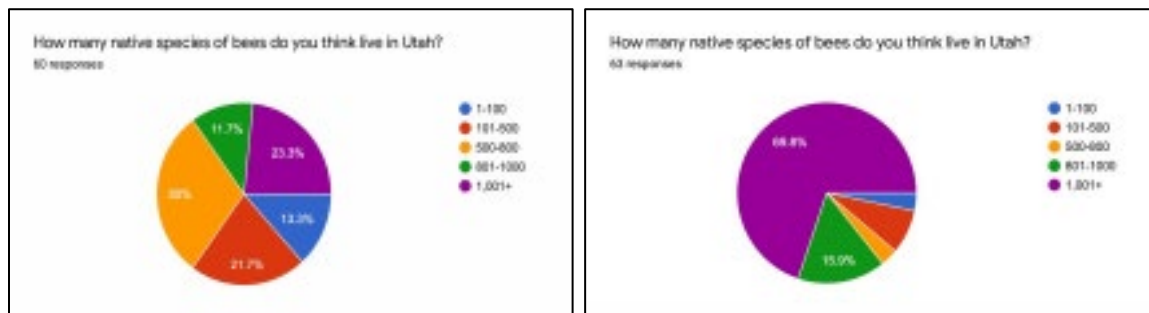


What Do Utah Students Know About Native Bees and the Honey Bee? Two brief surveys

Over the course of the fall semester in 2020, seven students in a University of Utah Global Environmental Issues class set out to understand a bit about Utah students' depth of knowledge about native bees and the European honey bee. Divided into two groups and meeting occasionally with Lecturer Amy Sibul and Mary O'Brien (Grand Canyon Trust), the students developed, administered, and analyzed the results of two surveys regarding native bee-honey bee conflicts on public lands

One group compared Park City high school students' and University of Utah students' knowledge of native and honey bees. Surprisingly, the high school students (in an Advanced Placement Environmental Science class) did significantly better than the college students (in a creative writing course). The survey found that the high school students were more accurate in their knowledge of the number of native bee species that exist in Utah (i.e., 1,100), the invasive nature of honey bees, and the threat of disease transference from honey bees to native bees.



1a. University of Utah creative writing class

1b. Park City AP Environmental Science class

Fig. 1 "How many native species of bees do you think live in Utah?" Purple is correct answer: 1,100

The other group surveyed students at the University of Utah with slightly different survey questions and differentiated between students in STEM and non-STEM classes. They found that a significant proportion of their respondents were familiar with honey bees and the purpose of a honey bee hive, but were not familiar with native bees (only 23.9% said they had seen a native bee) or the distinction between the two. Over 65% of participants identified a fly (Fig.3) as a native bee. The group also found that participants in science classes were more likely to be confident of their answers than participants in humanities classes even though the accuracy was similar between groups.



Fig. 3 A fly, usually identified by students as a native bee

Thanks to Amy Sibul, Instructor/Community Engaged Learning Coordinator at School of Biological Sciences at University of Utah, and students Puja Batchu, Kimberly Gamarra, Kiefer Hammer, Maryan Shale, Annabel Jorgensen, Donny Hicks, and Walker West for their enthusiastic and informed survey work.

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