

## **Taxonomic background information is essential for bee conservation**

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Bees are a monophyletic group of largely pollenivorous species derived from among the predatory apoid wasps. Their extant diversity is estimated to be about 20,000 species worldwide, with ~2,000 species known from Europe. Many European bee species are experiencing a strong decline and several working groups are currently analysing potential drivers of range contraction.

Here we would like to address the importance of clear taxonomic background information to correctly characterize bee decline and to develop a conservation program at global scale.

We present the state of art of species concept in bees and how it can impact on a European red list assessment developed in collaboration with IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature).