



CENTRAL COAST BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

July 2021

ISSUE NUMBER 61

NEXT MEETING JULY^H 2021

Club Picnic and Social: Saturday July 31st 3pm to 5pm

For the first time in two years we will be having our annual club picnic the last Saturday of the month. It will be held at the Toledo residence/apiary of Pat Wackford, one of the club's board members. The club will provide hamburgers (*even a few veggie burgers*), hot dogs and lots of good conversation. Feel free to bring a special beverage (*we will have a small assortment of soft drinks*), a small appetizer (*eg chips*) and even a friend.

As this is a private residence, we are requesting that all attendees have been vaccinated for Covid-19. The meeting will be held in well ventilated open areas, so masks are optional. Since we are providing food, we need a count of those who plan to attend so **please RSVP as soon as possible** if you haven't already done so. **Detailed directions and other information will be sent to those who send an email to confirm attendance.**

It should be a fun and much needed opportunity to get together again so we hope you will join us!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Stu Willason

The blackberry blossoms are finally dwindling, swarming seems to have stopped or at least greatly subsided, and the hornets - yellow jackets - paper wasps are out



in force. This is the time of year that beekeepers have their work cut out for them.

It is embarrassing to admit but we found a giant nest (*larger than a football*) hanging from the high eaves in the back corner of our deck. I guess we never looked up. We did an inspection of our property and found more nests both in

the ground and under the eaves. You might want to do the same since it looks to be a nasty wasp and hornet year.

We had our first “in-person” club meeting last month. It was really nice to see and talk with everyone in person again. A big thanks to Becca Fain and Jim Parrish for showing us how to make honey soap and wax candles. All attendees also got to make their own wonderful molded soap with the help of Becca. It was a super fun meeting and we all took home honey soap that we made at the meeting.

Becca also obtained, bottled, labeled and sold honey last week at the Florence Farmer's Market. She sold 60+ jars of local honey in little over an hour and made \$575 for the club *(the funds are earmarked for the club's donation to the OSU Bee Lab)*. Becca, our past president, is truly a "super-club member". All we can say is wow and THANKS!



Dewey Caron's *2020-2021 Winter Bee Losses of Oregon Backyard Beekeepers* is now available at [2020-21 Survey Reports | PNW Honey Bee Survey](#). Overall winter hive loss in Oregon was 35% and along the central coast 31%. It is well worth your time to read his excellent report.

The Oregon State Beekeepers Association will have a booth at the Oregon State Fair in Salem from August 27 to Sept 6. There will be an opportunity for club members to help staff the booth on a few select days for 3 hour shifts. Two years ago a number of our club members volunteered and, not only was it really fun, but all volunteers got into the fair for free and received preferred parking. We will send out more information on volunteering when it becomes available.

If you haven't already done so, you can renew or start a new membership for only \$15 per person or \$25 per family. The membership form is on our website [CCBA Membership Form .pdf](#)

We look forward to finally seeing everyone IN-PERSON at our annual picnic on Saturday July 31st at 3pm!

Meet a CCBA Member

Each month we'll be featuring one of the club's members to find out a little about their beekeeping passion. This month we are featuring Max Kuhn who is an Oregon Master Beekeeper. Here's Max's story:



I became interested in beekeeping in about 2004 when a swarm of honey bees landed on a bush in my front yard. In an effort to rid myself of this plague from parts unknown, I located a beekeeper. As it turned out, he lived nearby and the swarm could well have been from his apiary. He came right over, arriving in shirt sleeves and armed with a cardboard box. He proceeded to shake the bees into the box, place it in the back of his pickup truck and drive away. Leaving a trail of honeybees flying behind his truck. I was stunned! From that point on I spent a great deal of my free time seeking information about Honey Bees. Purchasing my first package of bees from Glory Bee in Eugene Oregon a few years later.

In 2007- I attended beekeeping school put on by Lane County Beekeeper's Association. The one-day school galvanized my interest in beekeeping and sent me on a search for more information.

2009- I enrolled in Washington State's Beekeeper program at the Apprentice Level, receiving my certificate in May 2010.

2010- I enrolled in Washington State's Beekeeper program at the Journeyman Level, receiving my certificate in 2011.

2012- Oregon had then started their own Master Beekeeper Program and I enrolled as an apprentice. Receiving my certificate in 2012. Since 2012 I have completed the Journeyman and Master Levels for Certification in the Oregon Program.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the learning process relevant to beekeeping and plan to continue my efforts in that pursuit. I have nothing but praise for all those involved in the Master Beekeeper programs in both Oregon and Washington. I do not regret a single day spent in the search for knowledge regarding Honeybees and Beekeeping. As a matter of fact, my only regret is that I did not start this quest earlier in life. I urge anyone considering beekeeping as a hobby or occupation to get started. I doubt you will regret your decision.



US beekeepers continue to report high colony loss rates, no clear improvement

June 23, 20 *Source:* University of Maryland

Beekeepers across the United States lost 45.5% of their managed honey bee colonies from April 2020 to April 2021, according to preliminary results of the 15th annual nationwide survey conducted by the nonprofit Bee Informed Partnership (BIP). These losses mark the second highest loss rate the survey has recorded since it began in 2006 (6.1 percentage points higher than the average annual loss rate of 39.4%). The survey results highlight the

continuing high rates of honey bee colony turnover. The high loss rate was driven by both elevated summer and winter losses this year, with no clear progression toward improvement for beekeepers and their colonies. BIP hopes to use the survey results to better understand how colony losses are experienced by beekeepers, and what can be done to reduce losses in future seasons.

Since beekeepers began noticing higher losses in their colonies in the early 2000s, agricultural agencies, researchers, and the beekeeping industry have been working together to understand why and develop best management practices to reduce their losses. The BIP annual colony loss survey, which has been conducted since 2006, has been integral to that process.

"This year's survey results show that colony losses are still high," says Nathalie Steinhauer, BIP's science coordinator and a post-doctoral researcher in the University of Maryland Department of Entomology. "Not all beekeepers are affected at the same intensity, but the turnover rate of colonies is still overall higher than beekeepers deem acceptable [normal or acceptable turnover is defined at about 20%]. We should remember, however, that loss rates are not the same as population decline. The recent numbers of honey bee colonies in the U.S. are relatively stable despite those high losses, but that's because beekeepers invest a lot of time and effort to increase their operation size to mitigate their losses."

Commercial honey bee operations are essential to agricultural production in the U.S., pollinating \$15 billion worth of food crops each year. Honey bee colonies are moved around the country to pollinate important agricultural crops such as almonds, blueberries, and apples. Minimizing their losses and ensuring the health of both commercial and backyard colonies is critical to food production and supply.

"Beekeepers of all types consistently lose a high number of colonies each year, which puts a heavy burden on many of them to recoup those losses in time for major pollination events like California almonds," says Geoffrey Williams, assistant professor of entomology at Auburn University and co-author of the survey. "Colony losses remain elevated, and this year's annual and summer loss rates are among the highest recorded."

This past year, winter losses were reported at 32.2%, which is 9.6 percentage points higher than last year and 3.9 points higher than the survey average. Summer losses were some of the highest ever reported again this year at 31.1%, which is 0.9

percentage points lower than last year, but 8.6 points higher than the survey average.

The survey asks beekeeping operations of all sizes to track the survival or turnover rates of their honey bee colonies. This year, 3,347 beekeepers managing 192,384 colonies across the country responded to the survey, representing about 7% of the nation's estimated 2.71 million managed colonies. This effort helps to keep a finger on the pulse of what is going on with beekeepers to identify why high losses are persisting.

"Though we see fluctuations from year to year, the worrisome part is we see no progression towards a reduction of losses," says Steinhauer.

"The long-term efforts of the BIP's annual survey are so important to monitoring honey bee colony losses and beekeeper management over time, and hopefully to identifying key practices that are protective for colonies," stresses Williams. "Because of the close connection of honey bees to the environment, the survey's long-term data may lend itself to insights into how changes in land-use and weather impact the beekeeping industry too. These are really understudied areas at the moment."

This year, to get a better understanding of different management practices that may lead to loss fluctuations, the BIP team delivered two versions of the survey to cater to different beekeepers. The two surveys found that backyard (managing 50 or fewer colonies) and sideliner (managing 51-500 colonies) beekeeping operations face both similar and distinct challenges to commercial beekeepers managing more than 500 colonies. While parasitic varroa mites continue to be a major issue for beekeepers regardless of operation size, queen management might be a factor that can lead to variation in seasonal colony losses.

"A colony needs a healthy, fully functioning queen before major pollination events to be productive," explains Williams. "A preliminary look into survey data reveals that commercial beekeepers almost always replace old queens with new ones during the summer, whereas only about half of backyard beekeepers do. Could this explain why commercial beekeepers lose fewer colonies in the subsequent winter than backyard beekeepers? Perhaps, but we need to dig deeper and possibly perform experiments to shed more light on this."

While the survey suggests that beekeepers are remaining responsive to the current best management practices and health concerns of their colonies, the loss data shows little progress.

"We see in the survey signs that beekeepers are adjusting their practices over time," says Steinhauer. "We also see that their perception of risk is changing. The level of acceptable loss, which was originally around 15% in earlier years of the survey, has crept up to 23% this year. So that tells us beekeepers are thinking about those factors that affect honey bee health more actively. We also see some beneficial changes in agricultural practices that could affect honey bee health, like changes in spray recommendations. But there are still a lot of issues that are left unaddressed. It seems we're running to stand still because beekeepers are changing their practices, and yet we still don't see a clear improvement in their loss rates."

BIP stresses that the lack of improvement in losses is a clear call for more attention and efforts to be paid on finding solutions, especially concerning varroa mites. The BIP annual loss survey continues to be an important part of documenting the data necessary to drive future research, best management practice recommendations, and support for honey bee health.

"We hope to continue BIP's survey effort to record colony losses experienced by U.S. beekeepers and explore beekeepers' management practices," ensures Steinhauer. "We have a general idea of what practices are associated with higher success, but the devil is in the details, and we need to understand why the implementation of some practices are more successful in some cases than others. Of course beekeepers also need the support of the public and political sectors. We need to recreate environments that are conducive to healthy bees, and that will benefit both honey bees and native bees or other wild pollinators."

The survey is conducted by the Bee Informed Partnership with data collected and analyzed by the University of Maryland and Auburn University. Survey results are available here on the Bee Informed Partnership website, with a summary provided below.

Winter Loss Estimates:

1 October 2020 -- 1 April 2021: 32.2% losses

9.6 percentage points higher than winter 2019-2020: 22.6%

3.9 percentage points higher than average winter loss (2006-2021): 28.3%

Summer Loss Estimates:

1 April 2020 -- 1 October 2020: 31.1% losses

0.9 percentage points lower than summer 2019: 32.1%

8.6 percentage points higher than average summer loss (2010-2020): 22.8%

Total Annual Loss Estimates:

1 April 2020 -- 1 April 2021: 45.5% losses

1.8 percentage points higher than 2019-2020: 43.7%

6.1 percentage points higher than average annual loss (2010-2021): 39.4%

Loss Comparison by Beekeeper Category:

Backyard beekeepers (manage 50 or fewer colonies): 27.0% summer vs. 42.0% winter losses

Sideliner (manage 51-500 colonies): 19.5% summer vs. 31.9% winter losses

Commercial (manage more than 500 colonies): 30.9% summer vs. 32.9% winter losses

Story Source:

[Materials](#) provided by **University of Maryland**. Original written by Samantha Watters. Note: Content may be edited for style and length.



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