

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Weekly Reading HW

Week # \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: Read and annotate the passage. Then answer the questions below.*

### Counting the Vanishing Bees

A new method for monitoring the decline in bee populations may prove a useful tool in a much-needed area. When United Nations experts noticed that crop production was flagging in seven countries, they contacted Gretchen LeBuhn, a professor in San Francisco who studies bees. “The U.N. thought that the problem might be tied to a decline in bee populations,” Dr. LeBuhn said. “I was hired to see if it would be possible to monitor this decline.” The new monitoring method is remarkably cheap and efficient for tracking national, regional, or global bee populations.

Globally, insect pollination is responsible for almost \$200 billion of crop production every year. 70 percent of the crops that are consumed by humans depend on pollinators, such as bees. Pollinators also contribute to ecosystem functions like water and habitat health.

Despite the economic stakes and growing concern about bee decline, there is no fixed network for tracking bee populations. “Talk all you want about declines, but it’s based on nothing. No one monitors bees,” said Dr. LeBuhn. A critical feature of her new method is its ability to capture very slight population changes in a small window of time, thereby acting as an early-warning system. An even subtler and more difficult challenge is identifying bees once they’ve been collected.

Other scientists are using the findings from the study to build an international monitoring network. But even with the development of a network, there is no central place, federal or private, for the data. Dr. LeBuhn is not sure what to do with the vast and growing collection of information. “I’m sitting on an amazing data set that is not being collected by places like the U.S. Department of Agriculture.” To underline the importance of systematic monitoring, Dr. LeBuhn remembered how a former student surveyed bumblebees in San Francisco’s urban parks in 2004 and discovered that a bee species that had been one of the city’s most common ones in the 1990s had disappeared entirely. “Wow, I thought. The most common bumblebee in San Francisco disappeared, and none of us noticed, not even me, a biologist,” Dr. LeBuhn said. “That really got my attention.”

1. (RST.9-10.4) As it is used in the passage, the term *flagging* means:
  - a. Banner
  - b. Declining
  - c. Boring
  - d. Increasing
2. (RST.9-10.2) The author’s purpose in writing the second paragraph is to:
  - a. Discourage individuals from using pesticides because they are killing insect pollinators.
  - b. Highlight the importance of insect pollinators, such as bees, on the human population.
  - c. Show that the new monitoring program is remarkably cheap compared to other things.
  - d. Warn that humans are too dependent on insect pollinators for food.

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3. (RST.9-10.1) According to the fourth paragraph, what got Dr. LeBuhn's attention?
- a. The fact that there was not a system in place to monitor insect populations before she developed one.
  - b. The fact that no one is putting to use the data she is collecting on insect pollinators' population.
  - c. The fact that there are bumblebees in San Francisco despite the city's pollution.
  - d. The fact that no one noticed the disappearance of the most common bumblebee in San Francisco

4. (RST.9-10.1) What caused Dr. LeBuhn to develop the method on tracking insect pollinators?

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5. (RST.9-10.1) According to the last paragraph, despite the development of the new monitoring method, why is Dr. LeBuhn still unhappy?

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*Adapted from the article, "Counting the Vanishing Bees" by Dylan Walsh for The New York Times, on January 16, 2013.*

