Neonicotinoid insecticides are accumulating in hummingbirds

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Video Byte

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Abstract

Rufous hummingbirds are disappearing from North America with population declines of 60% over the past 40 years. There's also been an uptick in the use of neonicotinoid insecticides over the last 25 years. To find out if neonicotinoids – notorious for their toxicity to honeybees – are also affecting hummingbirds, researchers tested urine and stool samples from wild hummingbirds living near blueberry fields. They found high levels of pesticide exposure in the birds. Like bees, hummingbirds are important pollinators of plants. Pesticide exposure in the birds may impact their ecosystem services to humans and other wildlife, making the protection of these animals an urgent concern. Bishop C, et al. Hummingbirds and bumble bees exposed to neonicotinoid and organophosphate insecticides in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia, Canada. (2018) Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry