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SWEDEN | DENMARK | NORWAY

PP-439 [Bee Biology]

THREE DECADES OF CONSERVATION WORK FOR THE DARK EUROPEAN HONEY BEE

(*Apis mellifera mellifera*)

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SICAMM
Societas Internationalis pro Conservatione Apis mellifera mellifera
International federation for the conservation of the dark European honey bee Apis mellifera mellifera

Conall McCaughey, Native Irish Honeybee NIHBS

Martin Feurer Mellifera CH, Switzerland

ABOUT SICAMM

SICAMM was founded in 1995 and is an **international federation of the dark European honey bee** (*Apis mellifera mellifera),* and its primary goals are to conserve, protect and promote the dark European honey bee.

SICAMM is managed by an elected Main Board. Over the last **thirty years**, SICAMM has played a vital role in organizing biennial conferences, which foster communication and collaboration among beekeepers, scientists, policymakers and conservationists.

In addition to the Main Board the Federation has **National Delegates from across Europe,** a **Science Board**, and dedicated work teams. The SICAMM Federation will work co-operatively to link with stakeholders and promote the conservation of the dark European honey bee.

SICAMM hopes to play a crucial role in **raising awareness of the importance of conservation areas for the dark European honey bee populations**, and in **supporting scientific and applied projects** aimed at protecting this precious natural resource. Similarly, SICAMM is interested in **offering support to** initiatives whose objectives are the welfare of **localised, wild and free-living bees that are under threat.**

SICAMM membership is open to organisations and individuals. SICAMM supports also **other organisations with similar goals**, e.g. the European Beekeeping Association (EBA).

Other features: Conferences, work teams on e.g. conservation, bee product quality, science, bee health, apitherapy, social and PR management, and education.

HOW TO SUPPORT SICAMM: ● Become a member. ● **O**ffer financial support, practical help, your speciality or expertise. ● Join our work teams. ● Become a beekeeper of the dark European honey bee. For promotion, our SICAMM social manager can offer social media support and get magazine and publication for a press release.

For more information:

- **Weblink:** https://sicamm.org
- **Email:** info@sicamm.org
- **SICAMM WhatsApp**

SICAMM Newsletter

Audun Braastad/NTB-scanpix, NBBL, Norway

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Hubert Guerriat, Mellifica, Belgium

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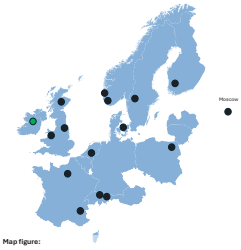

Map figure:
Blue labelled countries: Countries with dark European honey bee associations with ongoing conservation work.
Black dots: Locations for former international SICAMM conferences.
Next SICAMM conference: 2027, in Ireland, hosted by the Native Irish Honey Bee Society (NIHBS).

A few more countries, such as Estonia and Czech republic are believed to harbor minor amounts of dark European honey bees. Further, countries in the East, such as the Russian Federation, Belorussia and Ukraine are believed to have dark European honey bees, but due to current political situation it is hard to obtain further information about these. In future, more research on this and contacts to local beekeepers in these countries would be needed in order to explore this further.

Dark European honey bees have also been occasionally imported to other countries like Iceland and Greenland, or continents like America and Australia. More research is needed to follow up their fate.

ASSOCIATIONS WORKING ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE DARK EUROPEAN HONEY BEE

Robert Svensson, Föreningen Nordbi, Sweden

PP-439 [Bee Biology]
The conservation of the European dark honey bee, Apis mellifera mellifera

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[3]International Association for the Protection of the European Dark Bee

The European dark honey bee (also called the Black German Bee, British black bee, Native Irish Honey Bee, Cornish black bee or the Nordic brown bee), Apis mellifera mellifera, is a subspecies of the western honey bee, which reached Europe after the last ice age about 11.000 years ago. Current theories suggest that A. m. mellifera was the most dominating honey bee subspecies in many northern European countries up till about 1800. After this, many beekeepers, started to modernize beekeeping strategies. One of these strategies was to import large amounts of other honey bee subspecies (e.g. A.m. carnica, A.m.ligustica) or hybrids (the Buckfast bee), thereby nearly extinguishing the local dark honey bee. However, with the modern awareness of the necessity to protect native, local bees, the interest in the dark honey bee has increased steadily during the last decades, both among beekeepers as well as academic researchers.

Today, about 15 European countries have local organisations with the goal to promote the dark honey bee both from a practical as well as from a scientific point of view. SICAMM is the International Association of the European Dark Bee, representing all these local organisations. Over the last thirty years SICAMM has played a vital role in organizing conferences which foster communication and collaboration among beekeepers, scientists, policymakers and conservationists. Due to the increasing interest in the dark honey bee across Europe and outside, SICAMM has now become a professional Federation with National Delegates from across Europe, working teams and a Science Board. The primary goals of SICAMM are to conserve, protect and promote the European dark honey bee. SICAMM is also interested in offering support to initiatives whose objectives are the welfare of other localised, wild and free living bees that are under threat. SICAMM intends to play a crucial role in raising awareness of the importance of conservation areas for European dark honey bee populations and in supporting scientific and applied projects aimed at protecting this precious natural resource. A short overview of ongoing research on the genetics, microbiology, bee product science, and pollination ecology will also be presented.