

XERCES UPDATE

Donor Newsletter | August 2023



It Takes More Than A Village

Invertebrate Conservation Requires Significant Teamwork

The Xerces Society community is growing every year, and together we are achieving bigger and bolder things. We have you to thank, from your passionate support of our advocacy campaigns to your dedicated participation in community science programs, and much more.

With so many invertebrate species out there, the expanding Xerces staff is still working at a ratio of one person to tens of thousands of tiny spineless species in need of protection. We really can't do it alone. The more we work together, the more feasible preserving biodiversity becomes.

We believe that all people have a role to play in conservation. Whether you're a scientist, teacher, gardener, farmer, advocate, or policymaker, we all rely on insects and other invertebrates to keep our ecosystems intact. And we all owe it to them to protect their populations and restore their habitats.

Thanks for being on our team. We hope you continue to share your love of the little creatures with your families, friends, and networks so that our community (and our victories!) can continue to grow.

Ways to Donate

Online

xerces.org/donate

By Mail

The Xerces Society
PO Box 97387
Washington, DC 20090-7387

By Phone

(855) 232-6639, option 2

Email for Assistance

membership@xerces.org



25,000 Acres Protected

This summer, the Xerces Society worked with partners and the public to successfully advocate for the cancellation of a toxic aerial insecticide spray over 25,000 acres of natural areas in New Mexico by USDA-APHIS.

USDA-APHIS is the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service within the United States Department of Agriculture. This federal program allows insecticide spraying on millions of acres in 17 western states as part of a short-term and short-sighted means of suppressing native grasshopper populations, which can sometimes compete with grazing livestock for rangeland forage.

Yet insecticides like liquid carbaryl, which was chosen for this project, are toxic far beyond their target, threatening native pollinators, birds, and other wildlife all the same. Insecticides are not the solution.

Xerces is collaborating on better grasshopper management plans in New Mexico and monitoring future spray announcements. We anticipate more advocacy opportunities in the future and we hope we can count on you!



The Rio Chama watershed is home to countless species of wildlife and is also used by people as a recreation area. (Photo: Larry Lamsa, CC BY 2.0, Flickr.)

Connect

Our website expands on our work and what you can do to help invertebrates. Updates are posted to our blog and webinars to YouTube. You can also connect on social media.

xerces.org



@xercessociety



Tracking the Twinkly Things

First Firefly Atlas Season Brings Discovery and Community

This spring, Xerces launched the Firefly Atlas, a community science project for tracking the distribution, seasonality and status of firefly species in the U.S. and Canada. Conservation assessments of North American firefly species from 2020 revealed that up to a third may be threatened with extinction and more than half fell into the “data deficient” category, meaning that we lack the information to know how these species are doing. The Firefly Atlas empowers individuals to fill these data gaps, enabling more effective firefly protection. This firefly season was a dizzying one, with threatened fireflies across a wide geography receiving much-needed attention.

In southeast Florida, surveys by Xerces staff uncovered previously undetected populations of the Florida intertidal firefly persisting in state and county parks surrounded by development. This year, Xerces petitioned for the Florida intertidal firefly to be listed under the Endangered Species Act. Spending time with rangers and local naturalists—people who can steward and champion these insects—was an equally important outcome. We were able to be a voice for fireflies at an International Dark Sky Week celebration, highlighting that stars are not the only twinkly things threatened by light pollution.

In the southeast, Firefly Atlas volunteers and local partners monitored known sites and surveyed new areas, improving our understanding of the seasonal timing and distribution of the loopy five firefly, another species Xerces petitioned to list as endangered this year.

In Arizona, we gathered with land managers and community scientists to research the southwest spring firefly (another petitioned species) and the southwest synchronous firefly. New firefly sites are already on the map, reaffirming the importance of protecting desert wetlands from disturbance.

Online, Xerces facilitated a three-day species identification course and three regional working group meetings to strengthen and expand the community of people engaged in firefly research and conservation. Participants shared and discussed recent research, firefly survey tips, and local findings.

Community science, the participation of non-professional researchers in collecting scientific data, is advantageous because it allows for large-scale data collection and broad geographic coverage. It is also joyful to witness the community in community science. Firefly watchers across North America have exchanged excited emails with subjects like “Are the loopy five fireflies out in your area yet?” or “Found a new cypress firefly site!” The Firefly Atlas now serves as a steward for these firefly observations and provides guidance to beginner “fireflies.” We are excited by the possibilities of future seasons!

In addition to the Firefly Atlas, the Xerces Society facilitates community science projects for monarch butterflies, bumble bees, and western freshwater mussels. (Photo: Stephanie McKnight / Xerces Society.)

Light pollution, habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change are all threats to fireflies. (Photo: Katie Lamke / Xerces Society.)

Community Science

This firefly season may be over, but we hope to have you next year! Your participation in community science helps us better conserve invertebrates.

**[xerces.org/
community-science](https://xerces.org/community-science)**





Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

Peer-to-peer fundraising is when an individual raises donations from their peers. Xerces administers a peer-to-peer fundraising platform that lets anyone host a custom online fundraiser to support the Xerces Society.

xerces.org/fundraise

Xerces member and musician Rose Esposito of Portland, OR hosted a save the bees concert in her backyard this July. Rose raised \$800 to support Xerces conservation work. Thank you Rose and friends! (Photo: Rose Esposito.)

Literally the Coolest Members

Xerces Member Spotlights

Members of the Xerces Society not only provide financial support, but also lend their unique personalities, interests, and efforts to our community, and to the cause of invertebrate conservation. From cultivating pollinator gardens, to giving inspirational talks, to sharing their enthusiasm for invertebrates through photography, to simply being wonderful people, they—you—are making a difference! Thank you to all of our members and donors around the world! We say this often, but it is true that none of the Xerces Society's success would be possible without you.

Augustin Garnier of Redondo Beach, California is an active advocate for pollinators, especially the monarch butterfly. As a senior officer for two local nonprofit organizations and a musician and composer, his many positive outputs have a ripple effect. Augustin recently worked to establish a pollinator garden at his local library, where he planted milkweed, California poppies and more. The cheerful, colorful garden now greets library visitors and invites them to join in the cause.

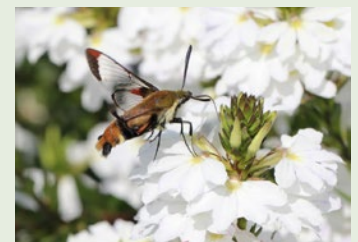
Pat Thomas of Duluth, Minnesota is a decades-long advocate for invertebrate conservation. Pat often gives talks in her local community to spread the word about the importance of protecting pollinators. Pat enjoys photographing all the amazing creatures she sees in her garden and while out on nature walks with her husband and adorable dog, Banjo.

Jennifer Geib of Charleston, West Virginia teaches about planting for healthy living and creating gardens that provide food for all creatures great and small. After almost two decades of practice, Jennifer is an expert container gardener. Her deck at home features over 200 pots filled with a variety of native perennials, annuals, herbs, and vegetables. Insects and birds flock to the deck which has become a vibrant ecosystem. Jennifer finds this work very rewarding and encourages everyone to create a container garden of some kind. Even peonies can grow in pots!

Noah Raven of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is doing incredible work to encourage others to help monarch butterflies. Noah, age 12, is the founder of Monarch Defenders, a nonprofit with the mission "to save the monarchs from extinction, one garden at a time." Noah was first inspired by overwintering monarchs in Mexico. Anyone in North America can become a Monarch Defender by planting milkweed and other pollinator plants. Monarch Defenders maintains a map of garden sites.



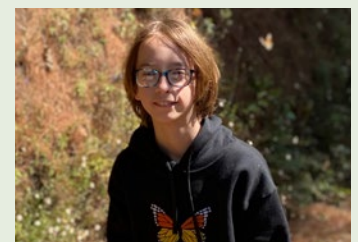
Augustin Garnier with a monarch



Pat Thomas moth photography



Jennifer Geib's deck garden



Noah Raven with monarchs



Please recycle

Become a Xerces Ambassador

If you have a way with people, experience with outreach, plus a passion for invertebrate conservation—we need you! We are recruiting Xerces Ambassadors.

Xerces Ambassadors are volunteers who officially represent Xerces at events across the continent. With a wide geographic reach and a range of valuable skills, Xerces Ambassadors amplify our capacity to educate and inspire allies in invertebrate conservation.

Duties include tabling at events, giving presentations to groups online and in-person, and helping Xerces develop outreach materials and opportunities.

Becoming a Xerces Ambassador requires an application process and participation in online training. Learn more about processes, requirements, and deadlines on our website. Apply today!

xerces.org/volunteer



Xerces Ambassadors enable our organization to be in more places at once, which results in exponentially more outreach on behalf of our incredible invertebrates. (Photo: Gio Leos.)