

Southwest Region “Three-Peat” – Win’s National Pollinator Challenge Again

The Southwest Region rose to the challenge again winning the 2013 National Pollinator Challenge Award for the third year in a row, capturing the highest scores for pollinator conservation activities. Continuing to set the bar in pollinator efforts, employees from Refuges, Ecological Services Field Offices including the Partners Programs, Fisheries, Migratory Birds, and Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs tallied up a total of 978 points! Corpus Christi Ecological Services and Partners Program tallied the most points (176), followed closely by the Southwest Arizona National Wildlife Refuge Complex (150 points), San Bernadino NWR [also Arizona] (106 points), and the Southwest Regional Office collectively (Refuges, Fisheries, ES, Migratory Birds, and WSFR) (114 points).

Participants in Region 2 this year include 17 National Wildlife Refuges; 4 Ecological Services Field Offices with 3 of their Partners programs; 1 Migratory Bird Field Office; and the Southwest Regional Office, represented by Refuges, Fisheries, Migratory Birds, Wildlife Sport Fish Restoration Program, and Ecological Services.

In the Southwest during 2013 (April – October) a few of the ways pollinators benefitted were:

- 55 educational events at schools, universities, nature centers, refuges, camps, Navajo Reservation, National Parks, community gardens, garden centers, conferences, festivals, private ranches, etc.;
- 18 inventory and monitoring projects involving bees, moths, nectar bats, butterflies, monarchs, hummingbirds, and all pollinators;
- 1 pilot NCTC course “Building Urban Community Habitats for Youth,” hosted by R2 RO for staff training-involved garden site visits, design, final product presentation; field trips to other community gardens, including Valle del Oro NWR for garden planning; presentations to staff by local experts;
- 3 peer-reviewed scientific papers on southwestern pollinators –
 - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23536593>
 - <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcad.12049/abstract>
 - 2010 Biennial Conference on Biological Research on the Colorado Plateau (submitted);
- Over 785 acres in 17 projects were restored, most by removing exotic plants, re-planting with native wildflowers to benefit pollinators on private lands, and some with some restoring wetlands (Texas Corpus Christi Partners Program, New Mexico Partners Program, Tishomingo NWR).

Special thanks go to Julie McIntyre, the Southwest Regions biggest advocate for pollinators, for her extraordinary efforts encouraging, coordinating and participating in many of these activities, and collating and submitting the event data to Headquarters.