



Natural History of Insect Pollinators

Insect pollinators share long co-evolutionary histories with 75% of the world's plants, and they perform essential ecological services in most terrestrial ecosystems. But in the past several decades, numerous studies have reported dramatic declines in populations of many pollinator species around the world. In this seminar, we will explore the natural history of a variety of pollinators including bees, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps, beetles, and other species. Specific topics we will cover for each group will include: evolutionary history, current taxonomy, regional and global diversity, ecology, significance in terms of pollination, population trends in the context of the 'insect apocalypse', and pollinator conservation. Each session will include discussions of recent research related to that evening's topic. No previous background in entomology is required for this seminar - only an interest in insects and pollination.

Dr. Ron Butler (butler@maine.edu) is a broadly experienced animal ecologist and Professor Emeritus at the University of Maine at Farmington where he taught for 35 years. While Ron spent the first part of his career conducting research with seabirds in Maine, Newfoundland, and Antarctica, for the past several decades he has focused on ecologically important groups of insects. He helped plan and coordinate several state-wide citizen science initiatives including the Maine Damselfly and Dragonfly Survey, the Maine Butterfly Survey, the Maine Bumble Bee Atlas, and (presently) the Maine Flower Fly Survey. Ron has co-authored over 50 peer-reviewed publications and technical reports, **Butterflies of Maine and the Canadian Maritime Provinces** (2023), and **Damselflies and Dragonflies of Maine and the Canadian Maritime Provinces** (in press). Ron lives in the western mountains of Maine where he continues to collaborate with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife on regional insect conservation initiatives.

Dr. Herb Wilson (whwilson@colby.edu) is the David Arey Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biology at Colby College, Waterville, ME. Herb is an ecologist and evolutionary biologist who has used a variety of animals to answer ecological and evolutionary questions. He has published over 70 scientific articles on marine sand flat invertebrates, birds, dragonflies and butterflies. He is one of the authors of the recently published **Butterflies of Maine and the Maritime Provinces** (Cornell University Press). He was a co-director of the Maine Butterfly Survey, a 15-year citizen-science project that provided the data for the recently published book. Herb retired from Colby in 2019 after 30 years of teaching, but he continues to remain active in regional conservation initiatives. Herb helped plan and is presently coordinating the Maine Flower Fly Survey in collaboration with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Herb lives in central Maine in Waterville.

April 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, & 23, 2026

7-9 PM ET

\$270

Participants need to have a Zoom account (<https://zoom.us> sign up for zoom is free). You will receive a secure link to join the instructor before each class. Classes will be recorded so participants can review them or make up missed ones.

[REGISTER](#)

[CALENDAR](#)

[GENERAL INFO](#)