

Plummeting insect numbers ‘threaten collapse of nature’

Insects could vanish within a century at current rate of decline, says global review.

The world’s insects are **hurtling** down the path to extinction, threatening a “**catastrophic** collapse of nature’s ecosystems”, according to the first global scientific review. More than 40% of insect species are declining and a third are endangered, the analysis found. The rate of extinction is eight times faster than that of mammals, birds and **reptiles**.

plummet 垂直落下；骤然下跌

hurtling 飞奔；疾驰

catastrophic 灾难的

reptile 爬行动物

“It should be of huge concern to all of us, for insects are at the heart of every food web, they **pollinate** the large majority of plant species, keep the soil healthy, recycle nutrients, control pests, and much more. Love them or **loathe** them, we humans cannot survive without insects,” said Prof Dave Goulson at the University of Sussex in the UK.

pollinate 授粉

loathe 讨厌；厌恶

The analysis, published in the journal Biological Conservation, says **intensive** agriculture is the main driver of the declines, particularly the heavy use of pesticides. Urbanization and climate change are also significant factors.

One of the biggest impacts of insect loss is on the many birds, reptiles, **amphibians** and fish that eat insects. A small number of adaptable species are increasing in number, but not nearly enough to outweigh the big losses.

intensive 集中的

amphibian 两栖动物；双重人格的人

Matt Shardlow, at the conservation charity Buglife, said: “It is **gravely sobering** to see this **collation** of evidence that demonstrates the **pitiful** state of the world’s insect populations. It is increasingly obvious that the planet’s ecology is breaking and there is a need for an **intense** and global effort to halt and reverse these dreadful trends.”

gravely 严重地；严肃地

sobering 使冷静的；使清醒的

collation 整理；校对

pitiful 可怜的

intense 强烈的；热情的