

**Bees are neighbours: beekeepers' mission to convince Hong Kong that vital pollinators shouldn't be exterminated**

**i. \_\_\_\_\_**

[1] For two young beekeepers in Hong Kong, their job isn't really about making honey: they're saving the bees.

[2] As Harry Wong Ka-hon gently ushers bees from a hive on the buzzing streets of Central into a black bag, he is on a delicate rescue mission. After relocating the queen bee, the 35-year-old beekeeper uses a brush to guide the rest of the worker bees to their new home, where they will be safe from extermination by pest control units.

[3] "Our main goal is bee conservation because Hong Kong is not very bee-friendly. Many people tend to spray insecticide to eliminate them whenever they see bees," shared Wong, who in 2020 founded Beetales, a social enterprise in Hong Kong *dedicated* to bee conservation.

[4] "What we want to do is educate the public that we don't need to be too afraid of honeybees; they are our neighbours," he said.

[5] On social media, Beetales helps people identify different bee species and deal with the ones that enter their homes. Through educational workshops and vocational training, *the group* teaches people to appreciate the bee's vital role as pollinators in the ecosystem. Beetales also trains volunteers to safely relocate beehives away from populated areas.

[6] "We hope to save the beehives that are close to residential areas. We release some of them into nature while raising others in our conservation centre," Wong explained.

[7] Wong's co-founder Jill Kong Pui-wa, who is in her 20s, began pursuing beekeeping while she was in her third year studying environmental science in university.

[8] The female beekeeper believes the public needs a fresh perspective on this industry.

[9] "We want to revitalise the profession and ... [show] that the job of a beekeeper can have a new image."

**ii. \_\_\_\_\_**

[10] There are more than 20,000 species of bees around the globe, and they are essential to life on Earth.

Without them, many plants would not grow and reproduce – meaning we would not have food to eat.

[11] According to the UN Environment Programme, bees pollinate about 71 of the crop species that provide 90 per cent of the world's food.

[12] In recent years, climate change has been a leading contributor to the loss of bee colonies. Wong noted that longer, hotter summers posed problems for bees' health.

[13] "The time for bees to face their natural enemies like wasps also becomes longer," Wong explained, adding that prolonged summers also affected when flowers bloom.

[14] "When confronted with a different blooming season, it becomes difficult for them [bees] to rely on their traditional way of life to survive."

[15] "We are exploring ways to improve the health of the bees, since their conditions in the last few years are not so good," Wong added. "Honeybees are experiencing more diseases and facing a population decline."

**iii. \_\_\_\_\_**

[16] The group tries to do their part in protecting bees, no matter if they are in the city, in the wild, or in their conservation centre. The beekeepers are keen to clarify some misconceptions surrounding these insects.

[17] While Beetales' operations are partially supported by the sale of lip balm, soap and other products made with their bees' honey, Wong emphasised that these animals should not be seen as moneymaking tools.

[18] "In Hong Kong, the [honey] harvest season lasts only about eight weeks in a year. However, we take good care of the bees throughout the remaining time," Wong said, adding that raising bees required strenuous work.

**iv. \_\_\_\_\_**

[19] Some people also mistakenly believe that taking honey from bees means depriving them of all their food. But the beekeeper explained that this was not true.

[20] "Each time we harvest honey, we carefully calculate the amount we should leave behind to ensure their continued well-being and survival," Wong noted.

[21] The biggest misunderstanding that Beetales hopes to clear up is that bees are dangerous. But as long as you do not disturb their hives, most bees will leave you alone.

[22] “Many people believe that bees are prone to launching attacks. But as you can see, they primarily focus on their work and are not as dangerous as most people would think,” he said.

v. \_\_\_\_\_

[23] Before transitioning into beekeeping, Wong worked as an arborist, managing trees for 10 years. But four years ago, a trip to Madagascar inspired him to pursue bee conservation in Hong Kong.

[24] “While researching the skills and systems I could contribute to Madagascar, I realised the strong connection between bees and agriculture, urban development, and the environment. This realisation sparked my interest and led me to give beekeeping a try,” he recalled.

[25] “As I continued to learn more about it, I became aware of the demand for beekeepers in Hong Kong,” Wong shared, adding that he picked up the necessary skills from the city’s experienced beekeepers and online tutorials.

[26] For Kong, the job has been a rewarding way of giving back to tonly he environment, and she enjoys raising awareness: “At an annual event for social enterprises, I had the opportunity to share my experience as a speaker. I realised that many people are interested in bees.”

[27] The duo has seen this interest reflected across all age groups, as they have held more than 100 workshops, teaching everyone from kindergarten pupils to the elderly about the role of pollinators. Their educational efforts also extend to social media, where they share content about their mission to rescue bees.

[28] “Many people think that being a beekeeper is only about raising bees and harvesting honey. But because our goals are diverse, we also need to communicate well with schools and the public,” Kong said.

[29] “It makes us very happy whenever people say they become less afraid of bees because of our page.” She added.

v  
i. \_\_\_\_\_

[30] For Wong, one memorable moment was when a group of trainees took on the challenging task of saving

a swarm of bees that were resting on a fire hydrant in Sheung Wan.

[31] “Normally, those bees would leave in about two days. But the city won’t wait for two days and would kill them straight away,” Wong pointed out.

[32] He didn’t expect the volunteers to be able to handle this case, but they did, and because of their work, those bees were protected from extermination.

[33] Beetales’ founders hope more Hongkongers will join their efforts to recognise the beauty and value of bees. “In the past, people viewed bees solely as tools to collect food, but that’s not the case. It’s about working together with them for a mutually beneficial coexistence,” Wong said.

Answer the following questions with reference to the information in the article.

1. In paragraph 2, why was Wong guiding the bees to a new home?

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2. In paragraph 3, why was Hong Kong described as being not “bee-friendly”?

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3. Which of the following words share a similar meaning to ‘dedicated’?

- A. Interested
- B. Committed
- C. Assigned
- D. Designed

4. Which of the following are things that Beetales are NOT doing to educate the public?

- A. Identify the species of bees in pictures sent to them on social media
- B. Deal with bees which enter people’s homes
- C. Training volunteers to relocate beehives
- D. Running advertisements to tell people not to be afraid of bees.

5. Who/What does ‘the group’ (paragraph 5) refer to?

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6. Name one action that Beetales may take when they save beehives in residential areas.

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7. What is implied about the public’s current view on the beekeeping industry when Jill Kong Pui-Wa said she believes the public ‘needs a fresh perspective of the industry’?

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8. Find a word in paragraphs 7-9 which has a similar meaning to ‘bring new life to’

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9. Complete the following summary based on the information from paragraphs 10-14.

Bees are important for the food production on Earth. Bees (i)\_\_\_\_\_ crops which are major sources of food for humans. Without bees, plants are unable to grow and (ii)\_\_\_\_\_, meaning humans will not have sufficient food. However, in recent years, (iii)\_\_\_\_\_ is a challenge for many bee colonies, as a result, a lot of them are unable to survive. Bees’ physical health is also negatively affected by longer and (iv)\_\_\_\_\_ summers and they have to face their predator – (v)\_\_\_\_\_ for longer periods of time throughout the year. Finally, bees will find it difficult to adapt when the blooming season (vi)\_\_\_\_\_.

10. In paragraph 15, how does Wong feel about the living conditions of bees?

- A. Worried
- B. Optimistic
- C. Satisfied
- D. Confused

11. According to Wong in paragraphs 17 and 18, does he believe that bees are good at making money?

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12. Determine whether the following statements are true(T), false,(F), or not given(NG) according to the information in paragraphs 17-21.

- i. Wong believes that raising bees is an easy task
- ii. Taking honey from bees is depriving the food supply of bees
- iii. Wong calculates the suitable amount of honey harvested from his bees.
- iv. Wong has never been stung by bees because he leaves them alone

13. According to paragraph 22,

Wong believes that people think bees are more \_\_\_\_\_ than they actually are.

14. In paragraphs 20-22, find a word which can be replaced by 'inclined'.

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15. How was Wong inspired to become a beekeeper?

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16. How did Wong learn to become a beekeeper?

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17. In paragraph 26, which word best describes Kong's view of her work?

- A. Challenging
- B. Boring
- C. Fulfilling
- D. Tedious

18. With reference to the goal of Beetales, why is Kong happy in paragraph 29 when people say they are less afraid of bees after view their social media page?

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19. Determine if the statements are true, false or not given from the information in paragraphs 26-30.

- i. Kong realised through her activities that some people disliked bees.
- ii. Only children are interested in bees
- iii. Kong believes the roles and responsibilities of beekeepers should be communicated well towards the public
- iv. Everyone becomes less afraid of bees after viewing Beetale's social media pages.

20. What does 'a swarm' mean in paragraph 30?

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21. In paragraph 31, what does 'them' refer to?

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22. Complete the summary based on the information from paragraphs 30-32

Wong vividly remembers when a group of (i)\_\_\_\_\_ tried to save a swarm of bees which were resting on a (ii)\_\_\_\_\_. The volunteers were able to handle the case on their own, which surpassed Wong's (iii)\_\_\_\_\_. Wong believes if they had not acted, the bees would have been (iv) \_\_\_\_\_ before they would leave on their own after (v) \_\_\_\_\_ days.

23. In paragraph 33, according to Wong, how should humans treat bees?

24. Match the quotes with the person who most likely said it. Each person may only be used once.

- A. Wong Ka-Hon      B. Kong Pui-Wa      C. Representative at UN Environment Programme  
D. Child attending workshop      E. Volunteers saving bees

i.	I thought bees love to sting people! But not anymore!	
ii.	It's great to see so many people in bees.	
iii.	My trip to Madagascar was extremely eye-opening	
iv.	I cannot believe we saved them by ourselves!	
v.	The global food supply chain cannot survive without bees.	

25. Match each missing heading in the article with the most suitable choice.

A. The need for bees	B. Saving the bees	C. A memorable event
D. A memorable event	E. Becoming beekeepers	F. The operations

(i) \_\_\_\_\_ (ii) \_\_\_\_\_

(iii) \_\_\_\_\_ (iv) \_\_\_\_\_

(v) \_\_\_\_\_ (vi) \_\_\_\_\_