



## Insect extinction

They're sometimes seen as creepy ... and often crawly ... or jumpy ... or wriggly ... or fly-y?

Actually, there are lots of different ways to describe insects because there are 30 million different insect species in the world. And they're just the ones we know about. In fact, if you put all the insects together into one big, creepy, crawly, wriggling mass, they'd outweigh all of humanity at least 17 times over.

Now, hearing all that, who could blame you for thinking, 'Hey, insects are doing just fine.' But scientists say that's not the case. They're actually disappearing at a worrying rate.

A new study has found that over the past decade the world's insect populations have reduced by 41 per cent. That includes around 46 per cent of bee populations, 49 per cent of beetles, 50 per cent of crickets and grasshoppers and 53 per cent of butterflies and moths.

So, why are some insects dying out? Well, the finger is pointing mostly towards us humans.

Scientists say habitat loss from deforestation, pollution and pesticides and climate change are some of the biggest factors.

The study predicted a pretty sad future too, where more than 40 per cent of all insect species could go extinct over the next few decades.

Hey, Ben.

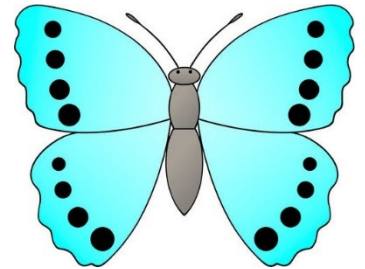
How are you doing, Amelia? Great to see you.

Great to see you. This is amazing.

Yeah, it's a fantastic place. Well, I think we should get cracking and go catch some bugs. I brought you along a net.

Awesome! Let's do it!

## Video zone





Yeah.

Ben is an entomologist. That's a scientist that studies insects.

So, I've always loved bugs. Ever since I was a pup, all I've ever wanted to be is a bug scientist.

So, check this out, Amelia. I've caught a nice little fly in the grass here.

Oh, wow!

He says even the tiniest, most irritating insects are more important than they appear.

They pollinate plants, they help to recycle material in the environment, like plant material but also animal material. They also play important roles in food webs because not only do they consume things like plants, [then] they are actually food sources for animals further up the food chain.

Ben, what would the world be like without insects?

I think we wouldn't have a world without insects. Once we remove that chain from this kind of food web, everything collapses around it. We would pretty much have waste piling up everywhere, and this is animal waste and plant waste. We wouldn't have any food to eat.

Whoa!

So, it's a pretty scary idea to think about a world without insects.

Ben says that's why it's so important to take care of our environment and to keep a close eye on how insects are going.

Hey, I've got something!

Let's have a look.

Oh, so this is a male velvet ant.



Oh, look at that!

This is a really good catch.

So, what can I do and what can the kids of Australia do to help insects?

Some easy things you can do around the home is reduce your reliance on insecticides, spraying them in and around the house. And as far as habitat loss, to actually provide ... by planting native plants in your backyard which provide food sources but also kind of habitat.

While we go work on that, scientists like Ben will keep spreading the word that without insects both pretty ...

Aww!

... and creepy ...

Ew!

... our world just wouldn't be the same.

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Watch this video <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/video-zone/insect-extinction>

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