

Organic Farms Support More Species, Greater Biodiversity

in

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A meta-analysis of 184 observations from 94 studies has found that on average, organic farms support 34% more plant, insect and animal species ('species richness') than conventional farms. This result was relatively robust across 30 years of data, mostly from developed countries. The research team further found that organic farms had a greater positive effect on biodiversity in intensively farmed regions, providing rich habitats free from pesticides.

"Organic farming.... can yield significant long-term benefits for biodiversity. Organic methods could go some way towards halting the continued loss of diversity in industrialised nations," says Sean Tuck of Oxford University's Department of Plant Sciences, lead author of the study.

The researchers call for more studies on organic farming to be conducted in tropical, sub-tropical and Mediterranean regions, where very few such studies exist, in order to provide a globally relevant analysis of the effects of organic farming.

The study, entitled "Land-Use Intensity and the Effects of Organic Farming on Biodiversity: A Hierarchical Meta-Analysis" has been published in the Journal of Applied Ecology. The summary, synthesis and recommendations (Item 1) as well as a media release on the paper (Item 2) are reproduced below. The full study can be downloaded from:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2664.12219/full> [2]

Date : 27 March 2014

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