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2. This intensive survey provided the first baseline data for these two ecosystems, one protected by Federal mandates, the other open to public use. The submitted paper, “**Butterfly Diversity on a Southeast Florida Military Base Located within an Urban Matrix”** is the result of an intensive butterfly survey done in southeast Florida, detailing the important difference between the protected lands of an idle Federal military base, and the open-access public park located beside it. Butterflies are documented pollinators, vital food sources for birds and other invertebrates, iconic representations of the beauty of nature, and an important charismatic species for involving the public in the conservation of our natural areas.
3. There is no Declaration.
4. There is no conflict of interest. Project sponsor is the Homestead Air Reserve Base, FA6648-14-P-0023, “Qualitative and Base-Wide Butterfly-Moth Pollinator Survey Homestead Area Reserve Base, Florida”
5. Full permission to publish has been received from the Homestead Air Reserve Base.
6. Ethical statement.

On behalf of, and having obtained permission from my co-author, I declare that:

a. the material has not been published in whole or in part elsewhere except as an original biological report to the Homestead Air Reserve Base, Homestead, Florida;

b. the paper is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere;

c. both authors have been personally and actively involved in substantive work leading to the report, and will hold themselves jointly and individually responsible for its content;

d. all relevant ethical safeguards have been met in relation to patient or subject protection, or animal experimentation.

1. There is no trial registration required.
2. SK performed most of the surveys, wrote the paper and contributed graphs, tables and other research information. CVDH provided editorial and statistical support as project supervisor.

June 19, 2020

Dear Journal of Insect Conservation Editors,

As a conservation entomologist (SK) and wildlife ecologist (CVDH), the extreme decline in invertebrate populations globally has been of utmost concern. Dr. van der Heiden is currently the Wildlife Director for the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, while Ms. Koi is presently a doctoral student studying under Dr. Hong Liu at Florida International University in Miami Florida, USA.

There are multiple factors related to the decline, most of which scientists and the public may be unable to change. However, ecologists are addressing some of the concerns by at least documenting baseline data, which has been missing in many ecosystems. Lately, scientists are noting invertebrate populations and other ‘neglected’ wildlife even if we are not quite sure how to address and repair the declines because this provides the beginning information needed for forward-moving conservation action.

While the United Kingdom has maintained butterfly surveys for over 100 years, the United States has only been documenting selected invertebrate populations since 1974 (Xerces Society). It was not until 1992 that the North American Butterfly Association was founded. Both of these organizations have developed baseline data for *some* ecosystems, but we are seriously unprepared to document our conservation status in most ecosystems.

The Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC) has been documenting baseline and ongoing floristic surveys in natural environments since 1984, and as former employees and a current Associate (SK) for IRC, we completed butterfly surveys in globally endangered pine rockland ecosystems in southeast Florida. This intensive survey provided the first baseline data for these two ecosystems, one protected by Federal mandates, the other open to public use.

The submitted paper, “**Butterfly Diversity on a Southeast Florida Military Base Located within an Urban Matrix”** is the result of an intensive butterfly survey done in southeast Florida, detailing the important difference between the protected lands of an idle military base, and the open-access public park located beside it. Butterflies are documented pollinators, vital food sources for birds and other invertebrates, iconic representations of the beauty of nature, and an important charismatic species for involving the public in the conservation of our natural areas.

I appreciate your review and urge the publication of this important paper.

Thank you,

Sandy Koi, MSc

Craig van der Heiden, Ph.D.