Shedding light on pollinators

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A QR code allows cameras to monitor bee behavior.

James Crall/Harvard University

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Dear [informal salutation],

Did you ever think of training bees to fly upwind?

Associate Professor Stacey Combes, a Chancellor's Fellow, does exactly that. She lures bees through a long wind tunnel using fake flowers and nectar while high-speed cameras capture every movement.

The purpose? To better understand how bees fly and forage — an important question for our food supply **as climate change reshapes ecosystems for bees and other pollinators.**

In another study, Combes and colleagues superglued tiny barcodes to bumblebees to track, via camera, how they divide labor when foraging and caring for young. **The BEEtag system sheds light on many bee behaviors, including their response to pesticide use.**

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"My goal in teaching is to inspire students to be constantly curious about the world around them—and to understand how to go from that curiosity to designing a scientific study and critically evaluating the results."

- STACEY COMBES, 2019 CHANCELLOR'S FELLOW AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF NEUROBIOLOGY, PHYSIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR