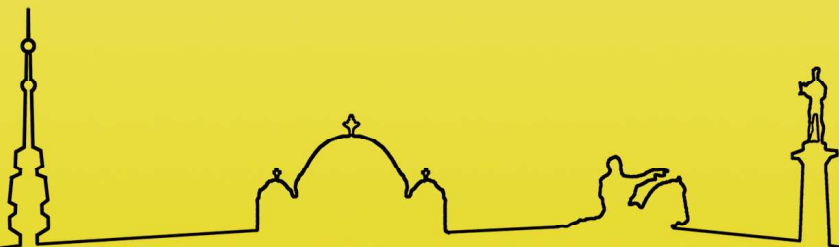


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## **A MOBILE PHONE APPLICATION TO SURVEY AND MONITOR THE WILD COLONIES OF *APIS MELLIFERA***

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Although *Apis mellifera* have been reared by humans for millennia, it remains a wild animal as reported by ancient authors and modern beekeepers and researchers. Until a few decades ago, wild colonies of *Apis mellifera* were largely common. However, since the early 1980s there has been a rapid and underestimated rarefaction of the “wild” colonies due to a parasite, the fearsome *Varroa destructor* mite. The effect of the *Varroa* mite on unmanaged colonies was so strong that today in Europe most of the survived honey bees live in hives managed by beekeepers. Indeed, for many years it has even been thought that in Europe wild honey bees were disappeared. Rather surprisingly, there are no scientific studies on this phenomenon and the only available information deals with the number and distribution of honey bees colonies owned by beekeepers. In recent years, reports and interest in wild honey bee colonies have increased significantly and today we can say that even in many areas of Europe these colonies are still there. The app BeeWild intends to survey and monitor these wild colonies through a typical citizen science action.

**Keywords:** Wild honey bees, BeeWild, mobile app