Banning Neonics

# **Letters to the Editors- Guidelines and Template May 2018**

Dear Nature Canada Members:

Letters to Editors are an excellent way to encourage and promote discussion of nature topics you are passionate about. A Letter to the Editor can help create awareness about an important issue and help to influence public opinion.

Publishing a Letter to the Editor is not a simple process. Most editors of publications receive up to 300- 500 letter submissions daily.

You can significantly improve your chances of having your letter published by following these guidelines.

**Letters to the Editor Guidelines**

* A timely letter will be more likely to be chosen for publication. It is best to respond within seven days to a particular article or news event that was published by the newspaper.
* Try to make the letter concrete if you are commenting on a national issue, highlight the national significance and try to link it to a recent event or article that discusses the issue.
* If you are responding to a community event or issue, your local (community) newspaper is the best publication to submit your letter to.
* Be concise, try to keep letters to fewer than 150 words. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.
* Send letters by e-mail and include the contents of the letter in the body of the e-mail message as plain text only. Do not use Microsoft Word format or rich text format (RTF).
* Do not send letters as an attachment.
* Ensure you include your name, address and daytime phone number.

***Banning Neonics*Letters to the Editor - Template**

Name of Media Outlet or Publication

Attention: Editor

Address

City, Postal Code

Dear Editor:

RE: *[State your reason for writing your letter right at the beginning. If you are responding to articles or editorials by the media, use the first sentence to reference the title or topic of the article (such as Declining Monarch Butterflies), name of the author or source (i.e, Globe and Mail), and the date the article was published.]*

* In your [DATE] article [ARTICLE TITLE], columnist [NAME OF REPORTER/COLUMNIST] states [MAIN POINT OF ARTICLE].
* The European Union, which includes countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, ruled to impose a ban on all outdoor use of neonicotinoid (neonics) products on April 27 2018, citing the risks they pose to bee and plant populations. Neonics also have been proven to hurt bird [populations](https://news.usask.ca/articles/research/2017/u-of-s-research-reveals-controversial-insecticides-are-toxic-to-songbirds.php), especially aerial insectivores like the swallows that are suffering significant declines. It is time that the federal government takes the necessary steps to join these nations in banning these destructive chemicals.

*[If you responding to a current issue, state that you are responding to the issue and where the issue is being addressed. State your points here. Include facts, references, or research here to establish credibility. Keep length in mind.]*

* Neonicotinoids or “Neonics” are a variety of pesticide that have been used for decades in order to kill unwanted pests and insects. However, neonics have been proven to persist in ground water, plant life and surface water around agricultural projects, and have been linked to serious environmental concerns.
* Researchers have discovered Neonics link to bee colony collapse disorder. This disorder led to the devastation of 44% of hives belonging to beekeepers in the United States from 2015-2016.
* Insects and pollinators are not the only species being affected by Neonics. These products have insidious effects on bird populations. The Dutch centre for field ornithology and birdlife in the Netherlands found that areas where water contained a high concertation of Neonic products, bird populations tended to decline by an average of 3.5% annually. In Canada, Scientists Dr. Bridget Sturchbury, Dr. Christie Morrissey Dr. Margaret Eng have proven a connection between impaired navigation in songbirds and exposure to neonics.
* Birds are being exposed to Neonics through eating treated seeds, or insects exposed to the pesticide, which can cause migratory disorientation, reproductive issues and emaciation. Many insects eaten by birds such as swallows and swifts die when exposed to Neonic insecticides, reducing food supplies for these birds. Canada’s swallow populations have dropped by nearly 60% over the past 40 years, with some species declining by 90%.
* The effects of Neonic pollution will only increase if the federal government and agricultural communities do not take positive action. As it stands, researchers have detected at least one Neonic product in a staggering 91% of wetlands and 44% of cropland in Canada.

[*Include a CALL TO ACTION: asking readers to follow up with some activity, such as joining in calling on policymakers to address the issue.]*

* We need to ensure the federal government works with the provinces, agricultural communities and stake holders to:
  + Ban any and all use of Neonic products without delay. The half measures the government has put in place have not been effective in protecting our environment or wildlife.

A ban of neonics will help:

* + Ensure the pollution from Neonic pesticides does not continue to spread throughout our ecologically vital wetlands and croplands, and
  + Safeguard our bird and bee populations from the harmful effects of Neonic products, which can have devastating on both populations.

Individuals can take more personal action and help:

* + Continue to pressure pesticide companies and retailers into joining organizations such as Lowe's, Home Depot, Walmart, and Costco in eliminating the use of Neonics in commercial products.
  + Ensure that all alternatives are safer, less persistent and do not have impact our birds, bees or life systems.

[*End with a strong, positive STATEMENT in support of your case*]

* In 2018 let us ensure that Canada follows the example of The European Union in banning this harmful chemical.
* Please go to [Nature Canada’s website](http://naturecanada.ca/) to sign our petition on the banning of all Neonic products in Canada. The federal government is currently reviewing Neonics but has only introduced half measures that still allow the wide usage of this toxic insecticide. Make sure to let them know your frustration and help push our agricultural practices in a more ecofriendly direction.

Sincerely,

*Signature*

Name of writer