

## **Hawaiian Yellow-faced bee** by Keith Roberts, MCBH Natural Resources Manager

The Hawaiian archipelago is home to many endemic plants and animals. Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH) is home to many endemic species, including a Hawaiian yellow-faced bee (*Hylaeus anthracinus*). These are the only bees native to Hawaii and are largely unknown to many people due to their small size and declining population numbers. The bees are approximately 6mm long (similar in size to a large ant). They are named for the distinguishing yellow mark located between the eyes of the male bee. Females are entirely black and can be distinguished from males by the black hairs on the end of the abdomen and mandible.

These small, solitary invertebrates are pollinators that contribute to the reproductive success of Hawaii's native plants such as Naupaka, 'Ilima, 'Akoko, and Naio. These plants can all be found on the shorelines of all MCBH beaches. Additionally, protecting this vegetation not only preserves Yellow-faced bee habitat but also helps to slow the progression of shoreline erosion.

On MCBH, yellow-faced bees nest in coastal areas and will sometimes inhabit dry shrublands. The bee makes its nest in the small cavities of decaying wood, openings of plants, and holes of coral fragments that have washed ashore. So, if you see a live plants, coral fragments, shells, or driftwood near the beach—leave them be; they could be home to a Hawaiian yellow-faced bee!

For more about the yellow-face bee, visit:

<https://www.mcbhawaii.marines.mil/Portals/114/WebDocuments/IEL/Environmental/NaturalResources/HawaiianYellow-facedBeeConservationManagement.pdf>

**Activity:** If you were a yellow-faced bee, where would you live? Kids of all ages: Draw a potential yellow-faced bee home and post it with #YFBeeMCBH. Random drawings for prizes will be held when social distancing measures have been lifted.

Mālama i ka 'āina—care for and live in harmony with the land. Earth Day every day.