

ASIAN HORNET WEEK 10 – 16 September 2018

The non-native Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*, is a serious predator of European native insects. It is a risk to all pollinators, but particularly to honey bees, which are the primary managed pollinators of crops in the UK, and it is a significant threat to commercial and hobby beekeeping.

Native to Asia, in 2004 the Asian hornet was inadvertently introduced into France, became established and spread rapidly into neighbouring countries. It was found in the Channel Islands in 2016.

One nest was found in the UK in 2016 and one in 2017; both were destroyed but other single insects have been reported.

The British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) has designated 10 – 16 September as Asian Hornet Week. One Asian hornet nest can produce many young queens at this time of year, which mate and hibernate over winter before developing new nests the following spring. Destroying nests before the new queens are produced and mated, or finding hibernating queens, will help to reduce the risk of the Asian hornet establishing in the UK. It is hoped that raising awareness of the risk will encourage people to be on the look-out and report any sightings.

Hibernating queens could enter the UK in shipments of goods, or in cars, caravans, camping equipment or boats.

The Asian hornet is also known as the Yellow-legged hornet, as it has distinctive yellow-tipped legs. It is mostly dark brown/black, but has a yellow/orange band towards the back end of the abdomen. **Its colouring is very different from the native European hornet, *Vespa crabro*, which is not a serious predator of honey bees and is a beneficial insect in UK biodiversity.**

For further information and an identification poster please visit www.nonnativespecies.org or www.nationalbeeunit.com

An excellent Asian Hornet Watch app is free to download from the Apple and Android app stores and includes photos and information.

If you think you have seen an Asian hornet please take a picture and email it with details of where you saw it and your contact details to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk, or use the Asian Hornet Watch app to send a picture and a location via GPS in the app straight to the Non-native Species Secretariat.

Do not approach a nest. Asian hornets do not generally sting without provocation but may attack in a group if the nest is threatened or disturbed.

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<https://dorchesterandweymouthbka.com>