

News story

Asian hornet: UK sightings

The latest updates on Asian hornet sightings in the UK in 2019.

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From:

[Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#) and [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#)



Asian hornet

The [Asian hornet \(*Vespa velutina*\)](#) is a species of hornet which is not native to the UK. It is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than other hornets or bees.

However, they do pose a risk to honey bees and pollinating insects. This is why we are keen to stop this insect establishing in the UK, and why you should report suspected sightings.

When a sighting is confirmed, experts from the National Bee Unit (NBU) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) will work quickly to find and destroy any active nests in the area.

Current situation

On 3 July 2019, the first UK sighting of an Asian hornet of the year was confirmed in [New Milton, Hampshire](#). It was spotted by a member of the public and reported via the Asian Hornet Watch App. This was the first confirmed sighting since October 2018.

Since 2016, there have been a total of 14 confirmed sightings of the Asian hornet in England and six nests have been destroyed.

Nine of these sightings occurred in 2018; an individual hornet in Lancashire (April) and Hull, three in Cornwall, two in Hampshire, one in Surrey (all September) and one in Kent (October).

The risk of an active Asian hornet nest being found in the UK is negligible during the colder winter months, but higher during the summer. Asian hornets have already been spotted this year in countries close to the UK (France and Jersey) and a risk remains at all times of year of accidentally transporting an Asian hornet when returning to the UK from abroad.

It is crucial you report any possible sightings so our experts can take quick and effective action to eradicate Asian hornets.

Nicola Spence, Chief Plant Health Officer, said:

By ensuring we are alerted to possible sightings as early as possible, we can take swift and effective action to stamp out the threat posed by Asian hornets.

While the Asian hornet poses no greater risk to human health than a bee, we recognise the damage they can cause to honey bee colonies and other beneficial insects.

Please continue to look out for any Asian hornets and if you think you've spotted one, report your sighting through the Asian hornet app or online.

How to spot an Asian hornet

Asian hornets:

- have a dark brown or black velvety body
- have a yellow or orange band on fourth segment of abdomen
- have yellow tipped legs
- are smaller than the native European hornet
- are not active at night

Guidance on [how to identify an Asian hornet](#).

How to report an Asian hornet

If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet you should report this using the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app:

- [Asian Hornet Watch app for iPhone](#)
- [Asian Hornet Watch app for android](#)

You can also report sightings by email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

Please include information on location, date and number of Asian hornets you have seen. Please also include a photo if you can to help our experts identify the insect.

Alternatively, you can fill out an [online report form](#)

If you find a nest, don't try to remove it yourself – it can be dangerous and should only be done by experts.

What to do if you keep bees

If you keep bees, you should:

Read our guidance on the Asian Hornet

- [Asian hornet information pages of BeeBase](#)

- [Asian hornet ID sheet](#)
- [Asian hornet poster](#)
- ['How to obtain a sample' guidance](#)

Monitor for its arrival

Use [monitoring traps](#) in your apiaries. Watch our video on how to make a monitoring trap:

For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-uk-sightings-in-2018>