

News story: Asian hornet identified in Devon

The [National Bee Unit](#) has confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet at an apiary near Woolacombe in Devon.

The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than a bee. However, they do pose a risk to honey bees.

This is the first confirmed sighting since last year, when a nest was discovered in the Tetbury area in Gloucestershire. That Asian hornet incursion was successfully contained by bee inspectors who promptly tracked down and destroyed the nest.

Work to identify, destroy and remove any nests is already underway, which includes:

- setting up a surveillance zone around North Devon
- opening a local control centre to coordinate the response
- deploying bee inspectors across the area who will use infrared cameras and traps to track hornets and locate any nests
- readying nest disposal experts who will use pesticides to kill the hornets and destroy any nests

Nicola Spence, Defra Deputy Director for Plant and Bee Health, said:

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. That's why we are taking swift and robust action to locate and destroy any nests in the Devon area following this confirmed sighting.

Following the successful containment of the Asian hornet incursion in Gloucestershire last year, we have a well-established protocol in place to eradicate them and control any potential spread.

We remain vigilant across the country, working closely with the National Bee Unit and their nationwide network of bee inspectors.

A local control centre will be opened this week in North Devon and bee inspectors from APHA National Bee Unit will be carrying out surveillance and

monitoring initially in a 1-2 km radius around the initial sighting.

They will be supported by nest disposal experts who will use an approved pesticide to destroy any hornets and remove any nests.

The free [Asian Hornet Watch](#) reporting app, launched last March and downloaded 6500 times already, allows people to quickly and easily report possible sightings of the invasive species and send pictures of suspect insects to experts at the National Bee Unit.

- The cost of eradication on private land will be met by [APHA](#).
- Anyone who believes they have found a nest should not go near it and report it using the [Asian Hornet Watch](#) app which is available to download from the [Apple](#) and [Android](#) app stores.
- The hornet found near Woolacombe is currently undergoing both DNA testing at the [National Bee Unit](#) in North Yorkshire to help establish how it arrived in the UK.
- Members of the public can also report sightings by email to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk with a photo or on the Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat [website](#).
- The Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat is a joint venture between Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government to tackle the threat of invasive species. More information can be found on their [website](#).
- For details on the appearance of an Asian hornet please can be found on [Bee Base](#) guide or the [non-native species identification guide](#).