

# Asian hornet: UK sightings

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 single hornets pose 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.

There have also been reports in other countries of Asian hornets becoming aggressive when their nests are disturbed. If you find a nest, don't try to remove it yourself – it can be dangerous and should only be done by experts.

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

The latest case of Asian hornet was confirmed near Christchurch, Dorset on 1 October 2019. Two nests have subsequently been destroyed. This follows earlier confirmed sightings south west of Ashford in Kent on 9 September 2019 and the Tamworth area of Staffordshire on 2 September 2019, where a nest was subsequently located and destroyed. Earlier in the year a single hornet was confirmed in New Milton, Hampshire. In all cases the hornets were spotted and reported by a member of the public.

Since 2016, there have been a total of 17 confirmed sightings of the Asian hornet in England and nine nests have been destroyed.

## 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:

You can also report sightings by email: [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto: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**

#### **Monitor for its arrival**

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

Watch our [video on how to make a monitoring trap](#)

### **Ensure your BeeBase records are up to date with apiary locations**

We encourage you to update your apiary records online and record if you have set Asian Hornet traps.

### **Report any suspect sightings**

If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet you should report this using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch', by filling out an [online report form](#) or by emailing [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk).

## **Visiting countries where Asian hornet is widespread**

The Asian hornet is native to China but arrived in Europe in 2004 and is now widespread in parts of France, Spain, the Channel Islands and Portugal.

It presents no greater risk to human health than a bee so there is no need for you to take extra precautions in these countries.

However, there have been cases where Asian hornets have been found in bags or camping equipment of travellers returning from those countries, particularly in spring and late autumn.

Before returning to the UK you should check your luggage, especially if it's been kept outside during your trip. If you do spot an Asian hornet on your return to the UK you should report it with the dates and places you went on holiday, and ideally a photo of the insect.

## Recent confirmed sightings and announcements – 2019

- Christchurch, Dorset – confirmed 10 October, nest destroyed
- Christchurch, Dorset – confirmed 1 October 2019 – nest destroyed
- Ashford, Kent – confirmed 9 September 2019 – single hornet captured
- Tamworth area, Staffordshire – confirmed 2 September 2019 – nest destroyed
- [New Milton, Hampshire](#) – confirmed 3 July 2019 – single hornet captured

## Confirmed sightings in 2018

- Dungeness, Kent – confirmed 15 October 2018 – single hornet captured
- Guildford, Surrey – confirmed 28 September 2018 – single dead hornet
- Brockenhurst, Hampshire – confirmed 26 September 2018 – nest destroyed
- [New Alresford, Hampshire](#) – confirmed 24 September 2018 – nest destroyed
- [Fowey, Cornwall](#) – confirmed 20 September 2018 – nest destroyed
- [Hull, Yorkshire](#) – confirmed 9 September 2018 – single dead hornet
- [Liskeard, Cornwall](#) – confirmed 7 September 2018 – single dead hornet
- [Fowey, Cornwall](#) – confirmed 3 September 2018 – nest destroyed
- [Bury, Lancashire](#) – confirmed 13 April 2018 – single hornet sighted with photograph