



The Asian Hornet – *Vespa velutina*

The following release is based on information supplied by Defra on Friday 23 September 2016:

The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) was found by a beekeeper in the Tetbury area last week and other beekeepers in the immediate area have since seen hornets hawking in front of their hives. A 20 km incident zone has been imposed by Defra and the National Bee Unit (NBU) is currently locating the nest. If they find it they will destroy it. Fortunately the NBU have been expecting the arrival of the Asian hornet for some time and had a contingency plan ready to go.

The NBU has caught several hornets and examined their genetics; it appears that these hornets are related to those in France. So they have not come in from China or another country. This is important because they are obviously breeding from quite a small genetic pool and may have been weakened from in-breeding. The issue is whether they flew directly from France to Gloucester which is considered unlikely. So they maybe in other locations already. This needs to be established. So far every hornet found has been found by a beekeeper.

The Asian hornet is a very serious pest of honey bees. As you may know, if the hornets gain access to a colony they will summon the rest of their nest mates and the colony will be overcome very quickly. Our European bees currently have no natural defences.

The NBU is checking every hive in the incident zone. But the problem is they cannot be sure they know the whereabouts of every beekeeper and every hive. So, please, if you are not already registered on BeeBase, register now. If





you are already registered, please update your entry to ensure all your apiaries are included.

Also please ensure that the beekeepers that you know are informed. Don't forget to check any wasp traps you have to see if there are hornets in them or indeed set up some new traps.

Please look at the identification sheet information at

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/downloadDocument.cfm?id=872>
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Any sighting should be reported to the non-native species team at:

alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

It is vital that beekeepers are on the alert.

BBKA 23 Sept 2016

