

20th July 2019

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASIAN HORNET ACTION TEAM (AHAT)

We must assume that the Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*) will again appear in our area. The National Bee Unit (NBU) of DEFRA lacks the manpower to chase up every sighting but they will get involved once they see a photo or a specimen confirming that there may be a nest in the neighbourhood. (Asian Hornets have restricted foraging range - only a few hundred metres.)

GBKA has appointed me as the County AHAT Coordinator - hence this document. Each branch on GBKA has an AHAT lead and our respective contact details are below:

County coordinator	Mike Forster	07866 977359	mikeforster88@googlemail.com
Cheltenham & Gloucester	Mike Forster	07866 977359	mikeforster88@googlemail.com
Cirencester& District	Denis Flavel	07900 212758	dmf5@me.com
Dean Forest	Graham Pugh	07870 619114	graham.pugh@talktalk.net
Newent	John Whitaker	01989 780738	johnmartinwhitaker@hotmail.com
North Cotswolds	Sarah Foulkes	07887 933098	sfoulkes3@btinternet.com
Stroud	Peter Lead	01453 832383	peterdawnlead@aol.com
South Cotswolds	<i>Nomination awaited</i>		

Branch preparation.

1. Each branch should maintain a list of volunteers - they don't have to be beekeepers - who would be able to recognise an Asian Hornet and who have said they would be available to give their time to double check that the sighting as reported is correct.
2. Branches are encouraged to prepare and hold a stock of hornet traps ready to deploy in the area of a sighting.

Volunteer preparation. Each volunteer should:

1. Hold a copy of the identification sheet, poster and postcard, which can be downloaded from the Asian Hornet pages of BeeBase (www.nationalbeeunit.com) or ordered from the NBU office (nbu@apha.gov.uk).
2. Download the Asian Hornet Watch app onto their smart phone.
3. Be prepared to capture a specimen - pre-prepared hornet traps, butterfly nets and jam jars (with perforated lids) are suitable implements. Note that Asian Hornets away from their nests are fairly placid; however, near their nests they can be highly defensive and the normal bee suit does not provide enough protection. Specimens should be kept alive if possible.
4. Be ready to take a photo - a smart phone is ideal as the photo can then be sent easily.

Action on getting a sighting report. Reports of sightings may come from beekeepers, from members of the public or be disseminated down the chain from the Non-Native Species Secretariat, via the NBU and the BBKA. Whichever route the report follows the first thing to do is to share the information with the county coordinator and the local AHAT lead. Remember always: the operation is on a 'need to know' basis - no point in raising panics or having hordes of well-meaning citizens trampling all over people's property. Further to that, if you need to go onto someone's land you must first get the landowner's permission, otherwise you will be trespassing.

1. Confirm the sighting, or not. The local AHAT lead should contact suitable volunteers and arrange for the area of the report to be carefully examined.
 - a. Local apiaries should be kept under observation for some hours to see whether 'hawking' is going on.
 - b. Sources of water may attract the hornets.
 - c. An attractant can be used and its position monitored.
 - d. Pre-prepared traps can be baited and deployed in the area and regularly checked.
2. If confirmed, pass the word.
 - a. Use the Asian Hornet Watch app to send the picture and location straight to the Non-native Species Secretariat and the NBU. Failing that there is an on-line recording form at www.brc.ac.uk.
 - b. Remember to keep the local AHAT lead informed - he or she will pass the word to the County Coordinator.
3. Next steps. Once the NBU has been informed, they will then take charge of the operation to find and destroy the nest. Under their direction AHATs may be invited to help find it.

Additionally, all members should register their apiaries on BeeBase so that they can receive hornet warnings from NBU.