

Cumbria Asian Hornet Team Volunteers - Newsletter



February 2024

Hope you're all well and beginning to see your bees appear in the Spring sunshine.

Firstly, There have been quite a few developments from the National Bee Unit (NBU) and BBKA this month, highlighted in the BBKA Asian Hornet Team Conference this month. As such I have decided to postpone another meeting until late March at the earliest as we digest what this means for us in Cumbria. As such there will be another newsletter, as you see and I plan to make this monthly regardless of meetings. So here it is.

BBKA Conference AHT Summary

As many of you will know, there was an Asian Hornet Conference: Saturday 17th February 2024. This year's online conference provided updates from the NBU, Kent and Jersey together with further information as to how beekeepers fit into the fight against the Asian Hornet.

Nigel Semmence: 'An Update from the NBU'

Martin Smith; eR2 Project Manager: 'Communication is the key'

Kirsteen Thorne; BBKA Outreach Officer

Alastair Christie: 'An update on Jersey and what BBKA could learn from the Jersey Experience'

Jackie Aucott: An update from Kent

Watch the recording here: <https://youtu.be/dUMk2tzaw1E>

If you access via the Kendal & South Westmorland BKA [website](#) then there's a guide to timings for the specific presentations, to save you having to watch the whole thing to see specific presentations.

Cumbria Asian Hornet Team – Current Plan

Now that there's been more clarification as to the likely roles and requirements of the BBKA AHT volunteers we can focus on the year ahead, as well as planning the future times of increased role contribution. The coordinators (myself and Piers Manson in Cumbria) will be doing just that; communicating to the BBKA and NBU as well rest of the volunteers making sure everyone involved is in the loop. It is important the all actions and communications are logged and available to all volunteers. The verifiers will be called upon to pick up on the many credible reports, contacting the reporters, verifying the report credibility, and arranging to set up bait stations to establish whether there is an AH presence in that location. Once an actual verification is confirmed then the NBU shall be notified and they, for now, will conduct the track and trace process.

This will require the volunteers to establish their availability for contact, with a clear idea of their location, this is so that the coordinators can assess the best volunteer to allocate for a given report. A given report will be sent via the AH Watch app or email to the Non Native Species Secretariat (NNSS), who will notify the NBU. The NBU in turn would be able to then send the possible sightings to the coordinators, one imagines filtering the least credible reports out. The triage method of assessment for a given report will be the main new skill for the volunteers. This can be done by a coordinator or a verifier. It would involve assessing, from initial contact with the reporter, whether the report is credible enough to spend time and resources going out to set up observation stations in the field.

Volunteer Qualification Change - BBKA

The BBKA is asking every Association to select a team of members to assist with local requests for help in identifying Asian Hornets. It is vital that all beekeepers are able to identify Asian Hornets.

Each branch or group can establish their own team so that individuals will not be asked to travel vast distances. They should establish a good communication network between each other, so that the

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nearest team member can answer a call about a potential siting and call for back up if necessary. The team will work with a co-ordinator to help identify the hornets. The co-ordinator must be recorded as an Officer on the eR2 membership database. The map below shows all Asian Hornet Co-ordinators.

The BBKA have amended their standard insurance so that members are covered for work they might do as part of an Asian Hornet Team. As with the insurance generally, this covers officers and members who are Registered, Partner or Honorary members. It does not cover 'local only' members.

The online [Asian Hornet Team Training Exercise](#) is no longer required for insurance purposes. The BBKA office will no longer inform branches of any of their members who have taken the test and there is no requirement to record it locally. The training exercise will continue to be publicly available (using the link below) primarily as an education and public awareness tool. Anyone who does the [training exercise](#) will receive a confirmation email that they have completed the test but this is purely for their own use.

Cumbria Asian Hornet Team – Specific Webpage

I personally finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the multiple sources of information and navigating around the various NNSS, BBKA and BBKA information and educational sources. As such I have attempted to create a one-stop location for all I can find with a hopefully user friendly interface so that CAHT volunteers can get a quick access to the information they need. This is mostly links but also includes downloadable material as well as standardised presentation you can use for talks and presentations around your community. Please feel free to contact me and let me know if you have any suggestions for changes or updates. It can be done quite quickly most of the time. I have piggybacked it onto the Kendal & South Westmorland BKA website for convenience but it is a separate discrete webpage for us. The URL address is: www.kendalbeekeepers.com/caht.



In Summary

Once again may I express a profound thank you to all of you who have unselfishly stepped up to the task and understood that we cannot be found wanting on this issue. Your assistance is much appreciated. Getting this process set up as soon as possible will reap huge benefits to our bees and other pollinators and save us a lot of despair later. Thank you and I'll catch up with you all soon I hope.

Andy Brown BBKA Cumbria AHT Coordinator

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Information :

<https://www.kendalbeekeepers.com/asian-hornet>

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/listing/category/asian-hornet-vespa-velutina>

Have you seen this insect? NNSS
Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*

What is it?
A highly aggressive predator of native insects that poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators. Originally from Asia, in 2004 this invasive non-native species was accidentally introduced to France where it has spread rapidly and into neighbouring countries. Since 2016 a number of sightings have been recorded in the UK.

Entirely dark body (native hornet more brown / orange)
Dark abdomen, fourth segment yellow / orange
Yellow tips to legs (native hornet has dark legs)

Slightly smaller than the native European hornet. May be confused with other species, shown below in actual size for comparison.

Asian hornet, European hornet, Median wasp, Hornet mimic hoverfly, Woodwasp

Where might I see it?
May be seen on flowering plants, around beehives, around rotting / fermenting fruit and protein, and at street markets attracted by sweet fruit and fish stalls. Active February to November across England and Wales.

Please report sightings immediately with a photo:
- with the iPhone and Android recording app: Asian Hornet Watch
- online at: noninvasivespecies.org/asianhornet
- by email: alertnonnative@oah.ac.uk

Find out more and report a sighting:

This insect stings, do not disturb an active nest.

For more information on invasive non-native species visit: noninvasivespecies.org