

Hello everyone, I am the new in post CBKA Asian (yellow legged) Hornet Coordinator.

I took on the role of coordinator last year and probably like yourselves I have taken time out to research the Asian Hornet. I didn't know much but I soon realised how serious this invasive species is to us beekeepers once I read up about the impact it has had in France, where honey producers have reported massive colony losses. Other Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Italy are experiencing significant impact as well. The hornet is also moving north into Belgium and Germany as well as having crossed the channel. A lot of good practice methodology is also coming out of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands, that has also been impacted.

### **Asian Hornet on our shores**

As for the UK, you will know that most of the activity so far has been in the South East, but sightings were confirmed last year as far north as Hull and Preston. In January this year, there was a sighting in Oswestry. What has been noticed is the link with sightings at or near distribution hubs and major road networks. These distribution hubs accommodate vehicles that travel to the EU mainland which gives AH an opportunity to quite literally hitch a ride. It goes without saying that fruit & veg distributors are part of this link.

The inference is obvious, that whilst AH Queens can fly large distances, they are opportunistic and will take advantage of vehicular traffic crossing country borders. It is therefore only a matter of time that the AH will find itself on Welsh soil.

As I type, I have had an image of a cartoon Hornet dodging customs and excise hiding in a vehicle without a passport. However of course the implication for us here in the UK is serious.

### **Wider information**

There is plenty information out there and I would encourage you to look online at such sites operated by BBKA, WBKA, Bee Base, plus the AH reporting app for smartphones. You will have read the article in the latest WBKA magazine by John Bowles, our Invasive Species Coordinator. It is vitally important that we can identify an Asian (yellow legged) Hornet from our native European Hornet and other insects, and do our bit as beekeepers to reduce the impact on our honey bees and other native pollinators.

### **Welsh activity**

Currently the WBKA is in preparation mode, because we have not any confirmed sightings in Wales.....yet. This includes spreading awareness amongst ourselves and the wider community. Efforts are being made to inform ramblers groups, gardening groups and staff of utility companies who work outside a lot as well as fruit & veg wholesalers. Warehouses used as distribution hubs are also being made aware as well as the main stream media. If you provide talks to groups, please add some info on this invasive species and promote the Asian Hornet Watch reporting App.

The WBKA is also appointing Coordinators, and recruiting Verifiers & Monitors but more on that later.

Whilst there are no 'confirmed' sightings in Wales, as I type this (13 March) there has been a notification on social media of a possible sighting on Anglesey. If this proves to be a positive sighting, BKA's will be informed.

From a local beekeeping group perspective, there are things we can do.

- Be vigilant as queens will soon emerge from hibernation. Maintain our knowledge of the AH and it's activity across the UK. You will inevitably be asked by friends, family, acquaintances & non beekeepers about the hornet and we must be able to update people.
- As hibernating Queens emerge, they will be hungry. Setting traps is a good tool in our armoury. There are several online DIY videos, but one of the better ones is the video from the APHA. Its about 15 mins long and easy to follow. All you need is a large plastic fizzy drinks bottle, a stapler and some tape. If you set a trap, please let me know where it is as we need to map out where they are.

## **Coordinators, Verifiers, Monitors**

### **Coordinator**

I am finding my way around the Coordinators App which is a dedicated App for coordinators. My role is to appoint Verifiers, mark on a map where sightings have been 'confirmed' and where traps are set and be the associations link with the WBKA on all things AH.

### **Verifiers**

If there is a reported sighting in our area, I will coordinate a response by sending out a Verifier. This is much dependant on the quality of information provided and if a photograph was taken, but essentially, a verifier may need to attend the location of the sighting and liaise with the person reporting the sighting to verify if the insect is/was an Asian Hornet.

On renewal of your membership, you were asked if you were willing to be a Verifier. Now is the time to step up, so if you are still willing to be one, please give your details to Peter McFadden before you leave tonight or contact me direct. See below.

### **Monitors**

This is a new role and is meant as a way to confirm who is monitoring traps. This maybe the same person who has set the trap but not always. All traps need to be logged and subject to regular monitoring.

As an association we need verifiers and monitors. If you are willing to step up give your details to Peter, or contact me das below.

Gary Pittaway  
07899075148.

Or message via our Facebook page