Introduction

The first Asian hornet appeared in Wallonia in 2011 and in Flanders in 2017. Since then, the species has expanded rapidly. This wasp comes from China. It hunts prey insects such as bees, flies and wasps, and it is considered an invasive alien species (IAS) harmful to insect biodiversity. In Belgium, it is monitored. The population is managed by exterminating nests.

Recognition

The Asian hornet is easy to recognize by its size and color pattern. Hornet workers are bigger than bees and wasps but smaller than the European hornet (Vespa crabro). The color of the body is distinctly dark with a single orange band on the abdomen. The legs are typically black with yellow tips.

Asian hornets (10%) are commonly confused with European hornets (69%), hoverflies (2%), lemonade wasps (2%), polliniferous wasps (1%), hornjilts (1%) and bees (<1%). Vespawatch rates 2016–2019 (N=3345).

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In France and Portugal, nest densities up to 16 nests km⁻¹ in good wasp years (cf. 2017, 2018) are not uncommon. Given the establishment of the Asian hornet is favored by temperate climate and high degree of urbanization, nest density in Belgium is expected to further increase. Awareness among citizens and consistent nest eradication are crucial elements in managing the Asian hornet. At the Vespawatch portal, you can:

- Record observations
- Learn about Asian hornet presence
- Find tips & tricks to find hornets or nests
- Learn more about the species
- Get actively involved!

How can YOU participate?

Surveillance requires many eyes on the lookout, including yours! Find out here how you can help detect an Asian hornet in the citizen science project Vespawatch. Your data will then be used for control and research. So much things to learn!

How to recognize Asian hornets?

Table 1. Number of nests discovered in months (2016 – 2019) in function of nest height above the ground. Unknown = concealed and unregistered nests.

Nest finding is the limiting factor

Asian hornet nests are well-hidden. Finding nests by “manual” searches requires experience, time and dedication. Good proxies to find the nest are the direction hornets set off with a prey and how often a hornet visits the same nest or prey resource.

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Where to find hornets?

Report your observations at www.vespawatch.be

Help us to verify records at www.iNaturalist.org and become a true observer!

Reproduce the Asian hornet attacks entailing activity and survival probability of honey bees in Western Europe. 3 Pest Sci 82, No 979-979 (2009): 979–979.