

# Asian Hornet

**Scientific name:** *Vespa velutina*  
**AKA:** Yellow-legged Hornet  
**Native to:** Asia

**Habitat:** Nests usually high in trees and man made structures, sometimes closer to the ground; hunts honey bees, other insects and also feeds on fruit and flowers.

Not easily confused with any other species. Dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs. Smaller than the native European Hornet.

Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. A number of sightings have been recorded in the UK since 2016. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, in vehicles, or in/on untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out.

A highly aggressive predator of native insects. Poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators.

**Do not disturb an active nest. Members of the public who suspect they have found an Asian Hornet should report it with a photo using the details provided in the red box at the bottom of this ID sheet.**



## Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) for comparison

- Queen up to 30mm long, worker up to 25mm long
- Legs yellow at the ends
- Dark brown / black abdomen with a yellow / orange band on 4th segment
- Head dark from above, orange from front
- Dark coloured antennae
- Entirely black velvety thorax
- Never active at night



## Similar Species

### European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)

- Queen up to 35mm long, worker up to 30mm long
- Legs brown at the ends
- Yellow abdomen marked with brown on the upper part, not banded
- Head yellow from above, yellow from front
- Yellow antennae
- Thorax black with extensive brown markings



### Giant woodwasp (*Urocerus gigas*)

- Larger than Asian hornet, female up to 45mm long
- Legs yellow
- Distinctive yellow and black banded abdomen
- Long cylindrical body unlike Asian hornet which has an obvious waist
- Long yellow antennae
- Female has an obvious long sting-like appendage (ovipositor) which it uses to lay eggs in trees

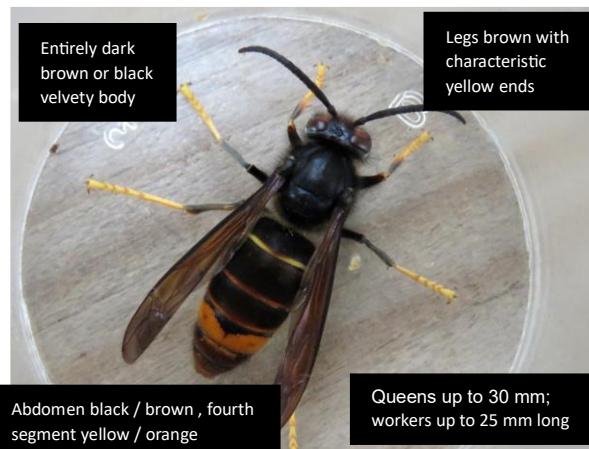


### Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*)

- Abdomen has more yellow stripes than Asian hornet
- Legs darker than Asian hornets
- Only one pair of wings (hornets and wasps have two pairs)
- Large, globular eyes



## Key ID Features



### Asian Hornet      European Hornet



Asian Hornet abdomen is almost entirely dark except for 4th abdominal segment.



## Report sightings of this species:

- with the iPhone and Android recording app: **Asian Hornet Watch**
- online at: [www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet)
- by email: [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

## For local support and help with identification contact :

- **North Hertfordshire Beekeepers Association**
- online at : [www.nhbka.org.uk/ahat](http://www.nhbka.org.uk/ahat)
- by email : [ahat@nhbka.org.uk](mailto:ahat@nhbka.org.uk)