



National
Bee Unit

National Bee Unit Wales Annual Review 2022

The 2022 Season

With the easing of Covid19 restrictions it was fantastic to once again start a beekeeping season in Wales at the Welsh Beekeepers convention in Builth Wells. The National Bee Unit was able to attend with its stand in the main trade hall, where beekeepers could ask for advice on honey bee diseases and pests, register on BeeBase and also pick up some advisory leaflets. New beekeepers could also attend the NBUs workshop on varroa management to learn more about the life cycle of varroa, monitoring techniques and chemical and non-chemical treatment methods. Beekeepers that attended the convention could attend a full lecture series and pick up a bargain from the many traders that were present.

Weather wise the season started out dry and cold with night time frosts persisting in some areas through to the end of May. This left most colonies holding their own with very few areas having any significant spring honey crops and also saw some colonies needing to be fed throughout the spring. However, an unprecedented heatwave in late June and July saw record honey yields in most areas with the average main honey crop being 51lbs per colony. Equally throughout the region many beekeepers have reported record heather honey crops this year with hives producing an average of 28lbs.



Bumper honey harvest for 2022 season.

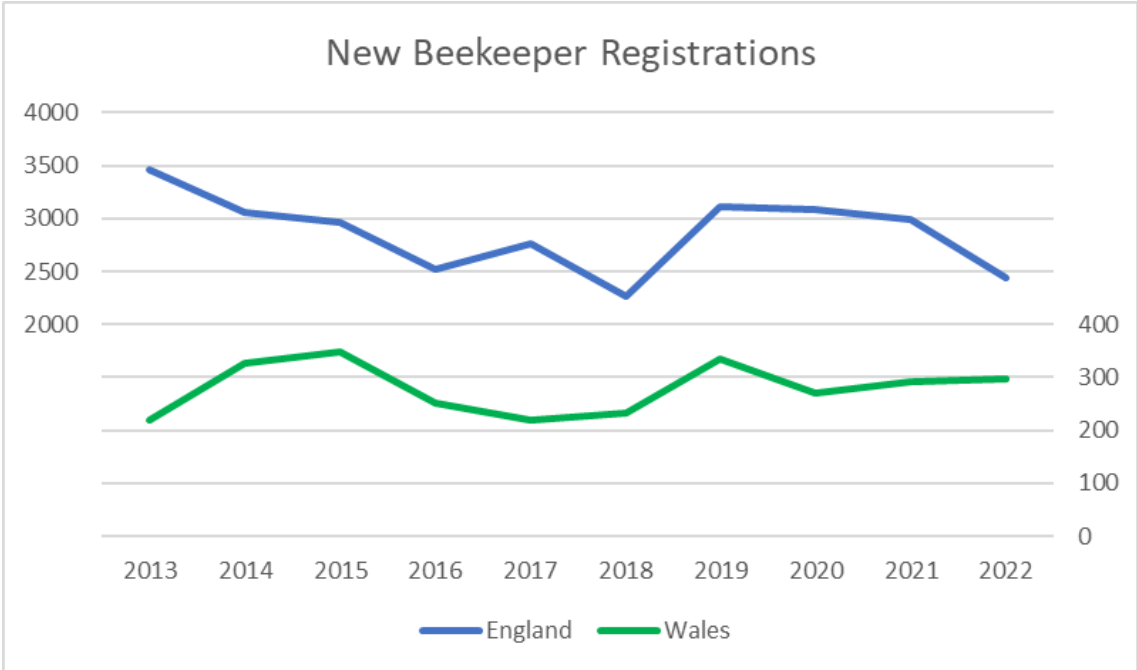


Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Asiantaeth
Iechyd Anifeiliaid
a Phlanhigion

2022 has seen the general trend for an increase in new beekeeper registrations in Wales continue, which goes against the general decline seen in the UK. It is important for beekeepers to remember that being a member of a beekeepers association or the WBKA does not mean that you are registered on BeeBase, the National Bee Units website and database. If you have been inspected by the National Bee Unit then your details will automatically be on BeeBase. If you are registered then thank you, but please keep your apiary locations updated. If you have lost your BeeBase password, there is a forgotten password link on BeeBase. You can register online (www.nationalbeeunit.com), by contacting the NBU office on 0300 3030094 / nbu@apha.gov.uk or by contacting your Seasonal Bee Inspector.

Registration is free and all your details are kept confidential. You will receive email alerts when foulbrood or exotic pests (including Asian Hornet) are found in the area of your apiaries. Your registration also benefits the wider beekeeping community by allowing inspectors to know where to look for disease or pests so that outbreaks can be quickly brought under control.



Trends in new beekeeper registration in Wales and England for the last decade (2022 data to end of October).

The NBU, BeeBase and the team in Wales

The National Bee Inspector Cristina Ruiz was on maternity leave from January and returned to the National Bee Unit in October. Her maternity leave was covered by Dhonn Atkinson the Regional Bee Inspector for the North East region. The National Bee Unit office welcomed Samantha O’Toole in June to provide programme support alongside Diane Gillibrand.

There have been some significant changes to staffing in Wales this year. The regional bee inspector Frank Gellatly left the NBU in March this year and was replaced by Maggie Gill who had been a seasonal bee inspector in South Pembrokeshire and West Carmarthenshire since 2014. Maggie’s vacancy was filled by George Tonge who is based in Llanelli. After seven years with the National Bee Unit Tony Davis, the inspector

for Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham retired at the end of the 2021 season and was replaced by Tom Birch. 2022 also saw the recruitment of Liz Childerley in North Powys.

You can use the post code search on the contacts page of BeeBase to check for your local SBI, who can be contacted on the numbers below from the beginning of April until the end of September. During the winter period of October to March please direct all enquiries to the RBI.

Regional Bee Inspector	Area	Contact
Maggie Gill	Wales	07979 119373
Seasonal Bee Inspectors	Area	Contact
Vacancy	Anglesey, N Gwynedd & Conwy	
Tom Birch	Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham	07796 021642
Liz Childerley	South Gwynedd	07867 180968
Vacancy	Ceredigion	
Shane Jones	Powys	07827 552312
Chris Welton	N Pembrokeshire, SW Ceredigion	07900 166143
George Tonge	S Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire	07769 643138
Paul Davies	Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf. Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend	07557 566228
Edmund Thomas	Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent	07385 930914
Daniel Baxter	Monmouthshire	07771 038646

Beekeeper and hive numbers

There are currently 3,919 beekeepers in Wales registered on BeeBase. Between them they have 24,168 colonies in 5,512 apiaries, which is an average of 6 colonies per beekeeper and 4.4 colonies per apiary. These figures are relatively static compared with last year but show an overall slight increase in the number of colonies.

Almost 9,000 beekeepers updated their details on BeeBase during the 2021 hive count. There are currently more than 46,000 beekeepers registered on BeeBase, meaning that around 20% participated. The Hive Count provides a very useful indication of the number of managed colonies in the UK and helps to ensure that BeeBase records are kept up to date. Information about numbers and location of hives is very important for the National Bee Unit and Scottish Government inspectors in terms of preparing and planning for outbreaks of disease and exotic pests. Please take the time to complete the 2022 hive count which will go live on the 1st of November and finishes on the 31st of December.

Inspections

This year Welsh Seasonal Bee Inspectors visited a total 876 apiaries and inspected 5205 colonies and assisted their colleagues in England where staffing was an issue.

Inspectors have also carried out 11 honey samples for the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and attended several reports of poisonings. In all cases these colony deaths were attributed to either parasitic mite syndrome (PMS) caused by varroa or chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV).

Bee health days

The lifting of Covid19 restrictions saw the return of bee health days, which are our primary method of beekeeper training. This year sessions focused more on the practicalities of inspecting a colony for disease, and SBIs enjoyed the opportunity to lead apiary based sessions.

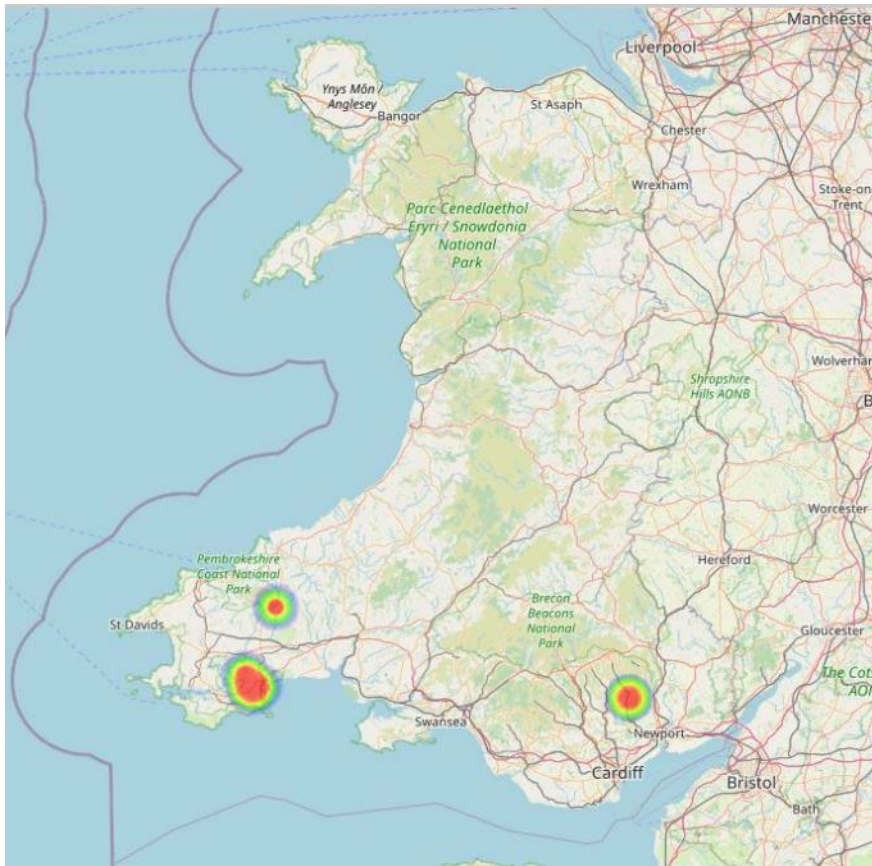


Pembrokeshire association bee health day apiary session.

Disease and Pests

Notifiable diseases: European Foulbrood (EFB) and American Foulbrood (AFB)

This season foulbrood was diagnosed in 31 apiaries, and this was the first season when foulbrood was found in all inspection areas of Wales. AFB continues to be an issue in the south of Wales, and incidences of EFB were widespread.

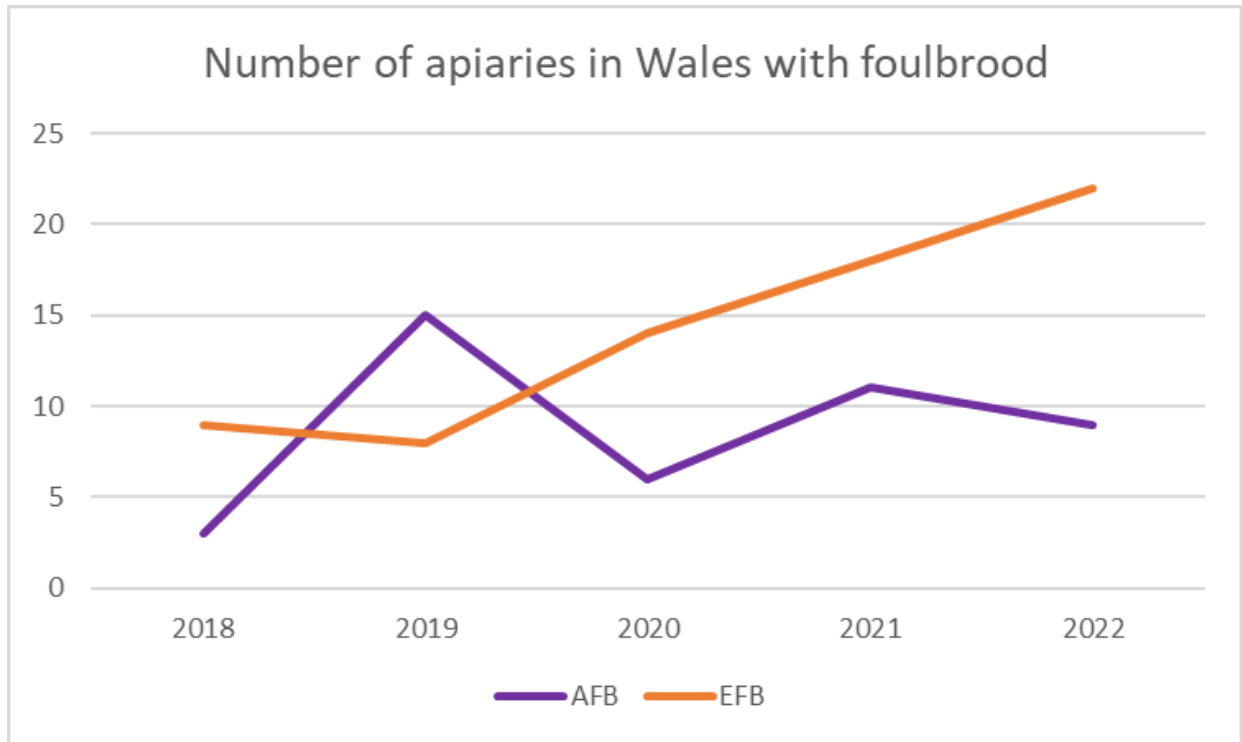


American foulbrood outbreaks 2022.



European foulbrood outbreaks 2022.

Number of apiaries in Wales with foulbrood (2018 – 2022)



As you will see from the graph levels of EFB in Wales are continuing to increase year on year. Whereas previously foulbrood had been largely confined to mid and south Wales 2022 has seen several cases of EFB in north Wales. It is important to do regular bee disease inspections of your colonies in the active beekeeping season and contact your local Inspector if you have any concerns.

Further details on the distribution of disease in Wales can be found on the disease incidence pages of BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com.



Classic AFB ropiness test.



Contorted larvae with EFB

Varroa

In order to maintain strong vigorous colonies, the NBU advice is to monitor and control Varroa appropriately. Control can be achieved by using biotechnical methods and authorised products as directed. Varroa treatments should be targeted before colonies start to produce their 'winter' bees but monitoring of Varroa levels throughout the season will help determine whether an earlier treatment is required.

Varroa acts as a vector for viruses which will reduce the longevity of the bees and so impact on the foraging capability of colonies during the summer. Hives treated too late in the season may result in winter bees being affected by viruses or they may be weakened by the Varroa mites feeding on them. This may lead to colony mortality in the winter or early spring.

This year the Varroa treatments Bayvarol and PolyVar Yellow are no longer permitted for use in the UK. Formic Pro is also not now authorised for usage with supers present and if a honey super remains on the hive during treatment that honey may not be used for human consumption. The list of those registered and approved for use by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is available on their [website](#) together with the 'Summary of Product Characteristics' giving full details of use. For the full list, select 'Bees' on the drop-down list of species in the product search link.

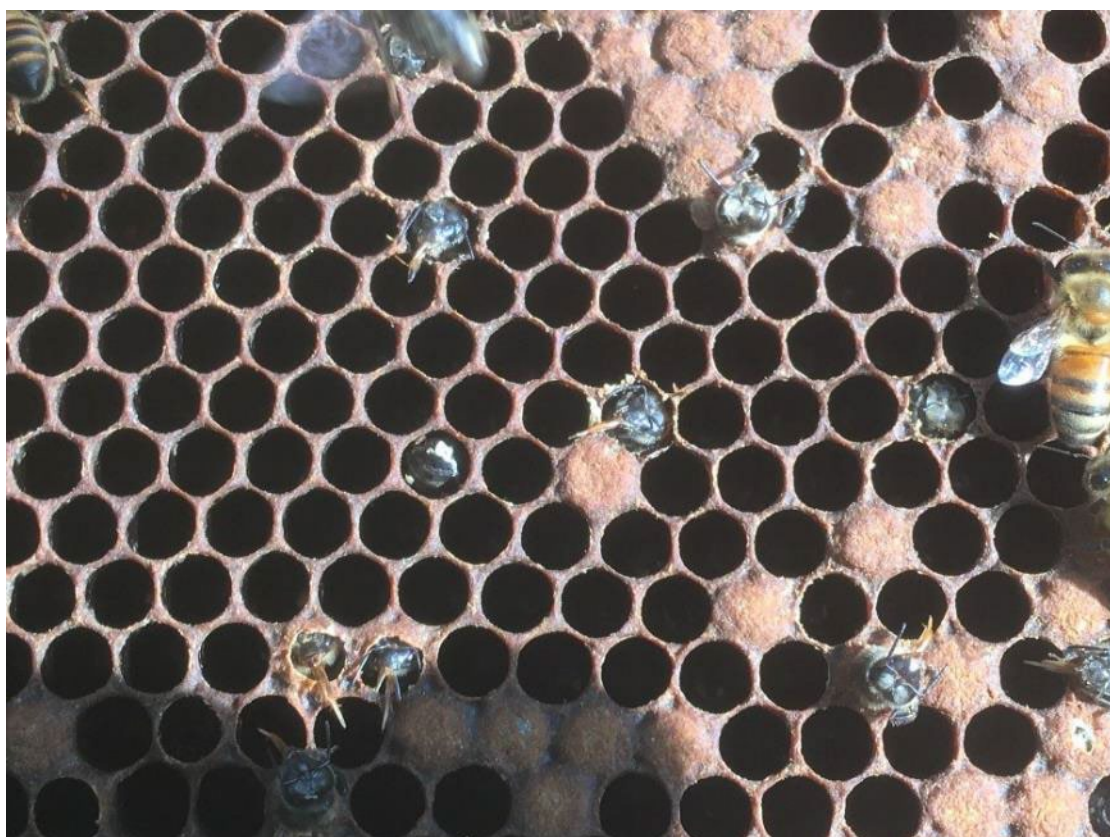
To avoid Varroa mites becoming resistant to specific chemicals it is good policy to rotate your treatments on a regular basis.

There's a legal requirement that the use of any treatments is recorded, and these records must be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Full details can be found on this link -

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=110>

BeeBase has pdf links to numerous free fact sheets including the 'Managing Varroa' advisory leaflet.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>



Collapsed colony - typical signs of late-stage Parasitic Mite Syndrome (Varroosis)

Exotic Pest Surveillance

As well as NBU inspectors carrying out specific exotic pest surveillance inspections (for Small Hive Beetle and Tropilaelaps mites), we also have a group of volunteer beekeepers who have apiaries near risk points and who specifically monitor their honeybee colonies for these exotic pest species on behalf of the NBU. These 'Voluntary Sentinel Apiary' (VSA) holders represent a valuable front-line defence against exotic pest incursion.

Risk points include freight ports, plant importers, airports, crude hive product importers, honey and queen importers. The distribution of VSAs both near risk points and at random sites maximises the likelihood of early pest detection. VSA holders are provided with a monitoring and sampling kit and regularly examine their colonies according to standard protocols. Samples of hive debris are tested twice in each season for the presence of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) and Tropilaelaps mites.

We are always looking for new recruits and would be happy to hear from any beekeepers who would like to join the scheme. In addition, by agreement with the beekeeper, NBU inspectors monitor selected 'enhanced sentinel apiaries' 3 times each season near each of the 4 main freight ports in Wales. This is due to the higher risk of an exotic pest incursion at these locations. These are Milford Haven, Port Talbot, Holyhead and Newport in order of tonnage handled.

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrathorax*)

This year has seen continued low levels of confirmed Asian Hornet sightings in the UK with just one Asian Hornet nest found by NBU inspectors in a sycamore tree in the Rayleigh area of Essex on Friday 30th of September, which was subsequently destroyed. This followed reports from a beekeeper in the area who had identified Asian Hornets entering their greenhouse where they were rendering wax. The nest was large, approximately 40cm in diameter, local beekeepers were made aware through the Asian Hornet Teams (AHTs) and monitoring has continued in the area.

Single Asian hornets were also photographed and reported via the Asian hornet watch app in Chelmsford in Essex and Dover in Kent. No further insects were seen but local Asian Hornet Teams have been alerted and are continuing to observe forage and monitor insects in the area



Chelmsford Asian hornet.



Rayleigh Asian hornet nest being held by RBI Dan Etheridge.

The WBKA website now has a 'Report an Asian Hornet sighting in Wales' page with an interactive map that gives details of the local associations' Asian Hornet Co-ordinators, they are trained in identifying Asian hornets and to have an understanding of the lifecycle and foraging habits. Please see <http://www.wbka.com/asian-hornet-reporting/> We are encouraging everyone to:

- download the free Asian Hornet Watch iPhone or Android app
- familiarise yourself with what the hornets and similar insects look like
- keep a look out on late summer flowering plants such as ivy where the hornets (and other insects) forage on the flowers.
- report suspect sightings using the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app, or by filling out an online report form, or by emailing alernonnative@ceh.ac.uk .

We in Wales are currently at the northern edge of the Asian hornet's European range and by working together hope to keep this invasive species at bay and protect our nation's important pollinators.

Imports and exports of honey bees

Third Country rules now apply to import and export trade between the UK and EU member states. Movements of honey bees from Great Britain to Northern Ireland are treated as exports and so are also subject to these rules. Import rules do not apply to movements of honey bees from Northern Ireland to GB.

Imports

Honey bees imported from a Third Country must have an appropriate Export Health Certificate (EHC). The health certificate must be issued by the Third Country's

Competent Authority or their Official Certifier. Currently only the import of queens (in cages with attendant workers) is permitted under Third Country rules, except from New Zealand where the import of packages of bees is also permitted.

Importers must notify all imports in advance via the IPAFFS system. From 1st November 2022, the health certificate for imports from EU countries must be uploaded onto IPAFFS (Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System) so that it can be viewed online. There is no longer a requirement for the original paper EHC document to accompany the consignment. Original documents will remain valid but, by providing an original document, this does not remove the requirement to upload an electronic version.

Imports from countries other than EU member states must enter via a Border Control Point (BCP). For now, imports from EU member states will continue to be checked at destination by a Bee Inspector on a risk basis; this approach is expected to change in 2023, with the exact date to be confirmed.

Exports

If you intend to export bees, you must ensure that the destination country permits imports from GB and that you can comply with their import conditions. It is the exporter's responsibility to do this.

If you export your bees to any country without the correct certification, the consignment may be rejected/destroyed by the destination country. If the consignment required an inspection prior to export, the NBU would not be able to issue a certificate retrospectively.

From January 2022, Export Health Certificates for exports to EU countries must be signed by an Official Veterinarian (OV). For countries outside the EU, whether an OV is required to sign the EHC is determined by the authorities in the country of destination, so it is important for the exporter to check the requirements with them.

Exporting to EU countries

Only queen bees can be exported to EU countries. To export queen bees, you must obtain an Export Health Certificate and arrange for it to be signed by an OV. The OV must carry out a health inspection at the apiary before the certificate can be signed, and exporters should expect that there will be a charge for the services of an OV. The health certificate template can be found on GOV.UK, along with Notes for Guidance and information on how to contact an OV.

The OV will confirm whether a National Bee Unit inspector also needs to be present to support the OV at the health inspection. There is no separate charge for a bee inspector to be present.

The OV can find information about how to contact a Bee Inspector on BeeBase or contact the National Bee Unit at (nbu@apha.gov.uk). For exports to EU countries, a signed health certificate is valid for 10 days.

To keep up to date with the latest guidance on importing and exporting live honey bees, please visit the following link <https://nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

Finally

I would like to thank the Wales SBIs for all of their hard work this season and for all the help and support they gave me during my first season as RBI. I would also like to thank

the team for their hard work and dedication to improving and maintaining Bee Health across Wales.

I'd like to wish you all a successful and trouble free season next year and please remember the NBU are here to help <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/>

Maggie.

Maggie Gill. BSc (Hon). MSc.

Telephone/ Ffôn: [07979 119373](tel:07979119373) | Email/ Epost: margaret.gill@apha.gov.uk

Regional Bee Inspector - Wales | Arolygydd Gwenyn Rhanbarthol - Cymru

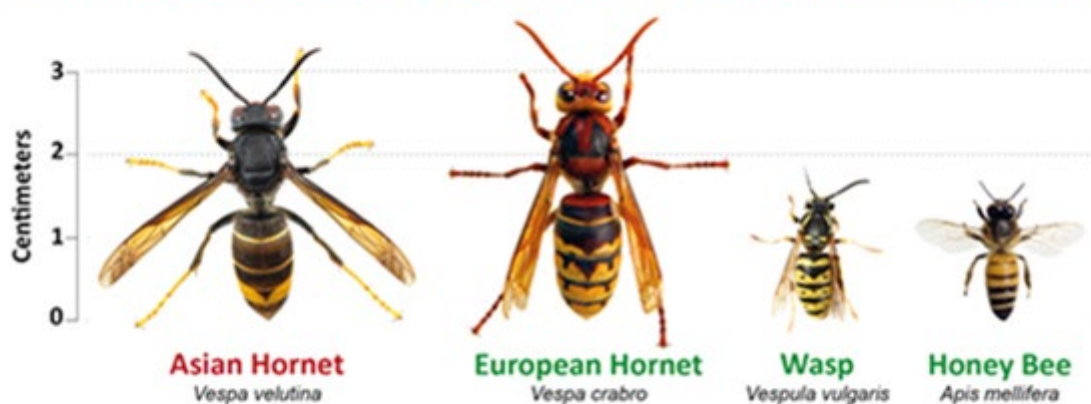
**National Bee Unit | Uned Gwenyn Cenedlaethol
Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) | Asiantaeth Iechyd Anifeiliaid a Phlanhigion**

National Bee Unit Website (BeeBase)/ Gwefan: www.nationalbeeunit.com

Address/ Cyferiad: National Bee Unit, APHA, Room 11G03, York Biotech Campus, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ

[BeeBase](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

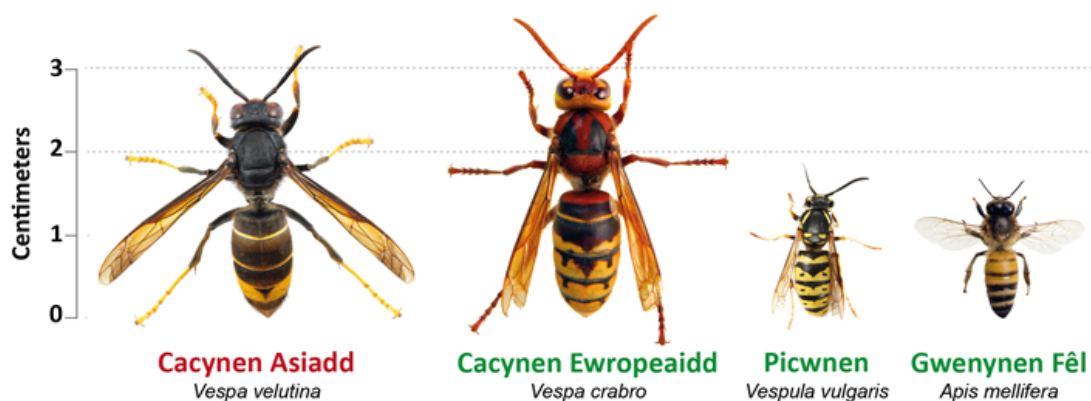
Think you've seen an Asian Hornet? Report it!



Report through the Asian Hornet Watch app or www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport



Meddwl eich bod wedi gweld Cacynen Asiaidd?



Cofnodwch hyn trwy'r app 'Asian Hornet watch' neu www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport



 Asiantaeth Iechyd Anifeiliaid a Phlanhigion

[APHA Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#)

OGL

© Crown copyright 2022

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.3. To view this licence visit

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/ or email

PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.