



National Bee Unit

South Eastern Region Annual Report 2016

Covering: London, Kent, Surrey & Sussex

Out with the Old and in with the New

In summer 2016 the South East Region welcomed two new Seasonal Bee Inspectors to the team, Hilary Hayward and Mark Patterson. Hilary has been looking after the beekeepers of West Sussex, and Mark commenced work in the Greater London area, south of the river. Adjustment of other inspecting areas meant north of the Thames is now covered by Brian Mc Callum, whilst Kent and East Sussex have been ably managed by Kay Wreford and Michael Cooper.

Yet more changes are to come in the 2017 season; Jonathan Brookhouse has decided to leave the inspectorate and give his gas gun a well-earned rest after 4 years of thoughtful and effective wielding in the Surrey area. His area (and I suspect his gas gun) will be taken up next year by Hilary, leaving a gap in West and East Sussex for a seasonal inspector, which I hope to step back into.

I feel the Bee Inspectorate will be more effectively served by my reversion to “hands-on” field work by taking my “hands-off” the office work. Recruitment for a new Regional Bee Inspector for the South East will commence in the New Year, and I will endeavour to make the handover process as smooth as possible.

The 2016 Season

The mild weather of November and December 2015 continued into January 2016. Checking the hives became a soggy business for those affected by localised flooding in the South East. Temperatures were higher than average for the time of year and brought narcissus into bloom, whilst autumn daisies were still in flower. From the bees point of view these mild temperatures meant that colonies were using up stores far faster than expected as activity levels were still high. Varroa levels were also found to be higher than normal in the spring, as mite levels had continued to increase after late summer treatments. In some cases, winter oxalic acid treatments were not able to work as effectively as normal, and colonies were unfortunately lost. Towards the end of April the Bee Unit sent out advice that in some areas colony food levels were getting very low, and directed beekeepers to check their colonies by hefting, and if necessary to make up feed. <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

Those colonies that did winter successfully were then faced with a further challenge by the erratic weather of May. With few consecutive days of good weather, some queens were poorly mated (or did not mate at all) resulting in long gaps before the appearance of eggs. The ensuing relief of some beekeepers unfortunately turned to disappointment when they subsequently found drone laying queens.



Foulbrood Finds in 2016

Below is a table of the foulbrood finds in the South East Region for 2016. I would like to remind you to refresh your knowledge of the signs and symptoms of both American and European.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=7> Even if you are still unsure whether you have foulbrood after consulting the literature or an experienced beekeeper, please make the effort to send a photograph via email to your local inspector, (see their contact details below) and they will respond as quickly as possible.

Foulbrood in South Eastern England in 2016

COUNTY	10 km square Foulbrood found	Area name	Number of Positive Diagnoses	Month Found	AFB/EFB
East Sussex	TQ41	N.E.LEWES	3	AUGUST	EFB
East Sussex	TQ51	N.HAILSHAM	1	JUNE	EFB
East Sussex	TQ51	N.HAILSHAM	1	AUGUST	EFB
East Sussex	TQ53	S. W. TUN. WELLS	1	APRIL	EFB
East Sussex	TQ53	S. W. TUN. WELLS	2	JUNE	EFB
Greater London	TQ19	HATCH END/ STANMORE	1	OCTOBER	EFB
Greater London	TQ26	EPSOM & SUTTON	3	JUNE	AFB
Greater London	TQ28	N.W.LONDON	1	AUGUST	EFB
Greater London	TQ29	BARNET & FINCHLEY	1	MAY	EFB
East Sussex	TQ41	N.E.LEWES	3	AUGUST	EFB
East Sussex	TQ51	N.HAILSHAM	1	JUNE	EFB
East Sussex	TQ51	N.HAILSHAM	1	AUGUST	EFB
East Sussex	TQ53	S. W. TUN. WELLS	1	APRIL	EFB
East Sussex	TQ53	S. W. TUN. WELLS	2	JUNE	EFB
Greater London	TQ19	HATCH END/ STANMORE	1	OCTOBER	EFB
Greater London	TQ26	EPSOM & SUTTON	3	JUNE	AFB
Greater London	TQ28	N.W.LONDON	1	AUGUST	EFB
Greater London	TQ29	BARNET & FINCHLEY	1	MAY	EFB
Kent	TQ95	WICHLING/ EASTLING	4	JUNE	EFB

Kent	TQ95	WICHLING/ EASTLING	5	JULY	EFB
Kent	TQ95	WICHLING/ EASTLING	1	AUGUST	EFB
Kent	TR25	WINGHAM/ RATLING	4	SEPTEMBER	EFB
Kent	TR26	HOATH/ STOURMOUTH	1	SEPTEMBER	EFB
Kent	TR35	SANDWICH/ DEAL	1	APRIL	EFB
Kent	TR35	SANDWICH/ DEAL	1	MAY	EFB
Kent	TR35	SANDWICH/ DEAL	2	SEPTEMBER	EFB
Surrey	SU85	FARNBOROUGH	1	MAY	EFB
Surrey	SU85	FARNBOROUGH	1	SEPTEMBER	EFB
Surrey	SU94	GODALMING	4	JULY	EFB
Surrey	TQ05	E.GUILDFORD/WOKING	1	MAY	EFB
Surrey	TQ05	E.GUILDFORD/WOKING	1	AUGUST	EFB
Surrey	TQ26	EPSOM & SUTTON	1	JUNE	AFB
West Sussex	TQ02	BILLINGSHURST	2	APRIL	EFB
West Sussex	TQ02	BILLINGSHURST	7	JULY	EFB
West Sussex	TQ10	WORTHING	1	MAY	EFB
West Sussex	TQ10	WORTHING	5	JUNE	EFB
West Sussex	TQ10	WORTHING	2	AUGUST	EFB
West Sussex	TQ11	STEYNING	2	MAY	EFB
West Sussex	TQ11	STEYNING	4	JULY	EFB
West Sussex	TQ11	STEYNING	2	AUGUST	EFB
West Sussex	TQ21	HENFIELD	1	MAY	EFB

West Sussex	TQ21	HENFIELD	1	JUNE	EFB
West Sussex	TQ33	CRAWLEY DOWN	1	JUNE	EFB

Asian Hornet 2016

In February this year the Kent Bee-Keepers' association, in conjunction with the NBU held a workshop on the Asian Hornet. In particular, the practical aspects of constructing bottle traps to be deployed in apiaries around Kent. We honed and modified the simple trap shown on BeeBase (see link on page 6) and produced well over a hundred to help detect any forthcoming incursion. Kent is a high risk area, with its channel ports, rail link and close proximity to France.

Ironically, however, the first confirmed sighting turned out to be in the west of the country, in Tetbury, Gloucestershire in late September. An Asian hornet was caught in a trap set by a beekeeper. After confirmation of its identity by entomologists at York, the contingency plan, (practised annually by the Bee Inspectorate,) was actioned, and within 48 hours bee inspectors from the South East were called in to join others in searching for the nest. (See the Western Regional Report 2016 on BeeBase for a detailed account)

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageId=168>



Update on Asian Hornet and Small Hive Beetle in Europe

Asian Hornet

A natural or assisted spread of the Asian Hornet, *Vespa Velutina*, from mainland Europe into the UK had been anticipated and a Contingency Plan is in place to deal with any confirmed outbreak.



The google map illustrated (updated November 2016) shows the continuing spread of Asian hornet in Europe.

This includes the first incursion into the British Isles in the Crown dependencies of Alderney and Jersey and subsequent incursions in the UK in Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?msa=0&mid=1jRfoi4oF6GmiGRgbXuD71Qpbw8s&ll=46.60925415505642%2C2.689161067645273&z=6>

The recent Defra press release <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-outbreak-contained-in-gloucestershire-and-somerset> confirms the destruction of the nest found at Tetbury, Gloucestershire and no subsequent Asian hornet activity in this area or that of the sighting in North Somerset. Further details and pictures of the nest at Tetbury can be found on BeeBase 'recent news':

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/News/news.cfm#177>

With the amount of traffic, both commercial and private, entering the UK from Europe, further incursions are likely and, as experience has shown, could occur anywhere in the UK, not just in our higher risk areas along the South East coasts. The NBU will be assisting beekeepers in placing hornet traps in the affected areas early next year, but all beekeepers are advised to put out monitoring traps with a sweet bait in apiaries in late winter



Experience in France has shown that these are highly attractive to queen hornets coming out of hibernation. These should be checked regularly, preferably daily so that non-target species can be released.

Any suspect sightings should be reported to the Non-Native Species Secretariat at

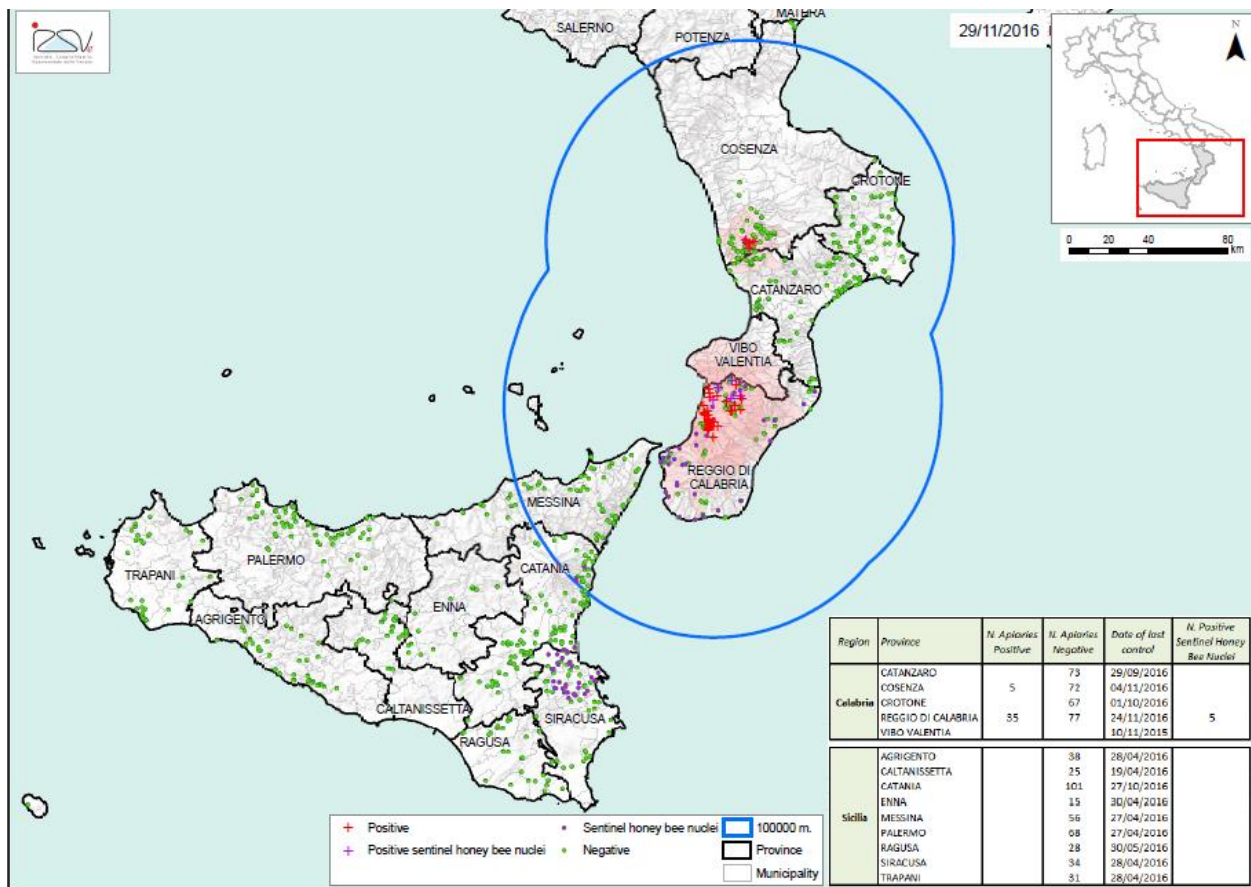
alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk and the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector. A fact sheet detailing a suitable home-made monitoring trap can be found on BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

An updated identification sheet for the Asian hornet and further information on the Asian hornet can also be found on the dedicated pages on BeeBase at: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208>



There are also some Asian Hornet videos available for viewing on the APHA YouTube channel which may be found here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLouExecY1KnfANGcLUd2D6KkLRHE_n_T

Small Hive Beetle



In July this year we had the unwelcome news of a further outbreak of Small Hive Beetle about 100km north of the original finding near Gioia Tauro in Calabria, South West Italy. It is understood that this outbreak was found after the Italian authorities became aware of and traced an illegal movement of a significant number of colonies from the restricted area to several apiaries in the province of Cosenza, Calabria.

All the colonies were destroyed and inspections of surrounding apiaries commenced. A small number of adult beetles have since been found in one other apiary close by. Only time will tell whether the prompt action has eradicated SHB from this area as (so far) appears to be the case for Sicily where colonies were moved just before the first outbreak was discovered.

A large number of sentinel apiaries have been set up in Calabria and Sicily, near apiary sites where SHB has been previously found and to monitor for any spread into other areas. Once again this year there was little found until late summer, apart from some adult beetles and one larva picked up in a small number of sentinel colonies in Calabria. However, since September and to date (16/11/16) another 34 apiaries within the original protection zone have been found to be infested with a significant cluster to the south of Gioia Tauro. See <http://www.izsvenezie.com/aethina-tumida-in-italy/>

Despite considerable effort it is apparent that the Italian authorities have not yet managed to eradicate SHB from southern Italy, demonstrating the absolute necessity for the earliest detection of an incursion for this to be possible. The NBU continues to step up monitoring for SHB under the exotic pest surveillance programme at apiaries within England and Wales near to identified risk points for incursion. Many thanks to those beekeepers who add to the surveillance effort by being part of the Sentinel Apiary programme. Please could all beekeepers make themselves aware of the signs of SHB and the monitoring techniques described in the NBU leaflet, 'The Small Hive Beetle – a serious threat to European apiculture', available as a download from BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com

It is essential that all apiaries are registered on BeeBase (as well as beekeeper contact details) so that we can identify apiaries at risk in the event of an incursion of SHB into the UK and target control measures effectively. Self-registration is free via the link at www.nationalbeeunit.com or you can register by contacting the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector. It is also important that all beekeepers abide by UK regulations for the import of bees from Europe and elsewhere, including submitting an Importer Notification Form, either on-line or to the NBU office, so that we are able to follow up on imports. It is illegal to import bees, queens or any bee-related products from within the 100km zone around the affected areas. Further details can be found on the Imports/Exports pages of BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

Imports 2016

Import numbers for this year (with 2015 in brackets for comparison):

- 13,921 Queens imported from EU (10,434)
- 1,924 Packages of Bees imported from EU (2,393) of which 1,354 Italy (1,862)
- 23 Nucs imported from EU (225)
- 0 Full colonies imported from EU (16)
- 335 Queens from Third Countries (Argentina) (520, also Argentina)

South Eastern Region Contact Details

Seasonal Bee Inspectors

North London - Brian McCallum 07775119478 brian.mccallum@apha.gsi.gov.uk

South London - Mark Patterson 07900223241 mark.patterson@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Surrey - Hilary Hayward 07900167409 hilary.hayward@apha.gsi.gov.uk

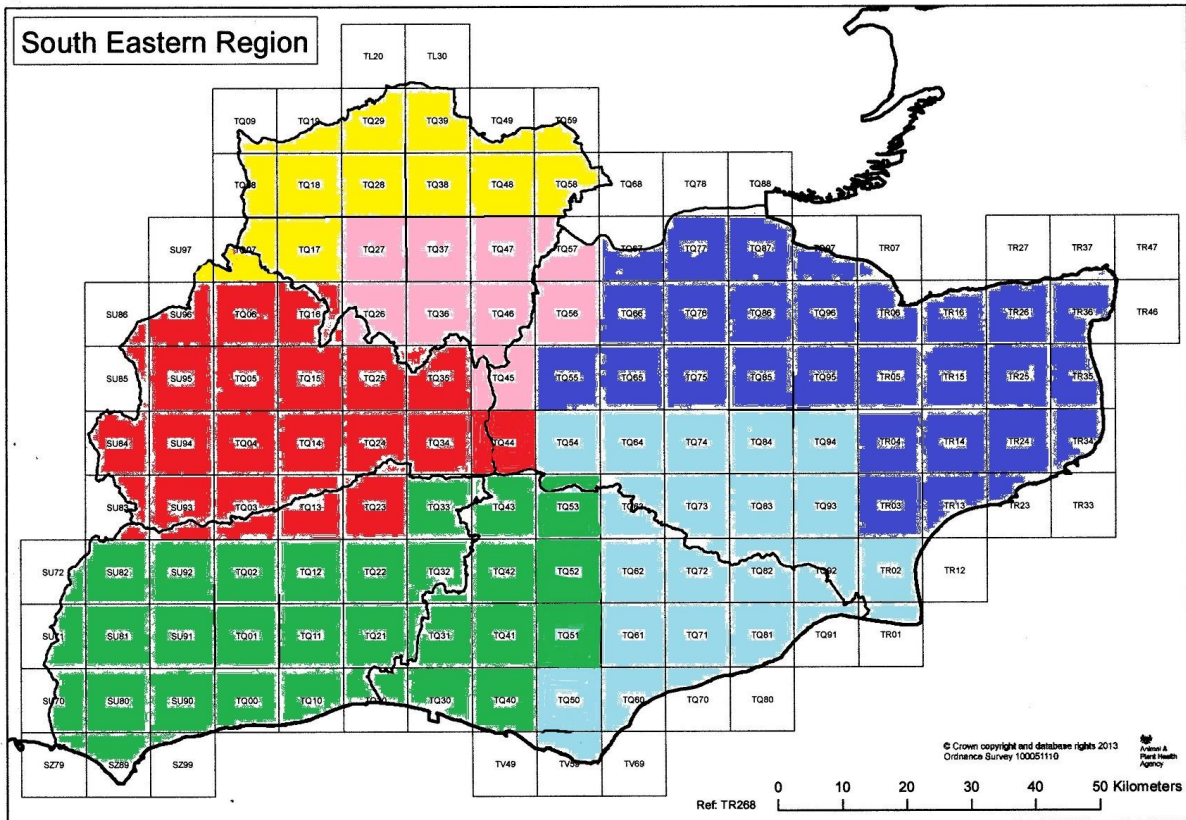
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East Sussex - Michael Cooper 07775119451 michael.cooper@apha.gsi.gov.uk

and South Kent

West Sussex - Diane Steele 07775119452 diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk

and East Sussex



Finally

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the South Eastern Seasonal Bee Inspectors for their hard work this season. Please be vigilant for the imminent arrival of the Asian Hornet and Small Hive Beetle. I wish you success with the 2017 season, it may well prove to be challenging!

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