

Asian black hornet

(Asian predatory wasp) *Vespa velutina*

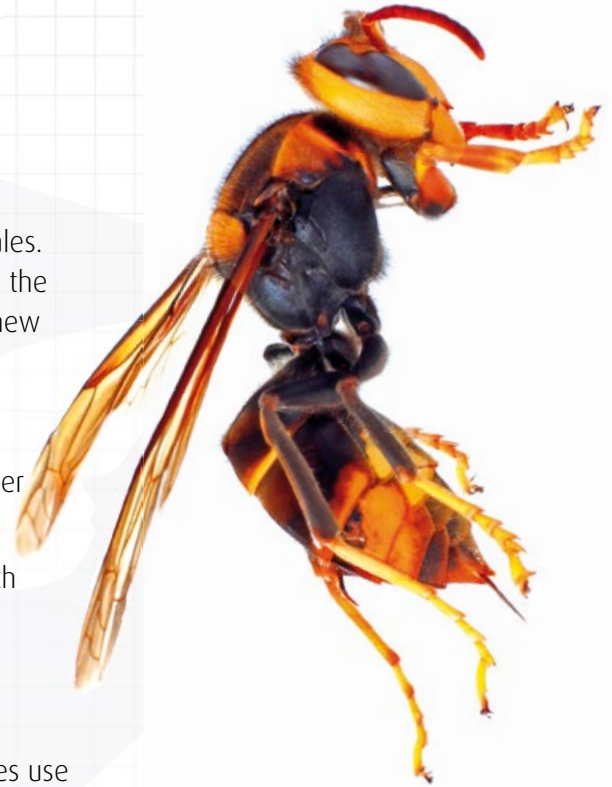
**Potential invader:
High impact**

Species profile

- Habitat:** Terrestrial.
- Distribution in Ireland:** Not currently recorded in Ireland.
- Status:** Not yet known to occur in Ireland.
- Family name:** Vespidae.
- Reproduction:** In autumn, colonies produce new queens and males. The new queens and males then mate, with only the mated queens hibernating over winter to found new colonies in spring.

Identifying features

- Size:** Workers grow up to 25mm while queens are larger and can grow to 30mm.
- Colour:** Body is dark brown/black in colour with the fourth segment of the abdomen being yellow/orange in colour.
- Legs:** Dark legs with lighter coloured tips.
- Nests:** Builds very large nests in trees and can sometimes use man-made structures.



Showing the distinctive dark colouring along most of the body, note that the 4 abdominal section is yellow-orange in colour - Shutterstock



Dark bodied and dark legged apart from the tips which are lighter in colour - Shutterstock



Asian hornet showing its dark legs with yellow tips - Shutterstock



Asian black hornet

Threats

Primarily poses a threat to Ireland's native honey bee, social wasps and other prey insects.

A loss to our native pollinator species could have a significant impact upon agricultural crop production and wildflower populations. Similarly, decline of a top predator such as our social wasps would have negative consequences for the natural control of invertebrate pests in agriculture and the structure of wild invertebrate communities.

Human Hazard: As with other bees and wasps, allergic reactions could occur due to the venomous sting, but is only aggressive to humans in close proximity to its colony.

Similar species

Distinctively larger than native wasp species and with much darker coloration over most of its body. Expert verification of Asian hornet identification is recommended.

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High impact**



Close up of the face of an Asian hornet - Shutterstock



The common wasp (*Vespa vulgaris*) is much smaller than the Asian hornet - o. Duffy

