



Southern Region Annual Report 2016

National Bee Unit

The 2016 Season

It has been a challenging season for Southern Region; we started the year with 2 Seasonal Inspector vacancies due to both Karen Smith and Dan Etheridge opting to take up SBI positions within the Welsh team. By June we had managed to replace Karen and welcomed Jonathan Palmer as our new Buckinghamshire Seasonal Inspector. Like Karen before him, Jonathan is also a Mid-Bucks beekeeper, well known to many of you in and around Buckinghamshire. Unfortunately, despite our efforts we did not manage to place anyone within the vacant Berkshire role and so we will be recruiting to this post very early in the New Year, having already obtained Agency consent to recruit for Bee Inspector vacancies. This should place us in good stead timing-wise, allowing us to hopefully place new inspectors in post earlier in the coming 2017 season. On this note if any of you reading this have ever considered becoming a Seasonal Bee Inspector and would like to take this forward, please do get in contact with me and I will then ensure that you have the details in early January as they become available. Given the difficulty historically in recruiting to Berkshire, I would consider candidates not just from Berkshire but from nearby surrounding areas, as ultimately I can mix and match territories to inspectors to ensure full coverage across the region.



Disease levels this season across the region have been fairly unremarkable against the historic trends as I will touch on later in this update.

This year once again saw significant numbers of package bee and queen imports, which tied up a lot of inspector time doing checks to guard against Small Hive Beetle, thankfully nothing was found. A note of import numbers appears later.

In July we ran an Exotic Pest Contingency exercise in Dorset to rehearse our response to an outbreak. This exercise was unplanned and sprung upon the Southern team to see how we would react and respond when no notice is given (as would be the case in a genuine outbreak). The exercise additionally pulled in inspectors from three other regions in order to respond to the simulation. Whilst very aware of the threat, I don't think any of us running this exercise dared to think that later in the year we would be responding for real, as a consequence of the now widely publicised Asian Hornet outbreak in Tetbury, again more of this later. My thanks to Dorset beekeepers for supporting us in running this exercise and to Kevin Pope our Dorset Seasonal

Inspector for his exceptional local knowledge and support organising the Local Incident Command Centres.

So, just as we thought the inspection season was winding down towards the middle of September Asian Hornet was confirmed in Tetbury and pretty much all of the Southern team was redeployed and placed at the disposal of the Bee Unit's Local Incident Command in Tetbury. Consequently, many of our inspectors worked into the middle of October instead of finishing the season, as we usually would, at the end of September.

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 highly likely



and, as experience has shown, could

occur anywhere in the UK, not just in the higher risk areas along the South and 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>

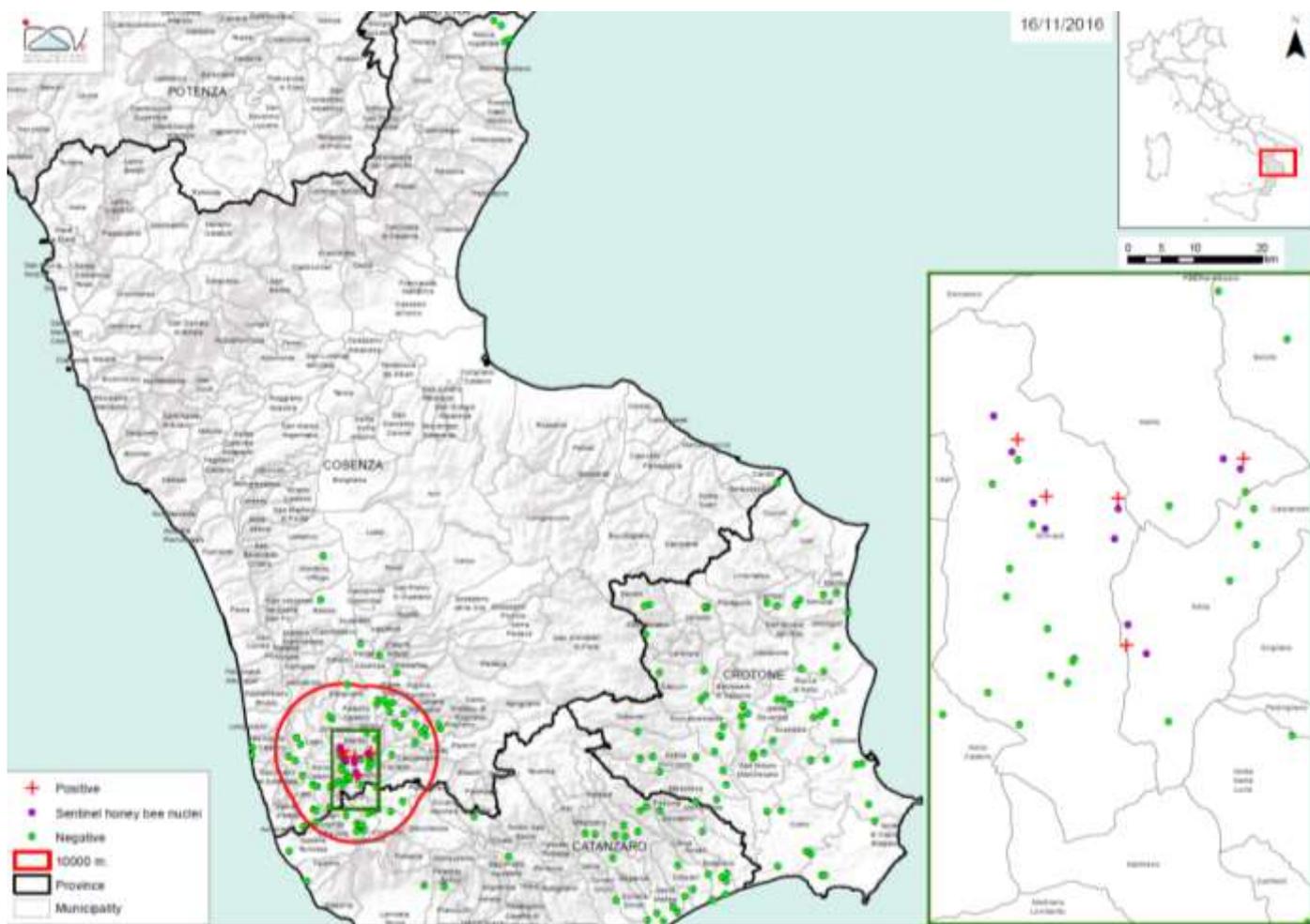


There are also some Asian Hornet videos available for viewing on the APHA YouTube channel which may be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLouExecY1KnfANGcLUd2D6KkLRHEn_-T

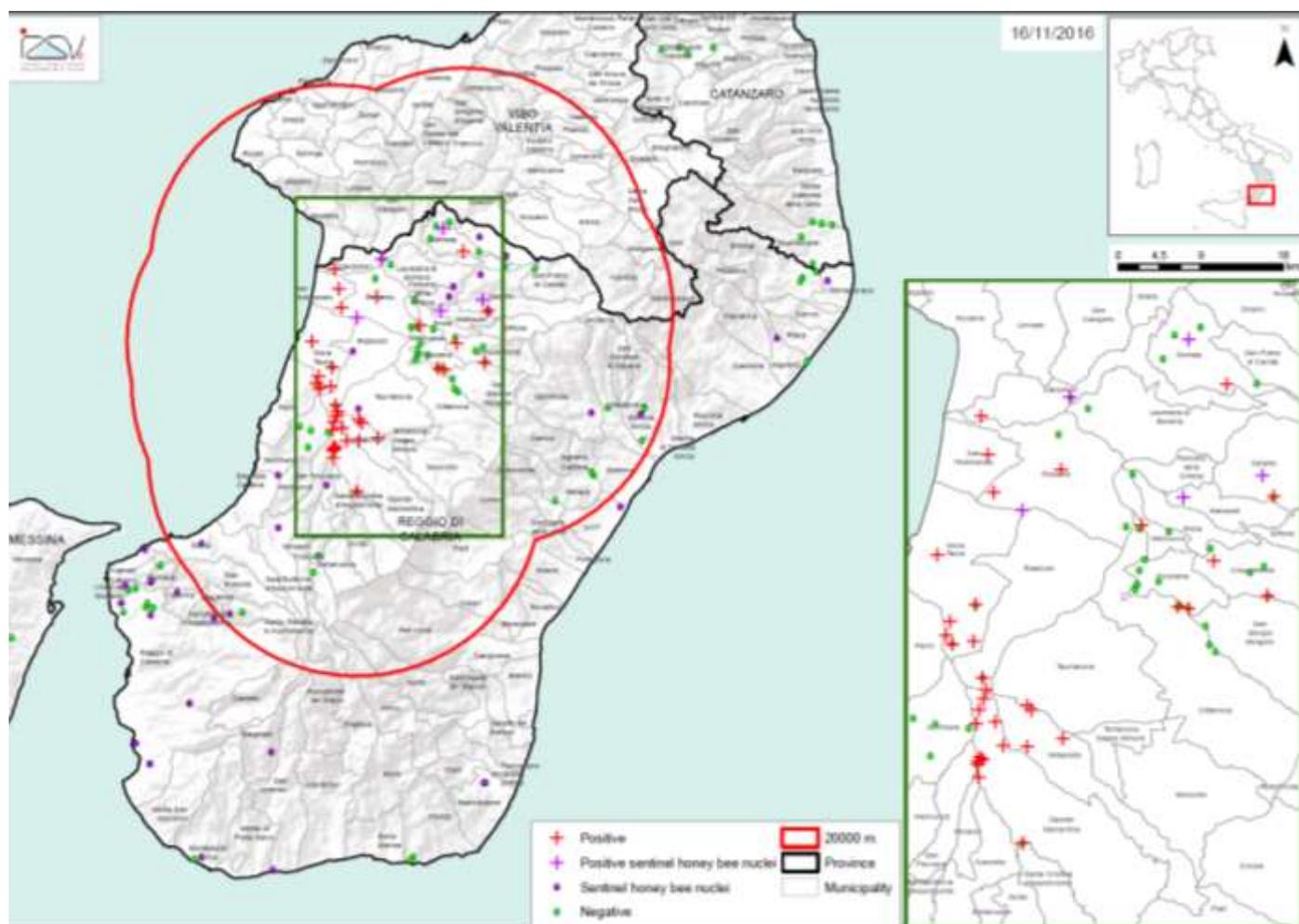
Small Hive Beetle

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. I am thankful to those beekeepers who add to the surveillance effort by being part of the Sentinel Apiary programme but I would encourage all beekeepers to make themselves aware of the signs of SHB and monitoring techniques as 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 or as a hard copy.

I make no apology for mentioning once again how essential it is 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 essential 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 of course 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 at time of writing are as follows (with 2015 in brackets for comparison):

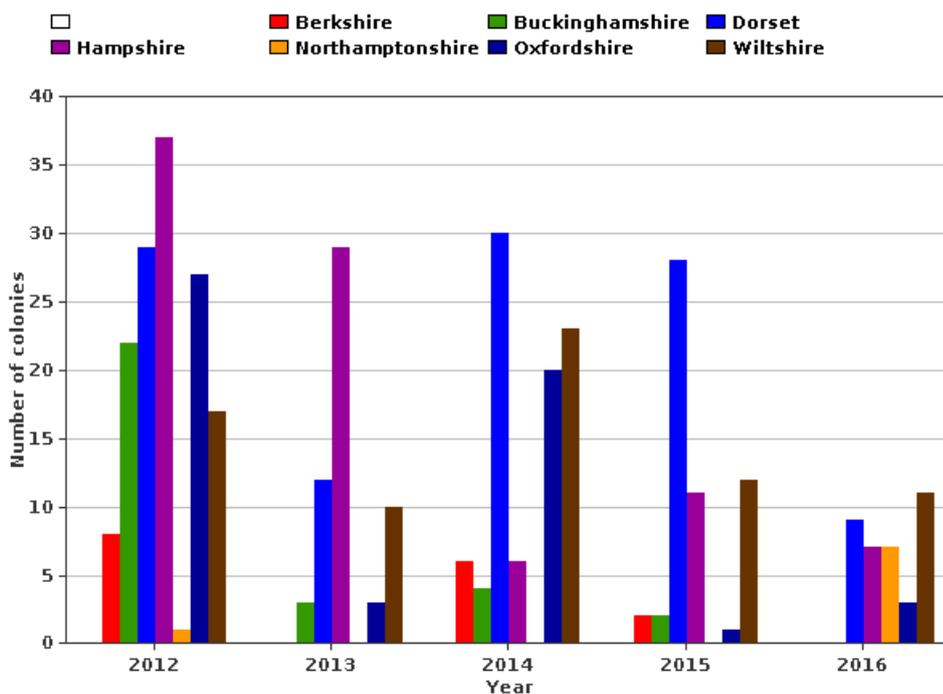
- 2016 So far...
 - 13,924 Queens imported from EU (10,434)
 - 1,924 Packages of Bees imported from EU (2,393)
 - of which 1,354 Italy (1,862)
 - 23 Nucs imported from EU (225)
 - 0 Full colonies imported from EU (16)
 - 335 Queens from Third Countries (Argentina) (520, also Argentina)

Foulbrood Disease 2016

EFB

Southern Region:
37 colonies (56 in 2015)

Nationally
EFB 426 (2016)
EFB 578 (2015)

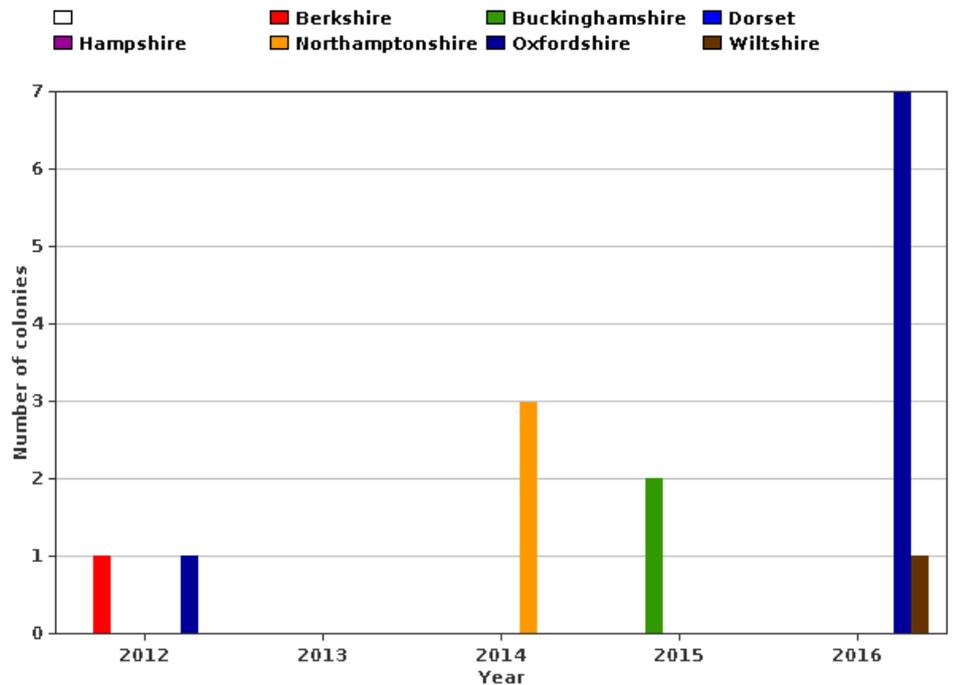


AFB

Southern Region:
8 colonies (2 in 2015)

Nationally
AFB 86 (2016)
AFB 40 (2015)

Further details and mapping can be found on the disease incidence pages of BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com. It is recommended that these are checked regularly to see if there is any foulbrood disease close by.



All beekeepers registered on BeeBase with an email address will receive an automatic email alert if disease is found within 3km of the registered apiary. If you are self-registered, please ensure that you keep your apiary records up to date or contact me if you are unsure. Self-registration is recommended as it also gives beekeepers secure password protected access to personal details and inspection records.

Education and Advisory Services

Each year we are able to offer Bee Health Days at a County level, where a number of inspectors will run a bee health and disease day with the opportunity to see foul brood at close quarters. We can only offer these days when the County is confident that attendance will exceed 100 beekeepers and ideally be closer to 150 as increasingly the call on inspector time means resources are limited and so these events must be robustly targeted. This further means that we cannot repeat these events year after year in the same area and instead need to move around the region for best coverage. With this in mind I am now starting to offer these events on a strict rolling programme, whereby repeat events to the same County will not be available within 3 years of the last anniversary. This may disappoint some Counties that have historically sought these events more frequently, but increasing demands on time and not least the clear and present danger from Asian Hornet means that tougher decisions have to be made.

Southern Region Contact Details

Seasonal Bee Inspectors

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Vacancy	Berkshire Use Beebase "Find my nearest Inspector" http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/Contacts/contacts.cfm	
Jonathan Palmer	Buckinghamshire jonathan.palmer@apha.gsi.gov.uk	07900 405018

Finally

I have had an enjoyable, if busy, first season as RBI in the Southern Region. I look forward to the opportunity to meet more of you in 2017. If anything the coming year will be busier still as we balance the control of foulbrood with the advancing threats from exotic pests.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Southern Seasonal Bee Inspectors for their hard work this season,

I wish you a successful and trouble free beekeeping season in 2017, but if the worst happens we are here to help and on that note, my contact details follow at the foot of this newsletter:

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