

Surrey Beekeepers' Association (BKA) – Bee Disease Insurance (BDI) report 2023

The County of Surrey and the area of Surrey BKA are not the same. Kingston and Wimbledon divisions of Surrey BKA, are included in Greater London area statistics for reporting of bee diseases and pests.

The overall trend in the last couple of years has been a reduction in the numbers of colonies diagnosed with AFB and EFB.

In 2023, the National Bee Unit (NBU) reported on BeeBase that the total number of colonies inspected in the County of Surrey was 399 and, of these, 40 colonies were found dead and in the Greater London area, 641 colonies were inspected and 47 were found dead.

American Foul Brood (AFB)

AFB is a bacterial disease, *Paenibacillus larvae*, that is reportable to the NBU usually via the local bee inspector. No outbreaks were reported to be found in either the County of Surrey or in Greater London area.

In England, most the outbreaks of AFB were diagnosed to be found in Devon and Cornwall.

European Foul Brood (EFB)

EFB is a bacterial disease, *Melissococcus plutonis*, that is reportable to the NBU usually via the local bee inspector. In 2023 the no outbreaks were reported in the County of Surrey area, but 20 colonies were diagnosed as positive in the Greater London area and, of those 11 were destroyed.

In England, most the outbreaks of EFB occurred in Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Devon, Somerset and Berkshire.

Other diseases and pests

Varroa

The varroa mite, *Varroa destructor*, is a parasitic mite of adult bees and brood and is notifiable to the NBU via Bee Base (the Animal and Plant Health's National Bee Unit website to help beekeepers) so that its spread can be monitored. Varroa is now considered to be indigenous in the UK.

Asian Hornet

Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*, is notifiable to the Non-Native Species Secretariat. Monitoring for arrival of this insect is strongly encouraged throughout the UK, but especially in areas where likelihood of arrival is considered to be highest (S & SE England) and this includes the area of Surrey BKA. In the UK, Jersey has the greatest incursion of this insect which destroys and consumes honey bee colonies. Unfortunately, it has no known predator.

Up until 2023, the number of Asian hornets found in England was relatively small, but this year, there has been a significant increase where 64 incursions have been reported, predominately in south-east England but they have gradually been spreading further north.

Surrey BKA has been monitoring any incursions carefully and reporting them. To the end of September, the confirmed sighting in Surrey BKA area was on Oxted where 2 nests were destroyed. Previously the only sighting in Surrey BKA area was in Guildford in 2018.

Tropilaelaps and, small hive beetle

If any member thinks they have seen Tropilaelaps (*Tropilaelaps clareae*, *Tropilaelaps koenigeru*) or small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*), they need report the sighting straight away to their local bee inspector.