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YELLOW-LEGGED LEDGER

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • TYLER HARPER, COMMISSIONER

Yellow-legged Hornets are an invasive species that have recently been detected in Georgia, and they pose a potential threat to the state's agriculture. As an aggressive predator of honeybees, these hornets can disrupt pollination, which is vital to Georgia's agricultural economy. It's important for Georgians to be aware of their presence, how to identify them, and the steps to take to help manage their spread. Below are answers to some common questions about Yellow-legged Hornets in Georgia.

1. What part of Georgia are Yellow-legged Hornets found in?

Currently, Yellow-legged Hornets have only been detected in the Savannah area, specifically in Chatham, Bryan, Effingham, and Liberty counties.

2. Have they been found in the Metro Atlanta area?

As of now, Yellow-legged Hornets have not been found in the Metro Atlanta area.

3. Why are Yellow-legged Hornets harmful?

The yellow-legged Hornet poses a threat to honeybees and other pollinators in our state. Certain crops (e.g. Apples, blueberries, cucumbers, watermelons, etc.) are heavily dependent on bees – honeybees and native bees – for pollination. So, these pollinators play a significant role in Georgia's agriculture industry, the state's main economic driver, and it is imperative that these invasive pests are tracked and eradicated. In fact, USDA estimated that insect pollination adds more than \$34 billion in economic value to U.S. agricultural crops annually.

4. Do Yellow-legged Hornets pose a threat to humans?

Yellow-legged Hornets do not pose a significant threat to humans. However, we recommend that individuals with allergies to bee or wasp venom avoid them for safety.

5. How do Yellow-legged Hornets differ from native hornet species?

Although we use the terms “wasp” and “hornet” interchangeably, there is a difference between these two groups of insects. Technically speaking, hornets are not native to North America. The insect we call a “baldfaced hornet” is an aerial yellowjacket, a type of wasp. The European hornet was introduced into North America in the mid-1800s and has become well established.

Wasps are a very large group of insects, and hornets are a subset of that group. For example, the term “athlete” includes everyone that participates in sports while football players are a specific group of athletes.

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Another term that entomologists (people who study insects) use is “social.” Social means that the insects form a colony with multiple individuals who have different roles (e.g. foraging for food, laying eggs, caring for the young, etc.).

	Wasp	Hornet
Size	Typically, less than 1 inch (although exceptions occur)	Typically, 1 inch or more
Body type	Slender	Robust, stocky
Hairy or fuzzy	No	No
Social	Can be social or solitary	Social
Coloration	Tend to have brighter colors and more varied patterns (yellows, blacks, reds, metallic, etc.).	Typically have darker coloration, featuring black or reddish-brown hues
Aggressiveness	Depends on the species	Depends on the species

For more information on wasps and hornets, please visit

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/social-wasps-yellowjackets-hornets-and-paper-wasps/>.

6. Do Yellow-legged Hornets have a different temperament than native wasps?

Yellow-legged Hornets are known to be aggressive toward honeybees, but they typically don't pose a threat to humans unless they feel provoked, or their nest is disturbed.

7. Are Yellow-legged Hornets striped or solid-colored on their legs?

There are several insects in Georgia with yellow on the legs. A yellow-legged hornet's leg is dark colored where it attaches to the body and the last third of the leg is yellow. However, a key in identification is the very wide orange to yellow strip on the insect's abdomen.

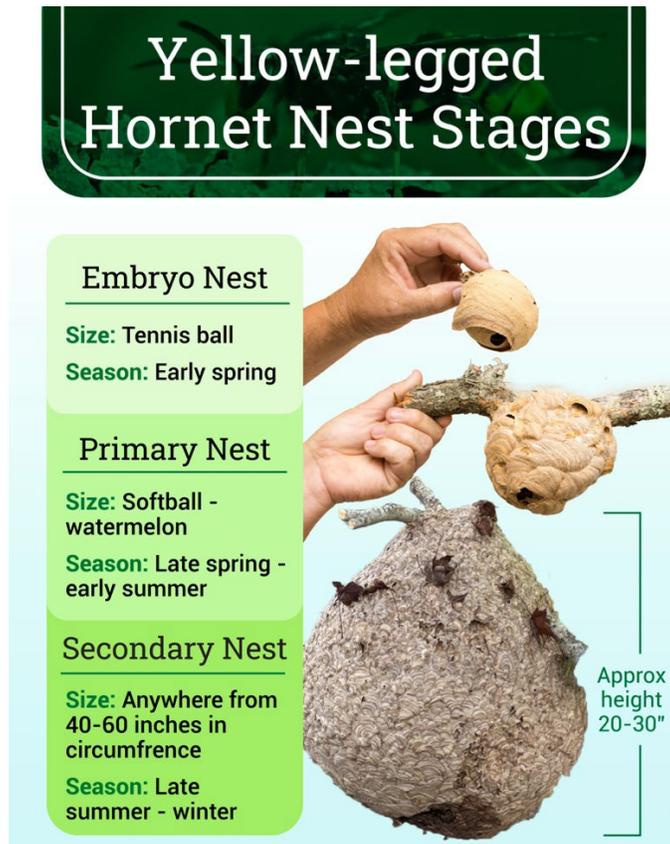


8. Where are Yellow-legged Hornet nests most likely to be found?

To date, yellow-legged hornets have only been found in Chatham, Bryan, Effingham, and Liberty counties in Georgia and the Hilton Head area of South Carolina. Embryo and primary

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nests are usually found in trees, bushes, shrubs, awnings, and porches, while secondary nests are typically built higher up, often more than 60+ feet off the ground.



9. Can I remove a Yellow-legged Hornet nest myself?

We strongly recommend contacting the Georgia Department of Agriculture for nest removal. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, it is critical to ensure the queen is eradicated to prevent the hornets from rebuilding a nest elsewhere. Secondly, if there are yellow-legged hornets in the area, we will want to deploy traps and monitor so that we can remove any other yellow-legged hornet nests that may be in the area.

10. Should I notify the Georgia Department of Agriculture after a nest has been removed?

We strongly recommend contacting the Georgia Department of Agriculture for nest removal. If a nest has already been removed, please notify us. We ask that you provide photos of both the nest and the hornets to help us confirm if they are Yellow-legged Hornets. You can send the images to yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov. We will want to deploy traps and monitor so that we can remove any other yellow-legged hornet nests that may be in the area.

11. Where can I report Yellow-legged Hornet sightings?

Report any hornet sightings or suspected nests by emailing the Georgia Department of Agriculture at yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov or using our online reporting [form](#).

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We appreciate your assistance in helping us eradicate this serious threat to Georgia's agriculture, our state's number one industry. For more information, visit GDA's Dedicated Yellow-legged Hornet webpage: <https://agr.georgia.gov/yellow-legged-hornet>.