

Yellow-legged hornet

(Vespa velutina)

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Yellow Legged Hornet (YLH) is an invasive species from Southeast Asia that was first detected in Savannah, Georgia in August 2023. YLH has spread throughout areas of costal Georgia and South Carolina, but as of March 2026 has not been detected in Kentucky. However, there are concerns that YLH will hitchhike undetected to new areas. We need your help in identifying and reporting potential sightings of this pest!



Photo credit: Asian hornet, Giles San Martin, flickr.com/photos/sanmartin/48235652347, CC BY-SA 4.0

Quick ID Information

- Smaller than European hornet
- Velvety dark thorax
- Yellow feet (tarsi)
- Dark abdomen with thin yellow bands
- Distinct orange 4th abdominal segment

Nest Comparisons



Yellow-legged hornet

Photo credit: Pittou2 via Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0



Bald-faced hornet

Photo credit: <https://birdwatchinghq.com/wasps-and-hornets-in-kentucky/>



European hornet

Photo credit: <https://birdwatchinghq.com/wasps-and-hornets-in-kentucky/>



Yellow-legged hornet lookalikes

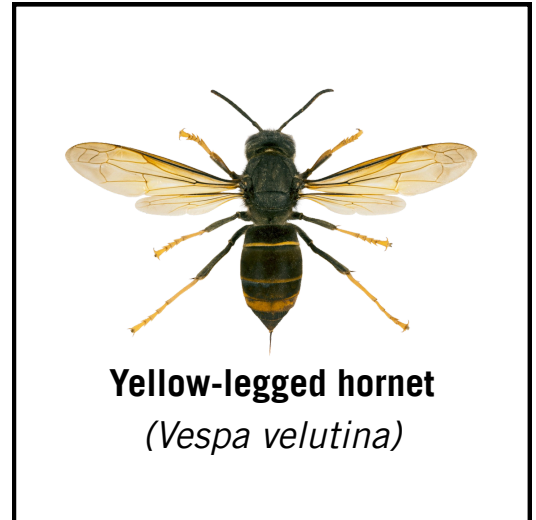
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Found in Kentucky

1. European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*)
2. Southern yellowjacket (worker) (*Vespula squamosa*)
3. Northern paper wasp (*Polistes fuscatus*)
4. European paper wasp (*Polistes dominula*)
5. Horntail wasp (*Tremex columba*)
6. Bald-faced hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*)
7. European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)
8. Eastern cicada killer (*Sphecius speciosus*)

*All insects pictured are to scale



1



2



3



4



4



5



6



7

