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## YELLOW-LEGGED LEDGER

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • TYLER HARPER, COMMISSIONER

As temperatures drop, hornet activity naturally decreases. So, this is likely the last edition of the Yellow-Legged Ledger for the 2024 season. We will continue to monitor for YLH but traps will be checked every 3 to 4 weeks rather than weekly during the colder months of January and February. However, any new developments will be promptly shared.

Earlier this year, we detected YLH queen activity in mid-March and captured 22 YLH queens. At that time, we had approximately 200 traps in the Savannah area. Now, with over 1,200 traps deployed in Georgia, we hope that in 2025, we will capture a large percentage of queens that may be active.

We often use the term “Savannah Area.” This term, to us, includes all of Chatham County as well as the southern part of Effingham County and portions of Bryan County that border Chatham. The 1,200 traps also include those that have been deployed along the Georgia coast to the Florida border (which number over 130). We do not expect to detect hornets in these traps but are monitoring our coast out of an abundance of caution.

Forty-seven (47) nests were found and eradicated in 2024. That number is a significant increase over the five (5) found in 2023. However, all nests were found within a 25-mile radius and are still within what we call the Savannah area. However, we do not have indications that YLH is everywhere within the city limits of Savannah or the surrounding area. There seemed to be “hot spots” or areas where nests appeared to be concentrated. There are portions of the trapped area where we have not captured any YLH. In fact, we have over 700 trapping sites where we have never captured a YLH.

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(Above: The map highlights the approximate locations where 47 nests were discovered and eradicated in 2024.)

We encourage anyone seeing a suspected YLH to report it to us at [yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov](mailto:yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov) or <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/7b8255c0dbbd41daadd269d0ae2eb36a>. We also encourage those in the Savannah area to continue to be on the lookout for nests. Remember, the secondary nests are often near the tops of trees. Beekeepers or the general public are welcome to deploy traps – and please report any suspects to the Department.



(On Wednesday, December 18, 2024, the PPD found and eradicated a YLH nest in the Savannah area. While it's unusual to find a nest this late in the season, the team believes this may be an isolated occurrence. Although live YLH were found inside, the number of active YLH was lower compared to nests discovered earlier in the season.)

## UPDATE BY THE NUMBERS

New Traps Deployed: 4

Total traps deployed (August 17, 2023 – December 19, 2024): 1,243

Hornets found (December 5 – December 19, 2024): 375

Nests found & eradicated (December 5 – December 19, 2024): 1

Total nests found & eradicated (August 2023 – December 19, 2024): 52

- January 2024 – December 5, 2024: 4 embryo nests, 3 primary nests, 40 secondary nests
  - Total: 47
- August 2023 - December 2023: 5 secondary nests

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

### How to Report Sightings and Nests:

As always, we are grateful for the public's help in contacting us as soon as they find a nest. We continue to encourage all Georgians to report any hornet sightings or suspected nests by emailing us at [yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov](mailto:yellow.legged.hornet@agr.georgia.gov) or using our online reporting [form](#).



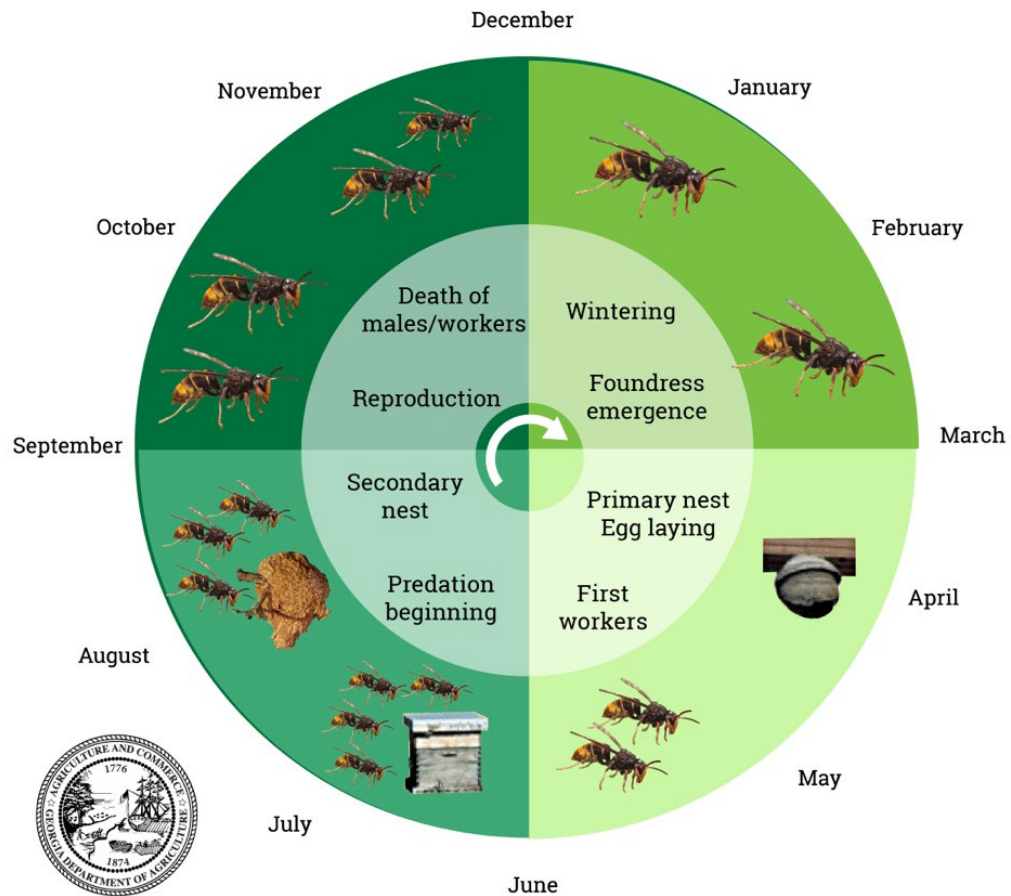
### Terms to Know:

- **Embryo Nests** are built by queens so that they can begin forming a colony and often are the size of a tennis ball. Embryo nests are usually found in early spring.
- **Primary Nests** are nests built by worker hornets once they emerge from embryo nests. They can be the size of a grapefruit. Primary nests are usually found in early summer.
- **Secondary Nests**, the final stage of a hornet colony, are much larger than embryo and primary nests. These nests, often found atop trees and larger than a basketball, were successfully eradicated from the Savannah area in 2023. They typically appear from late summer to fall.

### Yellow-legged Hornet Life Cycle:

Here is a diagram illustrating the life cycle of the yellow-legged hornet. Currently, they are progressing as expected and constructing secondary nests.

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Source: Monceau, Karine & Thiery, Denis. (2016). *Vespa velutina*: current situation and perspectives. *Atti della academia nazionale Italiana di Entomologia*.

**Join the Georgia Hornet Watch Facebook Group:**

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# GEORGIA HORNET WATCH

Join the GDA's dedicated yellow-legged hornet Facebook group to get the latest information!



[facebook.com/groups/georgiahornetgroup](https://facebook.com/groups/georgiahornetgroup)

(Click [here](#) to join.)

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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>.**