Breadcrumb

1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

# APHIS in Action: Victory Over the World’s Largest Hornet Species

Print

**A Milestone in Invasive Species Eradication**

After five years of relentless effort, the northern giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) has been eradicated from Washington State and the United States. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced this landmark achievement today. The

announcement marked a significant victory in the ongoing fight against invasive species.

The northern giant hornet first captured national attention in late 2019 when it was detected near Blaine, Washington. Known for its ability to decimate a honey bee colony within hours, the hornet posed a serious threat to pollinators and all the life they support. However, this invasive predator is no longer a threat thanks to the collaborative efforts of APHIS, WSDA, researchers, and the public.

APHIS played a critical role in the eradication effort, providing essential funding, personnel, and scientific expertise. The agency also shared advanced technologies, such as telemetry tags that APHIS initially used for tracking the invasive spotted lanternfly. These tags were pivotal in locating the hornet's nests. Live hornets were tagged and tracked as they flew through dense forests, leading teams to their hidden nests, primarily found inside alder trees.

"This success demonstrates what's possible when agencies and communities unite toward a common goal," said Dr. Mark Davidson, Deputy Administrator for APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine Program. "By tackling this threat head-on, we protected not only pollinators and crops but also the industries, communities, and ecosystems that depend on them."

Photo by: Photo Karla Salp, Washington State Department of Agriculture

Community involvement was equally vital. Nearly half of the confirmed detections came from public reports. Citizen scientists and vigilant residents provided crucial sightings and helped monitor traps and local wasp populations for signs of this pest. Without their dedication, this victory might not have been possible.

WSDA and its partners eradicated four northern giant hornets' nests between 2020 and 2021, often under challenging conditions made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. The work required an innovative approach, specialized tools, and protective suits to ensure the team's safety during each eradication. The combined effort was remarkably successful in neutralizing the threat and advancing the scientific understanding of this species.

This eradication underscores the power of early detection, community involvement, and interagency collaboration. We remain committed to monitoring for any future threats. We also appreciate the public's vigilance in preventing the spread of invasive species by reporting new threats to agricultural officials in your State. Together, we can face formidable threats to plant health and prevail.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.