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# First record of *Vespa velutina* Lepeletier, 1836 from Hungary (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)

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**Abstract** - The Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina* Lepeletier, 1836 (Hymenoptera: Vespidae), is reported for the first time from Hungary.

Key words - Asian hornet, introduced species, invasive species, distribution

### INTRODUCTION

The Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina* Lepeletier, 1836 (Hymenoptera: Vespidae), is native to Southeast Asia. It was accidentally introduced to France in 2004, and since then it has rapidly been spreading on the continent. It has already been reported from Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Ireland (RIES *et al.* 2021, DILLANE *et al.* 2022). The introduction and dispersion of the Asian hornet represent a serious threat to apiculture in Europe (MONCEAU *et al.* 2014).

Considering the directions of its expansion within the continent and the suitable climatic conditions (Abou-Shara & Al-Khalaf 2022), the species was expected to reach Hungary eventually (Vas 2019, 2023). In this paper we report the first record of *Vespa velutina* from northwestern Hungary.

Taxonomy, nomenclature and identification are based on Archer (2012). The examined material was collected by the first author in his apiary, then sent to the second author for confirming the identification. Voucher specimens are deposited in the Hymenoptera Collection of the Hungarian Natural History Museum (HNHM, Budapest).

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Figs 1-2. Voucher specimen of Vespa velutina Lepeletier, 1836 from Kimle, Hungary, 1 = dorsal view, 2 = lateral view (photos by Zoltán Vas)

#### RESULTS

## Vespa velutina Lepeletier, 1836 (Figs 1-2)

Material examined – Hungary: Győr-Moson-Sopron County, Kimle, apiary, 19–21.VIII.2023, leg. T. Márta; 2 worker females. Several other workers have been observed at the hives of Western honeybees (*Apis mellifera* Linnaeus, 1758) by the first author in his apiary since 10.VIII.2023.

Remarks – First record from Hungary. The specimens from Hungary, as well as the specimens reported from other European countries, belong to the subspecies Vespa velutina nigrithorax Buysson, 1905, and presumably represent a subsequent spread from a single introduction to France (DILLANE et al. 2022). Considering the present record from areas close to the border of Hungary, the species might already be present in Austria and/or Slovakia.

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