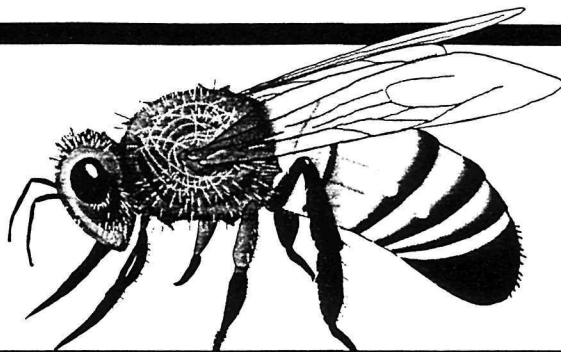


Lake Mead

National Recreation Area
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Africanized Honeybees



Africanized honeybees have arrived in Nevada and Arizona and are here to stay. Although not readily distinguishable from common European honeybees, they exhibit different behaviors and you should

use more caution when encountering them. Both kinds of honeybees are very different in behavior and appearance from native solitary bees, wasps, and other flying insects.

Where did they come from?



The African honeybee was introduced into Brazil in 1956 and purposely interbred with European honeybees to increase honey production. In 1957, many colonies escaped. The interbred Africanized bees became dominant, expanding in both range and population. Migrating swarms (groups of bees looking for a new home) moved northward through Central America

and Mexico and arrived in the United States through Texas by October of 1990. Swarms arrived in Arizona in 1992, and in Southern Nevada in 1998. In prior years, a few incidental swarms discovered in the United States arrived on ships and commercial trucks that originated from Central and South America and Mexico, but were eliminated when found.

Which bee is it?



European honey bee



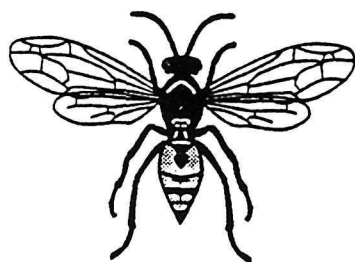
Africanized honey bee



Carpenter bee



Mud dauber



Paper wasp

Africanized honeybees (AHB) and European honeybees (EHB) cannot be distinguished unless they are scientifically examined under a microscope. Although they are essentially the same in physical size and appearance, they differ greatly in behavior. An EHB colony may swarm only once per year, while an AHB colony may swarm 10 to 12 times per year. Therefore, an Africanized colony reproduces more often and increases territory faster than a European colony. As a result, Africanized colonies become more numerous.

The AHB is much less particular about nesting sites than is the EHB. A European colony may nest in

cavities or holes in trees, cacti, caves, and buildings, but Africanized colonies may nest in ground holes, flower pots, abandoned appliances, and utility boxes as well. All bees, regardless of type, tend to nest near sources of water which is essential to moderating temperature and humidity within the hive. Africanized bees are more aggressive than European honeybees. When protecting their hive and territory, they will attack a person or animal in greater numbers than a European colony would. An AHB attack generally lasts for longer periods of time and result in significantly more stings. The AHB will pursue an intruder for a longer distance from their nests, at least 1/4 mile, and sometimes up to a mile.

What can I do?

Be aware of your environment, **AVOID** concentrated bee activity or bee hives.

Be aware near water because bees are attracted to water.

If attacked, **RUN AWAY** from the hive. Take refuge in an enclosed shelter (car, house, tent) if possible. If not possible, **KEEP RUNNING** until you are safely away.

COVER YOUR HEAD AND FACE WITH CLOTHING, as bees tend to attack these areas first.

DO NOT JUMP INTO WATER! Africanized bees will wait for you to come up for air.

DO NOT SWAT BEES as sudden actions will provoke them. An injured or crushed bee emits an odor that alarms other bees to attack.

Do not kick or roll logs, rocks, or other objects on the ground – there may be a hive underneath. Likewise, do not throw rocks at or otherwise agitate a known hive.

Be especially aware around caves, mine openings, and rock crevices.

Wear light-colored clothing, and **DO NOT** wear perfume, cologne, scented lotions, etc., or shiny objects such as jewelry, which attract bees.

Keep food and beverages covered, especially soda cans and bottles. Keep trash containers covered and sealed.

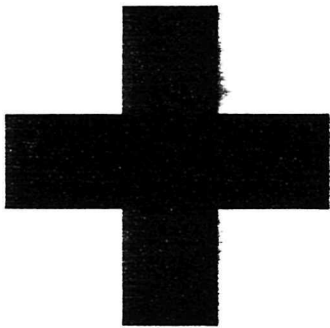
NEVER SPRAY aerosol chemicals, including insecticide, mace, or pepper spray. These merely aggravate the bees, but may incapacitate you.



Individual bees gathering pollen from flowers are only working. They are docile, and should be left alone.

Remember that native bees and wasps are an essential part of the desert ecosystem, and should not be harmed in any way.

Report all stinging incidents and hive locations to park personnel for database management. This will help us keep track of the spread of Africanized honeybees.



Medical Precautions

The venom from AHB is no more dangerous than from EHB, although being stung many more times is likely. If stung, gently scrape away the stinger with a fingernail, credit card or knife, but do not squeeze the stinger because this will inject more venom. Seek medical attention immediately if you have re-

ceived more than 15 stings, are feeling ill, or are allergic to bee stings. Persons highly allergic to bee venom should carry appropriate medication (such as epinephrine injection kits) at all times.

Pet Safety

Take special precautions for pets because they are more vulnerable to bee stings than are people. Many pets, especially dogs, have been killed by Africanized honeybee attacks. Most stings are to the head where fur is thinner. Keep pets on a leash and under control at all times so that they do not

disturb a colony and lead the bees back to you. If attacked, unleash your pet so both of you can **RUN AWAY**. Do not leave pets unattended and tied or penned up because they will be unable to escape if attacked. If your pet is being stung, throw a blanket or clothing on it if possible, but **DO NOT ENDANGER YOURSELF**. Seek veterinary attention if your pet is stung several times.

