

The experience of LIFE STOPVESPA reporting system up to 2018



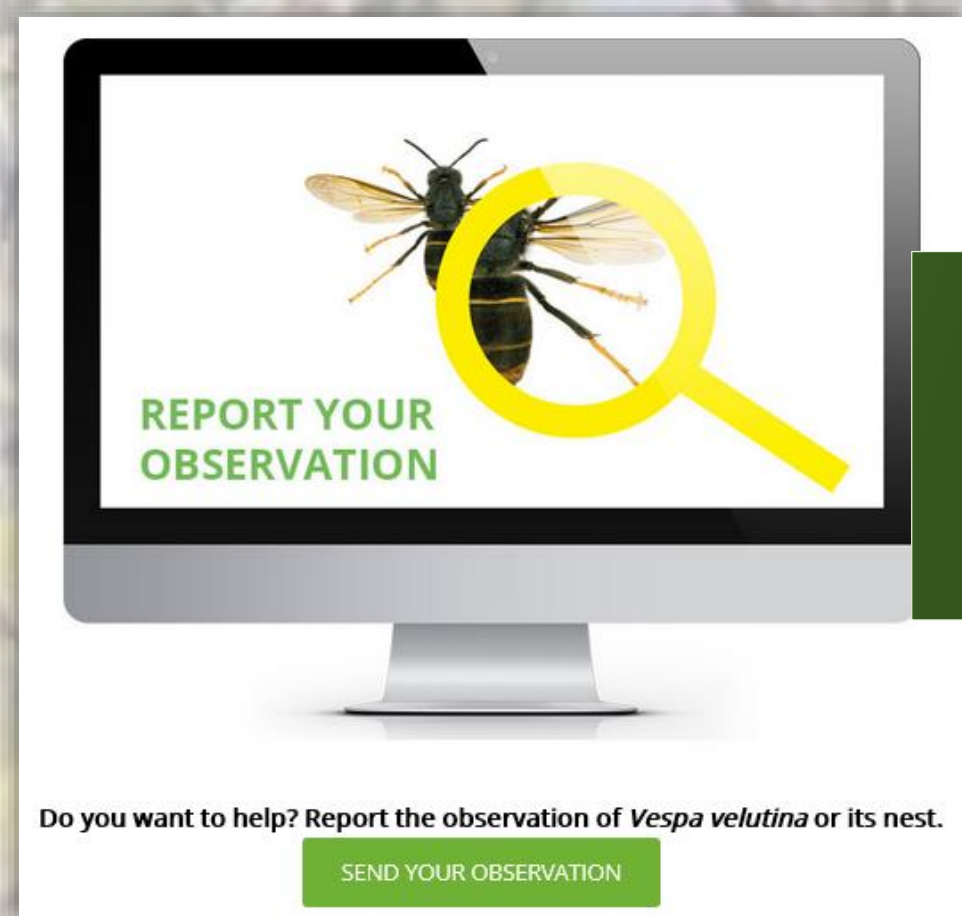
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In order to manage the expansion of *Vespa velutina* in Italy, the LIFE STOPVESPA Project developed an Early Warning and Rapid Response System in the project area (Liguria and Piedmont regions), continuing the activities already started in 2012 by the bee research unit of DISAFA (University of Turin). Pivotal points of this system were intensive networking and communication activities together with monitoring and control actions in the colonized areas. Beekeepers and more generally the public were constantly informed about the importance of reporting the presence of *V. velutina* nests or individuals. To collect their reports, several tools were provided to the citizens: a mobile phone number, an e-mail address, a reporting form available on the project webpage (www.vespavelutina.eu) and social media webpage. In Liguria, at regional level, an institutional phone number and e-mail address were also established. The involvement of firefighters and local police allowed to collect other *V. velutina* reports. In the period 2012-2018, over 5,800 reports were collected and verified.

A four-step approach for the management of *Vespa velutina* in Italy:



V. velutina
YES



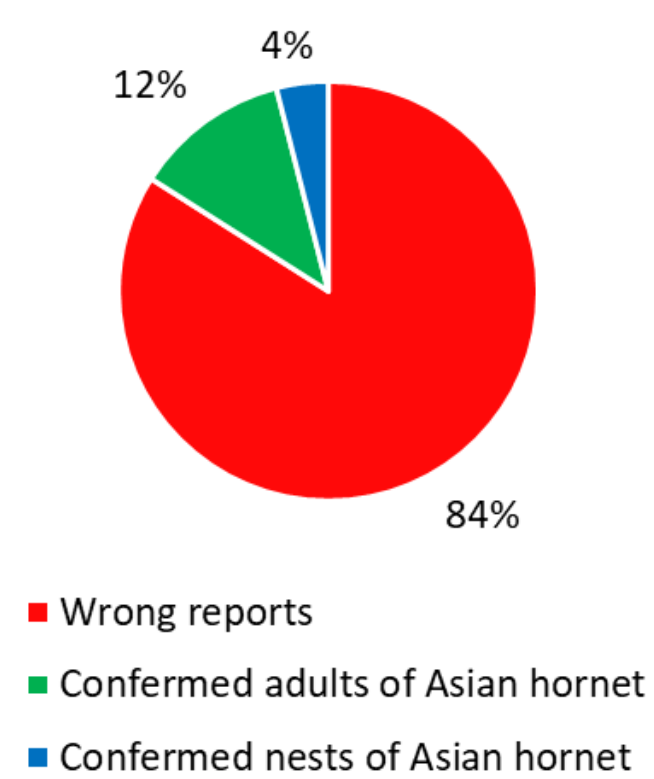
1) Report collection: verification and species identification

2) Activation of a Vespa Emergency Team

3) Nest destruction by trained teams

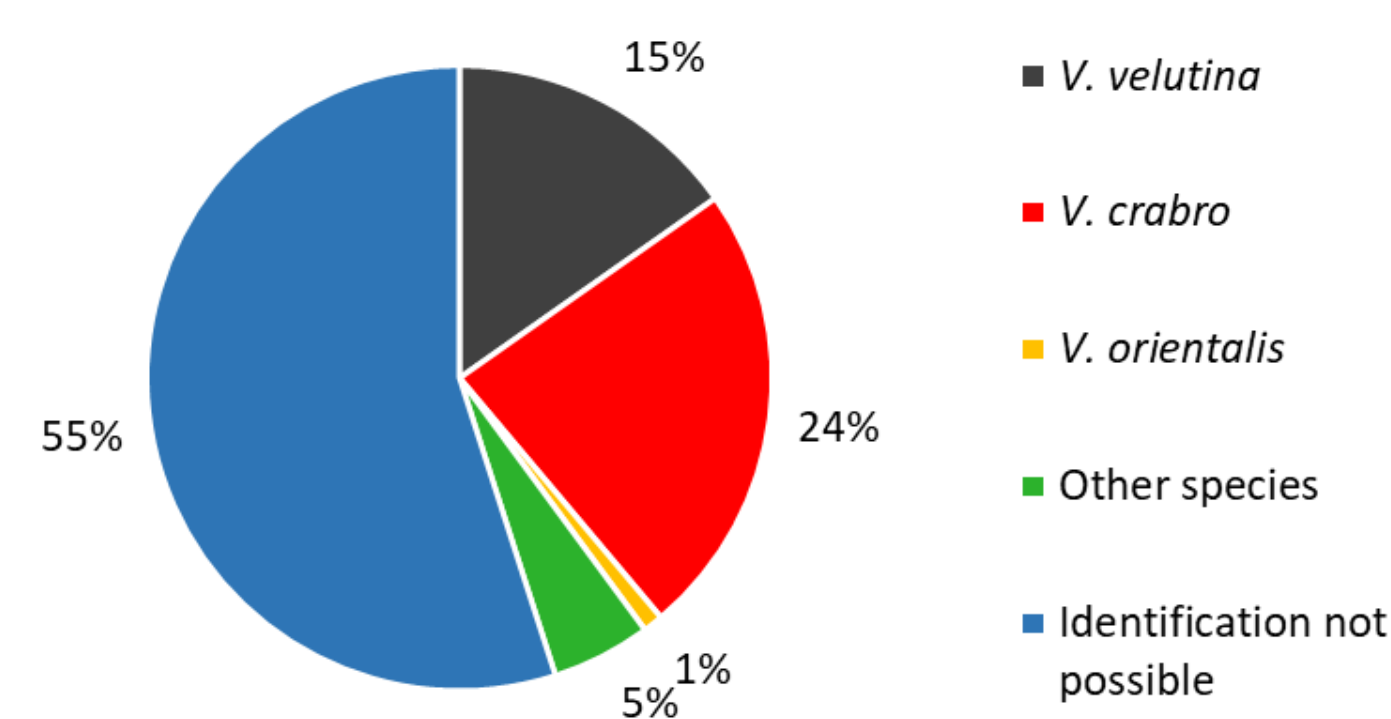
4) Data recording and analysis

Reports received by citizens through the project website



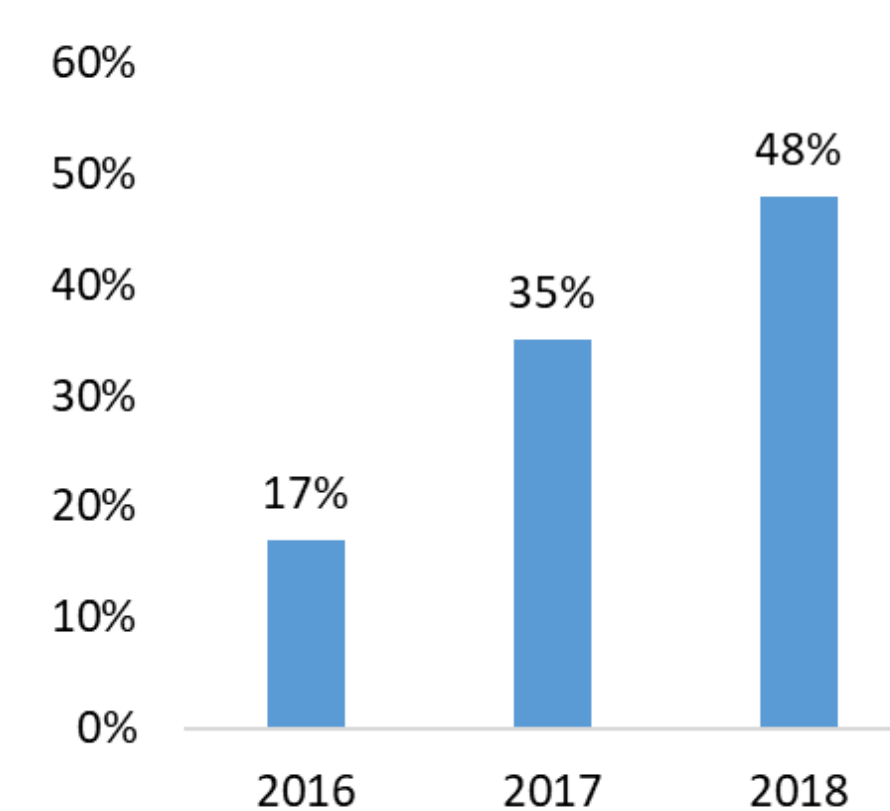
Considering online reports, the species is highly confused with native insects.

Species identification



When photographic documentation was provided, *V. velutina* was mainly confused with the European hornet *Vespa crabro*.

Reports number per year through the project website



The number of reports increased in the years, thanks also to the dissemination activities of LIFE STOPVESPA.

✓ **3,382 phone calls**
✓ **1,671 WhatsApp messages**
✓ **757 online reports**

Online reports from Italian Regions:

36% Liguria
13% Lombardy
10% Piedmont
7% Emilia-Romagna
7% Veneto
6% Lazio
21% Other Italian Regions

The highest number of reports arrived on the mobile phone number (3,382 calls) and WhatsApp account (1,671 messages), while a lesser number of reports from e-mail and webpages (757 reports). Considering online reports, 36% were sent from Liguria where *V. velutina* is well established, 13% from Lombardy, 10% from Piedmont and the remaining reports from other Italian Regions. The management of all reports (data collection, verification and species identification) required about 200 hours full-time working days.

The dissemination activity raised citizens' awareness and participation: the analysis of the records highlighted that a large part of the public needs to be more informed about species identification, in order to improve data reliability.

To help citizens to recognize *V. velutina*, the project edited different materials that are available on the project webpage (e.g. flyers, leaflet, brochures, a 40 minutes documentary film).

The rapid and efficient response given to this problem by trained people must be taken into consideration for the future management of *V. velutina* in Italy, to assure the maintenance of an efficient management strategy in compliance with the **EU Regulation 1143/2014** and its implementation by the national law.



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