

First Confirmed Sightings of *Apivenenum magnus* (Oak 1995) in Maui, Hawaii, U.S.A

Anthony Laurel^{1*}, Samuel Oak², Rex Kukui³¹Littleroot Town Research Laboratory, Taku, Saga Prefecture, Japan²Oak Monstrasinu Research Laboratory, Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan³Hau'oli City Research Laboratory, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.ADOI: [10.36347/sjebm.2020.v07i08.00X](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjebm.2020.v07i08.00X)

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*Corresponding author: Anthony Laurel

Abstract

Review Article

Apivenenum magnus (Oak 1995) is a well-known anthophile native to the Kanto region of Japan. It is most notable for its large size, reaching one meter in length and weighing nearly thirty kilograms as a full-grown adult. Like many anthophiles, it lives in groups and will violently defend their nests from predators, but its large size makes it a public health concern. Here we report two confirmed sightings on the island of Maui in the Hawaiian Island chain, Hawaii, U.S.A. In the first, a young animal trainer walking through the jungle with his pet mouse was attacked by a group of *A. magnus*. He escaped along with his unconscious mouse, which suffered injuries that are only consistent with *A. magnus* attacks. In the second sighting, a pair of petty thieves was watching a pet show from a distance with their pet cat when they inadvertently stumbled across an *A. magnus* nest, all requiring hospitalization. It is currently unknown if *A. magnus* will be able to establish a permanent population on Maui, or how it arrived, with international shipping containers a possibility. Animal control authorities have been alerted to the danger and are currently searching for *A. magnus* nests.

Keywords: Sightings *Apivenenum magnus*.

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INTRODUCTION

Apivenenum magnus (Oak 1995) is the largest anthophile species in the world [1]. In its native habitat in the Kanto region of Japan, it can reach lengths of one meter and can weigh almost thirty kilograms [2, 3]. It is a gregarious species, living in groups of several dozen around a single nest, which they will violently defend against predators, such as hawks and owls [2]. They are most common in the forest between Pewter City and Viridian City in Yamanashi, Saitama, and Nagano Prefectures, and cause serious difficulties in the local area [4, 5]. They have attacked bug catchers and lasses, and the local authorities are often equipped with insect repellent that only works for 100, 200, or 250 steps [4, 5]. The forest is known for its maze-like warrens of paths, making travel even more difficult, even notwithstanding the threat of *A. magnus* attacks.

As such, this species is closely monitored by biologists from the Oak Monstrasinu Research Laboratory and the Devon Corporation, and its importation is currently banned by many nations in East Asia, including the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic

of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Mongolian People's Republic, and the Republic of North Macedonia [6-10]. Despite these deterrents, it has spread to other areas in Japan, including a Safari Zone in Kagoshima Prefecture, and other countries, including Santalune Forest in Île-de-France, France [11, 12]. We report two novel sightings of *A. magnus* from the South Pacific islands of Hawaii in the United States.

The First Sighting

On February 29, 2020, a young animal trainer was walking with his pet mouse through a jungle on the island of Maui, the second largest island in the Hawaiian Islands [13]. Unbeknownst to him, he had wandered into the territory of a swarm of *A. magnus*, which attacked both the animal trainer and his pet mouse [11]. His pet mouse tried to fight back through harnessing electrical currents, but both the trainer and his mouse were severely injured from the attack, suffering multiple pairs of twineedle wounds that had an estimated power of 25 per strike [11-12]. Despite an estimated 20% likelihood of any twineedle attack poisoning the victim, neither was poisoned [11,13]. The trainer made a full recovery after a hospital stay, and his pet mouse recovered after taking Revive™ along with

berries of the oran tree and a check at a Monstrasinu Center [11-14].

The Second Sighting

On March 15, 2020, a pair of petty thieves and their pet cat were in the same area on the island of Maui that the young animal trainer had been attacked [15]. They were monitoring a pet show from a distance, with the intent to kidnap some of the animals and sell them for ransom or harness their abilities for themselves when they accidentally disturbed an *A. magnus* nest [15]. Despite their best efforts, they were unable to defend themselves with their punching bag or pet cat, were sent blasting off again, and were ultimately hospitalized with twineedle injuries that match those from the first sighting [12,15].

Other Possible Sightings

Other authors have noted possible sightings in Pinwheel Forest in Unova County, New York, United States, with some going so far as to claim that they have established a colony [11]. We reject these sightings, as the sources claiming that these sightings occurred are unreliable, in the same way that this paper is unreliable, although we are open to the possibility of the presence of *A. magnus* in Unova County but have not seen sufficient evidence to support this claim.

Ramifications

It is currently unknown if *A. magnus* will be able to establish a permanent population on Maui, or how it arrived, with international shipping containers a possibility. Given the amount of time it takes an *A. magnus* nest to be built, it is likely that they were introduced to Maui in late 2019 or earlier [2]. The Hawaiian Department of Land and Natural Resources has been alerted to the danger and are currently searching for *A. magnus* nests, as they hope to eradicate the colony before it spreads to other islands in the chain [15].

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