

Information for beekeepers: small hive beetle

Effective from 29 November 2023:

- The East Devonport Bee Movement Restriction Area (BMRA) reduces from a radius of 5km to 1.5km. An interactive map of the BMRA can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/beerestriction>.
- The moratorium on opening beehives and harvesting honey and honeycomb within the BMRA is lifted.
- Movement restrictions are still in place within the BMRA. The movement of any bees, hives or used beekeeping equipment into, out of or within the BMRA is still prohibited.
- Biosecurity Tasmania will be conducting two further inspections, one in January and one in March.

Surveillance activities for small hive beetle (SHB) are still ongoing. Biosecurity Tasmania asks that any beekeepers opening their hives remain vigilant for signs of SHB. Weak and stressed colonies with a low bee-to-comb ratio are considered the most susceptible.

What should I look for?

Adult SHB are brown-black, 5-7mm long with clubbed antennae. The eggs are tiny (about 1mm long) and are pearly white. In strong colonies, eggs are laid in the crevices of the hive, while in weak colonies eggs are laid directly on brood comb. Larvae are white, approximately 10mm long with three pairs of legs near the head.

Adult SHB avoid light and will seek refuge quickly when the hive is inspected so ensure you look in the darker parts of the hive. Inspect underneath the hive lid, as well as the brood box, and in the debris found on the bottom board.

In its larval stage, SHB burrow into beehives consuming brood, pollen, and honey. Whilst feeding, the yeast species (*Kodamaea ohmeri*) is released causing the honey to ferment. Heavy infestations may cause the honey to look greasy and slimy and 'slime out' of the cells.



Adult small hive beetle. Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), Crown Copyright. <https://beeaware.org.au>



Larva head showing the distinctive three pairs of legs at the front end of the body. Simon Hinkley and Ken Walker, Museum Victoria, PADIL <https://beeaware.org.au>



Small hive beetle larva
Division of Plant Industry,
University of Florida



Close up of small hive beetle 'slime out' a frame. Nick Annand, NSW DPI <https://beeaware.org.au>

If you think you have found signs of SHB in your hive(s), or you notice anything unusual, contact Biosecurity Tasmania immediately on 03 6165 3777.

Permits

Permits may be issued in exceptional circumstances to enable prohibited activities to occur. Permits are free and enable Biosecurity Tasmania to record the location of any movement activities. Traceability plays a key role in a successful response and will be vital if more small hive beetles are found.

What can I do without a permit?

If your bees, hives, captured swarms, nucleus colonies, or used beekeeping equipment are **located outside the BMRA**:

- There are no restrictions.

If your bees, hives, captured swarms, nucleus colonies, or used beekeeping equipment are **located within the BMRA**:

- You can now open your hives for management and the collection of honey, honeycomb or wax.
- **IMPORTANT:** any beekeeping equipment and hive components must be sourced from your property as movement restrictions are still in place (see below).

What can't I do?

Movement restrictions remain in place.

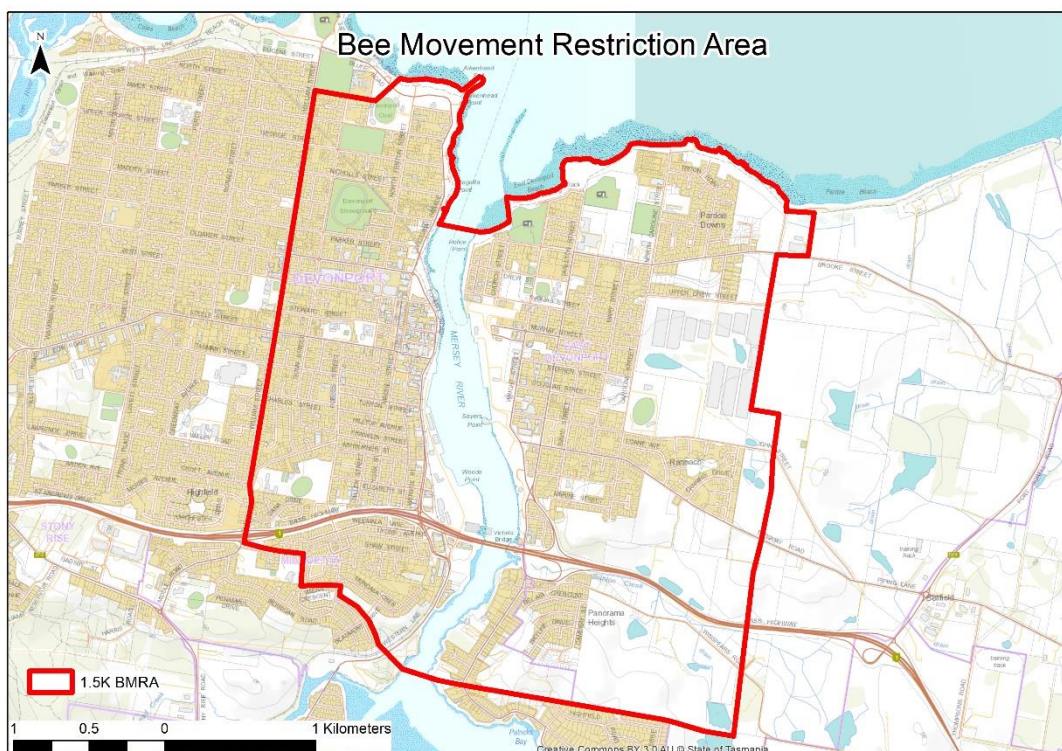
- You must not move bees, beehives, captured swarms, nucleus colonies, or used beekeeping equipment into, out of, or within the BMRA.
- Beehives located outside the BMRA that are being transported through the BMRA are able to do so under a Group Permit available [here](#).
- The capture of swarms is supported by Biosecurity Tasmania, however if you are within the BMRA some restrictions apply and you must first contact us on (03) 6165 3777 to obtain a permit. This process will allow Biosecurity Tasmania officers to record the location of the swarm and the intended destination and enable officers to inspect the remaining hive or wild colony for any traces of SHB.

Contact

If you are within the 1.5km BMRA and need to apply for a permit, or undertake any activities not specified above, please contact Biosecurity Tasmania.

Phone: (03) 6165 3777

Email: biosecurity.tasmania@nre.tas.gov.au



For the latest information, or to apply for a permit, please visit www.nre.tas.gov.au/SHB