



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications, Sport and the Arts



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



Biosecurity alert: Macao paper wasp



Polistes olivaceus

Have you seen an unusual wasp or nest?

The Macao paper wasp (*Polistes olivaceus*) is an invasive wasp that is established on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands but does not occur on Christmas Island. Because the species can hitchhike on vessels, cargo, and equipment, early detection and prompt reporting are important to help protect Christmas Island's community, environment and unique wildlife.

Why is this wasp a concern?

The Macao paper wasp is an aggressive social wasp that can establish large colonies in residential areas, buildings and infrastructure and the natural environment. If it becomes established on Christmas Island, it will:

- Aggressively defend nests located near homes, workplaces and recreational areas
- Deliver painful stings, including multiple stings from a single encounter
- Affect community wellbeing and outdoor activities
- Prey on native insects and other invertebrates, potentially disrupting local ecosystems and impacting unique wildlife on Christmas Island, including diverse butterfly populations.

Christmas Island has its own unique paper wasp

Christmas Island is home to a native paper wasp, *Polistes balder*.

Unlike the Macao paper wasp, *P. balder* is found nowhere else in the world. This makes it part of Christmas Island's unique natural heritage, alongside iconic local species such as the red crab and Abbott's booby.

Protecting Christmas Island from invasive species helps protect the unique fauna that make the island special.



What to look for

Macao paper wasp

(*Polistes olivaceus*)

REPORT

- Large yellow wasp, up to 26 mm long
- Distinctive body stripes and wavy black bands across the abdomen
- Nests can be very large, but typically 10 to 20 cm across



The Macao paper wasp is larger than the native wasp and has distinctive stripes and bands



An average-sized Macao paper wasp nest

Native Christmas Island paper wasp

(*Polistes balder*)

No report required

- Native wasps are 15 to 18 mm long, smaller than the Macao paper wasp
- Lacks the distinctive wavy black abdominal bands
- Builds smaller nests



The native paper wasp has limited markings



Native paper wasp nests are generally smaller



If you see a suspect wasp or nest

- Keep your distance
- Do not disturb or spray the nest
- Report it

Disturbing a nest can place people at risk.

If possible:

- Record the location
- Take a photo from a safe distance
- Report the sighting as soon as possible



Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au

or

Pest and Disease Information Service
(08) 9368 3080
padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

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