



## Wildlife Hazard Management

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

ASWHM\_OAN\_068

Version 9.0

## Operational Advice Notice

### Solitary Bees (May – September)

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OANs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their supervisor or Manager.

**This document has been re-issued for 2026. Red bars indicate change.**

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2021, three separate incidents occurred at Heathrow Airport involving abnormal pitot/static system readings on departing aircraft, two of which led to rejected take-offs. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) investigation concluded that the cause was nesting activity by particular species of wasps and bees within the pitot probes, leading to erroneous airspeed indications and corresponding flight crew responses.
- 1.2 In response to the incidents that occurred in June 2021, a series of layered surveillance and alert measures were implemented to address the increased activity of insects, particularly solitary bees. These measures have been summarised annually through Operational Advice Notices (OANs).
- 1.3 The purpose of the OAN is to remind airline operators about additional control measures necessary to mitigate the environmental risks posed by insects. This includes reinforcing the use of pitot covers and, where applicable, enhancing pre-flight inspections.
- 1.4 The above OAN complemented the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Safety Notice SN-2021/014 on pitot blockage events, as well as the associated AAIB investigation. It also emphasised that significant insect activity is typically observed during the summer months (June to August). However, the risk period can begin as early as May and extend through to September.



- 1.5 Following a rejected take-off at Heathrow on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 due to pitot blockage, the CAA issued an updated [Safety Notice—SN-2025-010](#) on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to address the continued threat posed by such occurrences.
- 1.6 The airside monitoring stations, which does include sites on the perimeter of the airfield are monitored bi-weekly. However, the Landside locations will only be inspected once a month as part of our normal Biodiversity monitoring.
- 1.7 Since the layered surveillance and alerting plans were put into place in 2022, one site within the Heathrow Airfield boundary has recorded solitary bee activity (end of the 2025 season, site 1).

## 2. Safety Procedure

As outlined in the updated CAA Safety Notice SN-2025-010, airline operators should apply the following during the above risk period:

- 2.1 Maintenance Organisations and Airworthiness Management Organisations should comply with the Original Equipment Manufacturers / Type Certificate Holders – Operational Suitability Data (OSD), specifically concerning aircraft storage and pre-flight inspections.
- 2.2 Crews should be made aware of this potential issue and reminded of the importance of the speed checks during the take-off roll and the actions to be taken in the case of a discrepancy, as well as the appropriate unreliable speed indications for their aircraft type should they discover the issue once airborne.
- 2.3 Airline operators should also ensure that appropriate covers are used to cover any inlets when aircraft go into periods of low utilisation.
- 2.4 Additionally, airline operators should be aware of the following conditions that tend to favour the behaviour of solitary bees blocking pitot probes:
  - 2.4.1 Peak activity occurs between May and September, with the highest risk in June to August. This aligns with the bees' natural nesting season in temperate climates.
  - 2.4.2 Warm temperatures and dry weather encourage bee activity. Operator feedback suggests that bee nesting occurrences in pitot probes is more prevalent when an elevated overnight temperature (>12°C) occurs follows a high day temperature (>26°C). Proximity to green spaces, gardens, or areas with flowering plants increases the likelihood of bee presence.
  - 2.4.3 Low aircraft utilisation or extended ground time increases the risk, as pitot probes remain exposed and stationary for longer periods. Aircraft parked near vegetated or less trafficked areas are more vulnerable.



### 3. Monitoring

- 3.1 HAL Airfield Operations and its nominated subcontractor have installed various 'bug hotel' monitoring sites airside and landside for bee and other insect activity.
- 3.2 During the risk period, only the monitoring stations located airside will be checked, initially every fortnight. If insect/bee activity is observed, the monitoring frequency will increase (up to daily where required).
- 3.3 A map of the monitoring stations can be found in Appendix A.

### 4. Notification

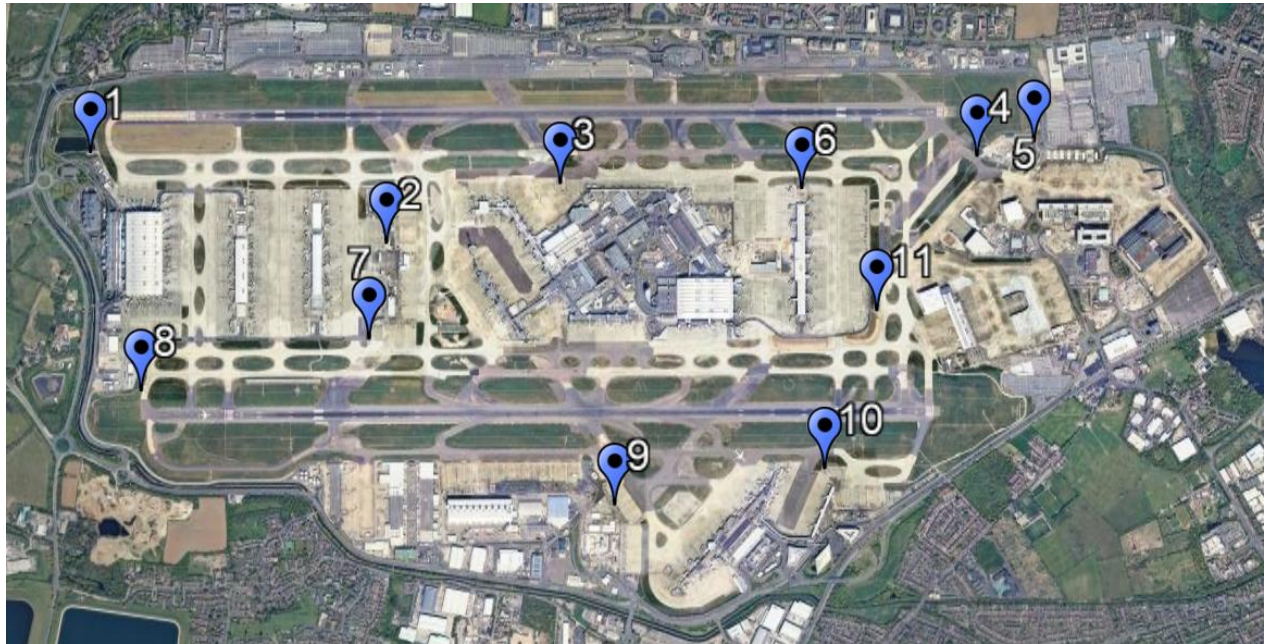
- 4.1 If you wish to receive notification of activity detection from the surveillance visits, please contact the Airfield Duty Manager (AfDM) at [airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com](mailto:airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com).
- 4.2 Airline operators must notify the Airfield Duty Manager (AfDM) if they are conducting their own monitoring or observing of bee/insect activity as required.

### 5. Enquiries

Any questions regarding this OAN should be directed to the Heathrow Airfield Duty Manager (AfDM) at [airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com](mailto:airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com) or 0208 745 7373.



Appendix A



Number	Location
1.	T5 Balancing Pond
2.	573 / Vehicle Wash
3.	355 / Cargo Store
4.	AY1
5.	Eastern Perimeter Road Boundary – Vehicle Store
6.	231 / 249 Building
7.	581 – Above Underpass D1
8.	NB11 Lamppost
9.	455 Hydrant Post
10.	429 Post
11.	251 / 252 - Nevis

