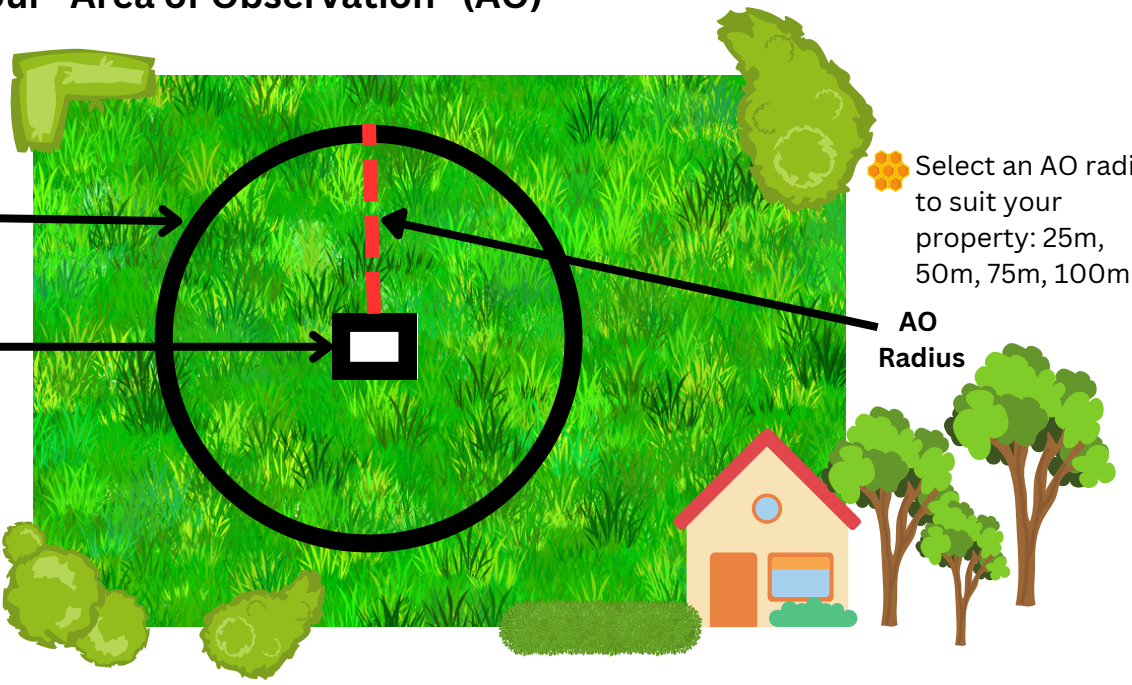
woodend bee-friendly society

Honeybee Swarm Monitoring Project

Participant Guidelines & Project Terminology

Thank you for participating in the **WBFS Spring 2023 Honeybee Swarm Monitoring Project**. This document is intended to provide you with an overview of what you will be asked to do during the project as well as to establish common terminology that we can share. This will help make our observations and data collection more meaningful.

1 Determine your "Area of Observation" (AO)



Select an AO radius to suit your property: 25m, 50m, 75m, 100m.

The Area of Observation (AO) should centre on a managed hive on your property. You will monitor this area twice a week during spring.

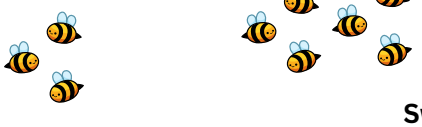
Your AO should be roughly circular in shape.

If your AO is larger than 100m radius, simply estimate the radius.

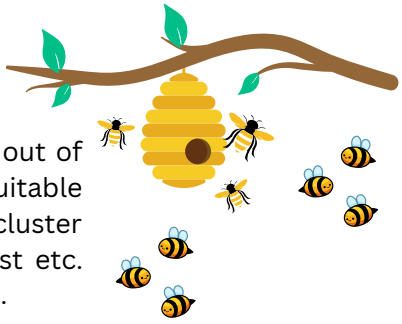
2 Understand what you're monitoring for.

Hive or Colony

An established group of bees exhibiting complex functioning as a unit over a period of time



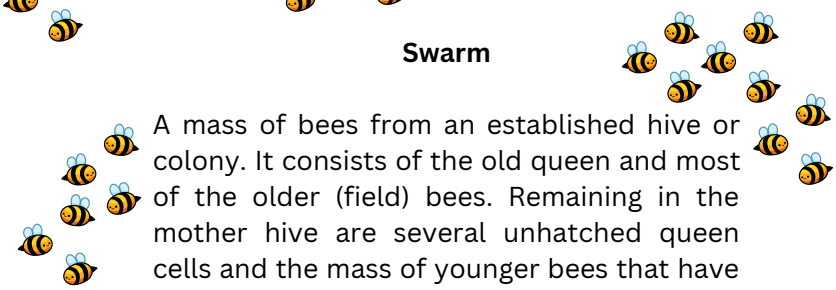
Cluster



The first stage of a swarm as it issues out of the mother hive on its way to find a suitable cavity for a new home. Normally the cluster hangs from the branch or a fence post etc. within about 20m from the mother hive.

The cluster usually remains for about 2 days while a couple of hundred scout bees search for a suitable site to set up a permanent colony where the old queen can soon begin laying eggs. Capturing a swarm in the 'traditional' way usually takes place while the swarm is in a cluster. In our Swarm Monitoring Project we hope that the scout bees will decide that our bait boxes are suitable cavities in which to set up a new home.

Swarm



A mass of bees from an established hive or colony. It consists of the old queen and most of the older (field) bees. Remaining in the mother hive are several unhatched queen cells and the mass of younger bees that have not yet become field bees.

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3 Record what you see bi-weekly from September to December 2023.

Swarm Activity Report

There are six possible outcomes that you can record in your biweekly report:

(a) Did the swarm come from your managed hive?

(b) Did the swarm come from an unknown source?

(c) Was the swarm captured in the traditional way? (i.e. When the swarm was in a cluster?)

(d) Did the swarm take off from the cluster site to an unknown location?

(e) Did the swarm take off from the cluster site to a known location other than a WBFS bait box?

(f) Did the swarm leave the cluster site and enter your WBFS bait box?

What will your report look like?

We are working on both a mobile app version as well as a paper-based version. Stay tuned for details!

OR

4 What else you need to know.

Project Participants

Anyone who volunteers to be an observer becomes a participant. We request that all participants be paid members of the Woodend Bee Friendly Society, via their membership in the Macedon Ranges Sustainabilty Group (MRSG). Once a MRSG membership has been purchased, you become a member of the WBFS by selecting us as one of your "Action Groups".

Other Swarm Monitoring Activity

The WBFS has always received and shared ad hoc swarm activity via our Facebook page. We plan to continue to do so even during this special Spring 2023 project. The project team will work to integrate the data from ad hoc swarm reporting into the more coordinated data obtained by participants during the special project period.