

# Orange County Beekeepers Association

## Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2025

OCBA Vice President, Mary Anne Rhyne, opened the January meeting and welcomed attendees. The meeting was attended by approximately 42 members in-person at the Orange County Extension Office in Hillsborough.

### **Presentation: Challenges Ahead for Beekeepers in 2025**

**Don Hopkins** is the Chief Apiary Inspector for NC, overseeing 5 other inspectors working for the NCDA & Consumer Services in the Plant Protection Section, Apiary Services (<https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/plant-industry/plant-protection/plant-industry-apiary-field-services>). In addition, he directly oversees Orange County, as well as 12 other counties in central North Carolina. The inspectors' purpose is to protect and promote the state's beekeeping industry, by providing disease and disorder inspections and fumigation services to control diseases and pests, and to provide educational workshops and lectures to the beekeeping community on the biology and treatment of mite and disease pests of honey bees.

Don provided an overview of some of the challenges faced by honey bees in NC, with a focus on a potential future threat: the invasive yellow-legged hornet. He noted that the yellow-legged hornet is not yet found in NC, however, populations have been established in Georgia and there are recent observations of them in South Carolina.

<https://pdic.ces.ncsu.edu/2023/08/yellow-legged-hornet-found-in-georgia/>

Don noted that compared to our native hornets, the larger colony size of yellow-legged hornets and a particular behavioral trait called "hawking" – where they hover in front of a hive waiting for foragers to return where they are easily picked off – makes them a particular threat to honey bee colonies. NC Apiary Inspectors will be focused on this threat in the coming years. A citizen trapping program will also be rolling out with more information coming at the spring NCSBA conference.

### **Club Business**

#### **Treasurers Report (Jim Greco)**

- Jim recapped our 2024 financial report with a summary slide. In coming meetings he will present monthly budget reports for 2025.

#### **Membership (Cindy Copolo)**

- A reminder to renew your membership for 2025.

- Also, a survey will be sent out to all members to obtain feedback on what people like about OCBA and what can be improved. A separate survey will be sent to former members who have decided not to renew.

## **Education**

- Bee School 2025 (Randall Austin)
  - o The 2025 Bee School is underway, having started 2 weeks earlier than normal to allow completion before bee packages are expected to arrive.
  - o There are currently 61 students, but Randall noted there are often late registrants since the course is also offered online and recorded.
- Journal Club Discussion Group
  - o Axel Elling gave an overview of the OCBA's Journal Discussion Group, which is for more experienced beekeepers to discuss advanced topics related to honey bees and beekeeping from academic journal articles.
  - o There is a sign-up button under the Education tab on the OCBA website:  
<https://theocba.org/journal-discussion-group/>
  - o The group is also looking for a volunteer to facilitate the group (setting up the Zoom meetings, soliciting article ideas and otherwise organizing the group).

## **Next Month's Speaker**

At the February 13 meeting, our invited speaker will be Eric Talley, who is a Master Craftsman Beekeeper and coordinator of the NCSBA Master Beekeeping Program. Eric's presentation will be about the contrasting practices of commercial beekeepers versus backyard hobbyists.

*Erika Wittchen*  
*OCBA Secretary*