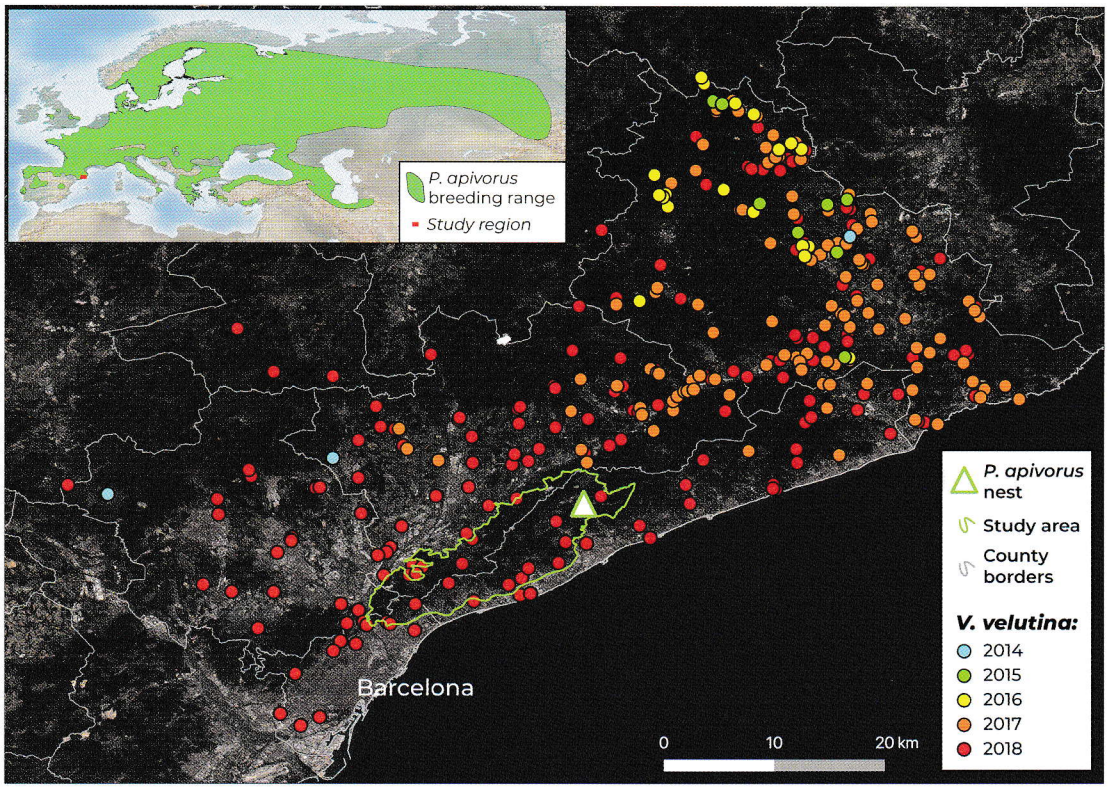

Figure 1. Map of the study region. The inset shows the location of the study region and the breeding distribution range of European Honey Buzzard (BirdLife International 2004). The green triangle represents the European Honey Buzzard nest with Asian Hornet remains, sampled in 2018. The green line shows the area that was surveyed and grey lines the county borders. Points show the Asian Hornet nests recorded each year since its arrival in 2014 to the surrounding counties. Records were obtained from the Catalan Cos d'Agents Rurals del Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia, Pesca i Alimentació.

This finding represents the first unambiguous case of predation on an Asian Hornet nest during the active breeding period of the wasp. A few potential cases, also by European Honey Buzzard, were mentioned in the mass media but apparently not yet scientifically confirmed (Vigneaud 2013, mentioned in Monceau *et al.* 2014). The Asian Hornet is extremely aggressive and venomous, and thus, it is remarkable that the European Honey Buzzard exploits the active nests.

The main foraging range of breeding European Honey Buzzards does not usually surpass 10 km (van Manen *et al.* 2011). Until 2018, no Asian Hornet nests were documented within this distance of the nests monitored in this study. The Asian Hornet arrived in Catalonia in 2012 (Pujade-Villar *et al.* 2012-2013) and to the study region in 2014. Since then, recorded wasp nest-to-bird nest distances were: 2014, 21 km; 2015, 29 and 42 km; 2016, 25 km; 2017, no breeding recorded. On the contrary, in 2018 the monitored European Honey Buzzard nest was much nearer to a number of Asian Hornet nests, the closest being only 1.8 km away (Figure 1).

Assuming that the wasp presence records are accurate, which is likely given the social alarm due to the expected arrival of the species in the area, we can infer that the European Honey Buzzard started using the Asian Hornet to provision their offspring within a maximum of a year since nests were accessible. It is well known that this raptor has a number of behavioural (e.g. excavation of the wasp nests) and morphological (e.g. densely imbricated feathers) adaptations to predate wasps, as is also the case for its sister species, the Crested Honey Buzzard.

Despite our discovery being limited to a few fragments on a single nest, it opens the door to a number of questions, and long-term quantitative studies in various parts of the European Honey Buzzard range will be needed to establish the extent and evolution of the trophic exploitation of the Asian Hornet. The effects of this additional allochthonous resource on the European Honey Buzzard populations are especially intriguing.

Large colonies by social wasps that last 5–6 months, such as those of the Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris* and the German Wasp *Vespula germanica*, are the