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An Unusual Recording of Honeybees (*Apis florea*) in Abu Dhabi

Early in February 1983 Liz and Phillip Mansley noticed a swarm of bees on a wire mesh fence close behind a small oleander bush in their Khalediya garden. The swarm measured approximately 30 x 25 x 12.5 cm. Although the weather was rather cool a few of the bees were actively foraging for food, and beginning to make a comb. The Recorder immediately identified the species as the Small Asiatic Honeybee (*Apis florea* Fabricius). These bees occur widely in Northern Oman, normally suspending their nests from the roofs of caverns and rocky niches, or from the branches of trees and bushes. They have been collected and kept to obtain honey in some mountain villages, but usually return to the wild. Unfortunately, widespread chemical spraying of date plantations is having a disastrous effect on bees and other useful insects, as well as destroying pests. This is the first record of a nest of bees on Abu Dhabi Island though individual specimens have been collected in other parts of town. Whether this particular swarm was brought in, or a single queen, is an open question.

Records show specimens from Wadi Uyaynah (Dibba), Qasr al Zubba (near al-Nakheel, Ras al Khaimah), the Wadis Assimah and Sidr (both near Masafi, Ras al Khaimah), Sueyhan, Khor Fakkan, Hatta and at Abool (near Mahdah, beyond Buraimi).