Beat: News

Bees attack young children at South African park, injuring 44

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USPA News - More than 40 young children were injured and transported to area hospitals after a swarm of bees attacked them at a park in the northeastern region of South Africa, paramedics said on late Friday. Four of the children were critically injured.

The freak incident happened at around 3:30 p.m. local time on Friday when 80 children from a pre-primary school were waiting to board their bus after visiting a bunny park in Benoni, a city on the East Rand in Gauteng province. All of the children were between the ages of 2 and 6. "They were waiting for a bus when things went drastically wrong. A swarm of bees came out of nowhere and attacked the children," said Chris Botha, a spokesman for ambulance service Netcare 911. The incident sparked a large emergency response with ambulances from across the region being sent to the scene. There were conflicting reports on the number of injured, but Botha said 44 of the children were stung and transported to area hospitals. "Four of them were in a critical condition when the paramedics arrived on scene," he said. "One of the critically injured children was airlifted with the Netcare medical helicopter to the Charlotte Maxeke hospital " It was not clear what may have provoked the swarm to attack the children, but it seemed unlikely the incident involved Africanized honey bees, known for relentlessly attacking and chasing perceived threats in large numbers. This has earned them the nickname "killer bees" even though their venom is no more potent than that of other bees. "I am a bee keeper and we only have African bees here, commonly known as the honey bee," Botha explained.

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