

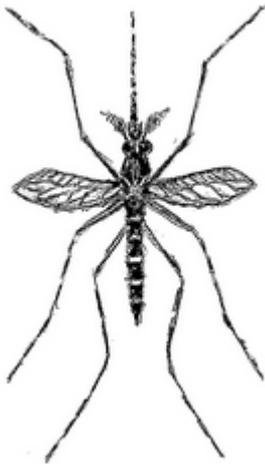
Mosquitos of the Surf Coast... Bill McKellar

Drawings by Kaye Traynor

There are about 26 species of mosquitos in our region (Museum of Victoria circa 2006). Most do not bite humans and very few are vectors for viruses causing infective polyarthritis (Barmah, Ross River and Kunjin diseases). The hosts for these viruses are kangaroos, wallabies, possums, horses, birds, etc. The worst vectors like *Aedes aegypti* (causing a long list including Dengue fever, Yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis) and *Anopheles* species many including malaria], are found in the tropics only e.g. Queensland and Northern NSW.

The two mosquitos most likely to cause problems here are:

Aedes camptorhynchus



Aedes camptorhynchus

A dark, quiet, medium sized insect with white bands on its legs and abdomen. The wings have dark scales. It is a strong flyer and can travel up to four kms from its hatching site. The female will bite humans all times of the day but is worse at dawn and dusk. She then lays rafts of up to 300 eggs in non- salty water. These hatch within four days and the larva moult within 14 days. It is a confirmed vector for various diseases including Ross River virus, Barmah virus and Dog heartworm. She can live for up to three weeks

The male has the same markings but does not bite, living on nectar, pollen etc. Males have a lifespan of seven days

Culex annulirostris

This is a larger, noisier, brown mosquito with faint markings on its abdomen and legs. The wings are transparent. The female is an active biter, again all day and night, but worse at dusk. It is called swamp mosquito because that's where it lays its eggs. These hatch within four days and larvae moult in 10-14 days. This mosquito is found on the coast but also along the rivers in northern Victoria. It is a good distance flyer and has been shown to be a vector for Ross river, Barmah river, Murray River encephalitis viruses.



Culex annulirostris

Protection

The recommendation to prevent these diseases is to stop the mosquitos biting you:

- Be indoors during dusk and dawn.
- Wear loose clothing covering the arms and legs, including ankles and shoes. Permethrin impregnated onto clothing will give added protection.
- Wear a hat
- Use an insect repellent on exposed areas. These block out our smell.
- Dark clothing and some perfumes attract mosquitos

The many studies on the effectiveness of insect repellents show that compounds containing DEET (Rid , Aerogard or Bushmans) and those containing picaridin (OFF! Skintastic) are the only compounds giving proven protection for more than 2 hours. Citronella and other natural oil compounds work for up to 30 mins. Wristbands work for 12 seconds!

If using sun screen it should be applied first and repellent second.

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