

MOSQUITO NEWS FROM ALASKA *

Culiseta incidens (THOMSON) PRESENT IN SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA. The collection of a single well-marked female (hibernator) of *Culiseta incidens* on May 29, 1952 and of two small larval samples, most probably of that species, the following month at Peterson Creek near Juneau confirms the occurrence of the mosquito in Alaska.

Since neither the intensive surveys of the Alaska Insect Project nor the *Culiseta* life-history studies of the Arctic Health Research Center recovered any *incidens* in the Upper Cook Inlet Area it has seemed prior to this finding prudent to question the recent Alaska records: (1) That of Stage and Chamberlin (this journal, 1945) for the Matanuska Valley based on specimens which were included in trap collections, very likely only rubbed *alaskaensis*; (2) That of Frohne (this Journal, 1951) for Ketchikan based on 21 larvae checked by Dr. Alan Stone but with the reservation: "It is possible these are *alaskaensis* larvae." *Incidens* appears to replace *alaskaensis* in Southeastern Alaska.

WATER LEVEL PREDATOR OF EMERGING MOSQUITOES. During June in Southeastern Alaska almost every breeding pool of *Aedes punctor* (Kby.) or *pionips* Dyar has its population of small smoky-winged flies tirelessly skimming the water surface. These are dance flies (Empididae), a species of *Rhamphomyia*, probably new, according to Dr. Willis Wirth of the U. S. National Museum, who kindly made the identification. It is reasonable to consider them important predators of the principal insects, viz. mosquitoes, of these pools, although not a great deal of their activities has been observed. Mosquito and midge pupae breaking the surface film are harried by the dance flies. Several midge pupae, which hatched in the shelter of the edge of the pool, were seized and carried off before their wings had hardened. When swatted, still-kicking mosquitoes were dropped on the water each was immediately found, grappled with, and soon carried away by these predators. This activity of the dance flies goes on for 18 or 20 hours a day in good weather, and since both sexes were collected skimming, it may be assumed both males and females are predaceous. Flying mosquitoes and other small insects in the air are ignored, but let one of them disturb the surface of the pool and dance flies are there in a flash.

This species of dance fly is not to be confused with another *Rhamphomyia* whose males prey on mating swarms of *Aedes punctor*. The predator of the water level is a smoky-winged fly very much like the swarm predator but is smaller and some of the spiny hairs of the legs and abdomen are yellow rather than black.

ALASKAN MOSQUITOES DISTURB SNOWSHOERS. Reporting to Juneau, Alaska, to start a mosquito survey in March 1952, I was embarrassed to find winter sportsmen enjoying several feet of accumulated snow. My early start did not surprise a group of public health specialists and enthusiastic snowshoers, however, who reported big mosquitoes had been landing on them and resting on the snow during February and March on the mountain ski trails. Inquiry of two fishery biologists making regular snowshoe trips throughout the winter elicited the further claim that they had seen mosquitoes during a warm spell sometime in January, as well as later on. I was able to collect the hibernators of *Culiseta impatiens* (Wlk.) in the area late in March, and it is presumed that this is the big mosquito the snowshoers saw. Mr. Frank Field, who was a malaria control engineer during the War, stated the insects were on the wing chiefly in the sunshine and when the air temperature was probably slightly above freezing. No one, evidently, was bitten.

* Contributed by William C. Frohne.