

A PICTORIAL KEY TO THE MOSQUITO LARVAE OF THE SEYCHELLES

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The Seychelles are a group of predominantly granitic islands lying in the Indian Ocean approximately 1,000 miles east of the African coast and 2,000 miles southwest of Sri Lanka. The remoteness of the Seychelles from mainland biota limits the number of species that can populate these islands. This same remoteness also has prevented their thorough study by biologists prior to the influx of tourists. The destruction of the natural ecosystem on the islands is a great biological loss.

Most likely the islands were formed from a crest or ridge of land left behind when India and Africa separated during the drifting of these continents. These are the only granitic oceanic islands in the world. The question remains: Does any part of the present day biota represent the continental species that remained on the islands during drifting, or were the islands submerged? The species now inhabiting the islands are of three possible types: archaic remains of the continental biota; 2) invasions from India or Madagascar (which species from which area?), or 3) autochthonous. The following list of mosquito species are tentatively evaluated in this manner.

Mattingly and Brown (1955) reviewed the mosquitoes of Seychelles including historical references, and listed 13 species from the Seychelles proper. The following species were collected by the authors during the period of 8-15 August 1974 on the islands of Mahe and Praslin. The geographical distribution of the species is given in brackets after the name. This is as recorded in Stone, Knight, and Starcke, 1959.

Aedes albocephalus (Theo.) [Tropical Africa; Madagascar] Mahe: Northpoint, 10 Aug 74, in swampy pond; Victoria Botanical Gardens 11 Aug 74, in rock pool.

Aedes albopictus (Skuse) [Oriental Region; Australia; New Guinea, Mariana Isl.; Hawaii; Japan; French Somaliland; Madagascar] Mahe: San Souci, 9 Aug 74 in rockhole; Victoria Botanical Gardens, 11 Aug 74 in leaf axil.

Aedes lambrechtii van Someren [Autochthonous]. Mahe: Port Glaud, 12 Aug 74 in crab hole.

Aedes vigilax vansomeranae Mattingly and Brown [Autochthonous; typical subspecies: Coasts of Australia, New Guinea, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Formosa, and ? Malaya]. Mahe: Port Glaud, 12 Aug 74 in brackish water rock hole.

Culex fatigans Weid. [Cosmotropical]. Mahe: Victoria Botanical Gardens, 11 Aug 74, in rock pool.

Culex simpsoni Theo. [Ethiopian Region]. Mahe: Rochon Dam, Filter Plant, 9 Aug 74, at edge of dam; Northpoint, 10 Aug 74 in swampy pond.

Culex stellatus van Someren [Autochthonous]. Mahe: St. Louis Hill, 13 Aug 74 in tire.

Uranotaenia browni Mattingly [Autochthonous]. Praslin: Vallee de Mai, 14 Aug 74, in fallen rachis of coco-de-mer; Mahe: Victoria Botanical Garden, 11 Aug 74, in leaf axil.

Uranotaenia nepenthes (Theo.) [Seychelles and Madagascar]. Mahe: Sans Souci, 9 Aug 74, in flower bracts of *Nepenthes* sp. Note: the species of the pitcher-plant family NEPENTHACEAE are distributed from Madagascar to Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaya, northern tip of Australia to New Caledonia which shows the close relationship between Madagascar and the Indo-Malayan region.

Uranotaenia pandani (Theo.) [Seychelles and Madagascar]. Mahe: Victoria Botanical Gardens, 11 Aug 74, in leaf axil; Praslin: Vallee de Mai, 14 Aug 74, in fallen rachis of Coco-de-Mer.

In summary, 1 species is cosmopolitan; 2 also occur in Africa; 4 are found in the Indo-Malayan region; and 3 are autochthonous. Obviously no satisfactory conclusions can be drawn from these data as to the origin of the Seychelles fauna.

The pictorial key to the larvae includes 12 of the 14 species reported the Seychelles. Not included in the key are: *Culex scottii* Theo. [autochthonous] and *Culex wigglesworthi* Edw. [known from Central Africa, but not Madagascar]. The larva of *C. scottii* is unknown and *C. wigglesworthi* has been reported only once from Praslin. *C. wigglesworthi* would key to *C. simpsoni*, from which it can be differentiated by the comb scales.

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