



# *Ochlerotatus sollicitans* Biology

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*Ochlerotatus sollicitans* larvae occur in and adjacent to the salt marshes along our coast. Both the larvae and adults may be found any time during the year in Brunswick County. They are typically collected from April to November in Brunswick County.

*Oc. sollicitans* is what is called a brooded mosquito. This means when a tidal or rainfall event covers the eggs with water the eggs all hatch about the same time. The larvae develop through their four larval instars at about the same rate. Next they go through the non-feeding pupal stage together and finally emerge as adults at roughly the same time. We have seen as many as 12 broods of *Oc. sollicitans* in one season in Brunswick County.

Consider this example; one female *Oc. sollicitans* is capable of laying over 100 eggs in its life time. If for example, 50 of those eggs are female and they oviposit 100 eggs apiece, the result is 5,000 mosquitoes. It follows that 2,500 will again be female and they lay another 100 eggs apiece, the result is 250,000 mosquitoes in 2 generations. If you have ever wondered why there are so many salt marsh mosquitoes in the fall, Their reproductive potential is one answer.

*Oc. sollicitans* adults are strong fliers and often migrate in large numbers to communities many miles from the salt-water marshes in which they breed. The females are persistent biters and will attack any time during the day or night. The adults rest in the vegetation during the daytime and will attack anyone invading their haunts, even in full sunlight.

We consider this mosquito to be of high importance to the citizens of Brunswick County. *Oc. sollicitans* was one of the dominant mosquito species collected after hurricane Hugo in 1989. This mosquito has a strong nuisance potential and is one of two *Ochlerotatus* salt marsh mosquitoes that can literally run you into the house at twilight when and if the environmental conditions favor their reproduction.

## **REFERENCE**

Carpenter, S. J. and W. J. LaCasse. 1955. Mosquitoes of North America (North of Mexico), University of California Press, Berkeley. 360 pp., 127 pl.