

VECTOR OF THE MONTH

Southern House Mosquito



Culex quinquefasciatus Say

C. pipiens complex includes *C. quinquefasciatus*, in North America. The northern house mosquito, *C. pipiens*, occurs in areas above 39° N. latitude; the southern house mosquito, *C. quinquefasciatus*, occurs at latitudes less than 36° N. latitude.

C. quinquefasciatus serve as intermediate hosts of the human filarial worm; it is also involved in transmitting the pathogens of bird malaria and avian pox virus. In the eastern US, *C. pipiens* complex are considered important vectors of St. Louis and recently West Nile encephalitis.

C. quinquefasciatus lays its eggs in rafts (120-200 eggs) on water, in improperly maintained swimming pools, tanks, cisterns, catch basins, waste treatment ponds, agricultural fields with flood and drip irrigation, and other small collections of water; favoring waters with high organic pollution. Where breeding places are favorable, it may occur in enormous numbers. Larval development requiring 4-6 days, pupal 1-2 days. It invades houses freely.

In the Coachella Valley, *Cx. quinquefasciatus* may breed throughout the year. The species do not normally move far from their breeding sources unless overcrowded or there is a lack of available blood sources in the area. Usually the breeding source is in or near the area from which complaints are received.

Mating occurs one to two days after emergence with a blood meal necessary for eggs to be developed.

Although a number of vertebrate can be used as a blood source, birds are the principal blood meal source for both species. Females feed mainly in the evening and at night, spending the daylight hours resting in cool, humid, dark place.

The first confirmed *Cx. quinquefasciatus* positive pool for West Nile virus in California was collected on September 16, 2003 in Los Angeles area – Whittier.