



26 October 2018

## Spraying to eradicate exotic *Culex sitiens* mosquito



Earlier in the year, Biosecurity New Zealand notified the local community that larvae from an exotic mosquito species, *Culex sitiens*, was found in the Kawau Parua Inlet.

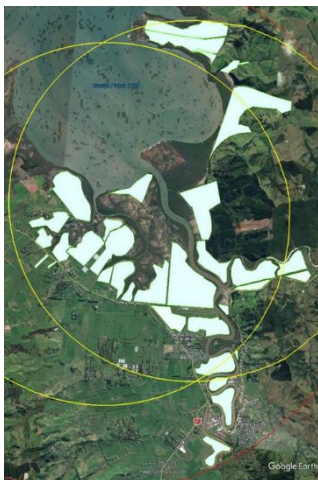
Since then, only a small number of larvae have been found and no adults have been detected.

Surveillance of the surrounding area has determined it has not spread from the site where they were originally detected.

We have a good opportunity to successfully eradicate the *Culex sitiens* mosquito from New Zealand. We have successfully eradicated exotic mosquitoes in the past, including from this area.

*Culex sitiens* is wide-spread in Southeast Asia, the South Pacific and Australia. It is known to transmit diseases such as Ross River virus and Kunjin virus. However, this is not currently a risk for New Zealand as these diseases are not present here. *Culex sitiens* may also be able to transmit Japanese encephalitis, but this has not been observed outside of a laboratory setting.

## Eradication and animal welfare



Biosecurity New Zealand will be conducting an aerial spraying programme to attempt to eradicate the *Culex sitiens* mosquito from the Kawau Parua Inlet.

The treatment will be applied to wet areas in the Kawau Parua Inlet. This extends to a 5km radius around the sites where larvae have been found. Most of the area is pasture and other non-habitat areas, so treatment will only be applied to part of this area.

The spraying will be conducted by a helicopter flying at low levels, on a day after 29 October, as and when the weather permits. We are planning to undertake four applications, with a week between each treatment.

There is always a chance that the use of a low flying helicopter could spook animals. If you have horses and other animals in the

vicinity and would like to discuss the spray programme and timings, please contact [david.yard@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:david.yard@mpi.govt.nz)

## What is the spray?

The treatment to be used is called Vectobac which contains the active ingredient Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *israelensis*).

Bti is a biological and naturally occurring bacterium found in soils. It contains spores that produce toxins which only kill larvae, or mosquitoes when they are in water.

Bti is not toxic to humans or animals, and is approved in the USA for pest control in organic farming operations.

More information about the *Culex sitiens* mosquito is also available on our website: [www.biosecurity.govt.nz/culex-sitiens](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/culex-sitiens).