

# SKEETER SCOOP



Photo by Sean McCann, University of Florida

## St. Lucie County Featured Mosquito

**Scientific Name:** *Aedes taeniorhynchus*

**Common Name:** Black Salt Marsh Mosquito

**Pronunciation:** Ayy-Deez Tee-knee-yur-ink-us

### Habitat and Distribution:

*Aedes taeniorhynchus* inhabits coastal areas in brackish and marshy habitats. It is found in South, Central and North America as well as the Caribbean. In St. Lucie County, they can be found in the mangrove marshes in North and South Hutchinson Island, as well as some portions of the mainland near the Indian River. A strong flyer, this species can catch gusts of wind and fly further inland.

### Biology:

*Aedes taeniorhynchus* has a unique biology for mosquitoes. Instead of laying its eggs on water like many other mosquito species, it lays its eggs on the moist soil found in mangrove swamps and other coastal areas. When the water level rises due to heavy rainfall or rising tides, it floods the moist soil where the eggs are laid, triggering them to hatch. A single square foot of marsh soil can contain as many as 40,000 eggs, leading to significant hatch-offs. Female *taeniorhynchus* will generally feed on mammals such as armadillos, marsh rabbits, and people. This species is active during the day in addition to dusk and dawn and is most numerous in the late spring and summer, although it can be found year-round in St. Lucie County.

### Medical Importance:

Fortunately, *Aedes taeniorhynchus* is not a mosquito species associated with transmitting human disease. It is a major pest however, aggressively pursuing its target in search of a blood meal. From a veterinary perspective, they can transmit filarial worms, which can cause dog heartworms, making vaccinations for dogs and other mammalian pets important.

### Management:

The best form of *Aedes taeniorhynchus* management comes in the form of depriving them of suitable locations for them to lay their eggs. At St. Lucie County, we conduct this using coastal impoundments. Utilizing dozens of heavy-duty pumps, we pump water from the Indian River into mangrove habitats, keeping water levels high and ensuring that as much of the marsh is covered in water as possible. This prevents *Aedes taeniorhynchus* from locating moist soil to lay its eggs. When visiting mangrove marshes, it is strongly recommended to wear long sleeves and pants, as well as to apply a generous coat of insect repellent such as DEET or picaridin.

To find more information about mosquito control, including treatment areas, please visit [www.stluciemosquito.org](http://www.stluciemosquito.org). To fight the bite around your home tip and toss standing water in containers, repair window screens to keep mosquitos out when you have your windows open, check that your gutters are clear of debris, and flush birdbaths and bromeliads twice a week. Mosquitoes can mature in as little as a bottlecap full of water, so keep your eyes peeled for anything that could turn your home into a mosquito hatchery.