

## A PREDATOR MOSQUITO FOR VECTOR MOSQUITO CONTROL

T. SUBRAMONIA THANGAM AND K. KATHIRESAN

Centre of Advanced Study in Marine Biology, Annamalai University, Parangipettai – 608502, Tamil Nadu, India.

The mosquito *Culex (Lutzia) raptor* is a predator on other species of mosquito larvae during its larval period. This species was found to breed along with other species of mosquito larvae in natural habitats during rainy seasons. The vector mosquito population was observed to be reduced considerably in these breeding habitats. The predatory efficiency of this predator species was assessed using the larvae of *Culex quinquefasciatus*, a vector of bancroftian filariasis in India. The number of prey larvae consumed by the predator larva at each of its developmental stages was assessed by providing each stage of the prey larvae. The prey preference of the predator among different larval stages of the prey was also evaluated by providing two different stages of the prey larvae at a time. The predator consumed an average of 142 larvae during its total larval period when it was allowed to consume the preferred stages of the prey larvae. Cannibalism was also observed when the density of the prey larvae was low. The study revealed that the mosquito *Culex (Lutzia) raptor* could prove useful as an agent for biological control of mosquitoes as the predator does not attack humans. Further studies are required on colonisation of this species under laboratory conditions.