Redescription of the adults of Culicoides bancrofti Lee and Reye and C. hornsbyensis Lee and Reye (Diptera: Ceratopogonidae)

GLENN BELLIS¹ & ALAN DYCE²
¹Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, PO Box 37846, Winnellie, NT, Australia, 0821. glenn.bellis@daff.gov.au
²Honorary Research Fellow, CSIRO Division of Entomology, Canberra, Australia (present address 48 Queens Rd, Asquith, NSW, Australia, 2077)

Abstract

The Bancrofti species group of the biting midge genus Culicoides Latreille which embraces two species from Australia and Papua New Guinea is revised. A diagnosis for the group along with a first description of adult male C. bancrofti Lee & Reye and redescriptions of female adult C. bancrofti and male and female adult C. hornsbyensis Lee & Reye are presented together with keys for their specific determination.

Key words: Biting midges, Culicoides, Bancrofti group

Introduction

While the distribution of sensilla coeloconica have been routinely included in descriptions of female Culicoides spp. since the 1960’s, providing data on the distribution and abundance of the other forms of antennal sensilla has only been adopted relatively recently (Meiswinkel and Dyce 1989; Dyce and Meiswinkel 1995; Dyce and Wirth 1997; Clastier and Delécolle 1996; Bellis and Dyce 2011). Given the usefulness of these data at both the species and species group level (Cornet 1974) and the increasing number of morphologically similar ‘cryptic’ species revealed by molecular analyses (Gomulski et al. 2006; Pagès et al. 2009), it is important to provide data on the full range of antennal sensilla to aid in the discrimination of closely related species and to provide a more complete range of morphological characters to assist in future studies on the phylogeny of this genus. Currently, data on the distribution and abundance of antennal sensilla is available for only 16 of the 272 species reported from Australasia, the remainder consequently require some redescription. Two such species are C. bancrofti Lee & Reye and C. hornsbyensis Lee & Reye, placed into the Bancrofti species group by Dyce et al. (2007). Additionally, the male of several species, including C. bancrofti, remain undescribed.

Based on similarities between the wing and palpal sensilla pattern of the female, Wirth and Arnaud (1969) considered C. bancrofti to be closely related to C. costalis Tokunaga and their new species C. polynesiae Wirth and Arnaud. They included a diagnosis of the characters shared by these species but acknowledged that only the female of C. bancrofti was known at the time and that some significant differences existed between this species and the other two members of the group. Wirth and Hubert (1989) subsequently added C. novairelandi Tokunaga to this group and named it the Costalis group. Clastier and Delécolle (1996) added two new species to the group and provided a key to distinguish the species. At no time was C. hornsbyensis included in this group although Lee and Reye (1962) did note a similarity in the arrangement of palpal sensilla between C. bancrofti and C. hornsbyensis.

More recently, Dyce et al. (2007) placed C. bancrofti and C. hornsbyensis in a new group, the Bancrofti group, while retaining the Costalis group for C. costalis and its seven cohort species. Herein a diagnosis for the Bancrofti group sensu Dyce et al. (2007) is presented along with a description of the male of C. bancrofti and redescriptions of the females of C. bancrofti and male and female C. hornsbyensis and keys to their determination.