

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: "Screwworm - *Cochliomyia hominivorax*, Key Deer National Refuge, Big Pine Key, Florida" by Judy Gallagher is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Common Name: Screw-worm Fly or Primary Screwworm

Scientific Name: *Cochliomyia hominivorax*

Order and Family: Diptera, Calliphoridae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		
Larva/Nymph	up to 17mm	Spines protrude from the body and wrap around in a spiral; also has darkened trachea
Adult	12-18 mm	Metallic blue with 3 dorsal stripes on the thorax, middle stripe being slightly shorter than the others
Pupa (if applicable)		

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):

Mouthhooks in larvae and sponging in adults.

Host/s:

Living animals with existing wounds

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.):

Can be used in PMI (postmortem interval) determinations for forensic scientists. However, this species is very limited in the USA today. Some have been reintroduced in an area of Florida, but the species is primarily found in South America now.

This fly can also be a pest. The primary screwworm lays its eggs in existing wounds, even ones that are very small or mostly unnoticeable (i.e. tick bite). This species can feed on living tissues and causes an issue for livestock. The larvae will feed on the tissues and if disturbed will burrow deeper into the living tissue. Once they hit third-instar and are ready to pupate, they will fall out of the wound and pupate in leaf litter and light soil.

References:

Species *Cochliomyia hominivorax* - Primary Screwworm. (n.d.). Retrieved September 18, 2020, from <https://bugguide.net/node/view/1329820>

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