

Crane Fly

Description: Although some people think these flies look like Texas-sized mosquitoes, and they have also wrongly been called "mosquito hawks." Crane flies are large tan-colored fragile flies with long legs. Adults and larvae do not feed on mosquitoes. Larval forms of crane flies are grey-brown cylindrical larvae which may bear fleshy lobes on the (posterior) end. Occasionally, the segments towards the end of the body can be greatly expanded.



There are many species of these flies that occur in Texas. The term "**mosquito hawk**" generally refers to dragonflies (Odonata), but could also refer to the large true mosquito species in the genus, *Toxorhynchites* (Diptera), which have larval stages that are predaceous on mosquito larvae.

Life Cycle: Larvae are often encountered under layers of decomposing leaves in wet locations such as ditch banks in December and January. Adults emerge in February and March.



Habitat and Food Source(s): Larvae have chewing mouthparts. Crane fly larvae feed primarily on decomposing organic matter. Adults do not feed. They commonly occur in moist environments such as woodlands, streams and flood plains although some species inhabit open fields, dry rangeland and even desert environments. In compost piles, they often occur on the soil surface below the pile of decaying vegetation. Some species have been reported to feed on roots of forage crops, turf grasses and seedling field crops. Usually their presence causes little concern because they are assisting in the process of decomposition. Larvae have not been reported to feed on vegetable transplants or garden plants in Texas. Adults have long slender legs which are easily broken and may be missing in some specimens.

Pest Status: Large numbers of adult crane flies can be a nuisance indoors; medically harmless.