



My grandson, Chance Watkins, uses a toy, Bug Assault, salt gun to help me keep the fly population under control. (Mark Rackay/ Special to the MDP)

The other day, I made an offhand comment to my wife about how fortunate she is to be married to someone that is not easily annoyed, and I stand as a model of self-restraint. She immediately came back with, “You? Of all people, you? You are the most easily annoyed person in the entire world. One little thing goes wrong, and you just complain, complain, complain.”

She then began howling with laughter and left the room. There is nothing more annoying than a spouse’s sarcastic prattle, being delivered while she has tears of mirth running down her face, but in the interest of marital bliss, I left the room, to return later when she was no longer in one of her moods.

Of the few things that really do annoy me, flies and mosquitoes stand near the top of the list. I can go outside and fire up the grill or smoker, and the flies come rallying in from all directions. When I sit down to have a bite of supper, there will always be that one fly skittering all around the table, apparently its only purpose in life is to annoy me.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

The real problem comes when you try to dispatch the offender. If you try to nail them with a fly swatter, success is rare. Seems flies have some special ability to evade a swat, like a built-in radar. The more I miss, the madder I become. It is quite annoying.

The common house fly goes by his street name *Musca domestica* Linnaeus, in case you were wondering. This species is always found on farms, ranches, rural and urban areas, pretty much anywhere humans are. Not only are house flies annoying, but they can also be very dangerous. Flies are transporters of disease-causing organisms and excessive populations

can cause a public health problem.

The common fly originally hailed from Asia, but now occurs on all the inhabited continents of the world. He can survive in all climates from tropical to temperate, just about anywhere there are people or animals. The fly is not a health nut, considering his favorite food is animal feces, but he has adapted to feeding on garbage as well.

The house fly has a complete metamorphosis, starting with an egg, then larva or maggot, to a pupal, and finally, the adult stage. The fly will overwinter in the larval or pupal stage under manure piles or other protected locations. In warm summer-like conditions, the fly can complete its life cycle in as little as seven days. When in a colder climate, the complete life cycle may take up to two months.

An egg is 1.2 mm in length and laid singly by the female fly. Each female fly can lay up to 500 eggs over a three-day period. This explains why the population seems to expand so rapidly as the summer progresses.

The legless maggot will emerge from the egg in warm weather conditions within eight to 20 hours. The larvae will complete their development in four to 13 days at warm temperature, longer when cooler. The developed larva will crawl from the manure pile to a dry place, up to 50 feet away, where it will enter the pupal stage. Inside a pupal case formed from the last larval skin, the pupa ages for two to six more days, emerging as the full-grown annoying house fly.

Unlike other insects that have two pairs of wings, house flies only have one pair. The second pair of wings is reduced and looks like a pair of drumsticks. This pair, known as halteres, is used for balancing.

They don’t have teeth, instead they have a long tongue called a proboscis. This proboscis acts like a straw to suck up food. If you are not annoyed enough, consider that when a fly lands on your lunch, he vomits an acid that dissolves the food so he can suck it up with his proboscis.

Fly activity is greatest when it is sunny and

warm. They like temperatures above 80 degrees. When the temps drop below 45 degrees, flies return to their resting state, usually at night.

The danger in flies begins when you consider they defecate every five minutes, and anywhere they feel like it. When you consider their diet, you can see how easily they transmit disease. Another reason why it is easy for flies to contaminate food is because of their ability to stick to a surface or place for long periods of time. This is due to the stickiness of the pads of their feet.

Flies have compound eyes that enable them to see 360 degrees. Because of this, they can perceive a threat, such as a fly swatter, very quickly. After visually detecting an incoming threat, a fly can adjust their posture for immediate takeoff in one-fifth of a second. This quick reflex action prevents many flies from being sent to fly paradise ahead of schedule.

You can try and swat them, but your success will never keep up with them. Fly traps and tapes work well when used regularly.

You should also keep the area clean and free from the garbage, spoiled foods, and manure piles they like to breed in.

A homemade lure can be made from a 2-liter soda bottle filled with apple cider vinegar and beer. Place a funnel in the bottle neck so flies can easily enter but never leave. Call it a Hotel California for flies.

Flies will always annoy me and so will the prattle of an overly sarcastic spouse, and I plan on telling her next chance I get. I probably will never get the chance though, and just as well for marital harmony reasons.

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Temporary safety closure enacted for Bear Creek trail

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

In the interest of public safety, officials with the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests’ Ouray Ranger District are temporarily closing the Bear Creek National Recreation trail from Aug. 11 through October for a large-scale reconstruction project.

Crews began work July 24 to reconstruct various portions of the trail, including extensive construction of stone retaining walls, drainage structures and low water crossings. Upon further consideration and assessment, it was determined that a temporary closure of the trail between Bear Creek and Yellowjacket Mine is necessary during the reconstruction project. This will allow crews to carry out their work efficiently and without interruption, while safeguarding the well-being of visitors to the area.

Upper Bear Creek trail will remain open for use and is

accessible through Engineer Pass and Horsethief trail. Hikers are encouraged to explore the upper portion of the trail during the closure period and experience the beauty of the GMUG National Forests.

“The safety of the public and the workers involved in the trail reconstruction project is our top priority,” said Neil Perry, Ouray Ranger District Recreation Management Specialist. “By closing the affected section of the trail for a short period of time, we aim to complete reconstruction work efficiently and mitigate potential hazards during the construction process.”

During the closure period, signage will be placed at key points on the trail to indicate the closure area. We ask visitors to respect the closure and stay clear of the area for their safety.

For more information on the trail reconstruction project, contact the Ouray Ranger District at 970-240-5300.

*Information from GMUG news release.*



Bear Creek National Recreation Trail will be closed Aug. 11 through October as a proactive public safety measure. (Courtesy photo/USFS)