

Risks of malaria



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

About a decade ago, I was putting together my first trip to South America. The plan was to hunt water buffalo in the riparian areas of the Parana River as it flowed through Argentina. Water buffalo are aptly named because they spend much time in water and the surrounding swamps. My wife insisted I check in with our longtime family doctor and friend before I went. Many countries require certain vaccinations and sometimes others are not required but make good sense anyway. Doc researched the areas I would be hunting in and gave me his list of shots. I left his office with a very sore fantail from numerous shots. He also handed me a prescription for a drug called Malarone, with instructions to take one pill daily a week before I go, every day while there, and several weeks after I return. He said it was an antimalarial drug. At first, I thought he was joking. I always considered malaria as an exotic

disease that early African hunters contracted, had bouts of their entire life, and drank lots of quinine to keep the symptoms at bay. All the great writers of African safaris wrote about their trackers and staff that had “malarial eyes” or “were down with a bout of malaria.” Never hearing much about it in the U.S., it almost seemed like a surreal disease that existed in classic literature, but alas, that is false. It is very real. Malaria is one of the world’s greatest health problems. Approximately 220 million people are infected each year worldwide, with 660,000 reaching eternal bliss because of it. Most are children, and yes, most cases are in Africa. The disease is caused by 4 species of protozoan parasites of the genus Plasmodium: P. falciparum, P. vivax, P. malaria, and P. ovale. The felon that transmits this dreaded disease is the Anopheles species of the lowly, but accomplished, mosquito. Before you say, “I don’t have to worry, because I won’t be taking any jungle vacations in Africa,” think again. Besides being available to just about everyone on the African Continent, it is also very prevalent in Asia, including Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Iran, South Korea, Thailand, and at least a dozen other countries there. It is also present in large numbers in the Americas, including Brazil,



We have here the perfect storm for malaria; sunset, hot, humid, wet season, near standing water, and mosquitoes, in Africa. You don’t have to travel abroad to find the disease as there are cases annually in the states. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, and more. If you consider travel to any of these countries, consult with your family doctor. The prevalence and risk of malaria can vary significantly within each country. Preventative medications might work well in one area, and not another. Check with your doctor and visit the CDC website for more information. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention heeps://www.cdc.gov) Our government is pretty quick to say that malaria has been eradicated from the United States for more than 70 years, and there have not been any local transmissions since 1969. There are, however, there are cases of imported malaria reported in the U.S., meaning that people who have traveled to areas where malaria is

present can bring it home with them, back to the States. In 2023, there were approximately 2,000 cases of imported malaria reported in the U.S. These cases typically occur in people who have visited regions where malaria is present. Malaria symptoms can be from nothing to severe, and can include tiredness, fever, chills, aches, headaches, organ failure, and death. Some types of the malaria parasite can survive for years and cause relapses after the initial infection. This can happen weeks, months, or even years after the initial sickness. Malaria is curable if diagnosed quickly and treated correctly. The disease starts out with symptoms similar to the flu, and in the U.S. can often be misdiagnosed at first. You might be quick to

point out that a person who does not leave the friendly confines of the United States has nothing to worry about but better hold on to that thought. While malaria is not contagious, the carrier, the Anopheles mosquito, is very much alive and well here. The disease is transmitted in a relationship involving a mosquito, a parasite and a person. A female mosquito must be infected with the malaria parasite in order to pass on the infection. The disease is not transmitted person to person, only by the felonious mosquito. There are cases of locally transmitted malaria reported in Florida and Texas over the last several years. The thought is, a person infected with malaria travelled to the U.S. from a malaria-endemic area and was bitten by a local Anopheles mosquito, which picked up the parasite and then bit someone else, passing on the parasite. For example, there were seven local cases in Sarasota, Florida reported in June of 2023. Florida and Texas have long summers and mild winters, allowing mosquitoes more time to breed. This could be exacerbated by global warming, experts believe, as entire populations of insects might migrate from their normal home. Climate change could create more suitable habitats for the mosquitoes, which thrive in warm and wet

environments, potentially leading to an expansion of their geographic range, increasing the risk of transmission of the disease. The disease doesn’t like the Colorado climate, not hot long enough, and not very wet. That doesn’t mean you can’t pick up the disease while on holiday in Texas and bring it home as a souvenir. However, as the winters get warmer and shorter, things could change. We have plenty of West Nile to deal with, so it would be wise to be vigilant. The same preventative still stands. Avoid dusk and dawn, lots of mosquito sprat containing DEET, and get rid of standing water. Meanwhile, I will take the preventative pills and have a good time in Africa and South America anyway. Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for The Nautical Mile, and other saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff’s Posse. Personal email is elkhunter77@icloud.com For information about the Posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

Crawford State Park offers free access for Pioneer Days celebration, advises of low-water conditions and safety adjustments

SPECIAL TO THE MDP
Crawford State Park offers free access for Pioneer Days celebration, advises of low-water conditions and safety adjustments
Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff are ready for the biggest weekend of the summer at Crawford State Park, which offers free admission on Saturday, June 13 to celebrate the 47th Crawford Pioneer Days.
This year’s Pioneer Days theme is “Land of the Free, Home of the Brave,” as the town celebrates 250 years of American spirit and 150 years of Colorado pride. The three-day event culminates Saturday night with a professional fireworks display managed by the Crawford Fire Department over the Crawford State Park reservoir.

Special Event Logistics & Boat Ramp Adjustments
To accommodate the fireworks staging and emergency personnel, CPW is advising visitors and boaters of several operational adjustments on Saturday, June 13:
Peninsula Boat Ramp Closure: The boat ramp will close completely from 7 p.m. until 30 minutes after the conclusion of the fireworks display to ensure public safety near the launch zone. All trailered boat traffic must route through the Peninsula ramp prior to 7 p.m. because of low water levels.
Trailer Parking: All boat trailers and towing vehicles must park at the Iron Creek boat ramp parking lot to keep the Peninsula area clear for Emergency Medical Services.

Traffic & Parking:
Rangers and additional CPW staff will be directing traffic. Vehicles must park only in designated areas and remain off park vegetation. Visitors should expect delays when exiting after the show.
Extended ANS Hours: The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) inspection station will extend its hours until all boats are off the water or approximately midnight Saturday to accommodate clearing the water.
“I’m incredibly excited to experience Crawford Pioneer Days,” said Mark Lehman, Park Manager at Crawford and Paonia State Parks. “The fact that Pioneer Days is in its 47th year is a true testament to the dedication and sense of community within the North Fork

Valley. We are honored to host the finale for the celebration and extend a warm welcome to everyone attending.”
The annual community festival will bring an action-packed day to the park. Day-use fees will be waived Saturday, though those in the park on Sunday will need to have a valid park pass. CPW staff will also participate in the town parade beginning at 10 a.m. and will host an educational booth at Crawford Town Park beginning at 9 a.m.
The fireworks show will begin at dusk, lasting approximately 45 minutes and finishing around 10 p.m. With as many as 250 vehicles expected, Lehman reminds the public to exercise patience.
“People driving in and out of the park should

expect traffic for the fireworks show,” Lehman said. “We will have heavy pedestrian traffic, and we want to keep everyone safe, so please drive slowly and be cautious.”
Low-Water and Fire Safety Reminders
The reservoir at Crawford is currently 28 feet below full. While Delta County remains out of fire restrictions, CPW reminds visitors that resource protection and fire safety are paramount.
The professional show will display over the water of the reservoir. As a reminder to the public, no personal fireworks are allowed anywhere within Crawford State Park, and any campfires must be strictly confined to designated campfire pits and grills.
While water temperatures have risen to 67 de-

grees, safety on the water remains a top priority.
“We always want to remind people, even strong swimmers, that it’s vital to have a personal floatation device (PFD) when on the water,” Lehman said. “Even in 70-degree water, hypothermia can set in quickly and impair your ability to self-rescue.”
Crawford State Park is located in Delta County along Highway 92 southeast of Hotchkiss and northeast of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. The reservoir is known as a quality warm water fishery.
Reservations for campgrounds can be made at: cpw.state.co.us/buyapply/Pages/Reservations.aspx.
For more information on Crawford’s Pioneer Days, go to: www.crawfordpioneerdays.com.



10 SOUTH SELIG AVE

MONTROSE, COLORADO 81401

970-249-4226