

Nuisance Midges

Midges Fast Facts

1. Midges belonging to the insect family Chironomidae are small non-biting insects that live and breed naturally in Perth's lakes and wetlands.
2. Midges are not vectors of disease like mosquito and are not considered a public health risk.
3. When water bodies become unhealthy, mainly due to high nutrient levels, midge breeding increases, resulting in a greater impact of nuisance adult midges on residents living in close proximity to lakes and wetlands.

Monitoring

1. The Cities of Joondalup (COJ) and Wanneroo (COW) in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) conduct regular monitoring and identification of midge larvae within Lake Joondalup and Lake Goollelal.
2. Nuisance adult midge swarms are monitored during periods of high level midge breeding to assess the impact on nearby residential areas.
3. Records are kept of customer enquiries/concerns in relation to the impact of nuisance midge swarms.

Control

1. Chemical spraying of the lakes is a short term control measure which can be carried out during periods where midge larvae counts are high and there is an increased impact of nuisance adult midges on nearby residents. The frequency of these treatments is limited by environmental restrictions and is dependent on the availability of approved chemicals.
2. Light traps have been positioned within and around the lake to reduce adult midge swarms impacting on residential areas.

Ongoing Management

COJ, COW and DEC are involved in the following midge management strategies:

1. Provision of funding for and management of research projects which investigate factors affecting water quality and elevated midge breeding. These studies provide valuable information for the creation and implementation of midge management and reduction initiatives.
2. Continued re-establishment of fringe vegetation surrounding wetlands to reduce nutrients entering the water bodies and to provide barriers between the wetland and residential areas.

What residents can do

In order to reduce the impact of nuisance midges around the home, residents living near lakes and wetlands can follow the suggestions listed below:

1. Use yellow, low wattage globes (25 or 30 Watt) around the home and reduce lighting to external areas.
2. Prevent midges from accessing your home by sealing gaps around doors, windows and skylights and installing fine mesh screens over your windows.
3. Plant local native plants in your garden which screen lighting from your property.

Residents can also help reduce run-off of nutrients into the environment by

1. Disposing of household waste appropriately, not down stormwater drains.
2. Washing cars on the lawn rather than the driveway or street.
3. Using nutrient free detergents.
4. Using slow-release fertilisers on lawns and gardens.
5. Where properties have been provided with sewer, but are still using septic tanks around the Wanneroo area, decommissioning these septic tanks and effluent disposal systems and connecting the property to the Water Corporation sewer.

Further Advice

For further advice relating to midge management or should you like to report nuisance midges in your local area please contact:

- The City of Joondalup Health and Environmental Services on **9400 4933**.
- The City of Wanneroo Health Services on **9405 5444**.
- The Department of Environment and Conservation on **9219 9290**.