

# ENTOMOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE OF *CULICOIDES* (DIPTERA: CERATOPOGONIDAE), VECTOR OF BLUETONGUE IN TUNISIA

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Bluetongue (BT) is an arboviral disease that affects ruminants. BT virus is transmitted by biting midges of the genus *Culicoides* (Diptera: Ceratopogonidae). Since 1999, BTV outbreaks have occurred in Tunisia and two serotypes (BTV-2 and BTV-1) have been involved in 2000 and 2006, respectively. Entomological surveillance has been implemented in Tunisia with the aim to study population dynamics of *C. imicola* and other potential vectors. Two-night catches of midges per site were performed

monthly from June 2006 through July 2008 on 14 sites throughout the country. A total of 11,582 *Culicoides* specimens, collected from 336 light traps, comprised 25 species of which seven were identified for the first time in Tunisia. The seasonal occurrence of these species is described.

**KEYWORDS:** *CULICOIDES* – BLUETONGUE – SURVEILLANCE – TUNISIA.

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