

**Zeitschrift:** Acta Tropica  
**Herausgeber:** Schweizerisches Tropeninstitut (Basel)  
**Band:** 42 (1985)  
**Heft:** 2

**Artikel:** Seasonal variations in indoor resting "Anopheles gambiae" and "Anopheles arabiensis" in Kaduna, Nigeria  
**Autor:** Rishikesh, N. / Di Deco, M.A.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-313466>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 20.08.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

Vector Biology and Control Research Unit, Kaduna, Nigeria

## Seasonal variations in indoor resting *Anopheles gambiae* and *Anopheles arabiensis* in Kaduna, Nigeria

N. RISHIKESH, M. A. DI DECO, V. PETRARCA, M. COLUZZI

### Summary

A longitudinal study in a guinea savanna area in Northern Nigeria showed that indoor resting samples consisted almost entirely of *An. gambiae* in the wet season, characterized by relatively lower temperature and higher relative humidity, whereas *An. arabiensis* predominated in the dry season, characterized by relatively higher temperature and lower relative humidity. A significant change was also observed in the frequency of polymorphic chromosomal inversions in the population of *An. gambiae*. The inverted arrangements 2Rbc, 2Rd and 2La were found more frequent in the dry season samples as compared to the wet season ones.

**Key words:** *Anopheles gambiae*; *Anopheles arabiensis*; cytotaxonomy; chromosome inversions; seasonal variation.

### Introduction

Of the six sibling species of *An. gambiae* complex, *An. gambiae* and *An. arabiensis* are the most closely associated with man and are major vectors of malaria and filariasis. The distribution of these species overlaps extensively and they occur sympatrically in large areas of tropical Africa.

Investigations in Nigeria (Coluzzi et al., 1979), and along the boundary with Niger, showed that the two species occur in different frequencies along an ecological gradient comprising different vegetational zones and running South to North from the tropical forest with an annual rainfall of over 2000 mm, to the Sahelian savanna with an annual rainfall of less than 500 mm. *An. gambiae* typically occurs in forest and humid savanna areas although its range extends

---

Correspondence: Dr. N. Rishikesh, Division of Vector Biology and Control, World Health Organization, CH-1211 Geneva 27 – Prof. M. Coluzzi, Istituto di Parassitologia, Università di Roma, Piazzale delle Scienze 5, I-00100 Roma, Italia

into the arid savanna areas. *An. arabiensis* on the other hand is rare or absent in humid savanna areas, at least during the rainy season, but is prevalent in arid savanna areas. *An. arabiensis* may also occur as isolated populations in urban centres that have been developed through deforestation (man-made environment) within the forest zones. The polytene chromosomes of both species show polymorphism for paracentric inversions, the frequencies of which are correlated with climatic and vegetational patterns. In particular, the frequencies of arrangement 2Ra in *An. arabiensis* and arrangements 2Rbc, 2Rd and 2La in *An. gambiae* increase gradually in progressively more arid areas and may reach up to 100%.

The above relationship could also result in different seasonal distributions of the species and of their chromosomal variants in areas of perennial breeding. This hypothesis was tested through a longitudinal study over a period of a year in the Kaduna area in Nigeria. The findings were also expected to be of relevance in the evaluation of new insecticides sprayed indoors against malaria vectors in villages near Kaduna. A preliminary report of the results was presented at the XI Congress of the Italian Society of Parasitology (Di Deco et al., 1981).

## Materials and Methods

### *Study area*

The study was carried out in four localities (Nassarawa, Ungwan Maazu, Ungwan Rimi, and Kaballa) in humid guinea savanna area (Keay, 1953) on the outskirts of Kaduna town (Fig. 1). The meteorological data for the years 1974 and 1975 (Fig. 2) show a rainy season extending from April to October with peak rainfall in September. During the wet season, *An. gambiae* s.l. breeds extensively in scattered rainwater collections. However, following the onset of the dry season (December through March), these water collections disappear and breeding continues at a reduced level in drains, garden wells, residual pools in river beds, etc. (Ramsdale and Fontaine, 1970).

### *Mosquito collection and identification*

Only indoor resting collections were made because the immediate purpose of the study was to analyze the composition of the indoor resting populations of *An. gambiae* and *An. arabiensis* in relation to evaluation of the efficacy of residual insecticides. The mosquitoes were caught by pyrethrum spray-capture in the afternoon in order to ensure that specimens had reached the correct stage of ovarian development for obtaining readable polytene chromosome preparations. The material was preserved in Carnoy's fluid, and polytene chromosome preparations were obtained from the nurse cells according to the method described by Hunt (1973). The species were identified and the different karyotypes were scored according to the nomenclature of Coluzzi et al. (1979). The agreement between the observed and the expected karyotype frequencies according to the Hardy-Weinberg law was tested by the Wright's F statistics (Brown, 1970).

## Results and Discussion

During August (the month before peak rainfall), characterized by over 80% relative humidity at sunrise and mean temperature of less than 25° C, the

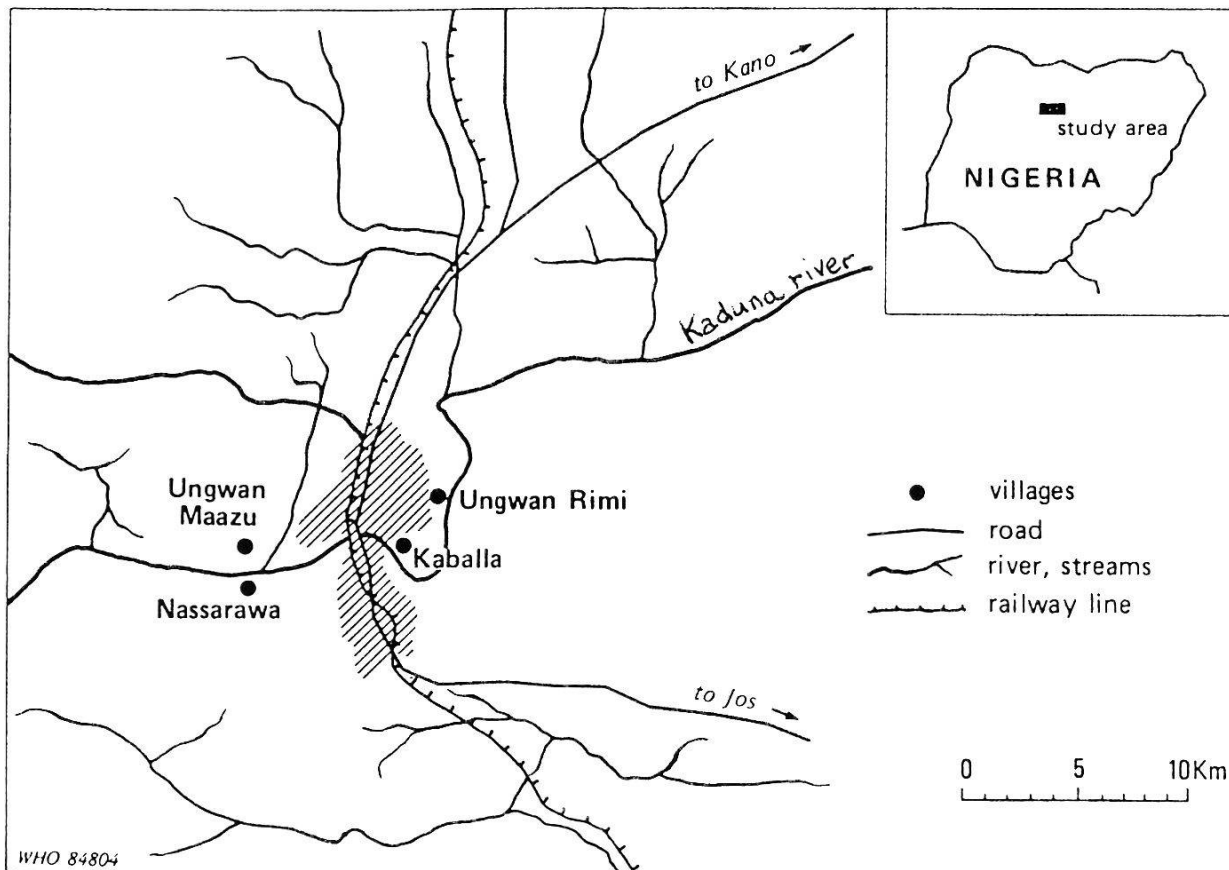


Fig. 1. Sketch map of Kaduna town (shaded) and surrounding area showing study villages.

samples consisted almost entirely of *An. gambiae* (Table 1). However, during the dry season (December through March), the frequency of *An. arabiensis* rose progressively to a maximum of 85% in March, when the relative humidity was less than 50% and the mean temperature was higher than 27° C. In April and May, following the onset of the rainy season, the frequency of *An. arabiensis* decreased rapidly representing less than 3% of the sample in June and less than 0.5% in August.

Earlier studies (Service, 1970; White and Rosen, 1973) had shown that *An. gambiae* was the predominant species in both adult and larval samples. However, these studies were confined to the transitional periods between dry/wet seasons and the wet/dry seasons, respectively.

The results on intraspecific chromosomal polymorphism pertain only to *An. gambiae* because the sample of *An. arabiensis* caught resting indoors during the rainy season was numerically inadequate for statistical comparison with the dry season sample. Full agreement was found between the observed and expected karyotype frequencies according to the Hardy-Weinberg law, as shown by the F values (see Table 2). On the other hand the differences observed in the monthly frequencies of the three inversions on chromosome 2 were found highly significant by homogeneity tests ( $p < 0.001$ ). Arrangements 2Rbc, 2Rd and 2La (which are found at a higher frequency in arid areas) showed a higher

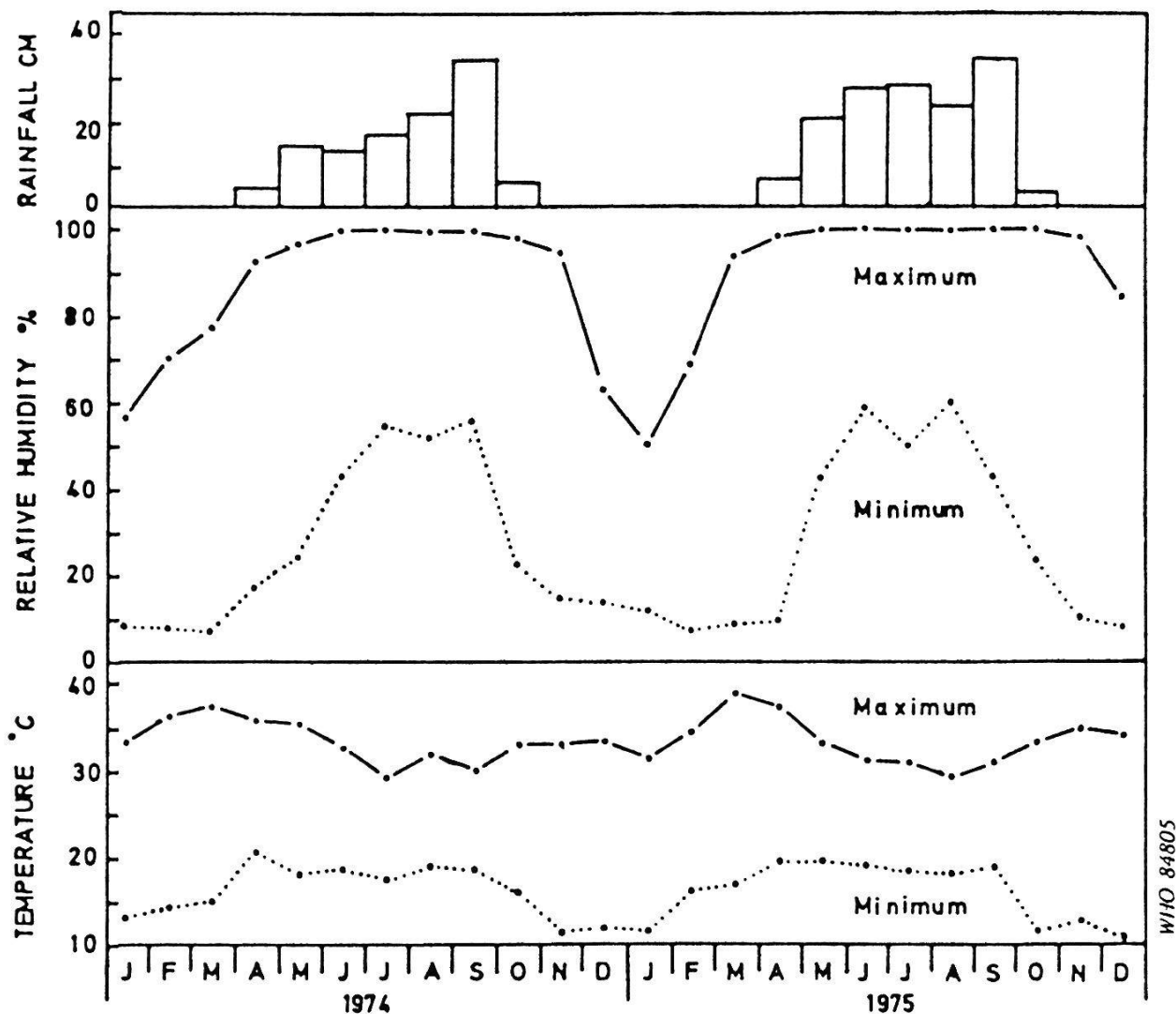


Fig. 2. Meteorological data from Kaduna area, Nigeria, 1974/75 (extracted from Rishikesh et al., 1977).

frequency in the dry season as compared to the wet season. The parallel increase of 2Rbc and 2Rd could be explained by their close association (crossing over values less than 1%) whereas the parallel increase of 2La should be considered largely independent as shown by previous association studies (Di Deco et al., 1980).

The seasonal distribution patterns shown by the two species and the intra-specific chromosomal variants are probably governed by different adaptive values related to changes of climatic conditions in agreement with the patterns of geographical distribution (Coluzzi et al., 1979). *An. gambiae* is predominant indoors during the wet season and up to December. However, for the rest of the dry season and up to May, *An. arabiensis* is the dominant species. Similarly within *An. gambiae*, the carriers of chromosomal arrangements 2Rbc, 2Rd and 2La show an advantage over carriers of other arrangements during the dry months. Most likely, the advantage lies in larval adaptation to restricted, atypi-

Table 1. Monthly percent frequencies of *An. gambiae* and *An. arabiensis* caught indoors in Kaduna area, Nigeria

| Month               | n    | <i>An. gambiae</i> | <i>An. arabiensis</i> |
|---------------------|------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| August 1974 .....   | 182  | 100.00             | —                     |
| December 1974 ..... | 78   | 87.18              | 12.82                 |
| February 1975 ..... | 111* | 43.24              | 56.76                 |
| March 1975 .....    | 182  | 15.38              | 84.62                 |
| April 1975 .....    | 153  | 33.99              | 66.01                 |
| May 1975 .....      | 149  | 85.91              | 14.09                 |
| June 1975 .....     | 75   | 97.33              | 2.67                  |
| August 1975 .....   | 315  | 99.68              | 0.32                  |

\* Includes 11 specimens caught the previous month

Table 2. Monthly percent frequencies of chromosomal arrangements 2Rbc, 2Rd and 2La in *Anopheles gambiae* caught indoors in Kaduna area, Nigeria. When  $|F| > 1.96/\sqrt{N}$  the observed karyotype frequencies are significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) different from the expected frequencies according with the Hardy-Weinberg law

| Month               | n   | $\frac{1.96}{\sqrt{N}}$ | 2Rbc  | F     | 2Rd   | F     | 2La    | F     |
|---------------------|-----|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| August 1974 .....   | 182 | 0.15                    | 24.45 | —0.03 | 21.97 | —0.12 | 82.97  | —0.01 |
| December 1974 ..... | 68  | 0.24                    | 44.12 | —0.01 | 38.97 | 0.04  | 98.53  | —0.01 |
| February 1975 ..... | 48  | 0.28                    | 55.21 | 0.03  | 46.88 | 0.21  | 97.92  | —0.02 |
| March 1975 .....    | 28  | 0.37                    | 39.29 | —0.20 | 35.71 | —0.24 | 100.00 | —     |
| April 1975 .....    | 52  | 0.27                    | 41.35 | 0.09  | 35.58 | 0.12  | 93.12  | 0.03  |
| May 1975 .....      | 128 | 0.17                    | 33.20 | —0.00 | 29.69 | 0.11  | 94.14  | —0.06 |
| June 1975 .....     | 73  | 0.23                    | 37.67 | —0.02 | 32.88 | 0.01  | 89.04  | —0.12 |
| August 1975 .....   | 314 | 0.11                    | 30.41 | —0.03 | 26.27 | —0.04 | 87.74  | 0.07  |

cal breeding habitats and/or adult adaptation to dryness which could, for instance, find expression in a lower reproductive activity (aestivation) of the species and karyotypes decreasing in frequency during the dry months. However, an alternative hypothesis should also be considered. The seasonal changes could influence the resting behaviour and a karyotype could be exophilic in a given situation and endophilic in another. The lower frequency of *An. arabiensis* and of some karyotypes of *An. gambiae* indoors during the wet season could thus be the result of exophily due to prevalence of outdoor resting places with a suitable microclimate. The seasonal frequencies could even be influenced by the migration of chromosomal types, with different adaptive values, in accordance with seasonal changes.

The evidence of seasonal changes in the *gambiae/arabiensis* ratio and in the chromosomal constitution of *An. gambiae* s.l. populations in Kaduna area, may be relevant in explaining some of the variations in the results obtained in villages sprayed with new insecticides (Rishikesh et al., 1975, 1977). Moreover,

the presence of chromosomal polymorphism in both *An. gambiae* and *An. arabiensis* may cause behavioural heterogeneities in each of the vector populations which show in particular partial exophily and non-uniform reduction of longevity under the impact of indoor sprayed insecticides (Molineaux et al., 1976; Coluzzi et al., 1979).

### Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the authorities of the Nigerian Federal and State Ministries of Health for providing the facilities and Mr. S. J. Obanewa, Health Superintendent, and other national staff assigned to the Vector Biology and Control Research Unit, Kaduna, for their assistance in collecting the material. The excellent technical assistance of Mr. G. Petrangeli of the Institute of Parasitology of the University of Rome is also acknowledged.

- Brown J. H.: The estimation of Wright's fixation index from genotypic frequencies. *Genetica* 41, 399–406 (1970).
- Coluzzi M., Sabatini A., Petrarca V., Di Deco M. A.: Chromosomal differentiation and adaptation to human environments in the *Anopheles gambiae* complex. *Trans. roy. Soc. trop. Med. Hyg.* 73, 483–497 (1979).
- Di Deco M. A., Petrarca V., Villani F., Coluzzi M.: Proc. Third European Multicolloquium of Parasitology, Cambridge, Abs. 87 (1980).
- Di Deco M. A., Rishikesh N., Petrarca V., Coluzzi M.: Variazioni stagionali in *Anopheles gambiae* e *Anopheles arabiensis* a Kaduna, Nigeria. *Parassitologia* 23, 169–172 (1981).
- Hunt R. H.: A cytological technique for the study of *Anopheles gambiae* complex. *Parassitologia* 15, 137–139 (1973).
- Keay R. W. J.: An outline of Nigerian vegetation, 2nd ed. Lagos Government Printers, 1953.
- Molineaux L., Shidrawi G. R., Clarke J. L., Boulzaguet R., Askar T., Dietz K.: The impact of propoxur on *Anopheles gambiae* s.l. and some other anopheline populations, and its relationship with some prespraying variables. *Bull. Wld Hlth Org.* 54, 379–389 (1976).
- Ramsdale C. D., Fontaine R. E.: Ecological investigations of *Anopheles gambiae* and *Anopheles funestus*. I. Dry season studies in villages near Kaduna, Nigeria, 1970. WHO/VBC/70.248 and WHO/MAL/70.735 (1970) – Unpublished document.
- Rishikesh N., Rosen P., Ramasamy M., Bang Y. H., Mathis H. L., Renaud P. G.: An expanded stage V trial of OMS-597 for the control of *Anopheles gambiae* and *Anopheles funestus* in Nigeria. WHO/VBC/75.597 (1975) – Unpublished document.
- Rishikesh N., Mathis H. L., Ramasamy M., King J. S.: A field trial of chlorophoxim for the control of *Anopheles gambiae* and *Anopheles funestus* in Nigeria. WHO/VBC/77.661 (1977). – Unpublished document.
- Service M. W.: Identification of the *Anopheles gambiae* complex in Nigeria by larval and adult chromosome. *Ann. trop. Med. Parasit.* 64, 131–136 (1970).
- White G. B., Rosen P.: Comparative studies on sibling species of the *Anopheles gambiae* Giles complex (Dipt., Culicidae). II. Ecology of species A and B in savanna around Kaduna, Nigeria, during transition from wet to dry season. *Bull. ent. Res.* 62, 613–625 (1973).