

black-legged meadow katydid *Orchelimum nigripes*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Orthoptera

Family: Tettigoniidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Katydid have feet with four segments. The body generally resembles that of grasshoppers, but katydids have long, threadlike antennae instead of the grasshoppers' short antennae. The black-legged meadow katydid is about one inch long. Its body is green with a blue tinge. There is yellow on the femur of the first two pairs of legs, and the tibiae are black. The head is white-brown and has red eyes. The female's ovipositor is curved.

BEHAVIORS

The lifespan of a katydid is about a year. Females usually lay their eggs at the end of summer in plant stems. The eggs are typically oval and laid in rows on the plant. Most katydids overwinter in the egg form. The males have sound-producing organs on their front wings. They use this sound for courtship. During courtship there often is antennal contact between male and female. Katydid are eaten by birds and mammals and may be the target of insect predators and parasites including horsehair worms, wasps and flies. The black-legged meadow katydid sings from July through November. It is generally a species that lives near water, but it may move into dry meadows and thickets. It sometimes sings from trees.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; wet prairies and fens; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; gravel prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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