

prairie meadow katydid *Conocephalus saltans*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/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 prairie meadow katydid is four-tenths to six-tenths inch long. The wings are about one-fourth the length of the abdomen. The femur (large section of the leg; third leg segment from the body) has two brown stripes with a plain brown section between them.

BEHAVIORS

The lifespan of a katydid is about a year. Females usually lay their eggs at the end of summer beneath the soil or 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 prairie meadow katydid lives on grasses growing on dry, poor soil. It seems to prefer areas of sandy soils. Singing occurs from August through September.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

Lake Michigan; lakes, ponds, rivers

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2020. Biodiversity of Illinois.