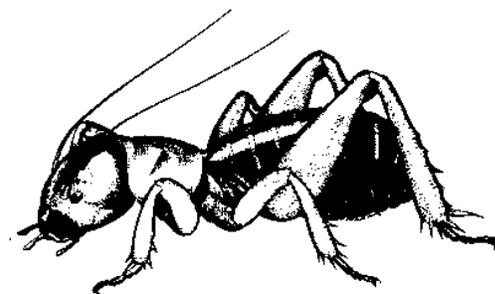




Jerusalem Cricket



Class	Order	Family	Species
Insecta	Orthoptera	Stenopelmatidae	<i>Stenopelmatus spp.</i>

Range

The family is represented worldwide. This genus is found in southern Canada, the western U.S. and south to Costa Rica.

Habitat

Temperate and tropical. Coastal sand, deserts, interior montane and dune habitats.

Niche

They live under rocks and underground in burrows which they dig themselves.

Diet

In nature: they are omnivores feeding on insects smaller than themselves, dead animal matter, roots and other plant material.

In culture: same as above including termites, and oats.

Reproduction

Growth: gradual, molts several times.
Egg: laid in small masses in nest like holes; may overwinter.
Nymph: takes about two years to reach adulthood.
Adult: lives for several months. In the Bay Area mating occurs in the fall and so Jerusalem Crickets are most likely to be encountered during this time. Their total life span from hatching through adulthood may be up to 3 years.

Physical Characteristics

Mouthparts: chewing.
Wings: none in U. S. (winged spp. in Mexico & Central America)
Legs: 3 pairs of spiny, strong legs.
Antennae: 1 pair.
Egg: oval, white with rough surface.
Color: shining pale amber-yellow to brownish with darker stripes on abdomen. (different spp. vary in color from light tan to black)
Body: large human-like head, soft bodied.
Size: 20mm to 3 inches in size as adults depending on the species; the female tends to be larger than the male as in many insects.

Did You Know?

Though they possess large jaws, **these crickets are harmless** and will only pinch in defense if molested. Jerusalem crickets are called "niña de la tierra" in Mexico which means "child of the Earth".

Species in Western U. S. : *Stenopelmatus fuscus*
Stenopelmatus intermedius
Stenopelmatus longispina

Other common names used: Potato bugs, stone crickets.

Special Adaptations

When disturbed, Jerusalem crickets make a rasping sound by rubbing their legs against a roughened spot on their abdomen; they also tap their abdomen against the surface of the ground to produce a drumming sound. Different species produce distinctly different drumming patterns. Male and female Jerusalem crickets find the opposite sex and correct species during the mating season by picking up

Conservation Concerns

There are only 6 described species in California but there may be up to 40 species. One species that used to be native to San Francisco is now extinct due to habitat destruction. There are three species that are considered endangered (but not yet on the endangered species list).

Sources

(12) (43)

