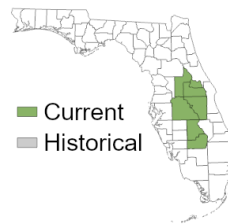


BROAD CERCUS SCRUB GRASSHOPPER

Melanoplus forcipatus



Order: Orthoptera

Family: Acrididae

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

U.S. Status: none

FL Status: none

Description: A flightless grasshopper. Speckled tan color overall. Males (11.5 - 14.5 mm long) have a shiny black stripe that extends from behind the eye to the base of the hind leg. Females (17 - 20.5 mm long) lack this stripe.

Similar Species: This species looks very much like other small flightless *Melanoplus* species and can only reliably be told apart by examining male genitalia.

Habitat: This species is almost exclusively found in oak scrub, sand pine scrub, and sandhill habitats.

Seasonal Occurrence: Possibly present year-round, but most commonly found from June-December.

Florida Distribution: Endemic to central Florida from Seminole County to Glades County.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Florida.

Conservation Status: This species appears to be stable with all populations on conservation lands. Long-term fire exclusion causing habitat degradation is its primary threat.

Protection and Management: Prescribed fire applied during the growing season is needed to maintain scrub habitat. Rosemary scrub should be burned every 15-30 years. Scrub oak should be burned every 10-20 years. Sand pine scrub should be burned every 5-20 years. Sandhill habitat should be burned every 1-3 years. Avoid roller-chopping and other mechanical techniques that cause severe ground disturbance.

References: Capinera et al. 2001, Deyrup 1989, Deyrup and Carrel 2011, Hubbell 1932, Squitier and Capinera 2002



Male. © Dave T. Almquist



Male. © Brandon Woo



Close-up of male genitalia which are key features for identification. © Dave T. Almquist.