

EAST COAST SCRUB GRASSHOPPER

Melanoplus indicifer

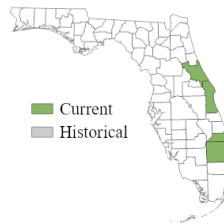
Order: Orthoptera

Family: Acrididae

FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2S3

U.S. Status: none

FL Status: none



Description: Very small, with body length of males around 14 mm (0.55 in.) and females around 21 mm (0.82 in.). Dorsal surface and hind legs grayish tan with dark speckling, sometimes forming incomplete bands on hind femora. Forelimbs reddish brown. Males have a black stripe extending from the eye to the end of the pronotum. Forewings shorter than pronotum. Cerci broad basally with short distal dorsal projection and long, thin, and slightly curved ventral projection (see figure 15b in Smith 2004).

Similar Species: *Melanoplus* grasshoppers are very similar and best identified by examining certain characters on male specimens. Although they do not overlap geographically, *M. forcipatus* is most similar. The cerci of *M. forcipatus* have small teeth on the dorsal and inner surfaces of the dorsal projection and a short, strongly downcurved ventral projection.

Habitat: Found in scrub habitat along the Atlantic Coastal Ridge (Hubbell 1932, Lamb and Justice 2005, Woller 2017).

Seasonal Occurrence: Most often found in August and September, but has been found as early as May and as late as December (Hubbell 1932, Lamb and Justice 2005).

Florida Distribution: Known from a small number of sites in Volusia, Brevard, Martin, and Palm Beach counties.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Florida.

Conservation Status: This species has been recorded on Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Jonathan Dickinson State Park, and Malabar Scrub Sanctuary. Little is known about its population status although its habitat has become highly

fragmented.

Protection and Management: Use prescribed fire during the growing season to reduce woody encroachment, promote a diverse herbaceous understory, and create sandy openings. Avoid roller-chopping which has been shown to have only short-term benefits for reducing woody plant density.

References: Hubbell 1932, Lamb and Justice 2005, Smith 2004, Woller 2017



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