

Species Factsheet

the species recovery trust



Decticus verrucivorus

Wart-biter Bush Cricket



Description: A large member of the bush cricket family. The body is around 31-37mm in length, dark green, mottled with brown. The wings are slightly longer than the body, but the species is effectively flightless in the UK. Wart-biters are omnivorous and eat a variety of plants and small invertebrates.

Lifecycle: Adult females lay eggs in the soil, where they spend at least two winters before hatching. After hatching out in April, the young crickets (nymphs) pass through a number of stages of development (instars) before reaching adulthood in July. The adults are present in the field until around the end of September.

Habitat: The species requires sunny, calcareous (chalky) grassland with a very high diversity of plants and invertebrates. It must also have just the right mixture of tall vegetation (grassy tussocks), short turf and patches of bare ground.

Distribution: Found across Europe (except in extreme south) and in temperate Asia. Also in the UK, but only in southern England: three sites in East Sussex and one in each of Wiltshire and Kent.

Status: Classified as 'Endangered' and is therefore considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

Reasons for decline: Loss of high-quality calcareous grassland; inappropriate management of habitat (typically over- or under-grazing).

Protection under the Law: Protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

What we are doing:

- Improving the quality of the habitat at the Kent site, through scrub clearance.
- Investigating the potential impacts of climate change on the distribution of the species

What you can do:

- Become a species supporter and help fund the project



Red List Status:
Endangered

Threat of extinction:
Very High

Main Threats:
Lack of favourable sites, habitat degradation