



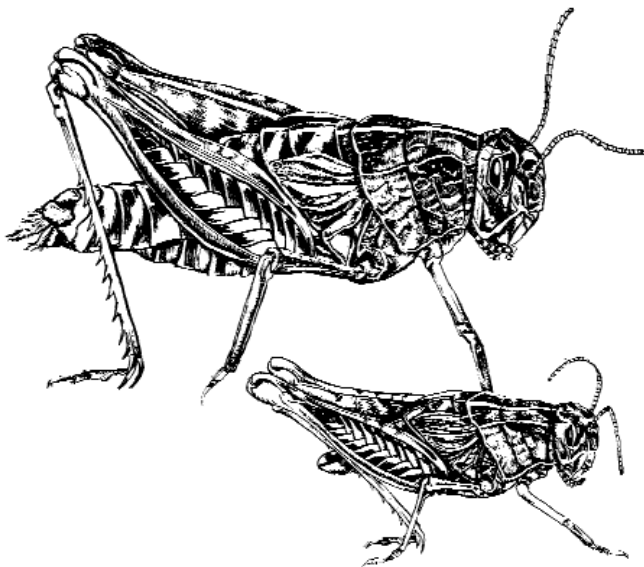
THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ACT

Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*)

A vulnerable species

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The Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*) is a short-winged but flightless grasshopper, with adult females (26-35 mm long) being appreciably larger than adult males (15-20 mm long). The colour is variable, often ranging from brown to grey in dry years, to green in wet years. In the Canberra region, the species is distinguished by the presence on the dorsal surface of a pale 'X'. Nymphs hatch in autumn and develop over winter and early spring, and adults are present from mid spring to late summer. Eggs are laid in the soil.



Key habitat for the Perunga Grasshopper appears to be natural temperate grassland dominated by wallaby, kangaroo and spear grasses with forb food plants located in the inter-tussock spaces. Grass tussocks are used also to escape predators. It may also occur in open woodland areas with a grassy understorey, including the endangered Yellow Box–Red Gum Grassy Woodland community.

Records of the species are from Wagga Wagga, Boorowa, Galong, the ACT and adjacent areas of NSW including Jeir, Murrumbateman and Queanbeyan.

ACT locality records include Black Mountain, Gungahlin, Majura Valley, Canberra International Airport, Jerrabomberra Valley, Molonglo valley, the Campbell Park paddocks, Belconnen Naval Station, Hall, Kambah Pool, Mt Stromlo, Reid, Weetangera and Tuggeranong.

CONSERVATION THREATS

In common with other threatened grassland animal species, the main threats to the Perunga Grasshopper are:

- continued loss and fragmentation of its grassland habitat due to agricultural, urban and industrial development; and
- degradation of its habitat through changed grazing intensity, pasture improvement, weed invasion, changed fire regimes and impacts of stock.

CONSERVATION ACTION

- Collect information on the distribution of the species.
- Encourage, support, coordinate, and where practicable, undertake research into the biology and ecology of the species as the basis for managing the species and its habitat.
- Continue to monitor habitat (vegetation composition) at known Perunga Grasshopper locations, including impacts of management practices, particularly grazing.

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- Encourage management to be undertaken in an adaptive framework, and facilitate the incorporation of research results into management of species and their habitats.
- Seek protection of key habitat known to support viable populations of the species across its range in the ACT.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The primary source of information for this information sheet is the ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy—Action Plan No. 28, where a full bibliography is available.

Action plans are available online at www.environment.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

Acknowledgement

The illustration of the species was prepared for Environment ACT by Fiona Sivyer.