

Great Green Bush-cricket

The Folly trees harbour the great green bush cricket - a rare creature

Orthopteroids 12 - Great Green Bush Crickets

Tettigonia viridissima
Body length 46mm

Our largest bush-cricket. Bright green except for brown dorsal stripe. Female has long, straight ovipositor. Male's song loud but difficult to pinpoint. Found in scrub in S England and S Wales; commonest on S coast from Dorset to Cornwall.

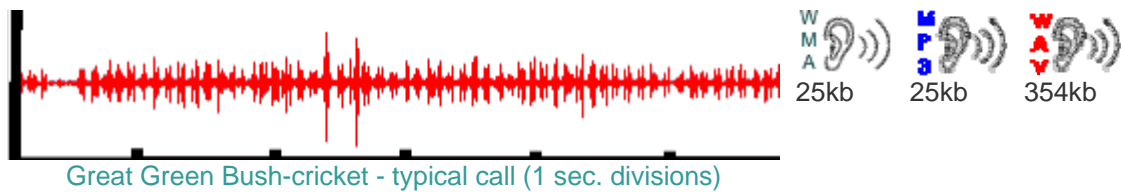
This is the largest species of Bush Cricket in the UK although it is only found in the South. However, it is very common in Europe, producing amazing crepuscular/nocturnal choruses in the marshlands of northern France that are even audible from a speeding train! The **stridulation** (song)* produced by all male British Bush Crickets (with the exception of the **Oak** and **Southern Oak Bush Crickets**) is generated by rubbing the toothed stridulatory ridge on the left forewing against a 'scraper' on the right forewing. Despite its size this species can be frustratingly difficult to locate as it is extremely well camouflaged against the vegetation in which it lives. The stridulation of the Great Green Bush Cricket is very loud and distinctive, carrying quite some distance (up to 50 metres), but when one closes in on the cricket the exact source of the sound is hard to find. The stridulation is ventriloquial and it may be necessary to search for the insect at some length before actually seeing it! In order to pinpoint the exact position it is sometimes helpful for the observer to listen with alternate ears directed towards the presumed origin of the noise and then split the difference.

Great Green Bush-cricket:

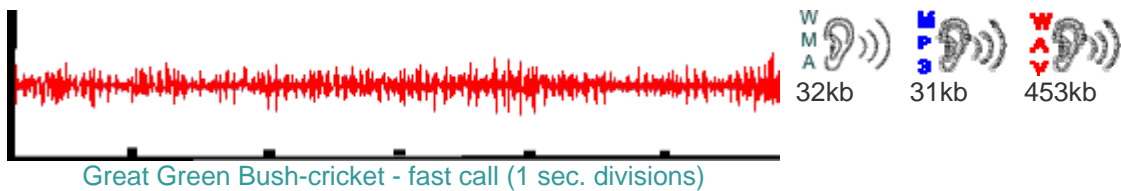
This is our loudest species, so a detector may not be necessary. However, it will often increase range for older orthopterists whose high frequency hearing is naturally diminishing.

The call may be ventriloquial, as on my local cliffs there were occasions at night when the stridulation was audible, but the detector registered nothing when pointed in the direction of the calling. This may need further investigation.

The stridulation heard on the detector can be likened to an old electronic typewriter. The sound comes from rubbing the wings together about 10 times a second.



In hot weather, it can be much faster, rubbing the wings together almost 20 times a second, when it sounds similar to that of a cone-head.



Identification

Body length; males 40-50 mm, females 40-50 mm + 20-25 mm ovipositor. Wings extend well beyond the tip of the abdomen.

The entire body and limbs are a grass green colour. A brown stripe runs down over the top of the head, thorax and wings in the closed position. There is a pair of white bands running down either side of the underside of the abdomen. The female ovipositor is very slightly down-curved.

Behaviour and life history

The colour of these bush-crickets makes them extremely difficult to locate, even when aided by their distinctive song. Young nymphs spend most of their time in coarse grassland whilst older nymphs and adults are more arboreal and frequent clumps of scrub, brambles and shrubs. The males call through the afternoons and into night during warm weather from late July onwards. This bush-cricket is omnivorous with invertebrates making up the bulk of their diet, although grass, and other vegetation is also eaten. The female lays her eggs in late summer directly into the ground. After over-wintering as an egg, the nymphs emerge from mid May onwards and are mature by late July.

Song

An unmistakable prolonged shrill buzzing call that carries for about 100 m or more in still conditions.

Great Green Bush-cricket is known for its incredible talent for leaping and for its... concerts! In the evenings males make characteristic sounds by rubbing its hind legs against each other.