

En Ouer fir d'Natur

Lead an ear to nature



**mouvement
écologique**

Episode 4



PROFILE

EN: FIELD CRICKET
LAT: GRYLLUS CAMPESTRIS



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A touch of Provence ... who's chirping so loudly in the meadow ?

Did you recognize the field cricket in the video clip ?

From April to July, you can hear the field cricket's song in suitable habitats. Even bad weather doesn't get it down – it continues to sing its loud “Zri, zri, zri” even under grey skies. This makes it one of the earliest audible grasshopper species in our region. Other species don't begin their chirping concerts until high summer.

Lifestyle

The sound is produced by the male, which rubs its wings together – a bit like how a violin works. With this sound, the male tries to attract females and mark its territory. Interestingly, the field cricket is one of the few grasshopper species with territorial behavior.

Male field crickets “stridulate” mainly from their self-dug burrows – a tunnel in the ground about 2 cm in diameter and up to 40 cm long. So it's not easy to spot them, as they're quick to hide. But since the burrow also amplifies their song, you can hear these little musicians from far away (50–100 meters)!

Habitat Requirements

Field crickets are found in meadows and pastures – open, agriculturally used land. They prefer sunny spots, often on slopes. You can also find them along roadsides or embankments that are mown later in the year.

They like a mix of tall and short vegetation, especially with some gaps. Their diet consists mainly of grasses and herbs, occasionally small insects. Therefore, a diverse plant life is essential for them. Their presence is strongly linked to species-rich meadows. Proximity to hedges, fruit trees, or forest edges is also important.



Such areas are typically used “extensively,” meaning they are hardly fertilized, grazed with only a few animals, or mown only once or twice a year.

Threats to the Field Cricket

The field cricket cannot survive if vegetation becomes too dense or impenetrable – this can happen when land is fertilized more heavily, making land use more “intensive,” or when land use is completely abandoned, leading to shrub overgrowth (“shrub encroachment”). Both are bad for the field cricket (and many other plant and animal species) – it needs a balance!

In recent decades, both the area and the quality of species-rich meadows have significantly declined. In addition to the reasons mentioned above, habitat loss due to urban sprawl and roads is also a problem.



Distribution in Luxembourg

Thirty years ago, the field cricket was known only in very limited locations in Luxembourg, mainly around Ettelbrück and the Moselle. Today, it can be found in new areas – likely due to climate change. Prolonged heat and drought have probably made new habitats more attractive (e.g., due to sparse vegetation).

How can I help the field cricket ?

1. Report field crickets when you hear them – and contact your local municipality!

You can easily record the cricket’s song using the iNaturalist app and report it to the National Museum of Natural History. Conservation measures can only be taken effectively if we know where the animals still exist – you can help with that! If the area is within your municipality, ask whether any nature conservation projects for the field cricket are already being carried out.

2. Support local farms in Luxembourg that still allow their cattle to graze.

This helps preserve the field cricket’s habitat and that of many other animals!

For example, choose beef from Luxembourg. In local suckler cow farming, cattle spend most of their lives on pasture – even under conventional farming. In supermarkets, it can be hard to tell whether the meat comes from these animals or from dairy cows raised in barns. A better option is to buy directly from the farm – you can find lists of farms offering direct sales here:

<https://agriculture.public.lu/de/veroeffentlichungen/ernaehrung/bio/einkaufsfuehrer.html>



Plus d’infos sur le grillon champêtre (en allemand) :

<https://insektentrainer.nabu.de/insekt/feldgrille/>

<https://www.nabu.de/tiere-und-pflanzen/insekten-und-spinnen/heuschrecken/00866.html>



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