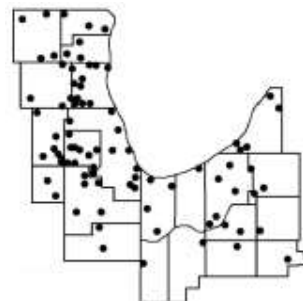
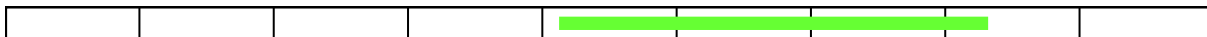




Forbes's Tree Cricket (*Oecanthusforbesi*)

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



trilling-tree-crickets/), and at Lisa Rainsong's website (<https://www.listeningtoinsects.com/forbes-s-tree-cricket>). An excellent site for tree crickets generally is <http://oecanthinae.com/index2.html>.

Forbes's tree cricket has a sibling species, the black-horned tree cricket (*O. nigricornis*), but recent research by Laurel Symes (2013) revealed a transition zone between the two species in Ohio (currently being detailed by Lisa Rainsong), with only Forbes's occurring in the Chicago region. This species usually is found in areas with mostly tall forbs. Vines and woody plants also may be present, but not necessarily tall grasses. Males sing up in the tops of meadow plants on warm days, lower when cooler. Females lay eggs in woody stems. They are common throughout the region.

Season. Noted first songs have ranged August 2-September 5, and last song dates September 30-November 10. Singing begins in the morning, continuing into the night.

Similar Species. The elongated shape is shared with other tree crickets. The black leg segments, black antennas, broad dark zones down the ventral center of the abdomen, and (often, not always) a narrow black stripe down the center of the pronotum, are distinguishing characteristics. These insects are highly variable in the amount of dark pigmentation they show. Even the patterns of spots on the basal two antenna segments, once regarded as important in tree cricket identification, are highly variable in this species (see photos). Blacker individuals are more common in Indiana than in the Illinois portion of the region.

Song. The song is a long, loud, 3.7 kHz trill. At a given temperature, Forbes's tree crickets have faster pulse rates than their relatives (above 60/second at 25C), but this difference becomes less reliable at lower temperatures (Symes 2013). Pulse rate determination is done in a computer from recordings. Forbes's tree cricket songs and photos can be found at the Singing Insects of North America website (<https://sina.orthsoc.org/594a.htm>), my blog (<https://natureinquiries.wordpress.com/2014/01/27/sound-ideas->



The female in the top photo shows the darker colors displayed by some individuals, while the male represents the pale end of the range. An intermediate pattern is represented in the photo above right. The two photos to the lower right show the range of antennal spot patterns. In the larger basal antenna segments, the pairs of spots may be partly obscured by diffuse pigment as on the left, or may be sharply defined as on the right. The outer spot is oval or comma-shaped rather than circular, however. On the second segment there is a clear separation between the two marks, comparable to the width of the inner mark. Center right, a female laying a line of eggs in a woody stem, producing a 3-inch scar line. She has arched her body to bring her ovipositor into the stem at a right angle.

