

THE COMMON GROUND-HOPPER ON THE ISLAND OF BUTE

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Introduction

In an accompanying paper in the present volume of the Society's *Transactions* I give a list of the Acrididae or grasshoppers which have been recorded for the Island of Bute. Close relatives of the grasshoppers are the Tetrigidae or ground-hoppers, one species of which, the Common Ground-hopper *Tetrix undulata*, occurs in Scotland. During the past few years I have recorded a good many specimens on the island, and since, according to Marshall and Haes (1988), there appear to be no previously known Bute occurrences, it is obviously desirable to place the available details on record.

Ground-hoppers are small (c 10 mm) and relatively inconspicuous, and were it not for their hopping activity when disturbed, they could very easily be overlooked. An unusual feature is also their ability to swim. The life-cycle of *T. undulata* is also slightly different, in that adults or nymphs may be found at any time of the year, although mid-summer understandably sees the main population. The method of catching and identification I have usually used is similar to that described under the grasshoppers.

Species

COMMON GROUND-HOPPER *Tetrix undulata*

During the past seven years, since acquiring the definitive textbook by Marshall and Haes (1988) which stimulated my interest, when out looking for grasshoppers I have also taken time to hunt for any ground-hoppers, and have found *T. undulata* to be fairly well distributed over the island, most commonly in woodland clearings, mossy areas, and the sandy coastal fringe. The statement by Marshall and Haes that the Common Ground-hopper could swim also led me to capture some specimens at the side of the Plan Loch.

I am sure that any other field-naturalist who is prepared to take the time would also be able to find specimens without too much difficulty. With regard to numbers, it is difficult to give any accurate assessment since the insects are easily overlooked and must be searched for, but it seems to me that *T. undulata* is not really uncommon.

References

- Gibson, J A, 1996 The grasshoppers of the Island of Bute. *Transactions of the Buteshire Natural History Society*, 24: 71-73.
- Marshall, J A, and Haes, E C M, 1988 *Grasshoppers and Allied Insects of Great Britain and Ireland*. Colchester: Harley Books.