

window strike. A final report will follow at a later date.

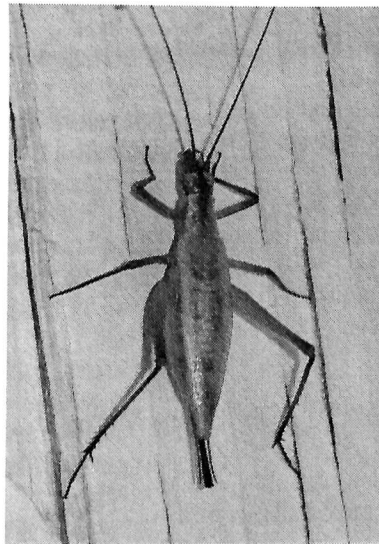
American Woodcocks are migratory birds that normally migrate from their northern breeding areas to their southern wintering areas in late October and November. This certainly raises some questions as to why this bird was found here this time of year.

### **FIRST OCCURRENCE OF TREE CRICKET FROM PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND:**

by Robert W. Harding

Tree Crickets, (Orthoptera: Gryllidae) are related to grasshoppers, field crickets and katydids. While grasshoppers are often seen jumping about fields, and the familiar black and brown field crickets are usually encountered along the ground, tree crickets spend most of their time hidden in trees and shrubbery. Although they are perfectly camouflaged and are often not seen, last September a male and female were attracted to our porch light in Summerville, in central Kings County.

On the night of September 19, 2015, a male was found and stayed for about an hour while photos were taken. The following morning, a female was found under the same light and a series of photos were taken as well. I did not collect these specimens, which would be advisable because identification to species is apparently inconclusive from photos. This species is very likely the Black-horned Tree Cricket (*Oecanthus nigricornis*), the only Tree Cricket recorded so far from the Maritimes. It has been found across the southern half of New Brunswick and in central Nova Scotia. While there are other similar species of *Oecanthus* that may be found in the region, this is the first time this genus has been recorded on PEI.



First Record for  
Tree Cricket on PEI  
Photo by Robert W. Harding

These insects are fairly small, with a body length of about 15 mm. The black antennae of both male and female are very long – much longer than their body length. The male is dorsally compressed and paddle-shaped, while the female appears more slender, with her wings held close to the sides of her abdomen. They are omnivorous, and feed on aphids and other soft-bodied bugs as well as soft plant tissues. The female has a prominent black ovipositor which she uses to pierce woody stems and to lay eggs inside these holes. Males rub their wings together and ‘sing’ to attract females late in the day and into the night.

The Black-horned Tree Cricket prefers lower shrubs than other species of tree crickets. It has been found in patches of goldenrod (*Solidago*), brambles (*Rubus*) and other tall weeds. Nature PEI members are encouraged to collect any tree cricket specimens that may be encountered in late summer, so that identification can be confirmed. It has been suggested that tree crickets and some related insects are relative newcomers to the Maritimes and are spreading across the region due to climate change. Tracking where they are found across the Island is important in helping determine distribution patterns of this interesting insect, and in adding to the general knowledge of the natural history of PEI.

Thanks to Dr. Don McAlpine, New Brunswick Museum and John Klymko, Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre for their assistance in confirming identifications and providing information on this family in the region.