

# House Cricket, *Acheta domesticus* (Linnaeus) (Insecta: Orthoptera: Gryllidae)<sup>1</sup>

T. J. Walker<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

House crickets are commonly encountered in Florida in only two contexts: bait for fish and food for pets. This is because they do not survive very well in the wild in this part of the United States. The house crickets that are sold in bait and pet stores are reared in large commercial cricket factories or by local entrepreneurs.

Other Florida field and house crickets.

## Distribution

The house cricket is probably native to southwestern Asia, but has been widely distributed by man. In the United States it occurs wherever it is sold, but it survives in feral populations only in the eastern United States (except peninsular Florida), and southern California. Why it fails to survive in peninsular Florida is not known.

## Life Cycle

House crickets take two to three months to complete their life cycle when reared at 80 to 90°F. They have no special overwintering stage, but survive cold weather in the northern States and Canada in and around buildings and in dumps, where heat from fermentation may sustain them. Eggs are deposited in whatever damp substrate is provided — for example, sand or peat moss. Juveniles resemble the adults except for being smaller and wingless.



Figure 1. Distribution of house cricket in the United States. Credits: Paul M. Choate, University of Florida

## Identification

The house cricket is a 16 to 21 mm long, light yellowish-brown cricket, with wings that cover the abdomen. It has three dark transverse bands on the top of the head and between the eyes. All house crickets have long hind wings when they become adult, but they sometimes shed them later.

## Habitat

In Florida, house crickets are usually found where they have recently escaped or been released — for example, on the shores where people fish.

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2. T. J. Walker, professor, Entomology and Nematology Department, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.



Figure 2. Female house cricket, *Acheta domesticus* (Linnaeus), hindwings intact.  
Credits: Paul M. Choate, University of Florida



Figure 3. Female house cricket, *Acheta domesticus* (Linnaeus). Forewings extended, revealing intact right hindwing. Left hindwing has been shed.  
Credits: Paul M. Choate, University of Florida

## Song

As in most other crickets, male house crickets make a calling song by rubbing a scraper on the inner edge of the left wing against the teeth of a file that is beneath the right wing. The calling song (689Kb wav file) is a series of short

chirps. Each chirp consists of two or three *pulses* which correspond to two or three wing closures (*graphs*). Wing openings are silent.

## Rearing

House crickets, as well as various native ground-dwelling crickets, are easy to rear in small numbers in the home or schoolroom. Among Web-published rearing instructions are [Rearing Crickets](#) (for fish bait) and [Breeding and Raising the House Cricket](#) (for feeding captive herps).

## Management

Generally house crickets do no harm. However, if crickets kept for pet food or fish bait escape into your home and annoy you with their calls, you can eliminate them by setting out baits that are sold for cockroach or earwig control.

## Selected References

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