Summer-feeding grasshoppers can cause severe damage to nearly all crops when they are abundant in field borders. Identification of the grasshoppers present is important because only four species are likely to cause significant crop damage. These four species are spur-throated grasshoppers that have a rounded head and a spur between their front legs. They are more common in weed-infested field borders and weedy adjacent pastures, but will move to cropland after consuming most of the weeds. Summer-feeding grasshoppers overwinter as eggs and hatch through much of May and June. Identification of the nymphal development stage is important because control efforts are most effective when the 3rd and 4th instar stages are targeted. Control efforts should begin while nymphs are concentrated in field borders and before they move to cropland.

**Biology and Management**

**Nymph Development**

- **Twostriped Grasshopper**
  - *Melanoplus bivittatus*
  - Facts:
    - One of the largest Nebraska grasshoppers.
    - Severe pest of small grains, alfalfa, corn, and sunflowers.
    - Feeds on forbs and grasses by climbing on plants, consuming leaves, and clipping them off.
    - Begins to hatch in early May.
    - Lays eggs in ditch banks and compact drift soil.

**Adult Identification**

- Body length: male - 1.1 inches, female - 1.5 inches.
  - Body with two yellow stripes running down the back of the head.
  - Body with two yellow stripes running down the back of the head.

**Nymph Identification**

- Body green or tan.
  - Body length of 4th instar nymph: 0.6 inch.
  - Side of head has a dark horizontal band above a light stripe from the eye across the pronotum.
  - Upper part of the hind legs has a black lengthwise stripe.

**Facts**

- Crop-protection strategies include:
  - Use pesticides in drift banks and compact drift soil.
  - Use biological control agents.
  - Fertilize to increase the abundance of plants.
  - Use cultural practices such as crop rotation.

**Images not to scale.**
**Migratory Grasshopper**  
*Melanoplus sanguinipes*

**Facts**
- The most important crop-damaging grasshopper.
- Severe pest of small grains, alfalfa, clover, corn, and vegetables.
- Feeds on forbs and grasses by climbing on plants and consuming leaves.
- Begins to hatch in mid-May.
- Lays eggs in soil at the base of grasses.

**Adult Identification**
- Body tan or gray with a black band with light spots, band broadens and extends from behind eyes across 2/3 of the pronotum (plate behind head).
- Body length: male - 0.9 inch, female - 1.0 inch.
- Lower part of hind legs is blue-green or reddish.

**Nymph Identification**
- Body tan or gray.
- Length of 4th instar nymph: 0.4 inch.
- Head has a black stripe behind eyes and a narrow pale yellow crescent below eyes that both continue across the pronotum.
- Upper part of hind legs has a broken black lengthwise stripe.
- Lower part of hind legs is blue-green or reddish.

**Differential Grasshopper**  
*Melanoplus differentialis*

**Facts**
- Severe pest of small grains, corn, soybeans, alfalfa, and vegetables.
- Feeds on forbs and grasses by climbing on plants and consuming leaves.
- Begins to hatch in early June.
- Lays eggs in soil among grass or weeds.

**Adult Identification**
- Body yellow with black markings.
- Body length: male - 1.0 inch, female - 1.25 inches.
- Upper part of hind legs has a series of chevron-like markings.

**Nymph Identification**
- Body pale green, pale yellow, or tan.
- Body length of 4th instar nymph: 0.5 inch.
- Side of pronotum (plate behind head), near the top, has two dark horizontal stripes divided by a light stripe.
- Upper part of hind legs has a dark lengthwise stripe.

**Redlegged Grasshopper**  
*Melanoplus femurrubrum*

**Facts**
- Severe pest of small grains, alfalfa, clover, corn, soybeans, and vegetables.
- Favors low, moist, weedy areas.
- Feeds on forbs and grasses by climbing on plants and consuming leaves.
- Begins to hatch in early June.
- Lays eggs in soil under grass sod.

**Adult Identification**
- Body dark tan with a bright yellow underside.
- Body length: male - 0.8 inch, female - 1.0 inch.
- Lower part of hind legs is bright red.

**Nymph Identification**
- Body yellow with black markings.
- Body length of 4th instar nymph: 0.4 inch.
- Side of head has a pale yellow crescent band that continues across pronotum (plate behind head) to front of abdomen.
- Top of head has a pale yellow stripe, flanked by black stripes, that continues down the length of the body.
- Upper part of hind legs has a dark lengthwise stripe.