Robust grasshopper

They are really smelly which makes them an easy lunch for introduced pests that hedgehogs and stoats.

They look like little grey tanks. Their colouring makes them really hard to spot their surroundings.

They have a life-cycle of about two years and adults eat about two leaves a day.

Robust grasshoppers (Brachaspis robustus) are very rare and the only place they live is the open gravel riverbeds of Te Manahuna/the Mackenzie Basin.

They are facing extinction and are classified as nationally endangered (just like kea and whio/blue duck).

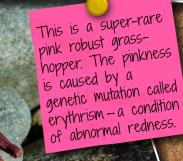
The Te Manahuna Aoraki conservation project is helping to protect robust grasshoppers. In 2018 the project built a 6,000 m² fenced grasshopper sanctuary that keeps most predators out. It is thought this is the world's first predator-exclusion sanctuary for insects.

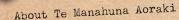
DOC has been monitoring robust grasshoppers for ten years. Canterbury and Lincoln University students are also studying the grasshoppers, inside and outside the fence, to see how much impact predators like mice, rats, stoats and hedgehogs have on them.

Robust grasshoppers don't live in grass—they live in gravel riverbeds.

They can jump quite well but they landing — they do a kind of belly-flop.

Females grow to about 4 cm long, about twice the size of males (that's a male on her back).





Te Manahuna Aoraki is a conservation project protecting the landscapes and threatened species over 310,000ha of the upper Mackenzie Basin and Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park (that's nearly three times the size of Auckland, and twice the size of Stewart Island/Rakiura).



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Find out more on www.temanahunaaoraki.org