Manitoba Grasshopper Forecast for 2026

Twostriped (left) and migratory (right) grasshoppers

Grasshopper surveys have been conducted in Manitoba in various degrees of detail since 1931. The current grasshopper forecast is based on counts of grasshopper populations in August (which estimates the egg-laying population), weather data (which helps estimate whether those female grasshoppers present are capable of laying their optimum level of eggs), and recent trends in grasshopper populations. In some years, natural enemy populations may significantly affect the number of grasshoppers, or the number of their eggs that survive and hatch, and such data may be pertinent to the forecast as well. Counts are generally done in or alongside crop fields in Manitoba. The goal is to estimate levels of the four species of grasshoppers that have potential to be pests of crops in Manitoba.

Purpose of a grasshopper forecast

All stages of grasshoppers, except the egg stage, feed on plants. Some species will feed on crops, while other species do not, or rarely will. Older grasshoppers of these crop feeding species can do the most damage to crops, particularly later in the season as these grasshoppers can move greater distances. In annual cropping systems, the young stages of these species are often highly concentrated around field edges early in the season, particularly around fields that had sparse green vegetation late in the previous summer. If grasshopper populations get quite high, these younger, concentrated populations of grasshoppers are much easier to control than older and more dispersed populations later in the season.

Knowing the risk of grasshoppers being a problem alerts farmers and agronomists to the importance of monitoring field edges, vegetation surrounding the fields, and other preferred egg laying areas in late-May and June for these younger grasshoppers. This information can also help farmers choose crops and plan seeding practices for the following year.

December 2025

Manitoba

Interpreting the grasshopper survey map

The grasshopper survey map for Manitoba is based on counts of adult grasshoppers per m^2 done by crop production extension specialists, agronomists, and entomologists in August 2025. Grasshopper counts from 173 locations in Manitoba were used to produce the map. The legend on the map shows the average grasshopper counts in an area, and relates these to potential risk for many of our crops. Factors affecting grasshopper development, survival and behaviour will determine whether these August populations are likely to increase, decrease, or remain fairly stable for the next year and are also important factors in the overall forecast for 2026. The small circles on the map show where data was collected, and the risk category the count is in. White areas on the map are areas where data was not collected. Note that the averaging of counts in a region will result in a density category for a region representing the cumulative data, not the value from a specific count.

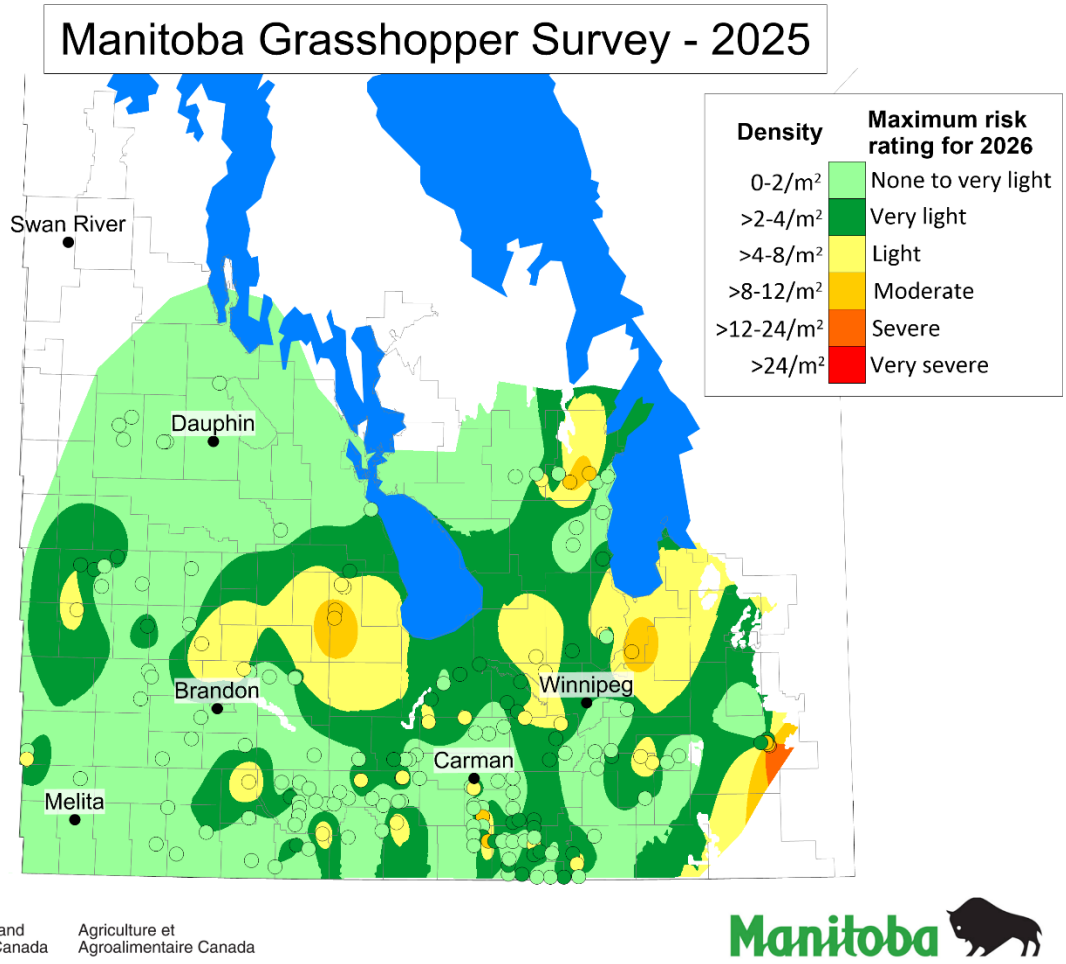

Figure 1. Average density of grasshoppers in Manitoba during August 2025.

The Grasshopper Forecast for Manitoba for 2026

What the grasshopper survey map shows

About 80% of the counts were in the none to very light or very light risk categories (139 out of 173 counts). Twenty-four count were in the light risk category (>4-8/m^2), 9 counts were in the moderate risk category (>8-12/m^2), and one counts was in

the severe risk category (>12-24/m^2), from a site east of Prawda in the Eastern region of Manitoba. A species of grasshopper that is not a crop pest, the marsh meadow grasshopper, was the dominant grasshopper species at this site, however. There were no counts in the very severe risk category. The Eastern and Interlake regions were the regions with the highest proportion of counts in the moderate risk category or above, with some counts in the moderate risk category also occurring in the Central region.

Table 1. Grasshopper counts in each risk category for each agricultural region surveyed.

		Counts in Risk Category					
Region	**Counts**	**Very Severe**	**Severe**	**Moderate**	**Light**	**Very Light**	**None to very light**
Northwest	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Southwest	38	0	0	0	5	7	26
Central	93	0	0	4	13	24	52
Eastern	16	0	1	2	2	4	7
Interlake	18	0	0	3	4	2	9
Total	**173**	**0**	**1**	**9**	**24**	**37**	**102**
Percent of Total		**0**	**0.58**	**5.2**	**13.9**	**21.4**	**59.0**

Dominant species: While doing grasshopper counts, dominant species of grasshoppers were recorded from 116 locations, with two or more different species listed as dominant at some locations. The dominant species that was reported from the most locations was a non-pest species of grasshopper, the marsh meadow grasshopper, *Pseudochorthippus curtipennis*. Katydids, which are also not regarded as crop pests, were also quite abundant at many locations, often more abundant than the pest species of grasshoppers.

Of the potential pest species of grasshoppers, twostriped grasshopper (*Melanoplus bivittatus*) was the most commonly reported, followed closely by the migratory grasshopper (*Melanoplus sanguinipes*). The presence of clearwinged grasshopper (*Camnula pellucida*) was noted at four locations, but it was not the dominant species at any; marsh meadow was the dominant species at each of these locations. Packard grasshopper (*Melanoplus packardii*) was noted as the dominant species at one location in the Interlake region.

Marsh meadow grasshopper feeds on grasses and sedges, and is found where grass grows relatively tall and dense. It is often associated with moist habitats. Aside from being found along the edges of marshes, lakes and ponds, habitat of marsh meadow grasshopper includes roadsides and pastures. Although they can feed on forage grasses, they do not cause significant damage, and are not regarded as a pest species of grasshopper. Twostriped and migratory grasshoppers feed on a variety of types of plants (both crops and non-crop). Clearwinged grasshopper is primarily a grass feeder, and seldom feeds on broad-leaved plants.

Recent trends in grasshopper populations

Grasshopper outbreaks usually develop after a few years of conditions that are favourable for a steady increase in numbers of those species of grasshopper that can become pests of crops. Comparing the current August grasshopper counts with those of previous years can determine if the populations tend to be rising or falling.

Table 2. Percentage of grasshopper counts in moderate to very severe risk categories over the past 5 years.

Year	Percent in moderate to severe risk category
2021	10.3
2022	16
2023	9.2
2024	5.6
2025	5.8

In the counts for the grasshopper survey in August 2025, the percent that were in the moderate to very severe categories was 5.8%, very similar to the percentage of counts in these higher categories in the 2024 grasshopper survey. There continues to be areas where counts in some of the higher risk categories are occurring, but overall the number is not high, and the majority of counts were in the lighter risk categories.

Weather in late-summer

A lot of the eggs of grasshoppers are laid in August and into September. If the late summer and early fall are cool or very rainy, less grasshopper eggs may be laid. An earlier frost, although not desirable for many crops, may kill many grasshoppers and prematurely end their egg laying.

Temperature: Temperatures in August were above the 30-year average for all agricultural regions. Most regions had slightly above normal temperatures (0.3 to 0.6 °C), however the Northwest region was 1.1°C warmer than normal. Average temperatures in September were well above normal; 2.5°C to 3°C above normal for all agricultural regions.

The first wide-spread frost event was on October 7th, although there were more regional and less severe frosts on September 4th and 7th impacting some areas.

Precipitation: Precipitation was below the 30-year average in all agricultural regions in May, June and July, but was generally above average in August and September, with the exception of the Interlake region, which had below average precipitation in September. Although above normal rain accumulations occurred in August for all regions, parts of the Interlake were still well below normal. Isolated storms in September and October saw some overland flooding in the Eastern and Northwestern regions. The number of days with rain (0.1 mm or more) from August 1 to September 30 was less than the 30-year mean for all agricultural regions of Manitoba in 2025.

The weather overall would have been favourable for grasshoppers to be active and laying eggs in August and September. Temperatures would have been favourable. Although the amount of precipitation was generally above average in August and September, the number of days with rain was less than average.

Summary

Grasshoppers were still a concern in some areas of Manitoba in 2025, including pastures in some of the drier areas. However, they were overall of less concern compared to recent years. In the grasshopper survey in August, the percentage of counts in the higher risk categories was similar to 2024, and lower than years preceding that.

Conditions for egg laying in late-summer were generally good. Temperatures were above normal in August and September in all agricultural regions, with the first wide-spread frost not occurring until into October. The number of days with rain in August and September was less than normal. Conditions would have allowed the grasshoppers to be active and laying eggs into late-summer.

The risk of economical populations of grasshoppers developing in 2026 varies, depending on location. The August survey showed generally light to moderate levels in many areas, but there continues to be areas where counts in some of the higher categories are occurring. Non-pest species of grasshoppers, such as marsh meadow and katydids, were also quite abundant at many locations. If weather is favourable for grasshopper survival and development, there still may be areas where grasshoppers are a concern to crops in 2026.

When they have the opportunity, farmers and agronomists are encouraged to monitor grasshopper populations, beginning in late-May or early-June in 2026, along roadsides, field edges, and other areas where populations tend to be concentrated or at high levels early in the season.

For more information on the grasshopper forecast or monitoring for grasshoppers, please contact John Gavloski at (204) 750-0594.

The protocol for doing the grasshopper counts for this survey can be found at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/grasshopper-survey-protocol-revised-2025-07.pdf

A factsheet providing more information on grasshopper biology, species identification, monitoring and management is available at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/grasshoppers-factsheet-revised-november2022.pdf

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