

Zoos Victoria's Fighting Extinction Species

# KEY'S MATCHSTICK GRASSHOPPER

*Keyacris scurra*

*Critically Endangered*



Photo: Matthew Frawley

The Key's Matchstick Grasshopper, with its distinctive elongated body shape, was once common in the native grassland and grassy woodlands across inland south-eastern Australia. However, these habitats fall within the wheat and grazing belt which is one of the most heavily modified regions in the country and almost no original habitat remains.

Excitingly this species has just been rediscovered in Victoria after half a century, but is also known from a few locations in southern NSW and the ACT. We will work with our partners to try and locate and/or reintroduce this species to Victoria and also help raise awareness and support for insect conservation more generally.

**ZOOS**  
**VICTORIA**  
Fighting Extinction

# Zoos Victoria is committed to Fighting Extinction

We are focused on working with partners to secure the survival of our priority species before it is too late.

**The Key's Matchstick Grasshopper was added to Zoos Victoria's priority list in 2019, following our resolve to expand this list to include some local invertebrate species. Not seen in Victoria for over 50 years, a very small population of this species was rediscovered near Omeo in eastern Victoria very recently. We will support surveys and citizen science projects to try and locate any other remaining populations. Working with our partners, we will also explore options for captive breeding and reintroduction, with the aim of securing a long-term future for this species in the wild.**

## KEY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Identify any remnant populations or suitable but unoccupied habitat patches within Victoria.
- Support research to investigate habitat needs and options for habitat restoration and reintroduction.
- Display the species in an innovative exhibit and help raise public awareness of invertebrate conservation more generally.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

This is a newly prioritised Zoos Victoria Fighting Extinction species, we aim to achieve the objectives above and annually report on outcomes through Zoos Victoria communication channels.

## THE SPECIES

The Key's Matchstick Grasshopper was first described in 1952 and falls into a family of grasshoppers that is unique to Australia. It is generally found in habitat dominated by the tall perennial grass, *Themeda australis*, which it does not eat, but may rely on for protection from predators and weather extremes. Like other members of the family, the Key's Matchstick Grasshopper is flightless which has likely impaired its ability to persist across a fragmented landscape.

Current work by researchers at the University of Melbourne aims to discover more about the genetic characteristics of remaining and extinct populations. Among other insights, this work will inform options for potential translocations of the grasshopper into or within Victoria.

## THE PLAN

Together with our partners, we aim to undertake the following actions.

Undertake field surveys to identify any remaining Victorian populations. \$60,000

Provide support for habitat restoration and re-introduction. \$90,000

Initiate and maintain captive breeding for public display and re-introduction, as required. \$130,000

Welcome this new species onto Zoos Victoria's priority list. Establishing the grasshopper's presence at our zoos and online as part of our local threatened species commitment. \$15,000

Citizen science – creating invertebrate investigators: a community-led search for Key's Matchstick Grasshopper, a species unobserved in Victoria for 40 years. YEAR 3 \$40,000  
YEAR 4-5 \$30,000 p.a

**Total cost over five years \$395,000**

## How can I help?

Zoos Victoria will be supporting community-led searches for the Key's Matchstick Grasshopper. You can also support our Wildlife Conservation Master Plan 2019-2024 by donating at:  
**[zoo.org.au/donate](http://zoo.org.au/donate)**

## PROGRAM PARTNERS

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning  
**[delwp.vic.gov.au](http://delwp.vic.gov.au)**

School of BioSciences  
University of Melbourne  
**[biosciences.unimelb.edu.au](http://biosciences.unimelb.edu.au)**