

GRYLLOBLATTODEA

The next order that we will briefly discuss is the order Grylloblattodea (sometimes called the Grylloblattaria). These are commonly called the rock crawlers. In some of the older literature you may see this order called the Notoptera. There is only 1 family, the Grylloblattidae. These are generally considered to be very rare [we do have 1 vial with a couple specimens that we will have available in the laboratory - look at these in the vial, but do not remove from the vial].

There are 4 genera and 25 species in the world, with 11 described from North America. All of the North American species occur in the western and northwestern U.S., and they all belong in the genus *Grylloblatta*. The other species of this order occur in Japan, Siberia, China, and Korea.

Rock crawlers are elongate, slender insects; they are wingless and have a pair of cerci at posterior end of abdomen. The eyes are small or absent and they lack ocelli. The antennae are long and filiform, consisting of 23-45 segments. The cerci are relatively long, with 5 or 8 segments. The ovipositor of the female is almost as long as the cerci.

The first species was not described until 1914. They are called rock crawlers because they are found around or on rocks. They tend to live in cold places such as mountain slopes near glacial fields, and also in ice caves. They are nocturnal and they feed mainly on dead insects and other organic matter. They live about 5-7 years.

Some workers consider rock crawlers to be very primitive, and to be living remnants of the extinct order Protorthoptera. Others consider them to be just a subfamily of the Orthoptera. There is some recent molecular evidence that this group may actually be closely related to the earwigs (Dermaptera).