**Interesting Fact**

Cicadas don't bite or string, but that doesn't mean they can't bug your ears.

The insect, which emerges from its underground habitat once every 13 years to shed its shell, has a hiss so loud that one university professor is warning Tennessee locals about the potential hearing damage the cicada chirping can cause.

"They're in the neighborhood of 90 decibels or above, if you get real close to them," Todd Ricketts, associate professor of hearing and speech at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, recently told [WSMV Nashville](http://www.wsmv.com/news/28010771/detail.html).

"Annoying, irritating and you have to shout to talk over them," said Ricketts.

According to Rickets' measurements, the cicadas on the Vanderbilt campus in Nashville, Tenn., measured at roughly 86 decibels. 85 decibels is the volume where the threat of hearing damage begins, and federal work standards stipulate that sounds exceeding that level should not be heard for more than a four hour period.

Depending on proximity, [the cicadas' hiss](http://news.vanderbilt.edu/2011/05/audiologist-measures-cicada-sound/) stacks up to a [85 decibel bustle](http://www.gcaudio.com/resources/howtos/loudness.html) of heavy city traffic, a 90 decibel hum of a lawnmower or a 95 decibel rumble of a New York City subway train.

And good luck avoiding them. Nancy Hinkle, a University of Georgia entomologist managing [Georgia's first statewide study](http://www.ajc.com/lifestyle/cicadas-nothing-harmful-cant-953329.html) on periodical cicadas says there are "bazillions."

Source: *Cicadas’ Chirp Could Cause Hearing Damage*, Professor Says. http:weirdnews.aol.com, May 26, 2011. Online. Available: <http://weirdnews.aol.com/2011/05/26/cicada-noise_n_867407.html>. May 30, 2011