

Life in the big smoke: the ecology and conservation of urban bats



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Although urbanisation by expanding human populations can reduce native biological diversity by reducing the amount and quality of habitat available for wildlife, green spaces (e.g. parks, gardens) within urban areas can hold relatively rich wildlife communities.

Although it is well known that some bat species are able to exploit opportunities created by man-made structures, such as using buildings as roost sites, little is known about the ecology of bats in urban environments. There is evidence that many bat species in Europe have undergone large population declines during the 20th century, driven by the loss of foraging and roosting habitat. Whilst some studies have shown a general avoidance of urban areas by bats, others have suggested that urban environments may have a positive role to play in resource availability for some bat species, particularly in landscapes dominated by intensive agricultural land use.

Specifically, it is unclear how important areas of greenspace are in comparison to built up areas, how this is influenced by the degree of urbanisation, and how these patterns reflect the behaviour of individual bats. The aim of this PhD studentship is to investigate the effect of urbanisation on bat ecology and conservation in the UK. This project will also involve collaboration with the Bat Conservation Trust (www.bats.org.uk) utilising data collected across the UK by volunteers.

This year there are lots of opportunities for funding outstanding candidates at Stirling University - see "PhD funding notes" on my home page for further details:
www.sbes.stir.ac.uk/people/park

The entry qualification for postgraduate studentships is a first class or upper second class honours degree in a relevant biological subject, or an appropriate masters degree.

Closing date: 17th February 2010. Interviews will be held in late March.

To apply send a CV and covering letter with contact details of two referees to Dr Kirsty Park, preferably by email (k.j.park@stir.ac.uk) or to the School of Biological & Environmental Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA, Scotland UK

