



Original Research Paper

Simulating Urbanization Impacts on Species Adaptation and the Role of Green Infrastructure in Ecosystem Health

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Key Words
Abstract

Urbanization,
Species
adaptation,
Green
infrastructure,
Urban
biodiversity,
Habitat
fragmentation,
Ecosystem health,
Ecological
simulation.

One of the significant drivers of environmental transformation is accelerating urbanization, which alters habitats and disrupts the processes of animal adaptation and ecosystem function. This analysis role-plays the effects of urbanization on species adaptation and the importance of green infrastructure in maintaining the ecosystem's well-being. The model was a spatially explicit simulation that quantified the dynamics of animal populations, adaptive responses, and survival across urban-intensity gradients. The significant stressors considered are habitat fragmentation, reduced landscape connectivity, and changes in microclimatic conditions associated with the urban environment. The results of the simulation indicate that in urbanized landscapes, generalist species and more dispersively able species have greater adaptive success, while habitat specialists have increased vulnerability and decreased population. Green infrastructure (urban green spaces, ecological corridors, green roofs, riparian buffers, etc.) plays a significant role in improving habitat quality and connectivity, boosting population survival and genetic interactions. The other positive role of Green infrastructure is that it moderates urban heat effects and supports four trophic interactions. The results highlight the need to incorporate ecologically conscious green infrastructure into the urban planning process to reduce biodiversity loss. The study presents a functional approach to understanding how animals adapt to urban ecosystems and offers a realistic perspective on how to enhance resilience, nature, and sustainable urban landscapes through nature-based solutions.

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Received: 26 September 2025; Reviewed: 31 October 2025; Revised: 05 December 2025; Accepted: 29 December 2025

(DOI): [10.70102/AEJ.2025.17.4.53](https://doi.org/10.70102/AEJ.2025.17.4.53)

Introduction

Urbanization is among the most widespread forms of land-use change, altering natural habitats and ecological processes. In urban expanses, habitat fragmentation, loss of native vegetation, and alterations of microclimatic conditions are frequent effects that impose intense selective pressures on the lives of animal species. As heterogeneous landscapes become increasingly diverse, species must evolve to live in urban environments by adapting their behavior, physiology, and life-history characteristics. Although generalist species exhibit adaptive flexibility, most specialists face population declines or local extinction due to low habitat suitability and connectivity (Tzoulas et al., 2007). Such alterations not only affect individual species but also larger-scale ecological interactions, such as pollination, predator-prey relationships, and nutrient cycling, which affect the stability of the overall ecosystem.

Green infrastructure has become one of the strategies for offsetting the environmental effects of city development. Green infrastructure is defined as a planned system of natural and semi-natural ecosystems that helps sustain biodiversity and provides essential ecosystem services (Wang et al., 2018). Green areas, avenues, and riparian buffers can sustain connections between habitats, moderate microclimates, and increase ecological stability. Studies have shown that this type of infrastructure can alleviate the impact of climate change, reduce urban heat stress, and facilitate species movement across divided landscapes (Reynolds et al., 2020; Sturiale & Scuderi, 2019; Lõhmus & Balbus, 2015; Salayev et al., 2025). Moreover, green infrastructure can benefit the ecosystem and human health by enhancing air quality, helping maintain disease control, and creating healthier urban landscapes (Coutts & Hahn, 2015; Lohmus & Balbus, 2015; Ganieva et al., 2024).

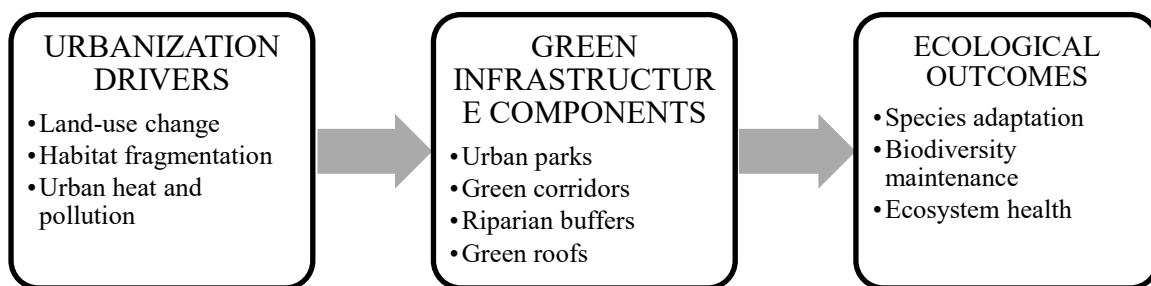


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Linking Urbanization, Green Infrastructure, and Species Adaptation

Urbanization results in numerous projects that endanger ecosystems due to changing land uses, habitat fragmentation, rising temperatures, and increased pollution. The creation of components of green Infrastructure, e.g., parks, greenways,

riparian buffers, and rooftop gardens, will reduce the effects of urbanization on ecosystems (promoting species adaptation to new habitat types), maintain biodiversity, and promote ecosystem health. (See Figure 1).

The objective of this research paper is to discuss the impacts of urbanization on species adaptation and also assess the importance of green space in maintaining ecosystem wellbeing in the urban environment. The study aims to fill the gap between ecological responsiveness to urban pressures and sustainable urban development by focusing on ecological responses to these pressures. Recent literature focuses on the adaptive management of green infrastructure as a tool for integrating

conservation goals into urban planning (Wang et al., 2024). The dynamics are important in understanding how to create evidence-based recommendations to help improve urban resilience and animal populations. The findings will provide planners, ecologists, and policymakers with insights into how to use the concept of green infrastructure as a nature-based solution to prevent ecological degradation in rapidly urbanizing areas.

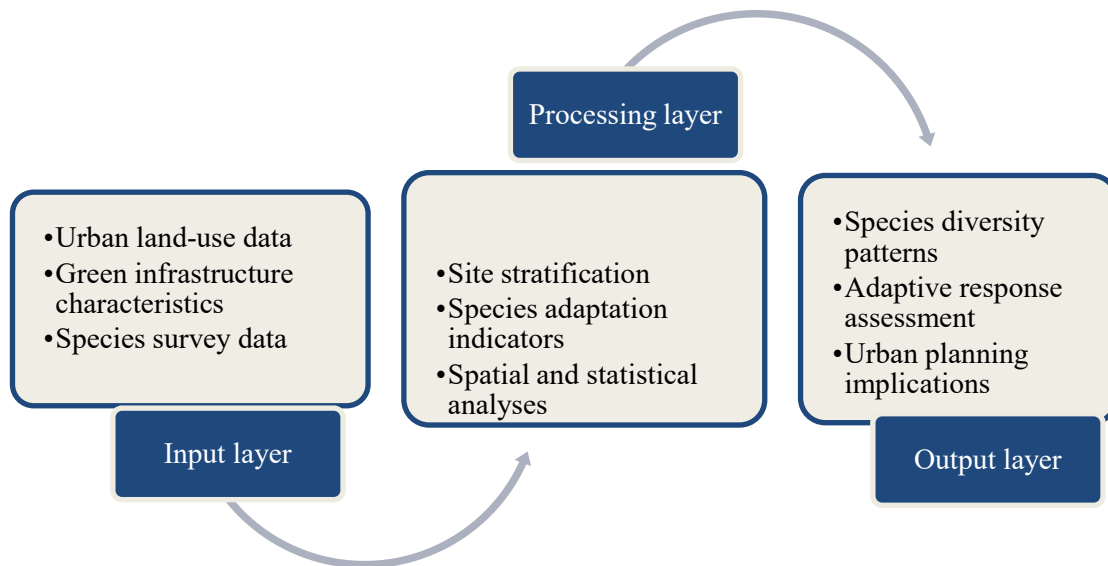


Figure 2: Framework for Assessing Urban Biodiversity Responses to Green Infrastructure

The currently existing framework (Figure 2) describes the three components of the urban land use and green infrastructure data (input layer), processing the data through site stratification methods; indicators of species adaptation (processing layer); and, lastly, producing insights into patterns of species diversity and adaptive responses to urban environments and therefore implications for urban planning and management (output layer).

In this paper, there are six sections. The literature review is based on the available research on urbanization, species adaptation, and green infrastructure, which follows the introduction. The study design, site selection, data collection techniques, and analysis methods are described in the methodology section. An essential part of the results section presents the key findings on species diversity, adaptive behavior, and survival factors. These findings are

discussed in the context of urban planning and conservation, and the paper closes by summarizing key points and describing their implications for sustainable urban development.

Literature Review

There are already a significant number of studies that have documented the impact of urbanization on species diversity, focusing on habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and changing climatic patterns as major factors contributing to ecological change. Urbanization patterns reorganize the species assemblage by promoting generalists and disturbance-tolerant groups and limiting habitat specialists with restricted ecological niches (Pakhira et al., 2024). Variations in temperature regimes, hydrology, and resource availability also affect adaptive responses, often leading to changes in phenology, behavior, and spatial distribution. Works that combine climate change and urban development emphasize that adaptive capacity is disproportionately distributed among species, with limited dispersal capacity and habitat specificity making them more vulnerable in the urban environment (Demuzere et al., 2014). These results highlight the need to adopt city planning based on long-term ecological flexibility rather than short-term land-use efficiency. Green infrastructure has received extensive research attention as a way to help sustain biodiversity in urban landscapes by increasing the availability and connectivity of habitats. It has been found that well-planned green networks can help species move, mitigate isolation, and sustain functional ecological processes (Van Teeffelen et al., 2015). Empirical

and modeling research show that green corridors and multifunctional green spaces help maintain population persistence, especially among amphibians and other taxa sensitive to landscape fragmentation. Nevertheless, green infrastructure performance heavily relies on the specifics of design, management, and site layout, since ill-conceived interventions may have only a small ecological footprint (Cameron & Blanuša, 2016). Scenario analyses also suggest that it is possible to enhance biodiversity outcomes through adaptive, resilient green infrastructure planning in the future, alongside climate and urban development pathways (Li et al., 2022). Although green infrastructure has been shown to have beneficial effects, there are several practical challenges associated with its implementation. Green networks in densely populated areas are often constrained by competing land-use pressures, budgetary limitations, and governance challenges (Barrios-Crespo et al., 2021). Also, to translate ecological concepts into planning practice, there is a need for tools that can evaluate long-term performance under dynamic urban conditions. Multi-scale measurements show that incompatibility between administrative boundaries and ecological processes may decrease the effectiveness of green infrastructure measures (Ramyar & Zarghami, 2017). These issues underscore the need for integrated planning systems that incorporate ecological modeling, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive management to ensure that green infrastructure makes significant contributions to the conservation of urban biodiversity.

Methodology

Choosing Urban Areas as Study Sites

The experiment was carried out at several urban sites spanning a continuum of development density, from densely populated city centres to peri-urban areas with large green spaces. The stratification method was also applied to select study sites to achieve diversification in land-use patterns, green infrastructure types, and the composition of the surrounding matrix. Urban parks, green corridors along roadways, green

spaces in residential areas, and riparian buffers were prioritized to embrace functional diversity in green infrastructure. The spatial analysis of land-use maps, population density, and vegetation cover was used to select the site. The size of each site was approximately 1 km² to provide a more systematic comparison of ecological indicators. Access, management's continued presence, and no recent uproar were also taken into consideration to ensure stable data collection.

Table 1: Selection Criteria In The Study Sites

Criterion	Description
Urban intensity	High, medium, and low built-up areas
Green infrastructure type	Parks, corridors, rooftops, riparian zones
Vegetation cover (%)	≥20% within site boundary
Site area	~1 km ²
Management stability	No major land-use change in the past 5 years

As shown in Table 1, the parameters used to select urban study sites ensure a mix of development intensities and green infrastructure types. The criteria could be used to standardize site size, vegetation cover, and management stability, enabling uniform comparisons of ecologies in urban settings.

Data Collection Methods for Measuring Species Adaptation

Adaptation of the species was measured using a combination of field surveys and trait measurements. The scopes of interest were birds, small mammals, and arthropods, which were chosen because they were well-suited to the

urban environment. The abundance and diversity of the population were measured using standardized point counts, live trapping, and pitfall sampling over one year, with seasonal sampling. The behavioral markers, including foraging behavior, activity patterns, and habitat use, were recorded through direct observation and camera traps. Where possible, morphological and physiological characteristics related to adaptation, such as changes in body size and proxies of thermal tolerance, have been measured. Environmental variables, including temperature, vegetation structure, and noise level, were recorded simultaneously to associate species responses with urban stressors.

Table 2: Species Adaptation Measured Key Variables

Variable category	Measurement method
Species richness	Field surveys
Population abundance	Counts and trapping
Behavioral traits	Observation, camera traps
Environmental factors	Sensors and vegetation surveys

Table 2 shows the key biological and environmental variables that are applied in determining the species adaptation in urban environments. These chosen variables will include variation in species composition, population dynamics, behavior as well as local environmental conditions and will present the full foundation in the assessment of adaptive responses to urban green infrastructure.

Methods of Evaluation of The Effectiveness of Green Infrastructure

Data analysis was aimed at assessing the association between the features of green infrastructure and the signs of species adaptation. Geographic information systems were used to calculate spatial metrics including patch size, connectivity and edge density. Generalized linear models were used as statistical analyses to determine the impact of green infrastructure variables on the species richness and abundance. Multivariate analyses were used to investigate the trends in responses to the traits along urban gradients. The study conducted comparative analysis of sites with different setups of the green infrastructure to determine the features that can be attributed to greater adaptive success. The integrated analytical framework provided an opportunity to perform a strong evaluation of the

impacts that the green infrastructure design has on ecological results in urban settings.

Results

Comparison of The Species Diversity of Green and Non-Green Infrastructure Areas

There were also significant variations in the diversity of species in urban environments that had the presence of a green infrastructure and those without vegetated features. The locations with established green infrastructure continually favored the abundance of species and evenness of all the surveyed taxa. Parks within urban centers and riparian buffer strips had the highest values of diversity whereas the diversities of densely developed areas with no greenery had simplified hierarchies of species with few tolerant species. Communities of birds and arthropods were especially sensitive to vegetation structure and canopies and green corridors among patches of habitats enabled movement. Non-green sites, on the contrary, had lower functional diversity, which implies a small ecological role and a poor ecosystem functioning. These trends indicate that the existence of green infrastructure has a significant impact on the preservation of the biodiversity of urban environments.

Table 3: Diversity Measures of the Species in City Locations

Site type	Species richness	Shannon index
Urban green areas	High	2.45
Mixed-use areas	Moderate	1.86
Built-up areas	Low	1.12

The table 3 presents a comparison of species richness and diversity in various urban sites types indicating a positive impact of green

infrastructure on the maintenance of more diverse and balanced biological community compared to highly constructed areas.

Assessment of Species Adaptation to Effects of Urbanization

The species adaptation was spread along the urbanization gradient with deviations in the environmental stress and quality of the habitat. In more urbanized locations, species were also subject to behavioral changes like changes in the times of activity and dependence on human-made resources. There was greater morphological variation such as a shrinkage in body size in

certain taxa in localities where vegetation was sparse. On the other hand, sites with mixed green cover demonstrated that there was adaptive buffering with the species having constant population levels and more extensive habitat utilization. Seasonal observations showed that the adaptive mechanisms were best during the seasons when the environment was under strain like when temperatures were high, which reflected the moderating role of green infrastructure on urban pressures.

Table 4: Adaptive Response Measures Along Urban Gradient

Urban intensity	Behavioral flexibility	Population stability
High	High	Low
Medium	Moderate	Moderate
Low	Low	High

This table 4 indicates the trends in patterns of behavioral flexibility and population stability at successively higher intensities of urban environments, and the way species adaptation to environmental stress and habitat availability changes.

Determination of the Important Forces Affecting the Existence of Species Within Urban Environment

Numerous variables proved to be decisive on the survival of species in cities. Complexity of vegetation, connectivity between habitats, and microclimatic regulation were always related to the increased survival rates. Surface impermeability and noise levels had a negative impact on sensitive species especially in places that do not have green buffers. Evaluation of

performance showed that green infrastructure locations were more ecologically efficient due to a higher number of supported taxa with a low level of management input. These findings underline that it is the structure and quality of green infrastructure, as opposed to its existence that plays a key role in improving species persistence in cities.

The graph (Figure 3) displays the relative percentage proportion of the various types of urban sites to the total species diversity. The urban green areas have the highest percentage, which means that they have high potential in sustaining various biological communities, whereas built-up areas have the smallest percentage, which means less suitability of the habitat in highly developed areas.

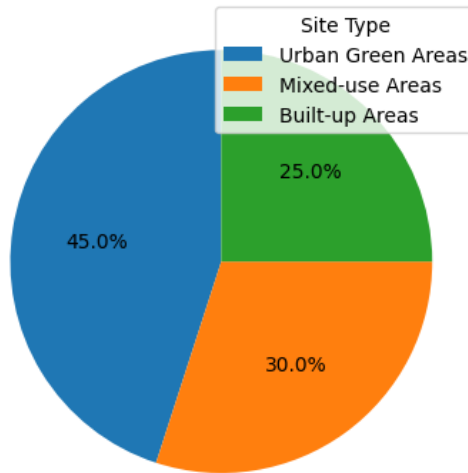


Figure 3: Species Diversity Distribution Across Urban Sites

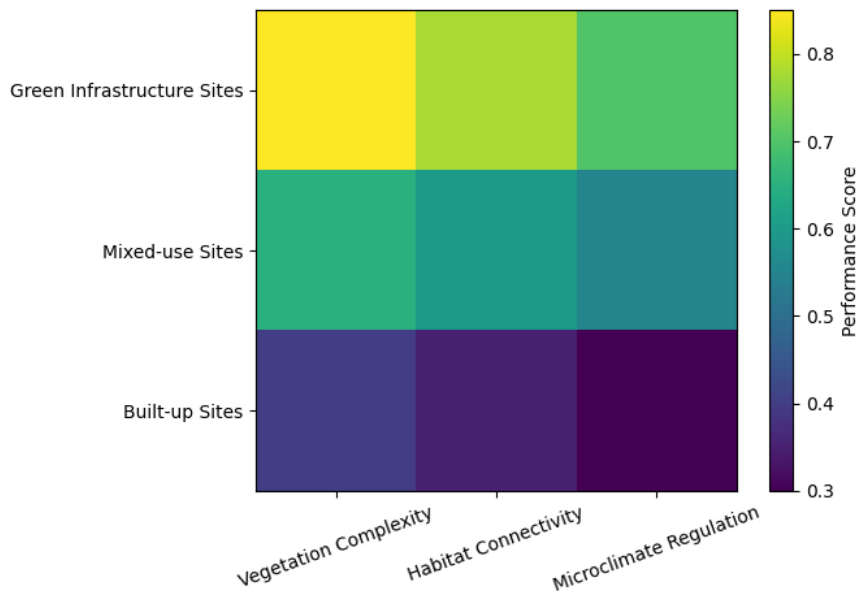


Figure 4: Factor Performance of Species Survival

This graph (Figure 4) illustrates the performance of some of the key environmental factors that affect the survival of the species in various urban environments. Green infrastructure sites have always received a higher score in performance, which is why the complexity of the vegetation, connectivity of habitats, or microclimatic control has proven to be significant in the ecological resilience of urban landscapes.

Discussion

This research study has significant implications in urban planning and biodiversity conservation especially in fast growing cities where environmental issues are not very important as compared to development pressures. The obvious connection between green infrastructure and greater species diversity suggests that urban environments can be considered as potential habitats in case the

ecological connectivity and vegetation complexity are carefully incorporated. Planning wise, the findings can be utilized to incorporate multifunctional green spaces, which have ecological and social purposes. The green corridors and the riparian buffers as well as structurally diverse parks proved to be particularly helpful in balancing the urban stressors and facilitating the adaptive responses to the species. Nevertheless, the paper also portrays issues that are associated with space constraints, disproportionate management, and conflicting land-use needs that may diminish the ecological efficiency of green infrastructure. The scope of the sample (i.e., on the chosen taxa) and time scale (i.e., the time usage is limited) can be considered as methodological limitations that can limit the ability to generalize results to a wider ecological setting. Future studies are advised to be extended to long-term monitoring, consider other taxonomic categories, and add genetic and physiological measures of adaptation. The use of the social and economic aspects on the ecological analysis would also enhance the usefulness of green infrastructure policy in towns.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that urbanization does not necessarily result in the ecological degradation where green infrastructure is carefully integrated into urban environments. Regions that had well designed and linked up the green spaces were always very beneficial in terms of species diversity, adaptive capacity and better survival rates as opposed to the highly built up ones. The results highlight that the ecological effectiveness of green infrastructure is highly

dependent on the quality, structure, and management of green infrastructure. The inclusion of green infrastructures in the urban planning approach should thus be perceived as a luxury addition, yet not as part of the sustainable development. Green infrastructure can be used to reconcile urban development with biodiversity conservation by ensuring connectivity of habitats, moderate microclimatic extremities, and ecological processes. The paper points out that forward looking strategies must be embraced by the planners, policymakers and environmental managers, which will focus on ecological resilience with urban growth. It is necessary to promote the use of sustainable development practices that would incorporate nature-based solutions that will support species adaptation and ensure the health of the ecosystem in the progressively urbanized environment. Future studies might also consider how green infrastructure has long-term effects on the urban ecosystem, especially in those cities that are developing at a very high rate. Also, research might focus on the effectiveness of various nature-based solutions to support species adaptation and provide urban ecological resistance.

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