

The female of the species is harder to please than the male

November 19 2014, by Karen McIntosh



Soprano pipistrelle bat. Credit: Lorna Blackmore

Female bats are fussier than males when it comes choosing where to eat in urban areas, according to new research from the University of Stirling.

Town and city planners must take the needs of [females](#) into account when managing urban woodlands, to prevent a decline in numbers of

certain [bat species](#).

The Stirling study, published today in the Royal Society journal *Open Science*, considered how male and female bats respond to different types of woodland.

Researchers captured bats in 32 urban woodlands across Central Scotland and examined what factors were determining the numbers of males and females within each woodland.

It found female soprano pipistrelles favour high quality woodland which is well connected to other woodland patches.

Males, on the other hand, seem to be less particular and are just as likely to be found settling for poorer-quality woodland patches next to built-up areas.

Stirling PhD student Paul Lintott conducted the research. He said: "People often see bats in [urban areas](#), but many species have suffered population declines and struggle to survive in urbanised landscapes.

"We examined whether there might also be differences between the sexes as it is particularly important to understand how breeding females are responding to urbanisation given their importance in ensuring the survival of future generations within the city environment.

"These findings suggest the demands of pregnancy and raising offspring are driving females to select woodlands which provide good feeding opportunities and a safe route to fly between feeding grounds and roosting sites."

Ecologist Dr Kirsty Park, who led the research team, added: "Our results show it is essential to identify habitats for breeding females rather than

assuming that all individuals of a species respond in the same way – indeed the survival of the species may depend on it.

"As the push for new housing and development continues within towns and cities, the remaining green-space is becoming increasingly threatened. There is growing evidence human health within cities is linked to the ability to access green-space and it seems that [bats](#) have similar requirements to survive within our crowded streets."

More information: City life makes females fussy: sex differences in habitat use of temperate bats in urban areas, [rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org ... /10.1098/rsos.140200](https://rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org/.../10.1098/rsos.140200)

Provided by University of Stirling

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