Stadium lighting affects bat behavior and may threaten biodiversity

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A new *Animal Conservation* study shows that sports stadium lighting can alter patterns of bat species activity and feeding, which may in turn have cascading effects on other organisms and the ecosystem as a whole.

Using a novel field experiment, Dr. M. Corrie Schoeman demonstrates that urban exploiter bats are more likely to hunt insects attracted to bright light pollution sources such as stadiums than urban avoider bats. (Exploiter organisms can take advantage of food or resources supplied by humans, while avoider organisms have either a history of conflict with humans or very specific habitat requirements that are unattainable in human settlements.)

"Increasing light pollution is a major feature of global change that's attributable to humans, and it is a potential threat to biodiversity," said Dr. Schoeman. "Although stadiums are an integral part of the urban and social environment, light pollution from these structures could lead to biotic homogenization, which may ultimately threaten native biodiversity."

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