

Public Abstract

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Title:HABITAT ASSOCIATIONS OF BIRDS OF PREY IN URBAN BUSINESS PARKS

In the United States of America and other parts of the world, various species of birds of prey (hawks, falcons, and eagles) have been found living and hunting in all parts of the urban environment, including complexes of business and light industrial facilities, or "business parks". Conservation in business parks is a growing concern due to the amount of land they occupy and their pattern of development of formerly vacant land on the fringes of urban areas.

To investigate the use of business park sites by birds of prey, I conducted surveys for birds of prey in business parks in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The data from these surveys was used to determine how the amount of different land cover types at each site affected the probability that a bird of prey would be found there. I measured the amount of area in a 1000-meter circle surrounding each survey point covered by different land cover types such as grassland, lawn, pavement, urban trees, and woodland.

Overall, birds of prey were negatively associated with large amounts of lawn. Red-tailed hawks and Cooper's hawks were positively associated with woodland, and American kestrels were positively associated with non-lawn grassland. Based on this study, I would recommend that businesses concerned with the conservation of birds of prey in and around their properties plan to develop less lawn area, preserve or plant more native grassland, and preserve woodlots.