

Small mammal assemblages in fragmented shrublands of urban areas of Central Chile

Fernández, Ignacio C.

Simonetti, Javier A.

Mediterranean-type ecosystems are one of the most affected environments by habitat loss and fragmentation due to urban development, however only few studies have evaluated the effects of urbanization on the biodiversity of remnant fragments in these ecosystems. This study aims to evaluate the effects of urban development over small mammal assemblages inhabiting isolated forest fragments of an urban area of Chilean Mediterranean zone. We compared abundance and richness of small mammal assemblages of six remnant fragments within an urban matrix, and six fragments similar in area and habitat characteristics with those of urban area, but surrounded by a rural matrix. We found that small mammal assemblages differ considerably among fragments types (urban vs rural), with lack of endemic species from urban fragments and with high proportion of introduced rodents in urban fragments. Furthermore abundance of small mammals was higher in rural than in urban fragments. In urban areas small mammal