

MS Thesis
Department of Environmental Science and Policy
College of Science
George Mason University

Candidate: Alexia Yau

Defense Date and Time: April 8, 2024, 12:00pm

Defense Location: Exploratory Hall 3302

Title: Habitat use and conservation of two species of conservation concern in Washington, D.C. – the eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and woodchuck (*Marmota monax*)

Thesis Director: Dr. David Luther

Committee: Dr. Travis Gallo, Dr. Cynthia Smith

ABSTRACT

The rate of urbanization is increasing exponentially, influencing the environment and wildlife habitats in metropolitan areas. While urbanization has a major impact on wildlife populations, some wildlife species still live in cities. This project assessed the distribution and habitat use of two understudied small mammal species in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, eastern cottontails (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and woodchucks (*Marmota monax*). Both species are considered species of conservation concern in Washington, D.C. However, very little research has focused on these species in urban environments. The results from this project will support urban land managers in the implementation of management strategies for these species.