



New England Urban Habitats

This deck highlights 26 species commonly found in New England, USA urban habitats. Included on the cards is information about biological and physical adaptations as well as energy sources.

Find this card deck and more at:
education.eol.org/species_cards

Title Image Credit: Charlie via Flickr CC-BY-NC

Project Description

Scutch-grass *Cynodon dactylon*

eol

Flowering Plants



Urban Habitats

AUTO
Foodweb Role

Height	90 cm (max)
Growth Form	Grass
Life Cycle	Perennial
Seed Color	Brown
Sunlight/Soil	Open; disturbed

NE
IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Holds water in deep roots to survive droughts
Reproduction: Seeds germinate prolifically after fire
Energy: Sunlight, carbon dioxide, water

Image: test CC-BY-NC

Black Carpenter Ant *Camponotus pennsylvanicus*

eol

Insects



Urban Habitats

OMNI
Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length	0.5-1.6 cm, workers
Development	Complete
Adult Lifespan	0.5-7 yrs, queen
Number of Eggs	5-15+; twice/yr
Wings	Males/sexual females Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Antennae are used for communication
Behavioral: Share regurgitated food; increase immunity
Energy: Insects, larvae, nectar, fruit, fungi

Image: Patrick Coin CC-BY-NC-SA

Common Name

Scientific Name

Taxon Group

Food Web Roles

DECO	Decomposer: Energy from dead material
AUTO	Autotroph: Energy from sun, water, CO ₂
HERB	Herbivore: Energy from plants
OMNI	Omnivore: Energy from plants, animals
CARN	Carnivore: Energy from animals
APEX	Apex Predator: Top predator
DETR	Detritivore: Energy from dead vegetation
SANG	Sanguinivore: Energy from blood
MULT	Multiple: Energy from multiple sources

 Habitat (where species is found)
+ (indicates species is also found in other habitats)

Species Conservation Status

IUCN Redlist™

International Union for
Conservation of Nature

LC	Least Concern
DD	Data Deficient
NT	Near Threatened
EN	Endangered

NE Not Evaluated

VU	Vulnerable
CR	Critically Endangered
EW	Extinct in Wild
EX	Extinct

eol

Arachnids

Wolf Spider *Hogna carolinensis*



Urban Habitats

CARN
Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length	1.8-3.5 cm
Development	Molts
Adult Lifespan	1+ yrs
Number of Eggs	100 (est.)
Activity	Nocturnal

NE
IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Uses venom to subdue prey
Behavioral: Female carries eggsac/young on abdomen
Energy: Insects, invertebrates, small vertebrates

Image: 2014 William Flaxington CC-BY-NC



Cinnamon Fern

Osmundastrum cinnamomea



Ferns



AUTO

Foodweb Role

Height	61-91 cm
Growth Form	Fern
Life Cycle	Perennial
Spore Color	Green
Sunlight/Soil	Shade; moist



Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Fertile red fronds surrounded by infertile ones
Reproduction: Spores grow on mineral soil after fires
Energy: Sunlight, carbon dioxide, water

Image: aaronunnar CC-BY-SA

Coyote

Canis latrans



Mammals



CARN

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length	81-94 cm
Adult Weight	7-21 kg
Lifespan	6-9 yrs (avg)
Offspring/Litters	6 (avg); 1/yr
Female Maturity	9-10 months



Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Keen sense of smell for locating prey
Behavioral: Change hunting styles seasonally
Energy: Mammals, birds, snakes, invertebrates, carrion

Image: Franco Folini CC-BY-SA

Common Grackle

Quiscalus quiscula



Birds



OMNI

Foodweb Role

Wingspan	36-46 cm
Adult Weight	74-142 g
Lifespan	22 yrs (max)
Clutch / Broods	1-7 eggs; 1-2/yr
Nest Type	Cup high in tree



Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Hard keel in upper bill for sawing acorns
Behavioral: Ants secrete acid to control bird's parasites
Energy: Seeds, amphibians, birds, mice, invertebrates

Image: John J. Mosesso /life.nbi.gov CC-BY-NC-SA

Northern Raccoon

Procyon lotor



Mammals



OMNI

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length	60-95 cm
Adult Weight	6.0 kg (avg)
Lifespan	5 yrs (avg)
Offspring/Litters	4 (avg); 1/yr
Female Maturity	8-12 months



Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Dexterous, highly sensitive front paws
Behavioral: Often "douse" aquatic food underwater
Energy: Variety of invertebrate and vertebrates, fruits

Image: test CC-BY-SA

Common Dandelion

Taraxacum sylvanicum



Flowering Plants



AUTO

Foodweb Role

Height	46 cm (max)
Growth Form	Herb/Forb
Life Cycle	Perennial
Seed Color	Black
Sunlight/Soil	Open; disturbed



Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Rosettes cover ground, blocking other plants
Reproduction: Seeds light and fly on wind or by force
Energy: Sunlight, carbon dioxide, water

Image: 2008 Keir Morse CC-BY-NC-SA

Earthworm

Lumbricus terrestris



Annelids



DETR

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length	35 cm (max)
Development	4 stages; no molt
Lifespan	6 yrs (avg)
Number of Eggs	1-20 / cocoon
Activity	Nocturnal



Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Bristles on each body segment help grip soil
Behavioral: Move to surface when feel vibrations in soil
Energy: Decaying vegetation, feces, carrión

Image: test CC-BY-NC-SA



American Toad

Anaxyrus americanus

eol

Frogs and Toads



Urban Habitats

CARN

Foodweb Role

Snout-vent Length 5-9 cm

Adult Weight 44 g F; 26 g M (avg)

Lifespan

5-10 yr (avg)

Number of Eggs 4,000-8,000 / yr

Activity Nocturnal

LC

IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Excretes toxic fluid from skin for defense
Behavioral: Inflate bodies to prevent being swallowed
Energy: Insects, snails, slugs, earthworms

Image: Kent McFarland CC-BY-NC-SA

Eastern Gray Squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis

eol

Mammals



Urban Habitats

OMNI

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length 23-30 cm

Adult Weight 338-750 g

Lifespan

6 years (avg)

Offspring / Litters 2-4 (avg); 2/yr

Female Maturity 15 months

LC

IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Extreme agility makes them difficult to capture
Behavioral: Bury food in winter caches
Energy: Nuts, flowers, fungi, insects, nestlings, frogs

Image: Everett Johns CC-BY-NC

Eastern White Pine

Pinus strobus

eol

Flowering Plants



Urban Habitats

AUTO

Foodweb Role

Height

30 m

Growth Form Tree

Leaf Duration Needled evergreen

Seed Color Reddish-brown

Sunlight / Soil Sun/shade; drained

NE

IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Fire-dependent; lateral root system
Reproduction: Monoecious; sexual reproduction
Energy: Sunlight, carbon dioxide, water

Image: marie CC-BY

Field Cricket

Gryllus pennsylvanicus

eol

Insects



Urban Habitats

OMNI

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length 1.5-2.5 cm

Development Incomplete

Adult Lifespan 1 wk (avg)

Number of Eggs 400 (avg) in lifespan

Wings Two pairs, shortened

NE

IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Large hind legs for hopping

Behavioral: Males have fighting and mating songs

Energy: Grasses, forbs, organic materials, fruits, insects

Image: test CC-BY-SA

Field Mushroom

Agaricus campestris

eol

Fungi



Urban Habitats

DECO

Foodweb Role

Cap Size 3-11 cm

Growth Habit Central stem

Spore Surface Gills

Cap Color White

Spore Print Dark brown

NE

IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Hyphae threads absorb nutrients from food

Reproduction: Gill surface increases spore production

Energy: Absorb nutrients from dead organic matter

Image: Drew Henderson CC-BY-NC-SA

House Mosquito

Culex tarsalis

eol

Insects



Urban Habitats

SANG

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length 3-6 mm

Development Complete

Adult Lifespan 6-8 weeks (F)

Number of Eggs 200-300 / night

Wings One pair

NE

IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Aquatic larvae breathe through siphon

Behavioral: Adult female suck blood before laying eggs

Energy: Nectar; females suck bird and mammal blood

Image: Public Health Image Library



Humans

Homo sapiens

eol
Mammals



Northern Mockingbird

Mimus polyglottos

eol
Birds



+ Urban Habitats

Foodweb
Role

Adult Body Length 147-181 cm (avg)

Adult Weight Variable

Lifespan 32-84 yrs (avg)

Offspring/Litters 1 or more; variable

Female Maturity 8-17 years (avg)

IUCN
Redlist™

APEX

LC

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Opposable thumbs, highly complex brain
Behavioral: Long-term care, cooking food, clothing
Energy: Wide variety of plants, animals, fungi

Image: test CC-BY-SA

Pillbug

Armadillidium vulgare

eol
Malacostraca



+ Urban Habitats

Foodweb
Role

Adult Body Length 1 cm (avg)

Development Molts; several stadia

Adult Lifespan 1.5 yrs (avg)

Number of Eggs 100/yr (avg)

Activity Nocturnal

DET R

NE

IUCN
Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Back covered in plates that act as armor
Behavioral: Can roll body into ball for protection
Energy: Plant litter, seeds, scavenged dung

Image: Stanislav Krejčík CC-BY

Eastern Red-backed Salamander

Plethodon cinereus

eol
Amphibians



+ Urban Habitats

Foodweb
Role

Snout-vent Length 4.1 cm (avg)

Adult Weight 0.5 g (avg)

Lifespan 10 yrs (avg)

Number of Eggs 6-9; every other yr

Activity Nocturnal

CARN

LC

IUCN
Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Drops tail when attacked; can grow a new one
Behavioral: Mark territories to protect food when scarce
Energy: Spiders, insects, snails, ants, earthworms, larvae

Image: 2010 Todd Pierson CC-BY-NC-SA

Painted Lady Butterfly

Vanessa cardui

eol
Insects



+ Urban Habitats

Foodweb
Role

Wingspan 5.1-7.3 cm

Development Complete

Adult Lifespan 10-24 days

Number of Eggs 500 in lifetime

Wings Two pairs

NE

IUCN
Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Straw-like tongue to sip flower nectar (adults)
Behavioral: Migrates to Mexico for winter
Energy: Leaves, foliage (larvae); nectar (adults)

Image: Valter Jacinto CC-BY-NC-SA

Red-tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis

eol
Birds



+ Urban Habitats

Foodweb
Role

Wingspan 114-133 cm

Adult Weight 0.90-1.46 kg (F)

Lifespan 10-21 yrs (avg)

Clutch / Broods 1-5 eggs; 1/yr

Nest Type Pile on tree or cliff

APEX

LC

IUCN
Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Sharp talons for catching prey
Behavioral: Soar above open areas searching for prey
Energy: Rodents, rabbits, birds, snakes, carrion

Image: test



Marsh Slug

Deroceras laeve

eol
Gastropods



Urban Habitats

HERB

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length 1-3 cm

Shell/Mantle

Mantle 50% of body



Lifespan

3-5 mo (avg)

Number of Eggs

33 (max), once / life



Activity

Early morning

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Self-fertilizes with male and female organs
Behavioral: Can forage underwater + survive for days
Energy: Live and dead vegetation

Image: test CC-BY-NC

White Oak

Quercus alba

eol
Flowering Plants



Urban Habitats

AUTO

Foodweb Role

Height

30 m



Growth Form

Tree

Leaf Duration

Deciduous

Seed Color

Greenish-brown



Sunlight / Soil

Sun/shade; various

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Pioneer on frequently burned sites
Reproduction: Seed dispersal birds, squirrels
Energy: Sun, carbon dioxide and water

Image: Steven J. Baskauf CC-BY-NC-SA

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

Halyomorpha halys

eol
Insects



Urban Habitats

HERB

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length 1.2-1.7 cm

Development Incomplete

Adult Lifespan 6-8 mo

Number of Eggs 400/yr

Wings Two pairs

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Uses proboscis to pierce host plant to feed
Behavioral: Emits odor through abdomen as a defense
Energy: Fruit plants, vegetable plants, fruit

Image: test CC-BY



IUCN Redlist™

Variable Dancer

Argia fumipennis

eol
Insects



Urban Habitats

CARN

Foodweb Role

Adult Body Length 2.9-3.5 cm

Development Incomplete

Adult Lifespan 2-8 weeks

Number of Eggs 1+ / stem

Wings Two pairs

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Blade-like ovipositor to cut/inject eggs in plant
Behavioral: Hover over vegetation to pick off insects
Energy: Small flying insects like midges + mosquitoes

Image: Everett Johns CC-BY-NC

White Oak

Quercus alba

eol
Flowering Plants



Urban Habitats

AUTO

Foodweb Role

Height

30 m



Growth Form

Tree

Leaf Duration

Deciduous

Seed Color

Greenish-brown



Sunlight / Soil

Sun/shade; various

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Growth: Pioneer on frequently burned sites
Reproduction: Seed dispersal birds, squirrels
Energy: Sun, carbon dioxide and water

Image: Steven J. Baskauf CC-BY-NC-SA

Common Box Turtle

Terrapene carolina

eol
Turtles



Urban Habitats

OMNI

Foodweb Role

Carapace Length 11-18 cm

Adult Weight 311-523 g

Lifespan 30-40 yrs (avg)

Number of Eggs 4-5 / yr (avg)

Activity Diurnal, Crepuscular



IUCN Redlist™

Adaptations + Energy Sources

Physical: Shell can regenerate itself if damaged
Behavioral: Retracts body into carapace if threatened
Energy: Arthropods, frogs, reptiles, eggs, fungi, plants

Image: Darrin O'Brien CC-BY-NC-SA

eol species cards

Adaptation: A physical characteristic or behavior that helps an organism survive in its environment

Brood/Litter: Group of young produced at one time

Carapace: Shell of a turtle or head and thorax of arthropods

Clutch Size: Number of eggs laid in a nest at one time

Complete Metamorphosis: Some insects have a four stage life cycle: egg, larva, pupa, adult

Crepuscular: Active at dawn and dusk

Diurnal: Active during the day

Vocabulary



Habitat: The area an organism lives and can find its resources

Growth Form: Classification of plants as trees, shrubs, herbaceous, and grasses

Incomplete Metamorphosis: Some insects have a three stage life cycle: eggs, nymph, adult

Molt: The act of shedding exoskeleton, skin or feathers as an animal grows

Snout-vent Length: In amphibians and reptiles, the length from tip of nose to tail base (cloaca)

Standard Length: In fishes, length from tip of snout to end of last vertebra

Vocabulary

