

Relative Biodiversity in the Valley Area

South Okanagan-Similkameen Biodiversity Conservation Strategy



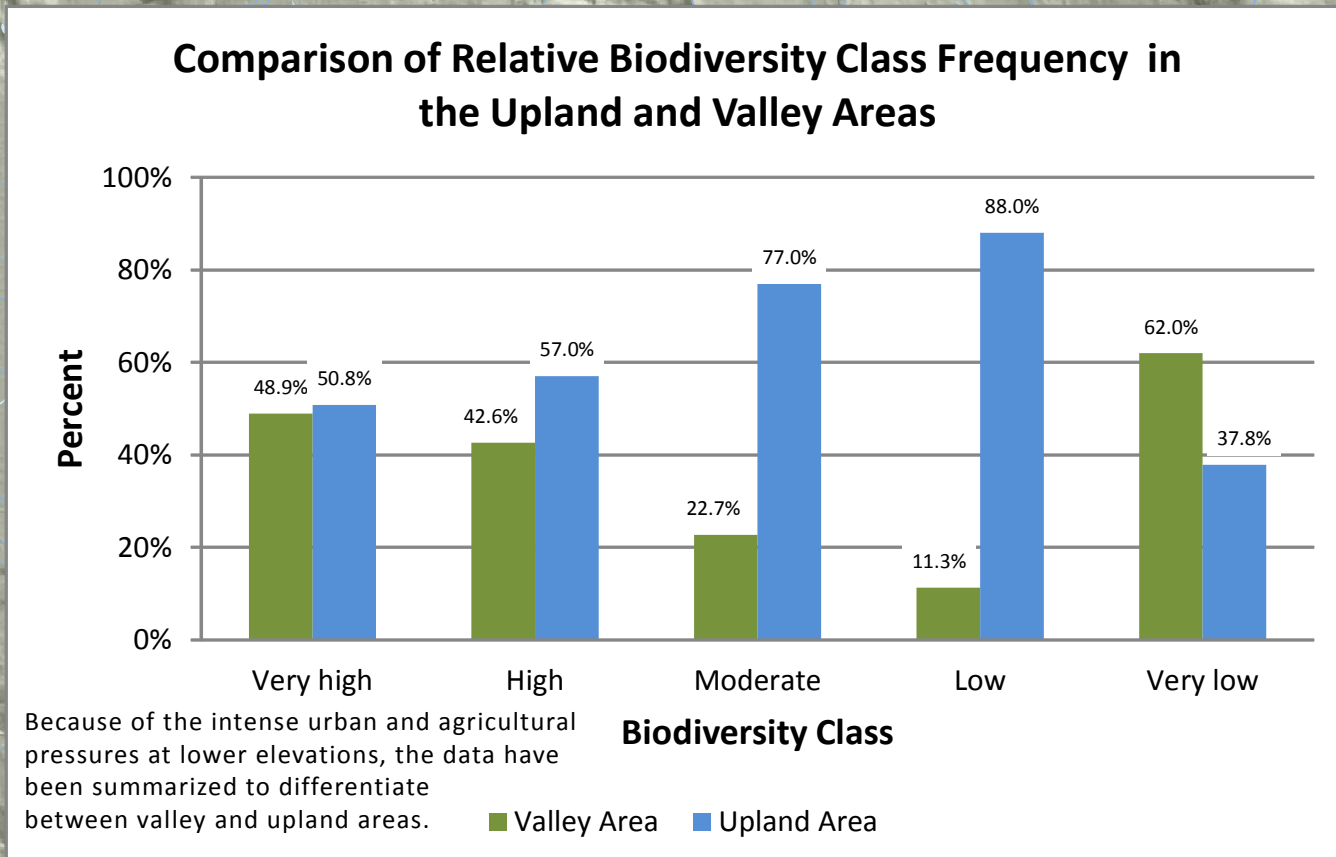
Relative Biodiversity

The relative biodiversity map is based on a model designed to identify the areas of greatest ecological and biodiversity significance. The result is a decision support tool that identifies biodiversity 'hotspots' at a regional scale in the study area. The relative biodiversity model considers the following parameters:

- Conservation ranking – Polygons with higher conservation rankings receive higher scores. The majority of the score came from the conservation ranking.
- Wetlands – Due to the importance of wetland habitats in this region, wetlands receive a higher score.
- Buffers around wetlands – Deep soil grasslands and shrub steppe units falling within a 250 metre buffer of wetlands receive a higher score.
- Tiger salamander wetlands – Deep soil grasslands and shrub steppe units falling within a 630 metre buffer of wetlands identified as tiger salamander habitat receive a higher score.
- Antelope brush – antelope brush habitat receives a higher score.
- Potential riparian habitat – Potential riparian habitat areas receive a higher score.
- Species occurrences – Areas falling inside the buffered species occurrence polygons were assigned to the very high relative biodiversity class.
- Habitat patch size (i.e., whether the area falls within a habitat reservoir or refuge) – Larger habitat patches receive higher scores.
- Distance to roads – Habitat areas in close proximity to roads receive slightly lower scores.

The specific scores assigned to each of the parameters and their associated classes are documented in Table 7 of the SSORID methods report. The total score for each cell was summed and the assigned numeric values indicate relative biodiversity values – the higher the numeric value the higher the relative biodiversity.

Because of the intense urban and agricultural pressures at lower elevations, the data have been summarized to differentiate between valley and upland areas. The biogeoclimatic ecosystem subzones and variants were used to distinguish between valley and upland areas; the Valley Area was based on a selection of BEC classes that represented and valley bottom habitat in the study area. The zones selected were: BGsh1; IDPh1; IDPh1a; PPh1; and PPh1a. The Upland Area consists of the remainder of the study area.



Legend

- Study Area
- Electoral/Municipal Boundary
- Freshwater Atlas streams**
 - Stream
 - Intermittent stream
 - Subsurface Flow
- Major rivers/Lakes
- Transportation**
 - Overgrown
 - Gravel Class 1
 - Gravel Class 2
 - Paved
 - Arterial
 - Railroad
 - Highway
- Relative biodiversity**
 - Very high
 - High
 - Moderate
 - Low
 - Very low

0 5 10
Kilometres

Data sources:

- Ministry of Forests and Range
- Ministry of Environment
- TRIM
- ESRI base data

Scale: 1:145,000
Projection: BC Albers NAD 83
Written scales are approximate and are based on a 36 x 48 inch paper size.

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