**General abstract** (currently 299 words; max 300 words)

Human activities have profoundly impacted global biodiversity. Currently, anthropogenic land-use and climate change figure among the major threats to the world’s fauna. However, not all species respond similarly to these pressures. Interspecific variability in responses to human threats is notably underpinned by the fact that different species possess different attributes and intrinsic characteristics (traits), some of them allowing species to cope with environmental changes, while others confer a disadvantage to species in modified environments. Understanding what renders species sensitive to anthropogenic pressures is vital to inform and prioritise conservation efforts. Yet, in terrestrial vertebrates, a group for which ecological data is the most abundant, it remains unclear which traits are associated with higher sensitivity to human pressures. The aims of my thesis are to investigate whether and which traits are associated with land-use responses and climate-change sensitivity in terrestrial vertebrates, and to highlight some of the consequences for ecosystem functioning. I first assess the global availability of ecological trait data for terrestrial vertebrates, identifying understudied groups and regions (e.g., Central-African reptiles). I then show that, at global scales, disturbed land uses negatively impact the functional diversity of vertebrate assemblages. Further, I find that in all classes, higher sensitivity to land-use and climate change is associated with narrower ranges, smaller habitat breadth and inability to use human-modified habitats. Both land-use responses and climate-change sensitivity are unevenly distributed among dietary groups, highlighting potential food-web disruptions in assemblages under pressure. Finally, I show that land-use responses are influenced by species energetic requirements, so that energetic fluxes within vertebrate assemblages are likely modified under human-driven land-use change. Although the large-scale consequences of biodiversity changes for ecosystem functioning remain to be fully understood, my thesis highlights a compositional reshaping of vertebrate assemblages under human pressure and furthers our understanding of anthropogenic impacts on biodiversity.

**Impact statement** (currently 488 words; max 500 words)

As anthropogenic pressures on the world’s biota keep increasing, it is vital to put into place conservation measures to prevent and reverse further species loss. Beyond ethical and moral considerations, there is an urgent need to protect biodiversity because it sustains a range of ecological processes essential to human well-being and planetary health. Effectively managing biodiversity and related ecosystem processes in a changing world requires an understanding of how different species respond to anthropogenic disturbances. My thesis integrates various data sources to investigate the influence of traits on species land-use responses and on species climate-change sensitivity – two of the most pressing threats on biodiversity – at global scales and comparatively across the four terrestrial vertebrate classes. By asking whether interspecific trait variation is associated with species land-use responses and with climate-change sensitivity, my work consolidates our understanding of what renders species sensitive to environmental change, which can help prioritise conservation efforts.

Chapter 2 presents a trait data collection for terrestrial vertebrates, targeting seven commonly-used traits. I highlight the global taxonomic, geographical, and phylogenetic biases in the trait data, revealing knowledge gaps which could guide future data collection efforts. Chapter 2 was published in *Global Ecology and Biogeography*. The compiled data were made available and have since been used by researchers in the field (e.g., Capdevila *et al.* (2022), *preprint*) and downloaded 272 times as of May 2022. Chapter 3 uses the collected trait data and reveals profound effects of land-use change on vertebrate functional diversity, which contributes to documenting global human impacts on vertebrates and also underlines the possible threats posed by land-use change to ecosystem processes sustained by vertebrates. Chapter 3 was published in *Ecology Letters*. In Chapter 4, I ask whether traits are associated with species land-use responses and with species climate-change sensitivity, comparatively across the four vertebrate classes. Chapter 4 thus puts into perspective the usefulness of trait data for understanding how species respond to these anthropogenic changes, which is valuable for conservation planning and prioritisation. In Chapter 5, I ask whether species energetic requirements, estimated from metabolic rates, influence species persistence in disturbed land uses. Chapter 5 thus integrates physiological data to further our fundamental understanding of how vertebrate species respond to land-use change and of the potential consequences for ecosystem functioning.

Beyond publishing two of my PhD Chapters, I have been able to disseminate my work at various international conferences, notably at the annual meeting of the British Ecological Society (BES) (in 2019, 2020 and 2021), at the annual meeting of the BES Macroecology Special Interest Group (in 2019), and at the International Biogeography Society early-career conference (in 2021). I will additionally present my PhD work at the International Biogeography Society conference (June 2022, 10th Biennial meeting), and at the BES Macroecology conference (July 2022). Overall, my PhD work consolidates our knowledge of the role of vertebrate traits for understanding species responses to human pressures and highlights the value of trait data, and more widely, of ecological knowledge, for preserving vertebrate species in a changing world.

**Thesis outline of contents, authorship and collaborations**

**Chapter 1: General introduction**

Chapter 1 presents the background for this Thesis, exposes the fundamental concepts, and highlights the research questions I investigated in the different Chapters.

**Chapter 2: Global gaps and biases in trait data for terrestrial vertebrates**

In Chapter 2, I present an analysis of the global gaps and biases in terrestrial vertebrate trait data. To this end, I collate data on seven traits commonly measured in terrestrial vertebrates. I then evaluate the availability of these trait data across the vertebrate classes, assessing whether there are taxonomic, phylogenetic and spatial biases. This chapter was published in *Global Ecology and Biogeography* in 2020 (DOI: 10.1111/geb.13184; Etard et al., 2020). The paper was co-authored by Sophie Morrill who collated some of the data on reptile traits as part of an MRes project at UCL, and by Tim Newbold, who participated in the development of the research questions, provided detailed feedback on the analyses, and contributed to the writing of the paper.

**Chapter 3: Intensive human land uses negatively affect vertebrate functional diversity**

In this Chapter, I investigate how land-use change affects the functional composition and functional diversity of local vertebrate assemblages. This chapter was published in *Ecology Letters* in 2022 (DOI: 10.1111/ele.13926; Etard et al. 2022) and co-authored by Alex Pigot and Tim Newbold, who helped construct the hypotheses, provided detailed feedback on the work, and took part in the writing of the paper.

**Chapter 4: Geographical range area, habitat breadth and specialisation on natural habitats explain land-use responses and climate-change sensitivity more consistently than life-history and dietary traits in terrestrial vertebrates**

In this Chapter, I assess whether ecological traits as well as geographical range area are associated with species land-use responses and species estimated climate-change sensitivity, comparatively among terrestrial vertebrate classes. Rhiannon Osborne-Tonner contributed to this Chapter by collecting data on amphibian and reptile diet during her MSc project at UCL, which I used to complement my datasets. This Chapter was conducted in collaboration with Tim Newbold who helped develop the research questions and provided detailed feedback on the work and on the writing. I plan to submit this Chapter as a research article to a scientific journal.

**Chapter 5: Energetic constraints and trophic group explain species persistence in disturbed land uses**

In Chapter 5, I evaluate the impacts of land-use change on community energetic requirements, and I assess whether species energetic requirements influence species persistence in disturbed land uses. To this end, I use physiological data, compiling species resting metabolic rates (used as a proxy for energetic requirements) from the literature. Meghan Hayden and Laura Dee of the University of Colorado, Boulder, as well as Tim Newbold, contributed to the elaboration of the research questions for this Chapter. Meghan Hayden further contributed to this Chapter by retrieving information on net primary productivity for PREDICTS sites, using data from MODIS satellite imagery. All collaborators also provided feedback on the work and participated in writing the manuscript. This Chapter was submitted to a scientific journal and underwent a round of peer-review. I am preparing this Chapter for resubmission to a scientific journal.

**Chapter 6: General discussion**

This final chapter summarises the main findings of my thesis and assesses their contributions to the field.

**General introduction (~3300 words)**

Humans have been modifying Earth’s ecosystems for thousands of years. Archaeological and palaeontological evidence suggest that human activities may have played a major role in the extinction of Australian’s megafauna as early as fifty thousand years ago (Johnson *et al.* 2016; Miller *et al.* 2016; Van Der Kaars *et al.* 2017). The subsequent arrival of modern humans in other parts of the world has also been associated with extinctions, of the megafauna in particular (Sandom *et al.* 2014; Broughton & Weitzel 2018). However, the global signature of human presence on Earth has never been as prominent as in recent decades. The past two hundred years have been characterised by a sharp increase in the rates of human-driven changes at the planetary scale, a phenomenon that has been termed “the Great Acceleration” (Steffen *et al.* 2015). To emphasize the recent impacts of human activities on the Earth’s systems, Crutzen & Stoermer (2000) proposed that we have entered a new geological epoch, which they called “the Anthropocene”. Although the formal acceptance of this epoch and the timing of its start are still debated within the stratigraphic community (Lewis & Maslin 2015; Monastersky 2015), the coined term reflects the profound effects of humans on planetary processes and on the biosphere, such that its use has largely surpassed the geological field (Malhi 2017).

The Anthropocene can be characterised with Earth-system and socio-economic indicators (Steffen *et al.* 2011; Biermann *et al.* 2016). Two of the major signatures are the human-driven transformations of the land surface, and changes to atmospheric composition, which have led to the onset of anthropogenic climate change (Lewis & Maslin 2015). Altogether, the development of human activities at unprecedented scales and magnitude has led to the alteration of many ecosystems. As a result of combined anthropogenic pressures, the world’s biodiversity has been changing (Dirzo *et al.* 2014; McGill *et al.* 2015; Johnson *et al.* 2017; Daru *et al.* 2021). Decreases in a range of biodiversity indicators have been reported for many taxonomic groups (Butchart *et al.* 2010). Human-mediated invasions and translocations of species, coupled with local declines in native species, have promoted biotic homogenisation (Newbold *et al.* 2018; Finderup Nielsen *et al.* 2019; Daru *et al.* 2021). In addition, species have gone extinct at rates higher than expected from natural background variability, with current extinction rates estimated to exceed those inferred from fossil records by a hundred to a thousand times (Barnosky *et al.* 2011; De Vos *et al.* 2015). Biodiversity loss and ecosystem change have become such major issues in the 21th century that the prevention of biodiversity erosion and the protection of ecosystems have become priority goals on international agendas (Convention on Biological Diversity 2020; Hoban *et al.* 2020). Indeed, it is now well established that biodiversity is tightly linked with ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services delivery (Duraiappah *et al.* 2005, Oliver *et al.* 2015, Hooper *et al.* 2005), and thus ultimately, with human well-being. However, the difficulty in achieving global conservation goals – such as the failure to reach the Aichi targets (Buchanan *et al.* 2020) – highlights the need to strengthen global conservation efforts if we are to protect biodiversity and related ecosystem services from global threats (Butchart *et al.* 2016).

1. *Major drivers of global biodiversity change in the Anthropocene*

The biggest anthropogenic threats to biodiversity have been well characterised (Maxwell *et al.* 2016). Currently, land-use change is the primary driver of global biodiversity loss (Newbold *et al.* 2015; Chaudhary *et al.* 2018; Jetz & Pyron 2018; Powers & Jetz 2019). However, the negative effects of climate change on biodiversity could equate those of land-use change in their magnitude by 2070 (Newbold 2018).

*Land-use change*

Land cover describes the physical aspect and composition of the land surface from dominant biotic and abiotic features, typically classifying the Earth’s surface into determined sets of natural and artificial ensembles; land cover can notably be characterised with satellite imagery (Wulder *et al.* 2018). Land use, however, describes the human intent behind a particular land cover (Lambin *et al.* 2001). Land-use change thus refers the process by which humans transform the landscape to achieve socio-economic needs. Land-use change includes transitions from natural to anthropogenic landscapes, as exemplified by agricultural-driven deforestation in tropical areas (Jayathilake *et al.* 2021). It also describes transitions between different forms of human-dominated land uses, such as the expansion of urban areas over agricultural lands (Ustaoglu & Williams 2017). Land-use change can also describe transitions from anthropogenic land uses to natural habitats, as exemplified by the restoration of human-degraded landscapes (Banks-Leite *et al.* 2020). Although humans have been modifying terrestrial ecosystems for millennia – between 75% and 95% of the total land surface could have been altered by human activities at some point in history (Ellis *et al.* 2013, 2021) – it is only during the past three centuries that the terrestrial surface made the transition from mostly wild to mostly human-dominated (Ellis *et al.* 2010). The most important driver behind this transition has been agricultural expansion, with major increases in cropland and grazing areas from the mid-18th century onward (Figure 1a). In recent decades, the expansion of grazing areas and animal feed crops, fuelled by the rising demand for animal products, has been identified as the most important driver of land-use change (Alexander *et al.* 2015).

The effects of land-use change on biodiversity have been characterised at local, regional and global scales – although global-scale studies represent a small proportion of the published research (Davison *et al.* 2021). Overall, land-use change has a negative impact on species richness and abundance (Newbold *et al.* 2015), as well as key impacts of future land-use change scenarios for ecosystem processes and services (Lawler *et al.* 2014). Urban areas have been expanding at faster rates than urban populations themselves (Seto *et al.* 2010), and can have a considerable negative impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services, although they currently represent a small proportion of the terrestrial surface (about 1%; Goldewijk *et al.* (2017)). In particular, the expansion of impervious surfaces, which characterizes urban development, has been linked to a reduction in species richness (Souza *et al.* 2019; Yan *et al.* 2019) and to increases in ecological risks (e.g., due to flooding, Hou *et al.* 2022). Another important aspect of land-use change for biodiversity outcomes is the level of intensity at which the land is used to fulfil its purpose. For instance, introducing and managing green spaces can lead to positive biodiversity outcomes in urban environments (Ives *et al.* 2016; Aronson *et al.* 2017). Yet, land-use intensity has not been explicitly considered by a majority of past studies investigating impacts of land-use change on biodiversity (Davison *et al.* 2021), despite its likely importance (Dullinger *et al.* 2021; Millard *et al.* 2021).

*Climate change*

According to the World Meteorological Organization, climate change is defined as long-term changes (i.e, over at least several decades) to the mean state or to the variability of the climate, attributable to human activity or to natural causes. There is a strong scientific consensus that current climate change (from approximately 1850) is the result of human-driven changes to atmospheric composition (Crowley 2000; IPCC 2013; Maibach *et al.* 2014). Current manifestations of climate change include rising average temperatures (Valipour *et al.* 2021; Figure 1b), increases in the frequency of extreme events (Seneviratne *et al.* 2012), and changes in global rainfall patterns (Dore 2005; Trenberth 2011).

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated

**Figure 1: Characteristics of The Great Acceleration. (a) Land surface (and land-surface proportion) used for agricultural purposes between year 0 and 2016.** Data from the HYDE database (Goldewijk *et al.* 2017), downloaded from <https://ourworldindata.org/land-use> (24/01/2022). (b) **Annual land-surface temperature anomaly between 1880 and 2021.** Data retrieved from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – National Centers for Environmental Information, , Climate at a Glance: Global Time Series, published April 2022, retrieved on May 6, 2022 from [https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/cag/). The anomalies are calculated with reference to the global temperature average for the 20th century.

There is accumulating empirical evidence that climate change affects biodiversity globally, with documented changes in phenology (Inouye 2022), in the geographical distributions of species (Chen *et al.* 2011; Lenoir & Svenning 2015; Soroye *et al.* 2020), and in species physiology (Pörtner & Farrell 2008; Chown *et al.* 2010). Climate-change impacts on individual species have consequences for whole communities, through disruptions of species interactions, which can in turn exacerbate impacts on individual species (Cahill *et al.* 2013; Kharouba *et al.* 2018).

*Future human impacts on biodiversity*

Projecting future land-use and climate-change impacts on biodiversity highlights the key role of human-development scenarios for global biodiversity outcomes (Newbold 2018) and for the long-term viability of animal populations (Spooner *et al.* 2018). As the world’s population continues to grow and as the demand for food, energy and other commodities keeps rising, rates of global land-use and climate change are unlikely to slow without the implementation of strong international regulations and consumption changes (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022; Stehfest *et al.* 2019). In this context, evaluating the effects of land-use and climate change on biodiversity and associated ecosystem services has become vital in order to put into place mitigation measures. In particular, understanding what makes species more sensitive to land-use and climate change can help conservation efforts.

1. *Ecological importance of terrestrial vertebrates and current threats*

Vertebrates play significant roles in ecosystem functioning and support a wide range of processes, most notably as pollinators (Ratto *et al.* 2018), seed dispersers (Tiffney 2004), regulators of lower trophic levels (Barber *et al.* 2010; Salo *et al.* 2010; Luck *et al.* 2012; Lin *et al.* 2018; Zhang *et al.* 2018), nutrient cyclers (Wilson & Wolkovich 2011; Inger *et al.* 2016; Cunningham *et al.* 2018) and ecosystem engineers (Severtsov 2012). Vertebrates are also important for human societies, both culturally and as sources of proteins (Hirons *et al.* 2016; Albert *et al.* 2018; Alves *et al.* 2018), and feature among the most charismatic species in the public eye (Courchamp *et al.* 2018). Despite their cultural and ecological importance, terrestrial vertebrates are highly threatened by human activities. The latest Living Planet Report revealed that vertebrate populations have decreased by 70% on average since 1970 (WWF 2020). According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, about 41% of assessed amphibian species, 26% of mammals, 21% of reptiles and 13% of birds are classified as threatened with extinction (IUCN 2022, <https://www.iucnredlist.org/resources/summary-statistics>). A recent assessment of vertebrates listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species highlights habitat destruction as the predominant human threat (Cox *et al.* 2022), but direct exploitation also features among the major factors of decline (Monastersky 2014). Although climate change is not the principal driver of current population declines at present (Caro *et al.* 2022), the first extinction of a mammal attributed to anthropogenic climate was reported in 2016 (Watson 2016). Future projections highlight that between 10% and 30% of vertebrate species could be locally lost by 2070 depending on climate-change scenarios (Newbold 2018), and that up to one in six species could face extinction under current scenarios of climate change (Urban 2015).

1. *Using trait-based approaches to understand the causes and consequences of biodiversity change species responses to environmental change*

Despite the global average declines reported for vertebrate populations, not all species respond similarly to environmental changes (Dornelas *et al.* 2019; Leung *et al.* 2020): while some species are impacted negatively, others benefit from global environmental changes (Thomas 2013; Newbold *et al.* 2018). One of the reasons why species differ in their ability to cope with disturbances is that species present different intrinsic characteristics, or traits. Although the formal definition of a trait can vary depending on studies, in this thesis I consider traits to be characteristics that are measurable at an organismal level, and that likely influence organismal fitness and performance (this is also the definition adopted in McGill *et al.* (2006)). The idea that species traits mediate species responses to environmental change was formalised in the “response-effect” framework, developed in the field of plant ecology (Lavorel & Garnier 2002), where traits that influence species responses to environmental change were termed “response traits” (and those that underpin ecological processes were termed “effect traits”). One of the appeals of trait-based approaches is that individual species are no longer the fundamental unit of biodiversity investigations. Rather, traits become the focus and act as “common currencies” across species, which is of particular interest for conservation when long-term population data are lacking. If species’ responses to human threats consistently relate to certain traits, it may be possible to generalise patterns, and estimate the responses of species for which population data are not available (Verberk *et al.* 2013). As such, traits have been used to assess species vulnerability to global changes, in particular to climate change (Foden *et al.* (2013); Pacifici *et al.* (2015)), with frameworks assuming that species traits predict species sensitivity to environmental change. A number of studies have focused on explaining species extinction risk with traits (Lebreton 2011; Chichorro *et al.* 2019), which is of high interest for conservation, but often lack a consideration of specific threats (Gonzalez-Suarez *et al.* 2013). Among studies focused on land-use change, empirical evidence linking traits and biodiversity responses rely mostly on (1) functional diversity indices to evaluate the effects of land-use disturbance on the functional composition of local assemblages (Flynn *et al.* 2009), and (2) on correlative assessments aiming to explain land-use responses with traits (Newbold *et al.* 2013). Correlative trait-based approaches have also been used to understand species responses to climate change (with studies focusing on explaining interspecific variation in past or projected range shifts with traits (Schloss *et al.* 2012; Pacifici *et al.* 2017; Di Marco *et al.* 2021); and with range-filling approaches (Estrada *et al.* 2018)). However, such studies investigating relationships between traits and environmental change have mostly been conducted at local to regional scale (Hevia *et al.* 2017; Davison *et al.* 2021). Thus, although response traits to land-use and climate change have been identified in various vertebrate taxa, whether the effects of such traits can be generalised geographically and taxonomically remains largely uncertain, emphasising the need for global comparative assessments of the relationships between traits and species responses to human threats. In this thesis, I set out to fill in this gap by asking whether interspecific trait variation is associated with species land-use responses and with estimated climate-change sensitivity, at global scales, and comparatively across the four terrestrial vertebrate classes. Such an assessment helps to understand which species are at most risk from global changes, and may be useful to the prioritisation of conservation efforts. I also aim to highlight some of the consequences of global changes for ecosystem functioning. Throughout my thesis, assemblage-level and species-level responses to land use and land-use intensity are assessed using a “space-for-time” approach (De Palma *et al.* 2018). To this end, I use one of the most comprehensive databases recording species occurrence and abundance in different land uses (the PREDICTS database, Hudson *et al.* (2014, 2017)). I estimate sensitivity to climate change from properties of species climatic niche space, and thus it is important to emphasize that this does not allow a consideration of species’ *responses* to climate change (which would require to integrate considerations of species exposure to climate change; Foden (2016)).

1. *Aims, hypotheses and outline of the following Chapters*

The overarching aims of my thesis are to investigate whether species traits are associated with species land-use responses and species estimated climate-change sensitivity in terrestrial vertebrates, and to highlight some consequences for ecosystem functioning. One of the obstacles that has hindered the application of trait-based approaches at large scales in animal taxa is the lack of a centralised repository for readily available trait data, as emphasized by the recent calls to compile and release trait data for animals (Kissling *et al.* 2018; Junker *et al.* 2022). Thus, collecting trait data and investigating the current availability of the data for terrestrial vertebrates was an important and necessary prerequisite to any analysis. In Chapter 2, I present a trait data collection for terrestrial vertebrates. Because using similar traits in the different vertebrate classes is necessary to be able to make comparisons among vertebrate classes, I target seven traits that are commonly used across taxonomic groups: body mass/size, a proxy for lifespan, litter/clutch size, trophic level, diel activity, habitat breadth, and a broad degree of habitat specialisation. I am not able to consider intraspecific variation in the data compilation, since multiple measurements of trait values do not exist for many vertebrate species. Chapter 2 also assesses the availability of the trait data across the terrestrial vertebrate classes, and investigates whether the trait data present global taxonomic, phylogenetic and spatial biases. On the basis of past work (Titley *et al.* 2017), I hypothesize that amphibians and reptiles are under-sampled compared to mammals and birds. Further, I hypothesize that trait data are less abundant for the narrower-ranging species and in species-richer regions.

At the assemblage level, multivariate trait composition can be summarised with functional diversity indices (Villéger *et al.* 2008; Schleuter *et al.* 2010; Legras *et al.* 2018). Past research has shown that land-use disturbances affect the functional composition of vertebrate assemblages (Flynn *et al.* 2009; Tinoco *et al.* 2018). However, to the best of my knowledge, a global assessment of how the functional diversity of terrestrial vertebrate assemblages respond to land use and land-use intensity, within and across taxonomic classes, has not yet been undertaken. Chapter 3 aims to fill in this gap, by investigating the effects of land use and land-use intensity on the functional diversity of local vertebrate assemblages. To this end, I combine the trait data collected in Chapter 2 with the PREDICTS database. After imputing missing trait values (as described in Chapter 2), I investigate the effects of land use on the functional diversity of local terrestrial vertebrate assemblages, across and within vertebrate classes. I hypothesize that the functional diversity of vertebrate assemblages in disturbed land uses is lower than in undisturbed areas. I further predict that decreases in functional diversity in disturbed land uses are driven by high levels of functional loss and that observed declines in functional diversity exceed those expected from random species loss.

Chapter 3 highlights the effects of land-use change on the functional composition of vertebrate assemblages, but does not allow an assessment of the effects of particular traits on species land-use responses, as multidimensional trait variation is summarised into single indices of functional diversity. In Chapter 4, I investigate whether ecological traits and geographical range area are associated with species land-use responses and estimated climate-change sensitivity, comparatively among the terrestrial vertebrate classes. I enhance the trait data compiled in Chapter 2 with information on species’ diet. I investigate whether there are associations between ecological traits and geographical range area and species land-use responses on the one hand, and between ecological traits and species climate-change sensitivity on the other hand. I further assess whether these associations can be generalised across classes and threats by looking for emerging patterns in the associations between traits and land-use responses and between traits and climate-change sensitivity. To the best of my knowledge, Chapter 4 constitutes the first global comparative assessment, across terrestrial vertebrate classes, of associations between species’ traits and both land-use responses and likely climate-change sensitivity.

Chapter 5 develops our understanding of the impacts of land-use change on ecosystem functioning by focusing on species energetic requirements. First, I assess the effects of land use on the total energetic requirements of vertebrate assemblages. Second, I assess whether species energetic requirements influence species persistence in disturbed land uses. To this end, I collect resting metabolic rates for vertebrate species, which I use as a proxy for species-level energetic expenditure, and I combine these estimates with the PREDICTS database. Assuming that there is less energy available in disturbed land uses, I hypothesize that the assemblage-level energetic requirements of vertebrates are lower in disturbed land uses compared to natural habitats, and that species with lower mass-independent energetic requirements are favoured over species with higher mass-independent energetic requirements in disturbed land uses. Chapter 5 highlights the impacts of land-use change on vertebrate community metabolism.

Finally, inChapter 6, I summarise the findings of my thesis, I highlight some of the limitations, and I examine the relevance of my findings for the field. By investigating whether traits are associated with species land-use responses and climate-change sensitivity across the terrestrial vertebrates, my thesis furthers our understanding of what could render species more sensitive to human threats, underlines possible modifications to ecosystem functioning, and stresses the role and usefulness of vertebrate trait data and ecological knowledge for understanding species- and community-level responses to human pressures.

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