

Projecting climate change and land-use scenarios of crop pollination risk (Land use, climate change, pollinators, pollination risk)

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1 Science Instructions

- Reports are up to 2,500 words (including references, notes and captions)
- Up to 4 figures or tables
- Approximately 30 references

2 Key Papers

2.1 Already Read

- ☐ Outhwaite et al. (in press). *Nature*
- ☐ Millard et al. (2021). *Nature Communications*
- ☐ Biesmeijer et al. (2006). *Science*
- ☐ van Klink et al. (2020). *Science*
- ☐ Silva et al. (2021). *Science Advances*
- ☐ Soroye et al. (2020). *Science*
- ☐ Halsch et al. (2021). *PNAS*
- ☐ Basset & Lamarre (2019). *Science*
- ☐ Dainese et al. (2019). *Science Advances*
- ☐ Albrecht et al. (2012). *Proceedings B*
- ☐ Peters et al. (2019). *Nature*

- ☐ Piano et al. (2017). *Global Change Biology*
- ☐ Oliver et al. (2017). *Global Change Biology*
- ☐ Potts et al. (2010). *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*
- ☐ Rodger et al. (2021). *Science Advances*
- ☐ Woodcock et al. (2019). *Nature Communications*
- ☐ Lister & Garcia (2018). *PNAS*
- ☐ Wagner et al. (2020). *Annual Review of Entomology*
- ☐ Powney et al. (2019). *Nature Communications*
- ☐ Brittain et al. (2013). *Global Change Biology*
- ☐ Samways et al. (2020). *Biological Conservation*
- ☐ Genung et al. (2017). *Ecology*
- ☐ Uhler et al. (2021). *Nature Communications*
- ☐ Oliver et al. (2016). *Landscape Ecology*
- ☐ Mantyka-Pringle et al. (2012). *Global Change Biology*
- ☐ Warren et al. (2001). *Nature*
- ☐ Suggitt et al. (2018). *Nature Climate Change*
- ☐ Wilson & Fox (2021). *Ecological Entomology*
- ☐ Janzen & Hallwachs (2019). *Biological Conservation*
- ☐ Platts et al. (2019). *Scientific Reports*
- ☐ Aizen et al. (2008). *Current Biology*
- ☐ Holzschuh et al. (2011). *Proceedings B*
- ☐ Dornelas et al. (2019). *Ecology Letters*
- ☐ Martay et al. (2017). *Ecography*
- ☐ Oliver et al. (2015). *Nature Communications*
- ☐ Hickling et al. (2006). *Global Change Biology*
- ☐ Winfree et al. (2018). *Science*
- ☐ Ricketts et al. (2004). *PNAS*
- ☐ De Palma et al. (2016). *Scientific Reports*
- ☐ Klein et al. (2007). *Proceedings B*

2.2 To Read

- ☒ Potts et al. (2010). *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*
- ☒ Rodger et al. (2021). *Science Advances*
- ☒ Wagner et al. (2020). *Annual Review of Entomology*
- ☒ Powney et al. (2019). *Nature Communications*
- ☒ Samways et al. (2020). *Biological Conservation*
- ☒ Brittain et al. (2013). *Global Change Biology*
- ☒ Woodcock et al. (2019). *Nature Communications*
- ☒ Genung et al. (2017). *Ecology*
- ☒ Oliver et al. (2016). *Landscape Ecology*
- ☒ Uhler et al. (2021). *Nature Communications*
- ☒ Wilson & Fox (2021). *Ecological Entomology*
- ☒ Janzen & Hallwachs (2019). *Biological Conservation*
- ☒ Platts et al. (2019). *Scientific Reports*
- ☐ Lenoir et al. (2020). *Nature Ecology & Evolution*
- ☐ Deutsch et al. (2008). *PNAS*
- ☐ Lonsdorf et al. (2009). *Annals of Botany*

2.2.1 Pollen limitation

- ☒ Aizen et al. (2008). *Current Biology*
- ☒ Holzschuh et al. (2011). *Proceedings B*

3 Introduction

Recent studies have highlighted rapid ongoing changes in insect biodiversity (1–3). Some of these studies have reported net declines (1, 3), at least for terrestrial insects (1), while others have shown mixtures of gains and losses (2). Pollinator biodiversity specifically has been shown to be undergoing rapid changes (4–8), with potential consequences for the provision of pollination to wild plants and crops. Importantly, evidence for insect biodiversity trends has been biased toward Western Europe and North America, with little coverage of tropical regions (9, 10). Although a few studies have shown steep declines of insects in the tropics (3), evidence about insect biodiversity trends there often remains anecdotal (11), with global syntheses (1, 2) having strong geographic biases towards non-tropical regions.

Among the drivers of insect and pollinator biodiversity changes, human land-use disturbance and climate change are prominent (5, 10). A large number of studies have shown substantial effects of human land use and agricultural intensification on insects, including pollinators (12–15). Climate change is emerging as an increasingly important driver of changes in insect biodiversity (8, 12, 16–19). Tropical insects are expected to be more susceptible to climate change, owing to their narrower physiological tolerance compared to non-tropical species (20), but evidence about the response of tropical insects to climate change remains very scarce (19). Evidence is now accumulating for strong interactive effects of land-use change and climate change on insects (21–25). A key mechanism underpinning this interactive effect is the altered microclimatic conditions in areas where vegetation has been modified for human land use (21). The interaction between the effects of climate change and land use is often synergistic, leading to greater declines in biodiversity than if the pressures acted alone (21, 23–25), and larger declines in tropical than non-tropical insect biodiversity (25).

Changes in the biodiversity and composition of pollinator communities will have large effects on the provision of pollination services. Pollen limitation from animal pollinator losses has already been shown to reduce the reproductive success of wild plants (4, 26), and the productivity of certain crops (27–30), although there is no evidence yet that pollen limitation is causing wholesale reductions in yields of crops that rely on animal pollination (31). Evidence that insect biodiversity responds to human pressures more strongly in the tropics than elsewhere (15, 25) is noteworthy, given that the majority of animal-pollination-dependent crops are grown there (32). However, it is not only tropical countries that will experience the effects of pollinator losses and subsequent pollen limitation, with highly developed countries benefiting from imports of animal-pollination-dependent foods from tropical areas (33). Abundance, species diversity and functional diversity of pollinators have all been implicated as determinants of the delivery of pollination service (30, 34–38). Previous attempts to model the provision of crop pollination service have been based on predictions of pollinator abundance, which bears a direct relation to pollination of plants, and has been shown to give a reasonable approximation of pollen deposition in at least some study systems (39).

Here, we present a global assessment of the interactive effects of climate change and land use on pollinator abundance, and predictions of the risk to crop pollination worldwide from the inferred changes in pollinator abundance (see Shiny app for full extended predictions, https://joemillard.shinyapps.io/pollinator_dependence_visualisation/). Our analyses are based on the PREDICTS database of biodiversity comparisons in different land uses (40), together with a list of species identified in the literature as likely pollinators (15). We use mixed-effects models to fit total pollinator community abundance as a function of land use (primary vegetation versus cropland) and a measure of historical climate change between a baseline period (XXXX-XXXX) and the X years prior to biodiversity sampling, standardized by monthly climate variability in the baseline period (25). Using estimated proportional reduction of pollinator total abundance as a proxy for relative risk to pollination services, together with estimates of where crops are grown (41), how dependent these crops are on animal pollination (32), projections of historical and future climate change, and a set assumptions for the relationship between local pollinator abundance and crop pollination, we predict which locations and crops are likely to be at greatest risk from pollination shortfalls. We then combine these projections with estimates of the trade in pollination dependent production, to predict regions of the world that may be vulnerable to the indirect consequences of crop pollination risk via trade routes.

4 Results and Discussion

For both pollinating and non-pollinating insects, standardised temperature anomaly (STA) and land-use type had a strong interactive effect on local abundance (Figure 4.1; $F = 23.3195$, $p < 0.001$; $F = 10.5764$, $p < 0.01$). In both insect groupings, the effect of STA diverges significantly between primary vegetation and cropland (Figure 1), such that abundance increases with greater STA on primary vegetation, and decreases with greater STA on cropland. Such an effect has been demonstrated previously in a broader sample of insect species (25). Here we show that this interactive effect may be stronger for pollinating insects (Figure 1). However, whether sensitivity to climate change and land-use interactions for insect pollinators relates to their actual reliance on floral resources, or to other correlated traits such as dispersal ability, body size, voltinism, or specialism, is unclear. Most likely some combination of both is true. For example, insect-pollinated plants have been shown to respond more strongly to warming than wind-pollinated plants, suggesting that plant-pollinator interactions are highly sensitive to thermal changes (Fitter & Fitter, 2002). Pollinator pilosity (i.e. hairiness), on the other hand, has been shown to affect an insect’s ability to adapt to changes in climate (Roquer-Beni et al., 2020), and given its nature as a trait typical of bees and hoverflies, tends to be correlated with a reliance on floral resources (Stavert et al., 2016).

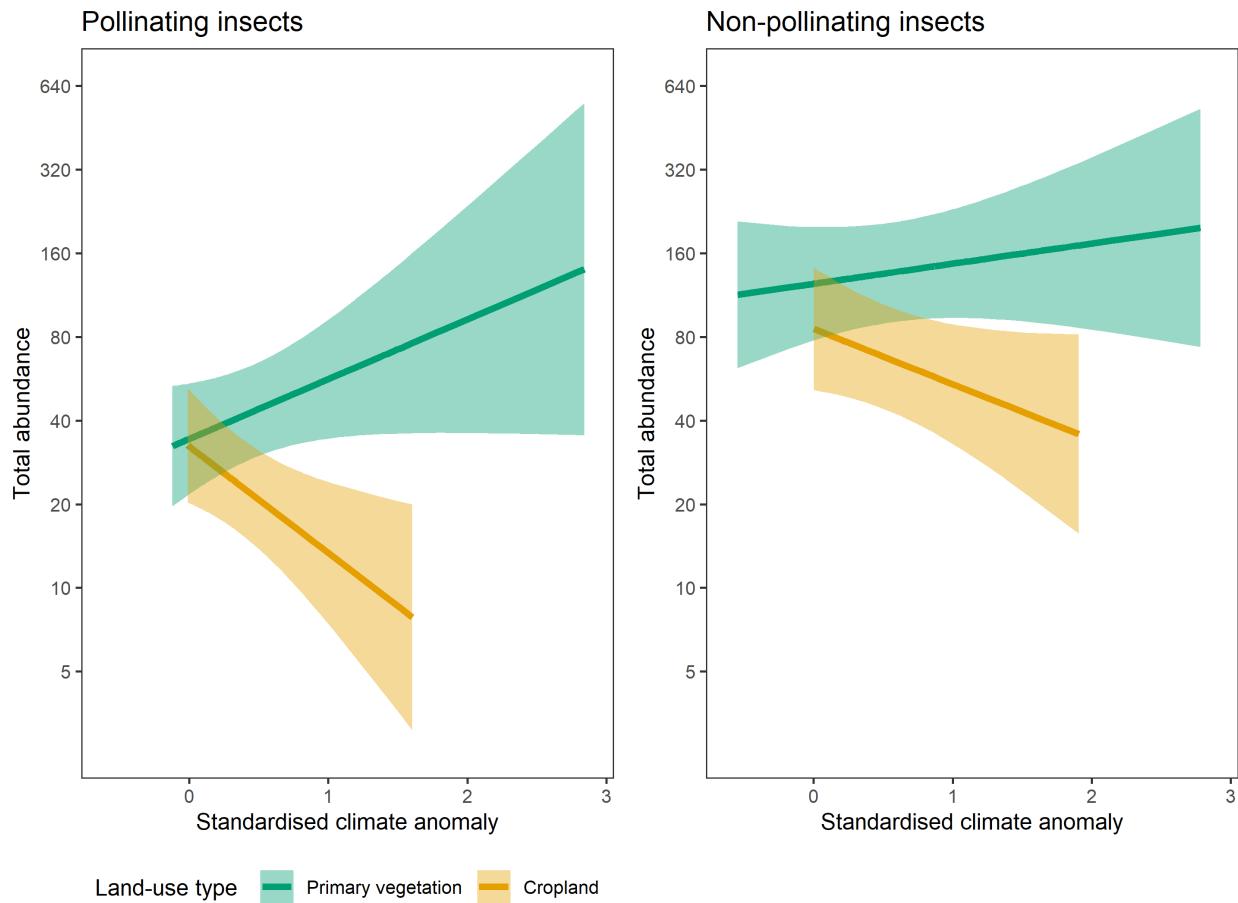


Figure 1: Response of pollinating and non-pollinating insect total abundance to standardised temperature anomaly on primary vegetation and cropland (note that abundance is plotted on a loge scale). Both panels represent a linear mixed-effects model for pollinating or non-pollinating insects. Coloured lines represent mean fitted estimates for each interaction, and shading 95% confidence intervals around that prediction: green, primary vegetation; orange, cropland.

Total production risk is predicted to increase under all climate scenarios (Figure 2), for both a linear relationship between local pollinator abundance and crop production, and all variants of our tested convex relationship. Average rate of change in production risk is highest under RCP 6.0, although there is a great deal of variation among plausible abundance-production relationships. Under RCPs 6.0 and 2.5, highly convex relationships between abundance and production result in a highly volatile change in risk, with large fluctuations between high and low risk scenarios. Potentially this is caused by an interaction between high abundance/production convexity and El Nino effects, in which transition between a warm and cool phase cause shifts from high to low productivity (*reference*). Although highly convex relationships have a high average rate of change and greater volatility, total production at risk under a highly convex relationship is markedly lower than either low convexity or linear relationships (Figure 2). Our total production risk projections were not overly influenced by the prediction of single climate model (Figure S06), do not change markedly when abundance loss is capped at the maximum model-fitted value (Figure S02), do not change markedly when tested for sensitivity to data quality (Figure S04), and likely hold across a set of plausible active season temperature thresholds, fitted through two different approaches (Figures S11 and S12).

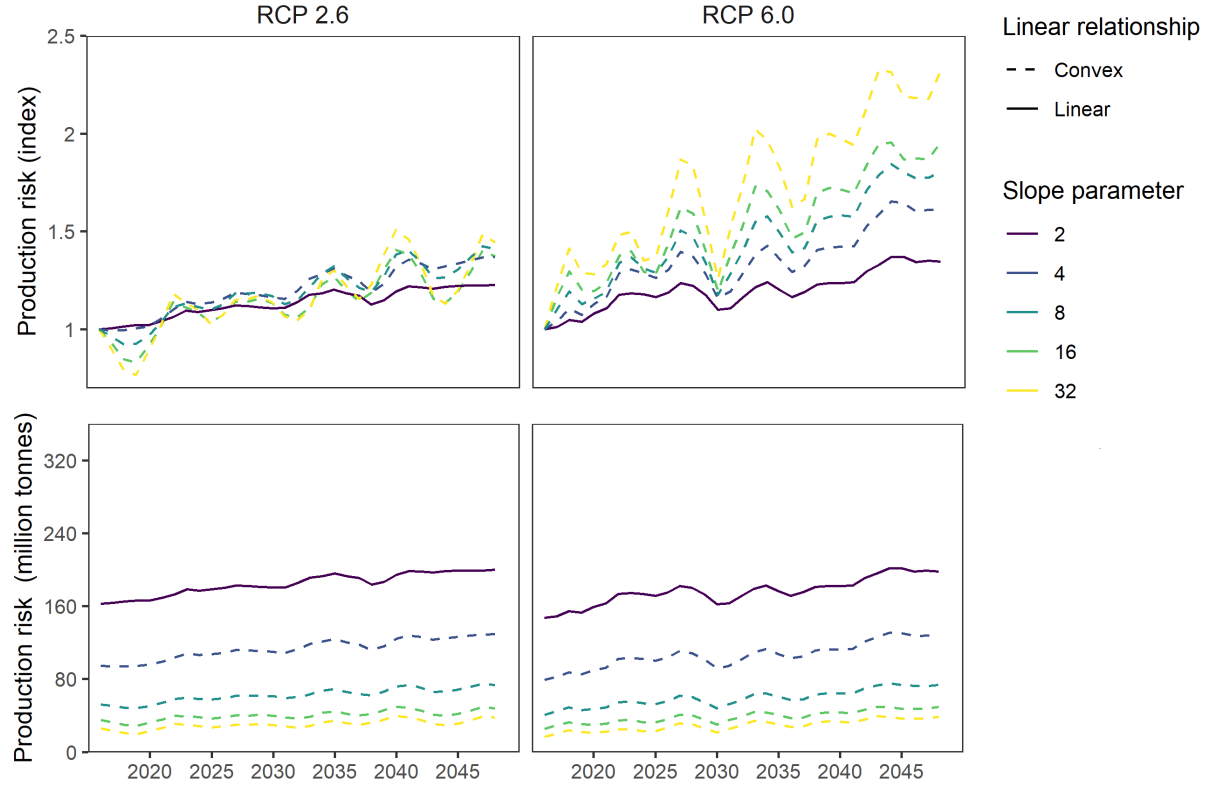


Figure 2: Projected change in total production risk under an ensemble mean of two RCP scenarios (6.0 and 2.6) and a set of different abundance-production relationships, for both an index of change in risk and total pollination production risk. For each year into the future, the standardised temperature anomaly was projected globally for all cells of pollination-dependent production, using a 3-year rolling average. We used data on crop production from the year 2000 (the latest year when such data are available for all crops), therefore assuming that the distribution of the production of these crops does not change. For each annual projection of standardised temperature anomaly, insect pollinator abundance on cropland was predicted according to the model in Figure 1 (left panel), and then expressed as proportional abundance loss compared to cropland that has experienced no warming (i.e. standardised temperature anomaly of 0). In each cell, animal pollination-dependent production was then adjusted for the percentage reduction in abundance at that cell, before summing animal-pollination-dependent production for all cells at each time step. Line type refers to the shape of the abundance-production relationship: dashed, convex; and solid, linear. Colour refers to the degree of convexity of the relationship between abundance and production, with the highest level of convexity in yellow.

Cell-level proportional production risk is highest, and predicted to increase most rapidly, in regions of sub-Saharan Africa and northern South America (Figure 3). Somalia, Guinea Bissau, and Ivory Coast all are particularly vulnerable, given their high overall crop pollination risk, change in risk, and dependence of their economy on agriculture (Figure 3). Within a continental region there is large variation in risk. For example, much of Asia and Australia is predicted to have low levels of risk, but the Philippines, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea have amongst the highest levels of risk globally (Figure 3). Among the 20 top crops by total pollination dependent production, cocoa is by a large margin the most vulnerable crop to pollination risk, followed by mango and watermelon (Figure 3). Although coffee has a lower relative risk, its value is second only to cocoa, meaning regions in which it is grown may experience economic difficulties.

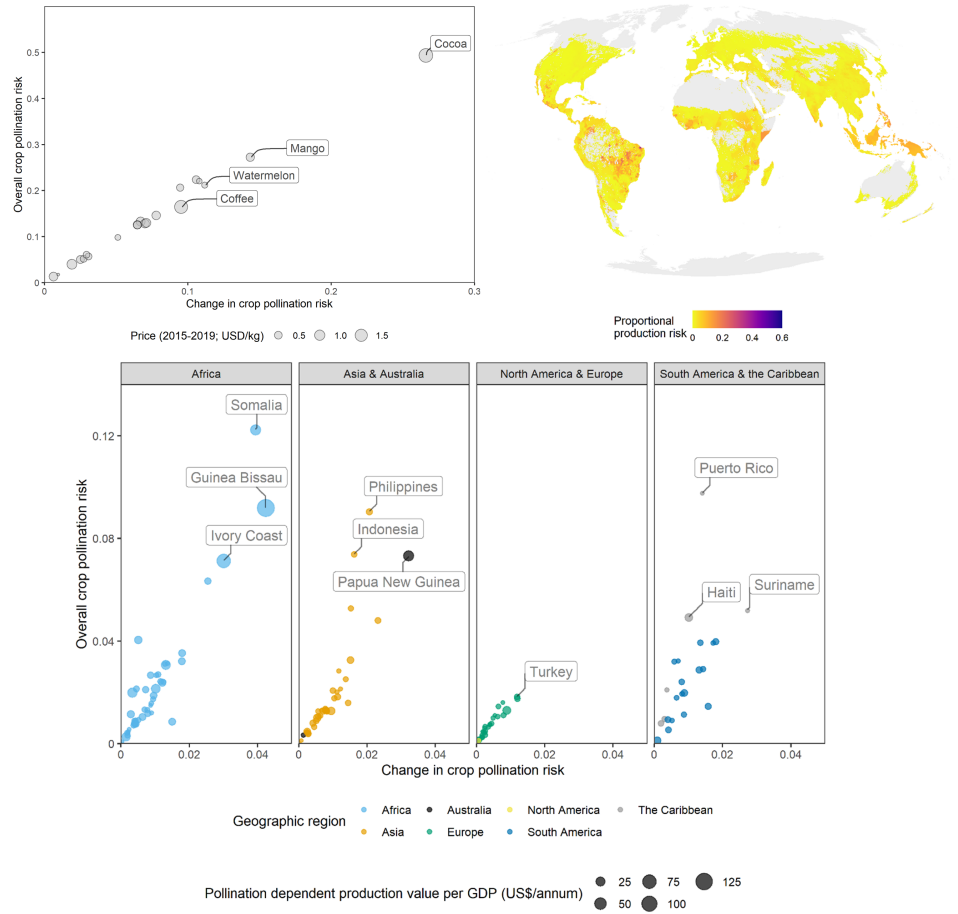


Figure 3: Projected change in proportional production risk for 2050 under an ensemble mean of RCP scenario 6.0 and a linear relationship between abundance and production loss. Top left: Proportional production risk for the top 20 crops by pollination dependent production (see Figure S01 for the top 20 crops). Overall risk is the median of proportional production risk for all cells of that crop, whilst change in risk is the difference in overall risk between the start and the end of the series. Point size represents an estimation of the per kg value of each crop for the years 2015-2019, calculated from FAO data. Top right: Proportional production risk at the level of each spatial cell (see Figure S08 to see how cell-level risk differs among abundance-production scenarios). Bottom: Proportional production risk at the level of each country. Here overall risk is the median of proportional production risk for all cells of that country, whilst change in risk is the difference in overall risk between the start and the end of the series. Point size here represents the total value of the pollination dependent production in that country (according to Monfreda et al 2008) adjusted for GDP. Colour represents the geographic region of each country, distinguishing between regions within a panel: Blue, Africa; orange, Asia; black, Australia; green, Europe; yellow, North America; dark blue, South America; grey, the Caribbean.

Total import risk (i.e. total import risk per capita) shows a distinct latitudinal pattern, with northern countries tending to have high overall import risk, and southern countries low import risk (Figure 4). Most of Africa and South America, for example, are in the bottom 25% in terms of total import risk, whereas most of North America and Europe are in the top 50%. Countries that display the highest levels of import risk tend to be those that have high dependence on food imports, such as the Cayman Island's, Singapore, and Aruba. Interestingly, the Netherlands has the third highest per capita import risk, consistent with its status as the greatest importer of cocoa beans worldwide (reference).

Climate change and anthropogenic land use have had significant effects on the biosphere. The consequences of such change on pollinators and the service they provide could be great. Here we showed that climate change and agricultural land use are associated with a strong interactive effect on insect pollinator abundance, such that insect pollinator abundance is significantly lower where cropland coincides with high levels of historical climate change. We further show that the tropics will likely experience the greatest risk of future pollination shortfalls. Crop pollination risk is highest, and predicted to increase most rapidly, in regions of sub-Saharan Africa and northern South America, primarily for cocoa, mango, pumpkin, melon, watermelon, and coffee production. Given the many factors that determine crop production and crop price, conclusive attribution to pollinator abundance changes is likely to be challenging (Khanal et al., 2018; Santeramo et al., 2018), even if impacts on crop production occur. These complications likely in part explain why identifying a strong effect of pollinator losses on global crop yield and price has thus far been so difficult (Aizen et al., 2008, 2009; Garibaldi et al., 2011). Regardless, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that declining insect pollinator abundance will moderate some quantity of crop production risk, particularly for those in the global south (Dicks et al., 2021). The health, well-being, and livelihoods of billions of people to some extent depends upon the availability and affordability of animal pollination dependent crops (Potts et al., 2016). Climate change and agricultural land use could risk this contribution. Mitigating this risk will be a key challenge of the 21st Century.

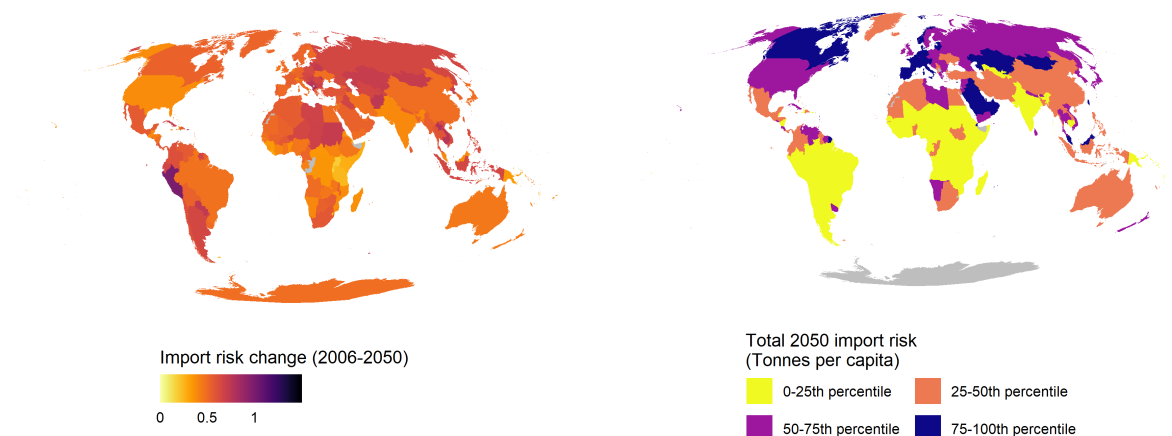


Figure 4: Projected change in import risk for 2050 under an ensemble mean of RCP scenario 6.0 and a linear relationship between abundance and production loss. Import risk is a measure of how the effects of localised production risk might be distributed among other countries, calculated using trade flow data from da Silva et al (2021). Left panel: Change in import risk between 2006 and 2050. Colours represent the degree of import risk change, from no change at 0 in yellow to a doubling at 1 in purple. Right panel: Total import risk in 2020 adjusted for population and then converted to a percentile. Colours represent each percentile grouping: yellow, 0-25th percentile; orange, 25-50th; purple, 50-75th; dark blue, 75-100th.

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