

Class 1: Time Series Models for Ecologists

Andrew Parnell with Emma Howard and John O'Sullivan
andrew.parnell@ucd.ie



Introductions

- ▶ Tell us who you are, what you are working on, and what you hope to get out of the week
- ▶ Timetable for the week
- ▶ A quick note about pre-requisites

How this course works

- ▶ This course lives on GitHub, which means anyone can see the slides, code, etc, and make comments on it
- ▶ The timetable html document provides links to all the pdf slides and practicals
- ▶ Let me know if you spot mistakes, as these can be easily updated on the GitHub page
- ▶ There is an issues page if you want to ask questions

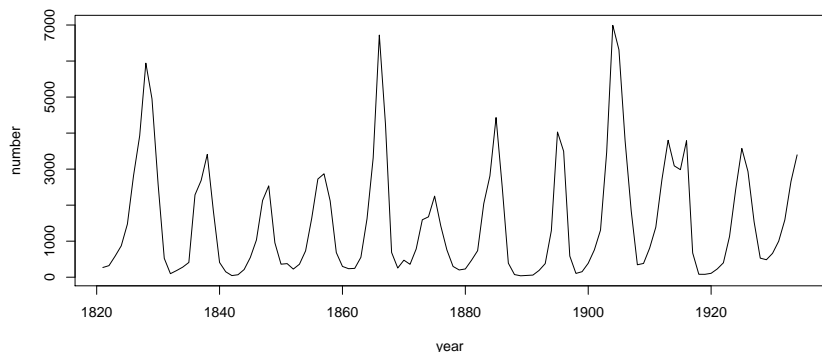
R code, slides, and practicals

- ▶ All the slides and practicals are available in pdf format for you to annotate
- ▶ In the background, the slides and the practicals are written in `Rmarkdown` format, which means you can load them up in Rstudio and see how everything was created
- ▶ When you have spare time, feel free to load up the `.rmd` files and run the code in the background

R code in slides

- ▶ Many of the slides contain R code and output (some of which may be hidden in the .rmd file)
- ▶ An example:

```
lynx = read.csv(file = '../..data/lynx.csv')  
with(lynx, plot(year, number, type = 'l'))
```



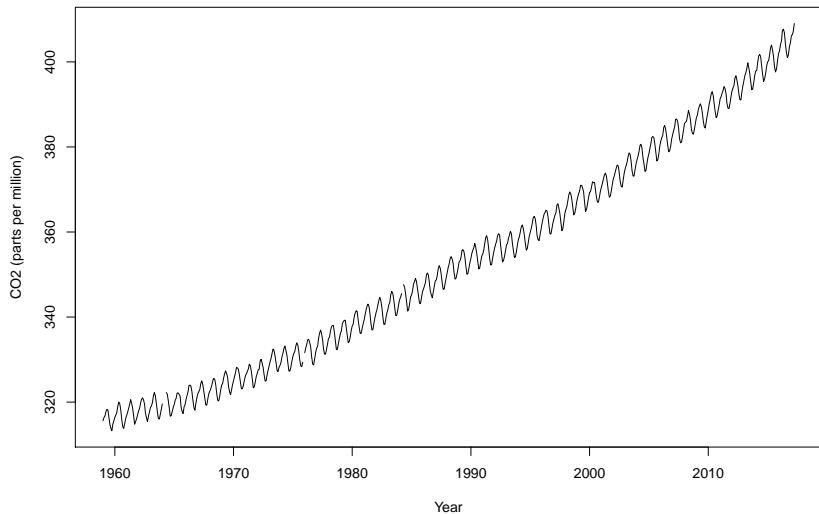
Course format and other details

- ▶ Lectures will take place in the morning, practical classes in the afternoon
- ▶ Please ask lots of questions
- ▶ Some good books:
 - ▶ *Forecasting: Principles and Practice* by Hyndman and Athanasopoulos
 - ▶ *Hierarchical Modeling and Inference in Ecology* by Royle and Dorazio
 - ▶ *Bayesian Methods for Ecology*. by McCarthy
 - ▶ *Bayesian Data Analysis* by Gelman et al
- ▶ Looking for data? Try: [<https://datamarket.com/data/list/?q=provider:tsdl>]

What is a time series?

- ▶ A time series is any set of data where the response variable is measured over time
- ▶ There may be other variables included too (covariates)
- ▶ Time may be discrete (1, 2, 3, 4, ...) or continuous (1.7, 2.53, 7.12, ...)
- ▶ There may be missing values or outliers
- ▶ Occasionally there may be more than one response variable (multivariate time series)

A time series plot: CO₂ data



General features of a time series

- ▶ Trend: long term behaviour. May be a straight line or something more complicated
- ▶ Seasonal: repeated behaviour. May be yearly, monthly, daily, etc. Likely to be dependent on the time resolution
- ▶ Error: Leftover uncertainty beyond the trend and seasonal behaviour. May have interesting statistical patterns.

Writing time series mathematically

- ▶ If we write y_t as the value of the response variable at time t then the series can be *decomposed* as:

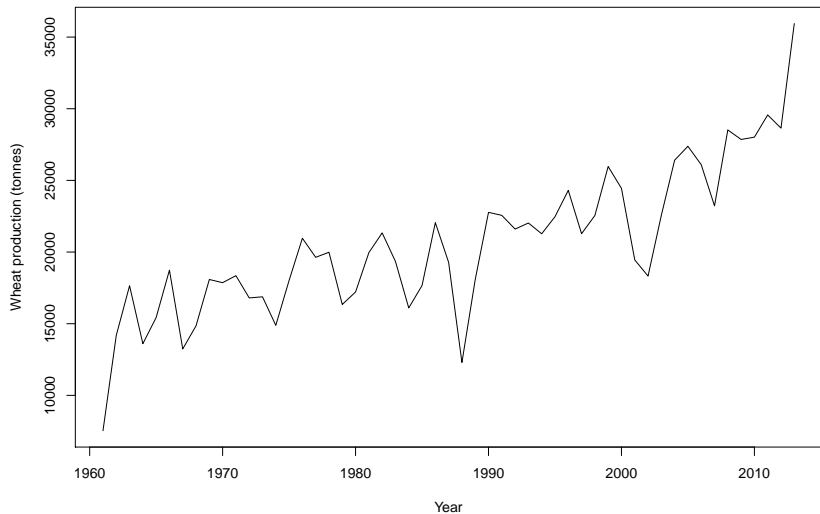
$$y_t = \text{trend}_t + \text{seasonality}_t + \text{error}_t$$

- ▶ Most time series models concentrate on the error structure
- ▶ Time Series analysis is usually harder if you need to identify the seasonality too

Participation exercise

- ▶ I want to you to look at the time series on the following slides and...
- ▶ ... identify the trend. Is it linear or non-linear?
- ▶ ... identify the seasonality (if any). Can you estimate the frequency?
- ▶ ... look at the residual errors after accounting (in your head) for trend and seasonality. Can you spot any patterns or strange observations?

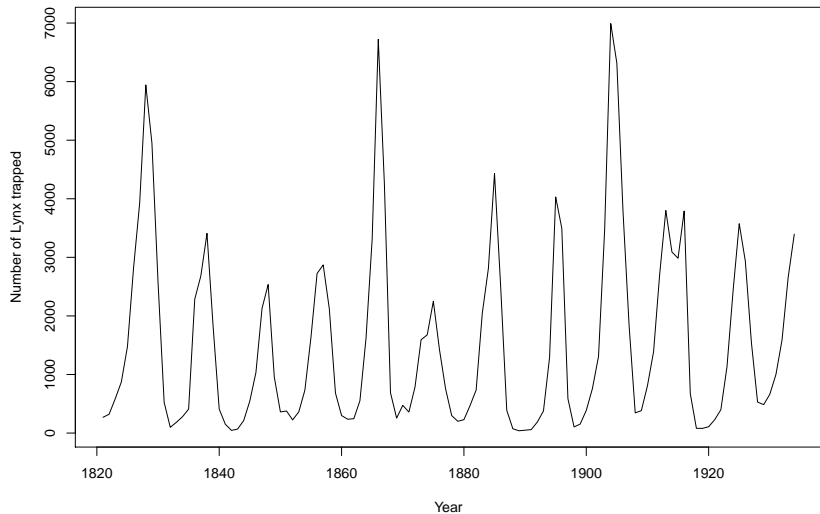
Data set 1: Wheat production in Canada



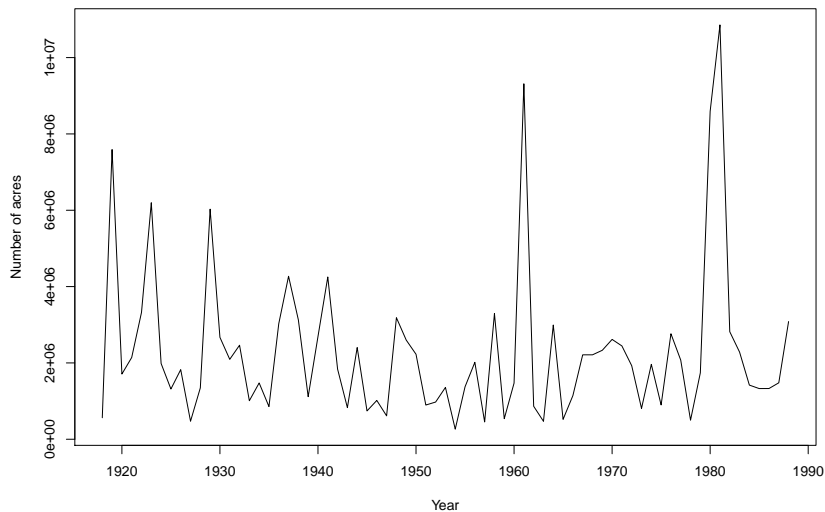
Data set 2: Sheep numbers in Asia



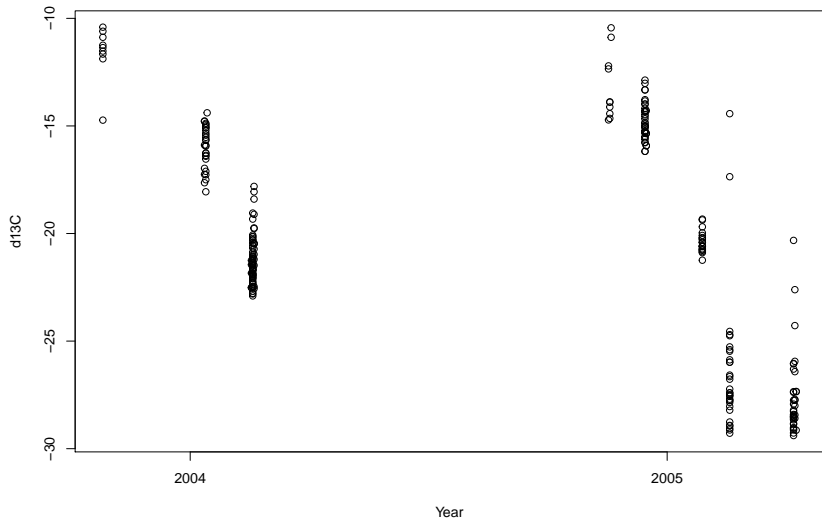
Data set 3: Lynx trappings in Canada



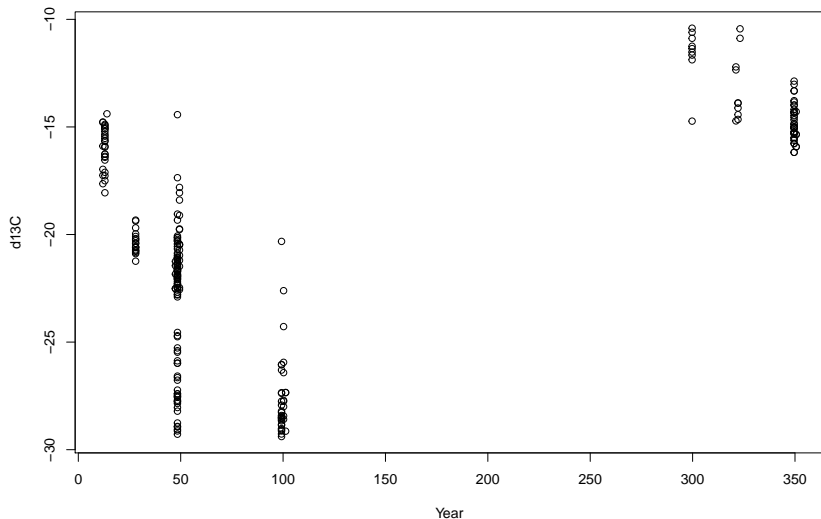
Data set 4: Forest fires in Canada



Data set 5: Geese isotopes



Data set 5: Geese isotopes again



Goals of time series analysis

- ▶ Predict future values of the response variable
- ▶ Try to predict the behaviour of the response variable for missing or interpolated times
- ▶ Try and explain which factors are causing the time series to change
- ▶ Try to understand the underlying behaviour of the time series

Summary

This course takes a practical approach, and should help you:

- ▶ Understand modern time series modelling techniques.
- ▶ Get and use tools for thinking about and dealing with uncertainty.
- ▶ Fit time series models, and make predictions.
- ▶ Understand your time series data, and the process that generates it.