Lecture slides

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Lecture 1

- Introduction to nonlinear difference equations
- The Malthusian model
- The Ricker model

Why difference equations?

A general model

Consider the first order difference equation

$$N_{t+1} = N_t f(N_t) = H(N_t), \tag{1}$$

where $f(N_t)$ is a function that defines the per capita growth rate. The function $H(N_t)$ describes the total (net) growth rate.

The Malthusian model

The population size at time $t+1$ is

$$N_{t+1} = N_t + bN_t - dN_t = rN_t,$$

Exercise: solve the Malthusian model and classify qualitative behaviours

Nonlinear models

- Beverton-Holt
$$N_{t+1} = \frac{rN_t}{1 + \frac{N_t}{K}},$$
- Hassell model
$$N_{t+1} = \frac{rN_t}{(1 + \frac{N_t}{K})^b},$$
- Ricker model
$$N_{t+1} = N_t e^{r(1-\frac{N_t}{K})}.$$

Numerical simulation of the Ricker model

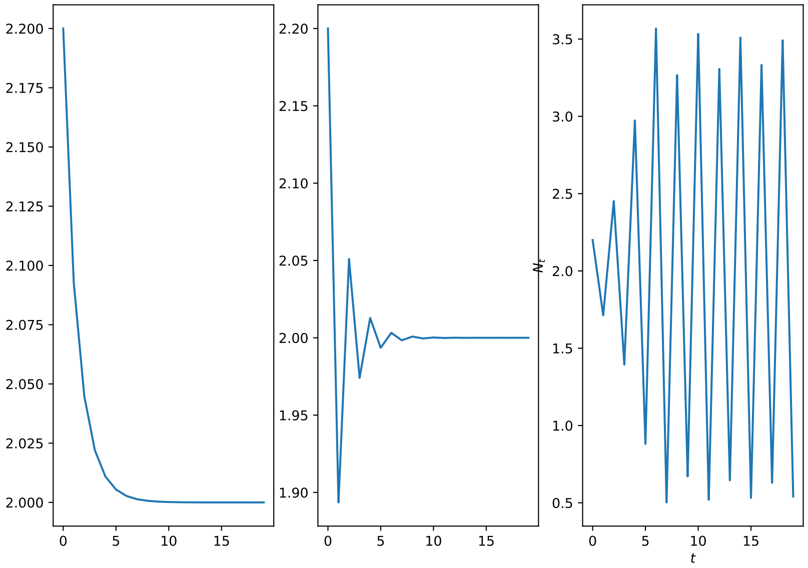

Figure 1: A plot of numerical solutions of the Ricker model. (a)r=0.5.

Summary

- Motivated use of difference equation models
- Introduced general model for one population
- Solved the Malthusian model
- Introduced nonlinear models

Lecture 2 - General techniques for solving nonlinear difference equations

$$N_{t+1} = N_t f(N_t) = H(N_t), \tag{2}$$

- Computational solutions
- Fixed points
- Linear stability of fixed points
- Cobweb diagrams
- Bifurcation diagrams
- Identify how model solutions depend on model parameters

Fixed points

Suppose the solution at the next iteration is equal to that at a given iteration, i,e. there exists some N^* such that

$$N^* = N_{t+1} = N_t$$

Fixed point definition

$$N^* = H(N^*), N^* \geq 0$$

Biological relevance: non-negative solutions

Linear stability analysis - how do small perturbations about N^* behave?

Linear stability analysis (ctd)

Linear stability is determined by the derivative of H evaluated at N^*

$$|H'(N^*)| < 1 \implies \text{linear stability of } N^*.$$

Exercise

Identify the fixed points of the Malthusian model

$$N_{t+1} = rN_t$$

and identify their linear stability.

Cobweb diagrams

Definition

A cobweb diagram is a technique for computing graphical solutions of a difference equation.

Use previous analyses to identify different qualitative cases (one cobweb digram for each fixed point).

For each case:

- Sketch a graph of H to evaulate iterative solutions
- Compute an iterative solution

Example

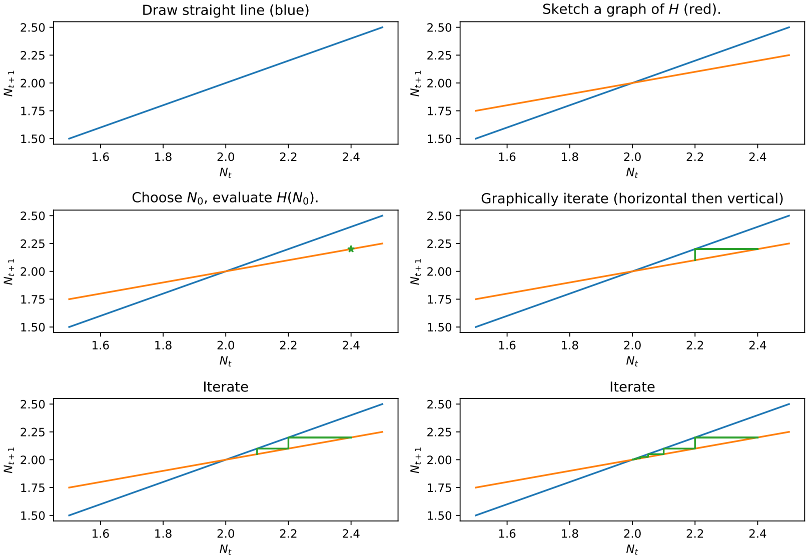

Figure 2: Generating a cobweb plot.

Bifurcation diagrams - Plot fixed points against a parameter and annotate their stability

Exercise

Draw cobweb diagrams for the Malthusian model.

$$N_{t+1} = rN_t$$

and identify their linear stability.

Lecture 3 - Preparation for tutorial 3

- Curve sketching nonlinear functions in qualitatively distinct cases

Example:

Sketch a graph of

$$f(x) = xe^{-r(1-\frac{x}{K})}, \quad r, K \in \mathfrak{R}^+, \quad x \in \mathfrak{R}, x \geq 0$$

Approach

Identify properties of H to distinguish qualitatively distinct cases

Roots

Turning points

Limit as $x \to \infty$

Limiting behaviour as $x \to 0$

Tutorial sheet 1