Fecal results

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The most parsimonious models for explaining diet quality, or fecal protein content, were models D2 and D4, which contained twig biomass and temperature, and hare density and temperature, respectively (Table 2). Model D2 found that with every 10 kg increase in twig biomass, fecal protein increased 0.6 ± 0.3% (Figure 5A). While fecal samples from food supplemented had 1.88 ± 1.2% higher protein than controls, there was between the two groups in how responded to twig biomass (p = 0.01; Figure 6A). However, food treatment did affect the response to ambient temperature (p = 0.01): as weekly temperatures increased from -30 to 6, food supplemented hares increased their fecal protein by 1.75%, always staying above the 10% threshold, while control hare fecal protein decreased by 0.76%, from 10.96 to 10.2 (Figure 5B). Model D4 showed that hare fecal protein content decreased slightly, about 0.87 ± 0.305 for every 0.5 hare/ha increase, and food treatment did no affect the slope of this response (p = 0.71; Figure 5C).