Optimally allocating resources for gathering evidence and managing biodiversity

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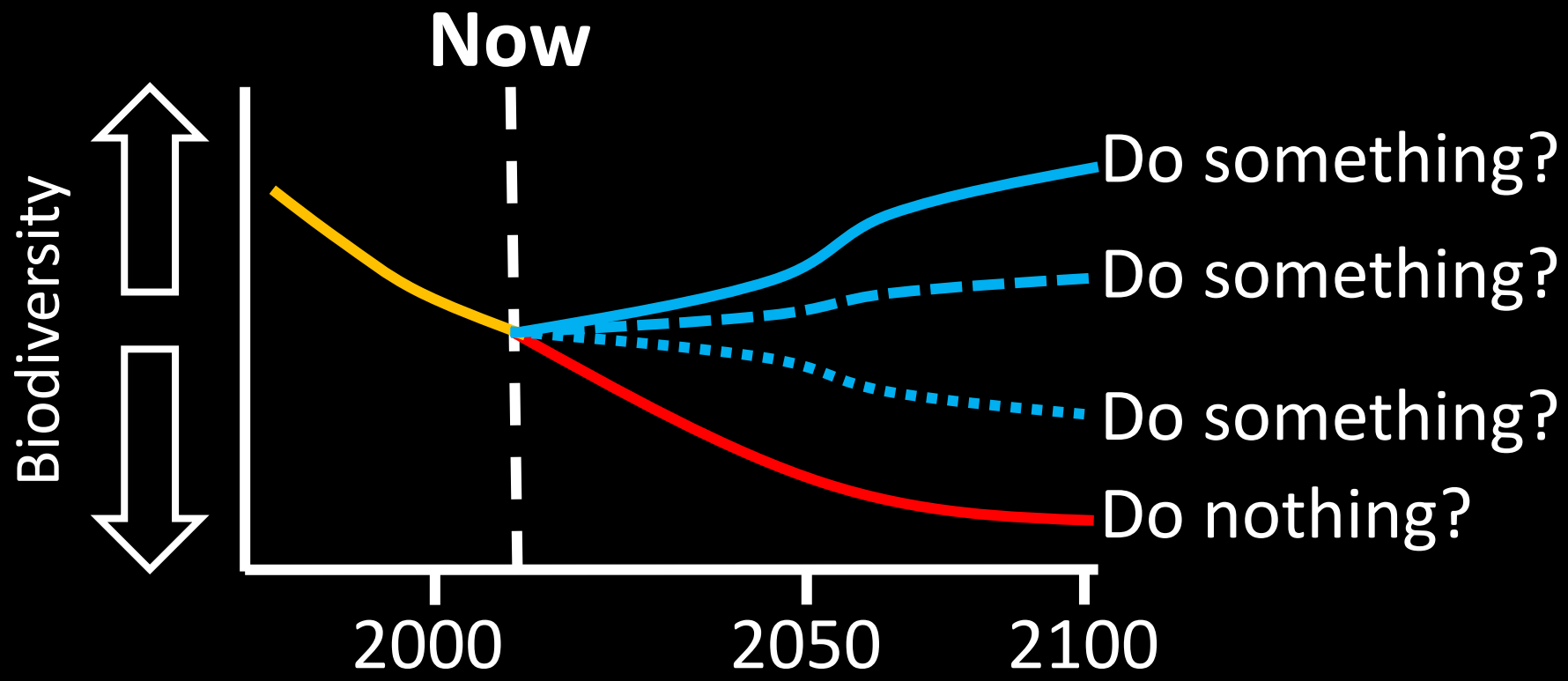
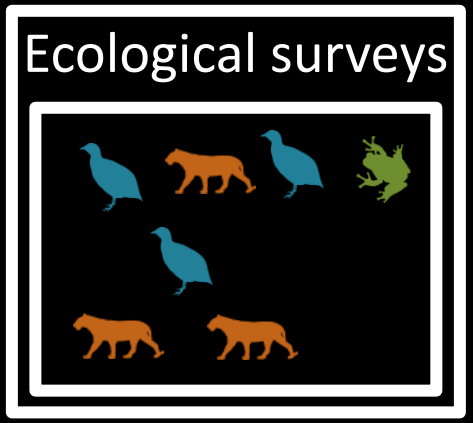
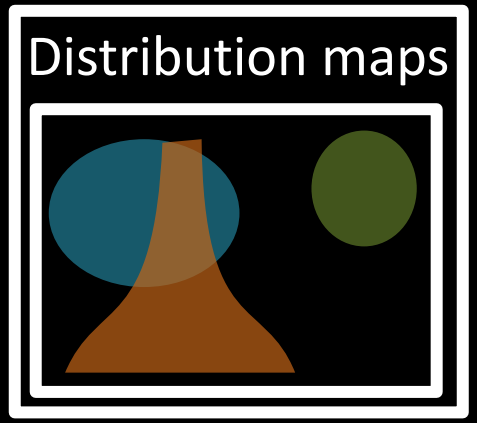
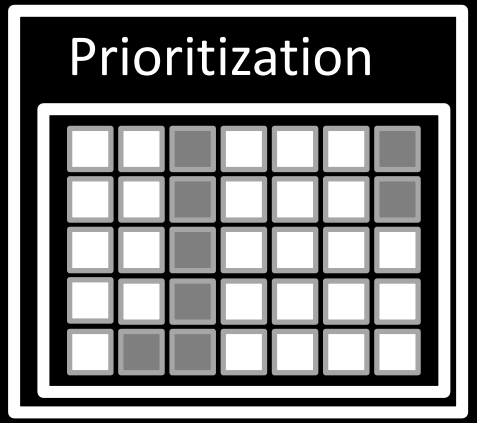
- Iadine Chadès
- Caitlyn Proctor
- Joseph Bennett

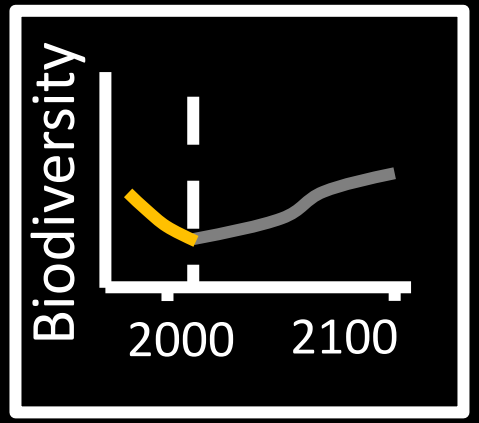
Carleton
UNIVERSITY


Now
Biodiversity
Do something?
Do something?
Do something?
Do nothing?
2000
2050
2100



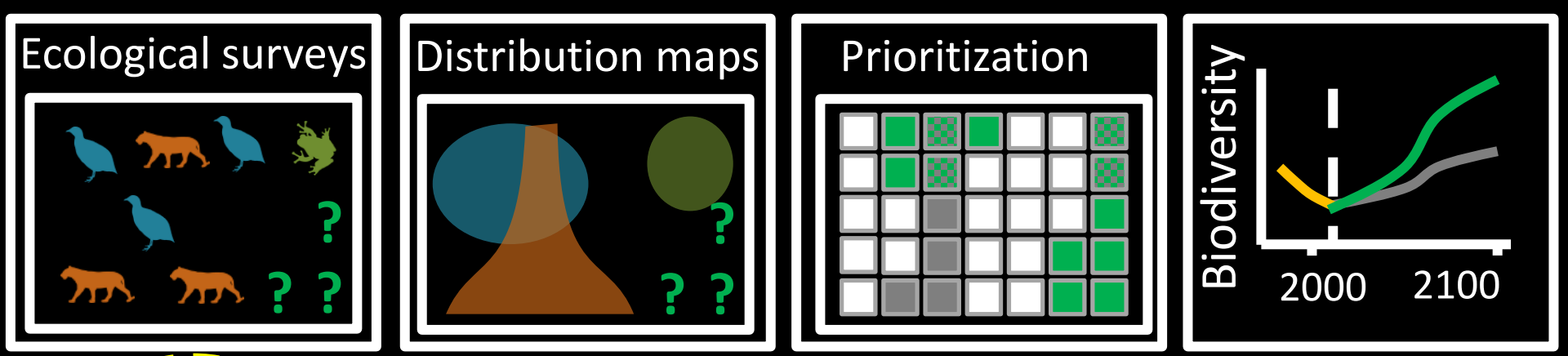






Data → Information → Action → Outcome

Objectives Constraints



Data → Information → Action → Outcome

More data

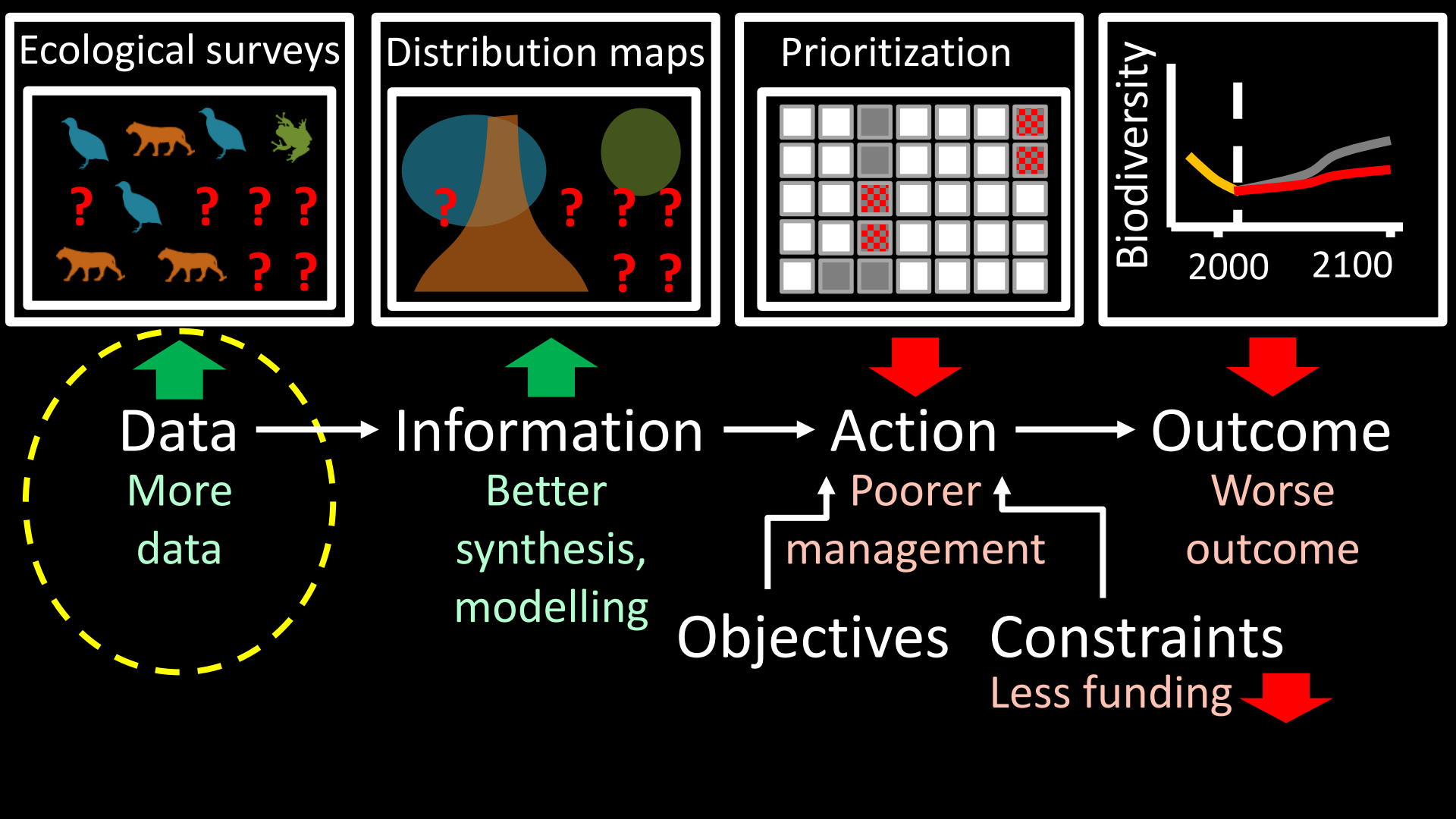
Better synthesis, modelling

Better management

Better outcome

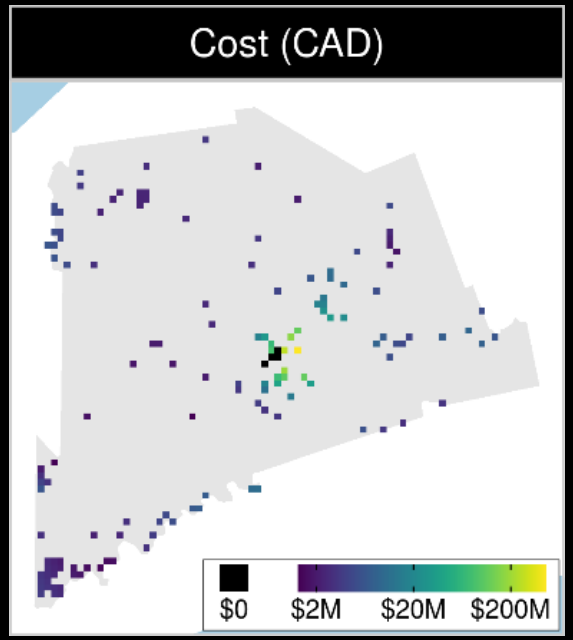
Objectives

Constraints

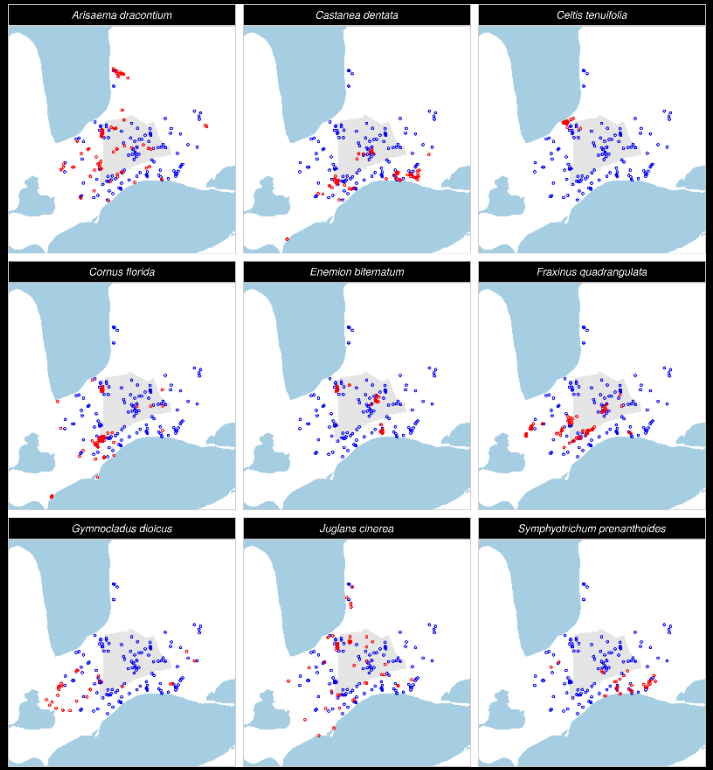

Ecological surveys
Distribution maps
Prioritization
Biodiversity
2000
2100
Data
More data
Information
Better synthesis, modelling
Action
Poorer management
Outcome
Worse outcome
Objectives
Constraints
Less funding

How to design ecological surveys (gather evidence) to maximize conservation outcomes?

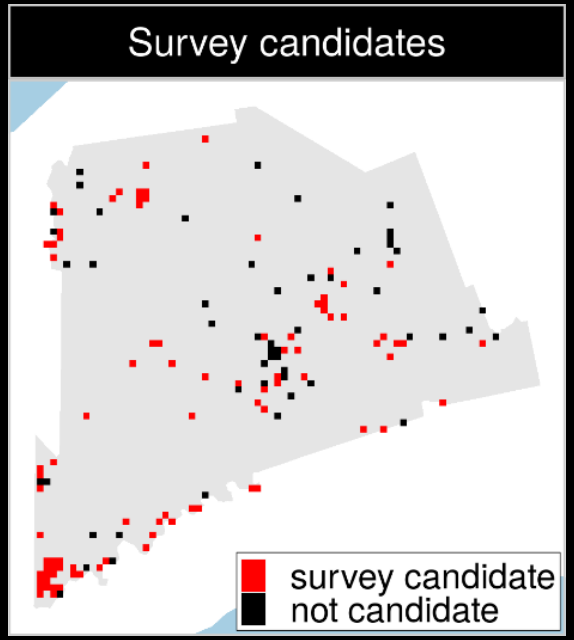
Case study: Middlesex county, Canada



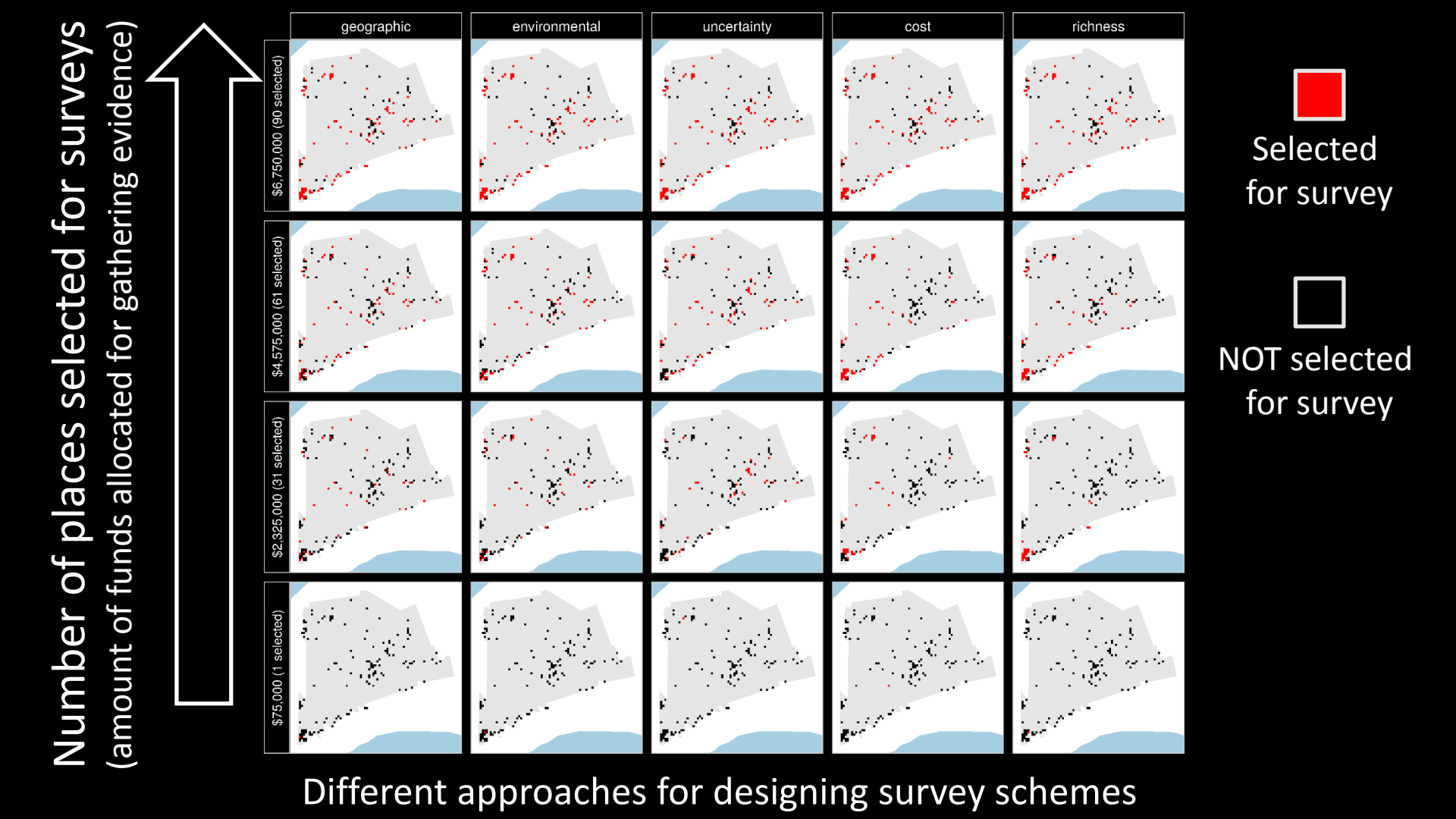
142 places that could potentially be acquired for protected area establishment



9 imperilled plant species

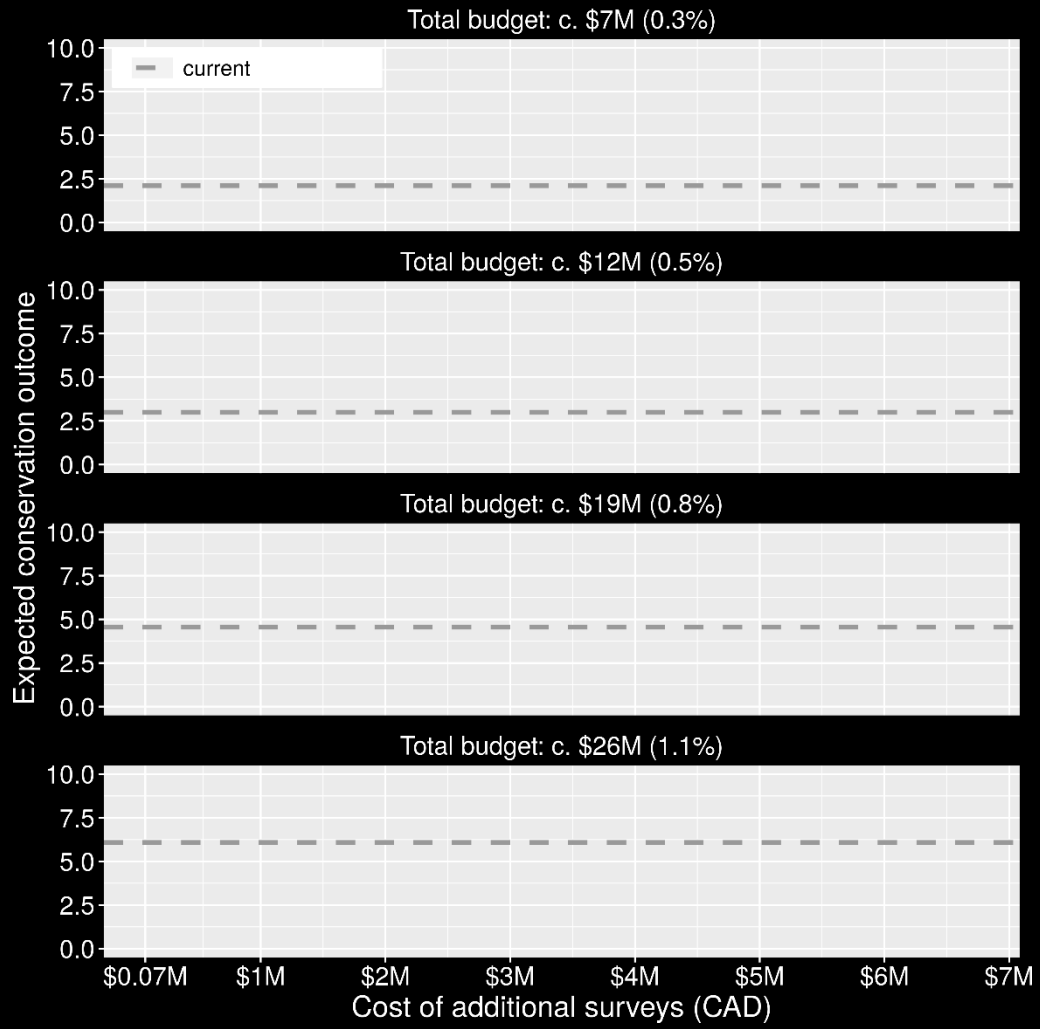


90 places that could potentially be surveyed to improve existing data


Number of places selected for surveys
(amount of funds allocated for gathering evidence)
geographic
environmental
uncertainty
cost
richness
$6,750,000 (90 selected)
$4,575,000 (61 selected)
$2,325,000 (31 selected)
$75,000 (1 selected)
Selected for survey
NOT selected for survey
Different approaches for designing survey schemes

Value of information

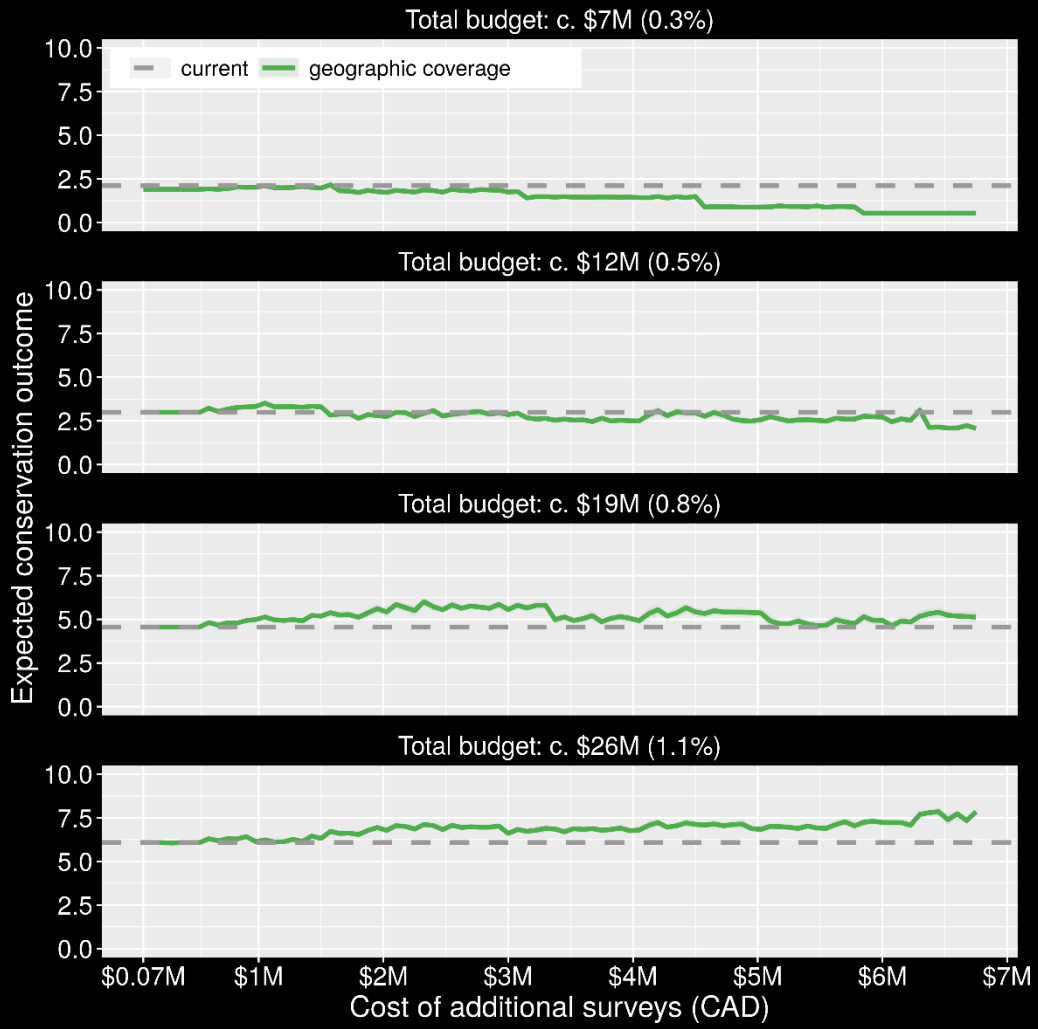
- Existing evidence leads to positive outcomes
- More budget means better outcomes



Value of information

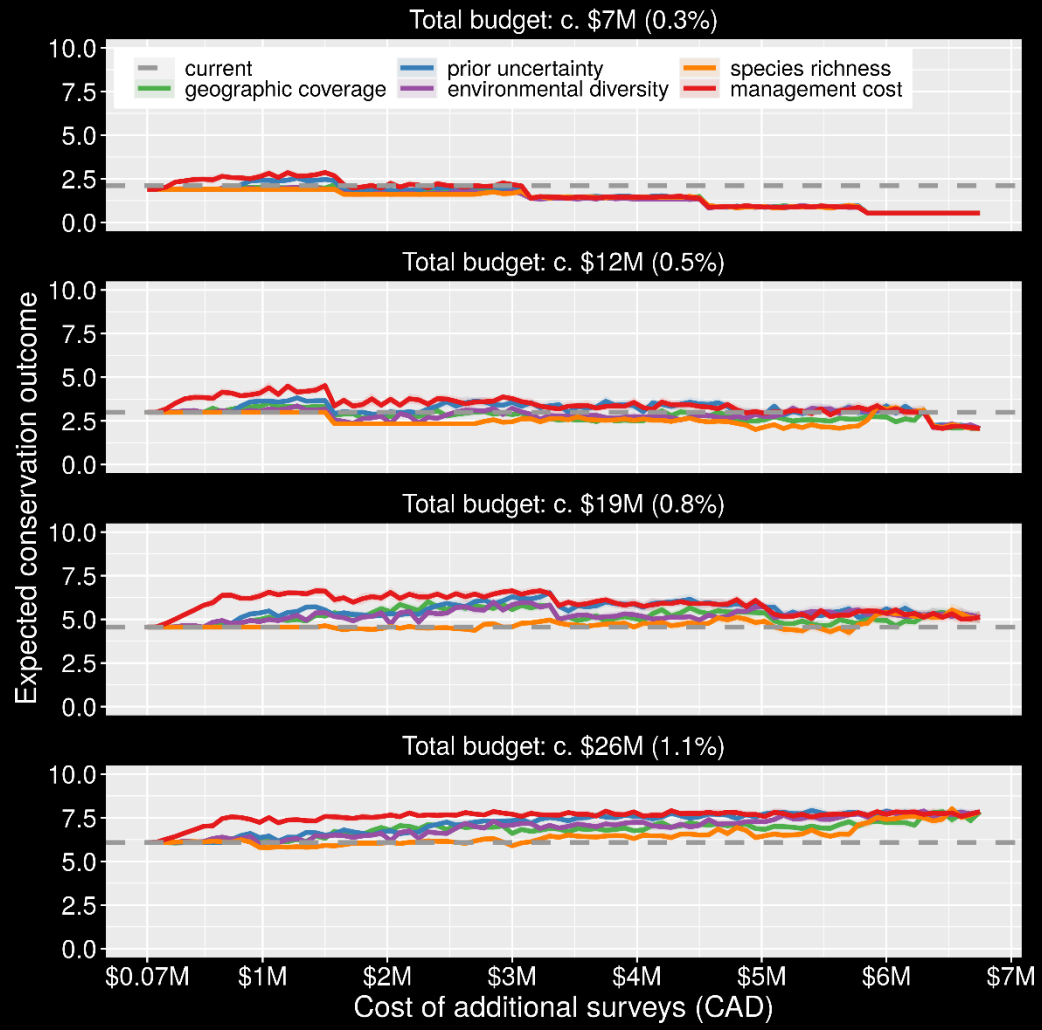
- Allocating funds for gathering additional evidence can mean worse outcomes

- Allocating funds for gathering additional evidence can mean better outcomes too



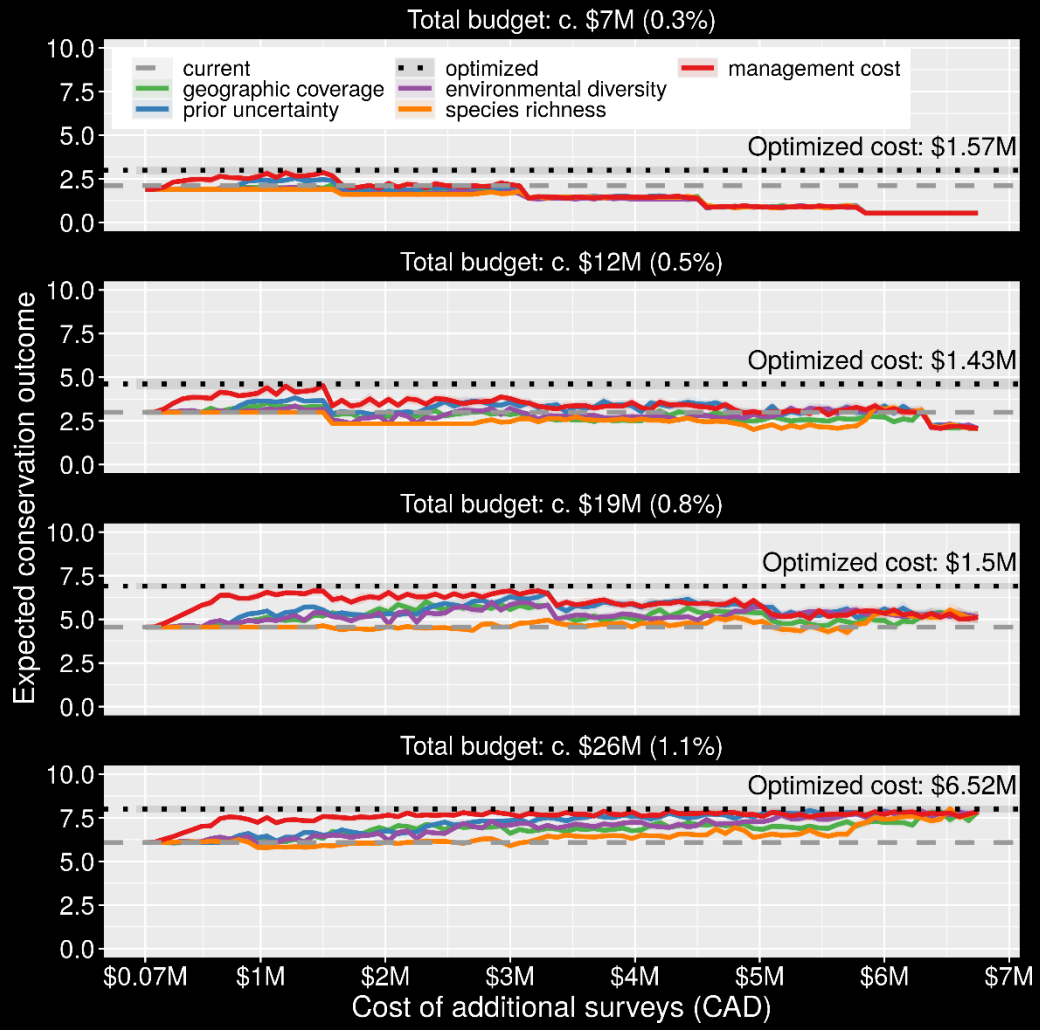
Value of information

- Conventional approaches for gathering additional evidence have different performance
- Performance of these approaches depends on available funds
- All of them could lead to lead to worse outcomes



Value of information

- Directly maximizing return on investment is best method for gathering evidence
- This considers objectives and constraints that underpin conservation plans and their success



More evidence not always better

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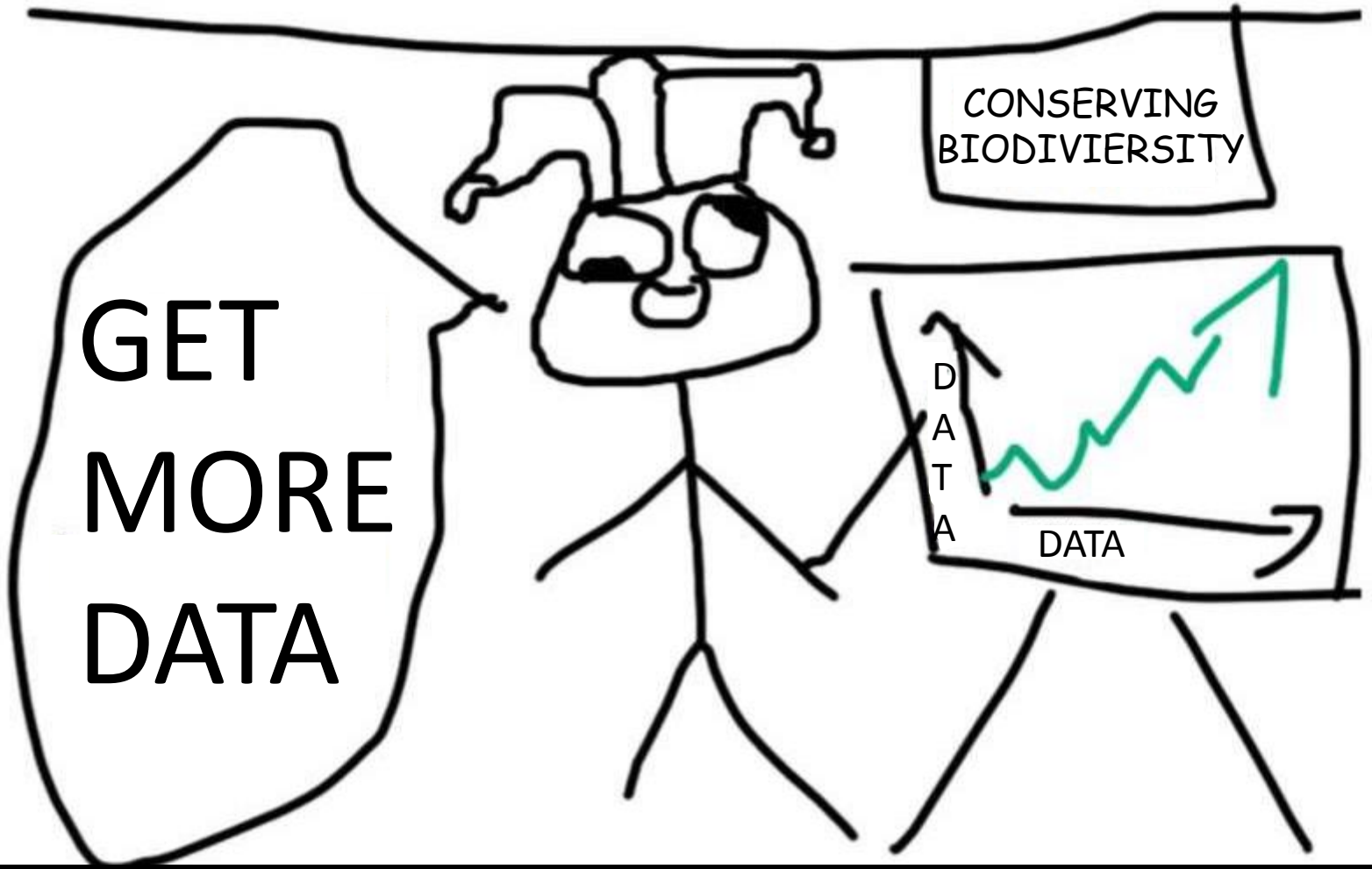
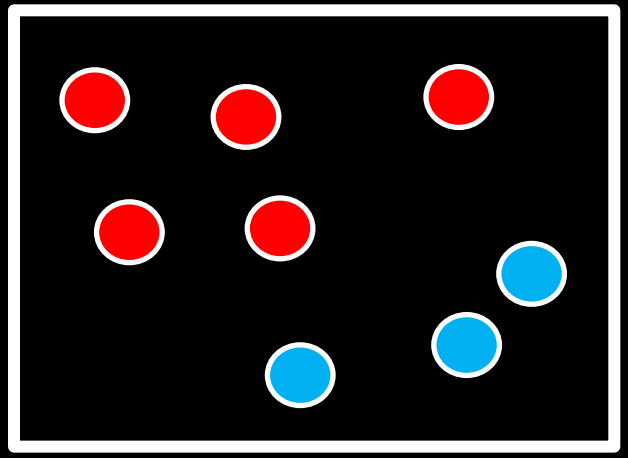
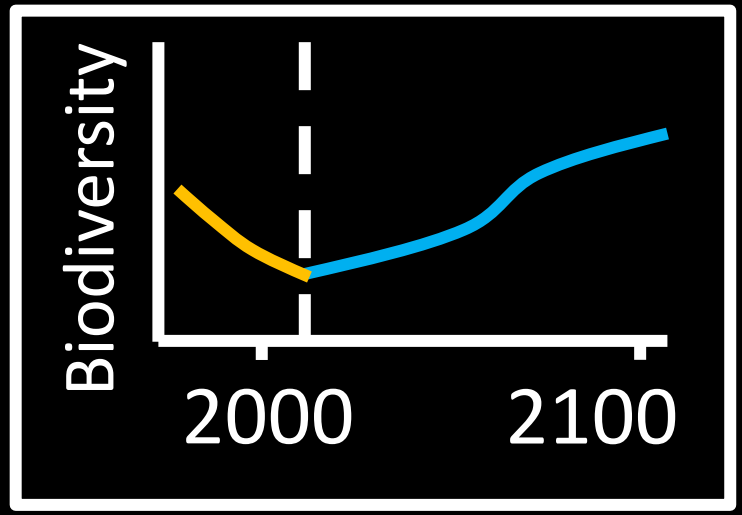

GET
MORE
DATA
CONSERVING
BIODIVIERSITY
DATA
DATA

Appendix

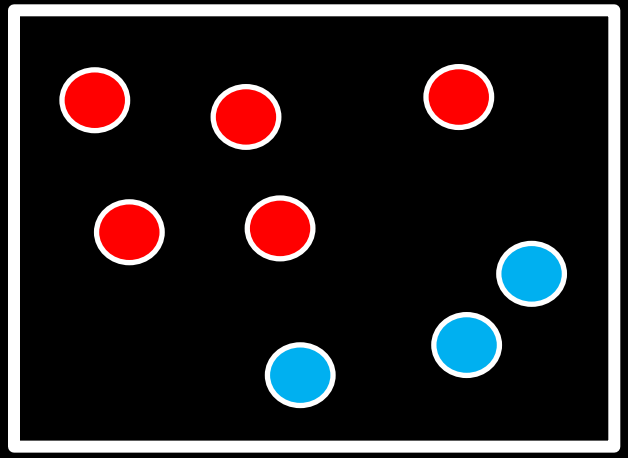
Ecological surveys for threatened spp.



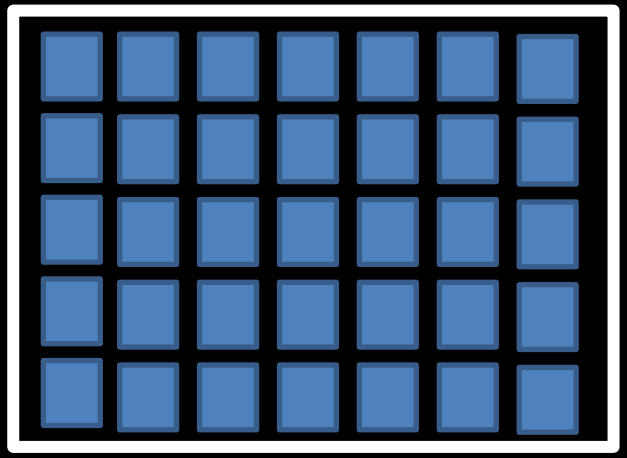


Data → ? → Outcome

Ecological surveys for threatened spp.



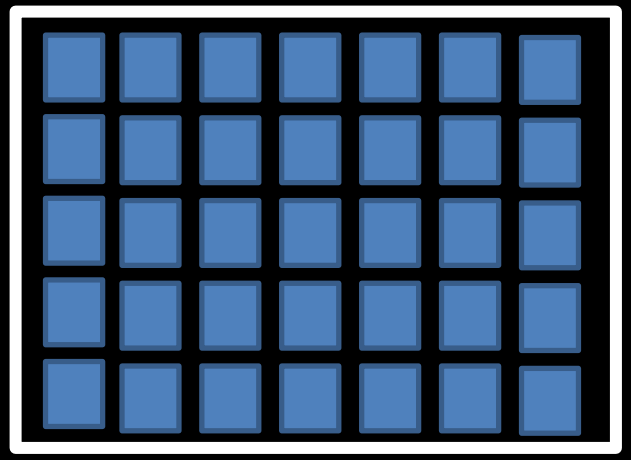
Spatial distribution of threatened spp.



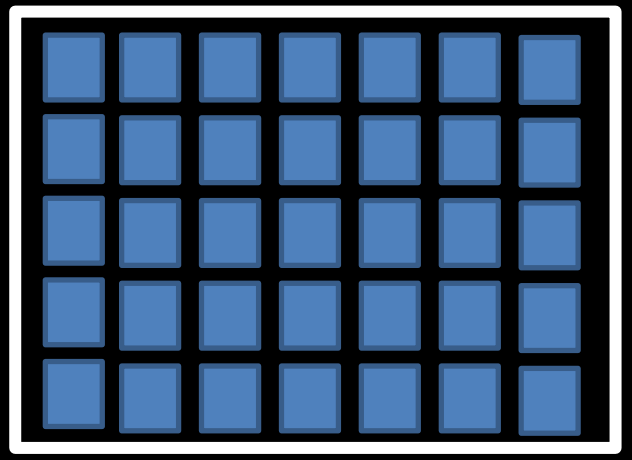
Data → Information

Outcome ← ? ←

Spatial distribution of threatened spp.

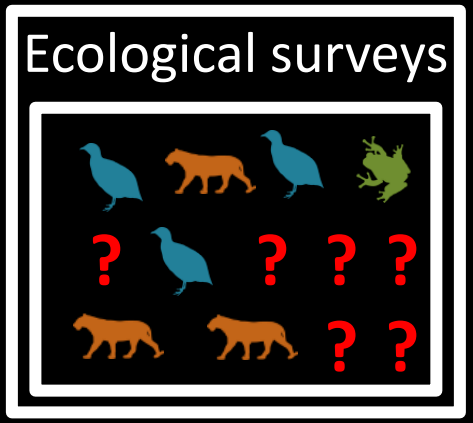


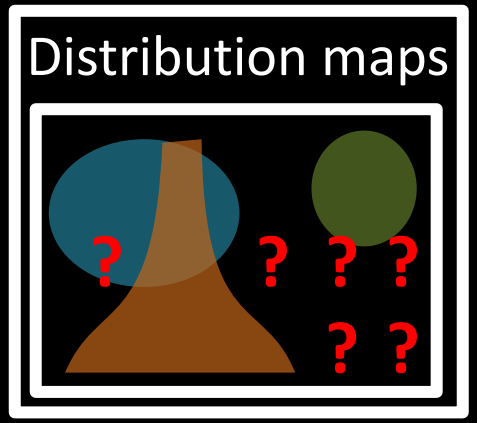
Priorities for protected areas

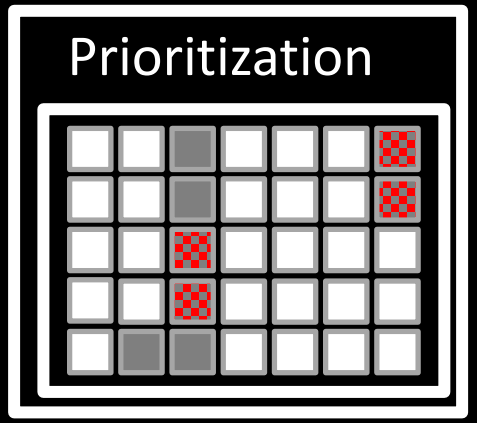


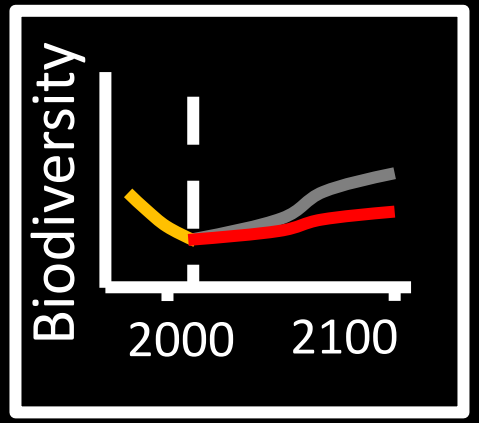
Information → Plan?

Plan? → Outcome ← ? ← Data ← Information









Objectives

Data → Information → Plan → Action → Outcome

More data

Better synthesis, modelling

Poorer management

Worse outcome

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