

# MAXIME DAHIREL

**Behavioural and evolutionary ecologist**  
**Dispersal ecology and evolution, urban ecology**

My researches on the causes and consequences of **individual-level variation** are especially focused on **dispersal**, as a key trait bridging ecological and evolutionary dynamics, and on the role of behaviour in explaining species' ability (or inability) to persist in increasingly anthropogenic environments (**especially cities**).


I view these two axes of my researches as tightly linked, given the role of dispersal in responses to environmental changes in space and time. As (dispersal) behaviours are one part of complex integrated phenotypes, I am also always interested in the dynamics of morphological and physiological traits, among others.

I develop these research themes using a combination of lab and outdoor experiments, monitoring in naturalistic contexts and individual-based models.

→ To go directly to the list of publications [click here](#)


## CURRENT POSITION

present  
|  
2019


- **Postdoctoral researcher**  
INRAE (formerly INRA), Institut Sophia Agrobiotech  Sophia-Antipolis, France
  - Range expansions, individual-based modelling
  - PI: Dr Elodie Vercken

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH POSITIONS


2018  
|  
2016

- **ATER (fixed-term research and teaching associate)**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)  Rennes, France
  - Evolutionary ecology in cities, dispersal ecology and evolution

2016  
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2015


- **Postdoctoral researcher**  
Ghent University, Terrestrial Ecology unit  Ghent, Belgium
  - Behavioural changes in response to urbanisation
  - **Mentor:** Prof. Dries Bonte
  - funded by a personal Fyssen Foundation fellowship

2014  
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2011

- **Research assistant (PhD student/candidate in Biology)**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)  Rennes, France
  - PhD thesis (defended Oct. 2014): *Individual and environmental drivers of dispersal in a hermaphrodite species, the land snail *Cornu aspersum*.*
  - Supervisors: Dr Armelle Ansart, Prof. Luc Madec (Univ. Rennes 1)

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2018  
|  
2016

- **ATER (fixed-term research and teaching associate)**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)  Rennes, France

2012  
|  
2011

- **'Moniteur' (teaching assistant)**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)  Rennes, France

## INFO

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## KEY SKILLS

### Main study taxa



Rearing  
Trait measurements  
Behavioural observations  
(direct and video tracking)  
Field sampling  
Species ID (Western Europe)

### Languages

French: first language

English: fluent

German: 'false beginner'

### Data analysis

R (incl. tidyverse)

Stan

*Bayesian & frequentist statistics*

Linear models and extensions

(Any and all combinations of generalized, mixed, non-linear, or multivariate)

Multivariate ordination and classification

...

### Other software

Netlogo

ImageJ

QGIS

Krita, Glimpse, Inkscape

- **Courses taught or co-taught in these positions include:**

**Statistics and data science** (lectures and practical)  
Advanced R for data analysis (1st year of MSc) ~ 20h  
Statistical tools, methodologies, and experimental design (2nd year of BSc to 1st year of MSc) ~ 230h

**Ecology** (lab and field)  
General ecology (1st year of BSc) ~ 80h  
Community ecology (3rd year of BSc and 1st year of MSc) ~ 42h  
Spatial ecology (movement ecology; 1st year of MSc) ~ 4h  
Ecological bases of vegetal production (3rd year of BSc) ~ 12h  
Initiation to GIS (2nd year of BSc) ~ 4h

**Zoology** (lab and field)  
Introduction to the diversity of life (1st year of BSc) ~ 30h  
Entomology (3rd year of BSc) ~ 40h  
Physiology of nutrition, development, growth (3rd year of BSc); ~ 6h

## ⇔ MENTORING EXPERIENCE

2020  
|  
2012

- **Supervision of 12 MSc students and 4 BSc students (1 to 6 months projects)**  
Field and lab studies of dispersal and behaviour  
Data synthesis and individual-based modelling

More information on each project [here](#)

## € RESEARCH FUNDING ACQUIRED

2018

- **Research grant from the Observatoire des Sciences de l'Univers de Rennes**  
€1500
  - **Project:** Dispersal syndrome evolution and habitat fragmentation
  - **Collaborators:** Julien Pétilion (Univ. Rennes 1), Solène Croci (CNRS)

2016  
|  
2015

- **Fyssen Foundation postdoctoral grant**  
€24600
  - **Project:** Behavioural changes in response to urbanisation

## 💬 SELECTED SCIENCE COMMUNICATION (BY AND ABOUT)

since  
2018

- **Contributor to the Life in the City : Evolution in an Urbanizing World blog**  
Discussions of current topics and articles in urban ecology and evolution

2018


- **Participation to the rotation curation outreach account La Bio au Labo**  
Archives (in French) [here](#)

2017

- **La vie au pied de l'immeuble: adaptation et évolution biologique en ville (Life among buildings : adaptation and biological evolution in cities).**  
Public talk and discussion, Pint of Science  Rennes, France  
with Balbi, M.

2017

- **The Circles of Life: 52 stories of people and the things they really, really, really care about.**  
An illustration series by Franz Anthony.

 Research I have participated in has also been featured by various press outlets including the RTBF, De Standaard, Scientific American, Le Temps, as well as local journals and television channels.

## SERVICE

- **Referee for various journals and outlets**  
including Proceedings of the Royal Society B, Functional Ecology, Journal of Animal Ecology, Oikos, PCI Ecology, Ethology...
- **Member of the Grant Review College of the British Ecological Society**  
Reviewing Research and Outreach Grant applications (6 to 8 / year)
- **PhD students representative to the Advisory Board of the research unit**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)

full Publons record [here](#)

2014  
|  
2012

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

### PREPRINTS (2)

- 2020 ● **Increased population density depresses activity but does not influence dispersal in the snail *Pomatias elegans***  
*bioRxiv preprint*  
• Dahirel M., Menut L. Ansart A.
- 2019 ● **Boldness and exploration are linked to shell morph but not environmental context in the snail *Cepaea nemoralis***  
*bioRxiv preprint*  
• Dahirel M., Gaudu V., Ansart A.

### PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS (18)

- 2020 ● **Transdisciplinary Bioblitz: Rapid biotic and abiotic inventory allows studying environmental changes over 60 years at the Biological Field Station of Paimpont (Brittany, France) and opens new interdisciplinary research opportunities**  
*Biodiversity Data Journal*, 8: e50451  
• Nicolai A., Guernion M., Guillocheau S., Hoeffner K., Le Gouar P., Ménard N., Piscart C., Vallet D., Hervé M., Benezeth E., Chedanne H., Blémus J., Vernon P., Cylly D., Hotte H., Lois G., Mai B., Perez G., Ouisse T., Monard C., Wiegand C., Caudal J.-P., Butet A., **Dahirel M.**, Barbe L., Balbi M., Briand V., Bormans M., Charrier M., Bouger G., Jung V., Le Lann C., Pannard A., Pétilion J., Rantier Y., Marguerie D., Tougeron K., Devogel P., Dugravot S., Dubos T., Garrin M., Carnet M., Gouraud C., Chambet A., Esnault J., Poupin M., Welk E., Bütof A., Dubois G., Humbert G., Marie-Réau O., Norvez O., Richard G., Froger B., Rochais C., Potthoff M., Ayati K., Bellido A., Rissel A., Santonja M., Farcy J.-O., Collias E., Sene L., Cluzeau D., Supper R.
- 2020 ● ***Brachylaima* spp. (Trematoda) parasitizing *Cornu aspersum* (Gastropoda) in France with potential risk for human consumption**  
*Parasite*, 27: 15  
• Gérard C., Ansart A., Decanter N., Martin M.-C., **Dahirel M.**

- 2020 ● **Urbanization drives cross-taxon declines in abundance and diversity at multiple spatial scales**  
*Global Change Biology*, 26(3): 1196–1211  
 • Piano E., Souffreau C., Merckx T., Baardsen L.F., Backeljau T., Bonte D., Brans K.I., Cours M., **Dahirel M.**, Debortoli N., Decaestecker E., De Wolf K., Engelen J.M.T., Fontaneto D., Gianuca A.T., Govaert L., Hanashiro F.T.T., Higuti J., Lens L., Martens K., Matheve H., Matthysen E., Pinseel E., Sablon R., Schön I., Stoks R., Van Doninck K., Van Dyck H., Vanormelingen P., Van Wichelen J., Vyverman W., De Meester L., Hendrickx F.
- 2019 ● **The distinct phenotypic signatures of dispersal and stress in an arthropod model: from physiology to life history**  
*Journal of Experimental Biology*, 222: jeb203596  
 • **Dahirel M.\***, Masier S.\*, Renault D., Bonte D. (\* contributed equally to the work)
- 2019 ● **Dispersers are more likely to follow mucus trails in the land snail *Cornu aspersum***  
*The Science of Nature*, 106: 43  
 • Vong A., Ansart A., **Dahirel M.**
- 2019 ● **Urbanization-driven changes in web-building are decoupled from body size in an orb-web spider**  
*Journal of Animal Ecology*, 88: 79–91  
 • **Dahirel M.**, De Cock M., Vantieghem P., Bonte D.
- 2018 ● **Bottom-up and top-down control of dispersal across major organismal groups: a coordinated distributed experiment**  
*Nature Ecology and Evolution*, 2: 1859–1863  
 • Fronhofer E.A., Legrand D., Altermatt F., Ansart A., Blanchet S., Bonte D., Chaine A., **Dahirel M.**, De Laender F., De Raedt J., di Gesu L., Jacob S., Kaltz O., Laurent E., Little C.J., Madec L., Manzi F., Masier S., Pellerin F., Pennekamp F., Schtickzelle N., Therry L., Vong A., Winandy L., Cote J.
- 2018 ● **Body size shifts in aquatic and terrestrial urban communities**  
*Nature*, 558: 113–116  
 • Merckx T., Souffreau C., Kaiser A., Baardsen L.F., Backeljau T., Bonte D., Brans K. I., Cours M., **Dahirel M.**, Debortoli N., De Wolf K., Engelen J.M.T., Fontaneto D., Gianuca A., Govaert L., Hendrickx F., Higuti J., Lens L., Martens K., Matheve H., Matthysen E., Piano E., Sablon R., Schön I., Van Doninck K., De Meester L., Van Dyck H.
- 2018 ● **Kin competition accelerates experimental range expansion in an arthropod herbivore**  
*Ecology Letters*, 21(2): 225–234  
 • Van Petegem K., Moerman F., **Dahirel M.**, Fronhofer E.A., Vandegehuchte M.L., Van Leeuwen T., Wybouw N., Stoks R., Bonte D.
- 2017 ● **Individual boldness is life stage-dependent and linked to dispersal in a hermaphrodite land snail**  
*Ecological Research*, 32(5): 751–755  
 • **Dahirel M.**, Vong A., Ansart A., Madec L.
- 2017 ● **Intraspecific variation shapes community-level behavioral responses to urbanization in spiders**  
*Ecology*, 98(9): 2379–2390  
 • **Dahirel M.**, Dierick J., De Cock M., Bonte D.

- 2017 ● **Dispersal: a central and independent trait in life-history**  
*Oikos*, 126(4): 472–479  
 • Bonte D., Dahirel M.
- 2016 ● **Dispersal-related traits of the snail *Cornu aspersum* along an urbanisation gradient: maintenance of mobility across life stages despite high costs**  
*Urban Ecosystems*, 19(4): 1847–1859  
 • Dahirel M.\*, Séguret A.\*, Ansart A., Madec L. (\* contributed equally to the work)
- 2016 ● **Density-dependence across dispersal stages in a hermaphrodite land snail: insights from discrete choice models**  
*Oecologia*, 181(4): 1117–1128  
 • Dahirel M., Vardakis M., Ansart A., Madec L.
- 2016 ● **Potential syndromes linking dispersal and reproduction in the hermaphrodite land snail *Cornu aspersum***  
*Journal of Zoology*, 299(2): 98–105  
 • Dahirel M., Ansart A., Madec L.
- 2015 ● **Context-dependence of the olfactory perceptual range in the generalist land snail *Cornu aspersum***  
*Canadian Journal of Zoology*, 93(8): 665–669  
 • Dahirel M., Chol   H., S  guret A., Madec L., Ansart A. (2015).
- 2015 ● **Movement propensity and ability correlate with ecological specialization in European land snails: comparative analysis of a dispersal syndrome**  
*Journal of Animal Ecology*, 84(1): 228–238  
 • Dahirel M., Olivier E., Guiller A., Martin M.-C., Madec L., Ansart A.  
 • featured in the *Movement Ecology* Virtual Issue
- 2014 ● **Stage- and weather-dependent dispersal in the brown garden snail *Cornu aspersum***  
*Population Ecology*, 56(1): 227–237  
 • Dahirel M., Ansart A., Madec L.

## TALKS IN CONFERENCES (6)

- 2019 ● **Pushed to the edge: dispersal restriction shapes eco-evolutionary dynamics of micro-wasp range expansions.**  
 Annual Meeting of the British Ecological Society  Belfast, UK  
 • Dahirel M., Bertin A., Calcagno V., Fellous S., Lombaert E., Mailleret L., Vercken E.
- 2017 ● **Body size constraints and behavioural adaptations to city life: a case study in the spider *Araneus diadematus*.**  
 Ecology Across Borders, joint conference of the BES, Gf   and NeCoV  Ghent, Belgium  
 • Dahirel M., De Cock M., Bonte D.  
 • “Eco-evolutionary dynamics in an urbanised world” symposium, invited symposium talk

(Talks or posters as non-presenting author not included)

- 2017 ● **Metabolic dispersal syndromes and response to stress in spider mites**  
 "Dispersal – Connecting networks", EVENET Movement and Dispersal conference  
 Ghent, Belgium  
 • Dahirel M., Masier S., Renault D., Bonte D.
- 2016 ● **Behavioural responses of arachnids to urbanisation: the role of intra- and inter-specific variation**  
 16th conference of the International Society for Behavioral Ecology  
 Exeter, UK  
 • Dahirel M., Dierick J., Bonte D.
- 2013 ● **Habitat specialization and movement characteristics in European helicoid land snails: implications for dispersal and foraging strategies**  
 9th "Ecology & Behaviour" SERL meeting  
 Strasbourg, France  
 • Dahirel M., Olivier E., Madec L., Ansart A.
- 2012 ● **Dispersal strategies in the land snail *Cornu aspersum*: sex-biased dispersal in a hermaphroditic species?**  
 8th "Ecology & Behaviour" SERL meeting  
 Chizé, France  
 • Dahirel M., Ansart A., Madec L.

## 📅 POSTERS (4)

- 2019 ● **Orb-web spider responses to city life: Species replacement, phenotypic changes and consequences for ecosystem functioning**  
 67th meeting of the Entomological Society of America  
 St Louis, USA  
 • Dahirel M., Dierick J. De Cock M., Bonte D.  
 • remotely presented
- 2014 ● **Studying the interplay between dispersal behavior and reproduction in hermaphrodites, using land snails as models**  
 15th conference of the International Society for Behavioral Ecology  
 New York, USA  
 • Dahirel M., Ansart A., Madec L.
- 2013 ● **How does habitat specialization influence dispersal? A comparative approach in European land snails**  
 Movement and Dispersal International Conference  
 Aberdeen, UK  
 • Dahirel M., Olivier E., Guiller A., Martin M.-C., Madec L., Ansart A.
- 2013 ● **Slow but sure: stage-dependent dispersal in the brown garden snail *Cornu aspersum***  
 Causes and Consequences of Organism Dispersal  
 Lund, Sweden  
 • Dahirel M., Ansart A., Madec L.



## WORKSHOPS

2017

- **An introduction to Bayesian data analysis using Stan.**  
Ecology Across Borders, joint conference of the BES, GfÖ and NeCoV  
📍 Ghent, Belgium  
• Hertzog L., Dahirel M.



## PREDOCTORAL EDUCATION

2011  
|  
2009

- **MSc in Evolutionary, Behavioural and Functional Ecology**  
University of Rennes 1  
📍 Rennes, France  
• with honours, rank: 1st year 1st/46, 2nd year 1st/18

2009  
|  
2006

- **BSc in Organismal Biology**  
University of Rennes 1  
📍 Rennes, France  
• with honours, rank: 2nd/130

## OTHER

- **Qualifications from the French National Council of Universities**  
authorized to apply for Lecturer/Assistant Professor positions in France, section 67 (Population Biology and Ecology) and 68 (Biology of Organisms)
- **Member of the British Ecological Society**

## REFERENCES

- **Prof. Dries Bonte**  
Ghent University, Terrestrial Ecology unit  
• dries.bonte [at] ugent.be  
• mentor during 2015-2016 position; current collaborator
- **Dr. Elodie Vercken**  
INRAE, Institut Sophia Agrobiotech  
• elodie.vercken [at] inrae.fr  
• PI of current research project
- **Dr. David Renault**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)  
• david.renault [at] univ-rennes1.fr  
• research team leader during 2016-2018 position; current collaborator
- **Dr. Armelle Ansart**  
University of Rennes 1, ECOBIO (Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Evolution)  
• armelle.ansart [at] univ-rennes1.fr  
• PhD co-supervisor; current collaborator