Cenozoic mammals and the biology of extinction

Peter D Smits

Committee on Evolutionary Biology, University of Chicago

June 5, 2014

Extinction

All species that have ever lived are, to a first approximation, dead.

(Raup 1986 The Nemesis Affair)

Foundation

Question

Why do certain taxa go extinct while others do not?

Modes of extinction

Field of Bullets – Wanton – Fair Game

(Raup 1991 Extinction: Bad Genes or Bad Luck?)

In context of this study

Rephrased

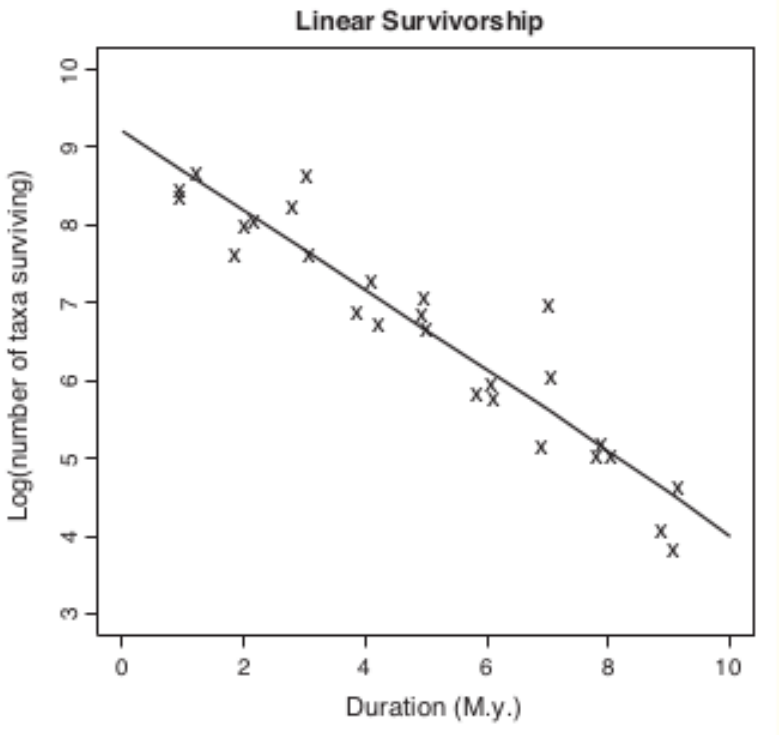
How does a taxon's adaptive zone affect extinction risk?

Van Valen's observation

Law of Constant Extinction

Extinction rate, in a given adaptive zone, is taxon–age independent.

(Van Valen 1973 *Evol. Theory*)



(Liow et al. 2011 *TREE*)

Formalization of Van Valen

Law of Constant Extinction

$T \sim Exp(\lambda)$

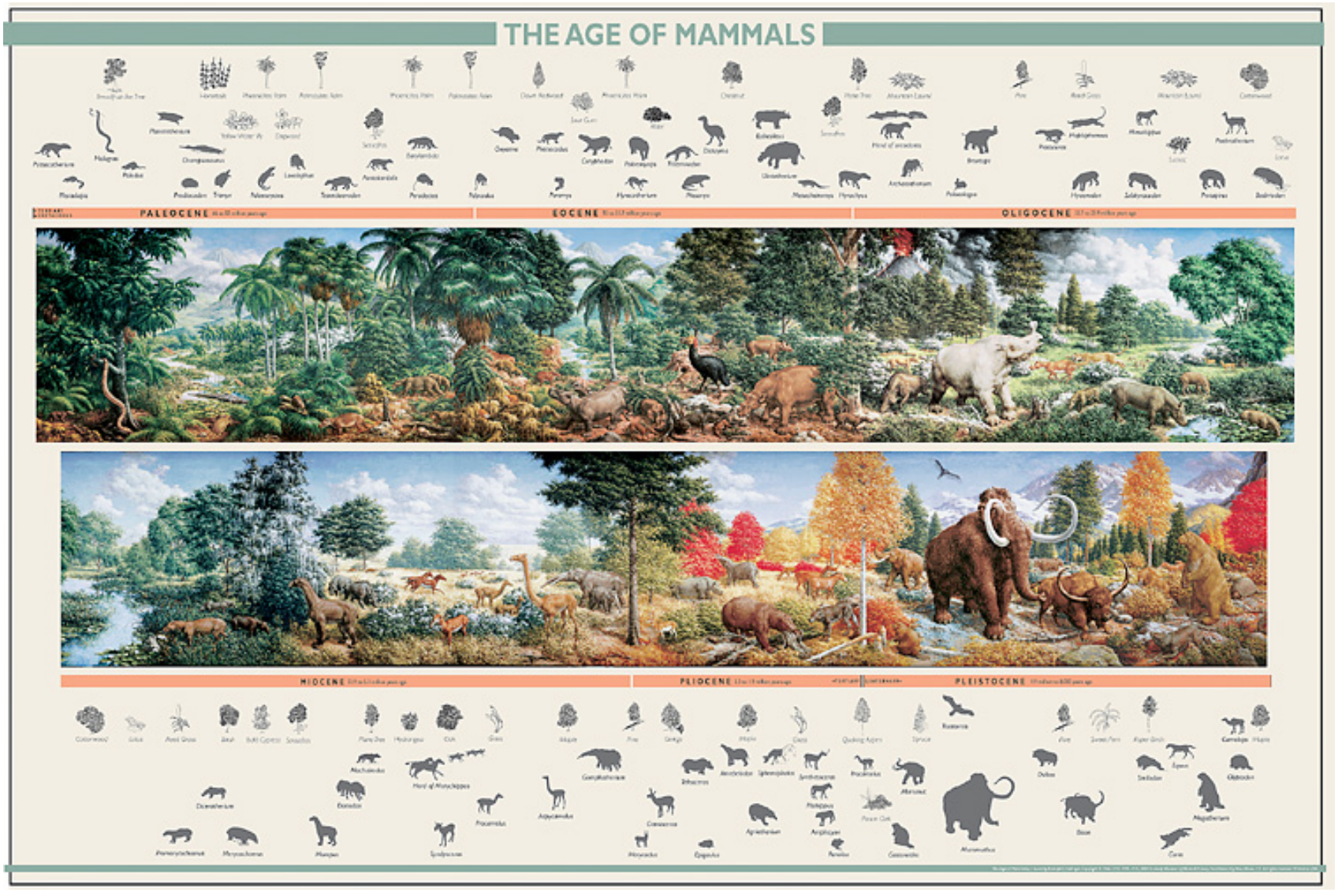
T: survival time
λ: expected number of extinctions per unit time

Biology and extinction

Questions

- Do interactions involved in environmental preference predict differential survival?
  - Is survival best modeled by a single interactor or multiple interactors?
  - How do factors, such as climate, contribute?
- Is extinction taxon-age independent or dependent?
- Do genera and species have fundamentally different survival distributions?

Mammals



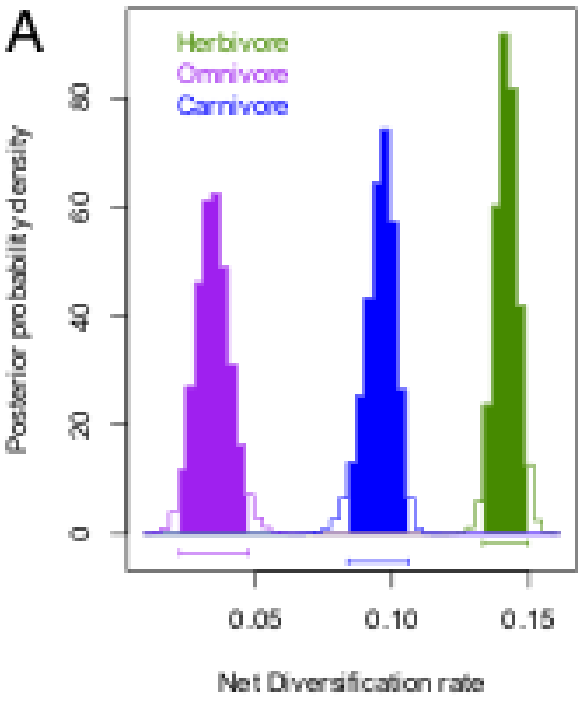
(Yale Peabody Museum)

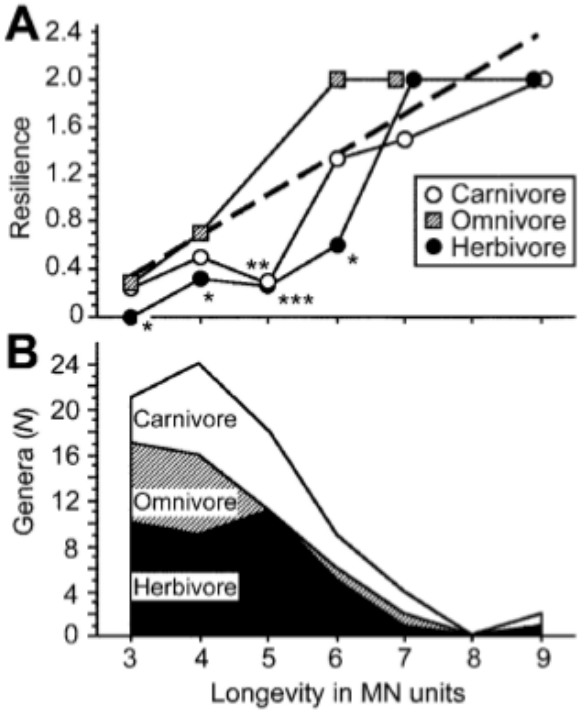
Regions

North America:
2366 species, 1003 genera

Europe:
1767 species, 658 genera

Diet





carnivore, herbivore, omnivore, insectivore

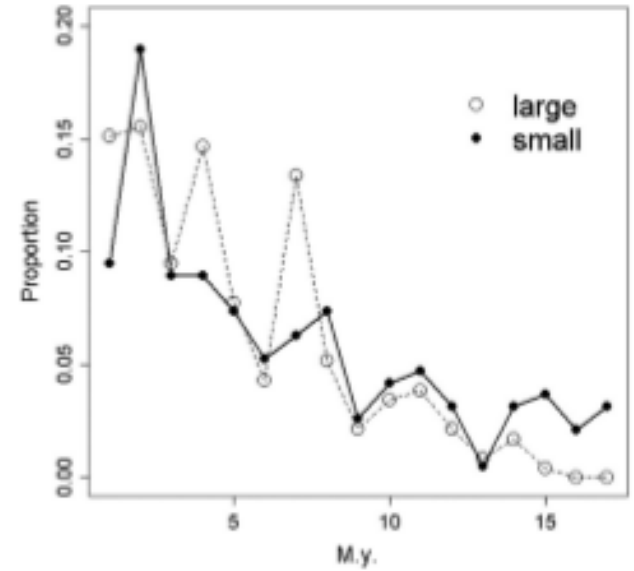
herbivore $>$ carnivore omnivore $\simeq$ carnivore insectivore ?

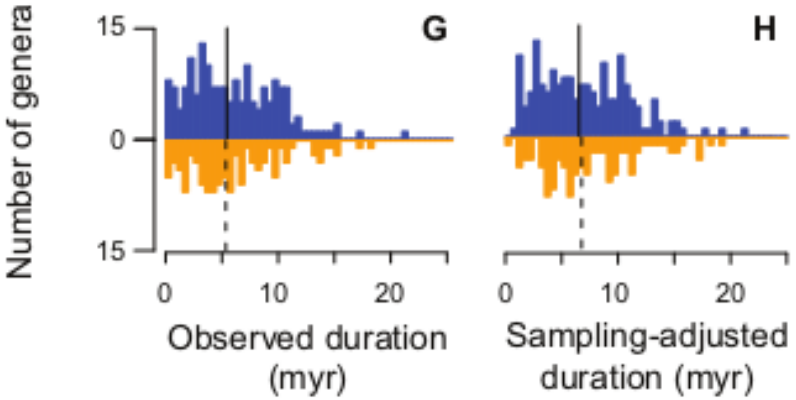
Locomotion

ground dwelling, scansorial, arboreal

- ground dwelling $>$ arboreal
- scansorial $\simeq$ ground dwelling

Body size





↑ mass, ↑ range size, ↑ survival

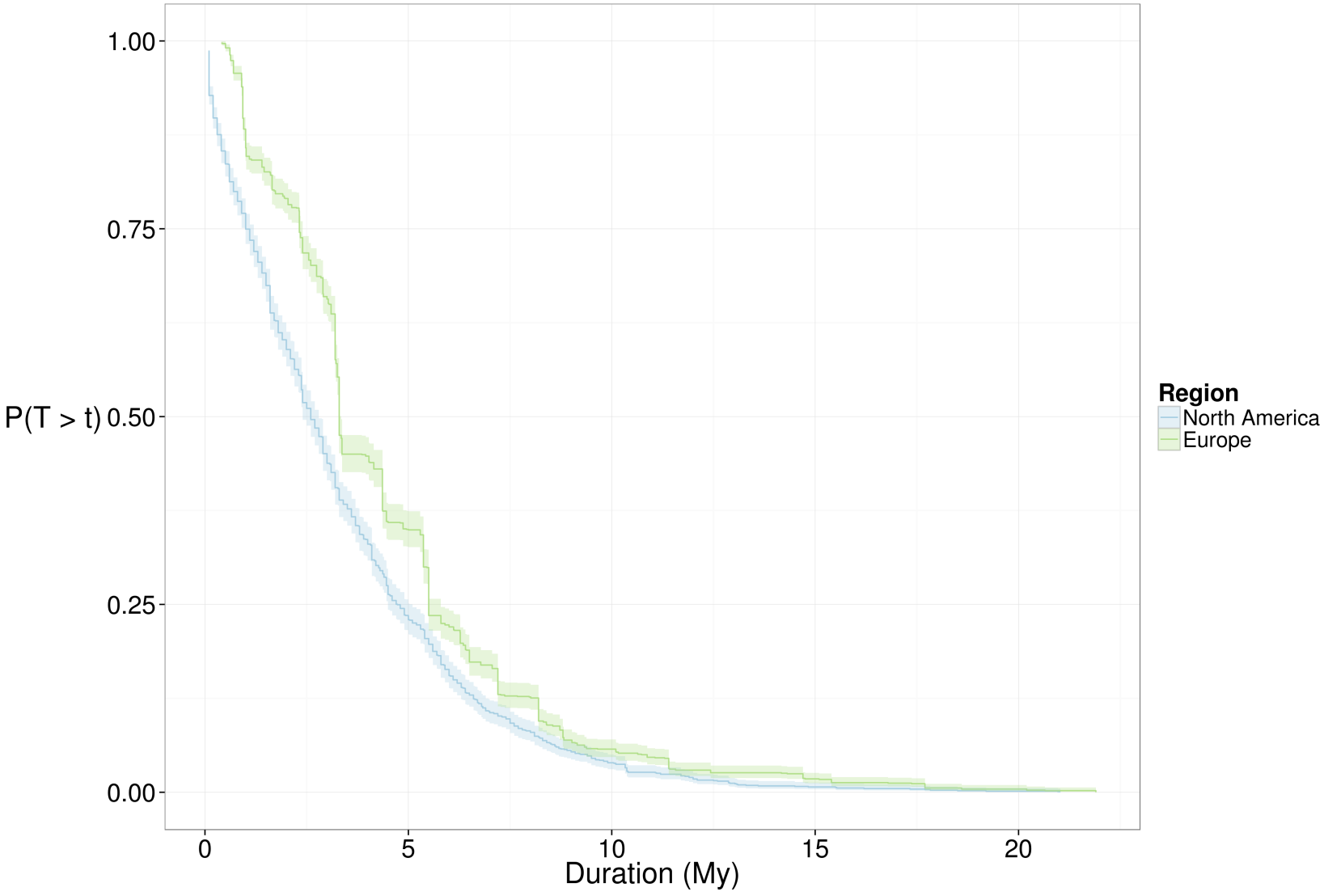
OR

↑ mass, ↓ reproductive rate, ↓ survival

OR

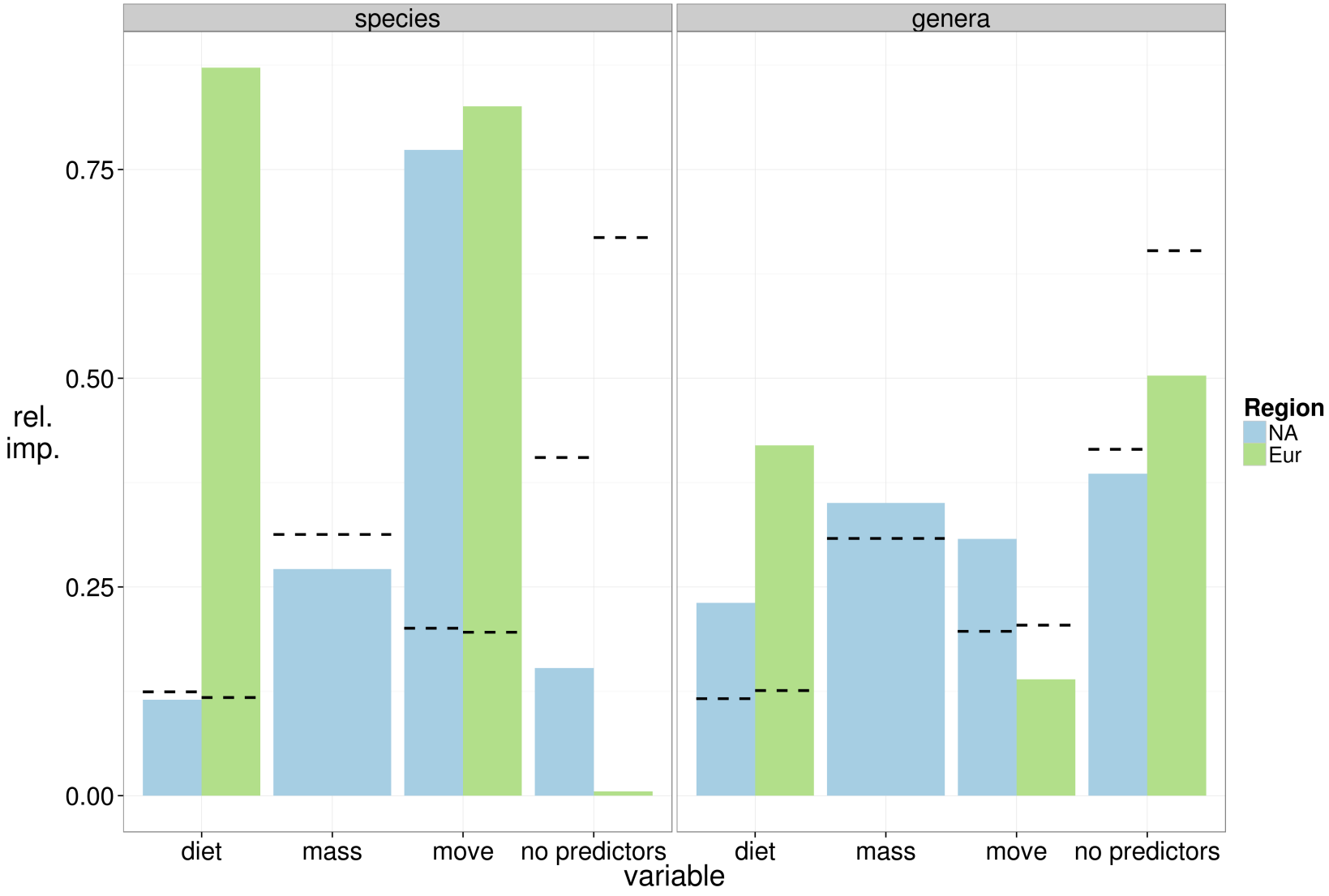
no effect

NP regional survival curves

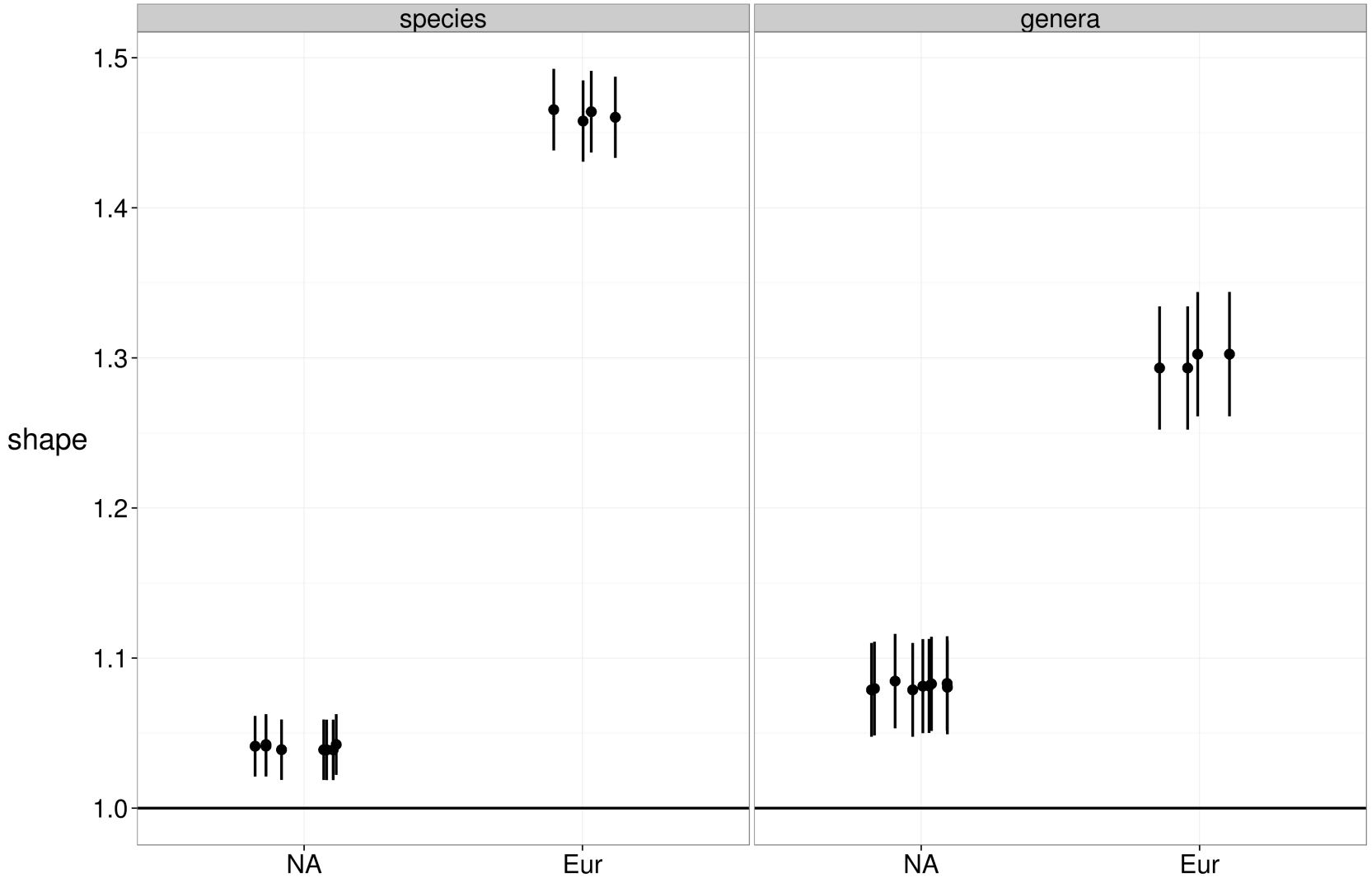


Model selection

Variable importance



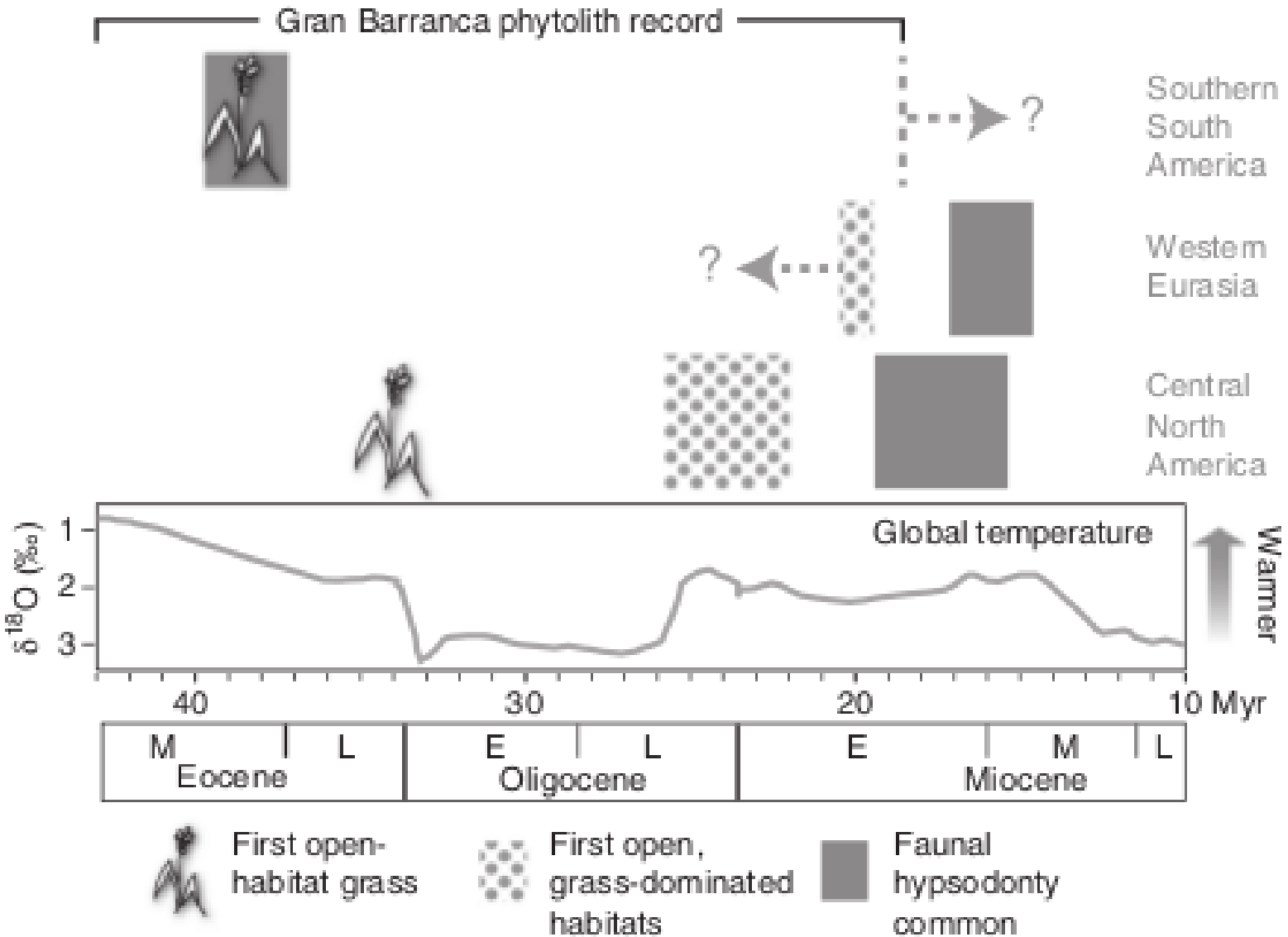
Parameter interpretations



The Elephant in the Range

$\uparrow$ occupancy, $\uparrow$ duration

Climate



(Strömberg *et al.* 2013 *Nature Com.*)

Future modeling work

currently $\hat{k} = c$, future $\hat{k} \approx$ CV climate and/or occupancy

generic level properties

- species:genus
- trait dispersion (H(diet), Var(mass), etc.)

CAR prior on frailty using phylogenetic distance/VCV matrix

incorporate duration uncertainty due to sampling

Acknowledgements

- **Committee**
  - Kenneth D. Angielczyk (co-advisor)
  - Michael J. Foote (co-advisor)
  - P. David Polly
  - Richard H. Ree
- Discussion
  - David Bapst, Megan Boatright, Ben Frable, Colin Kyle, Darcy Ross, Liz Sander
  - John Alroy, Graeme Lloyd, Kathleen Ritterbush, Carl Simpson, Graham Slater