

# Modeling the biodiversity crisis: the roles of space and market structure in bioeconomic modeling.

*Modéliser la crise de la biodiversité : les rôles de l'espace et de la structure de marché dans la modélisation bioéconomique*

## Thèse de doctorat de l'Université Paris-Saclay

École doctorale n°512 Agriculture, Alimentation, Biologie, Environnement et Santé (ABIES)  
Spécialité de doctorat: Sciences Economiques

Graduate school: Biosphera

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**Thèse présentée et soutenue à Nogent sur Marne, le 26 novembre 2024, par**

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# Acknowledgements

Before presenting my work, I would like to wholeheartedly thank everyone that contributed to me becoming a doctor. Whether it involved discussing ideas, polishing arguments, having coffee, playing ping pong, drinking a couple of beers, working out, solving some code or maths problem, gaining confidence, finalizing a paper or delivering the most compelling argument, I want to thank everyone who helped me along the way. As I get to become a doctor, you sure are responsible for it. These words are a token of my everlasting gratitude, and I hope the future is filled with opportunities to work, think, grow, help and laugh with all the people I'm mentioning, and those I may forget.

First, I would like to thank my two PhD advisors, Dr. Lauriane Mouysset and Dr. Christopher Costello. Lauriane and I started working together after I finished my masters degree, before she (drastically) helped me getting my PhD funding. Ever since, Lauriane has turned into an amazing mentor, and I hope to soon call her a friend. I want to thank you, Lauriane, for the trust you put in me, your help to grow as a scientist and find interesting questions, your intellectual and emotional support through the difficult process of research. I met Chris in 2018, as an intern at the Environmental Markets Lab (emLab), where Chris and his team made my dream to come work in California real. As time went by, Chris went on to become one of my mentors and friends, and welcomed me again and again in Santa Barbara, where I have spent almost three years. Chris, I want to thank you for your vision, that keen eye you have to find interesting ideas and make people feel smart and valuable. I also want to thank you - and your family - for making me feel home in California, for making me a part of your community.

I would like to particularly thank Nicolas Quérou and Agnès Tomini for being the *rapporteurs* of this manuscript, and Martin Quaas, Mireille Chiroleu Assouline, Charles Figuières and Jim Sanchirico, for agreeing to be part of my PhD jury. I am deeply honored that you took part in this jury, as our interactions have been instrumental in the PhD process. Whether I took some of your classes, met you in seminars and conferences, read your insightful articles, your contributions to the field of environmental and resource economics have shaped my understanding, spurred my curiosity, and fueled my work. Thank you!

My PhD is split between two fabulous research institutions, that make the perfect combination.

First, I want to thank all my colleagues and friends at CIRED. CIRED cultivates an atmosphere of intellectual rigor, cutting edge research, and convivial, almost family-like environment. The list may not be exhaustive, but here goes. I want to thank Romain, for being one of the smartest and funniest people I've shared a desk and conferences with, your dynamic optimization skillset and for being real bad at paper toss; Thibault for "créer le commun", for being a dedicated friend, power horse and tremendous DJ; Baptiste, for being the only PSG supporter in that open space,

and a brilliant critical mind; Auriane, for the joy and energy you infused at CIRED, the ping pong trash talk and much more; Lucas, for your sour humour, the endearing support and constructive talks; Mai-Thi, for sharing the good vibes and cultivating a joyful atmosphere; Valentin, for being a source of inspiration in terms of research standards; Charles Claron, my first year office mate, for teaching me jazz, and opening up my thinking horizons; Pierre Yves (le petit ange), for the intellectual support, and the ping pong beat ups; Charles Collet, for the fun, the econometrics and the chess; Luc, for the ping pong as well, and the opening up of my intellectual perspectives to different horizons; Louis, for being the research gold standard and a terrific Bologna tour guide; Soline, for being a good ear, a power through colleague; Morgane, for your soothing perspective on life and your humor; Clément, for your intellectual depth and your fine mustache; and Bertille, for the beers and help in game theory; Yann, for our team and your legendary ping-pong undertakings; Dimitri, for the cigarette breaks and the progress with *Fences*. The faculty at CIRED have also been terrific : thank you Philippe for your ping-pong lessons and care towards the PhD cohort; Aurélie, for the support and the dancing; Tarik, for the help with articulating papers; Antoine, for your rigor and interest; Laurent, for the chess and the mathematical help.

Even though they have already been named, I want to extend a warm thank you to my PhD seminar co-organizers: Baptiste, Thibault, Clément and Bertille.

Finally, I want to thank Carine, and Valérie for your great administrative help, Estelle for your friendship and making "Y'a pas de forêt sans feux" possible. To everyone I may have forgotten at CIRED, I apologize, and extend the warmest thank you.

As I have previously stated, I have been lucky enough to be part of two amazing institutions. I first joined emLab when it was in its infancy, and I've been amazed by its culture, way of actually implementing science with a lot of different partners, and convivial work environment. I have met amazing people along the way. I want to thank Julia, my co-author, for bringing me on one of the chapters of this dissertation and becoming a good friend; Kyle, Andrew, Kelsey and Olivier, for their comments and help; members of the Costello Lab, for providing continued food for thought and productive feedback; Vincent, for Quebec music and the shaping of my final chapter; Jacob, for the wildfire talks and teaching me basketball; Roberto, for our biodiversity talks, and Flavio, for our long discussions, and both for sunday movie night and making me part of the Sueno community, along with Dario and Camilo; Tracey, for being an awesome co-author on seafood and friend in life; Michaela, Heather and Jen for your help and support; and Erin, Lauren, Danielle and Sarah (and Tracey, of course), the brilliant Breaktime Crew. To anyone I may have forgotten at emLab, I apologize, and thank you from the bottom of my heart. I also want to thank my other SB friends, who also made my stay very difficult to end : the Isla Vista Chess Club, Elliott, Marie, Ian, Dan, Phoebe, my housemates Seth and Ferdi, my neighbors Danny, Andrew and Max, my friends in San Francisco, Luis and Joey.

I have been lucky enough to be surrounded with my long time friends, who listened to me blabing about wildfires, totoaba and linear algebra. Thank you Clara, for being the best friend and housemate for 2 out of 3 years; Leo for our never ending econ talks and travels across the globe; Minha for always opening your home and providing clarity; Jeanne, for being so relentlessly positive, joyful and solutions oriented; Kinan, for the board games and the emotion talks; Joachim and Camille, for traveling the world together and listening all along; Thomas, for the inspiration from your own academic and personal research; Juliette, for your help with competition law and your trust in the future; Louis Victor, for your positivity and your gear in every situation; Jeremy, for the inspiration from your ambitious projects; Alexis, for navigating through life and seemlessly switching directions; Lazare, for being the Nick to our home for 2 years; Ambre, for being so

energetic; Morgane, for your kindness and energy to see the world; Malena, for ; Robinson, for always being there, stylish, guiding and listening; Maria, for your energy and optimism ; Paul, for exploring the world and still choosing to undertake a PhD; Augustin A. for your relentless effort to becoming a better version of yourself; Augustin L. for being the next climate grey eminence and the long nights across Paris; Eloïse, for your creativity and la GymSu; Clara B., for your lasting enthusiasm; Rico, for dreaming of other horizons together while undertaking a PhD; Julie for the Rimini fun and the EAERE related (more *and* less) fun; Alexandre, for the Platt anecdotes and the endless chess; Tom, for the long nights talking shop at the Baily.

Finally, I need to thank my family, my homes, and, even more than safe, happy places across the globe. Thank you Mambo, Julie and Matheo, for opening your family to me and making California home. Thank you David, Kate, Mila and Alice, for being family for ever, supportive, fun, open-minded and chatty, for welcoming me all this time in New York. Thank you Papi and Mamie for believing in me and wishing success, thank you Mamé, I know you are proud, and thank you Grand Papa, I can say I wish you'd seen that one. Thank you Paul for the torture, and getting me back in shape. Thank you Papa and Maman, or Maman and Papa, for bringing me up, for providing me with everything in life, and for pushing me to pursue great things, for supporting me financially, emotionnally, always and everywhere, thank you. Thank you to my sisters, Julia-Kim and Suzanne, for always believing their brother was smart even though I was pretentious, I have now read enough studies that it is no joke, and to my youngest brother, Bob, for being the joyful furrball you are.

I know this acknowledgements section is already too long, so it's time to conclude. Thank you to everyone involved in this adventure, I can't say it enough, and although I did this for me, I did it because of you, with you as fuel, and I'm immensely grateful for this experience. On to the next one!



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## **Part I**

# **Introduction and Background**

# Introduction

What should I say in the general introduction of my thesis?

- Une page qui résume : le déclin de la biodiversité, l'économie bioéconomique, la contribution méthodologique de la thèse, et les résultats nouveaux.
- Introduction générale thématique : le déclin de la biodiversité / 3-5 pages avec des graphiques.
  - Le déclin de la biodiversité de façon générale
  - Par écosystème et taxon : on parlera alors de poissons, d'espèces invasives, de forêts
  - En rajoutant un petit quelquechose sur le changement climatique
  - Les causes sont à chercher du côté des hommes
- D'où la nécessité d'une approche par les sciences sociales, et l'économie peut y apporter beaucoup, elle l'a déjà fait : social ecological systems, JEEM.
- Pourquoi l'économie et la modélisation bioéconomique?
  - Un problème d'externalité global, de biens publics, de valeurs d'options, d'informations e.g. tous les problèmes spécifiques à l'économie de l'environnement
  - Un outil permettant la modélisation et la prospective: c'est à dire la description, sur base axiomatique, des comportements, à la fois individuels, non coopératifs, et de politique publique.
  - Qui permet d'articuler grâce à un langage partagé différents champs de connaissance, notamment de dialoguer avec les sciences du vivant
  - Nonobstant les contributions
  - Il existe des champs d'application inexplorés, ou des questions importantes non résolues : bien lister ici les dimensions : marché, espace, politique publique/gestion privée.

From the review:

- \* Stochasticity : how stochasticity governs ecological and economic processes is a recent strand, but studied (costello, augereau véron, quaas and Baumgartner). Remain an open question as to how do people respond to uncertain and risky contexts, with the limited possibility of insurance; mentionner des choses à la Romain, genre risques reliés : stochasticité de la ressource écologique et incertitude autour de la détection des invasive species etc.
- \* Community perspective for ecosystem based conservation planning, e.g. interaction between several species at the landscape level
- \* The role of spatial processes, for movement, different habitat quality, understanding how space changes results in combination with other determinants of bioeconomic models (Sanchirico, Costello as well)

- \* Intricate property rights, ranging from the most locally complex in terms of types of interactions (externality locally), local competition for resource, different levels of political management, but also different types of market structure
- \* Incorporating different value types, including indigenous knowledge, in bioeconomic modeling for policy making
- \* incorporating more evidence from quasi experimental methods in the results
- On a donc deux éléments bien identifiés dans la recherche et les questions qu'ils posent : l'espace et la structure de marché.
- La structure de marché :
  - Question bien vieille dans la littérature sur les ressources naturelles: Solow, Hotelling etc
  - Moins bien tranchée sur la question des ressources renouvelables : rhinos (AER), foresterie etc ...
  - On l'étudie donc dans un cas précis, c'est le chapitre 2
- La question de l'espace :
  - L'espace est une dimension importante à prendre en compte, car il conditionne l'exploitation des ressources, autant que comment les décisions doivent être prises : ce qui change (Sanchirico et Costello)
  - C'est un challenge qui pose des questions de politique publique : la gestion de l'espace, dans un contexte de fragmentation, de prévention des risques etc est cruciale
  - Il faut aussi comprendre comment l'espace, et les processus écologiques qu'il construit, sont formés par les individus [à raffiner] c'est le chapitre 3
- Bien mentionner que l'intégralité des données, codes etc sont disponibles gratuitement et librement.

### **What's left to do**

- List contributions from the literature review, and find a way to put more into it.
- Find references and graphs from the institutions to document biodiversity loss -> IPBES?

## 0.1 New intro

### 1. Lay the facts : global biological diversity decline

- What is biological diversity? How can we define it? What values does it call for? *Est ce que ça a vraiment sa place ici?* - peut être plutôt note de bas de page, sur les difficultés du concept etc, mais on se dit richness and abundance across the world
- An overall decline over time :
  - Across taxa
  - Across ecosystems
  - Across types of species
- The causes are man made, on land and at sea : overexploitation, habitat destruction and fragmentation  
Rajouter une bonne couche sur la nécessité de (i) pas trop exploiter et pourquoi; et (ii) sur la fragmentation de l'habitat (avec pas mal de concepts écologiques, genre surface, fragmentation, stepping stones etc)

### 2. Need a unifying method, conceptual body, to remedy this crisis : find pathways towards a sustainable future etc

⇒ Bioeconomic modeling : what it is

- What it does : mix together ecological dynamics and economic drivers
- Strengths : process based, out of sample, policy design
- Applied to various ecosystems : forestland a lot, oceans and fisheries, and agricultural land to have several  
Maybe list some results?

### 3. The current state of biodiversity calls for an “ecosystem centered” management

*Uncomfortable with that, but it allows to introduce biocon modeling, and highlight the shortcomings based on empirical facts*

- Ecosystems feature different uses, different species, offer different risk and benefits etc : cases of forests (risks of wildfire, habitat to biodiversity, forestry industry, leisure); and oceans (fisheries, conservation of habitat, leisure).
- The literature has gradually evolved towards encompassing the many dimensions of ecosystem based management, but shortcomings remain :
  - Stochasticity : how stochasticity governs ecological and economic processes is a recent strand, but studied (costello, augereau véron, quaas and Baumgartner). Remain an open question as to how do people respond to uncertain and risky contexts, with the limited possibility of insurance; mentionner des choses à la Romain, genre risques reliés : stochasticité de la ressource écologique et incertitude autour de la détection des invasives species etc.
  - Community perspective for ecosystem based conservation planning, e.g. interaction between several species at the landscape level
  - The role of spatial processes, for movement, different habitat quality, understanding how space changes results in combination with other determinants of bioeconomic models (Sanchirico, Costello as well)

- Intricate property rights, ranging from the most locally complex in terms of types of interactions (externality locally), local competition for resource, different levels of political management, but also different types of market structure
- Incorporating different value types, including indigenous knowledge, in bioeconomic modeling for policy making
- incorporating more evidence from quasi experimental methods in the results

4. In this dissertation, I chose to focus on space and market structure across 2 different types of ecosystems

- Space & Market structure : make up policy, conceptual and methodological challenges, as they address the principal causes of global biodiversity decline and foster technical and methodological challenges, as highlighted by our review and other.
- Space on terrestrial landscapes is important to tackle main causes of species decline:
  - Classical arguments : featuring space in traditional models allows to understand better aggregate behavior (Sanchirico); externalities arise from spatial dependence, and optimal behavior can be characterized in some cases (Costello)
  - Forests support a variety of functions and risks, benefits and costs; these risks and benefits have distinct spatial patterns, and occur at a large scale, calling for an aggregate scale approach; different phenomena are characterized by different scales, different time frames and different ??? but connectivity is an important feature that structures ecological processes; raises specific challenges with spatial optimization; spatial management of connectivity with multiple use/functions ecosystems is complicated, but useful in terms of policy and methods  
Additionally, in a context of resource scarcity, space can be a driver of policy success for both resource preservation and wildfire prevention.
  - Spatial heterogeneity drives movement; spatial resources are difficult to manage as they create spatial externalities, that are dynamic through time; it has long been considered that movement is an exogenous process, or driven exclusively by ecological features; besides fragmentation, as well as corridors etc, human actions at a more local scale can change the pattern of spatial movement, especially in the case of invasive species. Petite envoiée sur le fait que la géographie est le résultat d'un processus social? When possible, people may fence, to resolve the externality; in doing so, they may have a better use of the resource (e.g. halt overexploitation) but undermine landscape connectivity (e.g. increase fragmentation); it is shown that not all fences are bad, and connectivity is good if heterogeneity exists;
- Market structure matters for resource exploitation
  - In the harvesting literature, it is often considered that marginal revenue is constant as prices are determined by an international market. Additionally, open access is a key feature of the commons, and a small group of people seldom controls a complete market.
  - However, some specific cases of endemic resources, such as wildlife trade, in informal contexts, can be characterized by restricted access
  - A monopolist may be a conservationist's best friend : intuitively, restrict quantities to maximize profits. This is dependent on market specifics, discounting etc (Hanesson)
  - Additionally, competition in intricate settings can trigger weird dynamics, according to existing papers

5. That's how I choose to address them

- Summary of research work

*Or should that be integrated with the previous point?*

## Summary of publications and conferences

**Chapter 1 : Bioeconomic Models for Terrestrial Social Ecological System Management : a Review**, S.Jean and L. Mouysset

[Replication code](#) and [data](#) are freely accessible

- Published in *International Review of Environmental and Resource Economics*  
DOI : 10.1561/101.00000131

- Presentations :

- European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE) Annual Conference, Rimini, 2022
  - ABIES Doctoral Days - Best Poster Award, 2022

**Chapter 2 : The Wildfire-Habitat Connectivity Dilemma: a Graph Theoretical Approach to Landscape Management**, S.Jean and L. Mouysset

[Replication code](#) and [data](#) are freely accessible

- Working paper

- Presentations :

- BINGO Seminar, CIRED, 2023
  - Interdisciplinary PhD in Sustainable Development, Columbia University, 2023

**Chapter 3 : Fences - the Economics of Movement in Mobile Public Bads**

[Replication code](#) and [data](#) are freely accessible

- Working paper

- Presentations :

- French Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, Université Savoie Mont-Blanc, 2024
  - Parisian PhD Seminar in Environmental Economics, Nogent sur Marne, 2024
  - CIRED Internal Seminar, 2024

**Chapter 4: Little downside and substantial gains result from farming of *Totoaba Macdonaldi***, J.

Lawson, S.Jean (co-first authors), A. Steinkruger, M. Castellanos-Rico, G.M. Goto, M.A. Cisneros-Mata, E. Aceves Bueno, M.M. Warham, A.M. Sachs and S.D. Gaines

[Replication code](#) and [data](#) are freely accessible.

- Under review at *NPJ Ocean Sustainability*

- Presentations:

- BIOECON Network Annual Conference, University of Santiago de Compostela, 2023
  - Trade and the Environment, Paris Saclay Applied Economics, 2023
  - European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists Annual Conference, University of Leuven, 2024



# Chapter 1

## Bioeconomic models for terrestrial social ecological system management: a review

This article was published in the International Review of Environmental and Resource Economics with Lauriane Mouysset. Data and code are publicly available - DOI 10.1561/101.00000131

It is slightly modified to account for minor errors and add several references.

### Abstract

We provide a cartography of 319 bioeconomic models applied to terrestrial habitats, by combining a quantitative analysis of methodological criteria and of the narratives underlying the equations. Based on a Multiple Correspondence Analysis and clustering techniques, our cartography is organized in 4 groups. Two of them adopt a conservation perspective: while the first one focuses on how to efficiently preserve species given a limited budget through a cost-effectiveness approach without any biodiversity monetarization, the second one stands for a second generation of models tackling habitat-based conservation measures with specific applications in agriculture and forestry. The last two groups are concerned with the notion of harvesting. Biodiversity is here monetized and the problem is framed as the maximization of the utility of agents derived from the flow of the biodiversity variable raising thus a cost-benefit problem. While the notion of harvesting is mostly applied to endangered species and invasive species in one group, a specific interest for forestry characterizes the second one. The temporal analysis of the database shows that bioeconomic models applied to terrestrial social-ecological systems exhibit an overall recent and on-going decline. We discuss this result regarding the neighbouring methods, especially the correlative and data-driven models. Since a diversity of modeling frameworks is needed to investigate the management of social-ecological systems, especially to embrace different understandings and decrease uncertainty, we provide some challenges for the future of the mathematically-based bioeconomic models.

Keywords : Biodiversity; land use change; maximum economic yield; mathematical model; ecological economics; environmental and resource economics; natural capital; ecosystem services; multiple correspondence analysis; K-modes clustering

# 1 Introduction

Implementing sustainable development constitutes one of the main challenges of the 21st century, given the current ecological crisis. In the last fifty years, two successive trends have paved the way for ongoing studies in sustainability issues. Beginning in the 1970s, large-scale pollution betrayed many of the pressures exerted on the environment by anthropogenic activities. This was followed in the 1990s by a new trend that highlighted the impact of the ecosystem on human development and economic activities (Costanza et al., 1997). The idea that an ecosystem could affect economics yielded new concepts such as the well-known concept of *ecosystem services* (Daily et al., 1997; Hassan et al., 2005; Bateman et al., 2013). The current understanding of sustainability combines these two perspectives, as reflected by the concept of *sustainable development*, which is defined as the management of a complex system, namely, a *social-ecological system* (Ostrom, 2009), and which articulates human society and the ecosystem (Dasgupta, 2008). This dual concern notably led to the creation of the International Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES<sup>1</sup>).

Managing these social-ecological systems, therefore, requires understanding the co-evolution of society and ecosystems. On a more technical note, designing sustainable development paths in the context of the ecological crisis requires identifying sustainable dynamics or equilibria, defined as the long-term states needed to maintain viable both socioeconomic and ecological systems. To characterize such sustainable states and their underlying drivers, an adequate understanding and representation of the relationships between society and ecosystems are required. In this respect, we are forced to deal simultaneously with considerations of economic and ecological dynamics as well as their mutual interactions in interdisciplinary-opened scientific researches. Different modeling frameworks that probe the relationships between ecosystems and economics have already been developed in the literature with the economics of natural resources (for an overview, see Halvorsen and Layton (2015))

The integration of natural resources in economics models started with the management of exhaustible resources (Hotelling, 1931; Dasgupta and Heal, 1974). Typically, economic models have been developed to study the extraction of fossil energy. In these settings, natural resources are characterized by a regeneration rate negligible in comparison with its extraction rate. The central economic question about such an exhaustible natural resource regards the investment of the rent emerging from extraction into a non-natural asset. The extraction rate thus depends on the interest rate: the larger the interest rate, the faster the extraction. Besides these models, other economic models have been dedicated to exploring the management of renewable resources (Smith, 1968; Plourde, 1970; ?). Contrary to exhaustible resources interpreted as a stock, renewable resources are modeled as a flow. Indeed, renewable resources are characterized by commensurable rates of regeneration and extraction. Economic models thus investigate how to maintain the balance between the regeneration and extraction rates, and how to avoid large extraction rates, which would unbalance ecological dynamics and yield to resource erosion. Because biodiversity is a typical example of renewable resources, such resource models are usually designated as bioeconomic models (Gordon, 1954; Scott, 1955).

Historically, bioeconomic modeling for renewable resources (Clark, 1973b; Kontoleon et al., 2007) has extensively been developed for fisheries. Mathematical models of species extinction have been developed on Gordon's and Schaeffer's fisheries models (Gordon, 1954; Schaefer, 1954) to examine the conditions under which the eradication of a given species might appear to be the most attractive policy for a resource owner. Clark's work, which has popularized the concepts

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.ipbes.net/> - "The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an independent intergovernmental body established by States to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development" see <https://ipbes.net/about>

of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and Maximum Economic Yield (MEY), provided a crucial framework for policy-making in regards to exploited marine resources. Typically, these equilibria show that economic decisions that account for interactions between ecosystems and economics reduce the fishing effort compared to decisions taken in ignorance of these interactions. Many extensions of these fishery models have been specifically developed to introduce complexity into the ecological and economic processes (see [Petrakis et al. \(2012\)](#) for a review), towards ecosystem-based fishery management. The development of bioeconomic mathematical modeling for renewable resources in the case of fisheries can probably be explained by the fact that marine biodiversity has been one of the first ecosystems to be strongly damaged by anthropogenic actions. For example, the North Sea herring population collapsed from more than 2 million tons to less than 50 000 tons in the 70s due to overfishing, ([Nash and Dickey-Collas, 2005](#)). This marine decline clearly affected economic activities: in the UK alone, the value of the herring fishery dropped from 14 to 2 million pounds between 1977 and 1979, before a slow recovery ([Wood and Hopper, 1984](#)).

However, the intensification of anthropogenic pressures over all the ecosystems for the last 50 years, combined with a substantial improvement in the knowledge about ecosystems, has called for bioeconomic studies on other types of biodiversity and habitats (such as estuarian, aquatic or terrestrial habitats). Among them, terrestrial biodiversity is of special interest due to its competition for land with humans. Indeed, urbanization ([McDonald et al., 2008; McKinney, 2008](#)) and agricultural land-use changes ([Dudley and Alexander, 2017; Reidsma et al., 2006](#)) over the last decades have been identified as major drivers of the erosion of terrestrial biodiversity. Such land uses are responsible for the degradation of habitat quality, thus altering species nesting success and survival.

In spite of some early models focusing on pest management in agricultural settings ([Hueth and Regev, 1974; Feder and Regev, 1975](#)), bioeconomic models have been widely developed for the management of non-marine social-ecological systems 20 years after their application to marine resources. Considering such a development of the literature, several reviews have tried to summarize its findings. Some of them adopted an explicit public policy perspective: for example [Boyd et al. \(2015\)](#) focus on bioeconomic model-based articles which investigate conservation planning and the use of return on investment measures or [Epanchin-Niell \(2017\)](#) who reviewed bioeconomic models about the management of terrestrial invasive species. While these studies review the policy issues and the solutions brought by bioeconomic models, they lack methodological consistency since they use a variety of elements, such as narratives, methodological traits, and mixing methodological and statistical approaches. These reviews thus fail at giving an overview of a single methodological framework applied to the management of terrestrial social-ecological systems. On the opposite, other reviews consider a methodological perspective about the bioeconomic modeling framework. We can notably cite [Eppink and van den Bergh \(2007\)](#) which study the biodiversity indicators and theories underlying bioeconomic modeling, as well as [Castro et al. \(2018\)](#) who explore the methodological advances in bioeconomic models applied to agriculture (and mostly abiotic elements) and [Drechsler \(2020\)](#) who explores the integration of spatiality, dynamics and uncertainty in "ecological economic models" for the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services. If these reviews bring valuable insights on the bioeconomic modeling fields, they usually fail in providing a quantitative assessment of the field, with a notable exception in [Drechsler \(2020\)](#). Morevoer, these studies often disregard the analysis of the narratives deployed with the mathematical specifications.

In this article, we aim at providing a cartography of the bioeconomic models applied to terrestrial biodiversity based on quantitative methods by combining mathematical and narrative elements of the modeling frameworks. To do so, we performed a review of 319 articles fitting

with our specific focus on mathematical and process-based bioeconomic models as popularized for fisheries, but applied to wild and weakly managed terrestrial biodiversity (agro-biodiversity which is strongly managed by humans has been excluded since it has been widely reviewed by agricultural economics). We then studied our database through a methodological perspective by combining an analysis of the methodological criteria included in the economic model, the ecological one and their linkage, and an analysis of the narratives underlying the equations. In this way, we adopted Gibbard and Varian's standpoint (Gibbard and Varian, 1978), on stories as an integral part of the model in economics. We provide a cartography of our database using a quantitative analysis relying on Multiple Correspondence Analysis and clustering techniques. Our cartography is organized in 4 groups that we depict in terms of methodological and narrative specifications. More precisely, two of them adopt a conservation perspective: while the first one focuses on how to efficiently preserve species given a limited budget through a cost-effectiveness approach without any biodiversity monetarization, the second one stands for a second generation of models tackling habitat-based conservation measures with specific applications in agriculture and forestry. The last two groups are concerned with the notion of harvesting. Biodiversity is monetized and the problem is framed as the maximization of the utility (or profit) of agents, derived from the flow of the biodiversity variable raising thus a cost-benefit problem. While the notion of harvesting is mostly applied to endangered species and invasive species in one group, a specific interest for forestry characterizes the second one. Surprisingly, the method exhibits a recent and on-going decline over the last years. In regards with this result, some elements of discussion regarding the competition with neighbouring methods, especially the correlative and data-driven models, are in investigated. Since the IPBES methodological report (IPBES, 2016) highlights the need to maintain a diversity of modeling frameworks to investigate the management of social-ecological systems, especially to embrace different understandings and decrease uncertainty, a discussion on the future of the mathematically-based bioeconomic models is therefore of special interest. In this perspective, we conclude by providing some challenges for its development.

## 2 Review method

### 1 Article selection

We performed bibliographic searches on SCOPUS using a wide array of keywords regarding bioeconomic models for renewable terrestrial resources (see annex A for the specified query). Based on these, we ruled out all the articles applied to marine ecosystems. Furthermore, as Eppink and van den Bergh (2007), we tracked the references of the selected articles by hand, and used the website [Connected Papers](#), which provides a map of the earlier and derivative papers from an article. This first screening provided approximately 1000 articles. Then we refined our article selection by precising the concepts of *model* and *bioeconomic*. Figure 1.1 illustrates the process.

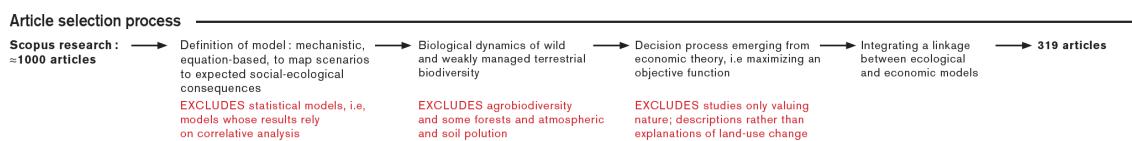


Figure 1.1: Article selection process for inclusion in the systematic review

First, we need to precise the definition of *model* we used for this review. Indeed the modeling literature usually mixes scenarios and models which are both used to provide information to support policy and decision making. However they refer to two different modeling components: sce-

narios describe plausible futures for drivers of change and options for altering the course of these drivers through policy and management interventions while models enable scenarios of change in drivers to be translated into expected consequences for social-ecological systems ([IPBES, 2016](#)). Adopting a methodological perspective of the field instead of a public policy one, we will focus here on models only. Nevertheless, different types of models coexist in the literature. They can rely on quantitative relationships between the components of the social-ecological systems, or on qualitative relationships between them. While the first ones usually have mathematical foundations, the second ones are expert-based. In those models, the experience of experts and stakeholders, including local and indigenous knowledge holders, is used to describe relationships. In consistency with the bioeconomic models popularized by Clark about fisheries, we restrict our attention to quantitative models. Eventually, the scientific literature distinguishes 2 types of quantitative models. On the one hand, the correlative models which rely on empirical data and estimate values for parameters through statistical relationships. In these models, processes are rather implicit. Second, the process-based models which describe explicitly-stated processes or mechanisms based on established scientific understanding. In these models, model parameters therefore have a clear and predefined interpretation. The scope of our review focuses on process-based bioeconomic models. This is of special interest since correlative modelling is probably the best known to manage social-ecological systems, especially due to the popularity of correlative species distribution modelling ([Elith and Leathwick, 2009](#)). In such a context, we postulate that a specific focus on the alternative method might bring new insights about social-ecological system management.

Second, bioeconomics is a polysemous term which is used in different strands of literature: a first group is related to N. Georgescu-Roegen and develops a thermodynamics understanding of social-ecological systems ([Georgescu-Roegen, 1971](#)); a second group, led by Clark on Gordon's and Schaeffer's foundations, develops mathematical models integrating ecological and economic processes ([Clark, 1973a,b; Schaefer, 1957](#))<sup>2</sup>; finally a third group is related to biomimetism where technological innovations are inspired by living systems ([Van Lancker et al., 2016](#)). In this review, we focus on the second group of literature, related to Clark's bioeconomic mathematic modeling.

To do so, we define bioeconomic models at the intersection of 3 conditions:

1. integrating an explicit biological dynamic
2. integrating a decision process emerging from economic theory,
3. integrating a linkage between ecological and economic models.

The first item characterizes the ecological dynamics of a renewable resource where the rates of regeneration and extraction are commensurable. Except for this condition, no specific requirement of the ecological process at play is needed. Different ecological processes such as population dynamics or niche distribution are thus eligible. By biological, we mean that the dynamics have to be related to living organisms. In other terms, the stake of the model has to be related to biotic elements. This condition aims at excluding pollution models or carbon and nitrogen models ([Nordhaus, 1994; Lemoine and Traeger, 2014](#)). Eventually, by explicit we mean mathematically formalized. This condition is necessary to exclude exclusively declarative bioeconomic models (*i.e* bioeconomic frameworks without any mathematical formulation). Indeed, the objective of this study is focused on changes in a specific method (*i.e* the mathematical process-based bioeconomic model) rather than in a problem (*i.e* the bioeconomic one). Because they adopt a different methodological framework, correlative or declarative bioeconomic studies need to be excluded from our corpus.

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<sup>2</sup>See [Parent et al. \(2024\)](#) for a history of the 'standard' fishery model, notably the gradual inclusion of dynamics

The second item precises the economic side of bioeconomic models. By considering an economic decision process, we aim at excluding articles performing an economic valuation of biodiversity such as empirical studies giving the monetary values of species, like owls or bats ([Montgomery et al., 1994](#); [Penn et al., 2019](#)). Although such studies are highly valuable to deal with the ecological crisis, they stem from a very different methodological tradition (choice experiments and monetary valuation). By explicitly requiring a decision process from economic theory, we ensure to avoid agro-ecological models. Indeed, many agro-ecological models address the question of sustainable management of terrestrial social-ecological systems and bring valuable knowledge to this question. However, they combine ecological dynamics with land-use change models without specifying the economic determinants of these land-use changes (some costs are sometimes associated with these land-use changes but without being driven by economic processes) ([Sabatier et al., 2010](#)). The methodological corpus we are interested in in this article is rooted in economic theory. Thus, we only consider economic decision models, in which agents allocate scarce resources to fulfill their objectives. Agents can, for example, maximize their utility or profit, or act as cost-minimizers to achieve specific goals.

The third condition is that of an integrated ecological-economic system, *i.e.*, how the ecological and economic models are coupled. This bioeconomic linkage is not specified and can take different forms: for example, it can be mutual (by considering simultaneously the anthropogenic effects on ecosystems and the economic valuation of biodiversity in an economic problem) or unidirectional (one of the two effects mentioned above), and it can be done by prices or by physical variables. If the bioeconomic coupling is done by prices, economic value will be granted to the biodiversity elements to make them commensurable with other economic determinants. However, this monetary quantification has to be incorporated into a decision model (cf previous item).

Eventually, these bioeconomic modelling specifications have been applied to terrestrial social-ecological systems. Since many studies take place in an agricultural context, it is necessary to specify here the distinction between *agro-biodiversity* and *agricultural biodiversity*. *Agro-biodiversity* stands for species which are directly managed by farmers (for examples the crops species, the battle species etc) while *agricultural biodiversity* stands for wild biodiversity living into agricultural habitats (such as birds, bats etc). Because the economic aspects of agro-biodiversity have been broadly studied by agricultural economics, we focus here on wild terrestrial biodiversity. In this perspective, bioeconomic models applied to only managed forests, such as the seminal article of [Faustmann \(1849a\)](#)<sup>3</sup>, are excluded. Models with natural forest ingrowth are however in our scope. To finish, we formally exclude articles with marine case studies. For example, articles with both marine and terrestrial case studies have been excluded in this review. In doing so, we aim at providing a restricting view about terrestrial social-ecological system management. However the integration of such excluded articles appears as a natural perspective of future extensions of this work.

Based on these criteria, we individually screened all the papers selected in the first look to refine our database. Among 1000 articles identified after the first literature screening, we selected 319 articles developing bioeconomic models applied to terrestrial social-ecological systems.

## 2 Analytical framework

To analyze mathematical tools such as bioeconomic models, we adopted here a methodological perspective. However as mentioned by Gibbard and Varian ([Gibbard and Varian, 1978](#)) at an early stage, stories are an integral part of the model in economics. More precisely, the authors explain

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<sup>3</sup>Moreover, Faustmann's work focusing on tree values does not feature any biological dynamics.

that a model is a *story* with a *specified structure*<sup>4</sup>. In that perspective, methodological specifications are not sufficient to characterize the model since the questions the authors want to explore and the stories they can tell with it are at the core of the model identity. Such narrative elements are more than chronicles, they are essential to connect economic modeling research with the specifics of the world (Morgan, 2001). Without these narrative elements, it is impossible to apply model-structures directly onto the facts of the economic world. Since we are interested in models that are motivated by concrete stakes such as resource management, the biodiversity crisis and sustainable development, exploring narratives associated with the methodological specifications of the mathematical model is crucial to characterize the outline of such a bioeconomic modeling.

In this context, we developed an analytical framework based on two dimensions: the first one is based on a set of methodological criteria related to mathematical equations, while the second one is related to the narratives associated with the mathematical tool. Based on the combination of these two dimensions, we aim at providing an overall cartography of bioeconomic modeling as a tool to investigate the management of terrestrial biodiversity.

### 3 Cartography method

For our methodological analysis, we first investigated a set of 18 criteria related to the ecological model, the bioeconomic linkage, and the economic model.

#### 1 Ecological criteria

The ecological criteria aim at precising how biodiversity is captured by the ecological model. To do so, we mobilize 8 criteria split into 2 groups. The first group of criteria helps to understand the paradigm of biodiversity while the second group is related to the technical specifications of the ecological model.

Within the first group, the first criterion is related to the measure of biodiversity. Indeed, biodiversity can either be modeled *per se* (for example based on population dynamics models) or be deducted from a proxy (typically, the habitat suitable for biodiversity or economic activity). The second criterion precises the proxy measure: this proxy can be habitat, economic activity, a conservation budget, or not be specified. The third criterion precises the ecological state variable in the ecological model. More precisely, the biodiversity variable can be related to the individuals (such as in population or metapopulation models), the species (when focusing on species richness), or the community, when both species abundance and richness are taken into account. The fourth criterion focuses on the type of biological diversity, *i.e.* we distinguish functional and genetic diversity definitions. Finally, the fifth criterion characterizes the biodiversity level at which the model intends to contribute. Some articles are focused on a single species (for example, articles based on a population model developed for one species) while some others adopt a community perspective by integrating a pool of species. In some cases, when species interact, models display two species. However, many of the articles we reviewed did not focus on species interactions and therefore encompassed a larger number of species. This community perspective can be either explicit, as in articles modeling populations of different species, or implicit, in studies using a habitat proxy as a biodiversity measure and informing about the community living in this habitat. It is interesting to note that there is no systematic implications between habitat, proxy-based models and community level contribution since the habitat might be related to one single species.

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<sup>4</sup>"A model [...] is a story with a specified structure. The structure is given by the logical and mathematical form of a set of postulates, the assumptions of the model. The structure forms an uninterpreted system [...] Although the term 'model' is often applied to a structure alone, we shall use it in another sense. In economists' use of models, there is always an element of interpretation: the models always tells a story." (Gibbard and Varian, 1978), p.666)

Besides this first group of criteria for the characterization of biodiversity, we mobilize a second group of criteria related to the ecological technical specifications. The first criterion is related to the category of biological dynamics: we distinguish population dynamics models (such as in the seminal model developed by Clark, or articles implementing age-structured modeling) and other ecological dynamics. These other dynamics can be for example either a niche distribution model or Brownian motion models. The second criterion characterizes the spatial dimension of the ecological process. Spatial considerations can be explicit when the ecological process implies spatial exchanges (typically a meta-population model) or implicit, when the ecological process at play takes place in a heterogeneous context (for example when heterogeneous patches are taken into consideration for an aggregated analysis without any exchange between the patches). Eventually, the spatial dimension can be absent. Then the third criterion is related to the integration of stochasticity in the ecological modeling. Stochastic components may include dispersal probabilities of species across land patches as well as probabilities of species extinction.

Table 1.A sums up the ecological criteria with their related items.

## 2 Bioeconomic linkage criteria

Bioeconomic linkage criteria characterize how biodiversity is taken into account in the economic model and the economic decision. To do so, we mobilize 3 criteria. The first criterion indicates whether the biological element has been monetarized or not. In order to make biodiversity commensurable with other economic variables in the decision problem, some articles rely on an economic valuation of biodiversity (in other words, biodiversity is expressed in monetary units, such as dollars). A monetary bioeconomic linkage occurs in two situations: either if the study is directly driven in monetary terms (for example when biodiversity is measured through a proxy in economic units) or if the ecological model is developed in non-monetary terms (with a biodiversity measure *per se* or based on a habitat-based proxy) but the biodiversity is monetarized thanks to a monetarization method to be integrated into the economic decision.

The second criteria precises how the bioeconomic problem is raised. We distinguish two problems: the cost-benefit problem and the cost-effective problem. Cost-benefit analysis integrates costs and benefits related to classical economic factors and ecological factors, then selects the decision which maximizes the overall utility. Due to criticism on monetarization methods ([Diamond and Hausman, 1994](#)), some authors favor cost-effectiveness analysis which separates classical economic factors and the ecological ones. The economic decision is thus taken according to a maximization under constraints. Typically, the optimal decision maximizes the profit or the utility under an ecological constraint. By isolating ecological and economic objectives, this cost-effectiveness method aims at limiting the substitutability between natural and non-natural capital. Interestingly some studies consider the ecological value in economic terms (for example when biodiversity is measured through an economic proxy) but keep separated the benefits or costs emerging from the ecosystem and the ones emerging from classical economic factors. In other terms, an economic value for biodiversity does not necessarily imply a cost-benefit problem. It is the reason why it is informative to keep in our review the two criteria, relative to biodiversity monetarization and the bioeconomic problem respectively.

The third criterion captures the position of the biodiversity stake in the bioeconomic model. The biodiversity stake can be within the objective of the maximization such as in cost-benefit problems but also in a cost-effectiveness problem which maximizes the ecological output while satisfying a cost constraint. Then, the biodiversity stake can be a constraint (in a cost-effectiveness problem which maximizes profit under ecological constraint for example). Eventually, other stakes occur either when the biodiversity stake emerges in both the maximization and constraint or when the biodiversity stake is an output. The simultaneous consideration is possible when

are considered different taxonomic groups (one being in constraint while the other is included in the maximization) or when non-human well-being is taken into consideration in the objective function while biological dynamics constitute mechanistic constraints. The biodiversity stake can be assessed as an output computed after the economic decision.

Table 1.A sums up the bioeconomic linkage criteria with their related items.

### 3 Economic criteria

Economic criteria specify the economic side of bioeconomic models. More precisely, we explore a set of criteria related to the technical economic specifications. They are related to dynamics<sup>5</sup> and spatial dimensions, and to uncertainty. Bioeconomic models are economically either static or dynamic. Similarly to ecological technical specifications, we explore the spatial and uncertain dimensions. Economic spatiality can be investigated explicitly through a spatial process such as trade between regions or implicitly by spatial heterogeneity of economic variables, or eventually absent of bioeconomic models. Eventually, economic models can be either deterministic or stochastic if an economic variable is primarily subject to a source of uncertainty.

To finish, we explore four last criteria regarding the general characteristics of bioeconomic models. The first one is related to the solving method used to explore the bioeconomic question. We distinguish 3 forms of solving method in the articles of our corpus: closed form resolution, numerical resolution and the combination of both. The second criterion informs whether the study is empirical or theoretical or whether its combines empirical and theoretical perspectives. Additionally, we explore how the model is used to highlight the economic question. If the solution emerging from the bioeconomic model characterizes a judgement on the best behavioral options or policy instruments, the model use is normative. On the other hand, if a paper investigates some behaviors of the system without any recommendation, the model use is descriptive. Eventually, we characterize whether the model is framed in terms of general equilibrium or partial equilibrium.

Table 1.A sums up the economic criteria with their related items.

### 4 Methodology-based cartography

These methodological criteria have been analysed through a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). MCA allows to uncover the underlying structure of categorical data by performing a recombination of the data into a two-dimensional space formed by orthogonal vectors which maximize the variance (inertia) explained by the data (see [Benzécri \(1976\)](#) for seminal works and [Roux and Rouanet \(2010\)](#) for a modern presentation).

As MCA can be sensitive to unbalanced variables (*i.e.* variables whose distribution are highly skewed towards one value), we performed a sensitivity analysis to select the optimal combination of variables to use in the MCA, based on the explained variance. To do so, we performed an MCA analysis with all the possible combinations of our sample. The graph 1.E in appendix C exhibits the explained variance as a function of the number of criteria. Among the 18 methodological criteria, we selected the set of 14 methodological criteria (see tab. 1.A) which keeps a large set of criteria while reaching 31% of the explained variance. The rationale for variable selection was to avoid redundancies as well as excluding variables that are too skewed and would impair MCA analysis.

Based on these selected criteria, we performed a classification with a K-modes algorithm

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<sup>5</sup>Indeed whereas our definition of bioeconomic models requires a condition of dynamics in the ecological model (see section 1), we do not impose any dynamics specifications on the economic side to be included in the database.

(Huang (1998)). The K-modes algorithm generalizes the K-means method<sup>6</sup> to categorical data, and uses a dissimilarity measure to assign observations to clusters. One of the inconvenients of K-modes algorithms is the need to specify to number of clusters. Therefore, the number of groups used in the classification was determined using a cost function, namely the sum of the within variance of each clusters. We used the so-called 'elbow-method' (Ketchen and Shook (1998)), stating that the optimal number of clusters is located at an elbow of the curve relating the sum of the within cluster variances and the number of clusters. Indeed, after this point, the reduction in the sum of the within cluster variances becomes less important, suggesting additional clusters do not significantly improve results. Figure 1.F in appendix C depicts this cost function. For the following analysis, we will consider the optimal cluster of 4. However since 9 clusters might also be considered as optimal clustering, we also present an MCA classification with 9 clusters as robustness test (see figure 1.G in appendix C).

## 5 Narrative-based analysis

In order to perform a narrative analysis, we used the titles, keywords and abstracts of the papers in our database. Then we pre-processed the data by removing stopwords and grouped similar words together (for example, *farming*, *farmers* and *farms* were all grouped under *farm* with this procedure). Moreover, because our analysis relies on single words, typical nominal groups were recoded (for example, *endangered species* was recoded into *endangeredspecies*)<sup>7</sup>. For our analysis, we kept words which occurred at least 5 times in our database<sup>8</sup>. Since we have 319 articles, we thus kept a significant portion of the words database, which displays the most information. More precisely, a total of 1202 words out of 4355 relevant words (27.6%) were kept, accounting for 81% of word occurrences.

Eventually, we classified words according to semantic fields. Based on the 1202 words words kept for the analysis, we designed 8 lexical groups, pertaining to two habitats (agricultural and forest), two species status (invasive species and endangered species), two management semantic fields (policy and risk) and two human-nature paradigms (conservation and harvesting). The list of words in each semantic field is depicted in appendix B. In order to characterize the narratives underlying the different groups resulting from the methodology-based classification, we investigated the bias of each semantic fields into them. More precisely, for each methodology-based group, we assess the ratio between the frequency of the semantic fields and the number of papers included in this group. This ratio avoids size effects between groups.

## 4 Database overview

### 1 Temporal and geographical distributions

Figure 1.2 presents the distribution of the articles in the database. Most articles range from the 90's, testifying the recentness of the use of such methodology for terrestrial social-ecological systems. Except some early-bird articles published in the 70's related to the management of agricultural pests and pesticides use (Hueth and Regev, 1974; Feder and Regev, 1975), the distribution

<sup>6</sup>The K-means algorithm (MacQueen, 1967; Lloyd, (1957) is a standard classification algorithm in Natural Language Processing. Documents are mapped to a vector space featuring as many dimensions as there are distinct words in the document, and are thus coded in a binary fashion. The algorithm picks random initial centroids, computes the Euclidean distance to other observations, which are assigned to the closest clusters. Centroids are thus actualized, and the procedure is repeated. If no observations changes cluster upon a new iteration, it converges.

<sup>7</sup>The following expressions were recoded and grouped together : endangered species, bio-economic, invasive species, ecosystem service, optimal-control, dynamic-programming, integer-programming, cost-effective, cost-benefit, reserve-design, optimal-management, land use, property rights, conservation-planning

<sup>8</sup>These 5 occurrences can come from a single article or at most 5 articles.

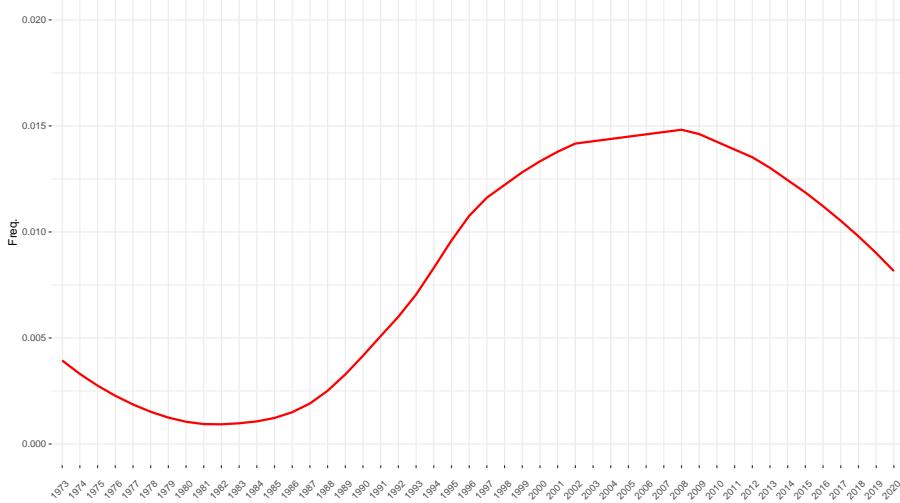


Figure 1.2: Temporal distribution of articles in the database.

of the articles follows a Gaussian function with a 20-years spike between 1995 and 2015. This indicates that the use of such bioeconomic models to investigate the sustainable management of terrestrial social-ecological systems has decreased recently. This decline is of special interest as the question of sustainably managing terrestrial social-ecological system is far from solved. This situation is quite unusual for a methodology associated with such a burning issue which calls for a strong research effort and generates a huge amount of literature.

To complete this temporal distribution, we investigate the geographical origins of the authorship of the 319 articles (fig. 1.3). We observe that our database in majority emerges from North American and European research even if the part from Oceania is not negligible. Eventually a small part comes from Asia and Africa. This relative dominance of North American research could be explained by the original diffusion of Schaeffer's (American) and Clark's (Canadian) seminal models. From a more naturalist stand, the magnitude of the resources and the early conservation movement in North America could have paved the way for this trend.

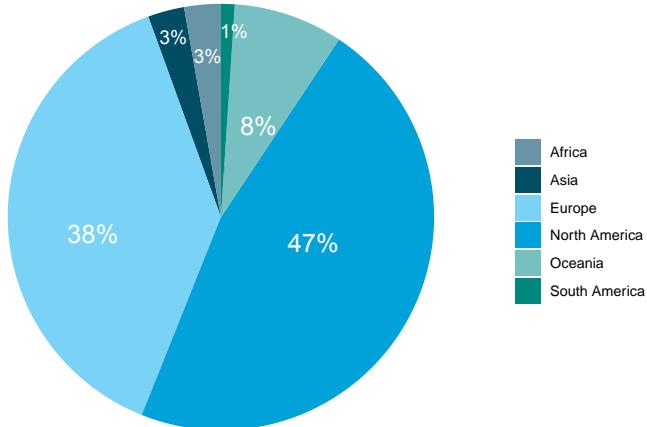


Figure 1.3: Geographical distribution of articles in the database.

However with a higher pressure on land use and land use change in Europe than in the USA,

European researchers look also very active to face the urgent and concrete stake of managing terrestrial ecosystems while reconciling socioeconomic goals and ecological requirements.

## 2 Journal and discipline distributions

The articles emerge from 97 journals which are related to different disciplines such as applied mathematics, economics, ecology and sustainability sciences (see tab. ??). Based on the journal affectation, table 1.1 sums up the frequencies of these 3 disciplines among our corpus of 319 articles.

Table 1.1: Distribution of journal across fields

Field	Count	Percentage
Economics	190	60%
Ecology	83	26%
Sustainability science	34	10%
Applied Mathematics	12	4%

We observe that most of the articles have been published in journals related to economics (60%) confirming the anchorage of bioeconomic modeling as an economic approach. Among the journals, one of them captures a substantial part of the papers: 44 papers (*ie* 14% of the overall database and 23% of the papers published in economic journals) are indeed published in *Ecological Economics*. This dominance was expected since the methodology brought by bioeconomic modeling fits perfectly with the scope of the journal. Indeed, this journal focuses on the articulation of ecological and economic issues in the perspective of sustainable development<sup>9</sup>. Beside this journal, bioeconomic models contribute to classical resource management questions (with environmental and energy journals such as *Environmental and Resource Economics*, *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*), applied questions and notably agricultural economic journals (such as in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* or the *Agricultural Economics*), theoretical economic questions (with classical theoretical journals such as *Econometrica*, *American Economic Review*).

The proportion of articles published in non-economic journals (40%) testifies an interest for bioeconomic models beyond its economic expected arena. The non-negligible part of articles published in Ecology journals (such as *Ecological Modeling*, *Conservation Biology*, *Ecology Letters* or *Journal of Theoretical Biology*), sustainability sciences journals (such as *Natural Resource Modeling*, *Agricultural Systems* or *Environmental Modeling and Software*) and applied mathematics (*Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications* and *Journal of Mathematical Biology* for example) emphasizes an acceptance of bioeconomic models outside the field of economics. And more specifically, it confirms a certain legitimacy of bioeconomic models regarding ecological theory and knowledge. In this perspective, bioeconomic modeling embraces a genuine interdisciplinary aspiration.

## 5 Database cartography

### 1 Methodology-based classification

Figure 1.4 presents the results of the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) running on 14 methodological criteria. It also displays the classification of the articles resulting from our K-

<sup>9</sup>The scope of *Ecological Economics* mentions that "The journal is concerned with extending and integrating the understanding of the interfaces and interplay between "nature's household" (ecosystems) and "humanity's household" (the economy). Ecological economics is an interdisciplinary field defined by a set of concrete problems or challenges related to governing economic activity in a way that promotes human well-being, sustainability, and justice."

modes algorithm into 4 groups : group 1, in green, with 47 articles; group 2, in purple, with 48 articles; group 3, in yellow, with 162 articles; group 4, in black, with 62 articles.

We observe on figure 1.4 that the MCA is well structured on both sides of the  $y$ -axis with groups 1 and 2 on the right side, and groups 3 and 4 on the left side. The  $x$ -axis offers a split between groups 1 and 2 while it does not strongly play on the groups 3 and 4 even if the main part of group 3 tends to be below the  $x$ -axis while the main part of group 4 tends to be above. Figure 1.G in appendix C exhibits the MCA based on 9 groups. While being more fragmented, the cartography exhibits a similar structure to the 4 groups classification.

The interpretation of the 4 groups comes with figure 1.5 which depicts the distribution of the items of the selected 14 methodological criteria. The colors stand for the contribution of the items to the structuration of the axes. We observe that the  $x$ -axis is strongly driven by the criteria related to the bioeconomic problem e.g. biodiversity monetarization, data anchorage, solving method and spatiality. More precisely the left side is characterized by a cost-benefit problem where biodiversity is monetized. The problems are theoretical and solved with closed-form solutions. Eventually, the problems do not integrate spatiality. On the contrary, the right side is characterized by the cost-effective problem where biodiversity is not monetized. The problems are mainly empirical and solved with numerical tools, and take into account spatiality. The  $y$ -axis is mainly driven by the integration of spatiality in the economic model and the framing of the economic problem as a general equilibrium.

Combining figures 1.4 and 1.5, we understand that the MCA classifies the articles in our database in a first group (in green) specified by a cost-effective problem, an absence of biodiversity monetarization, empirical and theoretical studies and stochasticities being present both in ecological and economic models ; a second group (in purple in figure 1.4) specified by a cost-effective problem, an absence of biodiversity monetarization, empirical studies and spatiality being explicit on the economic side and implicit on the ecological side ; a third group (in yellow in figure 1.4) specified by a cost-benefit analysis, biodiversity monetarization, numerical and theoretical solving and the absence of spatiality ; a fourth group (in black in figure 1.4) specified by a cost-benefit analysis, biodiversity monetarization, theoretical solving and explicit spatiality.

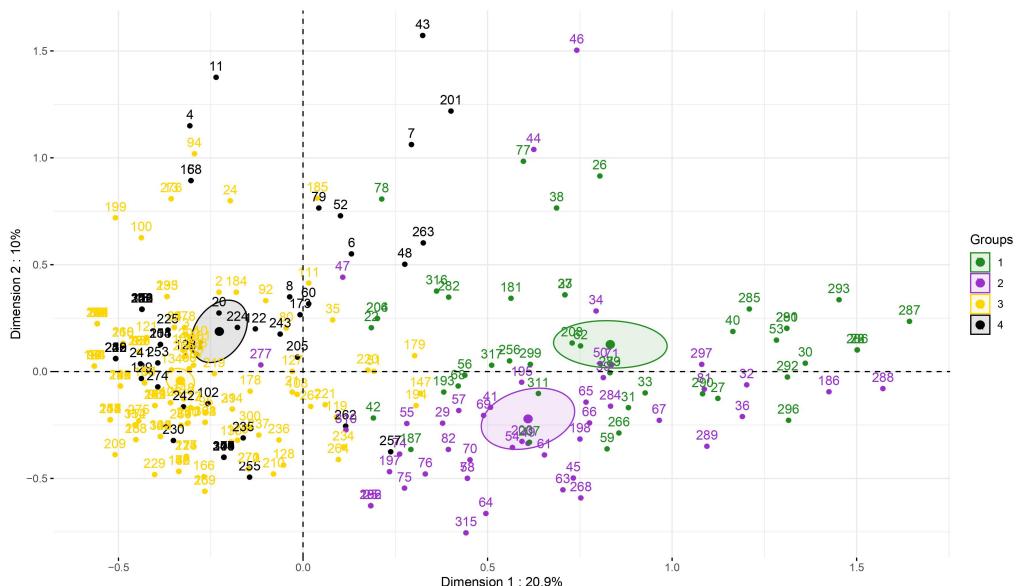


Figure 1.4: Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) running on 12 methodological criteria and 4 clusters (K-modes)

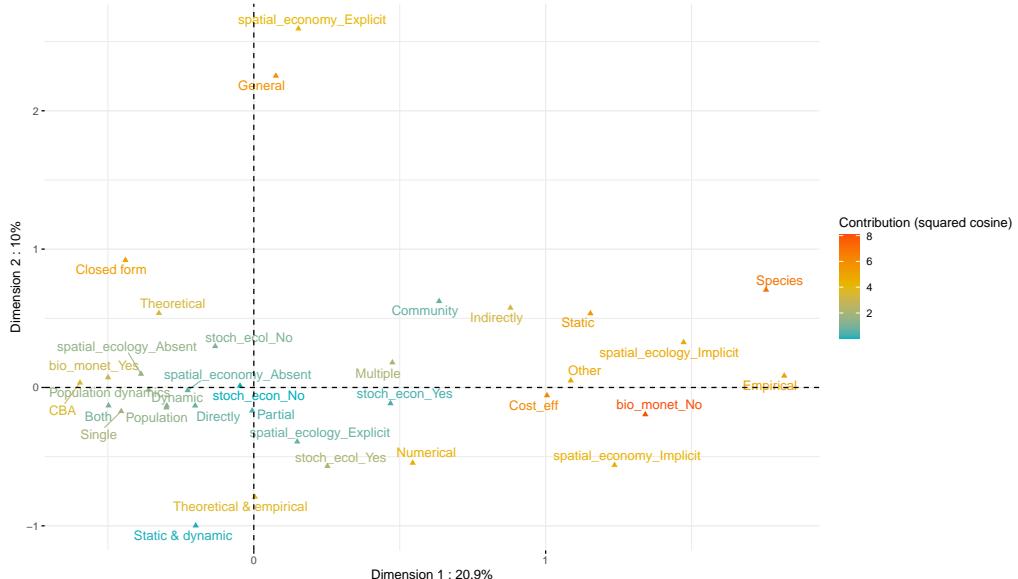


Figure 1.5: Distribution of the values of 14 methodological criteria among the MCA axes.

## 2 Narrative-based specifications

In order to interpret the narratives of the 4 methodology-based groups, we depicted on figures 1.C and 1.D the distribution profiles of the 50 most frequent words for each group.

First of all, we observe that for all profiles the most common words are those which are in common with the 4 groups. We identified the following keywords: (i) economic, cost, (ii) management, policy, strategy, conservation (iii) biodiversity, resource, species, population, ecological, biological, (iv) model, optimal, dynamic, (v) land use, forest, habitat. This observation indicates that the 4 methodology-based groups are driven by a common narrative which regards an economic problem of management of biodiversity and natural resource and land use change based on models, mostly relying on optimal control theory. This result confirms the consistency of our database regarding the research question investigated in the selected papers within the database.

Since the specific words are too disparate to be easily understandable, we completed these profiles by a semantic fields analysis in order to characterize the 4 methodology-based groups. The figure 1.6 depicts the frequency of the different semantic fields in each group<sup>10</sup>. We observe that groups 1 and 2 are related to conservation issues. Among conservation-related articles, the ones with specific applications into agricultural landscapes, especially related to public policy issues, are preferentially located in group 2. On the opposite, groups 3 and 4 are related to harvesting issues. A specific focus on endangered and invasive species characterizes group 3. Eventually, group 4 looks dedicated to the risk problematic with forestry applications.

<sup>10</sup>see appendix B for the listing of words within each semantic field

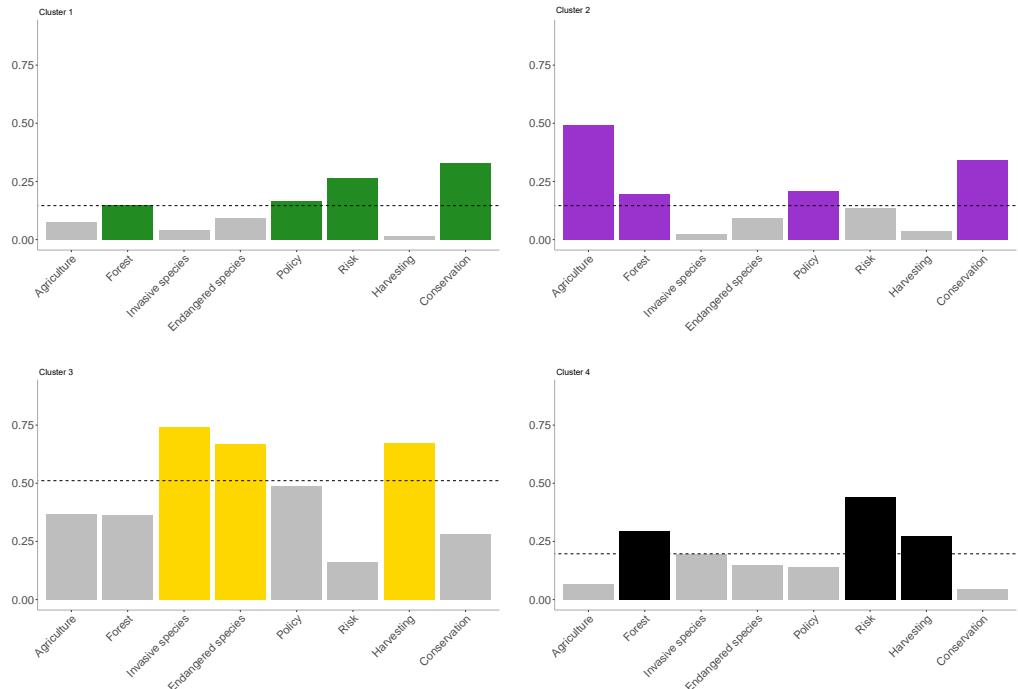


Figure 1.6: Frequency of the different semantic fields in the 4 methodology-based groups.

On the *y* axis is the proportion of mentions of lexical groups in a given cluster across all the mentions. The dashed line represents the size of each cluster as the share of articles of the database they represent. Each color corresponds to the cluster color in figure 1.4

### 3 Overall cartography

Combining methodological and narrative specifications draws thus a 4-groups cartography where each group can be described as follows.

**The first group** is polarized towards conservation issues broadly rather than specifically applied to a type of habitat. Spanning from 1992 to 2019, with a median year in 2006, it can be viewed as a first generation of models applied to conservation, i.e, focusing on the optimal ways to conserve species rather than harvesting them. This corpus focuses on how to efficiently preserve species given a limited budget for land acquisition through a cost-effectiveness approach without any biodiversity monetarization. It can be viewed as a generalization of the so-called "Noah's Ark" problem ([Weitzman \(1998\)](#)). In this paper, [Weitzman](#) considers the genetic diversity of an array of species to maximize the amount of biological diversity one can fit into an Ark, e.g, given a limited budget and the cost of conserving a species. An array of papers, such as [Courtois et al. \(2014\)](#) revisit Weitzman's definition of diversity, including species interactions, to refine the criterion to be maximized in conservation planning.

Considering not only one Ark, but a variety of habitat patches for species conservation broadens again the issue. Moreover, including costs in the decision process is required to design efficient conservation strategy. This concern yields optimal reserve site selection problems. Whereas the seminal Weitzman's Ark framework was a theoretical one, this extension usually comes with a theoretical enquiry and an empirical case study. For example, [Costello and Polasky \(2004\)](#) focus on the optimal combination of sites suitable for an array of species that need to be set aside from development, permanently or temporarily. Using dynamic integer programming, the authors showed that the timing of decisions, the quality of habitat in patches as well as their costs is key to designing optimal reserve sites for a large set of Southern California vertebrates. Using the same approach, a wide array of papers focus on the static problem of optimal reserve site selection at a very large scale, in order to prioritize conservation projects. For example, [Moore et al. \(2004\)](#) focus on the minimization of the costs to operate a network of reserves in Africa that covers 10% of its 118 ecoregions. Using species-area relationships and considering that land costs are correlated with high endemism or threat, focusing only on cheap areas was unlikely to yield the desired conservation outcome. Moreover, factoring in land prices in the reserve site decision problems was shown to increase the cost-effectiveness of the prioritization scheme.

**The second group** spans from 1993 to 2021, with a median publication year in 2010. Focusing on conservation, it can be viewed as a second generation of models tackling specific habitat-based conservation measures. The typical research question is how to conserve biodiversity in a working landscape, i.e, when land-use is devoted to agriculture, and to a lesser extent, to forestry. Considering biodiversity, mostly in the form of multiple species, as a separate entity, a cost-effective problem is framed in order to find optimal solutions to reconcile the economic and ecological objectives. In this context, a wide array of solutions are considered. For example [Polasky et al. \(2005\)](#) develop a spatially explicit framework in which a large set of vertebrates from Oregon can stochastically migrate across land patches as they compete for habitat with agriculture and forestry. Due to the analytical complexity of the problem, [Polasky et al. \(2005\)](#) use a variety of algorithms to gradually increase the biodiversity objective and find the least-cost policy in terms of land use, thus resulting in a production possibility frontier.

While land-use policies are key, other articles investigate monetary based policy instruments to conserve biodiversity. In this approach, [Drechsler et al. \(2007\)](#) develop a single-species, spatially explicit meta-population model of butterflies living in an agricultural landscape in Germany. Taking into account species dynamics, agricultural constraints, and heterogeneous land quality for agricultural and conservation purposes, they design means of determining cost-effective solu-

tions to biodiversity conservation through conservation payments. Based on this framework, they show that patch-specific conservation payments can increase ecological benefits up to 50% compared to uniform strategies. Co-leading a European strand of literature on the conservation of species in a working landscape is [Mouysset et al. \(2012\)](#). In this paper, a spatially explicit model of 620 small French agricultural areas is coupled with a public decision maker who aims at preserving diversity under budgetary constraint. Farmers decide their management schemes under uncertainty and with no specific regards to biodiversity, apart from economic incentives. The model is used to evaluate various policy scenarios pertaining to farm management and the impact on common farm bird species. Optimal policies such as tax and subsidies to promote biodiversity conservation are derived.

**The third group** is the largest group (51% of our database) from our classification, spanning over the whole temporal distribution (1973-2021) and a median year in 2005. It is mostly concerned with the notion of harvesting, i.e, removing a portion of the biodiversity variable for beneficial use. The measure of this beneficial use tends to be monetary, and the problem is framed as the maximization of the profit or utility of a set of agents derived from the flow of the biodiversity variable, mostly population, raising thus a cost-benefit problem. The notion of harvesting is mostly applied to two particular sets of species, endangered/remarkable species and invasive species, that are characterized with opposite properties : the former is an economic "good", the latter is an economic "bad".

In the endangered/remarkable case, a good example is [Skonhoft \(1999\)](#). Considering the case of African wildlife, especially large mammals, and factoring in land-use costs, non-consumptive benefits, nuisance costs and harvest profits, Skonhoft examines the dynamics of a single species' population and its optimal harvesting scheme, in a deterministic framework. This paper can be seen as one of the most refined versions of the work of [Clark \(1973b\)](#) and later on [Swanson \(1994\)](#), who examines the optimal harvesting of African elephants in the context of land-use pressures, later on refined by [Alexander \(2000\)](#) through the integration of non-consumptive values. In this strand of literature, the institutional arrangements between stakeholders are refined, thus examining the equilibria between poachers and locals, the potential for tourism revenue, and the interaction of conservation measures and harvesting. What is key is the Human around interactions surrounding the resource, rather than the resource's intrinsic dynamics, such as migration or uncertain population dynamics.

Invasive species, whether present in agricultural, forestry or wildlife settings, are one of the earliest application cases of bioeconomic modeling for terrestrial ecosystems. In these settings, a resource owner (mostly farmers or foresters) are concerned with the spread of a single invasive species. In this case, optimal control methods are developed to compute the optimal amount of surveillance and detection, pesticides use, preventive cuts or harvests, to prevent damages from invasions. A typical example can be found in [Jayasuriya et al. \(2011\)](#). In this article, a state of the art population dynamics, seed-bank model is applied to a crop invader. This invasive species spreads stochastically, depending on both its intrinsic growth rate, and the agricultural crop growth rate. Using dynamic stochastic programming, the authors show that control measures are always beneficial, and that if eradication is too costly, it still pays to maintain infestation at low levels. While agricultural damages are of interest, the value of ecological degradation from biological invasions are also considered. For example, [Taylor and Hastings \(2004\)](#) investigate the spread of *Spartina Alterniflora*, an invasive grass species, in Willapa Bay in the state of Washington in the USA. This species, subject to a density-dependent, age-structured growth function, is to be removed, and the authors investigate the least cost strategy, for the sake of the preservation of the local landscape.

Eventually, **the fourth group** spans all over our temporal distribution, with a median year in 2002. This group focuses on more specific biodiversity dynamics. It tends to focus on uncertain biodiversity dynamics, and to a lesser extent, multiple species relationships (mostly predator-prey, but incorporating some mutualistic configurations). In this context, decision makers are concerned with the optimal harvesting of a stochastic population that can be an economic good or bad. It is therefore no surprise that forestry economics are more represented in this setting. A typical example can be found in [Lin et al. \(1996\)](#), where a density-dependent stochastic growth model governs the evolution of forest stands characterized by their diversity. The question, akin to Faustmann's seminal interrogation ([Faustmann, 1849a](#)), sums up to when is it optimal to harvest this uneven-aged stands forest? Taking into account age and species diversity modifies the optimal harvesting rule.

Forests can also be the habitat to stochastic populations of invasive species. For example, [Epanchin-Niell et al. \(2014\)](#) focus on bark beetles and wood borers, that may invade forests. The authors focus on the optimal surveillance strategy to develop in order to prevent a detrimental forest invasion in New Zealand. The program's costs are weighed against the benefits (in the form of forgone damages) from earlier detection. Their appraisal of the relative costs and benefits from surveillance suggest that implementing the program is always beneficial, under all considered scenarios. Eventually, a small last strand of literature of this fourth group focuses on the economic implications of the stochastic nature of biodiversity on the provision of ecosystem services. Using a single species, closed-form mathematical framework, [Augeraud-Véron et al. \(2019\)](#) investigate the value of biodiversity as an insurance device for agricultural production, as it decreases agricultural productivity volatility. In a similar fashion, [Baumgärtner \(2007\)](#) characterizes the insurance value of biodiversity in the provision of monetary values ecosystem services, not specifically agriculture. Biodiversity conservation therefore becomes a financial product, akin to financial insurance.

Not surprisingly, articles from the first two groups (related to conservation paradigm) were published in economics journals for a first half, and non-economics journals for the second half (mainly Ecology journals but also Sustainability science journals). This testifies of the explicit integration of other disciplines in the study of conservation issues, while modeling approaches remain anchored by the economics methodology. On the contrary, articles from the last two groups (related to the harvesting paradigm) display a disciplinary distribution skewed towards Economics journals. This dominance of economics journals is consistent with the methodological specifications of the bioeconomic models within these corpus, which are directly in line with economic theory.

Eventually, the second group of our overall cartography displays an over-representation of European researchers (63% of the corpus, compared to 37% of the database) as well as an under representation from North-American research. A European strand thus emerges out of this corpus, led by Drechsler, Wätzold and Mouysset<sup>11</sup>, focusing on biodiversity conservation in agricultural settings. The other corpus do not display a significantly different geographical distribution from the full database.

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<sup>11</sup>These authors are the top 3 of the most credited authors in the corpus, thus each representing 10% or more of the publications.

## 6 Discussion

### 1 Bioeconomic models as tools to manage social-ecological systems

Designing sustainable development paths in the context of the ecological crisis requires identifying sustainable dynamics or equilibria, which could be defined as the long-term behaviors needed to maintain both socioeconomic and ecological systems. To characterize such sustainable states and their underlying drivers, an adequate understanding and representation of the relationships between society and ecosystems are required ([IPBES, 2016](#)). In this respect, we are forced to deal simultaneously with considerations of economic and ecological dynamics as well as their mutual interactions by integrating feedback effects and interdependences between the ecological and socioeconomic systems ([Carpenter et al., 2009](#); [Figueiredo and Pereira, 2011](#); [Perrings, 2011](#)). Since the modelling communities in the natural and social sciences are relatively isolated from each other, substantial research efforts have to be done to overcome linguistic, epistemological, technical and other hurdles between the disciplines to provide a consistent framework ([Rindfuss et al., 2004](#))

The bioeconomic mathematically-based method reviewed in this article fits perfectly with this objective. By modelling complex structures and interactions within social-ecological systems, this type of model investigates how people perceive their well-being, how people make decisions to enhance their well-being, how it is affected by environmental conditions, how people may adapt their behaviour as their environment changes and how policies might be designed to be ecologically and economically efficient and socially accepted.

The set of models we reviewed in this article reveals nevertheless a plurality in the way that individuals and groups value nature, especially pending on contexts and scales. By combining methodology-based and narrative-based analysis, our cartography showed that this plurality of understandings, to perceive the interactions between human and nature within the social-ecological systems, can be embodied within two main and opposite human-nature paradigms. The first one is related to harvesting while the second one to conservation.

The harvesting paradigm resonates with the early nature paradigm where nature is mainly seen as wild nature, grasped in its emblematic dimension. In this context, living elements are linked to socioeconomic decisions without considering any of their ecological features nor economic particularities except their direct and visible benefits. It can be understood as the modernization of the "conservationist" movement in the United States in the late XIXth century, championed by Gifford Pinchot, who conceived Nature through its instrumental value for humans and adopted a model of rational planning for resource use ([Banzhaf, 2019](#)). This conception of nature underlies international institutions such as the World Wide Fund for Nature founded in 1961 or emblematic public policies such as the Endangered Species Act established in 1973 the USA.

Beside this harvesting paradigm, the conservation group derives from a second paradigm stemming from the early "preservationist" movement, whereby Nature should be conserved for its own sake, led by naturalist John Muir ([Banzhaf, 2019](#)). This paradigm was reshaped by the concept of biodiversity in the 90's. Popularized in 1992 by the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio, the concept of biodiversity captures both the notion of biological diversity and its ongoing situation of crisis ([Robin and Libby, 2011](#)). This new concept has implied two switches. First, it appears crucial to extend the conception of biological diversity by incorporating genetic, population, and ecosystem diversity to the classical species diversity, and by moving from emblematic nature to common and ordinary nature. Second, such an explicit context of ecological crisis calls unambiguously for protection.

Today both paradigms coexist in the mathematically-based bioeconomic modeling framework. In this perspective, this method seems to offer an up-to-date and promising context to

think and assess the management of terrestrial social-ecological systems. In the 1990's and 00s, the biodiversity crisis spurred social demand and agenda setting in environmental policy, thus accelerating the development of this method.

## 2 Discussion about the recent and on-going decline

Despite a large increase in the 90's and 00's, our review reveals a decline over the last few years (since 2008), which is surprising as the question of sustainably managing terrestrial social-ecological systems is far from being solved. Indeed this situation is quite unusual for a methodology associated with such a burning issue and which seems to offer an up-to-date framework. This recent decrease might suggest a lag between the questions opened by the sustainable management of terrestrial social-ecological system and the answers brought by this bioeconomic mathematical modeling method. Understanding such a lag constitutes a determinant methodological stake with two implications: (i) defining the insights of the bioeconomic methodology to the knowledge in the field of economics, (ii) identifying perspectives of development of this methodology in regards with this ecological crisis.

A crucial perspective to investigate these questions is to proceed to a similar analysis of the neighboring methodological corpuses, including agro-ecological and land use change models, declarative bioeconomic models, simulation-based models (*i.e* without mathematical specifications, biodiversity and ecosystem service quantification articles etc). Studying the technical features of such methods and their changes would be a determinant piece of information to understand the coexistence of the different methods aiming at studying the management of terrestrial social-ecological systems. To complete this analysis, it may be informative to extend this overall comparative analysis to the habitat, by distinguishing marine and terrestrial habitats<sup>12</sup>. Indeed the nature paradigm might slightly differ among these habitats, due to differences in the intensity of the competition between nature and society. The most adequate methodology to investigate the bioeconomic question can thus be different. This might be an explanation of the differences in the development of such a methodology for marine and terrestrial resources

Among the neighboring methods, one of them merits specific attention, namely the correlative models (see for example [Leclère et al. \(2020\)](#), who use a wide array of Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs) and biodiversity models (BDMs) to evaluate biodiversity decline scenarios). This method, widely popular in ecological sciences, also fits with social expectations for decision-makers regarding social-ecological system management ([IPBES, 2016](#)). Indeed, there is a social demand for data-driven models since these ones look more realistic and reliable to make management decision. In this perspective, the correlative approaches based on large datasets might look more accurate to design concrete public policies and management strategies than the process-based model such as the mathematical bioeconomic models. Moreover, the IPBES report highlights the need for user-friendly modeling tools to be successfully used by decision-makers. Correlative models are based on mathematical tools since statistical analysis relies on mathematical foundations. However, by emphasizing the results on the data instead of the mathematical foundations, such tools look more understandable than process-based approaches which emphasize the equations of processes and frequently provide results in terms of stylized facts. By emphasizing the centrality of mathematics in the method, the process-based models are less accessible to a non-specialist audience. These specificities might explain the relative decline of mathematical

<sup>12</sup>Terrestrial bioeconomic models applied to terrestrial biodiversity management seem to represent a smaller yet comparable share of the literature as bioeconomic models applied to marine ecosystems. A search on SCOPUS yields 418 articles (respectively 212) against 407 (respectively 229). (We used the following query : *TITLE-ABS-KEY (bioeconomic AND model)* as well as *TITLE-ABS-KEY (bioeconomic AND modeling)* selecting the appropriate keywords pertaining to both sub-fields. Because the selection was operated using keywords, some articles applied to marine ecosystems can remain. The aim of these numbers is to gauge the magnitude order of the different literature strands

bioeconomic models which may have benefited integrated data-driven approaches.

Despite substantial advantages, data-driven correlative approaches have to deal with several difficulties. First, they usually rely on specific and user-friendly softwares. While many tools are open-source and freely accessible, access to proprietary softwares can be attained through financial support from funding sources such as the UN, the World Bank and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species ([IPBES, 2016](#)). Similar problems emerge to access some datasets since some of them remain costly. To overcome this difficulty, it is possible to use different platforms collecting biodiversity and ecosystem services datasets at large scale. However their use is not always easy since inconsistencies and a lack of complementarity persist and interfere with an optimal use of the data. Second, correlative models are calibrated with existing data. Therefore it is impossible to model unexpected effects which never happened in the past. Yet there is an urgent need from the stakeholders to identify early tipping points as proxy of regime shifts to avoid crisis before its emergence ([Zimmermann et al., 2009](#)).

Mathematical bioeconomic models offer promising answers to these two limits. First the approach is less dependant to datasets and softwares. Second the modeling of the explicit processes makes possible the integration of events out of the set of calibration, including crisis effects. In this context, we understand that bioeconomic models offer a complementary tool to the popular correlative models. Actually, a variety of modelling approaches may often be available for addressing the social-ecological system research questions. As mentioned by the IPBES report ([IPBES, 2016](#)), debates about the use of correlative versus process-based models are frequently polluted by misconceptions about the utility of these models. Yet, many modelling exercises have clearly illustrated the benefits of combining multiple model types since it improves the quality of the management of social-ecological systems by providing complementary understandings of the research question and limitating uncertainty ([Cheaib et al., 2012; Gritti et al., 2013; van Oijen et al., 2013](#)).

Due to this complementarity, we support that the ongoing decline of the mathematical bioeconomic method is not desirable and merits to be reverse. This reversal calls therefore for improvements in adequacy between the method and the social demand from decision-makers.

### 3 Challenges for bioeconomic models

Our methodological cartography makes possible to observe that bioeconomic models have gradually improved over time. First, we highlighted the evolution of the model features in both paradigms. While earlier models lacked an inclusion of uncertainty, whether through a stochastic component in the ecological or economic model or a sensitivity analysis on the model parameters, they gradually evolved to take into account several forms of uncertainty, for example in the form of stochastic population dynamics ([Bulte and Kooten, 1999](#)) or uncertainties in the value of ecosystem services ([Augeraud-Véron et al., 2019](#)). However, in line with [Drechsler \(2020\)](#), it appears that uncertainty remains to be systematically integrated and considered as a major modeling component.

Second, the bioeconomic method has gradually encompassed the spatial dimension, and recognized its importance in both model components. Following [Sanchirico and Wilen \(1999\)](#), the spatial component has been integrated on the ecological side, in the form of a "patchy resource", paving the way for spatially differentiated population dynamics, namely meta-populations. The use of spatially differentiated data for ecological processes, including different habitat qualities, has gradually increased as well as spatially differentiated economic components. Third, a variety of actors have been gradually included, ranging from a single resource owner to complex property rights settings (local conservation agencies and communities competing for the resource ([Skonhoft, 1998](#)), neighboring farmers facing a common threat of invasive species ([Fenichel et al.,](#)

2014)) and political settings (with the integrated management, by a social planner, of heterogeneous farmers (Mouysset et al., 2014) through public policies). Eventually, the process-based models we reviewed have gradually included some key components of correlative-methods, in order to be applied to real world settings and to provide policy guidance and evaluation. For example, species-area relationships have gradually been included. Notably Davis et al. (2006) investigate efficient conservation measures in a utility maximizing framework, where they used a species-area relationship to measure the value of conservation in the Sierra Nevada bioregion of California, instead of designing a fully tractable species model. These different improvements testify ways to better fit real-world conditions and thus answer to social expectations from decision-makers managing concrete terrestrial social-ecological systems.

However these improvements do not totally overcome the challenges. For example, explicit geographic economic components remain mostly absent from our sample and constitute an ongoing challenge of bioeconomic models. Likewise, the articulation of actors within social-ecological systems remains an unsolved question since a wider variety of actors, especially local stakeholders and households, could better be taken into account.

Beyond these methodological examples in direct lines with our cartography, we can point out some more general fruitful avenues for future methodological improvements of bioeconomic models to better fit with stakeholders' needs. First, regarding the human-nature paradigm: indigenous standpoints and different value cultural systems should more systematically integrate into bioeconomic models which remain for now grounded in Western-Occidental ethics (Kneese and Schulze, 1985). Especially, spirituality underpinning the value of nature could be integrated, although existing works such as Lopes and Atallah (2020) investigate trade-offs and perform valuations of spirituality based on the framework pioneered by Krutilla (1967). Second, regarding the methodology : a more systematic use of statistical approaches developed by correlative models to calibrate or interpret the process-based modeling might provide the in-real anchorage desired by decision-makers. Third, regarding the communication platform. Inspired by correlative models, it would probably be strategic to provide easy-to-use softwares which generate the results of simulations pending on a set of parameters that the user can change. Even if the results can be expressed in stylized facts, this way of communication is not operational for practitioners.

#### 4 Technical limitations and perspectives

Our cartography relies on a review which might be discussed at several levels. First of all, in spite of our efforts, we could not access *Forest Science*, a leading review in forestry. Therefore, forestry is underepresented in our sample. That being said, a sizeable share (16%) of our sample focuses on the topic. Second, our review procedure encompasses several criteria with a high level of generality. This methodological choice aims at filling a gap in the literature since most of the reviews focus on a smaller level. However, refining our methodological criteria, such as the ecological models we considered (population dynamics v. others) or the framing of uncertainty (absent or present, it can be refined through an analysis of stochasticity, sensitivity analysis) might help to precise the groups depicted by the MCA and thus help to connect our cartography to existing reviews, such as Eppink and van den Bergh (2007) and Castro et al. (2018). Third, our methodological characterization relies on a K-modes algorithm, an extension of K-means. Although well performing, the potential of such algorithms is limited by the number of observations. Given the number of variables and potential values, our sample size could limit the power of the K-modes algorithm in retrieving the structure of the dataset. In this perspective, other classification algorithms merit investigation to assess the robustness of our cartography. Fourth, our narrative elicitation with text data can be viewed as coarse, given that it only encompasses word counts and lexical groups. Further analysis should deploy a more comprehensive method to analyze

narratives quantitatively, and select a limited sample to conduct in depth analysis of narrative structures. Moreover other semantic fields might be investigated to precise the narrative underlying the different groups.

Finally, we adopted here a method perspective to cartography the bioeconomic models. We complete this perspective with some sociological information related to geographical origins of the researchers and to disciplines in which articles are published. However at this stage this information remains scarce and merits to be deepened by a specific sociological analysis. For example, connections between labs and institutions as well as between researchers measured by professional relationships (PhD student & supervisor), and citation networks such as in [Smessaert et al. \(2020\)](#) could yield interesting results. Regarding disciplinary aspects, an epistemological discussion would constitute a valuable addition in this economic field at the interface with natural sciences. All these elements might be used to precise our cartography but might also be the basis of new cartographies which could be confronted to the methodological ones. Convergences or divergences between technical, sociological and epistemological stakes might be this way highlighted.

## Acknowledgements

We are thankful to two anonymous referees and the editors for their valuable suggestions and comments.

## A Appendix

### A Article selection equation on SCOPUS

In order to select articles, we performed a research on SCOPUS using the following query :

TITLE-ABS-KEY ( biodiversity AND ( ecological-economic OR bio-economic OR economic ) AND modeling ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENVI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "AGRI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "EART" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENER" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENGI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "COMP" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MATH" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "DECI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BIOC" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) )

TITLE-ABS-KEY (bioeconomic AND modeling) LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENVI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "AGRI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "EART" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENER" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENGI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "COMP" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MATH" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "DECI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BIOC" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) )

TITLE-ABS-KEY (bioeconomic AND model) LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENVI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "AGRI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "EART" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENER" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ENGI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "COMP" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MATH" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "DECI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BIOC" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) )

### B Lexical groups

**Agriculture** : agriculture, agricultural, crop, rangeland, livestock, forage, fallow, farmland, grassland, oats, agri, farmers, grazing, crop, livestock, farming, wheat, crops, farm, cropping, range-land, grazing, stocking, alfalfa, wheat, agro, crofting, pastures, ranchers, range, grasslands

**Forest** : Trees, stand, tree, forest, forestry, basal, spruce, even-aged, uneven-aged, forests, timber, diameter, wood, pine, faustmann, volume, reforestation, rotation, rotational, acacia,forested, lichen

**Invasive species** : Invasive species, invasive, rabies, invasion, invasivespecies, invader, coevolution, non-endemic, nis, eradication, pest, mountainpinebeetle, weevil, disease, gypsophila, weevil, oats, weed, herbicide, invader, rabies, pathogens, invasivespecies, indigenous, barrier, infestation, alien, beaver, calvescens, eradicate, host, resistance, infestations, pesticide, pests, invasions, weed, weeds, pest, nonindigenous, pathogen, invaders, spartinaalterniflora, spartina, beetle, endemic, emeraldashborer, beetles, avena, rodent, serratedtussock, tuberculosis, miconiacalvescens, vaccine, insects, spread, vector-borne, epidemiology, quarantine, trap

**Endangered/remarkable species :** Endangered species, remarkable, trophy, tiger, endangered-species, warbler, moose, illegal, threatened, threats, endangered, elephants, butterfly, wildlife, game, poachers, wolf, reindeer, poaching, wolves, elephant, bushmeat, ivory, black, hunt, canislupus, hunters, bear, serengeti, tigers, deer, rhino, extinction, endangered

**Policy :** Policy, subsidy, tax, tradable, subsidies, instruments, policy, policies, payments, taxes, market, markets, incentives, payment, permits, taxes, incentive, funding, budget, budgets, conflict, conflicts, bonus, planner, taxation, property, market-based, contracts, interventions, intervention, strategy, propertyrights, taxsubsidy

**Risk :** risk, uncertainty, insurance, markov, option, resilience, stochastic, probabilities, uncertain

**Conservation :** conservation, park, reserve, sites, restoration, planning, conservationplanning

**Harvesting :** harvesting, harvests, harvest, hunting

## C Supplementary tables

	<i>Biodiversity measure</i>	<i>Proxy measure</i>	<i>Biodiversity state variable</i>
<b>Biodiversity characterization</b>	Per se Proxy	No - per se Habitat Economic activity Conservation budget Not specified	Population Species Community (species & population) Not specified
	<i>Biological diversity</i>	<i>Biodiversity contribution level</i>	
	Functional Genetic Functional & genetic	Single species Multiple species Unknown	
<b>Ecological specifications</b>	<i>Dynamics</i>	<i>Spatiality</i>	<i>Uncertainty</i>
	Pop. dyn. Other	Explicit Implicit Absent	Stochastic Deterministic
<b>Bioeconomic linkage specifications</b>	<i>Biodiversity monetarization</i>	<i>Bioeconomic problem</i>	<i>Biodiversity stake</i>
	Yes No	Cost-benefit analysis Cost-effectiveness analysis	Constraint Objective Other
<b>Economic specifications</b>	<i>Dynamics</i>	<i>Spatiality</i>	<i>Uncertainty</i>
	Static Dynamic	Explicit Implicit Absent	Stochastic Deterministic
<b>General characteristics</b>	<i>Solving method</i>	<i>Data anchorage</i>	<i>Model use</i>
	Closed form Numerical solution Both	Theoretical Empirical Both	Normative Descriptive
	<i>Equilibrium</i>		
	General Partial		

Table 1.A: List of the methodological criteria and their related items used to perform the methodology-based cartography. In grey stand the criteria which have been excluded after the sensitivity analysis of the MCA.

<i>Economic journals</i>	<i>Count(60%)</i>	<i>Ecology journals</i>	<i>Count(26%)</i>
Ecological Economics	44	Ecological Modelling	15
American Journal of Agricultural Economics	19	Biological Conservation	11
Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	19	Ecological Applications	11
Environmental and Resource Economics	15	Canadian Journal of Forest Research	6
Resource and Energy Economics	15	Journal of Applied Ecology	6
Land Economics	11	Conservation Biology	4
Environment and Development Economics	6	Forest Science	4
Journal of Bioeconomics	6	Diversity and Distributions	3
Journal of Environmental Management	6	Forest Ecology and Management	3
Agricultural Economics	4	Biological Invasions	2
Review of Agricultural Economics	4	Conservation Letters	2
Australian Journal of Agricultural Economics	3	Ecology Letters	2
Journal of Economics	3	Biodiversity and Conservation	1
Journal of Forest Economics	3	Commonwealth Forestry Research	1
Agricultural and Resource Economics Review	2	Ecological Indicators	1
American Economic Review	2	Ecology and Society	1
European Review of Agricultural Economics	2	Environmental Entomology	1
Journal of Economic Theory	2	European Journal of Forest Research	1
Canadian Journal of Economics	1	Journal for Nature Conservation	1
Computational Economics	1	Journal of Economic Entomology	1
Econometrica	1	Journal of Forestry Research	1
Economic Inquiry	1	Journal of Theoretical Biology	1
Economic Theory	1	New Forests	1
Journal of African Economics	1	Silva Fennica	1
Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics	1	Theoretical Population Biology	1
Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	1	Wildlife Biology	1
Journal of Agricultural Economics	1		
Journal of Economic Dynamics & Control	1		
Kiel Working Papers	1	<i>Sustainability science journals</i>	<i>Count (10%)</i>
Management Science	1	Natural Resource Modeling	10
MPRA Papers	1	Agricultural Systems	3
MPRA Working Papers	1	Environmental Modeling and Software	2
Oxford Economic Papers	1	Environmental Modeling and Assessment	2
Review of marketing and Agricultural Economics	1	PNAS	2
RFF Discussion papers	1	Australian Journal of Experimental	1
Social Choice and Welfare	1	Agriculture	
Socio-Economic Planning Sciences	1	Central European Journal of Operations	1
Spatial Economic Analysis	1	Research	
The Australian Journal of Agricultural and	1	Climatic Change	1
Resource Economics	1	EcoHealth	1
The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy	1	Ecosystem Services	1
The Journal of Political Economy	1	Journal of Biological Dynamics	1
Western Journal of Agricultural Economics	1	Journal of Environment Management	1
		Land Use Policy	1
		Nature	1
<i>Applied Mathematics journals</i>	<i>Count (4%)</i>	Non Linear Analysis	1
Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications	2	Operations Research	1
Journal of Mathematical Biology	2	PLoS One	1
Applied Mathematics Letters	1	Proceedings of the Royal Society	1
Biometrics	1	Regional Environmental Change	1
Bulletin of Mathematical Biology	1	Science	1
Computers and Mathematics with Applications	1		
Journal of Optimisation Theory and Applications	1		
Mathematical Biosciences	1		
Mathematical Biosciences and Engineering	1		
Mathematical Models and Methods in Applied Science	1		

Table 1.B: Journal distributions among disciplines

## D Supplementary figures

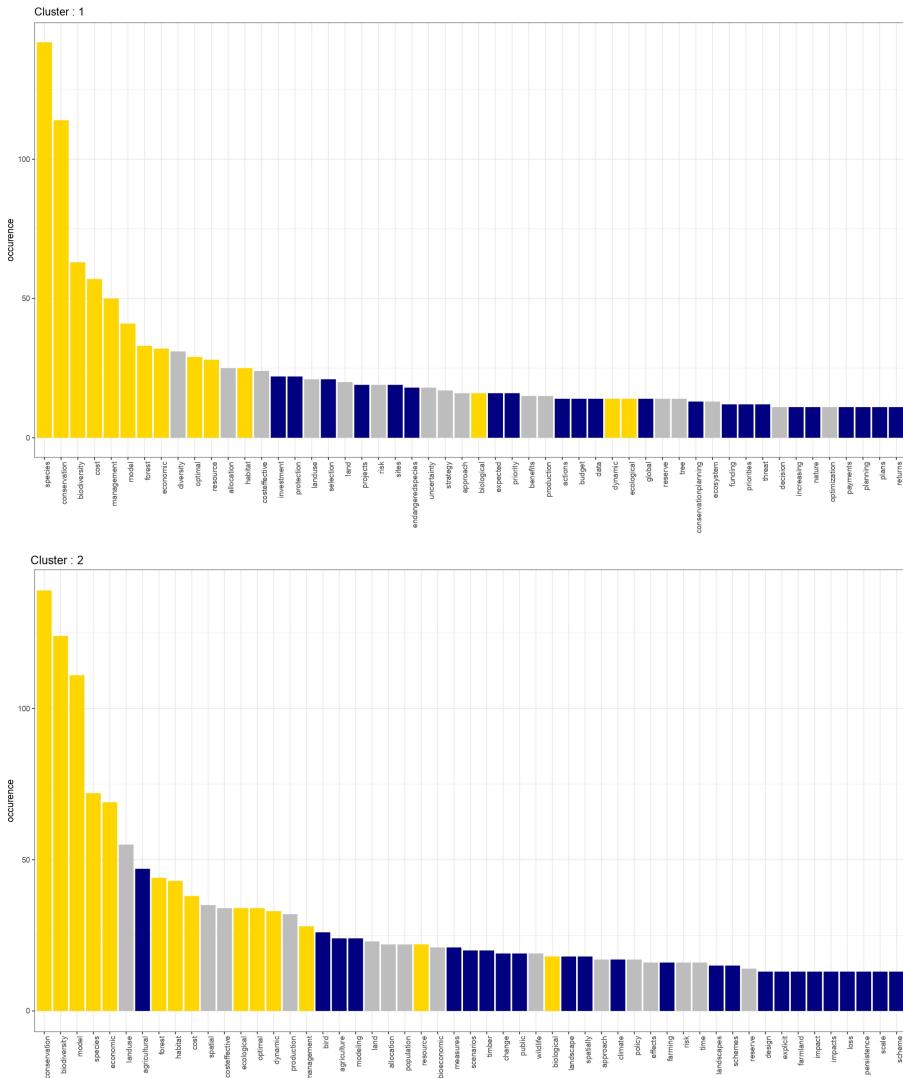


Figure 1.C: Distribution profiles of the 50 words the more frequent for methodology-based groups 1 and 2. In yellow stand the words in common among the 4 profiles. On the opposite in blue stand the words specific to a profile

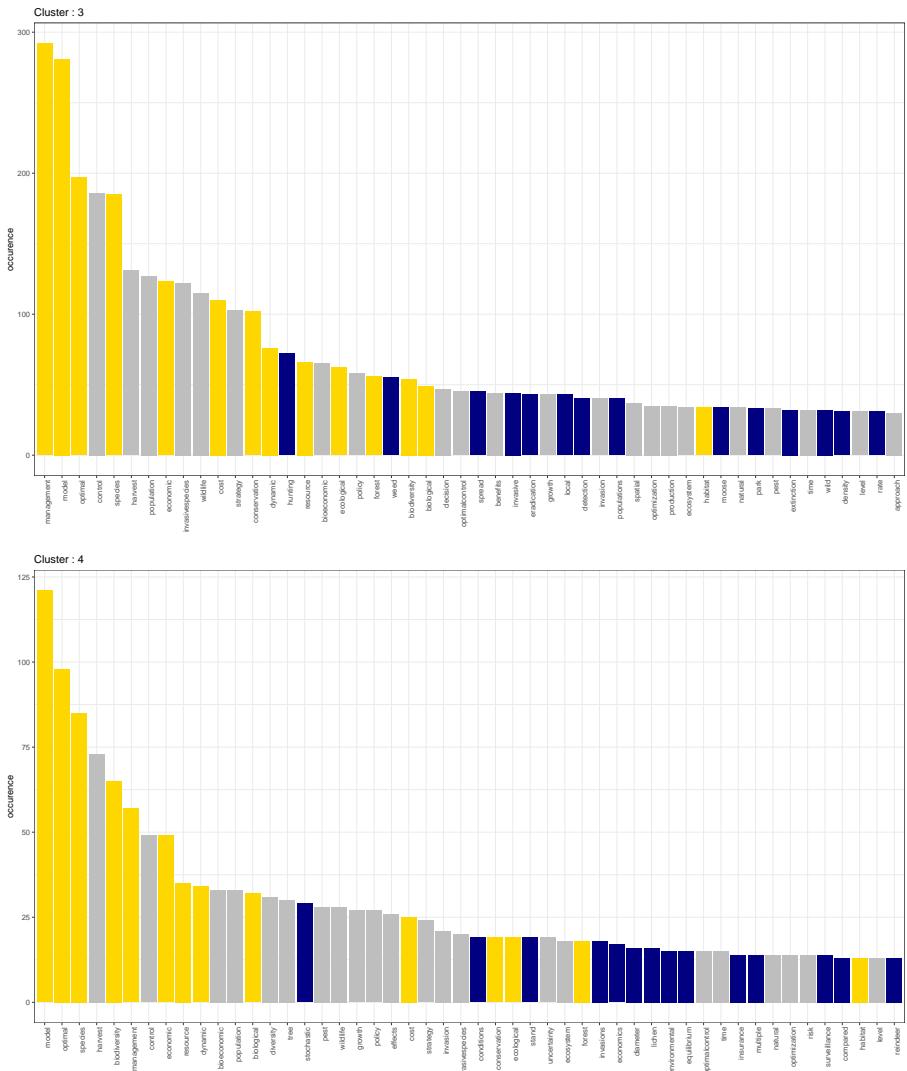


Figure 1.D: Distribution profiles of the 50 words the more frequent for methodology-based groups 3 and 4. In yellow stand the words in common among the 4 profiles. On the opposite in blue stand the words specific to a profile

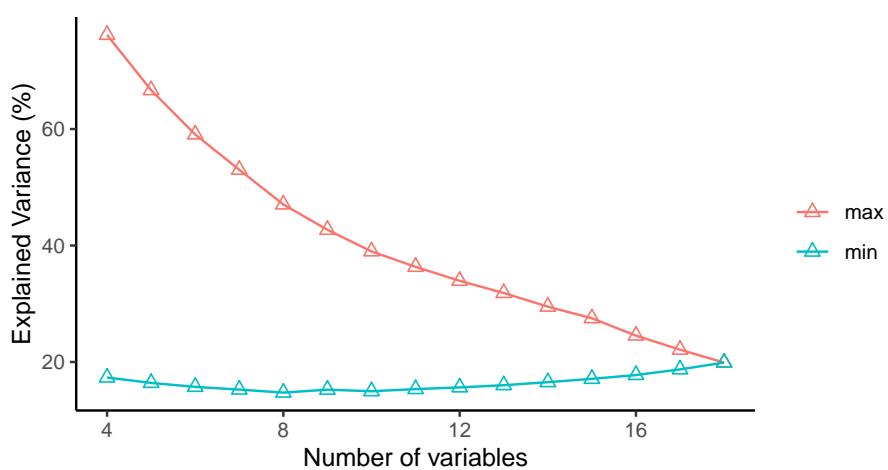


Figure 1.E: Explained variance function of the number of methodological criteria used in the MCA.

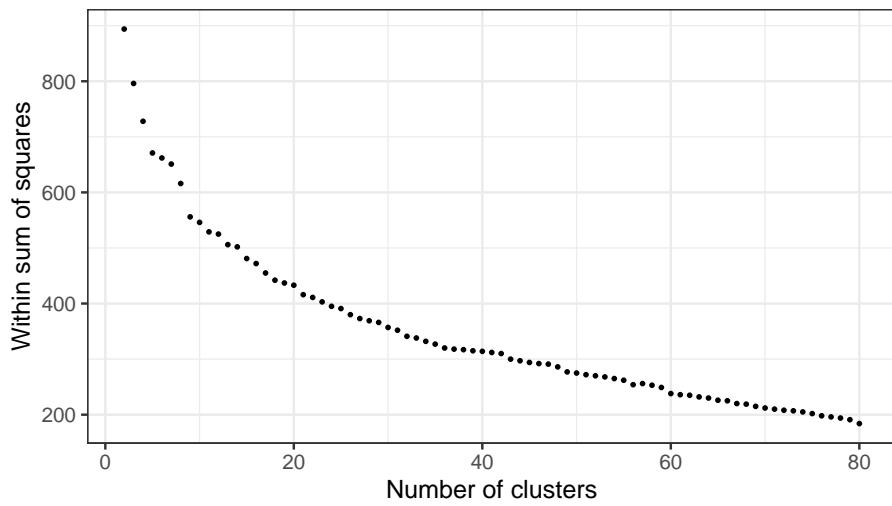


Figure 1.F: Cost function of the K-modes.

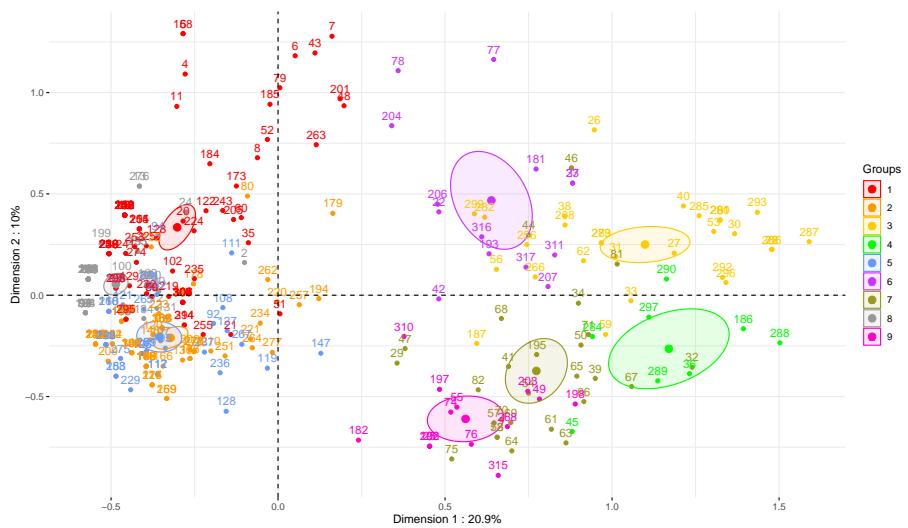


Figure 1.G: Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) running on 12 methodological criteria and 9 groups.

## **Part II**

# **Managing space and movement in terrestrial landscapes**



## Chapter 2

# The wildfire-habitat connectivity dilemma: a graph theoretical approach to landscape management

### Abstract

**Background:** Fuel treatment operations help to mitigate the spread and severity of wildfires in numerous ecosystems. As they aim at fragmenting the fire landscape, they also fragment wildlife habitat. This poses a dilemma for land managers, in the form of a trade-off between lowering wildfire patch connectivity and maintaining wildlife habitat connectivity. Previous studies have investigated the spatial allocation of fuel treatments over time, mostly without specific care devoted to biodiversity, in a variety of case studies. However, they lack generality and an interpretative framework. We use dynamic programming and graph theory on every possible theoretical landscape configuration to gain a general understanding of the allocation of treatments over space and time and the corresponding landscape properties with various habitat connectivity targets.

**Results:** Our results show that all initial landscapes converge to steady-state landscape cycles. Moreover, we show that there exist optimal trajectories that significantly reduce wildfire risk while safeguarding habitat connectivity. As the policy budget increases, more risk reduction is achieved, albeit with a decreasing marginal efficiency, and more steady-state cycles emerge. As habitat targets increase, increasing the budget is of no effect, and risk increases, while the number of steady-state cycles decreases. Landscapes are less risky, more fragmented, and diverse when the budget is large and biodiversity targets are low, while they are more compact and less diverse when the opposite is true. Treatment allocation follows graph centrality measures, and central cells are treated first. When the budget increases, fewer central cells (i.e. edge **patches**) are treated as well. When biodiversity targets increase, central cells are no longer treated as they decrease habitat connectivity. Treatment is reshuffled to the edges of the landscape.

**Conclusion:** Computational experiments generalize existing results. Using graph theory, general insights can be gained, and help managers faced with multiple objectives in forested landscapes. From a policy perspective, in the face of climate change, increasing treatment budgets should be a priority to avoid increasing damages. A key guideline is treating a variety of seral stages to create landscape diversity, mitigate risk and guarantee the connectivity of wildlife habitat.

**Keywords :** Fuel treatment, connectivity, wildfire risk, wildlife habitat, spatial optimization, graph theory

## To do

### Analysis

- Run sample analysis for successive optimization
- Compare outcomes
  - Compare FPPs
  - Compare locations of treatments : centrality, degree etc
  - Compare landscapes characteristics
- Need to think of the 5 period optimization v. the 3 age structure.

### Purpose of the paper

- Launch all of the analysis : impossible for dynamic optimization
- We do a subsample of 300 landscapes for real dynamic optimization: can generalize the findings
- We compare and find the general rules in a probabilistic sense
- Then we find globally applicable rules of treatment allocation
- Then we test them on large scale landscapes (100x100) and we test with different strategies:
  - Treat only old cells
  - Treat only young cells
  - Treat central cells
  - Treat a lot now, and less in the future (e.g. shift the budget towards today)

### Rewriting

- Justify why this is an economics problem
  - We look at the social planner solution, and not the decentralized problem, because of the spatial, stochastic externality : space creates an interdependence and stochastic nature tends to cause underprotection.
  - Public ownership of land
  - Budget constraint
  - Scale
- Need to reinforce the wildfire risk/biodiversity relationship :
  - Redo literature review to link the two
  - Show clear examples with graphs
- Need to reinforce our contribution in terms of what the problem is, and how our analysis is innovative :
  - Dynamic MILP : we do 5 periods : how do they relate to real life and how can we justify it?

- The former point implies the curse of dimensionality
- In terms of graphs : we do not really do it in terms of coding, but we do it
- NP hardness etc
- Compare with existing literature, including the ones from the reviewers : network flow, or corridor : this is a single species view, or a hotspot to hotspot view, we do offer a view for multi level, multi functional biological diversity, not just the hotspots. THe question of the scale of movement of considered species is of course key. We adopt a broader view?
- Need to write the model in a better way : fuck *Fire Ecology*.

# 1 Introduction

Hazardous and intense wildfires destroy forest cover<sup>1</sup>, threaten forest resilience and can cause ecosystem shifts, ranging from changes in forest structure to changes towards non-forest ecosystems (Coop et al., 2020). Additionally, intense wildfires cause human damages, in the form of direct asset losses: in 2018, wildfires in California have caused \$ 27 billion (Wang et al., 2021). Indirect costs are also of concern, especially related to wildfire smoke : increases in PM 2.5 concentrations have important health impacts (Burke et al., 2023; Heft-Neal et al., 2023), smoke directly affects recreation values in the US, amounting to \$USD 2.3 billion in welfare losses (Gellman et al., 2024). Aside from directly measurable costs, wildfires also cause dramatic impacts on biodiversity across taxa (Wintle et al., 2020), through direct population losses and durable habitat disruption (Ayars et al., 2023).

In a business as usual scenario in terms of forest management, wildland-urban interface expansion and climate change, these direct and indirect costs and damages to both humans and non-humans are expected to increase drastically.

Decades of wildfire suppression have created a “wildfire deficit”, which increases the probability, extent and severity of wildfires in the western United States (Kreider et al., 2024). European forests are not adapted to climate change induced wildfire risks (Khabarov et al., 2014), in terms of species composition and use of fuel management operations. Mechanical thinning, prescribed burns, and sometimes, logging, have been leveraged to decrease the fuel load in risky areas and theoretically decrease the probability and severity of burns upon wildfire occurrence<sup>2</sup>. In numerous regions, such as conifer forests in California (Vaillant et al., 2009; Kalies and Yocom Kent, 2016; Low et al., 2023), eucalypt forests in South Western Australia (Burrows and McCaw, 2013; Boer et al., 2009; Florec et al., 2020), southern Europe (Fernandes et al., 2013), evidence shows that fuel treatments, can mitigate wildfire intensity and spread. Land management agencies have historically implemented these policies in Australia (Burrows and McCaw, 2013), Europe, and the United States (and are projected to ramp up, for example under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 in the US). While potentially useful, the use of these treatments is still hindered by numerous obstacles (Miller et al., 2020) and remains insufficient ref<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, the extension of wildland-urban interfaces (WUI) increases the extent of potential damages as well as ignition probabilities (Radeloff et al., 2018).

As global warming affects water supply and fuel moisture (Jolly et al., 2015; Abatzoglou and Williams, 2016; Ruffault et al., 2018), it is projected to increase the frequency, severity, and magnitude of wildfires (Dupuy et al., 2019; Wasserman and Mueller, 2023). Recent wildfire events in California (since 2018), in Australia (2019-2020), and in Europe (France, Portugal, Greece in 2022) have epitomized these trends. Moreover, wildfires and climate change are endogeneously linked in a positive feedback loop : large wildfires are of importance in the face of climate change; as they release large amounts of greenhouse gases and reduce the extent of terrestrial carbon sinks (Zheng et al., 2023; Sweeney et al., 2023).

In the face of a growing threat to human assets and biological diversity, increasing the efficiency of fuel treatments to manage multiple objectives is paramount. A decision framework that accounts for wildfire processes and biological diversity drivers is paramount to deliver policy

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<sup>1</sup>From 2001 to 2023, forest loss attributed to wildfires amounted to 138 million hectares (roughly 33% of the surface of the European Union) (Tyukavina et al., 2022)

<sup>2</sup>The efficiency of these measures depends on environmental and terrain variables. For example, prescribed burns are efficient every 1-4 years in reducing risk and severity only in the case of non-extreme weather conditions, and when the terrain ruggedness is limited (Bradstock et al., 1998)

<sup>3</sup>However, recent bills have been passed in the US (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021) and California to ramp up the use of prescribed burns - such as the budget act of 2022, committing \$2.8 billion to the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan - and limiting liabilities in the case of wildfire escape (see California Senate Bill SB-332) on private land.

recommendations that simultaneously achieve wildfire damage reduction and protect biological diversity (Driscoll et al., 2010). Among the decision levers, the extent and location of treatments are key variables.

By changing the structure of the landscape, fuel management operations may reduce the risk and associated damages of wildfires. Treatments achieve larger risk reduction when located close to the values at risk instead of being dispersed across the landscape (Ager et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2017; Florec et al., 2020). However, they also affect the structure of biodiversity habitat, notably, its structural connectivity (Taylor et al., 1993). Maintaining habitat connectivity, through wildlife corridors, landscape links, and ecoducts (Turner, 2005; Turner and Gardner, 2015), is instrumental in mitigating the biodiversity crisis. Species richness and diversity are intimately linked to landscape connectivity (Olds et al., 2012; Tian et al., 2017; Velázquez et al., 2019) and are necessary to maintain ecosystems in the future. The use of fuel management operations alters the structure of the landscape e.g. both habitat and matrix<sup>4</sup>, in terms of temporal and spatial variation in landscape configuration and composition. As habitat is altered, so is the surrounding matrix, which can impede species movement (Eycott et al., 2012; Kuefler et al., 2010) and alter evolution and selective regimes (Cheptou et al., 2017).

The impact of fuel treatments on biodiversity remains a debated topic. Evidence suggests that maintaining a variety of vegetation types and ages on a patchy landscape maintains a 'fire mosaic' (Sitters et al., 2015) (e.g. landscape level variations in habitat types that provide habitat to an ecological community) or that fuel treatment can be beneficial to wildlife (Saab et al., 2022; Loeb and Blakey, 2021) and even restore local populations (Templeton et al., 2011). On the other hand, treating at too high a frequency may be detrimental to biodiversity (Bradshaw et al., 2018), as vegetation with extensive juvenile period may disappear, and fauna that rely on them as well<sup>5</sup>, or high frequency treatment favors the invasion of fire tolerant, fire-enhanced weed species (van Wilgen, 2013).

Hence, fragmenting the wildfire risk poses significant threats to biodiversity in forest landscapes. Nonetheless, there may exist a range of spatial allocation patterns that take into account the location of protected species and can reduce threats to both assets and biodiversity (Ager et al., 2007; King et al., 2008; Rachmawati et al., 2018).

Eventually, wildfire risk and potential damages pose a significant challenge in terms of policy-making. As wildfire risks and potential damages are spatially heterogeneous, and as wildfires spread, they create a large spatial externality. Indeed, individual risk reduction is hampered by the influence of neighbors on individual risk, which results in the under provision of risk reduction (Costello et al., 2017). Additionally, in a risky (e.g. stochastic) context, risk aversion may bolster this phenomenon when financial insurance is limited (Ehrlich and Becker, 1972)<sup>6</sup>. Finally, the magnitude of potential damages (Costello et al., 2017) as well as the large information requirements for efficient fuel treatment planning warrant a collective approach.

In this context, we study the spatial patterns of treatment allocation that diminish potential damages from wildfires in where fire spread is governed by patch connectivity, while safeguarding biodiversity habitat connectivity, from a central decision maker perspective.

A substantial literature has applied optimization techniques to tackle the spatial allocation of fuel treatments. Analytical (Finney, 2001), simulation-based (Finney, 2007; Rytwinski and Crowe, 2010) or mixed-integer programming techniques (Wei et al., 2008) have solved the allocation of treatments in a static framework. Given the dynamic nature of fuel growth, studies based on

<sup>4</sup>e.g. land use or cover, or environmental conditions that differ from eitehr species' habitat or reference natural conditions (Fletcher et al., 2024)

<sup>5</sup>For example, in Australia, species such as *Banksia baueri*, *B. nutans* and *B. baxteri* would disappear, threatening tammar wallabies, quokas and honey possums (Bradshaw et al., 2018)

<sup>6</sup>This is particularly the case in California, where repeated fire episodes have pushed insurers to spike contract premiums, or to not renew contracts- non renewal rates went from 11% in 2018 to 13% in 2021

mixed-integer dynamic programming ([Wei et al., 2008](#); [Minas et al., 2014](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2015, 2016](#)) have studied the temporal and spatial allocation of fuel treatments on real and simulated landscapes. While they solve the spatial treatment allocation problem in forests, these articles fail to acknowledge the multiple uses and objectives land planners have to consider, such as habitat conservation. Several articles have devoted their attention to the spatial allocation of treatments while conserving habitat, and investigated the trade-offs between risk reduction and biodiversity conservation, using spatial heuristics ([Calkin et al., 2005](#); [Lehmkuhl et al., 2007](#)) and linear programming ([Williams et al., 2017](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2018](#)).

Most of the existing literature focuses on case studies and lacks a general interpretative framework to generalize its results. Graph theory offers a toolbox suited to analyze the properties of connected cells or patches of land with varying characteristics, and has extensively been applied in landscape ecology ([Urban and Keitt, 2001](#); [Minor and Urban, 2008](#); [Rayfield et al., 2016](#)). [Conrad et al. \(2012\)](#) and [Jafari and Hearne \(2013\)](#) use a specific graph theory algorithm - a network-flow model - to find the optimal subgraph of corridors connecting habitat areas. Their approach optimally connects patches of habitat spread across the landscape for a given species, in a reserve-network design problem fashion. Our approach adopts a more holistic perspective, as it emphasises the degree of connectedness between habitat cells, thus allowing for a multi-species and multi-scale perspective, instead of a corridor for a single species.

Recent research focusing on the allocation of fuel treatments has leveraged tools from graph theory ([Matsypura et al., 2018](#); [Pais et al., 2021a](#)). Reconciling habitat and wildfire risk mitigation using graph theory is a recent research endeavor ([Rachmawati et al., 2018](#); [Yemshanov et al., 2022](#)) and has focused on specific case studies.

In this article, we focus on the dynamic and spatial dimensions of the problem (thus abstracting from the stochastic components) and leverage graph theory to study the general patterns of treatment allocation emerging from a multi-objective, dynamic, and integer landscape management problem, governed by connectivity.

To do so, we first compare the optimal allocation of treatments using repeated static optimization and heuristic dynamic programming on a 5 period horizon on a subsample of 300 small scale landscapes with an exhaustive range of habitat connectivity constraint. We show that for realistic biodiversity habitat constraint levels, the constraint imposed on the evolution of the forest results in similar structures for repeated myopic and dynamic optimization. Therefore, we analyse the treatment allocation and landscape structures emerging in the long run using repeated myopic optimization for all the possible initial landscape configurations, in a graph theoretical framework. We characterize the landscapes using a range of ecological indicators and find general mechanisms and guiding principles applicable to a broad class of settings, to guide decision-makers and foster new efficient multi-objective graph theory algorithms. Finally, we test our predictions from a small scale landscape to simulated realistic large scale landscapes (10,000 cells) with varying composition and spatial autocorrelation, and compare them with different intuitive policy recommendations.

Our contributions are several. First, we provide a spatial framework to understand the trade-offs between wildfire risk reduction and biodiversity conservation. Second, we leverage the constraints imposed on a dynamic spatial system to show that repeated optimization performs relatively well compared to dynamic programming. Third, using graph theory, we derive general principles regarding the spatial characteristics of landscapes and treatments from an exhaustive set of theoretical landscapes to guide policymakers as well as future research in heuristics to reconcile conflicting land-based phenomena.

This article is structured as follows : section 2 explains our methods, section ?? explains our re-

sults, and section 4 discusses our results and concludes.

## 2 Methods

### 1 Model description

We consider landscapes represented by a regular grid of  $n \times n$  standardized area cells in period  $t$  by  $\mathbf{A}_t$  with a forest seral stage succession module. Each cell  $a_{ijt} \in \mathbf{A}_t$  with  $\{i, j\} \in \{1, \dots, n\}^2$ , at time  $t$  is characterized by a successional stage: *juvenile*, *adolescent*, or *mature*, which translates into 3 numerical age classes ranging from 0 to 2. Each transitional seral stage has the same duration<sup>7</sup>, hence at each time step, it changes stage until it is in the *mature* stage, where it remains (eq 2.1)

We use a stylized representation of the link between vegetation age, habitat, and wildfire risk (figure 2.1).

First, we assume a cell offers suitable wildlife habitat once it is *adolescent* (eq. 2.2). Second, a cell can turn at critical risk of wildfire during a normal hot season when its successional stage is *mature* (eq. 2.3). We assume an Olsen-type model of flammability, where age class is the main predictor of flammability (Olson, 1963; McCarthy et al., 2001; McColl-Gausden and Penman, 2019). A cell remains at high risk as long as it is in the *mature* age class.

Finally, we consider fuel treatment to be a binary decision e.g. treatment is absent or present and there is no extensive margin, hence a treatment binary variable  $x_{ijt} \in \{0, 1\}$  represents the treatment status in cell  $a_{ij}$  a time  $t$ . The decision maker first observes the transition to the next successional stage, then decides upon treatment. Treatment can happen at any successional stage : whether at an *adolescent* stage, in anticipation of a cell becoming *mature* and turning at *high risk* in the next period, or as an immediate strategy upon becoming *mature* and thus, *high risk*. Upon treatment, a cell successional stage is reset to *juvenile* (eq. 2.1). Figure 2.1 illustrates the dynamics of the model.

Given a patch  $a_{ijt}$  and treatment status  $x_{ijt}$  in period  $t$ , equation 2.1 summarises the successional dynamics, and equations 2.4,2.3 summarize the link between successional stage, habitat, and high risk:  $\forall t, \forall \{i, j\} \in \{1, \dots, n\}^2$

$$a_{ijt+1} = \max((a_{ijt} + 1)(1 - x_{ijt}); 2) \quad (2.1)$$

$$\text{Habitat}(a_{ijt}) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } a_{ijt} \geq 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2.2)$$

$$\text{Risk}(a_{ijt}) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } a_{ijt} \geq 2 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2.3)$$

We use a network structure to apprehend the landscapes. From the matrix  $\mathbf{A}_t$ , we form two graphs:  $\mathcal{B}_t = (V_{\mathcal{B}_t}, E_{\mathcal{B}_t})$ , the graph of suitable habitat cells and  $\mathcal{F}_t = (V_{\mathcal{F}_t}, E_{\mathcal{F}_t})$ , the graph of high risk cells. First, the vertices of each graphs are the suitable habitat cells e.g  $V_{\mathcal{B}_t} = \{(i, j) \text{ such that } \text{Habitat}(a_{ijt}) = 1\}$  and the high risk cells, respectively e.g.  $V_{\mathcal{F}_t} = \{(i, j) \text{ such that } \text{Risk}(a_{ijt}) = 1\}$ . Second, vertices are connected if they are within a Moore (or 8-cell) neighborhood of each other and share the same status. Therefore, notice that  $\mathcal{F}_t \subset \mathcal{B}_t$ . Figure 2.2 illustrate the mechanism

<sup>7</sup>For example, in Australia, McColl-Gausden and Penman (2019) use quasi evenly spaced age classes for heathland, tall-mixed, foothills, forby and wet vegetation types (see table 1); on the other hand, in coniferous forests in Western US (Washington and Oregon), Thomas (1979) developed a successional stage description for wildlife habitat management, still used by the USDA. 40 year transitional classes can be made grouping *grass-forb*, *shrub-seedling* and *pole-sapling* together and *young*. *Maturity* is reached at 80 until 159 years old, where it mutates into *old-growth*

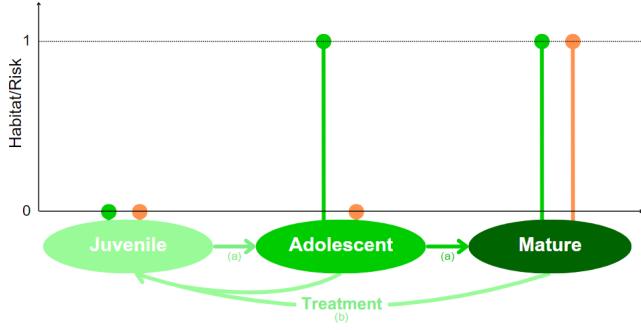


Figure 2.1: Illustration of the successional stages and the link between successional stage, habitat and wildfire risk using a discretized Olson-type relationship

At the bottom, the dynamics of the model are illustrated. First, successional stages transition (step (a)), then treatment is applied (step (b)). At the top, the link between successional stage, habitat and high risk. In green, a *habitat* variables turns to 1 when a cell is *adolescent*, and in orange, a *high risk* dummy turns to 1 when a cell turns *mature*

from the landscape in matrix form  $\mathbf{A}_t$  with age classes ranging from 0 to 2, to graphs  $\mathcal{B}_t$  and  $\mathcal{F}_t$ .

We use this 8-cell neighborhood for evaluating biodiversity habitat and wildfire risk within a common spatial framework, using the same adjacency properties. Regarding biodiversity, we focus on general characteristics related to landscape structural connectivity rather than functional connectivity, as we are agnostic about effective species (Fahrig et al., 2011). We assume that species are able to disperse from one patch to another, and that habitat quality is uniformly distributed conditional on habitat being available.

We consider the wildfire risk through the lens of potential spread, influenced by fuel, wind direction and terrain. We abstract from wind patterns and terrain, to focus on fuel connectivity<sup>8</sup>. Consistent with the literature (see Peterson et al. (2009), Pais et al. (2021b); Gonzalez-Olabarria et al. (2023)), a wildfire can spread in any direction, conditional on neighbor cells with high risk.

To assess the connectivity of  $\mathcal{F}_t$  and  $\mathcal{B}_t$ , we use a global connectivity indicator. As connectivity can be measured in numerous ways in graph theory, we use this metric as it satisfies criteria pertaining to its evolution when vertices and edges are removed (Pascual-Hortal and Saura, 2006) when using graph theory applied to landscape ecology. Additionally, it offers a reformulation of the metric used in previous work closely related to ours (Minas et al., 2014; Rachmawati et al., 2016) (see appendix A for a demonstration). We define the global connectivity index of a given graph  $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E})$  as<sup>9</sup>:

$$H(\mathcal{G}) = \text{card}(\mathcal{V}) + 2\text{card}(\mathcal{E}) \quad (2.4)$$

Let a *patch* be a collection of connected cells of suitable wildlife habitat. This indicator considers that a habitat cell is connected to itself (i.e., within a habitat patch, there is no barrier) and whether it is connected to other cells. It implies lower connectivity when the distance between habitat cells increases, attains its maximum value when a single habitat patch covers the whole landscape, indicates lower connectivity as the habitat is progressively more fragmented, considers negative the loss of a connected or isolated cell, and detects as more important the loss of bigger patch, and less important steppingstone cells or patches.

Our global connectivity indicator is similar to the notion of *energy of a graph* (Gutman, 2001), which can be understood as a measure of connectedness (highly connected graphs tend to have high energy) for graphs. However, we differ from Gutman (2001) by including self-loops as habitat cells and patches are connected to themselves. Our formulation of  $H$  reframes a quadratic form from the adjacency matrix of a graph grid structure (appendix A). The adjacency matrix displays inter-

<sup>8</sup>Note that our framework is amenable to prevailing wind patterns and terrain ruggedness, as the graph adjacency matrix can change from a Moore adjacency to any pattern influenced by environmental features

<sup>9</sup>With  $\text{card}$  being the cardinal operator in set theory and denotes the number of elements in a set

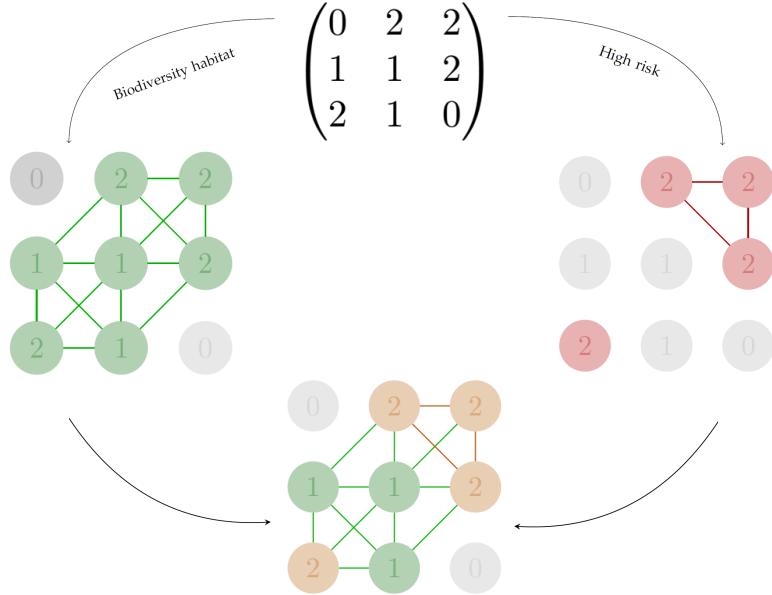


Figure 2.2: Illustration of the suitable habitat and high risk graphs for  $n = 3$

The first layer is the values from a raster  $\mathbf{A}_t$  of age classes in a forest landscape. It is turned into two different graphs. In the left graph, the green vertices are  $V_{\mathcal{B}_t}$  and support biodiversity habitat, while on the right graph, red vertices are  $V_{\mathcal{F}_t}$  display high risk. Green and red links are respectively  $E_{\mathcal{B}_t}$  and  $E_{\mathcal{F}_t}$ . The high risk graph has two components (top right corner with 3 nodes, and bottom left corner with 1 node), while the biodiversity habitat graph only has one. Cells for which the value is 0 are not considered as nodes for both graphs, and are thus not connected to the rest of the graphs. In the final landscape, because  $\mathcal{F}_t \subset \mathcal{B}_t$ , the landscape where orange cells are high fuel load and also support biodiversity habitat (e.g.  $a_{ijt} \in V_{\mathcal{B}_t} \cap V_{\mathcal{F}_t}$ )

action among nodes that are neither purely constructive or destructive, as some combinations of active neighboring nodes will add to global connectivity, while other combinations may subtract global connectivity. In all the landscape sizes we used, eigenvalues of the adjacency matrix were both positive and negative, leading to indefiniteness (see figure 2.A). Therefore,  $H$  is not globally convex nor concave.

## 2 Decision problem

A social planner tries to minimize the global connectivity index of the high risk graph, using fuel treatments (eq. 2.5). However, when implementing treatment, a cell's successional stage is reset to *juvenile*, thus destroying biodiversity habitat. In coherence with real world applications, the social planner is faced with a temporal budget constraint (e.g. the sum of treatments  $\sum_{ij} x_{ijt}$  must be lower or equal to the *Budget* - eq. 2.9) as well as an ecological constraint, in terms of biodiversity habitat connectivity (e.g. the global connectivity of biodiversity habitat  $H(\mathcal{B}_t)$  must be larger than constraint *Biod* - eq. 2.7). Both the ecological and budget constraint need to be satisfied in each period.

For the sake of the analysis, we focus on two layers of complexity : time and space. We do not include a stochastic component related to wildfire risk e.g. we adopt a deterministic framework where the value at risk (global connectivity of risky cells) is weighed against the loss in biodiversity habitat connectivity. Additionally, we consider a homogeneous distribution of treatment costs across the landscape e.g. cost of treatment in each cell through time is 1. We come back to this assumption in the discussion. Monetary benefits are also homogenously distributed across the landscape, and normalized to 1. Note that there is, however, heterogeneous returns to treating across the landscape : some cells will contribute more than other to global connectivity. Finally,

given that the planning horizon is finite, we do not discount future high risk connectivity scores and assume each period is equally important in decision making.

The optimization problem is :

$$\min_{\{\{x_{ijt}\}_{(i,j)}\}_{t=1}^T} \left[ \sum_{t=1}^T H(\mathcal{F}_t) \right] \quad (2.5)$$

Such that:

$$\mathbf{A}_0 \text{ given} \quad (2.6)$$

$$\forall t \in \{1, \dots, T\} :$$

$$H(\mathcal{B}_t) \geq Biod, \quad (2.7)$$

$$\text{and } \forall (i, j) \in \{1, \dots, n\} :$$

$$a_{ijt+1} = \min((a_{ijt+1}(1 - x_{ijt}); 2), \quad (2.8)$$

$$\sum_{i,j} x_{ijt} \leq Budget, \quad (2.9)$$

$$x_{ijt} \in \{0, 1\} \quad (2.10)$$

Notation	Concept
$\mathbf{A}_t$	Landscape matrix representing successional stage at time $t$
$a_{ijt}$	Cell $(i, j)$ of landscape with value $\in \{0, 1, 2\}$
$x_{ijt}$	Treatment status $\in \{0, 1\}$ of cell $(ij)$ at time $t$
$H$	Global connectivity measure
$\mathcal{F}_t = (V_{\mathcal{F}_t}, E_{\mathcal{F}_t})$	Graph of high risk cells
$\mathcal{B}_t = (V_{\mathcal{B}_t}, E_{\mathcal{B}_t})$	Graph of suitable habit cells
$Biod$	Level of habitat global connectivity constraint
$Budget$	Level of the budget constraint
$n$	Size of the landscape
$c = 3$	Number of age classes
$T = 5$	Planning horizon

Table 2.1: Summary of model variables and functions

We focus on a  $T = 5$  planning horizon. First, as the dynamic of our ecological processes comprises 3 stages, using a 5-period horizon allows for each cell to grow from its original stage to *mature*, be treated, and revert to its original stage, e.g. allows for a full successional cycle to be performed. Second, a 5-period horizon corresponds to a long policy horizon, ranging from 25 years to 200 years ([McColl-Gausden and Penman, 2019](#); [Thomas, 1979](#)). Third, for our approach to be useful for policy making given that we abstract from stochastic modifications to the environment (e.g. occurrence of wildfire, spread of invasive species increasing flammability at a given age etc), policies need to be forward looking with enough temporal depth to be relevant and be reevaluated with potentially new initial conditions resulting from environmental perturbations. As common in the literature, we can express the budget as a share of land being treated ranging from 10% to 33% of the surface area (when  $n = 3$ ) and 5 to 25% of the surface area (when  $n = 4$ ). These values encompass historical and projected policies in Australia ([Burrows and McCaw, 2013](#)), the United States ([Office, 2019](#)) and Southern Europe ([Fernandes et al., 2013](#)). Finally, we solve the problem for a range of possible habitat connectivity values, ranging from 0 to the maximum possible habitat connectivity for each landscape size  $n$ .

### 3 Solution method and computational experiments

Our problem can be classified as a *critical node detection problem*, i.e, a problem of locating the vertices that best degrade our global connectivity metric  $H(\mathcal{F}_t)$  (Arulselvan et al., 2009). Problems of the critical node class are computationally difficult (e.g. NP - Hard) in a single graph (Arulselvan et al., 2009; Matsypura et al., 2018). Efficient heuristics to find near-optimal solutions exist and leverage perturbations around local solutions (Arulselvan et al., 2009; Zhou and Hao, 2017). Compared to the canonical *critical node detection* problem, our problem features non-convex objective function, a budget constraint, and a constraint on habitat connectivity, which imposes a constraint on the supergraph of high risk cells. Given our constraints, the behavior of the global connectivity measure  $H$ , standard optimization techniques cannot be applied.

In dynamic problems, a standard technique is dynamic programming. Dynamic programming provides a temporal decomposition of the initial problem defined over  $T$  periods, into  $T$  recursive problems, as it relies on the 'optimality principle'<sup>10</sup>. A value function  $V$ , mapping each possible state of the world e.g.  $\mathbf{A}_t$  to its objective function value, is iterated upon to find the optimal policies  $x_{ijt}^*(\mathbf{A}_t)$ , i.e, the sequence of optimal controlled burns, and the optimal states  $\mathbf{A}_t^*(\mathbf{A}_0)$  resulting from the optimal policies and the initial conditions. However, it is impractical in our case. As a matter of fact, our problem suffers a *dimensionality curse* (Bellman, 1957). There are  $3^{n^2}$  possible combinations<sup>11</sup> in each period and the specific nature of our objective function  $H$ , the habitat connectivity and budget constraints make interpolation of a value function impossible<sup>12</sup>.

To circumvent this issue, we adopt a three-fold approach.

First, we trade the completeness of dynamic programming (e.g. solution of the problem for the entire domain of the state variable  $\mathbf{A}$ ) for a manageable piecemeal approach, where we solve the complex 5-period combinatorial problem with a genetic algorithm (Holland, 1992) (implemented in R with package GA (Scrucca, 2017)) for 300 randomly generated landscapes, with population size of 100 and 250 iterations. Genetic algorithms are especially suited for high dimensional, combinatorial search spaces<sup>13</sup> and fare better than a brute force approach, or other heuristics (Particle Swarm Optimization or Simulated Annealing). We then compare the performance of the 5 period, genetic algorithm approach to a repeated static optimization procedure, for landscapes of size  $n \in \{3, 4\}$ . While this size appears simplifying, it encapsulates the main mechanisms displayed in similar models (Rachmawati et al., 2016, 2018).

Second, we perform a repeated static optimization on all the possible landscape configurations for landscape size  $n \in \{3, 4\}$ , over all the whole range of possible values for the biodiversity habitat constraint, over 5 years. This approach sacrifices the dynamics of our problem but allows us to scan the entire state space to gain insights. Of all the  $3^{n^2}$  initial landscapes combinations possible, we only keep landscapes that are unique up to a permutation<sup>14</sup>. This results in a sharp reduction of landscapes to consider, from 19,683 initial conditions to 2861 unique initial landscapes for  $n = 3$ , and from 43,046,721 initial to 5,398,082 unique initial landscapes for  $n = 4$ . We focus on exact optimal solutions for all the initial conditions of these small-scale landscapes and implement our own solution algorithm in Python 3.9.13 and R 4.3.3<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup>"An optimal policy has the property that whatever the initial state and initial decision are, the remaining decisions must constitute an optimal policy with regard to the state resulting from the first decision". (See Bellman (1957), Chap. III.3., p.83)"

<sup>11</sup>Given that the landscape  $\mathbf{A}$  is of size  $n \times n$ , and that each element of  $a_{ij}$  can take 3 values, there are  $3^{n^2}$  landscape configurations possible

<sup>12</sup>As a matter of fact, even with a large number of state variables e.g. a high-dimensional state space, adaptive sparse grids can be used with smooth, continuous objective functions (Brumm and Scheidegger, 2017). The fact that the input space is an  $n^2$  dimensional cartesian binary product and that  $H$  is not globally convex hinder the use of such tools.

<sup>13</sup>Here, the control variable is a  $Tn^2 = 5n^2$  binary variable

<sup>14</sup>That is to say, landscape  $\mathbf{A}_0$  is included in the set of initial conditions  $\mathcal{I}$  if and only if for any element  $\mathbf{A}'_0$  in  $\mathcal{I}$ ,  $\mathbf{A}_0$  is not a permutation (eg can be obtained through rotations or symmetries) of  $\mathbf{A}'_0$

<sup>15</sup>Data and code are publicly available

Third, we simulate 20 large scale (10,000 cells) landscapes with varying compositions and auto-correlation using two-dimensional fractional Brownian motions (table 2.B summarizes their characteristics and figure 2.B illustrates 6 of them). We use neutral landscape models (Caswell, 1976; Gardner and Urban, 2007) and implement them in R (Sciaini et al., 2018). Neutral landscape models were designed in theoretical landscape ecology to develop spatial ecology indicators and “evaluate the effects of landscape structure on ecological processes” (With and King, 1997). Even though they are designed as null models to compare with real landscapes, after ecological processes have shaped them, they provide a useful basis for scaling our analysis. We solve the repeated myopic optimization problem on these 20 landscapes.

## 4 Landscape indicators

To characterize the managed landscapes, we mobilize several indicators from landscape ecology and graph theory (see appendix D).

First, we account for the high risk and habitat surfaces in the landscape by measuring the number of vertices in each graph. Second, to assess landscape connectivity and fragmentation as well as landscape diversity<sup>16</sup>, we use our global connectivity metric  $H$  (eq. 2.4), as well as the *number of components*<sup>17</sup>. To specifically assess landscape diversity, we use the Simpson index (Simpson, 1949) on successional stages stages (eq. A.5)<sup>18</sup>. However, the Simpson index does not account for the diversity of spatial patterns: a checkered landscape with two seral stages would be as diverse as a landscape with two large patches for each seral stage, according to the Simpson index. Therefore, we use the landscape shape index (eq. A.6), a normalized ratio between the perimeter of biodiversity habitat and its area (Patton, 1975; McGarigal and Marks, 1995). To disentangle the correlated effects of perimeter and area that affect the landscape shape index, we use a successional stage heterogeneity index, that averages the probability that, for each cell, neighbors in the 4 cardinal directions share the same successional stage (eq. D). The index ranges between 0, when the successional stage is the same across the whole landscape, to 1, in a checkered landscape. The index assesses whether the landscape is a mosaic (Bradstock et al., 2005), and if it displays structural diversity, conducive to diverse communities and functional diversity.

## 3 Results

### 1 Steady states

Our simulations show that 100% of the initial landscapes converge in finite time towards a steady state solution, that minimizes wildfire risk while satisfying budgetary and habitat connectivity requirements. Steady states are landscape cycles with finite periods. Analyzing the steady-state cycles (and the unique landscapes that form them) drastically reduces the set of landscapes to analyze: they represent 2% (resp. 0.001%) of the initial landscapes of size  $n = 3$  (resp.  $n = 4$ ). Our model highlights the convergence of landscapes towards types that can be managed to deliver several objectives. As landscape size increases, the number of steady state landscape cycles in-

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<sup>16</sup>In the context of fire prone ecosystems, the notion of “fire mosaics” (Bradstock et al., 2005) conveys the idea that fire causes variations in successional stages through space thus providing different types of habitat for biodiversity and improving biodiversity

<sup>17</sup>A component  $\mathcal{C}_t$  of graph  $\mathcal{G}_t$  is a maximally connected subgraph of  $\mathcal{G}_t$  that is not part of any larger connected subgraph. A component is *connected* (for all two vertices  $(u, v) \in V_{\mathcal{C}}$ , there exists a path in  $\mathcal{C}_t$  that connects them) and  $\mathcal{C}_t$  being a subgraph of  $\mathcal{G}_t$ , it is *maximal* if there is no other connected subgraph  $\mathcal{C}'$  of  $\mathcal{G}_t$  such that  $\mathcal{C}_t$  is a proper subgraph of  $\mathcal{C}'_t$ . Figure 2.2 illustrates this concepts in both the habitat and high risk graphs resp.  $\mathcal{B}_t$  and  $\mathcal{F}_t$

<sup>18</sup>Similar results can be found with the Shannon index (Shannon, 1948). To avoid issues related to degenerate values and logarithms, we focus on the Simpson index.

creases, but the power of convergence increases as well (e.g. ratio between initial configurations and effective steady state landscapes): from 19 683 initial landscapes when  $n = 3$ , 51 steady states emerge and from 43 046 721 initial landscapes when  $n = 4$ , at most 95 diverse steady-state landscapes emerge. Focusing on steady states makes all the more sense as landscape size increases.

Eventually, figure 2.C shows that conditional on data availability on every patch, the more the decision maker wants to conserve biodiversity, the fewer steady-state landscapes she has to consider. An increase in the habitat requirement reduces the room for maneuver. Indeed, budget acts as a complexifying factor: the larger the budget (relative to costs), the larger the set of steady-states to consider. Aiming for relatively large habitat connectivity reduces the set of viable strategies to be considered and can more efficiently guide policy.

## 2 Wildfire risk reduction and habitat connectivity in steady state landscapes

Figure 2.D shows the wildfire risk reductions and habitat requirements normalized by their respective maximum values for landscapes of size  $n = 3$  and 4. The maximum value for both risk and habitat corresponds to a landscape covered in 'old' vegetation, which we take to be the counterfactual. Randomly assigned treatments do generate risk reductions but are not cost nor habitat-efficient. Following our spatial optimization procedure, it is clear that implementing fuel treatment reduces wildfire risk while supporting biodiversity habitat. Figure 2.D shows that these two objectives come as a trade-off, albeit moderate: indeed, increasing habitat requirements increases the remaining risk, but there are combinations that can satisfy large habitat connectivity and risk reductions. Budget is a key factor in risk reduction, as it relaxes the trade-off between the two objectives: increasing the budget reduces the wildfire risk while maintaining a range of biodiversity constraints. When habitat constraints are large, however, the marginal effect of budget is limited, and a larger remaining risk needs to be accepted. For example, with a budget of 25% of land to be treated (with landscape size  $n = 4$ ), and no habitat constraint, risk can be reduced up to 80% compared to the counterfactual scenario. However, when the habitat constraint is at 60%, only 70% of risk reduction can be achieved. Moreover, this risk reduction can be achieved with a lower budget. Conversely, as the costs of treatment increase, for a stable budget, the remaining risk increases sharply, and factoring in habitat requirements in the decision-making is not necessary for targets below 80%.

## 3 Properties of steady state landscapes: surface, fragmentation, and diversity

Figure 2.E displays, for each class, the most frequent steady-state cycle for landscapes of size 3 and 4 for each biodiversity target. Figure 2.F shows the indicators relative to the surface and components of the high-risk graph and figure 2.G shows the indicators related to diversity, both for landscapes of size  $n = 3$  and 4, averaged over all the steady-state landscape cycles.

Previous results show that budget increases risk reduction, conditional on habitat connectivity constraint being low. Focusing on zones  $A$  and  $A'$  of the panels of figure 2.F shows that risk reduction primarily comes from a reduced surface (panels 2.Fa and 2.Fb), and an increase in the number of components, i.e, disconnected high-risk patches (panels 2.Fe and 2.Ff). Overall, the high-risk area is reduced and the number of components increases, thus resulting in smaller largest high-risk component area (panels e and f). As more connected habitat area needs to be protected, the high-risk surface increases (fig. 2.E panels 2.Fa and 2.Fb) and the number of high-risk components drastically reduces. The landscapes collapse to the same dominant structure (fig. 2.E), where the high-risk area is (almost) maximal and there is one large, well-connected component. Overall, landscapes are riskier but also feature larger, better-connected biodiversity habitat. For large budgets (e.g. 3 and 4), these effects are non-trivial: the number of components (weakly)

increases first, small components either disappear or increase in size (see figure 2.E for budget 4 in panels  $A'$ ,  $B'$  and  $C'$ ), risky patches are reallocated to connect separated components before the high-risk surface increases.

Landscape diversity unambiguously increases with the budget (panels 2.Ga, 2.Gb, sections  $A$  and  $A'$ ). As more units are treated, the evenness of seral stages increases in the landscapes. When the habitat objective is low, the spatial diversity of landscapes increases with the budget (panels 2.Gc, 2.Gd): even though the relative area of habitat decreases with the budget, the shape of habitat is more irregular, and the landscape is more of a mosaic. In this context, cells with a ‘young’ seral stage act as stepping stones and corridors between high-risk habitat patches. When habitat objectives increase, diversity collapses both quantitatively and qualitatively (fig. 2.G). The Simpson index collapses from panels  $A$  (resp.  $A'$ ) to  $G$  (resp.  $F'$ ), as land types gradually homogenize (see fig. 2.E for an illustration) across all budgets. Moreover, landscapes form less of a mosaic, and are more clumpy, as displayed by the LSI and Land type heterogeneity index. Overall, for large habitat targets, landscapes tend to homogenize and to be better connected, although less quantitatively and qualitatively diverse.

Results are consistent across landscape sizes while they display more variability for size  $n = 3$ , as border effects play a larger role.

## 4 Spatial allocation of optimal management at the steady-state landscape cycle

Figures 2.Ha and 2.Hb display the number of fuel treatments in the steady-state cycles, for various budgets and habitat connectivity constraints. Treatment allocation follows the evolution of the high-risk area (fig 2.Fa and 2.Fb): the larger the budget, the larger the treated area, the budget constraint is always satiated. However, when biodiversity targets increase, the budget constraint is no longer satiated.

Figures 2.Hc and 2.Hd display the average spatial location of treatments in the steady state cycles. The darker the cell, the higher the frequency of treatment. First, not all cells are equally treated. For low levels of biodiversity constraint, panels  $A$  and  $A'$  of figures 2.Hc and 2.Hd show that central cells are primarily treated, and when the budget increases, cells on the edges get treated, while corner cells are never treated. In the context of critical node detection, when the ecological requirements are low, the high-risk graph is primarily considered, and nodes with the most cost-efficient risk reduction, i.e, with the largest degree are targeted. Once the most connected cells are treated, lower-degree cells get treated.

When habitat constraints increase, several effects come at play. Not only does the number of treatments decrease, but the spatial allocation also changes. For example, in panels  $A$  and  $B$  for budgets 3 and 4, panels  $C$  and  $D$  for budget 2 and panels  $E$  and  $F$  for budget 1 in figure 2.Hc, the number of treatment remains the same but is spatially reallocated to lower degree nodes. Treatments are spatially reallocated before being reduced. In this context, as the relative weight of the habitat graph increases, treating the most cost-efficient risk-reducing nodes also degrades habitat connectivity. Therefore, as habitat targets increase, edge and corner (e.g. low degree nodes) are being treated and habitat connectivity is maintained.

## 4 Discussion

### 1 Confirmation and generalization of existing results

Our analysis of the exhaustive set of initial conditions for small-scale landscapes confirms existing results in the literature. We argue that they bring robust evidence and complement the existing

literature to derive general conclusions.

Our model encompasses 3 seral stages and 1 composite vegetation type and proves the convergence of every initial condition to a steady state cycle, irrespective of the initial configuration. We extend [Minas et al. \(2014\)](#) that find convergence patterns for *homogeneous* landscapes only, i.e., landscapes where the initial vegetation age is uniformly distributed. We show that in the event of environmental perturbations that do not disrupt ecosystem dynamics, an appropriate policy can recover the previous equilibrium risk and habitat. We hypothesize that as long as the risk/seral-stage relationship reaches a plateau for every vegetation type on the landscape, convergence should be observed.

Our results display a concave production possibility frontier (PPF) between wildfire risk reduction and habitat connectivity, consistent with PFF literature ([Arthaud and Rose, 1996](#); [Calkin et al., 2005](#)). Our results also confirm that trading one objective for the other is not as efficient as increasing the policy budget to reconcile objectives. We show that increasing the policy budget nonetheless has diminishing returns for risk reduction, as highlighted by [Wei et al. \(2008\)](#); [Yemshanov et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Pais et al. \(2021b\)](#).

Our study yields clear results in terms of landscape ecology, leveraging concepts from landscape ecology, and highlighting the spatial mechanisms underlying the shape of PPF. We show that treatment allocation targets the most central nodes first and then focuses on less connected nodes (e.g. cells closer to the border of the landscape) when habitat goals are low. In doing so, we do find general treatment allocation principles where previous studies on larger landscapes could not ([Minas et al., 2014](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2016](#)), generalize smaller scale ([Konoshima et al., 2008](#)) and case study specific ([Yemshanov et al., 2021](#); [Pais et al., 2021a](#)) results.

Leveraging a dynamic integer programming, graph theoretic framework on small-scale landscapes, we show that cell-level metrics help formalize and understand the drivers of treatment allocation and rationalize existing results. Furthermore, we show that while prioritization approaches based on a graph theoretic framing fare very well in an unrestricted set-up, including biodiversity habitat targets augments the problem's complexity. We generalize case studies ([Yemshanov et al., 2022](#)) and show less central high-risk nodes need to be targeted to achieve risk reduction and safeguard biodiversity habitat.

## 2 Caveats and methodological perspectives

Our analysis tackles the exhaustive set of landscapes of size  $n = 3$  and  $4$ . Our approach allows us to study the steady-state patterns emerging from any initial condition, replicates existing results in larger landscapes, and sheds light on the mechanisms underlying the wildland dilemma. Increasing landscape size is incompatible with this approach, as we would run into a dimensionality curse ([Bellman, 1957](#)). To conserve our exhaustive approach, different proof mechanisms would be required. Nonetheless, if landscape size is of the essence for actual policy recommendation, so are other layers of information such as habitat quality, treatment costs, and values at risk heterogeneity. These other layers would reduce the computational burden, and we believe our results, targeting the most cost-efficient, risk-reducing, and habitat-conserving strategies, would still apply.

In our model, we use a simple relationship to characterize the link between the seral stage, habitat formation for a single species, and wildfire risk and severity. This choice is motivated by the existence of a lower bound for a fire return interval and drives our ability to adopt our exhaustive approach. Increasing the number of seral stages would help to complexify the relationships governing habitat formation and wildfire risk and severity: in some ecosystems, wildfire risk and severity may be higher for young vegetation than for older and may not be linear ([Taylor et al., 2014](#)). On the other hand, some species may require old-growth forests to survive, not 'young'

forests, and old-growth forests may also be more fire-resilient ([Lesmeister et al., 2021](#)). As the number of seral stage augments, convergence towards steady-state landscape cycles would take longer, but we hypothesize it would still occur. Moreover, as long as wildfire risk and habitat quality are in conflict, a trade-off would govern treatment allocation. Multiple seral stages may be targeted for fuel treatment, depending on their location and properties, but we claim the general mechanism would still apply: in a graph weighted for different risk and habitat properties, centrality and connectivity would still guide treatment allocation.

We implicitly assume that focusing on a given species' habitat would also provide habitat for a variety of species and be conducive to functional diversity. However, this does not imply that all species would benefit from maintaining a given habitat type ([Saab et al., 2022](#)). Moreover, the lack of structural diversity may cause the trophic web of the targeted species to collapse. Therefore, management objectives should include structural diversity. In this case, landscapes could not satisfy extreme habitat connectivity targets and diversity targets. For intermediate goals, however, we claim that treatment allocation would still aim at fragmenting the landscape, and node centrality and connectivity would still govern allocation.

Eventually, we chose to abstract from a stochastic ignition process affecting the landscape. As a thought experiment, imagine a Bernoulli-distributed, high-risk area independent probability of ignition in each period. If part of the landscape ignites, all that remains is the unburnt habitat, while if not, all habitat remains. A decision-maker faced with maximizing the expected payoff in this scenario would solve the reciprocal of our problem. On the one hand, she has to ensure that the high-risk cells in the landscape are not 'too' connected, to maximize the remaining habitat in the event of a wildfire. On the other hand, she wants to maximize connectivity for wildlife when there is no wildfire. As a result, the trade-off she faces, and the resulting spatial allocation of treatment would be the same. The stochastic nature of ignition may change the steady state cycles, but convergence would not be impossible. If the probability of wildfire increases, she focuses more on maintaining a 'young' seral stage over the landscape. In this setting, increasing the probability of ignition would act as a decrease in our habitat target as well as an increase in the budget available for policy. With our model, we are able to disentangle these two effects and understand how each constraint would play. We claim we match with actual policy, where the budget is not fully endogenously determined.

### 3 Conclusion and policy relevance

While there is a *dilemma* for land managers between lowering wildfire risk and severity and maintaining species habitat connectivity, reconciling the two objectives is not a dead end. This is an important result for land planners as biodiversity habitat targets are gradually included in policy agendas (for example, the recent pledge by the participants to the Conference of Parties on Biodiversity in Montreal to preserve 30% of land and oceans by 2030 for biodiversity<sup>19</sup>). It shows that if policymakers can commit to a given budget over time, these biodiversity targets can be reached and a management cycle that minimizes wildfire risk can be implemented in wildlands. Moreover, as steady-state cycles are reached, the uncertainty over future land uses is resolved while achieving policy goals.

In the face of climate change, treatment costs are expected to increase ([Kupfer et al., 2020](#)). The decreasing marginal efficiency of budget to reduce risk highlights that as climate change increases the costs of treatments, risk, and damages will increase at an increasing rate, unless the budget is changed accordingly.

Our analysis shows that budget should be determined by factoring a careful, *ex-ante* analysis of

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<sup>19</sup>See Target 2 in the [Keunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework, 2022](#)

treatment costs, the policy maker's risk aversion towards a measure of wildfire risk and severity, and ecological preferences. Indeed, low budget-to-cost ratios are incompatible with high risk and severity aversions and/or large ecological requirements.

As wildfires and biodiversity habitat destruction are challenges in the face of global warming, finding policy guidance tools is of the essence. Many studies focus on specific case studies or limited ranges of potential initial conditions. We develop a simplified ecological model of habitat and wildfire connectivity to guide policymakers in the form of general principles. Reducing wildfire risk and accommodating wildlife habitat is possible with carefully designed policies, where budget plays a key role. However, it is impossible to achieve drastic risk reduction without harming biodiversity habitat. General principles of treatment allocation in the landscape are derived, and the concepts of graph theory provide an operational toolbox to understand the underlying mechanisms. Landscape **patches** that display high wildfire risk seral stages and are well connected to other **patches** should be treated first. When habitat targets are included, tackling lower-risk **patches** is of the essence to maintain habitat connectivity.

Our article summarizes and generalizes how policies should be implemented, both in terms of budgets and spatial allocation, to protect and enhance ecosystem health.

## 5 Declaration

### Acknowledgments

This research was conducted while SJ was on leave at the Environmental Markets Lab, UC Santa Barbara. We acknowledge support from the Center for Scientific Computing from the CNSI, MRL: an NSF MRSEC (DMR-1720256) and NSF CNS- 1725797, at UC Santa Barbara. Moreover, the authors are grateful to the editor and 2 anonymous referees, as well as participants to the Columbia Interdisciplinary PhD Workshop in Sustainable Development and the BINGO group at CIRED for their valuable comments.

### Data availability

Given its size, steady-state cycle data is available upon request from the authors. Code for replication is available at [https://github.com/sim-jean/Landscape\\_connectivity\\_dilemma](https://github.com/sim-jean/Landscape_connectivity_dilemma)

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### Competing interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### Contribution

LM and SJ designed the study, SJ ran the computational experiment, SJ and LM analyzed the results and wrote the manuscript.

## A Appendix

### A Global connectivity index and graph theory

Minas et al. (2014) work with a collection of cells  $I$ . This landscape can be represented by a graph structure  $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E})$ . For each  $v_i \in \mathcal{V}$ , define a neighborhood<sup>20</sup> of  $v_i$  by  $\Phi_i = \{v_j \text{ such that } (v_j, v_i) \in \mathcal{E}\}$ . Finally, let  $Q_{ij} \in \{0, 1\}$  where  $Q_{ij} = 1$  if  $v_i$  and  $v_j$  are connected. Minas et al. (2014) define the following connectivity metric over a landscape:

$$z_t^* = \sum_{i \in I} \sum_{j \in \Phi_i} Q_{ij} \quad (\text{A.1})$$

For the proof, assume  $Y \in \{0, 1\}^{n^2}$  such that  $Y_i = 1$  if cell  $i$  is 'high risk' and 0 otherwise, and that we focus on the high risk graph on the landscape. The argument is identical in the case of mature habitat.

In graph theory, an adjacency matrix  $\mathcal{K}$  for an undirected graph is a binary, symmetric, square matrix of dimension  $\text{card}(V)^2$  where  $k_{ij} = 1$  if vertices  $i$  and  $j$  are connected, 0 otherwise. In our context, it is clear that  $k_{ij} = Q_{ij}$ . Equation A.1 can be reformulated as :

$$\begin{aligned} Y' \mathcal{K} Y &= \sum_j \left( Y_j \sum_i Y_i k_{ij} \right) \\ &= \sum_j \sum_i (Y_j Y_i k_{ij}) \end{aligned}$$

And notice that  $Y_j Y_i k_{ij} = Q_{ij}$ , so :

$$\begin{aligned} Y' \mathcal{K} Y &= \sum_{i \in I} \sum_{j \in \Phi_i} Q_{ij} \\ &= \sum_j \left( Y_j \left( Y_j k_{jj} + \sum_{i \neq j} Y_i k_{ij} \right) \right) \end{aligned}$$

Given the symmetric nature of  $\mathcal{K}$ ,  $\forall i \neq j$ ,  $k_{ij} = k_{ji}$ . Each cell is connected to itself so  $k_{jj} = 1$ . Additionally, as  $Y_i \in \{0, 1\}$  then  $Y_i^2 \in \{0, 1\}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} Y' \mathcal{K} Y &= \sum_j \left( Y_j^2 + \sum_{i \neq j} Y_i Y_j k_{ij} \right) \\ &= \sum_j Y_j + \sum_j \left( \sum_{i \neq j} Y_j Y_i k_{ij} \right) \\ &= \sum_j Y_j + \sum_j d_j \end{aligned}$$

The first sum is the number of high risk cells, i.e.  $\text{card}(\mathcal{V})$ . In the second sum,  $\sum_{i \neq j} Y_j Y_i a_{ij}$  is the degree of each vertex  $j$  excluding self loops. In a graph with no self loops, by definition,  $\sum_j d_j = \text{card}(\mathcal{E})$ .

Hence, for a set of cells  $I$  reformulated in terms of graph theory :

$$\sum_{i \in I} \sum_{j \in \Phi_i} Q_{ij} = \text{card}(V) + 2\text{card}(E) \quad (\text{A.2})$$

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<sup>20</sup>Notice that *belonging to the neighborhood of* is a symmetric binary relationship e.g. if  $v_i \in \Phi_j \iff v_j \in \Phi_i$ , as we are working with undirected graphs

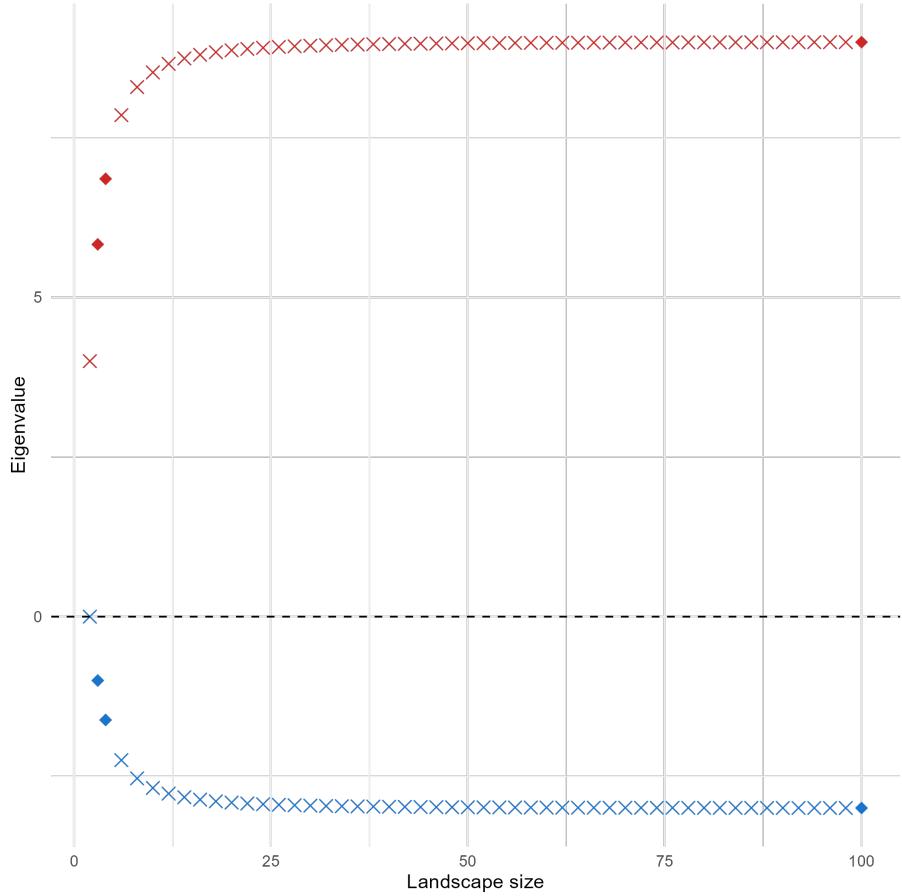


Figure 2.A: Maximum and minimum eigenvalues of  $\mathcal{K}$  depending on graph size

In red, the maximum eigenvalues, in blue, the minimal eigenvalues. Diamond-shaped points represent values actually used for the present study. Dotted line at 0

## B Dynamic programming equation

The Bellman equation links current and future payoffs in a recurring fashion.

$$V(t, A) = \min_{x \in \{0,1\}^{n^2}} (H(A) + V(t+1, A_t + 1)) \quad (\text{A.3})$$

subject to constraints (2.8), (2.9), (2.7) and (2.10).

We use backward induction given by the final value  $V(T, A) = H(A)$  to dynamically solve the program.

## C Large scale landscape characteristics

Age classes			Autocorrelation
<i>Juvenile</i>	<i>Adolescent</i>	<i>Mature</i>	
33%	33%	34%	0.5
10%	45%	45%	0.7
10%	10%	80%	0.9
10%	80%	10%	1.3
			1.8

Table 2.B: Summary of the large scale simulated landscapes characteristics

For each distribution profile governing the number of cells in a landscape, all of the spatial autocorrelation values are applied making  $4 \times 5$  landscapes

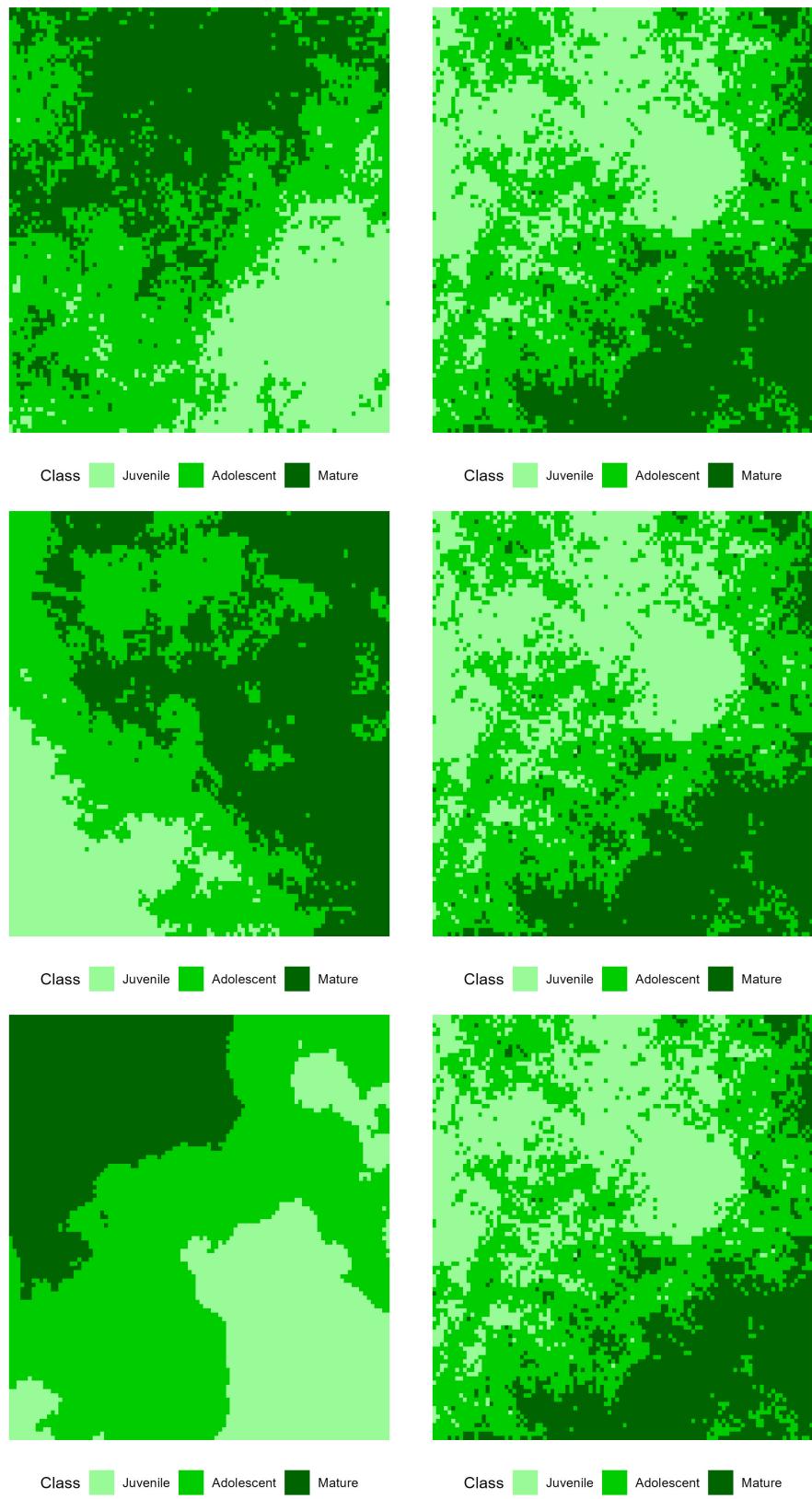


Figure 2.B: Examples of large scale landscapes with uniform distribution (left) and skewed towards *adolescent* (right)and low, middle and large spatial autocorrelation

## D Landscape indicators

**Area** We use the number of vertices (nodes) for both graphs:

$$Area(\mathcal{G}_t) = \text{card}(V_{\mathcal{G}_t} \text{ with } \mathcal{G}_t \in \{\mathcal{B}_t, \mathcal{F}_t\}) \quad (\text{A.4})$$

**Simpson diversity index:** Let  $p_i$  be the proportion of landscape  $A_t$  in a given successional stage<sup>21</sup>, the Simpson diversity index is :

$$SIDI = 1 - \sum i \in \{Juv, Ado, Mat\} p_i^2 \quad (\text{A.5})$$

**Landscape shape index:** following [McGarigal and Marks \(1995\)](#), the adapted LSI index from [Patton \(1975\)](#) in a raster landscape is:

$$LSI = \frac{0.25 \times \text{perimeter}(G)}{n} \quad (\text{A.6})$$

Where  $\text{perimeter}(G)$  is the perimeter of the cells comprised in the graph as vertices.

**Successional Stage Heterogeneity Index:** let  $d_{ij}$  be a binary variable such that  $d_{ij} = 1$  if patch  $i$  and  $j$  share the same successional stage. Define  $\mathcal{J}$  as the set of neighbors in 4 directions (north, south, east, west) of cell  $i$ <sup>22</sup>. The successional stage heterogeneity index is :

$$LTH = 1 - \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \frac{\sum_{j \in \mathcal{J}_i} d_{ij}}{\text{card}(\mathcal{J}_i)} \right) \quad (\text{A.7})$$

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<sup>21</sup>Let  $Juv = \{a_{ijt} \text{ such that } a_{ijt} = 0\}$ , then  $p_{Juv} = \frac{\text{card} Juv}{n^2}$

<sup>22</sup>The set  $\mathcal{J}_i$  varies with cell  $i$  to account for edge effects

## B Figures

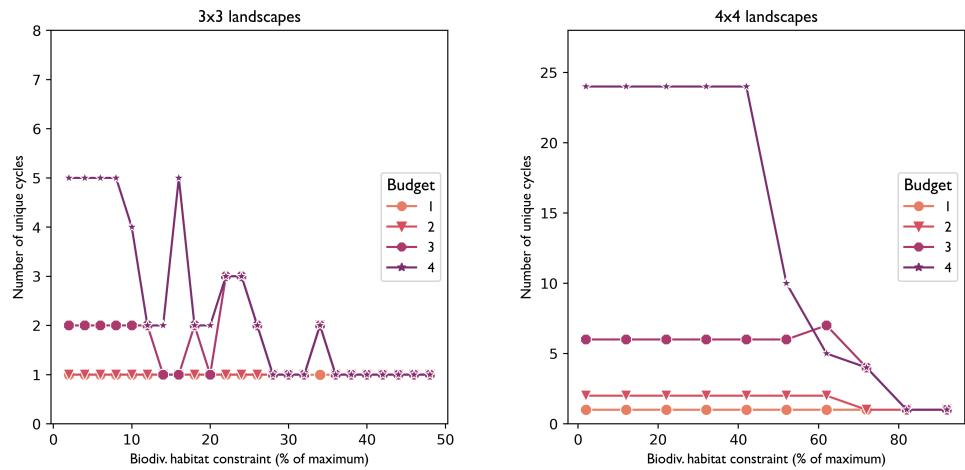


Figure 2.C: Number of cycles as a function of biodiversity habitat and budget

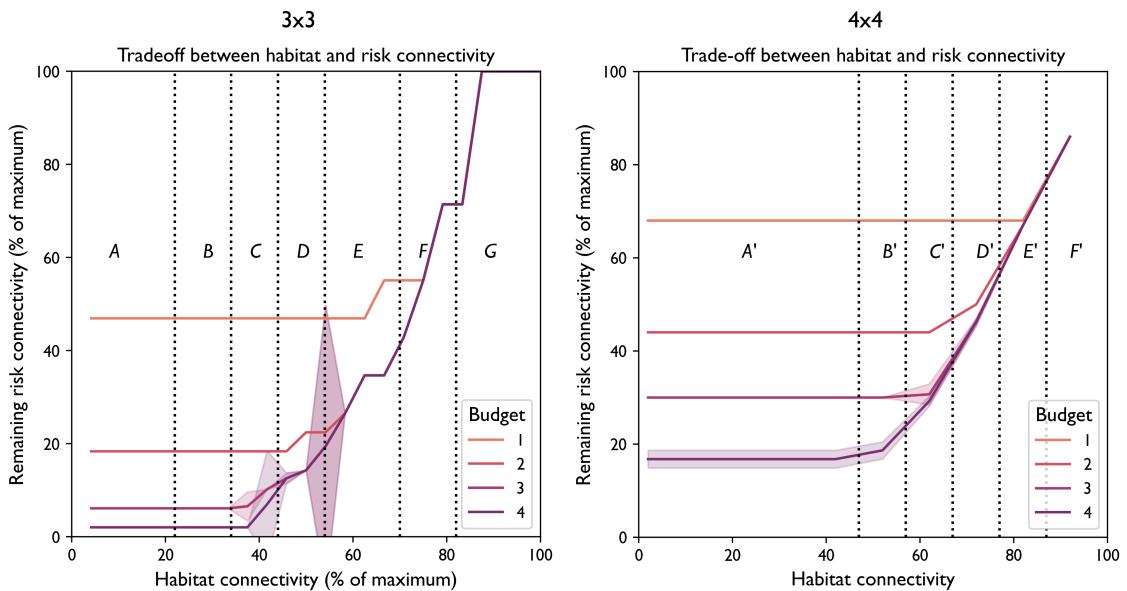


Figure 2.D: Production possibility frontier between constraint (as a % of maximum biodiversity sustainable in landscape) and wildfire risk for various budgets, and landscape size

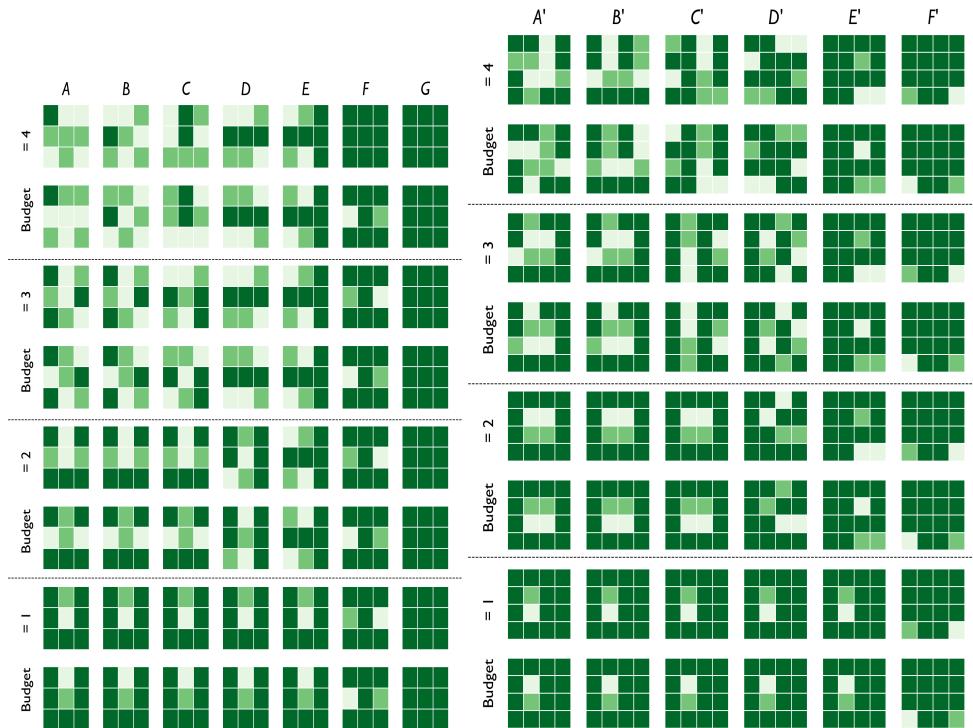


Figure 2.E: Most represented cycles for each biodiversity constraint level, for various budget and landscapes  $3 \times 3$ , and  $4 \times 4$  (95% CI shaded)

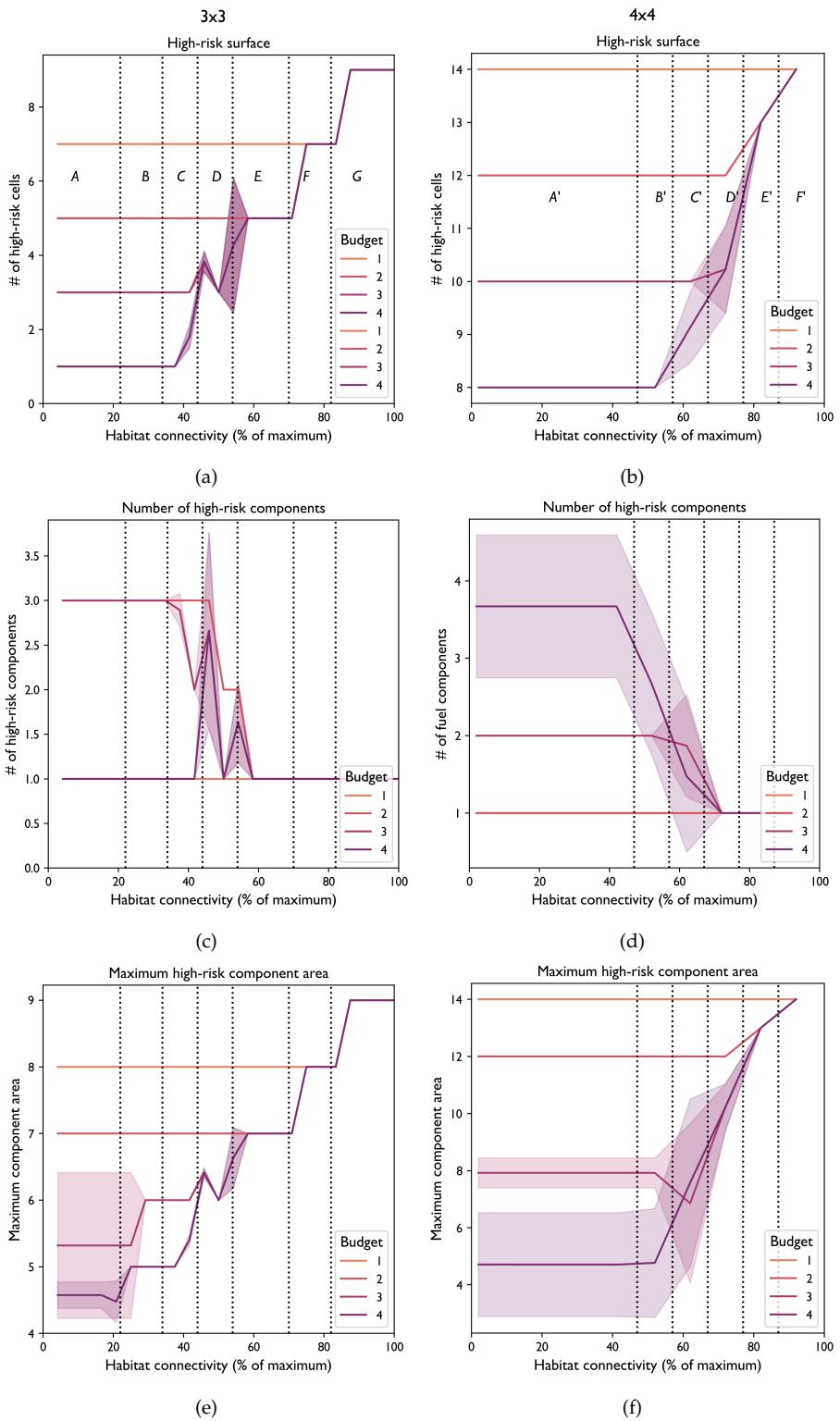


Figure 2.F: Assessment: surface, components of high-risk graph (95% CI shaded)

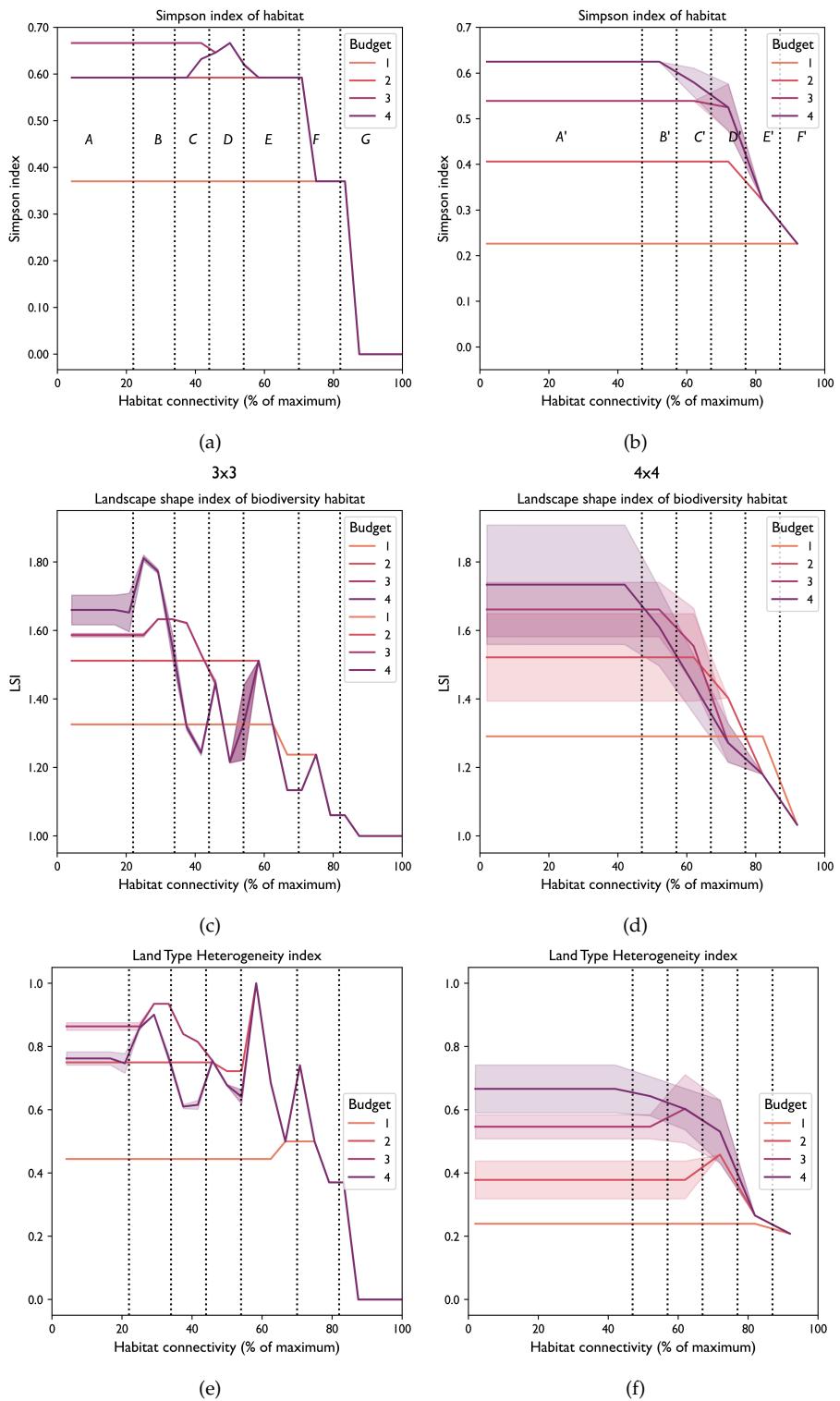


Figure 2.G: Assessment: diversity (95% CI shaded)

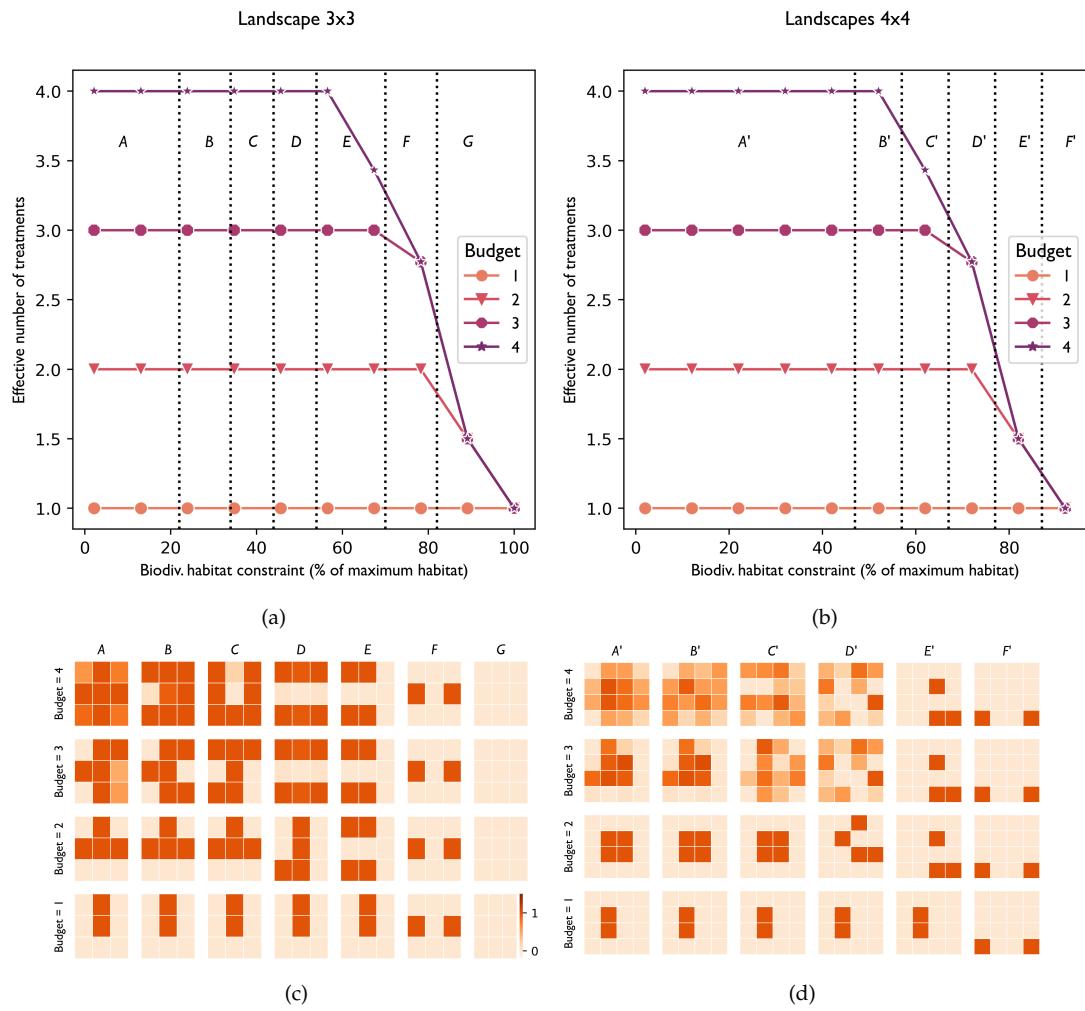


Figure 2.H: Treatment allocation : number, location

## **Chapter 3**

# **Fences : the economics of movement in mobile public goods**



## **Part III**

# **The role of market structure in renewable resource management**

## Chapter 4

# Little downside and substantial gains result from farming of *Totoaba* *Macdonaldi*

This article is under review at *NPJ Ocean Sustainability* and is joint work with Julia M. Lawson (co-first author), Andrew Steinkruger, Miguel Castellanos-Rico, Garrett M. Goto, Miguel A. Cisneros-Mata, Erendira Aceves Bueno, Matthew M. Warham, Adam M. Sachs and Steven D. Gaines

### Abstract

Illegal wildlife trade poses a growing threat to species globally. Where bans or policy instruments have failed, conservation farming has been considered, which aims to reduce illegal poaching by “flooding the market” with farmed product. However, predicting if farming will succeed necessitates a holistic understanding of how supply and demand interact and how markets will respond. Poaching and illegal trade for totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*), currently dominated by a Mexican monopolist cartel, has continued unabated despite half a century of prohibitions on international trade and domestic fishing. We investigate if farming can reduce poaching and support a healthy wild population by extending a flexible bioeconomic model of a three-stage illegal supply chain: poachers sell to traders (i.e., middlemen or cartels) who sell to end-markets. While we show under the monopolist a large stable wild population is maintained, this outcome is sensitive to cost parameters. Introducing farming decreases poaching by 29% or increases poaching by 6%, and results are robust to changes in cost parameters. Our results upend previous assertions that certain strategic responses will undermine conservation efforts and always result in population collapse. Furthermore, our quantitative framework can be adapted to evaluate conservation farming for other species and market structures.

Keywords :

# 1 Introduction

Illegal wildlife trade is a multi-billion dollar industry that drives biodiversity loss through unsustainable harvest ([T Sas-Rolfes et al., 2019](#)), spreads zoonotic disease ([Bell et al., 2004](#)), and threatens animal welfare([Baker et al., 2013](#)). The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) provides a regulatory framework that aims to ensure that international trade of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Yet, for many species, regulatory interventions such as trade bans and controls have failed, and illegal trade in black markets continues to flourish ([Challender and MacMillan, 2014](#); [Challender et al., 2015a](#)). In such instances, supply-side interventions such as conservation farming can theoretically bolster conservation by “flooding the market” with farmed products, leading to reduced market prices and lower poaching incentives ([Gentry et al., 2019](#); [Phelps et al., 2014](#); [Tensen, 2016](#)). Supply-side interventions have occasionally succeeded at reducing poaching and recovering wild populations – e.g., vicuña and spotted cat ([IUCN, 2000](#); [Sahley et al., 2007](#)) – but they have also failed – e.g., green python, African elephant ([Lyons and Natusch, 2011](#); [Hsiang and Sekar, 2016](#)). Uncertainty around conservation outcomes from market-based approaches has led to continued reliance on trade bans and controls that are often ineffective at reducing poaching.

Determining whether farming will succeed or fail requires a holistic understanding of a specific illegal wildlife market<sup>1</sup>, including the interplay between market conditions and ecological criteria ([Challender et al., 2015b](#)). Studies have pointed to a common set of farming pitfalls. Species with slow individual growth rates and low fecundity are often unable to grow supply quickly enough to displace illegal products. Further, if poaching is very inexpensive, it is impossible for farming to undercut prices <sup>6,8</sup> – e.g., dried seahorses are ‘free’ to poach when retained as bycatch ([Lawson et al., 2017](#)). Demand-side concerns are focused on substitutability between farmed and wild products. Consumers of wildlife for medicinal or conspicuous purposes often prefer wild products for greater perceived potency or associated social status ([Dutton et al., 2011](#); [Gratwicke et al., 2008](#); [Fabinyi, 2012](#)). Here, we develop a quantitative framework that comprehensively considers all these pitfalls while accounting for detailed species-specific and market information.

Another critical factor in driving the success or failure of farming is market structure: illegal markets are often characterized by imperfect competition – where an individual trader or a small number of traders (i.e., middlemen, cartels, gangs, or other criminal organizations) dominate illegal trade and exert significant control over market prices. A bioeconomic model that predicts how imperfectly competitive markets will respond to competition from farming was developed almost two decades ago ([Bulte and Damania, 2005](#); [Damania and Bulte, 2007](#)). Predicted strategic responses depend on how a trader chooses to compete with farming. If a trader responds by price setting (an aggressive response where the trader tries to undercut farmed prices and take market shares), then poaching pressure will increase and can lead to the collapse of the wild population. On the other hand, if traders respond by quantity adjustment (a mutually beneficial response where the trader competes on the amount of output produced, letting market prices adjust), poaching pressure is reduced and wild populations have the possibility to increase. This model has been widely used to both justify ([Biggs et al., 2013](#); [Abbott and van Kooten, 2011](#)) and discourage ([Tensen, 2016](#)) prospective farming initiatives. The authors of the original bioeconomic model concluded that farming is a perilous coin toss ([Bulte and Damania, 2005](#); [Damania and Bulte, 2007](#)). Here, we expand upon this model and reach a different conclusion: that farming can maintain large, stable wild population sizes that are robust to changes in cost structure under both types of competition. Furthermore, quantity adjustment yields substantial decreases in poaching and is the more likely response because prices and profits are higher than under price setting ([Singh and Vives, 1984](#)).

We explore the biological and economic performance of conservation farming for totoaba swim bladder in the context of illegal poaching and trade under different market conditions (Froehlich et al., 2017). Specifically, we examine the evolution of poaching and wild totoaba biomass, as well as prices and profits for different economic actors. The lifecycle for totoaba has been successfully closed in aquaculture, and the species is currently farmed in Mexico for domestic meat production. Totoaba is endemic to Mexico's Gulf of California and is threatened by a lucrative illegal international trade for its large swim bladder (C4ADS, 2017; env, 2019, 2016). A single totoaba swim bladder can sell for up to \$80,000 USD per kilogram in Chinese end markets, where it is purchased for special occasions, gifting, and speculative investment (ElephantActionLeague, 2018; Sadovy de Mitcheson et al., 2019; Martínez and Alonso, 2021). For nearly half a century international trade for totoaba has been prohibited, and the legal totoaba commercial fishery has been closed. However, illegal fishing and trade continue and are controlled primarily by a single criminal organization (a cartel) that will likely respond strategically to farming (Damania and Bulte, 2007; Felbab Brown, 2022)

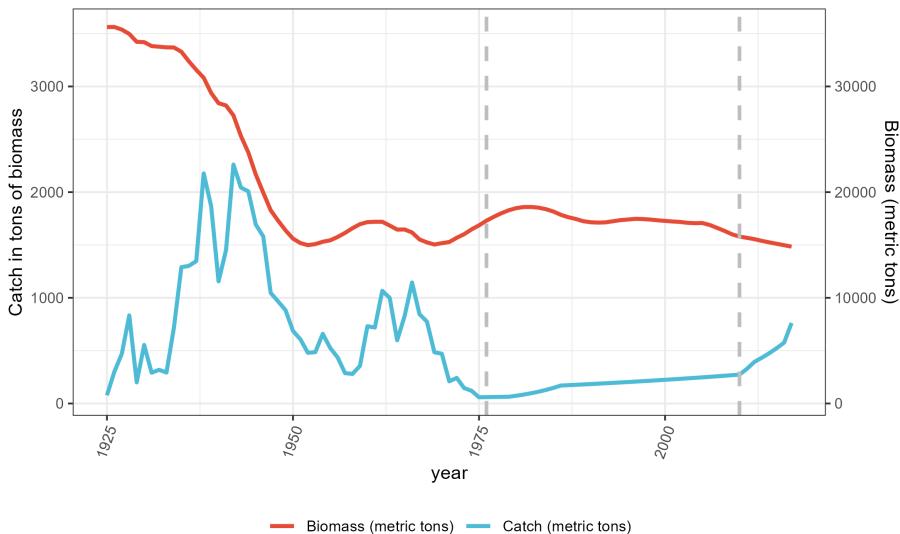


Figure 4.1: Evolution of totoaba population and catch over time

Dashed lines represent listing as CITES Appendix II species, and cartel takeover, respectively

There is an urgent need to reduce poaching for totoaba, as the vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), a porpoise also endemic to the upper Gulf of California, is caught as bycatch in gillnets used to catch totoaba. The vaquita is on the brink of extinction as there are now fewer than fifteen individuals remaining (Rojas-Bracho et al., 2022). Furthermore, illegal trade has had negative social welfare consequences, as cartels are increasingly extorting Mexican fishing communities (Felbab Brown, 2022). Despite Mexico's attempts to stop totoaba poaching through various enforcement mechanisms, the country recently received wildlife trade sanctions for taking inadequate action (Rojas-Bracho and Reeves, 2013; CITES, 2023). Conservation farming presents a legal alternative to reduce illegal fishing by manipulating market structure.

We assemble and leverage a unique wealth of information on the totoaba stock, poaching sector, and farming sector to estimate the effects of market structure on poaching harvest and stock biomass. We focus on the market structure that best characterizes the totoaba trade – a vertical monopoly where a single monopolist trader controls the entire supply chain – and evaluate how this trader will respond strategically to competition from farming. We also show how to identify an effective policy space, where all supply, demand, and market structure parameters align to ensure that conservation farming will reduce poaching. Our results challenge long-standing model

conclusions ([Bulte and Damania, 2005](#); [Damania and Bulte, 2007](#)), thereby disrupting widely-held beliefs about the impacts of conservation farming. In particular, previous studies cautioned that when a trader responds to farming through price setting, the wild population always declines dramatically. In contrast, we find that for totoaba, price setting can maintain a stable and large population given that as the population size decreases, fishing costs increase. To ensure low retail prices, traders must limit the price they pay to poachers and maintain a viable wild population.

## 2 Methods

We examine the effect of market structure and competition on poaching a population of wild animals using the logistic growth function (Figure 4.2). The poaching harvest function intersects with population growth producing stable and unstable equilibria. If poaching pressure is high relative to population growth (i.e. when demand is large, or poaching costs are low), a single stable equilibrium point is observed with a low wild abundance (an overharvested population). In the opposite scenario, where poaching pressure is low relative to population growth (i.e. when demand is small, or poaching costs are prohibitive), a single stable equilibrium point is observed with a high wild abundance (a healthy population). Between these extremes, two or three potential equilibria can emerge, with uncertain results that depend on the initial size of the population: a large initial population will result in a high abundance equilibrium point, and a small initial population will result in a low abundance equilibrium point.

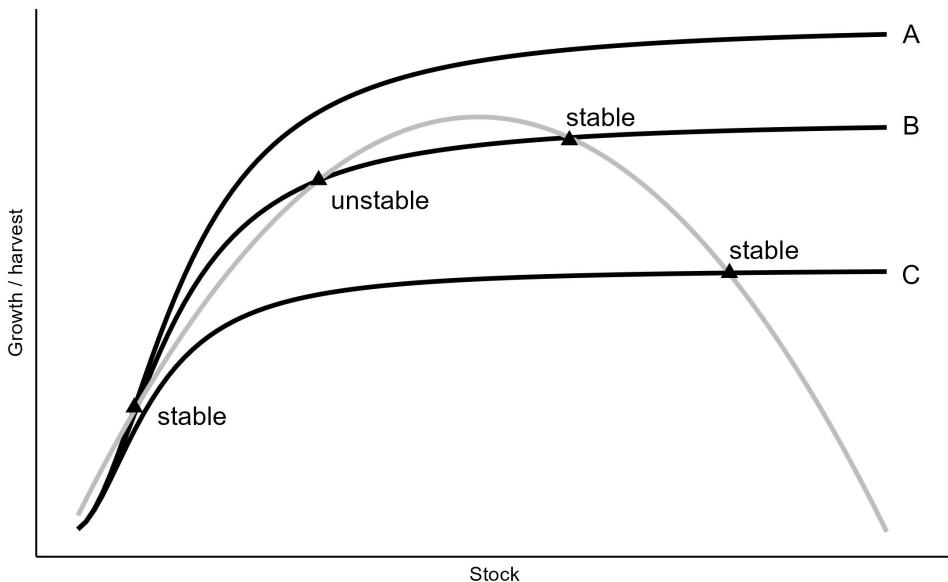


Figure 4.2: Schematic of equilibrium points under different poaching harvest functions

Logistic growth function (light gray) showing equilibria points resulting from three hypothetical poaching harvest functions (black). (A) a single low stable equilibrium point; (B) uncertain outcome, three interior equilibria two of which are stable and one unstable and separating. The long run equilibrium point will depend on the initial size of the population. A large initial population will result in a high abundance equilibrium point, and a small initial population will result in a low abundance equilibrium point; (C) a single high stable equilibrium point.

To assess expectations for totoaba, we first calculate equilibrium points for the stock in the absence of conservation farming under vertical monopolistic conditions (hereafter referred to as monopolistic conditions for ease) (Figure 4.3). A single trader exists in a single location where he is the sole buyer, typical of endemic species such as totoaba ([Wyatt et al., 2020](#); [Martinez-Alvarado and Martinez, 2018](#)). The trader sells poached harvest on an end market where prices and quantities can be manipulated.

Next, we add conservation farming to the monopolistic market structure, creating a duopolistic

market (Figure 4.3). We calculate equilibrium points for the totoaba stock if a monopolistic trader responds to conservation farming either in a way that is (a) mutually beneficial by quantity adjustment or (b) aggressive by price setting. From a policy assessment perspective, any scenario where poached harvest produces a single high stable equilibrium point, and the monopolist cartel loses income, presents clear conservation and social welfare benefits.

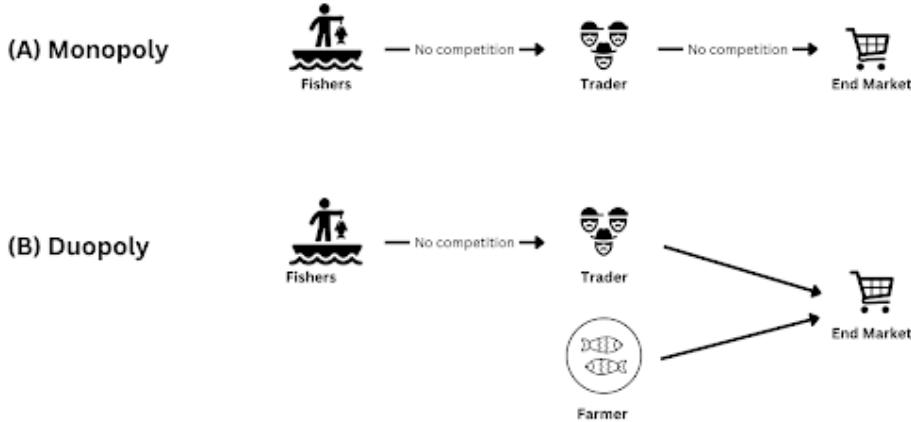


Figure 4.3: Schematic of monopoly and duopoly market structures

(A) monopolistic conditions, where fishers sell to a single trader where they are the sole buyer. This single trader sells poached harvest on an end market where they can manipulate prices and quantities. (B) Next, we add duopoly with farming: A monopolistic trader responds to conservation farming either in a way that is mutually beneficial by quantity adjustment or aggressive by price setting.

Here we briefly discuss our methods with an emphasis on the empirical application. Information on our theoretical conclusions from the bioeconomic model we revisited, lemmas and proofs can be found in the Appendix, section B. Table 4. J summarizes all the functions of the model.

## 1 The Poaching Model

The growth of the fish stock follows a logistic curve and the stock is poached following a Gordon-Schaefer production model. Totoaba population growth parameters were obtained from the 2017 stock assessment, where the carrying capacity ( $K$ ) was 20,226 mt, and the stock biomass in 2017 was 14,844 mt ([Cisneros-Mata, 2020](#)). The intrinsic rate of population increase ( $r$ ) was predicted using the *FishLife* package in R, which estimates growth parameters using totoaba-specific life history data from *FishBase* ([Thorson et al., 2017](#)). The growth equation is :

$$g(x) = rx \left(1 - \frac{x}{K}\right) \quad (2.1)$$

using a predicted  $r$  of 0.20. We do not consider potential effects of hyperstability of the stock resulting from poaching on seasonal spawning aggregations ([Erisman et al., 2011](#)) or age structure.

Poachers optimally determine their effort to maximize their profit, with constant catchability,  $\sigma$ , and stock biomass,  $x$ , obtained from the 2017 stock assessment<sup>46</sup>, and a linear quadratic cost of effort function,  $E$ . The poaching equation is  $q = \sigma x E$  where  $\sigma = 0.00002$ .

Poachers are faced with a linear quadratic cost function  $C(E) = W_1 E + W_2 E^2$ . We calculated two poaching cost parameters  $W_1$  (the linear coefficient of the cost function) and  $W_2$  (the quadratic coefficient of the cost function) by (a) estimating total and average annual operating costs of the fishing fleet using semi-structured interviews conducted by the authors of this study; and (b) calibrating a linear quadratic cost function that matches historical data and predicts future cost evolution.

We conducted semi-structured interviews in the upper Gulf of California with two fishing cooperative leaders and four fishers in July and August 2018. These interviews informed annual poaching costs: food and fuel, labor, gear replacement, and bribes paid to fisheries officials. The fishery operates over six months with a variable number of active vessels, monthly fishing days, and sets per day ([Cisneros-Mata, 2020](#)). Poaching costs also include annual fleet-wide costs related to gear confiscations, vessel replacement, and fines, adapted and extrapolated from a summary of law enforcement actions provided by Mexico ([noa, 2018](#)). The cost per fishing trip was estimated to be \$5,051.26 during the low season (January and June), \$8,385.34 during the mid-season (February and May), and \$14,386.7 during the high season (March and April) (supplementary table 4. F). In our analysis we reconstructed a linear quadratic cost function with cumulative effort. We considered effort in each season cumulative with effort in less intense seasons. We used a low-season average cost for effort levels between 0 and low-season effort; for effort levels between low-season effort and cumulated low and mid-season efforts, we used a mid-season average cost.

We estimated the corresponding poaching cost parameters to match the observed average cost and modeled marginal costs at historical levels (resulting in cost parameters  $W_1 = 12,200$  &  $W_2 = 0.57$ ). Our low sample size precludes a robust statistical estimation of these cost parameters, e.g., of the historical cost function and of the evolution of costs if the fishery were to increase. To account for this uncertainty, we run a sensitivity analysis on two dimensions of costs. First, we use different estimates for the average cost and reconstructed total costs, ranging from -10% to +30% of our high season average cost estimates. Second, we test weights for the linear and quadratic costs, ranging from a purely linear cost ( $W_1 = 14,386.7$ ,  $W_2 = 0$ ) to a purely quadratic cost ( $W_1 = 0$ ;  $W_2 = 3,74$ ).

The resulting poaching profit function is calculated as follows:

$$\Pi = p\sigma xE - W_1E - W_2E^2 \quad (2.2)$$

Traders operate on the end market, taking prices as given (competitive scenario) or determining prices (monopolistic scenario) to maximize profits. Traders face a linear demand function. We estimate a linear demand function by regressing price data on estimated catch from 2014 to 2017<sup>46</sup>, yielding the equation  $p(q) = \alpha - \beta q$  where the intercept,  $\alpha$ , is \$1,625,837 USD and the slope coefficient,  $\beta$ , is \$1,563.75 USD (see supplementary table 4. G). Price data were obtained from available literature that provided estimated weight and value of totoaba maw seizures 24,26,50,51. In addition to the literature review, valuable insights were obtained through personal communication with Wild Aid Investigators (pers. comm. Anonymous Wild Aid Investigators, 2018) as well as with local fishers and cooperative leaders in the upper Gulf of California, as previously described. The information shared by investigators and stakeholders was aggregated with the existing data from the literature. To ensure consistency and comparability, we standardized the weight measurements to grams and the currency values to US dollars. We assume that annual catch reaches the market during the same year, i.e, there is no stockpiling. As data are notoriously difficult to acquire for illegal trade, we pool observations and estimate a stationary demand function (supplementary table 4. G).

Traders buy totoaba from poachers at **price**  $s$  (USD/metric ton). The price paid to poachers balances demand from traders and supply to poachers. It decreases as the population increases, as fishing becomes less demanding. Traders also pay a unit transaction cost  $c$  (USD/metric ton), which we conservatively estimated to be zero. At a minimum this unit transaction cost includes transport (land and air travel), and payment to two or three 'runners' who carry up to ten swim bladders each (pers. comm. Anonymous Wild Aid Investigators, 2018). We know through anecdotal evidence that unit transaction costs  $c$  are likely large ([ElephantActionLeague, 2018](#)). How-

ever, due to scarce evidence, we used a value of  $c = 0$  thus adopting a conservative strategy.

## 2 The Farming Model

We use a linear profit model for aquaculture and estimate a unit farming production cost parameter  $v$  (USD/metric ton) using annual operational costs (labor, feed, vessel fuel, facility and administrative fees), as well as annual maintenance of pens (including cleaning) and vessels, using information provided by existing aquaculture facilities (supplementary table 4. H). Population growth rates differ in the wild and in captivity. Using captive growth rates obtained from personal communication with totoaba aquaculture producers, we consider harvestable size to be between 4.5 and 5 years old (an adult weight of 21.43 – 27.2 kg), associated with a swim bladder size between 417 – 529 g (supplementary figure 4.E). A minimum farmed harvestable size of 4.5 years closely corresponds to the mean swim bladder size (500 g) and estimated adult totoaba size (25.7 kg), as reported in surveys of individuals harvested in the wild ([Cisneros-Mata, 2020](#)). We considered this to be the size at which farmed totoaba would be competitive with the average wild-caught totoaba. We assume that aquaculture operates on a homogenous rotation ([Faustmann, 1849b](#); [Mitra and Wan, 1986](#)). The implications of this assumption are discussed in the appendix A.3. We compute the farming cost per metric ton as the capitalized sum of annual costs over 4.5 years at a 10% interest rate.

## 3 Demand

We use a linear demand function in the case of the vertical monopoly, estimated using price and catch data from 2014 to 2017 (see table 4. G), such that  $p^w = \alpha^w - \beta^w q^w$ . Upon the introduction of aquaculture, following [Singh and Vives \(1984\)](#) and [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#), we include a substitutability parameter  $\gamma$ , which measures the imperfect substitutability between farmed and wild products in the linear demand functions. When farmed products are introduced, the linear demand function is modified such that  $p^i(q^i, q^k) = \alpha_i \beta_i q^i + \gamma q^k$  where  $q^i$  and  $q^f$  indicate the supply from the wild ( $w$ ) and the farmed supply ( $f$ ). This demand system emerges from a linear quadratic utility function in Supplementary Text (section 1.3.2). When demand intercept  $\alpha_i$ s are equal, and own price effect  $\beta_i = \beta_j = \gamma$  are equal, products are perfect substitutes. When demand intercepts are equal, but own price effects differ ( $\beta_i \neq \beta_j$ ), then  $\frac{\gamma^2}{\beta_i \beta_j}$  denotes the degree of product substitutability. At present, there has been no stated preference investigation for wild and farmed totoaba swim bladders in Chinese end-markets, although we know that the end-market economic value for fish maw is determined by taxon, size, and thickness of swim bladder. Investigative work in Mexico reports that it is challenging to distinguish between wild and farmed specimens ([ElephantActionLeague, 2018](#)). Therefore, we assume high substitutability (75% product substitutability) and check for smaller substitutability values in our sensitivity analysis (Figure 4.7) (see supplementary table 4. I) for a list of parameters).

## 3 Results

### 1 Totoaba stock under monopoly is sensitive to cost structure

We revisit and expand upon a bioeconomic model developed nearly two decades ago which differentiates between poachers and traders and develops a three-stage game ([Bulte and Damania, 2005](#); [Damania and Bulte, 2007](#)). The totoaba is an endemic species that is illegally traded by a single trader, a monopolist, who dominates the market. This is the market structure that best

characterizes the present consolidated totoaba trade ([Felbab Brown, 2022](#)). In this setting, a single monopolist trader restricts the supply of wildlife products to consumers, leading to increased prices and profits for the monopolist.

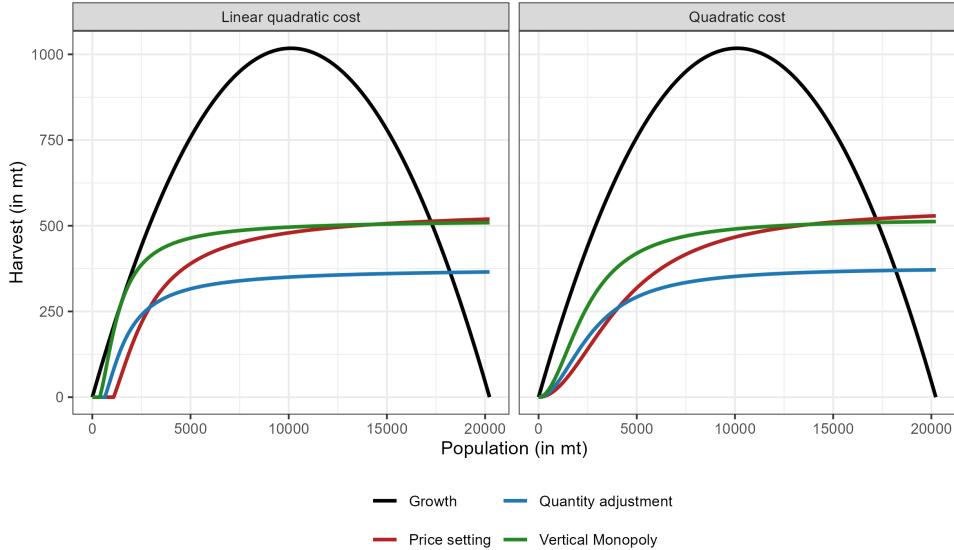


Figure 4.4: Equilibrium points for wild totoaba stock under different market structures with (left) a linear quadratic cost structure, and (right) a quadratic cost structure.

Logistic growth function (black) for *Totoaba macdonaldi* wild stock biomass with intersecting colored lines representing different market structures and competitive responses. Harvest under the status quo vertical monopoly is represented by the green curve. When conservation farming is added to the monopoly scenario the trader can respond either in a mutually beneficial way by adjusting the quantity supplied given a market price (quantity adjustment, in blue). Alternatively, the trader can respond aggressively and try to set a price that undercuts the price of farmed products, resulting in increased poaching (price setting, in red)

We initially calculate equilibrium points for totoaba assuming a quadratic cost structure, consistent with the original model, before calculating equilibrium points under a linear quadratic cost structure (Figure 4.4). Under the quadratic cost structure used in the original bioeconomic model, the totoaba wild stock biomass remains at a high steady-state equilibrium of 17,259 mt. However, we expand upon the quadratic cost structure, introducing a linear quadratic cost structure to account for energy costs associated with fishing. A linear quadratic cost structure more accurately represents new poachers being recruited to the fishery as fishing opportunities increase ([Péreau et al., 2012](#); [Clark, 2007](#)).

We find that under monopoly the linear quadratic cost structure is sensitive to cost parameter specifications, where relatively small changes in cost parameters can cause multiple steady states to emerge (Figure 4.5). If an increase in poaching comes at a small cost increase compared to historical average costs, the aggregate cost is close to linear (e.g.  $W_2 = 0.47$ ) and below, compared to baseline  $W_2 = 0.57$ . In this case, a low steady-state equilibrium of 1,106 mt, an unstable intermediate equilibrium arises at 1,842 mt and a high stable steady-state equilibrium of 17,277 mt in the vertical monopoly. Our model uses the best available information on the totoaba fishery, but uncertainty surrounding the projected evolution of fishery-wide poaching costs warrants a cautious assessment of monopoly performances: while it could maintain a healthy population, it can also lead to stock collapse.

## 2 Farming produces conservation benefits

While our results show that totoaba stock may remain healthy under the current monopolistic market conditions, these results are sensitive to changes in poaching costs (Figure 4.5). Therefore,

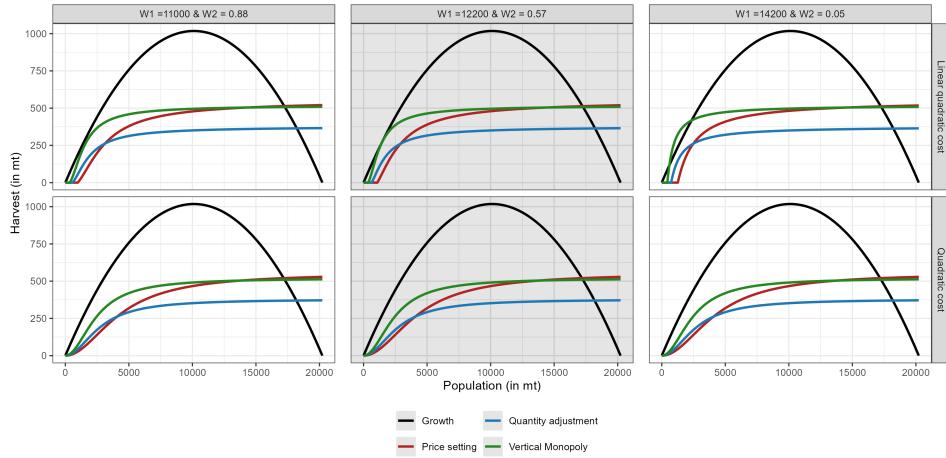


Figure 4.5: Sensitivity of equilibrium points to cost structure for wild totoaba stock

Logistic growth function (black) for Totoaba macdonaldi wild stock biomass with intersecting colored lines representing different market structures and competitive responses. Harvest under the status quo vertical monopoly is represented by the green curve. When conservation farming is added to the monopoly scenario the trader can respond either in a mutually beneficial way by adjusting the quantity supplied given a market price (quantity adjustment, in blue). Alternatively, the trader can respond aggressively and try to set a price that undercuts the price of farmed products, resulting in increased poaching (price setting, in red). Cost parameters  $W_1$  and  $W_2$  correspond to the linear quadratic cost structure. In the top panel, equilibria are displayed for the linear quadratic cost, on the bottom, for a quadratic cost. On the left panel, the quadratic component is large, and vertical monopoly maintains a healthy stock. Center panel highlights the baseline scenario. In the right panel, the cost structure is close to linear. In this case, the vertical monopoly may lead to drastic stock decline.

we ask if conservation farming can improve upon the status quo by producing a robust single high stable equilibrium point and reduced cartel profits.

We add conservation farming to the monopolist model and now have two ‘firms’ – a trader and a farmer – competing on a duopolistic market. When farming supplies legal product to end-market consumers, the demand for illegal product will fall, assuming that wild and farmed products are substitutable (an assumption we explore later). The monopolist trader can respond to competition in two ways: a mutually beneficial way by adjusting the quantity supplied given a market price (quantity adjustment), or alternatively, an aggressive way that tries to select a price that undercuts the price of farmed products (price setting). In both scenarios, the trader and farmer choose a quantity supplied simultaneously, without knowing how the other will respond. Illegal markets are almost always characterized as competing through quantity adjustment (Poret, 2009; Flores, 2016). Under the assumption that products are substitutable, it is more profitable – and therefore more likely – for both firms to compete through quantity adjustment (Singh and Vives, 1984). When goods are substitutes, if both firms restrict the quantities supplied, they both enjoy higher prices. If they flood the market, prices and profits collapse. In the case of totoaba, we find that if traders respond through quantity adjustment under the linear quadratic cost structure, then the wild stock biomass increases by 5.45% (compared to a monopoly) to a steady state equilibrium of 18,220 mt, or to 90% of carrying capacity (Table 4.6). This represents a reduction in poaching harvest of 28.27% and \$195.16 million USD of annual lost profit to the trader.

Even if traders respond aggressively through price setting, considered a less likely response (Singh and Vives, 1984) a single high equilibrium emerges (Figure 4.4). Price setting is considered a much less likely response to competition because the trader would face steep profit losses. Under the high steady-state equilibrium with the linear quadratic cost structure, wild stock biomass decreases by 0.24% relative to monopoly, to a steady-state equilibrium of 17,235 mt, or to 85% of carrying capacity (Table 4.6). Although the high steady-state reflects a relatively small increase in poaching harvest by 5.85%, it would result in \$313.84 million USD of annual lost profit to the cartel, making this strategy unlikely.

Scenario	Poached harvest (in mt)	Farmed harvest (in mt)	Steady state population (in mt)	Illegal profit (in million USD)	Farming profit (in million USD)	Fishing profit (in million USD)	Aggregate profit (in million USD)	Illegal profit change (in million USD)	Variation in ss. pop.	Poaching change (%)
Vertical Monopoly	507.04	0.00	17277.0	402.02	0.00	1.22	403.24	0.00	0%	0%
Quantity adjustment	363.71	333.60	18220.5	206.87	174.03	0.57	381.46	-195.16	5.46%	-28.27%
Price setting	536.70	430.05	17235.0	88.18	58.74	3.57	150.49	-313.84	-0.24%	5.85%

Bioeconomic performance

Figure 4.6: Economic and ecological performance of different market regimes

Our current specifications for totoaba show that price setting leads to a slight increase in poaching pressure, however, we argue that price setting does not universally lead to increased poaching pressure, challenging a key conclusion from the original bioeconomic model ([Bulte and Damania, 2005](#); [Damania and Bulte, 2007](#)). Farming puts an upper bound on the price traders can pay to poachers in order to remain competitive. When the cost of farming becomes lower than the combined cost of poaching and trading, price-setting competition does not inevitably result in the overexploitation of the wild stock. This is because when farming costs are low, traders have an incentive to maintain large stocks by poaching less to remain competitive with farmers. This limits the price paid to poachers. On the other hand, when farming costs are large, traders have an incentive to poach more, paying a larger price to poachers while remaining competitive with the farming sector. In the case of totoaba, species specific traits and market characteristics result in a slight increase in poaching in the price setting scenario. However, if the carrying capacity were smaller, or demand lower, the price-setting equilibrium would result in conservation benefits.

While we focus on the effect of conservation farming on a monopolistic market structure, given that this scenario best represents the totoaba fishery today, the effect of conservation farming on market structures can be explored in different contexts. We model alternative market structures, including scenarios with multiple competing traders or multiple competing farmers, and find that if the number of farmers exceeds the number of traders, poaching levels will decline (supplementary figure 4.A). Additionally, if farming is taken over by monopolists, we find that poaching is reduced and the wild population increases (supplementary figure 4.B).

### 3 An effective policy space for farming.

Our analysis provides a quantitative framework that can identify an effective policy space where all supply, demand, and market structure parameters align to ensure that conservation farming will reduce poaching, improving greatly on the original bioeconomic model and the limitations of binary qualitative approaches ([Phelps et al., 2014](#); [Tensen, 2016](#); [Bulte and Damania, 2005](#); [Damania and Bulte, 2007](#); [Challender et al., 2019](#)). This bioeconomic model allows researchers to quantify: (a) how much cheaper farming must be relative to poaching to be competitive; (b) how much of a demand increase can be absorbed by farming; and (c) how substitutable must wildlife products be for farmed products to displace wild products. Critically, we also explore how the interaction between these factors may affect outcomes. We explore how sensitive the results are for totoaba, offering general and totoaba-specific policy solutions to help ensure that conservation farming remains in the effective policy space.

We find that the cost of conservation farming for totoaba can be high and still competitive with poaching, but this is contingent on the cost for traders also being high (supplementary figure

4.D). Traders inherently rely on poachers to obtain totoaba, and if farming is expensive this forces traders to pay poachers higher prices. If traders compete with poachers under the more likely quantity adjustment response, the population remains healthy, even increasing by nearly 6% from the monopoly steady state. However, if traders compete with farmers by price setting, the low prices paid to poachers can incentivize poachers to increase fishing pressure in order to maintain payouts. This can lead to a decrease in the wild population biomass modestly by 0.24% from the monopoly steady state. Policymakers can support farming success by subsidizing farming to keep the cost low while maintaining enforcement to keep the cost of poaching high (for totoaba this includes marine patrols, fisheries closures, and gillnet bans). To mitigate the possibility of stock decline under the less-likely price-setting response, we identify that maintaining conservation farming below \$77,339 USD per mt of totoaba (amounting to a 14% subsidy on unit production cost) will prevent any increase in poaching pressure under either competitive response, assuming no effect of law enforcement in our baseline model.

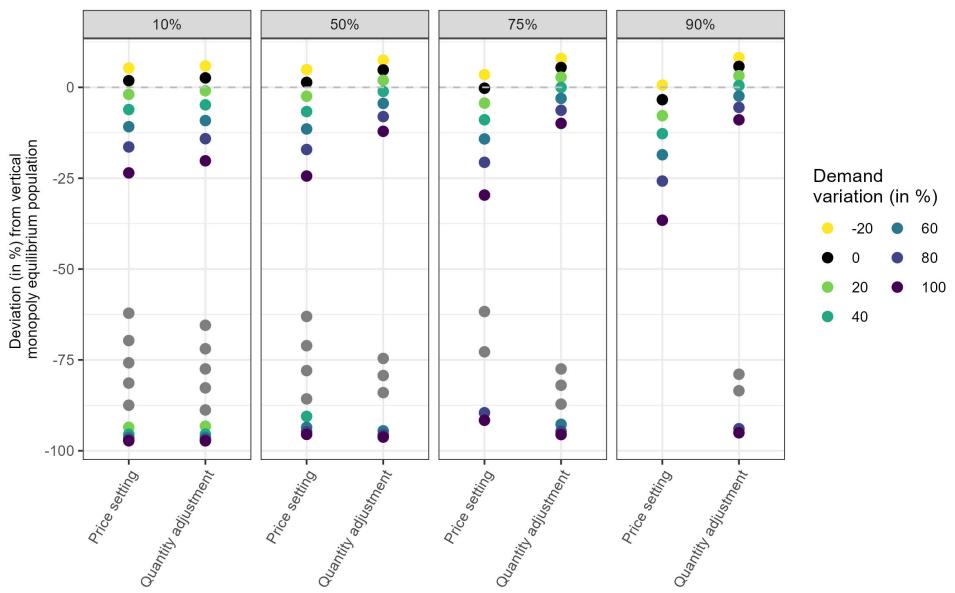


Figure 4.7: Interaction between substitutability and demand under duopolistic competition

Each panel represents a different substitutability between farmed and wild product: large (90% substitutability), baseline (75%), medium (50% substitutability), and low (10% substitutability). Our baseline results are in the 75% substitutability case, with zero demand variation (black dots). When conservation farming is added to the monopoly scenario the trader can respond aggressively and try to set a price that undercuts the price of farmed products (price setting), alternatively the trader can respond in a mutually beneficial way by adjusting the quantity supplied given a market price (quantity adjustment). We simulate a change in end-market demand ranging from a reduction in demand by 20% to an increase in demand up to 100%, in increments of 20%. One, two, or three potential equilibria can emerge. Where three equilibria points emerge, we color only the high and low stable equilibria (unstable equilibria are indicated in gray). The dotted horizontal lines indicate the status quo monopoly equilibrium population (in the absence of conservation farming). Points closer to 0 represent a high stable equilibrium point, whereas points closer to -100 represent a population collapse stable equilibrium point.

Our results confirm that high substitutability is critical to conservation farming success and leads to larger conservation benefits in the quantity-setting equilibrium, under the assumption that demand remains stable (Figure 4.7). Fish swim bladders have a wide variety of uses and values, and it is possible that farmed totoaba swim bladders may enter into these different product streams ([Sadovy de Mitcheson et al., 2019](#)). In the case of no substitutability, two separate, non-competitive markets emerge. In this scenario the status quo is maintained, both firms set high prices, and traders continue to operate as a monopoly because farmed product does not

compete with wild product. At the other extreme, in the case of perfect substitutability, consumers prefer the cheaper option without any preference of source. This increases the intensity of potential price-setting competition between firms and further depletes the stock in this case. To comply with CITES captive breeding guidelines totoaba must be identified as farmed ([CITES, 2019](#)), and distinguishing between products to meet regulatory obligations can artificially lower substitutability. Outcomes vary under intermediate states of substitutability. For low to medium substitutability (i.e., 10 – 50%) traders and farmers are still likely to limit quantity: undercutting a competitor would yield significant profit losses. For high substitutability (i.e., 90%) there is an incentive to compete for market control either by price setting or quantity adjustment, which reflects our main results.

The value of totoaba swim bladder is tied to rarity, and while demand evolution is an open empirical question, we test the sensitivity of our results to simultaneous changes in demand and substitutability (Figure 4.7). Totoaba swim bladder purchases are ‘conspicuous consumption,’ luxury products commonly purchased for social status and speculative investing by wealthy consumers ([Sadovy de Mitcheson et al., 2019; Veblen, 2023](#)). A decrease in swim bladder price resulting from conservation farming may actually undermine the desirability of totoaba swim bladders in Chinese end markets, given that the high monetary value is linked to high social status ([Jenkins, 2016](#)). However, some increase in demand may be expected if a legal product becomes available, as law-abiding consumers will be more likely to purchase wildlife products when those products are traded and purchased legally ([Phelps et al., 2014](#)). Under our high substitutability assumption (75%), competition through quantity adjustment can withstand a 40% increase in demand, whereas competition through price setting is not robust to demand increases. For price setting, a demand increase of 40% would cause the equilibrium population to decrease by 10% from the monopoly status quo, increasing poaching by 216 mt.

There is a much higher threat to the wild population if demand increases under low to medium substitutability (i.e. 10 – 50%), given that this additional demand cannot be fully met by farmed product (Figure 4.7). In the best-case and most likely scenario, medium substitutability (50%) can meet a 20% increase in demand if competition occurs through quantity adjustment, although uncertain outcomes (e.g. high and low steady states) start to emerge if demand increases by 60% or more. In the worst-case scenario, if competition occurs through price setting and products have medium substitutability (50%), any increase in demand reduces the wild population from the status quo. While increases in demand of 20 – 40% still produce a single high equilibrium point, the population size is lower than under monopoly. Furthermore, if demand increases beyond 80%, uncertain outcomes emerge, with the wild population either stabilizing at a high equilibrium point (14,322 mt in the price setting scenario; 15,886 mt in the quantity adjustment scenario) or being pushed to a low equilibrium point (ranging from 763 mt in the quantity adjustment scenario; 909 mt in the price setting scenario). We recommend that stated preference investigations on wild versus farmed product should be undertaken in Chinese end-markets and that these investigations include questions focused on perceived social status benefit and legality ([Hinsley and 't Sas-Rolfes, 2020](#)).

## 4 Conclusion

Our results show that conservation farming presents a potentially high reward intervention. If traders respond to competition from farming by quantity adjustment, the wild totoaba stock is predicted to increase by 5.45% relative to the status quo monopoly, to a high stable biomass of 18,220 mt (90% of carrying capacity). In addition to improving the totoaba wild stock, this quantity adjustment response will decrease poaching by 28.27% relative to the status quo. If traders

respond by price setting, the wild stock biomass decreases by less than 1% to a high stable biomass of 17,235 mt (85% of carrying capacity). Economic theory concludes that quantity adjustment is the more likely outcome because restricting quantities allows both farmers and traders to collect higher profits (Singh and Vives, 1984). Conservation farming presents a more robust outcome to the status quo monopoly market structure (where a single trader dominates the market), as the wild totoaba reaches either a low or high stable equilibrium biomass depending on the poaching cost structure. We find that if products have high substitutability they are more likely to maintain a high stable equilibrium. Further, under a quantity adjustment response, highly substitutable products can better maintain this high stable equilibrium for demand increases up to 40%. Our results are sensitive to changes in substitutability and increases in demand, therefore we encourage a thorough understanding of end-market demand before implementing conservation farming for totoaba.

We revive an existing bioeconomic model and reach different and optimistic conclusions about the potential for conservation farming to reduce poaching and maintain a healthy wild population. We provide a novel framework to objectively assess the potential effects of farming by grounding our analysis in detailed species ecology and market data. Furthermore, our approach provides a rigorous alternative to existing qualitative frameworks that are unable to analyze the interaction between multiple variables. While our analysis focuses on totoaba, the bioeconomic model is flexible and can be applied more broadly to other species and contexts to examine the effect of conservation farming on a wild population.

### Acknowledgements

We thank Mark Buntaine, Chris Costello, and Lauriane Mouysset for helpful comments and feedback on the manuscript, as well as members of the Costello research group. J.M.L acknowledges funding from the Daniel and Dianne Vapnek Fisheries Management Fellowship, the Schmidt Family Foundation Research Accelerator Award as well as from the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Postgraduate Scholarship. M.C.-R. acknowledges funding from the Latin American Fisheries Fellowship.

### Contributions and data availability

J.M.L and S.J contributed to this work equally. J.M.L., S.J., M.C-R., G.M.G., M.A.C-M., E.A-B, and S.D.G. contributed to writing the manuscript. J.M.L., S.J., A.S., and S.D.G. contributed to study conception and design. All authors contributed to data acquisition and analysis. All authors approve of the submitted manuscript.

The data that support the findings of this study are available [here](#)

The code used for this study is publicly available on [Github](#) and [archived here](#)

# A Appendix

## A A theoretical model of poachers, traders, and farmers

Our framework follows [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#), with a poaching cost structure adapted to fisheries. The model develops a three-stage dynamic, game theoretic, bioeconomic model. The value chain for poached animal products comprises poachers, middlemen traders, and end markets. As a small number of actors characterizes many wildlife markets, the model features a vertical monopoly and looks at the consequences on wildlife population stocks of the introduction of a farmed substitute. In this setting, farmers compete on end markets with traders in quantity and price. In the original model, price competition unambiguously results in larger harvests than in the vertical monopoly case. Therefore, while quantity competition reduces poaching, the threat of a population collapse in the price-setting case should warrant a cautious approach to conservation farming. We argue that this conclusion is erroneous, as the intricacies of imperfect substitutability and market dynamics have not been properly accounted for in the original model. As a matter of fact, standard economic intuition regarding price-setting competition in the homogeneous goods case does not directly apply here, as fishing costs rise as the stock decreases, limiting the ability of the trader to flood the market. We show that scenarios exist where any type of competition unambiguously leads to positive conservation outcomes, i.e., reduced poaching and larger steady-state stocks. We amend the original results and use this model for simulation.

First, poachers illegally harvest wildlife resources. Second, they sell their catch to a monopsonistic buyer. Third, the buyer sells catches on a monopolistic market, which is not accessible to poachers. We label this value chain 'vertical monopoly' as a reference case. We then look at the impact of introducing a competitor on the end market, the farming sector.

### A.1 Entry in the fishery and poaching supply

We denote the fishing effort by  $E$ , which is measured in the number of vessel trips. Entry in the poaching sector,  $\dot{E}$ , is a function of payoff and an adjustment parameter. Harvest,  $q$ , follows the Gordon-Schaefer dynamic biomass model  $q = \sigma x E$ , with  $\sigma$  the (stock-independent) catchability coefficient, and  $E$ , effort. The payoff is determined by the price paid to the poachers  $s$  minus the cost of effort. We adopt a disaggregated view of the fishery, and consider increasing marginal costs of effort, as individuals have to be attracted from other activities with increasing opportunity costs. To account for energy costs, we derive a modified version of this model using a linear-quadratic cost function (see [37, 53]). Entry happens as long as the profit of the marginal poacher is positive :

$$\dot{E} = \eta \frac{d\Pi}{dE} = \eta \frac{d}{dE} [sq - W_1 * E - W_2 E^2] \quad (\text{A.1})$$

The resource stock biomass  $x$  follows a logistic growth curve and is harvested. Overall, the dynamics are:

$$\dot{x} = g(x) - q = rx \left(1 - \frac{x}{K}\right) - \sigma x E \quad (\text{A.2})$$

Where  $r$  is the intrinsic population growth rate, and  $K$  is the carrying capacity.

Fishermen enter the fishery as long as the marginal profit from selling to traders along the vertical value chain is positive. As the resource is in open access from the fishermen poachers maximize their instantaneous profit with respect to effort. The optimal effort and aggregate sup-

ply of poached fish is:

$$\frac{d\Pi}{dE} = 0 \Rightarrow E^* = \max\left(0, \frac{s\sigma x - W_1}{2W_2}\right) \quad (\text{A.3})$$

$$\Rightarrow q^* = \max\left(0, \frac{s\sigma^2 x^2 - W_1 \sigma x}{2W_2}\right) \quad (\text{A.4})$$

Given the linear quadratic nature of the costs, there is no effort or catch for low stock levels and/or low prices. Effort and catch increase with the price paid to poachers,  $s$ .

## A.2 Traders as vertical monopolists, without farming

We introduce a trader who has market power on the end-market (monopoly) and on the primary market, making it a “vertical monopoly”. The trader has to set price  $s$  on the primary market to clear the poaching market. On the end market, we assume the trader faces a linear inverse demand :

$$P^m = \alpha^m - \beta^m q^W \quad (\text{A.5})$$

Trading an illegal commodity incurs transaction costs  $c$ . Hence, the monopoly profit can be written as :

$$\Pi^m = (\alpha^m - \beta^m q^W - c - s)q^W \quad (\text{A.6})$$

The optimal level of output is :

$$q_m^{\tilde{W}} = \frac{\alpha^m - c - s}{2\beta^m} \quad (\text{A.7})$$

Using the poachers’ supply, it must be that in equilibrium, the supply of the monopolist trader equals the supply of the poachers. The price paid to poachers  $s$  balances supply and demand (consistent with equation 13 in [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#)). Substituting  $s^*$  into equation A.7 yields the quantities of poached product in the vertical monopoly scenario :

$$\text{Price paid to poachers : } s_m^*(x) = \frac{W_2(\alpha_m - c) + \beta^m(W_1\sigma x)}{\sigma^2 x^2 \beta^m + W_2} \quad (\text{A.8})$$

$$\text{Poaching : } q_m^*(x) = \frac{\sigma^2 x^2 (\alpha_m - c) - W_1 \sigma x}{2(\sigma^2 x^2 \beta^m + W_2)} \quad (\text{A.9})$$

First, note that equation A.9 is consistent with equation 14 in [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#), as the limiting case where  $W_1 = 0$  and  $W_2 = W$ .

## A.3 Captive breeding, imperfect competition and conservation

In this part of the model, a farmer can grow and sell totoaba. The theoretical model focuses on the duopolistic competition between the two actors on the end market for totoaba. As products are strategic substitutes, it is natural to investigate the case where Cournot competition arises. Indeed, when products are substitutes, each firm tries to maximize its residual demand (25). Nonetheless, given the asymmetric nature of costs, we also investigate Bertrand competition, as [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#).

**Introducing aquaculture :** the aquaculture farm needs to determine the optimal harvest age, based on the intrinsic growth rate in the pen, and expected prices. A sizeable literature has shown that rotation time is invariant to market structure in forestry applications ([Faustmann, 1849b; Mitra and Wan, 1986](#)) although quantities can be modified. The optimal rotation literature confirms the existence of a Faustmann rotation, where a set of  $T^*$  pens are equally distributed among each

age class (1 pen per age class until  $T^*$ ). While it is arguably unrealistic to expect this structure for an inherited forest, it is reasonable to assume that a farm would *ex-ante* determine this rotation period given the expected price schedule over time. We assume that the aquaculture farm aims at producing a product that is as similar as possible from a biophysical stand-point and thus determines  $T^*$ . As we consider a stationary demand function, one can write the farming problem as a linear profit maximization problem, where the unit cost of production equals the capitalized sum of annual average variable costs over  $T^*$  periods. Therefore, we assume that an aquaculture firm can raise totoaba at cost  $v$  and sell it to the market:

$$\Pi^F = (P^F - v)q^F \quad (\text{A.10})$$

With  $v$  the unit cost per ton of totoaba, corresponding to the capitalized sum of annual costs.

**Utility maximization and demand functions :** upon the introduction of farmed goods, the inverse demand functions change. We use a model consistent with ([Singh and Vives, 1984](#)), where a representative consumer maximizes a quadratic and strictly concave utility function subject to prices:

$$\max_{q^W, q^F} V = \alpha^W q^W + \alpha^F q^F - \left( \frac{\beta^W(q^W)^2 + 2\gamma q^W q^F + \beta^F(q^F)^2}{2} \right) - p^W q^W - p^F q^F \quad (\text{A.11})$$

Two inverse demand functions emerge, that the traders and farmers face :

$$P^W = \alpha^W - \beta^W q^W - \gamma q^F \quad (\text{A.12})$$

$$P^F = \alpha^F - \beta^F q^F - \gamma q^W \quad (\text{A.13})$$

Where  $W, F$  refers to wild and farmed. We assume  $\gamma > 0$  e.g that goods are substitutes. When  $\alpha_W = \alpha^F$  and  $\beta^W = \beta^F = \gamma$ , the goods are perfect substitutes. When  $\alpha^F = \alpha^W$ , but  $\beta^F \neq \gamma$  or  $\beta^W \neq \gamma$ ,  $\frac{\gamma^2}{\beta^W \beta^F}$  measures the degree of product differentiation.

Rearrange the initial inverse demand functions into direct demand functions:

$$q^W = a^W - b^W P^W + e P^F \quad (\text{A.14})$$

$$q^F = a^F - b^F P^F + e P^W \quad (\text{A.15})$$

With  $a^i = \frac{\alpha^i \beta^j - \alpha^j \gamma}{\beta^i \beta^j - \gamma^2}$ ,  $b^i = \frac{\beta^j}{\beta^i \beta^j - \gamma^2}$  and  $e = \frac{\gamma}{\beta^i \beta^j - \gamma^2}$

**Cournot competition in the retail market:** assume that the two firms compete by setting their quantities. We solve the multi-stage game using backward induction. First, we derive the supply function resulting from Cournot competition. Second, we find the price paid to poachers so that the quantities supplied by the traders on the end market equal the quantities supplied by poachers.

Taking the inverse demand functions and plugging them into the profit functions:

$$\begin{aligned} \Pi^F &= (\alpha^F - \beta^F q^F - \gamma q^W - v)q^F \\ \Pi^W &= (\alpha^W - \beta^W q^W - \gamma q^F - s - c)q^W \end{aligned}$$

In a Cournot equilibrium, each firm takes its competitor's quantity as given, and picks optimal reaction functions.

Solving for the Nash equilibrium using reaction functions, each firm supplies:

$$q_c^W = \frac{2\beta^F(\alpha^W - (s + c)) - \gamma(\alpha^W - v)}{4\beta^W\beta^F - \gamma^2} \quad (\text{A.16})$$

$$\tilde{q}_c^F = \frac{2\beta^W(\alpha^F - v) - \gamma(\alpha^W - s - c)}{4\beta^W\beta^F - \gamma^2} \quad (\text{A.17})$$

Now, we find the equilibrium price paid to poachers for each unit of totoaba  $s_C^*(x)$  by equating  $\tilde{q}_c^W$  and  $q_c^W$ , and find the Nash equilibrium supply functions.

In the Cournot equilibrium:

$$\text{Price paid to poachers: } s_C^*(x) = \frac{2W_2(2\beta^F(\alpha^W - c) - \gamma(\alpha^F - v)) + W_1\sigma x(4\beta^F\beta^W - \gamma^2)}{4W_2\beta^F + \sigma^2x^2(4\beta^F\beta^W - \gamma^2)} \quad (\text{A.18})$$

$$\text{Poaching : } q_C^{W*}(x) = \frac{\sigma^2x^2(2\beta^F(\alpha^W - c) - \gamma(\alpha^F - v)) - 2\beta^FW_1\sigma x}{4W_2\beta^F + \sigma^2x^2(4\beta^W\beta^F - \gamma^2)} \quad (\text{A.19})$$

First, including a linear component for energy in the poaching cost significantly raises the price paid to poachers (when  $W_1 > 0$ ). Second, poaching decreases with the degree of substitutability between farmed and wild products ( $\gamma$ ), and increases with the production cost of farmed products  $v$ . On the other hand, it increases with demand for the wild product  $\alpha^W$ . For low stock values, poaching can be null since the production costs increase as stocks diminish. In the polar quadratic cost case (e.g.  $W_1 = 0$ ), our results differ from [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#) by a magnitude effect. Nonetheless, the results stand :

**Lemma 1:** *Assume the market is large, i.e., the residual demand for large stock levels is large enough. For any given wildlife stock, poaching levels in equilibrium with captive breeding will be lower than those without captive breeding, if the introduction of captive-bred animal products has no impact on the parameters of the original inverse demand function for wild animal products.*

See Appendix B.1. for proof of Lemma 1

### Bertrand competition in the retail market

**Interior solution:** the two firms compete by setting their prices. This section investigates a potential interior equilibrium, where both producers operate on the market.

Using demand functions instead of inverse demand functions:

$$q^F = a^F - b^F P^F + eP^W$$

$$q^W = a^W - b^W P^W + eP^F$$

With  $a^i = \frac{\alpha^i\beta^j - \alpha^j\gamma}{\beta^i\beta^j - \gamma^2}$ ,  $b^i = \frac{\beta^j}{\beta^i\beta^j - \gamma^2}$  and  $e = \frac{\gamma}{\beta^i\beta^j - \gamma^2}$

Firms set their prices. The Bertrand profit equations are :

$$\Pi^F = (P^F - v)q^F = (P^F - v)(a^F - b^F P^F + eP^W)$$

$$\Pi^W = (P^W - (s + c))q^W = (P^W - (s + c))(a^W - b^W P^W + eP^F)$$

Solving for the reaction functions :

$$r^F(P^W) = \frac{a^F + b^F v + eP^W}{2b^F} \quad (\text{A.20})$$

$$r^W(P^F) = \frac{a^W + b^W(s + c) + eP^F}{2b^W} \quad (\text{A.21})$$

Finding the interior solution for the Nash Equilibrium :

$$P_B^F = \frac{2b^W(a^F + vb^F) + e(a^W + b^W(s + c))}{4b^Fb^W - e^2}$$

$$P_B^W = \frac{2b^F(a^W + b^W(s + c)) + e(a^F + vb^F)}{4b^Fb^W - e^2}$$

The equilibrium price paid to poachers is determined by equating the quantity supplied by the trader in Bertrand duopoly and the quantity supplied by the poachers and yields the quantity supplied yields :

In the **Bertrand equilibrium** :

$$\text{Price paid to poachers } s_B^*(x) = \frac{2W_2b^W[b^F(2a^W + ev) + ea^F + c(e^2 - 2b^Wb^F)] + W_1\sigma x(4b^Fb^W - e^2)}{\sigma^2x^2(4b^Fb^W - e^2) + 2W_2b^W(2b^Fb^W - e^2)} \quad (\text{A.22})$$

$$\text{Poaching : } q_B^{W*}(x) = \frac{b^W[\sigma^2x^2(b^F(2a^W + ev) + ea^F + c(e^2 - 2b^Wb^F)) - W_1\sigma x(2b^Fb^W - e^2)]}{2Wb^W(2b^Wb^F - e^2) + (4b^Fb^W - e^2)\sigma^2x^2} \quad (\text{A.23})$$

We amend the original results from [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#) with the concurring Lemma 2:

**Lemma 2:** *With Bertrand competition, if the introduction of captive-bred products has no impact on the parameters of the demand function for wild animal products, poaching levels with captive breeding are ambiguous. The driver of the equilibrium is the cost ratio between aquaculture and the illegal poaching sector, i.e,  $v$  and  $c + s(x)$*

- For relatively low ratio values (i.e,  $c + s(x) >> v$ ), poaching is unambiguously lower than without captive breeding for any given wildlife stock
- For intermediate ratio values, poaching is larger (for  $x < \tilde{x}$ ), then lower (for  $x > \tilde{x}$ ), than without captive breeding (with  $\tilde{x}$  such that  $q_B^{W*} = q_m^W$ )
- For large values of unit farming costs, poaching is unambiguously larger than without captive breeding for any wildlife stocks

See appendix B.2 for proof of Lemma 2.

Our results significantly differ from [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#), as Bertrand competition does not unambiguously lead to more extraction. Indeed, poaching functions are ambiguously ranked, and the final location of the steady state depends on the species intrinsic growth rate  $r$  and carrying capacity  $K$ .

With low farming costs, traders have an incentive to maintain large stocks. As the price paid to poachers is inversely related to the size of the stock, low harvest maintains large stocks and thus limits the price paid to poachers. Given its operational costs, it is the only way for the trader to remain competitive with the farming sector. On the other hand, when farming costs are large, the traders are incentivized to harvest more, as they can afford to pay a larger price to poachers

while remaining competitive with the farming sector.

**Corner solution:** in a perfectly substitutable framework, a corner solution emerges if one firm has a lower marginal cost than the other: if farmed and wild animal products were perfect substitutes and farmed products unambiguously cheaper to produce, poaching would cease. In the context of imperfectly substitutable goods, this result is challenged. For poaching to cease, it must be that :

$$v = -\frac{1}{e}(2(a^W - cb^W) - \frac{1}{b^F}(ce + a^F)) \quad (\text{A.24})$$

In our setup, the marginal cost of production for farming would need to be **negative** for poaching to stop<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, as substitutability increases, this cost lowers. The relative cost of trading poached goods plays a minor role.

#### A.4 Steady state equilibria

Given the inverted U-shape of the logistic growth function, several steady-state equilibria can arise. First, if the *harvest function* (that is increasing and concave) is *steeper* than the growth function at low stock levels, there can be (i) no equilibrium if the harvest at  $K/2$  is larger than the growth rate, (ii) one bifurcation point (tangent harvest and growth functions at  $K/2$ , and (iii) two equilibria, with one stable and one unstable. If the *growth function* is *steeper* than the growth function at low stock levels, there can be (i) a single equilibrium, (ii) a bifurcation point and an equilibrium, (iii) three interior equilibrium, with only two being stable (see figure 4.2 for an illustration)

#### A.5 Extensions

**An oligopoly model:** we extend our model to gauge the impact of the number of traders and farmers. We denote by  $\mathcal{I}$  the set of individual traders  $i \in \mathcal{I}$  and by  $\mathcal{J}$  the set of individual farmers  $j \in \mathcal{J}$ . The demand functions are :

$$P_k^W = \alpha^W - \beta^W \sum_{i \in \mathcal{I}} q_i^W - \gamma \sum_{j \in \mathcal{J}} q_j^F \quad (\text{A.25})$$

$$P_l^F = \alpha^F - \beta^F \sum_{j \in \mathcal{J}} q_j^F - \gamma \sum_{i \in \mathcal{I}} q_i^W \quad (\text{A.26})$$

**Cournot oligopoly :** each farmer and trader maximizes profits by taking as given its competitors' quantity commitments. We assume traders and farmers are homogeneous, i.e for each type of producer, costs are identical :

$$\begin{aligned} i, j \in \mathcal{I}, i \neq j, c_i = c_j = c \\ k, l \in \mathcal{J}, k \neq l, v_k = v_l = v \end{aligned}$$

Assuming that  $\text{card}(\mathcal{I}) = N$  and  $\text{card}(\mathcal{J}) = M$ , the profit functions for each farmer and trader can be written as :

$$\Pi_i^W = \left( \alpha^W - \beta^W(N-1)q_i^W - \beta^W q_i^W - \gamma M q^F - s - c \right) q_i^W \quad (\text{A.27})$$

$$\Pi_k^F = \left( \alpha^F - \beta^F(M-1)q_k^F - \beta^F q_k^F - \gamma N q^W - v \right) q_k^F \quad (\text{A.28})$$

---

<sup>1</sup>If consumers enjoy a numeraire good, they must receive compensation to consume the farmed good such that they increase their numeraire consumption to make up for the imperfectly substitutable nature of the farmed good.

Where  $q_i^W$  denotes the quantities sold by all other traders different from trader  $k$  (and  $q_l^F$  for farmers different from farmer  $l$ ). Given that all players in each type are identical cost-wise, the reaction functions are :

$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{I} : q_i^W = q_j^W = q^W = \frac{\alpha^W - (s + c) - \gamma M q^F}{(N + 1) \beta^W} \quad (\text{A.29})$$

$$\forall k, l \in \mathcal{J} : q_k^F = q_l^F = q^F = \frac{\alpha^F - v - \gamma N q^W}{(M + 1) \beta^F} \quad (\text{A.30})$$

The **Cournot-Nash equilibrium** is :

$$\text{Poaching} : q_{\text{Cournot}}^W = \frac{\beta^F(M + 1)(\alpha^W - (s + c)) - \gamma M(\alpha^F - v)}{\beta^W \beta^F (M + 1)(N + 1) - \gamma^2 NM} \quad (\text{A.31})$$

$$\text{Farming} : q_{\text{Cournot}}^F = \frac{\beta^W(N + 1)(\alpha^F - v) - \gamma N(\alpha^W - (s + c))}{\beta^W \beta^F (M + 1)(N + 1) - \gamma^2 NM} \quad (\text{A.32})$$

(A.33)

The primary market (between poachers and traders) must clear, and  $s(x)$  equates supply and demand:

$$N q_{\text{Cournot}}^W = q^W \quad (\text{A.34})$$

$$\iff s^{C^*}(x) = \frac{2W_2N[\beta^F(M+1)(\alpha^W - c) - \gamma M(\alpha^F - v)] + W_1\sigma x(\beta^F\beta^W(M+1)(N+1) - \gamma^2 NM)}{\sigma^2 x^2[\beta^F\beta^W(M+1)(N+1) - \gamma^2 NM] + 2W_2N(M+1)\beta^F} \quad (\text{A.35})$$

Solving for the equilibrium quantity, the quantity supplied on the market by individual traders is

$$q_{\text{Cournot}}^W = \frac{\sigma^2 x^2 [\beta^F(M+1)(\alpha^W - c) - \gamma M(\alpha^F - v)] - \sigma x W_1 N (M+1) \beta^F}{\sigma^2 x^2 [\beta^F\beta^W(M+1)(N+1) - \gamma^2 NM] + 2W_2N(M+1)\beta^F} \quad (\text{A.36})$$

In our case study, when  $c = 0$ , it shows that when the number of farmers is larger than the number of traders, the introduction of farming generates larger steady-state stocks. An interesting perspective is when there remains 1 sole trader, and the number of farmers increases: in this case, poaching is drastically cut down, as shown in Figure 4.A. When the number of traders is larger than the number of farmers, steady-state stocks decrease. In our context, when the number of traders is limited, increasing the number of farming facilities is a safe way to guarantee conservation outcomes.

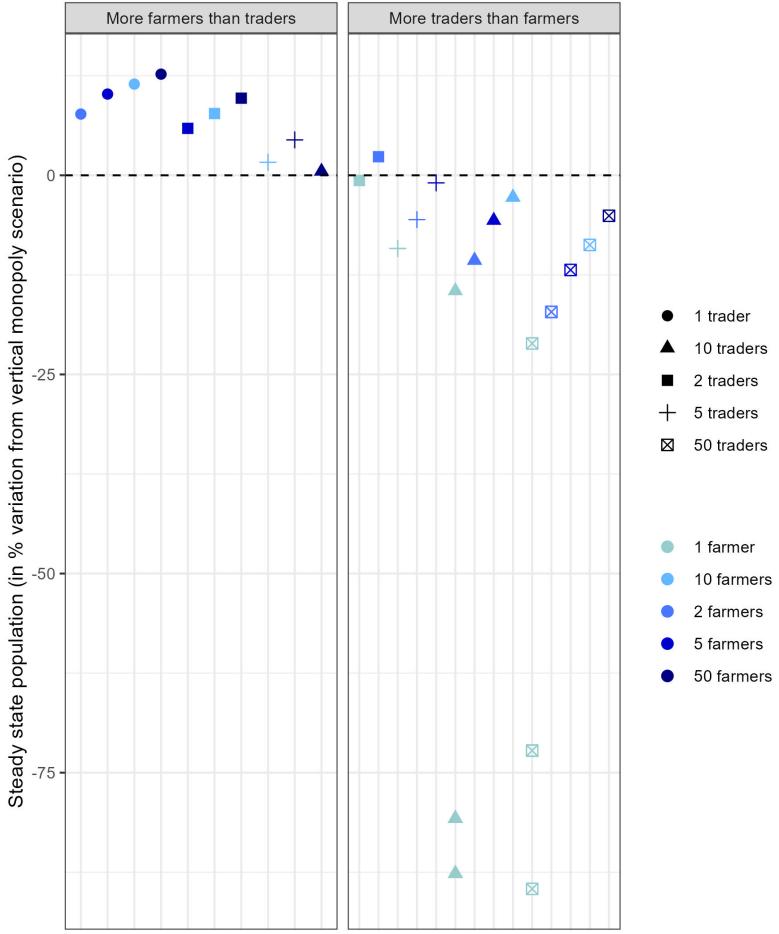


Figure 4.A: Steady state outcomes when multiple traders and multiple farmers are considered (an oligopoly) in the quantity adjustment scenario.

The left panel shows the steady state of the wild *Totoaba macdonaldi* population when there are more farmers than traders. The right panel shows the steady state of the wild population when there are more traders than farmers

**Bertrand oligopoly :** using the same notations as previously, the demand functions can be written as :

$$\forall i \in \mathcal{I} : q_i^W = q^W = \frac{1}{N}(a^W - b^W P^W - eP^F) \quad (\text{A.37})$$

$$\forall j \in \mathcal{J} : q_j^F = q^F = \frac{1}{M}(a^F - b^F P^F - eP^W) \quad (\text{A.38})$$

Using these demand functions and solving for the reaction functions in each case yields :

$$r^F(P^W) = \frac{a^F + b^F v + eP^W}{2b^F} \quad (\text{A.39})$$

$$r^W(P^F) = \frac{a^W + b^W(s + c) + eP^F}{2b^W} \quad (\text{A.40})$$

These reaction functions are the same as in the duopoly case (see eq. A.21). This result shows that aggregate production is invariant to the number of farmers or traders as long as both are present on the market. Moreover, the individual production for traders is  $\frac{1}{N}q_B^W$  and  $\frac{1}{M}q_B^F$  with  $q_B^W$  and  $q_B^F$  referring to the duopoly equilibrium quantities for poached and farmed productions. In a Bertrand equilibrium, irrespective of the number of players, price-setting competition pushes the price to its minimum such that both firms still operate (given that traders have a stock-dependent production cost). Increased competition in the form of more players cannot push the prices fur-

ther down. Therefore, aggregate output remains the same and individual production is divided among players.

This result further contradicts the results in [Damania and Bulte \(2007\)](#), as the authors find that increasing the number of players in a Bertrand set-up has detrimental effects on the steady-state stock. We find no effect, consistent with the theory and intuition.

**Trader take over of the aquaculture sector :** in this section, we look at the 'extended cartel' scenario, where the vertical monopoly takes over the ownership of the aquaculture firm.

To gain intuition, assume poached and farmed products are perfect substitutes. On the one hand, the vertical monopoly has two production technologies: poaching (with a variable marginal cost, as the price paid to poachers depends on the population stock) and farming (with a constant marginal cost). In this case, the vertical monopoly equates the marginal costs across production units; that is, it buys a poached product to poachers up until the marginal cost of an extra poached unit equates to that of a farmed unit. In this case, if the marginal cost of farming is lower than market prices absent farming, then poaching goes down. Notice that the only way for traders to limit the price paid to poachers is to maintain a healthy stock. Therefore, the new equilibrium population stock is larger than the initial stock, and poaching is lower.

Now consider the case at stake, where products are imperfect substitutes. In this case, the extended cartel does not only equate marginal costs, as marginal revenues diverge across products. We use the following model to investigate the resulting equilibrium. Let the profit of the extended cartel be:

$$\Pi(q^F, q^W) = (\alpha^W - \beta^W q^W - \gamma q^F - (s + c))q^W + (\alpha^F - \beta^F q^F - \gamma q^W - v)q^F \quad (\text{A.41})$$

The extended cartel maximizes its profit with respect to the poached and farmed products. The poached production it sells on end markets is :

$$q^W = \frac{\sigma^2 x^2 (\beta^F (\alpha^W - c) - \gamma (\alpha^F - v)) - W_1 \beta^F \sigma x}{2(\beta^F W + \sigma^2 x^2 (\beta^F \beta^W - \gamma^2))} \quad (\text{A.42})$$

Figure 4.B shows that if the 'extended cartel' scenario arises, poaching goes down, and the steady-state population increases.

## B Proofs to lemmas

### B.1 Lemma 1 : content and proof

Assume  $\alpha^W = \alpha^m$  and  $\beta^m = \beta^W$ , i.e., that the demand faced by the monopolist is the same as in the duopolistic case. Comparing monopoly and Cournot harvest functions:

$$\begin{aligned} q_m^W &\geq q_c^W \\ \Rightarrow v &\leq \bar{v} = \alpha^F - \frac{\gamma(\alpha^m - c)\sigma^2 x^2 - W_1 \sigma x}{2\beta^m \sigma^2 x^2 + 2W} \end{aligned}$$

First, look at when  $x \rightarrow 0$  :

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \bar{v} = \alpha^F$$

This requires that farming costs are lower than the choke price for consumers on their market. This condition is necessary for a farm competitor to enter the market.

Second, acknowledge that the second part of the equation is weakly decreasing, but non-increasing.

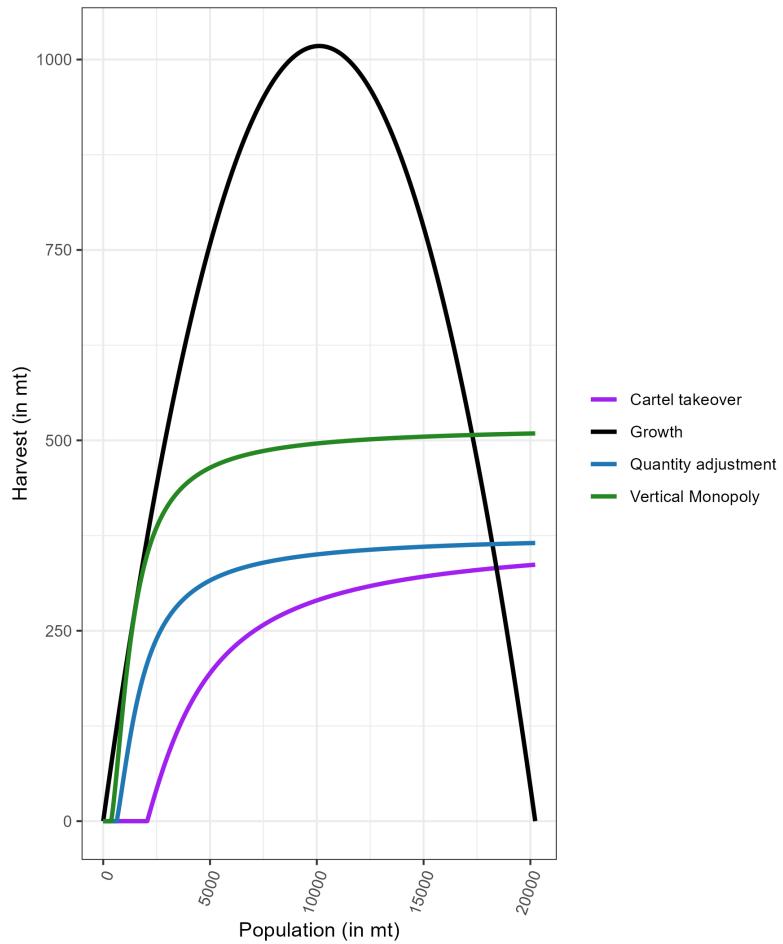


Figure 4.B: Steady-state equilibrium for the wild stock of *Totoaba macdonaldi* in the ‘extended cartel’ scenario, where the vertical monopoly takes over the ownership of farming operations

Assuming the carrying capacity goes to infinity, it is limited by :

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \bar{v} = \alpha^F - \gamma \frac{(\alpha^m - c)}{2\beta^m}$$

As fish abundance increases, the price paid to poachers decreases, as there is less scarcity. From equation (A.18), when  $x \rightarrow \infty$ , the price paid to poachers drops to 0. Moreover, notice that the last term in parenthesis is equation (A.7) for  $s = 0$ . Therefore, it means that the residual willingness to pay, when the poachers behave like a monopoly and  $x \rightarrow \infty$ , is larger than the unit cost of farming.

If the market is truly duopolistic, in the sense that the poachers could not manage the stock such that they depress demand so much as to kick their competitor out of the market, then Cournot competition unambiguously leads to lower poaching levels than a monopoly does.

## B.2 Lemma 2

Assume that the demand parameters are unchanged by the introduction of farmed substitutes, that is to say  $\alpha^W = \alpha^m$  and  $\beta^W = \beta^m$ , and use the definition of the coefficients for the direct demand function:

$$\begin{aligned} a^j &= \frac{\alpha^j \beta^i - \alpha^i \gamma}{\beta^j \beta^i - \gamma^2}; & b^j &= \frac{\beta^i}{\beta^j \beta^i - \gamma^2} \\ a^m &= \frac{\alpha^m}{\beta^m}; & b^m &= \frac{1}{\beta^m} \end{aligned}$$

For  $i, j \in \{W, F\}$  and  $m$  the monopoly case. To establish Lemma 2, we compare  $q_B^W$  and  $q_m^W$ . Equation (A.9) can be rewritten as :

$$q^m(a^m, b^m) = \frac{\sigma^2 x^2 (a^m - b^m c) - b^m W_1 \sigma x}{2\sigma^2 x^2 + 2W b^W}$$

Therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} q_m^W &\geq q_B^W \\ \Rightarrow v &\leq \frac{a^m - b^m c}{b^W b^F e} \left[ \frac{2W_2 b^W (2b^F b^W - e^2) + (4b^F b^W - e^2) \sigma^2 x^2}{2\sigma^2 x^2 + 2b^m W_2} \right] - \frac{W_1 \sigma x [(4b^F b^W - e^2)(b^m - b^W) + e^2 b^W]}{b^W b^F e (2\sigma^2 x^2 + 2b^m W_2)} \\ &\quad - \frac{e a^F + c(e^2 - 2b^W b^F) + 2b^F a^W}{b^F e} \end{aligned}$$

Notice that this equation can be reframed as :

$$F(x|c) \geq v \text{ where } F(x|c) = \Phi \frac{\eta + \mu x^2}{\theta + \nu x^2} - \frac{\kappa x}{\omega x^2 + \epsilon} - \zeta$$

And :

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi &= \frac{a^m - b^m c}{b^W b^F e}, \quad \eta = 2W_2 b^W (2b^W b^F - e^2), \quad \mu = (4b^W b^F - e^2) \sigma^2, \\ \theta &= 2W_2 b^m, \quad \nu = 2\sigma^2, \quad \zeta = (e a^F + c(e^2 - 2b^W b^F) + 2b^F a^W) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \kappa &= \frac{W_1 \sigma [(4b^F b^W - e^2)(b^m - b^W) + e^2 b^W]}{b^F * e}, \\ \omega &= 2b^W b^F e \sigma^2 \text{ and } \epsilon = 2b^m b^W b^F e W_2 \end{aligned}$$

**Analysis of  $\Phi_{\theta+\nu x^2}^{\eta+\mu x^2}$ :** if  $\mu\theta - \nu\eta < 0$ , the first component of  $F(x|c)$  is decreasing:

$$(4b^W b^F - e^2)b^m - 2(b^W b^F - e^2)b^W < 0$$

$$\iff \frac{\gamma^2}{\beta^m(\beta^W \beta^F - \gamma^2)^3} [\beta^m \beta^F + \gamma^2 - 4\beta^F \beta^W] < 0$$

Under the assumption that  $\beta^m = \beta^W = \beta^F = \beta$ , it is clear that

$$\frac{\gamma^2}{\beta(\beta^2 - \gamma^2)} (\gamma^2 - 3\beta^2) < 0$$

as  $\gamma < \beta$ . Therefore,  $\Phi_{\theta+\nu x^2}^{\eta+\mu x^2}$  is *decreasing*  $\forall x$

**Analysis of  $\frac{\kappa x}{\omega x^2 + \epsilon}$**  : the second component of  $F(x|c)$  is increasing for  $x \leq \sqrt{\frac{\epsilon}{\omega}}$ , and decreasing after, since  $x \in \mathbb{R}^+$ . Noticing that  $\kappa < 0$ :

- For  $x \in [0, \frac{1}{\sigma}\sqrt{W_2 b^m}]$ ,  $\frac{\kappa x}{\omega x^2 + \epsilon}$  is negative and decreasing
- For  $x > \frac{1}{\sigma}\sqrt{W_2 b^m}$ ,  $\frac{\kappa x}{\omega x^2 + \epsilon}$  is negative and increasing

**Conclusion :** overall,  $F(x|c)$  is such that :

- For  $x \leq \frac{1}{\sigma}\sqrt{W_2 b^m}$ , the first component is decreasing, while the second component is increasing
- For  $x \geq \frac{1}{\sigma}\sqrt{W_2 b^m}$ , the first component is decreasing and the second component is decreasing

Hence,  $F(x|c)$  is bounded above by  $\max(F(0|c), F(\frac{1}{\sigma}\sqrt{W_2 b^m}|c))$ , and bounded below by  $F(K|c)$  where  $K$  is the system carrying capacity. Therefore:

1. If  $v < F(K|c)$ , then Bertrand harvest is always lower than monopoly harvest
2. If  $F(K|c) < v < F(0|c)$ , then Bertrand harvest starts by being lower than in the monopoly case, but gets larger for large stock values.
3. Eventually, if  $F(0|c) < v$ , then Bertrand harvest is always larger than in the monopoly case

Figure 4.C illustrates this lemma with our parameter specification.

**Corner equilibrium:** for a corner solution to emerge, it must be that  $q_B^{w*} = 0$ ,

$$v = v(x) = \frac{W_1(2b^F b^W - e^2)}{\sigma x b^F e} - \frac{2b^F a^W + ea^F + c(e^2 - 2b^W b^F)}{b^F e} \quad (\text{A.43})$$

Equation A.43 shows that for low stock values, costs can still be positive and poaching disappear. However, to ensure that poaching is *never* beneficial in the Bertrand equilibrium, it must be that  $v = \min v(x) = -\frac{2b^F a^W + ea^F + c(e^2 - 2b^W b^F)}{b^F e v}$ . In this case, the subsidy rate is so high that production is always beneficial for the farmer, and prices are too low for the trader to compete. In our baseline specification, this would amount to  $v = -720,855$  USD.

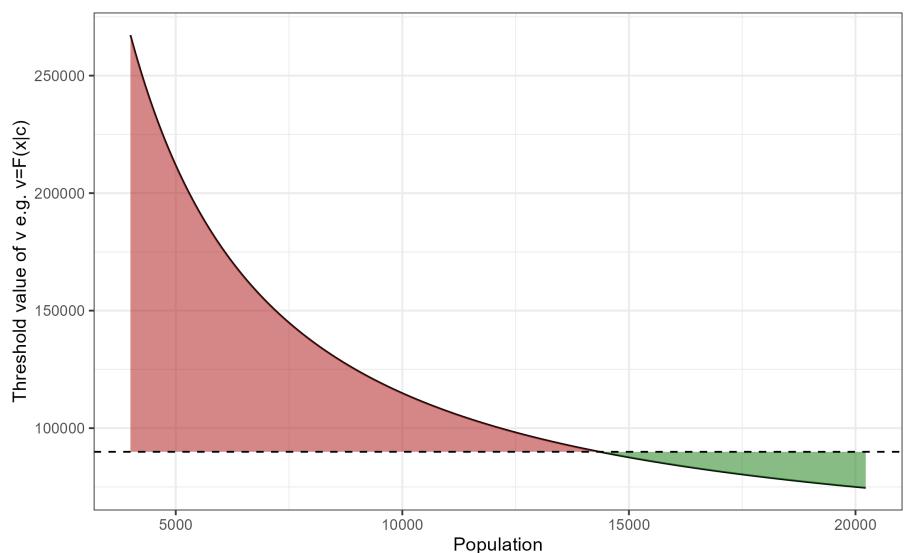


Figure 4.C: Evolution of the threshold  $v$  to compare vertical monopoly and price setting (Bertrand) harvest functions

In green, vertical monopoly harvests more than in the price setting equilibrium. For larger population values, in red, price setting leads to more harvest than the vertical monopoly. This illustrates our main specification and property 2 above.

## B Supplementary Figures and Tables

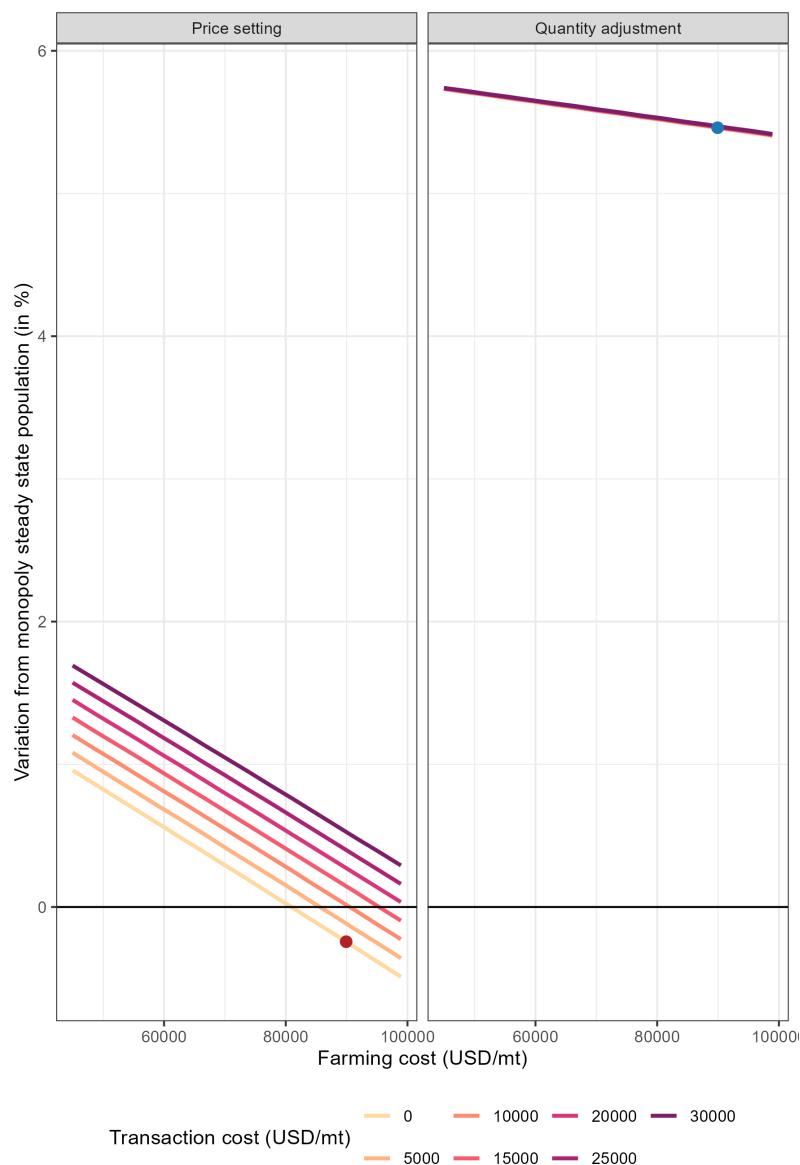


Figure 4.D: Percent change in steady state population across scenarios, following the joint evolution of illegal transaction and farming costs

Red and blue dots represent baseline results in the price setting and quantity adjustment scenarios

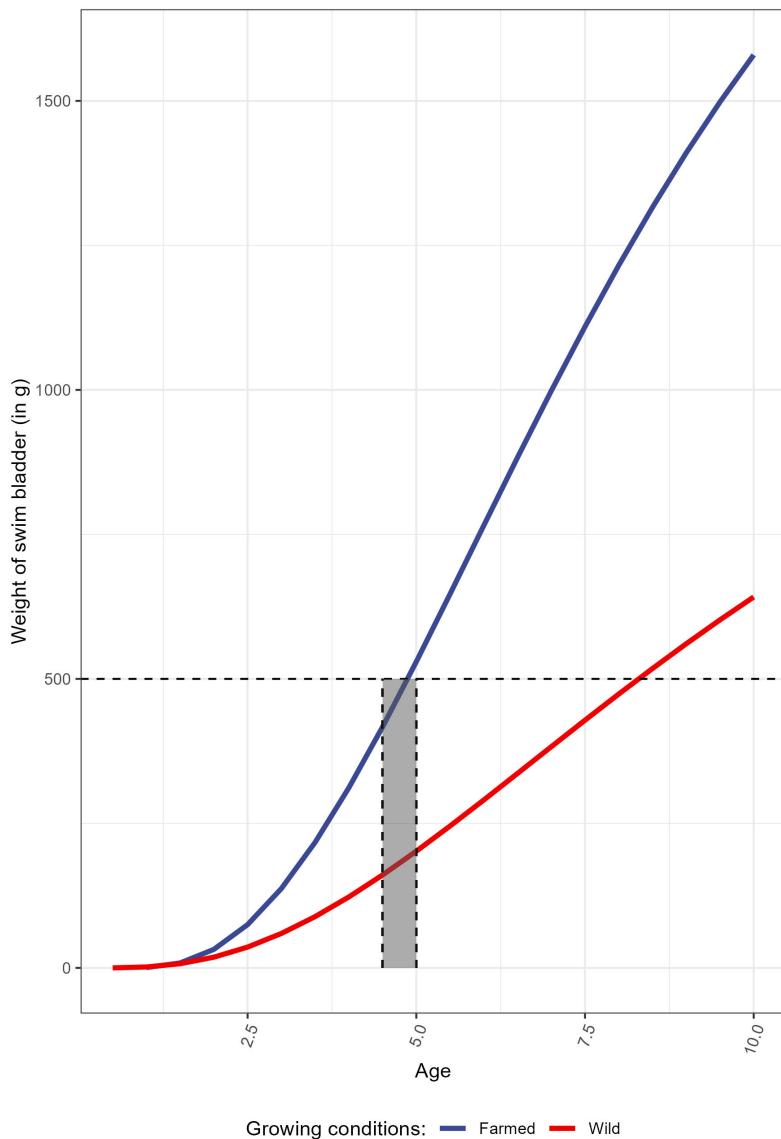


Figure 4.E: Von Bertalanffy Growth curves for wild and farmed *Totoaba macdonaldi* under different growing conditions

Gray box indicates the range of ages that possess a 500 gram swim bladder. The wild individual growth curve was calibrated with information from the stock assessment, while the farmed individual growth curve was calibrated using

Variable	Low Season	Mid Season	High Season	Source
Vessels	5	20	50	<a href="#">Cisneros-Mata (2020)</a>
Days per month	4	12	14	<a href="#">Cisneros-Mata (2020)</a>
Total fleet days year	20	240	700	<a href="#">Cisneros-Mata (2020)</a>
Food fuel day	525	525	525	Semi-Structured Interviews
Totoaba gearset	2	3	6	<a href="#">Cisneros-Mata (2020)</a>
Gear loss day	0.5	0.5	0.5	Semi-Structured Interviews
Gearset vessel per day	2	3	3	<a href="#">Cisneros-Mata (2020)</a>
Gear replacement	1600	1600	1600	Semi-Structured Interviews
Bribes/year	600	7200	21000	Semi-Structured Interviews
Average cost (per vessel day)	8385.34	14386.69	5051.26	Authors' calculation

Table 4. F: Supporting information for the calculation of the *Totoaba macdonaldi* poaching cost parameters ( $W_1$  and  $W_2$ )

The methods section details how and when semi-structured interviews were conducted.

<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Price	
Catch	-1,563.752** (725.985)
Constant	1,625,837.000*** (406,789.500)
Observations	45
R <sup>2</sup>	0.097
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.076
Residual Std. Error	431,737.700 (df = 43)
F Statistic	4.640** (df = 1; 43)

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table 4. G: Regression output for the linear demand estimation calculated by regressing price data on catch data.

Data were obtained from the available literature that provided estimated weight and value of *Totoaba macdonaldi* maw seizures on estimated *Totoaba macdonaldi* catch from 2014 to 2017 obtained from a recent stock assessment. The methods section details where information was obtained from.

Variable	Value	Source
Sphere	1.00	Earth Ocean Farm Video, 2022
Capacity per sphere (t)	144.00	Earth Ocean Farm Video, 2022
<i>In \$USD</i>		
Maintenance year	12500.00	Felipe Ramirez, InnovaSea, 2018
Cleaning year	5000.00	Felipe Ramirez, InnovaSea, 2018
Vessel maintenance/year	10000.00	Tyler Korte, BlueOcean Mariculture, 2018; Fernando Cavalin, Earth Ocean Farms, 2018
Fuel year	25122.50	Author's Calculations
Feed	312480.00	Tyler Korte, BlueOcean Mariculture, 2018
Labor	1580000.00	Authors' calculations
Facility lease	150000.00	Cygnus Ocean Farms, 2017
Admin.	50000.00	Cygnus Ocean Farms, 2017
Operational costs	2145102.50	Authors' calculations
Operational costs (per t & year)	14896.55	Authors' calculations

Table 4. H: Supporting information for the calculation of the *Totoaba macdonaldi* farming cost parameter ( $v$ )

Annual cost estimates were obtained from informants and converted to \$USD. Capacity of each farming pen was obtained from Earth Ocean Farms, and an annual cost 706 per tonne of totoaba was calibrated using personal communications with totoaba aquaculture producers.

Parameter	Value	Concept	Units
$\alpha$	1,625,836.98	Demand model : intercept	USD
$\beta$	1,563.75	Demand model : coefficient	USD/metric ton of biomass
$\gamma$	1,354.25	Demand model : substitutable good coefficient	USD/metric ton of biomass
$r$	0.20	Intrinsic growth rate	unitless
$K$	20,226.00	Carrying capacity (in metric tons)	metric tons of biomass
$\sigma$	$2 \times 10^{-5}$	Catchability	% of biomass/vessel trip
$AvgCost$	14,386.69	Average cost per vessel trip at historical value	USD/vessel trip
$W$	3.75	Quadratic cost parameter - Quadratic cost function	USD vessel trip <sup>-2</sup>
$W_1$	12200.00	Linear cost parameter - Linear quadratic cost function	USD/vessel trip
$W_2$	0.57	Quadratic cost parameter - Linear quadratic cost function	USD vessel trip <sup>-2</sup>
$v$	89929.92	Unit cost of farming	USD/metric ton of biomass
$i_r$	0.10	Interest rate	%
$Age$	4.50	Age of farmed totoaba	Years
$c$	0.00	Unit cost of trading	USD/ metric ton of biomass

Table 4. I: Summary of *Totoaba macdonaldi* ecological and market parameters for model calibration

The methods section details where information was obtained to estimate each parameter, as well as relevant equations.

Concept	Formula	Reference
<i>Fishery</i>		
Growth	$\dot{x} = rx(1 - \frac{x}{K}) - \sigma xE$	eq. A.2
<i>Poaching</i>	$s$ is price paid to poachers	
Harvest technology	$q = \sigma xE$	
Profit	$\Pi = s \times (\sigma xE) - W_1 E - W_2 E^2$	
Poached harvest	$q^W = \frac{s\sigma^2 x - W_1}{2W_2}$	eq. A.4
<hr/>		
<i>Vertical monopoly scenario</i>		
Demand	$P^m = \alpha^m - \beta^m q$	eq. A.5
Profit	$\Pi^m = (P^m - s - c)q$	eq. A.6
Supply on end market	$q_m^*(x) = \frac{\sigma^2 x^2 (\alpha_m - c) - W_1 \sigma x}{2(\sigma^2 x^2 \beta^m + W_2)}$	eq. A.9
<hr/>		
<i>Duopoly</i>		
Aquaculture profit	$\Pi^F = (P^F - v)q^F$	eq. A.10
Demand for imperfect substitutes	$P^W = \alpha^W - \beta^W q^W - \gamma q^F$	eq. A.12
	$P^F = \alpha^F - \beta^F q^F - \gamma q^W$	eq. A.13
Quantity adjustment (Cournot) supply	$q_C^{W*}(x) = \frac{\sigma^2 x^2 (2\beta^F (\alpha^W - c) - \gamma (\alpha^F - v)) - 2\beta^F W_1 \sigma x}{4W_2 \beta^F + \sigma^2 x^2 (4\beta^W \beta^F - \gamma^2)}$	eq. A.19
Price setting (Bertrand) supply	$q_B^{W*}(x) = \frac{b^W [\sigma^2 x^2 (b^F (2a^W + ev) + ea^F + c(e^2 - 2b^W b^F)) - W_1 \sigma x (2b^F b^W - e^2)]}{2Wb^W (2b^W b^F - e^2) + (4b^F b^W - e^2) \sigma^2 x^2}$	eq. A.23

Table 4. J: Summary of the key functions in the model

For model conclusions, the plotted functions are growth, vertical monopoly end market supply ( $q^m$ ), quantity adjustment end market supply ( $q_C^W$ ) and price setting end market supply ( $q_B^W$ )

# **Conclusion**



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**Mots clés:** 3 à 6 mots clés

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