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James Ross
Assistant Editor
Journal of Ecology

Dear James:

We are thankful to the senior and associate editors, Prof. James Ross and Prof. Nicole Rafferty, and two anonymous reviewers for the insightful comments to improve the manuscript. We are also grateful for the opportunity to resubmit. In the attached document you can find a detailed response to each of their comments. Here we summarise the main changes to the manuscript.

Briefly, our paper explores the possible applications of control theory in an ecological context. We see potential in our paper to contribute to both applied and theoretical aspects in ecology. However in our initial submission we lingered midway between these two directions and as the editors and reviewers pointed out we failed to address either option successfully. We have re-inspected our manuscript and think that the theoretical insights are stronger. As a consequence in this revision we have chosen to focus on the conceptual aspect of our approach at the expense of numerous, but weak, connections with conservation and applied ecology.

Adopting a primarily conceptual focus allowed us to be clearer about the justification, methodology and potential insights of our approach. However, improving clarity while successfully tying the conceptual motivation with our findings required more than some changes to some paragraphs or sections of the manuscript. Therefore, we have rewritten almost entirely the manuscript and the supplementary materials. We maintain the methodology and findings, but there has been a major change in the way we justify the study, introduce novel concepts to the ecological domain, and present our conclusions.

We look forward to further feedback and hope that the editors and reviewers find these changes satisfactory.

Regards,

Fernando Cagua
(in behalf of all authors)