ELO European Landowners' Organization

Nature conservation as driver of biodiversity loss

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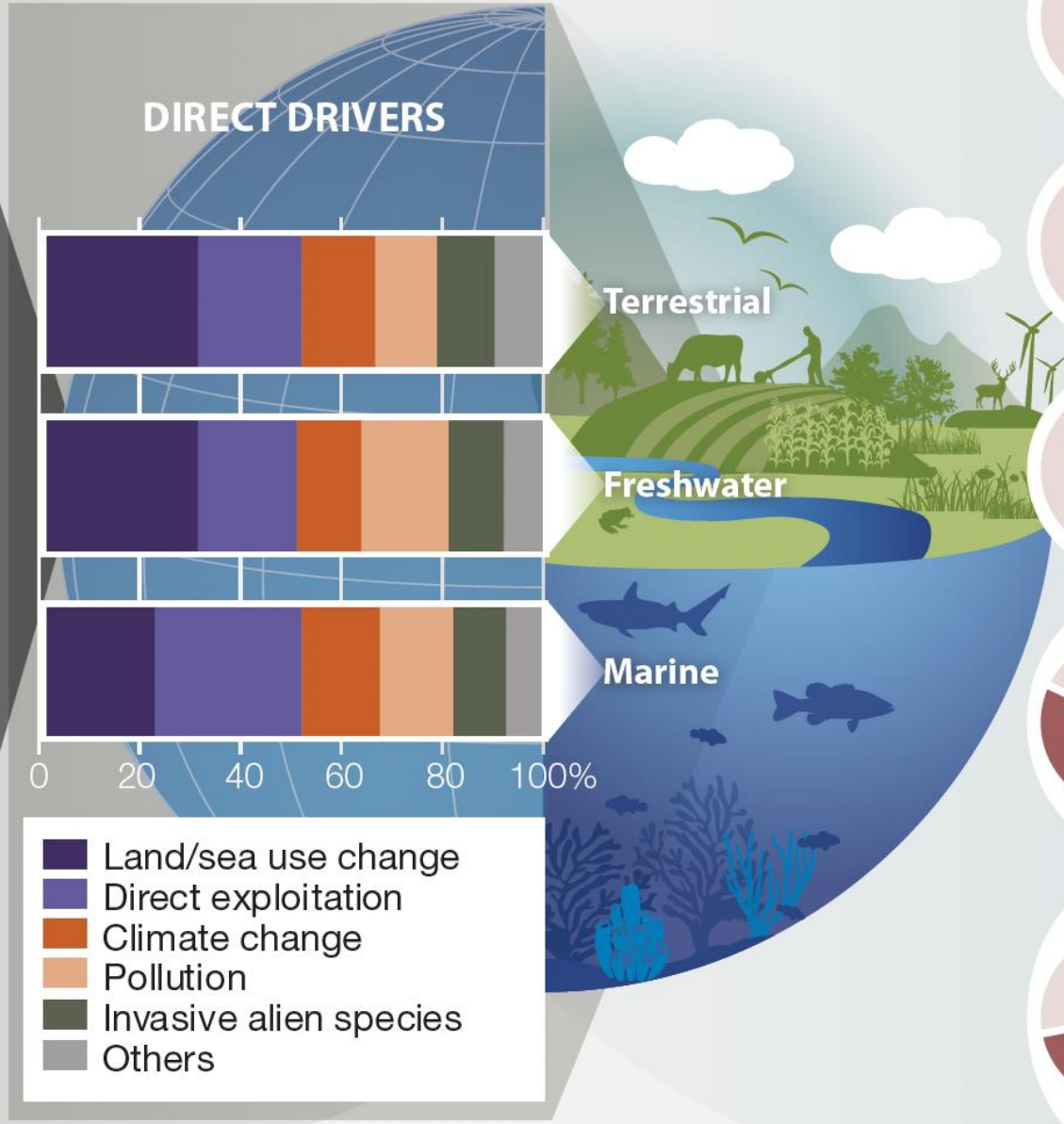
DRIVERS

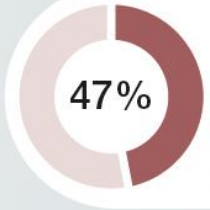
INDIRECT DRIVERS

Values and behaviours

- Demographic and sociocultural
- Economic and technological
- Institutions and governance
- Conflicts and epidemics

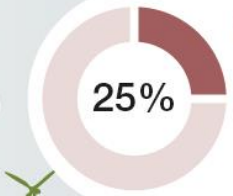


EXAMPLES OF DECLINES IN NATURE



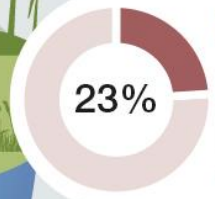
ECOSYSTEM EXTENT AND CONDITION

Natural ecosystems have **declined by 47 per cent** on average, relative to their earliest estimated states.



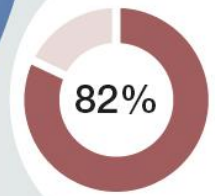
SPECIES EXTINCTION RISK

Approximately **25 per cent of species are already threatened with extinction** in most animal and plant groups studied.



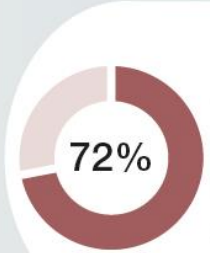
ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

Biotic integrity—the abundance of naturally-present species—has **declined by 23 per cent** on average in terrestrial communities.*



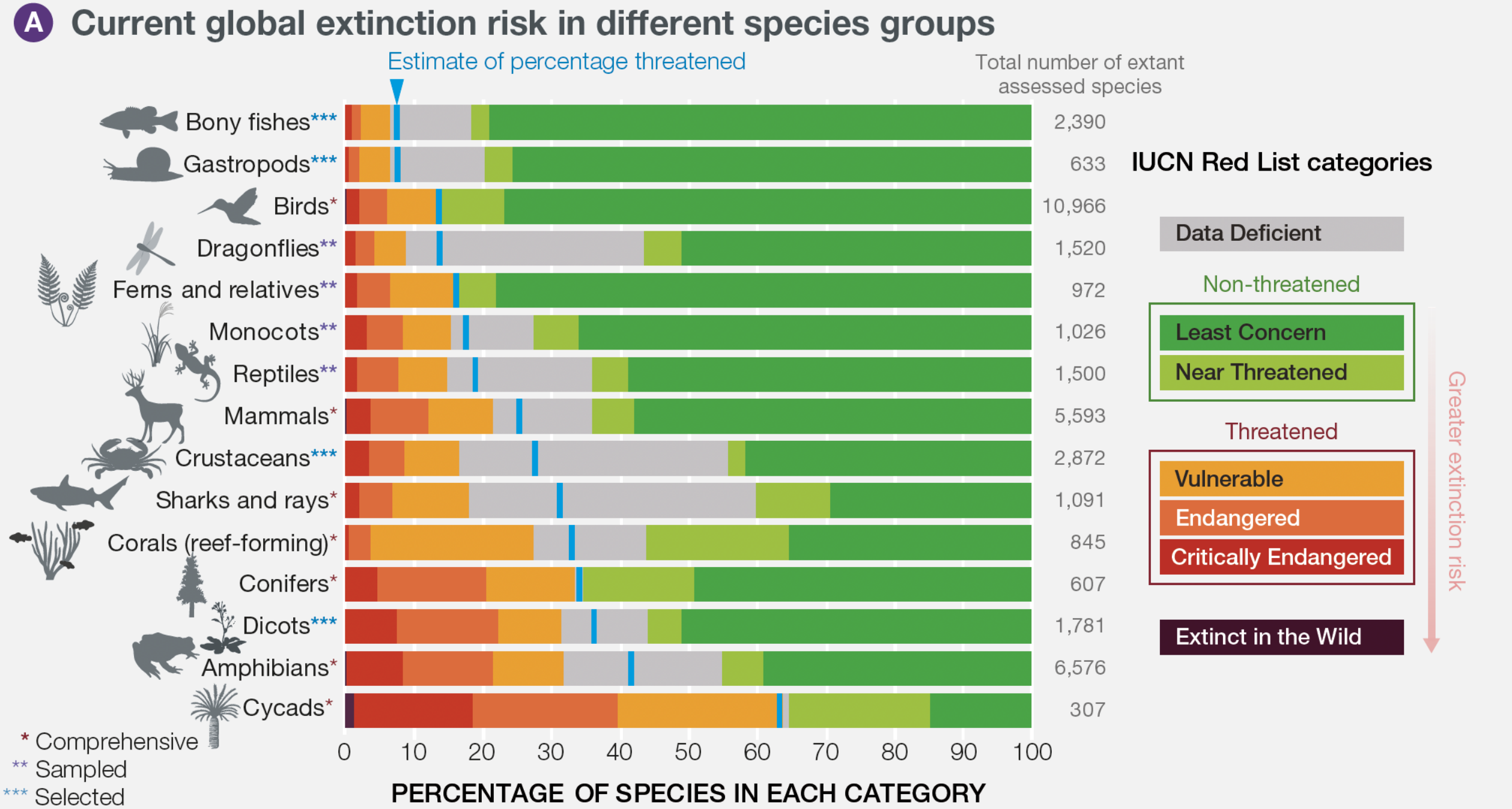
BIOMASS AND SPECIES ABUNDANCE

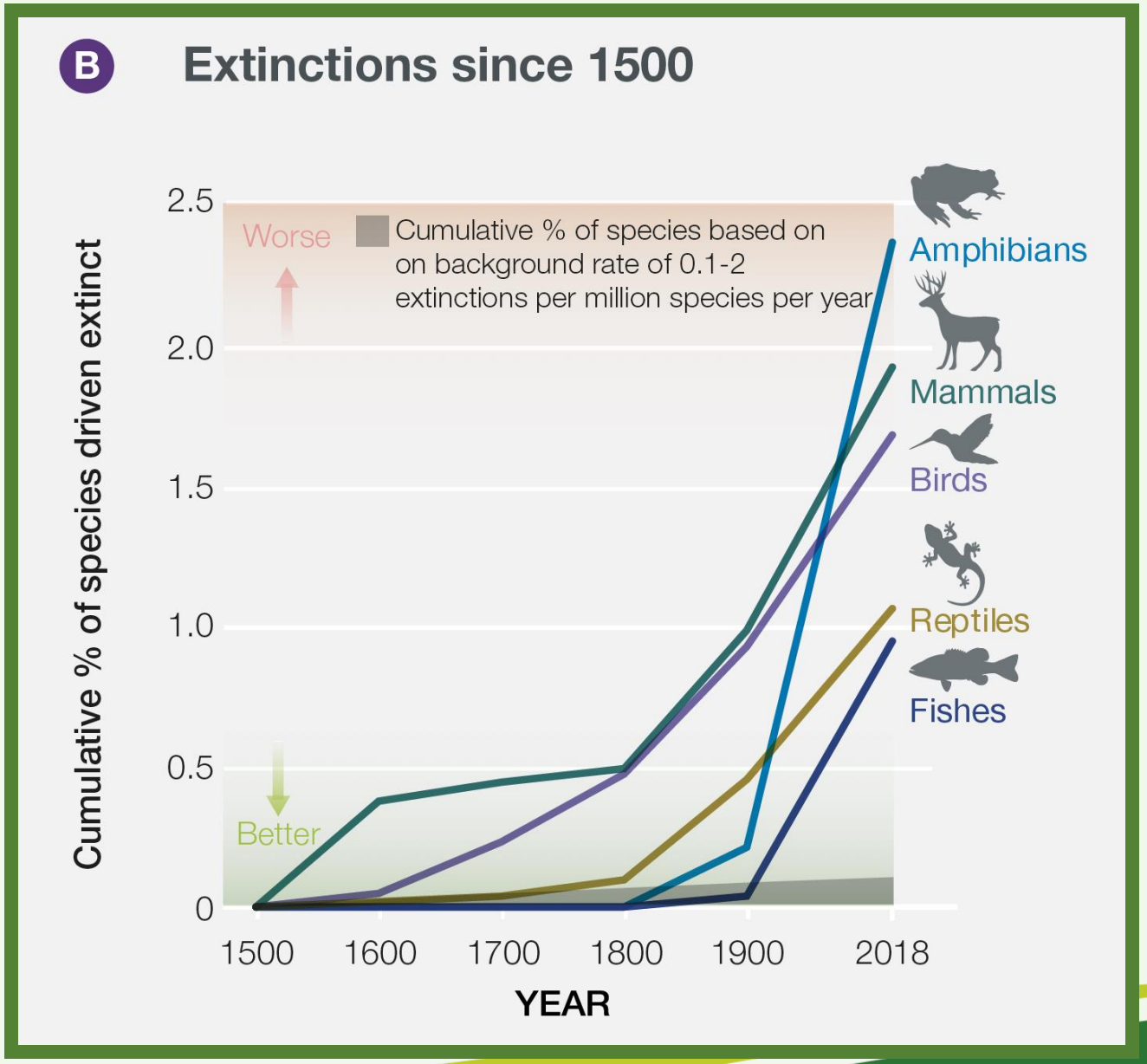
The global biomass of wild mammals has **fallen by 82 per cent**.* Indicators of vertebrate abundance have declined rapidly since 1970



NATURE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

72 per cent of indicators developed by indigenous peoples and local communities show **ongoing deterioration** of elements of nature important to them





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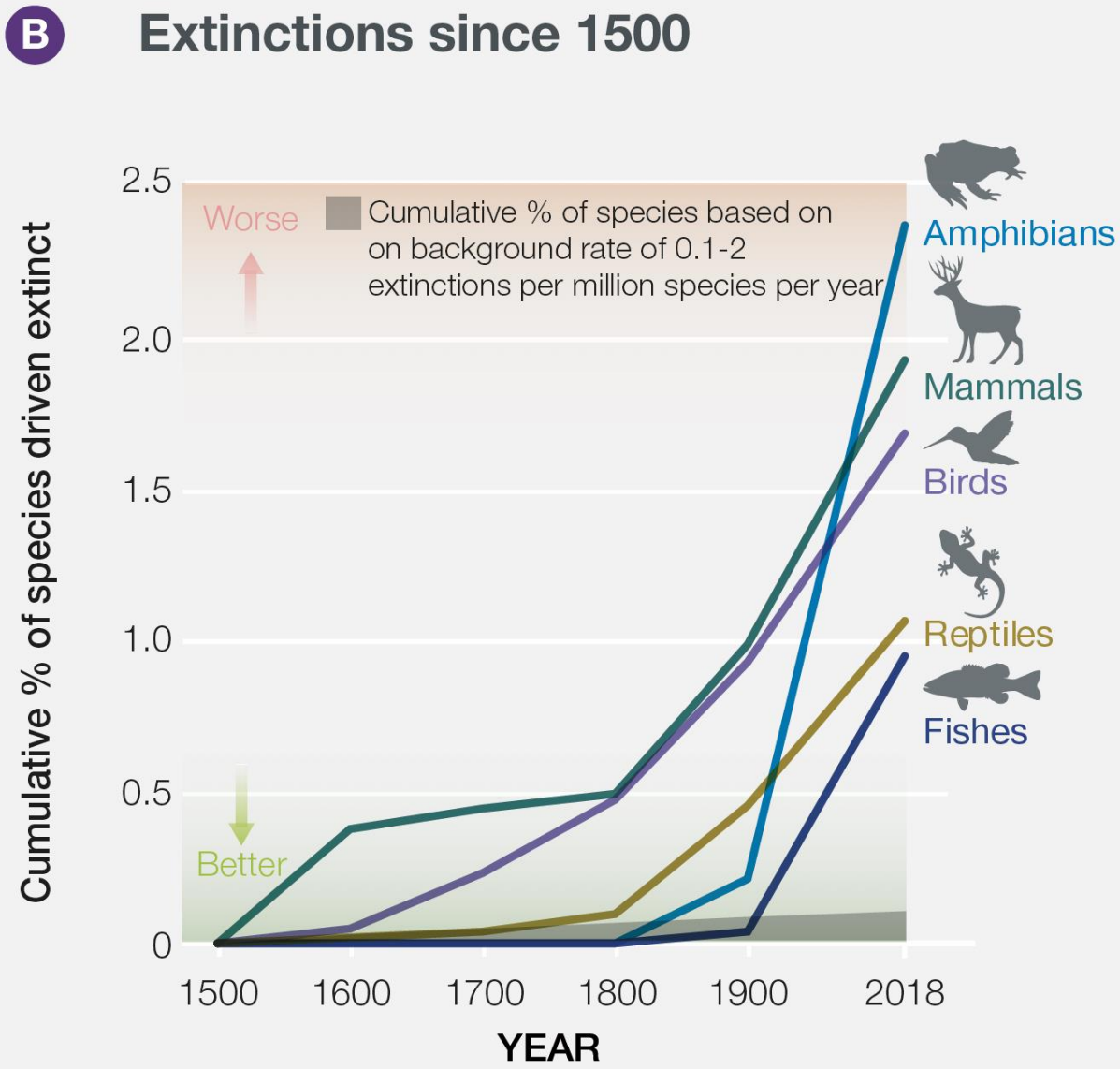

? Agriculture: pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers
? Air pollution
? Water pollution
? …

→ Climate change
→ Habitat fragmentation

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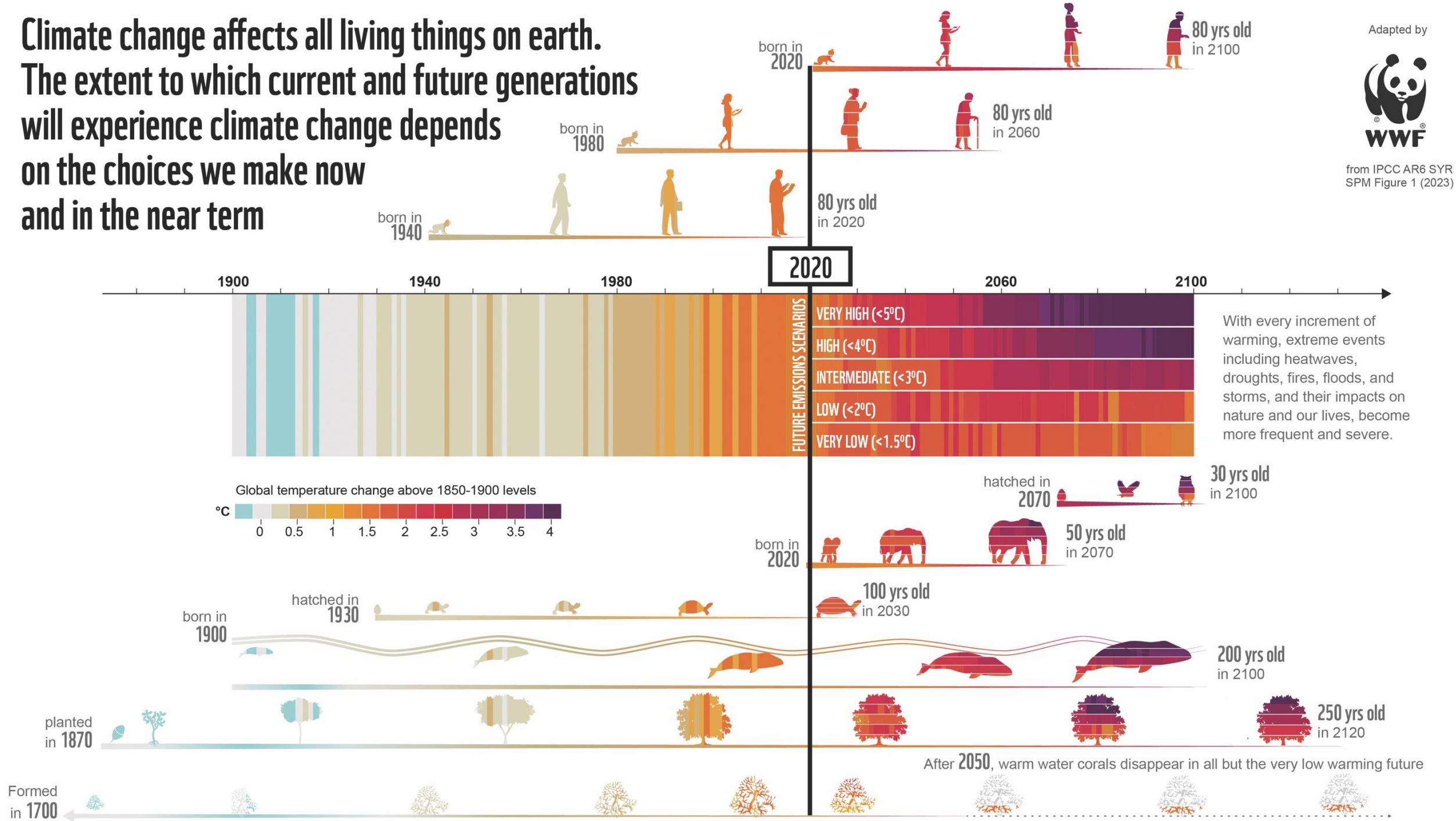
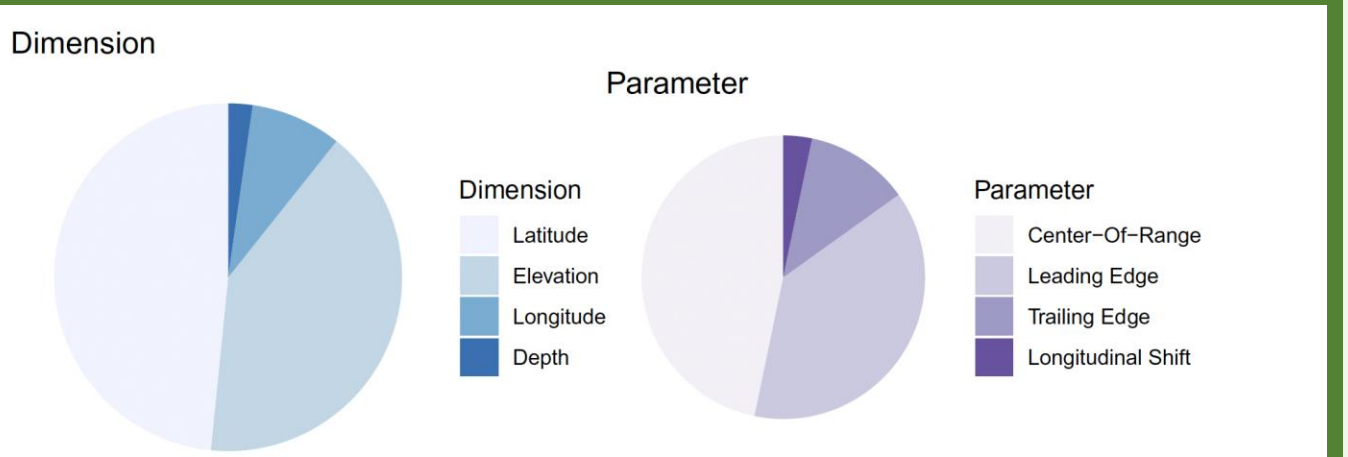
Climate change affects all living things on earth. The extent to which current and future generations will experience climate change depends on the choices we make now and in the near term

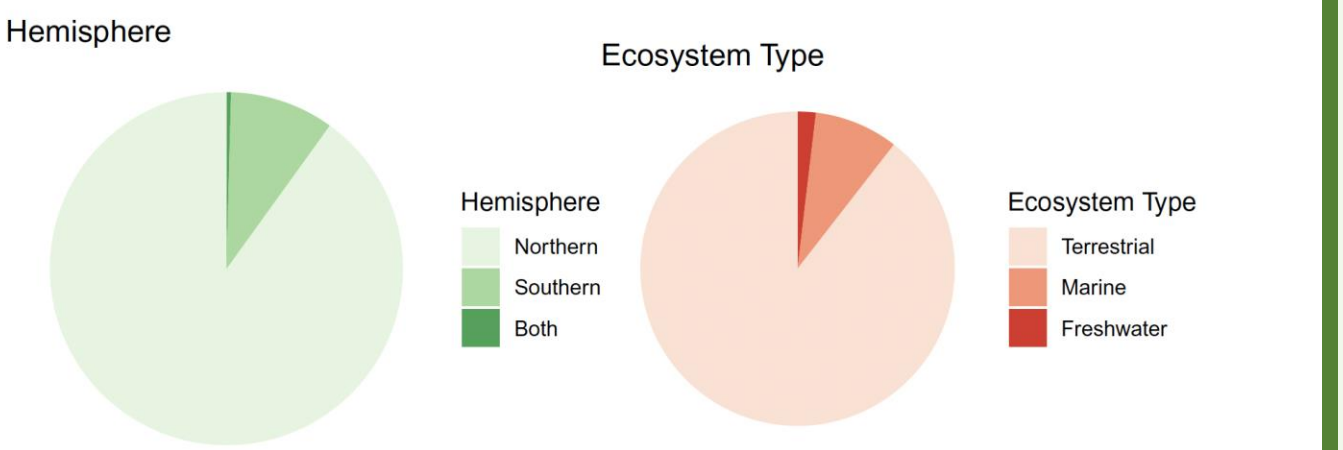


Adapted by

WWF

from IPCC AR6 SYR SPM Figure 1 (2023)

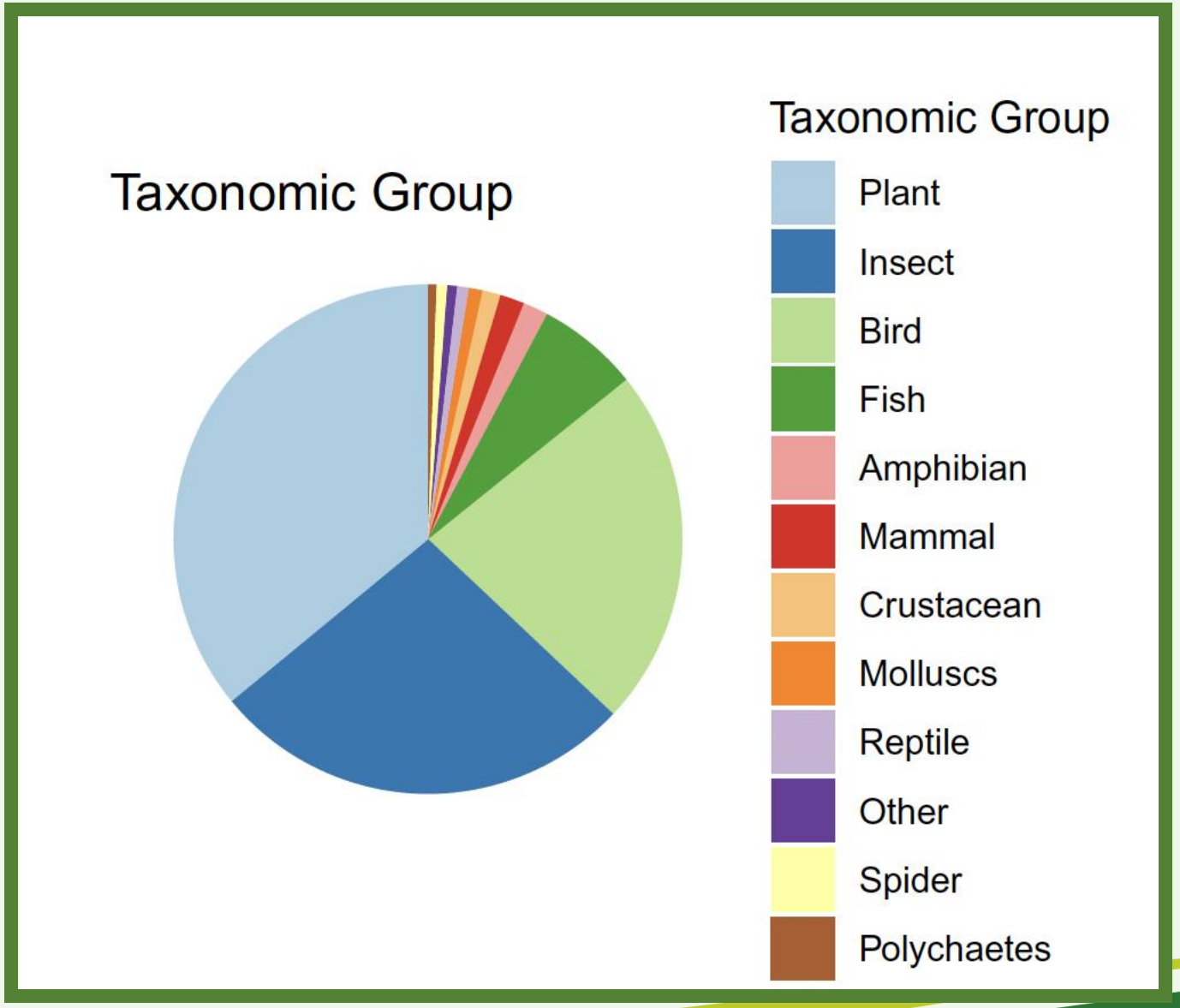




Rubenstein et al. Environmental Evidence (2023) 12:7

315 articles included in the final database reported 32,632 range-shift estimates across 12,009 species

ELO



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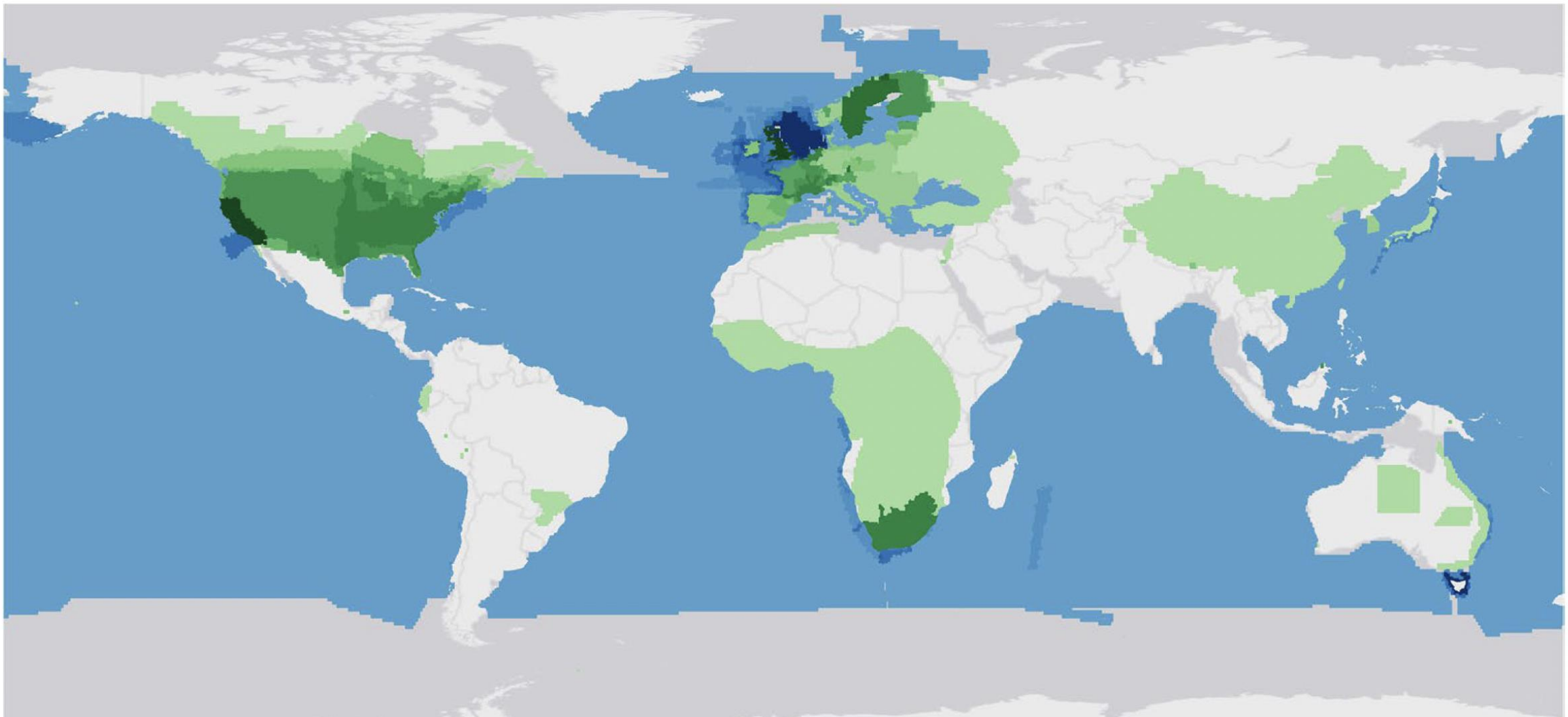

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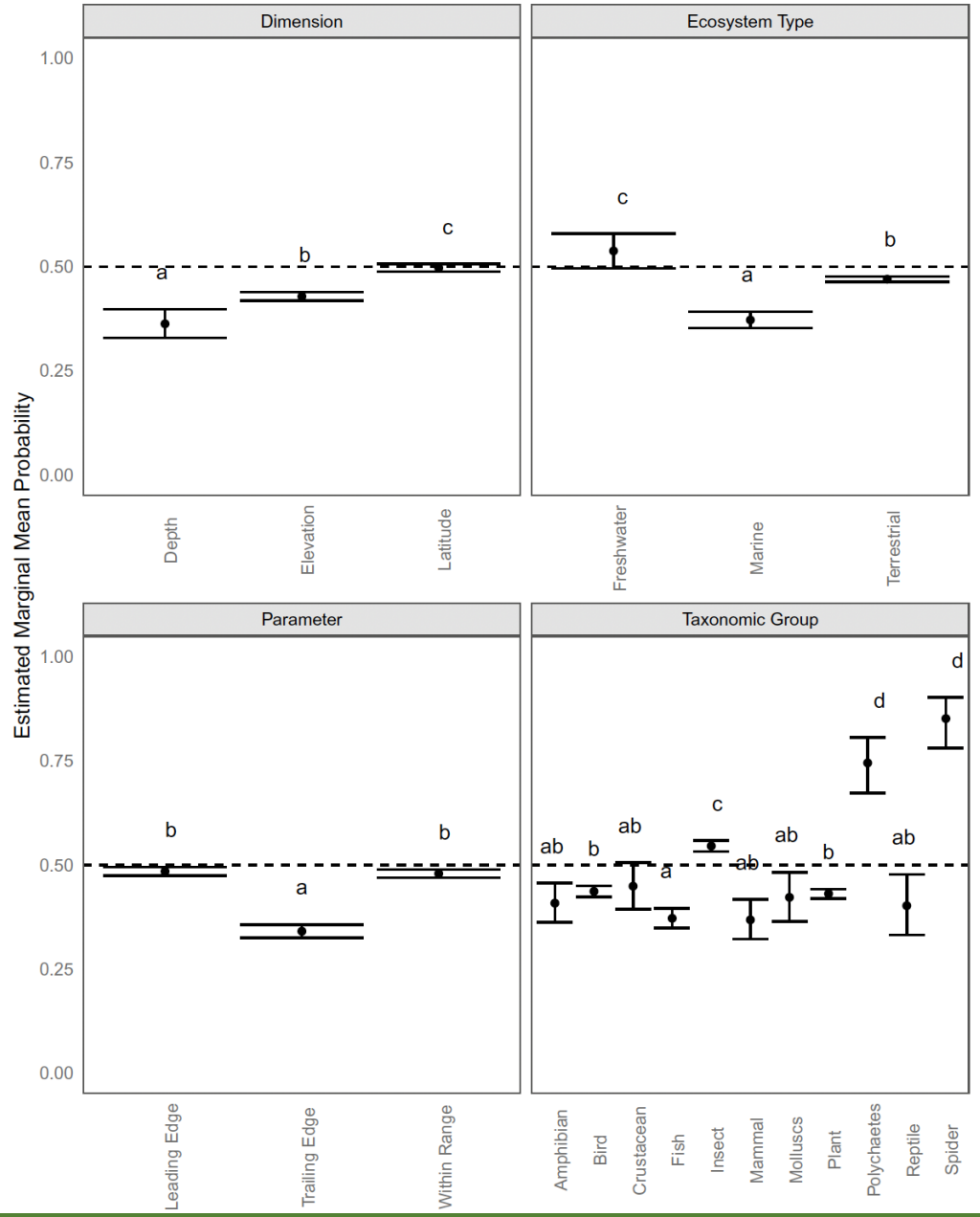

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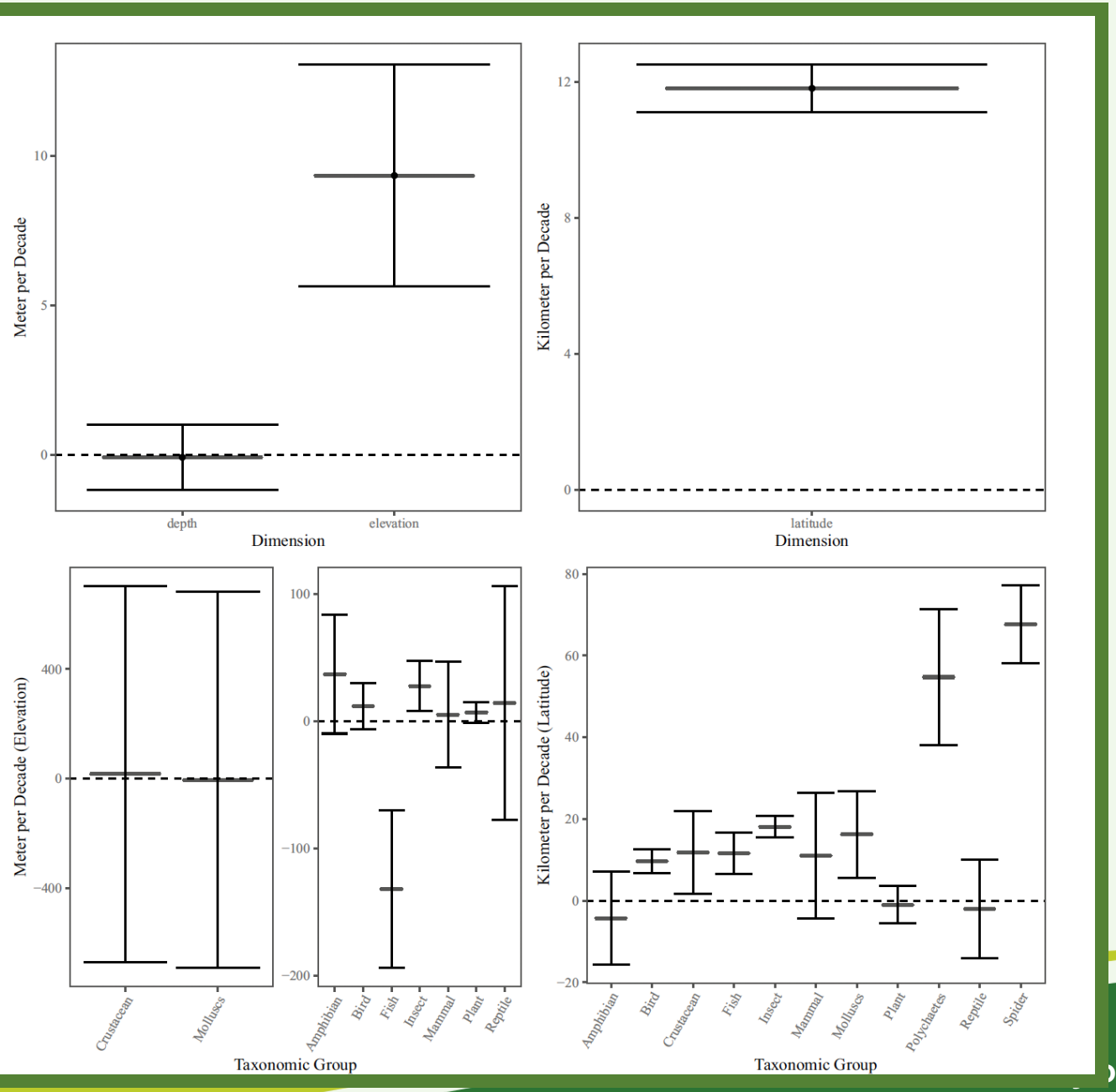

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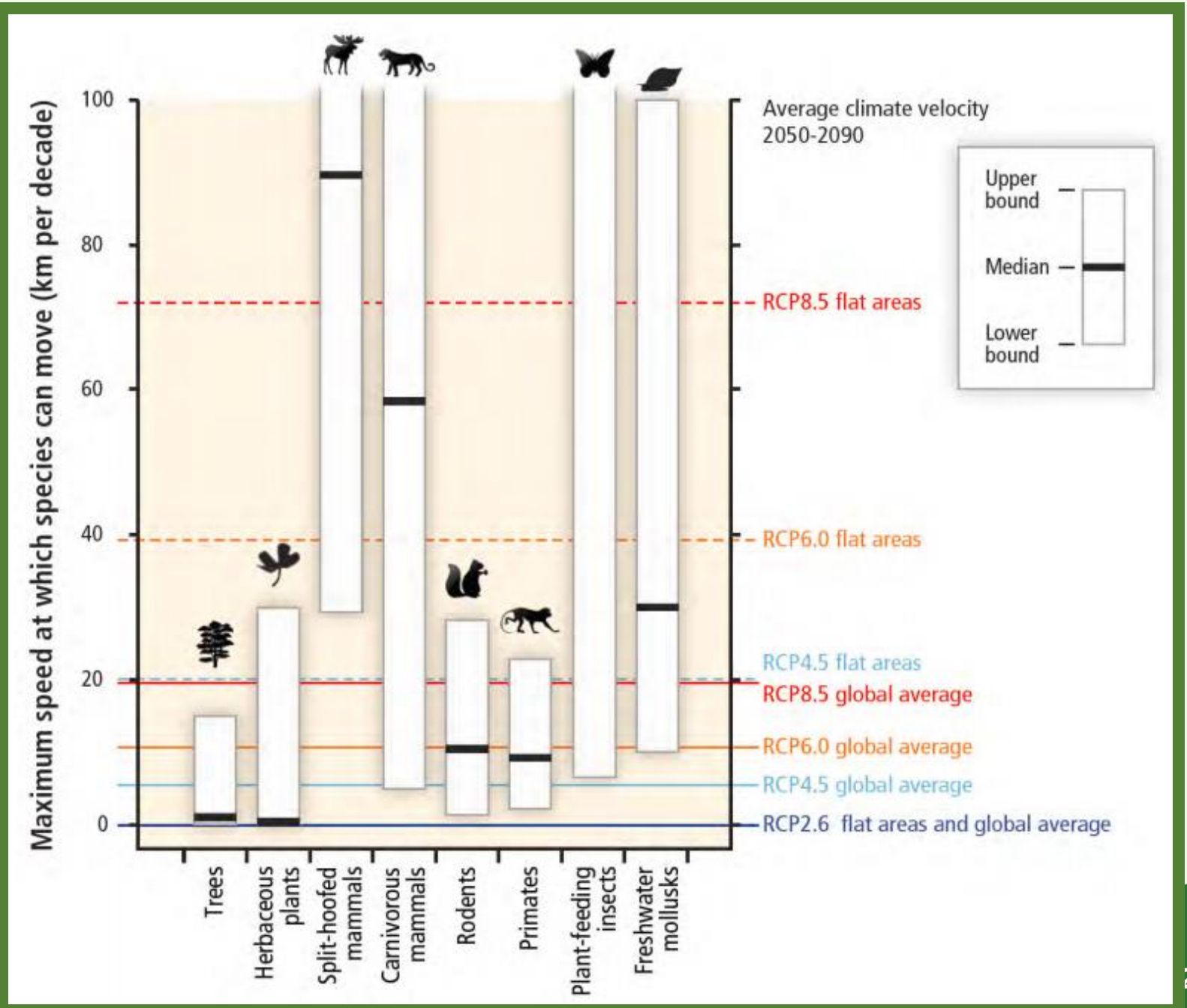

IPCC, 2014

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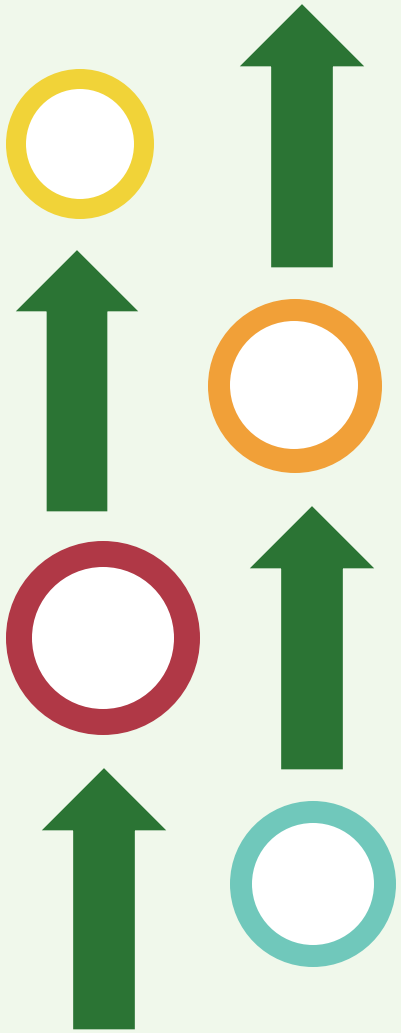

habitats provide food
but habitats do not move

animals move
and arrive at new habitats
adapt to new food sources
or go extinct

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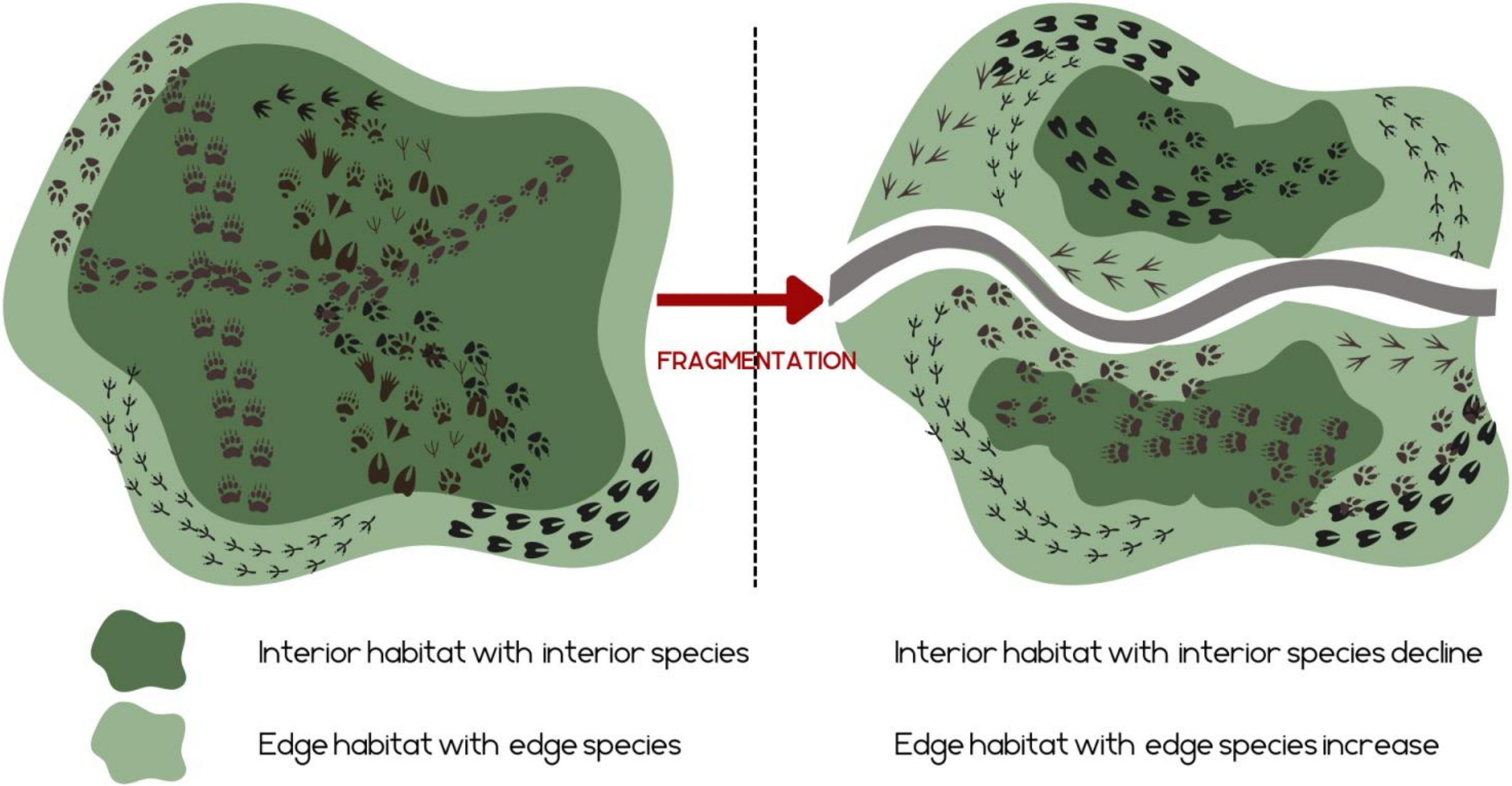
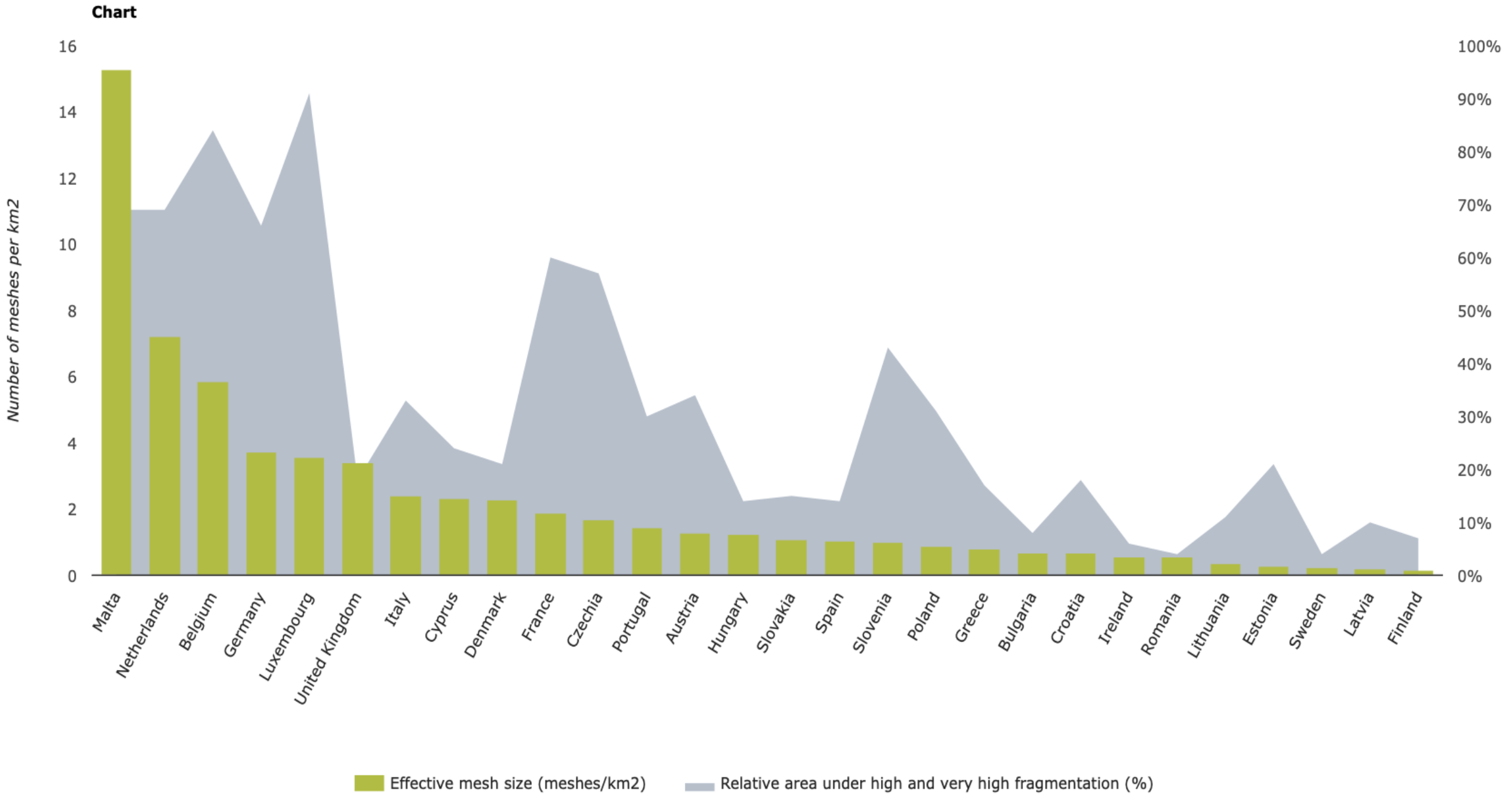
Strict protection regulations

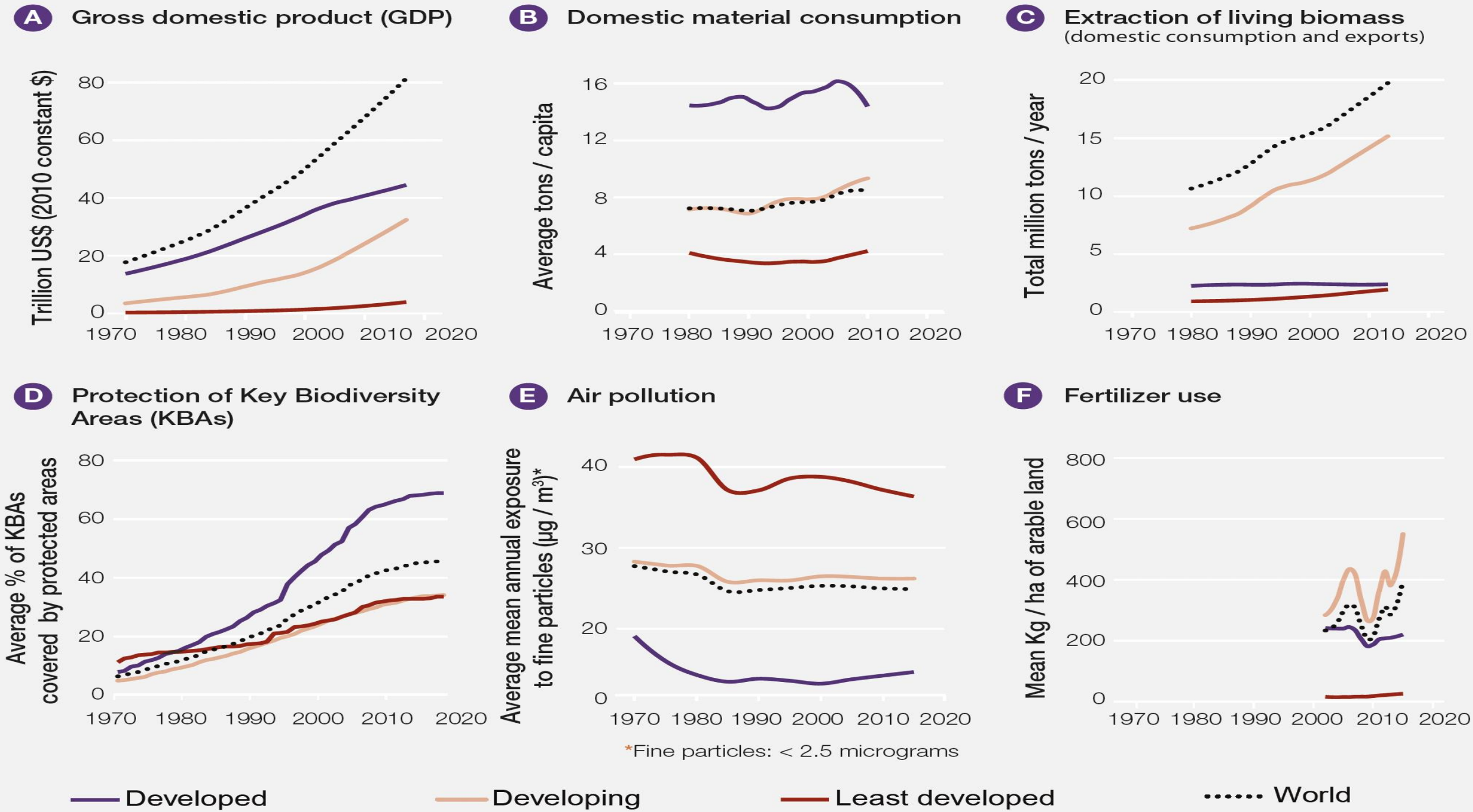
- EU **- Habitats Directive & Birds Directive → Nature Restoration Regulation**
- United States – **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**
- Australia – **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act)**
- Canada – **Species at Risk Act (SARA)**
- India – **Wildlife Protection Act**
- South Africa – **National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA)**
- China – **Wild Animal Protection Law**

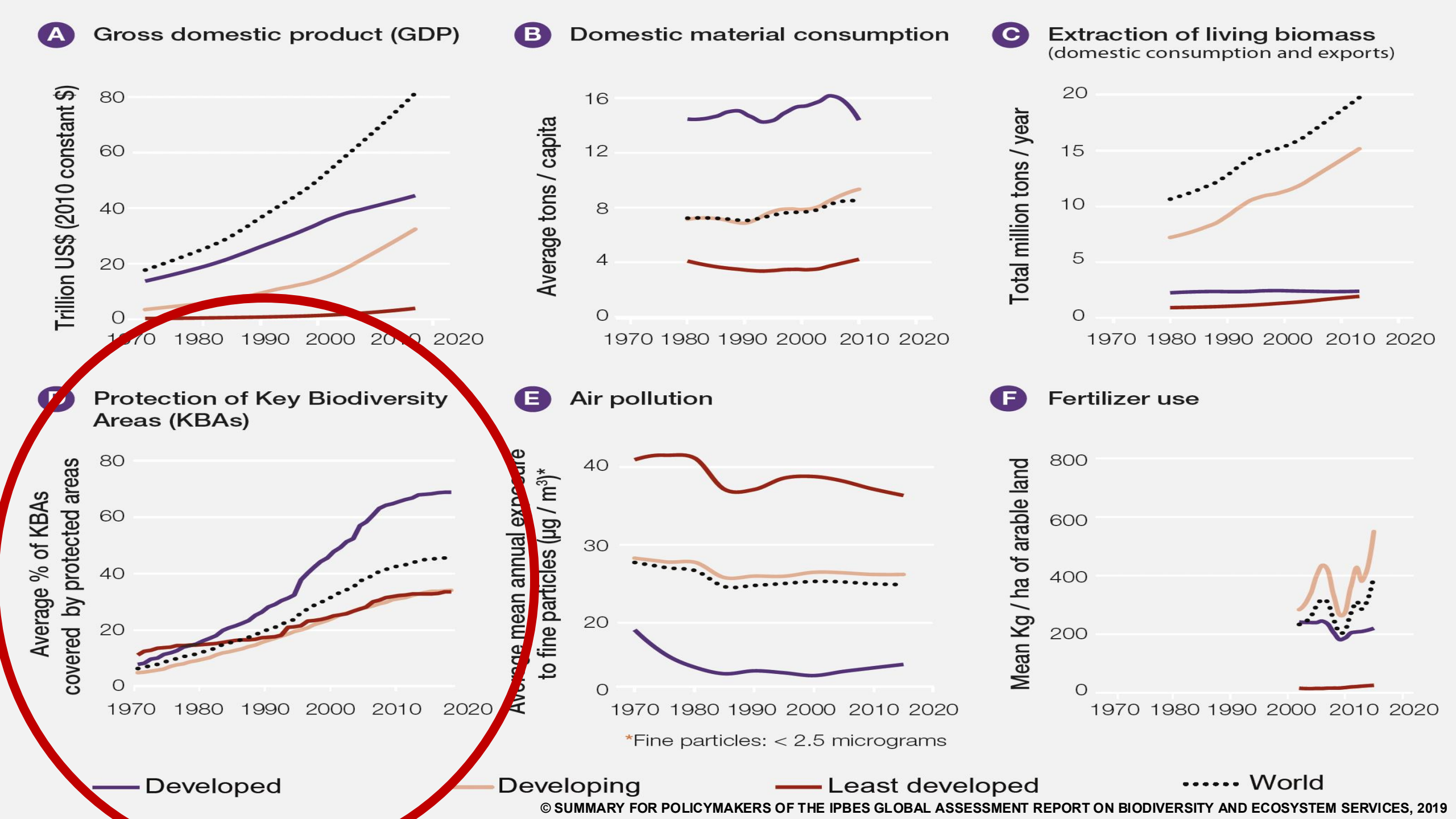
→ Species extinction due to strict protection
→ Needed:
    → Active conservation
    → Assisted migration

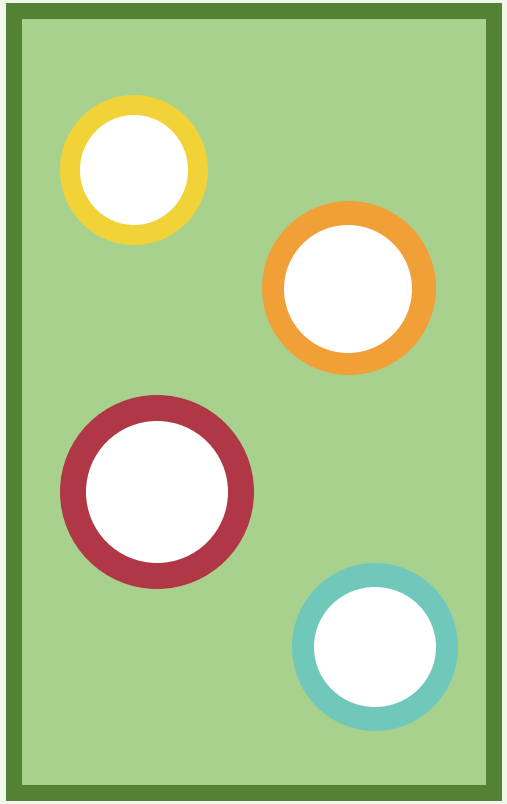




European Environment Agency (EEA), 2016



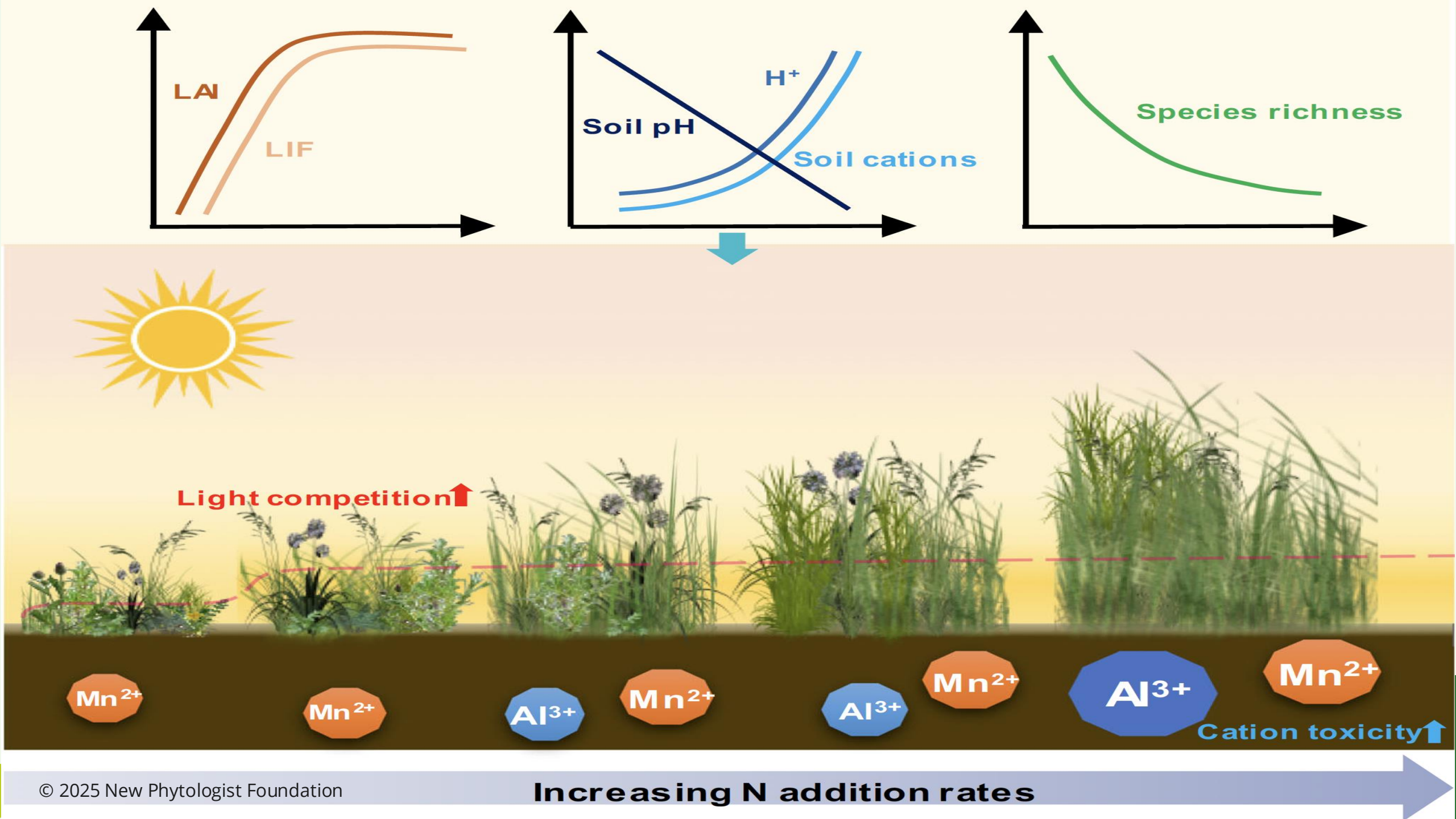


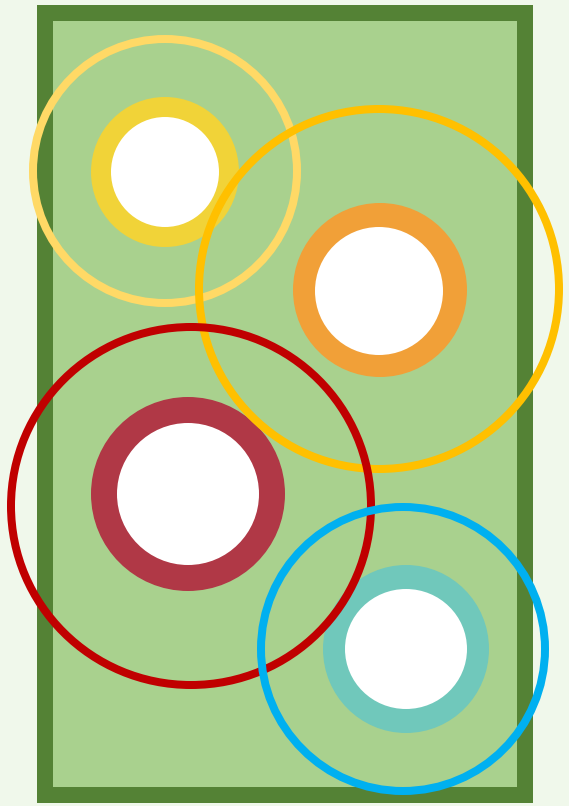


Nature conservation organisations:

- Opportunistic land buys
- No strategy

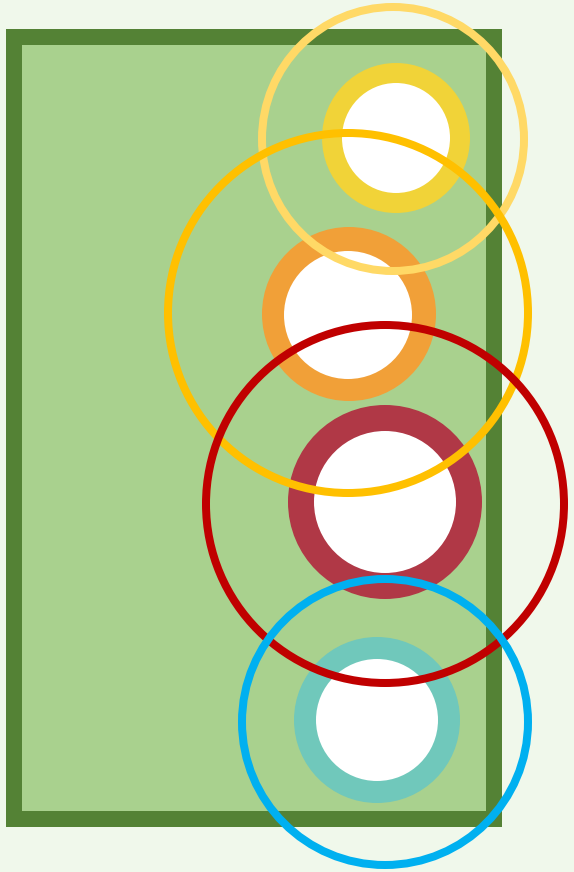
- Belgium: average size nature reserve: 40 ha





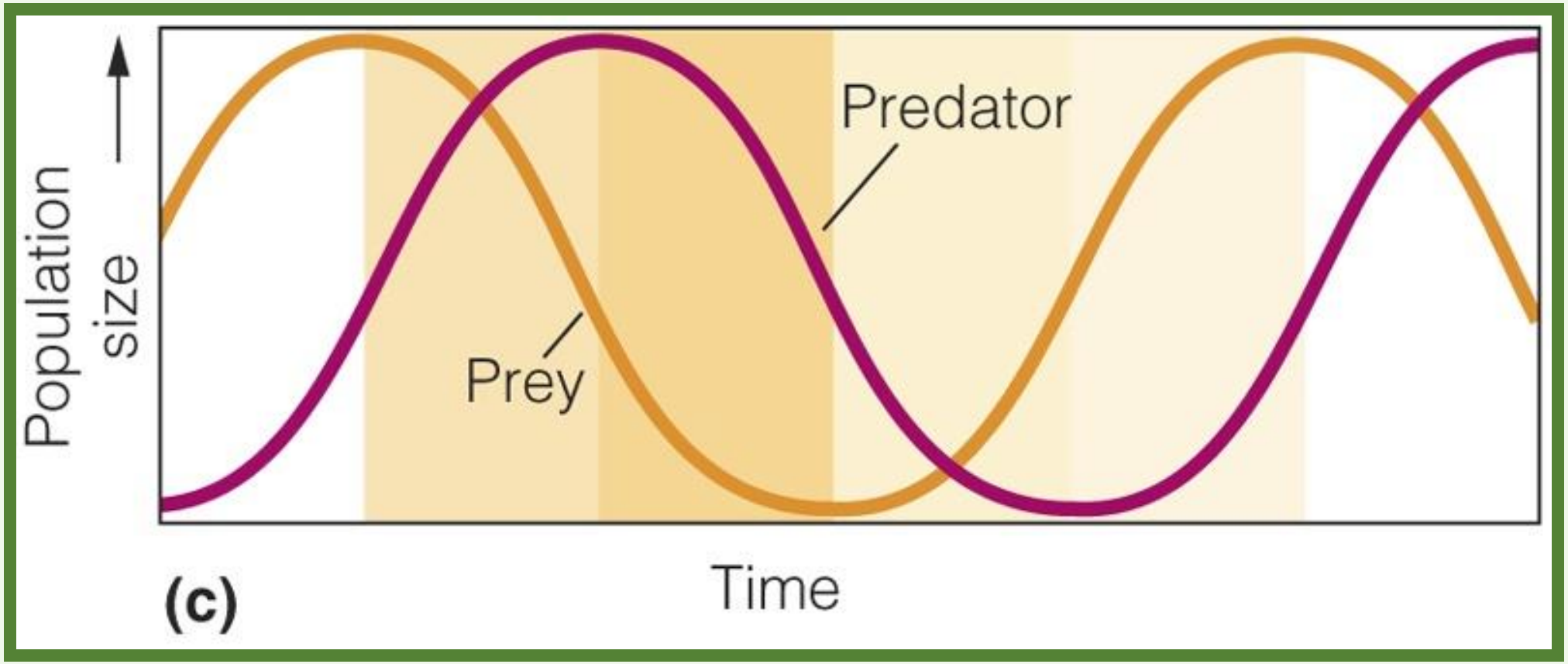
Nature conservation organisations:

- Buffer zones
- Belgium:
  - Average size nature reserve: 40 ha
  - 500 m buffer: 191 ha
  - 3000 m buffer: 3500 ha

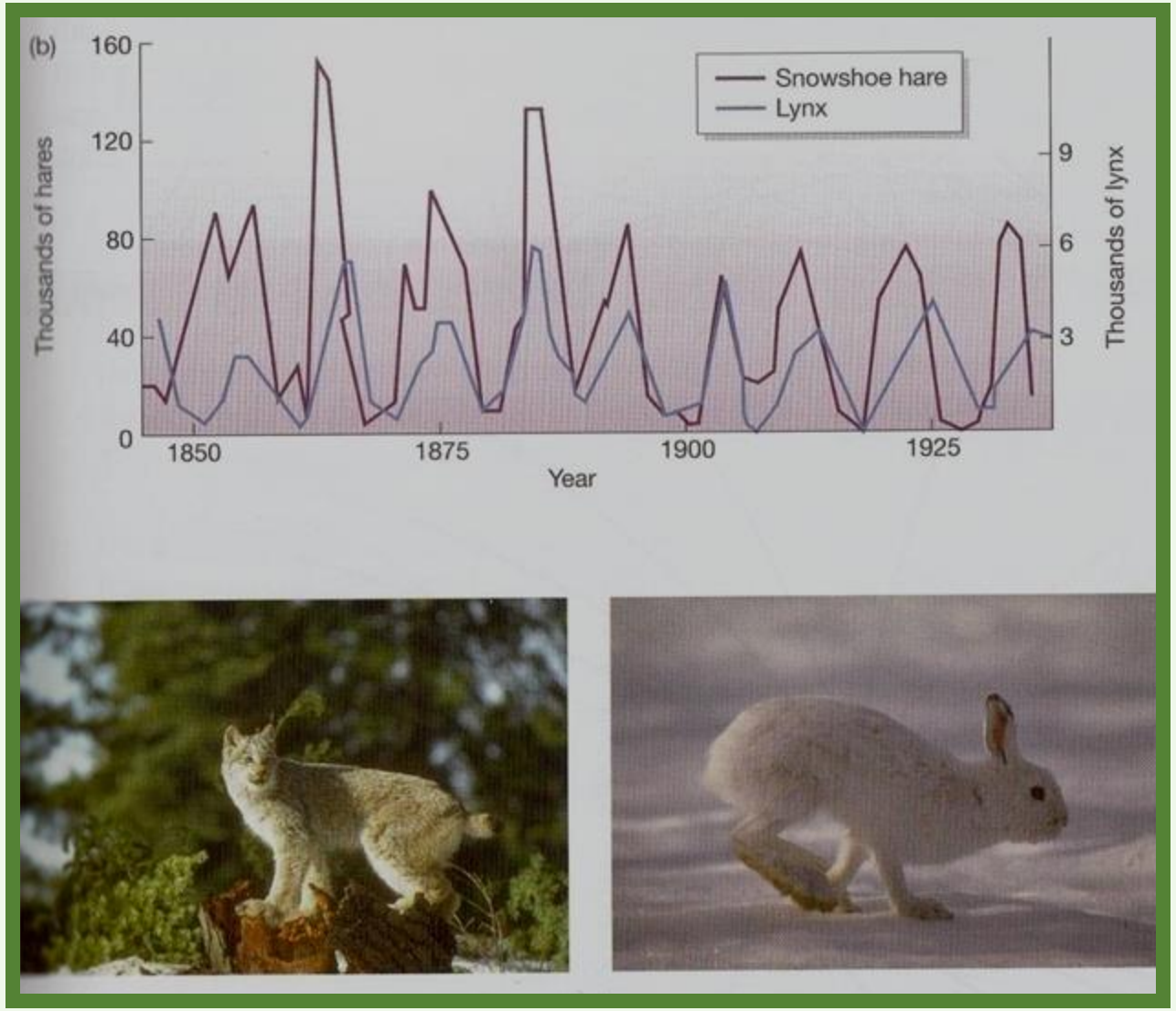


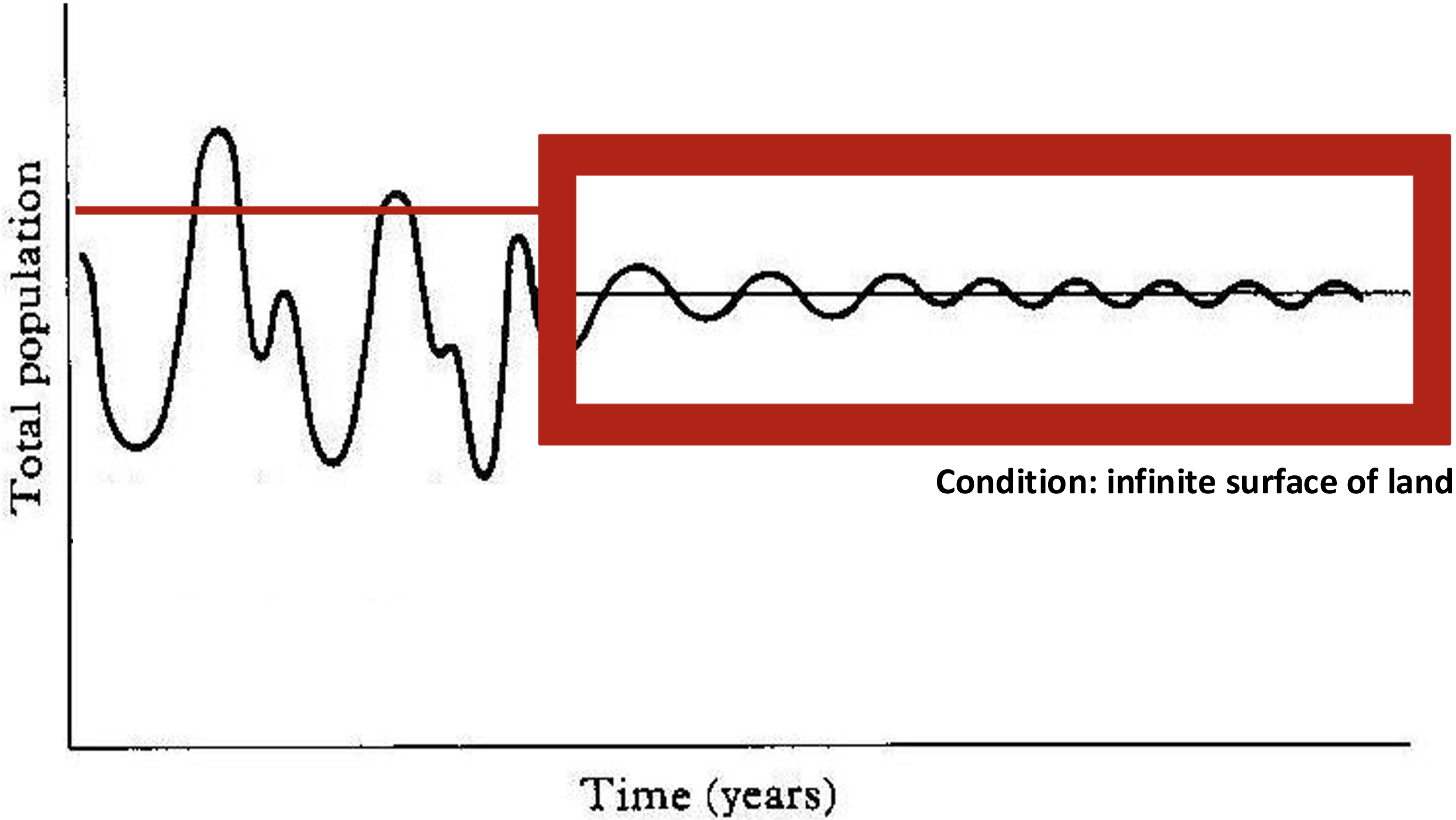
Nature conservation organisations:

- National parks replacing present nature reserves
- Belgium:
  - Factor: 11x

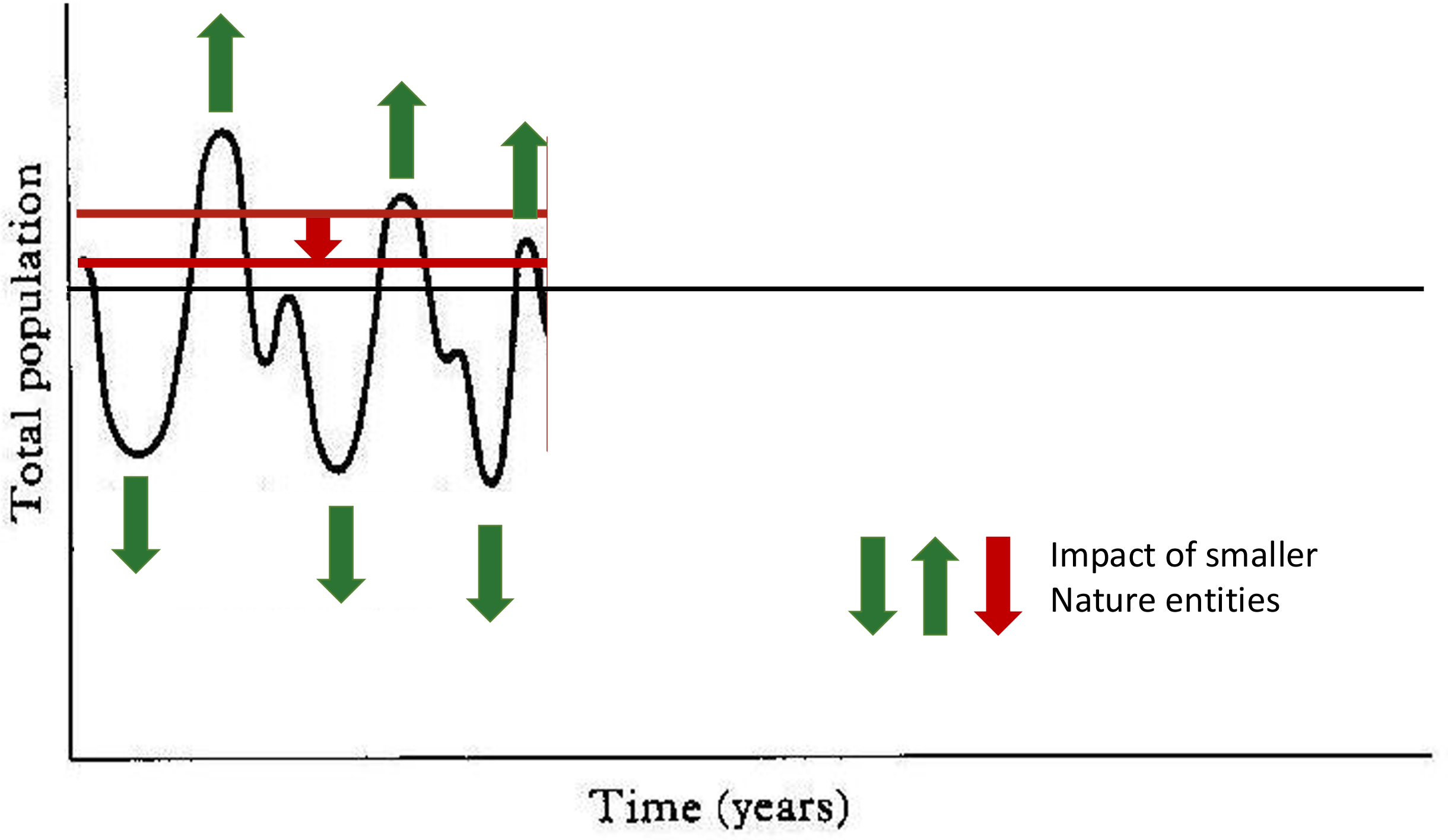


Idealized predator-prey coupled dynamics.


(b)
160
120
80
40
0
Thousands of hares
Snowshoe hare
Lynx
9
6
3
Thousands of lynx
1850
1875
1900
1925
Year



Condition: infinite surface of land


Total population
Time (years)
Impact of smaller
Nature entities

Conclusion

Nature conservation based on strict protection is having a negative impact on biodiversity

Fragmentation of nature conservation efforts is having a negative impact on biodiversity, agriculture and other land uses

Hunting is an effective nature conservation tool to mitigate the effect of decreasing habitat sizes

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Thank you

Dr. Jurgen Tack

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