
Incorporating water temperature and discharge into climate change models of freshwater invertebrates across Europe

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Résumé

Freshwater organisms are expected to be profoundly impacted by the predicted increase in water temperatures and discharge alterations associated with climate change. However,

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available models focus mostly on changes in air temperature, potentially failing to incorporate these impacts. Given that freshwater biodiversity is declining at an alarming and exponentially increasing rate, there is an urgent need to assess the relation of this biodiversity to water temperature and discharge to plan effective management and conservation actions. Here, we modeled the distribution of freshwater macroinvertebrates across Europe for present and future conditions including recently available data on water temperature and discharge. We also included other environmental variables that might be relevant in understanding the current spatial distribution of invertebrates (e.g. geology, adjacent land use). We used 40 datasets of standardized monitoring protocols of freshwater invertebrates spanning 23 years. The study includes a comparison of the predictions for the future at different taxonomic resolutions, from species to family level, to discuss the high variability of response to water temperature between species of some genera and families. This work is a first step towards the selection of taxa sensitive to climate change, the final aim being to build a multimetric macroinvertebrate-based index that could serve to monitor the effects of climate change on rivers and streams at the European scale.

Mots-Clés: distribution models, random forests, rivers, warming, range shift, suitable area