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Predicting ecosystem responses to species eradications and reintroductions: an uncertain future?

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Species eradications and reintroductions are drastic management actions that alter ecosystem structure with the end goal of conserving or restoring one or more species of interest. Because of the complexity of ecosystem food webs, these actions can have unintended consequences on other parts of the ecosystem. Even with the best available data, predicting future trajectories of the ecosystem with high precision is not always possible. In this talk, I demonstrate the situations where ordinary differential equation (ODE) models of the ecosystem food web, calibrated to species abundance data, can or cannot be used to accurately predict future responses of the ecosystem to species eradications and/or reintroductions.

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