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## Individual-based model of population dynamics in a sea urchin of the Kerguelen Plateau (Southern Ocean), *Abatus cordatus*, under changing environmental conditions

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### Abstract :

The Kerguelen Islands are part of the French Southern Territories, located at the limit of the Indian and Southern oceans. They are highly impacted by climate change, and coastal marine areas are particularly at risk. Assessing the responses of species and populations to environmental change is challenging in such areas for which ecological modelling can constitute a helpful approach. In the present work, a DEB-IBM model (Dynamic Energy Budget – Individual-Based Model) was generated to simulate and predict population dynamics in an endemic and common benthic species of shallow marine habitats of the Kerguelen Islands, the sea urchin *Abatus cordatus*. The model relies on a dynamic energy budget model (DEB) developed at the individual level. Upscaled to an individual-based population model (IBM), it then enables to model population dynamics through time as a result of individual physiological responses to environmental variations. The model was successfully built for a reference site to simulate the response of populations to variations in food resources and temperature. Then, it was implemented to model population dynamics at other sites and for the different IPCC climate change scenarios RCP 2.6 and 8.5. Under present-day conditions, models predict a more determinant effect of food resources on population densities, and on juvenile densities in particular, relative to temperature. In contrast, simulations predict a sharp decline in population densities under conditions of IPCC scenarios RCP 2.6 and RCP 8.5 with a determinant effect of water warming leading to the extinction of most vulnerable populations after a 30-year simulation time due to high mortality levels associated with peaks of high temperatures. Such a dynamic model is here applied for the first time to a Southern Ocean benthic and brooding species and offers interesting prospects for Antarctic and sub-Antarctic biodiversity research. It could constitute a useful tool to support conservation studies in these remote regions where access and bio-monitoring represent challenging issues.

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## Highlights

► A DEB-IBM model was built for the [sea urchin](#) *abatus cordatus* using literature data. ► Monthly environmental conditions are available at the reference station. ► The model was implemented in contrasting food and temperature conditions. ► The sea urchin population structure and dynamics were evaluated in time. ► A sensitivity analysis was performed to test for model robustness.

**Keywords** : Ecological modelling, Kerguelen, Climate change, Model sensitivity, Endemic echinoderm, Dynamic energy budget, Individual-based model

## 32 1. Introduction

33

34 The Kerguelen Islands are part of the French Southern Territories (Terres australes françaises - Taf), located at  
35 the limit of the Indian and Southern oceans, in the sub-Antarctic area. The region is highly impacted by climate  
36 change, and coastal marine ecosystems and habitats are particularly at risk given that species have long adapted to  
37 cold and stable conditions (Waller et al. 2017, Gutt et al. 2018, Convey & Peck 2019). Coastal marine species of the  
38 Kerguelen Islands are threatened by temperature and seasonality shifts, which are expected to intensify in a near  
39 future (Turner et al. 2014, IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> report). Future predictions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
40 (IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> report) are provided as possible Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) scenarios of climate change  
41 and can be used to infer the potential response of ecosystems to future environmental conditions. However, the  
42 insufficient spatial and time resolutions of such models constitute serious limitations to assessing the effects of future  
43 environmental changes on sub-Antarctic species (Murphy & Hofmann 2012, Constable et al. 2014).

44 The echinoid *Abatus cordatus* (Verrill 1876) is endemic to the Kerguelen oceanic plateau and common in coastal  
45 benthic habitats of the Kerguelen Islands. It is reported in the northern Kerguelen plateau, and around Heard and  
46 Kerguelen islands but most records are from shallow, coastal areas of the Kerguelen Islands where dense populations  
47 are commonly observed (Agassiz 1881, De Ridder et al. 1992, Mespoulhé 1992, Poulin 1996, David et al. 2005,  
48 Hibberd & Moore 2009, Guillaumot et al. 2016, Guillaumot et al. 2018a,b). This makes the species particularly at  
49 risk considering the synergetic effects of the multiple factors (temperature variations, significant shifts in coastal  
50 currents, sedimentation rates and phytoplanktonic blooms) affecting coastal marine communities at high latitudes  
51 (Waller et al. 2017, Stenni et al. 2017, Gutt et al. 2018). The species' endemism can be partly related to low  
52 dispersal capabilities, which is a consequence of a particular life trait: *A. cordatus* broods its young in incubating  
53 pouches located on the aboral side of the test, and has a direct development with no larval stage and no  
54 metamorphosis. The low dispersal capacity of *A. cordatus* likely increases its vulnerability to environmental changes  
55 (Ledoux et al. 2012).

56 Benthic fauna of sub-Antarctic regions remains under-studied compared to pelagic species ([Améziane et al. 2011](#),  
57 [Xavier et al. 2016](#)). Ecological niche models can represent relevant tools to study the consequences of environmental  
58 changes on the biology of these benthic organisms and on their population dynamics. Correlative niche models were  
59 used to predict the distribution of suitable areas for *A. cordatus* on the Kerguelen plateau ([Guillaumot et al. 2018a,b](#)).  
60 However, supplementary data and analyses are still needed to depict and understand the species' response to  
61 environmental changes.

62 In the present work, a mechanistic modelling approach using a Dynamic Energy Budget - Individual-Based  
63 Model (DEB-IBM) was used to analyse the biological response of *A. cordatus* to various environmental conditions.  
64 An individual mechanistic model (DEB) was first built using experimental and literature data ([Guillaumot 2019](#)). A  
65 DEB model aims to represent the physiological development of an organism, from the embryo to its death based on  
66 energetic fluxes and allows considering the metabolic state of the individual at any given moment of its life cycle. It  
67 relies on biological principles and first laws of thermodynamics to recreate the metabolic development as a function  
68 of two environmental parameters, food resources and temperature ([Kooijman 2010](#)).

69 The DEB model was then upscaled to the population level (IBM), wherein it was implemented as iterative  
70 mathematical calculations of each organism's individual development in the population. The IBM relies on the  
71 simulation of individuals as autonomous entities forming a complex population within a dynamic system ([Railsback  
72 and Grimm 2019](#)). The DEB-IBM is used to analyse population dynamics emerging from the development and the  
73 physiological traits of individuals as a function of environmental forcing variables (i.e. food resources and  
74 temperature). The DEB-IBM can then be used to simulate population dynamics under different environmental  
75 scenarios, enabling a better quantification of the vulnerability of populations to changing environmental conditions.  
76 Modelling population dynamics using a DEB-IBM model for a sub-Antarctic and brooding invertebrate brings a  
77 feature so far unseen in other published DEB models. The main objectives of the study were to develop a DEB-IBM  
78 model for *A. cordatus* (1) to simulate population structure and dynamics at different sites under both current  
79 environmental conditions and future IPCC climate scenarios RCP 2.6 and RCP 8.5, and (2) to assess the feasibility of  
80 such a model for organisms in a region where low data availability and resolution may limit model building and  
81 validation. The current resolution and accuracy of future climate scenarios in sub-Antarctic areas do not allow  
82 building precise and reliable predictions for the future but they were used here as a proof of concept to test  
83 population responses to various, conceivable conditions. Sensitivity analyses were performed to test the robustness,

84 potential and relevance of models (Grimm & Berger 2016) considering data availability. Simulations performed for  
85 various temperature conditions and food resource availabilities, if validated, may constitute a promising tool to  
86 address conservation issues.

87

## 88 2. Methods

### 89 2.1. Study area

90 The DEB-IBM population model was generated in the geographic and environmental context of the Kerguelen  
91 Islands (Fig. 1) using data of the study site of Anse du Halage, a fieldwork station that has regularly been  
92 investigated through several biological studies since the 1980s (Magniez 1980, Schatt & Féral 1991, Mespoulhé  
93 1992, Poulin 1995, Poulin & Féral 1998, Ledoux et al. 2012). The Kerguelen Islands show jagged coastlines and  
94 numerous islets and fjords that provide a large variety of habitats to the marine benthic fauna. The nature of the  
95 seafloor varies from rocky to sandy and muddy shores. The predominance of the giant kelp *Macrocystis pyrifera* is a  
96 main feature of the Kerguelen as this engineer and key species plays a decisive role in the protection and structuring  
97 of benthic shallow habitats in many places of the archipelago (Lang 1967, 1971, Arnaud 1974, Féral et al. 2019).

98 Located in the Morbihan Bay, a 700 km<sup>2</sup> semi-enclosed shallow embayment (50m depth on average) of the  
99 Kerguelen Islands, Anse du Halage is situated at the bottom of a small and shallow (2m depth) cove dominated by  
100 fine to medium sands (Magniez 1979, Poulin 1996) (Fig. 1). The tidal range is comprised between 0.4 and 2.1m, so  
101 that the area can exceptionally be uncovered at the lowest tides (Schatt and Féral 1991, Mespoulhé 1992). Sea  
102 surface temperature varies between 1 and 2°C in winter (September) to 7 to 8°C in summer (March), with sporadic  
103 peaks of +11°C in some places for certain years (Schatt and Féral 1991, Féral et al. 2019). Salinity varies between  
104 31.89 and 33.57 (Arnaud 1974).

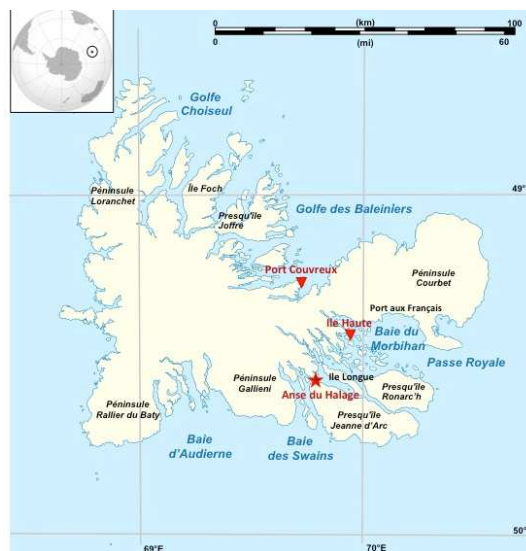
105 Temperature data used in the model were collected in the framework of the Proteker programme (French Polar  
106 Institute n°1044) (Féral et al. 2019) and accessed online (IPEV programme n°1044, [http://www.proteker.net/-  
107 Thermorecorders-.html?lang=en](http://www.proteker.net/-Thermorecorders-.html?lang=en) accessed on 08/05/2019). They were recorded from 2012 to 2018 at three sites used  
108 in the model (Fig. 1): Ile Longue (for the model at Anse du Halage), Ile Haute, an island in the North-Western corner  
109 of the Morbihan Bay, and Port Couvreur, a coastal site outside the Morbihan Bay, in the Gulf of the Baleiniers on  
110 the Northern coast of the archipelago (Fig. A.1).

111 The organic matter deposited on the seabed varies with seasonal phytoplankton blooms and remineralization by  
112 bacteriae (Delille et al. 1979). The sediment organic content and phytoplanktonic blooms are particularly important  
113 at Anse du Halage, with average values of 4.5% of organic carbon content. The sediment organic carbon (OC)  
114 content was measured monthly as a percentage of sediment dry weight by Delille & Bouvy (1989).

115

116 Environmental data time-series are available at a monthly timestep. The model was scaled on a single square metre  
117 patch, supposing no connectivity between neighbour locations, as no data on horizontal nor vertical water  
118 movements and matter fluxes were available.

119



120

121 **Figure 1.** Location of the studied sites in the Kerguelen Islands, calibration site (Anse du Halage, red star) and  
122 projection sites (Ile Haute and Port Couvreur, red triangles).

123

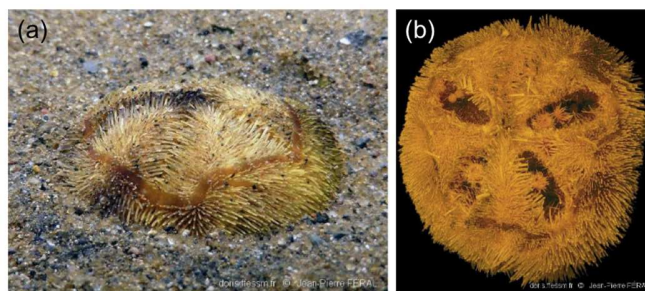
## 124 2.2 Study species

125 *Abatus cordatus* (Fig. 2) is a shallow deposit-feeder and sediment swallower, living at 5°C average, full or half  
126 buried into soft sediments (De Ridder and Lawrence 1982). It is distributed all around the Kerguelen Islands, but  
127 population densities are highly variable depending on depth, substrate nature and exposure to the open sea.  
128 Distributed from the intertidal area to the deep shelf over 500m depth, populations highest densities are found in very  
129 shallow (0-2m depth) and sheltered areas with soft bottoms of fine to medium sand (Poulin 1996). In shallow areas,  
130 observed density vary from less than 5 individuals/m<sup>2</sup> (in the Fjord des Portes Noires, Poulin & Féral 1995) to 10

131 ind./m<sup>2</sup> (at Port-aux-Français, [Mespoulhé 1992](#)), 130 ind./m<sup>2</sup> (Ile Haute, [Mespoulhé 1992](#), [Poulin 1996](#)), 168 ind./m<sup>2</sup>  
132 (Port Couvreur, [Poulin 1996](#)) and up to 280 ind./m<sup>2</sup> (Anse du Halage, [Magniez 1980](#), [Poulin 1996](#)). Juveniles are  
133 commonly found sheltered in between holdfasts of the giant kelp *Macrocystis pyrifera* bordering with sandy shallow  
134 areas.

135 The species is relatively resistant to low salinities locally induced by freshwater run-off from the main island  
136 ([Guille & Lasserre 1979](#)). It is tolerant to temperature variations, particularly marked in shallow areas, but  
137 temperature tolerance does not exceed +12°C (personal observations). The maximum size ever observed is 4.9 cm in  
138 length ([Mespoulhé 1992](#)). Lifespan is assumed to be around six years old ([Mespoulhé 1992](#)), although it cannot be  
139 excluded that some individuals may grow older. Identified predators are gastropods, crustaceans and seagulls ([Poulin](#)  
140 [& Féral 1995](#), [Poulin 1996](#)) from which the specimens are hidden when burrowing into the sediment ([Magniez 1979](#),  
141 [Poulin & Féral 1995](#)).

142



143

144 **Figure 2.** Specimens of *Abatus cordatus*. (a) Aboral view of a specimen half buried in sand, (b) Aboral view of a  
145 female showing the brood pouches with juveniles inside. © Féral J.P.

146

147 Sexual reproduction in *A. cordatus* occurs every year, with all mature females producing eggs ([Magniez 1983](#))  
148 and incubating their young in their four brood pouches located on the aboral side of the test (Fig. 2b). After brooding,  
149 juveniles exit the pouches and start their autonomous development on the seabed, in the vicinity of their mother  
150 ([Magniez 1983](#), [Schatt 1985](#)). Reproduction time can greatly differ between sites: generally extending from March to  
151 May (as in Anse du Halage and Ile Haute), reproduction can also occur from June to August (Ile Suhm), from  
152 December to February (Port Matha) or from August to November (Port Couvreur) ([Poulin 1996](#)). Females usually  
153 spawn once a year ([Poulin 1996](#)). Brooding and burrowing behaviours imply a relative sedentary lifestyle and can

154 explain a part of the species endemism, with dense populations scattered all around the archipelago and only a few  
155 older individuals that may be found isolated from core populations (Mespoulhé 1992, Poulin & Féral 1995).

156

### 157 2.3 DEB modelling

158

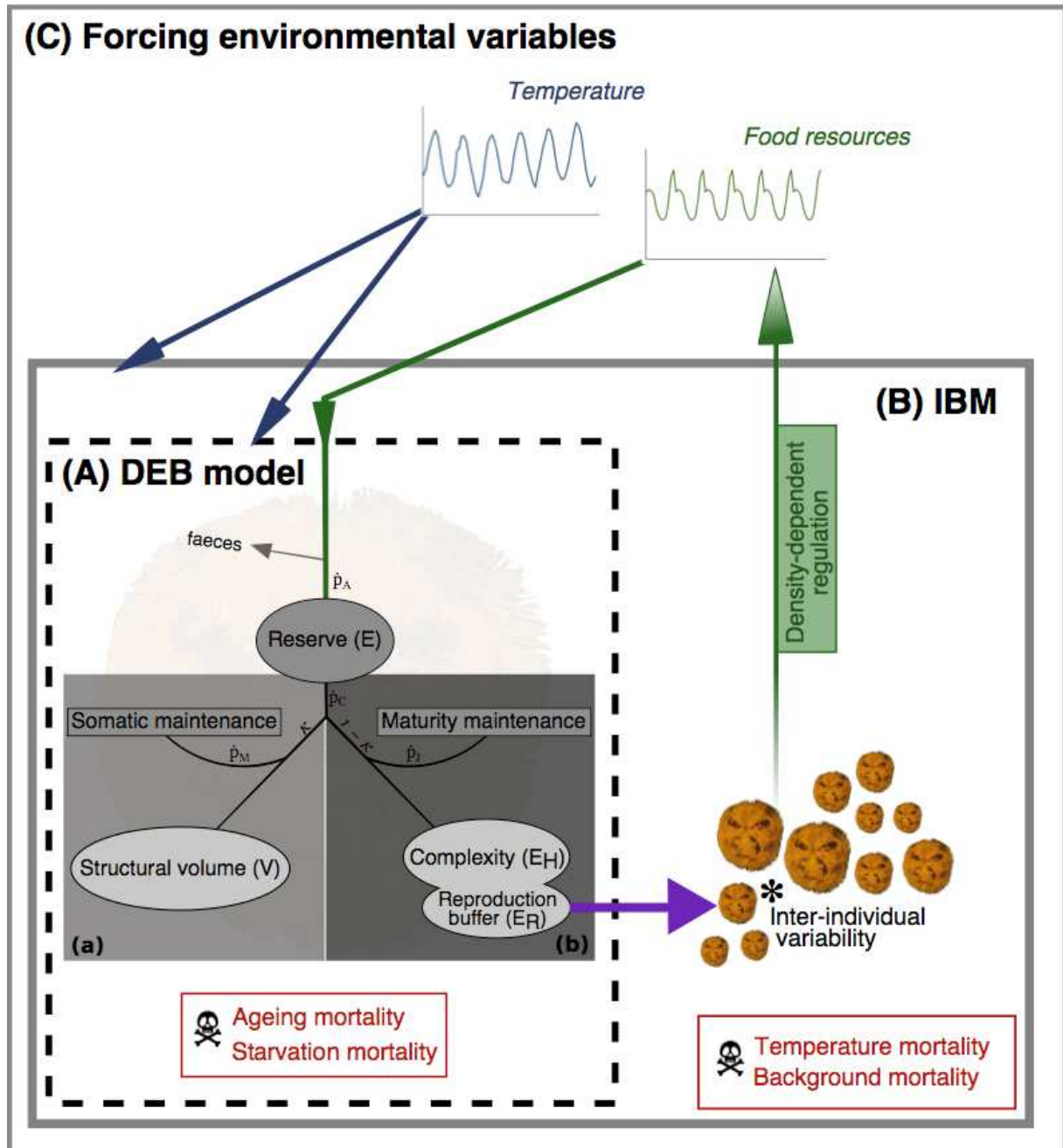
#### 159 2.3.1. Principles

160 DEB theory defines individuals as dynamic systems and provides a mathematical framework for modelling  
161 organisms' life cycle. It describes physiological processes using four primary state variables —reserve, structure,  
162 reproduction buffer and maturity— directly linked to mass and energy flows and influenced by two forcing variables,  
163 temperature and food availability (Fig. 3, Kooijman 2010, Jusup et al. 2017). Based on feeding, growth and  
164 reproduction processes, DEB models predict the metabolic and development states of organisms through time (Sousa  
165 et al. 2008, Kooijman 2010). Metabolic processes are linked to shape and size of the organism, represented by the  
166 structural volume and the structural area. Structural volume is related to maintenance processes, while structural area  
167 is closely linked to food ingestion and assimilation processes and controls the amount of energy arriving into the  
168 reserve compartment  $E$  (Fig. 3A, van der Meer 2006).

169 The energy contained in the reserve compartment is allocated to organism maintenance ('somatic' and 'maturity'  
170 maintenances, priority processes that condition the organism's survival), to growth (increase of structural volume  $V$ ),  
171 and to the increase of complexity ( $E_H$ ) or reproduction buffer ( $E_R$ ) (Fig. 3A) according to the kappa-rule (Kooijman  
172 2010). The complexity is represented as the maturity level. The amount of energy accumulated into this compartment  
173 triggers metabolic switches such as the transition (i.e. ability to feed, to reproduce) between life stages, defined in  
174 DEB theory (namely embryo, juvenile and adult life stages) (Kooijman 2010).

175





176

177 **Figure 3.** Schematic representation of the DEB-IBM (Dynamic Energy Budget - Individual-Based Model).

178 Individuals (A) undergo development through the DEB model and reproduce (purple arrow). Altogether and with a

179 slight inter-individual variability in DEB parameters (\*), they form the population of the IBM (B) which undergoes

180 population-specific processes (temperature and background mortalities) at the scale of a simple square metre patch at

181 the reference site (C). The IBM population is embedded within this specific environment, whose environmental

182 conditions (temperature and food resources) affect individual and population dynamics. Additionally, the population  
 183 influences the resources availability following a density-dependence regulation.

184

185 *2.3.2. Application of DEB model to A. cordatus*

186

187 **Parameter estimation.** An individual mechanistic DEB model was developed for *A. cordatus* (Guillaumot 2019).  
 188 Estimated DEB parameters are reported in Table 1. The DEB model considers a larval growth accelerated compared  
 189 to the adult stage (Schatt 1985), so-called ‘abj’ type model. The model was constructed using data from the literature  
 190 (Table 2). The goodness of fit of the DEB model to the data was evaluated by calculating the Mean Relative Error  
 191 (MRE) of each dataset, which is the sum of the absolute differences between observed and expected values, divided  
 192 by the expected values. MRE values are contained in the interval [0, infinity). The MRE is considered to be a  
 193 reference method to assess DEB modelling performance (Lika et al. 2011b), for which the closer to 0, the better  
 194 model predictions match the data.

195

196 **Table 1.** Parameters estimated for the DEB model developed for *Abatus cordatus*. Values are given for the reference  
 197 temperature of 20°C. The MRE of the model is 0.121.

Parameter	Symbol	Value	Unit
Basic DEB parameters			
Volume of specific somatic maintenance <sup>1</sup>	[ $\dot{p}M$ ]	13.84	J.d <sup>-1</sup> .cm <sup>-3</sup>
Somatic maintenance rate coefficient <sup>1</sup>	$\dot{k}M$	5.10 <sup>-3</sup>	d <sup>-1</sup>
Fraction of energy allocated to somatic maintenance and growth <sup>1</sup>	$\kappa$	0.78	-
Volume-specific cost of structure <sup>1</sup>	[EG]	2395	J.cm <sup>-3</sup>
Energy of maturity at birth <sup>1</sup>	[E <sub>H</sub> <sup>b</sup> ]	0.5693	J.cm <sup>-3</sup>
Energy of maturity at metamorphosis <sup>1</sup>	[E <sub>H</sub> <sup>j</sup> ]	8.325	J.cm <sup>-3</sup>
Energy of maturity at puberty <sup>1</sup>	[E <sub>H</sub> <sup>p</sup> ]	1638	J.cm <sup>-3</sup>
Arrhenius temperature <sup>3</sup>	TA	9000	K
DEB compound parameters			
Energy conductance <sup>1</sup>	$\dot{v}$	0.02722	cm.d <sup>-1</sup>
Maturity maintenance rate coefficient <sup>3</sup>	$\dot{k}J$	0.002	d <sup>-1</sup>
Shape coefficient <sup>2</sup>	$\delta$	0.6718	-
Maximum structural length <sup>1</sup>	L <sub>m</sub>	2.93	cm
Acceleration factor <sup>1</sup>	sM	2.397	-

Reproduction parameters			
Yield of structure on reserve <sup>1</sup>	yVE	0.865	#mol.mol <sup>-1</sup>
Contribution of reserve to weight <sup>1</sup>	w	0.647	-
Ageing parameters			
Weibull ageing acceleration <sup>1</sup>	$\dot{h}_a$	5.02.10 <sup>-6</sup>	d <sup>-2</sup>
Gompertz stress coefficient <sup>3</sup>	sG	0.0001	-

198 <sup>1</sup> Estimated using the covariation method (Lika et al. 2011a, 2011b, Marques et al. 2018)

199 <sup>2</sup> Calculated from data for initial value and then estimated with the covariation method

200 <sup>3</sup> Fixed, guessed value

201

202 **Table 2.** Zero and uni-variate data used for the estimation of the DEB model parameters. All values are  
 203 given at a measured temperature of 5°C. MRE: Mean Relative Error. Plots related to uni-variate data can  
 204 be found in Appendix B.

Variable	Symbol	Obs.	Prediction	Unit	MRE	Reference
Zero-variate data						
Age at metamorphosis <sup>1</sup>	aj	142	143	d	0.0072	Schatt (1985)
Age at puberty <sup>2</sup>	ap	1098	1018	d	0.0731	Mespoulhé (1992)
Life span	am	2190	2190	d	5.10 <sup>-8</sup>	Mespoulhé (1992)
Length at metamorphosis	Lj	0.276	0.324	cm	0.1738	Schatt (1985)
Length at puberty	Lp	1.9	1.824	cm	0.0399	Mespoulhé (1992)
Maximal observed length (at 6 years old)	L6	4.2	3.65	cm	0.1321	Mespoulhé (1992)
	Li	8	9.507	cm	0.1883	guessed
Ultimate maximal length	Ww0	1.78.10 <sup>-3</sup>	1.59.10 <sup>-3</sup>	g	0.1081	Schatt (1985)
Wet weight of the egg	Wwj	1.03.10 <sup>-2</sup>	1.70.10 <sup>-2</sup>	g	0.6482	Schatt (1985)
Wet weight at metamorphosis	Wwp	2.9	3.03	g	0.0448	Féral and Magniez (1988)
Wet weight at puberty	Ww6	25	24.18	g	0.0328	Féral and Magniez (1988)
Wet weight at 6 years old	GSI	0.07	0.078	-	0.1194	Magniez (1983)
Gonado-somatic index <sup>3</sup>						

205

Variable	Symbol	Obs. /Prediction	Unit	MRE	Reference
Uni-variate data					
Time since birth vs. length	tL	See Appendix B	d // cm	0.2259	Schatt and Féral (1996)
Egg diameter vs. egg wet weight	LW_egg		cm // g	0.1262	Mespoulhé (1992)
Length vs. Wet weight adult	LW		cm // g	0.3248	Féral and Magniez (1988)
Length vs. O2 consumption	LJO		cm // µL/h	0.2872	Féral and Magniez (1988)

206 <sup>1</sup> moment at which the juveniles leave the brooding pouch of the mother

207 <sup>2</sup> moment at which the sea urchin is able to reproduce

208 <sup>3</sup> maximum gonad index for an animal of the maximum size, gonad index as gonad weight/total wet  
209 weight.  
210

211  
212 **Maturation and development.** Embryos of *A. cordatus* have a direct development in brood pouches of females  
213 (Magniez 1983, Schatt 1985). They start feeding inside pouches after 142 days of incubation (i.e. 5 months) and  
214 leave the pouches as fully developed sea urchins after 8.5 months (Schatt 1985). According to DEB theory,  
215 individuals are considered embryos until they can feed (Kooijman 2010). Before the fifth month, feeding inside the  
216 maternal pouches is not clearly attested, but feeding through epidermal uptake of Dissolved Organic Matter (DOM)  
217 is considered as the possible mechanism (Schatt & Féral 1996). At each growth step, energy is supplied to the  
218 reserve by the ingested food (Fig. 3A,  $\dot{p}_A$ ) and then leaves the reserve compartment to be directed to growth,  
219 maturation or reproduction compartments through the mobilisation flux (Fig. 3A,  $\dot{p}_C$ ). This is performed following  
220 the kappa-rule: a  $\kappa$  fraction is directed towards the structure (growth compartment and somatic maintenance, Fig.  
221 3A(a)), and the remaining  $1 - \kappa$  fraction towards complexity (maturation, reproduction compartments and maturity  
222 maintenance, Fig. 3A(b)).

223 During the juvenile stage, the individual does not supply energy into reproduction, but accumulates energy in its  
224 maturity compartment  $E_H$  until reaching the ‘puberty’ threshold that, according to DEB theory, defines the moment  
225 when the organism is mature enough to reproduce (Kooijman 2010). After reaching this threshold, at around 2.5 to 3  
226 years old (Schatt 1985, Mespoulhé 1992), the organism can allocate energy into the reproduction buffer  $E_R$  for  
227 gamete production (Fig. 3A). The structural volume increases continuously along the individual’s life, from birth to  
228 death, supplied in energy left from what has not been allocated to priority maintenance costs  $\dot{p}_M$  and  $\dot{p}_J$ .

229  
230 **Starvation mortality.** Magniez (1983) observed that the gonadal index continues to decrease slightly for around two  
231 months after reproduction. He hypothesized that it was related to the season: as the reproduction period finishes at  
232 the start of winter, food resources decrease and energy investment into reproductive organs is momentarily diverted  
233 towards the maintenance of somatic elements. This was demonstrated in the other sea urchin species  
234 *Strongylocentrotus purpuratus* (Lawrence et al. 1966) and *Arbacia lixula* (Fenaux et al. 1975) confronted to  
235 starvation. In the model, when scaled reserve  $e$  (reserve relative to reserve capacity, no dimension) falls below the  
236 scaled structural length  $l$  (length relative to maximum length, no dimension), it is assumed that the individual is

237 confronted to starvation: the kappa-rule is then altered as energy is entirely redirected to the somatic maintenance  
238 and all other fluxes (growth, reproduction or maturation) are set to 0. When  $e < 0$ , the organism does not have  
239 enough energy to allocate the amount necessary for survival (somatic maintenance costs) and dies. See section  
240 “7.Submodels/Starvation” in Appendix G for further details and implemented equations.

241  
242 **Ageing mortality.** Death probability by senescence was calculated in the model using the ageing sub-model, a  
243 simulation of damages induced by lethal compounds such as free radical or other reactive oxygen species (ROS),  
244 following the DEB theory for ageing (Kooijman 2010).

245 The density of damage inducing compounds in the body increases as the reserve compartment is fuelled with energy  
246 that is allocated through the entire organism. It influences the hazard mortality rate  $\dot{h}$ , which is a function of the  
247 damage accumulated in the body and simulates the vulnerability of the individual to damages, such as the risk of  
248 dying from illness increases with age. In the model, the hazard mortality rate  $\dot{h}$  is supplemented by a stochastic  
249 parameter (Martin et al. 2010) to control the ageing mortality rate. See section “7.Submodels/Ageing” in Appendix G  
250 for further details and implemented equations.

251

## 252 2.4 Individual-based modelling for the population

### 253 2.4.1 Principles

254 The individual DEB model is used to simulate each individual as an entity of the individual-based population model  
255 (IBM). An IBM represents the individual components (individuals of *A. cordatus*) of an environmental system (Anse  
256 du Halage) and their behaviours, enabling to feature each individual as an autonomous entity and looking at results at  
257 the scale of the whole population (DeAngelis & Mooij 2005, Grimm & Railsback 2005, Railsback & Grimm 2019).

258 In our model, each individual do not have any direct interaction nor adaptive behaviour towards their environment  
259 nor the other members of the population. They follow a continuous development governed by metabolic fluxes (DEB  
260 model) that are influenced by environmental conditions (temperature and food resources) along their entire life. Each  
261 individual is a component of the modelled population, which is itself affected by population death rate and density-  
262 dependent processes.

263 The IBM was built with the software Netlogo version 6.0.4 (Wilensky 1999), using the DEB-IBM model developed  
264 by Martin et al. (2010) for the species *Daphnia magna*. The NetLogo code is available at

265 [http://modelingcommons.org/browse/one\\_model/6201](http://modelingcommons.org/browse/one_model/6201). It contains the script to run the model, the input files of  
266 monthly food resources and temperatures for the three stations and a detailed description of the model following the  
267 ODD protocol from [Grimm et al. \(2010\)](#) and the associated list of variables present in the code. This detailed ODD  
268 was also included in Appendix G.

269

#### 270 *2.4.2 Application of IBM model to A. cordatus*

271 **Model structure.** The model includes two types of entities: the individuals and the environment. Individuals are  
272 divided into 4 types of sub-agents, depending on their life stage and sex: embryos, juveniles, adult males and adult  
273 females. The values of four primary state variables are attributed to each individual (scaled reserve  $U_E$ , volumetric  
274 structural length  $L$ , scaled maturity  $U_H$  and scaled reproduction buffer  $U_R$ ). The level of energy contained in the  
275 scaled maturity  $U_H$  thresholds the life stages. These four variables are 'scaled', meaning here that the energy  
276 dimension has been removed by dividing with the surface-area-specific maximum assimilation rate  $\{p_{Am}\}$  (in  $J.L^{-2}.t$   
277 <sup>1</sup>), based on DEB theory ([Kooijman 2010](#)).

278 Simulations were run with a monthly timestep for calculation, in regard to the slow growth of the species and the  
279 available data (an analysis of the effect of the timestep on the core individual model was conducted, cf. Appendix C).  
280 At each timestep, food and temperature conditions are first input into the model, state variable values of each  
281 individual are calculated in order to assess whether new maturity thresholds are reached or whether energy is  
282 sufficient for survival, growth or reproduction. The population state is reassessed at the end of each month. Spatially,  
283 population structure and density are simulated on a patch of one square metre at each site and individuals do not  
284 leave the patch during their entire life.

285

286 **Initialisation.** The initial population density value was set to 120 ind./m<sup>2</sup> and this figure was split into classes of  
287 equal densities of 20 individuals of different age-classes, between 0 and 5 years old, in order to stabilize the  
288 initialisation between the different replicates. An initial run is realised to capture the values of the four state variables  
289 that characterize the individual of each age class (at October 2012 temperatures and  $f=1$ ), in order to initiate the  
290 model (Appendix H).

291 The first decade of the simulation period was always considered as the initialisation phase and was removed from the  
292 analysis, the model showing important outliers (in individual metabolism and population structure) during these first  
293 ten years.

294

295 **Inter-individuals variability.** Each individual is characterized by similar energetic performances estimated by the  
296 DEB estimation (Table 1). Five DEB parameters were divided by a *scatter-multiplier* parameter that was generated  
297 in order to create inter-individual variability. These five DEB parameters were selected because they are associated  
298 to the four state variables that characterize the individuals and are not null at the time the individual is initiated into  
299 the model (following Martin et al. 2010): (1) maturity level at birth ( $U_H^b$ , d.cm<sup>2</sup>), that is the amount of energy  
300 accumulated in the maturity compartment needed to reach the *juvenile* stage; (2) maturity level at *puberty* ( $U_H^p$ ,  
301 d.cm<sup>2</sup>), the amount of energy accumulated into the maturity compartment to reach the adult stage; (3) energy  
302 investment ratio ( $g$ , no dimension), the cost of the added volume relative to the maximum potentially available  
303 energy for growth and maintenance; (4) the initial energy reserve at *birth* ( $U_E$ , d.cm<sup>2</sup>); and (5) the initial structural  
304 length ( $L$ , cm).

305 The *scatter-multiplier* is the exponential of a random number from a normal distribution of mean 0 and standard  
306 deviation  $cv$  (0.1 by default, can be set by the user in the interface of the model). The value is therefore small enough  
307 to not affect tremendously the initial variable and generate trade-off between parameters. It is applied as soon as the  
308 individual is created in the system.

309

310 **Reproduction.** Sex-ratios (ratio males/females) in the studied populations are slightly contrasting between localities,  
311 from 0.94 (Ile Haute) to 0.99 (Anse du Halage) and 1.04 (Port Couvreux) (Poulin 1996). The average ratio of 0.99  
312 was chosen in the model. By approximation, it was considered that only females undergo physiological changes  
313 during the reproduction process, males being only used as a component of the total population.

314

315 To this date, few monitoring studies have been performed on *A. cordatus* reproduction. Magniez (1983) is the only  
316 one who studied the Gonado Somatic Index (GSI), that is the proportion of ash-free gonads dry weight over the ash-  
317 free body dry weight, therefore directly linked to the accumulation of energy into the reproduction buffer. According

318 to Magniez (1983), reproduction can occur if the GSI reaches at least 0.07%. This condition was used in our model  
319 to control the ability of the female to reproduce when time comes.

320 The gonadosomatic index GSI was only attributed to females and was estimated for each month, with this equation  
321 (Kooijman 2010, section 4.10, eq. 4.89):

322 
$$\text{GSI} = \frac{\text{time\_of\_accumulation} * \dot{k}_M * g}{f^3 * (f + \kappa * g * y_{VE})} * \left( (1 - \kappa) * f^3 - \frac{\dot{k}_J * U_H^p}{L_m^2 * s_M^3} \right)$$
, where the time of accumulation is the

323 number of days spent since the end of the reproduction period,  $\dot{k}_M$  is the somatic maintenance rate coefficient (in d<sup>-1</sup>),  
324  $g$  the energy investment ratio (no dimension),  $f$  the scaled functional response (no dimension),  $\kappa$  the fraction of  
325 energy directed towards structure,  $y_{VE}$  the parameter for the yield of structure on reserve (mol/mol), that is the  
326 number of moles of structure that can be produced with one mole of reserve,  $1 - \kappa$  the fraction of energy directed  
327 towards complexity,  $\dot{k}_J$  the maturity maintenance rate coefficient (in d<sup>-1</sup>),  $U_H^p$  the scaled energy in the complexity  
328 compartment at puberty (d.cm<sup>2</sup>),  $L_m$  the maximum structural length (cm), and  $s_M$  the acceleration factor (no  
329 dimension).

330

331 The reproduction period is constant from March to May for the individuals at Anse du Halage, and they only spawn  
332 once a year (Magniez 1983, Schatt & Féral 1996, Poulin 1996). After each monthly step, the model checks the GSI  
333 value for each female. If the GSI reaches the 0.07% threshold at the onset of the period (March), reproduction is  
334 triggered for this considered female.

335 According to the literature, when reproducing, females invest around 52% of their reproductive organs' energy into  
336 reproduction (Magniez 1983). This energy is released during the three months when spawning occurs. That is, the  
337 GSI of the female will decrease by 52% of its initial value over the 3 months period (so a decrease of one third of 52%  
338 per month, with  $\partial \text{GSI} = (\text{GSI}_{\text{start}} - 0.52 * \text{GSI}_{\text{start}}) / 3$ , where  $\text{GSI}_{\text{start}}$  is the level of gonadal index at the onset of  
339 reproduction). In parallel, the usual  $\partial U_R$  (change in energy density in the reproduction buffer outside of the  
340 reproduction period, no unit) is set to 0 for the three months, while  $U_R$  (energy density in the reproduction buffer) is  
341 forced to decrease in a similar fashion to the GSI:  $\partial_2 U_R = (U_{R\_start} - 0.52 * U_{R\_start}) / 3$ , with  $U_{R\_start}$  being the  
342 reproduction buffer at the start of the period.

343 Reproduction induces the introduction of 27 embryos in average in the system (Magniez 1983), added proportionally  
344 along the three months (9 per month).



345

346 **Background mortality.** No specific adult mortality rates are mentioned in the literature, as no cause have been  
347 defined precisely. Background population mortality annual rates were estimated based on size frequency distribution  
348 provided by [Mespoulhé \(1992\)](#), and using the formula from [Ebert \(2013\)](#)  $N(t) = N_0 * e^{-M*t}$  with  $N(t)$  the population  
349 size at time  $t$ ,  $N_0$  the initial population size,  $M$  the mortality rate and  $t$  the time (in months). Two yearly mortality  
350 rates were defined: one for juveniles (41%) and one for adults (24%).

351 A percentage of embryos mortality in the pouches was calculated based on data from [Poulin \(1996\)](#), determining an  
352 egg survival of 65%. This mortality is associated to the fact that when the first juveniles start leaving the maternal  
353 pouches at the beginning of January, they push aside the protecting spikes of the pouch, and eggs remaining in the  
354 brood are no longer protected and die ([Magniez 1980](#)).

355

356 **Mortality induced by temperatures.** As no precise information is available to accurately describe *A. cordatus*  
357 temperature tolerance, three different types of sensitivity were designed to cover different hypothesis (Fig. D.2).  
358 Based on experimental results obtained in the Kerguelen Islands (personal observation), mortality gradient due to  
359 temperature was applied to the population for temperatures comprised between 8 and 12°C. Over 12°C, all  
360 individuals are considered to die in the model, as none survived in the experiment. (1) A 'vulnerable' type was  
361 defined with population death rates of 25%, 35% and 45% when the sea urchins are exposed to temperatures  
362 respectively reaching 8, 9.5 and 11°C during two consecutive months. (2) The 'resistant' type was defined with a  
363 mortality rate 15% lower than the vulnerable one for the same temperature thresholds (e.g. 10% instead of 25%  
364 population mortality at +8°C), for similar exposure duration (i.e. two months). (3) The 'intermediate' type is similar  
365 to the 'resistant' type but individuals are considered to die after one month of exposure to each temperature instead  
366 of two (Fig. D.2).

367

368 **Density-dependent regulation.** Population density autoregulates through competition for food resources. This  
369 procedure relies on the monitoring of population density in relation to the carrying capacity and allows to stabilize  
370 the model. The model calculates the current population density and quantifies the competition effect on food  
371 availability depending on how far from the carrying capacity ( $K$ ) the population density ( $P$ ) is, and updates food  
372 availability in accordance.

373 It is considered that at each timestep, a certain amount of food is available in the environment ( $f_{env}$ ) but according to  
374 population size, competition for food (FC, quantified food competition) is present and influences effective food  
375 availability ( $f_{eff}$ ), with  $f_{eff} = f_{env} + FC$ , following Goedegebuure et al. (2018).  $f_{eff}$  and  $f_{env}$  are contained between 0 and  
376 1. FC is calculated with the following equations:

377 If  $P < 1.9 * K$ , then  $FC = (1 - f_{env}) \cdot (1 - \frac{P}{2 \cdot K - P})$

378 If  $P \geq 1.9 * K$ , then  $FC = (1 - f_{env}) \cdot (1 - \frac{P}{K/10})$

379 FC is positive if  $P < K$ , and  $f_{eff}$  tends to its maximal value 1 with a decreasing population size, as FC becomes very  
380 low and tends to  $1 - f_{env}$ . When  $P > K$ , FC turns negative and makes  $f_{eff}$  decrease with the minimal value reached at  $P$   
381  $= 2K$ .

382 Two equations are used because if  $P = 2K$ , the first formula gives an error due to a division by 0, and if  $P > 2K$ , then  
383 the formula gives the untrue result of less competition with a bigger population (hence the use of 1.9 as a pivot  
384 value). Competition is only effective if food availability is less than the maximum (hence the use of '1 -  $f_{env}$ ' in the  
385 equation).

386

### 387 2.5. Summary of model parameterization and sensitivity analysis

388 The model was constructed following the ecological and physiological observations available in the literature for *A.*  
389 *cordatus*. These observations are summarised in the following table (Table 3). Once these elements added, the ageing  
390 submodel and the carrying capacity parameters, for which no *in situ* observations are defined, were calibrated until  
391 obtaining a model stable in time, over several centuries.

392

393 The sensitivity of the model to different parameters was tested. This sensitivity analysis also served as a first form of  
394 validation in the absence of wider means of validation. Initial population number, inter-individuals variation  
395 coefficient, juvenile and adult background mortalities, number of eggs produced per female during a reproduction  
396 event, and egg survival rate were each applied variations of -30%, -20%, -10%, +10%, +20% and +30% (Table 3).

397 The influence of changes in these parameter values was assessed on the average population density (ind/m<sup>2</sup>), the  
398 average juvenile/adult ratio, the average physical length, the average reserve energy and the average structural length  
399 variation over the period of 200 years. For each analysis, models were replicated 100 times. A model was considered  
400 to 'crash' when the population is not stable and collapses entirely before the end of the simulation period. The

401 proportion of crashes relates to the number of crashes counted for 100 simulations (i.e., for 15 crashes and 100  
 402 simulations, the proportion is  $15/(100+15) \sim 13\%$ ). Due to computing time limitations, the analysis was stopped when  
 403 reaching a proportion higher than 66% of crashes (indicated by a black cross in Appendix E).

404  
 405 The model sensitivity to the GSI threshold assumption was tested with the upper and lower values of the GSI  
 406 calculated at the onset of reproduction in [Magniez \(1983\)](#). The minimum value did not impact the model at all, but  
 407 the higher threshold value prevented most of the females from reproducing (results not presented).

408  
 409 **Table 3.** List of parameters integrated in the individual and population models. Descriptions and values. The source  
 410 reference that justifies the choice of the parameterization is provided in the ‘reference’ column. The last column  
 411 synthesises which parameters were modified to performed a sensitivity analysis, whose results are presented in  
 412 Appendix E.

Parameters	Model parameterization	Reference	Sensitivity analysis
<b>Individuals</b>			
Time of development until birth	8 months	254 days (Schatt 1985)	MRE DEB model
Time of development until puberty	Threshold by $U_H^b$ value	2.5 to 3 years old (Schatt 1985, Mespoulhé 1992)	MRE DEB model
Starvation	$e < 1$	Kooijman (2010)	Not tested
Ageing	Probability depending on accumulated cell damages, constrained by stochasticity	Damage probability: following Martin et al. (2010) and Kooijman (2010) rules for ageing  Stochasticity: calibrated at the end of model construction until reaching model stability	Not tested, calibrated parameter
<b>Population</b>			
Initial population density	120 ind./m <sup>2</sup>	Rounded from literature (Guille and Lasserre 1979, Magniez 1980, Mespoulhé 1992, Poulin 1996)	-30 to +30% variation tested
Initial population structure	5 age-classes of 20 individuals	Follow average population structure observed by Mespoulhé (1992)	Not tested

Variation coefficient (cv) from the inter-individual variability	0.1	Follow IBM parameterization of Martin et al. (2010) study	-30 to +30% variation tested
Ratio females/males	50/50	Sex-ratio: 0.99 (Poulin 1996)	Not tested
Initial GSI	0.03%	Magniez (1983)	Not tested
GSI threshold for reproduction	0.07%	Magniez (1983)	Tested with the upper (0.116) and lower (0.028) values of the GSI calculated at the onset of reproduction in Magniez (1983)
Reproduction period	3 months once a year	Magniez (1983), Schatt & Féral (1996), Poulin (1996)	Not tested
Energy investment into reproduction	52% of the reproductive energy at the onset of the period	Magniez (1983)	Not tested
Number of eggs	27 eggs per adult female	Magniez (1983), Schatt (1985)	-30 to +30% variation tested
Eggs survival to juvenile stage (birth)	65%	Poulin (1996)	-30 to +30% variation tested
Yearly background mortality rates	41% of juveniles 24% of adults	Equation provided in Ebert et al. (2013), implemented with population data from Mespoulhé (1992)	-30 to +30% variation tested
Mortality induced by temperature tolerance	Three sensitivity scenarios	Designed from experimental results	Not tested
Carrying capacity	200 ind./m <sup>2</sup>	Calibrated at the end of model construction until reaching model stability, no information available in the literature	Not tested, calibrated parameter

413

414

415 *2.6. Forcing environmental variables*

416

417 *2.6.1. Temperature*

418 In the frame of DEB theory, temperature influences metabolic rates following the Arrhenius function which  
419 defines the range of temperatures that affect enzyme performance, considering that metabolic rates are controlled by  
420 enzymes that are set inactive beyond an optimal temperature tolerance (Kooijman 2010, Thomas & Bacher 2018).  
421 The Arrhenius response is characterized by five parameters that describe the species tolerance range: the Arrhenius  
422 temperature  $T_A$ , the temperature at the upper and lower limits of the species tolerance range  $T_H$  and  $T_L$  respectively,  
423 and the Arrhenius temperature beyond upper and lower limits of the tolerance range  $T_{AH}$  and  $T_{AL}$  respectively.

424 In our study, the available information is not sufficient to define the complete relationship between temperature  
425 and metabolic performances, and the temperature correction factor ( $TC$ ) is only calculated using one of the five  
426 Arrhenius parameter  $T_A$  (in K), following the equation  $\tau(T) = \tau * \exp(T_A/T_{ref} - T_A/T)$  with  $\tau$  a given metabolic rate,  
427  $T_{ref}$  the reference temperature (293K  $\approx$  20°C),  $T$  the environmental temperature (in Kelvin) and  $\exp((T_A/T_{ref} - T_A/T))$   
428 being the temperature correction factor  $TC$ . The correction is applied to the metabolic rates  $\dot{v}$ ,  $\dot{k}_M$ ,  $\dot{k}_J$ ,  $\dot{h}_a$  (Table 1).

429

430 Temperatures recorded since 1993 at Port aux Français, another site in the Gulf of Morbihan, show a clear 6-year  
431 cycle of increasing and decreasing temperatures (Appendix A). The [2012-2018] temperature dataset selected as  
432 input forcing variable in the model therefore constitutes an interesting proxy of temperature conditions at Anse du  
433 Halage which includes a complete overview of the environmental variability at the station. However, it is important  
434 to take this choice into consideration during interpretation of results, as it needs to be differentiated from a cycle that  
435 would be inherent to the biology of the species.

436

### 437 2.6.2. Food resources

438 In DEB theory, the energy is supplied to the reserve of the organism through ingestion proportional to food  
439 availability, represented in the model by a functional response  $f$  (from 0 to 1). Food assimilation ( $\dot{p}_A$ , Fig. 3A) is  
440 proportional to the surface of the structure of each individual and contributes to the filling of the reserve  
441 compartment  $E$  (Fig. 3A). The functional response  $f$  was calibrated using the values of organic carbon (OC) content  
442 in sediment as a percentage of dry weight of sediment at the station Anse du Halage at the end of each month,  
443 available in Delille & Bouvy (1989). The maximum value of 1 for  $f$  corresponds here to the maximum value of  
444 organic carbon content that was found (6.94%) and a  $f$  minimum of 0 corresponds to 0% OC.

445

446 2.7 Model projection

447 2.7.1. Present-day conditions at Anse du Halage

448 To assess the influence of varying environmental conditions on model outputs, after being constructed for the site  
449 Anse du Halage, the model was implemented in two other sites, Ile Haute and Port Couvreur, where *A. cordatus* is  
450 reported in high densities (Poulin 1996) (Fig. 1). The implementation to these two other stations was done with  
451 contrasting temperatures (from the Proteker programme, as previously explained in 2.1). Food conditions at these  
452 two sites are not available and were estimated at the end of the summer to be 50% to 30% of the organic carbon  
453 values measured at Anse du Halage according to the comparative study of Delille et al. (1979). These rates were  
454 applied to yearlong conditions (Fig. A.2). Models were launched for a period of 200 years.

455

456 2.7.2. Future conditions

457 Two future scenarios predicting environmental conditions for 2100 were used, based on the IPCC scenario RCP  
458 2.6 and 8.5 (respectively optimistic and pessimistic scenarios, IPCC 5th report), accessed at  
459 <https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/ipcc/ocn/> (in August 2019). Coarse IPCC predictions (1°x1° resolution) of  
460 chlorophyll a concentration were used to roughly evaluate potential changes of food availability on the east coast of  
461 the Kerguelen Island in future conditions. Scenario RCP 2.6 shows an average decrease of 10% of current food  
462 resources availability, while scenario RCP 8.5 shows an average decrease of 20% (Fig. D.3). As for temperature, we  
463 defined RCP 2.6 with a linear increase of +1.1°C and +1.7°C for RCP 8.5. Models were launched for a period of 30  
464 years.

465

466

467 **3. Results**

468

469 3.1 The individual-based model

470

471 Variations in energy allocated to the reserve and the maturation buffer are the main controls of individual  
472 development. Monthly variations ( $\partial U_E$  and  $\partial U_R$ ,  $\partial X$  here stands for  $\frac{dX}{dt}$ ) were simulated over one year under present-  
473 day environmental conditions (Fig. 4). Energy in the reserve (Fig. 4a) shows variations between -2.5 and 8 on

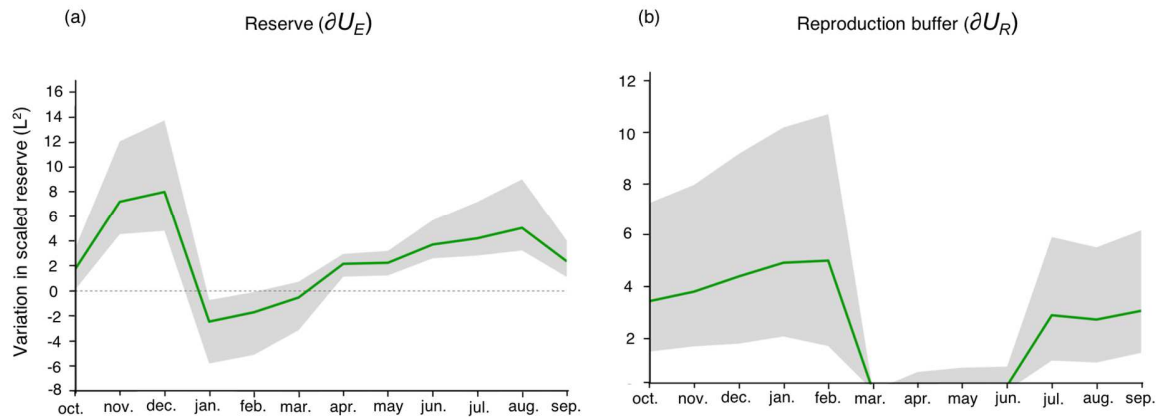
474 average (no unit), with maximum range values reaching -5.8 and 13.7. This shows a relative constant energy density  
475 inside the reserve throughout the year with, however, a noticeable increase from October to December and a sharp  
476 decrease from December to January (Fig. 4a). According to DEB theory (Kooijman 2010), the more energy is stored  
477 inside the reserve (through food assimilation), the more it can be distributed to other compartments, and the more  
478 energy can be assimilated into the reserve anew. Availability of food resources for *A. cordatus* is the highest in  
479 December ( $f = 1$ ) (Fig A.2), it is assimilated and stored as energy into the reserve. Based on the energy available in  
480 the reserve at the end of December, energy is supplied in January to other compartments (such as the reproduction  
481 buffer, Fig. 4b and growth, Fig. Fa), while the individual ingests the food available to replenish its reserve anew. As  
482 food availability decreases in January ( $f = 0.748$ ), the reserve loses energy (Fig. 4a) because the individual cannot  
483 assimilate as much energy as the amount transferred to other compartments.

484

485 The energy density entering the reproduction buffer (Fig. 4b) of mature females varies between 0 and 4.9 on average  
486 in the course of the year, with a maximum of 10.7. The rate of energy input increases at an average pace of +1.1%  
487 per month from October to the onset of the reproduction period in March, when it decreases and remains null until  
488 the end of the spawning period in June. Then, energy starts accumulating again until the next reproduction period.  
489 During the three months of the spawning period, from March to May, no energy is allocated from the reserve to the  
490 reproduction buffer and the energy stored in this buffer is progressively delivered to gametes. Only females that are  
491 mature in March undergo reproduction and deliver the energy contained in the reproductive buffer to the gametes.  
492 Females that become mature during the reproduction period undergo a normal increase of the energy in the  
493 reproduction buffer, which explains the small increasing trend observed during the March-May period (Fig. 4b).

494

495



496

497

**Figure 4.** Simulation of the variation of energy allocated to the reserve (a) and the reproduction buffer (b)

498

compartments over one year. Males were not considered in the model when simulating reproduction processes, and

499

thus results presented here only take females into consideration. Average results for all mature females, in 100 model

500

simulations are presented by the green line. The grey area corresponds to the variation range (variation induced by

501

differences between individuals: age, size, energy allocation) between all females among the 120 individuals that

502

initiate the model. The variation in energy allocated is the change in a scaled variable X:  $\partial X$  here stands for  $\frac{dX}{dt}$  (for

503

an explanation of the term “scaled” here, see section 2.4.2).

504

### 505 3.2 The population model

#### 506 3.2.1. Modelled population dynamics at the calibration site

507

Based on the individual model, population dynamics were simulated over a time period of 30 years, showing a

508

constant population density comprised between 120 and 220 individuals per square metre. Overall, the population

509

structure remains constant through time but with well-marked yearly variations, mainly in juvenile density (Fig. 5).

510

Juveniles indeed represent around 83% of the total population density and show important yearly variations due to (1)

511

important seasonal reproductive outputs causing a surge in population density, (2) strong mortality rates causing

512

gradual decreases in the population, (3) the transfer of the large juvenile cohort to the adult population after around 3

513

years, and (4) the influence of inter-individual competition for food limiting population densities and even causing its

514

decrease. In contrast, the adult population is much more stable relative to the juvenile one, with lower density values

515

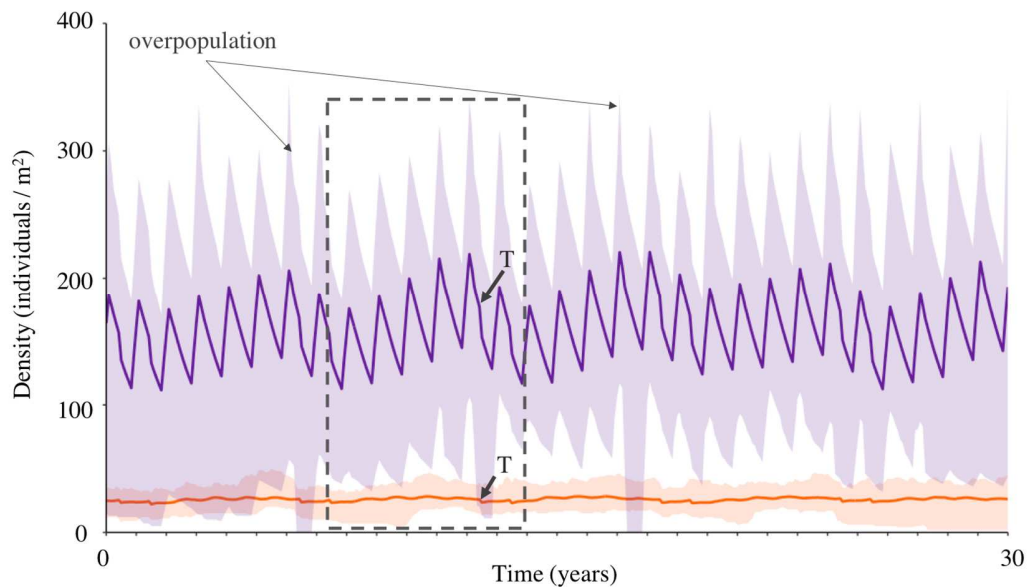
(around 40 individuals per square metre). Both juvenile and adult population fluctuations follow a general 6-year

516

pattern displayed over the 30 years of simulations (rectangle, Fig. 5). This pattern is linked to temperature cycles



517 over the same time span and includes two sharp decline in population density over a 6-year cycle ('T' symbol, Fig.  
518 5), which corresponds to high temperatures rising above +8°C during two consecutive months and causing mortality  
519 rates of 10% of the entire population.  
520



521  
522 **Figure 5.** Modelled population structure and density under present-day environmental conditions: monthly values of  
523 juvenile density (purple) and adult density (orange) over 30 years (for 100 simulations). Bold lines: mean density  
524 value. Shaded areas: variation range for the 100 simulations. 'T' symbol: sharp decrease in population density due to  
525 temperature-induced mortality. Dashed-line rectangle: 6-year cycle in population dynamics (this 6-year pattern is due  
526 to the input temperature data and not to a biological cycle inherent to the population).

### 527 528 3.2.2 Sensitivity analysis

529 Different parameter settings for the model initiation may result in very diverging outputs (Appendix E). It also  
530 influences model stability, and population collapse in particular. Overall, the initial number of individuals and the  
531 level of the inter-individual variation coefficient are parameters that have little influence on model stability and low  
532 proportion of population crashes may result. In addition, model outputs do not differ significantly between  
533 simulations. Increase in juvenile and adult mortality levels will also have little influence on model outputs but

534 decreasing mortality levels will induce a population burst followed by a strong competition for food and a  
535 consequent population collapse.

536 Among all the parameters set at the model initialisation, egg number and egg survival are the most important  
537 determining model stability, as they directly control juvenile density. High juvenile densities (induced by a low  
538 background juvenile mortality and a high number of eggs and egg survival) always result in fast population collapses  
539 as a result of high competition for food between individuals. As population density increases, the amount of food  
540 available for each individual decreases and individuals start starving to death. In contrast, a reduction in the number  
541 of juveniles causes a reduction in the average population density due to a strong mortality rate of juveniles. It does  
542 not imply model instability and the proportion of modelled population crashes is always lower than 15%. The  
543 reduction of population density also strongly influences the average amount of energy available for each individual:  
544 the more energy is available, the more individuals can grow in structural length.

545

### 546 3.2.3. *Projections of the population dynamics model to other sites*

547 The dynamic population model built at Anse du Halage was implemented (Appendix G) for the two sites of Ile  
548 Haute (inside the Morbihan Bay) and Port Couvreur (outside the Morbihan Bay). Both models were simulated twice  
549 with initial estimates of 50% and 30% of food availability ( $f$ ) compared to Anse du Halage ( $f_H$ ). Temperature inputs  
550 were based on local temperature variations recorded at the two sites. Model outputs predict lower population  
551 densities at both sites compared to Anse du Halage and interestingly, similar ratios between juveniles and adults  
552 (Table 4). These results are consistent with density values found in the literature, which give between 100 and 136  
553 individuals/m<sup>2</sup> at Ile Haute and 50 to 168 ind./m<sup>2</sup> at Port Couvreur (Mespoulhé 1992, Poulin 1996). The different  
554 observed density values reported in publications for Port Couvreur may be due to contrasting conditions that locally  
555 prevail among the three small embayments of that locality (Poulin 1996). This has recently been confirmed by our  
556 personal observations in the field (Saucède 2020). Model outputs suggest a strong influence of food availability on  
557 population densities controlled by inter-individual competition for food. Accordingly, simulations predict a drop in  
558 density values at Port Couvreur when food resources decrease at 30% of  $f_H$ , while density values are relatively stable  
559 at Ile Haute in comparison (Table 4a). This mainly affects juvenile densities and results in a lower population ratio  
560 (Table 4b).

561       Temperatures recorded at the two sites inside the Morbihan Bay (Anse du Halage and Ile Haute) are close to each  
562 other and slightly higher than outside the Bay at Port Couvreur (Fig. A.1). Contrasting results were therefore  
563 expected between Port Couvreur and the two other sites. On the contrary, temperatures may not be contrasting  
564 enough between sites to affect population structure and density. Confidence intervals overlap between all sites for  
565 values of both population density and juveniles-adults ratio (Table 4).

566

567 **Table 4.** Modelled population densities (a) and juveniles over adults ratio (b) at the calibration (Anse du Halage)  
568 and projection (Ile Haute and Port Couvreur) sites. Average and standard deviation values are given for 100 model  
569 replicates and 200 years of simulation.  $f_H$ : time series of  $f$  value at Anse du Halage (Delille & Bouvy 1989).

(a)	Anse du Halage	Ile Haute	Port Couvreur
$f_H, T^\circ\text{Halage}$	182.6 $\pm$ 49	-	-
50% of $f_H, T^\circ\text{site}$	-	137.6 $\pm$ 40	137.4 $\pm$ 41
30% of $f_H, T^\circ\text{site}$	-	123.2 $\pm$ 38	91.8 $\pm$ 44

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(b)	Anse du Halage	Ile Haute	Port Couvreur
$f_H, T^\circ\text{Halage}$	6.53 $\pm$ 3.12	-	-
50% of $f_H, T^\circ\text{site}$	-	6.31 $\pm$ 4.40	6.32 $\pm$ 4.31
30% of $f_H, T^\circ\text{site}$	-	6.04 $\pm$ 4.31	3.87 $\pm$ 2.61

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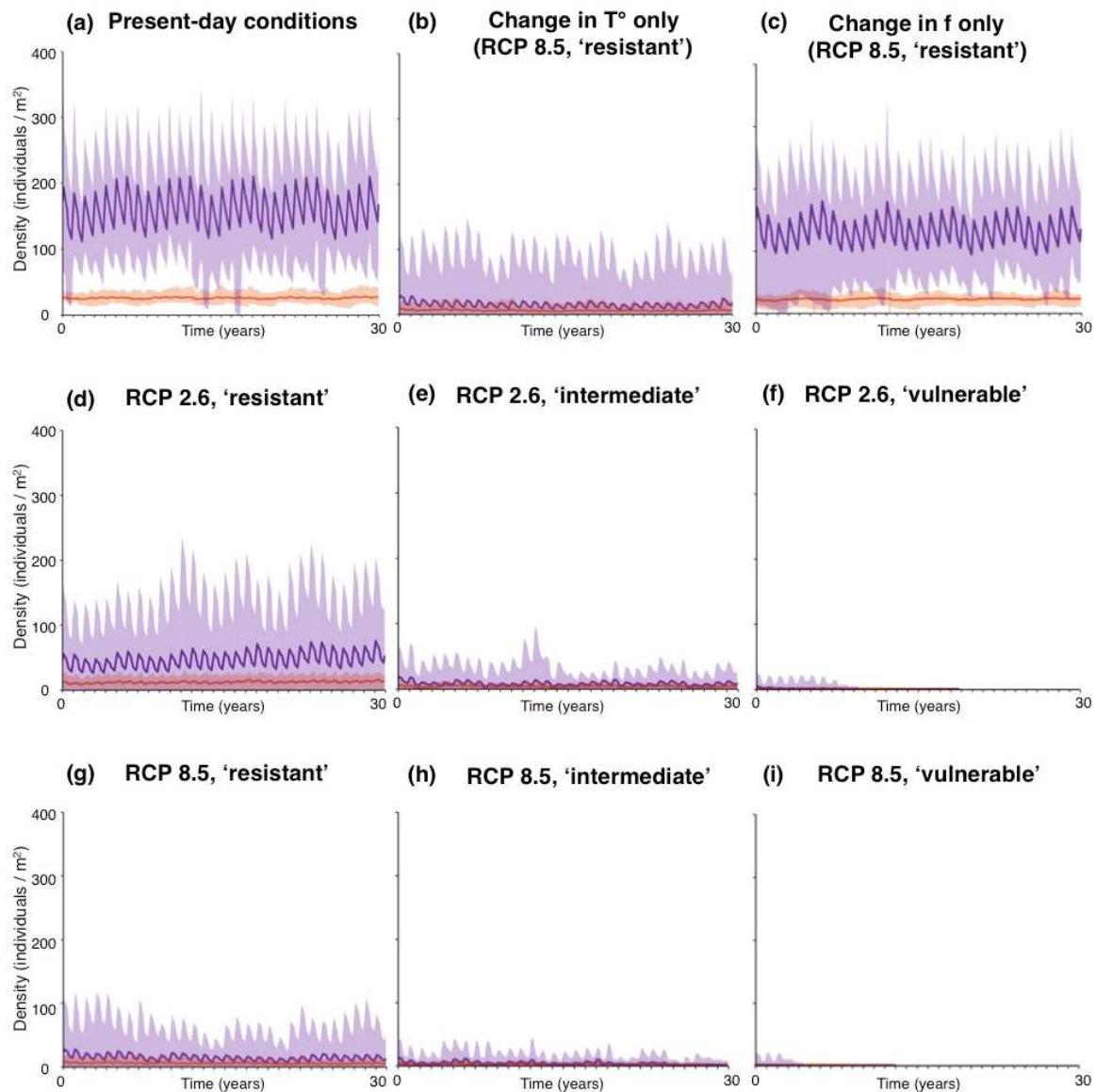
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### 573 3.2.4. Population dynamics under future predictions of climate change

574       Population structure and density were simulated and implemented for scenarios of temperature and food  
575 resources changes based on IPCC scenarios RCP 2.6 and 8.5, and for populations of 'resistant', 'intermediate' and  
576 'vulnerable' organisms (Fig. 6). Population dynamics are all predicted to be affected by both scenarios (Fig. 6d, 6g)

577 with overall population densities predicted to be four to seven times lower than current population predictions.  
578 Population structures are also predicted to be affected by a lower contribution of juveniles to overall population  
579 densities. The respective effects of temperature (Fig. 6b) and resource availability (Fig. 6c) were simulated  
580 independently. Under temperature change only (Fig. 6b), model predictions are close to model outputs in which both  
581 variables are combined (Fig. 6g), with a strong decrease in average population density compared to present-day  
582 conditions (Fig. 6a). The effect of changes in resources availability only (Fig. 6c) is less marked, with population  
583 densities showing a close pattern to present-day models (Fig. 6a).

584 Models therefore predict a stronger effect of temperature changes on populations, with population densities of  
585 'vulnerable' organisms predicted as very low (less than one tenth of present-day densities on average). Populations of  
586 'vulnerable' organisms are even predicted to go extinct in only 30 years of simulation (Fig. 6f, 6i). Populations of  
587 organisms with 'intermediate' sensitivity (Fig. 6e, 6h) are more resilient and withstand over 30 years of simulation in  
588 some cases, but they collapse at the end of the period under IPCC scenario RCP 8.5. Overall densities are very low  
589 (around 20 or less individuals per square metre on average).



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**Figure 6.** Model predictions under IPCC scenarios RCP 2.6 and RCP 8.5 of environmental change (for 100 simulations). Purple: adult population, orange: juvenile population. Coloured bold lines show mean values for 100 simulations. Shaded areas are simulation variation ranges. (a) Population model under present-day conditions, (b) model under IPCC scenario RCP 8.5 of  $T^\circ$  change only (+1.7°C compared to present) and for resistant organisms; (c) model under IPCC scenario RCP 8.5 of  $f$  change only (-20% compared to present) and for resistant organisms; (d) model under IPCC scenario RCP 2.6 of  $T^\circ$  and  $f$  changes (-10% of  $f$  and +1.1°C compared to present) and for 'resistant' organisms; (e) model under IPCC scenario RCP 2.6 of  $T^\circ$  and  $f$  changes and for 'intermediate' organisms; (f) model under IPCC scenario RCP 2.6 of  $T^\circ$  and  $f$  changes and for 'vulnerable' organisms; (g) model under IPCC

599 scenario RCP 8.5 of  $T^\circ$  and  $f$  changes and for 'resistant' organisms; (h) model under IPCC scenario RCP 8.5 of  $T^\circ$   
600 and  $f$  changes and for 'intermediate' organisms; (i) model under IPCC scenario RCP 8.5 of  $T^\circ$  and  $f$  changes and for  
601 'vulnerable' organisms.

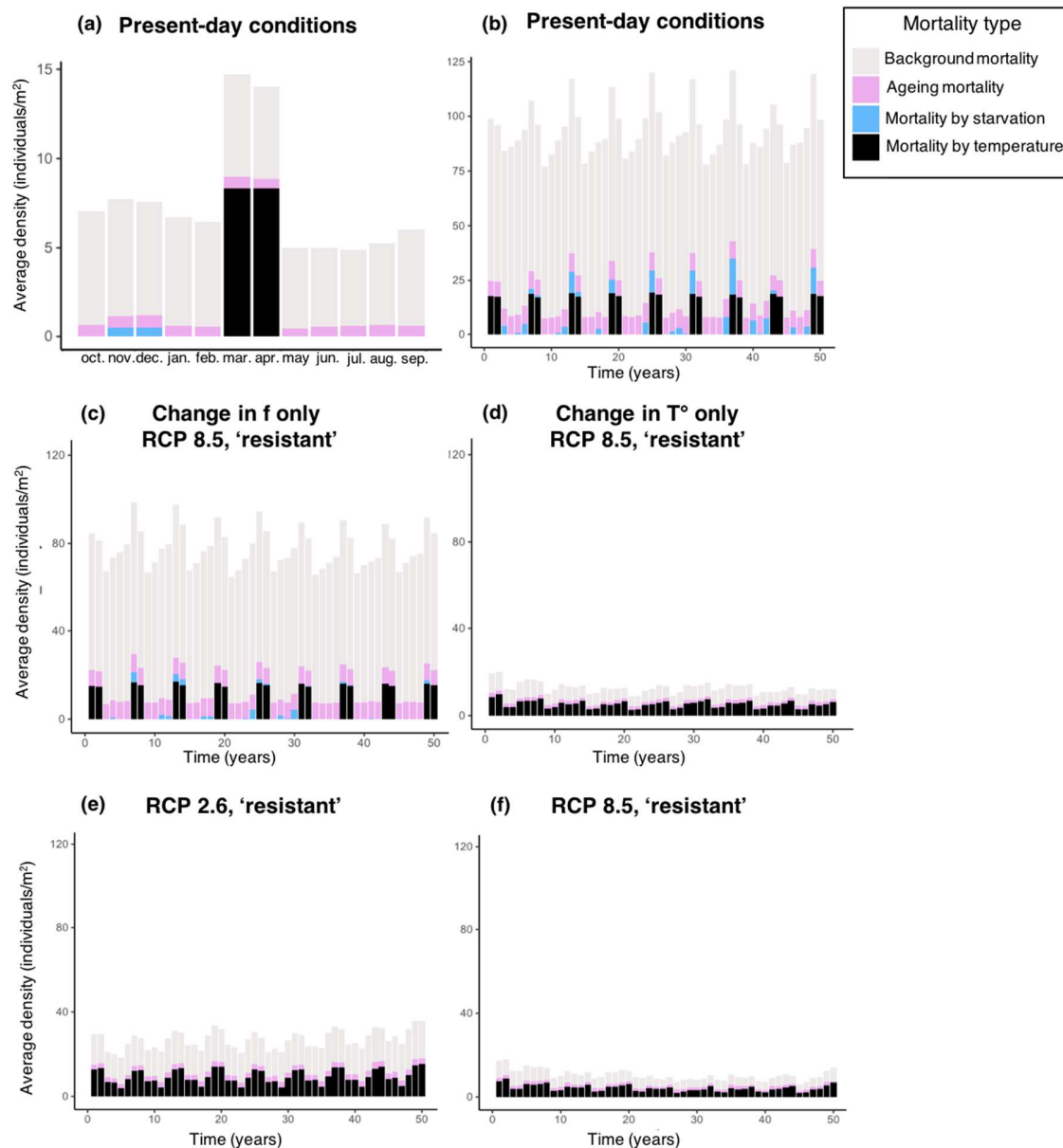
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### 603 *3.3. Population mortality under present-day and future predictions*

604 Under present-day conditions (Fig. 7b), background mortality and ageing are the main causes that affect  
605 population mortality each year (respectively between 65 to 90% and 5.8 to 9%). High temperatures and starvation  
606 have sporadic effects on mortality. High mortality due to high temperatures only happened in [2016-2017] and  
607 [2017-2018] and starvation contributes at the highest to 10% of overall mortality, depending on the year.

608 Over the course of a year (Fig. 7a), background mortality and ageing affect the population every month, while  
609 high temperatures (over 8°C) cause the death of half of the population in March and April. Starvation is responsible  
610 for the death of a weak proportion of the population in November and December only (austral summer), in link with  
611 the competition for food resources of the increasing population during this productive and warm period.

612 Under both future scenarios (Fig. 7e, 7f), mortality levels are low compared to present-day model (Fig. 7b),  
613 which is mostly due to small predicted population densities. Background and ageing mortalities are therefore very  
614 low. Starvation is not a cause of mortality anymore, while high temperatures cause mortality of individuals before  
615 they may starve to death. When comparing between model predictions under scenario RCP 8.5 for changes in food  
616 availability only (Fig. 7c), temperature change only (Fig. 7d), and the combined variables (Fig. 7f), temperature  
617 clearly appears as the main cause of mortality, at the same level as background mortality.



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**Figure 7.** Mortality simulations (in individuals/m<sup>2</sup>) per month (7a) and year (7b-f) under present-day (7a-b) and future (7c-f) predictions of the two IPCC scenarios (for 100 model simulations). (a) Model under present-day conditions for 12 months (year #7 [2016-2017] was chosen as an example); (b) Model under present-day conditions for 50 years of simulations; (c) Simulated mortality under scenario RCP 8.5 for resistant organisms and predicted changes in food availability only ( $f=-20\%$  compared to present); (d) Simulated mortality under scenario RCP 8.5 for resistant organisms and predicted changes in temperature only ( $+1.7^{\circ}\text{C}$  compared to present); (e) Simulated mortality under scenario RCP 2.6 for resistant organisms and predicted changes in both food availability and temperature (food

626 reduction of -10%, T° increase of +1.1°C); (f) Simulated mortality under scenario RCP 8.5 for resistant organisms  
627 and predicted changes in food availability and temperature (food reduction of -20%, T° increase of +1.7°C).

628

## 629 **4. Discussion**

### 630 *4.1. Potential and limitations of the DEB-IBM approach*

631 In the present work, a DEB-IBM model was built for *A. cordatus* based on our current knowledge of this  
632 vulnerable, endemic species of the Kerguelen plateau. On-site monitoring and experiments on species tolerance to  
633 changing environmental conditions remains challenging issues in the Kerguelen Islands, and in the Southern Ocean  
634 in general. Difficulties are owed to the sensitivity of specimens (Magniez 1983, Schatt 1985, Mespoulhé 1992) and  
635 the inherent ecological characteristics. Models can constitute a powerful tool for Antarctic research as they can  
636 provide additional support to experimental knowledge and infer the impact of broad-scale climate change on  
637 populations. The potential of the present mechanistic modelling approach resides in its capacity to model the  
638 physiology of organisms as a response to environmental factors. Using DEB models for the representation of  
639 individual components within the IBM enables to upscale a dynamic model to an entire population (Railsback &  
640 Grimm 2019) as a function of two changing abiotic factors: temperature and food resources. Applying such a model  
641 to a sub-Antarctic, benthic, and brooding species is challenging, and had never been performed so far. The present  
642 work shows the feasibility and relevance of the DEB-IBM approach to study Southern Ocean species like *A.*  
643 *cordatus*.

644 Relevant results were obtained both at the individual and populations levels. First, simulations showed the  
645 characteristic annual evolution of energy dynamics in the organism (Fig. 4, Appendix F) and second, population  
646 structure and density dynamics were modelled over an extended period of time decoupling juvenile and adult  
647 populations (Table 4, Fig. 6, Fig. 7). Projections to other sites also show the potential application of the model to  
648 other areas for which environmental data are available. Future models give an insight and add some clues to assess  
649 the potential impact of climate change and predict the biotic response of populations. Models however still need  
650 some improvements including complementary data on species ecophysiology. The model was also shown to be  
651 sensitive to mortality rates and some parameters (egg number and egg survival) settings while some population  
652 characteristics (initial population densities and inter-individual variability) have little effects (Appendix E).

653



654 4.2. *Limitations to the DEB-individual model*

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656 The dynamic population model built in this work uses outputs from the DEB model developed for *A. cordatus*  
657 (Guillaumot 2019), which allows to represent as faithfully as possible the physiological dynamics of individuals  
658 during their entire life cycle. The goodness of fit of the DEB model shows that estimated parameters accurately  
659 described observed data. However, collecting additional data at the different stages of the organism's life cycle and  
660 under different conditions of temperature and food availability would contribute to improving further model  
661 accuracy and parameter predictions. In particular, data on environmental settings and species ecophysiology are still  
662 needed to improve the accuracy and relevance of the following parameters.

663

664 4.2.1. *The Arrhenius function and the optimal temperature range*

665 In DEB theory, the Arrhenius function determines the optimal temperature range of the organism's metabolism as  
666 a response to enzymatic tolerance (Kooijman 2010, Thomas & Bacher 2018). In the present work, calculation of the  
667 Arrhenius function relies on fragmental datasets. The ascending part of the Arrhenius curve that is, the temperature  
668 range in which faster metabolic rates are determined by higher temperatures was estimated, but values are still  
669 missing for the descending slope (i.e. the temperature range beyond the optimal temperatures in which the metabolic  
670 rates slow down with higher temperatures) (Kooijman 2010). The present model assumes that higher temperatures  
671 favour more suitable conditions with no limit (Appendix F), which has to be corrected arbitrarily using our personal  
672 field and experimental observations on the echinoid ecology (Fig. D.2). Further experiments should help improve the  
673 calculation of the Arrhenius function. They would consist in measurements of respiratory rates as a function of  
674 temperature variations (e.g. Uthicke et al. 2014) and will enable more accurate simulations of *A. cordatus*'  
675 ecophysiology and the direct effect of temperature on the organism's metabolism, a prerequisite to better model  
676 population mortality.

677

678 4.2.2. *Age, size, and growth estimates*

679 Most parameters used in the DEB model were taken from the literature and experimental studies, except for some  
680 of them that were assumed based on physiological traits of counterparts. In particular, organisms' maximum age,  
681 growth rate and size are not sufficiently known due to difficulties in setting up long-term experiments in the

682 Kerguelen Islands. The relationship between echinoid growth, size and shape cannot be assessed based on growth  
683 lines measurement because there is no linear relationship between echinoid size and age (Ebert 1975) and because  
684 resorption may occur during periods of starvation (Brockington et al. 2001, Ingels et al. 2012). The most reliable  
685 method would consist in monitoring organisms' growth through time using tagging methods (Ebert 2013). However,  
686 such an approach is time-consuming and challenging as even small measurement errors may have a significant effect  
687 on results (Ebert 2013) and no experimental data are available so far.

688 Former studies (Mespoulhé 1992) showed that after 4 to 5 years, specimens of *A. cordatus* only slowly increase  
689 in size and echinoids' test tend to become distorted, a common feature in large spatangoid echinoids in which test  
690 plates tend to overlap while body size does not increase anymore (Mespoulhé 1992). However, this slow growth rate  
691 in aged specimens could also result from other causes affecting optimal food intake for instance. At the calibration  
692 site of Anse du Halage, a study of echinoid cohorts suggests that few individuals grow older than six years old  
693 (Poulin & Féral 1994). Overall, the absence or nearly absence of growth in old invertebrate organisms makes age  
694 estimates delicate to assess. In the present model, based on the combination of the ageing sub-model and other  
695 mortality processes, most individuals are calibrated to die within the assumed maximum age (before 6 years old),  
696 although some individuals may reach over ten years old due to the chosen stochasticity introduced in the sub-model.

697 Juveniles inside brood pouches were assumed to grow at a constant and same rate as adults but it has sometimes  
698 been assumed that the brooded young may already feed and develop at a faster rate (Schatt 1985, Schatt & Féral  
699 1996). At this stage, the offspring is particularly fragile and needs protection in the brood pouches to survive, which  
700 prevents any monitoring of growth rates and feeding behaviours (Magniez 1983, Schatt 1985, Mespoulhé 1992).

701

#### 702 4.3. Ecological relevance of the IBM population model

703

704 Upscaling the DEB-individual model to the population level in the IBM enables to simulate population structure  
705 and dynamics as a response to temperature and food resource availability. In particular, the IBM enables to predict  
706 the targetted effect of environmental changes on the population at the different life stages of individuals. Additional  
707 environmental data would help enhance IBM reliability and improve our knowledge of populations and  
708 environmental conditions in remote areas.

709 Field works are also subject to uncertainties due to the species burrowing habit which renders the assessment of  
710 population structure difficult, the brittleness of specimens also limiting counting replicates (Magniez 1980,  
711 Mespoulhé 1992). Important variations in population densities were noted across studies (Guille & Lasserre 1979,  
712 Mespoulhé 1992, Poulin 1996, personal observations) for a same site, which may suggest either important variations  
713 in population density and structure through time, which was however refuted by Poulin & Féral (1994), or important  
714 biases in sampling due to the aggregative behaviour of individuals and the patchiness of distribution patterns (Poulin  
715 1996).

716 The sensitivity analysis (Appendix E) showed that the model is not very much dependent on assumptions made  
717 on initial population densities because the model density-dependent regulation operates through intra-specific  
718 competition for food resources only. There is no agonistic behaviour among conspecific individuals as it was  
719 reported in other echinoid species (e.g. *Echinometra* sp. Shulman 1990) and there is no evidence of competition for  
720 space in *A. cordatus* based on field observation. Intra-specific competition in shallow-water echinoids is a common  
721 phenomenon under food-limited conditions (Stevenson et al. 2015). McClanahan & Kurtis (1991) stated that in  
722 *Echinometra mathaei*, when predation pressure and intra-specific competition are low, populations increase without  
723 limitation and regulation operates through a decrease in food availability for individuals. The same could hold true  
724 for *A. cordatus* as well.

725 Intra-specific competition for oxygen could also have a regulatory effect (Ferguson et al. 2013) since *A. cordatus*  
726 shows a high oxygen consumption rate (Guille & Lasserre 1979, Magniez & Féral 1988). In muddy substrates,  
727 specimens are usually observed unburied, positioned onto the sediment (instead of underneath), which was often  
728 interpreted as a result of difficulties to breath inside fine sediments.

729 The sensitivity analysis also showed that the number of eggs produced by females is a controlling parameter of  
730 model stability as well. There is a high variability in the number of eggs produced among females (from 9 to 106  
731 eggs per female, personal communication from P. Magniez). Taking into account such a variability would introduce  
732 an enhanced stochasticity in the population dynamics model if implemented and linked to each female's reproductive  
733 buffer  $U_R$  and GSI values (Martin et al. 2010, e.g. for zebrafish in Beaudouin et al. 2015).

734 Finally, the model was also shown to be sensitive to background mortality (Appendix E). Although monitoring  
735 mortality rates in the field is challenging, such data would greatly enhance the reliability of the IBM.

736 In general, the sensitivity tests showed that the model works with the current quality and quantity of data  
737 available for this species in this habitat. However, on the matter of the temporal resolution, our model needs to be  
738 expanded and further consolidated, and we consider this element as a limitation to our work in its current state  
739 (Appendix C).

740

#### 741 4.3.1. Modelled food resources

742 The organic content of sediments is one of the main food resources for detritus feeders and sediment swallowers  
743 like *A. cordatus* (Snelgrove & Butman 1994) and Antarctic echinoids (Michel et al. 2016). In the present model, the  
744 organic carbon content of sediments was used as a proxy for food availability for *A. cordatus*. Intra-specific  
745 competition for food has a stronger effect on resources availability than seasonal variations in resource availability.  
746 This is in line with ecological evidences that populations of *A. cordatus* survive periods of low food resources that  
747 prevail during the austral winter. High seasonality in food resources is a common feature of polar ecosystems and  
748 species have long adapted their diet accordingly (De Ridder & Lawrence 1982, Michel et al. 2016). This has been  
749 shown in Antarctic benthic invertebrates such as shallow-water brachiopods (Peck et al 2005), cnidarians (Orejas et  
750 al. 2001), and echinoids (Brockington et al. 2001, Ingels et al. 2012). For instance, the Antarctic sea urchin  
751 *Sterechinus neumayeri* is believed to be capable of mobilizing energy from gut tissues, gonads and the body wall  
752 during the austral winter (Brockington et al. 2001), a strategy that may have been evolved in *A. cordatus* as well  
753 (Magniez 1983). Shrinking and resorption, which are sometimes hypothesized as a survival mechanism in other  
754 echinoids facing long periods of starvation, are phenomena which are still understudied (David & Néraudeau 1989,  
755 Ebert 2013) and have not been verified in *A. cordatus*. In the present model, starvation results in the redirection of  
756 the energy flow exclusively toward maintenance of structure, at the expense of other compartments. Although  
757 Magniez (1983) observed a decrease in gonadal material after the reproduction period, it is very small in females (-  
758 0.3%) and slightly bigger in males (-1.6%), and the exact cause has not been studied. It is not known whether this  
759 decrease in gonadal material can be directly attributed to a reabsorption for survival purposes or some other  
760 mechanism. The use of previously stored energy in the different compartments to sustain the maintenance of  
761 structure is assumed to be non-existent in our model. Such starvation processes could be tested in future  
762 implementation, provided sufficient data is obtained through experimental setups observing the phenomenon.

763 The two scenarios of future food availability were based on coarse IPCC and NOAA projection models for the  
764 region. These simulations and associated outputs are here considered as conceivable scenarios of the influence of  
765 food and temperature changes on population dynamics. They are used as a proof of concept and are by no means  
766 considered as definite and reliable scenarios of population dynamics in the future. Future accurate predictions should  
767 imply the integration of complex mechanisms influencing the production, transport and deposition of organic matter  
768 in the ocean, the possibility of species to adapt to changing environmental conditions, and more experimental data  
769 are needed to integrate the detailed influence of temperature on physiological processes. First observations suggest a  
770 low response toward the applied changes in food availability, in comparison with the influence of temperature.  
771 However, it cannot be concluded that the species would not be affected by future conditions in food resources in the  
772 area.

773

#### 774 4.3.2. *Temperature resilience*

775 Important differences were obtained between population structures and densities depending on future scenarios  
776 and model projections made for contrasting food resources and temperature. Most importantly, the 'resistant'  
777 population model of *A. cordatus* at Anse du Halage is predicted to sustain the expected changes in temperature and  
778 food resources under both future scenarios although population density is also predicted to be strongly reduced. In  
779 contrast, the 'vulnerable' population model predicts population extinction after a few decades of simulation. This  
780 implies that a precise evaluation of the species resilience to temperatures is needed for more robust and decisive  
781 models. Moreover, Antarctic echinoids were shown to present varied responses to ocean warming depending on  
782 species and life stages, with higher vulnerability to warm temperatures in juveniles than in adults (Ingels et al. 2012).  
783 Such a contrast suggests that more data could help fine-tune the present model.

784

#### 785 4.4. *Relevance of the DEB-IBM approach for Southern Ocean studies*

786

787 DEB-IBM models are being developed for various applications and research fields. They are considered a  
788 powerful tool for environmental risk assessment, such as the effect of toxicity (e.g. Beaudouin et al. 2015, David et  
789 al 2019, Vlaeminck et al. 2019) and the impact of environmental changes on population dynamics (e.g. Saraiva et al.  
790 2014, Malishev et al. 2018, Thomas & Bacher 2018, Goedegebuure et al. 2018). They can also be used to predict the

791 behaviour of microbial systems (Jayathilake et al. 2017) or bring to light underlying mechanisms of life history  
792 strategies (e.g. Gatti et al. 2017). The DEB model brings ontogenetic and phenotypic variations to the population  
793 model while the IBM brings stochasticity, population dynamics (e.g. competition for food), as well as learning and  
794 interaction mechanisms (DeAngelis et al. 1991, Martin et al. 2012) to complement the model. The potential of the  
795 DEB-IBM approach resides in the combination of both models to predict population dynamics as a response to  
796 changing environmental conditions (i.e. at the individual level in the DEB model and at population level in the IBM)

797 In the present work, the DEB-IBM was used to improve our understanding of the dynamics of *A. cordatus*'  
798 populations. Applications could be further developed to address conservation issues such as the designation of  
799 priority areas and the definition of management plan strategies. Vast areas of the French Southern Territories have  
800 recently been placed under enhanced protection of a national nature reserve based on experts' knowledge and  
801 ecoregionalisation approaches (Koubbi et al. 2010, Fabri-Ruiz et al. 2020). Most areas however could not have  
802 benefited from thorough benthic field studies, and ecological models can represent interesting tools to assess the  
803 relevance of defined protection areas for target species and ecosystems. Such models can be useful when drafting  
804 management plan strategies for determining favored ship traffic routes or areas where human activities can be  
805 implemented in coastal areas of the national nature reserve of the French Southern Territories. Dynamic population  
806 models allow testing different ecological scenarios in a quite straightforward way to illustrate research designs and  
807 proposals. They can provide some clues to investigate the potential effect of environmental changes on key species  
808 for which conservation efforts should be directed in a short to long-term strategy (Fulton et al. 2015). Dynamic  
809 models can also prove useful for adaptable conservation strategies like the designation of dynamic protected areas as  
810 a consequence of changing environments and ecosystems. Finally, dynamic models could be further implemented  
811 into studies of ecosystem functioning and the impact of environmental changes on the alteration of sub-Antarctic  
812 ecosystems.

813

814

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825

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