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## The potential effects of climate change on amphibian distribution , range fragmentation and turnover in China

Ren-Yan Duan, Xiao-Quan Kong, Min-Yi Huang, Sara Varela, Xiang Ji

Many studies predict that climate change will cause species movement and turnover, but few studies have considered the effect of climate change on range fragmentation for current species and/or populations. We used MaxEnt to predict suitable habitat, fragmentation and turnover for 134 amphibian species in China under 40 future climate change scenarios spanning four pathways (RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6 and RCP8.5) and two time periods (the 2050s and 2070s). Our results show that climate change will cause a major shift in the spatial patterns of amphibian diversity. Suitable habitats for over 90% of species will be located in the north of the current range, for over 95% of species in higher altitudes, and for over 75% of species in the west of the current range . The distributions of species predicted to move westwards, southwards and to higher altitudes will contract, while the ranges of the species not showing these trends will expand . Amphibians will lose 20% of their original ranges on average; the distribution outside current ranges will increase by 15% . Climate change will likely modify the spatial configuration of climatically suitable areas. Changes in area and fragmentation of climatically suitable patches are related, which means that species may be simultaneously affected by different stressors as a consequence of climate change.

1 **The potential effects of climate change on amphibian distribution, range**  
2 **fragmentation and turnover in China**

3

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17

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20 **ABSTRACT**

21 Many studies predict that climate change will cause species movement and turnover, but few  
22 studies have considered the effect of climate change on range fragmentation for current species  
23 and/or populations. We used MaxEnt to predict suitable habitat, fragmentation and turnover for  
24 134 amphibian species in China under 40 future climate change scenarios spanning four  
25 pathways (RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6 and RCP8.5) and two time periods (the 2050s and 2070s).  
26 Our results show that climate change will cause a major shift in the spatial patterns of amphibian  
27 diversity. Suitable habitats for over 90% of species will be located in the north of the current  
28 range, for over 95% of species in higher altitudes, and for over 75% of species in the west of the  
29 current range. The distributions of species predicted to move westwards, southwards and to  
30 higher altitudes will contract, while the ranges of the species not showing these trends will  
31 expand. Amphibians will lose 20% of their original ranges on average; the distribution outside  
32 current ranges will increase by 15%. Climate change will likely modify the spatial configuration  
33 of climatically suitable areas. Changes in area and fragmentation of climatically suitable patches  
34 are related, which means that species may be simultaneously affected by different stressors as a  
35 consequence of climate change.

36 Keywords Amphibians, MaxEnt, Climate impacts, Distribution, Fragmentation, Turnover,  
37 Dispersal, Range shifts

## 39 INTRODUCTION

40 The global climate is changing rapidly because of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, with  
41 unexpected consequences (Solomon, 2007). The average temperature on the earth's surface is  
42 projected to rise by 1.1–6.4 °C between 1990 and 2100 (Solomon, 2007). Climate change can  
43 alter the distribution of organisms by causing shifts in area, latitude, longitude and/or altitude and  
44 thus impact their geographic ranges ( Pearson & Dawson, 2003; Raxworthy et al., 2008). Range  
45 changes can impact ecosystem function and biodiversity (Raxworthy et al., 2008).

46 The prediction of climate-driven shifts in species' potential ranges under future climate  
47 scenarios relies on the application of species distribution model (SDM) (Collevatti et al., 2013;  
48 Eskildsen et al., 2013). SDM uses current climate data to model species' existing distributions,  
49 and forecast potential future distributions under various climate scenarios (Elith & Leathwick,  
50 2009). These models are needed to understand the possible responses of species to future climate  
51 change and how current species' ranges are determined by potential causal factors (Zhang et al.,  
52 2012). For example, Pounds et al. (2006) observed a decline in amphibian populations under  
53 climate warming using SDMs and Lawler et al. (2006) used SDMs to assess the relative  
54 vulnerability of amphibians to future climate change, observing that several regions in Central  
55 America will experience high species turnover. More recently, Ochoa-Ochoa et al. (2012)  
56 showed that species with a low dispersal capability have high extinction rates, and that climate-  
57 driven population declines may be species- and region-specific.

58 Amphibians are sensitive to changes in thermal and hydric environments due to unshelled  
59 eggs, highly permeable skin and unique biphasic life-cycles (Ochoa-Ochoa et al., 2012; Stuart et

60 al., 2004). With at least one third of some 6000 known species threatened with extinction,  
61 amphibians are one of the most threatened groups of animals (Hof et al., 2011; Stuart et al.,  
62 2004). The reasons for the worldwide decline in amphibian numbers and populations and the  
63 increase in threatened species are numerous and complex, but for many species climate change  
64 cannot be precluded as one of the main causes (Stuart et al., 2004).

65       Locations and regions with many endemic or endangered species, known as hotspots, are  
66 more sensitive to future climate change (Malcolm et al., 2006). China is a confluence of two  
67 main biogeographical divisions, the Oriental and Palaearctic Realms, and contains many priority-  
68 eco-regions for global conservation (Fei et al., 2009). Of some 410 amphibian species found in  
69 China, 263 are endemic (Fei et al., 2009). The IUCN (2015) reported that 27.6% of amphibians  
70 in mainland China are at risk of extinction or threatened and 65.2% of them are endemic. Most  
71 of those species are distributed in forests, farmland and wetlands. Thus, climate change would  
72 have severe synergistic effects on Chinese amphibians, because it would increase the effects of  
73 habitat destruction and fragmentation associated with anthropogenic land-use change, that are  
74 one of the main drivers of amphibian's extinction risk (Hof et al., 2011). Quantifying the general  
75 trends of the climate-change driven shifts in species distribution and abundance is extremely  
76 important for applying adequate conservation policies. However, despite the high endemism and  
77 richness of amphibian species in China, this is the first attempt to predict climate change-driven  
78 shifts in their distribution and abundance.

79       Many studies showed that climate change causes species' movement (Pearson & Dawson,  
80 2003; Raxworthy et al., 2008) and significant species turnover (Peterson et al., 2002), but few

81 studies considered the effect of climate change on fragmentation of current species populations.  
82 Here we used MaxEnt (a common SDM) and 40 different future climate scenarios to study the  
83 effect of different greenhouse gas scenarios on the distribution of amphibians in China. We want  
84 to quantify the effect of the current global warming on the Chinese amphibians, namely,  
85 potential range shifts, the directions of those predicted range shifts and the fragmentation of the  
86 future predicted distributions. Further, we aim to calculate the temporal turnover of species  
87 composition in order to identify priority areas for amphibian conservation in China.

88

## 89 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### 90 **Species data**

91 Occurrence points for amphibians were collected from the Global Biodiversity Information  
92 Facility (GBIF; <http://www.gbif.org>) and published papers. In order to improve the accuracy of  
93 prediction, we did not include species with less than ten different geo-referenced occurrences.  
94 We obtained a total of 134 species [20 urodeles of the families Cryptobranchidae (1),  
95 Hynobiidae (7) and Salamandridae (12), and 114 anurans of the families Bombinatoridae (3),  
96 Bufonidae (6), Dicoglossidae (17), Hylidae (6), Megophryidae (27), Microhylidae (10), Ranidae  
97 (35) and Rhacophoridae (10) (Table S1).

98

### 99 **Climate variables**

100 To build SDMs we chose five climatic variables: (1) annual precipitation; (2) annual mean  
101 temperature; (3) temperature seasonality; (4) minimum temperature of the coldest month; and (5)

102 maximum temperature of the warmest month. Although more bioclimatic variables were  
103 available we used these five variables because (1) precipitation and temperature are critical  
104 climatic factors in all atmospheric ocean general circulation models (AOGCMs) and reflect the  
105 availability of water and energy and directly impact amphibian physiology (Collevatti et al.,  
106 2013); (2) these variables are very important in determining the distribution of amphibians  
107 (Collevatti et al., 2013; Munguía et al., 2012); (3) the addition of other climatic variables to  
108 SDMs generally increases the danger of over-fitting (Collevatti et al., 2013) and the uncertainty  
109 (Varela et al., 2015). All climate data were obtained at a 5 arc-min grid scale from WorldClim  
110 (<http://www.worldclim.org/>).

111

## 112 **Climate layers**

113 Our prediction is based on bioclimatic envelope modeling, which changes with coupled  
114 AOGCMs. Different AOGCMs and greenhouse gas scenarios will lead to various changes in  
115 species' distributions in the future. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in  
116 its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) proposes four Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs).  
117 RCPs may be better than the emission scenarios developed in the Special Report on Emissions  
118 Scenarios (SRES) and hence RCPs have replaced SRES standards (Wayne, 2013). The four  
119 pathways (RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6 and RCP8.5) represent the four possible radiative forcing  
120 values (+2.6, +4.5, +6.0 and +8.5 W/m<sup>2</sup>, respectively) (Wayne, 2013). We used data from  
121 1950–2000 as baseline climate data. Five AOGCMs [Integrated Earth System Model (MIROC-  
122 ESM), Beijing Climate Center Climate System Model (BCC-CSM1-1), Goddard Institute for



123 Space Studies (GISS-E2-R), Community Climate System Model (CCSM4) and Institut Pierre  
124 Simon Laplace (IPSL-CM5A-LR)] were used for the years 2050s and 2070s. For each AOGCM,  
125 we used all four RCPs to evaluate different greenhouse gas scenarios. Hence, the total number of  
126 climate scenarios considered was 40 (20 scenarios and two time steps).

127

### 128 **Species distribution modelling**

129 MaxEnt is a commonly used algorithm in species distribution modelling because of its good  
130 predictive performance (Elith et al., 2011; Varela et al., 2014). MaxEnt predicts species'  
131 probability distributions of habitat suitability by calculating the maximum entropy distribution  
132 and constraining the expected value of each of a set of environmental variables to match the  
133 empirical average (Phillips et al., 2006). Using presence-only data, MaxEnt fits an unknown  
134 probability distribution within the environmental space defined by the input variables of the cells  
135 with known species occurrence records. This unknown probability distribution is proportional to  
136 the probability of occurrence (Elith et al., 2011).

137 Analyses were performed in R using the dismo package to simulate species distributions (R  
138 Core Team, 2013; Hijmans et al., 2015). We carried out SDMs following Elith et al. (2011). For  
139 each species, occurrence points were randomly partitioned into two subsets (calibration and  
140 validation, at a ratio of 4:1); this was repeated 100 times, each time choosing different random  
141 combinations of occurrence points for the calibration/validation datasets. Next, we calculated  
142 model parameters and used them to predict future distributions.

143 The prediction results of the SDMs were evaluated using the area under the receiver

144 operating characteristic curve (AUC) ( Elith et al., 2011; Eskildsen et al., 2013; Freeman &  
145 Moisen, 2008; Guisan et al., 2013). We used the maximum value of (sensitivity + specificity) as  
146 a threshold, in order to minimize the mean of the error rate for both positive and negative  
147 observations (Freeman & Moisen, 2008). This is equivalent to maximizing (sensitivity +  
148 specificity - 1), otherwise known as the true skill statistic (TSS) (Freeman & Moisen, 2008).

149

### 150 **Species' range shift and turnover**

151 We used four indicators to illustrate changes in amphibian distribution under climate change  
152 scenarios: (1) area change ( $AC$ ); (2) altitude change; (3) latitude change; and (4) longitude  
153 change. Area is the number of grid cells occupied by the species and  $AC$  is the area of a species'  
154 distribution in the future ( $A_f$ ) minus its current area ( $A_c$ ), divided by its current area:  $AC =$   
155  $(A_f - A_c) / A_c \times 100\%$ . We then calculated the distribution space loss ( $DSL$ ):  $DSL = (DS_c - DS_{fc}) / DS_c$   
156  $\times 100\%$ , new distribution space ( $NDS$ ):  $NDS = (DS_f - DS_{fc}) / DS_f \times 100\%$ , here  $DSL$  represents  
157 the proportional decrease in original distribution area under climate change;  $DS_c$  is the  
158 distribution space under current climatic scenarios;  $DS_f$  is the distribution space under future  
159 climatic scenarios;  $DS_{fc}$  is the overlapped distribution space between future and current climatic  
160 scenarios; and  $NDS$  represents the proportion of new distribution area in future distribution under  
161 climate change.

162 To evaluate overall changes in amphibian diversity and distribution in China we calculated  
163 species turnover sum ( $TS$ ) and turnover ratio ( $TR$ ) in each grid cell within the potential  
164 geographical range shifts for all species.  $TS$  was calculated as the total number of newly

165 occurring species ( $NC$ ) and extinct species ( $NE$ ) in a given grid cell:  $TS = NC + NE$ .  $TR$  was  
166 calculated as  $TS$  divided by the sum of current species in each grid cell ( $NT$ ) and  $NC$ :  $TR = TS /$   
167  $(NT + NC) \times 100\%$  (Peterson et al., 2002). We considered grid cells with a  $TR$  greater than 50%  
168 and a  $TS$  greater than 20 as areas of significant future change.

169

## 170 **Fragmentation**

171 We studied the fragmentation of species distributions according to methods for calculating  
172 habitat fragmentation. We used SDMTTools (VanDerWal et al., 2014) to generate patch  
173 information from a raster map. To measure species fragmentation we used the coherence index  
174 (Jaeger, 2000). The coherence index ( $CI$ ) is a measure of the probability that two animals placed  
175 in different patch areas find each other (Jaeger, 2000). The coherence index is calculated as:

176 
$$CI = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{A_i}{A_t} \right)^2$$
, where  $n$  is the number of patches;  $A_i$  is the size of  $i$ -th patch; and  $A_t$  is the total

177 area of the species distribution. An increase in the coherence index means distribution  
178 fragmentation decreases (Jaeger, 2000). We chose the coherence index as our measure and not  
179 conventional fragmentation (Cerezo et al., 2010) because of (1) its low sensitivity to very small  
180 patches as opposed to mean patch size; (2) the monotony of its reaction to different  
181 fragmentation phases; and (3) its ability to distinguish spatial patterns.

182

## 183 **RESULTS**

184 MaxEnt shows great predictive performance for all distributions under the baseline scenario,

185 with high values for AUC ( $> 0.8$ ). The 134 amphibians show varying sensitivities to future  
186 climate change and most species have large changes in RCP8.5 in the 2070s (Figs 1, S1–S2).

187 The suitable habitat of the majority of species (92.5% in the 2050s, and 91.8% in the 2070s)  
188 will move northwards (mean latitude increased), with a mean latitude shift of  $0.60^\circ$  by the 2050s  
189 and  $0.83^\circ$  by the 2070s (Fig. 2A). The suitable habitat of the majority of species (76.9% in the  
190 2050s, and 84.3% in the 2070s) will move westwards (mean longitude will decrease) across all  
191 future scenarios ranging from  $0.03$ – $4.51^\circ$  (mean  $1.35^\circ$ ) in the 2050s, and from  $0.03$ – $6.87^\circ$  (mean  
192  $1.72^\circ$ ) in the 2070s. The number of species with the furthest longitudinal movement (more than  
193  $0.5^\circ$  and more than  $1^\circ$ ) are 75 and 56 in the 2050s, respectively, and 84 and 68 in the 2070s (Fig.  
194 2B). The suitable habitat of virtually all species (95.5% in the 2050s, and 97.0% in the 2070s)  
195 will move to higher altitudes under climate change, with a mean range shift of 287.2 m by the  
196 2050s and 387.8 m by the 2070s (Fig. 2C).

197 Area change will vary from  $-52.8$ – $324.5\%$  by the 2050s and from  $-57.6$ – $418.1\%$  by the  
198 2070s. 70.9% of species in the 2050s (38.1% for area contraction and 32.8% for area expansion)  
199 and 75.4% of species in the 2070s (37.3% for area contraction and 38.1% for area expansion)  
200 will undergo a significant change in distribution of greater than 10% (Fig. 2D). Among these  
201 species, three and six species in the 2050s, and 13 and 11 species in the 2070s will respectively  
202 show substantial area contraction (greater than 50%) and expansion (greater than 50%) (Fig. 2D).

203 By the 2050s, the mean value of distribution space loss will be 20.7%, and nine species will  
204 lose more than 50% of their original distribution space; by the 2070s, the mean value of  
205 distribution space loss will be 23.9%, and 22 species will lose more than 50% of their original

206 distribution space (Fig. 2E). By the 2050s, the mean value of the new distribution space ratio for  
207 amphibians will be 15.9%, and three species will have a new distribution space greater than 50%;  
208 by the 2070s the mean value of the new distribution space ratio will be 21.1%, and five species  
209 will have a new distribution space greater than 50% (Fig. 2F).

210 Area change and area change ratio were correlated with changes in latitude, longitude and  
211 altitude (Table 1). In other words, under climate change, suitable habitat of amphibians that  
212 move westwards, southwards and to higher altitudes will undergo overall range contraction.

213 For species undergoing declines in distribution, the mean value of coherent index (*CI*)  
214 change will be -16.2% for the 2050s and -19.6% for the 2070s; for species undergoing increases  
215 in distribution, the mean value of *CI* change will be 5.9% for the 2050s and 6.6% for the 2070s.  
216 Under climate change, species with higher area change (decrease or increase) will have higher *CI*  
217 changes (Fig. 3).

218 Different regions have different TR and TS (Fig. 4). Areas with the highest TR are located  
219 in Northwest China where amphibian species richness is lower. Areas with high TS are located  
220 in Central and Southern China and these areas were inconsistent with areas of high TR.

221 According to our composite indicator (with TR > 50% and TS > 20), climate strongly influenced  
222 amphibian distributions in five regions: the Qinling Mountains, Wuyi Mountains, Dabie  
223 Mountains, Sichuan Basin and surrounding areas, and western Guizhou province (Fig. 4).

224

## 225 **DISCUSSION**

226 Climatic shifts to warmer, drier regimes can have profound effects on the distribution of

227 amphibians (Araújo et al., 2006). The 134 amphibians studied here exhibited a variety of  
228 climate-driven range shifts. Climatic shifts to warmer temperatures were more substantial by the  
229 2070s than by the 2050s. RCP8.5 represents the highest greenhouse gas emission trajectory  
230 (Wayne, 2013) and as expected we detected the greatest change in amphibian distribution under  
231 RCP8.5 and by the 2070s.

232

### 233 **Effects of climate change on the direction of movement**

234 The average temperature of Earth's surface will rise by up to 6.4 °C by 2100, and species will  
235 need to migrate to higher latitudes and/or elevations (Pearson & Dawson, 2003; Raxworthy et al.,  
236 2008). When temperature undergoes one degree change, elevation needs to change 100–200 m  
237 and latitude about 0.5° (about 55 km of polar movement, though latitude has a complex and  
238 variable relationship with temperature) (Peterson & Vose, 1997). Our study confirmed these  
239 general trends and that under climate warming the suitable habitat of amphibians will  
240 predominantly migrate to higher altitudes and latitudes. The direction and speed of migration  
241 depend on the climate scenario and species being modelled.

242       The annual average temperature is expected to rise to 3.2 °C and 4.5 °C by the 2050s and  
243 2070s respectively, and if temperature has a consistent rate of increase we should see 320–900 m  
244 elevation shifts and/or 1.6–2.3° (176–253 km) of northern movement. However, our results  
245 indicate that species move only 0.60–0.83° and upward 287–387 m. Thus, future climate change  
246 may push many amphibians into unsuitable climatic zones and increase their risk of extinction.

247       Our analysis showed that the majority of amphibians will move westwards. This result

248 contradicts other studies where no trend in longitudinal displacement was found (Peterson et al.,  
249 2002). However, the longitudinal trend observed in China is plausible given that the terrain of  
250 the country is high in the west and low in the east (amphibians will move to higher altitudes  
251 under climate warming), and that East China is adjacent to the sea without space for amphibians  
252 to migrate.

253       Organisms often show species-specific environmental requirements and global climate  
254 change has different effects on the ranges of different species (Erasmus et al., 2002; Peterson et  
255 al., 2002; Varela et al., 2015). For example, Midgley et al. (2003) found that under climate  
256 warming, 11 plant species in the Cape Floristic Region expanded their distributions and five  
257 species faced elimination of all suitable habitat. Erasmus et al. (2002) found climate-induced  
258 shifts in ranges: 78% of animal species in South Africa underwent range reduction, 17%  
259 expanded, 3% showed no change and 2% became locally extinct. Foden et al. (2013) found that  
260 11–15% of amphibians, 6–9% of birds and 6–9% of coral species were highly vulnerable to  
261 climate change. Our study confirmed that future climate change is a double-edged sword for the  
262 distribution of amphibians: some amphibian species will undergo distribution reduction, and  
263 others will expand. Following our results, if amphibians move west (drier habitats), south  
264 (warmer habitats), and to higher altitudes, their distribution will decrease. In other words, the  
265 direction of movement of amphibians may control the eventual change in distribution area.

266

### 267 **Effects of climate change on fragmentation**

268 Under climate warming, the increase in fragmentation (lower *CI*) caused a decrease in

269 distribution areas. Distribution fragmentation can reduce populations and habitat connectivity,  
270 interfere with gene communication, and reduce migration rates and resilience (Chen & Bi, 2007;  
271 Sarmento Cabral et al., 2013), negatively affecting the long-term viability of threatened and  
272 endangered amphibians. To our knowledge, this is the first evidence that climate warming will  
273 cause a fragmentation in the distribution of amphibians, though some studies have documented  
274 that climate change can cause habit fragmentation (Opdam & Wascher, 2004). Distribution  
275 fragmentation causes population disjunction and most populations in small fragments can easily  
276 disappear because small populations are sensitivity to genetic, demographic and environmental  
277 fluctuation. The negative effect of distribution fragmentation can be explained by island  
278 biogeography theory and meta-population models. Many species are rare with specialized habitat  
279 requirements making them particularly vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and modification  
280 (Andreone et al., 2005).

281 Our study shows that the lost habitat for some species is not at the edge of distributions but  
282 mainly in the core region (Fig. S3). The core distribution region is very important for a species  
283 because it acts as a hub that connects patches, allowing the genetic exchange between different  
284 populations. Habitat loss and fragmentation have been identified as one of the major causes of  
285 amphibian decline globally (Stuart et al., 2004). Our study shows that future climate change  
286 might not only shrink the distribution area of some amphibians, but also make their distribution  
287 area more fragmented. This is a synergic effect which would accelerate the decline and/or local  
288 extinction of certain amphibians. On the other hand, species predicted to undergo area expansion  
289 such as *Hynobius leechii*, *Hylarana macrodactyla* and *Fejervarya multistriata* were not affected



290 by fragmentation, which would benefit them and allow them to expand more easily.

291

## 292 **Species turnover and high impact areas**

293 The identification of critical habitats for amphibian protection under climate change is important  
294 for making robust conservation management decisions (Guisan et al., 2013). Areas of high  
295 species turnover may be sites with largest shifts in population. Many studies conduct turnover  
296 assessments using turnover ratios (Erasmus et al., 2002; Peterson et al., 2002), however our  
297 results revealed that areas with high turnover ratios were not the same as areas with high  
298 turnover sums. This is because an area with a low turnover sum can have a high turnover ratio if  
299 the area has a very low species richness under the current climate (e.g. northwestern China). We  
300 considered grid cells with turnover ratios greater than 50% and turnover sums greater than 20 as  
301 areas of potentially large future shifts in amphibians. We found several such areas including the  
302 Sichuan Basin and surrounding areas, the Qinling Mountains, the Dabie Mountains, the Wuyi  
303 Mountains and western Guizhou, and hypothesize that these regions may see major shifts in  
304 amphibians as a result of the combined action of several factors. First, the Sichuan Basin and  
305 surrounding areas, western Guizhou province and Dabie Mountains are located in an area of  
306 transition from the northern subtropics to warm temperate climate; there are relatively large  
307 climatic gradients in these areas (Xie et al., 2007). Second, these five areas contain the  
308 boundaries of many species' distributions (Fei et al., 2009); areas containing many range limits  
309 are expected to experience greater turnover than those containing few range limits. Third,  
310 mountainous regions, such as the Qinling Mountains form a natural (north or south) boundary for

311 many species and so may experience significant faunal change. Under climate change, habitat  
312 loss, especially that resulting from changes to freshwater ecosystems, is the greatest risk to  
313 amphibians (Solomon, 2007).

314

### 315 **Conservation implications**

316 We found overlapping key amphibian regions, such as important endemic amphibian  
317 regionalization (e.g. Sichuan and Guizhou provinces) and global biodiversity hotspots (e.g.  
318 Sichuan) (Chen & Bi, 2007). Nature reserves provide the most effective approach for  
319 biodiversity conservation, especially for the in situ conservation of wildlife and natural  
320 ecosystems (D'Amen et al., 2011). The current natural reserve network in China does not  
321 provide adequate coverage for amphibians. Only two national nature reserves have been  
322 established to protect amphibians, one in Zhangjiajie and the other in Zhongjianhe, both for the  
323 protection of the Chinese giant salamander (*Andrias davidianus*). The creation of new nature  
324 reserves, in important regions identified here with high predicted amphibian turnover, is a critical  
325 conservation requirement for China. For other species projected to suffer from large range  
326 contraction, we need to develop and implement management plans for the protection of their  
327 habitat and translocate individuals into these regions. Climate change will change the current  
328 distribution area of species and impact distribution fragmentation, and so we should pay  
329 additional attention to fragments and the connectivity of distribution spaces in the design of  
330 future conservation strategies.

331

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335

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352

353 **Competing Interests**

354 The authors declare there are no competing interests.

355

356 **Author Contributions**

357 ● Ren-Yan Duan, Xiao-Quan Kong and Min-Yi Huang conceived and designed the  
358 experiments, performed the experiments, collected and analyzed the data, contributed  
359 reagents/materials/analysis tools, prepared figures and/or tables, reviewed drafts of the paper.

360 ● Sara Varela analyzed the data, reviewed drafts of the paper.

361 ● Xiang Ji conceived and designed the experiments, wrote the paper, reviewed drafts of the  
362 paper.

363

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472 **Figure legends**

473 **Figure 1 Predicted species movement in a climate scenario, using the BC45 scenario as an**

474 **example.** The arrow represents the distance and direction of species geometric mean point at

475 different periods. The black arrow presents climatic scenario of the 2050s, blue arrow presents

476 climatic scenario of the 2050s-2070s. The wind roses summarize the distance and direction of

477 shift for each species. The radiuses of rings on each wind rose represent geographical distance

478 (inner circus: 2 degrees; outer circus: 5 degrees). The grey axis bars on wind roses represent a

479 length of 7 degrees. BC45 scenario represents BCC-CSM1-1 as AOGCM and using RCP4.5 as

480 greenhouse gas scenarios. The figure was generated using R (<http://www.R-project.org/>), ggplot2

481 (<http://had.co.nz/ggplot2/boo>) and raster (<http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=raster>) softwares,

482 and the map was created using data downloaded from the GADM database

483 (<http://www.gadm.org/>) for free use.

484 **Figure 2 Distribution patterns of 134 species of amphibians from different aspects.**

485 **Figure 3 Percent of coherence index (CI) change.** CI is the probability that two animals placed

486 in different areas (patches) will find each other. The order of 134 species in X axis from left to

487 right depends on the order of mean value of area change (from low to high, to make thing to be

488 comparable, the 2070s using the order of the 2050s).

489 **Figure 4 Turnover of species under climate change, using the BC45 scenario in the 2070s as**

490 **example.** A: species richness in current; B: turnover rate; C: turnover sum of 134 species. The

491 figure was generated using R (<http://www.R-project.org/>), ggplot2 (<http://had.co.nz/ggplot2/boo>)  
492 and raster (<http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=raster>) softwares, and the map was created using  
493 data downloaded from the GADM database (<http://www.gadm.org/>) for free use.

494 **Figure S1 Species movement under different AOGCM models and RCP in the 2050s.** Y axis  
495 presents different AOGCM models. X axis presents different RCP models. The arrow and wind  
496 rose are same with Figure 1.

497 **Figure S2 Species movement under different AOGCM models and RCP in the 2070s.** Y axis  
498 presents different AOGCM models. X axis presents different RCP models. The arrow and wind  
499 rose are same with Figure 1.

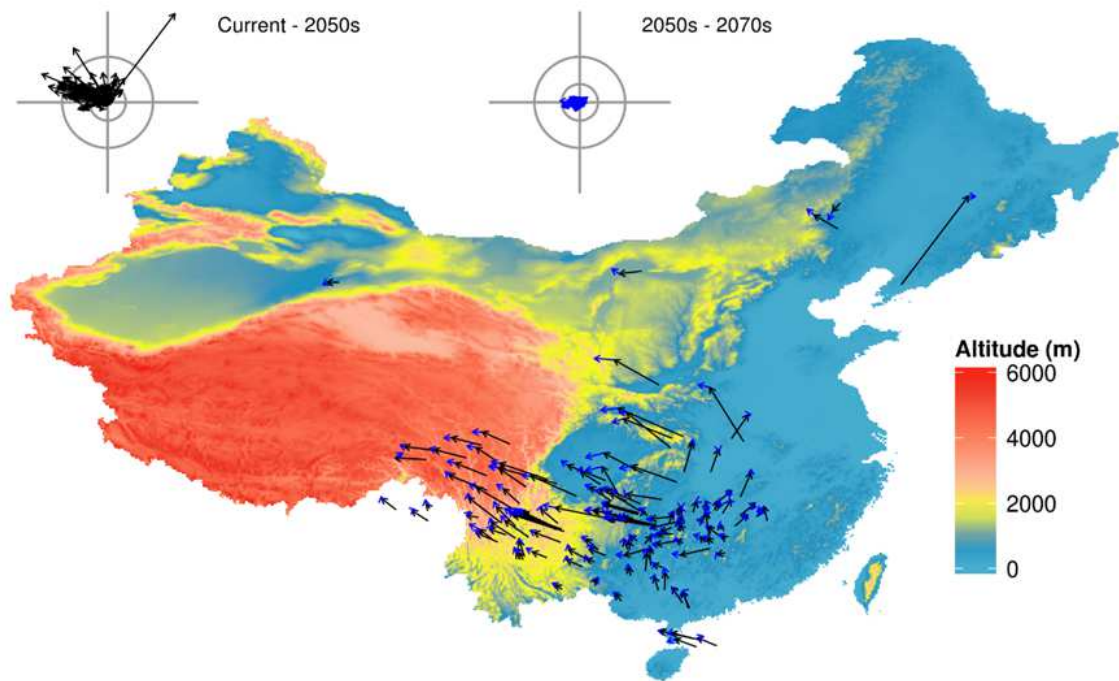
500 **Figure S3 Distribution change under climate change using *Megophrys major* as an example.**

501 The figure was generated using R (<http://www.R-project.org/>), ggplot2  
502 (<http://had.co.nz/ggplot2/boo>) and raster (<http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=raster>) softwares,  
503 and the maps were created using data downloaded from the GADM database  
504 (<http://www.gadm.org/>) for free use.

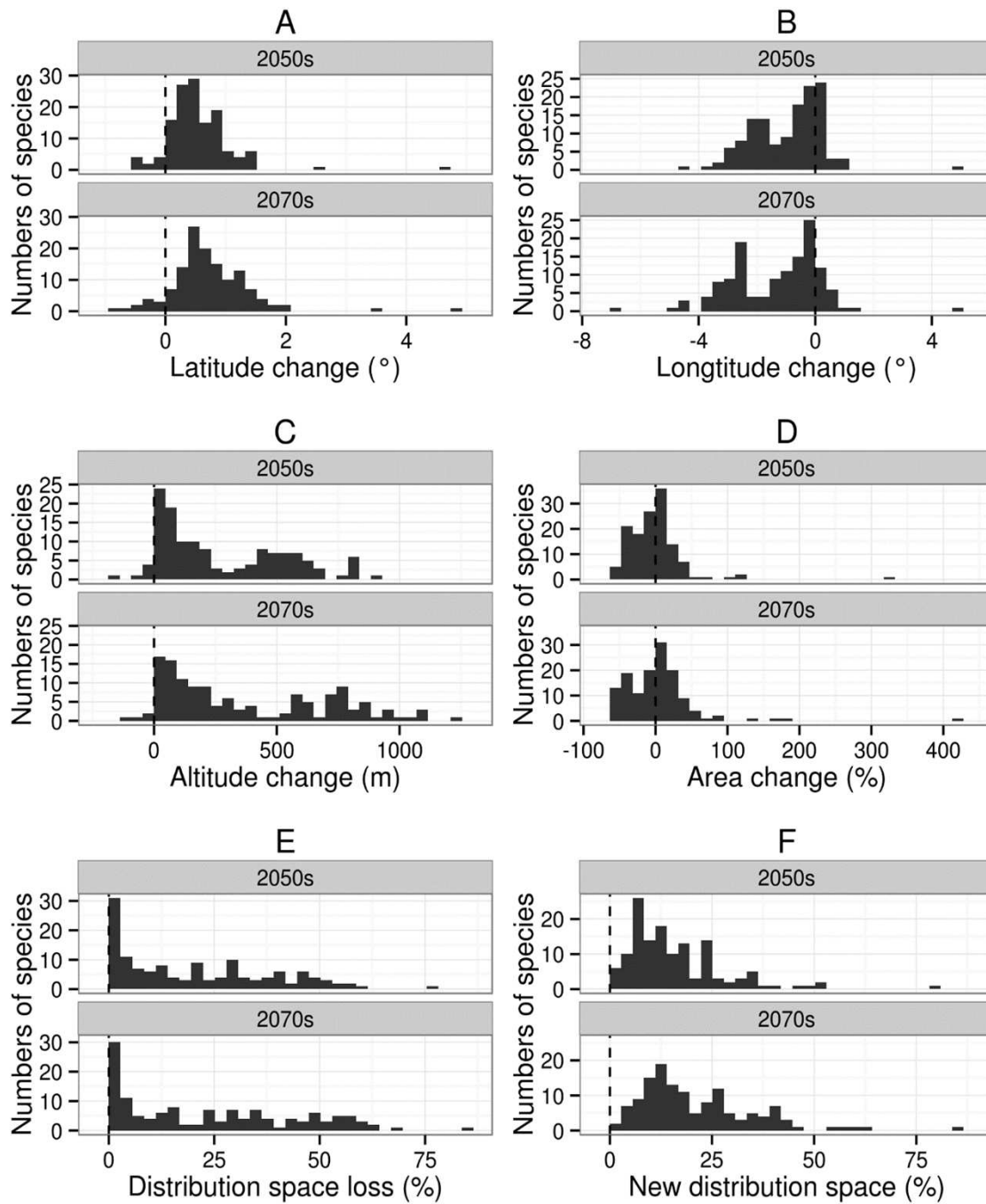
506 **Table 1 Correlation coefficients between parameters.** \*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$ .

	2050s		2070s	
	Area change	Area change ratio (%)	Area change	Area change ratio (%)
Current area	0.363***	0.108	0.358***	0.069
Current latitude	0.058	0.135	0.049	0.118
Current longitude	0.053	0.226**	0.060	0.220*
Current altitude	-0.074	-0.146	-0.084	-0.144
Latitude change	0.28**	0.516***	0.355***	0.524***
Longitude change	0.340***	0.477***	0.371***	0.464***
Altitude change	-0.405***	-0.374***	-0.432***	-0.373***
New distribution area	-0.027	-0.116	-0.016	-0.123
Distribution area loss	-0.011	-0.074	-0.012	-0.072
Change of coherence index	0.656***	0.517***	0.624***	0.534***

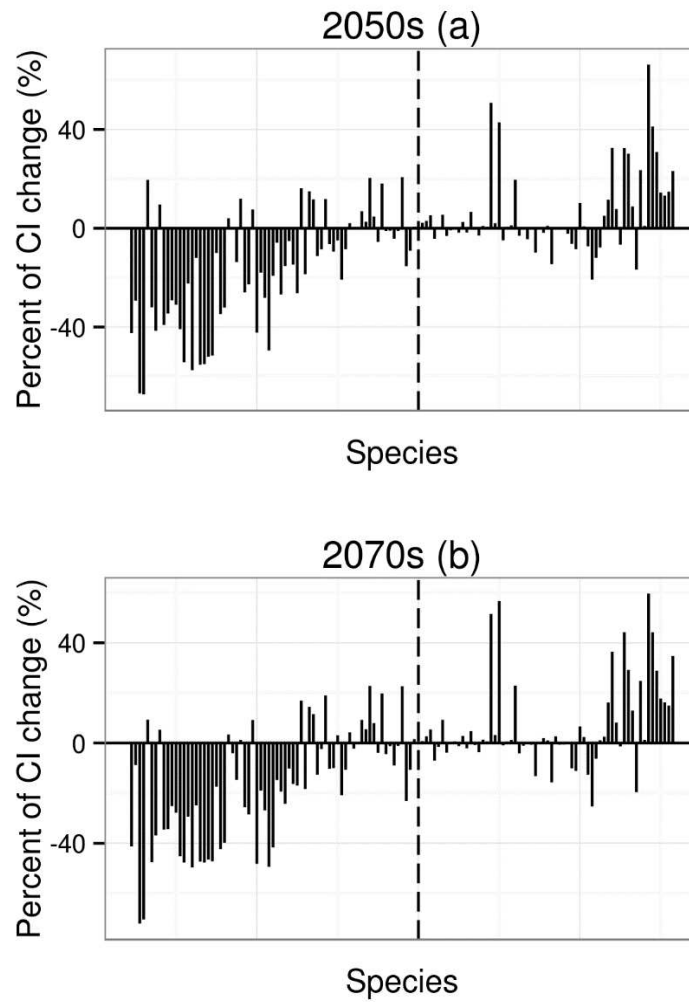
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509 **Figure 1**

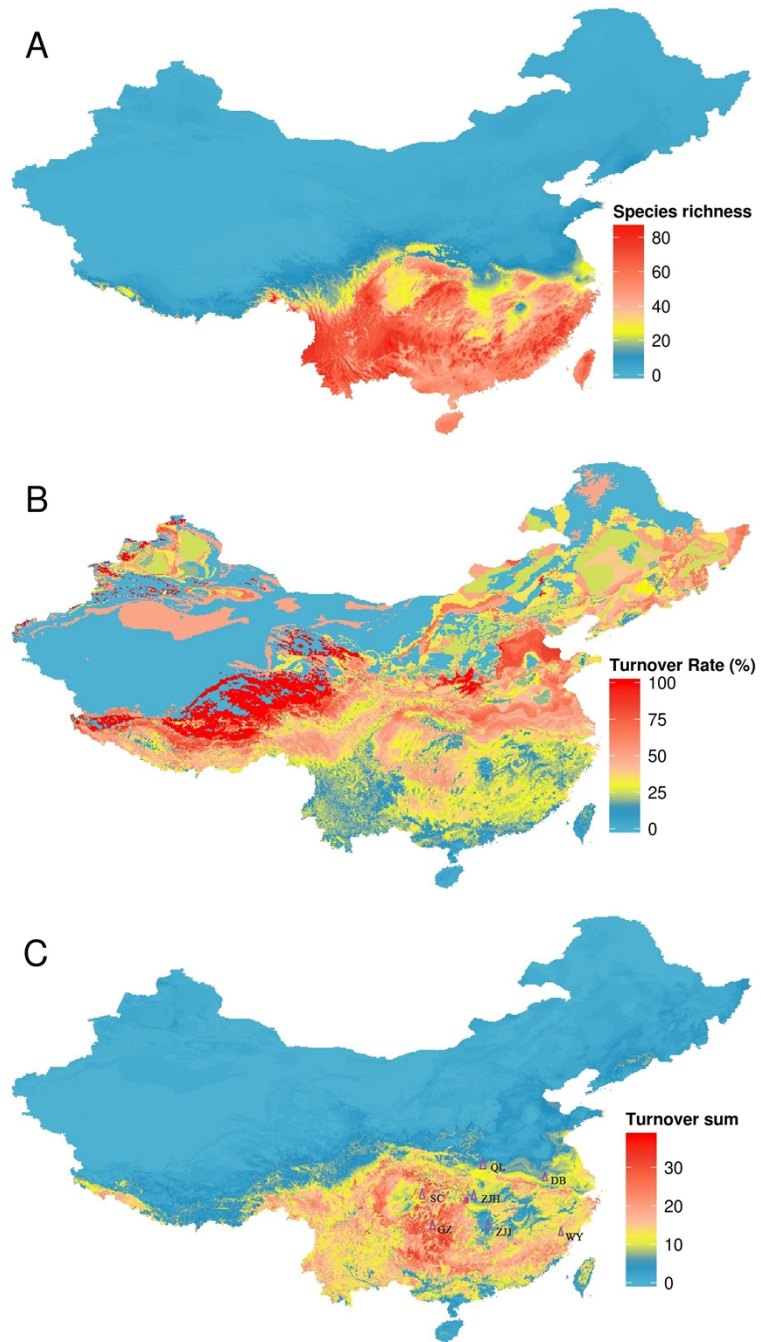
510

512 **Figure 2**

513

515 **Figure 3**

516

518 **Figure 4**

519