



The key role of timing of weather events in the survival of the Karner blue butterfly

Ralph Grundel
USGS/Great Lakes Science Center
Chesterton, IN 46304



Summary

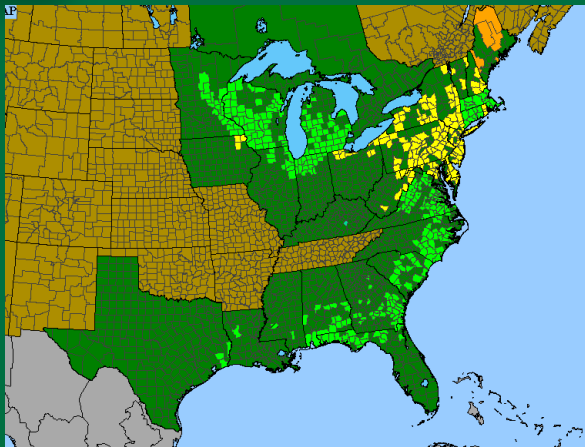
- Subtle ways in which climate change can endanger species
- Timing of weather events was a key component of local extinction of an endangered butterfly in a national park due to phenological mismatching
- Microclimate – variation in variables such as temperature and soil moisture over small spatial and topographic scales can greatly affect survival
- Caveat - Although we posit a role for topographic soil moisture gradients in this extinction event, we did not specifically measure soil moisture as part of this study.

Karner blue butterfly

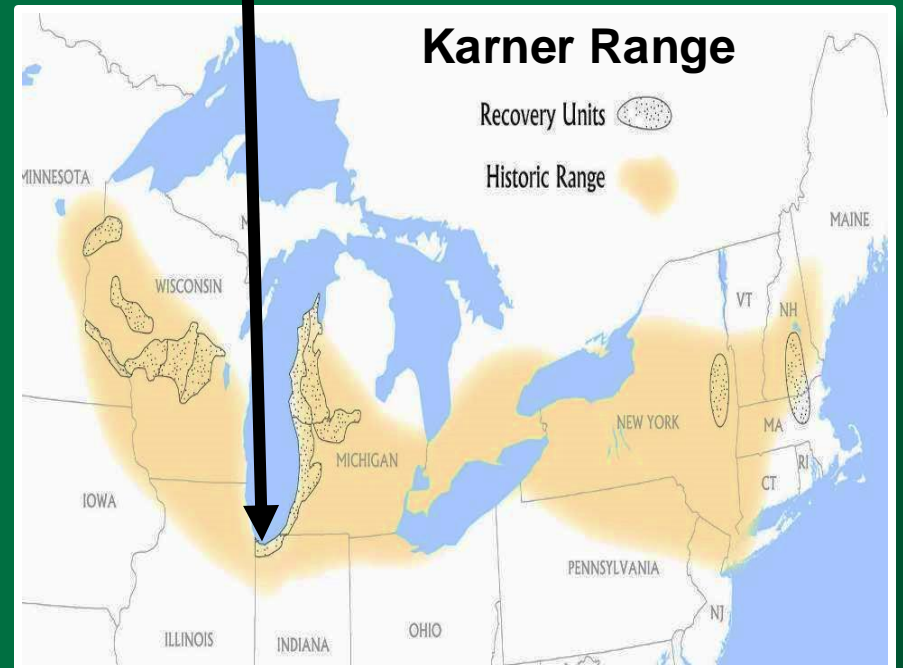
Lycaeides (Plebejus) melissa samuelis



- Federally Endangered 1992
- Lupine Specialist (*Lupinus perennis*)
- Indiana Dunes National Park



Lupine Range
(Green/Yellow)



Karner blue: 2+ yearly cycles; Lupine: 1/ year



April
Eggs hatch & larvae
feed on lupine



Mid-May
Larvae pupate, mature
into butterflies, emerge &
mate

**Late July- Early
August**
Females lay eggs near
lupine plants



Early June
Females lay eggs near
lupine plants

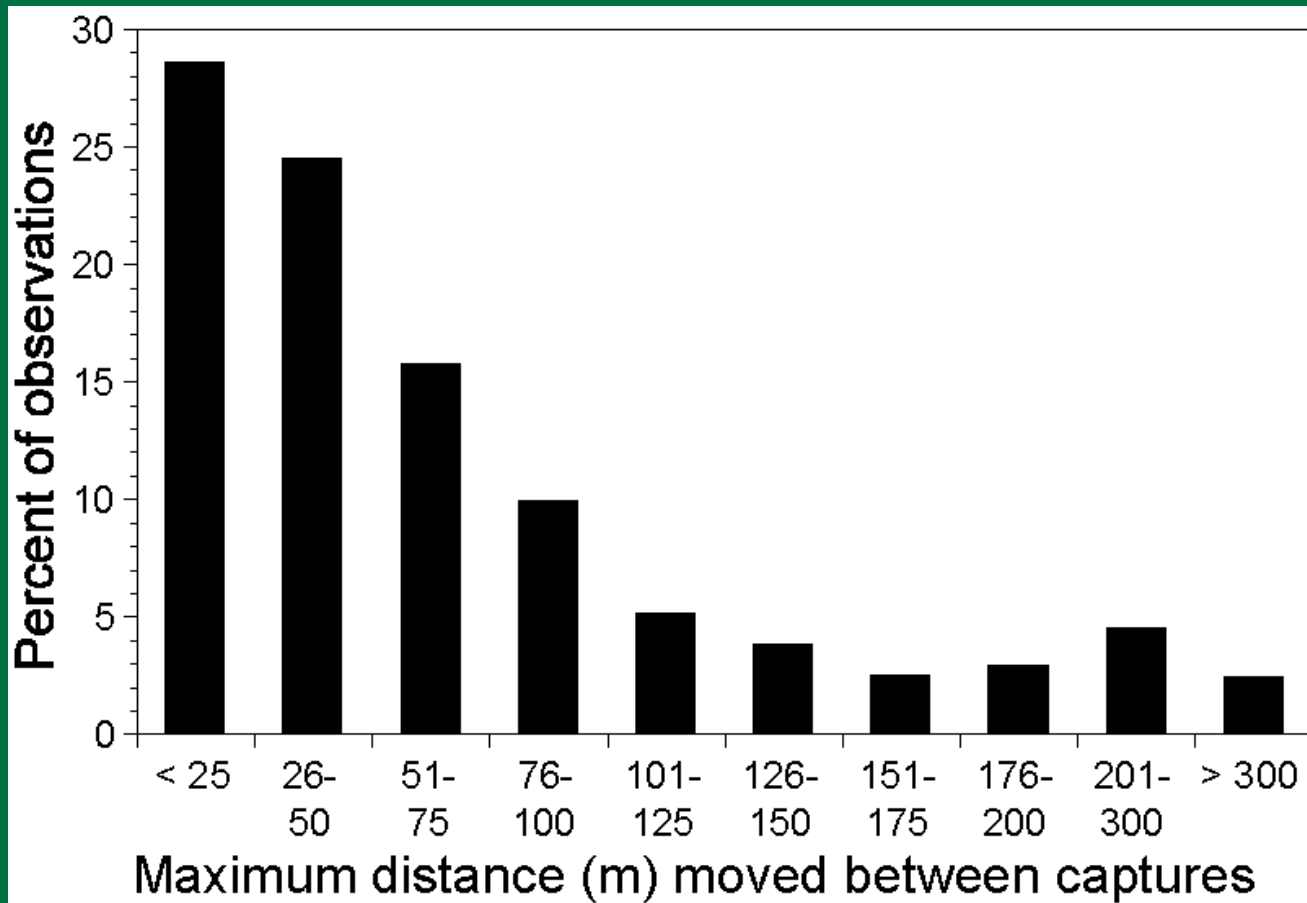
July
Larvae pupate, mature
into adults, emerge &
mate

June
Eggs hatch & larvae
feed on lupine

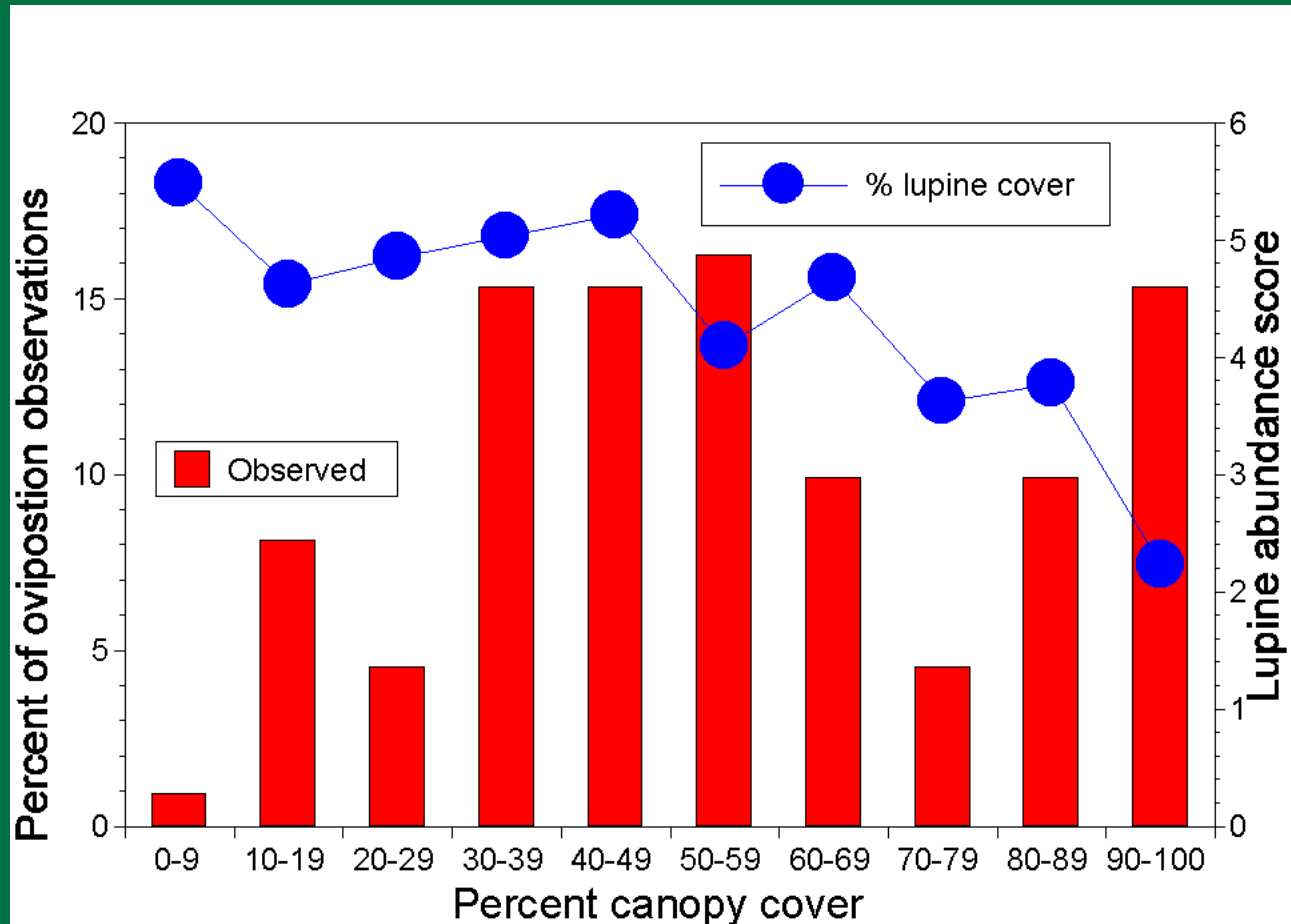


What we learned about Karner blue habitat use

Limited Dispersal; Importance of local topography and shade heterogeneity

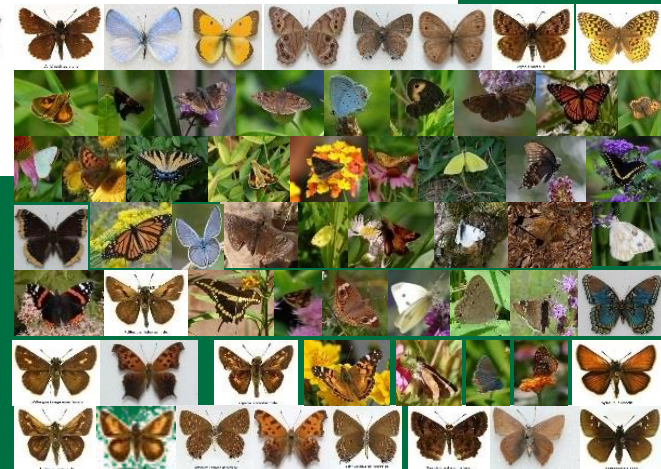
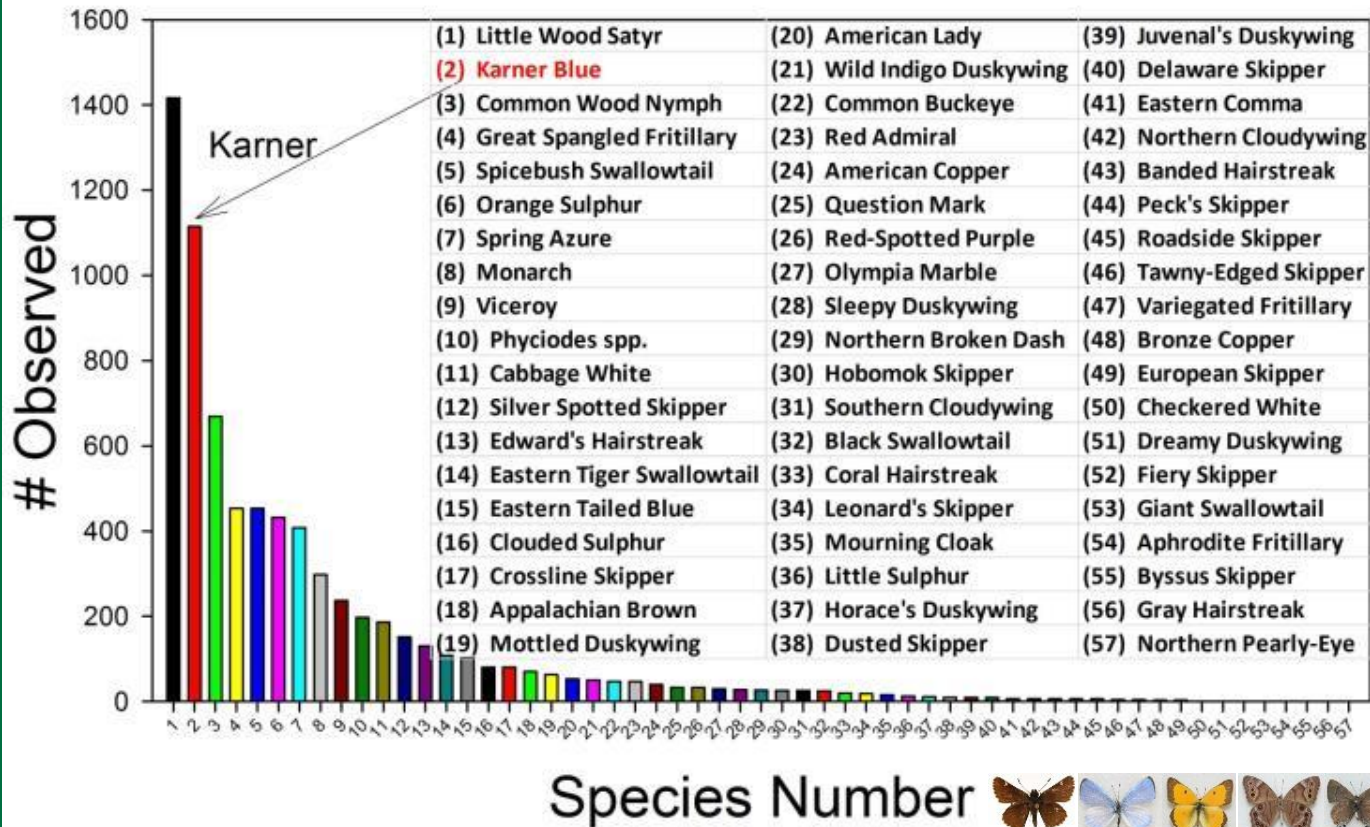


Canopy heterogeneity is an important component of habitat quality – “Bet hedging”



- **So, we had a prescription for Karner habitat – maintain canopy heterogeneity at a scale of ~100 m to account for Kbb dispersal ability.**
- **Greatly influenced recovery plan**
- **NPS implemented this prescription mainly using prescribed fire.**
- **How did it work at INDU?**

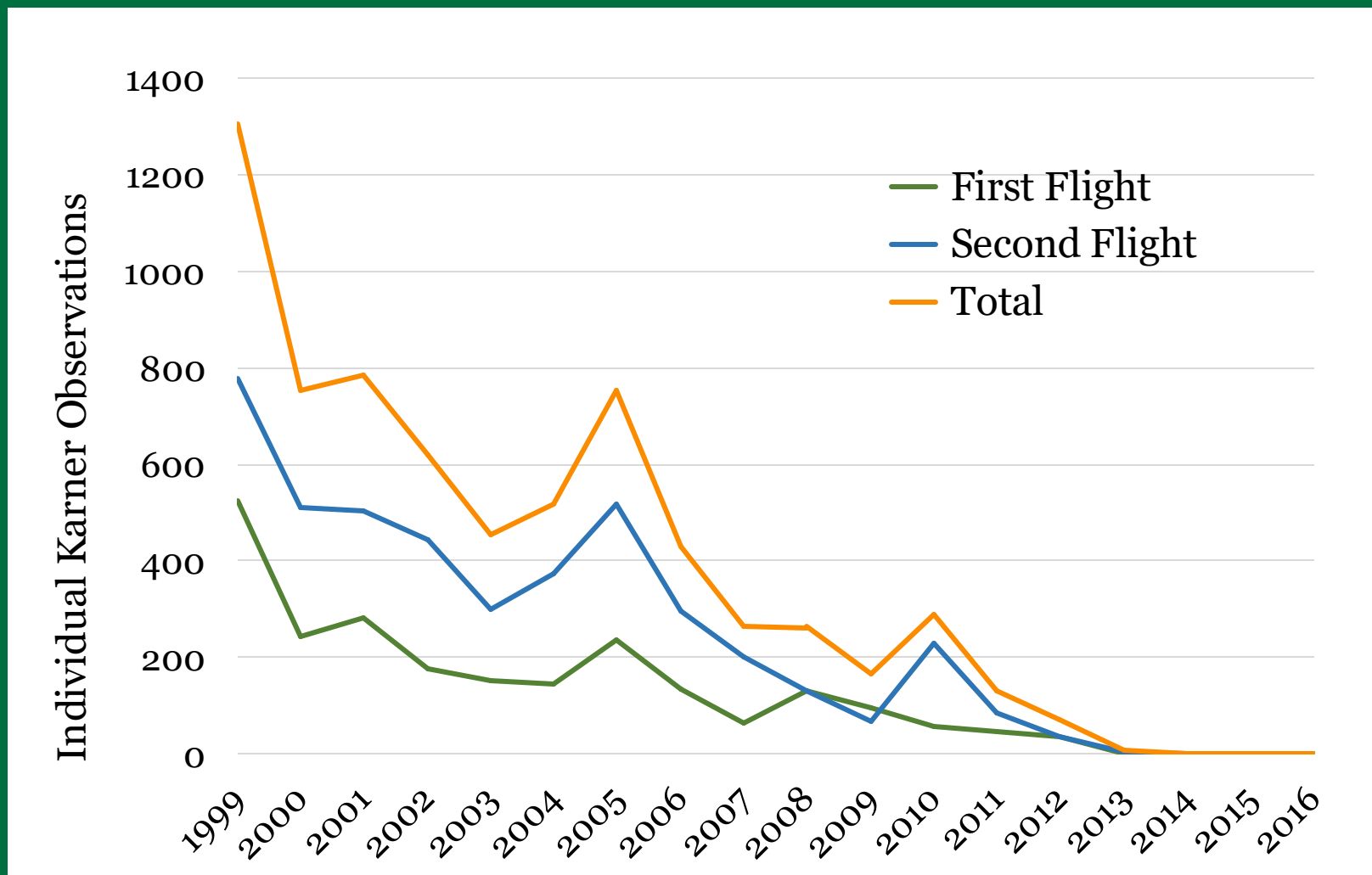
Butterflies of INDU 1999



Grundel, R., G. S. Dulin, and N. B. Pavlovic.
 PLoS ONE 15:e0234139

Extirpation of an endangered species in a national park

Indiana Dunes Kbb surveys – none found after 2013



Source: Randy Knutson, NPS, Indiana Dunes NP

**What went wrong?
We have good insight into
the final year of decline**



Spring 2012 – earliest/warmest on record

Summer 2012 – hot and very dry

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EOS, TRANSACTIONS, AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION

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PAGES 181–188

The False Spring of 2012, Earliest in North American Record

PAGES 181–182

Phenology—the study of recurring plant and animal life cycle stages, especially their timing and relationships with weather and climate—is becoming an essential tool for documenting, communicating, and anticipating the consequences of climate variability and change. For example, March 2012 broke numerous records for warm temperatures and early flowering in the United States [Karl et al., 2012; Elwood et al., 2013]. Many regions experienced a “false spring,” a period of weather in late winter or early spring sufficiently mild and long to bring vegetation out of dormancy prematurely, rendering it vulnerable to late frost and drought.

As global climate warms, increasingly warmer springs may combine with the random climatological occurrence of advective freezes, which result from cold air moving from one region to another, to dramatically increase the future risk of false springs, with profound ecological and economic consequences [e.g., Gu et al., 2008; Marino et al., 2011; Augsburg, 2013]. For example, in the false spring of 2012, an event embedded in long-term trends toward earlier spring [e.g., Schwartz et al., 2006], the frost damage to fruit trees totaled half a billion dollars in Michigan alone, prompting the federal government to declare the state a disaster area [Knudson, 2012].

Phenological Forecasting: Predicting False Springs a Season or Two in Advance?

Robust phenological forecasts at seasonal

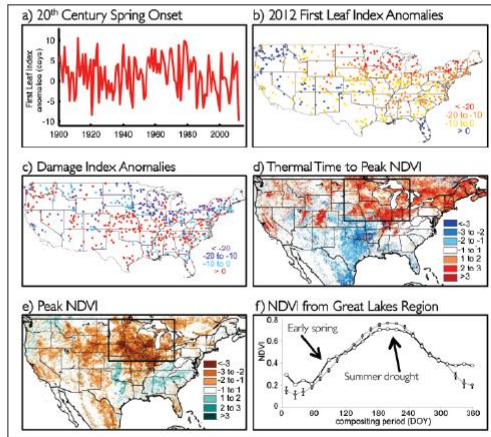
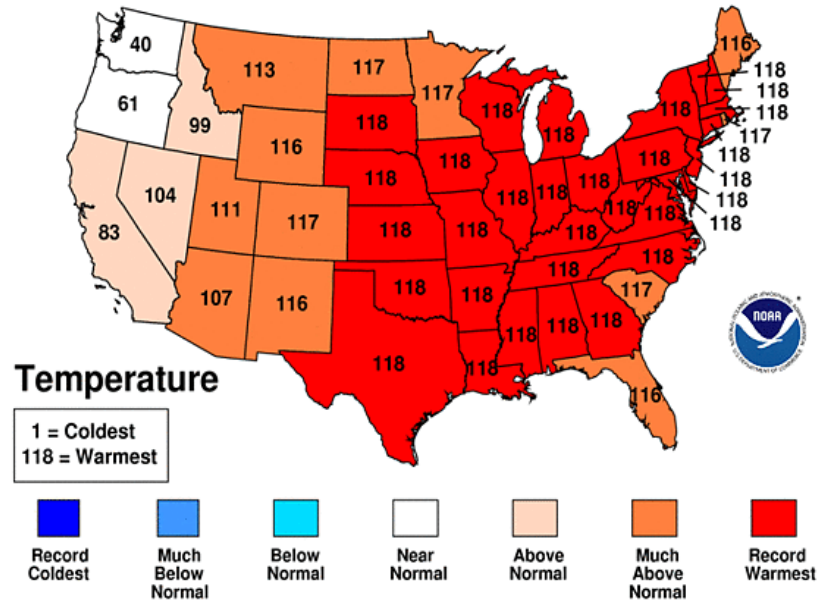


Fig. 1. Metrics of phenology during the spring and summer of 2012. (a) Time series of station-based extended spring index anomalies with respect to the 1981–2010 climatology from 1900 through 2012 and averaged over the conterminous United States (the first leaf index described in Schwartz et al. [2006] and Schwartz et al. [2013]). (b) Map of first leaf index anomalies (in days) with respect to the 1981–2010 climatology. (c) Values of the damage index with respect to the 1981–2010 climatology (also described in Schwartz et al. [2006]), which measures the anomalous amount of frost damage between the last frost event date and the first leaf index date. (d) The vegetation index (NDVI) from the Great Lakes region during the spring and summer of 2012. (e) Map of peak NDVI. (f) NDVI from Great Lakes Region showing early spring and summer drought.

March-May 2012 Statewide Ranks

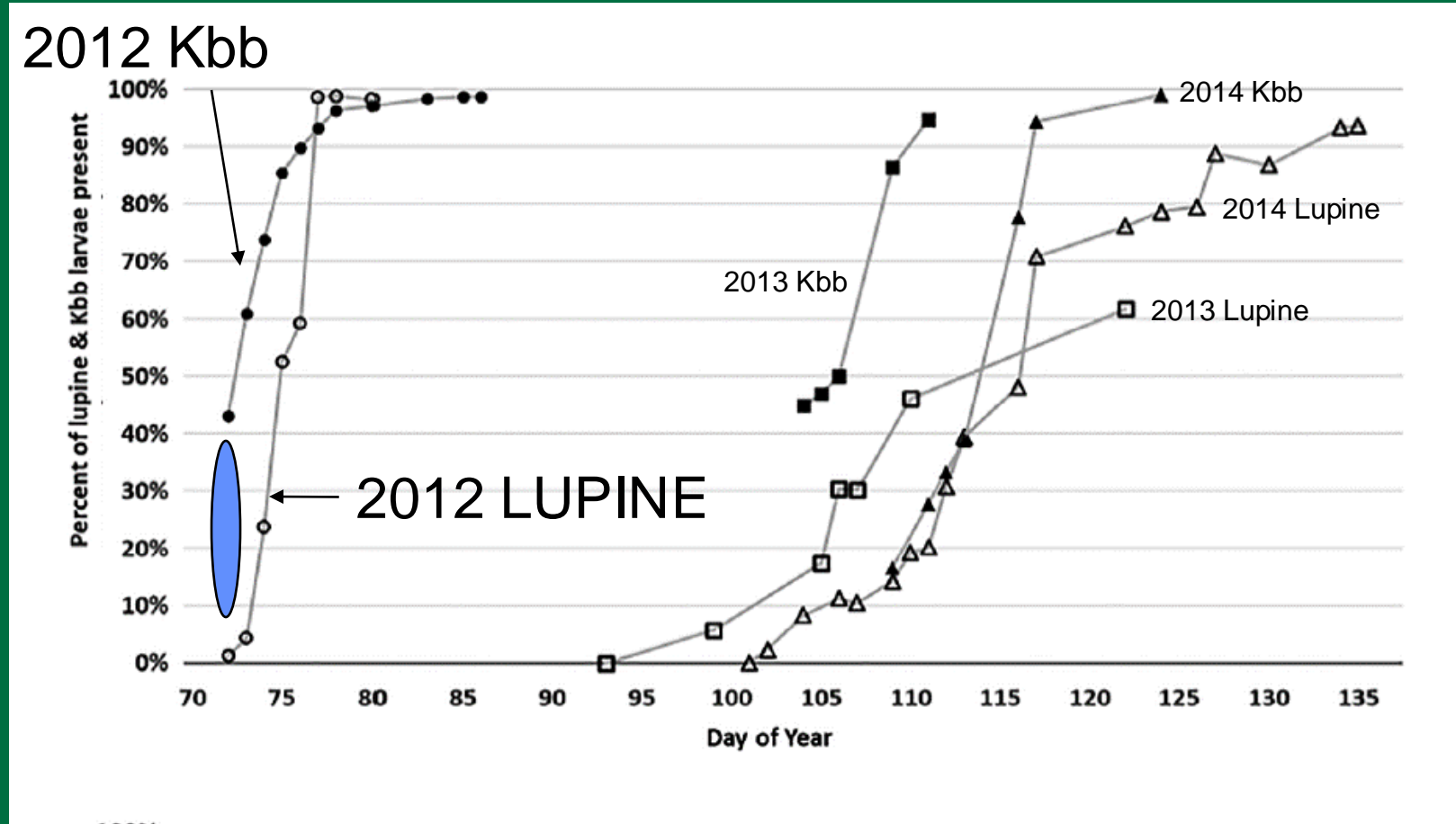
National Climatic Data Center/NESDIS/NOAA



2012 Weather in comparison to 1990-2023 mean

- March Max Temp – Mean: 7.6 °C (\pm 2.8 sd); 2012: 16.3 °C
- April – July Max Temp (°C) compared to historic monthly mean: April: -0.6, May: 2.7, June 0.9, July: 3.5
- Precipitation Ratio (2012:1990-2023 Mean): March: 80%, April: 38%, May: 54%, June: 58%, July: 148%
- Snow depth during coldest months: December 2012 - Feb 2013: 9%, 19%, 81% of long-term mean
- **CONCLUSION:** Very early spring, hot spring/summer, low precipitation spring/early summer, low snow cover next winter

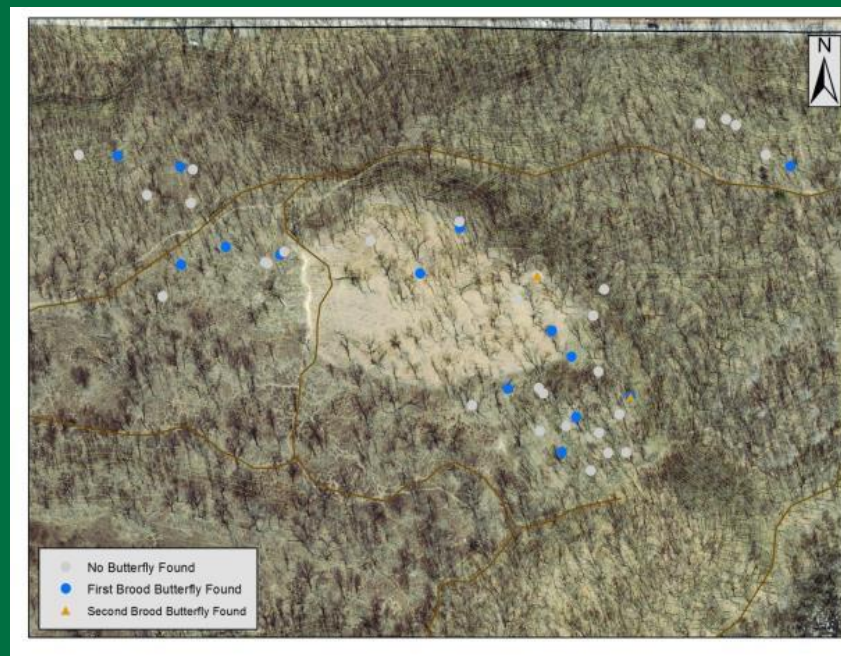
Spring 2012 – earliest/warmest on record in US Phenological Mismatch



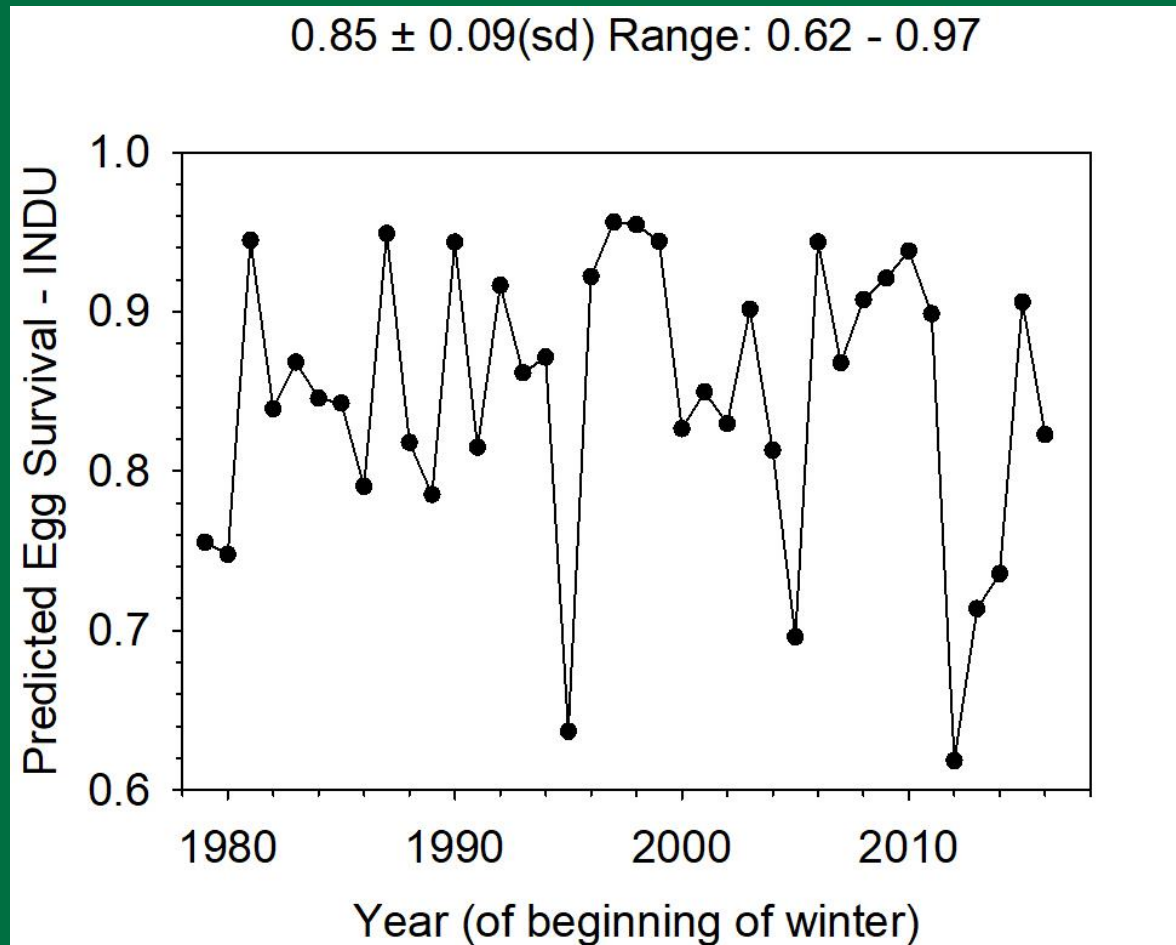
Patterson, T. A., R. Grundel, J. D. K. Dzurisin, R. L. Knutson, and J. J. Hellmann. 2020. Conservation Science and Practice 2:e147.

Poor survival second brood as well

- In the second generation, only 5.7% of eggs led to adults. Only eggs on northern slopes, at the limit of where lupine occurred, reached the adult stage. 27% of test sites on south faces completely lost all lupine leaves during early larval instars. We suspect that low soil moisture was responsible for the relatively early demise of lupine and the only environmental buffering was from the relatively shaded northern slopes.

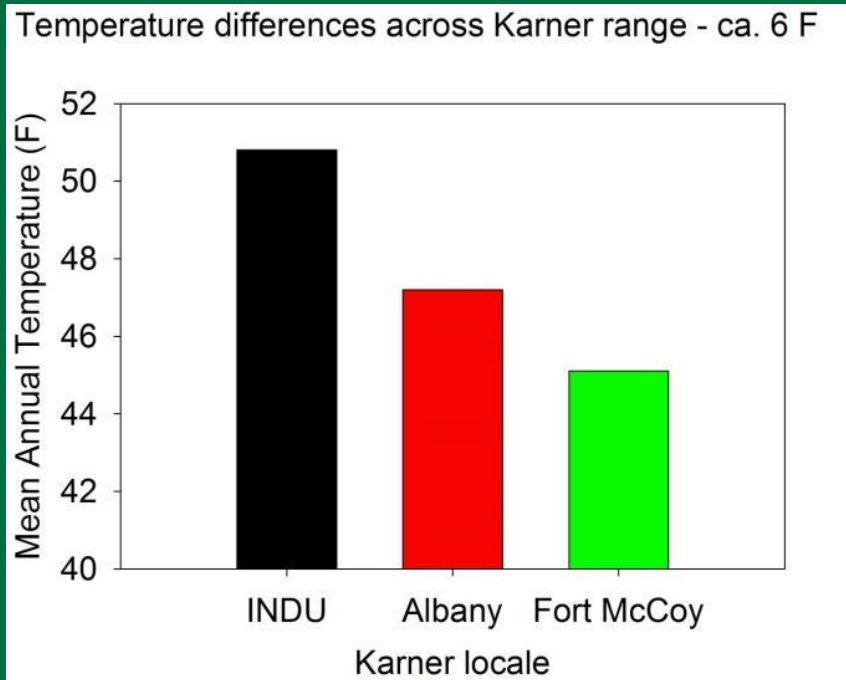


Egg survival was lowest Winter 2012-13 @ Indiana Dunes – low snow cover couldn't buffer cold temperatures

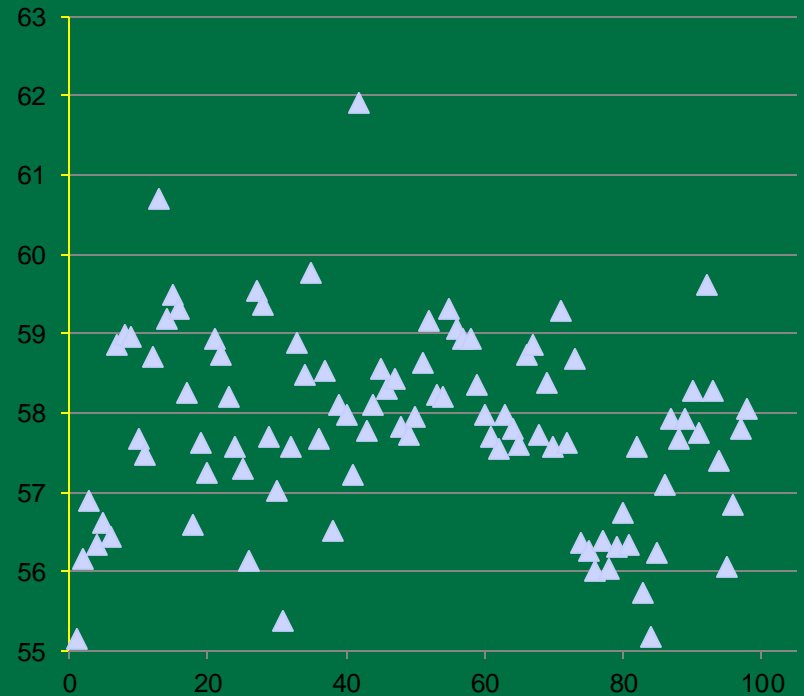


Small scale differences in temperature and soil moisture could be important.
Mean temp difference across Kbb range = temp difference across dune aspects

Rangewide 6 F

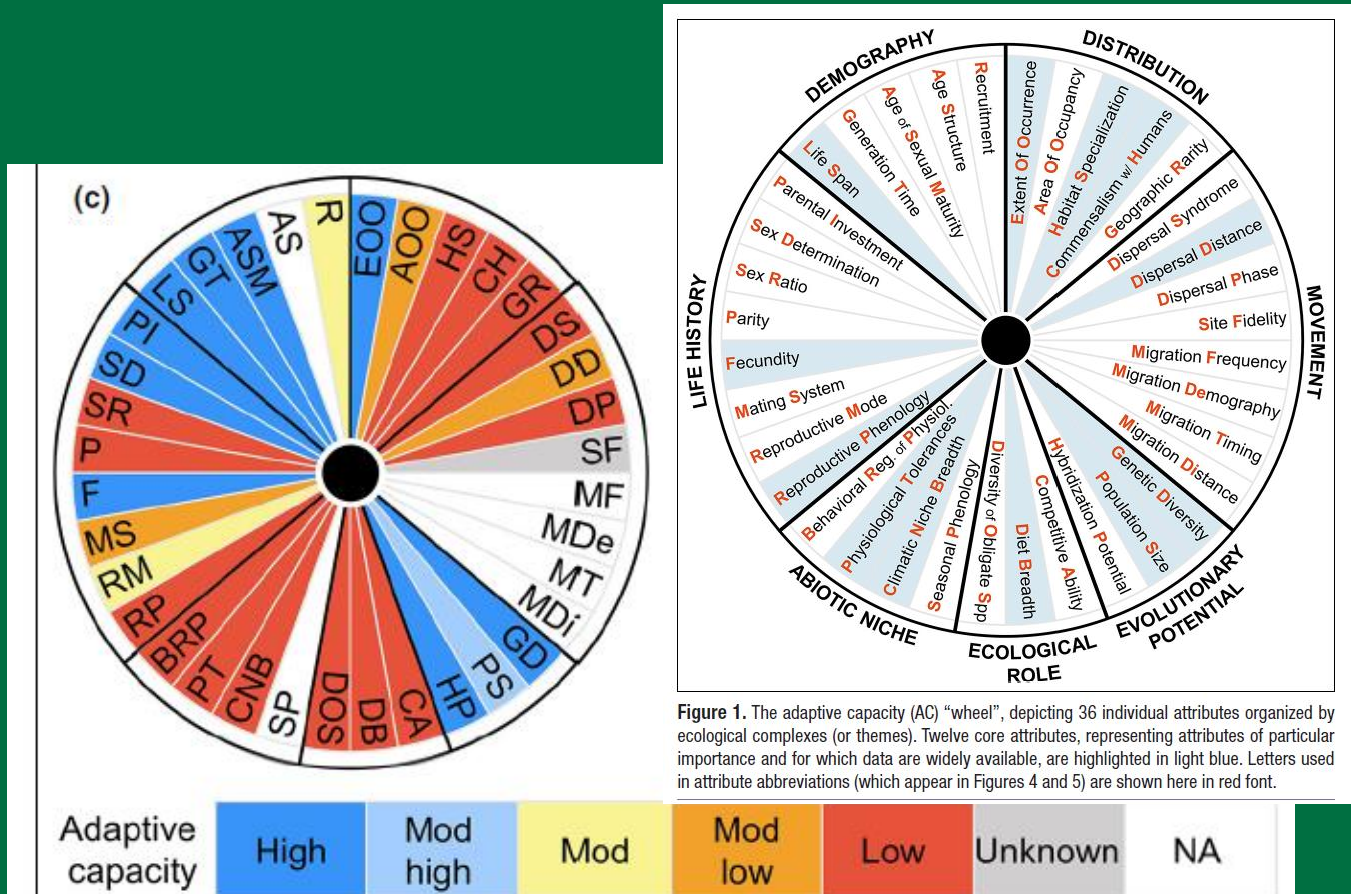


Across INDU aspects 7 F



◆ Seasonal Nighttime Mean ▲ Seasonal Afternoon Mean
■ Seasonal Morning Mean

Is the Kbb doomed by low Adaptive Capacity – limited mobility, diet specialization, small climatic niche breadth - in a time of rapid global change?

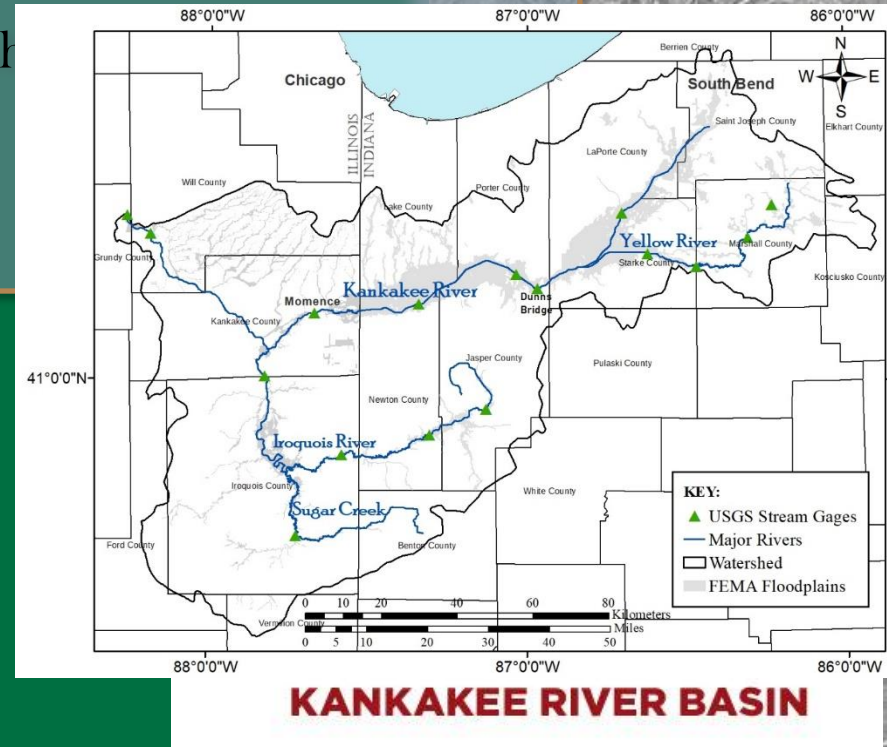
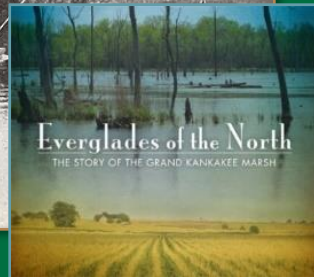
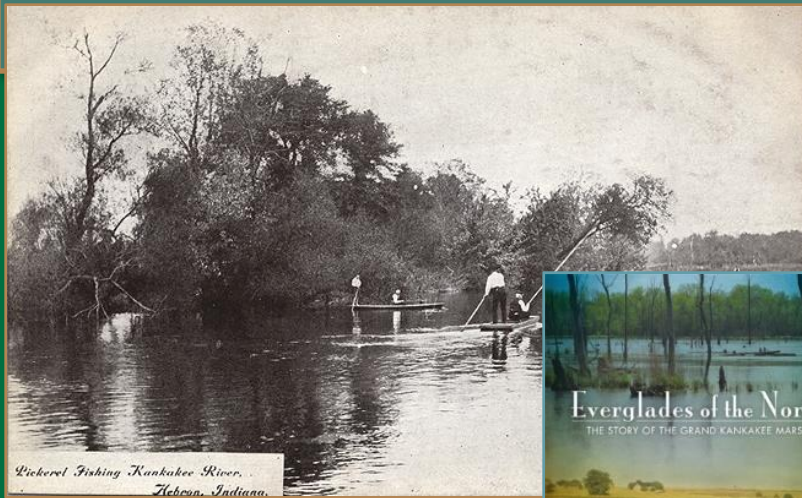


Thurman, L. L., et al. (2020). *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 18(9): 520-528.

Are changes in precipitation (soil moisture) that negatively affected the Karner blue – decreased late spring/summer – likely to continue to occur?

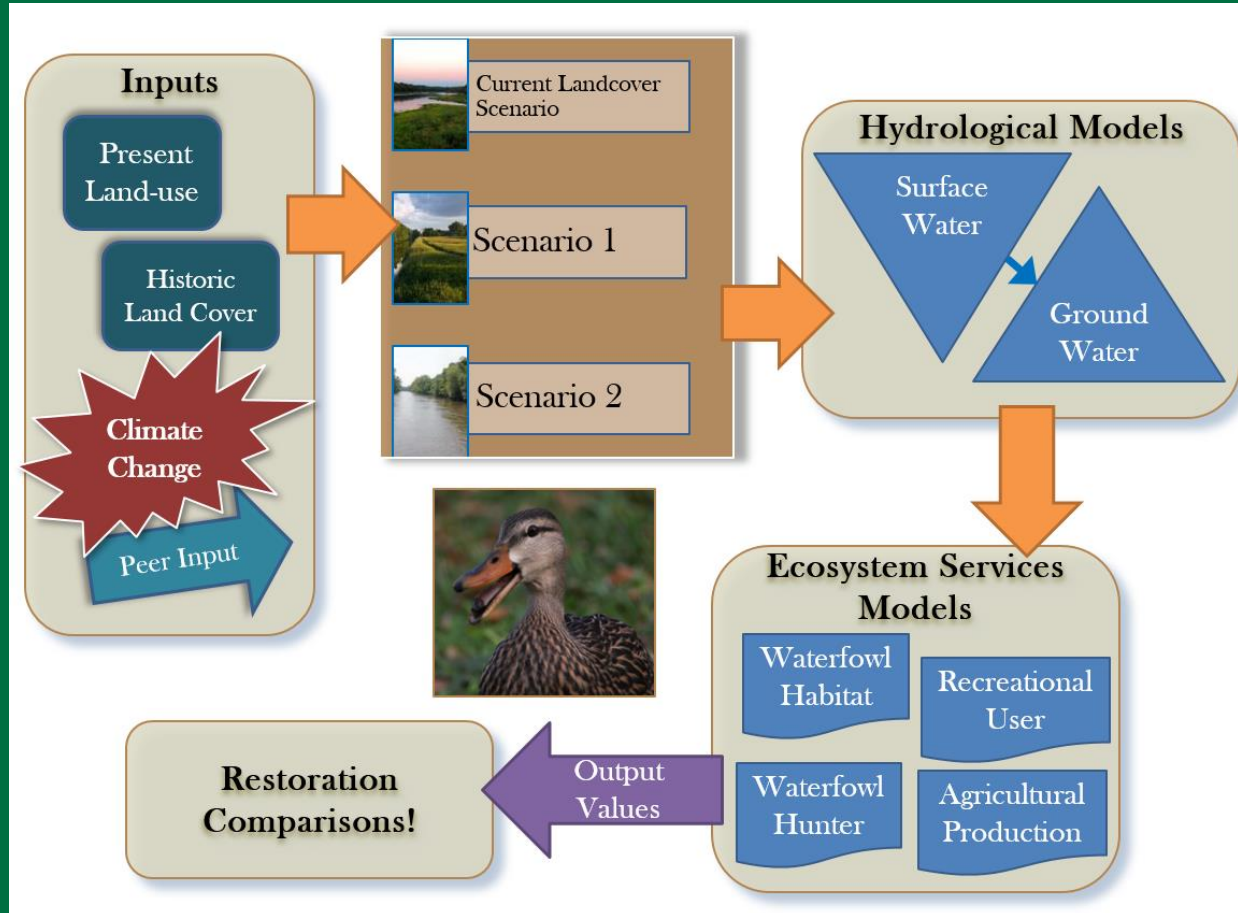
Waterfowl Habitat Restoration as an Adaptive Mechanism for Water Sustainability in the Kankakee River Watershed

- Once home to Grand Kankakee Marsh
- Hydrology is highly modified system
- Predominantly agricultural landscape
- Some quality remnant wetlands remain
- Wetland restorations completed in watershed
- National Wildlife Refuge



MODELING SCHEME: Waterfowl Habitat Restoration as an Adaptive Mechanism for Water Sustainability in the Kankakee River Watershed

Variable Infiltration Capacity (VIC) for surface water modeling, MODFLOW for groundwater

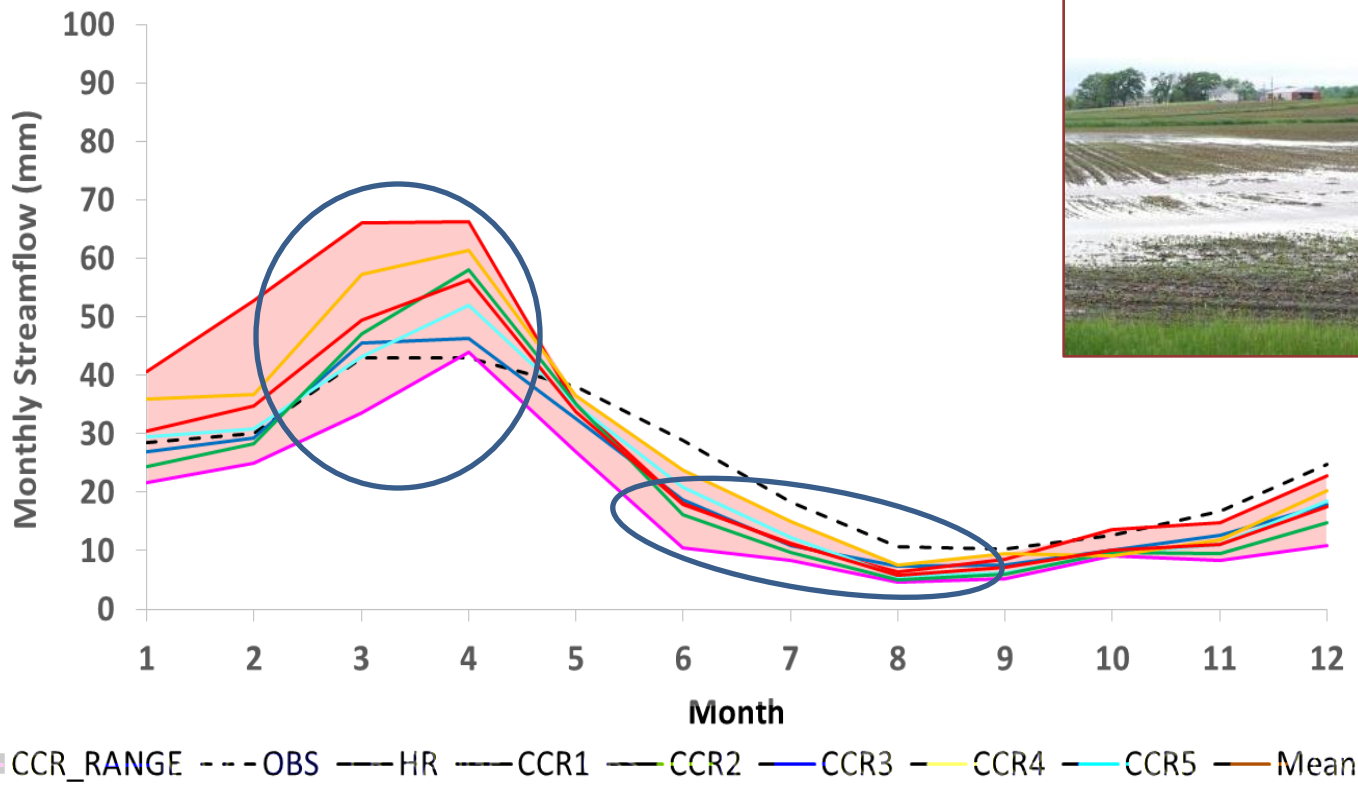




Seasonal Flows:



- Projected Period: 2020s
 - More springtime rain events
 - Heavy springtime rain events
 - Decrease in summer/fall rain events

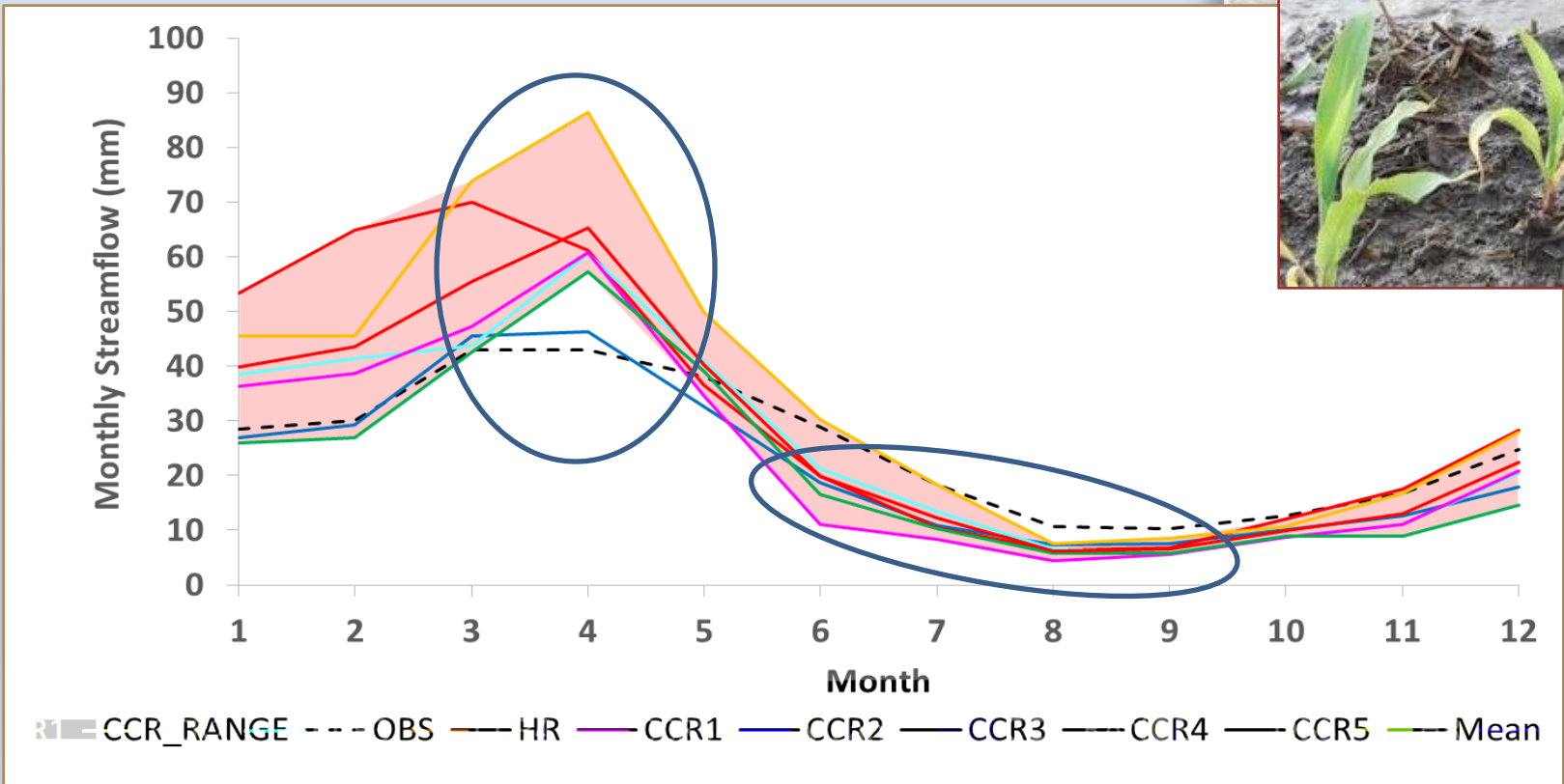




Seasonal Flows:



- Projected Period: 2050s
 - MORE spring rain events
 - HEAVIER springtime rain events
 - Decrease in summer/fall rain events

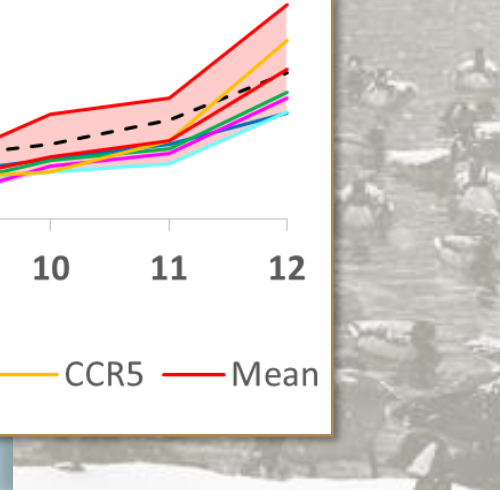
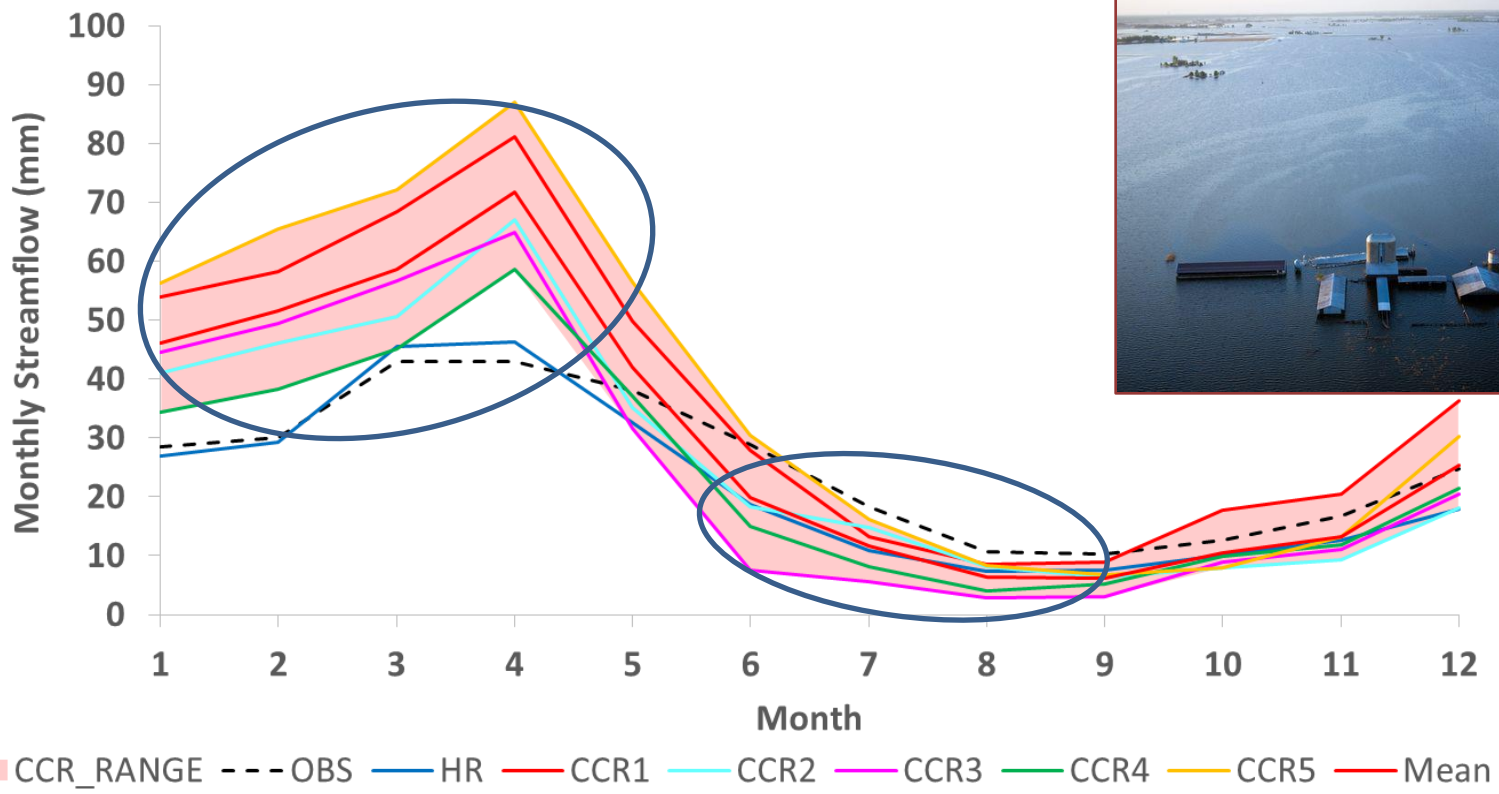




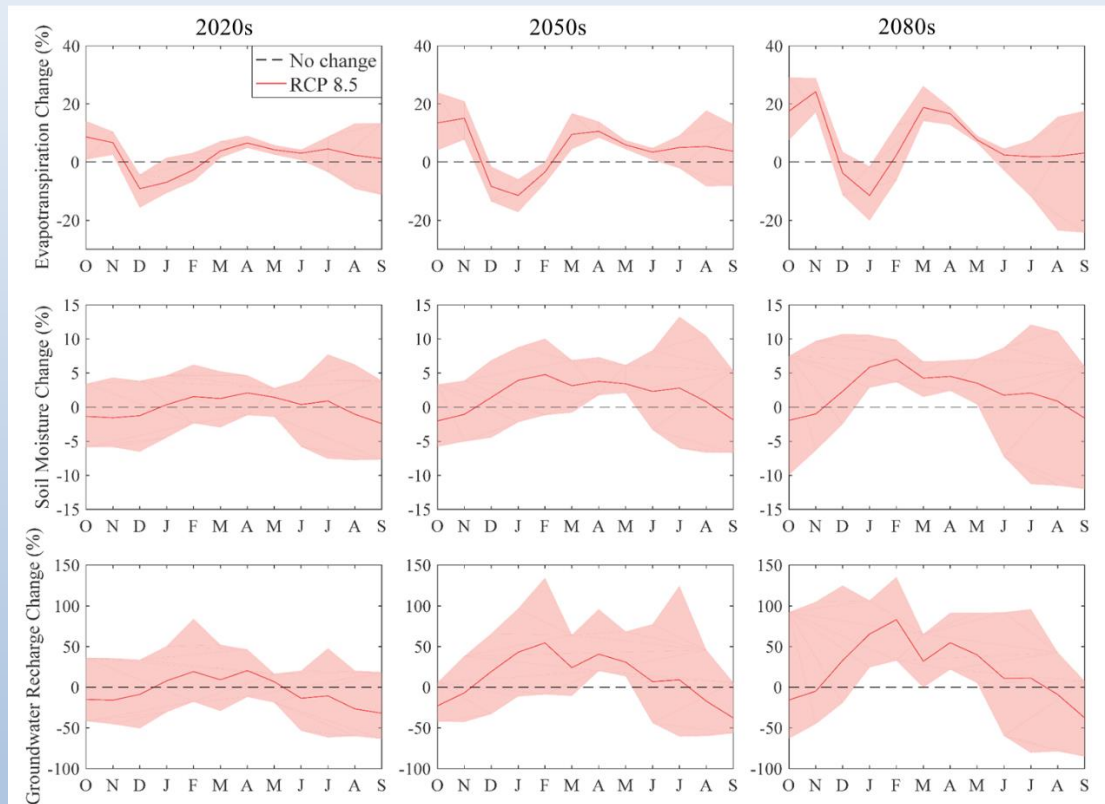
Seasonal Flows:



- Projected Period: 2080s
 - Doubling of springtime rain
 - WET, earlier winters
 - Dry summers



Predicted ET, Soil Moisture, and Groundwater Recharge for 5 climate change scenarios as % difference from 1971-2000 mean



Soil Moisture declined below long-term average July-August (later in the future). Above long-term mean in spring.

For 2020, 2050, 2080

- Decreased summer precipitation
- That was one of the factors that got the Karner blue in trouble
- The predicted patterns – increased spring flows and decreased summer flows could have negative effects on agricultural productivity and could negatively affect native species that depend on summer plant resources

Karner project team



Noel Pavlovic U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center

Jessica Hellmann University of Minnesota/MWCASC (formerly Notre Dame)

Tammy Patterson U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (formerly USGS/GLSC and Notre Dame)

Randy Knutson U.S. National Park Service, Indiana Dunes NP

Lainey Bristow University of Notre Dame

Grace Wu University of California, Santa Barbara (formerly Notre Dame)

Jason Dzurisin Colorado State University (formerly Notre Dame)

Yudi Li University of California, Davis (formerly University of Minnesota)

Tim King/Aaron Aunins USGS, Eastern Ecological Science Center



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USGS – Grasslands Initiative
University of Minnesota, University of Notre Dame



Kankakee Project Team:



Alan F. Hamlet, Surface Water Hydrologist, University of Notre Dame

Chun-Mei Chiu, Post Doc. Hydrologist, University of Notre Dame

Diogo Bolster, Groundwater Hydrologist, University of Notre Dame

Zachary Hanson, PhD. Student Hydrologist, University of Notre Dame

Kyuhyun Byun, Post Doc. Hydrologist, University of Notre Dame

David Lampe, USGS Kentucky-Indiana Water Science Center

Jason McLachlan, Paleobotanist, University of Notre Dame

Jody Peters, PalEON project manager, University of Notre Dame

Mark Schurr, Archeologist, Department of Anthropology, University of Notre Dame

Ralph Grundel, Ornithologist/Ecologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center

Noel Pavlovic, Botanist/Ecologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center

Jessica Hellmann, Climate Change Ecologist, University of Minnesota

Tammy Patterson, Conservation Ecologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center

