

Article (refereed) - postprint

Elliott, J. Alex; Henrys, Peter; Tanguy, Maliko; Cooper, Jonathan; Maberly, Stephen C. 2015. **Predicting the habitat expansion of the invasive roach *Rutilus rutilus* (Actinopterygii, Cyprinidae), in Great Britain.** *Hydrobiologia*, 751 (1). 127-134. [10.1007/s10750-015-2181-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10750-015-2181-9)

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The final publication is available at Springer via <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10750-015-2181-9>

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1 **Predicting the habitat expansion of the invasive roach *Rutilus rutilus* (Actinopterygii,**
2 **Cyprinidae), in Great Britain**

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10 **Keywords:** Habitat model, climate change, temperature, EncRoach, Ecological Niche Model

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30 **Abstract**

31 The roach is influential ecologically and has a preference for water temperatures >12 °C. In
32 this study we attempted to predict its habitat expansion in response to global warming,
33 hypothesing its increase in Great Britain. Historical data for air temperature over different
34 time scales (annual, seasonal, monthly and daily) and for the presence of roach in Great
35 Britain were used to create four Ecological Niche Models. Mean seasonal air temperature
36 (EncRoach-S) was the best predictor. Using EncRoach-S two future climate scenarios were
37 tested: a sensitivity test (i.e. incrementally increasing temperature values by 1°C), and using
38 air temperature data from UKCIP 11-member ensemble of climate change projections for
39 2031-2040, 2061-2070 and 2091-2100. Both approaches predicted an increase in habitat
40 suitability in Great Britain with rising air temperatures but the extent of change differed for
41 England, Wales and Scotland. In England, the rate of expansion was initially slow but
42 rapidly increased mid-century leading to 88% coverage by the century end. In Wales, there
43 was a greater increase by the century end and a similar trend in Scotland. This study supports
44 the conjecture that a rise in air temperature over the next few decades will lead to an increase
45 in potential roach habitat.

46

47 **Introduction**

48 With the range of environmental changes predicted for this century there has been much
49 interest and speculation about how the habitat range of numerous species will be affected.
50 Beyond the simple gain or loss of individual species in a specific region, there is also the
51 added concern that some species may be affected which are known to have significant
52 impacts on ecosystems i.e. they can be considered invasive (McNeely *et al.*, 2001). In British
53 freshwaters, the fish species roach (*Rutilus rutilus* (L. 1758)) fits this criterion and is the
54 subject of this study.

55 The roach is a eurythermal cyprinid and the fourth most recorded fish species in the
56 UK Database and Atlas of Freshwater Fish (DAFF; Davies *et al.*, 2004). Its current
57 distribution is predominately Eurasian, although it is also found in southern Australia (Froese
58 & Pauly, 2014), and it is considered to be expanding its range (e.g. in Ireland (e.g. Ferguson,
59 2008), Italy (e.g. Giannetto *et al.*, 2014)). Their omnivorous feeding habits and ability to
60 reach high population densities means that they have a great potential to establish new
61 populations, influence other freshwater species and even affect ecosystem function (e.g.
62 Brabrand *et al.*, 1986; Graham & Harrod, 2009; Winfield *et al.*, 2011; Jeppesen *et al.*, 2012;
63 Hayden *et al.*, 2014). Such attributes are of concern given the evidence for its continued
64 expansion in both habitat range (e.g. Davies *et al.*, 2004) and, where already present,
65 population size (e.g. Winfield *et al.*, 2011). The two key drivers behind such changes are
66 believed to be eutrophication and increasing water temperature (Graham & Harrod, 2009;
67 Jeppesen *et al.*, 2012), and we have focussed upon the latter in this study as it operates at a
68 national scale whereas eutrophication is site-specific.

69 The eurythermal characteristics of roach allow it to survive a broad range of water
70 temperatures (4 to >30°C; Cocking, 1959, Graham & Harrod, 2009) but with a distinct
71 preference for warmer temperatures: growth occurs only above 12 °C (van Dijk *et al.*, 2002)

72 and juvenile growth is maximal between 20-27 °C (Hardewig & van Dijk, 2003).
73 Furthermore, spawning is observed only at temperatures above 12-16 °C (Graham & Harrod,
74 2009) illustrating that population recruitment of the species is also tightly linked to higher
75 water temperatures. Given these relationships, it is little wonder that Graham & Harrod
76 (2009) in their review of the implications of climate change for fish populations of the British
77 Isles predicted that the habitat range of the roach will expand. Therefore, this study attempts
78 to test and quantify their prediction by the application of an Ecological Niche Model.

79 Ecological Niche modelling involves relating environmental variables to the known
80 spatial distribution of a given organism in order to estimate the likelihood of its occurrence in
81 a given area. It should be noted, however, that some confusion has arisen in the literature
82 through the use of numerous other names for essentially the same model methodology (Hirzel
83 & Le Lay, 2008) e.g. Habitat Suitability/Selection Models, Habitat/Species Distribution
84 Models, Resource Selection Functions. Nevertheless, for this study we have constructed and
85 tested a range of Ecological Niche Models for roach in Great Britain in order to predict how
86 its habitat range may change over this century. To do this, we have brought together large
87 spatial and temporal data sets. We have selected air temperature as the key driver of the
88 model because i) air temperature data are available at high spatial and temporal resolution, ii)
89 air temperature is a standard variable found in climate change model scenarios and iii) air
90 temperature is closely related to water temperature, at least within the range of temperatures
91 found in this study (the relationship is linear below air temperatures of 25 °C: Morrill *et al.*,
92 2005). Thus, following the construction and testing of the models, we examined the
93 sensitivity of the selected model's prediction to increasing temperature and also specific
94 climate change projections developed by UKCIP (United Kingdom Climate Impacts
95 Programme; Murphy *et al.*, 2009). Finally, drawing on all of the modelled evidence, we have

96 attempted to assess how roach populations across Great Britain may respond as the climate of
97 this century continues to evolve.

98

99 **Methods**

100 *Observed data*

101 Information on the distribution of the roach in Great Britain was obtained from the National
102 Biodiversity Network (NBN; data.nbn.org.uk (accessed 18 April 2014)) . These data consist
103 of over 40 years of presence recordings attributed to 10 km UK Ordnance Survey National
104 Grid squares. Absence squares were estimated by using all the grids in the NBN where a
105 fish species had been recorded but roach had not. This made the assumption that the roach
106 was a commonly recognisable fish, which we felt was reasonable given it is the fourth most
107 recorded species in the DAFF (Davies *et al.*, 2004). These data were split into two equal time
108 periods: 1973-1989 (Period 1) and 1990-2006 (Period 2). This was done so that the Period 1
109 data could be used to construct the models and Period 2 could be used to evaluate them.
110 Daily observed mean air temperature data (influenced by both the grid's weather and mean
111 altitude) were obtained from the Met Office UKCP09 at 5 km grid resolution. These data
112 were then mapped onto the appropriate 10 km square used by NBN to provide daily mean
113 values at the National Grid scale. Finally, the air temperature data were split into Period 1
114 and Period 2, as per the roach data, and for each period daily, monthly, seasonal (winter =
115 December to February, spring = March to May, summer = June to August, autumn =
116 September to November) and annual mean values were calculated.

117

118 *The Ecological Niche Model: EncRoach*

119 Using the Period 1 data, four Ecological Niche Models (called EncRoach (Environmental
120 change & Roach)) were created using a Generalised Linear Model (GLM) with binominal
121 response and a logit link. This method related the mean air temperatures calculated in each

122 grid to the roach presence/absence data in order to create an estimate of the likelihood of
123 roach presence. Each EncRoach model was given an appropriate suffix to indicate which air
124 temperature means had been used i.e. annual (A), seasonal (S), monthly (M) or daily (D).

125 As each model produces a probability of roach presence, the next step was to define
126 the best threshold on the probability range to switch an “absent” value (0) to a “present”
127 value (1). Thus, we tested each model against the Period 1 roach data using a range of
128 probability thresholds to find which value produced the lowest predictive error rates in the
129 Period 1 observed presence/absence data.

130 Following this, the four models were tested by using the air temperature data from
131 Period 2 to drive the EncRoach models and their outputs were compared to the Period 2 roach
132 observations. The models were assessed by calculating their respective Receiver Operating
133 Characteristic (ROC) curve, which plots the true positive rate against the false positive rate,
134 calculating the Area Under the Curve (AUC). This provides an evaluation of the percentage
135 of the presence/absence predictions in the modelled output that match the observed. These
136 latter comparisons were made against all grids in Period 2 and also only grids that showed
137 change in roach presence between Periods 1 and 2. Following this, the EncRoach model that
138 was judged to have performed the best was selected for use in the next stage of the study.

139

140 *Climate change testing of EncRoach*

141 Two approaches were taken to test the effect of changing air temperature on the distribution
142 of roach habitat. Firstly, the EncRoach model selected was re-run using Period 1 data but the
143 air temperature means were forced to be +1, 2, 3 and 4°C warmer and the outputs of these
144 simulations provided a sensitivity test of the models’ predictions. Secondly, air temperature

145 data from UKCIP 11-member ensemble of climate change projections (Prudhomme *et al.*,
146 2012a,b) was used to produce seasonal means for the following periods: 2031-2040, 2061-
147 2070 and 2091-2100. These data were then used to drive the EncRoach model to produce
148 roach habitat predictions for the different future time periods which were then compared
149 using box plots (created using R version 3.0.2; R Developmental Core Team, 2013) and
150 paired t-tests. In order to ensure that there was no bias introduced by using climate scenarios
151 in the prediction against using observed climate data in the model, a bias correction was
152 established between the observed climate and the output from each of the climate scenarios.

153

154

155 **Results**

156 *Model assessment*

157 The statistics used to assess the four Ecological Niche Models illustrated large differences
158 among them (Table 1). The model using daily mean air temperature values (EncRoach-D)
159 was the poorest at predicting roach presence/absence with a low AUC, percentage match and
160 heavily skewed error values. EncRoach-A (using annual means) was also poor with a
161 percentage match against all grids of only 67%, despite having a high AUC value (0.803),
162 and again the error was skewed towards false positive values. The final two models
163 performed to a similar level, but EncRoach-S (using seasonal means) was slightly better at
164 matching the observed data than EncRoach-M (using monthly means), both overall (82%)
165 and for the grids that had changed (48%). Furthermore, its error was more balanced and had
166 the lowest false positive error values, meaning it was the model least likely to predict a
167 presence where there was none and was thus the most conservative. On this basis, the
168 EncRoach-S model was selected to explore the potential expansion of roach habitat in Great
169 Britain. The formulation for this model is presented below, where Y_i represents the observant
170 presence or absence at location i , η represents the logit link function and SP, SU, A and W
171 represent the mean spring, summer, autumn and winter temperatures respectively:

$$172 \quad E[Y_i] = p_i \eta(p_i) = -22.81 + 2.10 * SP_i + 0.82 * SU_i + 0.39 * A_i - 2.33 * W_i$$

173

174 *Predicting the change in roach habitat: sensitivity analysis*

175 EncRoach-S was repeatedly run using Period 1 seasonal air temperature means increased
176 incrementally by 1°C to a maximum rise of 4°C (Fig. 1). The results showed a marked
177 increase in potential habitat available with each 1°C increase in air temperature. The

178 EncRoach-S probability threshold (0.876) was used to convert the probabilities into
179 presence/absence values. The probability threshold was defined as the value on the ROC
180 curve that minimises the distance to the ideal optimum of 100% True positives and 0% false
181 positives. This illustrated that the rate of habitat increase in Great Britain was not linear
182 (Table 2). Specifically, the number of new grids added per 1 °C rise increased with the
183 higher temperatures, e.g. across Great Britain there were 163 additional grids for the rise of 0
184 to 1 °C, but 301 additional grids for the 3 to 4 °C increase (Table 2). The main cause of this
185 effect was the rapid increase in new grids in Scotland with increasing temperature, compared
186 to a relatively constant rate of increase in Wales and a declining rate in England (Table 2). In
187 terms of changes in the percentage of potential habitat grids, England and Wales had
188 achieved >90% cover with a 4 °C increase and Scotland >35% (Table 2).

189

190 *Predicting the change in roach habitat: climate change projections*

191 The 11-member ensemble of climate projections was used to make a range of predictions for
192 specific periods of the 21st century (Fig. 2). The universal trend was of an increase in
193 potential roach habitat as the century progressed. For the majority of regional areas, the
194 changes between each decade were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) with the exception of
195 England between 2030-2039 and 2060-2069 (Fig. 2b). Furthermore, the 2060-2069 decade
196 generally showed the widest range of predicted values i.e. the greatest uncertainty (Fig. 2).

197 The trend of increase for England (Fig. 2b) was asymptotic because by the later
198 decades almost all potential grids were indicating roach presence. In Wales and Scotland
199 (Fig. 2c & d), the increase was more linear, although Wales was also approaching total
200 coverage by the end of the century.

201 **Discussion**

202 Understanding how the changes to our climate this century may affect fauna and flora in
203 ecosystems remains a challenging objective. While expert judgement provides one approach,
204 modelling offers a qualitative, and complementary, methodology. For this study Ecological
205 Niche modelling was used, a method that has been widely applied to simulate potential
206 species habitat changes, in order to evaluate how roach habitat suitability in Great Britain
207 may change over this century. However, before discussing the results and their implications,
208 it is valuable to assess critically the model and its assumptions first.

209 Firstly, the EncRoach-S model only relates the habitat available to air temperature,
210 using it as a proxy for water temperature. The use of air temperature in this way is
211 reasonable (Morrill *et al.*, 2005) but it does mean that the model does not consider the
212 nutrient richness of the habitat. The latter could be an issue because roach tend to be
213 associated with eutrophic environments (but certainly not exclusively) but changes in this
214 factor are difficult to predict, especially across the whole of Great Britain. Therefore, we
215 accept that the model is likely to over predict the expansion of roach, especially in areas of
216 the country that are less nutrient rich e.g. uplands. Secondly, dispersal-limitation is another
217 factor that could affect the spread of roach to new habitats and is not considered by the model
218 which deals with potential habitat. It might be imagined that, given the disconnected nature
219 of different river catchments, the natural methods available to the roach for invasion to a new
220 catchment are very limited. Unfortunately, the introduction of roach to catchments is all too
221 common throughout Great Britain because it is a desirable species for use in sport fishing.
222 These movements are supposed to be regulated and controlled (e.g. as use for live bait in Pike
223 fishing) but historically have proven to be very difficult to police (e.g. Winfield & Durie,
224 2004). Therefore, given its historic level of introduction (Davies *et al.*, 2004), it is difficult to
225 conceive that dispersal (i.e. river system connectivity) will be a restraining factor over the rest

226 of this century. Despite these caveats, the EncRoach-S model can be used to predict the
227 suitability of an area in Great Britain as roach habitat based solely upon the species'
228 temperature requirements since it correctly predicted 82% of the observed grids for Period 2
229 (1990-2006; Table 1) across Britain.

230 Both the sensitivity simulations and the climate change scenarios showed a universal
231 trend of increasing roach habitat suitability across Great Britain with rising temperatures.
232 This result is in accord with qualitative predictions made by others (Graham & Harrod, 2009)
233 and offers support to them. However, beyond this simple trend of increase, the EncRoach-S
234 model allowed both a regional and temporal nuance to be added to the result. Thus, we can
235 examine the predicted changes in roach habitat over the 21st century for the three countries of
236 Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland).

237 England currently has the greatest number of roach occurrences (802 grids between
238 1973-1989; Davies *et al.*, 2004) and EncRoach-S predicted a similar amount (817 grids;
239 Table 2). This equates to about 60% of the potential grid habitats available to freshwater fish
240 in England. Given this large starting value of habitat suitability, it is perhaps unsurprising
241 that the model predicts the almost total expansion of habitat suitability into north and south-
242 west England (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) with a median percentage cover of 88% predicted for 2090-
243 2099. However, this expansion was initially slow, with only a modest increase occurring in
244 2030-2039 to raise the percentage cover to 66% (Fig. 2). By 2060-2069, the increase was
245 more substantial (median = 84%) but it should be noted that the uncertainty of this prediction
246 was large. Despite this, we can conclude that in England, if temperature is currently
247 constraining roach, the expansion of roach habitat suitability will be initially slow but could
248 increase rapidly in the middle of the century.

249 In Wales, the roach is currently less common than in England (16% of grids between
250 1973-1989; Davies et al., 2004) and this was reflected in the EncRoach-S simulations of the
251 present climate (11% of grids; Table 2). The future simulations suggested an increase in
252 habitat cover in the country throughout the century from 16% (2030-2039) to 55% (2060-69)
253 to 79% (2090-2099). Again, the large mid-century increase seen for England was also
254 simulated in Wales. Given the current level of presence of roach in Wales, these results are
255 dramatic and suggest the potential impact of the species upon freshwater ecosystems in the
256 country is likely to rise.

257 The final part of Great Britain considered was Scotland. Currently, the roach is
258 relatively restricted in its distribution and mainly concentrated in the central belt (8% of
259 Scottish grids between 1973-1989; Davies *et al.*, 2004). The model predicted zero habitat for
260 the present climate (Table 2) and the median for 2030-2039 was also zero (Fig. 2). This
261 underprediction by the model shows some of its limitations and that the predictions for
262 Scotland are the least certain in the study. Nevertheless, the trend with time was for an
263 increase in habitat suitability leading to a median coverage by 2090-2099 of 39% (Fig. 2).
264 This would suggest that roach expansion is probable in Scotland although it is perhaps likely
265 to be slower than in the rest of Great Britain.

266 Overall, this study supports the conjecture that the forecast rise in air temperature over
267 the next few decades will lead to an increase in the habitat area suitability of the roach. This,
268 of course, assumes that this habitat area up to now has been restrained at least partly by
269 temperature but, as discussed above, this is not unreasonable given the species' eurythermal
270 range and the good match the model achieved with the observed Period 2 data (Table 1). The
271 confidence of the model's predictions is probably greatest for England and weakest for
272 Scotland, with Wales falling in the middle. Despite this, and the somewhat simplistic nature
273 of this kind of model, we believe this study provides important quantifiable results to support

274 the conjecture that the roach will gain an increase in its potential habitat area in Great Britain
275 as a consequence of climate change induced increases in air temperature.

276

277 **Acknowledgments**

278 The authors would like to thank Christel Prudhomme (Centre for Ecology & Hydrology) for
279 making available the UKCIP climate projections data and for her guidance in the use of the
280 data. Also, to all the contributors and collators of the UK Database for the Atlas of
281 Freshwater Fishes and also to the Biological Records Centre at the Centre for Ecology &
282 Hydrology for making it available on-line via the National Biodiversity Network's Gateway
283 (data.nbn.org.uk). The work was supported by NERC grant NE/H000208/1. Finally, we
284 thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

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339 **Table 1.** Assessment statistics for the four Ecological Niche models tested. The suffix to
 340 EncRoach indicates the use of annual (A), seasonal (S), monthly (M) or daily (D) mean air
 341 temperatures. Note that “Data tested” refers to: “All” = all grids in Period 2 considered,
 342 “Changed” = only grids that changed between Periods 1 and 2 considered. Also, “AUC” =
 343 Area Under the Curve”; “% Match” = percentage of grids in the modelled output which
 344 match the observed in Period 2; “FPE” = False Positive Error and “FNE” = False Negative
 345 Error.

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Model tested	Data tested	AUC	% Match	FPE	FNE
EncRoach-A	All	0.803	67%	30%	3%
	Changed		46%	44%	9%
EncRoach-S	All	0.867	82%	7%	11%
	Changed		48%	25%	26%
EncRoach-M	All	0.896	78%	18%	4%
	Changed		45%	42%	13%
EncRoach-D	All	0.611	38%	61%	0%
	Changed		50%	50%	0%

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351 **Table 2.** The results of the model sensitivity analysis for Great Britain, England, Wales and
 352 Scotland showing the total number of grids where roach was predicted to be present
 353 (including the percentage of the total grids that represented) as air temperature for Period 1
 354 was increased in 1°C steps.

Area of Great Britain (total no. grids)	No. of grids	Increase in air temperature (°C)				
		0	1	2	3	4
All Great Britain (2470)	Presence	842	1005	1214	1509	1810
	% presence	34.1	40.7	49.1	61.1	73.3
England (1334)	Presence	817	958	1083	1202	1279
	% presence	61.2	71.8	81.2	90.1	95.9
Wales (233)	Presence	25	47	93	153	211
	% presence	10.7	20.2	39.9	65.7	90.6
Scotland (903)	Presence	0	0	38	154	320
	% presence	0	0	4.2	17.1	35.4

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361 **Figure Legends**

362 **Fig. 1** The predicted probabilities of roach presence in Great Britain with an increase in
363 Period 1's seasonal mean air temperature of: a) 1, b) 2, c) 3 and d) 4 °C. Note Dark Red
364 region indicates Period 1 roach presence.

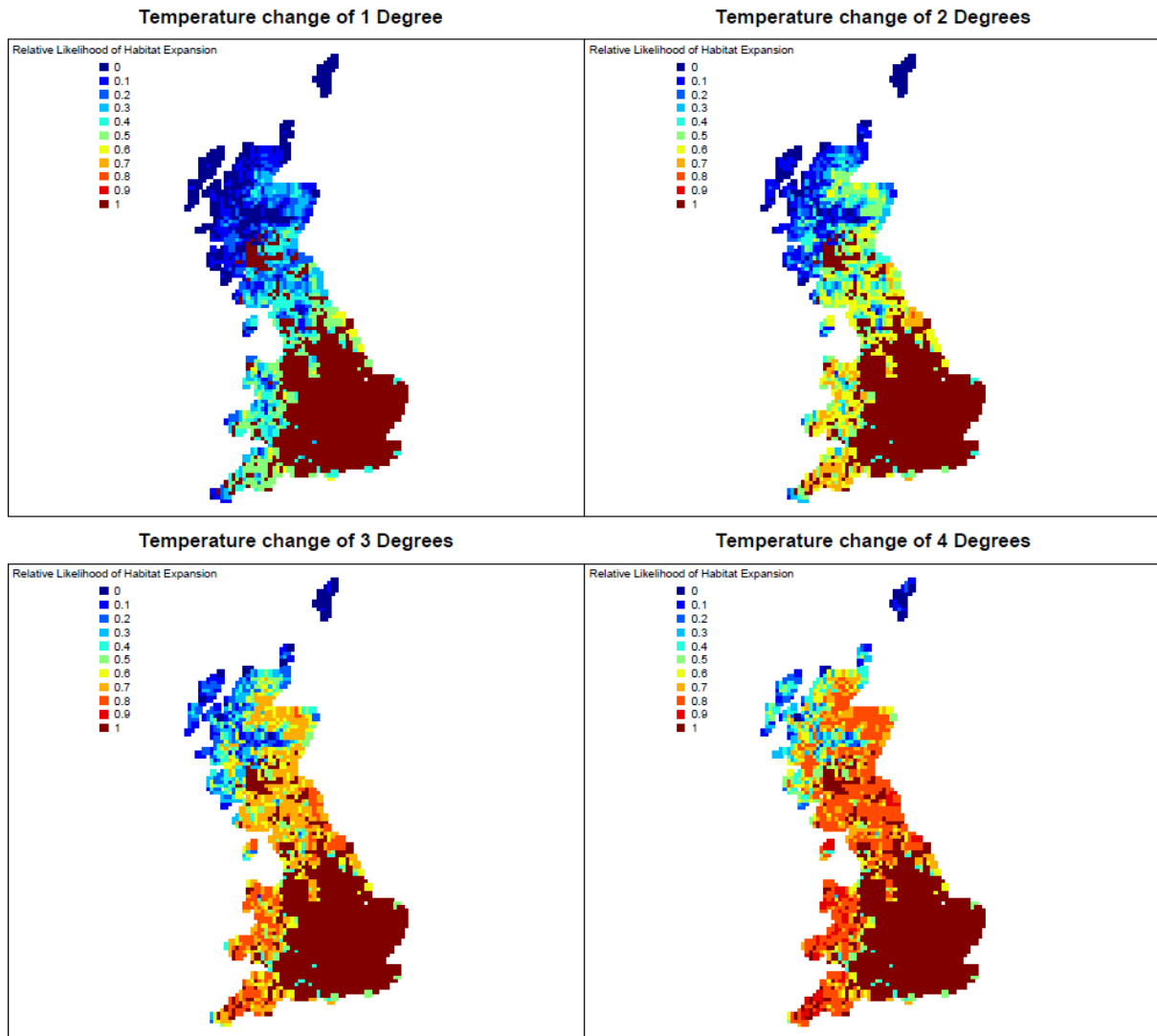
365 **Fig. 2** Box plots of the number of 10 km grids where roach presence is predicted using the
366 11 UKCIP climate change scenarios for the following decades: 2030-2039, 2060-2069 and
367 2090-2099. These data are further categorised spatially to cover (a) Great Britain, (b)
368 England, (c) Wales and (d) Scotland. Double headed arrows indicate paired t-tests and level
369 of statistical significance (NS = Not Significant $P > 0.05$, * = $P < 0.05$, ** = $P < 0.01$, *** =
370 $P < 0.001$).

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376 (Note: higher resolution pdf available)

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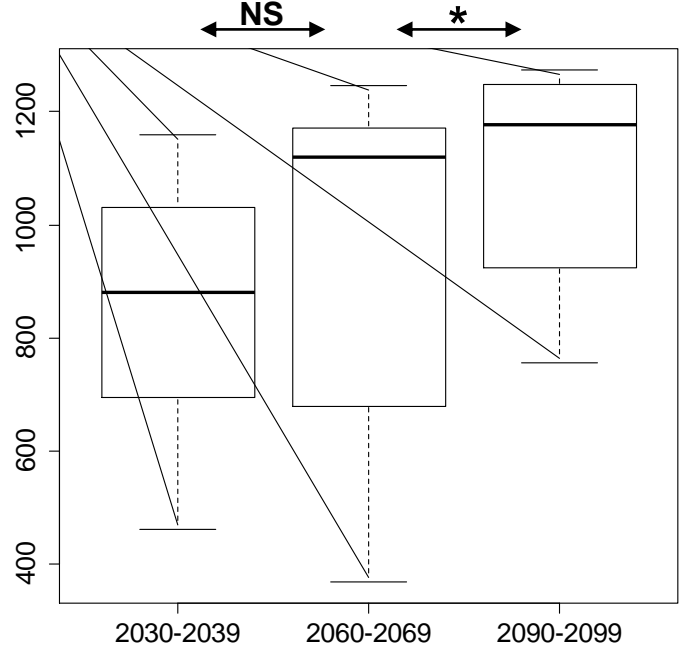
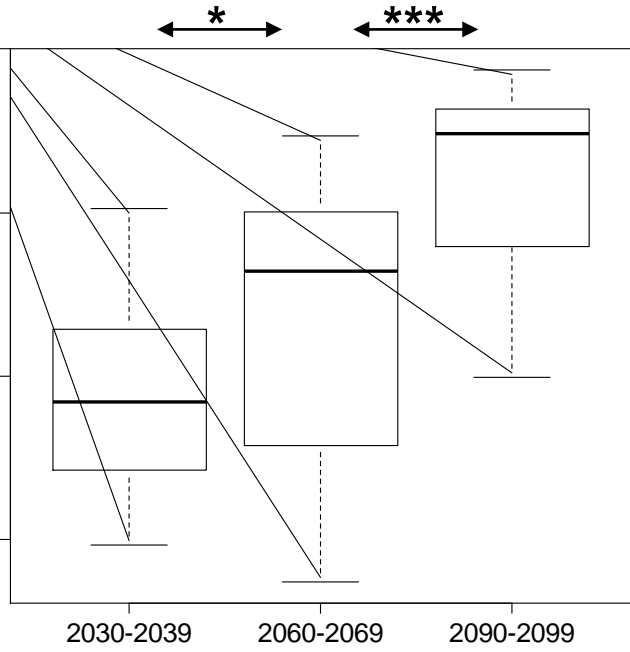
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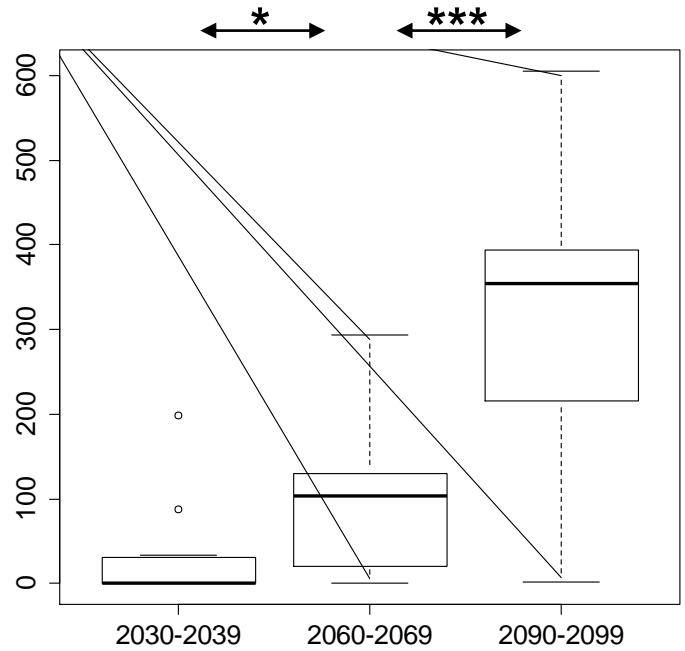
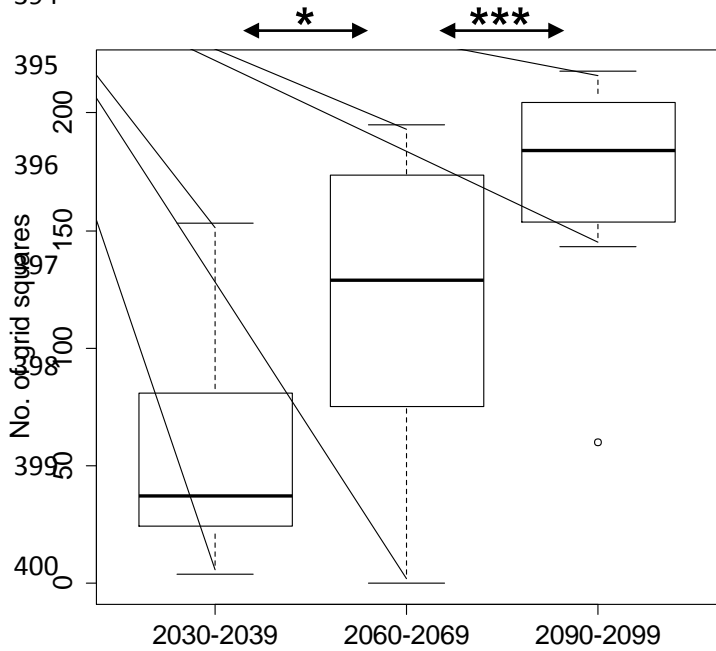
(a) Great Britain

(b) England



(c) Wales

(d) Scotland



Time period (decade)