

# A Periodic Matrix Model of Seabird Behavior and Population Dynamics

Mykhaylo M. Malakhov<sup>1</sup>, Benjamin MacDonald<sup>2</sup>, Shandelle M. Henson<sup>1,3</sup>, J. M. Cushing<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Mathematics, Andrews University <sup>2</sup>Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Vermont <sup>3</sup>Department of Biology, Andrews University <sup>4</sup>Interdisciplinary Program in Applied Mathematics, Department of Mathematics, University of Arizona

## Abstract

Rising sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the Pacific Northwest lead to food resource reductions for surface-feeding seabirds, and have been correlated with several marked behavioral changes. Namely, higher SSTs are associated with increased egg cannibalism and egg-laying synchrony in the colony. We study the long-term effects of climate change on population dynamics and survival by considering a simplified, cross-season model that incorporates both of these behaviors in addition to density-dependent and environmental effects. We show that cannibalism can lead to backward bifurcations and strong Allee effects, allowing the population to survive at lower resource levels than would be possible otherwise.

## Background

- Increases in SSTs in the Pacific Northwest depress marine food webs, leading to decreased resource levels for surface-feeding seabirds such as glaucous-winged gulls (*Larus glaucescens*)
- Decreased resource levels lead to:
  - increased egg cannibalism
  - increased egg-laying synchrony
- What are the consequences of these changes on long-term population persistence and dynamics?
- The presence of backward bifurcations would imply that the population can survive at a low resource level, in a region for which the net reproductive number  $R_0 < 1$

## Model and Analysis

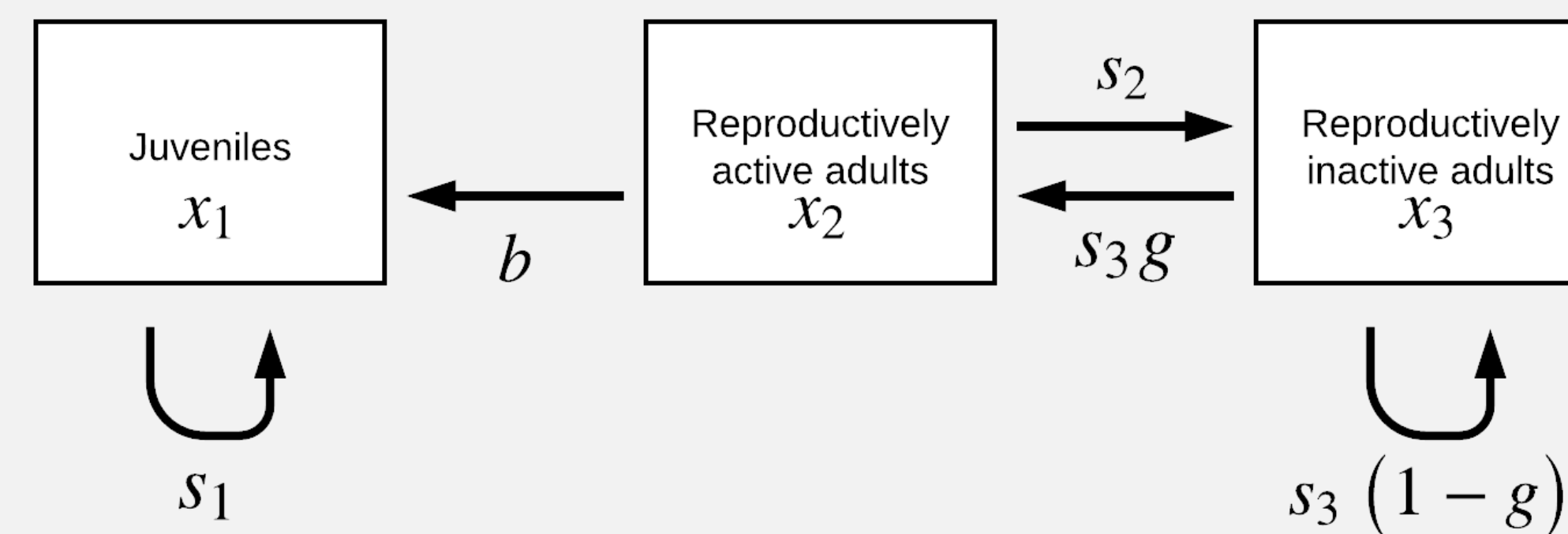


Figure 1: Within-season dynamics

The model is a  $k$ -periodically-forced, nonlinear, three-dimensional map

$$\mathbf{x}(t+1) = C(t, \mathbf{x}(t))\mathbf{x}(t)$$

where the time step is one day and

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \text{juveniles} \\ \text{reproductively active adults} \\ \text{reproductively inactive adults} \end{pmatrix}.$$

The projection matrix

$$C(t, \mathbf{x}) = \begin{cases} W(\mathbf{x}) & \text{for } t = 0, 1, \dots, k-2 \\ A & \text{for } t = k-1 \end{cases}$$

is extended periodically for all  $t \geq 0$ . The within-season and between-season projection matrices are, respectively,

$$W(\mathbf{x}) = \begin{pmatrix} s_1 f(1 - \pi_2(x_2)x_2)(1 - \pi_3(x_3)x_3) & b f \varphi(\mathbf{x}) & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & s_3 f \beta_3(\mathbf{x}) g(x_2) \\ 0 & s_2 f \beta_2(\mathbf{x}) & s_3 f \beta_3(\mathbf{x})(1 - g(x_2)) \end{pmatrix}$$

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ \nu & \nu & \nu \\ 1 - \nu & 1 - \nu & 1 - \nu \end{pmatrix}.$$

- We implemented the model in MATLAB in order to create bifurcation diagrams with  $\rho$  as the bifurcation parameter
- We also studied it analytically:
  - the model can be reduced to an autonomous scalar map of the form  $P_{n+1} = r(P_n)P_n$ , where  $P = x_1 + x_2 + x_3$
  - we found  $r(P)$  for  $k = 3$ , and linearized it around an equilibrium  $P_e$
  - the primary bifurcation point occurs when  $r(0) = 1$ 
    - $\frac{dr}{dP}(0) > 0 \Rightarrow \lambda > 1$  and the positive branch is unstable
    - $\frac{dr}{dP}(0) < 0 \Rightarrow \lambda < 1$  and the positive branch is stable

## Conclusions

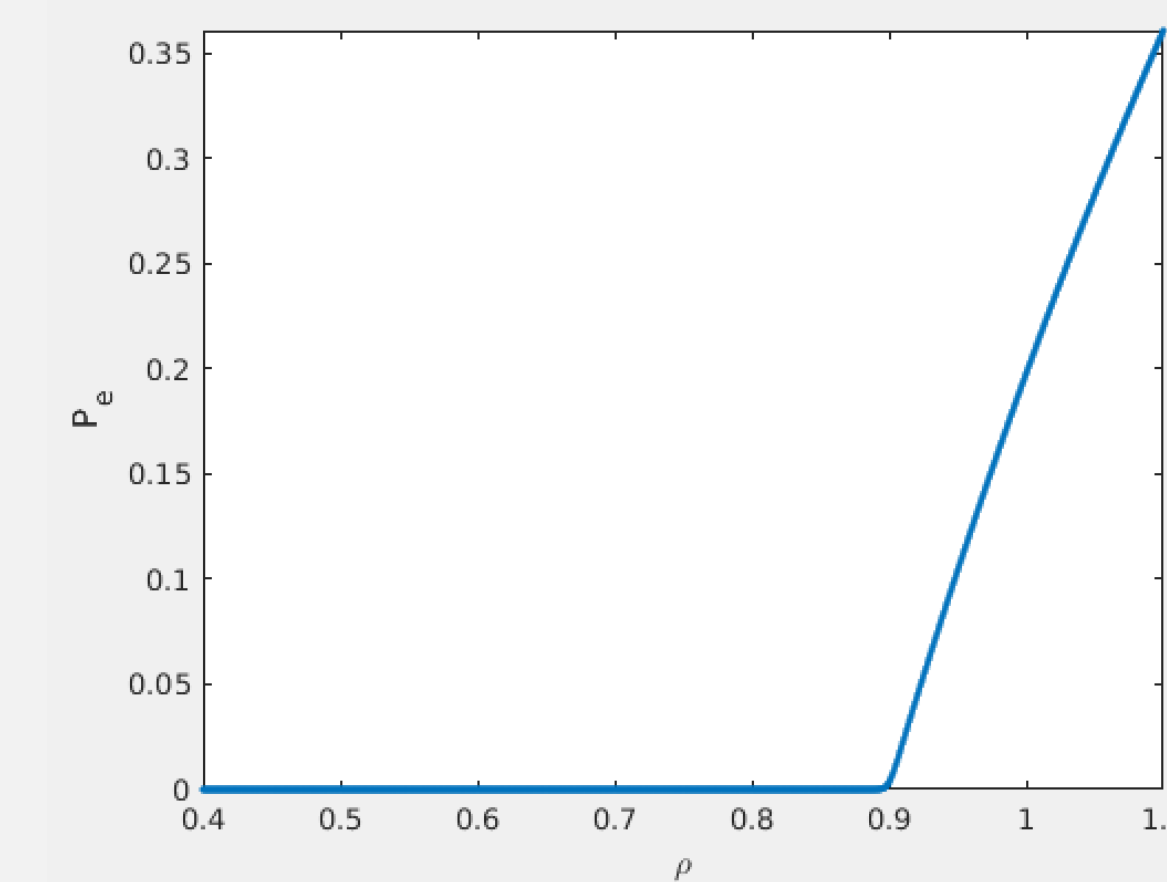


Figure 2: Without cannibalism, stable (forward) bifurcation

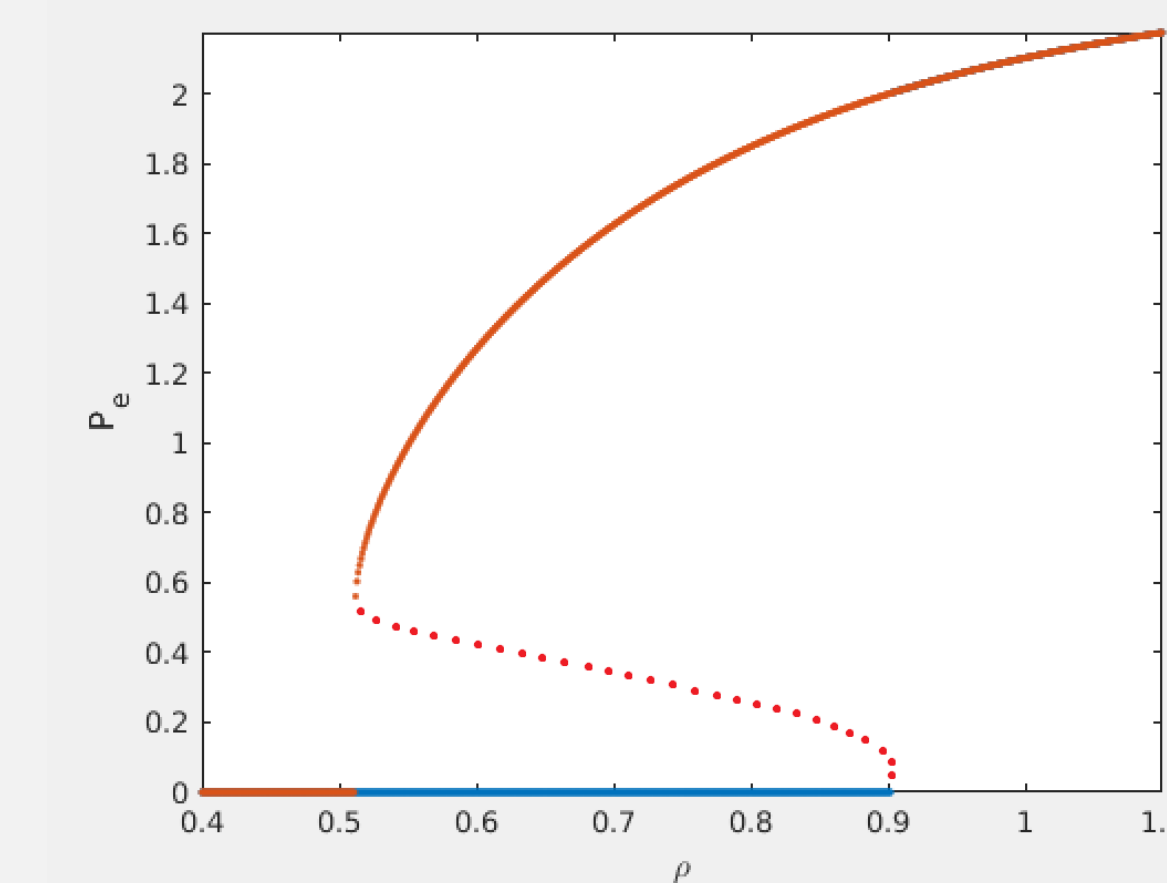


Figure 3: With cannibalism, unstable (backward) bifurcation

### Theorems ( $k = 3$ ):

- The net effect of synchrony is negative.
- Greater  $\rho$  values are needed for the onset of a stable equilibrium in the presence of full synchrony than in all other cases.
- Backward bifurcations can arise from cannibalism alone, but not from synchrony alone.

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Department of  
Mathematics  
Andrews University



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