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1 **Original Article:**

2 **Sub-orbital climatic variability and centres of biological diversity in**  
3 **the Cape region of southern Africa**

4 Brian Huntley<sup>1\*</sup>, Guy F. Midgley<sup>2,3</sup>, Phoebe Barnard<sup>2,4</sup> and Paul J. Valdes<sup>5</sup>

5 <sup>1</sup> School of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Durham University, South Road, Durham  
6 DH1 3LE, United Kingdom

7 <sup>2</sup> Climate Change and BioAdaptation Division, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Kirstenbosch  
8 Research Centre, P/Bag X7, Claremont 7735, Cape Town, South Africa

9 <sup>3</sup> School of Agricultural, Earth and Environmental, Sciences, University of Kwazulu-Natal,  
10 Pietermaritzburg Campus, Pvt Bag X101, Scottsville 3209, South Africa

11 <sup>4</sup> Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, DST/NRF Centre of Excellence,  
12 University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, Cape Town, South Africa

13 <sup>5</sup> School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol, University Road, Bristol BS8 1SS,  
14 United Kingdom

15 \* Corresponding author: Prof Brian Huntley  
16 School of Biological and Biomedical Sciences  
17 Durham University  
18 South Road  
19 Durham DH1 3LE  
20 United Kingdom  
21 brian.huntley@durham.ac.uk

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24 8070 (Abstract to References inclusive); 139 (Biosketch);  
25 74 references; 1 table; 5 figures; 10 keywords.

## 26 **Abstract**

27 **Aim:** To explore the magnitude and spatial patterns of last glacial stage orbitally-forced climatic changes  
28 and sub-orbital climatic fluctuations in southern Africa, and to evaluate their potential roles in determining  
29 present biodiversity patterns.

30 **Location:** Africa south of 15° S.

31 **Methods:** Palaeoclimate scenarios for southern Africa were derived for 17 time slices using outputs from  
32 HadCM3 atmosphere–ocean general circulation model experiments, including five designed to mimic  
33 Heinrich Events. Species' distribution models for birds of Karoo (45) or Fynbos (31) were used to simulate  
34 species' potential past distributions. Species-richness patterns were assessed for each time slice, and  
35 minimum species-richness for regional endemics of each biome determined for each grid cell. Areas of  
36 greatest 'stability' for endemics of each biome were identified using grid cells with greatest minimum  
37 richness.

38 **Results:** Simulated sub-orbital climatic fluctuations were of greater magnitude than orbitally-forced  
39 changes and had anomalies of opposite sign in many areas. The principal local driver of sub-orbital  
40 fluctuations was marked contrasts in South Atlantic circulation and temperature between experiments  
41 mimicking Heinrich Events and those with only slow forcings. These contrasts in ocean circulation and  
42 temperature were consistent with marine sediment core evidence of changes in the South Atlantic  
43 coincident with Heinrich Events in the North Atlantic. Whereas orbitally-forced last glacial climates  
44 generally resulted in range expansions and increased species richness in many grid cells compared to  
45 present, the contrasting conditions of Heinrich Events resulted in much reduced ranges and species  
46 richness, especially for Karoo species. Very few grid cells remained suitable for larger numbers of  
47 endemic species of either biome under all palaeoclimate scenarios examined, but this minority of 'stable'  
48 grid cells correspond to present diversity centres.

49 **Main Conclusions:** Sub-orbital climatic fluctuations during the last glacial stage were likely of  
50 considerable magnitude in southern Africa. This may account for apparent inconsistencies between  
51 regional palaeoclimate records, as well as being key to determining present biodiversity patterns.

52 **Keywords:**  
53 birds;  
54 Cape Floristic Province;  
55 endemics;  
56 Fynbos;  
57 Heinrich Events;  
58 hosing experiments;  
59 last glacial stage;  
60 South Atlantic;  
61 species distribution models;  
62 Succulent Karoo.

## 63 Introduction

64 The Cape Floristic Province has long been recognised as an area of extreme diversity of vascular plants,  
65 with high levels of endemism (Good, 1964; Goldblatt & Manning, 2002); it is also a centre of diversity and  
66 endemism for various animal groups (e.g. Stuckenberg, 1962; Branch *et al.*, 1995; Skelton *et al.*, 1995;  
67 Picker & Samways, 1996; Proches & Cowling, 2006). Two biomes, Fynbos and Succulent Karoo, defined  
68 by dominance of distinct plant functional types (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006), characterise the region  
69 (Midgley *et al.*, 2005). Each biome has a high overall species diversity and high level of endemism; both  
70 also have well-recognised centres of diversity. They are also currently under threat from various forms of  
71 human land-use; as a result they have been identified as priority areas for conservation (Myers *et al.*,  
72 2000; Mittermeier *et al.*, 2004). Developing effective strategies to achieve the conservation of such  
73 important centres of biological diversity (Cowling & Pressey, 2003), however, requires an understanding of  
74 the factors determining their locations (Cowling & Lombard, 2002). This becomes especially important in  
75 a world with rapidly increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations and human land-use pressures,  
76 as well as changing climates.

77 Understanding the origin and persistence of such centres of biological diversity provides insights into  
78 their potential vulnerabilities and is crucial to formulating biodiversity conservation strategies. A wide  
79 range of hypotheses has been advanced to account for global biodiversity patterns (Gaston, 2000), and  
80 especially for the location of centres of biodiversity. Broadly, these hypotheses fall into two categories,  
81 those that focus upon the present environment and those that invoke historical factors. Although patterns  
82 of global productivity, present climatic patterns and topographic diversity all have been shown to correlate  
83 with biodiversity patterns to some extent and in at least some regions (Rahbek & Graves, 2001; Jetz &  
84 Rahbek, 2002; Thuiller *et al.*, 2006), such determinants alone cannot generally account fully for present  
85 patterns (Jetz *et al.*, 2004). When historical factors have been considered, these have often been shown  
86 to provide a more complete explanation of the observed patterns (Huntley, 1993; Araújo *et al.*, 2008;  
87 Voelker *et al.*, 2010). Some such studies invoke processes operating over geological time scales of  
88 millions to tens of millions of years, often with an emphasis upon tectonic processes, or focus upon  
89 substantial long-term climatic or other environmental changes that occurred millions of years ago,  
90 especially during the Tertiary Period (e.g. Linder & Hardy, 2004) or at the transition from the Tertiary to  
91 Quaternary Periods (e.g. Voelker *et al.*, 2010). Others focus upon the Quaternary Period (the last

ca. 2.6 Ma), mainly considering the large magnitude changes in global climates associated especially with the alternating glacial and interglacial stages that characterise the last million years or so of that Period (e.g. Huntley, 1993; Dynesius & Jansson, 2000). These and other multi-millennial Quaternary climatic changes result from predictable periodic variations in the Earth's orbital characteristics with frequencies of  $10^1 - 10^2$  ka (Hays *et al.*, 1976). The impacts of these orbital changes upon the global climate have been studied using both geological evidence and general circulation models (GCMs) of the climate system (COHMAP Members, 1988; Wright *et al.*, 1993), and a mechanism has been advanced to explain how the differing relative impacts of these changes in different regions can account for global biodiversity patterns (Dynesius & Jansson, 2000).

The diversity of the Cape Floristic Province, and of the Fynbos and Succulent Karoo biomes in particular, cannot readily be explained solely by factors relating to the present environment (Cowling & Lombard, 2002; Tolley *et al.*, 2006), and it has been argued that it may reflect climatic changes between glacial and interglacial stages of the Quaternary, and consequent repeated and reciprocal expansions and contractions of the two biomes (Midgley & Roberts, 2001). However, the general circulation model (GCM) simulations used to simulate the shifting extents and distributions of the two biomes in the latter study were perpetual January and July simulations made using CCM0 (Kutzbach & Guetter, 1986), an early GCM that simulated only the atmospheric general circulation, sea surface temperatures for the simulations being prescribed following CLIMAP (CLIMAP Members, 1976). Advances in GCMs since those early simulations not only enable full seasonal cycles to be simulated, but, more importantly, especially given the role that it is now clear is played by the ocean thermohaline circulation (THC) in rapid climatic changes, provide coupled simulations of both ocean and atmosphere dynamics. Palaeoclimate experiments made using such coupled atmosphere–ocean models, and designed to explore how the climate system responds to orbital forcing, have indicated that southern Africa experienced relatively modest climatic changes on orbital time scales (Dynesius & Jansson, 2000). However, this appears inconsistent with evidence from terrestrial palaeoclimatic records that has been interpreted as indicating a mean cooling of 5 – 6°C during the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM), with winter temperatures as much as 8 – 10°C cooler than present, and conditions generally moister in the west and drier in the east of the region (Chase & Meadows, 2007).

Although, given the limitations of available terrestrial records from southern Africa that are “*rarely of sufficient length or resolution to justify correlation with anything beyond the broadest cycles of climate*

121 *variability*" (Chase & Meadows, 2007, p. 133), such a generalised interpretation is all that currently can be  
122 achieved with confidence, the evidence synthesised by Chase and Meadows (2007), as well as by earlier  
123 authors (Deacon & Lancaster, 1988; Meadows & Baxter, 1999), contains some apparent inconsistencies.  
124 Notable amongst these, as Chase and Meadows (2007) discuss, are conflicts between ages ascribed to  
125 phases of dune activity in the Kalahari, interpreted as arid phases, and the often similar ages ascribed to  
126 evidence of increased regional moisture availability. Furthermore, as Chase and Meadows (2007, p. 116)  
127 observe, "*There is ... marked variability within the LGM, highlighting the possibility that the homogenisation*  
128 *inherent in the interpretation of the lower resolution records from the region is likely to mask potentially*  
129 *important shifts in climate systems during this period*". This observation becomes especially relevant in  
130 the context of the increasing volume of evidence that rapid climatic shifts of large magnitude occurred at  
131 sub-orbital (i.e. millennial) time scales during the Pleistocene. Evidence of such millennial climatic  
132 fluctuations during the last glacial stage has been reported from a variety of palaeoclimatic records,  
133 including ice cores (e.g. GRIP Members, 1993; Blunier & Brook, 2001; Andersen *et al.*, 2004; Wolff *et al.*,  
134 2010), corals (e.g. Yokoyama *et al.*, 2000), cave deposits (e.g. Wang *et al.*, 2008) and palaeovegetation  
135 records from lake sediment cores (e.g. Grimm *et al.*, 1993; Allen *et al.*, 1999; Allen *et al.*, 2000). Evidence  
136 from ice cores taken in Greenland and Antarctica clearly establishes that such large climatic changes  
137 occurred at millennial time scales not only throughout the last glacial (Wolff *et al.*, 2010) but during at least  
138 the last eight glacial stages (Loulergue *et al.*, 2008). It has also become clear that variation in the strength  
139 of the THC, and the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) in particular, plays a key role both  
140 as a mechanism for rapid climatic changes and in linking changes in distant regions of the globe (Broecker,  
141 1992). Notably, the bi-polar see-saw of alternating stadials and interstadials in the northern and southern  
142 hemispheres (Blunier & Brook, 2001) is linked to alternations between different patterns of the THC (Vidal  
143 *et al.*, 1999). Despite the wealth of evidence now available relating to the ubiquity, rapidity and magnitude  
144 of sub-orbital climatic variations, during Pleistocene glacial stages in particular, the potential relevance of  
145 these variations to the origins of present biodiversity patterns has not generally been considered.  
146 Furthermore, their potential impacts in southern Africa, that may help explain apparent inconsistencies in  
147 the palaeoclimatic record, also have not been explored to-date. However, recent experiments using fully-  
148 coupled models of the general circulations of the atmosphere and oceans (AOGCMs), and designed to  
149 explore millennial-scale variability of glacial climates (Kageyama *et al.*, 2010; Singarayer & Valdes, 2010),  
150 have shown that the area is likely to have been extremely sensitive to such sub-orbital climatic fluctuations.

151 We have used a recent internally-consistent series of AOGCM experiments spanning the last glacial–  
152 interglacial cycle made using HadCM3, and including so-called ‘hosing’ experiments (in which large a large  
153 volume of fresh water is added to the North Atlantic to mimic the melting of ice-berg armadas) designed to  
154 mimic Heinrich Events (Singarayer & Valdes, 2010), to explore the potential sensitivity of southern African  
155 palaeoclimates to orbital and other slow forcings, as well as to changes in the THC during Heinrich Events,  
156 comparing the simulated palaeoclimatic changes to various records of the regional palaeoclimate. We  
157 have also used the AOGCM experiment results to re-examine the hypothesised role of Pleistocene climatic  
158 changes in accounting for present patterns of diversity and endemism in the Fynbos and Succulent Karoo,  
159 taking into account not just orbitally-forced climatic changes but also sub-orbital climatic fluctuations. To  
160 do this we first fitted species’ distribution models, relating species’ recorded present distributions to a small  
161 number of bioclimatic variables, for a series of bird species associated with either Fynbos or Karoo,  
162 including many species endemic to southern Africa. We then used these models to simulate species’  
163 potential distributions for 17 palaeoclimate scenarios. We chose to model birds because their southern  
164 African distributions have been mapped more completely and systematically than have those of any other  
165 taxonomic group in the region (Harrison *et al.*, 1997). They also have a substantial rate of endemism in  
166 southern Africa, show greater diversity in the Cape Floristic Province than in adjacent areas to the north  
167 (Jetz *et al.*, 2004), and include species strongly associated with the Karoo and Fynbos biomes.



## 168 **Methods**

169 Observed climatic data for 1961–90 ('present') were obtained from a global compilation of mean monthly  
170 data at 0.5° longitude x latitude resolution (New *et al.*, 1999). Seventeen palaeoclimate scenarios, for 6,  
171 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48 and 120 ka BP, and for Heinrich Events H1 (17 ka BP), H2 (24 ka BP),  
172 H3 (32 ka BP), H4 (38 ka BP) and H5 (46 ka BP), were derived from the series of experiments performed  
173 by Singarayer and Valdes (2010) using the HadCM3 AOGCM. These 17 experiments were selected  
174 because together they span the range of conditions simulated during the last interglacial–glacial cycle.  
175 Anomalies for monthly mean temperature, precipitation and cloudiness values, relative to a pre-industrial  
176 experiment, were calculated for each palaeoclimate experiment for each GCM grid cell. Using thin-plate  
177 spline surfaces fitted to the GCM anomalies for each of the 36 variables (Hutchinson, 1989), the anomalies  
178 for each palaeoclimate experiment were then interpolated from the GCM resolution to the 0.5° grid for  
179 which the 1961–90 observed climatic data were available, this grid being extended to shelf areas exposed  
180 by the lowered sea level of glacial times as described by Huntley *et al.* (2013). Interpolated anomalies  
181 were then applied to the 1961–90 data, and the resulting monthly mean values of temperature, precipitation  
182 and cloudiness used to calculate, for the cells of the 0.5° grid, the bioclimatic variables used to model bird  
183 species' distributions. Monthly mean values of temperature, precipitation and cloudiness for the 0.25°  
184 cells used to record bird distributions were obtained by bilinear interpolation from the surrounding cells of  
185 the 0.5° grid and used to calculate the bioclimatic variable values for the 0.25° cells.

186 Bird species' data used were from the first Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP, 1987–91)  
187 (Harrison *et al.*, 1997) that mapped each species' reporting rate, a proxy for abundance (Huntley *et al.*,  
188 2012), for 0.25° longitude x latitude grid cells in South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe,  
189 and for 0.5° grid cells in Botswana. Response surface models (Huntley *et al.*, 2006; Huntley *et al.*, 2007;  
190 Huntley *et al.*, 2012) were fitted, using locally-weighted regression (Cleveland & Devlin, 1988), to relate  
191 species' reporting rates for the SABAP grid cells to a series of bioclimatic variables for those grid cells.  
192 Each model used four bioclimatic variables. All models used the mean temperatures of the coldest and  
193 warmest months and an annual integral of the ratio of actual to potential evapotranspiration (Hole *et al.*,  
194 2009). The fourth variable used was whichever of two measures, one the intensity of the wet season and  
195 the other the intensity of the dry season (Huntley *et al.*, 2006), gave the model with the better overall  
196 goodness-of-fit, the latter being assessed by considering the consensus of a series of 11 measures, as

197 described by Huntley and Barnard (2012); these measures included Cohen's kappa (Cohen, 1960), area  
198 under the curve of a receiver operating characteristic plot (Metz, 1978) and the true skill statistic (Allouche  
199 *et al.*, 2006).

200 An initial selection of 48 Karoo and 32 Fynbos bird species was made by identifying those species listed  
201 by Hockey *et al.* (2005) as having Karoo or Fynbos as their main habitat. Of these, three Karoo and one  
202 Fynbos species were not mapped by SABAP because they were more recent taxonomic splits, only the  
203 previous unsplit taxon having been mapped. We were thus able to fit models for 45 Karoo species (19  
204 endemic to southern Africa) and 31 Fynbos species (24 endemic to southern Africa); 10 species were  
205 common to both Karoo and Fynbos (Table 1). All species gave satisfactory models in terms of their  
206 goodness-of-fit measures when used to simulate species' present distributions for the cells of the SABAP  
207 grid (Table 1). All were hence used to make projections of species' potential present and past  
208 distributions for the cells of a 0.5° grid across the region, and the potential species' distributions used to  
209 assess potential changes in species richness.

210 Results from the simulations of species' potential distributions were summarised by counting and  
211 mapping the numbers of species for which each grid cell was potentially suitable under each palaeoclimate  
212 scenario. The potential extent and stability of areas of higher species richness was then assessed by  
213 counting the number of palaeoclimate scenarios for which each grid cell was potentially suitable for more  
214 than appropriate threshold numbers of Karoo (> 20, > 30) or Fynbos (> 10, > 15) species. Finally, the  
215 minimum number of Karoo or Fynbos species endemic to southern Africa for which each grid cell was  
216 suitable under the 1961–90 climate and all 17 palaeoclimate scenarios was determined.

## 217 **Results**

218 Figures 1 and 2 present maps of two of the four bioclimatic variables used to fit the species' models, those  
219 variables illustrated being two that are readily compared with palaeoclimatic reconstructions for the region,  
220 namely the mean temperature of the coldest month (MTCO) and the annual integral of the ratio of actual to  
221 potential evapotranspiration (APET), the latter a measure of overall moisture availability. In each case the  
222 first panel of the figure maps the observed present (i.e. 1961–90) values whilst the other 17 panels map  
223 anomalies between the values simulated by the AOGCM for a particular time slice and values simulated by  
224 the AOGCM in the pre-industrial ('control') experiment.

225 Focusing first upon the anomaly maps for the 'normal' AOGCM experiments, in which only the relatively  
226 'slow' forcing factors (orbital configuration; atmospheric composition; ice sheet extent and topography;  
227 sea-level; and land–sea mask) are changed, a number of key results emerge. Firstly, the simulated  
228 palaeoclimatic changes are not spatially uniform across the region, instead showing marked and often  
229 temporally consistent spatial patterns, anomalies often being of opposite sign in different parts of the  
230 region. Notable in this context is the consistent area of cooler but markedly drier conditions in the Eastern  
231 Cape seen in the three simulations that span the LGM (18, 21 and 24 ka BP) that contrasts with the much  
232 less marked cooling and drying simulated for the Western Cape and with the generally marginally moister  
233 conditions simulated to the north. Secondly, although there is some consistency in the magnitude of the  
234 simulated changes in moisture availability (Figure 2) and their spatial patterning across the three  
235 simulations spanning the LGM, this consistency does not extend to other time slices of the last glacial  
236 stage, when the orbital forcing, in particular, differed from that around the LGM, nor is it seen overall in the  
237 simulated changes in winter temperature (Figure 1). Thirdly, the general magnitude of the simulated LGM  
238 cooling of winter temperatures at the LGM (21 ka BP) is relatively small, at 2 – 3°C across most of the  
239 region. Fourthly, most of the region is simulated to have been marginally moister at the LGM, although  
240 with drying in some areas and greater increases in moisture in others, notably in the extreme north-east of  
241 the region.

242 Turning to the Holocene and last interglacial time slices, these simulations show generally marginally drier  
243 conditions across the region, although with the south-west Cape a striking and consistent exception that is  
244 marginally moister in all cases. The strongest drying is seen in the last interglacial (120 ka BP) time slice

245 and especially in the north-west of the region. Perhaps surprisingly, winter temperatures are simulated  
246 generally to have been consistently marginally cooler (anomalies of  $-1 - 0^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in the southern part of the  
247 region at these times, but warmer, by up to  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$ , in central northern parts of the region. Strikingly, in the  
248 simulations for both 6 and 120 ka BP there is an area of cooling, by as much as  $3^{\circ}\text{C}$ , in the north-west of  
249 the region centred on the highlands of western Namibia. This is related to a simulated intensification of  
250 the Benguela upwelling at these times.

251 The most striking changes, however, and the anomalies of greatest magnitude, are seen in the results from  
252 the five simulations designed to mimic Heinrich Events H1 – H5. In all five simulations winter  
253 temperatures are simulated to show a strong spatial pattern of change, with positive anomalies of  $2 - 3^{\circ}\text{C}$   
254 along the west coast and negative anomalies of  $-4 - -5^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the north-east or north of the region. Moisture  
255 availability anomalies also show generally consistent, but much more complex, spatial patterning across  
256 the five experiments. The north-west, especially the area now occupied by the Namib Desert, is  
257 consistently simulated to be markedly moister, with APET anomalies  $> 0.4$ . Most of the rest of the region  
258 shows moist anomalies, although the increase in moisture availability is consistently less in the southern  
259 Kalahari. A striking and consistent area of simulated drier conditions coincides with parts of north-east  
260 Namibia, south-east Angola and north-west Botswana today occupied by an extensive stabilised linear  
261 dune field that has been shown to have had several phases of activity during the last glacial stage (Thomas  
262 *et al.*, 2000). The principal mechanism underlying these simulated changes in the terrestrial palaeoclimate  
263 is a simulated weakening and movement offshore of the Benguela Current, and a poleward shift of the  
264 Angola–Benguela front.

265 Figure 3 shows the spatial patterns of species-richness for Karoo and Fynbos bird species simulated for the  
266 climate of 1961–90, and for climates simulated for the ‘Holocene thermal optimum’ (HTO – 6 ka BP), LGM  
267 (21 ka BP) and a Heinrich Event (H2 – 24 ka BP). These time slices were selected because their species-  
268 richness patterns represent the variety of those seen across all 17 palaeoclimate scenarios. These maps  
269 lead to a number of conclusions about the potential impacts of late-Quaternary climatic changes on  
270 biodiversity patterns in southern Africa. Firstly, notwithstanding the relatively modest magnitude of the  
271 climatic changes simulated in response to the slow forcings, and especially to orbital changes, these  
272 climatic changes result in substantial changes in the potential distributions of species of both the Karoo and  
273 Fynbos, and consequent marked changes in their species-richness patterns. In particular, and in contrast

274 to previous studies (Midgley & Roberts, 2001), the extent of the area of richness of Karoo species is  
275 considerably expanded northwards under LGM conditions (Fig. 3(c)); that of Fynbos species also  
276 expands, albeit to a lesser extent, but principally towards the east and north-east (Fig. 3(g)). Perhaps  
277 surprisingly, both species groups also show small increases in the extent of their areas of richness at the  
278 HTO. The potential impacts of sub-orbital climatic changes associated with shut-down of the AMOC  
279 during Heinrich Events, however, are much more substantial than those arising primarily from orbital  
280 forcing. The climate simulated for H2 leads to very much reduced potential distributions of species in both  
281 groups, and hence much reduced extents of their areas of richness, relative not only to those simulated for  
282 the LGM palaeoclimate but also for both the 6 ka BP and present climates. Two outlying areas of potential  
283 richness should be noted: Both species groups show an area of potential richness in north-western  
284 Namibia for the 1961–90, HTO and LGM climates, and both species groups show an area of potential  
285 richness for the H2 climate that coincides with the area of linear dunes mentioned earlier.

286 In order to summarise the results for all time slices in terms of the changing extent of the areas of  
287 species richness for the two species groups, the number of cells potentially suitable for more than  
288 appropriate threshold numbers of species in each group was counted for each time slice. These values  
289 are shown in Figure 4, plotted against the ages of the time slices. Also shown on the figure is summer  
290 (December 21<sup>st</sup> – January 20<sup>th</sup>) insolation at 30°S, calculated following Laskar *et al.* (2004), to illustrate the  
291 principal orbital forcing. Figure 4 reveals systematic temporal patterns in the potential numbers of  
292 species-rich grid cells. Firstly, the potential number of species-rich grid cells for Karoo species, especially  
293 those with >20 species, varies systematically at orbital time scales, to a large extent more or less  
294 paralleling summer insolation at 30°S that in turn is dominated by the *ca.* 21 thousand year precession  
295 cycle. Secondly, the potential number of species-rich grid cells for the Fynbos species, especially those  
296 with >10 species, also appears to vary systematically at orbital time scales, although in contrast to the  
297 Karoo species it reaches a maximum around the time of the obliquity minimum at *ca.* 30 ka BP, and shows  
298 a similar value to the present at 120 ka BP when obliquity was also close to the present value (Laskar *et*  
299 *al.*, 2004). Thirdly, the potential number of species-rich grid cells for Karoo species is markedly reduced  
300 under the climatic conditions simulated for Heinrich Events, with reductions of relatively greater magnitude  
301 when summer insolation at 30°S is higher. Fourthly, the potential number of species-rich grid cells for  
302 Fynbos species also is generally reduced for the Heinrich Event climates, although mostly to a much lesser

303 extent than for the Karoo species; exceptions, however, are seen for H2 (24 ka BP), when the reduction is  
304 more marked than for other events, and especially for H3 (32 ka BP), when the potential number of  
305 species-rich grid cells is increased compared to both 30 and 36 ka BP. These results suggest that, not  
306 unexpectedly, the impacts of Heinrich Events on the regional climate, and hence on potential biodiversity  
307 patterns, depend upon the prevailing orbital configuration.

308 In order to explore the extent to which the varying climatic conditions of the last glacial–interglacial cycle  
309 may have influenced the location of present centres of biodiversity and endemism in the region, Figure 5  
310 maps minimum numbers of species of each biome, and endemic to southern Africa, for which each grid cell  
311 was suitable across all 17 palaeoclimate scenarios as well as the 1961–90 climate. As a result of the  
312 magnitude of the impacts of the simulated climatic changes, only a very small minority of grid cells remains  
313 suitable for any substantial number of species endemic to southern Africa in either group under all 18  
314 climates examined. Only 8 0.5° grid cells consistently support 11 or more of the 19 endemics associated  
315 with Karoo, four of them consistently supporting 12 of these species and a single grid cell consistently  
316 supporting 13 of them. The areas that larger numbers of species were able consistently to occupy lie in  
317 the Tanqua and Little Karoo and the coastal Richtersveld areas, coinciding with areas of high present  
318 floristic diversity (Thuiller *et al.*, 2006). In the Fynbos, 11 0.5° grid cells consistently support 7 or more of  
319 the 24 endemics associated with this biome, with just four supporting 8 of these species. Once again, the  
320 areas able consistently to be occupied by larger numbers of species coincide with areas of higher present  
321 floristic and overall diversity within the biome (Thuiller *et al.*, 2006).

## 322 Discussion

323 In regions such as southern Africa, where relatively few terrestrial records of late-Quaternary palaeoclimatic  
324 conditions have been investigated, and many of those records are fragmentary or discontinuous, leading to  
325 a reliance upon often rather imprecise dates when making any comparisons amongst records, a modelling  
326 approach such as we have adopted potentially can provide important insights and/or generate new testable  
327 hypotheses. Of course, to be of value in such ways the models used must first be demonstrated to give  
328 simulated palaeoclimates that are consistent with those records that are available from the region.  
329 However, making the necessary comparison of model results and palaeoclimate records is itself rendered  
330 difficult when, as in the present case, at least some of the palaeoclimatic evidence appears contradictory.  
331 This difficulty is compounded by the lack of continuous, high-resolution terrestrial palaeoclimatic records  
332 that might record the millennial climatic fluctuations that characterise the last glacial stage. For this reason  
333 we first explore comparisons between the results of the AOGCM experiments and marine records from the  
334 South Atlantic that are both continuous and of sufficient resolution to reveal millennial fluctuations,  
335 especially those associated with Heinrich Events.

336 As described above, the largest magnitude regional climatic changes were seen in the experiments  
337 designed to mimic Heinrich Events and thus to generate climatic conditions characteristic of extreme  
338 Greenland Stadial intervals. In the South Atlantic, the “hosing” simulations produce a general warming  
339 which is a consistent and robust feature of GCM simulations seeking to mimic Heinrich Events (Kageyama  
340 *et al.*, 2010), and is consistent with ice-core evidence for a bi-polar see-saw (Blunier & Brook, 2001) with  
341 respect to temperatures during the last glacial. The “hosing” also shifts the position of the ITCZ and  
342 changes the overall latitudinal temperature gradient. These changes are intimately linked to a weakening  
343 of the south-east trade winds that are a major driver of the Benguela current which changes significantly.  
344 There is also a poleward shift of the Angola–Benguela front. At present, and under the orbitally-forced  
345 scenarios, the Benguela Current (which is a cold eastern boundary current) maintains cool dry conditions in  
346 the west of southern Africa. In the “hosing” simulations, the weaker trade winds and current shifts result in  
347 a broad change in upwelling waters along the west coast of southern Africa; this is supported by evidence  
348 from marine sediment cores indicating such changes coincident with the timing of Heinrich Events (Kim *et*  
349 *al.*, 2003). Similar evidence indicates a reduced contrast in temperature between waters north and south

350 of the Angola–Benguela Front at these times (Kim *et al.*, 2003). There is also evidence linking the vigour  
351 of the south-east trade winds to the extent of Antarctic sea ice (Stuut *et al.*, 2004), with weakening of the  
352 trade winds when Antarctic sea ice extent is reduced, as it was during the Antarctic warming episodes that  
353 coincide with Heinrich Events in the North Atlantic. The AOGCM modelling results, and the palaeoclimate  
354 scenarios derived from them, thus appear consistent overall with the available evidence from marine  
355 sediment cores in the South Atlantic.

356 When we turn to the terrestrial palaeoclimatic records, comparisons are more difficult because the  
357 records are often fragmentary and because of limitations of dating precision; in particular, few if any of the  
358 available terrestrial records either can unequivocally be attributed to an interval between Heinrich Events or  
359 shown to coincide with a Heinrich Event. Nonetheless, aside from the generally cooler conditions, and  
360 moister conditions in the west, for time slices spanning the LGM, a number of more detailed points of  
361 potential agreement do emerge. One such relates to the conflicting evidence of linear dune fields in the  
362 north-eastern Kalahari that were active during the last glacial stage, and that are interpreted as evidence of  
363 arid conditions, and evidence from cave sites of humid conditions in the same region during the last glacial,  
364 leading to the inference that dune construction in the region during the last glacial stage was ‘punctuated’  
365 (Stokes *et al.*, 1997; Thomas *et al.*, 2000). The AOGCM experiments indicate conditions in the area  
366 generally similar to or moister than present for the majority of last glacial time slices (Figure 2), but with  
367 episodes of marked aridity associated with Heinrich Events. A similar inference of episodic dune activity  
368 during the last glacial stage associated with arid conditions has been made for western coastal regions  
369 (Chase & Thomas, 2007) where other palaeoclimatic records are interpreted as indicating generally moister  
370 conditions during much of the last glacial (Chase & Meadows, 2007). Once again, however, the AOGCM  
371 experiments indicate contrasting conditions during Heinrich Events and other last glacial time slices,  
372 although in this case the prevalent condition is similar to or marginally drier than present, with the Heinrich  
373 Event climates being markedly moister, especially in more northern parts of the region. A further point of  
374 detailed agreement relates to the evidence from a number of localities, including Nelson Bay Cave,  
375 Boomplaas Cave and Vankervelsvlei wetland, reviewed by Chase and Meadows (2007) and interpreted as  
376 indicating an interval of cooler and drier conditions in the Eastern Cape spanning the LGM and extending  
377 as late as *ca.* 14 ka BP. The climates of the relevant AOGCM time slices (24, 21, 18 and 15 ka BP, Figs.  
378 1 and 2) indicate a consistent area with conditions cooler and drier than present in the Eastern Cape.



379 We thus conclude that, given the limitations of the terrestrial palaeoclimatic records, there is overall  
380 general agreement between the AOGCM results and these records in terms of spatio-temporal patterns of  
381 climatic change, with some striking examples of detailed agreement. Furthermore, the contrasting  
382 AOGCM results for Heinrich Events and other last glacial time slices lead us to hypothesise that apparently  
383 conflicting evidence of drier and moister conditions from discontinuous records in some parts of the region  
384 can likely be accounted for by millennial climatic fluctuations, such fluctuations being evident in marine  
385 sediment records from the South Atlantic. However, testing this hypothesis requires much more precise  
386 dating of the discontinuous records or, ideally, recovery and examination of continuous records, although  
387 the lack of maar lakes or other geological formations favouring the development of deep-water lakes likely  
388 to offer such records in southern Africa may render this an unachievable goal.

389 Turning to the potential role of late-Quaternary climatic changes in determining patterns of biodiversity  
390 in the Cape region, we have demonstrated coincidence between areas of current highest species diversity  
391 and endemism within the Karoo and Fynbos biomes and limited areas that potentially were most  
392 consistently suitable, throughout at least the last glacial–interglacial cycle, for species associated with these  
393 biomes (Figure 5). This represents compelling evidence that historical factors have been of primary  
394 importance in determining present diversity patterns (see e.g. Thuiller *et al.*, 2006 for plant species-richness  
395 patterns). Furthermore, our results show that, rather than orbitally-forced changes in potential species'  
396 ranges, it was the much reduced extent of areas potentially occupied by species of the two biomes during  
397 extreme Greenland Stadial intervals, corresponding to Heinrich Events, that was of greatest importance in  
398 defining these patterns, and hence the locations of present centres of diversity.

399 The paramount role of historical factors in determining present diversity patterns in the Cape Floristic  
400 Province has important implications for conservation. In particular, demonstrating coincidence between  
401 centres of present diversity and areas showing greatest continuity of suitability for species associated with  
402 these centres not only helps understand the origins of present patterns but also focuses attention upon the  
403 potential impacts of projected anthropogenic climatic changes (Meehl *et al.*, 2007) upon these centres of  
404 diversity. Forecast changes in climatic conditions will result in conditions in these areas no longer suitable  
405 for many of their associated species (Huntley & Barnard, 2012) as climatic patterns develop that appear to  
406 be without analogues today in the Quaternary record (Jansen *et al.*, 2007). This would lead to substantial  
407 changes in potential distributions of species in southern Africa in ways that are likely to result in the areas

408 of greatest present diversity, and hence the areas of greatest historical suitability, suffering large reductions  
409 in species richness (Huntley & Barnard, 2012). Whilst changes of similar magnitude occurred in the past,  
410 especially during Heinrich events, geographical responses of species' distributions to future anthropogenic  
411 climatic change will differ from their past responses, some future climates being likely to lack analogues  
412 and some present climates being likely to disappear (Williams *et al.*, 2007). The impacts of future  
413 anthropogenic climatic change will also be compounded by pressures arising from other aspects of global  
414 change. Increasing atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have direct impacts upon vegetation,  
415 altering the balance between woody plants and grasses (Bond *et al.*, 2003); these impacts are likely to  
416 render some areas currently within these centres of diversity no longer suitable in future in terms of habitat  
417 structure. Habitat loss and fragmentation as a result of the increasing extent and intensity of human land  
418 use further exacerbates the problems. Furthermore, the responses of human populations to climatic  
419 change may result in intensified pressures upon habitats (Watson & Segan, 2013). Developing effective  
420 conservation strategies for these important centres of biological diversity must thus be informed by  
421 integrated modelling of the impacts of projected changes in climate, atmospheric composition and land use  
422 on their species and ecosystems. Such an approach is urgently needed if internationally agreed targets to  
423 stem biodiversity losses are to be achieved.

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613 **Biosketch**

614 **Brian Huntley** is a palaeoecologist, ecologist and biogeographer with research interests in the interactions  
615 between species, ecosystems and their changing environment. His work encompasses studies of the  
616 palaeoecology and palaeoenvironments of the Quaternary, of present ecosystems and biogeographic  
617 patterns, and of the potential impacts of anthropogenic global change on species and ecosystems. His  
618 research has considered a range of taxonomic groups, from plants to extinct Quaternary mammals, and  
619 various ecosystems, from Arctic tundra to Fynbos. He has a particular interests in birds and climatic  
620 change, and in the development of conservation strategies informed by research into how species and  
621 ecosystems respond to environmental changes.

622 BH, GFM and PB conceived the study. PJV performed the palaeoclimate simulations. BH carried out the  
623 species' modelling, analysed the results, prepared the figures and drafted the manuscript. All authors  
624 commented upon and contributed to the final version of the manuscript.

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**Table 1: Karoo and Fynbos bird species**

<b>Scientific name*</b>	<b>Common name*</b>	<b>Karoo<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Fynbos<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Endemic<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>AUC<sup>4</sup></b>
<i>Afrotis afra</i> / <i>A. afroides</i>	Black Korhaan	K	F	E	0.926
<i>Anthobaphes violacea</i>	Orange-breasted Sunbird		F	E	0.972
<i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>	Cape Penduline-Tit	K			0.816
<i>Anthus crenatus</i>	African Rock Pipit	K		E	0.961
<i>Aquila pennatus</i>	Booted Eagle	K			0.801
<i>Bradornis infuscatus</i>	Chat Flycatcher	K			0.929
<i>Bradypterus sylvaticus</i>	Knysna Warbler		F	E	0.956
<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	Red-capped Lark	K			0.841
<i>Calendulauda albescens</i>	Karoo Lark	K		E	0.973
<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	Familiar Chat	K			0.849
<i>Cercomela schlegelii</i>	Karoo Chat	K			0.958
<i>Cercomela sinuata</i>	Sickle-winged Chat	K	F	E	0.964
<i>Cercomela tractrac</i>	Tractrac Chat	K			0.966
<i>Cercotrichas coryphoeus</i>	Karoo Scrub-Robin	K	F	E	0.958
<i>Certhilauda curvirostris</i>	Longbilled Lark	K	F	E	0.899
<i>Chaetops frenatus</i>	Cape Rock-jumper		F	E	0.965
<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>	Spike-heeled Lark	K			0.932
<i>Cinnyris afer</i>	Greater Double-collared Sunbird		F	E	0.978
<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>	Southern Double-collared Sunbird	K	F	E	0.956
<i>Cinnyris fuscus</i>	Dusky Sunbird	K			0.946
<i>Circus maurus</i>	Black Harrier		F	E	0.910
<i>Cisticola subruficapilla</i>	Grey-backed Cisticola	K	F		0.977
<i>Crithagra albogularis</i>	White-throated Canary	K			0.933
<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>	Yellow Canary	K			0.911
<i>Crithagra leucopterus</i>	Protea Seedeater		F	E	0.991
<i>Crithagra symonsi</i>	Drakensberg Siskin		F	E	0.978
<i>Crithagra totta</i>	Cape Siskin		F	E	0.964
<i>Cryptillas victorini</i>	Victorin's Warbler		F	E	0.976
<i>Emberiza capensis</i>	Cape Bunting	K	F		0.921
<i>Emberiza impetuanii</i>	Lark-like Bunting	K			0.918
<i>Eremomela gregalis</i>	Karoo Eremomela	K		E	0.979
<i>Eremopterix australis</i>	Black-eared Sparrowlark	K		E	0.964
<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>	Grey-backed Sparrowlark	K			0.879
<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	Yellow Bishop		F		0.966

**Table 1: Karoo and Fynbos bird species** (continued)

Scientific name*	Common name*	Karoo <sup>1</sup>	Fynbos <sup>2</sup>	Endemic <sup>3</sup>	AUC <sup>4</sup>
<i>Eupodotis vigorsii</i>	Karoo Korhaan	K		E	0.975
<i>Euryptila subcinnaomea</i>	Cinnamon-breasted Warbler	K		E	0.953
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Lesser Kestrel	K			0.925
<i>Falco rupicolis</i>	Rock Kestrel	K			0.826
<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>	Large-billed Lark	K		E	0.982
<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	Rock Martin	K			0.881
<i>Hirundo spilodera</i>	South African Cliff-Swallow	K			0.937
<i>Malcorus pectoralis</i>	Rufous-eared Warbler	K		E	0.953
<i>Melierax canorus</i>	Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk	K			0.910
<i>Merops apiaster</i>	European Bee-eater		F		0.883
<i>Mirafra apiata</i>	Clapper Lark	K	F	E	0.930
<i>Monticola explorator</i>	Sentinel Rock-Thrush		F	E	0.964
<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>	Anteating Chat	K		E	0.905
<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	Malachite Sunbird		F		0.964
<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>	Ludwig's Bustard	K			0.932
<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>	Mountain Wheatear	K			0.906
<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	Capped Wheatear	K			0.855
<i>Parus afer</i>	Grey Tit	K		E	0.966
<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	Cape Weaver		F	E	0.964
<i>Prinia flavicans</i>	Black-chested Prinia	K			0.914
<i>Prinia maculosa</i> / <i>P. hypoxantha</i>	Spotted Prinia	K	F	E	0.975
<i>Promerops cafer</i>	Cape Sugarbird		F	E	0.984
<i>Promerops gurneyi</i>	Gurney's Sugarbird		F	E	0.980
<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	Cape Bulbul		F	E	0.966
<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	African Stonechat		F		0.948
<i>Serinus alario</i>	Black-headed Canary	K		E	0.962
<i>Serinus canicollis</i>	Cape Canary		F	E	0.976
<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>	Cape Grassbird		F	E	0.964
<i>Spizocorys sclateri</i>	Sclater's Lark	K		E	0.960
<i>Struthio camelus</i>	Common Ostrich	K			0.802
<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	Bokmakierie	K	F		0.971
<i>Turnix hottentotta</i>	Black-rumped Buttonquail		F	E	0.967

629

\* Scientific and common names follow Hockey *et al.* (2005).

630

<sup>1</sup> K indicates species associated with Karoo; <sup>2</sup> F indicates species associated with Fynbos;

631

<sup>3</sup> E indicates species endemic to southern Africa;

632

<sup>4</sup> Area under the curve for a receiver operating characteristic plot for a model fitted to all data.

633 **Figure Legends**

634 **Figure 1 Mean temperature of the coldest month**

635 Mean temperature of the coldest month (MTCO) for the present (1961–90) climate (top left panel) and  
636 MTCO anomalies for 17 time slices derived from experiments made using the HadCM3 AOGCM  
637 (Singarayer & Valdes, 2010). Sea levels are shown lowered following Fairbanks (1989) and Lambeck *et*  
638 *al.* (2002), relative sea levels for the 17 time slices being as follows: -5, -25, -55, -95, -105, -110, -120,  
639 -125, -125, -110, -80, -80, -80, -80, -80, -60 and 0 m respectively.

640 **Figure 2 Ratio of actual to potential evapotranspiration**

641 Annual integral of the ratio of actual to potential evapotranspiration (APET) for the present (1961–90)  
642 climate (top left panel) and APET anomalies for 17 time slices derived from experiments made using the  
643 HadCM3 AOGCM (Singarayer & Valdes, 2010). Sea levels are shown lowered following Fairbanks (1989)  
644 and Lambeck *et al.* (2002), relative sea levels for the 17 time slices being as follows: -5, -25, -55, -95,  
645 -105, -110, -120, -125, -125, -110, -80, -80, -80, -80, -80, -60 and 0 m respectively.

646 **Figure 3 Contrasting species-richness patterns for Karoo and Fynbos birds**

647 Potential species richness for Karoo (a – d) and Fynbos (e – h) species for 1961–90 (a, e), 6 ka BP (b, f),  
648 21 ka BP (c, g) and Heinrich Event 2 (24 ka BP; d, h). Sea level shown lowered by 120 m for 21 and by  
649 125 m for 24 ka BP; background shading indicates topography with contours at 500, 1000, 2000 and  
650 3000 m. Darker shaded dots represent higher potential species richness.

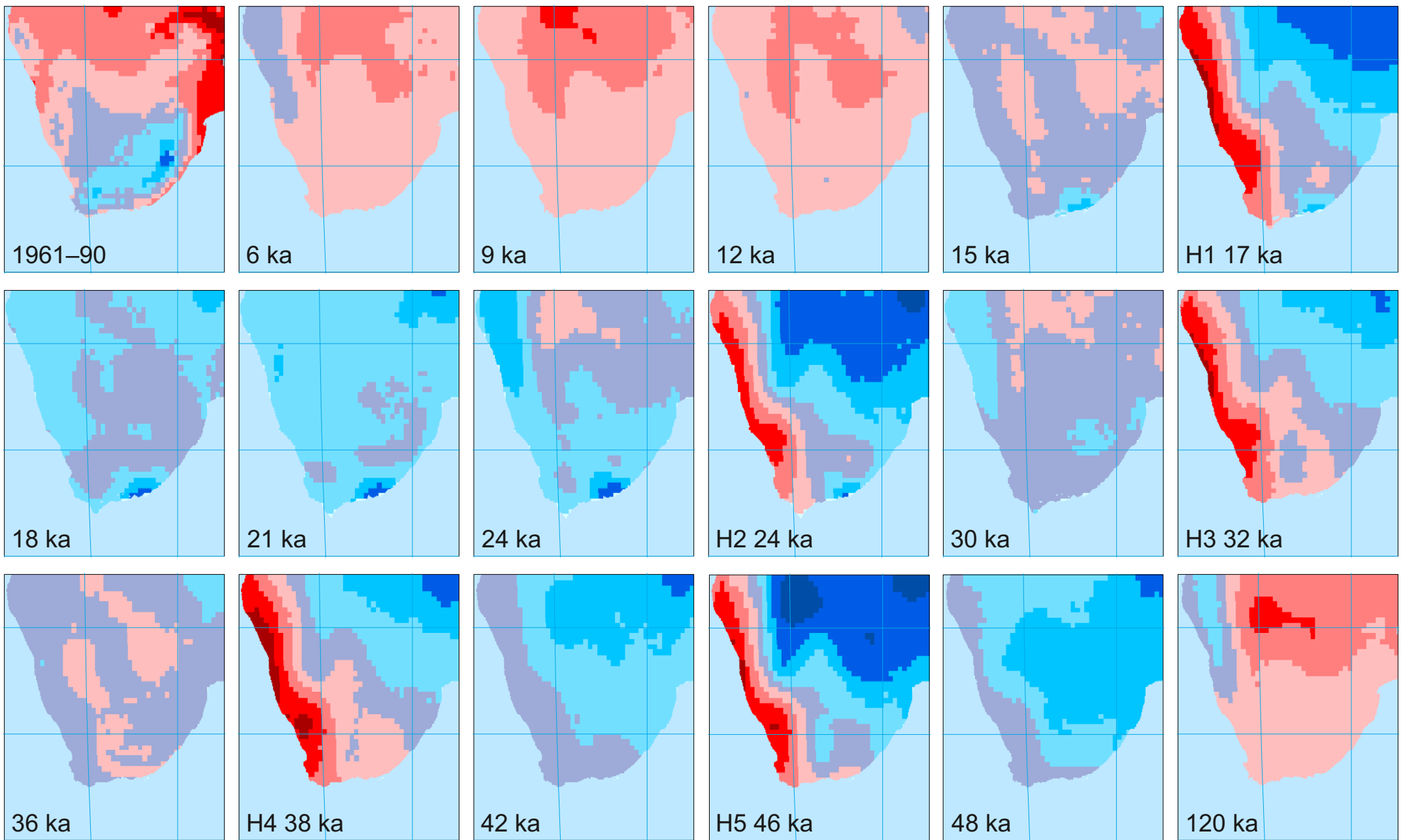
651 **Figure 4 Variation between palaeoclimate scenarios in numbers of species-rich grid cells**

652 Numbers of grid cells potentially occupied by >20 Karoo species (filled black diamonds), >30 Karoo species  
653 (unfilled diamonds), >10 Fynbos species (filled black triangles) and >15 Fynbos species (unfilled triangles)  
654 for the present climate and 17 palaeoclimate scenarios. Hatched vertical bars indicate palaeoclimate  
655 scenarios for experiments designed to mimic Heinrich Events. The curve shows the summer (December  
656 21<sup>st</sup> – January 20<sup>th</sup>) insolation at 30°S calculated following Laskar *et al.* (2004).

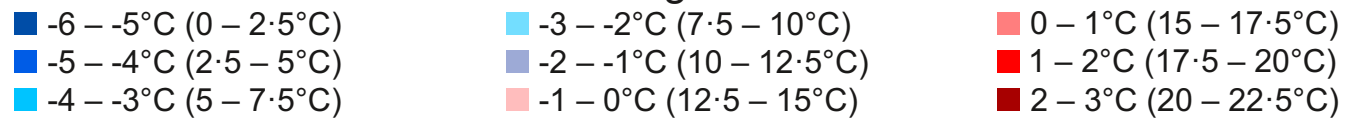
657 **Figure 5 Grid cells consistently supporting higher numbers of southern African endemic species**  
658 **of each biome**

659 Grid cells potentially occupied (a) by a minimum of 7 – 13 Karoo species endemic to southern Africa for the  
660 1961–90 climate and all 17 palaeoclimate scenarios and (b) by a minimum of 6 – 8 Fynbos species  
661 endemic to southern Africa for the 1961–90 climate and all 17 palaeoclimate scenarios. No grid cells  
662 potentially occupied at all times by species of either group endemic to southern Africa achieved higher  
663 minima than 13 and 8 for Karoo and Fynbos species respectively. Darker shaded dots indicate grid cells  
664 potentially occupied by a higher minimum number of species; background shading indicates topography  
665 with contours at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 m.

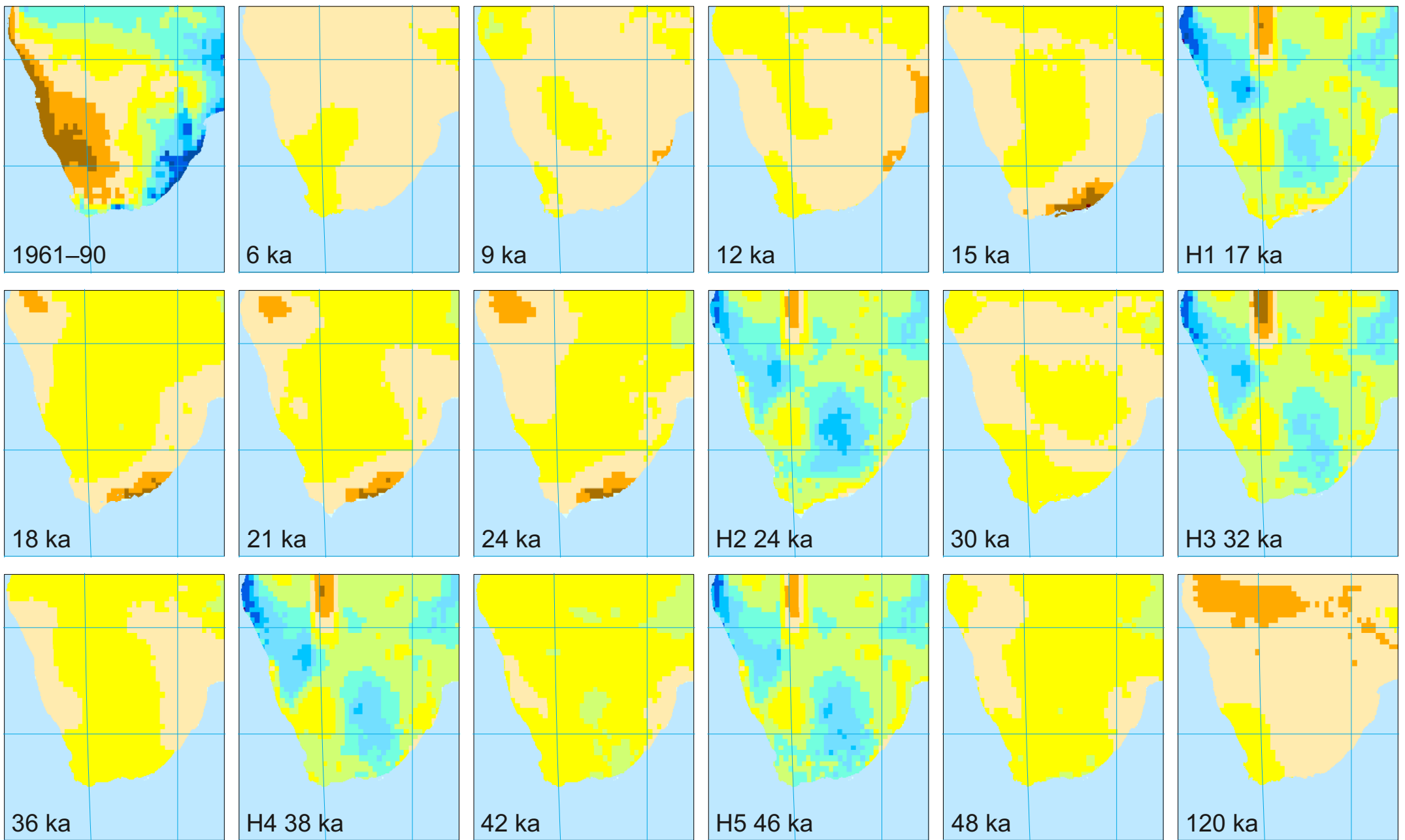




### Legend



(values in parentheses refer to 1961–90 map)



Legend



(values in parentheses refer to 1961–90 map)

