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# Trade-offs between carbon stocks and biodiversity in European temperate forests

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#### Abstract

Policies to mitigate climate change and biodiversity loss often assume that protecting carbon-rich forests provides co-benefits in terms of biodiversity, due to the spatial congruence of carbon stocks and biodiversity at biogeographic scales. However, it remains unclear whether this holds at the scales relevant for management, with particularly large knowledge gaps for temperate forests and for taxa other than trees. We built a comprehensive dataset of Central European temperate forest structure and multitaxonomic diversity (beetles, birds, bryophytes, fungi, lichens, and plants) across 352 plots. We used Boosted Regression Trees to assess the relationship between above-ground live carbon stocks and (a) taxon-specific richness, (b) a unified multidiversity index. We used Threshold Indicator Taxa ANalysis to explore individual species' responses to changing above-ground carbon stocks and to detect change-points in species composition along the carbon-stock gradient. Our results reveal an overall weak and highly variable relationship between richness and carbon stock at the stand scale, both for individual taxonomic groups and for multidiversity. Similarly, the proportion of win-win and trade-off species (i.e. species that respectively increase or decrease with increasing carbon) varied substantially across taxa. Win-win species gradually replaced trade-off species with increasing carbon, without clear thresholds along the aboveground carbon gradient, suggesting that aggregate indices (e.g. richness) might fail to detect these changes. Collectively, our analyses highlight that leveraging co-benefits between carbon and biodiversity in temperate forest may require stand-scale management that prioritizes either biodiversity conservation or carbon-storage in order to maximize co-benefits at broader scales. Importantly, this contrasts from tropical forests, where climate and biodiversity objectives may be effectively integrated at the stand-scale, thus highlighting the need for context-specificity when managing for multiple objectives. Accounting for critical change-points of target taxa can help to deliver this specificity, by defining a safe operating space to manipulate carbon while avoiding biodiversity losses.

#### Introduction

Forests play a critical role in mitigating climate change, in addition to providing many ecosystem services fundamental to human society (FAO, 2015; MEA, 2005). The estimated amount of carbon stored in forests globally is almost 900 Pg (=10<sup>15</sup> g), with a net global carbon sink of 1.1 Pg C per year (Pan et al., 2011). Forests also provide habitat for over half of all known terrestrial plant and animal species (MEA, 2005), albeit covering only 27% of the Earth's land area (FAO, 2015). Conserving forests and managing them sustainably is therefore fundamental for facing two of the most pressing societal challenges of our times: biodiversity loss and climate change (MEA, 2005).

Global and regional environmental policies, such as the 2015 Paris Agreement, the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) initiative (Gardner et al., 2012) or the European Forest Strategy (European Commission, 2013), all acknowledge the critical importance of forests for jointly addressing biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation (Bustamante et al., 2016; Deere et al., 2018; Ferreira et al., 2018). The extent to which these two targets can be reached in parallel, however, is not properly understood (Di Marco, Watson, Currie, Possingham, & Venter, 2018; Mori, Lertzman, & Gustafsson, 2017; Pichancourt, Firn, Chadès, & Martin, 2014). If high biodiversity and carbon stocks coincide spatially, then protecting carbon-dense forests or managing forests for high carbon stocks would co-benefit both environmental policy goals (Di Marco et al., 2018; Reside, VanDerWal, & Moran, 2017; Strassburg et al., 2010). Otherwise, this may lead to negative biodiversity outcomes (Boysen, Lucht, & Gerten, 2017; Bustamante et al., 2016; Ferreira et al., 2018). For instance, protecting a carbon-dense forest may reallocate human pressure to unprotected areas with lower carbon density, but high biodiversity (Di Marco et al., 2018). Also, shifting from natural vegetation to tree plantations to maximise carbon stock leads to biodiversity loss (Pichancourt et al., 2014), especially where natural grasslands or savannahs are afforested (Bremer & Farley, 2010; Burrascano et al., 2016; Pellegrini, Socolar, Elsen, & Giam, 2016). Finally, it remains unclear at which scales co-benefits between conservation and climate-change-mitigation should be sought. Should carbon storage and conservation goals be integrated at the stand scale, where management takes place, or at broader scales, thus prioritizing one of the goals at the stand scale?

Understand the relationship between carbon stocks and biodiversity, and how it varies across spatial scales, is crucial to answer this question (Gardner et al., 2012; Mori et al., 2017; Reside et al., 2017).

At the scale of an individual forest stand, carbon stock is the amount of long-term carbon stored in living biomass, dead organic matter and soil carbon pools, and is the result of the complex relationships between forest productivity, disturbance history, and species composition (FAO, 2015). Compared to other important forest carbon pools, above-ground live carbon stored in wood (hereafter above-ground live carbon) can be guantified relatively easily, and is therefore considered a sustainable forest management indicator (CBD, 2006; FOREST EUROPE, 2015). Even if it constitutes the substrate for many forest species (Bouvet et al., 2016; Hatanaka, Wright, Loyn, & Mac Nally, 2011; Stokland, Siitonen, & Jonsson, 2012), above-ground live carbon is only indirectly related to biodiversity (Hatanaka et al., 2011). Recent evidence supports a positive correlation between above-ground live carbon and biodiversity at broader scales (Di Marco et al., 2018; Strassburg et al., 2010). The shape of the carbon-biodiversity relationship remains however an open question for the scales most relevant to decision-makers, such as landscape and stand scales (Deere et al., 2018; Ferreira et al., 2018; Pichancourt et al., 2014). Large uncertainties also remain on how this relationship varies across biogeographical regions (Di Marco et al., 2018; Potter & Woodall, 2014; Xian et al., 2015). For the tropics, there is evidence for a positive relationship between biodiversity and above-ground live carbon stocks, both across stands (Cavanaugh et al., 2014; Deere et al., 2018; Magnago et al., 2015), and within stands (Sullivan et al., 2017), especially for disturbed sites (Ferreira et al., 2018). In temperate forests, research has traditionally focused on carbon sequestration and productivity (Ratcliffe et al., 2017), which are often not good indicators of carbon stock. Although recent work highlighted the importance of carbon quality, or complexity, for bird biodiversity (Hatanaka et al., 2011), studies relating carbon quantity to biodiversity remain rare and mostly refer to tree diversity only (Potter & Woodall, 2014; Xian et al., 2015).

The carbon-biodiversity relationship may also vary across taxonomic groups (Di Marco et al., 2018; Ferreira et al., 2018). Even in the tropics most research to date has focused on either vertebrates (Beaudrot et al., 2016; Deere et al., 2018; Sollmann et al., 2017), or tree species richness only (Cavanaugh et al., 2014; Magnago et al., 2015; Sullivan et al., 2017), while research comparing the carbon-biodiversity relationship across groups at fine-scale remains rare (Ferreira et al., 2018). Although understandable, given the inherent costs of collecting field-based data for multiple taxonomic groups (Bustamante et al., 2016), focusing on trees or vertebrates only assumes that these taxa are good surrogates for overall forest biodiversity, which is questionable (Larrieu et al., 2018; Sabatini et al., 2016; Zilliox & Gosselin, 2014). Moreover, even within the same taxonomic group, different species may relate very differently to carbon stocks (Edwards et al., 2014; Lindenmayer, Fischer, & Cunningham, 2005; Villard & Jonsson, 2009). Some species may benefit from increasing carbon stocks (hereinafter called 'win-win species'), while others, hereafter 'trade-off species', may be hindered by the environmental conditions associated to carbon-dense forests (Ferreira et al., 2018). Splitting the community into win-win and trade-off species, and considering explicitly the behaviour of species of conservation concern, could thus help to better predict the effect of changing carbon stock on specific components of biodiversity (Magnago et al., 2015; Sollmann et al., 2017).

Finally, although the carbon-biodiversity relationship is often assumed to be linear (Beaudrot et al., 2016; Deere et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2017), thresholds could exist along the carbon stock gradient, meaning that a slight change in forest carbon stocks could cause disproportionate biodiversity loss (Evans et al., 2017; Sasaki, Furukawa, Iwasaki, Seto, & Mori, 2015). Such thresholds have been identified for a range of anthropogenic gradients (Li, Xu, Zheng, Taube, & Bai, 2017; Magnago et al., 2015; Sasaki et al., 2015), including carbon stocks in tropical forests (Ferreira et al., 2018). For temperate forests, however, empirical evidence is lacking (Evans et al., 2017), especially at fine scales (Sasaki et al., 2015). Identifying such thresholds, and understanding how they vary across taxa and forest types, would provide important information on how forest management, including timber harvesting, might impact biodiversity. This would help to identify 'safe operating spaces' for manipulating forest carbon in managed forests without triggering undesired biodiversity loss (Villard & Jonsson, 2009).

Here, we investigated the relationships between the diversity of six ecological groups (i.e., saproxylic beetles, birds, bryophytes, wood-inhabiting fungi, epiphytic lichens, and vascular plants) and

carbon stock across 22 temperate forest sites in three European countries. We addressed the following questions:

(1) What is the relationship between above-ground live carbon stocks and (a) species richness of different taxa, and (b) a single, unified multidiversity index?

(2) How do responses to increasing above-ground live carbon of individual species, and the proportion of win-win and trade-off species, vary across taxonomic groups and forest types?

(3) Are there community level thresholds in species richness or composition along carbon stock gradients?

# Methods

#### Study sites

Our study area included a network of 352 plots in 22 temperate forest sites (ranging from 200 to 400 km<sup>2</sup>) covering a wide latitudinal and longitudinal range across Europe (Figure 1, Table S1). The sites covered deciduous forest types that are common in temperate Europe, including acidophilous oak and oak-birch forest (20 plots), mesophytic deciduous forest (84 plots), European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and montane beech forest (232 plots in total), as well as thermophilous deciduos forest (16 plots). Forest type nomenclature follows EEA (2006). Our dataset also covered a wide range of structural types (one-, two- and multi-layered stands), ages, management histories, and management regimes, including coppice, shelterwood, group selection and unmanaged stands. These stands comprised most of the forest succession gradient, including late-successional phases.

Elevation ranged from 150 to 1700 m a.s.l. and substrates included sedimentary rocks (limestones, dolomites, marls, and flysch) in the French and Italian sites, and alluvial gravel mixed with sand and loess in the Hungarian site. All sites were within the temperate region: annual mean temperature varied from 5°C in the French Alps to 14°C in southern Italy. Annual precipitation varied from about 600 mm to about 1900 mm.



Figure 1 – Distribution of forest sites in Europe. Pie charts return the relative proportion of plots in different forest types (FTs) for each stand. FTs follow EEA (2006). The size of the pie represents the number of plots in each site. Grey shadings represent the distribution of forest in Europe. FT4 - acidophilous oak and oak-birch forest; FT5 - mesophytic deciduous forest; FT6 - European beech (Fagus sylvatica) and (FT7) montane beech forest; FT8 - thermophilous deciduos forest.

# Sampling and measuring biodiversity

Our multi-taxonomic dataset stemmed from projects (Burrascano et al., 2018) using similar, but not identical sampling protocols (Table S2 in the Supplementary Material for details). All vascular plant species were recorded in plots ranging from 314 to 1,256 m<sup>2</sup>. Bryophytes were sampled on different substrates (standing trees, deadwood, rocks, and ground), while only epiphytic lichens and wood-inhabiting fungi were considered. Birds were sampled through point-counts or area search techniques. Saproxylic beetles were sampled using window-flight interception traps, emerging traps and Winkler extractors. Only presence-absence data was available for birds, bryophytes, fungi and lichens, while abundance data was

available for plants (percentage cover) and beetles (number of trapped individuals). Not all six taxonomic groups were sampled in every plot, returning a total of 1,533 (= taxonomic group x plot) combinations. We fixed nomenclature inconsistencies in the species lists based on up-to-date checklists (Table S2).

To control for varying sampling efforts across sites, we calculated for each plot the scaled richness of each taxonomic group, i.e. the ratio between the richness observed in the plot (alpha diversity) and the species pool size of that taxonomic group in a given site. Species pool size was estimated as the asymptotic species richness based on sample-based rarefaction and extrapolation curves (Colwell et al., 2012) using the Chao2 estimator in the R package *iNext* (Hsieh, Ma, & Chao, 2016). We then calculated the average scaled richness across taxonomic groups to obtain a single measure of the diversity of all taxa we sampled, hereafter referred to as multidiversity (Allan et al., 2014). Multidiversity ranges between 0 and 1, with multidiversity of 1 meaning that a plot hosts all species contained in the species pool of a site. Multidiversity has the advantage of being comparable across sites, whatever the sampling effort and the species pool (both at the taxa and the site levels).

#### Forest above-ground live carbon

We sampled living trees in plots ranging from 491 and 2,827 m<sup>2</sup> in area using a diameter at breast height (DBH) threshold of 10 cm. Height was measured for all the trees or in a sample of them and calculated successively for the others by means of height-diameter models. Growing stock was calculated using local allometric equations, with DBH and height as explanatory variables (Table S2) and then converted to above-ground live carbon (AGC, MgC/ha) as AGC = GS\*BEF\*WBD/2, where BEFs are biomass expansion factors and WBDs are the wood basic densities (Federici, Vitullo, Tulipano, De Lauretis, & Seufert, 2008).

#### Control variables

Coarse woody debris was sampled in plots ranging from 491 to 1,600 m<sup>2</sup> using a diameter threshold of 10 cm. Volume of deadwood pieces were either calculated using the same allometric equations used for living trees (for standing or downed dead trees), or approximating deadwood volume to truncated cones or cylinders, depending on the data source (Table S2). We then calculated coarse woody debris ratio as the ratio between deadwood volume and total live and dead wood volumes. As additional control variables, we derived two topographic covariates (slope, aspect) from a 30-m resolution Digital Terrain Model (NASA, 2006), which we then used to calculate heat load, i.e. the heat gain from incoming solar radiation. Moreover, we derived two climatic variables (mean annual temperature and precipitation) from raster layers with 30 arcsec resolution grids (approx. 13 km) from WorldClim v2.0 (Fick & Hijmans, 2017). We derived information on parent material from the European Digital Archive on Soil Maps to classify plots into three classes: igneous-metamorphic, sedimentary-clastic, sedimentary-limestone (Panagos, Jones, Bosco, & Kumar, 2011). Finally, we considered forest type as a categorical variable with four levels: acidophilous oak, mesophytic deciduous, beech dominated, and thermophilous deciduous.

#### Modelling the response of biodiversity to forest above-ground C

We used Boosted Regression Trees (BRTs) to assess the relationship between above-ground live carbon and the scaled species richness of each taxonomic group as well as multidiversity. BRTs are non-parametric models based on decision trees in a boosting framework that does not require prior assumptions. BRTs are therefore relatively robust against overfitting, missing data, and collinearity (Elith, Leathwick, & Hastie, 2008). We used above-ground live carbon as explanatory variable, while controlling for the effect of forest structure, climatic, topographical and soil. After checking for correlation (Pearson's r>0.7), we retained five control variables: coarse woody debris ratio, forest type, annual precipitation, heat load and substrate parent material. We also included *forest site* and *data source* as categorical control variables to account for remaining unobserved environmental and methodological differences across sites.

We parametrized the BRTs setting a tree complexity of 5 and a bag fraction of 0.5 (Elith et al., 2008). We tested different learning rates (0.5 - 0.0025), and determined the optimal number of trees for each learning rate using the *gbm.step* routine provided in the *dismo* package (Hijmans, Phillips, Leathwick, & Elith, 2011). We then selected the parameter combination returning the highest cross-validated model fit. We finally calculated the relative importance of each explanatory variable (i.e., the fraction of times a

variable was selected for splitting a tree in each BRT model, weighted by the squared model improvement). We evaluated model performance using 10-fold cross-validation. We explored the relationship between biodiversity and the explanatory variables using partial dependency plots, which are the graphical visualizations of the marginal effect of a given explanatory variable on scaled richness (or multidiversity). These plots also allow to visually check for non-linear responses and possible thresholds. We explored the interactions between explanatory variables using the *gbm.interactions* function in the *dismo* package. All analysis were performed in R 3.4.1.

#### Assessment of win-win and trade-offs species

We used Threshold Indicator Taxa Analysis – TITAN (Baker & King, 2010) to identify win-win and trade-off species, i.e. species that respectively increase or decrease their abundance and/or frequency with increasing levels of above-ground live carbon. TITAN uses binary partitioning by indicator value (IndVal, Dufrêne & Legendre, 1997) to identify species-specific change-points along an environmental gradient (above-ground live carbon in our case). Change-points are compared to random data permutations to assess their relevance, taking into account indices of purity (i.e. proportion of bootstrapped change-points response that agree with the observed response) and reliability (i.e. proportion of bootstrapped change points with significant IndVal for p<0.05). We evaluated uncertainty in change-point location based on the bootstrapped empirical distribution (Baker & King, 2010). To account for the nested (plots within sites) and unbalanced (different number of plots per site) nature of our dataset, we modified TITAN's original bootstrapping approach to randomly select (with replacement) a number of plots per site equal to the number of plots in the site having the lowest number of plots (if greater than 3, 3 otherwise). We ran TITAN after pooling all species across taxonomic groups, but separately for forest types. We aggregated acidophilous and mesophytic oak forests (oak-dominated thereafter), and lowland and montane beech forests (beech-dominated forest thereafter) but excluded termophilous oak forests due to the low sample size (n = 16). We also checked the conservation status of our win-win or trade-off species using the IUCN red lists (IUCN, 2017) and the r package *rredlist* (version 4.0, Chamberlain, 2017).

TITAN also allows to explore if species-level change points aggregate to a community-level threshold, i.e. congruent change-points across all individual species, which we did separately for trade-off and win-win species. To explore the variability across taxonomic groups in community-level change-points, we ran TITAN both when considering the whole species assemblage, and for each taxonomic groups. We considered narrow confidence limits across bootstrapped replicates as an evidence for a community threshold.

# Results

#### Relationships between above-ground live carbon and species richness

The relationship between scaled richness and above-ground live carbon was overall consistently weak (relative importance between 3.3-12.2%), and varied in direction across taxa (Figure 2). The scaled richness of birds, bryophytes and fungi increased slightly, but non-linearly, across the above-ground live carbon gradient (~5% absolute increase along the whole gradient). Most of the increase for birds and bryophytes occurred between 180-200 MgC/ha and 120-150 MgC/ha, respectively. The richness fraction of fungi increased non-monotonically along the above-ground live carbon gradient, with a first peak at 70 MgC/ha, and a secondary peak at 175 MgC/ha. The richness fraction of plants, instead, showed a ~5% absolute decline (see also Figures S1-S6).



Figure 2 – Partial dependency plots of the relationship between scaled richness and above-ground live carbon, modelled using Boosted Regression Trees. Scaled richness represents the fraction of species of the species pool size estimated for a given plot. Ticks on the x-axis represent above-ground live carbon data distribution. For each taxonomic group, we report in parenthesis the relative importance of above-ground live carbon in the respective boosted regression tree model.

Above-ground live carbon had a very little relative importance on multidiversity (3.3%), compared to other control variables especially *site* (relative importance 77.2% - Figure S7). Multidiversity increased by less than 1% over the whole above-ground live carbon gradient (Figure 3). BRT models were effective at modelling multidiversity and scaled richness (cross-validation correlation 0.53-0.84, Table S3), although most of the variation derived from site-to-site differences. Indeed, *site* was always the variable having the highest relative importance (57.4-84%, Figure S1-S7). For all taxa but beetles and lichens, the interaction between *site* and above-ground live carbon ranked among the top three most important interactions.



Figure 3 – Partial dependency plot of the relationship between multidiversity and above-ground live carbon using Boosted Regression Trees. Tick marks on the x-axis represent above-ground live carbon data distribution.

#### Response of individual species to changes in above ground carbon

The TITAN analyses identified 27 and 75 species as pure and reliable indicators of above-ground live carbon (i.e. having a consistent response in both direction and magnitude across bootstrap replicates), corresponding to 5.3% and 9.0% of the total number of species in oak- and beech-dominated forests, respectively (Figure 4). Most of the species-specific change-points occurred between 80-120 MgC/ha, in both forest types (Fig. S8-S9). Eleven species (ten plants and one bryophyte) were pure and reliable indicators in both forest types. All pure and reliable trade-off indicator species for oak-dominated forests were plants (Figure S8), either tree species with good dispersal ability (e.g., *Sorbus aria, S. domestica, Acer campestre*) or herbs and shrubs associated to forest margins (e.g., *Vicia sepium, Lonicera xylosteum, Rosa arvensis*). Win-win species were mostly bryophytes, typically found in shaded conditions and, secondarily, beetles (*Tomicus piniperda, Cryptolestes duplicatus*). Trade-off species in beech forests were principally plants (22 species), beetles (16 species) and secondarily birds (three species) and fungi (one species, Figure S9). Win-win species were mostly plants (14 species) and beetles (11 species). Those associated to the right end of the above-ground C gradient were mostly fungi (*Fuscoporia ferruginosa, Stereum rugosum* and

*Heterobasidion annosum*) and beetles (e.g., *Pediacus dermestoides*, and *Xylechinus pilosus*). Only 200 out of the 2,384 species we considered were included in the IUCN database, with conservation status of win-win and trade-off species only available for 18 species, none of which were threatened.



Figure 4 – Proportion of win-win vs. trade-off species across taxonomic groups and forest types (sorted for decreasing number of win-win species). a) oak-dominated forests. b) beech-dominated forests c) comparison of the two forest types across all taxonomic groups. Win-Win\* (trade-off\*) species are pure and reliable species. Win-win (trade-off) species are pure but not reliable indicators.

We found a slightly higher number of trade-off than win-win species, both in oak (3.4 vs. 2%) and in beech (4.7% vs. 4.3%, respectively - Figure 4c). When also considering species not having a reliable response (i.e. responding consistently across bootstraps, but being significant indicators at the p<0.05 level in less than 95% of bootstraps) this balanced picture did not change (8.7% trade-off vs 7.9% win-win species in oak-dominated forests; 11.3% vs 10.8% in beech dominated forests). The contribution of individual taxonomic groups varied substantially across forest types. In oakdominated forests (Figure 4a), fungi, lichens and bryophytes returned a higher proportion of win-win than trade-off species, while for plants, we observed the opposite. In beech forests, most taxonomic groups had a higher proportion of trade-off than win-win species, with the exception of bryophytes and beetles (Figure 4b).

#### Community level change-points along above-ground live carbon gradients

Aggregating individual species' responses to infer community-level change-points did not reveal a clear community-level threshold in above-ground live carbon across all the taxa (Figure 5). In oak-dominated forests, the wide confidence intervals around the community-level change-points suggest that rather than abruptly, trade-off species were gradually replaced by win-win species with increasing above-ground live carbon. In beech forests, instead, we observed relatively sharp community-level change-points for trade-off species across all taxa (except lichens), which ranged between 81.3 MgC/ha (fungi) and 122.4 MgC/ha (lichens). In both forest types, community-level change-points of win-win species were more variable than those of trade-off species and, at least in beech forests, returned wider confidence intervals (e.g., for plants, fungi and beetles). Community-level change-points for trade-off species of different taxa were very similar across the two forest types, while for win-win species these were on average higher in beech compared to oak forests.



Figure 5 – Community-level change-points and 90% quantiles along the above-ground live carbon gradient for different taxonomic groups, in two forest types. Tick marks on the x-axis represent above-ground live carbon data distribution.

#### Discussion

Can managing forest for carbon storage jointly achieve biodiversity conservation and climatechange mitigation goals? Answering this question critically depends on better understanding the relationship between forest carbon stocks and biodiversity for the scales at which management takes place (Ferreira et al., 2018; Gardner et al., 2012; Mori et al., 2017). We assembled a large dataset of fine-scale forest carbon stocks and multi-taxonomical diversity for temperate forest, where knowledge gaps are largest. We found little evidence that above-ground live carbon and species richness in temperate forests are congruent at the stand scale, which contrasts with most of the evidence from the tropics (Sullivan et al., 2017). For all taxa we investigated, we found that win-win species gradually replaced trade-off species with increasing above-ground live carbon levels, changes that aggregate biodiversity indices (e.g. richness) would fail to detect. In general, species and community-level change-points were neither congruent, nor equally abrupt across taxa, suggesting that leveraging co-benefits across taxonomic groups might be difficult. Overall, our results highlight that in temperate forests it may not be best to jointly pursue conservation and climate-change-mitigation goals at the stand scale. Rather, forest planners should establish local priorities to leverage potentially higher co-benefits at broader scales. Stand-scale priorities can be established by taking into account the taxon-specific carbon-biodiversity relationship and the share of win-win vs. trade-off species to establish a safe operating space to manipulate above-ground live carbon levels while avoiding undesired biodiversity loss.

Our work provides new insights into the shape, variability and context-specificity of the carbonbiodiversity relationship, especially for taxonomic groups that are rarely considered (e.g., fungi, lichens, saproxylic beetles and bryophytes). The correlation between carbon and biodiversity was overall relatively weak and highly variable across taxonomic groups. While previous research mostly reported a positive carbon-biodiversity relationship in tropical forest (Deere et al., 2018; Magnago et al., 2015; Sullivan et al., 2017), for temperate forests the evidence is still inconclusive and mainly based on tree species only (Potter & Woodall, 2014; Xian et al., 2015). The contrasting patterns observed across different taxonomic groups may explain the weak relationship between multidiversity and above-ground live carbon. On the one hand, carbon-dense, late-successional forests represent better habitat than open forests for many organisms. Birds, for instance, may benefit from high above-ground live carbon, especially in the presence of ecologically complex carbon, such as wide-branching canopies, large standing trees and stem cavities (Bouvet et al., 2016; Hatanaka et al., 2011). High above-ground live carbon also often correlates with high deadwood levels, which represents fundamental resources for wood-inhabiting fungi or beetles (Lassauce et al., 2011; Stokland et al., 2012). On the other hand, plant richness decreased with increasing aboveground live carbon stocks, likely as a consequence of the strong, asymmetrical competition for light exerted by few tree species on the herb-layer, which comprises the majority of plant species in temperate forests (Sabatini, Jiménez-Alfaro, Burrascano, & Blasi, 2014). Furthermore, in our assessment most variation occurred across forest sites, rather than along the above-ground live carbon gradient. This is in agreement with previous research, which highlighted the importance of broad-scale drivers, including macroclimate and the regional species pool, as determinants of forest fine-scale biodiversity (Jiménez-Alfaro et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2017).

Forest assemblage composition did change along the above-ground live carbon gradient, although species richness and multidiversity did not. With increasing above-ground live carbon, win-win species gradually replaced trade-off species, confirming that what constitutes suitable habitat conditions differs among species (Lindenmayer et al., 2005). Both in oak- and beech-dominated forests, the overall proportion of win-win species was similar to the proportion of trade-off species. This might concur at explaining why both multidiversity and scaled richness per taxa were relatively insensitive to increasing above-ground live carbon, since neither can discriminate between colonization and local extinction of species when these occur simultaneously and gradually in response to shifts in ecological conditions (Lindenmayer et al., 2005). As observed in tropical forests, the effect of carbon removal on species richness may be confounded by the increase in generalist species, so that a special focus on sensitive species, or species of conservation concern is recommended (Deere et al., 2018; Magnago et al., 2015). In our work, the conservation status of the vast majority (92%) of species was not available, especially for understudied taxa (i.e. lichens, fungi and bryophytes; IUCN, 2017). In the absence of species-level assessments, identifying win-win and trade-off species, provides a proxy for identifying sensitive taxa, and for calibrating biodiversity goals when managing temperate forests for climate-change mitigation.

Community-level change-points differed between win-win and trade-off species, as well as across taxa and forest types, suggesting that a clear ecological threshold along the carbon-stock gradient may not exist in temperate forests. When considering trade-off species, however, we found a relatively marked decrease between ~80-120 MgC/ha, and the change-points of different taxonomic groups were surprisingly similar across the two forest types. We interpret this result as the effect of canopy closure (i.e. the phase of forest succession when the canopies of individual trees overlap), which reduces light availability, buffers temperature variation, increases relative humidity, and nearly excludes wind at the forest floor (Franklin et al., 2002). These ecological changes may determine a shift in the species composition of the herb-layer and facilitate forest succession towards the dominance of shade tolerant species, while triggering bottom-up cascading effects on the whole trophic network (Kagata & Ohgushi, 2006). Furthermore, canopy closure kicks off self-thinning processes, which provide a first pulse of deadwood in early successional stands, thus

favouring the colonization by saproxylic species (Lassauce et al., 2011; Stokland et al., 2012). This result suggests that a general pattern may exist in temperate forests and advises against assuming a linear positive carbon-biodiversity relationship in conservation actions (Di Marco et al. 2018).

We used a large, multi-taxonomic dataset collected across a broad geographical area and environmental gradient, which give us confidence on the generality of our result. Still, our analyses do not come without uncertainty. First, although comprehensive, our dataset suffers from a lack of detailed information on management and disturbance history, both of which influence biodiversity and carbon stock, and possibly their relationship (Paillet et al., 2010). Second, our results provide indication on the carbon-biodiversity relationship exclusively for natural or semi-natural forests, i.e. self-regenerated forests of native species. These forests are particularly relevant for biodiversity conservation, but in many European countries they are often replaced with forest plantations composed of very productive carbonsinking species (e.g., *Picea abies, Pseudotsuga menziesii, Eucalyptus spp.*) that may show different carbonbiodiversity relationships (Pichancourt et al., 2014). Finally, our dataset is spatially nested in nature. Failing to treat data nestedness leads to the classical problem of pseudoreplication and increases the probability of type I error. To avoid this problem, we accounted for nestedness by stratifying the bootstrapping procedure when exploring change-points through TITAN. This approach, however, strongly reduces the power of the analysis, which means that our analysis probably detected only a conservative subset of the win-win and trade-off species.

Our work provides new understanding of how co-benefits between biodiversity and carbon storage might be leveraged in temperate forests. Three major implications for management derive from our results. First, biodiversity and above-ground live carbon cannot easily be simultaneously maximized in temperate forests at the scale of individual stands. Instead of seeking to integrate both goals at the stand scale (i.e., a land sharing strategy), co-benefits might be larger for strategies that seek to maximize cobenefits at broader scales by prioritizing either biodiversity conservation or carbon-storage goals at the stand scale (i.e., a land sparing strategy; Butsic & Kuemmerle, 2015; Edwards et al., 2014). Forest planners and managers should carefully evaluate whether to give priority to biodiversity conservation or other carbon-related goals, since maximizing forest carbon at the stand scale may only benefit some species, while harming others. Importantly, the scaling of trade-offs in temperate forests thus appears to differ fundamentally from tropical forests, at least those under management, where climate and biodiversity objectives may be effectively be integrated at the stand scale (Deere et al., 2018; Magnago et al., 2015; Ferreira et al, 2018).

Second, reconciling biodiversity and carbon objectives requires planning across scales. This includes assessments of which arrangement of management types delivers lowest trade-off or highest co-benefits (Law et al., 2017; Reside et al., 2017), while integrating stand-scale constraints (Pichancourt et al., 2014). Likewise, landscape-scale planning is needed to ensure heterogeneity in forest developmental stage and structure across stands (Schall et al., 2018), which should include set-asides (Bouget et al., 2014; Ferreira et al., 2018; Hatanaka et al., 2011), to ensure that trade-off assessments are robust over time. Encouraging the retention of blocks of undisturbed forest as a conservation priority within managed forests may represent an effective option for reconciling carbon-storage and conservation goals, while incorporating multiple environmental goals in forest management (Edwards et al., 2014). This would allow for the persistence of the full range of both win-win and trade-off species, and therefore maximizing multitaxonomic diversity while optimizing carbon-stock allocation (Trentanovi, Campagnaro, Rizzi, & Sitzia, 2018). Third, rather than relying on synthetic indices of biodiversity, only an explicit consideration of all taxa of conservation concern will provide the full picture of how these taxa respond to the manipulation of forest structure and above-ground live carbon stocks in temperate forests (Villard & Jonsson, 2009).

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# Supplementary material

- Table S1 Description of study sites.
- Table S2 Main characteristics of the sampling protocols across different datasets.
- Table S3 Diagnostics of boosted regression tree models modelling multidiversity and the scaled richness
- of different taxonomic groups.
- Figure S1 Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of beetles and the six

top-performing explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.

- Figure S2 Partial dependency plots for birds.
- Figure S3 Partial dependency plots for bryophytes.
- Figure S4 Partial dependency plots for fungi.
- Figure S5 Partial dependency plots for lichens.
- Figure S6 Partial dependency plots for plants.
- Figure S7 Partial dependency plots for multidiversity.
- Figure S8 Diving board plot of species-specific change-points for pure and reliable indicator species in oak-

dominated forests.

Figure S9 – Diving board plot of species-specific change-points for pure and reliable indicator species in beech forests.

Stand Name	Substrate	Number	Annual	Annual	Elevation	Aspect	Slope	Latitude	Longitude
		of Plots	Mean T	rainfall mm	m a.s.l.	•	•		· ·
			°C						
Ventron	Limestone	22	9.0	800-900	455	229	5	47.818	6.798
Auberive	Limestone	14	6.9	1300-1400	1043	189	16	47.583	3.649
Ballons-		9	10.9	650-750	195	222	4	46.235	12.237
Comtois	Granit								
Bois du Parc	Limestone	9	7.2	1300-1500	1255	141	11	46.146	-0.386
Cajada forest -		18	12.0	800-900	89	207	2	47.090	5.050
Dolomiti									
Bellunesi	Dolomite/								
National Park	Limestone	10	10.0	700.000	224	205	2	47.000	4 0 2 0
Chizé	Limestone	10	10.9	700-800	231	205	2	47.226	4.939
Citeren	Alluvial	8	9.1	800-900	572	197	12	48.421	2.660
Citeaux	deposits	25	10 5	600-700	120	172	2	15 115	5 506
Combe Lavaux	Limestone	10	7.0	1200 1500	1222	100	5 1 E	45.145	5.500 E 701
Fontainebleau	Acidic sands	10	7.0	1200-1500	1232	189	10	45.339	5.791
Vercors	Limestone	31	0.8	1300-1900	1130	245	19	45.701	6.167
Chartreuse	Limestone	29	7.2	1350-1850	1107	266	22	46.299	5.986
Bauges	Limestone	6	7.5	1300-1400	1101	109	25	48.104	4.188
Haute-Chaine		12	10.0	650-750	175	170	2	46.892	16.308
du Jura	Limestone	25	0.2	700.000	200	124	-		45 220
Haut Tuileau	Alluvial	25	9.2	700-800	308	134	5	40.465	15.339
		24	10 1	718-1250	1272	177	17	10 257	15 3//
Cilente N	graver/idess	10	11.2	700	1272	175	17	40.237	12 51/
Cliento N	Limestone	10	0.1	1062 1007	1240	262	17	42.300	IS.JI4
Cilento S	Elvsch	19	9.1	1062-1097	1354	203	17	44.123	5.820
Chento 3	limostono	7	8.0	1000-1100	1448	109	31	48 671	1 763
	Limestone	, 16	10.0	600-700	16/	180	2	16 300	12 302
Lure		11	10.0	1200 1500	104	206	10	40.303	6 021
Rambouillet	Acidic sands	2	7.2	1300-1300	1250	200	19	47.959	0.951
Val Tovanella	Limostono	3	8.9	1200-1300	950	266	22	48.757	2.250
Mature Reserve	Acidic sands	7	9.6	600-700	177	203	2	<b>44 181</b>	5 261
Verrières	marls	,	5.0	300 / 00	1,,	205	2	FT.101	5.201
Ventoux	Limestone	9	7.9	1000-1100	1356	187	25	47.818	6.798

# Table S1 – Description of study sites.

Table S2 - Main characteristics of the sampling protocols across different datasets.

	Dataset	IT_Cilento	IT_FAGUS	IT_NE	HU	FR_YP	FR_Alps
	Country	Italy	Italy	Italy	Hungary	France	France
	Responsible	SB	SB	TS	PÓ	YP	PJ
Taxon	Detail						
Plants	Sampling unit size shape	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	490 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	900 m <sup>2</sup> square plot	1000 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	314 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot
	Season/year	Summer 2007	Summer 2013	Summer 2007	Summer 2006	Spring-summer 2008-2013	Spring-Summer 2014
	Reference	Burrascano et al. (2011)	Sabatini et al. (2016)	Sitzia et al. (2012)	Márialigeti et al. (2016)		Janssen et al. (2017)
Bryophytes	Sampling unit size shape	four 154 m <sup>2</sup> circular plots			900 m <sup>2</sup> square plot	1256m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	
	Substrates	wood, ground			wood, ground	wood, ground	
	Season/year	Summer 2008			Summer 2006-2009	Spring and Autumn 2008-2013	
	Reference	Blasi et al. (2010);			Király et al. (2013);		
		Brunialti et al. (2010)			Márialigeti et al.		
					(2009); Ódor et al. (2013)		
Lichens	Sampling unit size shape	three 154 m <sup>2</sup> circular plots	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	490 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	900 m <sup>2</sup> square plot		1256 m <sup>2</sup> square plot
	Substrates	3 trees (DBH > 16cm) in each subplot	3 trees (DBH > 16cm) in each subplot	all trees	all trees (DBH > 20cm)		6 largest trees
	Season/year	Summer 2008	Summer 2013	Summer 2007	Summer 2010		Summer 2015
	Reference	Blasi et al. (2010); Brunialti et al. (2010)	Sabatini et al. (2016)	Nascimbene et al. (2013); Sitzia et al. (2017)	Király et al. (2013); Ódor et al. (2013)		
Birds	Sampling unit size shape	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	490 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	31,400 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	31,400 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	
	Season/year	Summer 2008	Summer 2013	Summer 2010-2011	Spring-Summer 2006	Spring-summer 2008-2013	
	Methodology	20-min pointcount	10-min pointcount	10-min pointcount	pointcount	5-min pointcount	
	Frequency of sampling:	15 days	once	twice a year	twice a year	twice a year	

	Reference	Blasi et al. (2010)	Sabatini et al. (2016)	Sitzia et al. (2017)	Mag & Ódor (2015)	Bouvet et al. (2016)	
Beetles	Sampling unit size shape	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	1256 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	490 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	900 m <sup>2</sup> square plot	1256m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	1256m <sup>2</sup> square plot
	Season/year	Spring and Summer 2008	Summer 2013	Spring-Summer- Autumn 2009	Spring-Summer 2010	Spring-Summer 2008	Spring-Summer 2014
	Methodology	windowflight traps	window flight traps, emerging traps	windowflight traps	emerging traps	windowflight traps	windowflight traps, Winkler extractors
	Frequency of sampling	monthly	monthly	twice a month	only once	monthly (for 3 months)	monthly
	Reference	Blasi et al. (2010); Persiani et al. (2010)	Sabatini et al. (2016)	Sitzia et al. (2015; 2017)		Bouget et al. (2016)	Janssen et al. (2016)
Fungi	Sampling unit size shape	four 154 m <sup>2</sup> circular plots	530 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	490 m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	900 m <sup>2</sup> square plot	1256m <sup>2</sup> circular plot	
	Substrates	wood > 10 cm diameter	wood > 10 cm diameter	wood	wood > 10 cm diameter	wood	
	Season/year	Summer 2008	Autumn 2013	Summer-Autumn 2009-2010	Spring-Autumn 2010- Summer 2009	Spring-Autumn 2008-2013	
	Reference	Blasi et al. (2010); Persiani et al. (2010)	Sabatini et al. (2016)	Sitzia et al. (2017)	Kutszegi et al. (2015)		
Forest structure	Plot size for living trees (DBH>10 cm)	concentric circular areas with a radius of 13 and 20 m	concentric circular areas with a radius of 13 and 20 m	491 m <sup>2</sup>	40 x 40 m plot	Combined fixed surface (314 m <sup>2</sup> ) and fixed angle (2%)	10-m-radius subplot for DBH > 10 cm; 20- m-radius subplot for DBH > 30 cm;
	Plot size for deadwood (mid diameter >10 cm	Circular areas with a radius of 13 m	Circular areas with a radius of 13 m	logs: 491 m <sup>2</sup> ; stumps/snags 736 m <sup>2</sup>	40 x 40 m plot	Combined line intersect sampling (3 X 10m) and fixed surface (1256 m <sup>2</sup> )	10-m-radius subplot for DBH > 10 cm; 20- m-radius subplot for DBH > 30 cm;
	Trees with height measurement	20 height samples per main species per plot	20 height samples per main species per plot	All	All	5 largest trees (Dominant height)	No height measurement taken
	Allometric equations	Tabacchi et al. (2011)	Tabacchi et al. (2011)	Castellani et al. (1984)	Sopp & Kolozs (2000)	Paillet et al. (2015)	In mountain forests, ALGAN table: softwood=11; hardwood=8

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#### Nomenclatures and checklists

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Table S3 – Diagnostics of boosted regression tree models modelling multidiversity and the scaled richness of

different taxonomic groups.

						Cross-Validated	Cross-Validated
	Number of	Learning	Number	Total	Residual	correlation	correlation
	observations	rate	of trees	Deviation	Deviation	(mean)	(standard error)
Multidiversity	352	0.0025	1450	0.005	0.001	0.786	0.025
Beetles	307	0.005	650	0.010	0.002	0.785	0.020
Birds	272	0.0025	1450	0.024	0.004	0.838	0.021
Bryophytes	180	0.005	800	0.011	0.003	0.722	0.040
Fungi	248	0.05	5550	0.007	0.000	0.711	0.045
Lichens	179	0.01	200	0.011	0.006	0.528	0.067
Plants	352	0.01	250	0.009	0.004	0.668	0.039



Figure S1 – Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of beetles and the six top-performing explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree. Scaled richness represents the fraction of species of the estimated species pool size observed in a given plot. Tick marks on the x-axis represent above-ground C data distribution. For each variable we report in parenthesis its relative importance.



Figure S2 – Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of birds and the six top-performing explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.



*Figure S3 – Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of bryophytes and the six topperforming explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.* 



Figure S4 - Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of fungi and the six topperforming explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.



Figure S5 - Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of lichens and the six top-performing explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.



Figure S6 - Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of plants and the six top-performing explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.



*Figure S7 – Partial dependency plots of the relationship between the scaled richness of multidiversity and the six topperforming explanatory variables as modelled through a Boosted Regression Tree.* 



Figure S8 – Diving board plot of species-specific change-points for pure and reliable indicator species in oak-dominated forests. For win-win species, the horizontal lines extend from the highest observed above-ground C value to the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile of the permuted distribution of change-points. For trade-off species the horizontal lines extend from the lowest observed above-ground C value to the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. The size of the symbols is proportional to species' indicator value (z-scores). Only species having a level of purity and reliability higher than 0.95 were reported. We reported the limits of the confidence interval, as these conservatively indicate the point along the above-ground C gradient above (below) which the trade-off (win-win) species potentially decline (increase).



Figure S9 – Diving board plot of species-specific change-points for pure and reliable indicator species in beech forests.

Symbols as in Figure S8