Measuring tree water content in-situ with a portable, unilateral magnet

Shannan Blystone, Guilhem Pagès, Hervé H. Cochard, Pierre Conchon

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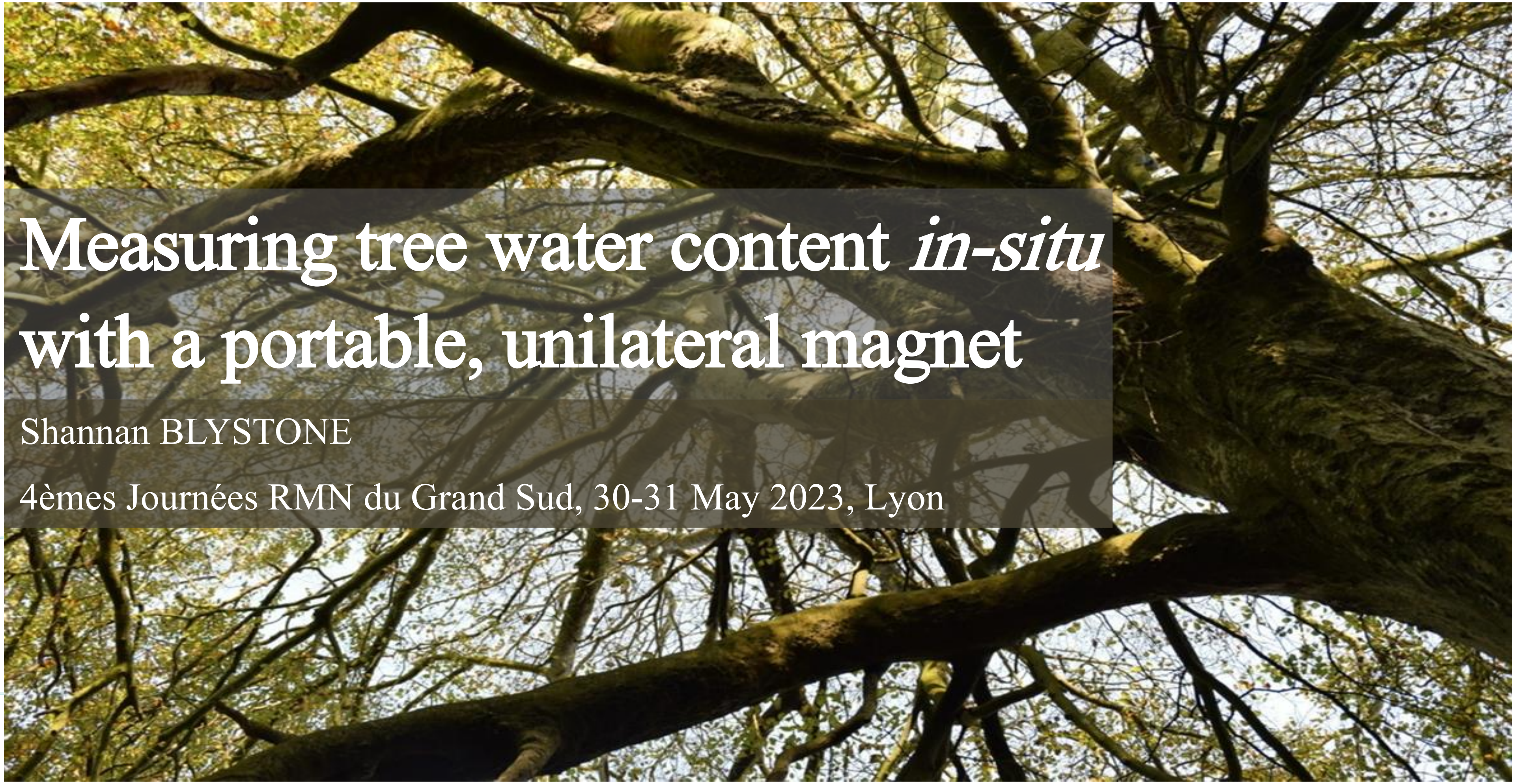
Shannan BLYSTONE

4èmes Journées RMN du Grand Sud, 30-31 May 2023, Lyon



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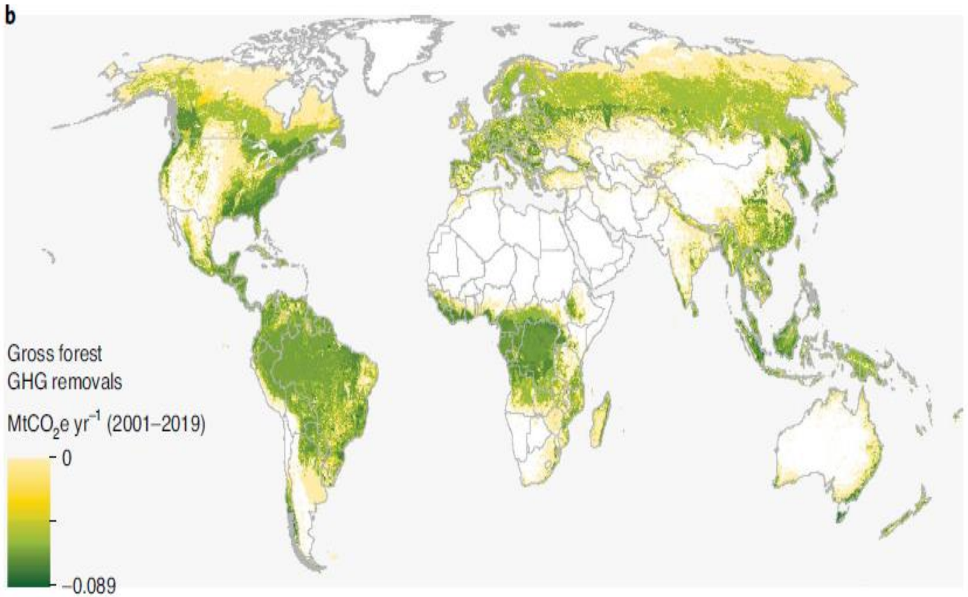
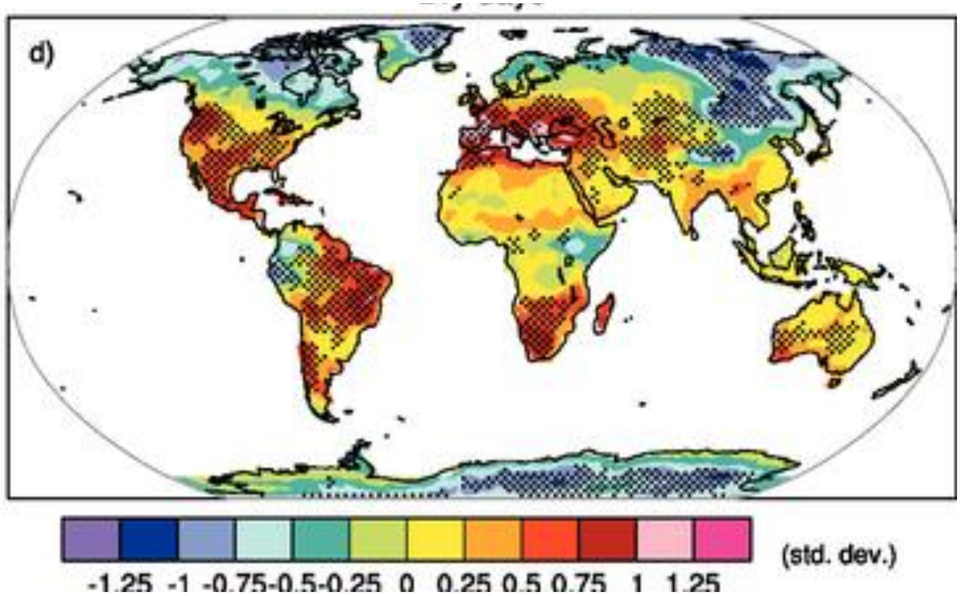
The future of forests as carbon sinks in a changing climate

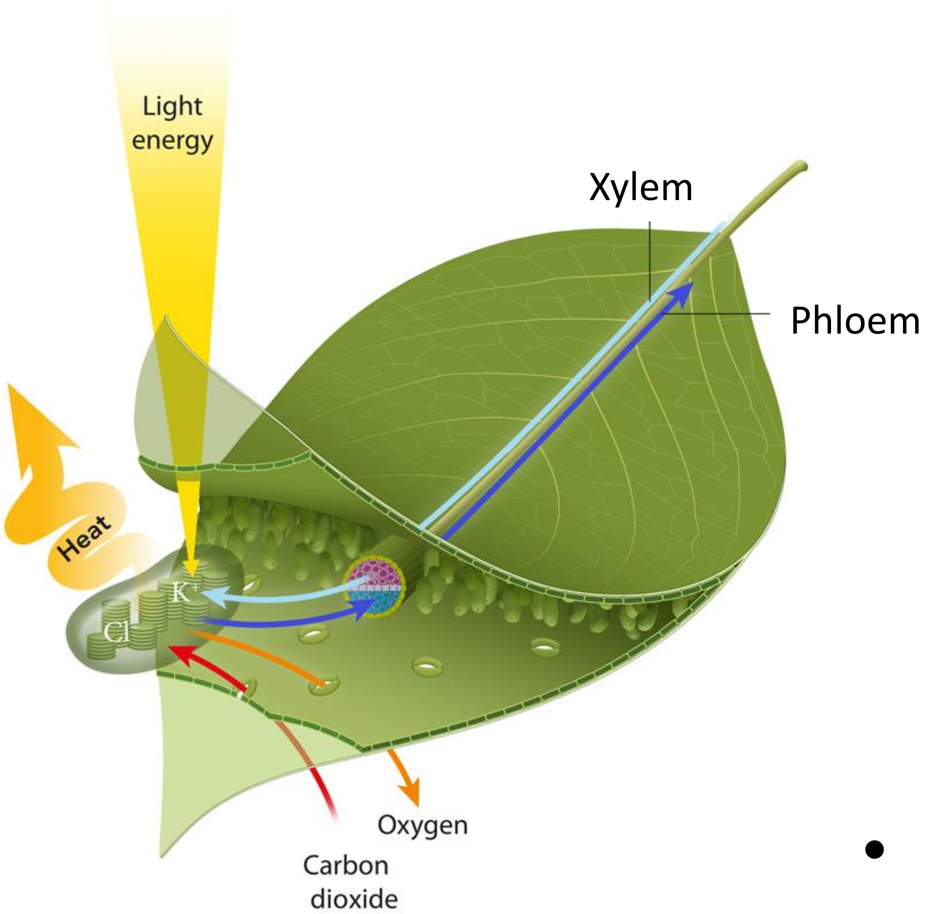


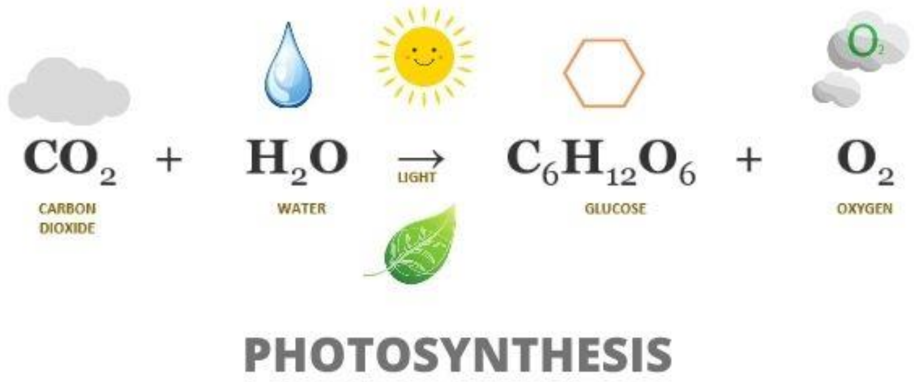


Gross annual greenhouse gas removals by forest systems (Harris *et al*., 2021).

Changes in spatial patterns of simulated dry days between two 20-year means (2080–2099 minus 1980–1999)(IPCC, 2014).

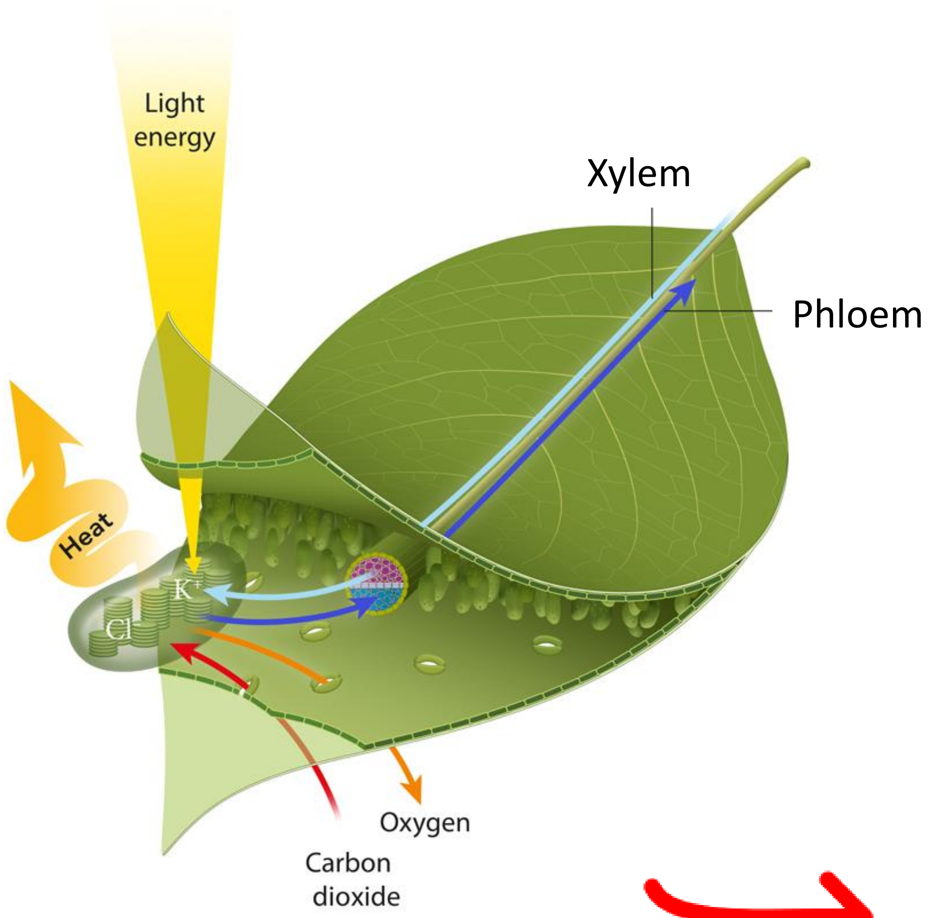
The coupling of the water and carbon cycles

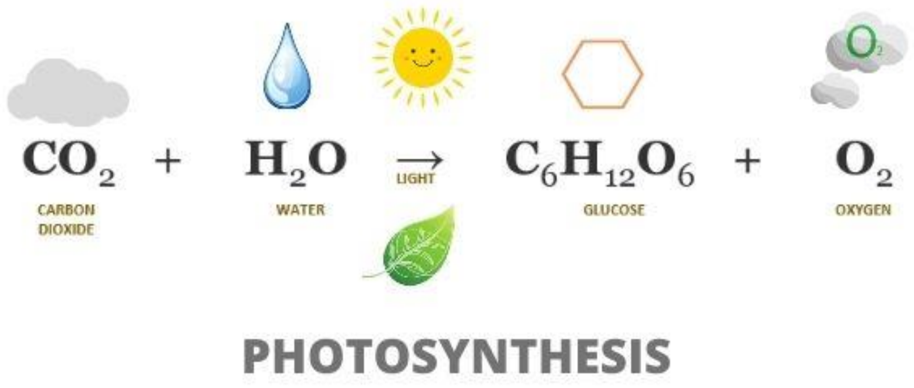




- **Water is a reactant**
- **Water loss during transpiration +++**

The coupling of the water and carbon cycles





Water dynamics key to understanding the future of forests as carbon sinks

How to measure water dynamics

- **Water content** : Fresh/dry weights, NIRS, high-field NMR
- **Xylem flow** : Sap flow meters, porometers, gravimetric methods, isotopic tracing, high-field NMR
- **Phloem flow** : Aphids, ^{11}C PET imaging, high-field NMR

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→ **However, all of these methods are either destructive, limited to the laboratory, or indirect**

Advantages of MRI in the plant sciences

- Non-invasive
- Sensitive to $^{1}H \longrightarrow$ water in biological systems
- Information about water movement in multiple water populations can be obtained (relaxometry)
- Multitude of information can be gathered with one instrument

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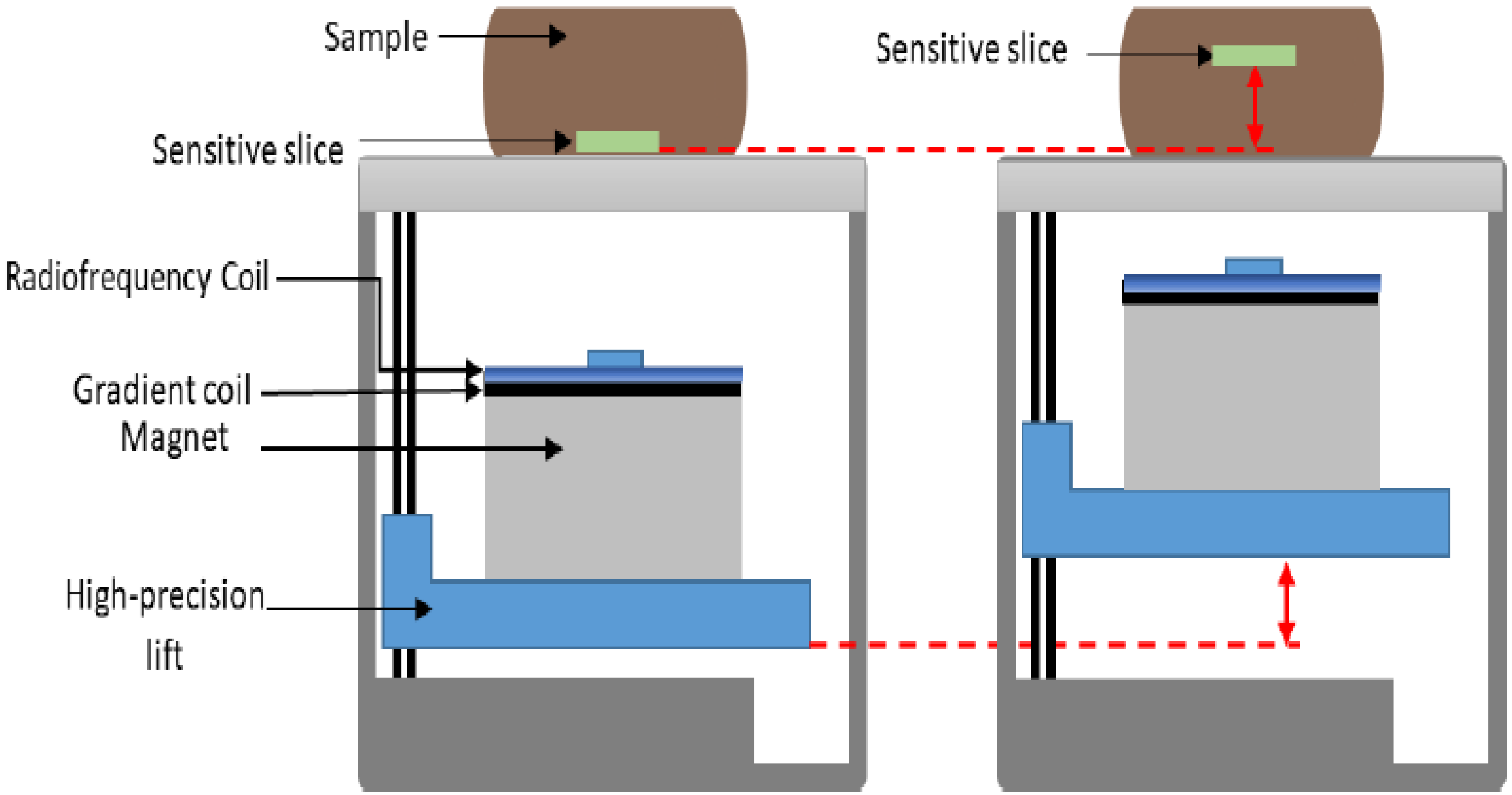
→ **But typically restricted to the lab**

A portable, unilateral device to study plants

The Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Mobile Universal Surface Explorer (NMR-MOUSE)



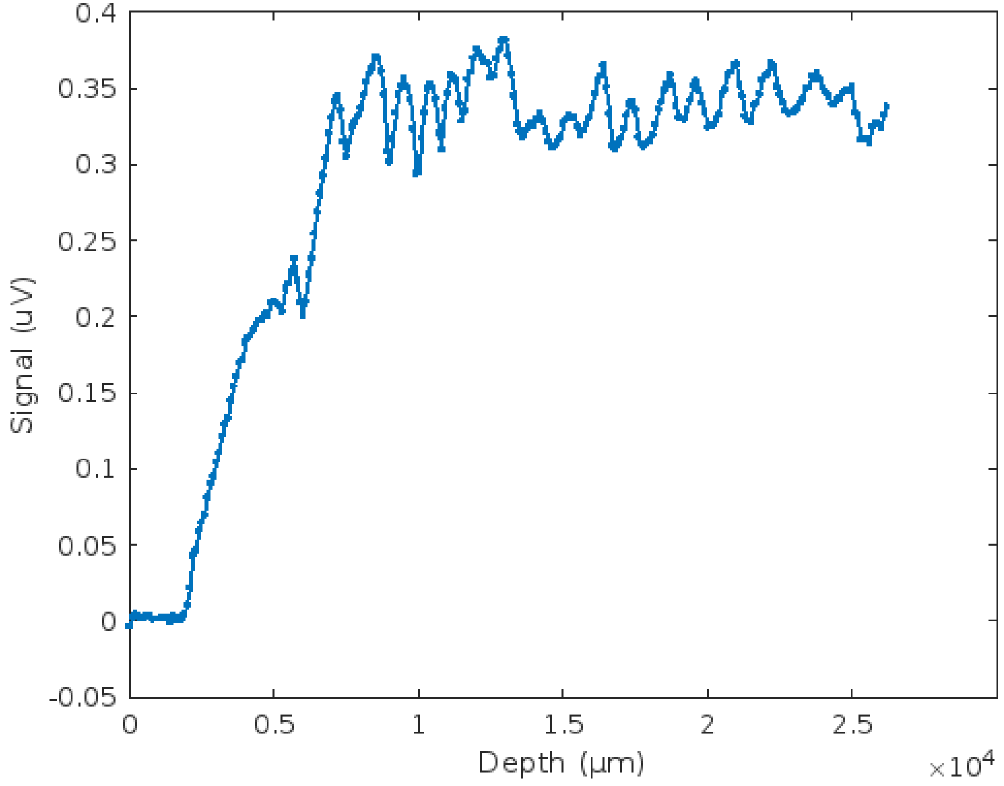
Taking the device into the field

The Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Mobile Universal Surface Explorer (NMR-MOUSE)

Taking the device into the field

The Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Mobile Universal Surface Explorer (NMR-MOUSE)

Branch of *B. pendula* (Birch)



→ **Is it quantitative ?**

Materials and Methods

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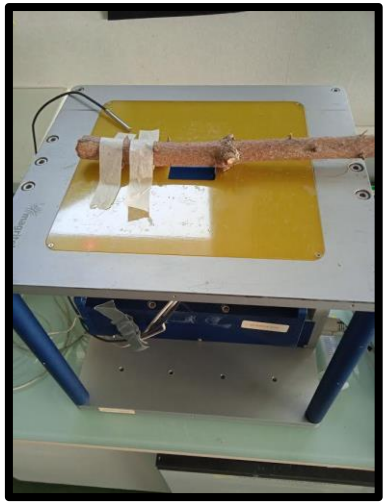
Measuring tree water content with the NMR-MOUSE

Can we measure the branch/trunk of any species, at any level of hydration, and have a reliable indicator of water content ?

- 30 branches measured over time as they dehydrated
- 6 species, including 2 functional types
- Model of NMR signal as a function of water content
- 4 *in-situ* trees measured



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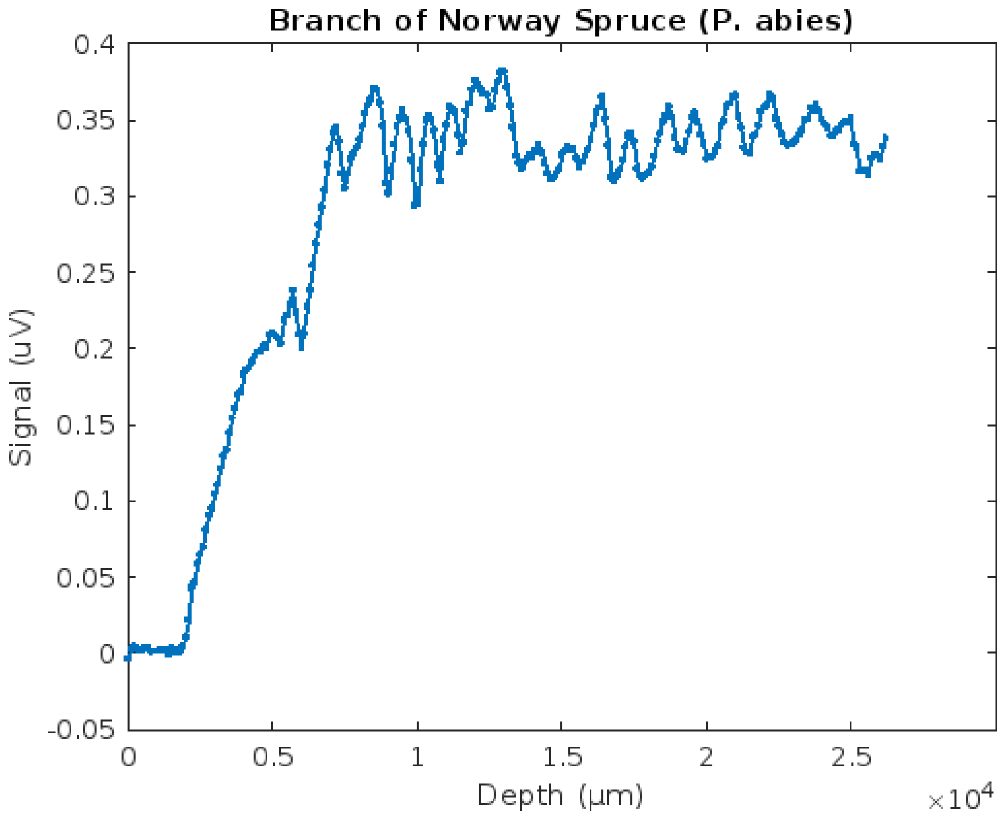
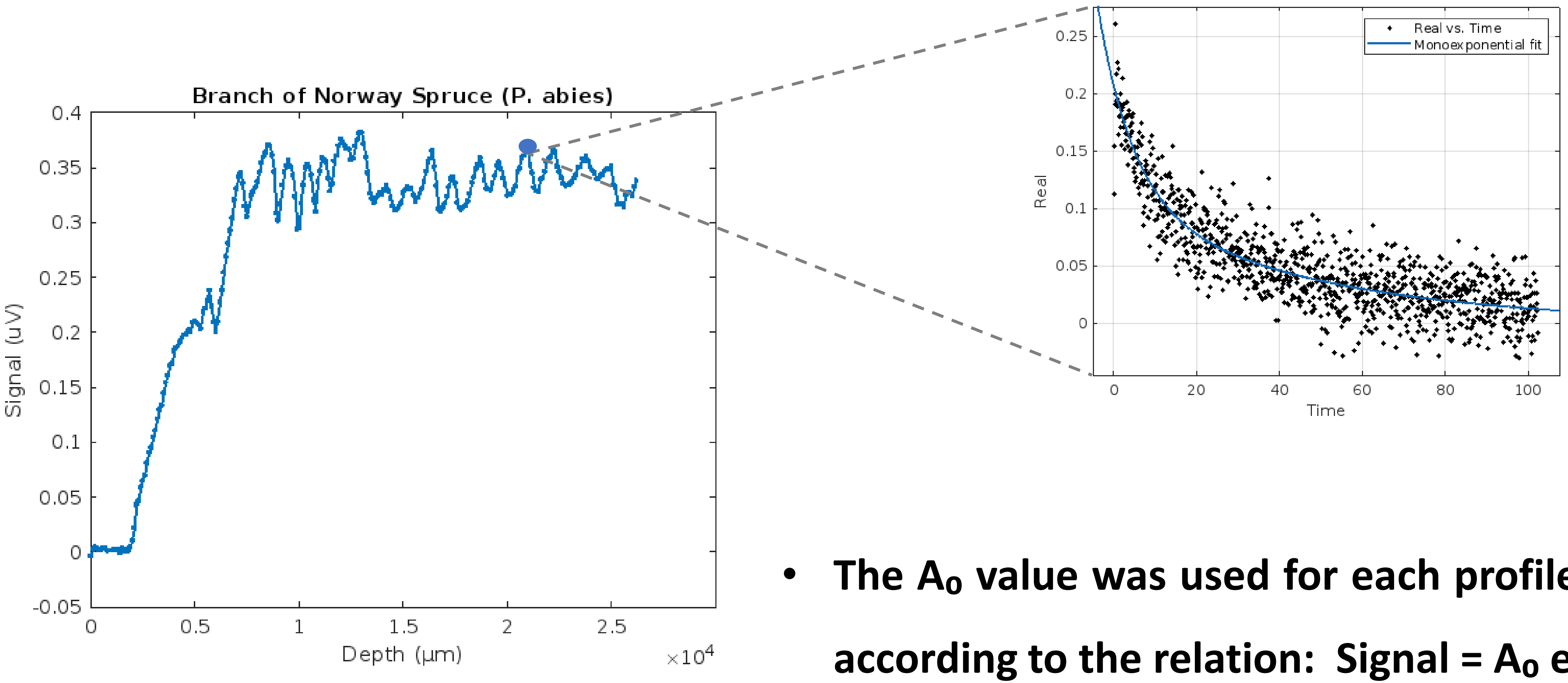


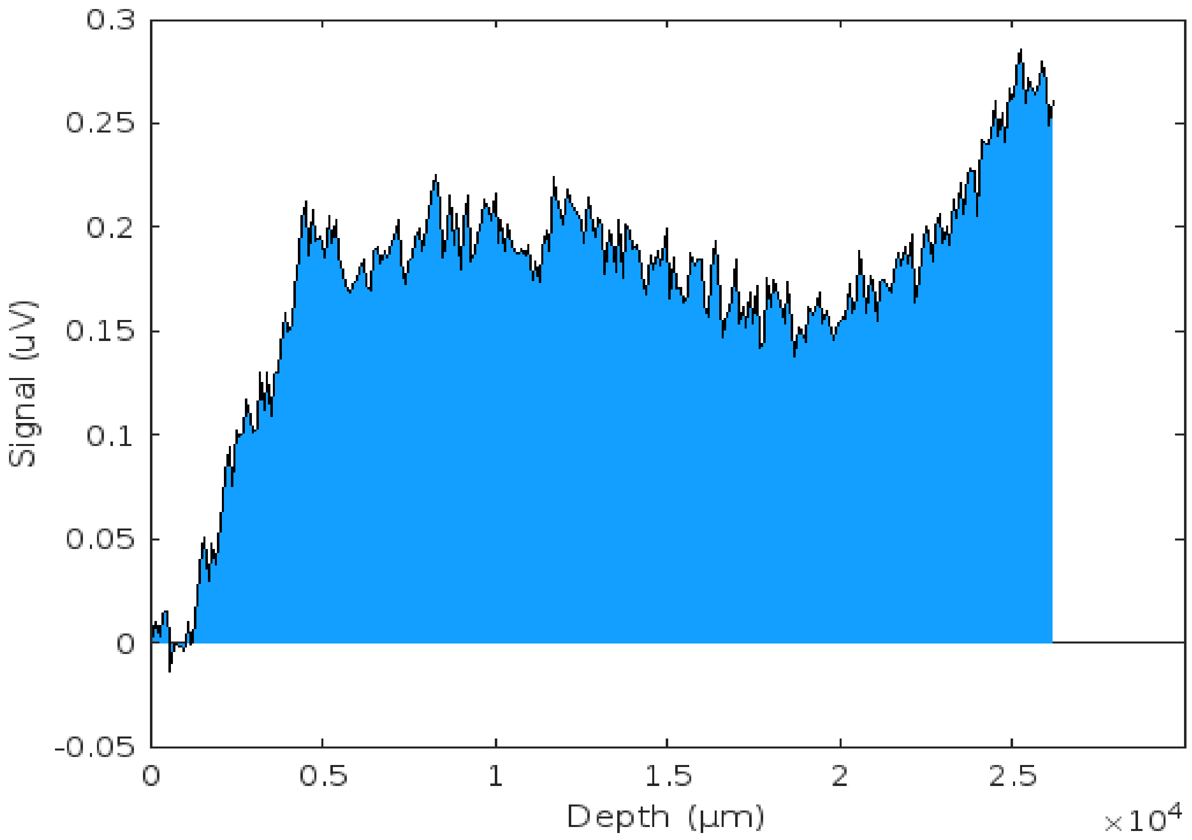
- **CPMG sequence at each depth, with parameters: TE=102, TR=3000, scans = 4, NrEchoes = 128, resolution 100 μm**

Measuring tree water content with the NMR-MOUSE



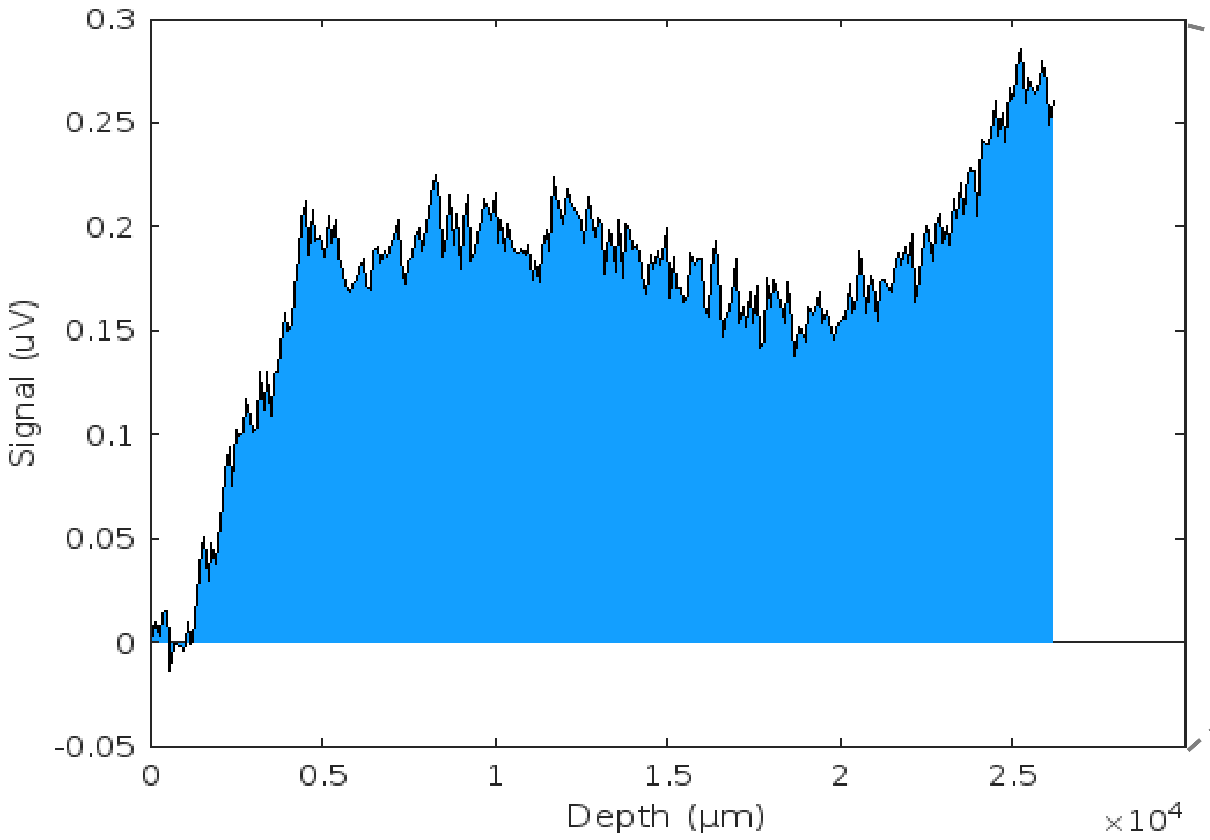
- **The A_0 value was used for each profile point, according to the relation: Signal = A_0 e^-t/T2**

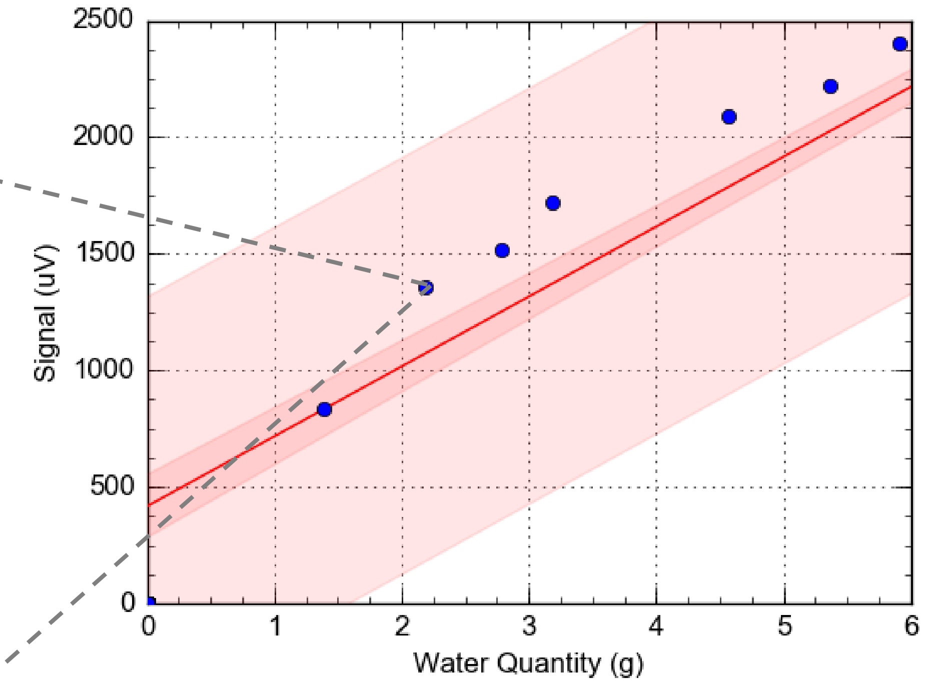
Measuring tree water content with the NMR-MOUSE



- **The signal is represented by the integral of A_0 profiles**

Measuring tree water content with the NMR-MOUSE





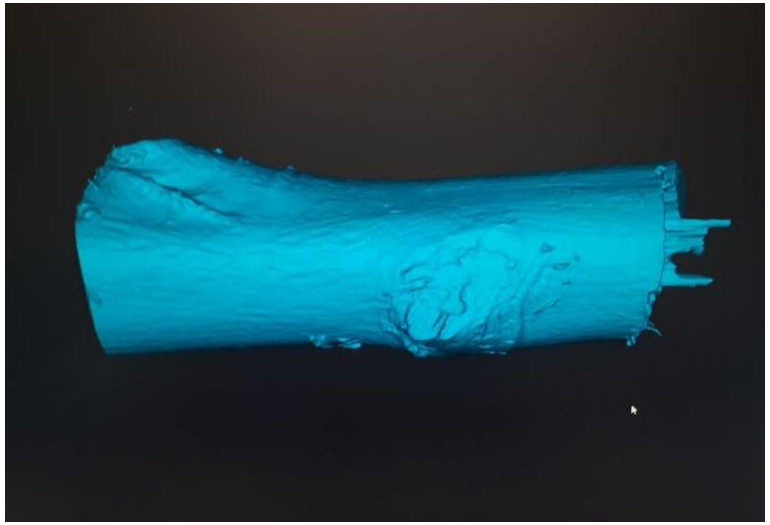
- **The signal is represented by the integral of A_0 profiles**

Measuring tree water content with the NMR-MOUSE

Calculating Water Quantity in the NMR sensitive zone:

Water quantity (g) = Branch water content (g/cm³) X Volume of branch in sensor (cm³)

- Water content (g) was calculated by taking fresh and dry weights
- Volume (cm³) determined by taking 3D scans



Results

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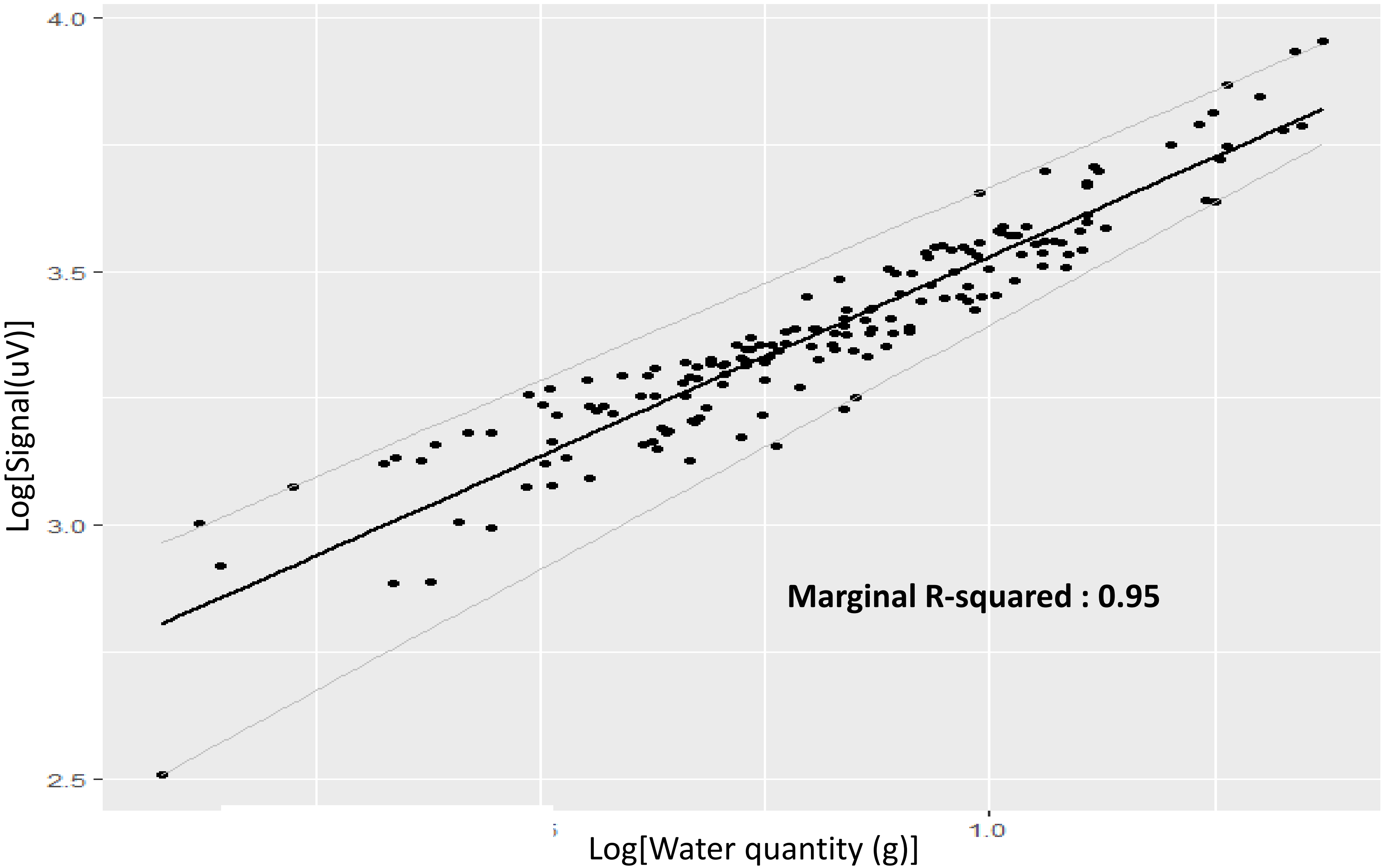
The linear relationship between water quantity and signal



The linear relationship between water quantity and signal

Statistical Treatment :

- ANCOVA
- Collinearity between species and functional type as variables are nested
- Mixed model used :

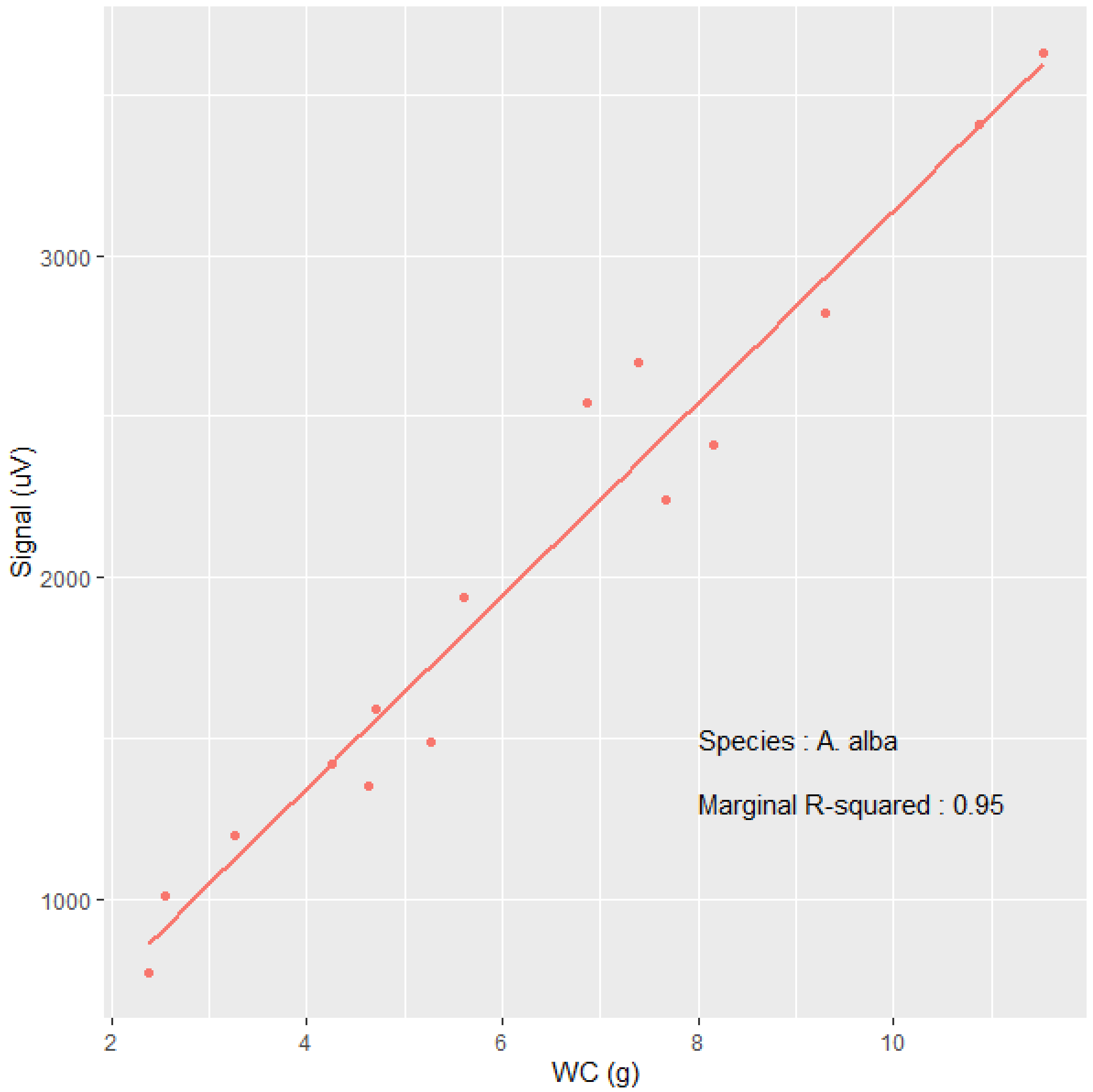
Signal ~ Water Quantity * Species + (1|Branch)

The linear relationship between water quantity and signal

Results of ANOVA :

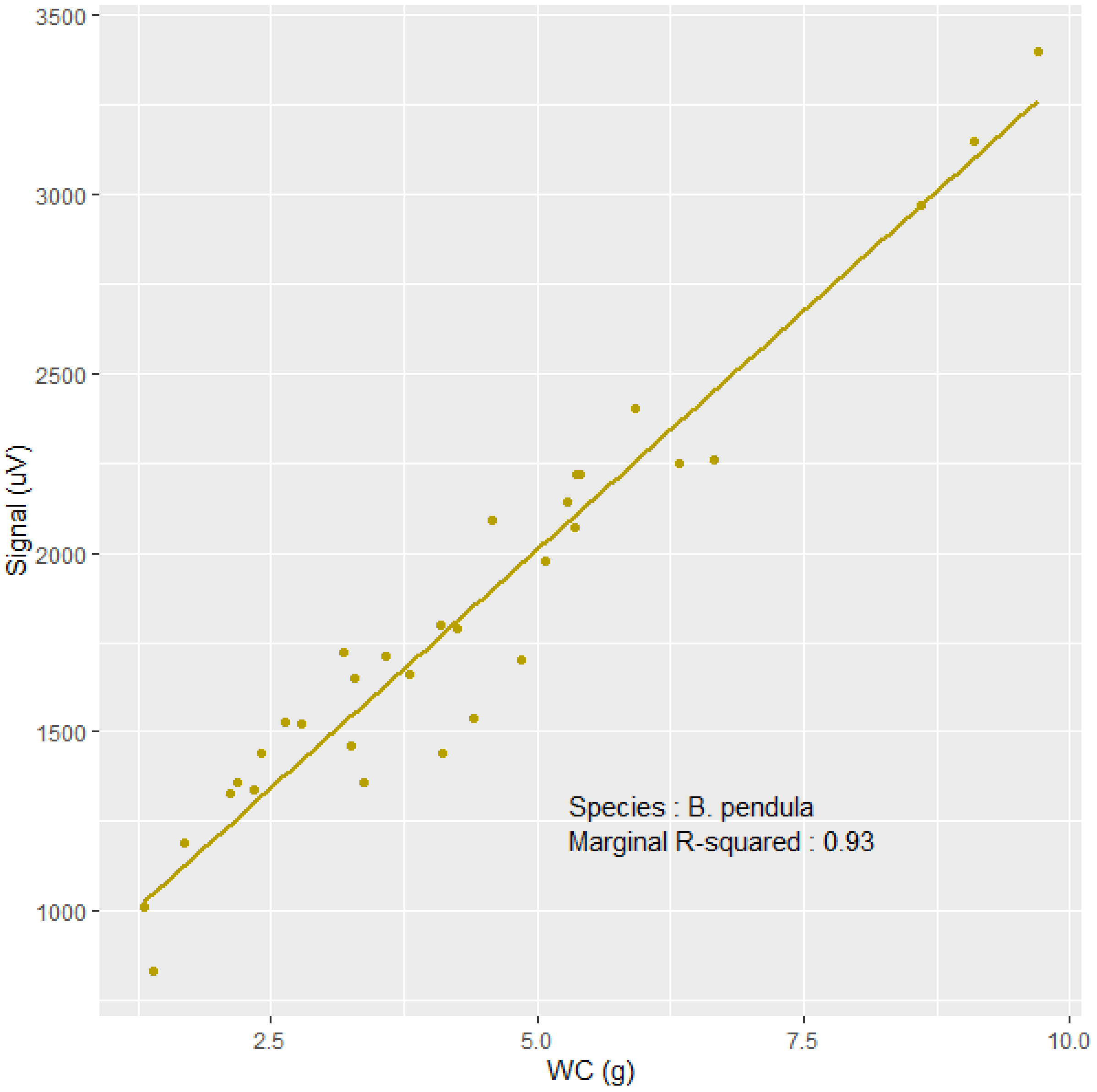
	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	P-value
Water quantity	1	2.380	3.438	273.310	**< 2e-16 *****
Species	5	0.145	0.039	3.127	**9.323e-05 *****
Water quantity : Species	5	0.187	0.011	0.895	**< 2e-16 *****

The linear relationship between water quantity and signal



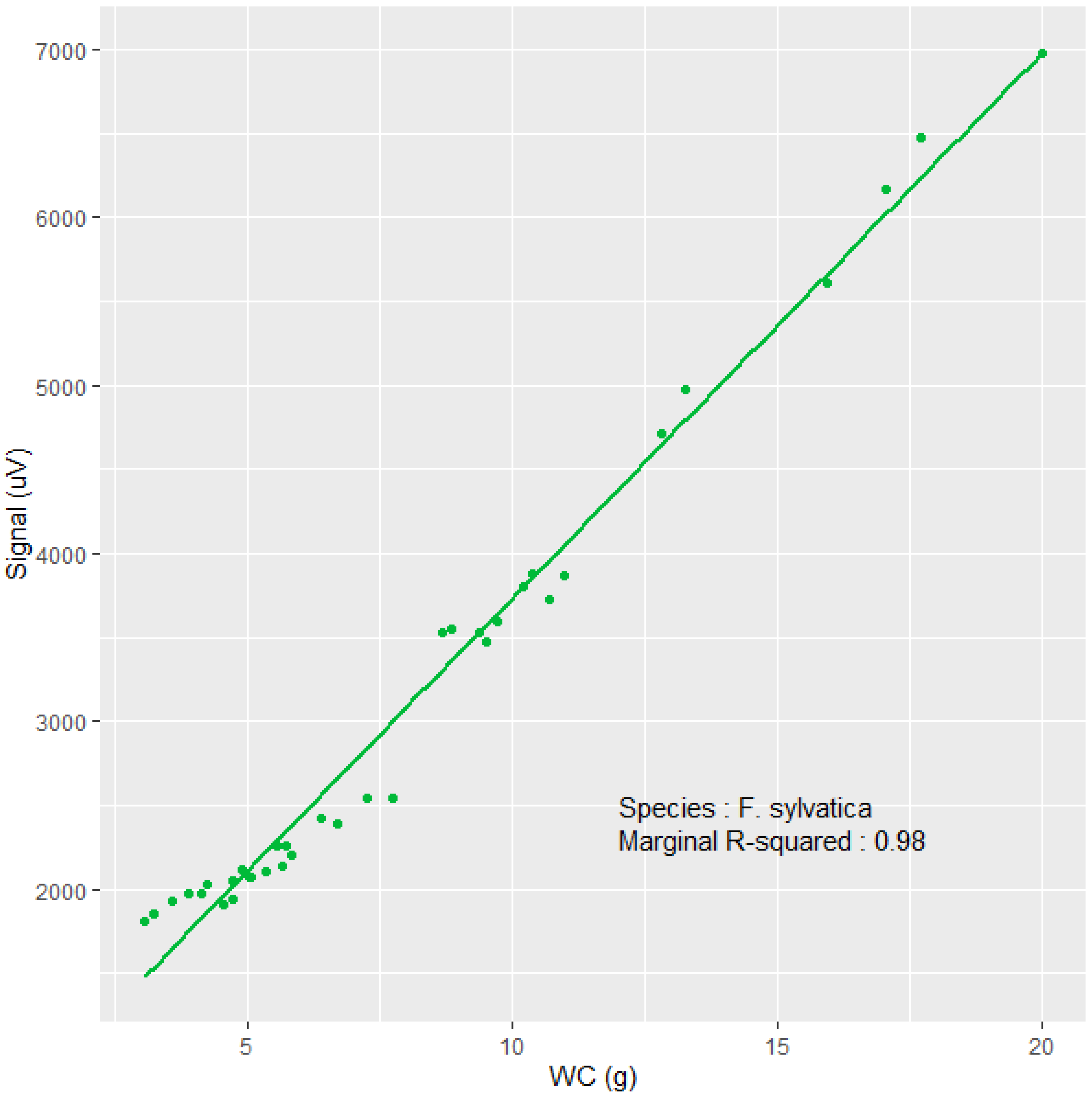
Species	Intercept	Slope
A. alba	101.732	309.724 ***

The linear relationship between water quantity and signal



Species	Intercept	Slope
A. Alba	101.732	309.724 ***
B. pendula	594.149 ***	284.809 ***

The linear relationship between water quantity and signal



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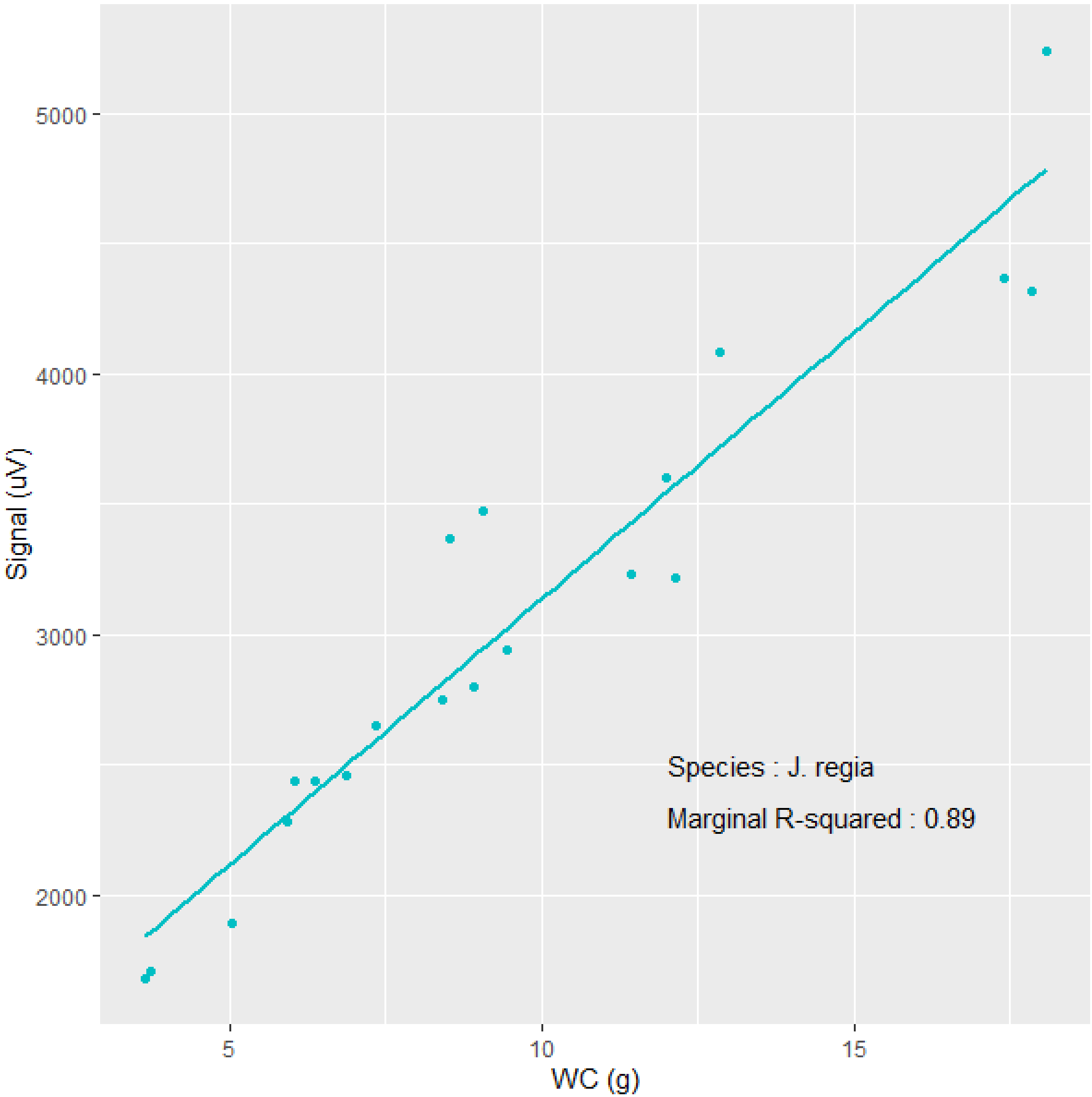

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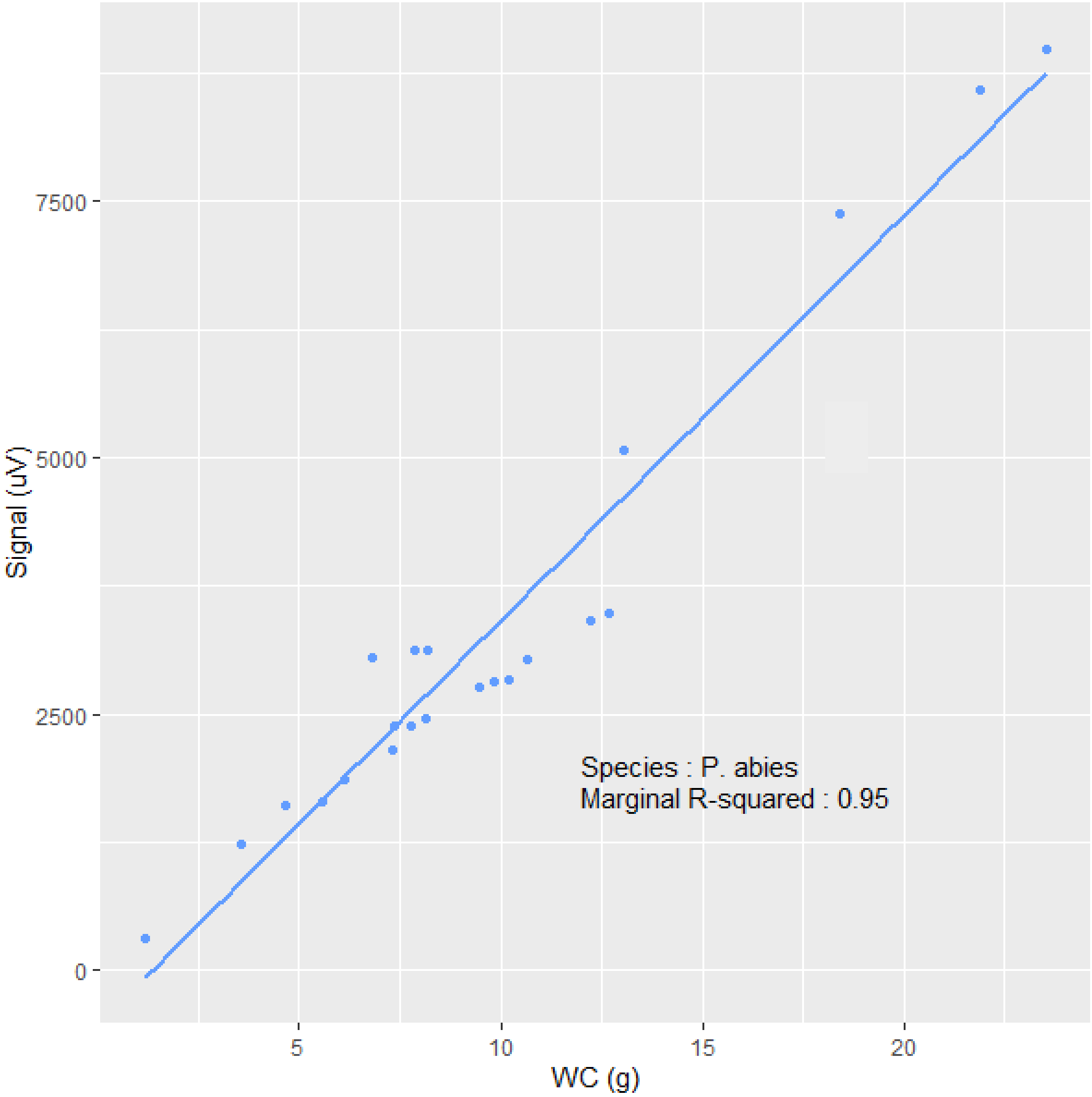

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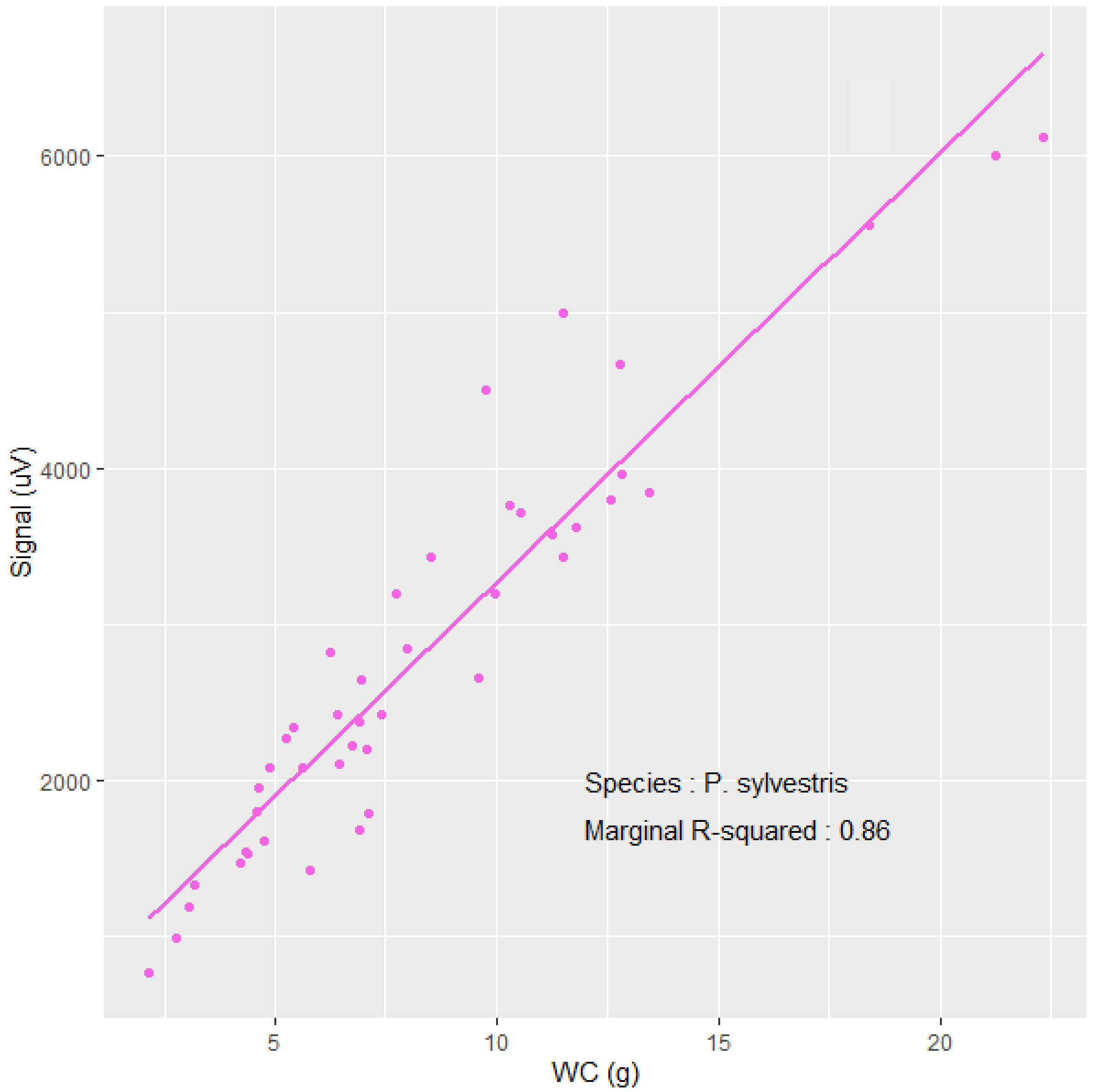

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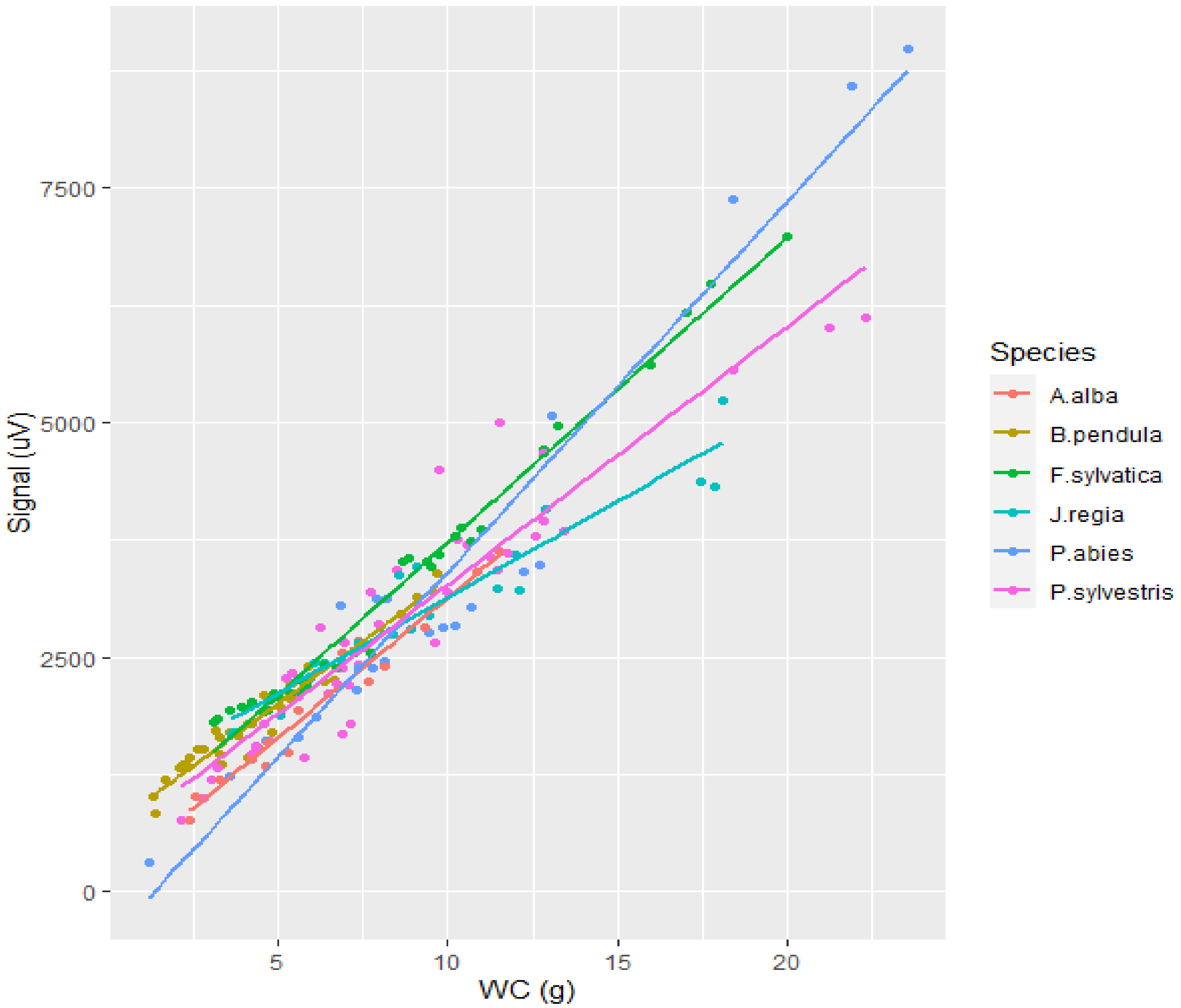

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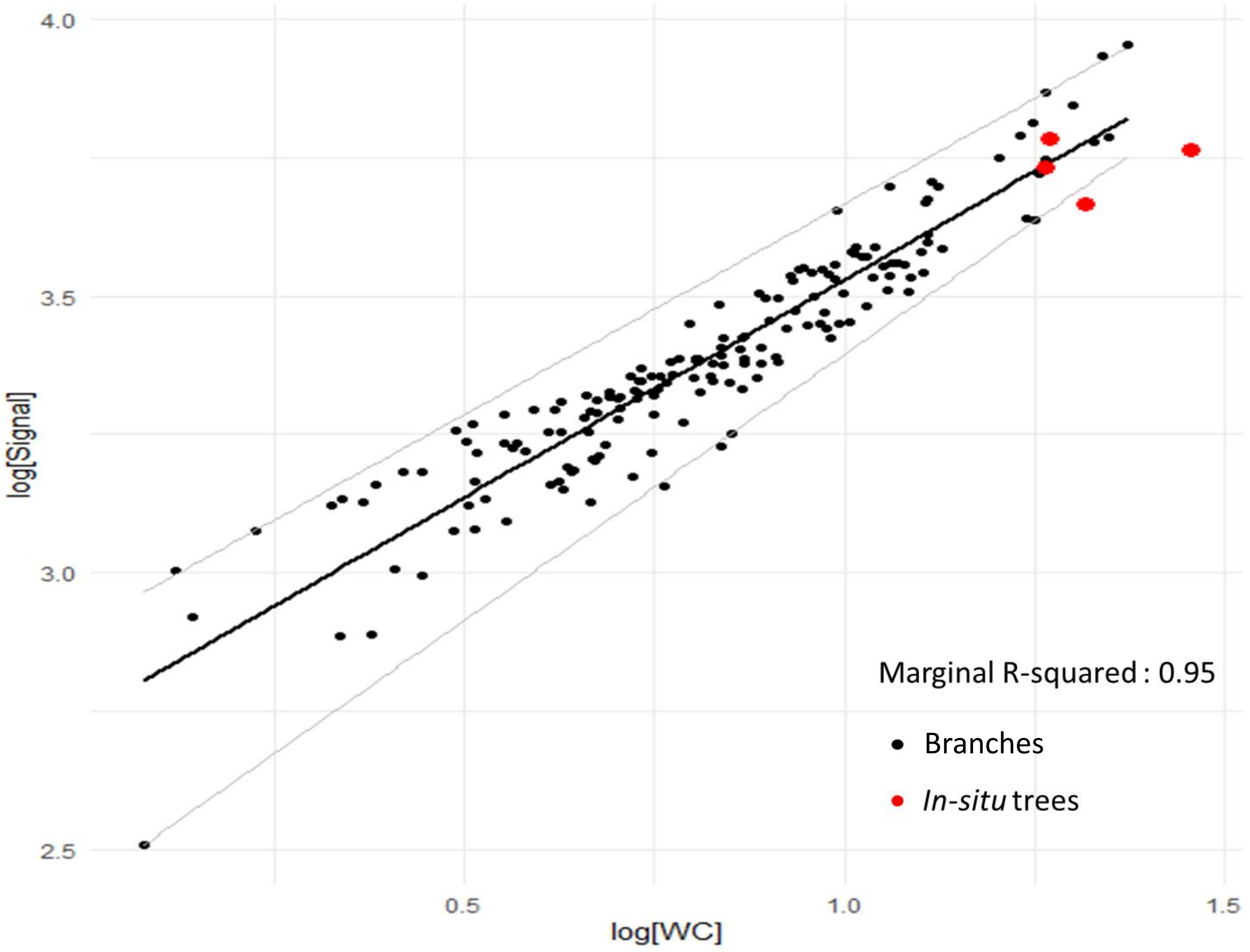
Effects of species and functional type

- Spectrum of wood density between functional types

- The persian walnut, *J. regia*, is the most dense wood amongst the species, and it has the thickest bark zone (varying water content)

In-situ trees added to the model



Conclusions and perspectives

- Tree water content can be reliably measured with the NMR-MOUSE at the level of the species
- Additional *in-situ* measurements will help to validate the model

Join the project

- We are looking for a postdoctoral researcher to work on this project
- The candidate will work on *in-situ* flow NMR with the goal of measuring xylem and phloem fluxes

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