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Genetic diversity affects ecosystem functions across trophic levels as much as species diversity, but in an opposite direction

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Abstract

Understanding the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning stands as a cornerstone in ecological research. Extensive evidence now underscores the profound impact of species loss on the stability and dynamics of ecosystem functions. However, it remains unclear whether the loss of genetic diversity within key species yield similar consequences. Here, we delve into the intricate relationship between species diversity, genetic diversity, and ecosystem functions across three trophic levels —primary producers, primary consumers, and secondary consumers— in natural aquatic ecosystems. Our investigation involves estimating species diversity and genome-wide diversity –gauged within three pivotal species- within each trophic level, evaluating seven key ecosystem functions, and analyzing the magnitude of the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functions (BEFs). We found that, overall, the absolute effect size of genetic diversity on ecosystem functions mirrors that of species diversity in natural ecosystems. We nonetheless unveil a striking dichotomy: while genetic diversity was positively correlated with various ecosystem functions, species diversity displays a negative correlation with these functions. These intriguing antagonist effects of species and genetic diversity persists across the three trophic levels (underscoring its systemic nature), but were apparent only when BEFs were assessed within trophic levels rather than across them. This study reveals the complexity of predicting the consequences of genetic and species diversity loss under natural conditions, and emphasizes the need for further mechanistic models integrating these two facets of biodiversity.

eLife assessment

This study presents **valuable** findings from an observational dataset in a riverine ecosystem about the effects of genetic and species diversity, across multiple trophic levels, on ecosystem functions. However, the support for these findings is currently **incomplete** because raw data are not provided and there is insufficient information in the manuscript for readers to understand and assess the statistical analyses and conclusions. The work will be of broad interest to ecologists.

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Introduction

Diversity *within* and *among* species are both important to ensure and stabilize ecosystem functions (Cardinale *et al*. 2012; Raffard *et al*. 2019). Studies on the links between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning (BEFs) have primarily focused on the interspecific (species) facet of biodiversity (Balvanera *et al*. 2006; Hooper *et al*. 2005). However, the intraspecific (genetic) facet of biodiversity has also recently been shown to have substantial effects on ecosystem functions (Crutsinger *et al*. 2006; Hughes & Stachowicz 2004; Reusch *et al*. 2005). Recent meta-analyses have shown that genetic diversity of plant and animal populations affect ecosystem functions, and that the magnitude (and shape) of intraspecific BEFs is similar to that of species diversity (Raffard *et al*. 2019; Wan *et al*. 2022).

Although natural assemblages encompass both intra– and interspecific diversity, most studies investigating BEFs are considering each biodiversity facet separately (but see, Fridley & Grime 2010; Prieto *et al*. 2015; Grele *et al*. 2024). This makes it difficult to differentiate the relative role of genetic and species diversity in ecosystem functions, impeding general predictions regarding the consequences of biodiversity loss as a whole on ecosystem functions (Blanchet *et al*. 2023). For instance, we are currently unaware whether genetic diversity may functionally compensate for a species loss in an (species-poor) ecosystem, whether the loss of genetic diversity within a few species in an assemblage is as detrimental for ecosystem functions as a species loss, or whether the combined loss of genetic and species diversity may have non-additive consequences for ecosystem dynamics. Although these biodiversity loss scenarios are realistic, our knowledge on the relative role of genetic *vs*. species diversity in ecosystem functions are still too scarce to provide reliable predictions.

The few studies investigating the combined effects of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem functions were all conducted experimentally by manipulating the genetic and species diversity of assemblages under controlled conditions (Fridley & Grime 2010; Hargrave *et al*. 2011; Prieto *et al*. 2015; but see Grele *et al*. 2024). Our understanding of genetic (intraspecific) and species (interspecific) BEFs therefore relies on simplified ecosystems that often lack variation in other factors (including spatial scales, abiotic factors…), and in which feedbacks between ecosystem functions and biodiversity are limited (Duffy *et al*. 2017; Prunier *et al*. 2023). However, knowledge acquired from BEFs at the interspecific level reveals that environmental variation can either reduce or enhance the effects of biodiversity on ecosystem functions, hence generating large variance in the magnitude and direction of BEFs measured in the wild (Hagan *et al*. 2021; Van Der Plas 2019). To our knowledge, the question of whether environmental variation decreases or enhances the relative influence of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem

functions has never been tackled. Therefore, we need further realistic field studies of BEFs, embracing the whole diversity of life forms (from genes to species) to generate insightful knowledge for future mechanistic models.

BEF studies often consider a single trophic level, despite accumulating evidence that biodiversity at a given trophic level can propagate across trophic levels, generating "multi-trophic BEFs" (Lefcheck *et al*. 2015; Soliveres *et al*. 2016). For instance, studies testing the joint effects of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem functions have mostly considered the effect of primary producer diversity on their own productivity ("*within-trophic level BEFs*", e.g., Hargrave *et al*. 2011; Prieto *et al*. 2015). However, genetic and species diversity within a given trophic level may have propagating effects on the ecosystem at other trophic levels (hereafter, "*between-trophic level BEFs*"). For instance, a genetically-diverse predator population shares their resources more efficiently than a genetically-poor predator population, which might permit a higher prey species coexistence and hence a larger prey biomass (*between-trophic level* BEFs due to genetic diversity, e.g., Raffard *et al*. 2021). Alternatively, a species-rich community of primary producers likely exhibits higher primary production, as organisms in species-rich communities share basal resources more efficiently than in species-poor communities (*within-trophic level BEFs due to species diversity*, Balvanera *et al*. 2006; Hooper *et al*. 2005). Similarly, the relative impact of genetic and species diversity should likely be inconsistent across trophic levels. For instance, the relative impact of genetic diversity on ecosystem functions should increase with increasing trophic levels, because the higher the trophic level, the lower the species richness and the higher the chance for genetic diversity to have strong effects on functions (Blanchet *et al*. 2020). Studies considering genetic and species BEFs under a realistic multitrophic scenario may thus provide insightful information that has so far been rarely revealed.

Here, we conducted a field study to test the relative importance of genetic and species diversity for ecosystem functions across multiple trophic levels in a natural landscape. We focused on three trophic levels from river ecosystems; riparian trees (primary producers), macroinvertebrate shredders (primary consumers) and fish (secondary consumers). For each trophic level, we quantified the species diversity of each community, as well as the genetic diversity of a single target and dominant species (*Alnus glutinosa*, *Gammarus* sp. and *Phoxinus dragarum* respectively). We further estimated several ecosystem functions, including leave decomposition of riparian trees, biomass (as productivity estimates) of each target species and total biomass of each community within each trophic level. We relied on causal analyses, taking into account the direct and indirect effects of the environment (through biodiversity) on ecosystem functions (Duffy *et al*. 2016) to test i) whether BEFs measured at the genetic level (*genetic* BEFs) are similar in magnitude and direction to BEFs measured at the species level (*species* BEFs); and ii) whether *within-trophic level* BEFs are similar in magnitude than *between-trophic level* BEFs. We also tested whether the relative effects of species and genetic diversity on ecosystem functions (within or between trophic levels) are consistent across the three trophic levels (primary producers, primary consumers and secondary consumers), in order to generalize findings along the trophic chain.

Materials and methods

Sampling sites and trophic chain

We sampled 52 sites in Southern France from the Adour-Garonne watershed, and distributed along an east-west gradient in the Pyrenees Mountains (**Figure 1a**). We acquired data on species diversity, genetic diversity and ecosystem functions at three trophic levels (primary producers, primary consumers and secondary consumers) (**Figure 1b**). Riparian trees (57 species in the sampled area) provide organic matter in the form of fallen leaves as a food source for decomposers. We selected the common alder *Alnus glutinosa* for acquisition of genetic data due to its dominance at most sites and its functional relevance, as its roots serve as shelters for many

aquatic species and are involved in nitrogen fixation. Macroinvertebrate shredders (101 genera in the sampled area) are primary consumers using leaves as resources, and converting them into accessible organic matter for other species. We focused on the most abundant Gammarid (Crustacean) species for genetic data acquisition, referred to as *Gammarus* sp. This species has not yet been formally named although it is phylogenetically distinct from its closest relative, *Gammarus fossarum* (Carnevali 2022; Piscart, unpublished data). This species is particularly efficient at decomposing tree leaves, in particular those from *Alnus* (Macneil *et al*. 1997). Fish (20 species in the sampled area) are secondary consumers feeding on invertebrates (amongst others). We used the minnow *Phoxinus dragarum* as the fish target species as it is an abundant and important predator strongly impacting invertebrate communities (Raffard *et al*. 2021).

Biodiversity estimates

Species datasets

At each site, we collected data on the abundance of all species within each trophic level, at one occasion for trees (July-August 2021) and two occasions for invertebrates (July and November 2020) and fishes (mid-July to mid-August 2020 and 2021), to obtain accurate biodiversity estimates. We identified tree species along a 200m transect of each river bank, excluding trees with trunk smaller than 2cm in diameter and more than one meter away from the bank. The abundances of trees were estimated as the total number of individuals per species and per site. For invertebrates, we identified shredders to the genus level (or to the family level for some groups such as chironomids) sampled from two types of standardized traps installed in four micro-habitats per site: natural coconut brushes (15*5.5 cm, bristles length 7.5 cm) recovered after 1.5 month of colonization, and litter bags (15*11 cm, 0.8 cm mesh size) filled with senescent *Alnus* leaves from each site and recovered after nine days of colonization (see below). We calculated abundances of each genus by summing the number of individuals per genus found in the coco brushes and the litter bags, and we averaged the abundances over the two sampling occasions to get a single estimate per genus per site. For fish, we collected all specimens during single-pass electric fishing sessions over a mean area of ~ 469.9 m^2 (± 174 m^2) per site. We anesthetized, identified and counted individuals at the species level. We calculated fish abundances as the number of individuals per species and per m^2, and we averaged the abundances over the two sampling occasions as for invertebrates.

Genetic datasets

At each site, we collected tissue from up to 32 individuals of each of the three target species. We collected fresh leaves of *A. glutinosa* in May 2020, specimens of *Gammarus* sp. in February 2020, and a piece of pelvic fin from *P. dragarum* individuals in summer 2020. The DNA of these samples was extracted using commercial kits for *Alnus* and *Gammarus sp.* and a salt-extraction protocol for *P. dragarum* (see Fargeot *et al*. 2023 for details). For each specimen, DNA concentrations were measured using Qubit 3.0 fluorometer (Life Technologies®, USA). Sequencing was performed based on equimolar pools of DNA ("pool-seq" approach, Schlötterer *et al*. 2014) from each population and each species. For *Gammarus sp*., we also obtained a ~600 bp mitochondrial sequence from the COI mitochondrial gene from each individual to ensure identification and avoid mixing individuals from different species. *Gammarus* sp. was found allopatric in most sites, but for a few sites from the eastern part of the area in which two species were identified (Carnevali 2022). In this latter case, we conserve only the target species for creating the DNA pools. We created one DNA pool per site per species (52 pools for *A. glutinosa*, 47 pools for *Gammarus* sp. and 44 pools for *P. dragarum*) and performed double-digest restriction-site associated DNA sequencing (ddRAD-seq) for *A. Glutinosa* and *Gammarus* sp. (respectively, PstI/MseI and Pst/HindIII enzymes) and normalized Genotyping-by-Sequencing (nGBS) for *P. dragarum* (MsII enzyme). Library preparation and pool-sequencing were executed by LGC Genomics (Biosearch Technologies®,

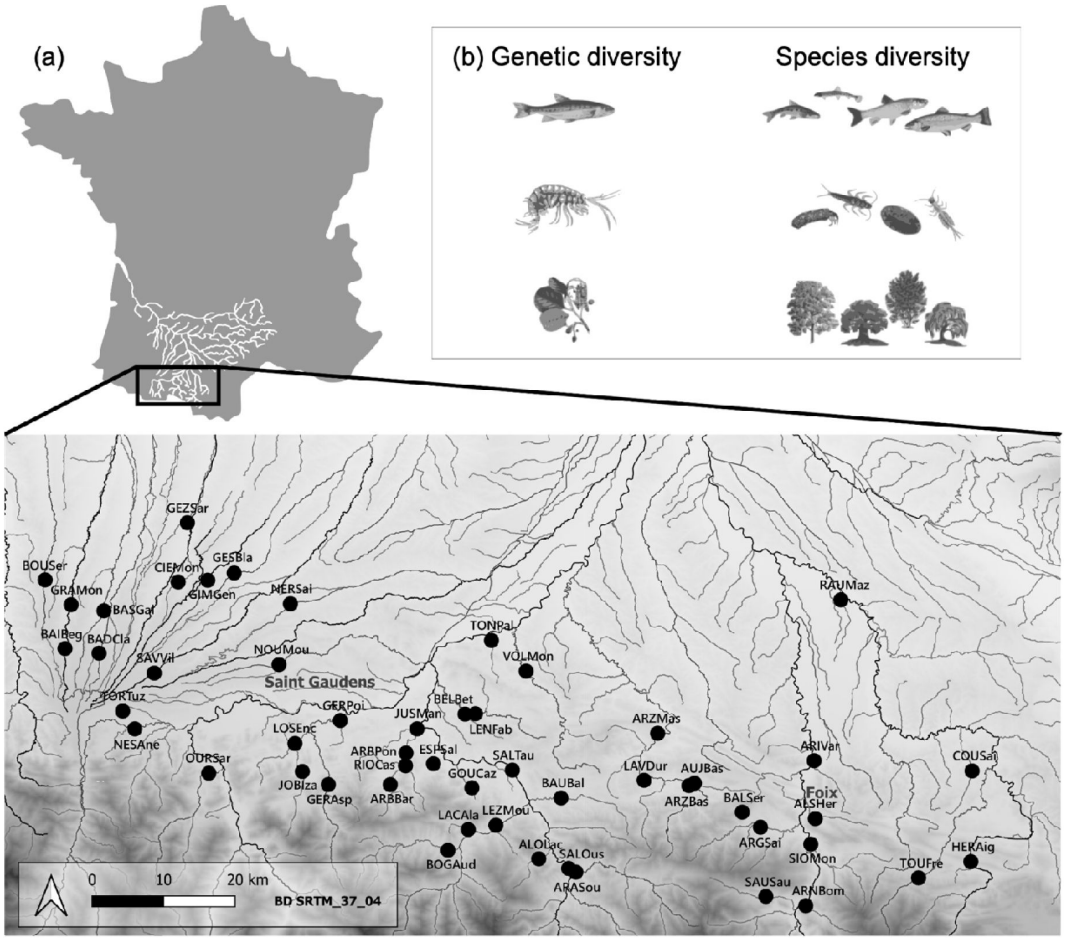


Figure 1.

Location of sampling sites and illustration of the trophic chain.

(a) Distribution of the 52 sampling sites (black dots) spanning a East-West gradient at the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains (France). Each site is denoted by a six-letter code, with the three first letters indicating the river name and the three last letters indicating the closest city or village. **(b)** Our study focused on a tri-trophic food chain commonly found in mountain rivers, consisting of riparian trees, macroinvertebrate shredders and fishes (from bottom to top). Within each trophic level, we measured two facets of biodiversity: genetic diversity in a single target species within each trophic level (specifically *Phoxinus dragarum*, *Gammarus* sp. and *Alnus glutinosa*), and species diversity from communities.

Germany) on an Illumina NovaSeq® (2×150 pb). Data processing was performed following De Kort *et al*. (2018), except that read mapping was performed on reference genomes. The genome of *A. glutinosa* was already available (Griesmann *et al*. 2018), and we assembled reference genomes from Illumina short-read sequencing and PacBio long-read sequencing for *Gammarus. sp.* (available upon request) and *P. dragarum* (accession number on DDBJ/ENA/GenBank: JARPMJ000000000), respectively. SNP calling was performed with (i) filtering of raw sequencing files; (ii) indexing of reference genomes; (iii) mapping reads to the reference; (iv) filtering for unpaired and badly/non-mapped reads; (v) assembling all read information in a single file per population and per species and (vi) calculating SNP allelic frequencies (De Kort *et al*. 2018). The total numbers of SNPs retrieved were 583 862 for *A. glutinosa*, 331 728 for *Gammarus* sp. and 414 213 for *P. dragarum* (see Fargeot *et al*. 2023 for details).

Species and genetic diversity estimates

We calculated α-diversity per site using the Shannon entropy from the "hillR" R package for both species and genetic diversity. The Shannon entropy is a metric of evenness that takes into account the distribution of allele or species abundances within each site (Chao *et al*. 2014) by weighting each species/allele by its proportional abundance (q = 1). Results were similar when using the Simpson's diversity index (q = 2, results not shown).

Ecosystem function measurements

At each site, we measured seven ecosystem functions. We collected biomass production data of all species at each trophic level (hereafter "total biomass") and the biomass production of each target species as estimates of productivity, as well as the decomposition rate of *Alnus* leaves. For riparian tree biomass, we used the trunk diameter of each single tree as a proxy of individual tree biomass, and we summed the trunk diameters of all trees found along the transect (divided by the length of the transect) to estimate the total tree biomass per site and per meter of bank. The same approach was used to estimate *A. glutinosa* biomass. For macroinvertebrate shredders, we estimated the total invertebrate biomass by drying all individuals for 24h at 60°C before weighing them (10^{-4}g precision). The same procedure was used to estimate the biomass of *Gammarus* sp. For both estimates, we averaged biomasses over the two sampling sessions. For fish, (fresh) total fish biomass was estimated as the total weight of all individuals (0.01g precision) per site, whereas *P. dragarum* biomass was the mass of all *P. dragarum* specimens per site. Fish biomasses were averaged over the two sampling sessions.

For the decomposition rate, we quantified leaf mass loss in litter bags placed in four micro-habitats per site twice (July and November 2020). We gathered and dried senescent leaves during fall 2019 from five *Alnus* trees per site to limit individual-specific effects on decomposition. Litter bags were 15cm x 11cm pockets of plastic-wire mesh (mesh size; 8 mm to allow invertebrates colonization) in which we introduced 4g of dried leaves before closing the bags with staples. We installed three bags per micro-habitat (12 per site) that we removed sequentially after ~9 days, ~18 days and ~27 days respectively to estimate decomposition rates. Bags were brought back to the laboratory, the remaining leaves were cleaned, dried and weighed. Decomposition rate was estimated as the slope of leaf mass loss over time (obtained from a linear model) that we averaged across replicates and temporal sessions (Raffard *et al*. 2021).

Environmental data

A major challenge for inferring BEFs from empirical data is to take into account the direct and indirect (through biodiversity) effects of environmental factors on ecosystem functions (Duffy *et al*. 2016, 2017). Failing to do this may result in overestimated and/or artefactual BEFs, especially if the same environmental factor simultaneously affects biodiversity and ecosystem processes (Grace *et al*. 2016). For each site, we measured thirteen variables related to river topography and physico-chemical characteristics that likely influence biodiversity and ecosystem processes

(Altermatt 2013). *River bed width* (m) was averaged from five measurements per site. *Connectivity* was calculated as the "closeness centrality", *i.e.*, the inverse of the sum of the distances of a node to all other nodes along the shortest paths possible (Altermatt 2013), using QGIS and the "RiverDist" R package. *Altitude* (m), *distance from the outlet* (m) and *east-west gradient* (longitudinal position along the Pyrenees chain) were measured using QGIS; *oxygen concentration* ($mg.L^{-1}$), *oxygen saturation* (%), *water temperature* (°C), *specific conductivity* (µS/cm) and *pH* were measured (and averaged) in summers 2020 and 2021 using a multi-parameter probe (Aqua TROLL 500, In-Situ Inc.). Concentration of NO_3-, NO_2-, NH^+ and PO_4^{3-} were estimated (and averaged) during summers 2020 and 2021 from a filtered water volume (100mL) using the Alpkem Flow Solution Iv Autoanalyzer (OI Analytical®).

A Principal Component Analysis combining all thirteen variables was performed using the R package "ade4" (Dray & Dufour 2007), and coordinates of each site on the two first axes (38.03% of the total variance, see **Table 1**) were used as two synthetic environmental variables for further analyses. We kept only these two first axes to avoid collinearity and over-parameterization of subsequent models. The first axis is defined by a strong contribution of (in decreasing order) oxygen concentration and altitude (**Table 1**). The second axis is defined by a strong contribution of east-west gradient and connectivity (**Table 1**).

Statistical analyses

BEF relationships

To quantify the magnitude of association between biodiversity estimates and ecosystem functions (BEFs), we performed piecewise Structural Path Models (pSEM, "piecewiseSEM" package, Lefcheck 2016). pSEM allows modelling direct and indirect causal relationships among a set of response variables and predictors (Shipley 2009). Further, pSEM uses local estimates of each linear structural equation separately (*i.e.*, parameters are estimated from a series of independent models forming a general causal graph), which allows the inclusion of a large number of parameters despite modest sample sizes (Shipley 2009). We ran a pSEM for each ecosystem function separately (*i.e.*, seven pSEMs, see an example in **Figure 2**). In each pSEM, the ecosystem function was the dependent variable whereas the six biodiversity estimates (species and genetic diversity estimated for each trophic level) and the two synthetic environmental variables were the predictors. In each model, environmental predictors were allowed to explain each biodiversity estimate (indirect effects of environmental variables through their influence on biodiversity, see **Figure 2**). For some functions (in particular those associated with plant biomass), irrelevant biodiversity-functions links were not included (e.g., the impact of fish or invertebrate diversity on tree biomasses), which results in 34 BEFs (out of the 42 possible links) having been included in the meta-analysis (see hereafter).

For each function, we retrieved the local parameter associated with the direct effect of each biodiversity estimate (six per function, but for some functions for which ecology-irrelevant BEFs were excluded) on the function (coloured arrows in **Figure 2**), which provides both the magnitude and the direction of each BEF. To smoothen comparison, we calculated a standardized effect size for each BEF by applying the Fisher's Z transformation (*Zr*) to the local parameters. Our seven measures of ecosystem functions were not correlated one to each other (all $r_{pearson}<|0.39|$).

Direction and magnitude of all types of BEFs

We used a linear mixed-model to test (i) whether the magnitude and direction of *genetic* BEFs are similar to those of *species* BEFs, and (ii) whether *within-trophic level* BEFs are similar in effect size to *between-trophic level* BEFs. In this model, *Zr* (providing the direction and magnitude of each BEF, n=34) was the dependent variable, and the predictors were the diversity facets used to

Table 1.

Characteristics of the two first principal components identified by the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) ran on the thirteen environmental variables.

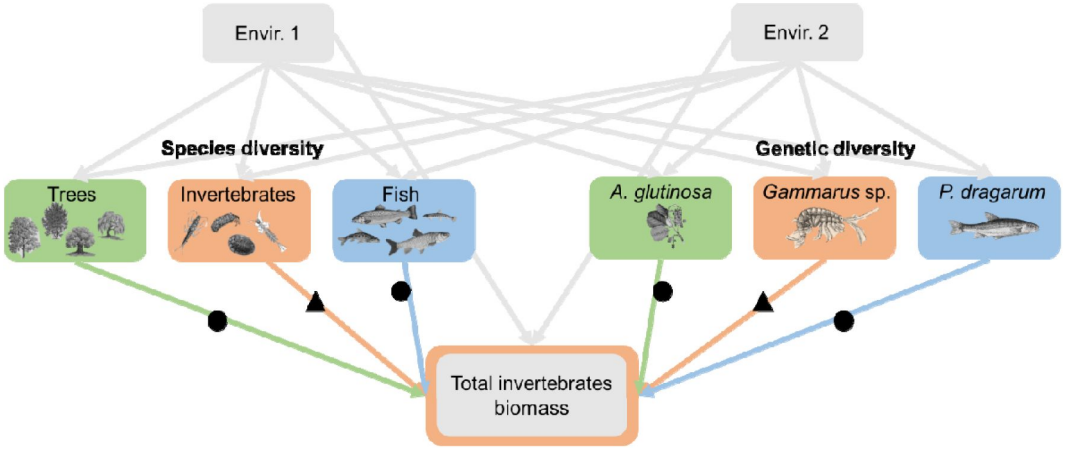
The part of the total environmental variance (%) and the contribution of each variable on each component are shown. The variables that contributed significantly to the axis are highlighted in bold.

	Component 1	Component 2
Part of total Variance (%)	21.66	16.37
River width	0.596	0.320
Connectivity	-0.155	**0.646**
Altitude	**0.648**	-0.385
Distance from outlet	0.528	-0.331
East-west gradient	0.105	**-0.795**
Oxygen concentration	**0.738**	0.343
Oxygen saturation	0.266	-0.509
Water temperature	-0.594	-0.012
Specific conductivity	-0.463	-0.045
pH	0.573	0.398
Concentration in $NO_3^-NO_2$	-0.369	-0.286
Concentration in NH_4+	-0.019	-0.207
Concentration in PO_4^{3-}	-0.279	0.236
Global characteristic	Low altitude, poorly oxygenated site - High altitude, highly oxygenated sites	Poorly connected east site - Highly connected west site

Figure 2.

Example of one of the seven causal models used to quantify the relationships between (species and genetic) diversity and ecosystem functions.

We focused on seven ecosystem functions associated with genetic and species diversity at three trophic levels (green for primary producer, orange for primary consumer and blue for secondary consumer). Each relationship between biodiversity and ecosystem functions (n = 6 values per function, but for some functions for which irrelevant links were not considered, see the text, n = 32 values in total) was measured at the same trophic level (triangles) or at another trophic level (dots).



measure biodiversity (genetic or species diversity) and the type of BEF (*within-trophic* or *between trophic* levels, triangles vs. dots in **Figure 2**). We included the two-term interaction between diversity facet and type of BEF to test whether the magnitude and direction of *genetic* and *species* BEFs are consistent across *within-trophic level* and *between-trophic level* BEFs. We further included in this model the type of ecosystem function as a random term (to take into account that each ecosystem function was associated with several biodiversity estimates) as well as the inverse of the asymptotic variance (v_z=n-3) associated with each effect size as a weighting parameter for each case study (Balvanera *et al*. 2006; Raffard *et al*. 2019).

We ran an additional linear mixed-model similar to the previous one, except that we added as a fixed effect the trophic level at which biodiversity was measured to estimate BEFs (primary producers, primary consumers or secondary consumers) as well as all interaction terms. Interaction terms allow testing the consistency of major conclusions across trophic levels, thereby determining the extent to which our findings can be generalized along the trophic chain. Models were run using the lmer function ("lme4" package) and significance of fixed effects was determined using type III ANOVA (function Anova from the "car" R package, α=0.05).

Results

Individual effect sizes (*Zr*) measured between biodiversity estimates and ecosystem functions were weak to moderate, irrespectively of the considered ecosystem function and of the type of BEFs (*genetic/species BEFs*, *within-trophic level/ between-trophic level* BEFs) (**Figure 3a, 3b**, **Table S2**). As expected under natural conditions (Hagan *et al*. 2021), BEFs ranged from negative to positive, and their distribution were centred around 0, although we observed a slight tendency for *genetic* BEFs toward positive values (**Figure 3b**). Four out of the 34 BEFs were strong and significant; two significant BEFS concerned *species* BEFs (negative relationship between the biomass of *A. glutinosa* and the diversity of trees, *Zr* = – 0.446, 95% CI [-0.695, –0.143]; negative relationship between the biomass of *P. dragarum* and the diversity of fish, *Zr* = –0.529, 95% CI [-0.802, –0.166]) and two concerned *genetic* BEFs (negative relationship between the biomass of *P. dragarum* and the diversity of *A. glutinosa*, *Zr* = –0.321, 95% CI [-0.602, –0.019]; positive relationship between the biomass of *Gammarus sp.* and the diversity of *P. dragarum*, *Zr* = 0.446, 95% CI [0.001, 0.829]) (**Figure 3a**). Noteworthily, for *within-trophic* BEFs, most case studies fall into the category whereby genetic BEFs tend to be positive and species BEFs tend to be negative (grey bottom-right square in **Figure 3a**).

We confirmed this visual tendency by summarizing all individual *Zr* through a meta-analysis. Indeed, we found a significant interaction between the facet at which biodiversity is measured (genetic or species diversity), and the type of BEF that was measured (within-or between trophic levels; **Table 2**). This interaction indicates (i) that –overall-*within-trophic level* BEFs were significantly negative when considering species diversity ($Zr_{Within*Species}$ = – 0.185, 95% CI [-0.343, –0.027]), whereas *within-trophic level* BEFs were significantly positive when considering genetic diversity ($Zr_{Within*Genetic}$ = 0.168, 95% CI [0.010, 0.326], see **Figure 4a**), and (ii) that this pattern was not observed for *between-trophic levels* BEFs, where no particular trend was observed (**Figure 4a**). Although most individual *Zr* were weak to moderate (and not significant), their consistency (in term of magnitude and direction) resulted in a significant pattern whereby species and genetic diversity have opposite effects on ecosystem functions for *within-trophic level* BEFs; species diversity is negatively associated, whereas genetic diversity is positively associated with ecosystem functions, but only when the influence of biodiversity on ecosystem functions is measured within the same trophic level.

When including the trophic level at which biodiversity is measured, we found no significant interaction terms between trophic levels and other fixed effects nor any additive effect of trophic levels (see **Table S1**). This indicates that our main findings were consistent across trophic levels,

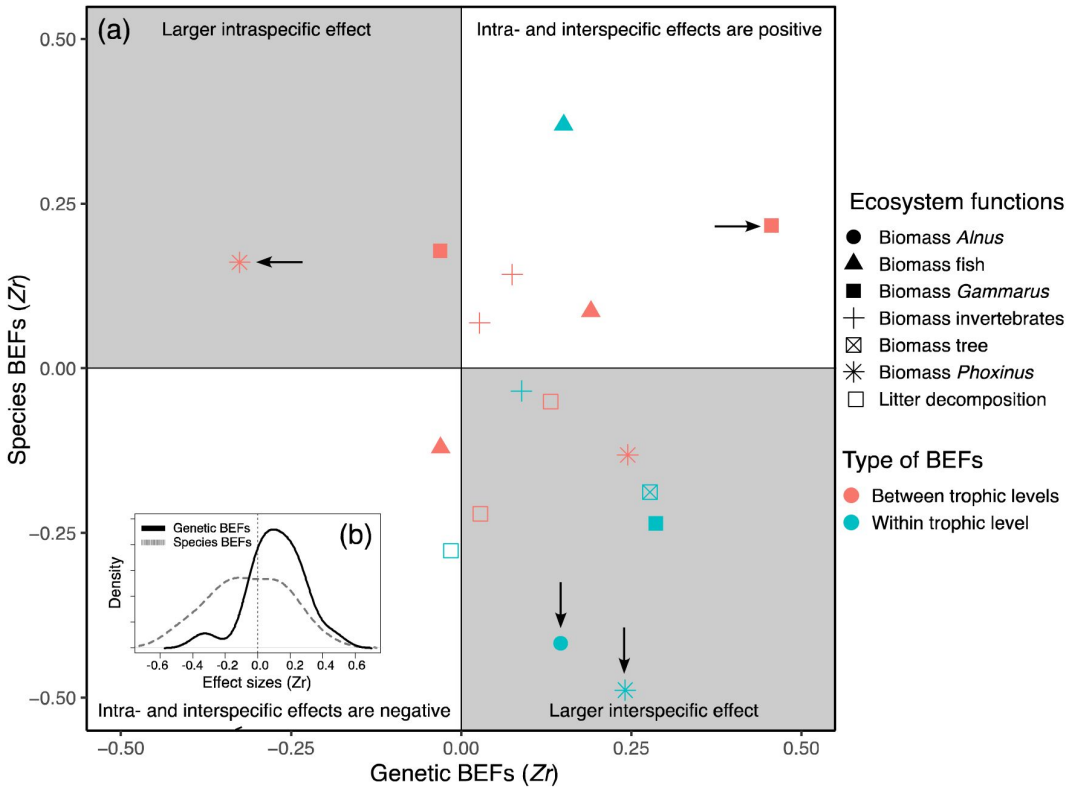


Figure 3.

General description of individual effect sizes measured between biodiversity estimates and ecosystem functions (BEFs) in a riverine trophic chain.

(**a**) The magnitude and direction of individual effect sizes (*Zr*) of biodiversity is shown for each ecosystem functions as a biplot between *Zr* associated with genetic diversity (y-axis, *genetic* BEFs) measured for one of three target species (*Alnus glutinosa*, *Gammarus sp.* and *Phoxinus dragarum*) and *Zr* associated with species diversity (x-axis, *species* BEFs) measured for one of three trophic levels (trees, invertebrates and fish). For each ecosystem function (but the biomass of trees and of *A. glutinosa*), a total of six *Zr* are depicted in the biplot; four of them are associated with biodiversity measured at another trophic level than the one of the target functions (red symbols, e.g., effect of fish diversity on invertebrate biomass) and two of them are associated with biodiversity measured at the same trophic level than the one of the target functions (blue symbols, e.g., effect of fish diversity on fish biomass). The arrows indicate significant *Zr* (95% confidence intervals excluded 0, see Table S2); vertical arrows are for significant *genetic* BEFs, horizontal arrows are for *species* BEFs. (b) Density plots displaying the distribution of individual *Zr* for *species*– and *genetic* BEFs (dotted and full lines respectively).

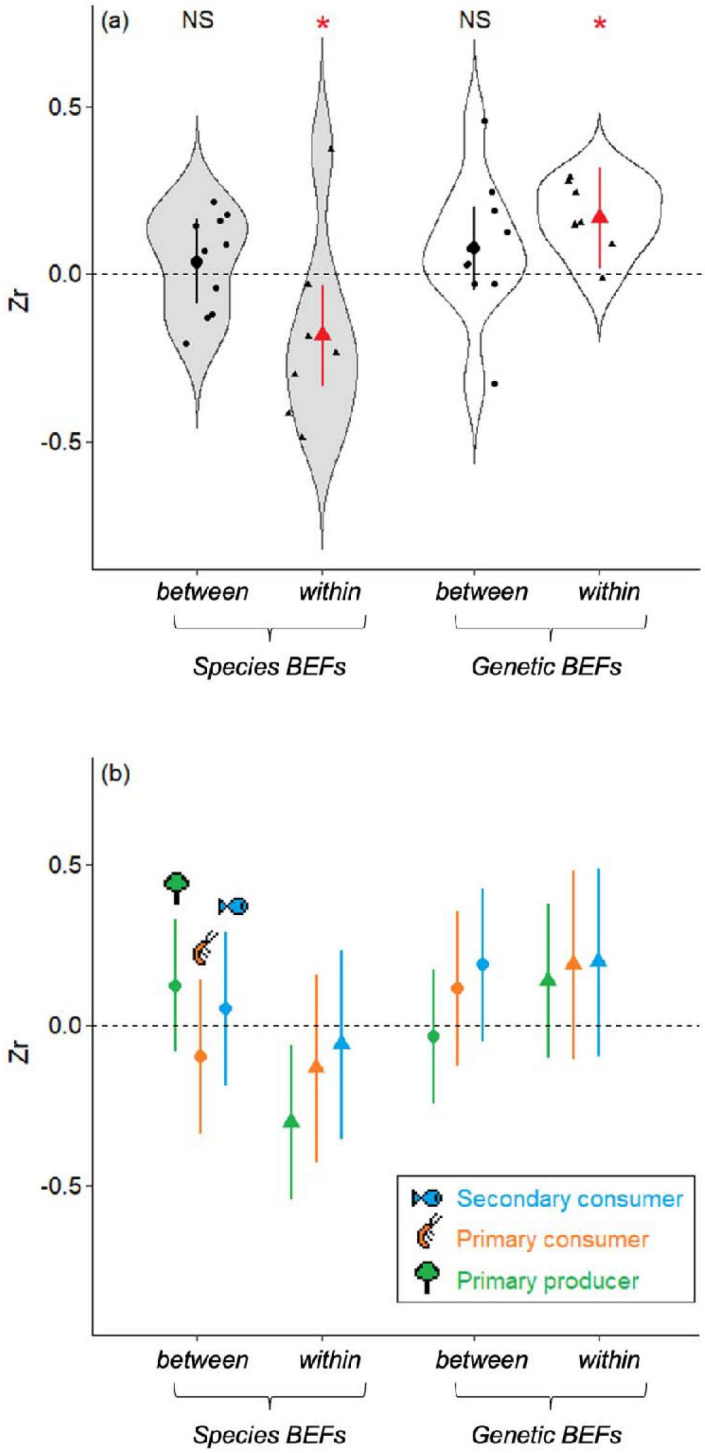


Figure 4.

Magnitude and direction of the mean effects sizes estimated from the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functions (BEFs) measured in a riverine trophic chain.

(**a**) The magnitude and direction of BEFs are expressed as effect sizes (*Zr*) and are displayed according to the facet used to measured biodiversity (genetic or species diversity, light grey and white boxplots respectively) and to the type of BEFs (*within-trophic level* BEFs or *between-trophic level* BEFs, triangles and dots respectively). Red colour and stars indicate global effect sizes that are significantly different from zero (p-value <0.05). Large symbols are mean ± 95%IC. (b) Same representation as (a) but with details at each trophic level (mean ± 95%IC, green for primary producer, orange for primary consumer and blue for secondary consumer). The trophic level at which BEFs are measured is coherent across all trophic levels.

	D.f.	F-value	P-value
(Intercept)	1, 30	0.287	0.595
Biodiversity facet	1, 30	0.232	0.630
Type of BEF	1, 30	5.393	**0.020**
Biodiversity facet*Type of BEF	1, 30	5.567	**0.018**

Table 2.

ANOVA table for the linear model testing the effects of the biodiversity facet (species or genetic diversity) and the type of BEF (*within-* or *between-trophic levels*) on the magnitude and direction of the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functions measured in a riverine trophic chain.

i.e., the respective negative and positive effects on ecosystem functions of species and genetic diversity hold statistically true across all trophic levels (**Figure 4b**).

Discussion

We provide empirical evidence that, in natural ecosystems, the effect sizes of genetic and species diversity on multi-trophic ecosystem functions are of similar magnitude, but operate in opposite directions. Indeed, for BEFs measured within the same trophic level, the effects of species diversity across multiple ecosystem functions were moderately negative on average, whereas the effects of genetic diversity were moderately positive. This suggests an antagonistic effect between the genetic and the species components of biodiversity in the modulation of ecosystem functions within one trophic level. This antagonistic effect was not identified for BEFs measured across trophic levels, since in these cases the influence of both genetic diversity and species diversity across multiple ecosystem functions was generally not different from zero. These conclusions hold true across three trophic levels (plants, invertebrates and fish), indicating that the relative effects of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem functions are not limited to a specific trophic level.

Our study is one of the few field-based study revealing BEFs across an entire (riverine) food chain spanning from primary producers to secondary consumers. Indeed, most previous BEF studies in the field focused on a single trophic level, and predominantly on terrestrial primary producers (Duffy *et al*. 2017; Van Der Plas 2019). This permitted encompassing a broad range of ecosystem functions that depict the overall functioning of a riverine ecosystem (rather than focusing on a single compartment). Moreover, we focused both on the effects of genetic and species diversity on these ecosystem functions, which has rarely (if not ever) been evaluated so far and which provides an exhaustive understanding of BEFs in the wild. After accounting for environmental covariates, we found that most individual BEFs (either *genetic* or *species*, *within-trophic levels* or *between-trophic levels* BEFs) were weak to moderate in magnitude, and that they operated almost equally in both direction (i.e., positive and negative association between biodiversity and ecosystem functions). As such, the distribution of individual effect sizes was centred around 0, for both *genetic* and *species* BEFs. Accordingly, there were only four individual BEFs that were significant, three out of them were negative and one was positive (**Table S2**). This general pattern (low to moderate BEFs with both positive and negative direction) is actually consistent with the most exhaustive meta-analysis having synthesized the magnitude and direction of *species* BEFs in the wild (Van Der Plas 2019) and with recent conceptual works (Hagan *et al*. 2021) concluding that strong and positive BEFs should not be the norm in natural ecosystems, but rather that a mix of positive, neutral and negative BEFs are expected. Our results confirm, using a dataset encompassing three trophic levels in a single ecosystem type, this conclusion.

We focused both on *within-trophic level* and *between-trophic level* BEFs, which likely encompasses a broad array of mechanisms sustaining potential associations between biodiversity and ecosystem functions. For instance, two out of the significant BEFs we reveal are negative association between species diversity (fish or tree species diversity respectively) and the biomass production of one of the target species (*Phoxinus sp*. and *Alnus sp*. respectively). These *within-trophic level* BEFs can –for instance-arise either because, if resources are limited, increased number of species within a patch limit the biomass production of each individual species, or because of a poorer competitive ability of the target species under some environmental conditions, which favors the settlement of additional species. The other two significant BEFs concerned the association (either positive or negative) between the genetic diversity of a target species (*Alnus sp.* or *Phoxinus sp.*) with the biomass production of another target species (*Phoxinus sp*. or *Gammarus sp.*, respectively). These *between-trophic level* BEFs likely arise through indirect effects implying the diversity and availability of (prey) resources. An obvious limit of this field-based study is the impossibility to tease out these mechanisms. Another limit is associated with the

fact that, although environmental covariates were taken into account in causal models, they were synthetized by two PCA axes, and we cannot ensure that all potential environmental covariates have been taken into account. This can influence the actual estimates of BEFs in the wild (Duffy *et al*. 2017). Nonetheless, keeping these limitations into account, revealing these associations (or the lack of) in natural ecosystems is –as ecologists-an important step forward to set theoretical and experimental approaches aiming at understanding this complex biological reality. Beyond individual BEF case studies (that were not the main aim of this study), their aggregation across trophic levels and biodiversity facets revealed a clear (and statistically supported) pattern whereby, within trophic levels, genetic and species diversity display antagonistic association with ecosystem functions; the global effect of species diversity across multiple ecosystem functions was negative, whereas the global effect of genetic diversity was positive. This pattern emerges from the "cumulative" effects of weak to moderate associations between biodiversity and ecosystem functions that consistently point toward the same direction (positive for genetic diversity, negative for species diversity), emphasizing the meaningfulness of meta-analyses (and more generally approaches based on effect sizes rather than on p-values) to reveal biological patterns. We hereafter discuss the ecological relevance of this general pattern.

Our results confirm a previous meta-analysis demonstrating that genetic and species diversity modulates ecosystem functions with a similar magnitude (Raffard *et al*. 2019), and results from few experimental studies that manipulated both the genetic and species components of biodiversity under controlled conditions (e.g., Jiang *et al*. 2022; Prieto *et al*. 2015). Indeed, within trophic levels, the absolute mean effect size of genetic and species diversity across ecosystem functions were of the same magnitude ($|Zr|$ = 0.168 and 0.185 for genetic and species diversity effects respectively), and slightly greater than the effect sizes reported under controlled conditions ($|lnRR|$ = 0.132 and 0.134 for genetic and species diversity effects respectively, Raffard *et al*. 2019) and those more generally reported for *species* BEFs ($|Zr|$ = 0.101, Balvanera *et al*. 2006). This demonstrates for the first time that under natural conditions, the effects of genetic and species components of biodiversity on ecosystem functions are comparable. However, our study goes two steps further as (i) it extends the conclusion made by Raffard *et al*. (2019) to multiple trophic levels and (ii) it demonstrates that the effects of genetic and species BEFs can actually operate in opposite directions.

As pointed out by Raffard *et al*. (2019), the vast majority (91% of 23 reviewed studies by 2019, see also Wan *et al*. 2022) of studies investigating the effects of genetic diversity on ecosystem functions have focused on primary producers, and all of them were based on experiments, which is also the case for most studies manipulating both genetic and species diversity. These trends strongly hamper any generalization. On the contrary, our findings provide a strong support for broadening the conclusion that both genetic and species diversity can influence ecosystem functions in the wild. More strikingly, our results demonstrate that, although the absolute effect sizes of genetic and species BEFs are of similar magnitude, for *within-trophic level* BEFs, the direction of their effects are opposite; species diversity (in general) reduces the rate of ecosystem functions, whereas genetic diversity enhances the same functions. For instance, all other things being equal, higher fish species diversity is associated with a lower productivity (biomass) in *P. dragarum* (see above for potential explanations), whereas its own genetic diversity tends to be associated with a higher productivity (**Table S2**). As genetic and species diversity have been found to be uncorrelated spatially in this landscape (Fargeot *et al*. 2023), covariation among diversity estimates cannot explain these patterns. These antagonistic effects of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem functions parallel previous experimental findings on plants (Hazard *et al*. 2017; Tang *et al*. 2022). It is now essential to understand the mechanisms sustaining these antagonistic effects as a step forward.

S*pecies* BEFs were on average negative (see **Table S2** for individual estimates), which contrasts with the general view that species biodiversity favours ecosystem functions, although it is not that surprising (Dee *et al*. 2023; Hagan *et al*. 2021). Indeed, the net effect of species biodiversity on

ecosystem functions results from the combined effects of both negative factors, arising from antagonistic interactions such as negative complementarity or negative selection effect, and positive factors, arising from beneficial interactions such as niche complementarity or facilitation (Loreau & Hector 2001). It is likely that, in our case, the net effect of interspecific interactions mostly results from negative complementarity among species (or strong negative selection effect), whereas the net effect of intraspecific interactions may result from facilitative interactions and/or improved niche complementarity with increased genetic diversity. Intraspecific competition is generally stronger than interspecific competition (Connell 1983), and intraspecific interactions could be expected to lead more frequently to negative complementarity (and hence negative *genetic* BEFs) than interspecific interactions. Since we observe the opposite, we can hypothesize that genetic diversity is essential to increase niche complementarity within species (Bolnick *et al*. 2003) and hence to reduce the pervasive effects of intraspecific interactions (Hughes *et al*. 2008; Prunier *et al*. 2023). Given the empirical nature of our study, it is hard to tease apart underlying mechanisms. Theoretical approaches, modelling simultaneously the genetic and species components of biodiversity, would be extremely useful to reveal the mechanisms sustaining opposite effects of intra– and interspecific diversity on ecosystem functions.

These antagonistic effects were observed only for BEFs measured *within* trophic levels, not for those measured *between* trophic levels. An overall *between-trophic level* BEF not different from zero suggests that biodiversity at a trophic level has only limited impact on ecosystem functions at another trophic level. For example, the biomass of *P. dragarum* was primarily influenced by genetic and species diversity in fishes, rather than the diversity of their preys (**Table S2**). However, for both genetic and species estimates of biodiversity, there was a substantial variation in effect sizes for *between-trophic level* BEFs that ranged from negative to positive BEFs (**Figure 4**). This suggests that biodiversity effects across trophic levels may be more variable in their direction than within-trophic level BEFs, which appear as more constrained. Variability in the magnitude and direction of effect sizes for *between-trophic level* BEFs likely blur a more general trend, but this variation is actually expected under natural conditions in which interactions involve multiple prey and predator species, fostering co-adaptation among communities from different trophic levels (Aubree *et al*. 2020; Poisot *et al*. 2013). In these cases, trophic complementarity between two trophic levels (i.e., the originality of a species based on the identity of the species it interacts with) might be a stronger determinant of ecosystem functions than complementarity measured at either one of the two trophic levels (Poisot *et al*. 2013). Quantifying trophic complementarity among our three target species (and communities) using stable isotope or gut content analyses for instance would be extremely valuable to assess whether this complexity can better explain BEFs between trophic levels than diversity measured at one of the trophic level (Aubree *et al*. 2020).

The empirical patterns we revealed here were all extremely consistent across the three trophic levels, hence allowing generalization. It is noteworthy that, although statistically strong and consistent, these patterns must be interpreted with care as field-based approaches are limited in properly taking into account the environmental heterogeneity of natural ecosystems (Hagan *et al*. 2021). BEFs were not particularly stronger at any specific trophic level and the relative effects of genetic and species diversity were not dependent on the trophic level at which the function was estimated. We may have expected a stronger top-down regulation (i.e., biodiversity of predators has more effects than biodiversity of preys) of ecosystem functions since previous studies showed that biodiversity loss should have greater consequences for multi-functionality when it occurs at higher trophic levels (Lefcheck *et al*. 2015). For instance, increased genetic diversity within a predatory fish species has experimentally been shown to indirectly increase the rate of litter decomposition by increasing the diversity of shredders (Raffard *et al*. 2021). Similarly, the relative effects of genetic and species diversity on functions may have varied among trophic levels, and in particular the relative importance of genetic diversity may have been higher for species-poor trophic levels (i.e., fish community) because of a “compensatory effect”. We found no evidence for these potential trophic-level dependencies, but instead found extremely consistent

patterns, which, from a broader perspective, reveal the importance of integrating both multi-trophic and multi-faceted approaches in predicting the overall consequences of biodiversity loss on ecosystem functioning.

To conclude, we found that the genetic (intraspecific) and species (interspecific) facets of biodiversity are both important drivers of multiple ecosystem functions in a natural and multi-trophic context. In the wild, these two facets of biodiversity can, as expected, generate low to moderately high impacts on ecosystem functions measured across three trophic levels, and they can operate in opposite directions. This demonstrates the importance for managers to develop integrative conservation plans spanning the entire diversity of life (from genes to species). For instance, genetic diversity loss often precedes species loss, and our results suggest that –in mountain streams-losing genes may actually be particularly detrimental for the performance of ecosystem functions. As such, it appears essential to maintain populations with high levels of genetic diversity in these ecosystems. Future studies should (i) extend these findings to other ecosystems and by quantifying natural genetic variation in more than a single species per trophic level, (ii) generate theoretical predictions regarding the mechanisms sustaining the antagonistic effects of genetic and species diversity on functions we revealed, and (iii) use a broader integrative approach for estimating biodiversity across facets (*inclusive* biodiversity) by using either a trait-based approach or a genetic-based approach as recently proposed by Blanchet *et al.* (2023) and Loreau *et al.* (2023).

Author contribution

Laura Fargeot: Conceptualization (Supporting); Methodology (Equal); Software (Equal); Validation (Equal); Formal analysis (Lead); Investigation (Lead); Data curation (Lead); Writing – original draft (Lead); Writing – review & editing (Equal); Visualization (Lead); Supervision (Equal); Project administration (Lead). **Camille Poesy:** Methodology (Equal); Validation (Equal); Investigation (Lead); Data curation (Supporting); Supervision (Equal); Project administration (Supporting). **Maxim Lefort:** Methodology (Supporting); Investigation (Lead); Data curation (Supporting); Supervision (Equal); Project administration (Supporting). **Jérôme G. Prunier:** Methodology (Supporting); Software (Equal); Formal analysis (Supporting); Investigation (Supporting); Resources (Equal); Data curation (Supporting); Writing – original draft (Supporting); Writing – review & editing (Supporting). **Madoka Krick:** Methodology (Supporting); Investigation (Equal). **Rik Verdonck**: Methodology (Supporting); Software (Equal); Investigation (Supporting); Writing – review & editing (Supporting). **Charlotte Veyssière:** Methodology (Supporting); Investigation (Equal). **Murielle Richard:** Methodology (Supporting); Investigation (Supporting); Writing – review & editing (Supporting). **Delphine Legrand:** Validation (Equal); Writing – review & editing (Equal); Visualization (Supporting). **Géraldine Loot:** Validation (Equal); Investigation (Supporting); Writing – review & editing (Supporting); Visualization (Supporting). **Simon Blanchet:** Conceptualization (Lead); Methodology (Lead); Software (Supporting); Validation (Equal); Formal analysis (Supporting); Investigation (Lead); Resources (Equal); Data curation (Supporting); Writing – original draft (Supporting); Writing – review & editing (Lead); Visualization (Lead); Supervision (Lead); Project administration (Lead); Funding acquisition (Lead).

Supplementary materials

	D.f.	F-value	P-value
(Intercept)	1, 24	1.453	0.228
Biodiversity facet	1, 24	1.293	0.255
Type of BEF	1, 24	7.498	**0.006**
Trophic level	2, 24	1.976	0.372
Biodiversity facet*Type of BEF	1, 24	7.884	**0.005**
Biodiversity facet*Trophic level	2, 24	3.520	0.172
Trophic level*Type of BEF	2, 24	2.901	0.234
Biodiversity facet*Type of BEF*Trophic level	1, 24	2.994	0.224

Table S1.

ANOVA table for the linear model testing the effects of the biodiversity facet (species or genetic diversity), the type of BEF (*within-* or *between-trophic levels*) and the trophic level at which BEFs are estimated (primary producers, primary consumers or secondary consumers) on the magnitude and direction of the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functions measured in a riverine trophic chain.

Ecosystem function	Predictor	Biodiversity facet	Type of BEF	*Zr*	negative 95% CI	positive 95% CI
***Phoxinus* biomass**	**Fish species diversity**	**Species diversity**	**Whithin-trophic levels**	**-0.529**	**-0.803**	**-0.166**
***Alnus* biomass**	**Tree species diversity**	**Species diversity**	**Whithin-trophic levels**	**-0.447**	**-0.695**	**-0.143**
***Phoxinus* biomass**	***Alnus* genetic diversity**	**Genetic diversity**	**Between-trophic levels**	**-0.321**	**-0.602**	**-0.020**
Litter decomposition	Tree species diversity	Species diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	-0.293	-0.630	0.060
Gammarus biomass	Invertebrate species diversity	Species diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	-0.273	-0.661	0.128
Litter decomposition	Fish species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	-0.210	-0.625	0.210
Tree biomass	Tree species diversity	Species diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	-0.183	-0.485	0.122
Fish biomass	Invertebrate species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	-0.138	-0.428	0.153
Phoxinus biomass	Invertebrate species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	-0.129	-0.471	0.215
Invertebrate biomass	Invertebrate species diversity	Species diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	-0.051	-0.381	0.279
Fish biomass	*Gammarus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	-0.047	-0.457	0.364
Gammarus biomass	*Alnus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	-0.043	-0.438	0.352
Litter decomposition	Invertebrate species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	-0.020	-0.401	0.361
Litter decomposition	*Alnus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	-0.012	-0.394	0.370
Litter decomposition	*Phoxinus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.018	-0.379	0.416
Invertebrate biomass	*Alnus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.025	-0.306	0.356
Invertebrate biomass	Tree species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.063	-0.236	0.362
Invertebrate biomass	*Phoxinus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.085	-0.260	0.429
Fish biomass	Tree species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.087	-0.276	0.449
Invertebrate biomass	*Gammarus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.097	-0.242	0.435
Litter decomposition	*Gammarus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.110	-0.281	0.500
Alnus biomass	*Alnus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.128	-0.179	0.433
Invertebrate biomass	Fish species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.144	-0.219	0.504
Fish biomass	*Phoxinus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.159	-0.260	0.575
Gammarus biomass	Tree species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.161	-0.198	0.516
Phoxinus biomass	Tree species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.165	-0.100	0.426
Gammarus biomass	Fish species diversity	Species diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.185	-0.249	0.614
Fish biomass	*Alnus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.193	-0.211	0.592
Phoxinus biomass	*Gammarus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Between-trophic levels	0.228	-0.074	0.522
Phoxinus biomass	*Phoxinus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.244	-0.064	0.542
Tree biomass	*Alnus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.280	-0.062	0.609
Gammarus biomass	*Gammarus* genetic diversity	Genetic diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.292	-0.120	0.688
Fish biomass	Fish species diversity	Species diversity	Whithin-trophic levels	0.326	-0.123	0.753
***Gammarus* biomass**	***Phoxinus* genetic diversity**	**Genetic diversity**	**Between-trophic levels**	**0.446**	**0.007**	**0.830**

Table S2

– Estimates of individual effect sizes of BEFs (Zr, n=34) for each ecosystem function, each biodiversity facet (genetic or species diversity) and each type of BEF (within-or between-trophic levels).

95% confidence intervals are provided together with the estimate of each BEF. BEFs are considered as significant when the 95%CI does not overlap 0.

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Editors

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Reviewer #1 (Public review):

Summary:

This work used a comprehensive dataset to compare the effects of species diversity and genetic diversity within each trophic level and across three trophic levels. The results showed that species diversity had negative effects on ecosystem functions, while genetic diversity had positive effects. These effects were observed only within each trophic level and not across the three trophic levels studied. Although the effects of biodiversity, especially genetic diversity across multi-trophic levels, have been shown to be important, there are still very few empirical studies on this topic due to the complex relationships and difficulty in obtaining data. This study collected an excellent dataset to address this question, enhancing our understanding of genetic diversity effects in aquatic ecosystems.

Strengths:

The study collected an extensive dataset that includes species diversity of primary producers (riparian trees), primary consumers (macroinvertebrate shredders), and secondary consumers (fish). It also includes the genetic diversity of the dominant species at each trophic level, biomass production, decomposition rates, and environmental data.

The conclusions of this paper are mostly well supported by the data and the writing is logical and easy to follow.

Weaknesses:

While the dataset is impressive, the authors conducted analyses more akin to a "meta-analysis," leaving out important basic information about the raw data in the manuscript. Given the complexity of the relationships between different trophic levels and ecosystem functions, it would be beneficial for the authors to show the results of each SEM (structural equation model).

The main results presented in the manuscript are derived from a "metadata" analysis of effect sizes. However, the methods used to obtain these effect sizes are not sufficiently clarified. By analyzing the effect sizes of species diversity and genetic diversity on these ecosystem functions, the results showed that species diversity had negative effects, while genetic diversity had positive effects on ecosystem functions. The negative effects of species diversity contradict many studies conducted in biodiversity experiments. The authors argue that their study is more relevant because it is based on a natural system, which is closer to reality, but they also acknowledge that natural systems make it harder to detect underlying mechanisms. Providing more results based on the raw data and offering more explanations

of the possible mechanisms in the introduction and discussion might help readers understand why and in what context species diversity could have negative effects.

Environmental variation was included in the analyses to test if the environment would modulate the effects of biodiversity on ecosystem functions. However, the main results and conclusions did not sufficiently address this aspect.

https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.100041.1.sa3

Reviewer #2 (Public review):

Summary:

Fargeot et al. investigated the relative importance of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem function and examined whether this relationship varies within or between trophic-level responses. To do so, they conducted a well-designed field survey measuring species diversity at 3 trophic levels (primary producers [trees], primary consumers [macroinvertebrate shredders], and secondary consumers [fishes]), genetic diversity in a dominant species within each of these 3 trophic levels and 7 ecosystem functions across 52 riverine sites in southern France. They show that the effect of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem functions are similar in magnitude, but when examining within-trophic level responses, operate in different directions: genetic diversity having a positive effect and species diversity a negative one. This data adds to growing evidence from manipulated experiments that both species and genetic diversity can impact ecosystem function and builds upon this by showing these effects can be observed in nature.

Strengths:

The study design has resulted in a robust dataset to ask questions about the relative importance of genetic and species diversity of ecosystem function across and within trophic levels.

Overall, their data supports their conclusions - at least within the system that they are studying - but as mentioned below, it is unclear from this study how general these conclusions would be.

Weaknesses:

(1) While a robust dataset, the authors only show the data output from the SEM (i.e., effect size for each individual diversity type per trophic level (6) on each ecosystem function (7)), instead of showing much of the individual data. Although the summary SEM results are interesting and informative, I find that a weakness of this approach is that it is unclear how environmental factors (which were included but not discussed in the results) nor levels of diversity were correlated across sites. As species and genetic diversity are often correlated but also can have reciprocal feedbacks on each other (e.g., Vellend 2005), there may be constraints that underpin why the authors observed positive effects of one type of diversity (genetic) when negative effects of the other (species). It may have also been informative to run SEM with links between levels of diversity. By focusing only on the summary of SEM data, the authors may be reducing the strength of their field dataset and ability to draw inferences from multiple questions and understand specific study-system responses.

(2) My understanding of SEM is it gives outputs of the strength/significance of each pathway/relationship and if so, it isn't clear why this wasn't used and instead, confidence intervals of Z scores to determine which individual BEFs were significant. In addition, an inclusion of the 7 SEM pathway outputs would have been useful to include in an appendix.

(3) I don't fully agree with the authors calling this a meta-analysis as it is this a single study of multiple sites within a single region and a specific time point, and not a collection of multiple studies or ecosystems conducted by multiple authors. Moreso, the authors are using meta-analysis summary metrics to evaluate their data. The authors tend to focus on these patterns as general trends, but as the data is all from this riverine system this study could have benefited from focusing on what was going on in this system to underpin these patterns. I'd argue more data is needed to know whether across sites and ecosystems, species diversity and genetic diversity have opposite effects on ecosystem function within trophic levels.

https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.100041.1.sa2

Reviewer #3 (Public review):

The manuscript by Fargeot and colleagues assesses the relative effects of species and genetic diversity on ecosystem functioning. This study is very well written and examines the interesting question of whether within-species or among-species diversity correlates with ecosystem functioning, and whether these effects are consistent across trophic levels. The main findings are that genetic diversity appears to have a stronger positive effect on function than species diversity (which appears negative). These results are interesting and have value.

However, I do have some concerns that could influence the interpretation.

(1) Scale: the different measures of diversity and function for the different trophic levels are measured over very different spatial scales, for example, trees along 200 m transects and 15 cm traps. It is not clear whether trees 200 m away are having an effect on small-scale function.

(2) Size of diversity gradients: More information is needed on the actual diversity gradients. One of the issues with surveys of natural systems is that they are of species that have already gone through selection filters from a regional pool, and theoretically, if the environments are similar, you should get similar sets of species, without monocultures. So, if the species diversity gradients range from say, 6 to 8 species, but genetic diversity gradients span an order of magnitude more, you can explain much more variance with genetic diversity. Related to this, species diversity effects on function are often asymptotic at high diversity and so if you are only sampling at the high diversity range, we should expect a strong effect.

(3) Ecosystem functions: The functions are largely biomass estimates (expect decomposition), and I fail to see how the biomass of a single species can be construed as an ecosystem function. Aren't you just estimating a selection effect in this case?

Note that the article claims to be one of the only studies to look at function across trophic levels, but there are several others out there, for example:

Li, F., Altermatt, F., Yang, J., An, S., Li, A., & Zhang, X. (2020). Human activities' fingerprint on multitrophic biodiversity and ecosystem functions across a major river catchment in China. Global change biology, 26(12), 6867-6879.

Luo, Y. H., Cadotte, M. W., Liu, J., Burgess, K. S., Tan, S. L., Ye, L. J., ... & Gao, L. M. (2022). Multitrophic diversity and biotic associations influence subalpine forest ecosystem multifunctionality. Ecology, 103(9), e3745.

Moi, D. A., Romero, G. Q., Antiqueira, P. A., Mormul, R. P., Teixeira de Mello, F., & Bonecker, C. C. (2021). Multitrophic richness enhances ecosystem multifunctionality of tropical shallow lakes. Functional Ecology, 35(4), 942-954.

Wan, B., Liu, T., Gong, X., Zhang, Y., Li, C., Chen, X., ... & Liu, M. (2022). Energy flux across multitrophic levels drives ecosystem multifunctionality: Evidence from nematode food webs. Soil Biology and Biochemistry, 169, 108656.

And the case was made strongly by:

Seibold, S., Cadotte, M. W., MacIvor, J. S., Thorn, S., & Müller, J. (2018). The necessity of multitrophic approaches in community ecology. Trends in ecology & evolution, 33(10), 754-764.

https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.100041.1.sa1

Author response:

> ***Public Reviews:***
>
> ***Reviewer #1 (Public review):***
>
> *Summary:*
>
> *This work used a comprehensive dataset to compare the effects of species diversity and genetic diversity within each trophic level and across three trophic levels. The results showed that species diversity had negative effects on ecosystem functions, while genetic diversity had positive effects. These effects were observed only within each trophic level and not across the three trophic levels studied. Although the effects of biodiversity, especially genetic diversity across multi-trophic levels, have been shown to be important, there are still very few empirical studies on this topic due to the complex relationships and difficulty in obtaining data. This study collected an excellent dataset to address this question, enhancing our understanding of genetic diversity effects in aquatic ecosystems.*
>
> *Strengths:*
>
> *The study collected an extensive dataset that includes species diversity of primary producers (riparian trees), primary consumers (macroinvertebrate shredders), and secondary consumers (fish). It also includes the genetic diversity of the dominant species at each trophic level, biomass production, decomposition rates, and environmental data.*
>
> *The conclusions of this paper are mostly well supported by the data and the writing is logical and easy to follow.*
>
> *Weaknesses:*
>
> *While the dataset is impressive, the authors conducted analyses more akin to a "meta-analysis," leaving out important basic information about the raw data in the manuscript. Given the complexity of the relationships between different trophic levels and ecosystem functions, it would be beneficial for the authors to show the results of each SEM (structural equation model).*

We understand the point raised by the reviewer. Our objective was to focus the Results section on the main hypotheses, and for this we let away the raw statistics. We can definitively show the seven individual SEM, highlighting the major links, which may help understand some processes. This will be done in the next version of the manuscript.

> *The main results presented in the manuscript are derived from a "metadata" analysis of effect sizes. However, the methods used to obtain these effect sizes are not sufficiently clarified. By analyzing the effect sizes of species diversity and genetic diversity on these*

> *ecosystem functions, the results showed that species diversity had negative effects, while genetic diversity had positive effects on ecosystem functions. The negative effects of species diversity contradict many studies conducted in biodiversity experiments. The authors argue that their study is more relevant because it is based on a natural system, which is closer to reality, but they also acknowledge that natural systems make it harder to detect underlying mechanisms. Providing more results based on the raw data and offering more explanations of the possible mechanisms in the introduction and discussion might help readers understand why and in what context species diversity could have negative effects.*

We hope you will be right. As said above, we will explore this possibility.

> *Environmental variation was included in the analyses to test if the environment would modulate the effects of biodiversity on ecosystem functions. However, the main results and conclusions did not sufficiently address this aspect.*

This will be addressed by the more in-depth analysis of individual SEM, and we will discuss this further.

> ***Reviewer #2 (Public review):***
>
> *Summary:*
>
> *Fargeot et al. investigated the relative importance of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem function and examined whether this relationship varies within or between trophic-level responses. To do so, they conducted a well-designed field survey measuring species diversity at 3 trophic levels (primary producers [trees], primary consumers [macroinvertebrate shredders], and secondary consumers [fishes]), genetic diversity in a dominant species within each of these 3 trophic levels and 7 ecosystem functions across 52 riverine sites in southern France. They show that the effect of genetic and species diversity on ecosystem functions are similar in magnitude, but when examining within-trophic level responses, operate in different directions: genetic diversity having a positive effect and species diversity a negative one. This data adds to growing evidence from manipulated experiments that both species and genetic diversity can impact ecosystem function and builds upon this by showing these effects can be observed in nature.*
>
> *Strengths:*
>
> *The study design has resulted in a robust dataset to ask questions about the relative importance of genetic and species diversity of ecosystem function across and within trophic levels.*
>
> *Overall, their data supports their conclusions - at least within the system that they are studying - but as mentioned below, it is unclear from this study how general these conclusions would be.*
>
> *Weaknesses:*
>
> *(1) While a robust dataset, the authors only show the data output from the SEM (i.e., effect size for each individual diversity type per trophic level (6) on each ecosystem function (7)), instead of showing much of the individual data. Although the summary SEM results are interesting and informative, I find that a weakness of this approach is that it is unclear how environmental factors (which were included but not discussed in the results) nor levels of diversity were correlated across sites. As species and genetic diversity are often correlated but also can have reciprocal feedbacks on each other (e.g.,*

> *Vellend 2005), there may be constraints that underpin why the authors observed positive effects of one type of diversity (genetic) when negative effects of the other (species). It may have also been informative to run SEM with links between levels of diversity. By focusing only on the summary of SEM data, the authors may be reducing the strength of their field dataset and ability to draw inferences from multiple questions and understand specific study-system responses.*

We will address this issue by performing a more in-depth analysis of each individual SEMs, and provide directly these raw data. Regarding the comment on species-genomic diversity correlations (SGDCs), we would like to point out that this has already been addressed in a previous paper (Fargeot et al. Oikos, 2023). There is actually no correlations between genomic and species diversity in these dataset, which is merely explain by the selection of the sampling sites. The relationships between species diversity, genomic diversity and environmental factors are also detailed in Fargeot et al. (2023). We precisely published this paper first to focus here “only” on BEFs. But we realize we need to provide further information and discuss further these issues. This will be done in the next version of the manuscript.

> *(2) My understanding of SEM is it gives outputs of the strength/significance of each pathway/relationship and if so, it isn't clear why this wasn't used and instead, confidence intervals of Z scores to determine which individual BEFs were significant. In addition, an inclusion of the 7 SEM pathway outputs would have been useful to include in an appendix.*

Yes, we can provide p-values. Results from p-values will provide the same information than 95%Cis, both yield very similar (if not exactly the same) results/conclusions. We wil provide the 7 SEMs in Appendices.

> *(3) I don't fully agree with the authors calling this a meta-analysis as it is this a single study of multiple sites within a single region and a specific time point, and not a collection of multiple studies or ecosystems conducted by multiple authors. Moreso, the authors are using meta-analysis summary metrics to evaluate their data. The authors tend to focus on these patterns as general trends, but as the data is all from this riverine system this study could have benefited from focusing on what was going on in this system to underpin these patterns. I'd argue more data is needed to know whether across sites and ecosystems, species diversity and genetic diversity have opposite effects on ecosystem function within trophic levels.*

We agree. “Meta-regression” would perhaps be more adequate than “meta-analyses”. As said above, more details will be provided on the next version of the manuscript.

> ***Reviewer #3 (Public review):***
>
> *The manuscript by Fargeot and colleagues assesses the relative effects of species and genetic diversity on ecosystem functioning. This study is very well written and examines the interesting question of whether within-species or among-species diversity correlates with ecosystem functioning, and whether these effects are consistent across trophic levels. The main findings are that genetic diversity appears to have a stronger positive effect on function than species diversity (which appears negative). These results are interesting and have value.*
>
> *However, I do have some concerns that could influence the interpretation.*
>
> *(1) Scale: the different measures of diversity and function for the different trophic levels are measured over very different spatial scales, for example, trees along 200 m transects*

> *and 15 cm traps. It is not clear whether trees 200 m away are having an effect on small-scale function.*

Trees identification and invertebrate (and fish) sampling are done on the same scale. Trees are spread along the river so that their leaves fall directly in the river. Traps have been installed all along the same transect in various micro-habitats. Diversity have been measured at the exact same scale for all organisms. We will try to be more precise.

> *(2) Size of diversity gradients: More information is needed on the actual diversity gradients. One of the issues with surveys of natural systems is that they are of species that have already gone through selection filters from a regional pool, and theoretically, if the environments are similar, you should get similar sets of species, without monocultures. So, if the species diversity gradients range from say, 6 to 8 species, but genetic diversity gradients span an order of magnitude more, you can explain much more variance with genetic diversity. Related to this, species diversity effects on function are often asymptotic at high diversity and so if you are only sampling at the high diversity range, we should expect a strong effect.*

We will provide more information. The range of diversity also vary according to the trophic level; there are more invertebrate species than fish species. But overall the rage of species number is large.

> *(3) Ecosystem functions: The functions are largely biomass estimates (expect decomposition), and I fail to see how the biomass of a single species can be construed as an ecosystem function. Aren't you just estimating a selection effect in this case?*

The biomass estimated for a certain area represent an estimate of productivity, whatever the number of species being considered. Obviously, productivity of a species can be due to environmental constraints; the biomass is expected to be lower at the niche margin (selection effect). But is these environmental effects are taken into account (which is the case in the SEMs), then the residual variation can be explained by biodiversity effects. We will try to make it more clear.

> *Note that the article claims to be one of the only studies to look at function across trophic levels, but there are several others out there, for example:*

Thanks, we will cite some of these studies (and make our claim less strong)

Li, F., Altermatt, F., Yang, J., An, S., Li, A., & Zhang, X. (2020). Human activities' fingerprint on multitrophic biodiversity and ecosystem functions across a major river catchment in China. Global change biology, 26(12), 6867-6879.

Luo, Y. H., Cadotte, M. W., Liu, J., Burgess, K. S., Tan, S. L., Ye, L. J., ... & Gao, L. M. (2022). Multitrophic diversity and biotic associations influence subalpine forest ecosystem multifunctionality. Ecology, 103(9), e3745.

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