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BOOK OF ABSTRACT



O8. Step by step: how ungulate individual behaviour can contribute to nutrients' flow in Alpine ecosystems

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Animal movement is a fundamental process in life, assuring an animal's fitness by searching for food, escaping predators, finding mates, and caring for offspring.

Beyond individuals, it is a fundamental ecosystemic process that links individuals, species, and habitats by transporting nutrients, exerting functions, and also assuring the element dynamics.

Migration in particular is a movement behaviour used by large herbivores, among many other species, to exploit the best conditions for survival and reproduction across time and space, especially in highly heterogeneous landscapes like the Alps.

Studying individual movements of red deer and observing the occurrence of the mountain ungulate species across seasons in an elevational gradient of habitats, we found evidence of how these species respond to the environmental pressures, such as climate and resource availability, alongside human disturbance and the occurrence of predators. By doing so, they facilitate nutrient fluxes across a range of spatial scales, between habitat types and along the altitudinal gradient.