

# Only a theory: Why birds fly, why mammals stayed small, and why dinosaurs became big and died out

#### Marcus Clauss

Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Science and Barbecue Zürich August 2012







... or how listening to interdisciplinary gossip, riding trains and drawing pictures can lead to high attention-generating and completely non-useful hypotheses.



Sauropod Biology - the Evolution of Gigantism









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#### Digestive physiology supervisors

Jürgen Hummel



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Irina Nurutdinova





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Irina

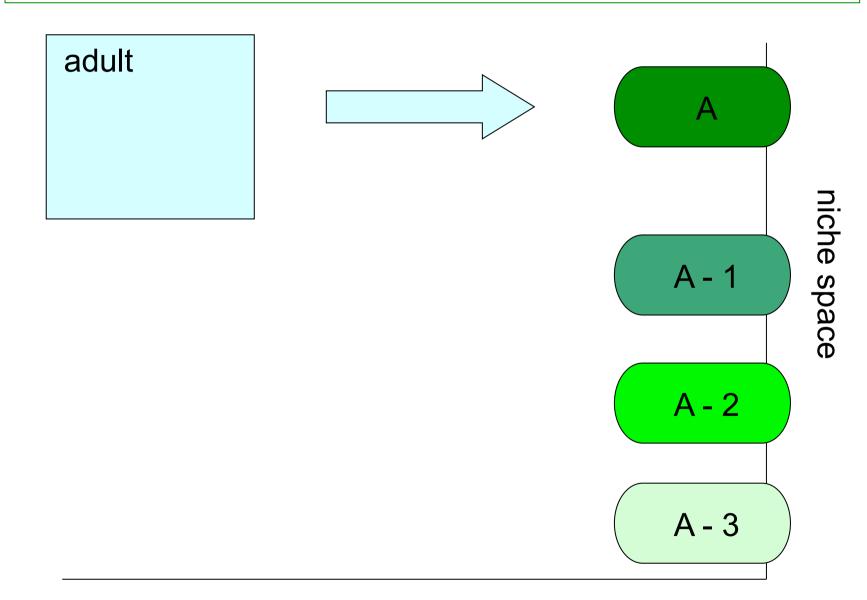
Nurutdinova



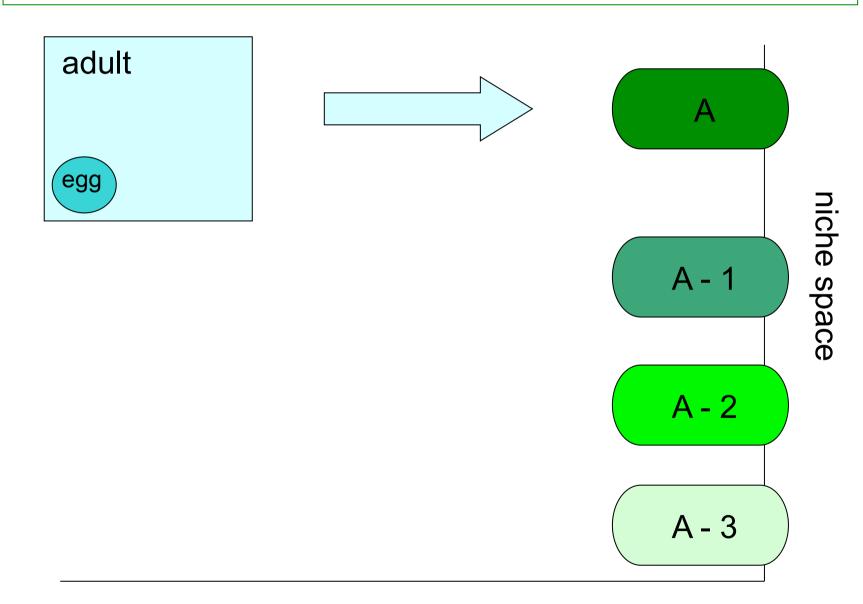
#### Assumptions

- Niche stratification according to body size (=body mass)
- Eggs cannot increase endlessly in size because of physical constraints on egg shell thickness (stronger shells needed for larger eggs) and diffusion (thicker shells prevent diffusion of oxygen)
- The K-T extinction event affected all animals above a certain body size threshold

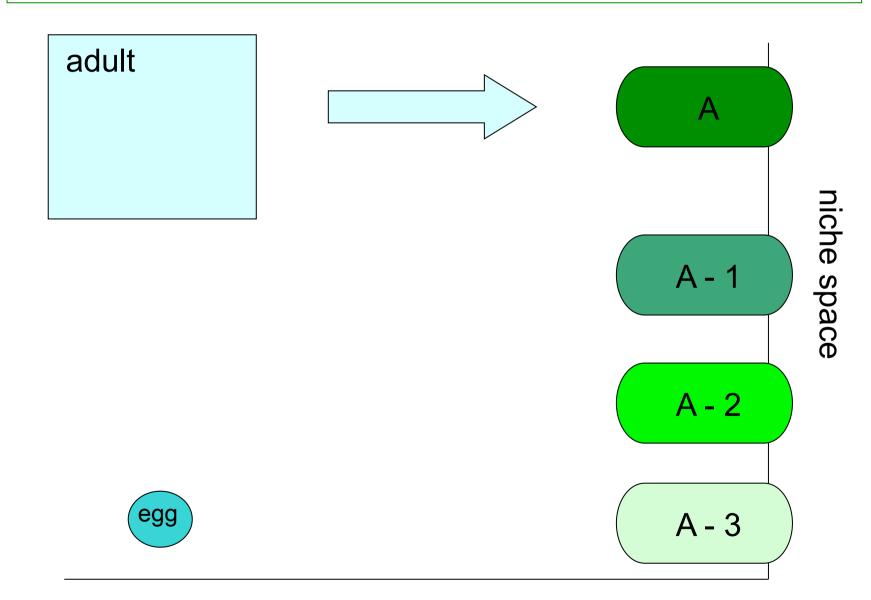




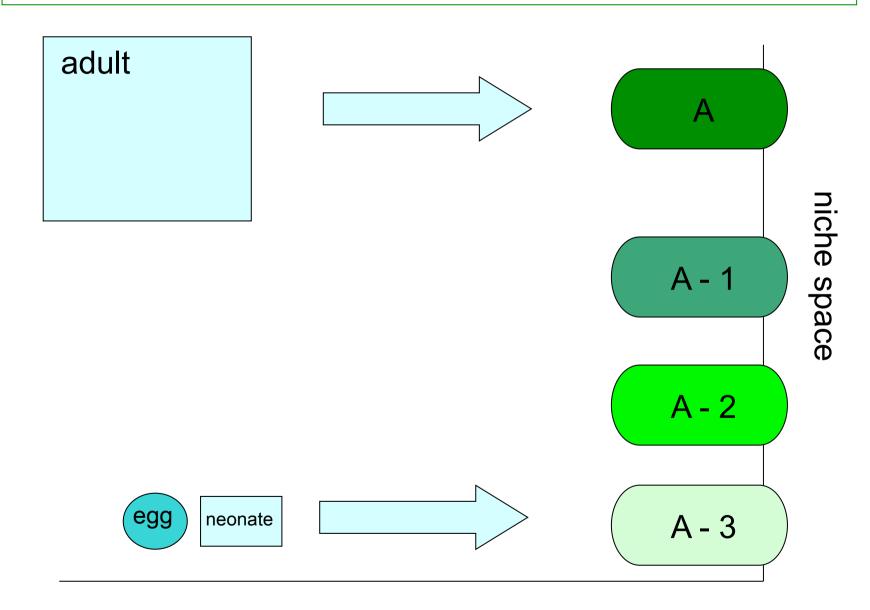




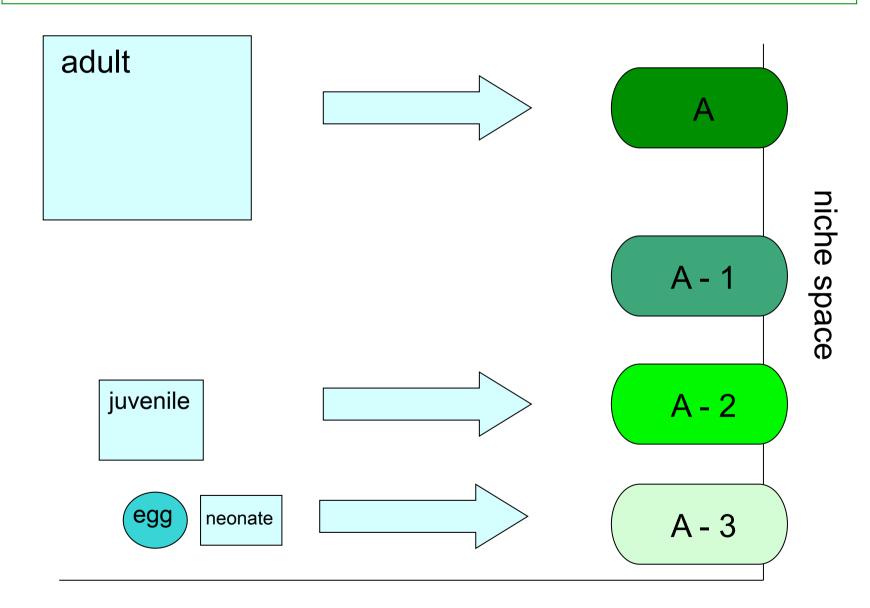




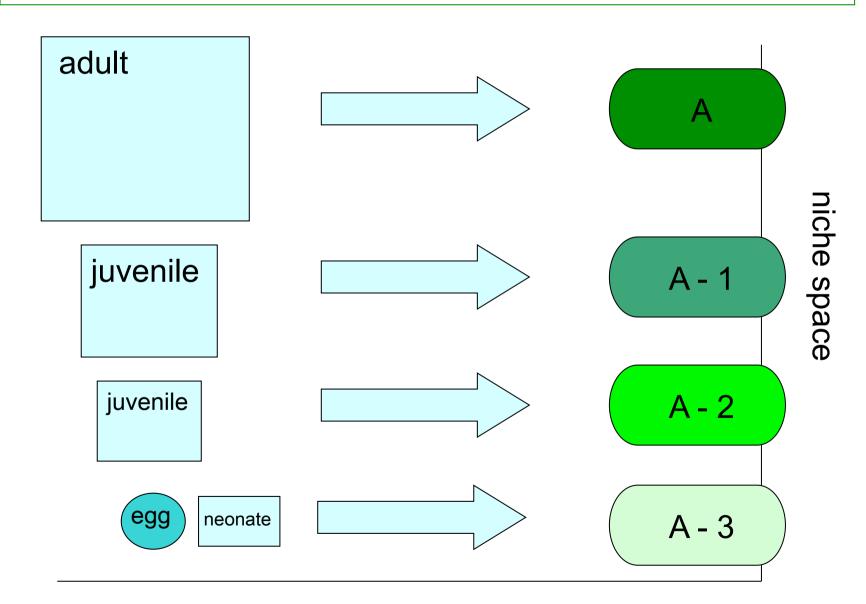




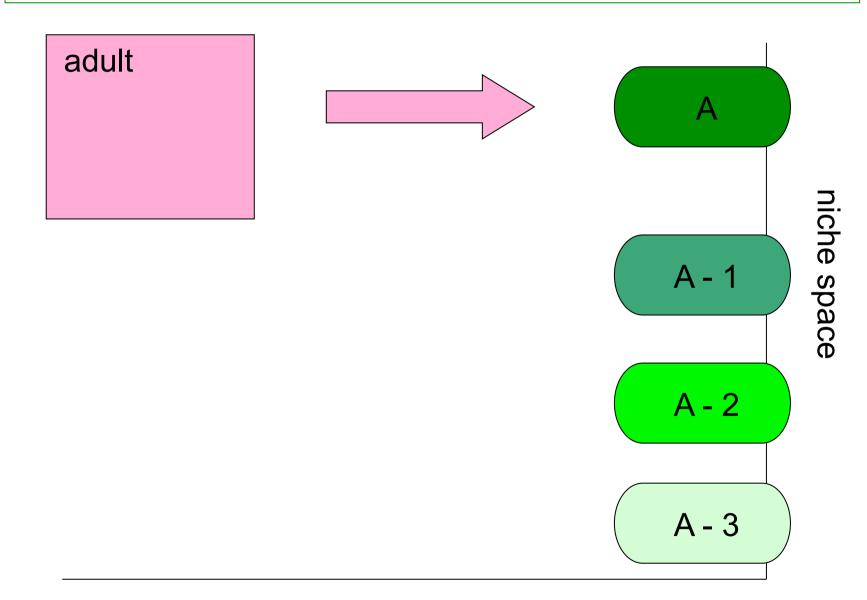




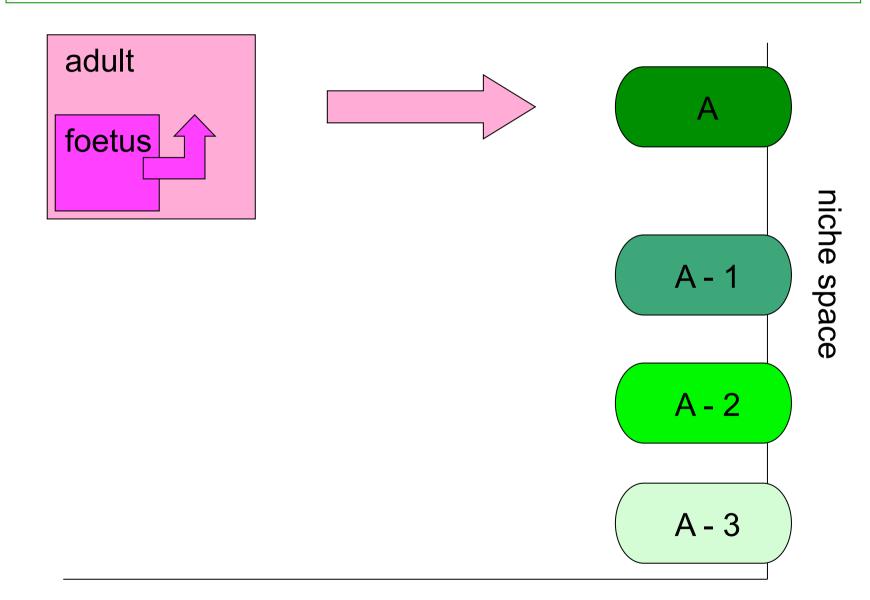




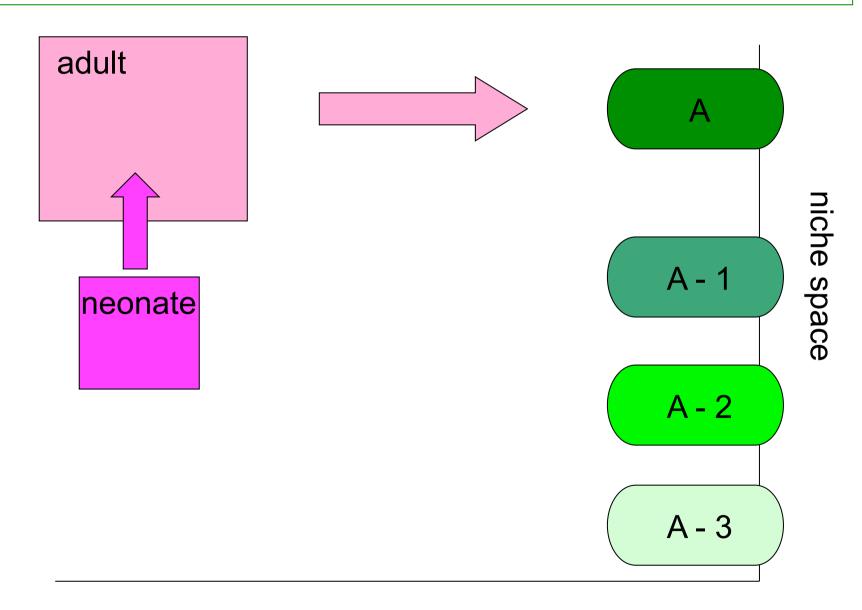




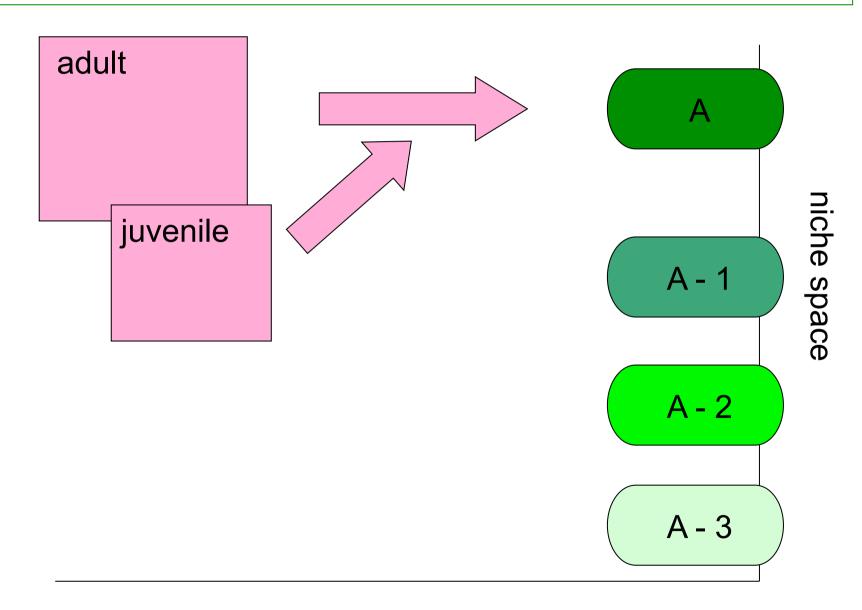




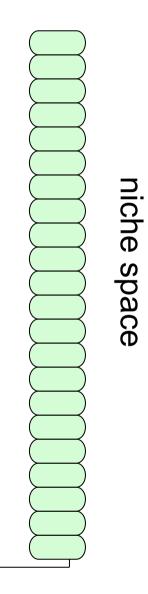




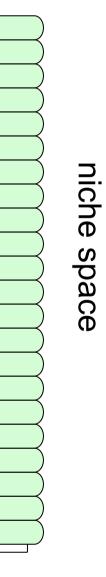












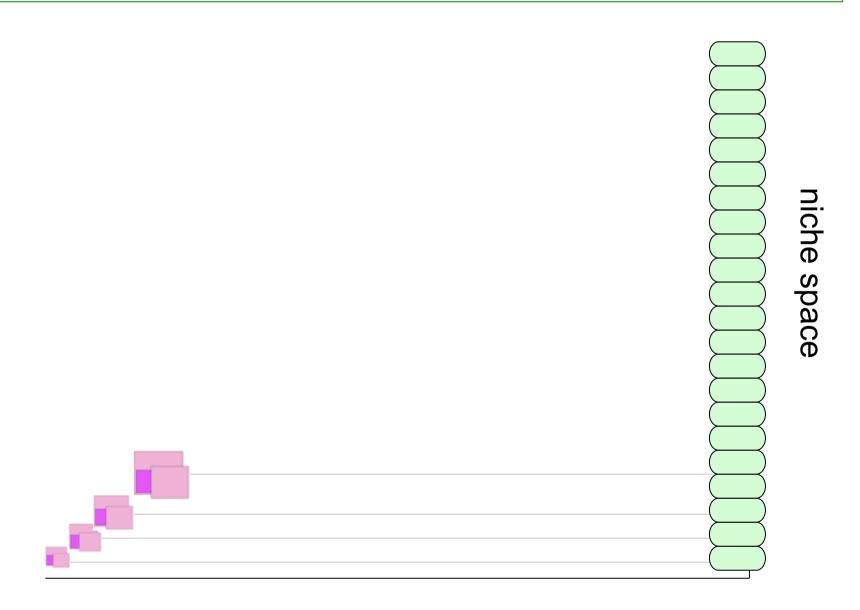




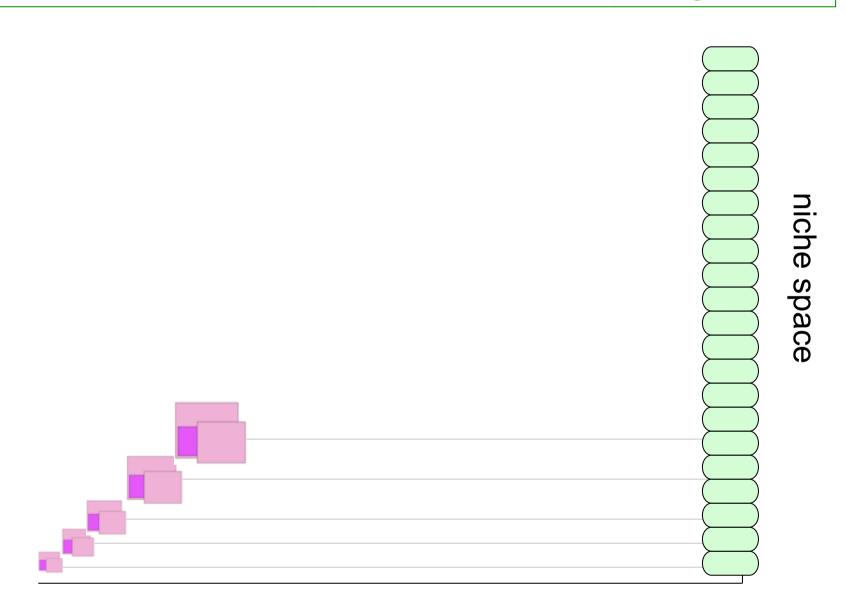




















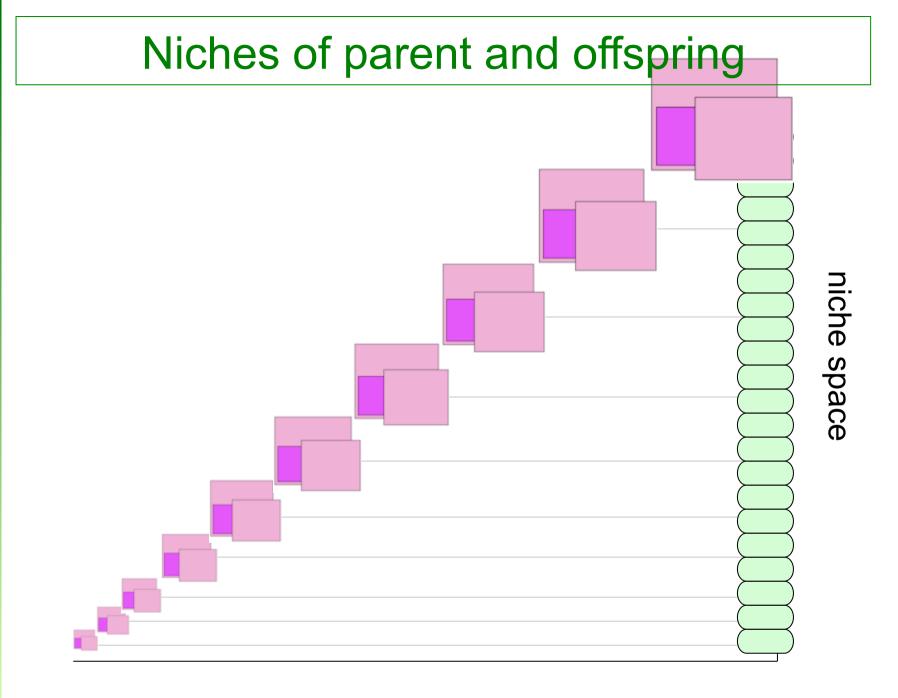




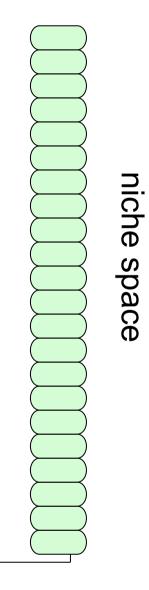




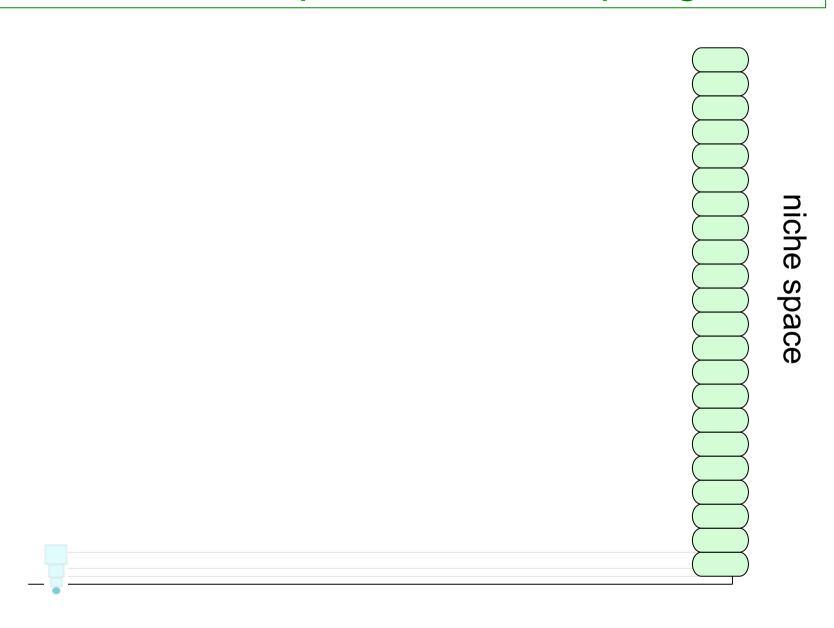




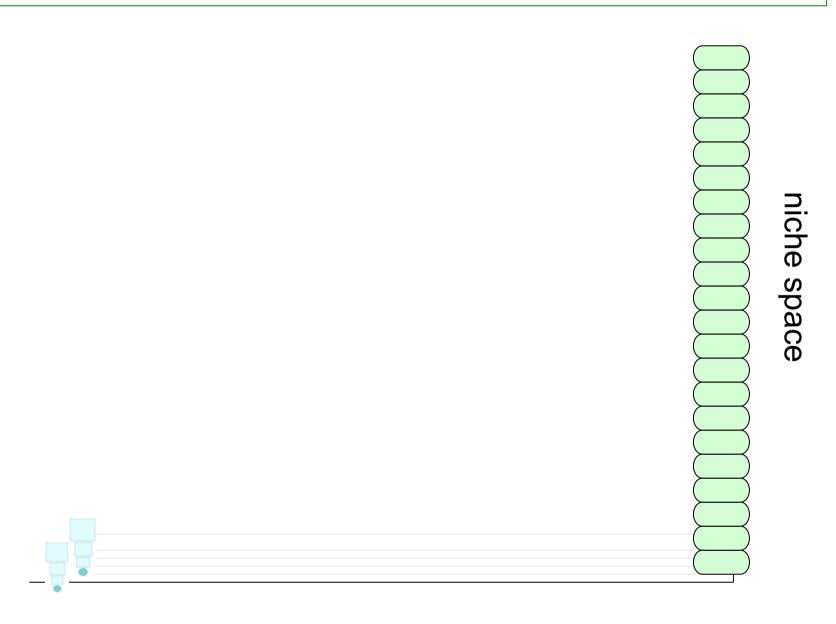




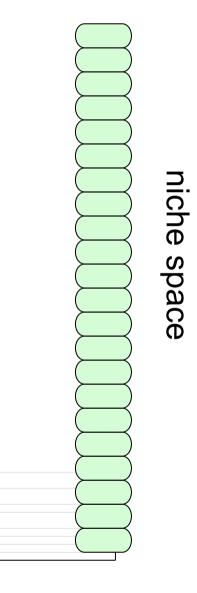


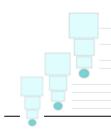




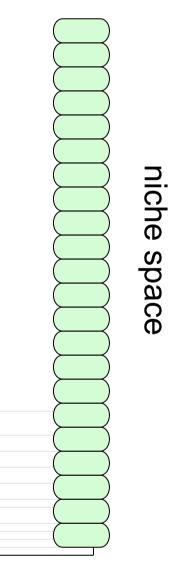


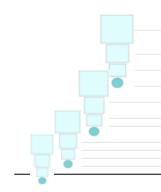




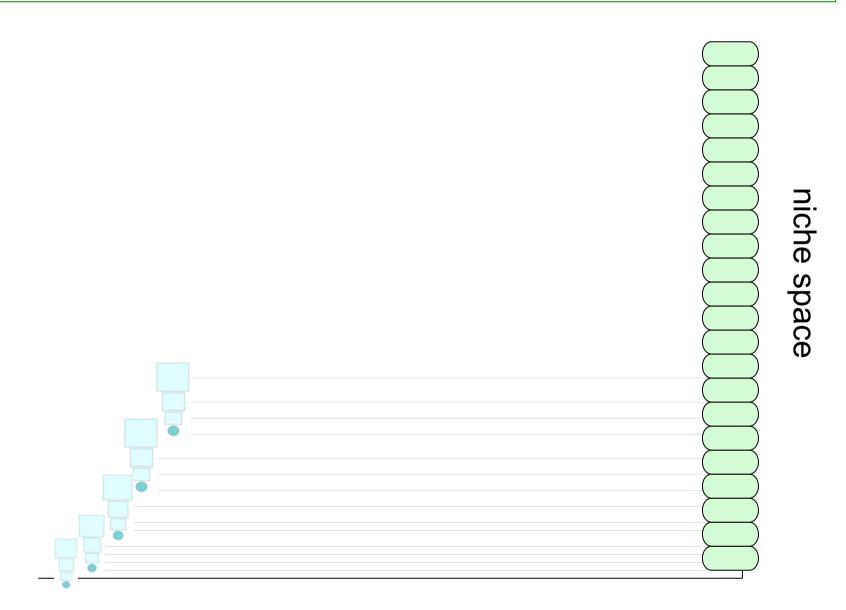




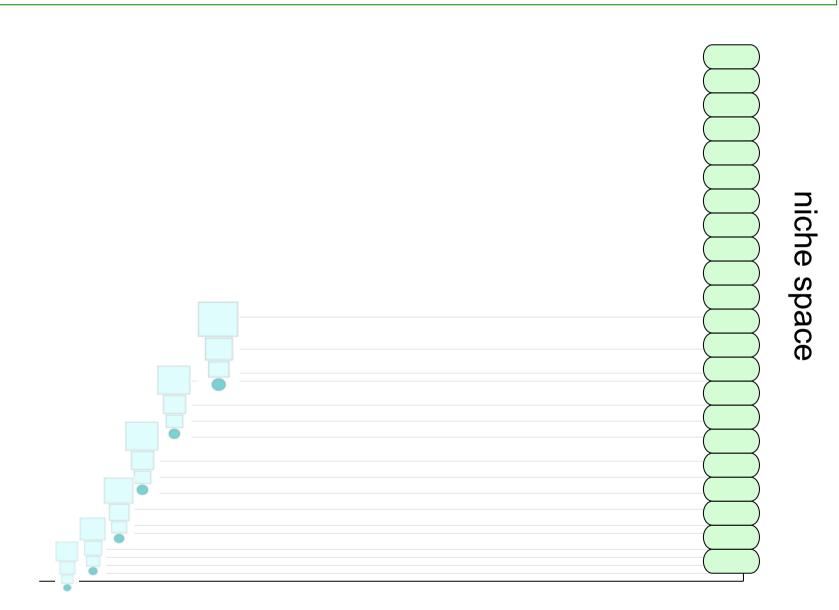




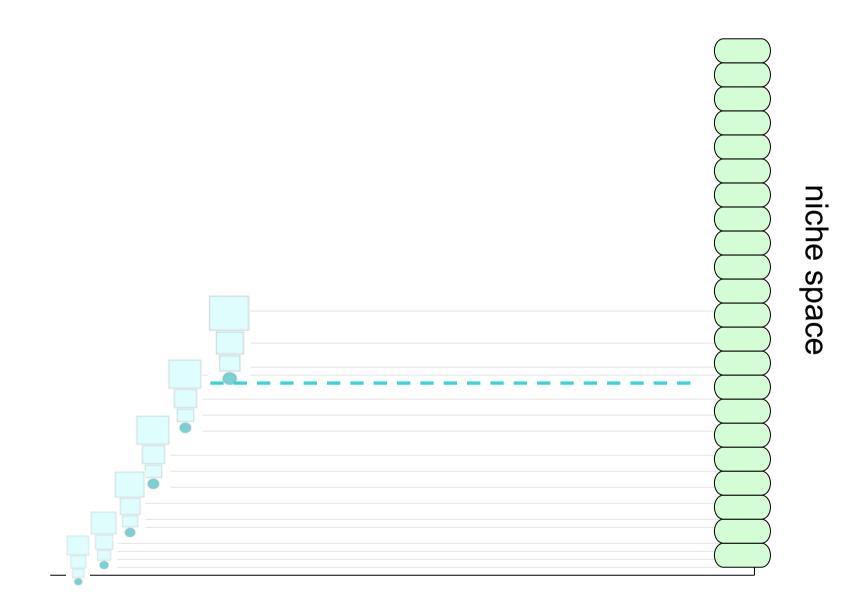




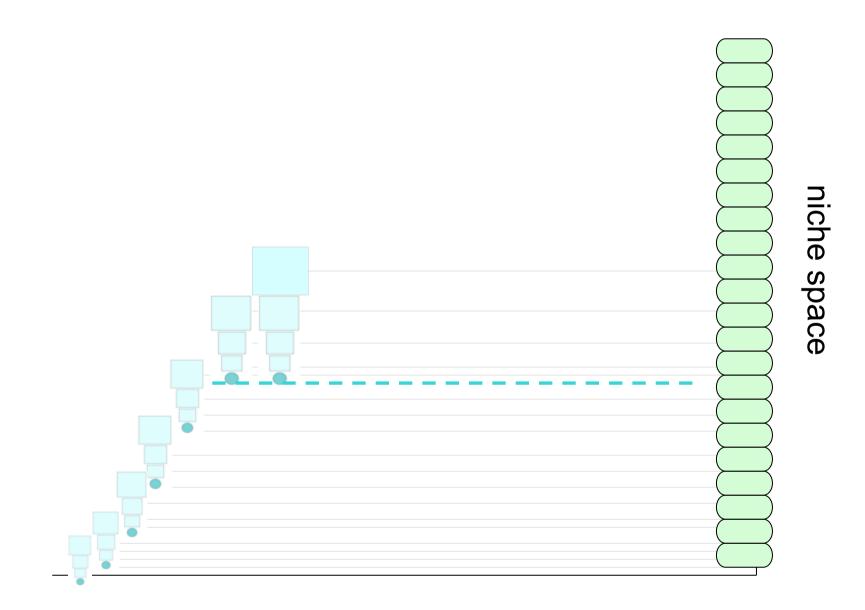




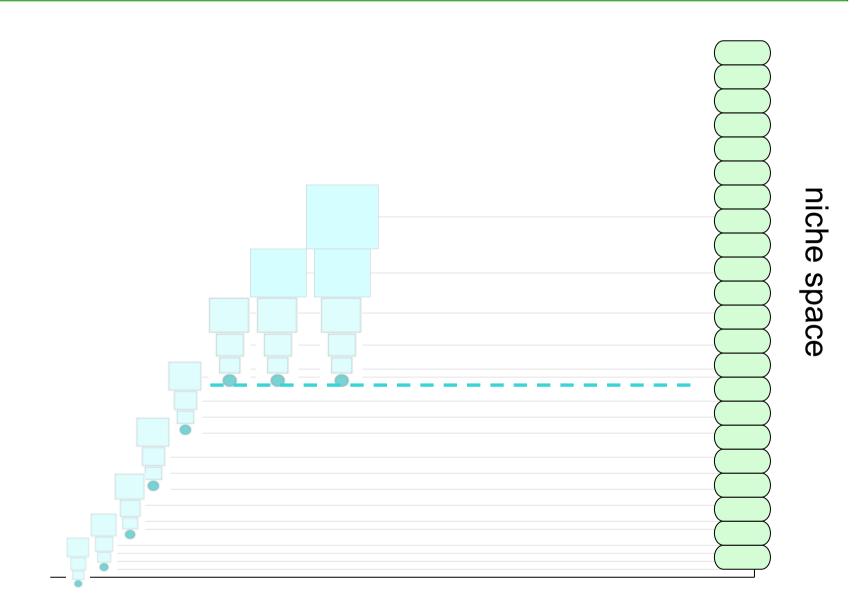




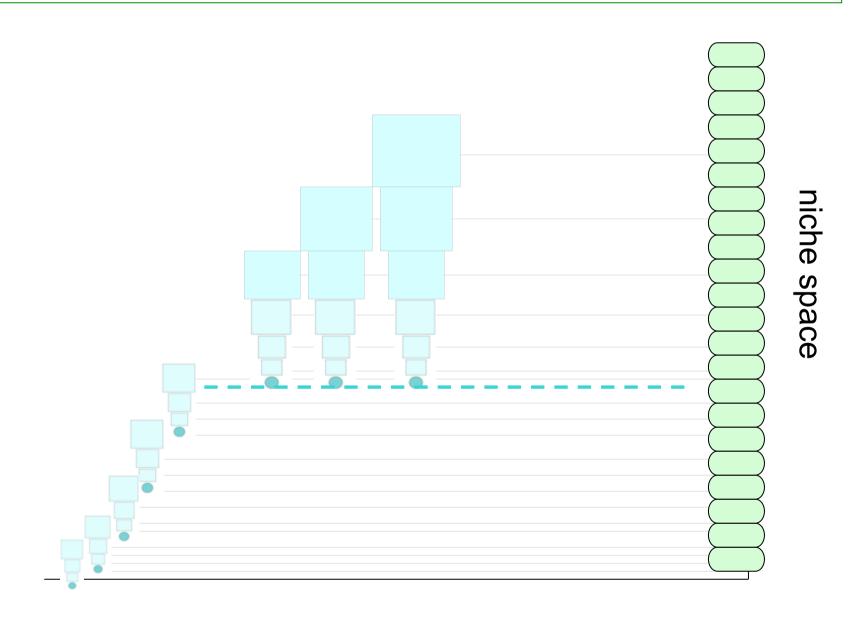




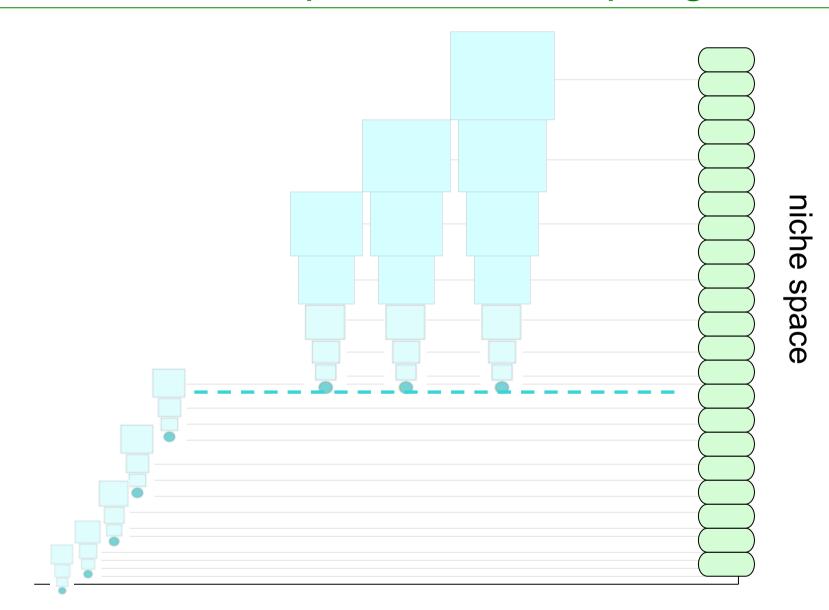




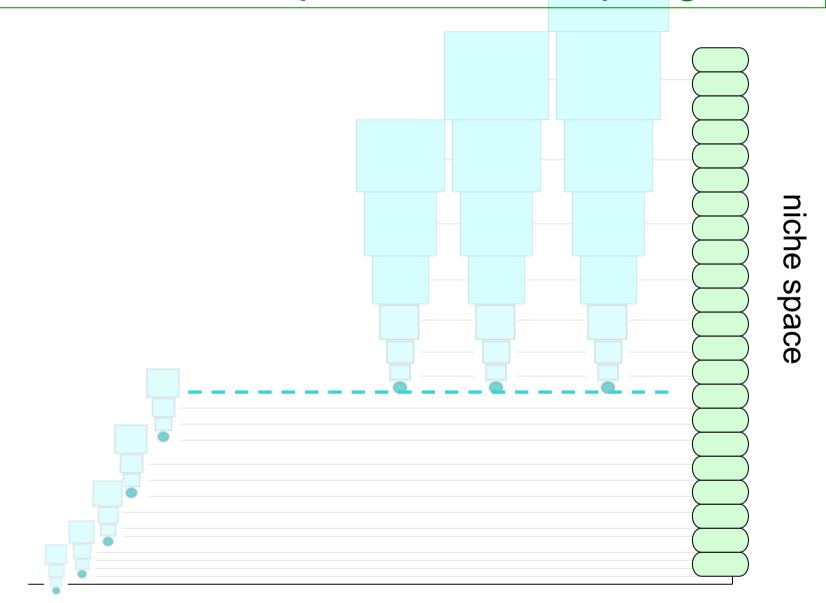




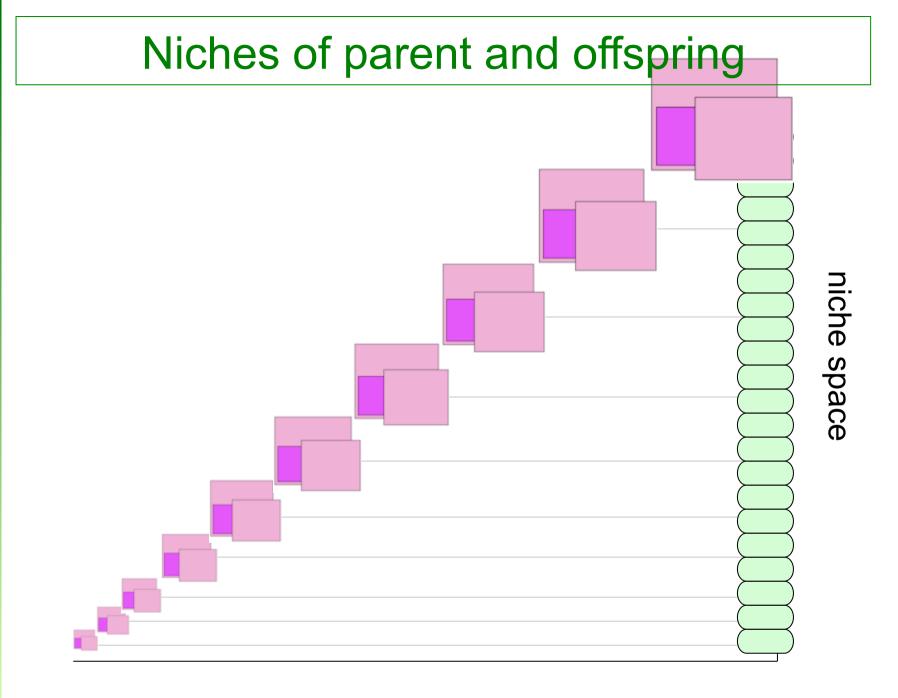




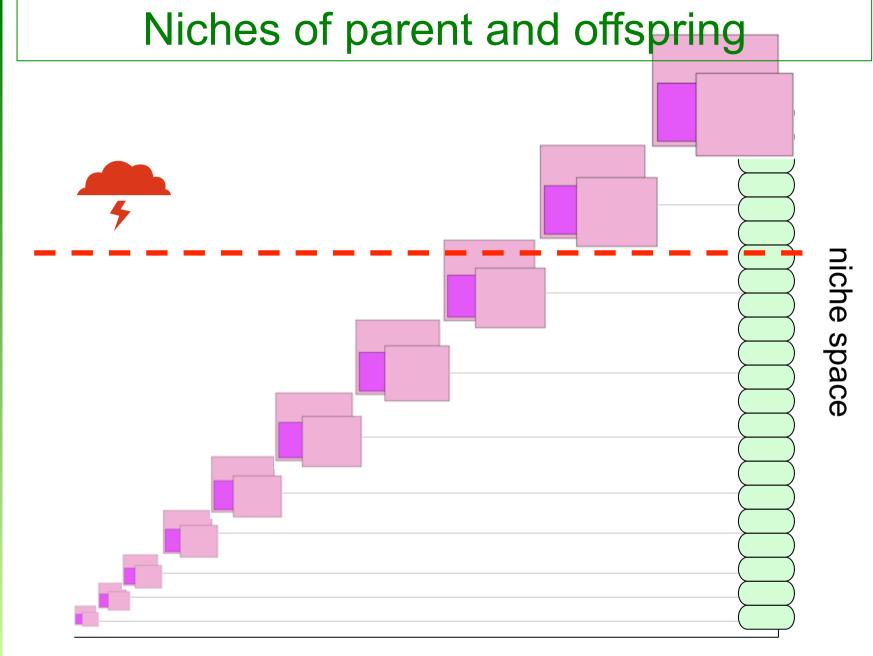




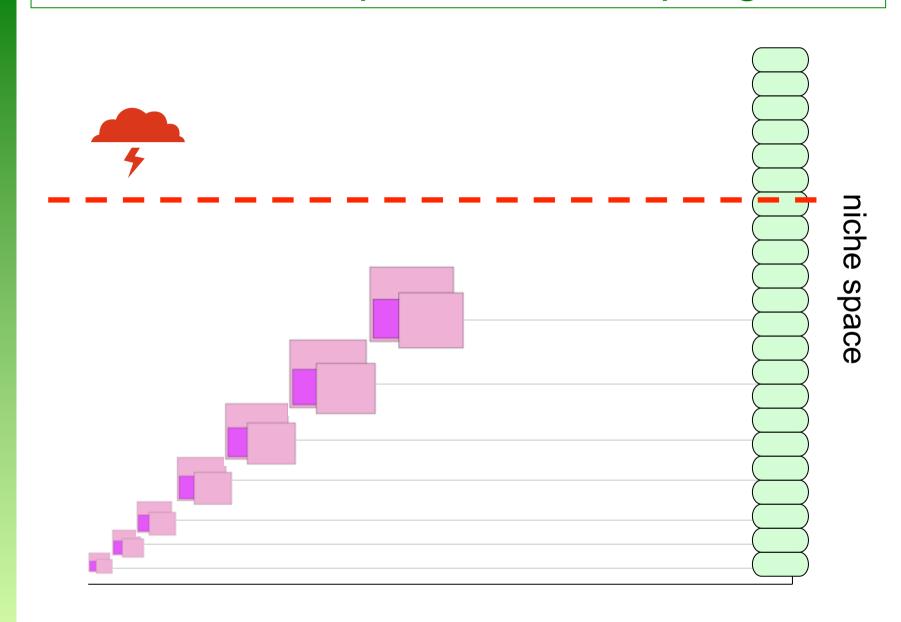




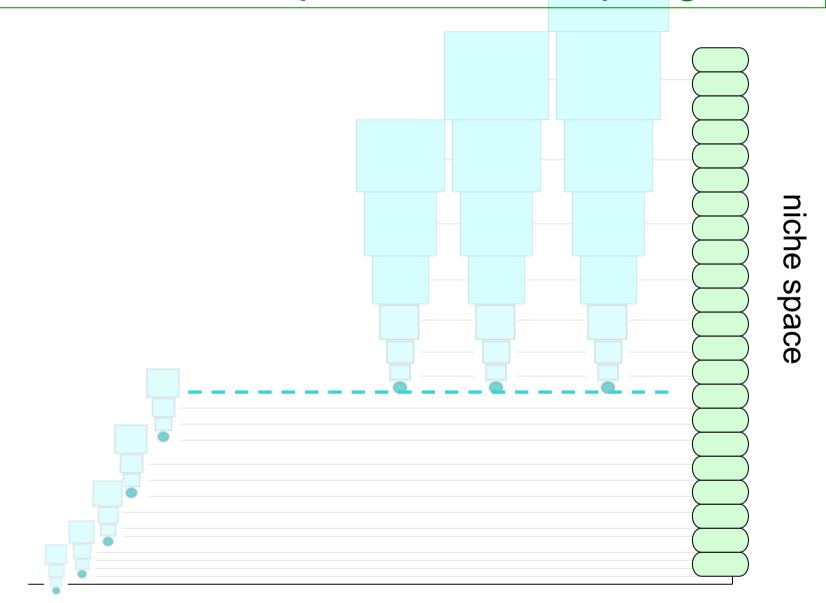




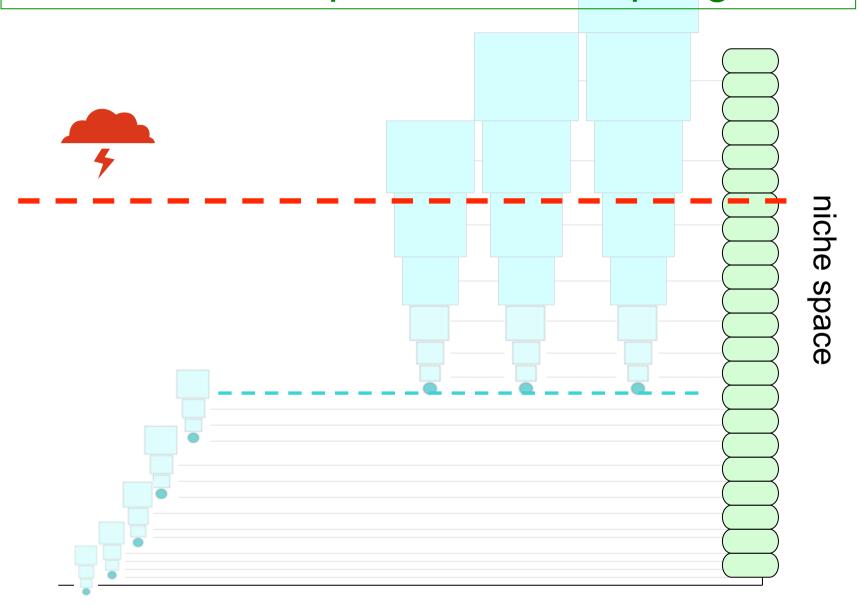




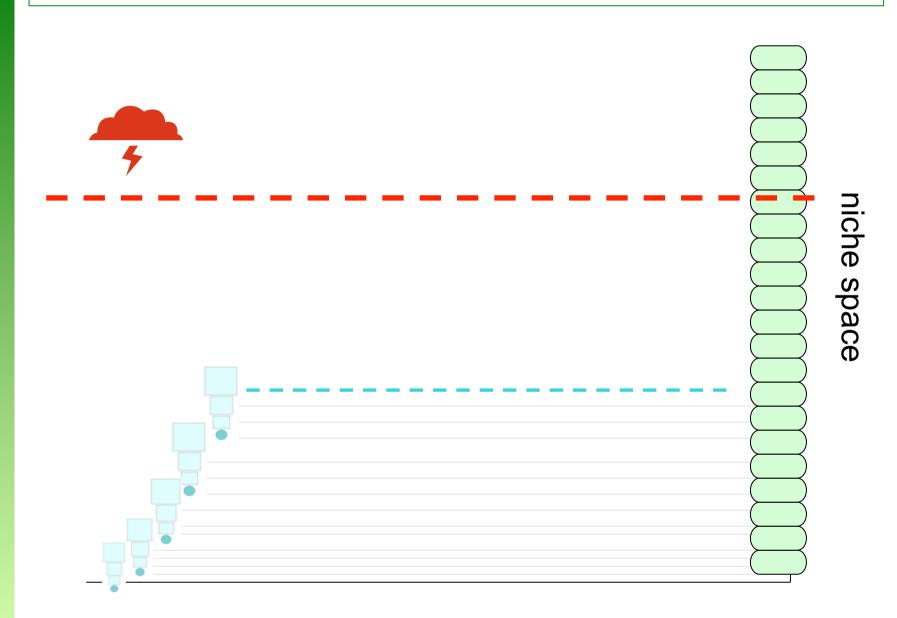














## Resulting hypothesis I

The reproductive mode of dinosaurs (ovipary), with its intrisic limited juvenile start size linked to ontogenetic niche stratification, may have led to a parallel decrease of small dinosaur species with the increase of larger species, because offspring of large species fill the niche space of the smaller species.

A catastrophic event, truncating adult body size, could therefore, in theory, wipe out the whole reproductive dinosaur population.



## Resulting hypothesis II

In contrast, the reproductive mode of mammals (and also that of many birds due to parental care) does not lead to an ontogenetic niche stratification, but offspring use the parents' niche.

Thus, with increasing body mass of larger species, niches of smaller species are not usurped by the larger species' offspring to the same extent.

Die-offs of larger species would not leave niches of smaller life forms empty.



## Work plan

Check species assemblages for distribution patterns (is there a 'gap')?

Design deterministic model to test effect of interspecific competition on body mass distribution of mammals and dinosaurs before and after a simulated K-T-event



## Work plan

Check species assemblages for distribution patterns (is there a 'gap')?

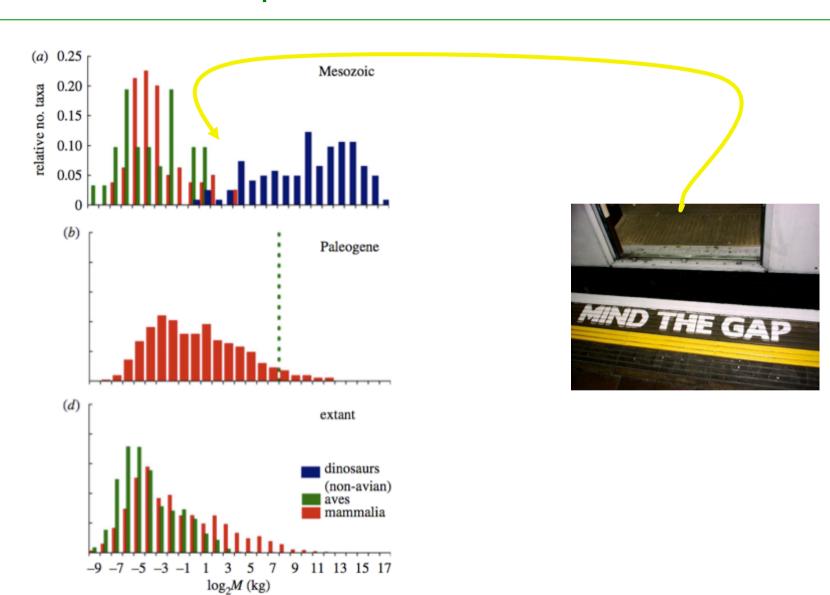
Design deterministic model to test effect of interspecific competition on body mass distribution of mammals and dinosaurs before and after a simulated K-T-event



Daryl Codron



## Species distributions





## **Deterministic model**

Populations of different sized species of:

```
Dinosaurs: i_1, i_2...i_k = \{2 \text{ g to } \sim 131 \text{ tons} \}
Mammals: i_1, i_2...i_k = \{2 \text{ g to } \sim 16 \text{ tons} \}
```

 Each structured by size (log<sub>2</sub>M increments, j) from neonateadult

$$M_{\text{neonate}} = aM_{\text{adult}}^{b}$$

$$b_{\text{dinosaurs}} \sim 0.6$$

$$b_{\text{mammals}} \sim 0.9$$

- For each  $M_{i,j}$ , estimate:
  - 1. initial abundance *n* (allometry)
  - 2. survivorship *p* (*r*-selecting or *K*-selecting)
  - 3. fecundity f (allometry; add  $f_i n_{i,k}$  to  $n_{i,1}$ )
- Assume: each  $log_2M$  step = ontogenetic niche shift



## **Deterministic model**

Competition-induced mortality ( $\alpha$ ) occurs amongst all similarly-sized individuals (symmetric)

• Density of each *i* after competition:

$$N_i = p_{i,j} n_{i,j} - \alpha(\Sigma[p_{i,j} n_j] - p_{i,j} n_{i,j})$$

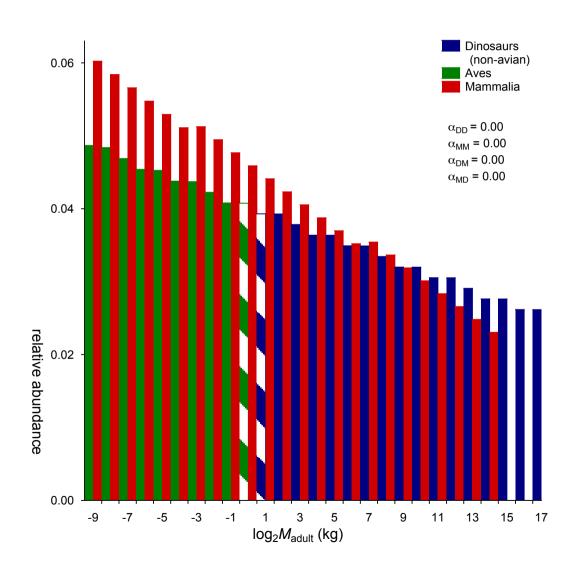
Independent α for D on M and M on D:

Dinosaurs: 
$$N_{Di} = \Sigma [n_{Di,j} - \alpha_{DD}(\Sigma n_{Dj} - n_{Di,j}) - \alpha_{MD}(\Sigma n_{Mj})]$$
  
Mammals:  $N_{Mi} = \Sigma [n_{Mi,j} - \alpha_{MM}(\Sigma n_{Mj} - n_{Mi,j}) - \alpha_{DM}(\Sigma n_{Dj})]$ 

Simulate K-T: kill all individuals >25 kg

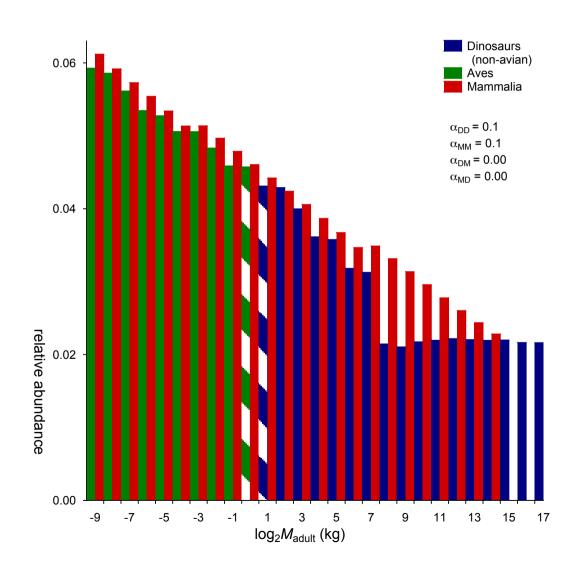


## Model results - no competition



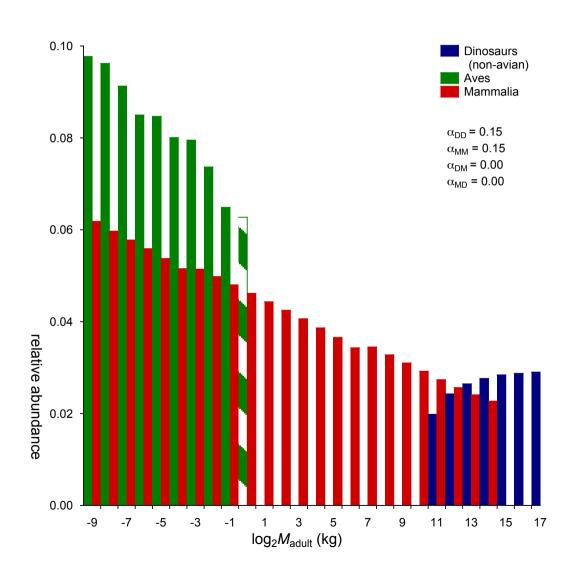


## Model results - mild competition-induced mortality



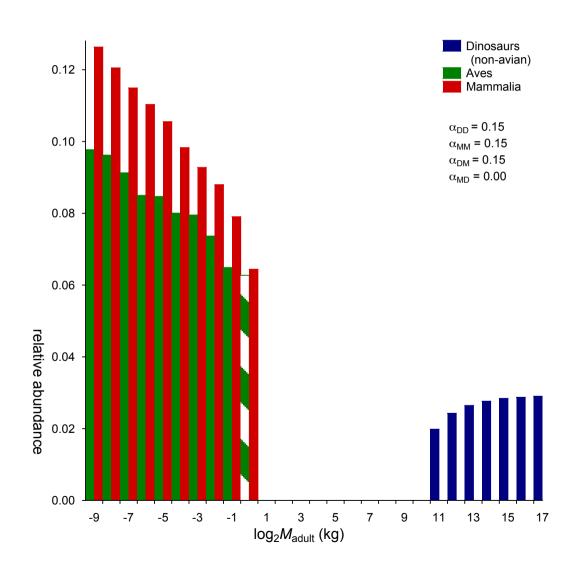


## Model results - stronger competition



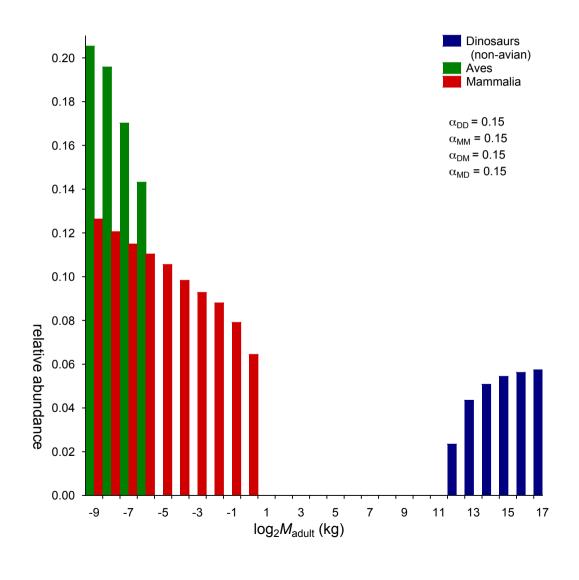


## Model results - including competition from dinosaurs on mammals



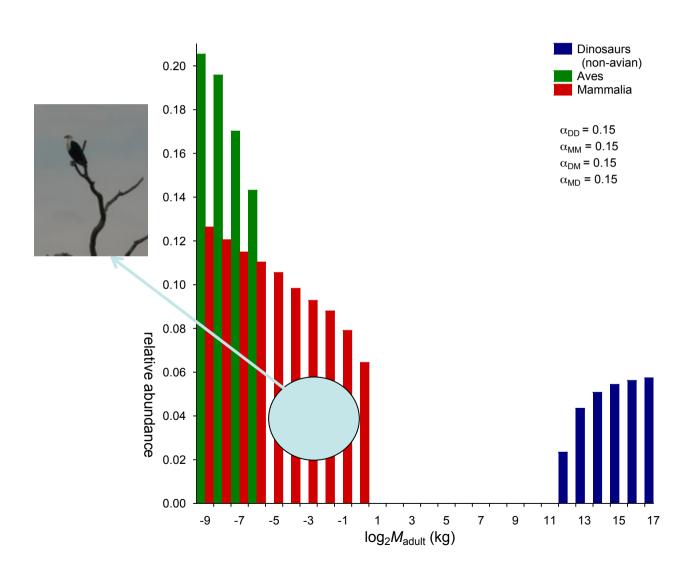


## Model results - ... and from mammals on dinosaurs



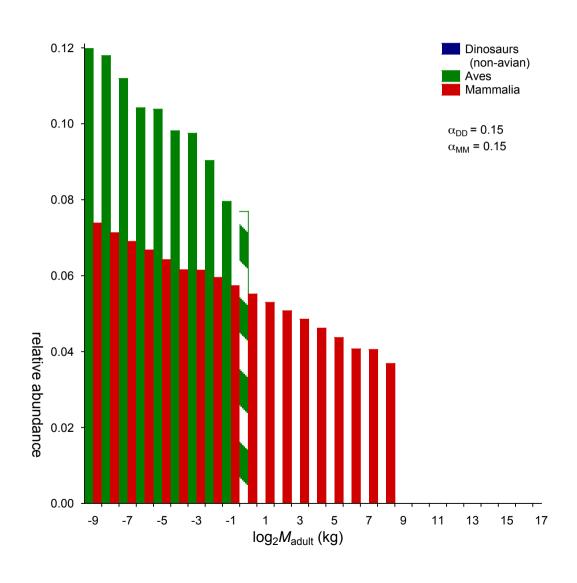


## Model results - ... and from mammals on dinosaurs





## Model results - after K/T, with competition



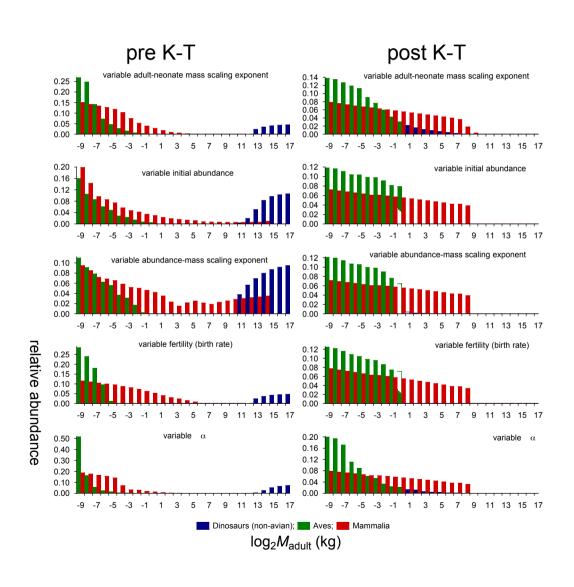


## **Deterministic model**

- Robustness and sensitivity
- Changes and variability in M effects on:
  - 1. life history strategy
  - 2. reproductive output
  - 3.  $M_{\text{adult}}$ : $M_{\text{neonate}}$  ratio
  - 4. competition co-efficient ( $\alpha$ )
  - 5. symmetry of  $\alpha$
  - 6. abundance
- Stochastic parameter estimates (bounded within empirical limits for birds/herpetiles or mammals), 10<sup>3</sup> iterations



## Model results - variation in neonate scaling, demography, and ecology





## Conclusions

## Size-specific competition influences species diversity

- Effects largest amongst species with high intraspecific niche breadth (e.g. large, oviparous)...
- ... favouring large-bodied taxa

## **Explains paucity of small-bodied dinosaurs**

- Dominance of large dinosaurs then limited max BM of other vertebrate groups in Mesozoic...
- ... resultant dominance of small taxa amongst mammals further limited small dinosaurs (=aerial niche?)

Extinction event above body mass threshold = remaining species diversity too low for recovery



# b i o l o g y letters

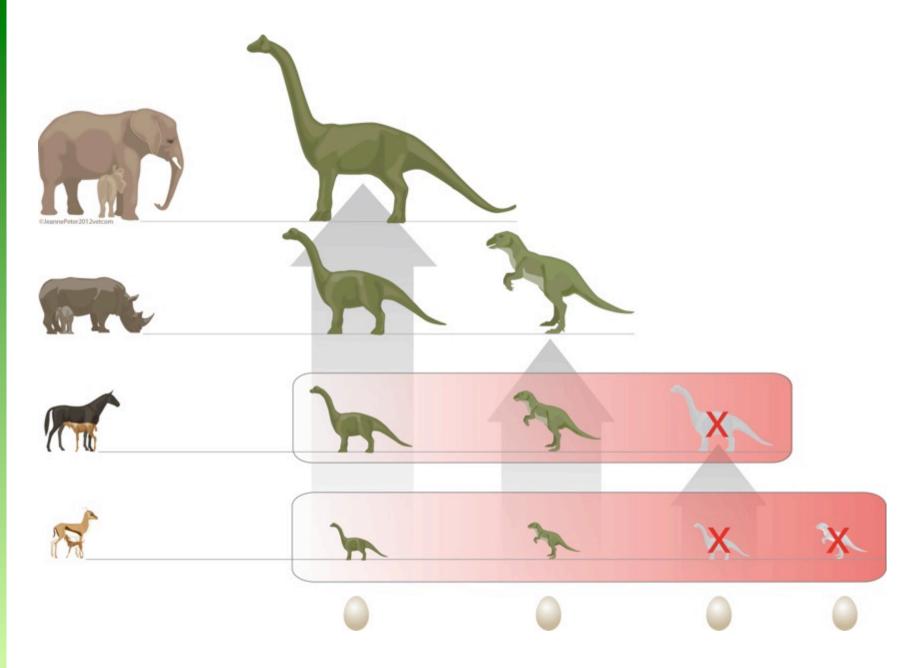
Biol. Lett. (2012) 8, 620-623 doi:10.1098/rsbl.2012.0240 Published online 18 April 2012

**Evolutionary biology** 

# Ontogenetic niche shifts in dinosaurs influenced size, diversity and extinction in terrestrial vertebrates

Daryl Codron<sup>1-4,\*</sup>, Chris Carbone<sup>5</sup>, Dennis W. H. Müller<sup>1</sup> and Marcus Clauss<sup>1</sup>









## Universität Forschung Studium Dienstleistungen News

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Medienmitteilung vom 18.04.2012

## Das Eierlegen war der Anfang vom Ende der Dinosaurier

Sie legten Eier, besetzten mit nur einer Art viele ökologische Nischen, und sie standen in Konkurrenz auch untereinander. Forscher der Universität Zürich haben die Kette der Ereignisse enthüllt, die zum Aussterben der Dinosaurier geführt haben.

Der Anfang vom Ende liegt in ihrer Fortpflanzungsstrategie: Daraus, dass sie Eier legen, erwächst den Dinosauriern gegenüber den lebend gebärenden Säugetieren ein entscheidender Nachteil. Warum und wie dies letztendlich zu ihrem Aussterben geführt hat, haben Daryl Codron und Marcus Clauss von der Universität Zürich zusammen mit Kollegen der Zoological Society of London erforscht und in der Zeitschrift «Biology Letters» veröffentlicht.

## Das Ei des Dinosauriers und das winzige Dino-Baby

2'500-mal schwerer ist das vier Tonnen schwere Muttertier als ihr neugeschlüpftes Dinosaurierbaby. Im Vergleich dazu: Die gleich schwere Elefantenmutter wiegt lediglich etwa 22-mal so viel wie ihr Neugeborenes. Bei den grossen Arten der Säugetiere sind also bereits die Neugeborenen gross.

Der gigantische Grössenunterschied zwischen neugeschlüpften Dinosauriern und

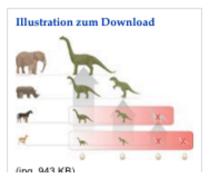
## Kontakte

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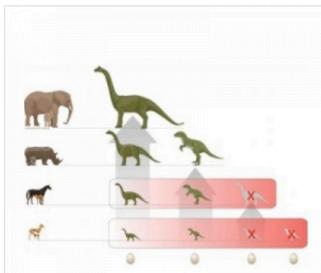


NOTES



thrive, scientists said.

The fact that dinosaurs laid eggs put them at a considerable disadvantage compared to viviparous mammals. Together with colleagues from the Zoological Society of London, Daryl Codron and Marcus Clauss from the University of Zurich investigated why and how this ultimately led to the extinction of the dinosaurs and published their findings in the journal Biology Letters today.





## Les dinosaures trahis par leurs œufs

Diplodocus et autres tyrannosaures passaient d'une minuscule à une gigantesque taille > Cette particularité aurait fini

## Etienne Dubuis

par avantager les mammifères

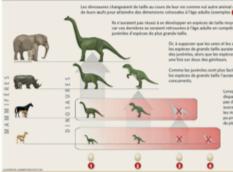
les dinosaures out pendu leur Les dinosaures ont perdu leux suprémaire sur la fanse terrestre parce qu'ils pondaient des oruls. Ce mode de reproduction, qui leux a permis de 190 rail par-tage pendant plus de 190 raillours d'années, étes valsiement ne-tourné contraveux. Jefferet l'hypothèse originale avancée or mer credi dato la revue Biology Letters

s'accompagnant d'éclaincles. La neige se situana vers 1000 à 1500 militres suivant les jours et les lieux. Au sud des Alipes,

le temps s'annonce plus perturbé joudi et vendredi et une relative

pour la journée de samedi.

Le gigantisme, un atout devenu handicap



An experimental contractions. Active configure available or supposed in the final processing of the final contract of the final cont

LA MÍTEO COMPLÉTE

X Explors non viables

## Panorama

## Santé

## Implants mammakes fraciles

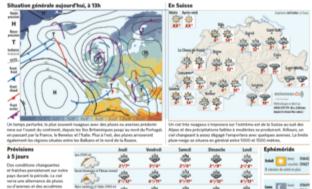
implants manneaires fragille Les ruptures sur les implants manies. PP augel de silacore dir-laté pournières être plus nont-breuses que potre a dispois sure étode britannique publié dans le journel of plants, resoutactes euré ordrés in segrey et conducte auprè de 900 femines dans er paps. Le taxas de rupture serait situé entre 15,9et X3,8% pour des prothèses sieillesde 7 à 12 ans. «Selon-de onforblentes études, les taux de

## Nivologie

## Hiver des extrêmes

Chiver 2011-2012 a été celui des cotrômes en Suisse, selon l'Institut continues en Suisse, selon l'Institut pour l'étude de la neigne et des availanches SLE. Après van début de saison, avant en neign, la ternélance s'est d'autiquement invendre en janvier. Les reconds de mesures oon Samedan (GRC, avec 192 cm. Au final, le total de neige n'a pos dé-

## Météo



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## Déficience mentale et obésité



## Florence Girard\*

Les personnes attalates de diffi-Les personnes attentes de dét-cience mendale sont quatre fais plus touchées par fobésité que la popula-tion générale. Si la sand publique instaure des projens pour lutter contre corte épidémie, ils sont narement desinés à ces individus. le point. Instrumen de con ceils de publicates realigible. In-terregulère ont judis ground que la glimbique, crisions syndromes particulens et la médicamente y contribuent largement. Capendant, les calendar que sont sciennesse relord fluores factures plus qué filiques. El made point en premier les de doigt ser l'inaccivité des personnes.

handicapies mentales. Leur motivaion les mouveir est moindre.

regularre, par manque de personner ou de moyens. Envalte, les individus attrients de retard mental ne sainivaent pos forciment la zaison pour laquelle on leur demonde de se noutra sainoment et de ne pas grignoner tout au long de la journée ils pensent à leux-envies du moment. Ils sont la gestion de leurs repes, et leur

consulinances en nutrition. Enfin, Timager corporelle de ces personnes ox. briquenneses plucie au servindiplan, car cile est rendue presque invisible par le problème mental. Et le fait que leurs proches ainsi que les professionnels de la

quests que pour tout un chacun. De ce fait, or phénomène deveuit être traité de manière spécifique, indivienne pay un varhandicap.

Ortous les instituts qui les héber-gent n'unt pus la possibilité de leur "Dététiulenne HES-diplômée



ADVENTURE TECH & GADGETS ANIMALS HISTORY

Discovery News > Animal News > Why Huge Dinosaurs Had Such Tiny Babies

## WHY HUGE DINOSAURS HAD **SUCH TINY BABIES**

In the end, dinosaurs were no match for mammals and the main issue was their egg-laying.



By Jennifer Viegas Tue Apr 17, 2012 07:00 PM ET (5) Comments | Leave a Comment







=\* Email



Like # 413 people like this.







Egg-laving may have helped dinosaurs get big.

## THE GIST

- . Larger mammals can have larger babies, but dinosaurs could not due to the physical limitations of laying eggs.
- . Most dinosaurs were either large or small, but mammals can fill all body size niches in the ecosystem.
- When a catastrophic event wiped out larger species 65.5 million years ago, mammals were better able to recover.

A new study may explain many mysteries about dinosaurs, such as why enormous species had such small offspring, why non-flying dinos went extinct, and why today's birds fly.

The paper, published in the journal Biology Letters,





12:20 Uhr Mo; 13. August 2012

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Zu kleine Eier







Neue These über das Ende der Dinosaurier



