



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

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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.



DFG Research Group 533

Sauropod Biology - the Evolution of Gigantism





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Digestive physiology supervisors

Jürgen Hummel



Marcus Clauss



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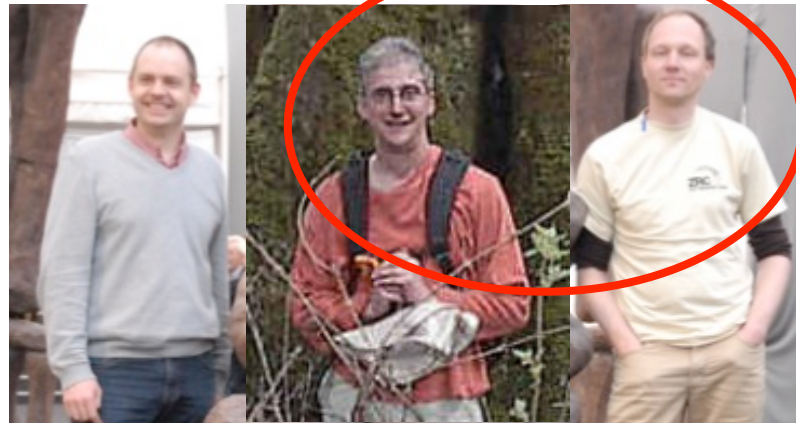
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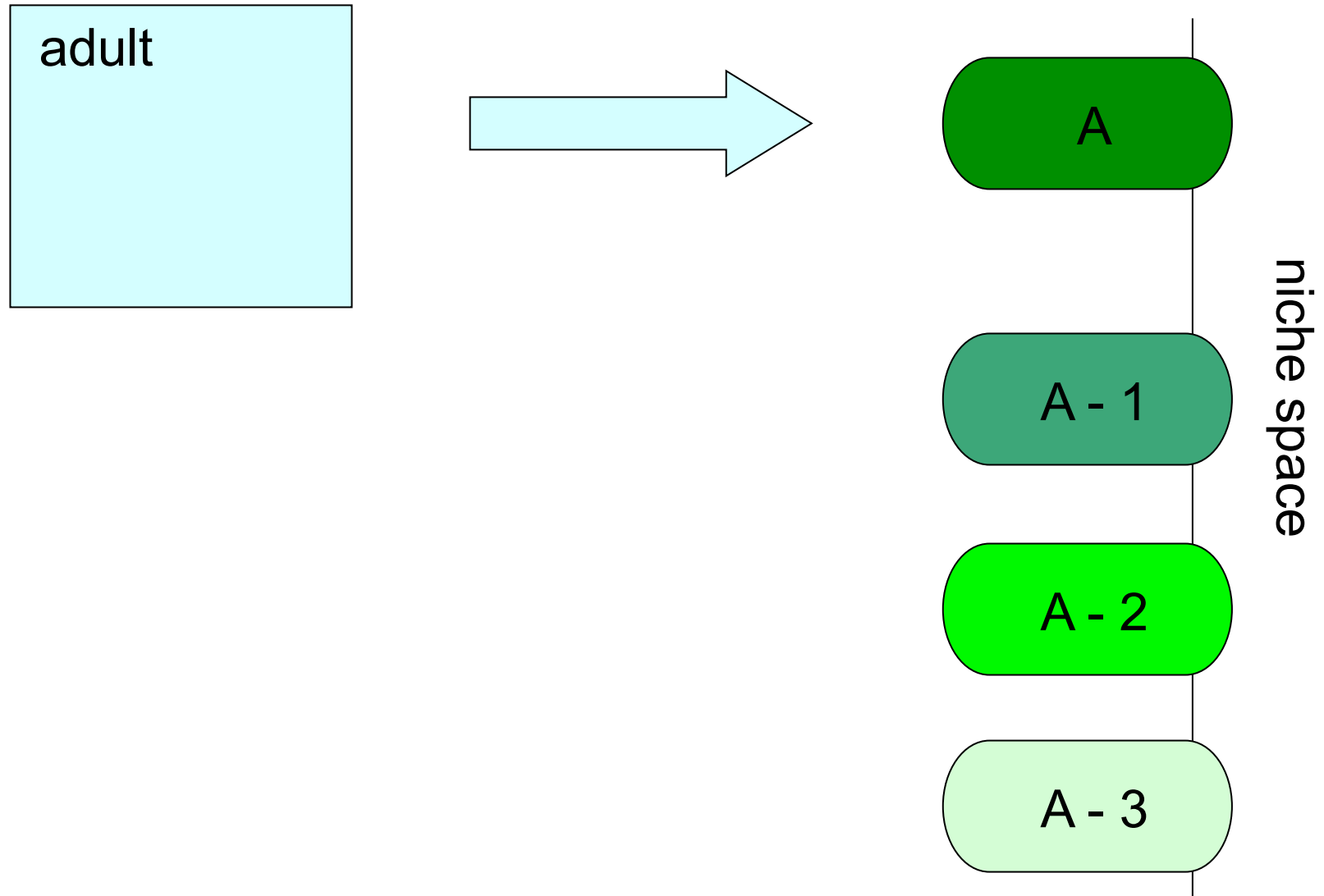


Assumptions

- 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

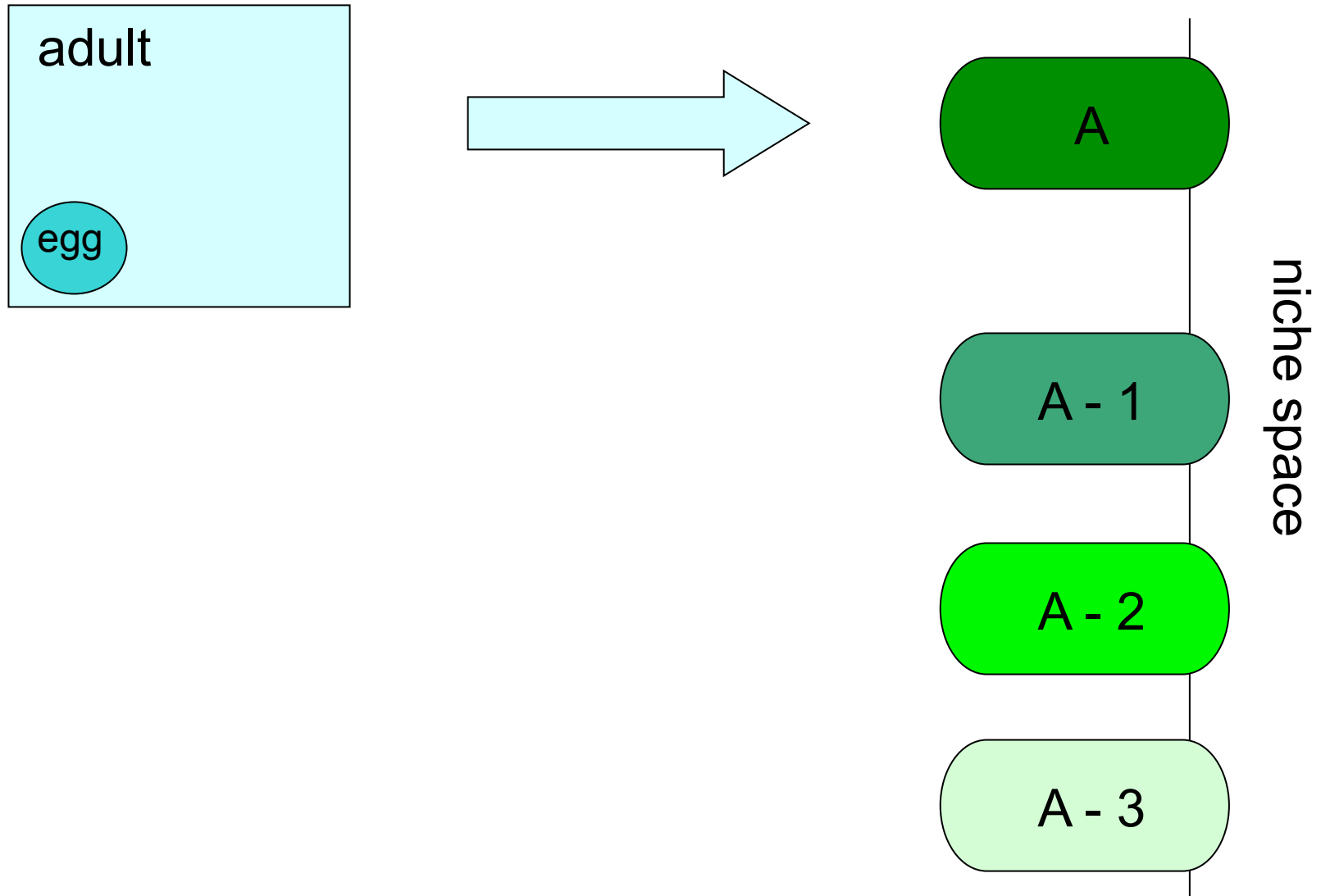


Niches of parent and offspring



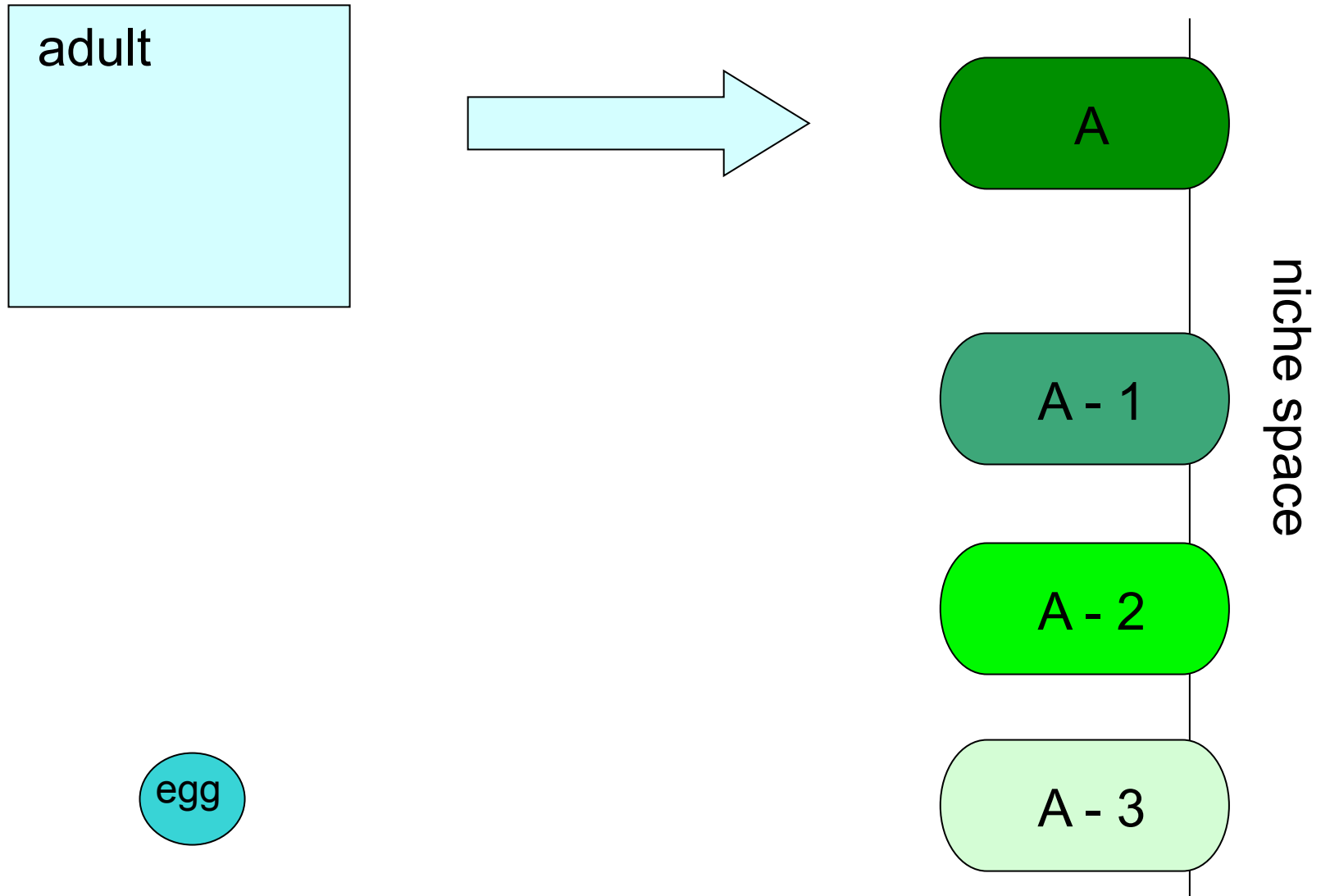


Niches of parent and offspring



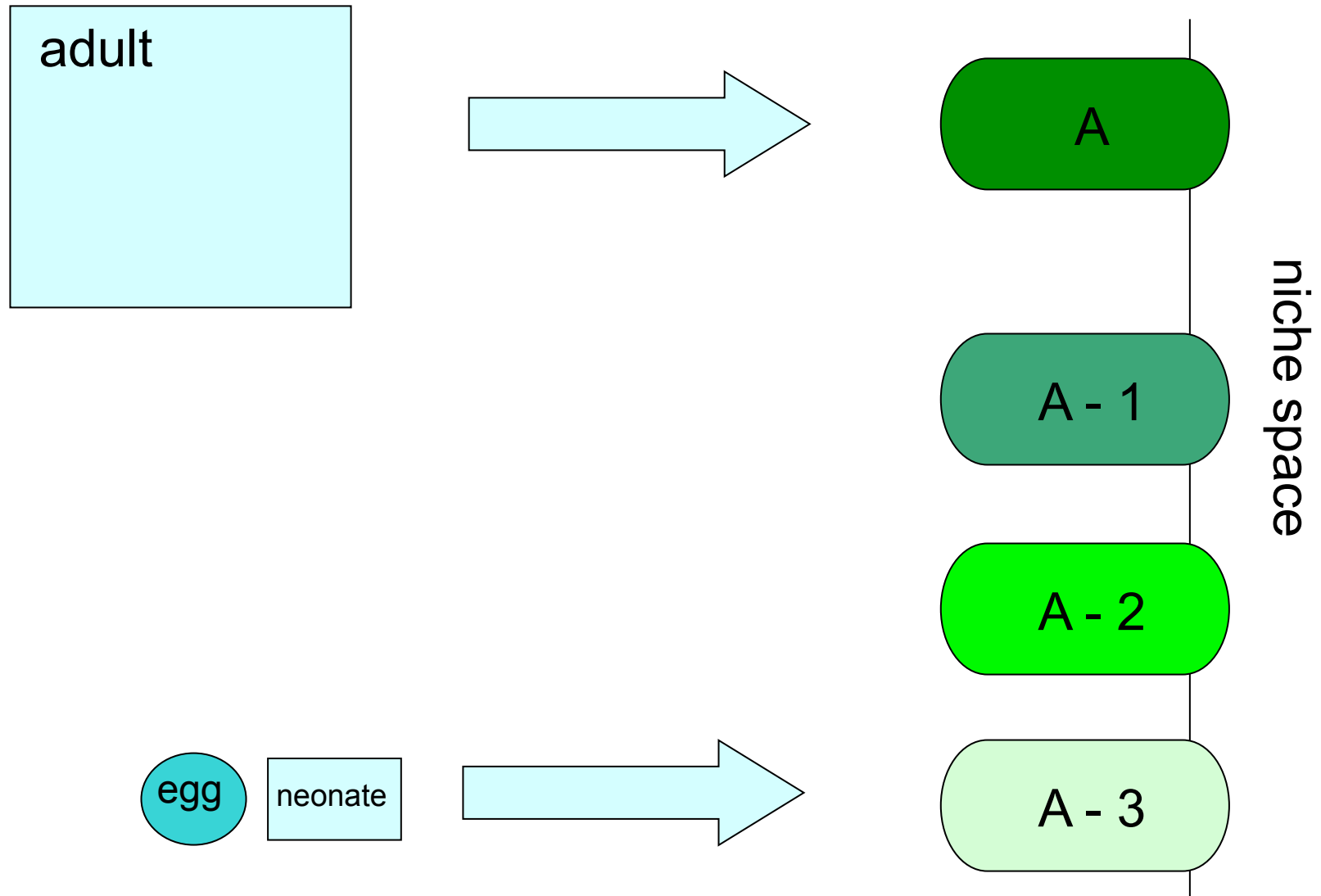


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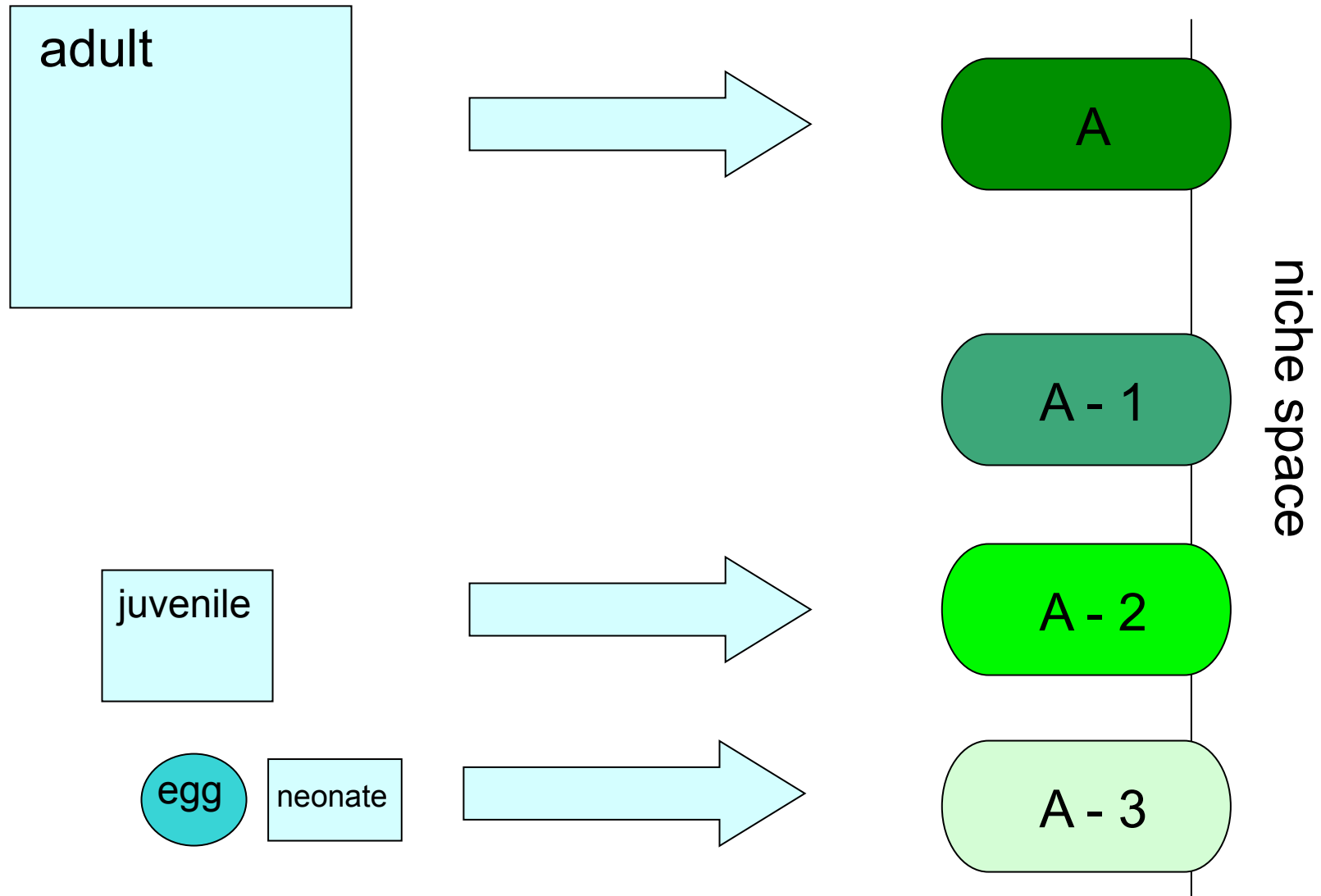


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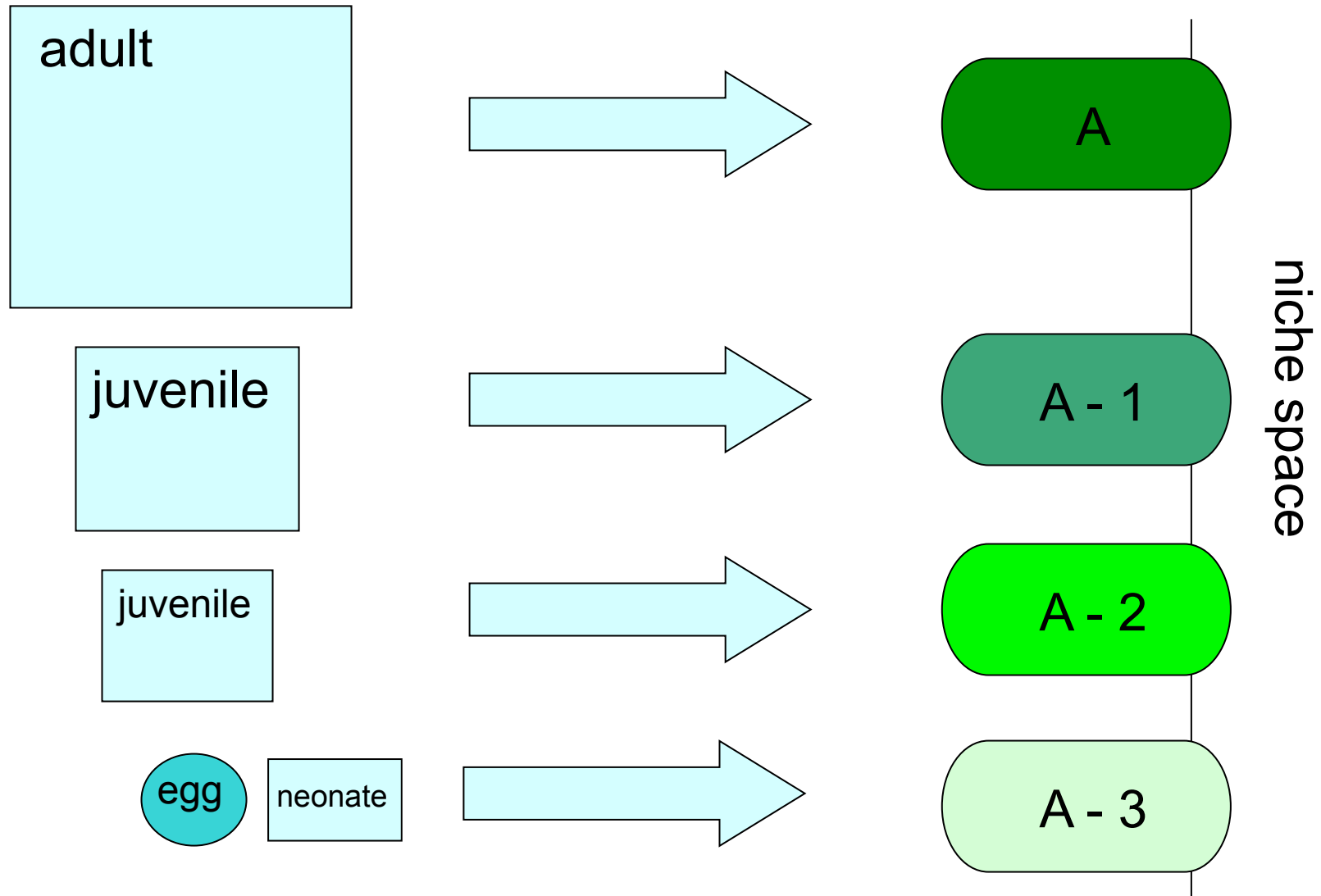


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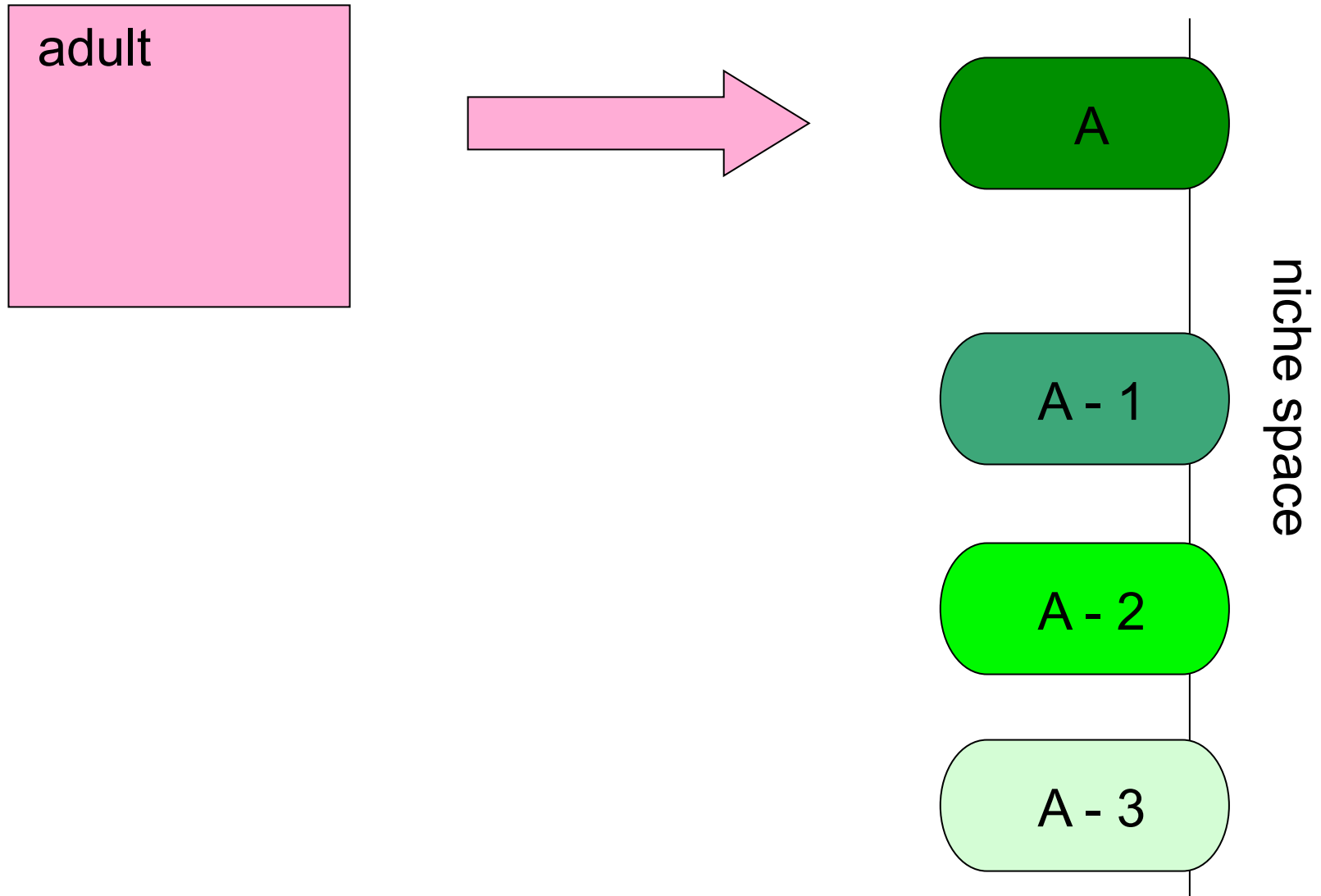


Niches of parent and offspring



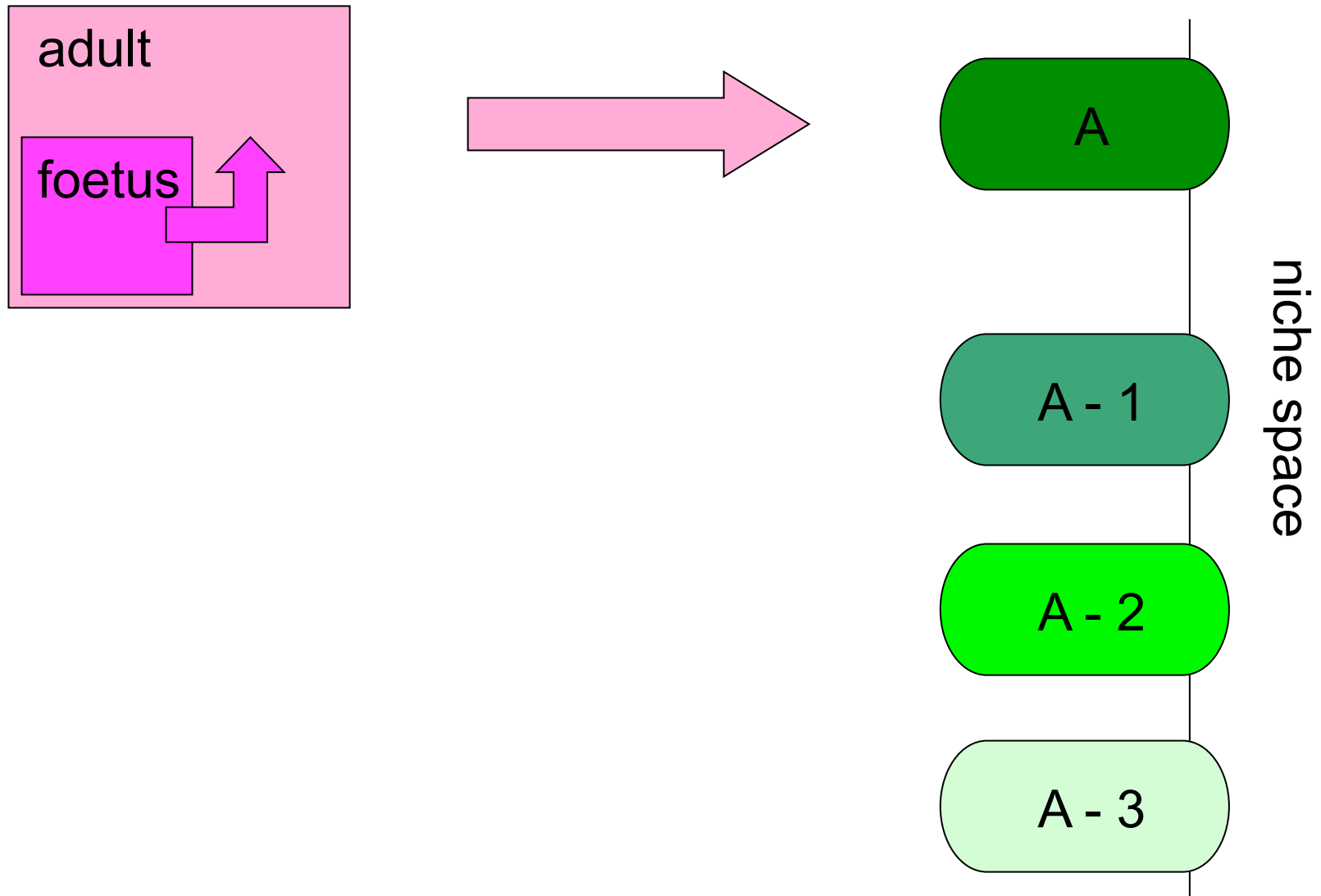


Niches of parent and offspring



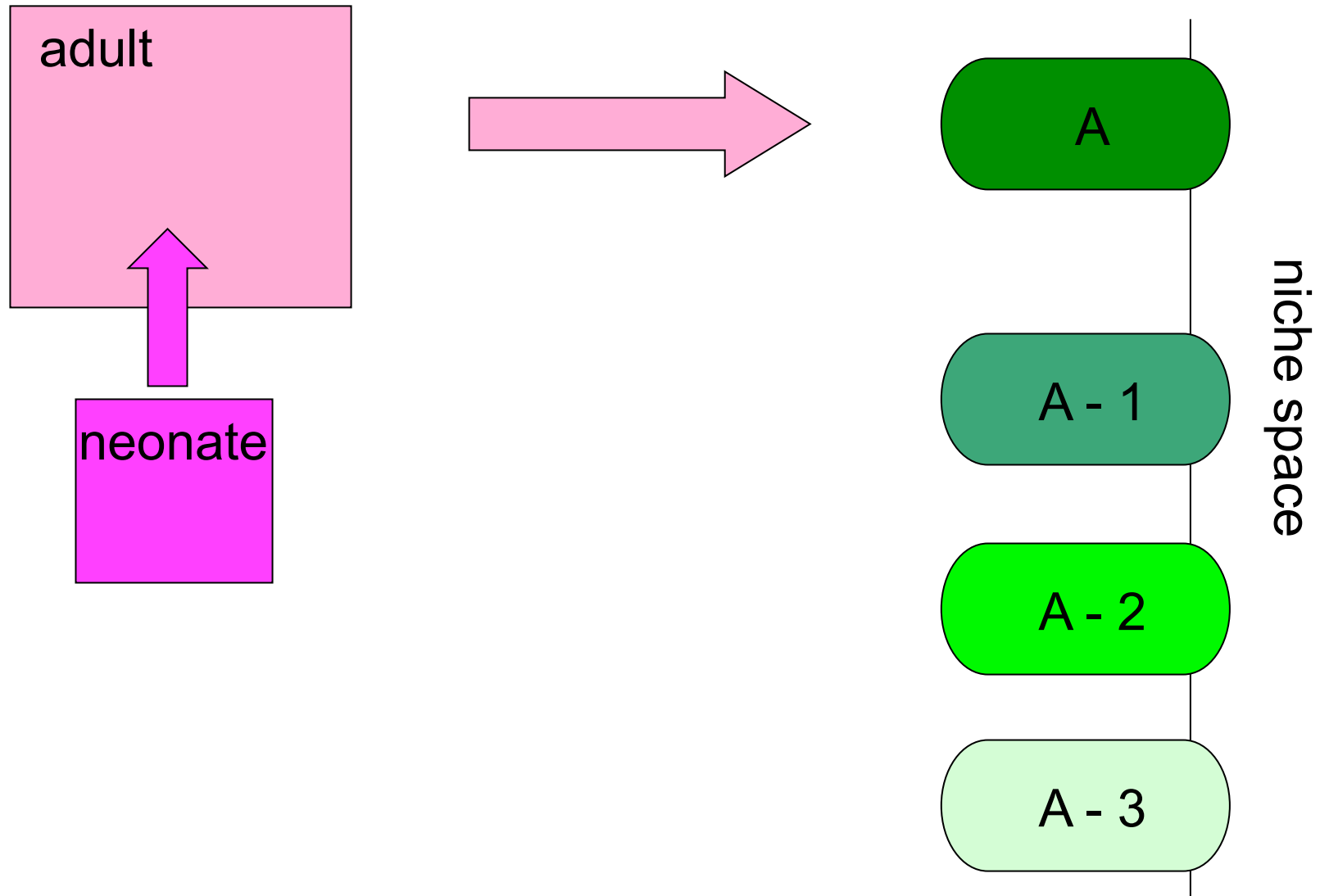


Niches of parent and offspring



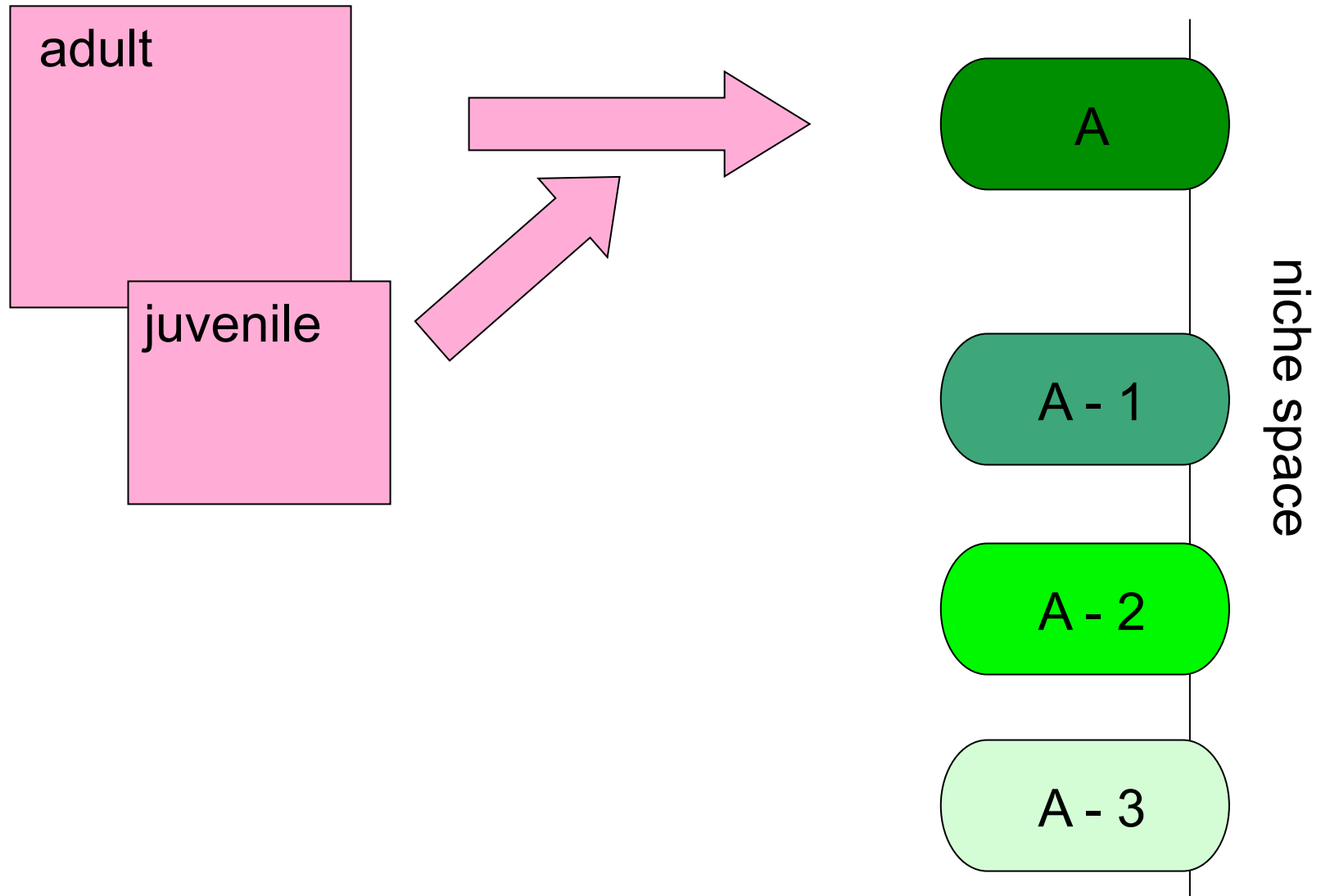


Niches of parent and offspring





Niches of parent and offspring





Niches of parent and offspring

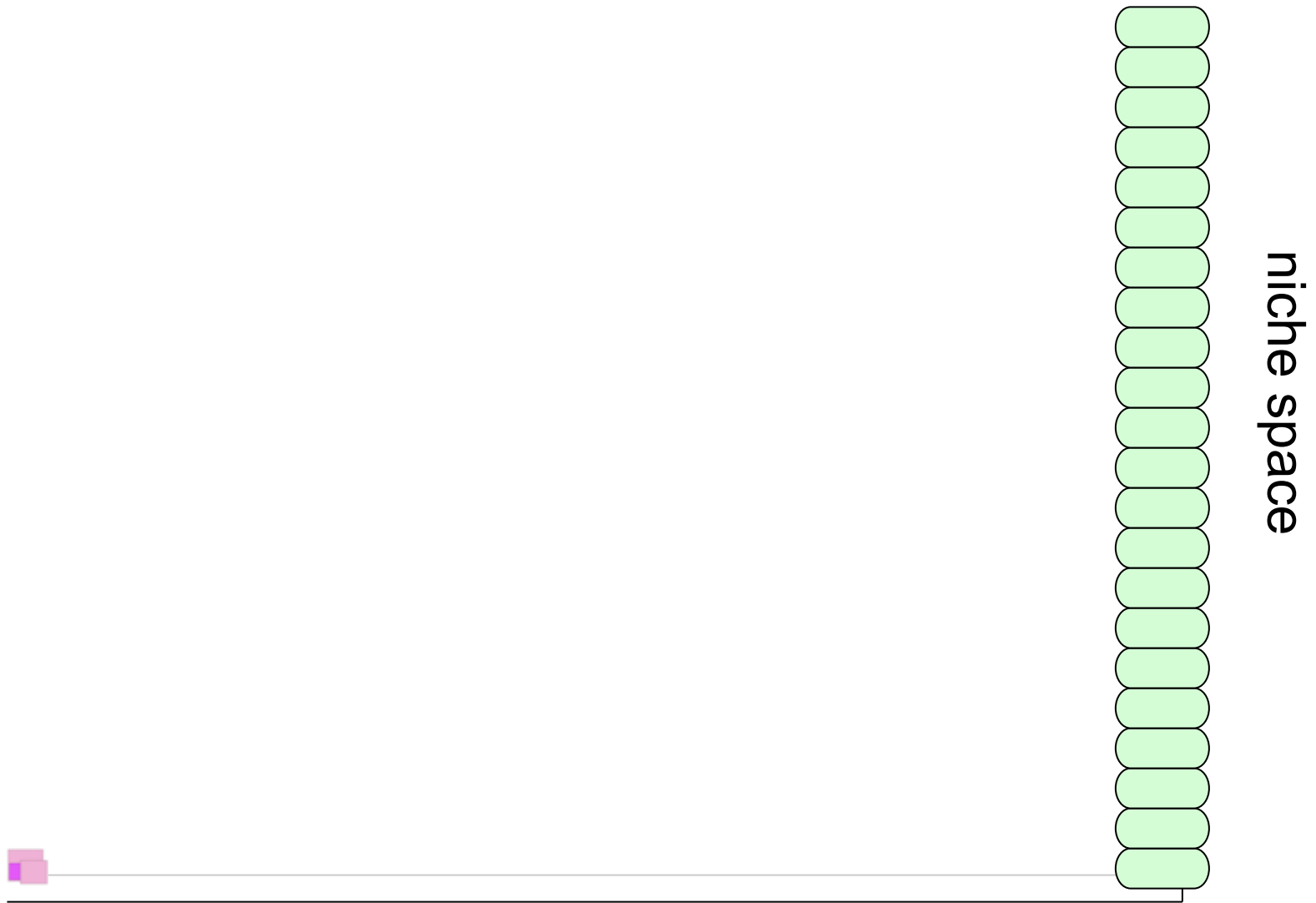


niche space



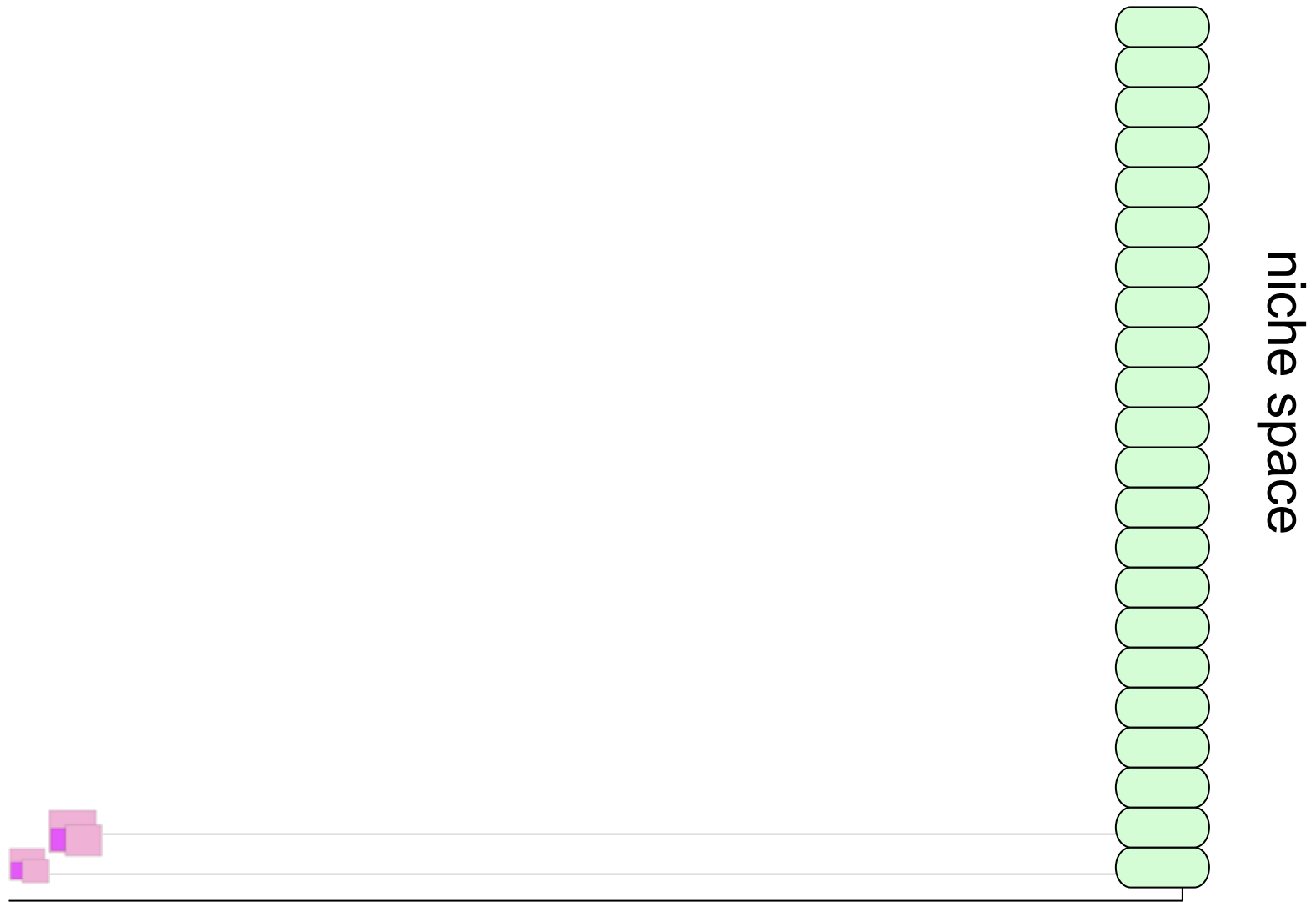


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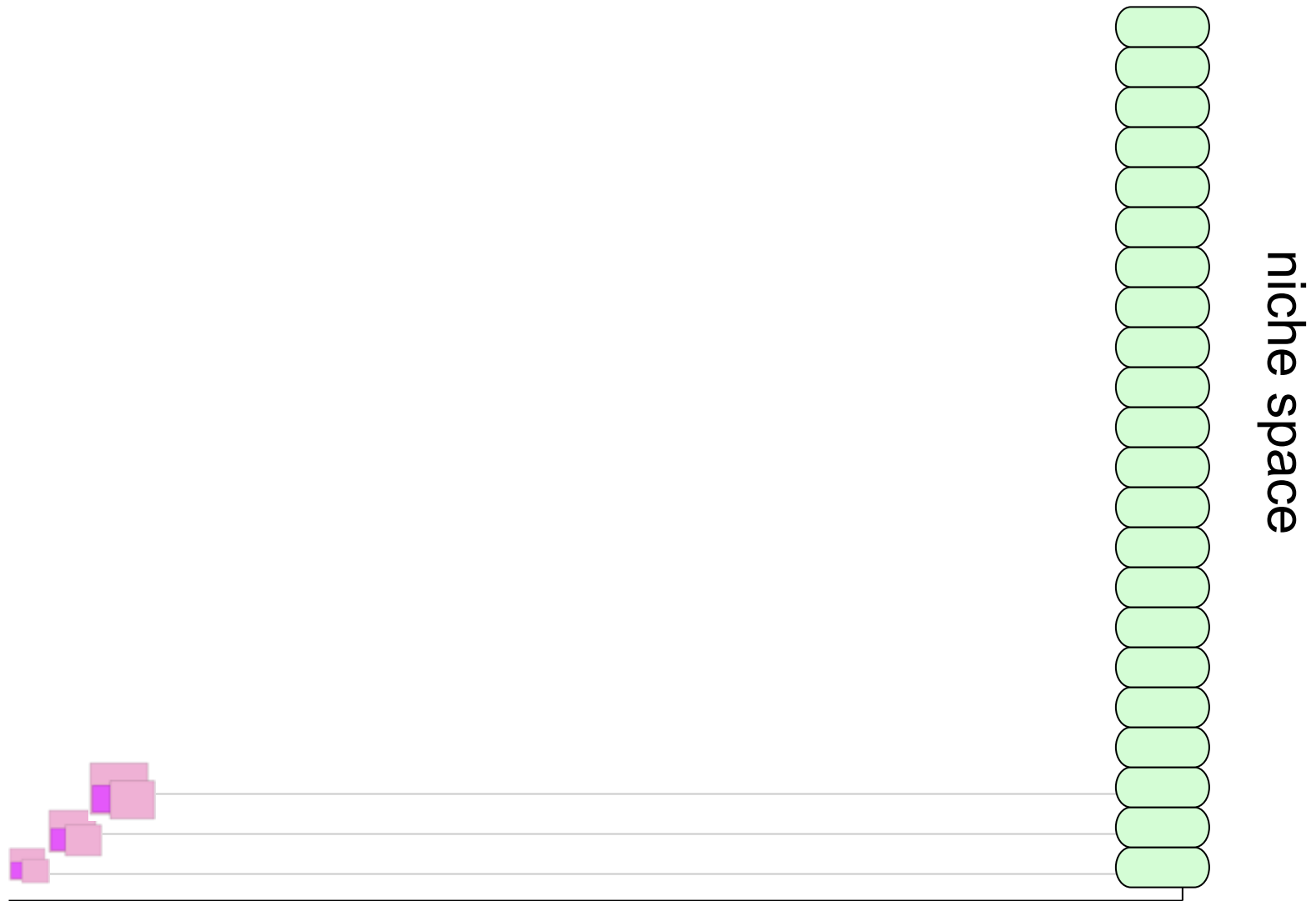


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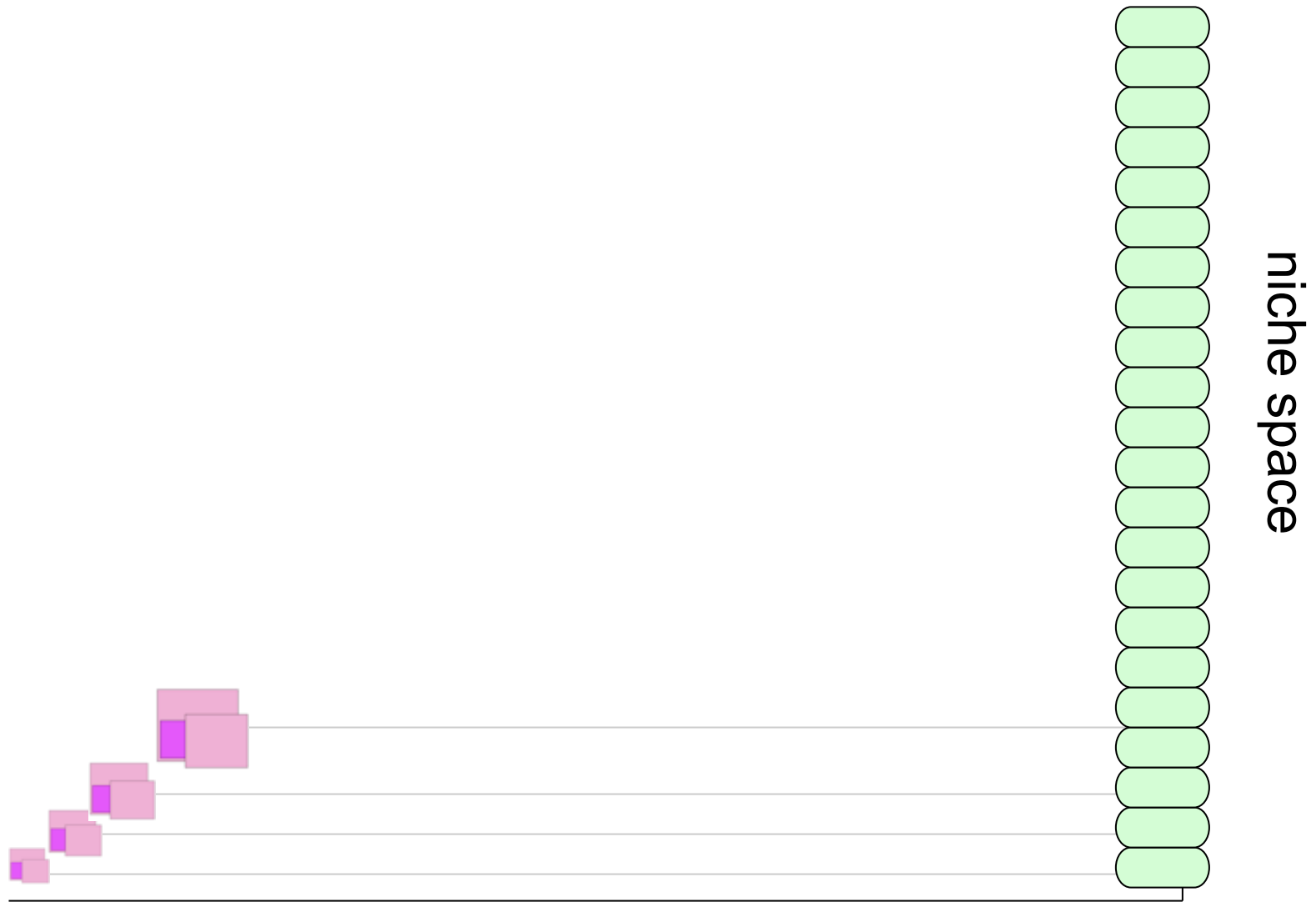


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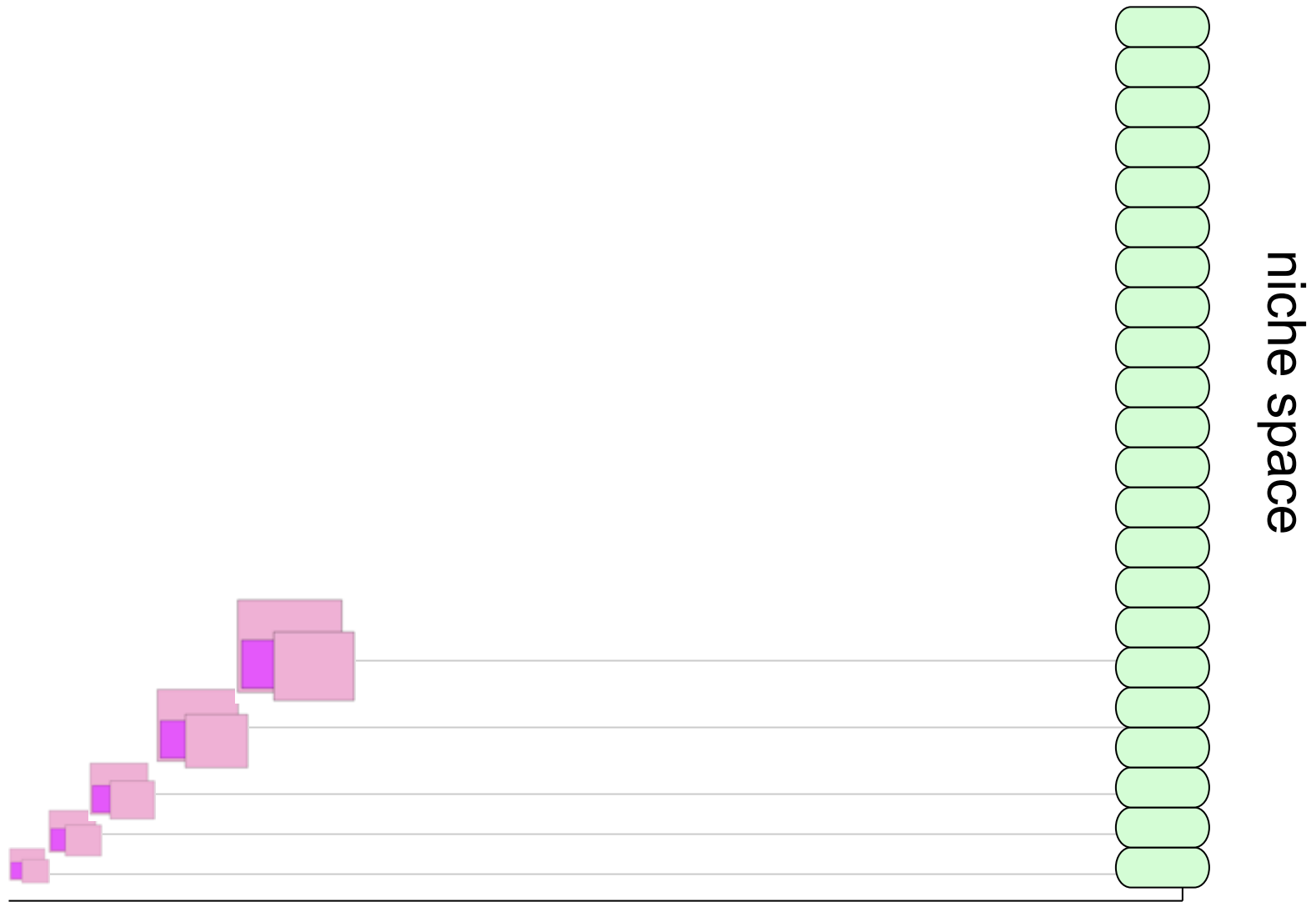


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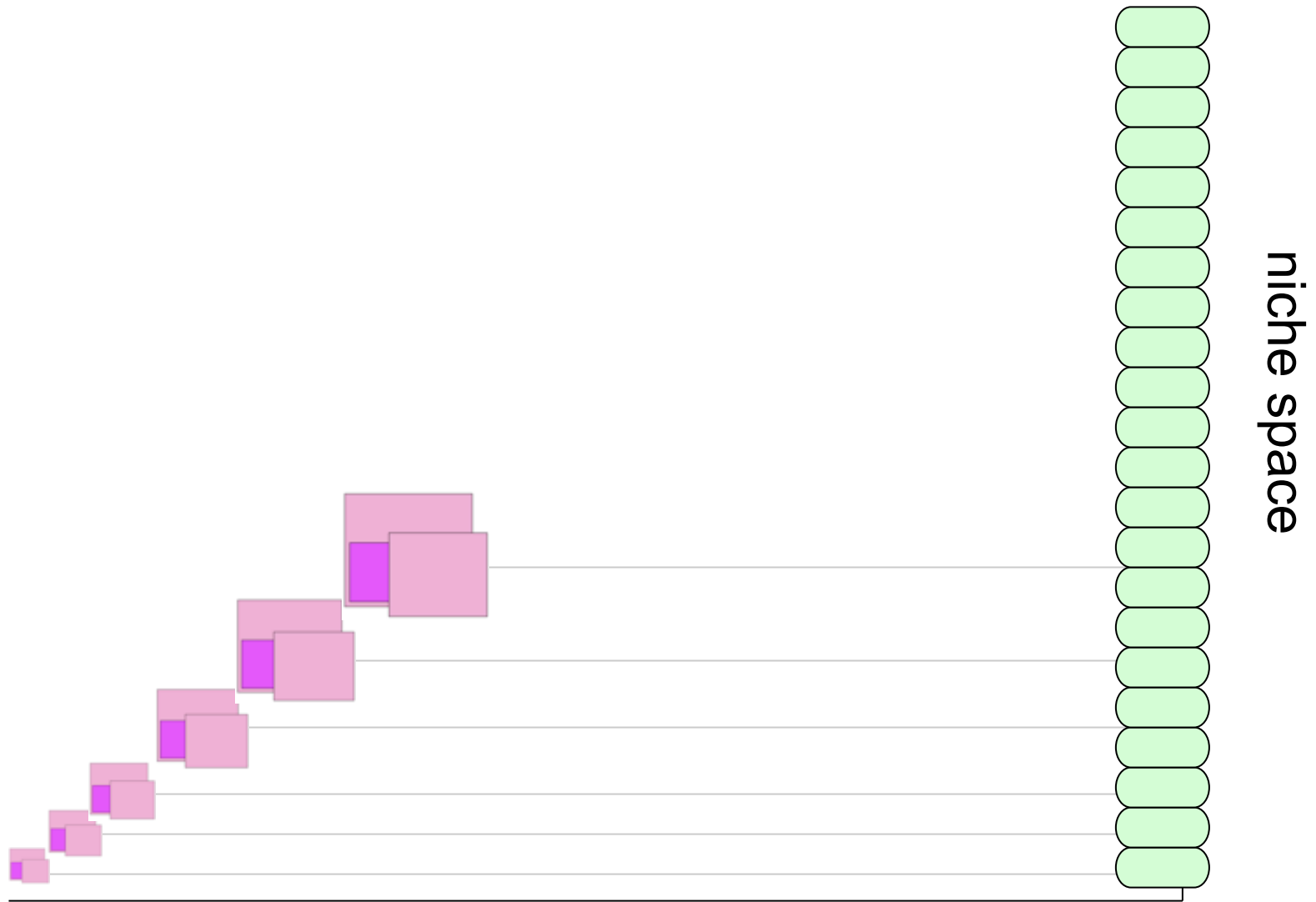


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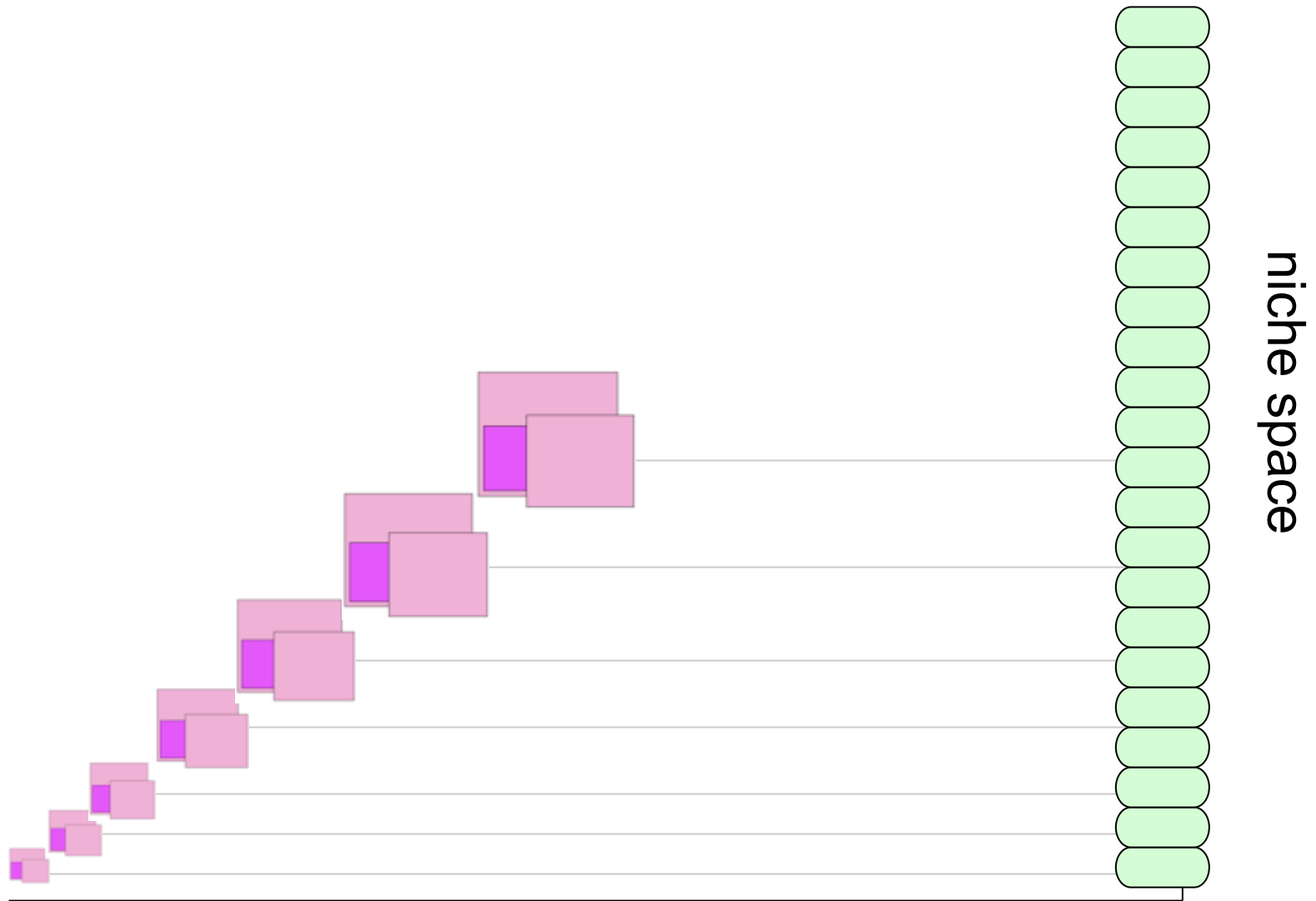


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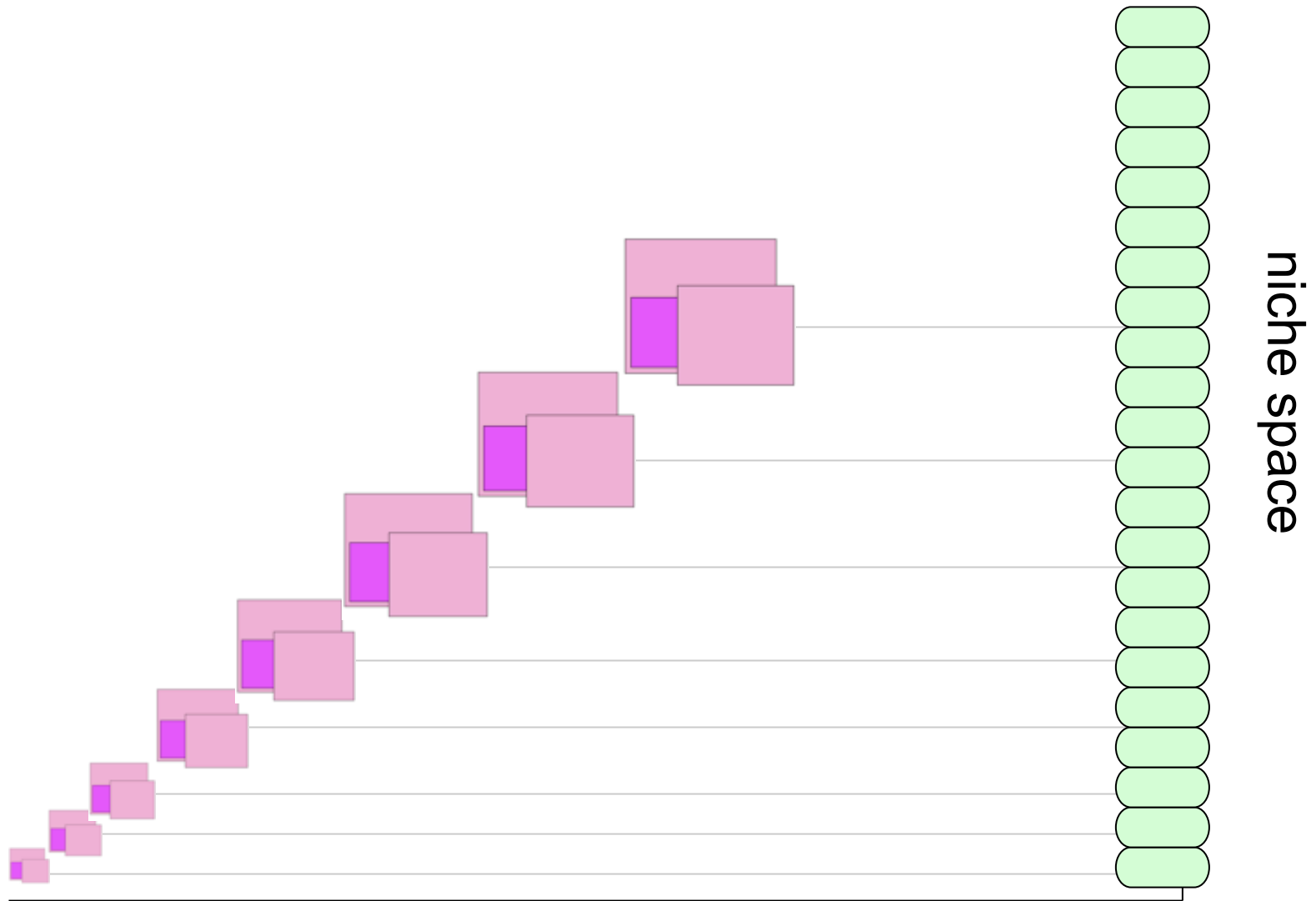


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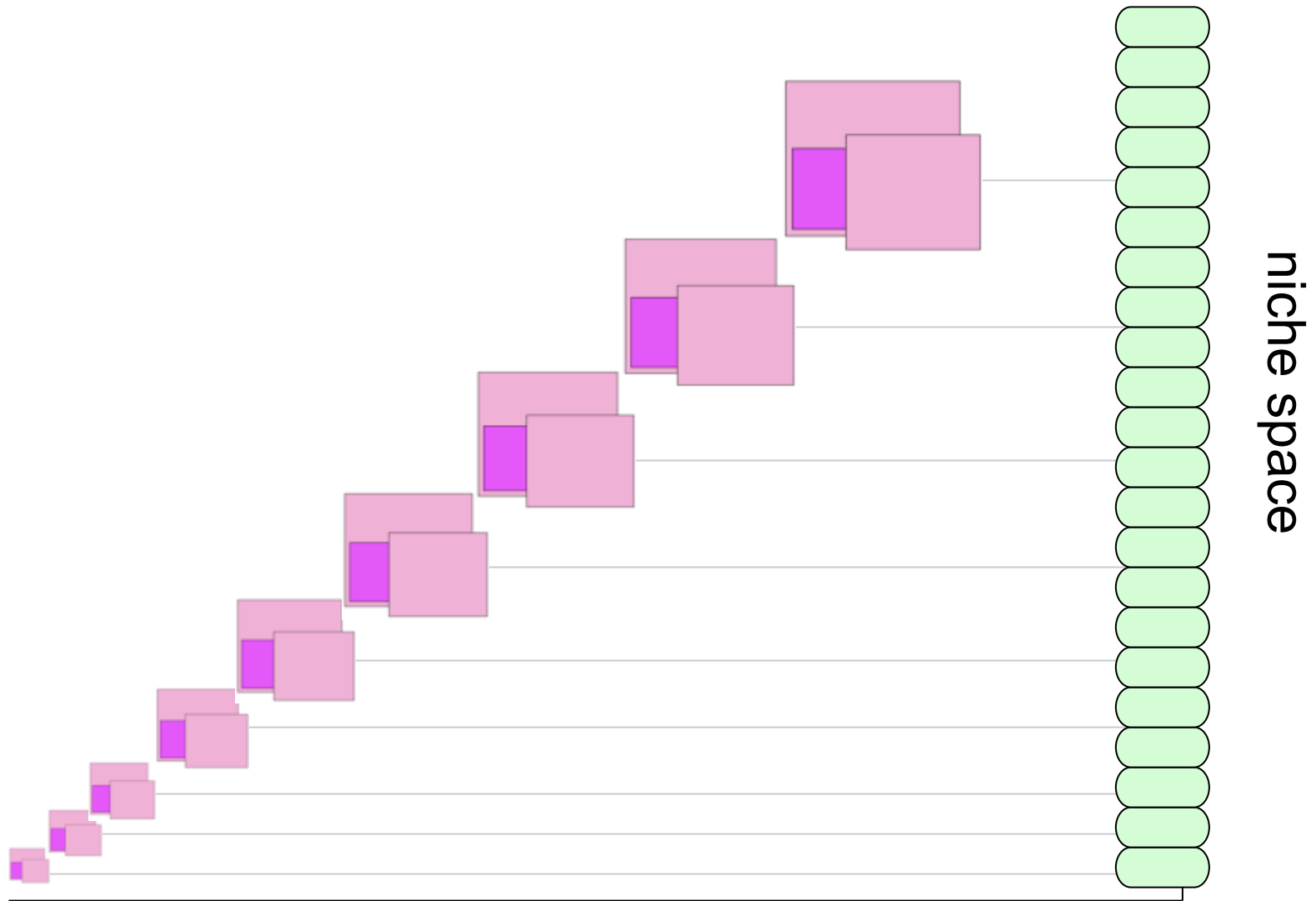


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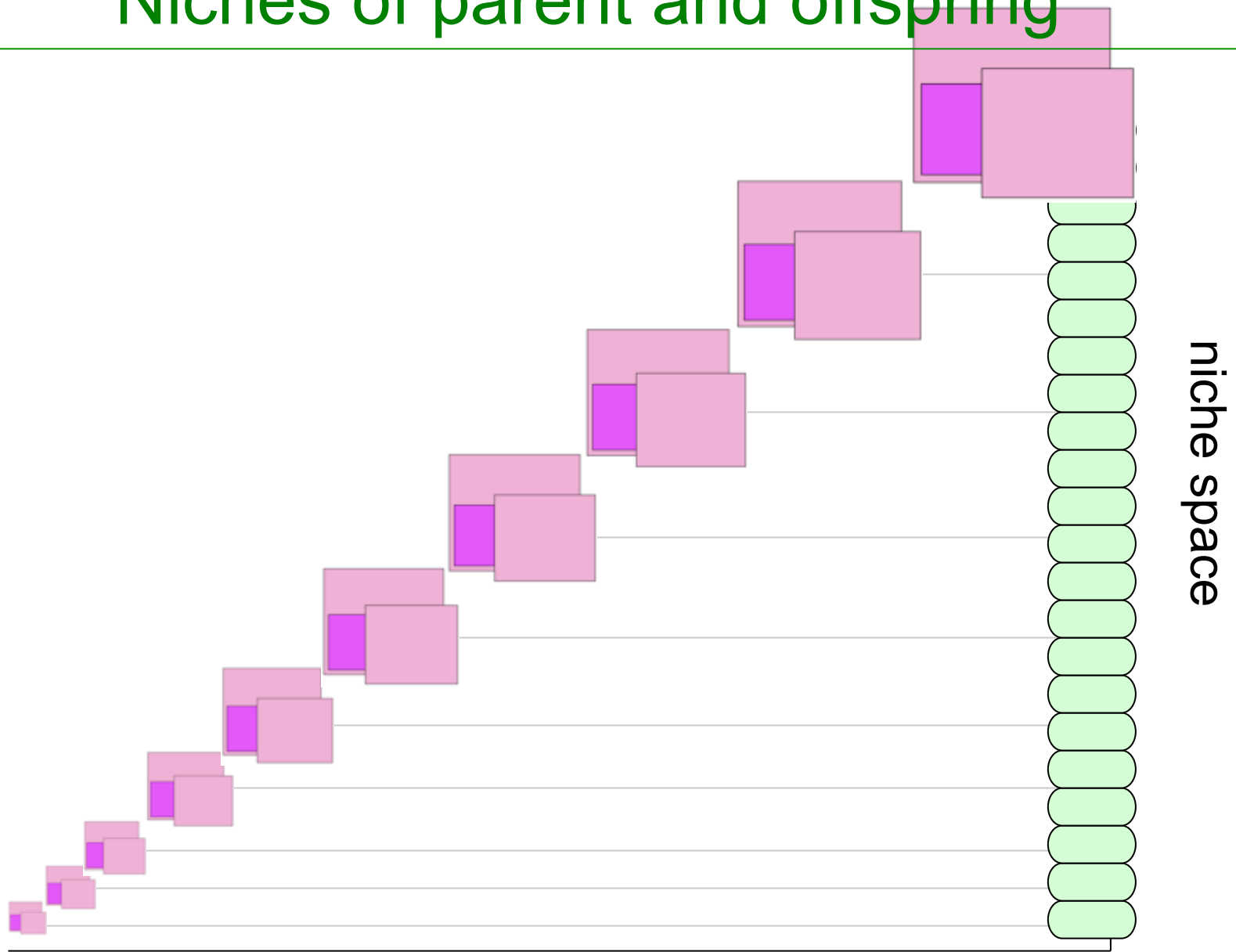


Niches of parent and offspring





Niches of parent and offspring





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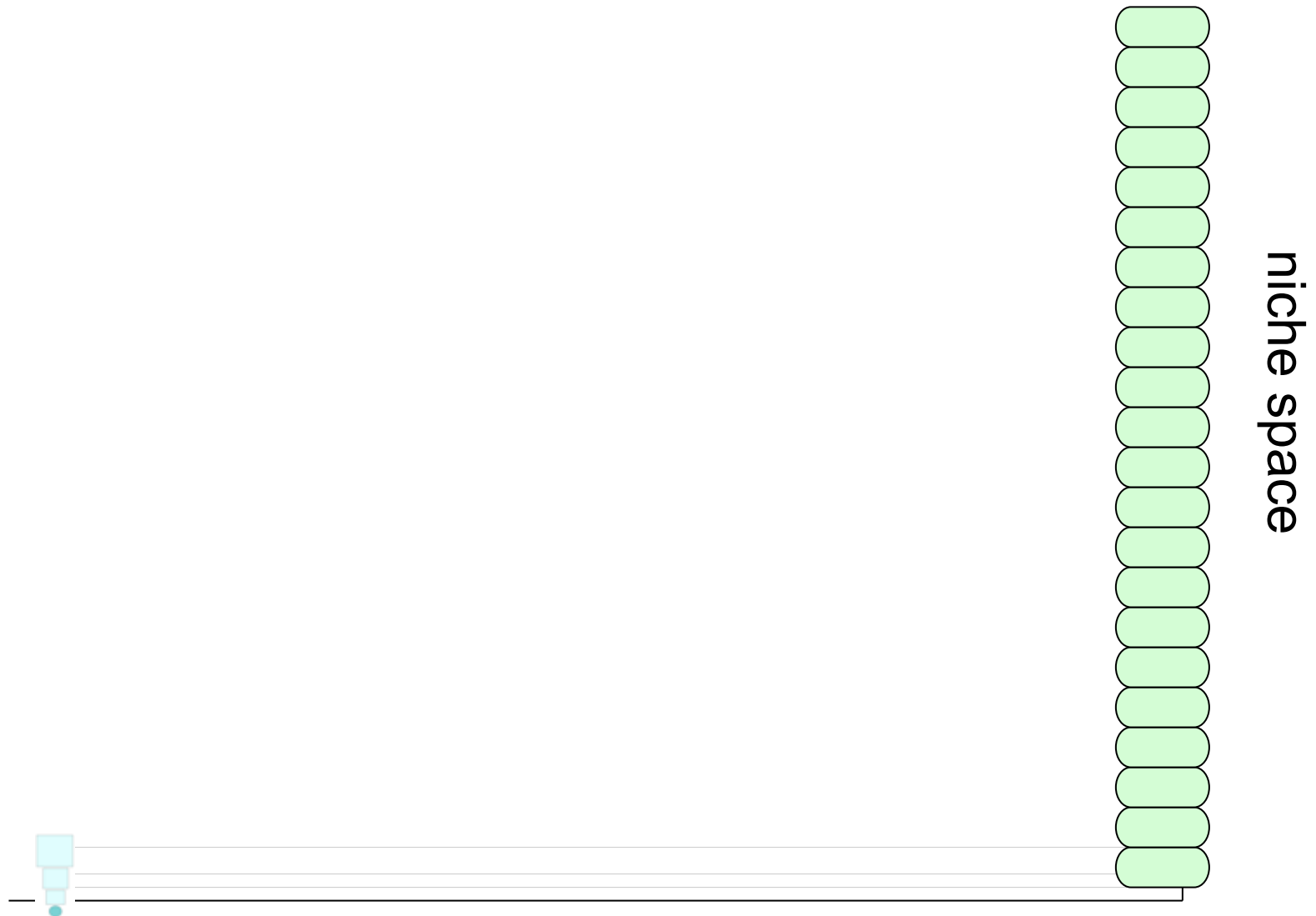


niche space





Niches of parent and offspring





Niches of parent and offspring





Niches of parent and offspring



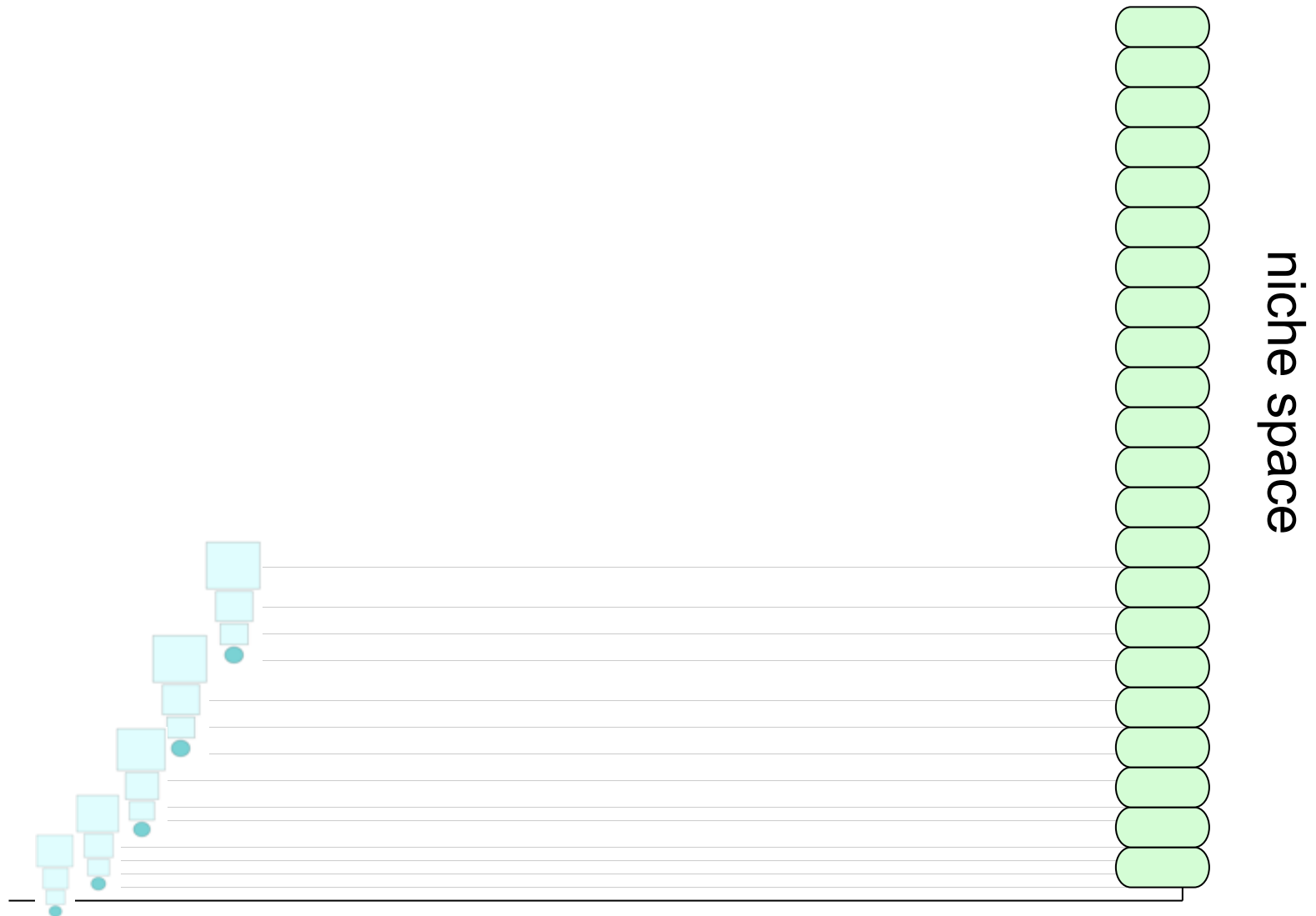


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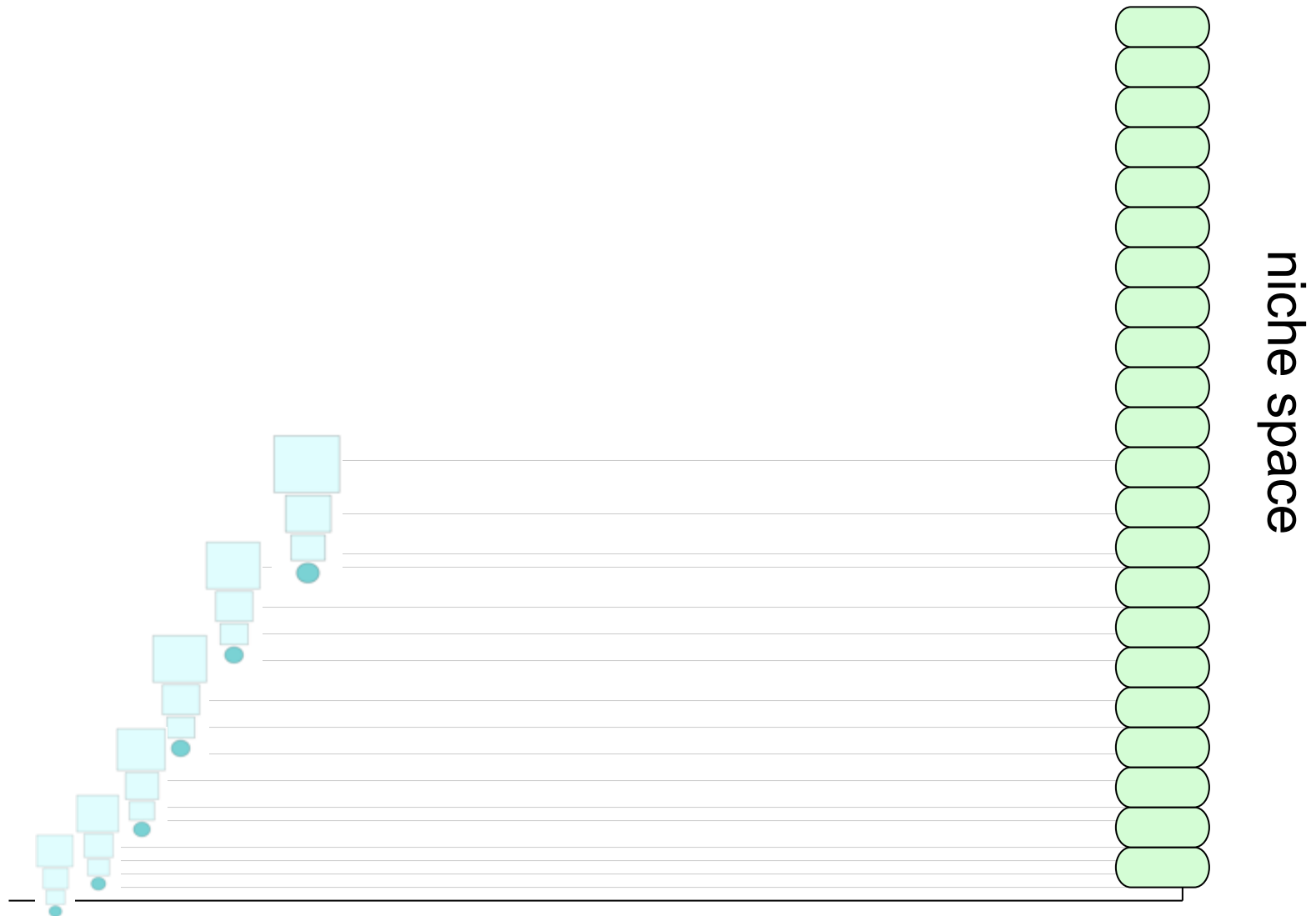


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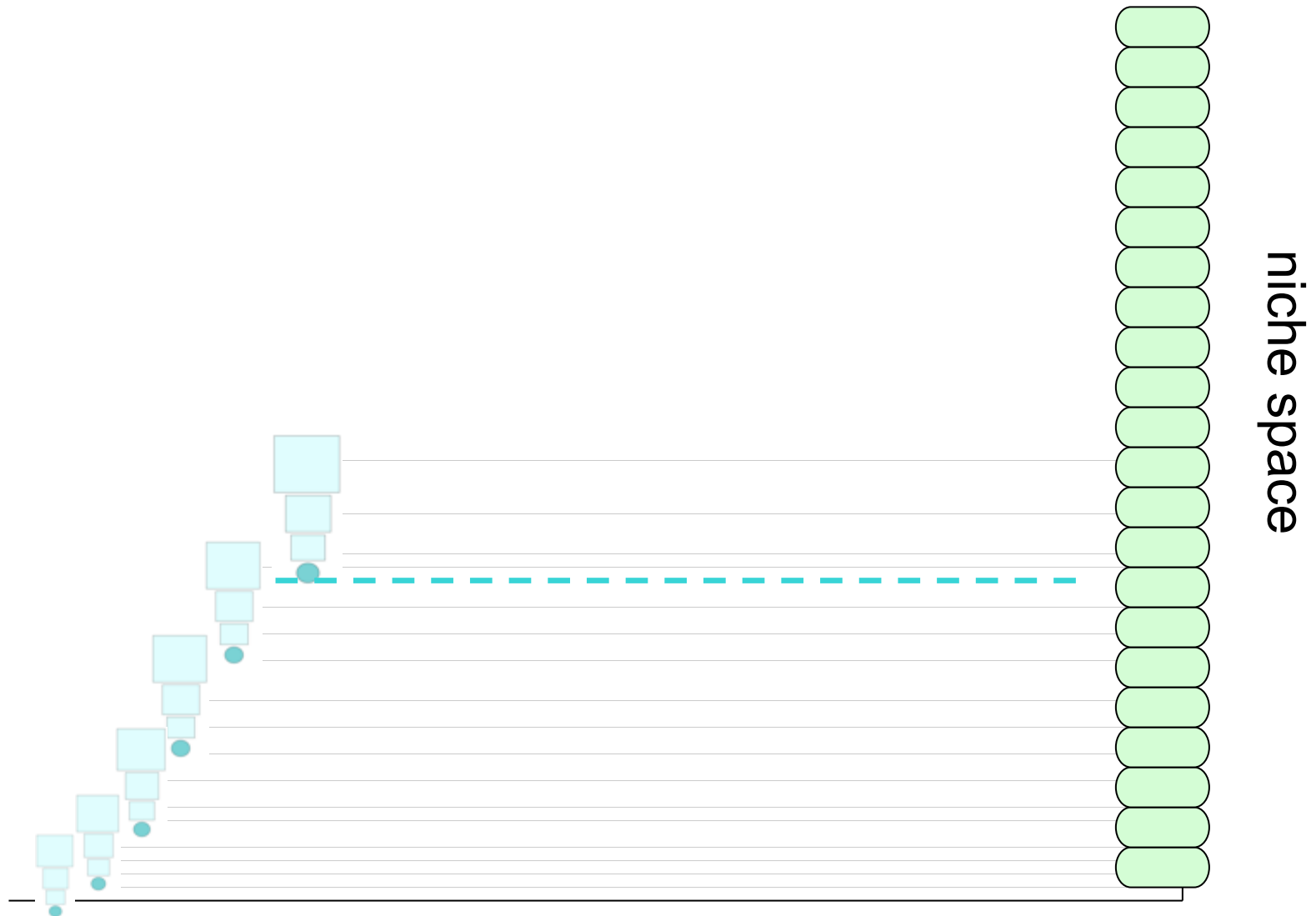


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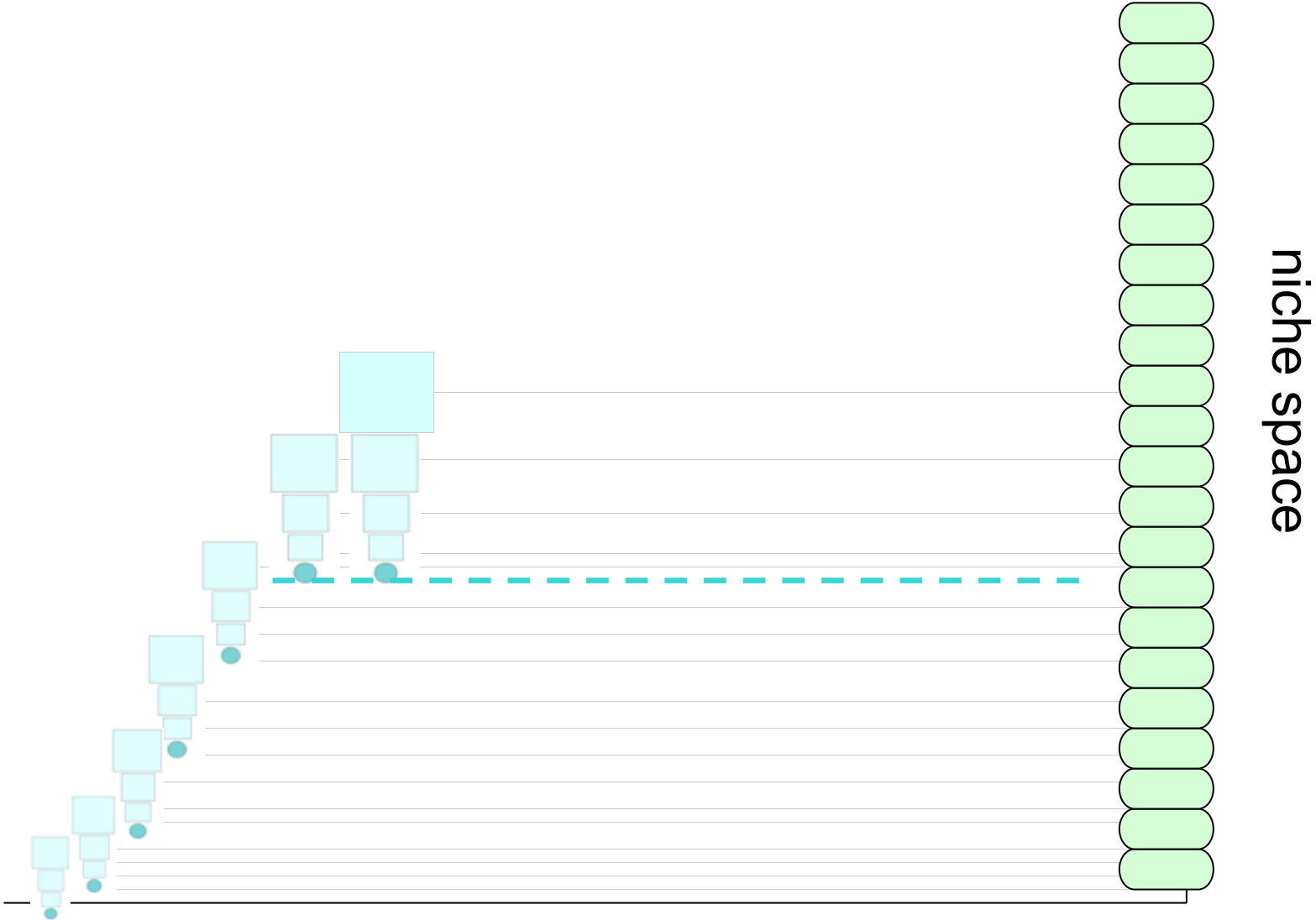


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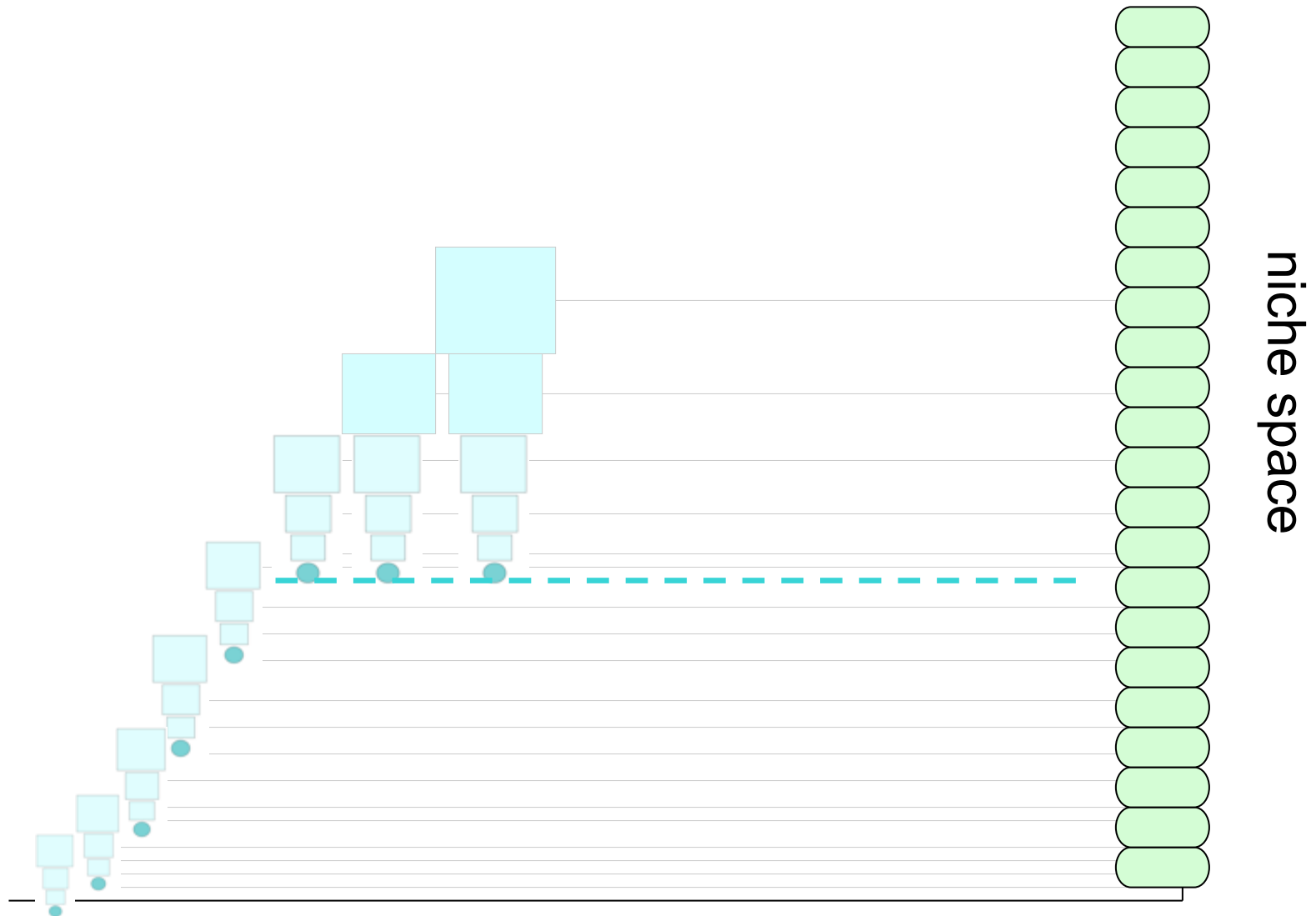


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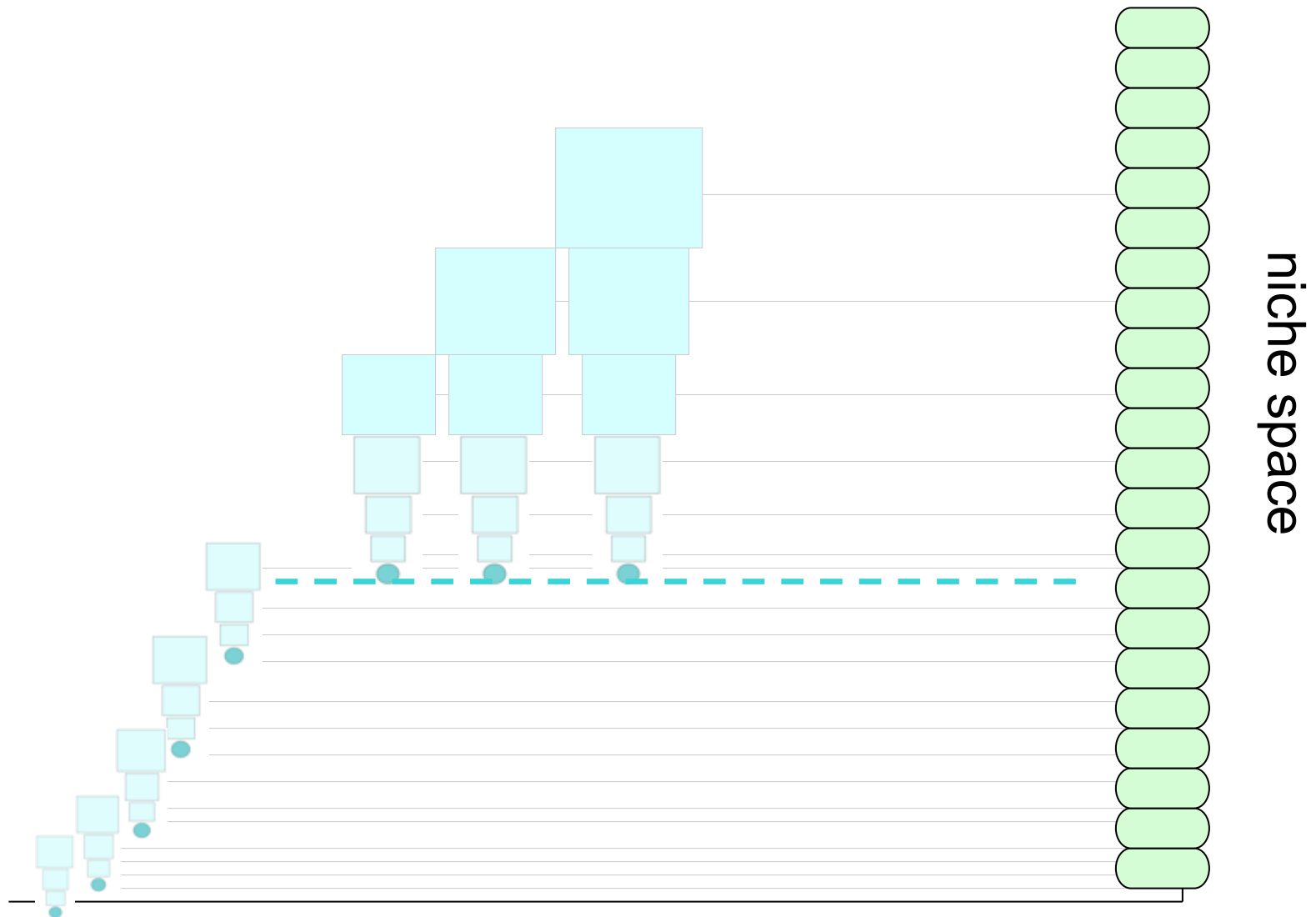


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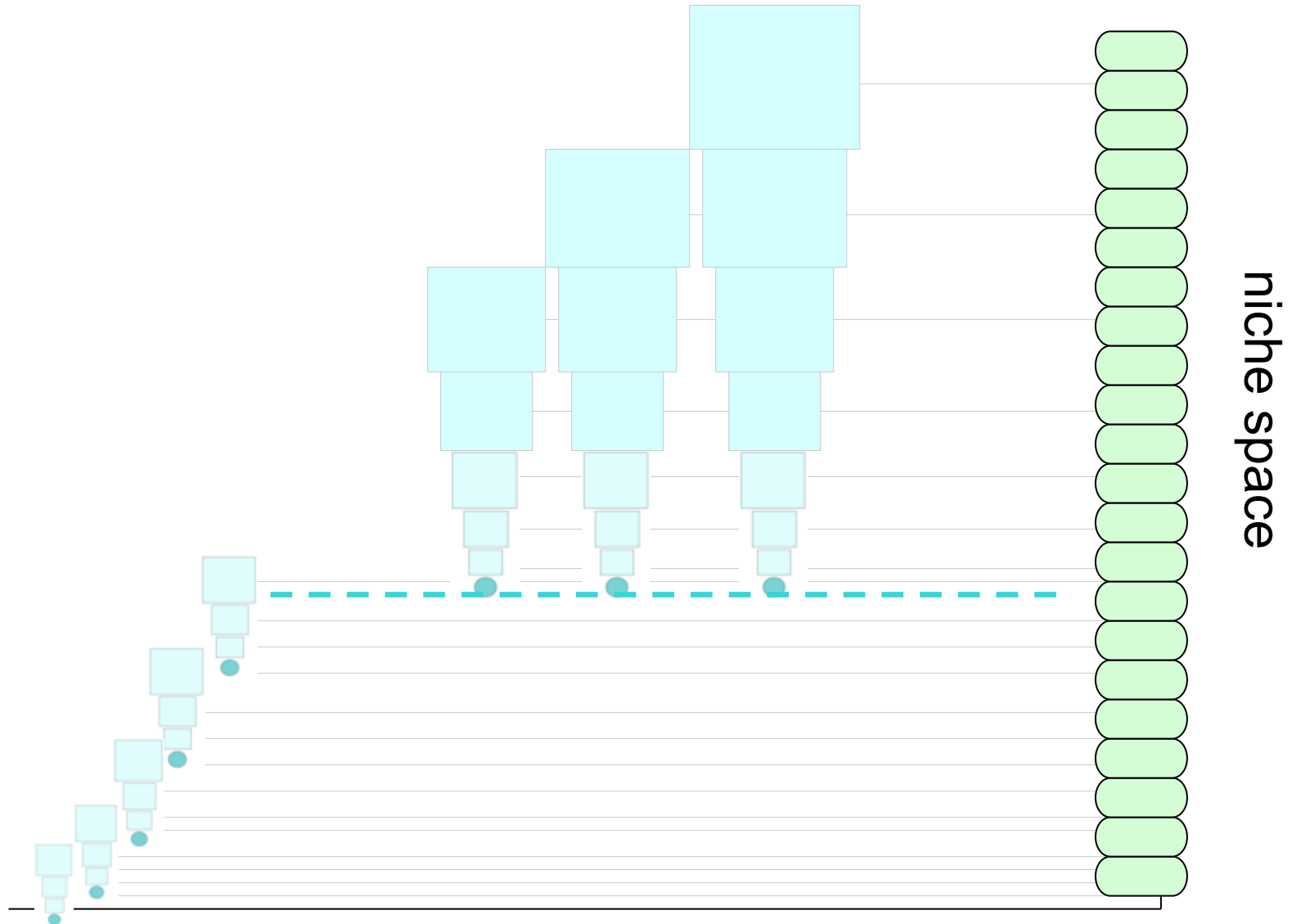


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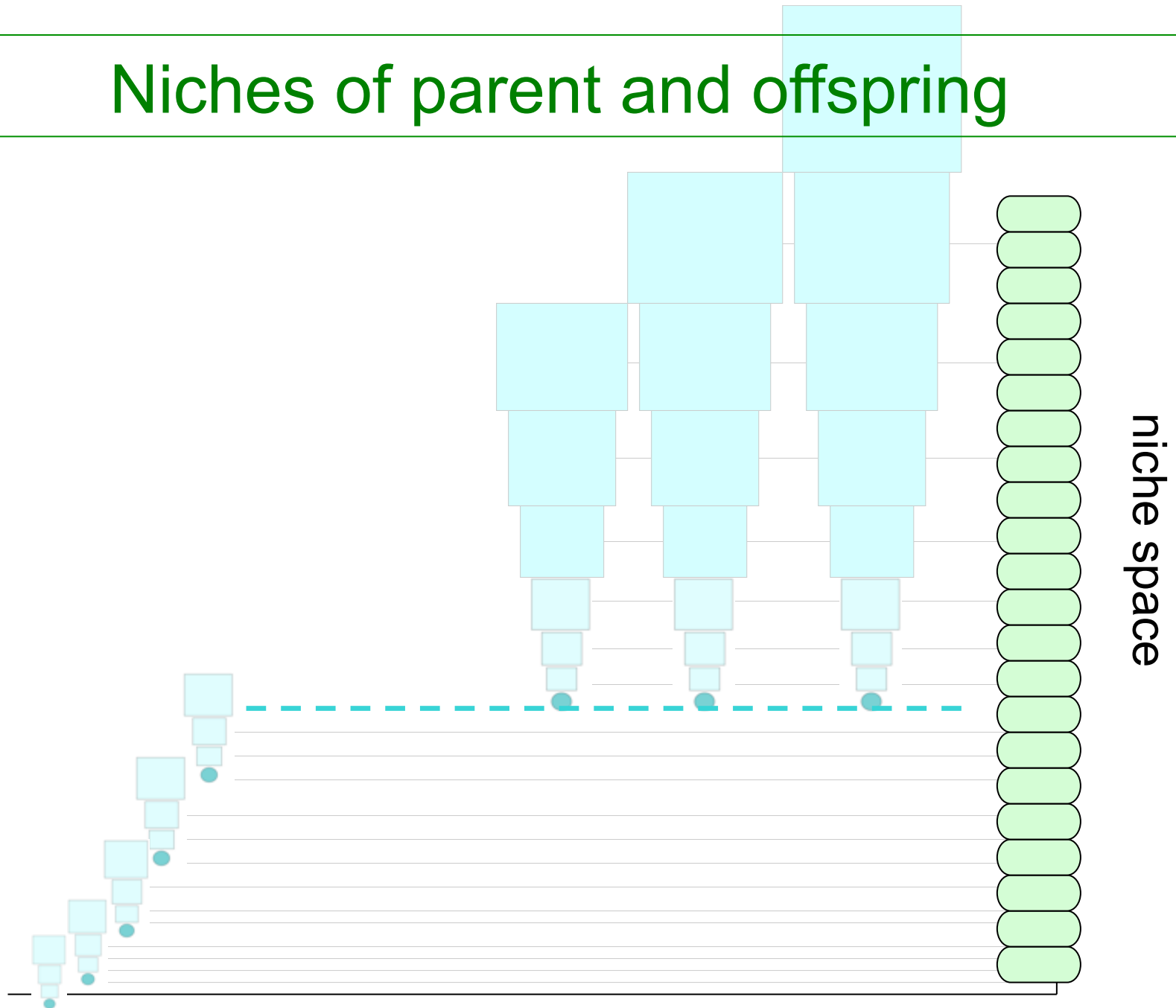


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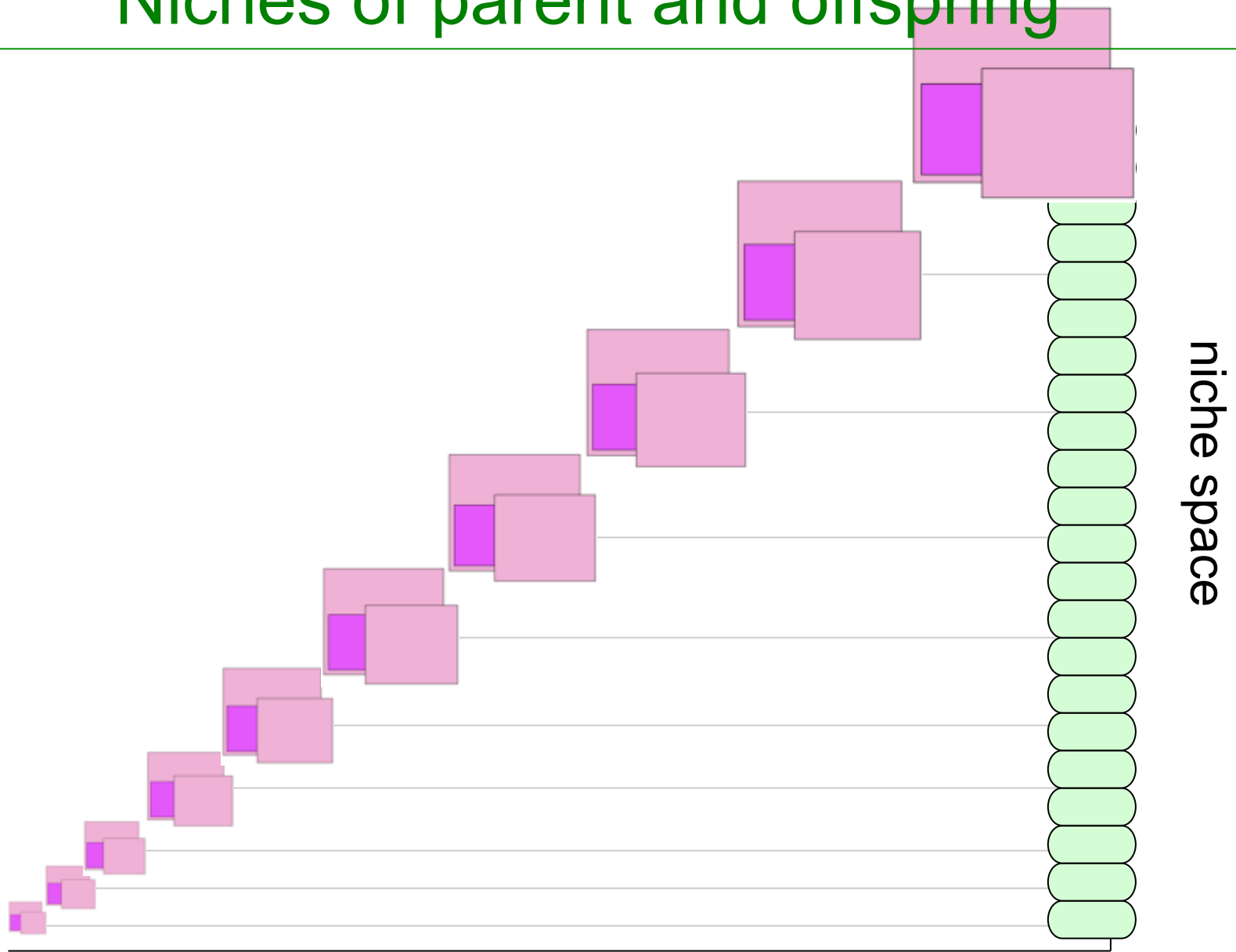


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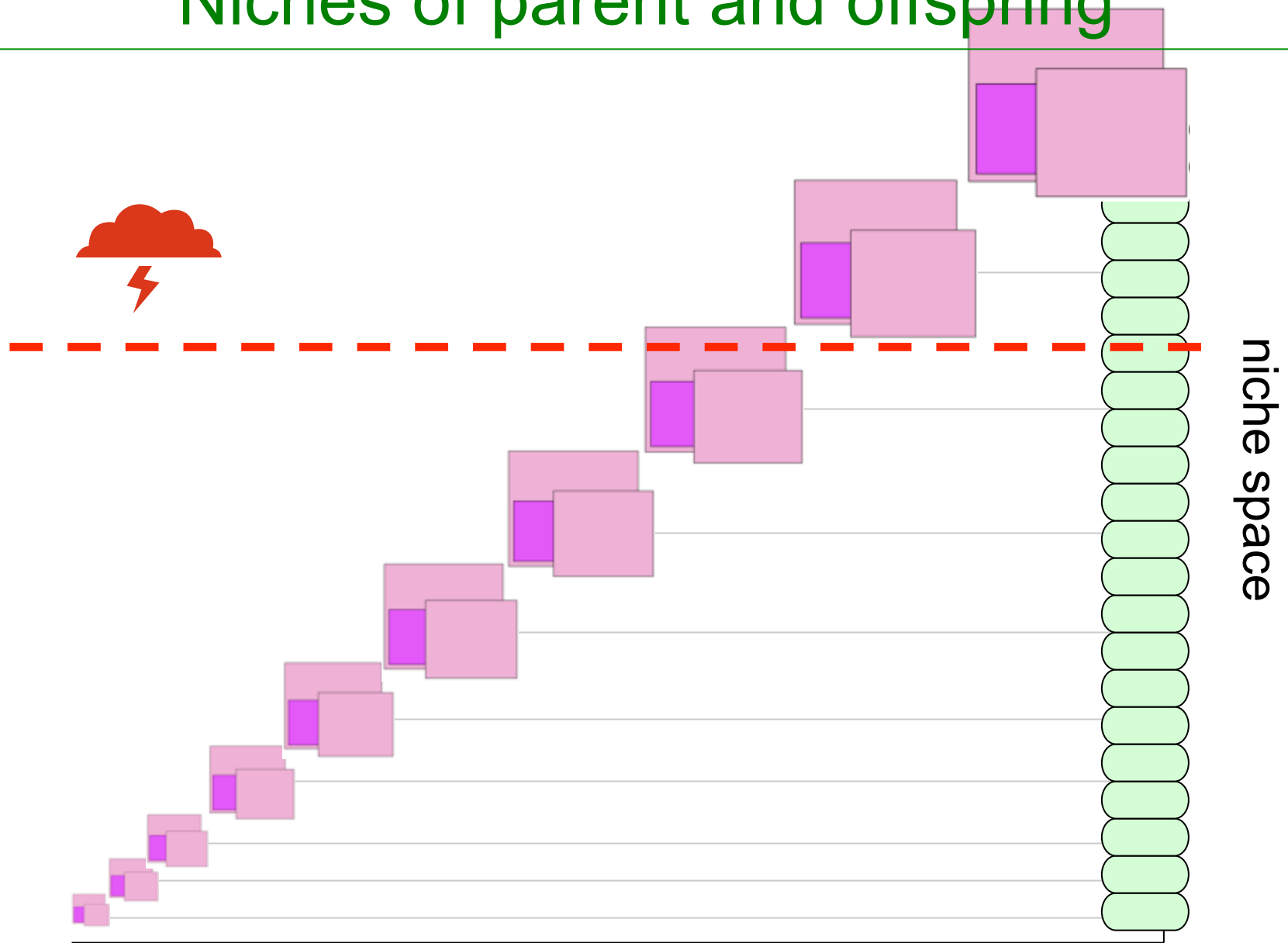


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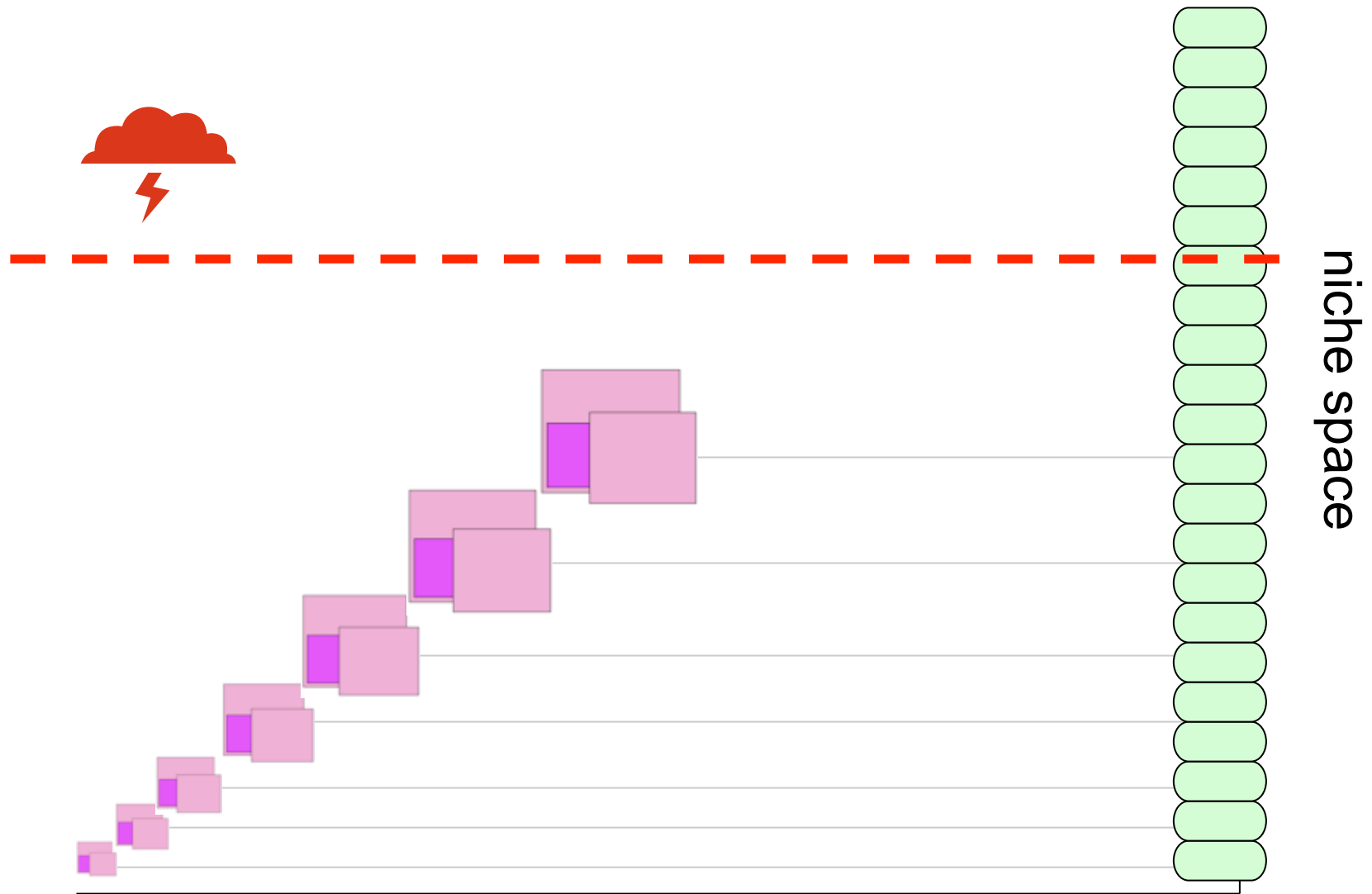


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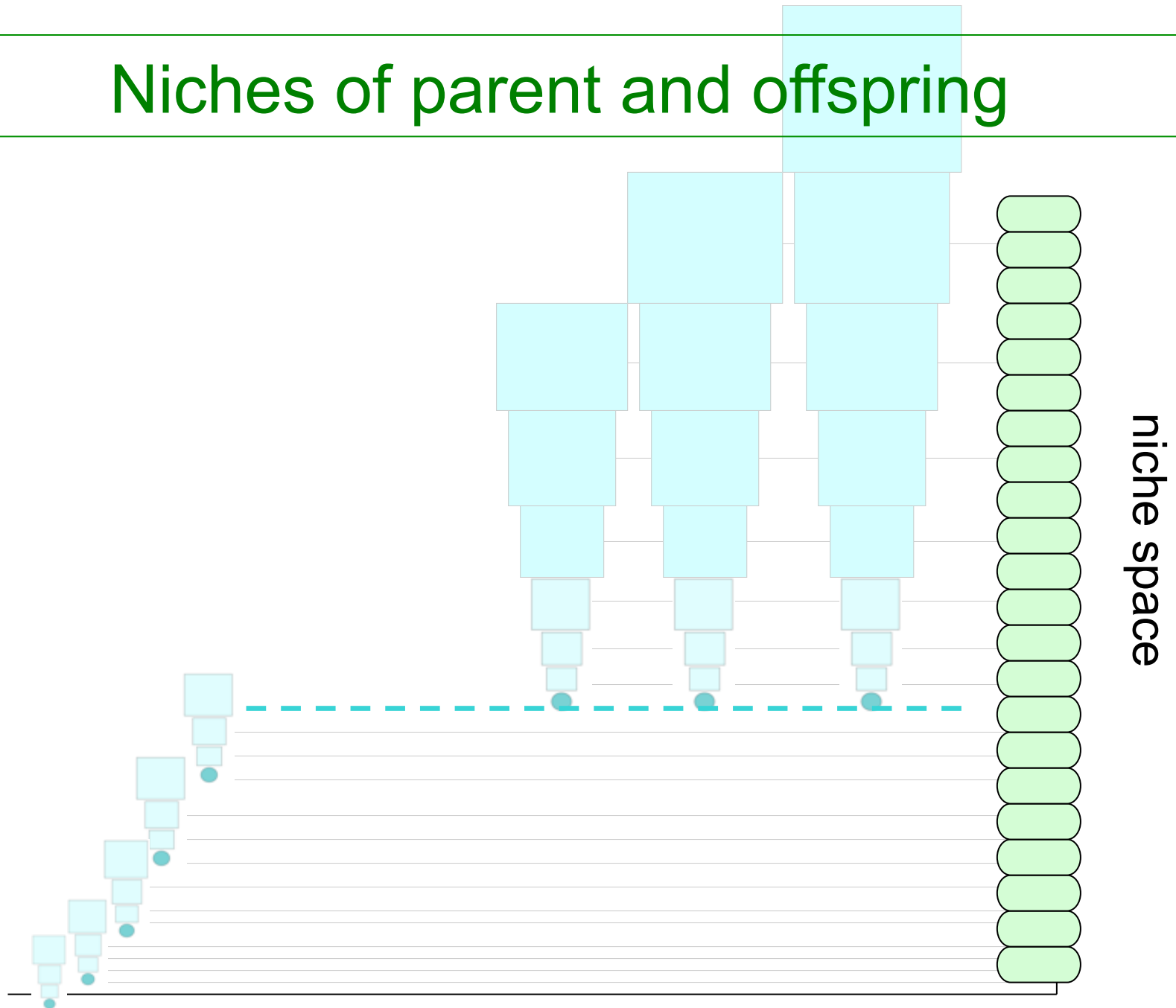


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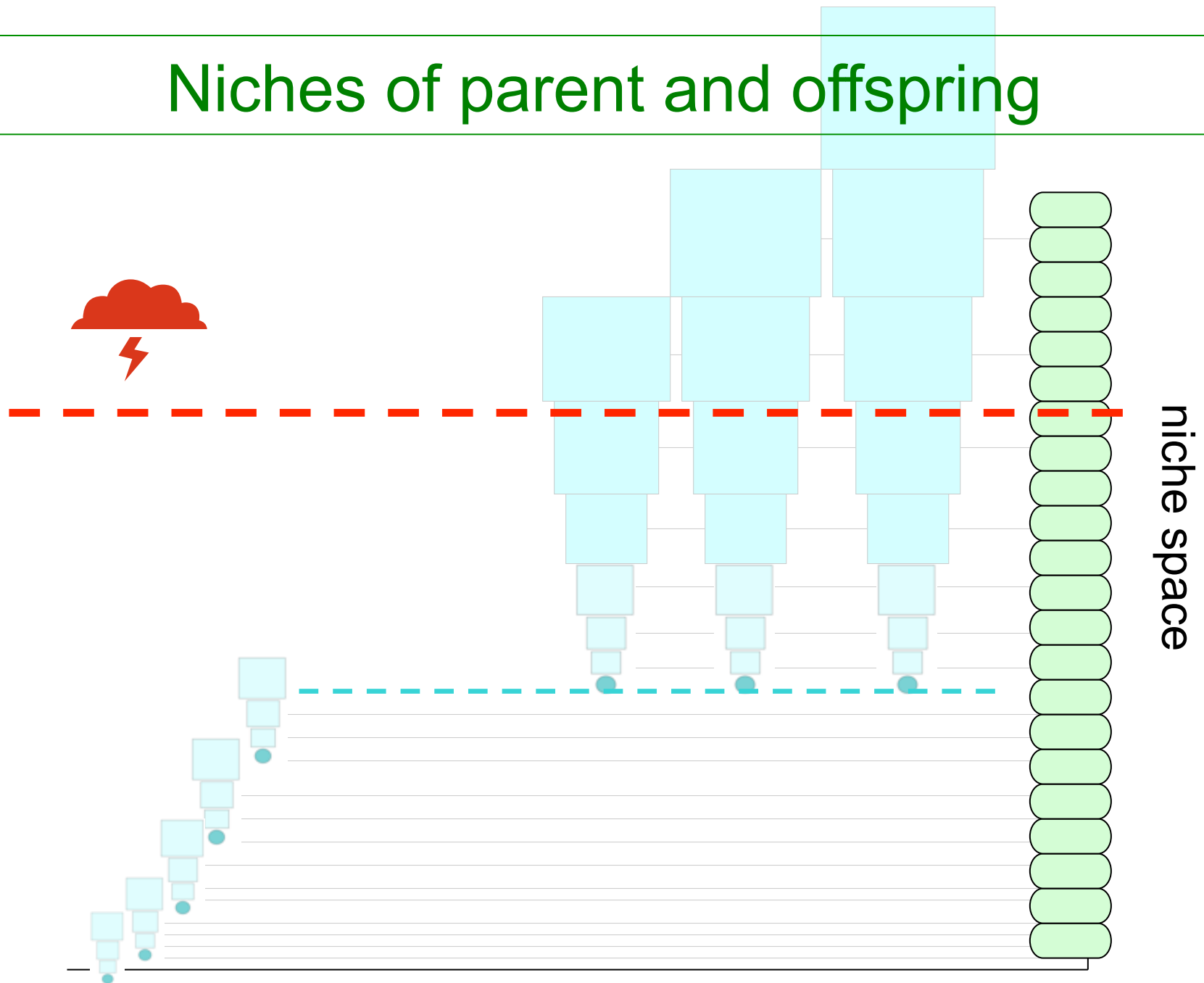


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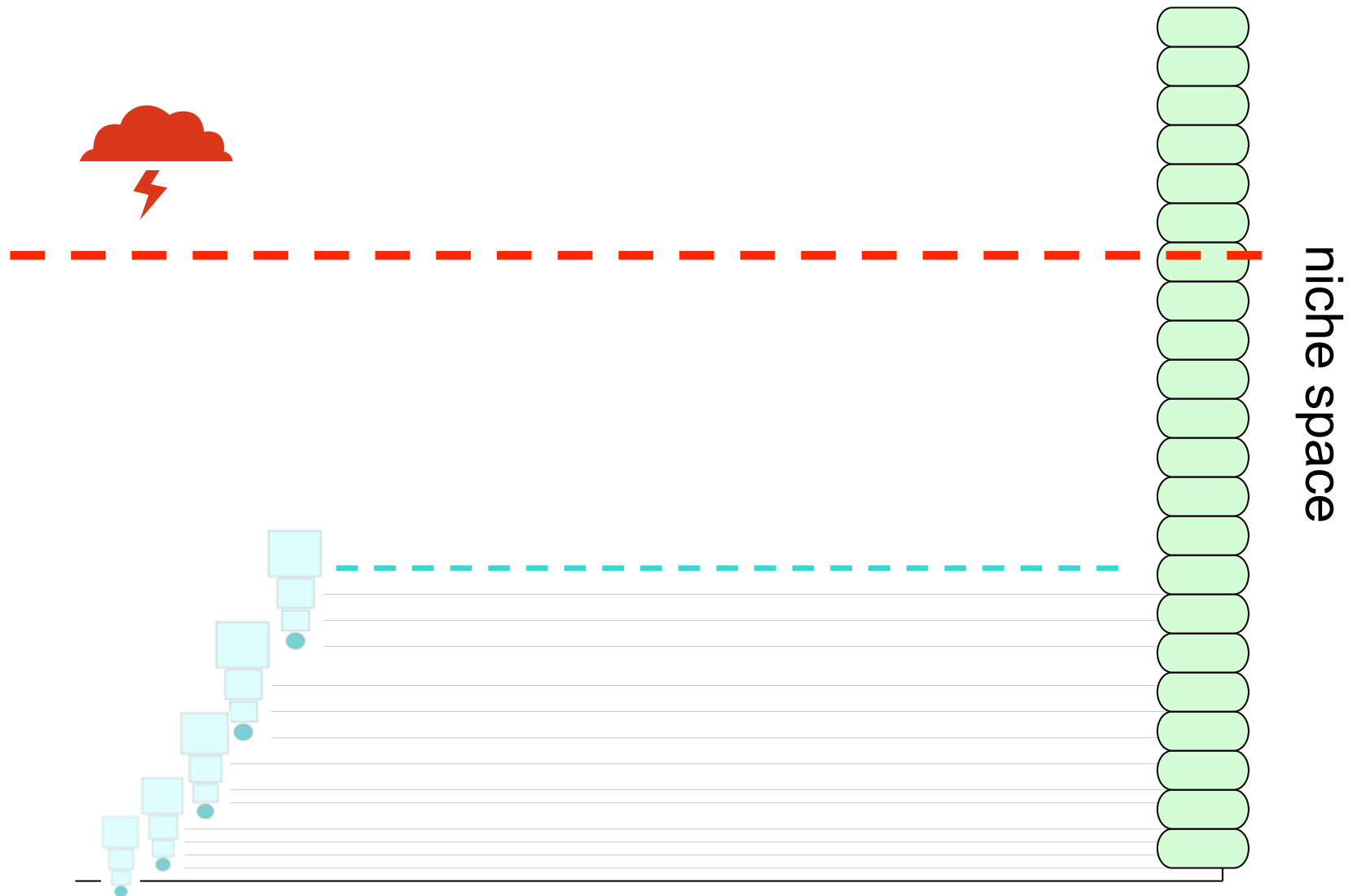


Niches of parent and offspring





Niches of parent and offspring





Resulting hypothesis I

The reproductive mode of dinosaurs (ovipary), with its intrinsic 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')?

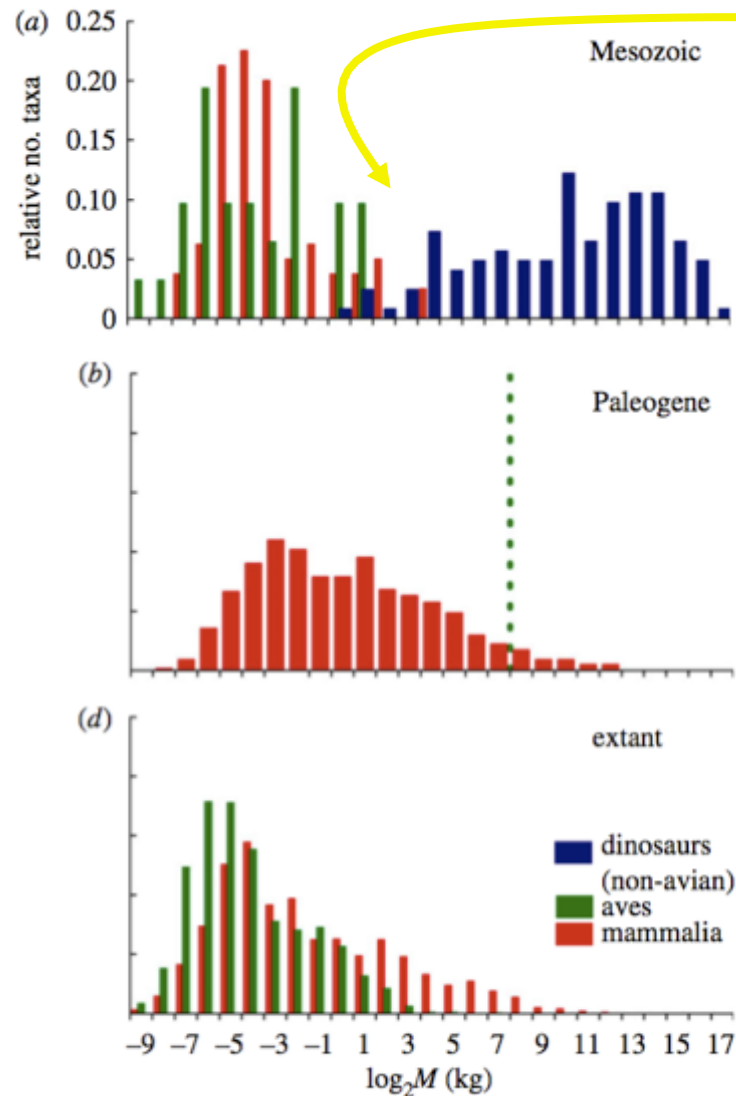
Design deterministic model to test effect of interspecific competition on body mass distribution of mammals and dinosaurs before and after a simulated K-T-event



Daryl Codron



Species distributions





Deterministic model

- Populations of different sized species of:

Dinosaurs: $i_1, i_2 \dots i_k = \{2 \text{ g to } \sim 131 \text{ tons}\}$

Mammals: $i_1, i_2 \dots i_k = \{2 \text{ g to } \sim 16 \text{ tons}\}$

- Each structured by size ($\log_2 M$ increments, j) from neonate-adult

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

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

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

- 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 $\log_2 M$ step = ontogenetic niche shift



Deterministic model

Competition-induced mortality (α) 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:

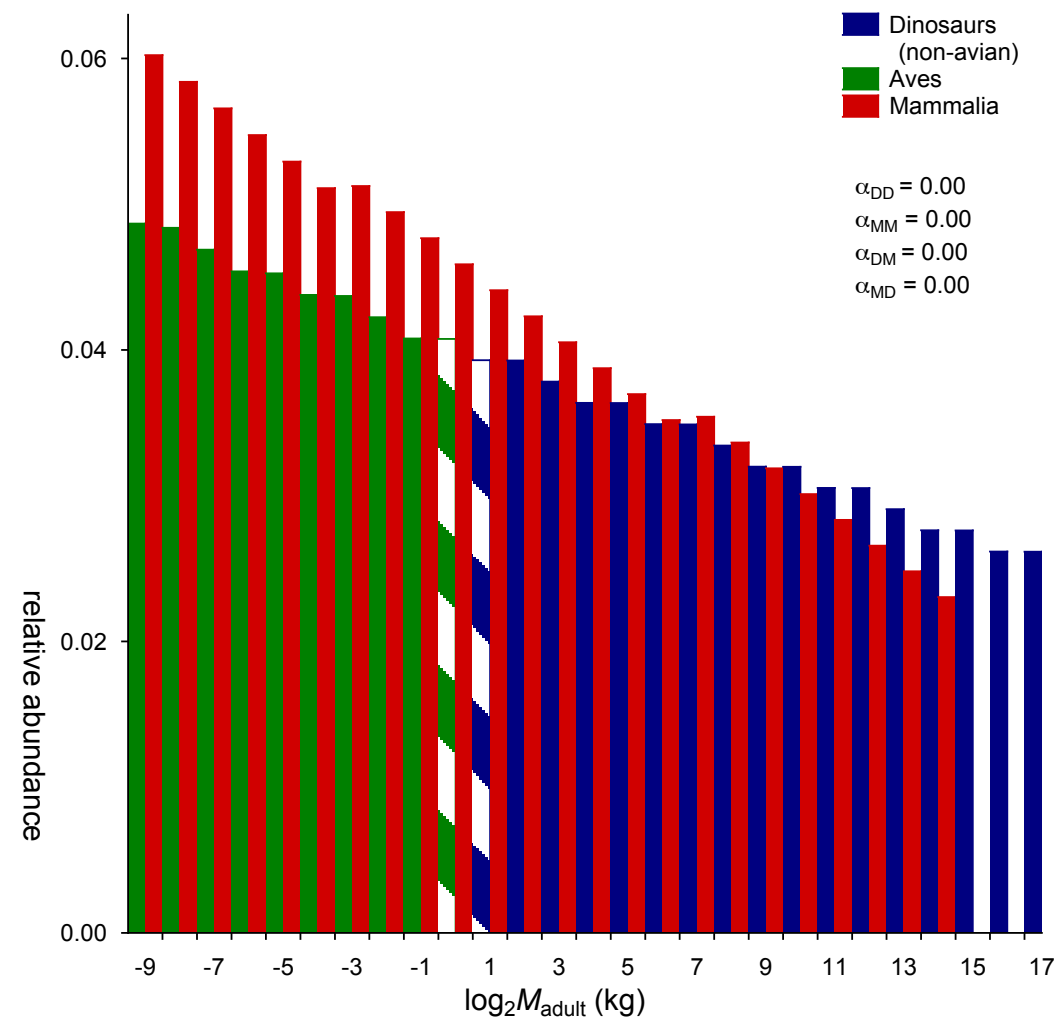
$$\text{Dinosaurs: } N_{Di} = \Sigma[n_{Di,j} - \alpha_{DD}(\Sigma n_{Dj} - n_{Di,j}) - \alpha_{MD}(\Sigma n_{Mj})]$$

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

- Simulate $K-T$: kill all individuals >25 kg

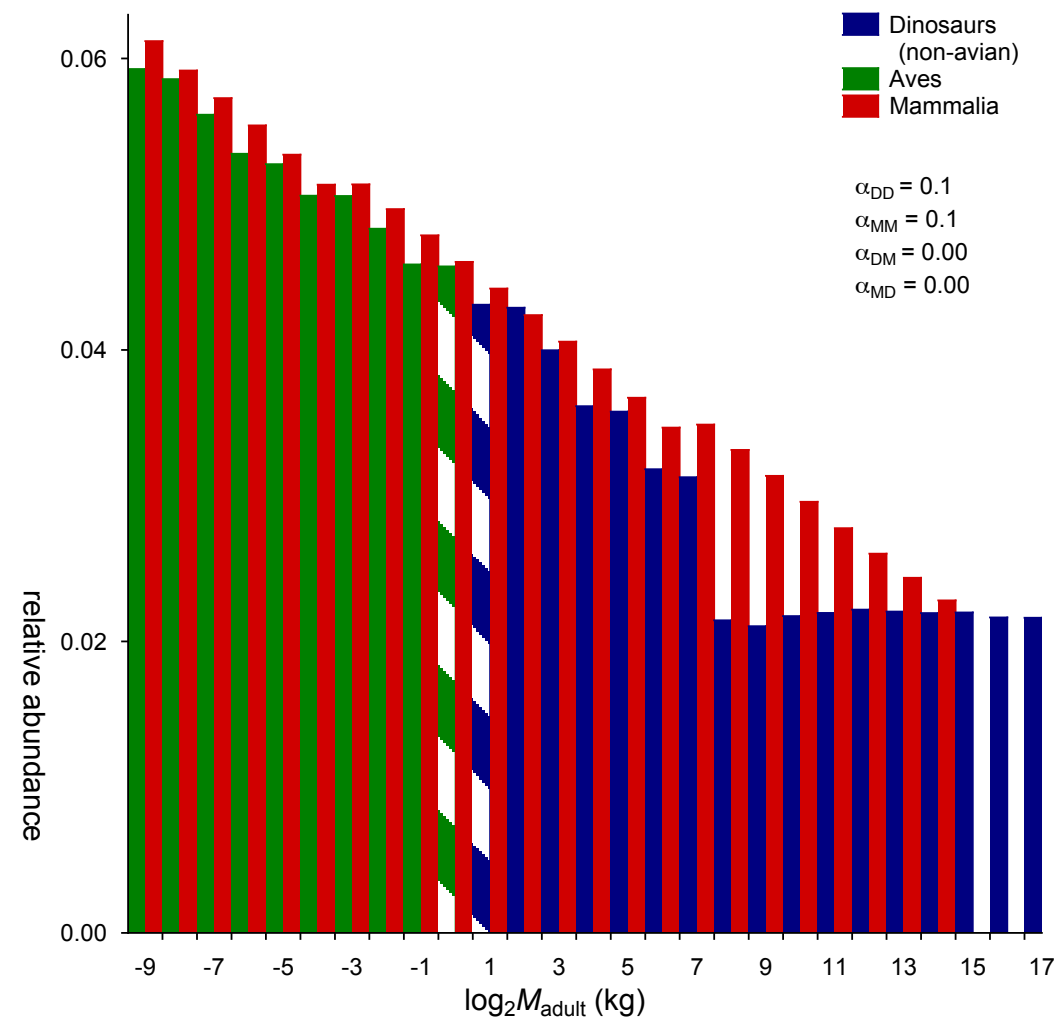


Model results - no competition



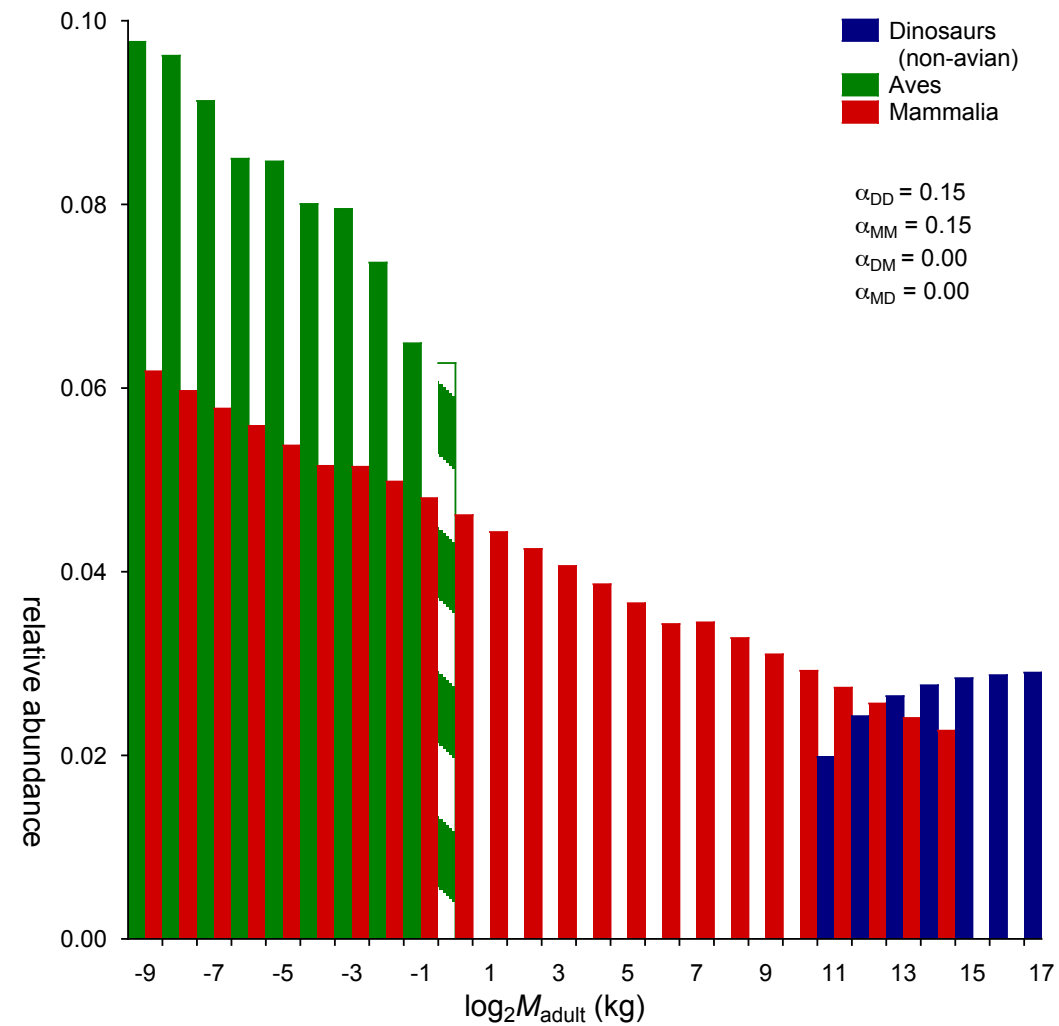


Model results - mild competition-induced mortality



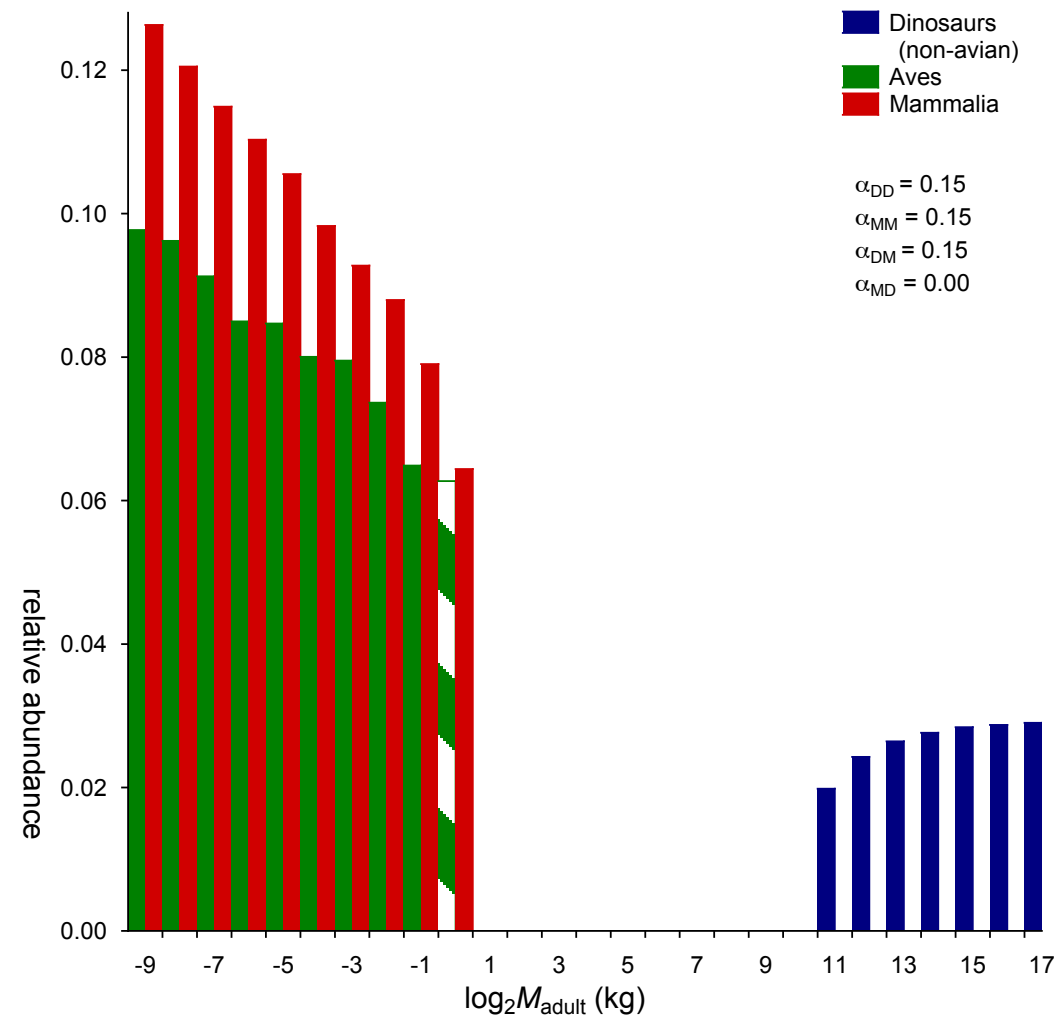


Model results - stronger competition



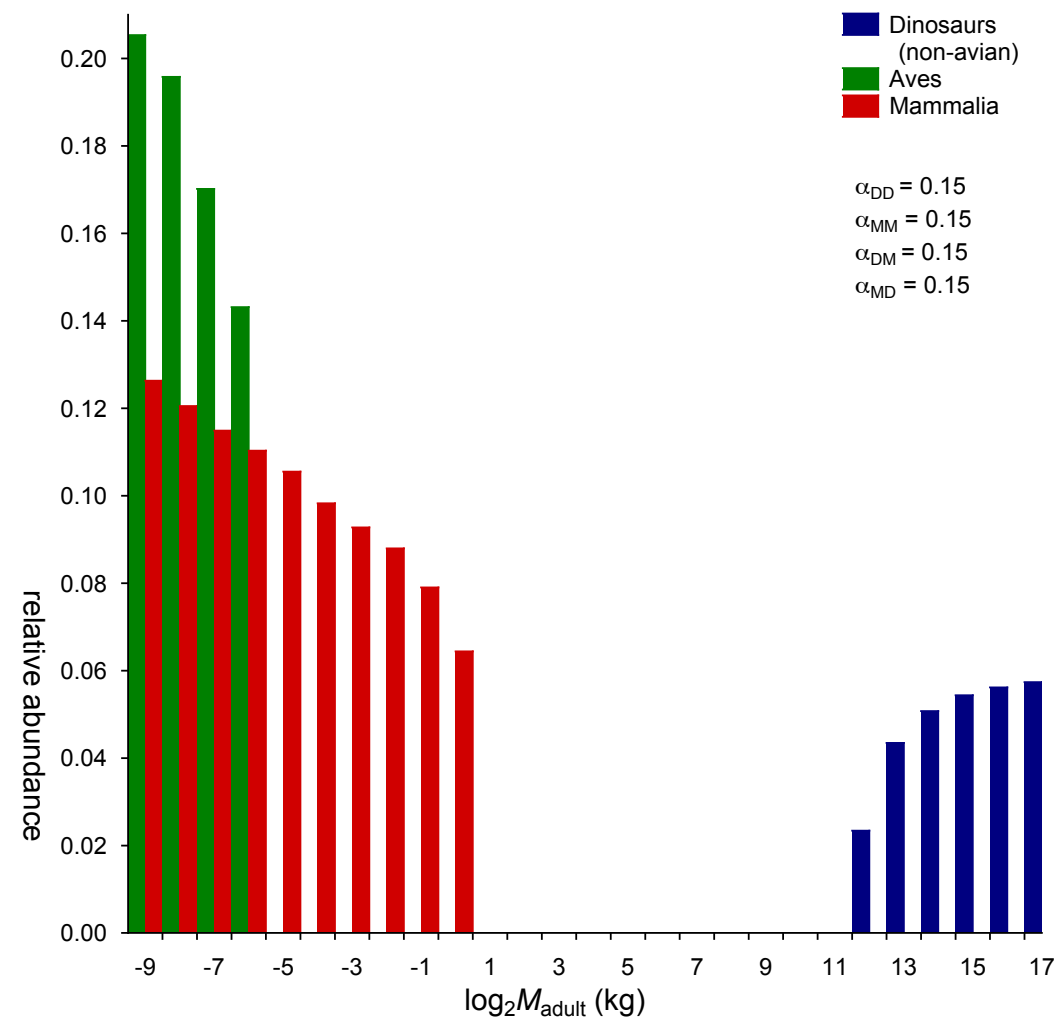


Model results - including competition from dinosaurs on mammals



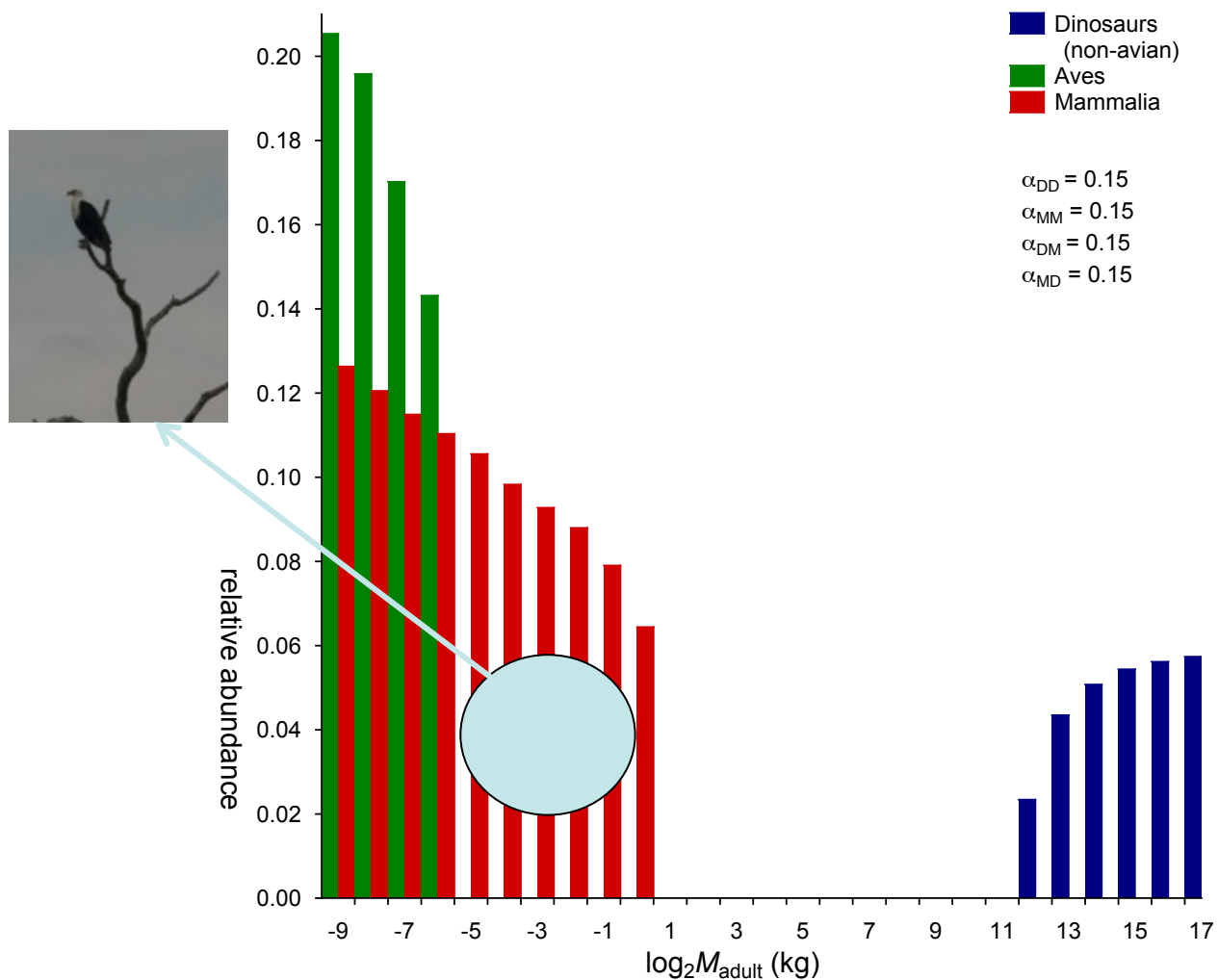


Model results - ... and from mammals on dinosaurs



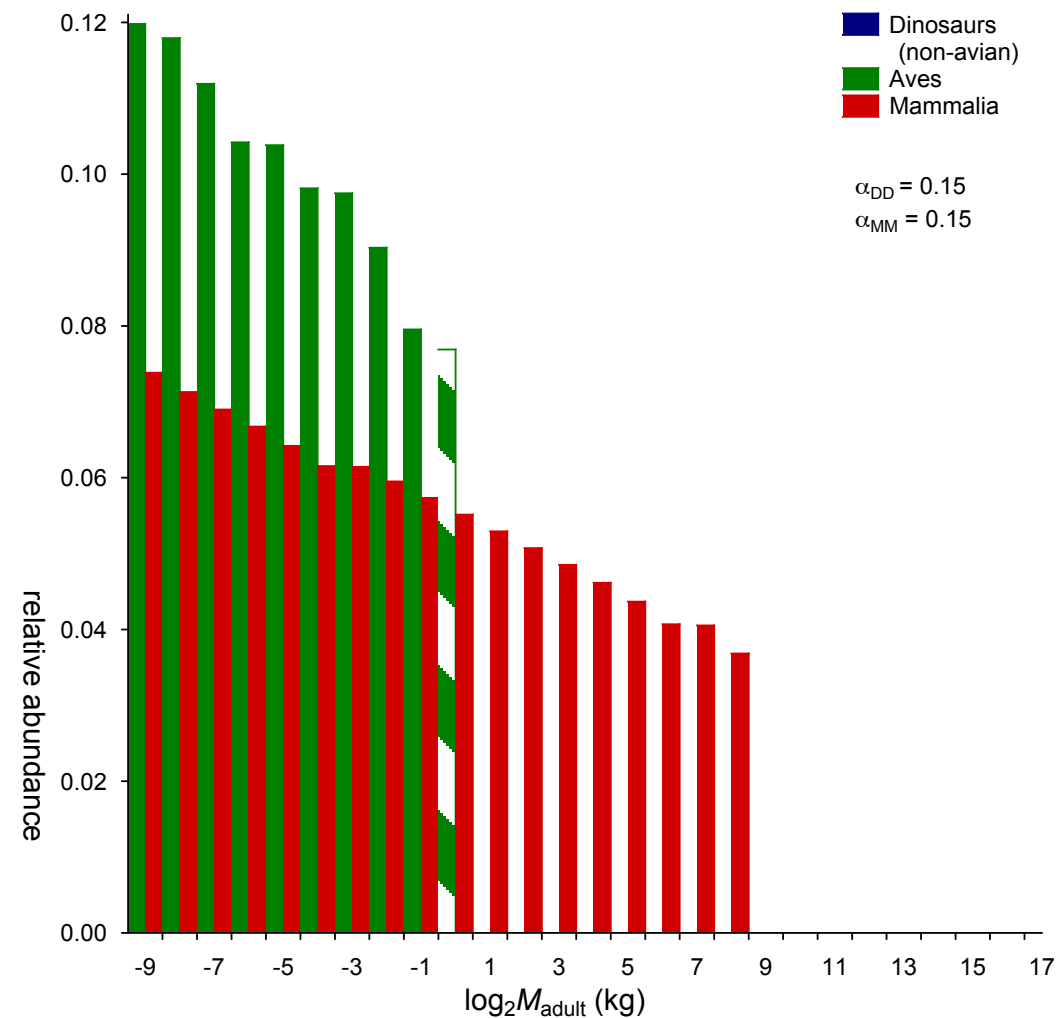


Model results - ... and from mammals on dinosaurs





Model results - after K/T, with competition



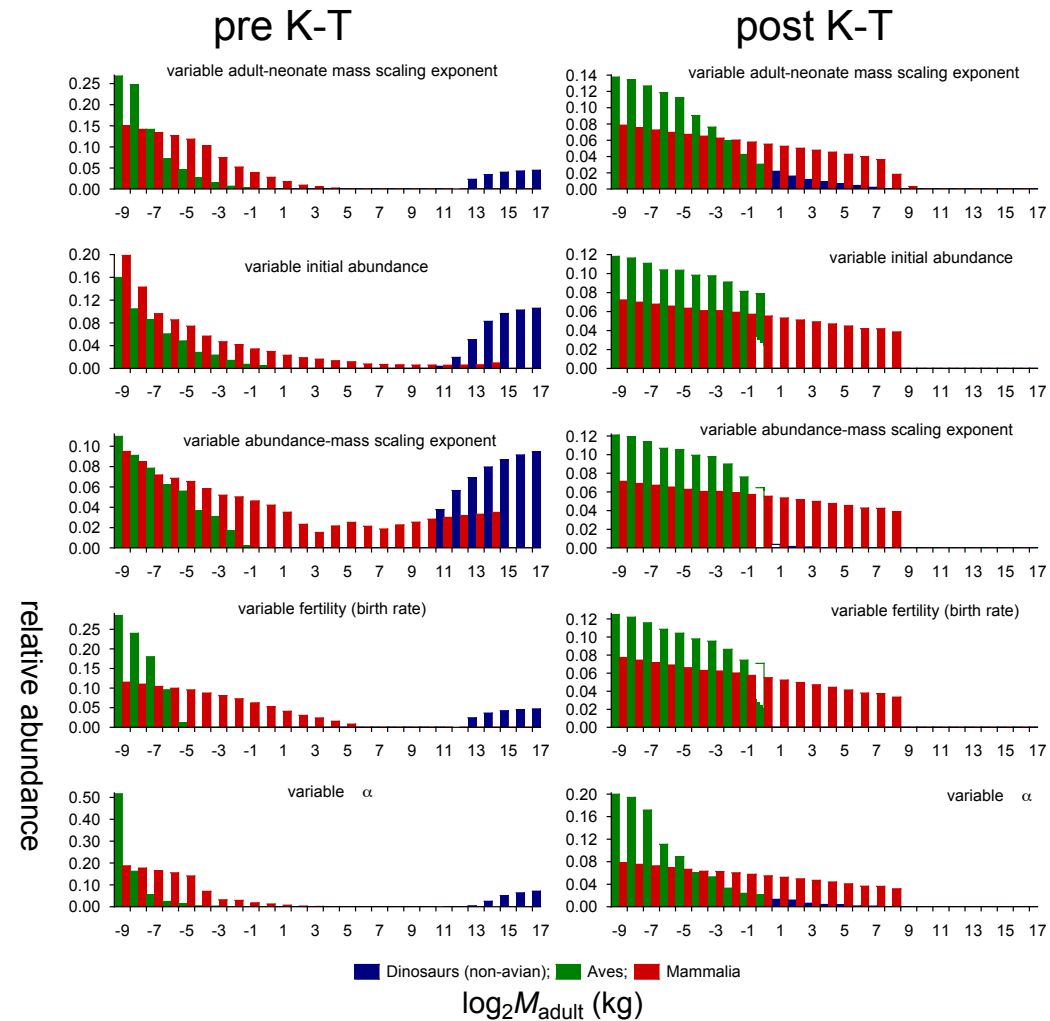


Deterministic model

- 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 (α)
 5. symmetry of α
 6. abundance
 - Stochastic parameter estimates (bounded within empirical limits for birds/herpetiles or mammals), 10^3 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



biology
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Evolutionary biology

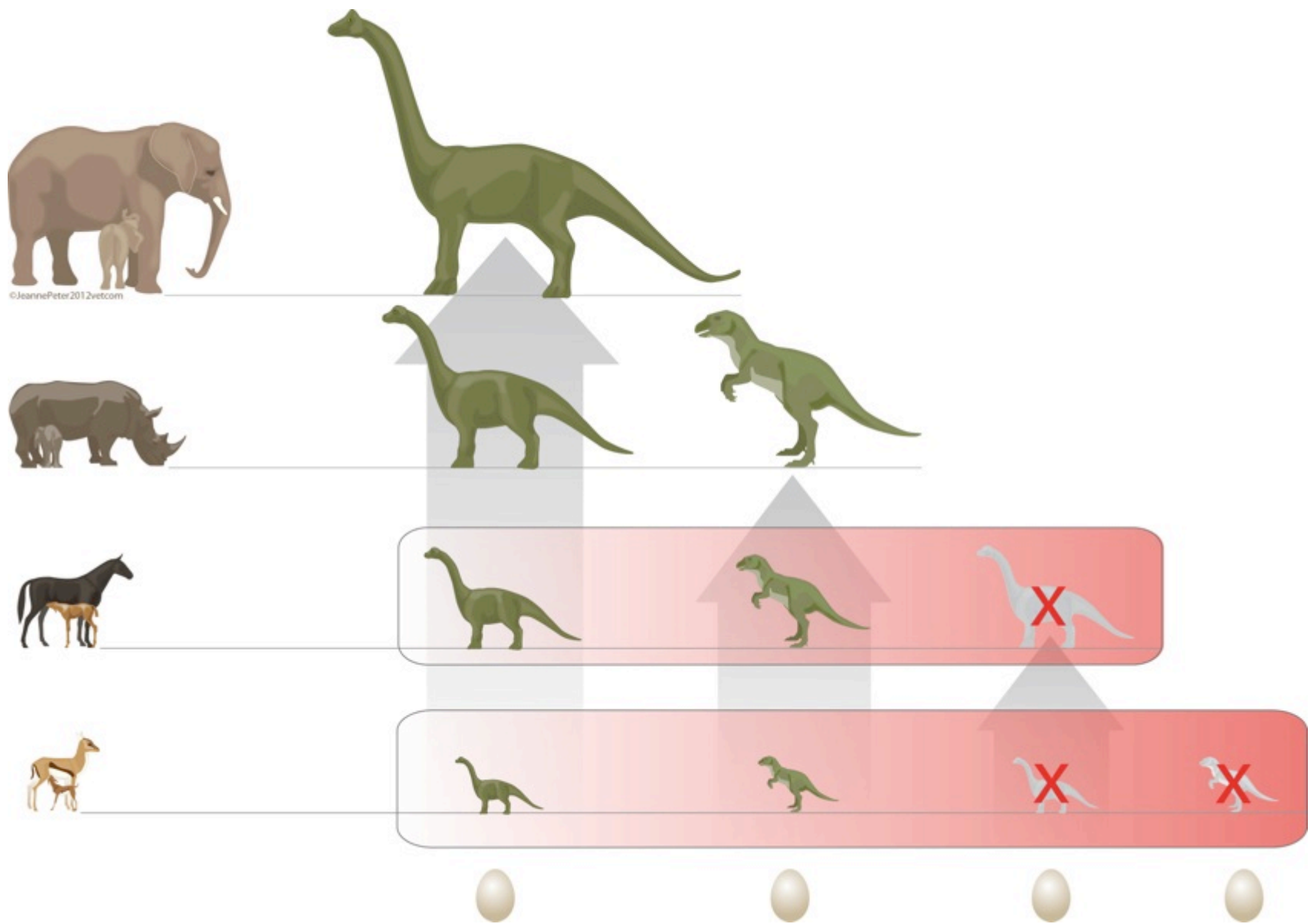
Biol. Lett. (2012) 8, 620–623

doi:10.1098/rsbl.2012.0240

Published online 18 April 2012

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

Daryl Codron^{1–4,*}, Chris Carbone⁵,
Dennis W. H. Müller¹ and Marcus Clauss¹





Universität
Zürich^{UZH}

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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.

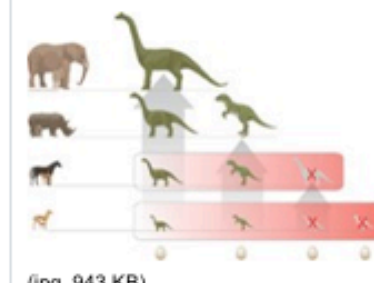
Der gigantische Grössenunterschied zwischen neugeschlüpften Dinosauriern und

Kontakte

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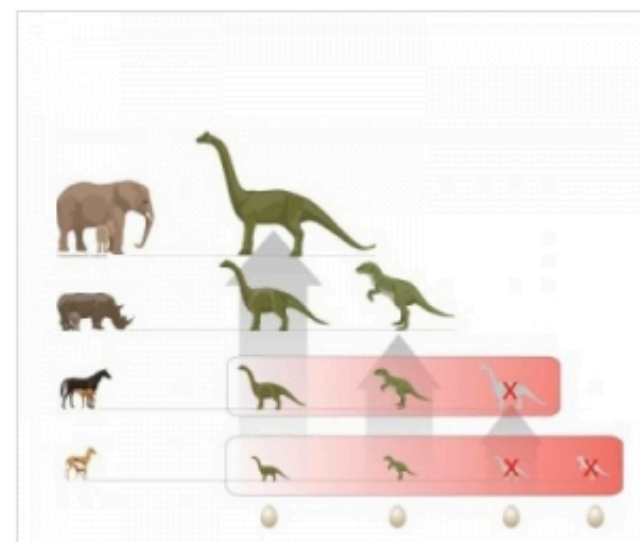
Eggs failed the dinosaurs

Agence France Presse

Wednesday, 18 April 2012

PARIS: Their reproductive strategy spelled the beginning of the end: The fact that land-bound dinosaurs laid eggs is what sealed their fate of mass extinction while live birthing mammals went on to 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.





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
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Egg-laying 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

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Neue These über das Ende der
Dinosaurier



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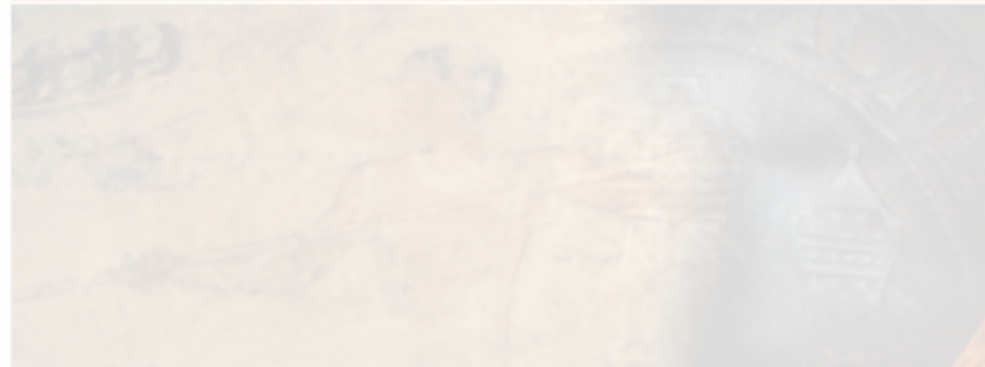
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Neue These über das Ende der
Dinosaurier