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SÉMINAIRE

Cancer: a missing link in ecosystem functioning?

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Cancer is a disease that affects the majority of metazoan species and prior to directly causing host death, is likely to influence the competitive abilities of individuals, their susceptibility to pathogens, their vulnerability to predators and their ability to disperse. Despite the potential importance of these ecological impacts, cancer is rarely incorporated into model ecosystems. In this talk, I will describe the diversity of ways in which oncogenic phenomena, from precancerous lesions to generalized metastatic cancers, may affect ecological processes that govern biotic interactions. I will argue that oncogenic phenomena, despite their complexity, have predictable ecological consequences. Our aim is to provide a new perspective on the ecological and evolutionary significance of cancer in wildlife, and to stimulate research on this topic.