

Reorganization of surviving mammal communities after the end-Pleistocene megafaunal extinction

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Extinction leads to restructuring

By most accounts, human activities are resulting in Earth's sixth major extinction event, and large-bodied mammals are among those at greatest risk. Loss of such vital ecosystem components can have substantial impacts on the structure and function of ecological systems, yet fully understanding these effects is challenging. Tóth *et al.* looked at the loss of large-bodied mammals in the Pleistocene epoch to identify potential community assembly effects. They found that the demise of large mammals led to a restructuring and a shift from biotic to abiotic drivers of community structure. Understanding past changes may help predict the community-level effects of the extinctions we are currently driving.

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