# Anthropogenic factors of occurrence instability in the biosphere



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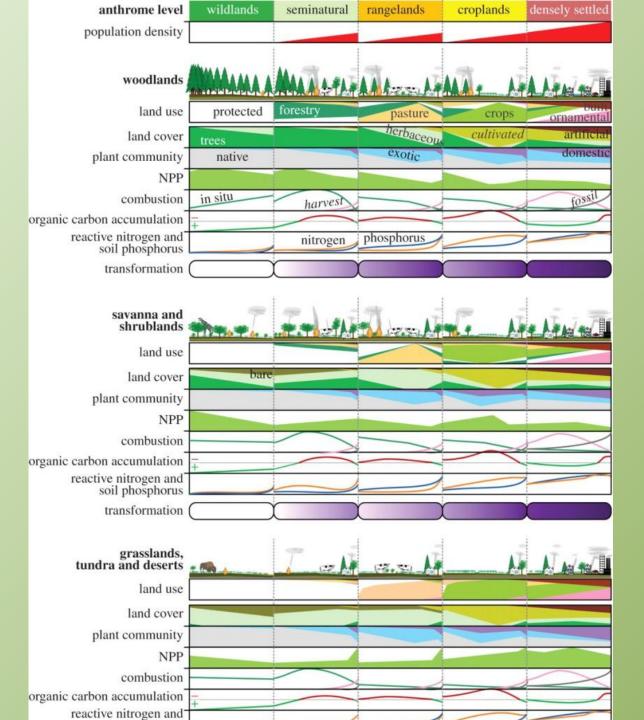
### Abstract

 Human populations and their use of land have transformed most of the terrestrial biosphere into anthropogenic biomes (anthromes), causing a variety of novel ecological patterns and processes to emerge. To assess whether human populations and their use of land have directly altered the terrestrial biosphere sufficiently to indicate that the Earth system has entered a new geological epoch, spatially explicit global estimates of human populations and their use of land were analysed across the Holocene for their potential to induce irreversible novel transformation of the terrestrial biosphere.

## Anthropogenic changing

 Anthropogenic changes in global climate may ultimately drive changes in the biosphere that are far greater than any of the direct effects investigated here [19]. However, massive changes in the biosphere mediated by climate change are not novel in the Earth system. For example, the biogeographic shifts caused by glacial cycles are rarely considered sufficiently novel to merit distinct epochs in the geologic record





#### Ecology in the Anthropocene

 It seems clear that the terrestrial biosphere is now predominantly anthropogenic, fundamentally distinct from the wild biosphere of the Holocene and before. From a philosophical point of view, nature is now human nature; there is no more wild nature to be found, just ecosystems in different states of human interaction, differing in wildness and humanness [132]. As evolution and other ecological processes now occur primarily within human systems, biology and ecology must incorporate human systems into their mainstream research and educational paradigms

#### Conclusions

 All species have complex interactive effects on ecosystems. Humans, with their unrivalled capacity for ecosystem engineering, have outsized effects and add even greater complexity and novelty by acting both as individual agents of change and collectively as human systems with adaptive social learning networks. A single human being can intentionally transform a pristine forest to pasture using fire and livestock or unintentionally by introducing an invasive species. Human systems can sustain cities in the desert and convert factories to woodlands. Yet human transformation of terrestrial ecology is always incomplete: some native species flourish even in the mostly densely populated cities.

