

DATA PAPER




RecruitNet: A global database of plant recruitment networks

Miguel Verdú¹  | Jose L. Garrido^{2,3}  | Julio M. Alcántara^{4,5}  |
 Alicia Montesinos-Navarro¹  | Salomón Aguilar⁶ | Marcelo A. Aizen⁷ |
 Ali A. Al-Namazi⁸  | Mohamed Alifriqui⁹ | David Allen¹⁰  |
 Kristina J. Anderson-Teixeira^{6,11}  | Cristina Armas¹²  | Jesús M. Bastida¹³  |
 Tono Bellido¹⁴ | Giuliano Bonanomi¹⁵ | Gustavo B. Paterno¹⁶  |
 Herbert Briceño¹² | Ricardo A. C. de Oliveira¹⁷ | Josefina G. Campoy¹⁸  |
 Ghassen Chaieb¹⁹ | Chengjin Chu²⁰ | Sarah E. Collins¹ | Richard Condit²¹  |
 Elena Constantinou²² | Cihan Ü. Degirmenci²³ | Leo Delalandre²⁴  |
 Milen Duarte²⁵  | Michel Faife²⁶ | Fatih Fazlioglu^{27,28}  |
 Edwino S. Fernando^{29,30} | Joel Flores³¹ | Hilda Flores-Olvera³²  |
 Ecaterina Fodor³³ | Gislene Ganade³⁴ | María Begoña Garcia³⁵  |
 Patricio García-Fayos¹  | Sabrina S. Gavini⁷  | Marta Goberna³⁶ |
 Lorena Gómez-Aparicio³⁷  | Enrique González-Pendás³⁸  |
 Ana González-Robles⁴ | Stephen P. Hubbell^{6,39} | Kahraman İpekdal⁴⁰  |
 María J. Jorquera¹² | Zaal Kikvidze⁴¹  | Pinar Kütküt²³ | Alicia Ledo⁴²  |
 Sandra Lendínez² | Buhang Li⁴³ | Hanlun Liu⁴³  | Francisco Lloret⁴⁴ |
 Ramiro P. López⁴⁵ | Álvaro López-García²  | Christopher J. Lortie⁴⁶  |
 Gianalberto Losapio⁴⁷  | James A. Lutz⁴⁸  | Arantzazu L. Luzuriaga⁴⁹  |
 František Máliš⁵⁰  | Esteban Manrique⁵¹ | Antonio J. Manzaneda⁴ |
 Vinicius Marcilio-Silva⁵² | Richard Michalet¹⁹  | Rafael Molina-Venegas⁵³  |
 José Antonio Navarro-Cano³⁶  | Vojtech Novotny⁵⁴ | Jens M. Olesen⁵⁵ |
 Juan P. Ortiz-Brunel⁵⁶  | María Pajares-Murgó⁴ | Nikolas Parissis⁵⁷ |
 Geoffrey Parker⁵⁸ | Antonio J. Perea⁴ | Vidal Pérez-Hernández³⁸  |
 María Ángeles Pérez-Navarro⁴⁴ | Nuria Pistón^{12,59}  | Elisa Pizarro-Carbonell⁶⁰ |
 Iván Prieto^{12,61}  | Jorge Prieto-Rubio²  | Francisco I. Pugnaire¹²  |
 Nelson Ramírez⁶²  | Rubén Retuerto¹⁸ | Pedro J. Rey^{4,5}  |
 Daniel A. Rodríguez Ginart¹ | Mariana Rodríguez-Sánchez⁶³ |
 Ricardo Sánchez-Martín¹  | Christian Schöb^{49,64}  | Çağatay Tavşanoğlu²³ |

For affiliations refer to page 3

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Giorgi Tedoradze⁶⁵ | Amanda Tercero-Araque⁴  | Katja Tielbörger⁶⁶ |
Blaise Touzard²⁰ | İrem Tüfekcioğlu²⁴ | Sevda Turkis⁶⁷ |
Francisco M. Usero¹²  | Nurbahar Usta²³  | Alfonso Valiente-Banuet^{68,69} |
Alexia Vargas-Colin³¹ | Ioannis Vogiatzakis²² | Regino Zamora^{5,70}

Correspondence

Miguel Verdú

Email: miguel.verdu@ext.uv.es

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Abstract

Plant recruitment interactions (i.e., what recruits under what) shape the composition, diversity, and structure of plant communities. Despite the huge body of knowledge on the mechanisms underlying recruitment interactions among species, we still know little about the structure of the recruitment networks emerging in ecological communities. Modeling and analyzing the community-level structure of plant recruitment interactions as a complex network can provide relevant information on ecological and evolutionary processes acting both at the species and ecosystem levels. We report a data set containing 143 plant recruitment networks in 23 countries across five continents, including temperate and tropical ecosystems. Each network identifies the species under which another species recruits. All networks report the number of recruits (i.e., individuals) per species. The data set includes >850,000 recruiting individuals involved in 118,411 paired interactions among 3318 vascular plant species across the globe. The cover of canopy species and open ground is also provided. Three sampling protocols were used: (1) The Recruitment Network (RN) protocol (106 networks) focuses on interactions among established plants (“canopy species”) and plants in their early stages of recruitment (“recruit species”). A series of plots was delimited within a locality, and all the individuals recruiting and their canopy species were identified; (2) The paired Canopy-Open (pCO) protocol (26 networks) consists in locating a potential canopy plant and identifying recruiting individuals under the canopy and in a nearby open space of the same area; (3) The Georeferenced plot (GP) protocol (11 networks) consists in using information from georeferenced individual plants in large plots to infer canopy-recruit interactions. Some networks incorporate data for both herbs and woody species, whereas others focus exclusively on woody species. The location of each study site, geographical coordinates, country, locality, responsible author, sampling dates, sampling method, and life habits of both canopy and recruit species are provided. This database will allow researchers to test ecological, biogeographical, and evolutionary hypotheses related to plant recruitment interactions. There are no copyright restrictions on the data set; please cite this data paper when using these data in publications.

KEYWORDS

ecological networks, facilitation, plant–plant interactions, recruitment, replacement

AFFILIATIONS

- ¹Centro de Investigaciones Sobre Desertificación (CIDE, CSIC-UV-GV), Moncada, Spain
- ²Departamento de Microbiología del Suelo y Sistemas Simbióticos, Estación Experimental del Zaidín (EEZ-CSIC), Granada, Spain
- ³Estación Biológica de Doñana (EBD-CSIC), Sevilla, Spain
- ⁴Departamento de Biología Animal, Biología Vegetal y Ecología, Universidad de Jaén, Jaén, Spain
- ⁵Andalusian Institute for Earth System Research (IISTA), Granada, Spain
- ⁶Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), Panama, Panama
- ⁷Instituto de Investigaciones en Biodiversidad y Medioambiente (INIBIOMA), Universidad Nacional del Comahue-CONICET, San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina
- ⁸Life Sciences & Environment Research Institute, King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- ⁹Laboratory of Ecology and Environment, Biology Department, Faculty of Sciences Semlalia, Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco
- ¹⁰Department of Biology, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, USA
- ¹¹Center for Conservation Ecology, Smithsonian National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute, Front Royal, Virginia, USA
- ¹²Estación Experimental de Zonas Áridas, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (EEZA-CSIC), Almería, Spain
- ¹³Estación Experimental del Zaidín, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (EEZ-CSIC), Granada, Spain
- ¹⁴Servici Devesa-Albufera, Vivers Municipals de El Saler, Valencia, Spain
- ¹⁵Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, Portici, Italy
- ¹⁶Biodiversity, Macroecology & Biogeography, University of Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany
- ¹⁷Departamento de Botânica, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Setor de Ciências Biológicas, Curitiba, Brazil
- ¹⁸Departamento de Biología Funcional (Ecología), Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- ¹⁹University of Bordeaux, UMR CNRS 5805 EPOC, Pessac, France
- ²⁰State Key Laboratory of Biocontrol, School of Ecology, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China
- ²¹University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California, USA
- ²²Faculty of Pure & Applied Sciences, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- ²³Division of Ecology, Department of Biology, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey
- ²⁴CEFE, University of Montpellier, CNRS, EPHE, IRD, Montpellier, France
- ²⁵Instituto de Ecología y Biodiversidad (IEB), Santiago, Chile
- ²⁶Jardín Botánico de Villa Clara, Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Central 'Marta Abreu' de Las Villas, Santa Clara, Cuba
- ²⁷Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, Ordu University, Ordu, Turkey
- ²⁸Bayreuth University (Plant Ecology, University of Bayreuth), Bayreuth, Germany
- ²⁹Institute of Biology, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Philippines
- ³⁰Department of Forest Biological Sciences, University of the Philippines, Los Baños, Philippines
- ³¹Instituto Potosino de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica, A.C., División de Ciencias Ambientales, San Luis Potosí, Mexico
- ³²Departamento de Botánica, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico
- ³³Faculty of Environmental Protection, Department of Forestry and Forest Engineering, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania
- ³⁴Departamento de Ecología, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Brazil
- ³⁵Pyrenean Institute of Ecology (CSIC), Zaragoza, Spain
- ³⁶Department of Environment and Agronomy, Centro Nacional Instituto de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria (INIA-CSIC), Madrid, Spain
- ³⁷Instituto de Recursos Naturales y Agrobiología de Sevilla, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (IRNAS-CSIC), Sevilla, Spain
- ³⁸Departamento de Investigaciones Botánicas, Centro de Investigaciones y Servicios Ambientales, ECOVIDA, Pinar del Río, Cuba
- ³⁹Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Los Angeles, California, USA
- ⁴⁰Faculty of Agriculture, Ahi Evran University, Kirsehir, Turkey
- ⁴¹Institute of Botany, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
- ⁴²Freelance Scientist, Huesca, Spain
- ⁴³Department of Ecology, State Key Laboratory of Biocontrol, School of Life Sciences, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China
- ⁴⁴CREAF, U. Ecologia, Department of Biología Animal, Biología Vegetal i Ecologia, Universitat Autònoma Barcelona, Cerdanyola del Valles, Spain

⁴⁵Carrera de Biología, Facultad de Ciencias Puras y Naturales, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA), La Paz, Bolivia

⁴⁶Department of Biology, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

⁴⁷Institute of Earth Surface Dynamics, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

⁴⁸Utah State University, Wildland Resources, Logan, Utah, USA

⁴⁹Department of Biology and Geology, Rey Juan Carlos University, Móstoles, Spain

⁵⁰Faculty of Forestry, Technical University in Zvolen, Zvolen, Slovakia

⁵¹Real Jardín Botánico, CSIC, Madrid, Spain

⁵²Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior, University of Minnesota, Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA

⁵³Department of Life Sciences, Universidad de Alcalá, GLOCEE - Global Change Ecology and Evolution Group, Alcalá de Henares, Spain

⁵⁴Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic

⁵⁵Department of Biology, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

⁵⁶Departamento de Botánica y Zoología, Centro Universitario de Ciencias Biológicas y Agropecuarias, Universidad de Guadalajara, Zapopan, Mexico

⁵⁷Department of Agricultural Development, Management of Plant Production, Plant Protection and Environment, Democritus University of Thrace, Orestiada, Greece

⁵⁸Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater, Maryland, USA

⁵⁹Programa de Pós-graduação em Ecologia, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

⁶⁰Asociación Aprisco, Torrejón el Rubio, Spain

⁶¹Department of Biodiversity and Environmental Management, Ecology Area, Faculty of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of León, León, Spain

⁶²Universidad Central de Venezuela, Facultad de Ciencias, Instituto Biología Experimental, Centro Botánica Tropical, Caracas, Venezuela

⁶³Posgrado en Ciencias Biológicas, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico

⁶⁴Institute of Agricultural Sciences, ETH, Zurich, Switzerland

⁶⁵Department of Plant Systematics and Geography, Institute of Botany, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

⁶⁶University of Tübingen, Institute of Evolution and Ecology, Plant Ecology Group, Tübingen, Germany

⁶⁷Faculty of Education, Department of Mathematics and Science Education, Ordu University, Ordu, Turkey

⁶⁸Departamento de Ecología de la Biodiversidad, Instituto de Ecología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico

⁶⁹Centro de Ciencias de la Complejidad, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México City, Mexico

⁷⁰Department of Ecology, University of Granada, Granada, Spain

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The complete data set is available as Supporting Information and is also available in Zenodo at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6567608>.


ORCID

Miguel Verdú  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9778-7692>

Jose L. Garrido  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6859-4234>

Julio M. Alcántara  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8003-7844>

Alicia Montesinos-Navarro  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4656-0321>

Ali A. Al-Namazi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2767-4366>

David Allen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0712-9603>

Kristina J. Anderson-Teixeira  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8461-9713>

Cristina Armas  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0356-8075>

Jesús M. Bastida  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8680-1401>


Gustavo B. Paterno  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9719-3037>

Josefina G. Campoy  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7300-1173>

Richard Condit  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4191-1495>

Leo Delalandre  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2875-4587>

Milen Duarte  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4784-9880>

Fatih Fazlioglu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4723-3640>

Hilda Flores-Olvera  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3262-9570>

María Begoña García  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4231-6006>

Patricio García-Fayos  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3449-5075>









Sabrina S. Gavini  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8138-8155>

Lorena Gómez-Aparicio  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5122-3579>

Enrique González-Pendás  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5058-7733>

Kahraman İpekdal  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9968-3013>

Zaal Kikvidze  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5007-4484>
Alicia Ledo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3967-6994>
Hanlun Liu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9424-4940>
Álvaro López-García  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8267-3572>
Christopher J. Lortie  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4291-7023>
Gianalberto Losapio  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7589-8706>
James A. Lutz  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2560-0710>
Arantzazu L. Luzuriaga  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5023-7813>
František Máliš  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2760-6988>
Richard Michalet  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6617-4789>
Rafael Molina-Venegas  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5801-0736>
José Antonio Navarro-Cano  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8091-1063>
Juan P. Ortiz-Brunel  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0695-8143>
Vidal Pérez-Hernández  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6793-296X>
Nuria Pistón  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4946-9945>
Iván Prieto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5549-1132>
Jorge Prieto-Rubio  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5600-5113>

Francisco I. Pugnaire  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1227-6827>
Nelson Ramírez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6385-3866>
Pedro J. Rey  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5550-0393>
Ricardo Sánchez-Martín  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5272-3276>
Christian Schöb  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4472-2286>
Amanda Tercero-Araque  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7255-5844>
Francisco M. Usero  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4648-4202>
Nurbahar Usta  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9265-2780>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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