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## Living on the edge-plants and global change in continental and maritime Antarctica

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## Living on the edge-plants and global change in continental and maritime Antarctica

### Abstract

Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems experience some of the most extreme growth conditions on Earth and are characterised by extreme aridity and sub-zero temperatures. Antarctic vegetation is therefore at the physiological limits of survival and, as a consequence, even slight changes to growth conditions are likely to have a large impact, rendering Antarctic terrestrial communities sensitive to climate change. Climate change is predicted to affect the high latitude regions first and most severely. In recent decades, the Antarctic has undergone significant environmental change, including the largest increases in ultraviolet B (UV-B; 290-320nm) radiation levels in the world and, in the maritime region at least, significant temperature increases. This review describes the current evidence for environmental change in Antarctica, and the impacts of this change on the terrestrial vegetation. This is largely restricted to cryptogams, such as bryophytes, lichens and algae; only two vascular plant species occur in the Antarctic, both restricted to the maritime region. We review the range of ecological and physiological consequences of increasing UV-B radiation levels, and of changes in temperature, water relations and nutrient availability. It is clear that climate change is already affecting Antarctic terrestrial vegetation, and significant impacts are likely to continue in the future. We conclude that, in order to gain a better understanding of the complex dynamics of this important system, there is a need for more manipulative, long-term field experiments designed to address the impacts of changes in multiple abiotic factors on the Antarctic flora.

### Keywords

Climate change, UV-radiation, ozone hole, temperature, water relations, nutrients

### Disciplines

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1 ***Living on the edge – plants and global change in continental***  
2 ***and maritime Antarctica***

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1 **Abstract**

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19 understanding of the complex dynamics of this important system, there is a need for  
20 more manipulative, long-term field experiments designed to address the impacts of  
21 changes in multiple abiotic factors on the Antarctic flora.

## 1 **1. Introduction**

2 The Antarctic continent is the coldest, highest, driest, windiest and most isolated  
3 landmass on earth. Growth conditions are therefore extreme, and plants exist at the  
4 physiological limits of survival. Plants are confined to the few ice-free areas, which  
5 constitute less than 2% of the continent. Characteristic of Antarctic growth conditions  
6 are low summer temperatures, a strongly seasonal climate, a very short growing season,  
7 continuous light in midsummer, and frequent strong winds. As a consequence of these  
8 severe conditions, the Antarctic flora is almost entirely cryptogamic, only two vascular  
9 species occur, both of which are restricted to the relatively mild Antarctic Peninsula.

### 10 *Antarctica and the detection of climate change*

11 Climate change is expected to impact first, and most severely, in the high latitudes  
12 (Callaghan *et al.* 1992; Vincent 1997; Walker 1997), rendering Antarctica one of the  
13 most significant baseline environments for the study of global climate change (Lewis  
14 Smith 1990b; Walton *et al.* 1997). Vegetation characteristics, such as simple  
15 community structure, and the geographic isolation of the Antarctic continent also  
16 contribute to the importance of this region in climate change research. The largely  
17 cryptogamic vegetation of continental Antarctica, dominated by bryophytes (mosses  
18 and liverworts) and lichens, constitutes one of the simplest ecosystems in the world, and  
19 therefore provides a biological study system with minimal associated ecosystem  
20 interactions (Lewis Smith 1988). In Antarctica, where vegetation grows at the  
21 physiological limit of survival, plants would be expected to show a more marked  
22 response to changes in growth conditions than those from less extreme climates  
23 (Adamson & Adamson 1992; Callaghan *et al.* 1997; Hansom & Gordon 1998; Melick  
24 & Seppelt 1997) thus enhancing the suitability of this system for the detection of

1 environmental change. The life history characteristics of polar species (Callaghan *et al.*  
2 1992) and the precarious freeze-thaw balance, which influences many aspects of these  
3 ecosystems (Vincent 1997), render high latitude ecosystems vulnerable to change. In  
4 addition, the geographic isolation of the Antarctic continent further enhances the value  
5 of the vegetation of this region for climate change research, because it remains  
6 relatively free from the concurrent effects of anthropomorphic phenomena such as land  
7 use changes, weeds and pollution (Callaghan *et al.* 1992). It is believed that, since polar  
8 regions have been relatively undisturbed, small climatic shifts may have a significant  
9 impact on biological habitats (Melick & Seppelt 1997).

#### 10 *Vegetation and phytogeographic zones*

11 Antarctica has been divided into three phytogeographic zones (continental, maritime  
12 and periantarctic; Fig. 1, Stonehouse 1989). The high latitude, Continental Antarctic, is  
13 the most climatically severe zone. The northwest coast of the Antarctic Peninsula and  
14 associated islands (including King George, South Shetlands, Sandwich and Orkney and  
15 Peter I Øy) make up the relatively mild Maritime Antarctic. The present review focuses  
16 on the continental and maritime zones.

17 Despite the severe growth conditions, plants are found on the Antarctic continent  
18 although many species, including the two Angiosperms, are restricted to the relatively  
19 mild maritime zone (Table 1; Hansom & Gordon 1998; Lewis Smith 1984; Edwards  
20 and Smith, 1988; Longton, 1988). Outside the maritime zone the remaining  
21 cryptogamic vegetation is primarily limited to a few small rocky outcrops along the  
22 coast, the dry valleys and inland nunataks (Hansom & Gordon 1998). These continental  
23 areas are considered polar deserts, as the precipitation is less than 100 mm/year and is  
24 almost always delivered as snow (Kappen 1985a). Exacerbating the extremely dry

1 conditions are the subzero summer temperatures which lock most water away as snow  
2 and ice, significantly limiting plant productivity (Hansom & Gordon 1998). Despite  
3 limitations to growth, mosses have been reported from as far south as 84° S and  
4 although bryophyte fruiting events are rare in the continental Antarctic zone (Filson &  
5 Willis 1975; Wise & Gressitt 1965), moss sporophytes have been reported as far south  
6 as 77° 55' S (Seppelt *et al.* 1992). In addition to the relatively conspicuous mosses and  
7 lichens, the continental Antarctic terrestrial vegetation includes groups that are often  
8 overlooked, including the chasmoendolithic algae, which occur only within rock  
9 fissures. These organisms are widespread in coastal regions of Antarctica and are  
10 believed to underlie up to 20% of the rock surface in some locations (Hansom &  
11 Gordon 1998; Longton 1985).

#### 12 *Adaptations to severe conditions*

13 Cryptogams are poikilohydric, and as a result, during periods of low water availability  
14 or freezing temperatures, they possess the ability to enter a dormant state of  
15 physiological inactivity through controlled dehydration of their cells. Many Antarctic  
16 plants can therefore survive frozen and desiccated, beneath a cover of snow, over the  
17 long dark winter and rehydrate during the spring thaw for the short summer growing  
18 season of 1-4 months (Melick & Seppelt 1997). Emerging from beneath the protective  
19 and insulating snow cover, these plants are exposed to the extreme conditions of the  
20 frigid Antarctic climate with frequent subzero temperatures, desiccating winds,  
21 intermittent water supply, a highly seasonal light regime, and more recently, elevated  
22 ultraviolet-B (UV-B; 290-320nm) radiation levels. Plant photosynthetic rates and  
23 consequently, growth and productivity, are greatly influenced by these environmental  
24 variables. Optimising photosynthesis over the short growing season depends on the

1 ability of these plants to acclimate to prevailing environmental conditions in this highly  
2 seasonal and variable climate (Melick & Seppelt 1994b).

### 3 *Distribution & community structure*

4 Antarctic plant distributions are primarily determined by environmental factors such as  
5 temperature (Adamson & Adamson 1992), moisture availability (Adamson & Adamson  
6 1992; Melick & Seppelt 1994a; Schwarz *et al.* 1992) and microtopography (Melick &  
7 Seppelt 1994a; Schwarz *et al.* 1992).

8 Most species occurring on continental Antarctica are restricted to either the continental  
9 or the maritime zone and only a few species are found in both (Table 1; Hansom &  
10 Gordon 1998). For the cryptogamic species, lichens tend to predominate in drier, more  
11 exposed locations, while bryophytes are restricted to moist, sheltered refuges (Lewis  
12 Smith, 1988). Of the two maritime Antarctic, vascular species, the grass *Deschampsia*  
13 *antarctica* which grows as dense tussocks, is relatively widespread compared to the  
14 cushion forming pearlwort, *Colobanthus quitensis*, which is restricted to three localities  
15 (Corner 1971; Komarkova *et al.* 1985). The environmental conditions favourable to  
16 these latter species are found in sandy, mineral-rich, well-drained substrates that do not  
17 have a continuous supply of melt-water throughout the growing season but do have  
18 some moisture-holding capacity (Komarkova *et al.* 1985).

19 Antarctic terrestrial plant communities have small stature, low biomass, low  
20 productivity and low species diversity (Seppelt *et al.* 1988). There is, however, a wide  
21 range of growth forms, including endolithic algae and lichens (Broady, 1981b;  
22 Friedmann, 1982), and epiphytes (Broady, 1981a; Seppelt and Ashton, 1978), with  
23 communities containing multispecies assemblages that display both vertical and  
24 horizontal complexities (Seppelt *et al.* 1988).



1 A small number of ice-free coastal areas in Antarctica support relatively rich and/or  
2 extensive floristic assemblages, and as a consequence these sites have been the focus of  
3 much research. These sites include the Windmill Islands Region, Wilkes Land, Ross  
4 Island, Victoria Land, and Signy Island (see Fig. 1).

#### 5 *Antarctic research history and aims of this review*

6 Early Antarctic terrestrial studies, prior to 1965, were limited to qualitative and  
7 taxonomic works, and are reviewed in Lewis Smith (1984). Since the 1970s, research  
8 has become both more quantitative and directed towards species autecology and  
9 community and ecosystem processes (Lewis Smith 1984). The research on vegetation  
10 patterns, life history attributes and ecosystem processes has been extensively reviewed  
11 (*e.g.* Lindsay, 1978; Longton, 1979; Pickard and Seppelt, 1984; Convey, 1996; Hansom  
12 and Gordon, 1998; Green *et al.* 1999). Only a handful of review articles have been  
13 related to climate change, with topics including: Antarctic plants as indicators of climate  
14 change (Green *et al.* 1999), polar desert ecosystems (Vincent 1997), the ecological  
15 considerations of Antarctic ozone depletion (Karentz 1991) and global change research  
16 strategies (Weller 1992). The most relevant works are those discussing the potential  
17 effects of global climate change on Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems (Adamson &  
18 Adamson 1992; Convey 2001a; b; Kennedy 1995; 1996). These reviews have all  
19 identified the need for greater research into the responses of Antarctic plants to climate  
20 change. We focus on research published in the last decade and indicate where research  
21 is still required. We address how terrestrial, photosynthetic eukaryotes are likely to  
22 cope with climate change. In doing this, we identify the major factors currently  
23 influencing plant distribution and productivity in Antarctica, discuss how these factors  
24 are likely to change, and consider the potential impacts of such changes on the Antarctic  
25 flora.

## 1 **2. UV and solar radiation**

### 2 *The Antarctic 'Ozone Hole'*

3 Seasonal stratospheric ozone depletion over the Antarctic continent is evident in data  
4 collected since the 1970s (Frederick *et al.* 1998; Kerr & McElroy 1993). Prior to 1978,  
5 ozone layer thickness was generally >300 Dobson Units (DU) over Antarctica. The  
6 'ozone hole', which is defined as the average area with an ozone thickness of <220 DU,  
7 develops during the austral spring (September-November) and is closely linked with the  
8 polar vortex (Roy *et al.* 1994). Ozone depletion has recently extended into the mid-  
9 latitudes reaching South America and the south island of New Zealand (McKenzie *et al.*  
10 1999; Stolarski *et al.* 1986). The largest 'ozone holes' were recorded between 1998-  
11 2001 with areas twice that of Antarctica (Fig. 2) and minimum ozone thickness reaching  
12 90 DU at the south pole (NASA 2002). Despite international efforts to reduce emissions  
13 of chlorofluorocarbons, substantial ozone depletion is expected to continue for several  
14 decades (Anderson *et al.* 1991; Shindell *et al.* 1998).

15 Ozone depletion results in elevated UV-B levels at the earth's surface, with a spectral  
16 shift to the more biologically damaging shorter wavelengths (Frederick & Snell 1988).  
17 As a consequence, Antarctica now experiences high UV-B levels through much of the  
18 spring, caused by the combined effects of the dissipating ozone hole and the approach  
19 of the natural annual radiation peak, the summer solstice (Frederick & Snell 1988;  
20 Karentz 1991; Roy *et al.* 1994). In Antarctic ecosystems, snow cover can offer  
21 protection from excess photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) and also damaging  
22 UV-B radiation (Marchand 1984). Furthermore, the spectral composition of sunlight  
23 transmitted through snow is primarily between 450 and 600 nm, with shorter and longer  
24 wavelengths removed (Salisbury 1984). However, these figures vary with depth and

1 density of snow cover. After snowmelt, submergence beneath water may reduce  
2 incident PAR. Water preferentially absorbs longer wavelengths and, although some  
3 attenuation of shorter wavelengths does occur, it offers only limited UV-B protection  
4 (Cockell & Knowland 1999). In addition to changes in incident UV-B due to  
5 stratospheric ozone distribution and concentration, actual UV-B experienced on the  
6 ground is highly variable because it is strongly influenced by cloud cover, geometry and  
7 albedo (Bodeker 1997).

## 8 **Impact of UV-B on Antarctic plants**

### 9 *Damage by UV-B radiation*

10 Absorption of UV-B radiation by plants can damage and disrupt key biological  
11 molecules, with an array of repercussions for the physiological functioning of the plant  
12 (reviewed by Greenberg *et al.* 1997; Jansen *et al.* 1998; Rozema *et al.* 1997; Tobin  
13 2003). The first line of defence is to screen UV-B radiation before it reaches the cell,  
14 then to minimise damage within the cells through other protective strategies, and finally  
15 to repair damage once it has occurred (Fig. 3; reviewed by Jansen *et al.* 1998; Stapleton  
16 1992). Since repair mechanisms are often incomplete, prevention of damage, through  
17 avoidance of UV-B absorption, should be more effective (Cockell & Knowland 1999).  
18 Damage to biological molecules can occur through direct absorption of UV-B or  
19 indirectly as a result of the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS; Fig. 3).  
20 Although such molecular effects of UV-B damage can manifest as reduced  
21 photosynthesis and growth of the plants, recent reviews have argued that photosynthetic  
22 productivity is unlikely to be significantly affected by increasing UV-B (Allen *et al.*  
23 1998) and direct effects on plant communities are likely to be subtle (Caldwell *et al.*  
24 1999).

1 Vulnerability to UV-B damage is likely to be greater in plants occurring at high  
2 latitudes due to the fact that they have evolved under lower UV-B conditions (Barnes *et*  
3 *al.* 1987; Caldwell *et al.* 1982; Marchant 1997). Prior to ozone depletion, polar plants  
4 were growing under the lowest UV-B levels on earth, and in the last few decades they  
5 have been exposed to similar levels as temperate plants, having little time for  
6 evolutionary adjustment and acclimation (Karentz 1991). Measurement of UV-B  
7 incident on similar altitude polar sites in 1991, showed the Antarctic site was exposed to  
8 150% greater UV-B than the Arctic site (Madronich *et al.* 1995). The annual occurrence  
9 of the ‘ozone hole’ also coincides with time of emergence from winter dormancy  
10 beneath the protective snow cover (Adamson & Adamson 1992; Karentz 1991; Wynn-  
11 Williams 1994), exposing plants to sudden elevations of UV-B radiation in combination  
12 with increased PAR and greater temperature fluctuations. Bryophytes may be  
13 particularly susceptible to UV-B damage because of their simple structure, with most  
14 having leaves which are only one cell thick and lacking protective cuticles or epidermal  
15 layers (Gehrke 1998; Gwynn-Jones *et al.* 1999; Richardson 1981). The survival of  
16 Antarctic plants under ‘ozone depletion’ depends on their ability to acclimate, by  
17 employing photoprotective mechanisms to avoid and repair UV-B damage.

18 Studies investigating the impact of UV-B exposure on Antarctic vascular plants,  
19 bryophytes and terrestrial algae are summarized in Table 2 (photosynthetic parameters,  
20 growth and reproduction) and Table 3 (UV-B screening- and photosynthetic-pigments).  
21 The majority of studies to date have employed screens which reduce UV-B below the  
22 current levels. Such screens usually have confounding effects on temperature and water  
23 availability. The effect on precipitation, maybe less of a problem in Antarctica since  
24 blowing snow can still accumulate under horizontal screens, reducing the negative  
25 effects (Robinson 1999). However, screens with sides can elevate temperatures

1 compared with those without sides, and have larger effects on water availability by  
2 reducing precipitation or increasing humidity (Huiskes *et al.* 2000). These confounding  
3 factors must be considered when interpreting results, and in comparisons of screened  
4 with unscreened control treatments.

5 There is also considerable variation in the duration of studies, with some performed  
6 over just one day and others over several years. Long-term studies in the Antarctic are  
7 difficult to maintain but given the inter-season variability in Antarctica, they are very  
8 important in establishing real trends in growth. We focus mostly on field studies, given  
9 the problems associated with reproducing natural solar radiation in controlled  
10 environment studies. However, in relation to induction of UV-B screening pigments or  
11 establishment of maximum rates of DNA damage, laboratory studies can be  
12 informative.

### 13 *Photosynthetic activity, growth and reproductive characteristics*

14 A number of studies have found that photosynthetic activity (estimated by measuring  
15 gas exchange or chlorophyll fluorescence) does not appear to be strongly affected by  
16 either reduced or elevated UV-B treatments in the two Antarctic vascular species (Table  
17 2). However, growth was affected in a number of ways by exposure to UV-B. The  
18 major impact was a reduction in cell length, leading to shorter leaves. Less branching  
19 and fewer leaves per shoot led to reduced plant size and biomass with effects more  
20 pronounced in *C. quitensis* than *D. antarctica* (Table 2). Leaves were also thicker in  
21 plants exposed to UV-B. Perhaps the cost of producing and maintaining thicker leaves  
22 explains the reductions in growth that occur in the absence of effects on photosynthesis  
23 (Xiong & Day 2001; Xiong *et al.* 2002). Long term field studies showed similar but less  
24 pronounced impacts of UV-B radiation compared to similar length pot studies, (Xiong

1 & Day 2001), but the latter showed high inter-annual variation and provided evidence  
2 of cumulative UV-B effects (Day *et al.* 2001).

3 Exposure to UV-B accelerated plant development and led to greater numbers of  
4 reproductive structures in both species, although the weight of *C. quitensis* seed  
5 capsules declined with higher UV-B exposure (Table 2; Xiong *et al.* 2002). However,  
6 since these structures produced fewer spikelets and seeds, the overall reproductive effort  
7 was unchanged. In addition, although the final seeds produced under UV-B exposure  
8 were smaller, their germination rates were unaffected (Day *et al.* 2001).

9 In two Antarctic bryophyte species (*Sanionia uncinata* and *Bryum argenteum*), no  
10 reductions of net photosynthesis or chlorophyll fluorescence parameters were observed  
11 under current levels of UV-B (Table 2). However, in a 7 d field UV-B enhancement  
12 study, effective photochemical quantum yield ( $\Phi$ PSII) was reduced in *S. uncinata*  
13 (Table 2). *In situ* studies suggest that increases in screening and protective pigments  
14 (see below) are sufficient to protect the photosynthetic apparatus from the damaging  
15 impacts of UV-B radiation in bryophytes (see Table 3; Newsham *et al.* 2002).

16 Although exposure of the terrestrial alga *Prasiola crispa* to elevated UV-B for 1 month  
17 in controlled environment cabinets led to reductions in maximum rates of oxygen  
18 evolution (Post & Larkum 1993), these experiments were performed at low PAR levels,  
19 and subsequent field studies have not supported these findings (Table 2).

20 Studies of lichens in Antarctica have concentrated on the impact of excess visible  
21 radiation on photosynthesis and have found that, whilst photoinhibition was evident  
22 when lichens were water stressed (Hovenden *et al.* 1994), it was less likely to be a  
23 factor when lichens were fully hydrated (Kappen *et al.* 1998a). No significant effects of  
24 either screening or supplementation of UV-B have been observed. As with the excess

1 PAR studies, it appears that lichens are far more sensitive to moisture content and  
2 temperature. Perhaps these factors, which are hard to control under screening  
3 treatments, have tended to obscure any potential impact of UV-B (Huiskes *et al.* 2001;  
4 Lud *et al.* 2001b).

5 To date few studies relating growth or reproduction to UV-B exposure have been  
6 reported for Antarctic bryophytes, lichens or algae. However, in one study of the moss  
7 *S. uncinata*, shoot biomass and length were unaffected but shoots had less branching,  
8 when turves were screened to reduce UV-B for 2 years (Lud *et al.* 2002).

9 Studies of interactions between UV-B and other environmental factors (such as water  
10 availability and temperature) are particularly important because it is likely that there are  
11 interactive effects of these multiple stressors. In the Arctic, such studies have shown  
12 that soil microbial biota is more sensitive, than associated plants, to UV-B and CO<sub>2</sub>  
13 (Johnson *et al.* 2002). These types of study highlight the fact that the most profound  
14 effects of UV-B on plant communities may well be indirect (Caldwell *et al.* 1999).

#### 15 *UV-B absorbing compounds*

16 Pigments that absorb biologically damaging UV-B while transmitting essential PAR are  
17 widespread across the plant kingdom (Cockell & Knowland 1999). The primary UV-B  
18 absorbing pigments found in higher plants are flavonoid compounds, providing a broad  
19 UV-B screen (Swain 1976). UV-B absorbing pigments such as flavonoids are  
20 wavelength-selective UV-B screens, which can accumulate rapidly in response to high  
21 UV-B radiation levels (Caldwell *et al.* 1983). As well as their UV-B absorbing  
22 properties, some flavonoids (e.g. quercetin and luteolin) with additional hydroxyl  
23 groups are thought to function as antioxidants, thus protecting plants against oxidative  
24 damage (see below; Bornmann *et al.* 1997). Accumulation in higher plants is primarily

1 in the epidermis, screening physiologically important molecules below (Fig. 3; Bjerke  
2 *et al.* 2002; Buffoni-Hall *et al.* 2002; Cuadra & Harborne 1996; Lois 1994; Robberecht  
3 & Caldwell 1978; Tevini *et al.* 1991; Vogt *et al.* 1991). The accumulation of UV-B  
4 absorbing pigments would be particularly useful in Antarctic plants because such  
5 passive screens could protect them from UV-B damage when physiological inactivity,  
6 due to desiccation or freezing, renders active repair mechanisms unavailable (Cockell &  
7 Knowland 1999; Lovelock *et al.* 1995a; b). UV-absorbing compounds have been  
8 investigated in a number of Antarctic terrestrial species from cyanobacteria to terrestrial  
9 plants. In general, cyanobacteria are protected by mycosporine-like amino acids  
10 (MAAs) and scytonemins, whilst terrestrial plants contain flavonoids (Fig. 3; Rozema *et*  
11 *al.* 2002).

12 Several studies have investigated the effect of screening UV-B radiation on internal  
13 pigment concentrations in the two Antarctic vascular species, *D. antarctica* and *C.*  
14 *quitensis* (Table 3). These studies, performed over several years, have shown that in the  
15 short term (4 months), UV-B pigments may be higher under ambient rather than  
16 reduced UV-B radiation but this trend was not found in longer term studies (Table 3;  
17 Lud *et al.* 2001b). Elevated UV-B supplied in growth cabinets for 90 d, also failed to  
18 produce an increase in UV screening pigments in *D. antarctica* (Rozema *et al.* 2001).  
19 Leaves of both plants showed low epidermal transmittance of UV-B (4% *D. antarctica*,  
20 0.6% *C. quitensis*) suggesting that they may rely on wall-bound phenylpropanoids,  
21 which provide a spatially uniform filter, rather than on soluble UV-B pigments  
22 (Ruhland & Day 2000). Levels of UV-B pigments were however higher in seedlings,  
23 suggesting that immature plants utilise soluble pigments, whilst developed leaves  
24 produce compounds bound to cell walls (Ruhland & Day 2001).



1 Mosses are generally assumed to have a low capacity to produce flavonoids and tissue  
2 protection is usually less than in phanerogams and lichens (Callaghan *et al.* 1992). In a  
3 survey of the response of plant functional types to enhanced UV-B radiation studies,  
4 mosses showed no stimulation of flavonoid production (Gwynn-Jones *et al.* 1999).  
5 Most of the studies (total 6 globally) investigated arctic and periantarctic ecosystems,  
6 where bryophytes are amongst the dominant plants. Two of the five Antarctic  
7 bryophytes studied, *Grimmia antarctici* and *Ceratodon purpureus*, support this  
8 observation, showing low levels of UV-B absorbing compounds and no evidence of  
9 stimulation in response to elevated UV-B levels (Table 3). However, two recent studies  
10 of bryophytes *in situ*, that related concentrations of UV-B pigments to natural solar UV-  
11 B over a summer season (Dunn 2000; Lovelock & Robinson 2002; Newsham *et al.*  
12 2002); suggest that some bryophytes do produce screening pigments. Newsham *et al.*  
13 (2002) showed that UV-B absorbing pigments were induced within 24 h under naturally  
14 elevated UV-B in the mosses *S. uncinata* and *Andreaea regularis* and the liverwort  
15 *Cephaloziella varians* on the Antarctic Peninsula (Newsham *et al.* 2002; Newsham  
16 2003). Dunn (2000) showed that of the three dominant mosses found in the Windmill  
17 Islands, one (*B. pseudotriquetrum*) produced UV-absorbing pigments in response to  
18 increased UV-B radiation, whilst the other two (*C. purpureus* and *G. antarctici*) did not.  
19 In addition, Markham and coworkers (Table 3) demonstrated that flavonoid  
20 concentrations in herbarium specimens of Antarctic *Bryum* spp. were correlated with  
21 historical ozone levels (Markham *et al.* 1990; Markham & Given 1988). These latter  
22 studies show that at least for Antarctic bryophytes, the majority studied to date do  
23 produce sunscreens. Given the paucity of studies conducted worldwide, it is probably  
24 too early to conclude that this is not the case elsewhere.

1 Studies on the terrestrial alga, *P. crista*, have also yielded contradictory results with  
2 higher levels of UV-B absorbing pigments in summer than winter but no response to  
3 increased UV-B in controlled environment studies, or in short term UV supplementation  
4 studies (Table 3). Levels of UV-absorbing pigments appear to be constitutively higher  
5 than most marine green algae, and screening treatments have generally resulted in  
6 reduced levels of all pigments rather than showing a specific effect on those absorbing  
7 UV-B (Lud *et al.* 2001a). There is also evidence of chlorophyll bleaching in the  
8 uppermost, exposed layers of this sheet alga, and gradients of UV-absorbing pigments  
9 have been observed from exposed to self shaded cell layers suggesting that the upper  
10 thalli confer protection to the lower layers of cells (Table 3).

11 Most of the studies described above have been concerned with soluble UV-B pigments.  
12 However, not all pigments are soluble - some are bound to cell walls (Ruhland & Day  
13 2000). There is therefore a general need for further studies to investigate the role that  
14 such insoluble flavonoids might play in UV screening in Antarctic plants.

#### 15 *Photosynthetic and photoprotective pigments*

16 Photo-oxidative damage can also occur as a result of UV-B radiation, with detrimental  
17 effects on DNA, photosynthetic pigments and membrane integrity (Fig. 3; Middleton &  
18 Teramura 1993; Murphy 1983; Renger *et al.* 1989; Tevini 1993; Tevini & Teramura  
19 1989). Since any excess radiation (PAR or UV) can lead to the production of ROS,  
20 photosynthetic pigments adjust to optimise absorption of sunlight whilst avoiding  
21 photodamage. This acclimation of pigments involves changes in the relative  
22 concentration of light-harvesting pigments (especially chlorophylls), and antioxidant  
23 and photoprotective pigments that can reduce the likelihood of chlorophyll photo-  
24 oxidation (such as zeaxanthin and  $\beta$ -carotene; Demmig-Adams *et al.* 1996; Young

1 1991). If UV-screening compounds are unable to sufficiently reduce UV penetration,  
2 these carotenoids may be able to minimise the damage to macromolecules (Fig. 3).  
3 Comparison between studies of the levels of chloroplast pigments is complicated by  
4 variation in the extraction procedures used, and in the analytical techniques applied to  
5 separate and quantify these pigments. In studies of higher plants, sequential, and often  
6 multiple, extractions in 80% and 100% acetone are required to obtain accurate  
7 quantification of the various carotenoids and chlorophylls (Lovelock & Robinson  
8 2002). However, in phytoplankton studies, methanol extractions are more common  
9 (Wright *et al.* 1991) and many studies of Antarctic bryophytes and vascular plants have  
10 utilised this extraction method (Table 3). Direct comparison of methanol and acetone  
11 extractions for various algae and plant species revealed that these solvents are equally  
12 efficient for extraction of xanthophylls and chlorophylls, but that acetone was more  
13 effective for extraction of the more hydrophobic carotenes (Dunn and Robinson,  
14 *submitted*). Some of the differences observed between studies may therefore be due to  
15 the different extraction methodologies employed.

16 For the two Antarctic vascular plants, studies have either shown a reduction in  
17 chlorophyll under reduced UV-B radiation or no effect on chlorophyll concentration  
18 (Table 3). The ratio of carotenoid to chlorophyll was higher in UV-B exposed plants in  
19 some studies but not in others (Table 3).

20 In continental Antarctica, low temperatures and low water availability often limit  
21 photosynthesis, while long summer days provide excess light, thus increasing the  
22 potential for photoinhibition and photodamage (Adamson *et al.* 1988). Photoinhibition  
23 is reported to severely limit productivity in Antarctic bryophytes and photo-oxidative  
24 chlorophyll bleaching has been observed (Adamson & Adamson 1992; Post *et al.*  
25 1990). High levels of photoprotective and antioxidant carotenoids have been observed

1 in some Antarctic mosses, and it appears that species with low levels of UV-B  
2 absorbing pigments accumulate higher levels of carotenoids, suggesting the possibility  
3 that bryophytes can use alternative mechanisms of UV protection (Fig. 3; Lovelock &  
4 Robinson 2002; Robinson *et al.* 2001). Dunn (2000) found that, in all species studied,  
5 the xanthophyll cycle pigments increased with increasing radiation and the de-  
6 epoxidation status was negatively correlated with plant water content and air  
7 temperature, indicating strong stress responses. These increases cannot be attributed to  
8 UV-B radiation alone since high levels of xanthophylls might relate purely to combined  
9 stress from PAR, drought and temperature (Lovelock 1995a; b). However Newsham *et*  
10 *al.* (2002) reported significant changes in carotenoid concentration in response to  
11 natural UV-B radiation for both *S. uncinata* and *C. varians*. An overall increase in total  
12 carotenoids in response to elevated UV-B was reported for both *S. uncinata* and *A.*  
13 *regularis*, but decreases in lutein and zeaxanthin were counteracted by increases in  
14 neoxanthin and violaxanthin in *C. varians*. Chlorophyll content showed a negative  
15 correlation with radiation for two moss species (*G. antarctica* and *B. pseudotriquetrum*)  
16 but no obvious relationship was seen for *C. purpureus*, *S. uncinata* or *C. varians* (Dunn  
17 2000; Lud *et al.* 2002; Newsham *et al.* 2002).

18 Studies of plants grown in controlled, elevated UV-B environments are needed to  
19 clarify the relationship between carotenoid concentrations and exposure to UV-B  
20 radiation, and to establish if these pigments have a role in UV-B protection. If  
21 carotenoids are found to be important in UV protection, it is likely to be as antioxidants  
22 since they are unlikely to have a direct screening role. Such studies could also be used  
23 to investigate if UV-B screening pigments can be induced in Antarctic bryophytes.

1 *DNA damage and repair*

2 Direct damage to DNA results from absorption of photons, with 98% of the resulting  
3 damage occurring in the form of pyrimidine dimers, which prevent replication and gene  
4 transcription and thus have the potential to be mutagenic and disrupt cellular  
5 metabolism (Mitchell & Karentz 1993; Taylor *et al.* 1997). Of these pyrimidine dimers,  
6 75% of those produced under natural sunlight are in the form of cyclobutyl pyrimidine  
7 dimers (CPDs), with the remainder being (6-4) photoproducts (6-4PP; Mitchell & Nairn  
8 1989). Both forms of damage can be repaired in plants by either light-dependent  
9 (photorepair) reactions, catalysed by photolyases, or by excision repair which is light-  
10 independent (Britt 1999). Excision repair is 'error prone' in all systems, while  
11 photoreactivation cannot take place in the dark and is vulnerable to temperature  
12 extremes. Damage prevention is therefore a necessary part of UV-B protection (Murphy  
13 1983; Taylor *et al.* 1997). Accumulation and repair of pyrimidine dimers has been  
14 studied in a number of plant species but there are few published studies of such  
15 experiments involving Antarctic plants. Cyclobutyl pyrimidine dimers have been  
16 shown to accumulate in the Antarctic terrestrial alga, *P. crispa*, exposed to both natural  
17 and elevated UV-B radiation (Lud *et al.* 2001a), whilst CPDs accumulated only in  
18 response to elevated UV-B radiation in *S. uncinata* (Lud *et al.* 2002). Preliminary  
19 studies in our laboratories have found that *C. purpureus* accumulates both 6-4PP and  
20 CPDs over the course of a 24-hour cycle in Antarctica. There was no direct correlation  
21 between the amount of DNA damage and incident UV-B levels although there is  
22 evidence from both field and laboratory studies that desiccation may result in DNA  
23 photoproduct accumulation (Duncan & Tobin 2002). There is also evidence of high  
24 somatic variation in Antarctic bryophytes (Skotnicki *et al.* 2000), which suggests that  
25 DNA damage is sustained by these plants. However, it is not clear at this stage whether

1 such damage is related to increased UV-B exposure or induced by other factors such as  
2 desiccation or freezing. Field studies such as those performed by Rousseaux *et al.*  
3 (1999), which have found increased accumulation of DNA photoproducts in South  
4 American species exposed to naturally elevated UV-B, would be highly appropriate.

### 5 **3. Elevated CO<sub>2</sub>**

6 The atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, have been  
7 rising over the last few decades (Houghton *et al.* 2001). Despite considerable research  
8 effort being focussed on this issue worldwide (see for example, Drake *et al.* 1997), no  
9 research appears to have been conducted to investigate the ecological impact of rising  
10 CO<sub>2</sub> levels in Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems.

11 The only relevant work to date is a study by Tarnawski *et al.* (1992) on the dominant  
12 moss species in the Windmill Islands, *G. antarctici*. This showed that, whilst small  
13 cushions growing in dry sites might be CO<sub>2</sub> limited for much of the summer, high CO<sub>2</sub>  
14 levels were achieved throughout the summer in the turf form common to moist sites and  
15 making up most of the biomass of this species. Although an increase in ambient CO<sub>2</sub>  
16 levels, as a result of global climate change, might alleviate CO<sub>2</sub> limitations in certain  
17 populations, a significant increase in overall productivity seems likely only if water  
18 availability increases (see below).

19 Evidence from a non-Antarctic system, suggests that elevated CO<sub>2</sub> may increase the  
20 temperature optimum for photosynthesis in mosses (Silvola 1985). The interactions of  
21 increased CO<sub>2</sub> with increasing and decreasing water and temperature therefore require  
22 investigation before we can attempt to predict the effect of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on these  
23 communities.

## 1 **4. Temperature**

### 2 **Evidence**

3 The most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)  
4 estimates that the global surface temperature has increased 0.6°C since the late 19th  
5 century, with a 95% confidence interval of 0.4 to 0.8°C (Houghton *et al.* 2001).

6 Climate models predict a rise in global average surface temperatures of 1.5 to 4.5 °C in  
7 response to doubling of greenhouse gas concentrations (Tokiooka 1995). Temperature  
8 increases are predicted to predominately impact on the high latitudes in winter, largely  
9 due to sea ice-albedo and snow-albedo feedbacks (Tokiooka 1995). Other polar feedback  
10 loops, which contribute to the heightened sensitivity of the high latitude regions, include  
11 those involving sea-ice extent and temperature, for which evidence is provided from the  
12 Antarctic Peninsula region (King 1994; Smith *et al.* 1996).

13 Predictions for escalating temperatures are supported by meteorological evidence from  
14 the Antarctic Peninsula region, where temperatures have increased over the last half-  
15 century, by 1 °C in summer (Fowbert & Lewis Smith 1994; Lewis Smith 1990b; Lewis  
16 Smith 1994) and 4-5 °C in winter (Smith *et al.* 1996). These substantial temperature  
17 increases appear to have already triggered ice-albedo feedback loops, evidence for  
18 which is provided from Signy Island, where there has been a 35% reduction in ice cover  
19 (Lewis Smith 1990b).

20 However, temperature trends for the Antarctic continent as a whole are not so clear. A  
21 recent, detailed analysis using meteorological data (1957-1998) from stations  
22 throughout the Antarctic region and satellite data (1979-1998) for the Antarctic  
23 continent found contrasting trends. The 45 y record in the meteorological data showed  
24 an overall increase of  $0.012 \pm 0.008$  °C  $y^{-1}$  but a decline of  $0.008 \pm 0.025$  °C  $y^{-1}$  over the

1 past 20 y. The recent 20-y trend is supported by the satellite data for the same period,  
2 which showed a more severe decline in temperature of  $0.042 \pm 0.067$  °C y<sup>-1</sup> (Comiso  
3 2000). Similar fluctuations have been detected in the Windmill Islands region, East  
4 Antarctica; average temperatures increased  $0.086$  °C y<sup>-1</sup> from 1960 to the mid-1980s and  
5 then declined  $0.010$  °C y<sup>-1</sup> to the mid-1990s (Melick & Seppelt 1997). Evidence of a  
6 cooling trend for continental Antarctica has also been provided in a recent study that  
7 analyzed meteorological records throughout Antarctica for the period 1966-2000 (Doran  
8 *et al.* 2002). Contrary to the predictions of increasing global temperatures, and  
9 measured warming trends of the maritime Antarctic, these studies suggest a recent  
10 cooling trend for the Antarctic continent. However, since Antarctic temperature trends  
11 vary spatially, seasonally and interdecadally, we believe that it is impossible at this  
12 stage to confirm consistent warming or cooling of the continent and for the purposes of  
13 this review we will concentrate on the likely impacts of increasing temperature (see also  
14 Turner *et al.* 2002; Walsh *et al.* 2002).

## 15 **Alien invasion**

16 The ameliorating growth conditions provided by rising maritime Antarctic temperatures  
17 increase the threat of invasion by alien species in this region. Evidence from Signy  
18 Island has shown that there is a continuous immigration of sporomorphia from South  
19 America (Lewis Smith 1991) and exotic pollen and spores have also been detected on  
20 the continent (Kappen & Straka 1988; Linskens *et al.* 1993). Particular species (Melick  
21 *et al.* 1994b) and sites (Selkirk *et al.* 1997) have been identified as having greater  
22 potential for invasion. In addition to the potential for species from outside Antarctica  
23 to colonise the continent, expansion of species ranges within Antarctica is also a  
24 possibility, and five native Antarctic species (Table 4) have been identified as potential



1 long-distance dispersers (Convey & Lewis Smith 1993). Under ameliorating climatic  
2 conditions, alien species invasion to the Antarctic may cause detrimental disruptions to  
3 the current ecological balance in these sensitive communities (Green *et al.* 1999,  
4 Walther *et al.* 2002). Although not yet determined experimentally, sporophyte  
5 production in bryophytes is thought to be limited by the low Antarctic temperatures  
6 (Filson & Willis 1975; Seppelt *et al.* 1992), so an increase in temperature is likely to  
7 result in an increase in sexual reproduction events, and consequently, an increase in  
8 spore production and dispersal within continental Antarctica. Combined with  
9 ameliorating growth conditions, the likelihood of colonisation by new populations of  
10 native and alien species is projected to increase under a warmer climate.

## 11 **Ecological Impacts**

12 Substantial evidence is available to suggest that plant community dynamics are  
13 changing in response to recent warming for the maritime Antarctic (Table 4). On Signy  
14 Island, the steady rise in summer air temperatures since the late 1940s, and the  
15 consequent reduction in ice cover, have provided more favourable growth conditions  
16 and new areas for colonisation, respectively (Lewis Smith 1990b). There have been  
17 changes in abundance and area of the Antarctic vascular species, *D. antarctica* and *C.*  
18 *quitensis* (Fowbert & Lewis Smith 1994; Lewis Smith 1990b; Lewis Smith 1994). A  
19 26-year survey in the Argentine Islands archipelago, western Antarctic Peninsula, found  
20 a species-specific correlation with warming; *D. antarctica* showed a considerable  
21 increase in colony numbers and a 25-fold increase in area of each colony while no  
22 additional *C. quitensis* colonies were recorded and only a 5-fold increase in area was  
23 observed (Fowbert & Lewis Smith 1994). Day *et al.* (1999) conducted a manipulative  
24 field experiment, increasing the ambient temperatures for these species over two

1 consecutive growing seasons. They also detected species-specific responses, but the  
2 direction was opposite to that found in the field survey. When growth was measured in  
3 terms of leaf and shoot length, leaf production and foliar cover, warming improved the  
4 growth of *C. quitensis* and reduced growth in *D. antarctica* (Day *et al.* 1999). Both  
5 species showed more advanced development of reproductive structures, at the time of  
6 census, as a result of the experimental warming treatment.

7 In the absence of long-term, field-based monitoring of plant communities on the  
8 continent, predictions for the impact of temperature change on the distribution of  
9 species can only be based on laboratory experiments and/or indirect evidence (Table 4).  
10 Perhaps the most direct evidence for the ecological impact of temperature on  
11 continental vegetation is provided by a manipulative growth experiment from the  
12 Windmill Islands, demonstrating the regeneration potential of continental Antarctic  
13 moribund moss. This study showed that in samples with up to 75% crustose lichen  
14 encrustation, moribund moss regeneration was faster at 18 °C than at 2 °C (Melick &  
15 Seppelt 1997).

16 It is thought that the extremely low temperatures that are characteristic of the Antarctic  
17 environment are the primary factor limiting Antarctic terrestrial vegetation to  
18 predominantly cryptogams. Antarctic vegetation is often limited to sites maintaining  
19 relatively high temperatures, which tend to be sheltered from cold winds, have high  
20 levels of solar radiation, and consequently high levels of snow and ice melt (Kappen  
21 1985a; Seppelt & Ashton 1978; Shimizu 1977). Lichen vegetation, for example, tends  
22 to be particularly rich on north facing rock sites (Kappen 1985a) where temperatures are  
23 consistently warmer. Sheltered sites are also where fruiting events, which occur  
24 relatively rarely in Antarctica, have been observed (Filson & Willis 1975). Increasing  
25 temperatures on the continent are likely to see an expansion of the area suitable for

1 reproduction, vegetation colonisation and survival. Long-term monitoring of continental  
2 Antarctic terrestrial vegetation is crucial for accurate measurement and predictions of  
3 vegetation dynamics in response to future temperature regimes.

#### 4 **Photosynthetic physiology**

5 The response of vegetation to elevated temperatures varies across species and regions.  
6 There is evidence available to suggest that both increases and decreases to productivity  
7 may occur (Table 4). Since the prevailing low temperatures throughout the Antarctic  
8 biome are generally considered to limit net photosynthesis ( $P_n$ ) for most of the growing  
9 season, warming conditions would therefore be expected to increase primary  
10 productivity (Xiong *et al.* 1999). Increased  $P_n$  under elevated temperatures has been  
11 demonstrated, for example, in three continental moss species (Lewis Smith 1999) and  
12 the two maritime vascular species (Xiong *et al.* 2000). There is, however, a wealth of  
13 literature that suggests increasing temperatures may cause declines in  $P_n$  (Table 4). This  
14 has been demonstrated for both mosses and vascular plants. Laboratory experiments  
15 using the maritime moss, *S. uncinata*, showed that over a temperature range of 0 to 20  
16 °C, net photosynthesis remains low but dark respiration steadily increases (Nakatsubo  
17 2002). Low temperatures thus appear to be important for positive net carbon balance in  
18 this species, and increasing temperatures may reduce carbon gain by increasing  
19 respiratory loss (Nakatsubo 2002). Declines in  $P_n$  with increasing temperatures also  
20 occur for those species exhibiting increased photoinhibition under conditions of  
21 increasing temperatures, as has been demonstrated by field measurements of some  
22 continental Antarctic moss species (Kappen *et al.* 1989).  
23 In addition, a rise in temperature will cause an increase in the duration and frequency of  
24 supra-optimal temperature events, during which photosynthesis is often depressed.

1 Laboratory measurements of the maritime vascular species, *D. antarctica* show a  
2 pronounced decline in photosynthetic rates at supra-optimal temperatures (>12 °C), with  
3 negligible photosynthesis at 35 °C (Vining *et al.* 1997). In the field, both *D. antarctica*  
4 and *C. quitensis* have negligible midday net photosynthetic rates at canopy air  
5 temperatures greater than 20 °C, whilst high rates of midday net photosynthesis are  
6 obtained at temperatures of less than 10 °C. Accompanying laboratory experiments  
7 verified that high temperatures, not visible irradiance, were responsible for the  
8 photosynthetic depression observed (Xiong *et al.* 1999). Currently canopy air  
9 temperatures exceed 20°C for less than 1% of diurnal periods (Day *et al.* 1999) and  
10 midday photosynthetic depression events are uncommon. The temperature at which  
11 conditions become supra-optimal for photosynthesis varies between species (Table 4).  
12 Cited values of optimal temperatures range from 10 °C in *D. antarctica* (Xiong *et al.*  
13 1999) to 20-25 °C in a maritime moss species (Rastorfer 1972).

14 The data available show that although plant surface temperatures may exceed 40 °C  
15 during the growing season (Lewis Smith 1986; Lewis Smith 1988), these elevated  
16 temperatures are not sustained (Xiong *et al.* 1999). A continental study recorded moss  
17 surface temperatures above 13 °C less than 5% of the time and below 2.5 °C  
18 approximately 60% of the time (Longton 1974). Exceptionally high temperatures are  
19 often accompanied by large diel fluctuations, an extreme example of which exceeded 50  
20 °C (-9.2 to 42.8 °C) in a continental Antarctic moss species (Lewis Smith 1988).

21 Despite the evidence of photosynthetic depression during elevated temperatures, it has  
22 been demonstrated that, at least in the two maritime vascular species, increasing  
23 vegetative growth outweighs declines in photosynthetic rates under these high growth  
24 temperatures (Xiong *et al.* 2000).

1 The lack of experimental, field-based manipulation of temperature, due to the difficulty  
2 of performing such experiments in the severe Antarctic climate, limits our knowledge in  
3 this area. However, open-top chambers have been successfully used to increase soil  
4 temperatures by +2.2 °C at 10 cm depth and +5.2 °C at the surface (Marion *et al.* 1997).  
5 In addition, experimental manipulation of growth conditions has shown that some  
6 species have a greater potential for plasticity of optimal temperatures in response to  
7 elevated temperatures. Collins (1977), demonstrated that the maritime moss species,  
8 *Drepanocladus uncinatus* and *Polytrichum alpestre*, showed optimal temperatures for  
9 net photosynthesis of 15 °C and 5-10 °C, respectively when grown under a temperature  
10 regime similar to field conditions. When grown at warmer temperatures, the optimal  
11 temperature for *D. uncinatus* remained at 15 °C, whilst that for *P. alpestre* increased to  
12 15 °C. Species such as *P. alpestre* that show a relatively plastic response to increased  
13 temperatures may be better equipped to cope with future field temperature increases  
14 (Collins 1977).

15 Experimental manipulation of temperature in the field has been achieved as a side effect  
16 of UV-B screening experiments, thus providing an opportunity to investigate the effect  
17 of elevated temperature (*e.g.* Huskies *et al.* 2001). Despite the challenge of conducting  
18 this kind of work in the severe Antarctic environment, well-designed experiments of  
19 this type are possible and are badly needed.

#### 20 *Impact of increased freeze-thaw*

21 Temperature fluctuations that cause plant tissues to cyclically freeze and thaw may be  
22 more damaging than exposure to cold temperatures alone (Kennedy 1993) and there is  
23 some evidence that these events are increasing in frequency (Lovelock 1995a; b).

1 Continental Antarctic species can survive repeated freeze-thaw events (Melick &  
2 Seppelt 1992), while maritime species appear to be less tolerant (Davey 1997b).  
3 Tolerance of freeze-thaw events involves interactions with other environmental  
4 parameters, such as water availability. For example, desiccation prior to freezing  
5 reduces damage to the photosynthetic apparatus and protection from freeze-thaw can be  
6 provided by snow cover, which acts as an insulator (Lovelock 1995a: b). If climate-  
7 warming results in reductions in snow cover, Antarctic plants may be more exposed to  
8 damage by freeze-thaw events in the future. Since freeze-thaw cycles reduce plant  
9 productivity and survival (Table 4), increases in the frequency and/or magnitude of the  
10 temperature differential of freeze-thaw cycles on the Antarctic continent are likely to  
11 have negative impacts on the Antarctic flora.

## 12 **5 Precipitation and water relations**

13 The predominance of extreme cold across the Antarctic continent locks most water  
14 away in the form of snow and ice, resulting in the Antarctic being the largest desert on  
15 Earth. Biologically available water is in the form of melt water, and it is confined to the  
16 summer months. Melt water can be derived from freshly deposited snow, or from  
17 melting of permanent snow and ice banks. A fine balance between the snow regime and  
18 melt patterns is crucial in maintaining water availability to these exceedingly dry  
19 habitats. A discussion of precipitation and water relations must therefore also consider  
20 snow relations. Incorporating the variables of temperature, precipitation and melt, we  
21 suggest a model that predicts the impact of climate change on water availability in  
22 Antarctic ecosystems (Fig. 4). Three possible paths are suggested; two scenarios lead to  
23 increasing aridity, whilst the third results in either unchanged or increased water  
24 availability. If an increase in the area of permanent snow cover were the result of the  
25 final scenario, a concomitant loss of habitat for plants would occur.

## 1 **Evidence**

2 Climate warming is predicted to increase global precipitation and evaporation levels by  
3 3 to 15% (Tokiooka 1995). Two types of precipitation occur: (1) from cumuli-form  
4 clouds, which will increase globally in response to climate change, and (2) from strati-  
5 form clouds, which will decrease with climate change. The effect of climate change on  
6 global precipitation patterns will therefore be a decrease in precipitation area, while  
7 precipitation amount will increase (Tokiooka 1995).

8 Under a global warming climate scenario, snow accumulation in Antarctica is predicted  
9 to increase (Ye & Mather 1997). However, measurement of continental soil moisture  
10 levels shows that continental Antarctic moisture content is decreasing (Doran *et al.*  
11 2002). In the Windmill Islands, East Antarctica, the presence of moribund moss is  
12 considered indicative of a drying trend, which corresponds with glaciological and  
13 geomorphological evidence of isostatic uplift since the last glacial maximum (Melick &  
14 Seppelt 1997).

## 15 *Ecological Impacts*

16 Studies from across the Antarctic biome have established a correlation between water  
17 availability and species distributions (Table 5). The majority of these studies have  
18 investigated broad-scale patterns, covering large spatial scales and incorporating the  
19 majority of vegetation types or species (Bolter *et al.* 2000; Broady 1989; Lewis Smith  
20 1986; Lewis Smith 1990a; Melick *et al.* 1994a; Melick & Seppelt 1997; Nakanishi  
21 1977; Rudolph 1963; Seppelt & Ashton 1978; Seppelt *et al.* 1988; Shimizu 1977).  
22 Examination of broad-scale patterns may be appropriate in regions undergoing rapid  
23 change, such as the Periantarctic (Adamson *et al.* 1988; Frenot *et al.* 1997; Smith and  
24 Steenkamp, 1990) and the Antarctic Peninsula (Lewis Smith 1990b). On the continent,

1 however, where growth rates are slow, fine-scale studies, working with selected  
2 vegetation components such as lichens (Inoue 1989; Kappen 1985a), bryophytes (Lewis  
3 Smith 1999; Schwarz *et al.* 1992; Selkirk & Seppelt 1987) or single species (Kappen *et*  
4 *al.* 1998b) will probably be required to detect community change.

5 Relatively few studies of the relationship between water availability and vegetation  
6 distribution have included modern, quantitative statistical analyses (Table 5). Studies  
7 from the continent that have employed such methods have generally found positive  
8 associations between fine-scale distribution patterns and water availability (Leishman &  
9 Wild 2001) or factors affecting water availability (Ryan & Watkins 1989).

#### 10 *Increasing aridity*

11 Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems will suffer increasing aridity if temperatures increase,  
12 causing elevated melts but precipitation is insufficient to counteract the increased melt,  
13 resulting in net depletion of permanent snow and ice reserves (Fig. 4).

14 The ecological impact of increasing aridity in Antarctica has received very little  
15 attention (Table 5). One exception is the work by Melick and Seppelt (1997), who  
16 suggested that the drying trend evident in the Windmill Islands, East Antarctica, is  
17 driving an expansion of lichen-dominated vegetation in the region, whilst the  
18 bryophytes are contracting to lower-lying areas with more reliable moisture supply.

#### 19 *Increasing water availability*

20 In Antarctic habitats, increases in water availability are likely to result if temperature  
21 increases are coupled with increased precipitation, equal to or exceeding the elevated  
22 melt, thus improving melt water availability and maintaining permanent snow and ice  
23 reserves (Fig. 4).



1 As is the case for increasing aridity, the ecological impacts of increasing water  
2 availability in Antarctica have received very little research attention. The regeneration  
3 potential of moribund moss (encrusted with up to 75% lichen cover) is greatest under  
4 permanently wet conditions, and regeneration potential is less under experimental  
5 irrigation regimes that provide reduced water availability (Melick & Seppelt 1997).

6 It appears that no experimental tests of the influence of water availability on relative  
7 species distributions in Antarctica have yet been published.

8 Studies that have surveyed vegetation patterns in relation to water content have tended  
9 to be short-term with most conducted during only one summer season (Table 5). One  
10 ongoing study has employed a multivariate statistical approach, to test for differences in  
11 species distributions within bryophyte communities in the Windmill Islands and to  
12 correlate any differences to environmental parameters such as water content (Wasley.  
13 *unpublished*).

#### 14 **Physiological Impacts**

##### 15 *Increasing aridity*

16 Under a climate change scenario of increasing aridity, lichens may have a greater  
17 chance of survival than other groups of cryptogamic organisms, as they are particularly  
18 well adapted to dry conditions (Table 5). Uptake of water by lichen in Antarctica, is  
19 largely from snow deposited on their surfaces (Schroeter *et al.* 1994) which, even at  
20 subzero temperatures, is adequate for rehydration (Schroeter *et al.* 1997; Schroeter &  
21 Scheidegger 1995). The water relations of lichens under snow and ice has been  
22 reviewed by Kappen (1993; 2000).

23 Increasing aridity will subject vegetation to increasing frequency, severity, and duration  
24 of desiccation events. Levels of tolerance of desiccation vary across the Antarctic

1 biome and between species and vegetation types (Table 5). Some regions and species  
2 will therefore be more severely affected than others under conditions of increasing  
3 aridity. The maritime region appears to support some desiccation-sensitive species,  
4 particularly in hydric habitats, and these might be expected to be particularly vulnerable  
5 (Davey 1997a; b; c). On the continent, lichens are likely to survive increasing aridity as  
6 they show extraordinarily high levels of tolerance of desiccation and are capable of  
7 reactivating photosynthetic activity via uptake of water vapour (Hovenden & Seppelt  
8 1995b; Lange & Kappen 1972). Continental Antarctic bryophytes are not likely to be as  
9 tolerant of increasing aridity as lichens, but also have the ability to survive desiccation  
10 events. Species-specific differences in tolerance of desiccation have been detected for  
11 three moss species from the Windmill Islands, East Antarctica (Robinson *et al.* 2000),  
12 with the endemic, *G. antarctici*, more likely to be adversely affected by drying climatic  
13 conditions than the cosmopolitan species tested.

14 Other impacts of increasing aridity include morphological changes such as reduced  
15 bryophyte leaf size (Table 5). In addition to the direct effects of increasing aridity,  
16 reductions in water availability may cause alterations to other environmental  
17 parameters. For example, it has been observed that dry habitats are characterised by  
18 higher temperatures and larger temperature fluctuations than moist habitats (Melick &  
19 Seppelt 1994b).

#### 20 *Increasing water availability*

21 Water is generally limiting in Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems and increases in water  
22 availability are likely to induce significant biological effects. In general the evidence  
23 suggests that net photosynthesis and growth are currently limited by water availability  
24 (Table 5). However certain plant groups offer exceptions to this. As previously noted,

1 lichens can achieve physiologically optimal water contents through contact with snow,  
2 but at water contents greater than optimal, a depression of net photosynthesis occurs  
3 (Hovenden *et al.* 1994; Kappen & Breuer 1991). Although it is clear that water uptake  
4 directly from melting snow is a very important source of water for lichens (Schroeter *et*  
5 *al.* 1994; Schroeter *et al.* 1997), an increase in precipitation levels that cause more  
6 frequent periods of supra-optimal water contents may have a negative impact (Huiskes  
7 *et al.* 2000).

8 In addition to altering rates of net photosynthesis, a range of morphological,  
9 physiological and biochemical changes are likely to occur if water availability  
10 increases, as is evident in the differences that have been measured between plants from  
11 wet and dry habitats in continental Antarctica (Table 5). Vegetation from wet sites, for  
12 example, has been found to have higher water contents at full hydration (Robinson *et al.*  
13 2000), higher chlorophyll concentrations (Kappen *et al.* 1989; Melick & Seppelt  
14 1994a), higher concentrations of soluble carbohydrates (Melick & Seppelt 1994a;  
15 Robinson *et al.* 2000), nitrogen and potassium (Fabiszewski & Wojtun 2000), higher  
16 turf CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (Tarnawski *et al.* 1992) higher rates of nitrogen fixation (Davey  
17 1982; Davey & Marchant 1983), higher production rates, and a wider temperature range  
18 for maximal net photosynthesis (Kappen *et al.* 1989). On the negative side,  
19 photosynthetic efficiency declines at higher tissue water contents (Robinson *et al.* 2000)  
20 and tissues freeze at higher temperatures (Melick & Seppelt 1994a) in samples collected  
21 from wet sites compared to those from dry sites.

22 Water may be less universally limiting in the relatively moist maritime Antarctic (Table  
23 5). Whilst some xeric species from Signy Island were occasionally water-limited  
24 (Davey 1997c), there are several sites on Signy Island where photosynthesis was not  
25 water-limited (Collins 1977). When the photosynthetic rates of a range of xeric and

1 hydric species from this island were compared, under laboratory conditions, no  
2 difference between habitats was detected (Convey 1994).

3 As is the case with the impact of changes to other environmental parameters, the impact  
4 of increasing water availability is likely to be species-specific and show variation across  
5 the Antarctic biome (Table 5). Whilst many studies have compared sites with naturally  
6 occurring variations in water content, publications produced from field manipulations of  
7 water availability are lacking. The absence of such studies is probably due to the  
8 associated difficulty of conducting field manipulations of this nature in the severe  
9 Antarctic environment.

10 One final point to consider with respect to the impact of increasing water availability in  
11 Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems, is the interaction between water content and freezing.  
12 Evidence suggests that desiccation, prior to freezing, may improve plant survival at low  
13 temperatures (Kennedy 1993; Lovelock 1995a; b). Increased damage during freezing  
14 events may therefore occur if Antarctic habitats receive an increase in water availability.

#### 15 *Changes to snow regime*

16 A fine balance with respect to the snow regime may be particularly important to lichen  
17 survival in Antarctica. Although moisture from summer snowmelt is utilised by lichens  
18 (Kappen 2000), a persistent summer snow cover can cause lichen mortality (Benedict  
19 1990; Lewis Smith 1990b; Melick & Seppelt 1997). Snow cover throughout winter,  
20 maintaining dark conditions with temperature close to zero, caused negative carbon  
21 balance in lichens (Kappen 2000). This may mean that lichens would be particularly  
22 disadvantaged by an increase in snow cover as a result of climate change (Kappen  
23 2000).

## 1 **6. Interactions between water, temperature and nutrients**

2 Changes to environmental parameters, such as temperature, CO<sub>2</sub> and water availability,  
3 are likely to have a synergistic effect on productivity and nutrient cycling, resulting in  
4 alterations to the current balance of the nutrient cycle. Perhaps due to the difficulties  
5 associated with detecting environmental change of this nature, there are no published  
6 studies relating nutrient availability to climate change in Antarctica.

7 Nutrient cycling in the Antarctic is relatively slow, due to the restraints imposed on  
8 biological activity by low temperatures and extreme aridity. Antarctic terrestrial  
9 habitats often have low nutrient availability, but the communities that they support are  
10 generally not nutrient-limited (Table 6). Nutrient requirements for Antarctic vegetation  
11 are exceptionally low, such that nitrogen levels in precipitation (Greenfield 1992a) are  
12 sufficient for growth of cryptogams, particularly lichens. However nutrient availability  
13 does play a role in determining patterns of species distributions in Antarctica (Table 6).

14 Nutrient availability in Antarctic terrestrial ecosystems is patchy with high  
15 concentration of nutrients in the vicinity of bird and seal colonies, whilst elsewhere  
16 nutrients are limited to that deposited in precipitation (Greenfield 1992a; b) Two studies  
17 in particular have demonstrated positive correlations between vegetation patterns and  
18 nutrient availability associated with nutrient inputs from birds (Gremmen *et al.* 1994;  
19 Leishman & Wild 2001). Current nutrient availability can be determined by site history.  
20 Abandoned penguin rookeries, for example, can produce relatively nutrient rich  
21 habitats, thus affecting local species compositions (Hovenden & Seppelt 1995a).  
22 Knowledge of terrestrial site history can therefore be important in understanding current  
23 vegetation patterns.

1 In continental Antarctica, release of nutrients from organic matter is primarily microbial  
2 and is relatively slow (Smith & Steenkamp 1992). In the Periantarctic, rates of inorganic  
3 nutrient release from plant litter are enhanced by a suite of macroinvertebrates (Smith &  
4 Steenkamp 1992) which are absent on the continent.

5 Nitrogen fixation by the cyanobacteria, *N. commune*, occurs during the Antarctic  
6 summer. Fixation rates are dependent on water availability and temperature conditions;  
7 fixation ceases below  $-7\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  (Davey & Marchant 1983), with rates highest in areas of  
8 high water content (Davey 1982). *N. commune* and moist associations of moss-*Nostoc*  
9 are estimated to contribute  $52$  and  $119\text{ mg N m}^{-2}\text{ yr}^{-1}$  to the terrestrial ecosystem,  
10 respectively (Davey & Marchant 1983). These results suggest that warmer, wetter  
11 conditions are more favourable for nitrogen fixation.

12 If photosynthesis and growth rates of Antarctic plants increase, in response to greater  
13 water availability and/or temperature increases, the demand for nutrients will increase,  
14 leading to the development of a nutrient-limited system. Nutrient inputs through  
15 precipitation and biological fixation of nitrogen are known to be too small to meet the  
16 current demands of plants in Periantarctic ecosystems (Smith & Steenkamp 1992). The  
17 capacity to increase nutrient availability under future climatic conditions might also be  
18 limited by low continental soil fauna diversity.

## 19 **7. Conclusions**

20 Climate change has already impacted on Antarctic plants. Temperature increases in the  
21 maritime Antarctic have led to changes in the distribution of native plants and increased  
22 the opportunities for alien species to invade. Current levels of UV-B have been shown  
23 to reduce growth of the two vascular species suggesting that ozone depletion may be  
24 having a negative effect on these plants. Although negative effects of UV-B are

1 ameliorated by UV-screening compounds in many Antarctic plants, increased levels of  
2 these compounds may lead to indirect effects on nutrient cycling.

3 This review has suggested scenarios for the Antarctic flora under global climate change.  
4 Comprehensive predictions are complicated by both the lack of certainty in the  
5 prediction of changes to abiotic variables, and by the lack of long-term studies  
6 investigating recent changes to the flora. Although manipulative, long-term and  
7 quantitative research has been undertaken in recent years, there is a particular need for  
8 studies that address the impact of combinations of abiotic factors. Given the slow rate of  
9 change in these ecologically extreme communities, a commitment to long-term studies  
10 such as those planned and occurring as part of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic  
11 Research, Regional Sensitivity to Climate Change program are essential to investigate  
12 both the response of key species and of key assemblages.

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**Table 1.** Estimated contribution of plant groups to terrestrial plant biodiversity of Antarctica.

<b>Phytogeographic zone</b>	<b>Angiosperms</b>	<b>Mosses</b>	<b>Liverworts</b>	<b>Lichens</b>	<b>Macro-fungi</b>	<b>References</b>
Continental	-	30	1	125	2	(Lewis Smith 1984)
Maritime	2	75	25	150	22+	(Lewis Smith 1984)
Total	2	85	25	200+	28	(Longton, 1985)



**Table 2.** Summary of effects of UV-B radiation on photosynthetic parameters, growth and reproduction in Antarctic plants and terrestrial algae.

Plant group and Species	Duration and type of study	Photosynthetic parameters	Growth	Reproduction	References
<i>Vascular plants</i>					
<i>D. antarctica</i>	2m field screening study		Reducing UVR improved growth.		(Day <i>et al.</i> 1999)
	4m field screening study		Leaves longer (cells elongated) under reduced UVR.		(Ruhland & Day 2000)
	4m field screening study (pot grown)	O <sub>2</sub> evolution not affected on area basis but higher on both chlorophyll and leaf mass basis under reduced UV-BR. ΦPSII higher under reduced UV-BR but F <sub>v</sub> /F <sub>m</sub> not affected.	Total leaf area, tillar length and total biomass increased with reduced UV-BR. Leaves thinner under reduced UV-BR.		(Xiong & Day 2001)
	4y screening study		Leaf elongation faster with reduced UV.	Overall no change per unit area. Slower development and reduced number of panicles under reduced UV-BR - offset by more spikelets. Larger seeds under reduced UV-BR but germination rates similar.	(Day <i>et al.</i> 2001)
	1m and 2y screening studies	No effect of screening on ΦPSII or F <sub>v</sub> /F <sub>m</sub> .			(Huskies <i>et al.</i> 2001; Lud <i>et al.</i> 2001b)
	7d UV-BR field enhancement	No change in ΦPSII.			(Montiel <i>et al.</i> 1999)
	90d enhanced UV-BR, controlled environment	No change in ΦPSII, A <sub>max</sub> or dark respiration.	Shoot length reduced, more branching of shoots and thicker leaves under increased UV-BR. Overall no effect on RGR.		(Rozema <i>et al.</i> 2001)
<i>C. quitensis</i>	2m field		Some indications of improved growth under		(Day <i>et al.</i>

	screening study		reduced UV-BR.		1999)
	4m field screening study (pot grown)  Similar 63d study	O <sub>2</sub> evolution not affected on area basis but higher under reduced UV-BR on both chlorophyll and leaf mass basis. Midday $\Phi$ PSII slightly higher under reduced UV-BR but $F_v/F_m$ not affected.	Total leaf area, cushion diameter and total biomass increased with reduced UV-BR. Leaves thinner under reduced UV-BR.  RGR and NAR higher under reduced UV-BR. Higher shoot biomass, more branching and more leaves per shoot, larger leaves and greater leaf longevity under lower UV-BR. Leaf area higher, but total leaf biomass unchanged, due to lower SLM with reduced UV-BR.	Higher reproductive biomass, capsules heavier under reduced UV-BR.	(Xiong & Day 2001)  (Xiong <i>et al.</i> 2002)
	Summer season screening		Seedlings produce more leaves and branches and have greater leaf area if grown under reduced UV-BR.	No effect of UV-BR on seedling survival.	(Ruhland & Day 2001)
	4y screening study		Increased leaf length, branching, cushion diameter, aboveground biomass and numbers of green leaves per shoot with reduced UV-BR.	Overall no change per unit area. Slower development and reduced number of capsules with reduced UV-BR - offset by more seeds. Larger seeds under reduced UV-BR but germination rates similar.	(Day <i>et al.</i> 2001)
	7d UV-BR field enhancement	No change in $\Phi$ PSII.			(Montiel <i>et al.</i> 1999)
<b>Bryophytes</b>					
<i>B. argenteum</i>	8h screening study	No effect on $P_n$ or $F_v/F_m$ .			(Green <i>et al.</i> 2000)
<i>S. uncinata</i>	1m screening study	No effect on $\Phi$ PSII.			(Huskies <i>et al.</i> 2001)
	4-6w study <i>in situ</i>	No effect of naturally increased UV-BR on $F_v/F_m$ .			(Newsham <i>et al.</i> 2002)
	7d UV-BR field enhancement	$\Phi$ PSII reduced.			(Montiel <i>et al.</i> 1999)
	2d UV-BR field	No effect on $P_n$ , $F_v/F_m$ or $\Phi$ PSII.			(Lud <i>et al.</i> 2002)

	enhancement				
	2y screening study		No effect on biomass or short length. Less branching under reduced UV-BR.		(Lud <i>et al.</i> 2002)
<i>C. exiliflora</i>		Density of thylakoids greater in shaded plants.			(Post & Vesk 1992)
<b>Algae</b>					
<i>P. crista</i>	1m enhanced UV-BR, controlled environment	Reduced $A_{max}$ .			(Post & Larkum 1993)
	1m screening study	No effect on $\Phi$ PSII.			(Huskies <i>et al.</i> 2001)
	2d enhanced UV-BR	No effect on gas exchange.			(Lud <i>et al.</i> 2001a)

**Abbreviations:**  $A_{max}$  light saturated rate of photosynthesis, **d** day,  $F/F_m$  optimal efficiency of PSII, **h** hour, **m** month, **NAR** net assimilation rate,  $\Phi$ PSII quantum yield of PSII,  $P_n$  net photosynthesis, **RGR** relative growth rate, **UV-BR** ultraviolet-B radiation, **w** week, **y** year

**Table 3.** Summary of effects of UV-B radiation on UV-B screening and photosynthetic pigments in Antarctic plants and terrestrial algae.

Plant Group and Species	Duration and type of study	UV-B absorbing pigments	Chlorophylls	Carotenoids	References
<i>Vascular plants</i>					
<i>D. antarctica</i>	2 & 4 m field screening study	No effect.	No change over 2 m.		(Day <i>et al.</i> 1999)
	4 m field screening study (pot grown)	Lower under reduced UV-BR.	Lower under reduced UV-BR.	Total car. lower under reduced UV-BR (methanol extract).	(Ruhland & Day 2000; Xiong & Day 2001)
	2 y screening study	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.	(Lud <i>et al.</i> 2001b)
	90 d enhanced UV-BR, controlled environment	No effect.			(Rozema <i>et al.</i> 2001)
<i>C. quitensis</i>	2 m field screening study	No effect.	No effect.		(Day <i>et al.</i> 1999)
	63 d & 4 m field screening study (pot grown)	Soluble pigments, measured on area basis, lower under reduced UV-BR.	No change over 63 d.	Total car. reduced after 4 m (methanol extract).	(Ruhland & Day 2000; Xiong & Day 2001; Xiong <i>et al.</i> 2002)
	Summer season screening	Trend for lower UV-B screening pigments in seedlings grown under reduced UV-BR.	Trend for higher chl. in seedlings grown under reduced UV-BR.		(Ruhland & Day 2001)
<i>Mosses</i>					
<i>B. psuedotriquetrum</i>	6 m study <i>in situ</i>	High relative to other moss species and positively correlated with UV-BR.	High relative to other moss species. Negative correlation with TSR.	VAZ positively correlated with TSR and WC. De-epoxidation status of VAZ negatively correlated with WC and air temp. B-car positively correlated with WC and air temp (acetone extract).	(Dunn 2000)
<i>B. argenteum</i>		Correlation between flavonoid concentration			(Markham <i>et</i>

		in herbarium specimens of plants collected from Ross Sea area and historic UV-BR levels.			<i>al.</i> 1990)
<i>Bryum</i> spp		Generally show ability to accumulate flavonoids.			(Adamson & Adamson 1992; Markham & Given 1988)
<i>C. purpureus</i>	6 m study <i>in situ</i>	Low relative to other moss species, no correlation with TSR. Anthocyanin pigments high on chl. Basis.	Low relative to other moss species. No correlation with TSR.	VAZ positively correlated with TSR and WC. De-epoxidation status negatively correlated with WC and air temp. B-car. positively correlated with WC and air temp.	(Dunn 2000)
<i>G. antarctici</i>	6 m study <i>in situ</i>	Low relative to other moss species, no correlation with TSR.	Greatest range compared to other moss species. Strong negative correlation with TSR and positive correlation with WC.	VAZ positively correlated with TSR negatively correlated with WC. De-epoxidation status negatively correlated with WC and air temp. B-car. negatively correlated with WC, positively correlated with air temp.	(Dunn 2000)
<i>S. uncinata</i>	4-6 w study <i>in situ</i>	Increased pigments under naturally elevated UV-BR.	Unaffected by ozone depletion.	Increased total car. under naturally elevated UV-BR. Higher N and B-car (acetone extract).	(Newsham <i>et al.</i> 2002)
	2 y screening		No effect.		(Lud <i>et al.</i> 2002)
<i>C. varians</i>	4-6 w study <i>in situ</i>	Increased pigments under naturally elevated UV-BR.	Unaffected by ozone depletion.	Increased total car. under naturally elevated UV-BR. Higher N and V but lower L and Z.	(Newsham <i>et al.</i> 2002)
<i>A. regularis</i>	4-6 w study <i>in situ</i>	Increased pigments under naturally elevated UV-BR.		Increased total car. under naturally elevated UV-BR.	(Newsham 2003)
<b>Algae</b>					
<i>P. crispa</i> ssp <i>antarctica</i>		Higher relative to chl. in summer versus winter. Higher UV screening pigments in upper portions of thalli.	Evidence of chl. bleaching in top layer of thalli.	TCar/chl increased under elevated UV-BR (methanol extract).	(Post & Larkum 1993)
		Reduced under UV-A or UV-B screens relative to unscreened controls. Pigments lowest under snow (Dec) increased until March then declined.			(Jackson & Seppelt 1997)
	4 w controlled chamber	No effect.	Reduced under elevated UV-BR.		(Post & Larkum

	elevated UV-BR				1993)
	1-2 d enhanced or reduced UV-BR	No effect.		Most car. did not change under screening treatments, V decreased under reduced UB-BR but no Z found (methanol extract).	(Lud <i>et al.</i> 2001a)

**Abbreviations:** **A** antheraxanthin,  **$\beta$ -car**  $\beta$ -carotene, **chl** chlorophyll, **car** carotenoid, **d** day, **h** hour, **L** lutein, **m** month, **N** neoxanthin, **NAR** net assimilation rate, **TSR** total solar radiation, **UV** ultraviolet, **UV-BR** ultraviolet-B radiation, **V** violaxanthin, **VAZ** xanthophyll cycle pigments, **w** week, **WC** water content, **y** year, **Z** zeaxanthin

**Table 4.** Summary of effects of Temperature on Antarctic vascular plants, bryophytes and terrestrial algae.

Scenario	Impact	Nature of impact	Major Results	Plant group	Location	Field / Lab	References
Increased Temperature	Increased risk of alien invasion	Physiological	Current, low, Antarctic temps limit sporophyte production.	B	C	F	(Filson & Willis 1975; Seppelt <i>et al.</i> 1992)
			Sporophyte production higher at high latitudes than previously expected. Relatively high in micro-oases.	B	M	F	(Lewis Smith & Convey 2002)
		Ecological	Supply of pollen and spores to Antarctica.	V B L F	C M	FC/ L	(Lewis Smith 1991; Linskens 1993; Kappen & Straka 1988)
			Vestfold Hills are at greater risk of alien invasion than the Ross Sea Region.	B	C	FC/ L	(Selkirk <i>et al.</i> 1997)
			Some species have greater potential for invasion than others.	B	C	FC/ L	(Melick <i>et al.</i> 1994b)
			5 native Antarctic species identified as potential long-distance colonists.	B	M	FC/ L	(Convey & Lewis Smith 1993)
	Altered distribution	Ecological	Species-specific response to increasing summer air temps (1944-92): species distributions 1964-90 - <i>Deschampsia antarctica</i> increased in area 25-fold + increased colony numbers, <i>Colobanthus quitensis</i> increased in area 5-fold, no new colonies.	V	M	F	(Fowbert & Lewis Smith 1994)
			<i>D. antarctica</i> and <i>C. quitensis</i> : increased number of individuals and populations during 27-year monitoring period.	V	M	F	(Lewis Smith 1994)
			Manipulative field experiment: Warming increased <i>C. quitensis</i> growth (increased leaf production, shoot production and foliar cover). Warming decreased growth of <i>D. antarctica</i> (decreased leaf length, leaf production and foliar cover). Improved sexual reproduction in both species.	V	M	F	(Day <i>et al.</i> 1999)
			Antarctic veg often limited to sites maintaining relatively high temps which tend to be sheltered from cold winds, have high levels of solar radiation, and consequently high levels of snow and ice melt.	B L	C	F	(Kappen 1985a; Seppelt & Ashton 1978; Shimizu 1977)
			With up to >75% crustose lichen encrustation, moribund moss regeneration faster at 18 °C than at 2 °C.	B L	C	FC/ L	(Melick & Seppelt 1997)
			Lichen veg particularly rich on north facing rock sites, where temps are consistently warmer.	L	C M	R	(Kappen 1985a)
	Increased productivity	Physiological	<i>D. antarctica</i> and <i>C. quitensis</i> grown at 7, 12 or 20 °C: despite P <sub>n</sub> being highest in plants grown at 12 °C, all measures of growth (RGR, total biomass, leaf area, LAR and leaf mass ratio) were greatest in	V	M	L	(Xiong <i>et al.</i> 2000)

		20 °C grown plants				
		P <sub>n</sub> increased with increased temp (tested up to 20 °C). Species differences: <i>Bryum argenteum</i> > <i>Bryum pseudotriquetrum</i> > <i>Ceratodon purpureus</i> .	B	C	FC/L	(Lewis Smith 1999)
Reduced productivity	Physiological	<i>D. antarctica</i> and <i>C. quitensis</i> : negligible midday field P <sub>n</sub> at canopy air temp >20 °C, but high P <sub>n</sub> at temps <10 °C. Lab tests show high temp, not visible irradiance, was responsible for P <sub>n</sub> depression.	V	M	F+L	(Xiong <i>et al.</i> 1999)
		<i>D. antarctica</i> pronounced decline in P <sub>n</sub> at supra-optimal temps(>12 °C), P <sub>n</sub> negligible at 35 °C.	V	M	L	(Vining <i>et al.</i> 1997)
		Increased photoinhibition with increased temp.	B	C	F	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1989)
		<i>Sanionia uncinata</i> : dark respiration decreased as temp increased (tested range: 0 – 20 °C). Low temps important for positive carbon balance: climate warming may reduce carbon gain by increasing respiratory loss.	B	M	L	(Nakatsubo 2002)
Morphological changes	Physiological	<i>D. antarctica</i> : leaf anatomy shows plastic response to changes in growth conditions.	V	M	FC/L	(Romero <i>et al.</i> 1999)
Physiological ranges	Physiological	<i>C. quitensis</i> optimal leaf temp for P <sub>n</sub> 14 °C, <i>D. antarctica</i> 10 °C. Continued warming: increased frequency of supraoptimal temps, but canopy temps currently average 4.3 °C and remain < optimal for 86% of diurnal periods during the growing season. Continued warming will usually increase P <sub>n</sub> .	V	M	FC/L	(Xiong <i>et al.</i> 1999)
		Optimum temp for P <sub>n</sub> : <i>D. antarctica</i> 13 °C, <i>C. quitensis</i> 19 °C.	V	M	L	(Edwards & Lewis Smith 1988)
		Optimal temp regime (day/night) 22/15 °C for a moss species.	B	C	FC/L	(Longton 1981)
		P <sub>n</sub> highest at 15 °C for <i>B. argenteum</i> (measured over temp range –8 to 21 °C).	B	C	L	(Green <i>et al.</i> 2000)
		<i>Polytrichum alpestre</i> : optimum temp 5-10 °C or 15 °C, depending on growth conditions.	B	M	L	(Collins 1977)
		<i>Drepanocladus uncinatus</i> : 15 °C, regardless of growth conditions. Species-specific response to temp: <i>P. alpestre</i> showed ability to acclimate to changed temps.				
		4 species: differing responses to 5-25 °C temp range. General trend: P <sub>n</sub> increased with increasing temp. <i>D. uncinatus</i> shows 20-25 °C optimum.	B	M	L	(Rastorfer 1972)
		P <sub>n</sub> maximal at 20-25 °C for <i>B. argenteum</i> : and 15-20 °C for <i>Umbilicaria aprina</i> .	B	C	FC/L	(Green <i>et al.</i> 1998)
		Lichen phycobionts (from 6 species of lichen): optimal temp 15 °C.	L	C	L	(Schofield & Ahmadjian 1972)
Surface temps can reach relatively high levels, but are not sustained throughout the growing	Physiological	Moss surface temps measured over 13 d period) >10 °C 44%, >20 °C 24% of the time.	B	C	F	(Lewis Smith 1988)
		Moss surface temp reached 17 °C (1 d observation).	B	C	F	(Seppelt & Ashton 1978)
		<i>P. alpestre</i> , 80% of summer: -5 to +5 °C.	B	M	F	(Collins 1977)
		<i>B. pseudotriquetrum</i> : field thallus temp up to 27 °C.	B	M	F	(Schlensog & Schroeter 2000)
		Hourly microclimate measurements 1972-4: <i>Polytrichum</i> surface temps >+5 °C and <-15 °C uncommon (<15% of measurements). Absolute max & min temps: +35 °C and -26.5 °C.	B	M	F	(Walton 1982)
		<i>Andreaea gainii</i> and <i>Usnea antarctica</i> : thallus temps in the range 0 °C – 15 °C, which is thought to	B	M	F	(Schlensog &



	season		be almost optimal for $P_n$ in both species.	L			Schroeter 2000)
			When lichens were wet, and photosynthetically active, surface temps exceeded air temps but remained less than 10 °C.	L	C	F	(Kappen 1985c)
			Measured surface and air temps + irradiance (5 weeks), showed lichen growth conditions to be relatively warm: rock surface & hydrated lichen up to 19 °C higher than air, overall rock surface temp averaged 5.5 °C warmer than air.	L R	C	F	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1998b)
			Within soil and plant habitats: spring/summer (Nov-Mar) minimum daily temps close to 0 °C.	S	M	L	(Davey <i>et al.</i> 1992)
	Surface temps and fluctuations are often greater than ambient	Physiological	Field moss surface temps (56 d measurement): >0 °C >80% of the time, >10 °C 25% of the time.	B	C	F	(Lewis Smith 1999)
			Field moss surface temps (27 d measurement): < 5% of readings >13 °C, ~60% <2.5 °C.	B	C	F	(Longton 1974)
			Extreme surface temp diurnal fluctuation of -9.2 to 42.8 °C.	B	C	F	(Lewis Smith 1988)
			Moss and lichen summer temps higher than, and fluctuate more than, air temps (measured over 5 d). Exposed lichen surface temp recorded to fluctuate >30 °C during a 5 h period.	B L E	C	F	(Melick & Seppelt 1994b)
			Moss surface temp range (~17 °C to ~0 °C) greater than range of air temps (~4 °C to ~-2 °C), during 1 d of observation.	B S A	C	F	(Seppelt & Ashton 1978)
			Lichen temp higher (with greater fluctuations) than the relatively stable air temp (~28 h diurnal plot). Air temp ~0 °C, lichen temp ~-0-35 °C.	L	C	F	(Inoue 1989)
		Diurnal fluctuations greater at ground level than in air above or soil below.	E	C	F	(Longton 1974)	
		Surface temp (rock) greater, with greater fluctuations, than air temps.	E	C	F	(Rudolph 1966)	
Increased freeze-thaw	Increased damage	Physiological	Increased loss of soluble carbohydrates, species differences in % loss.	B	C	FC/ L	(Melick & Seppelt 1992)
			<i>P. alpestre</i> : repeated freeze-thaw cycles caused a greater reduction in gross PS than constant freezing over the same time period. Frequency of freeze-thaw significant impact: 12h cycles, more damage than 24 or 48h cycles.	B	M	L	(Kennedy 1993)
	Environmental	Spring/summer (Nov-Mar) few freeze-thaw cycles, those that occurred were not severe. Authors suggest that freeze-thaw cycling is unlikely to currently limit organism survival during summer: if freeze-thaw increases in frequency or severity, this may change.	S	M	F	(Davey <i>et al.</i> 1992)	

**Abbreviations:** DR dark respiration, d day, LAR Leaf area ration,  $\Phi$ PSII quantum yield of PSII,  $P_n$  net photosynthesis, PS photosynthesis, RGR relative growth rate, temp temperature, veg Vegetation, **Plant group codes:** V vascular plants, B bryophytes, M moss, L lichen, L(P) lichen phycobiont, A algae, F fungi, C cyanobacteria, S soil. **Location codes:** C Continental Antarctic, M = Maritime Antarctic. **Study Type:** F Field based, L Laboratory based, FC/L Field Collected / Laboratory analyses, R Review, M-FD Model, based on field data, M-LD Model, based on laboratory data

**Table 5.** Summary of effects of precipitation and water relations on Antarctic vascular plants, bryophytes and terrestrial algae.

Scenario	Impact	Nature of Impact	Major Results	Plant Group	Location	Field / Lab	References
Increased Aridity	Changes to species distribution	Ecological	Presence of moribund moss is indicative of a drying trend: lichen-dominated veg is expanding in area, whilst bryophyte communities are contracting, to lower lying areas with reliable moisture supply.	B L	C	F	(Melick & Seppelt 1997)
	Lichens most likely to survive: adapted to dry conditions	Physiological	ΦPSII highest at intermediate WC.	L	C	F	(Hovenden <i>et al.</i> 1994)
			Capable of absorbing water from air. Modeled using field data.	L	C	F+L	(Hovenden & Seppelt 1995b)
			Desiccated thalli able to reactivate P <sub>n</sub> after uptake of water vapor from air.	L	C	FC/L	(Lange & Kappen 1972)
			Metabolic activity in thalli rehydrated from snow at subzero temps (-4°C).	L	C	L	(Schroeter <i>et al.</i> 1997)
	Requires extreme tolerance of desiccation	Physiological	3 bryophyte species (Windmill Islands, East Antarctica) show species-specific responses to desiccation. <i>Grimmia antarctici</i> (endemic to Antarctica) appears least tolerant of desiccation and is therefore likely to be adversely affected by an increase in frequency, duration and/or severity of desiccation events.	B	C	FC/L	(Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2000)
			Maritime species from a variety of habitats (hydric, mesic, xeric) showed differences in gross PS: hydric species are drought sensitive.	B	M	FC/L	(Davey 1997a)
			Recovery from desiccation faster in xeric than hydric species, but no correlation between habitat and final degree of recovery.	B	M	FC/L	(Davey 1997c)
			Maritime moss species from a variety of habitats (hydric, mesic, xeric) showed increased penetration of light into the moss as drying occurs, reducing loss of productivity during periods of desiccation.	B	M	FC/L	(Davey & Ellis-Evans 1996)
			Maritime liverwort ( <i>Marchantia berteroana</i> ) sensitive to desiccation, recovery of gross PS limited to approximately 10%.	B	M	FC/L	(Davey 1997b)
			Continental Antarctic lichens were capable of tolerating, and recovering from, desiccation	L	C	FC/L	(Lange & Kappen 1972)
	↑ Temperature fluctuations	Physiological	Exposed lichen thalli reached greater temps, with greater fluctuations, than moist moss bed. Measured temps only, no measurement of moisture.	B L	C	F	(Melick & Seppelt 1994b)
	Morphological impact	Physiological	<i>Bryum inconnexum</i> : Leaf size smaller and more diversified in dry habitats than in moist habitats. Leaf shape independent of water status.	B	C	FC/L	(Nakanishi 1979)
			<i>G. antarctici</i> : comparison of wet and dry sites - differences in turf and gametophyte morphology. Dry site: shorter shoots, leaves smaller and more tightly packed, cell size and number greater.	B	C	FC/L	(Wilson 1990)
Growth form and water relations related to habitat occupied. <i>Andreaea</i> and <i>Grimmia</i> species (small cushions) have low evaporation rates and take up water readily from any part of shoot: occupy dry sites. <i>Drepanocladus uncinatus</i> ranges in growth form and has a wide ecological amplitude in relation to water supply.			B	M	FC/L	(Gimingham & Lewis Smith 1971)	

Increased water availability	Correlations with species distribution	Ecological	Distribution of moss species correlated with moisture availability. Quantification of % cover of species along hydrological gradient - no quantification of moisture content. Histograms of % cover along transects. Description of trends.	B	C	F	(Lewis Smith 1999)
			Distribution of moss species and <i>Nostoc</i> influenced by water level - e.g. <i>Pottia</i> shows significant correlation with the drier habitat of hummocks. Semi-quantitative, largely mapping of waterline on transects. Some statistical analysis performed.	B	C	F	(Schwarz <i>et al.</i> 1992)
			Moss community types correlated with nature of moisture supply.	B	C	F	(Shimizu 1977)
			Distribution of moss species correlated with moisture availability. Quantification of both species distribution and water availability.	B	C	F + FC/L	(Selkirk & Seppelt 1987)
			Windmill Islands: 4 major veg groups, correlated with water availability: pure bryophyte communities highest water availability, lichen communities lowest.	B L	C	F	(Melick & Seppelt 1997)
			Veg community types have different WCs. Quantitative measurements (moisture content in variety of community types), descriptive analysis.	B L	C	F	(Lewis Smith 1990)
			Distribution of some moss sociations related to pattern of water supply (based on type of water supply: small, medium or large snow drift, lake-shore, seepage or stream). Quantification of veg patterns (development of sociations) + each veg quadrat assigned 1 of 6 water supply types. Veg + water data tabulated together - but analysis descriptive only.	B L	C	F	(Nakanishi 1977)
			Moss species diversity and abundance positively correlated with soil WC.	B L	C	F + FC/L	(Leishman & Wild 2001)
			Fine-scale (intra-transect) plant dispersion patterns determined primarily by physical factors affecting water availability (amount of drift snow available and the effects of shelter and shade on evaporation rates).	B L A	C	F	(Ryan & Watkins 1989)
			Soil WC highest in areas with moss veg. Quantitative measurements, no analysis of data.	B L A	C	F + FC/L	(Bolter <i>et al.</i> 2000)
			<i>Buellia frigida</i> (crustose lichen) distribution explained by frequency and duration of meltwater moistening, of rock surface. Qualitative observations and some quantification.	L	C	F	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1998b)
	Experimentally determined impact of water on species distributions	Ecological	With up to 75% crustose lichen encrustation, moribund moss regeneration potential greatest in permanently moist samples. Regeneration potential reduced in samples irrigated weekly and non-existent in samples irrigated fortnightly.	B L	C	FC/L	(Melick & Seppelt 1997)
			Physiological	14 bryophyte species (from hydric, mesic or xeric sites): broadscale community patterns explained by water availability, but other factors must be important in determining fine scale patterns of species distribution (within habitats of similar water availability).	B	M	FC/L
		Liverwort ( <i>M. berteriana</i> ), low tolerance of desiccation, therefore limited to relatively mild habitats. If conditions become wetter, might expand into new areas that are currently too severe.		B	M	L	(Davey 1997b)
Water availability determines the stability of lichen symbiosis: in wet habitats the free-living algal and intermediate forms became dominant.		L A		M	FC/L	(Huskies <i>et al.</i> 1997a)	

↑ P <sub>n</sub> and growth	Physiological	Increased P <sub>n</sub> and larger temp range for P <sub>n</sub> in mesic versus xeric moss.	B	C	F + FC/L	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1989)
		Mesic (compared to xeric) species showed largest growth increments under a range of WCs. Generally, species-specific responses to water availability (measured growth increments, lateral shoot production, leaf density and size, optimal WC etc.).	B	M	FC/L	(Fowbert 1996)
		13 moss species, 1 liverwort: Xeric species gross PS currently often water-limited.	B	M	FC/L	(Davey 1997c)
		Liverwort ( <i>M. berteriana</i> ) desiccation had highly adverse effect on photosynthetic capacity, with only about 10% recovery after dehydration.	B	M	L	(Davey 1997b)
		<i>Andreaea gainii</i> and <i>Usnea antarctica</i> : xeric fellfield species, only water source precipitation, active only for about 40% and 31% of the time respectively.	B L	M	F	(Schlensog & Schroeter 2000)
↓ P <sub>n</sub> and growth	Physiological	Field manipulations (3 lichen species): Depression of P <sub>n</sub> at supra-optimal WC (optimum WC for P <sub>n</sub> was 75-115% dwt). Current climate: conditions of supra-optimal WC relatively rare.	L	C	F	(Kappen & Breuer 1991)
No impact on P <sub>n</sub>	Physiological	<i>G. antarctici</i> : No difference in photosynthetic physiology between wet and dry sites.	B	C	FC/L	(Wilson 1990)
		14 moss species on Signy Is., no relationship between habitat (xeric versus hydric) and photosynthetic performance (rates of gross PS, P <sub>n</sub> or DR).	B	M	FC/L	(Convey 1994)
Characteristics of wet habitats (compared to dry habitats): <i>Continental Antarctica</i>	Physiological	Higher concentrations of nitrogen and potassium.	V B L A	M	FC/L	(Fabiszewski & Wojtun 2000)
		Higher turf CO <sub>2</sub>	B	C	FC/L	(Tarnawski <i>et al.</i> 1992)
		Higher WCs at full hydration and at 50% photosynthetic efficiency.	B	C	FC/L	(Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2000);
		Higher production rates and a wider temp range for P <sub>n</sub> .	B	C	F + FC/L	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1989)
		Higher chlorophyll concentrations.	B L	C	F + FC/L	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1989; Melick & Seppelt 1994a)
		Higher levels of soluble carbohydrates.	B L	C	FC/L	(Melick & Seppelt 1994a; Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2000)
		Higher rates of nitrogen fixation.	B C	C	F + FC/L	(Davey 1982; Davey & Marchant 1983)
Higher tissue freezing points.	L	C	FC/L	(Melick & Seppelt 1994a)		
<i>Signy Is., Maritime Antarctica</i>		At some sites at least water was not limiting P <sub>n</sub> .	B	M	F	(Collins 1977)
		P <sub>n</sub> in xeric species, often water-limited.	B	M	FC/L	(Davey 1997c)
		Rates of P <sub>n</sub> for a range of xeric and hydric species showed no difference between habitats.	B	M	FC/L	(Convey 1994)

	Species specific differences in physiological response	Physiological	Differences in species tolerance of desiccation:; <i>G. antarctici</i> was least tolerant, <i>Ceratodon purpureus</i> most tolerant and <i>B. pseudotriquetrum</i> intermediate.	B	C	L	(Robinson <i>et al.</i> 2000)
			Lichen ( <i>Mastodia tessellata</i> ) and its free-living phycobiont ( <i>Prasiola crispa</i> ): when occurring in symbiosis as a lichen, decline in $P_n$ , measured when hydrated, no change in $P_n$ in either the free-living algae, or an intermediate form of the lichen and alga.	L A	M	FC/L	(Huskies <i>et al.</i> 1997a)
			Rates of uptake and loss of water measured for 6 lichen species. Differences between species detected and thought to be due to differences in thalli morphology and anatomy.	L	M	F+L	(Huskies <i>et al.</i> 1997b)
Changes to snow regime	Permanent snow banks an important moisture source	Ecological	Steep decrease in moss moisture content as distance from snow patch increased.	B	C	F + FC/L	(Lewis Smith 1990)
			Positive correlation between veg cover and extension and duration of shallow snow cover.	B, L	C	F	(Kappen <i>et al.</i> 1990)
	Snow cover positive impacts	Physiological	Lichens photosynthetically active when moistened by snowfall or by run-off from snow melt.	L	C	F	(Hovenden <i>et al.</i> 1994)
			WC of lichens resulting from contact with snow was frequently near the optimum for $P_n$ .	L	C	F	(Kappen & Breuer 1991)
			Lichens have total reliance on snow as a water supply.	L	C	F	(Hovenden <i>et al.</i> 1994)
			Quantum flux density under 15cm snow can reach light saturation for $P_n$ of <i>U. sphacelata</i> at 0°C.	L	C	F	(Kappen & Breuer 1991)
			Lichen productivity possible when snow covered: light compensation point low at low temps. Indirect quantification.	L	C	F + FC/L	(Lange & Kappen 1972)
Up to 20% of the photosynthetically active radiation penetrates 20cm of winter snow.	Sn	M	F	(Walton 1982)			

**Abbreviations:** DR dark respiration, dwt dry weight,  $\Phi$ PSII quantum yield of PSII,  $P_n$  net photosynthesis, PS photosynthesis, temp temperature, veg Vegetation, WC water content. ↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing. Plant group codes and Study Type as in Table 4.

**Table 6.** Summary of effects of nutrients on Antarctic vascular plants, bryophytes and terrestrial algae.

Scenario	Impact	Nature of impact	Major Results	Plant Group	Location	Field / Lab	References
Increased nutrient availability	Relative species distribution	Ecological	Field survey of broadscale veg patterns. Environmental influences observed and described. Crustose lichens: abundant at sites with nutrient input from skuas. Snow algae occurred in areas fertilized by birds. <i>Prasiola crispa</i> (algae) is nitrophilous and common in the vicinity of bird colonies.	B L A	C	F	(Broady 1989)
			Coarse-scale (inter-transect) analysis of plant dispersal patterns showed significant responses along bird-influence gradients. Quantitative statistical analysis of veg and environmental data.	B L A	C	F	(Ryan & Watkins 1989)
			Field observations suggested that nitrogenous debris was a major factor in influencing the distribution of the veg components. Data presented as a veg map of the study area, no quantitative statistical analysis.	B L A	C	F	(Rudolph 1963)
			Determined distribution of veg (using 1km grid squares). Description of field observations: nutrients (probably N & P) from bird nest sites have positive influence on distribution, biomass and species diversity of terrestrial lithic algae, mosses and lichens.	B L A	C	F	(Seppelt <i>et al.</i> 1988)
			Distribution of macroscopic terrestrial cryptogams determined by type of N compounds and the concentration of water-soluble salts.	B L A	C	F+ L	(Schofield & Ahmadjian 1972)
			Positive relationship between lichens (diversity and abundance) and soil nutrients, P more influential than N. Soil nutrients not significantly associated with moss diversity or abundance. Quantitative statistical analysis of veg and environmental data.	B L	C	FC/ L + F	(Leishman & Wild 2001)
			Field survey of veg patterns (aerial photography + ground truthing). Quantitative analysis of soil characteristics (conductivity, pH, total N and total P). Mosses and lichens absent, and terrestrial algae <i>P. crispa</i> dominant, in eutrophic sites near bird colonies.	B L	C	F + FC/ L	(Melick <i>et al.</i> 1994a)
			Measured nutrient contents for a range of veg samples: description of relationship between moss communities and total N and C. <i>P. crispa</i> distribution influenced by P availability. Text in Japanese, figures suggest no quantitative statistical analysis.	B A	C	FC/ L+ F	(Yamanaka & Sato 1977)
			Species composition and distribution of lichen communities influenced by organic nutrients supplied by sea bird excrement. Some quantification of veg patterns (determined sociations). Nutrient relations descriptive (related to observed vicinity of bird nests).	L	C	F	(Nakanishi 1977)
			Suggests nutrient enrichment from birds explains relatively rich coastal communities.	L	C	F	(Kappen 1985b)
			Well-developed lichens around rookeries or nests of sea birds (except where wind-blown sea-spray is significant). Based on veg mapping and observations of environment.	L	C	F	(Inoue 1989)

			Quantitative measurement of substratum chemistry and veg cover along a transect. Lack of effect of nutrients on distribution of major lichen species, but several minor species restricted to nutrient-rich zones (nutrient source: ancient penguin rookery). Relationship between chemical and veg data descriptive.	L	C	FC/ L+ F	(Hovenden & Seppelt 1995a)
			Species distributions within veg complexes related to factors indicating nutrient status (Cl <sup>-</sup> and NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> concentration, distance from sea) as well as a range of microclimate variables. Although canonical correspondent analyses found a large amount of the variation could not be explained by these factors. Concentration of Cl <sup>-</sup> , NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> and PO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> correlated with distribution of lichen complexes: <i>Usnea</i> complex – low whilst <i>Mastodia-Rinodina</i> complex – high salt concentration.	L	M	F	(Gremmen <i>et al.</i> 1994)
No change to nutrient availability	Nutrients currently non-limiting	Physiological	Soil nutrients not limiting to growth of alien vascular species.	V	C	L	(Rudolph 1966)
			High mobility of plant nutrients in Signy Island ecosystem. K and Ca provided by rock weathering, Na and Mg from the ocean, phosphorous and nitrogen from fauna. Direct droppings and drainage particularly important for distribution of N.	V B	M	FC/ L	(Allen <i>et al.</i> 1967)
			Soils under moss favourable for soil respiration. Moss appears to act as a sink for nutrients originating from bird nests.	B S	C	FC/ L	(Cocks <i>et al.</i> 1998)
			Fellfield plants and soils obtain substantial quantities of N from atmospheric precipitation. In the absence of other limitations, precipitation N would allow an annual biomass increase for <i>U. antarctica</i> of 14% at Deception Is. and 7% at Ross Is.	B L S	C M	FC/ L	(Greenfield 1992a)
			Precipitation N major N input to fellfield biota (Cape Bird and Signy Island).		C M	FC/ L	(Greenfield 1992b)
			<i>U. sphacelata</i> highly efficient at scavenging inorganic N from snow meltwater, capturing 92 and 87% of NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> and NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> , respectively.	L	C	FC/ L	(Crittenden 1998)
			Nutrients not limiting to veg: K, Mg and P values often extraordinarily high.	S	C	FC/ L	(Beyer <i>et al.</i> 2000)
Changed nutrient availability	Species-specific differences in nutrient relations	Physiological	Measured differences in annual nitrogen content trends for two lichen species: <i>U. sphacelata</i> and <i>Umbilicaria decussata</i> .	L	C	FC/ L	(Hovenden 2000)

**Abbreviations:** veg Vegetation, Plant group codes and Study Type as in Table 4

## **Figure legends**

**Figure 1.** Map of Antarctica. The Maritime Antarctic is the area to the left of the dashed line. The Periantarctic islands are found north of the limit of sea ice and bounded by the polar front. Locations where much of the research described in this review was conducted include; Signy Island, Maritime Antarctic, Windmill Islands, Wilkes Land and Ross Island. Victoria Land.

**Figure 2.** Depth and area of the Antarctic ozone layer from 1980-2002 showing (a) minimum ozone concentration (Dobson Units) between 60-90 °S and (b) area of the springtime Antarctic ozone hole (ozone depth <220 DU, data represent 30 d mean with vertical lines showing minimum and maximum area). The area of the Antarctic Continent is shown for comparison. Data were collected from the following spacecraft; the Nimbus 7 Total ozone monitoring spectrophotometer (TOMS; 1979 and 1992), the Meteor 3 TOMS (1993 and 1994) and the Earth probe TOMS (1996-2000). No TOMS was in orbit in 1995. Figure redrawn from NASA (2002).

**Figure 3.** Diagram to show potential effects of UV-B radiation on plant cells, showing screening, sites of damage and mechanisms of protection.

**Figure 4** Schematic model of impact of climate change on water availability in Antarctic ecosystems.



Figure 1

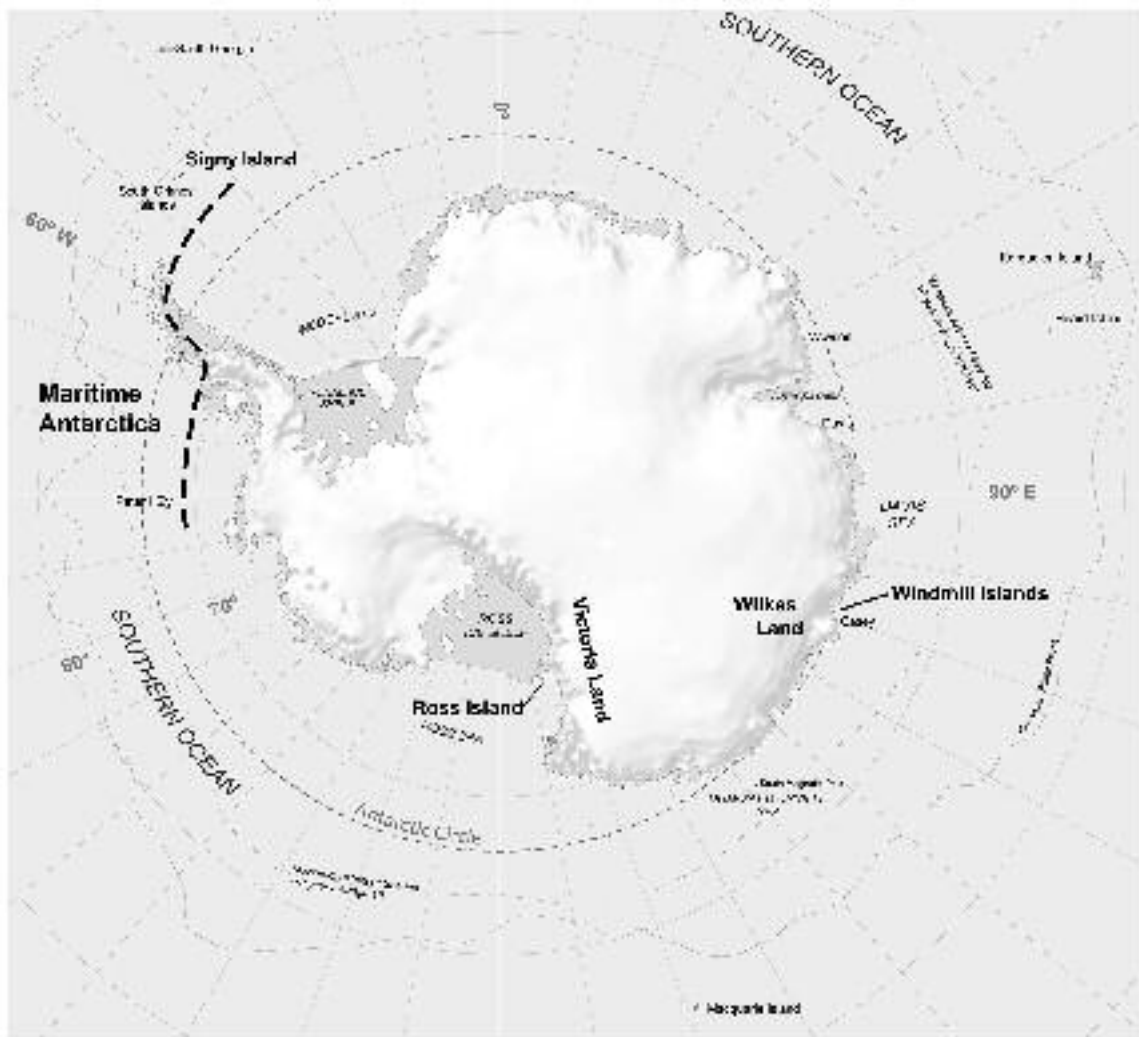


Figure 2

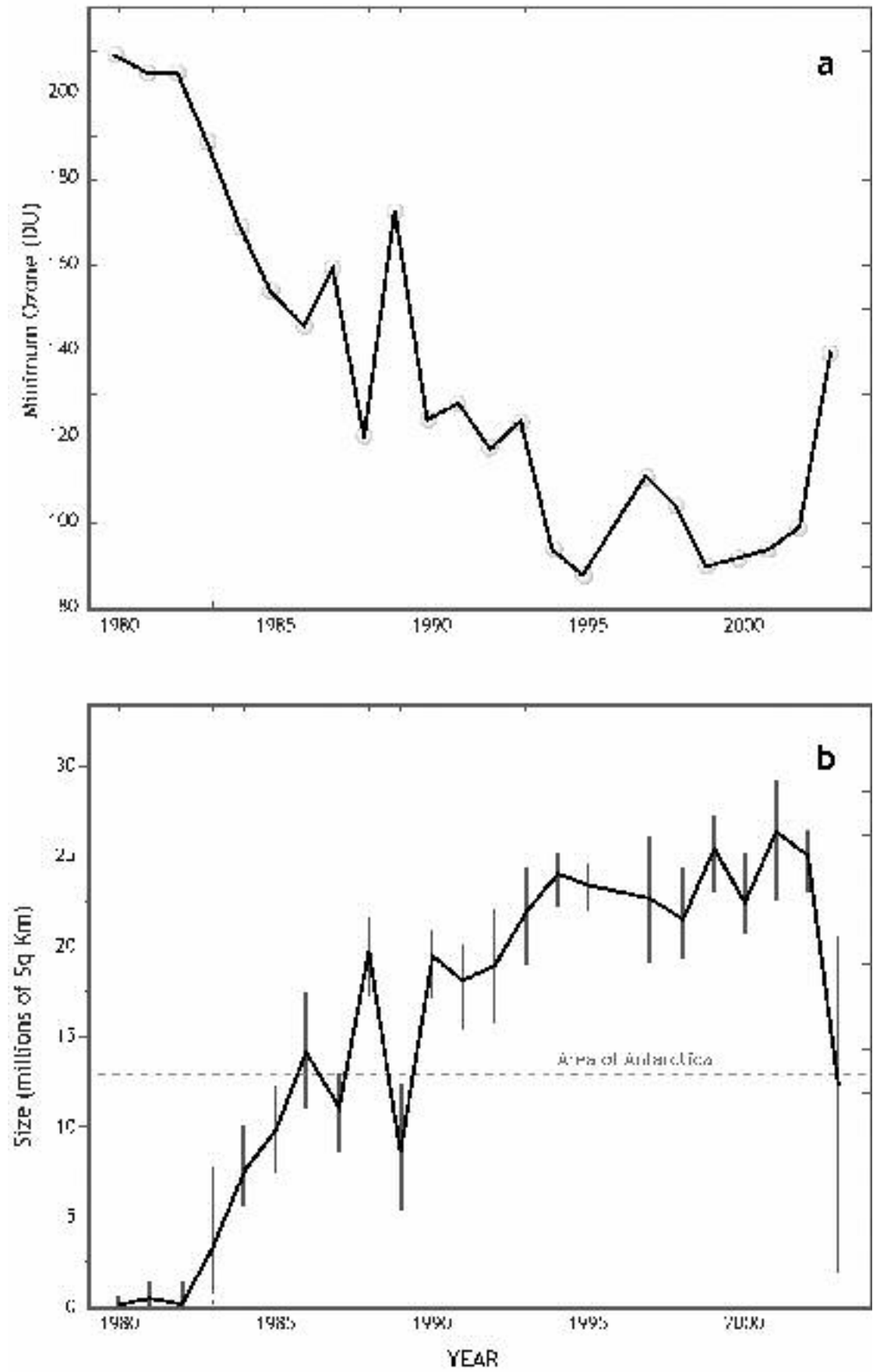


Figure 3

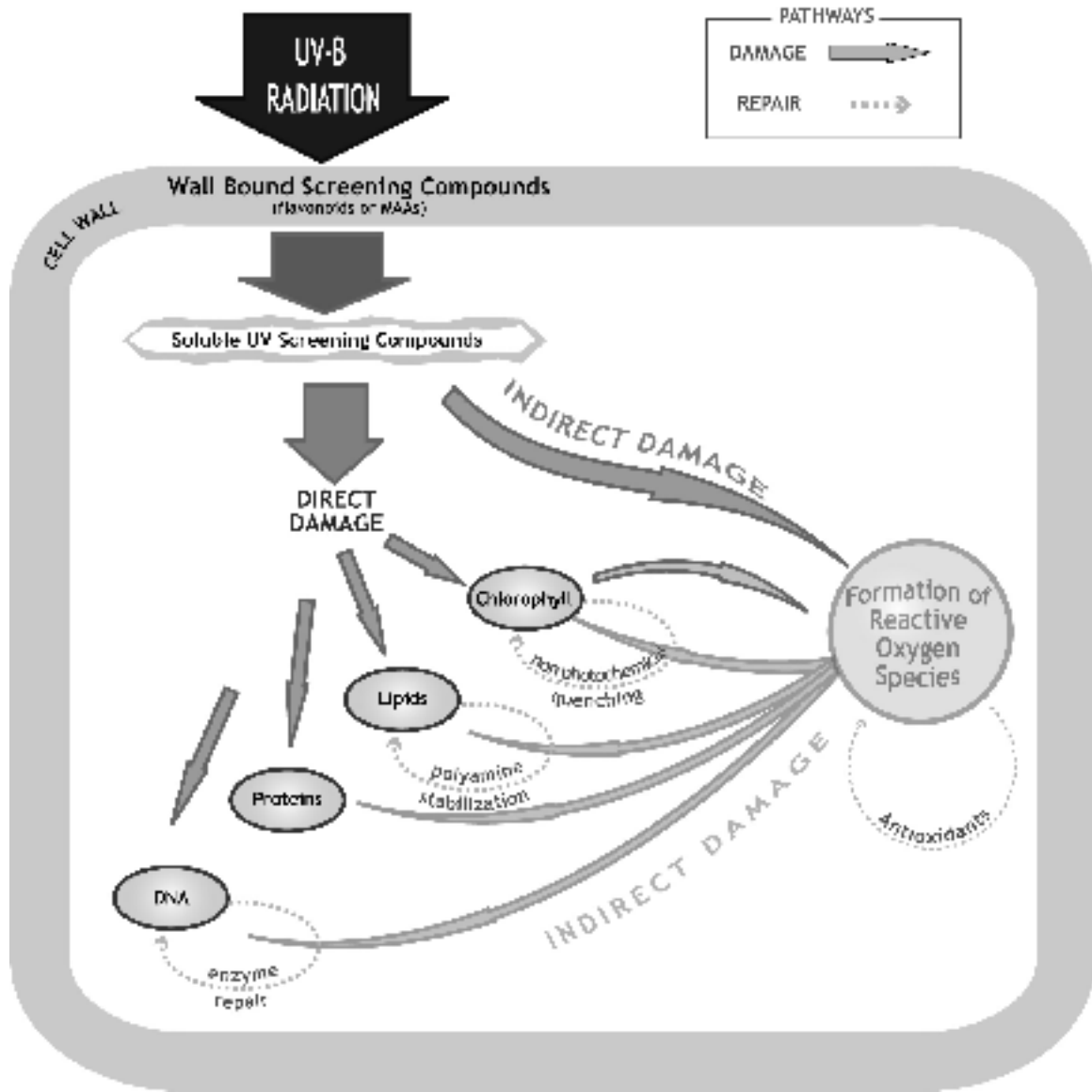


Figure 4

