1 Running head: Future range of a migratory ungulate

## 2 Future suitability of habitat in a migratory ungulate under climate change

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## 13 Abstract

14 With climate change, the effect of global warming on snow cover is expected to cause range 15 expansion and enhance habitat suitability for species at their northern distribution limits. 16 However, how this depend on landscape topography and sex in size-dimorphic species remains 17 uncertain, and is further complicated for migratory animals following climate-driven seasonal 18 resource fluctuations across vast landscapes. Using 11 years of data from a partially migratory 19 ungulate at their northern distribution ranges, the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), we predicted sex-20 specific summer and winter habitat suitability in diverse landscapes under medium and severe global warming. We found large increases in future winter habitat suitability, resulting in 21 22 expansion of winter ranges as currently unsuitable habitat became suitable. Even moderate 23 warming decreased snow cover substantially, with no suitability difference between warming 24 scenarios. Winter ranges will hence not expand linearly with warming, even for species at their 25 northern distribution limits. Although less pronounced than in winter, summer ranges also 26 expanded and more so under severe warming. Summer habitat suitability was positively 27 correlated with landscape topography and ranges expanded more for females than males. Our 28 study highlights the complexity of predicting future habitat suitability for conservation and 29 management of size-dimorphic, migratory species under global warming.

*Keywords:* Climate change, IPCC, home range, landscape composition, migration, species
distribution models

## 32 Introduction

33 Climate change is a substantial threat to biodiversity and ecosystems worldwide [1]. Increasing 34 temperatures are affecting a wide range of taxa, leading to phenological mismatch across trophic 35 levels [2], and shifting, contracting or expanding distribution ranges [3-5]. Climate change is 36 particularly topical for migratory species [6, 7], who follow seasonal resource fluctuations in 37 time and space [8]. These resources are highly affected by climate, making management and 38 conservation of migratory species increasingly challenging [6]. In seasonal environments, 39 animals migrate between separate seasonal ranges, e.g. summer and winter ranges or wet and dry 40 season ranges, and these ranges are typically situated at different latitudes and/or elevations. 41 With the predicted increasing temperatures and lack of snow cover in the decades to come [9], it 42 is of particular interest to derive predictions of how migratory species will respond to changes in 43 their seasonal ranges.

44 A widespread method to make predictions about future habitat availability for different 45 species under climate change is species distribution models (SDMs) and estimation of habitat 46 suitability maps [10]. SDMs have been used to predict future ranges of a variety of organisms 47 such as plants, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals [e.g. 11, 12], including non-migratory 48 ungulates such as Syalbard reindeer [Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus; 13] and mountain goat 49 [Oreamnos americanus; 14]. However, this becomes more complicated for migratory animals 50 with two disparate seasonal ranges, as climatic factors interact with topography and determine 51 the weather ultimately affecting migratory animals and their food resources [15]. The migration 52 patterns of ungulates in temperate environments are largely driven by snow levels during fall, 53 forcing them to stay at low elevation/low latitude during winter. In spring they expand their 54 ranges and increase access to early forage maturation in summer ranges at higher elevation or

latitude [8]. Thus, habitat suitability varies for migratory species depending on season, i.e. with
snow levels determining the available habitat in winter, and temperature influencing the quality
of summer habitats.

58 We aim to investigate how the current available habitat for a migratory species depends 59 on season, sex and landscape topography, and to predict how winter and summer ranges will 60 change under two alternative future emission scenarios (medium and severe), both in terms of size and habitat suitability. We use 11 years of data (2005-2015) from a total of 192 GPS marked 61 62 red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) in Norway, a partially migratory species [16]. This study system is 63 particularly useful, as it spans over a long south-north and coast-inland gradient, and an 64 extensive ~800 meter elevation gradient including a range of different landscapes [8, 15]. Snow 65 levels is the limiting factor for winter range availability [17, 18]. Global warming predicts 66 increased temperatures, less precipitation falling as snow and a prolonged growing season, but 67 the magnitude depends on landscape topography [9]. We therefore predict an overall range 68 expansion and increase in red deer habitat suitability for both seasons and emission scenarios, with a more pronounced response in the severe scenario. We expect a larger range expansion and 69 70 increase in habitat suitability with increasing elevation, as snow levels and temperature are 71 limiting factors for current use of high elevation areas. Finally, polygynous species such as the 72 red deer show sex-specific use of the elevation gradient, with males using higher elevation areas 73 to a larger extent since they have no dependent offspring requiring protective forest habitat [19]. 74 We therefore explore differences between the sexes in future habitat suitability and range size.

## 75 Materials and methods

76 Study area

77 The study area comprises 4 counties (Sør-Trøndelag, Møre og Romsdal, Sogn og Fjordane and 78 Hordaland) situated in the core area for red deer on the western part of Southern Norway, where 79 ~90% of red deer in Norway are harvested yearly (http://www.ssb.no; Fig.1). The vegetation is 80 mostly in the boreonemoral zone dominated by Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris) and deciduous 81 forests, with increasing domination of birch (Betula sp.) northwards. Norway spruce (Picea abies) 82 has been planted on a large scale. Temperature and precipitation generally decrease from coast to 83 inland and from south to north, while snow depth and number of days with snow increases along 84 the same gradients. The topography is characterized by diverse elevation gradients, with 85 generally steeper terrain and higher elevations inland.

#### 86 Red deer GPS data

87 Adult red deer (females≥1.5 and males≥2.5 years old) were fitted with GPS collars (Followit, 88 Sweden and Vectronic, Germany) between 2005-2015 [16, 17]. The individuals were darted on 89 winter feeding grounds in winter [January-March; 20], following a standard procedure approved 90 by the Norwegian Animal Research Authority. The GPS collars were preprogrammed to record a 91 position every 1-2 hours, and the individuals were followed between 1-3 years, depending on the 92 GPS collar battery life, technical difficulties, mortalities and recaptures. GPS locations from the 93 first 24 hours after marking were removed, and the remaining raw location data were screened 94 for outliers following Bjørneraas et al. [21; <0.01%]. The rate of successful GPS locations 95 obtained by the collars and the magnitude of the GPS location error vary with canopy cover of 96 habitat and topography [e.g. lower success rate in areas with steep mountains; 22]. In our study area these sources of errors were quantified in using the same collar types as the in red deer [23]. 97 98 Variable success rate may influence the models, and to avoid bias we simulated missing GPS 99 locations using a map of the study area with an associated probability of obtaining a GPS

location in each pixel, based on the models built by Godvik et al. [23] and according to Frair et al.
[22]. For details on the simulation of missing locations see Godvik et al. [23] and Loe et al. [24].

102 We used the model-fitting approach developed by Bunnefeld et al. [25], and sophisticated 103 by Bischof et al. [8] and Rivrud et al. [17], to determine red deer migration patterns. We retained 104 individuals with clear migratory movement patterns. Migration is rapid and merely a transit 105 between the separate summer- and winter areas [8, 17], and we therefore removed locations 106 between migration onset and -end for each individual. See Supporting Information Table S1 and 107 Fig. S1 for a summary of migration characteristics. Due to the marking/drop-off schedule, many 108 individuals were missing data for parts of the winter season. Individuals usually use the same 109 ranges every year (unpublished data), and partial winter ranges were retained if overlapping with 110 past or subsequent complete winter ranges. Seasonal ranges where individuals spent less than 111 two weeks were removed (N<sub>obs</sub>=38 ranges).

112 A total of 62 male and 130 female individual red deer covering 89 and 167 seasons 113 respectively, were available for summer analyses ( $N_{obs}$ =670328), and 53 male and 117 female 114 red deer covering 119 and 261 seasons respectively were available for winter analyses 115 ( $N_{obs}$ =842238).

### 116 Environmental variables

We derived all environmental variables from maps prepared and rasterized using ArcGIS 10.3 (ESRI, USA), with a resolution of 100x100 m. Elevation (m a.s.l.), slope (degrees) and aspect (radians) were derived from a digital elevation model. Aspect was cosine transformed to northness, a continuous variable ranging from 1 (north) to -1 (south). Layers with roads and coastline (scale 1:50000) were used to calculate the shortest linear distance (meters) to roads and

122 the coast for each pixel in the study area. Digital land resource maps (scale 1:5000) were 123 obtained from Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research, with information on 4 functional 124 habitat types relevant for our study species (agricultural areas, forests, mountains and marshland), 125 in addition to non-relevant habitats (inhabited areas, glaciers, water bodies and uncharted areas). 126 All locations sampled as used and available in non-relevant categories were removed before 127 running models, to assure balanced data. As the use of pastures depends on the availability in our 128 study area [23], we calculated the proportion of available pasture pixels to relevant habitat types 129 within a circle for each location with a season-specific radius corresponding to the median sizes 130 of 95% seasonal adaptive Local Convex Hull (a-LoCoH) home ranges (summer; 799 m, winter; 131 732 m).

132 Daily 1x1 km grids of snow water equivalent (SWE; used as proxy of snow depth) and 133 temperature covering the study area and -period were provided by the Norwegian Water 134 Resources and Energy Directorate and the Norwegian Meteorological Institute's (NMI), 135 respectively. These grids were made using statistical downscaling predicting SWE and 136 temperature based on observed values of temperature and precipitation recorded by NMI weather 137 stations in the area. Tests have shown close correlation with observed data, but some 138 overestimation of SWE occurred during snow melt in spring [26]. The Norwegian Centre for 139 Climate Services provided daily 1x1 km grids with future predictions of SWE and temperature 140 covering Norway [27]. The 1x1 km predictions were based on regional 12x12 km HIRHAM 141 simulations provided by the Danish Meteorological Institute and EURO-CORDEX [COordinated Regional climate Downscaling EXperiment; 28], which again were based on global predictions 142 143 from the Earth system model [EC-EARTH; 29]. Future predictions of red deer habitat suitability 144 were made for two alternative emission pathways, based on IPCC's Representative

Concentration Pathway (RCP) 4.5 and 8.5 [9, 30]. A medium emission scenario is represented by RCP4.5, where emission increases until ~2040, before a reduction and stabilization from ~2080. This scenario results in about 2.5°C increase in global temperature around year 2100, compared to 1850-1900. RCP8.5 represents a severe emission scenario, with emissions following the same trajectory as during the last decade. Global temperatures are expected to increase about 4°C in year 2100 relative to 1850-1900 in this scenario. Maps of monthly means for summer and winter used in the analyses can be seen in the Supplementary Material, Fig. S2.

All extraction of environmental variables and coupling to the red deer locations was donein R.

### 154 Estimation of use and availability

155 Use and availability were estimated on the home range and landscape scale respectively,

156 corresponding to second-order selection [31].

157 Availability: We divided all red deer GPS locations into three regions defined by natural barriers 158 in the landscape such as great fiords (Nobs=899153, 321343 and 446578 from north to south; Fig. 1). As the study area is on the western coast of Norway, locations were bounded by open sea in 159 160 the west and high elevation areas in the east, which resulted in the total GPS locations taking a 161 banana-shape. Thus, regular kernel- or minimum convex polygon methods did not perform well. 162 The available area in each region was therefore estimated by calculating the  $\alpha$ -convex polygons, 163 which is more flexible in shape, using the "alphahull" package in R [32]. A range of  $\alpha$ -values 164 were tested searching for a value of  $\alpha$  encompassing all locations, but minimizing large areas of 165 inaccessible habitats at high elevations. A radius  $\alpha$ =70000 m yielded the best estimate for all 166 regions. Larger values included obvious inaccessible areas, while smaller values resulted in

167 fragmented areas and excluded locations from the polygon. Available locations were sampled 168 randomly within the regional polygons. We sampled an excess of locations to be able to remove 169 locations located in non-habitat (e.g. water), and still keep a 1:1 relationship between used and 170 available locations. After removal of these locations, we retained the same amount of available 171 and used locations (N=1000 per individual/year). We also sampled 1000 random dates for each 172 individual within their individual monitoring period for extraction of SWE and temperature, 173 which were coupled with the sampled GPS locations representing availability.

174 Use: Used areas were estimated by calculating the 95% a-LoCoH home ranges for each animal 175 each season using the package "adehabitatHR" in R [33]. This method also performs very well 176 when dealing with linear home ranges or home ranges bounded by elements such as shorelines or 177 steep mountains. An *a*-value larger than the two longest distances between individual locations 178 should always give the 100% isopleth, but also keep a small radius of LoCoH elements in areas 179 of high use [34]. We therefore used this *a*-value when possible, and increased to the sum of the 180 three, four or five longest distances if the *a*-LoCoH did not converge. The mean number of 181 locations used for estimation of individual summer home ranges was 2618 (sd=1098) and 2211 182 (sd=1686) for winter ranges. Used locations were sampled within the individual 95% home range 183 polygons, and the number of locations sampled for each individual corresponded to the number 184 of available locations sampled to ensure a balanced data set. The individual dates sampled above 185 were coupled to the GPS locations representing use for extraction of SWE and temperature.

#### 186 Statistical analyses

187 Resource selection functions were estimated using generalized linear mixed effects models
188 (GLMMs) with a use-availability design, and random intercept for year to account for yearly

189 sampling variation. The response is binomial, where used locations are coded 1 and available 190 locations are coded 0. We ran 4 separate models, split by season (summer and winter) and sex 191 (Supplementary Material, Table S2). The landscape variables elevation, slope, northness, 192 distance to coast, distance to roads, proportion of pasture (arcsine-square root transformed), 193 SWE (mm; winter models) and temperature (°C; summer models), were all checked for 194 correlations before initial model building. Distance to roads and elevation were correlated with r >195 [0.6], and thus only elevation was retained as this was more relevant. We did not include the 196 categorical variable habitat type, as mountainous habitat was highly correlated with elevation. 197 All variables except proportion of pasture and northness were rescaled by centering on their 198 mean and dividing by their standard deviation to avoid convergence issues. Generalized additive 199 models were used to check for non-linearity. Temperature/SWE were included in interaction 200 with elevation, and we included the interaction between pasture availability and pasture use 201 following Godvik et al. [23] and Loe et al. [24] to account for trade-offs in pasture use. GLMMs 202 including all covariates and interactions listed above were estimated with the "glmer" function in 203 the "lme4" package [35] in R. The candidate GLMMs were subjected to backwards fixed-effect 204 model selection using likelihood ratio tests [36].

The most parsimonious models were extrapolated into habitat suitability maps by stacking the individual environmental maps into a multi-layered raster map, and predicting from the GLMMs the relative probability of detecting individual red deer in each pixel. Changes in future range size and habitat suitability were then quantified separately for each of the three regions. Three habitat suitability maps were estimated for each model; current (average temperature (July) and SWE (February) from 2005-2014), RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 year 2100 (both with average temperature (July) and SWE (February) from 2100). February and July averages were chosen as these months represent the most snow rich (February) and warmest (July) months
in Norway. All habitat suitability maps were made in R using the "raster" package [37]. Finally,
we calculated the niche overlap between present and future habitat suitability maps using
Schoener's D [38].

#### 216 Effects of sample size and measures of model quality

217 To ensure that the sample sizes were appropriate, we investigated how sample size (number of 218 individuals) affected model quality. For each of the four models we divided the data into a 219 training set and a test set as follows: Individuals were sampled randomly (range 2-70) with 220 replacement and the data set was subset based on these individuals, representing the training data. 221 We sampled with replacement as these individuals could represent other unsampled individuals 222 with identical habitat selection strategies [24]. The rest of the data set represented the test data. 223 The models were then fitted with the training data, and model predictions were made based on 224 the test data, from which we calculated the area under the ROC curve (AUC) and Cohen's Kappa 225 to assess prediction accuracy [39]. The process was repeated 100 times for each sample size. 226 Model quality of the 4 final models was assessed using k-fold cross validation [40]. The data set 227 was randomly split into 5 folds, of which 80% were assigned as training data and 20% as test 228 data. The model was fitted with the training data, and then evaluated on the test data by 229 estimating the overall prediction accuracy using the "caret" package in R [41]. The process was 230 repeated 20 times, yielding 100 model runs for each of the 4 models.

231

## 232 **Results**

#### 233 *Effects of sample size and measures of model quality*

The mean prediction accuracy stabilized at a sample size of 15 individuals for winter models

(both AUC and Cohen's Kappa), and for 25-30 individuals for summer models depending on the

236 quality measure used (see Supporting Information, Fig. S3). Overall prediction accuracy for the

237 final models based on *k*-fold cross validation was high, and winter models

238 (mean±SD=0.79±0.001 and 0.80±0.0003 for males and females respectively) performed better

than summer models (mean±SD=0.71±0.003 and 0.72±0.002 for males and females respectively).

## 240 Seasonal patterns of current habitat selection

The final summer models for both sexes included elevation, slope, distance to coast (squared), northness (squared), temperature and the interaction between elevation and temperature, and pasture trade-off term were included in female summer models only (Table1a). The final winter model for both sexes included elevation, slope (squared), distance to coast, northness, pasture trade-off, snow water equivalent (SWE) and the interaction between elevation and SWE (Table 1b).

247 Summer

During summer, habitat selection in the elevation gradient depended on temperature for both sexes, with increased selection of high elevation areas when temperatures increased (Table 1a). In general, high temperatures resulted in females showing stronger selection of high elevation than males (Table 1a). Selection for distance to coast and northness were both non-linear (Table 1a). Both sexes selected for intermediate distances from coast, with females utilizing a larger range of distances than males, and both avoided areas close to or very far from the coastline. There was strong selection for southfacing aspect for both sexes, with decreasing selection towards northfacing aspects. Females showed stronger avoidance of northfacing aspects than
males. Males and females both selected for steeper slopes and avoided flat terrain (Table 1a).

257 Winter

Selection in the elevation gradient during winter depended on snow levels for both sexes. In general, red deer avoided high elevation areas, and avoidance increased with increasing snow depths (Table 1b). The relationship was stronger for females than for males. Males and females both selected for areas closer to the coast and for southfacing aspects (Table 1b). Selection of slopes was non-linear for both sexes with selection for intermediate slopes and higher selection for steeper slopes for males than females (Table 1b). Finally, females showed stronger selection for pastures than males (Table 1b).

#### 265 *Current habitat suitability*

266 Habitat suitability maps during the study period showed larger sex differences in winter than in 267 summer (Fig. 2). During winter the most suitable habitat was constricted to coastal areas, and 268 more so for females than males (Fig. 2). The differences also varied across the south-north 269 gradient (Fig. 3). Males had consistently larger suitable ranges than females, and the range size 270 difference varied as a function of topography and distance to coast (Figs 2-3). Range size 271 differed less between the sexes in flatter regions with higher summer temperatures and less snow 272 (Sør-Trøndelag) than in steeper regions with lower summer temperatures (Sogn og Fjordane; Fig. 273 3; Supplementary Material, Table S3).

274 *Predictions of future ranges and habitat suitability* 

275 Habitat suitability increased strongly in winter under both scenarios, in particular in inland areas 276 (Fig. 4). The predicted effect of summer warming was less pronounced but differed more 277 between scenarios. In coastal areas, summer habitat suitability decreased for both sexes under 278 severe emission (Fig. 4). The future increase in habitat suitability was mainly due to poor or 279 unsuitable habitat becoming suitable during both seasons (Supplementary Material, Fig. S4). 280 Present high quality winter habitat improved further, while present high quality summer habitat 281 was unchanged or became less suitable (Supplementary Material, Fig. S4). In order to investigate 282 how changes in habitat suitability values affected range expansion, we need to set a threshold for 283 suitable habitat. With a threshold value of 0.2, the future ranges expanded in both seasons and 284 sexes, and the ranges expanded more for females than males (Fig. 3, Supplementary material, 285 Table S4). While females showed range expansion for all tested thresholds for habitat suitability 286 (0.1-0.5), male summer ranges were predicted to contract at suitability thresholds higher than 0.5, 287 implying that the currently best male summer habitat will deteriorate most (Supplementary 288 material, Table S4).

289 As predicted, future habitat suitability and range size was dependent on topography. 290 Ranges expanded substantially during winter for both sexes in all counties, but more in the 291 higher elevation counties (Hordaland and Sogn og Fjordane; Figs 3-4). Contrary to our 292 predictions, there were no differences in range size between the alternative emission scenarios 293 medium and severe (Fig. 3), suggesting that even with medium emission snow cover will be 294 limited. Summer range size was more variable both with elevation, emission scenarios and sexes. 295 There was a general future range expansion, with stronger increase under severe emission and in 296 higher elevation counties, as predicted, and the range expansion was larger for females than 297 males (Figs 3-4). The niche overlap between present and future habitat suitability, assessed by

Schoener's D, ranged from 0.887 – 0.994, and was higher in summer than in winter, and higher
for males than females (see Supporting Information, Table S5).

### 300 Discussion

301 Northern latitudes are expected to experience the greatest climate change impacts [9], with 302 potentially large consequences for migratory species following fluctuating resources across 303 broad scales [6]. Studies showing range shifts, contractions or expansions under climate change 304 are numerous, and represent many taxa [reviewed in 1]. However, few have done detailed 305 investigations of how the response varies within species over different seasons and landscapes, 306 and under alternative emission scenarios. We found three particularly important results in this 307 context. First, there was no difference in range expansion or habitat suitability between emission 308 scenarios during the winter season. This is likely due to the snow cover, which limit the winter 309 distribution ranges, disappearing already with medium emissions. Second, the magnitude of 310 range expansion and change in habitat suitability depended on landscape topography. Range 311 expansion was smaller in areas with overall lower elevation, and habitat suitability in coastal 312 areas even decreased in summer indicating possible range shifts. Finally, warmer summers 313 resulted in larger range expansion and higher habitat suitability for females than males. Males 314 remained less responsive to climate change, and even showed a marginal future range 315 contraction of highly suitable habitat. The seasonal effects interacting with sex and landscape 316 topography in response to climate change highlights the complexity of estimating future ranges 317 for migratory species.

318 Species at their northern distribution limits are expected to expand their ranges
319 northwards and to higher elevations with increasing global warming due to decrease of snow

320 cover, but this expansion will naturally reach a plateau when all snow cover is lost. In the Alps, 321 predictions show that an increase of 4°C in mean temperature will reduce the duration of snow 322 cover by 50% and 95% at 2000 and 1000 m a.s.l. respectively [42]. In our case, the predicted 323 decrease in snow cover is reflected in the large expansion of future winter ranges, but without 324 large range size differences between emission scenarios, indicating nonlinear effects of global 325 warming on snow cover and in turn habitat suitability. Range expansions reaching a plateau, or 326 range contraction, is a commonly documented pattern in species dependent on high elevation 327 habitat [1]. The magnitude of future winter range expansion differed with landscape composition, 328 where the northernmost county (Sør-Trøndelag), showed a lower increase than the remaining 329 counties. The future available red deer habitat under climate change is probably limited in this 330 region, as there is less high elevation area to expand into as snow levels decrease. Hence, the 331 global warming effects on habitat suitability are not necessarily stronger further north as 332 responses depend more on topography.

333 Increasing summer temperatures can affect migratory ungulates both directly and 334 indirectly. Large-bodied herbivores inhabiting northern environments have been shown to shift 335 to higher elevations, select habitats with more cover but lower forage quality, and reduce 336 foraging rates when temperatures increase to avoid heat stress [43]. Higher temperatures causes 337 increased lignification of plant cell walls due to rapid growth, reducing forage quality and 338 digestibility [44], and affecting the animals indirectly. Faster snow melt may cause more rapid 339 green-up, thus reducing time with high quality forage at early phenological stages [45]. Although 340 these are all predicted negative effects of a warming climate, increased temperatures can also be 341 positive, i.e. by making high elevation areas earlier covered by snow accessible. We found that 342 changes in future summer ranges and habitat suitability were less consistent than during winter,

343 and depended on sex, landscape topography and emission scenario. Female summer ranges 344 expanded more with increasing emission, and more than male ranges. Habitat suitability 345 depended on topography for both sexes, with an increase in inland areas and a decrease in coastal 346 areas. The red deer is a sexually size-dimorphic species, and the sexes also spend most of the 347 year segregated [19]. Males already use more high elevation habitat during summer than females 348 as they are not limited by offspring at heel [19]. Consequently, males will have less new 349 available habitat to expand into. Studies in birds found that male great bustards (Otis tarda), the 350 most sexually size-dimorphic bird species, selected areas with more shade than females during 351 the warmest periods of the day, and males also migrated further north at high summer temperatures [46, 47]. Hence, both direct and indirect sex-specific responses to climate may be 352 353 common for dimorphic species in many taxa and should be considered when predicting future 354 suitable ranges.

355 A limitation of SDM approaches [13, 14], is that habitat changes likely to occur over long 356 time scales are not taken into account. Warming temperatures and lack of snow are expected to 357 move the tree line and vegetation upwards [48, 49], and create new suitable habitats with a time 358 lag. The tree line ecotone is a major effect causing a non-linear impact of habitat use along the 359 elevation gradient. The alpine tree line ecotone determines whether the ecosystem carbon stocks 360 will be mainly above ground (forests) or in ground (soil). Strict forest living species such as roe 361 deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) showed no change in elevation distribution over the last decades in 362 the Alps, while species more tolerant to open habitat, such as red deer and ibex (*Capra ibex*), are now found at higher elevations [50]. Complicating this, large herbivores may influence the 363 364 advance of the tree line through grazing [49], and possibly affect their own future habitat 365 negatively. Although many species have already shifted to higher elevation or latitudes in

366 response to global warming [3], the movement in elevation even for species using open habitat 367 will eventually be limited by soil depth and quality. The soil in high alpine zone is of poor 368 quality or absent [51] and developing soil of sufficient depth takes more time than the projected 369 upwards movement of vegetation caused by rapid climate change [52]. Other consequences of 370 future climate change, such as more unpredictable and extreme weather events [53] and indirect 371 effects on habitat suitability caused by humans through i.e. changes in infrastructure and habitat 372 fragmentation are also expected to influence the future habitat suitability of species. In addition, 373 different species can be affected differently by climate change, which may alter the competitive 374 interactions between species, and in turn affect species distribution [54]. These complex 375 interactions are hard to incorporate precisely, but are also likely to play a relatively minor role 376 compared to the overall effect of climate change.

#### 377 Conclusion

378 Our models predict range expansion and increase in habitat suitability for migratory deer 379 populations at their northern distribution limits, with interesting interactions with season, sex and 380 landscape topography. Annual habitat suitability predictions are therefore not sufficiently 381 detailed to foresee consequences of climate change for future conservation and management of 382 migratory species. With males and females displaying different tolerance levels to snow and temperature in sexually size-dimorphic species [47, 55] and global warming affecting the 383 384 weather differently during summer and winter [9], incorporating these factors in species 385 distribution models is clearly necessary to improve future range predictions for these species. In 386 addition, landscape topography is crucial both for determining the speed of climate change 387 effects, and to buffer effects of global warming, thus creating possible refugia where species can 388 persist [56].

#### 389 Ethics

All capture and handling of red deer have been approved by the Norwegian Animal ResearchAuthority.

## **392 Competing interests**

393 The authors declare no competing interests.

### 394 Authors' contributions

- A.M. and I.M.R. designed the study, and E.L.M. and A.M. organized the data collection. I.M.R.
- analyzed the data with input from L.E.L., and I.M.R. wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All
- 397 authors contributed substantially to the final version.

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## 403 **Data accessibility**

404 The datasets supporting this article can be accessed at https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.8p003sg.

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## 558 Figures and tables

**Table 1.** Parameter estimates from the final resource selection functions for both sexes during a.

560 summer and b. winter, with year as random intercept. SE=standard error. Standard deviation for

the random effects for summer was 0.088 (females) and 0.127 (males) and for winter 0.136

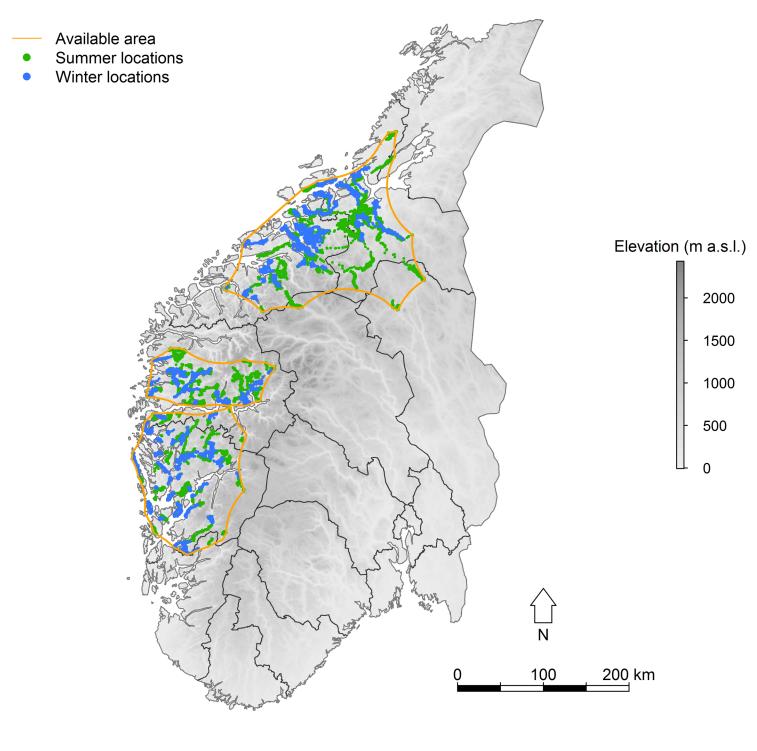
562 (females) and 0.072 (males).

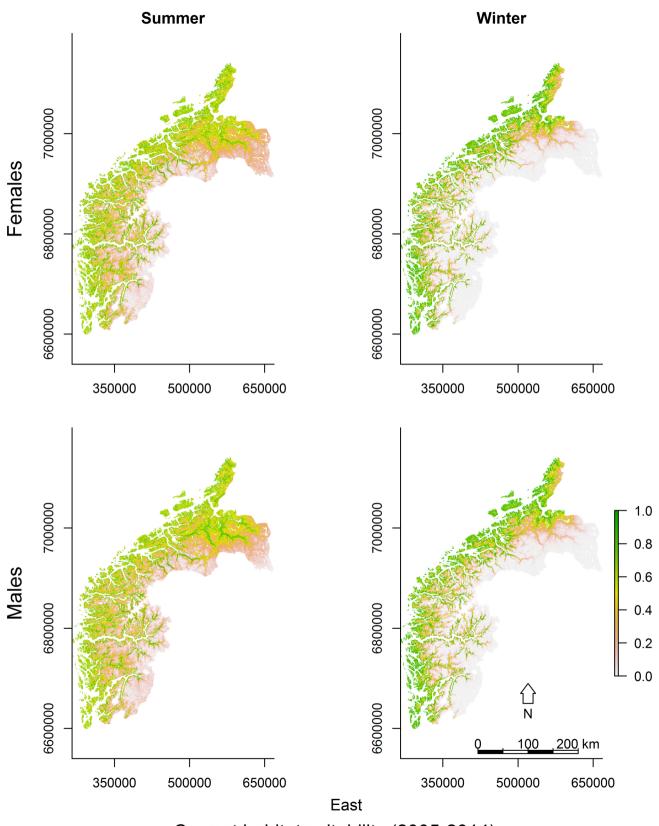
a. Summer					nmer	ier			
		Females			Males				
Variable	Estimate	SE	Z	P value	Estimate	SE	z	P value	
Intercept	-0.079	0.029	-2.72	0.006	-0.008	0.044	-0.19	0.853	
Elevation	-1.309	0.007	-194.80	< 0.001	-1.297	0.009	-143.12	< 0.001	
Slope	0.603	0.005	128.14	< 0.001	0.541	0.006	85.16	< 0.001	
Distance to coast	0.378	0.009	41.13	< 0.001	0.666	0.012	55.58	< 0.001	
Northness	-0.247	0.006	-42.49	< 0.001	-0.158	0.008	-20.94	< 0.001	
Temperature	0.152	0.005	31.78	< 0.001	-0.021	0.006	-3.55	< 0.001	
Distance to coast <sup>2</sup>	-0.085	0.003	-30.92	< 0.001	-0.240	0.005	-48.04	< 0.001	
Northness <sup>2</sup>	0.231	0.012	19.85	< 0.001	0.328	0.016	21.07	< 0.001	
Pasture availability × pasture use	-0.904	0.028	-32.45	< 0.001					
Elevation × temperature	0.275	0.006	47.20	< 0.001	0.142	0.007	20.85	< 0.001	

1b.	Winter							
		Females			Males			
Variable	Estimate	SE	z	P value	Estimate	SE	z	P value
Intercept	-0.382	0.041	-9.21	< 0.001	-0.401	0.026	-15.31	< 0.001
Elevation	-2.089	0.010	-213.51	< 0.001	-1.814	0.013	-143.97	< 0.001
Slope	0.596	0.005	112.14	< 0.001	0.530	0.008	69.16	< 0.001
Distance to coast	-0.766	0.010	-80.62	< 0.001	-0.934	0.014	-65.72	< 0.001
Northness	-0.273	0.005	-49.62	< 0.001	-0.259	0.008	-33.06	< 0.001
Snow water equivalent	-0.467	0.009	-54.29	< 0.001	-0.269	0.010	-26.63	< 0.001
Slope <sup>2</sup>	-0.172	0.003	-55.94	< 0.001	-0.132	0.004	-30.87	< 0.001
Pasture availability × pasture use	0.452	0.020	22.72	< 0.001	0.282	0.028	10.15	< 0.001
Elevation × snow water equivalent	-0.712	0.018	-40.36	<0.001	-0.315	0.017	-18.23	< 0.001

#### 564 **Figure legends**

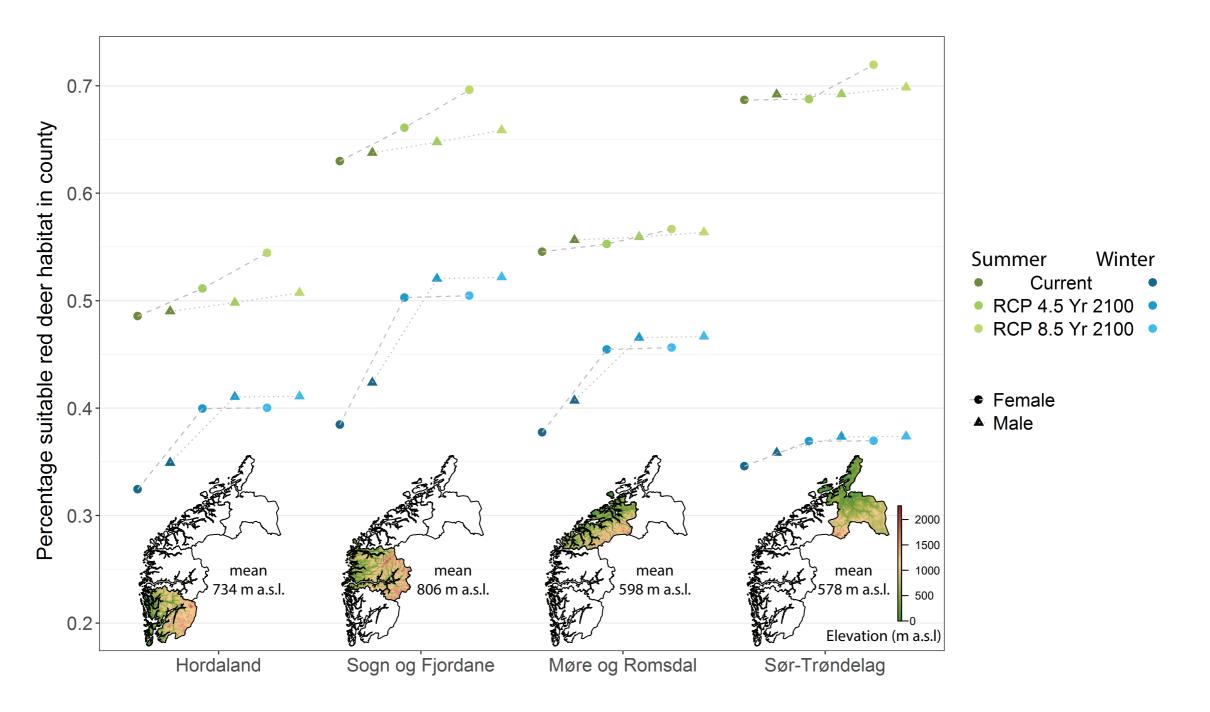
- Figure 1. Map of Southern Norway showing the study area with available polygons (orange), red
  deer winter (blue) and summer (green) locations.
- 567 **Figure 2.** Predicted habitat suitability for red deer in Western Norway during 2005-2014 for
- 568 females (top row) and males (bottom row) in summer (left) and winter (right).
- 569 Figure 3. Percentage of area consisting of suitable red deer habitat (habitat suitability threshold
- 570 0.2) in each county per season and sex based on resource selection functions. Predictions are
- 571 made for the study period (current), and for year 2100 under alternative future emission
- 572 scenarios medium (RCP4.5) and severe (RCP8.5). Maps on the x-axis show the elevation
- 573 gradient in each county with elevation mean.
- 574 **Figure 4.** Predicted change in habitat suitability from 2005-2014 to 2100 in Western Norway for
- 575 both sexes during summer (July) and winter (February). Predictions are made under the
- 576 alternative future emission scenarios medium (RCP4.5) and severe (RCP8.5).

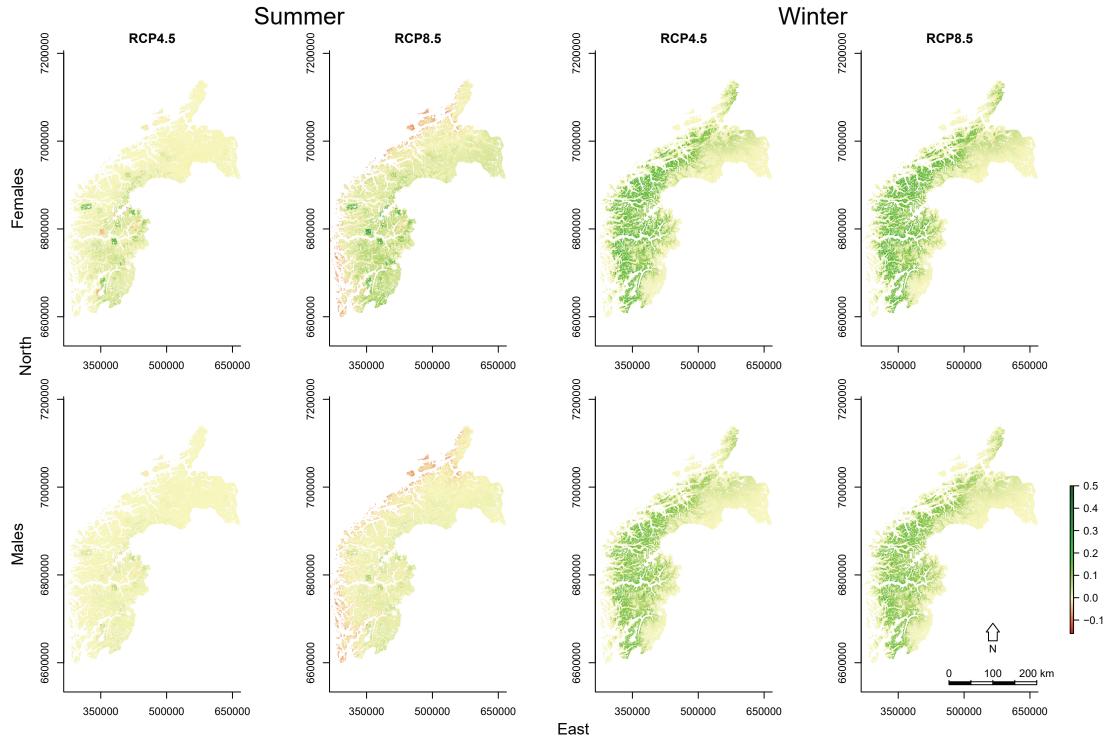




Current habitat suitability (2005-2014)

North





Change in habitat suitability from 2005-2014 to 2100

# **Supplementary material for:**

## Future suitability of habitat in a migratory ungulate under climate change

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**Table S1.** Mean and median of sex-specific migration characteristics for red deer in Norway

 used in the resource selection functions.

	Females		Males	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Distance (km)	17.8	14.2	25.7	20.2
Duration spring migration (days)	5.4	2	10.5	7
Duration fall migration (days)	4.3	2	8.1	4
Direction winter to summer range (degrees)	131	107	133	120

**Table S2.** Number of locations (obs), years, individuals (id) and individual ranges used in the resource selection functions for the two seasons (summer and winter) and sexes.

	Sum	mer	Winter		
	Females	Males	Females	Males	
N <sub>obs</sub>	326000	178000	488000	238000	
Nyears	10	9	11	9	
N <sub>id</sub>	127	62	110	53	
N <sub>range</sub>	163	89	244	119	

**Table S3.** Key statistics on selected topography and climate variables in the four counties in

 Norway comprising the study area.

County	Hordaland	Møre og Romsdal	Sør- Trøndelag	Sogn og Fjordane
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	15 437	15 100	18 848	18 619
Elevation mean (m a.s.l.)	734	598	578	806
Elevation median (m a.s.l.)	761	517	561	788
Elevation range (m a.s.l., 5-95%)	22-1425	14-1405	42-1235	51-1568
Slope mean (degrees)	13.43	16.83	7.92	17.69
Northness mean (cos(degrees))	0.004	0.044	0.041	-0.003
Distance to coast mean (km)	101.6	84.6	403.1	94.2
Temperature mean (July; °C)	11.97	12.05	12.62	11.25
SWE <sup>1</sup> mean (February; mm)	366.26	238.18	153.25	355.18
Pasture availability mean (prop)	0.029	0.036	0.037	0.024

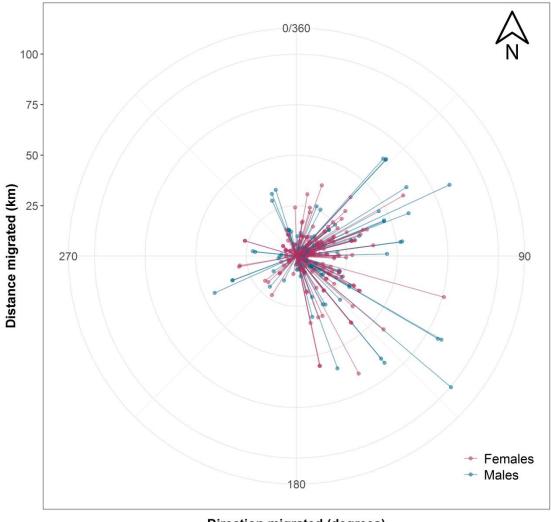
 $^{1}$ SWE = Snow water equivalent

**Table S4.** Percent change in available red deer habitat in Western Norway from 2005-2014 to year 2100 for 5 different thresholds of habitat suitability (0.1-0.5). Predictions are made for males and females during summer and winter, and under two emission scenarios (medium, RCP4.5 and severe, RCP8.5).

		Sum	mer		Winter			
	Fem	ales	ales Males		Females		Males	
Threshold	RCP4.5	<b>RCP8.5</b>	RCP4.5	<b>RCP8.5</b>	RCP4.5	<b>RCP8.5</b>	RCP4.5	<b>RCP8.5</b>
0.1	3.01	7.30	1.28	2.86	24.15	24.83	17.69	18.12
0.2	2.52	7.27	0.80	2.06	19.81	20.14	14.48	14.69
0.3	2.00	6.76	0.49	1.41	17.07	17.29	12.65	12.79
0.4	1.57	5.62	0.25	0.32	14.25	14.40	10.92	11.02
0.5	1.32	3.74	0.00	-2.64	11.17	11.26	8.96	9.02

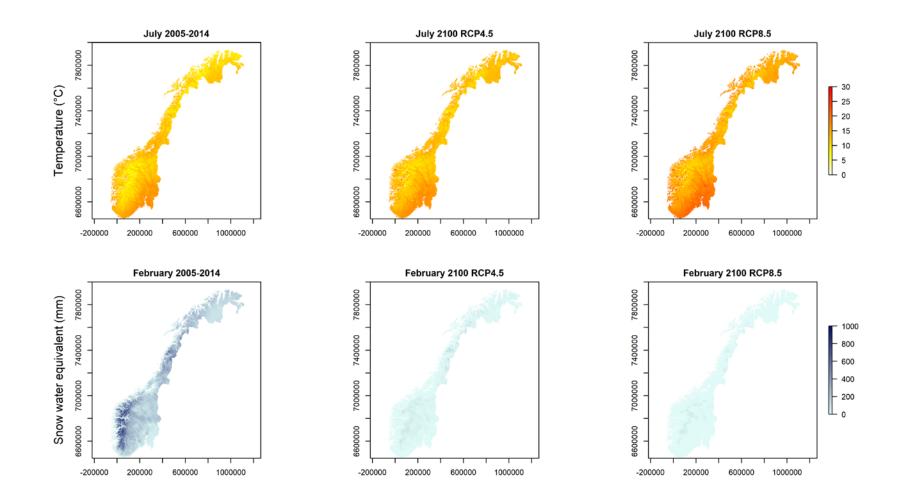
**Table S5.** Niche overlap between present and future habitat suitability, assessed bySchoener's D, for red deer in Western Norway. Current habitat suitability is estimated for thestudy period 2005-2014, and future habitat suitability for the year 2100 under moderate(RCP4.5) and severe (RCP8.5) emission.

	Sum	mer	Winter		
	Current - RCP4.5	Current - RCP8.5	Current - RCP4.5	Current - RCP8.5	
Females	0.981	0.958	0.889	0.887	
Males	0.994	0.983	0.919	0.917	

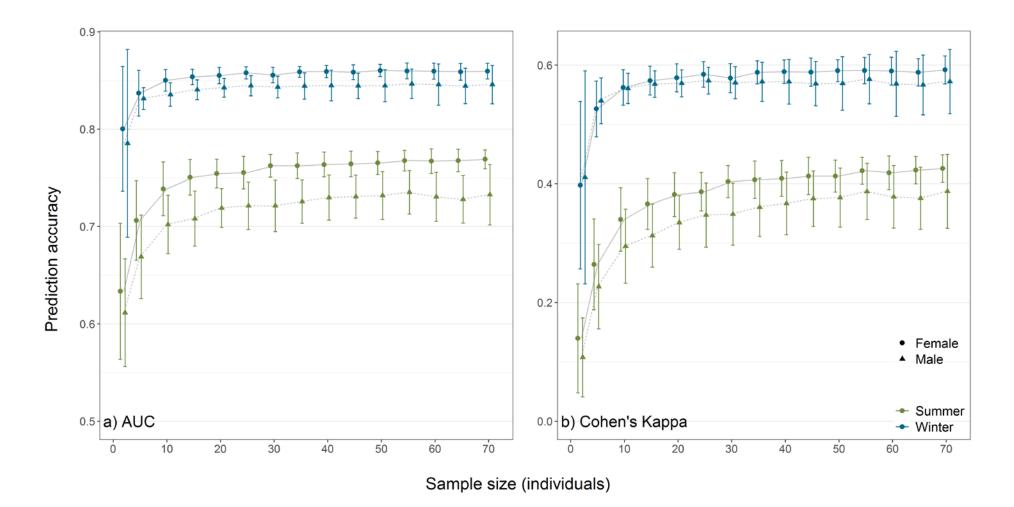


Direction migrated (degrees)

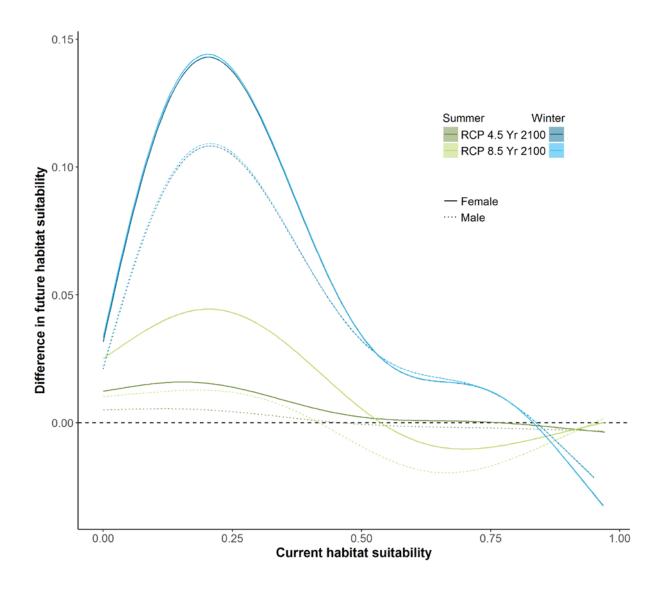
**Figure S1.** The distance (km; length of lines) and direction (degrees) migrated between winter and summer ranges for female (red) and male (blue) red deer in Norway from 2005-2015.



**Figure S2.** Monthly temperature (July; top row) and snow water equivalent (February; bottom row) means for Norway during the study period (2005-2014) and in year 2100 under two alternative emission scenarios (medium, RCP4.5 and severe, RCP8.5).



**Figure S3.** Effects of sample size on prediction accuracy estimated as a) AUC and b) Cohen's Kappa on resource selection functions for red deer in Norway during summer (green) and winter (blue) and for females (circles) and males (triangles). Points show the mean and error bars show the standard deviation.



**Figure S4.** Relative change per pixel in habitat suitability from 2004-2014 to year 2100 for male (dashed lines) and female (solid lines) red deer during winter (blue) and summer (green) under medium (RCP4.5; darker) and severe (RCP8.5; lighter) emission. The smoothed lines are based on generalized additive models with future habitat suitability as response and current habitat suitability as predictor. The horizontal line indicates no change in habitat suitability.