

The main idea advanced by this study is that resident species can resist competitive exclusion by an invasive species by evolving life history traits to exploit ephemeral low-competition situations after disturbances (i.e., avoiding competition), as opposed to a more common idea of evolving to be a better competitor. The study uses an interesting natural metacommunity context to cleverly make space for time substitutions to assay population phenotypes among replicated populations with suspected difference in their histories of selection and evolution in response to competitors and local conditions. It's a nice study.

The manuscript has a solid conceptual grounding, clear hypotheses and predictions, and is well-organized. Having replicate populations within each 'treatment' type is necessary, and was a strength.

The caveats and limitations (for example, of a contrived laboratory setting) are addressed well. The inferences being made are connected to the evidence presented, and are not overstatements or spin.

I wondered about the role of dispersal in the set of traits that might make *A. marmorata* better at exploiting ephemeral patches of resources. I didn't get a sense of how much disturbances (like floods) cause local extinction and how much of the community reorganization is due to local recruitment from the few remaining individuals or if it depends on dispersal from elsewhere (other patches). If *A. marmorata* is less good at dispersing, then could some sort of priority effect shift the advantage to *P. acuta* in field settings?

Some minor suggestions to improve clarity:

I would find it easier to read and interpret the results if I was reminded which species is the invader, and using the words in place of their acronym. I had to keep going back to remind myself what all the letters meant. Perhaps easier to just write the words out in the text?

Showing the population variation in Figures 2, 3, 4 is good, but the key information to assess the hypotheses are the dotted lines showing 'treatment' effects. To see the uncertainty in how these means differ to each other, I think it would help to show 95% confidence intervals, such that the mean and 95%CI are those estimated from the GLMM's.

Finally, in the results section, I think it would help to have clear statements that say how a particular result provides support for or against the various hypotheses, instead of making the reader having to join the dots first.