

Dear Dr Burdon,

Please find attached the new version of the manuscript entitled “The return of the trophic chain: fundamental vs. realized interactions in a simple arthropod food web”. We have incorporated all your suggestions in the new version. A detailed answer to each of them is provided below. Again, thank you very much for your help and input, we deeply appreciate it! We hope that the manuscript is now ready for recommendation from PCI Ecology.

All the best,

Marta Montserrat, on behalf of all authors

1 - Using “fundamental trophic niche” (and “realized trophic niche”) in the MS to make it very explicit how the niche concept is applied (i.e., L492).

R: Done, L 495

2 - Reword L110-111 “However, it remains unclear how the addition of species into a community alters all other trophic interactions in the network (e.g., Bascompte et al 2006).” The way this was previously worded sounded like an invasion (i.e., species introduction), which isn’t really the same as the study system where these species have co-evolved.

R: Thank you! Done, L110-111, reference added to the reference list (L526-527)

3 - Adding the following text at L112 “To address this question, we have considered if the fundamental trophic niches of species (i.e., with all their potential interactions; Elton 1927) are always realized (Hutchinson 1957). Specifically, we explore how pairwise trophic interactions between species are modified by the inclusion of other species in a simple community. We focus on...”

R: Again, thank you, done: 112-114, new Hutchinson reference added too (L600-601)

4 - Rewording L468-471 to something along the lines of “Thus, the fundamental trophic niche of species in this system (i.e., the food items that species are potentially able to feed on) is larger than the realized trophic niche (i.e., the food items that species actually feed on when present in combinations exceeding the individual pairwise interactions).”

R: Done too, L470-473.