Investigating climate change impacts on Arctic Charr *(Salvelinus alpinus)* **in Canada and the Circumpolar Region: Environmental and species interactions**

by

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Abstract

One of the greatest challenges for researchers today is understanding climate change impacts on fish populations, particularly in vulnerable ecosystems such as the Canadian Arctic. Northern fish populations will undergo thermal stress as atmospheric temperatures are projected to rise globally. Models that consider both environmental factors and species interactions can help project the future distribution of a species. This thesis investigates the climate change impacts of rising temperatures and the potential northward shift of Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) on Arctic Charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*), Canada's highly valuable and northernmost fish species. Understanding the current distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada will help determine future projections based on warming temperatures and species interactions. A logistic regression model for Arctic Charr evaluated a baseline time period (1976-2005) using growing-degree day, longitude, latitude, and Brook Trout occurrences, correctly classified 93% of Arctic Charr occurrences in Canada. The distribution of Arctic Charr is projected to contract by 18% in Canada by the time period of 2051-2080 using a High Carbon scenario. The projected distributions only included known native populations of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout and excluded any deliberate or accidental human-induced introductions. The decrease in the projected distribution of Arctic Charr could be attributed to warming atmospheric temperatures that lengthen growing seasons in the Arctic. The Canadian high Arctic will provide refuge for Arctic Charr, where conservation efforts will need prioritizing.

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- AIC Akaike Information Criterion
- COSEWIC Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada
- GDD Growing degree-day
- GHG Greenhouse gas
- IPCC The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- PCIC Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

1.1. Climate Change and Arctic Fish

Management strategies that appropriately deal with climate change impacts must consider the sustainability and adaptability of fish stocks. In Canada, the Prime Minister mandates the importance of using scientific research and the precautionary principle when deciding on climate change impacts affecting fish stocks and vulnerable ecosystems (Lennon & Perry, 2018). One major challenge researchers face is understanding the climatic effects on fish population behavior and dynamics within Arctic ecosystems (Ulvan et al., 2011). An improved understanding of climate change impacts on fish is relevant for Arctic biodiversity, ecosystem health, and food security (Van Vliet et al., 2013).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has reported that many parts of the world are already experiencing the consequences of 1° C of global warming through increased climate events and rising sea levels (IPCC, 2018). Recent research documented observations of climate warming and how changes in environmental factors associated with anthropogenic climate change affect the livelihoods of communities situated in the Arctic (Pearce et al., 2015; Falardeau et al., 2022). The Arctic is becoming an emerging hot spot for frequent access to oil and gas reserves, expanding shipping routes, and other economic opportunities, including tourism in the Arctic (Jeffers, 2010). The IPCC has reported that if human activities through anthropogenic global warming continue to increase at the current rate, global warming will likely reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052, with the Arctic experiencing impacts two to three times faster than the global average (IPCC, 2018; Falardeau et al., 2022). Rapid temperature increases associated with climate change likely directly affect the Arctic by

altering the aquatic ecosystem's environmental factors (Rouse et al., 1998). Some of these environmental factors in the Arctic include changes in water levels, varying river flow, increases in water temperatures, fluctuating nutrient supply, and changes in water quality (Van Vliet et al., 2013; Ficke et al., 2007).

Arctic communities depend on fish and wildlife for subsistence, and climate change has diminished the physical condition and availability of fish over the years (Pearce et al., 2015). Ulvan et al., (2011) described how climate change will affect the temperature dimensions at fish ecosystem boundaries and some of the most profound impacts are known to occur in the Canadian Arctic. The Arctic has the highest proportion of species potentially threatened with thermal stress, which may cause local extinctions, northward shifts of species ranges, and forced adaptation (Van Vliet et al., 2013; Rouse et al., 1998).

Charrs are of concern due to the rapidly changing Arctic environments (Reist et al., 2013). The Family Salmonidae (Charrs, Salmons, and Trouts) comprises 11 genera with about 70 species worldwide (Coad & Reist, 2017). Of those species, 42 are found in Canada, and 17 are in the Canadian Arctic (Coad & Reist, 2017). They are primarily freshwater fishes, but some are anadromous fishes that migrate to marine environments and return to freshwaters to reproduce (Coad & Reist, 2017; Johnson 1980). There are five Charr species native to North America, and they are distinguished from other salmonid genera by their light-coloured spots on their dark back and the number of their anal fin rays (Lane, 2013). Charrs are primarily cold-water adapted and sensitive to extreme warming (Coad & Reist, 2017; Johnson 1980).

1.2. Arctic Charr *(Savelinus alpinus)*

Arctic Charr are restricted to cold water environments and can survive at temperatures as low as 1°C, making them the most cold-adapted salmonid species in the world (Gerdeaux, 2011; Brannas, 1992). Arctic Charr have a circumpolar and northernmost distribution (about 84°N) more than any other freshwater or anadromous fish in the world (Reist et al., 2013; Brunner et al., 2001; Johnson, 1980). In Canada, Arctic Charr are found in the Yukon, northern Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, along the Hudson Bay, Ungava, Newfoundland, and the St. Lawrence River (Lane, 2013; Scott & Crossman, 1973; Figure 1).

Arctic Charr are a well-adapted species that survived in glaciated polar regions south of the North American ice sheets during the last glacial maximum (Moore et al. 2015). Cold waters, likely extend the southernly limit of Arctic Charr in freshwater lakes due to glaciated polar regions (Reist & Sawatzky, 2010). Within these glaciated polar regions, Arctic Charr colonized postglacial lakes and rivers where few freshwater fish species are commonly found (Moore et al., 2015; Arbour et al., 2010). Moore et al. (2015) explored the genetic makeup of Arctic Charr populations and concluded that Arctic Charr found in Canada originated from a small refugial population from the Arctic Archipelago or within Beringia. The range of this species was repeatedly impacted during Pleistocene glaciations through refugia during colder conditions and dispersal during warming conditions (Brunner et al., 2001).

Literature describes Arctic Charr as one of the most diverse fish species in northern Arctic aquatic ecosystems (Reist et al., 2013; Johnson, 1980). Arctic Charr are an example of a polymorphic salmonid that displays morphological differences depending on habitat use and diet (Skúlason & Smith 1995; Arbour et al., 2010). Ecological plasticity tactics such as varying life history traits enable Arctic Charr to survive in the coldest oligotrophic habitats (Hammer et

al., 1991). Some populations complete their entire life cycle within freshwater, significantly varying in size and body morphology (Reist et al., 2013; Power et al., 2008). Arctic Charr can also be anadromous, where considerable growth occurs at sea, and they return to freshwater for reproductive purposes (Coad & Reist, 2017). In the Canadian high Arctic, Arctic Charr spawn in autumn, usually in September or October (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Arctic Charr that inhabit Canadian water systems further south are known to spawn as late as November or December (i.e., Matamek River, Quebec; Scott & Crossman, 1973). Within their distributional region, Arctic Charr are recognized for their range of functional and ecological diversity (Reist et al., 2013). Arctic Charr are considered a habitat generalist and occur in lakes, streams, rivers, and the sea across the Holarctic region (Reist et al., 2013).

Considering a situation with unlimited food supply, the optimal temperature for Arctic Charr growth and development lies between 14.4℃ and 17.2℃ (Hein et al., 2012). However, situational conditions where food is not readily available, the optimal water temperature for Arctic Charr growth and development is likely much lower (Hein et al., 2012). Knowing that Arctic Charr are cold-water adapted species, they have a low resistance to increased water temperatures (Reist et al., 2013). Warmer water temperatures will limit their habitat choices in the projected future. Arctic Charr may be restricted in lake habitats, where ideal habitat preferences may be lake bottom habitats (>30 meters; Reist et al., 2013). Thermal stress to Arctic Charr is one foreseeable long-term impact due to climate change.

Figure 1: Canadian distributional range of Arctic Charr shaded in grey. Arctic Charr circumpolar distributional range found in the top right corner (Scott & Crossman, 1973).

1.3. Brook Trout *(Salvelinus fontinalis)*

Brook Trout *(Salvelinus fontinalis)* also often called Brook Charr, are a cold-adapted species (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, 2010). Brook Trout are another endemic species to North America (Chadwick & Stephen, 2017; Scott & Crossman, 1973). Under natural conditions, Brook Trout occur only in northeastern parts of North America, southeastern parts of Canada (Scott & Crossman, 1973). In North America, the distributional range for Brook Trout consists of the Atlantic seaboard, in the Appalachian Mountains, west in the Great Lakes drainages to Minnesota, and northern parts of Manitoba to Hudson Bay (Scott & Crossman, 1973; Figure 2). Particularly in Canada, Brook Trout are widely distributed in eastern Provinces, including Newfoundland, Labrador, Quebec, through the Great Lakes drainage and northern parts of Ontario and Manitoba, including James and Hudson Bays (Scott & Crossman, 1973).

Brook Trout thrive in northern latitudes as they are limited by warm water temperatures and are known as habitat generalists found in lakes, streams, and can be known as sea-run or anadromous (Lenormand et al., 2004; Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 2010). Brook Trout are not commonly a marine oriented species as anadromy can be a risky venture (Gunn & Snucins, 2010). Therefore not all Brook Trout head to marine environments as some remain freshwater residents favoring stream and lake habitats (Gunn & Snucins, 2010).

In North America, Brook Trout spawning can vary with latitude and temperature and depending on the seasonal changes such as late summer or fall (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Through southern and eastern parts of Canada, Brook Trout tend to spawn during late

September, October, or November (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Brook Trout spawning can take place in early August throughout northern parts of North America and occur late December in the southern part of Ontario (Scott & Crossman, 1973).

Figure 2: Canadian distributional range of Brook Trout shaded in grey. North American distributional range found in the top right corner (Scott & Crossman, 1973).

1.4. Arctic Charr and Brook Trout Interactions

Arctic Charr and Brook Trout share the same genus making them both freshwater Charr species that recolonized eastern Canada post-glaciation (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018). Arctic Charr and Brook Trout have similar morphological characteristics (Hammer et al., 1991; Scott & Crossman, 1973) and can exhibit both benthic and pelagic morphisms (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018; Skúlason & Smith, 1995). Arctic Charr and Brook Trout can be known as residents, where they have access to marine environments but prefer lake environments; landlocked, where they have no access to marine environments; or anadromous, where they make seasonal migrations between lakes and marine environments (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018). Stewart and Watkinson (2004) describe Arctic Charr, much like the Brook Trout, they can live in lakes and rivers that do not freeze to the bottom during the season of winter and can be optionally anadromous. They both use anadromy as a strategy for energetic and opportunistic marine feeding advantages to prepare for reproduction in freshwater habitats (Gunn & Snucins, 2010; Skúlason & Smith, 1995). Advantages of anadromy include increased fecundity, ovulation rate, egg size, and lipid content (Gunn & Snucins, 2010). While using the anadromy strategy, Arctic Charr and Brook Trout are considered feeding generalists and opportunists that eat suitable food that they encounter during dispersal (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018; Falardeau et al., 2022).

Native species of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout have overlapping distributions found in northeastern Canada, with Arctic Charr having a more northern distribution, and Brook Trout having more of a southern distribution (Glémet et al., 1998). Scott and Crossman (1973) consider freshwater populations of both species to be sympatric, where their distributions exist in the same geographical areas and may frequently encounter one another. Arctic Charr are

considered allopatric in their northernmost distributions, where they utilize a broader niche through the life characteristic trait of anadromy because they rarely coexist with competing species (Hammer et al., 1991; Johnson, 1980). In their southern distribution, Arctic Charr tend to use a much narrower niche and are more commonly known to be landlocked or as residents (Hammer et al., 1991; Johnson, 1980). Their niche habitat preferences are mainly depicted by thermal regimes and water temperatures (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018). Arctic Charr are well adapted to harsh conditions and cold waters ranging from $5{\text -}19^{\circ}\text{C}$, and Brook Trout are also known as a cold-water adapted species but prefer water temperatures ranging from 8-20°C (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018).

Salmonid genera are the predominant fish group in the Canadian Arctic region. Hybridization can occur when one of the two salmonid species is introduced, when an environmental disturbance occurs, or when one species is bordering the natural ecological distributional range of another (Hammer et al., 1991; Peterson & Fausch, 2003). Hammer et al., (1991) studied the natural hybridization between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout in the Fraser River, Labrador. They concluded that hybridization might be a common occurrence in areas of Canada where the range of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout overlap naturally (Hammer et al., 1991). Environmental factors, such as similar spawning periods, drive Arctic Charr and Brook Trout to hybridize (Hammer et al., 1991; Peterson & Fausch, 2003). The effects of hybridization can impact genetics and ecosystem dynamics (Peterson & Fausch, 2003)

1.5. Distributional Range Expansions of Fish

In North America, spatially freshwater fish diversity decreases with latitude (Christiansen & Reist, 2013). Freshwater or anadromous Arctic Charr are known to have the northernmost

distribution in North America (Wilson et al., 1996). Along Canada's mainland margin, Arctic Charr are found at the maximum extent of freshwater lakes and streams at about 84°N at Ellesmere Island, Canada (Christiansen & Reist, 2013). Longitudinally, the greatest fish diversity is found in regions that were unglaciated during the last glacial maximum (Christiansen & Reist, 2013).

Historically, the Pleistocene glaciations significantly impacted the evolution of fish in North America (Wilson et al., 1996). The repeated glaciations altered the genetic makeup and habitat range of many northern fish species, including Arctic Charr (Wilson et al., 1996; Johnson, 1980). The phenotypic plasticity strategies allowed Arctic Charr to disperse into glaciated polar regions after the last glacial maximum when North American ice sheets were at their greatest extent (Wilson et al., 1996; Moore et al., 2015). These glaciated polar regions provided freshwater habitats for Arctic Charr, which are required for their persistence and survival as a species (Wilson et al., 1996; Johnson, 1980).

The glacial meltwater provided freshwater lakes that Arctic Charr require as stable habitats for overwintering purposes (Wilson et al., 1996; Johnson, 1980). Arctic Charr use overwintering periods for growth and reproduction (Budy & Chris, 2014). Arctic lakes provide ideal habitats to allow Arctic Charr to grow and reproduce during the ice cover overwintering growing season (Budy $&$ Chris, 2014). Glacial meltwaters also decreased salinity concentrations in marine environments, allowing anadromous Arctic Charr to survive and furthering their marine migration dispersal abilities (Wilson et al., 1996).

The evidence of repeated glaciations exposed Arctic Charr to a great range of natural selection forces, and the diversity among North American populations suggests that they have adaptable strategies (Reist et al., 2013; Skúlason & Smith, 1995). Wilson et al. (1996) studied the dispersal history and the genetic diversity of Arctic Charr. They found genetic differences

among North American Arctic Charr, which indicated distributional dispersal patterns into separate origins of glacial refugia. The dispersal rates resulted from coastal movement or water connections overland (Wilson et al., 1996). Therefore, the persistence of Arctic Charr occurred in several refugia post-glaciation, which reflects the ecological differences among the genetic lineages (Wilson et al., 1996). Over time, the ecological pressures shaped the morphological, behavioural, and life-history characteristics of Arctic Charr populations (Skúlason & Smith, 1995). The ecological plasticity of Arctic Charr includes varying life history strategies to survive in very harsh and cold conditions (Hammer et al., 1991; Johnson, 1980).

Today, ecological pressures on fish now include climate change. The effects of climate change include a global increase in atmospheric temperature (Government of Canada, 2021). Global warming will intensify as a response to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from anthropogenic behaviours and activities (Government of Canada, 2021). Widespread warming in Canada can result in ecological pressures including annual global temperature rises, shorter ice cover seasons, increased nutrient availability, rising sea levels, and longer growing seasons (Government of Canada, 2021; IPCC, 2018). Climate change can disrupt the length of openwater seasons (Budy & Chris, 2014; Dunmall et al., 2022). Reist et al. (2013) explained how theoretical studies of climate change scenarios suggest that warming will create longer summer seasonal periods. This will create larger volumes of water temperatures for optimal growth in many northern fish species (Reist et al., 2013). Minor changes to the Arctic's thermal regime and the timing and durations of ice-free days, can affect fish persistence and survival of many temperate freshwater fish (Budy & Chris, 2014; Dunmall et al., 2022).

Reist et al. (2006) explored climate change impacts on Arctic freshwater ecosystems where it is very likely several fish species will extend their ranges northward, seeking preferred habitats. One scenario is in northern Quebec and Labrador and native Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo*

salar), Brook Trout, and introduced Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) may expand their ranges (Reist et al, 2006). In particular, Brook Trout is a species limited in their northernmost distribution by temperature (Reist et al., 2006). The southernly limits of Arctic Charr are highly likely limited in their southern range by temperature (Reist et al., 2006). However, some researchers consider the southernly distribution of Arctic Charr is likely limited by potential fish competitors (Reist et al., 2006).

Some temperate fish species are already widening their distributions northward to Canada's high Arctic regions. A climate-driven northward range expansion is common in fish species with vaster migration and dispersal abilities, increased reproductive rates, and greater ecological generalization of environmental conditions and resources (Alofs et al., 2013). Dunmall et al. (2013), studied Pacific Salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.)* as they are considered ideal indicators of climate change because they are responding to increasing ocean temperatures in high Arctic environments. Due to rising ocean temperatures, Pacific Salmon are extending their range northward to search for thermally suitable habitats and are benefiting from increased productivity of nutrient availability (Dunmall et al., 2013; Dunmall et al., 2022). Pacific Salmon are now commonly found and tracked by fishers in the Canadian high Arctic waters (Dunmall et al., 2013; Dunmall et al., 2022). When a species expands its distribution northward, its survival of the species depends on establishing a self-sustaining reproductive population at that new latitude (Alofs et al., 2013). The continuous long-term impacts of climate change create reduced sea ice cover and longer durations of open water in the Arctic, which will allow the climate-driven marine migratory of Pacific Salmon to establish a self-sustaining reproductive population as (Dunmall et al., 2013).

Fish migrations and invasions can be by natural dispersal through drainage networks or can be human-induced by management stocking agencies and/or illegal introductions (Alofs et al.,

2013). Dunham et al., (2002) reviewed Brook Trout invasions in the western United States and Canada, and their impacts on native Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) populations. In this scenario, the Brook Trout invasion of dispersal was caused by management stocking programs in the early 1800s (Dunham et al., 2002; Peterson & Fausch, 2003). Brook Trout were introduced as a game fish and were heavily stocked in 35 states on the western side of the United States (Dunham et al., 2002). Since then, Brook Trout numbers have increased and have dispersed, while native Cutthroat Trout populations have rapidly declined (Dunham et al., 2002; Peterson & Fausch, 2003). Dunham et al., (2002) explained possibilities that suggest the rapid decline in Cutthroat Trout populations by Brook Trout being a competitor species using mechanisms of competition, predation, or disease transmission. Cutthroat Trout and Brook Trout have overlapping habitat niches (Dunham et al., 2002). Brook Trout can easily disperse in well-oxygenated rivers, lakes, and streams (Dunham et al., 2002; Peterson & Fausch 2003). Brook Trout dispersal rate can depend on habitat factors, most importantly including the direction and topography of the stream networks (Dunham et al., 2002). Peterson and Fausch (2003) looked at the dispersal ability of Brook Trout and the combination of their fast upstream movements and biological characteristics make Brook Trout effective invaders of stream headwaters, which is ideal habitat for Cutthroat Trout.

Range expansions can create interspecific competition among native and introduced species where a species' realized niche use and resources become compromised (Dunham et al., 2002; Reist et al., 2013). The ecological niche theory is where a species can carry out its life based on certain environmental conditions and resources; and is truly the basis for ecology and biogeography (Hutchinson, 1992). A species' realized niche is influenced by a multitude of factors such as growth, survival rate, reproduction, interspecific competition, predation, and parasites or diseases (Hutchinson, 1992). Management must understand a species'

phylogenetic distributions through evolutionary history and the environmental conditions impacting its current distribution (Dunham et al., 2002; Figure 3). Figure 3 is a diagram that explains the successful establishment of a potential biological or climate-driven invasion, which can occur at the early stages of arrival through transport (Dunham et al., 2002). Another essential question for management is whether the species is a native or an invasive occurrence as the severity of managing the invasion could change (Dunham et al., 2002). The establishment of a potential biological or climate-driven invasion can be complex to solve and is becoming the new reality for many managers and policy makers.

Figure 3: Generalized steps in an invasion process modified from Dunham et al., (2002). For each step, key questions should be addressed. Numbers indicate the steps but interactions among all stages are possible.

1.6. Climate Change Projections for Fisheries Management

Arctic Charr are highly valued and are considered an important subsistence and commercial fishery resource in the Arctic (Gallagher & Dick, 2010). Arctic Charr are known to be one of most valuable species in subsistence fisheries for centuries throughout parts of the Canadian Arctic, specifically Nunavut (Gallagher & Dick, 2010; Harris et al., 2016). In Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada, anadromous Arctic Charr have been targeted by commercial fisheries since the 1960s (Harris et al., 2016). Fisheries management must consider the biology and ecology of a target fish species. An effective management strategy is to determine a fish stock, which is a unit of measurement that represents the demographics of fish populations (Harris et al., 2016).

In Canada's Arctic region, there are challenges with assessing and managing of fisheries for Arctic Charr (Roux et al., 2019). One challenge being the widespread distribution of stocks over vast and remote regions with the understanding of climate change impacts that will potentially affect overall stock productivity (Roux et al., 2019). Research by Harris et al. (2006) suggested that usually a regionally based management approach manages the commercial Arctic Charr fishery because of the genetic differences and reproductive isolation in the Arctic Charr samples. Fisheries stock assessment can be fundamental in detecting changes to the distribution of genetic variation and structure of Arctic Charr populations in a rapidly changing Arctic (Harris et al., 2016). Some conservation measures currently implemented include minimum gillnet mesh size and total harvest levels during a fishing season for Arctic Charr commercial fisheries (Government of Canada, 2021). Establishing an

Integrated Fishery Management Plan for commercial fisheries focuses on conserving Arctic Charr populations in Canada (Government of Canada, 2021).

A collaborative approach ensures the best available strategies to monitor and conserve the management decisions for Arctic Charr. In the Nunavut Settlement Area, Arctic Charr fisheries are co-managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Regional Wildlife Organizations, and Hunter and Trapper Organizations (Government of Canada, 2021). Arctic Charr must follow the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the Fisheries Act, and its Regulations, and by local Hunter and Trapper Organization bylaws (Government of Canada, 2021). Roux et al. (2019) suggests that additional insights from local knowledge are important when managing Arctic Charr stocks. Local knowledge can provide additional information that can inform decision making on stock data collection on Arctic Charr; such as physical condition, parasites, migration timing and distribution shifts (Roux et al., 2019).

The Arctic is a region where ecological pressures of climate change are exemplary for other regions of Canada or other parts of the world. Canada's Arctic region deserves proactive approaches and focused attention due to the rate of climate change (IPCC, 2018; Chu et al., 2005). The precautionary principle is used for legal approaches where scientific research may be lacking; however, it is a proactive approach to designate a species as endangered before it is too late (Lennon & Perry, 2018). Chu et al., (2005) recommended modelling approaches to project a species' distribution in response to climate change and that this information should be incorporated into the selection of candidate species for conservation by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada). Currently, the selection process does not include modelling approaches to project a species distribution and this could be a proactive approach to conserve biodiversity in Canada (Chu et al., 2005). Another proactive and innovative example to manage the distributional range of a species is how Dunmall et al.,

(2013) studied Pacific Salmon and initiated a community-based monitoring program in the Canadian Arctic. The community-based monitoring program was an initiative from the research on Pacific Salmon being found in the Canadian high Arctic due to increasing temperatures and prey productivity (Dunmall et al., 2013). The community-based monitoring program reports any adult Pacific Salmon harvested as bycatch in subsistence fishery nets (Dunmall et al., 2013). Chila et al. (2022) research incorporated traditional knowledge and the Arctic Salmon Program; and suggested that Indigenous knowledge should be used to create and validate species distribution models. As the rate of environmental change in the Arctic increases, collaborative approaches that include traditional knowledge, political and economic scientifically based strategies will conserve vulnerable species (Chila et al., 2022; Dunmall et al., 2013). Canada must focus conservation efforts on vulnerable habitats and species diversity (Dunmall et al., 2013).

1.7. Thesis Outline

Climate change impacts can significantly affect the distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada. This thesis is arranged into two main chapters:

Chapter 2, entitled "Distribution Model for Arctic Charr," explores the development of an Arctic Charr distribution model for the time period of 1976-2005 in Canada. I hypothesized that a combination of environmental factors and species' interactions would be related to the distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada (Hypothesis 1). I predicted that the probability of Arctic Charr occurrence would be significantly related to the variables of growing degree-days and the occurrence of Brook Trout. I predicted that species' interactions would be more important/significant than growing-degree days. A model suite was performed to determine the

best model to reflect the probability of Arctic Charr occurrences.

Chapter 3, entitled "Projected Distribution Model of Arctic Charr," explores the projected distributional range of Arctic Charr in Canada. I hypothesized that environmental factors, and the occurrence of Brook Trout would be related to the distribution of Arctic Charr for two future time periods of 2021-2050 and 2051-2080 (Hypothesis 2). I predicted that the change in growing degree-days and the presence of Brook Trout would be associated with a reduced likelihood of Arctic Charr occurrence. A spatial case study for Manitoba, Canada, was added to explore spatial impacts to the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr. I predicted that the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr in northern parts of Manitoba and Quebec would be significantly impacted in response to climate change. Insight into current barriers to conservation and future management policies within Canada was also explored.

Chapter 4, entitled "Summary and Recommendations," summarizes my conclusions and suggests future research on Arctic Charr and Brook Trout interactions.

2. Chapter 2: Baseline Arctic Charr Distribution Model Abstract

Previous distributional model approaches used environmental factors to predict a species distribution, but more recently researchers are including species interactions in models. A model for Arctic Charr *(Salvelinus alpinus),* was developed to display the current distribution of Arctic Charr. The model included the following factors of growing-degree days, longitude, latitude, and occurrence of Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis)*. This model was created to evaluate the baseline time period of the known distribution of Arctic Charr from 1976-2005 in Canada. The model classified 93% of Arctic Charr occurrences in Canada, with growingdegree days being a driving factor.

2.1 Introduction

Across considerable scales, the distributions of fish species are largely impacted by temperature and are known to affect spawning, development, growth, survival, and community structures in northern fish species (Alofs et al., 2013; Dunmall et al., 2022). Charr species are of concern because of their northern life cycles that are adapted to cold water conditions and can be largely impacted by rapidly changing environments (Reist et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2015). In particular, Arctic Charr and Brook Trout have freshwater and anadromous forms that likely aided them in recolonizing Canada post glaciation (Moore et al., 2015; Dupont Cyr et al., 2018). Arctic Charr and Brook Trout share similar morphological characteristics and are ecologically distinct species (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018). Arctic Charr are the world's most northerly adapted fish species (Gerdeaux, 2011; Brannas, 1992; Reist et al., 2013). Brook Trout occupy well-oxygenated stream networks in south-eastern parts of Canada (Chadwick $\&$ Stephen, 2017; Dupont Cyr et al., 2018).

Unpublished research by Ross Tallman explored the climate-induced competition between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. Ross Tallman proposed Brook Trout to be a cold-water adapted freshwater invader candidate fish species that have the potential to shift their distributional range northward. Ross Tallman looked at various freshwater fish species distributions within Canada using Scott and Crossman (1973), and selected freshwater fish as potential climatedriven invaders. These freshwater fish species appeared to have thermal limits that mirrored glacial retreat (Tallman, unpublished research). Ross Tallman found that growing-degree days (GDDs) interpreted thermal limits of freshwater fish in Canada. Within a growing season, water temperature can directly influence the onset of physiological changes for fish maturation. Generally, fish mature earlier in water bodies with higher average temperature.

Ross Tallman examined a map from the Atlas of Canada, which included GDD trends that ultimately are used to determine the likelihood of successful agriculture (Government of Canada, 2021; Figure 4). The intensity of the map's colours range from dark green to pale yellow, where the darker green coloured regions indicate warmer temperatures and longer growing seasons within Canada (Government of Canada, 2021). Ross Tallman found that the spatial trends of GDDs did not match Canada's latitude lines. The western and southern parts of Canada experiences increases in GDDs while the eastern and northern parts of Canada experiences decreases in GDDs, implying that the north-eastern part of Canada is typically colder. Ross Tallman then compared Canada's GDDs boundary lines with the distributional range of Brook Trout (Scott & Crossman, 1973; Figure 4). A single GDDs boundary line matched the northernmost distributional range of Brook Trout (Tallman, unpublished research). This GDDs boundary line acts as an indicator of tracking the current distributional thermal limits of Brook Trout (see the GDD boundary line clearly in Hudson Bay, Canada; Tallman, unpublished research).

Globally, the annual mean temperature is projected to rise in response to climate change in the foreseeable future (IPCC, 2018; Tallman, unpublished research). Atmospheric temperature range within a season or year over a geographical area is an imperative aspect of climate (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2021). Fish have an optimal water temperature for proper functioning and a critical thermal maximum and minimum for vital bodily functions. As climate change increases atmospheric temperatures, the Arctic winters will still be cold, and summer temperatures will not significantly vary in a single year (Falardeau et al., 2022; Tallman, unpublished research). However, with earlier ice breakup advancing spring and delaying the onset of winter, the effect of climate change on a species' growing season will be profound (Falardeau et al., 2022; Tallman, unpublished research).

For decades, agriculturalists and entomologists have recognized growing seasons, known as the GDD (or heat or thermal) units, as a reliable predictor of growth and development (Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007; Climate Atlas of Canada, 2021). GDDs are the accumulation of daily mean temperatures (including the minimum and maximum daily temperatures) above a specified threshold base temperature (Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007; Climate Atlas of Canada, 2021). The base temperature is considered the threshold temperature, where the minimum development threshold must be exceeded for growth to occur (Neuheimer $\&$ Christopher, 2007; Climate Atlas of Canada, 2021). Neuheimer and Christopher (2007) explain that GDDs is a relevant metric providing greater explanatory power than solely using annual mean temperature data and is a physiologically relevant measure of temperature and considers the timing of a season (i.e., seasonal temperature responses of fish maturity; size-at-age recruitment). The technical description of GDDs is the annual sum of the number of degrees Celsius that each day's mean temperature is above a specified base temperature (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2021; Eq. 1).

Equation 1: *GDD: [(max daily temp + min daily temp)/2] – base temp = GDD*

GDDs are a good indicator of the potential maturity of a particular species and can be applied to all ectotherms, including fish (Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007). Explaining or predicting growth and development in fish is often essential to population dynamics and ecosystem studies on topics such as food web relationships or determining fishing practices suitable for sustaining a fishery (Falardeau et al., 2022; Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007).

A warmer climate can change the phenology and recruitment of fish. A fundamental component of Charr's life history traits is their overwintering periods. This period is used to conserve energy and growth for reproductive purposes (Johnson, 1980). Spring is a thermal threshold indicator of potential maturity onset, where Arctic Charr uses energy for recruitment (Reist et al., 2013; Falardeau et al., 2022). Climate change impacts can alter Arctic Charr life cycles by increasing water temperatures and pushing thermal thresholds earlier during the onset of spring from the winter seasonal transition (Falardeau et al., 2022; Tallman, unpublished research). In North America, particularly in the Southern Appalachians, Brook Trout are known to be fall spawners (Flebbe et al., 2011). The seasonal timing of spawning can vary with temperature and latitude (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Flebbe et al. (2011) explained that the southern Appalachians is a warmer climate threshold environment for Brook Trout, allowing them to spawn later in the fall and hatch earlier.

Studying the impacts of climate change is a complex task due to multiple interlaced impacts across ecological systems linked to fish (Falardeau 2022). An assortment of factors operating at different scales, such as regional and local scales, influence the current distribution of freshwater fish (Chu et al., 2005). For example, at a regional scale of Canada environmental factors (annual mean temperature) can influence the distributional range of freshwater fish (Chu et al., 2005).

Species distribution models use various environmental factors to better understand climate change impacts on various species. Species distribution models that include interaction scenarios with various fish species are receiving more attention lately (Alofs et al., 2013; Jackson & Mandrak, 2002; Chu et al., 2005; Hein et al., 2012). For example, researchers have produced a model to predict the climate change impacts of Smallmouth Bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*; Alofs et al., 2013; Jackson & Mandrak, 2002). As Smallmouth Bass shift their

distributional range northwards, they could potentially extirpate over 25,000 populations of cyprinid species from Ontario, Canada (Alofs et al., 2013; Jackson & Mandrak, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to use a modelling approach to explore climate change impacts on Arctic Charr and the relationship between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. The distributional range of Arctic Charr may contract substantially under a warmer climate (Hein et al., 2012; Reist et al., 2006). This is because Arctic Charr hold the northernmost distributional range in Canada and there is little opportunity to expand their range northward in response to climate change (Hein et al., 2012; Chu et al., 2005). Fish may adapt through shifting their distributional range to preferred habitats, become extirpated, or go extinct in a particular region as temperatures rise and alter their seasonal life cycles (Hein et al., 2012). As temperatures warm, southernly populations of Brook Trout may experience habitat loss due to climate warming (Chadwick & Stephen, 2017). Brook Trout are known to be exceptional habitat colonizers due to vast dispersal ability (Alofs et al., 2013), and therefore, Brook Trout are likely to re-distribute northward, invading Arctic Charr habitats.

The current distribution of Arctic Charr is contingent on various factors. This study aims to develop a baseline time period (1976-2005) model to reflect the current distribution of Arctic Charr. The model will explore a combination of environmental factors and a Brook Trout species interaction to see if variables are important/ significant to the distributional range of Arctic Charr in Canada. I hypothesized that a combination of environmental factors and species' interactions would be related to the distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada (Hypothesis 1). I predicted that the probability of Arctic Charr occurrence would be significantly related to the variables of growing degree-days and the occurrence of Brook Trout. I predicted that species' interactions would be more important/significant than growing-degree days. I predicted that the occurrence of Brook Trout would be an important variable because
researchers suggest the southernly limits of Arctic Charr in Canada may be controlled by potential fish competitors (Reist et al., 2006). The development of the distribution model for Arctic Charr would consider ecological and evolutionary insights.

Figure 4: Growing degree-day map (left) from the Atlas of Canada (Government of Canada, 2021). Brook Trout Canadian distributional range map (left; Scott & Crossman, 1973) modified to include growing degree day lines (red) by Ross Tallman

2.2 Materials and Methods

2.2.1 Study Area

 This study explored the distribution of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout within Canada and the Canadian high Arctic. This research is relevant to a wide range as Arctic Charr have a circumpolar distributional range. Canada's climate ranges from temperate to sub-Arctic temperatures. Scott and Crossman (1973) was used to explore the distributions of Canada's freshwater fishes. Many of Canada's lakes and streams are interconnected; and most major rivers flow to the Arctic, Atlantic, or Pacific Oceans, or to Hudson Bay and James Bay (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Canada's mean annual air temperature for the year 2021 was 2.1℃ (Government of Canada, 2021). According to climate scenario projections the annual air temperature from 2081 to 2100 ranges from 1.8℃ in a low carbon emission scenario to 6.3℃ considered in a high carbon emission scenario (Bush & Lemmen, 2019). Bush and Lemmen (2019) project that in the Arctic, sea ice cover will see a 50% chance of ice-free conditions, and a global rise in sea levels ranging from 28 cm to 98 cm by 2050 under a high carbon emission scenario.

2.2.2 Data Collection

The Climate Atlas of Canada (https://climateatlas.ca/) is an online software that operates as a standard grid square and was used to compile climate data (Appendix 1). The Climate Atlas of Canada uses Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium's (PCIC's) climate data (Constructed Analogues and Quantile mapping, Version 2; BCCAQv2), which originates from global climate models (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). The Climate Atlas of Canada projects two

carbon emission scenarios at varying time periods, where RCP4.5 is considered the low carbon scenario, and RCP8.5 is considered the high carbon scenario (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). The low carbon scenario was used for the time period of 1976-2005 to reflect the baseline distribution for Arctic Charr.

The complete dataset equated to 832 regions within Canada based on the Climate Atlas of Canada online software, and included climate variables of growing degree-days (GDDs, base 4℃) and annual mean temperature (℃) for the time period of 1976-2005. This research assumed close correspondence between air temperature and water temperature. GDDs are known as heat or thermal units for growth and maturation of plants and animals (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022; Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007). The base temperature of 4℃ was used to capture heat or thermal demands of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). Then for each region, corresponding latitudes (+) and longitudes (-) were collected using Google Maps (https://www.google.ca/maps).

The study area looked at the continuous range distributions of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout across Canada. The distributional maps reflect broad sweeps where Arctic Charr and Brook Trout occur over landscapes and water bodies. The distributional maps for Arctic Charr and Brook Trout were acquired from Nick Mandrack's lab database (Figure 5 & 6; Mandrak, 2020). The database included records of native (in blue) and introduced (in red) occurrences of both Arctic Charr and Brook Trout (Figure 5 $\&$ 6). Only native occurrences of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout were included in the dataset. Independent occurrence data of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout was not acquired. The presence data reflects the presence of occurrence in the water bodies within a region of Canada. The dataset was manually created where 832 regions within Canada and Canada's high Arctic reflected the presence (*presence* = 1) or absence (*absence* = 0) of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout.

Figure 5: Continuous distributional range of Arctic Charr in Canada. Distribution highlighted in blue are known native occurrences and distribution highlighted in red are known introduction occurrences (Mandrak, 2020).

Figure 6: Continuous distributional range of Brook Trout in Canada. Distribution highlighted in blue are known native occurrences and distribution highlighted in red are known introduction occurrences (Mandrak, 2020).

2.3 Data Analysis

The function used to create the regression model is the generalized linear model function. One very important application of generalized linear models in biology is to model binary response variables (e.g., presence or absence). In general, an equation is created and called a model where independent parameters are plugged into the equation to generate the dependent variable's output, which is a prediction (Quinn & Keough, 2002). Regression is known as a statistical relationship between two or more parameters where a change in the independent parameter is associated with a change in the dependent variable outcome (Quinn & Keough, 2002). Thus, an independent parameter drives the probability of the dependent variable. The logistic model equation is:

$$
\text{Equation 2: } \quad Ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k
$$

where *Ln* is the natural log odds (native Arctic charr occurring in a region) against various predictor variables (*X*) and their corresponding coefficients (β ; Eq. 3). β_0 and β_1 are parameters to be estimated (Quinn & Keough, 2002). With the predicted one unit change in the predictor parameters there is a change in the probability outcome in the dependent variable (Quinn & Keough, 2002). Logistic regression answers the question, *will it happen or not* (Quinn & Keough, 2002). Logistic regression uses a Sigmoid function, which uses the Sigmoid curve

(Quinn & Keough, 2002). The error terms project a binomial distribution because the response variable is binary (Quinn & Keough, 2002). A binomial logistic regression attempts to predict the probability of the dependent parameter based on one or more continuous or categorical independent parameters (Quinn & Keough, 2002).

The library for generalized linear models (glm) in R version 2022.07.2 (2009-2022 R Studio, PBC) was used for this research. The baseline time period ranged from 1976-2005 at Low Carbon Scenario. Models were specified with a binomial distribution and a logistic link function. The full dataset was randomly divided by Arctic Charr occurrence data into a training dataset (321 presences, 345 absences) and a testing dataset (86 presences, 80 absences; Appendix 2). The training dataset fit the logistic regression model, and the testing dataset was used to evaluate model performance. A correlation matrix including all variables was performed.

The training dataset developed a model suite, which involved variations of the parameters chosen to predict the Arctic Charr present within their distributional range:

- GDD (base 4℃, 1976-2005)
- Annual mean temperature (℃, 1976-2005)
- Longitude (-)
- Latitude $(+)$
- Presence (1) or absence (0) of Brook Trout

To begin the model suite (Appendix 3), exploring the null model is the first step, where this model includes no independent variables in the model. The hypothesis would read: no parameters would influence Arctic Charr distribution in Canada (abundance of Arctic Charr

equals the intercept). All model suites must include a null to compare to additional scales of influence to the model (Burnham $\&$ Anderson, 2002). Assurance of model assumptions included large sample size, and no excessively influential observations. GDD is a function of annual mean temperature and is a logical example of multicollinearity. Including annual mean temperature and GDD in a single model would cause multicollinearity, where two or more independent parameters are highly correlated (Burnham & Anderson, 2002).

The performance of the Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) was used to find the best predictor model:

$$
AIC = 2K - 2ln(L)
$$

Equation 3:

where K is the number of parameters in the model and $ln(L)$ is the likelihood (natural loglikelihood) evaluated at the maximum likelihood estimates to determine which model performed best (Hein et al., 2012; Burnham & Anderson, 2002; Eq. 3). An AIC is an information theory that compares the relative fit of a model suite including various models to see which one fits the data best and is most likely closest to the truth (Burnham & Anderson, 2002). To emphasize further, the AIC is the idea that each model reflects a particular hypothesis and selects a model that fits the best (Burnham & Anderson, 2002). The model with the smallest AIC*c* value is known as the best model (Burnham & Anderson, 2002). The calculation on the test dataset to assess model performance was percent correctly classified, sensitivity (percent presences correctly classified), specificity (percent absences correctly classified), and kappa (Burnham & Anderson, 2002).

2.4 Results

For the climate data at a Low Carbon Scenario, the annual mean temperature for the period 1976-2005 describing the baseline time period (1976-2005) distribution of Arctic Charr were: (mean = -5.7 °C, range = $-22.6 - 9.4$). GDD for the period 1976-2005 describing the baseline distribution of Arctic charr were: (mean = 826.85 , range = $7.8 - 2591$). Latitude was: (mean = 60.19, range = $43.45 - 82.32$), and longitude was: (mean = -95.24 , range = $-139.84 - 53.76$).

Within Canada, Arctic Charr had a total of 401 presences and 431 absences, and Brook Trout had a total of 266 presences and 566 absences. Arctic Charr and Brook Trout were found present in 113 regions simultaneously. Co-occurrence patterns of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout included 248 regions that contained Arctic Charr and no Brook Trout, whereas 113 regions contained Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. Arctic Charr and Brook Trout do not occur in 318 regions.

The logistic regression analyzed the relationship of environmental, spatial, and species interactions parameters to predict Arctic Charr occurrence probability. The chosen model included GDD as a predictor variable rather than annual mean temperature because of the literature review and unpublished research by Ross Tallman. Including both parameters in the model, the model would experience multicollinearity. GDD and annual mean temperature have a logical correlation because GDD is derived from annual mean temperature data. A correlation matrix was used to determine the correlation between all parameters (Table 1). GDD was used as a climate variable in the logistic regression models.

The logistic regression model with the best score (AIC*c* = 232.33) included four predictor variables (GDD, longitude, latitude, and Brook Trout) and two interactions (between longitude

and latitude; and between GDD and latitude; Table 2; Appendix 4). The model with the lowest AIC score was not chosen based on the simplicity of understanding the model biologically. The model chosen to predict the current occurrences of Arctic Charr had the second-best model score (AIC*c* = 235.99; Appendix 5). This logistic regression model included four predictor variables (GDD, longitude, latitude, and Brook Trout) and one interaction (between longitude and latitude; bolded in Table 2). Interaction terms address variance and can make the model stronger as one variable may be dependent on another variable. The model is summarized here with corresponding coefficients:

Equation 4: $Q = 59.51 - 0.005(D) + 0.73(H) - 0.72(V) - 0.28(B)$ *– 0.01(H*V)*

Where \boldsymbol{O} is Arctic Charr occurrences, \boldsymbol{D} is growing-degree days (Base 4°C), \boldsymbol{H} is for longitude, *V* is for latitude, and *B* is for the occurrence of Brook Trout (present = 1). The reason for choosing this model included dropping one interaction term (between GDD and latitude), making the model simpler. The interaction between GDD and longitude, and between longitude and latitude could be interpreted as the same meaning. Four coefficients were significant ($p \le 0.05$), except for Brook Trout ($p \ge 0.704$).

The training dataset produced the logistic regression model where 80% of the source data correctly classified as Arctic Charr presence or absence, with detection probability $P = 0.93$ (95% confidence interval = $0.91 - 0.95$), sensitivity 93%, specificity 93% and kappa 0.86 (Appendix 6). The training dataset and the testing dataset reached a similar conclusion. The testing dataset had 40% of the source data and correctly classified as Arctic Charr presence or

absence, with detection probability $P = 0.94$ (95% confidence interval = $0.89 - 0.97$), sensitivity 92%, specificity 96%, and kappa 0.88 (Appendix 7).

Row	Column	Correlation	P -value
Latitude	AMT	-0.945	≤ 001 ****
Latitude	GDD	-0.859	< 0.01
AMT	GDD	0.915	$\leq 001***$
Latitude	Arctic Charr	0.5	≤ 001 ****
AMT	Arctic Charr	-0.61	≤ 001 ****
GDD	Arctic Charr	-0.683	< 0.001
Latitude	Brook Trout	-0.504	≤ 001 ****
AMT	Brook Trout	0.358	≤ 001 ****
GDD	Brook Trout	0.242	≤ 001 ****
Arctic Charr	Brook Trout	0.133	$\leq 001***$
Latitude	Longitude	-0.236	≤ 001 ****
AMT	Longitude	0.042	$.453^{ns}$
GDD	Longitude	-0.014	$.692^{ns}$
Arctic Charr	Longitude	0.457	< 0.001
Brook Trout	Longitude	0.737	< 0.01

Table 1: Correlation matrix of mean climate data (growing degree-days and temperature), species interactions of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout, and spatial data of latitude and longitude for Canada measured from 1976-2005.

Table 2: Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) and difference in AICc (AICi – AICmin, ΔAICc) for candidate models predicting the presence of Arctic Charr. The full model included the following predictor variables: growing degree-days (D), longitude (H), latitude (V), and Brook Trout (B). The model in bold is the chosen model used to predict the future distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada.

MODEL	AICC	\triangle AIC C
$D+H+V+B$	285.22	52.90
$D+H+V+B+D:H$	236.82	4.49
$D+H+V+B+D:H+H:V$	232.33	$\mathbf{0}$
$D+H+V+B+D:B+H:B+V:B$	259.47	27.15
$D + H + V + B + H:V$	235.99	3.67
$D+H+V+B+D:B$	266.12	33.80
$D+H+V+B+D:B+H:V$	236.78	4.46

2.5 Discussion

Models are a tool to understand and forecast climate change impacts. Researchers include specific environmental data depending on the scales of the species distribution model. Including variables that are independent of one another captures the current distribution of a species and considers its niche habitat. Many aquatic-related models are under the assumption of a close correspondence between air temperature and water temperature. Spatially it is challenging to estimate an aquatic species distribution compared to a terrestrial species distribution (Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007). When considering climate change impacts, aquatic environments can be variable due to reasons of fish mobility and the fact that aquatic environments have high heat capacities (Neuheimer & Christopher, 2007). This research considered a large spatial scale and was under the assumption of the close correspondence between air temperature and water temperature, exploring GDDs as an environmental variable for considering climate change impacts.

Temperature and precipitation are the most common environmental variables found in models (Moore et al., 2015). Much of the environmental data for this research was collected from the Climate Atlas of Canada. The Climate Atlas of Canada is an online software used by researchers, politicians, and the public (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). Precipitation pattern data was not collected for this research. It is important to acknowledge that climate change is to cause environmental changes, such as changes to precipitation patterns. To capture the impacts of climate change, including precipitation patterns as an additional independent variable may have been beneficial to the model. Fish need water to survive, and changes in precipitation patterns affect water availability. In response to climate change, the impacts of lack of water on Arctic Charr would be considered a greater impact than increased water temperatures.

The study aimed to consider the interaction between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. The literature suggests that Brook Trout is an exceptional colonizer in new habitats, known as a habitat generalist, and a fish competitor (Reist et al., 2006). This study could have considered other fish interactions with Arctic Charr, such as Lake Trout and Pacific Salmon. However, this study kept focused solely on the interaction between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout.

When conducting research on climate change, it is essential to understand which variables are meaningful and to be mindful of their effects on the model. A correlation matrix determined the pairwise relationships among the chosen variables of annual mean temperature, GDDs, latitude, longitude, Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. GDDs and annual mean temperature are logically positively correlated (0.915) because GDDs are derived from annual mean temperature data. As latitude increases, GDDs (-0.859) and annual mean temperature (-0.945) decrease, displaying a strong negative relationship. The relationship between Brook Trout and GDDs is slightly positive (0.242) because the distribution of Brook Trout increases where more GDDs accumulate in a region. The relationship between Arctic Charr and GDDs is negative (-0.683) because of the distribution of Arctic Charr in a region. Longitude and latitude should be independent of one another and have a value of 0, but the relationship is slightly negative (-0.236). The pattern between longitude and latitude is driven by the data.

It was important to choose a model that best represents the baseline time period (1976- 2005) distribution data on Arctic Charr in Canada. The performance of the AIC helped with choosing a model, although the model with the lowest AIC was not chosen. The final model selected was based on the performance of AIC and the simplicity of understanding the model's effects. The decision to choose the model that performed the second best was based on the AIC calculation and ensuring that the model was both biologically and statistically easily understood.

The relationship of the model is generally negative. When the intercept (59.51) is considered the first level, the predictor values add additional levels of information to the model. In this model, there is a temporal scale focused on GDDs. GDDs is recognized as a strong predictor variable, even though at first glance it could be interpreted as the least. The GDD coefficient is very small (-0.005) because GDD values are a very large unit scale (in the thousands). For example, in Churchill, Manitoba (High Carbon Scenario), the GDD mean for the time period of 1976-2005 was 811.9 (base 4℃). For the time period of 2021-2050, GDD is projected at 1076 (base 4℃; +263.9 from the time period of 1976-2005), and for the time period of 2051-2080, GDD is projected at 1392 (base 4℃; +580.4 from the time period of 1976-2005). Understanding the thermal tolerances of Arctic Charr related to their growth and life cycles is monumental to their diversity, adaptability, and survival.

The model considered the diversity of anadromous and landlocked Arctic Charr. Many landlocked post-glacial regions in North America serve as a refuge for Arctic Charr (Wilson et al., 1996). Arctic Charr are mostly found in the northeast of Canada. Geographically, the only option for anadromous Arctic Charr is to disperse north. Anadromous Arctic Charr are restricted and cannot disperse through marine environments from east to west of Canada. Arctic Charr might increase their range further north into the Canadian Arctic refugia if climate change were to deglaciate Baffin Island and forms new habitats. Arctic Charr currently have their backs up against the wall (Chu et al., 2005), and their distributional range is northernly restricted.

The current distribution of Arctic Charr is partly relatable to the glacial history of North America (Wilson et al., 1996). It is known that a large portion of the current distribution of Arctic Charr was once covered by ice (Moore et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 1996). Arctic Charr now occupies the post-glacial lakes that were created by large ice sheets (Moore et al., 2015;

Wilson et al., 1996). Arctic Charr are exceptional colonizers and are known to be a highly mobile species through the evidence of dispersal into post-glacial regions (Moore et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 1996). This reflects the geographic opportunities and/or limits of the current distribution of Arctic Charr. Arctic Charr are prevalent in the eastern part of Canada, found in the northern parts of Labrador and Quebec, and throughout the Canadian Arctic ranging northmost into the Archipelago Islands (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Currently, on the eastern side of Canada, polar conditions are more prevalent, such as in the north-eastern part of Canada, where glaciers are still found on Baffin Island. In the north-western part of Canada, unless in high mountainous regions, glaciers are not as commonly found. Evidence suggests that the current distribution of Arctic Charr is based on the post-glacial history and has shaped the genetic diversity and adaptability of Arctic Charr (Moore et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 1996).

Variables of latitude and longitude relate to the glacial history of the distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada. The interaction between longitude and latitude is a north-eastern probability of Arctic Charr reflecting glacier recession. The coefficients of latitude (-0.72) and longitude (0.73) are bound by a smaller unit scale (degrees) compared to GDDs (base 4℃). Latitude values were imputed as positive values, and longitude values were imputed as negative values (i.e., Churchill, Manitoba: latitude $= 58.77072$ and longitude $= -94.16928$). The longitude coefficient value is truly a negative correlation. It is most likely to see Arctic Charr in the north-eastern parts of Canada based on the latitude and longitude predictor variables.

It was intriguing not seeing a positive latitude coefficient in the model. This is most likely a sampling issue. There were speculations of a positive correlation for latitude as a predictor variable because Arctic Charr are known as the northernmost species of Canada. Another observation is that GDDs and latitude are inheritably correlated, and the factors should portray the same meaning. Therefore, one could be under the assumption that GDDs and latitude

variables would be competing factors and cause multicollinearity. The model negative latitude coefficient (-0.72) conveys the density of the current distribution of Arctic Charr ranges from 60°N-70°N in Canada. Little sampling of Arctic Charr occurs in the Canadian high Arctic where post-glacial lakes are more commonly found. The Canadian Government has travelled twice to Ellesmere Island, northernmost Canada, for Arctic Charr sampling. Travelling to Ellesmere Island is a huge undertaking because of the harsh conditions. Arctic Charr are known to exist there, but most of the Island is frozen and a lake may only be open once every ten years for sampling to occur. Arctic Charr can survive in very harsh conditions, unlike Brook Trout. Most of the reporting of Arctic Charr occurrences are from Northern Communities that report to Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The majority of Northern Communities are situated by coasts or the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr. For example, Cambridge Bay is situated on the coast, and local communities monitor Arctic Charr occurrences. Anadromous Arctic Charr are more commonly sampled because most Northern Communities live near marine coastal waters.

The model indicates that the probability of Arctic Charr occurrence decreases with the presence of Brook Trout occurrence. The coefficient unit scale of Brook Trout (-0.28) is smaller than other predictor variables because the unit scale range is bounded between 0-1. Occurrence and absence data were collected where one was noted as an occurrence and 0 was noted as an absence. The number zero can be meaningful or cause challenges in the occurrence dataset. It is important to ensure that the zero is described meaningfully, where a species can be found but is not, or the species is impossible to exist. The dataset may have shared zeros (double zeros) that can affect the relationship among variables. Fish species can be found in the same area but not co-occurring in the same body of water. The relationship is only slightly negative and suggests that the occurrence of Brook Trout decreases the odds of Arctic Charr

occurrence. The coefficient is not a strong negative relationship and therefore reflects the baseline spatial relationship between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. Arctic Charr and Brook Trout are currently found in an overlapping north-eastern region of Canada. Arctic Charr and Brook Trout don't heavily overlap in their distributional ranges and can portray that Brook Trout currently do not cause much stress on Arctic Charr populations. Brook Trout was not significant to the model $(p<0.704)$, while all other predictor variables were found significant (*p*>0.05). Brook Trout was kept in the model, and the uncertainty in the significance of the coefficient of Brook Trout is noted as a concern moving forward in the research. The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout.

This model incorporated data at a regional scale of Canada, exploring the distributional ranges of Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. This model is a stepping stone in understating the relationship between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. Another layer to this research could involve exploring modelling at a local scale. Modelling only lakes where Arctic Charr and Brook Trout are found and compiling variables such as lake surface area and depth. In response to climate change, lake surface area and depth would reflect how a lake would warm over time. Hypothetically speaking, modelling results may include the scenario where you find Brook Trout excluding Arctic Charr. In the lake habitat, Arctic Charr may be more commonly found at the lake's bottom, which would allow both species to coexist. It is valuable research to acknowledge that research can be performed in multiple ways and to consider different approaches.

This research allowed for the development of an Arctic Charr distribution model for the time period of 1976-2005 in Canada. I hypothesized that a combination of environmental factors and species interactions would be related to the distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada (Hypothesis 1). A model suite was performed to determine the best model to reflect the

probability of Arctic Charr occurrences. Through the performance of AIC, a logistic regression model was chosen, and included variables of GDDs, longitude, latitude, and the occurrence of Brook Trout. The development of the distribution model for Arctic Charr considered the environmental, ecological, and post-glacial effects of evolutionary insights. I predicted that the probability of Arctic Charr occurrence would be significantly related to the variables of growing degree-days and the occurrence of Brook Trout. I predicted that species interactions would be more important/significant than growing-degree days. Growing-degree days was the driving factor in the model. Chapter 3 will use the chosen logistic regression model to predict the distribution of Arctic Charr in response to continuous climate change impacts of increasing atmospheric temperatures.

3 Chapter 3: Projected Distribution Model for Arctic Charr

Abstract

To manage and conserve native fish populations, Canada must consider how climate change may impact distributions of cold-water adapted fishes. There is an urgency to uncover the thermal tolerances of cold-water adapted fishes to conserve native fish populations endemic to Canada. As atmospheric temperatures rise, seasonal cycles may alter and become suitable for adaptable fish species. The potential northward shift of Brook Trout may cause additional stress on Canada's most northern endemic fish species, Arctic Charr. A model was developed to reflect Canada's distribution of Arctic Charr in response to climate change. The model from the baseline time period ranging from 1976-2005 was used to predict Canada's future distribution of Arctic Charr for two 30-year time periods ranging from 2021-2050 and 2051- 2080. The Arctic Charr distribution model explores several climate change impact scenarios that include environmental data and Brook Trout as a species interaction. With this analysis, I predicted that Arctic Charr will lose 18% of its distributional range at a high carbon scenario during the time period of 2051-2080. This information can be used by managers and policy makers to identify thermally vulnerable ecosystems that are essential for conservation of native species in Canada. Managers and policy makers must assess the risks associated with climatedriven distributional shifts by invasive or native, and potentially colonizing fish species.

3.1 Introduction

Forecasting climate change effects is pivotal for conserving Canada's northern endemic fish populations. Proceeding with a precautionary principle and scientific research are fundamental ways to make decisions on climate change impacts (Lennon & Perry, 2018). Environmental responses to climate change may significantly impact fish behaviour and dynamics, including the timing of migrations, immigrations, and recruitment (Murdoch et al., 2014). In the Canadian high Arctic, cold-water adapted fish have specific spatial, thermal, and temporal characteristics in aquatic ecosystems (Reist et al., 2006).

Charrs are at risk of climate change because they are a cold-water adapted fish species (Reist et al., 2013). The cold-water adaptations and the spatial patterns of northern Canadian fish are most likely a reflection of the historical patterns of glaciation in North America (Loewen et al. 2021; Moore et al., 2015). As atmospheric temperatures warmed, post-glacial lakes allowed fish to disperse and persist through adaptable abilities (Loewen et al., 2021).

Arctic Charr are the northernmost freshwater fish species and are currently found in the Canadian high Arctic, Yukon, northern Northwest Territories and Nunavut and along the Hudson Bay (Lane, 2013; Scott & Crossman 1973). Arctic Charr are known to adapt and persist with environmental changes based on the evidence of their survival in post-glacial refugia (Moore et al. 2015). During the glaciations, it is likely that Arctic Charr repetitively used refugia during colder conditions and dispersed during warming conditions (Brunner et al., 200; Moore et al. 2015). Arctic Charr are sensitive to potential climate change impacts, such as shifts in temperature. Increasing atmospheric temperatures could contract the availability of thermally suitable habitat for Arctic Charr, resulting in shifting the southern thermal boundary of Arctic Charr northward (Hein et al., 2012).

Brook Trout may be another fish species to shift their distributional range northward. Under natural conditions within Canada, Brook Trout are widely distributed in the Maritime Provinces, including Newfoundland, Labrador, Quebec, through the Great Lakes drainage, northern parts of Ontario and northeastern Manitoba (Scott & Crossman, 1973). Brook Trout thrive in northern temperate latitudes as they are limited by warm water temperatures (Lenormand et al., 2004; Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 2010). Brook Trout have high dispersal rates and can disperse through freshwater and marine networks (Dunham et al., 2002). The dispersal rate of Brook Trout relies heavily on factors such as topography of the aquatic system networks and the location of its source population (Dunham et al., 2002). Brook Trout are known to be aggressive as they displace other fish species for preferred habitat and food (Dunham et al., 2002). For example, Brook Trout have invaded aquatic systems in the western United States and have caused the rapid decline of native Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) populations (Dunham et al., 2002). The distributional range of Brook Trout is thought to be limited in their northern distribution by temperature, but Arctic Charr are likely limited in their southern range by potential competitors (Reist et al., 2006).

Arctic Charr and Brook Trout distributional ranges overlap in the northeastern parts of Canada (Glémet et al., 1998; Scott & Crossman, 1973). In Canada, the Fraser River, Labrador is an example of where their distributional ranges overlap and natural hybridization occurs among Arctic Charr and Brook Trout (Hammer et al., 1991). Hybridization is considered a source of novel adaptive variation and may be more commonly found with the continuing impacts of climate change forcing species into more frequent sympatry. Fish hybrids are less common in areas where fish species have evolved together over time (Hammer et al., 1991),

and Arctic Charr and Brook Trout don't commonly overlap in niche habitats (Dupont Cyr et al., 2018).

Long-term impacts of continuing climate change could result in fish species becoming extirpated or extinct if temperatures exceed their thermal range (Falardeau et al., 2022; Dunmall et al., 2022). Habitat disruptions in lower latitudes of Canada have caused a variety of species to move northward. Continuing climate change impacts could increase the availability of thermally suitable habitats in the Arctic for fish species that are more commonly found in southern parts of Canada. This is already happening in the Arctic, where reduced sea ice extent and longer open water seasons are facilitating the marine migrations of Pacific Salmon into Arctic areas where they were once not found (Dunmall et al. 2013; Dunmall et al., 2022).

Species distribution models are a management tool to project the future distribution of a species in response to climate change impacts. One logistic regression model predicts that Arctic Charr will lose 63% of its distributional range in Canada by 2050 (Chu et al., 2005). Another model predicts that Arctic Charr will lose 73% of its distributional range in Sweden by 2100 (Hein et al., 2012). Predicted extirpations of Arctic Charr populations could be attributed to precipitation patterns, atmospheric temperature increases and species interactions (Chu et al., 2005; Hein et al., 2012).

Using a modelling approach, this research explores climate change impacts on the distribution of Arctic Charr in Canada. I hypothesized that environmental factors, and the occurrence of Brook Trout would be related to the distribution of Arctic Charr for two future time periods of 2021-2050 and 2051-2080 (Hypothesis 2). I predicted that the change in growing degree-days and the presence of Brook Trout would be associated with a reduced likelihood of Arctic Charr occurrence. A spatial case study for Manitoba, Canada, was added to explore spatial impacts to the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr. I predicted that

the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr in northern parts of Manitoba and Quebec would be significantly impacted in response to climate change. Insight into current barriers to conservation and future management policies within Canada was also explored.

3.2 Materials and Methods

The chosen logistic regression model from Chapter 2 (Eq.4) predicted the baseline time period of 1976-2005. The baseline time period model was used for the projected Arctic Charr distributions for two future 30-year time periods of 2021-2050 and 2051-2080. In this data set, GDD values (base 4℃) were compiled from the Climate Atlas of Canada (https://climateatlas.ca/), which is an online software that uses layers of mapping and integrates environmental factors as projections for how climate change will affect Canada (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). GDD values were compiled at two emissions scenarios RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). RCP4.5 is the low carbon scenario and RCP8.5 is the high carbon scenario (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). The high carbon scenario is considered to have more carbon or greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere resulting in severe global warming (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022).

The future (2021-2050 and 2051-2080) distributions of Arctic Charr looked at the distributional continuous range of occurrences ($n = 401$) from Nick Mandrack's lab database (Figure 5). For each region from the Climate Atlas of Canada the corresponding latitudes $(+)$ and longitudes (-) were compiled in the dataset using Google Maps (https://www.google.ca/maps). Predictions for future distributions of Brook Trout were not found, therefore Brook Trout occurrences were kept constant based on their distributional

continuous range of occurrences from Nick Mandrack's (University of Toronto) lab database (Figure 6).

3.3 Data Analysis

The regression model was used from Chapter 2:

$O = 59.51 - 0.005(D) + 0.73(H) - 0.72(V) - 0.28(B) -$ 0.01(H^*V)

where \bm{O} is the predicted Arctic Charr occurrences (1), \bm{D} is growing-degree days (Base 4°C), \bm{H} is longitude, V is latitude and **B** is the occurrence of Brook Trout $(1 = present)$ to project the distributions of Arctic Charr for two future time periods (2021-2050 and 2051-2080) within Canada.

The baseline time period and the future projections time periods only reflect native individuals. I used the logistic model to project the following scenarios for the distributional continuous range of occurrences of Arctic Charr $(n = 401)$:

- Baseline data 1976-2005 w/o *B* (without occurrence of Brook Trout)
- Low carbon 2021-2050 w/o *B* (without occurrence of Brook Trout)
- Low carbon 2051-2080 w/o *B* (without occurrence of Brook Trout)
- High carbon 2021-2050 w/o *B* (without occurrence of Brook Trout)
- High carbon 2051-2080 w/o *B* (without occurrence of Brook Trout)
- Baseline data 1976-2005 w/ *B* (with occurrence of Brook Trout)

● High carbon 2051-2080 w/ *B* (with occurrence of Brook Trout)

I included the Brook Trout coefficient for the time period of 2051-2080 at a high carbon scenario. Logistic regression was used to project the future projections of Arctic Charr distributional range:

$$
Ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k
$$

where the natural log of *P* over 1 minus *P* is the dependent variable and the remainder of the expression looks like a linear model. If the expression:

$$
Ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right)
$$

is written using a:

$$
y^*
$$

then it looks like a linear expression:

$$
\mathbf{y}^* = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k
$$

knowing that there are similarities between logistic and linear expression. Therefore, taking the exponent of *y** calculated by:

,

Equation 5:
$$
P = exp(y^*)/(exp(y^*)+1)
$$

projects a percent of the odds of the occurrence.

 In linear expressions you interpret the magnitude of coefficients, but in a binomial logistic model you can predict the odds of the dependent variable. The model baseline time period (1976-2005) model is interpreted as:

59.5: the constant term.

(D): its coefficient is **– 0.005.** Note the negative value. Keeping all other variables constant, for each unit increase in GDD, the odds of Arctic Charr occurrence decreased by a factor $= \exp$ (**-**0.005).

(H): its coefficient is **0.73.** Note the positive value is not truly a positive value relationship.

For this model, longitude values were imputed as negative values (i.e., Churchill, Manitoba: latitude = 58.77072 and longitude = **-94.16928**). Therefore, keeping all other variables constant, for each unit decreased in longitude, the odds of Arctic Charr occurrence increased by a factor = $\exp(0.73)$.

(V): its coefficient is **-0.72.** Note the negative value. Keeping all other variables constant, for each unit increase in latitude, the odds of Arctic Charr occurrence decreased by a factor = exp (-0.72).

(*B***):** its coefficient is **-0.28.** Note the negative value. Keeping all other variables constant, when Brook Trout are present, the odds of Arctic Charr occurrence decreased by a factor $= \exp$ (-0.28) .

 (H^*V) : its coefficient is **-0.01.** Note the negative value. Keeping all other variables constant, when longitude and latitude are in an interaction term, the odds of Arctic Charr occurrence decreased by a factor $= \exp(-0.01)$.

In excel, the beta coefficients from the baseline time period (1976-2005) model were used for the projected independent variables to estimate the likelihood of Arctic Charr occurrence. The exponent (exp) value from the log odds value (*O)* value were calculated. The average percent of the odds of Arctic Charr occurrence was calculated for each projected scenario. Using the spatial parameters of longitude and latitude, a case study for Manitoba, Canada was developed to explore the projected distributional range Arctic Charr.

3.4 Results

The projected change to the distributional range of Arctic Charr is derived from the baseline time period (1976-2005) model developed in Chapter 2 (Eq. 4). The projected distribution of Arctic Charr were caused by increases in GDDs (a factor of temperature; Hypothesis 2). The distributional range of Arctic Charr will contract by 18% in the future time period of 2051-2080 at a high carbon scenario (Table 3). The probability of occurrence of Arctic Charr contracted in all the future time period scenarios.

The baseline time period of 1976-2005 was a low carbon scenario (*GDD mean = 413.28, range = 7.8 - 1945*). The projected time period of 2021-2050 explored a low carbon scenario (*GDD mean = 559.23, range = 17.5 – 2311*) and a high carbon scenario (*GDD mean = 578.38, range = 18.2 - 2359*). The projected time period of 2051-2080 explored a low carbon scenario (*GDD mean = 644.64, range = 23.9 – 2518*) and a high carbon scenario (*GDD mean = 796.63,* *range 40.9 - 2835*).

Two additional scenarios explored including the occurrence of Brook Trout. The baseline time period 1976-2005 scenario was a low carbon scenario (*GDD mean* = 413.28, *range* = 7.8 - 1945). The projected time period of 2051-2080 explored a high carbon scenario (*GDD mean = 796.63, range 40.9 - 2835*).

The low carbon scenario for the time period of 2021-2050 only contracted the distributional range of Arctic Charr by 6% (*mean* $Q = 3.0372$ *, P = 0.8437*) from the baseline time period of 1976-2005 (*mean* $O = 3.8449$, $P = 0.9040$). The low carbon scenario for the following time period of 2051-2080 contracted the distribution of Arctic Charr by 10% (*mean O = 2.7174, P = 0.8039)* from the baseline time period. The two high carbon scenarios further contracted the distribution of Arctic Charr, 7% (*mean O = 3.0408, P = 0.8349*) for 2021-2050 and 18% (*mean O = 1.9758, P = 0.7253)* for 2051-2080.

For the Brook Trout scenario for the time period of 2051-2080, at a high carbon scenario projected the distribution of Arctic Charr to contract by 21% (*mean O = 1.6985, P = 0.6985*) from the baseline time period of 1976-2005 (mean $Q = 3.7388$, $P = 0.8982$).

If the distributional range of Arctic Charr is projected to contract, it would be expected that the southernly limits of Arctic Charr would be severely impacted. Spatial exploration of the southernly limits of the distributional range of Arctic Charr were explored in Manitoba, Canada.

Table 3: The table includes the projected probability of Arctic Charr occurrence in Canada. Future time periods (2021-2050, 2051-2080) were explored at low and high carbon scenarios without the Brook Trout interaction and including the Brook Trout interactions for the time period of 2051-2080.

3.4.1 Spatial Case Study: Distribution of Arctic Charr in Manitoba, Canada

This thesis was primarily focused on northern latitudes (60° N and above) of Canada, although this study is relevant to Manitoba. While more prominent in the Canadian high Arctic, native occurrences of Arctic Charr are found in northern Manitoba (Figure 7). Manitoba claims Arctic Charr as one of their endemic species. In Manitoba, Arctic Charr are recorded as far south as the Churchill River (Stewart & Watkinson, 2004). Manitoba stocks Arctic Charr in lakes in Duck Mountain Provincial Park, and in human-made ponds at the Fort Whyte Centre for Outdoor Education in Winnipeg (Stewart & Watkinson, 2004). Manitoba holds the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr (Figure 7) and that is why the province of Manitoba was chosen for this spatial case study. Five regions in northern Manitoba (*mean latitude* = 58.517285, *mean longitude* = -95.021868) are within the distributional range of Arctic Charr ($n = 5$; Table 4).

At a regional scale for Canada, it was projected for the time period of 2051-2080 under a high carbon scenario with including the Brook Trout, the distributional range of Arctic Charr will contract by 21% (*mean* $Q = 1.6985$ *, P = 0.6985*). I projected for Manitoba ($n = 5$) during the time period of 2051-2080 under a high carbon scenario with Brook Trout, the probability of Arctic Charr distributional range occurrence would be left at 2% (*mean O = -4.0484, P =* 0.017). This is a 20% (*mean O = -1.2756, P = 0.2200*) decrease from the baseline time period of 1976-2005.

Figure 7: Arctic Charr (left) and Brook Trout (right) distribution within Manitoba, modified from Stewart and Watkinson (2004)

Table 4: The table includes a spatial comparison of Arctic Charr distribution within Manitoba, under a high carbon scenario for time period of 2051-2080 with the Brook Trout interaction. The average probability of Arctic Charr occurrence is 2% at the time period of 2051-2080.

3.5 Discussion

Humans are now responsible for a new global warming trend never experienced in history (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). The model chosen in Chapter 2 (Eq.4) predicted the distributional range of Arctic Charr for two future 30-year time periods ranging from 2021- 2050 and 2051-2080 in Canada. In research, the IPCC recommends exploring projected climate trends at various levels of carbon in the atmosphere scenarios (IPCC, 2018). This research explored low and high carbon scenarios which reflected global temperature change. The high carbon scenario reveals more carbon emissions released into the atmosphere from anthropogenic activities (Climate Atlas of Canada, 2022). The model displayed a contracting effect where the availability of thermally suitable habitat for Arctic Charr contracted in response to climate change impacts for all the projected model scenarios.

For the low carbon scenarios, the distributional range of Arctic Charr contracted 6% (*mean* $O = 3.0372$, $P = 0.8437$) by the time period of 2021-2050 from the baseline time period of 1976-2005 (*mean* $O = 3.8449$, $P = 0.9040$). The low carbon scenario for the following time period range of 2051-2080 further contracted the distributional range of Arctic Charr by 10% (*mean* $Q = 2.7174$ *,* $P = 0.8039$) from the baseline time period. For the high carbon scenarios, the distributional range of Arctic Charr contracted 7% (*mean* $Q = 3.0408$ *, P = 0.8349*) by the time period of 2021-2050 and by 18% (*mean* $O = 1.9758$ *, P = 0.7253*) by the time period of 2051-2080. Two additional scenarios were explored by adding the baseline occurrence of Brook Trout in Canada. At a high carbon scenario, the distributional range of Arctic Charr contracted 21% (*mean* $Q = 1.6985$ *, P = 0.6985*) by the time period of 2051-2080 from the baseline time period of 1976-2005 (mean $O = 3.7388$, $P = 0.8982$). There was a 3% difference when including the occurrence of Brook Trout for the time period of 2051-2080. This research
did not directly test a climate-driven expansion of Brook Trout. Therefore, I cannot conclude if the 3% increase by including the occurrence of Brook Trout in the model further contracted the distribution of Arctic Charr through means of competition.

It would be beneficial to explore the climate-driven Brook Trout invasion theory through the development of a Brook Trout distribution model, where Brook Trout is the dependent variable. Warmer water temperatures are known to bring new species that seek out thermally preferred habitats. If a competitor fish species shifted its range northward, Arctic Charr might be exposed to new pathogens (Lehtonen, 1996; Falardeau et al., 2022). The combination of the arrival of new species and pathogens can eliminate regional Arctic Charr diversity (Lehtonen, 1996). One logistic regression model by Chu et al. (2005) considered the natural expansion or contraction of a species range in Canada. They predicted a 49% decrease in the native southeasternly region of Quebec and Labrador, Canada distributional range of Brook Trout by the year 2050 (Chu et al., 2005). Therefore, they did not predict that Brook Trout have the potential to expand their distributional range northward (Chu et al., 2005). However, researchers suggest that Brook Trout are to expand their distributional range northward in response to climate change (Reist et al., 2006; Tallman, unpublished research). Chu et al. (2005) discussed how there is potential for Brook Trout to shift their range in two directions, northeasternly away from central Canada towards the Quebec-Labrador region, and westernly towards British Columbia. Native Brook Trout populations could migrate northward from Quebec to Baffin Island or along Hudson Bay, colonizing brackish water systems as temperatures rise. These potentially expanding migration routes could be challenging for Brook Trout as they are not commonly known as a marine-oriented species.

There needs to be more modelling research on the impacts of non-native Brook Trout in Canada. Brook Trout that were introduced through stocking or accidental means are commonly

found in the southwestern region of Canada (Scott & Crossman, 1973; Hammer et al., 1991). Non-native Brook Trout could move into the Mackenzie River Basin, where they would primarily disperse through freshwater systems. For long-term management purposes, it is critical to acknowledge regions where non-native populations of Brook Trout were introduced. Brook Trout were heavily stocked in the western United States in the 1800s, and negatively impacted native fish populations (Dunham et al., 2002; Peterson & Fausch 2003). Brook Trout are known to display competitive characteristics towards other salmonids when competing for resources of preferred habitat and food (Dunham et al., 2002; Peterson & Fausch 2003). Much of the western United States now restricts the stocking of Brook Trout in areas where Brook Trout are not expected to encounter native salmonids because of the irreversible damage they caused (Dunham et al., 2002). Human-induced introductions may aid in the climate-driven expansion of species through stocking programs or accidental introductions (Hammer et al., 1991; Chu et. al., 2005). Arctic Charr and Brook Trout coexist and overlap in southeastern parts of Canada, such as the Fraser River, Labrador, where natural hybridization occurs (Hammer et al., 1991). The hybrid between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout is called the Sparctic Charr (Hammer et al., 1991), and knowing that they can hybridize, it may be a common occurrence heading into the future as they are thrust into closer contact.

The interaction between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout cannot be fully understood by modelling research alone. Interspecific competition between fish species, such as Arctic Charr and Brook Trout would be relatively straightforward to study under a controlled environment in a lab or field enclosure setting (Reist et al., 2006). The model research served as a stepping stone. To test the model's predictions, a laboratory setting would be ideal to explore the behavioural interactions between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout.

An additional research case study explored the spatial components of the distributional range of Arctic Charr in Canada. The research looked at Manitoba as Manitoba is the only prairie province that can claim Arctic Charr as one of their species. It was suspected that under a high carbon scenario for the time period of 2051-2080, Manitoba's distribution of Arctic Charr would be greatly affected. Manitoba was a region of interest because Manitoba is an indicator of the southern limits of Arctic Charr in Canada. The model predicted that in Manitoba during the time period of 2051-2080 under a high carbon scenario with Brook Trout, the probability of Arctic Charr occurrence would be 2% ($O = -4.0484$, $P = 0.017$). This is a 20% ($O = -1.2756$, $P = 0.2200$) decrease from Manitoba's baseline time period of 1976-2005. Therefore, Manitoba's distribution of Arctic Charr is predicted to be a tenfold decrease from 1976-2005 to 2051-2080. This tenfold decrease suggests that the distributional range of Arctic Charr will be greatly affected in Manitoba, leading to potential extirpation from Manitoba by the time period of 2051-2080. Arctic Charr may not be found in Manitoba with continuous impacts of climate change because they are sensitive to extreme warming.

Continuous long-term impacts of climate change could negatively affect the current distributional range of Arctic Charr through increased growing seasons, which is a factor of GDDs. The model predicted that as GDDs increase, the presence of Arctic Charr decreases in Canada. Long-term impacts of increasing temperatures can cause physiological impairment to Arctic Charr as a species if temperatures exceed their thermal range, leading to extirpation or extinction (Falardeau et al., 2022). This research expected that landlocked Arctic Charr to be the most affected as temperatures rise. In the Canadian high Arctic, many lakes inhabited by Arctic Charr are found are shallow depressions. Arctic Charr are particularly sensitive to oxygen content and water temperature within a water body, which plays a major role in determining survival. Increased water temperatures will thermally limit habitat choice as Arctic

Charr will move and disperse warm water temperatures. As water temperatures rise in lake habitats, Arctic Charr will likely avoid warm littoral zones and move to lake bottom habitats which are deep and cold (Reist et al., 2013; Power et al., 2008). The thermal stress would push Arctic Charr out of lakes in post-glacial Arctic regions and reduce the overall abundance of Arctic Charr. Another factor to consider in response to climate change is migration dispersal rates for anadromous Arctic Charr. It will be difficult for Arctic Charr to access freshwater and marine systems due to low water levels and changing tides (Falardeau et al., 2022). Thermal stress is a factor for anadromous Arctic Charr, as increasing temperatures will cause physiological impairment for seasonal migrations (Falardeau et al., 2022).

Recent research has shown that short-term climate change impacts may positively affect Arctic fisheries. In the short-term, climate change will likely increase productivity by creating longer open water seasons, which includes advancing spring and delaying the onset of winter (Falardeau et al., 2022). Warming temperatures will increase productivity suggesting an array of readily available food resources for Arctic Charr. Arctic Charr are highly variable in colour depending on what they eat as they are opportunistic feeders (Reist et al., 2013; Falardeau et al., 2022). In marine environments, Arctic Charr may increase their consumption of shrimp, krill, or pelagic zooplankton, which can cause higher-quality Arctic Charr meat for subsistence and commercial fisheries (Falardeau et al., 2022). Longer open water seasons also may mean that anadromous Arctic Charr can reach a greater physiological condition and become larger in size as there is an increase in feeding opportunities (Falardeau et al., 2022; Grenier & Tallman, 2021). Through an Indigenous and local knowledge study by Falardeau et al. (2022), some Inuit fishers commented that they are currently meeting commercial quotas of Arctic Charr faster than ever before. A research study by Grenier and Tallman (2021) explored the difference between resident and anadromous Arctic Charr regarding their growth patterns

before migrating to the sea. Grenier and Tallman (2021) found that the faster-growing fish were more likely to become anadromous. A warmer lake habitat will lead to a higher proportion of anadromous Charr (Grenier & Tallman, 2021). Anadromous Charr had a significantly higher maturity and fecundity; and lived longer than resident Charr (Grenier $\&$ Tallman, 2021). Climate change can positively impact Arctic Charr if they do not reach their thermal limits in a particular region.

This research focused on Arctic Charr. Arctic Charr are highly valued in the Canadian Arctic. Determining the selective advantages of Arctic Charr is critical for conservation and their persistence in Canada. Arctic Charr are highly adaptable and mobile, proven through the historic post-glacial events of their dispersal in North America (Moore et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 1996). Arctic Charr are considered fish morphs, and populations can differ in life cycle growth patterns, such as differences in maturity, niche shifts or migratory behaviours (Skúlason & Smith, 1995). Typically, in Canada, the northern populations of Arctic Charr can be anadromous, making seasonal migrations from freshwater lakes to marine environments. The diversity of Arctic Charr allows them to adapt to seasonal changes that include water temperatures, salinity, and other environmental changes. The southern populations of Arctic Charr in Canada are known to be more landlocked and are found in freshwater lakes. In northern regions of Canada, Arctic Charr use a broader niche in contrast to landlocked southern populations. The Canadian Arctic has notably experienced less anthropogenic habitat fragmentation and disruption than the southern regions of Canada (Christiansen & Reist, 2013). Are Arctic Charr well equipped for environmental changes in response to climate change and human interventions? The Arctic faces new environmental changes caused by human activities and the interventions of today's world. Arctic Charr diversity may provide resilience allowing Arctic Charr to adapt to rapid and continuous environmental changes.

There is a certainty that climate change is affecting the nature of northern habitats. How a species will respond is notably an area of research where much uncertainty remains (Budy $\&$ Chris, 2014). When thinking critically about climate change and the model's predictions, has the distribution of Arctic Charr (currently in the time period ranging from 2021-2050) decreased since the time period ranging from 1976-2005? Northern communities situated by subsistence and recreational fishing sites near Cambridge Bay have observed rapid warming in the past five years and have witnessed effects on Arctic Charr (Falardeau et al., 2022). An Inuit Elder spoke to the current distribution of Arctic Charr in research done by Falardeau et al. (2022):

"that's a major, major, change that I've seen over my lifetime, is that lot of Charr certain times, when it is 20 to 30℃, the Charr quits being on shore, it's too warm for them. The shorelines are really warm, the water, and the Charr don't like the warm water so they're moving out into deeper water, so it is harder to harvest summer-round Charr now. We can get them in early season, in end of June, early, July while it's cool $(pg. 11)."$

Therefore, the effects of climate change on Arctic Charr are noticeable. Particularly, the warming water temperatures are affecting the seasonal migration routes of fish and fisheries (Falardeau et al., 2022).

Arctic Charr are considered a candidate species when studying climate change because they are vulnerable to diverse environmental pressures. Additional stressors on Arctic Charr include polluted environments, barriers to migration, and overfishing (Reist et al., 2013; Maitland, 1995). It is essential to assess the negative and positive climate change impacts on Arctic Charr for management purposes and to inform policy. The continuous long-term effects of climate change project a decrease in the distribution of Arctic Charr. There is a need for

increased conservation regulations for species in the Arctic whose geographical niche can be drastically disturbed by climate change projections. Modelling research is a management tool for conserving biodiversity. Modelling can determine the size of a predicted effect, and depending on the outcome, the size of the effect can inform and trigger conservation measures (Chu et al., 2005). Suppose it was found through modelling that the future distribution of Arctic Charr will decrease substantially in a particular region. In that case, management should be triggered for the proactive establishment of conservation and recovery efforts (Chu et al., 2005). In terms of managing the impacts of climate change, little can be done now to affect species dispersal. However, management actions on limiting a species interaction through stocking or other dispersal means is a daily decision for most governments.

Community-based research and programs are vital for the appropriate adaptation and management strategies to conserve Arctic species, such as Arctic Charr (Dunmall et al., 2013; Falardeau et al., 2022). Dunmall et al. (2013) established a community-based monitoring program in the Canadian Arctic to preserve Arctic fisheries from climate-driven fish expansions. Since the program's establishment, Northern communities have negotiated a ban on certain fishing practices in the Arctic Ocean until appropriate science and management are in place to evaluate the noticeable increase in sightings of Pacific Salmon (Dunmall et al., 2013; Dumall et al., 2022). Many Northern communities situated by the coast are witnessing the effects of climate change today, and their knowledge is monumental to conserving Arctic species.

I hypothesized that environmental factors, and the occurrence of Brook Trout would be related to the distribution of Arctic Charr for two future time periods of 2021-2050 and 2051- 2080 (Hypothesis 2). I predicted that the change in growing degree-days and the presence of Brook Trout would be associated with a reduced likelihood of Arctic Charr occurrence. I can

conclude that in response to climate change impacts, the distributional range of Arctic Charr will contract in all the five predicted model scenarios by: 6% (low carbon scenario) and 7% (high carbon scenario) for 2020-2051; and 10% (low carbon scenario), 18% (high carbon scenario), and 21% (high carbon with the occurrence of Brook Trout scenario) for 2051-2080. A spatial case study for Manitoba, Canada, was added to explore spatial impacts to the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr. I predicted that the southernly distributional range of Arctic Charr in northern parts of Manitoba and Quebec would be significantly impacted in response to climate change. Manitoba's distribution of Arctic Charr is predicted to be a tenfold decrease from 1976-2005 to 2051-2080. This tenfold decrease suggests that the distributional range of Arctic Charr will be greatly affected in Manitoba, leading to potential extirpation from Manitoba by the time period of 2051-2080. Research of competition characteristics of Brook Trout needs further exploration in a lab or experimental setting. Insight into current barriers to conservation and future management policies within Canada was also explored. Increased scientific modelling techniques and conservation regulations for Arctic fish are necessary as their geographical niche can be disturbed by the impacts of climate change. The Canadian government mandates the precautionary principle, and modelling research is a useful tool to conserve Arctic fisheries.

4 Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations

I developed a model to reflect the occurrence of Arctic Charr in response to climate change in Canada. Model variables included growing-degree days (GDDs), longitude, latitude, and the occurrence of Brook Trout. All but one predictor variable (Brook Trout, *p>*0.704) was found significant (GDDs, longitude, latitude, $p<0.05$) in the model. The model reflected where Arctic Charr and Brook Trout do not overlap, and overlapping was not found to be significant in the model. The model classified 93% of Arctic Charr occurrences in Canada for the baseline time period ranging from 1976-2005.

This model predicted the future distribution of Arctic Charr in the Canadian Arctic under climate change scenarios, which included environmental changes and Brook Trout interactions. The model predicted the distribution of Arctic Charr for two 30-year time periods into the future: 2021-2050 and 2051-2080. The model displayed a contracting effect on the distribution of Arctic Charr in all future scenarios. Climate change will contract the availability of thermally suitable habitats for Arctic Charr in Canada. I predicted that Arctic Charr will lose 18% of their distributional range under a high carbon scenario (GDD mean = 796.63, range 40.9 - 2835) during the time period of 2051-2080. I predicted that Arctic Charr will lose 21% of their distributional range under a high carbon scenario (GDD mean = 796.63, range 40.9 - 2835) during the time period of 2051-2080 when including the occurrence of Brook Trout.

It is recommended that future research takes place in a laboratory setting to explore the relationship (predator-prey) between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout. Researching the aggressive characteristic traits that Brook Trout display when in competition with another species for resources of preferred habitat and food. This research could test the prediction that a Brook Trout invasion would occur in response to climate change, and that Brook Trout can displace

Arctic Charr through competitive characteristic traits. Researching the interaction between Arctic Charr and Brook Trout would be empirical evidence that the species' interaction is either a meaningful variable or not to be included in a model. Specifically, if climate change induces a Brook Trout invasion northward into previously exclusive Arctic Charr habitats, would Brook Trout be capable of pushing Arctic Charr out? If Brook Trout do not, then the climatic imperative is less of a concern in a model. Conversely, if the interaction shows Brook Trout as winners when it comes to competition, then the climate imperative is very high for the long-term success of Arctic Charr.

It is reasonable to suggest that climate change has already impacted most species on Earth in some way or another. Continuous climate change impacts are projected to cause thermal stress on Arctic Charr. The Canadian high Arctic will serve as a refuge for Arctic Charr. Species distribution models use scientific evidence to project a distributional range based on various factors. Models displaying a substantial decrease in a species distribution should trigger management and policy for conservation measures and recovery efforts. Collaborative management approaches with Northern communities are critical to conserving Arctic Charr. Collaborative community-based research efforts will build adaptation to management strategies when responding to climate change impacts.

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Appendix 1: The Climate Atlas of Canada

Appendix 2: Summary Training & Test Dataset in R

Appendix 3: Confusion Matrix performed on Train and Test Datasets in R

> confusionMatrix(tab1) Confusion Matrix and Statistics

Actual Predicted 0 1 0 320 22 1 25 299 Accuracy: 0.9294 95% CI: (0.9073, 0.9477) No Information Rate: 0.518 P-Value \lceil Acc > NIR] : <2e-16 Карра : 0.8587 Mcnemar's Test P-Value : 0.7705 Sensitivity : 0.9275 Specificity : 0.9315 Pos Pred Value: 0.9357 Neg Pred Value : 0.9228 Prevalence : 0.5180 Detection Rate: 0.4805 Detection Prevalence: 0.5135 Balanced Accuracy : 0.9295 'Positive' Class : 0

> confusionMatrix(tab2)

Confusion Matrix and Statistics

Actual Predicted 0 1 0 79 3 1 7 7 7 Accuracy: 0.9398 95% CI: (0.892, 0.9707) No Information Rate : 0.5181 P-Value $[Acc > NIR]$: <2e-16 Карра: 0.8796 Mcnemar's Test P-Value : 0.3428 Sensitivity : 0.9186 Specificity : 0.9625 Pos Pred Value : 0.9634 Neg Pred Value : 0.9167 Prevalence : 0.5181 Detection Rate: 0.4759 Detection Prevalence : 0.4940 Balanced Accuracy : 0.9406 'Positive' Class : 0

Appendix 4: AIC*c* **in R**

```
> library(AICcmodavg)
> aictab(cand.set = models1)
```
Model selection based on AICc:

- Mod3 -109.08 Mod5 -111.93 Mod7 -111.31 Mod2 -113.36 Mod4 -121.63 Mod6 -127.00
- Mod1 -137.57

Appendix 4: AIC*c* **= 0 Model in R**

> summary(model3) $Call:$ $qlm(formula = ArcticCharr ~ GDD + Longitude + Latitude + BrookTrout +$ GDD * Longitude + Longitude * Latitude, family = binomial(link = "logit"), $data = training_set$) Deviance Residuals: Min 10 Median 30 Max $-2.2941 - 0.1028 - 0.0009$ 3.3948 0.1841 Coefficients: Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|) (Intercept) 2.894e+01 1.634e+01 1.771 0.0766 . GDD 3.123e-03 3.568e-03 0.875 0.3814 Longitude 3.714e-01 1.816e-01 2.045 $0.0409*$ Latitude $-3.418e-01$ 2.288e-01 -1.494 0.1351 BrookTrout 2.526e-01 7.732e-01 0.327 0.7439 GDD:Longitude 9.823e-05 4.423e-05 2.221 0.0264 * Longitude:Latitude -5.386e-03 2.467e-03 -2.183 $0.0290*$ $-$ Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1 (Dispersion parameter for binomial family taken to be 1) Null deviance: 922.41 on 665 degrees of freedom Residual deviance: 218.16 on 659 degrees of freedom AIC: 232.16

Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 8

Appendix 5: Baseline Model in R

```
>summary(model6)Call:glm(formula = ArcticCharr ~ GDD + Longitude + Latitude + BrookTrout +Longitude * Latitude, family = binomial(link = "logit"),
    data = training_setDeviance Residuals:
    Min
              10
                  Median
                                30
                                        Max
-2.4183 - 0.1181 - 0.00230.1751
                                     3.4279
Coefficients:
                     Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
                   59.5108988 10.9051529 5.457 4.84e-08
(Intercept)
GDD
                   -0.0048915 0.0009255 -5.285 1.25e-07
                    0.7289708  0.1046456  6.966  3.26e-12
Longitude
Latitude
                   -0.7239434 0.1725835 -4.195 2.73e-05
BrookTrout1
                   -0.2809740 0.7405901 -0.3790.704
Longitude:Latitude -0.0098504  0.0016287  -6.048  1.47e-09
                    ***
(Intercept)
                    ***GDD
Longitude
                    ***
Latitude
                    ***
BrookTrout1
Longitude: Latitude ***
- -Signif. codes:
0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
(Dispersion parameter for binomial family taken to be 1)
    Null deviance: 922.41 on 665 degrees of freedom
Residual deviance: 223.87 on 660 degrees of freedom
AIC: 235.87
```
Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 7

Appendix Raw Data: Low Carbon Data Set

Appendix Raw Data: High Carbon Data Set

