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**Girkin, NT, Dhandapani, S, Evers, SL, Ostle, N, Turner, BL and Sjögersten, S**

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# **Interactions between labile carbon, temperature and land use regulate carbon dioxide and methane production in tropical peat**

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## Abstract

1 Tropical peatlands are a significant carbon store and contribute to global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)  
2 emissions. Tropical peatlands are threatened by both land use and climate change, including 3 – 4°C predicted  
3 warming by 2100 and the alteration of regional precipitation patterns. Plant communities in tropical peatlands can  
4 regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) fluxes through labile carbon inputs, but the extent to which these inputs regulate  
5 the temperature response of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production in tropical peat remains unclear. We conducted an anoxic  
6 incubation experiment using three peat types derived from contrasting botanical origins to assess how carbon  
7 addition affects the temperature response (Q<sub>10</sub>) of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production. Peats from a forested peatland in  
8 Panama and Malaysia, and a converted oil palm and pineapple intercropping system in Malaysia differed  
9 significantly in terms of redox potential, total carbon and carbon: nitrogen ratios. The production of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub>  
10 varied significantly among peat types and increased with increasing temperature. Carbon addition further  
11 increased gas fluxes, but did not influence the Q<sub>10</sub> for CO<sub>2</sub> or CH<sub>4</sub> production. These findings demonstrate that  
12 CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production in tropical peats are sensitive to warming, that potential emissions vary among  
13 contrasting peat types, but that the effect of root inputs in altering Q<sub>10</sub> appears to be limited.

## 14 **Introduction**

15 Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) are increasing, driven by  
16 anthropogenic activities and accelerating climate change (IPCC, 2013). Tropical peatlands represent an important  
17 component of the carbon cycle, being an important source of both CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> and a major store of carbon.  
18 Indeed, tropical peatlands account for 11% of total peatland area but 15-19% of peat carbon stocks worldwide,  
19 equivalent to approximately 104.7 Gt C, with significant deposits reported throughout the tropics in Central and  
20 South America, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia (Dargie et al., 2017; Page et al., 2011).

21  
22 Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from tropical peatlands are strongly regulated by peat temperature, with  
23 increased temperature associated with greater fluxes *in situ* (Jauhiainen et al., 2014). This is particularly important  
24 in the context of predicted climate change for tropical peatlands globally. Current estimates of air temperature  
25 changes in the Neotropics and Southeast Asia are for 3 – 4°C warming by 2100 (IPCC, 2013). Previous *ex situ*  
26 studies have demonstrated that the temperature response of tropical peats to warming is not linear (Sjögersten et  
27 al., 2018), meaning that relatively small increases in temperature have the potential to dramatically increase  
28 emissions.

29  
30 In addition to changing regional climate patterns, many tropical peatlands are under significant threat from  
31 changes in land use. In Southeast Asia, the drainage, deforestation and expansion of plantation agriculture has the  
32 potential to significantly alter the balance of emissions from peatland sites (Hergoualc'h and Verchot, 2014).  
33 Conversion to plantation agriculture has previously been shown to significantly alter organic matter properties  
34 (Cooper et al., 2019; Tonks et al., 2017). In turn, this may affect the response of these ecosystems to environmental  
35 change, including to elevated temperatures and altered patterns of precipitation. Differences in organic matter  
36 properties between contrasting vegetation types have also been reported in Neotropical systems (Girkin et al.,  
37 2019; Hoyos-Santillan et al., 2015; Upton et al., 2018).

38  
39 Root exudates represent an important plant carbon input which, depending on their composition, can contribute  
40 significantly to net greenhouse gas emissions in tropical peats even at relatively low addition rates (Girkin et al.,  
41 2018a, 2018b). Root respiration, which includes microbial use of exudates, can be the dominant driver of CO<sub>2</sub>  
42 fluxes *in situ* in tropical peatlands (Girkin et al., 2018c; Melling et al., 2013). Emissions of both CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> are  
43 also driven by the decomposition of peat organic matter, with the extent of production determined by substrate

44 quality (Bridgham and Richardson, 1992; Hoyos-Santillan et al., 2015). Under low oxygen to anoxic conditions  
45 that can predominate in peatlands, methanogenic archaea produce CH<sub>4</sub> through the reduction of acetate  
46 (acetoclastic methanogenesis), the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> (hydrogenotrophic methanogenesis), or the cleavage  
47 of methylated organic compounds (Holmes et al., 2015; Kolton et al., 2019; Le Mer and Roger, 2001). These  
48 pathways are strongly influenced by prevalent environmental conditions *in situ*, including substrate and nutrient  
49 availability, microbial community structure, water table depth, and temperature (Couwenberg et al., 2009;  
50 Gorham, 1991; Le Mer and Roger, 2001).

51

52 The temperature sensitivity of soil respiration under aerobic conditions increases with the recalcitrance of organic  
53 matter due to the higher activation energies required (Fierer et al., 2005; Lloyd and Taylor, 1994). Tropical (and  
54 some temperate) peats have been shown to have a lower carbohydrate content and a higher proportion of aromatic  
55 compounds compared to boreal peatlands (Hodgkins et al., 2018), therefore requiring higher energy yield terminal  
56 electron acceptors to drive decomposition, which are likely less available in the low oxygen to anaerobic  
57 conditions of peatlands (Keiluweit et al., 2016). The degradation of root exuded labile carbon compounds, which  
58 can include a range of organic acids, sugars and amino acids, are likely to therefore have a lower sensitivity than  
59 other organic matter components, the oxidation of which may be coupled to lower yielding terminal electron  
60 acceptors (Davidson and Janssens, 2006; Keiluweit et al., 2016). Previous *ex situ* studies of the response of tropical  
61 peat have not accounted for the influence of continuous low input rates of labile carbon (Sjögersten et al., 2018),  
62 for example low concentrations of glucose, a common component of plant root exudate profiles (Smith, 1976).

63

64 Developing an understanding of temperature sensitivity of peat and soils is important in accurately assessing  
65 future changes in the global carbon cycle in response to rises in temperature. Strong responses of greenhouse gas  
66 production to increased temperature, and greater temperature sensitivity with increasing carbon substrate  
67 recalcitrance are predicted by kinetic theory (Davidson and Janssens, 2006) and supported by some experimental  
68 data (Conant et al., 2008). Decomposition of recalcitrant peatland carbon (particularly highly aromatic tropical  
69 peat) may also be subject to thermodynamic limitation due to a shortage of terminal electron acceptors (Beer and  
70 Blodau, 2007). Previous studies in mineral soils have reported an increase in the temperature sensitivity of aerobic  
71 respiration on the addition of labile carbon (Gershenson et al., 2009; Nianpeng et al., 2013; Song et al., 2010),  
72 most likely because microbial respiration in these soils was limited by carbon lability. High latitude peatlands  
73 have previously been demonstrated to have high temperature sensitivity for CH<sub>4</sub> production (Bergman et al.,

74 1998). Increased temperatures have also been shown to result in substantial changes in microbial community  
75 structure, possibly resulting in changes in methanogenic pathways (Lupascu et al., 2012). However, it is unclear  
76 how this applies in tropical peatlands with high organic matter content (> 60%), but a high aromatic content, and  
77 how responses vary between dominant vegetation types with different litter inputs (Upton et al., 2018, Cooper et  
78 al., 2019), and under waterlogged and low oxygen conditions (Wright et al., 2013).

79

80 In this study, we assessed the response of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production of three tropical peats to elevated temperatures  
81 and carbon addition, in the form of glucose. Based on the strong role of organic matter quality in regulating  
82 greenhouse gas emissions we predicted that i) basal CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production would differ among peat types, and  
83 ii) temperature sensitivity would differ among peat types. As labile carbon can be rapidly depleted during  
84 decomposition, and peat is predominantly composed of recalcitrant biomolecules, we also hypothesised that iii)  
85 glucose addition would increase Q<sub>10</sub> for all peat types due to waterlogged, low oxygen conditions, and strong  
86 substrate limitation resulting in thermodynamic limitation.

87

## 88 **Methods**

### 89 **Study sites**

90 This study was conducted using peat samples collected from sites in Panama and Malaysia between May 2016  
91 and July 2017. Panamanian peat samples were collected in May 2016 from the 80 km<sup>2</sup> ombrotrophic peatland at  
92 Changuinola, part of the San San Pond Sak freshwater and marine wetland located in Bocas del Toro province  
93 (Figure 1a). The site was located approximately 600 m from the coast (09° 18' 13.00"N, 82° 21' 13.80"W) in a  
94 mixed forest stand. The central peat dome is approximately 8 m deep and was initiated approximately 4000–5000  
95 years ago (Phillips et al., 1997). The site features seven distinct plant phasic communities beginning with a  
96 *Rhizophora mangle* mangrove swamp on the coastal margins, which is succeeded by palm swamp dominated by  
97 *Raphia taedigera*, a mixed forest stand, a monodominant *Camposperma panamensis* forest stand, and a *Myrica-*  
98 *Cyrtilla* bog-plain (Phillips et al., 1997). This vegetation gradient is matched by a pronounced decrease in nutrient  
99 availability, particularly phosphorus (Cheesman et al., 2012; Sjögersten et al., 2011). The microbial community  
100 throughout the peatland is dominated by *Acidobacteria*, with precise community composition clustered by  
101 phosphorus availability (Troxler et al., 2012). Sampling was conducted in the mixed forest stand dominated by *C.*  
102 *panamensis*, *R. taedigera*, and *Symphonia globulifera*.

103

104 The Malaysian forested peatland site is located in Terengganu state, in northeastern Peninsular Malaysia. The site  
105 is approximately 8.42 km<sup>2</sup> and, and is 11.3 km from the coast, located in Kampung Mat Jintan (5°25'16.2"N,  
106 102°55'46.2"E) in the boundary between Kula Nerus and Setiu districts (Figure 1b). The forest vegetation  
107 comprised trees that were up to 40 m tall and with a diameter-at-breast-height (DBH) of 40 - 50 cm. Common  
108 species included *Antisoptera* sp., *Shorea* sp., *Calophyllum sclerophyllum*, *Calophyllum* sp., *Blumeodendron*  
109 *tokbrai*, *Durio carinatus*, *Gonostylus bancanus*, *Elateriospermum tapos*, and *Syzygium* sp. Both *Macaranga*  
110 *pruinosa* and *M. gigantean* were present on the forest edges. *Pandanus helicopus* and *Nepenthes ampullaria* were  
111 common understory species. Peat depth was approximately 2 m.

112

113 The Malaysian oil palm and pineapple intercropping site is located in Selangor State, approximately 14 km from  
114 the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia (3°25'20.6"N, 101°19'56.6"E). The site is surrounded by recently planted  
115 (2014) 2<sup>nd</sup> generation oil palm mono-cropping and is drained by two drainage ditches along the borders at opposite  
116 sides of the site (Dhandapani et al., 2019b). During sampling the site was not flooded, although the peat was moist,  
117 with high gravimetric moisture content.

118

119 At each site, three 10 × 10 × 10 cm bulk peat samples were collected using a hand trowel, excluding any recent  
120 surface litter. Samples were shipped to the University of Nottingham and kept at 4°C for one month prior to  
121 analysis.

122

### 123 **Experimental design**

124 Peat samples (20 g) from each site, were placed in stainless steel chambers (0.6 dm<sup>3</sup>) with polypropylene lids and  
125 a silicon ring seal. Two holes were drilled in the lids and fitted with three-way stopcock valves silicon-sealed in  
126 place. The gas-tightness of chambers was tested by closing all valves and submersing in water, and through  
127 flushing the chamber with N<sub>2</sub> and observing for changes in headspace CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> concentrations over time prior  
128 to adding peat. Each peat sample was mixed with 20 ml of deionised water to mimic *in situ* flooded conditions.  
129 Chambers were flushed with N<sub>2</sub> to displace accumulated headspace gases for two minutes and were placed in  
130 incubators set at 25, 30 and 35°C for acclimation of microbial communities for seven weeks following sample  
131 storage and preparation. temperatures were selected to represent broad scale warming of peatlands in the Central  
132 Americas and in Southeast Asia (IPCC, 2013). Chambers were subsequently opened to displace accumulated

133 headspace gases, flushed again with N<sub>2</sub> for two minutes and sealed. Overall conditions most closely match the  
134 flooded oxic conditions outlined in Sjogersten et al. (2018), namely, water saturated with low oxygen, but not  
135 entirely anoxic, mostly closely resembling peat *in situ* conditions in the 0 – 10 cm horizon (Girkin, 2018; Hoyos-  
136 Santillan et al., 2016).

137

138 Glucose solutions were prepared for an input rate equivalent to 0.1 mg C g<sup>-1</sup> soil per day. This addition rate  
139 represents a relatively low daily addition rate for plant carbon inputs (Grayston and Campbell, 1996). Solutions  
140 were adjusted to a pH of 5.5 using HCl sterilised, and stored at 4°C prior to addition. Oxygen was not removed  
141 from exudate solutions prior to addition to better mimic the combined inputs of oxygen and labile carbon at the  
142 root-peat interface (Hoyos-Santillan et al., 2016).

143

144 During headspace sampling, chambers were connect to a Los Gatos ultraportable greenhouse gas analyser (San  
145 Jose, California), sampling at 0.5 Hz. Fluxes were subsequently measured over 90 seconds, with measurement  
146 occurring immediately prior to glucose addition, and at 6, 24, 72 and 120 hours following the first addition.  
147 Glucose (or deionised water) was added to each chamber at the rate of 1 ml per day. Gas concentrations were  
148 adjusted for incubation temperature (25 – 35°C), as well tube and optical bench volume, according to the ideal  
149 gas law. The rate of potential gas production, expressed as μg CO<sub>2</sub> g<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup> or μg CH<sub>4</sub> g<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup>, was calculated  
150 assuming a linear accumulation rate of gases in the headspace (Hogg et al., 1992).

151

152 Q<sub>10</sub>, describing the temperature sensitivity of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production was calculated as:

$$153 \quad Q_{10} = 10^{(m \times 10)}$$

154 Where m is the regression slope of a log<sub>10</sub> CO<sub>2</sub> or CH<sub>4</sub> flux versus temperature plot.

155

### 156 **Peat characterisation**

157 Sub-samples from each site were used to characterise peat physiochemical properties. Gravimetric water content  
158 was determined by analysis of the mass of water lost from 10 g fresh peat oven dried at 105°C for 24 hours.  
159 Organic matter content was determined as the mass lost after ignition for 7 hours at 550°C. Total carbon (C) and  
160 total nitrogen (N) content were determined from 0.2 g of dry, homogenised peat combusted using a total element  
161 analyser (Flash EA 1112, CE Instruments, Wigan, UK). pH and redox potential were measured using a Hanna



162 209 meter coupled with pH and redox probes following one week acclimation but prior to beginning the  
163 experiment. After measurement, chambers were flushed with N<sub>2</sub> and resealed.

164

### 165 **Statistical analysis**

166 Differences in CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production and Q<sub>10S</sub> were tested using the restricted maximum likelihood method  
167 (REML), including site, temperature and presence/absence of glucose as fixed effects and sample replicate as a  
168 random effect. CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes were log-transformed to meet test assumptions. Significance was assessed at  
169  $p < 0.05$ . All statistical analyses were conducted using Genstat v17.

170

## 171 **Results**

### 172 **Peat biochemical properties**

173 Peats were acidic ( $pH < 5$ ), with high gravimetric moisture and organic matter contents. These properties were  
174 not significantly different among peat types ( $p > 0.05$ ). There was, however, a significant difference in redox  
175 potential among sites ( $p = 0.003$ ), with substantially lower redox potential in the Malaysian primary forest peats  
176 compared to the Panamanian forest or intercropping site (Table 1). Total carbon was also significantly different  
177 among sites ( $p = 0.021$ ), and was greatest in pineapple intercropping sites. Total nitrogen did not differ  
178 significantly among peat types ( $p = 0.134$ ). C:N was significantly different among peat types ( $p = 0.003$ ), and was  
179 lowest in Panamanian forest peat but broadly comparable between Malaysian peats.

180

### 181 **Basal peat CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production**

182 Mean basal CO<sub>2</sub> production varied between 69.0 – 77.7  $\mu\text{g CO}_2 \text{ g}^{-1} \text{ hr}^{-1}$  (Figure 2) but did not differ significantly  
183 among peat types ( $p = 0.151$ ). CH<sub>4</sub> production, however, varied significantly among peat types ( $p = 0.02$ ). The  
184 magnitude of CH<sub>4</sub> production compared to CO<sub>2</sub> was considerably lower, ranging from 0.06 – 0.08  $\mu\text{g CH}_4 \text{ g}^{-1} \text{ hr}^{-1}$ .  
185 Greatest CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production occurred in Malaysian primary forest peats, with the most variable production  
186 occurring in peats from the intercropping sites.

187

### 188 **Temperature and labile carbon sensitivity**

189 Temperature strongly influenced CO<sub>2</sub> fluxes, with increased production relative to basal rates for all sites at both  
190 30°C and 35°C ( $p < 0.001$ ). Glucose addition significantly increased CO<sub>2</sub> production ( $p < 0.001$ ), with a significant

191 (p < 0.001) interaction between glucose addition and peat type, with a 178% increase in mean fluxes from  
192 Malaysian primary forest peats, but only 34% for the Panamanian mixed forest peat.

193

194 CH<sub>4</sub> production increased significant with temperature (p < 0.001), with mean production increasing at both 30  
195 and 35°C (Figure 3b,d,f). Glucose addition increased mean CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes by 11% (p = 0.034). There was also a  
196 significant interaction between glucose addition and peat type (p < 0.001). In Malaysian forest and Panamanian  
197 forest peats, there were 5 and 7% declines in mean CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes respectively on glucose addition, but there was a  
198 56% increase in mean fluxes for the intercropping site.

199

200 There were no significant differences in temperature sensitivity (Q<sub>10</sub>) of CO<sub>2</sub> or CH<sub>4</sub> production in the presence or  
201 absence of glucose (p > 0.05, Table 2), between sites (p > 0.05), or in the interaction between treatment and sites  
202 (p > 0.05).

203

## 204 **Discussion**

205 Warming promoted CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production in all peat types, in common with previous studies in both temperate  
206 and boreal (Dunfield et al., 1993, Inglett et al., 2012), and tropical peats (Sjögersten et al., 2018), as well as drained  
207 lowland tropical soils from Peru (Nottingham et al., 2015). Previously, it has been proposed that heterotrophic  
208 microbial communities in tropical peat respond weakly to warming primarily due to adaptation to high peat  
209 temperatures, and because optimal temperature for respiration and methanogenesis is approximately 25°C (Kolton  
210 et al., 2019; Menichetti et al., 2015; Sjögersten et al., 2018). Q<sub>10</sub> for both CO<sub>2</sub> (1.07 – 2.25) and CH<sub>4</sub> (1.10 – 2.39)  
211 production were relatively low in our study, particularly when compared to 6.1 for anaerobic CH<sub>4</sub> production  
212 reported for Panamanian peats (Sjögersten et al., 2018), although they are closer to the 2.2 – 3.7 reported from  
213 studies of CH<sub>4</sub> production in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia (Brady, 1997; Hirano et al., 2009; Jauhiainen et al.,  
214 2014), and 1.8 under flooded oxic conditions from Panamanian peats (Sjögersten et al., 2018). Previous studies  
215 have reported a higher temperature sensitivity of CH<sub>4</sub> production than CO<sub>2</sub> production, although we found no  
216 supporting evidence for this (Table 2) (Sjögersten et al., 2018, and references therein). These results have clear  
217 implications in assessing the impact of future environmental change on gaseous carbon emissions from tropical  
218 peatlands: warming peat will result in increased CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from flooded, low oxygen peats.

219

220 Although there was no difference in basal CO<sub>2</sub> production (from unamended peats at 25°C), or in temperature  
221 sensitivity among peat types, both CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes varied significantly among sites across the three  
222 temperatures. While organic matter content was similar among peat types, there were significant differences in  
223 total carbon and C:N, likely reflecting contrasting aboveground vegetation and management practices. Previous  
224 work in Malaysia (Tonks et al., 2017, Cooper et al., 2019) and Panama (Hoyos-Santillan et al., 2015, Upton et al.,  
225 2018, Girkin et al., 2019) has demonstrated substantial differences in organic matter properties between  
226 contrasting plant functional types and land uses, driven by differences in plant litter inputs and decomposition  
227 rates. While various studies have assessed the impacts of land use change on organic matter properties (Cooper et  
228 al., 2019; Könönen et al., 2018; Tonks et al., 2017), there is limited data available regarding the role of  
229 intercropping systems on organic matter properties, meaning differences in responses cannot be readily ascribed  
230 to contrasts in organic matter properties alone. The low CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes from the Malaysian intercropping system may  
231 reflect significant depletion of labile carbon (Cooper et al., 2019), but could also be driven by a poorly adapted  
232 methanogenic community, or a highly active methanotrophic community under partially aerobic conditions  
233 (Andersen et al., 2013), as well as a redox potential c. 300 mV.

234

235 Changes in CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production in response to glucose addition varied between peat types. At 35°C, CH<sub>4</sub>  
236 fluxes were greater from unamended Panamanian and Malaysian forest peats compared to carbon amended peats,  
237 implying that labile carbon availability was not a limiting factor for production at this temperature. Similarly, CO<sub>2</sub>  
238 production in peat from the Panamanian primary forest was comparable at 30 – 35°C even with glucose  
239 amendment implying an additional limiting factor other than temperature. Rates of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production in  
240 tropical peatlands have previously been reported as lower at low fertility (Sjögersten et al., 2011), with litter  
241 decomposition partially constrained by nutrient availability (Hoyos Santillan et al., 2018). The higher response of  
242 the Malaysian intercropping peat to glucose addition may reflect the effects of management practices, specifically  
243 fertiliser addition. This may substantially alter the temperature sensitivity of the system by alleviating inorganic  
244 nitrogen (NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>/NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>/NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>) limitation (Liu et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2010), although in this study only total peat  
245 nitrogen was assessed and this did not differ significantly between peat types. The lack of significant difference  
246 in temperature sensitivity of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production with glucose addition may be because despite an increase  
247 in carbon lability, unamended peats still had sufficient available carbon for respiration due to high organic matter  
248 content (Dai et al., 2017). Alternatively, the system is thermodynamically limited due to a shortage of high energy  
249 terminal electron acceptors necessary for the decomposition of recalcitrant aromatic carbon which is likely under

250 the low oxygen conditions (Hodgkins et al., 2018; Kolton et al., 2019), and with the relatively low concentration  
251 glucose additions being rapidly consumed (Girkin et al., 2018a).

252

253 Fully understanding the impact of increased temperature on fluxes *in situ* is more complex due to the additional  
254 regulatory roles of microtopography (Jauhiainen et al., 2005), water table changes (Wright et al., 2013), plant  
255 inputs of oxygen (Hoyos-Santillan et al., 2016), and small scale heterogeneity of peat organic matter properties  
256 (Girkin et al., 2019). In temperate peatlands, vegetation cover has been shown to also have a significant impact  
257 on the temperature sensitivity of GHG production (Leroy et al., 2017). Increasing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> has been found  
258 to increase rates of root exudation in wetland ecosystems (Sánchez-Carrillo et al., 2018) and increases in  
259 temperature have also been reported to enhance rates of root exudation in some tree species (Uselman et al., 2000),  
260 and alter the composition of exudate profiles (Badri and Vivanco, 2009; Vančura, 1967), both known to be critical  
261 regulators of GHG emissions and peat properties (Girkin et al., 2018a & 2018b). As a consequence, the true  
262 response of *in situ* net emissions of GHGs will comprise components driven by both the temperature sensitivity  
263 of the peat itself, and any changes in root inputs.

264

265 Taken together, our results demonstrate that increased temperatures will substantially increase CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub>  
266 production in tropical peats, regardless of current land cover. As a consequence, predicted warming for Central  
267 America and Southeast Asia will be associated with substantial increases in gaseous carbon emissions (IPCC,  
268 2013). However, the extent of this increase is likely to be lower than the response of higher latitude peatlands for  
269 which higher Q<sub>10</sub>s have been reported, including 2.4 – 5.8 for a *Sphagnum* peatland (Lupascu et al., 2012) and 2.5  
270 – 35 (Bergman et al., 1998). Differences in fluxes between peat types are likely driven by contrasts in organic  
271 matter properties (Cooper et al., 2019) and/or nutrient availability (Hoyos Santillan et al., 2018; Sjögersten et al.,  
272 2011) and microbial community structure and function. Processes that alter organic matter properties, for example  
273 the conversion of pristine forest to oil palm, or the use of intercropping species, will further affect fluxes. In  
274 addition, our findings demonstrate that the temperature sensitivity of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> production is not affected by  
275 labile carbon addition. This is important because plants can input significant quantities of labile carbon which are  
276 not accounted for in the majority of studies of GHG temperature sensitivity.

277

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286

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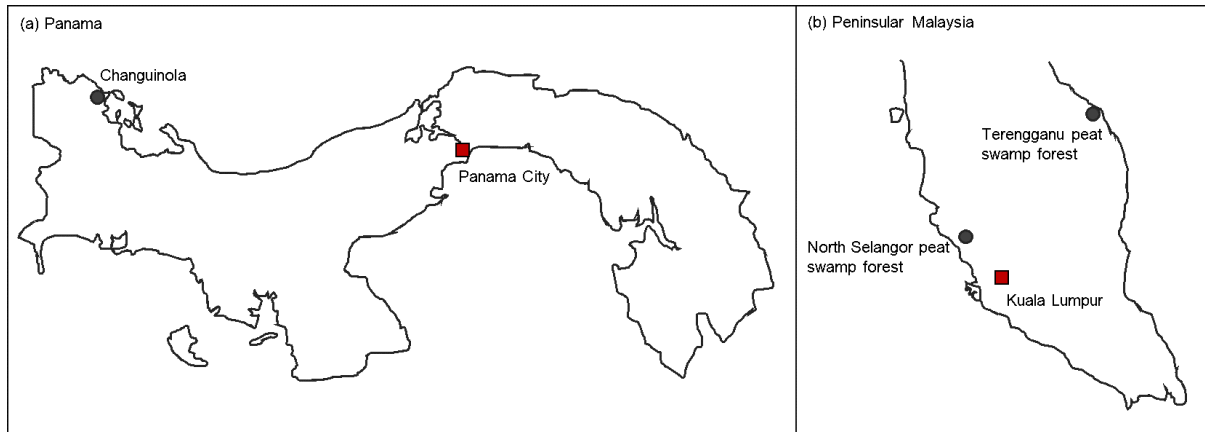
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447 **List of tables and figures**

448



449

450 Figure 1: Study site locations in (a) Panama: Changuinola, Bocas del Toro province. (b) Malaysia: Kampung Raja

451 Musa, North Selangor and Kampung Mat Jintan, Terengganu,

452

453 Table 1: Peat properties for Panamanian and Malaysian forested peatlands, and converted Malaysian oil palm with

454 pineapple intercropping. Means  $\pm$  one SE (n = 3). (<sup>a</sup> Phillips et al., 1997; <sup>b</sup> Isla Colon, STRI Environmental

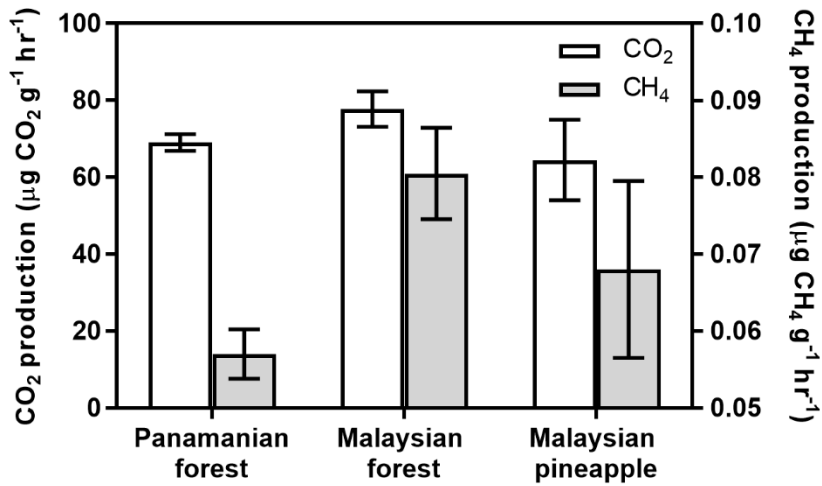
455 Monitoring; <sup>c</sup> (Wright et al., 2013); <sup>d</sup> (Dhandapani et al., 2019b); <sup>e</sup> (Dhandapani et al., 2019a); <sup>f</sup> (Global

456 Environment Centre, 2014).

	<b>Panamanian forest</b>	<b>Malaysian forest</b>	<b>Malaysian intercropping</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Peat depth (m)	5 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>d</sup>	3 <sup>e</sup>	-
pH	4.0 $\pm$ 0.01	4.4 $\pm$ 0.4	4.2 $\pm$ 0.1	0.457
Redox potential (mV)	303.7 $\pm$ 6.9	185.3 $\pm$ 21.2	294.3 $\pm$ 3.5	0.001
Moisture content (%)	77.00 $\pm$ 9.5	90.4 $\pm$ 0.2	77.2 $\pm$ 1.2	0.225
Organic matter content (%)	93.8 $\pm$ 1.4	78.9 $\pm$ 11.8	86.3 $\pm$ 2.5	0.378
C (%)	43.8 $\pm$ 3.9	51.3 $\pm$ 0.6	59.4 $\pm$ 2.8	0.021
N (%)	2.6 $\pm$ 0.4	1.9 $\pm$ 0.1	2.3 $\pm$ 0.05	0.134
C:N	17 $\pm$ 1.0	26.9 $\pm$ 1.3	25 $\pm$ 1.7	0.003
Peat temperature (°C)	23.9 $\pm$ 0.1	27.3 $\pm$ 0.1	27.7 $\pm$ 0.5	-
Air temperature (°C)	26.3	26.8	26.6	-
Mean annual rainfall (mm)	3206 <sup>b</sup>	1000 <sup>d</sup>	1359- 2480 <sup>f</sup>	-
Water table range (cm)	-20 – 20 <sup>c</sup>	5 – 10 <sup>d</sup>	-150 – -50 <sup>f</sup>	-

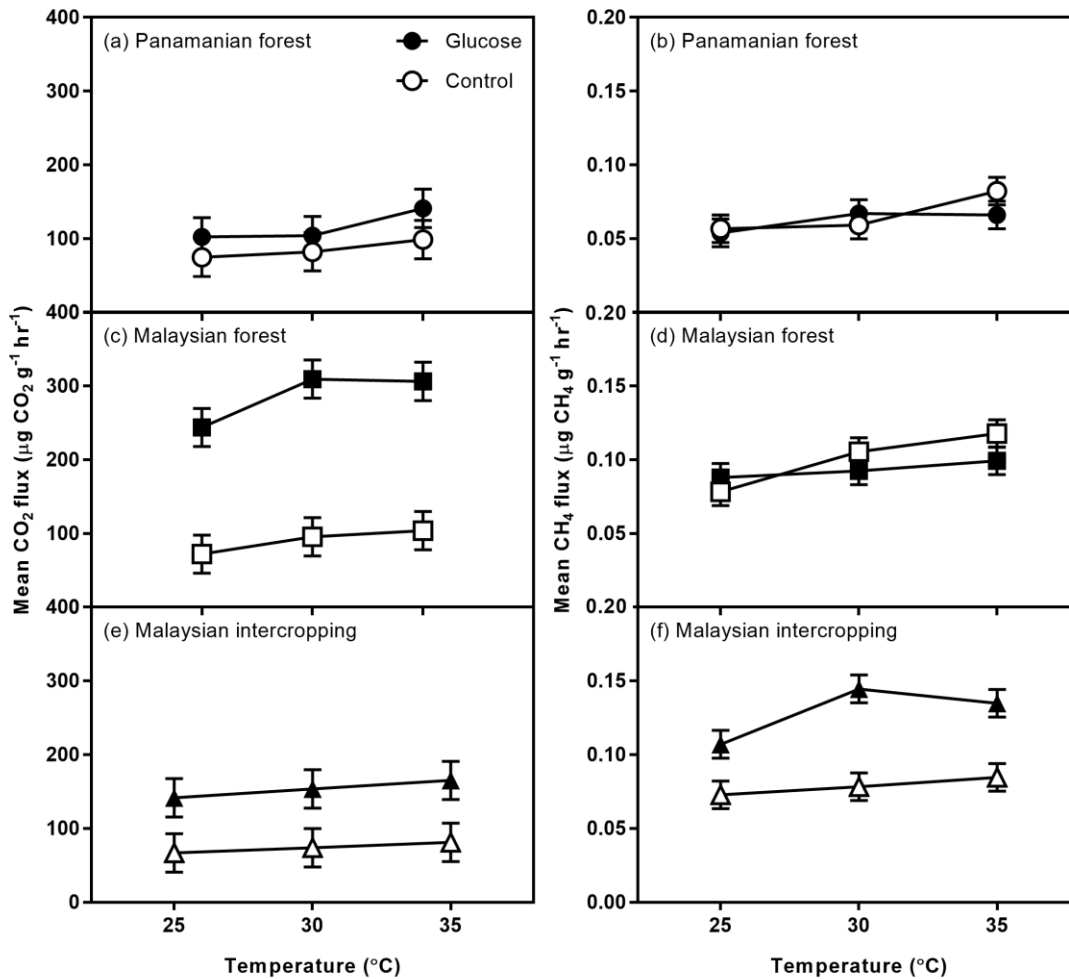
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459

460 Figure 2: *Ex situ* basal CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes at 25°C and in the absence of glucose. Means ± one SE (n = 3).



461

462 Figure 3: Mean CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> fluxes for (a-b) Panamanian forest, (c-d) Malaysian forest, (e-f) Malaysian pineapple

463 intercropping. Means ± one SE (n = 3).

464 Table 2: Q<sub>10</sub> for Panamanian and Malaysian forests, and Malaysian pineapple intercropping sites in the presence  
 465 and absence of glucose. Mean ± one SE (n = 3).

Site	Glucose	CO <sub>2</sub>		CH <sub>4</sub>	
		Q <sub>10</sub>	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sub>10</sub>	R <sup>2</sup>
Panamanian forest	+	1.3 ± 0.4	0.67	1.1 ± 0.04	0.48
	-	1.5 ± 0.2	0.78	1.5 ± 0.3	0.74
Malaysian forest	+	1.4 ± 0.1	0.31	1.2 ± 0.1	0.50
	-	1.3 ± 0.01	0.80	1.5 ± 0.3	0.57
Malaysian intercropping	+	1.2 ± 0.04	0.83	1.3 ± 0.2	0.04
	-	1.3 ± 0.3	0.81	1.3 ± 0.2	0.68

466