ECOPOTENTIAL: Improving Future Ecosystem Benefits Through Earth Observations

MEDITERRANEAN WOOD-PASTURES FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE:
Montado in Alentejo Natura 2000 sites

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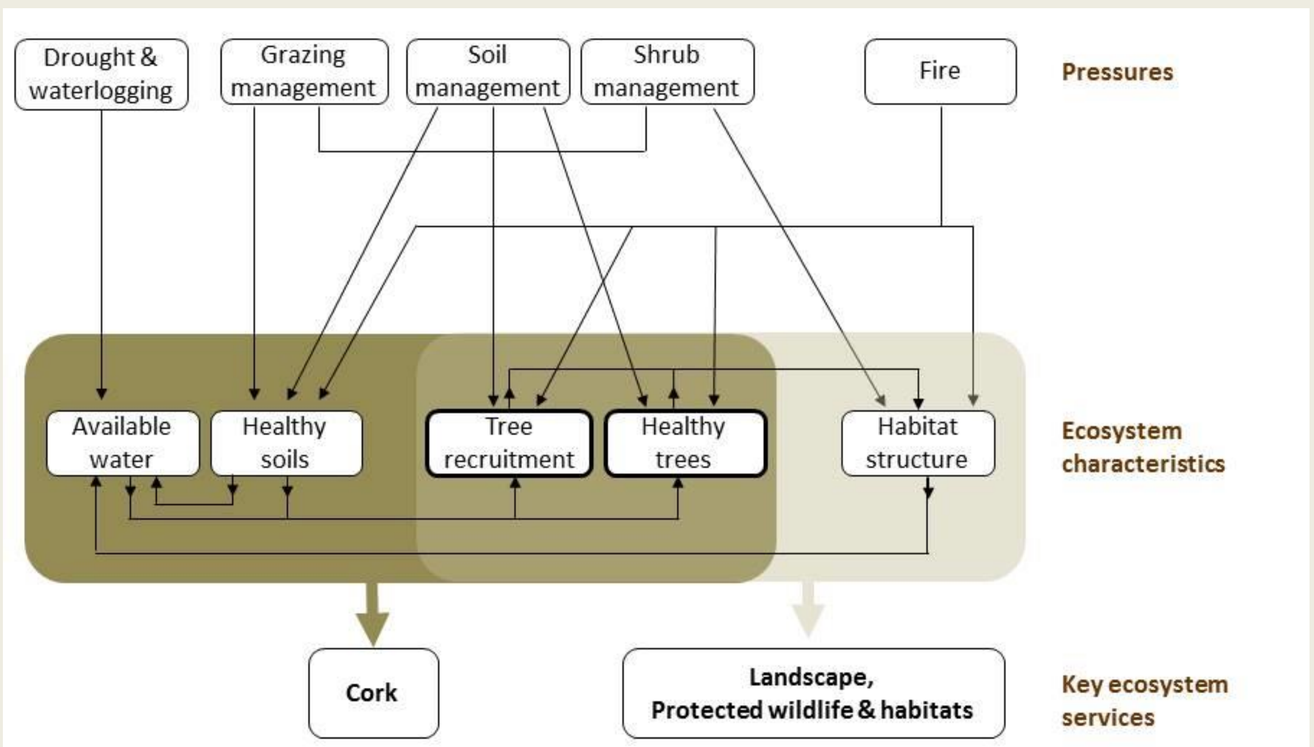
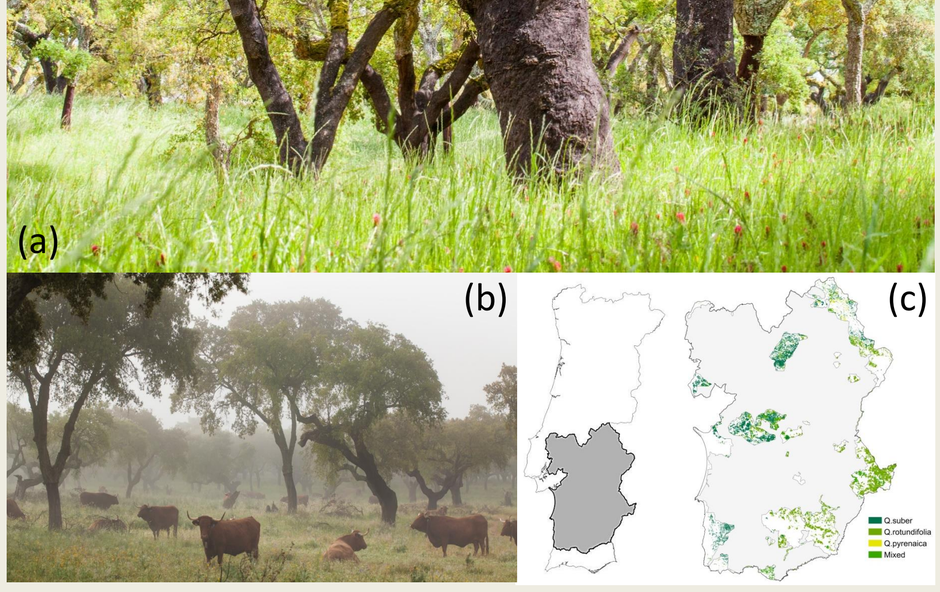
Montado is a High Natural Value wood-pasture system characteristic of the Iberian Peninsula. Cork oak (*Quercus suber)* and holm oak (*Q. rotundifolia*) are the dominant species and key structural and functional elements. Montados are listed under the EU Habitats Directive (habitat 6310), and are key habitats of Special Areas of Conservation (Habitats Directive) and of Special Protection Areas (Birds Directive), which are part of the Natura 2000 network. Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardinus*) and Iberian imperial eagle (*Aquila adalberti*) are two of the endangered species found in these habitats.

Tree mortality and insufficient tree recruitment are causing a gradual decline in tree density which threatens the whole system and its survival.



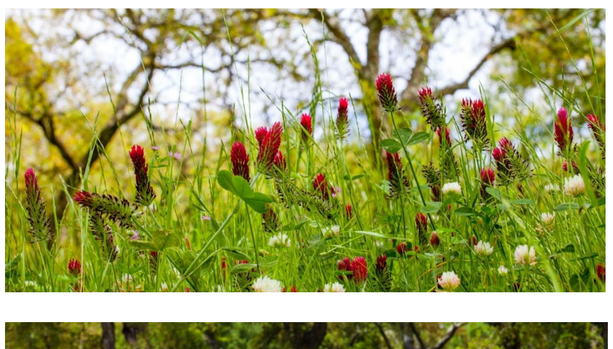
Direct pressures and their interactions on Montado systems



(a) Cork oak trees in Montado
(b) Livestock and cork are important sources of income
(c) Montado by dominant tree cover in Natura 2000 areas in Alentejo (PT)

System characteristics

- **Traditional socio-ecological systems; current structure mostly results from long-term human use**
- **The multifunctional management promotes structural diversity at stand and landscape scales**
- **Structural diversity contributes to maintain high levels of biodiversity**
- **Biodiversity is also supported by the large area of distribution and spatial continuity of the system.**



Drivers & Pressures

- **Excessive stoking rates (CAP subsidies)**
- **Shrub control practices that destroy the soil and the roots**
- **Changes in rainfall patterns with longer droughts**

Impacts

- **Soil degradation, water stress**
- **Increased vulnerability of trees to pests and diseases**
- **Increased fire risk in abandoned/shrub encroached areas**
- **Higher tree mortality and insufficient tree recruitment**

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