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Title	A Lyapunov function for Leslie-Gower predator-prey models
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Citation	Applied Mathematics Letters, 14(6), 697-699 https://doi.org/10.1016/S0893-9659(01)80029-X
Issue Date	2001-08
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/33885
Type	article (author version)
File Information	LG.pdf

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A Lyapunov function for Leslie-Gower predator-prey models

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Abstract

A Lyapunov function for continuous time Leslie-Gower predator-prey models is introduced. Global stability of the unique coexisting equilibrium state is thereby established.

Key words: Leslie-Gower systems, Lyapunov functions, stability.

In his papers [1,2] P.H. Leslie introduced a predator-prey model where the "carrying capacity" of the predator's environment is proportional to the number of prey. Leslie stresses the fact that there are upper limits to the rates of increase of both prey H and predator P, which are not recognised in the Lotka-Volterra model. These upper limits can be approached under favourable conditions: for the predator, when the number of prey per predator is large; for the prey, when the number of predators (and perhaps the number of prey also) is small.

In the case of continuous time these considerations lead to the differential equation models

$$\frac{dH}{dt} = (r_1 - a_1 P)H, \qquad \frac{dP}{dt} = \left(r_2 - a_2 \frac{P}{H}\right) P \tag{1}$$

and

$$\frac{dH}{dt} = (r_1 - a_1 P - b_1 H)H, \qquad \frac{dP}{dt} = \left(r_2 - a_2 \frac{P}{H}\right) P, \tag{2}$$

which are known respectively as the first and the second Leslie-Gower predator-prey models [3, p. 91]. (All the constants in systems (1) and (2) are positive.) System (1) is a simplification of system (2) in which within-species

competition has negligible influence on prey population growth (i.e. $b_1 = 0$). The system (2) is one of the simplest having maximum growth rates which each population approaches under favourable conditions.

Both of the systems (1) and (2) have the unique coexisting fixed point

$$H^* = \frac{r_1 a_2}{a_1 r_2 + a_2 b_1}, \quad P^* = \frac{r_1 r_2}{a_1 r_2 + a_2 b_1}. \tag{3}$$

It follows from equations (3) that

$$r_2 H^* = a_2 P^*, \qquad a_1 P^* + b_1 H^* = r_1. \tag{4}$$

Linear analysis of models (1) and (2) shows that their coexisting fixed point is stable. Numerical computations [3, p. 91] suggest that the fixed point is globally stable.

In this paper we introduce a Lyapunov function for both models (1) and (2) and use it to prove their global stability.

Theorem 1 *The coexisting fixed point (H^*, P^*) of the first and the second Leslie-Gower predator-prey models is globally stable.*

PROOF. A Lyapunov function

$$V(H,P) = \ln \frac{H}{H^*} + \frac{H^*}{H} + \frac{a_1 H^*}{a_2}\left(\ln \frac{P}{P^*} + \frac{P^*}{P}\right)$$

is defined and continuous for all $H, P > 0$. The function $V(H,P)$ satisfies

$$\frac{\partial V}{\partial H} = \frac{1}{H}\left(1 - \frac{H^*}{H}\right), \qquad \frac{\partial V}{\partial P} = \frac{a_1 H^*}{a_2 P}\left(1 - \frac{P^*}{P}\right),$$

hence the fixed point (H^*, P^*) is the only extremum of the function $V(H,P)$ in the positive quadrant. It is easy to see that the point (H^*, P^*) is a minimum. Since

$$\lim_{H\to 0} V(H,P) = \lim_{P\to 0} V(H,P) = \lim_{H\to\infty} V(H,P) = \lim_{P\to\infty} V(H,P) = +\infty$$

the point (H^*, P^*) is the global minimum, i.e.

$$V(H,P) > V(H^*,P^*) = \ln H^* + 1 + \frac{a_1 H^*}{a_2}(\ln P^* + 1) > 0$$

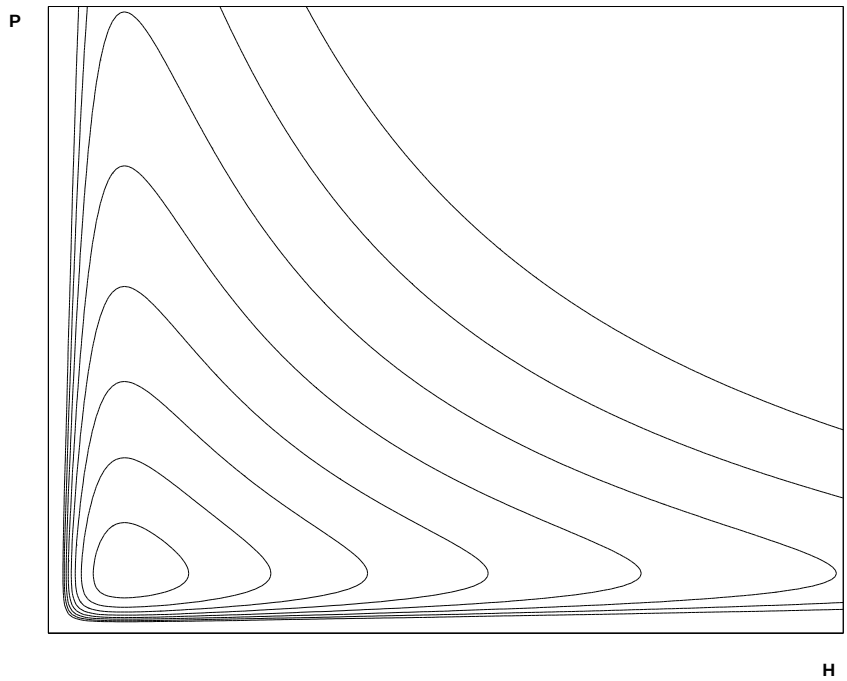

Fig. 1. Level curves of the Lyapunov function $V(H,P)$.

holds for all $H, P > 0$.

Using equalities (4) we obtain that the derivative of the function $V(H,P)$ satisfies

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{dV}{dt} &= r_1 - a_1 P - b_1 H - \frac{r_1 H^*}{H} + \frac{a_1 H^* P}{H} + b_1 H^* \\ &\quad + \frac{a_1 H^*}{a_2} r_2 - \frac{a_1 H^* P}{H} - \frac{a_1 H^* P^*}{a_2 P} r_2 + \frac{a_1 H^* P^*}{H} \\ &= -\frac{a_1}{P}\left(P^* - P\right)^2 - \frac{b_1}{H}\left(H^* - H\right)^2 .\end{aligned}$$

For the second model $\frac{dV}{dt} < 0$ strictly for all $H, P > 0$ except the fixed point (H^*, P^*) where $\frac{dV}{dt} = 0$. Hence the function $V(H,P)$ satisfies Lyapunov's asymptotic stability theorem, and the fixed point (H^*, P^*) of the system (2) is globally stable.

For the first model $b_1 = 0$, hence

$$\frac{dV}{dt} = -\frac{a_1}{P}(P^* - P)^2.$$

In this case the equality $\frac{dV}{dt} = 0$ holds on the set (the straight line)

$$M = \{(H,P) | P = P^*, H \in \mathbf{R}\},$$

and $\frac{dV}{dt} < 0$ off M. The fixed point (H^*, P^*) is the only invariant set of the system (1) contained entirely in M. Consequently, the function $V(H, P)$ satisfies the asymptotic stability theorem (see [4, p. 28] or [5, p. 58]), and by the theorem the fixed point (H^*, P^*) of the system (1) is globally stable as well. This completes the proof.

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