

Snow ~~sensitivity to climate change~~sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change
during compound cold-hot and wet-dry seasons in the Pyrenees.

Josep Bonsoms¹, Juan I. López-Moreno², Esteban Alonso-González³

¹ Department of Geography, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.

² Instituto Pirenaico de Ecología (IPE-CSIC), Campus de Aula Dei, Zaragoza, Spain.

³ Centre d'Etudes Spatiales de la Biosphère (CESBIO), Université de Toulouse,
CNES/CNRS/IRD/UPS, Toulouse, France.

Corresponding author: Juan I. López-Moreno (nlopez@ipe.csic.es)

1 **Abstract.** The Mediterranean basin has experienced one of the highest warming rates on earth
2 during the last few decades, and climate projections predict water-scarcity in the future. Mid-
3 latitude Mediterranean mountain areas, such as the Pyrenees, play a key role in the hydrological
4 resources for the highly populated lowland areas. However, there are still large uncertainties about
5 the impact of climate change on snowpack in the high mountain ranges of this region. Here, we
6 perform a snow sensitivity analysis to temperature and precipitation change analysis of the
7 Pyrenean snowpack (1980 – 2019 period) using five key snow-climatological indicators. We
8 analyzed snow sensitivity to seasons with temperature and precipitation during four different
9 compound compounds extreme weather conditions (cold-dry [CD], cold-wet [CW], warm-dry
10 [WD], and warm-wet [WW]) at low elevations (1500 m), mid-elevations (1800 m), and high
11 elevations (2400 m) in the Pyrenees. In particular, we forced a physically based energy and mass
12 balance snow model (FSM2), with validation by ground-truth data, and applied this model to the
13 entire range, with forcing of perturbed reanalysis climate data for the period 1980 to 2019 as the
14 baseline. The FSM2 model results successfully reproduced the observed snow depth (HS) values
15 ($R^2 > 0.8$), with relative root-mean square error and mean absolute error values less than 10% of
16 the observed HS values. Overall, the snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation
17 change decreased with elevation and increased towards the eastern Pyrenees. When the
18 temperature increased progressively at 1°C intervals, the largest seasonal HS decreases from the
19 baseline were at +1°C (47% at low elevation, 48% at mid-elevation, and 25% at high elevation).
20 A 10% increase of precipitation counterbalanced the temperature increases ($\leq 1^\circ\text{C}$) at high
21 elevations during the coldest months, because temperature was far from the isothermal 0°C
22 conditions. The maximal seasonal HS and peak HS max reductions were during WW seasons,
23 and the minimal reductions were during CD seasons. During WW (CD) seasons, the seasonal HS
24 decline per °C was 37% (28 %) at low elevations, 34% (30%) at mid-elevations, and 27% (22
25 %) at high elevations. For climate indicators of snow ablation, Further, the largest decreases were

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26 ~~during the WD seasons, when the peak HS date was on average anticipated 40–2, 3 and 8 days~~
27 ~~at low, mid and high elevation, respectively, and snow duration decreases 12% per °C of warming.~~
28 Results suggests ~~snow sensitivity~~snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change will be
29 similar at other mid-latitude mountain areas, where snowpack reductions will have major
30 consequences on the nearby ecological and socioeconomic systems.

31

32 **Keywords:** Snow, Climate change, Sensitivity, Alpine, Mediterranean Mountains, Mid-latitude,
33 Pyrenees.

34

35 1 Introduction

36

37 Snow is a key element of the Earth's climate system (Armstrong and Brun, 1998) because it cools
38 the planet (Serreze and Barry, 2011) by altering the Surface Energy Balance (SEB),
39 ~~increasing~~decreasing the albedo, and ~~modulating~~increasing surface and air temperatures (Hall,
40 2004). Northern-Hemispheric snowpack patterns have changed rapidly during recent decades
41 (Hammond et al., 2018; Hock et al., 2019; Notarnicola et al., 2020). It is crucial to improve our
42 understanding of the timing of snow ablation and snow accumulation due to changing climate
43 conditions because snowpack affects many nearby social and environmental systems. From the
44 hydrological point of view, snow melt controls mountain runoff rate during the spring (Barnett
45 et al., 2005; Adams et al., 2009; Stahl et al., 2010), river flow magnitude and timing (Morán-
46 Tejeda et al., 2014; Sanmiguel-Vallelado et al., 2017), water infiltration and groundwater storage
47 ([Gribovszki et al., 2010](#); [Evans et al., 2018](#)), and transpiration rate ([Cooper et al., 2020](#)). The
48 presence and duration of snowpack affects terrestrial ecosystem dynamics because snow ablation
49 date affects photosynthesis ([Woelber et al., 2018](#)), forest productivity ([Barnard et al., 2018](#)),
50 freezing and thawing of the soil ([Luetschg et al., 2008](#); [Oliva et al., 2014](#)), and thickness of the
51 active layer in permafrost environments ([Hrbáček et al., 2016](#); [Magnin et al., 2017](#)). Snowpack
52 also has remarkable economic impacts. For example, the snowpack at high elevations and
53 surrounding areas determines the economic success of many mountain ski-resorts ([Scott et al.,](#)
54 [2003](#); [Pons et al., 2015](#); [Gilaberte-Búrdalo et al., 2017](#)). Changes in the snowpack of mountainous
55 regions also influence associated lowland areas because it affects the availability of snow
56 meltwater that is used for water reservoirs, hydropower generation, agriculture, industries, and
57 other applications (e.g., [Sturm et al., 2017](#); [Beniston et al., 2018](#)).

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59 Mid-latitude snowpacks have among the highest snow sensitivities worldwide (Brown and Mote,
60 2009; López-Moreno et al., 2017; 2020b). In regions at high latitudes or high elevations,
61 increasing precipitation can partly counterbalance the effect of increases of temperature on snow
62 coverpaek duration (Brown and Mote, 2009). Climate warming decreases the maximum and
63 seasonal snow depth (HS), the snow water equivalent (SWE) (Trujillo and Molotch, 2014;
64 Alonso-González et al., 2020a; López-Moreno et al., 2013; 2017), and the fraction total
65 precipitation as snowfall (snowfall ratio; e.g., Mote et al., 2005; Lynn et al., 2020; Jeenings and
66 Molotch, 2020; Marshall et al., 2019), and also delays the snow onset date (Beniston, 2009;
67 Klein et al., 2016). However, warming can slow the early snow ablation rate on the season
68 (Pomeroy et al., 2015; Rasouli et al., 2015; Jennings and Molotch, 2020; Bonsoms et al., 2022;
69 Sanmiguel-Vallelado et al., 2022) because of the earlier HS and SWE peak dates (Alonso-
70 González et al., 2022), which coincide with periods of low solar radiation (Pomeroy et al., 2015;
71 Musselman et al., 2017a).

72

73 The Mediterranean basin is a region that is critically affected by climate change (Giorgi, 2006)
74 being densely populated (>500 million inhabitants) and affected by an intense anthropogenic
75 activity. Warming of the Mediterranean basin will accelerate for the next decades, and
76 temperatures will continue to increase in this region during the warm months (Knutti and
77 Sedlacek, 2013; Lionello and Scarascia 2018; Cramer et al., 2018; Evin et al., 2021; Cos et al.,
78 2022), increasing atmospheric evaporative demands (Vicente-Serrano et al., 2020), drought
79 severity (Tramblay et al., 2020), leading to water-scarcity over most of this region (García-Ruiz
80 et al., 2011). Mediterranean mid-latitude mountains, such as the Pyrenees, where this research
81 focuses, are the main runoff generation zones of the downstream areas (Viviroli and Weingartner,
82 2004) and provide most of the water used by major cities in the lowlands (Morán-Tejeda et al.,
83 2014).

84

85 Snow patterns in the Pyrenees have high spatial diversity (Alonso-González et al., 2019), due to
86 internal climate variability of mid-latitude precipitation (Hawkins and Sutton 2010; Deser et al.,
87 2012), high interannual and decadal variability of precipitation in the Iberian Peninsula (Esteban-
88 Parra et al., 1998; Peña-Angulo et al., 2020) as well as the abrupt topography and the different
89 mountain exposure to the Atlanticmain air masses (Bonsoms et al., 2021a). Thus, snow
90 accumulation per season is almost twice as much in the northern slopes as in the southern slopes
91 (Navarro-Serrano and López-Moreno, 2017), and there is a high interannual variability of snow
92 in regions at lower elevations (Alonso-González et al., 2020a) and in the southern and eastern
93 regions of the Pyrenees (Salvador-Franch et al., 2014; Salvador-Franch et al., 2016; Bonsoms et

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94 al., 2021b). Since the 1980s, the energy available for snow ablation has significantly increased in
95 the Pyrenees (Bonsoms et al., 2022), and winter snow days and snow accumulation have non-
96 statically significantly increased (Buisan et al., 2016; Serrano-Notivoli et al., 2018; López-
97 Moreno et al., 2020a; Bonsoms et al., 2021a) due to the increasing frequency of positive west and
98 south-west advections (Buisan et al., 2016). 21st century cEclimate projections for Pyrenees-during
99 the mid late 21st century anticipate a temperature increase of more than 1°C to 4°C (relative to
100 1986–2005), and an increase (decrease) of precipitation by about 10% for the eastern (western)
101 regions during winter and spring (Amblar-Frances et al., 2020). Therefore, changes in snow
102 patterns in regions with high elevations are uncertain because winter snow accumulation is
103 affected by precipitation (López-Moreno et al., 2008) and Mediterranean basin winter
104 precipitation projections have uncertainties up to 80% of the total variance (Evin et al., 2021).

105

106 Previous studies in the central Pyrenees (López-Moreno et al., 2013), Iberian Peninsula Mountain
107 ranges (Alonso-González et al., 2020a), and mountain areas that have Mediterranean climates
108 (López-Moreno et al., 2017) demonstrated that snowpack sensitivity to changes in climate are is
109 mostly controlled by elevation. Despite the impact of climate warming in mountain hydrological
110 processes, there is limited understanding of the snow sensitivitysnow sensitivity to temperature
111 and precipitation changes and seasonality of mid-latitude Mediterranean mountain snowpacks.
112 Some studies reported different snowpack sensitivities during wet and dry years (López-Moreno
113 et al., 2017; Musselman et al., 2017b; Rasouli et al., 2022; Roche et al., 2018). However, the
114 sensitivity of snow during periods when there are seasonal extremes of compound weather
115 (temperature and precipitation) conditions has not yet been analyzed. The high interannual
116 variability of the Pyrenean snowpack, which is expected to increase according to climate
117 projections (López-Moreno et al., 2008), indicates a need to examine snowpack sensitivity
118 sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change, focusing on the year-to-year variability, y,
119 especially during the Wwarm seasons in the Mediterranean basin require special attention (Vogel
120 et al., 2019; De Luca et al., 2020) because these are likely to increase in the future (e.g., Vogel et
121 al., 2019; De Luca et al., 2020; Meng et al., 2022). Further, the occurrence of different HS trends
122 at mid- and high-elevation areas of this range (López-Moreno et al., 2020a) suggest that elevation
123 and spatial factors contribute to the wide variations of the sensitivity of snow to the climate.

124

125 Therefore, the main objective of this research is to quantify snow (accumulation, ablation, and
126 timing) sensitivity due to climate temperature and precipitation change change during compound
127 temperature and precipitation extremes seasons in the Pyrenees.

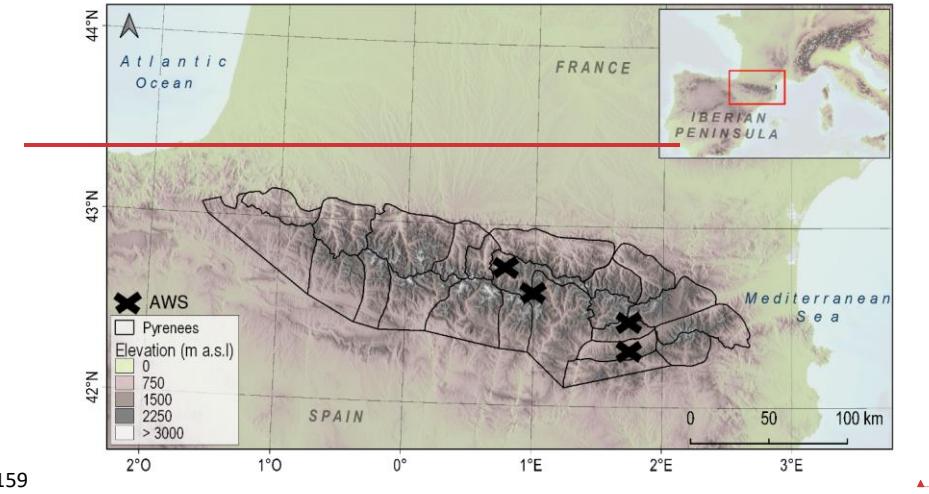
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129 **2 Geographical area and climate setting**

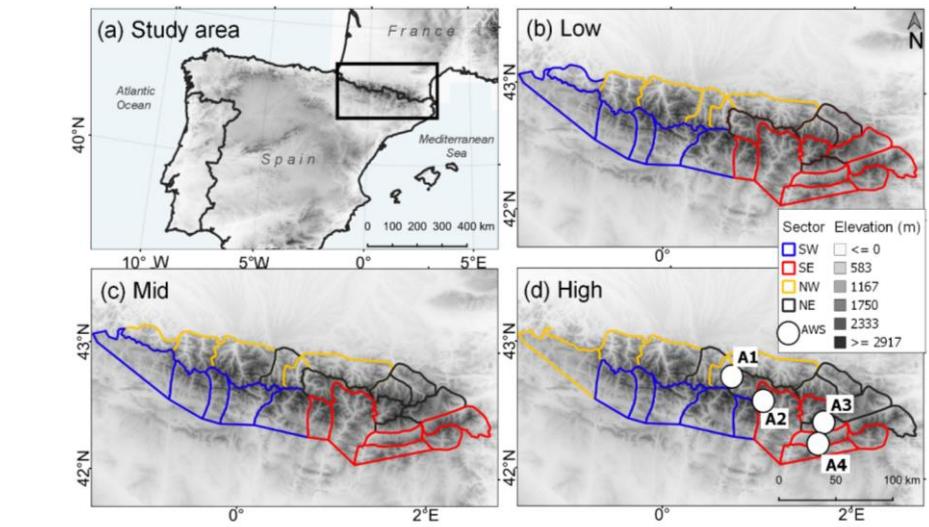
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131 The Pyrenees is a mountain range located in the north of the Iberian Peninsula (south Europe;
132 42°N-43°N to 2°W-3°E) that is aligned east-to-west between the Atlantic Ocean and the
133 Mediterranean Sea. The highest elevations are in the central region (Aneto, 3404 m) and
134 elevations decrease towards the west and east (Figure 1). The Mediterranean basin, including the
135 Pyrenees, is ~~located~~ in a transition area, and is influenced by the continental climate and the
136 subtropical temperate climate. Precipitation is mostly driven by large-scale circulation patterns
137 (Zappa et al., 2015; Borgli et al., 2019), the jet-stream oscillation during winter (Hurrell, 1995),
138 and land-sea temperature differences (Tuel and Eltahir, 2020). During the summer, the northward
139 movement of the Azores high pressure region brings stable weather, and precipitation is mainly
140 convective at that time (Xercavins, 1985). Precipitation is highly variable depending on mountain
141 exposure to the main circulation weather types; it ranges from about 1000 mm/year to about 2000
142 mm/year (in the mountain summits), with lower levels in the east and south (Cuadrat et al., 2007).
143 There is a slight disconnection of the general climate circulation towards the eastern Pyrenees,
144 where the Mediterranean climate and East Atlantic/West Russia (EA-WR) oscillations have
145 greater effects on snow accumulation (Bonsoms et al., 2021a). In the southern, western, and
146 central massifs of the range, the Atlantic climate and the negative North Atlantic Oscillation
147 (NAO) phases regulate snow accumulation (W and SW wet air flows; López-Moreno, 2005;
148 López-Moreno and Vicente-Serrano, 2007; Buisan et al., 2016; Alonso-González et al., 2020b).
149 In the northern slopes, the positive phases of the Western Mediterranean Oscillation (WeMO)
150 linked with NW and N advections trigger the most episodes of snow accumulation (Bonsoms et
151 al., 2021a). The seasonal snow accumulation in the northern slopes is almost double the amount
152 (about 500 cm more) as in the southern slopes at an elevation of about 2000 m (Bonsoms et al.,
153 2021a). The temperature/elevation gradient is about 0.55°C/100 m (Navarro-Serrano and López-
154 Moreno, 2018) and the annual 0°C isotherm is at about 2750 to 2950 m (López-Moreno and
155 García-Ruiz, 2004). Net radiation and latent heat flux governs the energy available for snow
156 ablation; the former ~~heat flux~~ increases at high elevations and the latter towards ~~the~~ east (Bonsoms
157 et al., 2022).

158



159



160

161 **Figure 1-** (a) Study area. Pyrenean massifs grouped by sectors for (b) low, (c) mid and (d) high
 162 elevation. The white dots indicate the locations of the automatic weather stations (AWS) shown
 163 at Table 1. Locations of automatic weather stations (AWS) and geography of the Pyrenean
 164 massifs. Massifs delimitation is based on the spatial regionalization of the SAFRAN system, which
 165 groups massifs according to topographical and meteorological characteristics (modified from
 166 Durand et al., 1999).

167

168 3 Data and methods

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169

170 **3.1 Snow model**

171

172 Snowpack was modelled using a physical-based snow model, the Flexible Snow Model (FSM2;
 173 Essery, 2015). This model resolves the SEB and mass balance to simulate the state of the
 174 snowpack. [FSM2 is open access and available at \[https://github.com/RichardEssery/FSM2 \\(last\]\(https://github.com/RichardEssery/FSM2\)](https://github.com/RichardEssery/FSM2)
 175 [access 16 December 2022\)](#). Previous studies tested the FSM2 (Krinner et al., 2018), and its
 176 application in different forest environments (Mazzotti et al., 2021), and hydro-climatological
 177 mountain zones such the Andes (Urrutia et al., 2019), Alps (Mazzotti et al., 2020), Colorado
 178 (Smyth et al., 2022), Himalayas (Pritchard et al., 2020), Iberian Peninsula Mountains (Alonso-
 179 González et al., 2020a; Alonso-González et al., 2022), Lebanese mountains (Alonso-González et
 180 al., 2021), providing confidential results. The FSM2 requires forcing data of precipitation, air
 181 temperature, relative humidity, surface atmospheric pressure, wind speed, incoming shortwave
 182 radiation (SW_{inc}), and incoming long wave radiation (LW_{inc}). We have evaluated different FSM2
 183 model configurations (not shown) without ~~remarkable~~significant differences in the accuracy and
 184 performance metrics. ~~Thus, the FSM2 configuration Therefore, we selected the most complex~~
 185 ~~FSM2 configuration, except for the included in this work estimates~~ snow cover fraction
 186 ~~estimation, that is,~~ based on a linear function of HS. ~~In detail, and albedo is calculated~~ based on
 187 a prognostic function, with increases due to snowfall and decreases due to snow age. Atmospheric
 188 stability is calculated as function of the Richardson number. Snow density is calculated as a
 189 function of viscous compaction by overburden and thermal metamorphism. Snow hydrology is
 190 estimated by gravitational drainage, including internal snowpack processes, runoff, refreeze rates,
 191 and thermal conductivity. [Table S1 summarizes the FSM2 configuration and the FSM2 compile](#)
 192 [numbers.](#)

193

194 **3.2 Snow model validation**

195 FSM2 configuration was validated by in situ snow records of four automatic weather stations
 196 (AWSs) that were at high elevations in the Pyrenees. Precipitation in mountainous and windy
 197 regions is usually affected by undercatch (Kochendorfer et al., 2020). Thus, the instrumental
 198 records of precipitation were corrected for undercatch by applying an empirical equation validated
 199 for the Pyrenees (Buisan et al., 2019). Precipitation type was classified by a threshold method
 200 (Musselman et al., 2017b; Corripio et al., 2017): snow when the air temperature was below 1°C
 201 and rain when the air temperature was above 1°C, according to previous research in the study area
 202 (Corripio et al., 2017). The LW_{inc} heat flux of the AWSs (Table 1) were estimated as previously
 203 described (Corripio et al., 2017). Due to the wide instrumental data coverage (99.3% of the total
 204 dataset), gap-filling was not performed. The HS records were measured each 30 min using an

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205 ultrasonic snow depth sensor. The meteorological data used in the validation process were
 206 provided and managed by the local meteorological service of Catalonia
 207 (<https://www.meteo.cat/wpweb/serveis/formularis/peticio-dinformes-i-dades-meteorologiques/peticio-de-dades-meteorologiques/>; data requested: 14/01/2021). Quality-
 208 checking of the data was performed using an automatic error filtering process in combination with
 209 a climatological, spatial, and internal coherency control defined by the SMC (2011).
 210

211

212

Table 1. Characteristics of the four AWSs.

Area	Code	Lat/Lon°	Elevation (m)	Atlantic Ocean, Distance (km)	Mediterranean Sea, Distance (km)	Validation period (years)	Years
Central-Pyrenees, Northern slopes	A1	42.77/0.73	2228	200	190	2004–2020	16
	A2	42.61/0.98	2266	225	170	2001–2020	19
Eastern Pyrenees, Southern slopes	A3	42.46/1.78	2230	295	115	2005–2020	15
Eastern Pre-Pyrenees, Northern slopes	A4	42.29/1.71	2143	300	110	2009–2020	11

213

214 Model accuracy was estimated based on the mean absolute error (MAE) and the root mean square
 215 error (RMSE), and model performance was estimated by the coefficient of determination (R^2).
 216 The MAE and the RMSE indicate the mean differences of the modelled and observed values.

217

218 3.3 Atmospheric forcing data

219

220 We forced the FSM2 with the [open access reanalysis-climate reanalysis](#) dataset [provided by](#) Vernay et al. (2021), which consists of the modelled values from the SAFRAN meteorological
 221 analysis. The FSM2 was run at an hourly resolution for each massif, each elevation range, and
 222 each climate baseline and perturbation scenario from 1980 to 2019. The SAFRAN system
 223 provides data for homogeneous meteorological and topographical mountain massifs every 300 m,
 224 from 0 to 3600 m (Durand et al., 1999; Vernay et al., 2021). We analyzed three elevation bands:
 225 low (1500 m), middle (1800 m), and high (2400 m). Precipitation type was classified using the
 226 same threshold approach used for model validation. Atmospheric emissivity was derived from
 227 the SAFRAN LW_{inc} and air temperature. SAFRAN was forced using numerical weather
 228 prediction models (ERA-40 reanalysis data from 1958 to 2002 and ARPEGE from 2002 to 2020).
 229 Meteorological data were calibrated, homogenized, and improved by in situ meteorological

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231 observations data assimilation (Vernay et al., 2021). Durand et al. (1999; 2009a; 2009b) provided
232 further technical details of the SAFRAN system. Previous studies used the SAFRAN system for
233 the long-term HS trends (López-Moreno et al., 2020), extreme snowfall (Roux et al., 2021), and
234 snow ablation analysis (Bonsoms et al., 2022). SAFRAN system has been extensively validated
235 for the meteorological modelling of continental Spain (Quintana-Seguí et al., 2017), France
236 (Vidal et al., 2010) or alpine snowpack climate projections (Verfaillie et al., 2018), among other
237 works.

238

239 **3.4 Snow sensitivity**Snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change analysis

240

241 Snow sensitivitySnow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change was analyzed using a
242 delta-change methodology (López-Moreno et al., 2008; Beniston et al., 2016; Musselman et al.,
243 2017b; Marty et al., 2017; Alonso-González et al., 2020a; Sanmiguel-Vallelado et al., 2022). In
244 this method, air temperature and precipitation were perturbed for each massif and elevation range
245 based the historical period (1980–2019). Air Temperature was increased from 1 to 4°C at 1°C
246 intervals, assuming an increase of LW_{inc} accordingly (Jennings and Molotch, 2020). Precipitation
247 was changed from -10% to +10% at 10% intervals, in accordance with climate model
248 uncertainties and the maximum and minimum precipitation projections for the Pyrenees (Amblar-
249 Frances et al., 2020).

250

251 **3.5 Snow climate indicators**

252

253 Snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change was analyzed using five key indicators:
254 (i) seasonal average HS, (ii) seasonal maximum absolute HS peak (peak HS max), (iii) date of the
255 maximum HS (peak HS date), (iv) number of days with HS > 1 cm on the ground (snow duration),
256 and (v) daily average snow ablation per season (snow ablation, hereafter). Snow ablation was
257 calculated as the difference between the maximum daily HS recorded on two consecutive days
258 (Musselman et al., 2017a), and only days with decreases of 1 cm or more were recorded. Some
259 seasons had more than one peak HS; for this reason, peak HS date was determined after applying
260 a moving average of 5-days. All indicators were computed according to massif and elevation
261 range.

262

263 **3.6 Definitions of compound temperature and precipitation ~~extreme~~ seasons**

264

265 The snow season was from October 1 to June 30 (inclusive). Snow duration was defined by snow
266 onset and snow ablation dates in situ observations (Bonsoms, 2021a), and results from the

267 baseline scenario snow duration presented in this work. A “compound temperature and
268 precipitation ~~extreme~~-season” (~~season type~~_{season type}) was assessed based on each massif and
269 the elevation historical climate record (1980–2019) using a joint quantile approach (Beniston and
270 Goyette, 2007; Beniston, 2009; López-Moreno et al., 2011a). ~~Season type~~_{Compound season types}

271 were defined according to López-Moreno et al. (2011a), based on the seasonal 40th percentiles
272 (T40 for temperature and P40 for precipitation) and the seasonal 60th percentiles (T60 and P60).

273 There were four types of ~~extreme~~-seasons based on seasonal temperature (Tseason) and seasonal

274 precipitation (Pseason) data:

275 Cold and Dry (CD): Tseason ≤ T40 and Pseason ≤ P40;

276 Cold and Wet (CW): Tseason ≤ T40 and Pseason ≥ P60;

277 Warm and Dry (WD): Tseason > T40 and Pseason ≤ P40;

278 Warm and Wet (WW): Tseason > T60 and Pseason is > P60.

279 All remaining seasons were classified as having average (Avg) temperature and precipitation.

280 ~~Note that the number of compound season type is different depending on the Pyrenees massif~~
281 ~~(Figure S1). However, by applying the joint-quantile approach described, we are comparing the~~
282 ~~snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change between similar climate conditions,~~
283 ~~independently where each compound season type was recorded. Figure S1 shows the number of~~
284 ~~season types by elevation and massifs.~~

285

286 **3.7 Spatial regionalization**

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287

288 ~~We have examined spatial differences in the snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation~~
289 ~~change by compound season types. Massifs were grouped into four sectors by applying a Principal~~
290 ~~Component Analysis (PCA) of HS data (i.e., López-Moreno et al., 2020b; Matiu et al., 2020) and~~
291 ~~for each elevation depending on PC1 and PC2 scores. PCA scores are shown at Figure S2,~~
292 ~~whereas the number of season types per sector are shown at Figure S3 and the spatial~~
293 ~~regionalization is presented at Figure 1.~~

294

295 **3.6 Snow climatological indicators**

296

297 ~~Snowpack sensitivity was analyzed using five key indicators: (i) seasonal average HS, (ii)~~
298 ~~seasonal maximum absolute HS peak (peak HS max), (iii) date of the maximum HS (peak HS~~
299 ~~date), (iv) number of days with HS > 1 cm on the ground (snow duration), and (v) daily average~~
300 ~~snow ablation per season (snow ablation). Snow ablation was calculated as the difference between~~
301 ~~the maximum daily HS recorded on two consecutive days (Musselman et al., 2017a), and only~~
302 ~~days with decreases of 1 cm or more were recorded. Seasonal HS and peak HS max are snow~~

303 ~~accumulation indicators; snow ablation, snow duration, and peak HS date are snow ablation~~
304 ~~indicators. All indicators were computed according to massif and elevation range.~~

305

306 **4. Results**

307
308 We validated the FSM2 at Section 4.1. Subsequently, we analyzed the snow sensitivity to
309 temperature and precipitation change based on five snow climate indicators, namely the seasonal
310 HS, peak HS max, peak HS date, snow duration and snow ablation. Compound season types show
311 similar relative importance on the snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change
312 regardless of the Pyrenean sector. For this reason, our results have been focused on seasonal snow
313 changes due to increments of temperature, elevation, and compound season type. These are the
314 key factors that ruled the snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change, and an accurate
315 analysis is provided at Section 4.2. Spatial differences on the snow sensitivity to temperature and
316 precipitation change during compound season types are examined at Section 4.3.

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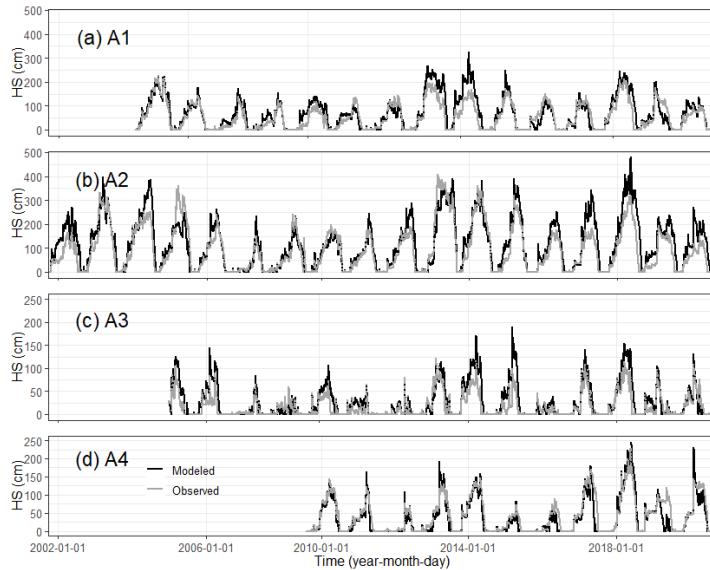
318 **4.1 Snow model validation**

319

320 Our snow model validation analysis (Figures 2 and 3) confirmed that FSM2 accurately reproduces
321 the observed HS values. On average, the FSM2 had a R^2 greater than 0.83 for all stations. In
322 general, the snow model slightly overestimated the maximum HS values. The highest R^2 values
323 were at A4 and A2 ($R^2 = 0.85$ in both stations), and the lowest were at A3 and A1 ($R^2 = 0.79$ and
324 $R^2 = 0.82$, respectively). The highest accuracy was at A4 (RMSE = 18.5 cm, MAE = 8.9 cm), and
325 the largest errors were at A2 (RMSE = 45.8 cm, MAE = 29.0 cm).

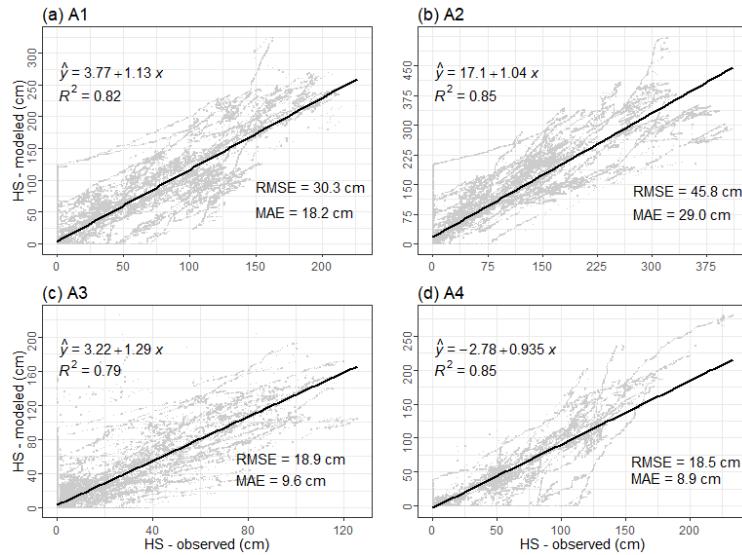
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326

327 **Figure 2.** Time series of the observed (gray) and modelled (black) HS values at the four AWSs.
328



329

330 **Figure 3.** Regression analysis of observed (x-axis) and simulated (y-axis) HS values.
331

332 4.2 Snow sensitivity Snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change

333

334 We then determined seasonal HS profiles for each perturbed climate scenario and compound
335 season type- temperature and precipitation extreme season (Figure 4). The results show a non-
336 linear response between seasonal HS loss and temperature increase. When the temperature
337 increased at 1°C intervals, the largest relative seasonal HS decrease from the baseline was at +
338 1°C for all elevations and all compound season type- temperature and precipitation extreme
339 seasons. High elevation areas had lower seasonal HS variability between compound season types
340 than low elevations (Figure S4). High elevation areas had lower season to season snow variability
341 than low elevations for all season types (Figure 4). At At low elevations, snow was significantly
342 greater during CW seasons than other seasons. All the snowpack-perturbed scenarios indicated
343 that snowpack decreased at low and midfor all elevations under warming climate scenarios.
344 Snowpack sensitivity sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change depended on the season
345 typecompound season type (Figures 5 and 6). At low elevations, the seasonal changes in HS
346 ranged from -37% (WW) to -28% (CD) per °C increase. For mid-elevation ranges, there were
347 no significant remarkable differences among season typecompound season types (Table 2), and
348 the seasonal HS changes ranged from -34% (WW) to -30% (CW) per °C increase. Low and mid-
349 elevations had greater snowpack reductions than high elevations. In the latter, a 10% increase of
350 precipitation counterbalanced a temperature increase of about 1°C, and there were no remarkable
351 differences in the seasonal HS from the baseline scenario especially in the coldest months of the
352 season (Figure S52 and Figure S63 and Figure S4). The maximum seasonal HS was during WD
353 seasons (27%/°C), and the minimum was during CW seasons (-22%/°C).

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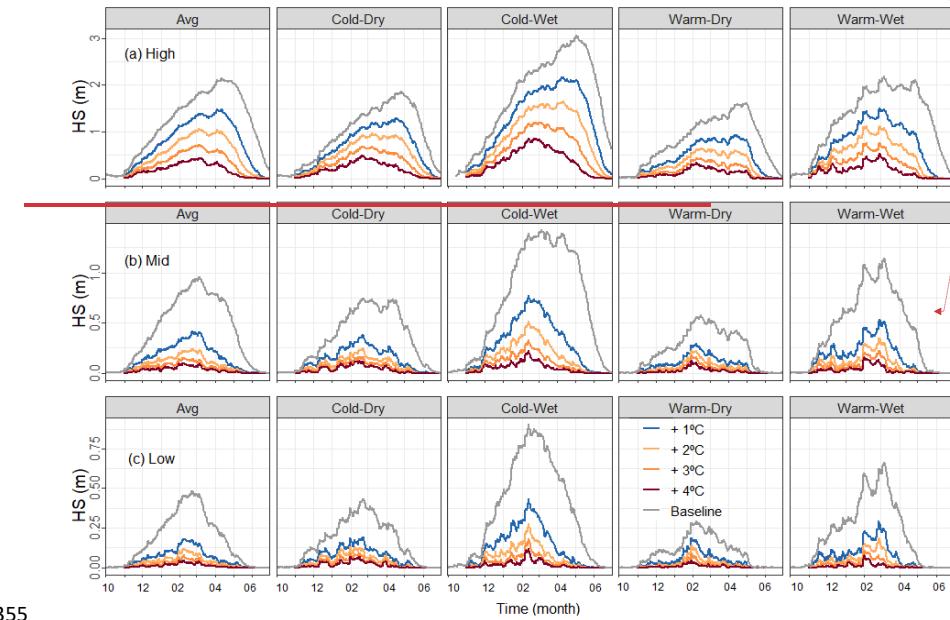
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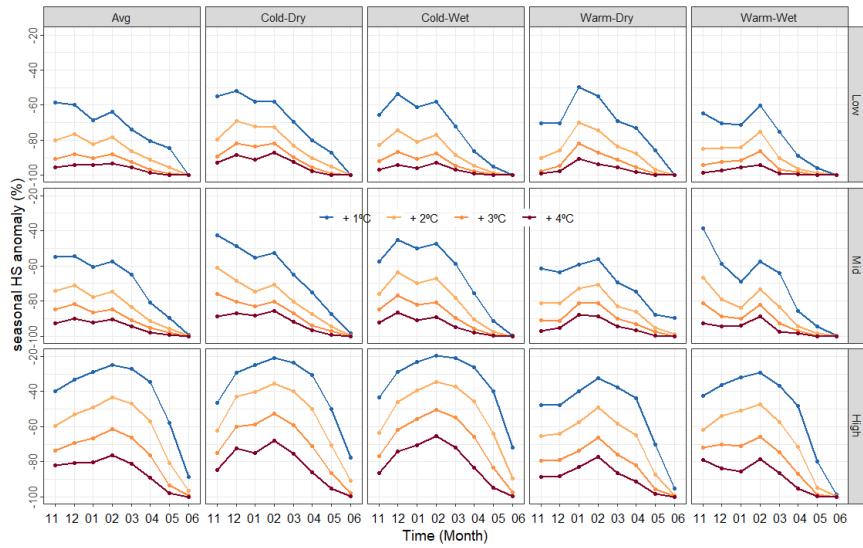
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357 **Figure 4.** Average Anomalies of seasonal HS daily values for low, mid and high elevation (rows),
 358 elevation, season type compound season type (columns), baseline climate and different temperature
 359 increases (colors) for (a) high (b) mid and (c) low elevation.

360

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Table 2. Average and seasonal HS and peak HS sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change during the four different compound temperature and precipitation extreme seasons at three different elevations.

364

Compound extreme season	%HS/ °C			%peak HS max/°C			
	Season type	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
Avg.		-33	-33	-25	-20	-20	-16
CD		-28	-30	-22	-17	-17	-14
CW		-33	-32	-22	-22	-20	-15
WD		-32	-30	-27	-19	-16	-16
WW		-37	-34	-26	-24	-24	-16

365

At low and mid elevations, the peak HS max was greatest during WW seasons ($-24\%/\text{C}$) and lowest during the CD and WD seasons ($-17\%/\text{C}$ for both). At high elevations, there were no significant differences in the peak HS max for the different seasons. The maximum peak HS max was during WD seasons ($-16\%/\text{C}$) and the minimum was during CD seasons ($-14\%/\text{C}$).

370

We also determined average seasonal snow duration for each elevation range and—season type
compound season type for different temperature increases (Table 3 and Figure 5c6). The minimum snow duration was during CW seasons (-13 \textdegree C at low elevations, -10 \textdegree C at mid-elevations, -5 \textdegree C at high elevations). At low elevations, the snow duration was most sensitive during WW seasons (-17 \textdegree C). On the contrary, at mid-elevations and high elevations, the snow duration was most sensitive during WD seasons (-13 \textdegree C at mid-elevations and -8 \textdegree C at high elevations).

|378

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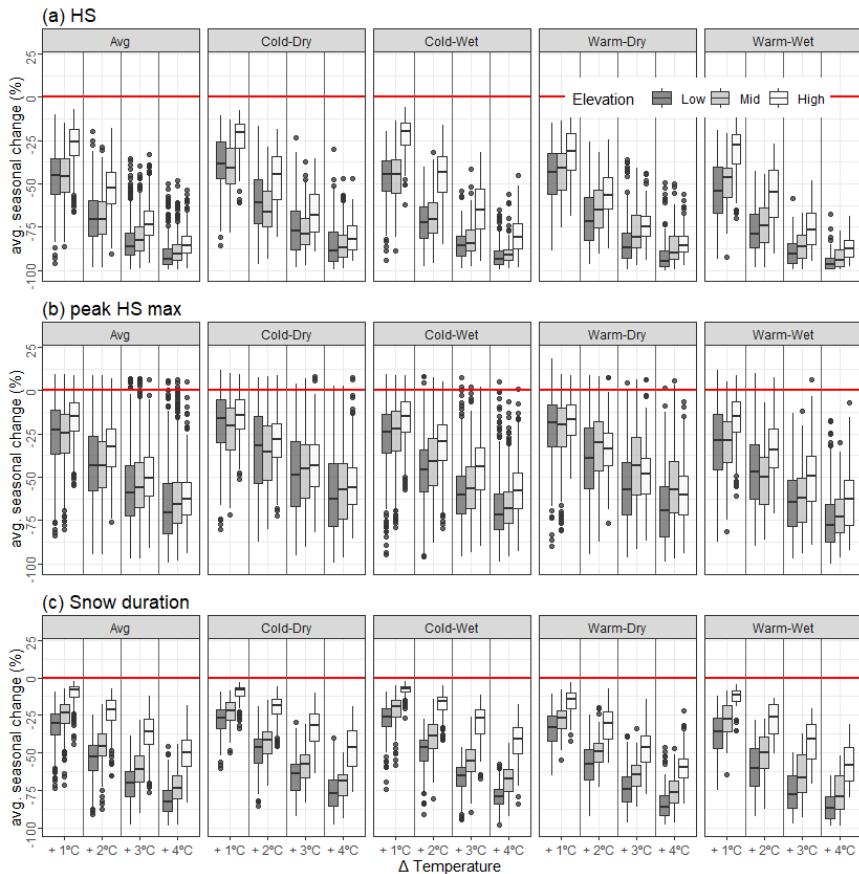
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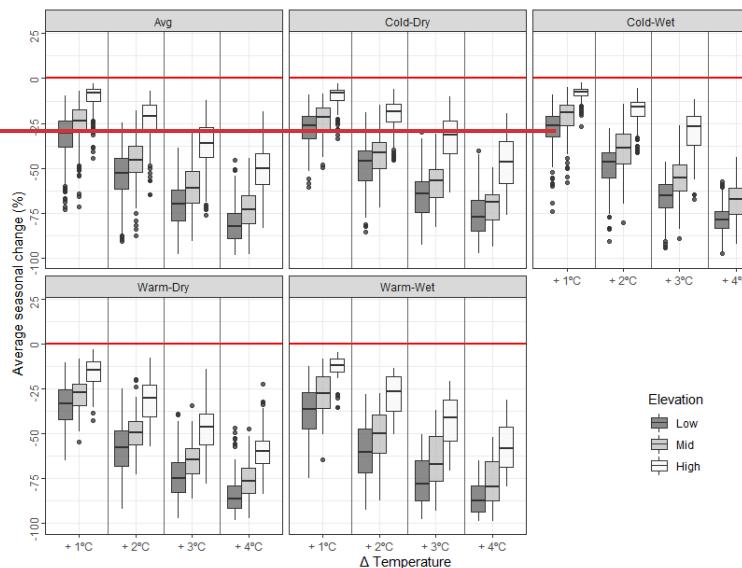
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380 **Figure 5.** Anomalies of seasonal HS (a), peak HS max (b) and snow duration (c) for different
 381 temperature increases relative to baseline at three different elevations during the four different
 382 compound temperature and precipitation extreme season types. The solid black lines within each
 383 boxplot are the average. Lower and upper hinges correspond to the 25th and 75th percentiles,
 384 respectively. The whisker is a horizontal line at 1.5 interquartile range of the upper quartile and
 385 lower quartile, respectively. Dots represent the outliers. Data is grouped by season, season
 386 typecompound season type, increment of temperature, precipitation variation, elevation, and
 387 massif.

388

389 Overall, The peak HS date occurred earlier due to warming, independently of precipitation
 390 changes. During WD seasons, the peak HS date per °C was anticipatedearlier by 39 days at low
 391 elevations, 33 days at mid-elevations, and 647 days at high elevations; during CD seasons, the
 392 peak HS date per °C was earlieranticipated by 445 days at low elevations, 58 days at mid-

393 elevations, and 24 days at high elevations. In high low and mid elevation areas, if the temperature
 394 increase was no more than about 1°C above baseline, there was little change in the peak HS date
 395 (Figure 7Figure 6), except during dry seasons, when the maximum peak HS date sensitivity was
 396 found. On the contrary.In addition, the minimum peak HS date did not change significantly due
 397 to warming is found during WW seasons (Table 34), and because the snowpack would be scarce
 398 at those times, and there were no defined peaks (Figure S4).



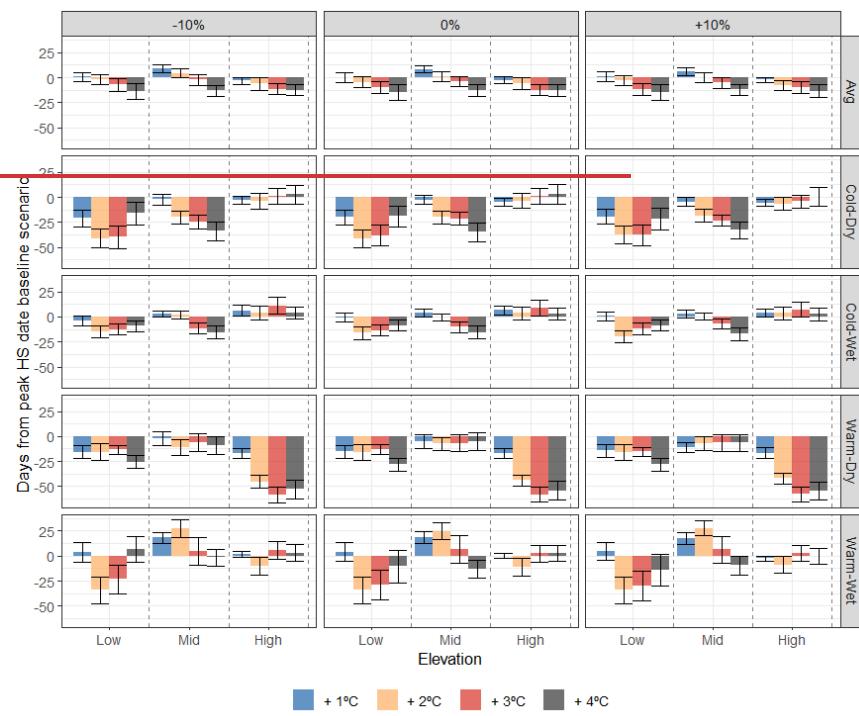
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399
 400 **Figure 6.** Average and seasonal decrease of snow duration at three different elevations;
 401 increments of temperature, and during the four different temperature and precipitation extreme
 402 seasons. The solid black lines within each boxplot are the average. Lower and upper hinges
 403 correspond to the 25th and 75th percentiles, respectively. The whisker is a horizontal line at 1.5
 404 interquartile range of the upper quartile and lower quartile, respectively. Dots represent the
 405 outliers. Data is grouped by season, season type compound season type, increment of temperature,
 406 precipitation variation, elevation, and massif.

407
 408 We determined the snow ablation sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change average
 409 daily snow ablation in response to different temperature increases at different elevations and
 410 during different compound extreme season types (Figure 8). The results show there were
 411 moderate low differences in the absolute snow ablation values average daily snow ablation in a
 412 warmer climate (Figure 7). At low elevations, the average snow ablation sensitivity to temperature
 413 and precipitation change in all four extreme compound seasons was 12%/°C (Table 34). At mid-

414 elevations and high elevations, the maximum snow ablation sensitivity to temperature and
 415 precipitation change was during dry seasons; WD seasons had a snow ablation sensitivity to
 416 temperature and precipitation change of 13%/°C at mid-elevations and 10%/°C at high elevations.
 417 On the other hand, the minimum values for mid-elevations were during WW seasons, when the
 418 snow ablation sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change was 8%/°C; the minimum
 419 values at high elevations were during CW seasons, when snow ablation was 5%/°C.

420



421

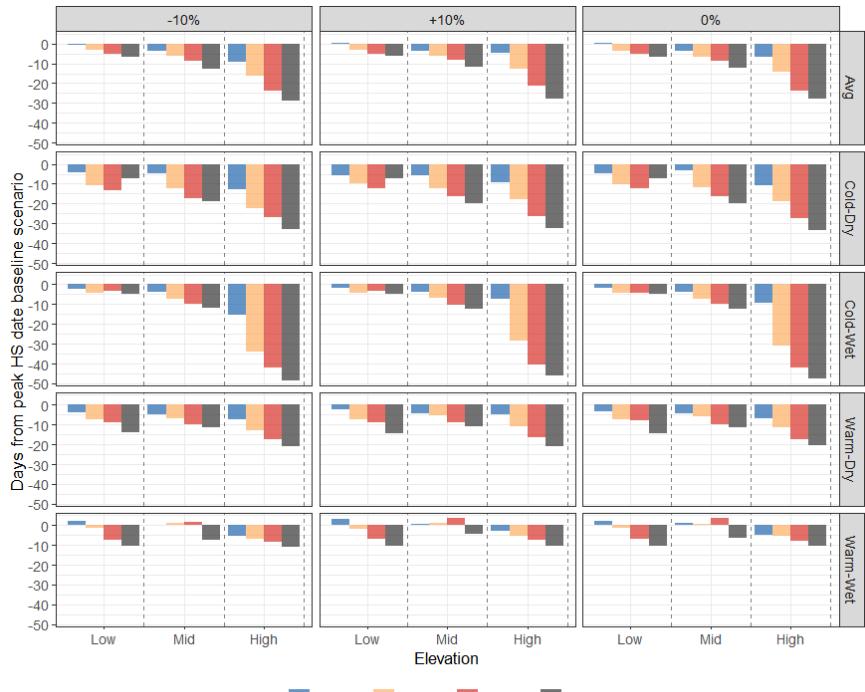


Figure 7 Difference (days) from baseline Peak HS date at three different elevations and during the four different temperature (colors) and precipitation shifts (columns) for each season (boxes). Error bars indicate the maximum and minimum values (mean by massifs and elevation).

Table 34. Snow duration, snow ablation, and peak HS date sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change during the four different compound season types, temperature and precipitation extreme seasons.

<u>Extreme</u> <u>Season</u> <u>type</u> <u>season</u>	Snow duration (%/°C)			Snow ablation (%/°C)			Peak HS date (days/°C)		
	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
Avg.	-15	-12	-6	12	11	7	-1-2	-3+	-7-4
CD	-13	-11	-5	12	13	8	-4-15	-5-8	-9-4
CW	-13	-10	-5	12	10	5	-2-3	-3-4	-134
WD	-16	-13	-8	12	13	10	-3-9	-3-3	-6-17
WW	-17	-13	-7	12	8	7	-1-5	-08	-30

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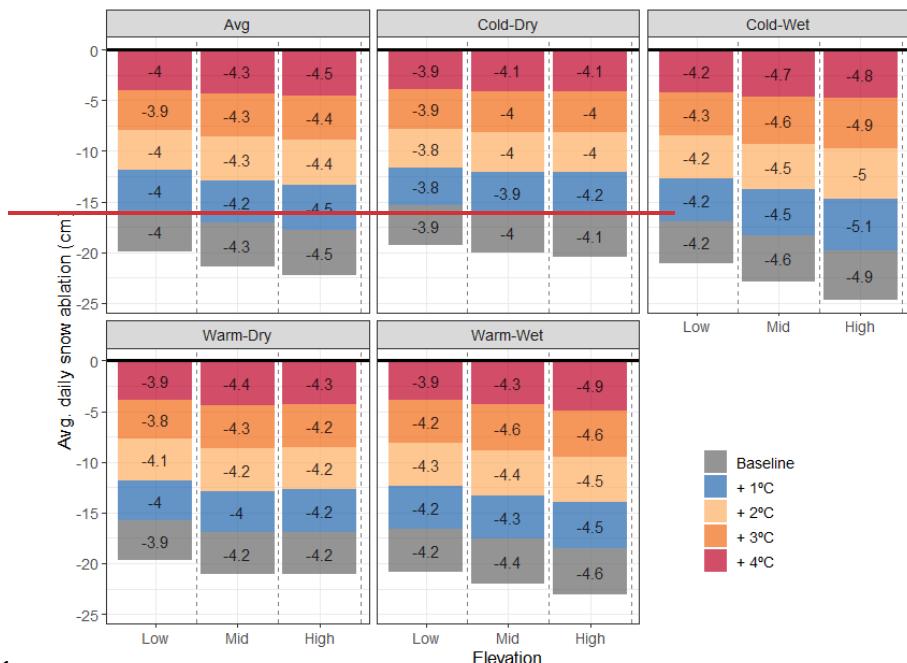
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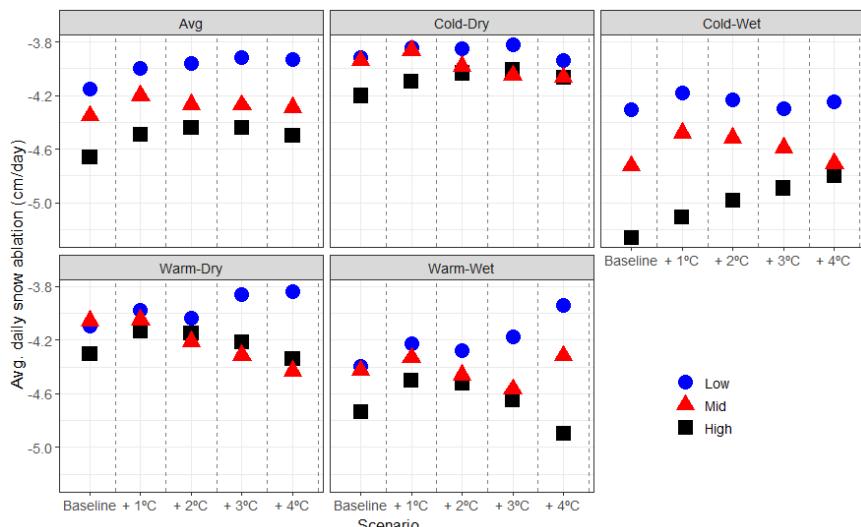
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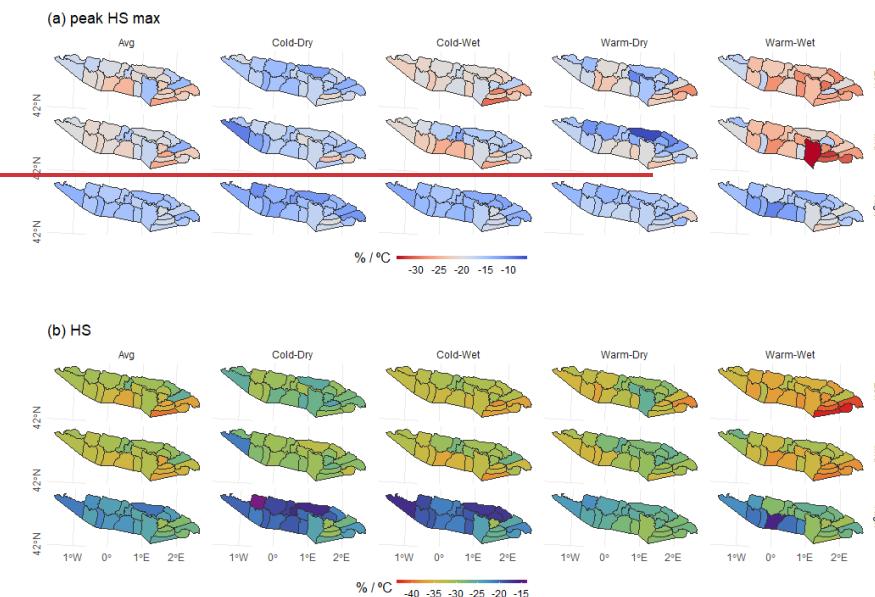


432

433 **Figure 8**Figure 7. Average daily Absolute snow ablation values (cm/day) (y-axis) at three different elevations during four different compound temperature and precipitation for baseline

434

435 and different increments of temperature (x-axis), extreme seasons, for different temperature
436 increases above baseline (gray).



437
438 **Figure 9.** Geographical distribution of seasonal (a) peak HS and (b) HS sensitivity during the
439 four different compound temperature and precipitation extreme seasons.

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440

441 **4.3 Spatial patterns**

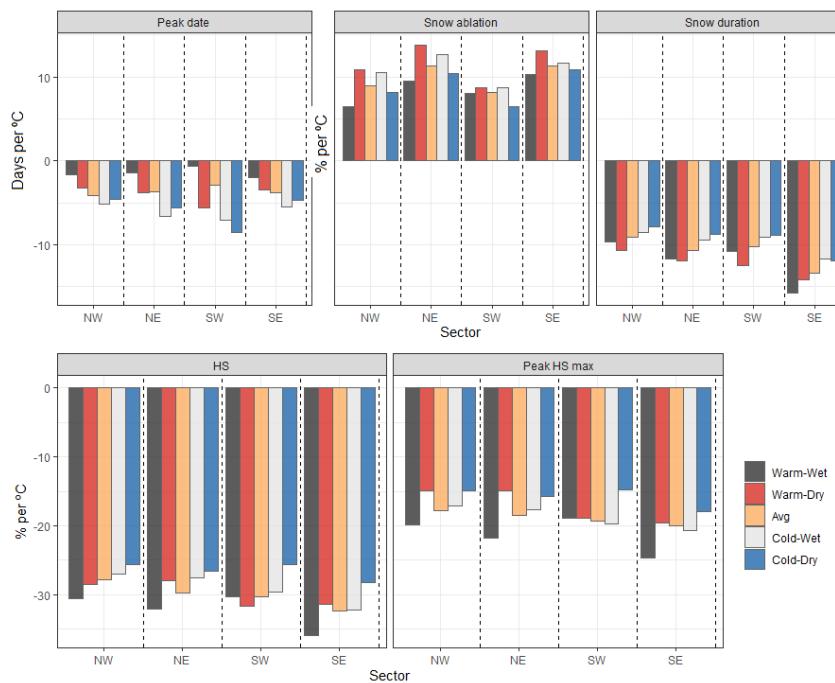
442 ▲
443 PCA analysis reveals four Pyrenean sectors, namely northern-western (NW), northern-eastern
444 (NE), southern-western (SW), and southern-eastern (SE). No remarkable differences between
445 sectors are found in the relative importance of each compound season type in the snow sensitivity
446 to temperature and precipitation change (Figure 8). The sensitivity of HS to climate change also
447 had different spatial patterns. Snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change absolute
448 values are generally lower at northern slopes (NW and NE) than at the southern slopes (SW and
449 SE) (Figure S7 and Figure S8). The sensitivity was greater in the eastern massifs, independently
450 of the elevation range and season type (Figures 9 and 10). The greatest sensitivities of HS were
451 at low elevations. Here, + In detail, the seasonal HS ranged from -260%/°C during CD in the
452 central area (NW) to -3640%/°C during WW in the southern slopes of the eastern (SE) Pyrenees.

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453 Similarly, the maximum peak HS max sensitivity of peak HS max to temperature and precipitation
 454 change was at mid elevations in the SE during WW seasons (25%/°C) and the minimum was
 455 during CD seasons at NW (15%/°C), southern slopes of the eastern Pyrenees, and the change was
 456 less than -35%/°C (Figure 9). The snow duration sensitivity to temperature and precipitation
 457 change increased during WW seasons, and the maximum changes were at SE (-16%/°C); in
 458 contraposition, the lowest sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change are found at NW,
 459 during CD and CW seasons (-8%/°C, in both seasons). Snow ablation sensitivity to temperature
 460 and precipitation change increases towards the eastern Pyrenees, particularly during WD seasons
 461 (14%/°C and 13%/°C for NE and SE, respectively). Finally, no remarkable peak HS date
 462 differences are observed between sectors and maximum values are found during CD and CW
 463 seasons, when the peak HS date is anticipated >= 5 per °C for all sectors. There was a general
 464 tendency for higher sensitivity in the southern slopes than in the northern slopes. Snow duration
 465 in the northern slopes and at high elevations had the lowest sensitivity, especially during CD and
 466 CW seasons (-5%/°C). The sensitivity of snow duration increased during WW seasons, and the
 467 maximum changes were at the lowest elevations of the southern eastern Pyrenees (-35%/°C;
 468 Figure 10).

469

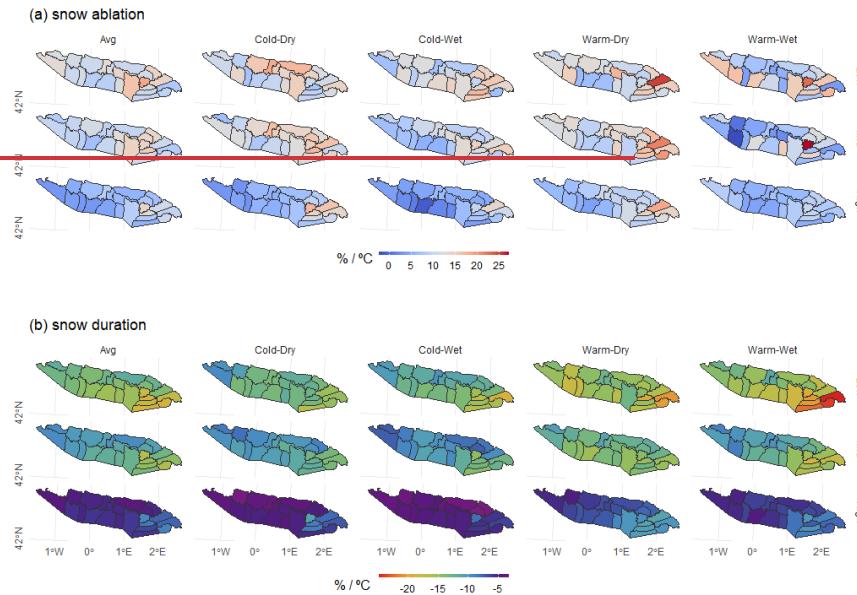


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470

471 **Figure 8.** Average snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change (y-axis) grouped by
472 sector (x-axis), season type (color bars) and snow climate indicator (boxes).

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474 **Figure 10.** Geographical distribution of seasonal (a) snow ablation and (b) snow duration
475 sensitivity during the four different compound temperature and precipitation extreme seasons.
476

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477 5. Discussion

478

479 The spatial and temporal patterns of snow in the Pyrenees are highly variable, and climate
480 projections indicate that extreme events will likely increase during future decades (Meng et al.,
481 2022). Therefore, we analyzed factors that affect the snowpack sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change gain insight into how future climate changes may affect the
482 snow regime.

483

484 **5.1 Spatial and elevation factors controlling snow sensitivity to climate change**

485

488 The sensitivity of snow to different spatial patterns of climate change that we identified here
489 (Figures 9 and 10) are consistent with the snow accumulation and ablation patterns previously
490 reported in this region (López Moreno, 2005; Navarro Serrano et al., 2018; Alonso González et
491 al., 2020a; Bonsoms et al., 2021a). The Atlantic climate has less of an influence in the eastern
492 massifs; in this area, in situ observations indicated there was about half of the seasonal snow
493 accumulation amounts as in northern and western areas at the same elevation (>2000 m; Bonsoms
494 et al., 2021a). The snow in the southern slopes of the eastern Pyrenees is more sensitive to climate
495 change because these massifs are exposed to higher turbulence and radiative heat fluxes (Bonsoms
496 et al., 2022). The results thus show an upward displacement of the snow line due to warming.
497 Previous studies described the sensitivity of the snow pattern to elevation at specific stations of
498 the central Pyrenees (López Moreno et al., 2013; 2017), Iberian Peninsula mountains (Alonso-
499 González et al., 2020a), and other ranges such as the Cascades (Jefferson, 2011; Sproles et al.,
500 2013), the Alps (Marty et al., 2017), and western USA (Pierce et al., 2013; Musselman et al.,
501 2017b). In these regions, the models suggest larger snowpack reductions due to warming at
502 subalpine sites than at alpine sites (Jennings and Molotch, 2020; Mote et al., 2018). Low
503 elevations are more sensitive simply because the temperatures there are closer to isothermal
504 conditions (Brown and Mote, 2009; López Moreno et al., 2017).

505

506 **5.25.1 Snow sensitivity to climate changesensitivity to temperature and precipitation change**
507 and relationship with historical and future snow trends

508

509 **5.12.1 Snow accumulation phase**

510

511 The snow losses due warming that we described here are mainly associated with increases in the
512 rain/snowfall ratio (Figure S94), changes in the snow onset and offset dates (Figure S4), and
513 increases in the energy available for snow ablation during the later months of the snow season, as
514 it was previously reported by literature (e.g., Pomeroy et al., 2015; Lynn et al., 2020; Jennings
515 and Molotch, 2020). At high elevations, a trend of increasing precipitation (+10%) could
516 counterbalance temperature increases (<1°C; Figure S52), consistent with the results previously
517 reported for specific sites of the central Pyrenees (Izas, 2000m; López-Moreno et al., 2008).
518 Rasouli et al. (2014) also found that a 20% increase of precipitation could compensate for 2°C
519 increase of temperature in subarctic Canada. A climate sensitivity analysis in the western
520 Cascades (western USA) found that increases of precipitation due to warming modulated the
521 snowpack accumulation losses by about 5%/1°C (Minder, 2010). These results are consistent with
522 recent data that examined snow above 1000 m in the Pyrenees, which found that an increase in
523 the frequency of west circulation weather types since the 1980s increased the HS (Serrano-

524 Notivoli et al., 2018; López-Moreno et al., 2020), snow accumulation (Bonsoms et al., 2021a),
525 and changes in winter snow days (Buisan et al., 2016). There are similar trends in the Alps, with
526 an increase of extreme (exceeding the 100-year return level) snowfall above 3000 m during recent
527 decades (Roux et al., 2021) and increases in extreme winter precipitation (Rajczak and Schär,
528 2017).

529

530 **5.12.2 Snow ablation phase**

531

532 Climate warming leads to a cascade of physical changes in the SEB that increase snow ablation
533 near the 0°C isotherm. On overall, the ~~average daily~~ snow ablation showed ~~low to nonexistent~~
534 ~~moderate to low~~ changes due to warming. Comparison between low and high elevations indicated
535 slightly faster snow ablation at high elevations ([Figure 8](#)[Figure 7](#)). This higher rate of snow
536 ablation per season at high elevations (which have deeper snowpacks) are probably because the
537 snow there lasts until late spring, when more energy is available for snow ablation (Bonsoms et
538 al., 2022). Temperature increase does not imply ~~significant remarkable~~ changes in ~~the daily~~ snow
539 ablation ~~rate~~ per season because warming decreases the magnitude of the snowpack (seasonal HS
540 and peak HS max) and triggers an earlier onset of snowmelt (Wu et al., 2018). The earlier peak
541 HS date ~~at low and mid elevations~~ (Table 34 and [Figure 7](#)[Figure 6](#)) implies lower rates of net
542 shortwave radiation, because snow melting starts earlier in warmer climates (Pomeroy et al.,
543 coinciding with the shorter days and lower solar zenith angle (Lundquist et al., 2013;
544 Sanmiguel-Vallelado et al., 2022). Our results agree with the slow snow melt rates reported in the
545 Northern Hemisphere from 1980 to 2017 (Wu et al., 2018). The results of previous studies were
546 similar for subarctic Canada (Rasouli et al., 2014) and western USA snowpacks (Musselman et
547 al., 2017b), but Arctic sites had faster melt rates (Krogh and Pomeroy, 2019).

548

549 **5.12.3 Snow sensitivity**~~Snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change and~~
550 ~~snowpack projections~~

551

552 Our results suggest that warming had a non-linear effect on snowpack reduction. Our largest snow
553 losses were for seasonal HS when the temperature increased by 1°C above baseline. At low and
554 mid elevations, the average seasonal HS decrease was more than 40% for all ~~season~~
555 ~~type compound season type~~, and the maximum sensitivity was during WW seasons. Previous
556 research in the Pyrenees and other mid-latitude mountain ranges reported similar results. A study
557 in the central Pyrenees reported the peak SWE was 29%/°C, whereas snow season duration
558 decreased by about 20 to 30 days at about 2000 m (López-Moreno et al., 2013). The average peak
559 HS max at high elevations in the Pyrenees (-16 %/°C; Figure 6 and Table 2), was similar to the
560 average peak SWE sensitivity (-15%/°C) reported in the Iberian Peninsula mountains at 2500 m

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561 (Alonso-González et al., 2020a). These results are also consistent with climate projections for this
562 mountain range. In particular, for a 2°C or more increase of temperature, the snow season declined
563 by 38% at the lowest ski resorts (~1500 m) in the ~~southern slopes of the eastern~~ Pyrenees (Pons
564 et al., 2015). However, high emission climate scenarios projected an increase in the frequency
565 and intensity of high snowfall at high elevations (López-Moreno et al., 2011b). ~~Climate~~
566 ~~projections for the mid-late 21st century indicated that~~ ~~Snow~~ sensitivity in the easternmost areas
567 could decline during the winter because of a trend for an increase of about 10% in precipitation
568 in this area (Amblar-Francés et al., 2020). Our projected changes in the Pyrenean snowpack
569 dynamics are similar to the expected snow losses in other mountain ranges. For example, a study
570 of the Atlas Mountains of northern Africa concluded that snowpack decreases were greater in the
571 lowlands and projected seasonal SWE declines of 60% under the RCP4.5 scenario and 80% under
572 the RCP8.5 scenario for the entire range (Tuel et al., 2022). A study in the Washington Cascades
573 (western USA) found that snowpack decline was 19 to 23% per 1°C (Minder, 2010), similar to
574 the values in the present study at high elevations. A study of the French Alps (Chartreuse, 1500
575 m) found that seasonal HS decreases on the order of 25% for a 1.5°C increase and 32% for a 2°C
576 increase of global temperature above the pre-industrial years (Verfaillie et al., 2018). A study of
577 the Swiss Alps reported a snowpack decrease of about 15%/°C (Beniston, 2003); in the same
578 alpine country, another study predicted the seasonal HS will decrease by more than 70% in
579 massifs below 1000 m in all future climate projections (Marty et al., 2017). The largest snow
580 reductions will likely occur during the periods between seasons (Steger et al., 2013; Marty et al.,
581 2017). Nevertheless, at high elevations, snow climate projections found no significant trend for
582 maximum HS ~~during the mid-late until the end of the~~ 21st century above 2500 m in the eastern
583 Alps (Willibald et al., 2021), suggesting that internal climate variability is a major source of
584 uncertainty of SWE projections at high elevations (Schirmer et al., 2021).

585

586 **5.23 Influence of compound temperature and precipitation ~~extreme~~ seasons**

587

588 We found that the maximum sensitivities of seasonal HS and peak HS max to temperature and
589 precipitation change were during WW seasons at low and mid-elevations and during WD seasons
590 at high elevations. Brown and Mote (2008) analyzed the sensitivity of snow to climate changes
591 in the Northern Hemisphere and found maximal SWE sensitivities in mid-latitudinal maritime
592 winter climate areas, and minimal SWE sensitivities to temperature and precipitation change in
593 dry and continental zones, consistent with our results. López-Moreno et al. (2017) also found
594 greater decreases of SWE in wet and temperate Mediterranean ranges than in drier regions.
595 Furthermore, Rasouli et al. (2022) studied the northern North American Cordillera and found
596 higher snowpack sensitivities to temperature and precipitation change in wet basins than dry

597 basins. Our maximum snow ablation [relative change over the baseline scenario and peak HS date](#)
598 occurred during [dry WD](#) seasons, in accordance with Musselman et al. (2017b), who found a
599 higher snowmelt rate during dry years in the western USA. Low and mid-elevations are highly
600 sensitive to WW seasons because wet conditions favor decreases in the seasonal HS due to
601 advection from sensible heat fluxes. The temperature in the Pyrenees is still cold enough to allow
602 snowfall at high elevations during WW seasons, and for this reason we found maximal
603 sensitivities [to temperature and precipitation change](#) during WD seasons. Reductions of snowfall
604 in alpine regions can be compensated in a warmer scenario, because warm and wet snow is less
605 susceptible to blowing wind transport and losses from sublimation (Pomeroy and Li, 2000;
606 Pomeroy et al., 2015). During spring, snow runoff could be also greater in wet climates due to
607 rain-on-snow events (Corripio et al., 2017), coinciding with the availability of more energy for
608 snow ablation.

609

610 [5.3 Spatial and elevation factors controlling snow sensitivity to temperature and](#) 611 [precipitation change](#)

612

613 [Comparison between Pyrenean sectors \(Figure 8\) reveals no remarkable differences in the relative](#)
614 [importance of each compound season type in the snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation](#)
615 [change. This is because by applying a joint-quantile approach for each massif and elevation, we](#)
616 [are comparing similar climate seasons between sectors, regardless of the number of compound](#)
617 [season types recorded in each massif during the baseline period \(Figure S1 and S3\). The highest](#)
618 [absolute snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change values is found in the SE](#)
619 [Pyrenees. This is consistent with the snow accumulation and ablation patterns previously reported](#)
620 [in this region \(Lopez-Moreno, 2005; Navarro-Serrano et al., 2018; Alonso-González et al., 2020a;](#)
621 [Bonsoms et al., 2021a; Bonsoms et al., 2021b; Bonsoms et al., 2022\). The Atlantic climate has](#)
622 [less of an influence in the SE sector, and in situ observations indicated there was about half of the](#)
623 [seasonal snow accumulation amounts as in northern and western areas at the same elevation](#)
624 [\(>2000 m; Bonsoms et al., 2021a\). The snow in the SE Pyrenees is more sensitive to temperature](#)
625 [and precipitation change because these massifs are exposed to higher turbulence and radiative](#)
626 [heat fluxes \(Bonsoms et al., 2022\), and 0°C isotherm is closer. Similar conclusions are found for](#)
627 [low elevations, where the results show an upward displacement of the snow line due to warming.](#)
628 [Previous studies described the sensitivity of the snow pattern to elevation at specific stations of](#)
629 [the central Pyrenees \(López-Moreno et al., 2013; 2017\), Iberian Peninsula mountains \(Alonso-](#)
630 [González et al., 2020a\), and other ranges such as the Cascades \(Jefferson, 2011; Sproles et al.,](#)
631 [2013\), the Alps \(Marty et al., 2017\), and western USA \(Pierce et al., 2013; Musselman et al.,](#)

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632 2017b). In these regions, the models suggest larger snowpack reductions due to warming at
633 subalpine sites than at alpine sites (Jennings and Molotch, 2020) due to closer isothermal
634 conditions (Brown and Mote, 2009; Lopez-Moreno et al., 2017; Mote et al., 2018).

635

636 **5.4 Environmental and socioeconomic implications**

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638 Our results indicated there will be an increase of snow ablation days and imply a disappearance
639 of the typical sequence of snow accumulation and snow ablation seasons. Climate warming
640 triggers the simultaneous occurrence of several periods of snowfall and melting, snow droughts
641 during the winter, and ephemeral snowpacks between seasons. These expected decreases in snow
642 will likely have importantsignificant impacts on the ecosystem. During spring, a snow cover cools
643 the soil (Luetschg et al., 2008), delays the initiation of freezing (Oliva et al., 2014), functions as
644 a thick active layer (Hrbáček et al., 2016), and protects alpine rocks from exposure to solar
645 radiation and high air temperatures (Magnin et al., 2017). Due to warming temperatures, the
646 remaining glaciers in the Pyrenees are shrinking and are expected to disappear before the 2050s
647 (Vidaller et al., 2021). The shallower snowpack that we identified in this work will increase the
648 vulnerability of glaciers, because snow has a higher albedo than dark ice and debris-covered
649 glaciers and functions as a protective layer for glaciers (Fujita and Sakai, 2014).

650

651 The earlier onset of snowmelt suggested by our results, which is greater at low and mid-elevations
652 during WD seasons, is in line with previous global studies that reported earlier streamflow due to
653 earlier runoff dates (Adam et al., 2009; Stewart, 2009), and with a study of changes in the Iberian
654 Peninsula River flows (Morán-Tejeda et al., 2014). Overall, our results are consistent with the
655 slight decrease of the river peak flows that have occurred in the southern slopes of the Pyrenees
656 since the 1980s (Sanmiguel-Vallelado et al., 2017). The significant reductions of seasonal HS that
657 we identified, which are driven by increases in the rainfall ratio, suggest that snowmelt-dominated
658 stream flows will likely shift to rainfall dominated regimes. Although high elevation meltwater
659 might increase and contribute to earlier groundwater recharging (Evans et al., 2018), the increased
660 evapotranspiration in the lowlands (Bonsoms et al., 2022) could counter this effect, so there is no
661 net change in downstream areas (Stahl et al., 2010). Snow ephemerality triggers lower spring and
662 summer flows (Barnett et al., 2005; Adam et al., 2009; Stahl et al., 2010) and has an impact on
663 the hydrological management strategies. Winter snow accumulation affects hydrological
664 availability during the months when water and hydroelectric demands are higher. This is because
665 reservoirs store water during periods of peak flows (winter and spring), and release water during
666 the driest season in the lowlands (summer) (Morán-Tejeda et al., 2014). Recurrent snow-scarce

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667 seasons may intensify these hydrological impacts and lead to competition for water resources
668 among different ecological and socioeconomic systems. The economic viability of mountain ski-
669 resorts in the Pyrenees depends on a regular deep snow cover (Gilaberte-Burdalo et al., 2014;
670 Pons et al., 2015), but this is highly variable, especially at low and mid-elevations. The expected
671 increase in snow-scarce seasons that we identified here is consistent with climate projections for
672 this region, which suggest that no Pyrenean ski resorts will be viable under RCP 8.5 scenario by
673 the end of the 21st century (Spandre et al., 2019).

674

675 **5.5 Limitations and uncertainties**

676 The meteorological input data that we used to model snow were estimated for flat slopes and the
677 regionalization system we used was based on the SAFRAN system. According to this system, a
678 mountain range is divided into massifs with homogeneous topography. The SAFRAN system has
679 negative biases in shortwave radiation, a temperature precision of about 1 K, and biases in the
680 accumulated monthly precipitation of about 20 kg/m² (Vernay et al., 2021). Our estimates of snow
681 sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change were based on the delta-approach, which
682 considers changes in temperature and precipitation based on climate projections for the Pyrenees
683 (Amblar-Francés et al., 2020), but assumes that the meteorological patterns of the reference period
684 will be constant over time. In this work we used a physical-based snow model since it provides
685 better results for future snow climate change estimations than degree-day models (Carletti et al.,
686 2022). The FSM2 is a physics-based model of intermediate complexity, and the estimates of snow
687 densification are simpler than those from more complex models of snowpack. However, a more
688 complex model does not necessarily provide better performance in terms of snowpack and runoff
689 estimation (Magnusson et al., 2015). The FSM2 configuration implemented in this work includes
690 snow meltwater retention, snowpack refreezing and snow albedo based on snow age, which are
691 the physical parameters included in the best-performing snow models according to Essery et al.
692 (2013). Snow model sensitivity studies reveal that intermediate complexity models exhibit similar
693 snow depth accuracies than most complex multi-layer snow models, as well as robust
694 performances across seasons (Terzaghi et al., 2020). The snow model used in this work (FSM2)
695 is a physics-based model of intermediate complexity, and the estimates of snow densification are
696 simpler than those from more complex models of snowpack; however, a more complex model
697 does not necessarily provide better performance in terms of snowpack and runoff estimation
698 (Magnusson et al., 2015). Biases in the SAFRAN system and biases related to the FSM2 were
699 minimal because we quantified relative changes between a modeled snow scenario (climate
700 baseline) and several perturbed scenarios. Finally, our estimates of snow sensitivity were based
701 on the delta approach, which considers changes in temperature and precipitation based on climate

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702 ~~projections for the Pyrenees (Amblar Francés et al., 2020), but assumes that the snow patterns of~~
703 ~~the reference climate period will be constant over time.~~

704

705 **6 Conclusions**

706

707 Our study assessed the impact of ~~climate-temperature and precipitation~~ change on the Pyrenean
708 snowpack during ~~seasons with extreme compound temperature and precipitation~~~~compound cold-~~
709 ~~hot and wet-dry seasons,~~-using a physical-based snow model that was forced by reanalysis data.
710 We determined the ~~snow sensitivity~~~~snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change~~
711 using five key indicators of snow accumulation and snow ablation. ~~Our results indicated that~~
712 ~~elevation affected the snow sensitivity. In particular, snowpack losses were greatest during WW~~
713 ~~seasons at low and mid elevations and were greatest during WD seasons at high elevations.~~The
714 lowest ~~snow sensitivity~~~~snow sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change~~ was at high
715 elevations of the ~~western and northern~~NW Pyrenees; and ~~sensitivity~~ increased at lower elevations
716 and in the ~~eastern and southern~~SE slopes. An increase of 1°C at low and mid elevation regions
717 led to ~~remarkable~~~~a significant~~ decreases in the seasonal HS and snow duration. However, at high
718 elevations, precipitation plays a key role, and temperature is far from the isothermal 0°C during
719 the middle of winter. In this region, a 10% increase of precipitation, as suggested by many climate
720 projections over the eastern regions of this range, could compensate for temperature increases on
721 the order of about <1°C. The impact of climate warming depends on the combination of
722 temperature and precipitation during ~~extreme compound~~ seasons. Our analysis of seasonal HS
723 and peak HS max indicated ~~the greatest declines were during WW seasons and the smallest~~
724 ~~declines were during CD seasons, independently of the Pyrenean sector.~~ For snow duration,
725 however, the ~~highest (lowest)-~~sensitivity ~~sensitivity to temperature and precipitation change~~ is
726 found during WD (CW) seasons. Similarly, ~~the peak HS date and~~ snow ablation had slightly
727 greater ~~climate~~ sensitivities ~~to temperature and precipitation change~~ during ~~dry~~WD seasons, in
728 that snow ablation ~~increased by variation is about less than~~ 10% and the peak HS date occurred
729 about ~~10.5~~ days earlier per °C. Our findings thus provide evidence that the Pyrenean snowpack is
730 highly sensitive to ~~climate~~climate warming ~~change, and~~and suggest that the snowpacks of other
731 mid-latitude mountain ranges may also show similar response to warming.

732

733 **Data availability**

734

735 ~~Snow model (FSM2) is open access and provided by Essery (2015) and available at~~
736 ~~<https://github.com/RichardEssery/FSM2> (last access 16 December 2022).~~ Climate forcing

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737 data is provided by Vernay et al. (2021), through AERIS (<https://www.aeris-data.fr/landing-page/?uuid=865730e8-edeb-4c6b-ae58-80f95166509b#v2020.2>, last access 16 December
738 2022). Data of this work is available upon request (contact: josepbonsoms5@ub.edu).

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750

751
752 **Author contributions**
753
754 JB analyzed the data and wrote the original draft. JB, JILM and EAG contributed in the
755 manuscript design and draft editing. JB, JILM and EAG read and approved the final manuscript.
756

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