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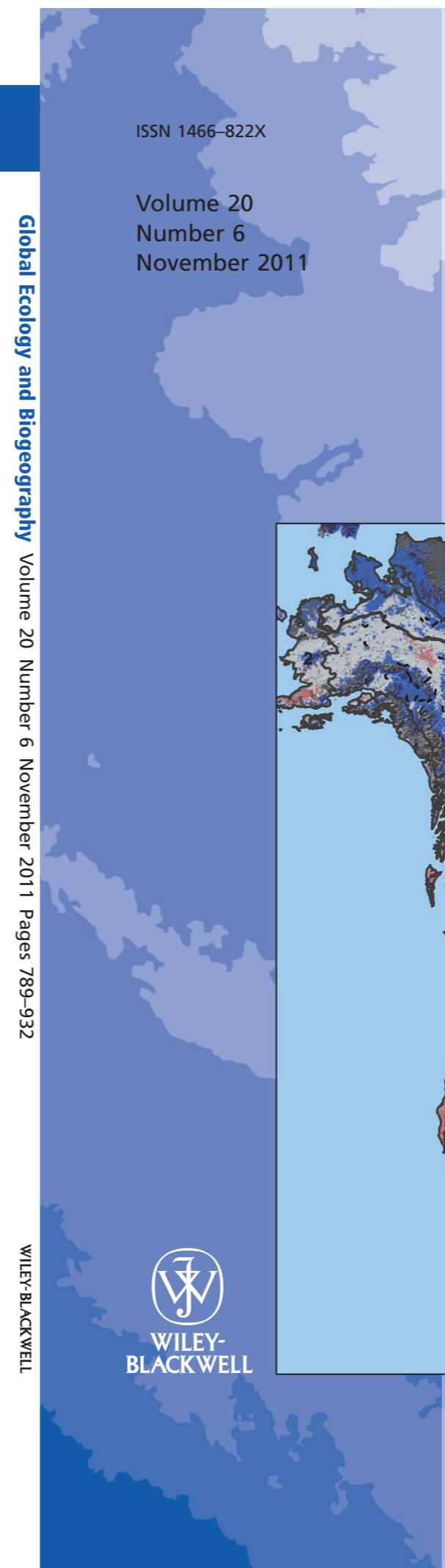
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Front cover: Illustration of the predicted ‘carrying capacity for species richness’ (S_K) for native landbirds across portions of North America not strongly influenced by land use. S_K is based on annual primary productivity, interannual variability in productivity and potential evapotranspiration. S_K tends to be low in the west and the north where the bulk of protected areas are located, and high in the eastern US and Lake States – regions dominated by private lands and high human population densities. Habitat conservation and restoration in these more populated regions has high potential payoff (see Hansen *et al.*, pp. 817–831).

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