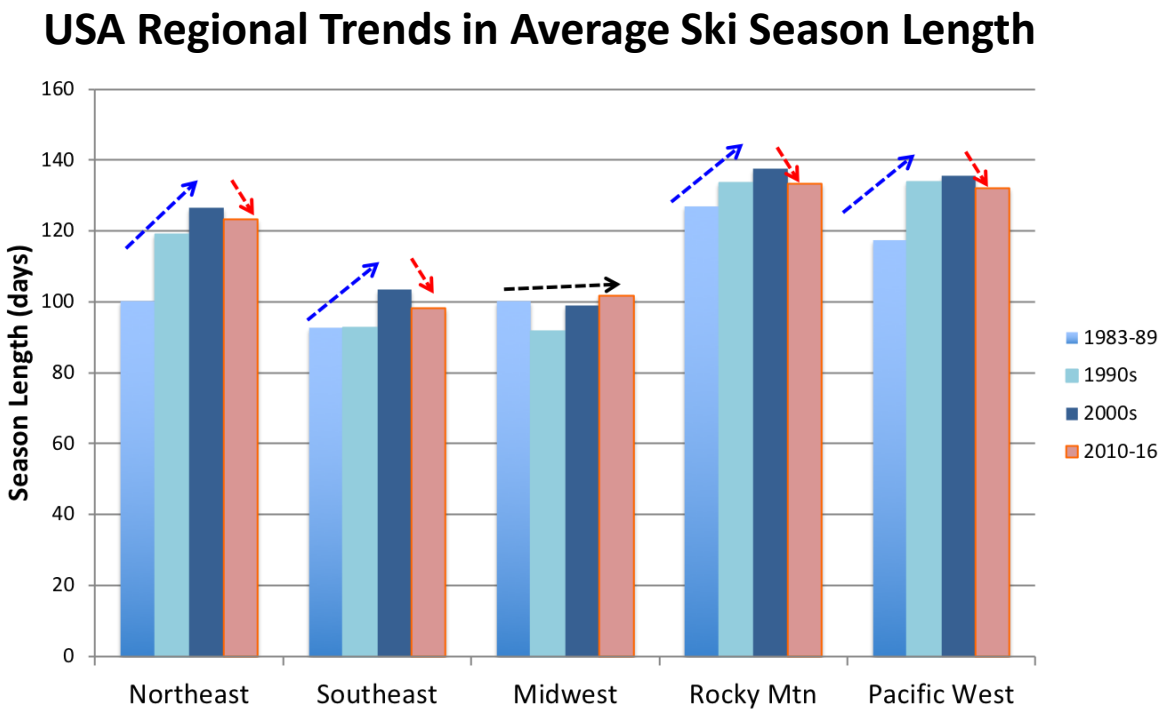
The Misrepresentation of Climate Change Risk in the Ski Industry



Travel › Ski › News

The Telegraph

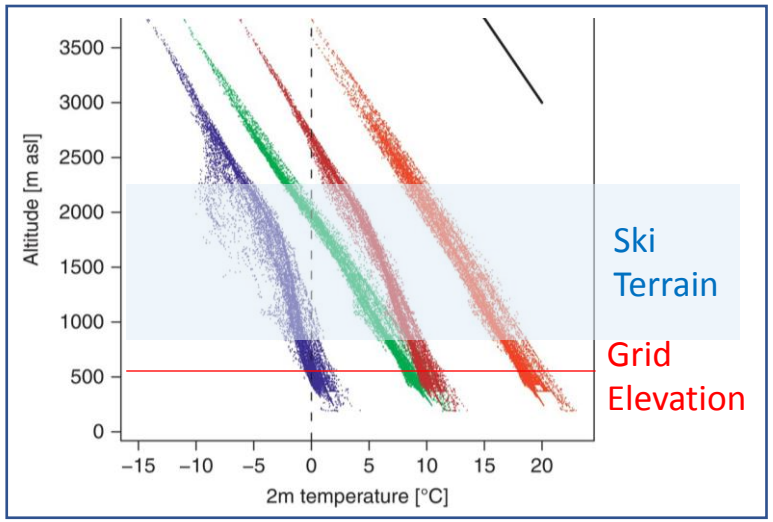
Will global warming kill off skiing in North America?

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Daniel Scott, Robert Steiger, Natalie Knowles

universität innsbruck

Common Methodological Limitations in the Ski Industry Climate Change Risk Literature



1) inappropriate temporal and spatial resolution of climate data

- e.g., monthly snowfall or monthly Tmin for snowmaking potential
- e.g., gridded temperature data not adjusted to elevation of ski terrain

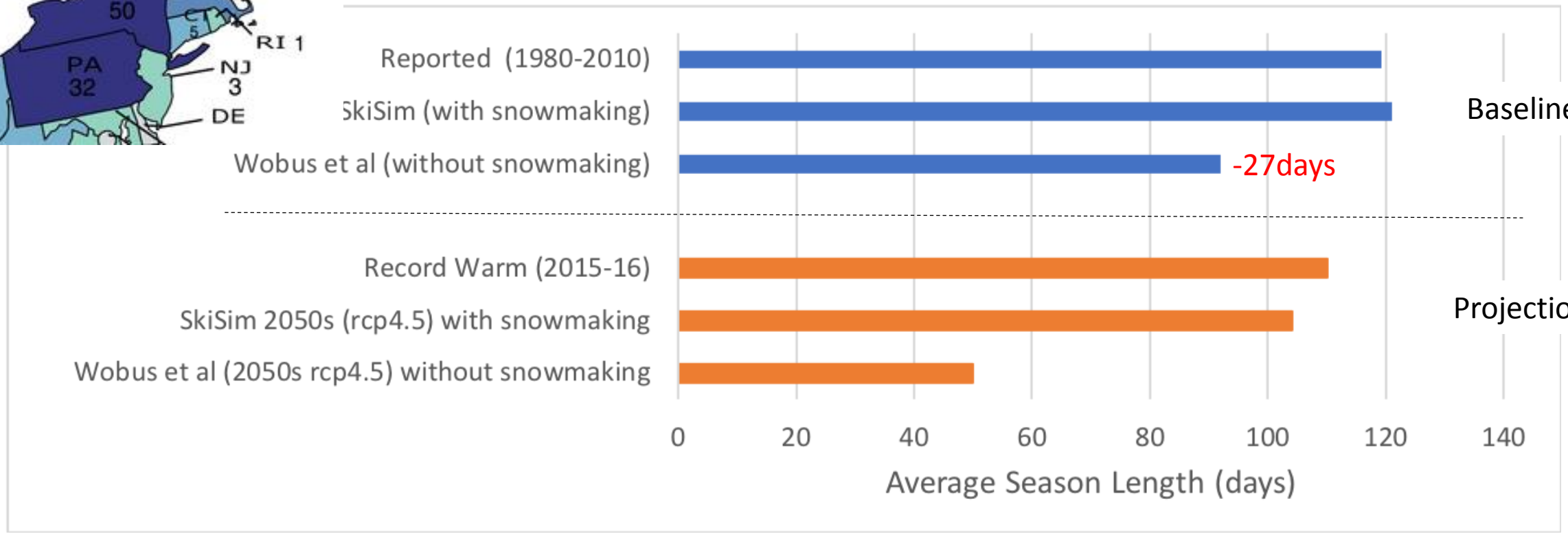
2) inappropriate ski industry climate impact indicators

- e.g., snow cover (2.5cm) is irrelevant for ski operations
- e.g. April 1 SWE is also irrelevant to ski operations and determining season length variability

3) Failure to Account for Snowmaking Capacity (current or future adaptation)

Inter-model Comparison Versus Reported Season Length *(with/without snowmaking)*

USA Northeast Ski Region



Key Messages

- Studies that do not physically incorporate snowmaking clearly **misrepresent** the climate risk to the ski industry/ski tourism.
- This is dangerous for companies and alpine destinations and poses an **obstacle** to effective, science-based climate change adaptation.

- Snowmaking has been called **'mal-adaptation'** by some, because it increases energy use by ski areas.
- **We argue the opposite**. To curtail snowmaking is 'mal-adaptation' because that will increase net tourism system emissions and severely increase the vulnerability of ski tourism and alpine economies.