

# Package: mrangr (via r-universe)

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**Title** Mechanistic Metacommunity Simulator

**Version** 1.0.1

**Description** Flexible, mechanistic, and spatially explicit simulator of metacommunities. It extends our previous package - 'rangr' (see <https://github.com/ropensci/rangr>), which implemented a mechanistic virtual species simulator integrating population dynamics and dispersal. The 'mrangr' package adds the ability to simulate multiple species interacting through an asymmetric matrix of pairwise relationships, allowing users to model all types of biotic interactions — competitive, facilitative, or neutral — within spatially explicit virtual environments. This work was supported by the National Science Centre, Poland, grant no. 2018/29/B/NZ8/00066 and the Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Centre (grant no. pl0090-01).

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---

a\_eg

*Example Of Interaction Coefficients Matrix*

---

### Description

A square numeric matrix representing interaction coefficients between species.  $a_{ij}$  is the per-capita interaction strength of species  $j$  on species  $i$ . It expresses the change in carrying capacity of species  $i$  by a single individual of species  $j$ . This data is compatible with [n1\\_map\\_eg.tif](#) and [K\\_map\\_eg.tif](#) maps.

### Usage

a\_eg

**Format**

A numeric matrix with 4 rows and 4 columns containing interaction coefficients.

**Source**

Data generated in-house to serve as an example

---

community\_eg

*Example Community Data*

---

**Description**

A pre-initialized `sim_com_data` object used to demonstrate community structure and simulation input. It contains 4 species with spatially correlated carrying capacity and initial abundance maps.

This object can be accessed via the [get\\_community](#) function.

**Format**

An object of class `sim_com_data` from the `mrangr` package generated using [initialise\\_com](#).

**Source**

Data generated in-house to serve as an example

**See Also**

[get\\_community](#), [initialise\\_com](#)

---

diagonal

*Compute Maximum Possible Distance for a Raster Object*

---

**Description**

Calculates the diagonal length of a raster's extent, accounting for the coordinate reference system.

**Usage**

```
diagonal(x)
```

**Arguments**

x                    A raster object.

**Value**

The diagonal distance in meters.

**Examples**

```
library(terra)

# Read data from the mrangr package
K_map <- rast(system.file("input_maps/K_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))

diagonal(K_map)
```

---

get\_community      *Load Example Community Object*

---

**Description**

Loads a pre-simulated example of a spatial community object, useful for demos and testing.

**Usage**

```
get_community()
```

**Value**

An object of class `sim_com_data` containing community structure, simulation parameters, species-specific carrying capacity and initial abundance maps.

**Examples**

```
community <- get_community()
summary(community)
```

---

get\_simulated\_com      *Load Example Simulated Community Results*

---

**Description**

Loads a pre-run simulation output, based on the example community data. Useful for examples, unit tests, or visualization.

**Usage**

```
get_simulated_com()
```

**Value**

An object of class `sim_com_results` containing simulation output for a community over time.

## Examples

```
sim <- get_simulated_com()
plot(sim)
```

---

grf

*Generate a Gaussian Random Field*

---

## Description

Generates a Gaussian random field (GRF) based on the Matern model of spatial autocorrelation.

## Usage

```
grf(x, range, fun = "scale", ...)
```

## Arguments

x	A template raster of class <a href="#">SpatRaster</a> (from the <b>terra</b> package).
range	Numeric. The range parameter of the variogram model (in spatial units of x raster).
fun	A function to apply to the generated values (default is <a href="#">scale</a> to standardize the GRF).
...	Additional arguments passed to the function specified in fun.

## Value

A [SpatRaster](#) object containing the generated Gaussian random field.

## Examples

```
library(terra)
r <- rast(nrows = 100, ncols = 100, xmin = 0, xmax = 100, ymin = 0, ymax = 100)
grf_field <- grf(r, range = 30)
plot(grf_field)
```

---

initialise\_com      *Initialise Community Simulation Data*

---

### Description

Prepares community-level input data for a spatial simulation. This function builds on `rangr::initialise()` by organising inputs for multiple species and their interactions.

### Usage

```
initialise_com(
  n1_map = NULL,
  K_map,
  r,
  a,
  dlist = NULL,
  invasion = NULL,
  use_names_K_map = TRUE,
  ...
)
```

### Arguments

<code>n1_map</code>	A <a href="#">SpatRaster</a> with one layer per species representing the initial abundance. If NULL (default), random initial values will be generated from a Poisson distribution using <code>K_map</code> .
<code>K_map</code>	A <a href="#">SpatRaster</a> with one layer per species representing carrying capacities.
<code>r</code>	A numeric vector of intrinsic growth rates. It can be a single-element vector (if all species have the same intrinsic growth rate) or a vector of length equal to the number of species in the community.
<code>a</code>	A square numeric matrix representing interaction coefficients between species. Each element <code>a<sub>i,j</sub></code> is the per-capita interaction strength of species <code>j</code> on species <code>i</code> . It expresses the change in carrying capacity of species <code>i</code> by a single individual of species <code>j</code> . The diagonal must be NA and the matrix must be a square matrix of order equal to the number of species. It does not have to be symmetric.
<code>dlist</code>	Optional. A list; target cells at a specified distance calculated for every cell within the study area.
<code>invasion</code>	Optional. A named list of specifying invasion configuration (can be prepared using <a href="#">initialise_inv</a> ). Must contain: <b>invaders</b> Integer vector of invading species indices. <b>propagule_size</b> Number of individuals introduced per invasion event. <b>invasion_times</b> Matrix of invasion times, with one row per invader.
<code>use_names_K_map</code>	Logical. If TRUE, the layer names of <code>K_map</code> are used as species names. If FALSE, species are numbered sequentially ( <code>1:number_of_species</code> ). Defaults to TRUE.

... Additional named arguments passed to `initialise()`. Each must be either length 1 or equal to the number of species.

**kernel\_args** Optional. A list of lists, each containing named arguments for the corresponding species' kernel function. Must be the same length as number of species.

## Value

A list of class `sim_com_data` containing:

**spec\_data** A list of `sim_data` objects (one per species) returned by `initialise()`.

**nspec** The number of species.

**a** The interaction matrix.

**r** Intrinsic growth rate(s).

**n1\_map** Initial abundance maps (wrapped `SpatRaster`).

**K\_map** Carrying capacity maps (wrapped `SpatRaster`).

**max\_dist** The maximum dispersal distance across all species.

**dlist** A list; target cells at a specified distance calculated for every cell within the study area.

**invasion** Invasion configuration (if any).

**call** The matched call.

## Examples

```
library(terra)

# Read data from the mrangr package

## Input maps
K_map <- rast(system.file("input_maps/K_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))
n1_map <- rast(system.file("input_maps/n1_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))

## Interaction coefficients matrix
a <- a_eg

# Initialise simulation parameters
community_01 <-
  initialise_com(
    K_map = K_map,
    n1_map = n1_map,
    r = 1.1,
    a = a,
    rate = 0.002)

# With invaders
invasion <- initialise_inv(
  invaders = c(1, 3),
  invasion_times = c(2, 5))
```

```

community_02 <- initialise_com(
  K_map = K_map,
  r = 1.1,
  a = a,
  rate = 0.002,
  invasion = invasion)

# Custom kernel function
abs_rnorm <- function(n, mean, sd) {
  abs(rnorm(n, mean = mean, sd = sd))
}

community_03 <- initialise_com(
  K_map = K_map,
  n1_map = n1_map,
  r = c(1.1, 1.05, 1.2, 1),
  a = a,
  kernel_fun = c("rexp", "rexp", "abs_rnorm", "abs_rnorm"),
  kernel_args = list(
    list(rate = 0.002),
    list(rate = 0.001),
    list(mean = 0, sd = 1000),
    list(mean = 0, sd = 2000))
)

```

---

initialise\_inv

*Initialise Invasion Parameters*


---

## Description

Prepares a list of invasion configuration details, including the identifiers of the invading species, the times of invasion and the number of individuals introduced at each event. Result of this helper function is designed to be passed to `initialise_com()` as `invasion` argument.

## Usage

```
initialise_inv(invaders, invasion_times, propagule_size = 1)
```

## Arguments

<code>invaders</code>	An integer vector of species indices indicating which species are invaders. These indices should match the species layers in the input maps ( <code>n1_map</code> and <code>K_map</code> ).
<code>invasion_times</code>	A matrix or vector specifying when each invader enters the system. If a vector is provided, it is assumed to apply to all invaders. If a matrix, it must have one row per invader and columns corresponding to invasion events.
<code>propagule_size</code>	A numeric scalar specifying the number of individuals introduced at each invasion time. Defaults to 1.

**Value**

A named list with the following components:

**invaders** Integer vector of invading species indices.

**propagule\_size** Number of individuals introduced per invasion event.

**invasion\_times** Matrix of invasion times, with one row per invader.

**Examples**

```
# Define invaders and invasion times
initialise_inv(
  invaders = c(1, 3),
  invasion_times = matrix(c(5, 10, 5, 20), nrow = 2, byrow = TRUE),
  propagule_size = 10
)

# Uniform invasion times across all invaders
initialise_inv(
  invaders = c(2, 4),
  invasion_times = c(5, 10, 15)
)
```

---

K\_map\_eg.tif

*Example Of Carrying Capacity Map*


---

**Description**

[SpatRaster](#) object with 4 layer that can be passed to [initialise\\_com](#) as a simulation ([sim\\_com](#)) starting point.

This map is compatible with [n1\\_map\\_eg.tif](#).

**Format**

[SpatRaster](#) object with 4 layers, each with 15 rows and 15 columns. Contains numeric values representing carrying capacity and NA's indicating unsuitable areas.

**Source**

Data generated in-house to serve as an example (using spatial autocorrelation).

**Examples**

```
terra::rast(system.file("input_maps/K_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))
```

K\_sim

*Carrying Capacity Map Simulator***Description**

Generates multiple carrying capacity maps based on spatially autocorrelated Gaussian Random Fields (GRFs), with optional correlation between layers.

**Usage**

```
K_sim(n, id, range, cor_mat = NULL, qfun = qnorm, ...)
```

**Arguments**

n	Integer. Number of maps to generate.
id	A <a href="#">SpatRaster</a> object used as a geographic template.
range	Numeric. Spatial autocorrelation parameter passed to the <code>grf</code> function.
cor_mat	Optional correlation matrix. If NULL, maps are generated independently.
qfun	Quantile function to apply to the generated GRFs (default: <a href="#">qnorm</a> ).
...	Additional arguments passed to the quantile function <code>qfun</code> .

**Value**

A [SpatRaster](#) object with `n` layers, each representing a carrying capacity map.

**Examples**

```
library(terra)
library(FieldSimR)

# Community parameters
nspec <- 3
nrows <- ncols <- 10
xmin <- 250000; xmax <- xmin + nrows * 1000
ymin <- 600000; ymax <- ymin + ncols * 1000
id <- rast(nrows = nrows, ncols = ncols, xmin = xmin, xmax = xmax, ymin = ymin, ymax = ymax)
crs(id) <- "epsg:2180"
plot(id)

# Correlation matrix of carrying capacities
cor_mat <- matrix(c(1, 0.29, 0.32, 0.29, 1, 0.32, 0.32, 0.32, 1), nrow = nspec, ncol = nspec)
cor_mat

# Generate and define the distributions and parameters of correlated carrying capacity maps
K_map <- K_sim(nspec, id, range = 20000, cor_mat = cor_mat, qfun = qlnorm, meanlog = 2, sdlog = 0.5)
K_map
hist(K_map)
plot(K_map)
```

---

n1\_map\_eg.tif

*Example Of Abundance Map At First Time Step Of The Simulation*


---

### Description

`SpatRaster` object with 4 layer that can be passed to `initialise_com` as a simulation (`sim_com`) starting point.

This map is compatible with `K_map_eg.tif`.

### Format

`SpatRaster` object with 4 layers, each with 15 rows and 15 columns. Contains integer values representing abundance and NA's indicating unsuitable areas.

### Source

Data generated in-house to serve as an example.

### Examples

```
terra::rast(system.file("input_maps/n1_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))
```

---

plot.sim\_com\_results

*Plot sim\_com\_results Object*


---

### Description

Draws simulated abundance maps for any species at any time

### Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_results'
plot(
  x,
  species = seq_len(dim(x$N_map)[4]),
  time_points = x$sim_time,
  type = "continuous",
  main,
  range,
  ...
)
```

**Arguments**

x	An object of class <code>sim_com_results</code> , returned by <code>sim_com()</code> .
species	Integer vector. Species ID(s) to plot.
time_points	Integer vector. Time step(s) to plot (excluding burn-in).
type	Character vector of length 1. Type of map: "continuous" (default), "classes" or "interval" (case-sensitive)
main	Character vector. Plot titles (one for each layer)
range	Numeric vector of length 2. Range of values to be used for the legend (if <code>type = "continuous"</code> ), which by default is calculated from the <code>N_map</code> slot of <code>sim_com_results</code> object
...	Further arguments passed to <code>terra::plot</code>

**Value**

#' \* If `length(time_points) == 1`, returns a `SpatRaster` with species as layers.

- If only one species is selected with multiple time points, returns a single `SpatRaster`.

**Examples**

```
# Read simulation data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Plot
plot(simulated_com)
```

---

plot\_series

*Community Time-Series Plot*

---

**Description**

This function plots a community time-series for a given location and time.

**Usage**

```
plot_series(
  obj,
  x = seq(dim(obj$N_map)[1]),
  y = seq(dim(obj$N_map)[2]),
  time = seq(obj$sim_time),
  species = seq(dim(obj$N_map)[4]),
  trans = NULL,
  ...
)
```

**Arguments**

obj	An object of class sim_com_results.
x	Indices for the x-dimension - first dimension of the obj\$N_map (default: full range).
y	Indices for the y-dimension - second dimension of the obj\$N_map (default: full range).
time	Indices for the time-dimension - third dimension of the obj\$N_map (default: full range).
species	Indices for the species - fourth dimension of the obj\$N_map (default: full range).
trans	An optional function to apply to the calculated mean series before plotting (e.g., log, log1p). Defaults to NULL (no transformation).
...	Additional graphical parameters passed to plot.

**Value**

Invisibly returns a matrix of the mean (and possibly transformed) abundance values for each species.

**Examples**

```
# Read simulation data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Plot
plot_series(simulated_com)
plot_series(simulated_com, x = 5:12, y = 1:5)
plot_series(simulated_com, time = 1:5)
plot_series(simulated_com, trans = log1p)
```

---

print.sim\_com\_data     *Print sim\_com\_data Object*

---

**Description**

Print sim\_com\_data Object

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_data'
print(x, ...)
```

**Arguments**

x	sim_com_data object; returned by the <a href="#">initialise_com</a> function
...	further arguments passed to or from other methods; currently none specified

**Value**

sim\_com\_data object is invisibly returned (the x param)

**Examples**

```
# Read community data from the mrangr package
community <- get_community()

# Print
print(community)
```

---

print.sim\_com\_results *Print sim\_com\_results Object*

---

**Description**

Print sim\_com\_results Object

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_results'
print(x, ...)
```

**Arguments**

x	sim_com_results object; returned by the <a href="#">sim_com</a> function
...	further arguments passed to or from other methods; none specified

**Value**

sim\_com\_results object is invisibly returned (the x param)

**Examples**

```
# Read simulation data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Print
print(simulated_com)
```

---

```
print.summary.sim_com_data
      Print summary.sim_com_data Object
```

---

**Description**

Print summary.sim\_com\_data Object

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'summary.sim_com_data'
print(x, ...)
```

**Arguments**

x	An object of class summary.sim_com_data
...	Additional arguments (not used)

**Value**

Invisibly returns x

**Examples**

```
# Read community data from the mrangr package
community <- get_community()

# Print summary
sim_com_data_summary <- summary(community)
print(sim_com_data_summary)
```

---

```
print.summary.sim_com_results
      Print summary.sim_results Object
```

---

**Description**

Print summary.sim\_results Object

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'summary.sim_com_results'
print(x, ...)
```

**Arguments**

x summary.sim\_com\_results object; returned by [summary.sim\\_com\\_results](#) function

... further arguments passed to or from other methods; currently none specified

**Value**

None

**Examples**

```
# Read simulation data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Print summary
sim_com_summary <- summary(simulated_com)
print(sim_com_summary)
```

---

set\_zero

*Set Non-Missing Values to Zero*

---

**Description**

This function takes an object and sets all non-missing values to zero, while leaving missing values unchanged.

**Usage**

```
set_zero(x)
```

**Arguments**

x A vector or other object for which `is.na()` and subsetting with `[]` are defined (e.g., vector, data frame, SpatRaster).

**Value**

An object of the same type as `x` with all originally non-missing elements replaced by zero.

**Examples**

```
# Example with a numeric vector
vec <- c(1, 2, NA, 4, NA, 5)
set_zero(vec)
```

---

`sim_com`*Simulate Community Dynamics Over Time*

---

## Description

This function simulates species interactions and population dynamics over a given period. It accounts for species invasions and updates population abundances at each time step.

## Usage

```
sim_com(obj, time, burn = 0, progress_bar = TRUE)
```

## Arguments

<code>obj</code>	An object of class <code>sim_com_data</code> , as returned by <code>initialise_com()</code> .
<code>time</code>	Integer. Total number of simulation steps. Must be $\geq 2$ .
<code>burn</code>	Integer. Number of initial burn-in steps to exclude from the output. Must be $\geq 0$ and $< time$ .
<code>progress_bar</code>	Logical. Whether to display a progress bar during the simulation.

## Value

An object of class `sim_com_results`, a list containing:

**extinction** Named logical vector indicating species that went extinct.

**sim\_time** Integer. Duration of the output simulation (excluding burn-in).

**id** A `SpatRaster` object used as a geographic template.

**N\_map** 4D array [rows, cols, time, species] of population abundances.

## Examples

```
# Read community data from the mrangr package
community <- get_community()

# Simulation
simulated_com_01 <- sim_com(obj = community, time = 10)

# Simulation with burned time steps
simulated_com_02 <- sim_com(obj = community, time = 10, burn = 3)
```

---

simulated\_com\_eg      *Example Simulated Community Output*

---

**Description**

A `sim_com_results` object containing results of a 20-step simulation of a 4-species community.

The simulation was generated using the `community_eg` object.

This object can be accessed via the `get_simulated_com` function.

**Format**

An object of class `sim_com_results` from the `mrangr` package generated using `sim_com`.

**Source**

Data generated in-house to serve as an example

**See Also**

`get_simulated_com`, `plot.sim_com_results`, `sim_com`

---

summary.sim\_com\_data      *Summary Of sim\_com\_data Object*

---

**Description**

Summary Of `sim_com_data` Object

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_data'  
summary(object, ...)
```

**Arguments**

`object`      `sim_com_data` object; returned by `initialise_com` function  
`...`      further arguments passed to or from other methods; currently none used

**Value**

A list of class `summary.sim_com_data`

## Examples

```
# Read community data from the mrangr package
community <- get_community()

# Summary
summary(community)
```

---

summary.sim\_com\_results

*Summary Of sim\_com\_results Object*

---

## Description

Summary Of sim\_com\_results Object

## Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_results'
summary(object, ...)
```

## Arguments

object	sim_com_results object; returned by <a href="#">sim_com</a> function
...	further arguments passed to or from other methods; none specified

## Value

summary.sim\_com\_results object

## Examples

```
# Read simulation data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Summary
summary(simulated_com)
```

---

```
to_rast.sim_com_results
```

*Convert sim\_com\_results to SpatRaster(s)*

---

### Description

Converts simulated population abundance data from a `sim_com_results` object (produced by `sim_com()`) into `SpatRaster` objects.

### Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_results'
to_rast(
  obj,
  species = seq_len(dim(obj$N_map)[4]),
  time_points = obj$sim_time,
  ...
)
```

### Arguments

<code>obj</code>	An object of class <code>sim_com_results</code> , returned by <code>sim_com()</code> .
<code>species</code>	Integer vector. Species ID(s) to extract.
<code>time_points</code>	Integer vector. Time step(s) to extract (excluding burn-in).
<code>...</code>	Currently unused.

### Value

- If `length(time_points) == 1`, returns a `SpatRaster` with `species` as layers.
- If `length(time_points) > 1`, returns a named list of `SpatRaster` objects, one per species.
- If only one species is selected with multiple time points, returns a single `SpatRaster`.

### Examples

```
# Read simulation data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Extract one timestep, all species
r1 <- to_rast(simulated_com, time_points = 10)

# Extract multiple timesteps, one species
r2 <- to_rast(simulated_com, species = 2, time_points = c(1, 5, 10))

# Extract multiple timesteps, multiple species
r3 <- to_rast(simulated_com, species = c(1, 2), time_points = c(1, 5, 10))
```

---

update.sim\_com\_data *Update sim\_com\_data Object*

---

### Description

Updates the parameters used to create a `sim_com_data` object, returned by `initialise_com()`.

### Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'sim_com_data'  
update(object, ..., evaluate = TRUE)
```

### Arguments

<code>object</code>	A <code>sim_com_data</code> object, as returned by <code>initialise_com()</code> .
<code>...</code>	Named arguments to update. These should be valid arguments to <code>initialise_com()</code> . If <code>kernel_fun</code> is updated, any associated <code>kernel_args</code> (if present in previous call) will also be replaced.
<code>evaluate</code>	Logical (default <code>TRUE</code> ). If <code>TRUE</code> , the function returns the re-evaluated updated object; if <code>FALSE</code> , it returns the updated function call without evaluating it.

### Details

- If dispersal-related arguments such as `max_dist`, `kernel_fun`, or `kernel_args` are changed, the existing `dlist` is removed and recalculated unless a new `dlist` is explicitly provided.
- If `n1_map` or `K_map` is updated, the `dlist` will also be removed to ensure consistency.

### Value

If `evaluate = TRUE`, a new `sim_com_data` object with updated parameters. If `evaluate = FALSE`, a call object representing the updated function call.

### See Also

[initialise\\_com\(\)](#)

### Examples

```
library(terra)  
  
# Read data from the mrangr package  
  
## Input maps  
K_map <- rast(system.file("input_maps/K_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))  
n1_map <- rast(system.file("input_maps/n1_map_eg.tif", package = "mrangr"))  
  
## Competition coefficients matrix  
a <- a_eg
```

```

# Initialise simulation parameters
community_01 <-
  initialise_com(
    K_map = K_map,
    r = 1.1,
    a = a,
    rate = 0.002)

# Update simulation parameters

# Custom kernel function
abs_rnorm <- function(n, mean, sd) {
  abs(rnorm(n, mean = mean, sd = sd))
}

community_02 <- update(community_01,
  kernel_fun = c("rexp", "rexp", "abs_rnorm", "abs_rnorm"),
  kernel_args = list(
    list(rate = 0.002),
    list(rate = 0.001),
    list(mean = 0, sd = 1000),
    list(mean = 0, sd = 2000)))

```

---

virtual\_ecologist      *Virtual Ecologist*

---

## Description

Organizes and extracts community data from a simulated community object based on one of three sampling methods: random proportion, constant random sites, or user-provided sites.

## Usage

```

virtual_ecologist(
  obj,
  type = c("random_one_layer", "random_all_layers", "from_data"),
  sites = NULL,
  prop = 0.01,
  obs_error = c("rlnorm", "rbinom"),
  obs_error_param = NULL
)

```

## Arguments

obj	An object created by the <code>sim_com()</code> function, containing simulation data.
type	character vector of length 1; describes the sampling type (case-sensitive):

- "random\_one\_layer" - random selection of cells for which abundances are sampled; the same set of selected cells is used across all time steps.
- "random\_all\_layers" - random selection of cells for which abundances are sampled; a new set of cells is selected for each time step.
- "from\_data" - user-defined selection of cells for which abundances are sampled; the user is required to provide a data.frame containing three columns: "x", "y" and "time".

sites	An optional data frame specifying the sites for data extraction. This data frame must contain three columns: x, y and time.
prop	A numeric value between 0 and 1. The proportion of cells to randomly sample from the raster.
obs_error	character vector of length 1; type of the distribution that defines the observation process: "rlnorm" (log-normal distribution) or "rbinom" (binomial distribution).
obs_error_param	numeric vector of length 1; standard deviation (on a log scale) of the random noise in the observation process when "rlnorm" is used, or probability of detection (success) when "rbinom" is used.

### Value

A data frame with 6 columns:

- id: unique cell identifier (factor)
- x, y: sampled cell coordinates
- species: species number or name
- time: sampled time step
- n: sampled abundance

### Examples

```
# Read simulated community data from the mrangr package
simulated_com <- get_simulated_com()

# Option 1: Randomly sample sites (the same for each year)
sampled_data_01 <- virtual_ecologist(simulated_com)
head(sampled_data_01)

# Option 2: Randomly sample sites (different for each year)
sampled_data_02 <- virtual_ecologist(simulated_com, type = "random_all_layers")
head(sampled_data_02)

# Option 3: Sample sites based on user-provided data frame
custom_sites <- data.frame(
  x = c(250500, 252500, 254500),
  y = c(600500, 602500, 604500),
  time = c(1, 10, 20)
)
```

```
sampled_data_03 <- virtual_ecologist(simulated_com, sites = custom_sites)
head(sampled_data_03)
```

```
# Option 4. Add noise - "rlnorm"
sampled_data_04 <- virtual_ecologist(
  simulated_com,
  sites = custom_sites,
  obs_error = "rlnorm",
  obs_error_param = log(1.2)
)
head(sampled_data_04)
```

```
# Option 5. Add noise - "rbinom"
sampled_data_05 <- virtual_ecologist(
  simulated_com,
  sites = custom_sites,
  obs_error = "rbinom",
  obs_error_param = 0.8
)
head(sampled_data_05)
```

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