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Authors

Olsen, Kevin C
Lima, Thiago G
Barreto, Felipe S
[et al.](#)

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1 **Title:** Genomic architecture of hybrid male sterility in a species without sex chromosomes
2 (*Tigriopus californicus*, Copepoda: Harpacticoida)

3
4 **Authors:** Kevin C. Olsen^{1*}, Thiago G. Lima¹, Felipe S. Barreto², and Ronald S. Burton¹

5
6 **Affiliations:**

7 ¹University of California San Diego, Scripps Institution of Oceanography Marine Biology
8 Research Division, CA, USA

9 ²Oregon State University, Department of Integrative Biology, OR, USA

10
11 **Corresponding Author Email:** * k.olsen.ecoevo@gmail.com

12
13 **Author Contributions:**

14 TGL and RSB conceived the study. TGL performed laboratory and bioinformatic processing.
15 KCO and FSB conducted statistical analyses. KCO wrote the manuscript. All authors contributed
16 to interpreting results and editing the manuscript.

17
18 **Conflict of Interest Statement:**

19 The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

20
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1 Abstract

2 Sterility among hybrids is one of the most prevalent forms of reproductive isolation
3 delineating species boundaries and is expressed disproportionately in heterogametic XY males.
4 While hybrid male sterility (HMS) due to the ‘large X effect’ is a well-recognized mechanism of
5 reproductive isolation, it is less clear how HMS manifests in species that lack heteromorphic sex
6 chromosomes. We evaluated differences in allele frequencies at approximately 460,000 SNPs
7 between fertile and sterile F₂ interpopulation male hybrids to characterize the genomic
8 architecture of HMS in a species without sex chromosomes (*Tigriopus californicus*). We tested
9 associations between HMS and mitochondrial-nuclear and/or nuclear-nuclear signatures of
10 incompatibility. Genomic regions associated with HMS were concentrated on a single
11 chromosome with the same primary 2 Mbp region identified in one pair of reciprocal crosses.
12 Gene Ontology analysis revealed that annotations associated with spermatogenesis were the most
13 overrepresented within the implicated region, with 9 protein-coding genes connected with this
14 process found in the QTL of chromosome 2. Our results indicate that a narrow genomic region
15 was associated with the sterility of male hybrids in *T. californicus* and suggest that
16 incompatibilities among select nuclear loci may replace the large X effect when sex
17 chromosomes are absent.

18 **Keywords:** Hybrid male sterility, reproductive isolation, Pool-seq, *Tigriopus californicus*

19 Significance Statement

20 Reproductive incompatibility between divergent taxa can often be traced to hybrid male sterility.
21 For many animals, hybrid male sterility is due to genetic incompatibilities associated with sex
22 chromosomes. Yet not all species have sex chromosomes. In these species, sterility might be due

1 to incompatibilities between mitochondrial and nuclear genes or strictly among nuclear genes
2 themselves. We evaluated the causes of hybrid sterility in a copepod species without sex
3 chromosomes and found that incompatibilities underlying sterility map to a single autosome
4 where genes involved with spermatogenesis are enriched and are likely involved in male
5 reproductive failure. Our results highlight how hybrid male sterility and the boundaries between
6 species may be maintained through population-specific nuclear incompatibilities in taxa without
7 sex chromosomes.

9 **Introduction**

10 Inviability and reproductive failure in interspecific hybrids can often be attributed to
11 mismatching genetic elements with differing evolutionary histories (Dobzhansky 1936; Muller
12 1942; Orr 1995). Incompatibilities among sex and autosomal chromosomes make an especially
13 strong contribution to hybrid reproductive failure and the formation of allopatric species (*i.e.*, the
14 ‘Large X Effect; Presgraves 2008; Phillips and Edmands 2012; Lima 2014). In many
15 interspecific crosses, hybrid offspring that are members of the heterogametic sex are more
16 susceptible to reproductive failure than their homogametic counterparts (Haldane 1922).
17 ‘Haldane’s Rule’ can often be attributed to recessive sex-linked factors that are hidden in
18 homogametic individuals but exposed in heterogametic form (Turelli and Orr 1995; Presgraves
19 and Orr 1998). Sterility is one such hybrid incompatibility that is disproportionately prevalent in
20 males (or females in ZW systems), typically because of genetic elements that accumulate on sex
21 chromosomes (Price and Bouvier 2002; Masly and Presgraves 2007; Presgraves and Meiklejohn
22 2021). In fruit flies, nematodes, mosquitos, and mice, hybrid male sterility (HMS) can be traced
23 to incompatibilities between X-linked and autosomal loci (Tao et al. 2003; Slotman et al. 2004;

1 Schwann et al. 2018; Bi et al. 2019). While the concept of the large X effect has a broad
2 influence, it is not well understood how HMS manifests across animal species that lack sex-
3 determining chromosomes or have a strong environmental contribution to sex determination
4 (Moyle and Graham 2005; Moyle and Nakazato 2008; Willett 2008).

5 Aside from sex chromosomes, incompatibilities between nuclear and mitochondrial genomes are
6 at times linked to male sterility in plants and hybrid inviability across taxa (Chase 2007; Burton
7 et al. 2013). In many angiosperms, sterility-causing mutations involve new open reading frames
8 (ORFs) formed from recombining mitochondrial genomes, but these mutations are often
9 counteracted by nuclear 'restorer-of-fertility' genes (Chase 2007; Case and Willis 2008).
10 Moreover, mito-nuclear interactions play an important role in the fitness breakdown of
11 interpopulation or interspecific F₂ hybrids in some animal and fungal taxa (Bolnick et al. 2008;
12 Chou et al. 2010; Meiklejohn et al. 2013; Lima et al. 2019; Healy and Burton 2020). Hybrid
13 breakdown due to mito-nuclear interactions in these systems is most often manifested via
14 inviability, slow development, metabolic dysfunction, and smaller clutch sizes. Alternatively,
15 incompatibilities strictly among nuclear autosomal loci contribute to hybrid pollen sterility in
16 some hermaphroditic plants (Sweigart et al. 2006; Long et al. 2008; Feng et al. 2020), but the
17 pervasiveness of this pattern in species with separate male and female sexes is uncertain.

18 Assessing the genomic architecture of HMS in species with separate sexes but without sex
19 chromosomes could provide valuable insight to the relative importance of nuclear and mito-
20 nuclear interactions in the formation of reproductive isolation generally and HMS in particular.

21 We evaluated the genomic architecture of male sterility resulting from interpopulation
22 hybridization in the tidepool copepod *Tigriopus californicus*. *T. californicus* has a polygenic sex-
23 determining system and lacks heteromorphic sex chromosomes (Alexander et al. 2014; 2015). In

1 some interpopulation crosses, male sterility in F₂ hybrids is increased relative to its baseline
2 frequency within populations (Willett 2008). In the absence of sex chromosomes, asymmetries in
3 the manifestation of HMS between reciprocal crosses might implicate mito-nuclear
4 incompatibilities as an important source of sterility. Alternatively, HMS in *T. californicus* could
5 be the result of mismatches among nuclear elements and these effects may be localized or
6 dispersed throughout the genome.

8 **Results**

9 In reciprocal crosses between copepods from Abalone Cove (AB) and San Diego (SD)
10 CA, USA, we scored fertility and sterility across a total of ~2000 F₂ interpopulation male
11 hybrids, and then performed whole-genome sequencing of four pools (*i.e.*, a pool of fertile males
12 and a pool of sterile males for each cross direction). Allele frequencies in AB_♀ x SD_♂ and SD_♀
13 x AB_♂ crosses were evaluated at 462,330 and 458,526 population-diagnostic SNPs, respectively
14 (Table S1). The average depth of coverage per locus ranged from 68.824 ± 0.100 (mean \pm 95%
15 C.I.) to 85.975 ± 0.159 across the four hybrid pools. The allele frequencies of each pool are
16 plotted in Fig.1.

17 Regions of the genome associated with HMS were identified by quantifying differences in allele
18 frequencies among fertile and sterile males within each of the reciprocal crosses using a bulk
19 segregant / quantitative trait locus (QTL) approach. G' analyses detected a single 15 Mbp
20 segment on chromosome 2 that was associated significantly with HMS (Fig. 2). Within the
21 region detected in G' analyses, we identified three 2 Mbp QTL peaks where differences in allele
22 frequencies were greatest: *QTL-1* (0.8 – 2.4 Mbp), *QTL-2* (3.4 – 5.7 Mbp), and *QTL-3* (6.2 – 7.6

1 Mbp) (Fig. 2, Fig. S1). The segment corresponding to *QTL-2* expressed the largest difference in
2 allele frequencies between fertile and sterile male hybrids relative to the rest of the genome, and
3 it overlapped fully between the reciprocal crosses.

4 A primary goal of this experiment was to assess the potential role of mito-nuclear
5 incompatibilities as a source of HMS. Such incompatibilities would be inferred if sterile males
6 showed patterns of mismatched nuclear allele frequency relative to their respective
7 mitochondrial backgrounds. In other words, sterile males from the AB♀ x SD♂ cross would
8 have elevated SD nuclear allele frequencies, while sterile males from the SD♀ x AB♂ cross
9 would show elevated AB nuclear allele frequencies. Within the detected QTLs, however, sterile
10 males from both cross directions showed elevated frequencies of SD alleles, clearly rejecting the
11 mito-nuclear incompatibility hypothesis for HMS in hybrids between these populations of *T.*
12 *californicus* (Fig. 1).

13 We identified 121, 279, and 173 protein-coding genes within *QTL-1*, *QTL-2*, and *QTL-3*,
14 respectively (Table S2). Across the protein-coding genes within the three QTL regions, a total of
15 55 Gene Ontology terms were overrepresented relative to their frequencies in the whole genome
16 (Table 1; Table S3). Interestingly, the most overrepresented term was 'spermatogenesis', with 9
17 genes in *QTL-2*, which is ~4.1x more common than expected by chance when considering that
18 107 total genes are annotated with this GO term.

19 20 **Discussion**

21 We found a 2 Mbp genomic region closely associated with the sterility of *T. californicus*
22 F₂ interpopulation male hybrids. The boundaries of the region were remarkably consistent in

1 reciprocal crosses and, unlike other forms of hybrid breakdown in *T. californicus*, displayed
2 patterns indicative of nuclear rather than mito-nuclear incompatibility. Our results suggest
3 mismatches among select nuclear loci were responsible for the sterility of male hybrids and point
4 to the role of autosomal incompatibilities in forming HMS when sex chromosomes are not an
5 available target of intrinsic reproductive isolation.

6 Within the identified QTL, sterile F₂ male hybrids showed elevated frequencies of SD alleles in
7 both cross directions (Fig. 1), indicating some incompatibility between these SD alleles and
8 nuclear components of the AB genome. In characterizing the frequency of HMS in *T.*
9 *californicus*, Willett (2008) found that crosses between AB females and SD males had higher
10 occurrence of F₂ male sterility by 11-21% compared with parental populations. Furthermore,
11 sterility was infrequent in F₁ hybrids and crosses between either AB or SD and other populations
12 did not lead to F₂ HMS (Willett 2008). These phenotypic patterns suggest AB and SD genetic
13 elements are particularly prone to forming male sterility when recombined in F₂ hybrids. Given
14 that within the QTL the frequency of AB alleles in sterile males averaged < 0.3 (as opposed to
15 the 0.5 expectation for all alleles in the F₂ generation), we can infer a very strong effect at one or
16 more genes in this region; indeed, if all SD homozygotes are sterile and heterozygotes are
17 unaffected, we would expect an AB frequency of 0.33. Taken together with the Gene Ontology
18 enrichment analysis (Table 1), our results suggest that deleterious interactions among SD and AB
19 nuclear elements on chromosome 2 disrupt spermatogenesis and culminate in hybrid male
20 sterility.

21 The genetic basis of HMS differs from other forms of F₂ hybrid breakdown and
22 inviability in *T. californicus* (Burton and Barreto 2012; Lima et al. 2019; Healy and Burton
23 2020; Han and Barreto 2021). While mito-nuclear incompatibilities are disproportionately

1 responsible for reductions in developmental rate, survivorship, and salinity tolerance in *T.*
2 *californicus* F₂ hybrids (Burton 1987; Burton 1990a; Burton 1990b; Edmands 1999), no mito-
3 nuclear signature was associated with HMS. A similar pattern has been described in
4 *Caenorhabditis* nematodes, where incompatibilities between mtDNA and nuclear genes
5 contribute to hybrid inviability, but male sterility is the result of a single X-autosome
6 incompatibility (Bundus et al. 2018). Because the AB and SD populations do not show evidence
7 of HMS when crossed to other populations (Willett 2008), the genomic architecture of HMS
8 appears to be more complex in *T. californicus* and involves population-specific interacting
9 elements. This pattern is more akin to polygenic X-autosome interactions described in
10 *Drosophila* clades (Presgraves and Meiklejohn 2021), and epistatic incompatibilities among
11 autosomal loci in some plant taxa that culminate in HMS (Sweigart et al. 2006; Long et al. 2008;
12 Feng et al. 2020). Overall, our results suggest that in some instances without sex chromosomes,
13 nuclear incompatibilities on a single chromosome may make a disproportionate contribution to
14 forming hybrid male sterility and in delineating species boundaries.

15

16 **Methods**

17 *Interpopulation crosses and identification of fertile and sterile male hybrids*

18 *Tigriopus californicus* were collected from intertidal rocky pools in Abalone Cove (AB;
19 33°44' N, 118°22' W) and San Diego (SD; 32°44' N, 117°15' W), CA. Copepods were
20 maintained in mass cultures in 400 mL of 35 ppt seawater and fed ground commercial fish food
21 and natural algal growth. Cultures were kept in incubators at 20°C with a 12-h light/dark cycle.
22 Males and females used in interpopulation crosses were sampled from different mass cultures so

1 that replicate crosses reflected as much of the genetic variation present in parent populations as
2 possible. Forty-eight reciprocal crosses between AB and SD were established in 24-well culture
3 plates, with a single male-female pair in each well. The resulting F₁ interpopulation hybrids were
4 separated as juveniles and raised to maturity in isolation. F₁ x F₁ crosses were conducted with a
5 single pair per well, with an effort to maximize mixing of offspring from different parental
6 population crosses (*i.e.*, no sibling crosses were performed).

7 The fertility of F₂ interpopulation male hybrids was assessed by pairing them with a
8 single female in two sequential trials. Females used to assess male fertility were from the
9 population that matched the hybrid male's mitochondrial background. Approximately 1000 F₂
10 male hybrids were evaluated for both cross directions. We incorporated two classes of F₂ male
11 hybrids: a) Fertile males, which successfully produced offspring in both sequential trials, and b)
12 Sterile males, which failed to produce offspring in both trials. Males that produced offspring with
13 only one of the two females were excluded from the study.

14 *DNA isolation and sequencing*

15 We collected fertile and sterile F₂ hybrid males from both of the reciprocal crosses resulting in
16 four pools: Fertile F₂ males from AB♀ x SD♂ crosses (n = 100), Sterile F₂ males from AB♀ x
17 SD♂ crosses (n = 88), Fertile F₂ males from SD♀ x AB♂ crosses (n = 100), and Sterile F₂ males
18 from SD♀ x AB♂ crosses (n = 76). DNA was isolated using a phenol:chloroform protocol
19 (Sambrook and Russell 2006). Each pool was sequenced as 100-bp paired end (PE) libraries on
20 the Illumina HiSeq 2000. Adapters were trimmed with Trimmomatic (Bolger et al. 2014) and
21 only reads of at least 50-bp were kept after trimming.

22

1 *SNP database between parental populations*

2 *Tigriopus californicus* has a reference genome that was developed *de novo* for the SD
3 population where greater than 90% of the genome is anchored to 12 chromosomes (Barreto et al.
4 2018). Lima et al. (2019) generated an AB consensus genome by mapping AB reads from Lima
5 and Willett (2018) to the most recent SD reference (GenBank accession: GCA_007210735.1).
6 Furthermore, Lima and Willett (2018) and Lima et al. (2019) identified population-diagnostic
7 SNPs for SD and AB. These original analyses were conducted with depth of coverage of ~40X
8 and with reads sequenced from large pools of individuals from SD and AB (~3000 and ~300,
9 respectively) (GenBank accessions SD: SRX469409; AB: SRX2746703). Briefly, the SNP list
10 was developed by (a) performing reciprocal mapping of reads of a population to the reference
11 sequence of the other, (b) considering only those positions where all mapped reads showed an
12 alternative nucleotide to the reference (*i.e.*, fixed differences), and (c) comparing the reciprocal
13 mappings and keeping only SNPs that were fixed differences in both mappings (Lima and
14 Willett 2018). Here we used the SD and AB assemblies and the population-diagnostic SNPs
15 developed by the previous authors.

16 In the current study, reads from the four hybrid pools were mapped reciprocally to both
17 the SD and AB reference using BWA with default parameters (Li and Durbin 2009), and only
18 reads that mapped with a MAPQ score >20 were kept. PoPoolation2 (Kofler et al. 2011) was
19 used to find positions across the genome where all reads had an alternative nucleotide to that of
20 the reference, considering only biallelic positions with total coverage ≥ 80 and ≤ 400 . Read
21 counts for every variable position were determined using PoPoolation2 (Kofler et al. 2011).
22 Allele frequencies were calculated as the AB allele frequency in reciprocal crosses.

23

1 *Identification of regions associated with hybrid male sterility*

2 To assess the genomic architecture underlying HMS in *T. californicus*, we evaluated the
3 allele frequency distributions of fertile and sterile F₂ hybrid males with a twostep approach. First,
4 we identified regions of the genome associated with HMS by quantifying differences in allele
5 frequencies among fertile and sterile males within each of the reciprocal crosses (fertile vs.
6 sterile AB♀ x SD♂; fertile vs. sterile SD♀ x AB♂) using a quantitative trait locus (QTL)
7 approach in R 4.1.2 with the package ‘QTLseqr’ (Mansfeld and Grumet 2018). We estimated the
8 G’ statistic described by Magwene et al. (2011) for analyzing bulk segregant data from next
9 generation sequencing under the default settings of the package and 1 Mbp nonoverlapping
10 sliding windows. Varying window size (250 kb - 1Mbp) did not qualitatively change our results.
11 Second, we distinguished the effects of nuclear and mito-nuclear incompatibilities on HMS
12 within these regions by evaluating allele frequency patterns among reciprocal crosses. We
13 expected that if HMS was caused by incompatibilities between nuclear factors, that allele
14 frequencies in sterile males would be shifted in the same direction in both crosses. On the other
15 hand, incompatibilities between the nuclear and mitochondrial genomes would be expected to
16 skew allele frequencies toward the population that matched the mitochondria (see Lima et al.
17 2019; Pereira et al. 2021).

18 *Enrichment analysis*

19 We used Gene Ontology annotations (GO terms) to search for functional categories that were
20 overrepresented in genomic regions associated with HMS. We focused on three 2Mbp QTLs
21 where differences in allele frequencies between fertile and sterile hybrid males were greatest and
22 compiled gene identifications within these regions with Integrative Genomics Viewer (IGV)
23 (Thorvaldsdottir et al. 2013). We used a Fisher’s exact test in the R package ‘topGO’ (Alexa and

1 Rahmenfuhrer 2021) to identify GO terms that were overrepresented compared with the rest of
2 the genome and report only those with $p \leq 0.01$ and at least 10 genomic annotations.

3

4 **Data accessibility statement:**

5 The data supporting this article are available in NCBI's Sequence Read Archive (SRA) under
6 accession numbers SRR24623753-SRR24623756.

7

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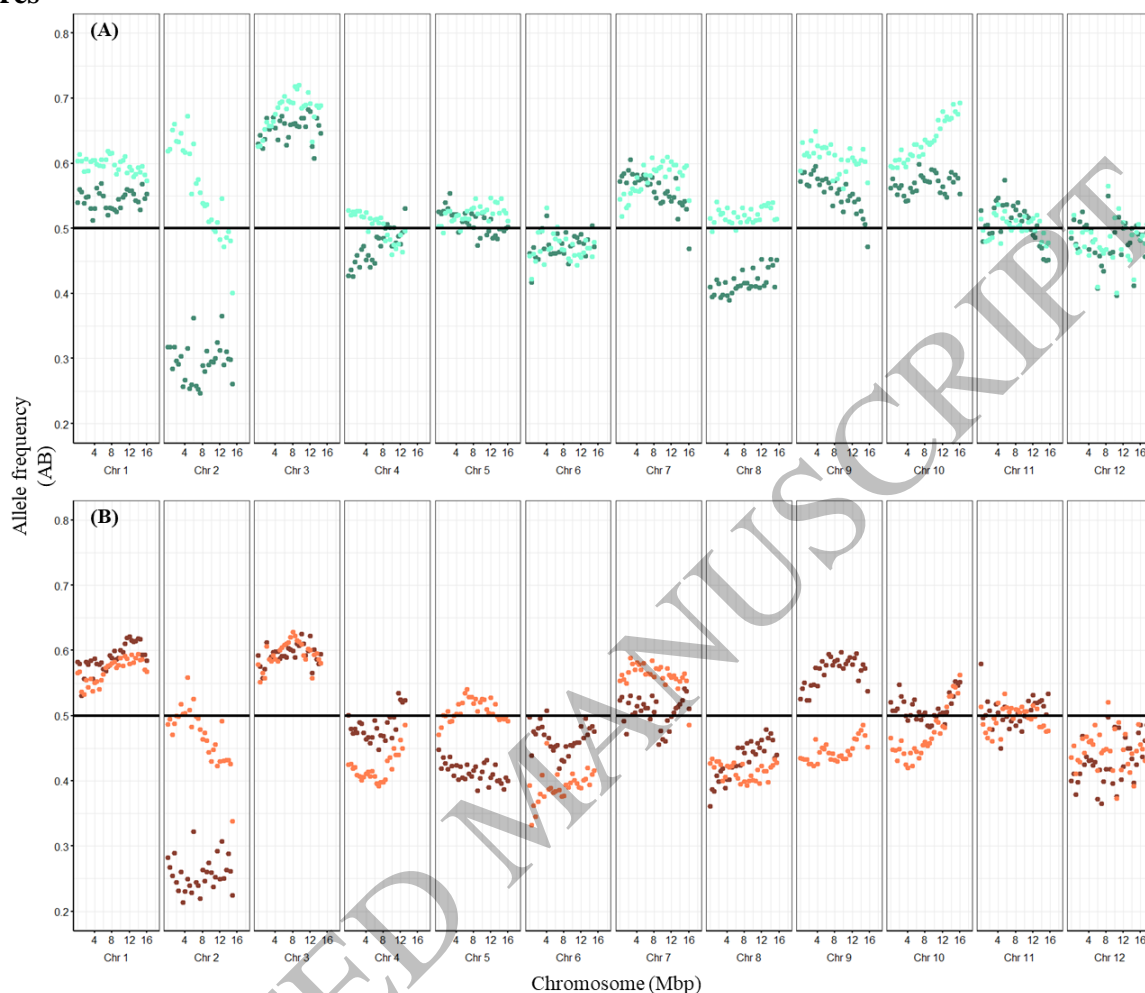
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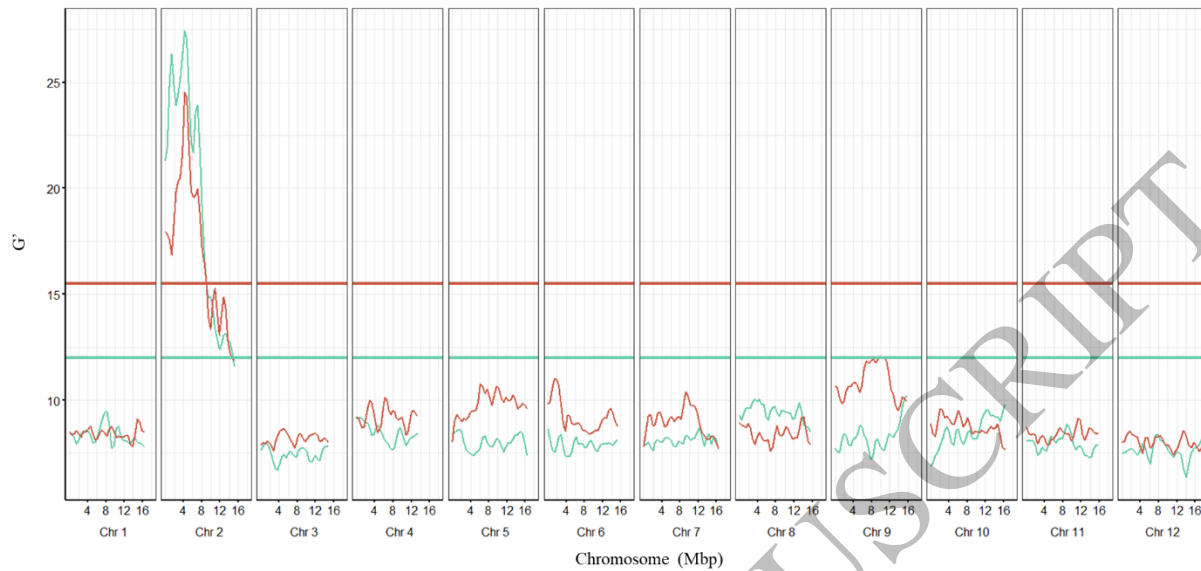
33

1 **Figures**

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 3 Figure 1. Allele frequencies of fertile and sterile *T. californicus* male F₂ hybrids produced from
 4 (A) AB♀ x SD♂ and (B) SD♀ x AB♂ crosses. Allele frequencies are based on the AB allele
 5 perspective. Light-colored symbols are allele frequencies of fertile males; dark-colored symbols
 6 are allele frequencies of sterile males. Data points represent mean allele frequency across SNPs
 7 in non-overlapping 500 kb sliding windows. Total assembly lengths vary across the 12 *T.*
 8 *californicus* chromosomes (13-18 Mbp).

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3 Figure 2. Differences in allele frequencies between fertile and sterile *T. californicus* male F_2
4 hybrids quantified with the G' statistic. Plot shows smoothed G' values estimated across 1 Mbp
5 windows for $AB_{\text{♀}} \times SD_{\text{♂}}$ (teal) and $SD_{\text{♀}} \times AB_{\text{♂}}$ (red). Horizontal lines represent statistical
6 thresholds of a genome-wide false discovery rate of 0.01. Total assembly lengths vary across the
7 12 *T. californicus* chromosomes (13-18 Mbp).

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1 **Tables**

2 Table 1. Gene Ontology (GO) biological process terms overrepresented in three QTLs identified
 3 on chromosome 2. Allele frequency differences between fertile and sterile F₂ male hybrids were
 4 greatest in the region associated with *QTL-2* in both cross directions. Only the five most
 5 significant terms in each QTL with at least ten genomic annotations included (see Table S3 for
 6 complete list).

Gene ontology term (Region on Chromosome 2)	GO term ID	Genomic annotations	Expected regional	Regional annotations	p-value
<i>QTL-1</i> (0.8 – 2.4 Mbp)					
Cellular response to manganese ion	0071287	10	0.06	2	0.002
DNA ligation	0006266	10	0.06	2	0.002
Maintenance of protein localization in endoplasmic reticulum	0035437	15	0.09	2	0.004
Nucleotide-excision repair, DNA duplex unwinding	0000717	15	0.09	2	0.004
Regulation of endoplasmic reticulum unfolded protein response	1900101	16	0.1	2	0.004
<i>QTL-2</i> (3.4 – 5.7 Mbp)					
Spermatogenesis	0007283	107	2.15	9	< 0.001
Protein ubiquitination	0016567	411	8.27	21	0.001
Ubiquitin-dependent protein catabolic process	0006511	310	6.24	14	0.004
Phosphatidylinositol phosphorylation	0046854	17	0.34	3	0.004
Phosphatidylinositol biosynthetic process	0006661	56	1.13	5	0.005
<i>QTL-3</i> (6.2 – 7.6 Mbp)					
Negative regulation of actin filament depolymerization	0030835	21	0.26	3	0.002
Regulation of hydrolase activity	0051336	525	6.54	15	0.002
Substrate adhesion-dependent cell spreading	0034446	57	0.71	6	0.002
Histone monoubiquitination	0010390	25	0.31	3	0.004
Regulation of intracellular steroid hormone receptor signaling pathway	0033143	58	0.72	4	0.006

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