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# Signatures Of Selection, Gene Flow, And Genetic Drift On The Genomes Of A Recent Avian Radiation

FLOR BRIGITTE HERNANDEZ CAMACHO University of Texas at El Paso

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# SIGNATURES OF SELECTION, GENE FLOW, AND GENETIC DRIFT ON THE GENOMES OF A RECENT AVIAN RADIATION

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By

Flor B. Hernandez Camacho

2024

# SIGNATURES OF SELECTION, GENE FLOW, AND GENETIC DRIFT ON THE GENOMES OF A RECENT AVIAN RADIATION

by

## FLOR BRIGITTE HERNANDEZ CAMACHO, B.S

## DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

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of the Requirements

for the Degree of

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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iv

#### **Abstract**

<span id="page-5-0"></span>Speciation is not a discrete event but rather a gradual process that occurs along a continuum. Initially, populations remain genetically and reproductively connected, but they become reproductively isolated as the process of speciation progresses. Advances in DNA sequencing technology has helped our understanding of the processes that contribute to changes in the genetic composition of populations over the progression of speciation, also known as drivers of evolution (i.e. genetic drift, mutation, selection, and gene flow). Among them, hybridization, or the interbreeding between distinct lineages, is increasingly recognized as a natural process that can have significant consequences to the speciation process. In particular, the frequency and directionality of introgressive hybridization (i.e., gene flow) dictates the extent of its impact(s) on the evolutionary trajectories. Importantly, the proximate result from gene flow is also tied to the directionality and strength of natural selection, as well as intensity of genetic drift. Here, I test hypotheses surrounding early species divergence, including the influence of these different evolutionary mechanisms on the process. Using a whole-genome sequencing approach, I aim to understand the genetic and evolutionary consequences of natural and human-mediated gene flow in a recently radiated avian system, the Mallard Complex. Importantly, I use inferences made from my study system to also inform conservation practices.

In Chapter 1, I focused on the genomic consequences of hybrid speciation by comparing the full genomes of a putative young homoploid hybrid species, the Hawaiian duck (*Anas wyvilliana*). I conducted full genome comparison of the Hawaiian duck to its parental species, the island endemic Laysan duck (*Anas layanensis*) and a mainland generalist mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). I found that the Hawaiian duck's genome is indeed a mosaic of genetic ancestry from both parental taxa, with a predominant contribution from the Laysan duck. Although the

v

extent of reproductive isolation from either parental species is still unknown, I found potential genes associated with reproductive barriers, particularly on the Z-sex chromosome, related to fertilization, male courtship, and embryo development. Overall, my results are consistent with the hypothesis that the Hawaiian duck evolved via hybrid speciation and shed light on genes potentially advantageous for the emergence and persistence of this nascent hybrid species in the Hawaiian Islands.

In Chapter two, I continue to focus on the Hawaiian duck that is currently threatened by introgressive hybridization from domestic mallards, highlighting the pressing conservation concern of potential genomic extinction and loss of adaptiveness for native species because of the extensive introgression of non-native genes. To alleviate or reverse trends for such scenarios requires the direct integration of genomic data within a model framework for effective management. Towards this end, I developed the simRestore R program as a decision-making tool that integrates ecological and genomic information to simulate ancestry outcomes from optimized conservation strategies. The program optimizes supplementation and removal strategies across generations until a set native genetic threshold is reached within the studied population. Importantly, in addition to helping with initial decision-making, simulations can be updated with the outcomes of ongoing efforts, allowing for the adaptive management of populations. After demonstrating functionality, I apply and optimize among actionable management strategies for the endangered Hawaiian duck for which the current primary threat is genetic extinction through ongoing anthropogenic hybridization with feral mallards. Simulations demonstrate that supplemental and removal efforts can be strategically tailored to move the genetic ancestry of Hawaii's hybrid populations towards Hawaiian duck without completely starting over. Further, I discuss ecological parameter sensitivity, including which factors are

vi

most important to ensure genetic outcomes (i.e. number of offspring). Finally, to facilitate use, the program is also available online as a Shiny Web application.

My third Chapter focuses on understanding the diverse signals present in the species' genomes that reflect the interplay of genetic drift, selection, and gene flow during the speciation process. Although unraveling the adaptive histories of species often includes determining how directional selection uniquely acts across respective genomes, it is equally important to establish what, if any, parts remain under purifying selection for ancestral state(s). Yet, this is only possible in sufficiently divergent genomes, allowing for the identification of both genomic islands and evolutionary valleys. To this end, my research involves comparing the full genomes of 11 of 14 species within the Mallard Complex, which represent successful adaptive radiation and the speciation continuum, to understand how directional and purifying selection have shaped derived and ancestral states, respectively. First, phylogenetic and demographic analyses support the "out of Africa" hypothesis of the Mallard Complex, dating back between 1 and 2 million years, with recent divergences occurring in the last 500,000 years among North American species. Second, while genomic islands of differentiation were identified in 44 pairwise species comparisons representing early and moderate stages of divergence, genomic valleys of ancestral retention were observed in all comparisons representing all stages of divergence. Finally, surveying gene ontology (GO) terms revealed a striking pattern in which valleys of similarity are linked to fundamental organismal functions and survival, and which outnumber islands of differentiation associated with adaptation to environmental challenges. Overall, my findings underscore the importance of analyzing species representing the speciation continuum to identify regions under divergent and purifying selection and discern potential stochastic mirages because of genetic drift.

vii

Finally, Chapter four examines the consequences of domestic introgression into the genomes of their wild counterparts using the Hawaiian duck, New Zealand grey duck (*Anas superciliosa*), North American mallard and their respectively domestic breeds as study system. Using whole-genome re-sequencing, I analyzed domestic and wild congeners, along with resulting hybrids representing different levels of admixture across these regions. Assessing genetic diversity, runs of homozygosity, and demographic parameters for each genome, I consistently found that wild genomes exhibited higher genetic diversity, lower runs of homozygosity, and reduced inbreeding coefficients compared to their domestic counterparts. Across ecoregions, the strongest statistical correlation between ancestry and summary statistics was observed in North America, where domestic game-farm mallards are regularly introduced and interact with wild populations. Conversely, in regions like New Zealand and Hawaii, where stocking efforts have declined or populations are small, I identified evidence of adaptive selection and genetic drift as dominant forces shaping genomes. Furthermore, I illustrated how demographic history inferences using genomes derived from domestication or hybrid origins can be severely biased, leading to distorted estimates of effective population size  $(N_E)$  and divergence times. Ultimately, I concluded that relying on highly inbred individuals to supplement populations of wild conspecifics not only exacerbates hybridization but might also intensify inbreeding, leading to important adaptive and conservation implications.

Overall, my dissertation investigates the intricate dynamics of speciation within the Mallard Complex, emphasizing the continuous nature of this evolutionary process. By recognizing speciation as a gradual continuum rather than discreet event(s), I have uncovered the

multifaceted roles of natural selection, genetic drift, and gene flow in driving genetic divergence and ultimately species formation. Through meticulous genomic analyses and simulations, I have elucidated the genetic and evolutionary consequences of hybridization. Importantly, my work resulted in the development of a novel decision-making tool, simRestore, which integrates ecological and genomic data to inform conservation strategies for threatened species. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of studying the dynamics of hybridization at both evolutionary and contemporary scales to advance our knowledge of speciation mechanisms and their implications for the conservation of Biodiversity.



<span id="page-10-0"></span>







## **List of Tables**

<span id="page-14-0"></span>

[Table S1.9: GO Term enrichment analyses for 173 Autosome genes and 13 Z-linked genes under](#page-258-0)  [PH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p](#page-258-0)  [values, and they are corrected to be FDR-](#page-258-0) adjusted p values. .. 240 [Table S1.10: KEGG enrichment analyses for 112 Autosome genes and 14 Z-linked genes under](#page-272-0)  [LH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p](#page-272-0)  [values, and they are corrected to be Benjamini-Hochberg adjusted p values.............................](#page-272-0) 254 [Table S1.11: KEGG enrichment analyses for 80 Autosome genes and 9 Z-linked genes under](#page-276-0)  [MH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p](#page-276-0)  [values, and they are corrected to be Benjamini-Hochberg adjusted p values.............................](#page-276-0) 258 [Table S1.12: KEGG enrichment analyses for 62 Autosome genes and 17 Z-linked genes under](#page-279-0)  [PH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p](#page-279-0)  [values, and they are corrected to be Benjamini-Hochberg adjusted p values.............................](#page-279-0) 261 [Table S2.1. Total sample size for each sampling location by Hawaiian Island that was genetically](#page-283-0)  vetted by Wells, Lavretsky et al. (2019). The average assignment probability  $(\pm$  Standard [Deviation\) to either Hawaiian duck or mallard \(Feral or Wild\) across sampling locations. I also](#page-283-0)  provide the proportion of samples that were identified as native Hawaiian duck ( $\geq 0.90$ ) assignment probability to Hawaiian duck), Feral mallard  $(≥ 0.90$  assignment probability to Hawaiian Feral mallards), or Wild mallard  $(≥ 0.90$  assignment probability to Wild North [American mallards\)...](#page-283-0) 265 [Table S2.2. Optimized management strategies for three wetlands on Oʻahu of varying starting](#page-284-0)  [average Hawaiian duck ancestry \(Table 1\). Static and adaptive optimizations were done under](#page-284-0)  [management strategies including removing only or a combination of supplementation and](#page-284-0)  [removal at different levels of Hawaiian duck ancestry in the removed individuals \(i.e. 0.1,0.5,](#page-284-0)  [0.9\). Success of each strategy was determined by the predicted final ancestry, with the objective](#page-284-0)  [set to reach 99% Hawaiian duck ancestry. Note that while static optimization simply allocates](#page-284-0)  [the same number of individuals across set generations \(gen\), adaptive optimization varies the](#page-284-0)  strategy across generations. [..](#page-284-0) 266 Table S3.1. Sample information. [..](#page-286-0) 268 [Table S3.2. Adult survival rate for each duck used to calculate generation time \(G\). The age of](#page-286-1)  maturity for mallard-like ducks [..](#page-286-1) 268 Table S3.3. Genome sequencing results. [..](#page-287-0) 269 [Table S4. List of genes and associated GO Terms in outlier windows per chromosome for top](#page-288-0)  [and bottom 1% in autosomes and Z-sex chromosome..](#page-288-0) 270 [Table S3.5. GO Term enrichment analyses for 194 Autosome genes and 130 Z-linked genes for](#page-345-0)  the 1% highest  $F_{ST}$ . Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p [values, and they are corrected to be FDR-](#page-345-0) adjusted p values. .. 327 [Table S3.6. GO Term enrichment analyses for 360 Autosome genes and106 Z-linked genes](#page-358-0)  under for the  $1\%$  lowest  $F_{ST}$ . Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown [by p values, and they are corrected to be FDR-](#page-358-0) adjusted p values. .. 340 Table S4.1. Sample information. [..](#page-381-0) 363 [Table S4.2. Genomic sequencing information..](#page-381-1) 363

#### **List of Figures**

<span id="page-16-0"></span>[Figure 1.1. Parental contribution to the hybrid lineage. \(A\) Ancestry painting of Hawaiian duck's](#page-34-0)  [genome based fixed sites between Laysan duck and mallard, resulting in 624,665 base-pairs \(bp\)](#page-34-0)  [across autosomes \(left\), 44,007 bp across the Z-sex chromosome, and 15 bp for the](#page-34-0)  [mitochondrial DNA \(mtDNA; right\). \(B\) Per chromosome D-statistics within the Hawaiian](#page-34-0)  [duck's genome. \(C\) The size distribution of putative ancestry blocks from the Laysan duck \(red\),](#page-34-0)  [mallard \(blue\), and from unresolved ancestry \(gray\)..](#page-34-0) 16 [Figure 1.2. Phylogenetic inference across autosomes to assess the origin of the Hawaiian duck.](#page-36-1)  [\(A\) The main three tested topologies for the position of the Hawaiian duck, and \(B\) their relative](#page-36-1)  [weightings and \(C\) average node placement distance across autosomes.](#page-36-1) .................................... 18 Figure 1.3. PSMC results. Demographic analyses of effective population size  $(N_E)$  calculated [across the genomes of a wild mallard, Hawaiian duck, and Laysan duck. Note that the dark and](#page-37-0)  [lighter lines denote the average and bootstrap estimates, respectively...](#page-37-0) 19 Figure 1.4. Divergence peaks between the Hawaiian duck and parent taxa. (A)  $F_{ST}$  estimates [between Hawaiian ducks \(H\) and Laysan duck \(L\) \(LH; top\) or mallard \(M\) \(MH; second from](#page-39-1)  top) for 100kb non-overlapping windows across their genomes. (B) Correlation between  $F_{ST}$  and  $d_{XY}$  and between F<sub>ST</sub> [and nucleotide diversity in autosomes. \(C\) Correlation between F](#page-39-1)<sub>ST</sub> and  $d_{XY}$ and between  $F_{ST}$  and nucleotide diversity in the Z-sex chromosome. (D) Disparities in  $F_{ST}$  values [between each LH and MH comparison from the parent species comparison for the same 100kb](#page-39-1)  [non-overlapping windows in the Z-sex chromosome. Note that divergence windows recovered](#page-39-1)  [for LH, MH, and PH are color coded as red, blue, and yellow, respectively. Finally, \(E\) the](#page-39-1)  [distribution of outlier genes recovered across autosomes versus the Z-sex chromosome............](#page-39-1) 21 [Figure 2.1. Overview of the simRestore shiny app display. \(Left\) Display of the main variables to](#page-67-1)  [modify, and \(Right\) the three graphs using a simple simulation.](#page-67-1) ... 49 [Figure 2.2. Overview of the ecological and genomic information used in the simRestore](#page-72-1)  [program. A\) Schematic of annual life-history of Hawaiian duck, B\) Survival curve based on](#page-72-1)  Robinson et al. (2017) equation, dashed line indicating calculated carrying capacity  $K = 400$ , C) [Genetic model: Point ancestry model and Junction ancestry model using genetic ancestry of](#page-72-1)  Hawaiian duck (yellow) and mallard (brown). [...](#page-72-1) 54 [Figure 2.3. Comparing outputs for point ancestry \(orange\) and the junctions \(green\) genetic](#page-76-1)  [methods based on a \(A\) no management strategy versus \(B\) optimization of supplementation](#page-76-1)  [only, each run 100 times. As expected, no substantial change between the starting and final](#page-76-1)  [ancestries were attained with either genetic method if no management is done, whereas](#page-76-1)  statistically similar (Wilcox-test p-value  $= 0.95$ ) results of substantial ancestry improvement was [recovered with both genetic methods when optimizing supplementation....................................](#page-76-1) 58 [Figure 2.4. \(A-F\) Changes in optimized supplementation and final population sizes when varying](#page-79-0)  [ecological parameters present in the 'simRestore' R package. \(G\) Magnitude of change](#page-79-0)  [expressed as percentage when varying A-F ecological variables in estimating supplementation](#page-79-0)  [and population size and depicted as box plots with mean values denoted \(grey circle\)...............](#page-79-0) 61 [Figure 2.5. Changes in optimized supplementation \(top row\) and final population sizes \(bottom](#page-80-0)  [row\) when varying sex ratios of offspring \(first column\) or individuals added \(second column\) in](#page-80-0)  [the 'simRestore' R package. Sex ratio is expressed as males / \(males + females\), such that 0.5](#page-80-0)  [indicates an even sex ratio, 0.9 indicates a male biased sex ratio and 0.1 indicates a female biased](#page-80-0)  [sex ratio...](#page-80-0) 62

[Figure 3.1. Speciation continuum: The continuous nature of divergence during speciation](#page-120-0)  reflected in the relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  in pairwise comparison from low genetic [differentiation \(left\) to high genetic differentiation \(right\) along the whole-genome sequences.](#page-120-0) [...](#page-120-0) 102 Figure 3.2. Summary statistics: A) Heatmap and relatedness based on means  $F_{ST}$ , B) Means of [nucleotide diversity, and C\) Boxplots of run of homozygosity \(ROH\) per species into the](#page-121-1)  [Mallard complex. Note that red dots along with their values denote average ROH in each plot.](#page-121-1)  [Color scale is determined by their phylogenetic relationship...](#page-121-1) 103 [Figure 3.3: Phylogenetic tree: \(Left\) Based on autosomes and \(Right\) Based on the Z-sex](#page-122-1)  [chromosome..](#page-122-1) 104 [Figure 3.4: Demographic analyses: PSMC results of each mallard-like duck.](#page-123-1) .......................... 105 [Figure 3.5: Ven Diagram: GO Term enrichment analyses for Autosome genes and Z-sex genes](#page-125-1)  for the 1% highest and lowest  $F_{ST}$ . The number in red represents significant number of Go Terms. [...](#page-125-1) 107 [Figure 4.1: Correlation between domestic parental ancestry and measures of genetic diversity per](#page-158-1)  sample. [..](#page-158-1) 140 [Figure 4.2: PSMC results from wild and domestic mallards and their hybrids from North](#page-160-0)  [America. In each analysis, the dark denotes the average, while the lighter lines indicate the](#page-160-0)  bootstraps. [...](#page-160-0) 142 [Figure 4.3: PSMC results from New Zealand Grey Duck, domestic mallard, and their hybrids](#page-161-0)  [from New Zealand. In each analysis, the dark denotes the average, while the lighter lines indicate](#page-161-0)  the bootstraps. [...](#page-161-0) 143 [Figure 4.4: PSMC results from Hawaiian duck, domestic mallard, and their hybrids from Hawaii.](#page-162-1)  [In each analysis, the dark denotes the average, while the lighter lines indicate the bootstraps..](#page-162-1) 144 Figure S1.1: [\(top\) OrthVenn2 Venn diagram highlighting the overlap of the protein clusters of](#page-383-1)  [each of the duck species. Singletons \(i.e. proteins that did not form a cluster and were not](#page-383-1)  [counted within the figure\) numbered 1,446 for Laysan, 655 for Hawaiian, and 578 for mallard.](#page-383-1)  [\(middle\) Protein cluster counts among the different genomes. The size of the list of proteins in](#page-383-1)  [each cluster was balanced suggesting that assembly did not have many duplicated regions.](#page-383-1)  [\(bottom\) Majority of the protein clusters overlapped among all the different taxa \(21,680\). For](#page-383-1)  [the protein clusters between two lists, an increased amount between the Laysan duck and](#page-383-1)  [Hawaiian were found \(868 of the 1909, or 45%\). Followed by the overlap between the Laysan](#page-383-1)  [duck and the mallard \(599\) and the lowest overlap was between the Hawaiian duck and the](#page-383-1)  [mallard \(442\)...](#page-383-1) 365 [Figure S1.2: Novel Alleles count in Autosomes \(left\) and the Z-chromosome. \(right\).](#page-384-0) ........... 366 [Figure S1.3. Phylogenetic inference across the Z-chromosome to assess the origin of the](#page-384-1)  [Hawaiian duck. A\) The main three alternative topologies for the position of the Hawaiian duck,](#page-384-1)  [and B\) their relative weightings across the Z-chromosome. C\) Average node placement distance](#page-384-1)  across the Z-chromosome. [..](#page-384-1) 366 [Figure S1.4. Divergence peaks between the Hawaiian duck and parent taxa on](#page-384-2)  microchromosomes.  $F_{ST}$  [plots for the LH \(top\), and MH \(second from top\) for 100kb non](#page-384-2)[overlapping windows across the genome. The bottom two panels display the disparities in FST](#page-384-2)  [values between each LH and MH comparison from the parent species comparison for the same](#page-384-2)  [100kb non-overlapping windows. Windows identified as LH divergence peaks are shown in red,](#page-384-2)  MH in blue, and PH peaks in yellow. [...](#page-384-2) 366



## <span id="page-19-0"></span>**Chapter 1: Whole genome sequence analysis supports the genomic mosaicism of the endangered Hawaiian duck**

## <span id="page-19-1"></span>**ABSTRACT**

Once considered rare events, hybridization and gene flow have been determined as pervasive evolutionary processes across much of biodiversity, leading to research foci attempting to understand proximate evolutionary outcomes from such events. Here, I compare the full genomes of a putative young homoploid hybrid species, the Hawaiian duck, to its parental species, the Hawaiian Island endemic Laysan duck and a mainland generalist mallard. I find that the Hawaiian duck's genome is indeed a mosaic of genetic ancestry of the two parental taxa, with a higher contribution coming from Laysan duck than mallard, but also identify genomic regions harboring Hawaiian duck-derived alleles. Although the extent of reproductive isolation from either parental species is still unknown, I find putative candidate genes related to reproductive barriers such as fertilization, male courtship behavior, and embryo development on the Z-sex chromosome. Importantly, I highlight genomic regions that harbor putative genes for species-specific adaptation including immune system, appetite, and fear response. Overall, my results support a hybrid origin for the Hawaiian duck and demarcate potential genes that may have been evolutionarily beneficial for the rise and persistence of this young hybrid species on the main Hawaiian Islands. Finally, my study resulted in the first reference genomes for the endangered Hawaiian and Laysan ducks, which will serve as important tools for their future conservation efforts.

#### <span id="page-20-0"></span>**INTRODUCTION**

Hybridization is defined as the interbreeding of individuals from genetically distinct populations irrespective of taxonomic status (R. Abbott et al., 2013a; Grant & Grant, 1992a; J. Rhymer, 2006). Importantly, hybridization resulting in gene flow where genetic material moves between distinct organisms and thereby modifying gene pool(s) (J. Rhymer, 2006) is increasingly being recognized as an important and pervasive evolutionary process (Mallet, 2007a; Rheindt & Edwards, 2011). In particular, the potential of interspecific interactions resulting in evolutionary adaptive scenarios or even in the speciation of novel taxa not only depends on the strength of reproductive barriers between the interbreeding species (R. Abbott et al., 2013a; R. J. Abbott et al., 2010; Barton, 2013a; Mallet, 2007a), but also on the fitness level of the hybrids (Nolte & Tautz, 2010a). In fact, if a hybrid lineage is better fit than their parental lineages in a new ecological niche, and subsequent reproductive isolation between hybrids and parents is achieved, then a separate species may arise (Mallet, 2005a; Rieseberg & Willis, 2007). Examples of natural hybrid species that evolve via hybrid speciation are rare, but have been identified across plants (Rieseberg et al., 1999), insects (Mavárez et al., 2006), flies (Schwarz et al., 2005), mammals (Chafin et al., 2020), and birds (Lamichhaney et al., 2018). In addition to hybrid speciation, signatures of genomic admixture can arise from the selection of one or few loci that influence a unique adaptive trait via adaptive introgression (R. Abbott et al., 2013a; R. J. Abbott et al., 2010; Jiggins et al., 2008; Schumer et al., 2014). Distinguishing between these scenarios is essential when attempting to understand their prevalence and importance on the evolution of species' genomes versus the potential for novel species formation (Jiggins et al., 2008).

2

Order Anseriformes presents the most extensive cases of hybridization, with an incidence around 40 – 60% (Aliabadian & Nijman, 2007; Grant & Grant, 1992a). In particular, the Mallard complex (Genus *Anas*), which is a group of 13-14 closely related taxa of waterfowl distributed around the world (depending on taxonomic authority: Johnsgard, 1960; Lavretsky et al., 2014), show high levels of hybridization because of their recent ancestry and/or lack of pre-zygotic barriers (Lavretsky et al., 2014). Among these species, the Hawaiian duck (*Anas wyvilliana*) constitutes a hypothetical example of hybrid speciation because of an ancient hybridization event between the island endemic Laysan duck (*Anas layanensis*) and the broadly distributed mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) (Lavretsky et al., 2015). The evolutionary history of the Hawaiian duck was difficult to reconcile because of incongruencies in sister relationships reconstructed with different markers or traits. Whereas morphology (Livezey 1993) and nuclear DNA identifify the Hawaiian duck as sister to Laysan ducks, mitochondrial DNA puts it closer to mallards (Lavretsky et al., 2014, 2015). In fact, through additional individual and genetic sampling, Lavretsky et al. (2015) was able to confirm that Hawaiian ducks are best described as a young hybrid species, which resulted from a relatively recent  $(\sim 1,000-5,000$  years before present) but ancient hybridization event between mallards and Laysan ducks. Thus, the genome of the Hawaiian duck offers a unique opportunity to gain insights into the intricate process of genome admixture within a nascent hybrid lineage, while also testing whether such genomes arise because of hybrid speciation or adaptive introgression.

The endangered Hawaiian duck is endemic to the main Hawaiian Islands, and it is phenotypically and ecologically distinct from all other mallard-like ducks. However, this species can be considered phenotypically intermediate, in terms of morphology and plumage, with respect to its putative parental species (i.e. Laysan duck and mallard) (Engilis Jr. et al., 2020a;

Lavretsky, 2021; Lavretsky et al., 2015; Uyehara et al., 2007). Previous morphological studies have suggested that Hawaiian ducks show intermediate intra-appendicular skeletal and sternal dimensions with respect to its putative parental species (Livezey, 1993). Additionally, plumage characteristics of Hawaiian ducks have also been found to be intermediate, with individuals displaying everything from Laysan duck to mallard-like traits (Engilis Jr. et al., 2020a). These morphological intricacies are similar to other studies of putative hybrid species that often exhibit intermediate phenotypes to their parental species (R. J. Abbott et al., 2010). For example, the *Heliconius heurippa* butterfly is considered a hybrid species that exhibits an intermediate wing color pattern that promotes an assortative mating preference among hybrids (Mavárez et al., 2006; Salazar et al., 2005). Although such morphological traits are easily described, the genomic basis of these remains poorly understood. Towards this end, I compare genomes of the Hawaiian duck and its two putative parental taxa to establish whether behavioral and morphological intermediacy of the Hawaiian duck may be a result of a genomic mosaicism. This condition involves a significant contribution of genetic material from both parental lineages, and it is considered a key signature of hybrid speciation (Schumer et al., 2014, Elgvin et al., 2017). I present the first reference Hawaiian and Laysan duck genomes, and combined these with the recent mallard reference genome (Lavretsky et al., 2023a), and test whether the Hawaiian duck's genome is indeed a mosaic of Laysan duck and mallard genetic diversity as predicted under a hybrid speciation scenario. Alternatively, the Hawaiian duck may simply be a case of adaptive introgression in which the genome is largely Laysan duck-derived with the exception of a few mallard-derived genes. Additionally, I determine whether Hawaiian ducks have been sufficiently isolated from its parental taxa to have derived novel ancestry since divergence. Finally, I delve into potential functionality within genomic regions that remain mallard and Laysan duck-

4

derived, as well as those that are unique to Hawaiian ducks within the Hawaiian duck's genome. I predict Hawaiian ducks to harbor Laysan duck ancestry associated with traits adapted to Hawaiian Island ecology, while mallard-derived genetic variation to be linked to predator evasion and/or other traits that may explain how this duck survived Polynesian colonization while so many other Island species did not (Athens et al., 2002; Boyer, 2008).

#### <span id="page-23-0"></span>**METHODS**

#### <span id="page-23-1"></span>**Sampling, DNA extraction, whole-genome resequencing, and variant calling.**

Tissue samples were collected from one Laysan duck (May 2016, Hawaiian Islands), Hawaiian duck (November 2016, Hawaiian Islands), and mallard (September 2016, New Mexico) (Supplementary Table S1.1). Wing or breast tissue was sent to Cantata Bio, LLC (Scotts Valley, CA) for DNA extraction, library preparation, and sequencing.

#### <span id="page-23-2"></span>**Genome sequencing, assembly, and annotation**

All steps were done at Cantata Bio laboratories. DNA was first fragmented using the Bioruptor Pico for Illumina library creation. Two short-insert libraries were produced, one with an approximate insert size of 400 bp and the other with 500 bp, following Cantata Bio's protocol and the Illumina TruSeq DNA PCR-free method. These libraries underwent sequencing on an Illumina HiSeq machine using paired-end (PE) 150-bp chemistry. Following, raw Illumina reads were first trimmed to remove sequencing adapters and poor-quality bases using Trimmonatic (Bolger et al. 2014). The short-insert sequences underwent analysis at various k-mer sizes (19, 31, 49, 75, 109), with a negative binomial model applied to optimize the assembly's coverage and to balance repetitive and heterozygous sequences. De novo assembly was performed using Meraculous v2 (Chapman et al. 2011), setting the k-mer size at 55 and requiring a minimum kmer frequency of 15, while employing the diploid nonredundant haplotig mode.

Following de novo assembly with Meraculus, three Chicago libraries were prepared (Cantata Bio) following methods outlined in Putnam et al. (2016). Briefly, around 500 ng of HMW DNA underwent in vitro chromatin reconstitution and was then fixed using formaldehyde. The chromatin was treated with DpnII, with biotinylated nucleotides filling in the 5' overhangs, and the remaining blunt ends were ligated. Post-ligation, crosslinks were undone to separate proteins from the DNA. The purified DNA underwent a process to eliminate non-ligated biotin, followed by fragmentation to an average size of approximately 350 bp. Sequencing libraries were created from this fragmented DNA using NEBNext Ultra enzymes and adapters compatible with Illumina. Biotin-labeled fragments were extracted using streptavidin beads prior to PCR amplification. Libraries were each sequenced on a single Illumina HiSeq X Lane using 150 bp PE chemistry.

Subsequently, to scaffold and improve assembly, shotgun and Chicago library data was combined with the initial assembly from Meraculous as the input for the HiRise computational pipeline (Putnam et al., 2016). First, the shotgun and Chicago library sequences were aligned to the draft contig assembly using Burrows Wheeler Aligner v07.15 (bwa,  $Li & D ($ urbin, 2009). Second, the Chicago read pairs were mapped within draft scaffolds to produce a likelihood model for genomic distance between read pairs, and this model was used to identify and break putative misjoins, score prospective joins, and make joins above the threshold. Finally, after aligning and scaffolding the draft assembly using the Chicago data, the short-insert sequences were used to close remaining gaps between contigs where possible. For the mallard duck genome, Omni-C libraries were meticulously prepared to enhance the genome assembly process (see Lavretsky et al., 2023). For Laysan and Hawaiian duck genomes, I assessed contiguity using

6

Quast (Gurevich et al., 2013), and used BUSCO v3.1.0 (Waterhouse et al., 2018) with the associated eukaryota odb9 dataset to attain BUSCO scores.

Finally, genomic assemblies were passed through Omics-box (https://www.biobam.com) to identify protein coding regions using Augustus (Hoff & Stanke, 2019). OrthoVenn2 (Xu et al., 2019) was employed to cluster homologous proteins and generate Venn diagrams across the three duck genomes.

### <span id="page-25-0"></span>**Variant calling**

Variant calling was performed across raw FASTQ files representing the three ducks (Laysan duck, Hawaiian duck and mallard) using a custom in-house Python script (Python scripts available at [https://github.com/jonmohl/PopGen;](https://github.com/jonmohl/PopGen) Lavretsky et al., 2020). Trimmomatic (Bolger et al., 2014) was used to trim or discard poor quality sequences. Quality sequence reads were then aligned to a high-quality de novo reference genome of a wild North American mallard (Lavretsky et al., 2023; Available at:

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA\_030704485.1/) using the Burrows Wheeler Aligner v07.15 (bwa; Li & Durbin, 2009). Samples were then sorted and indexed in Samtools v1.6 (Li et al., 2009) and combined and genotyped using bcftools v1.6 (as part of the SAMtools package) "mpileup" and "call" functions with the following parameters "-c –A -Q 30 -q 30," which set a base pair and overall sequence PHRED score of  $\geq$ 30 to ensure that only high-quality sequences are retained.

7

#### <span id="page-26-0"></span>**Summary statistics**

I assessed genome-wide heterogeneity by estimating pair-wise species relative divergence (F<sub>ST</sub>) and absolute divergence ( $D_{XY}$ ), as well as per species nucleotide diversity ( $\pi$ ) based on non-overlapping 100kb window sizes and using the Python script, popgenWindows.py (Martin et al., 2015; available in [https://github.com/simonhmartin/genomics\\_general\)](https://github.com/simonhmartin/genomics_general). Additionally, runs of homozygosity (ROH) were also calculated for each genome using VCFtools v0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011) and using all possible base-pairs.

### <span id="page-26-1"></span>**Ancestry painting**

I first visualized the Hawaiian duck's ancestry blocks through ancestry painting following Barth et al., (2020) and Runemark et al., (2018;

[https://github.com/millanek/tutorials/tree/master/analysis\\_of\\_introgression\\_with\\_snp\\_data\)](https://github.com/millanek/tutorials/tree/master/analysis_of_introgression_with_snp_data). I first identified fixed genomic differences between the Laysan duck and mallard with no missing data using the script get\_fixed\_site\_gts.rb. Following, base-pairs were thinned to be a minimum of 1kb apart. I plotted the ancestry-informative sites in the Hawaiian duck using the script plot fixed site gts.rb. If Hawaiian ducks represent a hybrid species, then I expect them to have a mosaicism of Laysan duck and mallard ancestry as previously found with a few loci (Lavretsky et al., 2015). Note that all samples were males (genotype  $= ZZ$ ), and thus the Z-sex chromosome was treated as diploid like autosomes. Although the mitogenome is haploid, this was also treated as diploid, and following Elgvin et al., (2017).

#### <span id="page-27-0"></span>**Patterns of gene flow and ancestry blocks**

I used a four-taxon ABBA-BABA (D' statistics) calculations to test for the presence of introgression (Durand et al., 2011; Green et al., 2010). The Tufted duck (*Aythya fulvigula*) genome (retrieved from NCBI, [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genome/?term=Aythya+fuligula;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genome/?term=Aythya+fuligula) Kraus et al. Unpublished) was aligned to my three genomes and served as the outgroup in analyses. Whole genome ABBA-BABA estimates and jack-knifed standard errors were calculated for two topologies that included: {(Laysan, Hawaiian), mallard [Tufted]} and {(mallard, Hawaiian), Laysan [Tufted]}, using R code detailed in Martin et al., (2015; [https://github.com/simonhmartin/tutorials/tree/master/ABBA\\_BABA\\_whole\\_genome\)](https://github.com/simonhmartin/tutorials/tree/master/ABBA_BABA_whole_genome). In addition to calculating the D' statistics, I quantified the *f<sup>d</sup>* estimator using the ABBABABAwindow.py script (Martin et al., 2015), and with the Tufted duck serving as an outgroup again. Both analyses were based on non-overlapping 100kb windows, with a minimum requirement of 10 SNPs per window.

Finally, I assessed the sizes of ancestry blocks inherited from distinct parental species within the Hawaiian duck following Meier et al. (2017; also see Runemark et al., 2018). To do so, I estimated the frequency of ABBA and BABA sites within non-overlapping 3kb windows. Windows in which the ratio of ABBA/(ABBA+BABA) exceeded 0.7 were identified as potential Laysan duck ancestry blocks, whereas those with a ratio below 0.3 were considered potential mallard ancestry windows within the Hawaiian duck genome. The length of each ancestry block was determined by the number of consecutive windows exhibiting the same ancestry pattern.

#### <span id="page-28-0"></span>**Phylogenetic analysis**

I took a phylogenetic approach to understand the relationships between the Hawaiian duck and its parental species, with the Tufted duck serving as the outgroup. First, the full VCF file was thinned to include only SNPs which were 100 bp apart using VCFtools v0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011; -thin 100). The SNP dataset was further filtered using bcftools (part of SAMtools v1.6; bcftools view -i 'COUNT(GT="RR") >  $0 \&$  COUNT(GT="AA")>0') to leave only SNPs that were present at least once in my dataset as homozygous for the reference allele, and homozygous for the alternative allele, as required by RAxML v8.026 (Stamatakis, 2014).The reduced VCF file was then partitioned into two dataset containing autosomal or Z-sex chromosome linked SNPs. For each of these datasets, VCF files were then converted to a fasta file using vcf2phylip.py (Ortiz, 2019) to generate alignments. To investigate possible variations in coalescent histories between different genomic segments, I divided the fasta files into nonoverlapping windows of 100 bp. Within each window, I estimated maximum likelihood trees using RAxML v8.026 (Stamatakis, 2014), employing the GTR-GAMMA model. For each possible subtree insertion, RAxML evaluates the average node placement distance of the alternative topology measuring how well a subtree fits into larger phylogenetic context. Window-based subtrees were analyzed for whether the Hawaiian duck was sister to Laysan duck, mallard, or formed a unique clade.

#### <span id="page-28-1"></span>**Demographic history**

Demographic histories for Hawaiian ducks, Laysan ducks, and mallards were reconstructed using the Pairwise sequential Markovian Coalescent (PSMC) models (Li & Durbin, 2011; [https://github.com/lh3/psmc\)](https://github.com/lh3/psmc). I first filtered each genome for a minimum read

10

sequencing depth of 10, and then applied PSMC parameters optimized for avian genomes as outlined in Nadachowska-Brzyska et al., (2015). These parameters included a maximum number of iterations (N = 30), a maximum 2N0 coalescent time (t = 5), an initial theta/rho ratio (r = 5), and a specific pattern of parameters ( $p = 4+30*2+4+6+10$ "). Each analysis was executed with 100 bootstrap replicates to ensure robustness. Finally, I converted the PSMC parameter into biologically informative values using a generation time (*G*) calculated as  $G = \alpha + (s/(1-s))$ , where α is the age of maturity and *s* is the expected adult survival rate (Sæther et al., 2005). For mallard-like ducks, the age of maturity is typically 1 year (i.e.  $\alpha = 1$ ; Alerstam & Högstedt, 1982). However, I estimated the average survival rate individually. For wild mallards, this survival rate is ~0.57 (i.e. range: 0.46–0.68; Arnold & Clark, 1996; Drilling et al., 2020; Smith & Reynolds, 1992); resulting in an estimated generation time of 2.32 years. For Layan duck, the survival rate is 0.906 (M. H. Reynolds & Citta, 2007), leading to an estimated generation time of 10.64 years. For Hawaiian ducks, the survival rate is 0.74 (Malachowski et al., 2022), resulting in an estimated generation time of 3.97 years. The nuclear mutation rate was set to  $1 \times$ 10<sup>-9</sup> (Lavretsky et al., 2020).

#### <span id="page-29-0"></span>**Identification of high-divergence regions and gene analysis**

Identifying candidate loci within putative outlier regions is often challenging when working with a hybrid system as such lineages inherit evolutionary histories from two sources that can distort signals (Elgvin et al., 2017; Runemark et al., 2018). Rather, I used disparities in  $F_{ST}$ values between lineages to identify genomic regions where the Hawaiian duck display elevated divergence from either one or both of its parent species. I selected the top 1% 100-kb windows where the Hawaiian duck exhibited the largest difference in  $F_{ST}$  values between one parent and

the other per comparison between the Hawaiian duck and either parent, and following these equations (Eq.1 and 2: Figure 1.4A and Supplementary Figure S1.4):

- (1) Laysan versus Hawaiian duck divergence (LH) = LH  $F_{ST}$  MH  $F_{ST}$
- (2) mallard versus Hawaiian duck divergence (MH) = MH  $F_{ST}$  LH  $F_{ST}$

Next, Hawaiian duck-specific outliers were based on the top 1% of 100kb-windows exhibiting the largest differences in *F*<sub>ST</sub> between each hybrid/parent comparison, keeping only windows overlapping between both hybrid-parent comparison as PH window, and following the equation (Eq.3, Figure 1.4D and Supplementary Figure S1.5):

(3) Parents versus Hawaiian duck divergence (PH) = MH *F*ST **–** LM *F*ST ∪ LH *F*ST **–** LM *F*ST

Finally, I investigated for enrichment of Gene Ontology (GO) terms within the highdivergence regions (LH, MH, and PH) by first isolating the genes and associated GO terms within those regions. Next, I used an in-house Python script to determine the GO terms that are significantly over-represented after applying a Bonferroni correction, with an adjusted *p* value cutoff of 0.05. Additionally, metabolic pathways were identified via the KEGG (Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes) database (Kanehisa et al., 2002) using GhostKOALA (Kanehisa et al., 2016; Available at the website: [https://www.kegg.jp/ghostkoala/\)](https://www.kegg.jp/ghostkoala/). Then, KEGG enrichment analyses was performed using Enrichr tool (Chen et al., 2013, Available at: [https://maayanlab.cloud/Enrichr/\)](https://maayanlab.cloud/Enrichr/) with a Benjamini-Hochberg correction at an adjusted *p* values cutoff of 0.05.

#### <span id="page-31-0"></span>**RESULTS**

#### <span id="page-31-1"></span>**Genome sequencing and assembly results**

I constructed scaffold-level reference genomes for the Laysan duck and Hawaiian duck, employing a multi-level approach that combined two sequencing and assembly technologies (shotgun and Chicago; Supplementary Table S1.2). Generating approximately 510 million paired reads for both genomes, I achieved 36-fold and 71-fold coverage genomes for the Laysan and Hawaiian duck assemblies, respectively. Both assembled genomes were  $\sim$ 1.04 Gb with a 41.01% GC content. Notably, both genomes exhibited scaffold N50 of 0.065 Mb, and the longest scaffold length reaching 1,060 Mb (Supplementary Table S1.2). Following the scaffolding of library reads using the Hi-Rise pipeline, the final Laysan duck assembly comprised 9,721 scaffolds covering 1 Gb at the scaffold level, with an N50 sequence size of 0.761 Mb and a BUSCO completeness score of 80.5%. In comparison, the final Hawaiian duck assembly consisted of 3,859 scaffolds encompassing 1 Gb at the scaffold level, with an N50 sequence size of 8.035 Mb, and a BUSCO completeness score of 81.5%. This is compared to the recently published 444.6-fold coverage mallard genome that was  $\sim$ 1.04 Gb with a slightly lower GC content of 40.9%, but with a BUSCO completeness score of 95.4% (Lavretsky et al., 2023b).

The total number of predicted proteins varied by genome, with the highest count observed in the Laysan duck (24,952), followed by the Hawaiian duck (23,927), and the wild mallard having the lowest number (23,584). Utilizing OrthoVenn2, I identified an overlap of 21,680 protein clusters across the three ducks. Notably, the most significant overlap in protein clusters was observed between the Laysan duck and the Hawaiian duck (868), followed by the overlap between the Laysan duck and the mallard (599), and the lowest overlap was observed between

the mallard and the Hawaiian duck (442) (Supplementary Figure S1.1). The number of singletons (i.e., proteins that did not form a cluster and were not included in Supplementary Figure S1.1) also varied across species, being 1,446, 655, and 578 for the Laysan duck, Hawaiian duck, and mallard, respectively. Finally, note the general lack of unique protein clusters within the Hawaiian duck and mallard genomes, and with the Laysan duck possessing only one unique protein cluster (Supplementary Figure S1.1).

Finally, all downstream analyses were based on the alignment of the three and Tufted duck genomes to the wild mallard chromosome-level reference genome, permitting us to partition datasets into autosomal, Z-sex chromosome, and the mitogenome. In the end, I attained high alignment similarity across genomes (~99%; Supplementary Table S1.3) for a total of 879,691,675 (of  $\sim$ 1.04 Gbp) quality base-pairs, including 63,805,135 single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs).

#### <span id="page-32-0"></span>**Summary statistics and genome painting**

Average relative genomic differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  values were markedly higher between the parent species (average  $F_{ST}$  Laysan duck versus mallard = 0.38) as compared to Hawaiian ducks and either the Laysan duck (average  $F_{ST} = 0.27$ ) or the mallard (average  $F_{ST} = 0.11$ ) (Table 1.1). Although Hawaiian ducks and mallards had similarly high nucleotide diversity (avg.  $\pi \sim 0.0078$ ), mallards had the shortest runs of homozygosity, followed by Hawaiian and Laysan ducks (Table 1.1). Moreover, I recovered disparities in heterozygosity levels across genomic regions of the Hawaiian duck, taking into account both putative parent species as fully homozygous. Specifically, the Z-sex chromosome exhibited higher heterozygosity (0.43) as compared to

autosomes (0.35) (Fig 1A; Supplementary Figure S1.2, and Supplementary Table S1.4). In fact, painting Laysan duck and mallard ancestry revealed a genomic mosaicism for the Hawaiian duck (Figure 1.1A). Interestingly, I find that the Hawaiian duck had a greater number of homozygous sites shared with the mallard across autosomes, whereas they shared a greater number of homozygous sites with the Laysan duck across the Z-sex chromosome (Supplementary Table S1.2). Finally, I found that Hawaiian duck harbors the mallard mitogenome (Figure 1.1A), supporting earlier hypotheses of a mitochondrial capture event (Lavretsky et al., 2015).

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Autosomes</b>	Z chromosome	
	LM	$0.389 \pm 0.115$	$0.387 \pm 0.135$	
$F_{ST}$	LH	$0.272 \pm 0.254$	$0.137 \pm 0.222$	
	MН	$0.116 \pm 0.162$	$0.123 \pm 0.168$	
	LM	$0.0096 \pm 0.0056$	$0.0047 \pm 0.0035$	
$D_{XY}$	LH	$0.0064 \pm 0.0047$	$0.0026 \pm 0.0025$	
	MН	$0.0091 \pm 0.0054$	$0.0045 \pm 0.0034$	
π	Laysan	$0.0009 \pm 0.0014$	$0.0006 \pm 0.0005$	
	Hawaiian	$0.007 \pm 0.0056$	$0.0035 \pm 0.0034$	
	mallard	$0.0086 \pm 0.0049$	$0.0042 \pm 0.0033$	
<b>ROH</b>	Laysan	$20,869 \pm 39,676$	$18,954 \pm 26,083$	
	Hawaiian	$14,132 \pm 23,750$	$11,619 \pm 15,366$	
	mallard	$9,621 \pm 15,133$	$4,283 \pm 11,160$	

<span id="page-33-1"></span>**Table 1.1.** Mean values of genome statistics for 100 kb non-overlapping sliding windows and run of homozygosity (ROH).

#### <span id="page-33-0"></span>**Estimating gene flow and ancestry blocks**

My four-taxon ABBA-BABA (D' statistics) test revealed substantial introgression occurring between both parental species and the Hawaiian duck at a whole-genome level (Table 1.2), as well as when analyzing chromosomes individually (Figure 1.1B; Supplementary Table S1.5). Similarly, calculating  $f_d$  statistics further supported varying admixture proportions

between the Hawaiian duck and its parental species. Notably, there is a higher degree of gene flow detected between Hawaiian and Laysan ducks at a whole-genome scale, but especially on the Z-sex chromosome (Table 1.3). Finally, I found small and interchanging blocks of Laysan duck and mallard ancestry across the Hawaiian duck's genome; although, there were more Laysan duck versus mallard ancestry blocks, in general (Figure 1.1C).



<span id="page-34-0"></span>Figure 1.1. Parental contribution to the hybrid lineage. (A) Ancestry painting of Hawaiian duck's genome based fixed sites between Laysan duck and mallard, resulting in 624,665 basepairs (bp) across autosomes (left), 44,007 bp across the Z-sex chromosome, and 15 bp for the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA; right). (B) Per chromosome D-statistics within the Hawaiian duck's genome. (C) The size distribution of putative ancestry blocks from the Laysan duck (red), mallard (blue), and from unresolved ancestry (gray).

				Patterson's	Jack-knifed	
	P1	P <sub>2</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	D	SE	Z score
<b>Autosomes</b>	Lavsan	Hawaiian	mallard	0.12	0.0040	30.42
		mallard Hawaiian	Lavsan	0.52	0.0080	66.44
Z-sex						
chromosome	Lavsan	Hawaiian	mallard	0.17	0.019	8.78
	mallard	Hawaiian	Lavsan	0.69	0.029	23.51

<span id="page-35-1"></span>**Table 1.2.** Results from Patterson's D test for introgression between lineages with block Jackknifed SE estimates and Z scores

<span id="page-35-2"></span>**Table 1.3.** Mean  $f_d$  values for 100-kb non-overlapping windows across the genomes



### <span id="page-35-0"></span>**Phylogenetic relationships**

Utilizing RAxML, I constructed maximum likelihood phylogenies across nonoverlapping 100kb genomic windows, encompassing 267,102 autosomal SNPs and 21,045 Z-sex chromosome linked SNPs. Classifying whether the Hawaiian duck clustered monophyletically with the Laysan duck, the mallard or formed a distinct clade recovered a sister relationship between Hawaiian and Laysan ducks across the majority of trees (69.8%). However, in a minority of cases (17.8%), the Hawaiian duck clustered with the mallard, and even forming a unique clade in 12.4% of trees (Figure 1.2). A similar pattern emerged when examining Maximum Likelihood trees constructed across Z-sex chromosome windows where the Hawaiian and Laysan ducks were sister taxa in 86.2% of trees, with 7.5% and 6.4% of trees placing Hawaiian ducks as sister to mallards or forming a unique clade, respectively (Supplementary Figure S1.3).


**Figure 1.2.** Phylogenetic inference across autosomes to assess the origin of the Hawaiian duck. (A) The main three tested topologies for the position of the Hawaiian duck, and (B) their relative weightings and (C) average node placement distance across autosomes.

### **Demographic histories**

Reconstructing the effective ancestral population size  $(N_E)$  change across time revealed distinct demographic trajectories for mallards, Hawaiian ducks, and Laysan ducks (Figure 1.3). First, the effective population size of Laysan ducks diverged from Hawaiian ducks and mallards about a million years ago, when they experienced declines in effective population size, while Hawaiian ducks tracked mallards in an increasing trend. Interestingly, the Hawaiian duck diverged in pattern from the mallard ~570,000 years ago, at which point it began to mimic the demographic ancestry of the Laysan duck. The mallard exhibited a decline in its effective population size from its peak ( $N_E = 5$  million), while the Laysan duck peaking at an estimated effective population size of 80,000 during the penultimate glacial period dating between 130,000 to 194,000 years ago. Finally, during the most recent ice age, the mallard maintained a stable

effective population of ~3 million, while both the Hawaiian and Laysan duck experienced significant declines.



Figure 1.3. PSMC results. Demographic analyses of effective population size (N<sub>E</sub>) calculated across the genomes of a wild mallard, Hawaiian duck, and Laysan duck. Note that the dark and lighter lines denote the average and bootstrap estimates, respectively.

# **Signatures of selection**

Overall, I observed higher  $F_{ST}$  values, higher  $D_{XY}$  values, and lower nucleotide diversity within outlier windows compared to the non-outlier windows (Figure 1.4B-C). The Laysan-Hawaiian (LH) duck comparison exhibited the highest total number of outlier windows (97 in autosomes and 7 in the Z-sex chromosome), followed by an equal number of outlier windows in the mallard-Hawaiian (MH; 96 in autosomes and 7 in the Z-sex chromosome) and Hawaiian duck-both parent (PH) comparisons (96 in autosomes and 7 in the Z-sex chromosome).

Comparing  $F_{ST}$ ,  $D_{XY}$ , and nucleotide diversity permitted us to associate outlier windows representing the "divergence-with-gene-flow" model that is characterized with high  $F_{ST}$ , high D<sub>XY</sub>, and low nucleotide diversity (Irwin et al., 2018). Alternatively, outlier regions characterized by high  $F_{ST}$ , low  $D_{XY}$ , and low nucleotide diversity represented a model of "recurrent selection" or "geographic-sweep-before-selective-differentiation" (Irwin et al., 2018). A total number of windows that followed the "divergence-with-gene-flow" model included 104 windows in the PH comparison (Autosomes = 97, Z-sex chromosome = 8), 102 in the LH comparison (Autosomes = 94, Z-sex chromosome = 8), and 95 in the MH comparison (Autosomes = 89, Z-sex chromosome  $= 6$ ). Outlier windows that were more consistent with an alternative model included 7 in the MH comparison (Autosomes  $= 6$ , Z-sex chromosome  $= 1$ ), 3 for the LH comparison (Autosomes  $= 2$ , Z-sex chromosome = 1), and 1 autosomal window in the PH comparison (Figure 1.4). Finally, I recovered 3 outlier windows in the MH comparison (Autosomes  $= 2$ , Z-chromosome  $= 1$ ) and 2 autosomal windows in the LH comparison that did not follow either model as I found high  $F_{ST}$ , high  $D_{XY}$ , and high nucleotide diversity; suggesting these regions may have experienced both divergence between populations and maintenance of diversity within populations.



**Figure 1.4.** Divergence peaks between the Hawaiian duck and parent taxa. (A) F<sub>ST</sub> estimates between Hawaiian ducks (H) and Laysan duck (L) (LH; top) or mallard (M) (MH; second from top) for 100kb non-overlapping windows across their genomes. (B) Correlation between  $F_{ST}$  and  $d_{XY}$  and between F<sub>ST</sub> and nucleotide diversity in autosomes. (C) Correlation between F<sub>ST</sub> and  $d_{XY}$ and between  $F_{ST}$  and nucleotide diversity in the Z-sex chromosome. (D) Disparities in  $F_{ST}$  values between each LH and MH comparison from the parent species comparison for the same 100kb non-overlapping windows in the Z-sex chromosome. Note that divergence windows recovered for LH, MH, and PH are color coded as red, blue, and yellow, respectively. Finally, (E) the distribution of outlier genes recovered across autosomes versus the Z-sex chromosome.

# **Outlier composition**

Annotated genes residing within all the outlier windows were extracted for ontology analysis, resulting in a total of 217 LH, 186 MH, and 183 PH outlier genes (Supplementary Table S1.6, S1.7, S1.8, S1.9). Enrichment analysis revealed significant gene ontologies (GO) associated with processes that may contribute to species differentiation within the system. Notably, all significant GO terms were found in the outlier windows representing the "divergence-with-gene-flow" model, and many of these significant GO terms were found to be linked to the Z-sex

chromosome rather than autosomes (Figure 1.4E). These processes were grouped into seven distinct categories based on their function, including DNA information processing, cellular structure, metabolism and function, behavior, individual's well-being and health (e.g. sleep, appetite, mood, energy), neurotransmission, fertilization and embryonic development, and immune response. The predominant GO terms in the LH comparison (Supplementary Table S1.7) were associated with cellular structure metabolism and function, while eight GO terms were associated with DNA information processing. For MH comparison (Supplementary Table S1.8), I recovered a comparable number of GO terms covering various processes, including behavior, neurotransmission, individual's well-being and health, cellular structure, metabolism and function, and DNA information processing. A single GO term was not categorized because of lack of information. Finally, most GO terms were related to cellular structure, metabolism and function. Additionally, GO terms associated with facilitating fertilization and subsequent embryonic development were recovered in the PH comparison (Supplementary Table S1.9). Fewer GO terms were associated with individual's well-being and health, immune response, and behavior while one GO term was related to neurotransmission in the PH comparison.

Finally, KEGG pathway and enrichment analyses revealed only two significant pathways within all windows that potentially contribute to species differentiation (Supplementary Table S1.10, S1.11, S1.12). The "FoxO signaling" and the "ubiquitin-mediated proteolysis" pathways were identified on the Z-sex chromosome within the PH comparison. The FoxO signaling pathway plays a crucial role in environmental information processing and signal transduction (Eijkelenboom & Burgering, 2013; Farhan et al., 2017), while the ubiquitin-mediated proteolysis pathway is vital for genetic information processing, protein folding, sorting, and degradation

(Kipreos, 2005). It is important to highlight that several other KEGG pathways showed strong associations with the immune response, followed by connections to DNA transcription, as well as pathways associated with processes related to digestion, metabolism, and the circulatory system.

### **DISCUSSION**

### **Genomic mosaicism and evolutionary dynamics of the Hawaiian duck**

My study finds that the genome of the Hawaiian duck is indeed a mosaicism of Laysan duck and mallard genetic ancestry, and consistent with the hypothesis that they represent a young avian homoploid hybrid species (Lavretsky et al., 2015). Overall, average relative divergence estimates demonstrate a closer affinity between Hawaiian ducks and mallards, with my genomic means being like those estimated with a few loci (Table 1.1; Lavretsky et al., 2014, 2015). However, testing for phylogenetic relationships across the genome placed Laysan and Hawaiian ducks as sister taxa in majority of analyzed trees regardless of chromosome-type (Figure 1.2). The disparity between general *FST* estimates and phylogenetic relatedness is likely because of increased homozygosity across the Laysan duck's genome (Table 1.1) as a result of them going through severe bottlenecking to a population size of 11 individuals by 1911 (M. Reynolds  $\&$ Klavitter, 2006). Nevertheless, whole genome admixture is supported in my ABBA-BABA (Figure 1.1B; Table 1.2) and *f*<sup>d</sup> (Table 1.3) estimates, while more refined ancestry analyses recovered an interchange of relatively small blocks (i.e.,  $\sim$  3 Kbp; Figure 1.1C) of Laysan duck and mallard ancestry across the Hawaiian duck's genome (Figure 1.1A). Together, these results are consistent with an ancient introgression event followed by backcrossing (Meier et al., 2017; Runemark et al., 2018). Despite an overall admixed genome, 6-12% of phylogenetic trees placed Hawaiian ducks as a unique clade (Figure 1.2), and with divergence calculations recovering a

similar proportion of loci as unique to Hawaiian ducks (Figure 1.4). This suggests that divergent selection has already played a role in shaping the Hawaiian duck's genome since their hybrid beginnings. I conclude that the Hawaiian duck represents an ancient hybrid lineage that is gradually differentiating from their parental taxa (Schumer et al., 2014).

Often, the evolution of a hybrid lineage occurs either via equal genomic contribution of parental species or through the adaptive introgression of a few genes from one parental species to the genome of the other (R. Abbott et al., 2013a; R. J. Abbott et al., 2010; Jiggins et al., 2008; Schumer et al., 2014). For the Hawaiian duck, their genomic mosaicism suggests that both parental taxa substantially contributed to their genome, and thus they do not represent a case of adaptive introgression. Nevertheless, the slight bias in ancestry between Hawaiian and Laysan ducks may be a result of backcrossing at initial stages of hybridization (Elgvin et al., 2017) as Laysan ducks very likely outnumbered vagrant mallards at the time (Lavretsky et al., 2015), and thus, resulting in an overrepresentation of the genetic background of the former species. Alternatively, the observed bias could be a result of Laysan ducks harboring allelic diversity adapted to Island life, and thus, those similar selective pressures also exhibited on these early hybrids to retain the same genetic diversity. Unlike the nuclear genome, I can confirm that Hawaiian ducks retained the mallard mitogenome (Lavretsky et al., 2014, 2015). Whether this capture of the mallard mitogenome in the Hawaiian duck's lineage was adaptive or stochastic remains unknown. However, given that mallards were the non-native parental taxa in this case, retention of its mitogenome because of local adaptive qualities is unlikely. Thus, I hypothesize that this mitogenome capture event was likely because of more random effects of genetic drift. Using ancient DNA techniques to sequence historical and subfossil remains of putative Hawaiian ducks found across biodiversity collections can help further test between these scenarios.

Towards this end, this study provides the first reference genomes for the endangered Laysan and Hawaiian ducks that can serve as references for such ancient DNA work, as well as important tools in the future of their conservation.

### **Ancestral population size and hybrid genome influences**

The analysis of effective ancestral population size  $(N_E)$  reveals distinct demographic trajectories among mallards, Hawaiian ducks, and Laysan ducks (Figure 1.3), influenced by colonization events, founder effects, impact of glaciation, and a hybrid genome. Divergence time for Laysan ducks is consistent with previous speciation times for the Mallard Complex more generally, dating to a million years ago when an African ancestral mallard-like duck began to simultaneously expand northward and through the South Pacific (Lavretsky et al., 2014). Notably, Laysan ducks exhibit the smallest effective population size since the beginning of their speciation, which combined with their decreased nucleotide diversity and extended runs of homozygosity, underscores a genetic history marked by isolation. During the penultimate glacial period, while mallards experienced a population decline, Laysan ducks reached a peak in their effective population size. These contrasting patterns can be attributed to the different impacts of the glaciation period, which particularly affected Eurasia, where the mallard resides, while potentially exerting less influence on the Hawaiian Islands where Laysan ducks evolved. However, during the last glaciation maximum, mallards established an effective population size of ~3 million, whereas Laysan ducks continued their decline. This extended period of glaciation likely affected Laysan duck populations in the Hawaiian Islands, while mallards had already expanded to North America and found refuges. Generally, however, the demographic history of the Hawaiian duck is a combination of mallard and Laysan duck histories and consistent with a

history of an admixed genome. Consequently, the reliability of Hawaiian duck divergence times in this analysis is compromised, as hybridization or extreme genetic drift events are recognized factors that can significantly distort such estimates (Brown et al., 2022; Lavretsky et al., 2023a; Orozco-terwengel & Bruford, 2014).

## **Insights into Hawaiian duck evolution and adaptation**

Outlier windows identified through the comparison of the Hawaiian duck with each parent (LH for Laysan-Hawaiian and MH for mallard-Hawaiian) revealed key genetic variations for the Hawaiian duck's development of ecological, behavioral, and physiological distinctions. As a result, these identified regions emerge as potential candidates for divergence barriers. First, key GO terms in the outlier windows of the Laysan duck versus Hawaiian duck comparison shed light on physiological processes (Supplementary Table S1.7). Specifically, GO terms associated with cholesterol and isoprenoid biosynthesis, along with coenzyme A metabolic processes, indicate potential influences on the physiological characteristics such as lipid metabolism (Brockmeier et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2012). Additionally, the comparison between the mallard and Hawaiian duck also revealed a spectrum of GO terms representing diverse biological processes and molecular functions (Supplementary Table S1.8). Findings include neurotransmitter-related terms (e.g., serotonin binding, G protein-coupled serotonin receptor activity) and processes regulating serotonin secretion and vasoconstriction. These indicate distinctions in neurotransmitter systems and various physiological responses, spanning areas such as appetite and digestion (Meguid et al., 2000), blood pressure (Kour et al., 2023), olfactory receptors (Grapputo et al., 2018; Schrader et al., 2014), and behavioral regulation (Cantabella et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2022).

The significance of these GO terms lies in their potential contribution to the Hawaiian duck's adaptation to a distinct ecological niche compared to its parent species. For instance, the restricted distribution of Laysan ducks results in these exclusively feeding on macroinvertebrates (Moulton & Marshall, 2020), while the mallard can occur in almost every wetland and has an opportunistic and omnivorous diet (Drilling et al., 2020). The Hawaiian duck exhibits intermediate ecological traits, living in a wider range of habitats as compared to Laysan ducks, and having a broader diet, including aquatic invertebrates, aquatic plants, seeds, and grains (Engilis Jr. et al., 2020a). Similarly, notable findings in the mallard and Hawaiian duck comparison include behavioral GO terms such as adult behavior, behavioral fear response, and exploration behavior hint at unique behavioral traits in each species, possibly reflecting ecological adaptations or social behaviors (Supplementary Table S1.8). The significance of these behaviors becomes apparent when considering the survival of the Hawaiian duck, as it had to cope with predators on the Hawaiian Islands, including threats during human colonization (e.g. habitat destruction, introduced species, overhunting; Athens et al., 2002; Boyer, 2008). I posit that having such traits likely explains how the evolving hybrid swarm of Hawaiian ducks evaded extinction, while the Laysan duck did not (M. H. Reynolds et al., 2015). Thus, evolution and adaptive capacity of the Hawaiian duck, particularly during Polynesian colonization may be related to social behaviors more akin to the mallard than the Laysan duck. Overall, the Hawaiian duck's admixed genome may explain the diversity of functions the species displays, shedding light into how they evolved such unique ecological, behavioral, and physiological features.

Finally, the comparative analysis between the Hawaiian duck and its parental species (PH) reveals distinct genomic regions associated with immune response and reproductive

isolation, marking potential adaptations crucial for the survival of this emerging hybrid lineage (Supplementary Table S1.8). Notably, key GO terms like "azurophil granule" (GO:0042582) assume significance in the immune system, suggesting a potential role in the Hawaiian duck's resilience against malaria, a pressing concern for many native bird species in Hawaii (Beadell et al., 2006). Furthermore, the identification of significant gene ontologies such as 'male courtship behavior' and 'in utero embryonic development,' exclusive to the Z-sex chromosome holds particular importance in the context of reproductive isolation. The presence of these significant GO terms is consistent with the role sex chromosomes play in shaping reproductive barriers and facilitating the emergence of distinct species (Peters et al., 2005; Sætre & Sæther, 2010). These GO terms suggest that the Hawaiian duck is likely proceeding through initial phases of species divergence, including likely build-up of reproductive isolation. It is crucial to acknowledge that the formation of a complete reproductive barrier is a gradual process, often spanning millions of years in birds (Gill, 2014; Grant & Grant, 1992a; Lavretsky et al., 2015). This protracted timeline indicates that the Hawaiian duck represents a relatively recent instance of hybrid speciation, but emphasizing the intricate and dynamic nature of the evolutionary processes leading to the emergence of novel lineages.

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# **Chapter 2: simRestore: A decision-making tool for adaptive management of the native genetic status of wild populations**

### **ABSTRACT**

Anthropogenic hybridization, or higher and non-natural rates of gene flow directly and indirectly induced by human activities, is considered a significant threat to biodiversity. The primary concern for conservation is the potential for genomic extinction and loss of adaptiveness for native species because of the extensive introgression of non-native genes. To alleviate or reverse trends for such scenarios requires the direct integration of genomic data within a model framework for effective management. Towards this end, I developed the simRestore R program as a decision-making tool that integrates ecological and genomic information to simulate ancestry outcomes from optimized conservation strategies. The program optimizes supplementation and removal strategies across generations until a set native genetic threshold is reached within the studied population. Importantly, in addition to helping with initial decisionmaking, simulations can be updated with the outcomes of ongoing efforts, allowing for the adaptive management of populations. After demonstrating functionality, I apply and optimize among actionable management strategies for the endangered Hawaiian duck for which the current primary threat is genetic extinction through ongoing anthropogenic hybridization with feral mallards. Simulations demonstrate that supplemental and removal efforts can be strategically tailored to move the genetic ancestry of Hawaii's hybrid populations towards Hawaiian duck without the need to completely start over. Further, I discuss ecological parameter sensitivity, including which factors are most important to ensure genetic outcomes (i.e. number of offspring). Finally, to facilitate use, the program is also available online as a Shiny Web application.

# **INTRODUCTION**

Classically, gene flow or the interbreeding of individuals from genetically distinct taxonomic units is often expected to result in outbreeding depression (R. Abbott et al., 2013b; Barton, 2013b; Mallet, 2007b), with sustained exchange of genetic material eventually leading to the loss of either one (i.e., loss of taxa) or both (i.e., formation of a hybrid swarm) interacting species (Kearns et al., 2018; Seehausen, Takimoto, Roy, & Jokela, 2008). However, secondary contact between taxa can also lead to the formation and maintenance of hybrid zones, which can cause reproductive reinforcement, and perhaps eventual completion of the speciation process (R. Abbott et al., 2013b; Grant & Grant, 1992b; López-Caamal & Tovar-Sánchez, 2014; J. M. Rhymer, 2006; Todesco et al., 2016). While gene flow is now recognized as an important natural phenomenon in the evolutionary history of many animal species, human activities have dramatically increased the rates of hybridization worldwide (Allendorf et al., 2001; Mallet, 2005b; Nolte & Tautz, 2010b). Specifically, direct and indirect human activities (e.g., increased urbanization, augmenting wild lands, and the intentional and unintentional release of invasive and often domestic species) are leading to unnaturally high rates of secondary contact among historically allopatric species (Crispo et al., 2011; McFarlane & Pemberton, 2019). Such anthropogenic hybridization has become a focal cause of concern for the conservation of many species (Crispo et al., 2011; Leitwein, Gagnaire, Desmarais, Berrebi, & Guinand, 2018; McFarlane & Pemberton, 2019; Wells et al. 2019; Lavretsky et al. 2023). Among activities that result in such human-mediated gene flow is the common practice of using captive-reared populations for conservation or restocking purposes in forestry, fisheries, and game management (Brennan et al., 2014; Söderquist et al., 2017). However, the selective pressures on wild (i.e., natural selection) versus domestic (i.e., artificial selection) individuals often results in contrasting

trait selection, with those specific to human-modified environments often being maladaptive in the wild (Christie et al., 2012;Crispo et al., 2011). Thus, the interbreeding between domestic and wild counterparts has frequently been found to lead to outbreeding depression or reduced local adaptation in the wild (Crispo et al., 2011). Increasing incidence of such interactions has brought understanding the impacts of anthropogenic hybridization on wild populations to the forefront of conservation science (Hirashiki et al., 2021).

Gene flow is both perceived as a problem and heralded as a potential solution, depending on the taxonomic organism of interest within conservation science (Flanagan et al., 2018). On the one hand, a species under threat of genetic extinction can require management involving the removal of the invading species, translocation of the threatened population, or habitat improvement (Rieseberg & Gerber, 1995; Wolf et al., 2001). Conversely, gene flow has been used to a limited extent as a conservation strategy to rescue the viability (i.e., improve the fitness) of small, inbred populations, known as 'genetic rescue' (Frankham, 2015; Hedrick & Fredrickson, 2010; Miller et al., 2012; Todesco et al., 2016). Traditional methods for evaluating these conservation actions have been based on increases in positive (e.g., population size, reproductive success, and survival rates) and decreases in negative (e.g., deleterious traits and mortality rate) ecological factors of the species to be conserved(Frankham, 2015; Hedrick & Fredrickson, 2010; Miller et al., 2012). Advances in next-generation DNA sequencing technologies along with novel analytical methods have been useful to provide genetic information, such as rates of hybridization, to complement conservation plans (Anderson & Thompson, 2002; Flanagan et al., 2018; Hohenlohe et al., 2021; van Wyk et al., 2017). However, integrating genomic data into conservation management requires significant genetic knowledge

and bioinformatics expertise, which is often lacking (Flanagan et al., 2018; Hoban et al., 2013; Hohenlohe et al., 2021).

To reach policymakers and managers, the development of more user-friendly programs and clear guidelines for applying genetic information to wildlife biology and management is needed. In particular, methodologies in which molecular and/or ecological data can be annually updated would provide a means for adaptive management planning. Towards this end, I developed simRestore, a decision-making R-based program that simulates the time (in generations) until a population may attain genetic native status under differing management strategies. The program makes use of backcrossing and admixture as a mechanism to establish genetic integrity (Lavretsky et al., 2016, 2019), and provides users a framework to incorporate management actions (e.g., augmenting and removal efforts) in combination with ecologically informative variables (e.g., survival rate) and genetic information (e.g., ancestry assignment) to simulate the expected time in generations to achieve the native status of the threatened species. Thus, the program consists of two intertwined models covering ecological and genetic data (Table 2.1). Importantly, as most conservation programs are resource-limited, the program is also designed to simulate under those limitations, including the total number of individuals that can be released and/or removed, as well as any temporal restrains for project completion. Finally, in addition to helping with initial decision making, simulations can be updated with the outcomes of ongoing efforts, allowing for the adaptive management of populations. Here, I demonstrate software functionality, as well as its utility through optimization of actionable management strategies for the endangered Hawaiian duck (*Anas wyvilliana*) for which the current primary threat is genetic extinction through ongoing anthropogenic hybridization with feral mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) (USFWS, 2012; Wells et al., 2019).

#### **Study system**

Once found across the main Hawaiian Islands, Hawaiian ducks once again only reside on the Island of Kauai (Wells et al., 2019). Although habitat loss and overhunting were in part responsible for their decline (Engilis & Pratt, 1993), it is the establishment of feral mallard populations that appear to be the proximate cause of conservation concern today (Engilis Jr., Uyehara, & Giffin, 2020, see also Wells et al. 2019). Although captive-rearing programs and reintroductions were attempted from the1960s to the 1980s (Browne et al., 1993; Engilis & Pratt, 1993), these efforts ultimately failed because of not handling the burgeoning feral mallard populations that eventually interbred with translocated Hawaiian ducks to form feral mallard x Hawaiian duck hybrid populations across Islands (Wells et al., 2019). Although the conservation of the Hawaiian duck could move forward with restarting all populations from Kauai stock after the extirpation of existing feral mallard x Hawaiian duck hybrids, such efforts are often not financially sustainable but also are complicated by human-dimensions (Stronen & Paquet, 2013). Instead, there is potential to maximize management strategies by varying restocking and partial removal efforts optimized for each wetland's characteristics. Given that sequential backcrossing into the same gene pool has the potential to re-establish the genetic signature of the backcrossed parental population within only a few generations (Lavretsky et al., 2016, 2019), the genetics of a hybrid population can thus be artificially moved towards a target parental through directed management efforts. However, the number of individuals required to be added and/or removed is dependent on many ecological factors (see Table 2.1; Hennessy et al., 2022). Fortunately, continued conservation efforts surrounding Hawaiian ducks has resulted in in-depth biological and genetic knowledge for the species that can be used to optimize management strategies among populations.

**Table 2.1**. Overview of available parameters available in the simRestore R package as well as their range of values to modify depending on the studies species. All values used across functions for Hawaiian duck simulations are also provided.







# **METHODS**

Simulation code for the simRestore package can be accessed directly via the R programming language, and can be incorporated into analysis scripts. It is available as an R package, accessible via CRAN, or via [www.github.com/thijsjanzen/simRestore.](http://www.github.com/thijsjanzen/simWILD) However, for those unfamiliar with the R programming language the simulation code can also be used via a Shiny Web application (Chang et al., 2022); which can be run either locally, or hosted online. The Shiny Web application presents a user-friendly graphical interface (GUI) in which the user can manipulate conditions through direct value input, buttons, and sliders to adjust chosen parameters (Figure 2.1). Once the parameters are set, the user is then presented with direct graphical feedback indicating the required supplementation or removal efforts, resulting change in focal ancestry, and population size change. The Shiny Web application is publicly available at [https://thijsjanzen.shinyapps.io/simRestoreApp/.](https://thijsjanzen.shinyapps.io/simRestoreApp/)



Figure 2.1. Overview of the simRestore shiny app display. (Left) Display of the main variables to modify, and (Right) the three graphs using a simple simulation.

## **Life-history model**

Life history model simulations are implemented using a population with overlapping generations and explicit sexes, where offspring may compete next year for mating opportunities and superfluous males or females may be excluded from mating. I assumed density-dependent population growth, such that over time, an equilibrium density of individuals is reached. The model proceeds through 'seasons' during which the following events occur in sequence: 1) survival, 2) Human intervention, 3) Mating and offspring survival, and 4) Offspring recruitment (Figure 2.2A).

Each season of the life cycle, survival is assumed to be the same and irrespective of sex. However, survival is density-dependent such that at higher densities, individuals have a lower survival rate because of a shortage of resources (Gunnarsson et al., 2013). I model density

dependence of survival following Robinson et al. (2017), who model survival in American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) using the following equation:

$$
S = S_{max} + \frac{S_{min} - S_{max}}{1 + \left(\frac{D}{p}\right)^b}
$$

Where *S* is the survival probability (and *max* and *min* indicate the maximum and minimum survival probabilities), *D* is the density (e.g.,  $N/K$ , where *N* is the number of individuals, and  $K$  is the carrying capacity),  $p$  is a variable that indicates the reflection point (e.g., the point at which survival is 50% of  $S_{max}$  *-*  $S_{min}$ , and *b* is a variable that indicates the steepness of the curve (Figure 2.2B). In addition to annual survival probability, I also include the capacity for users to include additional mortality for either or both sexes, as breeding animals often have higher rates of mortality (Lima, 2009;Norrdahl & Korpi[mäki,](https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/authored-by/ContribAuthorRaw/Korpim%C3%A4ki/Erkki) 1998; Simmons & Kvarnemo, 2006).

Human intervention is modeled as the supplementation or removal of individuals from the population. When supplementing, individuals are by default added in an equal sex ratio (50% males, 50% females), and assuming that the added individuals carry the ancestry of the focal system of interest. When removing, individuals are removed irrespective of sex and can be removed depending on their maximum genetic ancestry. For example, if this variable is chosen to be 0.5, only individuals with less than 50% native species ancestry are removed. By default, the value is chosen to be 1, which means individuals are removed irrespective of their native species ancestry. Additionally, the sex ratio of individuals added or removed can be changed by the user, as can the ancestry of the individuals supplemented.

To simulate mating, I consider two models designed to emulate the diverse range of social and behavioral aspects of reproductions observed across species: 1) "Strict Pair Bonding",

where females and males pair up in such a way that each female mates with one available male. If there are fewer males than females, some females remain unmated (and vice versa). 2) "Random mating", characterized by mating probabilities being equal among all individuals in a population. Additionally, I introduced a variable accounting for the probability of offspring resulting from EPC (i.e., extra-pair copulation), a behavior primarily observed in birds but also present in other species (Brouwer & Griffith; Soulsbury 2010; Uller & Olsson 2008). Furthermore, I do not model multi-season pair bonding to retain simplicity of the model. Thus, in smaller populations, offspring of a pair might mate with one of their parents in the next season (albeit this chance is relatively low, in the order of 1/N, which is usually less than 1%). Other factors affecting population growth are also considered in the model, such as reproductive success (i.e., the probability of successfully breeding; Table 2.1).

After mating, offspring recruitment is lower than the total number of offspring produced because of a multitude of factors such as predation (natural and human), parasitism, and deteriorating environmental conditions like food abundance (Bortolotti et al., 2011; Gaillard et al., 2008; Hoover & Reetz, 2006; Knights et al., 2012; Rigby, 2008). Thus, I modeled the contribution of variation in recruitment to changes in the population growth as density dependence. For simplicity, I have chosen to make recruitment identical to adult survival and use the same equation (see above equation 1) with identical parameters (Robinson et al., 2017).

### **Genetic model**

The implementation of the genetic model assumes a diploid genome (Zhang et al., 2020), where each chromosome undergoes crossover during meiosis, and the user can specify the total number of chromosomes to be simulated. Upon creation of new offspring, both mother and father provide a single copy of the genome, which are combined to form the diploid offspring

genome. Sex is determined randomly (Trivers & Willard, 1973), independent of the genetic makeup, and ignoring any potential processes driving sex determination or sex skew. Two models are implemented to track ancestry in the genome: 1) an explicit crossover model tracking 'junctions', and 2) a point ancestry model (Figure 2.2C).

In the explicit crossover model, local ancestry is explicitly tracked along the genome and I explicitly model crossovers, resulting recombination events and the effect this has on changes in ancestry. The effects on ancestry are tracked by keeping account of the number of switches in ancestry along the genome, coined 'junctions' by Fisher (1954). Junctions inherit similar to point mutations, provide a computationally efficient method to track changes in ancestry (Baird 1995) and are well studied mathematically (Janzen, Nolte, & Traulsen, 2018, Janzen & Miro Pina, 2022 and references therein). Furthermore, using junctions to track local ancestry (in contrast to, for instance, using high-density SNP maps), allows us to retain high resolution tracking of Linkage Disequilibrium, whilst retaining high computational efficiency (see Janzen & Diaz, 2021 for more expansive scenarios utilizing junctions). Changes in ancestry and the resulting junctions arise from crossover events, and I draw the number of crossovers per chromosome from a Poisson distribution, with the mean rate equal to the size of each chromosome expressed in Morgan, with a default value of 1. The location of each crossover on a chromosome is assumed to be independent of the location of other crossovers on the same chromosome, and crossovers are assumed to be distributed uniformly across the genome. Crossovers are independent between chromosomes. Crossovers on locations with differing ancestry between chromosomes result in recombination and the formation of a junction in the resulting recombined chromosome. Over time, the accumulation of recombinations then creates the ancestry-mosaic observed in admixed individuals.

Alternatively, in the point ancestry model, I only track the average ancestry along the genome and each copy of the genome is represented by a single floating-point number per chromosome, indicating the average proportion of ancestry belonging to either of the two parental species. To create a new copy, the average genome ancestry of both copies per chromosome existing in the parent is used. For example, if the parent has one chromosome copy with 20% focal ancestry, and one chromosome copy with 80% focal ancestry, the resulting single chromosome copy that is being given to the offspring has 50% focal ancestry. Thus, this model assumes that recombination acts as a process that uniformly mixes the two genomes. Although this model assumes an overly simplistic representation of the underlying ancestry dynamics, it provides a computationally efficient method to obtain results that, on average, behave very closely to the junctions method. The reason these two methods are so similar, is that although the accumulation of junctions changes the spatial arrangement of ancestry along a genome, it does not change the average ancestry along the genome, as this is mainly driven by population size effects such as drift. To test whether the genetic ancestry means estimated using the point ancestry and junction genetic model are different, I performed statistical tests using R Statistical Software (v 4.1.3, R Core Team 2023). Shapiro tests were used to evaluate the normal distribution of the data; however, this assumption was not met to perform a parametric test. Therefore, I performed the Wilcoxon rank-sum test to compare my two independent samples.

To initialize simulations, an ancestry mosaic is derived by performing 30 generations of Wright-Fisher admixture (e.g., non-overlapping generations, random mating, constant population size) using the known genetic ancestry of an admixed population as a starting point. I use Wright-Fisher admixture instead of the life-history model previously described to generate the starting mosaic to save computation time, and to constrain the population size such that it
matches the initial population size. For example, if the current frequency is 80/20, then I start the Wright-Fisher admixture with 80% focal ancestry and 20% non-focal ancestry, allowing this "population" to then inbreed over 30 generations to obtain an approximate ancestry mosaic previously shown to generate ancestry blocks of correct size and distribution (Janzen et al., 2018, Janzen & Miró Pina, 2022).



**Figure 2.2**. Overview of the ecological and genomic information used in the simRestore program. A) Schematic of annual life-history of Hawaiian duck, B) Survival curve based on Robinson et al. (2017) equation, dashed line indicating calculated carrying capacity  $K = 400$ , C) Genetic model: Point ancestry model and Junction ancestry model using genetic ancestry of Hawaiian duck (yellow) and mallard (brown).

# **Static versus Adaptive Simulation Model Optimizations**

Apart from providing functionality to forward simulate a chosen set of parameters, the package also provides functionality to optimize parameters to reach a target level of focal ancestry. First, static optimization attempts to find a fixed per-generation amount of input and removal efforts to reach the target level of genetic integrity. Alternatively, an adaptive optimization model provides more specific information by attempting to optimize the

distribution of individuals to be added or removed over a set of generations to reach the target level of genetic integrity. To reduce the degrees of freedom for fitting such a distribution, adaptive optimization does not directly fit the number of individuals per generation (keeping the total constant), but rather fits two parameters of a beta distribution, which is used to determine the number of individuals per generation. Optimization can be performed for supplementation, for removal, or for the joint effort of both supplementation and removal.

# **Ecological parameter sensitivity analysis**

I wanted to understand how the accuracy of the ecological data may impact modeling outputs, and thus, also determine how each ecological parameter influences management strategies. To do so, I tested and ranked how supplementation estimates were affected by successively varying each ecological parameter (Table 2.1). Sensitivity analyses were based on the static optimization of supplementation, assuming a population (*N*) size of 400, a starting genetic ancestry of 20:80 for parental A versus B, with a target ancestry of 99% for focal parental A, and using the junction as the genetic model. Each analysis was run 100 times with optimized supplementation and estimated population sizes following management strategy summarized as boxplots and including the mean value of the percent change in optimized value given a starting value per ecological parameter. In my sensitivity analysis, I first explored the impact of density dependence by varying the steepness / slope of the survival curve (varied as -4, -3.5, …, -0.5; see parameter b in Table 2.1). Similarly, I explored sensitivity of results to the mean number of offspring (i.e., varied as 1, 2, …, 10), maximum individual age (i.e., varied as 1, 2, …, 10), reproductive risk of females and males (i.e., varied as 0, 0.05, …, 0.4), and reproductive success (i.e., varied as 0.0, 0.1, …, 1.0). Specifically, sensitivity ranking of

ecological parameters was based on the magnitude of changes in estimated supplementation number and population size for each assessed parameter value expressed as percentage. The magnitude of change was based on the subtraction of the current estimated number (CE) of individuals/population size and previous estimates (PE), divided by the current value, and all multiplied by 100 % [((CE-PE)/CE)\*100%]. For example, to understand differences between the mean number of offspring of two compared to one, the magnitude of change was determined for estimated supplementation and population size as the PE and CE values under the mean number of offspring of one versus two, respectively. In the end, ecological parameters with the largest magnitude of changes between values were considered more sensitive. I plotted and visualized percent change of the absolute values as boxplots using R.

#### **Case study: Simulating Potential Conservation Strategies for Hawaiian Duck**

To illustrate the performance of the developed program, I tested whether any set of management efforts could reverse the genetic constitution of the Hawaiian duck x feral mallard hybrids found across Hawaiian Islands. The history and constant monitoring of Hawaiian duck provides high quality ecological and genetic information, including demographic and vital rate differences between native Hawaiian duck on Kauai and hybrids elsewhere, allowing us to optimize management strategies based on wetland-specific conditions (Table 2.1; Supplementary Table S2.1). Note that given that I used the Hawaiian duck as a case example, ecological models were based on their life cycle traits (Table 2.1). All simulations were done with an initial population size (*N*) of 100, and a starting fraction of focal (i.e., Hawaiian duck) ancestry specific to the Oʻahu wetlands Hamukua, Kawainui, and Ki'i (Tables 2.1 & S2.1; Wells, Lavretsky et al. 2019), with a target frequency of 0.99 for the focal ancestry to be achieved over 20 generations,

zero probability of extra-pair copulation, and considering an additional death rate of females during breeding (Table 2.1). Note that I followed Robinson et al. 2017 for density dependence, setting a moderately steep *b* (-2), along with parameter sets as  $p = 1.0$ ,  $S_{min} = 0.5$ ,  $S_{max} = 0.9$  (see Figure 2.1B). Both static and adaptive optimization models were run 100 times for each wetland. Moreover, 30 generations was used as this reflects when Hawaiian duck were re-introduced from Kauai into the other Hawaiian Islands; and thus, hybridization with already established feral mallards would have started (Engilis Jr *et al.* 2004).

#### **RESULTS**

#### **Genetic and mating models**

Whether using the point ancestry or 'junctions' genetic methods, final outputs were statistically identical if inputting values across parameters or optimizing outputs in either the static or adaptive optimization models (Figure 2.3). Importantly, when using the point ancestry or the 'junctions' genetic models, simulations in which no management strategies were undertaken (i.e. no supplementation or removing individuals) resulted in no change in the average local ancestry over time, and the population remained at the starting ancestry proportions (Table S2.1). However, the desired population ancestry goal of 0.99 for the focal population was achieved by supplementing individuals (Table 2.2). Even though the average behavior between the point ancestry and 'junctions' methods was identical, there was higher variance among replicates under the 'junctions' model, indicating that the point model tends to underestimate the observed standing genetic variation (Figure 2.3), as expected.

Next, I found no statistical differences when evaluating between mating models (i.e., struct pair bonding vs. random mating) whether in the absence of a management strategy or

when optimizing the management approach (Figure S2.1). This absence of differentiation between mating models is further reflected in the outcomes of management strategies (i.e., number of supplemented individuals and population size), even when evaluating a spectrum of extra-pair copulation rates ranging from 0 to 1 (Figure S2.2).



 $-$  junctions  $-$  point ancestry

**Figure 2.3.** Comparing outputs for point ancestry (orange) and the junctions (green) genetic methods based on a (A) no management strategy versus (B) optimization of supplementation only, each run 100 times. As expected, no substantial change between the starting and final ancestries were attained with either genetic method if no management is done, whereas statistically similar (Wilcox-test p-value  $= 0.95$ ) results of substantial ancestry improvement was recovered with both genetic methods when optimizing supplementation.

#### **Static versus adaptive simulation model optimizations**

All analyses were based on the junctions ancestry genetic model. First, optimization of removing only resulted in no change of focal ancestry (e.g., Table 2.2), even when exploring

variations in the genetic ancestry of the removed individuals across different levels of focal species ancestry (Table S2.2). Conversely, optimizing supplementation only reaches the target frequency over the time by consistently adding a greater number of individuals per generation with the static as compared to the adaptive model. However, focal ancestry was always reached with fewer individuals per generation when optimizing both supplementation and removal (e.g., Table 2.2). Applying totals that were recovered in the static simulation into the adaptive simulation model further optimized strategies for each generation (e.g., Table 2.2).

# **Ecological parameter sensitivity**

Sensitivity analyses were based on changes in the optimized number of individuals added to the population, which was estimated by changing each ecological parameter (Figure 2.4) while maintaining the target genetic frequency. Overall, I found that the required individuals to supplement per generation strongly correlated with the obtained population size as permitted by the used parameters that included, (a) lenient parameters allowed for large populations also caused large estimates for the required individuals to supplement, whereas (b) stringent parameter settings causing reduced population sizes and low estimates for the number of required individuals.

At the population level, I found that increasing the strength of density-dependence (e.g. making the slope more negative) resulted in smaller populations and decreasing supplementation requirements (Figure 2.4A). Conversely, with the slope becoming closer to 0.0 and density dependence weakening, I found that population sizes became exponentially larger, and consequently the supplementation requirement per generation increased exponentially as well. Therefore, it seems better to underestimate the strength of density dependence as this results in

overestimating the number to supplement; although, over-supplementation will still result in reaching the target genetic frequency. Next, I find that a shorter life expectancy reduces the required amount to be supplemented, plateauing for any maximum age extending past 6-7 years of age (Figure 2.4C) that is likely because of other mortality effects (density dependence, reproductive risk) acting before the focal individual reaches the maximum life expectancy.

At the mating stage, I find that the mean number of offspring is particularly important, with a 24% error in management strategy if the average number of offspring is inaccurate by even ±1 offspring (Figure 2.4B). As expected, population trends show an exponential increase with each increase in  $+1$  offspring per breeding event. Next, miscalculating additional female or male mortality during reproduction causes deviations in the true supplement number with errors ranging from 3-22% for females and 0-16 % in males (Figure 2.4E, F); .as with densitydependence, overestimating reproductive risk results in reaching the desired focal ancestry albeit over-supplementation. As expected, I find that population trends are inversely associated with increases in mortality of either sex. Finally, both supplemental need and population growth follow an S curve as reproductive success rate increases, with an inflection point for reproductive success of  $~50\%$ , and plateauing once reproductive success is  $\geq 80\%$ . Generally, optimized supplementation was underestimated by  $\sim$ 25% for every 0.1% inaccuracy in estimated reproductive success (Figure 2.4D).

The ecological parameters showed different influences on the number of individuals to supplement and the population size in each generation (Figure 2.4G). At the population level, both parameters (i.e. density dependence and maximum age) showed a weak influence in the supplemental of individuals in a population, and therefore the population size. Specifically, the life expectancy parameter had the lowest rank. At the mating stage, the number of offspring and

reproductive success rate showed the strongest influence on the number of individuals needed to add to the population and therefore, the population size. However, the additional mortality rate of males during reproduction had the lowest rank among the parameters that influence the mating stage.



Figure 2.4. (A-F) Changes in optimized supplementation and final population sizes when varying ecological parameters present in the 'simRestore' R package. (G) Magnitude of change expressed as percentage when varying A-F ecological variables in estimating supplementation and population size and depicted as box plots with mean values denoted (grey circle).

By default, the sex ratio of offspring is equal (e.g. offspring has a 50% probability to be

of the male sex). Deviations from this even sex ratio significantly influenced outcomes if

populations are strongly sex biased (e.g. 0.9 indicates a male biased sex ratio and 0.1 indicates a female biased sex ratio; Figure 2.5 B,D). Similarly, the number of individuals required to supplement also deviated if the sex ratio of the supplementation population was not even (Figure 2.5 A,C). Male biased supplementation resulted in overall population size declines, whereas female biased input resulted in population growth. Furthermore, female biased supplementation caused an increase in the number of individuals required to be put to reach the target genetic frequency, whereas male biased supplementation reduced this. Thus, the sex composition of the supplementing population can be skewed towards male or female if managers are attempting to simply change the genetic ancestry or also increase their population size, respectively.



**Figure 2.5.** Changes in optimized supplementation (top row) and final population sizes (bottom row) when varying sex ratios of offspring (first column) or individuals added (second column) in the 'simRestore' R package. Sex ratio is expressed as males / (males + females), such that 0.5 indicates an even sex ratio, 0.9 indicates a male biased sex ratio and 0.1 indicates a female biased sex ratio.

### **Simulating potential Hawaiian duck conservation strategies**

I simulated optimized management strategies to reverse the population's genetic ancestry for several wetlands on Oʻahu, Hawaii with varying starting average Hawaiian duck ancestry (Table 2.2). First, however, all simulations clearly show that the removal of individuals does not substantially change the focal ancestry (Table 2.2). More importantly, whereas management strategies employing supplementation only eventually reach ancestry goals, these require substantially more individuals than what would be required if strategies included a mix of supplementation and removal efforts (Table 2.2). Finally, by varying the management strategy generationally, the adaptive model generally decreases the number of generations to reach ancestry goal as compared to the static model (Table 2.2). For example, static simulations suggest that the ancestry can be moved from 74% to 99% Hawaiian duck on Oʻahu's Ki'i wetland complex by adding 60 Hawaiian ducks and removing 3 hybrids per generation for 20 generations. Conversely, applying the adaptive simulation model reaches 99% Hawaiian duck ancestry in five generations by varying the supplementation and removal strategies across generations (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2**. Optimized management strategies for three wetlands on Oʻahu of varying starting average Hawaiian duck ancestry (Table 2.1). Static and adaptive optimizations were done under management strategies including supplementation only, removing only, or a combination of supplementation and removal. Success of each strategy was determined by the predicted final ancestry, with the objective set to reach 99% Hawaiian duck ancestry. Note that while static optimization simply allocates the same number of individuals across set generations (gen), adaptive optimization varies the strategy across generations.



### **DISCUSSION**

My software package simRestore uses a forward simulator platform that optimizes available management strategies to meet set conservation goal(s). I provide functionality to the program through a user-friendly GUI interface where anyone can change ecological parameters and genetic ancestry information to forward simulate actionable management strategies. Importantly, simRestore was developed to permit for management strategy optimization at any geographical (i.e., wetland, Island) and temporal (i.e., number of generations) scale, as well as under any project limitations (i.e., number of individuals available for input, time for project completions). Finally, assessing offspring ancestry allows for a direct test of the implemented strategy; and thus, permitting researchers to determine ecological or other factors that were not accurately accounted for in situations where simulated values are unaligned to empirical ones. Assessing simulation accuracy can be done annually by comparing genetic ancestry of offspring in the simulation with genetic ancestry assessed empirically. If genetic integrity is reversed but set ancestry goals are not attained following the required number of generations of stocking, then the newly established genetic information can be fed back into models to help guide the following year's strategies. In the end, the simRestore program provides a means for the adaptive management planning for species' conservation.

### **Model considerations**

Although the point and junctions genetic models resulted in identical average behavior in resulting ancestry, there was a higher degree of variation when using the junctions model (Figure 2.3). I conclude that whereas the point model is a strong oversimplification of the underlying genetics, its fast computation and high similarity in outcome provides a great benefit over the

more complex and demanding junctions model. I suggest the use of the point model in management strategy optimization followed by an assessment in outcome variability and robustness with the junctions model. More importantly, for organisms for which more detailed genomic information remains lacking (i.e. chromosome size, recombination rate, etc), and thus the use of the junctions genetic model is perhaps inappropriate, the point genetic model will still provide robust inferences. Similarly, varying both the mating models (strict and pair-bonded) and the EPC variable produced comparable changes in ancestry and management strategies, as they are not inherently tied to a particular ancestry type (e.g., males of native ancestry show a greater likelihood of involvement in EPC). However, I strongly recommend setting up the mating system of the studied organism to the best of my knowledge to ensure inference reliability.

Next, assessing the utility of the three management strategies, I conclude that removing only is similar to a no management strategy as the local ancestry is unaffected (Table 2.2; Table S2.2). This is not unsurprising, as removing individuals of a hybrid swarm still results in remaining breeding individuals being hybrid; confirming that a parental gene pool is required to reverse the genetic ancestry of a hybrid pool (Wells et al., 2019). Whereas supplementing only can reverse the genetic signature towards the focal species, the total number required to be supplemented is consistently higher and requiring more generations than when combining supplementation and removal efforts (Table 2.2; Table S2.2). Thus, the optimum management strategy is combining supplementation and removal when possible.

In addition to starting genetic ancestry, researchers will also need to know a suite of ecological parameters for their population(s) of interest. Life-history traits can influence how much maternal vs. paternal genetic variation contributes to each generation (Table 2.1). Lifehistory traits therefore need to be correctly incorporated to ensure accurate model predictions. I

find that each of the ecological parameters within my model affects simulations differently, and with some being largely insensitive, while others are highly sensitive and require accurate estimates (Figures 2.4 & 2.5). Among parameters, researchers need to take particular care to have accurate estimates of the number of offspring (i.e., annual fecundity) and reproductive success rate in particular, as these have a disproportionate effect on population size, which in turn dictates management strategies. Moreover, researchers working in a female biased population and/or r-selected species will require substantial increases in supplemental efforts (Figure 2.5). More generally, however, I find that miscalculating most ecological parameters may not impact management outcomes, since doing so still typically results in the achievement of management goals, albeit on slightly different time-frames and/or supplementation efforts. Specifically, unless known, I recommend that it is better to underestimate density dependency, overestimate reproductive risk, and assume a 50:50 number of offspring as all of these will result in optimum management strategies that can still achieve ancestry goals (Figure 2.4  $\&$  2.5); though at the expense of additional resources that would otherwise not be required.

#### **Conservation implications**

The incorporation of genetic data has become a fundamental source of information for species conservation (Walters & Schwartz, 2020). Genomic data has been used to shed light into species' effective population size, inbreeding demographic history, and population structure that not only aid in management efforts (Hohenlohe et al., 2021), but are critical in efforts of biodiversity monitoring, resolving taxonomic uncertainty, wildlife forensics, and designation of conservation units (Funk et al., 2012; Hohenlohe et al., 2021). However, there has been a severe lag and lack in the implementation of genomic data into management decisions (Walters & Schwartz, 2020); in part because of the lack of user-friendly methods (Hohenlohe et al., 2021).

From the perspective of wildlife management, understanding the population genomics of wild populations can aid multiple traditional wildlife activities such as translocations, reintroductions, population augmentation, and the identification of units of conservation concern (Funk et al., 2012; Hohenlohe et al., 2021; Tallmon et al., 2004; Walters & Schwartz, 2020; Whiteley et al., 2015). Among conservation efforts, understanding rates of hybridization and its implication to wildlife populations is now at the forefront of conservation science (Cooper & Shaffer, 2021; Hohenlohe et al., 2021; Searcy et al., 2016). Towards these efforts, my developed simRestore program provides a tool where managers can couple genetic and ecological data to optimize management strategies that directly feed into decision making when attempting to resolve hybridization issues. Once again, the ability to feed empirical data (i.e., genetic assignment probabilities of a population) back into models provide a powerful tool for management to be adaptive and specific to the species' needs.

I apply developed methods to understand the potential in artificially reversing genetic ancestry through directed management efforts for the endangered Hawaiian duck. Given the proximate threat to the Hawaiian duck is genetic extinction through ongoing anthropogenic hybridization with feral mallards (USFWS, 2012; Wells et al., 2019), I demonstrate that the reversal to a genetic native status of these hybrid swarms is theoretically possible (Table 2.2). Importantly, both molecular data (Lavretsky et al., 2019; Wells et al., 2019) and telemetry movement data (Malachowski, 2013; Malachowski et al., 2019, 2020; Malachowski & Dugger, 2018) suggest that movement is not only limited between Islands, but also among wetlands within Islands. Consequently, each wetland on Islands can be effectively considered a closed system, providing an important means to closely monitor how optimized management strategies impact the genetic integrity of that wetland's population (Table 2.2). I conclude that the

developed models can help guide future Hawaiian duck conservation efforts, with work the implementation of optimized strategies in a pilot program to determine real-world feasibility of the simulations.

### **CONCLUSSIONS**

Conceptually, hybrid individuals are simply conduits of genes stemming from divergent lineages (Allendorf et al., 2001); and as a result, hybrids still possess the genetic diversity of the species of interest. Though hybrids pose a conservation concern because of the maladaptive potential when divergent genomes are admixed (i.e., outbreeding; Templeton, 1986), the genetic diversity of the focal species remains present. Given that species of conservation concern often suffer in population size and standing genetic diversity, continued losses in both are often detrimental. Here, I demonstrate that directed manipulation of hybrid populations can potentially reconstitute a hybrid population towards the focal population without additional loss of individuals and the genetic diversity they carry. However, what wildlife biologists are able to do to mitigate or reverse the continued loss of individuals to hybridization can be further limited by human dimensions (i.e., social rejection of particular management strategies; (Decker et al., 2012). Thus, the functionality of the simRestore program provides biologists and managers attempting to mitigate or reverse such trends, a decision-making tool for management optimization specific to the species or population of concern in an adaptive framework. By doing so, biologists not only have the means to evaluate possible conservation scenarios but critical information to explain and with which to engage their constituents.

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# **SIMULATION CODE AND DATA ACCESIBILITY**

The simulation code described in this manuscript is available as an R package, accessible via CRAN, via github [\(www.github.com/thijsjanzen/simRestore\)](http://www.github.com/thijsjanzen/simRestore), or via the Shiny app on https://thijsjanzen.shinyapp.sio/simRestoreApp. All simulations performed in this manuscript were performed using genetic ancestry data presented in Table S2.1.

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# **Chapter 3: Uncovering signals of genomic islands and valleys across the speciation continuum in the Mallard complex**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The continuous process of speciation as a central component of biological diversification is increasingly being appreciated, as are the resulting heterogenous signals across respective species' genomes. Consequently, resulting genomes are the product of equally dynamic evolutionary forces of genetic drift, selection, and gene flow. Although unraveling the adaptive histories of species often includes determining how directional selection uniquely acts across respective genomes, it is equally important to establish what, if any, parts remain under purifying selection for ancestral state(s). However, it is the latter that is only visible in sufficiently divergent genomes that permit the identification of both genomic islands and evolutionary valleys. Towards this, I compare the full genomes of 11 (of 14) species of the Mallard Complex that represent a successful adaptive radiation and the speciation continuum to determine how directional and purifying selection have acted to either establish derived or maintain ancestral states, respectively. First, phylogenetic and demographic (PSMC) analyses corroborated the "out-of-Africa" hypothesis for the Mallard Complex dated to 1-2 million years ago, with the most recent divergences dating to the last 500,000 years among North American species. Next, whereas genomic islands of differentiation were recovered across 44 pair-wise species comparisons representing early- and moderate-stages of divergence, genomic valleys of ancestral retention were identified across all species comparisons representing all stages of divergence. Finally, surveying gene ontology (GO) terms revealed a striking pattern in which valleys of similarity are linked to fundamental organismal functions and survival, and which outnumber islands of differentiation associated with adaptation to environmental challenges. I demonstrate

the utility in the analysis of species representing the speciation continuum to not only identify regions likely under divergent and purifying selection, but also those potential "outliers" that are in fact stochastic mirages because of genetic drift. Importantly, in the end, I find that evolutionary valleys are more predictable than genomic islands, demonstrating the strength of purifying selection in the face of speciation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Speciation continues to be a subject of extensive study in evolutionary biology, being recognized as a dynamic and continuous process rather than isolated event(s) (Hohenlohe et al., 2010; Nosil, Funk, et al., 2009; Nosil, Harmon, et al., 2009; Queiroz, 1998). Establishing genetic differentiation and structure between the genomes of diverging species has become standard when attempting to understand the speciation process (Andrew & Rieseberg, 2013; Ellegren et al., 2012; Irwin et al., 2018). Genomes of species are often heterogeneous because of the many evolutionary forces acting differentially across species (Andrew & Rieseberg, 2013; Feder et al., 2012; Ottenburghs et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2005; C.-I. Wu, 2001). Many recently diverged taxa often harbor much of the same genetic variability across their genomes, except for regions under strong and variable selective pressures. These selective forces contribute to the emergence of highly divergent genetic regions in a sea of similarity, a phenomenon recognized as "genomic islands of divergence" (Ellegren et al., 2012; Irwin et al., 2018; Ottenburghs et al., 2020). Theoretical and empirical studies suggest that the genomic regions that represent the magnitude of divergence between species are influenced by the extent of isolation (or gene flow) (Feder et al., 2012; Seehausen et al., 2014; C.-I. Wu, 2001). For example, parapatric and sympatric speciation, characterized by gene flow, may exhibit genetic differentiation under strong selection

and reduced recombination, while allopatric populations display heterogeneous divergence patterns across the genome, likely influenced by genetic drift and/or selection (Andrew & Rieseberg, 2013; Feder et al., 2012; Lavretsky, Dacosta, et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2013; Nosil & Feder, 2013; Yeaman & Whitlock, 2011). Consequently, genomic comparisons can unravel unique evolutionary trajectories, including differential adaptive histories.

In evolutionary biology, the concepts of purifying and directional selection stand as fundamental pillars in elucidating the dynamics of genetic variation within populations. Purifying selection, characterized by the removal of deleterious mutations from a population, serves as a crucial mechanism in maintaining the integrity of functional genes over successive generations (Cvijović et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2008). Conversely, directional selection propels the gradual shift of allele frequencies in response to environmental pressures, favoring particular traits that enhance an organism's fitness (Brunet et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2015). Both forms of selection play distinctive roles in the intricate process of speciation. Purifying selection acts as a stabilizing force, preserving the genetic cohesion within a population, while directional selection facilitates the divergence of populations and the emergence of new species by driving adaptive evolution (Rogozin et al., 2002). These processes leave distinct genomic signatures, with directional selection resulting in regions with high genomic differentiation and purifying selection in regions of low genetic differentiation or highly conserved regions (Casillas et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2015; Silva et al., 2014; D.-D. Wu & Zhang, 2011). A comprehensive understanding of speciation necessitates the exploration of both purifying and directional selection, as these forces collectively sculpt the genetic landscapes that define evolutionary trajectories (Brunet et al., 2021; Massingham & Goldman, 2005; Otto, 2000). Recognizing the interplay between these selective mechanisms is crucial for gaining insights into the complex

dynamics of genetic diversity and adaptation that shapes genomic diversity (Chen et al., 2017; Yang & Bielawski, 2000).

The Mallard Complex (*Anas platyrhynchos* and allies) comprises 13-14 closely related species distributed across various continents and Islands (Johnsgard, 1978; Lavretsky, McCracken, et al., 2014) that had diverged over the last million years (Johnson & Sorenson, 1999; Palmer, 1976). This radiation resulted in the Holarctic distributed mallard, while other mallard-like ducks confined to Islands or small continental ranges in the tropics or subtropics. The species complex displays diverse speciation mechanisms, including allopatry (all mallardlike ducks diverged in isolation; Lavretsky, McCracken, et al., 2014), parapatry (Mexican duck with mallard; Brown, Harrigan, et al., 2022), secondary contact (mallard with all mallard-like ducks; Lavretsky et al. 2014b), and hybrid speciation (Hawaiian duck; Lavretsky, Engilis, et al., 2015)). Being phenotypically distinct (Livezey, 1991; Palmer, 1976) but genetically similar (Lavretsky, Hernández-Baños, et al., 2014), the species within the mallard complex offer an excellent study system to study the dynamic genetic basis of speciation.

Previous studies exploring the intricacies of the speciation process have primarily focused on establishing evolutionary relationships between species, quantifying genetic differentiation, and revealing the genome-wide structure of this differentiation (Cruickshank  $\&$ Hahn, 2014; Duranton et al., 2018; Irwin et al., 2018; Turner & Hahn, 2010; Wolf & Ellegren, 2017). Despite widespread acknowledgment that the majority of new mutations affecting fitness are likely deleterious (Eyre-Walker & Keightley, 2007; Jackson et al., 2015; Pál et al., 2006), the role of purifying selection in shaping large-scale differentiation patterns remains inadequately characterized. Towards this, I delve into the subtle dynamics of speciation along its continuum by assessing whole-genome sequences of 11 (of 14) species of the Mallard Complex. I provide a

comprehensive exploration of phylogenetic relationships, demographic histories, and evolutionary forces that drove diversification of this avian lineage. Importantly, my study aims to predict regions that maintain ancestral states versus those that result in divergent lineages. I hypothesize to find the same genomic regions to be under purifying selection for ancestral states despite where species are in the divergence process, whereas regions under directional selection to be less consistent.

#### **METHODS**

#### **Sampling, DNA extraction, and whole-genome resequencing**

A total of 11 muscle tissues from individuals representing 10 species and one subspecies of the Mallard Complex were collected or provided by museums (Supplementary Table S3.1), with only the extant eastern spot-billed duck (*A. zonorhyncha*), Indian spot-billed duck (*A. poecilorhyncha*), and Meller's duck (*A. melleri*), as well as the extinct Mariana mallard (*Anas oustaleti*) missing. Note that preliminary population genetics analyses based on partial-genome data and against sets of respective reference samples of each taxa ensured that all samples had  $\geq$ 98% assignment probability to their respective taxonomic lineages; ensuring that none of my specimens were contemporary hybrids or harbored genetic diversity estimates that were not representative of their taxa. For eight samples, DNA was extracted using QIAGEN Blood & Cell Culture DNA kit following the manufacturer's protocols (Qiagen). Extracted DNA was cleaned using the Clean and Concentrated<sup>TM</sup> -25 kit following the manufacturer's protocols (Zymo Research). Following, DNA concentration was determined using Qubit fluorometer v 2.0 (Life Technologies), and DNA quality was determined using NanoDrop 2000 spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific). Clean DNA was sent to Novogenetics LTD. (Sacramento, California) for

sequencing on an Illumina HiSeq X with 150PE chemistry at a minimum of 30Gb per sample. Finally, tissue for the remaining three species (i.e. Laysan duck, Hawaiian duck, and mallard) were sent to Cantata Bio, LLC (Scotts Valley, CA) where DNA was extracted, followed by proprietary Chicago library preparation, and sequencing on an Illumina HiSeq X with 150PE chemistry at a minimum of 30 Gb per sample (also see (Lavretsky, Hernández, et al., 2023).

#### **Bioinformatics**

All raw Illumina reads were filtered and aligned using a custom in-house Python script (Python scripts available at [https://github.com/jonmohl/PopGen;](https://github.com/jonmohl/PopGen) Lavretsky et al.2020). Note that raw published sequences for the Tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula;* retrieved from NCBI, [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCF\\_009819795.1/;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCF_009819795.1/) Kraus et al. Unpublished) the Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*; retrieved from NCBI,

[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA\\_029042245.1/;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA_029042245.1/) Zhou, Unpublished), and the Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*; retrieved from NCBI,

[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA\\_026413565.1/;](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA_026413565.1/) Zhang, Unpublished) were included in alignments, but only further processed in downstream phylogenetic analyses where they served as outgroups. I first merged the Illumina paired-end sequences with the program PEAR v.0.9.11 (Zhang et al., 2014), then I trimmed and discarded poor quality reads using Trimmomatic (Bolger et al., 2014). All quality sequences were then aligned to the wild North American mallard reference genome (Lavretsky et al., 2023; Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA\_030704485.1/) using the Burrows Wheeler Aligner v07.15 (bwa; Li and Durbin, 2009). Samples were then sorted and indexed in Samtools

v1.6 (Li et al., 2009) and combined and genotyped using the bcftools v1.6 "mpileup" and "call"

functions with the following parameters "-c  $-A$  -Q 30 -q 30", which set a base pair and overall sequence PHRED score of  $\geq 30$  to ensure that high-quality sequences only are retained. Finally, alleles were further filtered for a minimum allele depth  $<$  5 (--remove-filtered 'AD $\le$ 5'), and genotypes were required to have a minimum depth of 10 (--minDP 10) from the resulting VCF file using VCFtools v0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011).

#### **Summary statistics**

Estimates of pair-wise species relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$ , absolute divergence  $(D_{XY})$ , and per species nucleotide diversity  $(\pi)$  were calculated based on non-overlapping 100-Kb windows size using the custom script popgenWindows.py script from Martin et al. (2015) (Available in: [https://github.com/simonhmartin/genomics\\_general.](https://github.com/simonhmartin/genomics_general)). Additionally, runs of homozygosity (ROH) were also calculated for each genome using all possible base-pairs as implemented in VCFtools v0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011).

## **Phylogenetic analysis**

I first filtered the full VCF file that included outgroups to include single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) that were 100 bp apart using VCFtools v0.1.17 (i.e., --thin 100; Danecek et al., 2011). The SNP dataset was further filtered with bcftools v1.6 (i.e., bcftools view-i 'COUNT(GT= "RR") >  $0 \& \text{COUNT}(GT = "AA")$  >  $0$ "; Li et al., 2009) to retain only those SNPs present at least once in my dataset as homozygous for the reference allele and homozygous for the alternative allele. I then partitioned datasets that included autosomal or the Z-sex chromosome only before generating alignments in FASTA file format using vcf2phylip.py (Ortiz, 2019). For each of these alignments I estimated the best nucleotide substitution model

using IQ-Tree (i.e., --s; Nguyen et al., 2015). I then reconstructed Maximum Likelihood species trees with 100 bootstrap replicates for each autosomal or Z-sex chromosome linked loci in RAxML-NG v.1.1.0 (Kozlov et al., 2019). Resulting trees were plotted and visualized in Figtree v.1.4.4 (Rambaut, 2012).

Divergence times were estimated for the autosomal based tree only using the penalized likelihood approach as implemented in treePL v 1.0 (Sanderson, 2002; Smith & O'Meara, 2012). The adjusted calibration points used to estimate divergence time were retrieved from timetree (Kumar et al. 2022), and included *Anas platyrhynchos* – *Aythya marila* (14.4 Mya; Mitchel et al 2014, Jiang et al. 2010, Jiang et al. 2014, Roquet et al 2014), and *Aythya fuligula* – *Aythya marila* (2.3 Mya; Fulton et al. 2012, Roquet et al. 2014). Note that I conducted a priming analysis to determine the best optimization parameters before running 18 cross-validation analyses separated by 10-fold increments starting from  $1x10^{-12}$  to find the best smoothing value. The resulting tree was visualized in FigTree v1.4.4 (Rambaut, 2012).

## **Reconstructing demographic histories**

I used the Pairwise sequential Markovian Coalescent (PSMC) model (Li & Durbin, 2011) to independently reconstruct the demographic histories from whole-genome sequences for each of the 11 taxa. PSMC estimates rates of coalescent events across a single genome and uses these to infer effective population size  $(N_E)$  in the past. PSMC analysis requires a consensus genome sequence (FASTQ) generated using SAMtools v1.3.1 (Li et al., 2009), bcftools v 1.1 (Narasimhan et al., 2016), and the vcftutils.pl scrip from bcftools to call variants from the alignment with the following command "samtools mpileup -C50 -uf ref.fas aln.bam| bcftools call -c | vcfutils.pl vcf2fq -d 10 -D 100 > diploid.fq". The minimum depth (d) and maximum depth

(D) were set up to approximately a third and twice the average depth read of each genome, respectively, and as recommended the PSMC documentation [\(https://github.com/lh3/psmc\)](https://github.com/lh3/psmc). PSMC parameters were all set as  $N = 30$ ,  $t = 5$ ,  $r = 5$  and  $p = 4+30*2+4+6+10$ ", and run with 100 bootstrap replicates (Nadachowska-Brzyska et al., 2015). Time and effective population sizes were transformed into biologically relevant numbers using generation time (G) and mutation rate (i.e.,  $1.0x10^{-9}$  per site per generation; Lavretsky et al. 2020). Note that the generation time was based on each species' average maximum age at sexual maturity (*α*) and adult survival (*s*) (i.e.,  $G = \alpha + (s/(1-s))$ ; see Supplementary Table S3.2).

# **Identifying genes within high and low divergence areas**

Relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  was estimated across 55 pair-wise species comparisons and in 100-kb windows. Note that my study was interested in determining the repeatability in the number of locations of genomic regions that are under selection, with a more specific goal, of understanding how these differ between regions under directional versus purifying selection. As a result, I did not consider any regions specific to a single taxon, but those that were found across multiple. To do so, genomic regions putatively under directional or purifying selection were based on windows representing the highest or lowest 1%, respectively, in each of the 55 comparisons. I then counted the times a selected window appeared across all 55 comparisons. Windows with at least half of the highest count per chromosome were considered (Table 3.1). For example, if an autosomal window in the highest 1%  $F_{ST}$  appeared in a maximum of 10 pairwise comparisons, then I also included any region appearing in a minimum of five comparisons. However, I also considered windows that appeared in fewer comparisons if they were located between selected windows found in the minimum number of comparisons as these regions could

indicate areas under genetic hitchhiking (a.k.a. genetic draft; (Neher, 2013), and may indicate genes of evolutionary importance. Finally, I used in-house Python scripts to extract genes within windows meeting my threshold criteria to investigate for enrichment of Gene Ontology(GO ) terms, including calculating significance with a Bonferroni correction at an adjusted *p-*value cutoff of 0.05.

Chromosome	Number of times a window appeared across all 55 comparisons for the highest 1% <b>FST</b>	# Windows meeting the threshold (half of the highest count)	Number of times a window appeared across all 55 comparisons for the lowest 1% FST	# Windows meeting the threshold (half of the highest count)
$\mathbf{1}$	21	10	55	27
$\overline{c}$	19	9	48	24
3	9	$\overline{4}$	49	24
$\overline{4}$	12	6	38	19
5	12	6	47	23
6	16	8	29	14
7	16	8	48	24
8	12	6	36	18
9	9	$\overline{4}$	43	21
10	12	6	54	27
11	16	8	28	14
12	$\overline{4}$	$\overline{2}$	36	18
13	13	6	46	23
14	8	$\overline{4}$	31	15
15	7	$\overline{3}$	39	19
16	5	$\overline{2}$	39	19
17	$\mathbf{1}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	54	27
18	10	5	55	27
19	10	5	53	26
20	9	$\overline{4}$	30	15
21	$\overline{7}$	3	55	27

**Table 3.1.** Counting method of windows per chromosome.



## **RESULTS**

## **Sequencing results**

Total Illumina sequencing data ranged from  $17 - 90x$  mean depth coverage genomes (Supplementary Table S3.3). Alignment of all genomes resulted in a total of 884,965,881bps (of  $\sim$ 1.04 Gbp) of overlapping sequence, and which contained 64,588,080 single nucleotide polymorphism (SNPs) across the 11 duck taxa and the outgroup (Supplementary Table S3.3).

# **Summary statistics**

Estimating relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  across pair-wise species comparisons yielded varying levels of genomic divergence that represent the speciation continuum (Figure 3.1). In general, values were remarkably high between the Laysan duck and the remaining species ( $Avg. F_{ST}$ ) range = 0.31 – 0.71), followed by the African Black duck (*Anas sparsa*) with a similar pattern (Figure 3.2A). Genomes with high levels of relative differentiation tended to carry lower levels of nucleotide diversity (Avg.  $\pi = 0.00085$ ) and longer runs of homozygosity (Figure 3.2 B,C). Interestingly, the African Black duck had one of the lowest levels of nucleotide diversity (Avg.  $\pi$ )  $= 0.0036$ ), but also had short runs of homozygosity (Avg. ROH  $= 6,388bp$ ). Conversely, species representing the North American clade – i.e., mallard, the American black duck, the Mexican

duck and both Mottled ducks – had the lowest levels of relative genomic differentiation (Avg. F<sub>ST</sub> range =  $0.05 - 0.42$ ) (Figure 3.2A), but the highest levels of nucleotide diversity (Avg.  $\pi$ ) range =  $0.007 - 0.008$ ), and variable runs of homozygosity (Avg. ROH range =  $6,996$  bp – 20,552 bp) (Figure 3.2C).



Figure 3.1. Speciation continuum: The continuous nature of divergence during speciation reflected in the relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  in pairwise comparison from low genetic differentiation (left) to high genetic differentiation (right) along the whole-genome sequences.



**Figure 3.2.** Summary statistics: A) Heatmap and relatedness based on means F<sub>ST</sub>, B) Means of nucleotide diversity, and C) Boxplots of run of homozygosity (ROH) per species into the Mallard complex. Note that red dots along with their values denote average ROH in each plot. Color scale is determined by their phylogenetic relationship.

#### **Phylogenetic analysis**

A total of 345,299 quality base pairs met my filtering criteria when including outgroups, with 320,023 bps (109,404 SNPs) and 24,826 bps (8,0878 SNPs) for the autosomal and Z-sex chromosome datasets, respectively. Bootstrap support values across phylogenetic nodes were high, with slightly higher values for the Z-sex chromosome compared to the autosomal based phylogeny. Regardless, four main taxonomic groups were recovered: (1) the North American clade, (2) Hawaiian Island clade, (3) Australasian Pacific clade, and (4) the African clade (Figure 3.3). First, the most basal group was the African clade in both trees. Conversely, I found that Hawaiian Island and Australasian Pacific clades swapping positions, being sister to the North American clade in Autosomal and the Z-sex chromosome-based trees, respectively (Figure 3.3). Finally, whereas the mallard was found as sister to the Mexican duck in the autosomal based tree, the mallard placed as the outgroup to the remaining North American ducks in the Z-sex chromosome-based trees.

Estimating nodal divergences in the autosomal tree suggest that the deepest split in the Mallard Complex occurred in the late Pliocene around 2.78 million years ago (Mya), while most species-level divergences occurred during the early Pleistocene between 0.72 to 1.73 Mya (Figure 3.2A). More specifically, the African clade showed the oldest split at 2.27 Mya, while the North American clade had the most recent divergence times, placing species evolution to the early Pleistocene between 0.72 to 1.30 Mya.



**Figure 3.3:** Phylogenetic tree: (Left) Based on autosomes and (Right) Based on the Z-sex chromosome.

## **Demographic history**

Using the PSMC method, I was able to trace the fluctuations in effective population size across the 11 taxa, covering most of the Pleistocene period, from as early as 10,000 years ago to as far back as nine million years (Figure 3.4). First, notable shifts in respective  $N_E$  were observed in the Mallard, Hawaiian duck, Philippine duck, Laysan duck, and Florida (FL) Mottled duck dating to the early Pleistocene cooling period (3-0.9 Mya) (Figure 3.4 B, C,I,J,K), with each of these experiencing increasing  $N<sub>E</sub>$  but displaying distinct trajectories by the end of this period. The Philippine duck and the FL Mottled duck experienced rising  $N_E$  during the mid-Brunhes event (MBE, 430-110 kya), followed by a steady decline until 10,000 years ago. Similarly, the mallard mirrored this pattern, but its  $N_E$  stabilized at the beginning of the Last Ice age (LIA, 110) kya). Conversely, both the Laysan duck and the Hawaiian duck exhibited a sharp decrease in effective population size during the LIA, despite a slight increase at the end of the MBE. The remining duck species, including the Yellow-billed duck, (WGC) Mottled duck, Mexican duck,

American Black duck, African Black duck, and New Zealand Grey Duck, showed a steady increase in their  $N_E$  at the beginning of the MBE, continuing into the beginning of the LIA, but with different trajectories by the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM, 26,500-19,000) (Figure 3.4 A,D, E,F,G,H). During this last glacial period, the Yellow-billed duck, Mexican duck, and New Zealand Grey duck exhibited an increase in their  $N_E$ , followed by a decline by the period's end, except for the New Zealand Grey duck that continued to increase. Conversely, the African Black duck, WGC Mottled duck, and American Black duck experienced a decrease in effective population size during the LGM, with the WGC Mottled duck and African black duck continuing a constant decline afterward, while the American Black duck showed a trend toward increasing its population size.



**Figure 3.4:** Demographic analyses: PSMC results of each mallard-like duck.

## **Identifying genes within high and low divergence areas**

Outlier windows were based on relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  estimated across all 55 pairwise species comparisons and based on non-overlapping 100 kbp windows. For autosomes, the maximum number of pair-wise comparisons for any of the top and bottom  $1\%$  of  $F_{ST}$  windows was 21 and 55, respectively, resulting in the selection of those windows found in a minimum of

10 and 25 comparisons for respective top and bottom windows. For the Z-sex chromosome, the maximum count for the top and bottom 1% of  $F_{ST}$  windows was 9 and 46, respectively, resulting in the selection of those windows found in a minimum of 4 and 23 comparisons for respective top and bottom windows (Table 3.1). Windows within the highest 1% of  $F_{ST}$  estimates across autosomes harbored a total of 194 gene ontology terms (GO terms), 47 of which were found to be significantly enriched (Figure 3.5, Table S3.4, S3.5). Similarly, a total of 360 GO terms were identified in the windows within the lowest  $1\%$  F<sub>ST</sub> estimates of autosomes, but only 17 were found to be significantly enriched (Figure 3.5, Table S3.4, S3.6). Conversely, windows within the highest 1% of F<sub>ST</sub> estimates across the Z-sex chromosome harbored a total of 130 GO terms, 17 of which were significantly enriched, whereas a total of 107 GO terms were found in the windows within the lowest 1% F<sub>ST</sub>, with 57 being significantly enriched (Figure 3.5, Table S3.4, S3.5, S3.6). Interestingly, prior to enrichment analyses, I recovered most GO terms among the lowest and highest  $F_{ST}$  windows for Autosomes and the Z-sex chromosome, respectively (Figure 3.5). However, this relationship flips when considering statistical significance in enrichment, with most enriched GO terms being in the highest versus the lowest  $F_{ST}$  windows for Autosomes and the Z-sex chromosome, respectively (Figure 3.5). Additionally, I recovered ~10% of GO terms shared among the highest and lowest  $F_{ST}$  windows, with only  $\sim$ 3% of these being significantly enriched (Figure 3.5).

GO terms that were significantly enriched among autosomes were associated with positive regulation in several processes related to immune systems, reproduction, and growth (Table S3.4, S3.5). Among GO terms that were significantly enriched within the Z-sex chromosome, I identified processes related to respiratory and circulatory system function, as well as inflammatory response and reproduction (Table S3.4, S3.6). Finally, a total of 51 and 27 GO

terms were found to be in both highest and lowest  $F_{ST}$  windows in autosomes and the Z-sex chromosome, respectively, but with only two of these being significantly enriched in both instances (Figure 3.5), and associated with reverse transcription (i.e., GO:0006278-"RNAdirected DNA polymerase activity and GO:0003964-"RNA-dependent DNA biosynthetic process").



ID of GO Terms

**Figure 3.5:** Ven Diagram: GO Term enrichment analyses for Autosome genes and Z-sex genes for the 1% highest and lowest  $F_{ST}$ . The number in red represents significant number of Go Terms.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Here, I provide the first genomic analysis of taxa representing a recently radiated Mallard Complex. In general, whole-genome data provided higher nodal support than before, but with taxonomic relationships following those derived from either multiple loci (Lavretsky,

McCracken, et al., 2014) or partial-genome data (Lavretsky, DaCosta, et al., 2019). Once again, I provide support for the "out-of-Africa" hypothesis for the Mallard Complex (Lavretsky, McCracken, et al., 2014; Palmer, 1976), with the African clade being basal to the others in both autosomal and Z-sex chromosomes-based trees (Figure 3.3). However, whereas the Hawaiian clade is sister to the North American clade in the Autosomal based tree (bootstrap support = 100), it is the Oceanic clade that is sister to the North American clade in the Z-sex chromosomesbased tree (bootstrap support  $= 87$ ). Previously, Lavretsky et al (2014) hypothesized that the dispersal into the Holarctic and Oceania likely proceeded simultaneously, and thus, clade switching may be because of varying evolutionary histories of these marker-types during the divergence process (Degnan & Rosenberg, 2009; Ellegren et al., 2012; Peters et al., 2014). Moreover, this clade switching may simply be because of the unique hybrid evolutionary history of Hawaiian ducks, causing signal biases in bifurcating tree analyses that do not capture more complex evolutionary histories (i.e., hybrid speciation; Lavretsky et al., 2015b). The only other discordance between the autosomal or Z-sex chromosome-based trees is the placement of the mallard that is either sister to the Mexican duck or outgroup to the remaining North American species, respectively. The same discordance in marker-type based tree reconstruction was recovered when analyzing multiple individuals and partial-genome data; however, mallards were sister to Mexican ducks when analyzing non-outlier autosomal regions only (Lavretsky, DaCosta, et al., 2019). In fact, the topology of the North American clade derived in my Z-sex chromosome-based tree was identical to trees derived from double digest restriction-site associated DNA sequencing (ddRADseq) SNPs of Autosomal outlier regions or the Z-sex chromosome regardless if they were recovered in putatively outlier or non-outlier regions. Together, I conclude that recency of the North American clades divergence resulting in high

rates of incomplete-lineage sorting (ILS) likely biases autosomal based trees when including all possible sites, moving the mallard to the species that most recently diverged from it (i.e., Mexican duck; Lavretsky et al., 2019).

The topology of my Z-sex chromosome-based tree (Figure 3.3) corresponds with previous studies more specifically examining evolutionary histories of Mexican ducks (Brown et al., 2022), American black ducks (Lavretsky, Janzen, et al., 2019), and mottled ducks (Peters et al., 2016) that all support each of the four North American monochromatic species diverging nearly simultaneously from the dichromatic mallard in the last 500,000 years. Indeed, species-specific demographic analyses generally recover non-zero effective population sizes for American black ducks, Mexican ducks, and WGC mottled ducks starting only 100,000 years ago, which are all distinct from when the non-zero effective population size of wild mallards dating to 1.5 million years ago (Figure 3.4). I posit that genetic drift may be biasing demographic inferences for FL mottled ducks that are the only ones with near-zero demographics today, suggesting these likely have gone through a severe bottleneck more recently; which is known to distort demographic analyses (Brown et al., 2022; Lavretsky et al., 2023). Unlike the FL mottled duck, the American black duck (Figure 3.4G) and Mexican duck (Figure 3.4F) have experienced general population growths with today's effective population size being ~600,000. Whereas the WGC mottled duck experienced population declines since  $\sim$  30,000 years ago, their effective population remains at 100,000 today (Figure 3.4E). Together, evolutionary models support a scenario in which the mallard that evolved in Eurasia millions of years ago (Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023) invaded and expanded in North America in the last million years, before pockets of them were isolated during glaciation events that resulted in the loss of dichromatism and evolution of these ecological

replacements post-glaciation and over the last 500,000 years (Lavretsky, DaCosta, et al., 2019; Omland, 1997).

Next, my phylogenetic and demographic analyses place the evolution of this species complex to the last 2.5 to 1 million years before present, respectively (Figures 3.3  $\&$  3.4). Nevertheless, the disparity in time estimates between methods was primarily driven by those derived from my autosomal based phylogenetic tree that were nearly twice that of demographic analyses and previous studies (Brown et al., 2022; Lavretsky et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2015a, 2015b, 2014b). This elevated time estimate is likely a result of the dating method in treePL, which incorporates age constraints based on both fossil data and ages reported in source papers (Smith & O'Meara, 2012; Tims et al., 2021). In my study, the dating method relied solely on previous reported age estimates in papers (see methods) because of the lack of fossil or geological evidence within the Anatidae group. Assessing divergence time estimation using molecular data is crucial in biology, however several challenges remain including nucleotide substitution rates and fossil calibration (Pennington et al., 2004; Püschel et al., 2020). I stress the importance of considering fossil to date the Anatidae group whenever possible to mitigate the disagreements in age estimates.

# **Evolutionary histories and standing genetic diversity within a species radiation**

Although I found a general negatively correlated trend between nucleotide diversity and runs of homozygosity (ROH) as would be expected (Bosse et al., 2019; Curik et al., 2014; Willoughby et al., 2015), my result was not significant (*p-value* = 0.718; Supplementary Figure S3.1). Increases in ROH proceeded with declining nucleotide diversity except within the two subspecies of mottled ducks and the Mexican duck (Figure 3.2B, 3.2C). Specifically, despite

having similar mean nucleotide diversity as the other North American clade taxa (Figure 3.2B), and which were also concordant with previous estimates (Lavretsky, DaCosta, et al., 2019; Peters et al., 2016), they had the highest average ROH of any taxa (Figure 3.2C). In fact, the only other species with similar ROH estimates is the Laysan duck, which is known to have gone through a severe bottleneck to 11 individuals in 1911 (Reynolds & Klavitter, 2006). This event explains its having the lowest levels of nucleotide diversity (Figure 3.2B) and corresponding to previous population genetics studies uncovering limited genetic diversity at several nuclear introns and major histocompatibility genes (Lavretsky, Engilis Jr, et al., 2014; Lavretsky, McCracken, et al., 2014). This discordance in mottled ducks and the Mexican duck suggest specific demographic or evolutionary scenarios, such as recent population bottleneck, founder effect or inbreeding within small populations. During such events, genetic diversity is reduced because of loss of rare alleles, leading to increase in homozygosity (Allendorf et al., 2001; Bosse et al., 2019; Hedrick, 2015). However, during the subsequent expansion phases or ongoing recombination events, new mutations may arise, leading to increases in nucleotide diversity that is unequally distributed across the genome. Indeed, previous studies have suggested that mottled duck populations reflect historical isolation and divergence by neutral genetic drift (Peters et al. 2016), and Mexican ducks evolving through sequential founder events (Brown et al 2022) both potentially contributing to their long runs of homozygosity. Similarly, the African Black duck shows disparities between nucleotide diversity and ROH, harboring low levels of nucleotide diversity but short runs of homozygosity (Figure 3.2B, 3.2C). Although the cause for these disparities will require additional genomes and analyses, it is evident that nucleotide diversity is not always equally distributed across the genome because of specific historical, demographic, or evolutionary factors influencing the genetic landscape of populations.

The genetic diversity of each taxon expectedly translated to unique demographic histories (Figure 3.4; Kim et al., 2016; Nadachowska-Brzyska et al., 2015). First, mallards and American black ducks that harbored the highest mean calculated diversity (Figure 3.2B) and shortest ROH (Figure 3.2C) also had some of the most exponential growths, along with cycles in effective population size in their respective time-sets (Figure 3.4G & 3.4J). Next, yellow-billed ducks and New Zealand grey ducks represent species with moderate levels of nucleotide diversity and ROH generally (Fogure 3.2B&3.2C), and each of these also have exponentially increasing effective population sizes (Figure 3.4A&3.4H) but more gradually than mallards or American black ducks. Finally, Philippine ducks and Laysan ducks are species that represent the tail-end of both nucleotide diversity and ROH estimations that suggests strong effects of genetic drift in their evolutionary histories, and coinciding with recovered demographic histories (i.e., Philippine duck & Laysan duck; Figures 3.4B & 3.4C). However, severe cases of genetic drift are known to strongly bias demographic analyses (Walsh et al., 2019), and thus, I caution interpretating demographic analyses for these species. Although, the yellow-billed duck's demographic history extends one million years before present and may represent the extant ancestor of this species complex, the lack of diversity in the African black duck's genome limited resolution (Figure 3.4D); and thus, determining which of these may have been the most basal lineage remains unresolved. Similarly, the demographic history reconstructed for the Hawaiian duck requires careful consideration as they represent a putative hybrid species (Lavretsky, Engilis, et al., 2015). In fact, the recovered pattern of effective population size for Hawaiian ducks (Figure 3.4K) is indeed intermediate in pattern between those recovered in their putative parental taxa, mallards (Figure 3.4J) and Laysan ducks (Figure 3.4C). Together, I conclude that researchers attempting

to understand evolutionary histories through similar demographic analyses need to carefully consider whether their genomes may have been affected by severe bottlenecking or represent ancient or contemporary hybrids, as these factors can introduce significant biases (Brown, Harrigan, et al., 2022; Mattingsdal et al., 2020).

#### **Genomic comparisons across the speciation continuum reveals selective heterogeneity**

Estimating pair-wise species relative differentiation  $(F_{ST})$  revealed genomes representing the speciation continuum (Figure 3.1). Whereas species at the earliest stages of divergence are important to identify genomic regions putatively under directional selection (i.e., American black duck vs Mallard), I found that those at the intermediate and later stages of divergence provided a view of genomic valleys where purifying selection maintains ancestral polymorphisms (i.e., Laysan duck vs African black duck; Figure 3.1). Traditionally, evolutionary studies focused on identifying genomics islands responsible for species divergence (Duranton et al., 2018; Ottenburghs et al., 2020; Renaut et al., 2013; Sendell-Price et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2005; Wolf & Ellegren, 2017). However, I argue that understanding the strength and location of purifying selection across species complexes is equally important (Cvijović et al., 2018; Hofer et al., 2012; Roesti et al., 2012; Sendell-Price et al., 2020; Van Doren et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). This perspective provides clues on how ancestral states are maintained in the face of genetic drift and divergent selection. To do so, I apply a novel method to demarcate the  $1\%$  F<sub>ST</sub> outlier regions putatively under directional (i.e. islands) versus purifying (i.e., valleys) selection, which resulted in 98 and 196 total regions, respectively (Supplementary Table S3.4). Specifically, a total of 63 and 182 windows were recovered as top and bottom 1% in autosomal chromosomes, while 35 and 14 windows represented the top and bottom 1% in the Z-sex chromosome. Notably, previous

studies have used extreme percentiles of the distribution (with an arbitrary threshold) for a given summary statistics, such as  $F_{ST}$ , to identify outliers from divergent peaks (Campagna et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2019; Wolf & Ellegren, 2017), or weighted statistical techniques, such as kernel smoother to identify both high or low diverged regions (Sendell-Price et al., 2020; Van Doren et al., 2017). My results align with the expected divergence process, wherein differentiation accumulates between populations, initially forming distinct regions or islands of differentiation at the beginning of the species continuum. As populations progress along this continuum, genomic islands expand because of linkage disequilibrium, facilitating divergence of neutral and weakly selected loci via divergence hitchhiking (Nosil et al. 2009, Feder and Nosil 2010). Towards the middle of the species continuum, highly conserved regions (i.e. genomic valleys) emerge, characterized by significantly lower differentiation compared to the background levels, potentially influencing genomic heterogeneity and slowing genome-wide divergence. My findings underscore the pivotal roles of genomic islands and valleys in shaping the genomic landscape across the speciation continuum, evident across all mallard-like duck population comparisons.

In general, the functional patterns of Gene Ontology (GO) Terms were related with both adaptation and reproductive isolation as evidenced by their distribution across autosomes and the Z-sex chromosome. Those identified in the top 1% in autosomes and Z-sex chromosome were linked to potential directional selection, likely playing crucial roles in evolutionary adaptation or diversification (Supplementary Table S3.3, S3.5). Many of these GO terms were closely associated in reproductive processes, such as the developmental process involved reproduction (GO:0003006 ), oocyte maturation (GO:0001556), as well as positive regulation of oocyte

development (GO:0060282), all of which are crucial for sex determination and development (Machado et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2021). Such mechanisms play a fundamental role in increasing reproductive isolation (Stöck et al., 2021). Moreover, the enrichment analysis suggests association with pathways involved in immune response (GO:0002684, GO:0070233), growth regulation (GO:0003420, GO:1902733, GO:0008083), development processes (GO:0007431, GO:0008340), or hormone activity (GO:0005179), allowing organisms to adapt to different environmental challenges or pathogen pressures. Conversely, significant GO terms in the bottom 1% that are associated with potential purifying selection, enrichment analysis suggests tight connections to essential metabolic pathways or highly conserved protein-coding regions (Supplementary Table S3.3, S3.6). For example, glutamate-5-semialdehyde dehydrogenase activity (GO:0004350) is related to molecular functions such as biosynthesis of amino acids from the glutamine family, such as arginine, glutamate, gutamine and proline (QuickGo,2024). Genes related to amino acid biosynthesis are often conserved (Heizer et al., 2011), highlighting their crucial role in cellular function and survival. Similarly, enriched GO terms found in the Z-sex chromosome are also involved in essential cellular processes crucial for organismal function and survival. These processes include DNA replication (GO:0006166), RNA transcription (GO:0042789), protein synthesis (GO:0019509), cellular signaling (GO:0017061, GO:0018344, GO:1902165), and intracellular transport (GO:0016021, GO:0031422). Finally, I argue that any GO terms in the windows comprising both islands and valleys are more likely a result of random drift, as these clearly can be fixed or lost in these species (Figure 3.5). This likely explains why only ~2% of these GO terms were recovered as statistically enriched. Together, these comparisons provide a means to better understand the roles

of directional and purifying selection, as well as random chance (i.e., genetic drift) play in shaping genomic diversity.

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# **Chapter 4: Unknown Biases: Understanding how anthropogenic hybridization impact genomic diversity and demographic estimates**

# **ABSTRACT**

Anthropogenic hybridization can profoundly influence the genetic landscape of wild populations. In particular, whereas the crossing of two outbred lineages may result in increasing genetic diversity, though likely resulting in lost local adaptations, hybridization with inbred individuals can result in decreasing diversity. Here, I focus on the latter as I investigate consequences of hybridization between domestic and wild mallard-like ducks across diverse ecological regions and with varied stocking histories in Hawaii, New Zealand, and North America. I re-sequence whole-genomes representing domestic and wild congeners, as well as the resulting hybrids that span admixture levels across ecoregions. For each genome, I assessed genetic diversity, runs of homozygosity, and estimated demographic parameters. First, I report that wild genomes consistently harbored higher levels of genetic diversity, lower runs of homozygosity, and lower inbreeding coefficients as compared to the respective domestic lineage. Importantly, the resulting summary statistics for the respective admixed individuals followed proportional contributions of their parental groups, including hybrids tending towards domestic ancestry possessing higher inbreeding coefficients. Among ecoregions, however, I recovered the strongest statistical correlation between ancestry and summary statistics for North America where domestic gamefarm mallards continue to be released and annually interact with wild populations. Conversely, both Islands in which stocking efforts largely ceased decades ago and/or populations are maintained at low numbers I find evidence of adaptive selection and genetic drift as the overwhelming forces on the genomes in New Zealand and Hawaii, respectively. Finally, I

demonstrate how inferences of demographic histories using genomes born of the domestication process or hybrid origins can be extremely biased, resulting in distorted estimates of effective population size (Ne) and divergence times. I discuss the intricate interaction among domestication, anthropogenic hybridization, and wildlife conservation in the Anthropocene. Together, I conclude that the use of highly inbred individuals when attempting to supplement populations of wild congeners not only results in high levels of hybridization, but that the resulting offspring are increasingly inbred themselves, which has real conservation and adaptive consequences.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Anthropogenic hybridization refers to the process whereby human activities, directly or indirectly, lead to interbreeding between previously isolated taxa (McFarlane & Pemberton, 2019; Ottenburghs, 2021). The frequency of such events are increases because of humanmediated habitat modifications, fragmentation, and the introduction of exotic species that facilitate the breakdown of reproductive isolation between sympatric species (Grabenstein & Taylor, 2018) or result in secondary contact between previously allopatric taxa (McFarlane & Pemberton, 2019). Anthropogenic hybridization can have significant constructive or destructive outcomes for the interbreeding populations. It can be beneficial in terms of adaptive introgression or an increase in genetic diversity (Crispo et al., 2011; Ottenburghs, 2021). However, it can also result in genetic swamping or extinction by hybridization (Rhymer  $\&$ Simberloff, 1996; Todesco et al., 2016). In recent decades, studies have highlighted numerous examples of anthropogenic hybridization occurring across a range of taxa, from plants (Guo, 2014; Lamont et al., 2003) to mammals (Adavoudi & Pilot, 2022; Salvatori et al., 2019) and

birds (Casas et al., 2012; Grabenstein et al., 2023; Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023), recognizing the evolutionary significance of hybridization. In conservation biology, anthropogenic hybridization poses challenges for species management and conservation efforts, as it can threaten their genetic native status or loss of local adaptations (Allendorf et al., 2001; Rhymer & Simberloff, 1996). Understanding the mechanisms and consequences of anthropogenic hybridization is therefore important for developing effective strategies to mitigate its impacts on Biodiversity.

An increasing concern within the realm of anthropogenic hybridization involves the interbreeding between domesticated animals and their wild relatives. The uncontrolled diffusion of domestic organisms, including establishment of feral populations, might lead to loss of genetic diversity and eventual local extinctions via introgressive hybridization (Randi, 2008; Rhymer & Simberloff, 1996). In particular, such interbreeding may not only introduce genes favored under artificial selection that are maladaptive in natural environments, but can also result in the disruption of locally adaptive gene complexes; and both leading to a reduction in the fitness of wild populations (Kidd et al., 2009). Examples of interbreeding between domesticated and wild counterparts includes terrestrial carnivores (dogs, cats), ungulates (pigs, goats), game stocks (Galliformes, waterfowl), and many fish species (Ottenburghs, 2021; Rhymer & Simberloff, 1996).

Finally, introgressed domestic genes can result in complex genetic patterns that may obscure demographic signals and bias population genetic analyses (Brown et al., 2022; Lavretsky, Hernández, et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2022). Despite the advances of genome-sequencing and demographic models such as Pairwise Sequentially Markovian Coalescent (PSMC, Li and Durbin, 2011), few studies have explored how introgressive hybridization may affect PSMC inferences. In particular, analyzing genomes of hybrids that vary in admixed ancestry is required

to fully realize the power of PSMC when attempting to reconstruct population histories from confounded genomes.

#### *Study System*

The world-wide popularity of the mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) among hunters and consumers has led to the generation of various domestic breeds, including captive breeding of strains specifically aimed for release into the wild to increase recreational opportunities (Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023; Schummer et al., 2023; Söderquist et al., 2017). However, the consequences of these human activities on the resilience of wild populations, particularly in relation to hybridization with these domestic mallards in their natural habitats, remain largely unknown. In particular, the release of the domestic game-farm mallard strain has resulted in wide-spread hybridization in all instances, including the formation of hybrid swarm of the Hawaiian duck (*Anas wyviliana*) and mallard outside the island of Kaua'i (Wells et al. 2019) and the New Zealand grey duck (*Anas supercilious*; Brown, 2021). Briefly, game-farm mallards were first imported to the Hawaiian Islands in early 1800s for food and hunting purposes (Engilis, Pyle, Davis 2004, Pyle and Pyle 2017). The Hawaiian duck was extirpated from the main Hawaiian Islands except Kaua'i by the 1960s, and while reintroductions were conducted in O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i from the late 1950s through the early 1990s (USFWS, 2012), the presence of feral mallards on those islands resulted in feral mallard x Hawaiian duck hybrid swarms by the 2000s (Wells et al. 2019). Similarly, the release of over 30,000 game-farm mallards into New Zealand between the 1860s to the 1950s resulted in a current census population of ~3 million (Williams, 2017) and resulting in wide-spread hybridization with and near genetic extinction of the endemic New Zealand grey duck (Brown, 2021). Whereas these endemic Island species were always found in small numbers (Engilis Jr. et al., 2020; Gillespie,

1985; USGS, 2007), which may explain their vulnerability to genetic extinction, a similar scenario is occurring at a more continental scales in Eurasia (Champagnon et al., 2013; Söderquist et al., 2017) and North America (Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023), where game-farm mallards continue to be released in mass today. In North America, the release of game-farm mallards across the last 100 years has recently been confirmed to have resulted in widespread and continuous hybridization with wild mallards. The eastern part of North American is now considered a game-farm x wild mallards hybrid swarm (Lavretsky et al., 2020; Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023). Whereas these examples highlight the profound impact of human activities can have on wild populations, they also present an opportunity to test whether hybridization results in similar consequences as each instance is between the same domestic lineage (Lavretsky et al. 2023).

Here, I aim to explore the consequences of secondary contact between domestic and wild congeners on genomic diversity and demographic estimates using regions that exhibit diverse ecologies and differing degrees of domesticated mallard release, including Hawaii, New Zealand, and North America. I analyzed whole-genome sequences of genetically vetted domestic and wild parental species, as well as various backcrosses that comprise identified domestic x wild swarms in the three regions. The domestication process often profoundly alters the genomic landscape towards increasingly lowered levels of genetic diversity as these breeds are exposed to serial generations of artificial selection; whether intended or not (Kidd et al., 2009; Ottenburghs, 2021). As a result, I predict that genomes representing domestic lineages will have lower levels of genetic diversity, increased runs of homozygosity, and generally higher levels of inbreeding as compared to their local wild relative (Crispo et al., 2011; Hedrick, 2015). Next, I hypothesize that the same measures of diversity/inbreeding will scale with the domestic level of admixture

among hybrid offspring. Finally, studies have demonstrated that genomes that have undergone severe bottlenecking or are highly admixed can result in biased demographic inferences (C. A. Martin et al., 2023). Thus, I also take this opportunity to determine levels of bias when estimating effective population size  $(N_E)$ , often a critical value used to assess conservation status (Lu et al., 2022), using genomes of domestic or hybrid origin. Together, my study provides insight into the genetic consequences of anthropogenic hybridization and its impact on overall genetic diversity of wild populations; something that is increasingly needed in the Anthropocene (Buckley & Catford, 2016; Ottenburghs, 2021).

#### **METHODS**

#### **Sampling, DNA extraction, whole-genome resequencing, and variant calling**

A total of 18 muscle tissue samples representing wild and domestic duck populations found in the Hawaiian Islands, New Zealand, and North America were collected or provided by museums (Supplementary Table S4.1). Note that all samples were picked by previous ancestry assignments obtained across population genetics studies using partial-genome data conducted in Hawaii (Wells et al. 2019), New Zealand (Brown 2021), and North America (Lavretsky 2023). Doing so, increased the likelihood each sample represented each genetic group recovered in those studies. Next, two (of 18) samples (i.e. Hawaiian duck, and North American wild mallard) were first sent to Cantata Bio, LLC (Scotts Valley, CA) where DNA was extracted, followed by proprietary Chicago library preparation, and sequencing on an Illumina HiSeq X to ~330M read pairs using 150bp paired-end (PE) chemistry per sample. For the remaining 16 tissues, DNA was extracted using QIAGEN Blood & Cell Culture DNA kit according to the manufacturer's protocols (Qiagen), followed by additional cleaning using the Clean and Concentrated<sup>TM</sup> -25 kit

as per manufacturer's instructions (Zymo Research). Subsequently, DNA concentration and quality were determined using Qubit fluorometer v 2.0 (Life Technologies),and a NanoDrop spectrophotometer (Nanodrop 2000, Thermo Scientific), respectively. Extracted DNA was then sent to Novogenetics LTD (Sacramento, California) for library preparation and sequencing using 150 bp PE chemistry on a NovaSeq 6000 until ≥30Gb was achieved per sample.

Raw Illumina paired-end reads were first merged with the program PEAR v.0.9.11 (Zhang et al., 2014), then I trimmed or discarded poor quality sequences using Trimmomatic (Bolger et al., 2014), followed by sequence alignment to the recently published reference-scale wild North American mallard genome (Lavretsky et al., 2023; Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/datasets/genome/GCA\_030704485.1/) using the Burrows Wheeler Aligner v. 07.15 (bwa; Li and Durbin, 2009). Samples were then sorted and indexed in Samtools v1.6 (H. Li et al., 2009) and combined and genotyped using the bcftools "mpileup" and "call" functions with the following parameters "-c  $-A$  -Q 30 -q 30", which set a base pair and overall sequence PHRED score of ≥30 to ensure that high-quality sequences only are retained. The resulting VCF file was then filtered using VCFTOOLS v.0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011) with a minimum quality of 30 (-minQ 30), a minimum depth of 10 (-minDP 10) and removing all sites with a minimum allele depth of 5 (-remove-filtered 'AD<5'). Note that bioinformatic steps were automated using the in-house Python script (Python scripts available at

[https://github.com/jonmohl/PopGen;](https://github.com/jonmohl/PopGen) Lavretsky et al.2020).

#### **Measures of genetic diversity**

For each genome, I assessed genetic diversity by calculating nucleotide diversity  $(\pi)$  across nonoverlapping 100-Kb windows using the custom script popgenWindows.py script from Martin et

al. (2015) (Available in: [https://github.com/simonhmartin/genomics\\_general.](https://github.com/simonhmartin/genomics_general)). For runs of homozygosity (ROH), I used VCFtools v0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011) and calculated using all possible base-pairs. Finally, SNP-based inbreeding coefficients  $(F_{IS})$  were calculated using VCFtools v0.1.17 (Danecek et al., 2011).

### **Inference of demographic history**

I inferred effective population size  $(N_E)$  across time for each genome using the Pairwise sequential Markovian Coalescent (PSMC) model (H. Li & Durbin, 2011). PSMC analyses require a consensus genome sequence (FASTQ) generated using SAMtools v1.3.1 (H. Li et al., 2009), bcftools v1.1 (Narasimhan et al., 2016), and the vcftutils.pl scrip from bcftools to call variants from the alignment with the following command "samtools mpileup -C50 -uf ref.fas aln.bam| bcftools call -c | vcfutils.pl vcf2fq -d 10 -D 100 > diploid.fq". The minimum depth (d) and maximum depth (D) were set up to approximately a third and twice the average depth read of each genome, respectively, and as recommended (see [https://github.com/lh3/psmc\)](https://github.com/lh3/psmc). Parameters were set to include  $N= 30$ ,  $t = 5$ ,  $r = 5$  and  $p = 4+30*2+4+6+10$ ", and analyses run with 100 bootstrap replicates (Nadachowska-Brzyska et al., 2015). The generation time (G) was calculated for each duck based on their average maximum age at sexual maturity (*α*) and adult survival (*s*) following the following formula  $G = \alpha + (s/(1-s))$ , and using a mutation rate of to  $1.0 \times 10^{-9}$  per site per generation (Lavretsky et al. 2020). For mallard-like ducks, the age of maturity is typically 1 year (i.e.  $\alpha = 1$ ; Alerstam & Högstedt, 1982). However, I estimated the average survival rate individually. For wild mallards, this survival rate is ~0.57 (i.e. range: 0.46– 0.68; (Arnold & Clark, 1996; Drilling et al., 2020; Smith & Reynolds, 1992); resulting in an estimated generation time of 2.32 years. For New Zealand grey duck, the survival rate is 0.56

(Caithness et al., 1991), leading to an estimated generation time of 2.27 years. For Hawaiian ducks, the survival rate is 0.74 (Malakowski, in review), resulting in an estimated generation time of 3.97 years. For all the domestic mallards and the domestic x wild hybrids, I used the same estimated generation time as for wild mallards.

### **RESULTS**

All genomes were sequenced to mean coverage depths ranging from  $17x - 84x$  (Table S4.2), with high alignment similarity  $(\sim 99\%)$  across the 879,691,675 quality base pairs, including 63,805,135 single nucleotide polymorphism (SNPs) that passed filtering. Note that I limited downstream analyses to autosomes only.

# **Measures of genetic diversity**

Among genomes representing wild species, mallards had the highest nucleotide diversity (Avg.  $\pi$ )  $= 0.0083$ ), smallest ROH (Avg. Autosomal ROH  $= 5,306$  bp), and lowest inbreeding coefficients (Avg. F<sub>IS</sub> = 0.23) as compared to Hawaiian ducks (Avg.  $\pi$  = 0.0068, Avg. Autosomal ROH = 24,642 bp, Avg. F<sub>IS</sub> = 0.35) and New Zealand grey ducks (Avg.  $\pi$  = 0.0063, Avg. Autosomal  $ROH = 5,582$  bp, Avg.  $F_{IS} = 0.39$  (Table 4.1). In each case, however, summary statistics for the representative domestic genomes were not necessarily worse as compared to their respective endemic wild congener, with those from Hawaii (Avg.  $\pi = 0.0067$ , Avg. Autosomal ROH = 37,389 bp, Avg.  $F_{IS} = 0.37$ ) generally having less favorable statistics compared to New Zealand (Avg.  $\pi$  = 0.0074, Avg. Autosomal ROH = 15,255 bp, Avg. F<sub>IS</sub> = 0.28) and North America (Avg.  $\pi$  = 0.0068, Avg. Autosomal ROH = 26,991 bp, Avg. F<sub>IS</sub> = 0.34). In fact, genomes representing game-farm x wild mallard hybrids in North America were the only set that showed expected and

statistically significant correlations between levels of domestic ancestry and summary statistics, with ROH and inbreeding coefficients being positively and nucleotide diversity negatively correlated (Figure 4.1A). Although correlation between levels of domestic ancestry and summary statistics were also statistically significant for genomes from New Zealand, I found increasing nucleotide diversity and decreasing inbreeding coefficients with increasing domestic ancestry; although ROH remained positively correlated with domestic ancestry, the values were generally very short (Figure 4.1B; Table 4.1). Finally, none of the summary statistics were significantly correlated with domestic ancestry among genomes from Hawaii, with generally similar summary statistics regardless of domestic ancestry levels (Figure 4.1C; Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1.** Per sample average nucleotide diversity  $(\pi)$ , runs of homozygosity (ROH), and inbreeding coefficients ( $F_{IS}$ ), as well as the effective population size ( $N_E$ ) obtained from the most recent time estimate from demographic analyses (Figs. 3-4). Note that samples are broken up by ecoregion and includes representative category based on the proportion of domestic ancestry assigned from partial genome data from previous population genetics studies (Wells et al. 2019, Brown 2021, Lavretsky et al. 2023).







Figure 4.1: Correlation between domestic parental ancestry and measures of genetic diversity per sample.

## **Demographic history**

PSMC analyses reliably estimated effective population size  $(N_E)$  up to at least 1.5 million years before present (Figures  $4.2 - 4.4$ ). Among genomes representing wild species, both the wild North American mallard and the Hawaiian duck exhibit similar demographic patterns, with an increasing effective population size starting around 1 million years before present (YBP). The

wild North American mallard reached its peak effective population size around 175,000 YBP before declining, stabilizing at an effective population size of  $\sim$ 3 million since 100,000 YBP. In contrast, the Hawaiian duck reached its peak effective population size around 570,000 YBP before experiencing declines, followed by a second increase around 100,000 YBP, and stabilizing at a contemporary effective population size of around 50,000 individuals. Finally, I recovered a continuous increase in effective population size since around 150,000 YBP for the New Zealand grey duck, reaching a contemporary effective population size of 100,000.

Next, the general trend in the increase of  $N<sub>E</sub>$  in deep time followed by a continuous reduction to near-zero today that was recovered across genomes representing domestic lineages is concordant with the fact that both Hawaii's and New Zealand's feral populations and those that are being released in North America are genetic lineages of the same game-farm mallard breed (Lavretsky et al. 2023). Nevertheless, the peak population sizes and times associated with changing  $N_E$  differed. Nearly identical demographic histories were recovered for domestic genomes from North America (Figure 4.2A) and Hawaii (Figure 4.4A), with  $N_E$  exponentially increasing up to ~700,000 years before present (YBP) before gradually declining to a contemporary effective population size of 10,000 individuals today. For the domestic genome from New Zealand, I recovered an increasing  $N_E$  to around 270,000 YBP before gradually decreasing to a contemporary effective population size of 230,000 today.

Finally, genomes representing the various domestic x wild hybrids tended to recover demographic histories closely tied to the parental taxa that is overwhelmingly represented in its genome. Although hybrid genomes did tend to show intermediate estimates in  $N<sub>E</sub>$  across time relative to their parental taxa, both  $N_E$  and time were substantially distorted (Figures 4.2-4.4). For example, genomes comprised of more wild mallard in North America (i.e., Hybrid 1 & 2;

Figure 4.2) showed a similar, though depressed pattern in  $N_E$ , but with these patterns consistently pushed forward in time. Interestingly, Hybrid 3 that was closest to 50:50 ancestry split between game-farm and wild mallard based on partial genome data (Table 4.1; Lavretsky et al. 2023) showed the expected combination effect by essentially depressing the wild signature through time but without a time-shift in those patterns (Figure 4.2). Conversely, genomes from Hawaii simply showed depressed estimates of  $N_E$  but all patterns pushed forward in time (Figure 4.4). Finally, hybrid genomes from New Zealand generally followed the exponential increase in  $N_E$ through time as seen in the New Zealand grey duck (Figure 4.3).



**Figure 4.2:** PSMC results from wild and domestic mallards and their hybrids from North America. In each analysis, the dark denotes the average, while the lighter lines indicate the bootstraps.



**Figure 4.3:** PSMC results from New Zealand Grey Duck, domestic mallard, and their hybrids from New Zealand. In each analysis, the dark denotes the average, while the lighter lines indicate the bootstraps.



**Figure 4.4:** PSMC results from Hawaiian duck, domestic mallard, and their hybrids from Hawaii. In each analysis, the dark denotes the average, while the lighter lines indicate the bootstraps.

# **DISCUSSION**

The history of supplementing the game-farm mallard breed across the world has indeed resulted in wide-spread anthropogenic hybridization, and I conclude to have negatively impacted the diversity of their wild congener's genomes. Generally, artificial selection for traits either specifically targeted by people or unknowingly pressured in a domestic setting often results in significant changes in population traits and their associated genetic variation (Andersson  $\&$ Georges, 2004; X. Li et al., 2020; Söderquist et al., 2014). In addition to strong artificial selection, domestication and breed selection innately result in sequential bottlenecking; both resulting in the increasing chance of inheriting identical-by-descent genetic material (Curik et al., 2014). Together, these pressures tend to exacerbate genetic diversity loss, increasing inbreeding depression, and resulting in extended homozygous regions in the offspring's genome (i.e., increasing ROH) (Bosse et al., 2019; Curik et al., 2014; Willoughby et al., 2015). Indeed, I

recovered expected summary statistics and depressed effective population size estimates for the genome representing the game-farm mallard that is currently being bred for release in North America and Eurasia (Table 4.1; Figs. 4.1-4.2). In fact, these genomic changes have recently been associated with morphological traits in which game-farm mallards tended to possess shorter, wider, and taller bills than their wild counterparts, which could influence their foraging behavior and diet preferences in the wild (Söderquist et al., 2014, Halligan 2024). Such morphological and behavioral traits are likely only some of the traits that were born in the domestic setting, but regardless, the movement of these traits that are likely maladaptive in the wild may at least partially explain the ever-declining wild mallard populations of North America where game-farm mallard releases are highest (Heusmann, 1991, USFW 2013). I expect any traits with maladaptive consequences in the wild to be under strong purifying selection (Gering et al., 2019); however, the continued release of game-farm mallards evidently perpetuates significant levels of gene flow that may counteract selective forces (Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023; Söderquist et al., 2017). Importantly, with only an average of ~2% of samples considered wild, the eastern portion of North America is now considered a game-farm x wild mallard hybrid swarm (Lavretsky et al. 2023). And thus, without a sufficiently large enough wild gene pool, the resulting offspring are expected to continue to have a combination of hybrid ancestry that may further prevent the loss of those maladaptive traits across generations (Schummer et al., 2023). Additionally, it is also possible that some traits born in the domestic setting may be neutral or even positively selected for in more urban settings (Driscoll et al., 2009), and thus, perpetuated among growing populations of urban waterfowl. Future work will benefit from extensive genomic sampling of individuals representing the spectrum of game-farm x wild mallard hybrids found in North America to test (1) whether the diversity statistics remain correlated (Fig. 4.1),

but more importantly, (2) to test the strength of selection by determining the speed (i.e., generations) in which domestically-derived genetic variation is lost in the wild and whether there is heterogeneity in selective pressure across urban and rural habitats. Regardless, I suggest that the domestication process negatively affected the diversity of the game-farm mallard's genome, and their release and subsequent interbreeding with wild congeners might result in offspring with genomes that are generally more inbred than their wild parent (Table 4.1; Fig. 4.1), and which has serious conservation implications.

Unlike North America where I find expected worsening genetic diversity values among genomes with increasing domestic ancestry, genomes from Hawaii and New Zealand provided uniquely different patterns (Table 4.1; Fig. 4.1). I note that while game-farm mallards continue to be released in North America, major releases have largely ceased and most mallards in Hawaii and New Zealand comprise respective self-sustaining feral populations today (Engilis Jr. et al., 2020; Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023; USGS, 2007; Williams, 2017). The differing history of supplementation likely explains the somewhat unexpected genetic patterns for these Island genomes in which I either recover reverse correlations or no correlations between summary statistics and levels of domestic ancestry in New Zealand and Hawaii, respectively (Table 4.1; Fig. 4.1). However, the expected pattern persists in runs of homozygosity, where greater domestic ancestry leads to longer runs; albeit with a lower correlation in New Zealand and no significant statistical effect in Hawaii. I posit that the lack of correlation in Hawaii is likely a result of genetic drift being the overwhelming force because of feral populations being maintained in relatively small sizes and evidently absent of gene flow between locations (Wells et al. 2019); both of which explain the generally low levels of genetic diversity, large ROH, and high inbreeding coefficients regardless of the proportional contribution of the domestic parent

(Table 4.1; Fig. 4.1). Conversely, I find that the genome representing New Zealand's feral mallard population harbored higher nucleotide diversity and lower inbreeding coefficients than endemic grey ducks (Table 4.1; Fig. 4.1). Again, whereas ROH did increase with the amount of domestic ancestry among New Zealand samples, these runs were comparable to those recovered in wild mallards (Table 4.1). Together, I hypothesize that a combination of successive recombination, as well as likely adaptive introgression from New Zealand grey ducks and local selective pressures have already refined the genome of New Zealand's feral mallard population, explaining why genetically they no longer reflect their source population (Lavretsky, Mohl, et al., 2023), their exponentially increasing and self-sustaining populations (Brown, 2021; Caithness et al., 1991; Williams, 2017), and the generally positive outcomes on genomic diversity found here. In the end, results from Hawaii and particularly New Zealand, demonstrate that the negative genomic outcomes from initial hybridization between domestic and wild congeners as being observed in North America might be refined with sufficient generations and a lack or decline in continued gene flow of the source domestic lineage. However, I also acknowledge Islands that generally have less complex ecologies may provide a backdrop for feralization that is absent in landscapes like North America. Consequently, understanding how feral and/or hybrid genomes may evolve in the changing ecologies of the Anthropocene cannot be considered singular, requiring the consideration of the ecological backdrop in which they are doing so (Ottenburghs, 2021).

#### *Domestic and hybrid genomes bias demographic inferences*

Reconstructing demographic histories and assessing contemporary levels of effective population size from genomic data has become integral in evolutionary and conservation genetic studies (Hu et al. 2020, Saremi et al. 2019; Wang et al, 2021). Not only are such analyses helpful to understand whether current standing genetic variation is a result of evolutionary or more contemporary trends, but establishing today's effective population size is critical and often an important consideration when determining conservation priorities (Brüniche-Olsen et al., 2021; Gabrielli et al., 2024). Given that PSMC analyses that provide such information are done so using a single genome, what that genome represents is equally important (Hung et al., 2014; Nadachowska-Brzyska et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2013). Towards this, I provide evidence that genomes subjugated to the domestication process or of hybrid origins substantially bias demographic inferences (Figs. 4.2-4.4; (Brown et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2022; Nikolic et al., 2020). First, my results confirm that the domestication process that results in ever-increasingly inbred lines (Table 4.1) causes demographic histories to be generally depressed, with similar patterns of slightly increasing  $N_E$  in deep time followed by decreasing trends in  $N_E$  to more recent times (Figs. 4.2-4.4). Next, whereas I recovered expected trends for genomes of hybrid individuals that followed demographics of their wild counterparts but with depressed values of  $N<sub>E</sub>$ , I unexpectedly also found that these trends were shifted forward in time. Thus, not only do inbred or hybrid genomes pose a serious consequence in estimating contemporary levels of  $N<sub>E</sub>$ , but that any inferences about divergence time between lineages is equally biased (H. Li & Durbin, 2011; MacLeod et al., 2013; C. A. Martin et al., 2023). This is especially concerning for genomes representing species but constructed from individuals born in captive settings (e.g., zoos) where both unintentional selective pressures, potential bottlenecking, and even admixture may cause such genomes to significantly diverge from the original wild source. Together, researchers should always consider the individual's source prior to making effort to build genomes and

reconstruct demographic histories, especially if such information is to be used to infer evolutionary histories or conservation planning.

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# **Appendix**

# **SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES**

**Table S1.1**. Sample information. Museums: UTEP: University of Texas at El Paso, UCD: University of California, Davis

<b>Sample</b> <b>Size</b>	<b>Museum</b> ID	<b>Species</b>	Location	State/ <b>Province</b>	Country	Latitude	Longitude	S e X
	UTEP- <b>Bird 3056</b>	Wild Mallard	Sierra Caballo Reservoir	New Mexico	<b>US</b>	32.953968	-107.295992	M
	$UCD -$ 25385-2	Laysan Duck	Sand Island	Hawaii	US	28.2097	$-177.3754$	M
	UCD - 25386-4	Hawaiian Duck	Kauai Island	Hawaii	US	22.03616	-159.77894	M

**Table 1.2.** Sequencing and assembly results of my Laysan duck and Hawaiian duck reference genomes.





**Table S1.3**. Alignment report of the Laysan duck, Hawaiian duck, and mallard nuclear autosomal, Z-chromosome and mitochondrial genomes using BWA. Coverage statistics were calculated using SAMtools coverage.



Table S1.4. Number of homozygous sites (n\_hom) in the Hawaiian duck and its parent species. Number of heterozygous sites (n\_het) and probability of heterozygosity (p\_het) in the Hawaiian duck.



<b>Mallard</b>			624665				44007	
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**Table S1.5**. Results from Patterson's D test for introgression between lineages with block Jackknifed SE estimates and Z scores per chromosome. Z scores are highlighted in bold to indicate significance of D' statistics (Z score >4).



**Table S1.6.** List of genes and associated GO Terms in outlier windows for LH, MH, and PH.


































































**Table S1.7:** GO Term enrichment analyses for 167 Autosome genes and 16 Z-linked genes under LH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be FDR- adjusted p values.

Categories:	<b>DNA</b> <b>Information</b> Processing	<b>Cellular</b> structure, metabolism and function	<b>Behaviour</b>	Individual's well- being and health (e.g.sleep,appetite, mood, energy)	Neurotransmission	<b>Fertilization</b> & embryonic development	<b>Immune</b> response	
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**Table S1.8**: GO Term enrichment analyses for 196 Autosome genes and 21 Z-linked genes under MH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be FDR- adjusted p values.

Categories:	<b>DNA</b> Information Processing	<b>Cellular</b> structure, metabolism and function	<b>Behaviour</b>	Individual's well- being and health (e.g.sleep,appetite, mood, energy)	Neurotransmission	<b>Fertilization</b> & embryonic development	<i>Immune</i> response	
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**Table S1.9**: GO Term enrichment analyses for 173 Autosome genes and 13 Z-linked genes under PH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be FDR- adjusted p values.

Categories:		<b>DNA</b> Information Processing		Cellular structure, metabolism and function	<b>Behaviour</b>	Individual's well- being and health (e.g.sleep,appetite, mood, energy)			Neurotransmission		<b>Fertilization</b> & embryonic development		Immune response	
Win dow S typ e	Chromoso me		GO ID		<b>GO Name</b>		<b>Numb</b> er of Genes		p-value	Adjusted p-value		Signi fican ce	Genes	
														g306.t1,g737.t1,g748.t1,g759 .t1,g763.t1,g859.t1,g860.t1,g 911.t1,g914.t1,g915.t1,g925. t1,g974.t1,g4475.t1,g5760.t1 ,g5988.t1,g5990.t1,g5991.t1, g6000.t1,g6006.t1,g6007.t1,g 6086.t1,g6700.t1,g8933.t1,g8 958.t1,g9010.t1,g9029.t1,g90
PH	Autosomes	GO:0003964		mf	<b>RNA-directed DNA</b> polymerase activity			32	0.001		0.1009	No	48.t1,g9050.t1,g12311.t1,g12 312.t1,g18136.t1,g18921.t1	
					RNA-templated DNA									g306.t1,g737.t1,g748.t1,g759 .t1,g763.t1,g859.t1,g860.t1,g 911.t1,g914.t1,g915.t1,g925. t1,g974.t1,g4475.t1,g5760.t1 ,g5988.t1,g5990.t1,g5991.t1, g6000.t1,g6006.t1,g6007.t1,g 6086.t1,g6700.t1,g8933.t1,g8 958.t1,g9010.t1,g9029.t1,g90 48.t1,g9050.t1,g12311.t1,g12
PH	Autosomes		GO:0006278	bp	biosynthetic process			32	0.001		0.1009	No		312.t1,g18136.t1,g18921.t1
PH	Autosomes		GO:0016301	mf		kinase activity		$\overline{2}$	0.685		0.7686	No	g733.t1,g4477.t1	



























**Table S1.10**: KEGG enrichment analyses for 112 Autosome genes and 14 Z-linked genes under LH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be Benjamini-Hochberg adjusted p values.









**Table S1.11:** KEGG enrichment analyses for 80 Autosome genes and 9 Z-linked genes under MH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be Benjamini-Hochberg adjusted p values.







**Table S1.12**: KEGG enrichment analyses for 62 Autosome genes and 17 Z-linked genes under PH selection regions. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be Benjamini-Hochberg adjusted p values.









**Table S2.1.** Total sample size for each sampling location by Hawaiian Island that was genetically vetted by Wells, Lavretsky et al. (2019). The average assignment probability ( $\pm$ Standard Deviation) to either Hawaiian duck or mallard (Feral or Wild) across sampling locations. I also provide the proportion of samples that were identified as native Hawaiian duck (  $\geq$  0.90 assignment probability to Hawaiian duck), Feral mallard ( $\geq$  0.90 assignment probability to Hawaiian Feral mallards), or Wild mallard  $(≥ 0.90$  assignment probability to Wild North American mallards).



**Table S2.2.** Optimized management strategies for three wetlands on Oʻahu of varying starting average Hawaiian duck ancestry (Table 1). Static and adaptive optimizations were done under management strategies including removing only or a combination of supplementation and removal at different levels of Hawaiian duck ancestry in the removed individuals (i.e. 0.1,0.5, 0.9). Success of each strategy was determined by the predicted final ancestry, with the objective set to reach 99% Hawaiian duck ancestry. Note that while static optimization simply allocates the same number of individuals across set generations (gen), adaptive optimization varies the strategy across generations.





**Table S3.1.** Sample information.







**Table S3.3.** Genome sequencing results.


**Table S4.** List of genes and associated GO Terms in outlier windows per chromosome for top and bottom 1% in autosomes and Z-sex chromosome


















































































































Table S3.5. GO Term enrichment analyses for 194 Autosome genes and 130 Z-linked genes for the 1% highest F<sub>ST</sub>. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be FDR- adjusted p values.



























Table S3.6. GO Term enrichment analyses for 360 Autosome genes and106 Z-linked genes under for the 1% lowest F<sub>ST</sub>. Significant differences were tested by Fisher's exact test and shown by p values, and they are corrected to be FDR- adjusted p values.














































<b>Sample</b> <b>Size</b>	Category	<b>Ecoregion</b>	State/ <b>Province</b>	Latitude	Longitude
$\mathbf{1}$	Park Mallard	Hawaii	Hawaii	22.03616	159.77894
1	Hawaiian Duck	Hawaii	Hawaii	22.03616	159.77894
1	Hybrid 1	Hawaii	Hawaii	22.03616	159.77894
1	Hybrid 2	Hawaii	Hawaii	22.03616	159.77894
1	Hybrid 3	Hawaii	Hawaii	22.03616	159.77894
$\mathbf{1}$	New Zeaand Mallard	<b>New</b> Zealand	Canterbury	44.096992	171.4691
1	New Zealand <b>Grey Duck</b>	<b>New</b> Zealand	<b>West Coast</b>	$-42.3122$	171.6027
1	Hybrid 1	<b>New</b> Zealand	Tasman	41.795741	172.3309
$\mathbf{1}$	Hybrid 2	<b>New</b> Zealand	Tasman	41.411411	173.01607
1	Hybrid 3	New Zealand	<b>West Coast</b>	42.796218	170.91844
1	Hybrid 4	<b>New</b> Zealand	<b>West Coast</b>	$-43.8208$	171.6985
1	Wild Mallard	North America	New Mexico	32.953968	107.29599
1	Game-Farm Mallard	North America	New Jersey	39.626111	75.486944
1	Hybrid 1	North America	New Jersey	39.8472	$-75.0005$
1	Hybrid 2	North America	Massachusetts	42.375	$-71.375$
1	Hybrid 3	North America	Connecticut	41.83671	-72.55994

**Table S4.1.** Sample information.

**Table S4.2.** Genomic sequencing information.



## **SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURES**



**Figure S1.1:** (top) OrthVenn2 Venn diagram highlighting the overlap of the protein clusters of each of the duck species. Singletons (i.e. proteins that did not form a cluster and were not counted within the figure) numbered 1,446 for Laysan, 655 for Hawaiian, and 578 for mallard. (middle) Protein cluster counts among the different genomes. The size of the list of proteins in each cluster was balanced suggesting that assembly did not have many duplicated regions. (bottom) Majority of the protein clusters overlapped among all the different taxa (21,680). For the protein clusters between two lists, an increased amount between the Laysan duck and Hawaiian were found (868 of the 1909, or 45%). Followed by the overlap between the Laysan duck and the mallard (599) and the lowest overlap was between the Hawaiian duck and the mallard (442).



**Figure S1.2:** Novel Alleles count in Autosomes (left) and the Z-chromosome. (right).



**Figure S1.3.** Phylogenetic inference across the Z-chromosome to assess the origin of the Hawaiian duck. A) The main three alternative topologies for the position of the Hawaiian duck, and B) their relative weightings across the Z-chromosome. C) Average node placement distance across the Z-chromosome.



**Figure S1.4.** Divergence peaks between the Hawaiian duck and parent taxa on microchromosomes.  $F_{ST}$  plots for the LH (top), and MH (second from top) for 100kb nonoverlapping windows across the genome. The bottom two panels display the disparities in FST values between each LH and MH comparison from the parent species comparison for the same 100kb non-overlapping windows. Windows identified as LH divergence peaks are shown in red, MH in blue, and PH peaks in yellow.



**Figure S1.5**. Divergence peaks for PH regions on large chromosomes. F<sub>ST</sub> disparities between the LH and LM comparisons for 100kb non-overlapping windows across the large chromosomes (to) and disparities between MH and LM comparisons in the bottom panel. LH divergence peaks are shown in red, MH in blue, PH in yellow.



**Figure S2.1.** Comparing outputs for pair bonding (red) and random mating (blue) mating methods based on a (A) no management strategy versus (B) optimization of supplementation only, each run 100 times. As expected, no substantial change between the starting and final ancestries were attained with either mating method if no management is done (Wilcox-test pvalue  $= 0.32$ ), whereas statistically similar results of substantial ancestry improvement was recovered with both mating methods when optimizing supplementation (Wilcox-test p-value = 0.73).



**Figure S2.2.** Changes in optimized supplementation and final population sizes when varying extra-pair copulation rate. Comparing these changes when using a (A) Strict pair-bonding or a (B) Random mating model.



**Figure S3.1.** Regression analysis between Nucleotide diversity and runs of homozygosity across the species of the Mallard Complex.

## **Vita**

Flor Brigitte Hernández Camacho was born in Lima, Peru. Her parents are Flora Camacho and Elvis Hernández. She received her elementary education at San Judas Tadeo and her secondary education at Alfa in San Juan de Lurigancho. In March 2006, she enrolled in the Science College at Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (UNALM) and graduated with honors with a B.S. in Biology in December 2010. In 2008, she joined the Centro de Ornitologia y Biodiversidad (CORBIDI) as a volunteer, later becoming an associated researcher in 2011. She was admitted to the Graduate School at the University of Texas at El Paso in January 2018, and graduated in the summer of 2024. Subsequently, she relocated to Ithaca, New York, with her husband and son, Alexis and Ricardo Díaz, where she worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology.

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