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**Global connections with some genomic differentiation between Indo-Pacific and Atlantic Ocean wahoo, a circumtropical large pelagic fish**

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**Running title:** Genetic structure in a pelagic fish

**Key words:** *Acanthocybium solandri*, population genomics, demographic inference, connectivity, population structure, fisheries management, wahoo

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## 30 **SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT**

31 Our study is the most comprehensive genetic investigation to date for the wahoo,  
32 *Acanthocybium solandri*, a pelagic fish with increasing importance to marine fisheries. Using  
33 population genomics approaches, we identify regional differentiation at the world's largest  
34 biogeographic scales, namely between the Indo-Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Demographic  
35 analyses revealed there has been considerable gene flow within these ocean basins over  
36 evolutionary timescales. Our findings highlight how genomics can uncover subtle geographic  
37 differentiation in highly dispersive marine animals and provide new insights on appropriate  
38 wahoo stock definitions for fisheries management.

39

40

## 41 **ABSTRACT**

### 42 **Aim**

43 Globally distributed pelagic fishes are typified by very low to negligible genetic differentiation at  
44 oceanic scales arising from high gene flow and (or) large population sizes. Genomic approaches  
45 employing thousands of loci to characterise genetic variation can, however, illuminate subtle  
46 patterns of genetic structure and facilitate demographic inference, such that effects arising  
47 from gene flow and population size can be partially decoupled. We used a population genomics  
48 approach to identify putative stocks in a circumtropical pelagic fish, wahoo, and to assess global  
49 connectivity in this species.

### 50 **Location**

51 Indo-Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

### 52 **Taxon**

53 Wahoo, *Acanthocybium solandri* (Cuvier, 1832)

### 54 **Methods**

55 Globally distributed wahoo samples from 11 locations (representing a total of 296 individuals)  
56 were sequenced using a pool-seq ezRAD approach to obtain 1,289–9,825 genome-wide SNP loci  
57 per population pair for analyses of genetic structure at MAF >0.05. Demographic inference  
58 using a diffusion approximation method ( $\partial A \partial I$ ) was performed using 11,495–12,812 SNPs per  
59 population pair at a MAF >0.02.

## 60 **Results**

61 Genetic structure, measured as  $F_{ST}$ , was overall low indicating very little heterogeneity among  
62 sample pairs (pairwise  $F_{ST} \leq 0.021$ ). However, there was a clear signal of regional genetic  
63 structuring between ocean basins. A principal coordinate analysis separated samples from the  
64 Indo-Pacific with those from the Atlantic, and an analysis of molecular variance suggested that  
65 ~77% of variation in genetic structure was among regions. Our demographic analyses found  
66 greater support for models including migration over simple models of isolation.

## 67 **Main conclusions**

68 Our study provides the most thorough genetic investigation of wahoo to date. We provide  
69 evidence for global connectivity of wahoo populations over their evolutionary history, but we  
70 also provide the first indication of subtle regional structure between the Indo-Pacific and  
71 Atlantic Oceans, which occurs against a background of high gene flow. The identification of  
72 regional stocks will inform new management strategies and guide future investigations in  
73 wahoo, an increasingly important species in global fisheries.

74

75

## 76 **INTRODUCTION**

77 Large pelagic fishes are highly mobile and inhabit an ecosystem with few barriers to movement.  
78 Their ranges are extensive and, in the extreme, include worldwide pelagic waters. Historically,  
79 evidence of minimal genetic differentiation across global spatial scales (for example, between  
80 ocean basins) appears consistent with extensive dispersal, at least when using traditional  
81 genetic markers (mtDNA, microsatellites, and allozymes: reviewed by Hauser & Ward, 1998;  
82 Gaither, Bowen, Rocha, & Briggs, 2016). Genetic homogeneity of large pelagic fishes contrasts

83 with frequent observations of geographic differentiation for coastal marine species (Lessios &  
84 Robertson, 2006; Rocha et al., 2007; Gaither & Rocha, 2013; Ludt & Rocha, 2014; Crandall et al.,  
85 2019), especially at the scale of ocean basins where landmasses, constrictions, and currents  
86 limit dispersal (such as the Isthmus of Panama, Sunda Shelf, Straits of Gibraltar, and Benguela  
87 Current), as do large expanses of deep waters (constituting the Eastern Pacific and Mid-Atlantic  
88 barriers). For high dispersal species such as pelagic fishes, the ability to query many loci using  
89 contemporary genomic methods, however, provides greater sensitivity to detect subtle  
90 population structure. Indeed, recent genomic surveys of circumtropical pelagic fishes have  
91 reported slight, but significant, genetic differentiation *within* ocean basins, for example, in  
92 yellowfin tuna (Grewe et al., 2015; Barth, Damerau, Matschiner, Jentoft, & Hanel, 2017;  
93 Mullins, McKeown, Sauer, & Shaw, 2018; Pecoraro et al., 2018), for albacore tuna (Laconcha et  
94 al., 2015; Vaux, Bohn, Hyde, O'Malley, 2021), for marlin (Mamoozadeh, Graves, & McDowell,  
95 2019), and for dolphinfish (Maroso, Franch, Dalla Rovere, Arculeo, & Bargelloni, 2016). Genomic  
96 results comparing *between* ocean basins reinforce emergent results from earlier genetic  
97 studies: for circumtropical pelagic fishes, Mediterranean populations can be very distinctive  
98 (for example, in albacore tuna: Laconcha et al., 2015), reflecting well noted biogeographic and  
99 phylogeographic transitions between the Atlantic and Mediterranean (Patarnello, Volckaert, &  
100 Castilho, 2007). Differentiation between Atlantic and Pacific Ocean populations can also be  
101 significant (albacore tuna: Laconcha et al., 2015; yellowfin tuna: Barth et al., 2017; Pecoraro et  
102 al., 2018), as can that between Indian and Pacific Ocean populations (albacore tuna: Laconcha  
103 et al., 2015; yellowfin tuna: Pecoraro et al., 2018; marlin: Mamoozadeh et al., 2019).

104  
105 Although pelagic fishes inhabiting Atlantic and Indian Oceans can manifest patterns of  
106 divergence consistent with long-standing isolation, intriguingly, genomic investigations of  
107 yellowfin tuna have detected ongoing connections with substantial migration into Atlantic  
108 Ocean populations over evolutionary time frames (Barth et al., 2017) and among present day  
109 populations (Mullins et al., 2018). Occasional Atlantic–Indian Ocean connections likely arise  
110 from the complex oceanography of southern Africa. The Benguela Current on the Atlantic coast  
111 of Africa transports cold, upwelled waters northward along the southeastern Atlantic, and its

112 low temperatures are lethal for most tropical species. However, the warm waters from the  
113 Angola (tropical east Atlantic) and Agulhas (western Indian Ocean) currents mix and generate  
114 the Agulhas Rings, a series of eddies that can be advected northward in the Benguela Current  
115 (Peeters, Acheson, Brummer, Wilhelmus, & et al., 2004; Hutchings et al., 2009). These warm-  
116 water filaments or edges breaking into the Benguela Current may allow the sporadic dispersal  
117 of some species between the Indo-Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, which is reflected in the  
118 genetic similarity between Atlantic and Indian Ocean populations of *pelagic* marine species that  
119 can move as adults (reviewed by Gaither et al., 2016). Colonization of the Atlantic by Indo-  
120 Pacific *benthic* marine species, however, has also been inferred, for example in a coral goby  
121 (Rocha et al., 2005).

122  
123 In addition to uncovering subtle genetic differentiation, population genomic data can also be  
124 used for demographic inference to infer relative contributions of restricted gene flow and  
125 divergence times to genetic differentiation (Gutenkunst, Hernandez, Williamson, &  
126 Bustamante, 2009), as exemplified by Barth et al. (2017) with yellowfin tuna. Though the high  
127 dispersal capacity of large pelagic fishes suggests that migration might maintain genetic  
128 homogeneity between ocean basins, such a genetic pattern can also be generated from a large  
129 effective population size. This is because large effective population sizes resist the effects of  
130 genetic drift and such a process is common in marine species (Waples, 1998). Therefore,  
131 genetic homogeneity does not necessarily implicate high dispersal. Moreover, simple patterns  
132 of genetic differentiation preclude assessment of possible asymmetries in migration:  
133 populations contributing more to migration could be considered more important in maintaining  
134 global connectivity. Therefore, demographic inference not only provides opportunity to assess  
135 whether populations are connected by migration, but also the nature of these connections.

136  
137 In this study, we focus on the wahoo, *Acanthocybium solandri* (Cuvier, 1832), as an exemplar of  
138 circumtropical pelagic fishes. Wahoo are members of the Scombridae, a family of large  
139 predatory fishes that are highly valued for commercial and sport fishing. Wahoo are strong  
140 swimmers and globally distributed in epipelagic tropical and temperate waters. These fish are

141 primarily caught as a byproduct in commercial tuna, swordfish, and dolphinfish fisheries and  
142 are also targeted in artisanal, subsistence and recreational fisheries worldwide (Collette &  
143 Nauen, 1983; Luckhurst & Trott, 2000; Zischke, 2012). Over the past ten years, the average  
144 annual global landings for wahoo in commercial fisheries have been ~4,500 tonnes, which  
145 represents an increase of 40% compared to the catches reported in the preceding decade (FAO,  
146 2019). The increasing importance of wahoo as a fishery, but scant information on its population  
147 genetic structure and biogeography, warrants increased investigation into patterns of  
148 population connectivity at a global scale (Oxenford, Murray, & Luckhurst, 2003; Luckhurst,  
149 2007; Theisen, Bowen, Lanier, & Baldwin, 2008; Zischke, 2012).

150

151 The natural history of wahoo sets an *a priori* expectation for low genetic differentiation at  
152 broad spatial scales. Wahoo are hypothesized to spawn in proximity to major oceanic surface  
153 currents that facilitate the dispersal of their buoyant eggs and pelagic larvae (Brown-Peterson,  
154 Franks, & Burke, 2000; Wollam, 1969), which potentially enhances their dispersal capacity  
155 (Jenkins & McBride, 2009; Zischke, Farley, Griffiths, & Tibbetts, 2013). Spawning probably  
156 occurs during the warmer summer months when individuals are diffusely distributed, and adult  
157 wahoo are not known to form large spawning aggregations (Jenkins & McBride, 2009; Zischke  
158 et al., 2013). Tagging studies have revealed that adults can swim at high speeds ( $>77 \text{ km h}^{-1}$ )  
159 (Walters & Fierstine, 1964) and can rapidly traverse long distances. For instance, Theisen &  
160 Baldwin (2012) described an individual in the Atlantic Ocean that traveled 1,960 km in 30 days.  
161 In the Pacific Ocean, an adult tagged in the vicinity of Hawaii was recaptured after ~200 days  
162 near Kiribati, more than 2,500 km away (NMFS, 1999). Consequently, wahoo have high  
163 dispersal capacity at all life stages, which should favour the homogenisation of genetic variation  
164 worldwide.

165

166 We use a population genomics approach to re-examine the patterns of genetic differentiation  
167 in wahoo and test competing demographic hypotheses that might explain the distribution of  
168 present-day genetic variation. Previous genetic studies support the concept that wahoo exist as  
169 a single globally homogeneous population. Comparisons between the Atlantic and Pacific using

170 the mtDNA control region (Garber, Tringali, & Franks, 2005), and broad global assessments  
171 using the mtDNA *cytb* and nuclear *IdhA6* sequences (Theisen et al., 2008), have failed to detect  
172 any genetic differentiation. Using thousands of SNP loci, we observed a signal of weak genetic  
173 differentiation and regional structuring between the Indo-Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans.  
174 Despite this regional structuring, demographic models suggest that ongoing gene flow occurs  
175 between ocean basins. Collectively, our study identifies potential wahoo management units at  
176 the level of ocean basins, with the considerations that these management units are likely  
177 connected by migration.

178

## 179 **METHODS**

### 180 **Collection of samples**

181 Wahoo were sampled at 11 localities throughout their global distribution between 1998 and  
182 2015 from recreational and artisanal commercial fisheries: American Samoa, Bimini, Christmas  
183 Island, Eastern Australia, Galapagos, Grand Cayman, Hawaii, North Carolina, Palau, Thailand,  
184 and Trinidad & Tobago (Figure 1a).

185

### 186 **DNA extraction and pooled RAD-seq libraries preparation**

187 Total genomic DNA was extracted from individual tissue samples (muscle, gill, or fin) using the  
188 E-Z 96 Tissue DNA Kit (Omega Bio-tek). The DNA extractions were visualized on 1% agarose gels  
189 to assess quality and quantity. Only samples that showed no signs of degradation were used for  
190 reduced representation library construction, as evidenced by high molecular weight bands and  
191 an absence of sample smearing on the gel. The final set consisted of 296 samples: American  
192 Samoa (AmSam,  $n = 30$ ); Bimini ( $n = 30$ ); Christmas Island (ChrIsl,  $n = 24$ ); Eastern Australia  
193 (EAus,  $n = 30$ ); Galapagos (Gal,  $n = 30$ ); Grand Cayman (GrandCay,  $n = 30$ ); Hawaii ( $n = 14$ );  
194 North Carolina (NCar,  $n = 30$ ); Palau ( $n = 30$ ); Thailand (Thai,  $n = 18$ ); and Trinidad & Tobago  
195 (TrinTab,  $n = 30$ ) (Figure 1a; Table S1).

196

197 We used the ezRAD method (Toonen et al., 2013) and a pool-seq approach to sample genomic  
198 variation. When DNA pool sizes are large ( $\geq 30$  diploids) allele frequency estimates show strong  
199 correlations to true population values (Futschik & Schlötterer, 2010; Gautier et al., 2013;  
200 Schlötterer, Tobler, Kofler, & Nolte, 2014; Hivert, Leblois, Petit, Gautier, & Vitalis, 2018). Hence,  
201 pool-seq was an attractive and preferred method for us to obtain genetic information (allele  
202 frequencies) from many individuals and sampling locations. We improved accuracy in allele  
203 frequency estimation by creating two replicate pooled ezRAD libraries per sample location.  
204 Replicate library preparation affords estimation of error from genetic sampling and technical  
205 artifacts (Gautier et al., 2013). For each library, 500 ng DNA was pooled per sampling location,  
206 with equimolar amounts per contributing fish. The same individuals went into each replicate  
207 library. Double digestion was performed with the MboI and Sau3AI enzymes (GATC). Library  
208 construction and sequencing were outsourced to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
209 Genomics Core Lab (TAMUCC; <http://genomics.tamucc.edu/>). A total of 22 libraries (11  
210 localities with 2 replicates) were sequenced on a single lane of Illumina HiSeq 4000 (150 bp  
211 paired-ends).

212

### 213 **De novo assembly and data processing**

214 Raw demultiplexed sequencing reads (paired-end) were screened using the program FASTQ  
215 SCREEN (Andrews, 2011) with the aligner software BWA (Li, 2013) to assess the presence of  
216 potential contaminants. A reference repository was generated containing genomic sequences  
217 downloaded from NCBI: yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (GCF\_000146045.2); fruit fly,  
218 *Drosophila serrata* (GCF\_002093755.1); *E. coli*, *Escherichia coli* (GCF\_000005845.2); human,  
219 *Homo sapiens* (GCF\_000001405.37); mouse, *Mus musculus* (GCF\_000001635.25). Illumina  
220 adapters were also screened. Reads were only kept for downstream analyses if they did not  
221 align to any of these reference genomes. Since FASTQ SCREEN can produce a desynchronization  
222 of paired read files, forward and reverse read files were resynchronized using PAIRFQ\_LITE.PL  
223 script (Staton, 2013). Only the reads that were correctly paired were used for further analysis.  
224 The restriction enzyme cut site was removed from the reads using the program SEQTK (Li, 2016)  
225 by trimming the first four bases in every read.



226

227 The main *de novo* assembly of RAD contigs was performed using the DDOCENT v2.2 pipelines  
228 (Puritz, Hollenbeck, & Gold, 2014). Briefly, PEAR (Zhang, Kobert, Flouri, & Stamatakis, 2014)  
229 removes reads that overlap. TRIMMOMATIC (Bolger, Lohse, & Usadel, 2014) is used to trim low-  
230 quality bases (Phred score < 20) from the extremes of each read, followed by a 5 bp sliding  
231 window approach to remove bases when the average Phred score < 10. Trimmed and  
232 untrimmed reads are used for different steps of the assembly. Contigs are assembled from  
233 untrimmed reads using a combination of the RAINBOW algorithm (Chong, Ruan, & Wu, 2012)  
234 and CD-HIT (Li & Godzik, 2006). Trimmed reads are then aligned to the contigs using the BWA  
235 MEM algorithm (Heng, Ruan, & Durbin, 2008) and SNPs are called with FREEBAYES (Garrison &  
236 Marth, 2012).

237

238 In our assembly, we implemented the DDOCENT in a series of discrete stages. First, we trimmed  
239 reads. We then utilised the DDOCENT script, REFMAPOPT.SH, to assemble contigs outside the  
240 main pipeline. Since two replicates from each ezRAD library were available, the replicate with  
241 the largest file size (from each pooled locality) was selected to generate the reference  
242 assembly, with a clustering threshold of 98%. This reference was then incorporated back into  
243 the DDOCENT pipeline for read mapping and variant calling. We used BWA MEM parameters: -A 1  
244 (match score), -B 3 (mismatch penalty), -O 20 (gap penalty), -E 10 (gap extension penalty) -U  
245 20 (unpaired penalty). The gap open penalty was set high to avoid alignments with many gaps.  
246 The DDOCENT script was edited to include the gap extension penalty (to further prevent large  
247 gaps in assembly) and the unpaired penalty (to reduce the splitting of reads across different  
248 contigs). The raw FREEBAYES SNPs were then treated with an initial filtering using VCFTOOLS  
249 (Danecek et al., 2011), which removed indels and SNPs with more than two alleles, required a  
250 minimum mean depth of one read, a mapping quality of 30, and no missing data.

251

252 SNPs derived from mitochondrial contigs (non-nuclear) were removed. The wahoo mitogenome  
253 (Accession AP012945) was downloaded from NCBI. RAD contigs were split into their forward  
254 and reverse sequences if they were scaffolded (joined by a series of "NNNNNNNNNN").

255 Separated forward and reverse RAD contig ends, and contiguous RAD contigs, were mapped  
256 against the wahoo mitogenome using BOWTIE2 (Langmead & Salzberg, 2012) extracted using  
257 SAMTOOLS. Any SNPs derived from these identified mitochondrial RAD contigs were removed  
258 prior to analyses of geographic differentiation or demographic inference.

259

### 260 **Analytical approaches: $F_{ST}$ and allele frequencies**

261 Using our pool-seq allele counts, we estimated geographic differentiation and conducted  
262 demographic inference analyses to determine the possible demographic scenarios that might  
263 have led to the observed distribution of genetic variation in wahoo. Our pool-seq allele counts  
264 were treated in slightly different ways for each of these respective analyses. To estimate  
265 population genetic structure, we combined reads across replicate libraries and estimated  
266 genetic structure ( $F_{ST}$ ) using R's 'poolfstat' package (Hivert et al., 2018). For demographic  
267 inference analyses, we imputed allele frequencies ( $p$ ) using POOLNE\_ESTIM (Gautier et al.,  
268 2013), which leverages information across replicate libraries. Hence, although the total read  
269 counts were the same, the analyses differed regarding whether the replicate library  
270 information was considered in the estimation of summary statistics ( $F_{ST}$  or  $p$ ). We elaborate on  
271 these differences below.

272

### 273 **Geographic differentiation**

274 We estimated geographic differentiation using R's 'poolfstat' package. This package does not  
275 accommodate replicate library information but has been optimised to provide highly robust  
276 estimates of  $F_{ST}$  from pool-seq data using an ANOVA framework (Hivert et al., 2018). We  
277 calculated  $F_{ST}$  for all geographic sample pairs and estimated genetic structure using two sets of  
278 SNPs. Firstly, we identified a *sample pair specific* SNP set, whereby loci were filtered for each  
279 sample pair independently, with the assumption that these loci are randomly sampled from  
280 across the genome and are all drawn from the same  $F_{ST}$  distribution. Secondly, we identified a  
281 *shared* SNP set, whereby loci were filtered with respect to all sampling locations. The *sample*  
282 *pair specific* SNP set allowed us to obtain a greater number of loci per sample pair,  $1,289 \leq n \leq$   
283 9,825 loci, which is useful for identifying subtle patterns of genetic differentiation (Table S2).

284 The *shared* SNP set allowed us to evaluate how non-overlapping loci in the *sample pair specific*  
285 SNP set might have influenced our interpretation of geographic differentiation, using  $n = 945$   
286 loci. We summed reads across replicate libraries and randomly sampled one SNP locus per RAD  
287 contig. For both SNP sets, loci were kept if the read depth (between sample pairs or across all  
288 samples) was  $50 \leq \text{total reads} \leq 1,000$  and if they had minor allele frequency (MAF) of 0.05.  
289 Note, the 99% percentile for read depth at a locus was 806, with a maximum 14,432 reads. Our  
290 minimum and maximum read depth requirements were chosen to balance good coverage with  
291 exclusion of loci with unusually high read depth.

292  
293  $F_{ST}$  was calculated in ‘poolfstat’ using the “Anova” method using POOLFSTAT\_DT() function from  
294 R’s ‘genomalicious’ (Thia & Riginos, 2019), which is a wrapper function for  
295 POOLFSTAT::COMPUTEFAST(). For the *sample pair specific* SNP set, we calculated the mean  
296 multilocus  $F_{ST}$  in two ways: (i) the empirically observed value using all loci available per sample  
297 pair; and (ii) the bootstrapped mean  $F_{ST}$  using 1,000 bootstrap replicates of  $n = 1,000$  randomly  
298 drawn loci. The bootstrapping procedure allowed us to compare sample pairs for equal number  
299 of loci in the sample specific SNP sets; we found that the correlation between the empirical (all  
300 loci) and the mean bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$  was high ( $r > 0.99$ ) for the sample specific SNP set, so we  
301 proceeded with further analyses using the mean bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$ . This bootstrapping  
302 procedure also facilitated comparison to the *shared* SNP set, where  $n = 945$  loci across all  
303 geographic locations, by virtue of a similar number of loci analysed. In the *shared* SNP set,  $F_{ST}$   
304 was calculated as the empirical value (using all loci, no bootstrapping). We did not remove  
305 outlier loci prior to  $F_{ST}$  calculation because we were interested in genome-wide patterns of  
306 geographic differentiation.

307  
308 We further interrogated patterns of geographic differentiation using a principal coordinate  
309 analysis (PCoA) for visualisation of spatial genetic relationships, and an analysis of molecular  
310 variance (AMOVA) (Excoffier, Smouse, & Quattro, 1992) to partition the variance at different  
311 spatial scales. For both SNP sets, we generated an  $F_{ST}$  distance matrix between sample pairs and  
312 used the PCOA() function from R’s ‘ape’ package (Paradis & Schliep, 2018) to conduct PCoAs.

313 We used the ‘pegas’ package (Paradis, 2010) to conduct AMOVAs in R, fitting a model where  $F_{ST}$   
314 was predicted by basins (Indian, Pacific, or Atlantic) nested within regions (Indo-Pacific, or  
315 Atlantic). Because negative  $F_{ST}$ -values are not interpretable and are effectively “zero”, we  
316 converted all negative  $F_{ST}$  estimates to zero prior to PCoA and AMOVA.

317

### 318 **Demographic inference analyses**

319 Marine organisms are characterised by their large population sizes and very high dispersal  
320 potential (Palumbi, 1994). Because of these characteristics, low genetic structure could be the  
321 product of two different processes: (1) large effective population sizes that resist drift and  
322 maintain allelic diversity and low genetic differentiation in the absence of high gene flow; or (2)  
323 high gene flow that facilitates genetic homogenisation among populations. To understand  
324 which processes might affect the global distribution of genetic variation in wahoo, we  
325 attempted to disentangle the relative likelihood of three demographic scenarios: isolation,  
326 symmetric migration, or asymmetric migration.

327

328 First, we imputed sample location allele frequencies ( $p$ ) using the program POOLNE\_ESTIM  
329 (Gautier et al., 2013). The algorithm in POOLNE\_ESTIM leverages information across replicate  
330 libraries to estimate the potential error associated with allele frequency imputation resulting  
331 from pooling (unequal contributions due to technical and sequencing biases): this allows  
332 estimation of the effective diploid number ( $n_e$ ) for a pool-seq experiment (Table S1). Imputed  
333 allele frequencies were used to estimate the site frequency spectrum (SFS) for demographic  
334 analyses. Loci were again filtered for read depth of  $50 \leq \text{total reads} \leq 1,000$ . However, we chose  
335 a MAF of 0.02 to prevent dropout of rare alleles, which would bias the SFS estimation (Matz,  
336 2018; Linck & Battey, 2019). Our demographic analyses focused on sample locations where 30  
337 diploid individuals were collected. Therefore, in a sample of 60 haploid chromosomes, a MAF of  
338 0.02 equates to  $\sim 1$  minor allele.

339

340 Sampling locations were also chosen for demographic analyses based on read depth. Read  
341 depth was consistently right-skewed across samples (low frequency of high coverage sites), but

342 Indo-Pacific pooled samples received less coverage than those from the Atlantic. For the Indo-  
343 Pacific locations, American Samoa and the Galapagos had the highest coverage (Figure S1).  
344 Among the Atlantic sampling sites, North Carolina and Trinidad & Tobago received less  
345 coverage than Bimini and Grand Caiman (Figure S2), exhibiting a read depth distribution more  
346 similar to those from the Indo-Pacific. We therefore selected American Samoa and the  
347 Galapagos to represent the Indo-Pacific, and North Carolina and Trinidad & Tobago to  
348 represent the Atlantic. For each of these geographic location samples, we used the  
349 `DADI_INPUTS_POOLS()` function in R's 'genomalicious' to create allele counts in the  $\partial A \partial I$  input  
350 format based on the imputed population allele frequencies: for a given number of pooled  
351 diploids, the SFS was calculated as the expected number of reference and alternate alleles in  
352 the haploid sample (60 unique chromosomes for 30 diploids). Demographic scenarios were  
353 assessed for sampled locations within each ocean basin (American Samoa/Galapagos and North  
354 Carolina/Trinidad & Tobago), and for all sample pairs between ocean basins (American  
355 Samoa/North Carolina, American Samoa/Trinidad & Tobago, Galapagos/North Carolina, and  
356 Galapagos/Trinidad & Tobago). The number of SNPs available for each sample pair and their  
357 median read depth statistics are tabulated in Table S3. On average, 11,979 loci were available  
358 for pairwise analyses of demography, with a range of 11,495–12,812 loci, and an average  
359 median depth of 139.5 reads per locus, with a range of 110–167 median reads per locus. The  
360 SFS for each sample pair was then projected down to 10-by-10 alleles and was folded prior to  
361 performing demographic simulations using the  $\partial A \partial I$  python function,  
362 `DADI.SPECTRUM.FROM_DATA_DICT()`.

363  
364 Support for our three demographic scenarios (isolation, symmetric migration, and asymmetric  
365 migration) was assessed using the demographic simulator,  $\partial A \partial I$  (Gutenkunst et al., 2009)  
366 (Figure 2). In the isolation scenario, it was assumed that populations have diverged from some  
367 ancestral population in the past and have not exchanged genes since divergence. In the  
368 symmetric scenario, it was assumed that gene flow has occurred since divergence and the rate  
369 of gene exchange is equal between populations. In contrast, the asymmetric migration scenario  
370 assumed that gene exchange is biased in one direction. If  $N_A$  is the ancestral population size,  $N_i$

371 the contemporary size for population  $i$ , the key parameters being estimated by our models are  
372 as follows:  $T$  (“ $T$ ”), the effective number of generations since divergence, with  $t$  number of  
373 generations ( $= t / 2N_A$ );  $\nu_i$  (“ $\nu$ ”), the relative contemporary population size parameter for  
374 population  $i$  ( $= N_i / N_A$ ); and  $M_{ij}$ , the scaled migration rate from population  $j$  into population  $i$ ,  
375 relative to  $m_{ij}$ , the proportion of chromosomes that move between populations per generation  
376 ( $= 2N_A m_{ij}$ ). Hence,  $M_{ij}$  describes gene flow in numerical terms, that is, the total number of  
377 chromosomes that migrate. When symmetric migration was modelled, it was assumed that the  
378 scale parameter was identical for both directions of gene flow (“ $M$ ”), whereas in the  
379 asymmetric scenario we modelled the movement of genes from population 1 into 2 (“ $M_{21}$ ”)  
380 and from population 2 into 1 (“ $M_{12}$ ”).

381  
382 Estimating demographic parameters in  $\partial A \partial I$  requires running multiple replicate simulations to  
383 explore parameter space and check for model convergence (Gutenkunst et al., 2009;  
384 Rougemont et al., 2017; Rougeux, Gagnaire, & Bernatchez, 2019). We ran 100 simulations per  
385 scenario, per sample pair, each with 100 optimisation iterations. Based on preliminary tests, we  
386 set the respective initial parameter values in the isolation scenario as  $T = \nu_1 = \nu_2 = 0.05$  with  
387 upper bounds of 5 and lower bounds of  $1e-10$ . For the symmetric and asymmetric scenarios,  
388 initial parameter values were  $T = \nu_1 = \nu_2 = m$  or  $m_{12} = m_{21} = 5$ , with upper bounds of 100  
389 and lower bounds of  $1e-3$ . For each simulation, we perturbed the initial parameters by a  
390 magnitude of three and used the linear extrapolation function in  $\partial A \partial I$ . Once the simulations  
391 had finished running, we summarised the parameter estimates and log-likelihoods for the top  
392 10 models.

393  
394 For each sample pair, the AIC for the best model in each scenario was calculated as  $AIC = 2k -$   
395  $2\ln(L)$ , where  $k$  was the number of estimated parameters, and  $\ln(L)$  was the log-likelihood. To  
396 test for differential support among scenarios for each sample pair, we calculated  $\Delta AIC$  scores as  
397  $\Delta AIC = AIC_S - AIC_B$ , where subscript  $S$  indicates the focal scenario and subscript  $B$  the scenario  
398 with the best AIC. A focal scenario was considered substantially different from the best scenario  
399 when  $\Delta AIC > 10$  (Burnham & Anderson, 2002).

400

## 401 RESULTS

### 402 RAD-seq assembly

403 After bioinformatic processing, the number of reads for any single library ranged from 196,568  
404 to 20,280,396. The total number of reads for any sampled location ranged from 5,350,856 to  
405 32,670,537, with sample means ranging from 2,680,428 to 16,335,269 reads across both  
406 replicate libraries.

407

408 The percentage similarity between the effective number of pooled diploids ( $n_e$ ) versus the true  
409 number of pooled diploids ( $n$ ) ranged from 2.9% to 100%. The mean percentage similarity  
410 between  $n_e$  and  $n$  was 71.32% for any one library preparation. Of the 24 libraries, 13 had an  $n_e$   
411 similar to  $n$  (> 85%). Values are tabulated in Table S1.

412

413 For each sample pair, after applying MAF and depth filters, the number of loci used for analyses  
414 of geographic differentiation ranged from 1,298–9,825 loci in the sample *pair specific* SNP set  
415 (average of 5,905 loci) (Tables S2). The *shared* SNP set contained 945 loci that met our MAF  
416 (>0.05) and depth filters in all samples. For demographic analyses, 11,495–12,812 SNP loci were  
417 available following depth and MAF (>0.02) filtering (Table S3).

418

### 419 Geographic differentiation

420 Using our *population pair specific* SNP set ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci), mean bootstrap  $F_{ST}$  estimates  
421 showed non-zero genetic differentiation ( $F_{ST} > 0$ ) between almost all sample pairs according to  
422 bootstrap 2.5% and 97.5% percentiles (Tables 1 & S2). The exceptions being the Christmas  
423 Island/Galapagos pair ( $F_{ST} = 0.002$ ), East Australia/Thailand ( $F_{ST} = 0.001$ ) and Palau/Thailand ( $F_{ST}$   
424 = 0.003), where estimates of genetic differentiation were not statistically different from zero.  
425 Overall, however, values of mean bootstrap  $F_{ST}$  were low, with a range of 0.001–0.021, and a  
426 mean of 0.010, suggesting that despite the presence of genetic structure, there was very little  
427 variation among geographic locations.

428

429 Despite apparent low genetic structure across large geographic extents, a pattern of regional  
430 geographic differentiation emerged. Comparisons of  $F_{ST}$  distributions between ocean basins  
431 indicated that genetic structure was lower within the Indo-Pacific and Atlantic than between  
432 these oceanic regions (Figure 1b). This regional structuring was further evidenced in a PCoA  
433 (Figure 1c), where the first axis (capturing 53% of the variance in pairwise  $F_{ST}$ -values) separated  
434 wahoo samples from the Atlantic from those in the Indo-Pacific. The second PCo axis (capturing  
435 14.8% of the variance in pairwise  $F_{ST}$ -values) was associated with variance within regions.  
436 Finally, AMOVA (Table 2) suggested that 77.41% of genetic variation was among regions, which  
437 was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), whereas only 0.82% of genetic variation was among  
438 basins nested within regions and this was statistically non-significant ( $p = 0.695$ ).

439

440 Measures of genetic differentiation from our *shared* SNP set ( $n = 945$  loci) provided a different  
441 picture of wahoo geographic differentiation. Using this set of loci, many more sample pairs  
442 exhibited  $F_{ST}$ -values that were non-significantly different from zero (26/55 sample pairs) with  
443 values ranging from  $-0.009$ – $0.014$  (Figure S3a). In contrast to the sample pair specific SNP set,  
444 there was no evidence of regional structuring when considering the smaller *shared* SNP set.  
445 There was no clear separation of the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific in a PCoA of pairwise  $F_{ST}$ -values  
446 (Figure S3b). An AMOVA found a non-significant effect of region, despite 57.43% of variation  
447 being attributed to region ( $p = 0.335$ ), and there was also a non-significant effect of basin  
448 nested in region ( $p = 0.278$ ), which explained 16.53% of the variation (Table 2).

449

450 Our analyses of genetic structure using the two different SNP sets highlight the subtlety in  
451 regional differences among wahoo populations. All loci in the *shared* SNP set were in the  
452 *sample pair specific* SNP sets, yet they did not capture the regional signal between the Atlantic  
453 and the Indo-Pacific. Hence, despite being drawn from the same  $F_{ST}$  distribution, it appears  
454 there were too few loci in the *shared* SNP set to adequately sample variation in  $F_{ST}$  across loci,  
455 and that this set of 945 loci on average sat in the lower range of  $F_{ST}$ -values. We note that the  
456 *sample pair specific* SNP sets used an equivalent number of loci to estimate the mean



457 bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$  ( $n = 1,000$  randomly subsampled loci per bootstrap replicate, without  
458 replacement) to the *shared* SNP set, indicating the number of genetic markers used to perform  
459  $F_{ST}$  calculations cannot explain differences between these SNP sets. Instead, more loci available  
460 in the *sample pair specific* SNP sets likely better characterised the  $F_{ST}$  distribution. The  
461 correlation between the number of loci and the mean bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$  was  $r = 0.32$ , indicating  
462 a moderately positive effect of a larger SNP set in capturing greater signals of genomic  
463 divergence within a sample pair. Additionally, the correlation between the number of loci and  
464 the bootstrapped interval width (2.5% and 97.5% percentiles) was  $r = 0.60$ , indicating there was  
465 greater variation in mean bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$ -values with larger SNP sets when subsampling for  
466 1,000 loci per bootstrap. Collectively, the larger number of loci obtained when SNPs were  
467 filtered by sample pair facilitated identification of regional structuring among sampled locations  
468 through greater genomic sampling.

469

#### 470 **Demographic inference analyses**

471 In all sample pairs considered, the allele frequency correlations were very high,  $r > 0.88$  (Figure  
472 S4), irrespective of whether pairs were between or within ocean basins. Using the demographic  
473 approximation method,  $\partial A \partial I$ , we attempted to assess whether such highly correlated allele  
474 frequencies were better explained by large population sizes and (or) high migration rates,  
475 through estimation of effective divergence time (T), relative contemporary population sizes  
476 ( $\nu_1$  and  $\nu_2$ ), and migration rates (M, or M12 and M21). Log-likelihoods for the best models  
477 and their associated parameter sets are summarised in Figures S5 and Figures S6–S8,  
478 respectively.

479

480 When considering the best model for each scenario, we observed high concordance between  
481 simulated SFSs and the observed SFS estimated from pool-seq ezRAD data (e.g., Figure 3; see  
482 also Figures S9–S14). This indicated that the parameter combinations estimated in the best  
483 models provided reasonable reconstruction of the observed data. We do note that our models  
484 tended to overestimate the number of joint allele counts at the lower ends of the SFSs, for  
485 example, 1:1 or 1:2 or 1:3 for sample 1:sample 2, or vice versa. In other words, rare alleles were

486 less frequent in our observed data, which might be partially attributable to our SFS estimation  
487 from imputed allele frequencies. However, most joint counts between simulated and observed  
488 SFS for any scenarios, in any sample pair, were similar, resulting in residual distributions  
489 centered on zero (with a few large outliers due to the overestimation of rare alleles in the  
490 simulated SFSS).

491  
492 Overall, our demographic analyses suggest that a scenario including migration among wahoo  
493 populations describes patterns of genetic variation better than a scenario of isolation without  
494 migration. Across the top 10 simulations per scenario, convergence on similar log-likelihoods  
495 was greater for the isolation scenario, whereas greater variance in log-likelihoods was exhibited  
496 for the symmetric and asymmetric migration scenarios (Figure S5). Nonetheless, the best  
497 isolation scenario models were less likely and had worse AIC scores relative to those that  
498 included migration (Table 3; Figure S5). Indeed, to explain contemporary patterns of genetic  
499 variation under the isolation scenario, wahoo populations would have had to diverge very  
500 recently and be of a much smaller size, relative to their shared ancestral population—as  
501 indicated by very small values of  $T$ ,  $\nu_1$ , and  $\nu_2$  (approaching zero) (Table 3; Figure S6).

502  
503 Symmetric migration was the most likely scenario for the American Samoa/North Carolina and  
504 Galapagos/North Carolina pairs (between Indo-Pacific and Atlantic) (Table 3). Note, however,  
505 that despite symmetric migration being the best scenario for the Galapagos/North Carolina  
506 pair, this was equivalent to the asymmetric scenario, based on  $\Delta AIC < 10$  (Table 3). Similarly,  
507 although not the best scenario for the North Carolina/Trinidad & Tobago pair, symmetric  
508 migration was nearly equivalent to the asymmetric scenario,  $AIC = 11$  (see below). The best  
509 symmetric migration scenarios were characterised by more recent divergences between  
510 contemporary populations ( $T < 1$ ), smaller but similar contemporary population sizes relative to  
511 the ancestral population ( $\nu_1$  and  $\nu_2 < 1$ , and  $\nu_1 \approx \nu_2$ ), and considerable movement of  
512 genes between populations ( $M > 50$ ) (Table 3). Across the top 10 models, although the exact  
513 value of  $M$  was variable among simulations, there was a general trend of large  $M$ , small  $T$ , and  
514 small  $\nu_1$  and  $\nu_2$  (Figure S7).

515

516 The sample location pairs where asymmetric migration was the best scenario were American  
517 Samoa/Galapagos (within the Indo-Pacific), American Samoa/Trinidad & Tobago and  
518 Galapagos/Trinidad & Tobago (between the Indo-Pacific and Atlantic), and North  
519 Carolina/Trinidad & Tobago (within the Atlantic). However, based on  $\Delta AIC$ , the symmetric  
520 migration scenario had an equivalent (or nearly equivalent) likelihood to asymmetric migration  
521 scenario for the Galapagos/North Carolina and North Carolina/Trinidad & Tobago pairs (Table  
522 3). Asymmetric migration models exhibited greater variability in parameter combinations,  
523 relative to the other scenarios (Figure S8). Qualitatively, there were two sets of parameters that  
524 emerged across the top 10 models in the asymmetric migration scenario: (1) more ancient  
525 divergence times with smaller migration rates, and (2) more recent divergence times with  
526 larger migration rates. For all sample pairs, the best asymmetric model was one where scaled  
527 divergence time was small ( $T < 1$ ), contemporary effective population sizes were small ( $\nu_1$  and  
528  $\nu_2 < 1$ ), and scaled migration rates were large ( $M_{12}$  and  $M_{21} > 30$ ).

529

530 Based on our demographic inference analyses, we can be relatively confident that large  
531 population size alone, in the absence of gene flow, is not a major mechanism for low  
532 geographic structure in wahoo. However, there were no clear or consistent patterns with  
533 respect to the directionality of gene flow among oceanic regions. Comparisons between  
534 samples from the Indo-Pacific versus the Atlantic yielded a mix of symmetric models being the  
535 most likely, asymmetric models being the most likely, or both migration models being  
536 indistinguishable (Table 3). We can therefore only conclude that migration has played an  
537 important role in maintaining shared genetic variation between the Indo-Pacific and Atlantic.

538

## 539 **DISCUSSION**

540 **Subtle regional genetic differentiation and challenges to demographic inference for a high**  
541 **gene flow pelagic fish**

542 Large circumtropical fishes are typified by minimal genetic differentiation over large geographic  
543 distances, including between ocean basins. Our study is the first to use genome-wide SNP data  
544 to assess global genetic patterns in wahoo. Prior investigations using single loci have been  
545 unable to discern putative boundaries (mtDNA and nuclear LDH: Garber et al., 2005; Theisen et  
546 al., 2008). Yet here, using 1000s of genome-wide SNPs, we recovered a regional signal that  
547 separated wahoo from the Indo-Pacific with those from the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 1b & 1c;  
548 Table 2). This regional structuring was, however, weak, as evidenced by very low  $F_{ST}$  ( $\leq 0.021$ ,  
549 Table 1) and highly correlated allele frequencies (Figure S4).

550  
551 Differentiation between the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific Ocean wahoo populations in our study  
552 conforms to phylogeographic observations from other pelagic species exhibiting inter-oceanic  
553 genetic structure (reviewed by Hauser & Ward, 1998; Theisen et al., 2008; Gaither et al., 2016),  
554 especially yellowfin tuna (Barth et al., 2017; Mullins et al., 2018). Weak-but-significant genetic  
555 structuring can result either from recent divergence, high migration rates, or a combination of  
556 the two processes, and both processes are commonly observed in marine fisheries species  
557 (Waples, 1998). When considering results of our  $\partial A \partial I$  demographic analyses across all scenarios  
558 and sample pairs (Table 3), isolation models performed worse than those including migration.  
559 The large scaled migration parameters observed ( $M > 50$ ,  $M_{12}$  and  $M_{21} > 50$ ) indicates that  
560 substantial gene flow has occurred in the evolution history of wahoo.

561  
562 Based on oceanography, it is expected that migration would occur from the Indo-Pacific into  
563 the Atlantic via advection of the warm water off the southern African coast, the Agulhas Rings,  
564 by the Benguela Current (Peeters et al., 2004; Hutchings et al., 2009). Contrastingly, migration  
565 around the southern tip of South America is a potentially unlikely route of connection due to  
566 the consistently cold sea surface temperatures (5–10°C). With respect to cross-Pacific  
567 movement through the East Pacific Barrier, asymmetric migration scenario was the most likely  
568 model for the American Samoa/Galapagos. Based on final parameters, greater dispersal was  
569 inferred from American Samoa into the Galapagos ( $M_{21} = 98.91$ ) versus the reverse direction  
570 ( $M_{12} = 73.94$ ). However, the high parameter values of  $M_{12}$  and  $M_{21}$  for the American

571 Samoa/Galapagos sample pair indicate that migration between the east and west Pacific has  
572 been extensive through time in both directions (Table 3). Regardless of the direction of  
573 movement, the deep waters of the East Pacific clearly do not constitute a barrier to movement  
574 in wahoo.

575  
576 One caveat in our analyses of geographic differentiation is that our  $F_{ST}$  genetic distance matrix  
577 used for PCoA and AMOVA is derived from a non-overlapping set of loci in the *sample pair*  
578 *specific* SNP set. The AMOVA framework partitions variance in a genetic distance matrix with  
579 respect to hierarchical population structure and was originally formulated with respect to  
580 haplotypes sampled in all samples and populations (Excoffier et al., 1992). By virtue that the  
581 response variable in an AMOVA is a distance metric, we were able to overcome missing data  
582 limits and obtain many more genetic markers for estimating  $F_{ST}$  in our *sample pair specific* SNP  
583 set (1,289–9,825 loci) relative to the *shared* SNP set (945 loci). Hence, we acknowledge that our  
584 measures of genetic distance using the *sample pair specific* SNP set are not directly comparable  
585 among sample pairs. Yet as evident from our parallel analyses of both datasets, the greater  
586 number of loci in the *sample pair specific* SNP set allowed us to better sample the  $F_{ST}$   
587 distribution across geographically distributed wahoo, whereas the *shared* SNP set was  
588 underpowered to capture regional structuring (Figures 1c versus Figure S3c; Table 2a versus  
589 Table 2b). Therefore, we believe our approach is justified and has allowed us to observe novel  
590 population genetic patterns in wahoo that are in line with general biogeographic expectations.

591  
592 An additional caveat pertains interpretation of gene flow directionality in our demographic  
593 analyses. Demographic inference methods, such as  $\partial A \partial I$  (Gutenkunst et al., 2009), can  
594 sometimes resolve the influence of divergence timing and migration. Yet in practice, extremely  
595 recent divergence and high migration rates are nearly impossible to resolve with confidence  
596 (Robinson, Coffman, Hickerson, & Gutenkunst, 2014). The ability to obtain well supported  
597 demographic inferences is dependent on various factors, such as the number of loci and  
598 individuals sampled, the complexity of the actual demographic history, and how well the true  
599 demography is reflected in models (which are undoubtedly over-simplified). Although we ran

600 many simulations per geographic sample pairs (100 simulations, each with 100 optimising  
601 iterations), three features of our results suggest that discerning the role of asymmetric versus  
602 symmetric migration is challenging with our present data. Firstly, both migration scenarios  
603 exhibited considerable variation among the top 10 models with respect to their migration  
604 parameters (Figure S7 & S8). Secondly, no clear pattern of asymmetric migration being more  
605 likely than symmetric migration (or vice versa) was recovered by our simulations (Table 2).  
606 Finally, all the best asymmetric models inferred high migration in both directions, and in some  
607 cases, the M12 and M21 parameters were of comparable magnitude (Table 3), which is  
608 numerically equivalent to symmetric migration. Hence, further investigations are required to  
609 fully characterise patterns of dispersal of wahoo (discussed below).

610  
611 In summary, our data provides good support for two major conclusions: (1) wahoo likely exist  
612 as two weakly differentiated stocks between the Indo-Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans; and (2)  
613 this weak differentiation occurs against a backdrop of considerable gene flow in the  
614 evolutionary history of wahoo. We do, however, caution against direct interpretation of our  
615 results with respect to asymmetry and directionality of migration, for reasons mentioned  
616 above. Indeed, the biology of wahoo implies a parameter space where inference is notoriously  
617 difficult (Robinson et al., 2014; Rougemont et al., 2017) and there is great scope for future work  
618 to more thoroughly examine the eco-evolutionary processes that shape connectivity and the  
619 distribution of genetic and phenotypic variation in this species.

620

### 621 **Future prospects and implications**

622 In this study, wahoo samples were collected over a 17 year window (1998–2015) to obtain  
623 globally distributed samples. In highly migratory, globally distributed marine species, such  
624 temporal separation of samples is the norm because broad biogeographic distributions are  
625 recalcitrant to collections within a narrow timeframe (Vaux et al., 2021). For demographic  
626 inference, which are on evolutionary timescales, the temporal separation in our study is  
627 unlikely to affect conclusions, unless major changes in the SFSs within and between locations  
628 have occurred over the last two decades. Targeted sampling could provide new insights into

629 temporal stability of genetic patterns, the distribution of life history traits, and measures of  
630 individual dispersal trajectories in wahoo. Augmented insights have been obtained, for  
631 example, in sampling young-of-the-year from the circumtropical bluefin tuna (Carlsson,  
632 McDowell, Carlsson, & Graves, 2007; Boustany, Reeb, & Block, 2008), and using temporal  
633 replication when sampling white marlin (Mamoozadeh, McDowell, Rooker, & Graves, 2018). For  
634 wahoo, reproductive areas, sex-specific movement patterns, habitat preferences, and  
635 philopatric behaviors are largely unknown, hindering the development of biologically informed  
636 sampling design (Zischke, 2012; Lascelles et al., 2014). Future work employing individual-based  
637 genotyping and increased representation of the Indian Ocean, Central and Eastern Atlantic  
638 Ocean, Mediterranean, and African localities would be important steps in resolving putative  
639 dispersal patterns in wahoo; for example, a recent genomic investigation of Albacore tuna was  
640 able to delineate North versus South Pacific populations using individual focused analyses (Vaux  
641 et al. 2021).

642  
643 The implications of our findings for fisheries are somewhat ambiguous, as wahoo clearly inhabit  
644 the “Waples Zone” of weak genetic differentiation arising from a combination of high migration  
645 and large effective population sizes (*sensu* Kelley et al., 2010, referring to Waples 1998). If  
646 indeed wahoo do travel large distances and mix readily (especially within ocean basins), then  
647 these linkages among geographically distant populations would imply that overharvesting in  
648 particular locations could affect population numbers elsewhere, particularly if there are  
649 seasonal aggregations in regions with limited resources to effectively regulate acute local  
650 harvest. On the other hand, recreational and artisanal harvesting is unlikely to affect local  
651 stocks at the oceanic stock scale. However, whether genetically similar yet geographically  
652 distant populations are ecologically cohesive remains an open question (i.e., Waples &  
653 Gaggiotti, 2006; Lowe & Allendorf, 2010). Multidisciplinary approaches that incorporate  
654 information based on morphometrics, parasite sharing, and tagging (Sepulveda et al., 2011;  
655 Zischke et al., 2012) alongside individual-based genotyping (e.g. Vaux et al., 2021) may uncover  
656 connectivity dynamics in a timeframe better matched to wahoo fisheries management than the  
657 evolutionary timescales reflected in allele-frequency based genetic data.

658

## 659 **Conclusions**

660 Genetic tools are useful for developing practical population delimitations for management  
661 purposes. However, characterising discrete stocks of cosmopolitan pelagic fishes is challenging  
662 because their large effective population sizes and (or) high dispersal can obscure signals of  
663 spatial genetic differentiation. We provide evidence that wahoo populations can be  
664 characterised as two weakly differentiated stocks based on genome-wide SNP loci: an Indo-  
665 Pacific and an Atlantic stock. Despite this regional structuring, our demographic analyses  
666 indicated that these populations are likely globally connected by high gene flow. These findings  
667 are in line with genetic-based biogeographic investigations of other large pelagic fishes that  
668 highlight substantial evolutionary connections over vast geographic distances.

669

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688

## 689 **DATA AVAILABILITY**

690 Our scripts and analyses have been uploaded to Dryad: Thia (2021),  
691 <https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.dncjsxkz4>. Raw ezRAD pool-seq reads have been uploaded to  
692 NCBI's SRA as has the relevant BioSample information: BioProject PRJNA683059. Additional  
693 metadata for these pool-seq reads are available through GeOME:  
694 <https://n2t.net/ark:/21547/DhI2>.

695

## 696 **BIOSKETCH**

697 The team behind this work constitutes a diverse group of marine biologists, biogeographers,  
698 and population geneticists. We share a general interest in understanding the processes that  
699 have shaped the distribution and evolution of marine life. Additionally, we seek to use our  
700 insights of eco-evolutionary processes to inform management decisions that benefit the  
701 sustainability of our oceans.

702

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938 **TABLE AND FIGURE LEGENDS**

939 **Figure 1.** Sampling spatial distribution and population structure of wahoo. **(a)** Global distribution  
940 of our focal wahoo locations with number of sampled fish in parentheses. Inset is an illustration  
941 of a wahoo. **(b)** Distribution of pairwise mean bootstrap  $F_{ST}$  estimates from genome-wide SNPs  
942 using sample pair specific SNP sets ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci). Estimates are grouped with  
943 respect to comparisons within versus between ocean basins. Boxplot outliers were only present  
944 in the Indian/Pacific comparisons: AmSam/ChrIsl ( $F_{ST} = 0.012$ ) and AmSam/Thai ( $F_{ST} = 0.008$ )  
945 were upper outliers, whereas EAus/Thai ( $F_{ST} = 0.001$ ) was a lower outlier. **(c)** Principal  
946 coordinate analysis (PCoA) of pairwise mean bootstrap  $F_{ST}$  estimates derived from sample pair  
947 specific SNP sets. Numbers in parentheses for axes labels indicate the proportion of variance  
948 captured by each PCo axis. Colours represent ocean basins (see legend). Location  
949 abbreviations: AmSam = American Samoa; Bimini = Bimini; ChrIsl = Christmas Island; EAus =  
950 East Australia; Gal = Galapagos; GrandCay = Grand Cayman; Hawaii = Hawaii; NCar = North  
951 Carolina; Palau = Palau; Thailand = Thailand; TrinTab = Trinidad & Tobago.

952

953

954 **Figure 2.** Demographic scenarios for gene flow between two populations (1 and 2): isolation,  
955 symmetric migration, and asymmetric migration.  $T$ , effective number of generations since  
956 divergence,  $\nu$ , relative contemporary population size parameter for each population,  $M$ ,  
957 symmetrical migration,  $M_{12}$ , scaled migration rate from population 2 into population 1,  $M_{21}$ ,  
958 scaled migration rate from population 1 into population 2.

959

960

961 **Figure 3.** Folded site frequency spectrums (SFS) for the American Samoa/North Carolina  
962 wahoo population pair for the observed data and our three simulated scenarios (Isolation,  
963 Symmetric, Asymmetric). Similarity between the simulated scenarios and the observed SFS  
964 indicate that reasonable parameter combinations were identified in our demographic analyses.  
965 The x-axes are the allele counts for North Carolina, the y-axes are the allele counts of American  
966 Samoa, and coloured cells illustrate the frequency of joint allele counts between the populations  
967 (see coloured scale bar). The SFSs presented were filtered to a minimum joint allele count of 1  
968 for visualisation.

969

970 **Table 1.** Pairwise mean bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$  estimates between wahoo sample pairs (ordered by  
971 ocean basin), across 1,000 bootstrap replicates of 1,000 subsampled loci (without replacement),  
972 using sample pair specific SNP sets ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci).

973

974 *Note:* Pairs with  $F_{ST} > 0$  based on bootstrap confidence intervals are in bold (see also Table S2).  
975 Population abbreviations are as follows: AmSam = American Samoa; ChrIsl = Christmas Island;  
976 EAus = East Australia; Gal = Galapagos; GraCay = Grand Cayman; NCar = North Carolina;  
977 Thai = Thailand; TrinTab = Trinidad & Tobago.

978

979

980 **Table 2.** Analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) of wahoo populations among basins nested  
981 within regions, using SNP sets specific to sample pairs ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci) or a common  
982 shared SNP set among all sample pairs ( $n = 945$  loci).

983

984

985 **Table 3.** Estimated demographic parameters from  $\partial A \partial I$  analyses between wahoo sample pairs,  
986 within or between ocean basins, and for different demographic scenarios.

987

988 <sup>a</sup> Location abbreviations: AmSam = American Samoa; Gal = Galapagos; NCar = North Carolina;  
989 TrinTab = Trinidad & Tobago.

990 <sup>b</sup> Underlined scenarios were deemed the most likely for their sample pair, based on lowest AIC,  
991 and  $\Delta AIC$  ( $< 10$  considered equivalent).

992 <sup>c</sup> Migration parameters (M, M12, and M21) are forward in time estimates, the number of  
993 chromosomes moving between populations per generation.

**Table 1.** Pairwise mean bootstrapped  $F_{ST}$  estimates between wahoo sample pairs (ordered by ocean basin), across 1,000 bootstrap replicates of 1,000 subsampled loci (without replacement), using sample pair specific SNP sets ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci).

		Atlantic				Indian			Pacific			
		Bimini	GraCay	NCar	TrinTab	ChrIsl	Thai	AmSam	EAus	Gal	Hawaii	Palau
Atlantic	Bimini	0										
	GraCay	0.004	0									
	NCar	0.004	0.004	0								
	TrinTab	0.004	0.007	0.008	0							
Indian	ChrIsl	0.015	0.017	0.015	0.011	0						
	Thai	0.016	0.012	0.017	0.012	0.005	0					
Pacific	AmSam	0.02	0.018	0.021	0.017	0.012	0.008	0				
	EAus	0.013	0.011	0.013	0.012	0.003	0.001	0.007	0			
	Gal	0.017	0.016	0.019	0.014	0.002	0.004	0.008	0.003	0		
	Hawaii	0.017	0.018	0.021	0.014	0.004	0.004	0.013	0.005	0.006	0	
	Palau	0.014	0.012	0.015	0.009	0.004	0.003	0.009	0.004	0.004	0.004	0

Note: Pairs with  $F_{ST} > 0$  based on bootstrap confidence intervals are in bold (see also Table S2). Population abbreviations are as follows: AmSam = American Samoa; ChrIsl = Christmas Island; EAus = East Australia; Gal = Galapagos; GraCay = Grand Cayman; NCar = North Carolina; Thai = Thailand; TrinTab = Trinidad & Tobago.

**Table 2.** Analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) of wahoo populations among basins nested within regions, using SNP sets specific to sample pairs ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci) or a common shared SNP set among all sample pairs ( $n = 945$  loci).

SNP set	Term	SSD	MSD	DF	% var	<i>p</i> -value
Specific	Regions	5.44e-4	5.44e-4	1	77.41	< 0.001
	Basins	5.73e-6	5.73e-6	1	0.82	0.695
	Error	1.53e-4	1.91e-5	8	21.78	
	Total	7.02e-4		10		
Shared	Regions	4.43e-5	4.43e-5	1	57.43	0.335
	Basins	1.28e-5	1.28e-5	1	16.53	0.278
	Error	2.01e-5	2.51e-6	8	26.04	
	Total	7.72e-5		10		

**Table 3.** Estimated demographic parameters from  $\partial A \partial I$  analyses between wahoo sample pairs, within or between ocean basins, and for different demographic scenarios.

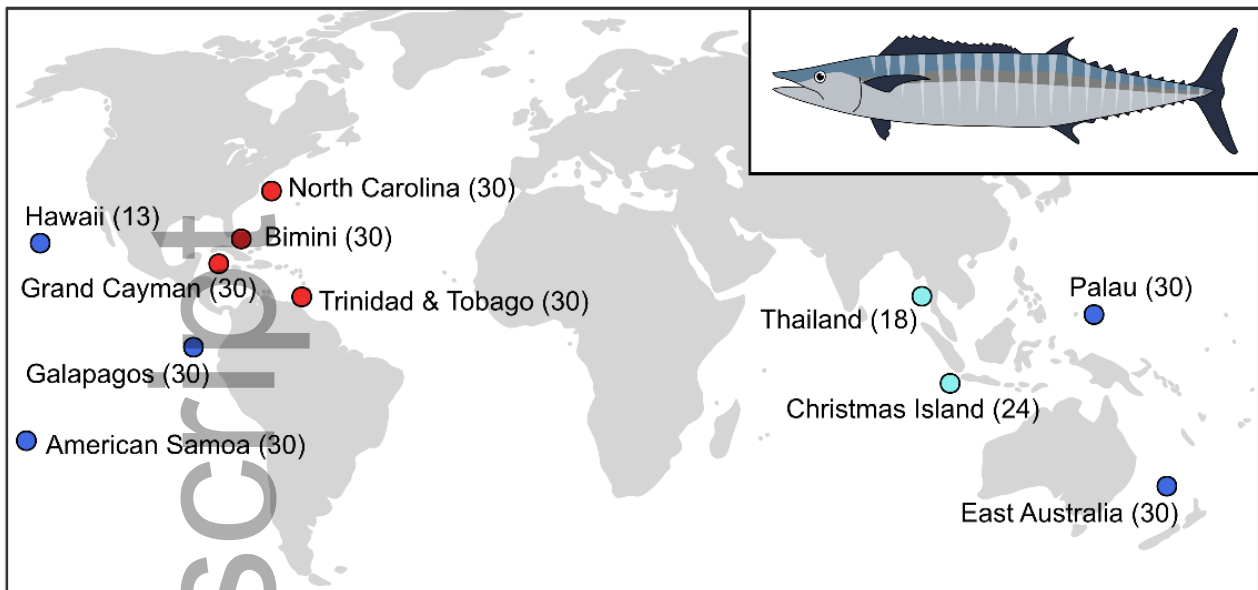
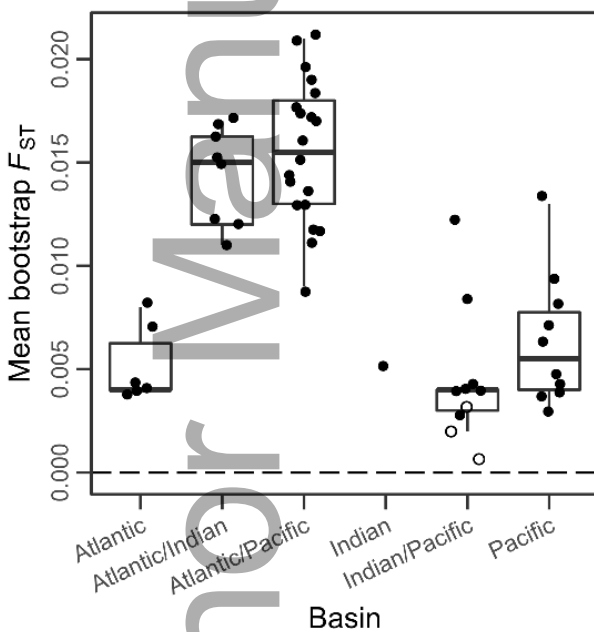
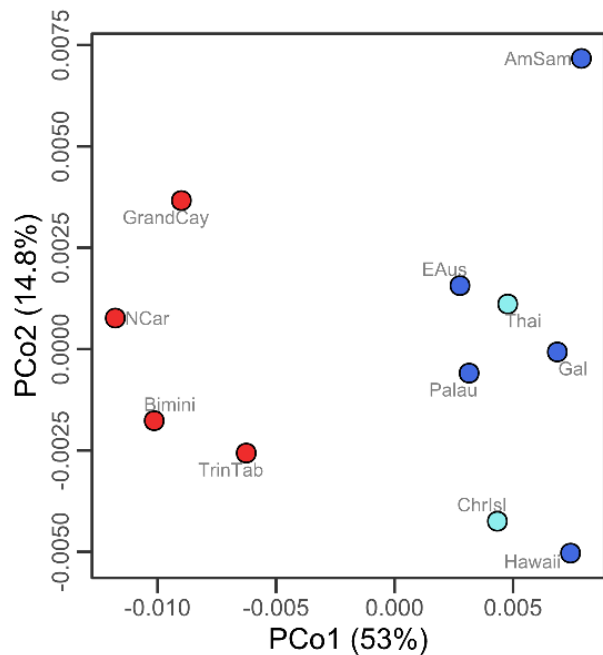
Sample pair <sup>a</sup>	Basin	Scenario <sup>b</sup>	Log-likelihood	T	nu1	nu2	M <sup>c</sup>	M12 <sup>c</sup>	M21 <sup>c</sup>	AIC	$\Delta AIC$
AmSam/Gal	Within	Isolation	-583	1.69e-10	7.98e-09	6.35e-09				1172	665
		Symmetric	-280	0.82	0.33	0.37	55.60			567	60
		<u>Asymmetric</u>	-249	0.55	0.26	0.20		73.94	98.91	508	0
NCar/TrinTab	Within	Isolation	-505	2.56e-07	1.19e-05	1.50e-05				1016	497
		Symmetric	-261	0.88	0.34	0.40	52.15			530	11
		<u>Asymmetric</u>	-254	0.77	0.24	0.51		96.80	46.18	519	0
AmSam/NCar	Between	Isolation	-551	1.41e-08	5.76e-07	3.61e-07				1108	482
		<u>Symmetric</u>	-309	0.69	0.42	0.23	63.71			626	0
		Asymmetric	-344	0.94	0.67	0.31		37.96	60.74	699	73
AmSam/TrinTab	Between	Isolation	-556	4.20e-09	1.75e-07	1.25e-07				1118	539
		Symmetric	-297	0.74	0.31	0.30	63.07			601	23
		<u>Asymmetric</u>	-284	0.46	0.28	0.15		98.42	94.36	579	0
Gal/NCar	Between	Isolation	-580	6.15e-08	2.36e-06	1.73e-06				1167	563

		<u>Symmetric</u>	-298	0.73	0.35	0.27	62.87		604	0	
		<u>Asymmetric</u>	-301	0.64	0.22	0.36		94.60	59.13	611	7
Gal/TrinTab	Between	Isolation	-572	7.46e-08	2.90e-06	2.47e-06				1150	612
		Symmetric	-290	0.78	0.36	0.30	58.54			589	51
		<u>Asymmetric</u>	-264	0.49	0.21	0.19		99.78	89.43	538	0

<sup>a</sup> Location abbreviations: AmSam = American Samoa; Gal = Galapagos; NCar = North Carolina; TrinTab = Trinidad & Tobago.

<sup>b</sup> Underlined scenarios were deemed the most likely for their sample pair, based on lowest AIC, and  $\Delta AIC$  ( $< 10$  considered equivalent).

<sup>c</sup> Migration parameters (M, M12, and M21) are forward in time estimates, the number of chromosomes moving between populations per generation.

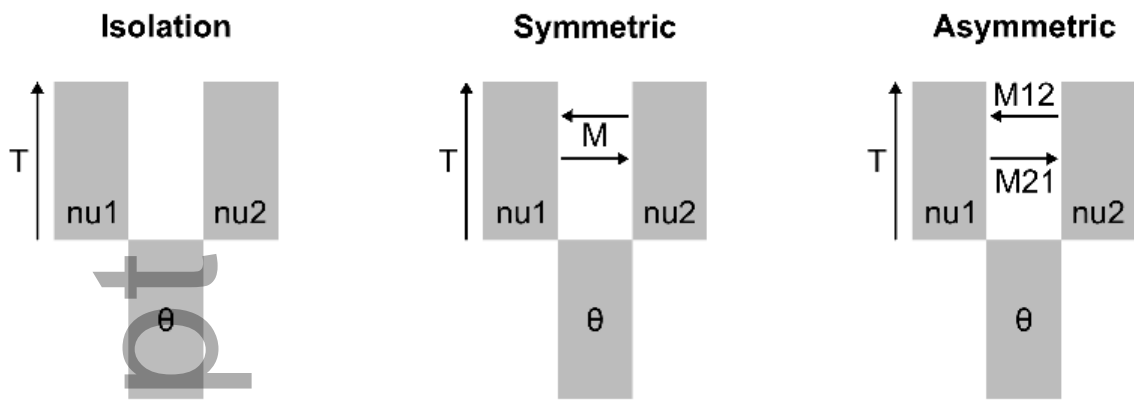
**(a) Focal populations and sample sizes****(b)** Non-zero  $F_{ST}$  ○ FALSE ● TRUE**(c)** Basin ● Atlantic ● Indian ● Pacific

**Figure 1.** Sampling spatial distribution and population structure of wahoo. **(a)** Global distribution of our focal wahoo locations with number of sampled fish in parentheses. Inset is an illustration of a wahoo. **(b)** Distribution of pairwise mean bootstrap  $F_{ST}$  estimates from genome-wide SNPs using sample pair specific SNP sets ( $1,289 \leq n \leq 9,825$  loci). Estimates are grouped with respect to comparisons within versus between ocean basins. Boxplot outliers were only present in the Indian/Pacific comparisons: AmSam/ChrIsl ( $F_{ST} = 0.012$ ) and AmSam/Thai ( $F_{ST} = 0.008$ ) were upper outliers, whereas EAus/Thai ( $F_{ST} = 0.001$ ) was a lower outlier. **(c)** Principal coordinate analysis (PCoA) of pairwise mean bootstrap  $F_{ST}$  estimates derived from sample pair specific SNP sets. Numbers in parentheses for axes labels indicate the proportion of variance captured by each PCo

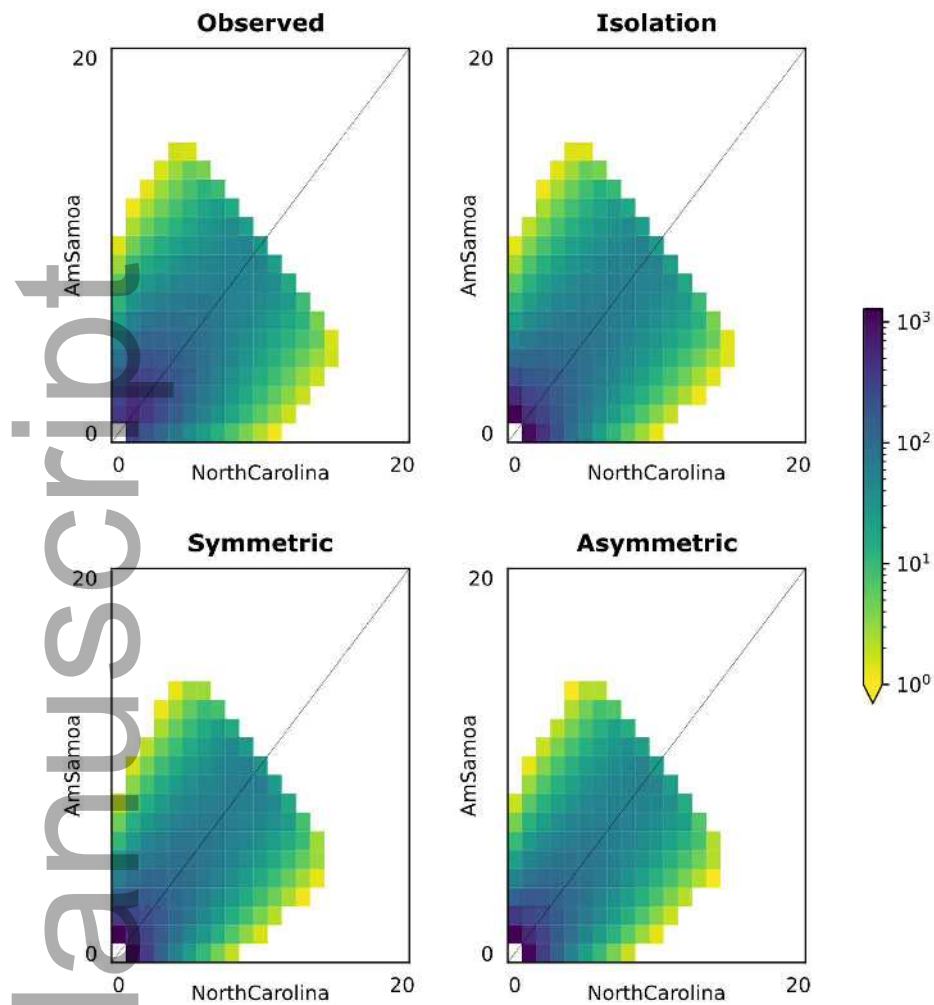


axis. Colours represent ocean basins (see legend). Location abbreviations: AmSam = American Samoa; Bimini = Bimini; ChrIsl = Christmas Island; EAus = East Australia; Gal = Galapagos; GrandCay = Grand Cayman; Hawaii = Hawaii; NCar = North Carolina; Palau = Palau; Thailand = Thailand; TrinTab = Trinidad & Tobago.

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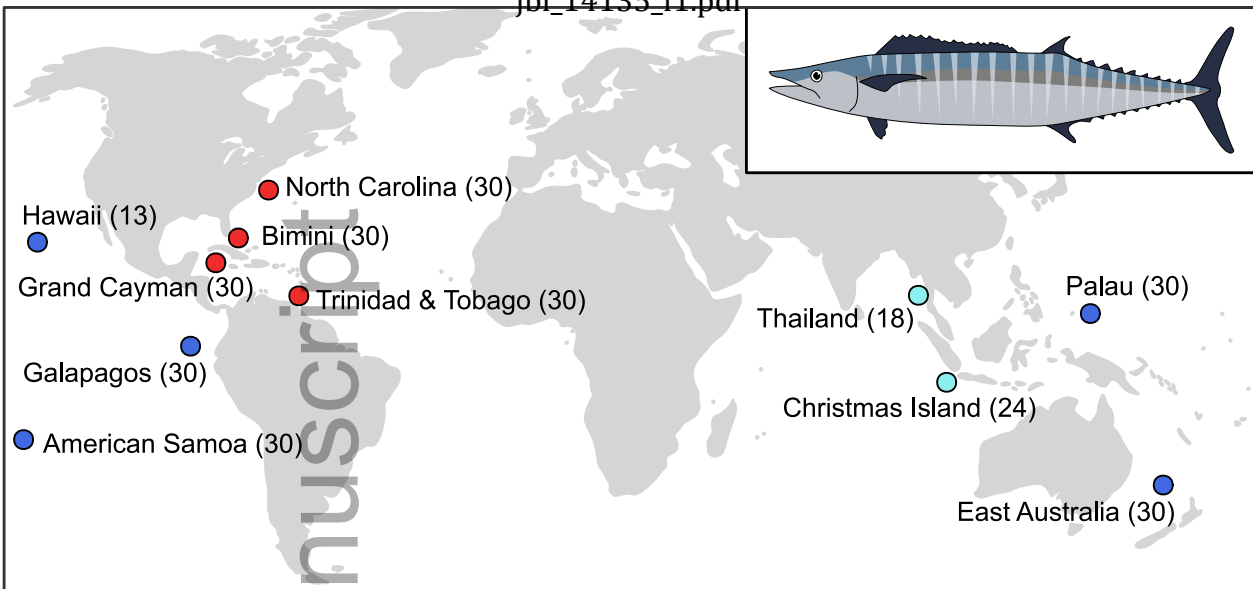
**Figure 2.** Demographic scenarios for gene flow between two populations (1 and 2): isolation, symmetric migration, and asymmetric migration.  $T$ , effective number of generations since divergence,  $nu$ , relative contemporary population size parameter for each population,  $M$ , symmetrical migration,  $M_{12}$ , scaled migration rate from population 2 into population 1,  $M_{21}$ , scaled migration rate from population 1 into population 2.



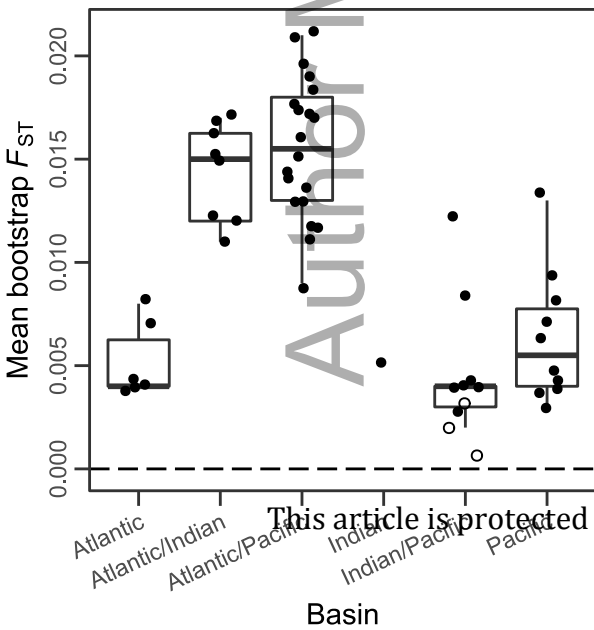
**Figure 3.** Folded site frequency spectrums (SFS) for the American Samoa/North Carolina wahoo population pair for the observed data and our three simulated scenarios (Isolation, Symmetric, Asymmetric). Similarity between the simulated scenarios and the observed SFS indicate that reasonable parameter combinations were identified in our demographic analyses. The x-axes are the allele counts for North Carolina, the y-axes are the allele counts of American Samoa, and coloured cells illustrate the frequency of joint allele counts between the populations (see coloured scale bar). The SFSs presented were filtered to a minimum joint allele count of 1 for visualisation.

(a) Focal populations and sample sizes

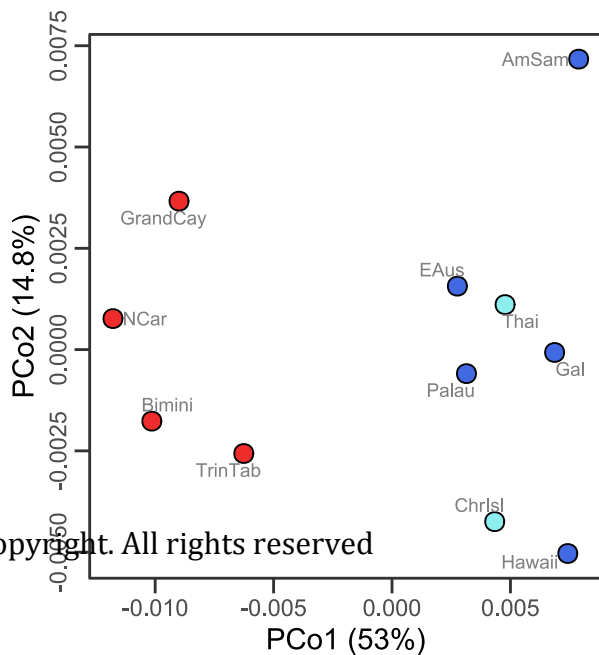
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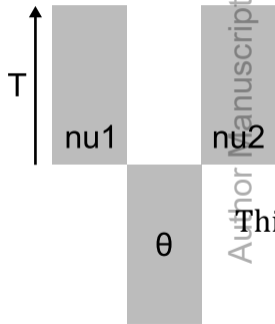
(b) Non-zero  $F_{ST}$  ○ FALSE ● TRUE



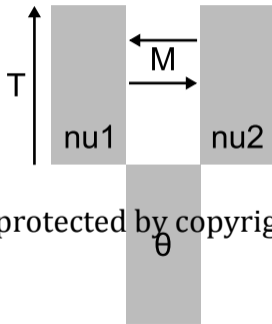
(c) Basin ● Atlantic ● Indian ● Pacific



### Isolation



### Symmetric

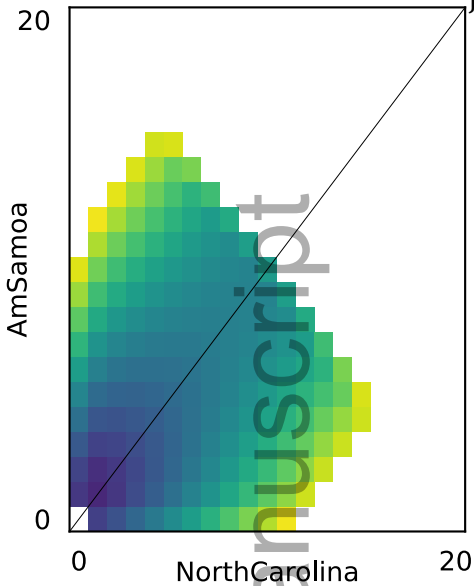


### Asymmetric

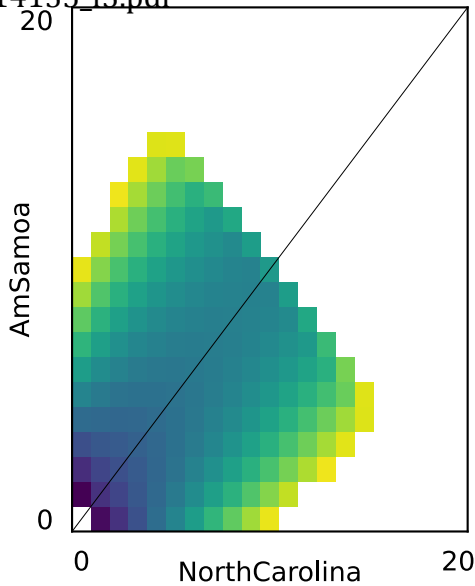


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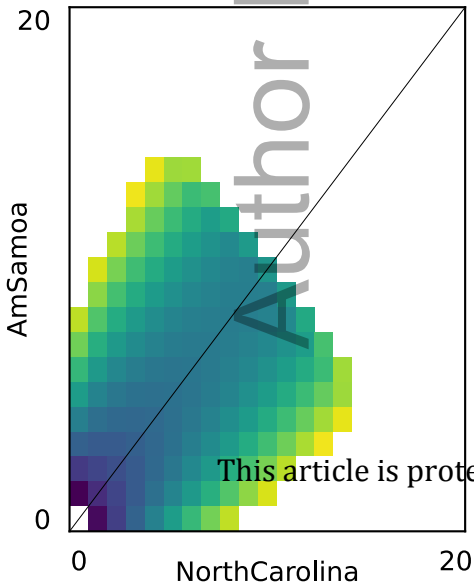
### Observed



### Isolation



### Symmetric



### Asymmetric

