Development and characterization of microsatellite loci for the haploid-diploid red seaweed *Gracilaria vermiculophylla*

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Microsatellite loci are popular molecular markers due to their resolution in distinguishing individual genotypes. However, they have rarely been used to explore the population dynamics in species with biphasic life cycles in which both haploid and diploid stages develop into independent, functional organisms. We developed microsatellite loci for the haploid-diploid red seaweed *Gracilaria vermiculophylla*, a widespread non-native species in coastal estuaries of the Northern hemisphere. Forty-two loci were screened for amplification and polymorphism. Nine of these loci were polymorphic across four populations of the extant range with two to eleven alleles observed. Mean observed and expected heterozygosities ranged from 0.265 to 0.527 and 0.317 to 0.387, respectively. Overall, these markers will aid in the stud the invasive history of this seaweed and further studies on the population dynamics of this important haploid-diploid primary producer.

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INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, genetic approaches to answering evolutionary and ecological
questions have become less expensive and more easily applied to non-model species
(Allendorf et al. 2010; Guichoux et al. 2011). Microsatellites, or tandem repeats of to
six nucleotides, are popular molecular markers due to their resolution in distinguishing
individual genotypes (Selkoe & Toonen 2006) and their ability to describe patterns of
population connectivity across landscapes (Manel et al. 2003) and seascapes (Galindo et
al. 2006). Much of the literature focuses on organisms with single free-living diploid
stages (i.e., animals and higher plants). Yet, there are many species with both haploid and
diploid stages in the same life cycle in which both ploidies undergo somatic development
and live as independent, functional organisms.
Theory predicts that selection should favor either diploidy or haploidy (Mable &
Otto 1998), Hughes and Otto (1999) demonstrated the maintenance of both haploid and
diploid stages when the two stages occupy different ecological niches. However, there are
relatively few empirical tests of these alternative hypotheses (but see Destombe et al.
1992; Thornber & Gaines 2004; Guillemin et al. 2013), and for isomorphic species in
which ploidy is not easily identified through morphological traits, molecular markers will
be essential to address them. These same markers can additionally be used to understand
connectivity and demographic history in haploid-diploid populations. Among marine
haploid-diploid macroalgae, relatively few microsatellites have been developed to
address any of these issues (but see Table 1).
Understanding the consequences of biphasic life cycles and land- or seascape
features on population structure is particularly relevant in light of the increasing

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frequency of biological introductions. There are numerous examples of widespread, and putatively invasive species, that have free-living haploid and diploid stages, including macroalgae (e.g., Asparagopsis spp.; Andreakis et al. 2007), ferns (e.g., Lygodium spp.; Lott et al. 2003) and mosses (e.g., Campylopus introflexus; Schirmel et al. 2010). Macroalgae, or seaweeds, account for approximately 20% of the world's introduced marine species (Andreakis & Schaffelke 2012) and a subset of these invasions are by species that are exploited in their native range, either for the phycocolloid industry or as food products (Williams & Smith 2007). The red seaweed *Gracilaria vermiculophylla* (Omhi) Papenfuse native to the northwest Pacific and, in the last 30-40 years, has spread throughout high to medium salinity estuaries of the eastern North Pacific (Saunders 2009), the western North Atlantic (Byers et al. 2012) and the eastern North Atlantic (Weinberger et al. 2008; Guillemin et al. 2008a). G. vermiculophylla transforms the ecosystems into which it is introduced through negative impacts on native species (e.g., direct competition, Hammann et al. 2013), the addition of structural complexity to soft-bottom systems (e.g., Nyberg et al. 2009, Wright et al. 2014) and the alteration of community structure, species interactions and detrital pathways (e.g., Byers et al. 2012). Previous studies of the population genetics of G. vermiculophylla focused on the mitoch rial gene cytochrome b oxidase I (Kim et al. 2010, Gulbransen et al. 2012), but mitochondrial genetics do not necessarily predict the population genetics of the nuclear genome and cannot assess patterns of ploidy and mating system. Thus, we developed nine polymorphic microsatellite loci for G. vermiculophylla.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

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48	A library of contigs for G. vermiculophylla was generated using the 454 next-
49	generation sequencing platform (Cornell University Life Sciences Core Laboratory
50	Center) from a single individual collected from Charleston, SC, USA. For library
51	preparation, DNA was extracted using CTAB (Eichenberger et al. 2000) and library
52	construction followed Hamilton et al. (1999). Dimeric to hexameric microsatellite repeats
53	were identified with the program MSATCOMMANDER, ver 1.0.8 (Faircloth 2008) and
54	primers were designed using PRIMER 3 (Rozen and Skalesty 2000) for contigs with at
55	least four sequences present in the library and motifs with less than prepeats.
56	Bioinformatics of these sequences was facilitated by the APE package (Paradis et al.
57	2004) in R (R Core Team 2014).
58	Total genomic DNA was isolated using 120 μL of a 10% Chelex solution
59	(BioRad Laboratories, Hercules, CA, USA) in which approximately 1 cm of dried algal
60	tissue was heated at 95°C for 30 minutes and vortexed intermittently (Walsh et al. 1991).
61	Loci were amplified on a thermocycler (BioRad) as follows: 10 μL final volume, 2 μL of
62	DNA template, 0.5 units of GoTAQ Flexi-DNA Polymerase (Promega), 1X buffer, 250
63	μM of each dNTP, 1.5 of MgCl ₂ , 150 nM of fluorescently-labeled forward primer,
64	100 nM of unlabeled forward primer and 250 nM of unlabeled reverse primer. The PCR
65	program included 2 min at 95°C, 30 cycles of 30 sec at 95°C, 30 sec at 55°C and 30 sec at
66	72°C , and a final 5 min at 72°C . One μL of each PCR product was added to 10 μL of
67	loading buffer containing $0.35~\mu L$ of size standard (GeneScan500 Liz; Applied
68	Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA). Samples were electrophoresed on an ABI 3130xL
69	genetic analyzer equipped with 36 cm capillaries (Applied Biosystems). Alleles were

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70	scored manually using GENEMAPPER ver. 4 (Applied Biosystems) and allele sizes were
71	binned with TANDEM ware (Matschiner & Saltzburger 2009; Krueger-Hadfield et
72	al. 2013).
73	We screened a total of 42 primer pairs for amplification and polymorphism in G .
74	vermiculophylla (Table 2). For the amplifiable loci that also showed polymorphism (nine
75	total, see Results and Discussion), we verified single locus genetic determinism (SGLD)
76	in a subset of known haploid gametophytes ($n = 28$) and diploid tetrasporophytes ($n = 30$)
77	collected at Elkhorn Slough, CA, USA (Table 3, Supplementary Figure 1). Elkhorn
78	Slough was the only population for which ploidy was determined by reproductive
79	structures and for which we had known haploids and diploids for genotyping. Loci were
80	in SLGD if known haploids produced a single allele and diploids produced either one or
81	two alleles in their homozygous or heterozygous state, respectively.
82	The frequency of null alleles was estimated in the haploid subpopulation from
83	Elkhorn Slough as well as diploid tetrasporophytes for each of the four populations
84	(Table 3). It is possible to calculate the null allele frequency directly in the haploids based
85	on the number of non-amplification events, after discounting technical errors. For diploid
86	tetrasporophytes, we used a maximum likelihood estimator (ML-NullFreq: Kalinowski &
87	Taper 2006). However, Krueger-Hadfield et al. (2013) demonstrated a strong bias in the
88	maximum likelihood estimators of null allele frequency when macroalgal populations do
89	not undergo random mating.
90	Next, we screened loci for short allele dominance (Wattier et al. 1998). The
91	presence of short allele dominance is rarely tested during microsatellite development,
92	even though it result in artificial heterozygote deficiencies. In contrast to null

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alleles, primer binding is successful, but the larger allele is not amplified due to the preferential amplification of the smaller allele. Wattier *et al.* (1998) demonstrated an analytical method to detect short allele dominance. If a regression of allele-specific F_{is} (inbreeding coefficient) statistics on allele size reveals a significant negative slope, then short allele dominance may be expected. We determined three to four allele size classes per locus and performed linear regressions in R (R Core Team 2014).

To provide preliminary assessment of the genotypic and genetic diversity one can gain from these loci, we genotyped diploid tetrasporophytes one native and three non-native populations of *G. vermiculophylla* (Table 3). Diploids were identified based either on reproductive phenology (Elkhorn) or microsatellite genotype (after assuring SLGD) if at least one locus was heterozygous (Akkeshi, Fort Johnson and Nordstrand, Table 3).

We calculated expected allelic richness using rarefaction in order to account for differences in sample size (HP-Rare; Kalinowski 2005). Observed (H_0) and expected heterozygosities (H_E) were calculated using GenAlEx, ver. 6.501 (Peakall & Smouse 2006; Peakall & Smouse 2012). Tests for Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium and F-statistics were performed in FSTAT, ver. 2.9.3.2 (Goudet 1995). F_{is} was calculated for each locus and over all loci according to (Weir & Cockerham 1984) and significance (at the adjusted nominal level of 0.001) was tested by running permutations of alleles among individuals within samples. We also tested for linkage disequilibrium in each population using GENEPOP, ver. 4.2.2 (Rousset 2008), with 1000 permutations followed by Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons (Sokal & Rohlf 1995).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

117	Of the 42 loci screened, 16 did not amplify for G. vermiculophylla even after
118	several PCR modifications (Table 2). Of the remaining 26 loci, four loci exhibited multi-
119	peak profiles and were discarded from further use, 13 loci were considered
120	monomorphic, and nine loci showed polymorphism. The nine polymorphic loci exhibited
121	SLGD in which known haploids always exhibited one allele.
122	The frequency of null alleles was zero at all loci except Gverm_1803 and
123	Gverm_2790 in which the frequencies were both 0.019 in the haploids at Elkhorn Slough
124	(Supplementary Table 1). The only evidence of null alleles in the diploids from Elkhorn
125	Slough was at locus Gverm_1803, with a maximum likelihood estimated frequency of
126	0.115. The discrepancy between the haploid and diploid estimates is likely due to
127	assumptions underlying the maximum likelihood estimators implemented in software like
128	HP-Rare (Kalinowski 2005), such as random mating. The higher frequencies of null
129	alleles (0.115-0.207) in the Akkeshi diploid subpopulation were most likely driven by a
130	violation of these assumptions as well, though empirical estimates in haploid
131	subpopulations are warranted. Nevertheless, the low frequency of null alleles and lack of
132	evidence for short-allele dominance (all regression p -values were > 0.2 , Supplemental
133	Table 2), suggest that observed heterozygote deficiencies using these loci will be due to
134	the mating system or spatial substructuring (Guillemin et al. 2008b; Krueger-Hadfield et
135	al. 2011; 2013).
136	The nine polymorphic markers described genetic variability in four populations
137	sampled across the extant distribution of G. vermiculophylla. Overall, there was little
138	evidence for linkage disequilibrium after Bonferroni correction (Supplementary Figure

139	2). Additionally, allelic diversity was comparable among the one native and three non-
140	native sites we sampled, but F_{is} varied considerably (summary in Table 4; per locus
141	statistics in Supplementary Table 3). Together, these results suggest that unique
142	demographic and evolutionary processes could be operating between native and non-
143	native ranges and within each population, but more detailed sampling is needed to
144	address these patterns.
145	In summary, we have developed and characterized microsatellite markers for the
146	haploid-diploid red seaweed G. vermiculophylla. These loci have the resolution to
147	distinguish individual thalli and will aid studies on the invasive history of G.
148	vermiculophylla, as well as the evolutionary ecology of rapidly spreading populations and
149	mating system shifts in organisms that have biphasic life cycles with free-living haploid
150	and diploid stages (i.e., macroalgae, ferns, mosses and some fungi).
151	
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Table 1. Studies in which both the haploid and diploid stages of seaweeds and mosses were investigated to reveal patterns in genetic structure and mating system.

	Phylum	Species	Marker	Type of study
Sosa et al. (1998)	Rhodophyta	Gelidium arbuscula	Isozymes	Genetic structure and mating system
Sosa et al. (1998)	Rhodophyta	Gelidium canariensis	Isozymes	Genetic structure and mating system
Engel et al. (1999)	Rhodophyta	Gracilaria gracilis	Microsatellites	Paternity analyses and dispersal
van der Velde et al. (2001)	Bryophyta	Polytrichum formosum	Microsatellites	Paternity analyses and dispersal
van der Strate et al. (2002)	Chlorophyta	Cladophoropsis membranacea	Microsatellites	Shorescape structure and mating system
Engel et al. (2004)	Rhodophyta	Gracilaria gracilis	Microsatellites	Shorescape structure and mating system
Guillemin et al. (2008)	Rhodophyta	Gracilaria chilensis	Microsatellites	Genetic structure, mating system and
				comparisons between natural and farmed
				populations
Szövényi et al. (2009)	Bryophyta	Sphagnum lescurii	Microsatellites	Paternity analyses and dispersal
Alström-Rapaport et al. (2010)	Chlorophyta	Ulva intenstinalis	Microsatellites	Genetic structure and mating system
Krueger-Hadfield et al. (2011)	Rhodophyta	Chondrus crispus	Microsatellites	Genetic structure and mating system
Krueger-Hadfield et al. (2013)	Rhodophyta	Chondrus crispus	Microsatellites	Shorescape structure and mating system
Krueger-Hadfield et al. (2015)	Rhodophyta	Chondrus crispus	Microsatellites	Paternity analyses and dispersal

Table 2. Characteristics of 42 microsatellite loci developed for *Gracilaria vermiculophylla*: Acc. No. = genbank accession number; locus; motif; primer sequences; Profile: one- or multi-locus genetic determinism, no amp. indicates non-amplification; allele range; avg. error: TANDEM (Matschiner & Saltzburger 2009) rounding errors for each microsatellite locus (the authors of TANDEM suggest that good loci have an average rounding error which is below 10% of the repeat size); *Ntall* = total number of alleles.

					Allele	Tandem	
Locus	Ac No.	Motif	Primer sequence	Profile	Range	Avg.	N_{tall}
						Error	
Gverm_5276	########	$(AC)_{10}$	F: GGAGAGCAGCACGTTTTAGG R: CTGCTTAGTTCCACGATCGAC	one	282-316	0.14	11
Gverm_6311	#########	(AG) ₉	F: GCGTCATTCCACTGAATGTG R: GATGAACCTCAATGCCTCGT	one	203-223	0.17	6
Gverm_8036	########	$(AC)_{12}$	F: GCCCTTTTAAGGATGCAACA R: GGGGTAAACGACCACAGAGA	one	213-251	0.14	5
Gverm_3003	########	$(AG)_{11}$	F: CATCTTGCTTCCTTGCTTCC R: TTGAAAGCCGGAATTTATCG	one	198-230	0.11	4
Gverm_1203	########	(AAG) ₈	F: CTCCTGGTGCACAAGCAATA R: ACATTCTGCGCACCTTTCTT	one	284-308	0.12	4
Gverm_1803	########	$(AC)_{11}$	F: GCGTGCACGATGTCTACACT R: GACAGCAACAAGTGGGGTTT	one	352-356	0.07	3
Gverm_804	#########	(AAG) ₈	F: TGTAGGATTGCTCTCCTGGTG R: CAGGCTGGCCAAAATAACAT	one	182-188	0.16	3
Gverm_10367	########	$(AG)_8$	F: GCTGAGAAATGAAGCGAAGG R: GCAAACCTGCCTTGTTTGTT	one	198-200	0.07	2
Gverm_2790	########	(AATGC) ₅	F: GAACAATGCGGGAAAACATT R: GGAAGAGGCTCAAAAGCAGA	one	262-267	0.16	2

Gverm_10883	########	(AAG) ₇	F: TCCCATCAGCCAACAGTAGA R: GCAGAGCTTGGTAGGCATTC	one	-	-	1
Gverm_7969	########	$(ATC)_6$	F: CGATCCTTCCTCCTGTGGTA R: AATTGGGATACGCAATACGG	one	-	-	1
Gverm_13240	########	(ACG) ₈	F: AACACATTGCTTCCGTTCTTG R: CTGCGAAGCACAAGTGATGT	one	-	-	1
Gverm_2178	########	(ACG) ₆	F: ATTTGCACCGGTAAAACTGG R: GGCTGTCATGCAAGATGATG	one	-	-	1
Gverm_12220	########	(AC) ₇	F: TGACTCGAGGAGTGCAGATG R: CTTTTGCCAGCAATGCAATA	one	-	-	1
Gverm_10926	########	(AC) ₇	F: CTTTTGCCAGCAATGCAATA R: TGACTCGAGGAGTGCAGATG	one	-	-	1
Gverm_10612	########	(AAG) ₇	F: GCAGAGCTTGGTAGGCATTC R: GGCAACACCATTGGACTCTT	one	-	_	1
Gverm 12990	########	(AC) ₇	F: GGGCGTAGAGAGCTGAAAGA	one	-	-	1
Gverm 9808	########	$(AG)_{10}$	R: TCGCCGTTTTTCTCCTACAC F: GCCTGTTCCTCATCTTTTGG	one	_	_	1
Gverm_10115	########	$(AG)_8$	R: GCGACAGAAGAGGCGACTTA F: CAGGGGCTACTCACCTTCAC	one	_	_	1
Gverm_10113	#########	$(AC)_8$	R: GTGTGTCTTGATCCGCTGTG F: CCGAAAGATTAGCGATCCAC	one			1
_		, ,	R: CTCCCCCTCTTGGTTTTGTT F: ACACGGGTCTCATGTTCCTC		-	-	
Gverm_871	########	(AG) ₉	R: AGGAGCGCAGTCCAAGTAAA F: ACGACTCACGGGTTGTTTTT	one	-	-	1
Gverm_3707	########	$(AG)_{10}$	R: AAGCAGACCAGCACATTTCA	one	-	-	1

Gverm_4346	########	(AC) ₈	F: ATCGCTCTTCTTCGGCTACA R: AGGGATGACTCACCAAGTGC	multi	-	-	-
Gverm_263	#########	(ACG) ₉	F: CACATTGCTTCCGTTCTTGTT R: TGAGTTCGTCGTCACGATTC	multi	-	-	-
Gverm_12453	########	$(AG)_{13}$	F: GAAGACTGACCGGAATCTGC R: ACAATCAACACGCAGCTCAG	multi	-	-	-
Gverm_13408	#########	(AAG) ₉	F: GGGAACGCATATCTTTGTGG R: GATACGGGAACAGCGTTTGT	multi	-	-	-
Gverm_8854	-	(AAAT) ₅	F: TGCGCAGGAAAGGGTTAATA R: ATCCCTCGTGATAGGCAAAT	no amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_6659	-	(AC) ₆	F: TGGTACGTGATCCCAGTGTG R: CATCGTGCTTCACCACATTC	no amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_85	-	$(ACC)_6$	F: AAAGTGGAGGCAGCTATGGA R: TCCCCAATGAACTCATGACA	no amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_5509	-	(AC) ₉	F: ACTTTGCACCTTTGCACCTT R: GTTGGAATGGTTCTGCGATT	no amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_269	-	(ACG) ₉	F: CACATTGCTTCCGTTCTTGTT R: TGAGTTCGTCGTCACGATTC	no amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_3258	-	(AC) ₉	F: AACTGGAGCTTGGGATGCTA R: CCGTCTCTGTTTCTTCTAGTGC	no amp.	-	_	-
Gverm_3883	-	(ACAG) ₂₀	F: ATCGAGATATTTACACGCAACA R: AGAGGGCAGTTAGATTGTCTGA	no amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_5516	-	$(AAC)_8$	F: AGTTGTAACAGCGGGAAACG R: CCCTGTTGCGAATCTTCTGT	no	-	_	_
Gverm_6564	-	(AAC) ₁₃	F: CCCTAAGCTCTGCCATTGTC R: TGCGCTGTAACAAGAAGAAGA	amp. no amp.	-	-	-



Gverm 7244	-	$(AAGG)_{20}$	F: CTGCATCAACACGATTACGC	no	_	-	-
_		,	R: GATATGGGTGGACGAGTGCT	amp.			
Gverm 8378	-	$(AC)_{20}$	F: CCAACCTCTCCTCTGTTTG	no	_	_	_
Gveini_6376		$(AC)_{20}$	R: TGTACGCTGCAATGCTGAAC	amp.	-	-	-
Gverm 8448	-	(ACC)	F: AACTGGAACTGCAAACAATGG	no			
Gveiii_0446		$(ACC)_8$	R: GCTTGTTGATGAGCCTGTTG	amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_8535	-	(ΛC)	F: CGTACAGAATGGGGGATTTG	no			
		$(AC)_{11}$	R: GGAAGATGGATGTGCAGGTT	amp.	-	-	-
Cyarm 11501	-	(ΛC)	F: AAAGGTGGCATTGAGTCAGC	no			
Gverm_11521		$(AC)_{11}$	R: TTCATTTGCCACTCTCTAAGCA	amp.		-	-
Gverm_11615		(ATCC) ₁₇	F: TGAAACGCCAATAAGTTTCTGTT	no			
	-		R: CACTGTTAGACAACCCAGAAAGA	amp.	-	-	-
Gverm_11818		$(AAGT)_{18}$	F: AAGGAAGAAGCATCACCTTCA	no			
	-		R: TCGATTCTGATTGGTTAATAGCAA	amp.	-	-	-

Table 3. Location of the four populations used to test for polymorphism in newly characterized microsatellite loci in *Gracilaria vermiculophylla*. The region (native or non-native), latitude, longitude, sampling date, collector* and ploidy determination (using reproductive phenology or microsatellite genotype) is provided.

Pop tion	Region	Latitude	Longitude	Date	Collector	Ploidy determination	
Akkeshi,	Native	43.04774	144.9498	25Aug10,	NMK, KH, KM,		
Japan	Inalive	43.04774	144.5456	31Jul12	AP, MS		
Elkhorn Slough CA,	Non-native	36.50447	-121.4513	3Nov13	SAKH, BFK,	ugat phanalagy	
USA	Non-nauve	30.30447	-121.4313	3N0V13	TDK, BH	μsat, phenology	
Fort Johnson	Non-native	32.7513	-79.900	11Dec13	CEG	ugat	
SC, USA	Non-nauve	32.7313	-79.900	11100013	CEG	μsat	
Nordstrand,	Non-native	54.454571	8.874846	24Mar10	MH	ugat	
Germany	mon-nauve	34.4343/1	0.0/4040	241VIAI IU	IVIΠ	μsat	

^{*} Collector abbreviations: AP: A. Pansch, NMK: N. M. Kollars, KH: K. Honda, KM: K. Momota, MS: M. Sato, SAKH: S. A. Krueger-Hadfield, BFK: B. F. Krueger, TDK: T. D. Krueger, BH: B. Hughes, CEG: C. E. Gerstenmaier, MH: M. Hammann

Table 4. Genetic features of four populations of *Gracilaria vermicuolphylla*, including: the sample size, N; the diploid genotypic richness, N_A , \pm standard error (SE); mean allelic richness, A_E , based on the smallest sample size of 46 alleles (23 diploid individuals) \pm SE; mean observed heterozygosity, H_O , \pm SE; mean expected heterozygosity, H_E , \pm SE; inbreeding coefficient, F_{is} , multilocus and per locus estimates (*, p < 0.001, adjusted nominal value).

Statistics	Akkeshi	Elkhorn Slough	Fort Johnson	Nordstrand
N	31	30	38	23
N_A	3.2 ± 0.5	2.2 ± 0.4	2.0 ± 0.2	1.9 <u>+</u> 0.2
A_E	3.1 ± 0.4	2.2 ± 0.3	2.0 ± 0.2	1.9 <u>+</u> 0.2
H_O	0.265 ± 0.060	0.311 ± 0.089	0.520 ± 0.110	0.527 ± 0.125
H_E	0.374 ± 0.079	0.317 ± 0.084	0.387 ± 0.077	0.352 ± 0.079
F_{is}	0.294 *	0.017	-0.350 *	-0.512 *
F_{is} per locus				
Gverm_5276	0.484 *	0.120	-0.209	-0.492
Gverm_6311	0.435 *	0.140	-0.267	-0.048
Gverm_8036	0.334	NA	-0.445 *	-0.217
Gverm_3003	0.529	-0.121	-0.138	-0.553
Gverm_1203	-0.15	-0.206	-0.310	-0.508
Gverm_1803	0.569 *	0.460	-0.696 *	NA
Gverm_804	-0.278	-0.206	-0.310	-0.508
Gverm_10367	-0.017	NA	NA	NA
Gverm_2790	NA	NA	NA	-0.913 *