Double-digest RAD sequencing outperforms microsatellite loci at assigning paternity and estimating relatedness: a proof of concept in a highly promiscuous bird

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Keywords: double-digest restriction site-associated DNA sequencing (ddRAD-seq), microsatellite, single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP), parentage, relatedness, cooperative breeding

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Running title: SNPs outperform microsatellite loci

Abstract

Information on genetic relationships among individuals is essential to many studies of the behavior and ecology of wild organisms. Parentage and relatedness assays based on large numbers of SNP loci hold substantial advantages over the microsatellite markers traditionally used for these purposes. We present a double-digest restriction site-associated DNA sequencing (ddRAD-seq) analysis pipeline that, as such, simultaneously achieves the SNP discovery and genotyping steps and which is optimized to return a statistically powerful set of SNP markers (typically 150-600 after stringent filtering) from large numbers of individuals (up to 240 per run). We explore the tradeoffs inherent in this approach through a set of experiments in a species with a complex social system, the variegated fairy-wren (*Malurus lamberti*), and further validate it in a phylogenetically broad set of other bird species. Through direct comparisons with a parallel dataset from a robust panel of highly variable microsatellite markers, we show that this ddRAD-seq approach results in substantially improved power to discriminate among potential relatives and substantially more precise estimates of relatedness coefficients. The pipeline is designed to be universally applicable to all bird species (and with minor modifications to many other taxa), to be cost- and time-efficient, and to be replicable across independent runs such that genotype data from different study periods can be combined and analyzed as field samples are accumulated.

Introduction

Advances in molecular techniques over the past several decades have substantially improved our ability to test questions about animal social behavior by providing reliable information on the genetic relationships among individuals (Westneat *et al.* 1990; Hughes 1998; Avise *et al.* 2002; Griffith *et al.* 2002; Solomon *et al.* 2004; Myers & Zamudio 2004). Microsatellites have been the molecular 'tool-of-choice' for this application since the 1990s, as microsatellite loci are often highly polymorphic, with up to dozens of co-segregating alleles at a single locus (Queller *et al.* 1993; Li *et al.* 2002; Selkoe & Toonen 2006; Guichoux *et al.* 2011). Accordingly, a small number of highly variable microsatellite loci can provide considerable power for discerning genetic relationships among individuals (Queller *et al.* 1993; Blouin 2003; Webster & Reichart 2005). However, microsatellite assays also have some practical drawbacks. Microsatellite laboratory protocols developed for one species are often not suitable for use in other species, especially in more distantly related taxa (Galbusera 2000; Decroocq *et al.* 2003; Hedgecock *et al.* 2004; Primmer *et al.* 2005). Traditional PCR-based microsatellite assays incur substantial financial and lab-bench time investments. The manual scoring of microsatellite alleles also requires substantial researcher time, and can involve various forms of error arising from alleles that have more than one clearly defined peak, allelic drop-out and null allele issues, and the various sources of human error that are inherent in any complicated workflow (Pemberton *et al.* 1995; Hedgecock *et al.* 2004; Hoffman & Amos 2005; Kalinowski *et al.* 2007).

87 Many of these limitations are less severe in assays based on single-nucleotide
88 polymorphisms (SNPs), which require fewer steps and have greater automation (Gut
89 2001; Syvänen 2001; Seeb *et al.* 2011; Davey *et al.* 2011). SNPs are appropriate
90 alternatives for studies of parentage and relatedness data because they are abundant in
91 the genome, have low mutation rates (Brumfield *et al.* 2003; Morin *et al.* 2004), and can
92 be scored semi-automatically (Garvin *et al.* 2010; Guichoux *et al.* 2011). In comparison
93 to microsatellite-based relationship tests, the primary limitation of SNPs is that SNPs are
94 typically biallelic, whereas microsatellite loci are often multiallelic, and hence the
95 statistical power of SNP loci for discriminating parentage and relatedness is far lower on
96 a per-locus basis (Ball *et al.* 2010). Compared to highly variable microsatellite loci, a
97 substantially higher number of SNP markers is therefore required to achieve appropriate
98 power in parentage and relatedness studies (Glaubitz *et al.* 2003; Morin *et al.* 2004;
99 Coates *et al.* 2009).
100 Recently, the application of SNPs for use in analyses of parentage, relatedness,
101 and overall population structure has received greater attention (Glaubitz *et al.* 2003;
102 Anderson & Garza 2006; Coates *et al.* 2009). Studies in birds (Cramer *et al.* 2011;
103 Weinman *et al.* 2014; Kaiser *et al.* 2016), fish (Hauser *et al.* 2011), and several
104 domesticated taxa (Tokarska *et al.* 2009; Fernández *et al.* 2013) have developed SNP
105 panels with a sufficient number of SNPs to attain a comparable, if not better, level of
106 resolving power as highly polymorphic microsatellite panels. While each of these studies
107 manage to identify powerful SNP panels, the SNP genotyping methods used are often
108 labor intensive, requiring a significant amount of preparatory work at the discovery stage

109 prior to genotyping of large numbers of individuals. Many of these methods also rely on
110 reference genomes (Anderson & Garza 2006; Heylar *et al.* 2011), or other genomic
111 resources (Fernández *et al.* 2013; Weinman *et al.* 2014; Kaiser *et al.* 2016) (e.g.
112 transcriptome, SNP microarray), for SNP identification. Ultimately, this has afforded
113 several beneficial examples of the utility of SNPs for parentage and relatedness
114 analyses, but without an efficient, universal method of SNP discovery and identification.
115 Restriction site-associated DNA sequencing (RAD-seq) is widely used in
116 molecular genetic studies (Davey & Blaxter 2010; Etter *et al.* 2012; Puritz *et al.* 2014),
117 particularly for linkage and quantitative trait locus (QTL) mapping (Baird *et al.* 2008),
118 genome wide association studies (Davey *et al.* 2011), and phylogeography (Andrews *et*
119 *al.* 2016). RAD-seq uses a restriction enzyme to fragment and sample a fraction of a
120 genome; as it identifies SNPs with no prior knowledge of the genome, it provides a more
121 universal method of SNP discovery (Willing *et al.* 2011). Double-digest restriction site-
122 associated DNA sequencing (ddRAD-seq) allows for selection of an even smaller
123 fraction of the genome through the combined use of two restriction enzymes, affording
124 the ability to target a smaller total number of SNPs in a greater number of individuals
125 (Peterson *et al.* 2012; Puritz *et al.* 2014). This ability, in concert with the fact that no prior
126 knowledge of the genome is needed, makes ddRAD-seq an attractive method of
127 simultaneous SNP discovery and screening for use in discerning genetic relationships
128 among individuals.
129 Here, we describe a ddRAD-based approach to the simultaneous discovery and
130 screening of high numbers of SNP loci with high power for testing questions about

131 parentage and relatedness. These protocols are optimized to generate an appropriately
132 robust set of SNP markers for 240 individuals per run, to be repeatable across runs to
133 allow the combination of SNP datasets generated at different times, and to be
134 universally applicable to birds (and with small modifications, to other organisms) without
135 requiring a species-specific marker discovery step. We validate these methods by
136 conducting a SNP-based parentage and relatedness study in the highly promiscuous,
137 and socially complex, variegated fairy-wren (*Malurus lamberti*). We compare the results
138 with previously generated paternity assignments and relatedness information, based on
139 microsatellite screens of the same fairy-wren individuals and social groups. To illustrate
140 the broad utility of this method we report summary statistics for equivalent studies of
141 parentage in a variety of other species that collectively span much of the phylogenetic
142 diversity of living birds.
143

144 **Methods & Materials**

145 *Study Population*

146 The variegated fairy-wren, endemic to Australia, is a cooperatively breeding bird
147 that lives in social groups composed of kin and non-kin (Schodde 1982; Rowley &
148 Russell 1997). Male dispersal is limited, and rates of extra-pair fertilizations (EPFs) are
149 high (~68% of all young, assessed with a panel of 12 species-specific microsatellites; DJ
150 Thrasher, unpublished data). We intensively monitored a color-banded population of the
151 nominate subspecies, *M. l. lamberti*, on Lake Samsonvale (27°16' S, 152° 41' E), 30 km
152 northwest of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, from 2012 – 2016. The population

153 ranges from about 250-300 adults depending on year-to-year conditions. The study site
154 is bounded on most sides by Lake Samsonvale, and on its westernmost side by a major
155 highway, which increases our confidence in sampling most, if not all, of the adults in the
156 population. We also monitored all nesting attempts to measure, mark, and collect blood
157 samples from nestlings 6 days after hatching. Blood samples were immediately stored in
158 lysis buffer (White & Densmore 1992), and genomic DNA was later extracted using
159 Qiagen DNeasy Blood and Tissue kits. DNA concentration was determined using the
160 Qubit dsDNA BR Assay Kit and the Qubit® Fluorometer (Life Technologies) following
161 the manufacturers protocol.
162
163 *Microsatellite development and genotyping*
164 We previously developed twelve polymorphic microsatellite loci for the variegated
165 fairy-wren (Table S1, Supporting information) following methods described previously in
166 Nali *et al.* (2014). Briefly, we extracted genomic DNA from blood in lysis buffer from eight
167 adults in our study population, enriched the mix of DNA with repetitive sequences to
168 develop an enriched microsatellite library, and conducted an Illumina MiSeq sequencing
169 run. From this pool of sequences, we optimized twelve loci that amplified well using
170 polymerase chain reaction (PCR), were polymorphic, and exhibited clearly defined
171 peaks for genotyping. We designed three multiplexed PCRs for genotyping, and each
172 amplification reaction contained 1ul of genomic DNA of varying concentrations (1 ng-40
173 ng per 1 ul). PCR products were combined with the GeneScan 500 base pair LIZ
174 internal size standard for size-sorting using a 3730 DNA Analyzer. We used Geneious

175 version 8.0 (Kearse *et al.* 2012) to score alleles. The program automatically identifies
176 alleles at each locus, and we manually inspected allele calls to minimize genotyping
177 error. In total, we genotyped 287 adults and 482 nestlings from 226 nests sampled
178 during the 2012-2016 breeding seasons.
179
180 *ddRAD sequencing*
181 We selected a subset of the individuals genotyped for microsatellite loci (120
182 adults and 40 nestlings) for use in our ddRAD-seq experiment and subsequent
183 analyses. To assess the reliability of our SNP panel for parentage and relatedness
184 analysis, we chose representative nestlings from all the years of our study. Typically, we
185 selected one nestling from any individual nest. In a few cases, we selected two nestlings
186 that prior microsatellite analysis had assigned to the same mother but different fathers.
187 For each nestling, we included the mother, the social father, and the genetic father as
188 assigned by previous microsatellite analysis. Our pool of candidate parents included 24
189 mothers and 78 putative fathers, and 18 randomly selected individuals of both sexes, for
190 a total of 120 adults.
191 Our ddRAD-seq protocol is adapted from Peterson et al. (2012) (see Supporting
192 information for a detailed protocol). Briefly, for each individual, 100ng - 500ng of DNA
193 (20ul of DNA between concentrations of 5ng/ul - 25ng/ul) were digested with either SbfI
194 and MspI, or SbfI and EcoRI (NEB), and ligated with one of 20 P1 adapters (each
195 containing a unique inline barcode) and a P2 adapter (P2-MspI or P2-EcoRI). After
196 digestion and ligation these samples were pooled in groups of 20 (each with a unqiue P1

197 adpater) and purified using 1.5X volumes of homemade MagNA made with Sera-Mag
198 Magnetic Speed-beads (FisherSci) as described by Rohland & Reich (2012). Fragments
199 of between 450 bp and 600 bp were selected using BluePippin (Sage Science) by the
200 Cornell University Biotechnology Resource Center (BRC). Following size selection,
201 index groups and Illumina sequencing adapters were added by performing 11 PCR
202 cycles with Phusion DNA Polymerase (NEB). These reactions were cleaned up with 0.7x
203 volumes of MagNA and pooled in equimolar ratios to create a single library for
204 sequencing on one lane of Illumina HiSeq 2500 (100bp single end, performed by BRC).
205 By replicating 20 samples (run as a separate index group) with a wider
206 BluePippin size selection range of 400-700 bp, we explored the inherent trade-off
207 between the number of samples sequenced on a lane at a given coverage threshold and
208 the number of SNPs recovered per sample. We similarly explored the effects of using a
209 less frequent restriction enzyme digest (by substituting the 6 bp cutter EcoRI in place of
210 the 4 bp cutter MspI) to generate a smaller total number of fragments in our size range,
211 which in turn should increase the sequencing coverage of the loci screened.
212 To assess repeatability across index groups, we replicated two index groups,
213 each comprised of 20 samples: one index group from the standard protocol, and the
214 index group generated with the rare-cutter EcoRI enzyme (Table 1). We multiplexed the
215 resulting 240 samples in 12 index groups (with 20 individuals each) which were pooled
216 into a final library that was sequenced on one lane of an Illumina HiSeq 2500, producing
217 220,300,739 100 bp single end reads (see Table 1).
218

219 *SNP data analysis*

220

221 Quality filtering and demultiplexing

222 After the quality of the reads was assessed using FASTQC version 0.11.5
223 (www.bioinformatics.babraham.ac.uk/projects/fastqc), we trimmed all sequences to 97bp
224 using fastX_trimmer (FASTX-Toolkit) to exclude low quality calls near the 3' of the reads.
225 We subsequently removed reads containing a single base with a Phred quality score of
226 less than 10 (using fastq_quality_filter). We additionally removed sequences if more
227 than 5% of the bases had a Phred quality score of less than 20. Using process_radtags
228 module from the Stacks version 1.37 pipeline (Catchen *et al.* 2013), we demultiplexed
229 the reads to obtain files with sequences that were specific to each individual.

230

231 De novo assembly of RAD loci

232 Because we do not have a sequenced genome for the variegated fairy wren or a
233 close relative – which is likely to be the case for many non-model organisms involved in
234 parentage studies – we assembled the sequences de novo using the Stacks pipeline
235 (Catchen *et al.* 2013). First, we used denovo_map.pl to assemble the reads into a
236 catalog allowing a minimum stack depth of 5 (m parameter), up to 5 mismatches per
237 locus within an individual (M paramenter), and 5 mismatches between loci of different
238 individuals when building the catalog (n parameter). We ran the rxstacks module to filter
239 loci with a log likelihood of less than -50 (lnl_lim -50) or that were confounded in at least

240 25% of the population (conf_lim 0.25). We then built a new catalog by rerunning cstacks
241 and obtained individual genotype calls with sstacks.
242
243 SNP filtering
244 SNPs were exported using the populations module of the Stacks pipeline. All of
245 our samples were grouped in one population and a locus was exported if it was present
246 in 95% of the individuals in this population (r parameter) at a stack depth of at least 10
247 (m parameter). The data were restricted to the first SNP per locus (--write_single_snp),
248 and a minor allele frequency of at least 0.25 was required to process a nucleotide site (--
249 min_maf).
250 Using vcftools version 0.1.14 (Danecek *et al.* 2011), we removed loci that were
251 not in Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium (---hwe). We obtained a variant call format file that
252 was converted to structure format in PGD Spider version 2.0.5.0 (Lischer & Excoffier
253 2012) and further modified to a format compatible with CERVUS version 3.0.7
254 (Kalinowski *et al.* 2007) using a custom perl script.
255
256 *Parentage Analysis*
257 We used CERVUS version 3.0.7 (Kalinowski *et al.* 2007) to assign paternity for all
258 nestlings using our microsatellite and SNP datasets separately. CERVUS uses a two-
259 step, likelihood-based approach to assign parentage. First, CERVUS compares each
260 offspring's genotype to that of a candidate parent and a random individual in the
261 population to calculate a likelihood ratio. This relationship is presented as an LOD score,

262 which is simply the natural logarithm of the calculated likelihood ratio. Positive LOD
263 scores indicate that a candidate parent is much more likely to be the true parent,
264 whereas negative LOD scores indicate that the candidate parent is highly unlikely to be
265 a true parent. Second, CERVUS conducts a simulation of parentage analysis based on
266 population allele frequencies and the proportion of potential parents included in the
267 analysis. The simulation accounts for the possibility of unsampled parents, missing data,
268 and genotyping errors. Considering these parameters, the simulation calculates critical
269 LOD scores by comparing the LOD distributions of the most likely parent and all other
270 candidate parents. The critical LOD score is used to determine the confidence (95% or
271 80%) of each parentage assignment.

272 CERVUS allows for different types of parentage analysis, including parent-pair
273 (sexes known or unknown), maternity (known father, but not mother), and paternity
274 (known mother, but not father). Variegated fairy-wrens at Lake Samsonvale are relatively
275 easy to observe, and we were able to assign known mothers behaviorally. We
276 subsequently confirmed this with microsatellite analyses: females that built and attended
277 a nest throughout incubation were always the mothers of the nestlings in that nest. In
278 many systems, a comparable level of demographic knowledge may not be available, so
279 a marker set must be powerful enough to assign parentage with minimal social
280 information. To investigate the broader utility of our ddRAD-seq method, we conducted
281 analyses that relied on the inclusion of the known mother, in addition to analyses
282 independent of the known mother, which were based only on the father-offspring
283 relationship. We simulated paternity assignments for 10,000 offspring to determine

284 critical LOD scores, using slightly different input parameters for each panel
285 (microsatellites and ddRAD sequencing derived SNPs). Simulations for both used the
286 following parameters: 78 candidate males, 95% of candidate males sampled, estimated
287 error rate of 0.01 for mistyped loci and likelihood scores. The proportion of loci typed
288 across all individuals was different for both panels: 0.997 for the microsatellite
289 simulation, and 0.961 for the SNP simulation.

290 For both paternity analyses, we used the trio LOD score and the father-offspring
291 LOD score from CERVUS to make assignments. The trio LOD score was calculated by
292 comparing the genotypes of the candidate male and offspring, relative to that of the
293 known mother. The father-offspring LOD score only accounts for the relationship of the
294 candidate male and the offspring, independent of the known mother. CERVUS ranked
295 candidate males by LOD scores in each category, and the highest-ranking males were
296 assigned as fathers. These rankings should be in agreement, but ambiguous
297 assignments (different top-ranking males assigned in each category) may occur when
298 multiple candidate male genotypes closely match an offspring's genotype.

299 We assessed each CERVUS assignment to determine whether it was plausible,
300 and whether the assigned male was the social father or an extra-pair sire. Our criteria for
301 accepting assignments differed slightly for microsatellites and SNPs. For microsatellites,
302 we automatically accepted the CERVUS assignment if the highest-ranking male was in
303 agreement for both the trio LOD and the father-offspring LOD, and if the number of
304 mismatches between the assigned male and the offspring was ≤ 1 (8% of 12 loci). For
305 SNPs, we also accepted the assignment if the highest-ranking males by LOD score type

306 were in agreement, and an allowable number of mismatches were not exceeded.
307 However, for SNPs, our allowable number of mismatches was based on the observed
308 maximum number of mismatches between a known mother and her known offspring
309 (max. = 7, mean = 3.4, 2% of 411 loci). For both panels, we accepted the social father
310 as the genetic sire if he met these respective criteria. If the social father mismatched the
311 offspring at higher numbers, or had negative LOD scores, the offspring was considered
312 sired by an extra-pair father. We accepted assignments of extra-pair fathers using the
313 same criteria outlined above. We did not observe cases in which an offspring could not
314 be assigned to either its social father, or an extra-pair sire.
315
316 *Relatedness Analysis*
317 We used the package, "related" (Pew *et al.* 2015), in R version 3.2.5 (R Core
318 Team 2016) to estimate pairwise relatedness (r) between all pairs of individuals in this
319 study. This package accounts for genotyping errors, missing data, and can estimate
320 relatedness using any of seven different estimators (4 non-likelihood-based, and 3
321 likelihood-based). "related" includes the function, **compareestimators**, which tests the
322 performance of different estimators on simulated data that share the same
323 characteristics as the real data. The program uses an allele frequency file to generate
324 simulated pairs of individuals of known relatedness, and automatically estimates
325 relatedness using four of the most commonly used estimators (all non-likelihood-based).
326 The function calculates a correlation coefficient between observed and expected values,
327 to evaluate which estimator performs best with the data set. Using **compareestimators**

328 to generate 200 simulated pairs of individuals for each degree of relatedness (i.e., half-
329 sib, full-sib, parent-offspring, unrelated), we determined that the Wang (2002) estimator
330 performed best for both our microsatellite and SNP datasets. We obtained point
331 estimates of relatedness using the Wang (2002) estimator, and evaluated all parent-
332 offspring relationships that were previously determined in our parentage analysis.
333 "Related" also evaluates how well different marker sets resolve degrees of
334 relatedness, given simulated genotypes based on allele frequency files. For both panels,
335 we used the **familysim** function to generate 200 pairs of individuals for each degree of
336 relatedness. We then used the **coancestry** function to analyze all pairwise relatedness
337 values with the Wang (2002) estimator. We created density plots representing
338 histograms of the relatedness values. These plots show the overlap in relatedness
339 values for degree of relatedness, and we used them to infer how well each panel
340 performed at discerning different relationships.
341

342 **Results**

343 *SNP development and analysis*

344 After trimming, filtering and demultiplexing the data, we retained a total of
345 109,524,874 reads across all index groups, with an average of approximately 9,000,000
346 reads per index group. Two individuals failed (i.e., had less than 66,000 reads each; one
347 individual from each of two index groups) and were excluded from further analysis. The
348 number of reads per sample for the remaining individuals ranged from 213,544 to
349 810,966 (mean = 459,726 ± 118,771 std. dev.).

350 Further analysis using the population program from stacks identified loci with at
351 least 10X coverage, present in 95% of the individuals, and a minimum allele frequency
352 greater than 25%. We further retained only those loci that were in Hardy-Weinberg
353 equilibrium. When performing analyses on all 160 individuals from the primary
354 comparison runs (Table 1), we identified 411 loci that fulfilled these criteria and were
355 used for downstream analyses.
356 We varied two aspects of the ddRAD-seq protocol to assess the number of loci
357 recovered and the reproducibility of the method. As expected, both a reduction in the
358 range of fragment sizes selected during the construction of the library (compare index 1
359 (150 bp size selection) and index 10 (300 bp size selection)) or the use of the less
360 frequent cutter, EcoRI (index 11 and 12), resulted in fewer loci recovered (Table 3).
361 Those from the EcoRI digest were non-overlapping with those from the MspI index
362 groups. More importantly, between the replicated index groups in our standard protocol
363 (index 1 and index 9) we recovered similar numbers of loci (797 and 645, respectively)
364 with 549 (85.1%) loci found in both datasets (under our stringent filtering criteria).
365
366 *Paternity assignments*
367 Both panels produced highly concordant results when assigning paternity, but the
368 SNP panel showed substantially higher power overall. Generally, the microsatellite loci
369 were more polymorphic, resulting in greater mean polymorphic information content (PIC)
370 for any given locus. Despite this, the SNP panel performed better because of the large
371 number of loci obtained through RAD sequencing. This greatly improved the non-

372 exclusion probabilities across different parentage assignment contexts (Table 2), and
373 reduced uncertainty in our assignments. Given the known mother, the microsatellite and
374 SNP panels assigned the same fathers to all 40 offspring with 95% confidence. When
375 paternity assignments were made without the known mother (no known candidate
376 parents), both panels again assigned fathers for all 40 offspring with 95% confidence.
377 However, 5 of these assignments were not in agreement between the two panels. For
378 these 5 cases, two candidate males had very similar LOD scores under the
379 microsatellite panel, and the assigned males did not match the males that were
380 assigned given the known mother. These (and all other) cases were resolved
381 unambiguously when the SNP panel was used, and the paternity assignments with and
382 without the known mother were in complete agreement for all offspring (Fig. 1).
383 Overall, both panels assigned 23 out of 40 nestlings (57.5%) to males that were
384 not their social father. Due to the nature of our non-random sampling of individuals for
385 this experiment, and the overall smaller sample size, this value is slightly lower than the
386 overall rate of 67.6% extra-pair young observed for all years of the study (unpublished
387 data).
388 As a measure of certainty for our assignments, we calculated the difference
389 between LOD scores for the two top-ranked males assigned to each nestling, under
390 each panel (Fig. 2). Typically, this difference was 8 – 10x higher for the SNP panel
391 (n=40, mean = 165.0) than for the microsatellite panel (n=40, mean 19.1), a reflection of
392 the much higher discriminatory power of the SNP dataset. For the SNP panel, many of
393 the second-ranked males had a strongly negative LOD score, making them extremely

394 unlikely to be the true father. This was less often true for the microsatellite panel, as the
395 second-ranked males often had positive, or just slightly negative, LOD scores. Overall
396 this result illustrates the increased discrimination power achieved by the SNP panel
397 compared to the microsatellites, which allowed us to assign paternity in cases in which
398 the microsatellite assignments remained ambiguous or (albeit rarely) misleading.
399
400 *Relatedness analysis*
401 The SNP panel produced simulated data that closely matched the observed allele
402 and genotype frequencies (Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.975). The microsatellite
403 panel also matched well, but was not as reliable as the SNP panel (Pearson's
404 correlation coefficient = 0.877). This resulted in better estimates of pairwise relatedness
405 for parent-offspring using the SNP panel (Fig. 3). Overall, the SNP panel produced
406 better simulated estimates for each degree of relatedness (Fig. 4), greatly reducing the
407 variance around expected relatedness values (unrelated = 0, half-sib = 0.25, full-sib =
408 0.5, and parent-offspring = 0.5). This bolsters the confidence with which actual
409 relationships can be discerned when calculating pairwise relatedness of a population for
410 which there is little prior knowledge of social relationships.
411
412 **Discussion**
413 Several recent studies have rigorously investigated the use of SNPs in population
414 genetic studies for several non-model organisms (Morin *et al.* 2004; Slate *et al.* 2010;
415 Garvin *et al.* 2010; Heylar *et al.* 2011; Seeb *et al.* 2011), with growing support for the use

416 of SNPs in studies of parentage (Anderson & Garza 2006; e.g. Hauser *et al.* 2011) and
417 relatedness (e.g. Glaubitz *et al.* 2003; Wang 2007). SNPs have proven to perform as
418 well, if not better, than microsatellites in these types of studies. To our knowledge this is
419 the first study to describe a universal ddRAD-seq method for use in parentage and
420 relatedness analyses of wild populations of birds. Our study is also the first to compare
421 the efficiency of microsatellites versus SNPs for determining genetic relationships in a
422 species that is both socially complex, and highly promiscuous. We show that SNPs
423 developed from our modified ddRAD-seq method are substantially more powerful than a
424 moderate number of species-specific microsatellite loci at assigning paternity and
425 estimating relatedness among individuals. Our method is highly attractive as an
426 alternative to traditional microsatellite genotyping, especially for systems where no
427 microsatellites have been developed. This is largely due to the combination of its cost
428 and researcher time efficiency, the ease of this non-species-specific method that
429 combines the SNP discovery and screening steps, and the large number of SNPs
430 reliably recovered.

431 The total approximate materials cost for our ddRAD-seq analyses, including DNA
432 extraction, normalization of the DNA concentrations, library preparation, sequencing and
433 computational time was US$3,270.00 for 240 samples, or approximately $13.63 per
434 sample. The use of a homemade MagNA in place of commercial SPRI beads provides
435 significant savings. This cost is similar to that for genotyping 240 individuals at 12
436 microsatellite loci (in 3 multiplexed PCR mixes), in a situation where the labelled primers
437 have already been designed, purchased, and tested. However, a substantial additional

438 benefit of this ddRAD-seq method is that it does not require any locus discovery or
439 development before starting. The time required for library preparation, once DNA has
440 been extracted, is modest, and once the sequence data have been obtained, SNP
441 calling for the entire dataset can be performed in less than a day through a largely
442 automated bioinformatics pipeline. Unlike manually scoring peaks as in a traditional
443 microsatellite genotyping analysis, the identification of SNPs is less subjective and takes
444 far fewer hours of hands-on analysis (as most is performed computationally). The tools
445 for analyzing these ddRAD data are freely available and widely used (e.g., Stacks,
446 VCFtools).

447 For this study, our conditions and protocol allowed us to recover 411 high quality
448 SNP loci for 240 individual samples. However, we show that through simple variations in
449 the size selection window or the specificity of the restriction enzyme, more or fewer loci
450 can be obtained. For some applications, it could be advantageous to multiplex a greater
451 number of individuals and achieve similar coverage by aiming to recover fewer loci (e.g.,
452 using EcoRI rather than MspI). Alternatively, for applications where more loci are
453 required, the size selection window could be widened and concordantly the number of
454 individuals would have to be lowered.

455 The number of SNPs needed to perform robust parentage and relatedness
456 analyses depends on characteristics of the study population. Populations with reduced
457 genetic diversity will likely require a greater number of loci than those that are more
458 genetically diverse (Saunders *et al.* 2007; Strucken *et al.* 2016; Tortereau *et al.* 2017).
459 Obtaining more loci from the outset would aid in overcoming any issues relating to

460 population genetic diversity. Additionally, when studying species with complex social
461 systems, including for example both variable levels of genetic relatedness among
462 individuals and high rates of extra-pair fertilizations, it is imperative to obtain a sufficient
463 number of markers to discern genetic relationships robustly (Hughes 1998; Ross 2001;
464 Weinman *et al.* 2014). Our case study, using the variegated fairy-wren, shows that our
465 modified ddRAD-seq method recovers more than enough SNP loci to confidently discern
466 relationships in a species with a complex social system. Most parentage and
467 relatedness analysis programs are well equipped to handle large numbers of loci, so a
468 greater number of loci would not hinder analyses. Once an appropriate number of SNPs
469 are identified for performing robust analyses, conditions can be varied to maximize the
470 number of individuals to be genotyped.

471 For both paternity and relatedness analyses, our SNP panel far outperformed our
472 microsatellite panel by providing much more power and improving the overall confidence
473 for assignments. Variegated fairy-wrens are relatively easy to observe, and every nest
474 found can be assigned to a known mother by watching the female that builds the nest
475 and/or incubates the eggs. This level of knowledge may not be the norm for most study
476 systems, so we also investigated the CERVUS output for male-offspring relationships,
477 independent of known mothers. In doing so, the reliability of the SNP panel became
478 even more evident. In CERVUS, the higher the LOD score, the more likely that a given
479 male is the true father. Using SNPs, CERVUS typically output only a single male with a
480 positive LOD score, and the difference in LOD scores between the top-two ranked males
481 was dramatically different for SNP assignments (Fig. 2). When social information about

482 the known mother was excluded from the paternity analysis, the microsatellite panel
483 sometimes produced assignments that were ambiguous (two males had similar LOD
484 scores), and occasionally the wrong male was assigned paternity of the offspring. Under
485 the SNP panel, ambiguous assignments were nonexistent, and these cases were clearly
486 resolved (Fig. 1).

487 It is sometimes difficult to obtain appropriate demographic data to use in a formal
488 parentage analysis, and for many studies, this level of detail may not be necessary.
489 Population allele frequencies can be used to estimate pairwise relatedness for
490 individuals, and to reconstruct pedigrees using maximum likelihood-based methods.
491 Variance in estimates of pairwise relatedness (*r*) for known parent-offspring pairs was
492 dramatically reduced when using SNPs (Fig. 3). For our simulations, SNPs greatly
493 improved the differentiation between distributions for individuals of known degrees of
494 relatedness (Fig. 4). This is particularly important for systems with minimal demographic
495 and observational data, where these distributions can be used to determine familial
496 relationships between individuals, in conjunction with actual estimated *r*-values.

497 In summary, our ddRAD-seq method provides a cost effective and robust way to
498 identify SNPs for use in studies utilizing parentage and relatedness analyses. Our
499 experiment shows that a majority of the same SNPs can be obtained across groups,
500 using the same size selection windows and restriction enzymes. Future individuals can
501 be genotyped and incorporated to the analysis by re-running the Stacks pipeline. Using
502 a bird exhibiting great social complexity, and high promiscuity, we have shown that
503 SNPs identified by ddRAD-seq are more effective at assigning paternity and estimating

relatedness than highly polymorphic, species-specific microsatellite loci. This protocol was designed to be universally applicable across bird species, and we have successfully applied it in a range of other avian study systems (Table 4). While different numbers of individuals were used in each study and therefore different numbers of loci were recovered, in all cases paternity was confidently assigned to nestlings using CERVUS (unpublished results). Applying this general protocol to many non-avian taxa may simply require ensuring that the specific restriction enzymes and fragment size windows are chosen appropriately.

Acknowledgements

We thank D. Baldassarre, K. Gielow, J. Welklin, and field technicians at Lake Samsonvale who assisted with field efforts for this study. We are grateful to L. Stenzler and S. Bogdanowicz for help with microsatellite discovery, development, and genotyping. D. Baldassarre, E. Greig, & A. Dalziel provided valuable discussion on the study design. This research was supported by the US National Science Foundation (IOS-1353681 and DEB-1721662) .

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Data Accessibility

The raw data used in this manuscript will be stored in the Dryad Digital Repository upon acceptance.

Author Contributions

D.J.T designed the study, collected field data, performed microsatellite development and analysis, conducted parentage and relatedness analyses, and drafted the manuscript with help from all co-authors. B.G.B and L.C. designed the study, and performed SNP discovery and analysis. M.S.W and I.J.L. helped design the study, and secured funding.

741 **Tables**

742 Table 1: Experimental design.

# of samples (index groups)	enzymes	size selection interval
160 samples (8 index groups, index 1-8)	SbfI - MspI	450 - 600 bp
20 samples (Index 9)	SbfI - MspI	450 - 600 bp (replicate of above)
20 samples (index 10)	SbfI - MspI	400 - 700 bp (wide size selection)
20 samples (index 11)	SbfI - EcoRI	450 - 600 bp (infrequent 3' cutter)
20 samples (index 12)	SbfI - EcoRI	450 - 600 bp (replicate of above)

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748 Table 2. Marker characteristics

Marker Panel	Number of loci	Mean proportion loci typed	Mean alleles per locus	Mean H_e	Mean H_o	Mean PIC	Nonexclusion probability (first parent)	Nonexclusion probability (second parent)	Nonexclusion probability (parent pair)
Microsatellites	12	0.99	14.17	0.77	0.76	0.74	1.9×10^{-4}	1.9×10^{-6}	1.5×10^{-10}
SNPs	411	0.98	2.00*	0.45	0.45	0.35	5.2×10^{-20}	6.9×10^{-35}	1.0×10^{-55}

749 *Only biallelic SNPs were retained. If a locus had 3 alleles across the population, it was filtered from the dataset.

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769 Table 3. Overlap in the RAD loci that were obtained while varying different steps of the
770 protocol (size selection and restriction enzymes). The diagonal indicates the total
771 number of loci recovered for each treatment. Values above the diagonal represent the
772 percent overlapping loci between groups (relative to the group with the smallest number
773 of loci), while values below the diagonal list the number of loci that were overlapping
774 between groups.

	All	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
All	411	85.4	78.1	79.1	1.2	1.0
A	351	797	85.1	75.8	0.8	0.8
B	321	549	645	83.4	2.0	2.3
C	325	604	538	1440	4.2	3.9
D	5	15	12	25	596	68.4
E	4	13	12	20	353	516

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All: 160 samples; Sbf1/Msp1; 450-600 bp.
A: 20 samples; Sbf1/Msp1; 450-600 bp.
B: 20 samples; Sbf1/Msp1; 450-600 bp.
C: 20 samples; Sbf1/Msp1; 400-700 bp.
D: 20 samples; SbfI/EcoRI; 450-600 bp.
E: 20 samples; SbfI/EcoRI; 450-600 bp.

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777 Table 4: Summary information for ddRAD-seq studies performed to investigate
778 parentage in other bird species.

Species	**Scientific name**	**Number of individuals**	**Number of loci**	**Number of loci in HWE**
Variegated fairywren	*Malurus lamberti*	160	552	411
Hispaniolan woodpecker	*Melanerpes striatus*	288	179	135
Northern Red-billed hornbill	*Tockus erythrorhynchus*	40	475	414
Von der Decken's hornbill	*Tockus deckeni*	112	490	410
Sapayoa	*Sapayoa aenigma*	6	672	671
Red-backed fairywren**	*Malurus melanocephalus*	240	483	233
		240	291	174

779 * Two independent ddRAD-seq experiments were performed - one with 240 samples
780 and the other with 48. After quality filtering and demultiplexing the data from 288
781 samples was combined for denovo assembly and SNP identification.
782 ** Two independent ddRAD-seq experiments were run on each set of 240 samples.
783 There is 74% overlap in the loci identified in each experiment (of the loci in HWE).
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Figures

Figure 1. Resolved paternity assignments for 5 nestlings with ambiguous assignments under the microsatellite panel, but not with the SNP panel. Each panel in the graph represents an individual offspring, and the two top-ranked males are depicted as a triangle and a circle, respectively. Lines connecting like shapes show the change in LOD score for each male, using each marker type (microsatellites versus SNPs). Note that y-axis scale varies among panels in the graph.

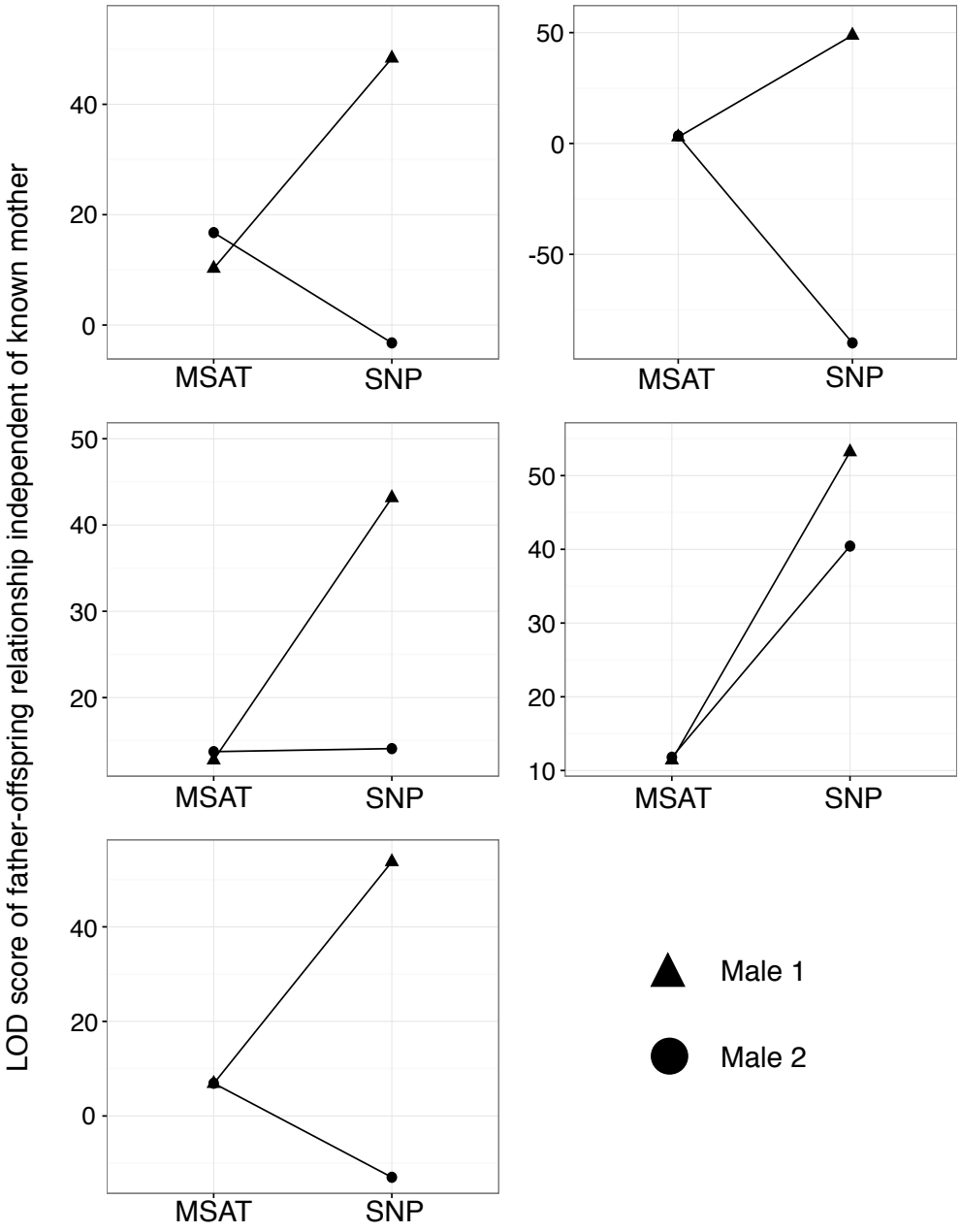

Figure 2. Difference in CERVUS LOD scores (delta LOD) between the most likely father of a nestling and the second possible father in the population, for both marker panels.

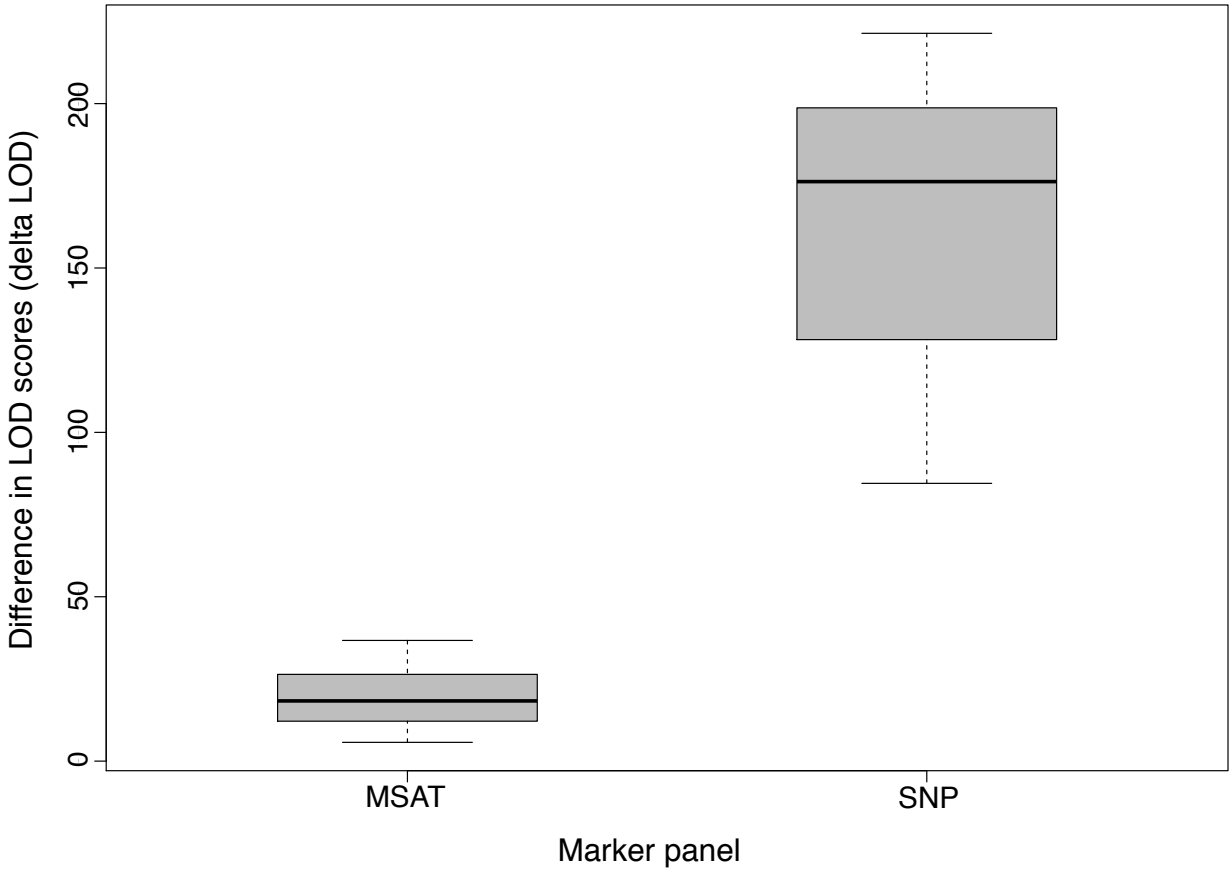

Figure 3. Box plot of pairwise relatedness values for all parent-offspring (40 mother-offspring and 40 father-offspring) relationships, using population allele frequencies from each marker panel.

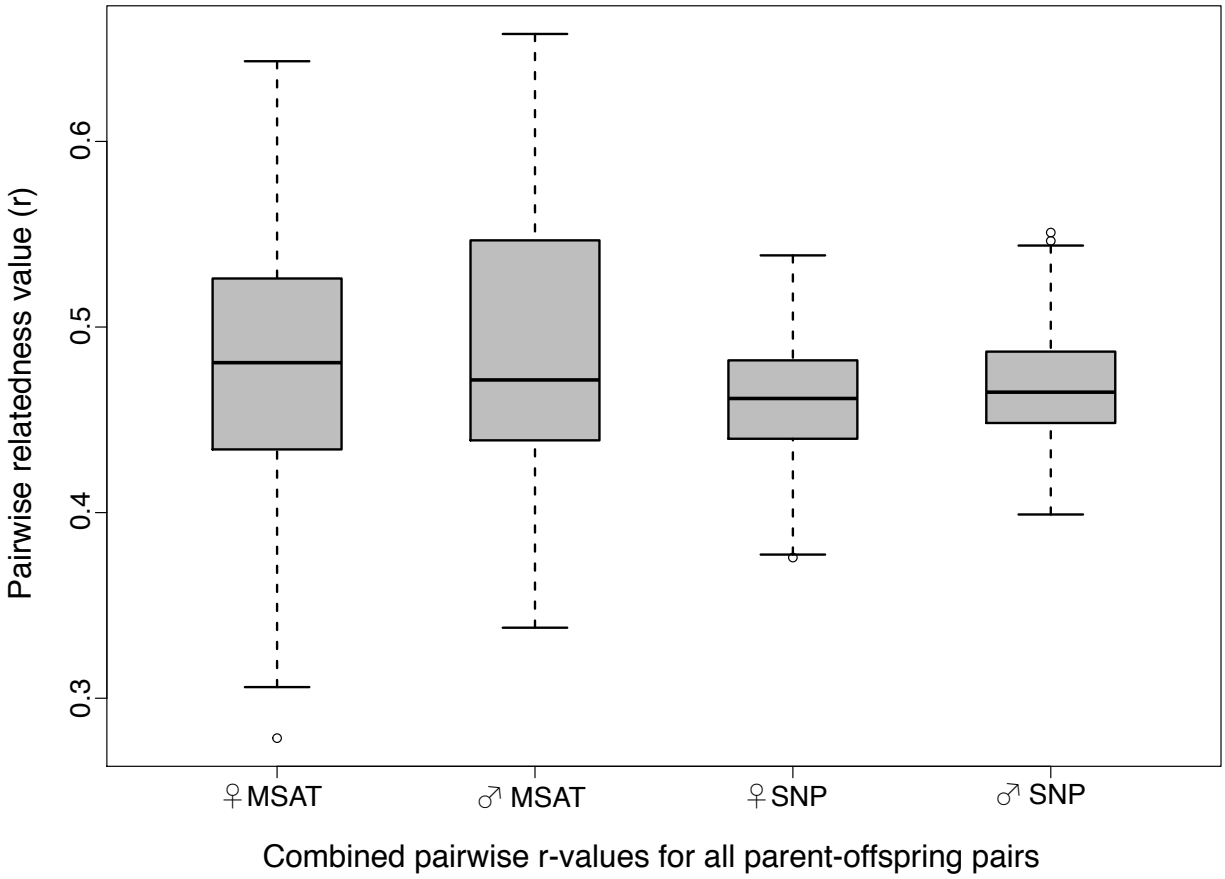
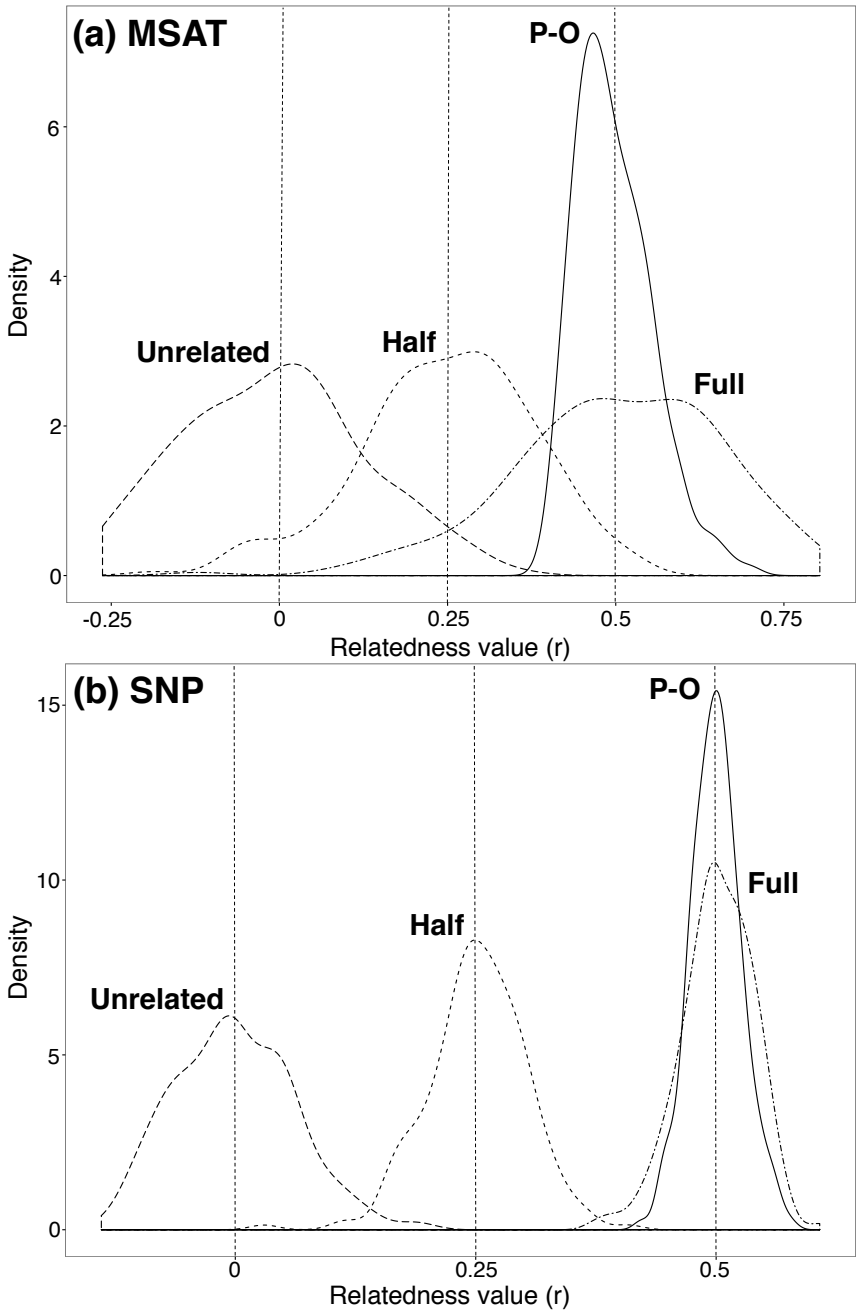
Figure 4. Density plots of relatedness values for simulated pairs of known relatedness (unrelated, half-sibling, full-sibling, and parent-offspring) using population allele frequencies from each marker panel (a. MSAT; b. SNP). Overlap in distributions indicates the overlap between relatedness value estimators for pairs of individuals of different relationships. The spread of each distribution indicates the reliability of observed relatedness values based on their deviation from expected relatedness values (Unrelated = 0, Half-sib = 0.25, Full-sib = 0.5, and Parent-offspring (P-O) = 0.5, denoted by vertical dashed lines).