

1 **Diversified regulation of circadian clock gene expression following whole genome**  
2 **duplication**

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11 **Keywords:** Whole genome duplication, Circadian, Photoperiod, Rediploidization, Anadromy,  
12 Smoltification, Cortisol, Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*.

13 **Short title:** Circadian clock gene regulation and whole genome duplication

## 14 **Abstract**

15 Across taxa, circadian control of physiology and behavior arises from cell-autonomous  
16 oscillations in gene expression, governed by a networks of so-called 'clock genes',  
17 collectively forming transcription-translation feedback loops. In modern vertebrates, these  
18 networks contain multiple copies of clock gene family members, which arose through whole  
19 genome duplication (WGD) events during evolutionary history. It remains unclear to what  
20 extent multiple copies of clock gene family members are functionally redundant or have  
21 allowed for functional diversification. We addressed this problem through an analysis of  
22 clock gene expression in the Atlantic salmon, a representative of the salmonids, a group  
23 which has undergone at least 4 rounds of WGD since the base of the vertebrate lineage,  
24 giving an unusually large complement of clock genes. By comparing expression patterns  
25 across multiple tissues, and during development, we present evidence for strong gene- and  
26 tissue-specific divergence in expression patterns, consistent with functional diversification.  
27 Unexpectedly, we found a clear link between cortisol secretion and non-circadian changes in  
28 the expression of a subset of clock genes in the salmon gill. This regulation is linked to  
29 changes in gill function necessary for the transition from fresh- to sea-water in anadromous  
30 fish, and, in contrast to mammals, we find no evidence for coupling between cortisol and  
31 circadian expression of salmon clock genes. Overall, this analysis emphasises the potential  
32 for a richly diversified clock gene network to serve a mixture of circadian and non-circadian  
33 functions in vertebrate groups with complex genomes.

## 34 Introduction

35 Circadian control of metabolic physiology and behaviour is a ubiquitous characteristic across  
36 taxa [1–3]. In eukaryotes, circadian control derives from a cell-autonomous molecular  
37 oscillator, assembled from a network of transcriptional (co-)activators and (co-)repressors,  
38 chromatin modifiers and an array of post-translational regulators of protein function, often  
39 described collectively as ‘clock genes’. Clock gene oscillations coordinate the transcription of  
40 multiple genes to exert effects on global cell metabolism. While the molecular clock is  
41 conserved between insects and mammals [2], the mammalian network contains many  
42 duplicated components as a consequence of both local and whole genome duplication  
43 (WGD).

44 Two rounds of WGD preceded the establishment of the tetrapod lineage 500 million  
45 years ago (MYA) (Figure 1A), and gave rise to the complement of clock genes seen in  
46 mammals, including multiple paralogues of *Period* and *Cryptochrome* genes. Paralogues  
47 arising from WGD are known as ‘ohnologues’, after Susumu Ohno, who wrote a seminal  
48 monograph hypothesising that the genetic redundancy proceeding WGD facilitates  
49 evolutionary innovation [4,5]. Nevertheless, the evolutionary importance and extent to  
50 which clock gene ohnologues are functionally divergent largely remains unclear [6–10].  
51 Indeed the retention of multiple redundant ohnologues of core clock genes is puzzling given  
52 that the essential role of the circadian clock has not changed during the course of  
53 evolutionary history [1,2,11,12]. Conceivably, functional differences between ohnologues,  
54 achieved either by coding sequence differences or by promoter-based differences in  
55 expression level, could enable tissue-specific optimization of function, but evidence for this  
56 is sparse [11,12]. It has been suggested that preferential interactions of specific mammalian

57 PERIOD proteins with specific mammalian CRYPTOCHROME proteins may affect photic  
58 entrainment [13], but experimental evidence is lacking [14]. Tissue-specific functions of  
59 mammalian CKI $\delta/\epsilon$  ohnologues in regulation of PERIOD protein stability have been  
60 suggested [15], and alterations in period ( $\tau$ ), amplitude and clock resetting behavior have  
61 been observed but clear distinctions of function between the ohnologues are lacking [8,16–  
62 18].

63         Since the ancestral tetrapod WGD events, subsequent rounds of WGD have occurred  
64 in several lineages, creating highly complex genomes containing thousands of ohnologue  
65 pairs. This is exemplified by the situation found in the salmonids, which underwent two  
66 additional rounds of WGD compared to basal tetrapods, with the most recent, the salmonid-  
67 specific fourth round of duplication (Ss4R) taking place some 100 MYA (Figure 1A) [19]. The  
68 Ss4R event is a defining characteristic of the salmonid group and is theorized to have led to  
69 the evolution of anadromy; an adaptation of freshwater salmonids to spend part of their life-  
70 cycle at sea [20]. Genome-scale analysis in salmonids has begun to provide new insights into  
71 the evolutionary significance of ohnologue divergence [21,22]. Impressively, even though  
72 gene loss often occurs following duplication events (reviewed in:[23]), there remains a rich  
73 complexity of clock genes in modern salmonids with the 18 clock genes (as defined in Figure  
74 1B) in laboratory mice having 61 counterparts in Atlantic salmon (S1 Table, Figure 1C).

75         To understand why so many additional copies of core clock genes are retained in the  
76 genomes of modern salmonids, we have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of clock gene  
77 expression in the Atlantic salmon, exploring temporal regulation in different tissues and  
78 responsiveness to different environmental stimuli. Here, we show diversified regulation of  
79 clock ohnologues as a result of WGD, reflecting the fundamental differences in temporal

80 organization of metabolism between tissues.

## 81 **Results**

### 82 **Tissue-specific expression of clock gene ohnologues indicates regulatory divergence**

83 To identify all conserved clock genes in the Atlantic salmon we extracted amino acid  
84 sequences from the highly-characterized mouse clock gene network (Figure 1B) then  
85 searched for homologous sequences in Atlantic salmon [22] and 12 other vertebrates  
86 (including five salmonids, S1 appendix). Homology relationships between protein sequences  
87 were traced back to the root of the vertebrate tree, revealing 61 canonical clock genes in the  
88 Atlantic salmon, 42 of these genes can be assigned to 21 Ss4R ohnologue pairings (referred  
89 to as Ss4R pairs from here on), while for the remaining 19 genes no extant Ss4R duplicate  
90 can be identified (Figure 1C, S1 Table, S1 appendix).

91 Following a WGD event the tetraploid genome incrementally returns to a diploid  
92 state (rediploidization), this process occurs at different rates at different genetic loci [24]  
93 (Figure 1C). Using published data [22] on sequence similarity in 1Mbp windows across  
94 syntenic Ss4R duplicated regions we could classify the rediploidization times for our 21 Ss4R  
95 pairs from early (approx. 87% sequence similarity) to late (>95% sequence similarity)(Figure  
96 1C).

97 RNA profiling from 13 different tissues [22] demonstrated tissue-specificity of clock  
98 gene expression, and particularly highlighted the wide variety and high abundance of clock  
99 genes in the brain (S1 Figure). To assess the divergence between Ss4R pairs we calculated an  
100 expression divergence index (EDI), based on the relative expression of each member of a  
101 pair across all tissues expressed as a ratio (Figure 1D). This revealed evidence for divergent  
102 tissue-specific expression within multiple Ss4R pairs but no clear relationship to approximate  
103 time of rediploidization (Figure 1D). The *Cry1-Ch12/Ch22* pair, which is linked to direct light

104 effects on circadian function in zebrafish [9] had the highest EDI, largely attributable to  
105 divergent expression in the brain and gill (S1 Figure). The three Ss4R pairs of *Nr1d1* (*Rev-*  
106 *erba*) and *Nr1d2* (*Rev-erbβ*), which encode transcriptional repressors linking the circadian  
107 clock to energy metabolism [25], were also highly divergently expressed genes, again due to  
108 differences in the brain and gill (Figure 1D, S1 Figure). Hence tissue-specific expression  
109 divergence is a feature of particular aspects of the circadian clockwork.

110

111 **Circadian and light-regulated Ss4R pair expression differs between tissues but is highly**  
112 **similar within tissues**

113 To test for circadian regulation of gene expression we collected samples from fish kept in a  
114 light dark cycle (diel), constant light (LL) and constant dark (DD) (Figure 2A). To avoid  
115 unintended rhythmical stimuli (zeitgebers), fish were fasted from 48 hours before the first  
116 sampling point and temperature was held constant. We focussed on three tissues with  
117 distinctive roles in salmonid physiology: the optic tectum (OT) of the brain, because it is  
118 linked to visual processing and is highly light-responsive [26,27]; the saccus vasculosus (SV)  
119 because it has been proposed as a mediator of photoperiodic responses [28]; and the gill  
120 because it is essential for respiratory gas exchange, ion- and water balance [29]. We  
121 hypothesized that expression profiles of clock genes in these three tissues would differ  
122 reflecting tissue-specific differences in temporal metabolic demand. We analysed RNA  
123 transcript profiles using a bespoke NanoString CodeSet which could specifically identify 46  
124 clock gene targets including the 17 Ss4R pairs (S2 Table, S2A Figure & S2 appendix).

125 In diel conditions, we identified 28 oscillating transcripts (JTK-cycle adj.p<0.05, S1  
126 Table) [30] (Figure 2B). Of the three tissues studied, the OT showed by far the strongest

127 oscillations in gene expression, both under diel and constant conditions (Figure 2B & C). For  
128 half of the genes identified, oscillation was only observed in the OT, and even for genes  
129 showing significant oscillation across tissues (e.g. Per1-Ch4) the amplitude of oscillation was  
130 clearly highest in the OT (Figure 2B & D).

131 In contrast, rhythmicity in both the SV and gill was much less robust. In the SV, only  
132 Nr1d1-Ch6 maintained rhythmicity and phase under DD, while in the gill only Arntl1-Ch10  
133 maintained rhythmicity and phase under DD (S2B-C Figure). Hence robust circadian  
134 rhythmicity is a feature of light-responsive tissue in the salmon brain, but gene expression  
135 rhythms are severely dampened in the peripheral tissues we studied.

136 Although differences in absolute expression levels were widely seen within Ss4R pairs  
137 - both across and within tissues, when comparing temporal dynamics of expression, within a  
138 given tissue they were typically similar (Figure 2D, S1 Table, S2 appendix). This is exemplified  
139 by the almost superimposable expression patterns seen for the Per1-Ch4/11 pair (Figure 2D),  
140 and for the Tef-Ch3/6 pair (Figure 2D). Indeed, only two significant within-pair differences in  
141 expression profile were observed (non-linear regression p-value <0.01, S1 Table, S2D-E  
142 Figure): the Arntl1-Ch10/16 pairing, with Arntl1-Ch10 showing more robust and higher  
143 amplitude rhythmicity than Arntl1-Ch6 in the OT (Figure 2D & S2D-E Figure), and the  
144 arrhythmic Cry1-Ch12/22 pairing, with Cry1-Ch22 showing a light-induced increase in  
145 expression following transfer to LL in the SV (Figure 2D & S2E Figure). Interestingly, we do  
146 not observe light responses through Tef as reported in zebrafish [31].

147

148 **Regulatory divergence of clock gene ohnologues within a tissue during a developmental**  
149 **transition**



150 The lack of circadian regulatory divergence among Ss4R pairs led us to consider whether  
151 retention of duplicates might be related to developmental changes in tissue function. One  
152 striking example of this in salmon is the transformation of gills from a salt retaining, water  
153 excreting organ in freshwater to a salt excreting water retaining organ in seawater  
154 (smoltification). This development of the anadromous lifestyle relies on hormonally-driven  
155 changes in physiology, dependent on seasonally changing day-length (photoperiod) [32]. We  
156 therefore performed a photoperiod manipulation experiment to assess the impact of  
157 photoperiod-dependent developmental changes in juvenile salmon (parr) (Figure 3A). This  
158 protocol produces a seawater-tolerant (smolt) phenotype within 4-6 weeks of return to LL  
159 (S3 Figure)(reviewed in:[32]).

160 We identified 30 clock genes showing significant changes in expression over the  
161 course of the experiment (FDR<0.01, S1 Table, Figure 3B); 3 clock genes were undetectable  
162 by RNA-seq, while a further 28 were present but did not change significantly over time.  
163 Amongst the differentially regulated genes we found 9 complete Ss4R pairs (18 genes), and 3  
164 incomplete pairs (i.e. only one of the pair is differentially expressed).

165 Cluster analysis of the differentially expressed genes revealed 5 distinct patterns of  
166 expression over the experiment indicating that different regulatory pathways are directing  
167 the expression of particular clock genes during smoltification (Figure 3B). Based upon this  
168 analysis we identified 6 Ss4R pairs within which evidence of developmental regulatory  
169 divergence could be observed (Figure 3C). For 3 of these Ss3R pairs only one member  
170 showed a developmental change in expression (Figure 3C, Cry1-Ch12/22, Rora-Ch2/5, Rora-  
171 Ch10/16) , while for the 3 remaining Ss4R pairs the dynamics of expression, as defined by  
172 cluster analysis, differed within the pairing (Figure 3C, Nr1d2-Ch2/5, Per1a-Ch4/11, CK1δ-

173 Ch1/28). Therefore we see strong developmental regulation of clock genes in the gill,  
174 contrasting with the lack of circadian regulation.

175

176 **Glucocorticoid signaling induces clock ohnologue expression and accounts for regulatory**  
177 **divergence observed in the Ss4R pair Tef-Ch3/6**

178 While glucocorticoids play a major role in the circadian organization of mammals (reviewed  
179 in: [33]), the evidence for an analogous role in fish is unclear (References summarized in: S3  
180 Table). Nevertheless, cortisol is a major hormonal regulator of smoltification in Atlantic  
181 salmon, steadily rising during this process [34]. We collected blood samples from fish kept in  
182 a light dark cycle (LD - 6:18) and in constant conditions (LL or DD) and found no evidence of  
183 diel or circadian rhythmicity in cortisol secretion (Figure 4A) along with weak/absent  
184 peripheral tissue clock gene oscillation (Figure 2B). We hypothesized that increasing cortisol  
185 during smoltification results in clock gene expression, and that by using a simple stress test  
186 to induce cortisol we could induce the same clock genes seen during smoltification.

187 To test this we conducted a 24 hour seawater (SW) challenge test in freshwater-  
188 adapted fish (Figure 4B) eliciting an osmotic stress-mediated increase in cortisol secretion  
189 (Figure 4C). Gills were collected from SW and fresh water (FW) groups. We identified 15  
190 clock genes showing significant changes in expression in response to SW by RNA-seq  
191 (FDR<0.01, S1 Table, Figure 4D). Importantly, 87% of SW-responsive clock genes (13/15) also  
192 change in the smoltification experiment (Figure 3, S1 Table). Amongst the SW responsive  
193 genes we found 3 complete Ss4R pairs (6 genes), and 6 incomplete pairs (i.e. only one of the  
194 pair is significantly differentially expressed). To assess regulatory divergence we plotted the

195 fold change in response to SW for each pair which indicated 5 pairs with significant  
196 regulatory divergence (two-way ANOVA <0.01, S1 Table, Figure 4E).

197 To further examine if glucocorticoid signaling, via cortisol, was responsible for the  
198 induction of clock genes in the gill we used transcription factor binding site analysis [35] on  
199 clock genes induced by SW (15 genes) compared to 43 clock genes that were SW-insensitive.  
200 SW-induced circadian genes promoters were highly enriched for HSF1 (heat shock factor 1),  
201 FOXO1 (forkhead box O1), MAX1 (myc-associated factor X1) and glucocorticoid receptor  
202 response elements (GR) (Figure 4F, S4 Table). Smoltification and responses to SW-exposure  
203 are coordinated by multiple endocrine factors including cortisol, growth hormone (GH) and  
204 IGF-1 [36,37]. HSF-1 and FOXO-1 elements are regulated by IGF1 signaling, during in stress,  
205 cellular metabolism and development [38–42]. Furthermore, the enrichment of GR  
206 implicates non-circadian glucocorticoid signaling in the induction of clock genes in the gill  
207 during smoltification and stress.

208 Next we wanted to experimentally test the *in-silico* association with glucocorticoid  
209 signaling and ask whether differential sensitivity to glucocorticoid signaling might account  
210 for the differential regulation observed within Ss4R pairs. We treated isolated gill arches  
211 with dexamethasone (DEX; a GR agonist) for 24h and then measured the gene expression of  
212 the 5 Ss4R pairs using qPCR (Figure 5A). We validated the experiment by assessment of a  
213 positive control gene: *Tsc22d3* (*Gilz*) [43](S4 Figure). We found that whilst some of the genes  
214 are glucocorticoid sensitive (3/10), supporting the *in-silico* association, the majority are not  
215 induced by glucocorticoids (Figure 5B-D). However, we do demonstrate that divergence in  
216 regulation due to glucocorticoid sensitivity in the Tef-Ch3/6 pair (Figure 5D).

## 217 **Discussion**

218 Divergent regulation of gene expression is a major contributor to the evolution of species  
219 diversity [44,45]. Our analysis of the circadian clock network in the Atlantic salmon reveals  
220 clear evidence of diversified expression regulation among the many retained copies of  
221 canonical clock genes that have arisen through successive WGD events. Diversified  
222 regulation is seen in tissue-specific expression patterns, and gene-specific changes in  
223 dynamic regulation within tissues. Ultimately, these differences likely reflect the uneven  
224 influence of diel factors on metabolism in central and peripheral tissues in a cold blooded  
225 fish. Altered sensitivity to cortisol emerges as one proximate cause of differences in tissue-  
226 specific expression dynamics. Overall this analysis emphasises the potential for a richly  
227 diversified clock gene network to serve non-circadian functions in vertebrate groups with  
228 complex genomes.

229         A striking contrast emerges between clock gene expression regulation in the OT and  
230 the gill. The OT is a brain site which is coupled to light input both through retinal afferents,  
231 photoreceptor expression, and indirect melatonin-mediated input via OT melatonin  
232 receptors [26,27,46,47]. In contrast, the gill is directly exposed to the water environment  
233 and continuously handles the osmotic and energetic challenges that this presents [48–50].  
234 Thus while both tissues are highly metabolically active and heavily reliant on ATPase activity  
235 to maintain function, the principal environmental influence for the OT is rhythmic light dark  
236 input, while for the gill it is continuous osmotic challenge.

237         Given these differences in tissue function, it is not surprising to observe different  
238 complements of clock genes in the two tissues and dramatic differences in temporal  
239 dynamics. In the diel-sensitive OT a dominant diel / circadian influence on expression is seen,

240 while in the gill this is a much weaker influence. Nonetheless clock gene expression in the gill  
241 is dynamically regulated, both over the chronic developmental time-scales of smoltification,  
242 and acutely in response to osmotic stress. The finding that the complement of genes  
243 showing highly sensitive changes in expression in the gill is largely non-overlapping with that  
244 under light / circadian control in the OT is clear evidence for sub-functionalized expression  
245 regulation within the circadian network.

246         Within this picture of distinctive tissue-specific expression dynamics, the role of  
247 cortisol is of considerable interest. In mammals cortisol is a major player in circadian  
248 organization, acting as an internal zeitgeber through which the hypothalamic–pituitary–  
249 adrenal (HPA) axis can coordinate daily changes in tissue activity throughout the organism  
250 (reviewed in: [33]). Because the teleost hypothalamic–pituitary–interrenal (HPI) axis is  
251 functionally analogous to the HPA axis [51], there has been a widespread assumption that  
252 cortisol plays a similar circadian coordination function in teleosts [52], although definitive  
253 evidence for this is lacking (S3 Table)[53]. Indeed our study implies that it is unlikely that  
254 cortisol plays a circadian role in salmonids – we found no evidence for circadian or even diel  
255 changes in cortisol secretion in Atlantic salmon, and GREs are less enriched in circadian  
256 oscillating clock genes than in non-oscillating, development- and SW-sensitive clock genes.  
257 Hence while our data strongly implicate cortisol in the dynamic expression of a subset of  
258 Atlantic salmon clock genes, this seems to have nothing to do with circadian function *per se*,  
259 and more to do with a role for these genes in non-circadian influences of the HPI axis. It is  
260 interesting to speculate that this shifting relationship between glucocorticoids and clock  
261 genes could be a contributory factor for the evolution of anadromy and the regulation of its  
262 seasonal timing. Furthermore, this finding raises interesting questions about the ubiquity

263 and evolutionary origins of mammal-like coupling between the HPA axis and circadian  
264 function.

265        Much of the genetic complexity seen in the salmonid circadian clockwork arose  
266 following the Ss4R event; we therefore asked how expression patterns diverged within Ss4R  
267 pairs. Intriguingly, the answer to this question was highly dependent upon context. We saw  
268 many examples of pronounced within-Ss4R pair differences in terms of tissue-specific  
269 expression, and some 50% of identifiable Ss4R pairs showed within-pair divergence in  
270 expression during smoltification. But within-pair divergence in daily expression patterns was  
271 hardly observed. Why might this be so? We suggest this may reflect a difference in the way  
272 that selection pressures have operated on promoter regions to, on the one hand modulate  
273 tissue-specific expression and, on the other daily temporal regulation. According to this view  
274 duplication would confer freedom to diverge, thereby meeting differing tissue-specific  
275 requirements. Conversely, the daily temporal patterning may be so fundamental to cell  
276 function that any mutations leading to deviation from the ancestral dynamics were strongly  
277 selected against. This conjecture will require detailed analysis of regions of promoter  
278 conservation        /        divergence        among        Ss4R        pairs.

279 **Materials and Methods:**

280 *Evolutionary analysis*

281 To identify gene orthologs and ohnologs we generated protein sequence homology based  
282 orthogroups using the Orthofinder pipeline [54]. For each orthogroup we used the resulting  
283 protein tree topology to manually annotate pairs of salmon ohnologs based on the following  
284 criteria: (i) salmon ohnologs should form a monophyletic clade only containing genes from  
285 other salmonid species, (ii) this monophyletic salmonid clade must have Northern pike as the  
286 sister group, and (iii) putative ohnolog pairs had to be conserved in minimum one other  
287 salmonid species. Finally, we only retained putative ohnolog if their genomic positions were  
288 defined as syntenic regions originating from the Ss4R as defined in Lien *et al.* [22].

289 Publically available data was used to assess the multi-tissue expression in the Atlantic  
290 salmon, these data can be found in the NCBI Sequence Read Archive (SRA): [PRJNA72713](#) and  
291 [PRJNA260929](#).

292 *Ethics statement*

293 Fish handling and euthanasia was performed by competent persons and in accordance with  
294 the European Union Regulations concerning the protection and welfare of experimental  
295 animals (European directive 91/492/CCE). The experiment was approved by the Norwegian  
296 Committee on Ethics in Animal Experimentation (ID 3630).

297 *Animal husbandry*

298 Juvenile Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*, Linnaeus, 1758) of the Aquagene commercial strand  
299 (Trondheim, Norway) were used in all experiments. Fish were held under constant light (LL;  
300 >200 lux), at 10° from hatching onwards, and kept in 500 L tanks from first feeding. The fish

301 were approximately 7 months old when the experiments were initiated. Up until that time  
302 the fish had been feed continuously with pelleted salmon feed (Skretting, Stavanger,  
303 Norway), from automatic feeders.

#### 304 *Circadian experiment I*

305 Fish were maintained in 500L freshwater were transferred from LL to a short photoperiod  
306 (SP; 6L:18D) light schedule for 8 weeks before the start of the experiment. Two weeks before  
307 sampling, fish were distributed to two separate 150L tanks and water temperature was  
308 maintained at 14°C. The lighting and collection schedule for the experiment is represented in  
309 Figure 2A. Fish were fasted for 48 hours prior to the experiment and throughout the  
310 sampling. Collections during the dark phase were conducted under dim red light.

#### 311 *Circadian experiment II*

312 Fish were maintained in 500L freshwater were transferred from LL to a short photoperiod  
313 (SP; 6L:18D) light schedule for 20 weeks before the start of the experiment. Two weeks  
314 before sampling, fish were distributed to two separate 150L tanks. The lighting and  
315 collection schedule for the experiment is represented in Figure 4A. Fish were fasted for 48  
316 hours prior to the experiment and throughout the sampling. Collections during the dark  
317 phase were conducted under dim red light.

#### 318 *Smoltification experiment and seawater tests*

319 Fish were fed continuously and in excess for eight hours a day, corresponding to the light  
320 phase of their photoperiod treatment but were fasted for 48h before sampling. Fish were  
321 maintained in 150L freshwater tanks at ambient temperatures (mean 8.5°C) were  
322 transferred from LL to a SP (8L:16:D) light schedule for 8 weeks before re-exposure to LL was



323 resumed. One week after return to LL, a subgroup of randomly selected fish were  
324 transferred to a 100L tank supplied with seawater (34‰ salinity). After 24h six fish were  
325 sampled from SW and FW tanks. Sampling points included in the study are represented on  
326 Figure 3A & 4A.

### 327 *Sampling protocol*

328 During sampling fish were netted out and euthanized by an overdose of benzocaine  
329 (150ppm). Weight and length were recorded, blood samples were collected from the caudal  
330 vein in heparinized vacutainers, followed by decapitation and dissection. Blood samples  
331 were centrifuged at 500 x g for 15 min to collect plasma. For RNAseq, one gill on the right  
332 side (caudal view) was collected and placed in RNAlater (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, Missouri,  
333 USA). Samples were stored at 4°C for 24 hours, before being transferred to -80°C. For  
334 nanostring samples were rapidly dissected and snap frozen on dry ice before being stored at  
335 -80°C.

### 336 *In-vitro Gill Culture*

337 Juvenile Atlantic Salmon were prepared as in the smoltification experiment. Following  
338 euthanasia whole gill arches were rapidly dissected, excess mucus was removed by careful  
339 blotting onto tissue paper before the arches were transferred individually into 50 ml of pre-  
340 prepared control or treatment media. The prepared media consisted of Leibovitz L-15  
341 (Lonza) supplemented with non-essential amino acids (1%, 100x Lonza), sodium-pyruvate  
342 (1%, 100x Lonza), 0.05 mg/ml gentamycin (Sigma) and 20% fetal bovine serum (FBS, sigma).  
343 The experimental group was supplemented with 0.1M dexamethasone diluted in DMSO  
344 (dimethyl-sulphoxide, Sigma) to a final concentration of 0.1µM. The control group contained  
345 an equivalent concentration of DMSO (0.1%). The excised gill arches were incubated for 24h

346 at 4°C, gill filaments were removed with a scalpel and snap frozen on dry ice before being  
347 stored at -80°C.

#### 348 *RNA extraction*

349 RNA extraction for RNAseq was performed using a TRIzol-based method (Invitrogen, Thermo  
350 Fisher, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA), and in accordance with the manufacturers  
351 recommendation. Resulting RNA concentrations and quality were checked using a NanoDrop  
352 spectrophotometer (NanoDrop Technologies, Wilmington, DE, USA). RNA was stored at -  
353 80°C.

354 For nanostring and qPCR, SVs were extracted using QIAgen RNeasy micro kit, OT and gill  
355 tissues were extracted using QIAgen RNeasy mini kit according to the manufacturers  
356 instructions. RNA concentration was quantified and quality confirmed using the Experion  
357 Automated Electrophoresis System (BioRad).

#### 358 *Nanostring*

359 Custom nanostring codesets were designed by Nanostring Technologies Inc. using the  
360 Atlantic Salmon reference genome (Cigene), accession numbers and target sequences are  
361 shown in S2 Table. Codesets were processed by the University of Manchester Genomic  
362 Technologies Core Facility. Data was processed using nSolver 4.0 software (Nanostring). Data  
363 can be accessed on GEO under the project identifier [GSE146530](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/geo/query/acc.cgi?acc=GSE146530).

#### 364 *Transcriptome sequencing and assembly*

365 Libraries were prepared using TruSeq Stranded mRNA HS kit (Illumina, San Diego, California,  
366 USA). Mean library length was determined using the 2100 Bioanalyzer with the DNA 1000 kit  
367 (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, California, USA). Library concentrations was determined

368 using the Qubit BR kit (Thermo Scientific, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA). Samples were  
369 barcoded with Illumina unique indexes. The Illumina HiSeq 2500 was used to perform single-  
370 end 100-bp sequencing of samples at the Norwegian Sequencing Centre (University of Oslo,  
371 Oslo, Norway).

372 Cutadapt (ver. 1.8.1) was used for removal of sequencing adapters and trimming of low  
373 quality bases (parameters `-q 20, -O 8 -minimum-length 40`). Quality control was performed  
374 with FastQC software. Reads were mapped onto the reference genome using STAR  
375 software (ver. 2.4.2a). Read counts for annotated genes were generated using the HTSEQ-  
376 count software (ver. 0.6.1p1)

377 All RNA-seq data for the smoltification experiment is available in the European nucleotide  
378 archive under project number: [PRJEB34224](https://www.ebi.ac.uk/ena/browser/view/PRJEB34224).

### 379 *Analysis of differentially expressed genes*

380 Analysis of differential gene expression was performed with package edgeR (ver. 3.14.0)  
381 using R (ver. 3.4.2) and RStudio (ver. 1.0.153). Prior to analysis of differential expression, the  
382 raw counts were filtered, setting an expression level threshold of a minimum of one count  
383 per million reads (cpm) in five or more libraries, resulting in a list of 33 951 expressed genes.  
384 The counts were scaled by applying trimmed means of M-values (TMM) scaling. Exact tests  
385 were then performed to find genes that were differentially expressed between FW-kept and  
386 24-h SW challenged fish. An ANOVA-like test was performed to find genes that were  
387 differentially expressed over T1-T6 FW time-points. The test results were filtered for a false  
388 discovery rate (FDR) to be less than 0.01 to identify significantly differentially expressed  
389 genes. Clustering analysis was performed using Pearson correlation.

390 Heatmaps were generated in R using custom scripts for pheatmap. Transcription factor  
391 binding site analysis was conducted using SalmotifDB [35].

### 392 *qPCR*

393 cDNA was synthesised from sample total RNA using High capacity RNA to cDNA kit (Applied  
394 Biosystems). qPCR was performed using GoTaq Master Mix (Promega) and a 96 well thermal  
395 cycler (Applied Biosystems). Relative gene expression was quantified by the  $\Delta\Delta CT$  method  
396 using *Ef1a* as reference gene. Primer sequences are listed in S2 Table.

### 397 *Hormone Assays*

398 Cortisol ELISA assays were performed by Stockgrand (UK).

### 399 *Statistical analyses*

400 RNAseq analysis is detailed above. Mean difference comparisons were carried out using  
401 Student's t-test (two-sided, unpaired), two-way ANOVA with post hoc tests as appropriate  
402 (Graphpad Prism 8.1.2). The expression divergence index (EDI) index was calculated as  
403 follows:  $EDI = \text{abs}(\log_2[\text{Gene1}/\text{Gene2}])$ .

404 The R package JTK cycle was used to assess rhythmicity of transcripts under LD and constant  
405 light or dark conditions [30]. For statistical comparison of gene expression between  
406 ohnologue pairs in the circadian experiment, expression was normalized to group mean then  
407 best fit sixth-order centered polynomial curves were generated by non-linear regression  
408 analysis and shared characteristics tested with extra sum of squares F test (Graphpad Prism  
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562 **Acknowledgements**

563 The authors thank all of the animal staff at Kårvik havbruksstasjonen for their expert care of  
564 their research animals. The work was supported by grants from the Tromsø  
565 forskningsstiftelse (TFS) starter grant TFS2016SW, awarded to SHW. ACW is supported by  
566 the Tromsø forskningsstiftelse (TFS) grant awarded to DGH (TFS2016DH).

567 **Author contributions**

568 **ACW** – conceived and designed the circadian and *in-vitro* experiments, collected samples,  
569 performed RNA preparation, gill culture, qPCR, bioinformatics analysis, analysed/interpreted  
570 data, prepared the manuscript and figures. **MI**– Bioinformatic analysis, osmolality  
571 measurements, data analysis and reviewed manuscript. **EJH** – collected samples, designed  
572 and conducted the smoltification experiment, and reviewed the manuscript. **SS** – Conducted  
573 the evolutionary analysis of clock genes and revised the manuscript. **DGH** - collected  
574 samples, analysed/interpreted data, designed and conducted the smoltification experiment,  
575 and revised the manuscript. **SHW**– conceived and designed the circadian and *in-vitro*  
576 experiments, collected samples, performed RNA preparation, gill culture,  
577 analysed/interpreted data, and prepared the manuscript.

578

579 **Figure legends**

580 **Figure 1. Clock gene Ss4R duplicate pairs are divergently expressed in different tissues.**

581 A. Phylogenetic tree highlighting WGD events and evolution of anadromy. B. The molecular  
582 clock network. C. Circos plot showing all Ss4R clock ohnologues chromosomal position and  
583 their partners indicated by the red line. Sequence similarity of the loci in a 1mb window is

584 shown on the circus plot; high similarity >95% (red), medium 95-90% (blue), low ~87%  
585 (green). Sequence similarity on a genome wide level relates to approximate rediploidization  
586 time of Atlantic salmon chromosomes (see grey box). D. Differential regulation of Ss4R pairs  
587 in a panel of 11 different tissues. For each Ss4R pair, in each tissue, an expression divergence  
588 index (EDI) index was calculated ( $EDI = \text{abs}(\log_2[\text{Gene1}/\text{Gene2}])$ ). The graph shows a violin  
589 plot of the distribution of EDI values across all tissues. The vertical black bar represents the  
590 median value. Approximate rediploidization time of the loci each pair is found on is  
591 represented by a colour: red – late, blue – mid, green – early.

592 **Figure 2. The molecular clock network regulation in the Atlantic salmon.**

593 A. Diel and circadian regulation experiment design, arrows indicate tissue collection points.  
594 Samples used for statistical analysis of rhythmicity under diel, LL (constant light) and DD  
595 (constant dark) conditions are indicated. B. Heatmap displays all diel rhythmic genes in OT,  
596 SV and gill. Overlap between tissues is shown in the venn diagram. C. Peak-phase aligned LL  
597 and DD rhythmic genes in the OT. Shaded area shows 95% confidence limit. D. Example  
598 duplicate comparisons from OT, SV and gill. JKTcycle ( $\text{adjP} < 0.05^*$ ,  $\text{adjP} < 0.01^{**}$ ,  
599  $\text{adjP} < 0.001^{***}$ ,  $\text{adjP} < 0.0001^{****}$ ).

600 **Figure 3. The molecular clock network shows ohnologue specific differences during a**  
601 **photoperiodically driven developmental transition.**

602 A. Photoperiodic gene expression experiment design. LL – constant light, SP – short  
603 photoperiod. Time-points for sampling indicated by arrows. B. Expression heatmap of  
604 significantly photoperiodic ( $FDR < 0.01$ ) clock genes in the gill. Significant genes cluster into  
605 five distinct expression patterns. Individual profiles are represented. Shaded area shows 95%

606 confidence limit where applicable. C. RNA-seq counts per million profiles for divergently  
607 regulated ohnologue pairs.

608 **Figure 4. Stress response implicates glucocorticoid receptor signaling in clock ohnologue**

609 **regulation.** A. Diel and circadian profile of plasma cortisol. Time axis is given in continuous

610 hours since the start of the experiment, therefore 1 to 21 represent zeitgeber time (ZT) and

611 25 onwards is equivalent to circadian time (CT)1 to CT29. Due to the sampling protocol time-

612 points 1 and 5 are replotted from time-points 25 and 29. B. Sea-water stress experiment

613 design. LL – constant light, SP – short photoperiod, SW- sea-water challenge. C. Plasma

614 cortisol concentration in blood plasma in sea-water stress experiment. D. Sea-water stress

615 regulation of clock genes. Significantly regulated transcripts (FDR<0.01) are shown in red. FC

616 – fold change. E. Differential sea-water stress regulation of ohnologue pairs. Significantly

617 different pairs (Analysis of genes where one or both genes are significantly regulated by

618 seawater (FDR<0.01), then submitted to a two-way ANOVA, with sea-water regulation and

619 interaction,  $p < 0.05$ ) are shown in red. F. Predicted transcription factor promoter binding

620 analysis. Both sea-water induced and not-induced gene cohorts were analysed. 50 motifs

621 were specific to the sea-water induced cohort. The top four motifs in each group are

622 displayed.

623 **Figure 5: In-vitro validation of glucocorticoid stimulated clock ohnologue expression**

624 A. Dexamethasone-dependent transcript regulation experimental design. After photoperiod

625 manipulation whole gill arches were removed and treated for 24h with glucocorticoid

626 receptor agonist dexamethasone (DEX), or dimethylsulphoxide (DMSO; control). B.

627 Comparative regulation of Cry1-Ch12/22 taken from *in vivo* sea-water stress experiment and

628 *in vitro* dexamethasone treatment. C. As in B for Nr1d2-Ch2/5 & Nr1d2-Ch14/27. D. As in B  
629 for Tef-Ch1/28 & Tef-Ch3/6. Braches indicate phylogenetic relationship between gene sets.

630 **S1 Figure: Tissue specific expression of clock ohnologues**

631 A. PCA plot showing the relative tissue differences when considering clock ohnologue  
632 expression. B. Heatmap showing the tissue specific expression of clock ohnologues.

633 **S2 Figure: Nanostring clock gene expression and circadian phase aligned plots**

634 A. Heatmap showing the mesor expression for each clock ohnologue in three tissues. Grey  
635 indicates the gene is not expressed. B. Phase aligned plots for the gill. C. Phase aligned plot  
636 for the SV. D. Arntl1-Ch10/16 comparison: plot of non-linear regression using a sixth-order  
637 centered polynomial to fit the data and compare individual curves. P-value is the result of  
638 extra sum-of-squares F test. E. As above for Cry1-Ch12/22.

639 **S3 Figure: Osmoregulatory capacity during the smoltification experiment**

640 A. Osmolality (mOsm kg<sup>-1</sup>) is displayed for fish in freshwater (FW – blue) and seawater (SW –  
641 green). This plot show osmoregulatory capacity develops by the two latest timepoints (T5  
642 and T6).

643 **S4 Figure: Gene expression of Tsc22d3-Ch3, a positive control gene for DEX treatment**

644 A. Gene expression of Tsc22dd3-Ch3 *in vivo* seawater stress experiment (RNA-seq counts per  
645 million (cpm)) and B. *in vitro* dexamethasone treatment (qPCR).

646 **S1 Table: Clock genes identified in Atlantic Salmon, orthogroups, duplicates, significances**  
647 **for the circadian, smoltification and seawater challenge experiments**

648 **S2 Table: Nanostring codeset design and qPCR primers**

649 **S3 Table: Summary of previous studies measuring cortisol in fish**

650 **S4 Table: SalmotifDB results – transcription factor binding site analysis**

651 **S1 appendix: Evolutionary gene trees for circadian clock genes**

652 **S2 appendix: Nanostring circadian profiles for all genes**



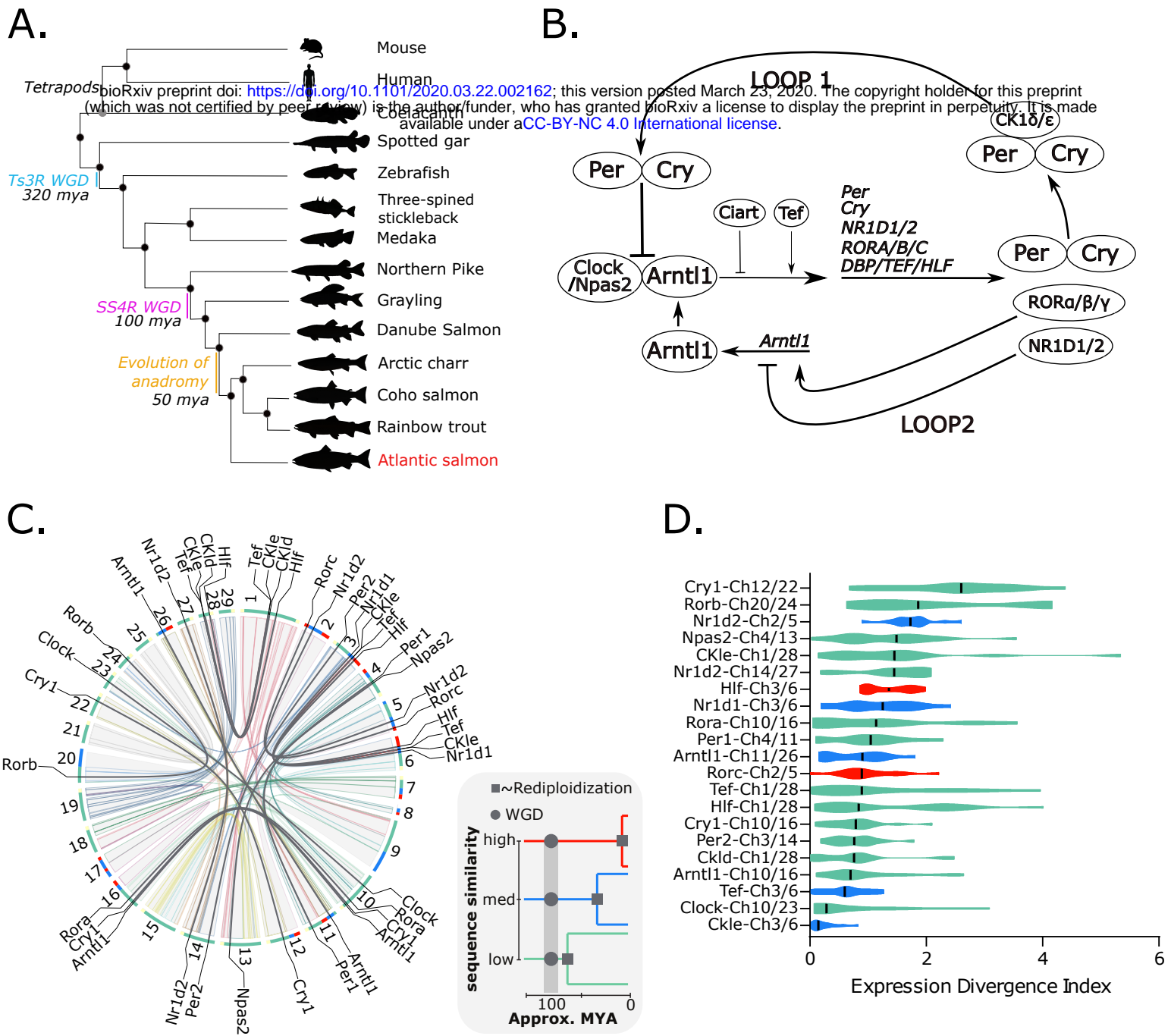


Fig. 1

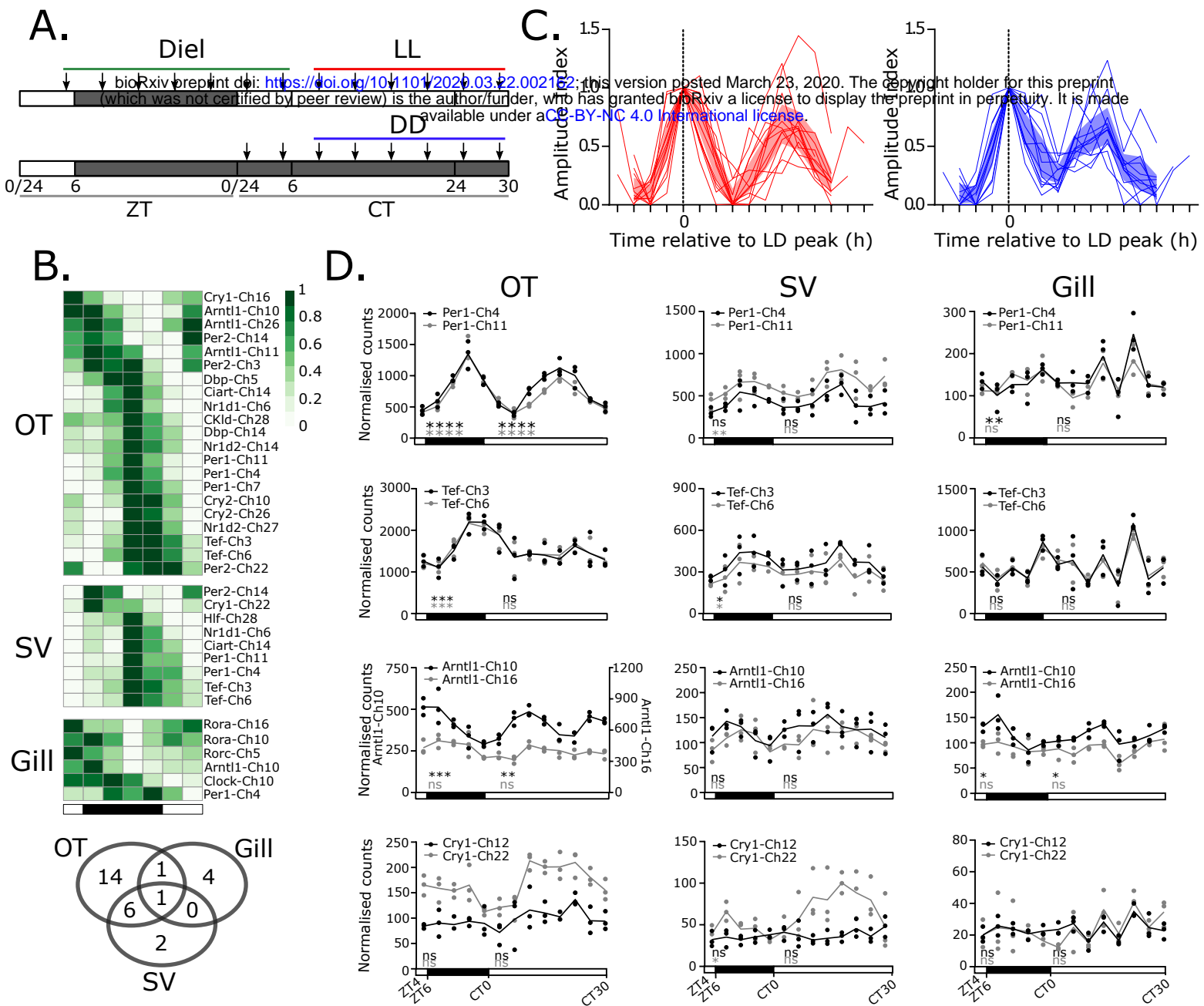
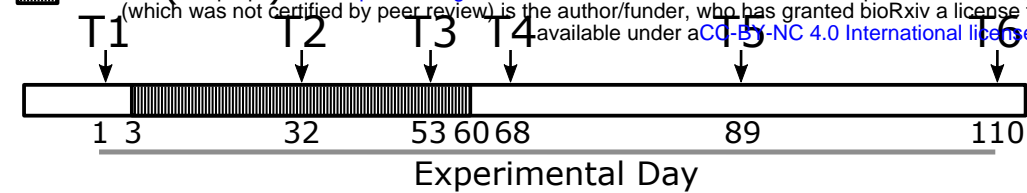
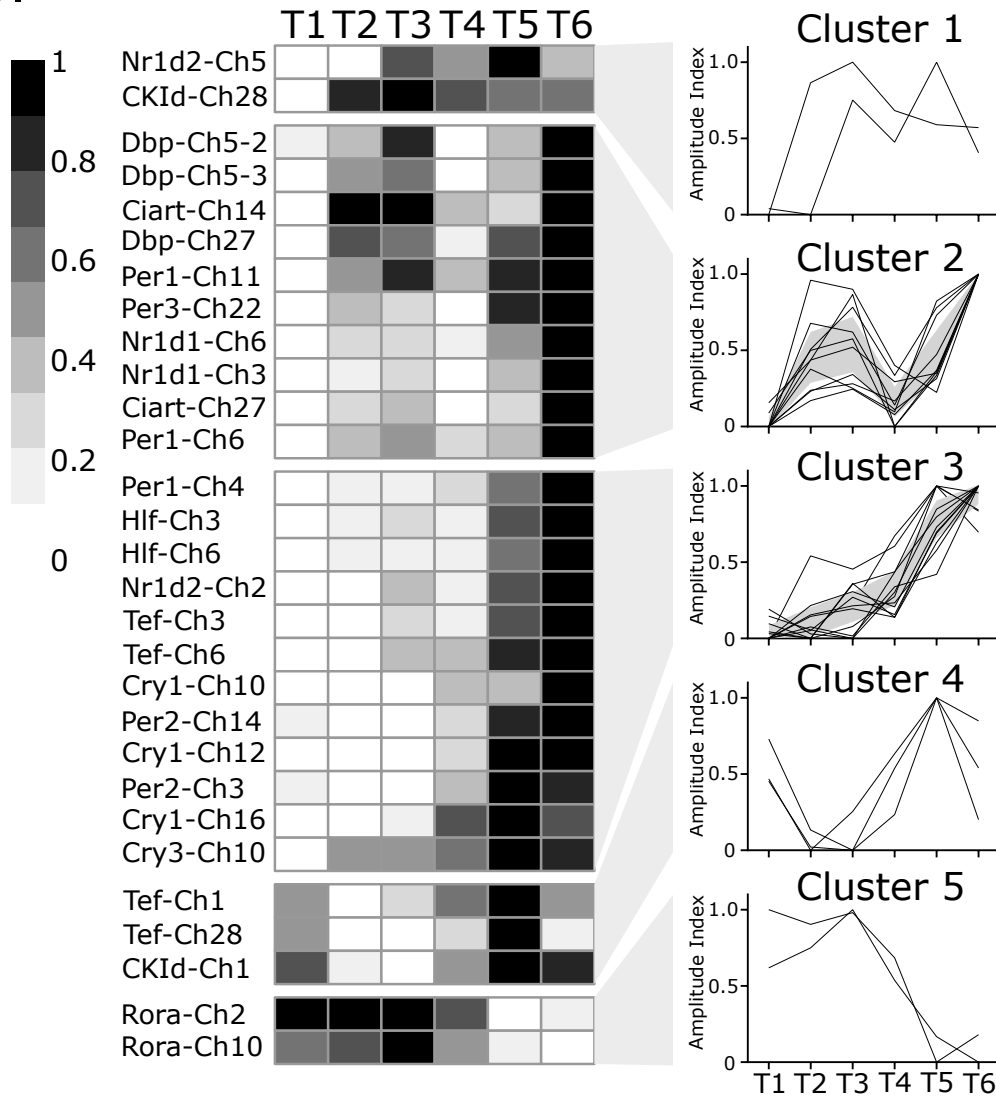
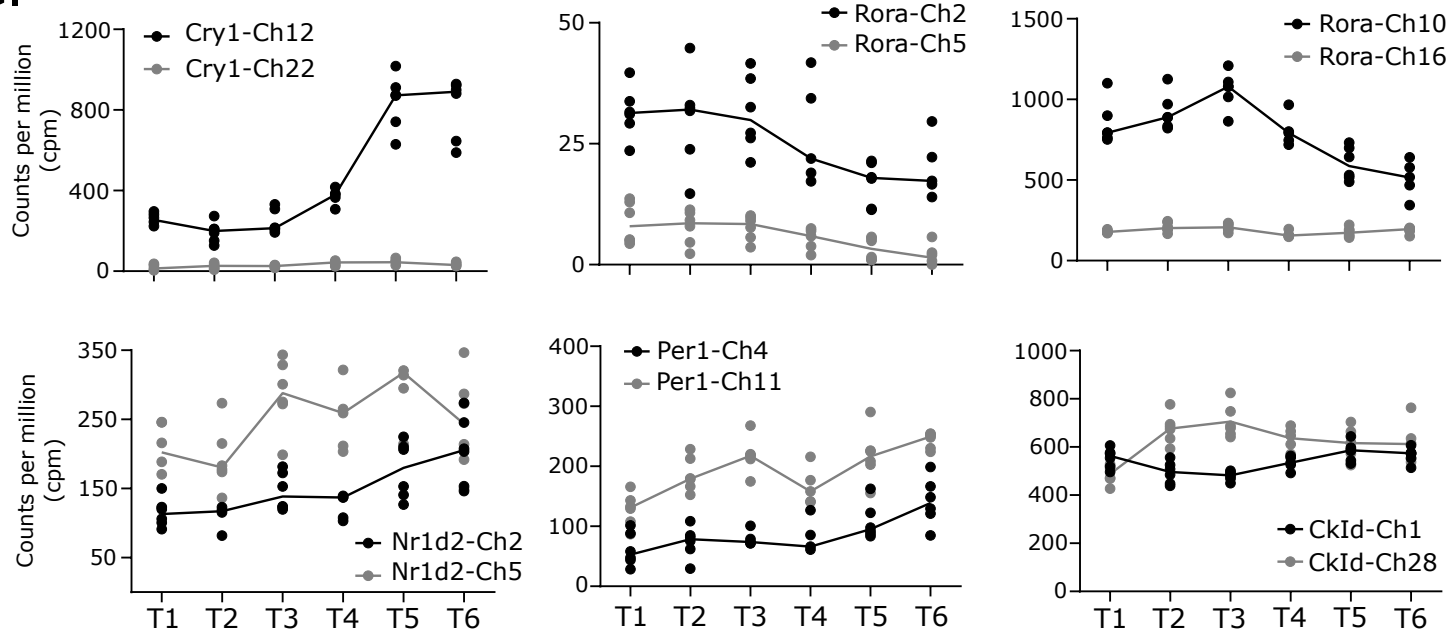


Fig. 2

**A.**

□ - LL (24:0)

▨ - SP (8:16)

**B.****C.****Fig. 3**

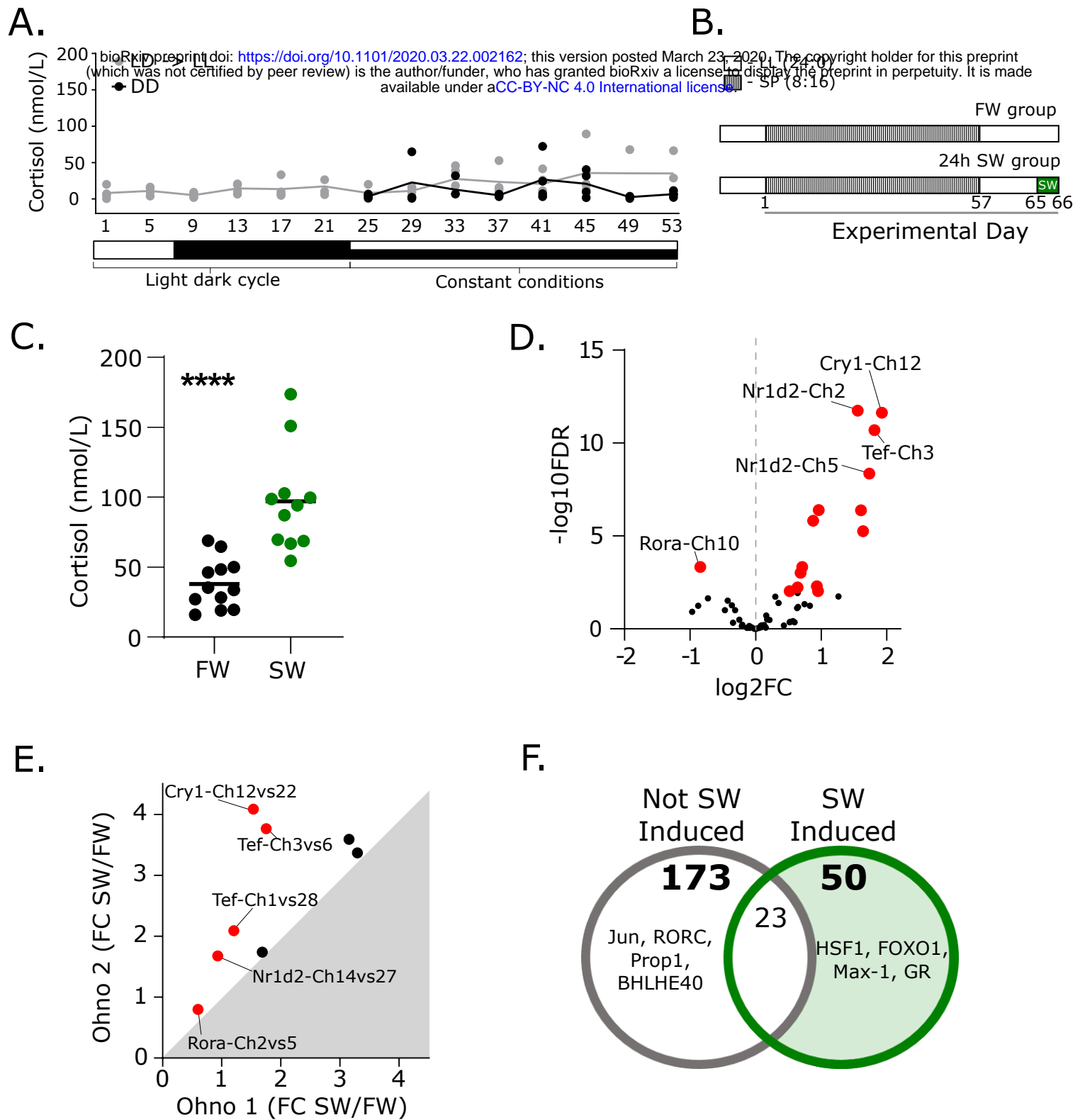
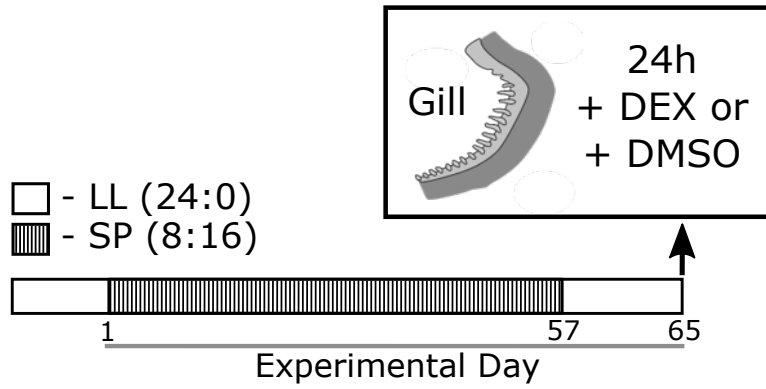


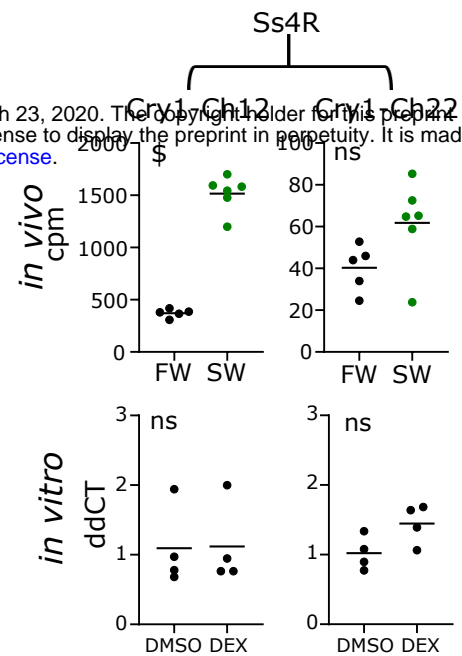
Fig. 4

A.

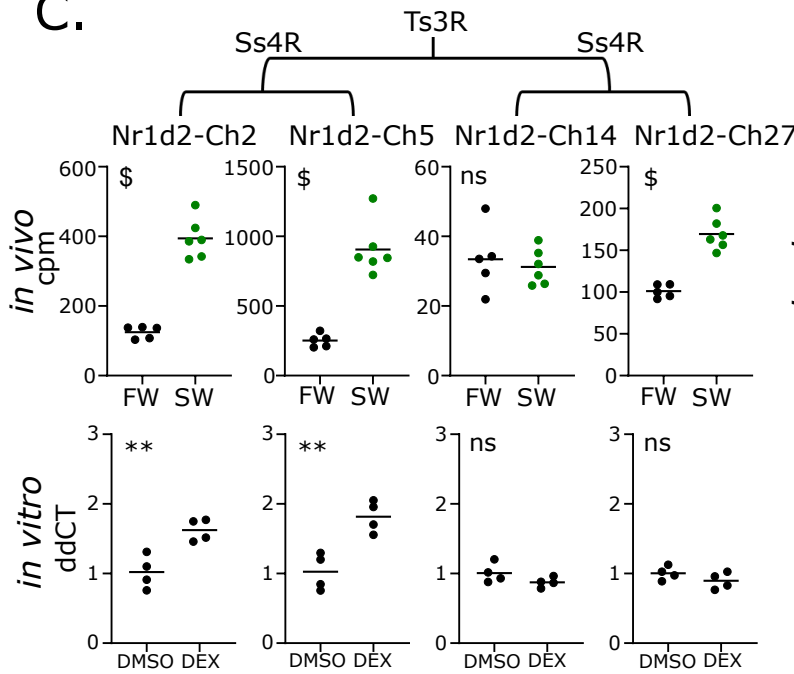
bioRxiv preprint doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.03.22.002162>; this version posted March 23, 2020. The copyright holder for this preprint (which was not certified by peer review) is the author/funder, who has granted bioRxiv a license to display the preprint in perpetuity. It is made available under aCC-BY-NC 4.0 International license.



B.



C.



D.

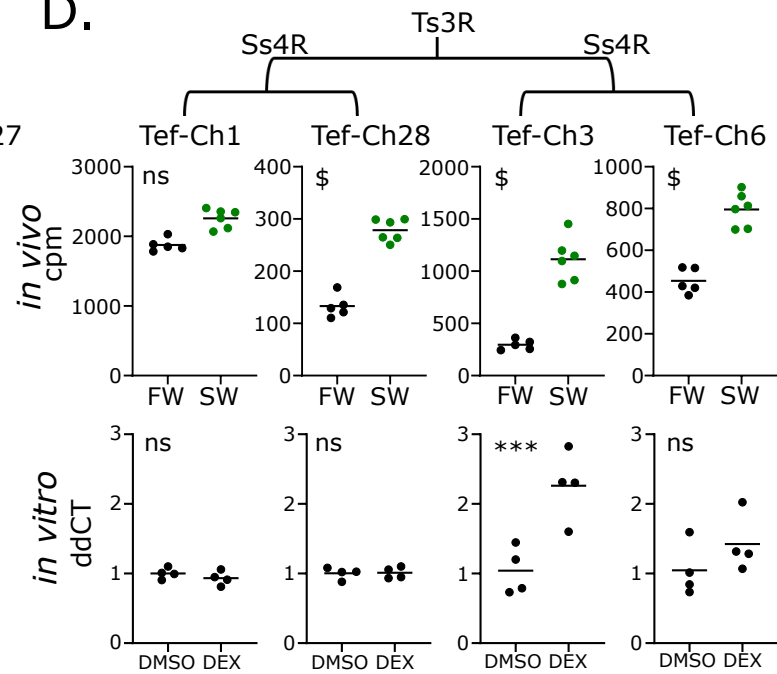
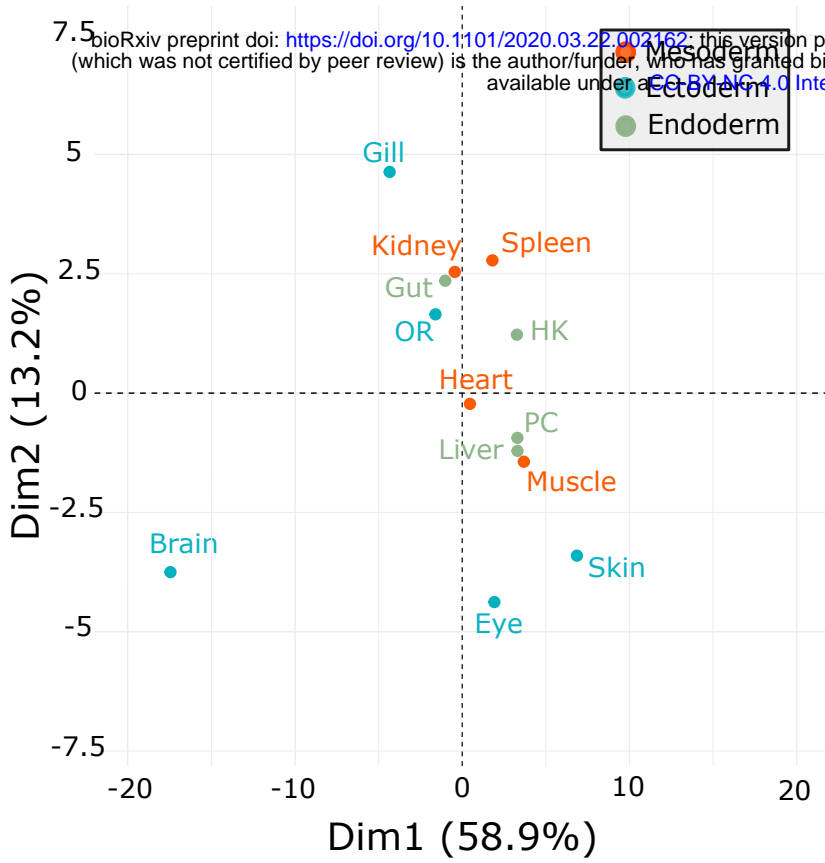
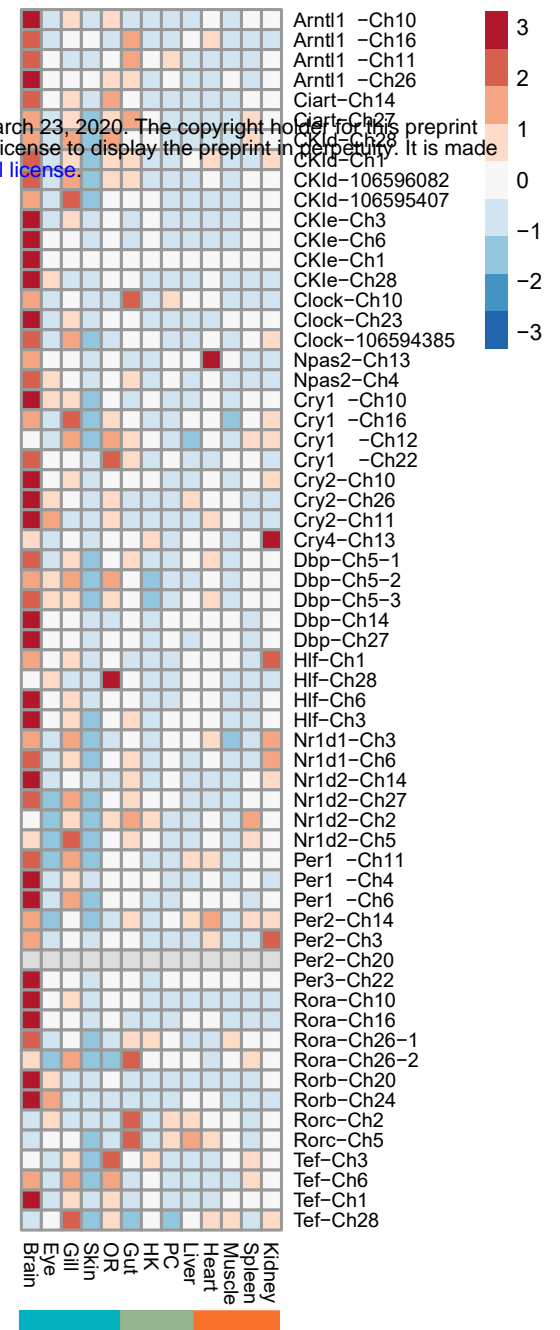


Fig. 5

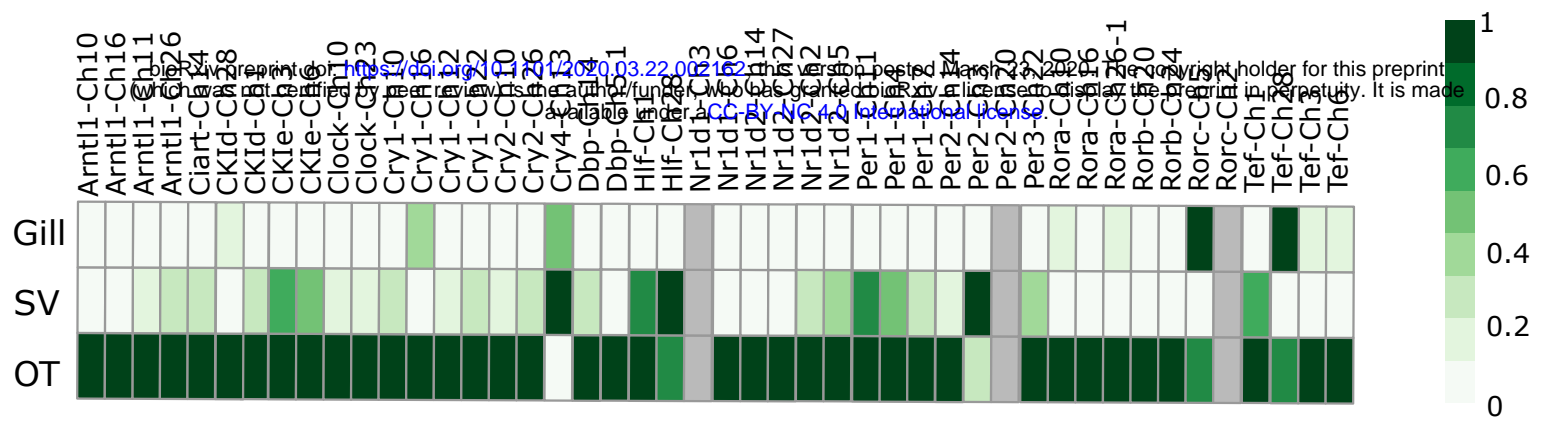
A.



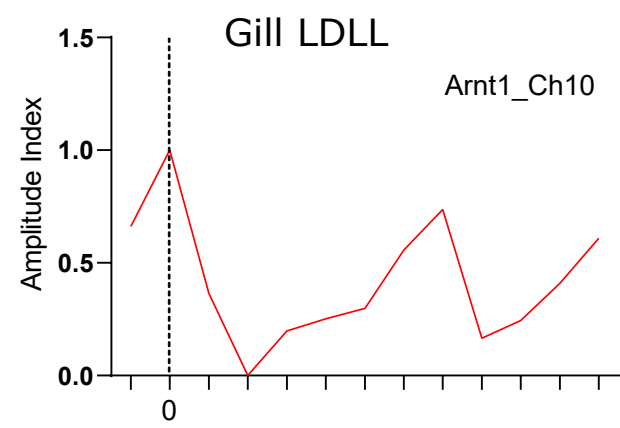
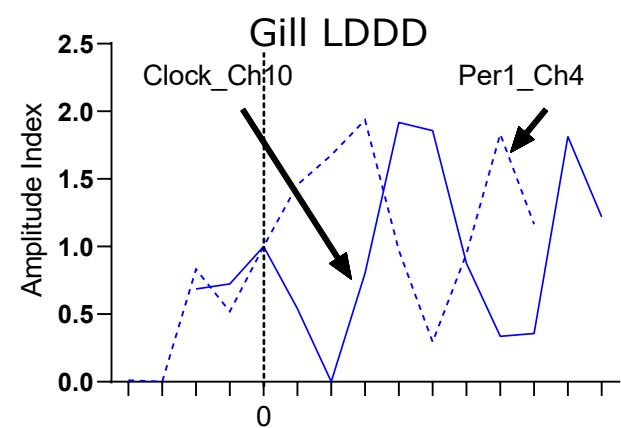
B.



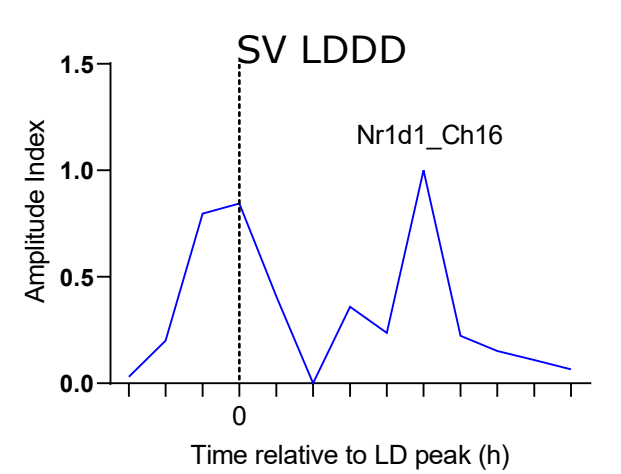
A.



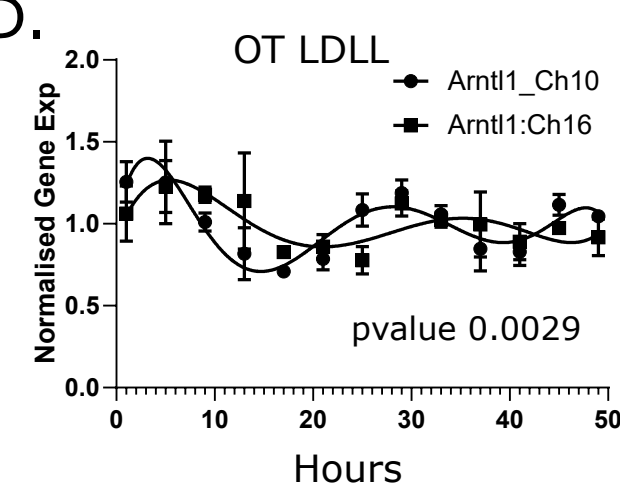
B.



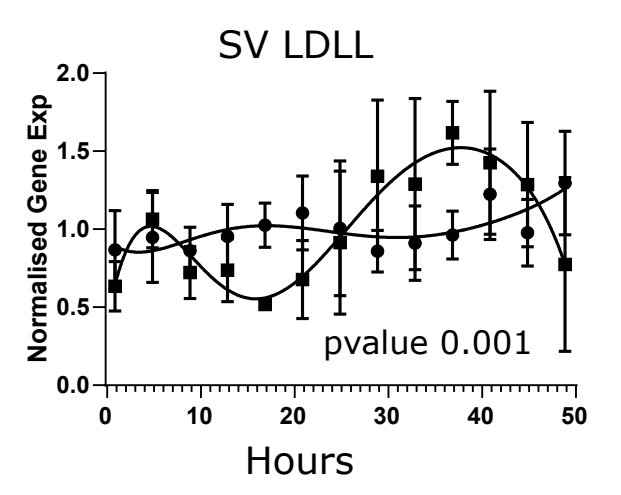
C.



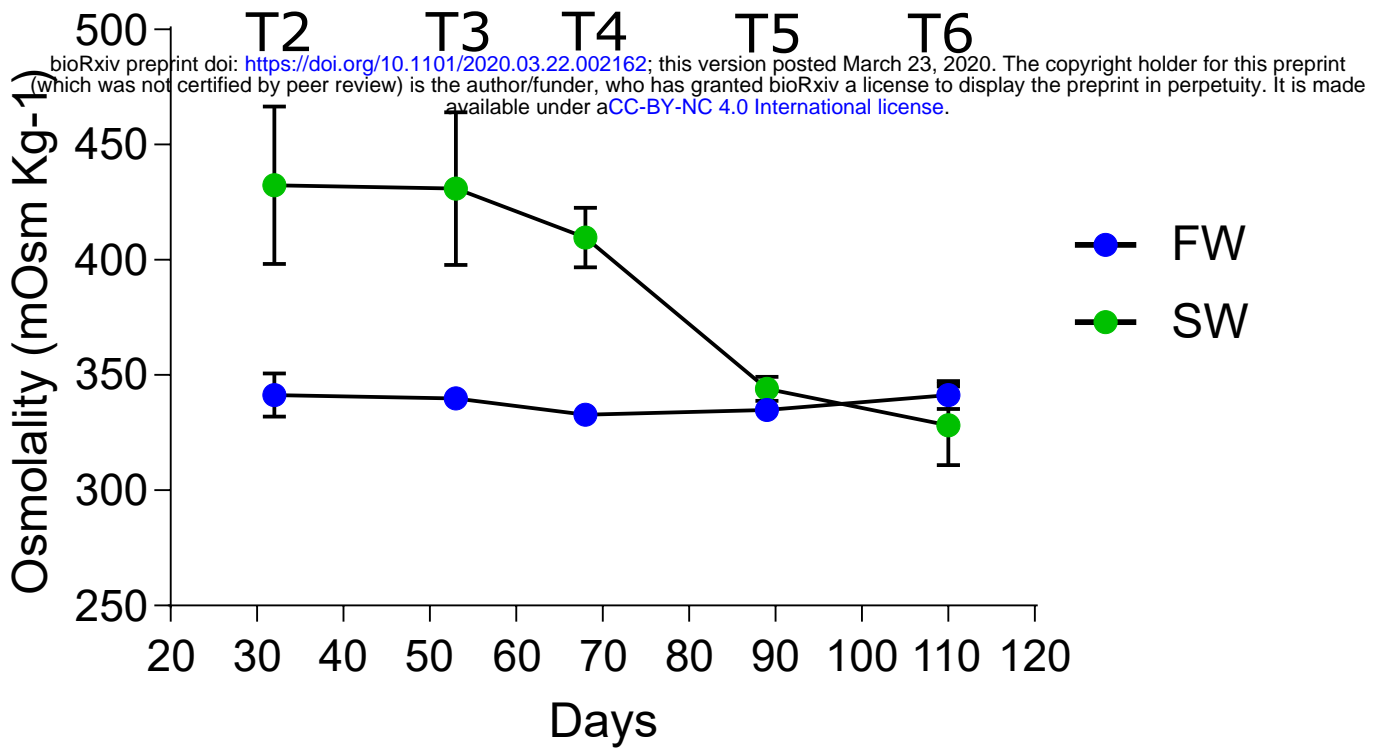
D.



E.

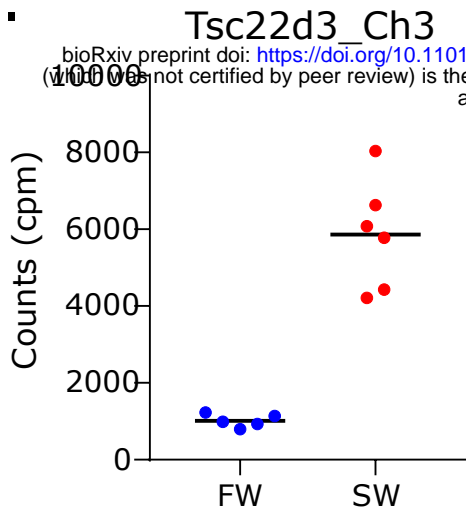


Supplementary Fig. 2



Supplementary Fig. 3



**A.****B.**