

1 **Whole Genome Sequencing of 5 Tibetan Sheep Breeds Identifies Selective Signatures to**  
2 **Adaptability at Different High-Altitude Areas in Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau**

3 Lei-Lei Li<sup>\*,1</sup>, Shi-Ke Ma<sup>†,1</sup>, Wei Peng<sup>†</sup>, You-Gui Fang<sup>‡,§</sup>, Hong-Yun Fu<sup>\*\*</sup>, Gong-Xue Jia<sup>‡,§,2</sup>

4 <sup>\*</sup>Institute of Animal Sciences, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Beijing, 100193, China,

5 <sup>†</sup>Qinghai Academy of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine, Qinghai University, Xining,

6 Qinghai, 810016, China, <sup>‡</sup>Key Laboratory of Adaptation and Evolution of Plateau Biota, Northwest

7 Institute of Plateau Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Xining, Qinghai, 810001, China,

8 <sup>§</sup>Qinghai Key Laboratory of Animal Ecological Genomics, Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology,

9 Chinese Academy of Sciences, Xining, Qinghai, 810001, China, <sup>\*\*</sup>Qinghai Headquarter of Animal

10 Husbandry Extension Station, Xining, Qinghai, 810008, China

11 <sup>1</sup>These authors contributed equally to this work.

12 <sup>2</sup>Correspond author: E-mail address: [jiagongxue@nwipb.cas.cn](mailto:jiagongxue@nwipb.cas.cn)

13

14 **RUNNING TITLE: Genomes of 5 Tibetan sheep breeds**

15 **ABSTRACT:** Tibetan sheep is one of primitive Chinese sheep breeds, which achieved the  
16 divergence about 2500 years ago in Qinghai plateau region. According to different geographic  
17 conditions, especially altitudes, Tibetan sheep evolved into different breeds. In this study, we  
18 performed pooled whole genome resequencing of 125 individuals from 5 representative Tibetan  
19 sheep breeds. Comparative genomic analysis showed that they can be divided into different clades  
20 with a close genetic relationship. However, some genes with common selective regions were  
21 enriched for hypoxic adaptability in different breeds living at higher altitude, including *GHR*,  
22 *BMP15* and *CPLANE1*. Furthermore, breed-specific selective regions about physical characteristics,  
23 especially wool growth, were found in genes such as *BSND*, *USP24*, *NCAPG* and *LCORL*. This  
24 study could contribute to our understanding about trait formation and offer a reference for breeding  
25 of Tibetan sheep.

26 **KEYWORDS:** Tibetan sheep; SNP; adaptability; coat color; candidate genes

## 27 **INTRODUCTION**

28 Tibetan sheep is one of representative herbivores in northwestern China, with more than 23 million  
29 individuals distributed throughout the Qinghai-Tibet plateau (statistics in 2008) (Du 2011). After  
30 the long course of evolutionary history, Tibetan sheep has been adapted to the harsh environment  
31 and plays an irreplaceable role in economic and social development for local people. Genomic  
32 reconstruction results indicate that Tibetan sheep was originated from northern Chinese ancient  
33 sheep ~3100 years ago and achieved the divergence ~2500 years ago (Zhao et al. 2017; Hu et al.  
34 2019). Since then, a subgroup of Tibetan sheep continued to southwest expand and reached to the  
35 central Tibet area ~1300 years ago, while the rest of them colonized different areas of Qinghai and  
36 gradually evolved into different breeds depending on geographic conditions (Hu et al. 2019).

37 Qinghai has a varied and complicated topography with altitudes ranging from 1650 m to 6860  
38 m, including eastern Hehuang valley region, southeastern Huangnan mountainous region, middle  
39 region around Qinghai lake, northern Qilian mountainous region, northwestern Qaidam basin region  
40 and southwestern Qingnan plateau region (Zhang 2009). Due to extreme geographic barrier and rare  
41 invasion of external populations, most regions reserve abundant and distinctive Tibetan sheep  
42 resources. However, because of ongoing regression of ecological environment, the introduction of  
43 modern commercial sheep and the lack of effective conservation efforts, indigenous breeds are  
44 facing crisis of population decline and genetic characteristic loss. Therefore, it is important to  
45 clarify the population structure and genetic diversity of Tibetan sheep to preserve and utilize the  
46 genetic materials efficiently.

47 Hence, we performed pooled whole genome resequencing of 125 sheep from five  
48 representative Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai. By analyzing single nucleotide polymorphism

49 (SNP) annotation, we aimed to elucidate the genetic relationships among breeds and excavate the  
50 candidate genes or variants responsible for adaptability of Tibetan sheep.

## 51 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### 52 **Sample collection**

53 Five phenotypically representative Tibetan sheep breeds were chosen in different geographical  
54 regions of Qinghai: Valley sheep (referred to as LD) from Hehuang valley region with an elevation  
55 of 2000 to 3000 m, Oula sheep (referred to as HN) from Huangnan mountainous region with an  
56 elevation of 3500 to 4000 m, Zeku sheep (referred to as ZK) from region around Qinghai lake with  
57 an elevation of 3000 to 3500 m, Grassland sheep (referred to as TJ) from Qilian mountainous region  
58 with an elevation of 3000 to 4000 m and Zhashijia sheep (referred to as QM) from Qingnan plateau  
59 region with an elevation above 4000 m. Whole blood samples were collected from 25 unrelated  
60 individuals with similar traits per breed. The detailed sample information is summarized in Figure  
61 1. All experiments in this study were handled in accordance with the requirements of Animal Ethic  
62 and Welfare Committee of Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

### 63 **DNA library construction and resequencing**

64 Genomic DNA was extracted from whole blood samples using a standard phenol-chloroform  
65 method (Russell and Sambrook 2001). After dilution to 100 ng/ $\mu$ L, DNA samples were divided into  
66 five pools per group by mixing equally genomic DNA. Pooled DNA samples were randomly  
67 sheared into 350 bp fragments, and then end repaired, A-tailed, ligated to paired-end adaptors for  
68 PCR amplification. The constructed libraries were sequenced at  $\sim 6.10\times$  coverage on the HiSeq X  
69 Ten platform (Illumina, San Diego, USA) by Annoroad Gene Technology Co., Ltd. (Beijing,  
70 China).

### 71 **Quality control and reads alignment**

72 After removing reads with polluted adaptor, low-quality or over 5% N bases, clean data were  
73 carried out on statistics analyses about its quantity and quality. The Burrows-Wheeler aligner was  
74 used to map clean reads to the reference genome of *Ovis aries* (Oar v.4.0) (Li and Durbin 2009).  
75 Merged alignment files were sorted using SAMtools (Li et al. 2009). Duplicate reads were removed  
76 using Picard tools (<http://broadinstitute.github.io/picard/>) and multiply aligned reads were filtered  
77 out.

### 78 **Variations calling and annotation**

79 The Genome Analysis Toolkit was used for SNPs and indels calling via local re-assembly of  
80 haplotypes for population (McKenna et al. 2010). The SNPs and indels were filtered with following  
81 parameters: (SNP: QD < 2.0, ReadPosRankSum < -8.0, FS > 60.0, QUAL < 30.0, DP < 4.0;  
82 INDEL: QD < 2.0, ReadPosRankSum < -20.0, FS > 200.0, QUAL < 30.0, DP < 4.0). Then  
83 annotation were performed using ANNOVAR for all the qualified variants (Wang et al. 2010). All  
84 the called SNPs were filtered to remove loci with low maf (< 0.05) and high missing rate (> 0.10).

### 85 **Population genetics analyses**

86 Principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted by EIGENSOFT (Price et al. 2006). Population  
87 structure analysis was implemented with Admixture (Alexander et al. 2009). Based on neighbor-  
88 joining (NJ) method, PHYLIP was used to construct phylogenetic tree (Plotree D 1989), and the  
89 result was displayed by Newick Utilities (Junier and Zdobnov 2010). Linkage disequilibrium  
90 analysis were carried out with PopLDdecay (<https://github.com/BGI-shenzhen/PopLDdecay>).

### 91 **Analysis of selective sweep regions**

92 Polymorphism parameters for each breed were calculated by VariScan (Vilella et al. 2005).  
93 VCFtools and House-perl scripts were taken to implement fixation index ( $F_{ST}$ ) and homozygosity  
94 ( $H_P$ ) respectively, and Z-transformed into  $Z(F_{ST})$  and  $Z(H_P)$  (Danecek et al. 2011; Axelsson et al.  
95 2013). Both the selective sweep analysis and polymorphism parameters analysis were conducted

96 using a sliding-window method with 100 kb windows sliding at 50 kb steps. Regions with top 5%  
97 values of highest  $Z(F_{ST})$  or lowest  $Z(H_p)$  were recognized as candidate regions.

### 98 **Candidate gene analysis**

99 The identified selective regions were annotated to the reference genome (Oar v.4.0), and genes  
100 located in selective regions were identified as candidate genes. Gene ontology (GO) analysis was  
101 performed in DAVID (<https://david.ncifcrf.gov>) (Jiao et al. 2012), based on the GO database  
102 (<http://geneontology.org/>) (Harris et al. 2004).

### 103 **Data availability**

104 The whole genome sequences of 5 Tibetan sheep breeds are deposited in the NCBI SRA under the  
105 accession number SRP266124. The NCBI BioProject ID is PRJNA636698 and BioSample IDs are  
106 SAMN15082206 to SAMN15082230. All the supplemental materials have been uploaded in GSA  
107 Figshare. Table S1 shows DNA sequencing information of five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai.  
108 Table S2 shows SNP and indel calling among five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai. Table S3 shows  
109 SNP summary statistics of five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai. Table S4 shows rankings of  
110 putative selected regions between different breeds. Table S5 shows lists of putative selected genes  
111 between different breeds. Table S6 shows GO analysis of putative selected genes compared with  
112 LD breed. Table S7 shows GO analysis of putative selected genes compared with HN breed. Figure  
113 S1 shows annotation information of SNPs and indels of Tibetan sheep in Qinghai. Figure S2 shows  
114 decay curves of genome-wide linkage disequilibrium and demographic trajectory in Tibetan sheep  
115 breeds in Qinghai.

## 116 **RESULTS**

### 117 **Sequencing, alignment, and identification of SNPs**

118 By sequencing 25 DNA pools from five breeds of Tibetan sheep (Figure 1), 2.70 billion reads or  
119 404.56 Gb of genome data were generated and 2.67 billion reads or 401.10 Gb of genome data were  
120 yielded via stringent quality filtering for the following analyses (Table S1).

121 Clean reads were aligned to the reference genome of *Ovis aries* (Oar v4.0) with average  
122 coverage rate of 95.00% and average mapping rate of 98.41% (Table S1). A total of 31.36 million  
123 SNPs located in chromosomes were identified, and 20.89 million, 20.67 million, 21.19 million,  
124 21.62 million and 21.21 million SNPs were obtained for LD, HN, ZK, TJ and QM respectively  
125 (Table S2). Among them, 11.78 million SNPs were shared by five breeds, as well as 1.32 million,  
126 1.08 million, 1.20 million, 1.32 million and 1.17 million SNPs were unique to LD, HN, ZK, TJ and  
127 QM respectively (Figure 2A and Table S2). Most SNPs were located in intergenic and intronic  
128 regions with T/C replacement, belonged to nonsynonymous/synonymous SNVs (Figure S1A-S1C),  
129 Detailed SNP information of each breed was listed in Table S3.

130 In addition, a total of 5.11 million indels were identified with 1.99 million indels shared by  
131 five breeds and 0.17 million, 0.16 million, 0.17 million, 0.18 million and 0.17 million indels unique  
132 to LD, HN, ZK, TJ and QM respectively (Figure 2B and Table S2). Most indels were located in  
133 intergenic and intronic regions with 1 bp length, belonged to frameshift deletion/insertion (Figure  
134 S1D-S1F).

### 135 **Population genetics structure**

136 To clarify the relationships among Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai, a phylogeny tree was  
137 constructed using the NJ method. The clustering turned up evidence of separations occurring  
138 between breeds, with each breed divided into own clades (Figure 2C). For another, the PCA plotting  
139 showed the first two components, explaining 5.47% and 5.26% of the total variation respectively,  
140 confirming that QM and TJ were genetically clustered tightly at an intermediate position, while

141 parts of LD and ZK were separated from them respectively. However, the second component  
142 clearly differentiated HN from other groups (Figure 2D).

143 To confirm the degree of divergence, population structure analysis was also implemented to  
144 estimate the proportion of common ancestry among breeds at different K values. At K = 2, HN  
145 showed a strong genetic differentiation that persisted at higher K values from other groups. At K =  
146 3, LD tended to be separated from the main population in another direction, while other breeds were  
147 distributed across the two remaining clusters. When K = 4, a high degree of genetic heterogeneity  
148 was observed among breeds, which revealed mixed ancestry. QM possessed a certain genetic  
149 similarity with LD, while TJ was much closer to ZK (Figure 2E). In addition, we observed similar  
150 decay curves of genome-wide linkage disequilibrium and demographic trajectory in five breeds  
151 (Figure S2), suggesting that their habitats were affected by concordant climatic and geologic  
152 succession.

### 153 **Selective sweep regions related to hypoxic adaptability in Tibetan sheep**

154 Although all the five Tibetan sheep breeds are distributed in Qinghai plateau, their natural habitats  
155 are located at different elevations. LD lives below 3000 m, HN, ZK and TJ lives at 3000 to 4000 m,  
156 while QM lives over 4000 m. Therefore, we detected selective regions relative to hypoxic  
157 adaptability in HN, ZK, TJ and QM breeds using LD as control firstly. There were 167, 193, 163  
158 and 140 selective regions identified for HN ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.83$ ,  $Z(H_P) < -1.90$ ), ZK ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.83$ ,  
159  $Z(H_P) < -1.90$ ), TJ ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.81$ ,  $Z(H_P) < -1.90$ ) and QM ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.80$ ,  $Z(H_P) < -1.90$ ),  
160 corresponding to 169, 197, 191 and 158 candidate genes embedded in these selective regions  
161 respectively (Figure 3A-3D, Table S4 and S5). Venn diagram showed that 27 identical selective  
162 regions (31 genes, including *ABCB7*, *ADAR*, *ATP13A3*, *ATP1B2*, *CD68*, *CD74*, *CYP2E1*, *DDX60*,  
163 *DIP2C*, *DNAH2*, *EIF4A1*, *FXR2*, *GP5*, *KCNN3*, *MCHR1*, *MPDU1*, *MRTFA*, *NDST1*, *OR13A1*,  
164 *RPS14*, *SAT2*, *SEN3*, *SH3GL2*, *SHBG*, *SOX15*, *SPRED2*, *TCOF1*, *TNFSF12*, *TNFSF13*, *TP53*,

165 *ZMYND11*) were found in 3 breeds, while 4 identical selective regions (7 genes, including *ANXA10*,  
166 *BMP15*, *CPLANE1*, *GHR*, *NIPBL*, *Olr226*, *TMEM45A*) were shared by all 4 breeds (Figure 3E and  
167 3F).

168 To further understand biological functions of selected signals, we performed GO analysis for  
169 candidate genes in each breed. We screened selective regions of different breeds relative to LD, 25,  
170 19, 24 and 19 GO terms were significantly enriched ( $P < 0.05$ ) for HN, ZK, TJ and QM  
171 respectively. And crucially, genes selected by at least three breeds were enriched in pathways,  
172 including membrane, positive regulation of peptidyl-tyrosine phosphorylation, embryonic  
173 viscerocranium morphogenesis, positive regulation of histone deacetylation and so on (Table S6). It  
174 means that physical development and physiological function of different Tibetan sheep were  
175 affected by more severe hypoxia environment, involving in some common important genes such as  
176 *CPLANE1* and *GHR* (Figure 3G).

### 177 **Selective sweep regions related to coat color in Tibetan sheep**

178 Considering that the physical characteristics of Oula sheep are distinctly different from other  
179 breeds, we also detected selective regions in ZK, TJ and QM using HN as control. There were 199,  
180 198 and 146 selective regions identified for ZK ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.81$ ,  $Z(H_P) < -1.89$ ), TJ ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.82$ ,  
181  $Z(H_P) < -1.88$ ) and QM ( $Z(F_{ST}) > 1.82$ ,  $Z(H_P) < -1.88$ ), corresponding to 206, 223 and 157  
182 candidate genes respectively (Figure 4A-4C, Table S4 and S5). These selective regions were  
183 intersected and 15 selective regions (24 genes, including *AP2B1*, *BICD2*, *BSND*, *ERMP1*, *FGD3*,  
184 *GAS2L2*, *IPPK*, *LCORL*, *MAP6D1*, *NCAPG*, *PARL*, *PFN2*, *POGZ*, *PSMB4*, *R3HDM1*, *RASL10B*,  
185 *RIC1*, *SELENBP1*, *SUPT3H*, *TAF11*, *TMEM61*, *USP24*, *YEATS2*, *ZC4H2*) were shared by them  
186 (Figure 4D and 4E).

187 GO analysis for candidate genes showed 12, 21 and 16 GO terms were significantly enriched  
188 ( $P < 0.05$ ) for ZK, TJ and QM relative to HN respectively. Furthermore, common selected genes in



189 three compares were closely related to cytoskeleton and negative regulation of microtubule  
190 depolymerization (Table S7). Interestingly, numerous selective genes, including *BSND*, *USP24*,  
191 *NCAPG* and *LCORL*, are found to be related to integument, pigmentation, homeostasis and  
192 mortality (Figure 4F). This might explain why the trait of Oula sheep is vastly different from other  
193 Tibetan sheep breeds.

## 194 **DISCUSSION**

195 Tibetan sheep is one of the three original sheep breeds in China, which formed and evolved with  
196 northern Chinese migration (Hu et al. 2019). Through long-term natural selection, Tibetan sheep are  
197 well suited to the harsh climate variation and poor pasture condition of plateau region, associated  
198 with morphological, physiological and genetic changes (Niu et al. 2016; Jing et al. 2019). Similar  
199 phenomena also have been found in other indigenous herbivores, such as yak (Qiu et al. 2012),  
200 Tibetan antelope (Rong et al. 2012) and gazelles (Zhang and Jiang 2006). Although Tibetan sheep  
201 genome is also deciphered to illuminate its evolutionary history and biological peculiarity (Hu et al.  
202 2019), mechanism about its adaptability dealing with different environments remains puzzling.  
203 Here we compared genomic changes of five Tibetan sheep breeds, and confirmed that Tibetan  
204 sheep under different circumstances have formed own branches and generated distinctive traits.

205 Hypoxia is the most striking feature of environmental changes in Qinghai-Tibet plateau (Ji et  
206 al. 2016). Almost all of plateau mammals have evolved the high-altitude adaptability to adjust  
207 physiological function to accommodate the hypoxic environment. Despite of big differences in  
208 genotype and phenotype between animals living in plain and plateau, Tibetan sheep improve the  
209 progressive tolerance to hypoxia with a rising of living altitude (Wei et al. 2016). Through  
210 comparative genomic analysis, we found a series of SNPs and corresponding candidate genes  
211 concerned with hypoxic adaptability of Tibetan sheep at different regions. Among them, *GHR*  
212 encodes a transmembrane receptor for growth hormone, and has been closely related to the

213 adaptability and growth traits of Tibetan sheep (Ma 2007; Han et al. 2016). *BMP15* is also an  
214 important gene encoding a secreted ligand of the transforming growth factor- $\beta$  and affecting the  
215 expression of downstream transcription factors. It's been widely reported that mutations happened  
216 in *BMP15* gene are associated with prolificacy and reproduction traits of sheep (Abdoli et al. 2018;  
217 Dolebo et al. 2019). *CPLANE1* is a new gene we found that could be associated with physiological  
218 function of Tibetan sheep in higher altitude. It encodes a transmembrane protein responsible for  
219 mitosis and neurogenesis, which defects could be a cause of Joubert syndrome (Hong et al. 2019;  
220 Srour et al. 2012). Moreover, some different genes were positively selected in connection with  
221 hypoxic adaptation in different comparison, such as *TP53* in HN, ZK and TJ (Muller et al. 2019),  
222 *MCHRI* in ZK, TJ and QM (Diniz and Bittencourt 2019).

223 Different from other Tibetan sheep breeds, Oula sheep tends to have a larger physique with  
224 sparse and dried brown wools, and its early development and meat performance are better than  
225 others (Liu et al. 2015). Some reports suggested that Oula sheep is originated from hybridization of  
226 wild argali and Tibetan sheep (Xian et al. 2017). We identified several genes responsible for this  
227 phenotypic modulation, especially coat color, including *BSND*, *USP24*, *NCAPG* and *LCORL*.  
228 Except for integument, *BSND* mutation is also correlated with failure to thrive and decreased body  
229 size (de Pablos et al. 2014; Nomura et al. 2011). *NCAPG* is required for the condensation and  
230 stabilization of chromosomes during mitosis and meiosis (Murphy and Sarge 2008), which regulates  
231 proliferation and apoptosis in carcinoma cells (Liu et al. 2018). Polymorphisms in *LCORL*, an  
232 important transcription factor, are related with skeletal frame size and adult height (Horikoshi et al.  
233 2013).

## 234 CONCLUSION

235 In this study, we identified a novel series of genes and function mutations subjected to positive  
236 selection in different breeds of Tibetan sheep. Hypoxic response of Tibetan sheep living in higher

237 altitude area was related with genes including *BMP15*, *GHR* and *CPLANE1*. Furthermore, some  
238 specific selective genes, such as *BSND*, *USP24*, *NCAPG* and *LCORL*, may explain why Oula sheep  
239 is distinctly different from other breeds in coat color, size appearance and growth property. These  
240 results provide new insights into the molecular mechanism of Tibetan sheep domestication and  
241 evolution as well as the formation of the unique characteristics of different Tibetan sheep breeds.

## 242 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

243 This study is funded by the Strategic Priority Research Program of Chinese Academy of Sciences  
244 (XDA2005010406) and the Natural Science Foundation of Qinghai Province (2017-ZJ-915Q and  
245 2017-NK-114). GJ is supported by “CAS Light of West” programs and HF is supported by Qinghai  
246 “1000 Talents” programs. We thank Ledu, Henan, Zeku, Qumarlêb ang Tianjun Animal Husbandry  
247 and Veterinary Station for the help with animal sampling.

## 248 **LITERATURE CITED**

- 249 Abdoli, R., S.Z. Mirhoseini, N. Ghavi Hossein-Zadeh, P. Zamani, and C. Gondro, 2018 Genome-  
250 wide association study to identify genomic regions affecting prolificacy in Lori-Bakhtiari  
251 sheep. *Anim Genet* 49 (5):488-491.
- 252 Alexander, D.H., J. Novembre, and K. Lange, 2009 Fast model-based estimation of ancestry in  
253 unrelated individuals. *Genome Res* 19 (9):1655-1664.
- 254 Axelsson, E., A. Ratnakumar, M.L. Arendt, K. Maqbool, M.T. Webster *et al.*, 2013 The genomic  
255 signature of dog domestication reveals adaptation to a starch-rich diet. *Nature* 495  
256 (7441):360-364.
- 257 Danecek, P., A. Auton, G. Abecasis, C.A. Albers, E. Banks *et al.*, 2011 The variant call format and  
258 VCFtools. *Bioinformatics* 27 (15):2156-2158.

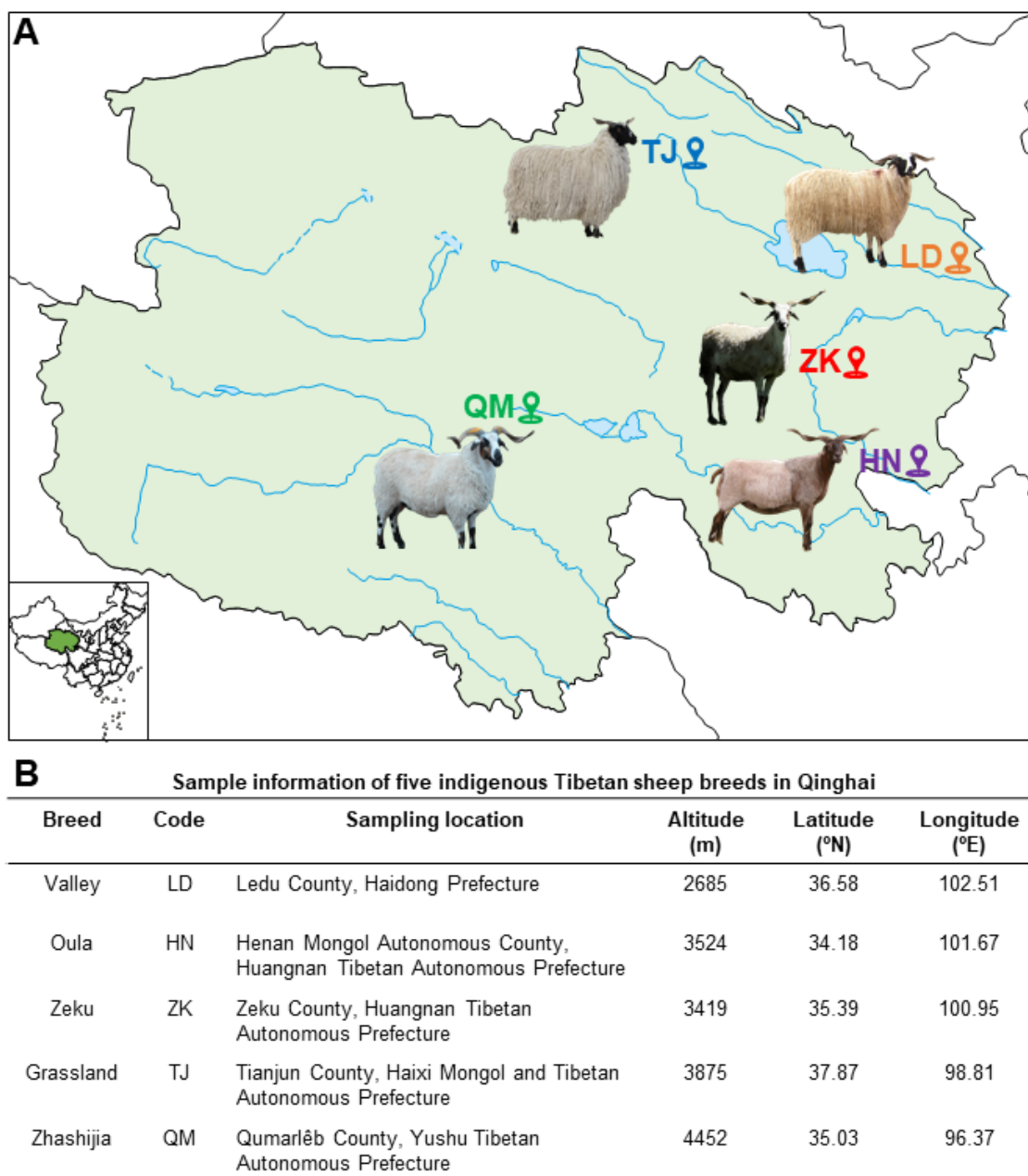
- 259 de Pablos, A.L., V. Garcia-Nieto, J.C. Lopez-Menchero, E. Ramos-Trujillo, H. Gonzalez-Acosta *et*  
260 *al.*, 2014 Severe manifestation of Bartter syndrome Type IV caused by a novel insertion  
261 mutation in the BSND gene. *Clin Nephrol* 81 (5):363-368.
- 262 Diniz, G.B., and J.C. Bittencourt, 2019 The Melanin-Concentrating Hormone (MCH) System: A  
263 Tale of Two Peptides. *Front Neurosci* 13:1280.
- 264 Dolebo, A.T., N. Khayatzaeh, A. Melesse, D. Wragg, M. Rekik *et al.*, 2019 Genome-wide scans  
265 identify known and novel regions associated with prolificacy and reproduction traits in a  
266 sub-Saharan African indigenous sheep (*Ovis aries*). *Mamm Genome* 30 (11-12):339-352.
- 267 Du, L., 2011 *Animal genetic resources in China (in Chinese)*: China Agriculture Press.
- 268 Han, Y.C., Y.G. Sun, and Q. Li, 2016 Growth hormone polymorphisms and growth traits in  
269 Chinese Tibetan sheep *Ovis aries*. *Genet Mol Res* 15 (3).
- 270 Harris, M.A., J. Clark, A. Ireland, J. Lomax, M. Ashburner *et al.*, 2004 The Gene Ontology (GO)  
271 database and informatics resource. *Nucleic Acids Research* 32 (Database issue):D258-261.
- 272 Hong, H., K. Joo, S.M. Park, J. Seo, M.H. Kim *et al.*, 2019 Extraciliary roles of the ciliopathy  
273 protein JBTS17 in mitosis and neurogenesis. *Ann Neurol* 86 (1):99-115.
- 274 Horikoshi, M., H. Yaghootkar, D.O. Mook-Kanamori, U. Sovio, H.R. Taal *et al.*, 2013 New loci  
275 associated with birth weight identify genetic links between intrauterine growth and adult  
276 height and metabolism. *Nat Genet* 45 (1):76-82.
- 277 Hu, X.J., J. Yang, X.L. Xie, F.H. Lv, Y.H. Cao *et al.*, 2019 The Genome Landscape of Tibetan  
278 Sheep Reveals Adaptive Introgression from Argali and the History of Early Human  
279 Settlements on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. *Mol Biol Evol* 36 (2):283-303.
- 280 Ji, Y., W.R. Li, F.H. Lv, S.G. He, S.L. Tian *et al.*, 2016 Whole-Genome Sequencing of Native  
281 Sheep Provides Insights into Rapid Adaptations to Extreme Environments. *Mol Biol Evol*  
282 (10):10.

- 283 Jiao, X., B.T. Sherman, W. Huang da, R. Stephens, M.W. Baseler *et al.*, 2012 DAVID-WS: a  
284 stateful web service to facilitate gene/protein list analysis. *Bioinformatics* 28 (13):1805-  
285 1806.
- 286 Jing, X., W. Wang, A. Degen, Y. Guo, and R. Long, 2019 Tibetan sheep have a high capacity to  
287 absorb and to regulate metabolism of short chain fatty acids in the rumen epithelium to  
288 adapt to low energy intake. *British Journal of Nutrition*:1-35.
- 289 Junier, T., and E.M. Zdobnov, 2010 The Newick utilities: high-throughput phylogenetic tree  
290 processing in the UNIX shell. *Bioinformatics* 26 (13):1669-1670.
- 291 Li, H., and R. Durbin, 2009 Fast and accurate short read alignment with Burrows-Wheeler  
292 transform. *Bioinformatics* 25 (14):1754-1760.
- 293 Li, H., B. Handsaker, A. Wysoker, T. Fennell, J. Ruan *et al.*, 2009 The Sequence Alignment/Map  
294 format and SAMtools. *Bioinformatics* 25 (16):2078-2079.
- 295 Liu, J.B., J. Guo, F. Wang, Y.-j. Yue, W.-l. Zhang *et al.*, 2015 Carcass and meat quality  
296 characteristics of Oula lambs in China. *Small Ruminant Research* 123 (2-3):251-259.
- 297 Liu, K., Y. Li, B. Yu, F. Wang, T. Mi *et al.*, 2018 Silencing non-SMC chromosome-associated  
298 polypeptide G inhibits proliferation and induces apoptosis in hepatocellular carcinoma cells.  
299 *Can J Physiol Pharmacol* 96 (12):1246-1254.
- 300 Ma, Z.J.W., Y. P.; Zhong, J. C.; Chen, Z. H.; Lu, H.; Tong, Z. B., 2007 Sequence characterization  
301 of the 5' '-Flanking region of the GHR gene in Tibetan sheep. *HEREDITAS (Beijing)*  
302 (08):61-69.
- 303 McKenna, A., M. Hanna, E. Banks, A. Sivachenko, K. Cibulskis *et al.*, 2010 The Genome Analysis  
304 Toolkit: a MapReduce framework for analyzing next-generation DNA sequencing data.  
305 *Genome Res* 20 (9):1297-1303.

- 306 Muller, M., R. Graf, K. Kashofer, S. Macher, A. Wolfler *et al.*, 2019 Detection of AML-specific  
307 TP53 mutations in bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stromal cells cultured under hypoxia  
308 conditions. *Ann Hematol* 98 (8):2019-2020.
- 309 Murphy, L.A., and K.D. Sarge, 2008 Phosphorylation of CAP-G is required for its chromosomal  
310 DNA localization during mitosis. *Biochem Biophys Res Commun* 377 (3):1007-1011.
- 311 Niu, L., X. Chen, P. Xiao, Q. Zhao, J. Zhou *et al.*, 2016 Detecting signatures of selection within the  
312 Tibetan sheep mitochondrial genome. *Mitochondrial Dna Part A Dna Mapping Sequencing  
313 & Analysis*:1-9.
- 314 Nomura, N., M. Tajima, N. Sugawara, T. Morimoto, Y. Kondo *et al.*, 2011 Generation and analyses  
315 of R8L barttin knockin mouse. *Am J Physiol Renal Physiol* 301 (2):F297-307.
- 316 Plotree D, P.D., 1989 PHYLIP-phylogeny inference package (version 3.2). *Cladistics* 5 (163):6.
- 317 Price, A.L., N.J. Patterson, R.M. Plenge, M.E. Weinblatt, N.A. Shadick *et al.*, 2006 Principal  
318 components analysis corrects for stratification in genome-wide association studies. *Nat  
319 Genet* 38 (8):904-909.
- 320 Qiu, Q., G. Zhang, T. Ma, W. Qian, J. Wang *et al.*, 2012 The yak genome and adaptation to life at  
321 high altitude. *Nat Genet* 44 (8):946-949.
- 322 Rong, C., M. Yan, B. Zhen-Zhong, Y. Ying-Zhong, L. Dian-Xiang *et al.*, 2012 Cardiac adaptive  
323 mechanisms of Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) at high altitudes. *Am J Vet Res* 73  
324 (6):809-813.
- 325 Russell, D.W., and J. Sambrook, 2001 *Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual*. New York: Cold  
326 Spring Harbor Laboratory Press.
- 327 Srour, M., J. Schwartzentruber, F.F. Hamdan, L.H. Ospina, L. Patry *et al.*, 2012 Mutations in  
328 C5ORF42 cause Joubert syndrome in the French Canadian population. *Am J Hum Genet* 90  
329 (4):693-700.

- 330 Vilella, A.J., A. Blanco-Garcia, S. Hutter, and J. Rozas, 2005 VariScan: Analysis of evolutionary  
331 patterns from large-scale DNA sequence polymorphism data. *Bioinformatics* 21 (11):2791-  
332 2793.
- 333 Wang, K., M. Li, and H. Hakonarson, 2010 ANNOVAR: functional annotation of genetic variants  
334 from high-throughput sequencing data. *Nucleic Acids Research* 38 (16):e164.
- 335 Wei, C., H. Wang, G. Liu, F. Zhao, J.W. Kijas *et al.*, 2016 Genome-wide analysis reveals  
336 adaptation to high altitudes in Tibetan sheep. *Sci Rep* 6:26770.
- 337 Xian, Jianbin, Yufeng, ZENG, Xuezhi *et al.*, 2017 Study on Complete Mitochondrial Genome of  
338 Oula Sheep (*Ovis aries*). *Agricultural Science & Technology*.
- 339 Zhang, F., and Z. Jiang, 2006 Mitochondrial phylogeography and genetic diversity of Tibetan  
340 gazelle (*Procapra picticaudata*): implications for conservation. *Mol Phylogenet Evol* 41  
341 (2):313-321.
- 342 Zhang, Z., 2009 *Geography of Qinghai Province (in Chinese)*: Science Press.
- 343 Zhao, Y.X., J. Yang, F.H. Lv, X.J. Hu, X.L. Xie *et al.*, 2017 Genomic Reconstruction of the History  
344 of Native Sheep Reveals the Peopling Patterns of Nomads and the Expansion of Early  
345 Pastoralism in East Asia. *Mol Biol Evol* 34 (9):2380-2395.

346 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

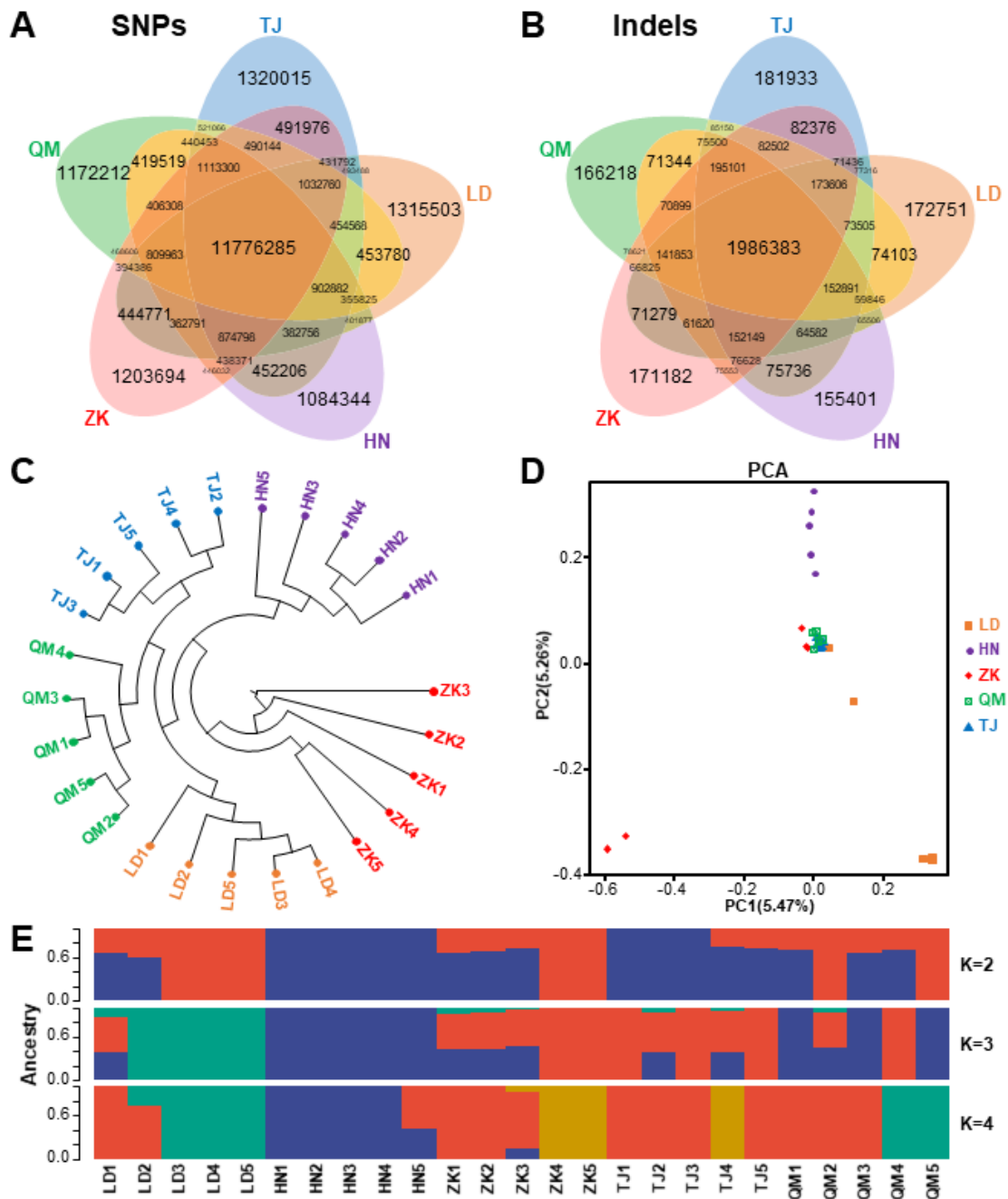


347

348 **Figure 1 Detailed information of five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai.**

349 (A) Geographic distribution of five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai. The map was generated using  
350 Adobe Illustrator. (B) Sample information of five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai, including breed,  
351 code, sampling location, altitude (m), latitude (°N) and longitude (°E).





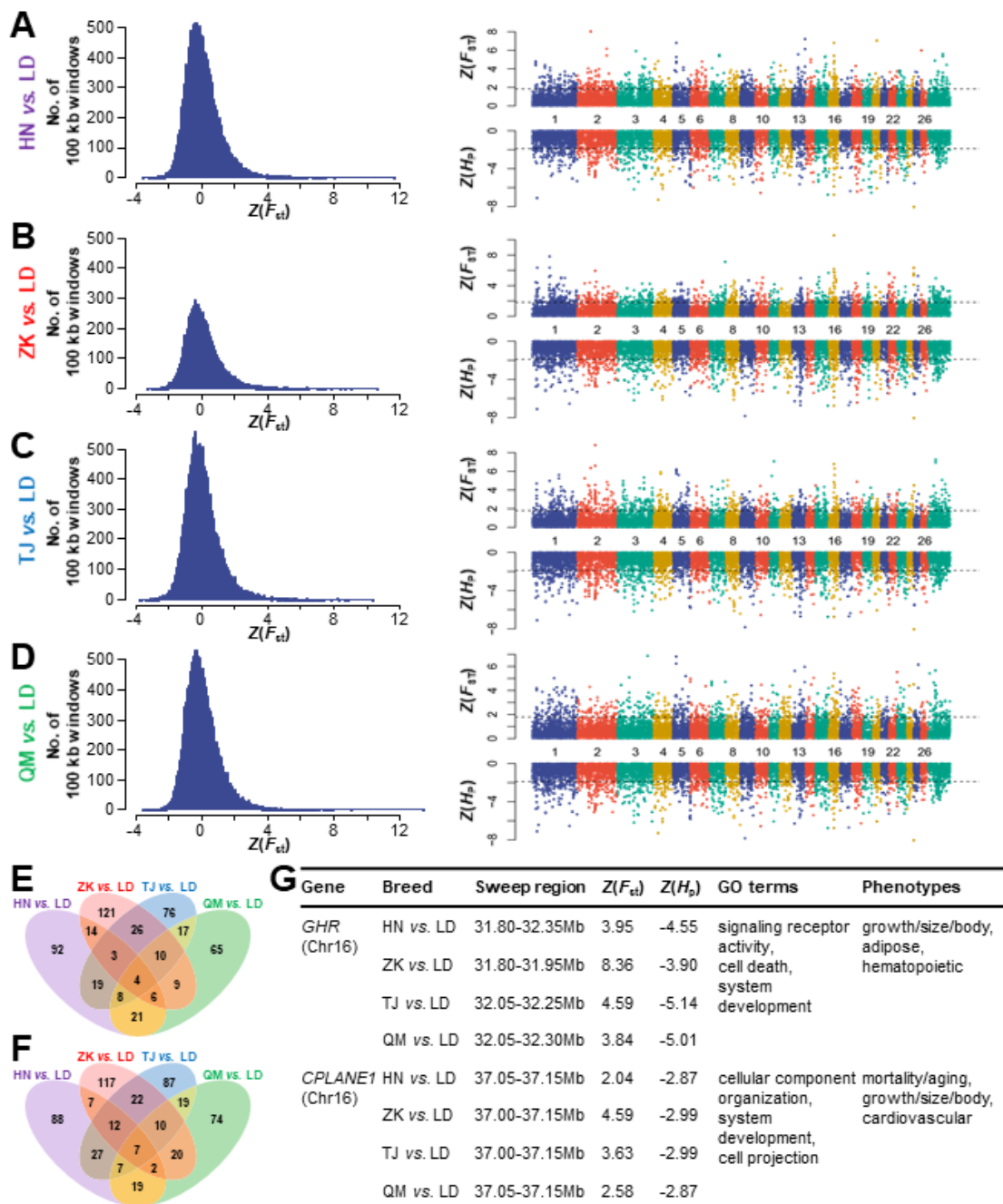
352

353 **Figure 2 Population genetics analyses of five Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai.**

354 (A-B) Venn diagram showing the shared SNPs (A) and indels (B) by five Tibetan sheep breeds. (C-

355 E) NJ phylogenetic tree (C), PCA plots (D) and population genetic structure (E) of five Tibetan

356 sheep breeds.



357

358 **Figure 3 Candidate regions associated with hypoxic adaptability compared with LD breed.**

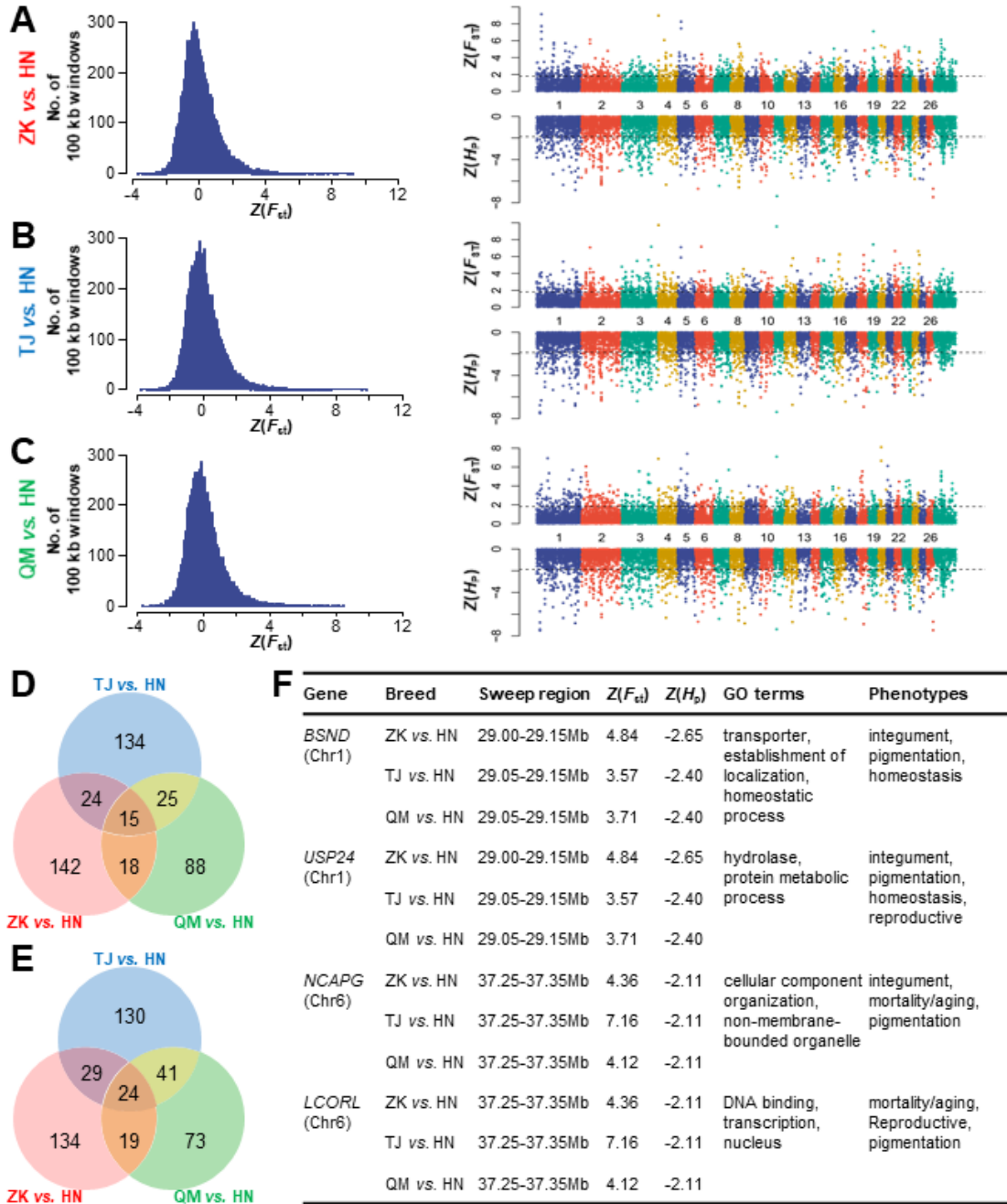
359 (A-D) Distribution of average  $Z(F_{ST})$  values for 100 kb windows and plots of  $Z(F_{ST})$  and  $Z(H_p)$

360 values along the whole genome in HN vs. LD (A), ZK vs. LD (B), TJ vs. LD (C) and QM vs. LD

361 (D). A dotted line indicates the cut-off used for extracting outliers. (E-F) Venn diagrams of

362 common selected regions (E) and corresponding genes (F) among different compares. (G)

363 Information of representative selective genes in HN, ZK, TJ and QM breeds related to hypoxic  
 364 adaptability.

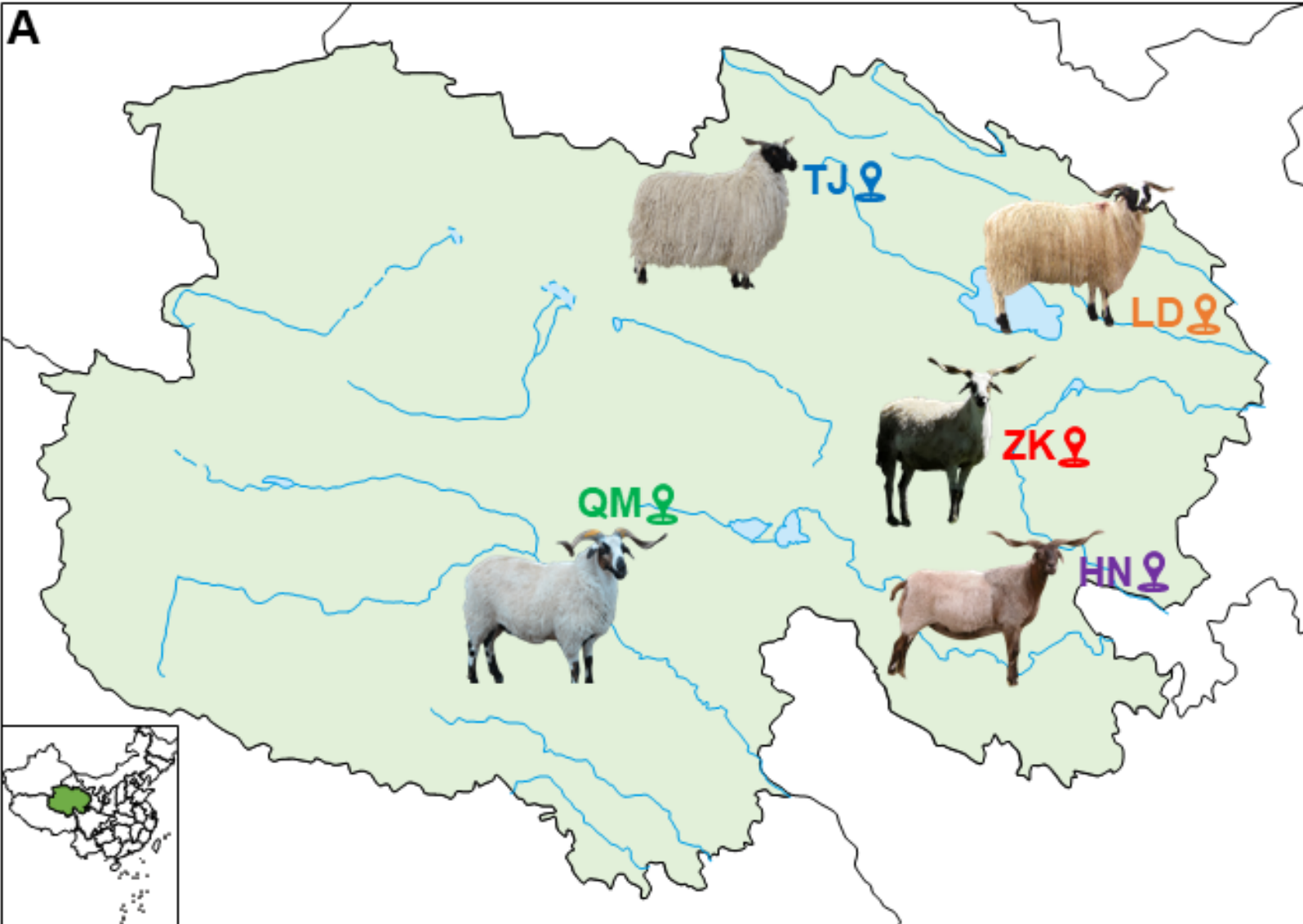


365

366 **Figure 4 Candidate regions associated with physical characteristic compared with HN breed.**

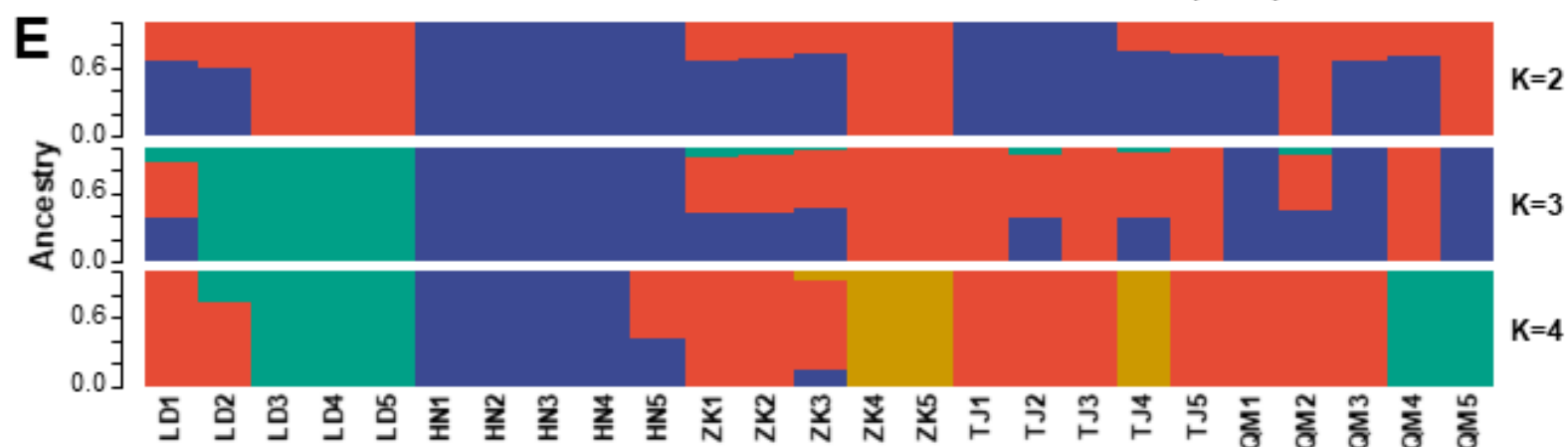
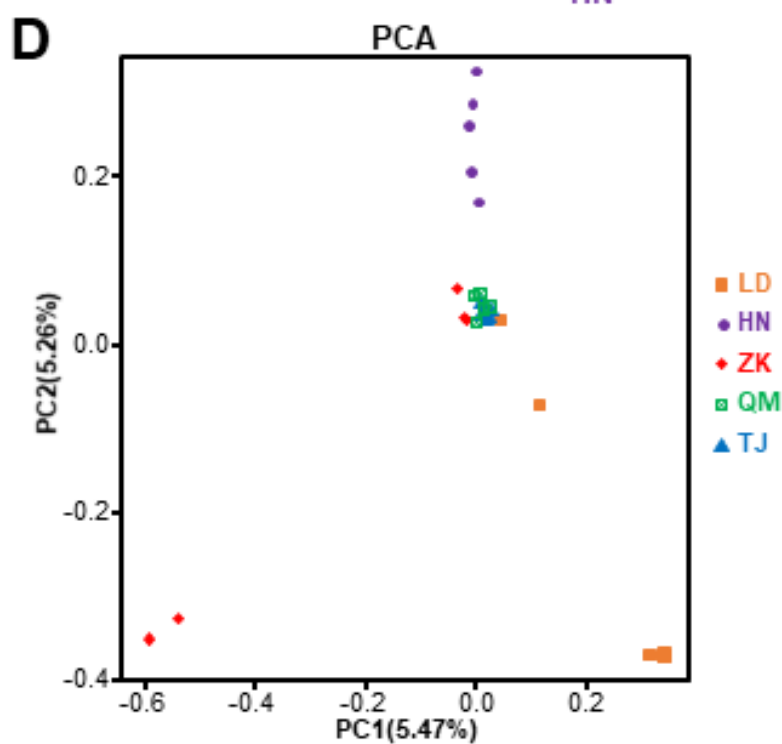
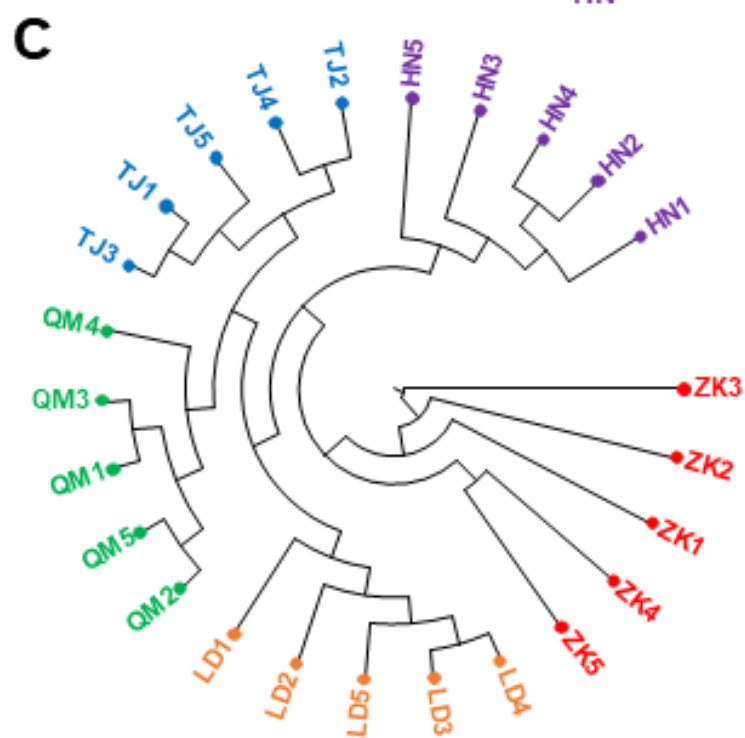
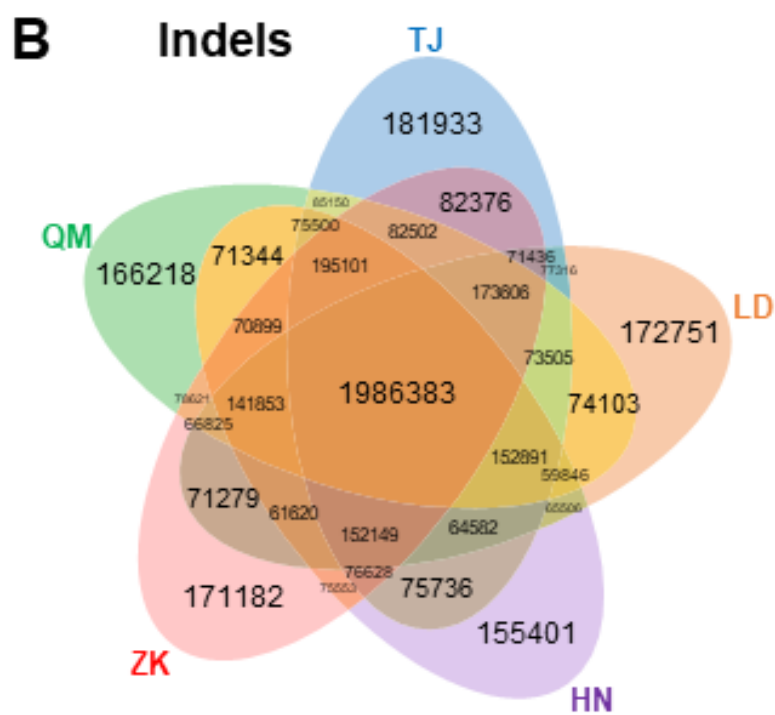
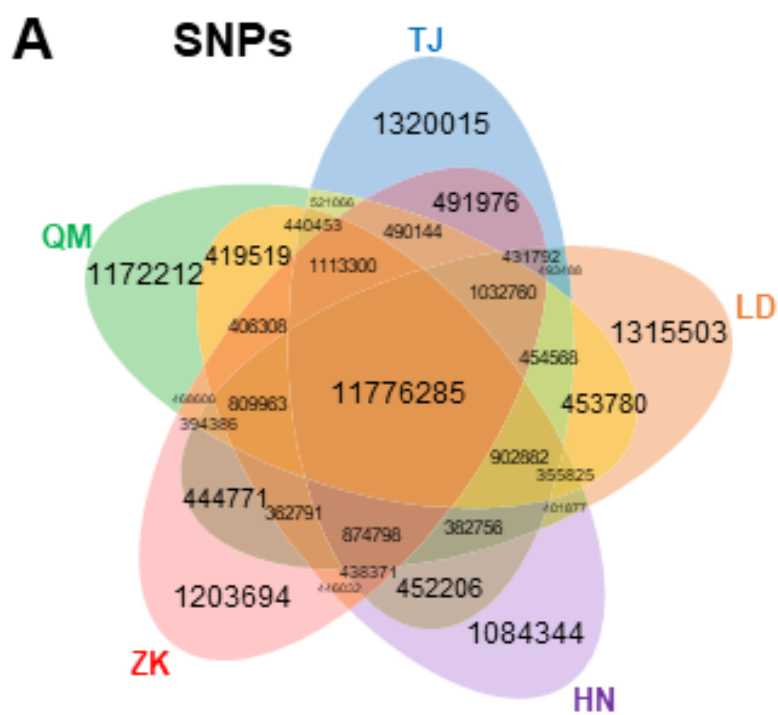
367 (A-C) Distribution of average  $Z(F_{ST})$  values for 100 kb windows and plots of  $Z(F_{ST})$  and  $Z(H_P)$   
 368 values along the whole genome in ZK vs. HN (A), TJ vs. HN (B) and QM vs. HN (C). A dotted line  
 369 indicates the cut-off used for extracting outliers. (D-E) Venn diagrams of common selected regions

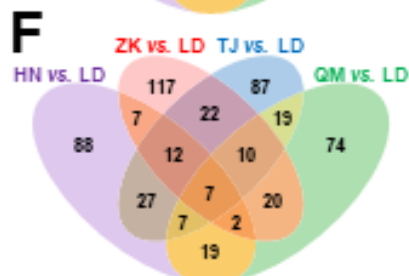
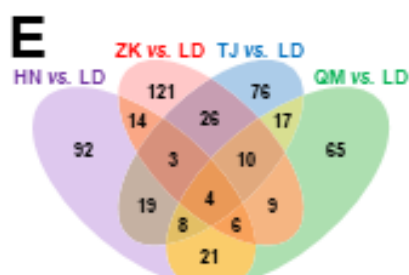
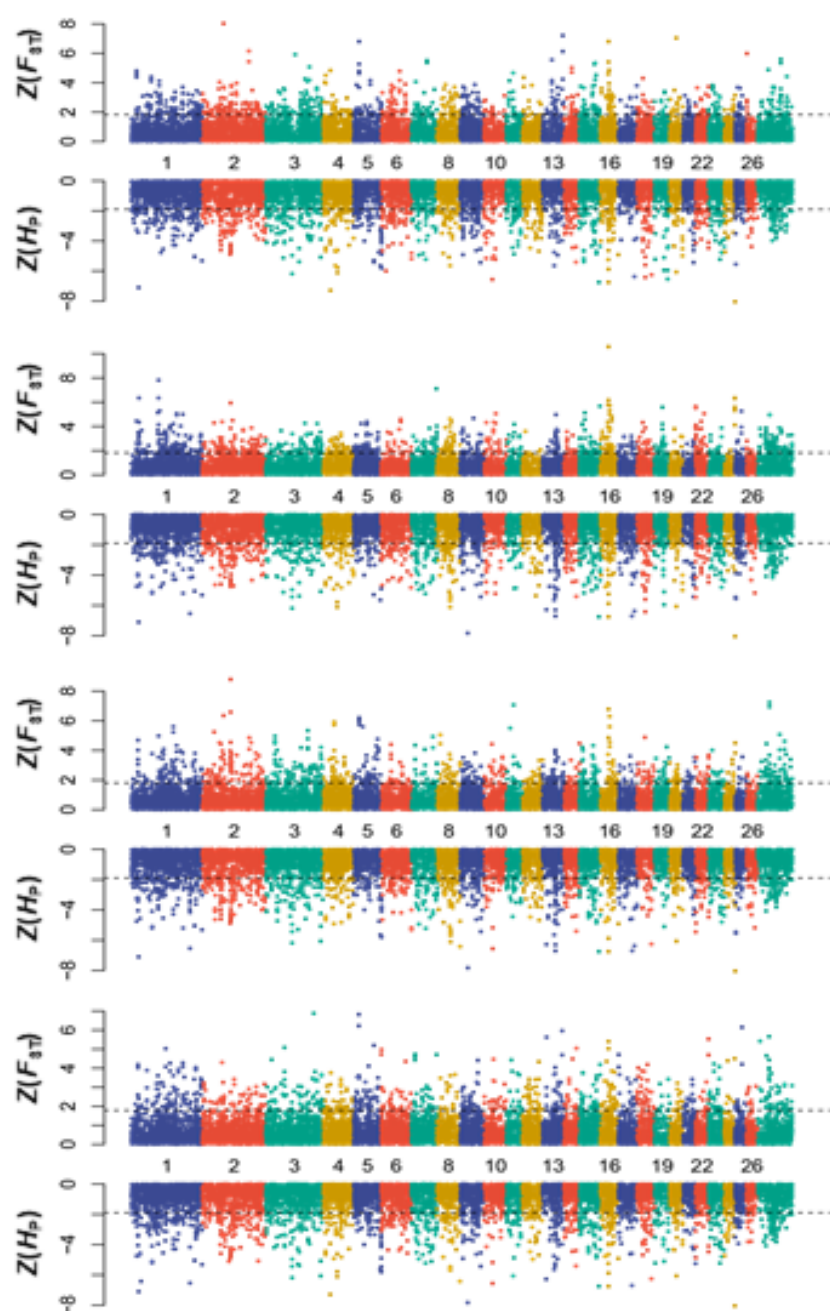
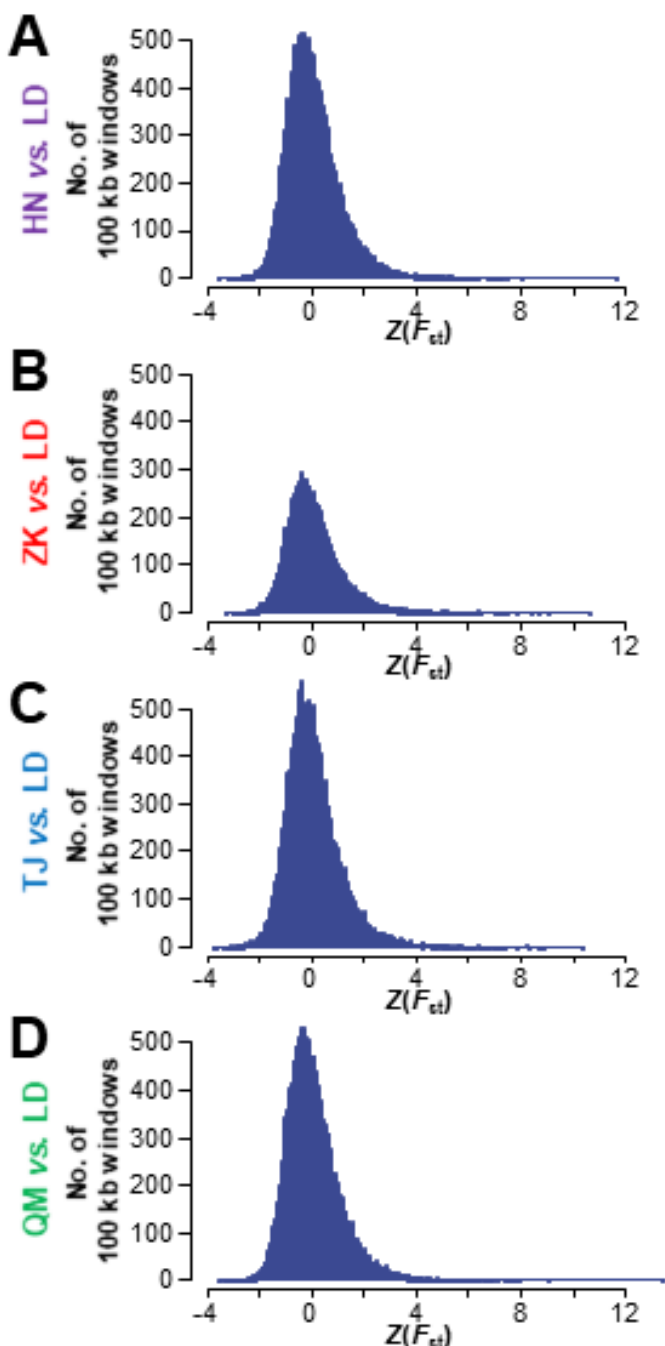
370 **(D)** and corresponding genes **(E)** among different compares. **(F)** Information of representative  
371 selective genes in ZK, TJ and QM breeds related to physical characteristic.



**B** Sample information of five indigenous Tibetan sheep breeds in Qinghai

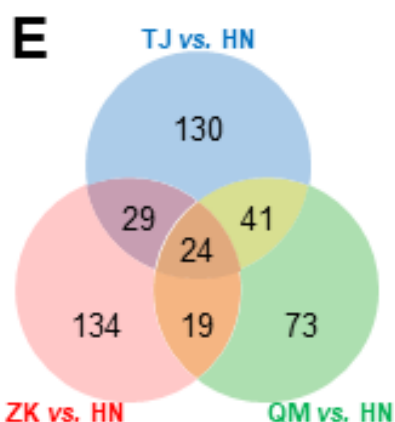
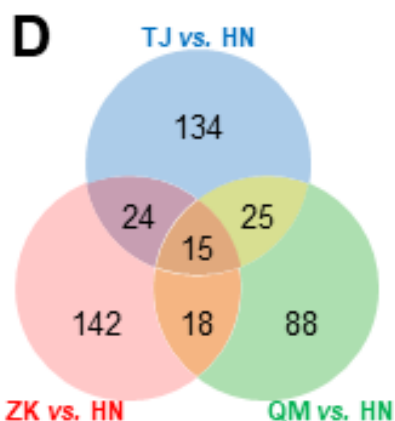
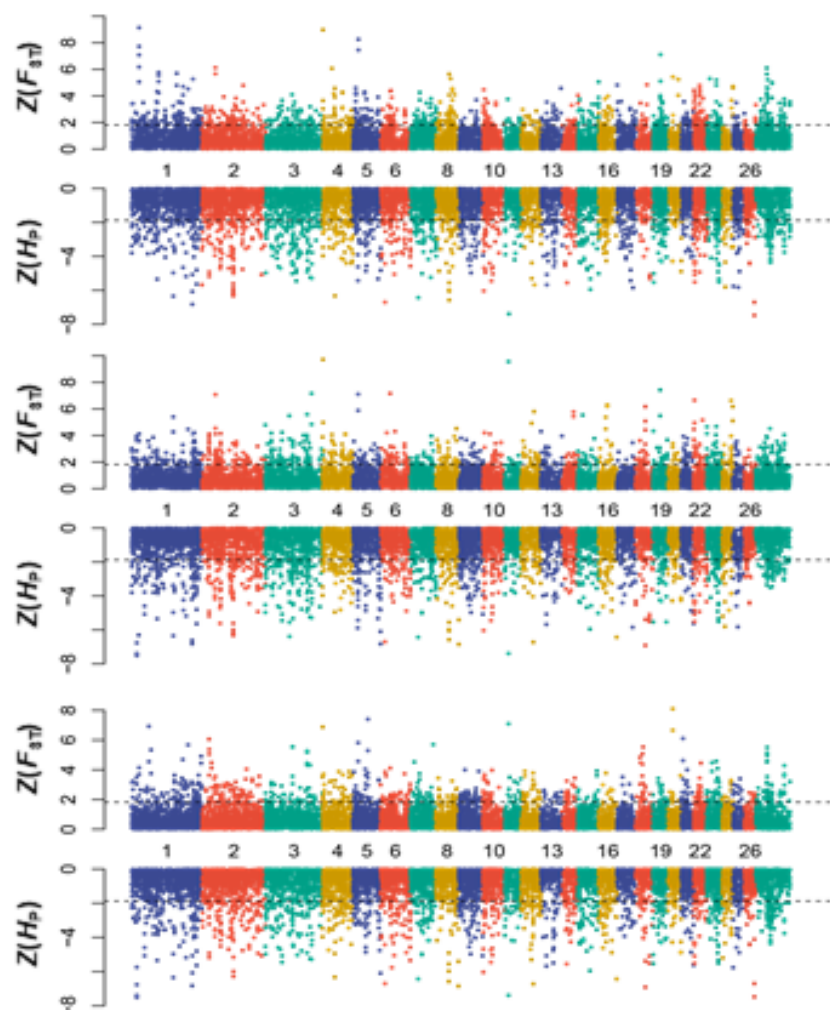
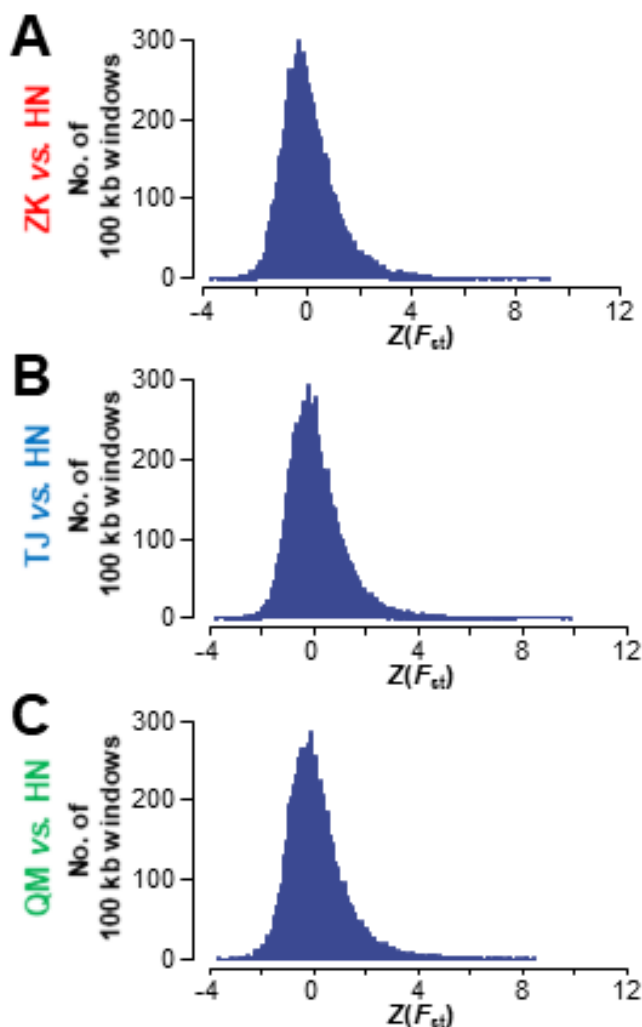
Breed	Code	Sampling location	Altitude (m)	Latitude (°N)	Longitude (°E)
Valley	LD	Ledu County, Haidong Prefecture	2685	36.58	102.51
Oula	HN	Henan Mongol Autonomous County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	3524	34.18	101.67
Zeku	ZK	Zeku County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	3419	35.39	100.95
Grassland	TJ	Tianjun County, Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	3875	37.87	98.81
Zhashijia	QM	Qumarlêb County, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	4452	35.03	96.37





**G**

Gene	Breed	Sweep region	$Z(F_{st})$	$Z(H_p)$	GO terms	Phenotypes
<i>GHR</i> (Chr16)	HN vs. LD	31.80-32.35Mb	3.95	-4.55	signaling receptor activity, cell death, system development	growth/size/body, adipose, hematopoietic
	ZK vs. LD	31.80-31.95Mb	8.36	-3.90		
	TJ vs. LD	32.05-32.25Mb	4.59	-5.14		
	QM vs. LD	32.05-32.30Mb	3.84	-5.01		
<i>CPLANE1</i> (Chr16)	HN vs. LD	37.05-37.15Mb	2.04	-2.87	cellular component organization, system development, cell projection	mortality/aging, growth/size/body, cardiovascular
	ZK vs. LD	37.00-37.15Mb	4.59	-2.99		
	TJ vs. LD	37.00-37.15Mb	3.63	-2.99		
	QM vs. LD	37.05-37.15Mb	2.58	-2.87		



**F**

Gene	Breed	Sweep region	$Z(F_{st})$	$Z(H_p)$	GO terms	Phenotypes
<i>BSND</i> (Chr1)	ZK vs. HN	29.00-29.15Mb	4.84	-2.65	transporter, establishment of localization, homeostatic process	integument, pigmentation, homeostasis
	TJ vs. HN	29.05-29.15Mb	3.57	-2.40		
	QM vs. HN	29.05-29.15Mb	3.71	-2.40		
<i>USP24</i> (Chr1)	ZK vs. HN	29.00-29.15Mb	4.84	-2.65	hydrolase, protein metabolic process	integument, pigmentation, homeostasis, reproductive
	TJ vs. HN	29.05-29.15Mb	3.57	-2.40		
	QM vs. HN	29.05-29.15Mb	3.71	-2.40		
<i>NCAPG</i> (Chr6)	ZK vs. HN	37.25-37.35Mb	4.36	-2.11	cellular component organization, non-membrane-bounded organelle	integument, mortality/aging, pigmentation
	TJ vs. HN	37.25-37.35Mb	7.16	-2.11		
	QM vs. HN	37.25-37.35Mb	4.12	-2.11		
<i>LCORL</i> (Chr6)	ZK vs. HN	37.25-37.35Mb	4.36	-2.11	DNA binding, transcription, nucleus	mortality/aging, Reproductive, pigmentation
	TJ vs. HN	37.25-37.35Mb	7.16	-2.11		
	QM vs. HN	37.25-37.35Mb	4.12	-2.11		



