

1 **Development of novel PCR primer sets for DNA metabarcoding of aquatic insects,**
2 **and the discovery of some cryptic species**

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20

21 **Abstract**

22 DNA barcoding is a powerful tool that provides rapid, accurate, and automatable species
23 identification by using standardized genetic region(s). It can be a powerful tool in various
24 fields of biology such as for revealing the existence of cryptic species and/or rare species
25 and in environmental science such as when monitoring river biota. Biodiversity reduction
26 in recent times has become one of the most serious environmental issues on a worldwide
27 scale. DNA barcoding techniques require the development of sets of universal PCR
28 primers for DNA metabarcoding. We tried to develop universal primer sets for the DNA
29 barcoding of all insect groups. In this study, we succeeded in designing not only universal
30 primer sets for DNA barcoding regions of almost all insects, which were designed to
31 include a hypervariable site between highly conserved sites, but also primer sets for
32 longer fragment sequences for registration in a database. We confirmed successful
33 amplification for 14 orders, 43 families, and 68 species with DNA barcoding in the
34 mtDNA 16S rRNA region, and for 13 orders, 42 families, and 66 species with DNA
35 barcoding in the mtDNA 12S rRNA region. A key feature is that the DNA fragments of
36 the DNA barcoding regions amplified by these primer sets are both short at about 200-
37 bp, and longer fragment sequences will increase the level of data registration in the DNA
38 database. Such resulting database enhancements will serve as a powerful tool for
39 increasingly accurate assessment of biodiversity and genetic diversity.

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42 **Keywords:** Biodiversity, DNA barcoding, eDNA, mtDNA mtDNA 12S rRNA, 16S
43 rRNA

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47 **Introduction**

48 About 8.7 million eukaryotic species are estimated to inhabit the Earth (Mora et al. 2011).
49 Insects are the largest and most diverse group of organisms on Earth, and about one
50 million species have been described (Grimaldi and Engel 2005; Tojo et al. 2017; Stork
51 2018). It is known that there are still many undescribed insect species, and new species
52 are still described on a daily basis. A more accurate understanding of species diversity
53 and elucidation of the mechanisms of diversity are important issues. On the other hand,
54 as many species have been evaluated to be threatened with extinction, environmental
55 conservation and species conservation efforts are also urgent tasks (Ceballos et al. 2015;
56 Dirzo et al. 2014). For effective conservation measures of a particular species, it is
57 important to appropriately assess and understand the current state of its biodiversity.

58 DNA barcoding is a system which provides rapid, accurate, and automatable species
59 identification by using a standardized genetic region(s) (Hebert and Gregory 2005). In
60 general, numerous insects are identified based on their morphological characteristics, but
61 this method requires specialist knowledge and it takes a lot of time to acquire enough
62 skills. Under such circumstances, DNA barcoding can rapidly identify a species by
63 sequencing a standardized short DNA fragment, even if the specimens are difficult to
64 identify by morphology (Hebert and Gregory 2005; Miya et al. 2015). In addition, DNA
65 barcoding even allows species identification of specimens that are not suitable for species
66 identification by means of traditional morphological classification, such as larval
67 specimens or parts of specimens (incomplete specimens). Since this method is easy and
68 fast, and its results are highly reproducible, it is possible use it for a wide range of species
69 to undertake long-term monitoring and gain an understanding of their biodiversity
70 (Hänfling et al. 2016; Uchida et al. 2020; Chucholl et al. 2021).

71 DNA barcoding is also an effective tool for identifying the existence of cryptic
72 species and/or rare species (Hebert et al. 2004). In recent years, it has been reported that
73 many cryptic species or undescribed species have been being discovered by conducting
74 DNA barcoding-based genetic analyses (Vuataz et al. 2013; Saitoh et al. 2015; Struck et
75 al. 2018; Takenaka and Tojo 2019; Yano et al. 2019; Ohnishi et al. 2021; Tojo et al. 2021).
76 Of course, DNA barcoding does not replace traditional taxonomy (Schindel 2005). There
77 is no doubt that highly experienced taxonomists are still required to scrutinize the
78 taxonomic descriptions of such assessed species. As an interesting example of the use of
79 DNA barcoding in recent studies, it was possible to understand past biodiversity by
80 detecting the DNA of a particular fish from hundreds of years ago collected from seafloor
81 sediments (Kuwae et al. 2020). Kudoh et al. (2020) identified a particular herbivorous
82 insect using leaves with external foliage feeding marks and environmental DNA (eDNA)
83 techniques. Moreover, for endangered species, DNA based non-invasive assessment of

84 biodiversity and corresponding genetic diversity is a breakthrough technique (Sekiya et
85 al. 2017; Ahn et al. 2020; Yamazaki et al. 2020). Such methods are also expected to be
86 applied to various other fields in addition to taxonomy.

87 For aquatic organisms, eDNA in aquatic environments has also facilitated the
88 detection of an aquatic vertebrate species (Miya et al. 2015). It can be a powerful tool in
89 the various fields of biology and environmental science such as in monitoring river biota.
90 Biodiversity reduction in recent times has become one of the most serious environmental
91 issues on a worldwide scale. In particular, freshwater organisms tend to account for a high
92 proportion of Red List species. Under such circumstances, it is necessary to monitor
93 biological fauna and flora to facilitate the conservation of biodiversity. For this purpose,
94 eDNA analysis offers a powerful molecular tool capable of non-invasively surveying
95 species richness within many ecosystems (Bohmann et al. 2014; Deiner et al. 2017;
96 Uchida et al. 2020).

97 These techniques require the development of sets of universal PCR primers for DNA
98 metabarcoding. For fish species, Miya et al. (2015) designed a set of universal PCR
99 primers (i.e., “MiFish”) for the metabarcoding of eDNA. Also, these primers have been
100 developed for various other animal taxa (e.g., “MiMammal” for mammals: Ushio et al.
101 2017; “MiBird” for birds: Ushio et al. 2018; “MiDeca” for crustaceans, especially
102 Decapoda: Komai et al. 2019). As for insects, which have the highest species diversity
103 on the Earth, the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) cytochrome c oxidase subunit I (COI)
104 region is frequently targeted using Folmer's universal primer set for DNA barcoding
105 (Folmer et al. 1994). However, it is not a suitable primer set for DNA metabarcoding, as
106 the protein-coding gene for amino acids of the mtDNA COI region is not highly
107 conserved (Deagle et al. 2014); its third codon in particular is detected with a high number
108 of polymorphisms. As such polymorphisms tend to be concentrated on the third base of
109 each codon, we considered that it was not suitable for the development of a highly
110 versatile primer set for amplification of short fragment sequences.

111 Many previous studies on non-insect groups using metabarcoding of eDNA have
112 used primer sets developed from within their ribosomal RNA region (Miya et al. 2015;
113 Ushio et al. 2017, 2018; Komai et al. 2019). Therefore, we also tried to design a universal
114 primer set suitable for DNA metabarcoding of insects based on the ribosomal RNA region
115 on the mtDNA.

116 The ideal characteristics of DNA fragments for a DNA barcoding region are listed
117 below (Valentini et al. 2009; Miya et al. 2015). It must be 1) possible to reliably identify
118 the specific insect species from it, so it needs to be completely the same or with only a
119 minimal difference from other individuals of the same species, but with clear differences
120 to the sequences of other species, 2) a homologous standardized region that is also able

121 to be used for amplification in all insect groups, 3) in a target region which has sufficient
122 phylogenetic information to easily assign undescribed species to a taxon (genus or family),
123 4) a highly preserved, reliable, robust fragment, 5) suitable for amplification of a short
124 fragment and contain sufficient sequence variations in order to correctly assign the insect
125 species.

126 Therefore, in this study, we tried to develop universal primer sets for DNA barcoding
127 of all insect groups, by the methods set out below and as in Miya et al. (2015). Firstly,
128 the primer sets developed in this study are applicable to all insect groups (especially
129 aquatic insects), and the region contained between these versatile primers includes
130 polymorphism-rich sites (hypervariable regions). Second, although the target region is a
131 short-length sequence (about 200 bp), it is able to reliably distinguish species, even
132 closely related species, and is also effective at capturing fragmented DNA such as
133 samples recovered from eDNA present in an aquatic environment. However, it takes a lot
134 of effort and is expensive to enrich a database that refers to the region amplified by using
135 our newly designed primer sets. In order to enhance the database more efficiently, we
136 designed versatile universal primer sets that amplify not only short fragments for DNA
137 barcoding, but also longer fragments including a targeted barcoding region that can also
138 be used for phylogenetic analyses. We consider that this primer set that can also amplify
139 longer fragments is an ideal tool for phylogenetic studies; it will therefore be adopted as
140 the optimal method and lead to the enhancement of databases that refer to eDNA.

141 We also examined whether the DNA region we selected for DNA metabarcoding
142 contained sufficient polymorphisms to be effective in species differentiation even
143 between closely related species, and also whether cryptic species could be readily
144 detected from it. In aquatic insects, it is known that closely related species are niche-
145 differentiated, each adapting to various river microhabitats (Ohgitani and Nakamura
146 2008; Ohgitani et al. 2021; Okamoto and Tojo 2021; Okamoto et al. 2021). Heptageniid
147 mayflies are a typical group exhibiting niche differentiation between closely related
148 species (Ohgitani and Nakamura 2008; Tojo 2010) and are therefore suitable for testing
149 the newly developed primers in this study. Previous studies using molecular markers have
150 reported cases of discovering undescribed species and/or cryptic species as a result of
151 phylogenetic analysis of species inhabiting a wide range and/or a variety of environments
152 (Ueda et al. 2012; Yano et al. 2019). Also, the study is based on the hypothesis that
153 *Epeorus aesculus* (Heptageniidae) also contains a cryptic species because *Epeorus*
154 *aesculus* Imanishi, 1934, inhabit in a relatively wide range of river flow (Ohgitani and
155 Nakamura 2008). From these viewpoints, we assessed and verified the detection ability
156 and sensitivity of this newly developed DNA metabarcoding primer set using heptageniid
157 mayflies, including *E. aesculus*.

158

159 **Materials and Methods**

160 **Development of primer sets**

161 In order to perform DNA metabarcoding, we focused on the mtDNA 16S rRNA and 12S
162 rRNA regions because these ribosomal RNA regions have been reported to provide
163 almost the same potential to correctly identify different individual species as the mtDNA
164 COI region, which is the standard DNA barcoding region (Collins et al. 2019). We
165 considered that these rRNA regions also have the advantage of having fewer intraspecific
166 polymorphisms than the COI region. Also, for previous studies of other vertebrates and
167 invertebrates, primer sets have been developed for DNA metabarcoding in the 16S rRNA
168 or 12S rRNA regions (Miya et al. 2015; Ushio et al. 2017, 2018; Komai et al. 2019). The
169 general DNA barcoding region for insects is the mtDNA COI region, but this could not
170 be as effective as the versatile primers sets in this study due to the presence of
171 polymorphisms every three bases.

172 In order to select a few suitable regions, whole or partial mitogenome sequences of
173 various insect groups, to increase versatility, were downloaded from GenBank: aquatic
174 insects [Ephemeroptera, Odonata, Plecoptera, each family of Hemiptera (Hemiptera s.
175 lat.: Belostomatidae, Nepidae, Gerridae, Corixidae), Corydalidae, Trichoptera, each
176 family of Coleoptera (Dytiscidae, Gyrinidae, Lampyridae, Dryopoidae), and each family
177 of Diptera (Simuliidae, Culicidae, Tipulidae)], and Apterygota (Diplura, Archaeognatha,
178 Zygentoma). Initially, we referred only to the sequences of aquatic insects because we
179 were focusing on the DNA barcoding of aquatic insects. However, since aquatic insects
180 include a wide range of insect groups, the results were used to search for a genetic region
181 that could be applied to almost all insect groups. All sequences were aligned using
182 MAFFT v7.222 (Katoh & Standley 2013) with the default set of parameters. The highly
183 versatile areas were graphically represented using MEGA 7.0.26 (Kumar et al. 2016) and
184 highly versatile regions were identified by means of visual inspection.

185 For the mtDNA 16S rRNA region, we searched for a highly versatile region using all
186 data sets of all insect groups downloaded. However, it was not possible to design a single
187 set for all insects in the highly versatile mtDNA 12S rRNA region for amplification;
188 therefore, we designed three specialized primer sets to amplify the mtDNA 12S rRNA
189 region for each of the three groups: 1) Hemimetabola, 2) Holometabola excluding
190 Trichoptera, and 3) Trichoptera. In designing these generic primers, we applied the
191 following recommendations made by Miya et al. (2015), paying attention to both ends of
192 each primer so that not only the complementarity on the 3'-end, but also the region with
193 high complementarity on the 5'-end were included.

194

195 **Testing the versatility of the newly developed primers**

196 To evaluate the versatility of the primers designed in this study, PCR amplification was
197 conducted using the total genomic DNA extracted and purified from a variety of insect
198 groups stored in the Tojo laboratory of Shinshu University, Japan (Table 1). Each total
199 genomic DNA sample was used to amplify DNA fragments [the mtDNA 16S rRNA and
200 12S rRNA regions] by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) with sets of primers designed in
201 this study. Regarding each reaction, 1.0 μ L of 10x Ex Taq buffer, 0.8 μ L dNTP Mixture
202 (included 25 mM MgCl₂), 0.05 μ L of 5U/ μ L Ex Taq polymerase (TAKARA, Shiga),
203 0.25 μ L of each primer, 1.0 μ L of extracted DNA in total 10 μ L. The PCR protocol for the
204 DNA barcoding region in the mtDNA 16S rRNA and 12S rRNA regions was: 94 °C for
205 1 min; 30 \times (94 °C for 1 min, 50 °C for 30 sec or 1min, 72 °C for 30 sec); 72 °C for 3 min.
206 The PCR protocol for the long fragment in the mtDNA 16S rRNA and 12S rRNA regions
207 was: 94 °C for 1 min; 30 \times (94 °C for 1 min, 51 °C for 30 sec, 74 °C for 1 min); 74 °C for
208 3 min. The PCR products were purified using ExoSAP-IT Express (Thermo Fisher
209 Scientific K.K., Tokyo, JP). Sequencing of purified DNA fragments was outsourced to
210 Eurofins Genomics (Tokyo, Japan). A BigDye Terminator Cycle Sequence Kit v3.1
211 (ABI) was used prior to sequencing with the ABI sequencer. Sequence data have been
212 submitted to the DNA data-bank of Japan (DDBJ database; Accession numbers are given
213 in Table 1). All sequence data were aligned using MAFFT v7.222 (Kato and Standley
214 2013). Phylogenetic analyses were performed by the Neighbor-Joining (NJ) method using
215 MEGA 7.0.26 (Kumar et al. 2016).

216

217 **Evaluation of interspecific variations and phylogenetic analysis**

218 To check for genetic variation between closely related species and within a species
219 (detection of cryptic species/lineages), this study focused on *Epeorus aesculus*
220 (Heptageniidae, Ephemeroptera). We used the total genomic DNA of 14 specimens of *E.*
221 *aesculus* Imanishi, 1934, from four localities including topotype specimens (i.e.,
222 specimens collected from the type locality: Kurobe-goro-zawa, Toyama, Toyama
223 Prefecture) (Table S1).

224 With respect to the outgroups, we added appropriate DNA sequence data on *Epeorus*
225 *dayongensis* (MK6422986, MT112895), *Epeorus herklotsi* (MG870104, NC_039612),
226 *Epeorus carinatus* (MT112896), and *Afronurus yixingensis* (MK642297). Each total
227 genomic DNA sample was used to amplify DNA fragments [the mtDNA 16S rRNA and
228 12S rRNA regions] by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) with sets of primers designed in
229 this study. The PCR products were purified using ExoSAP-IT Express (Thermo Fisher
230 Scientific K.K., Tokyo, JP). Sequencing of purified DNA fragments was outsourced to
231 Eurofins Genomics (Tokyo, Japan). A BigDye Terminator Cycle Sequence Kit v3.1

232 (ABI) was used prior to sequencing with the ABI sequencer. Sequence data have been
233 submitted to the DNA data-bank of Japan (DDBJ database; Accession numbers are given
234 in Table S1).

235 Sequence alignment and editing were performed using the same methods for each
236 gene separately using ATGC bundled with GENETYX ver. 15.2 (GENETYX
237 Corporation). All sequence data were aligned using MAFFT v7.222 (Katoh and Standley,
238 2013). Phylogenetic analyses were performed by Bayesian analysis using MrBayes v3.2.6
239 (Ronquist et al. 2012). The program Kakusan4 (Tanabe 2007) was used to select
240 appropriate models based on Schwarz's Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC; Schwarz,
241 1978). Best-fit substitution models were chosen as follows: HKY + G for the mtDNA 16S
242 rRNA; HKY + G for the mtDNA 12S rRNA regions. Bayesian MCMC simulations were
243 run for 10 million generations, sampling every 1000 generations. The output files were
244 checked for convergence after removing a 10% burn-in by examining Effective Sampling
245 Size (ESS > 200) using Tracer v1.6 (Rambaut et al. 2014). Then, this was visualized in
246 the resulting tree created by FigTree v1.3.1 (Rambaut 2009).

247

248

249 **Results and Discussion**

250 **Design of versatile primer sets for DNA metabarcoding**

251 We designed a primer set, "MtInsects-16S", for amplification of the DNA barcoding
252 regions in the mtDNA 16S rRNA region that is applicable to almost all insect groups. We
253 also designed a primer "AQdb-16S" that can be used to PCR-amplify longer DNA
254 fragments containing the DNA barcoding region and this is highly effective for
255 phylogenetic analyses. This primer set will be very effective and useful when registering
256 reference sequences. (Table 2; Fig. 1). The positional relationship of each primer is shown
257 in Figure S1.

258 On the other hand, in the mtDNA 12S rRNA region, we designed primer sets that
259 amplified the DNA barcoding region for each of three groups: 1) Hemimetabola, 2)
260 Holometabola excluding Trichoptera, and 3) Trichoptera. For Hemimetabola,
261 "MtInsects-12S_HemHol_F" and "MtInsects-12S_Hem_R" were used as the primer set
262 to amplify the DNA barcoding region. For Holometabola excluding Trichoptera,
263 "MtInsects-12S_HemHol_F" (the same as Hemimetabola) and "MtInsects-12S_Hol_R"
264 were used as the primer sets to amplify the DNA barcoding region. For Trichoptera,
265 "MtInsects-12S_cad_F" and "MtInsects-12S_cad_R" were used as the primer sets to
266 amplify the DNA barcoding region (Table 2; Fig. 1).

267 We also designed three primer sets to amplify longer fragments including each of
268 the three DNA barcoding regions of each group: 1) Hemimetabola, 2) Holometabola

269 excluding Trichoptera, and 3) Trichoptera. In Hemimetabola, “MtInsects-
270 12S_HemHol_F” (the same as DNA barcoding) and “AQdb-12S_Hem_R” were used as
271 a primer set; in Holometabola excluding Trichoptera, “MtInsects-12S_HemHol_F” (the
272 same as DNA barcoding) and “AQdb-12S_Hol_R”; were used as a primer set, and in
273 Trichoptera, “MtInsects-12S_cad_F” and “AQdb-12S_cad_R” were used as a primer set
274 (Table 2; Fig. 1). The positional relationship of each primer is shown in Figure S2.

275 The above primer information is shown in Table 2. All primers were designed to put
276 a hypervariable region between highly conserved regions (Fig. 2). It shows a comparison
277 of the polymorphisms of primer sites in all insects used in the search for primer sites in
278 this study (Table S2-13, Fig. 1). The concordance rate of each locus (the graph above)
279 and rate of each nucleic acid sequence (include indel) in the full length mtDNA 16S rRNA,
280 12S rRNA regions, and the COI region, which is the standard DNA barcoding region for
281 insects, are shown in Fig S3. These results show that the primer sets for DNA
282 metabarcoding developed in this study have been optimized to select the best sites
283 because the primer regions have a higher nucleic sequence concordance rate than other
284 loci, except for the regions with a lot of indels. Also, we suggested that the mtDNA COI
285 region, which is the standard DNA barcoding region for insects, is an unsuitable DNA
286 barcoding region to use for all insects because there was no region with a continuous high
287 concordance rate. For the mtDNA COI region, it was not possible to find regions with
288 high concordance rates, even at the mayfly order level.

289

290 **Versatility and nucleotide polymorphisms of the DNA metabarcoding regions**

291 In this study, using each of the applicable primer sets designed for PCR and Sanger
292 sequencing, we succeeded in the PCR amplification and sequencing of DNA barcoding
293 regions and longer fragments, including the respective DNA barcoding regions, for all
294 species used. We confirmed successful amplification for 14 orders, 43 families, and 68
295 species using DNA barcoding in the mtDNA 16S rRNA region, and for 13 orders, 42
296 families, and 66 species for DNA barcoding in the mtDNA 12S rRNA (Table 1). It is
297 necessary to confirm the methodology developed in this study in practice in future DNA
298 barcoding and/or DNA metabarcoding research (e.g., eDNA), but there is no doubt that
299 all the primers designed in this study have high versatility. Although PCR amplification
300 was successful in all examined species of the various insect groups tested, care should be
301 taken when using primer sets for the mtDNA 12S rRNA region in which T_m values differ
302 by about 10°C between the forward and reverse primers. In the mtDNA 12S rRNA region,
303 the GC nucleotides contained at the sites where the primers were designed was biased, so
304 the T_m values of these primers could not be made uniform (Fig. S3).

305 A phylogenetic cladogram was constructed to investigate whether species could
306 be identified using the DNA barcoding regions amplified using each primer set designed
307 in this study (Fig. 3). As a result, the species analyzed could be identified and did not in
308 any case share the same genotype among different species. In particular, as the DNA
309 barcoding regions selected using our newly designed primer sets retain sufficient
310 polymorphisms to identify each species, they can even differentiate between species of
311 the same genus (Fig. 3).

312 Our study detected only two exceptional cases of inadequate DNA barcoding, both
313 of which were due to species characteristics or for taxonomically problematic species.
314 The marker (primer set) of the mtDNA 16S rRNA region we designed could not
315 distinguish between two sub-species, *Hesperocorixa distanti hokkensis* and
316 *Hesperocorixa distanti distanti*. However, these subspecies cannot be differentiated even
317 using the sequence data of the mtDNA COI region (Yano et al. 2020). Therefore, these
318 species cannot be differentiated by genetic markers or are possibly not in fact
319 differentiated at the subspecies level. Regarding the second case, in the mtDNA 12S
320 rRNA region, no genetic differentiation was observable between *Ephemera japonica* and
321 *Ephemera strigata*. These species are sister species to each other, and are widely
322 distributed sympatrically in the Japanese Islands (Okamoto and Tojo 2021). We
323 confirmed interspecies introgression in areas where these two species had re-contacted
324 after speciation (Takenaka et al. unpublished data). Therefore, we do not think such cases
325 nullify the versatility of the primers we have developed.

326

327

328 **DNA barcoding method sufficiently sensitive to detect cryptic species**

329 It is known that there are cryptic species within the mayfly species, *Epeorus aesculus*
330 (Ogitani and Nakamura 2008; Tojo 2010). Therefore, this is a suitable species or species
331 group to assess the potential of the genetic region we proposed for phylogenetic analysis.
332 *Epeorus aesculus* were collected from multiple streams in the Japan Alps, including the
333 type locality, and genetic analyses were conducted using the primer sets developed in this
334 study to amplify longer fragments of their mtDNA 16S rRNA and 12S rRNA regions. As
335 a result, a clade (i.e., Clade B) was detected that was largely genetically differentiated
336 from another clade (i.e., Clade A: including the topotype specimens) collected at Kurobe-
337 goro-zawa, which is the type locality of *E. aesculus* (Fig. 4). This means that *E. aesculus*,
338 which has been treated as one species, has intraspecific large scale genetic differentiation,
339 i.e., a cryptic species. Although it is necessary to investigate more samples and their
340 morphology in detail, the results of this study adequately identified the existence of a
341 known cryptic species or an undescribed species.

342 Today, DNA barcoding is a powerful tool for assessing biodiversity (Struck et al.
343 2018; Mosa et al. 2019). Most importantly, the genetic region of longer fragments
344 amplified by the primer sets newly designed in this study contain a high number of
345 polymorphisms by which detection of even cryptic species is possible. In addition, our
346 development of the DNA barcoding methodology for short DNA fragments of about 200-
347 bp will undoubtedly bring about further significant innovation in DNA metabarcoding
348 methodology. Especially for aquatic insects, further development in the utilization of
349 eDNA is anticipated. Under such circumstances, we believe that this study constitutes a
350 methodological breakthrough that will underpin significant research advances.

351

352

353 **Conclusion**

354 In this study, we succeeded in developing universal primer sets and newly selected
355 optimal DNA barcoding regions. A key feature is that the DNA fragments amplified by
356 these primer sets are both short at about 200-bp. By developing these primer sets for DNA
357 barcoding or DNA metabarcoding that can be applied to almost all insect groups, it will
358 enable relatively easy long-term monitoring of insect species composition and species
359 diversity. In addition, it is also expected to facilitate the discovery of many undescribed
360 species and/or cryptic species that have been overlooked or are difficult to identify
361 morphologically.

362 We have established a barcoding region in the mtDNA ribosomal region; however,
363 it is possible that closely related species that could not be identified using ribosomal
364 regions will become identifiable in the future. For fish, it has been reported that the
365 universal primer “MiFish” for the metabarcoding primers cannot differentiate species or
366 amplify the barcoding region of some groups, so new primer sets focusing on specific
367 groups have been designed (genus *Anguilla*: Takeuchi et al. 2019; Salmonidae: Morita et
368 al. 2019; Cichlidae: Doble et al. 2019).

369 In the case of insects, if it is not possible to identify species using the ribosome DNA
370 regions developed in this study, it may be able to identify them by using the mtDNA COI
371 region, which is the traditional standard DNA barcoding region. In such cases, it would
372 be best to make effective use of the existing database. Also, we recommend using multiple
373 genetic regions to improve the accuracy and reliability of species identification.

374 Finally, we were able to design not only DNA barcoding region markers, but also primer
375 sets for longer fragment sequences for registration in the database. These primer sets that
376 can amplify longer fragments can also be used for phylogenetic analyses, which will
377 increase the level of data registration in the DNA database. In addition, such resulting

378 database enhancements will serve as a powerful tool for increasingly accurate assessment
379 of biodiversity and genetic diversity.

380

381

382 **Supplementary Information**

383 **Table S1.** List of specimens of *Epeorus* mayflies examined in this study, sequence types,
384 and the GenBank accession numbers

385

386 **Table S2.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-16S_F) and homologous
387 region of 557 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

388

389 **Table S3.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-16S_R) and homologous
390 region of 557 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

391

392 **Table S4.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (AQdb-16S_F) and homologous
393 region of 557 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

394

395 **Table S5.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (AQdb-16S_R) and homologous
396 region of 558 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

397

398 **Table S6.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-12S_HemHol_F) and
399 homologous region of 491 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

400

401 **Table S7.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-12S-Hem_R) and
402 homologous region of 265 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

403

404 **Table S8.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-12S_Hol_R) and
405 homologous region of 209 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

406

407 **Table S9.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-12S_cad_F) and
408 homologous region of 31 sequences of trichopteran insects used for development in this
409 study.

410

411 **Table S10.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (MtInsects-12S_cad_R) and
412 homologous region of 31 sequences of trichopteran insects used for development in this
413 study.

414

415 **Table S11.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (AQdb-12S_Hem_R) and
416 homologous region of 265 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

417

418 **Table S12.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (AQdb-12S_Hol_R) and
419 homologous region of 214 sequences of insects used for development in this study.

420

421 **Table S13.** Nucleotide sequences of universal primer (AQdb-12S_cad_R) and
422 homologous region of 31 sequences of trichopteran insects used for development in this
423 study.

424

425

426 **Figure S1.** Position of primers sets in the mtDNA 16S rRNA region. Reference sequence
427 data used the mtDNA 16S rRNA region in the complete mitochondrion genome of
428 *Ephemera orientalis* (NC_012645).

429

430 **Figure S2.** Position of primers sets in the mtDNA 12S rRNA region. Reference sequence
431 data used the mtDNA 12S rRNA region in the complete mitochondrion genome of
432 *Ephemera orientalis* (NC_012645).

433

434 **Figure S3.** Graph of the nucleotide concordance rate (0.0-1.0; above) and the proportion
435 of adenine (A: green), thymine (T: red), guanine (G: purple), cytosine (C: blue) and indel
436 (white) (0.0-1.0; below) in each nucleotide position in the full length of each of the
437 mtDNA 16S rRNA, 12S rRNA, and the COI regions. The nucleotide concordance rate of
438 each locus is shown by gray bars, and the region of each newly designed primer is shown
439 black bars.

440

441

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451

452

453 **Contributions**

454 M.T. designed, managed the study, and performed sample collection; M.T., K.Y. mainly
455 performed laboratory work and phylogenetic analyses; M.T., K.Y., T.S. designed Figures
456 and Tables; M.T., K.T. gathered funds; M.T., K.Y., and M.T., K.Y., T.S., K.T. wrote and
457 reviewed the manuscript.

458

459

460 **Ethics declarations**

461 The authors declare that they have no competing interests. The experiments comply with
462 the current laws of the country in which they were performed.

463

464

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637

638 **Figure Legends**

639 **Figure 1.** Concordance rate of primers site sequences. Gray bands show the sequences of
640 each primer, while under gray bands show stability of the sequence within compared taxa.

641

642 **Figure 2.** The barcoding region and the primer region were arranged using some of the
643 sequences used in the development of each primer. The DNA barcoding regions
644 suggested in this study in both the mtDNA 16S rRNA and 12S rRNA regions have high
645 polymorphism and versatility by placing a hypervariable region between regions with
646 highly conserved regions. Legends, green: “A” of nucleic acid sequence, red: “T” of
647 nucleic acid sequence, “G” of nucleic acid sequence, “C” of nucleic acid sequence.

648

649 **Figure 3.** A phylogenetic cladogram based on concatenated data of the mtDNA 16S
650 rRNA and the 12S rRNA regions to examine species identification sensitivity. The same
651 species are shown by solid lines, and the same genus is shown by dashed lines.

652

653 **Figure 4.** The estimated phylogenetic relationships (ML methods) based on the mtDNA
654 16S rRNA and 12S rRNA regions.

655

656

657

Table 1. List of specimens examined in this study, sequence types, and the GenBank accession numbers

Family	Species	Locality name	GPS*		The GenBank accession numbers				
			Latitude	Longitude	mtDNA 16S rRNA		mtDNA 12S rRNA		
			(N)	(E)	Barcoding	Database	Barcoding	Database	
Insecta									
Zygentoma									
Lepismatidae	<i>Thermobia domestica</i>	Zyg_1	Niimi laboratory strain	-	-	LC656038	-	-	-
Ephemeroptera									
Baetidae	<i>Cloeon dipterum</i>	Eph_1	Japan:Nara,Sango,Tatsunokita	34.59496	135.68168	LC656039	LC656119	LC656806	LC656864
Heptageniidae	<i>Bleptus fasciatus</i>	Eph_2	Japan:Nagano,Azumino,Horigane	36.30581	137.78880	LC656040	LC656120	LC656807	LC656865
	<i>Bleptus michinokuensis</i>	Eph_3	Japan: Fukushima,Fukushima,Tsuchiyuonsen	37.67972	140.24361	LC656041	LC656121	LC656808	LC656866
Isonychiidae	<i>Isonychia japonica</i>	Eph_4	Japan:Nagano,Ina,Nishiharuchika	35.82555	137.95057	LC656042	-	LC656809	LC656867
		Eph_5	Japan:Okayama,Maniwa,Kojiro	35.10613	133.64750	LC656043	LC656122	LC656810	LC656868
Isonychiidae	<i>Isonychia shima</i>	Eph_6	Japan:Miyagi,Osaki,Naruko-onsen	38.74012	140.74065	LC656044	LC656123	LC656811	LC656869
Ephemerellidae	<i>Drunella basalis</i>	Eph_7	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Azumi	36.24880	137.63759	LC656045	LC656124	LC656812	LC656870
Leptophlebiidae	<i>Paraleptophlebia japonica</i>	Eph_8	Japan:Kochi,Nakatosa,Kure	33.30871	133.19434	LC656046	LC656125	LC656813	LC656871
		Eph_9	Japan:Kochi,Muroto,Sakihama	33.46041	134.19602	LC656047	-	-	-
Polymitarcyidae	<i>Ephoron shigae</i>	Eph_10	Japan: Niigata, Ojija,Iwasawa	37.24570	138.80470	LC656048	LC656126	LC656814	LC656872
Potamanthidae	<i>Potamanthus formosus</i>	Eph_11	Japan:Oita,Oita,Shimohanda	33.16303	131.64708	LC656049	LC656127	LC656815	LC656873
Ephemeridae	<i>Ephemera japonica</i>	Eph_12	Japan:Kochi,Muroto,Sakihama	33.44480	134.21730	LC656050	LC656128	LC656816	LC656874
	<i>Ephemera strigata</i>	Eph_13	Japan:Aichi,Okazaki,Yomogyu	34.94153	137.26815	-	-	LC656817	LC656875

Siphonuridae	<i>Siphonurus</i> sp.	Eph_14	Japan:Nagano,Chikuma,Wakamiya	36.49517	138.13783	LC656051	LC656129	LC656818	LC656876	
Ameletidae	<i>Ameletus</i> sp.	Eph_15	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Azumi	36.24880	137.63759	LC656052	LC656130	LC656819	LC656877	
Dipteromimidae	<i>Dipteromimus tipuliformis</i>	Eph_16	Japan:Tokyo,Hinode,Oguno	35.77498	139.19145	LC656053	-	-	-	
		Eph_17	Japan:Kochi,Kitagawa,Kashiwagi	33.47795	134.07485	LC656054	LC656131	LC656820	-	
Odonata										
Aeshnidae	<i>Aeshna crenata</i>	Odo_1	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656055	-	-	-	
		Odo_2	Japan:Nagano,Azumino	-	-	LC656056	-	-	-	
		Odo_3	Japan:Nagano,Shiojiri	-	-	LC656057	-	-	-	
		<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	Odo_4	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656058	LC656132	LC656821	LC656878
Libellulidae	<i>Deiella phaon</i>	Odo_5	Japan:Okayama,Okayama	-	-	LC656059	-	-	-	
		Odo_6	Japan:Ibaraki,Kasama	-	-	LC656060	LC656133	LC656822	-	
Libellulidae	<i>Sympetrum depressiusculum</i>	Odo_7	Japan:Nagano	-	-	LC656061	LC656134	LC656823	LC656879	
		Odo_8	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656062	-	-	-	
		<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Odo_9	Japan:Nagan,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656063	LC656135	LC656824	LC656880
		<i>Sympetrum croceolum</i>	Odo_10	Japan:Nagan,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656064	LC656136	LC656825	LC656881
		<i>Sympetrum parvulum</i>	Odo_11	Japan:Nagan,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656065	LC656137	LC656826	LC656882
		<i>Pseudothemis zonata</i>	Odo_12	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656066	-	-	-
	Corduliidae	<i>Somatochlora</i> sp.	Odo_13	Japan:Nagan,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656067	LC656138	LC656827	LC656883
<i>Cordulia</i> sp.		Odo_14	Japan:Nagan,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656068	LC656139	LC656828	LC656884	
Megapodagrionidae	<i>Rhipidolestes amamiensis amamiensis</i>	Odo_15	Japan:Kagoshima,Amami	-	-	LC656069	LC656140	LC656829	LC656885	
	<i>Rhipidolestes amamiensis tokunoshimensis</i>	Odo_16	Japan:Kagoshima,Tokunoshima	-	-	LC656070	-	-	-	
	<i>Rhipidolestes shozoi</i>	Odo_17	Japan:Okinawa,Nago	-	-	LC656071	-	-	-	

Euphaeidae	<i>Euphaea yayeyamana</i>	Odo_18	Japan:Okinawa,Ishigaki	-	-	LC656072	-	-	-
	<i>Euphaea formosa</i>	Odo_19	Taiwan	-	-	LC656073	LC656141	LC656830	LC656886
Coenagrionidae	<i>Ischnura asiatica</i>	Odo_20	Japan:Nagano,Azumino	-	-	LC656074	LC656142	LC656831	LC656887
Plecoptera									
Scopuridae	<i>Scopura montana</i>	Ple_1	Japan:Fukushima,Tadami,Tadami	37.38463	139.27148	LC656075	LC656143	LC656832	LC656888
	<i>Scopura longa</i>	Ple_2	Japan:Niigata,Sado,Koda	38.20202	138.43325	LC656076	LC656144	LC656833	LC656889
	<i>Scopura quattuorhamulata</i>	Ple_3	Japan:Hokkaido,Hidaka,Mitsuiwa	42.79407	142.45286	LC656077	LC656145	-	-
Peltoperlidae	<i>Cryptoperla japonica</i>	Ple_4	Japan:Kochi,Muroto,Murotsu	33.34711	134.18271	LC656078	LC656146	LC656834	LC656890
		Ple_5	Japan:Niigata,Sado,Hayoshi	38.11197	138.39410	LC656079	LC656147	LC656835	LC656891
	<i>Yoraperla uenoi</i>	Ple_6	Japan:Niigata,Uonuma,Oshirakawa	-	-	LC656080	-	-	-
Pteronarcyidae	<i>Pteronarcys californica</i>	Ple_7	USA:Idaho,Twin Falls	42.33860	-114.28771	LC656081	LC656148	LC656836	LC656892
Chloroperlidae	<i>Sweltsa</i> sp.	Ple_8	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Azumi	36.24880	137.63759	-	LC656149	LC656837	LC656893
	Chloroperlidae Gen. sp.	Ple_9	Japan:Nagano	-	-	LC656082	-	-	-
Orthoptera									
Acrididae	<i>Chorthippus fallax</i>	Ort_1	Japan:Shizuoka,Fujinomiya,Awakura	-	-	LC656083	-	LC656838	LC656894
Dermaptera									
Labiduridae	<i>Labidura riparia</i>	Der_1	Niimi laboratory strain	-	-	LC656084	LC656150	LC656839	LC656895
Phasmatodea									
Phasmatidae	<i>Ramulus mikado</i>	Pha_1	Japan:Nagano,Azumino,Akashina	36.36432	137.94301	LC656085	LC656151	LC656840	LC656896
Mantodea									
Mantidae	<i>Tenodera sinensis</i>	Man_1	Japan:Nagano,Ueda,Sanada	36.45611	138.35000	LC656086	LC656152	LC656841	LC656897
Hemiptera									
Belostomatidae	<i>Appasus japonicus</i>	Hem_1	Japan:Nagano,Chino	-	-	LC656087	LC656153	LC656842	LC656898

	<i>Appasus major</i>	Hem_2	Japan:Aomori,Aomori	-	-	LC656088	LC656154	LC656843	LC656899
Nepidae	<i>Laccotrephes japonensis</i>	Hem_3	South Korea:Gyeongsangbuk	-	-	LC656089	LC656155	LC656844	LC656900
	<i>Nepa hoffmanni</i>	Hem_4	Japan:Wakayama,Hashimoto	-	-	LC656090	LC656156	LC656845	LC656901
		Hem_5	Japan:Aichi,Toyota	-	-	LC656091	-	-	-
		Hem_6	Japan:Wakayama,Hashimoto	-	-	LC656092	-	-	-
	<i>Ranatra chinensis</i>	Hem_7	Japan:Okinawa,Kume	-	-	LC656093	LC656157	LC656846	LC656902
Corixidae	<i>Hesperocorixa distanti hokkensis</i>	Hem_8	Japan:Fukushima,Shirakawa	-	-	LC656094	LC656158	LC656847	LC656903
	<i>Hesperocorixa distanti distanti</i>	Hem_9	Japan:Hokkaido,Ishikari	-	-	LC656095	LC656159	-	-
	<i>Hesperocorixa kolthoffi</i>	Hem_10	Japan:Fukuoka,Kitakyushu	-	-	LC656096	LC656160	-	-
Neuroptera									
Myrmeleontidae	<i>Hagenomyia micans</i>	Neu_1	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Shinagura	36.29241	137.99015	LC656097	LC656161	LC656848	LC656904
Mantispidae	<i>Mantispa japonica</i>	Neu_2	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Satoyamabe	36.24843	138.01241	LC656098	-	LC656849	LC656905
		Neu_3	Japan:Ishikawa,Nanao,Notojimagari	37.14830	136.98442	LC656099	-	-	-
Diptera									
Chironomidae	Chironomidae Gen. sp.	Dip_1	Japan:Gifu,Takayama,Okuhidaonsengonakao	36.23879	137.59551	LC656100	LC656162	LC656850	LC656906
	Chironomidae Gen. sp.	Dip_2	Japan:Gifu,Takayama,Okuhidaonsengonakao	36.23879	137.59551	LC656101	-	-	-
Coleoptera									
Dytiscidae	<i>Agabus japonicus</i>	Col_1	Japan:Niigata,Gosen	-	-	LC656102	LC656163	LC656851	LC656907
	<i>Cybister chinensis</i>	Col_2	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto	-	-	LC656103	LC656164	LC656852	LC656908
Lucanidae	<i>Dorcus montivagus</i>	Col_3	Japan:Niigata,Yuzawa,Mitsumata	-	-	LC656104	LC656165	LC656853	LC656909

Meloidae	<i>Meloe coarctatus</i>	Col_4	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Iriyamabe	-	-	LC656105	LC656166	LC656854	LC656910
	<i>Meloe</i> sp.	Col_5	Japan:Tochigi,Nikko,Chugushi	-	-	LC656106	-	-	-
		Col_6	Japan:Tochigi,Nikko,Chugushi	-	-	LC656107	-	-	-
Lepidoptera									
Pieridae	<i>Eurema hecabe</i>	Lep_1	Niimi laboratory strain	-	-	LC656108	LC656167	LC656855	LC656911
Trichoptera									
Stenopsychidae	<i>Stenopsyche marmorata</i>	Tri_1	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Mizukuma	36.26313	137.98338	LC656109	LC656168	LC656856	LC656912
	<i>Stenopsyche schmidi</i>	Tri_2	Japan:Kagoshima,Amami	-	-	LC656110	LC656169	LC656857	LC656913
Rhyacophilidae	<i>Rhyacophila</i> sp.	Tri_3	Japan:Nara,Kamikitayama	-	-	LC656111	LC656170	LC656858	LC656914
	<i>Rhyacophila verecunda</i>	Tri_4	Japan:Hyogo,Yabu,Oyachoyokoiki	-	-	LC656112	-	LC656859	LC656915
Limnephilidae	<i>Pseudostenophylax</i> sp.	Tri_5	Japan:Nagano,Takayama,Maki	36.64366	138.44631	LC656113	LC656171	LC656860	LC656916
Limnacentropodidae	<i>Limnacentropus insolitus</i>	Tri_6	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Misayama	36.27342	138.02556	LC656114	LC656172	LC656861	LC656917
Helicopsychidae	<i>Helicopsyche</i> sp.	Tri_7	Japan:Aichi,Okazaki,Ishihara	34.95250	137.39753	LC656115	LC656173	LC656862	LC656918
Hydroptilidae	<i>Palaeagapetus ovatus</i>	Tri_8	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Azumi	36.25544	137.63853	LC656116	LC656174	-	-
		Tri_9	Japan:Nagano,Matsumoto,Azumi	36.25545	137.63853	LC656117	-	-	-
Calamoceratidae	<i>Anisocentropus kawamurai</i>	Tri_10	Japan:Tokushima,Tokushima,Hata	33.97891	134.50219	LC656118	-	LC656863	LC656919

*For rare species, there were samples for which detailed points could not be shown.

Table 2. Information on the newly designed primer sets in this study

Gene	Primer name	Primer direction	Primer sequence (5'-3')	Target groups	purpose
mtDNA 16S rRNA	MtInsects-16S_F	Forward	GGACGAGAAGACCCTWTAGA	All	DNA barcoding
	MtInsects-16S_R	Reverse	ATCCAACATCGAGGTCGCAA	All	DNA barcoding
	AQdb-16S_F	Forward	TRACYGTRCAAAGGTAGC	All	Phylogeny and database
	AQdb-16S_R	Reverse	CCGGTYTAACTCARATCATGT	All	Phylogeny and database
mtDNA 12S rRNA	MtInsects-12S_HemHol_F	Forward	GTGCCAGCHDYCGGTTA	Hemimetabola & Holometabola	DNA barcoding & Phylogeny and database
	MtInsects-12S_Hem_R	Reverse	HATARDRGGGTMTCTAATCC	Hemimetabola	DNA barcoding
	MtInsects-12S_Hol_R	Reverse	TARTAGGTATCTAATCCTAG	Holometabola	DNA barcoding
	MtInsects-12S_cad_F	Forward	TTGKGCCAGCARTYCGGTWA	Trichoptera	DNA barcoding
	MtInsects-12S_cad_R	Reverse	WATARTRGRGTATCTAATYC	Trichoptera	DNA barcoding
	AQdb-12S_Hem_R	Reverse	CTACTWTGTTACGACTTRT	Hemimetabola	Phylogeny and database
	AQdb-12S_Hol_R	Reverse	TAMWYCTACTWTGTTACGACTT	Holometabola	Phylogeny and database
	AQdb-12S_cad_R	Reverse	ARYGACGGGCAATATGTRC	Trichoptera	Phylogeny and database

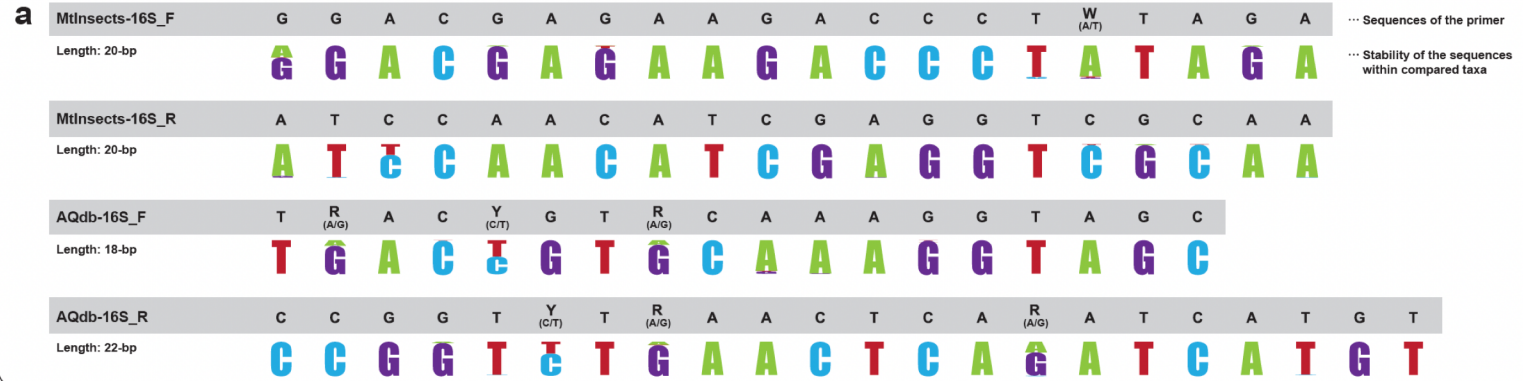


Figure 1

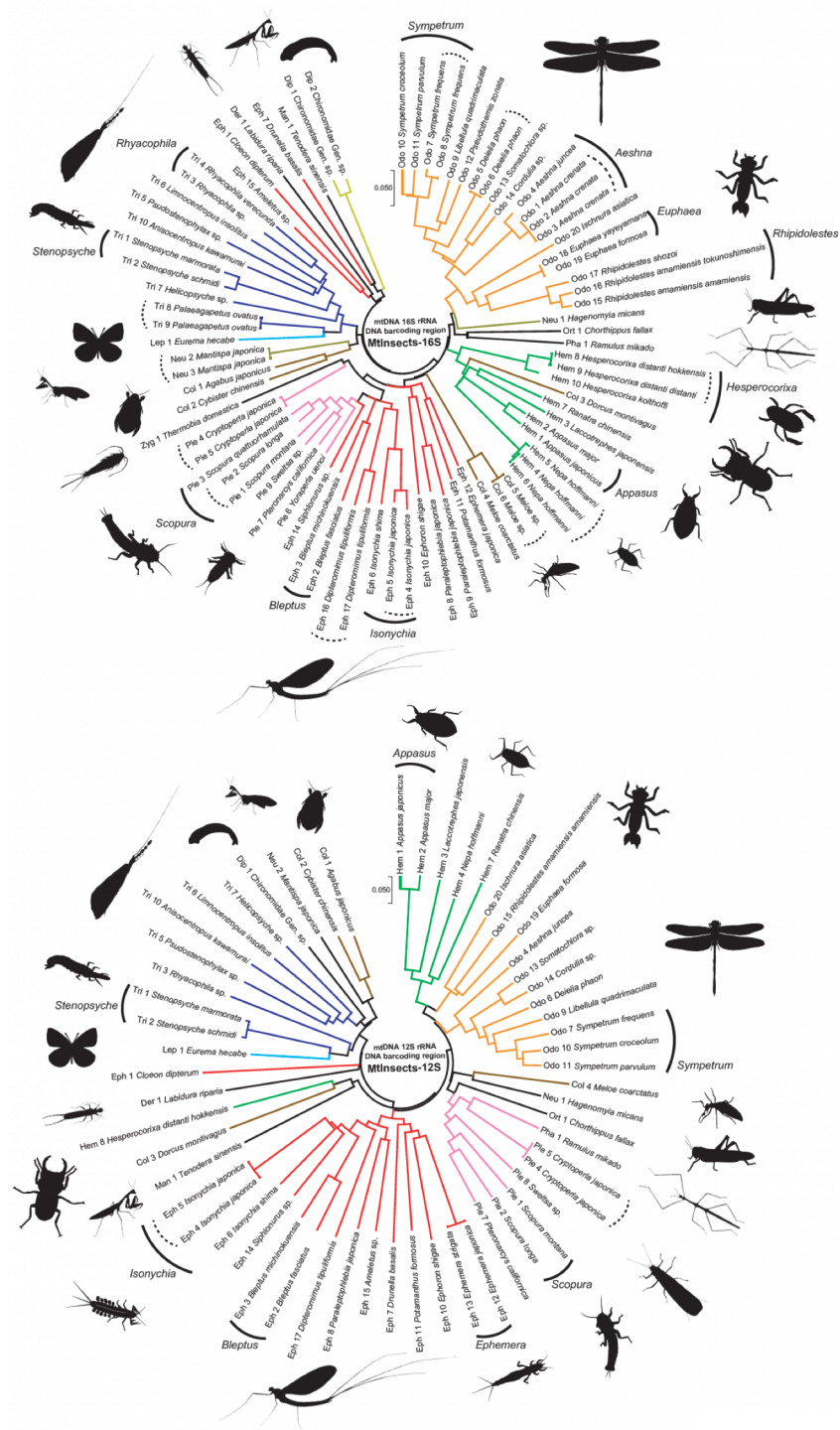


Figure 3

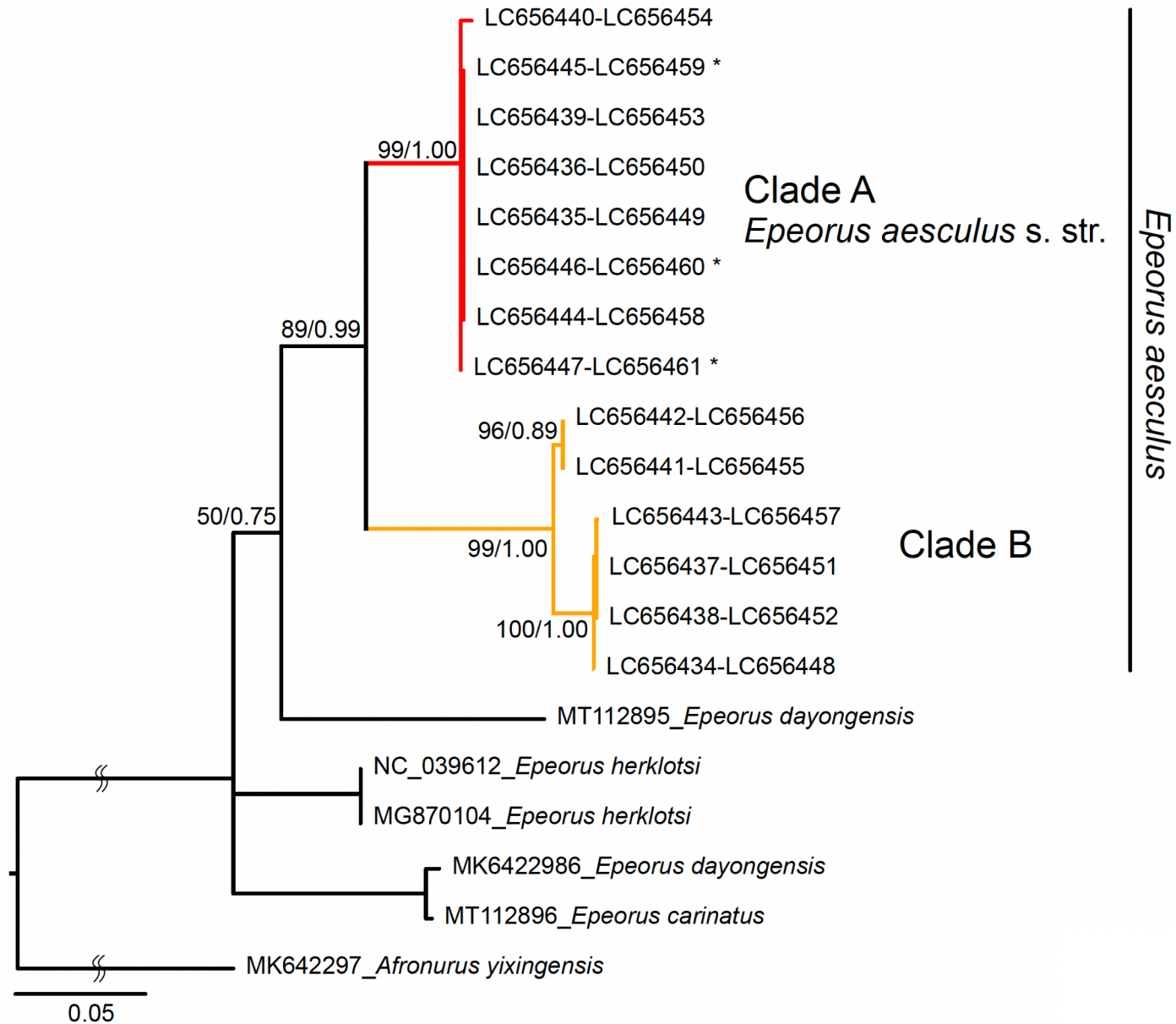


Figure 4