Using eDNA metabarcoding to establish targets for freshwater fish composition

following river restoration

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system

Abstract

Establishing realistic targets for fish community composition is needed to assess the

effectiveness of river restoration projects. We used environmental DNA (eDNA)

metabarcoding with MiFish primers to obtain estimates of fish community composition across 17 sites upstream, downstream and within a restoration mitigation project area (Kaihotsu–Kasumi) located in the Shigenobu River system, Ehime Prefecture, Japan. We evaluate the benefits of using eDNA to quickly, sensitively, and extensively gather data to establish existing fish community composition in the restoration area, as well as potential future short-term, medium-term, and long-term targets of species assemblages that could realistically emerge following dispersal into the project area from upstream and downstream populations. We compare results from eDNA metabarcoding with species lists obtained from contemporaneous capture surveys and historical information. Nonmetric multidimensional scaling plots of community composition obtained from eDNA surveys showed that the Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area and surrounding river reaches were divided into three clusters: upper reaches, middle and lower reaches, and estuarine reaches. The Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area sites were included in the group containing the middle and lower reaches of the inflow and outflow rivers that were near the restoration area. We detected a total of twenty-six species in this group, twenty-one native species and five non-native species. Therefore, these native species were considered suitable as short-term target species with high potential for dispersal into Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area. By comparison, only 14 species would have been selected as target species based on capture surveys and historical literature. One factor increasing the resolution of our eDNA surveys was our ability to identify the presence of intraspecific lineages of *Misgurnus anguillicaudatus* (Clades A and B), which were missed by the capture surveys. These results indicate that the eDNA metabarcoding method can provide more comprehensive and realistic short-term target species estimates than capture surveys, as well as provide higher resolution monitoring through intraspecific lineage detection.

Introduction

An imperative for aquatic biodiversity is to identify the organisms (hereafter "target species") that can benefit from restoration actions (Morimoto and Kameyama, 2001; Wiens and Hobbs 2015). When restoring connectivity to river habitats, most projects rely upon aquatic organisms naturally dispersing into restored areas from connected waters. Setting targets of potential species assemblages following restoration actions is needed to assess project success (Beechie et al. 2008, Roni et al. 2008). Such understanding also provides information about the likelihood of project success, because the pool of target species and their metapopulation structure is a primary determinant of how fish species respond to ecosystem restoration (Huxel and Hastings 1999; Stoll et al. 2013; Stoll et al. 2014). However, it can be difficult to objectively identify which species from nearby contributing populations could be part of the reassembled target species pool. One approach relies on past to present spatial distribution data of organisms in neighboring areas based on capture surveys, but there are several issues that limit the utility of this approach. If historical spatial distribution data are used, the risk of including large areas where target species cannot disperse into exists, as well as the risk of including extinct or extirpated species. If recent spatial distribution data are used, it may not be of the proper scope (especially in terms of spatial coverage and resolution) to estimate the full list of potential target species. In addition, there may be no available spatial distribution data for nearby areas.

Several methods exist to estimate the presence of species in aquatic habitats using environmental DNA (eDNA). Such methods are desirable because of their sensitivity and ability to detect cryptic or rare organisms, often at a lower cost than traditional capture surveys which in turn allows for increased spatial and temporal sampling effort (Jerde et al., 2013; Oka et al., 2021; Sakata et al., 2017; Sigsgaard et al., 2015; Yamamoto et al., 2017). Many studies have shown the usefulness of eDNA methods for determining the spatial distribution and diversity of fish species (e.g., Doi et al., 2021; Nakagawa et al., 2018; Oka et

al., 2021; Yamamoto et al., 2016, 2017) and that eDNA methods can be used to monitor rare

species with low densities and to provide greater sensitivity in monitoring after removing

artificial instream barriers (e.g., Duda et al., 2021; Muha et al., 2021; Sakata et al., 2017). In

particular, the eDNA metabarcoding method can simultaneously detect many fish species at

each location (e.g., Nakagawa et al., 2018; Yamamoto et al., 2017). Because the eDNA

metabarcoding method can easily obtain spatial distribution data for current fish species, it

can provide objective and realistic targets of target species that could assemble in restored

habitats.

Freshwater fishes are a major target species for restoration mitigation in rivers, but the

presence of cryptic non-native populations that cannot be distinguished by morphology is a

problem for biodiversity conservation (Mabuchi et al., 2008; Watanabe et al., 2017). eDNA is

a promising tool for detecting cryptic non-native populations (Uchii et al., 2016). MiFish

primers, commonly used in eDNA metabarcoding studies (Miya et al., 2015), can detect

fishes at the species level in most cases, but the resolution of intraspecific lineages is not well

discussed. The ability to distinguish between native and non-native lineages using eDNA

metabarcoding methods would be useful in target species selection for restoration and

conservation programs. Three lineages of *Misgurnus anguillicaudatus* in the Japanese

archipelago, which have been difficult to identify using morphological characteristics, are

now identifiable using phylogenetic methods: two native lineages (Clades A and C sensu

Koizumi et al., 2009) and a non-native lineage from China (Clade B sensu Koizumi et al.,

2009). The native *M. anguillicaudatus* is categorized as *near threatened* by the Ministry of

the Environment Government of Japan (2020). However, the non-native lineage has been

found to be distributed throughout the Japanese archipelago (Morishiuma et al., 2008;

Koizumi et al., 2009), which has a negative impact on the conservation of these native

lineages. Native and non-native lineages of *M. anguillicaudatus* can be distinguished in the

cytochrome *b* and control regions of mitochondrial DNA (Morishima et al., 2008; Koizumi et

al., 2009). Therefore, MiFish for the 12S rRNA region of mitochondrial DNA may also

distinguish them.

The Shigenobu River flows 36 km into the Seto Inland Sea, and wetlands with springs as

their source of water exist along the banks of the middle reaches of the river. In the middle

reaches of the Shigenobu River, including wetlands, good habitats (e.g., natural riverbeds and

riverbanks) have decreased or deteriorated due to urbanization and levee construction in

recent years (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Shikoku Regional

Development Bureau, 2008). Therefore, restoration mitigation was conducted by the Ministry

of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism from 2014 to 2019 for Kaihotsu–Kasumi, one

of the wetlands located in the middle reaches of the Shigenobu River, to restore the spring

area (Water intake through a water pipeline from 500m upstream) and improve its

connectivity with the mainstream (Removal of 0.5-1.0m levee and installation of

pool-and-weir fishway). On the Shigenobu River, there were records of capture surveys

conducted every five years from 1994 to 2021 (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport

and Tourism, http://www.nilim.go.jp/lab/fbg/ksnkankyo/index.html, accepted 1 April 2022),

as well as information on the distribution of endangered species (Ehime Prefecture, Japan,

2014). Given the regional species pool identified from prior capture surveys, a technical

working group advised by experts and discussions with local residents created a target species

list that could potentially assemble following restoration mitigation of Kaihotsu–Kasumi

(hereafter "target species by the working group", Table S1). The working group also

identified potential response times as short-term (restoration of about 3 years), medium-term

(restoration of about 20 years), and long-term (more than 20 years restoration) target species.

In addition, monitoring was conducted in 2020 using both capture and eDNA metabarcoding

surveys. The Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area of the Shigenobu River is a suitable location

for testing whether the application of eDNA methods provides additional benefits selecting

target species to track the effectiveness of restoration mitigation.

In this study, we examined the usefulness of eDNA metabarcoding to determine potential

short-term target species assemblages using eDNA metabarcoding monitoring data collected

from the Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area and neighboring habitats upstream and

downstream. Additionally, we examined whether intraspecific lineages of an endangered

native and non-native *M. anguillicaudatus* could be differentiated using DNA metabarcoding

methods using MiFish primers.

Methods

Water sampling

Water samples were collected from Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area (5 sites: K1−5), the

outflow river Shigenobu River (9 sites: S1−9), and the rivers (Uchi and Sagawa rivers)

flowing into the Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area (3 sites: U1−3) from October 26 to

October 27, 2020 (Fig. 1; Table S2). The basic water sampling protocol followed Minamoto et

al. (2021), with some modifications. Single-use plastic cups were used to collect water

samples, and 500 ml of surface water was collected per site. After water sampling, 500 μl of

10% benzalkonium chloride (BAC) was added immediately to inhibit DNA degradation

(Yamanaka et al., 2017). Each water sample was filtered in the field by repeatedly loading a

50 ml water by syringe with a 0.45 μm pore size Sterivex filter. At the end of filtration, the

Sterivex was plugged with sample water containing BAC to preserve eDNA.

As a field negative control (FNC), 500 ml of ultrapure water was filtered using the same

method as above after water sampling from three areas. After filtration, the samples were

transported to the laboratory at room temperature, and the Sterivex filters were stored in a –

20 °C freezer on October 28, 2020.

Fig. 1 Water sampling sites in the Shigenobu River system. Each circle symbol indicates sampling sites where eDNA samples were collected. Concurrent fish capture surveys were also conducted at the 5 sites (K1-K5) of the Kaihotsu-Kasumi restoration area. This altitude map was used with permission from the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (https://maps.gsi.go.jp/).

DNA extraction and amplification

DNA extraction was performed using the DNeasy Blood and Tissue Kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany), following Miya et al. (2016), with some modifications following Hirohara et al. (2021).

PCR was performed according to Miya et al. (2015), and the partial 12S rRNA region of mitochondrial DNA was amplified by the first PCR using the MiFish-6N-U-F/R primer pair. The 1st PCR was performed in a 12 μl reaction volume containing 0.24 μl of KOD Fx Neo (Toyobo, Osaka, Japan), 6 μl of 2 × Buffer for KOD Fx Neo, 2.4 μl of 2 mM dNTPs, 0.7 μl each of 5 μM MiFish-6N-U-F/R, and 2 μl of 10 × diluted template DNA. The thermal cycle profile was 94°C for 2 min; 40 cycles of 98°C for 10 s, 65°C for 30 s, and 68°C for 30 s; and 68°C for 5 min. Eight PCR replications were used for each sample and a PCR non-template control (PCR–NTC) using ultrapure water. The PCR amplicons were treated with ExoSAP-IT (ThermoFisher Scientific, Waltham, USA). The PCR amplicons from each of the eight replications were aggregated by 5 μl to a total of 40 μl, and 3.6 μl of ultrapure water and 0.4 μl of ExoSAP-IT were added per sample and treated at 37°C for 15 min and 80°C for 15 min. The second PCR was performed to add MiSeq adaptor sequences and eight bp index sequences (Hamady et al., 2008) to both amplicon ends. The total reaction volume of the 2nd PCR was 12 μl containing 0.24 μl of KOD Fx Neo, 6 μl of 2 × Buffer for KOD Fx Neo, 2.4 μl of 2 mM dNTP, 0.7 μl each of 5 μM MiFish-6N-U-F/R, 1 μl of ultrapure water, and 1 μl of the 1st PCR amplicons. The thermal cycle profile was 95°C for 3 min; 10 cycles of 98°C for 20 s, 65°C for 15 s, and 72°C for 15 s; and 72°C for 5 min. A 2% agarose gel electrophoresis was performed to confirm the amplification of the 2nd PCR amplicons.

Amplicon library and Miseq sequencing

The samples were aggregated in volumes ranging from 2 or 3 μl per sample, depending on the results of the electrophoresis (Table S3). AMPure XP (Beckman Coulter, Indianapolis IN,

USA) was added to 0.8 μl per 1 μl of each sample and treated according to the manual. DNA

was eluted with 60 μl of TE buffer. Then, 25 μl of the treated DNA solution was added to a

2% E-Gel Size Select (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA) to retrieve the target

band (ca. 370 bp). The collected DNA concentration was measured using a Qubit dsDNA HS

assay kit (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA). Finally, a bioanalyzer (Agilent

Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA) was used to confirm that PCR amplicons of the desired

size were obtained.

The libraries were sequenced using an Illumina MiSeq with a reagent kit v2 nano for 2 ×

150 bp PE (Illumina, San Diego, CA, USA). Raw reads were demultiplexed into each sample

by a preinstalled program in MiSeq, and the outputted fastq files were processed by an

in-house bioinformatic pipeline that uses USEARCH v11.0.667 (Edgar 2010) as its core

program as follows. 1) Pair-end reads were merged using the *fastq_mergepairs* function. 2)

Primer sequences were removed from both ends of the reads using *stripleft* and *stripright*

functions. 3) Short reads less than 100 bp and those with a Q-Score less than 30 were

removed using *fastq_minlen* and *fastq_truncqual* functions, respectively. 4) Identical reads

were dereplicated using the *fastx_uniques* function and treated as operational taxonomic units

(OTUs, i.e., zero-radius OTUs) with appending the sum of read numbers. 5) Denoising was

performed using the *unoise3* function, and the OTUs with read counts size less than 4 were

removed. Moreover, the OTUs that were judged as chimera were removed. 6) Taxonomic

identity was assigned to the OTUs as follows: The sequences of each OTU were used as

queries against a local sequence database at the threshold level of 0.95 using the

usearch_global function. The database was a compilation of mitochondrial 12S sequences of

fish downloaded from the National Center for Biotechnology Information website

(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/) on January 15, 2020. The hit sequences retrieved from the

database for each OTU were converted into phylogenic trees and visually checked to assign a

taxonomic identity for the focal OTU. The granularity of the taxonomic assignment to the

OTUs was mainly at the species level, but some OTUs were identified at the genus level

when a sequence cluster, including the query sequence and similar sequences at 0.95

threshold, included more than one species. Taxa that were unlikely to be distributed around

the Shigenobu River (mainland of the Japanese archipelago) based on known geographic

distribution information (Hosoya, 2019) were excluded (e.g., *Acanthopagrus sivicolus,*

Luciogobius_ryukyuensis, and *Tridentiger kuroiwae*). Nucleotide sequence data reported are

available in the DDBJ Sequenced Read Archive under the accession numbers DRR404794–

DRR404814.

220 Distinguishing between intraspecific lineages

For *M. anguillicaudatus*, we tried to distinguish between intraspecific lineages using the

following methods. First, a 124 bp 12S rRNA (MiFish) tree was constructed using the

sequence data output as *M. anguillicaudatus* OTU and *M. mizolepis* OTU. These OTUs were

clustered as similar sequences at 0.95 threshold from the local sequence database of fish

mitochondrial 12S sequences downloaded from NCBI. The names of these OTUs were named

in correspondence with the names of the sequences in the most closely related databases. In

addition, we used *Lefua echigonia*, a related species, as an outgroup (LC069488). Next, we

constructed a 1015 bp cyt *b* tree, referring to Koizumi et al. (2009), in which molecular

phylogenetic analyses of *M. anguillicaudatus* in Japan were conducted. For phylogenetic

analysis using cyt *b*, nucleotide sequence data of *M. anguillicaudatus* and *M. dabryanus*

registered in DDBJ, EMBL, and GenBank by Koizumi et al. (2009) were used: Clade A

(native lineage, AB473261, AB473312), Clade B (non-native lineage, AB473360, AB473346),

Clade C (native lineage, AB473381, AB473354, AB473382), and *M. dabryanus* (AB473408,

AY625701). The complete mitochondrial genome sequences included in the MiFish

phylogenetic tree (AP011291, AP017654, HM856629, KC509900, KC823274, MF579257,

KF771003, KJ939363, KM186181, KM186183, MG938589, MG938590, NC027448) were

also added to the cyt *b* phylogenetic tree. In addition, we used *L. echigonia* as an outgroup

(LC079000, Ito et al., 2019). Multiple alignments of nucleotide sequences were performed

using CLUSTAL W (Thompson et al., 1994). Phylogenetic analyses were conducted using the

neighbor-joining (NJ) method. The NJ analyses were performed using MEGA X (Kumar et al.,

2018), with the *p*-distance. The reliability of each internal branch was evaluated using a

bootstrap test with 1000 replicates.

Community analysis

The differences in community composition were visualized using nonmetric

multidimensional scaling (nMDS). Dissimilarity matrices were calculated based on the

Jaccard index using the vegdist function in the vegan package. A similarity profile analysis

(simprof function) in the clustsig package was used to identify the number of significant

cluster groups based on community similarity, and PERMANOVA was conducted using the

adonis function in the vegan package to test whether the cluster groups obtained significantly

differed from each other. All of the above statistics were conducted using R version 4.1.2 (R

Core Team 2021).

Capture survey

Capture surveys in Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area were conducted on August 27 and 28,

2020, and on October 26 and 27, 2020 at the same five sites as the eDNA sampling sites. The

capture survey was conducted using hand nets, net pots, and bottle traps, with permission

from Ehime Prefecture. The capture survey on October 26 was conducted after the eDNA

survey.

Results

Miseq sequencing

A total of 1,435,754 reads were obtained by Miseq run from 17 sampling sites, 3 FNCs,

and 1 PCR–NTC. Upon completion of the data processing pipeline, 314 OTUs were identified

as fish species comprising 817,797 reads. Species assignment automatically conducted by

Usearch was manually confirmed to check the independence of each OTU. If the

representative sequence of the focal OTU could not be identified at the species level, the OTU

was identified at the genus level. Five reads of *Opsariichthys platypus* were detected from an

FNC of the Shigenobu River; therefore, the equivalent read number was subtracted from the

O. platypus reads detected from the other sites in the Shigenobu River to account for possible

cross-contamination (Yamamoto et al., 2017). No read was detected from the PCR–NTC.

Fish species detected in the samples

We identified a total of 38 fish taxa from 8 orders and 16 families in our eDNA sampling.

This list excludes 6 fish taxa likely present because of human consumption and runoff of

eDNA into the sample location (i.e., Process Type I error; Darling and Mahon 2011):

Etrumeus teres, *Trachurus japonicus*, *Pseudocaranx dentex*, *Seriola quinqueradiata*, *Pagrus*

major, and *Pleurogrammus azonus*. However, peripheral freshwater fishes inhabiting

estuarine brackish or ephemeral freshwater areas (*Plotosus japonicus*, *Mugil cephalus*,

Plectorhinchus cinctus, *Acanthopagrus schlegelii*, *Omobranchus punctatus*, *Luciogobius*

pallidus, *Luciogobius* spp., *Acanthogobius flavimanus*, *Tridentiger trigonocephalus*,

Favonigobius gymnauchen, *Gymnogobius breunigii*, *Gymnogobius scrobiculatus*, *Takifugu*

spp.) were included in the results. A total of 36 species were detected at the 9 Shigenobu

River sites while 10 species were detected at the 3 Uchi and Sagawa River, and 19 species

were identified from the five Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area sites (Table S4).

MiFish and cyt *b* trees are shown in Fig. 2. In the MiFish tree, the sequences of *M.*

anguillicaudatus OTU and *M. mizolepis* OTU differed. The *M. anguillicaudatus* OTU

included three sequences, OTU 57, 259, and 283, and 1 mitogenome sequence (AP011291).

Fig. 2 Neighbor-joining trees of 124 bp 12S rRNA (MiFish) gene (left) and 1015 bp cytochrome *b* gene (right) sequences of *M. anguillicaudatus*. The *numbers at the nodes* indicate bootstrap probabilities. The complete mitochondrial genome sequences are indicated by gray boxes. The *parentheses* of the MiFish tree indicate sampling sites.

The *M. mizolepis* OTU included three sequences, OTU 40, 123, and 190, and 12

mitogenome sequences. In the cyt *b* tree, three intraspecific lineages of *M. anguillicaudatus*

(Clades A, B, and C), and *M. dabryanus* were distinguished with high bootstrap probability

(100%), similar to Koizumi et al. (2009) and Perdices et al. (2016). Clade C (native lineage)

contained one mitogenome sequence (AP011291), and Clade B (non-native lineage)

contained the other 12 mitogenome sequences. No mitogenome sequences were identified in

M. dabryanus or *M. anguillicaudatus* Clade A.

Clustering based on community analysis

The community analysis results showed that the regional species pool detected across the

17 study sites was significantly differentiated into three cluster groups (Fig. 3; $P < 0.001$).

Cluster 1 comprised three sites (S1−3) in the higher elevation portions (179−420 m) of the

Shigenobu River. These sites had low species richness, with an average of 3.7 species

detected per site (range 3−4) and a total of five taxa detected, including *Phoxinus oxycephalus*

jouyi, *Oncorhynchus* spp, and *Rhinogobius flumineus*. Cluster 2 included five sites in the

middle stream of the Shigenobu River (S4−8; elevation 7−100 m), and all three sites in the

Uchi and Sagawa River (U1−3). Furthermore, all five sites in the Kaihotsu–Kasumi

restoration area (K1−5) were also included in Cluster 2. Sites in cluster 2 had the highest

average species richness of 14.5 (range 6−17) and a total of 26 taxa detected, including

Pseudorasbora parva, *Gnathopogon elongatus*, *Oryzias latipes*, and *Odontobutis obscura*.

Fourteen of these taxa were unique to Cluster 2. For Cluster 2, 23 taxa were identified from

the Shigenobu River, 10 taxa from the Uchi and Sagawa River, and 19 taxa from Kaihotsu–

Kasumi restoration area. Of these, *Tanakia limbata* and *Takifugu* spp. were detected only in

Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area. Seven taxa, including *P. parva* and *Cobitis shikokuensis*,

were detected only in the Shigenobu, Uchi, and Sagawa rivers (Table 1).

Cluster 3 comprised only one site (S9) in the estuary of the Shigenobu River (elevation

Fig. 3 NMDS plot of fish species community compositions at different eDNA sampling sites. The community was significantly differentiated into three groups (PERMANOVA: $P < 0.001$). Site codes and text color follows map depicting sampling sites in the Shigenobu River (black), the Kaihotsu-Kasumi restoration area (red) and the Uchi and Sagawa Rivers (blue).

Table 1 Fish species in each cluster based on nMDS.

Cluster 1 comprised three sites (S1-3) in the higher elevation portions of the Shigenobu River. Cluster 2 included five sites in the middle stream of the Shigenobu River (S4-9), all five sited in the Kaihotsu-Kasumi restoration area (K1-5), and all three sites in the Uchi and Sagawa Rivers (U1-3). Cluster 3 comprised only one site (S9) in the estuary of the Shigenobu River.

Family	Species	Cluster 1 S1−3	Cluster 2 S4−8	Cluster 2 U1−3	Cluster 2 K1−5	Cluster 3 S9
Anguillidae	Anguilla japonica		+		+	+
Cyprinidae	Cyprinus carpio*		+	+	+	+
	Carassius spp.		+		+	
	Tanakia limbata*				+	
	Opsariichthys platypus	+	+	+	+	+
	Candidia temminckii	+	+	+	+	+
	Phoxinus oxycephalus jouyi	+	+	+	+	
	Pseudorasbora parva		+			
	Gnathopogon elongatus elongatus		+		+	
	Pseudogobio esocinus		+	+	+	+
Cobitidae	Misgurnus anguillicaudatus (Clade C)		+		+	
	Misgurnus anguillicaudatus (Clade B)*		+		+	
	Cobitis shikokuensis		+			
	Cobitis sp. BIWAE type A		+		+	
Siluridae	Silurus asotus		+		+	
Plotosidae	Plotosus japonicus					+
Plecoglossidae	Plecoglossus altivelis altivelis		+			+
Salmonidae	Oncorhynchus spp.	+	+			
Mugilidae	Mugil cephalus					+
Adrianichthyidae	Oryzias latipes		+		+	
Centrarchidae	Lepomis macrochirus*		+			
	Micropterus salmoides salmoides*			+		
Haemulidae	Plectorhinchus cinctus		+			
Sparidae	Acanthopagrus schlegelii					+
Blenniidae	Omobranchus punctatus					+
Odontobutidae	Odontobutis obscura		+	+	+	
Gobiidae	Luciogobius pallidus					+
	Luciogobius spp.					+
	Acanthogobius flavimanus					+
	Tridentiger spp.		+	+	+	+
	Tridentiger trigonocephalus					+
	Rhinogobius flumineus	+	+	+	+	
	Rhinogobius similis					+
	Rhinogobius spp.		+	+	+	+
	Favonigobius gymnauchen					+
	Gymnogobius breunigii					+
	Gymnogobius scrobiculatus					+
Tetraodontidae	Takifugu spp.				+	+
	Total	5	23	10	19	21

* non-native species

−0.8 m), where 21 taxa were detected, including *Plotosus japonicus*, *Mugil cephalus*, and

Acanthopagrus schlegelii. Twelve of these taxa were detected only in Cluster 3 (Table 1).

Fish species detected by capture surveys

The capture surveys in 2020 identified 15 taxa in Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area (Table

2). *C. shikokuensis*, *Plecoglossus altivelis altivelis*, and *Lepomis macrochirus* were identified

only in the capture surveys. Capture surveys failed to detect 5 taxa that were identified in

eDNA sampling: *Anguilla japonica*, *Tanakia limbata*, *Gnathopogon elongatus elongatus*,

Silurus asotus, and *Takifugu* spp. (Table 2). For *M. anguillicaudatus*, we were able to

distinguish them as Clades B and C by eDNA surveys but were unable to distinguish both

clades by capture surveys. *Rhinogobius nagoyae* and *Rhinogobius* sp. OR could be

distinguished by capture surveys, but not by eDNA surveys. Fish species that could not be

distinguished in one survey are shown in gray boxes in Table 2.

Table 2 Fish species confirmed by eDNA and capture surveys in Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area.

Gray boxes are showed fish species that could not be identified using one of the techniques.

Family	Species	eDNA	Capture
Anguillidae	*Anguilla japonica*	+	
Cyprinidae	*Cyprinus carpio**	+	+
	Carassius spp.	+	+
	Tanakia limbata*	+	
	Opsariichthys platypus	+	+
	Candidia temminckii	+	+
	Phoxinus oxycephalus jouyi	+	+
	Gnathopogon elongatus elongatus	+	
	Pseudogobio esocinus	+	+
Cobitidae	*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus* (Clade C)	+	+
	Misgurnus anguillicaudatus (Clade B)*	+	
	Cobitis shikokuensis		+
	Cobitis sp. BIWAE type A	+	+
Siluridae	*Silurus asotus*	+	
Plecoglossidae	*Plecoglossus altivelis altivelis*		+
Adrianichthyidae	*Oryzias latipes*	+	+
Centrarchidae	*Lepomis macrochirus**		+
Odontobutidae	*Odontobutis obscura*	+	+
Gobiidae	*Tridentiger* spp.	+	+
	Rhinogobius flumineus	+	+
	Rhinogobius nagoyae	+	+
	Rhinogobius sp. OR	+	+
Tetraodontidae	*Takifugu* spp.	+	
	Total	19	17

* non-native species

Discussion

We conducted eDNA sampling and metabarcoding analysis to assess the community composition of restored wetland areas and predict the target community composition based on beta diversity of fish throughout the adjacent riverscape. When compared with historical and contemporary field-based surveys of fish assemblages, results from metabarcoding analyses

were similar once known false positives (Process type I error from species purchased

commercially and brought into the surrounding communities for human food consumption)

were removed from the dataset. Additionally, for some taxa that were challenging to identify

to the species level in the field due using morphological characteristics, the genetic

approaches allowed a greater taxonomic resolution to identify the pool of fish species present

in the study area. Given the lower cost, similarity of target species lists compared with

traditional survey methods, and higher taxonomic resolution for cryptic taxa, our results

support the idea that eDNA techniques can be used to track fish communities following

habitat restoration actions (Duda et al. 2020; Muha et al. 2021) and other similar

environmental applications (e.g., DiBattista et al. 2022; Gold et al. 2021; Li et al. 2022).

All of the 38 taxa in 16 families of fishes detected by eDNA in this study were recorded in

previous capture surveys in the Shigenobu River (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure,

Transport and Tourism, http://www.nilim.go.jp/lab/fbg/ksnkankyo/index.html, accepted 1

April 2022). Therefore, the eDNA survey results were determined to be reasonable. The six

taxa which could not be identified to the species level by eDNA was due to low interspecific

variation in the MiFish region or introgression of mtDNA (e.g., *Carassius* spp.: Yamamoto et

al., 2010; *Rhinogobius* spp.: Yamasaki et al., 2015). Therefore, we identified the following

taxa by comparison with previous capture surveys (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure,

Transport and Tourism, http://www.nilim.go.jp/lab/fbg/ksnkankyo/index.html, accepted 1

April 2022): *Carassius* spp. as *Carassius* sp. (Silver crucian carp) or/and *Carassius buergeri*

(Giant golden crucian carp), *Oncorhynchus* spp. as *Oncorhynchus masou ishikawae* or/and

Oncorhynchus mykiss, *Luciogobius* spp. as *Luciogobius guttatus* or/and *Luciogobius martellii*,

Tridentiger spp. as *Tridentiger obscurus* or/and *Tridentiger brevispinis*, *Rhinogobius* spp. as

Rhinogobius nagoyae, *Rhinogobius fluviatilis*, *Rhinogobius* sp. OR or/and *Rhinogobius tyoni*,

and *Takifugu* spp. as *Takifugu niphobles* or/and *Takifugu poecilonotus*.

In this paper, to attempt to resolve intraspecific lineages using DNA metabarcoding

methods using MiFish primers, we attempted to identify intraspecific lineages in *M.*

anguillicaudatus. Based on the results of the Cyt *b* phylogenetic tree, including the

mitogenome sequence, *M. anguillicaudatus* OTU is the native lineage (Clade C) and *M.*

mizolepis OTU is the non-native lineage (Clade B). *M. anguillicaudatus* Clade B has also

been recorded from the Shigenobu River system as a non-native lineage by capture surveys

(Shimizu and Takagi, 2010). No matching sequences were found between *M.*

anguillicaudatus and *M. mizolepis* OTUs; thus, both OTUs are genetically distinct. However,

M. dabryanus (including *Paramisgurnus dabryanus* and *M. mizolepis*) and *M.*

anguillicaudatus sequences were mixed in the *M. mizolepis* OTU. Molecular phylogenetic

studies of mtDNA indicate that the *M. dabryanus* is not contained within *M. anguillicaudatus*

Clades A and B, and shows a phylogenetic position closely related to *M. anguillicaudatus*

Clade A and *M. nikolskyi* (Koizumi et al., 2009; Perdices et al., 2016). *M. anguillicaudatus*

and *M. dabryanus* can be difficult to identify in the field using morphological characteristics.

Therefore, the cause of the confusion of the sequence labeled *"M. dabryanus"* in *M.*

anguillicaudatus Clade B could be the misidentification of *M. anguillicaudatus* as *M.*

dabryanus. The sequence may also be a hybrid individual, since *M. anguillicaudatus* and *M.*

dabryanus can hybridize (Okada et al., 2020). Intentional exclusion of sequences derived

from misidentification and hybridization is difficult. Therefore, a phylogenetic tree that

includes mitogenomic sequences would help identify intraspecific lineages.

Native lineage (Clade C) and non-native lineage (Clade B) of *M. anguillicaudatus* were

identified from Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area using eDNA metabarcoding methods. The

successful identification of native and non-native lineages of *M. anguillicaudatus* using

eDNA is one of the advantages of introducing eDNA in monitoring. Future studies on the

feasibility of identifying intraspecific lineages for a larger number of fishes will contribute to

improving the resolution of monitoring using the eDNA metabarcoding method.

Multivariate analyses showed that the fish community structure of the Shigenobu River

was significantly divided into three clusters (Clusters 1–3). Each cluster has an upstream

(Cluster 1), middle and downstream (Cluster 2), and estuarine (Cluster 3) fish species

assemblage, suggesting that the fish community assembles across a gradient of river

environmental conditions (e.g., salinity, elevation, and gradient). The communities in

Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area (K1–5) were included in Cluster 2, which showed a

community structure associated with other mainstem sites located in the middle and lower

reaches of the river. Thus, the fish community at Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area more

closely resembles the middle and lower reaches of the Shigenobu River, which are

geographically close to each other. Of the 26 taxa of fish detected at the Cluster 2 sites, 17

were common between Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area and neighboring waters (S4–8 and

U1–3). The similarity between the fish communities in Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area and

neighboring waters after connectivity was restored suggests that the natural dispersal of fishes

inhabiting Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area from neighboring waters led to homogenization

between these reconnected habitats (Rahal 2007). Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area is

considered to provide a good fish habitat due to its high connectivity with neighboring waters.

428   Nineteen taxa were detected by eDNA in Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area, five of which

were not detected in the capture surveys conducted during the same period. Fish surveys

using eDNA tend to detect more species than capture surveys (e.g., Oka et al., 2021), and this

study showed similar results. *Plecoglossus altivelis altivelis*, *C. shikokuensis*, and *L.*

macrochirus were detected only in the capture surveys. Although optimization of eDNA

metabarcoding methods is necessary to maximize detection of fish communities, a

combination of capture surveys with eDNA approaches may be effective for a more accurate

understanding of the fish community.

436   The fish community structure of Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area sample sites resembled

the middle and lower reaches of the river (Fig. 3). Therefore, 21 taxa could be selected as

short-term target species for Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area, excluding non-native species

(*Cyprinus carpio*, *Tanakia limbata*, *M. anguillicaudatus* non-native lineage, *L. macrochirus*,

Micropterus salmoides; Hosoya, 2019) out of the 26 taxa included in Cluster 2. The target

species not identified by eDNA survey in Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area were

Pseudorasbora parva, *Oncorhynchus* spp., and *Plectorhinchus cinctus*. *P. parva* is

categorized as Near Threatened by Ehime Prefecture, Japan (2014). The slow flow of

Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area is considered a suitable habitat and breeding environment

for *P. parva*. In the future, efforts should be made to facilitate the natural dispersal of *P. parva*

into the restored Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area reach. *Oncorhynchus* spp. and *P. cinctus*

are found in the upper reaches of rivers and estuaries, respectively (Hosoya, 2019), therefore

Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area located in the middle reaches of rivers may not be suitable

habitat for both species. These two species may not be appropriate as short-term target species

for Kaihotsu–Kasumi restoration area, further studies of selection methods, including fish

preference by habitat, will bring us closer to a more realistic selection of short-term target

species.

In this paper, we identified list of short-term target species expected to reoccupy the

Kaihotsu-Kasumi reach after restoration mitigation using the eDNA metabarcoding method.

As a result, 21 short-term target species were selected. A similar exercise of developing a

target species list was conducted by a working group using traditional capture-based survey

methods, with 9, 5, and 2 species identified as short-term (within 3 years), medium-term

(within 20 years), and long-term (>20 years), respectively (Table S1). Of these, 14 of the

short- and medium-term target species were among the short-term target species detected by

eDNA (this study). Seven new species were included in the short-term target species

established by eDNA. Therefore, the decision of short-term target species using the eDNA

metabarcoding method is more effective than capture surveys in selecting fish species that are

expected to recover in the short term in a more comprehensive manner, probably because

eDNA is more sensitive to the current fish community than capture surveys.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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