Title: Spatial variation in population genomic responses to over a century of anthropogenic change

within a tidal marsh songbird

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ABSTRACT: Human activities have wide-ranging impacts on natural populations, but our ability

to pinpoint population responses to these activities is often limited to the analysis of populations

studied well after the fact. Museum collections can provide critical baseline data on patterns of

genetic diversity, connectivity, and population structure prior to the onset of human perturbation.

Here, we leverage a spatially-replicated time series of specimens to document population genomic

responses to the destruction of ~90% of coastal habitats occupied by the Savannah sparrow

(*Passerculus sandwichensis*) in California. We sequenced 219 sparrows collected from 1889-2017

across the state of California using an exome capture approach. Spatial-temporal analyses of

genetic diversity indicate that sparrow populations from southern California historically exhibited

lower levels of genetic diversity and have also experienced the most significant temporal declines

in genetic diversity. In contrast, birds from the San Francisco Bay area exhibit near constant levels

of genetic diversity, despite experiencing similar levels of habitat loss. Stable genetic diversity in

Bay Area birds may stem from increased levels of gene flow from interior California populations.

While greater levels of gene flow may prevent declines in genetic diversity, we also find that

immigration from inland freshwater-adapted populations into tidal marsh populations has led to

the erosion of divergence in loci associated with tidal marsh adaptation. Although gene flow can

play an important role in mitigating inbreeding depression, our results point to the potential

negative consequences of gene flow across environmental gradients on locally adapted

populations.

KEYWORDS: conservation genomics; tidal marshes; Passerellidae; anthropogenic change;

museum collections, exome capture

SIGNIFICANCE: Museum collections preserve a record of population responses to

anthropogenic change. We analyzed genomic data from historic specimens to document the

responses of coastal California Savannah sparrows to rampant tidal marsh loss over the past

century. We find that temporal shifts in source-sink dynamics among populations allowed some

populations to maintain high genetic diversity in the face of habitat loss, yet this led to the erosion

of genetic divergence at loci associated with tidal marsh adaptation. Shifting patterns of gene flow

through time in response to habitat loss may result in negative fitness consequences and

outbreeding depression. This has important implications for the long-standing debate on assisted

gene flow in populations threatened with inbreeding depression.

INTRODUCTION: The dynamics of local adaptation, gene flow, and effective population size

influence how species respond to anthropogenic change in complex ways. Fragmentation and

habitat degradation can lead to population declines, increased isolation, and increased risk of

inbreeding depression (e.g., Tallmon et al. 2004; Frankham 2005; Whitely et al. 2015). On the

other hand, changing patterns of gene flow (i.e. directions, rate) among populations locally adapted

to different environments may lead to the influx of mal-adapted immigrants and outbreeding

depression (e.g. Edmands et al. 2007; Frankham et al. 2011). It is also possible that increased gene

flow, even from a maladapted source population, could contribute to the evolutionary rescue of a

peripheral small population by providing the essential allelic variation needed to facilitate

adaptation to environmental change (e.g. Bell et al. 2019). Mixed support exists for all these

outcomes, but a deeper understanding of the ecological and demographic context in which certain

processes, such as gene flow, may be beneficial or detrimental to threatened populations is sorely

needed.

It can take several generations to observe how these different scenarios might shape

population responses to human-mediated ecological change. For many long-lived, non-model, and

threatened taxa facing immediate conservation threats, we do not have the luxury of waiting to see

if our current models of population responses will prove correct. Time-series data spanning past

human transformation of the landscape can inform this issue through documenting how natural

populations have been impacted by past episodes of ecological change. Museum collections are

important repositories of time-series data for evaluating population responses to anthropogenic

change across broad spatial, temporal, and taxonomic scales (e.g. Holmes et al. 2016; Billerman

& Walsh 2019). Such collections provide the opportunity for analyses across spatially-replicated,

time-series that can complement insights from other sources of time-series data (e.g. long-term

ecological studies; Magurran et al. 2010). The perspective provided by time-series analyses will

ultimately contribute to more accurate predictions of population responses to future anthropogenic

change.

Historical DNA isolated from museum specimens has proven to be a critical resource for

establishing baseline levels of genetic diversity and population structure (Wanderler et al. 2007).

More recent analyses have increasingly leveraged genomic datasets with dramatically increased

power to address a host of conservation genetics questions (Bi et al. 2013; Suchan et al. 2016; Bi

et al. 2019; Feng et al. 2019; van der Valk et al. 2019; Sánchez-Barreiro et al. 2021). In particular,

studies comparing patterns of temporal change at both neutral loci and loci potentially under

selection can provide further insights into: (1) how populations adapt to human-mediated

ecological change; and (2) how changing patterns of gene flow, population size, and habitat

degradation influence variation at neutral versus functional loci. Here, we leverage spatially

replicated time-series of Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) specimens collected from

throughout the state of California, to analyze genomic responses across a landscape of spatially

heterogenous anthropogenic change.

Savannah sparrows are one of the most widespread North American songbirds, with 17

subspecies breeding across a range of open habitats from Alaskan tundra to the highlands of

Guatemala (Fig. 1a; Wheelwright & Rising 2008). Within California, there are four subspecies

(Grinnell & Miller 1944; Fig. 1a): *Passerculus sandwichensis brooksi* and *P. s. nevadensis* are

both migratory subspecies that occupy grasslands in extreme northwest and eastern California,

respectively. *P. s. alaudinus* resides in tidal marsh and coastal grassland habitats from Humboldt

Bay (Humboldt County) south to Point Conception (Santa Barbara County); and *P. s. beldingi* is

a year-round resident of tidal marshes from Point Conception south to Baja California. These

coastal populations exhibit local adaptation to high salinity and flooding in tidal marshes with prior

work documenting physiological, behavioral, and genomic divergence from other inland,

freshwater-associated California populations of the species (Cade & Bartholomew 1959; Poulson

& Bartholomew 1962; Walsh et al. 2019; Benham & Cheviron 2020; Benham & Bowie 2021).

California Savannah sparrows span a landscape that has experienced dramatic but spatially

variable transformations due to human activity. The human population of California has grown by

more than 38 million since 1900 (U.S. Census Bureau 2019). Much of this growth is concentrated

in coastal and central California, while many areas of eastern and northern California retain

extensive tracts of wilderness. Similarly, maximum temperatures increased the most in urban and

agricultural areas over the past century, but decreased along the immediate coast (e.g., LaDochy

et al. 2007; Lebassi et al. 2008). Coastal populations of the Savannah sparrow have been

particularly impacted by anthropogenic change, with agriculture, urbanization, and certain

industries (e.g., salt evaporation mining) collectively destroying 75% of the state's coastal

wetlands between the late 1800s and the present (Powell 2006). This includes critical tidal marsh

habitat for many Savannah sparrow populations, with the loss of tidal marsh habitat in some

estuaries exceeding 90% (e.g., San Francisco Bay; Marshall & Dedrick 1994). Consequently,

coastal Savannah sparrow species are listed as either state endangered species (*P. s. beldingi;*

Zembal & Hoffmann 2010) or bird species of special concern (*P. s. alaudinus;* Fitton 2008).

To explore temporal patterns of genetic change across these different Savannah sparrow

populations, we sequenced genomic data from 219 individuals sampled over a 127 year period,

representing nine spatially replicated time-series. We analyzed this dataset to address the following

questions: (1) how has tidal marsh habitat loss impacted patterns of population structure and gene

flow among California Savannah sparrow populations? (2) How has genetic diversity changed

through time across different Savannah sparrow populations? And (3) what impact has changing

population demography had on loci associated with adaptation to tidal marsh habitats? By tackling

these questions we aim to document the nuances of past population responses to anthropogenic

change. This will contribute to an improved understanding of the demographic and ecological

factors that predict population resilience or decline in the face of ongoing and future environmental

change.

RESULTS:

Patterns of population structure: We extracted DNA and prepared libraries for sequencing with a

custom designed exome capture array (see supplemental methods). DNA was extracted from the

toepads of 155 historic specimens and blood and tissues from 94 modern samples (74 from

California and 20 from outside; Dataset S1). Captures performed well with an average of 73.4%

(modern) and 74.8% (historic) of cleaned reads mapping to the custom target capture regions

(supplemental Table S1, Figure S1). Average coverage was five times higher in modern samples

(range: 40.5-73.7; mean: 55.0x) than historical samples (range: 2.0-29.4; mean: 11.0x). To account

for this discrepancy in coverage for some downstream analyses, we randomly downsampled reads

of modern individuals to generate a dataset where modern birds had an average coverage of 10x

(supplemental Figure S2). Unlike most ancient DNA datasets, C to T and G to A mutations were

slightly more common in the modern dataset than historic dataset (supplemental Figure S3), which

likely reflects the influence of the USER enzyme treatment on historic samples.

Principal components analysis of the full dataset (60,765 SNPs) identified five genetic

clusters. Modern and historical samples collected from the same locality clustered together (Fig.

1b). The first principal component explained 2.8% of the variance in the data and separated out

three clusters: (1) *Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi* subspecies from south coastal California;

(2) birds from Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County; and (3) birds from the rest of California.

The second principal component explained 1.1% of the variance in the data and divided birds from

the *P. s. nevadensis* subspecies in eastern California, from birds in northwest California (*P. s.*

alaudinus and *P. s. brooksi*), and the remaining birds in the *P. s. alaudinus* subspecies from the

Bay Area and central California coast. The third principal component (0.9% of variance) separated

modern from historical samples and the fourth component (0.8% of variance) split northwest

California birds from other populations. PCA of other datasets (downsampled coverage, CpG sites

removed, C->T and G->A sites removed) revealed similar patterns of population clustering

(supplemental Figure S4).

To test for temporal changes in population structure and admixture among California

Savannah sparrow populations, we analyzed a dataset of 65,583 unlinked SNPs and 239

individuals (20 from outside California) within the program DyStruct (Joseph & Pe'er 2019).

DyStruct resembles other model-based clustering programs (e.g. Alexander et al. 2009), but

explicitly accounts for the temporal dynamics of allele frequency change in time-series data. After

running DyStruct three times independently for K equals 1 to 12 population clusters, we found

highly similar likelihoods for K=3 to 5 (log-likelihood= -1383.63 to -1383.76; Fig. 1c). All three

values of K identified *P. s. beldingi* from south coastal California and Mexico as a distinct cluster,

P. s. alaudinus of the central and northern California coast was a second genetic cluster, with *P. s.*

nevadensis of eastern California together with birds from Wyoming, Alaska, and Washington state

forming a third cluster. The main difference between K=3 and 4 was that Morro Bay birds were

recognized as a distinct cluster, and at K=5 modern birds from the central and northern California

coast were identified as a distinct cluster. This analysis also revealed temporal variation in

population structure with modern birds from the central and northern California coast exhibiting a

17% (Morro Bay) to 64% (Humboldt Bay) increase in the proportion of ancestry shared with inland

eastern California birds. Temporal changes in ancestry proportions points to a recent increase in

the level of gene flow from inland eastern California populations into coastal populations.

Spatial and temporal patterns of genetic diversity and gene flow: Visualization of effective

migration and diversity surfaces output from the program EEMS (Petkova et al. 2016) show similar

patterns of migration and genetic diversity among California Savannah sparrow populations in

both the historical (<1940) and modern (>2000) datasets (Fig. 2a; supplemental Fig. S5). In both

historic and modern datasets, southern California birds exhibited lower effective diversity rates

(the expected genetic dissimilarity between two individuals in a population) and greater isolation

relative to northern California birds.

We estimated the deviation from expected heterozygosity, F, as a measure of inbreeding

for both exons (n=9,971) and nongenic (n=1,024) regions. These estimates indicated that southern

populations at Newport and Morro Bays were more inbred than northern populations (Fig. 2b). In

all populations, we also detected a significant decrease in inbreeding over the past century,

suggesting that these populations have become more outbred. In the Newport Bay population (*P.*

s. beldingi), the inbreeding coefficient significantly decreased from the early 1900s to the 1960s

and then again from the 1960s to the 2010s. This suggests that the state endangered *P. s. beldingi*

has become more outbred despite increased habitat fragmentation over the past century.

Newport and Morro Bay populations also exhibited lower levels of genome-wide

nucleotide diversity (π), Watterson's theta (θ) and higher Tajima's D than populations from

northern California (Fig. 2c). These two populations exhibited significant declines in π and θ over

time within exons. Newport Bay also saw a significant increase in Tajima's D. Patterns were

similar for nongenic data, but these changes were not statistically significant. Despite experiencing

comparable levels of tidal marsh loss, sparrows from the San Francisco Bay Area exhibited no

significant change in π for exon or non-genic data but did experience a significant decline in θ for

both exons and non-genic data. However, despite these declines in θ, Bay Area birds retain

comparable levels of π and θ to birds from NW and eastern California. The NW and eastern

California populations exhibited either no change in these metrics or slight increases (e.g.,

temporal increases in π in NW California). Estimates of these parameters using datasets that were

less conservatively filtered showed similar patterns (supplemental Fig. S5). For Newport Bay

birds, significant decreases in π and θ only occurred between the 1968 (1960s) and 2016 time

points (supplemental Fig. S6). San Francisco Bay on the other hand showed a long-term increase

in Tajima's D from the 1900s-1910s to the present, which appeared to be driven by decreasing θ

through time (supplemental Fig. S7).

We next fit an isolation with migration model to the joint site frequency spectrum of

Newport Bay, eastern California, and the Bay Area from both the historical (pre-1920) and modern

(post-2000) periods in *Moments* (Jouganous et al. 2017). Historical and modern estimates of

divergence time among the three populations, effective population sizes, and gene flow patterns

were broadly overlapping (supplemental Fig. S8). Divergence between *P. s. beldingi* and northern

California occurred about 340,000 years ago and divergence between the Bay Area and inland

eastern California ~35,000 years ago. Estimates of effective population size for both time periods

was ~10,000 for *P. s. beldingi,* 61-68,000 for *P. s. alaudinus,* and 85-108,000 for *P. s. nevadensis.*

Both historic and modern gene flow rates into Newport Bay from both eastern California and the

Bay Area was less than 0.5 migrants per generation (supplemental Fig. S8). In contrast, gene flow

between the northern California populations was much higher and asymmetric with gene flow

from the Bay Area to eastern California exceeding 12 migrants per generation, but only 1-3

migrants per generation in the reverse direction.

Selection analyses: Mean Fst divergence between each of the four historical tidal marsh

populations (Humboldt Bay, Bay Area, Morro Bay, Newport Bay) and inland eastern California

populations varied from 0.014 at Humboldt Bay to 0.098 at Newport Bay in southern California

(Table 1). Modern values of Fst divergence showed increases in Morro Bay from 0.054 to 0.062,

but a sharp decrease in mean Fst at Humboldt Bay from 0.014 to -0.002. Across the four tidal

marsh populations we identified between 203 (Newport Bay) and 229 SNPs (Bay Area) that

exceeded the 99th percentile threshold (Fig. 3a). In all four tidal marsh populations we detected a

significant temporal decrease in Fst divergence for outlier SNPs relative to non-outlier SNPs (Fig.

3b). Analyses based on loci that were Fst, Dxy, and LFMM outliers showed similar patterns

(supplemental Fig. S9). No genes were found to be outliers in all four coastal populations, but two

genes were outliers in three populations (supplemental Table S2). This includes the estrogen

receptor 1 gene (ESR1), which was an outlier in all populations except Humboldt Bay. Moreover,

a T->C mutation in the 3' UTR region in the final exon of ESR1 exhibited the greatest Fst

divergence in both Newport Bay (Fig. 3c; Fst=0.73) and the Bay Area (Fig. 3d; Fst=0.41). While

this SNP showed large increases in Fst divergence within Morro Bay (Fst_{hist}: 0.45; Fst_{mod}: 0.78;

ΔFst: 0.33), it exhibited large temporal declines in the Bay Area (ΔFst=-0.17). Temporal change

in Fst at this locus is likely due to decreasing frequencies of the alternate C allele of this SNP in

the Bay Area (change in frequency -0.24; Fig. 3e).

Increased gene flow from inland eastern California populations into northern coastal

populations should also lead to the increased homogenization of allele frequencies among

populations towards the present. Further, if outlier loci associated with local adaptation to tidal

marshes exhibit increased resilience to gene flow then we would expect less homogenization of

allele frequencies at these loci relative to non-outlier loci. We tested these predictions by

estimating the degree of correlation between historical deviation in allele frequency and change in

allele frequency through time for each SNP (Gompert et al. 2021). In this analysis, stronger

correlations will reflect greater levels of gene flow. For each of the four tidal marsh populations

we estimated deviation from mean allele frequency of the tidal marsh and eastern California

populations as $\overline{p_i} - p_{ij}$. Where $\overline{p_i}$ is the mean allele frequency of the ith SNP between inland eastern

California and the jth tidal marsh population and p_{ij} is the allele frequency of the ith SNP in the jth

tidal marsh population. Difference in allele frequency change through time was estimated for each

SNP in each tidal marsh population as $p_{ij}^{modern} - p_{ij}^{historical}$. We used permutation tests to test for

significant differences from zero (no correlation) and between outlier and non-outlier SNPs. This

showed that correlations between historic deviation and temporal change in allele frequency were

significantly different from zero for both the Bay Area (mean correlation: 0.17; p-value=0.015)

and Humboldt Bay tidal marsh populations (mean: 0.30; p-value=0.001), but not significant for

Morro Bay (mean: 0.16; p-value=0.08) or Newport Bay (mean: 0.05; p-value: 0.33; Fig. 4a).

Second, we found that outlier loci exhibit significantly more positive correlations relative to non-

outlier loci across all four coastal populations (Fig. 4a). Finally, the degree of correlation varies

significantly with the extent to which inland eastern California ancestry increased in each tidal

marsh population through time (r^2=0.92; p-value=0.03; Fig. 4b). This result remained regardless

of the threshold used to identify outlier SNPs (thresholds: 0.9, 0.95, 0.99th percentile of Fst

divergence). In sum, ΔFst and temporal allele frequency change results both indicate that the

observed increase in gene flow levels from the freshwater-adapted, eastern California population

into tidal marsh populations eroded divergence at loci potentially associated with adaptation to a

high salinity environment.

DISCUSSION:

There is a pressing need to understand the ecological and demographic factors that

influence population genetic responses to habitat loss and environmental change. Through the

preservation of baseline genetic diversity data from before the onset of large-scale human

disturbance, museum collections are poised to play an increasingly important role in addressing

this issue. We leveraged replicated, time-series of specimens to document the impacts of habitat

loss in tidal marsh populations of the Savannah sparrow in California. Over 75% of coastal

wetlands in California have been lost due to human activities (Powell 2006), but the magnitude of

tidal marsh loss varies extensively among estuaries from 90% loss of marshes in the San Francisco

Bay (Marshall & Dedrick et al. 1994; Takekawa et al. 2006) to 84% increases of marsh habitat

over the past century in Morro Bay (Gerdes et al. 1974). This variation in habitat loss was not

found to predict declines in genetic diversity across different Savannah sparrow populations.

Rather, we show that both southern tidal marsh populations at Morro and Newport Bays: (1)

historically exhibited lower levels of genetic diversity; (2) higher inbreeding coefficients; and (3)

greater temporal declines in genetic diversity relative to northern California populations (Fig. 2).

In contrast, despite experiencing 90% tidal marsh habitat loss, San Francisco Bay sparrows still

exhibit similar levels of genetic diversity to other northern California populations (Fig. 2c; Supp.

Fig. S7). While habitat loss and fragmentation likely played some role in declining genetic

diversity, our analyses point to more complex demographic dynamics contributing to patterns of

changing genetic diversity among these populations.

In other species, a disconnect between habitat loss and genetic diversity declines has been

attributed to a range of different demographic, life history, ecological, and behavioral factors (e.g.

Welch et al. 2012; Lino et al. 2019). Many of these factors are unlikely to contribute to the

observed differences in genetic diversity between southern and northern California tidal marshes

as generation time, body size, and migratory behavior are all similar across coastal California

Savannah sparrow populations. Differences in the degree of specialization to tidal marshes could

contribute to differences in genetic diversity declines. Tidal marsh habitats are the stronghold for

P. s. alaudinus populations in northern California, but this subspecies can regularly be found

breeding in coastal grasslands (Grinnell & Miller 1944). This greater niche breadth may buffer

them from tidal marsh habitat losses. Indeed, populations from Humboldt Bay shifted from tidal

marsh into pasture habitats as pasture land expanded at the expense of tidal marsh habitat (Fitton

2008). In addition to differences in habitat use, our demographic and population structure analyses

indicate that spatial-temporal patterns of gene flow may have contributed to differences in genetic

diversity declines observed among coastal Savannah sparrow populations.

EEMS and *Moments* analyses suggest that more gene flow occurs among northern

California populations than between northern and southern California (supplemental Fig. S5, S9).

The greater isolation of Newport Bay birds may play a role in the greater declines of genetic

diversity observed in southern California despite similar levels of historic habitat loss. EEMS and

Moments did not show temporal differences in migration rates among populations. In contrast,

DyStruct analyses point to a reversal in the direction of gene flow from historically greater

immigration into eastern California from the coast to greater gene flow rates from eastern into

coastal California populations toward the present. These contrasting results likely stem from the

isolation with continuous migration model tested in *Moments,* which would return average

migration rates since population divergence and not necessarily identify recent shifts in gene flow

rates. Further, the more dynamic history of shifting gene flow patterns identified with DyStruct

was supported by declines in mean genome wide Fst divergence between Humboldt Bay and

eastern California (from 0.014 to 0) and between the Bay Area and eastern California (from 0.015

to 0.013). Second, allele frequency analyses showed greater positive correlations between

historical deviations from mean allele frequency and temporal change in allele frequency existed

for the Bay Area and Humboldt Bay (Fig. 4). Morro Bay and Newport Bay in southern California

were not significantly different from 0 (no correlation). These patterns were consistent with the

expectation that greater gene flow leads to greater correlation between the direction and magnitude

of allele frequency change (Gompert et al. 2021).

Although habitat loss is typically thought to increase population fragmentation and reduce

migration, theoretical work suggests that habitat loss and subsequent population declines can also

leave populations more susceptible to hybridization and gene flow (e.g. Todesco et al. 2016).

Differences in effective population sizes between populations will influence the direction of gene

flow with theoretical and empirical evidence suggesting that the direction of gene flow will

typically be from larger into smaller populations (Currat et al. 2008). Our demographic analyses

indicate that historically ~3 migrants per generation immigrated from inland eastern California

into the Bay Area and 13.5 migrants per generation immigrated in the opposite direction. If habitat

loss led to declining local recruitment and population growth within the Bay Area, the impact of

ongoing gene flow from inland eastern California into the Bay Area would become more

significant and could explain the observed increase in eastern California ancestry. These patterns

suggest that source-sink dynamics have shifted through time with the Bay Area potentially

becoming a sink population at present, sustained by migration from eastern California (Dias et al.

1996; Gaggiotti & Smouse 1996).

The impact of gene flow on the persistence of natural populations is hotly debated in the

conservation genetics literature (Tallmon et al. 2004; Frankham et al. 2011; Bell et al. 2019). Gene

flow can be crucial for preventing or reversing inbreeding depression (Westemeier et al. 1998;

Hogg et al. 2006; Whiteley et al. 2015; Fitzpatrick et al. 2020). Gene flow can also contribute

critical standing variation for adaptation and may be important for future responses to climate

change (e.g. Taylor & Larson 2019). However, gene flow could also play a role in eliminating

divergence between populations and may lead to outbreeding depression (Edmands et al. 2007).

Our data show that coastal populations experiencing higher levels of gene flow do exhibit reduced

declines in genetic diversity over time. However, we also show that increased immigration into

the Bay Area through time likely contributed to the homogenization of outlier regions associated

with tidal marsh adaptation (Fig. 3, 4). Our findings contrast with a recent study on Trinidadian

guppies, which found that allele frequency differences in outlier loci were more resistant to gene

flow than non-outlier loci (Fitzpatrick et al. 2020). This study also showed that increasing gene

flow from main stream environments led to increased fitness of headwater guppy populations, but

the study was performed only for a limited time frame of ~6 generations. Our study takes a longer

view on the impacts of increased immigration on loci associated with local adaptation. However,

whether increased gene flow contributes to reduced fitness and outbreeding depression remains to

be seen in these tidal marsh sparrows.

Although we do not fully understand the contributions of the identified outlier loci to

fitness in tidal marshes, over 40% of these loci may contribute to increased osmoregulatory

performance in high salinity environments via their known roles in kidney development, function,

and pathology (Supplemental Table S2). Seven genes with SNPs exceeding the 99th percentile Fst

threshold were also previously found to be outliers in other tidal marsh sparrow species (Walsh et

al. 2019). These include the genes GLI family zinc finger protein 2 (GLI2) and smoothened

homolog (SMO), which were identified as outliers in tidal marsh Nelson's (*Ammospiza nelsoni*)

and Swamp Sparrows (*Melospiza georgiana*), respectively. SMO and GLI2 were both Fst outliers

in the *P. s. beldingi* population at Newport Bay. These genes both interact within the sonic

hedgehog (SHH) signaling pathway during renal development with inhibition of these genes

leading to disrupted kidney morphogenesis (e.g. Hu et al. 2006). Within the Bay Area, SLC9A3

was another Fst outlier previously found to be under selection in tidal marsh Swamp Sparrows

(Walsh et al. 2019). SLC9A3 plays a primary role in sodium absorption within the mammalian

intestine and colon (Xu et al. 2018), and has been found to be differentially expressed in different

fish species exposed to high salinity (Gibbons et al. 2017).

Among outliers identified by multiple methods, only the estrogen receptor 1 (ESR1) and

IgGFc-binding protein-like (FCGBP-like) genes were found to be outliers across multiple

populations. The ESR1 gene was previously localized to an inversion on chromosome 2 of the

White-throated Sparrow genome and plays a role in differential aggressive behavior between color

morphs in this species (Tuttle et al. 2016; Merritt et al. 2020). In addition to behavioral and

reproductive functions, ESR1 also contributes to the generation of important osmoregulatory

phenotypes matching those found in tidal marsh sparrows. First, female knockout mice lacking the

ESR1 locus exhibit larger kidneys (Lovegrove et al. 2004). Second, this gene is widely expressed

throughout the loop of Henle, collecting ducts, and nephrons in the kidney (Jelinsky et al. 2003;

Cheema et al. 2015). Finally, this gene inhibits Aquaporin-2 expression in the collecting duct of

rat and mouse kidneys with estrogen reductions leading to the production of more concentrated

urine (Cheema et al. 2015). This result suggests that the more concentrated urine produced by salt

marsh passerines (Goldstein et al. 1990; Goldstein 2006; Benham & Cheviron 2020) may be

related to the influence of estrogen receptor activity on AQP2 expression within the collecting

ducts of the kidney. Salinity and temperature are expected to increase in northern California in the

near future and could exacerbate osmoregulatory stress experienced by these sparrows. If the ESR1

and other candidate genes identified in this study contribute to important osmoregulatory

functions, declining allele frequencies due to gene flow may leave the Bay Area population unable

to adapt to the hotter and saltier tidal marshes of the future.

Conclusions: Research on geographic variation has long motivated the growth of natural history

collections. Consequently, museum collections now provide abundant material for documenting

the role of human activities in temporal changes to the balance between migration, drift, and

selection. Taking full advantage of this unique strength of collections across broad taxonomic

scales will be essential for developing a more robust understanding of the dynamics of plant and

animal population responses to ecological change. Our work demonstrates the power of analyzing

these replicate time series of specimens to make novel insights into how habitat loss and

demography interact to shape population genetic change. Specifically, the role of human-driven

habitat loss in altering the dynamics of gene flow and negatively impacting local adaptation will

be important to consider in the effective conservation of threatened populations.

METHODS:

Sample library prep, capture, and sequencing: Historical toepad samples were extracted using a

phenol-chloroform protocol in a lab space dedicated to working with degraded DNA. Historic

samples were treated with the USER enzyme to mitigate C->T base misincorporation (Briggs et

al. 2009). Modern samples were extracted using a Qiagen DNeasy extraction kit (Valencia,

California) and randomly sheared using a qSonica Q800R3 Sonicator (Newtown, CT). For all

samples, libraries were prepared for sequencing using a Kapa Illumina Hyper Prep kit

(supplemental methods); 500ng of DNA from each library was then pooled and hybridized in

solution to the SeqCap EZ probes following the manufacturer's protocols (Roche Sequencing

Solutions, Inc, Pleasanton, CA). Captured libraries were sequenced on two lanes of NovaSeq S4

and a single lane of NovaSeq SP at the University of California Berkeley Vincent J. Coates

Genomics Sequencing Lab.

Population structure analyses: Principal components analysis of the full, exon, and nongenic

datasets resulting from different filtering protocols (supplemental methods) was performed using

the python package scikit-allel v. 1.2.0 (Miles et al. 2020). For all SNP datasets, we removed

singletons and pruned SNPs that were in linkage (r=0.25) in 2500 bp blocks. The estimated

effective population size (Ne) in DyStruct was set to 100,000 after preliminary analyses showed

that results were robust to varying the Ne setting from the smaller (25,000) to larger population

sizes (500,000) previously reported for this species (Benham & Cheviron 2019). Generation time

was set to 2.5 years (Bird et al. 2020) and we binned samples into eight 10-year windows spanning

48 generations from 1890 (generation 0) to 2017 (generation 48). We ran DyStruct three times

independently for K = 1 to 12, where K is the number of pre-defined population clusters. The most

likely value of K was identified using a cross-validation, hold-out method within the program.

Genetic diversity and demographic analyses: We compared historical and modern patterns of
migration and genetic diversity across California with Estimated Effective Migration Surfaces in
the program EEMS (Petkova et al. 2016). For both the modern and historic datasets, input files
were generated using the bed2diffs function in EEMS. We ran three independent runs of the
MCMC chain. Each chain started from a different random seed and ran for 2 million iterations of
burn-in followed by 5 million iterations. A population grid density of 250 demes was selected and
we adjusted the qEffctProposalS2 (0.01) and qSeedsProposalS2 (0.2) settings upwards to ensure a
proposal acceptance rate between 10-40%. We used the R package rEEMSplots to assess model
fit and convergence among the three independent chains.

To match sequence depth between modern and historical samples, population genetic
statistics were estimated using a dataset with downsampled coverage in modern samples and the
removal of C->T, G->A mutations. We estimated Tajima's D, nucleotide diversity (π), and
Watterson's Theta (θ) for each exon (n=9,971 loci) and non-genic target region (n=1,024 loci) in
the dataset using scikit-allel v. 1.2.0 (Miles et al. 2020). Heterozygosity and the inbreeding
coefficient for each individual were estimated for nongenic and exon datasets in VCFtools
(Danecek et al. 2011) using the --het function. These metrics were estimated for each population
(defined by population genetic clusters identified using PCA analysis, n=5) and sampling time
(modern vs. historic). We also estimated these metrics across three and six time points in Newport
Bay (*P. s. beldingi*) and San Francisco Bay (*P. s. alaudinus*), respectively. To estimate the
magnitude of temporal change in each metric we subtracted the historic from the modern value.
Within each population we assessed whether significant differences existed between sampling
points using ANOVA and post-hoc TukeyHSD tests or t-tests depending on the number of time

points sampled. All statistical analyses were performed in the open source program R version 3.5.1

(https://www.r-project.org/).

We used the program *Moments* (Jouganous et al. 2017) to assess temporal change in

patterns of gene flow among California populations of the Savannah sparrow. We fit an isolation

with migration model to the three dimensional site frequency spectrum of eastern California (*P. s.*

nevadensis), Bay Area (*P. s. alaudinus*), and Newport Bay (*P. s. beldingi*) birds. We fit this model

to the site frequency spectrum of a historic (26,080 SNPs) and modern (21,758 SNPs) dataset of

individuals from these populations. See supplemental methods for further details on data filtering

and program parameterization.

Spatial and temporal selection analyses: We identified putative outlier loci using the

downsampled dataset with C->T and G->A sites removed, a maf filter of 0.05, and only retained

sites with no missing data. We divided the dataset into five populations: (1) freshwater-adapted

populations of eastern California (*P. s. nevadensis*); (2) Humboldt Bay estuary (*P. s. alaudinus*);

(3) San Francisco Bay estuary (*P. s. alaudinus*); (4) Morro Bay estuary (*P. s. alaudinus/beldingi*);

and (5) Newport Bay estuary (*P. s. beldingi*). Each of these five populations were further divided

into historic (sampled 1900-1920) and modern (sampled after 2000) datasets. First, we estimated

Weir & Cockerham's Fst divergence between each estuary population (pops 2-4) and inland

localities across eastern California (pop 1) for both the historical and modern datasets. SNPs were

identified as being potentially under selection within tidal marsh environments if they exceeded

the 99th percentile of Fst. Second, we estimated Hudson's Fst (Bhatia et al. 2012) and Dxy between

salt and freshwater-adapted populations for 5Kb windows with a step size of 2.5 Kb following

approaches used to analyze other exome datasets (e.g., Schweizer et al. 2021). Third, we employed

a Latent Factor Mixed Models approach (LFMM; Frichot et al. 2013) to identify SNPs with

significant associations with mean salinity estimates from a previously published dataset (Benham

& Bowie 2021). Loci were designated as outliers if the 5kb region was in the top 5% of Fst

divergence, top 5% of Dxy divergence, and contained a SNP with a p-value <0.05 based on LFMM

analyses for each of the four populations. For both per SNP Fst estimates and 5kb windows we

compared temporal changes in Fst divergence by subtracting historical Fst from modern Fst

divergence in each locus to estimate ΔFst. We used t-tests to compare whether outlier versus non-

outlier regions exhibited significantly different changes in Fst through time.

To assess the degree of correlation between historical deviations in mean allele frequency

and the direction of allele frequency change through time. We estimated allele frequencies using

VCFtools. We classified SNPs as outliers if they exceeded the 99th percentile of Fst divergence.

We compared Pearson's correlation of the outlier SNPs to non-outlier SNPs by performing a

permutation test where we randomly sampled an equal number of non-outlier to outlier SNPs and

calculated correlations 1000 times. We then compared whether the non-outlier loci were both

statistically different from 0 (no correlation) or the correlation estimated for the outlier loci. We

used changes in the proportion of eastern California ancestry found in each of the four coastal

populations from the DyStruct analysis to approximate temporal increases in gene flow.

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Figure 1: Spatial and temporal patterns of population structure within California populations of the Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). **(a)** California breeding distribution of the Savannah sparrow (ochre). Circles represent historical (pre-1970) sampling localities of specimens sequenced in the study, and triangles represent modern (post-2000) sampling localities. Inset shows extent of the entire North American breeding distribution of the Savannah sparrow in ochre. **(b)** Principal components analysis of the full exome capture dataset (60,765 SNPs). Left panel shows PC1 (3.1% variance explained) versus PC2 (1.1% variance explained) and right panel shows PC3 (0.9% variance explained) versus PC4 (0.8% variance explained). Colors correspond to different subspecies as illustrated in Fig. 1a. Dashed circles denote different clusters corresponding to different populations within *P. s. alaudinus.* **(c)** Results from DyStruct analysis. Runs with clusters specified as K=3-5 all exhibited very similar log-likelihoods and are illustrated here. Colors correspond to different K clusters. Artwork of *P. s. beldingi* individual courtesy of Jillian Nichol Ditner

Figure 2: Spatial and temporal patterns of genetic diversity within California Savannah sparrows. **(a)** Historical and modern variation in genetic diversity across California estimated using the Estimated Effective Migration Surfaces (EEMS) program. Contour plots vary from low (dark brown) to high (dark blue) posterior mean diversity rates. **(b)** Variation in the inbreeding coefficient across different populations through time. The five populations correspond to the five genetic clusters shown in Fig. 1b. Data were divided into exon regions and nongenic regions >100 kb from any exon in the genome. Colors correspond to bins of different sampling times. **(c)** Boxplots comparing historical (red) and modern (blue) estimates of Tajima's D, Watterson's theta, and nucleotide diversity across the five different populations for both exon (left panel) and nongenic (right panel) target regions. Outlier regions removed from plot to simplify visualization. For both **b** & **c** plots are based on a downsampled dataset with C->T and G->A mutations removed. Asterisks in **b** & **c** denote p-values based on t-tests or ANOVA among sampling time groups (ns: non-significant; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***: p<0.0001). In **c** only historical modern comparisons with significant differences are denoted.

Figure 3: Temporal variation in Fst divergence. **(a)** Venn diagram showing overlap in genes with outlier SNPS across the four tidal marsh populations. **(b)** Change in Fst divergence between eastern California and four tidal marsh populations of Savannah sparrow. ΔFst for each SNP was estimated as the difference between historic and modern Fst divergence with positive values indicating increasing Fst divergence through time. SNPs above the 99th percentile of divergence were identified as historical outlier SNPs. Asterisks denote p-values from t-tests of ΔFst between outlier and non-outlier SNPs (ns: non-signifiant; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***: p<0.0001). **(c-d)** Distribution of per SNP Fst estimates for historical comparison between Newport Bay (*P. s. beldingi*) and Bay Area (*P. s. alaudinus*) with eastern California (*P. s. nevadensis*). Red dashed line denotes the mean 99th percentile threshold for calling outlier SNPs. Gray dashed lines represent modern and historic Fst estimates for a C->T mutation in the 3' UTR region of the final exon of the Estrogen Receptor 1 gene (ESR1). **(e)** Spatial variation in allele frequencies for the ESR1 C->T SNP across nine sampling localities with paired modern and historic sampling. Pie charts on left illustrate historical allele frequencies and pie charts on the right modern allele frequencies.

Figure 4: (a) Correlations between the historical deviation from mean allele frequency and direction of temporal change in each tidal marsh population. More positive correlations indicate greater changes in allele frequency towards the mean due to higher levels of gene flow. Red circles show observed correlation for outlier SNPs and gray box plots indicate the null distribution from 1000 permutations of non-outlier SNPs. **(c)** Regression analyses showing relationship between change in the proportion of ancestry from *P. s. nevadensis* populations in each tidal marsh population and the correlation coefficient for outlier SNPs shown in (b). Ancestry proportions from DyStruct analysis (Fig. 1c). Different colors represent SNPs inferred to be outliers from different percentile thresholds with red points showing data from non-outlier SNPs.

Table 1: Mean Fst divergence between eastern California and each of four tidal marsh populations of the Savannah sparrow in both the historic and modern datasets.

Population	historic sample size	modern sample size	Number SNPs	Historic mean Fst (sd)	Modern mean Fst (sd)
Newport Bay	10	11	4495	0.098 (0.008)	0.099 (0.009)
Morro Bay	11	8	5408	0.054 (0.003)	0.062 (0.006)
Bay Area	31	37	12021	0.015 (0.001)	0.013 (0.001)
Humboldt Bay	10	5	6466	0.014 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)