# Whole-genome resequencing data support a single introduction of the invasive white pine sawfly, *Diprion similis*

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**Running title:** Population structure of an invasive pine sawfly

**Abstract**

Biological introductions are unintended "natural experiments" that provide unique insights into

evolutionary processes. Invasive phytophagous insects are of particular interest to evolutionary

biologists studying adaptation, as introductions often require rapid adaptation to novel host

plants. However, adaptive potential of invasive populations may be limited by reduced genetic

diversity—a problem known as the "genetic paradox of invasions". One potential solution to this

paradox is if there are multiple invasive waves that bolster genetic variation in invasive

populations. Evaluating this hypothesis requires characterizing genetic variation and population

structure in the introduced range. To this end, we assemble a reference genome and describe

patterns of genetic variation in the introduced white pine sawfly, *Diprion similis.* This species

was introduced to North America in 1914, where it has undergone a rapid host shift to the thin-

needled eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*), making it an ideal invasion system for studying

adaptation to novel environments. To evaluate evidence of multiple introductions, we generated

whole-genome resequencing data for 64 *D. similis* females sampled across the North American

range. Both model-based and model-free clustering analyses supported a single population for

North American *D. similis.* Within this population, we found evidence of isolation-by-distance

and a pattern of declining heterozygosity with distance from the hypothesized introduction site.

Together, these results support a single-introduction event. We consider implications of these

findings for the genetic paradox of invasion and discuss priorities for future research in *D.*

*similis,* a promising model system for invasion biology.

**Keywords: invasion biology, population structure, adaptation, non-model genome,**
***Hymenoptera,* phytophagous insect**

**Introduction**

Human-mediated biological introductions are a ubiquitous part of changing global ecosystems with negative consequences for local flora and fauna (Carlton and Geller 1993, Wonham et al. 2001, Simberloff 2013, Capinha et al. 2015). Biological introductions involving plant-feeding (phytophagous) insects are particularly common and can cause widespread damage to local crops and plants (Schulz et al. 2020, Lesieur et al. 2019). This destruction is exacerbated when insects adapt to native plant hosts, which can lead to rapid range expansion and added complications for controlling the invasion (Kennedy and Storer 2000). For this reason, understanding how and why host shifts occur in invasive species is of considerable applied importance (Clavero and Garcia-Berthou 2005, Oerke 2005). From a basic research perspective, invasive species are unintentional "evolutionary experiments" that enable us to better understand the genetic and evolutionary mechanisms underlying rapid host adaptation (North et al. 2021, Forister et al. 2012, Futuyma and Moreno 1988, Lee 2002, Vertacnik and Linnen 2017, Prentis et al. 2008). Despite considerable research effort (Bock et al. 2015, North et al. 2021) many questions regarding evolution in invasive populations remain unresolved.

One unresolved question in invasion biology asks: given the profound reduction in genetic variation that accompanies many species introductions, how do invading populations have sufficient raw genetic material to adapt to novel environments (Allendorf & Lundquist 2003, Frankham 2005)? In recent years, the prevalence of this so-called 'invasion paradox' has been challenged (Estoup et al. 2016, Dlugosch and Parker 2008), with several studies failing to find evidence of reduced diversity in recently introduced populations (Roman and Darling 2007, Facon et al. 2008, Kolbe et al. 2004—but see Kanuch et al. 2021). A common mechanism for maintaining high levels of genetic variation in invasive populations is admixture between

multiple genetically distinct invading populations (Bock et al. 2015, Dlugosch and Parker 2008,

Prentis et al. 2008, Rius and Darling 2014). Most evidence used to support a multiple-invasion

scenario is the existence of multiple genetically distinct groups within the introduced range, often

inferred via patterns of population structure (Jaspers et al. 2021, Fitzpatrick et al. 2012, Sherpa et

al. 2019). However, population structure can be missed when too few individuals or genetic

markers are sampled (Sherpa et al. 2018, Lewald 2021). To reconstruct the demographic history

of invasions and identify recent targets of selection, genome-scale data (e.g., whole-genome re-

sequencing (WGS) data, are ideal (North et al. 2021). Analysis of WGS data is greatly facilitated

by high quality reference genomes; however, genomic resources are still lacking for many

insects (Hotaling et al. 2021, North et al. 2021, Ekblom and Galindo 2011).

Here, we develop genomic resources and describe population structure for invasive

populations of *Diprion similis* (Hymenoptera: Diprionidae), a potentially powerful model for

invasion population genomics. *D. similis* is an ideal organism for studying adaptation following

invasion: it has undergone a pronounced host shift in the invasive range, and the introduction and

spread of this species is well documented in literature and museum collections (Britton 1915,

Britton 1916, Middleton 1923). *D. similis* was first recorded in Connecticut, 1914 and rapidly

spread across eastern North. In its native Eurasian range, *D. similis* is found primarily on the

thick and resinous needled Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*. In North America, however, *D. similis* is

mostly found on a native, thin-needled pine, eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) (Lyons 2014,

Coppel et al. 1974). This host association is common enough that North American *D. similis* is

now referred to as the "introduced white-pine sawfly." The shift from a thick-needled Eurasian

host to a strikingly thin-needled North American host is somewhat surprising because thin

needles represent a substantial ecological barrier to successful reproduction in many diprionids.

This is because sawfly females must embed their eggs within needles without cutting too deeply,

or eggs will fail to develop (Figure 1B; Knerer and Atwood 1973, McCullough and Wagner

1993, Codella and Raffa 2002, Bendall et al. 2017). Indeed, although white pine is widespread

and abundant in eastern North America, only a single native diprionid, *Neodiprion pinetum*, uses

this host regularly (Linnen and Farrell 2010). *N. pinetum* has also evolved several adaptations for

laying eggs in thin needles, including smaller eggs, smaller ovipositors, and a unique egg-laying

pattern (Bendall et al. 2017, Bendall et al. 2022, Glover et al. in prep).

As a first step to understanding how invasive *D. similis* populations were able to adapt to

a novel and particularly challenging host, we describe patterns of population structure in the

invasive range. To do so, we assemble a high-quality reference genome for this species, to which

we map low-coverage whole-genome sequence data from 64 diploid *D. similis* individuals

sampled across eastern North America. With these data, we examined three spatial patterns of

genetic variation to evaluate support for single-invasion vs. multiple-invasion scenarios. First, a

single introduction is expected to yield a single genetic cluster within the introduced range, while

multiple invasions would be detectable as genetically distinct groups (van Boheeman et al. 2017,

Sherpa et al. 2019). Second, in a single-introduction scenario—and assuming sufficient time for

invasive populations to reach drift-migration equilibrium—genetic distance between individuals

in the introduced range is expected to follow a mostly continuous pattern of isolation-by-

distance, whereas discontinuities in the spatial distribution of genetic variation would be

indicative of multiple recent invasions (Sherpa et al. 2018). Third, under a single-invasion

scenario, genetic diversity should decrease from the point of introduction due to repeated founder

effects and consistently smaller population sizes on the edge of range expansion; by contrast, a

multiple-invasion scenario with multiple points of introduction would increase diversity and

disrupt spatial patterns of genetic diversity (Van Petegem et al. 2017, Biolozyt et al. 2005,

Hewitt 1993). By evaluating our data considering these predictions, we conclude that North

American *D. similis* populations most likely came from a single invasion. In the discussion, we

consider limitations of our data and explanations for how these populations were able to adapt to

novel hosts in the absence of an influx of genetic variation via admixture.

**Materials and Methods**

*DNA extraction and library preparation*

For assembling a reference genome, genomic DNA from *D. similis* was isolated from one

haploid male eonymph that was flash frozen in liquid nitrogen. Genomic nucleic acid isolation

was performed using the MagAttract HMW DNA Kit (Qiagen, Hilden Germany) precisely

following the instructions of the fresh or frozen tissue protocol. After isolation, a 2.0x bead

clean-up was performed to improve sample purity. At each step, double-stranded DNA was

quantified using the dsDNA Broad Range (BR) Qubit assay and the fluorometer feature of a DS-

11 Spectrophotometer and Fluorometer (DeNovix Inc, Wilmington, DE, USA). Sample purity

was quantified with the UV-Vis spectrometer feature on the DS-11 which reported OD 260/230

and 260/280 ratios. Isolated genomic DNA was sheared to a mean size distribution of 20 kb

using a Diagenode Megaruptor 2 (Denville, New Jersey, USA) and fragment size was confirmed

using a Fragment Analyzer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, California, USA) using the High

Sensitivity (HS) Large Fragment kit. The sheared DNA was used for PacBio SMRTBell library

preparation using the SMRTbell Express Template Prep Kit 2.0 (Pacific Biosciences, Menlo

Park, California, USA) according to the manufacturer protocol. The finished library was

sequenced at the USDA-ARS Genomics and Bioinformatics Research Unit in Stoneville,

Mississippi, USA, where the polymerase binding reaction was performed and sequencing was

carried out on one Pacific Biosciences 8M SMRT Cell on a Sequel IIe system (Pacific

Biosciences, Menlo Park, California, USA) using a 30-hour movie collection time after a 2-hour

pre-extension. Following sequence collection, consensus sequences from the raw PacBio Sequel

Iie subreads was called using the SMRTLink v8.0 software (Pacific Biosciences, Menlo Park,

California, USA).

To complement the PacBio HiFi sequencing, enriched chromosome conformation capture

(HiC) sequencing was performed using another *D. similis* eonymph male sample from the same

clutch of progeny from a single unmated *D. similis* female (*D. similis* is arrhenotokous, and

virgin females produce haploid, male-only families). The Arima HiC kit (Arima Genomics, San

Diego, California, USA) was used to perform the proximity ligation after initial crosslinking

using the Arima HiC low input protocol. Proximity-ligated DNA was sheared using a Bioruptor

(Diagenode, Dennville, New Jersey, USA), and appropriately sized fragments (200-600 bp) were

selected as the input for the Illumina library preparation using the Swift Accel NGS 2S Plus kit

(Integrated DNA Technologies, Coralville, Iowa, USA). The Hudson Alpha Genome Sequencing

Center (Huntsville, Alabama, USA) performed the 2x150 bp sequencing on the final Illumina

HiC library on a NovaSeq 6000. Adapter trimming was performed using BaseSpace software

(Illumina, San Diego, California, USA).

*Genome assembly*

Adapter-contaminated HiFi reads were filtered from the circular consensus sequencing

(CCS) dataset using HiFiAdapterFilt v2.0 (Sim et al, 2022). Filtered CCS reads were assembled

into a contig assembly using HiFiASM v0.16.1-r375 (Cheng et al. 2021) with no modifications

to the default parameters. The resulting assembly was converted to .fasta format from its native

.gfa format using any2fasta (Seeman, 2018). The contig assembly was scaffolded using the Phase

Genomics HiC functions (Kronenberg and Sullivan, 2018) (Phase Genomics, Seattle,

Washington, USA). This requires HiC reads mapped to the contig assembly and purged of PCR

duplicate artifacts and results files that are converted to a .hic and .assembly file using `run-

assembly-visualizer.sh` by 3d-dna. The .hic and .assembly files were manually edited using

Juicebox v1.11.08 (Durand et al. 2015) and the edits were applied to the contig assembly using

juicebox_assembly_converter.py by Phase Genomics.

*Assembly quality analysis*

Assembly quality was assessed using metrics for completeness in terms of gene content,

artifact duplicate content, parity with estimated genome size, and taxonomic assignment of each

assembled fragment. Completeness and amount of duplication were assessed by identifying

presence of a benchmark of universal single-copy ortholog (BUSCO) genes from the Eukaryota,

Metazoa, Arthropoda, Insecta, Endopterygota, and Hymenoptera odb10 databases through *ab

initio* gene prediction of the assembly using Metaeuk v.4.a0f584d (Levy et al. 2020) for all the

ortholog databases except for the Metazoa database which required annotation using Augustus

v3.4.0 (Stanke et al. 2008). Annotations and designations of whether the orthologous genes were

found in complete single copy, duplicated, fragmented, or missing were evaluated using BUSCO

v5.2.2 (Manni et al. 2021) in `genome` mode. Genome size was estimated using k-mer

abundance calculated using KMC v3.2.1 (Kokot et al. 2017) and analyzed using GenomeScope

v.2.0 (Ranallo-Benavidez, 2020). Genome coverage was estimated using KAT v2.4.2 (Mapleson

et al. 2017) which uses k-mer abundance and spectra analysis to assess ploidy, coverage depth,

and amount of duplication in the assembly relative to the raw reads. Finally, taxonomic

assignment of each assembly scaffold or contig was determined by local alignment using

nucleotide-nucleotide BLAST v2.5.9+, `blastn` (Camacho et al. 2009) to the NCBI nt database

(accessed on 2017-06-05) and Diamond v.2.0.9.147, `diamond blastx` (Buchfink et al. 2021) to

the UniProt Reference Proteomes database (accessed on 2020-03). Local alignment results were

used to assign scaffolds and contigs to taxa using the blobtools v.2.6.1(Challis, et al. 2020)

taxrule function `bestsumorder` which assigns taxonomic identity first based on nucleotide

BLAST hit followed by the preoteome BLAST hit. Scaffold and contig coverage was determined

by mapping the raw reads back to the assembly using minimap2 v2.2-r1101 (Li, 2021). Results

from the BUSCO analyses, alignments to the nucleotide and proteome databases, and read

coverage were summarized using blobblurb (Sim, 2022).

*WGS Sample collection, DNA extraction, library prep, and sequencing*

We extracted and sequenced DNA from 84 *Diprion similis* individuals collected across

77 sites on six different pine hosts (Table S1). Our sampling scheme was chosen to maximize the

geographic and host range of available preserved samples, consistent with our overall goal of

evaluating broad-scale demographic patterns across the introduced range. All samples were

obtained from preserved larvae or adult females collected between 2001 and 2020 and stored in

100% ethanol at -20 °C until use. Individuals were dissected to avoid contamination from the

midgut (in the case of larvae) or eggs (in the case of adult females) and then DNA was extracted

using Qiagen DNeasy Tissue Kits (Qiagen Inc., Valencia, CA, USA). DNA concentrations were

then assessed using a Qubit 2.0 fluorometer (Invitrogen, Waltham, MA, USA).

Library preparation and next-generation sequencing were performed on all 84 samples at

Admera Health (South Plainfield, NJ, USA). Library prep was performed using KAPA

HyperPrep (Roche, Basel, Switzerland) kits. Each sample was sequenced using 150-bp paired-

end reads on an Illumina Novaseq 6000 S4 flowcell (Illumina, San Diego, CA).

*Data filtering: hard-genotype calls, contamination, and haploid males*

Raw, demultiplexed reads were first processed using Trimmomatic (v0.3; Bolger et al.

2014) to trim adapter sequences from the ends of reads. Reads were then aligned to the *Diprion*

*similis* reference genome using Bowtie2's end-to-end alignment (v2.2.3, Langmead and Salzberg

2012). We then used Samtools (v0.1.19; Li et al. 2009) to exclude reads that mapped to more

than one location in our reference genome.

Because downstream analyses assume diploidy for all samples and diprionid sawflies—

like all hymenopterans—have haplodiploid sex determination, we removed putative haploid

males from our dataset. However, most of our samples were preserved larvae, which we cannot

sex reliably, and pine-sawfly males can occasionally be diploid (Harper et al. 2016; Bagley et al.

2017). We therefore used heterozygosity to infer ploidy. To do so, we obtained hard-genotype

calls using mpileup from bcftools (v1.19, Li et al. 2011) and the -het option in vcftools (v1.19

Danacek et al. 2011). While processing these data, we found evidence of small amounts of

contamination in samples—indicated by skewed allele counts unlikely to be the result of true

heterozygosity. To address this, sites with skewed allele counts were flagged in each individual

as missing data for downstream filtering. We then removed any site where more than half the

individuals had missing data, retaining only sites with 5x individual depth of coverage and a

minimum base Phred score of 20. After filtering for contamination, we examined patterns of

heterozygosity across individuals, we excluded 20 individuals with <0.02 heterozygosity as

putative haploid males, for a final dataset of 64 diploid individuals (Table S2).

*ANGSD genotype-likelihood estimation*

To account for genotype uncertainty in downstream analyses—a recommended strategy

for analyzing WGS datasets with coverage as low as 1x (Lou et al. 2020) —we used ANGSD

(v0.933, Korneliussen et al. 2014). This program produces genotype-likelihood estimates in lieu

"hard" single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) calls, and these genotype likelihoods were used

for most downstream analyses (but see below). For our dataset, genotype likelihoods were

estimated after keeping sites where >50% of samples passed filters for minimum mapping

quality and base quality of 20, minor allele frequency > 0.05, minimum coverage depth of 1x,

and maximum coverage depth of 100x (to remove repetitive loci). We then pruned on linkage

disequilibrium calculated from genotype likelihoods using ngsLD (v1.1.1, Fox et al. 2019),

which estimates linkage disequilibrium across the genome to produce a list of unlinked SNPs.

With this list, we used ANGSD to estimate genotype likelihoods only for unlinked SNPs for use

in downstream analyses. However, two analyses—isolation by distance and heterozygosity (see

below)—required "hard" SNP calls instead of likelihoods. To facilitate this, ANGSD was re-run

with the -dobcf and -dogeno options to produce a bcf file with "hard" SNPs at the same sites as

the genotype-likelihood approach. This approach kept all the same sites as used in the genotype-

likelihood approach, as these sites were already filtered.

*Evaluation of discrete population structure: PCA and NgsAdmix*

Population structure within the introduced range of *D. similis* was inferred by two

individual-based approaches that use genotype likelihoods and are implemented as extensions of

the ANGSD platform. First, we used the program PCAngsd (v1.03, Meisner and Albrechtsen

2018) to estimate the genetic covariance matrix and perform a principal component analysis

(PCA) on low-coverage genotype-likelihood data. This approach allows visualization and

analysis of genetic clustering via admixture estimation from principal axes of genetic variation.

Based on patterns revealed in this and other structure analyses (see below and *Results*), we also

used the *lm* function of base R (version 4.2.0 R Core Team 2022) to model PC1 as a function of

geography (longitude of sample location). To infer the number of populations ($K$) based on the

PCA analysis, we chose the value of $K$ that was one fewer than the number of eigenvalues that

pass Velicier's minimum average partial (MAP) test, following (Shriner 2011). To explore an

alternative clustering solution, we also used the -admix command and the first 10 eigenvectors of

the PCA to estimate admixture proportions for each individual for $K=2$.

For our second approach to evaluating discrete population structure, we used NgsAdmix

(v33), which calculates individual admixture proportions from low-coverage NGS data by

accounting for uncertainty present in genotype likelihoods (Skotte et al. 2013). Because we have

no *a priori* prediction for $K$, we ran NgsAdmix with a range of $K$ values from 1 to 7, with 10

independent runs for each value of $K$. We then computed the average resulting likelihoods for

each $K$ value to evaluate the most likely optimal $K$ value. As was done for the PCA-based

approach, we also examined admixture proportions for the second-best clustering solution, $K=2$.

*Evidence of continuous population structure (isolation-by-distance)*

To determine whether there is evidence of isolation-by-distance (IBD) in the introduced

range, we first generated geographic and genetic matrices using SPAGEDI (v1.5b; Hardy &

Vekemans 2002). Because our individuals were not sampled from discrete populations, we

calculated pairwise genetic distances Rousset's â which is analogous to the $F_{ST}/(1 - F_{ST})$ ratio

(Rousset 2000). Briefly, for a pair of individuals I and j, Rousset's distance â is given by $a_{ij} =$

$(Q_w-Q_{ij})/(1 -Q_w)$, where $Q_{ij}$ is the probability of identity by state of gene copies between

individuals and $Q_w$ is the probability of identity within individuals (estimated from all pairs of

individuals in the sample). We calculated pairwise Rousset's â (Rousset 2000) using a set of

10,000 loci randomly downsampled from our "hard" SNP call data (see above) to comply with

the maximum number of loci allowed by SPAGEDI 1.5 This program also calculated a pairwise

linear geographic distance matrix between latitude and longitude coordinates of individuals. To

test for IBD, we used the genetic and geographic distance matrices and the mantel.randtest()

function from the ade4 package of R (v1.7, Dray and Dufour 2007) to perform a Mantel test

(Mantel 1967) with 10,000 permutations.

*Spatial patterns of heterozygosity*

To investigate how genetic diversity changes as a function of distance from the

hypothesized location of introduction, we used individual heterozygosity estimates using the

vcftools -het option on the "hard" genotype dataset (see above) as our measure of genetic

diversity. For spatial distance from the origin of the invasive population, we used New Haven,

CT (latitude: -73, longitude: 41.28) as the introduction site, in accordance with museum records

of the species invasion (Britton 1915). We then calculated distance in kilometers from New

Haven to each collection site using the geodist package in R (v0.0.7, Padgham et al. 2021). To

evaluate the relationship between heterozygosity and distance from CT, we the *lm* function of R

to fit a linear model to the data.

**Results**

Diprion similis de novo *genome assembly*

The *D. similis* iyDipSimi1.1 (NCBI project: JAJNQI01) haploid assembly was sequenced

to 100x coverage, producing an assembly size of 270.225 MB in 14 haploid chromosomes

(consistent with published karyotype descriptions, Rousselet et al. 1998), 81 scaffolds, and 93

total contigs (see Table S3). The final genome size was slightly larger than the GenomeScope

estimate based on k-mer abundance (Figure S1), though the larger than expected assembly was

unlikely due to the inclusion of duplicate fragments (Figure S2), but rather short unplaced

heterochromatic regions with an elevated GC content (Figure S3). In the final chromosome-

length assembly, the smallest scaffold necessary to make up 50% of the genome (N50) was

19.014 MB, and size of the smallest scaffold necessary to make up 90% of the genome (N90)

was 11.122MB (Figure S4). Completeness in terms of BUSCO annotation ranged from 91.5% of

the Hymenoptera v.10 orthologs to 95.6% of the Arthropod v.10 orthologs. Of the Hymenoptera

BUSCOs, all complete genes found in single copy (n = 5457 genes) or duplicated (n = 25) were

in assembled chromosomes with none found in unplaced contigs. Analysis of local alignments to

the NCBI nucleotide and UniProt Proteomes databases revealed no fragments from non-*D.*

*similis* species in the assembly (Figure S3, Table S4).

*WGS sequencing, haploid filtering, and genotype-likelihood estimation.*

After sequencing, we obtained an average of 24.09 +/- 13.3 (SD) million reads per

individual. An average of 22.59 +/- 12.84 of these reads mapped to the reference genome after

removing duplicates and paralogs, and these reads covered an average of 94.3% of the reference

genome. Following filtering for contamination, site depth, and base quality, we identified 22

putative haploid samples with markedly low (<0.02, Figure S5) heterozygosity that were

removed from downstream analyses (Table S2). For the remaining 64 samples we filtered sites

for mapping and base quality, minor allele frequency, minimum coverage of 1x, and maximum

coverage of 100x, resulting in genotype likelihoods for 728,627 variable sites. After pruning

based on linkage disequilibrium, we retained 352,385 genotype likelihoods for unlinked SNPs

for downstream analysis. An analogous dataset with "hard" genotyped SNPs at the same sites

was also used for IBD and heterozygosity analyses.

*Discrete population structure, isolation-by-distance, and heterozygosity*

Analyses using PCAangsd and NgsAdmix both selected $K$=1 as the optimal number of

genetic clusters in this dataset. For the PCA-based approach, $K$=1 was supported by the

observation that only two eigenvectors passed the MAP test (Shriner 2011). Visualization of

these two eigenvectors (principal components) indicates that much of the variation is explained

by PC1 (10.5% of overall variance, Figure 2A), which correlates strongly with geography (linear

model: $F = 69.2$, $P < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.527$, Figure 2B). PC2 appears to explain additional variation

among individuals sampled from the eastern portion of the range, closer to the presumed

invasion site, but no strong geographic patterns emerge from further dissecting this axis (Figure

1C). For the NgsAdmix analysis, $K$=1 was supported by likelihood values from 10 replicate runs,

which matched our results from PCAngsd (Figure S6).

To further evaluate the potential for substructure in the data, we also evaluated population

assignments (admixture proportions) for the next best clustering solution, $K=2$. Both PCAngsd

and NgsAdmix produced very similar admixture proportions, with a continuous transition in

admixture proportions between eastern and western groups (Figure S7). The lack of a discrete

break between the two groups for the $K=2$ clustering solution (Figure S7) is consistent with a

pattern of isolation-by-distance in a single continuous population (Miermans 2012).

To evaluate evidence for isolation-by-distance in the introduced range, we used Mantel

tests, which revealed that there was significant positive relationship between genetic distance and

geographic distance ($R^2 = 0.562$, $P < 0.0001$, Figure 3). Plotting pairwise genetic and geographic

distances also revealed some discontinuities in the IBD relationship, with two somewhat distinct

clusters of points (Figure 3A). The smaller cluster of points near 0 genetic distance and < 500 km

from each other represents the enriched sampling in the north-west edge of *D. similis*' range. The

discontinuity seen between this and the larger cloud of points in the IBD figure might therefore

be explained by gaps in sampling; increasing sampling east and south of these locations could

bridge this gap.

Finally, across the 64 diploid females, average observed heterozygosity was 0.186

(Figure S5). We found that heterozygosity was significantly correlated with geographic distance

from the presumed location of first introduction in New Haven, CT, USA ($F = -2.47$, $P = 0.0162$,

$R^2 = 0.075$), with individuals further from this point showing reduced diversity (Figure 3B).

**Discussion**

Analyses of population structure in successful biological invasions are essential for

understanding the demographic and evolutionary processes behind these "natural experiments"

(Lee 2002, Sakai et al. 2001, Yoshida et al. 2007). But accurate analysis of population structure

may require genomic datasets consisting of many unliked markers (Sherpa et al. 2018, Lewald et

al. 2021). Moreover, if detection of locations in the genome that have undergone recent positive

selection is a goal, whole-genome data are better suited to the task than reduced-representation

data (reviewed North et al. 2021). As a first step to developing *Diprion similis* as a model system

for invasion biology, we assembled a high-quality reference genome and generated low-coverage

WGS data for 64 diploid individuals sampled across the introduced range of *D. similis* in North

America. We found strong evidence for a single North American population of this species, with

a pattern of isolation-by-distance in the introduced range. Here, we discuss both the limitations

and implications of our data, while also highlighting future directions that leverage *D. similis* as

a model for investigating genomics of adaptation following biological introduction.

*Spatial patterns of genetic variation support a single-invasion scenario*

Our main purpose for describing population structure in North American *D. similis* was

to distinguish between single-invasion and multiple-invasion scenarios, an essential first step to

understanding how invasive populations adapted to a novel pine, *Pinus strobus*. We evaluated

three predictions for a single-invasion scenario. First, a single wave of invasion should yield

population structure with a single genetic cluster in the introduced range, while subsequent

invasions are readily identified as separate genetic groups (van Boheeman et al. 2017). Our

analyses identified $K=1$—a single genetic cluster—as the mostly likely number of populations

within the introduced range of *D. similis*. Further supporting a single-invasion scenario,

population assignments for the next-best clustering solution ($K=2$) produced a continuous

gradient of population membership rather than a discrete break between two isolated populations

(Figure 2A). Second, genetic relationships between individuals in the introduced range are

expected to follow a continuous isolation-by-distance (IBD) pattern only if a single invasion

occurred (Sherpa et al. 2018). This predicted pattern of IBD is evident in North American *D.*

*similis* (Figure 3A), with most admixture and gene flow occurring between spatially contiguous

areas throughout the range. This indicates that in the hundred years following a single

introduction, the introduced meta-population is at or near drift-migration equilibrium (Sherpa et

al. 2018). Third, in a single introduction scenario, genetic diversity is expected to decrease as the

invasion spreads away from the original point of introduction, due to small population sizes and

genetic drift at the edges of range expansions (Van Petegem et. al 2017, Biolozyt et al. 2005,

Hewitt 1993). Consistent with this, there is a subtle—but significant—decline in heterozygosity

with distance from the assumed point of introduction in New Haven, CT (Figure 3B).

While our data strongly support a single introduction scenario, several limitations of our

dataset should be considered. One limitation of our population structure analyses is that we have

not yet sampled populations in the ancestral range, making it impossible to evaluate potential

source populations for the North American *D. similis* invasion. Another limitation is that there

are several small, but potentially meaningful sampling gaps across the introduced range of *D.*

*similis* (Figure 1C). Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that there are genetically distinct

populations that we did not sample. However, with the exception of very recent appearances in

the northwestern USA (Looney et al. 2016), our samples span most of the North American range

of *D. similis*, and our sampling gaps were primarily located in the middle of this range. This type

of sampling gap—which would be expected to cause artificial discontinuities in allele

frequencies—should bias our results to detecting more populations, not fewer (Meirmans 2012).

Moreover, any unsampled populations should still be detectable via admixture with nearby

populations and via disruption of IBD and heterozygosity patterns, which we do not observe

apart from a minor discontinuity in our IBD plot (Figure 3A). Thus, even with some sampling

gaps, our data strongly support the historical description of this invasion (Zappe 1917, Middleton

1923, Codella et al. 1991): *D. similis* was first introduced somewhere near New Haven, CT

approximately 110 years ago, after which it rapidly spread over a substantial portion of eastern

North America.

*Why are single-introduction scenarios rare?*

406            Our main conclusion that the highly successful *D. similis* invasion likely stems from a

single introduction event contrasts with a large body of literature demonstrating that multiple-

invasion scenarios are common, and in some cases necessary for successful colonization (Blair et

al. 2012, Rius et al 2012, Rosenthal et al. 2008, Kolbe et al. 2007, reviewed Rius and Darling

2014). However, most studies evaluating population genomics of invasive species are in systems

with much more recent introduction events (<50 years) than the ones investigated here (>100

years), and there is some evidence that age of the invasive population may influence patterns of

population structure. For example, with a history of multiple invasions of different ages in

different areas, the Asian tiger mosquito *Aedes albopictus* offers insights on the relationship

between invasion age and population structure. Although *A. albopictus* colonized Pacific and

Indian Ocean islands more than a century ago, it was not recorded in Europe until much more

recently—Albania in 1979 and Italy in 1990—where it has since expanded across the continent

(Scholte and Schaffner 2007, Benedict et al. 2007). Recent work demonstrates that populations

from an older invasion on Reunion Island have a continuous IBD pattern, indicative of a single

introduction (Sherpa et al. 2019). In contrast, more recently established European populations

have a discontinuous pattern of population structure, indicative of multiple, more recent

introductions (Sherpa et al. 2018, Sherpa et al. 2019, Schmidt et al. 2020). One possible

explanation for differences in population structure between old vs. young invasions is that

increased trade globalization makes multiple-invasion scenarios more likely in recent years than

they were in the past (Seebens et al. 2015, Sardain et al. 2019).

426           A non-mutually exclusive hypothesis for explaining different patterns of population

structure in old vs. young invasions is that evidence of multiple introductions may get erased

over time. For example, an older invasive population could have had multiple introductions, but

with whole-sale extinction of early invasive populations and replacement by subsequent, more

successful introductions. From a genetic variation perspective, however, extinction and

replacement via a new introduction with limited admixture is essentially equivalent to a single-

invasion scenario. Alternatively, if there has been enough time and sufficient gene flow between

invading populations, secondary invasions may not be detectable from samples of modern

invasive populations, although samples from source populations—if available—may provide

some evidence of historical admixture. Overall, multiple-invasion scenarios may be much harder

to detect in older invasions (e.g., >100 years) due to the possibility that introduced populations or

source populations have since gone extinct. Fortunately, recent advances in museum genomics

(Parejo et al. 2020, reviewed Raxworthy and Smith 2021) may make it possible to resurrect these

lost populations. With good representation in natural history literature and museum collections—

and now a reference genome for mapping sequencing reads from degraded samples—*Diprion*

*similis* provides an excellent test case for using museum genomics to evaluate cryptic multiple-

invasion scenarios.

*Adaptation in single-invasion scenarios*

If *Diprion similis* arrived in a single introduction event as the data here suggest, it

remains unclear how this species had sufficient genetic variation to shift to white pine (*Pinus*

*strobus*) in North America. According to the genetic paradox of invasions, a single invasive

wave is expected to considerably reduce genetic diversity (Allendorf and Lundquist 2003,

Frankham 2005), thereby limiting the raw genetic material available for adapting to novel hosts.

Nevertheless, there are several potential mitigating factors that may explain how invasive

populations can adapt to novel environments despite limited genetic variation (Estoup et al.

2016). Here, we consider several non-mutually exclusive explanations that may apply to *D.*

*similis.* The most plausible of these may be that the introduced range provides no adaptive

challenge to the invading species. While *Neodiprion* pine sawfly species that do not ordinarily

oviposit on white pine experience increased egg (Bendall et al. 2017) and larval (CRL, personal

observation) mortality, the same may not be the case for *D. similis*. For example, unlike

*Neodiprion* females, *D. similis* females use resin and pulp from the pine to cover the exposed egg

(Zappe 1917, Bittner et al. 2019, Bendall et al. 2017). It is therefore possible that this difference

in oviposition behavior is a pre-adaptation for white pine use in *D. similis*. One way to test this

hypothesis would be to measure egg-laying success in European populations of *D. similis* that

have never been exposed to *P. strobus*.

Another mechanism that could account for a rapid host shift despite presumably limited

genetic variation is if novel environments in the invasive range releases phenotypic plasticity for

host use (Lande 2015, Funk 2008, Zenni et al. 2014). For example, *Pinus sylvestris* is considered

the primary host of *D. similis* in its native range, but it has been documented attacking a variety

of other pines throughout its range (Codella et al. 1991). Across this range, *P. sylvestris* is the

dominant and often sole pine species available for attack, however some locations—particularly

in mountainous regions of Europe—having much greater pine diversity (Jin et al. 2021). It is

therefore possible that *D. similis* populations subject to environments with greater diversity in

pine hosts have increased plasticity in host-use phenotypes. Therefore, if the North American

population came from a *D. similis* population with more generalized pine use, pre-existing

plasticity for host acceptance—possibly coupled with pre-adaptations for laying eggs in different

types of needles—may have facilitated rapid shifts to novel hosts. Testing this hypothesis will

require evaluating host preference and acceptance behaviors in potential source populations

within the native range of *D. similis*. Other genetic phenomena in founder populations—such as

epigenetics and purging of deleterious mutations (Estoup et al. 2016)—can also promote

persistence and adaptation in the invasive range. Ultimately, pairing the genomic resources

generated here with additional experimental work in native and invasive *D. similis* populations

would provide useful insights into the genetic mechanisms underlying host shifts in invasive

populations.

**Conclusion**

Overall, our results and discussion highlight the value of taking an integrative approach

to evaluating the history of invasions: while genomic data are valuable, their interpretation

hinges on their ecological and historical context. Here, we lay the groundwork for establishing

*Diprion similis* as a model for evaluating the demographic history and genetic underpinnings of

adaptation in biological invasions. Armed with the genomic resources and spatial patterns of

genetic variation presented here, future work can leverage two key advantages in this system: (1)

a rich collection of historical samples and data that will provide snapshots of genetic variation in

past *D. similis* populations, and (2) experimental tractability for connecting genetic variation to ecologically relevant traits and their impact on fitness. Ultimately, this work will answer pressing questions about prevalence of single invasion scenarios and consequences for adaptation to novel environments.

**Data Availability**

The *de novo* assembled reference genome can be found on NCBI (BioProject PRJNA784632). Additional data, including individual WGS sequences for all 64 samples, genotype-likelihood .beagle file, and hard-called genotype data in .vcf format can be found on Dryad repository upon publication.

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514     policies and views of USDA. Mention of trade names or commercial products in this publication

515     is solely for the purpose of providing specific information and does not imply recommendation

516     or endorsement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

517
518  **Figure 1: A)** Photo of late-instar *Diprion similis* larva on white pine. Photo by Jane Dostart. **B)**
519  Photo of *D. similis* adult female ovipositing eggs on white pine (*Pinus strobus*). **C)** Sampling
520  locations of *Diprion similis* in eastern North America (United States and Canada) used for WGS.
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522
**Figure 2: Results of PCAgsd analysis of population structure. A)** Principal component axes
of genetic variation from samples, as calculated by PCAngsd. The color shading of individual
points in both panels shows admixture proportion as determined by PCAngsd for K=2 and
analogous to the admixture proportions shown in Figure S7 Note that K=1 is the optimal
clustering solution, admixture proportions for K=2 are shown to highlight the lack of a discrete
break corresponding to two clusters. Panel A shows the component axes with highest
contribution of overall variance, with PC1 inverted to align better with geographic orientation.
B) PC1 as a function of longitude of origin for each sample, and these variables are significantly
correlated (linear model: $F = 69.2$, $P < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.5274$).

**A**

**B**

532
**Figure 3: Spatial patterns of genetic variation in North American *D. similis.* A)** Heatmap for
isolation by distance (IBD) between all samples in the introduced range. Axes measure pairwise
geographic and genetic distances in km and Rousset's â respectively. Localized density between
more-related individuals is indicated by warmer colors on the plot. Mantel tests indicate
significant IBD range-wide ($R^2 = 0.562$, $P < 0.0001$). These results indicate continuous isolation
by distance. **B)** Spatial pattern to genetic diversity from the assumed original point of
introduction in New Haven, CT. The Y-axis uses heterozygosity as a measure of genetic
diversity for each individual sample. The correlation between these variables is significant
(linear model: $F = -2.47$, $P = 0.0162$, $R^2 = 0.075$).

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