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Bracketing phenotypic limits of mammalian hybridization

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Abstract

An increasing number of mammalian species have been shown to have a history of hybridization and introgression based on genetic analyses. Only relatively few fossils, however, preserve genetic material and morphology must be used to identify the species and determine whether morphologically intermediate fossils could represent hybrids. Because dental and cranial fossils are typically the key body parts studied in mammalian paleontology, here we bracket the potential for phenotypically extreme hybridizations by examining uniquely preserved cranio-dental material of a captive hybrid between gray and ringed seals. We analyzed how distinct these species are genetically and morphologically, how easy it is to identify the hybrids using morphology, and whether comparable hybridizations happen in the wild. We show that the genetic distance between these species is more than twice the modern human-Neanderthal distance, but still within that of morphologically similar species-pairs known to hybridize. In contrast, morphological and developmental analyses show gray and ringed seals to be highly disparate, and that the hybrid is a predictable intermediate. Genetic analyses of the parent populations reveal introgression in the wild, suggesting that gray-ringed seal hybridization is not limited to captivity. Taken together, gray and ringed seals appear to be in an adaptive radiation phase of evolution, showing large morphological differences relative to their comparatively modest genetic distance. Because morphological similarity does not always correlate with genetic distance in nature, we postulate that there is considerable potential for mammalian hybridization between phenotypically disparate taxa.

44

Introduction

Although hybridization has been extensively examined in the context of speciation, the role of interbreeding leading to introgression and admixture of phenotypic traits is attracting increasing attention (Ackermann et al., 2006; Mallet, 2007; Abbott et al., 2013; Polly et al., 2013; Pennisi, 2016; Árnason et al., 2018; Lamichhaney et al., 2018). In studies of human evolution, genetic

50   evidence has implicated introgression between different lineages of *Homo* (Green et al., 2010;

51   Meyer et al., 2012), and an increasing number of mammalian fossils are suggested to retain

52   signs of interbreeding by palaeogenomic studies (Enk et al., 2011; Fu et al., 2011; Wecek et al.,

53   2017). Hybridization can complicate the assignment of fossil specimens to specific taxa

54   (Trinkaus et al., 2003; Trinkaus, 2007; Polly et al., 2013; Martinón-Torres et al., 2017), and

55   currently it remains unclear how phenotypically different or disparate taxa might be expected to

56   hybridize. Even if hybrids between morphologically dissimilar species have reduced fertility,

57   they may still be preserved in the fossil record, especially if hybridization is fairly common as in

58   active hybrid zones (e.g., Mallet, 2007; Polly et al., 2013; Shurtliff, 2013; Pallares et al., 2016).

59   To assess the maximum morphological range of potential hybridization in the fossil record,

60   analyses of hybrids between morphologically disparate taxa are required. One such

61   hybridization, with uniquely preserved cranial material, has been reported to have occurred in

62   Stockholm zoo in 1929 between two mammalian species belonging to different genera; the gray

63   seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and the ringed seal (*Pusa hispida*) (Lönnberg, 1929). This incident

64   raises questions as to how distinct these species are genetically, how distinct these species are

65   phenotypically, how easy it is to identify the hybrids using morphology, and whether

66   comparable hybridizations happen in the wild. Addressing all these questions together allows

67   one to estimate the 'hybrid bracket', or the overall potential for hybridization in mammalian

68   evolution.

69

70   **Results**

71   **Validating the seal hybrid and the genetic context of the hybridization.** The seal born in

72   1929 was immediately concluded to be a hybrid because at the time the seal pond housed only

73   three adult seals; two male gray seals and one female ringed seal (Figure 1). The newborn was

74   found dead and although no malformations were reported (Lönnberg, 1929), both biological and

75   husbandry related causes of death remain a possibility. First, to verify the hybridization and

76   validate the identity of the museum specimen, we sequenced its genome (see Materials and

77   Methods, Table supp. 1) together with the genomes of its parental species, Baltic gray seals (n =

78   10) and Baltic ringed seals (n = 9) (see Materials and Methods). A genetic admixture analysis

79   shows that the hybrid shares roughly 50% of its genome with both species, confirming that it is

80   indeed a hybrid between the gray and the ringed seal (Figure 1C).

81   The exact phylogenetic position and distinctiveness of the gray seal in relation to the

82   ringed seal and other related taxa has been problematic (Fulton and Strobeck, 2010; Nyakatura

83   and Bininda-Emonds, 2012; Berta et al., 2018), leaving open the question how genetically

84   distinct the species really are. To approximate the genetic context of the seal hybridization, we

85   computed a genome-wide estimate of neutral genetic distance between gray and ringed seals

86   (see Materials and Methods), and contrasted this with species pairs well known to hybridize;

87   lion-tiger (*Panthera leo–P. tigris*) and domestic donkey–horse (*Equus asinus–E. ferus*) (see

88   Materials and Methods, Table supp. 2). Lion and tigers readily hybridize in captivity (Vella et

89   al., 1999), and as both they and seals are members of Carnivora, provide an appropriate

90   comparison. Whereas these carnivoran species-contrasts have the same number of chromosomes

91   [2n = 32 in seals (Corfman and Richart, 1964; Árnason, 1970) and 2n = 38 in felids (Vella et al.,

92   1999)], donkey and horse differ in their chromosome number and their hybrids, known as mules

93   and hinnies, are generally infertile [2n = 62 in donkeys and 2n = 64 in horses (Jónsson et al.,

94   2014)]. To place the results in the context of *Homo* lineage, human and Neanderthal were also

95   included in the analysis, as were some additional outgroups (Table supp. 2).

96   To obtain a robust proxy of neutral sequence evolution, we used the fourfold degenerate

97   sites of 4,045 protein-coding genes, present as single copy in each species (see Materials and

98 Methods). Analyses of 623,391 fourfold degenerate sites from genes orthologous for all the

99 eight species show that the gray-ringed seal genetic distance is roughly 49% and 26% of the

100 lion-tiger and donkey-horse distances, respectively (Figure 2, Table 1). These distances appear

101 robust when larger or smaller sets of species are compared (Table supps 3, 4). The

102 comparatively short genetic distance between the gray and ringed seals is noteworthy because

103 unlike in the hybridizing lion-tiger and donkey-horse comparisons, the dental and cranial

104 morphologies of the two seal species have historically warranted a genus level distinction

105 (Fulton and Strobeck, 2010; Nyakatura and Bininda-Emonds, 2012; Berta et al., 2018) in

106 contrast to the species level distinctions of the lion-tiger and donkey-horse pairs.

107 Even though the gray-ringed seal genetic distance is shorter than the carnivore and

108 perissodactyl contrasts (Figure 2), it is still considerably longer than the hominin contrast.

109 Compared to the modern human-Neanderthal distance, the gray-ringed seal distance is roughly

110 two and a half times greater (258%, Table 1), suggesting that many fossil hominins are within

111 the genetic hybrid bracket. Since several of the potentially hybridizing hominins are also

112 phenotypically different, next we analyzed the dental and cranial distinctiveness of the two seal

113 species and their hybrid. These phenotypic structures are the key features in many

114 paleontological studies.

115

116 **Analyzing the teeth of the hybrid.** Mammalian tooth shape is fully formed prior to function

117 with no remodeling other than wear after mineralization, thereby providing relatively direct

118 information about development. In addition, seals have vestigial deciduous dentitions and are

119 born with an erupting permanent dentition. Even though the newborn hybrid was found dead,

120 the precocious state of seal dental development allows us to compare the hybrid with adult seals

121 (Figure 1C). The original description of the hybrid by Lönnberg (1929), while detailed, was not

122   quantitative and therefore we 3D-reconstructed the hybrid dentition from microCT scans (see

123   Materials and Methods, Figure 3A, Figure supp. 1). Here we focus on the lower postcanine

124   dentitions as they show the largest range of variation and have been studied previously

125   (Jernvall, 2000; Salazar-Ciudad and Jernvall, 2010). Whereas seal dentitions are relatively

126   derived from the basic carnivoran pattern, seal postcanine morphologies are reminiscent of

127   various pretribosphenic patterns in mammalian evolution, classified to different families and

128   orders (Luo, 2007; Grossnickle and Polly, 2013).

129   The overall morphologies of the gray and ringed seal postcanine teeth are markedly

130   different. Ringed seal teeth have three to five slender cusps, and the teeth are generally more

131   similar along the jaw (Figure 1B, Figure 3A, Table supp. 5). In contrast, especially the anterior

132   postcanine teeth of the gray seal have large, fang-shaped central cusps with small, variably

133   present accessory cusps (Figure 1B, Figure 3A, Table supp. 5). These morphological differences

134   reflect the use of smaller fish and invertebrate foods by ringed seals compared to gray seals that,

135   in addition to fish are known to prey on mammals (Stringell et al., 2015; van Neer et al., 2015).

136   Because standard morphometric methods cannot be effectively used to compare teeth with

137   different numbers of tooth cusps, we quantified the shapes by using a top-cusp angle, a measure

138   of relative cusp height used previously in the analyses of seal dentitions (see Materials and

139   Methods) (Jernvall, 2000; Salazar-Ciudad and Jernvall, 2010).

140   The results show that the hybrid teeth are intermediate between a sample ($n = 130$) of the

141   parent species by having relatively large central cusps, but also relatively prominent accessory

142   cusps (Figure 3A, Figure supp. 2). The distinct and intermediate morphology of the hybrid is

143   most readily visible in the anterior postcanines (P2 and P3) in which the species differences are

144   also the greatest due to the stronger anteroposterior gradation in the gray seal dentition (Figure

145   3A, B, Figure supp. 2). In addition to shape, tooth size also appears intermediate between the

146 gray and ringed seal (Figure 3A). Because of the intermediate cusp morphologies of the hybrid,

147 next we examined what kind of developmental changes might drive the observed patterns.

148

149 **Developmental basis of the hybrid teeth.** Genetic regulation of mammalian tooth development

150 is highly conserved (Jernvall and Thesleff, 2012), and reiterative activation of signaling centers,

151 called secondary enamel knots, appear to direct cusp development in all studied mammals

152 (Jernvall and Thesleff, 2012). Consequently, computational modeling of genetic interactions

153 and tissue biomechanics, based on empirical data on mouse tooth development, has been used to

154 model embryological development of the teeth of rodent species (Harjunmaa et al., 2014;

155 Renvoisé et al., 2017), as well as seal teeth (Salazar-Ciudad and Jernvall, 2010). Since neither

156 seal tooth development nor hybridization is amenable to experimentation, we examined whether

157 the hybrid morphology could be produced by modeling development.

158 First, we generated virtual ringed and gray seal tooth rows (using real population mean

159 shapes, see Materials and Methods) using the ToothMaker-software (Harjunmaa et al., 2014;

160 Renvoisé et al., 2017) (see Materials and Methods). Setting three model parameters to different

161 values was sufficient to model the differences between gray and ringed seal teeth; inhibitor

162 (*Inh*), epithelial growth rate (*Egr*), and anterior bias (*Abi*). These parameters, by regulating the

163 dynamics of development, affect the spacing of cusps, the pointedness of cusps, and the

164 anterior-posterior symmetry of teeth, respectively (Figure supp. 3A, see Materials and

165 Methods). Changes along the tooth row were produced by a constant change in *Egr* in ringed

166 seal models and a constant change in *Egr* and *Inh* in gray seal models (Table supp. 6, see

167 Materials and Methods). The constant parameter changes not only parsimoniously account for

168 well recognized gradual shape changes along the tooth row (Butler, 1939; Van Valen, 1962;

169 Bateson, 1984), but also agree with the inhibitory cascade model that predicts a constant change

170   in tooth size proportions along the jaw (Kavanagh et al., 2007).

171   To mimic the hybridization between gray and ringed seals, the development of each tooth

172   along the jaw was simulated after adjusting each of the three parameters separating the two

173   species. For each parameter we used either the average parameter value (assuming no

174   dominance) or value adjusted 10% towards each of the parents. Additionally, we simulated teeth

175   by keeping one or two of the parameters at the parent values. We then simulated tooth

176   development using all these parameter value combinations (see Materials and Methods, Figure

177   supp. 3B, Table supps 6–8).

178   The resulting simulated tooth shapes show that the hybrid cusp patterns can be produced

179   by averaging the three parameters between the modeled gray and ringed seals (Figure 3C).

180   Furthermore, the top-cusp angles of this simulated hybrid tooth row fall between the parent

181   shapes similarly to the real hybrid (Figure 3D, Figure supp. 3B, Table supps 7, 8), suggesting

182   that the regulatory principles of tooth shape are largely conserved between the two seal species.

183   A key parameter differentiating the gray and ringed seal teeth that is also required to be

184   closest to the average between the parents is the inhibitor (*Inh*), as otherwise the simulated

185   hybrid would have the top-cusp angle close to one of the parents (Figure 3D, Table supps 7, 8,

186   Figure supp. 3B). Experiments on developing mouse teeth have identified sonic hedgehog

187   (SHH) as one candidate molecule for inhibition of new enamel knots and cusps (Harjunmaa et

188   al., 2014). However, because cusp spacing can be altered by tinkering with the activator-

189   inhibitor balance of enamel knots through several molecules, these results do not necessarily

190   implicate a single gene underlying each parameter. Rather, regardless of whether tooth shape is

191   driven by a large number of loci or relatively few loci with major phenotypic effects (for

192   discussion, see Pallares et al., 2016), our simulation results are strongly suggestive that the

193   hybrid dentition is both phenotypically and developmentally a predictable intermediate between

194   the species.

195

196   **Analyzing the cranium of the hybrid.** Unlike the dentition, the cranium of the newborn hybrid

197   does not allow direct comparison to adult seals. However, differences in cranium morphology

198   can be compared using geometric morphometrics across species and age groups (Klingenberg,

199   2010), and we digitized 46 3D-landmarks from newborn to adult gray and ringed seals (Figure

200   supp. 4, Table supp. 9, $n = 116$, Movie supp. 1, see Materials and Methods) to depict overall

201   changes in skull shape.

202   The results show that gray and ringed seal crania have distinct developmental trajectories,

203   and the newborn crania from each species are already well separated in the morphospace with

204   no overlap ($p < 0.0001$, permutation test on Procrustes distance with 10,000 rounds, Figure 4).

205   The hybrid cranium is positioned between the two species, and in the proximity of the geometric

206   morphometric mean of newborn gray and ringed seals (Figure 4). Therefore, as is the case for

207   the dentition, the overall morphology of the cranium appears to be an intermediate between the

208   species, a result agreeing with recent results on hybrids between different mouse strains (Warren

209   et al., 2018).

210   Examining the details of cranial shape shows that the first two principal components

211   distinguish features that separate the two species (explaining 61.6% of total variance) while the

212   third component captures some mixed traits common to both of them (explaining 7.5% of total

213   variance) (Figure supp. 5A). The hybrid differs from the geometric intermediate by having a

214   shorter snout, narrower zygomatic arches and a more elongated braincase (Figure supp. 5B, C),

215   agreeing with the original description reporting that some details of the hybrid cranial

216   morphology are closer to one, or the other species (Lönnberg, 1929). We note, however, that the

217   actual parents of the hybrid are not preserved, and thus some details of the morphology could

218   represent one of the individual parents. Another factor affecting cranial shape is pronounced

219   sexual dimorphism present in gray seals but not in ringed seals (Figure 4), although we did not

220   detect dimorphism in newborn crania ($p = 0.485$ for gray seals and $p = 0.839$ for ringed seals,

221   permutation tests on Procrustes distances with 10,000 rounds). Overall, the intermediate cranial

222   and dental features of the seal hybrid analyzed suggest that a perfectly intermediate fossil

223   specimen between two genera could potentially be a hybrid.

224

225   **Detecting hybridization in the wild.** Finally, because the grey-ringed seal hybrid was born in

226   captivity, in itself it does not imply that comparable hybridizations happen in the wild.

227   However, as is the case for mammals in general (Polly et al. 2013; Shurtliff, 2013; Árnason et

228   al., 2018; Warren et al., 2018), several seal species are well established as hybridising in the

229   wild, including documentation of fertile intergeneric hybrids (Franco-Trecu et al., 2016), and a

230   living intergeneric hybrid between the dentally disparate harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*)

231   and hooded seal (*Cystophora cristata*) (Kovacs et al., 1997). Furthermore, behavioural

232   observations have documented attempted matings by a wild gray seal male with harbour seal

233   females (*Phoca vitulina*) (Wilson, 1975).

234   To estimate potential interbreeding in the history of wild gray and ringed seals, we

235   examined introgression using the Patterson's D-statistics approach (Green et al., 2010). In

236   addition to Baltic gray seals and Baltic ringed seals, we sequenced genome wide data from

237   Saimaa ringed seals ($n = 12$, the Weddell seal was the outgroup, see Materials and Methods).

238   Saimaa ringed seals are a suitable contrast for the analyses (Figure 5A) because they have been

239   isolated from the Baltic for approximately 9,500 years, with no documented presence of gray

240   seals in Lake Saimaa (Valtonen et al., 2012; Ukkonen et al., 2014). The results show that Baltic

241   ringed seals have a statistically significant excess of derived alleles shared with the gray seal

242 compared to the Saimaa ringed seals (Figure 5B, Table supp. 10). We consider these results to

243 be at least suggestive of interbreeding occurring in the Baltic between gray and ringed seals, and

244 it is plausible that many seal populations and species will exhibit gene flow comparable to that

245 in bears (Kumar et al., 2017) and horses (Jónsson et al., 2014). Taken together, the captive gray-

246 ringed seal specimen can be considered to be a representative example of a phenotypically

247 disparate hybridization.

248

Discussion

250 Gray and ringed seals have sufficiently morphologically different dentitions that, if they were to

251 be discovered as unknown fossils, at least a genus level distinction could easily be justified. Yet,

252 the combination of our genomic, phenomic, and developmental, analyzes show that these

253 species can, and are likely to hybridize and that the resulting phenotype is a predictable

254 combination of the two species. In more general terms, this hybrid bracket is indicative of the

255 conservation of developmental mechanisms that tinker with quantitative traits. Whereas the

256 overall conservation of developmental signaling in tooth development across the whole of jawed

257 vertebrates is well established (Fraser et al., 2009; Jernvall and Thesleff, 2012), our results

258 suggest interspecies and higher level conservation of the regulatory architecture underlying

259 dental form. Previous reports have found increased occurrences of supernumerary teeth in

260 mammalian hybrids (Goodwin, 1998; Ackermann et al., 2006), which could indicate that there

261 is a point of divergence at which the developmental regulation begins to lose canalization. Loss

262 of developmental regulation underlying extra teeth is supported by the frequent presence of

263 supernumerary teeth in mice with null mutations affecting tooth development (Jernvall and

264 Thesleff, 2012). Supernumerary teeth are relatively common in seal populations (Cruwys and

265 Friday, 2006; Miller et al. 2007), but these are usually attributed to relaxed selection due to the

266   lack of refined occlusion in seals (Cruwys and Friday, 2006; Miller et al. 2007; Jernvall and

267   Thesleff, 2012). The potential role of interbreeding in the occurrence of extra teeth in seals

268   remains to be determined.

269   In the case of paleontological research where phenotypic analyses are the basis for

270   taxonomic inferences, our results suggest that many closely related genera could potentially

271   hybridize, and that intermediates between distinct species may be hybrids themselves. The large

272   morphological differences relative to the relatively modest genetic distance between gray and

273   ringed seals are suggestive of an adaptive radiation phase of evolution, and we postulate that

274   phenotypically disparate hybridizations are most likely to be observed in such radiations. In

275   itself, hybridization between species has been also proposed to facilitate adaptive radiations

276   (Seehausen, 2004; Warren et al., 2018). Finally, in our case, the hybrid seal was of the first

277   generation, and continuing interbreeding would result in segregation of traits, something that

278   might appear as a mosaic mixture of traits in the fossil record (Warren et al., 2018). With

279   advancing understanding of the developmental basis of organ form, it may be possible to

280   provide predictions of potential hybrids, even in cases where the phenotypic differences are

281   substantial.

282

Materials and Methods

284   **Specimen preparation.** The hybrid was a newborn and although the crown morphogenesis of

285   the permanent teeth was completed, the teeth were erupting and only partially mineralized. Seal

286   deciduous dentition is vestigial. The right side dentition was removed from the jaw by Lönnberg

287   (1929), and most of the teeth were cracked or split into halves during storage. The skull, jaws

288   and isolated teeth were microCT scanned using a custom-built microtomography system

289   (Nanotom 180 NF, phoenix|X-ray System and Service GmbH, General Electric, Wunstorf,

290   Germany) at the Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Finland. The voxel size was

291   32.1 μm for the skull and 16.6 μm for the tooth row. Volume data were processed in Avizo 9.0

292   (FEI Visualization Sciences Group) and surfaces were extracted and teeth segmented from the

293   jaw using Artec Studio 9.0 (Artec 3D). Cracked tooth halves were manually reattached using

294   Artec Studio 9.0. The tooth halves were joined together without deforming the meshes (Figure

295   supp. 1). Skull images and drawings are from specimens in Finnish Museum of Natural History

296   (Helsinki, Finland) and partly for *Homo* from (Tattersall and Schwartz, 1998).

297

298   **Seal genetic data.** Hybrid DNA was isolated from the pulpa of a poscanine tooth that had fallen

299   from the specimen in storage using NucleoMag kit (Macherey-Nagel GmbH & Co, Germany).

300   The same method was used to isolate DNA from Baltic gray seal, Baltic ringed, and Saimaa

301   ringed seal muscle tissue samples. The Baltic seal samples were obtained from the collections of

302   the Saimaa Ringed Seal Genome Project, University of Helsinki, and Natural Resources

303   Institute Finland, whereas the Saimaa samples originated from the collections of the University

304   of Eastern Finland, which has a permission from Finnish environmental authorities for taking

305   possession of and storing tissues of the Saimaa ringed seal (permission number: Dnro

306   VARELY/3480/2016). All libraries and sequencing were performed at the DNA Sequencing

307   and Genomics Laboratory, Institute of Biotechnology, University of Helsinki, Finland. The

308   hybrid seal genome was sequenced with 2 separate runs of Illumina HiScanSQ platform and 11

309   separate runs of Illumina MiSeq platform to ca. 100X raw sequencing coverage (Table supp. 1).

310   The base calls in the Illumina HiScanSQ platform were converted into text format (FASTA-

311   format with individual base quality scores) using the CASAVA toolkit (bcl2fastq version 1.8.3)

312   provided by the manufacturer. The Illumina MiSeq platform employed a primary analysis

313   software called MiSeq Reporter post-run that produced the base calls in text format.

314   For all the Illumina reads, base call accuracy and read length filtering (adapter cutoff) was

315   performed with cutadapt (Martin, 2011) using minimum accepted base call accuracy of 90% and

316   minimum post-filtering read length of 75 bp. The Weddell seal (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) draft

317   genome (Broad Institute) was used as a reference genome for the downstream genetic distances

318   analysis. The statistics and downloads for this reference are available at:

319   http://software.broadinstitute.org/allpaths-lg/blog/?p=647.

320

321   **Admixture and introgression analyses.** Short read data for Hybrid, Baltic gray seal, Baltic

322   ringed seal, and Saimaa ringed seal were mapped to the Weddell seal reference genome.

323   Similarly, the reference Weddell seal individual's short read data was mapped to its reference

324   genome. The mapping was conducted using bwa mem (v. 0.7.15), samtools rmdup (v. 1.3.1) and

325   GATK IndelRealigner (v. 3.7). The resulting bam files were used for introgression and

326   admixture analyses.

327   To examine the hybrid, an admixture analysis was carried using NgsAdmix (Skotte et al.,

328   2013) and the pipeline at: http://www.popgen.dk/software/index.php/NgsAdmix. To reduce

329   computational burden, a random sample of 3.6 million markers (10% of the data) were used to

330   reduce the computation burden. NgsAdmix was run 10 times with K=2 clusters on the hybrid,

331   gray and ringed seals. Each of these runs converged to identical clustering.

332   Introgression was studied using Patterson's D-statistics (Green et al., 2010) that, other

333   than requiring the ancestral population to be randomly mating, is robust to variables such as

334   variations in population size (Durand et al., 2011). D-statistics was calculated by abbababa2

335   module of ANGSD (Korneliussen et al., 2014) using the first 1,000 scaffolds of the Weddell

336   genome (over 50% of the genome) and the default pipeline at:

337   http://www.popgen.dk/angsd/index.php/Abbababa2. To examine individual differences, the D-

338   statistics were calculated for each Baltic individual in addition to the Baltic sample. The Saimaa

339   ringed seals were set as P1, Baltic ringed seals as P2, and Baltic gray seals as P3. The aligned

340   sequences are available through the European Nucleotide Archive under accession number

341   PRJEB25679.

342

343   **Genetic distances.** To obtain a relatively robust and comparable measure of genetic distances

344   between the hybridizing species pairs, we analyzed fourfold degenerate (ffd) sites from a large

345   number of orthologous genes. As substitutions on ffd sites do not alter the encoded amino acid,

346   they can be considered a proxy of the neutral evolutionary process and thus be relatively free of

347   biases due to selection. A list of single-copy human genes and their orthologs in cat, dog, horse

348   and chimpanzee were fetched from Ensembl BioMart (v. 83) (Kinsella et al., 2011). 4,826

349   complete gene sets with unambiguous orthology ("Homology Type" is "ortholog_one2one";

350   "Orthology confidence" is "high") were retained and, for each reference species, nucleotide and

351   peptide sequences of every transcript were fetched using the Ensembl REST API (Yates et al.,

352   2014). Using last (v. 658) (Kiełbasa et al., 2011), scaffold-level genome assemblies of tiger,

353   Weddell seal and donkey were aligned against the genomes of cat, dog and horse, respectively.

354   Lift-over chains were built using the Kent source utilities (Kent et al., 2002). Short read data for

355   donkey and lion were mapped to the horse and tiger genomes using bwa mem (v. 0.7.15),

356   samtools rmdup (v. 1.3.1) and GATK IndelRealigner (v. 3.7) (Li and Durbin, 2009; McKenna et

357   al., 2010). Locally generated short read data for Baltic gray seal and Baltic ringed seal were

358   mapped to the Weddell seal genome. The data for the Neanderthal human individual were

359   obtained as bam alignment files. Data sources are listed in Table supp. 2.

360   The gene annotations were divided into individual coding exons, removing split codons

361   where necessary, and the exon coordinates in reference species (human, cat, dog, horse) were

362   transferred to related non-reference genomes using CrossMap (v. 0.2.4) (Zhao et al., 2013). For

363   each gene transcript, exons were independently extracted from the non-reference genomes using

364   samtools (v. 1.3.1) and matched against the reference peptide sequences using Pagan's (v. 0.61)

365   (Löytynoja et al., 2012) translated pileup alignment. The resulting back-translated nucleotide

366   alignments were flattened and degapped, combining all successfully extracted exons into one

367   sequence. For species with bam alignment data (donkey, gray and ringed seal, Neanderthal), the

368   genome regions surrounding the exons were reconstructed by placing observed sequence

369   changes to the genome sequences of horse, Weddell seal and human. For each exon separately,

370   variants were inferred with samtools mpileup and bcftools call (v. 1.3.1), and then placed to the

371   genome sequences with vcfutils vcf2fq, requiring sequencing depth of 10 or higher. The exon

372   regions of each transcript were extracted and combined into one sequence.

373   Sequence data were obtained for 4,329 genes. These sequences were aligned, selecting the

374   longest transcripts, with Pagan's translated pileup alignment. To remove artefacts of low quality

375   sequence (for example, due to assembly errors), resulting multiple sequence alignments were

376   filtered and regions where two neighboring codons contain more than one non-identical base

377   among all the study species were masked. For different species sets, gene sequence alignments

378   of at least 100 columns in length after filtering and removal of sites with missing data were

379   concatenated, and ffd sites were extracted using R package rphast (v. 1.6.5) (Hubisz et al.,

380   2010). Pairwise genetic distances were computed using R package ape (v. 4.0) (Paradis et al.,

381   2004) and model T92, and phylogenetic trees (Figure 2B) inferred with RAxML (v. 8.2.9)

382   (Stamatakis, 2006) using model GTRGAMMA. In addition, we measured the distances using all

383   the codon third sites, and the relative distances remained largely the same.

384   The species set analyzed are: all twelve species, eight species known to hybridize, the two

385   seals with each pair of hybridizing species. The numbers of input genes, codons and ffd sites as

386 well as the pairwise genetic distances for different species sets are given in Table 1 and Tables

387 supp. 3, 4.

388

389 **Dental material and analyses.** Baltic gray and ringed seal material was used in comparisons to

390 the hybrid as the parents were reported to be from the Baltic Sea (Dataset supp. 1, Table supp.

391 5). Postcanine teeth of seals are laterally compressed resembling early mammalian

392 morphologies, and the lateral views capture most of the shape variation (Jernvall, 2000). Images

393 were taken from the lingual views from a distance (approximately ten times the length of the

394 tooth row) and the number of cusps and top-cusp angles were tabulated using ImageJ (version

395 1.51). The angle captures the relative height of the tallest cusp, and correlates with cusp number

396 because cusp spacing and number are developmentally linked (Jernvall, 2000; Salazar-Ciudad

397 and Jernvall, 2010). For teeth that had only one or two cusps, the line was drawn to the

398 maximum anterior or distal ends at the crown base. We tabulated the presence of all cusps,

399 including small incipient cusplets (arrowheads in Figure supp. 1B). All the measurements

400 reported are from the right side. The pattern of results remains the same for the left side. Of the

401 65 gray and 65 ringed seal jaws studied, angle measurements were excluded from teeth with

402 substantially cracked or worn cusp tips. We also excluded jaws with anomalies such as extra

403 teeth. A sample of gray and ringed seal teeth were imaged twice and measured to confirm the

404 robustness of the angle measurements (mean absolute error = 1.0 and 1.5, SD = 0.92 and 1.08, n

405 = 40 and 46 teeth for gray and ringed seals, respectively). To test how intermediate the hybrid is

406 between the species, we calculated average top-cusp angles between each gray-ringed seal pair,

407 and tabulated the probability of obtaining the hybrid value from the gray-ringed seal averages

408 (Figure 3B, Figure supp. 2). For visualization, dental specimens were scanned with PlanScan

409 laser scanner (PlanMeca, Helsinki, Finland).

410

Developmental modeling of teeth. We used ToothMaker (Harjunmaa et al., 2014) to simulate

seal tooth development. The model integrates experimentally inferred genetic interactions with

tissue biomechanics to simulate tooth development (Salazar-Ciudad and Jernvall, 2010), and

here we used a version that had been experimentally explored in connection with mouse and

vole molar development (Harjunmaa et al., 2014; Renvoisé et al., 2017). We focused on three

parameters to simulate development of seal dentitions. To regulate spacing of cusps, the key

difference between gray and ringed seals, we adjusted the strength of the enamel knot-secreted

inhibition of enamel knot formation (parameter *Inh*). Experimental evidence on mouse molar

development has shown how adjusting inhibition of new enamel knots results in quantitative

changes in cusp spacing (Harjunmaa et al., 2014). Another strategy to alter cusp initiation would

be to adjust the activator (Harjunmaa et al., 2012), but here we prefer the inhibitor due to the

experimental data (Harjunmaa et al., 2012; 2014), and because increasing inhibition alone,

which leads to larger spacing of cusps as in the gray seal, does not inhibit growth directly (only

indirectly by inhibiting new enamel knots). The other two parameters used to simulate the

species differences are epithelial growth (*Egr*) and anterior bias (*Abi*). Egr affects the relative

growth of the epithelium and pointedness of cusps, and Abi the anterior extension of the tooth

germ; both have been found previously to account for variation in species differences (Salazar-

Ciudad and Jernvall, 2010; Harjunmaa et al., 2014; Renvoisé et al., 2017). Lateral biases (*Lbi*

and *Bbi*) affect lateral expansion of the tooth and indirectly cusp position laterally (Renvoisé et

al., 2017). Because seals have laterally compressed teeth, these parameters were kept constant.

One candidate gene for the lack of lateral expansion in seals is a transcription factor Foxi3

(Jussila et al., 2015), as *Foxi3* haploinsufficient dogs have seal like lower molars (Kupczik et

al., 2017). All the used parameter values are listed in the Table supp. 6. Top-cusp angle

measurements were done using ToothMaker and manually (Figure supp. 3B). We modeled gray

435   and ringed seal tooth rows by making constant parameter changes from tooth-to-tooth to mimic

436   gradual shape changes along the jaw. All the simulations were run for the same number of

437   iterations.

438   To simulate hybridization, for each tooth, we averaged the parameter values between the

439   species, adjusted the averages 10% towards each of the parents, or used the gray or ringed seal

440   value in different combinations (Figure supp. 3B, Table supp. 7). These different combinations

441   basically simulate how additively the parameters function, but do not imply that each parameter

442   would have one underlying locus. Rather, we consider the simulations to approximate the

443   overall developmental effect of the genetic backgrounds. ToothMaker software, is freely

444   available for Windows, MacOS, and Linux (available from the authors and with default seal

445   parameters at https://github.com/jernvall-lab/ToothMaker).

446

447   **Analysis of the crania**. 31 ventral and 22 dorsal 3D landmark coordinates were acquired from

448   skulls of complete ontogenetic series (from newborns to adults) of gray and ringed seals from

449   the collections of Finnish Museum of Natural History (Helsinki, Finland) using a Microscribe

450   G2X digitiser with 0.2 mm accuracy (Immersion). These data were merged together into a full

451   configuration of 46 landmarks using FileConverter (Klingenberg, 2011) (Figure supp. 4).

452   Digitizing was performed twice and one-way ANOVAs were used to test for digitizing error

453   (Table supp. 9). We analysed variation among individuals (symmetric component of variation)

454   apart from asymmetry (differences between left and right sides of individuals) (Savriama and

455   Klingenberg, 2011). A Generalized Procrustes Analysis (GPA) was used to simultaneously

456   superimpose all configurations and extract shape data by removing the effects of scale,

457   orientation and position (Klingenberg, 2010). Centroid size, the measure of size in geometric

458   morphometrics, was computed as the square root of the sum of the squared distances of all

459   landmarks from their centroid (Dryden and Mardia, 2016). Permutation tests were used for

460   testing differences in mean shapes using function 'permudist' from 'Morpho' R package

461   (Schlager, 2017).

462   A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) performed on the covariance matrix of shape variables

463   was used to show the main patterns of morphological variation between the two species. A 3D

464   microCT-scan of the hybrid was warped to the consensus using the Thin Plate Spline (TPS)

465   method via the function 'warpRefMesh' in Geomorph (Adams et al., 2017) and the main

466   patterns of shape changes were visualised as deviations from this warped consensus for the first

467   three principal components (PCs) (Figure supp. 5A). The hybrid was compared to the geometric

468   morphometric mean and differences were visualised via warping and heatmaps (Figure supp. 5B

469   and C). A multivariate quadratic regression of shape onto centroid size was used to investigate

470   the main patterns of allometric growth for each species that were visualised with warped 3D

471   microCT-scans of a newborn gray and ringed seal using Landmark Editor 3.6 and function

472   'warpmovie3d' (Figure 5, Movie supp. 1) (Wiley et al., 2005; Gerber and Hopkins, 2011;

473   Schlager, 2017). All analyses were performed with MorphoJ 1.06d (Klingenberg, 2011), custom

474   R (R Core Team, 2009) and Python scripts.

475

490

491   **Author Contributions:** J.J. and P.A. conceived the project, I.J.C. identified and Y.S.

492   reconstructed the hybrid specimen, P.A. sampled DNA from the hybrid, M.V. collected and

493   M.V. and J.J. analyzed dental data, T.J.H., I.S.-C. and J.J. performed the developmental

494   simulation, Y.S. collected and analysed cranial data, S.G. performed the allometric analyses for

495   cranial data, J.K, O.-P.S., A. Lyyski, L.P., and P.A. performed the sequencing and J.K., O.-P.S,

496   and L.H. the processing of the reads, A.L. analyzed genetic distances, and P.R. and A.L.

497   analyzed introgression. J.J. wrote the initial manuscript and all authors discussed the results and

498   provided input and scientific interpretations on the manuscript.

499   **Data and materials availability:** The aligned sequences are available through the European

500   Nucleotide Archive under accession number PRJEBxxxxx with individual sample accessions

501   (xxx...xxx). The cranial specimens listed in this study are archived in the Finnish Museum of

502   Natural History and Swedish Museum of Natural History. Any further data not available in the

503   Supporting Materials are available from the corresponding authors on request.

504

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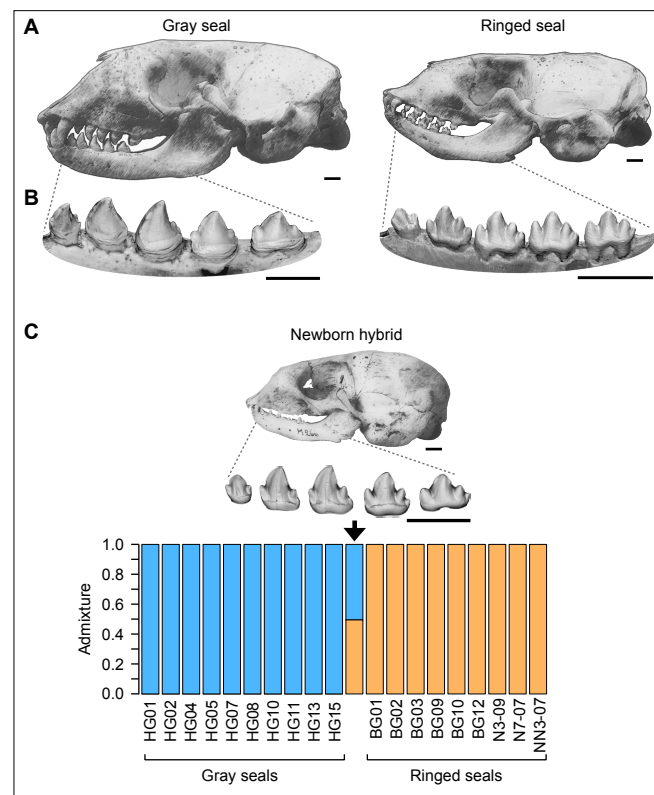
Figure 1. Gray and ringed seal cranio-dental morphologies show at least genus-level differences and genetic data validates the hybrid specimen. (A) The gray seal skull has a prominent snout with a straight profile whereas the overall cranial morphology of ringed seals is relatively gracile. (**B**) The gray seal lower postcanines have robust, fang-shaped central cusps with small and variably present accessory cusps. There is a marked gradation of tooth shapes along the jaw, and gray seal teeth are approximately 40% larger (anteroposteriorly) than ringed seal teeth. The ringed seal lower postcanines have typically four slender cusps on the four large postcanines of the lower jaw. Upper teeth show comparable but less disparate differences in cusp number. Gray seals have pronounced sexual dimorphism and the skull illustrations are of females. Postcanine dentitions, showing obliquely lingual views, have no marked sexual dimorphism. **(C)** The hybrid specimen is a newborn skull and mandible with erupting, but fully formed teeth. Genetic analysis from hybrid dental pulp shows close to 50% admixture between gray (50.51%) and ringed (49.49%) seals. Analysis shown (K=2) was performed using NGSadmix of ANGSD with 3.6 million markers (see Materials and Methods). Scale bars, 10 mm.

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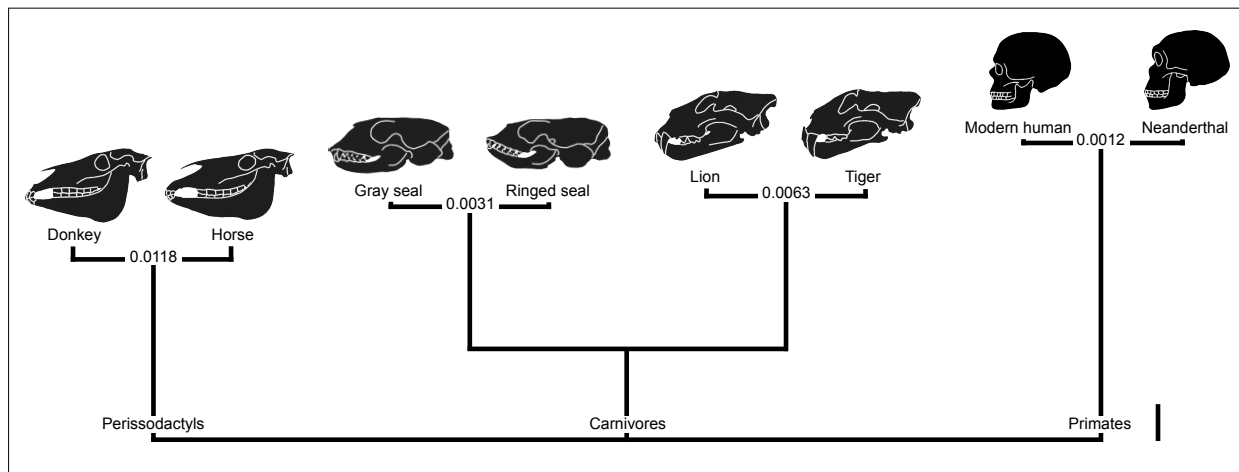
Figure 2. Bracketing the genetic distance of gray and ringed seals with other hybridizing taxa. Lion-tiger and donkey-horse distances (substitutions per fourfold degenerate site) are longer, and human-Neanderthal distance is shorter than the gray-ringed seal distance. Of the hybridizing species pairs, only gray and ringed seals are in different genera, and have pronounced differences in both dental and cranial morphologies. Pairwise distances (T92 model) and a phylogenetic tree were built using fourfold degenerate sites of 4,045 orthologous genes. For details and all the distances, see Materials and Methods and Table 1. Scale bar, 0.02 substitutions per ffd. The crania shown are not to scale. The horse cranium is of *E. f. przewalskii.*

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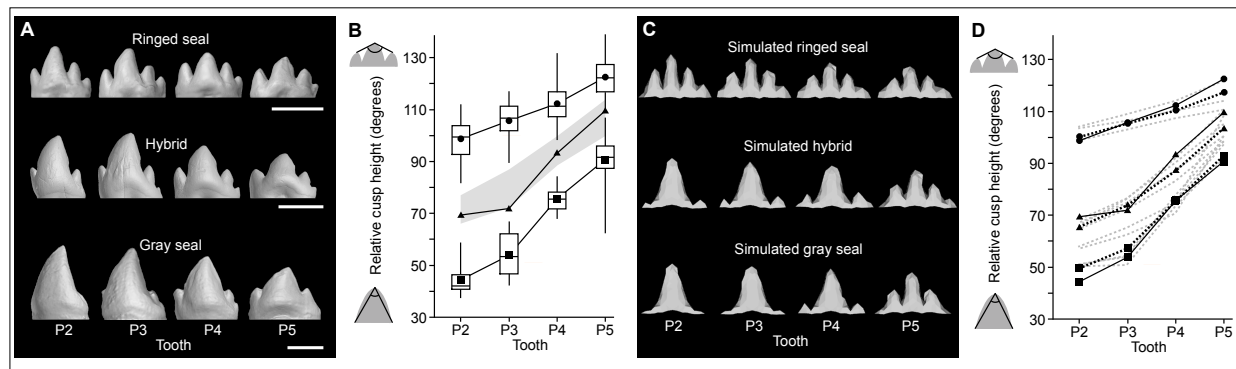
Figure 3. Teeth of the hybrid are morphologically and developmentally intermediate. (A) The hybrid has the large central cusps of the gray seal together with relatively prominent accessory cusps reminiscent of the ringed seals. (**B**) The top-cusp angle measure shows that the hybrid teeth (triangles) are intermediate between the ringed (circles, n = 43, 50, 49, and 49 for P2, P3, P4, and P5) and gray (squares, n = 41, 44, 39, and 53 for P2, P3, P4, and P5) seals with no overlap in P2 to P4, and marginal overlap with ringed seal teeth in P5. Gray area marks 80% of the angles averaged between each gray-ringed seal pair (see Figure supp. 2). Boxes enclose 50% of observations; the median and mean are indicated with a horizontal bar and circle or square, respectively, and whiskers denote range. (**C**) Simulated ringed and gray seal tooth rows that were manually matched with mean real shapes. The tooth row of the simulated hybrid was obtained by averaging the values of the parents. (**D**) The top-cusp angle measure shows that the average-value-simulated hybrid teeth (triangles, black dashed line) are intermediate between the simulated gray (squares, black dashed line) and ringed (circles, black dashed line) seal teeth, and comparable to the real hybrid teeth (triangles, black solid line). Gray dashed lines show hybrid simulation in which maternal or paternal values were tested for each parameter (Figure supp. 3, Table supp. 8). Teeth have been mirrored if needed to show left buccal views. Scale bars, 5 mm.

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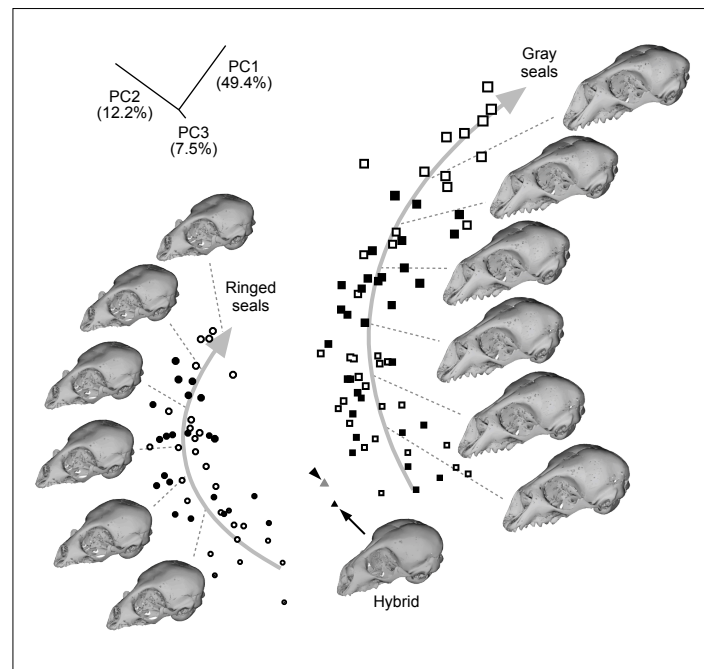
Figure 4. Ringed and gray seal crania are distinct at the birth and the hybrid is intermediate between the species. A geometric morphometric analysis shows the developmental trajectories from newborn to adult ringed (circles, n = 49) and gray (squares, n = 66) seals for the first three components (PCA). Arrows display developmental trajectories obtained by multivariate quadratic regressions of shape onto centroid size. The symbol size represents the relative centroid size of the crania and open symbols are male, black female. The larger size and more pronounced nasal region of gray seals are further developed in males. Arrowhead denotes the geometric mean calculated using the youngest ringed (n = 11) and gray seal (n = 11) crania. See Figure supp. 4, 5 and Materials and Methods.

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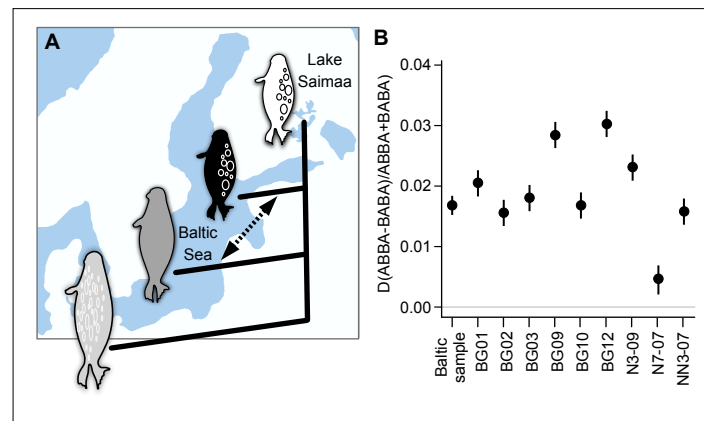
Figure 5. **Introgression analysis suggests interbreeding between Baltic gray and ringed seals in the wild. (A)** Saimaa ringed seals (white) have been landlocked in the Lake Saimaa, Finland for 9,500 years, providing a suitable comparison for Baltic ringed seals (black) and gray seals (gray). Outgroup was the Weddell seal (light gray). (**B**) Positive D-statistic values, calculated using D(Saimaa ringed seal, Baltic ringed seal; Baltic gray seal, Weddell seal) indicate gene flow between Baltic gray and ringed seals (arrow in A). Although the introgression and Z-scores vary between the individuals, all but one individual (N7-07) were *p* < 0.0001 (Table supp. 10 and Materials and Methods). Whiskers denote one standard error.

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784 **Table 1.** Genetic distances between hybridizing species (substitutions per fourfold degenerate
785 site).

	Human	Neanderthal	Tiger	Lion	Horse	Donkey	Ringed seal
Neanderthal	0.0012						
Tiger	0.2596	0.2596					
Lion	0.2599	0.2598	0.0063				
Horse	0.2369	0.2368	0.2164	0.2165			
Donkey	0.2366	0.2365	0.2159	0.2160	0.0118		
Ringed seal	0.2539	0.2539	0.1541	0.1542	0.2084	0.2079	
Gray seal	0.2540	0.2539	0.1544	0.1544	0.2086	0.2082	0.0031

786 Based on 1,526,260 codons, 623,391 fourfold degenerate sites, and 4,045 orthologous genes.

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