## 1 Oxford Nanopore R10.4 long-read sequencing enables near-perfect

## 2 bacterial genomes from pure cultures and metagenomes without

- short-read or reference polishing
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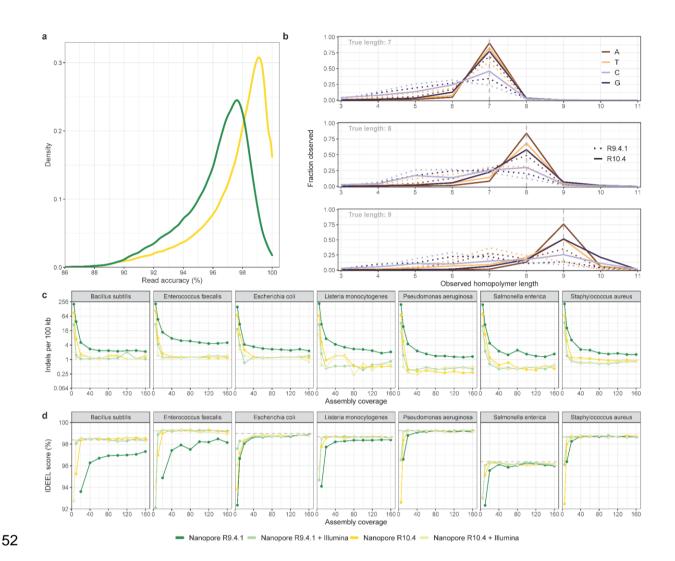
#### 12 ABSTRACT

Long-read Oxford Nanopore sequencing has democratized microbial genome sequencing and enables the recovery of highly contiguous microbial genomes from isolates or metagenomes. However, to obtain near-perfect genomes it has been necessary to include short-read polishing to correct insertions and deletions derived from homopolymer regions. Here, we show that Oxford Nanopore R10.4 can be used to generate near-perfect microbial genomes from isolates or metagenomes without shortread or reference polishing.

#### 20 MAIN TEXT

21 Bacteria live in almost every environment on Earth and the global microbial diversity is 22 estimated to entail more than  $10^{12}$  species<sup>1</sup>. To obtain representative genomes, sequencing of pure cultures or genome recovery directly from metagenomes are often employed<sup>2-4</sup>. High-23 24 throughput short-read sequencing has for many years been the method of choice<sup>5,6</sup> but fails 25 to resolve repeat regions larger than the insert size of the library<sup>7</sup>. This is especially problematic in metagenome samples where related species or strains often contain long 26 27 sequences of near-identical DNA. More recently, long-read sequencing has emerged as the 28 method of choice for both pure culture genomes<sup>8,9</sup> and metagenomes<sup>10–12</sup>. PacBio HiFi reads 29 combine low error rates with relatively long reads and generate near-perfect microbial genomes from pure cultures or metagenomes<sup>13–15</sup>. Despite very high-guality raw data, the 30 31 relatively high cost pr. base remains an economic hindrance for many research projects. A 32 widely used alternative is Oxford Nanopore sequencing which offers low-cost long-read data. 33 However, numerous studies have shown that despite vast improvements in raw error rates, 34 assembly consensus sequences still suffer from insertion and deletions in homopolymers that often cause frameshift errors during gene calling<sup>16–18</sup>. A commonly adopted solution has been 35 to include short-read data for post-assembly error correction<sup>12,19</sup>, although it increases the cost 36 37 and complexity overhead. Another solution has been to apply reference-based polishing to correct frameshift errors<sup>20-22</sup>, but while it provides a practical solution, which allows gene 38 39 calling, it does not provide true near-perfect genomes.

40 We first evaluated the ability for Oxford Nanopore R9.4.1 and R10.4 data to obtain near-41 perfect microbial genomes through sequencing of the ZymoBIOMICS HMW DNA Standard 42 #D6322 (Zymo mock) consisting of 7 bacterial species and 1 fungus. A single PromethION R10.4 flowcell generated 52.3 gbp of data with a modal read accuracy of 99 % (Figure 1A, 43 44 Table S1). In contrast to R9.4.1 data, we do not see any significant improvement in assembly 45 quality for R10.4 by the addition of Illumina polishing (Figure 1C, Figure S1). This indicates 46 that near-perfect microbial reference genomes can be obtained from R10.4 data alone at a 47 coverage of approximately 40x. The improvement in assembly accuracy from R9.4.1 to R10.4 48 is largely due to an improved ability to call homopolymers, as R10.4 is able to correctly call 49 the length of the majority of homopolymers up to a length of 10 (Figure 1B, Figure S2-3). In 50 general, a homopolymer length of more than 10 is very rare in bacteria, with an estimate of 51 less than 10 per species on average<sup>18</sup>.



53 Figure 1: Sequencing and assembly statistics for the Zymo mock. A) Observed raw read 54 accuracies measured through read-mapping. B) Observed homopolymer length of raw reads compared to the reference genomes (see Figure S2-3 for a complete overview). C) Observed 55 indels of de novo assemblies per 100 kbp at different coverage levels, with and without Illumina 56 57 polishing. Note that the reference genomes available for the Zymo mock are not identical to the sequenced strains (Table S3). D) IDEEL<sup>23</sup> score calculated as the proportion of predicted 58 proteins which are  $\geq$ 95% the length of their best-matching known protein in a database<sup>16</sup>. The 59 60 dotted line represents the IDEEL score for the reference genome.

To assess the performance of state-of-the-art sequencing technologies in recovering nearperfect microbial genomes from metagenomes we sequenced activated sludge from an anaerobic digester using single runs of Illumina MiSeq 2x300 bp, PacBio HiFi, and Oxford Nanopore R9.4.1 and R10.4. Despite being the same sample, direct comparisons are difficult as the additional size selection of the PacBio CCS dataset both increased the read length (**Figure S4**) and altered the relative abundances of the species in the sample (**Figure S5**). Furthermore, Nanopore R9.4.1 produced more than twice the amount of data compared to the

other datasets, while the Illumina data featured variations in relative abundances presumably due to GC bias (**Figure S5**). To assist automated contig binning, we performed Illumina sequencing of 9 additional samples from the same anaerobic digester spread over 9 years (**Table S2**) and used the coverage profiles as input for binning using multiple different approaches. Furthermore, to evaluate the impact of micro-diversity on MAG quality, we calculated the polymorphic site rates for each MAG as a simple proxy for the presence of micro-diversity<sup>6</sup>.

After performing automated contig binning it is evident that micro-diversity has a large impact on MAG fragmentation, but that long-read sequencing data results in much less fragmentation of bins at higher amounts of micro-diversity (**Figure S6**). Despite large differences in read length for Nanopore and PacBio CCS data (N50 read length 6 kbp vs. 15 kbp), only small differences in bin fragmentation were observed, as compared to the Illumina-based results (**Table 1, Figures S6**).

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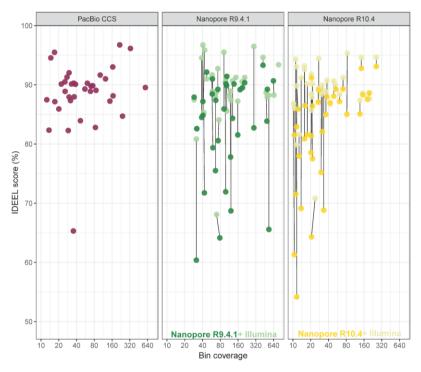
82 **Table 1**: Sequencing and assembly statistics for the anaerobic digester sample using

83 different technologies and approaches. \*Costs refer to the expenses encountered at the time

84 of conducting the experiments and may differ for other research groups.

	Illumina MiSeq	R9.4.1 / +Illumina	R10.4 / +Illumina	PacBio HiFi
Total Yield (Gbp)	13	35	14	15
Read N50 (kbp)	0.3	5.9	5.6	15.4
Observed modal read accuracy (%)	100	96.76	98.21	99.86
Assembly size (Mbp)	409	754	379	606
Contigs (> 1kbp)	145,976	24,680	21,585	8,989
Circular contigs (> 0.5 Mbp)	0	7	3	9
Contig N50 (kbp)	3.5	79.9	40.1	172.5
Reads mapped to contigs (%)	88.1	93.5	95.4	95.2
HQ MAGs	8	64/86	34/36	74
MQ MAGs	83	114/95	65/67	72
Contigs pr. HQ MAG (median)	184	15/16	21/21	9
Mapped reads in HQ MAGs (%)	16	46/49	39/40	48
Costs (\$)*	1,200	811/2,011	811/2,011	4,420
Cost per HQ MAG (\$)	150	13/23	24/56	60

- 86 All long-read methods produce high numbers of high-quality (HQ) MAGs, which capture 39-
- 49% of all reads (**Table 1**). Nanopore R9.4.1 is able to produce HQ MAGs as a standalone
- technology, but Illumina polishing increases the number of HQ MAGs from 64 to 86. For
- 89 Nanopore R10.4, Illumina polishing increases the number of HQ MAGs from 34 to 36. Using
- 90 the IDEEL test (Figure 2), it can be seen that Illumina polishing results in minor
- 91 improvements for Nanopore R10.4 above a coverage of 40, and that the Nanopore R10.4 is
- 92 in the same IDEEL range as PacBio HiFi MAGs. As with sequencing of the Zymo mock, the
- 93 difference from R9.4.1 to R10.4 is largely due to significantly better accuracy in
- homopolymers for lengths up to 10 (Figure S7).
- 95
- 96



97

98 Figure 2: IDEEL score vs. coverage for metagenome bins from the anaerobic digester
99 sample. The Nanopore bins are shown with and without Illumina polishing connected by a
100 line.

101

Since its introduction as an early access program in 2014 Oxford Nanopore sequencing technology has democratized sequencing and enabled every laboratory and classroom to engage in microbial genome sequencing. However, for the generation of highquality genomes, additional short-read polishing has been essential, as indels in homopolymer regions cause fragmented gene calls. The additional sequencing requirements have been one of the barriers to widespread uptake. Here we show that Oxford Nanopore R10.4 enables the generation of near-perfect microbial genomes from pure cultures or

- 109 metagenomes at coverages of 40x without short-read polishing. While homopolymers of 10
- or more bases will likely still be problematic, they constitute a minor part of microbialgenomes.
- 112 For genome-recovery from metagenomes, low-coverage bins (<40X) do need
- 113 Illumina polishing to attain quality comparable to PacBio HiFi. Hence, in some cases, the
- 114 most economic option could be Nanopore R9.4.1 supplemented with short-read sequencing,
- as the throughput is currently at least 2 times higher on R9.4.1 compared to R10.4 and no
- 116 difference is seen between the methods after Illumina short-read polishing.
- 117

## 118 Data availability

- 119 Anaerobic digester sequencing data are available at the ENA with bio project ID
- 120 PRJEB48021, while the Zymo mock community sequencing data is available at
- 121 PRJEB48692. The code and datasets used to generate the figures and supplementary
- 122 material are available at <u>https://github.com/Serka-M/Digester-MultiSequencing</u>.
- 123

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- 128

## 129 Author contributions

- 130 MS and RHK performed DNA extraction, and sequencing of the anaerobic digester and
- 131 selected Zymo mock samples. RWO prepared and sequenced the Zymo mock using R9.4.1
- and Illumina. MS, RHK, and MA wrote the first draft of the manuscript. SMK, TYM, RWO,
- 133 and EAS contributed to experiment design, result interpretation, and writing of the
- 134 manuscript. All authors reviewed the manuscript.
- 135

## 136 Conflict of interest

- 137 EAS, SMK, MA, RHK, and RWO are employed at DNASense ApS that consults and
- 138 performs sequencing. The remaining authors declare no conflict of interest.
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- 141

#### 142 Materials and methods

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#### 144 Sampling

- 145 Sludge biomass was sampled from the anaerobic digester at Fredericia wastewater
- treatment plant (Latitude 55.552219, Longitude 9.722003) at multiple time points and stored
- 147 as frozen 2 mL aliquots at -20°C. For the Zymo sample, the ZymoBIOMICS HMW DNA
- 148 Standard #D6322 (Zymo Research, USA) was used.
- 149

#### 150 **DNA extraction**

- 151 DNA was extracted from the anaerobic digester sludge using DNeasy PowerSoil Kit
- 152 (QIAGEN, Germany) following the manufacturer's protocol. The extracted DNA was then
- 153 size selected using the SRE XS (Circulomics, USA), according to the manufacturer's
- 154 instructions.
- 155

#### 156 **DNA QC**

- 157 DNA concentrations were determined using Qubit dsDNA HS kit and measured with a Qubit
- 158 3.0 fluorimeter (Thermo Fisher, USA). DNA size distribution was determined using an Agilent
- 159 2200 Tapestation system with genomic screentapes (Agilent Technologies, USA). DNA
- 160 purity was determined using a NanoDrop One Spectrophotometer (Thermo Fisher, USA).
- 161

#### 162 Oxford Nanopore DNA sequencing

- 163 Library preparation was carried out using the ligation sequencing kits (Oxford Nanopore
- 164 Technologies, UK) SQK-LSK109 and SQK-LSK112 for sequencing on R.9.4.1 and the
- 165 R.10.4 flowcells, respectively. Anaerobic digester and Zymo R.9.4.1 datasets were
- 166 generated on a MinION Mk1B (Oxford Nanopore Technologies, UK) device, while Zymo
- 167 R10.4 dataset was produced on a PromethION and digester R10.4 read sequences were
- 168 generated on a GridION.
- 169

#### 170 Illumina DNA sequencing

- 171 The anaerobic digester Illumina libraries were prepared using the Nextera DNA library
- 172 preparation kit (Illumina, USA), while the Zymo Mock sample was prepared with NEB Next
- 173 Ultra II DNA library prep kit for Illumina (New England Biolabs, USA) following the
- 174 manufacturer's protocols and sequenced using the Illumina MiSeq platform.
- 175
- 176
- 177 PacBio HiFi

- 178 A size-selected DNA sample was sent to the DNA Sequencing Center at Brigham Young
- 179 University, USA. The DNA sample was fragmented with Megaruptor (Diagenode, Belgium)
- to 15 kb and size-selected using the Blue Pippin (Sage Science, USA) and prepared for
- 181 sequencing using SMRTbell Express Template Preparation Kit 1.0 (PacBio, USA) according
- 182 to manufacturers' instructions. Sequencing was performed on the Sequel II system (PacBio,
- USA) using the Sequel II Sequencing Kit 1.0 (PacBio, USA) with the Sequel II SMRT Cell
- 184 8M (PacBio, USA) for a 30 hour data collection time.
- 185

#### 186 Read processing

- 187 Illumina reads were trimmed for adapters using Cutadapt v. 1.16<sup>24</sup>. The generated raw
- 188 Nanopore data was basecalled in super-accurate mode with using Guppy v. 5.0.16
- 189 (https://community.nanoporetech.com/downloads) with dna\_r9.4.1\_450bps\_sup.cfg model
- 190 for R9.4.1 and dna r10.4 e8.1 sup.cfg model for R10.4 chemistry. Concatemers in R10.4
- data were split by using "split on adapter" command (5 iterations) of duplex-tools v. 0.2.5
- 192 (https://github.com/nanoporetech/duplex-tools). Adapters for Nanopore reads were removed
- using Porechop v. 0.2.3<sup>25</sup> and reads with Phred quality scores below 7 and 10 for R9.4.1 and
- 194 R10.4 reads, respectively, were removed using NanoFilt v. 2.6.0<sup>26</sup>. The CCS tool v. 6.0.0
- 195 (https://ccs.how/) was utilized with the sub-read data from PacBio CCS to produce HiFi
- 196 reads. Read statistics were acquired via NanoPlot v. 1.24.0<sup>26</sup>. Zymo read datasets were
- 197 subsampled to custom coverage profiles using Rasusa v. 0.3.0
- 198 (https://github.com/mbhall88/rasusa). Counterr v. 0.1 (https://github.com/dayzerodx/counterr)
- 199 was used to assess homopolymer calling in reads.
- 200

#### 201 Read assembly and binning

- Long reads were assembled using Flye v. 2.9-b1768<sup>13,27</sup> with the "--meta" setting enabled
- and the "--nano-hq" option for assembling Nanopore reads, whereas "--pacbio-hifi" and "--
- 204 min-overlap 7500 --read-error 0.01" options were used for assembling PacBio CCS reads,
- as it resulted in more HQ MAGs than using the default settings. Polishing tools for
- Nanopore-based assemblies: Minimap2 v. 2.17<sup>28</sup>, Racon v. 1.3.3 (used thrice)<sup>29</sup>, and
- 207 Medaka v. 1.4.4 (used twice, https://github.com/nanoporetech/medaka). The trimmed
- 208 Illumina reads were assembled using Megahit v. 1.1.4<sup>30</sup>.
- 209
- Automated binning was carried out using MetaBAT2 v. 2.12.1<sup>31</sup>, with "-s 500000" settings,
- 211 MaxBin2 v. 2.2.7<sup>32</sup> and Vamb v. 3.0.2<sup>33</sup> with "-o C --minfasta 500000" settings. Contig
- 212 coverage profiles from different sequencer data as well as 9 additional time-series Illumina
- 213 datasets of the same anaerobic digester were used for generating the bins. The binning
- 214 output of different tools was then integrated and refined using DAS Tool v. 1.1.2<sup>34</sup>. CoverM

- v. 0.6.1 (https://github.com/wwood/CoverM) was applied to calculate the bin coverage ("-m
   mean" settings) and relative abundance ("-m relative abundance") values.
- 217

#### 218 Assembly processing

219 The completeness and contamination of the genome bins were estimated using CheckM v. 220 1.1.2<sup>35</sup>. The bins were classified using GDTB-Tk v. 1.5.0<sup>36</sup>. R202 database. Protein 221 sequences were predicted using Prodigal v. 2.6.3<sup>37</sup> with "p meta" setting, while rRNA genes 222 were predicted using Barrnap v. 0.9 (https://github.com/tseemann/barrnap) and tRNAscan-223 SE v. 2.0.5<sup>38</sup> was used for tRNA predictions. Bin guality was determined following the 224 Genomic Standards Consortium guidelines, wherein a MAG of high guality featured genome 225 completeness of more than 90 %, less than 5 % contamination, at least 18 distinct tRNA 226 genes and the 5S, 16S, 23S rRNA genes occurring at least once <sup>39</sup>. MAGS with 227 completeness above 50 % and contamination below 10 % were classified as medium 228 guality, while low guality MAGs featured completeness below 50 % and contamination below 229 10 %. MAGs with contamination estimates higher than 10 % were classified as 230 contaminated. 231 Illumina reads were mapped to the assemblies using Bowtie2 v. 2.4.2<sup>40</sup> with the "--very-232 233 sensitive-local" setting. The mapping was converted to BAM and sorted using SAMtools v.

1.9<sup>41</sup>. Single nucleotide polymorphism rate was then calculated using CMseq v. 1.0.3<sup>6</sup> from

- the mapping using poly.py script with "--mincov 10 --minqual 30" settings.
- 236

Bins were clustered using dRep v. 2.6.2<sup>42</sup> with "-comp 50 -con 10 -sa 0.95" settings. Only the
bins that featured higher coverage than 10 in their respective sequencing platform and a
higher Illumina read coverage than 5 for bins from the hybrid approach were included in
downstream analysis. For IDEEL test<sup>17,23</sup>, the predicted protein sequences from clustered
bins and Zymo assemblies were searched against the UniProt TrEMBL<sup>43</sup> database (release
2021\_01) using Diamond v. 2.0.6<sup>44</sup>. Query matches, which were not present in all datasets,
were omitted to reduce noise. The IDEEL scores were assigned as described by<sup>16</sup>.

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QUAST v. 4.6.3<sup>45</sup> was applied on the Zymo assemblies and the clustered bins with less than
0.5 % SNP rate to acquire mismatch and indels metrics. Cases with Quast parameters
"Genome Fraction" of less than 75 % and "Unaligned length" of more than 250 kb were
omitted to reduce noise. For homopolymer analysis, the clustered bins were mapped to each
other using "asm5" mode of Minimap2 and Counterr was used on the mapping files to get
homopolymer calling errors. For QUAST and Counterr, PacBio CCS bins were used as
reference sequences. FastANI v. 1.33<sup>46</sup> was used to calculate identity scores between Zymo

- assemblies and the Zymo reference sequences. The Zymo mock reference genome
- sequences were obtained from a link in the accompanying instruction manual to the
- 254 ZymoBIOMICS HMW DNA Standard Catalog No. D6332 at
- 255 https://s3.amazonaws.com/zymo-files/BioPool/D6322.refseq.zip.

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# Supplementary information for

# Oxford Nanopore R10.4 long-read sequencing enables near-perfect bacterial genomes from pure cultures and metagenomes without short-read or reference polishing

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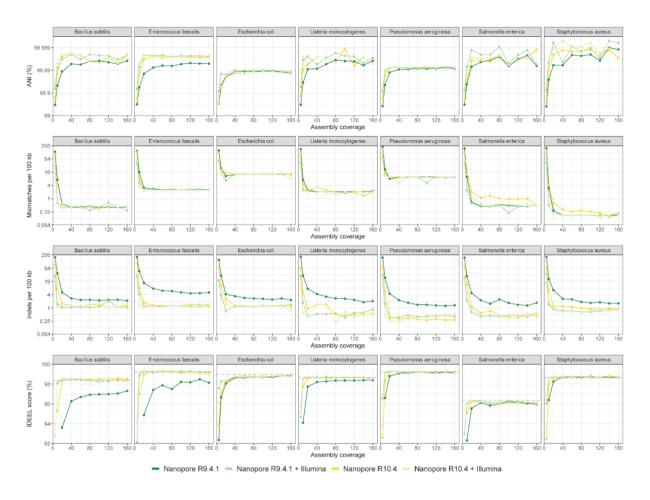
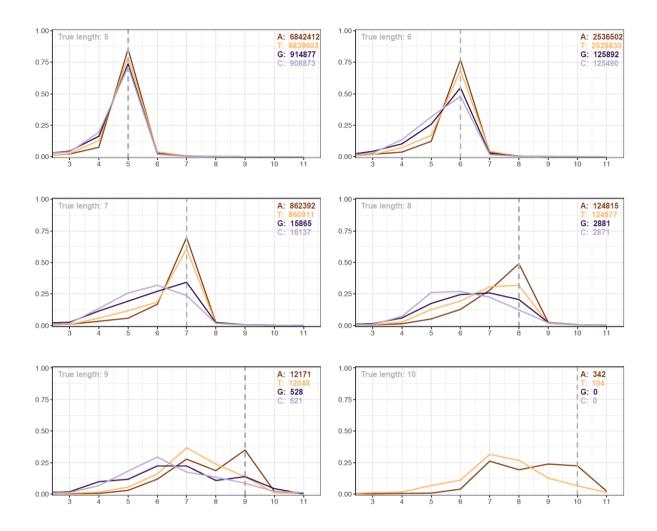
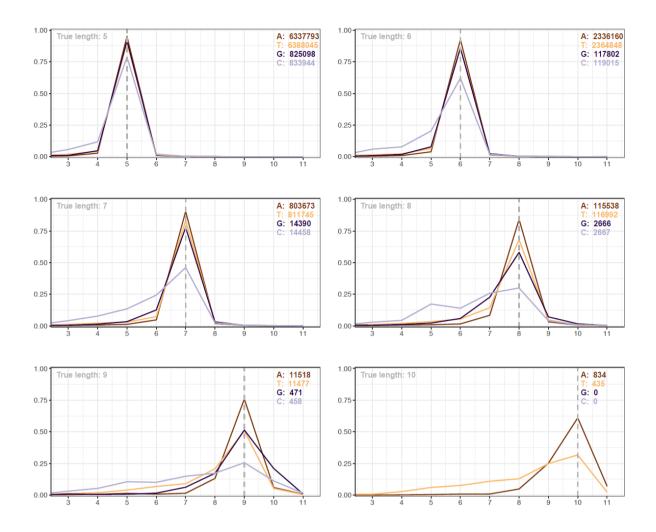


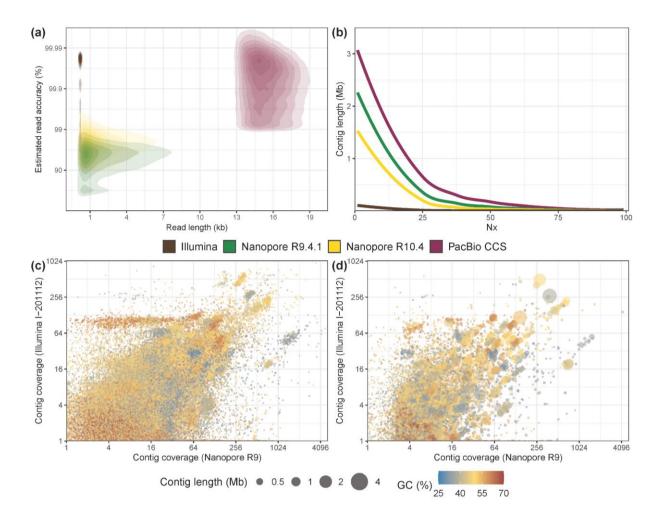
Figure S1: Assembly metrics for the ZYMO Mock HMW DNA.



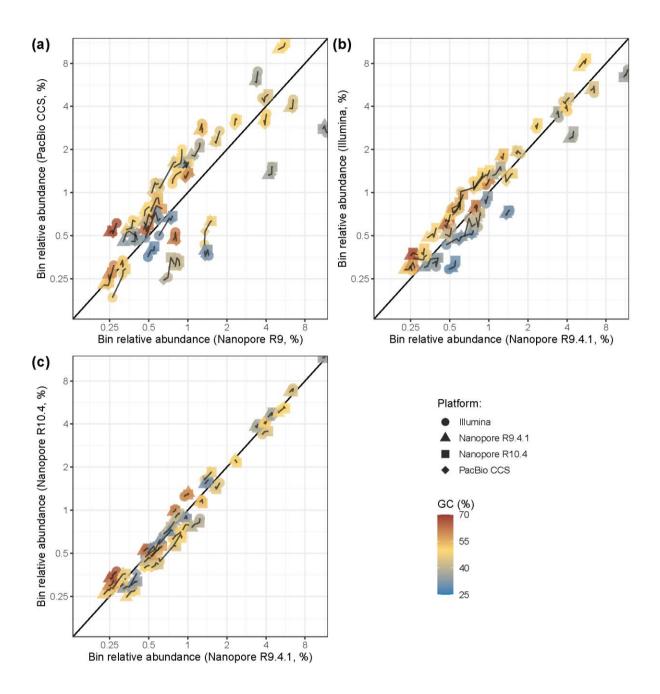
**Figure S2:** Counterr homopolymer plot for Nanopore R9.4.1 read data of the Zymo mock. Reads for each Zymo mock species, subsetted to a coverage of 160 were used for the analysis.



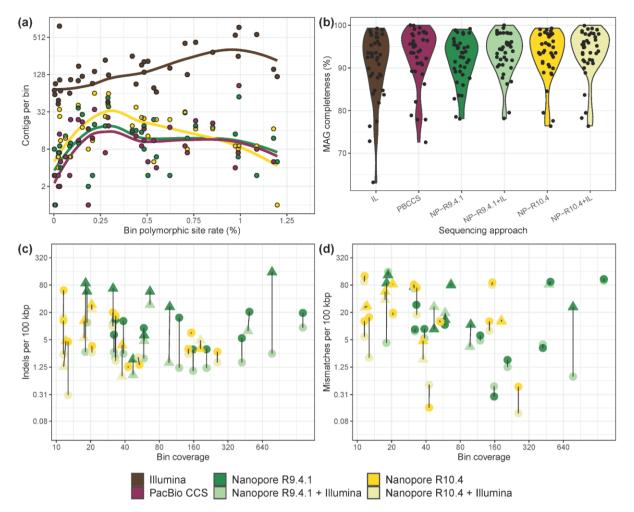
**Figure S3:** Counterr homopolymer plot for Nanopore R10.4 read data of the Zymo mock. Reads for each Zymo mock species, subsetted to a coverage of 160 were used for the analysis.



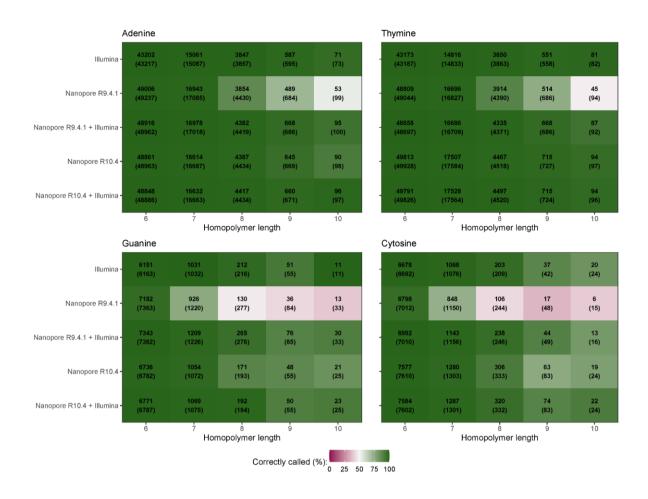
**Figure S4:** Sequencing and assembly overview for the anaerobic digester sample. **A)** Estimated read accuracy (from Q-scores) versus read length. Note that the PacBio HiFi sample underwent additional size selection prior to sequencing. **B)** Nx plot of the assemblies produced from different sequencing technologies. **C)** Differential coverage plot of the Illumina assembly. **D)** Differential coverage plot of the Nanopore R9.4.1 assembly.



**Figure S5:** Comparison of bin relative abundances between different sequencing platforms. Relative abundance values (log-scaled) are presented between the Nanopore R9 data and **a)** PacBio CCS, **b)** Illumina, **c)** Nanopore R10. Only the bins that were clustered together between different platforms are presented in the plots and are interlinked.



**Figure S6:** Comparison of bins from different sequencing approaches. **a)** MAG fragmentation (log-scaled) at different bin SNP rates in PacBio CCS MAGs. **b)** Genome bin completeness estimates for different sequencing platforms. IL — Illumina, NP — Nanopore, PBCCS — PacBio CCS. Bin **c)** indel and **d)** mismatch rates (log-scaled) for MAGs from Nanopore sequencing with and without Illumina read polishing, compared to MAGs from PacBio CCS. The presented bin coverage on the x axis (log-scaled) is for the corresponding Nanopore chemistry type. HQ MAGs are represented by circle, while triangles denote MQ MAGs. For all figures, only the bins that were clustered together between all the different sequencing platforms (see Materials and methods) are presented.



**Figure S7:** Homopolymer calling estimates in metagenomes (consensus sequences) from different sequencing platforms. Values in the heatmap show observed homopolymer counts estimated to be called correctly at a given sequence length. The total count of homopolymers (called correctly and incorrectly) are in brackets. Only the contigs for bins that were clustered together between different platforms were used to generate values for the plot.

#### **Table S1**: Sequence statistics for the Zymo HMW Mock using different sequencing

platforms. Estimated modal read accuracy is measured using the reported Q-score for each read type. Observed modal read accuracy was measured by read-mapping to the reference genomes.

	Illumina	Nanopore R9.4.1	Nanopore R10.4
Total read count	48,123,500	8,846,993	22,452,567
Total yield (Gbp)	7,2	31,6	52,3
N50 (bp)	151	14,018	5,992
Estimated modal read accuracy (%)	99.99	96.89	98.22
Observed modal read accuracy (%)	99.98	97.59	99.07

Read dataset	Instrument	Yield (Gb)	Read N50 (kb)	Read count	ENA sample ID	LOT#
IL-201104	Illumina HiSeq	6.2	0.15	42,727,130	ERS7673063	
IL-201112	Illumina HiSeq	11.4	0.15	79,619,634	ERS7673064	
IL-201301	Illumina HiSeq	7.5	0.25	31,702,618	ERS7673065	
IL-201308	Illumina HiSeq	6.7	0.25	28,067,586	ERS7673066	
IL-201502	Illumina HiSeq	5.3	0.25	22,351,578	ERS7673067	
IL-201702	Illumina HiSeq	15.9	0.25	66,225,442	ERS7673068	
IL-201705	Illumina HiSeq	4.9	0.25	20,492,240	ERS7673069	
IL-201707	Illumina HiSeq	5.5	0.25	23,663,146	ERS7673070	
IL-201804	Illumina MiSeq	3.2	0.3	11,981,252	ERS7673071	
IL-202001	Illumina MiSeq	13.3	0.3	47,091,904	ERS7673072	
PB-202001	PacBio Sequel II	15.3	15.4	992,914	ERS7673073	
R9-202001	MinION Mk1B	35.2	5.9	10,266,261	ERS7673074	
R10-202001	MinION Mk1B	13.0	6.4	3,646,771	ERS7673075	
R104-202001	GridION	14.0	7.5	3,514,955	ERS7672969	
IL-ZYMO	Illumina MiSeq	7.5	0.15	49,774,986	ERS8296812	ZRC195845
R941-ZYMO	MinION Mk1B	32.0	1.8	8,851,918	ERS8296813	ZRC195845
R104-ZYMO	PromethION	5.2	7.5	18,831,686	ERS8296814	

Table S2: Overview of read datasets used in the study.

	Covered bases (Mb)	Polymorphic bases (bp)	Polymorphic rate
Bacillus subtilis	4.0	10	2.5e-06
Enterococcus faecalis	2.8	113	4.0e-05
Escherichia coli	4.8	1156	2.4e-04
Listeria monocytogenes	3.0	80	2.7e-05
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	6.8	1222	1.8e-04
Salmonella enterica	4.8	41	8.6e-06
Staphylococcus aureus	2.7	18	6.6e-06

### Table S3: CMSeq SNP calling statistics for the Zymo mock reference sequences.