

Heritability estimation via molecular pedigree reconstruction in a wild fish population reveals substantial evolutionary potential for sea-age at maturity, but not size within age-classes

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21 ABSTRACT

While evolutionary responses require heritable variation, estimates of heritability (h^2) from 22 wild fish populations remain rare. A 20-year molecular pedigree for a wild Scottish 23 24 population of Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) was used to investigate genetic contributions to (co)variation in two important, correlated, phenotypic traits: "sea-age" (number of winters 25 26 spent at sea prior to spawning) and size-at-maturity (body length just prior to spawning). Seaage was strongly heritable ($h^2 = 0.51$) and size exhibited moderate heritability ($h^2 = 0.27$). A 27 28 very strong genetic correlation ($r_G = 0.96$) between these traits implied the same functional 29 loci must underpin variation in each. Indeed, body size within sea-ages had much lower 30 heritability that did not differ significantly from zero. Thus, within wild S. salar populations, temporal changes in sea-age composition could reflect evolutionary responses, whereas rapid 31 changes of body-size within sea-ages are more likely due to phenotypic plasticity. These 32 inheritance patterns will influence the scope of evolutionary responses to factors such as 33 harvest or climate change and, hence, have management implications for salmonid 34 35 populations comprising a mix of sea ages.

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Keywords. salmonids; population dynamics, quantitative genetics, Bayesian, evolvability,
adaptation, management, conservation genetics

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44 INTRODUCTION

Life history traits such as age and size at first reproduction are typically expected to 45 be under strong selection, given their close links with Darwinian fitness (Stearns 1992, Roff 46 2002). All else being equal, genotypes that reproduce as early as possible in life should have 47 higher relative fitness than those that first reproduce at older ages (Brommer et al. 2002). In 48 49 species with indeterminate growth such as most fishes, however, there may be strong breeding advantages (especially for females) to delaying first reproduction to older ages, and 50 hence larger sizes (Heino and Kaitala 1999). The optimum age and size at first reproduction 51 52 will then depend on factors such as (seasonal) environmental opportunities for growth, agespecific extrinsic mortality schedules, and the extent to which reproductive success depends 53 54 on body size (Stearns 1992, Charlesworth 1994, Roff 2002). Human-induced changes to any of these parameters can alter the selective pressures on populations; for example, harvests of 55 wild animals can drive "unnatural selection" on phenotypic traits such as age at maturity and 56 57 body size (Allendorf and Hard 2009, Heino et al. 2015, Harvey et al, 2017), while climate change can impact selective dynamics in a range of complex ways (Munday et al. 2013, 58 Sydeman et al. 2015). Inferring the potential for evolutionary responses, however, requires 59 information on the extent to which observed phenotypic (co)variation is underpinned by 60 genetic (co)variation (Kuparinen and Hutchings, 2017). Detailed, long-term, studies of 61 naturally regulated populations, in which the life histories, reproductive success and 62 pedigrees of individual animals are measured or inferred can provide this information (Naish 63 and Hard 2008, Clutton-Brock and Sheldon 2010). 64

In Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar* L.) and other salmonid fishes, the sea-age of adults returning to spawn for the first time is an important trait from both ecological and economic perspectives, as older fish tend to be larger and therefore more valuable from a commercial and recreational fishing perspective, while also having higher fecundity and therefore

contributing more towards total annual egg numbers. Sea-age variation may also contribute 69 towards ecological and evolutionary portfolio effects via bet-hedging mechanisms (Schindler 70 71 et al., 2015), where risk is spread across multiple sea-age cohorts. Some individuals, and populations of Atlantic salmon, return after just one winter at sea (1SW), whereas others 72 73 known as multi-sea winter (MSW) fish return after two or more winters at sea (Klemetsen et al, 2003). The marine feeding destination, sea-age, adult-return size and adult run-timing are 74 75 all inter-related (Malcolm et al, 2010). The average size of returning adults generally increases with time spent at sea, both across and within sea-age classes; for example, MSW 76 77 fish tend to be on average much larger than 1SW, and later-running fish of a given sea-age class are typically larger than early-running fish (Hutchings & Jones 1998, Bacon et al. 2009, 78 2010, Barson et al. 2015). A substantial genetic component underlying sea-age variation has 79 80 been shown or implied by several studies of Atlantic salmon (Nævdal 1983, Gjerde 1984, Johnston et al. 2014, Ayllon et al. 2015, Barson et al. 2015) and related species such as 81 82 Chinook salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) (Hankin et al. 1993, Quinn et al. 2001) and steelhead/rainbow trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss) (Tipping 1991, Kause et al. 2003). 83

Body-length at maturity has also been shown to be heritable in salmonids generally, 84 with Carlson & Seamons (2008) reporting a median heritability (the fraction of phenotypic 85 variation explained by genetic variation) estimate of 0.21 across six salmonid studies. Only 86 87 one of these studies (Dickerson et al. 2005), however, involved a situation where the fish (in that case, pink salmon, Oncorhynchus gorbuscha) spawned and reared naturally in a wild 88 river environment; the rest all involved either hatchery/farm-origin broodstock and/or 89 artificial rearing conditions (Carlson and Seamons 2008). Since then a limited number of 90 additional salmonid studies have appeared that estimate heritability of length-at-age in 91 freshwater in fully natural environments (Serbezov et al. 2010, Morrissey and Ferguson 2011, 92

Reed et al. 2015), but these studies did not focus on heritability of size-at-maturityspecifically.

95 Availing from the (still rare) existence of a multi-generation data set from a wild Atlantic salmon population, the specific aims of this study were to: (1) construct a pedigree 96 based on molecular data, (2) estimate the heritability of both adult body-length and sea-age-97 98 at-maturity; (3) test for any genetic correlation between these traits; and (4) test for temporal trends in estimated breeding values for both traits, which would indicate microevolutionary 99 responses over the study period. Significant phenotypic trends in body size and sea-age are 100 apparent in this population during our 1991-2011 study period (Glover, pers comm.) and 101 other populations in the region more generally (Bacon et al. 2009), but it remains unknown 102 whether there is any genetic component to these trends. Answering the latter question could 103 suggest fruitful new avenues for research and interpretation of monitoring data. 104

105

106 METHODS

107 Study site

The Girnock Burn (Fig.1) is an intensively studied upland catchment of c. 30 km² on the 108 Aberdeenshire Dee (confluence 57 ° 0.6' N, 3° 5.3' W), in north-eastern Scotland, which has 109 been operated by Marine Scotland Science Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory since 1966. Full 110 details of the site, monitoring data and a list of associated publications are available at URL1. 111 In brief, the catchment contains some 8 km of nursery stream for Atlantic salmon ranging in 112 113 altitude from 230 to 900m. Adult salmon entering the Girnock are caught in an ascending trap near the confluence with the mainstem of the Aberdeenshire Dee, given an individual 114 identification (floy) tag, sexed based on phenotypic characteristics, measured (adult fork 115

body-length, hereafter body-length) and aged by scale-reading, following internationalprotocols.

Apart from unusual scale- or tissue-sample loss, the DNA samples obtained from adults can be taken as a complete set of breeders (only one adult is known to have got above the traps without being caught in 50 years, during emergency trap-maintenance during an autumn spate). Since the early 1990s tissue samples (adipose-fin clips) of adults were also taken, and stored in molecular grade (99%) ethanol.

123 The Girnock provided an example of a fully wild Atlantic salmon population from the start of the historic study (1966) until 1999, with adult fish being allowed to spawn naturally 124 above the traps. During the late 1990s, numbers of adult females fell very low (9, 11 & 22 125 126 over three years), and from 2000 to 2010 increasing proportions of adults were temporarily held, stripped and their eggs stocked into the river section above the trap (see Bacon et al. 127 2015; URL2; Glover, pers. comm.). The fish were artificially mated with a crossing protocol 128 designed to increase mating variation and promote the maintenance of broad genetic variation 129 (see Bacon et al. 2015 for full details). From 2011 the system was returned to fully natural 130 spawning (but no offspring from that period returned during this study). Most juveniles from 131 the Girnock undergo parr-to-smolt transformation and seaward migration at age 2+ (third 132 year of life) or 3+ (fourth year of life). A minority of adults return after 1SW, the majority 133 134 after 2SW, typical of upland Scottish salmon sites (Gurney et al. 2015; URL3). 3SW adults are now uncommon, and repeat spawners are regionally relatively rare (less than 2%, as is 135 typical for eastern Scotland, Bacon et al. 2012). The life span of Atlantic salmon from the 136 137 Girnock is therefore typically 5 to 6 years, but can range from 4 to 8 years. 1SW adults typically suffer only about half the marine mortality of 2SW fish, but, being around half the 138 size (biomass), female 1SW salmon produce about half as many eggs as 2SW females 139 (Gurney et al. 2012, 2015). 140

142 DNA samples and microsatellite genotyping

143 DNA samples were derived from three sources during our study period 1991-2011. In the mid-1990s, aliquots of genomic DNA extracted during earlier studies were available, 144 prepared according to protocols given in Taggart et al. (2001). Most of the other samples 145 146 from the late 1990s onwards were obtained from adipose fin-clips taken from adults, stored in molecular grade (99%) ethanol, and with genomic DNA extracted using the Promega, 147 148 Wizard® SV 96 Genomic DNA Purification System (www.promega.com) (see Keenan et al. 2013a). The remaining samples, mainly from the early 1990s, plus some fish that were not 149 150 adipose-clipped in later years, were obtained from scale samples, archived in paper packets, 151 air-dried and with the genomic DNA extracted as above. Genomic DNA for all samples was checked for quality and concentration through visual comparison with a *Hind*III digested Λ 152 DNA size standard on Ethidium Bromide stained 0.8% 0.5X TBE agarose gels. 153

All samples were examined for a panel consisting of 17 putatively neutral 154 microsatellite marker loci organised in two multiplex PCR. These microsatellites were 155 156 selected based on information content (polymorphism), consistent co-amplification reliability and non-overlapping size compatibility. Multiplex-1 comprised ten markers and Multiplex 2 157 consisted of the seven remaining microsatellites (see Appendix A for details); , in addition to 158 159 a sex specific marker based on the sdY locus, which is a conserved region for sex determination in salmonids (Yano et al. 2012, 2013). This later marker was used to double-160 check concordance between the biometric records and the genotype results (to guard against 161 162 recording errors, including samples potentially omitted from sequences).

PCRs were carried out in 96 well microtitre plates in 3.5μl volumes consisting of 1μl
 DNA (~2-5 ng/μl), 1.75μl of 2x PPP Top-Bio mastermix (Top-Bio) and 0.75 μl of a cocktail

of ABI fluorescent labelled forward and/or unlabelled reverse 'pig' tailed PCR primers 165 (Appendix A.1 for details on labelled and unlabelled primers, and specific primer 166 concentrations per marker loci). Samples were overlain with 10 µl of mineral oil to prevent 167 evaporation. Thermocycling conditions for both multiplex panels were as follows: an initial 168 denaturation step of 15 min at 95°C, followed by 28 cycles of 95°C for 30 sec, 57°C for 90 169 sec and 72°C for 60 sec. This was followed by a final extension step of 30 min at 60°C. All 170 171 reactions were carried out using Techne TC-Plus thermal cyclers, with a heated lid at 105°C. Amplified fragments were diluted one-tenth with double-distilled H₂O, and 1µl of this 172 173 dilution was added to 9 µl of HiDi formamide (Thermo Fisher Scientific) mixed with Gene Scan 600-LIZ size ladder (Thermo Fisher Scientific). 174

175 Diluted PCR products were analysed on a 96 capillary ABI 3730XL DNA analyser (Thermo Fisher Scientific), and the fragment size analysis (i.e. allelic calls) for genotypes 176 carried out using GENEMAPPERv4.1 (Thermo Fisher Scientific). Genotypes for each 177 178 microsatellite locus/specimen were individually checked and manually confirmed prior to their addition to an electronic database. Over 50% of the genotyping was independently 179 repeated to ensure consistent scoring (i.e. to minimise scoring errors). Locus-specific 180 statistics including allele numbers, heterozygosity, allelic richness and deviations from 181 Hardy-Weinberg expectations were estimated both on annual caught samples (i.e. candidate 182 parents) and the pooled data set using the R package diveRsity (Keenan et al. 2013b). The 183 power of the markers to correctly assign individuals to unique families was carried out using 184 Family Assignment Program (FAP; Taggart 2007). 185

186

187 Pedigree reconstruction

Parental cohorts were defined as adults returning to spawn at the Girnock in each autumn. For 188 each such spawning cohort, a sub-set of later returning adults that comprised the full span of 189 190 their sea-going progeny, by all possible river-age (1 to 4) and sea-age (1 to 3) range combinations, was assembled as putative offspring. For instance, returning adults caught in 191 the trap between 1993 and 1998 were analysed as putative offspring for the 1991 spawning 192 cohort. Pedigree reconstruction was carried out using FAP (Taggart 2007), which estimates 193 194 exclusion-based family assignment probabilities within family mixtures where all parental genotypes are known. In summary, FAP was used to search all potential offspring for the 195 196 given spawning cohort and to exclude those that could not derive from a given putative pair of male and female adult parents (based on field-observed sexes). The output was a list of 197 'family-trio' identities (potential female parent, male parent, offspring), together with 198 information on the number of loci matching exactly, the number of evidently mismatching 199 loci, and the list of such mismatching offspring loci. This process was repeated, separately, 200 for each adult cohort from 1991 to 2006 (i.e. for all spawning cohorts for which full-sets of 201 putative returning adult offspring were available in the sample database). 202

The resulting cohort-specific lists of putative family trios were manually examined 203 204 and any mismatching loci for the putative offspring and its parents were double checked back to the original ABI raw chromatogram data. Most allele mismatches involved single marker 205 206 loci and resulted from one individual (one parent or the offspring) being incorrectly assigned an adjacent-sized allele, rather than the likely-true parental one. These could be easily 207 rectified following visual inspection. Following this second stage of quality control, the 208 209 validated family trios were used as the basis for the pedigree. Only complete parent-offspring 210 records were used in this study (a sampled offspring and both its anadromous father and mother), excluding any offspring with only one known adult female parent, presumably sired 211 by an un-sampled precocious parr male. FAP was also used to estimate the 'parental 212

exclusion power' of the data (i.e. power of the markers to correctly assign individuals to agiven set of known families).

215

216 *Power analyses for heritability estimation*

In order to quantify the statistical power in this dataset to detect true non-zero h^2 , a power analysis (see Appendix B.3 for full details) was conducted in which a range of h^2 values were simulated ($h^2 = 0.05$, 0.10, 0.15, 0.20, 0.25, 0.30, 0.40, 0.50, 0.75) using the *rbv* function in *MCMCglmm* (Hadfield 2010). One thousand replicate simulations were run for each simulated h^2 value, and each time the estimated h^2 and its associated P-value based on likelihood ratio tests were returned and saved. Power was then calculated as the proportion of P-values that were <0.05.

224

225 Estimation of quantitative genetic parameters using animal models

Bayesian animal models were used to estimate quantitative genetic parameters of interest
using the R package *MCMCglmm* (Hadfield 2010). Full details on the estimation procedures
for the quantitative genetic parameters, as well as more details on the pedigree structure, are
given in Appendix B.1

Univariate animal models for the data were first devised (one trait as a single response variable) to estimate the narrow-sense heritability (h^2) of each of the phenotypic traits of interest: adult body-length and sea-age-at-maturity. These univariate models partitioned the total phenotypic variance V_P in each trait into contributions from additive genetic effects (V_A), maternal effects (V_M), year effects (V_Y) and residual effects (V_R), the latter assumed to arise from environmental effects and non-additive genetic effects. Thus $V_P = V_A + V_M + V_Y +$ $V_{\rm R}$, and $h^2 = V_{\rm A}/V_{\rm P}$. A fixed effect of sex (two level factor: adult males and adult females) was included in the univariate models for both traits, to control for the fact that males may mature at a younger age, on average, and hence also are smaller as adults, than females. Yearto-sea (the year the focal individual migrated to sea as a smolt, known from scale readings) was used to define temporal cohorts (i.e. $V_{\rm Y}$, see Appendix B.2).

Adult body size (measured in centimetres and treated as a Gaussian variable) was first natural logarithm (hereafter simply log) transformed before fitting the animal models, as preliminary exploratory analyses indicated that this transformation minimised autocorrelation between MCMC samples and yielded less skewed posterior distributions of the parameters.

In Atlantic salmon, among-individual variation in adult body size is strongly affected 245 246 by sea-age, as fish that remain at sea an extra year have more time for marine growth. The 247 mean size of 1SW salmon in our 1990-2012 sample, for example, was 55.8 ± 2.1 (S.E.) cm, whereas the mean size of MSW salmon was 68.4 ± 2.1 cm. If sea age itself is heritable (i.e. if 248 the propensity to stay >1 year at sea has a genetic basis), then the h^2 of adult body size as 249 estimated from a univariate animal model will conceptually encompass the effects of genes 250 251 influencing sea age (which in turn drive size variation among sea-age classes), as well as, genes influencing body size variation within sea-ages. To capture this heritable effect, a new 252 variable "sea-age-corrected body-length", (denoted $\hat{S}_{i,a}$), was constructed as follows: 253

$$\hat{S}_{i,a} = S_{i,a} - \bar{S}_a,$$

where $S_{i,a}$ corresponds to the log body-length of individual *i* of sea-age category *a* (1SW or MSW) and \bar{S}_a is the mean log-body-length of all individuals of sea-age *a*. A univariate animal model of $\hat{S}_{i,a}$ was then run (UV model 2) with the same MCMCglmm settings and model structure as UV model 1 to estimate h^2 of body-length conditional on sea-age.

The trait sea-age was treated as a binary variable, with a value of 0 corresponding to 259 maturation after one sea-winter and a value of 1 to maturation after two or more sea-winters 260 261 (178 of the records in the dataset were 1SW adults; among the MSW adults, only 5 out of 323 spent three winters at sea, and only one fish spent four winters at sea). A probit link function 262 (family = "threshold" in *MCMCglmm*) was used, where the resulting residual variance refers 263 to the variance of the link function, here fixed at 1 in order to render V_A estimable. The h^2 264 reported from this univariate model of sea-age (UV model 3) thus refers to h^2 on the liability 265 scale, rather than the observed binary scale (see Appendix B.2). 266

In the next step, bivariate animal models (both traits included as response variables) 267 were used to partition the overall phenotypic (co)variance between body-length and sea-age-268 269 at-maturity into additive genetic versus environmental (residual) components. Maternal effects and year effects were not included in these models (see Appendix B.1). In the first 270 271 bivariate animal model (BV model 1), trait 1 was log adult body-length and trait 2 was binary 272 sea-age. Unstructured covariance matrices for the random effects were specified, in order to provide estimates of COV_A and the residual covariance, COV_R. The additive genetic 273 correlation ($r_{\rm G}$) between body-length and sea-age was calculated by dividing COV_A by the 274 product of the square root of V_A for each trait. Similarly, the environmental (residual) 275 correlation (r_E) was calculated by dividing the residual covariance by the product of the 276 square root of $V_{\rm R}$ for each trait. Statistical support for $r_{\rm G}$ and $r_{\rm E}$ was assessed by checking 277 whether the 95% highest posterior density (HPD) interval for each included zero. 278

A second bivariate animal model (BV model 2) was run where this time the two response variables were sea-age-corrected body length (on the log scale, i.e. $\hat{S}_{i,a}$) and sea-age. This effectively corrected adult body size for variation due to sea-age, and the resulting $r_{\rm G}$ and $r_{\rm E}$ estimates from BV model 2 correspond to the genetic and environmental correlations (respectively) between "body size-within-sea-age" and sea age. All quantitative genetic parameter estimates are reported as posterior means ± HPD intervals.
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286

287 Testing for microevolutionary trends

In a quantitative genetic sense, microevolutionary responses are apparent when estimated breeding values (estimates of the additive genetic "merit" of an individual for a given trait) exhibit a temporal trend at the population level. We used the procedure recommended by Hadfield et al. (2010 b) to test for evolutionary change in body-length corrected for sea-age, and in sea-age itself (see Appendix B.4 for full details).

293

294 RESULTS

295 Population composition and phenotypic trends

During our 1991-2011 study, a total of 1,733 anadromous adults came to the Girnock to 296 spawn [annual average 75.3 (range 29 to 144, total adults)], of which the great majority 297 298 (97%, range 88% to 100%) in every year, were of known sex, sea-age and river-age. The annual proportion of returning adults that had prior-clipped adipose fins, indicating that they 299 were both reared above the Girnock trap and trapped as juvenile emigrants, averaged 47% 300 301 (range 31% to 76%). The remaining 53% of unclipped returning adults are assumed to have either: 1) passed over the smolt trap and not been marked; or, more likely, (2) to have been 302 reared below the Girnock trap. If reared below the Girnock trap, they were probably reared 303 outside of the Girnock catchment (only 18% of fully-grown parr are estimated to be reared 304 within the Girnock catchment but also below the Girnock trap, a region comprising just 8% 305 306 of the Girnock's wetted area (Glover pers comm.)). An annual average of 47% of known-sex

307	adults were females (range 30% to 60%; male% \approx 100% - female%). During the sub-period
308	of ova-manipulation (2000 to 2010) an average of 80% of females (range 48% to 100%) were
309	artificially spawned. Fluctuations and/or trends in population numbers and composition
310	occurred (see Discussion).

311

312 Molecular genetics and pedigree reconstruction

The rate of genotyping success was high, with 92% of all individual samples amplifying for 313 at least 14 or more marker loci (i.e. 82% of screened markers per sample). Full genotype 314 information (17 loci) was obtained for 83% of all samples screened. Loci summary statistics 315 are detailed in Appendix A.2. Across the 17 loci, excluding the sex marker, there were, on 316 317 average across the 20 cohorts, 11.5 alleles per locus per year (\pm 7.9 S.D., range 2 to 47). Within annual cohorts, observed heterozygosity values averaged 0.748 across loci per year (\pm 318 319 0.178 S.D., range 0.150 to 1.000). Allelic richness within loci was similar over all the study years. There was no evidence for departures from Hardy-Weinberg expectations (HWE) or 320 linkage disequilibrium from any cohort. 321

Power analysis indicates that the marker panel (17 loci) used provides over 99% accuracy to identify putative offspring to family. There is only a very minor decrease in power when 14+ markers are considered with some variation related to the particular marker loci also being noted (i.e. high versus moderately polymorphic marker).

From some 1,600 records of adult genotypes available for paternity assignment during 1991-

327 2011, 273 full parent-offspring trios (mother, father, offspring) were discerned and retained

after quality-controlling. 1991 to 1995 and 2007 to 2011 have records of incomplete families

- 329 (not all eventual 'older' offspring will have returned and been sampled). Inclusion of such
- records could bias interpretation of the data. The retained complete parentage-records (both

parents and all offspring of varying river- and sea-ages) mainly spanned the years
1995~2006; these years happened also to span a period of low returning adult numbers.
Consequently, the estimated annual values of sea-age and body-length are particularly
variable.

In order to retain only those parent-offspring trio records that were informative for the quantitative genetic analyses, trios were excluded in which any of the involved individuals were repeat-spawners (i.e. had spawned in previous years); the sex of either parent was unknown; body-length was not measured; or neither sea-age nor river-age were readable from scales (see below). This rigorous filtering reduced the number of useable trios from an initial 336 to 276 (82% retained).

341 After such filtering, the years of spawning for both putative parents matched in every case. For one of the 276 trios, a missing value for the offspring's sea-age was estimated based on 342 its year of spawning, its known river-age, and the pedigree-determined year of spawning of 343 344 its parents. Similarly, for 14 of the 276 trio records, the offspring's river-age was estimated from its year of spawning, its known sea-age, and the pedigree-determined year of spawning 345 of its parents. The offspring's total scale-read age closely matched its pedigree-determined 346 total-age in most cases: in 78% of cases (216/276 trios) the match was exact; in 19% the age-347 comparisons differed by only a single year (53/276); the remaining seven age-discrepancies 348 349 comprised four records where age-comparisons differed by 2-years; one at 3-years; and two at 5-years. The latter three records involving offspring-ageing discrepancies of >2 years were 350 removed, resulting in 273 rigorously useable parental-trio records. 351

Further details on the pedigree are given in Table 1 and Appendix B.1.

353

354 Animal models

Convergence was good for all animal models (results not shown). The univariate model of 355 body-length (UV model 1) showed that additive genetic effects (V_A) accounted for 356 approximately one-quarter of the total phenotypic variance (Table 2, h^2 of log adult body-357 length = 0.27). Of the remaining variance (i.e. not including V_A), maternal effects (V_M) 358 accounted for approximately 13% (9% of the total phenotypic variance V_P), year-to-sea 359 effects (V_Y) for 15% (11% of V_P) and residual environmental effects (V_R) for 72% (53% of 360 361 V_P). Males were on average smaller (61.62 \pm 0.58 cm) than females (66.10 \pm 0.33cm). When body-length was corrected for sea-age (UV model 2), V_A then accounted for a considerably 362 363 smaller fraction of V_P (Table 2, h^2 of body length within sea-ages = 0.14). V_M accounted for approximately 14% of V_P , V_Y for 9%, and V_R accounted for the remaining 64%. The 364 univariate animal model of sea-age (UV model 3) showed that V_A accounted for a little over 365 half of V_P (Table 2, h^2 of sea-age = 0.51). Of the remaining variance (i.e. not including V_A), 366 V_M accounted for approximately 10% (5% of V_P), V_Y for 44% (20% of V_P) and V_R for 46% 367 (21% of *V*_{*P*}). 368

The results of the bivariate animal model of adult body length and sea-age (BV model 369 1) mirrored those of the univariate animal models in terms of the estimated heritabilities for 370 371 the two traits (h^2 of adult body length = 0.26 and h^2 of sea-age = 0.48 in BV model 1; Table 3). The estimated genetic correlation between these traits was very high in the bivariate 372 model where body length was not adjusted for sea age ($r_G = 0.96$; Table 3). The results of the 373 bivariate animal model of sea-age-corrected body length and sea-age (BV model 2) also 374 largely mirrored those of the univariate models in term of the estimated heritabilities for the 375 two traits, although the h^2 of sea-age-corrected body length was somewhat lower (h^2 of sea-376 age-corrected body length = 0.06 and h^2 of sea-age = 0.53 in BV model 2; Table 3). The 377 estimated genetic correlation between these traits was positive ($r_G = 0.33$) but the HPD 378

intervals overlapped zero (Table 3), indicating that the r_G was not significantly different from zero.

381 A power analysis showed that the Girnock data had sufficient power to detect $h^2 >$ 382 0.22 with >80% confidence with no inherent bias in the data-set (Fig.2).

383

384 *Testing for microevolutionary trends*

The temporal trend in estimated breeding values for the trait "sea-age corrected body-length" was estimated at -0.0001 log(cm)/year (95% quantiles: -0.0008 to 0.0004). This trend in estimated breeding values was not statistically significantly negative, as only 67.4% of the posterior distribution of estimated temporal slopes was less than zero. The probability that this very small trend in estimated breeding values was more negative than one would expect based on random genetic drift was 63.3%, again indicating a lack of any evidence for a microevolutionary response to selection.

The temporal trend in estimated breeding values for the trait sea-age was estimated at -0.017 liability units per year (95% quantiles: -0.053 to 0.009). This trend in estimated breeding values was not statistically significantly negative, as only 81.8% of the posterior distribution of estimated temporal slopes was less than zero. The probability that this trend was more negative than one would expect based on random genetic drift was 74.3%, again indicating a lack of solid evidence for a microevolutionary response to selection.

398

399 DISCUSSION

Our data from a well-studied, single, wild population of Atlantic salmon show that sea-age
and body-length are both quite strongly heritable and, importantly, that the two traits are
strongly genetically correlated. However, when sea-age is alternatively correlated to body-

length within each sea-age class (i.e. sea-age corrected body-length), the genetic correlation is 403 then not significantly different from zero, and nor is the h^2 for sea-age-corrected body-length, 404 405 implying that individual variation in size within sea-ages does not have a heritable basis. Most studies estimate quantitative genetic parameters in laboratory, or in the case of fish, 406 aquaculture settings, which may not reveal much about evolutionary potential under wild 407 natural conditions (Charmantier and Garant 2005). Our results thus add important general 408 409 information regarding the potential for wild fish populations to respond to natural selection (or "unnatural selection", c.f. Allendorf & Hard 2009) and complement recent findings 410 411 showing strong genetic components to age and size at maturity in Atlantic salmon (e.g. Ayllon et al. 2015, Barson et al. 2015, Lepais et al. 2017). 412

413 Inheritance patterns

Substantial amounts of additive genetic variance in sea-age were not entirely 414 unexpected, given that recent studies of Atlantic salmon discovered several genetic loci 415 416 underpinning variation in sea-age, including a single gene (VGLL3) that explains almost 40% of the total phenotypic variation (Ayllon et al. 2015, Barson et al. 2015). These studies used a 417 very different approach – genome-wide associations combining data from a large number of 418 populations across a broad geographic region – and homed-in on specific quantitative trait 419 420 loci (QTL), whereas we followed a classical quantitative genetics approach that treats the 421 underlying genetic architecture as a "black box" and focussed on a single population. The 422 concordant inferences between studies conducted at very different scales using different methodologies – namely, that sea-age variation in wild Atlantic salmon populations has a 423 424 strong genetic basis -points towards a general finding for the species. Studies of other fish species have also documented heritable differences in age-at-maturity within and among 425 populations (e.g. mosquitofish Gambusia affini introduced to Hawaii, (Stearns 1983); guppies 426 Poecilia reticulata in Trinidad, (Reznick et al. 1990); Chinook salmon Oncorhynchus 427

tshawytscha introduced to New Zealand, (Quinn et al. 2001). This raises interesting questions 428 regarding the evolutionary forces that maintain genetic variation in this key life-history trait, 429 430 which may include sex-dependent dominance (Barson et al. 2015), frequency-dependent selection and spatiotemporal variation in environmental selection pressures (Gurney et al. 431 2012). In this study we ignored potential sex-specific inheritance patterns, which is justified 432 if inter-sex genetic correlations for our traits of interest are positive and high, but this 433 434 assumption should be tested in future studies, given sufficient statistical power. It is also possible that the period of captive propagation might have had an influence on the results. 435 436 The crossing protocol, which involved mating multiple males to females and vice versa, may have increased the number of links in the pedigree beyond that which might have occurred in 437 the absence of captive propagation, in which case it could have afforded increased power and 438 accuracy to our animal models. On the other hand, this represented a deviation from natural 439 spawning behaviours and mate choice, which may have affected the expression of genetic 440 variation (Pigliucci 2006), but we have no way of knowing a priori the direction and 441 magnitude of such influences. 442

Despite these strong genetic effects, environmental influences clearly also play a role; 443 in our study, for example, approximately half of the variation in sea-age was attributable to 444 environmental variation, although some of this may have been due to non-additive genetic 445 effects (dominance and epistasis) which we could not separate out with our pedigree structure 446 (indeed, Barson et al. 2015 showed that dominance effects occur at the VGLL3 locus). To put 447 this in practical terms, we observed over our study period that of the 114 offspring in total 448 produced by matings between two MSW parents, 84 (74%) of the resulting offspring 449 450 themselves returned as MSW; thus a high heritability "biases" this probability towards "like producing like". Friedland & Hass (1996) found that the fraction of 1SW adult returns from a 451 452 hatchery-dependent stock of Atlantic salmon was positively associated with late summer

marine growth, implying that age-at-maturity responds plastically to marine environmental 453 conditions. The literature suggests that freshwater conditions may also affect the sea-age of 454 455 anadromous Atlantic salmon, as implied by positive correlations between smolt size and the proportion of fish returning after 1SW (O'Connell and Ash 1993, Salminen 1997). Similarly, 456 inverse relationships between freshwater age and ocean age have been found in wild 457 steelhead trout Oncorhynchus mykis (Ward and Slaney 1988). However, if sub-populations 458 459 are spatially structured, as in the North Esk in Scotland (Gurney et al., 2015; Bacon et al. 2012), with higher fractions of 1SW fish in lower parts of the catchment, where smolts also 460 461 tend to get larger quicker (e.g. due to better growth at higher temperatures), then such correlations would arise from the spatial structuring alone, even if freshwater conditions have 462 no causal effect on sea-age variation. Thus it remains unclear to what extent such patterns 463 reflect plastic responses, spatial structuring, or genetic correlations among traits expressed at 464 different life stages. 465

466 Genetic covariance among suites of growth-related and life-history traits have been demonstrated in rainbow/steelhead trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss) (Hecht et al. 2015) and 467 brook charr (Salvelinus fontinalis) (Thériault et al. 2007), while some QTL for early male 468 maturation status in Atlantic salmon also collocated with those affecting spring weights of 469 juveniles (Lepais et al. 2017). We lacked individual-level data on freshwater or marine 470 growth rates, and hence could not test explicitly for plastic effects of specific traits/cues on 471 sea-age, nor could we test for genotype-by-environment interactions, which may be important 472 here. Lepais et al. (2017) recently demonstrated that early male maturation in Atlantic salmon 473 474 emerges as an interaction between individual growth rate (an environmentally-sensitive status trait) and a genetically variable maturation threshold (underpinned by at least three detectable 475 QTL), using a powerful new approach called the 'latent environmental threshold model" 476 (LETM). It would be very interesting to apply the LETM approach to future studies of sea-477

age variation in Atlantic salmon or other anadromous fish; obtaining individual-level data on 478 relevant status traits, such as post-smolt growth, that may act as cues for sea-age decisions 479 will be challenging in many situations, but circuli spacing on scales could be used, for 480 example (e.g. Friedland & Hass 1996). Furthermore, it would be very interesting to dissect 481 the mechanisms by which genetic variation in sea-age comes about; for example, Scottish-482 origin Atlantic salmon that eventually become MSW evidently use different oceanic feeding 483 484 areas (e.g. the waters off Greenland) than those than adopt the 1SW life history (which are not recorded as going to Greenland, e.g. Malcolm et al. 2010), raising the intriguing 485 486 possibility that genetic variation in migration routes and/or destinations might partially explain variation in sea-age, although the correlation between sea-age and migration patterns 487 may not reflect any causal connection between these traits. 488

The significant positive genetic correlation we documented between sea-age and 489 490 overall body-length is also consistent with the results of Barson et al. (2015), who 491 documented pleiotropic effects of specific genomic regions on sea-age and size-at-maturity. Such pleiotropic effects are inevitable to a degree, in that alleles predisposing individuals 492 towards later maturation at older sea-ages should also produce larger fish, given that Atlantic 493 salmon keep growing the longer they remain at sea. A more surprising result was the fact that 494 the genetic correlation between sea-age and body-length was so high ($r_G = 0.96$) as to imply 495 496 that these are effectively the same trait at a genetic level. That does not mean, however, that body size is completely genetically-determined and indeed, in our case, it appears that 497 individual variation in marine growth – a key determinant of body size at breeding – was 498 499 predominantly environmental, rather than genetic, in origin. This is because sea-age-500 corrected body-length exhibited a low h^2 that did not differ significantly from zero (although we only had the statistical power to detect $h^2 > ca$. 0.22, so a true h^2 of less than this cannot be 501 ruled out). While this trait is not a direct measure of marine growth, Atlantic salmon put on 502

most of their growth at sea (smolt sizes are very small, see URL4) and thus variation in marine growth rates and/or variation in coastal return-times must explain a large fraction of the variation in size of returning adults within each sea-age class. Smolt size could also indirectly account for some of the variation in adult size if, for example, larger smolts grow faster at sea (e.g. due to feeding advantages of initially larger size within shoals of postsmolts, which would set up a positive feedback).

509 A lack of (strong) genetic influences on marine growth is somewhat unexpected, given that genetic variation could operate via a range of mechanisms here; e.g. some 510 genotypes could be better foragers, or target different prey types, or have different inherited 511 marine migration pathways or destinations, that expose them to more or less growth 512 513 opportunity, or be more efficient at converting food into somatic growth, etc. Moreover, return migration timing has been shown to have a heritable basis in Atlantic salmon (Stewart 514 et al. 2002; Cauwelier et al. In Press) and other salmonids (Smoker et al. 1998, Quinn et al. 515 516 2000, O'Malley and Banks 2008, Kovach et al. 2012). This alone could produce corresponding genetic variation in body-length within sea-age classes, unless return periods 517 were very short or if late-returning genotypes have lower marine growth rates than early-518 519 returning genotypes, such that final size differences among them are minimal. At present we can only speculate on this, as we do not have reliable information on coastal return-dates to 520 521 estimate the h^2 of that trait and potential genetic correlations with body size, or indeed seaage. Our tentative conclusion at this point is that environmental drivers of body-length 522 variation within each sea-age class are simply much larger in magnitude than any genetic 523 524 influences.

Our tests for microevolution during the period 1990~2012 did not reveal any
genetically based trends towards reduced average sea-age, nor towards smaller body-size.
However, over the longer period 1966~2016, Atlantic salmon from two Deeside streams (the

Girnock and Baddoch) have shown a significant decline in MSW numbers whilst 1SW 528 numbers remained stable, implying a significant decrease in average sea-age ratios, slightly 529 530 reducing the average sea-age; they also showed concomitant downward trends in body size, which were coherent for both 1SW and MSW fish, (Glover et al. 2018 and pers comm). It 531 may simply be that the phenotypic trends documented by Glover et al. are entirely driven by 532 phenotypic plasticity, i.e. environmental influences on average sea-age and body size, rather 533 534 than microevolutionary responses to any directional selection pressures that might have occurred over this period. Mortality pressures from both marine fisheries and freshwater 535 536 angling were strong on Scottish Atlantic salmon during the period 1960 to 1990, which conceivably could have led to fisheries-induced selection (FIS) on, and subsequent evolution 537 of, sea-age and/or body size. The data analysed in this study fall mainly into a period when 538 marine fishery pressures were much reduced and freshwater angling pressures decreasing. As 539 evolutionary recovery of phenotypic traits from FIS is expected to be much slower than 540 declines caused by it (Heino et al. 2015), our findings with respect to microevolution could 541 simply reflect a period when any real changes were quite small and too low for our sample 542 sizes to detect. Moreover, the current study was focussed on a shorter time period and 543 involved smaller sample sizes than the Glover et al. study, and thus the power to detect a real 544 but small-magnitude evolutionary response may have been limiting. A further complicating 545 factor is that broad-scale climatic changes also occurred over this period, which may have 546 547 contributed to the observed phenotypic trends in Girnock salmon (Glover et al. 2018), either via phenotypic plasticity, microevolution, or both. Given the apparently very low heritability 548 of body size within sea-ages, phenotypic plasticity – possibly driven by climate change – 549 represents the most parsimonious explanation for the observed length decreases in 1SW and 550 MSW Girnock salmon. The fact that these trends are parallel between sea-ages, despite 551 differing marine feeding zones, may point towards coherent climate effects acting across a 552

large geographic scale, but factors other than climate may of course be at play. A clearer
understanding of the relative roles of microevolution and plasticity and their
environmental/anthropogenic drivers could be achieved by extending this pedigree study over
a longer period to match the longer-term phenotypic data..

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576 Author Contributions

577 The Girnock Atlantic Salmon Pedigree project was envisaged by PJB and organised by him

and PMcG, in collaboration with PP, JG and CRP. FFL contributed the tissue-samples and

579 biometric-data. DNA extraction and genotyping were undertaken at QUB by CB and PP. PP

and PJB merged the biometric and genotype data, PP undertook the parentage-assignments

and he and PJB thereby quality-controlled the original genotype scorings. PJB extracted and

quality-controlled the merged sub-set of data for this paper, including preliminary analyses.

583 TR fitted and interpreted the animal models. PP wrote the Methods and Results for parentage

analyses. TR and PJB wrote the Methods and Results for the quantitative genetic analyses

and an outline for the paper. All authors contributed to the final draft

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774	URL1: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-
775	Coarse/Freshwater/Monitoring/Traps
776	URL2: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-
777	Coarse/Freshwater/Monitoring/Traps/AdultReturnsPopStatus
778	URL3: http://data.marine.gov.scot/dataset/girnock-and-baddoch-adult-returns-traps
779	Citation: Glover, R., Malcolm, I. 2015. Girnock and Baddoch: Adult Returns to the Traps.
780	DOI: 10.7489/1588-1
781	URL4: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-
782	Coarse/Freshwater/Monitoring/Traps/JuvenileEmigrants
783	Citation: Glover, R., Malcolm, I. 2015. Girnock and Baddoch: Emigrant Numbers by Year of
784	Emigration. DOI: 10.7489/1017-1

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785	
786	Appendices:
787	Appendix A:
788	A.1 Microsatellite marker information
789	A.2 Summary sample statistics per locus / cohort
790	Appendix B:
791	B.1 Details on the reconstructed pedigree
792	B.2 Full details on the estimation procedures for the quantitative genetic parameters
793	B.3 Power analyses for heritability estimation
794	B.4 Testing for microevolutionary trends
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796	Table 1 Summary of annual sample sizes of adult Atlantic salmon within the reconstructed
797	Girnock pedigree. Column 2 shows the total number of individual fish spawning in that year
798	(Column 1) that appeared either as parents or offspring within "parent-offspring trios" (where
799	a trio represents one offspring and both its genetically-assigned parents). For example, an
800	adult returning in 1996 could be recorded as being in a trio in that year (i) because it mated
801	with another fish in that year and produced at least one surviving offspring that itself was
802	DNA-sampled as a spawning adult (e.g. six years later in 2002); (ii) because it was itself
803	assigned two parents (which might have spawned and been DNA-sampled in 1991, for
804	example), or (iii) for both reasons (i.e. some fish appear in the pedigree as both offspring and
805	parents). Columns 3 and 4 break Column 2 down by sex. Column 5 specifies how many of
806	the fish enumerated in Column 2 were themselves assigned two parents, while Column 6
807	specifies how many were assigned no parents.
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Adult Return Year	Total	Females	Males	Number with both [†] parents known	Number with neither parents known
1991	8	5	3	$0^{\dagger\dagger}$	8
1992	9	4	5	0	9
1993	6	3	3	0	6
1994	2	1	1	0	2
1995	13	7	6	0	13
1996	12	8	4	7	5
1997	6	3	3	3	3
1998	10	6	4	6	4
1999	15	6	9	5	10
2000	28	11	17	8	20
2001	10	6	4	5	5
2002	11	3	8	4	7
2003	13	5	8	5	8
2004	51	28	23	9	42
2005	40	25	15	14	26
2006	46	28	18	9	37
2007	23	13	10	5	18
2008	19	7	12	14	5
2009	37	14	23	37	0
2010	60	25	35	60	0
2011	65	42	23	65	0
Grand totals:	484	250	234	256	228

818 [†] Note that this pedigree study focussed only on "full trios", i.e. cases where both parents of a given offspring

were assigned. An unknown fraction of offspring each year are sired by precociously maturing males, which are
 not DNA-sampled and therefore cannot be assigned as true fathers, but the numbers here refer only to full
 parent-offspring trios.

††Note that prior to 1996, the parents of sampled spawning adults were not discernible as these parents would
have themselves spawned prior to 1991, when DNA samples were not available.

Table 2 Results of the univariate animal models. The values for adult body-length are on the
natural logarithm scale, while the values for sea-age-at-maturity are on the underlying
liability scale from the probit model (note the residual variance was fixed at 1). The intercept

833 refers to the fixed effect of the reference sex, females. HPD = highest posterior density.

Model	Parameter	Mean	Lower HPD	Upper HPD
			interval	interval
(UV model 1)	Intercept (females)	4.197	4.173	4.2223
Univariate for	Sex: males	-0.072	-0.090	-0.049
adult body-	Additive genetic variance V_A	0.0039	0.0016	0.0062
length	Maternal variance V_M	0.0014	0.0002	0.0029
	Year variance V_M	0.0016	0.0004	0.0033
	Residual variance V_R	0.0078	0.0058	0.0101
	Heritability h^2	0.265	0.125	0.414
(UV model 2)	Intercept (females)	0.000	-0.0148	0.0136
Univariate for	Sex: males	0.0179	-0.0048	0.0307
sea-age-	Additive genetic variance V_A	0.0008	0.0003	0.0015
corrected body	Maternal variance V_M	0.0008	0.0003	0.0015
length	Year variance V_M	0.0005	0.0001	0.0010
	Residual variance V_R	0.0037	0.0030	0.0045
	Heritability h^2	0.140	0.044	0.261
(UV model 3)	Intercept (females)	2.207	1.299	3.363
Univariate for	Sex: males	-2.511	-3.647	-1.539
sea-age-at-	Additive genetic variance V_A	2.580	0.114	6.143
maturity	Maternal variance V_M	0.212	0.000	0.809
-	Year variance V_M	0.937	0.081	2.158
	Residual variance V_R	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Heritability h^2	0.511	0.267	0.734

Table 3 Results of the bivariate animal models of (1) adult body-length and sea-age (binary846trait), and (2) sea-age-corrected body length and sea-age. The values for adult body-length847and sea-age-corrected body length are on the natural logarithm scale, while the values for848sea-age are on the underlying liability scale from the probit model (note that V_R for sea-age849was fixed at 1). The fixed effects are not reported as they mirror the findings of the univariate850models.

	Model	Parameter	Mean	Lower HPD interval	Upper HPD interval
	(BV model 1)	V_A for body length	0.0042	0.0019	0.0065
	Bivariate for	V_A for sea-age	1.0914	0.1436	2.2986
	adult body-	Additive genetic covariance COV _A	0.0633	0.0171	0.1157
	length and	V_R for body length	0.0116	0.0095	0.0138
	sea-age	V_R for sea-age	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
		Residual covariance COV_R	0.0635	0.0471	0.0791
		Heritability h^2 for body length	0.2637	0.1261	0.3878
		Heritability h^2 for sea-age	0.4823	0.2174	0.7284
		Genetic correlation r_G	0.9551	0.9096	0.9879
		Environmental correlation r_E	0.5893	0.4586	0.6834
	(BV model 2)	V_A for body length within sea-ages	0.0004	0.0002	0.0007
	Bivariate for	V_A for sea-age	1.5715	0.1436	2.2986
	adult body-	Additive genetic covariance COV _A	0.0079	-0.0077	0.0256
	length within	V_R for body length within sea-ages	0.0069	0.0061	0.0078
	sea-ages, and	V_R for sea-age	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
	sea-age	Heritability h^2 for body length within sea-ages	0.0560	0.0295	0.0976
		Heritability h^2 for sea-age	0.5347	0.2316	0.8495
		Genetic correlation r_G	0.3334	-0.2604	0.7205
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Fig.1 Map of the Girnock Burn study system, a tributary of the River Dee, Aberdeenshire,

868 Scotland.





Fig.2 Power analysis for heritability estimation for an arbitrary trait given the observed

pedigree and phenotypic data structure, with statistical power (A) and estimated heritability

- 880 (mean plus 95% confidence intervals, B) plotted against simulated heritability. Dotted line in
- A corresponds to a power of 80%; dotted line in B shows the 1:1 line.