

Mitochondrial DNA Part B Resources

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/tmdn20

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To cite this article: Ana Matos, André Gomes-dos-Santos, Amílcar Teixeira, Simone Varandas, Ronaldo Sousa, Ioannis Karaouzas, Stamatis Zogaris, Elsa Froufe & Manuel Lopes-Lima (2024) The complete mitochondrial genome of *Potomida acarnanica* (Kobelt, 1879), Mitochondrial DNA Part B, 9:6, 696-700, DOI: [10.1080/23802359.2024.2353271](https://doi.org/10.1080/23802359.2024.2353271)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23802359.2024.2353271>



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Published online: 03 Jun 2024.



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The complete mitochondrial genome of *Potomida acarnanica* (Kobelt, 1879)

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ABSTRACT

Freshwater mussels (Bivalvia, Unionida) play essential roles in the well-functioning of ecosystems, even providing essential services to humans. However, these bivalves face numerous threats (e.g. habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, introduction of invasive species, and climate change) which have already led to the extinction of many populations. This underscores the need to fully characterize the biology of these species, particularly those, such as *Potomida acarnanica*, that are still poorly studied. This study presents the first mitogenome of *P. acarnanica* (Kobelt, 1879), an endemic species of Greece with a distribution limited to only two river basins. The mitochondrial genome of a *P. acarnanica* specimen, collected at Pamisos River (Peloponnese, Greece), was sequenced by Illumina high-throughput sequencing. This mitogenome (16,101 bp) is characterized by 13 protein-coding genes, 22 transfer RNA and 2 ribosomal RNA genes. The size of this mitogenome is within the range of another *Potomida* mitogenome already published for the species *Potomida littoralis*. In the phylogenetic inference, *P. acarnanica* was recovered as monophyletic with *P. littoralis* mitogenome in the Lamprotulini tribe, as expected. This genomic resource will assist in genetically characterizing the species, potentially benefiting future evolutionary studies and conservation efforts.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 24 January 2024
Accepted 5 May 2024

KEYWORDS



Mitogenome; freshwater mussels; phylogeny


Introduction

Freshwater mussels play a crucial role in maintaining the health and balance of aquatic ecosystems (Strayer 2014). These mollusks contribute to nutrient cycling and act as nature's water purifiers, filtering and cleansing the water they inhabit, helping to sustain a diverse array of aquatic life and supporting the overall health of freshwater ecosystems (Lopes-Lima et al. 2017; Vaughn 2018). Additionally, they also hold cultural and economic importance, as they have been used historically for food, tools, and even as sources of pearls (Strayer 2017; Zieritz et al. 2022). Nevertheless, freshwater mussel populations face numerous threats, such as habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, introduction of invasive species, and climate change, underscoring the urgency of conservation efforts to safeguard these vital organisms and the ecosystems they inhabit (Ferreira-Rodríguez et al. 2019; Lopes-Lima et al. 2023). In fact, several freshwater mussel species, especially those that are less abundant and have



Figure 1. Species image reference of *P. acarnanica* (photograph by Manuel Lopes-Lima).

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 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/23802359.2024.2353271>.

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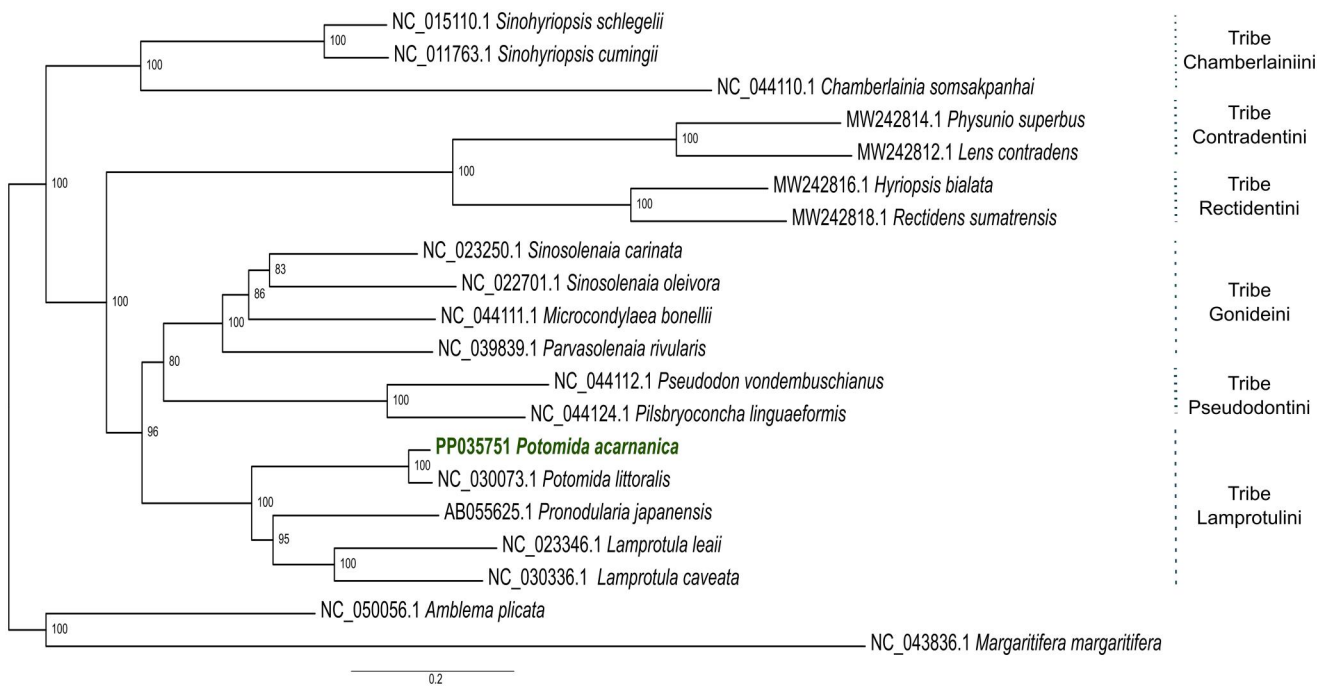


Figure 3. Maximum Likelihood Phylogenetic inference with all the downloaded mitogenomes ($n = 19$) and with the new mitochondrial genome of *P. acarnanica* (this mitogenome has been deposited in Genbank with accession number PP035751). The mitogenomes used in this phylogeny were: *Sinohyriopsis schlegelii* (NC_015110.1) (Sheng et al. 2014), *Sinohyriopsis cumingii* (NC_011763.1) (unpublished), *Chamberlainia somsakpanhai* (NC_044110.1) (Froufe et al. 2020), *Physunio superbus* (MW242814.1) (Zieritz et al. 2021), *Lens contradens* (MW242812.1) (Zieritz et al. 2021), *Hyriopsis bialata* (MW242816.1) (Zieritz et al. 2021), *Rectidens sumatrensis* (MW242818.1) (Zieritz et al. 2021), *Sinosolenia carinata* (NC_023250.1) (Huang et al. 2013), *Sinosolenia oleivora* (NC_022701.1) (Huang et al. 2015), *Microcondylaea bonellii* (NC_044111.1) (Froufe et al. 2020), *Parvasolenia rivularis* (NC_039839.1) (unpublished), *Pseudodon vondembuschianus* (NC_044112.1) (Froufe et al. 2020), *Pilsbryconcha linguaeformis* (NC_044124.1) (Froufe et al. 2020), *Potomida littoralis* (NC_030073.1) (Froufe et al. 2016), *Pronodularia japonensis* (AB055625.1) (unpublished), *Lamprotula leaii* (NC_023346.1) (unpublished) and *Lamprotula caveata* (NC_030336.1) (unpublished). The two outgroup taxa used were: *Amblema plicata* (NC_050056.1) (Teiga-Teixeira et al. 2020) and *M. margaritifera* (NC_043836.1) (Gomes-dos-Santos et al. 2019).

NC_039839.1, NC_044112.1, NC_044124.1, NC_030073.1, AB055625.1, NC_023346.1, NC_030336.1) from the Unionidae family (Gonideinae subfamily), were retrieved from GenBank (22nd December 2023). Moreover, two mitochondrial genomes (from *Amblema plicata* (NC_050056.1) and *Margaritifera* (NC_043836.1)) were downloaded from GenBank (22nd December 2023) as outgroup. The 13 protein-coding genes of the downloaded mitochondrial genomes were aligned, trimmed and concatenated with MAFFT (default parameters) (version 7.505) (Katoh and Standley 2013), trimAL (version 1.2) (-gt 0.5) (Capella-Gutiérrez et al. 2009) and FasConCAT-G (-p -p -a -s -l) (version 1.05.1) (Kück and Longo 2014), respectively. The final alignment had 11148 bp. IQ-TREE (version 1.6.12) (-m TESTNEWMERGE -rcluster 10) (Nguyen et al. 2015; Kalyanamoorthy et al. 2017) was used to identify the partition-scheme, best-fit nucleotide substitution models and Maximum Likelihood phylogeny. The evolutionary models applied were TPM3 + F + I + G4 (ATP6), TPM3u + F + I + G4 (ATP8), TN + F + I + G4 (COIII), TN + F + I + G4 (COII), TIM3 + F + R4 (COI and ND4L), TPM3u + F + R4 (Cytb, ND1 and ND2), K3Pu + F + I + G4 (ND3), GTR + F + R4 (ND4 and ND5), and TVM + F + I + G4 (ND6).

Results

The mitogenome of *P. acarnanica*, with a total of 16,101 bp, has 13 protein-coding genes, 22 transfer RNA (tRNA), and 2 ribosomal RNA (rRNA) genes (Figure 2). Twenty six of these genes are in the complementary strand (ND1 (NADH

dehydrogenase subunit 1), ND2 (NADH dehydrogenase subunit 2), ND6 (NADH dehydrogenase subunit 6), cytochrome b (CYTB), 12S ribosomal RNA, 16S ribosomal RNA and 20 tRNA (tRNA^{Gly}, tRNA^{Leu}, tRNA^{Val}, tRNA^{Ile}, tRNA^{Cys}, tRNA^{Gln}, tRNA^{Phe}, tRNA^{Pro}, tRNA^{Asn}, tRNA^{Leu}, tRNA^{Tyr}, tRNA^{Thr}, tRNA^{Lys}, tRNA^{Arg}, tRNA^{Trp}, tRNA^{Glu}, tRNA^{Ser}, tRNA^{Ala}, tRNA^{Met} and tRNA^{Ser}). This mitochondrial genome has been deposited in Genbank with accession number PP035751.

In the phylogeny here provided, 17 mitogenomes of the subfamily Gonideinae (Unionidae family) are divided according to six tribes with high support (Figure 3). *P. acarnanica* and *Potomida littoralis* are recovered as monophyletic and sister to *Lamprotula caveata*, *Lamprotula leaii* and *Pronodularia japonensis* (Figure 3), all these five species belong to the Lamprotulini tribe (Figure 3).

Discussion and conclusions

To date, only two mitochondrial genomes of *Potomida* have been available: the male (M-type) and female (F-type) mitogenomes of *Potomida littoralis* (Froufe et al. 2016b). This is the first complete F-type mitochondrial genome of *P. acarnanica*. The sex was determined using histology and this mitogenome presents the same F-type gene arrangement of this particular subfamily of Unionidae (Froufe et al. 2020). The single published F-type mitogenome of *P. littoralis* was 15,789 bp in length, similar to the length of the one presented here for *P. acarnanica* (16,101 bp). As expected, in the provided phylogenetic inference (Figure 3), the mitogenome

of *P. acarnanica* is grouped with that of *P. littoralis*. This phylogeny is congruent with other phylogenetic reconstructions of the Gonideinae subfamily (Froufe et al. 2020). M-type mitochondrial DNA has been independently evolving from the F-type since the origin of the Unionida order thus they will be far more divergent than any F-type mitogenome of any Unionidae species included in the phylogenetic analysis (Froufe et al. 2016b). Given this divergence, only F-type mitochondrial sequences were included in the phylogenetic reconstruction.

For the *Potomida* genus, there is still a lack of molecular data. *Potomida acarnanica* is a poorly studied freshwater mussel associated with a high risk of extinction. Genomic resources are essential in evolutive studies and conservation management strategies (Garrison et al. 2021). Therefore, we present the first mitogenome of *P. acarnanica*. This will aid in the comprehensive genetic profiling of the genus and the development of conservation measures for this species.

Author contributions

EF and MLL designed and planned the study. Sample collection was performed by IK and SZ. DNA extraction performed by AGS. Mitogenome assembly and annotation were performed by MLL and AGS, and phylogenetic analysis by AM. Figures prepared by AT, SV, and RS. Draft preparation by AM, AGS, MLL, and EF. All authors interpreted and discussed the data and contributed to the final version of the manuscript.

Ethical approval

The described work was approved by the CIIMAR Ethical Committee and CIIMAR Managing Animal Welfare Body (ORBEA), according to the European Union Directive 2010/63/EU. Permits for fieldwork were acquired from local coauthors, no permits were required for collecting invertebrate specimens. The voucher specimen has been deposited at the Museum of Natural History and Sciences of the University of Porto, Portugal (<https://mhnc.up.pt/>, Manuel Lopes-Lima, manuelplopeslima@gmail.com) with voucher name MHNC-UP BIV1121.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) supported EF by project reference CEECINST/00027/2021/CP2789/CT0003 and DOI identifier <https://doi.org/10.54499/CEECINST/00027/2021/CP2789/CT0003>, and MLL (2020.03608.CEECIND).

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Data availability

The genome sequence data that support the findings of this study are openly available in GenBank of NCBI at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> under the accession number PP035751. The associated BioProject, SRA, and Bio-Sample numbers are PRJNA1056157, SRR27332421 and SAMN39090842 respectively.

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