




Detecting host–parasitoid interactions in an invasive Lepidopteran using nested tagging DNA metabarcoding

James J. N. Kitson^{1,2}  | Christoph Hahn^{1,3} | Richard J. Sands^{4,5} | Nigel A. Straw⁴ | Darren M. Evans¹  | David H. Lunt² 

¹School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

²Evolutionary and Environmental Genomics Group, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Hull, Hull, UK

³Institute of Zoology, Karl-Franzens-Universität, Graz, Austria

⁴Forest Research, Centre for Ecosystems, Society and Biosecurity, Farnham, UK

⁵Centre for Biological Sciences, Highfield Campus, The University of Southampton, Southampton, UK

Correspondence

James J. N. Kitson, School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.
Email: KitsonJJN@gmail.com

Abstract

Determining the host–parasitoid interactions and parasitism rates for invasive species entering novel environments is an important first step in assessing potential routes for biocontrol and integrated pest management. Conventional insect rearing techniques followed by taxonomic identification are widely used to obtain such data, but this can be time-consuming and prone to biases. Here, we present a next-generation sequencing approach for use in ecological studies which allows for individual-level metadata tracking of large numbers of invertebrate samples through the use of hierarchically organised molecular identification tags. We demonstrate its utility using a sample data set examining both species identity and levels of parasitism in late larval stages of the oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*—Linn. 1758), an invasive species recently established in the United Kingdom. Overall, we find that there are two main species exploiting the late larval stages of oak processionary moth in the United Kingdom with the main parasitoid (*Carcelia iliaca*—Ratzeburg, 1840) parasitising 45.7% of caterpillars, while a rare secondary parasitoid (*Compsilura concinnata*—Meigen, 1824) was also detected in 0.4% of caterpillars. Using this approach on all life stages of the oak processionary moth may demonstrate additional parasitoid diversity. We discuss the wider potential of nested tagging DNA metabarcoding for constructing large, highly resolved species interaction networks.

KEYWORDS

biocontrol, invasive species, nested tagging, parasitism, species interactions

1 | INTRODUCTION

Invasive species are a growing global threat and pose a major risk to both natural and cultivated ecosystems with detrimental effects including direct competition for resources (Peck, Pringle, Marshall, Owens, & Lord, 2014), predation on native species (Boland, 2004) and even disruption of intentionally released biocontrol agents (Schooler, De Barro, & Ives, 2011). Economically, it is estimated that invasive species have a total global cost of at least US\$ 70 billion annually (Bradshaw et al., 2016). In Europe, there are over 1,590

non-native invasive arthropod species (estimate as of Roques, 2010) and the rate at which species are establishing is increasing with “an average of 10.9 species per year for the period 1950–1974 to an estimated 19.6 species per year for 2000–2008” (Roques, 2010; Roques et al., 2016). The United Kingdom has the third largest non-native species burden in Europe, with more than 502 arthropod species and 1,376 higher plants (Roy et al., 2014). Determining how to deal with invasive species is critically important for both ecological and financial reasons. Although good biosecurity is likely to be far cheaper than control or eradication of established species (Vazquez-

Prokopec, Chaves, Ritchie, Davis, & Kitron, 2010), this is not always achieved. Thus, an understanding of the interactions between invasive species and native species within an invaded range is essential for quantifying the impacts on communities (Hesketh, Roy, Eilenberg, Pell, & Hails, 2010; Roy, Hails, Hesketh, Roy, & Pell, 2009) as well as developing practical management approaches, such as biocontrol. Ecological network modelling provides a framework within which these questions can be addressed but typically requires well-sampled networks that are laborious to create with traditional observational approaches (Evans, Kitson, Lunt, Straw, & Pocock, 2016). Molecular tools and in particular, modern sequencing technologies, provide a way to collect this data on a large scale by standardising and automating much of the effort required to detect interactions (Handley et al., 2011).

The oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*, hereafter referred to as OPM), is historically considered a native of the warmer parts of southern and central Europe with a more sporadic presence in western Europe (Groenen & Meurisse, 2012), but since the 1970s, the frequency of outbreaks in north-western Europe (especially Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany) has increased dramatically with multiple intense outbreaks where the gregarious larvae reach population densities of thousands of individuals per host tree (deciduous *Quercus* spp.) (Stigter, Geraedts, & Spijkers, 1997). Population densities on this scale are capable of defoliating large areas of oak forest (Wagenhoff & Veit, 2011). In addition to commercial forestry concerns, the caterpillars are also a serious public health risk due to the presence of urticating hairs containing thaumetopoein, a strong allergen unique to OPM and related moth species (Lamy et al., 1986).

The oak processionary moth arrived in the United Kingdom in 2006 and has spread throughout Greater London but has yet to establish beyond this area (Mindlin, le Polain de Waroux, Case, & Walsh, 2012). This is in part due to a UK government control programme that involves both manual nest removal and insecticide spraying using *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), and even though the government-funded programme does not cover the complete UK range of the moth, the costs are still high at around £1.2 million in 2016 (Forest Research 2017). With costs this high, it is desirable to find an alternative to the current control method that is both financially viable and minimises any adverse ecological impact. Natural enemies of OPM have been investigated in Europe, and at least 30 egg, larval or pupal parasitoids are known (Roques, 2014; Sands, Jonusas, Straw, Kitson, & Raper, 2015; Sobczyk, 2014; Zwakhals, 2005), but often these records are collected on an ad hoc basis and other than one incidence of a single parasitoid being collected in London [Richmond Park: *Carcelia iliaca* (Sands et al., 2015)], nothing is known about parasitoids of OPM and their infection rates in the United Kingdom. Understanding which parasitoids utilise OPM and the parasitism rates for each parasitoid is essential for assessing the potential use of these species for integrated pest management (IPM). Species interactions have traditionally been detected using either observational data (e.g. Maglianesi, Blüthgen, Böhning-Gaese, & Schleuning, 2014), microscopic analysis of collected specimens (e.g. gut contents

Otte & Joern, 1976; Hyslop, 1980; or pollen on pollinators Lopezarazua-Mikel, Hayes, Whalley, & Memmott, 2007) or the rearing of organisms to identify plant–herbivore and host–parasitoid interactions (Pocock, Evans, & Memmott, 2012), but these approaches are labour intensive, and there are often significant taxonomic hurdles to overcome, both in terms of the knowledge base required to accurately perform identifications and the presence of cryptic species (e.g. Kaartinen, Stone, Hearn, Lohse, & Roslin, 2010; Smith, Wood, Janzen, Hallwachs, & Hebert, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). In addition to this, studying the parasitoids of OPM and other species with urticating hairs can make laboratory rearing impractical and there is evidence that more traditional rearing methods can underestimate parasitism rates (Day, 1994). Thus, a better method is required to understand host–parasitoid interactions, the vital first step in assessing the potential for biocontrol methods.

The advent of molecular biological tools has allowed unprecedented opportunities to determine hitherto difficult to observe species interactions. Most of the work to date has focussed on studies using PCR diagnostic approaches where a primer pair specific to a single species is used to amplify only that species within a more complex DNA mixture and then visualise a band on an agarose gel. This is typically applied to known sets of species using suites of primer pairs that each produce bands of different lengths that can then be separated by gel or capillary electrophoresis (e.g. aphid–parasitoid interactions Traugott et al., 2008). These approaches are extremely targeted and require extensive a priori knowledge regarding the interacting species as specific primers must be designed for each target species.

Massively parallel “next-generation” sequencing (NGS) is now a commonly used tool in diverse areas of ecology and has the advantage of being able to separate mixtures of DNA from multiple species into their constituent components. One commonly applied approach is “community metabarcoding” where a bulk DNA sample from one environment is PCR amplified for a standard barcode locus, sequenced, and taxa comprising the community identified bioinformatically (e.g. Taberlet, Coissac, Pompanon, Brochmann, & Willerslev, 2012; Yu et al., 2012). Bulk sampling and sequencing a few complex samples result in community rather than individual-level data. While this is useful for the detection of species (e.g. Dejean et al., 2012) or characterisation of whole communities across treatments or time (e.g. Giguët-Covex et al., 2014; Yu et al., 2012), this is not necessarily appropriate for detecting species interactions (but see Leray et al., 2013 for a dietary analysis using this approach). The ideal species interaction detection method would involve the ability to sequence a wide variety of organisms in complex mixtures (e.g. extracted DNA containing both host and parasitoid) while retaining individual sample level metadata so that semi and fully quantitative networks can be created sensu Hřček and Godfray (2015).

The use of unique MID tags (Molecular Identification tags, 8-mer oligonucleotide sequences) added to the PCR primers is a well-tested strategy for sample tracking in multiplexed samples with NGS approaches (Binladen et al., 2007). Eight forward MID tags are typically matched with twelve reverse MID tags to give 96 unique tag

combinations. Multiple sets of primers like this can increase the number of samples used, but large numbers of unique MID-labelled primers can be expensive and complex to organise in a laboratory environment, making it unusual to have more than four sets of primer combinations in a single experiment (384 samples although see Campbell, Harmon, and Narum (2015) for an example of highly multiplexed SNP genotyping). Sequencing 384 individual insects per sequencing run using a next-generation sequencing approach to detect species interactions is possible, but due to the cost per sample, it is unlikely to be feasible for the thousands of samples required when building well-sampled ecological networks (Evans et al., 2016).

Shokralla et al. (2015) and Cruaud, Rasplus, Rodriguez, and Cruaud (2017) provided a potential solution to this problem by utilising a nested barcoding approach involving two PCR steps followed by sequencing on the Illumina MiSeq that allow for the tracking of a large number of individual samples. However, Shokralla et al. provided limited reproducibility for readers with their workflow and Cruaud et al. focussed on mass barcoding of samples for species delimitation and construction of identification databases. To date, no studies have demonstrated the utility of these approaches for detecting species interactions, although see Lefort, Wratten, Cusumano, Varennes, and Boyer (2017) and Šigut et al. (2017) for examples of parasitism using more conventional sample tracking methods.

In this study, we have two interlinked objectives as follows: (i) to present a simplified version of nested metabarcoding methods for determining OPM–parasitoid interactions using a single PCR locus for a large number of samples, including improvements to control cross-contamination; and (ii) demonstrate the utility of nested metabarcoding for detecting species interactions by determining the parasitoid identities and rates for one recently established population of OPM in the United Kingdom using a reproducible pipeline for creating host–parasitoid networks (metaBEAT 0.97.7 <https://github.com/HullUni-bioinformatics/metaBEAT>) with a downloadable working environment conveniently packaged in Docker (Merkel, 2014) and GitHub (GitHub Inc.). By combining these objectives, we discuss

how the ability to link metadata to individuals opens many new avenues for research including the ability to create larger more highly resolved ecological networks for habitat management and restoration (Evans et al., 2016).

2 | METHODS

2.1 | The nested metabarcoding approach

We employed a modification to the standard Illumina 16S bacterial metabarcoding protocol (Illumina 2011). In the original protocol, two rounds of PCR were used as follows: first to isolate and amplify the gene region of interest (PCR1) and second, to add a set of molecular identification tags (MID tags) and the Illumina MiSeq adapter sequences (PCR2). Our modifications to the protocol include adding (i) an additional set of MIDs in PCR1 to further increase the resolution of sample identification and (ii) adding a sequencing heterogeneity spacer to improve MiSeq performance (Fadrosh et al., 2014). Each MID tag was composed of a unique 8-nucleotide sequence allowing them to be bioinformatically linked back to the individual sample. We included MIDs in both the forward and reverse primers with twelve forward tags and eight reverse tags, to give 96 unique combinations of sample tags that can be arranged on a single plate (See Figure 1 for general primer design). We also included specific MID tags for positives and negatives as this helped track contamination and mistagging through illegal tag combinations. A plate of PCRs with these tagged primers was carried out with each PCR well being given a unique combination of tags. The PCR products were then pooled into a separate prelibrary for each plate of samples (PCR1, Figure 2). The prelibrary was then used as a template for a second round of PCR which added the adapters necessary for Illumina sequencing. This reaction also added two additional MID tags that uniquely identify the plate (PCR2, Figure 2). These tagged prelibraries could then be purified, pooled and sequenced on a single Illumina MiSeq run.

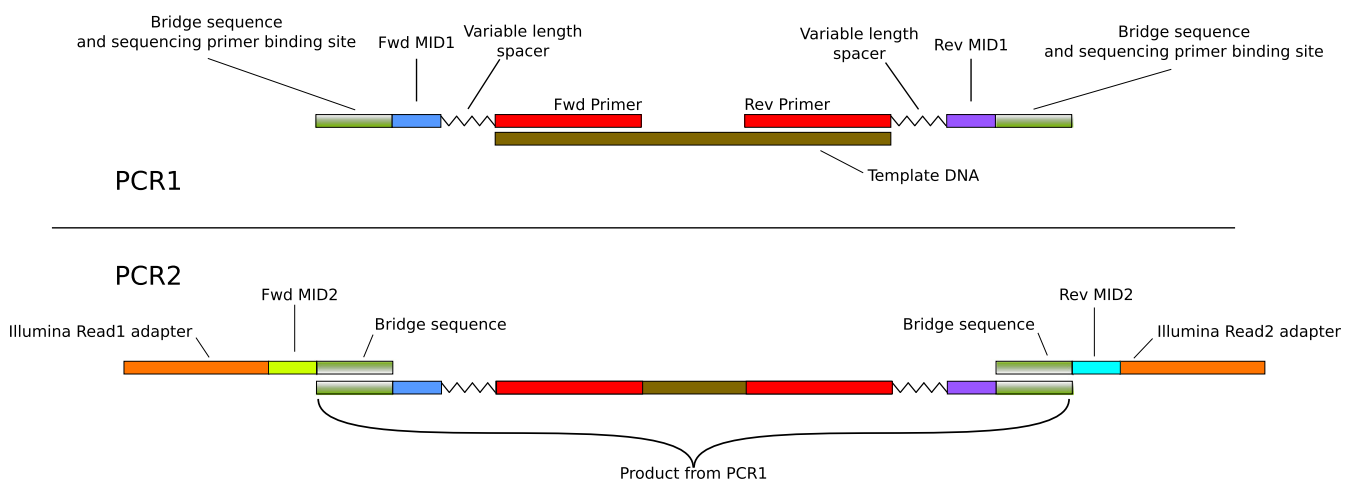


FIGURE 1 A simplified primer structure for a nested metabarcoding approach to detecting species interactions

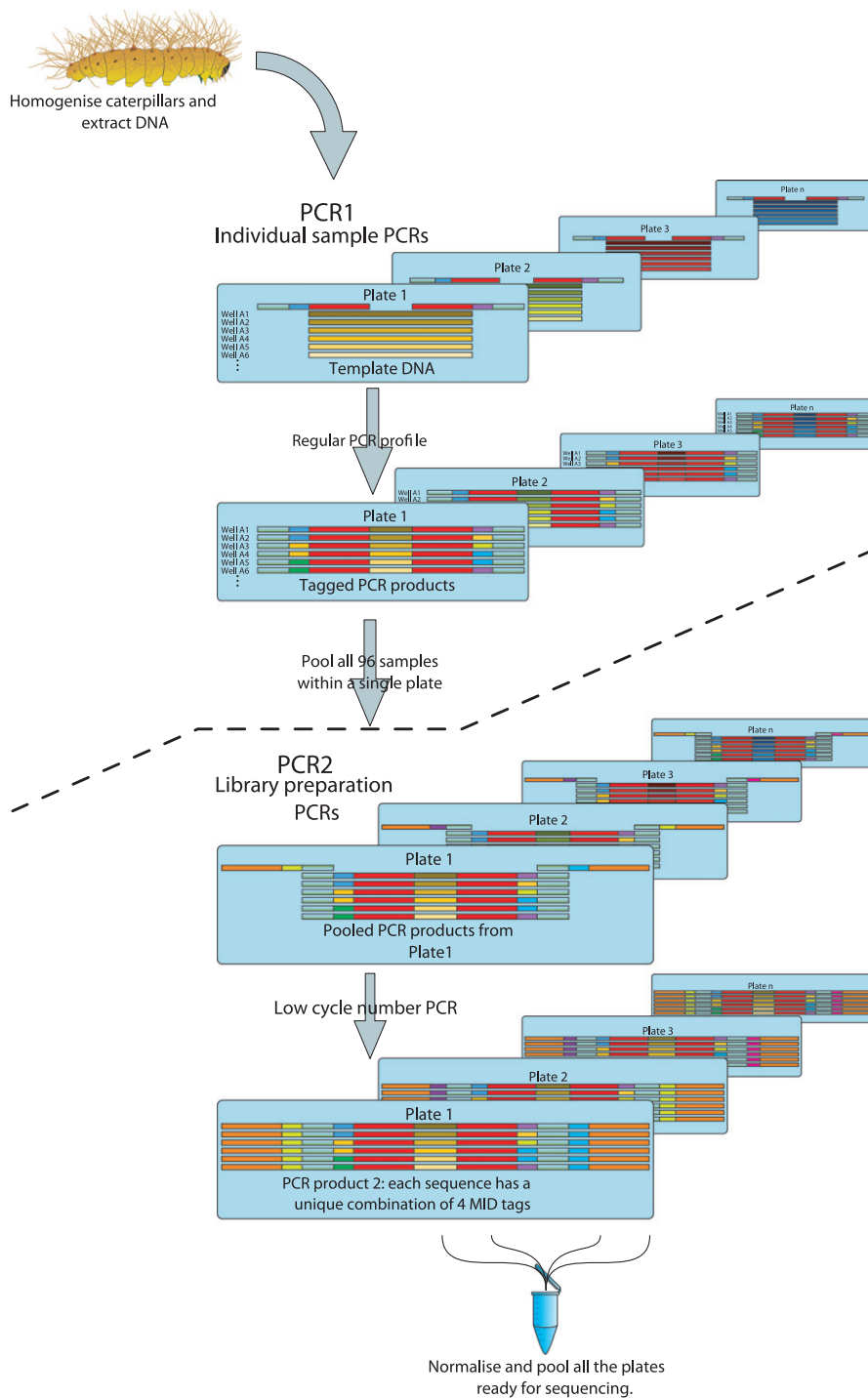


FIGURE 2 Preparation of PCR amplicon libraries for Illumina MiSeq using a nested metabarcoding approach to detecting species interactions. Colour choices have the same meaning as in Figure 1. Shades of colours represent the same target sequences in different individuals. Adapted from Evans et al. (2016)

2.2 | Sampling and laboratory protocols

For this study, 1,012 OPM caterpillars (4th to 6th instar) were extracted from 26 nests (silk structures created by communally living caterpillars) collected from various locations in Croydon, London, UK in July 2014 (full collection data are available in Table S1 in the Github repository). Nests were frozen whole at -20°C for at least 48 hr to kill the caterpillars before the nest was opened up and individual caterpillars removed. Whole caterpillars were placed in deep well plates with a single 5-mm stainless steel ball bearing per well

and 300 μl of digestion buffer one (20 mM EDTA, 120 mM NaCl and 50 mM Tris). Mechanical lysis was then performed by shaking in a Qiagen TissueLyser II for 2×2 min at 30 Hz. The caterpillar slurry was centrifuged to remove tissue residue from lids and reduce the possibility of cross-contamination. To each sample, 270 μl of digestion buffer two (20 mM EDTA, 120 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris and 2% SDS) plus 30 μl of 10 mg/ml Proteinase K solution were added. The plates were then mixed by repeated inversion and digested overnight at 37°C . After enzymatic lysis, 10 μl of the digestion supernatant was then used as the starting material for a 70 μl HotSHOT

DNA extraction (Truett et al., 2000) which was diluted 1/100 for PCR amplification.

A 313 bp fragment of the cytochrome C oxidase subunit I barcode region (*coxI*) was amplified using primers based on mCOLintF and jgHCO2198 modified from Leray et al. (2013) to include standard Illumina MIDs and bridge sequences (see Figure 1 and Table S2 in the GitHub repository associated with this manuscript) along with a variable length sequencing heterogeneity spacer as in Fadrosch et al. (2014). PCRs were carried out over 45 cycles (95°C for 15 s, 51°C for 15 s and 72°C for 30 s) in 20 µl reactions using a high fidelity *Taq* mastermix (MyFi Mix Bioline), 1 µl of template DNA and each primer (final concentration – 0.5 µM). Extra cycles were required as long primers are known to cause a lag in PCR amplification (Schnell, Bohmann, & Gilbert, 2015). To prevent cross-contamination between wells, all PCRs were performed in individually capped PCR strips and all wells were sealed using mineral oil. In addition to this, oil was placed in the PCR well before all other reagents and the PCR master mix were mixed with primers and template DNA under oil to prevent cross-contamination. An example output from a poorer performing run not employing these methods can be seen in Appendix S1.

PCRs were checked on a gel to gauge success rates, and 10 µl of each product from a plate was pooled together (without quantification) to produce each prelibrary, resulting in eleven separate prelibraries. Two aliquots of each prelibrary were gel purified to remove remaining primers using QIAquick gel extraction kit (Qiagen) while maximising library recovery. The second library PCRs were carried out over 12 two-step cycles (98°C for 20 s then 72°C for 30 s) in 20 µl reactions using MyFi Mix (Bioline), 5 µl of prelibrary and each primer (final concentration – 1.0 µM). PCR cycles were minimised so that nested-tagged PCR products were formed with minimal additional PCR error. Identical contamination control procedures were employed for PCR2 as in PCR1 (Figure 2). This resulted in eleven libraries each with a unique set of library MIDs and a set of sample MIDs repeated across libraries. Libraries were gel purified, and concentrations were quantified on a Qubit 3.0 using the Invitrogen dsDNA HS Assay Kit before being pooled at equal concentrations. The final set of pooled libraries was denatured and loaded onto a MiSeq using a v2 (2 × 250 bp) sequencing kit with a final concentration of 12 pM and 10% PhiX as a sequencing control.

Each plate contained 92 OPM samples, two negative samples (one HotSHOT extraction negative and one PCR water negative) and two positive samples. The first positive contained extracted template DNA from *Astatotilapia calliptera* (a cichlid fish) and was amplified at the same time as the OPM samples (hereafter denoted DNA positive). The second positive (hereafter denoted PCR positive) consisted of PCR products from *Mytilus edulis* (common mussel). Both positive samples were chosen due to their low probability of occurring in UK oak trees. The PCR positive was amplified independently from all other samples using primers with the correct combination of tags and was quantified using a Qubit 3.0 before being added directly to the prelibrary during pooling. The PCR-positive volume added to each prelibrary was calculated so that we were adding 1/94th the

total DNA (96 samples minus two negatives) of each prelibrary as PCR positive. All samples were sequenced (including positives and negatives) even when no band was present as PCR products may still exist below gel detectable levels.

2.3 | Bioinformatic processing of Illumina MiSeq output

Processing of Illumina data from raw sequences to taxonomic assignment was performed using a custom pipeline for reproducible analysis of metabarcoding data *METABEAT* v0.97.7. Individual steps performed as part of the pipeline are as follows: in brief, reads were demultiplexed using the *process_shortreads* script from the *STACKS* software suite (Catchen, Hohenlohe, Bassham, Amores, & Cresko, 2013). Trimmomatic 0.32 (Bolger, Lohse, & Usadel, 2014) was subsequently used for quality trimming and PCR-primer clipping of the raw reads in two steps: (i) reads were end-trimmed to phred Q30 using a sliding window approach (5 bp window size) and (ii) PCR primers were conservatively clipped off the reverse complement sequences by removing 40 bp from each read. Reads shorter than 100 bp after quality trimming/primer clipping were discarded. Paired-end sequences were subsequently merged (minimum overlap 10 bp) using *FLASH* 1.2.11 (Magoč, & Salzberg, 2011). Successfully merged reads were length filtered to retain only amplicons of the expected length (313 bp ± 10%). The remaining high-quality sequences were reduced to unique sequences using *VSEARCH* v1.1 (Rognes, Flouri, Nichols, Quince, & Mahé, 2016) by clustering with 100% similarity. Clustering results were further filtered based on the number of reads assigned to each cluster (minimum cluster coverage—see below for details) to minimise cross-contamination effects between wells. Surviving clusters in each well were then further clustered globally (again at 100% similarity) to reduce the number of BLAST searches performed. Single representative sequences from each cluster were subjected to a BLAST search (Zhang, Schwartz, Wagner, & Miller, 2000) against a local copy of the NCBI's nucleotide database (nt). Sequences with at least 95% similarity across at least 90% of their length to any sequence in the database were subjected to taxonomic assignment using a lowest common ancestor (LCA) approach similar to the strategy used by MEGAN (Huson, Auch, Qi, & Schuster, 2007), such that for each query, we identified the taxa receiving the top 10% (bit-score) BLAST hits and subsequently determined the lowest taxonomic level shared by all taxa in the list.

2.4 | Assignment of thresholds for data processing

We employed three approaches to filtering the data set and chose the most conservative approach for the final analysis. First, we examined our negative wells to see what minimum cluster coverage would effectively exclude background contamination (i.e., what is the minimum cluster coverage that results in zero retained reads and clusters in negative wells after filtering). Second, we examined our sample wells to look at what minimum cluster coverage resulted in

stable per-well read depths. We interpret this as the removal of minor components of each well such as PCR errors, mistagging errors and possible background contamination. Finally, we explicitly examined all possible illegal PCR1 MID tag combinations (four unused sample tag combinations plus a further 92 tag combinations involving special tags for positives/negatives and sample tags in all forward/reverse combinations). This allowed us to assess the minimum cluster coverage necessary to exclude sequences due to mistagging (i.e., possible tag swapping during PCR2 or signal bleed at the sequencing stage). For each approach, we performed the clustering analysis across a range of minimum cluster sizes from 6 reads to 101 reads and plotted boxplots of both per-well read depth and per-well cluster retention (except for mistagging where we only examined per-well read depth).

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | PCR and sequencing success rates

Overall, we had an apparent PCR success rate of 96.3% (i.e., 96.3% of sample wells produced a visible band on a gel). Analysis of clustering thresholds revealed that no negatives contained detectable reads or clusters above approximately 36 reads (Figures S7A and S8A in Appendix S3) and that per-well read depth and clusters retained in the sample wells became stable at approximately 56 reads (Figures S7B and S8B in Appendix S3). The mistagging analysis revealed that the single largest cluster created by any illegal tag combination was 66 reads (Figure S9 in Appendix S3). Based on these results, we believe that performing our final analysis using a conservative minimum cluster size of 67 reads resulted in the effective exclusion of errors from the data set.

From a single MiSeq v2 Illumina run, we produced a total of 12,112,538 untrimmed sequences and retained 11,078,131 after quality trimming (91.5%). For the 1,012 moth samples, read depth per well ranged from 0 to 63,182 reads before quality trimming (mean = 11,840.1, SD = 9,309.6) and from 0 to 57,336 reads after

quality trimming (mean = 10,870.9, SD = 8,613.8) (Figure 3). Overall, we had a sequencing success of 94.5% (percentage of sample wells for which reads were retained after data processing), eight of eleven DNA positives sequenced successfully, but none of the PCR positives were successful. For the failed DNA positives, one produced clusters that were just below our minimum cluster coverage so was excluded, while the remaining two produced no reads at all. The PCR positives produced raw reads, but they were of poor quality leading to very few reads merging and all clusters being excluded (Figure 4). The DNA positives that failed started with low raw read counts despite having distinct bands on agarose gels. This suggests that a pooling error led to underrepresentation of these wells in the final pooled prelibrary which probably resulted in dropout. The PCR positives also produced strong consistent bands on a gel prior to being added to the prelibraries, but because we quantified how much PCR positive we should add, we are less inclined to believe that a simple pooling error was responsible. A primer synthesis error in either the bridge sequence or the sequencing primer binding site for one or both of the PCR-positive primers would result in complete sequencing failure. A sequence error in the bridge sequence would result in poor library formation for this sample during PCR2 while an error in the sequencing primer site would result in unreliable sequencing signal and subsequent filtering. To try and resolve this, Sanger sequencing of the PCR1 PCR-positive product was undertaken. Reverse sequencing revealed that the forward primer was identical to the designed sequence. Forward sequencing was less successful and could not produce a strong Sanger trace (probably due to the primer length being suboptimal for Sanger sequencing). Alignments of the poor quality sequence and the reverse primer suggest there may be two deletions within the bridge sequence leading to poor library formation in PCR2. Ongoing work performed using newly synthesised PCR-positive primers, has resulted in successful sequencing. We also recommend that primers for future studies should be synthesised at the highest possible quality standard to ensure accuracy of synthesis.

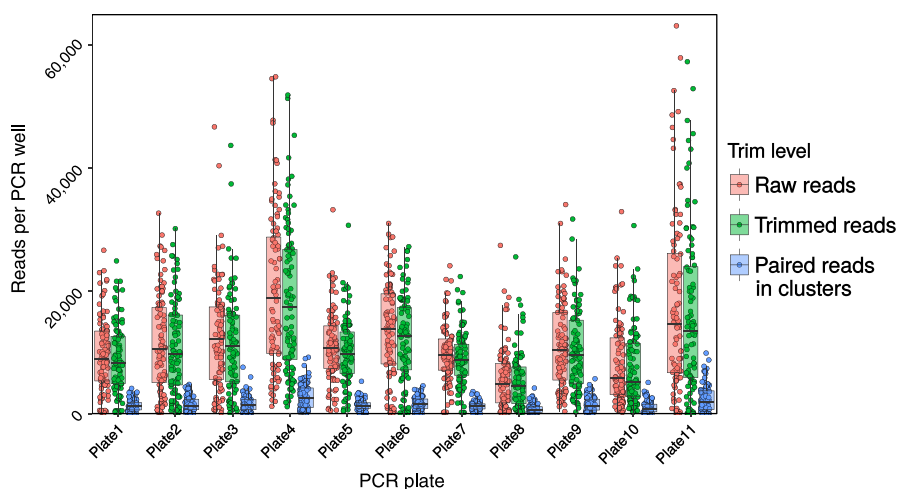


FIGURE 3 Read depth per PCR well for each plate (positives and negatives excluded) with actual read depth for each PCR well overlaid as scatter plots

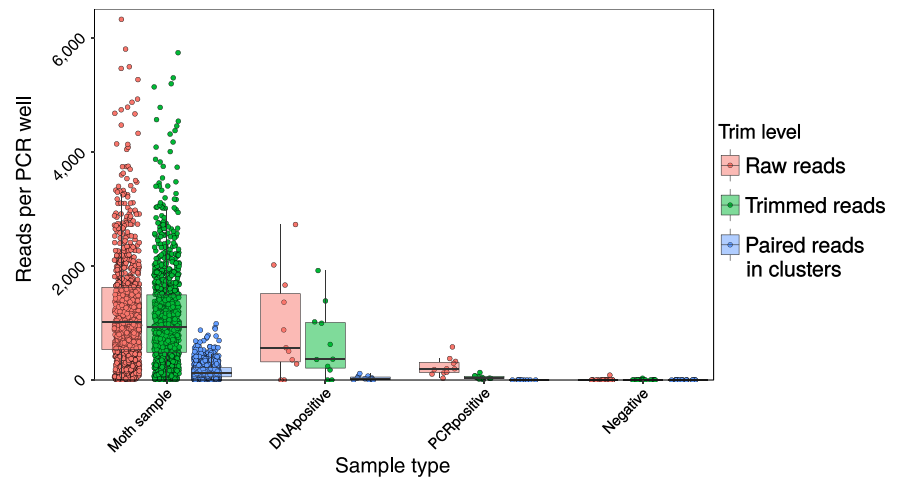


FIGURE 4 Boxplots of read depth per PCR well for each type of PCR well with actual read depth for each PCR overlaid as scatter plots

3.2 | Species identifications and parasitism levels in OPM

Most sequences were assigned by BLAST to either OPM or its known parasitoid fly *Carcelia iliaca* (Sands et al., 2015) with an additional rare parasitoid *Compsilura concinnata* (a parasitoid normally associated with Gypsy moth—*Lymantria dispar*— Figure 5A). Our data indicated that 45.7% of OPM caterpillars sampled from Croydon, London, were parasitised by *C. iliaca* while just 0.4% were parasitised by *C. concinnata*. No Hymenopteran parasitoids were detected, so to check for nonamplification of Hymenoptera parasitoids by Leray primers, we attempted PCR amplification of known pupal parasitoids of OPM and achieved 100% success (see Figure S6 in Appendix S2 for further details), leading us to conclude that the Hymenopteran parasitoids tested were not present in this life stage of OPM. In addition to insect parasitoids, we also detected a number of fungal sequences including the entomopathogenic ascomycete fungus (*Beauveria bassiana*), but given the more common use of ITS as a fungal barcoding locus (Seifert, 2009) and the probable inefficient amplification of fungal *cox1* when using primers designed for invertebrates, we pooled all fungal hits into one identification and did not consider them further. A small subset of reads was left unassigned by the metaBEAT pipeline. Manual BLAST searches of these sequences through the NCBI website revealed that these were either (1) sequences that did not meet the BLAST search criteria (95% similar across at least 90% of the sequence length) due to gaps in database composition or (2) sequences where a lowest common ancestor could not be assigned due to database error.

Scenario (1) generally occurs when BLAST identifications are either all fungal but none are close enough to assign (i.e., probably genuine fungal sequences but from groups poorly represented in GenBank for *cox1* sequences) or dipteran sequences with stop codons in all reading frames suggesting that these are *Carcelia iliaca* NuMTs (as defined in Lopez, Yuhki, Masuda, Modi, & O'Brien, 1994). Scenario (2) occurs when the lowest common ancestor algorithm fails because the top 10% of BLAST hits are a mixture of unrelated sequences probably due to the misidentification of sequences in GenBank (e.g. fungal sequences from dipteran specimens labelled as dipteran sequences).

4 | DISCUSSION

4.1 | Evaluating nested metabarcoding for determining Lepidopteran–parasitoid interactions

We tested the ability of a NGS nested metabarcoding design to produce individual-level data for a large number of caterpillar samples (>1,000) in a single sequencing run. We achieved a high level of PCR and sequencing success and found an average of 11,000x coverage for each PCR well before sequence filtering, allowing us to adopt a high stringency for sequence quality. The depth of coverage found in our experiment allowed us to distinguish multiple unique sequences in each well, representing the host, parasitoids and (potentially) any other species interacting with the moths such as parasitic fungi or intracellular parasites. *Thaumetopoea processionea* caterpillars were parasitised by two parasitoid species already known from the literature. *Carcelia iliaca* was found to parasitise almost half of all caterpillars while the other, *Compsilura concinnata*, was only detected in four caterpillars.

In addition to tachinid parasitoids, we detected a range of fungal sequences including the entomopathogenic fungus *Beauveria bassiana*. However, before making assessments of *B. bassiana* infection rates, it would be much better to use fungi-specific primers that target the ITS region more commonly used for fungal barcoding (Seifert, 2009). Arthropod *cox1* primers are likely to be inefficient at amplifying fungal DNA, and the fungal reference libraries are much more complete for ITS. While this would require investment in a set of tagged fungal ITS primers in addition to the general arthropod primers used here, multiple loci may not automatically mean multiple sequencing runs (e.g. Cruaud et al., 2017), so the overall cost may not increase considerably, something that is not the case with Sanger approaches. Thus, our approach leads easily to a much more complete understanding of the ecological interactions than standard Sanger barcoding approaches (cf. Derocles, Evans, Nichols, Evans, & Lunt, 2015; Wirta et al., 2014). The relative costs of NGS and Sanger sequencing vary with the scale of the experiment. Commercial UK prices for Sanger sequences in both directions are approximately 1/150th the cost of an Illumina MiSeq run at time of writing so for

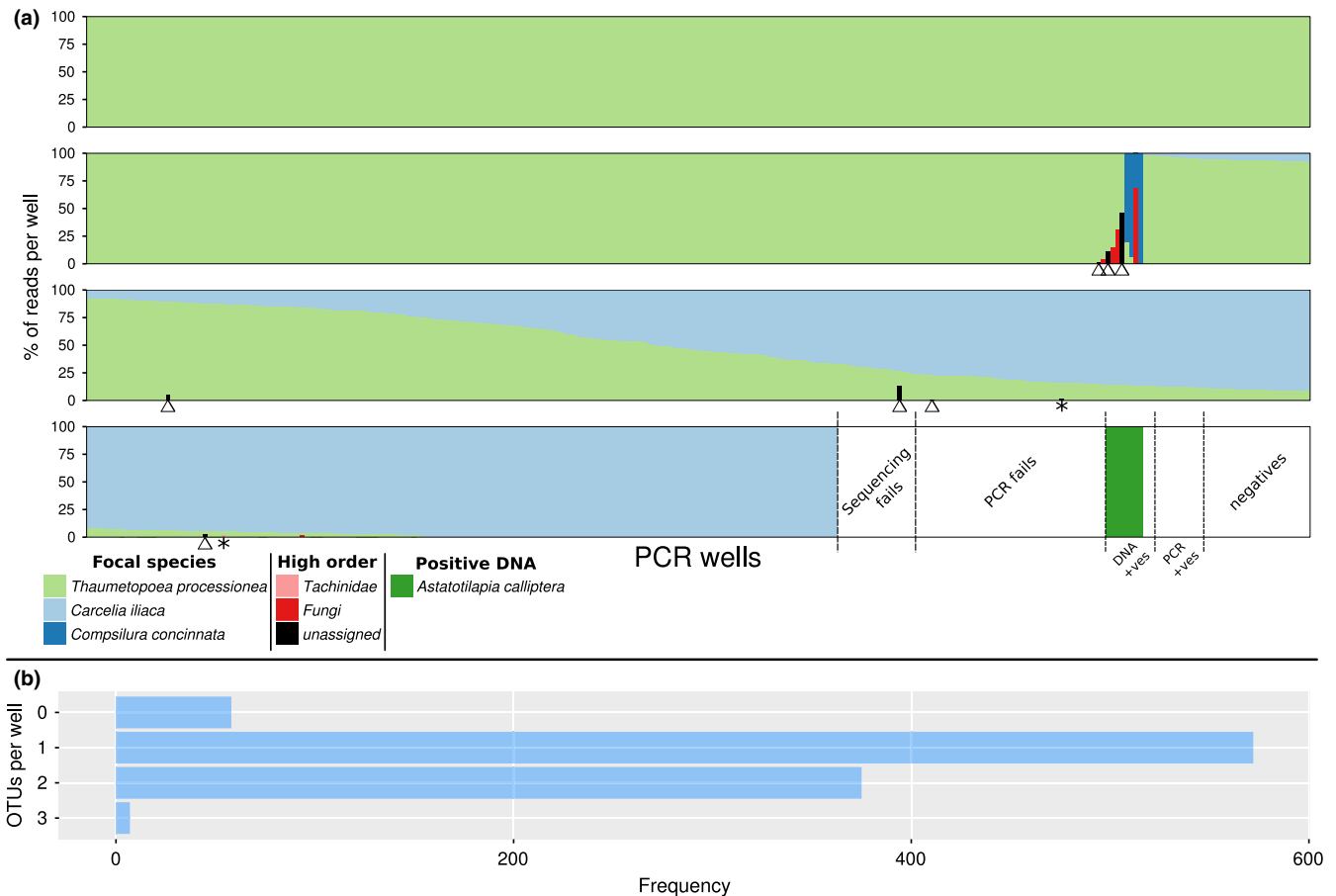


FIGURE 5 (a) Percentages of reads and taxonomic identifications for all PCR wells. (b) the frequency of different numbers of taxonomic identifications per OPM sample well. Samples in (a) are sorted by descending percentage OPM and increasing percentage *Carcelia iliaca*. Unassigned reads in samples marked with Δ are fungal reads that fall below our BLAST criteria, and unassigned reads in the samples marked * are likely to be *Carcelia iliaca* Numts (see main text)

small numbers of individuals and a single barcode locus Sanger sequencing may be much more cost-effective. As the quantity of data required increases, however, NGS has the potential to be considerably cheaper, as the costs of a single NGS run are largely fixed, irrespective of how many individuals are included. Although our experiment could have even been performed using Sanger sequencing (through the use of order level primers or cloning), for our experiment, we estimate that the costs are at least 1/2 that of the equivalent Sanger experiment even when buying a set of tagged primers sufficient to cover multiple experiments and assuming that no cloning and extra-sequencing is required for the Sanger approach (see Appendix S4). In reality, the cost savings are likely to be much greater.

4.2 | Limitations and improvements of the nested metabarcoding approach

Our first attempt at using this method (Appendix S1) revealed that it can be highly sensitive to cross-contamination between both sample and control wells (see Figures S1B, S2B, S4 and S5A;

Appendix S1 figures are intended for direct comparison with the main text figures). It was suspected that a number of pathways may have contributed to the contamination. First, manual puncturing of caterpillars may be releasing bodily fluids of both host and parasitoid into the air around the DNA extraction plate. We improved this by mechanically lysing caterpillars in closed tubes to contain any aerosols or debris. Second, it was suspected that contaminating aerosols may be moving beneath the commonly used sealing film on a standard 96-well PCR plate during the hottest stages of the PCR cycle. To mitigate this, we moved from using 96-well plates to strips of tubes with individual lids and a mineral oil vapour barrier above the PCR mastermix. This improved the quality of the results dramatically allowing us to have much greater confidence that our results are representative of true parasitism rates. In addition to the improvements already implemented here, we would recommend quantification of PCR products using a plate reader and the use of robotic liquid handlers to accurately pool equimolar samples into each prelibrary prior to PCR2 as this would likely help control for potential sequencing dropout as possibly seen in our DNA positives.

There is considerable variation in the proportions of reads in each sample attributable to OPM and its parasitoids, and it may be the case that this represents true variation in the proportions of each sample composed of OPM or parasitoid tissue, but we consider this to be an unreliable approach at present. Some authors have attempted to relate read depth to biomass or numbers of individuals both for PCR-based metabarcoding (e.g. Elbrecht & Leese, 2015; Thomas, Deagle, Eveson, Harsch, & Trites, 2016) and PCR-free metabarcoding (e.g. Tang et al., 2015). Attempting to measure sample sizes or biomass from read depth presents a number of challenges. First, PCR-based approaches can be biased by variation in amplification efficiency across different taxa (for example, variation in primer binding affinities across different taxa or base composition variation affecting enzyme efficiency). PCR-free approaches to metabarcoding attempt to circumvent this by removing the PCR step and all the associated biases completely (e.g. Tang et al., 2015). In theory, read depth should then correlate with copy number for a given locus, but in reality, we have little knowledge, for most species of how sequenceable DNA availability is affected by extraction method and more importantly, how read depth then correlates with biomass or numbers of individuals across different life stages. PCR-free metabarcoding is further constrained as much of the read depth which could be used for sequencing additional specimens is used for sequencing additional areas of genome that are not necessary for identification. While much of the variation in proportions of OPM and parasitoid reads in our samples are likely to be attributable to relative proportions of host and parasitoid tissue, we feel that it would be necessary to perform extensive calibration (as in Thomas, Jarman, Haman, Trites, & Deagle, 2014; and Elbrecht & Leese, 2015) to make any concrete conclusions surrounding this. Nevertheless, our approach allows us to use presence/absence data across a large number of individual specimens to produce quantitative frequency data that can be analysed with standard statistical tests at the same time as reducing over-sequencing of any single individual.

4.3 | OPM, its parasitoids and IPM

Other parasitoids species known to attack OPM in its native range were not detected. Their absence in our data set may be due to our samples being almost exclusively late instar caterpillars, whereas many of the parasitoids recorded in the literature are egg or early instar parasitoids that emerge before nest formation or are pupal parasitoids (Sobczyk, 2014). It is not known whether any of the pupal parasitoids of OPM oviposit in late-stage larvae then develop after formation of the pupa, so it is impossible to say whether recently laid eggs of larval–pupal parasitoids have been missed. It is also always a possibility that there may be false negatives for the detection of very minor components in DNA mixtures, but the improved pooling procedures outlined above would help to mitigate this. In addition, for future screening, it would be useful to explicitly test the detection threshold under laboratory conditions

using larvae known to be parasitised and sampled at different time points since parasitism, although this would be extremely difficult given the toxic nature of OPM caterpillars. It is also possible that other UK parasitoid species have yet to colonise OPM. The development of parasitism often exhibits a lag period of some years after the arrival of a new host (e.g. Stone et al., 2012 for natural communities; Pocock & Evans, 2014 for another example of an invasive Lepidopteran species in the United Kingdom), and much of the parasitoid community associated with OPM in its native range may simply not be present in the United Kingdom, or even if present as a taxonomic species, the local race may be an ecologically adapted cryptic species with different host preferences (e.g. Smith et al., 2007). More thorough sampling of all OPM life stages and those of other insect herbivores in the wider forest environment would allow us to assess this. In addition, a study examining a series of OPM populations sampled across the native range may provide further insights into potential biocontrol agents for future introduction.

To better understand the role of parasitoids in mediating OPM numbers, it is also desirable to consider the place of both OPM and its parasitoids in the broader ecological networks of which they are members, as both direct and indirect interactions with other species in the wider network affect probability of hosts and parasitoids of interest interacting (Evans et al., 2016; Hřček & Godfray, 2015). This is especially important when considering introducing a new biocontrol agent to an area. By knowing both the alternative hosts of confirmed OPM parasitoids and any previously reported parasitoids, forest managers could design specific planting regimes to enhance parasitoid control of OPM (as suggested in Evans et al., 2016). An example of this can be seen with *C. concinnata*. Evidence from the North American use of *Compsilura concinnata* as an introduced biocontrol agent for gypsy and brown-tail moths suggests that this species also has a very wide host range (Elkinton & Boettner, 2012; Strazanac, Plaugher, Petrice, & Butler, 2001) and that it is generally ineffective at preventing the spread of the two main target species because of low parasitism levels. This species was also detected at very low levels in UK OPM, but whether these were accidental parasitism events caused by adult females misinterpreting oviposition cues or the first steps in the host range expansion of the UK race of *Compsilura concinnata* is unclear. Understanding both how this will change over time and the competitive effects of other hosts vs. OPM for this species is crucial to its evaluation as an OPM biocontrol agent in the United Kingdom.

4.4 | Nested metabarcoding and ecological networks

Ecological sciences are appreciating more than ever the power of incorporating ecological networks rather than simple species lists into monitoring approaches. The ability to start disentangling species interactions has potential to revolutionise habitat management, habitat restoration, conservation and IPM, but to do this, there is a need for large well-sampled ecological networks (Evans et al.,

2016). Building such networks requires large sample sizes of individual level rather than community data and so have previously been little assisted by NGS. Nested metabarcoding can fill this gap and although applied here to parasitised individuals, we anticipate that the sequencing approach demonstrated could be applied in exactly the same way to a range of study systems where it is desirable to sequence numerous samples each containing a restricted number of species, for example for detecting pollen on pollinators (current work in prep); identifying recent meals on mouthparts of insect herbivores or describing interactions between arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi and different plant species. In addition, the networks produced are explicitly linked to sequence data for all the individuals included. This facilitates an evolutionary approach to examining community assembly and for the investigation of broader co-evolutionary patterns.

This approach could also be used to process more complex communities in environmental or medical samples, soil mesofauna, bulk insect samples or any other complex community while still keeping the number of MID tags required at reasonable levels. Should the read number be insufficient for a given experiment, the same samples could be loaded onto a sequencer with higher throughput (e.g. Illumina HiSeq rather than MiSeq) to address this issue, as long as the paired-end nature of the sequences can be maintained. For taxonomic groups that require longer barcodes for accurate identification, emerging technologies such as nanopore sequencing and the PacBio SMRT sequencing may ultimately prove useful.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

Here, we demonstrate a highly successful approach to detecting species interactions using a single MiSeq sequencing run. We have shown that a significant proportion of over 1,000 OPM caterpillars were parasitised by either *Carcelia iliaca* or *Compsilura concinnata*. The costs are highly favourable compared to undertaking the same study using Sanger-based approaches. Scaling this approach would allow for the construction of large, highly resolved ecological networks of use in a range of applications including conservation and land management, but the sequence-based nature of the data generated also allows for the construction of phylogenetically structured networks that enables many fundamental community dynamics and co-evolutionary questions to be explored. These network and evolutionary-based approaches will be of increasing importance as we attempt to quantify functional changes in ecological networks with climate change, habitat modification and species loss.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Amir Szitenberg for helpful discussion on bioinformatic pipelines and Gillian Jonusas (Royal Parks) for access and logistics in Richmond Park and Kai Gloyne (State Office for Health and Social Affairs, Rostock, Germany) for providing specimens

of *Pales processionea*. We would also like to thank Vasco Elbrecht and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this manuscript. The project was funded by Forestry Commission England.

DATA ACCESSIBILITY

To ensure reproducibility of all our analyses, we have deposited Jupyter notebooks, R scripts and supplementary material (including Tables S1–S4) on Github (https://github.com/HullUni-bioinformatics/Kitson_et_al_NMB). An archived version of this release is available on Zenodo (<https://zenodo.org/record/1066005>). Raw sequence data have been submitted to the SRA with accession number PRJNA305686. The metaBEAT pipeline, and other analyses, were run in a Docker container (<https://hub.docker.com/r/chrishah/metabeat/v0.97.7> was used for this study) to make our entire analysis environment available for replication if required.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

D.M.E., D.H.L. were principal investigators and designed the project. J.J.N.K. collected Croydon specimens in the field, developed protocols and processed specimens in the laboratory and undertook analysis and interpretation of the data. C.H. created metaBEAT and advised on how to process N.G.S. sequence data. N.A.S. facilitated all fieldwork and contributed to project design. R.J.S. collected Richmond park specimens and contributed to specimen processing. All authors contributed to writing and revising the paper.

ORCID

James J. N. Kitson  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2405-1198>

Darren M. Evans  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4061-6726>

David H. Lunt  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9000-7470>

REFERENCES

- Binladen, J., Gilbert, M. T., Bollback, J. P., Panitz, F., Bendixen, C., Nielsen, R., & Willerslev, E. (2007). The use of coded PCR primers enables high-throughput sequencing of multiple homolog amplification products by 454 parallel sequencing. *PLoS ONE*, 2, e197. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0000197>
- Boland, C. R. J. (2004). Introduced cane toads *Bufo marinus* are active nest predators and competitors of rainbow bee-eaters *Merops ornatus*: Observational and experimental evidence. *Biological Conservation*, 120, 53–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2004.01.025>
- Bolger, A. M., Lohse, M., & Usadel, B. (2014). Trimmomatic: A flexible trimmer for Illumina sequence data. *Bioinformatics*, 30, 2114–2120.
- Bradshaw, C. J., Leroy, B., Bellard, C., Roiz, D., Albert, C., Fournier, A., ... Courchamp, F. (2016). Massive yet grossly underestimated global costs of invasive insects. *Nature Communications*, 7, 12986. <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms12986>
- Campbell, N. R., Harmon, S. A., & Narum, S. R. (2015). Genotyping-in-Thousands by sequencing (GT-seq): A cost effective SNP genotyping method based on custom amplicon sequencing. *Molecular Ecology Resources*, 15, 855–867. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1755-0998.12357>

- Catchen, J., Hohenlohe, P. A., Bassham, S., Amores, A., & Cresko, W. A. (2013). Stacks: An analysis tool set for population genomics. *Molecular Ecology*, 22, 3124–3140.
- Cruaud, P., Rasplus, J.-Y., Rodriguez, L. J., & Cruaud, A. (2017). High-throughput sequencing of multiple amplicons for barcoding and integrative taxonomy. *Scientific Reports*, 7, 41948. <https://doi.org/10.1038/srep41948>
- Day, W. H. (1994). Estimating mortality caused by parasites and diseases of insects: Comparisons of the dissection and rearing methods. *Environmental Entomology*, 23, 543–550. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ee/23.3.543>
- Dejean, T., Valentini, A., Miquel, C., Taberlet, P., Bellemain, E., & Miaud, C. (2012). Improved detection of an alien invasive species through environmental DNA barcoding: The example of the American bullfrog *Lithobates catesbeianus*. *The Journal of Applied Ecology*, 49, 953–959. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2012.02171.x>
- Derocles, S. A. P., Evans, D. M., Nichols, P. C., Evans, S. A., & Lunt, D. H. (2015). Determining plant - leaf miner - parasitoid interactions: A DNA barcoding approach. *PLoS ONE*, 10, e0117872. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0117872>
- Elbrecht, V., & Leese, F. (2015). Can DNA-based ecosystem assessments quantify species abundance? Testing primer bias and biomass-sequence relationships with an innovative metabarcoding protocol. *PLoS ONE*, 10, e0130324. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0130324>
- Elkinton, J. S., & Boettner, G. H. (2012). Benefits and harm caused by the introduced generalist tachinid, *Comptosia concinnata*, in North America. *BioControl*, 57, 277–288. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10526-011-9437-8>
- Evans, D. M., Kitson, J. J. N., Lunt, D. H., Straw, N. A., & Pocock, M. J. O. (2016). Merging DNA metabarcoding and ecological network analysis to understand and build resilient terrestrial ecosystems. *Functional Ecology*, 30, 1904–1916. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2435.12659>
- Fadrosh, D. W., Ma, B., Gajer, P., Sengamalai, N., Ott, S., Brotman, R. M., & Ravel, J. (2014). An improved dual-indexing approach for multiplexed 16S rRNA gene sequencing on the Illumina MISEQ platform. *Microbiome*, 2, 6. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2049-2618-2-6>
- Forest Research (2017) Oak Processionary Moth Programme: Operational Report 2016. OPM Programme Board.
- Giguet-Covex, C., Pansu, J., Arnaud, F., Rey, P. J., Griggo, C., Gielly, L., ... Poulenard, J. (2014). Long livestock farming history and human landscape shaping revealed by lake sediment DNA. *Nature Communications*, 5, 3211.
- Groenen, F., & Meurisse, N. (2012). Historical distribution of the oak processionary moth *Thaumetopoea processionea* in Europe suggests recolonization instead of expansion. *Agricultural and Forest Entomology*, 14, 147–155. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1461-9563.2011.00552.x>
- Handley, L. J., Estoup, A., Evans, D. M., Thomas, C. E., Lombaert, E., Facon, B., ... Roy, H. E. (2011). Ecological genetics of invasive alien species. *BioControl*, 56, 409–428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10526-011-9386-2>
- Hesketh, H., Roy, H. E., Eilenberg, J., Pell, J. K., & Hails, R. S. (2010). Challenges in modelling complexity of fungal entomopathogens in semi-natural populations of insects. *BioControl*, 55, 55–73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10526-009-9249-2>
- Hrček, J., & Godfray, H. C. J. (2015). What do molecular methods bring to host-parasitoid food webs? *Trends in Parasitology*, 31, 30–35.
- Huson, D. H., Auch, A. F., Qi, J., & Schuster, S. C. (2007). MEGAN analysis of metagenomic data. *Genome Research*, 17, 377–386.
- Hyslop, E. J. (1980). Stomach contents analysis—a review of methods and their application. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 17, 411–429. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1095-8649.1980.tb02775.x>
- Illumina (2011) Preparing 16S Ribosomal RNA Gene Amplicons for the Illumina MISEQ System. Illumina technical note.
- Kaartinen, R., Stone, G. N., Hearn, J., Lohse, K., & Roslin, T. (2010). Revealing secret liaisons: DNA barcoding changes our understanding of food webs. *Ecological Entomology*, 35, 623–638. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2311.2010.01224.x>
- Lamy, M., Pastureaud, M. H., Novak, F., Ducombs, G., Vincèdeau, P., Maleville, J., & Texier, L. (1986). Thaumetopoein: An urticating protein from the hairs and integument of the pine processionary caterpillar (*Thaumetopoea pityocampa* Schiff., Lepidoptera, Thaumetopoeidae). *Toxicon: Official Journal of the International Society on Toxinology*, 24, 347–356. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0041-0101\(86\)90194-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0041-0101(86)90194-7)
- Lefort, M.-C., Wratten, S. D., Cusumano, A., Varennes, Y.-D., & Boyer, S. (2017). Disentangling higher trophic level interactions in the cabbage aphid food web using high-throughput DNA sequencing. *Metabarcoding and Metagenomics*, 1, e13709. <https://doi.org/10.3897/mbmg.1.13709>
- Leray, M., Yang, J. Y., Meyer, C. P., Mills, S. C., Agudelo, N., Ranwez, V., ... Machida, R. J. (2013). A new versatile primer set targeting a short fragment of the mitochondrial COI region for metabarcoding metazoan diversity: Application for characterizing coral reef fish gut contents. *Frontiers in Zoology*, 10, 34. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1742-9994-10-34>
- Lopez, J. V., Yuhki, N., Masuda, R., Modi, W., & O'Brien, S. J. (1994). Numt, a recent transfer and tandem amplification of mitochondrial DNA to the nuclear genome of the domestic cat. *Journal of Molecular Evolution*, 39, 174–190.
- Lopezaraiza-Mikel, M. E., Hayes, R. B., Whalley, M. R., & Memmott, J. (2007). The impact of an alien plant on a native plant–pollinator network: An experimental approach. *Ecology Letters*, 10, 539–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1461-0248.2007.01055.x>
- Maglianesi, M. A., Blüthgen, N., Böhning-Gaese, K., & Schleuning, M. (2014). Morphological traits determine specialization and resource use in plant–hummingbird networks in the neotropics. *Ecology*, 95, 3325–3334. <https://doi.org/10.1890/13-2261.1>
- Magoč, T., & Salzberg, S. L. (2011). FLASH: Fast length adjustment of short reads to improve genome assemblies. *Bioinformatics*, 27, 2957–2963.
- Merkel, D. (2014). Docker: Lightweight Linux containers for consistent development and deployment. *Linux Journal*, 2014(239), 2.
- Mindlin, M. J., le Polain de Waroux, O., Case, S., & Walsh, B. (2012). The arrival of oak processionary moth, a novel cause of itchy dermatitis, in the UK: Experience, lessons and recommendations. *Public Health*, 126, 778–781. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2012.06.007>
- Otte, D., & Joern, A. (1976). On feeding patterns in desert grasshoppers and the evolution of specialized diets. *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, 128, 89–126.
- Peck, H. L., Pringle, H. E., Marshall, H. H., Owens, I. P. F., & Lord, A. M. (2014). Experimental evidence of impacts of an invasive parakeet on foraging behavior of native birds. *Behavioral Ecology: Official Journal of the International Society for Behavioral Ecology*, 25, 582–590. <https://doi.org/10.1093/beheco/aru025>
- Pocock, M. J. O., & Evans, D. M. (2014). The success of the horse-chestnut leaf-miner, *Cameraria ohridella*, in the UK revealed with hypothesis-led citizen science. *PLoS ONE*, 9, e86226. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0086226>
- Pocock, M. J. O., Evans, D. M., & Memmott, J. (2012). The robustness and restoration of a network of ecological networks. *Science*, 335, 973–977. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1214915>
- Rognes, T., Flouri, T., Nichols, B., Quince, C., & Mahé, F. (2016). VSEARCH: A versatile open source tool for metagenomics. *PeerJ*, 4, e2584. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.2584>

- Roques, A. (2010). Taxonomy, time and geographic patterns. Chapter 2. In A. Roques, M. Kenis, D. Lees, et al. (Eds.), *Alien terrestrial arthropods of Europe* (p. 11). Sofia, Bulgaria: Pensoft Publishers.
- Roques, A. (2014). *Processionary moths and climate change: An update*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.
- Roques, A., Auger-Rozenberg, M.-A., Blackburn, T. M., Garnas, J., Pyšek, P., Rabitsch, W., ... Duncan, R. P. (2016). Temporal and interspecific variation in rates of spread for insect species invading Europe during the last 200 years. *Biological Invasions*, 18, 907–920. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-016-1080-y>
- Roy, H. E., Hails, R. S., Hesketh, H., Roy, D. B., & Pell, J. K. (2009). Beyond biological control: Non-pest insects and their pathogens in a changing world. *Insect Conservation and Diversity/Royal Entomological Society of London*, 2, 65–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-4598.2009.00046.x>
- Roy, H. E., Preston, C. D., Harrower, C. A., Rorke, S. L., Noble, D., Sewell, J., ... Jukes, A. (2014). GB Non-native Species Information Portal: Documenting the arrival of non-native species in Britain. *Biological Invasions*, 16, 2495–2505. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-014-0687-0>
- Sands, R. J., Jonusas, G., Straw, N. A., Kitson, J. J. N., & Raper, C. M. (2015). *Carcelia lliaca* (Diptera: Tachinidae), a specific parasitoid of the Oak Processionary Moth (Lepidoptera: Thaumetopoeidae), new to Great Britain. *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History*, 28, 225–227.
- Schnell, I. B., Bohmann, K., & Gilbert, M. T. P. (2015). Tag jumps illuminated - reducing sequence-to-sample misidentifications in metabarcoding studies. *Molecular Ecology Resources*, 15, 1289–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1755-0998.12402>
- Schooler, S. S., De Barro, P., & Ives, A. R. (2011). The potential for hyperparasitism to compromise biological control: why don't hyperparasitoids drive their primary parasitoid hosts extinct? *Biological Control: Theory and Applications in Pest Management*, 58, 167–173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocontrol.2011.05.018>
- Seifert, K. A. (2009). Progress towards DNA barcoding of fungi. *Molecular Ecology Resources*, 9(Suppl. s1), 83–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-0998.2009.02635.x>
- Shokralla, S., Porter, T. M., Gibson, J. F., Dobosz, R., Janzen, D. H., Hallwachs, W., ... Hajibabaei, M. (2015). Massively parallel multiplex DNA sequencing for specimen identification using an Illumina MISEQ platform. *Scientific Reports*, 5, 9687. <https://doi.org/10.1038/srep09687>
- Šigut, M., Kostovčík, M., Šigutová, H., Hulcr, J., Drozd, P., & Hřeček, J. (2017). Performance of DNA metabarcoding, standard barcoding, and morphological approach in the identification of host-parasitoid interactions. *PLoS ONE*, 12, e0187803.
- Smith, M. A., Rodríguez, J. J., Whitfield, J. B., Deans, A. R., Janzen, D. H., Hallwachs, W., & Hebert, P. D. (2008). Extreme diversity of tropical parasitoid wasps exposed by iterative integration of natural history, DNA barcoding, morphology, and collections. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 105, 12359–12364. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0805319105>
- Smith, M. A., Wood, D. M., Janzen, D. H., Hallwachs, W., & Hebert, P. D. N. (2007). DNA barcodes affirm that 16 species of apparently generalist tropical parasitoid flies (Diptera, Tachinidae) are not all generalists. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 104, 4967–4972. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0700050104>
- Sobczyk, T. (2014). *Der Eichenprozessionsspinner in Deutschland*. Bonn: Bundesamt für Naturschutz.
- Stigter, H., Geraedts, W., & Spijkers, H. (1997). *Thaumetopoea processionea* in the Netherlands: Present status and management perspectives (Lepidoptera: Notodontidae). *Proceedings of the Section Experimental and Applied Entomology of the Netherlands Entomological Society*, 8, 3–16.
- Stone, G. N., Lohse, K., Nicholls, J. A., Fuentes-Utrilla, P., Sinclair, F., Schönrogge, K., ... Tavakoli, M. (2012). reconstructing community assembly in time and space reveals enemy escape in a Western palearctic insect community. *Current Biology: CB*, 22, 532–537. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2012.01.059>
- Strazanac, J. S., Plaugher, C. D., Petrice, T. R., & Butler, L. (2001). New Tachinidae (Diptera) host records of eastern North American forest canopy Lepidoptera: Baseline data in a *Bacillus thuringiensis* variety *kurstaki* nontarget study. *Journal of Economic Entomology*, 94, 1128–1134. <https://doi.org/10.1603/0022-0493-94.5.1128>
- Taberlet, P., Coissac, E., Pompanon, F., Brochmann, C., & Willerslev, E. (2012). Towards next-generation biodiversity assessment using DNA metabarcoding. *Molecular Ecology*, 21, 2045–2050. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-294X.2012.05470.x>
- Tang, M., Hardman, C. J., Ji, Y., Meng, G., Liu, S., Tan, M., ... Bruce, C. (2015). High-throughput monitoring of wild bee diversity and abundance via mitogenomics. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution/British Ecological Society*, 6, 1034–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12416>
- Thomas, A. C., Deagle, B. E., Eveson, J. P., Harsch, C. H., & Trites, A. W. (2016). Quantitative DNA metabarcoding: Improved estimates of species proportional biomass using correction factors derived from control material. *Molecular Ecology Resources*, 16, 714–726. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1755-0998.12490>
- Thomas, A. C., Jarman, S. N., Haman, K. H., Trites, A. W., & Deagle, B. E. (2014). Improving accuracy of DNA diet estimates using food tissue control materials and an evaluation of proxies for digestion bias. *Molecular Ecology*, 23, 3706–3718. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.12523>
- Trautgott, M., Bell, J. R., Broad, G. R., Powell, W., Van Veen, F. J., Vollhardt, I. M., & Symondson, W. O. (2008). Endoparasitism in cereal aphids: Molecular analysis of a whole parasitoid community. *Molecular Ecology*, 17, 3928–3938. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-294X.2008.03878.x>
- Truett, G. E., Heeger, P., Mynatt, R. L., Truett, A. A., Walker, J. A., & Warman, M. L. (2000). Preparation of PCR-quality mouse genomic DNA with hot sodium hydroxide and tris (HotSHOT). *BioTechniques*, 29, 52, 54.
- Vazquez-Prokopec, G. M., Chaves, L. F., Ritchie, S. A., Davis, J., & Kitron, U. (2010). Unforeseen costs of cutting mosquito surveillance budgets. *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, 4, e858. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0000858>
- Wagenhoff, E., & Veit, H. (2011). Five years of continuous *Thaumetopoea processionea* monitoring: Tracing population dynamics in an arable landscape of South-Western Germany. *Gesunde Pflanzen*, 63, 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10343-011-0244-z>
- Wirta, H. K., Hebert, P. D., Kaartinen, R., Prosser, S. W., Várkonyi, G., & Roslin, T. (2014). Complementary molecular information changes our perception of food web structure. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111, 1885–1890. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1316990111>
- Yu, D. W., Ji, Y., Emerson, B. C., Wang, X., Ye, C., Yang, C., & Ding, Z. (2012). Biodiversity soup: Metabarcoding of arthropods for rapid biodiversity assessment and biomonitoring. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution/British Ecological Society*, 3, 613–623. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-210X.2012.00198.x>
- Zhang, Z., Schwartz, S., Wagner, L., & Miller, W. (2000). A greedy algorithm for aligning DNA sequences. *Journal of Computational Biology*, 7, 203–214.

Zwakhals, C. J. (2005). *Pimpla processionae* and *P. rufipes*, specialist versus generalist (Hymenoptera, Ichneumonidae, Pimplinae). *Entomologische Berichten*, 65, 14–16.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found online in the supporting information tab for this article.

How to cite this article: Kitson JJN, Hahn C, Sands RJ, Straw NA, Evans DM, Lunt DH. Detecting host–parasitoid interactions in an invasive Lepidopteran using nested tagging DNA metabarcoding. *Mol Ecol*. 2018;00:1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.14518>