

# GWTC-3: Compact Binary Coalescences Observed by LIGO and Virgo During the Second Part of the Third Observing Run

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The third Gravitational-wave Transient Catalog (GWTC-3) describes signals detected with Advanced LIGO and Advanced Virgo up to the end of their third observing run. Updating the previous GWTC-2.1, we present candidate gravitational waves from compact binary coalescences during the second half of the third observing run (O3b) between 1 November 2019, 15:00 UTC and 27 March 2020, 17:00 UTC. There are 35 compact binary coalescence candidates identified by at least one of our search algorithms with a probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . Of these, 18 were previously reported as low-latency public alerts, and 17 are reported here for the first time. Based upon estimates for the component masses, our O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  are consistent with gravitational-wave signals from binary black holes or neutron star–black hole binaries, and we identify none from binary neutron stars. However, from the gravitational-wave data alone, we are not able to measure matter effects that distinguish whether the binary components are neutron stars or black holes. The range of inferred component masses is similar to that found with previous catalogs, but the O3b candidates include the first confident observations of neutron star–black hole binaries. Including the 35 candidates from O3b in addition to those from GWTC-2.1, GWTC-3 contains 90 candidates found by our analysis with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  across the first three observing runs. These observations of compact binary coalescences present an unprecedented view of the properties of black holes and neutron stars.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) [1] and Advanced Virgo [2] detectors have revealed the Universe’s abundance of gravitational wave (GW) sources. Here, we present the third LIGO Scientific, Virgo and KAGRA (LVK) Collaboration Gravitational-Wave Transient Catalog (GWTC-3), which records transient GW signals discovered up to the end of LIGO–Virgo’s third observing run (O3). This updates the previous GWTC-2 [3] and GWTC-2.1 [4] by including signals found in the second part of O3 (O3b): this period comprises data taken between 1 November 2019, 15:00 UTC and 27 March 2020, 17:00 UTC. GWTC-3 adds 35 GW candidates from O3b that have an inferred probability of astrophysical compact binary coalescence (CBC) origin of  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  based upon the results of our search algorithms; additionally, there are 1048 subthreshold O3b candidates that do not meet the CBC  $p_{\text{astro}}$  threshold but have a false alarm rate (FAR)  $< 2.0 \text{ day}^{-1}$ . With the inclusion of O3b candidates, GWTC-3 is the most comprehensive set of GW observations presented to date, and will further advance our understanding of astrophysics [5], fundamental physics [6] and cosmology [7].

GWTC-3 contains candidate GWs from CBCs: merging binaries consisting of black holes (BHs) and neutron stars (NSs). We analyze in detail the properties of candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . Previously reported from O3b are the GW candidates GW200115\_042309 and GW200105\_162426, which are consistent with originating from neutron star–black hole binaries (NSBHs) [8]. The naming of these GW candidates follows the format GWYYMMDD\_hhmmss, encoding the date and Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) of the signal. In the GWTC-3 analysis, GW200105\_162426 is found to have

$p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ ; however, it remains a candidate of interest, and is discussed in detail in later sections. In addition to GW200115\_042309 and GW200105\_162426, the O3b candidates include GW191219\_163120 that is consistent with originating from a NSBH, and GW200210\_092254 that could either be from a NSBH or a binary black hole (BBH) as its less massive component has a mass ( $m_2 = 2.83^{+0.47}_{-0.42} M_\odot$ , quoting the median and symmetric 90% credible interval) that spans the range for possible NSs and BHs. All the other candidates are consistent with being GW signals from BBHs, as their inferred component masses are above the theoretical upper limit of the NS maximum mass [9, 10]. Among the O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ , we expect  $\sim 10\text{--}15\%$  of candidates to be false alarms caused by instrumental noise fluctuations; a smaller, higher purity sample of candidates could be obtained by adopting a stricter threshold.

During O3, low-latency public alerts were issued through Gamma-ray Coordinate Network (GCN) Notices and Circulars for GW candidates found by initial searches of the data [3, 11]. These public alerts enable the astronomy community to search for multimessenger counterparts to potential GW signals. There were 39 low-latency candidates reported during O3b. Of these, 18 (excluding GW200105\_162426) survive our detailed analyses to be included as potential CBC signals in GWTC-3. Additionally, GWTC-3 includes 17 candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  that have not been previously presented. No confident multimessenger counterparts have currently been reported from the O3b candidates (as reviewed in Appendix A).

The total number of GW candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  in GWTC-3 is 90, compared with 3 candidates found by LVK analyses after the end of the first observing run (O1) [12, 13], 11 in GWTC-1 after the end of the second observing run (O2) [14], and 55 in GWTC-2.1 after the end of the first part of O3 (O3a) [4]. Additional candidates have also been reported by other searches of public data [15–19]. The dramatic increase in the number of

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<sup>a</sup> Deceased, August 2020.

GW candidates during O3 was enabled by the improved sensitivity of the detector network. A conventional measure of sensitivity is the binary neutron star (BNS) inspiral range, which quantifies the average distance at which a fiducial  $1.4M_{\odot} + 1.4M_{\odot}$  BNS could be detected with a signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) of 8 [20–22]. During O3b the median BNS inspiral range for LIGO Livingston, LIGO Hanford and Virgo was 133 Mpc, 115 Mpc and 51 Mpc, respectively. In Fig. 1 we show the growth in the number of candidates in the LVK catalog across observing runs. Here, the search sensitivity is quantified by the BNS time–volume, which should be approximately proportional to the number of detections [3]. This is defined as the observing time multiplied by the Euclidean sensitive volume for the detector network [22]. For O1 and O2, the observing time includes periods when at least two detectors were observing, and the Euclidean sensitive volume is the volume of a sphere with a radius equal to the BNS inspiral range of the second most sensitive detector in the network. For O3, to account for the potential of single-detector triggers, the observing time also includes periods when only one detector was observing, and the radius of the Euclidean sensitive volume is the greater of either (i) the BNS inspiral range of the second most sensitive detector, or (ii) the BNS inspiral range of the most sensitive detector divided by 1.5 (corresponding to a SNR threshold of 12) [3]. As the sensitivity of the detector network improves [23], the rate of discovery increases.

Further searches for GW transients in O3b data have been conducted focusing on: intermediate-mass black hole (IMBH) binaries (with a component  $\gtrsim 65M_{\odot}$  and a final BH  $\gtrsim 100M_{\odot}$ ) [24], signals coincident with gamma-ray bursts [25], cosmic strings [26], and both minimally modeled short-duration ( $\lesssim \mathcal{O}(1)$  s, such as from supernovae explosions) [27] and long-duration ( $\gtrsim \mathcal{O}(1)$  s, such as from deformed magnetars or from accretion-disk instabilities) [28] signals. However, no high-significance candidates for types of signals other than the CBCs reported here have yet been found.

We begin with an overview of the status of the Advanced LIGO and Advanced Virgo detectors during O3b (Sec. II), and the properties and quality of the data used in the analyses (Sec. III). We report the significance of the candidates identified by template-based and minimally modeled search analyses, and compare this set of candidates to the low-latency public GW alerts issued during O3b (Sec. IV). We describe the inferred astrophysical parameters for the O3b candidates (Sec. V). Finally, we show the consistency of reconstructed waveforms with those expected for CBCs (Sec. VI). In the Appendices, we review public alerts and their multimesenger follow-up (Appendix A); we describe commissioning of the observatories for O3b (Appendix B); we detail data-analysis methods used to assess data quality (Appendix C), search for signals (Appendix D) and infer source properties (Appendix E), and we discuss the difficulties in assuming a source type when performing a

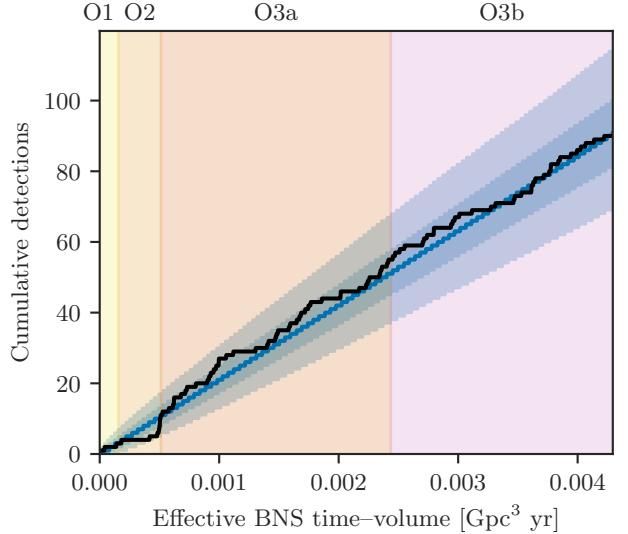


Figure 1. The number of CBC detection candidates with a probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  versus the detector network’s effective surveyed time–volume for BNS coalescences [3]. The colored bands indicate the different observing runs. The final data sets for O1, O2, O3a and O3b consist of 49.4 days, 124.4 days, 149.8 days (177.2 days) and 125.5 days (142.0 days) with at least two detectors (one detector) observing, respectively. The cumulative number of probable candidates is indicated by the solid black line, while the blue line, dark blue band and light blue band are the median, 50% confidence interval and 90% confidence interval for a Poisson distribution fit to the number of candidates at the end of O3b.

minimally modeled search analyses (Appendix F). A data release associated with this catalog is available from the Gravitational Wave Open Science Center (GWOSC) [29]; this includes calibrated strain time-series around significant candidates, detection-pipeline results, parameter-estimation posterior samples, source localizations, and tables of inferred source parameters.

## II. INSTRUMENTS

The Advanced LIGO [1] and Advanced Virgo [2] instruments are kilometer-scale laser interferometers [30–32]. The advanced generation of interferometers began operations in 2015, and observing periods have been alternated with commissioning periods [23]. After O1 [13, 33] and O2 [14], the sensitivity of the interferometers has improved significantly [3, 34]. The main improvements were the adjustment of in-vacuum squeezed-light sources, or *squeezers*, for the LIGO Hanford and LIGO Livingston interferometers and the increase of the laser power in the Virgo interferometer. The instrumental changes leading to improved sensitivities during O3b

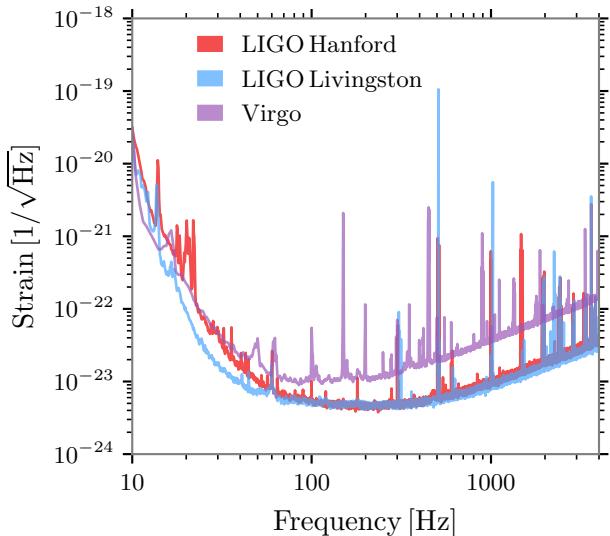


Figure 2. Representative amplitude spectral density of the three interferometers’ strain sensitivity: LIGO Livingston 4 January 2020 02:53:42 UTC, LIGO Hanford 4 January 2020 18:20:42 UTC, Virgo 9 February 2020 01:16:00 UTC. From the amplitude spectral densities we estimate BNS inspiral ranges [20–22] of 114 Mpc, 133 Mpc, and 59 Mpc for LIGO Hanford, LIGO Livingston and Virgo, respectively.

are discussed in Appendix B.

Figure 2 shows representative sensitivities during O3b for LIGO Hanford, LIGO Livingston and Virgo, as characterized by the amplitude spectral density of the calibrated strain output. The sensitivity of the interferometers is primarily limited by the photon shot noise at high frequencies and by a superposition of several noise sources at lower frequencies [34]. The narrowband features include vibrational modes of the suspension fibers, calibration lines, and 50 Hz and 60 Hz electric power harmonics.

The left panel of Fig. 3 reports the evolution of the detectors’ sensitivity over time, as measured by the BNS inspiral range [20–22]. Gaps in the range curve are due to maintenance intervals, instrumental failures and earthquakes. The epochs marked on the graph correspond to improvements in LIGO Hanford (2 January 2020) and Virgo (28 January 2020) that are discussed in Appendix B. The median BNS inspiral range of Virgo over the whole of O3b was 51 Mpc, while the maximum value reached 60 Mpc. For comparison, the median range and the maximum range during O3a were 45 Mpc and 50 Mpc, respectively. The LIGO Hanford median BNS inspiral range improved from 108 Mpc in O3a to 115 Mpc in O3b, primarily due to the squeezed-light [35, 36] source adjustments described in Appendix B. The LIGO Livingston median BNS inspiral range in O3b was 133 Mpc, consistent with the O3a value of 135 Mpc, with improvements due to squeezing counterbalanced by degradation

primarily due to the reduced circulating power.

The duty cycles for the three interferometers, i.e., the fractions of the total O3b run duration in which the instruments were observing, were 79% (115.7 days) for LIGO Hanford, 79% (115.5 days) for LIGO Livingston and 76% (111.3 days) for Virgo. The complete three-interferometer network was in observing mode for 51.0% of the time (75.0 days). Moreover, for 96.6% of the time (142.0 days) at least one interferometer was observing, while for 85.3% (125.5 days) at least two interferometers were observing. For comparison, during O3a the duty cycles were 71%, 76% and 76% for LIGO Hanford, LIGO Livingston and Virgo, respectively; at least one interferometer was observing 96.8% of the time, and at least two interferometers were observing 81.8% of the time. The duty cycles for both the Hanford and Livingston interferometers have improved from O3a to O3b. This demonstrates a clear improvement in robustness as higher microseism and storm activity were observed during O3b compared to O3a. While the fraction of time with at least one detector observing in O3a and O3b was comparable, the fraction of time with two instruments in observing mode increased, improving the performance of the network for coincident observations.

### III. DATA

Following the approach of previous analyses [3, 4], we calibrate the data of each detector to GW strain and mitigate known instances of poor data quality before analyzing the LIGO and Virgo strain data for astrophysical sources. We include segments of data from each detector in our GW search analyses only when the detector was operating in a nominal state, and when there were no diagnostic measurements being made that might interfere with GW data collection.

Once data are recorded, they are calibrated in near-real time and in higher latency, as described in Sec. IIIA. We subtract noise from known long-duration, quasi-stationary instrumental sources [37–39]. We also exclude time periods containing identified and well-characterized noise likely to interfere with signal extraction from the astrophysical analyses, as described in Sec. IIIB. We thoroughly vetted the data surrounding each GW event for evidence of transient noise, or *glitches*, or other anomalies that could impact accurate assessment of the event’s significance or accurate source parameter estimation. For GW events found near in time or overlapping with transient noise, we apply additional data processing steps, including the modeling and subtraction of glitches and linear subtraction of glitches using a witness time series, as described in Appendix C.

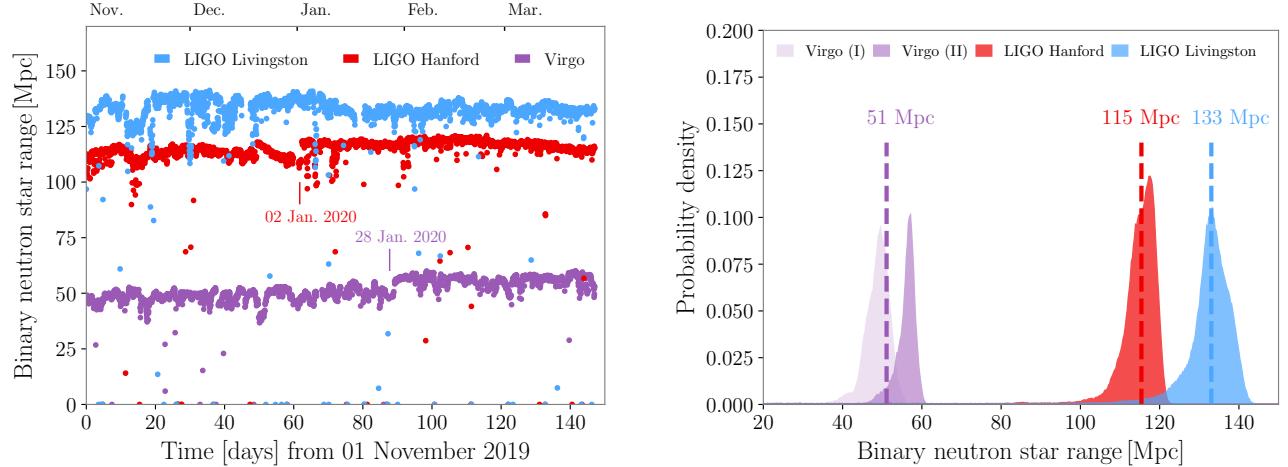


Figure 3. The BNS inspiral range [20–22] of the LIGO and Virgo detectors. *Left:* The range evolution during O3b. Each data point corresponds to the median value of the range over a one-hour time segment. *Right:* Distributions of the range and the median values for the entire duration of O3b; the data for Virgo are separately reported for the intervals before (I) and after (II) 28 January 2020 to illustrate changes in the range following detector improvements. An improvement in squeezer performance at LIGO Hanford is indicated at 2 January 2020.

### A. Calibration and noise subtraction

The dimensionless strain time series measured by the LIGO and Virgo detectors are an input to the astrophysical analyses. They are reconstructed from different output signals from the detectors and detailed modeling of the response of the detector [38, 40]. The reconstructed strain time series are timestamped following Global Positioning System (GPS) time, taking into account both the delays introduced in the synchronized distributed-clock timing system and data conditioning along the data acquisition systems [41]. The detector responses are described as complex-valued frequency-dependent transfer functions [38, 42]. Some control-system model parameters, such as the amount of light stored in the interferometer cavities and the gain of the actuators controlling the position of primary optics [1], vary slowly with time throughout operation of the interferometers. These parameters are monitored and, when possible, aspects of the calibration models are corrected in the strain reconstruction processing [38, 40, 43]. The analysis of the systematic error and uncertainty bounds for calibrated data throughout O3b is detailed in previous studies of LIGO [44, 45] and Virgo data [46–48].

The three detectors use auxiliary lasers, known as photon calibrators [49–51], to induce fiducial displacement of test masses via photon radiation pressure. The fiducial displacements are known to better than 1% in LIGO and 1.8% in Virgo and are used to measure interferometer parameters’ variation with time, develop accurate models, and establish estimates of systematic error and associated uncertainty.

Calibration models are estimated from a collection

of measurements that characterize the full detector response and from other measurements of individual components [38, 44, 45], such as the various electronics and suspension systems, gathered while the detector is offline (roughly once per week). An initial version of calibrated strain data is produced in low-latency throughout an observing period, and the final calibration models are assembled after the completion of an observing period where the detector configuration was stable [40, 48]. As needed, the GW strain data stream is then regenerated offline from the optical power variations and the control signals, and the systematic error estimate is updated based on the model used for the offline strain reconstruction.

The best available strain data for each detector have been used for both detection of GW events and estimation of the sources’ astrophysical parameters. For LIGO, the offline recalibrated strain data were used [44, 45]. Analysis of Virgo’s collection of validation measurements during the run did not motivate offline improvement to the low-latency strain data. Hence, Virgo’s low-latency strain data has been used for all analyses [46–48].

After the completion of the run, we identified a narrowband increased systematic error between 46–51 Hz in Virgo data, mainly related to a control loop designed to damp mechanical resonances of the suspensions at 49 Hz. This damping loop was added between O3a and O3b and ultimately improved the Virgo detector’s sensitivity around 49 Hz. However, since this damping loop was not included in the calibration models, it resulted in an increased systematic error in the calibrated strain data around 49 Hz during O3b. There was also a large increase in the systematic error between 49.5–50.5 Hz related to a control loop designed to reduce the electric power-grid

line [48]. Overall, the Virgo calibration errors in the band 46–51 Hz increased from 5% in amplitude and 35 mrad in phase to up to 40% in amplitude and 600 mrad in phase [48]. This narrowband increased systematic error was accounted for in source-parameter estimation (as described in Appendix E).

Known noise sources were subtracted from both the LIGO and Virgo strain data. The sinusoidal excitations used for calibration, known as calibration lines, were subtracted from the LIGO strain data. The 60 Hz electric power-grid lines were subtracted in the LIGO strain data along with the corresponding harmonics up to and including 300 Hz [39]. Additionally, noise contributions due to non-stationary coupling of the power grid were subtracted from the LIGO strain data [37, 52]. Numerous noise sources that limited the Virgo detector’s sensitivity were measured and linearly subtracted from the Virgo low-latency strain data using witness auxiliary sensors that measure the source of the noise [38, 53, 54]. Calibration lines were also subtracted from the Virgo strain data.

All final source parameter results, waveform reconstructions, and all but one search pipeline used strain data with all noise subtraction applied, as described above. The exception is the coherent WaveBurst (cWB) analysis [55], which searches for transient signals without assuming a model template. Following the GWTC-2 analysis [3], cWB used LIGO strain data with the calibration lines and power-grid lines subtracted, but without the subtraction of the non-stationary coupling of the power grid. Comparison of analyses using different versions of noise subtraction indicates that the exact noise-subtraction procedure used does not significantly impact the cWB search results.

## B. Data quality

The most limiting source of noise for identification and analysis of transient GW sources is frequent, short-duration glitches in GW detector data [56–58]. A summary of glitch rates for the three observatories over O3b is shown in Fig. 4. Each point corresponds to the average number of glitches per minute with SNR  $\rho > 6.5$  and peak frequency between 20 Hz and 2048 Hz, estimated every 2048 s, as measured with the Omicron algorithm [59]. Continuous solid lines indicate the daily median of the corresponding glitch rate. In all three detectors, we observed relatively high glitch rates, dominated by glitches below  $\sim 50$  Hz, corresponding to seasonally bad weather between the beginning of O3b and January 2020; some peaks in glitch rate are also visible in Virgo data during the second half of O3b corresponding to persistent unstable weather conditions.

The horizontal black lines in Fig. 4 indicate the median glitch rates during O2 (dashed), O3a (dotted), and O3b (dash-dotted). With respect to O3a, both LIGO detectors registered a modest glitch rate increase in O3b,

with the rate changing from  $0.29 \text{ min}^{-1}$  to  $0.32 \text{ min}^{-1}$  for Hanford and from  $1.10 \text{ min}^{-1}$  to  $1.17 \text{ min}^{-1}$  for Livingston; this variation was much more pronounced for Virgo, which increased its glitch rate from  $0.47 \text{ min}^{-1}$  to  $1.11 \text{ min}^{-1}$ . As discussed for GWTC-2 [3], the increase in glitch rate in the two LIGO detectors between O2 and O3a is largely due to scattered-light glitches, and the decrease in Virgo’s glitch rate between O2 and O3 is due to mitigation of several noise sources.

A large fraction of the O3b glitches captured in Fig. 4 are due to light scattering, as described in Appendix B. When the relative displacement between a mirror and a nearby moving reflective surface is  $\gtrsim 1 \mu\text{m}$  (the main laser wavelength) in amplitude, low-frequency ground motion can be upconverted to scattered-light glitches in the sensitive band of GW detector data [60, 61]. During O3, approximately 44% and 45% of all the transient noise with  $\text{SNR } \rho > 10$  at LIGO Livingston and LIGO Hanford, respectively, was due to light scattering. A high rate of scattered-light glitches is partly a consequence of weather-related high microseismic ground motion at the detector sites during O3b [58, 62, 63].

Two separate populations of transient noise due to light scattering known as *slow scattering* and *fast scattering* polluted LIGO data quality in O3. Slow scattering refers to longer-duration ( $\sim 2.0\text{--}2.5$  s) arches, as seen in the time–frequency spectrogram of LIGO Hanford data shown in Fig. 5. Slow scattering tends to occur when ground motion is high in the earthquake (0.03–0.1 Hz) or microseism (0.1–0.5 Hz) frequency bands.

For the LIGO detectors, we found the presence of these slow scattering arches to be strongly correlated with the relative motion between the end test mass chain and the reaction-mass chain of the optic suspension system, used to control the motion of the test masses. This led to implementing reaction-chain tracking [64, 65] in January 2020 to reduce this relative motion, as discussed in Appendix B. The rate of glitches associated with slow scattering also significantly decreased after the implementation of the reaction-chain tracking [62], as shown in Figure 4. After this change, the overall O3b glitch rate significantly decreased for LIGO Hanford, changing from  $0.82 \text{ min}^{-1}$  to  $0.18 \text{ min}^{-1}$ . Correlated with this drop in glitch rate, after the implementation of reaction-chain tracking, the average fraction of O3b public alerts that were retracted dropped from 0.55 to 0.21.

As shown in Fig. 5, fast scattering transient noise appears as short duration ( $\sim 0.2\text{--}0.3$  s) arches in the time–frequency plane [63]. Increased ground motion in the anthropogenic (1–6 Hz) band, usually caused by bad weather conditions and human activity, especially with nearby heavy machinery such as logging trucks, increases the rate of fast scattering glitches. Fast scattering is far more common at LIGO Livingston than at LIGO Hanford. During O3, it was the most frequent source of transient noise at Livingston. As shown in Fig. 5 and in Appendix C, fast scattering generally affects the GW data from 20–60 Hz, but occasionally manifests as high

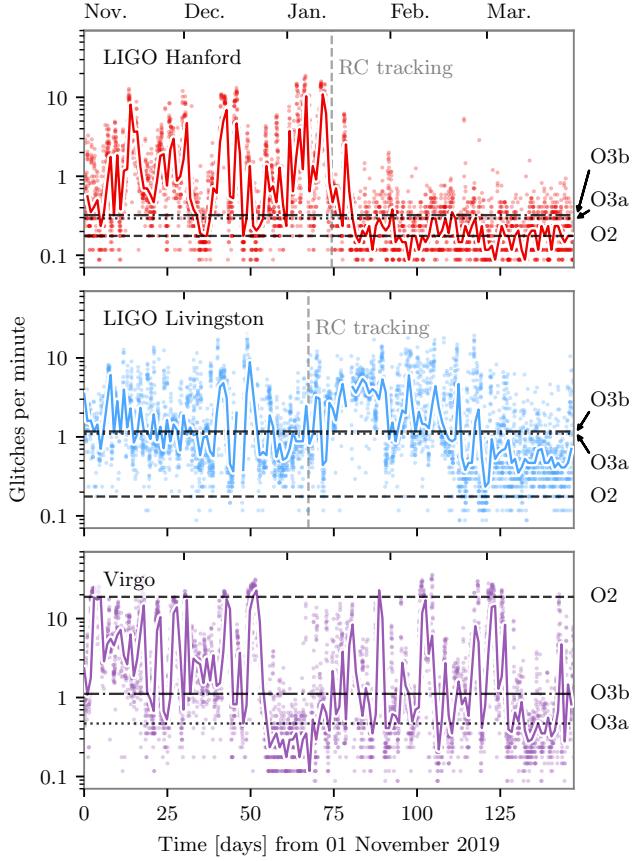


Figure 4. The rate of single-interferometer glitches with SNR  $\rho > 6.5$  and peak frequency between 20 Hz and 2048 Hz identified by Omicron [59] in each detector during O3b. Each point represents the average rate per minute, estimated over a 2048 s interval. Continuous curves represent the daily median of the rates. Black lines show the median rate over entire runs: dashed for O2, dotted for O3a, and dash-dotted for O3b. The vertical dashed lines indicate the implementation of reaction-chain (RC) tracking at the LIGO detectors, which reduced the rate of slow scattering glitches.

as 120 Hz. Physical environment and monitoring tests conducted at LIGO Livingston and LIGO Hanford found high quality-factor mechanical resonances at frequencies close to 4 Hz [67, 68] thought to be related to fast scattering. The fourth observing run (O4) upgrade plans include damping these resonances and studying the impact on the rate of fast scattering noise.

In Virgo, the initial high glitch rate and the subsequent peaks in Fig. 4 correspond predominantly to high numbers of glitches with central frequencies lower than 40 Hz. Across O3b,  $\sim 80\%$  of glitches in Virgo with  $\rho > 6.5$  central frequencies lower than 40 Hz. These lower frequency scattered-light glitches are largely the consequence of the activity of the sea, which is 15 km from the detector site [60].

All candidates reported in Table I and Table II have

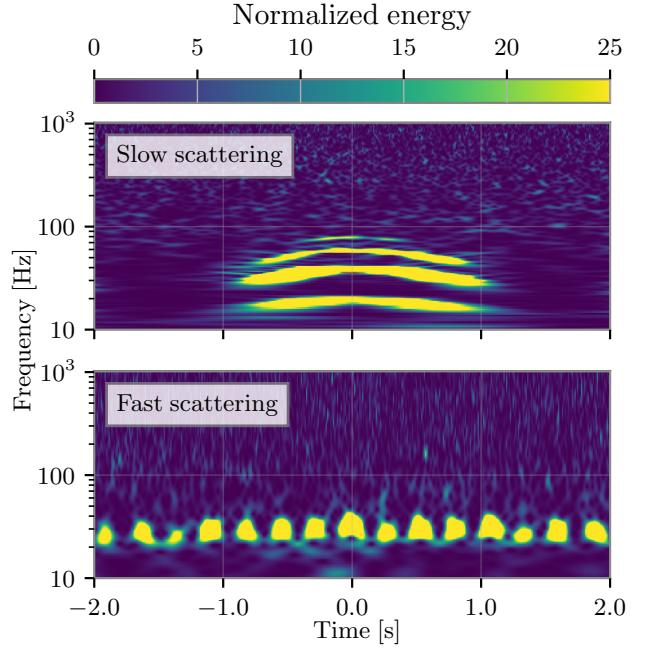


Figure 5. Top: Representative spectrograms [66] of glitches caused by light scattering. Slow scattering appears as long-duration arches in the time-frequency plane. The multiple arches are due to multiple reflections between the test mass optics and the scattering surface. During O3, slow scattering was the most frequent and second most frequent source of transient noise at LIGO Hanford and LIGO Livingston respectively. Bottom: As compared to slow scattering, fast scattering transients appear as short-duration, rapidly-repeating arches.

undergone validation to check for plausible instrumental or environmental causes using the same methods as were applied to O3a candidates [3, 58, 69]. As discussed in Sec. IV D, none of the O3b candidates with CBC  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  have evidence of instrumental origin, but we identified three marginal candidates (which do not meet the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  threshold) as likely instrumental in origin. We also investigated non-Gaussian instrumental artifacts present in the data close to each event time that could bias measurements of the event’s source parameters. In addition to the previously reported GW200105\_162426 [8], we identified 7 O3b events in Table I with nearby non-Gaussian artifacts that required mitigation before the data was further analyzed for source parameter estimation. In order to mitigate instrument artifacts present near the time of these events, we followed a procedure similar to O3a [3]. Further details on data-quality mitigation techniques, including data-quality products publicly available via the GWOSC, are given in Appendix C and in previous O3 analyses [3, 58]. The specific mitigation methods applied for each of these events are described in Appendix E, with a summary for each event reported in Table XIV.

## IV. CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION

Identification of candidates and assessment of their significance relative to the background of detector noise is the first step in extracting catalog results. This is followed by detailed analyses to estimate source properties (Sec. V) and reconstruct waveforms (Sec. VI). We use multiple search algorithms to identify potential GW candidates in our data. Searches are performed at two different latencies: online searches are run in near-real time as data are collected, and offline searches are completed later, using the final calibrated and cleaned data set. The online analyses allow for the rapid release of public alerts associated with candidates, to enable the search for multimessenger counterparts, as described in Appendix A. The offline analyses benefit from improved background statistics, extensive data calibration, vetting and conditioning as described in Sec. III, and the ability to perform more computationally expensive calculations to separate signals from background given the relaxation of latency requirements. Due to these factors, the offline analyses are more sensitive than the online analyses. In this catalog, we report on the results of offline analyses performed after the end of O3b.

Our search analyses use different approaches to find events, either filtering the data using CBC waveform templates to identify matches (described in Sec. IV A), or coherently searching data from the detector network for transient signals without assuming a waveform template (described in Sec. IV B). We use four pipelines to identify the candidates from O3b: three that search using CBC waveform templates, GstLAL [70–73], Multi-Band Template Analysis (MBTA) [74, 75] and PyCBC [21, 76–80], and one that searches for transient signals with minimal assumptions about sources, cWB [55, 81, 82]. The four pipelines used offline were also operated in online configurations, along with the waveform-based Summed Parallel Infinite Impulse Response (SPIIR) pipeline [83–85], to identify candidate GW signals in low latency. Of the four pipelines, cWB, GstLAL, and PyCBC were used for offline LVK analysis of O1 [13, 86], O2 [14] and O3a [3, 4] data, whereas MBTA was first used for offline analysis of O3a [4].

There are several technical and configuration differences across the pipelines used in the search analyses. While the CBC pipelines consider all possible (double or triple) detector combinations to form coincident events, cWB only reports analysis of pairs of detectors [27]. Another significant difference across pipelines is the data baseline used to assign FARs to candidates. The FAR is used as a measure of significance, and defines how regularly we would expect to see a noise (non-astrophysical background) event with the same, or higher, ranking statistic as the candidate. GstLAL compares candidates to a global background from the full O3b time-span, while cWB, MBTA and PyCBC use local background from a typical time-span of one to a few weeks. All pipelines estimate background distributions empirically from the

O3b data. Further technical details of the search algorithms are given in Appendix D.

### A. Modeled search analyses for transient sources

The dedicated CBC search algorithms use matched filtering [87, 88], identifying candidates by correlating the data with templates. We use sets of templates, or *banks*, that provide a discrete sampling of the parameter space defined by the binary component masses  $m_1$  and  $m_2$  (the primary and secondary masses, defining  $m_1 \geq m_2$ ), and the corresponding dimensionless spins  $\vec{\chi}_1$  and  $\vec{\chi}_2$ .

The signals expected from CBCs are well characterized by combinations of the binary component parameters. To leading order, the phase evolution during inspiral of a binary is determined by the chirp mass [89, 90],

$$\mathcal{M} = \frac{(m_1 m_2)^{3/5}}{(m_1 + m_2)^{1/5}}. \quad (1)$$

We also use the total mass  $M = m_1 + m_2$ , and the mass ratio  $q = m_2/m_1 \leq 1$  to describe a binary system. The dimensionless component spin  $\vec{\chi}_i = c\vec{S}_i/(Gm_i^2)$ , where  $\vec{S}_i$  is the spin angular momentum and  $i = \{1, 2\}$ , can theoretically range in magnitude from 0 (non-spinning) to 1 (Kerr limit) for BHs. The two spins are combined to form the effective inspiral spin [91, 92], defined as

$$\chi_{\text{eff}} = \frac{(m_1 \vec{\chi}_1 + m_2 \vec{\chi}_2) \cdot \hat{L}_{\text{N}}}{M}, \quad (2)$$

where  $\hat{L}_{\text{N}}$  is the unit vector in the direction of the Newtonian orbital angular momentum. In the modeled search analyses, the spins are assumed to be parallel to  $\hat{L}_{\text{N}}$ .

The banks cover systems with total masses, redshifted to the detector frame [93], ranging from a minimum value  $2M_{\odot}$  for all pipelines to a maximum value of  $200M_{\odot}$  (MBTA),  $500M_{\odot}$  (PyCBC) or  $758M_{\odot}$  (GstLAL). The minimum binary component mass is  $1M_{\odot}$ . Searches for binaries with component masses less than  $1M_{\odot}$  have been completed for previous observing runs [94–98]. The PyCBC pipeline performs two search analyses; the first is an analysis encompassing a wide parameter space, allowing detection of many different types of CBC systems, which we refer to as the PyCBC-broad analysis. In addition to this broad analysis, PyCBC is also used in a different configuration, which we refer to as the PyCBC-BBH analysis, focusing on BBH systems with total masses between  $10M_{\odot}$  and  $500M_{\odot}$ , mass ratios in the range  $1/3 \leq q \leq 1$ , and component masses in the range  $5M_{\odot} \leq m_1 \leq 350M_{\odot}$  and  $m_2 \geq 5M_{\odot}$ . This PyCBC-BBH analysis is designed to have higher sensitivity to BBH coalescences with component masses that are similar to those of the majority of previously detected systems. The range of templates is the same as used for the search of O3a [4].

For each template, the matched-filter correlation produces a time series of SNR values for each detector, and

peaks in this time series form triggers. Only triggers with a matched-filter SNR exceeding a threshold are considered further in the analysis. This SNR threshold is  $\rho > 4.0$  for PyCBC and GstLAL, and either 4.5 or 4.8, varying across the parameter space, for MBTA. MBTA and PyCBC assign a significance to triggers found with consistent binary parameters and times of arrival in at least two detectors, while GstLAL also does so for single-detector triggers. The SNR is combined with signal-consistency checks to rank triggers. Each pipeline uses a specific ranking statistic and background estimation method to assess the significance and probability of astrophysical origin of these triggers and coincidences. Results from the various CBC search analyses are expected to differ due to differences in the waveform template banks and in algorithmic choices such as their ranking statistic and assumed signal distributions. Technical details of the GstLAL, MBTA, PyCBC-broad and PyCBC-BBH, and (online-only) SPIIR analyses are given in Appendix D 1, Appendix D 2, Appendix D 3, and Appendix D 4, respectively.

## B. Minimally modeled search analyses for transient sources

The cWB pipeline searches for generic, short transient signals across a network of GW detectors [55, 99–102]. It provides rapid detection of GW transient signals with its online instance, and signal reconstructions and estimates of their significance with the version that runs offline on the final data set. Designed to operate without a specific waveform model, cWB identifies coherent excess power in multi-resolution time–frequency representations of the detector strain data. The SNR for each detector is estimated from the reconstructed waveforms, and the network SNR is calculated by combining the SNRs from the individual detectors. The cWB search analyses and reconstructions reported in this catalog primarily target BBH sources and are limited to the 16 Hz–512 Hz range [55], to boost computational efficiency given the expected frequency range of BBH signals. The analysis is further split into two configurations that target high-mass (central frequency  $f_c < 80$  Hz) and low-mass ( $f_c > 80$  Hz) BBH systems [103]. Technical details of the cWB analysis are given in Appendix D 5.

## C. Probability of astrophysical origin

In order to estimate a probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , and its complement, the probability of terrestrial origin  $p_{\text{terr}} = 1 - p_{\text{astro}}$ , for an event, we model foreground and background event rates using a Poisson mixture formalism [104], as in previous LVK results [3, 4, 13, 105, 106]. Technical details of the calculation of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for each analysis pipeline are given in Appendix D 7.

For any event,  $p_{\text{astro}}$  depends on the event’s ranking statistic and where the event lies in the parameter space, i.e., the template with which it was found in a matched-filter analysis, or whether it was found in the low- or high-mass configurations of the cWB analysis. To calculate  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , we compare the expected number of astrophysical events and the expected number of background events for the given ranking statistic and measured parameters. The number of true astrophysical signals depends on merger rates, which are jointly inferred as part of the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  estimation method, using assumptions about the populations of astrophysical sources, and the detectors’ and analysis’ sensitivity, which is calculated using simulated signals. The number of background events is derived from the same background distribution used to estimate FAR by the search analyses.

As we cannot provide full source-parameter estimates for all candidates with  $\text{FAR} < 2.0 \text{ day}^{-1}$ , we instead estimate the probability to originate from different categories of binary source (BNS, NSBH and BBH). These probabilities are estimated independently by each pipeline and rely primarily on the template masses with which triggers are recovered (see Appendix D 7 for more details). For calculating  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , all triggers from the cWB analysis are assumed to be from BBH sources as cWB has a reduced sensitivity to other population types. The source classes are defined in this calculation via an assumed boundary at  $3M_\odot$ : we consider any component with lower mass to be in the NS class and any component above as BH. These classes do not necessarily reflect the true division between NSs and BHs. The maximum mass of NSs is not currently known, but  $3M_\odot$  should be a robust upper limit [9, 10]. Therefore, the BBH category should only capture BBHs, while the BNS and NSBH categories should capture all binaries with components that could be NSs in addition to possibly capturing some BBHs.

While the same approach is used by all analyses to assess  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for their events, the detailed implementation varies. Besides differences in their ranking statistic definition, analyses divide the parameter space in different ways to compute  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , make slightly different assumptions about the astrophysical populations, have distinct responses to astrophysical sources, and have specific methods to evaluate their background. These differences will introduce a variation in results between pipelines. Each pipeline is subject to statistical and systematic uncertainties, such as how they respond to the observed noise fluctuations in ranking candidates, and the differences between pipelines mean that these uncertainties are not the same across pipelines. The details of these differences between pipelines are given in Appendix D. There is an extra uncertainty for single-detector events, where we can assume a conservative upper bound on FAR of 1 per observing time. However, we improve upon this estimate by extrapolating the noise background distribution. The  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values given in Sec. IV D represent our current best estimates of the origin of candidates using the information available from search pipelines and de-

tector characterization.

Values of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  close to 1 are expected to be robust with respect to uncertainties in the astrophysical populations, whereas cases for which  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and  $p_{\text{terr}}$  are comparable are sensitive to such uncertainties. Uncertainties are greater for candidates that, if astrophysical, have properties that correspond to a small number of detections in the overall population. The mass distributions for BBH sources are now sufficiently well constrained [107] such that we expect related uncertainties on  $p_{\text{astro}}$  to be small for the bulk of this region; however, at particularly high masses these uncertainties are expected to be larger [4]. In contrast to the BBH population, the populations of BNS and NSBH sources remain poorly known [5]. Both the shape and the boundaries of the component mass distributions (especially for NSs) can have a significant impact on the value of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  inferred for a BNS or NSBH event, and this uncertainty can be greater than 0.1 for moderate  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values near the threshold of 0.5 [108]. We therefore expect that inferred values for  $p_{\text{astro}}$  may change for less significant candidates as our understanding of the population evolves with further observations [109–111].

#### D. Search results

There are many potential GW sources. Hence, in theory, GWTC-3 could contain a variety of source types. However, currently no high-significance ( $\text{FAR} < 10^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ ) candidate transients have been reported for sources other than standard, quasi-circular CBCs [24–28]. Therefore, we limit this GWTC-3 candidate list to the established source categories of BNSs, NSBHs and BBHs.

Following GWTC-2.1 [4], we select candidates with a probability of an astrophysical CBC source  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  for detailed analysis. In applying this criterion, we follow the method used in GWTC-1 [14] and only consider cWB candidates that also have a BBH counterpart from one of the matched-filter analyses (i.e., a time-coincident candidate with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.1$ ). This is because cWB can potentially identify signals from a range of sources, but the calculation of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  assumes a CBC source, and so additional confirmation is needed to verify that the candidate signal is consistent with a CBC origin. However, all O3b cWB candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  also have  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  from a matched-filter analysis anyway, except for 200214\_224526, which is identified as being of instrumental origin [24]. The requirement that cWB candidates have a matched-filter counterpart is discussed further in Appendix F.

We identify 35 CBC candidates in O3b passing our threshold; these include 17 new events that were not found in low latency and are reported here for the first time. Significance estimates for the CBC candidates with probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  are reported in Table I. We report FARs, SNR and  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for

each search analysis that finds an event when at least one analysis finds the candidate above the threshold for inclusion. Additionally, the SNRs reported from each detector are given in Table IX of Appendix D 6. By comparing the sum of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values for events with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  to the number of such events for each analysis, we estimate that the expected contamination from events of terrestrial origin is  $\sim 10\text{--}15\%$ , or  $\sim 4\text{--}6$  events. A higher purity selection of candidates could be obtained by adopting a stricter selection criterion. Probabilities for different source categories (BNS, NSBH and BBH) are included in Table XI in Appendix D 7. Updated values for  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for O3a candidates are given in Table XIII in Appendix D 7; there is no change to the list of O3a candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  compared with GWTC-2.1 [4]. Results from O1 and O2 have not been recalculated [14]. The O3b candidates bring the total number of LVK-reported CBC candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  to 90.

Marginal candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$  but  $\text{FAR} < 2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  are discussed further in Sec. IV D 4. An extended list of candidates with  $\text{FAR} < 2.0 \text{ day}^{-1}$  is available from GWOSC [29], and discussed in Sec. IV D 5.

##### 1. O3b online candidates

In O3b, there were 39 events reported in low latency (see Appendix A). All candidates identified by the online searches are assigned an internal identifier according to the date on which they occur, for example, S200105ae for GW200105\_162426. These online analyses were carried out by the five independent pipelines: GstLAL, PyCBC, MBTAOnline, cWB and SPIIR. The overall FAR threshold for a public alert was set to one per two months ( $6 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ ) for CBC sources, meaning that once a trials factor is applied, there was a public-alert threshold of  $1.2 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  for each online pipeline. Candidate events found in low latency passing this threshold were disseminated to the public via GCN Notices and Circulars. This allows for rapid follow-up searching for multimessenger counterparts. Among the 39 candidates reported in low latency, 16 were later retracted as they were likely due to detector noise.

None of the 16 retracted online candidates were found above our  $p_{\text{astro}}$  threshold in the offline analyses, and thus are not included in Table I. There were 5 public candidates that did not meet the threshold for inclusion in Table I that were not retracted:

- S191205ah was found in low latency by GstLAL as a low-SNR ( $\rho < 10$ ) single-detector candidate in LIGO Livingston with a FAR of  $0.39 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ . Such FAR corresponds to modest significance, and thus it is not surprising to find differences in the estimated significance by the initial online analysis and the end-of-run offline analyses.
- S191213g was found in low latency by GstLAL in both LIGO Hanford and LIGO Livingston, with

Name	Inst.	cWB			GstLAL			MBTA			PyCBC-broad			PyCBC-BBH		
		FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>pastro</i>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>pastro</i>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>pastro</i>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>pastro</i>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>pastro</i>
<b>GW191103_012549</b>	HL	—	—	—	—	—	—	27	9.0	0.13	4.8	9.3	0.77	0.46	9.3	0.94
GW191105_143521	HLV	—	—	—	24	10.0	0.07	0.14	10.7	> 0.99	0.012	9.8	> 0.99	0.036	9.8	> 0.99
GW191109_010717	HL	< 0.0011	15.6	> 0.99	0.0010	15.8	> 0.99	$1.8 \times 10^{-4}$	15.2	> 0.99	0.096	13.2	> 0.99	0.047	14.4	> 0.99
<b>GW191113_071753</b>	HLV	—	—	—	—	—	—	26	9.2	0.68	$1.1 \times 10^4$	8.3	< 0.01	$1.2 \times 10^3$	8.5	< 0.01
<b>GW191126_115259</b>	HL	—	—	—	80	8.7	0.02	59	8.5	0.30	22	8.5	0.39	3.2	8.5	0.70
<b>GW191127_050227</b>	HLV	—	—	—	0.25	10.3	0.49	1.2	9.8	0.73	20	9.5	0.47	4.1	8.7	0.74
GW191129_134029	HL	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	13.3	> 0.99	0.013	12.7	> 0.99	$< 2.6 \times 10^{-5}$	12.9	> 0.99	$< 2.4 \times 10^{-5}$	12.9	> 0.99
<b>GW191204_110529</b>	HL	—	—	—	21	9.0	0.07	$1.3 \times 10^4$	8.1	< 0.01	980	8.9	< 0.01	3.3	8.9	0.74
GW191204_171526	HL	$< 8.7 \times 10^{-4}$	17.1	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	15.6	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	17.1	> 0.99	$< 1.4 \times 10^{-5}$	16.9	> 0.99	$< 1.2 \times 10^{-5}$	16.9	> 0.99
GW191215_223052	HLV	0.12	9.8	0.95	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	10.9	> 0.99	0.22	10.8	> 0.99	0.0016	10.3	> 0.99	0.28	10.2	> 0.99
GW191216_213338	HV	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	18.6	> 0.99	$9.3 \times 10^{-4}$	17.9	> 0.99	0.0019	18.3	> 0.99	$7.6 \times 10^{-4}$	18.3	> 0.99
<b>GW191219_163120</b>	HLV	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.0	8.9	0.82	—	—	—
GW191222_033537	HL	$< 8.9 \times 10^{-4}$	11.1	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	12.0	> 0.99	0.0099	10.8	> 0.99	0.0021	11.5	> 0.99	$9.8 \times 10^{-5}$	11.5	> 0.99
<b>GW191230_180458</b>	HLV	0.050	10.3	0.95	0.13	10.3	0.87	8.1	9.8	0.40	52	9.6	0.29	0.42	9.9	0.96
GW200112_155838	LV	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}\dagger$	17.6	> 0.99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GW200115_042309	HLV	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	11.5	> 0.99	0.0055	11.2	> 0.99	$< 1.2 \times 10^{-4}$	10.8	> 0.99	—	—	—
GW200128_022011	HL	1.3	8.8	0.63	0.022	10.1	0.97	3.3	9.4	0.98	0.63	9.8	0.95	0.0043	9.9	> 0.99
GW200129_065458	HLV	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	26.5	> 0.99	—	—	$< 2.3 \times 10^{-5}$	16.3	> 0.99	$< 1.7 \times 10^{-5}$	16.2	> 0.99	
<b>GW200202_154313</b>	HLV	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	11.3	> 0.99	—	—	—	—	—	0.025	10.8	> 0.99	
GW200208_130117	HLV	—	—	—	0.0096	10.7	0.99	0.46	10.4	> 0.99	0.18	9.6	0.98	$3.1 \times 10^{-4}$	10.8	> 0.99
<b>GW200208_222617</b>	HLV	—	—	—	160	8.2	< 0.01	420	8.9	0.02	—	—	—	4.8	7.9	0.70
GW200209_085452	HLV	—	—	—	0.046	10.0	0.95	12	9.7	0.97	550	9.2	0.04	1.2	9.2	0.89
<b>GW200210_092254</b>	HLV	—	—	—	1.2	9.5	0.42	—	—	—	17	8.9	0.53	7.7	8.9	0.54
<b>GW200216_220804</b>	HLV	—	—	—	0.35	9.4	0.77	$2.4 \times 10^3$	8.8	0.02	970	9.0	< 0.01	7.8	8.7	0.54
GW200219_094415	HLV	0.77	9.7	0.85	$9.9 \times 10^{-4}$	10.7	> 0.99	0.18	10.6	> 0.99	1.7	9.9	0.89	0.016	10.0	> 0.99
<b>GW200220_061928</b>	HLV	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.8	7.5	0.62
<b>GW200220_124850</b>	HL	—	—	—	150	8.2	< 0.01	$1.8 \times 10^3$	8.2	0.83	—	—	—	30	7.8	0.20
GW200224_222234	HLV	$< 8.8 \times 10^{-4}$	18.8	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	18.9	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	19.0	> 0.99	$< 8.2 \times 10^{-5}$	19.2	> 0.99	$< 7.7 \times 10^{-5}$	18.6	> 0.99
GW200225_060421	HL	$< 8.8 \times 10^{-4}$	13.1	> 0.99	0.079	12.9	0.93	0.0049	12.5	> 0.99	$< 1.1 \times 10^{-5}$	12.3	> 0.99	$4.1 \times 10^{-5}$	12.3	> 0.99
GW200302_015811	HV	—	—	—	0.11 <sup>†</sup>	10.6	0.91	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>GW200306_093714</b>	HL	—	—	—	—	—	—	410	8.5	0.81	$3.4 \times 10^3$	7.8	< 0.01	24	8.0	0.24
<b>GW200308_173609</b>	HLV	—	—	—	680	8.1	< 0.01	$6.9 \times 10^4$	8.3	0.24	770	7.9	< 0.01	2.4	8.0	0.86
GW200311_115853	HLV	$< 8.2 \times 10^{-4}$	16.2	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	17.7	> 0.99	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	16.5	> 0.99	$< 6.9 \times 10^{-5}$	17.0	> 0.99	$< 7.7 \times 10^{-5}$	17.4	> 0.99
GW200316_215756	HLV	—	—	—	$< 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$	10.1	> 0.99	12	9.5	0.30	0.20	9.3	0.98	0.58	9.3	0.98
<b>GW200322_091133</b>	HLV	—	—	—	—	—	—	450	9.0	0.62	$1.4 \times 10^3$	8.0	< 0.01	140	7.7	0.08

Table I. Candidate GW signals. The time (UTC) of the signal is encoded in the name, as GWYYMMDD\_hhmmss (e.g., GW200112\_155838 occurred on 2020-01-12 at 15:58:38). The names of candidates not previously reported are given in **bold**. The detectors observing at the merger time of the event are indicated using single-letter identifiers (e.g., H for LIGO Hanford); these are not necessarily the same detectors that contributed triggers associated with the candidate. Where a candidate was found above the *pastro* of 0.5 threshold by at least one analysis but below threshold by others, we include in *italics* the results from the other analyses, where available. A dash indicates that a candidate was not found by an analysis. The 2 candidates labeled with a dagger ( $\dagger$ ) were only found above threshold in a single detector with the GstLAL analysis, and the FAR estimates were made using significant extrapolation of the background data, meaning that single-detector events have higher uncertainty than coincident events. A conservative estimate of the FAR for these single-detector events is one per live time of the analysis; this is  $\sim 3.16$  yr<sup>-1</sup> for both LIGO Hanford and LIGO Livingston.

low network SNR and a modest FAR of  $1.1 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ .

- The NSBH candidate S200105ae (GW200105.162426) is reported as a marginal candidate (see Table II) and is further discussed below.
- The cWB candidate S200114f was found online in the Hanford–Livingston–Virgo (HLV) three-detector network with FAR of  $0.039 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ , meeting the significance threshold for a public alert. It was considered for inclusion in the O3 search for short-duration minimally modeled transients [27], but that analysis was uniformly carried out on the Hanford–Livingston (HL) network, where the event did not qualify because of its low coherence (cWB network correlation coefficient  $c_c < 0.8$ ). This candidate was discussed at length in the context of the search for IMBH binaries, where a potential instrumental origin was examined [24]. The analysis for the IMBH search was carried out using both the HL and HLV networks, and this event came out as marginally significant in the HLV network. In the analysis done for this catalog, this event was reported only by the cWB pipeline (which performed a two-detector analysis). Since the cWB  $p_{\text{astro}}$  is low,  $< 0.01$ , it does not meet the criteria for inclusion in Table I.
- S200213t was found in low latency by GstLAL as a low-SNR single-detector candidate in LIGO Hanford with a modest FAR of  $0.56 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ .

Given the characteristics of these online candidates, their absence in this catalog’s list of probable GW candidates is consistent with expectations.

## 2. New O3b candidates

The 17 new candidates listed in this catalog, not previously shared via GCN, are indicated in bold in Table I. Almost all of these events are found with modest significance. They are all coincident events involving at least both of the LIGO Hanford and Livingston detectors. The inferred source properties for all the new events (discussed in Sec. V) are consistent with BBH masses, with the exceptions of GW191219\_163120 and GW200210\_092254 that may be from NSBHs.

The identification of these new candidates can be attributed to a combination of factors: (i) offline searches benefit from data with better calibration, cleaning and data-quality information, as well as improved algorithms, resulting in better background rejection, and (ii) using a  $p_{\text{astro}}$  threshold allows us to highlight events in source-rich parts of the parameter space, including events with an (offline) FAR that would not meet the (online) threshold for public alerts.

## 3. Pipeline consistency

Not all candidates were found by all pipelines above the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  threshold of 0.5: of the 35 candidates, 10 events were found by cWB, 21 events were found by GstLAL (including the 2 events found in a single detector), 20 events were found by MBTA, and 29 events were found by one or both of the PyCBC-BBH and PyCBC-broad analyses. Among the O3b candidates, 21 events were found by two or more analysis pipelines, 15 by three or more pipelines, and 9 by all pipelines. We expect the analyses to find different sets of candidates, due to different search methods, tuning, and configuration choices. The impact of differences between search pipelines will be largest for candidates with low SNR, thus it is expected that such candidates may be identified by only a subset of pipelines. As methods used by different pipelines will be more or less effective in suppressing specific types of noise artifacts, and the sensitivity of different pipelines will have different dependencies on binary signal parameters, combining information from multiple pipelines may lead to a greater understanding of the population of astrophysical sources.

Some candidates are unique to a pipeline and not found by other pipelines:

- The GstLAL analysis found 2 unique candidates (see Appendix D 6); these are both single-detector events which had also been reported in low latency. As only GstLAL is configured to identify single-detector signals, we expect a difference between pipelines here.
- The MBTA analysis found 4 unique events, newly reported here, all of which are quiet signals inferred to be from BBHs. These events have  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  even though their FAR (integrated over a large parameter space) is high (see Appendix D 7 for further discussion), and their  $p_{\text{terr}}$  is also significant. GW191113\_071753 may have an unusual mass ratio, and GW200322\_091133 has significant uncertainties for its inferred source properties (see Sec. V), which may make these signals (if real GWs) outliers in the astrophysical population; therefore, the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for these events is more uncertain than for more typical candidates.
- The PyCBC analyses found 8 unique events, all of which are newly reported in this catalog. Of these, 2 were found by both analyses, 5 were found in the PyCBC-BBH analysis and 1 in the PyCBC-broad analysis. All the candidates found uniquely by PyCBC are relatively quiet. The lowest FAR, and therefore most significant, is that of GW191103\_012549:  $0.46 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ .

The candidate found only by the PyCBC-broad analysis, GW191219\_163120, was found as a potential NSBH candidate, with a mass ratio of 0.09. The comparatively extreme mass ratio and

low mass of the secondary component as identified by the search,  $1.84M_{\odot}$ , meant that the template was not analyzed in the PyCBC-BBH analysis. GW191219\_163120, with redshifted chirp mass  $4.69M_{\odot}$ , is included in the same mass bin as the population of significant BBH events for the estimation of event rates entering  $p_{\text{astro}}$  (see Appendix D 7). Such a simple binning scheme implies significant modeling uncertainty in  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for events with parameters outside known populations: for instance, with a minor change in bin boundaries which puts the event in a different bin from the BBH population, its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  would drop to 0.085. This example illustrates the sensitivity of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  calculations to the assumed astrophysical population. For candidates at the edges of (or outside of) the confidently detected populations, like GW191219\_163120, there may be large, model-dependent systematic uncertainties in  $p_{\text{astro}}$ . Future observations will reduce the uncertainty in the rate of similar mergers, and thus enable us to better quantify the origin of GW191219\_163120.

Despite its high SNR, GW200129\_065458 was only identified by a subset of the search analyses due to a specific set of circumstances. A data-quality issue in Livingston was reported through active Burst and CBC Category 2 flags (and required mitigation, as described in Appendix C). The Category 2 flags mean that the Livingston data was ignored by the cWB, MBTA and PyCBC analyses. Moreover, in the MBTA analysis the combination of signal and noise was loud enough to trigger gating in Hanford, but not loud enough in Virgo to create a Hanford–Virgo (HV) coincidence in the high-threshold analysis performed without gating (see Appendix D 2 for details about the internal gating procedure used to remove suspected artifacts in the data). The PyCBC analyses still identified a candidate using only the HV data, but the network SNR is lower than reported by GstLAL on account of not including the Livingston data. In the cWB analysis, the event was reconstructed in the HV network but was rejected by the post-production cuts. The differences in data handling between analyses are expected to lead to such differences in uncommon cases like this.

GW191109\_010717, GW200208\_222617 and GW200220\_061928 are events with high-mass sources that potentially make them also relevant in the context of the search for IMBH binaries [24]. GW191109\_010717 is a highly significant event that was also found in that IMBH binary search with a FAR as low as  $10^{-3} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ , but has a joint posterior distribution for the primary and remnant masses that does not match the strict criteria to be considered as an IMBH binary [24] (see Sec. V). GW200208\_222617 and GW200220\_061928 are low-SNR events, which were not identified as significant in the IMBH search; this difference is likely due to different choices of event ranking statistic between the two searches as well as differences between their noise

backgrounds arising from a different parameter space.

#### 4. Marginal candidates & GW200105\_162426

In Table II we report the marginal candidates found by each analysis below a FAR threshold of  $2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  but do not satisfy the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  threshold for inclusion in Table I. The naming of these marginal candidates follows the same YYMMDD\_hhmmss format as that described for the candidates of Table I, except omitting the GW prefix for the two events found to be caused by instrumental artifacts; for the other marginal candidates, we cannot exclude the possibility that they are quiet GW signals.

The marginal candidates 200121\_031748, 200214\_224526 and 200219\_201407 were found to be likely caused by instrument artifacts. At the time of 200121\_031748, LIGO Hanford data contains excess power consistent with a blip glitch, a common glitch in LIGO detector data [58, 112]. At the time of 200214\_224526, LIGO Livingston data contained significant excess noise due to fast scattering, while LIGO Hanford data showed evidence for a weak scattering arch; this candidate was further examined in the search for IMBH binaries [24], and is discussed in Appendix F. At the time of 200219\_201407, LIGO Hanford data is highly non-stationary, with multiple loud glitches visible within one second of the candidate time.

The marginal candidate GW200311\_103121 is found by both MBTA and PyCBC-broad with a template consistent with a (redshifted) chirp mass of  $1.17M_{\odot}$  in both pipelines, and hence, if it were an astrophysical signal, its source would correspond to a BNS. Its chirp mass is close to that of GW170817 [113] and is consistent with Galactic BNSs [114]. Future observations will better constrain the mass distribution of BNS mergers and thus enable a more accurate assessment of the origin of this candidate.

The NSBH candidate GW200105\_162426 [8] was found as a single-detector trigger by GstLAL with a FAR of  $0.20 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ . This is comparable to the previously published value of  $0.36 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  [8], which only used data from the beginning of O3b until 22 January 2020. Though FARs are not assigned to single-detector triggers by the PyCBC and MBTA analyses, GW200105\_162426 was also seen by the PyCBC-broad and MBTA analyses as a Livingston trigger with SNRs of 13.1 and 13.2 respectively, which were well above the rest of the background for triggers from similar templates. An astrophysical probability could be assigned for single-detector events by the PyCBC pipeline [115], but is not implemented here. Based on  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , GW200105\_162426 is listed here as a marginal event, despite it being a clear outlier from the background noise [8]. The marginal status of this candidate event can at least in part be explained from the underlying assumptions in the candidate’s FAR estimation and  $p_{\text{astro}}$  computation.

The empirical background noise distribution available

Name	Inst.	cWB			GstLAL			MBTA			PyCBC-broad		
		FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>
<b>GW191118_212859</b>	LV	–	–	–	–	–	–	$7.4 \times 10^5$	8.0	< 0.01	1.3	9.1	0.05
GW200105_162426	LV	–	–	–	0.20 <sup>†</sup>	13.9	0.36	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>200121_031748*</b>	HV	–	–	–	58	9.1	0.02	1.1	10.7	0.23	–	–	–
<b>GW200201_203549</b>	HLV	–	–	–	1.4	9.0	0.12	850	8.9	< 0.01	$1.0 \times 10^3$	8.3	< 0.01
<b>200214_224526*</b>	HLV	0.13	13.1	0.91	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>200219_201407*</b>	HLV	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.22	13.6	0.48	–	–	–
<b>GW200311_103121</b>	HL	–	–	–	110	9.0	< 0.01	1.3	9.0	0.03	1.3	9.2	0.19

Table II. Marginal candidates found by the various analyses. The candidates in this table have a FAR below a threshold of  $2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  in at least one analysis, but were not found with  $p_{\text{astro}}$  that meets our threshold for Table I ( $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  from a search analysis, with the additional requirement that cWB candidates have a counterpart from a matched-filter analysis). The probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}}$  quoted (i) assumes a CBC source, which may not be not always be applicable for candidates identified by the minimally modeled cWB analysis, and (ii) do not factor in data-quality information that was not used by the search algorithms. Detector-identifying letters are the same as given in Table I. The instruments for each event are the ones which were operating at the time of the event, and are not necessarily the same as those which participated in the detection. The events are named according to the same convention as in Table I except that here we omit the GW prefix for the candidates found to be likely caused by instrumental artifacts, indicated with an asterisk (\*). Where an event was seen below the FAR threshold in at least one analysis but above threshold in others, we have included in *italics* the information on that trigger from the other analyses as well where available. As in Table I, the dagger (†) indicates an event found by a single detector with the GstLAL analysis.

for evaluating the significance of single-detector candidates extends only as far as ranking statistics at which we see one noise event per observing time. In contrast, for multi-detector triggers, an extended background estimate can be obtained by constructing unphysical coincidences between triggers in different detectors. Consequently, for single-detector candidates like GW200105\_162426 that lie outside the background noise distribution, the FAR estimation relies on an extrapolation. For triggers in the tail of the background distribution, this extrapolation comes with uncertainty that impacts the estimated FAR, and this uncertainty also propagates to the noise distribution used in the calculation of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  [3, 8].

Additionally, the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  estimation for NSBH sources depends on the foreground distribution of ranking statistics as well as their merger rate. The former is subject to uncertainties coming from a lack of knowledge of the NSBH population, while the latter has large error bars due to a paucity of high significance NSBH detections (order  $\sim 1$ ). Such uncertainties on  $p_{\text{astro}}$  have a significant impact on marginal candidate events whose  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values hover around 0.5. As a consequence, the moderate  $p_{\text{astro}}$  value assigned at this time to GW200105\_162426 does not allow us to draw a firm conclusion on its origin. Future observations will likely shed more light on the true provenance of this and similar events.

### 5. Subthreshold candidates

Following GWTC-2.1 [4], we provide an extended list of O3b candidates with FAR less than  $2.0 \text{ day}^{-1}$  as part of the data products available from GWOSC [29]. In ad-

dition to the 35 O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  listed in Table I, and the 7 marginal candidates with FAR less than  $2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  listed in Table II, there are 1041 further subthreshold O3b candidates in the extended list (giving a total of 1083 O3b candidates in the data release) [29]. The subthreshold candidates have not been scrutinized for possible instrumental origin, but the purity of the sample is expected to be low ( $\sim 0.02$  considering all subthreshold candidates).

For each subthreshold candidate, we provide estimates of their  $p_{\text{astro}}$  (assuming a CBC source) and localization. Localization relies on the same tools that were used to provide low-latency localization for public GW alerts, namely Bayestar [116, 117] for GstLAL, MBTA and PyCBC candidates, and cWB for its own candidates.

### E. Search sensitivity

To estimate the sensitivity of the search analyses, we calculated a sensitive time-volume hypervolume  $\langle VT \rangle$  for each analysis during O3b. This hypervolume represents the sensitivity of each search analysis to a distribution of sources assumed to be uniformly distributed in comoving volume and source-frame time. The expected number of detections for a search analysis is

$$\hat{N} = \langle VT \rangle R, \quad (3)$$

where  $R$  is the rate of signals per unit volume and unit observing time. The different pipeline live-times affect their calculated  $\langle VT \rangle$ . The pipeline live-times are: 94.9 days (cWB), 142.0 (GstLAL), 124.5 days (MBTA) and 124.2 days (both PyCBC analyses). To estimate  $\langle VT \rangle$  for each analysis, we add simulated signals (referred

Binary masses ( $M_{\odot}$ )			Sensitive hypervolume ( $\text{Gpc}^3 \text{ yr}$ )					
$m_1$	$m_2$	$\mathcal{M}$	cWB	GstLAL	MBTA	PyCBC-broad	PyCBC-BBH	Any
35.0	35.0	30.5	$2.6^{+0.1}_{-0.1}$	$4.1^{+0.1}_{-0.1}$	$3.3^{+0.2}_{-0.1}$	$3.3^{+0.1}_{-0.1}$	$4.3^{+0.2}_{-0.1}$	$5.3^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$
35.0	20.0	22.9	$1.35^{+0.09}_{-0.10}$	$2.3^{+0.2}_{-0.1}$	$1.8^{+0.1}_{-0.1}$	$1.9^{+0.1}_{-0.1}$	$2.5^{+0.1}_{-0.1}$	$3.1^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$
35.0	1.5	5.2	—	$1.8^{+0.2}_{-0.3} \times 10^{-2}$	$1.9^{+0.3}_{-0.3} \times 10^{-2}$	$3.1^{+0.3}_{-0.3} \times 10^{-2}$	—	$3.3^{+0.4}_{-0.3} \times 10^{-2}$
20.0	20.0	17.4	$0.56^{+0.04}_{-0.04}$	$1.34^{+0.06}_{-0.05}$	$1.10^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$1.14^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$1.42^{+0.06}_{-0.05}$	$1.71^{+0.06}_{-0.07}$
20.0	10.0	12.2	$0.24^{+0.03}_{-0.04}$	$0.60^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$0.51^{+0.05}_{-0.04}$	$0.56^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$0.65^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$0.77^{+0.06}_{-0.06}$
20.0	1.5	4.2	—	$1.9^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	$1.9^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	$2.7^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	—	$2.9^{+0.3}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$
10.0	10.0	8.7	$6.8^{+0.8}_{-0.9} \times 10^{-2}$	$0.26^{+0.01}_{-0.02}$	$0.26^{+0.01}_{-0.02}$	$0.27^{+0.01}_{-0.02}$	$0.28^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$	$0.32^{+0.02}_{-0.01}$
10.0	5.0	6.1	$1.3^{+0.5}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$0.10^{+0.02}_{-0.01}$	$0.10^{+0.02}_{-0.01}$	$0.12^{+0.01}_{-0.02}$	$0.11^{+0.02}_{-0.01}$	$0.13^{+0.02}_{-0.01}$
10.0	1.5	3.1	—	$1.6^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-2}$	$1.5^{+0.2}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-2}$	$1.8^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-2}$	—	$2.1^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-2}$
5.0	5.0	4.4	$5^{+1}_{-2} \times 10^{-3}$	$5.8^{+0.5}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$4.5^{+0.4}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$6.5^{+0.5}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$5.0^{+0.5}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$7.4^{+0.5}_{-0.5} \times 10^{-2}$
5.0	1.5	2.3	—	$1.12^{+0.05}_{-0.06} \times 10^{-2}$	$1.19^{+0.06}_{-0.05} \times 10^{-2}$	$1.21^{+0.06}_{-0.06} \times 10^{-2}$	—	$1.43^{+0.06}_{-0.06} \times 10^{-2}$
1.5	1.5	1.3	—	$2.7^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-3}$	$3.4^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-3}$	$3.5^{+0.1}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-3}$	—	$3.9^{+0.1}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-3}$

Table III. Sensitive hypervolume from O3b for the various search analyses with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  at the assessed points in the mass parameter space. The *Any* results come from calculating the sensitive hypervolume for injections found by at least one search analysis. For each set of binary masses, the given values are the central points of a log-normal distribution with width 0.1. For some regions and analyses, few injections were recovered such that the sensitive hypervolume cannot be accurately estimated; these cases are indicated by a dash (—). As an example of this, the PyCBC-BBH and cWB analyses only analyzed injections in the designated BBH set, and so no injections were found in the BNS or NSBH regions. The injected population is described in Appendix D 7.

to as injections) into the data and test how many are recovered. The injections we use are designed to cover the detected population of BBHs, BNSs and NSBHs, and are described further in Appendix D 7. We use the same sets of simulated signals for each analysis to consistently measure  $\langle VT \rangle$ , but since the PyCBC-BBH and cWB analyses are designed to search for BBH signals, we only use injections in the designated BBH regions for these searches. Rather than consider the total rate of signals, we consider signals corresponding to sources with specific masses to parameterize sensitivity to signals across parameter space.

In Table III we report the O3b  $\langle VT \rangle$  for simulated signals corresponding to sources with component masses close to the specified values. In Figure 6, for each search, we show the variation in the O3b  $\langle VT \rangle$  across the parameter space. The injections around the specified points are weighted so that they follow a log-normal distribution about the central mass with a width of 0.1. We also assume component spins are isotropically distributed with uniformly distributed magnitudes up to a maximum spin that depends on the source-frame component mass; if  $m_i < 2M_{\odot}$ , we assume  $\chi_{\max} = 0.4$  and otherwise assume  $\chi_{\max} = 0.998$ . We consider:

- BHs at  $35M_{\odot}$ , which corresponds to a GW150914-like system [4, 118], and is approximately where we infer a feature (potentially a bump or a break) in the BH mass spectrum [107];
- BHs at  $20M_{\odot}$ ,  $10M_{\odot}$  and  $5M_{\odot}$ , to see how sensitivity varies across this range of previously-detected BH masses;

- NSs at  $1.5M_{\odot}$ , close to the canonical NS mass.

We use several combinations of masses in order to assess our sensitivity to BNS, NSBH, and (relatively equal-mass) BBH systems. From the masses considered, the search sensitivity is greatest for  $35M_{\odot} + 35M_{\odot}$  binaries in all analyses, although our detectors generally survey larger volume for higher-mass populations up to source-frame component masses of  $\sim 100M_{\odot}$  [119, 120]. Equivalent results for the whole of O3 are given in Table XII in Appendix D 7a.

The sensitivity results presented in Table III are obtained considering a detection threshold of  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ , calculated as for our main results. The *Any* pipeline results come from taking the maximum  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for an injection from across the analyses, and represent our overall sensitivity to CBCs in the specified region.

The cWB results are obtained using the standard  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  threshold; however, for candidates reported in Table I, we require that the cWB events must have an associated trigger from one of the matched-filter analyses, as the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  calculation performed by cWB assumes that the signal is from a CBC. Therefore, we also investigated the cWB  $\langle VT \rangle$  using a cut of  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  from cWB together with the requirement that  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.1$  from at least one matched-filter analysis, to match the main results. We found these values to be comparable, for example the  $\langle VT \rangle$  for the  $(5.0 + 5.0)M_{\odot}$  bin is unchanged, at  $5^{+1}_{-2} \times 10^{-3} \text{ Gpc}^3 \text{ yr}$ , and the  $(10.0 + 10.0)M_{\odot}$  bin changes from  $6.8^{+0.8}_{-0.9} \times 10^{-2} \text{ Gpc}^3 \text{ yr}$  to  $6.7^{+0.9}_{-0.8} \times 10^{-2} \text{ Gpc}^3 \text{ yr}$ . The largest change is in the highest mass  $(35.0 + 35.0)M_{\odot}$  bin, where the  $\langle VT \rangle$  changes from  $2.6^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \text{ Gpc}^3 \text{ yr}$  to  $2.5^{+0.1}_{-0.1} \text{ Gpc}^3 \text{ yr}$ . Overall, adding the requirement that

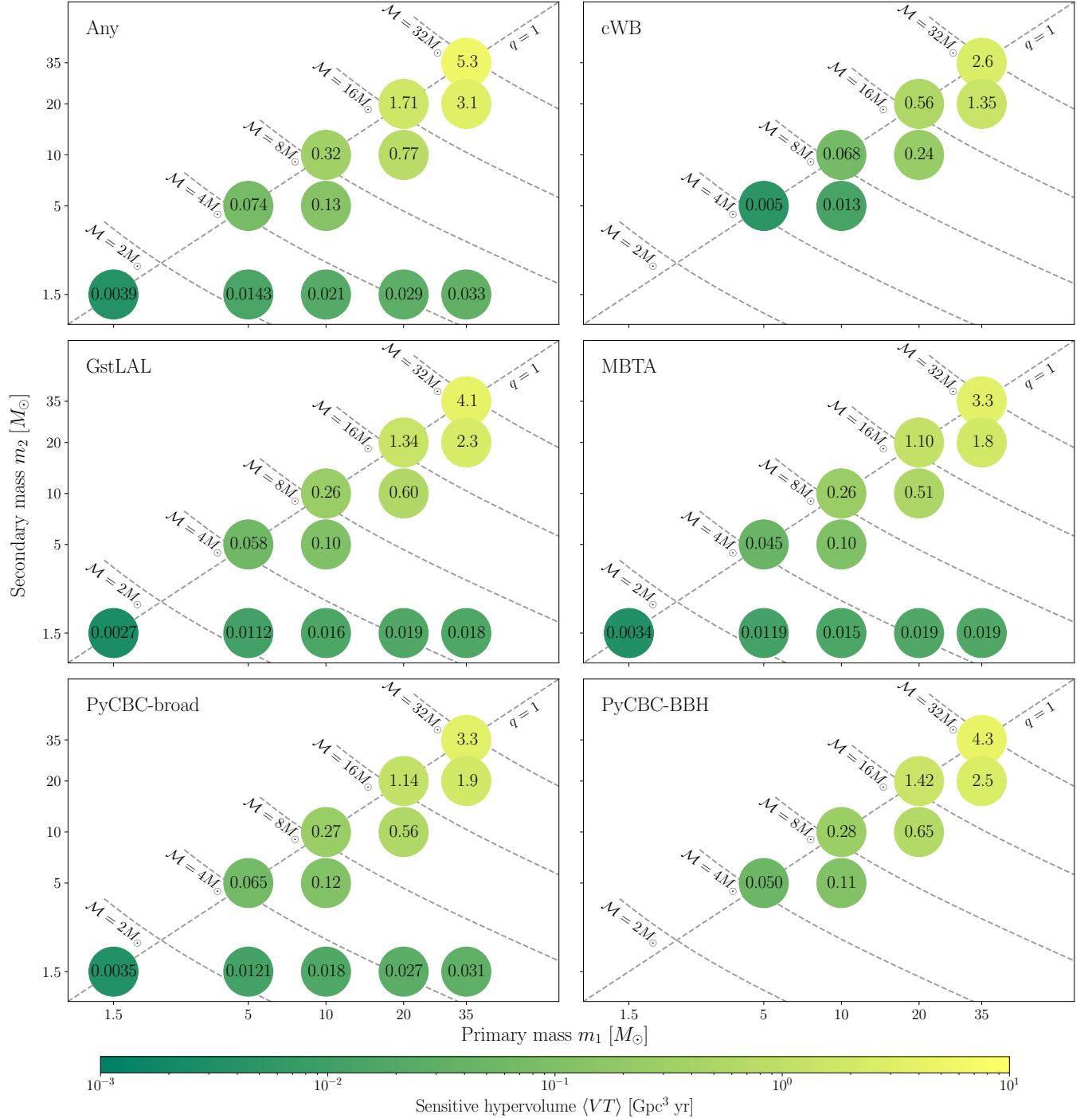


Figure 6. Sensitive hypervolume  $\langle VT \rangle$  from O3b for the various searches with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  at the assessed points in the mass parameter space. The *Any* results come from calculating the sensitive hypervolume for injections found by at least one search analysis. The plotted points correspond to the central points of the log-normal distributions (with widths 0.1) used for the calculation of  $\langle VT \rangle$ . The values displayed are the same as those given in Table III.

there be a CBC counterpart to cWB candidates makes little difference to the search sensitivity.

## V. SOURCE PROPERTIES

Having identified candidate signals, we perform a coherent analysis of the data from the GW detector network to infer the properties of each source. Information about the source parameters is encoded within the amplitude and phase of the GW signal recorded by each detector in the network. To extract this information, we match model waveform templates to the observed data, to calculate the posterior probability of a given set of parameters [121], assuming that the noise is Gaussian, stationary and uncorrelated between detectors [88]. We use the waveform models `IMRPhenomXPHM` [122] and `SEOBNRv4PHM` [123] to describe BBH systems, and `IMRPhenomNSBH` [124] and `SEOBNRv4_ROM_NRTidalv2_NSBH` [125] to describe matter effects in NSBH systems. All templates assume quasi-circular binaries, with the BBH models including the effects of spin precession and higher-order multipole moments [122, 123, 126, 127]. As the higher-order multipole moments and spin precession effects incorporated into the BBH waveform templates are more important in describing the signal than the NSBH matter effects, we preferentially quote results using the BBH waveforms [8]. We use an equal combination of `IMRPhenomXPHM` and `SEOBNRv4PHM` samples [128, 129]. Potential systematic uncertainties from differences in waveform modeling are discussed in Sec. V E. Analyses using the `IMRPhenomXPHM` or NSBH waveforms are performed with the Bilby family of codes [130–132] and analyses using the `SEOBNRv4PHM` waveforms are performed with RIFT [133–135]. The analysis closely follows the practices from previous studies [4, 118], and further details are presented in Appendix E.

A summary of key results for O3b candidates is given in Table IV, and shown in Fig. 7, Fig. 8 and Fig. 9. We show results for the O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  plus GW200105\_162426, which, despite being a marginal candidate, is a clear outlier from the noise background [8]. On account of its low  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , we highlight GW200105\_162426 in figures and tables. We similarly highlight GW191219\_163120 because, as discussed in Sec. IV D 3, the calculated  $p_{\text{astro}}$  is especially sensitive to the adopted population model, and, as discussed below, there is significant posterior support for mass ratios outside the range of calibration for the waveform models. Following previous analyses [3, 4], results are calculated using default priors that are intended to not make strong assumptions about the underlying astrophysical population (e.g., uniform priors are used for redshifted component masses, an isotropic distribution is used for spin orientations, and it is assumed that sources are uniformly distributed in comoving volume and time). Posterior samples are available from GWOSC [29], and the

simple form of the prior probability distributions enables the samples to be conveniently reweighted to use alternative prior distributions [136, 137]. Inferences about the underlying population of merging compact binaries are presented in a companion paper [5].

The O3b candidates show a diversity in their source properties. Many are similar to previous observations, but some do show unusual features. While the mass posterior probability distributions are typically unimodal, some results show multimodal behavior. For example, GW200129\_065458 shows a bimodality in mass ratio that translates to a bimodality in  $m_2$ . GW200225\_060421 and GW200306\_093714 both show bimodality in their redshifted chirp-mass distributions, although their source-mass distributions (shown in Fig. 7) are unimodal, as the additional uncertainty from the inferred redshift is sufficient to broaden the modes such that they merge. Due to the correlations between masses and spins [138–140], multimodality in mass distributions may also translate to multiple peaks in the effective inspiral spin distribution. Multimodality can arise due to: the complexity of the likelihood surface when using waveform models that include higher-order multipole moments [19, 141–143] and precession [144, 145], noise fluctuations for quiet signals [146], the presence of glitches [147–149], or there being multiple overlapping signals in the data (which is unlikely given O3 sensitivity) [150]. Therefore, multimodality is expected in a few cases.

Cases with significant multimodality are GW200208\_222617, GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133. These candidates have modest significance, with  $p_{\text{astro}} = 0.70, 0.86$  and  $0.62$ , respectively, and are each identified with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  by only one search analysis. For GW200208\_222617 the two main modes have comparable likelihoods, indicating comparable fits to the data, while for GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133, there are significant modes with lower likelihoods. The posterior probability distributions for GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133 both have peaks at lower masses and lower distances, and another broader peak corresponding to higher masses and larger distances; this high-mass, large-distance peak is dominated by the prior. The default prior probability distribution (described in Appendix E 3) places significant weight at large distances, and at high masses. This means that we can find significant posterior probability at large distances and high masses, even when the likelihood is low. Such low-likelihood peaks, corresponding to low SNRs, may arise due to a random noise fluctuation matching the signal template. For GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133, the high-mass and high-distance peak has lower likelihood and posterior support for SNRs  $\rho \sim 0$ . For such candidates, the multimodality indicates that we cannot separate the possibility of a signal from a lower-mass, closer source from a weaker (potentially vanishing) signal from a higher-mass, more-distant source. However, this support for high masses and large distances is driven by our choice of prior, which was

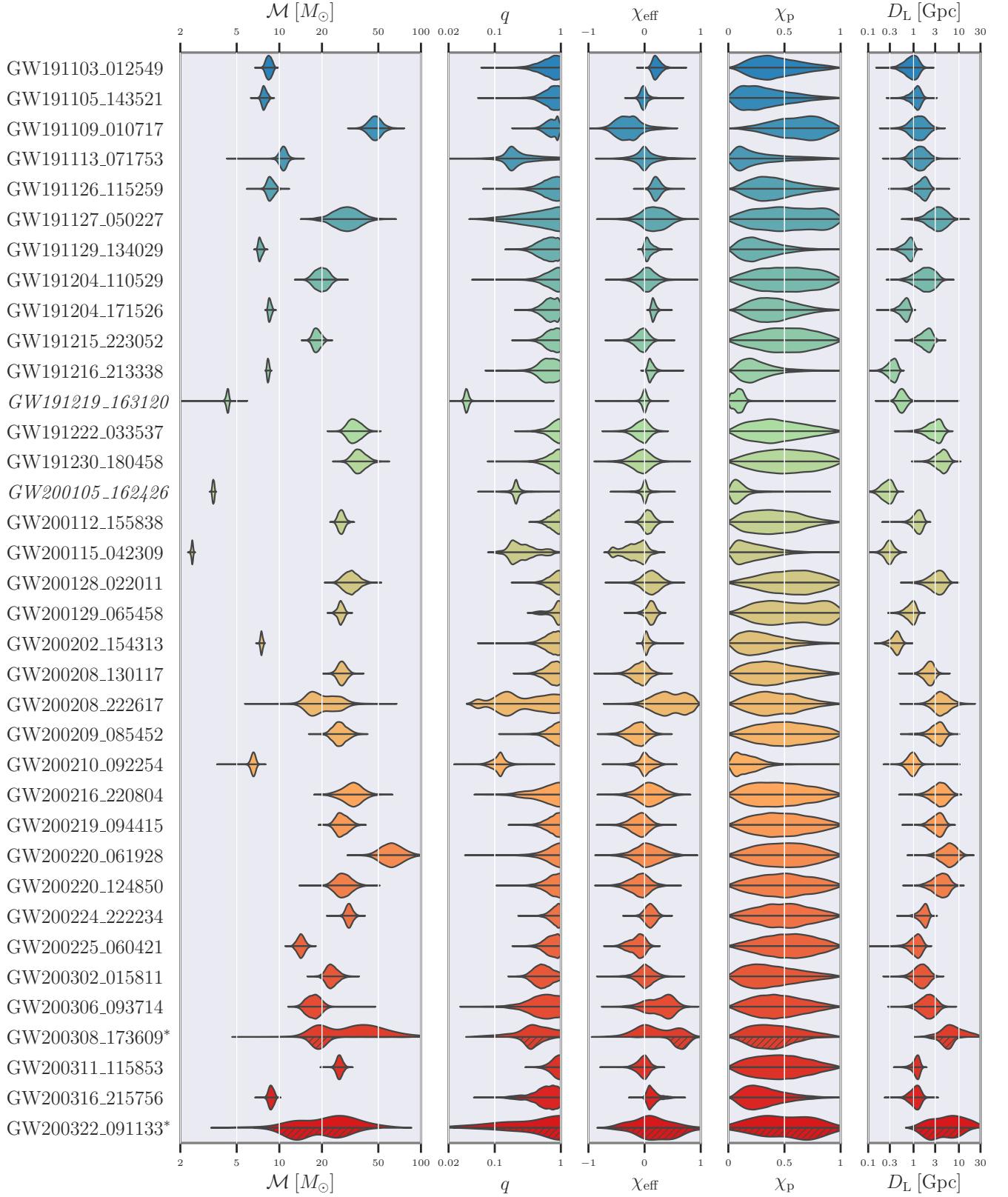


Figure 7. Marginal posterior distributions for the source chirp mass  $\mathcal{M}$ , mass ratio  $q$ , effective inspiral spin  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ , effective precession spin  $\chi_{\text{p}}$  and luminosity distance  $D_{\text{L}}$  for O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  plus GW200105\_162426. The vertical extent of each colored region is proportional to one-dimensional marginal posterior distribution at a given parameter value for the corresponding event. We highlight with italics GW200105\_162426 as it has  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , as well as GW191219\_163120 because of potential uncertainties in its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and because it has significant posterior support outside of mass ratios where the waveform models have been calibrated. Results for GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133 include a prior-dominated mode at large distances and high masses: the hatched posterior probability distribution shown on the lower half of the plots for these candidates exclude these low-likelihood, prior-dominated modes. Colors correspond to the date of observation.

Event	$M$ ( $M_{\odot}$ )	$\mathcal{M}$ ( $M_{\odot}$ )	$m_1$ ( $M_{\odot}$ )	$m_2$ ( $M_{\odot}$ )	$\chi_{\text{eff}}$	$D_{\text{L}}$ (Gpc)	$z$	$M_{\text{f}}$ ( $M_{\odot}$ )	$\chi_{\text{f}}$	$\Delta\Omega$ (deg $^2$ )	SNR
GW191103_012549	$20.0^{+3.7}_{-1.8}$	$8.34^{+0.66}_{-0.57}$	$11.8^{+6.2}_{-2.2}$	$7.9^{+1.7}_{-2.4}$	$0.21^{+0.16}_{-0.10}$	$0.99^{+0.50}_{-0.47}$	$0.20^{+0.09}_{-0.09}$	$19.0^{+3.8}_{-1.7}$	$0.75^{+0.06}_{-0.05}$	2500	$8.9^{+0.3}_{-0.5}$
GW191105_143521	$18.5^{+2.1}_{-1.3}$	$7.82^{+0.61}_{-0.45}$	$10.7^{+3.7}_{-1.6}$	$7.7^{+1.4}_{-1.9}$	$-0.02^{+0.13}_{-0.09}$	$1.15^{+0.43}_{-0.48}$	$0.23^{+0.07}_{-0.09}$	$17.6^{+2.1}_{-1.2}$	$0.67^{+0.04}_{-0.05}$	640	$9.7^{+0.3}_{-0.5}$
GW191109_010717	$112^{+20}_{-16}$	$47.5^{+9.6}_{-7.5}$	$65^{+11}_{-11}$	$47^{+15}_{-13}$	$-0.29^{+0.42}_{-0.31}$	$1.29^{+1.13}_{-0.65}$	$0.25^{+0.18}_{-0.12}$	$107^{+18}_{-15}$	$0.61^{+0.18}_{-0.19}$	1600	$17.3^{+0.5}_{-0.5}$
GW191113_071753	$34.5^{+10.5}_{-9.8}$	$10.7^{+1.1}_{-1.0}$	$29^{+12}_{-14}$	$5.9^{+4.4}_{-1.3}$	$0.00^{+0.37}_{-0.29}$	$1.37^{+1.15}_{-0.62}$	$0.26^{+0.18}_{-0.11}$	$34^{+11}_{-10}$	$0.45^{+0.33}_{-0.11}$	3600	$7.9^{+0.5}_{-1.1}$
GW191126_115259	$20.7^{+3.4}_{-2.0}$	$8.65^{+0.95}_{-0.71}$	$12.1^{+5.5}_{-2.2}$	$8.3^{+1.9}_{-2.4}$	$0.21^{+0.15}_{-0.11}$	$1.62^{+0.74}_{-0.74}$	$0.30^{+0.12}_{-0.13}$	$19.6^{+3.5}_{-2.0}$	$0.75^{+0.06}_{-0.05}$	1400	$8.3^{+0.2}_{-0.5}$
GW191127_050227	$80^{+39}_{-22}$	$29.9^{+11.7}_{-9.1}$	$53^{+47}_{-20}$	$24^{+17}_{-14}$	$0.18^{+0.34}_{-0.36}$	$3.4^{+3.1}_{-1.9}$	$0.57^{+0.40}_{-0.29}$	$76^{+39}_{-21}$	$0.75^{+0.13}_{-0.29}$	980	$9.2^{+0.7}_{-0.6}$
GW191129_134029	$17.5^{+2.4}_{-1.2}$	$7.31^{+0.43}_{-0.28}$	$10.7^{+4.1}_{-2.1}$	$6.7^{+1.5}_{-1.7}$	$0.06^{+0.16}_{-0.08}$	$0.79^{+0.26}_{-0.33}$	$0.16^{+0.05}_{-0.06}$	$16.8^{+2.5}_{-1.2}$	$0.69^{+0.03}_{-0.05}$	850	$13.1^{+0.2}_{-0.3}$
GW191204_110529	$47.2^{+9.2}_{-8.0}$	$19.8^{+3.6}_{-3.3}$	$27.3^{+11.0}_{-6.0}$	$19.3^{+5.6}_{-6.0}$	$0.05^{+0.26}_{-0.27}$	$1.8^{+1.7}_{-1.1}$	$0.34^{+0.25}_{-0.18}$	$45.0^{+8.6}_{-7.6}$	$0.71^{+0.12}_{-0.11}$	3700	$8.8^{+0.4}_{-0.6}$
GW191204_171526	$20.21^{+1.70}_{-0.96}$	$8.55^{+0.38}_{-0.27}$	$11.9^{+3.3}_{-1.8}$	$8.2^{+1.4}_{-1.6}$	$0.16^{+0.08}_{-0.05}$	$0.65^{+0.19}_{-0.25}$	$0.13^{+0.04}_{-0.05}$	$19.21^{+1.79}_{-0.95}$	$0.73^{+0.03}_{-0.03}$	350	$17.5^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$
GW191215_223052	$43.3^{+5.3}_{-4.3}$	$18.4^{+2.2}_{-1.7}$	$24.9^{+7.1}_{-4.1}$	$18.1^{+3.8}_{-4.1}$	$-0.04^{+0.17}_{-0.21}$	$1.93^{+0.89}_{-0.86}$	$0.35^{+0.13}_{-0.14}$	$41.4^{+5.1}_{-4.1}$	$0.68^{+0.07}_{-0.07}$	530	$11.2^{+0.3}_{-0.4}$
GW191216_213338	$19.81^{+2.69}_{-0.94}$	$8.33^{+0.22}_{-0.19}$	$12.1^{+4.6}_{-2.3}$	$7.7^{+1.6}_{-1.9}$	$0.11^{+0.13}_{-0.06}$	$0.34^{+0.12}_{-0.13}$	$0.07^{+0.02}_{-0.03}$	$18.87^{+2.80}_{-0.94}$	$0.70^{+0.03}_{-0.04}$	490	$18.6^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$
GW191219_163120	$32.3^{+2.2}_{-2.7}$	$4.32^{+0.12}_{-0.17}$	$31.1^{+2.2}_{-2.8}$	$1.17^{+0.07}_{-0.06}$	$0.00^{+0.07}_{-0.09}$	$0.55^{+0.25}_{-0.16}$	$0.11^{+0.05}_{-0.03}$	$32.2^{+2.2}_{-2.7}$	$0.14^{+0.06}_{-0.06}$	1500	$9.1^{+0.5}_{-0.8}$
GW191222_033537	$79^{+16}_{-11}$	$33.8^{+7.1}_{-5.0}$	$45.1^{+10.9}_{-8.0}$	$34.7^{+9.3}_{-10.5}$	$-0.04^{+0.20}_{-0.25}$	$3.0^{+1.7}_{-1.7}$	$0.51^{+0.23}_{-0.26}$	$75.5^{+15.3}_{-9.9}$	$0.67^{+0.08}_{-0.11}$	2000	$12.5^{+0.2}_{-0.3}$
GW191230_180458	$86^{+19}_{-12}$	$36.5^{+8.2}_{-5.6}$	$49.4^{+14.0}_{-9.6}$	$37^{+11}_{-12}$	$-0.05^{+0.26}_{-0.31}$	$4.3^{+2.1}_{-1.9}$	$0.69^{+0.26}_{-0.27}$	$82^{+17}_{-11}$	$0.68^{+0.11}_{-0.13}$	1100	$10.4^{+0.3}_{-0.4}$
GW200105_162426	$11.0^{+1.5}_{-1.4}$	$3.42^{+0.08}_{-0.08}$	$9.0^{+1.7}_{-1.7}$	$1.91^{+0.33}_{-0.24}$	$0.00^{+0.13}_{-0.18}$	$0.27^{+0.12}_{-0.11}$	$0.06^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$	$10.7^{+1.5}_{-1.4}$	$0.43^{+0.05}_{-0.02}$	7900	$13.7^{+0.2}_{-0.4}$
GW200112_155838	$63.9^{+5.7}_{-4.6}$	$27.4^{+2.6}_{-2.1}$	$35.6^{+6.7}_{-4.5}$	$28.3^{+4.4}_{-5.9}$	$0.06^{+0.15}_{-0.15}$	$1.25^{+0.43}_{-0.46}$	$0.24^{+0.07}_{-0.08}$	$60.8^{+5.3}_{-4.3}$	$0.71^{+0.06}_{-0.06}$	4300	$19.8^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$
GW200115_042309	$7.4^{+1.8}_{-1.7}$	$2.43^{+0.05}_{-0.07}$	$5.9^{+2.0}_{-2.5}$	$1.44^{+0.85}_{-0.29}$	$-0.15^{+0.24}_{-0.42}$	$0.29^{+0.15}_{-0.10}$	$0.06^{+0.03}_{-0.02}$	$7.2^{+1.8}_{-1.7}$	$0.42^{+0.09}_{-0.05}$	370	$11.3^{+0.3}_{-0.5}$
GW200128_022011	$75^{+17}_{-12}$	$32.0^{+7.5}_{-5.8}$	$42.2^{+11.6}_{-8.1}$	$32.6^{+9.5}_{-9.2}$	$0.12^{+0.24}_{-0.25}$	$3.4^{+2.1}_{-1.8}$	$0.56^{+0.28}_{-0.28}$	$71^{+16}_{-11}$	$0.74^{+0.10}_{-0.10}$	2600	$10.6^{+0.3}_{-0.4}$
GW200129_065458	$63.4^{+4.3}_{-3.6}$	$27.2^{+2.1}_{-2.3}$	$34.5^{+9.9}_{-3.2}$	$28.9^{+3.4}_{-9.3}$	$0.11^{+0.11}_{-0.16}$	$0.90^{+0.29}_{-0.38}$	$0.18^{+0.05}_{-0.07}$	$60.3^{+4.0}_{-3.3}$	$0.73^{+0.06}_{-0.05}$	130	$26.8^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$
GW200202_154313	$17.58^{+1.78}_{-0.67}$	$7.49^{+0.24}_{-0.20}$	$10.1^{+3.5}_{-1.4}$	$7.3^{+1.1}_{-1.7}$	$0.04^{+0.13}_{-0.06}$	$0.41^{+0.15}_{-0.16}$	$0.09^{+0.03}_{-0.03}$	$16.76^{+1.87}_{-0.66}$	$0.69^{+0.03}_{-0.04}$	170	$10.8^{+0.2}_{-0.4}$
GW200208_130117	$65.4^{+7.8}_{-6.8}$	$27.7^{+3.6}_{-3.1}$	$37.8^{+9.2}_{-6.2}$	$27.4^{+6.1}_{-7.4}$	$-0.07^{+0.22}_{-0.27}$	$2.23^{+1.00}_{-0.85}$	$0.40^{+0.15}_{-0.14}$	$62.5^{+7.3}_{-6.4}$	$0.66^{+0.09}_{-0.13}$	30	$10.8^{+0.3}_{-0.4}$
GW200208_222617	$63^{+100}_{-25}$	$19.6^{+10.7}_{-5.1}$	$51^{+104}_{-30}$	$12.3^{+9.0}_{-5.7}$	$0.45^{+0.43}_{-0.44}$	$4.1^{+4.4}_{-1.9}$	$0.66^{+0.54}_{-0.28}$	$61^{+100}_{-25}$	$0.83^{+0.14}_{-0.27}$	2000	$7.4^{+1.4}_{-1.2}$
GW200209_085452	$62.6^{+13.9}_{-9.4}$	$26.7^{+6.0}_{-4.2}$	$35.6^{+10.5}_{-6.8}$	$27.1^{+7.8}_{-7.8}$	$-0.12^{+0.24}_{-0.30}$	$3.4^{+1.9}_{-1.8}$	$0.57^{+0.25}_{-0.26}$	$59.9^{+13.1}_{-8.9}$	$0.66^{+0.10}_{-0.12}$	730	$9.6^{+0.4}_{-0.5}$
GW200210_092254	$27.0^{+7.1}_{-4.3}$	$6.56^{+0.38}_{-0.40}$	$24.1^{+7.5}_{-4.6}$	$2.83^{+0.47}_{-0.42}$	$0.02^{+0.22}_{-0.21}$	$0.94^{+0.43}_{-0.34}$	$0.19^{+0.08}_{-0.06}$	$26.7^{+7.2}_{-4.3}$	$0.34^{+0.13}_{-0.08}$	1800	$8.4^{+0.5}_{-0.7}$
GW200216_220804	$81^{+20}_{-14}$	$32.9^{+9.3}_{-8.5}$	$51^{+22}_{-13}$	$30^{+14}_{-16}$	$0.10^{+0.34}_{-0.36}$	$3.8^{+3.0}_{-2.0}$	$0.63^{+0.37}_{-0.29}$	$78^{+19}_{-13}$	$0.70^{+0.14}_{-0.24}$	2900	$8.1^{+0.4}_{-0.5}$
GW200219_094415	$65.0^{+12.6}_{-8.2}$	$27.6^{+5.6}_{-3.8}$	$37.5^{+10.1}_{-6.9}$	$27.9^{+7.4}_{-8.4}$	$-0.08^{+0.23}_{-0.29}$	$3.4^{+1.7}_{-1.5}$	$0.57^{+0.22}_{-0.22}$	$62.2^{+11.7}_{-7.8}$	$0.66^{+0.10}_{-0.13}$	700	$10.7^{+0.3}_{-0.5}$
GW200220_061928	$148^{+55}_{-33}$	$62^{+23}_{-15}$	$87^{+40}_{-23}$	$61^{+26}_{-25}$	$0.06^{+0.40}_{-0.38}$	$6.0^{+4.8}_{-3.1}$	$0.90^{+0.55}_{-0.40}$	$141^{+51}_{-31}$	$0.71^{+0.15}_{-0.17}$	3000	$7.2^{+0.4}_{-0.7}$
GW200220_124850	$67^{+17}_{-12}$	$28.2^{+7.3}_{-5.1}$	$38.9^{+14.1}_{-8.6}$	$27.9^{+9.2}_{-9.0}$	$-0.07^{+0.27}_{-0.33}$	$4.0^{+2.8}_{-2.2}$	$0.66^{+0.36}_{-0.31}$	$64^{+16}_{-11}$	$0.67^{+0.11}_{-0.14}$	3200	$8.5^{+0.3}_{-0.5}$
GW200224_222234	$72.2^{+7.2}_{-5.1}$	$31.1^{+3.2}_{-2.6}$	$40.0^{+6.9}_{-4.5}$	$32.5^{+5.0}_{-7.2}$	$0.10^{+0.15}_{-0.15}$	$1.71^{+0.49}_{-0.64}$	$0.32^{+0.08}_{-0.11}$	$68.6^{+6.6}_{-4.7}$	$0.73^{+0.07}_{-0.07}$	50	$20.0^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$
GW200225_060421	$33.5^{+3.6}_{-3.0}$	$14.2^{+1.5}_{-1.5}$	$19.3^{+5.0}_{-3.0}$	$14.0^{+2.8}_{-3.5}$	$-0.12^{+0.17}_{-0.28}$	$1.15^{+0.51}_{-0.53}$	$0.22^{+0.09}_{-0.10}$	$32.1^{+3.5}_{-2.8}$	$0.66^{+0.07}_{-0.13}$	370	$12.5^{+0.3}_{-0.4}$
GW200302_015811	$57.8^{+9.6}_{-6.9}$	$23.4^{+4.7}_{-3.0}$	$37.8^{+8.7}_{-8.5}$	$20.0^{+8.1}_{-5.7}$	$0.01^{+0.25}_{-0.26}$	$1.48^{+1.02}_{-0.70}$	$0.28^{+0.16}_{-0.12}$	$55.5^{+8.9}_{-6.6}$	$0.66^{+0.13}_{-0.15}$	6000	$10.8^{+0.3}_{-0.4}$
GW200306_093714	$43.9^{+11.8}_{-7.5}$	$17.5^{+3.5}_{-3.0}$	$28.3^{+17.1}_{-7.7}$	$14.8^{+6.5}_{-6.4}$	$0.32^{+0.28}_{-0.46}$	$2.1^{+1.7}_{-1.1}$	$0.38^{+0.24}_{-0.18}$	$41.7^{+12.3}_{-6.9}$	$0.78^{+0.11}_{-0.26}$	4600	$7.8^{+0.4}_{-0.6}$
GW200308_173609*	$50.6^{+10.9}_{-8.5}$	$19.0^{+4.8}_{-2.8}$	$36.4^{+11.2}_{-9.6}$	$13.8^{+7.2}_{-3.3}$	$0.65^{+0.17}_{-0.21}$	$5.4^{+2.7}_{-2.6}$	$0.83^{+0.32}_{-0.35}$	$47.4^{+11.1}_{-7.7}$	$0.91^{+0.03}_{-0.08}$	2000	$7.1^{+0.5}_{-0.5}$
GW200311_115853	$61.9^{+5.3}_{-4.2}$	$26.6^{+2.4}_{-2.0}$	$34.2^{+6.4}_{-3.8}$	$27.7^{+4.1}_{-5.9}$	$-0.02^{+0.16}_{-0.20}$	$1.17^{+0.28}_{-0.40}$	$0.23^{+0.05}_{-0.07}$	$59.0^{+4.8}_{-3.9}$	$0.69^{+0.07}_{-0.08}$	35	$17.8^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$
GW200316_215756	$21.2^{+7.2}_{-2.0}$	$8.75^{+0.62}_{-0.55}$	$13.1^{+10.2}_{-2.9}$	$7.8^{+1.9}_{-2.9}$	$0.13^{+0.27}_{-0.10}$	$1.12^{+0.47}_{-0.44}$	$0.22^{+0.08}_{-0.08}$	$20.2^{+7.4}_{-1.9}$	$0.70^{+0.04}_{-0.04}$	190	$10.3^{+0.4}_{-0.7}$
GW200322_091133*	$55^{+37}_{-27}$	$15.5^{+15.7}_{-3.7}$	$34^{+48}_{-18}$	$14.0^{+16.8}_{-8.7}$	$0.24^{+0.45}_{-0.51}$	$3.6^{+7.0}_{-2.0}$	$0.60^{+0.84}_{-0.30}$	$53^{+38}_{-26}$	$0.78^{+0.16}_{-0.17}$	6500	$6.0^{+1.7}_{-1.2}$

Table IV. Median and 90% symmetric credible intervals for selected source parameters, and the 90% credible area for the sky localization for O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  plus GW200105\_162426. We highlight with *italics* GW200105\_162426 as it has  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , as well as GW191219\_163120 because of potential uncertainties in its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and because it has significant posterior support outside of mass ratios where the waveform models have been calibrated. An asterisk (\*) is used to indicate candidates for which we only quote statistics for the higher likelihood modes of the posterior distributions, and do not include potentially unphysical, prior-dominated modes at large distances and high masses; full results are shown in the figures for these candidates. The columns show source total mass  $M$ , chirp mass  $\mathcal{M}$ , component masses  $m_i$ , effective inspiral spin  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ , luminosity distance  $D_{\text{L}}$ , redshift  $z$ , final mass  $M_{\text{f}}$ , final spin  $\chi_{\text{f}}$ , sky localization  $\Delta\Omega$  and the network matched-filter SNR. All quoted results are calculated using BBH waveform models; values come from averaging **IMRPhenomXPHM** and **SEOBNRv4PHM** results, except for the SNR (which is given for **IMRPhenomXPHM** because the RIFT analysis used for **SEOBNRv4PHM** does not output this quantity).

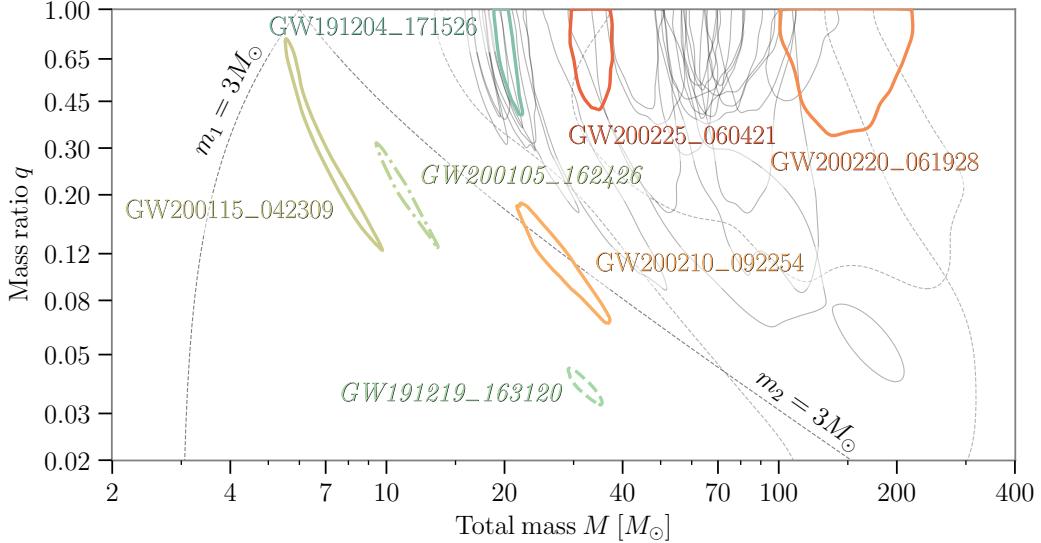


Figure 8. Credible-region contours in the plane of total mass  $M$  and mass ratio  $q$  for O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  plus GW200105\_162426. Each contour represents the 90% credible region for a different candidate. Highlighted contours are for the NSBH candidates GW191219\_163120, GW200105\_162426 and GW200115\_042309; the NSBH or low-mass BBH candidate GW200210\_092254; GW191204\_171526, which has inferred  $\chi_{\text{eff}} > 0$ ; GW200225\_060421, which has 85% probability that  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$ , and GW200220\_061928, which probably has the most massive source of the O3b candidates. We highlight with italics GW200105\_162426 as it has  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , as well as GW191219\_163120 because of potential uncertainties in its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and because it has significant posterior support outside of mass ratios where the waveform models have been calibrated. Results for GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133 are indicated with dashed lines to highlight that these include a prior-dominated mode at large distances and high masses. The dotted lines delineate regions where the primary and secondary can have a mass below  $3M_{\odot}$ . For the region above the  $m_2 = 3M_{\odot}$  line, both objects in the binary have masses above  $3M_{\odot}$ . The small island at  $M \sim 175M_{\odot}$  is part of the (nearby) contour for GW200208\_222617.

not designed to model the astrophysical population of sources. Therefore, we consider that the high-likelihood peaks for GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133 yield a more plausible estimate of the source parameters, although we cannot exclude the possibility that the low-likelihood peaks describe the sources (assuming that the signals are astrophysical).

In presenting results for GW200308\_173609 and GW200322\_091133, we show the full posterior distributions in figures, but in Table IV and in the discussion we consider the high-likelihood modes that are not prior dominated. To select the relevant modes, we use a cut on the likelihood (a rough proxy for the matched-filter SNR), and only consider regions of the posterior probability distribution with a likelihood above the chosen threshold. Results for these candidates are highlighted with an asterisk in Table IV and dashed lines in the figures. Figure 7 shows a comparison of results with and without this selection. For GW200322\_091133, there is still multimodality after the lowest likelihood mode is removed by the likelihood cut. Using a different prior, such as a population-informed prior [107, 110, 151–155], that has a stronger preference for masses more consistent with other GW observations, and a weaker preference for high masses and large distances, would also suppress the

low-likelihood peaks.

### A. Masses

Masses are typically the best constrained binary parameters. They are the dominant properties in setting the frequency evolution of the signal, with lower (higher) mass systems merging at higher (lower) frequencies. While we are typically interested in the source masses, it is the redshifted masses  $(1+z)m_i$ , where  $z$  is the source redshift, that are measured by the detectors [93]. The source masses are calculated by combining the inferred redshifted mass and luminosity distance (see Appendix E for the assumed cosmology).

Combinations of the two component masses (such as the chirp mass) may be more precisely measured than the individual component masses [138–140, 156]. However, component masses are most informative about the nature of the source, and indicate whether the compact object is more likely to be a BH or a NS. The maximum NS mass is currently uncertain, with estimates ranging over  $2.1$ – $2.7M_{\odot}$  [157–162]. We use  $3M_{\odot}$  as a robust upper limit of the maximum NS mass [9, 10], and split the candidates into two categories: *unambiguous BBHs* where,

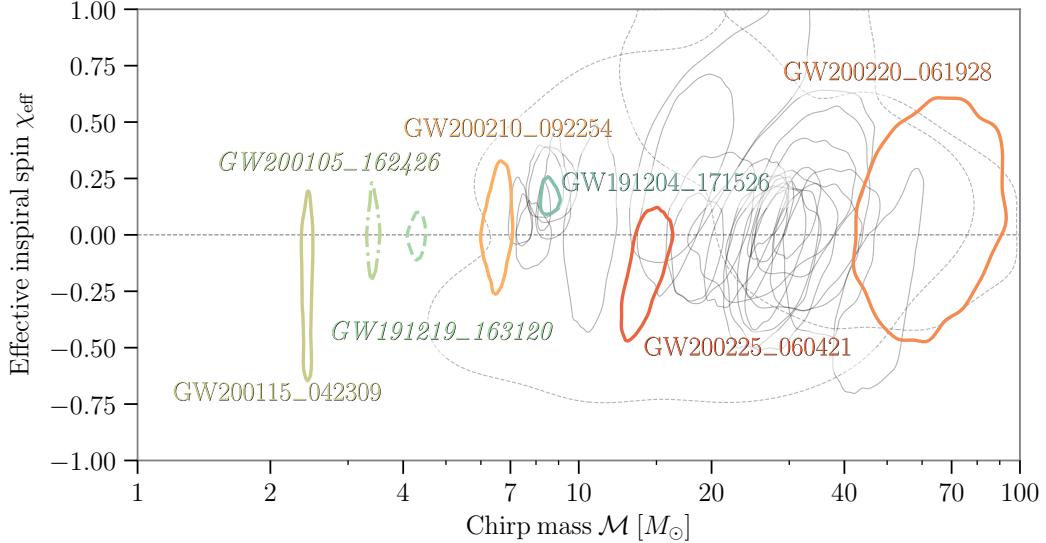


Figure 9. Credible-region contours in the plane of chirp mass  $\mathcal{M}$  and effective inspiral spin  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  for O3b candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  plus GW200105\_162426. Each contour represents the 90% credible region for a different candidate. Highlighted contours are for the NSBH candidates GW191219\_163120, GW200105\_162426 and GW200115\_042309; the NSBH or low-mass BBH candidate GW200210\_092254; GW191204\_171526, which has inferred  $\chi_{\text{eff}} > 0$ ; GW200225\_060421, which has 85% probability that  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$ , and GW200220\_061928, which probably has the most massive source of the O3b candidates. We highlight with italics GW200105\_162426 as it has  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , as well as GW191219\_163120 because of potential uncertainties in its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and because it has significant posterior support outside of mass ratios where the waveform models have been calibrated. Results for GW200322\_091133 and GW200225\_060421 are indicated with dashed lines to highlight that these include a prior-dominated mode at large distances and high masses.

assuming that the signal is astrophysical, both components of the source were BHs ( $m_2 > 3M_\odot$  at 97% probability), and *potential NS binaries* (in our case, potential NSBH binaries) where at least one component could have been a NS. Candidates from the two categories are discussed in Sec. V A 1 and Sec. V A 2, respectively. As shown in Fig. 8, all of the 35 candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  except GW191219\_163120, GW200115\_042309 and GW200210\_092254 (plus GW200105\_162426) have  $m_2 > 3M_\odot$  (the contour for GW200322\_091133 brushes the dividing line, but it has  $m_2 > 3M_\odot$  at 97% probability), and none of the candidates has posterior support for  $m_1 < 3M_\odot$ , which would be required for a BNS source. Therefore, we identify the majority of sources as BBHs.

### 1. Masses of sources with strictly $m_2 > 3M_\odot$ : Unambiguous BBHs

The mass combination with greatest influence on a CBC signal's frequency evolution is the chirp mass  $\mathcal{M}$  [90]. The chirp mass's influence on the inspiral means that it is more precisely measured in lower-mass systems, which have more of the inspiral signal in the sensitive frequency band of the detectors [163–167]. This is illustrated in Fig. 9, which also shows the effective inspiral spin (Sec. V B). The modestly significant ( $p_{\text{astro}} = 0.62$ )

GW200220\_061928 probably has the highest chirp-mass source of the O3b candidates, with  $\mathcal{M} = 62^{+23}_{-15} M_\odot$ . Similarly, GW191129\_134029's source probably has the lowest while still being an unambiguous-BBH ( $m_2 > 3M_\odot$ ) candidate, with  $\mathcal{M} = 7.31^{+0.43}_{-0.28} M_\odot$ . The range of chirp masses for the O3b candidates is consistent with GWTC-2.1 [3, 4].

The total mass of the binary  $M$  influences the merger and ringdown of the signal, which constitute a more significant proportion of the observed signal for higher-mass sources [13, 168, 169]. The O3b candidates with the highest  $M$  measurements (after excluding the prior-dominated low-likelihood modes), GW200220\_061928 and GW191109\_010717, have lower median  $M$  measurements than GW190521 [4, 170], of  $M = 148^{+55}_{-33} M_\odot$  and  $112^{+20}_{-16} M_\odot$ , respectively. The lowest-mass O3b unambiguous-BBH candidate is GW191129\_134029's source, with  $M = 17.5^{+2.4}_{-1.2} M_\odot$ . Posterior probability distributions for the total mass and mass ratio are shown in Fig. 8; the curving degeneracies seen at lower masses are where distributions follow a line of constant chirp mass.

Mass ratios are typically less precisely inferred from GW observations than the chirp mass or total mass. The mass ratio influences the phase evolution of the inspiral at the post-Newtonian (PN) order after the chirp mass [90, 121, 138, 139]. Most measured mass ratios are consis-

tent with the equal-mass limit  $q = 1$ , as shown in Fig. 7. For example, GW200129\_065458 and GW200311\_115853 have  $q \geq 0.50$  and  $\geq 0.61$  at 90% probability, respectively. However, multiple BBH candidates have support for unequal masses. GW191113\_071753's source has an inferred  $q = 0.202^{+0.490}_{-0.087}$  ( $q \leq 0.524$  at 90% probability) and GW200208\_222617's has  $q = 0.21^{+0.67}_{-0.16}$  ( $q \leq 0.78$  at 90% probability). Some posterior probability distributions extend outside the calibration range for current waveform models, and hence may be subject to additional systematic uncertainties [122, 123]. Future analysis with waveforms with improved fidelity at more extreme mass ratios should lead to a more complete understanding of these sources. GW191113\_071753 and GW200208\_222617 have moderate significance ( $p_{\text{astro}} = 0.68$  and 0.70, respectively), and hence may not be a reflection of the true BBH population. Using a population-informed prior [107, 110, 151–155], in place of our default uninformative prior, may give greater weight to equal masses [5].

Considering individual BH masses, the unambiguous BBH candidates have component masses ranging from  $\sim 5.9^{+4.4}_{-1.3} M_{\odot}$  to  $\sim 87^{+40}_{-23} M_{\odot}$  (excluding prior-dominated, low-likelihood modes). Primary masses range from  $10.1^{+3.5}_{-1.4} M_{\odot}$  for GW200202\_154313 to  $87^{+40}_{-23} M_{\odot}$  and  $51^{+104}_{-30} M_{\odot}$  for GW200220\_061928 and GW200208\_222617, while secondary masses range from  $5.9^{+4.4}_{-1.3} M_{\odot}$  for GW191113\_071753 to  $61^{+26}_{-25} M_{\odot}$  for GW200220\_061928. The distribution of component masses is analyzed, and its astrophysical implications discussed, in a companion paper [5].

Given our default prior assumptions, there is a 94% probability that the primary BH in GW200220\_061928 has a mass  $m_1 > 65 M_{\odot}$ ; this is approximately the maximum mass of BHs expected to be formed from stellar collapse before encountering pair-instability supernovae [142, 171–176], where the progenitor stars would be disrupted leaving no remnant behind, although there are many physical uncertainties that can impact this maximum mass [177–184]. GW191109\_010717 has 51% probability that  $m_1 > 65 M_{\odot}$ , while GW200208\_222617 and GW191127\_050227 have probabilities 42% and 30%, respectively. Similarly, GW200220\_061928 has a 39% probability that its secondary has  $m_2 > 65 M_{\odot}$ . GW200220\_061928 and GW200208\_222617 have 7% and 6% probabilities that  $m_1 > 120 M_{\odot}$ , respectively, which is expected to be approximately the mass where the pair-instability supernova mass gap ends [142, 175, 180, 185, 186].

Based upon X-ray binary observations, there is a hypothesized lower BH mass gap below  $5 M_{\odot}$  [187–190]. This may be a signature of the physics of core-collapse supernova explosions [191–195]. We infer that there are some BBHs that may have components in this mass gap. Given our standard prior assumptions, the candidate with most posterior support for  $m_2 < 5 M_{\odot}$  is GW191113\_071753 with 13% probability. None of the unambiguous-BBH candidates has a primary mass con-

sistent with being in the lower mass gap.

The component BH masses overlap with those from previous GW and electromagnetic observations. The range is consistent with observations in GWTC-2.1 [4, 170]. Non-LVK analysis of public GW data has led to other BBH candidates being reported [15–19, 196]; these BBHs have inferred masses and mass ratios that are consistent with the systems found here. From these non-LVK searches, the marginal candidate GW170817A [18, 197] may have the most massive source, with  $m_1 = 56^{+16}_{-10} M_{\odot}$  and  $m_2 = 40^{+10}_{-11} M_{\odot}$ . While overlapping at lower masses, the BH masses inferred from GW observations extend above the masses seen in X-ray binaries [188, 189, 198–201]. However, these X-ray binaries are largely expected not to form merging BBHs [202, 203]: for example, while Cygnus X-1 may form two BHs, predictions indicate that there is only a small probability that they would merge within a Hubble time [204]. Additionally, X-ray observations are typically drawn from binaries with near solar metallicity. Stellar mass loss due to winds increases with metallicity [205–207], so stars formed at solar metallicity leave less massive remnants than stars formed at lower metallicity with the same initial mass [175, 208–212]. Studying the masses of BHs will provide an insight into their formation and the lives of their progenitors [185, 213–220].

The remnant BHs formed from the mergers have masses  $M_f = M - E_{\text{rad}}/c^2$  where  $E_{\text{rad}}$  is the energy radiated as GWs, which typically corresponds to a few percent of  $M$  [221–224]. The most massive remnant BH among the O3b candidates probably corresponds to GW200220\_061928, with a final mass of  $141^{+51}_{-31} M_{\odot}$ . Using our default priors, there is a 99% probability of its final BH mass being above  $100 M_{\odot}$  (a conventional threshold for being considered an IMBH [24, 225, 226]). Several other systems are consistent with  $M_f > 100 M_{\odot}$ , including GW191109\_010717's remnant, which has a 78% probability of exceeding this threshold.

## 2. Masses of sources with support for $m_2 < 3 M_{\odot}$ : Potential NS binaries

The candidates GW191219\_163120, GW200115\_042309, GW200210\_092254 and GW200105\_162426 are all consistent with originating from a source with  $m_2 < 3 M_{\odot}$ . When a coalescing binary contains a NS, matter effects modify the waveform. If these effects can be measured, we can identify that the component is a NS rather than a BH. For O3b candidates, as discussed in Sec. V C, we find no measurable matter effects. Without this information, from the GW signal we can only infer the component type from their masses.

As illustrated by Fig. 7 and Fig. 8, the O3b candidates with potential-NS binary sources have more extreme mass ratios than the typical BBH candidates. At 90% probability, the

sources of GW191219\_163120, GW200105\_162426, GW200115\_042309 and GW200210\_092254 have mass ratios  $q \leq 0.041$ ,  $q \leq 0.259$ ,  $q \leq 0.571$  and  $q \leq 0.150$ , respectively. The mass ratio of GW200210\_092254's source is  $q = 0.118^{+0.048}_{-0.041}$ , which is comparable to GW190814's  $q = 0.112^{+0.008}_{-0.009}$  [227]. The mass ratio of GW191219\_163120's source is inferred to be  $q = 0.038^{+0.005}_{-0.004}$ , which is extremely challenging for waveform modeling, and thus there may be systematic uncertainties in results for this candidate.

GW200115\_042309's source is the lowest total mass O3b binary; this potential NSBH coalescence has  $M = 7.4^{+1.8}_{-1.7} M_{\odot}$ . Its chirp mass is well measured at  $\mathcal{M} = 2.43^{+0.05}_{-0.07} M_{\odot}$ . GW200115\_042309's source has components with masses  $m_1 = 5.9^{+2.0}_{-2.5} M_{\odot}$  and  $m_2 = 1.44^{+0.85}_{-0.29} M_{\odot}$ . These results are consistent with previous inferences [8], showing that the change in how the fast scattering glitches in Livingston data were mitigated (discussed in Appendix C) does not have a significant impact on this analysis. The primary is consistent with being a low-mass BH [8], we infer a 29% probability that  $m_1 < 5 M_{\odot}$ ; the secondary is consistent with the masses of known Galactic NSs [159, 228–230].

GW200105\_162426's source corresponds to a higher mass NSBH candidate, with  $M = 11.0^{+1.5}_{-1.4} M_{\odot}$ , and  $\mathcal{M} = 3.42^{+0.08}_{-0.08} M_{\odot}$ . The binary components have masses  $m_1 = 9.0^{+1.7}_{-1.7} M_{\odot}$  and  $m_2 = 1.91^{+0.33}_{-0.24} M_{\odot}$ , which are consistent with a BH and a NS, respectively [8].

GW200210\_092254's source has  $M = 27.0^{+7.1}_{-4.3} M_{\odot}$  and  $\mathcal{M} = 6.56^{+0.38}_{-0.40} M_{\odot}$ , which sit within the range seen for the unambiguous-BBHs candidates discussed in Sec. V A 1. While the primary is clearly a BH with  $m_1 = 24.1^{+7.5}_{-4.6} M_{\odot}$ , its secondary has  $m_2 = 2.83^{+0.47}_{-0.42} M_{\odot}$  with a 76% probability that  $m_2 < 3 M_{\odot}$ . The secondary mass sits within the hypothesized lower mass gap between NSs and BHs [187–190]. The inferred  $m_2$  is comparable to the  $3.3^{+2.8}_{-0.7} M_{\odot}$  (95% confidence) candidate BH in the non-interacting binary 2MASS J05215658+4359220 [231]; the  $3.04 \pm 0.06 M_{\odot}$  (68% confidence) candidate BH binary companion to V723 Mon [232], and potentially the pulsar J1748–2021B's estimated mass of  $2.74 \pm 0.21 M_{\odot}$  (68% confidence) if the assumption of purely relativistic precession (with no contributions from tidal or rotational distortion of the companion) is accurate [233]. GW200210\_092254's source is similar to GW190814's, where the component masses were inferred to be  $m_1 = 23.2^{+1.1}_{-1.0} M_{\odot}$  and  $m_2 = 2.59^{+0.08}_{-0.09} M_{\odot}$  [227]. GW200210\_092254's source could either be a BBH or a NSBH system, but given current understanding of the maximum NS mass [159, 160, 234–239], it is more probable that it is a BBH, similar to the case for GW190814 [227].

For GW191219\_163120, we infer a source with  $M = 32.3^{+2.2}_{-2.7} M_{\odot}$  and  $\mathcal{M} = 4.32^{+0.12}_{-0.17} M_{\odot}$ . It has  $m_1 = 31.1^{+2.2}_{-2.8} M_{\odot}$  and  $m_2 = 1.17^{+0.07}_{-0.06} M_{\odot}$ , which would make the source a clear NSBH, assuming that the signal is astrophysical. The secondary is probably the least massive

compact object among the O3b observations, and is comparable to the least massive of known NSs [159, 228, 240]. For example, the companion to pulsar J0453+1559 that has an estimated mass of  $1.174 \pm 0.004 M_{\odot}$  (68% confidence) [241], although this object has also been suggested to be a white dwarf [242]; the pulsar J1802–2124 that has an estimated mass  $1.24 \pm 0.11 M_{\odot}$  (68%) [243], or the NSs in the high-mass X-ray binaries SMC X-1 and 4U 1538–522 that have inferred masses of  $1.21 \pm 0.12 M_{\odot}$  and  $1.02 \pm 0.17 M_{\odot}$  (68%), respectively [244].

Measuring the mass distribution of NSs will illuminate the physical processes that form them. Determining the maximum NS mass provides a key insight into the properties of NS matter [235, 238, 239, 245–249], while determining the spectrum of NS masses provides an insight into the physics of processes such as supernova explosions [195, 242, 250–255]. As the catalog of observations grows, it will be possible to better determine the NS mass distribution.

## B. Spins

Spins leave a relatively subtle imprint on the GW signal, and so are more difficult to measure from observations than the masses [13, 138–140, 156, 256–258]. Typically, it is not possible to put strong constraints on individual components' spins, as the evolution of the system is primarily determined by mass-weighted combinations of the two component spins [259–263]. However, when a binary has unequal masses it may also be possible to constrain the primary spin because  $\chi_1$  dominates the spin contributions to the signal. To reflect how the two spins influence the signal, we quote results for two convenient spin parameters, the effective inspiral spin  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  [91, 92] and the effective precession spin  $\chi_p$  [264, 265].

The effective inspiral spin, as defined in Eq. (2), describes the mass-weighted projection of the component spins parallel to the orbital angular momentum, and is approximately conserved throughout the inspiral [266] while remaining important in determining evolution through the merger [222, 267, 268]. The effective inspiral spin influences the length of the inspiral and the transition to merger [222, 260, 267, 269]. A non-zero  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  indicates the definite presence of spins in the system, with positive values indicating that there is a net spin aligned with the orbital angular momentum, and negative values indicating that there is a net spin anti-aligned with the orbital angular momentum.

The effective precession spin,

$$\chi_p = \max \left\{ \chi_{1,\perp}, \frac{q(4q+3)}{4+3q} \chi_{2,\perp} \right\}, \quad (4)$$

where  $\chi_{i,\perp}$  is the component of spin perpendicular to the direction of the Newtonian orbital angular momentum  $\hat{L}_N$ , measures the mass-weighted in-plane spin component that contributes to spin precession [264, 265, 270, 271]. With this parametrization, a value of  $\chi_p = 0$  would

indicate no spin precession, and a value of  $\chi_p = 1$  indicates maximal precession; typically only weak constraints are placed on  $\chi_p$ , so the posterior covers a significant fraction of its prior range [3, 272, 273]. Since  $\chi_p$  is weakly constrained, the shape of the  $\chi_p$  prior often dominates the posterior. The  $\chi_p$  prior tends to zero at  $\chi_p = 0$  and peaks at a moderate value of  $\chi_p$  that depends on the prior ranges of  $\chi_1$ ,  $\chi_2$  and  $q$ , and so an inferred non-zero value does not necessarily imply a measurement of precession.

As a consequence of orbital precession,  $\chi_p$  changes throughout the inspiral. However, the tilt angles of a compact binary at a formally infinite separation are well defined [274]. We thus quote the tilt angles and derived quantities ( $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\chi_p$ ) at a fiducial reference point of infinite separation. The spins are evolved to infinite separation [275] using precession-averaged evolution [274, 276] with the orbital angular momentum calculated using higher-order PN expressions.

The spin orientations of a binary can provide clues to its formation channel [135, 218, 277–281]. Dynamically assembled binaries would have no preferred spin orientation, and therefore are expected to have an isotropic distribution of spin orientations (unless embedded in an environment like the disc of an active galactic nucleus where accretion or consecutive mergers can result in an anisotropic spin distribution [282–286]); on the other hand, binaries formed through isolated binary evolution are typically expected to have nearly aligned spins, with moderate misalignments arising due to supernova kicks [287–293]. Therefore, negative  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  or large  $\chi_p$  would be more common in dynamically formed binaries than those formed through isolated evolution.

Most of the candidates in O3b are consistent with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0$ . However, GW191204\_171526's source has  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.16^{+0.08}_{-0.05}$  with no posterior support at zero, while GW191103\_012549, GW191126\_115259 and GW191216\_213338 have sources with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.21^{+0.16}_{-0.10}$ ,  $0.21^{+0.15}_{-0.11}$  and  $0.11^{+0.13}_{-0.06}$ , respectively, and negligible support for  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$ . Other candidates with significant support for  $\chi_{\text{eff}} > 0$  include GW200316\_215756, GW200208\_222617, GW191129\_134029 and GW200129\_065458 with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} > 0$  at 98%, 95%, 91% and 89% probability, respectively. Additionally, if excluding the prior-dominated, low-likelihood mode of the posterior distribution, GW200308\_173609 has negligible support for  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$ , but when using the full posterior probability distribution  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.16^{+0.58}_{-0.49}$ . The O3b candidates with most significant support for  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$  are GW191109\_010717 and GW200225\_060421 with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$  at 90% and 85% probability, respectively. As with previous catalogs, there are more systems with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} > 0$  than with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$  [3, 4, 107, 197].

Figure 7 shows one-dimensional posterior probability distributions for  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\chi_p$ , and Fig. 9 shows two-dimensional posterior probability distributions for  $\mathcal{M}$  and  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ . Both GW200208\_222617 and GW200308\_173609 have high inferred values of  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ ,

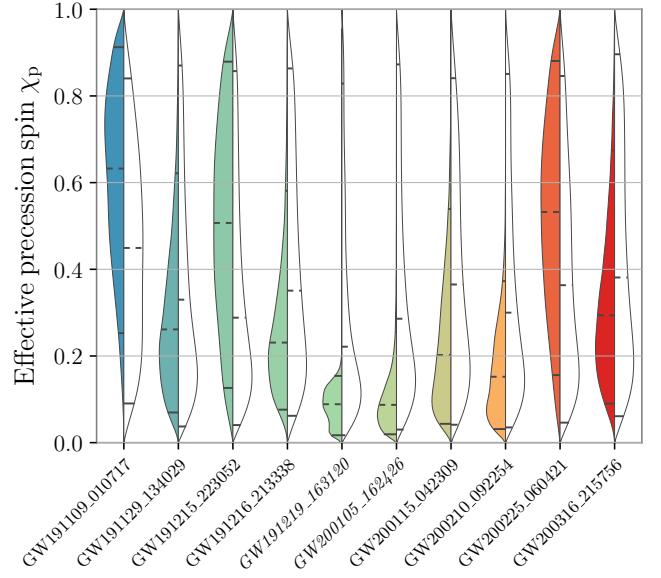


Figure 10. Posterior (left; colored) and effective prior (right; white) probability distributions for the effective precession spin parameter  $\chi_p$  of selected events. For each event, the prior distribution is conditioned on the posterior probability distribution for the effective inspiral spin  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  to illustrate how measurement of this quantity is correlated with inference of  $\chi_p$ . Horizontal lines mark the median and symmetric 90% interval for the distributions. The events selected show the greatest difference between the effective prior and posterior distributions. We highlight with italics GW200105\_162426 as it has  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , as well as GW191219\_163120 because of potential uncertainties in its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and because it has significant posterior support outside of mass ratios where the waveform models have been calibrated.

with  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.45^{+0.43}_{-0.44}$  and  $\chi_{\text{eff}} \sim 0.65^{+0.17}_{-0.21}$  (after excluding the prior-dominated, low-likelihood mode). These values are comparable to that inferred for GW190403\_051519 ( $p_{\text{astro}} = 0.60$ , as given in Table XIII in Appendix D 7), which has  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.70^{+0.15}_{-0.27}$  [4]. All three of these modest-significance candidates correspond to BBHs that have support for unequal masses. For example, GW190403\_051519's source has  $q = 0.25^{+0.54}_{-0.11}$ . The O3b source with probably the lowest  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  is GW191109\_010717's, which has  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = -0.29^{+0.42}_{-0.31}$ . Overall, the range of inferred  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  values matches the range for previous LVK candidates [4] as well as candidates from non-LVK analyses (when adopting comparable prior assumptions) [17, 19, 294, 295].

The in-plane spin components are less well constrained than those parallel to the orbital angular momentum. Given the constraint that spin magnitudes cannot exceed 1, a measurement of  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  influences the permitted values of  $\chi_p$ . This constraint means that the  $\chi_p$  posterior probability distribution may appear different from its (unrestricted) prior distribution even in cases where the signal contains no measurable information on the in-plane spins [14, 273]. Figure 10 shows the  $\chi_p$  posterior

probability distribution compared to the prior distribution after conditioning on the  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  measurement for a selection of events [3]. These distributions would be the same if no information about the in-plane spin components had been extracted from the signal, and the selected events have the greatest difference between the two distributions. For many events, the  $\chi_p$  posteriors are broad and uninformative. GW200129\_065458 (the highest SNR O3b candidate) has probably the highest inferred  $\chi_p$  of  $0.54^{+0.39}_{-0.39}$ . However, this inference is sensitive to the waveform model used, and is discussed in Sec. V E. GW191219\_163120 has probably the lowest measurement of the O3b candidates, with  $\chi_p \leq 0.14$  at 90% probability, which is between the measurements for GW200105\_162426 [8] and GW190814 [227] of  $\chi_p \leq 0.19$  and  $\leq 0.07$  at 90% probability, respectively. Since the mass ratio for this system is beyond the region of calibration for the waveforms, it is not clear how reliable this result is, and further work is needed to characterize the spin. For unequal mass binaries, it is generally easier to observe the effects of precession (or lack thereof), enabling tighter constraints on  $\chi_p$  [227, 258, 270, 273].

Figure 11 shows the posterior probability distributions for the dimensionless spin magnitude  $\chi_i$  and tilt angle  $\theta_{LS_i}$  for the binary components of a selection of six O3b candidates. In most cases, posteriors for the component spin magnitudes are largely uninformative, but for some of the unequal-mass binaries we may constrain  $\chi_1$  [227, 263, 296, 297]. For GW191219\_163120, GW200105\_162426 and GW200210\_092254, we find  $\chi_1 \leq 0.15$ ,  $\leq 0.27$  and  $\leq 0.38$  at 90% probability, respectively. Like GW190814 [227], where we inferred  $\chi_1 \leq 0.07$ , these NSBHs or BBHs with low-mass secondaries have negligible support for maximal primary spins. Conversely, for the asymmetric BBH candidate GW200208\_222617 we infer  $\chi_1 \geq 0.29$  at 90% probability, with 51% probability that  $\chi_1 > 0.8$ . These inferred spins are not as extreme as for GW190403\_051519's source [4]. With our default prior assumptions, only the O3a candidates GW190403\_051519 [4], GW190412 [263, 296] and GW190517\_055101 [4] lack posterior support for a primary spin of zero.

The final spin of the merger remnant  $\chi_f$  is determined by conservation of angular momentum, and receives contributions from both the orbital angular momentum at merger and the component spins. For equal-mass, non-spinning BHs, the merger remnant has a spin of  $\chi_f \sim 0.7$  [298–301]. As a consequence of the range of mass ratios and spins of the O3b candidates, there is a range of final spins, from  $\chi_f = 0.14^{+0.06}_{-0.06}$  for GW191219\_163120 and  $0.34^{+0.13}_{-0.08}$  for GW200210\_092254 (assuming the BBH waveform models are accurate) to  $0.83^{+0.14}_{-0.27}$  for GW200208\_222617 (or  $0.91^{+0.03}_{-0.08}$  for GW200308\_173609 after excluding the prior-dominated, low-likelihood mode).

In comparison to GWTC-3 observations, spins of BHs in X-ray binaries span the full range of magnitudes, including near maximal spins [201, 302, 303]. For low-

mass X-ray binaries, it is possible that these spins are grown by accretion from their companion [304–306]; in contrast, for high-mass X-ray binaries there would be insufficient time for accretion to significantly change the spin [201, 307, 308]. The comparison between spins in X-ray binaries and coalescing BH binaries may highlight details of their formation and differences in their evolution.

Predictions for BH spin magnitudes vary, depending upon the formation channel and assumptions about stellar evolution such as stellar winds or the efficiency of stellar tides [179, 216, 291, 309–311]. If angular momentum transport is efficient in stars, then BHs formed from stellar collapse may be born with low ( $\lesssim 0.1$ ) spins [312, 313]; for binaries formed via isolated binary evolution, this may mean that the first-born BH is expected to have a low spin, although the second-born BH may have a larger spin due to tides spinning up its progenitor [314–316]. The situation may be different if progenitor stars have significant rotation rates, such as for close binary star systems, where tidal locking can lead to chemically homogeneous evolution [317–319]. In this case, predicted BH spins are typically  $\sim 0.3$ – $0.5$ , and may extend up to the Kerr limit [218, 320]. Spin could also be imparted by asymmetric supernova explosions [292]. For BBHs embedded in active galactic nuclei discs, accretion can grow spins if they are prograde with respect to the disc, while retrograde spins become smaller before flipping to become prograde, with the rate of evolution depending upon the orientation of the orbit with respect to the disc [282, 285, 286]. Outside of stellar evolution, primordial BHs born in the early, radiation-dominated Universe are expected to have small ( $\lesssim 0.01$ ) spins at formation [321–323], but spins could increase through accretion [324, 325]. Given the theoretical uncertainties on BH spin magnitudes, GW (and X-ray) observations may reveal details of BH formation; the distribution of spins is analyzed in a companion paper [5].

### C. Tidal effects

If a binary contains at least one NS component, the GW signal from the inspiral is influenced by the deformability of NS matter. Tidal effects are quantified by the dimensionless quadrupole tidal deformability,

$$\Lambda_i = \frac{2}{3} k_{2,i} \left[ \frac{c^2 R_i}{G m_i} \right]^5, \quad (5)$$

where  $k_{2,i}$  is the second Love number and  $R_i$  is the component's radius [326, 327]. Quasi-universal relations [328] are used to parameterize the effects of NS spin-induced deformations in terms of  $\Lambda_i$ . Stiffer NS equations of state give larger values of  $\Lambda_i$ , which accelerates the rate of inspiral. BHs have  $\Lambda_i = 0$  [329–332].

On account of their SNRs, we do not expect to be able to place a lower limit on the tidal deformability for any

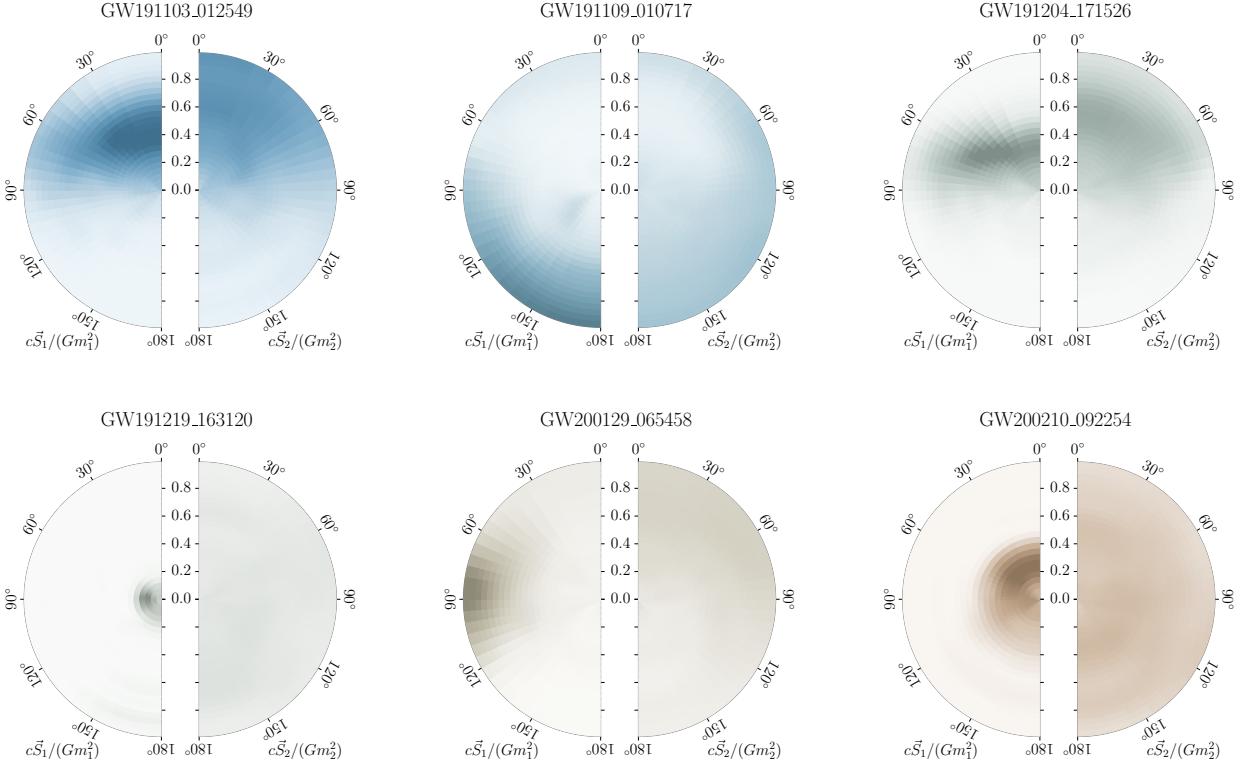


Figure 11. Posterior probability distributions for the dimensionless component spins  $\vec{\chi}_1 = c\vec{S}_1/(Gm_1^2)$  and  $\vec{\chi}_2 = c\vec{S}_2/(Gm_2^2)$  relative to the orbital plane, marginalized over azimuthal angles, for candidates GW191103\_012549, GW191109\_010717, GW191204\_171526, GW191219\_163120, GW200129\_065458 and GW200210\_092254, ordered chronologically. BBH waveform models are used for all the results shown here. GW191103\_012549 has  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.21^{+0.16}_{-0.10}$  with negligible posterior support at zero. GW191109\_010717 has  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$  at 90% probability and  $\chi_p = 0.63^{+0.28}_{-0.38}$ . GW191204\_171526 has  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.16^{+0.08}_{-0.05}$  with no posterior support at zero. GW191219\_163120 is a NSBH candidate with  $\chi_p \leq 0.14$  at 90% probability; this candidate has potential uncertainties in its  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and has significant posterior support outside of mass ratios where the waveform models have been calibrated. GW200129\_065458 has  $\chi_p = 0.54^{+0.39}_{-0.39}$ . GW200210\_092254 has  $\chi_p \leq 0.32$  at 90% probability and mass ratio  $q = 0.118^{+0.048}_{-0.041}$ . In these plots, histogram bins are constructed linearly in spin magnitude and the cosine of the tilt angles such that they contain equal prior probability.

events from O3b [333–335]. Results confirm this, with no analysis showing strong support for matter effects. This is consistent with previous observations where it was not possible to determine the nature of the compact objects from the GW data alone, such as GW170817 [113, 245] and GW190814 [227].

#### D. Localization

The distance to the source is inferred from the amplitude of the signal as the two are inversely related [118, 121]. Posterior probability distributions for the luminosity distance are shown in Fig. 7. The closest source found in O3b is probably GW200105\_162426, with an inferred distance of  $D_L = 0.27^{+0.12}_{-0.11}$  Gpc and redshift  $z = 0.06^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$ . At 90% probability, GW200105\_162426 has  $D_L \leq 0.36$  Gpc. GW200220\_061928 probably has the farthest source (excluding prior-dominated, low-likelihood

modes) at  $D_L = 6.0^{+4.8}_{-3.1}$  Gpc ( $D_L \geq 3.5$  Gpc at 90% probability),  $z = 0.90^{+0.55}_{-0.40}$ . This measurement is comparable to the probably most distant source reported in GWTC-2.1, which is for GW190403\_051519 at  $D_L = 8.00^{+5.88}_{-3.99}$  Gpc [3, 4]. As our detectors become more sensitive, it will be possible to observe sources at greater distances.

The sky localization depends critically upon the number of observatories able to detect a signal [23, 336, 337]. With only a single detector observing, localizations may cover the entire sky. The most constrained localizations are achieved when all three observatories record a significant SNR. The O3b source with the best sky localization is GW200208\_130117, with a 90% credible area of  $30 \text{ deg}^2$ , which was observed with all three detectors. As the detector network expands, the typical sky-localization precision will improve [23, 338].

The volume localization depends upon both the distance and sky localization. The best three-dimensional

localizations from O3b are for GW200202\_154313 and GW200115\_042309, which have 90% credible volumes of  $0.0024 \text{ Gpc}^3$  and  $0.0024 \text{ Gpc}^3$ , respectively. These correspond to two of the closest sources, with  $D_L = 0.41_{-0.16}^{+0.15} \text{ Gpc}$  and  $0.29_{-0.10}^{+0.15} \text{ Gpc}$ , respectively. Using the GLADE+ extension from the GLADE catalog [7, 339, 340], the 90% credible volume for GW200202\_154313 contains  $\sim 1500$  galaxies reported in the K band ( $\sim 10400$  in the bJ band), where we estimate the completeness of the galaxy catalog to be 7%–59% (13%–66%). Similarly, the 90% credible volume for GW200115\_042309 contains  $\sim 5800$  galaxies in the K band ( $\sim 13200$  in the bJ band), with estimated completeness of 27%–100% (90%–100%). As the typical distance to sources increases, so will the typical localization volume; however, improvements to detector sensitivity will mean that the localization precision for the best localized sources will improve [23, 338, 341].

The localization is crucial to multimessenger follow-up efforts. Previously reported candidates have been the target of dedicated follow-up observations. The details of currently reported follow-up observations are reviewed in Appendix A.

### E. Waveform systematics

Our inference of the source properties is dependent on being able to accurately calculate the signal waveform given the source parameters [144, 342–348]. The current generation of quasi-circular BBH waveforms used here (IMRPhenomXPHM and SEOBNRv4PHM) include higher-order spherical harmonics and model spin precession. Since the waveforms include equivalent physical effects, we expect that any differences that exist are attributable to the particular modeling of the relevant physics. Additionally, IMRPhenomXPHM uses the stationary phase approximation to trade accuracy for faster waveform evaluation in the frequency domain, which produces less reliable descriptions of massive merger–ringdown dominated signals. To assess the effects of waveform uncertainty on our inferences, and to identify discrepancies that require further study, we compare results obtained with different waveforms.

The waveforms are calibrated to non-precessing numerical relativity (NR) waveforms, and good agreement has been found between the two waveform models for non-precessing systems [349]. However, the waveforms are not calibrated to precessing NR waveforms, and use different approximations to describe precession (discussed in Appendix E2). The lack of accurate information about precession from NR also affects the merger and ringdown portions of the waveform, and the calculation of the quasi-normal mode frequencies. Additional issues regarding an accurate description of precessing systems arise for nearly anti-aligned spins, where approximations used to model spin effects can break down due to a wide opening angle of the precession cone (for more

extreme mass ratios), or instabilities in the spin configuration [350]. Generally, waveforms tend to disagree in parts of the parameter space with higher spins and more extreme mass ratios [123, 258, 349, 351], where the number of NR waveforms available for calibration are limited.

We find that for almost all the signals analyzed here, the differences between results obtained with the IMRPhenomXPHM and SEOBNRv4PHM are subdominant compared to the statistical uncertainty. As for previous observations, differences are typically small, and most noticeable for parameters like the spins [3, 14, 144, 272]. In some cases there are differences in the multimodality of the posterior probability distribution. Multimodality can be an indication of the complex structure of the waveform and highlight where subtle changes in the modeling may be important. Examples of candidates where there are differences between IMRPhenomXPHM and SEOBNRv4PHM are:

- GW191109\_010717, which has significant support for negative  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$  and misaligned spins, where waveform differences may be expected [349, 352]. There are differences in the spins and mass ratio inferred with the two waveforms. Both models show a structured, multimodal joint posterior distribution on  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ ,  $q$ , orbital inclination  $\theta_{JN}$  (the angle between the total angular momentum and the line of sight) and  $\chi_p$ , although the modes are overlapping. SEOBNRv4PHM has a posterior probability distribution with two modes separated mostly in  $\theta_{JN}$ , one face on and one face off. Both modes show similarly high values of  $\chi_p$ , and both have  $\chi_{\text{eff}} < 0$  with high probability. IMRPhenomXPHM, however, finds a near-edge-on mode ( $\theta_{JN} \sim \pi/2$ ) that prefers more equal component masses, and includes greater support for positive  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ . We infer  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = -0.31_{-0.32}^{+0.53}$  with IMRPhenomXPHM, and  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = -0.28_{-0.26}^{+0.26}$  with SEOBNRv4PHM. When a binary is viewed edge-on, any precession effects are maximally visible [256, 273, 345, 352, 353].
- GW191219\_163120, which has a comparatively extreme mass ratio, with the bulk of the posterior probability distribution outside the range of calibration of the waveforms. Despite this, the posteriors obtained with SEOBNRv4PHM and IMRPhenomXPHM show good agreement overall. While the waveforms produce consistent results, there are differences in the inferred inclination, with IMRPhenomXPHM showing less support for near edge-on orientations; total mass, with IMRPhenomXPHM preferring higher masses, and distance, with IMRPhenomXPHM having less support for larger distances. We infer  $q = 0.037_{-0.003}^{+0.004}$  with IMRPhenomXPHM, and  $q = 0.038_{-0.005}^{+0.006}$  with SEOBNRv4PHM. Modeling of higher-order multipole moments is particularly important for inferring the properties of systems with unequal masses [260, 296, 353–356], and may impact inference of param-

eters including the mass ratio, inclination and distance [3, 164, 347, 357–360].

- GW200129\_065458, which has a high SNR ( $\rho = 26.8_{-0.2}^{+0.2}$  using `IMRPhenomXPHM`) and was detected in all three detectors. While both waveforms show approximately the same  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ , this candidate shows a high  $\chi_p$ , as well as stronger support for unequal masses, when analyzed with `IMRPhenomXPHM`, whereas with `SEOBNRv4PHM` it does not exhibit strong evidence for precession and shows more support for equal masses. We infer  $\chi_p = 0.77_{-0.44}^{+0.19}$  and  $q = 0.73_{-0.30}^{+0.23}$  with `IMRPhenomXPHM`, and  $\chi_p = 0.36_{-0.25}^{+0.31}$  and  $q = 0.898_{-0.153}^{+0.084}$  with `SEOBNRv4PHM`. Unlike GW191109\_010717, the orbital plane is not viewed edge-on to the line of sight, so amplitude modulations from precession of the orbital plane are likely to be less significant. However, GW200129\_065458 has significant support for inclinations up to  $\theta_{JN} \lesssim 1.11$ , where precession and higher-order harmonic content may be important [164, 256, 273, 345, 353, 356, 359]. Waveform systematics become more important for higher SNR signals, where statistical uncertainties are smaller [118, 346].
- GW200208\_222617, which has a multimodal mass posterior and low SNR ( $\rho = 7.4_{-1.2}^{+1.4}$  using `IMRPhenomXPHM`). The preference for the different modes varies between waveforms. Of the two main modes, the lower  $m_1$  and  $M$  mode is favored by `SEOBNRv4PHM`, while the higher  $m_1$  and  $M$  mode is favored by `IMRPhenomXPHM`. Additionally, the `IMRPhenomXPHM` analysis finds an additional minor mode with  $M \sim 175M_\odot$  (visible as an island in Fig 8 adjacent to the main part of the 90% contour). The `IMRPhenomXPHM` analysis also shows a greater preference for higher  $\chi_{\text{eff}}$ : we infer  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.62_{-0.59}^{+0.26}$  with `IMRPhenomXPHM`, and  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = 0.34_{-0.37}^{+0.44}$  with `SEOBNRv4PHM`.

Future analyses with enhanced waveforms will update our understanding of the source parameters for these candidates.

## VI. WAVEFORM CONSISTENCY TESTS

Waveforms can be reconstructed from the data using two complementary approaches, either using parameter-estimation methods with templates [118, 361] or using minimal modeling [55, 362, 363]. While the parameter-estimation pipelines directly estimate the match between CBC model waveforms and data, BayesWave (Appendix C) and cWB (Appendix D 5) reconstruct waveforms making only minimal assumptions on the signal shape [55, 362, 363]. The waveform reconstruction performed by these pipelines uses time-frequency wavelets

to identify coherent features in the data, filtering out incoherent noise from the detectors. Although there are similarities between the methods used by cWB [55, 101] and BayesWave [362, 364], their waveform reconstructions differ in some details. In particular, the point estimate returned by cWB is the constrained maximum-likelihood reconstruction, while for BayesWave we use the median of the time-domain waveform reconstructions from BayesWave’s posterior probability distribution. Examples of both types of reconstruction were reported in GWTC-2 [3].

Starting from minimally-modeled waveform reconstructions we can try to detect unexpected behavior by comparing these reconstructions with the CBC waveforms from parameter estimation [3, 14, 101, 365, 366]. To test the consistency (or lack thereof) between minimally modeled reconstructions and the CBC waveforms, we perform sets of dedicated injections of CBC waveform samples from the posterior distributions for the source parameters. In these simulations the random waveforms are added to background data around the time of the events, and the simulated signal is analyzed by the minimally modeled pipelines. We call these *off-source* injected waveforms, while the reconstructed waveform of the event is our *on-source* result.

Here, as in GWTC-2 [3], we measure the waveform *match* (or *overlap*), defined by

$$\mathcal{O}(h_1, h_2) = \frac{\langle h_1 | h_2 \rangle}{\sqrt{\langle h_1 | h_1 \rangle \langle h_2 | h_2 \rangle}}, \quad (6)$$

where  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  are two waveforms,  $\langle \cdot | \cdot \rangle$  represents the noise-weighted inner product [367], and the match is  $-1 \leq \mathcal{O}(h_1, h_2) \leq 1$ . The theoretical definition of match in Eq. (6) does not depend on the amplitude of each signal [3]. However, the addition of noise typically reduces the match value, and it does depend both on SNR and, in more detail, on the distribution of signal power in time and frequency. A value of 1 indicates a perfect coincidence between waveforms, while a value close to 0 indicates that the correlation between waveforms is nil. A theoretically possible value of -1 would indicate an improbable perfect anticoincidence. The match is larger for signals corresponding to high-mass systems [365, 368–370]. The distribution of match values of the off-source injections defines a null distribution for each detected event. For each event, this distribution can be used both to estimate the uncertainty of the observed on-source match value and to obtain a p-value from the on-source match. For each event, the match is computed off-source between injected waveforms and their reconstructions, while on-source it is computed between the point estimate of the actual event and the maximum likelihood estimate provided by source parameter estimation.

The sets of events chosen for the BayesWave and cWB consistency tests are different. For the BayesWave analysis we consider candidates that are sufficiently loud and short for BayesWave to produce valid signal reconstructions. The events considered by cWB are those detected

Name	BayesWave		cWB	
	On-source match	Off-source match	On-source match	Off-source match
GW191109_010717	0.93	$0.94^{+0.04}_{-0.10}$	0.92	$0.90^{+0.04}_{-0.05}$
GW191127_050227	–	–	0.86	$0.83^{+0.07}_{-0.10}$
GW191129_134029	0.57	$0.35^{+0.26}_{-0.28}$	–	–
GW191204_171526	0.82	$0.68^{+0.14}_{-0.30}$	0.86	$0.80^{+0.05}_{-0.10}$
GW191215_223052	0.79	$0.65^{+0.17}_{-0.49}$	0.86	$0.81^{+0.07}_{-0.13}$
GW191216_213338	0.73	$0.74^{+0.09}_{-0.42}$	–	–
GW191222_033537	0.90	$0.88^{+0.06}_{-0.16}$	0.91	$0.88^{+0.04}_{-0.07}$
GW191230_180458	–	–	0.80	$0.88^{+0.05}_{-0.09}$
GW200128_022011	–	–	0.83	$0.84^{+0.06}_{-0.10}$
GW200129_065458	0.96	$0.96^{+0.02}_{-0.06}$	0.73	$0.87^{+0.05}_{-0.13}$
GW200208_130117	0.73	$0.74^{+0.14}_{-0.50}$	0.78	$0.79^{+0.07}_{-0.13}$
GW200209_085452	–	–	0.82	$0.83^{+0.08}_{-0.09}$
GW200216_220804	–	–	0.77	$0.85^{+0.07}_{-0.13}$
GW200219_094415	0.81	$0.74^{+0.14}_{-0.35}$	0.81	$0.85^{+0.06}_{-0.08}$
GW200224_222234	0.96	$0.93^{+0.03}_{-0.09}$	0.93	$0.92^{+0.03}_{-0.04}$
GW200225_060421	0.85	$0.73^{+0.12}_{-0.38}$	0.85	$0.78^{+0.08}_{-0.11}$
GW200311_115853	0.94	$0.90^{+0.06}_{-0.43}$	0.87	$0.89^{+0.04}_{-0.05}$

Table V. List of candidates tested by BayesWave and cWB for consistency with the waveform templates used in the inference of source parameters. We quote the on-source match calculated using the waveform reconstructed for the candidate, and the median and 90% symmetric interval for off-source matches calculated for simulated signals with source parameters consistent with those inferred for the candidate signal. The values reported in the table correspond to those in Figure 12. Dashes (–) correspond to candidates not included in an analysis.

by the search analysis (reported in Table I), plus 5 additional events that were identified by other search analyses (also reported in Table I). These additional 5 events were reconstructed by the initial stages of the cWB search analysis, but did not pass the cWB post-production cuts that are used to identify low-FAR candidates (described in Appendix D 5). Both lists are reported in Table V.

The waveform consistency tests were carried out with respect to results calculated by the Bayesian inference library Bilby [130, 132] using the IMRPhenomXPHM waveform [122] (details are presented in Appendix E). Fig. 12 shows the off-source match values versus the on-source median match values together with the 90% intervals. The match values move to lower values for smaller SNR, but the on-source value is still expected to be close to the median of the off-source distribution (blue dashed line in the figure) if the null hypothesis (that the minimally-modeled reconstruction does not deviate significantly from the template-based reconstruction) holds.

Figure 13 shows the p-values sorted in increasing order [101, 365]. When the null hypothesis holds, the sorted p-values are expected to remain close to the median value (orange dashed line); the 90% interval that surrounds the median line shows the size of the fluctuations that we expect to observe. Any significant deviations *below* the plot diagonal, corresponding to low p-values, point to a set of candidates that show potential disagreement with the waveform templates. However, the significance of several simultaneous deviations cannot be directly assessed from the 90% interval, which is calculated for *single values* [371]. Since the p-values are

sorted in increasing order, the sorting induces a correlation between successive values and this means that there may be a whole subset of points outside the interval. All but 1 of the 15 cWB p-values are within the 90% interval. The BayesWave plot has 8 out of 12 p-values outside the 90% interval; however, the BayesWave deviations occur above the median (corresponding to high p-values), indicating a better-than-expected agreement. Such an effect was also observed in GWTC-2 [3], and is likely due to an asymmetry that exists between the on-source and off-source reconstructions. For example, in this case, some of the simulated off-source signals are too quiet for BayesWave to reconstruct, and thus produce match values close to zero. We conclude that both the match-match and the p-value plot indicate that there is no inconsistency between the minimally modeled waveform reconstruction and the results of the parameter-estimation analysis. Further checks of the consistency of the signals with predictions from general relativity will be given in a companion paper [6].

## VII. CONCLUSION

We have presented the latest LVK catalog of GWs, which contains a total of 90 CBC candidate signals with an estimated probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . GWTC-3 builds upon past catalogs of GW candidates from O1 [13], O2 [14] and O3a [3, 4], adding an additional 35 events from O3b with

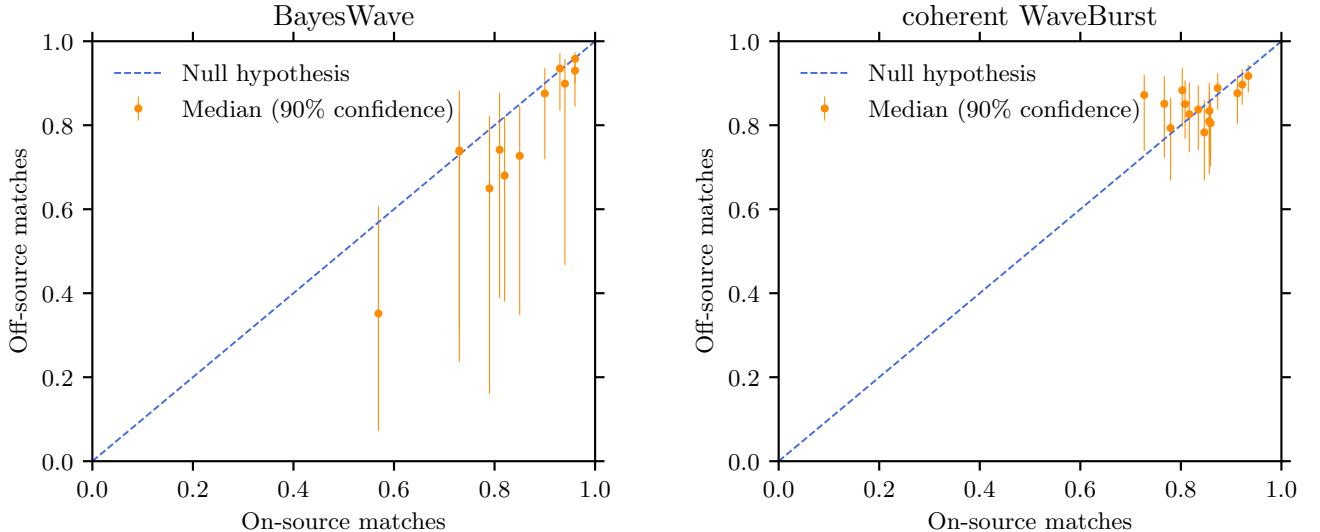


Figure 12. Off-source versus on-source match values for the events in O3b. The left and right panels show the results of the BayesWave and cWB analyses, respectively. The on-source match is estimated comparing the inferred maximum likelihood CBC waveform with point estimates from the minimally-modeled waveform reconstructions. The off-source match is the median value of the match distribution estimated from off-source injection of sample waveforms from the template based posterior distribution. The error bars in both panels are given by the symmetric (equal-tailed) 90% confidence interval, and they mark the distance from the null hypothesis (blue dashed line). The different size of the error bars in the two panels is due to the different number of off-source injections in the BayesWave and cWB analyses.

$p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . These include the NSBH candidates GW191219\_163120 and GW200115\_042309, as well as the candidate GW200210\_092254 that could potentially be either from a NSBH or a BBH. We additionally provide a list of candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$  meeting a FAR threshold of  $< 2.0 \text{ day}^{-1}$ . This includes GW200105\_162426, which is estimated to have  $p_{\text{astro}} = 0.36$  but is a clear outlier from our background noise distribution, and is inferred to have a NSBH source [8]. While we expect  $\sim 4\text{--}6$  of the candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  to be false alarms, we also expect  $\sim 25$  candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$  to be astrophysical GW signals. GW observations of CBCs provide new insight into diverse areas of physics ranging from binary stellar evolution to gravitation. Further analysis and interpretation of the GWTC-3 events is conducted in the companion papers [5–7]. As the population of GW observations grows, it will be possible to make increasingly detailed measurements of compact-object physics.

The growing catalog of GW sources has revealed a diversity of potential CBC sources. Among the candidates are a few with posterior support for high spins ( $\chi_i \gtrsim 0.8$ ) and comparatively extreme mass ratios ( $q \lesssim 0.1$ ). Creating waveform models in these regimes is challenging as the need to maintain accuracy necessitates more complete prescriptions of the underlying physics, including effects such as spin-induced precession [372, 373] plus higher-order multipole moments [164, 342, 347, 359]. This task is further complicated by the lack of extensive NR waveform catalogs covering these regions of parameter space [374–377]. As sensitivity improves, waveform

uncertainty may be a significant source of systematic uncertainty [345, 346]. Therefore, to ensure reliable interpretation of GW observations in the future, it is imperative to develop improved waveform models that cover a wider range of source properties, and include potentially important additional physics such as orbital eccentricity [378–383].

Data products associated with GWTC-3 results are available through GWOSC [29], in addition to the full O3b detector strain data [384]. Release of previous observing runs' strain data [385] has enabled multiple independent analyses of LIGO and Virgo data, including identification of additional detection candidates [15–19, 96, 97, 196, 386, 387]. Therefore, we anticipate that further discoveries may come from O3b data.

O3 saw the Advanced LIGO and Advanced Virgo detectors reach their greatest sensitivity to date, enabling an unprecedented rate of discovery. Coupled to the longer duration of O3 compared to previous observing runs, this sensitivity has enabled the number of GW detections from O3 to significantly exceed that from O1 and O2. The Advanced LIGO and Advanced Virgo detectors are currently offline undergoing commissioning to further enhance their performance for O4. O4 will also see the joint operation of the KAGRA detector [388]. The enhanced O4 global detector network will further increase the prospects for GW and multimessenger discoveries [23].

While the 90 probable GW candidates of GWTC-3 all correspond to CBC sources, we anticipate that there are

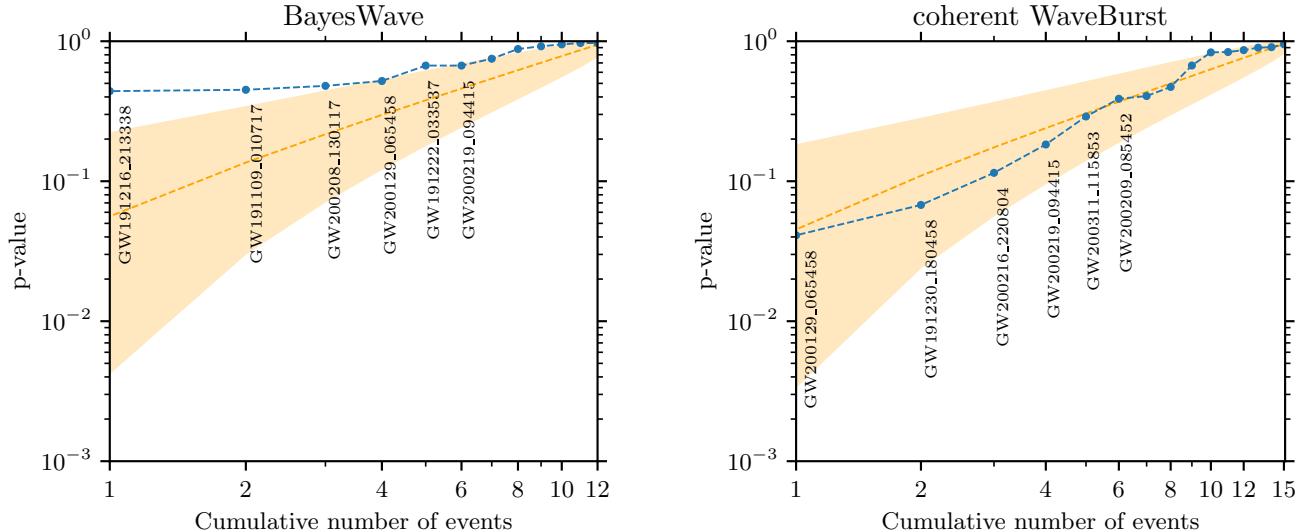


Figure 13. Distribution of p-values for the O3b events reconstructed by the minimally-modeled pipelines. The left and right panels report the BayesWave and cWB results, respectively. The p-values are sorted in increasing order and graphed against the order number (blue dashed line). Each p-value is estimated from the observed on-source match value and the related off-source distribution of the match values from off-source injections. The shadowed band is the symmetric 90% interval about the median, represented by the orange dashed line.

other GW signals waiting to be found [389]. These could include new types of transient signal, such as from supernovae [390], cosmic strings [26], or previously unidentified sources [27, 28]. Additionally, we may find long-lived signals such as continuous waves from rotating NSs [391–393] or stochastic backgrounds [394, 395]. As detector sensitivity increases and we observe for longer, we expect more of the GW universe to reveal itself.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Calibration of the LIGO strain data was performed with GstLAL-based calibration software pipeline [40]. Calibration of the Virgo strain data is performed with C-based software [48]. Data-quality products and event-validation results were computed using the DMT [396], DQR [69], DQSEGDB [397], gwdetchar [398], hveto [399], iDQ [400] and Omicron [59] software packages and contributing software tools. Analyses in this catalog relied upon the LALSuite software library [401]. The detection of the signals and subsequent significance evaluations in this catalog were performed with the GstLAL-based inspiral software pipeline [70–73], with the MBTA pipeline [74, 75], and with the PyCBC [78–80] and the cWB [55, 81, 82] packages. Estimates of the noise spectra and glitch models were obtained using BayesWave [362, 364, 368]. Source parameter estimation was performed with the Bilby and Parallel Bilby libraries [130–132] using the Dynesty nested sampling package [402], and the RIFT library [133–135],

with the LALInference [361] libraries used for initial analyses. PEsummary was used to post-process and collate parameter-estimation results [403]. The various stages of the parameter-estimation analysis were managed with the Asimov library [404]. Plots were prepared with Matplotlib [405], seaborn [406] and GWpy [407]. NumPy [408] and SciPy [409] were used in the preparation of the manuscript.

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## Appendix A: Low-latency alert system and multimessenger follow-up

Public alerts were issued for GW candidates identified by low-latency searches of the data. These candidates were cataloged in the Gravitational Candidate Event Database (GraceDB). Each entry into GraceDB is known as an event, and a collection of these within a specific time window is referred to as a *superevent*. The time window for CBC events was variable based on the spread of events, with a typical value of 1 s symmetric around the merger time. The duration of the time window for cWB was variable and was reported by the search pipeline for each event. One candidate event belonging to the superevent was identified as the preferred event and its attributes (time, localization, significance, classification and properties) [116, 410, 411] were inherited by the superevent. The *HasRemnant* property indicator was related to the probability of having an electromagnetic counterpart [410], and the *pastro* classifier assigned a source-category based astrophysical probability under the assumption that astrophysical and terrestrial triggers occurred as independent Poisson processes [104, 411]. The name of a superevent was its uniquely assigned identification in GraceDB consisting of three parts: the prefix S (for superevent), the six-digit UTC date of the event (YYMMDD), and a lowercase alphabetic suffix.

During O3, CBC superevents that passed a FAR threshold of 1 per 2 months and Burst superevents that passed a FAR threshold of 1 per year were distributed as public alerts. The individual FAR thresholds of each pipeline were corrected by a trials factor to account for the data being analyzed by multiple pipelines. Generally multiple pipelines identified the candidate GW events distributed as public alerts.

When a preferred event candidate passed the public alert threshold, a preliminary alert was queued, while new event candidates were still accepted to be added to the superevent. After the preliminary alert reception by the GCN broker, the preferred event was revised and a second preliminary Notice was issued, even if the preferred event candidate remained unchanged. The alerts were processed by the GWCelery distributed task queue software [11, 412], which organized basic data-quality checks, grouped events from online searches, and initiated localization and inference of source properties.

As in O2 [413], human vetting of the superevents was a critical part of the online program, and was completed once the superevent passed the public alert threshold. The rapid response team consisted of commissioning, computing and calibration experts from each of the detector sites, search-pipeline experts, detector-characterization experts, and follow-up advocates in charge of the delivery of the initial GCN Notice and

Circular. A data-quality report was also initiated by GWCelery, and consisted of a semi-automated detector characterization and data-quality investigation. It provided a variety of metrics based on auxiliary instrumental and environmental sensors to help the rapid response team to make a decision of whether to confirm or retract a candidate. The preliminary alerts were typically issued within a few minutes of data collection, for which latency due to data transfer between sites and search investigation were largely dominated by the GWCelery task. The human vetting and delivery of initial alerts had a median duration of  $\sim 30$  min.

There were 39 public alerts sent out via GCN during O3a and 39 during O3b. Of these, 32 from O3a and 23 from O3b were not retracted; the remaining were retracted on timescales from minutes to days. The majority of the retracted public alerts in O3b corresponded to candidates with SNR  $\rho > 5$  in only one detector. The online search pipelines collect background in real time, leaving them susceptible to new noise sources, and single-detector candidates are especially impacted by uncertainties in the background noise distribution since they cannot rely on coincidence to establish significance. Among the remaining O3b alerts, 22 involved CBC candidates, and 1 (S200114f) was a generic transient (Burst) candidate, as discussed in Sec. IV D 1. The unretracted O3a alerts were publicly distributed in  $7.3^{+56}_{-2}$  min, and the O3b alerts in  $5.8^{+377}_{-3}$  min (median and 90% symmetric interval). One O3b event, S200303ba, was retracted but never had a preliminary Notice sent out due to problems connecting to the GCN broker. The GW candidate alerts generated 1513 Circulars during O3 (44% of 3463 GCN Circulars in the same period), with 967 and 546 Circulars (64% and 36%) sent during O3a and O3b respectively.

Follow-up observations were made by teams across the astronomical community, culminating in GCN Circulars and papers. The searches for multimessenger counterparts employed the same variety of observing strategies used for previous observing runs [413], including archival analysis, prompt searches with all-sky instruments, wide-field tiled searches, targeted searches of potential host galaxies, and deep follow-up of individual sources. The follow-up effort mobilized a total of about one hundred ground- and space-based instruments such as neutrino observatories, very high energy gamma-ray observatories, space-based gamma-ray and X-ray instruments, visible and infrared telescopes, and radio telescopes. The latency for follow-up observations, analyses, public reporting of results and the process efficiency varies across the collaborations and the multimessenger probe involved. Additionally, the public alerts enabled amateur astronomers to join professional astronomers in the search for electromagnetic counterparts [414]. Summaries of the O3a and O3b events with public alerts and follow-up investigations are reported in Table VI and Table VII, respectively.

The two alerts with the largest number of GCN Circulars distributed during O3a were GW190814

(S190814bv), whose source was a potential NSBH or low-mass BBH coalescence [227, 473–475, 477, 480, 481, 483, 484] and the BNS GW190425 (S190425z) [145, 439, 476]. S191213g, the first O3b BNS candidate, had the largest number of GCN Circulars during O3b, a total of 53 [511] (but is only in fifth position considering the whole of O3). As discussed in Sec. IV D, S191213g was not identified as a significant candidate in the offline search results. The O3 candidates were predominantly BBHs, where counterparts are not typically expected unless the system has surrounding gas [544–549].

The neutrino follow-up involved searches of events with energies ranging from  $\sim 1$  MeV to  $\sim 1$  PeV. No confirmed neutrino counterpart has been found for any GW candidate [417–419, 424, 550].

The gamma and X-ray observations involved energies extending up to  $\sim 1$  TeV. The majority of high-energy searches reported no candidates [432, 441, 450, 458, 470, 484, 535, 551, 552].

The optical and near-infrared teams focused mainly on the non-BBH systems or well-localized and near-by events. Often multiple optical telescopes worked in synergy for the identification and characterization of counterparts [414, 423, 429, 440, 539]. Several surveys performed systematic prompt follow-up searches for counterparts for a large number of candidates [421, 425–427, 436, 443]. No confirmed prompt optical or infrared counterpart has been detected for O3 candidates.

The follow-up in the radio domain was mostly focused on the characterization of specific candidate counterparts, either neutrino, X-ray or optical candidates [435, 478, 515]. No confirmed radio counterparts have been reported.

Non-detection of electromagnetic counterparts in follow-up searches for candidates where at least one component could be a NS can potentially set constraints on the ejected matter; however, current observations cannot provide strong constraints [437, 553]. It has been suggested that due to their faintness and fast evolution, searches by optical surveys for kilonovae within a distance up to 200 Mpc require early observations down to magnitude 21 [554]. Future counterpart detections as soon as the next observing run are likely to place strong, multimessenger constraints on the equation of state of NSs, and the Hubble constant [555–559].

Additional specific counterpart searches have been performed after alerts, based on properties of the GW candidates and using all-sky, multi-wavelength data. As an illustration, GW190521, a signal from a high-mass BBH [4, 170], generated interest due to the possible association with an observed flare of the active galactic nucleus AGN J124942.3+344929 [457]. This association, while still uncertain [19, 560–562], highlights the potential discoveries that could be made by searching for counterparts to BBH coalescences, as well as the scope for detections of counterparts in archival searches.

SID	Event	GCN	Follow-up publications
S190408an	GW190408_181802	[415]	[416–429]
S190412m	GW190412	[430]	[416–425, 428, 429, 431, 432]
	GW190413_052954		[416, 418, 422]
	GW190413_134308		[416, 418, 422]
S190421ar	GW190421_213856	[433]	[416–424, 428, 429]
	GW190424_180648		[416, 418, 422]
S190425z	GW190425	[434]	[416–424, 426, 428, 429, 431, 432, 435–441]
S190426c	GW190426_152155	[442]	[416–424, 426, 428, 429, 431, 432, 436–440, 443, 444]
S190503bf	GW190503_185404	[445]	[416–420, 422, 424, 425, 428]
<i>S190510g</i>		[446]	[417, 420, 423, 424, 428, 429, 431, 432, 436, 437, 443, 447, 448]
S190512at	GW190512_180714	[449]	[416–418, 420, 422–424, 428, 450, 451]
S190513bm	GW190513_205428	[452]	[416–418, 420–424, 428]
	GW190514_065416		[416, 418, 422]
S190517h	GW190517_055101	[453]	[416–420, 422–424, 428]
<i>S190518bb</i>		[454]	
S190519bj	GW190519_153544	[455]	[416, 418, 419, 422]
S190521g	GW190521	[456]	[416–424, 427, 428, 457, 458]
S190521r	GW190521_074359	[459]	[416–424, 428, 429]
<i>S190524q</i>		[460]	
	GW190527_092055		[416, 418, 422]
S190602aq	GW190602_175927	[461]	[416–420, 422, 424, 428]
	GW190620_030421		[416, 418, 422]
S190630ag	GW190630_185205	[462]	[416, 418, 419, 422]
S190701ah	GW190701_203306	[463]	[416, 417, 419, 420, 422, 424, 428]
S190706ai	GW190706_222641	[464]	[416, 417, 419–424, 428]
S190707q	GW190707_093326	[465]	[416, 417, 419, 420, 422–424, 428]
	GW190708_232457		[416, 422]
S190718y		[466]	[417, 420, 423, 424, 428, 431, 432]
	GW190719_215514		[416, 422]
S190720a	GW190720_000836	[467]	[416, 417, 420, 422–424, 428, 429]
S190727h	GW190727_060333	[468]	[416, 417, 420, 422–424, 428]
S190728q	GW190728_064510	[469]	[416, 417, 420, 422–424, 428, 429, 431, 450, 470]
	GW190731_140936		[416, 422]
	GW190803_022701		[416, 422]
<i>S190808ae</i>		[471]	[431]
S190814bv	GW190814	[472]	[417, 420–423, 428, 429, 431, 432, 440, 473–484]
<i>S190816i</i>		[485]	
<i>S190822c</i>		[486]	[431, 432]
S190828j	GW190828_063405	[487]	[416, 417, 420–423, 428]
S190828l	GW190828_065509	[488]	[416, 417, 420, 422, 423, 428]
<i>S190829u</i>		[489]	
S190901ap		[490]	[417, 420, 423, 427–429, 436, 438, 440, 476]
	GW190909_114119		[416, 422]
S190910d		[491]	[417, 420, 423, 428, 438, 440]
S190910h		[492]	[417, 420, 428, 436, 476]
	GW190910_112807		[416, 422]
S190915ak	GW190915_235702	[493]	[416, 417, 420–423, 428]
<i>S190923y</i>		[494]	[417, 420, 423, 427–429, 438, 440]
S190924h	GW190924_021846	[495]	[416, 417, 420, 422, 423, 428]
S190928c		[496]	
	GW190129_102149		[416, 422]
S190930s	GW190930_133541	[497]	[416, 417, 420–423, 428, 429]
S190930t		[498]	[417, 420, 423, 427–429, 431, 440]

Table VI. Public alerts and follow-up investigations of O3a GW candidates. The columns show the superevent identification (SID), the GW name if in offline results [3, 4], the GCN Circular and references for follow-up publications. Candidates retracted following rapid event-validation checks are marked in *italics*. Events without superevent identifications were found only in the offline searches.

SID	Event	GCN	Follow-up publications
S191105e	GW191105_143521	[499]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428, 429]
S191109d	GW191109_010717	[500]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428]
<i>S191110af</i>		[501]	[431, 432]
<i>S191110x</i>		[502]	
<i>S191117j</i>		[503]	
<i>S191120aj</i>		[504]	
<i>S191120at</i>		[505]	
<i>S191124be</i>		[506]	
S191129u	GW191129_134029	[507]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
S191204r	GW191204_171526	[508]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428]
S191205ah		[509]	[414, 417, 421, 427, 429, 438, 440]
<i>S191212q</i>		[510]	[416]
S191213g		[511]	[414, 416, 417, 427, 428, 431, 432, 438, 440]
<i>S191213ai</i>		[512]	
S191215w	GW191215_223052	[513]	[414, 417, 421, 428]
S191216ap	GW191216_213338	[514]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428, 429, 431, 432, 470, 515]
<i>S191220af</i>		[516]	[436]
S191222n	GW191222_033537	[517]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
<i>S191225aq</i>		[518]	
S200105ae	GW200105_162426	[519]	[414, 416, 417, 427, 428, 440, 450, 520]
<i>S200106au</i>		[521]	
<i>S200106av</i>		[521]	
<i>S200108v</i>		[522]	
S200112r	GW200112_155838	[523]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
S200114f		[524]	[417, 421, 427–429, 431, 432]
S200115j	GW200115_042309	[525]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 427, 428, 431, 432, 438, 440, 450, 520, 526]
<i>S200116ah</i>		[527]	
S200128d	GW200128_022011	[528]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
S200129m	GW200129_065458	[529]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
S200208q	GW200208_130117	[530]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
S200213t		[531]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428, 429, 431, 432, 438, 440, 470]
S200219ac	GW200219_094415	[532]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428, 429, 533]
S200224ca	GW200224_222234	[534]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 427–429, 431, 432, 535, 536]
S200225q	GW200225_060421	[537]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 428, 429, 431, 432]
S200302c	GW200302_015811	[538]	[414, 416, 417, 428, 539]
<i>S200303ba</i>		[540]	
<i>S200308e</i>		[541]	
S200311bg	GW200311_115853	[542]	[414, 416, 417, 428]
S200316bj	GW200316_215756	[543]	[414, 416, 417, 421, 427, 428]

Table VII. Public alerts and follow-up investigations of O3b GW candidates. The columns show the superevent identification (SID), the GW event name if in the offline results (including GW200105\_162426), the GCN Circular and references for follow-up publications. Candidates retracted following rapid event-validation checks are marked in *italics*. Events without superevent identifications were found only in the offline searches.

## Appendix B: Observatory evolution

The LIGO Hanford, LIGO Livingston and Virgo observatories underwent several hardware and software changes from O3a to O3b that are described below.

### 1. LIGO Hanford & Livingston Observatories

The sensitivities of the Hanford and Livingston interferometers during O3b were similar to during O3a [3, 34]. The upgrades between O3a and O3b were aimed to address not only noise couplings that affect the range, but also reduce light scattering that degrades data quality, and improve resilience against environmental conditions that affect duty cycle.

High optical power in the interferometer reduces the shot noise. The current limit on the maximum circulating power of both LIGO interferometers [563] is from point defects in the test-mass mirror optical coatings which absorb and scatter light. Prior to O3b, both end test masses at LIGO Livingston were inspected with a microscope to investigate potential defects. After this investigation, new point absorbers appeared on both end test masses for reasons not yet known. These new absorbers resulted in increased optical losses, a reduction in circulating power, and a consequent degradation of the Livingston interferometer’s BNS inspirial range due to increased shot noise of  $\sim 5$  Mpc.

Adjustments to the squeezing subsystem produced the largest range improvements during O3b shown in the left panel of Fig. 3. An in-vacuum squeezer was installed for the O3 run at both LIGO sites to improve detector sensitivity above  $\sim 55$  Hz [564], below which radiation-pressure noise is larger with squeezing than the shot-noise level without squeezing. The squeezer works by optically pumping a non-linear crystal to create correlated photons. The correlations modify the distribution of uncertainty in the quantum state that enters the interferometer [35, 36]. The squeezer crystal has been found to degrade on timescales between a week and a month, reducing the pump light power and diminishing the squeezing below its optimal level. At LIGO Livingston, increased squeezing from moving the spot position on the crystal recovered  $\sim 3$  Mpc in BNS inspiral range between O3a and O3b. At LIGO Hanford, a damaged fiber delivering pump light to the crystal was replaced between O3a and O3b, allowing a threefold increase in pump power and more squeezing. Adjustments done between O3a and O3b, in conjunction with moving the crystal position and retuning the squeezer on 2 January 2020 of O3b (shown in Fig. 3), produced an improvement of  $\sim 7$  Mpc in Hanford’s BNS inspiral range.

O3b included upgrades to the LIGO detectors to reduce scattered-light noise. Scattered-light noise occurs when a fraction of light gets scattered from its intended path, hits another moving surface, and a part of this light gets reflected back, rejoining the main interferom-

eter beam with a noisy, varying phase [60, 61]. This noise can be upconverted to higher harmonics of the surface motion frequencies, causing glitches. At LIGO Livingston, several locations at both end stations were outfitted with improved light baffles to prevent scattered light reflected off the vacuum envelope from recoupling with the main beam. A particularly important contribution were new baffles surrounding a suspended platform that relay a beam transmitted by one end test mass, installed between O3a and O3b. At LIGO Hanford, a window in the output optic chain was replaced between O3a and O3b with one that has a larger incidence angle to ensure the back reflection from the window could not be a source of scattered light. Scattered-light noise was found to be correlated to microseismic activity, which is ground motion in the frequency band 0.1–0.5 Hz driven primarily by oceanic waves. During periods of high microseismic activity both Hanford and Livingston interferometers suffer from large relative motion between the end test mass and the reaction mass that is immediately behind the test mass. This motion was found to produce a scattered-light noise path contributing to transient noise in the interferometer output [62]. This noise was mitigated by implementing reaction-chain tracking, a control loop that makes the reaction mass follow the end test mass, reducing the relative motion. Reaction-chain tracking was implemented on 7 January 2020 and 14 January 2020 at Livingston and Hanford, respectively. These efforts to reduce scattered-light noise had a significant effect on data quality by reducing transient noise as discussed in Sec. III B.

Finally, at LIGO Hanford, another environmental noise, ground tilt induced by wind on the buildings, was mitigated by installing wind fences that reduce the wind velocity at the end stations [565]. This has been shown to lower ground tilt. The effect on data quality and duty cycle is still being investigated.

While the Hanford and Livingston detectors are nominally the same design [1], differences in environment and implementation result in different sensitivity during O3b. Hanford has more unexplained noise from 30–100 Hz and more angular control noise below 30 Hz. The higher noise above 430 Hz in the Hanford spectrum is due to lower optical power causing increased shot noise as well as higher frequency dependent losses that degrade the squeezing above the interferometer bandwidth [566].

### 2. Virgo Observatory

The one month commissioning break between the two observing periods was used to get a better understanding of the Virgo sensitivity and of some of its main limiting noises. Throughout O3, work was continuously carried out to improve the Virgo sensitivity in parallel with the ongoing data taking. Dedicated tests were made during planned breaks in operation (commissioning, calibration and maintenance), in-depth data analysis of these tests

was performed between breaks to ensure continual improvement. This effort culminated during the last three months of O3b, as shown by the step in the BNS inspiral range evolution in the left panel of Fig. 3, and by the bimodal BNS inspiral range distribution in the right panel.

The most significant change to the Virgo configuration between O3a and O3b was the increase of the input power from 18 W to 26 W. As for the LIGO detectors, we found that the optical losses of the arms increased following the increase of the input power. The presence of absorbing points on the arm cavity mirrors is suspected [563], and mitigation strategies will be implemented before O4.

The squeezing system in the Virgo interferometer was implemented before the start of O3a and squeezing injection was maintained during the whole of O3, with a gain in sensitivity at high frequency [567, 568]. Prior to the start of O3a, new high quantum-efficiency photodiodes were installed at the output (detection) port of the interferometer. These diodes increased the electronics noise at low frequency, but were improved at the end of January 2020 during a maintenance period, by replacing pre-amplifiers. The electronic noise disappeared completely, leading to a BNS inspiral range gain of  $\sim 2$  Mpc.

Shortly thereafter, an extended period of continuous and stable control of the Virgo detector allowed improvement to the performance of the etalon feedback system, designed to reduce the residual asymmetry between the optical linewidths of the interferometer arm cavities [569]. To compensate for these, the input mirrors of the Virgo Fabry–Perot cavities have parallel faces that create an optical resonator (the etalon) inside the substrate. To remain close to the optimized working point, it is necessary to reduce the temperature variations of the latter, by using heating belts in the input test mass towers. The implemented feedback requires hours to reach the equilibrium, but has a temperature accuracy of 6 mK, about 2% of a full etalon fringe (532 nm). The BNS inspiral range improvement from this etalon feedback control was  $\sim 2\text{--}3$  Mpc.

During the same period, it was discovered that some channels used as input for the GW strain channel reconstruction were numerically limited by quantization errors. Changing their storage from float to double precision led to an immediate gain of  $\sim 2$  Mpc for the BNS inspiral range.

Finally, in the period between the end of January to the beginning of February 2020 the alignment was improved for the injection of the squeezed light into the interferometer [567, 568], a critical parameter of the low-frequency sensitivity. By mitigating scattered-light noise, the BNS inspiral range increased by  $\sim 1\text{--}2$  Mpc.

All these quasi-simultaneous hardware and software improvements led to a significant increase in the BNS inspiral range visible in the data after 28 January 2020 (Fig. 3, left panel). The median range improved from 49 Mpc (before 28 January 2020) to 56 Mpc (after 28 January 2020). The Virgo sensitivity improved over the

whole frequency range, with a larger improvement below about 300 Hz, around the minimum of the sensitivity curve and at lower frequencies.

## Appendix C: Data-quality methods

Information about the data quality of the detectors is repackaged into products used by astrophysical analyses, including data-quality flags, gating, and iDQ glitch likelihoods, as introduced and discussed below. Including this information in searches, as summarized in Table VIII for each offline analysis, increases the total number of detectable signals [58, 571, 572]. The most egregious periods of light-scattering glitches in the LIGO detectors are vetoed from the astrophysical analyses through a combination of these veto products, but the rate of scattering glitches was so high in the beginning of O3b, especially in LIGO Hanford data, that current methods cannot effectively exclude these glitches without losing large stretches of data [58].

Data-quality flags are lists of time segments that identify the status of the detectors or the likely presence of a particular instrumental artifact. These flags are broken into 3 categories based on the severity of the data quality issue and how the flag was designed [58, 88, 572]. The amount of time removed by data-quality flags in each detector is typically of order 1%. Table VIII shows the cumulative fractional time removed by each category during O3b. The fractional time removed by individual data-quality flags can be found in a summary of flags applied during O3 for LIGO and Virgo [573, 574]. Category 1 flags indicate time periods where data should not be analyzed due to either incorrect configuration of the detector, operator error, or egregious data quality issues. All GW searches uniformly use Category 1 flag information to exclude these time periods. Category 2 flags are designed to indicate segments that are predicted to contain non-Gaussian artifacts likely to trigger GW searches based on information from auxiliary channels [58]. While data during Category 2 flags is still used in analyses to compute estimates of the power spectral density (PSD), searches that use Category 2 vetoes do not consider any events during these time periods in estimates of significance. The set of Category 2 flags that are used in analyses is different between the CBC analyses that use waveform templates and the Burst analyses that are more waveform agnostic. Similar to Category 2 flags, Category 3 flags are used to indicate periods of transient noise, but are constructed using estimates of statistically significant correlations between glitches in auxiliary channels and behavior of GW detector data [399]. Category 3 flags are only produced for use by the Burst analysis cWB.

The gating method removes short-duration artifacts from the data by smoothly rolling the data containing the artifact to zero with an inverse window function, as employed for LIGO data during previous observing runs [58]. The gating data product referenced in Ta-

Search pipeline	Category 1	CBC Category 2	Burst Category 2	Burst Category 3	Gating	iDQ
cWB	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
GstLAL	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
MBTA	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
PyCBC	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗

Detector	Category 1	CBC Category 2	Burst Category 2	Burst Category 3	Gating	iDQ
LIGO Hanford	0.30%	0.02%	0.52%	0.41%	0.01%	—
LIGO Livingston	1.68%	0.28%	0.50%	0.17%	0.01%	—
Virgo	0.21%	—	—	—	—	—

Table VIII. The top table reports data-quality products used for noise mitigation by each offline search pipeline. Products listed here are publicly available from GWOSC [29]. Most analyses employ additional internal noise mitigation methods, including gating [71, 75, 85, 102, 570]. The bottom table reports the percent of single-detector time removed by each of the same veto categories for each detector during O3b. Veto time values for LIGO Hanford and LIGO Livingston are reproduced from studies of O3 detector characterization [58]. A dash in a data-quality product’s column indicates that it is not produced for the relevant detector, except for iDQ output; iDQ has no associated deadtime as it is incorporated directly into the search pipeline ranking statistic [571].

ble VIII and available from GWOSC [29], was generated using times corresponding to a loud excursion in the data identified with auxiliary channel information. Most transient search algorithms also employ internal gating methods to exclude noise transients from analysis based only on the amplitude of the glitch.

The iDQ glitch likelihood uses machine learning to predict the probability that a non-Gaussian transient is present in detector data based on only information from auxiliary channels [400]. This likelihood is used by GstLAL as a part of the search pipeline ranking statistic to penalize events near periods of high iDQ likelihood [571]. As shown in Table VIII, GstLAL incorporates iDQ glitch likelihood information in lieu of applying Category 2 or Category 3 data-quality flags.

After the event-validation procedures described in Sec. III B, we assessed whether excess power present within the target analysis time of any event was sufficiently non-stationary to require mitigation [575]. We compared the variance of the power spectral density of the noise in each identified time-frequency region for consistency with Gaussian noise. Time-frequency regions inconsistent with Gaussian noise ( $p < 0.01$ ) were deglitched as described below before source-parameter estimation.

The majority of glitch-subtracted frames discussed in Sec. V were produced with the BayesWave algorithm [362, 364]. BayesWave models localized excess power as a sum of sine-Gaussian wavelets, using a multi-component model that simultaneously fits signals, glitches and the PSD of the Gaussian noise component using a trans-dimensional Bayesian inference, wherein the number of model components (wavelets, spectral lines and spline control points for the smooth portion of the PSD) is allowed to vary, in addition to the parameters that describe each component. The signal model reconstructs the plus and cross polarization states of a GW signal as a sum of wavelets, which are coherently projected onto the detector network [364].

We use the waveform reconstruction produced by

BayesWave in the waveform consistency tests as discussed in Sec. VI. The glitch model reconstructs noise transients separately in each detector. The spectral model adjusts to take into account the power that gets assigned to the signal and glitch models. Central to the BayesWave approach is that the model dimension is not fixed, with both the number of wavelets and their parameters explored using a trans-dimensional reversible jump Markov-chain Monte Carlo algorithm [576]. Louder signals generally demand more wavelets. In the case of CBC signals, high-mass, short-duration signals are generally reconstructed with fewer wavelets than low-mass, longer-duration signals.

The natural parsimony of Bayesian inference works to ensure that any coherent signal power is assigned to the signal model, while any incoherent noise transients are assigned to the glitch power, since fitting the data with a coherent model requires fewer parameters than fitting the data in each detector independently. This allows us to remove glitches even if they overlap with a GW signal [113, 364]. Going forward, it may be desirable to perform the glitch fitting and PSD estimation in concert with the CBC parameter estimation [148]. In the current analysis, the BayesWave algorithm was used to produce cleaned data frames and point estimates of the PSD that were then used in source-parameter estimation (Sec. E).

An example of glitch subtraction by the BayesWave algorithm is illustrated in Fig. 14 for the case of analyzing GW200115\_042309. The glitches removed here are fast scattering, one of the most common glitches observed in O3b LIGO Livingston data, as described in Sec. III B [58, 63].

One set of mitigated frames discussed in Sec. E 1 was produced using linear subtraction. We used a photodiode monitoring an element of the LIGO Livingston detector’s input optics (L1:LSC-POP\_A\_RF9\_I\_ERR\_DQ) identified [577] as a linear witness of the glitch. The time of the subtracted glitch was also identified as correlated with an auxiliary witness channel by a CBC Cate-

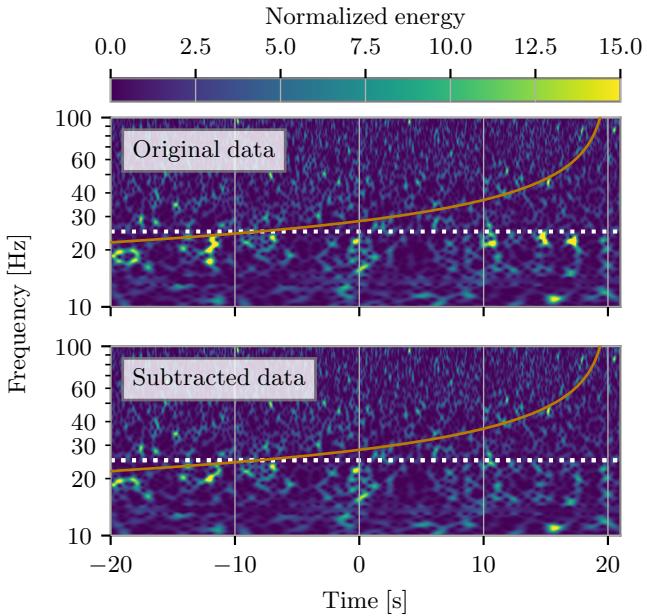


Figure 14. A spectrogram [66] of LIGO Livingston data prior to the estimated merger time of event GW200115\_042309. The top plot shows the untreated data and the bottom shows the data with some excess power due to fast scattering subtracted [364]. The estimated signal track is represented as an orange line. A white dashed line shows the lower frequency used for source-parameter estimation for the original GW200115\_042309 inference ( $f_{\text{low}} = 25$  Hz) [8].

gory 2 data-quality flag [54], defined as Flag 1.24 (45 MHz Sideband Fluctuations) in the O3 LIGO data-quality flag summary [573].

In order to assess the efficacy of glitch subtraction by either method described above for O3b candidates, we compared the stationarity of the glitch-subtracted data within the targeted time–frequency window to Gaussian noise. Glitch-subtracted data consistent with Gaussian noise were deemed sufficiently stationary for parameter estimation.

## Appendix D: Candidate identification methods

### 1. GstLAL

The GstLAL pipeline [70–73, 578, 579] uses matched-filtering in the time domain to detect triggers and coincidences. We model signals and search for them in the data using the same template bank as for the GWTC-2 analysis [3]. The template bank covers waveforms with redshifted total masses from  $2M_\odot$  to  $758M_\odot$ . The template bank is constructed using a stochastic placement method in five different regions of the parameter space that are the same as those defined for the

GWTC-2 analysis [3]. The SEOBNRv4\_ROM waveform approximant [580] is used for templates with chirp mass  $\geq 1.73M_\odot$ ; this waveform is a frequency-domain reduced-order model [581] of the time-domain inspiral–merger–ringdown model SEOBNRv4 which models quasi-circular, aligned-spin BBHs based upon the effective-one-body (EOB) equations of motion [580]. The TaylorF2 waveform approximant [90, 582–590] is used for lower-mass systems; this waveform is a frequency-domain, inspiral-only model of aligned-spin CBC systems built from closed-form PN approximations. The template bank is constructed such that any template in the continuous parameter space is certain to match at least one template in the discrete space to greater than a chosen minimum match, where the match used is that given in Eq. (6), maximized over the phase and time of coalescence. The value of the minimum match is chosen to ensure that the SNR loss due to the templates not exactly matching the signals is acceptable while keeping the total number of templates small enough to be computationally feasible. The minimum match is dependent on the region of the parameter space, but is never smaller than 0.97 [3].

Triggers are defined by maximizing the matched-filter SNR for each template, in each detector, over one second time windows [70]. We use an SNR threshold of  $\rho > 4.0$  to define triggers. Triggers from the same template that are time-coincident in multiple detectors are grouped together to form event candidates [70]. The GstLAL analysis uses single-detector triggers from HL coincident time (when either HL or HLV were operating) to estimate background statistics in bins according to template mass. This is due to the low probability of a real signal appearing above threshold in only LIGO Hanford or LIGO Livingston when both detectors are operating. Triggers from single-detector time, or times when only HV or Livingston–Virgo (LV) were operating, are excluded from the background estimation to avoid significant contamination by true astrophysical signals.

The likelihood ratio is informed by observables such as the matched-filter SNR from each detector, detector sensitivities at the time of coincidence, as well as the output of signal-based-veto tests, and time and phase differences between triggers [71]. The candidates are ranked by the likelihood ratio statistic which compares the probability in the signal hypothesis of finding the given observables to the probability of the same observables in the noise hypothesis. In addition, the likelihood ratio includes a term from iDQ [571], a statistical inference framework that identifies short-duration non-Gaussian artifacts in the strain data [400] (described in Appendix C). As discussed in the GWTC-2.1 paper [4], iDQ time series were regenerated offline using an acausal binning scheme and a larger set of auxiliary witness channels, making its data products more sensitive in identifying noise artifacts compared to their online counterpart. An increased sampling rate in the offline configuration also allowed for better resolution of short duration glitches. Due to these changes, iDQ had an improved performance in identifying glitches,

and starting in O3b, now has the expanded capability to increase the significance of events during times in which no noise artifacts are identified in the data, whereas for GWTC-2 [3] it was only used to decrease significance. Additionally, iDQ is now applied to both coincident and single-detector candidates.

Since O2, the GstLAL pipeline has allowed for the possibility of single-detector candidates [71]. This includes two cases: triggers from a time when only one detector was operational, and non-coincident triggers from one detector even when multiple detectors were operational. Single-detector candidates are required to pass the SNR threshold as well as a preliminary likelihood-ratio threshold. However, single-detector candidates are down-weighted with a singles penalty in the likelihood ratio statistic, depending on the detector in which it was observed and the sensitivities of the detectors which were on at the trigger time [4].

## 2. MBTA

MBTA [74, 75] uses a template bank covering binaries with redshifted component masses ranging from  $1M_{\odot}$  to  $195M_{\odot}$ , with the additional constraints that the maximum total mass is  $200M_{\odot}$ , and if the secondary object has a mass lower than  $2M_{\odot}$ , then the maximum mass of the primary object is  $100M_{\odot}$ . Objects are assumed to have spins parallel to the orbital momentum with maximum dimensionless values 0.05 if their masses are below  $2M_{\odot}$ , and 0.997 otherwise. The templates are generated in the time domain, using the `SpinTaylorT4` waveform approximant [586, 587, 589, 591–595] if both objects have masses below  $2M_{\odot}$ , and the `SEOBNRv4` waveform [580] otherwise. The `SpinTaylorT4` waveform is an inspiral-only, time-domain model for CBC systems based on the PN equations of motion, while `SEOBNRv4` is a full inspiral-merger-ringdown waveform appropriate for BBHs. The template bank is produced using a stochastic placement method.

The MBTA pipeline starts with a preprocessing step, where data are down-sampled then gated at (externally or internally) identified times of bad data quality. To mitigate safety issues in the gating procedure, a subset of the template bank is also analyzed without applying the gating procedure, albeit with higher SNR thresholds ( $\rho > 9.5$  in Hanford, 11.3 in Livingston and 12 in Virgo). MBTA splits the parameter space into three regions treated as independent searches. The regions can be considered to cover the BNS, NSBH and BBH source types, although the transition between NS and BH is conservatively taken to be  $2M_{\odot}$  (to allow for any heavier object to possibly have high spin) [4]. Single-detector triggers are ranked according to a statistic based on the matched-filter SNR, modified to take into account the consistency with an astrophysical signal (quantified from the quadratic average of the difference between the SNR time series around its maximum and the template auto-

correlation) and the local data quality (quantified from the overall pipeline response). Coincidences are ranked according to a statistic based on the quadratic sum of the single-detector triggers ranking statistics, modified to take into account the consistency of some parameters across the various detectors.

MBTA initially assigns a FAR to events depending on the coincidence type, whether HL, HV, LV or HLV, and the parameter-space region. The FAR is then modified to take into account trials factors from the various coincidence types and regions. For double coincidences the FAR at a given ranking statistic threshold is estimated from the rate of false coincidences (built from single-detector triggers in that region) that are as loud or louder. Single-detector triggers that are known to be part of loud (true) coincidences are excluded from this process. The FAR for triple coincidences is derived from that of double coincidences. Equal trials factors are applied for the three parameter-space regions, whereas for coincidence types, trials factors are applied according to the likelihood of astrophysical sources being detected as coincidences of each type, considering the relative detector sensitivities.

## 3. PyCBC

We employ two offline PyCBC configurations in this work [21, 76–80, 596]. The first, the PyCBC-broad analysis, is designed to search for as many different types of signal as possible, and probes a wide range of masses and spins. Following previous searches [3, 4, 17, 19], we also perform an analysis focusing on the BBH region of the parameter space in which we have seen most of our signals so far, making use of a population prior [597]. This second approach is the PyCBC-BBH analysis.

The PyCBC-BBH analysis focuses on a region ranging in primary component mass from  $5M_{\odot}$  to  $350M_{\odot}$ , with mass ratios from 1/3 to 1, and effective inspiral spins ranging from  $\chi_{\text{eff}} = -0.998$  to 0.998. The PyCBC-broad template bank covers a similar parameter space as the GstLAL template bank, but with a few significant changes. Both the PyCBC-broad and PyCBC-BBH analyses use the `SEOBNRv4_ROM` [580] waveform approximant for templates with total mass above  $4M_{\odot}$ , and `TaylorF2` [90, 582–590] for lower-mass systems. The templates within the template bank are placed using a hybrid geometric-random method [598, 599], and no template is used that has a duration of less than 0.15 s [600], meaning there is an upper limit on the mass of the systems. When relaxing this duration limit, and applying additional vetoes to the data, the sensitivity of the analysis to high-mass systems is improved [24, 601].

Both the PyCBC-broad and PyCBC-BBH analyses use data from all detectors, searching for coincident triggers in two or more detectors. For each coincident event, we calculate a ranking statistic which is compared to the background to calculate the significance, finally combin-

ing the significances from each possible coincidence type into a single result.

The search in the three-detector network is done by performing coincident searches in each coincidence type, and then combining FARs depending on the available coincident combinations. For example if an event is seen as an HL coincidence, the ranking statistic would be calculated, and the FAR estimated by counting higher-ranked events in a time-shifted background. If the Virgo detector is observing, then the FAR from the detected event would be added to the FAR at that ranking statistic from each of HV, HL and HLV backgrounds. This method means that we effectively apply a trials factor where it is needed, but not when the coincidence type in which the event was found is the only one available such that a trials factor would be inappropriate.

The PyCBC pipelines use a ranking statistic based on the ratio of the expected signal rate and the measured noise rate [17, 80]. This choice of ranking statistic has two consequences. First, we are able to incorporate more information about the detectors into our assessment of whether an apparent signal is real or not. For example, we now account for the sensitive volume of the detector network at the time of an event, and combine the single-detector rates of noise triggers with the time window for coincidences in order to estimate the coincident trigger rate. Second, ranking statistic values are directly comparable between events of different coincidence types, therefore FARs may be combined over different coincidence types.

Other recent alterations to the PyCBC analysis allow the use of graphics processing unit (GPU) cores or distributed computing through the Open Science Grid [602, 603] in order to perform matched filtering more quickly.

The PyCBC analysis does not currently analyze single-detector signals, though work is ongoing to incorporate this feature [115]. Usually, triggers from significant signals are removed from the background of lower-ranked events within the analysis, in a process called hierarchical removal [604], but as there is no single-detector signal significance calculation, we have no metric by which to remove these triggers, and so signal triggers can remain in the background. As a result, these loud triggers from signals can match random triggers in the time-shifted background and cause an excess of highly ranked background events. In order to prevent the contamination of the background, PyCBC analyses were performed twice; first with all triggers in place, and then again with the triggers removed from catalog candidates which did not form coincidences in the preliminary analysis. To ensure that this process matched the usual hierarchical removal procedure, we used the list of events from this catalog that have a FAR of less than  $10^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ , and compared these to the list of coincident events in the PyCBC analyses. If no coincident event (of any significance) was found in the PyCBC pipeline, then a window of one second either side of each event was removed. The triggers removed from

the background in the PyCBC-broad pipeline are from around GW200112.155838 and GW200202.154313, and from the PyCBC-BBH pipeline we remove the triggers from around GW200112.155838.

In addition to the offline analyses described above, we also used PyCBC Live [570, 605] to search for signals in low latency. The PyCBC Live algorithm uses the data and data-quality information that are available in low latency without human vetting. PyCBC Live uses a more computationally simple ranking statistic than the one used in offline analyses. This simpler ranking statistic is used in order to maintain speed in a low latency environment and does not contain all of the information used in the offline statistic. The reduced  $\chi^2$ -reweighted SNR [21] and a sine-Gaussian veto [386, 606] are used to assess significance of single-detector triggers. These single-detector triggers are then tested for coincidence, and the coincident ranking statistic is calculated. The ranking statistic is compared to the time-shifted background from five hours of data to estimate FAR.

#### 4. SPIIR

The SPIIR pipeline [83–85] ran as an online low-latency modeled coherent search. SPIIR is a time-domain equivalent to matched filtering that uses infinite impulse response filters [85, 607] to approximate waveforms with high accuracy and, in theory, constructs the SNR at zero latency. In O3 the pipeline operated in two low-latency, parallel modes: one to search using data from the two LIGO detectors, and another using data from all three detectors. SPIIR searches templates with primary component mass ranging from  $1.1M_\odot$ – $100M_\odot$ , a subset of the GstLAL template bank [85]. For online low-latency analyses, this method is more computationally efficient than traditional Fourier methods, with latency 7–10 s in O3 [85]. The filtering process [608–610] and coherent candidate selection [83] are accelerated using GPUs.

The pipeline ranks the triggers by a combination of the coherent network SNR and a  $\chi^2$ -distributed signal consistency statistic from the individual detectors [70, 85]. It computes the background of the search by performing 100 time-shifts per foreground trigger with SNR greater than 4. The  $k$ -nearest neighbors technique was used to estimate the significance for triggers [85]. The FAR for each trigger is estimated over three timescales (two hours, one day and one week) of collected background triggers for robustness, with the most conservative used for candidates.

#### 5. cWB

The cWB pipeline detects and reconstructs transient signals with minimal assumptions [55, 81, 99–101] by coherently analyzing data from multiple observatories. The sensitivity of cWB approaches that of matched-filter

methods for coalescing stellar-mass BBHs with high chirp masses [24, 611], such that it can detect high-mass CBC sources, and also sources that are not well represented in current template banks such as eccentric systems or comparatively extreme mass-ratio, precessing BBH systems [363]. It was used in previous CBC searches by the LVK [3, 12, 14, 612].

The cWB algorithm analyzes whitened data using the Wilson–Daubechies–Meyer wavelet transform [81, 100] to compute a time–frequency representation. The algorithm selects excess-energy data in the time–frequency representation and clusters them to define a trigger. Next, it identifies coherent signal power with the constrained maximum-likelihood method [55], and reconstructs the source sky location and the signal waveforms.

After identifying clusters of coherent data, cWB outputs several statistics. These include the total cluster energy for each detector; the coherent energy  $E_c$  of the reconstructed signal obtained by cross-correlating the normalized signal waveforms reconstructed in different detectors; the residual noise energy  $E_n$  estimated after the reconstructed waveforms are subtracted from the data, and the estimate of the coherent SNR in each detector. The residual noise energy is used to form a chi-squared statistic  $\chi^2 = E_n/N_{\text{df}}$ , where  $N_{\text{df}}$  is the number of independent wavelet amplitudes describing the event. We estimate the signal SNRs from the reconstructed waveforms, then, by combining the SNRs of the individual detectors, we calculate the network SNR. The network correlation coefficient  $c_c = E_c/(E_c + E_n)$  is another derived statistic that compares coherent and null energies; it approaches 1 when coherence is high, as expected for real signals. The cWB detection statistic is  $\eta_c \propto [E_c / \max(\chi^2, 1)]^{1/2}$ , where the  $\chi^2$  correction is applied to reduce the contribution of non-Gaussian noise.

For robustness against glitches, and to reduce the FAR of the pipeline, cWB uses signal-independent vetoes, which include Burst Category 2 data-quality flags in the processing step and Category 3 in the post-production phase [399, 613]. To further reduce background, the cWB analysis applies cuts based on the network correlation coefficient  $c_c$  and on the  $\chi^2$ , and employs signal-dependent vetoes based on basic properties of the time–frequency evolution of CBC signals [103, 614].

A generic search for CBC systems covers a large parameter space and it is not possible to design a search that is optimized for all such systems because of the wide frequency range in which the signals fall. With the setup used for this catalog, cWB can reconstruct GW signals with durations up to a few seconds in the detectors’ frequency range, which makes it better suited to identify BBH signals than longer NSBH or BNS signals. CBC signals have a peak frequency inversely proportional to the redshifted total mass, so that less massive binary systems merge at high frequency, while more massive systems merge at low frequency. Therefore, just as for the GWTC-2 analysis [3], the cWB analyses in this catalog are performed with two pipeline configurations targeting

the detection of high-mass ( $f_c < 80$  Hz) and low-mass ( $f_c > 80$  Hz) BBH systems. These configurations use different signal-dependent vetoes defined a priori to alleviate the large variability of non-stationary noise in the detectors’ bandwidth.

We estimate the FAR of events by time-shifting the data of one detector with respect to the other in each detector pair, with time lags so large (typically multiples of 1 s) that actual astrophysical events are excluded, and repeating this for a large number of different time lags over a total time  $T_{\text{bkg}}$  which is of the order of  $10^3$  yr. We count the number of events  $N_{\text{bkg}}$  due to background noise having an SNR (or another similar ranking statistic) that is at least as large as that of the event and we compute the FAR as the  $N_{\text{bkg}}$  divided by  $T_{\text{bkg}}$  [615].

The detection significance of an event identified by either pipeline configuration in a single frequency range is determined by its FAR measured by the corresponding cWB configuration. In the end, each configuration reports the selected events and their FAR. Whenever the low-mass and high-mass configurations overlap, the trials factor of two (the Bonferroni adjustment for the false alarm probability [616]) is included to determine the final FAR [170].

The cWB algorithm can work with arbitrary detector networks, although the cWB analysis presented in this catalog is restricted to the HL, HV and LV pairs. The HLV network is not included here because it does not improve the significance of the cWB candidates for the current sensitivity of the detector network [27]. Thanks to their near alignment, the two LIGO detectors select a well-defined GW polarization state, and cWB can efficiently exploit coherence to mitigate their glitches and make the remaining noise close to Gaussian. Conversely, the orientation of the Virgo detector differs considerably from that of the LIGO detectors so that, at the current sensitivity level, glitches in Virgo data cannot be mitigated as efficiently, and this reduces the discriminating power of current cWB HLV analyses with respect to HL analyses.

## 6. Search results

In Sec. IV D, we presented the  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , FAR and network SNR of candidates with CBC  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  or  $\text{FAR} < 2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  in Table I and Table II, respectively. Here, we additionally provide the single-detector SNR of each candidate in Table IX. The single-detector SNRs are used as an initial criterion by pipelines to define triggers and determine coincidences, and therefore are an important component in calculating the significance of a detection candidate. The detectors listed in Table I are those that were operating at the time of each event, but whether an event was missed or found in a particular detector depends on the matched-filter SNR found by each pipeline in the detector’s data. In particular, each of the single-detector events, GW200112\_155838, GW200302\_015811

and GW200105\_162426, were found during times when either LIGO Livingston or LIGO Hanford were operating simultaneously with the Virgo detector. However, Table IX shows that these were still classified as single-detector candidates since in each case the SNR in Virgo was  $< 4.0$ . Regardless of the number of detectors used for detection, data from all operating detectors is used for inference of the source parameters (described in Appendix E).

Candidates found by multiple analyses typically have comparable SNRs, but we do not expect the values to be identical because of differences in the template banks and how the pipelines select the most significant template when identifying a candidate. The most noticeable difference is in the Livingston SNR for GW200129\_065458, as discussed in Section IVD3, this is a result of the different analyses handling of data-quality flags.

## 7. Search sensitivity & probability of astrophysical origin

To assess search sensitivity, we inject simulated signals into the data, and attempt to identify them with each search analysis. The details of the injected populations are given in Table X, and the injected distributions over redshift are defined assuming a flat  $\Lambda$ -cold dark matter cosmology such that

$$p(z) \propto \frac{dV_c}{dz} (1+z)^{\kappa-1}, \quad (\text{D1})$$

where  $V_c$  is the comoving volume (see Appendix E for the assumed cosmology [617]). The details of the injected populations are given in Table X. These injected populations are reweighted to obtain estimates of the sensitive hypervolumes presented in Table III such that the injected distributions in Table X do not represent the assumed populations used to estimate search sensitivity.

The probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for an event is estimated directly from the ranking statistics  $x$  that are used to assess the FAR. By comparing the distributions of ranking statistics under the assumptions of foreground  $p(x|\text{signal})$ , or background  $p(x|\text{noise})$ , we can calculate a signal-versus-noise Bayes factor for each event. This Bayes factor acts as a likelihood in the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  computation for each event. The normalization of the astrophysical  $x$  distributions depends on merger rates, which are jointly estimated in the calculation, assuming that the triggers are drawn from independent Poisson processes [104]. For a given FAR,  $p_{\text{astro}}$  will be larger if the true alarm rate is higher.

The construction of the foreground (signal) and background (noise) distributions is specific to individual detection pipelines:

- The PyCBC analyses use time-shifted events to empirically estimate the rates of background events and their distributions over the search ranking

statistic, while foreground distributions are estimated using recovered simulated signals. As in GWTC-2.1 [4], we allow these background and foreground distributions to differ between different combinations of detectors in coincidence, and also allow for a dependence of the foreground distribution and signal rate on which detectors are observing at a given time [618]. In order to model variation of the signal rate over binary masses, the foreground and background estimates are obtained separately over the ranges of template chirp mass given in Table X; the rate of astrophysical signals is also estimated separately in each range.

- For GstLAL, the ratio of the foreground to background distributions (the signal-to-noise Bayes factor that enters into the  $p_{\text{astro}}$  calculation) is proportional to the likelihood ratio which is the ranking statistic  $x$ . Details of the GstLAL background collection method are given in Appendix D1. The time-volume sensitivity of the pipeline used in this calculation is estimated based on simulated sources injected into the pipeline and is rescaled to the astrophysical distribution [619]. We use time-volume ratios to combine triggers from various observation runs and perform the multicomponent analysis yielding  $p_{\text{astro}}$  and merger rates [104, 411] inferred from the entire set of available data (from O1 to O3b).
- The MBTA analysis uses a template bank split into 165 bins in the chirp mass-mass ratio parameter space to compute  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values of events [108]. The fine binning has the main benefit of allowing the proper tracking over the parameter space of the assumed CBCs populations used in the foreground distribution. It also provides a more tailored estimate of the background rate, compared to the FAR reported by the analysis, which uses a coarse estimate of the background (integrated over one of the three search regions) that is conservative for signals from high-mass sources. It can therefore result in events being assigned a significant  $p_{\text{astro}}$  in population-rich regions of the parameter space even though they were assigned a high FAR value (examples are GW200220\_124850, GW200306\_093714 and GW200322\_091133). For each of the bins, the background is constructed by making random coincidences of single-detector triggers for each coincidence type (HL, LV, HV or HLV) using the templates of the bin considered, but only during HL and HLV coincidence time to remove single-detector events from the background estimation [74, 75]. This means that the background assigned to an event depends on its coincidence type and on the bin which triggered the associated template. The foreground for the BNS and NSBH categories is estimated using the populations described in Table X. The foreground esti-

Name	cWB		GstLAL			MBTA			PyCBC-broad			PyCBC-BBH		
	H	L	H	L	V	H	L	V	H	L	V	H	L	V
GW191103_012549	–	–	–	–	–	6.5	6.3	–	6.3	6.8	–	6.2	6.9	–
GW191105_143521	–	–	5.8	7.6	2.8	6.1	8.2	3.1	5.9	7.8	–	5.9	7.8	–
GW191109_010717	9.8	12.1	8.5	13.3	–	8.6	12.6	–	8.7	9.9	–	9.0	11.3	–
GW191113_071753	–	–	–	–	–	6.3	6.4	2.2	6.3	5.4	–	6.1	5.9	–
GW191118_212859	–	–	–	–	–	–	5.2	6.1	–	5.5	7.2	–	–	–
GW191126_115259	–	–	5.7	6.5	–	5.7	6.3	–	5.8	6.2	–	5.8	6.2	–
GW191127_050227	–	–	6.8	6.7	4.0	6.7	6.4	3.2	7.0	6.4	–	6.1	6.2	–
GW191129_134029	–	–	8.8	10.0	–	8.5	9.4	–	8.6	9.6	–	8.6	9.6	–
GW191204_110529	–	–	4.6	7.8	–	5.4	6.0	–	5.0	7.4	–	5.0	7.4	–
GW191204_171526	9.0	14.5	8.9	12.8	–	10.0	13.8	–	9.8	13.8	–	9.8	13.8	–
GW191215_223052	6.6	7.3	7.0	7.8	3.0	6.7	7.9	3.0	7.2	7.5	–	7.0	7.5	–
GW191216_213338	–	–	17.8	–	5.6	17.1	–	5.4	17.6	–	5.2	17.6	–	5.2
GW191219_163120	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4.8	7.5	–	–	–	–
GW191222_033537	7.9	7.8	8.8	8.2	–	8.3	7.0	–	8.4	7.9	–	8.4	7.9	–
GW191230_180458	7.4	7.1	7.2	7.0	1.9	7.4	5.9	2.4	7.2	6.2	–	7.3	6.6	–
GW200105_162426	–	–	–	13.6	2.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GW200112_155838	–	–	–	17.5	2.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GW200115_042309	–	–	6.7	8.9	2.8	6.6	8.6	2.6	6.3	8.8	–	–	–	–
200121_031748	–	–	8.2	–	4.0	9.5	–	4.9	–	–	–	7.3	–	4.0
GW200128_022011	6.7	5.7	7.4	6.9	–	6.9	6.4	–	7.0	6.9	–	7.2	6.9	–
GW200129_065458	–	–	14.6	21.2	6.3	–	–	–	14.7	–	7.1	14.6	–	7.0
GW200201_203549	–	–	6.2	5.9	2.9	6.1	5.7	3.0	6.1	5.5	–	–	–	–
GW200202_154313	–	–	4.6	10.0	2.4	–	–	–	–	–	–	4.8	9.6	–
GW200208_130117	–	–	6.5	7.4	4.1	6.8	6.6	4.3	6.6	7.0	–	6.6	7.3	4.5
GW200208_222617	–	–	5.6	5.7	2.1	5.8	6.0	3.2	–	–	–	5.7	5.4	–
GW200209_085452	–	–	7.5	6.0	2.8	7.1	6.2	2.4	7.0	6.1	–	7.0	6.1	–
GW200210_092254	–	–	4.3	8.0	2.9	–	–	–	4.9	7.5	–	4.9	7.5	–
200214_224526	7.1	11.0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GW200216_220804	–	–	6.9	5.9	2.4	6.4	5.7	2.2	7.1	5.6	–	6.3	6.0	–
GW200219_094415	5.8	7.7	5.8	8.7	2.5	5.3	8.8	2.6	5.8	8.0	–	5.8	8.1	–
200219_201407	–	–	–	–	–	12.2	5.1	3.3	–	–	–	–	–	–
GW200220_061928	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4.4	6.0	–
GW200220_124850	–	–	6.1	5.5	–	6.1	5.5	–	–	–	–	5.8	5.2	–
GW200224_222234	13.3	13.4	12.5	12.9	5.8	12.6	13.0	5.5	12.7	12.9	6.4	12.2	12.5	6.3
GW200225_060421	9.6	8.9	9.9	8.2	–	9.8	7.8	–	9.4	7.9	–	9.4	7.9	–
GW200302_015811	–	–	10.4	–	1.9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GW200306_093714	–	–	–	–	–	5.9	6.1	–	5.7	5.4	–	5.5	5.8	–
GW200308_173609	–	–	4.9	6.1	2.1	5.1	5.7	3.2	5.1	6.1	–	5.1	6.1	–
GW200311_103121	–	–	5.4	7.2	–	5.7	7.0	–	5.7	7.2	–	–	–	–
GW200311_115853	12.0	11.0	12.1	10.7	7.0	10.7	10.4	6.9	11.9	10.2	6.7	11.9	10.7	6.9
GW200316_215756	–	–	5.4	7.9	3.1	5.1	7.2	3.5	5.6	7.4	–	5.5	7.5	–
GW200322_091133	–	–	–	–	–	6.0	5.8	3.5	5.8	5.6	–	5.5	5.4	–

Table IX. Individual-detector SNRs for all events in Table I and Table II. LIGO Hanford, LIGO Livingston and Virgo are indicated by H, L and V, respectively. Numbers in *italics* indicate where a candidate is identified with probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ . Dashes (–) indicate where no significant trigger was identified by a search analysis.

		Mass distribution	Mass range ( $M_{\odot}$ )	Spin range	Spin orientations	Redshift evolution	Maximum redshift
Injections	BBH	$p(m_1) \propto m_1^{-2.35}$ $p(m_2 m_1) \propto m_2$	$2 < m_1 < 100$ $2 < m_2 < 100$	$ \chi_{1,2}  < 0.998$	isotropic	$\kappa = 1$	1.9
	NSBH	$p(m_1) \propto m_1^{-2.35}$ uniform	$2.5 < m_1 < 60$ $1 < m_2 < 2.5$	$ \chi_1  < 0.998$ $ \chi_2  < 0.4$	isotropic	$\kappa = 0$	0.25
	BNS	uniform	$1 < m_1 < 2.5$ $1 < m_2 < 2.5$	$ \chi_{1,2}  < 0.4$	isotropic	$\kappa = 0$	0.15
cWB $p_{\text{astro}}$	BBH	Same as injections					
GstLAL $p_{\text{astro}}$	BBH	log-uniform	$3 < m_1 < 300$ $3 < m_2 < 300$	$ \chi_{1,2}  < 0.99$	aligned	$\kappa = 0$	3.76
	NSBH	log-uniform	$3 < m_1 < 300$ $1 < m_2 < 3$	$ \chi_1  < 0.99$ $ \chi_2  < 0.4$	aligned	$\kappa = 0$	0.80
	BNS	log-uniform	$1 < m_1 < 3$ $1 < m_2 < 3$	$ \chi_{1,2}  < 0.05$	aligned	$\kappa = 0$	0.16
MBTA $p_{\text{astro}}$	BBH	POWER LAW + PEAK [107] with $\alpha = 2.5$ , $\beta_q = 1.5$ , $m_{\min} = 5M_{\odot}$ , $m_{\max} = 80M_{\odot}$ , $\lambda_{\text{peak}} = 0.1$ , $\mu_m = 34M_{\odot}$ , $\sigma_m = 5M_{\odot}$ , $\delta_m = 3.5M_{\odot}$	$5 < m_1 < 80$ $5 < m_2 < 80$	$ \chi_{1,2}  < 0.998$	isotropic	$\kappa = 0$	1.9
	NSBH	Same as injections					
	BNS	Same as injections					
PyCBC-broad $p_{\text{astro}}$	BBH		$\mathcal{M} > 4.353$				
	NSBH		$2.176 < \mathcal{M} < 4.353$				
	BNS		$\mathcal{M} < 2.176$				
PyCBC-BBH $p_{\text{astro}}$	BBH		$\mathcal{M} > 4.353$				

Table X. Parameter distributions used to generate injections and to compute the probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for each pipeline. We always use the convention that  $m_1 \geq m_2$ ; this constraint means that the marginalized one-dimensional distributions for the masses will not match the distributions used to define the two-dimensional distributions (as given here) in cases where the  $m_1$  and  $m_2$  distributions overlap. Masses are in the source frame, except for the PyCBC rows, where the measured (redshifted) chirp mass is considered. The redshift-evolution parameter  $\kappa$  controls the injected distribution as described in Eq. (D1). The injection sets are used to estimate sensitive hypervolumes, with weights to match the populations assumed within each  $\langle VT \rangle$  calculation, including updating the mass, spin, and redshift distributions where appropriate.

mate for the BBH uses the POWER LAW + PEAK population model used to describe the GWTC-2 population [107, 620].

- Just as PyCBC, cWB also uses time-shifted analysis for significance assessment of background and foreground events. The distribution of the coherent network SNR ranking statistic for the time-shifted events is used to estimate the background, and consequently to assign the FAR. The foreground is derived from the recovered simulated events. Since cWB is significantly more sensitive to BBH systems, only these sources are considered.

The precise  $p_{\text{astro}}$  value depends upon the assumed true population, and hence may be subject to change as we learn more about the astrophysical population of CBCs. The population models used by the various pipelines in their computation of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  are summarized in Table X.

When estimating  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for each candidate, we do so separately for each category of source, as  $p_{\text{astro}}$  is dependent on the underlying BNS, NSBH and BBH populations. We separate the candidates based on their component masses; rather than a rigorous statement of the

nature of the component, the NS label is only used to identify components whose masses are below  $3M_{\odot}$ . BBH-category candidates are any for which component masses are both above  $3M_{\odot}$ , BNS-category candidates are the ones for which both component masses fall below this value, and we consider a candidate a part of the NSBH category if the primary component mass was above this boundary, and the secondary below it. In Table XI we give the calculated probabilities that an event comes from a system in our BBH category  $p_{\text{BBH}}$ , our NSBH category  $p_{\text{NSBH}}$ , or our BNS category  $p_{\text{BNS}}$ . The probability that a candidate belongs to a specific astrophysical source category ( $p_{\text{BNS}}$ ,  $p_{\text{NSBH}}$  or  $p_{\text{BBH}}$ ) is evaluated from source-class specific Bayes factors by redistributing the foreground probabilities across astrophysical source classes. These are estimated from the template-based estimate of the component masses of the event, as well as the response of the template bank to an assumed population of BNS, NSBH and BBH signals. The computation of the probability that a candidate comes from a system in one of the three astrophysical categories requires the choice of a prior on the event counts in each category [106]. GstLAL used a uniform prior for the BNS and

NSBH categories, and a Poisson–Jeffreys prior for the BBH category; MBTA used a uniform prior for the BNS category, and a Poisson–Jeffreys prior for the NSBH and BBH categories; PyCBC used a Poisson–Jeffreys prior for all three categories, and cWB used a Poisson–Jeffreys prior. Given the number of candidates, the prior choice does not significantly impact the BBH results, but can influence the BNS and NSBH  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values (e.g., variations of 0.045 for GW200105\_162426).

In addition to the choice of prior on count,  $p_{\text{BNS}}$ ,  $p_{\text{NSBH}}$  and  $p_{\text{BBH}}$  also depend upon the assumed foreground and background. The method to redistribute the foreground probabilities across astrophysical source classes, are specific to individual detection pipelines:

- GstLAL classifies signals into BNS, NSBH, and BBH using a semi-analytic template weighting scheme [621], which is needed for a multicomponent  $p_{\text{astro}}$  calculation [411]. The response of each template to signals from the different categories are computed assuming Gaussian noise [621], instead of using simulated signals. For a given trigger, the template identified for this classification is the one which has the highest SNR divided by the value of the signal-based-veto test, rather than the one with the highest likelihood ratio.
- For MBTA, the fraction of recovered simulated events from each category are used to infer the probabilities [108]. Following GWTC-2.1 [4], this analysis assumes an astrophysical population where BNSs have a maximum component mass of  $2.5M_{\odot}$ , NSBHs have one component above  $2.5M_{\odot}$  and one below  $2.5M_{\odot}$ , and BBHs have both components above  $5M_{\odot}$ . While this division between NSs and BHs does not match the other analyses, it should preserve our goal of the BBH category only including confident BHs with masses above  $3M_{\odot}$ , while the BNS and NSBH categories include any systems that could contain a NS (as well as potentially some low-mass BHs).
- For PyCBC, categories are assigned based on the source chirp mass. This is estimated by correcting the redshifted template masses using a luminosity distance derived from the SNRs [570]. As the PyCBC-BBH analysis is not sensitive to redshifted chirp masses below 4.353 (corresponding to an equal-mass binary with components of  $5M_{\odot}$ ), we do not calculate  $p_{\text{BNS}}$  for this analysis.
- As discussed above, cWB is most sensitive to BBH events, and, in this analysis, BBHs are the only astrophysical source class considered for this pipeline. The assumption that all signals identified by cWB correspond to CBCs is discussed further in Appendix F.

Given our current uncertainties on the maximum NS mass and minimum BH mass, the three categories do

not necessarily reflect the true nature of the source, but should serve to highlight candidates of interest if looking for potential BNSs or NSBHs, or a clean sample of BBHs.

The precise values of astrophysical source-class probabilities are generally insensitive to assumptions for events confidently identified as noise ( $p_{\text{astro}} \sim 0$ ) or signal ( $p_{\text{astro}} \sim 1$ ). However, marginal  $p_{\text{astro}}$  estimates ( $p_{\text{astro}} \sim 0.5$ ) tend to fluctuate by  $\mathcal{O}(0.1)$  based on various choices made [108]:

- The choice of distribution of masses used to estimate the foreground model. Since the true distribution of BNS, NSBH and BBH is unknown, the marginal  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values are subject to this uncertainty.
- The choice of injection distributions used to assess the response of the template banks to different astrophysical source classes. Given our lack of knowledge of the true distribution of intrinsic parameters for BNS, NSBH and BBH systems, uncertainties germane to this choice are especially pertinent to the MBTA estimations of  $p_{\text{astro}}$ . For GstLAL, the classification is most sensitive to the choice of upper limit on the NS mass distribution, as only triggers falling close to this threshold will have an ambiguous classification. For PyCBC, the corresponding uncertainty comes from the choice of threshold on  $\mathcal{M}$  used to assign a candidate to the BBH source class. Using the response of the template as a means to account for biases in the template-based estimate of intrinsic parameters is itself expected to be suboptimal as compared to a full inference of these parameters, and is therefore itself a source of uncertainty.
- The location of the boundary between source-classes in mass space. The upper limit on the NS mass is set at  $3M_{\odot}$ , although the true boundary is unknown. Marginal events with components close to this boundary could have significantly different  $p_{\text{astro}}$  depending on which side of the boundary the template estimates of their masses put them. For example, a marginal event categorized as BBH would have a larger  $p_{\text{astro}}$  than the same event categorized as NSBH, since  $p_{\text{astro}}$  depends on the number of foreground events pertaining to these source-categories; this is the case of GW191219\_163120.
- Specifically for single-detector candidate events, the background distribution must be extrapolated to evaluate the background probability. For coincident events, the background models are built from random coincidences from data between pairs of detectors time-shifted with respect to each other, which is not possible for single-detector events.

While the above captures some of the primary factors that affect the values of marginal  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , the list is not exhaustive. Marginal  $p_{\text{astro}}$  also depend on other factors

which are specific to the analysis methods used by different detection pipelines. Additionally, we expect that the estimated values of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  may change as we learn more about the various astrophysical populations. Using the expanded list of candidates including the subthreshold candidates, it is possible to use updated population models to reevaluate  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , and compile revised lists of probable GW candidates.

### a. Results for all of O3

Here we present results from all of O3, giving sensitivity estimates for the points in parameter space discussed in Sec. IVE from injections covering all of O3, and the updated  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for candidates in O3a given the updated event rate information inclusive of O3b.

The sensitive hypervolume  $\langle VT \rangle$  for each search analysis for all of O3 is presented in Table XII. These results show the same trends as shown in Table III and Fig. 6 for O3b. However, the values are naturally larger on account of the greater observing time.

Finally, in Table XIII we provide updated calculations of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for O3a events which were published in GWTC-2.1 [4] with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  using data from the whole of O3. For the first time for these candidates, we also report  $p_{\text{astro}}$  as calculated by the cWB pipeline. While there are small changes in value compared to the calculation using only O3a data, there are no changes in the list of candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . The change in  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for GW190425, from 0.78 in GWTC-2.1 to 0.69 here, stems from the increased  $\langle VT \rangle$  with no new confirmed BNS detection in O3b, and illustrates how medium-range  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values are subject to vary with our knowledge of source populations.

## Appendix E: Parameter-estimation methods

To determine the astrophysical parameters of each signal's source, we employ statistical inference techniques on the data from the interferometers. We calculate the posterior probability distribution  $p(\vec{\theta}|d)$  for the source parameters  $\vec{\theta}$  using Bayes' Theorem [622],

$$p(\vec{\theta}|d) \propto p(d|\vec{\theta})p(\vec{\theta}), \quad (\text{E1})$$

where the posterior is proportional to the prior probability distributions on the parameters  $p(\vec{\theta})$ , and the likelihood  $p(d|\vec{\theta})$ , which is the probability the data  $d$  would be observed given a model with parameters  $\vec{\theta}$ . Our analysis matches that performed for GWTC-2.1 [4].

Results from a number of analysis pipelines are presented in this work, but the principles used to construct the likelihood are the same for each [118]. The data from each interferometer are analyzed coherently, making the assumption that the noise can be treated as stationary,

Gaussian and independent between each of the interferometers used in the analysis over the duration analyzed for each signal [88, 623]. These assumptions result in a Gaussian likelihood [121] for a single interferometer,

$$p(d^k|\vec{\theta}) \propto \exp \left[ -\frac{1}{2} \langle d^k - h_M^k | d^k - h_M^k \rangle \right], \quad (\text{E2})$$

where  $d^k$  is the data and  $h_M^k$  the waveform model evaluated at  $\vec{\theta}$  as measured by the interferometer (incorporating the detector response [624, 625] and adjusted for detector calibration). The operation  $\langle \cdot | \cdot \rangle$  represents the noise-weighted inner product [367], which requires the pre-calculation of the PSD of the noise, and a choice of frequency ranges over which the product should be calculated:

- The minimum frequency  $f_{\text{low}}$  for the inner product was chosen to be 20 Hz.
- The maximum frequency was set as  $f_{\text{high}} = \alpha^{\text{roll-off}}(f_s/2)$ , where  $f_s$  is the sampling frequency ( $f_s/2$  is the Nyquist frequency) and  $\alpha^{\text{roll-off}}$  is included to avoid power loss due to the application of a window function. We limit power loss to 1%, which for the adopted Butterworth filter [132, 361] requires  $\alpha^{\text{roll-off}} = 0.875$ . To limit computational cost, the sampling rate was typically limited to  $f_s = 4096$  Hz or  $f_s = 8192$  Hz, and a lower rate was used when  $f_{\text{high}}$  was high enough to fully resolve the  $(\ell, |m|) = (3, 3)$  multipole moments. Given current detector sensitivity, we do not expect to gain significant information by using sampling rates above  $f_s \sim 4096$  Hz.
- The noise PSD for each event was estimated using BayesWave [364, 626]. The PSD was either estimated using the same data used for the likelihood calculation, or for an equivalent length of adjacent data. We use the median inferred PSD value at each frequency [627, 628]. The various PSDs were pre-calculated for each event, and used in each of the parameter-estimation studies for that event.

The duration of the data analyzed for each event is chosen such that the evolution of the signal from  $f_{\text{low}}$  to merger and ringdown is captured, and that there is 2 s of data post-merger [4]. The overall likelihood of data from across the detector network is obtained by multiplying together the single-detector likelihoods for the given set of parameters.

As described in Appendix E3, for almost all analyses, we marginalize over the uncertainty in the strain calibration. The frequency and phase calibration uncertainties are modeled using frequency-dependent splines. The coefficients of these splines are allowed to vary alongside the signal parameters with prior distributions on each spline node informed by the measured uncertainty at each node [118]. Preliminary studies [629, 630] have shown

Name	cWB	GstLAL				MBTA				PyCBC-broad				PyCBC-BBH			
	Pastro	PBBH	PNSBH	PBNS	Pastro	PBBH	PNSBH	PBNS	Pastro	PBBH	PNSBH	PBNS	Pastro	PBBH	PNSBH	Pastro	
GW191118_212859	-	-	-	-	-	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.04	< 0.01	0.05	-	-	-	
GW200105_162426	-	< 0.01	0.36	< 0.01	0.36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
200121_031748	-	0.02	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.02	0.22	0.01	< 0.01	0.23	-	-	-	-	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	
GW200201_203549	-	< 0.01	0.12	< 0.01	0.12	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	-	-	-	
200219_201407	-	-	-	-	-	0.45	0.03	< 0.01	0.48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
GW200311_103121	-	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.03	0.03	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.19	0.19	-	-	-	
GW191103_012549	-	-	-	-	-	0.13	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.13	0.67	0.10	< 0.01	0.77	0.81	0.14	0.94	
GW191105_143521	-	0.07	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.07	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.81	0.19	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.81	0.19	> 0.99	
GW191126_115259	-	0.02	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.02	0.30	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.30	0.38	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.39	0.69	0.01	0.70	
GW191127_050227	-	0.34	0.14	< 0.01	0.49	0.73	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.73	0.47	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.47	0.74	< 0.01	0.74	
GW191129_134029	-	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.72	0.28	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.72	0.28	> 0.99	
GW191204_171526	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.98	0.02	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.98	0.02	> 0.99	
GW191216_213338	-	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.91	0.09	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.91	0.09	> 0.99	
GW191219_163120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.20	0.63	< 0.01	0.82	-	-	-	
GW191222_033537	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	> 0.99	< 0.01	> 0.99	
GW200115_042309	-	< 0.01	> 0.99	< 0.01	> 0.99	< 0.01	> 0.99	< 0.01	> 0.99	< 0.01	0.93	0.07	> 0.99	-	-	-	
GW200202_154313	-	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.67	0.33	> 0.99	
GW200210_092254	-	0.40	0.03	< 0.01	0.42	-	-	-	-	0.31	0.22	< 0.01	0.53	0.31	0.23	0.54	
GW200316_215756	-	> 0.99	< 0.01	< 0.01	> 0.99	0.30	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.30	0.98	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.98	0.95	0.03	0.98	

Table XI. Multicomponent  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values for candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  and marginal candidates with FAR  $< 2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  where the probability of a BNS or NSBH category are nonzero in any search analysis. Since cWB does not calculate separate source probabilities, all sources are treated as BBHs for the purposes of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  calculation. Results in *italics* indicate where an analysis found the candidate with  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , and a dash (-) indicates that a candidate was not found by an analysis. Source probability for BNS is not given for PyCBC-BBH, as the search is not sensitive to redshifted chirp masses below 4.353. This would require extremely high redshifts, to which LIGO and Virgo are not sensitive, to correspond to a BNS source. The BNS, NSBH and BBH categories are defined by the masses associated with the candidate from the search results (as defined in Table X), and do not necessarily correspond to the true astrophysical population of sources.

Binary masses ( $M_{\odot}$ )			Sensitive hypervolume ( $\text{Gpc}^3 \text{yr}$ )						
$m_1$	$m_2$	$\mathcal{M}$	cWB	GstLAL	MBTA	PyCBC-broad	PyCBC-BBH	Any	
35.0	35.0	30.5	$5.5^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$	$8.8^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	$7.4^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	$6.9^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$	$9.2^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	$11.2^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	
35.0	20.0	22.9	$2.7^{+0.1}_{-0.2}$	$4.9^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	$3.9^{+0.2}_{-0.1}$	$3.9^{+0.2}_{-0.1}$	$5.3^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	$6.4^{+0.2}_{-0.2}$	
35.0	1.5	5.2	-	$3.8^{+0.3}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$3.7^{+0.4}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	$6.2^{+0.4}_{-0.5} \times 10^{-2}$	-	$6.6^{+0.5}_{-0.5} \times 10^{-2}$	
20.0	20.0	17.4	$1.19^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$2.82^{+0.08}_{-0.08}$	$2.41^{+0.07}_{-0.08}$	$2.38^{+0.07}_{-0.08}$	$2.99^{+0.09}_{-0.08}$	$3.57^{+0.09}_{-0.09}$	
20.0	10.0	12.2	$0.48^{+0.05}_{-0.05}$	$1.25^{+0.07}_{-0.07}$	$1.10^{+0.06}_{-0.07}$	$1.14^{+0.07}_{-0.07}$	$1.32^{+0.07}_{-0.08}$	$1.56^{+0.08}_{-0.08}$	
20.0	1.5	4.2	-	$3.9^{+0.2}_{-0.3} \times 10^{-2}$	$3.4^{+0.3}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	$5.4^{+0.3}_{-0.3} \times 10^{-2}$	-	$6.0^{+0.3}_{-0.4} \times 10^{-2}$	
10.0	10.0	8.7	$0.15^{+0.01}_{-0.01}$	$0.59^{+0.02}_{-0.03}$	$0.53^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$	$0.56^{+0.03}_{-0.02}$	$0.59^{+0.03}_{-0.02}$	$0.72^{+0.02}_{-0.03}$	
10.0	5.0	6.1	$3.6^{+0.9}_{-0.8} \times 10^{-2}$	$0.25^{+0.02}_{-0.03}$	$0.23^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$	$0.27^{+0.02}_{-0.03}$	$0.26^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$	$0.31^{+0.02}_{-0.02}$	
10.0	1.5	3.1	-	$3.5^{+0.1}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	$3.3^{+0.2}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-2}$	$3.8^{+0.1}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	-	$4.5^{+0.1}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	
5.0	5.0	4.4	$1.1^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-2}$	$0.129^{+0.007}_{-0.006}$	$9.8^{+0.6}_{-0.6} \times 10^{-2}$	$0.138^{+0.007}_{-0.007}$	$0.108^{+0.006}_{-0.006}$	$0.158^{+0.008}_{-0.007}$	
5.0	1.5	2.3	-	$2.34^{+0.08}_{-0.08} \times 10^{-2}$	$2.41^{+0.08}_{-0.08} \times 10^{-2}$	$2.47^{+0.08}_{-0.08} \times 10^{-2}$	-	$2.96^{+0.09}_{-0.09} \times 10^{-2}$	
1.5	1.5	1.3	-	$5.8^{+0.2}_{-0.1} \times 10^{-3}$	$7.0^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-3}$	$7.3^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-3}$	-	$8.2^{+0.2}_{-0.2} \times 10^{-3}$	

Table XII. Sensitive hypervolume  $\langle VT \rangle$  for the various search analyses for all of O3 at the assessed points in the mass parameter space. The *Any* results come from calculating the sensitive hypervolume for injections found by at least one search analysis. The sets of binary masses and distribution of injections found in this bin are the same as given in Table III. As in Table III, where insufficient numbers of injections are recovered such that the sensitive hypervolume cannot be accurately estimated; these cases are indicated by a dash (-).

Name	cWB			GstLAL			MBTA			PyCBC-broad			PyCBC-BBH		
	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>	FAR (yr <sup>-1</sup> )	SNR	<i>p</i> <sub>astro</sub>
GW190403_051519	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.7	8.0	0.60
GW190408_181802	9.5 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	14.8	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	15	> 0.99	8.7 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	14	> 0.99	2.5 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99	< 1.2 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	14	> 0.99
GW190412	9.5 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	19.7	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	19	> 0.99	1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	18	> 0.99	< 1.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	17	> 0.99	< 1.2 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	18	> 0.99
GW190413_052954	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	170	8.5	0.12	0.82	8.5	0.92
GW190413_134308	—	—	—	39	10	—	0.34	10	0.99	21	9.3	0.47	0.18	8.9	0.99
GW190421_213856	0.30	9.3	0.90	0.0028	10	> 0.99	1.2	9.7	0.99	5.9	10	0.74	0.014	10	> 0.99
GW190425	—	—	—	0.034	13	0.69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GW190426_190642	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.1	9.6	0.73
GW190503_185404	0.0018	11.5	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	0.013	13	> 0.99	0.038	12	> 0.99	0.0026	12	> 0.99
GW190512_180714	0.88	10.7	0.75	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	0.038	12	0.98	1.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	12	> 0.99	< 1.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	12	> 0.99
GW190513_205428	—	—	—	1.3 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	0.11	13	0.99	19	12	0.48	0.044	12	> 0.99
GW190514_065416	—	—	—	450	8.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.8	8.4	0.75
GW190517_055101	0.0065	10.7	> 0.99	0.0045	11	> 0.99	0.11	11	> 0.99	0.0095	10	> 0.99	3.5 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	10	> 0.99
GW190519_153544	3.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	14.0	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	7.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	14	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99	< 1.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99
GW190521	2.0 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	14.4	> 0.99	0.20	13	0.77	0.042	13	0.96	0.44	14	0.96	0.0013	14	> 0.99
GW190521_074359	1.0 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	24.7	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	24	> 0.99	1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	22	> 0.99	< 1.8 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	24	> 0.99	< 2.3 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	24	> 0.99
GW190527_092055	—	—	—	0.23	8.7	0.83	—	—	—	—	—	—	19	8.4	0.31
GW190602_175927	0.015	11.1	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	3.0 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99	0.29	12	0.98	0.013	12	> 0.99
GW190620_030421	—	—	—	0.011	11	0.99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GW190630_185205	—	—	—	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	15	> 0.99	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.24	15	> 0.99
GW190701_203306	0.32	10.2	0.89	0.0057	12	> 0.99	35	11	0.85	0.064	12	> 0.99	0.56	12	> 0.99
GW190706_222641	0.0010	12.7	> 0.99	5.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	0.0015	12	> 0.99	3.7 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	12	> 0.99	0.34	13	> 0.99
GW190707_093326	—	—	—	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	0.032	13	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	< 1.9 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99
GW190708_232457	—	—	—	3.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GW190719_215514	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.63	8.0	0.91
GW190720_000836	—	—	—	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	0.094	12	> 0.99	1.4 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	11	> 0.99	< 7.8 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	11	> 0.99
GW190725_174728	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.1	9.8	0.56	0.46	9.1	0.96	2.9	8.8	0.80
GW190727_060333	0.088	11.4	0.95	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	0.023	12	> 0.99	0.0056	11	> 0.99	2.0 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	11	> 0.99
GW190728_064510	—	—	—	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	7.5 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99	< 8.2 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	< 7.8 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99
GW190731_140936	—	—	—	0.33	8.5	0.76	6.1	9.1	0.78	—	—	—	1.9	7.8	0.83
GW190803_022701	—	—	—	0.073	9.1	0.93	77	9.0	0.95	81	8.7	0.16	0.39	8.7	0.97
GW190805_211137	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.63	8.3	0.95
GW190814	—	—	—	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	22	> 0.99	2.0 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	20	> 0.99	0.17	19	> 0.99	—	—	—
GW190828_063405	9.6 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	16.6	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	16	> 0.99	1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	15	> 0.99	< 8.5 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	14	> 0.99	< 7.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	16	> 0.99
GW190828_065509	—	—	—	3.5 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	11	> 0.99	0.16	11	0.96	2.8 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	11	> 0.99	1.1 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	11	> 0.99
GW190910_112807	—	—	—	0.0029	13	> 0.99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GW190915_235702	0.0010	12.3	> 0.99	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	0.0055	13	> 0.99	6.8 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	13	> 0.99	< 7.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99
GW190916_200658	—	—	—	12	8.2	—	6.9 × 10 <sup>3</sup>	8.2	0.62	—	—	—	4.7	7.9	0.62
GW190917_114630	—	—	—	0.66	9.5	0.74	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
GW190924_021846	—	—	—	< 1.0 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	13	> 0.99	0.0049	12	> 0.99	< 8.2 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99	8.3 × 10 <sup>-5</sup>	12	> 0.99
GW190925_232845	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	9.4	0.32	73	9.0	0.03	0.0072	9.9	0.99
GW190926_050336	—	—	—	1.1	9.0	0.51	—	—	—	—	—	—	87	7.8	0.09
GW190929_012149	—	—	—	0.16	10	0.86	2.9	10	0.61	120	9.4	0.14	14	8.5	0.40
GW190930_133541	—	—	—	0.43	10	0.74	0.34	10.0	0.86	0.018	9.8	> 0.99	0.012	10	> 0.99

Table XIII. Updated probability of astrophysical origin  $p_{\text{astro}}$ , FAR and SNR values for events from O3a using data from the whole of O3. We include  $p_{\text{astro}}$  values for any candidates that were published in GWTC-2.1 [4] with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . Using all of the O3 data, there are no changes to the list of candidates with  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ . As in Table I, results in *italics* indicate where an analysis found the candidate with  $p_{\text{astro}} < 0.5$ , and a dash indicates that a candidate was not found by an analysis. Although cWB contributed to the analysis of GW190814 [227], it is not included in the cWB column because it was not detected with LV alone with the standard data-quality vetoes, but required a manual override of the LIGO Hanford vetoes. This table updates Table I of GWTC-2.1 [4].

that, given the SNR of the events during O3, the calibration systematic errors are expected to have negligible impact on the estimation of the astrophysical parameters.

### 1. Data-quality mitigation

For events affected by transient, non-Gaussian detector noise, as part of the event-validation process described in Sec. III B, we performed data-quality mitigation prior to performing source-parameter estimation, as summarized in Table XIV. Where possible, noise transients were modeled and subtracted with the BayesWave algorithm [362, 364], or with linear subtraction using a witness time series [54], as described in Appendix C. Such subtraction was first used to mitigate the effects of a glitch that appeared in data from the LIGO Livingston detector overlapping GW170817 [113, 631].

When analyzing Virgo data, the systematic error in calibration around 50 Hz described in Sec. III A was mitigated by setting the PSD to a large value ( $1 \text{ Hz}^{-1/2}$ ) for 46–51 Hz, such that the affected data do not influence the results.

### 2. Waveforms

The waveform models used to analyze each event are selected depending upon the most likely source for the signal. Each candidate undergoes an initial parameter-estimation analysis shortly after the candidate is first identified. This is used to roughly infer the component masses (and other properties) of the binary source of the candidate signal, which are used to verify analysis settings. A further, more exhaustive set of parameter-estimation analyses are conducted to produce final results. To assess potential systematic uncertainties from waveform modeling, we perform analyses with two waveform families [118].

In cases with component masses in excess of  $3M_{\odot}$ , analyses are conducted using the SEOBNRv4PHM [123] and IMRPhenomXPHM [122] waveform models. The NRSur7dq4 NR surrogate model [632], previously used in for a subsets of analyses in GWTC-2 [3], is restricted in its length to only  $\sim 20$  orbits before the merger, and so not generally applicable for analysis of the candidates in this catalog. The SEOBNRv4PHM waveform is part of the SEOBNR waveform family [580, 633]. It is a time-domain model that is constructed by first deriving a time-dependent rotation from the co-precessing to the inertial frame using the EOB equations of motion [634, 635] for the spins and orbital angular momentum, and then applying this rotation to the non-precessing (only incorporating spins parallel to the orbital angular momentum) SEOBNRv4HM waveform. The SEOBNRv4HM model is computed by solving the EOB equations, obtained by resumming PN corrections, and incorporating information from NR simulations and BH perturbation theory [127].

To model spin precession, SEOBNRv4PHM numerically evolves the EOB dynamics of the system, including the spins in the time domain [123]. Since SEOBNRv4PHM inherits its higher-order multipole moment content from SEOBNRv4HM, it includes the modes  $(\ell, |m|) = \{(2, 2), (2, 1), (3, 3), (4, 4), (5, 5)\}$  in the co-precessing frame. The IMRPhenomXPHM model is the latest in the Phenom family of phenomenological, frequency-domain GW models, and is built upon the higher-order multipole model IMRPhenomXHM [126]. Each of the available higher-order multipole moments modeled in IMRPhenomXHM,  $(\ell, |m|) = \{(2, 2), (2, 1), (3, 3), (3, 2), (4, 4)\}$ , has been tuned to NR and is rapidly generated through the use of frequency multiband [636]. IMRPhenomXPHM includes precession effects by performing a frequency-dependent rotation on the non-precessing GW waveform IMRPhenomXHM [126, 264, 348, 637, 638]. The angles used arise from a multi-scale expansion of the PN equations of motion [276]. Neither waveform models the asymmetry between spherical harmonic modes with positive and negative spherical harmonic index  $m$  [639], and neither was tuned to NR in the precessing sector, but both were validated by comparing to a large set of BBH waveforms [122, 123].

When the initial parameter estimation provides evidence that the secondary mass is below  $3M_{\odot}$  then the signal may arise from a NSBH. In these cases, waveforms that include matter effects can be used to try to identify their imprint on the signal. We use the SEOBNRv4\_ROM\_NRTidalv2\_NSBH [125] and IMRPhenomNSBH [124] waveforms. Both are non-precessing, frequency-domain NSBH waveforms built upon previous non-precessing, frequency-domain BBH waveform models: SEOBNRv4\_ROM [580] for SEOBNRv4\_ROM\_NRTidalv2\_NSBH, and a combination of the IMRPhenomC [268] amplitude and IMRPhenomD [640] phase for IMRPhenomNSBH. These models include corrections to the phase arising from matter effects as in IMRPhenomPv2\_NRTidalv2, but have additional corrections to the amplitude tuned to NSBH NR waveforms.

For BBHs, the mass and spin of the final BH are calculated from the initial masses and spins using fits to NR results [223, 224, 289, 641, 642]. When using NSBH waveforms, the mass and spin of the final BH are calculated from the initial masses, the initial BH spin and the NS tidal deformability  $\Lambda_2$  using fits to NR results [643]. These fits are calibrated to BBH fits [224] in order to recover the BBH values in the test-mass limit ( $m_2 \rightarrow 0$ ) and in the absence of tides ( $\Lambda_2 \rightarrow 0$ ).

None of the waveform models employed for the analyses presented here include the effects of orbital eccentricity, and instead assume that all binaries follow quasi-circular orbits. An eccentric source can be interpreted by a quasi-circular analysis to be both higher mass and more equal-mass than it truly is [378, 381–383, 644]. Consequently, if any sources analyzed here have eccentric orbits, their true masses may be lower and their mass ratios more unequal than our inferred values. Eccentricity

Event	Affected detectors	Mitigation
GW191105_143521	Virgo	BayesWave deglitching
GW191109_010717	Hanford, Livingston	BayesWave deglitching
GW191113_071753	Hanford	BayesWave deglitching
GW191127_050227	Hanford	BayesWave deglitching
GW191219_163120	Hanford, Livingston	BayesWave deglitching
GW200105_162426	Livingston	BayesWave deglitching
GW200115_042309	Livingston	BayesWave deglitching
GW200129_065458	Livingston	Linear subtraction

Table XIV. List of data used and mitigation methods applied to data surrounding each candidate prior to source-parameter estimation. We list the candidates for which we performed mitigation of instrumental artifacts; there are 7 candidate events reported in Table I and the previously reported GW200105\_162426 [8]. For all analyses using Virgo data, calibration error at  $\sim 50$  Hz was mitigated by notching out the relevant frequency range. The noise-subtraction methods (BayesWave [362, 364] and linear subtraction using a witness [54]) used for these events are detailed in Appendix C.

may also influence the inferred spins [381–383, 645]. Significant eccentricity is not expected for the majority of sources considered here [89, 646].

### 3. Priors and sampling algorithms

To ensure that the parameter space for each event is explored adequately, each candidate is analyzed independently, with a choice of prior ranges for parameters that balance the required analysis time with the total volume of parameter space to be sampled. For all events we choose a uniform prior over spin magnitudes and redshifted component masses, and an isotropic prior over spin orientation, sky location and binary orientation [3, 14]. The default mass-ratio prior is  $q \in [0.05, 1]$  to reflect the range of calibration for our waveform models [122, 123]. However, some events show strong support for mass ratios outside of this range (such as GW191219\_163120). In these cases we extend the priors, as biases due to any waveform inaccuracies are likely subdominant to those from truncating the prior, and we consider prior ranges as wide as  $q \in [0.02, 1]$ . Following GWTC-2 [3], we reweight posteriors to have a luminosity-distance prior corresponding to a uniform merger rate in the source’s comoving frame for a  $\Lambda$ -cold dark matter cosmology with  $H_0 = 67.9 \text{ km s}^{-1} \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$  and  $\Omega_m = 0.3065$  [617].

We employed a number of different sampling techniques and their associated parameter-estimation pipelines for the candidate signals presented in this work. For the majority of events the Bilby [130, 132] and RIFT [133–135] pipelines were used to generate samples from the posterior distributions for each signal.

Bilby provides support for both Markov-chain Monte Carlo samplers and nested sampling techniques [130]. We use the Dynesty [402] sampler, which uses nested sampling to sample the posterior probability distribution. Analyses are organized using BilbyPipe which enables greater automation and reproducibility of analysis pipeline construction [132]. We use Bilby for inferences

using the IMRPhenomXPHM [122] model.

For events where more computationally expensive analyses were required, for example, using waveforms that include matter effects, we used the Parallel Bilby code [131]. This employs a highly parallel distributed approach to nested sampling that can be run over a large number of processing cores, reducing the wall time of the required computation.

To improve the sampling performance of Bilby and Parallel Bilby, the posterior distribution is analytically marginalized over luminosity distance [116] and geocenter time [132, 647] prior to sampling. We reconstruct posterior distributions for marginalized parameters in post-processing: for each sample, we interpolate over a one-dimensional likelihood computed at discrete points within the prior of the marginalized parameter, and draw one value from this posterior probability curve [132, 136].

For time-domain, computationally expensive waveforms, we use RIFT [648]. This algorithm constructs the posterior probability distribution iteratively with two alternating steps. First, for a grid of intrinsic-parameter points, a marginalized likelihood is evaluated by integrating over extrinsic parameters (source position, orientation and coalescence time) [133]. From this discrete grid of likelihoods, a continuous likelihood distribution is constructed via Gaussian-process regression. A new grid is then sampled from the resulting posterior probability distribution; this process is repeated until convergence is reached. RIFT’s grid-based approach has been shown to produce results consistent with our stochastic sampling algorithms [648].

To marginalize over calibration uncertainty [118, 649], the calibration coefficients are sampled alongside the source parameters in inferences performed by Bilby and Parallel Bilby [132], whereas for RIFT, this marginalization is done using likelihood reweighting (with the same spline calibration model) after the inference of the source parameters [629]. Due to computational constraints, the RIFT results for the NSBH candidates GW191219\_163120, GW200105\_162426 and GW200115\_042309 are not reweighted to include calibra-

tion uncertainties.

All sampling algorithms return posterior samples in the same format, and these are postprocessed using PE-Summary [403] to produce uniform HDF5 results. In the preparation of GWTC-2 [3], we employed some automation to assist with monitoring the parameter-estimation processes as they ran. For GWTC-2.1 and GWTC-3, we further developed this automation into the Asimov [404] code. This allowed the creation of analysis pipeline configurations to be fully automated, with the intention of ensuring consistency between analysis settings used for different algorithms.

The settings for the Bilby and RIFT analyses were designed to be as consistent as possible, aside from the differences in waveforms used. However, there do exist a number of differences between the analyses, such as the marginalization over time and the tapering applied to time-domain waveforms, that may lead to differences in results. Any differences should be negligible for intrinsic parameters such as the masses. In some cases, for example, in analysis of GW200129\_065458, we find that RIFT produces a posterior that includes low-likelihood modes correlated with extrinsic parameters like the sky position. These may reflect potential source locations, but also could indicate a lack of convergence in the estimation of the extrinsic parameters. In cases where the Bilby and RIFT parameters agree, we can be more confident in the robustness of results.

## Appendix F: Unconfirmed cWB-only candidates

The minimally modeled cWB pipeline (described in Sec. IVB) can identify a range of signal morphologies, including signals unrelated to CBC sources [27]. Since cWB does not exploit the rich prior information provided by CBC waveform templates, its flexibility in identifying many potential signals comes with a reduced sensitivity to CBC signals that match such templates, as compared to the matched-filter analyses. However, for the O3 analyses, we found that the efficiency of detection of cWB becomes comparable to that of matched-filter pipelines for systems with  $(1+z)\mathcal{M} \gtrsim 150M_{\odot}$ , and it is possible for cWB to identify CBC signals that would otherwise be omitted from the candidate list. In selecting candidates for Table I we use a criterion that the probability of astrophysical origin *assuming a CBC source* is  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$ ; as explained in Sec. IVD, because we cannot assume that a candidate identified by the cWB pipeline is consistent with a CBC origin, we require independent support from a template-based search pipeline.

Here we discuss three candidate events from cWB that would have  $p_{\text{astro}} > 0.5$  assuming a CBC source, but for which we do not have the counterpart from the matched-filter search pipelines required to corroborate the CBC source assumption. The candidates 190804\_083543 and 190930\_234652 were found during O3a, and 200214\_224526 was found during O3b. These

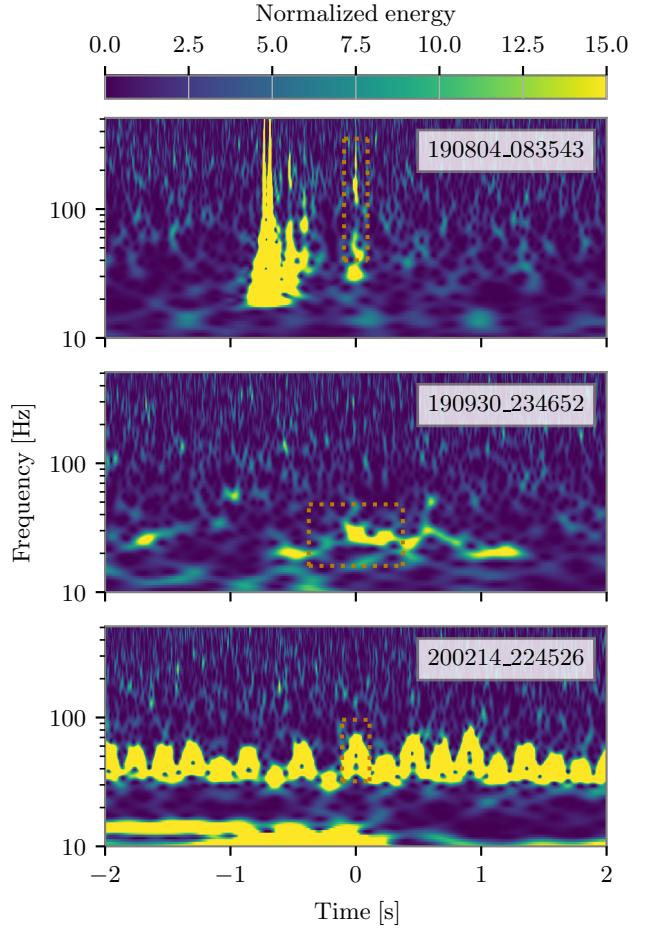


Figure 15. Spectrograms [66] of data surrounding 190804\_083543, 190930\_234652 and 200214\_224526. Time is plotted relative to the central time of each trigger. The plotted data are from LIGO Hanford for 190930\_234652 and from LIGO Livingston for 190804\_083543 and 200214\_224526. The red box represents the bandwidth and duration of the candidate identified by cWB. In all three cases, the data are affected by transient noise at the time of the trigger, and additional excess power is present in the data that is not accounted for as part of the trigger identified by cWB.

three candidates have  $\text{FAR} < 2.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ , meeting the threshold for marginal candidates. The candidate 190804\_083543 was also studied in the O3 minimally modeled search for short-duration transient signals [27], and the candidate 200214\_224526 was further studied in the O3 search for IMBH binaries [24]. In each case, we find that the analysis and interpretation of the data is made more difficult by the presence of glitches, as illustrated in Fig. 15. The detailed reconstructed signal morphology is shown in Fig. 16, which displays the time-frequency map [81, 100]. For a CBC signal, we would typically expect the reconstructed signal to show a chirp from lower to higher frequencies, with higher-mass sources being limited to lower frequencies and shorter

durations [101, 612]. However, we find that the three candidates have a range of signal morphologies.

The candidate 190804\_083543 was identified in low latency by the cWB BBH search analyzing HL network data, and in the offline analysis its SNR is 13.3 and FAR is  $0.024 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ . It occurred less than a second after a loud series of glitches in the LIGO Livingston detector. The time around these glitches was vetoed by a Burst Category 2 flag that measured length sensing and control channels [58]. Similar sequences of glitches have been observed at other times for both the LIGO Livingston and LIGO Hanford detectors [650]. In O3, it was observed that times around these loud glitches produced a higher rate of background triggers in the cWB analysis, and we consider this candidate of likely instrumental origin.

The candidate 190930\_234652 was identified in low latency by the cWB BBH search analyzing HL network data, and in the offline analysis its SNR is 8.6 and FAR is  $1.0 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ . Slow scattering glitches [62] are present in the LIGO Hanford data at the time of the candidate. These glitches correlate with the observed motion of the suspension systems and directly overlap the candidate. At LIGO Livingston, excess motion was measured by accelerometers at the time of the candidate that may also account for the observed signal in that detector's data. We consider this candidate of likely instrumental origin.

The candidate 200214\_224526 was identified in low latency by the cWB BBH search analyzing HL network data, and in the offline analysis its SNR is 13.1 and FAR is  $0.13 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ . In LIGO Livingston, the candidate was associated with a fast scattering glitch [62]; a sequence of such glitches is observed for multiple seconds before and after the candidate. As shown in Fig. 15, the glitch overlaps the candidate in LIGO Livingston. In LIGO Hanford, we find evidence of a weak scattering arch that started  $\sim 0.5 \text{ s}$  before the event and lasted  $\sim 2 \text{ s}$  in the frequency range 20–30 Hz. The event was studied in the search for IMBH binaries [24], where it was listed as the third-ranked candidate (the first-ranked being GW190521). However, it was not corroborated by any matched-filter search analysis, and it was concluded that the event was due to noise.

For each of 190804\_083543, 190930\_234652 and 200214\_224526 there is plausible evidence that the candidate is of instrumental origin. Regardless of the instrumental or astrophysical origin of these candidates, their morphologies (as shown in Fig. 16) do not resemble the CBC signals so far detected. The versatility of cWB in identifying potential signals without a template means that a variety of sources could be detected, such that the assumption of a CBC source is not assured and must be verified. Under the alternative assumption of a non-CBC source, the probability of astrophysical origin would be reduced, making any candidates less plausible as GW signals. Detection of new source types, and inference of their rates, would enable calculation of  $p_{\text{astro}}$  for a range of sources in addition to CBCs.

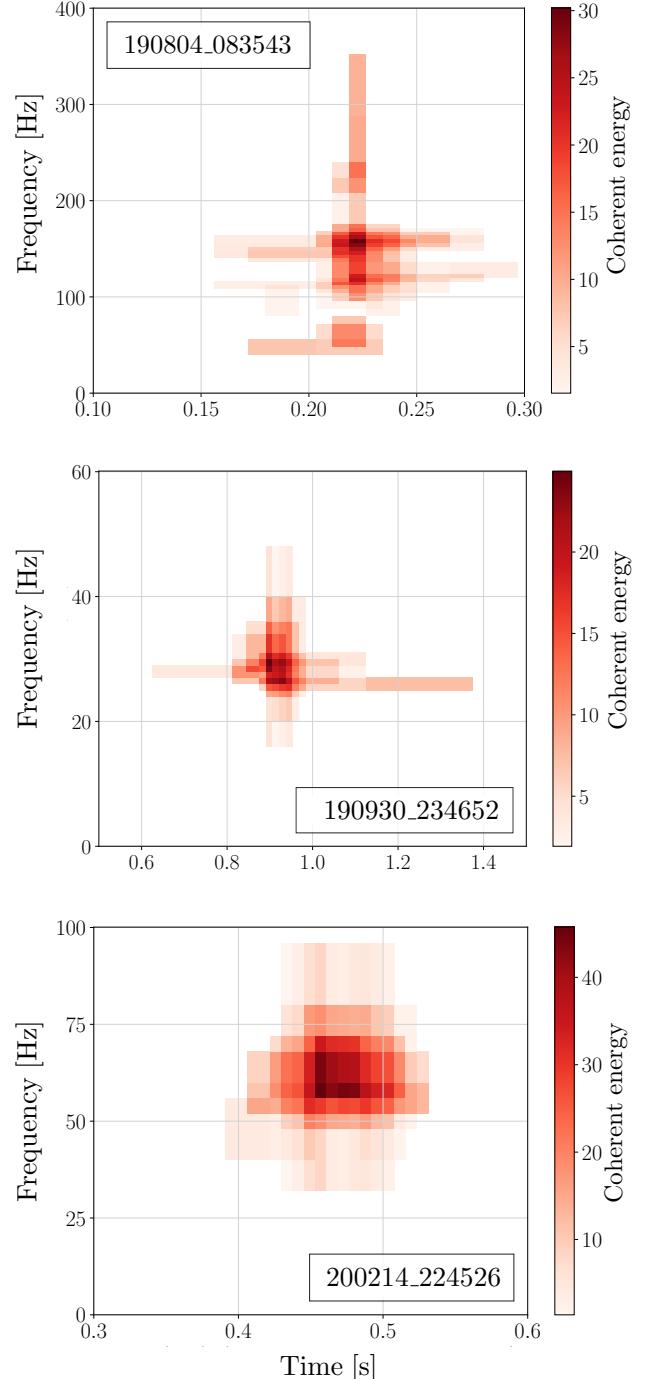


Figure 16. The coherent-energy time–frequency maps of the three candidates identified by only the cWB analysis. These time–frequency maps are scalograms of the Wilson–Daubechies–Meyer wavelet transform of the candidate signal, where scale is represented by frequency [81, 100], for the coherent energy  $E_c$  (see Appendix D 5). The normalization of the coherent energy scale is such that the sum of all the pixel values times their area is equal to the power SNR. The time axis corresponds to GPS times after adding the appropriate offset. For 190804\_083543, the offset is 1248942961 s; for 190930\_234652, the offset is 1253922430 s, and for 200214\_224526, the offset is 1265755544 s.

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