

1 **Title:** Reference genome of the endangered eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*)
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18 **Abstract**

19 The eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) is an endangered marsupial mesopredator native to
20 Australia. Since the extirpation of the last mainland Australian populations in the late 20th
21 century, wild populations of this species have been restricted to two islands at the far southern
22 end of its historical range. Eastern quolls are the subject of captive breeding programs and
23 attempts have recently been made to re-establish a population in mainland Australia through
24 translocations. However, few resources currently exist to guide the genetic management of this
25 species. Here, we present a chromosome-scale reference genome for the eastern quoll, along
26 with gene annotations supported by multi-tissue transcriptomes. Through comparisons with
27 related species, we find that our reference genome is among the most complete marsupial

28 assemblies currently available. Using this assembly, we infer the species' demographic history
29 and identify potential evidence of a long-term decline beginning in the late Pleistocene. Finally,
30 we identify a deletion at the *AS/P* locus that likely drives differences in pelage color between the
31 eastern quoll and the closely related Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*). The genomic
32 resources we present are valuable new tools for evolutionary and conservation genomic
33 studies.

34 **Introduction**

35 The eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*; Fig. 1a) is a marsupial carnivore native to
36 Australia³. A nocturnal mesopredator, the eastern quoll's diet primarily consists of small
37 mammals, reptile and invertebrate prey, as well as opportunistic scavenging on the remains of
38 larger species⁴. The eastern quoll is morphologically, behaviorally, and ecologically distinct from
39 the larger, parapatric spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*)⁵. Eastern quolls give birth to
40 exceptionally altricial young that are comparable to mid-gestation fetuses of eutherian
41 mammals^{6; 7}. Indeed, neonates have structurally immature lungs and perform as much as 95%
42 of their gas exchange through their skin⁸⁻¹⁰. Like other marsupials, their young travel from the
43 birth canal into their mother's pouch on the day of birth and complete much of their development
44 *ex utero*^{3; 11}.

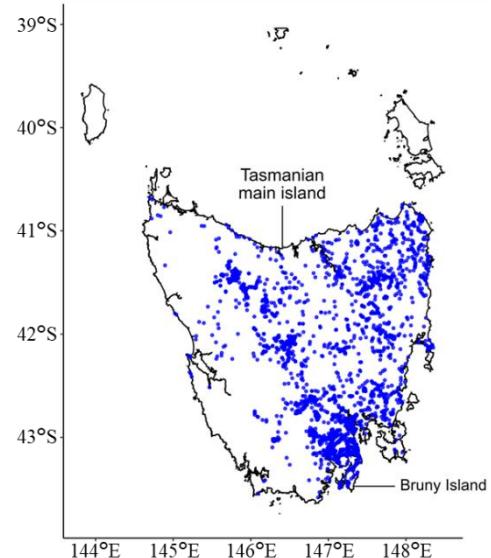
45 Despite having once ranged across much of southeastern Australia, eastern quolls were
46 likely extirpated from the mainland by the late 20th century¹². Today, natural populations of this
47 species are restricted to the state of Tasmania on two islands (the Tasmanian main island and
48 Bruny Island; Fig. 1b), which lie at the southern end of their historical range. Moreover, several
49 Tasmanian eastern quoll populations have also undergone significant and ongoing population
50 declines in recent decades and the species was declared 'Endangered' by IUCN in 2016¹³⁻¹⁵.
51 Suggested causes of decline include invasive predators and climatic fluctuation^{16; 17}.

Fig. 1.

(a)



(b)



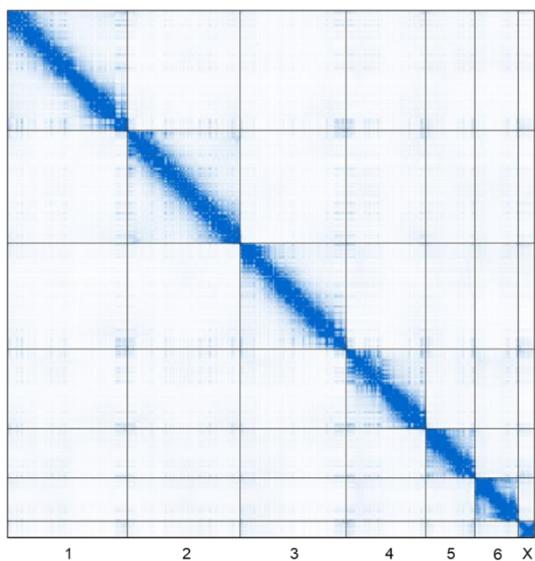
a) Photograph of an adult eastern quoll (photo credit Brett Vercoe). b) Map of the state of Tasmania, showing 50 years of eastern quoll sightings across the Tasmanian main island and Bruny Island recorded in the Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas. Individual sightings are shown as blue dots.

52 The eastern quoll has been flagged as one of 20 priority mammal species in the Australian
53 Government's Threatened Species Strategy, with conservation efforts including population
54 supplementation studies, an extensive captive breeding program spanning multiple sanctuaries,
55 and fenced safe havens free of cats and foxes^{18, 19}. The species has also recently been the
56 subject of an ambitious project aimed at re-establishing wild populations in parts of its former
57 mainland range, with two pilot releases of captive-bred animals in Booderee National Park on
58 the south coast of New South Wales^{20, 21}. However, potential challenges to the long-term fitness
59 and adaptive viability of eastern quolls in both Tasmania and mainland Australia remain largely
60 unexplored. The paucity of genomic resources also presents a barrier to conservation genetic
61 management of the species²². To address this limitation, we present a high-quality eastern quoll
62 reference genome with transcriptome-based gene annotations.

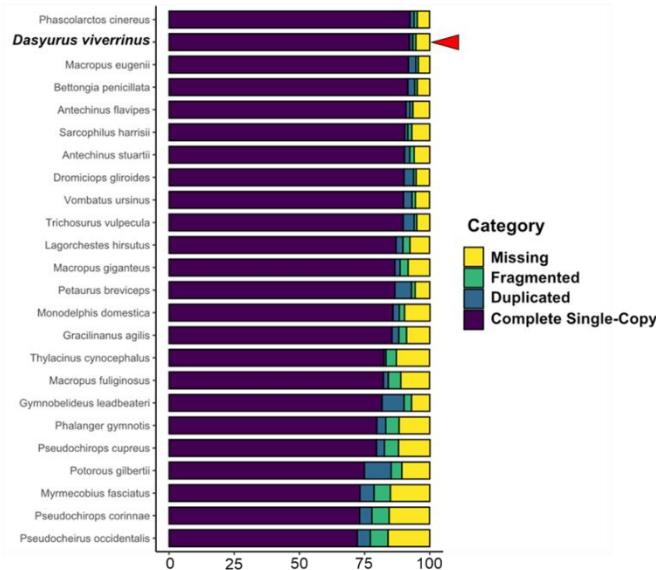
63 Results and discussion

Fig. 2.

(a)



(b)



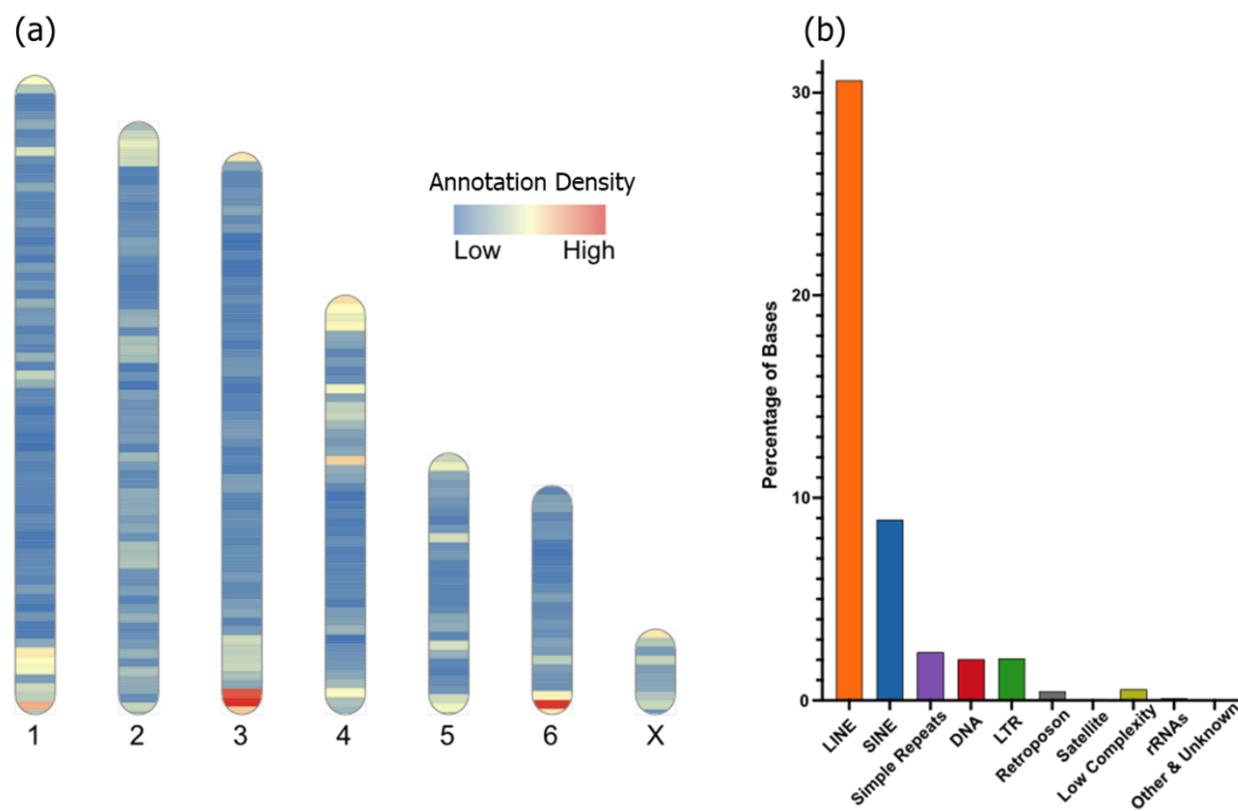
a) Contact map of Omni-C data against chromosome-scale scaffolds in the eastern quoll assembly. The enrichment level of chromosomal contacts is shown as blue pixel intensity b) Stacked bar plot comparing the recovery of mammalian BUSCO genes. Recovery in the eastern quoll is among the highest for sequenced marsupials, with low rates of duplicated or fragmented orthologs.

64 The eastern quoll reference genome

65 Eastern quoll samples were acquired opportunistically from an adult female postmortem,
66 including several frozen tissues and live primary fibroblasts which were expanded in culture
67 (Supplementary Table S1). Using these, we generated a chromosome-scale, de novo reference
68 genome by assembling ~97.68 gigabases (Gb) of Pacific Biosciences high-fidelity (HiFi) long-
69 reads and ~126 Gb of Omni-C long-range chromatin contact data. We called the resulting
70 assembly DasViv_v1.0. The assembly size was ~3.14 Gb, comparable to that of related
71 marsupials, and scaffolds were nearly free of internal gaps (Supplementary Table S2)^{23, 24}. The
72 assembly was composed of only 76 scaffolds, of which the seven largest corresponded to the
73 conserved karyotype found across all known dasyurids: six autosomes plus the X chromosome
74 (Fig. 2a)^{25, 26}. Together, the seven chromosome-scale scaffolds accounted for 99.34% of the

75 total assembly size. Homology between eastern quoll chromosome-scale scaffolds and those of
76 the related Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) and yellow-footed antechinus (*Antechinus*
77 *flavipes*) was confirmed by the high overlap of orthologous gene annotations (>95%) and their
78 similar total lengths (Supplementary Table S3)^{23; 24}. Recovery of complete single-copy
79 mammalian BUSCOs (Benchmarking Universal Single-Copy Orthologs) was 92.2%, second
80 only to the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) among marsupial reference genomes currently
81 available on NCBI (Fig. 2b). Moreover, rates of duplicated and fragmented BUSCO genes were
82 low (1.3% and 1.2%, respectively), reinforcing the completeness and integrity of our assembly.

Fig. 3.



a) Heat map illustrating the density of annotated genes across eastern quoll chromosome-scale scaffolds. b) Bar plot showing the distribution of annotated repeats by class.

83 **Genome annotation**

84 To accompany our assembly, we generated gene annotations by combining evidence from
85 transcriptome data generated from five tissues (Supplementary Table S1), homologous proteins
86 from related marsupials (Supplementary Table S4), as well as *ab initio* predictions. In total, we
87 generated 29,622 gene models (Fig. 3a)^{23; 24; 27-29}.

88 We also annotated and characterized the repeat content of the eastern quoll genome using
89 RepeatMasker³⁰. In total, ~1.476 gigabases were masked as repetitive (47.2% of the assembly),
90 comprising mainly LINEs (30.61%) and SINEs (8.93%; Fig. 3b). L1 repeats constituted the most
91 abundant LINEs in the assembly (20.15%) and MIRs constituted the most abundant SINEs
92 (7.67%). Notably, we identified a small fraction of bases (7,906 in total) corresponding to
93 putative KERV elements, an endogenous retrovirus that has undergone radical expansion in the
94 kangaroo genus *Macropus* (Supplementary Table S5)³¹.

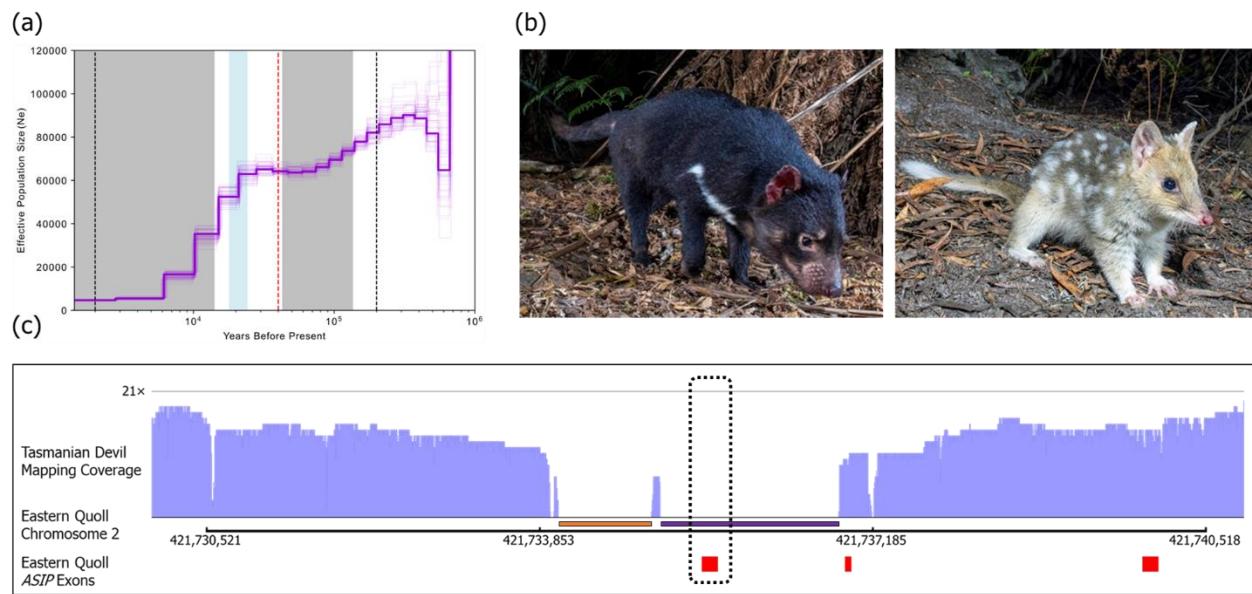
95 **Historical demography**

96 Australia has experienced substantial ecological changes over recent geological epochs.
97 For instance, the late Pleistocene saw extensive climatic changes, the periodic isolation of
98 Tasmania from the mainland, and the arrival and dispersal of humans into Australia^{1; 32; 33}. This
99 period also marked the extinction of the remaining megafauna (terrestrial vertebrates >40
100 kilograms)³⁴. However, the effects that these potential historical stressors may have had on
101 eastern quoll populations are poorly explored. Therefore, we next sought to examine historical
102 trends in eastern quoll effective population size (N_e) with multiple sequentially Markovian
103 coalescent (MSMC) analysis, using a mutation rate for the closely-related Tasmanian devil
104 measured from parent-offspring trios and a generation time of 2 years^{35; 36}.

105 Our analysis indicated long-term decline in N_e , comprised of two phases (Fig. 4a). The first
106 of the inferred decline phases is indicated to have begun ~300 thousand years ago (kya) and
107 continued until approximately 70 kya. However, recent work on the properties of MSMC analysis

108 in the related Tasmanian devil suggest that accuracy can decline markedly during very recent
109 and very ancient periods (less than 1,000 and greater than 100,000 generations ago,
110 respectively)². Thus, we are cautious in over-interpreting the precise start of this decline phase,
111 which falls outside of this range in our analysis (~2-200 kya). The more recent inferred decline
112 began approximately 28 kya and extended into the Holocene (Fig. 4a). The arrival of humans in
113 Tasmania ~40 kya seems an unlikely candidate to have driven this decline, as they co-existed
114 with eastern quolls for some 12 kyr with apparently little impact on N_e ³³. Curiously, our analyses
115 indicate that both declines may have initiated during periods in which Tasmania was connected
116 to mainland Australia due to lowered sea levels³⁷, despite the potential for increased gene flow
117 between Tasmanian and mainland populations. It is possible that unfavorable climates during
118 these colder periods created suboptimal environmental conditions in Tasmania and it is unclear
119 whether the Bassian Plain (the land bridge connecting Tasmania and mainland Australia)
120 environments were conducive to gene flow. Indeed, bare-nosed wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*)
121 populations with past territorial connections via the Bassian (i.e. on Tasmania, Flinders Island,
122 and mainland Australia) appear to have maintained genetic isolation³⁸. Future resequencing
123 studies of eastern quolls from Tasmanian, Bruny Island, and preserved historical mainland
124 specimens may provide further insights into historical gene flow and population structure, which
125 can confound MSMC and related analyses.

Fig. 4.



a) Step plot illustrating inferred changes in eastern quoll effective population size (Ne) over time. Grey regions indicate periods in which Tasmania was separated from mainland Australia (~135-43 kya and ~14 kya to present). The blue region indicates the coldest period of the Last Glacial Maximum (~24-18 kya)¹. The dashed red line represents the arrival of humans in Tasmania (~40 kya). Area between the black dashed lines at 2,000 and 200,000 years represent the window within which MSMC analysis is expected to be accurate based on previous studies (1-100 thousand generations before present)². b) Photographs comparing pelage color of the Tasmanian devil and eastern quoll (photo credits Brett Vercoe). c) Mapping coverage of Tasmanian devil long reads (in light purple) across the ASIP locus in the eastern quoll genome. Exons of the eastern quoll ASIP gene are shown as red blocks. The deletion region is indicated by the absence of mapped Tasmanian devil reads underlined by a purple bar and encompassing exon 1 (dashed box) of ASIP. The putative eastern quoll insertion is underlined by an orange bar, upstream of the Tasmanian devil deletion.

126 Comparative genomics of pigmentation

127 The closest living relative to the quolls (genus *Dasyurus*) is the Tasmanian devil. Notably,
128 quolls and Tasmanian devils differ markedly in their coat color and patterning. The quoll
129 background coat color consists of brown dorsal fur, punctuated by spots of white fur and white-
130 to-yellow ventral fur. In contrast, Tasmanian devils have nearly uniform brown/black fur on both
131 dorsum and ventrum, with many individuals bearing unpigmented white patches on the chest,
132 shoulders and/or base of the tail (Fig. 4b). The color of the background dorsal fur of eastern
133 quolls is produced by alternating bands of yellow pheomelanin and dark brown eumelanin in

134 individual hair shafts, a pattern called “agouti”³⁹. The agouti pattern, which is common among
135 diverse mammals and likely ancestral among dasyurid marsupials, is known to be regulated in
136 part by the interactions of two key proteins, the melanocortin 1 receptor (MC1R) which promotes
137 eumelanin production and agouti signaling peptide (ASIP), which antagonizes MC1R leading to
138 pheomelanin synthesis⁴⁰. Melanistic morphs of many animals have been shown to be caused by
139 loss-of-function (LOF) mutations in the *ASIP* gene, including multiple independent
140 polymorphisms among *Peromyscus* mice and in wild cats^{41; 42}. Therefore, we hypothesized that
141 the dark, eumelanin-bearing hair in Tasmanian devils might therefore have evolved through a
142 comparable mechanism.

143 We first sought to compare *ASIP* orthologs from our eastern quoll genome (DasViv_v1.0)
144 and the reference genomes of the Tasmanian devil (mSarHar1.11) with those from several
145 other dasyuromorph species by aligning their coding sequences (Supplementary File S1 and
146 Supplementary Table S6)^{23; 24; 43-45}. Notably, while extracting orthologs from each reference
147 genome, we failed to identify the first exon of *ASIP* from mSarHar1.11, despite the assembly
148 being of high-quality and containing few gaps²⁴. To rule out the possibility that this region is
149 present in the Tasmanian devil genome, but not reliably assembled during the construction of
150 mSarHar.1.11, we aligned the nanopore long reads used to produce this genome against our
151 eastern quoll genome. A histogram of read coverage showed two regions in which no
152 Tasmanian devil reads mapped (**Fig. 4c**). Among these, the second region (~1.8kb long)
153 encompassed the entirety of *ASIP* exon 1. Together, these observations indicated the presence
154 of a potential deletion of the first exon of this gene, including the start codon, supporting the
155 notion of an *ASIP* LOF underlying the Tasmanian devil’s melanistic coat color.

156 To confirm that the putative *ASIP* exon 1 deletion was not unique to the individual animal
157 used to produce the mSarHar1.11 assembly, we next extracted the orthologous genomic region
158 from another Tasmanian devil genome assembly available on NCBI, (SarHar_Dovetail_2.0),
159 which was generated from a different animal and used different sequencing and assembly

160 approaches. Additionally, we extracted this region from a third dasyurid species, the yellow-
161 footed antechinus (AdamAnt_v2) for comparison. Interestingly, alignment of these regions
162 revealed that the first, upstream region which had shown zero Tasmanian devil read mapping
163 coverage likely represents an eastern quoll-specific insertion, as this sequence was not found in
164 either Tasmanian devil or yellow-footed antechinus (Supplementary File S2). However,
165 consistent with our previous observations, our alignments also revealed identical deletion
166 breakpoints for the putative deletion region encompassing *ASIP* exon 1 in both Tasmanian devil
167 individuals (Supplementary File S2).

168 Taken together, these results provide strong evidence for the fixation of a loss-of-function
169 mutation in the Tasmanian devil ortholog of *ASIP*. Given the known effects of *ASIP* LOF in other
170 mammals, such a mutation is expected to cause a melanistic (non-agouti) pigment phenotype,
171 thus underpinning the stark difference in background coat color between the Tasmanian devil
172 and quolls.

173 **Conclusions**

174 Here, we present new, high-quality genomic resources for the endangered eastern quoll.
175 Our chromosome-scale genome assembly closely matches the known chromosome
176 complement of the species which is conserved among dasyurid marsupials. The completeness
177 and contiguity of the assembly exceeds that of most existing marsupial reference genomes as
178 indicated by high BUSCO recovery and low gap percentage. Our comparative analysis of core
179 pigmentation loci reveals the probable basis of pelage variation between the eastern quoll and
180 its close relative the Tasmanian devil, and genome annotations provided here represent a tool
181 for future comparative studies. Moreover, we identify preliminary evidence of historical
182 demographic declines, reinforcing the value of future population genomic studies aimed at
183 defining diversity, population structure, and genetic load in this species.

184 **Data availability**

185 The eastern quoll reference genome and all sequence data used in its generation are
186 available on NCBI under BioProject PRJNA758704. Transcriptome data used in gene
187 annotations are available under BioProject PRJNA963007. Gene annotation GFF files and all
188 original code used in this study can be accessed in a permanent FigShare repository:
189 <https://doi.org/10.26188/23501301.v1>.

190 **Acknowledgements**

191 We thank Revive & Restore for their funding and organizational support for this project with
192 special thanks to Bridget Baumgartner, Cantata Bio LLC for computational support and
193 sequencing services with special thanks to Mark Daly and Jordan Zhang, Karrie Rose for
194 collecting tissues, Sandy Ingleby and Emma Peel for depositing samples at Australian Museum,
195 the Computational Biology Core in the Institute for Systems Genomics at the University of
196 Connecticut for the use of the Xanadu HPC, Brett Vercoe for the use of his eastern quoll and
197 Tasmanian devil photographs and Elise Ireland for proofreading the manuscript.

198 **Author contributions**

199 C.Y.F., A.J.M., N.M.R., R.K.H., C.P.B. and M.E.J. conceived the study and acquired
200 funding. C.Y.F. performed assembly quality, gene annotation, historical demographic, and
201 comparative genomic analyses. G.A.H. performed genomic repeat characterization. S.R.F.
202 isolated dermal fibroblasts. R.B., T.F., H.S. and N.M.R. acquired samples, M.B.R, R.O. and
203 A.J.P. facilitated sample transport. C.Y.F., G.A.H. and S.R.F. wrote the manuscript with input
204 from all authors.

205 **Funding**

206 This project was supported by a Wild Genomes grant to C.Y.F., A.J.M., N.M.R., R.K.H.,
207 C.P.B. and M.E.J. from Revive & Restore (Contract no. 2020-017). C.Y.F. was supported by

208 NIH NRSA fellowship F32GM139240-01. G.A.H. and R.J.O. are supported by a grant from the
209 US National Institutes of Health R01GM123312-02.

210 **Author notes**

211 Conflicts of interest: None declared.

212 **Materials and methods**

213 **Eastern quoll sightings map**

214 An approximation of the eastern quoll's range within Tasmania was produced by accessing
215 curated sighting data from studies recorded in the Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas
216 (<https://www.naturalvaluesatlas.tas.gov.au/>), filtering to those within the 50-year period from
217 1/1/1973 to 1/1/2023. Locations were visualized on a map of Tasmania using a custom R script.

218 **Samples**

219 Samples of kidney, heart, liver, and spleen tissue were opportunistically collected as
220 secondary use during the necropsy of an adult, brown morph female quoll named Manda,
221 originating from the Aussie Ark captive breeding sanctuary and which had been euthanized for
222 veterinary reasons at Taronga Zoo (Sydney, NSW Australia). Excess tissue samples from this
223 individual were deposited in the Australian Museum along with the pelt and skeleton under
224 accession number M.52159. Subsampled tissues were snap frozen in liquid nitrogen
225 immediately upon collection and were stored at -80°C until used.

226 Additionally, slices of toe pad were taken and used to isolate primary dermal fibroblasts in
227 culture. Briefly, small pieces of footpad tissue were scored into the base of a 30-mm plastic
228 culture dish. 0.5 mL of DMEM (Gibco 10569044) containing 10% fetal bovine serum and
229 antibiotic/antimycotic) was carefully added to the dish without disrupting the tissue pieces and
230 incubated at 33°C in 5% CO₂. The next day, medium was carefully added up to a total of 2 mL,
231 then replaced every two days. Once the fibroblast outgrowths were 90% confluent, cells were

232 expanded by trypsinization to a T25 flask, then five aliquots cryopreserved in fibroblast medium
233 containing 10% DMSO. Cells were expanded in culture for eight passages before pellets were
234 collected and frozen at -80°C for RNA-seq.

235 **Genome sequencing and assembly**

236 Samples of liver tissue were used by Dovetail Genomics (Scotts Valley, CA USA) for
237 genome sequencing and assembly. High molecular weight DNA was extracted using the Qiagen
238 Blood & Cell Culture DNA miniprep kit (catalogue no: 13323) and quantified using a Qubit 2.0
239 Fluorometer (Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA, USA). PacBio (Menlo Park, CA, USA) SMRTbell
240 libraries were constructed using the SMRTbell Express Template Prep Kit 2.0. Libraries were
241 bound to polymerase using the Sequel II Binding Kit 2.0 and were sequenced on Sequel II 8M
242 SMRT cells. This yielded approximately 97.68 gigabases of sequence comprised of 5,959,830
243 HiFi reads with an average length of ~16,390nt. HiFi reads were then assembled into contigs
244 using Hifiasm v0.15.4-r343 with default parameters⁴⁶. Unpurged duplicates were then removed
245 using purge_dups (v1.2.5) using automated thresholds⁴⁷.

246 A 3D chromatin contact library was produced from additional liver subsamples using
247 Dovetail's Omni-C kit and was sequenced on an Illumina HiSeqX, generating approximately 126
248 gigabases of sequence (~420 million read pairs in 2x150bp format). Chromosome-scale
249 scaffolds were then produced by first aligning Omni-C libraries to the *de novo* contigs with BWA
250 mem and the HiRise Pipeline was used to make contig joins and break putative misjoins^{48; 49}.
251 Contact data were visualized by processing alignments with Pairtools (v1.0.2) and creating a
252 .hic file with juicer_tools pre (v1.22.01) which was loaded into Juicebox (v1.11) and exported to
253 generate a contact map⁵⁰⁻⁵².

254 **Genome assessment**

255 Genome assembly metrics related to contiguity, base composition and contig/scaffold
256 lengths were generated using the stats.sh script contained in the bbmap v39.01 package⁵³.

257 Assembly completeness was further assessed via the recovery of benchmarking orthologs
258 using BUSCO v5.4.6 in genome mode with the mammalia_odb10 database⁵⁴. BUSCO gene
259 recovery in the eastern quoll assembly was compared to that of all other marsupial whole-
260 genome assemblies hosted on the NCBI Genomes database and labelled as the representative
261 genome for their species as of April 18th 2023^{23; 24; 28; 29; 43-45; 55-58}.

262 **Inference of chromosome homology**

263 Homology between eastern quoll chromosomes and those of the related Tasmanian devil
264 and yellow-footed antechinus were inferred using gene annotation overlap. Briefly, homologs of
265 Tasmanian devil genes and antechinus genes respectively were identified via liftover to the
266 eastern quoll genome using Liftoff v1.6.3 (parameters -d 4 -a 0.9 -s 0.9)⁵⁹. Annotations were
267 compared between chromosome-scale scaffolds in the eastern quoll and each reference
268 dasyurid's genomes. Chromosomes sharing >= 95% of their gene content were deemed to be
269 homologous. Annotation-based homology assignment was supported by the nearly identical
270 relative sizes of presumptive homologous chromosomes between species, consistent with the
271 exceptionally conserved karyotype previously reported among all examined dasyurids^{25; 26}.

272 **RNA-sequencing and gene annotation**

273 Frozen samples of eastern quoll heart, kidney, liver, spleen and a pellet of cultured dermal
274 fibroblasts were provided to Psomagen Inc (Rockville, MD USA). RNA-seq libraries were
275 prepared using the TruSeq Stranded mRNA LT sample prep kit (15031047 Rev. E) and
276 sequenced on an Illumina NovaSeq 6000 in 2x150bp format. Residual adapters were removed,
277 and reads were trimmed and filtered for quality using Trimmomatic v0.39 (parameters:
278 SLIDINGWINDOW:5:15, MINLEN:50, AVGQUAL:20, ILLUMINACLIP:2:30:10)⁶⁰. After
279 processing, libraries ranged from approximately 29 to 40 million retained read pairs.

280 To annotate genes in the eastern quoll genome, filtered RNA-seq reads from all five tissues
281 together with RefSeq homologous proteins from seven other marsupial species were provided

282 to the funannotate v1.8.14 pipeline which integrated these with augustus *ab initio* predictions to
283 infer gene models⁶¹. Within the funannotate pipeline, the following modules were used: train
284 (parameters: --no_trimmomatic, --stranded RF), predict (--augustus_species human, --
285 busco_seed_species human, --optimize_augustus, --busco_db mammalia, --ploidy 1, --
286 organism other, --min_intronlen 10, --max_intronlen 100000, --repeats2evm), and update
287 (default parameters). This approach produced models for 29,622 genes, including 31,319
288 protein-coding transcripts. Of these, we were able to assign gene symbols to 14,293, based on
289 high-confidence 1-to-1 orthology inferred using eggNOG-mapper's Mammalia database, a figure
290 comparable to that of the Tasmanian devil and yellow-footed antechinus annotations produced
291 by RefSeq (15,613 and 15,573 respectively)⁶². The density of annotated genes was visualized
292 using the Rldeogram, providing a histogram of gene counts across 10 megabase (mb) windows
293 on each chromosome⁶³.

294 **Repeat masking and annotation**

295 Repeats in the eastern quoll assembly were annotated with RepeatMasker (v4.1.3) using
296 the NCBI BLAST derived search engine rmblast, sensitive settings (-s), and a combined Dfam
297 (v3.6) and Repbase (v20181026) repeat database for marsupials (-species metatheria)^{30; 64}. The
298 repeat annotations produced were used to hardmask the assembly using Bedtools (v2.29.0)⁶⁵.
299 Subsequently, RepeatMasker was performed on the hardmasked assembly using a custom
300 repeat library to identify KERV long terminal repeat elements (LTRs) and other marsupial-
301 derived satellites absent in the above repeat databases. The resulting repeat annotations were
302 combined and summarized using the RepeatMasker utility script buildSummary.pl.

303 **Historical demography**

304 Haplotype-phased variants for the reference eastern quoll were identified by parsing
305 aligned Omni-C reads with samtools and pairtools and passing them to the Google Deepvariant
306 pipeline which was run with default settings to call and filter variants^{50; 66; 67}. Variant phasing was

307 performed using HapCUT2 (v1.2)⁶⁸. The three largest chromosomes in the eastern quoll
308 genome exceed the maximum scaffold size limitations in the .bai alignment index required for
309 several steps in data processing. Therefore, a second copy of the assembly was made, in which
310 each of these scaffolds was split into two equal halves using samtools faidx. HiFi reads were
311 then mapped against this copy using minimap2 v 2.24-r1122 (parameters -a -x map-hifi) and
312 filtered with samtools view (parameters -h -q 20 -F 2304)^{67; 69}. The alignment file was then
313 reduced to only chromosome-scale scaffolds corresponding to the six autosomes and the
314 average mapping depth was calculated with samtools depth. A mapping coverage mask file was
315 then generated using the bamcaller.py included in the MSMC2 package, providing the average
316 coverage depth calculated above. Additionally, the RepeatMasker bed file was used to identify
317 construct a mappability mask which excluded repetitive regions. These masks were provided
318 together with heterozygous SNPs with QUAL >= 10 to the msmc-tools script
319 generate_multihetsep.py (<https://github.com/stschiff/msmc-tools>). Finally, MSMC2 v2.1.4 was
320 used to infer the eastern quoll's demographic history with 50 EM-iterations (-i 50) and time
321 pattern (-p) 1*2+20*1+1*5, reducing the number of free parameters relative to default settings
322 and grouping the last five time segments to reduce overfitting at extremely ancient time periods.
323 Data were then plotted using the previously-reported generation time of two years and a per-
324 site, per-generation mutation rate of 5.95e-9^{35; 36}.

325 **Comparative genomics**

326 The AS/P sequence was annotated in all available dasyuromorph reference genomes on
327 NCBI via lift-over from the annotation of the yellow-footed antechinus (see: 'Inference of
328 chromosome homology'). Sequences were then extracted with gffread, translated into the
329 conserved reading frame using MACSE v2, and then aligned using the MAFFT web server
330 using default parameters⁷⁰⁻⁷².

331 To generate coverage histograms, Tasmanian devil long reads used to generate
332 mSarHar1.11 were accessed from NCBI SRA (Accession: ERR3930603) and aligned against
333 the eastern quoll genome with minimap2 v2.24 (parameter: -x map-ont). Pileups of reads
334 mapped to the *ASIP* locus were then visualized using IGV⁷³.

335 To perform alignments of genomic sequence surrounding the *ASIP* exon 1 region, *ASIP*
336 exon 2 from the Tasmanian devil was aligned against the eastern quoll (DasViv_v1.0), yellow-
337 footed antechinus (AdamAnt_v2), and Tasmanian devil (mSarHar1.11 and
338 SarHar_Dovetail_2.0) assemblies using blastn with default settings⁷⁴. Samtools faidx was then
339 used to extract the region containing the putative deletion region (i.e., between conserved flank
340 sequences found in all species). These regions were then and were then aligned using the
341 MAFFT web browser with default parameters^{67; 72}.

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