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1 **Running title: Molecular phylogeny of *Oreochromis* cichlid fishes**

2

3 **Molecular phylogeny of *Oreochromis* (Cichlidae: Oreochromini) reveals**
4 **mito-nuclear discordance and multiple colonisation of adverse aquatic**
5 **environments**

6

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33

34 Abstract

35 Although the majority of cichlid diversity occurs in the African Great Lakes, these fish have also
36 diversified across the African continent. Such continental radiations, occurring in both rivers and lakes
37 have received far less attention than lacustrine radiations despite some members, such as the
38 oreochromine cichlids (commonly referred to as ‘tilapia’), having significant scientific and socio-
39 economic importance both within and beyond their native range. Unique among cichlids, several species
40 of the genus *Oreochromis* exhibit adaptation to soda conditions (including tolerance of elevated
41 temperatures and salinity), which are of interest from evolutionary biology research and aquaculture
42 perspectives. Questions remain regarding the factors facilitating the diversification of this group, which
43 to date have not been addressed within a phylogenetic framework. Here we present the first
44 comprehensive (32/37 described species) multi-marker molecular phylogeny of *Oreochromis* and
45 closely related *Alcolapia*, based on mitochondrial (1583 bp) and nuclear (3092 bp) sequence data. We
46 show widespread discordance between nuclear DNA and mitochondrial DNA trees. This could be the
47 result of incomplete lineage sorting and/or introgression in mitochondrial loci, although we didn’t find
48 a strong signal for the latter. Based on our nuclear phylogeny we demonstrate that adaptation to adverse
49 conditions (elevated salinity, temperature, or alkalinity) has occurred multiple times within
50 *Oreochromis*, but that adaptation to extreme (soda) conditions (high salinity, temperature, and
51 alkalinity) has likely arisen once in the lineage leading to *O. amphimelas* and *Alcolapia*. We also show
52 *Alcolapia* is nested within *Oreochromis*, which is in agreement with previous studies, and here revise the
53 taxonomy to synonymise the genus in *Oreochromis*, retaining the designation as subgenus *Oreochromis*
54 (*Alcolapia*).

55

56 Keywords: *Tilapia*; *Alcolapia*; ancestral state reconstruction; mito-nuclear discordance; introgression;
57 incomplete lineage sorting; taxonomic revision.

58

59 Introduction

60 The propensity for African cichlids to form adaptive radiations within lacustrine environments has
61 received considerable research attention (Turner 2007, Seehausen 2015), but the processes promoting
62 diversification within largely riverine lineages are less well known. One of the most species rich and
63 widely distributed lineages of African cichlids is the oreochromine group. Oreochromine cichlids have
64 significant scientific and socio-economic importance both within and beyond their native range –
65 providing a major food source for fisheries and aquaculture, a biocontrol agent for aquatic plants and,
66 together with other cichlid groups, they are a ‘model’ system for evolutionary research (Kobayashi et al.
67 2015; Yue et al. 2016; Brawand et al. 2014). However, the phylogenetic relationships of the species of
68 the most diverse group - *Oreochromis* Günther 1889 - are poorly understood.

69 As defined by Dunz and Schliewen (2013), the tribe Oreochromini is comprised of the
70 mouthbrooding lineages formerly assigned to the tilapiine tribe: *Alcolapia*, *Danakilia*, *Iranocichla*,
71 *Oreochromis*, *Sarotherodon*, *Tristramella*, along with four *Sarotherodon*-derived genera endemic to the
72 Cameroonian crater Lake Barombi Mbo (*Konia*, *Myaka*, *Pungu*, *Stomatepia*). The most diverse genus,
73 *Oreochromis*, is found throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the Nile basin and Middle East
74 (Trewavas 1983). The Oreochromini largely occur in rivers, floodplains and shallow lakes (75% of
75 species occur in rivers, or rivers and lakes; Trewavas 1983) and while members occur in every larger
76 lake of Africa (and in many small ones), they have only formed low diversity radiations in very few lakes
77 (Lowe-McConnell 1959; Trewavas 1982; Klett & Meyer 2002; Seehausen 2007), and these usually are
78 lakes that lack haplochromine cichlids (Seehausen 2007).

79 Oreochromine cichlids are attractive targets for aquaculture, with at least eight species actively
80 farmed globally. The Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) is one of the most widely farmed aquaculture
81 species globally, but other species of *Oreochromis* are farmed in many local regions on a smaller scale,

82 and are also important capture fisheries species (FAO 2016). However, such aquaculture and capture
83 fishery improvement initiatives can have significant environmental impact where fish escape and
84 establish local populations. Many species of *Oreochromis* have a substantial invasive potential,
85 exhibiting trophic plasticity that enables broad resource use, and a tendency to hybridise (Genner et al.
86 2013; Shechonge et al. 2019), and now four species of *Oreochromis* are listed on the Global Invasive
87 Species Index (IUCN 2018). Despite certain species exhibiting strong invasive potential, some species
88 within the the genus are severely range restricted and thus are threatened, with 19 species (50%)
89 categorised as "Near Threatened to Critically Endangered", of which seven species are listed as
90 Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List, v. 2017/3).

91 Although the higher-level taxonomic categories of cichlids formerly referred to as "Tilapia" have
92 received recent attention (e.g., Dunz and Schliewen 2013), questions remain regarding the factors
93 facilitating the diversification within *Oreochromis*. However, previous phylogenetic studies included
94 limited taxonomic coverage of *Oreochromis*, and delivered conflicting results. These have been largely
95 based on mtDNA markers, with the exception of Schwarzer et al. (2009), Dunz & Schliewen (2013), and
96 Matschiner *et al.* (2017) that included nuclear loci, but only a maximum of four species of *Oreochromis*
97 for the earlier studies, and seven species for the latter study. A recent study investigating
98 actinopterygian relationships (Rabosky *et al.* 2018), included 17 species of *Oreochromis* and two species
99 of *Alcolapia* for both mitochondrial and nuclear data (expanding slightly on Rabosky *et al.* 2013), and
100 while all taxa in this study included ND2, inclusion of nuclear data was very limited, with only *O. niloticus*
101 and *O. tanganyicae* having reasonable coverage.

102 The soda lake cichlid species in the genus *Alcolapia* were originally described as a member of
103 *Tilapia* and subsequently included by Trewavas (1983) as subspecies within a subgenus of *Oreochromis*,
104 as *O. (Alcolapia) alcalicus alcalicus* and *O. (Alcolapia) alcalicus grahami*. Seegers et al. (1999) elevated
105 the subgenus *Alcolapia* to genus based on mtDNA sequence data, and later revised the species name
106 *alcalicus* to *alcalica* to agree with the feminine genus (Seegers 2008). However, while molecular
107 analyses have consistently resolved a monophyletic *Alcolapia*, that is shown to nest within *Oreochromis*,
108 the specific relationship to *Oreochromis* is unresolved, with various taxa having been hypothesised to
109 be the sister species to the *Alcolapia* clade: *O. amphimelas* (Seegers *et al.* 1999; Nagl *et al.* 2001), *O.*

110 *malagarasi* (Seegers *et al.* 1999), *O. tanganyicae* (Schwarzer *et al.* 2009, Dunz & Schliewen 2013) and *O.*
111 *variabilis* (Kavembe *et al.* 2013, Matschiner *et al.* 2017, Rabosky *et al.* 2018). Other than *O. amphimelas*,
112 the other three species previously suggested as alternative sister taxa to *Alcolapia* (i.e. *O. malagarasi*, *O.*
113 *tanganyicae*, *O. variabilis*) are not found in soda lake conditions. Based on the lack of a densely sampled
114 phylogeny for *Oreochromis* and *Alcolapia*, we generated a comprehensive phylogeny for the group using
115 multiple markers from the mitochondrial and nuclear genomes with near-complete coverage of sampled
116 loci.

117

118 Adaptation to adverse environments

119 Of the 44 currently recognised species and subspecies of *Oreochromis*, excluding *Alcolapia*, nine are
120 known to tolerate or occur in environments with elevated salinity or temperature, but only *O.*
121 *amphimelas* and *Alcolapia* have adapted to the high alkalinity and low dissolved oxygen levels found in
122 soda lake conditions (see Table 1). Tolerance to temperature and salinity are intrinsically linked, with
123 lower temperature ranges tolerated in saline conditions than in freshwater in some species of tilapia
124 (reviewed in Philippart & Ruwet 1982), and these two parameters are considered to be the determining
125 factors in the distribution of several species. Several species of *Oreochromis* are euryhaline and
126 acclimatise to a range of levels of salinity (from freshwater through to seawater), including *O. urolepis*
127 and *O. mossambicus* that naturally occur in estuarine conditions and have been widely used in
128 aquaculture due to their salinity tolerance (e.g., Riedel & Costa-Pierce 2005; Sardella & Brauner 2008;
129 Ulotu *et al.* 2016). The typically freshwater *O. niloticus* (composed of seven subspecies) includes
130 members that have successfully colonised thermal hot springs (Bezault *et al.* 2007, Ndiwa *et al.* 2014),
131 while other *Oreochromis* species thrive in the high-pH volcanic springs feeding the soda lakes of East
132 Africa (Trewavas 1983). In particular, *O. amphimelas* occurs in the springs and main water bodies of the
133 seasonal soda-like Lakes Manyara, Eyasi, Sulungali, Kitangiri, and Singida, Tanzania. This species co-
134 occurs with introduced populations of *O. niloticus* in the Sulungali, Kitangiri and Singida lakes and
135 alongside introduced populations of *O. esculentus* in Kitangiri and Singida. The genus *Alcolapia* has
136 diversified in the even more extreme environment of the nearby soda lakes: Lakes Natron in Tanzania
137 and Magadi in Kenya (Seegers *et al.* 1999, Ford *et al.* 2015, 2016) and occurs in alkaline hydrothermal

138 springs feeding the lakes. These hot, hyper saline and highly alkaline soda springs represent some of the
139 most extreme aquatic environments known supporting fish life. It is unclear whether adaptation to soda
140 waters occurred early in the evolution of this lineage or arose more recently; and whether it arose only
141 once or multiple times. Resolving the species relationships of the genera *Oreochromis* and *Alcolapia* will
142 enable these hypotheses to be tested.

143 Based on our comprehensive multi-marker phylogeny, we examine the taxonomic status of the
144 genus *Alcolapia* to test whether *Alcolapia* and *Oreochromis* are reciprocally monophyletic. We also test
145 for multiple origins of a) tolerance to increased salinity and temperature typical of soda conditions, and
146 b) two male secondary sexual characteristics: extended jaws and the genital tassel (long bifid filaments
147 that develop in the breeding season on the genital papillae), that have historically been used to delimit
148 subgenera of *Oreochromis*.

149

150 2. Materials and methods

151 2.1 Species sampling

152 A total of 28 species from 33 described species of *Oreochromis*, as well as all four species of *Alcolapia*
153 (using taxonomic data compiled by Eschmeyer et al. 2018), are included in this study. Multiple wild
154 samples of each species, and where possible subspecies, from across Africa were included totalling 105
155 samples (Appendix A, Table S1). Specimens were collected mainly using seine nets, with specimens
156 euthanised with an overdose of clove oil and subsequently preserved in 70-80% ethanol. Fin-clips or
157 muscle tissue were taken for molecular analysis and were preserved in 96-100% ethanol. While this
158 study endeavoured to produce a comprehensive phylogeny of all species of *Oreochromis*, five species
159 could not be obtained, including *O. aureus* (although common in some countries as a food fish, we only
160 included wild samples with known localities), *O. ismailiaensis*, *O. lidole*, *O. saka*, and *O. spilurus*. However,
161 of these species we believe *O. lidole* to be functionally extinct based on our personal extensive field
162 observations (GFT, MJG), and it is likely that *O. saka* is a geographic variant (and junior synonym) of *O.*
163 *karongae* (Turner & Robinson 1991). *Oreochromis ismailiaensis* has also not been seen since the original
164 description and the type locality is reported to have been converted to a concrete channel devoid of fish
165 life (A. Dunz pers. comm.), so this too may be extinct. As such (excluding *O. lidole*, *O. ismailiaensis* and *O.*

166 *saka* as extinct or invalid species), our study represents ~93% of all *Oreochromis* species, and all
167 *Alcolapia* species (94% when *Oreochromis* and *Alcolapia* are combined). We included two *Sarotherodon*
168 species (*S. galilaeus* and *S. mvogoi*) based on their close association to *Oreochromis* and *Alcolapia* (Dunz
169 and Schliewen 2013), and the more distantly related *Coptodon rendalli* as an outgroup taxa. For the
170 mtDNA dataset only, a further 16 samples were included based on ND2 GenBank sequences (Table S1).
171 These included samples referred to as *Oreochromis aureus* (three samples), as well as coverage of other
172 Oreochromine genera, including five of the ten genera (Dunz and Schliewen 2013), *Iranocichla*, *Konia*,
173 *Sarotherodon* (eight further species), *Stomatepia*, and *Tristramella*, allowing us to investigate the
174 monophyly of *Oreochromis*.

175

176 2.2 Molecular markers

177 As cichlids are known to exhibit mito-nuclear discordance (e.g., Rognon & Guyomard 2003; Seehausen
178 2003; Schliewen & Klee 2004; Egger et al. 2007, Alter et al. 2017), we selected six nuclear loci to target
179 a presumed rapidly evolving clade based on the age of the oldest member of this tribe (Dunz & Schliewen
180 2013). These included the recently developed exon-primed intron crossing (EPIC) markers BMP4,
181 CCNG1, GAPDHS, TYR, b2m (Meyer & Salzburger, 2012) and the nuclear intron S7 intron 1 (Chow &
182 Hazama, 1998), which has previously been used in cichlid studies (Schelly et al., 2006; Schwarzer et al.,
183 2009). We also selected two mitochondrial (mtDNA) genes: NADH dehydrogenase 2 (ND2), frequently
184 used in cichlid phylogenetics (e.g. Klett & Meyer, 2002; Day et al., 2007; Schwarzer et al., 2009; Dunz &
185 Schliewen, 2013), and 16S rRNA (e.g. Farias et al., 1999; Schwarzer et al., 2009) to determine if there
186 was discordance between nuclear and mitochondrial datasets. We sequenced all samples where
187 possible (see Appendix A, Table 1).

188

189 2.3 DNA Extraction, amplification and sequencing

190 Genomic DNA was extracted from fin clip samples or muscle tissue stored in 95% ethanol using the
191 Qiagen DNeasy Blood and Tissue kit. The molecular markers were amplified using the Polymerase Chain
192 Reaction. 1µl of the DNA extraction was added to 12.5µl of MyTaq™ Mix (Bioline, UK), 9.5µl of water,
193 and 1µl each of the 10M forward and reverse primers (Sigma-Aldrich, UK), to give a 25µl total reaction

194 volume. The primers and reaction conditions for each gene are shown in Appendix A, Table S2. Cleaned
195 PCR products were sequenced on a 3730xl DNA Analyser (Applied Biosystems).

196

197 2.4 Alignment and partitioning scheme

198 Sequence data was edited using Sequencher 5.4 (Gene Codes Corporation, Ann Arbor, MI USA) and
199 GENEIOUS v. 6.0.6 (Biomatters) (Kearse et al. 2012) in which contigs were assembled from the forward
200 and reverse sequences. Sequences were subsequently aligned using MUSCLE in GENEIOUS (Kearse et
201 al. 2012) using default parameters, with alignments checked for stop codons and reading frame shifts.
202 The concatenated nuclear dataset (101 samples) included a total of 3092 bp: BMP4 (482 bp), CCNG1
203 (650 bp), GAPDHS (436 bp), TYR (561 bp), b2m (482 bp) and S7 (481 bp). We, however, removed a
204 hyper-variable region (42 bp) from exon 2 of the b2m loci (from 144 and 185 bp) as it was shown to
205 contain two dominant haplotypes and a high density (14) of variable sites. As the possible causes of
206 patterns like this include strong selection, introgression from more divergent species, or paralogous
207 sequences (although our sequences of b2m aligned against a previous dataset for this region [Meyer &
208 Salzburger, 2012]), they would likely erroneously influence phylogenetic reconstruction. The final
209 dataset for the nuclear data was therefore 3050 bp. The mitochondrial dataset (116 samples) included
210 a total of 1582 bp: ND2 (1047 bp) and 16S (535 bp), with each dataset analysed separately.

211 The optimal partitioning scheme and model choices were assessed with PartitionFinder v.2.1.1 (Lanfear
212 et al., 2017) using the greedy algorithm (Huelsenbeck and Ronquist, 2001) and assessed using the
213 Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC). For the nuclear concatenated analyses we defined two subsets for
214 the nuclear (nuDNA) dataset (combining introns vs. exons) and four subsets for the mitochondrial
215 (mtDNA) dataset (each codon position for ND2, plus 16S). For the species tree analyses it was more
216 appropriate to treat the six nuclear loci as separate genes (as opposed to the exon vs. intron partitions
217 in the concatenated analysis), as the most important factor in species tree analysis is variation in the
218 gene tree, as genes will (more or less) have different histories. We also checked to see if implementing
219 the partitions by loci made any difference to the outcome of the nuclear concatenated analysis. To obtain
220 evolutionary models for these partitions we re-ran PartitionFinder. Resulting models (see Table 2) were
221 implemented in subsequent phylogenetic analyses.

222 2.5 Phylogenetic inference

223 Phylogenetic analyses were run on 1) the concatenated nuDNA dataset, and 2) the concatenated mtDNA
224 data. Each dataset was analysed using Bayesian Phylogenetic Inference (BI) and Maximum Likelihood
225 (ML), and the nuDNA dataset was also analysed using a Bayesian multispecies coalescent approach.
226 Bayesian Phylogenetic Inference was implemented using MrBayes v.3.2.6 (Ronquist et al. 2012) in
227 which analyses were run for 50,000,000 generations using four Markov chains (three heated, one cold,
228 heating parameter 0.4) with default priors, implementing the models as defined by PartitionFinder.
229 Maximum Likelihood analyses were run using GARLI v.2.01 (Zwickl 2006), again implementing the
230 models defined by PartitionFinder, and running 100 bootstrap (BS) replicates. All analyses were run on
231 CIPRES Science Gateway server (Miller et al., 2010). The convergence of MCMC runs and burn-in were
232 assessed in Tracer v.1.7 (Rambaut et al., 2018) and FigTree v.1.4 (Rambaut, 2009) was used to visualise
233 trees.

234

235 2.6 Non-parametric likelihood-based tests

236 The alternative phylogenetic topologies generated from the mt- and nuDNA datasets were evaluated
237 using the approximately unbiased (AU) test of Shimodaira (2002), who considers this test more accurate
238 than the Shimodaira-Hasegawa (SH) test. ML trees for each dataset were generated in Garli v.2.01
239 (Zwickl 2006) using matrices containing the same one sample of each ingroup and outgroup species.
240 These trees were imported into PAUP v.4.0b 10 (Swofford, 2002) and site likelihood scores generated.
241 The resulting site likelihood scores were imported and run in the program CONSEL v0.20 (Shimodaira
242 and Hasegawa, 2001).

243

244 2.7 Calibration selection and species trees analyses

245 Although our study was not focused on investigating divergence dates, generation of a species tree to
246 investigate species relationships and trait evolution required the selection of calibrations. The fossil

247 record of the Oreochromini is represented by several fossils. The oldest of these, †*Sarotherodon martyni*
248 (Van Couvering, 1982) from the Ngorora Formation, Lake Turkana, Kenya (late Miocene: 12.0–9.3 Ma),
249 is considered to belong to *Oreochromis* (Murray and Stewart 1999), although this affinity has been
250 debated (Carnevale et al. 2003). A recent discovery of eight well preserved fossil skeletons from the
251 nearby site, Kabchore, which is middle Miocene (12.5 Ma) are attributed to *Oreochromis* based on
252 unique character combinations and meristic traits (Penk et al. 2018). Based on these fossils (and the
253 occurrence of †*Sarotherodon martyni*), the older age is used to constrain *Oreochromis* and is preferred
254 here to †*Oreochromis lorenzoi* (Carnevale et al. 2003) from the upper Miocene Messinian (7.246 Ma and
255 5.333 Ma), which has previously been applied as a constraint (Schwarzer et al. 2009). As the fossil record
256 represents a minimum age, we also used a secondary calibration from Rabosky et al. (2018), which is
257 based on a large teleost wide dataset and calibrated with a larger number of fossils, to provide a
258 maximum age (14.71 Ma) for this node.

259 The Bayesian multispecies coalescent (MSC) method was applied to our nuclear data because it
260 accounts for the coalescent process and therefore accommodates ILS (Flouri et al. 2018). Since our study
261 is focused on closely related young species we removed the outgroup species *Coptodon* spp. to reduce
262 rate heterogeneity. We initially used the program *BEAST v2.4.8 (Bouckaert et al. 2014). Clock models
263 were unlinked across loci, in which a log-normal relaxed clock was selected for the S7 and GAPDHS loci,
264 while a strict clock was selected for all other loci based on the uclStdev values (which were <1) from
265 an initial run. Site models were implemented based on the results of PartitionFinder in which the
266 nuDNA data was partitioned according to loci (see section 2.4) for these analyses. Analyses were run
267 using the Birth-Death (BD) Model. We applied the maximum and minimum calibrations described
268 above using a uniform prior, selecting 'use originate' = true. Population sizes in the multi-species
269 coalescent were modelled using the 'piecewise linear and constant root' setting.

270 A further *BEAST analysis of all loci (nuclear and mitochondrial DNA) was also performed as this is
271 required for running JML software (see section 2.8). All settings were the same as described for the
272 nuclear tree species analysis. The mtDNA data was treated as a single locus (see Table 2) in which a
273 strict clock was preferred as indicated by the uclStdev value which was <1. For each dataset (i.e.

274 nuDNA, and nuDNA + mtDNA) three analyses were run with chain length 500,000,000, and convergence
275 was checked in Tracer v.1.7, as for the MrBayes analysis. Most ESS values for the nuDNA *BEAST
276 analyses were >200, with treePriors and clock rates >100, but some values (posterior, species
277 coalescent and popMean) were between 96-93. All ESS values for the nuDNA + mtDNA species tree were
278 >200. Runs were combined using TreeAnnotator, and resampled, discarding 25% burnin, and visualised
279 using FigTree v.1.4.3.

280 We also used the program Bayesian Phylogenetics and Phylogeography (BPP) v 4.0 (Flouri et al.
281 2018) (method A01) and performed runs of 30,000,000 MCMC iterations testing alternative priors. The
282 calibrations previously described were also applied to this analysis. Although we did not obtain
283 convergence across the runs on the maximum a posteriori tree (MAP) we obtained convergence on the
284 majority rule consensus (MRC) tree, which was identical across all runs. We tried two priors on the root
285 age (tau prior) 1) Inv-Gamma (3,0.002), and 2) Inv-Gamma (2,0.05), and both priors yielded the same
286 (MRC) trees.

287

288 2.8 Testing for hybridisation

289 Due to discordance between mitochondrial and nuclear trees (see Results 3.1) we attempted to
290 investigate if we could distinguish between introgression and incomplete lineage sorting (ILS) using the
291 method described by Joly et al. (2009), implemented in JML v.1.3.1 (Joly 2012). This method uses
292 posterior predictive checking by comparing the minimum sequence distance between two species to
293 test if the minimum distance is smaller than expected under a regime not accounting for hybridisation.
294 However, we acknowledge that our dataset does not include many samples per species, and that loci
295 from our nuclear dataset are short, and therefore lack power of longer sequences (see Joly et al. 2009).
296 As this method uses the posterior distributions of species trees, population sizes and divergence times,
297 we generated a further coalescent tree from all loci (see section 2.7), ensuring that all loci were unlinked
298 to obtain mutation rates needed for JML. JModelTest v.2.1.10 (Guindon and Gascuel, 2003; Darriba et al.
299 2012) was implemented to obtain models for individual loci and also to obtain settings for the .jml.ctf

300 file of JML (state frequencies, transition-transversion ratio, proportion of invariable sites, gamma rate
301 heterogeneity). We ran 1000 simulations for each of the three selected loci, mtDNA (locus rate = 0.0038),
302 BMP4 (locus rate = 0.00036) and TYR (locus rate = 0.000656) pairwise distance comparisons. A
303 Benjamini-Hochberg correction was applied to the results using R v.3.5 (R Core Team, 2018).

304

305 2.9 Trait analyses

306 We tested for correlated evolution of traits using BayesTraits v3.0.1 (Pagel et al. 2004; Pagel & Meade
307 2006), which was also used for ancestral state reconstruction. We focused on trait data for tolerance to
308 soda conditions (salinity, temperature, and pH) with species states derived from the literature (see
309 Table 1). As tolerance to elevated salinity and temperature was most common, we tested for correlated
310 evolution between these traits, and separately reconstructed ancestral states for soda adaptation,
311 defined as comprising all three tolerance traits found in a species: salinity, temperature, and pH. We also
312 examined the correlated evolution of phenotypic secondary sexual male characteristics that have been
313 used in previous taxonomic analysis: the genital tassel, and extended male jaws. Although the two traits
314 have not previously been implicated to have correlated evolution, the two traits are used as diagnostic
315 characters to separate clades and subgenera of *Oreochromis*, and the traits do not co-occur, so we tested
316 whether their presence/absence was correlated. We ran the ancestral state reconstruction analyses on
317 the nuclear datasets only, using both the MrBayes (non-ultrametric) and *BEAST (ultrametric)
318 phylogenies. We did not ultrametricise the MrBayes tree, as branch lengths can have a substantial effect
319 on ancestral state reconstructions (McCann et al. 2016), and following recommendations from
320 Cusimano & Renner (2014) to run reconstructions on more than one type of branch length depiction we
321 therefore include both the phylogram and ultrametric trees. The MrBayes nuclear concatenated tree
322 was pruned to include only one sample per species (or subspecies, where relevant). One sample each
323 was included for subspecies of three species (specifically: *O. niloticus niloticus*; *O. niloticus cancellatus*;
324 *O. niloticus filoa*; and *O. placidus placidus*; *O. placidus ruvumae*; and *O. shiranus shiranus*, *O. shiranus*
325 *chilwae*), as plausibly the subspecies may exhibit different adaptations / morphology from each other
326 and so were coded separately. The resulting tree contained 40 tips (including subspecies of *Oreochromis*,

327 species of *Alcolapia*, and the three outgroup species). Details of the specimens included in the pruned
328 tree are given in Appendix A, Table S3. No pruning was required for the *BEAST species tree as there
329 was only one tip per species (total of 36 tips), which also did not include all the respective subspecies of
330 *O. shiranus* and *O. niloticus* as the availability of only single samples meant that they could not be
331 included in the multispecies coalescent approach. The BayesTraits analysis tested the tolerance (salinity
332 and temperature) and morphological characters separately, using the Discrete analysis mode (testing
333 two binary characters) and comparing the independent model (no correlation of shifts between the two
334 traits) with dependent (correlated shifts) models (see Table S3 for how traits were coded per species).
335 Each analysis (independent and dependent) was run for 5 independent runs, with 10 million MCMC
336 iterations, with the first million discarded as burnin, and the stepping stone sampler set to use 100
337 stones and run each stone for 10^4 iterations. Tree branch lengths were scaled to a mean of 0.1 using the
338 ScaleTrees command, following the recommendations of the BayesTrait manual. Priors for the rate
339 parameters (the rate coefficient for the gain/loss of each trait respectively) were set based on initial
340 Maximum Likelihood runs in BayesTrait. Based on the ML rates estimates, the MCMC analysis on the
341 MrBayes phylogeny used a hyperprior for all rate coefficients specifying an exponential prior seeded
342 from a uniform distribution on the interval 0 to 10, and those on the *BEAST trees used an exponential
343 prior seeded from a uniform distribution on the interval 0 to 1. Mixing of the chains was checked in the
344 output files to ensure acceptance rates were in the range 20-40%; convergence and ESS were checked
345 using Tracer v1.6. The results for the independent and dependent models based on the marginal
346 likelihood from the stepping stone sampler (expressed on a natural log scale) were compared using Log
347 Bayes Factors calculated as:

$$348 \text{ Log Bayes Factors} = 2(\log \text{ marginal likelihood complex model} - \log \text{ marginal likelihood simple model})$$

349 Interpretation of the values was based on Gilks (1996) as described in the BayesTraits manual,
350 specifically: a log BF factor of <2 is interpreted as weak evidence, >2 as positive evidence, 5-10 as strong
351 evidence, and >10 as very strong evidence.

352 The tests of correlated evolution suggested that tolerance to salinity and temperature were
353 correlated traits (Results Section 3.3). However, as salinity and thermal tolerance were predominantly

354 concentrated in one clade (*Alcolapia* and *O. amphimelas*), which could potentially generate a spurious
355 pattern of correlation (Uyeda et al. 2018), we ran two separate ancestral reconstructions coding the two
356 traits either as independent or dependent (correlated) traits. The mean values of the proportional
357 likelihoods for each node was calculated with Excel. We also separately reconstructed a ‘soda’
358 adaptation trait for which tip species were coded as present if the species exhibited elevated tolerance
359 to all three parameters (temperature, salinity, and pH). We reconstructed ancestral traits for the
360 phenotypic traits (genital tassel and male jaw morphology) independently, as they did not exhibit
361 evidence of correlated trait evolution (see Results). Input files were prepared for BayesTraits using
362 TreeGraph2 (Stöver and Müller 2010), and results of the ancestral state reconstruction analysis were
363 visualised using ggtree 1.12.14 (Yu et al. 2017) in R v3.5 (R Core Team, 2018). For the analyses using
364 the *BEAST trees, ancestral state reconstructions were conducted on a reduced set of trees (resampled
365 to 25,001 trees in TreeAnnotator), and visualised by plotting on the Maximum Clade Credibility tree.

366

367 3. Results

368 3.1 Phylogenetic relationships

369 The nuclear species tree (Figure 1), BI (Supplementary Figure S1) and ML concatenated (data not
370 shown, but BS values included on Figure S1) trees were reasonably similar in topology, particularly
371 regarding subclades, although there were several instances of taxa occurring in alternative positions
372 between the concatenated and species trees, most notably the sister group of *Alcolapia* (discussed
373 below). The mtDNA concatenated trees generated using BI and ML were largely congruent (see Figures
374 1b, Supplementary Figures S2). However, comparison of nu- and mtDNA trees showed high levels of
375 mito-nuclear discordance from the strikingly different placement of certain clades and taxa (Figure 1),
376 and there are instances where different groups appear to be well resolved and monophyletic in trees
377 built from the different sets of loci (Figure 1, Supplementary Figures S1, S2). The AU test based on the
378 ML concatenated trees resulted in the mtDNA tree (-ln L 7024.31) being significantly worse fit to the
379 data ($P < 0.001$) than the nuclear tree (-ln L 6516.82), but we discuss both topologies below. As
380 mitochondrial data is prone to introgression in cichlids, we used the nuclear species trees for

381 downstream analyses. A multispecies coalescent approach is preferred as it accounts for gene tree-
382 species tree incongruence that arise due to population level processes, and is particularly suitable for
383 more recently diverged groups (e.g. Ogilvie et al. 2016, 2017 and refs therein), although we acknowledge
384 that the nuclear genome may also be introgressed in this group of fishes.

385
386 *The sister group of Alcolapia*

387 Both the *BEAST (Figure 1a) and BPP (Supplementary Figure S3) versions of the nuDNA species tree
388 resolved *O. esculentus* (a freshwater species) as the sister group to *Alcolapia* (extreme soda-lakes), with
389 *O. amphimelas* (seasonal soda-lakes) as sister to these lineages. This is however not well supported (0.55
390 / 0.69 respectively), and a preliminary *BEAST analysis including the 42 bp hyper-variable data
391 (removed from subsequent analyses due to high variability) conversely resolved *O. amphimelas* as the
392 sister group (data not shown). The nuDNA concatenated phylogenies (Figure 1b, Appendix A Figure
393 S1) (with or without the 42 bp region) resolved the sister group to the *Alcolapia* clade as *O. amphimelas*
394 (BPP 1/0.90 [concatenated/species tree]; BS 91), with *O. esculentus* resolved (BPP 1/0.90; BS 89) as
395 sister to the *Alcolapia* + *O. amphimelas* group. All these species are closely distributed geographically
396 occurring in NW Tanzania and SW Kenya. The nuDNA concatenated tree (Appendix A Figure S1) shows
397 that there is also some resolution within the *Alcolapia* clade itself, with the geographically isolated *A.*
398 *grahami* (Lake Magadi, Kenya) resolved (BPP 0.99) and most closely related to the 'northern' *A. alcalica*
399 from Lake Natron, although there is poor resolution regarding the relationships among the three
400 sympatric Lake Natron species ('southern' *A. alcalica*, *A. latilabris*, *A. ndalalani*). In contrast, the mtDNA
401 concatenated phylogeny (Figure 1c, Appendix A Figure S2) placed the *Alcolapia* clade as the sister
402 group to (BPP 0.86/BS 56) a mixed assemblage of six species (including *O. esculentus*), which are not
403 themselves phylogenetically resolved, with *O. amphimelas* resolved as the sister taxon to this clade.
404 There is also no resolution of the relationships among the constituent species of *Alcolapia*. When the
405 ND2 data alone is analysed, *Alcolapia* + *O. amphimelas* are sister taxa, albeit with low support, and the
406 'mixed assemblage' is the sister group to this clade (data not shown) indicating differing signals from
407 the mtDNA loci.

409 There are also disparities in the placement of some of the African Great Lake taxa. For example, the Lake
410 Tanganyika basin species *O. tanganyicae* and *O. malagarasi* are sister taxa in all the nuDNA phylogenies,
411 but are not close relatives in the mtDNA tree. In the mtDNA tree a sister relationship of *O. malagarasi*
412 and *O. upembae* (occurs in the Congo Basin, and East Africa, specifically within the Lake Tanganyika
413 catchment) is resolved, which is in line with Trewavas's (1983) reporting of close relationships between
414 these two species based on phenotypic characters. Other placements that differ between the nuDNA and
415 mtDNA phylogenies included riverine taxa, *O. niloticus* (a wide-ranging taxon whose native range is
416 across the Nilo-Sudan ichthyo-province) which groups with *O. lepidurus* (occurs in the Lower Congo
417 River) and *O. upembae* in the nuDNA tree. Conversely *O. niloticus* groups with *O. angolensis* (Quanza
418 ichthyo-province) and *O. schwebischi* (Lower Guinea Forest ichthyo-province) in the mtDNA tree. In the
419 mtDNA trees subspecies *O. niloticus cancellatus* and *O. niloticus filoa* (Appendix A Figure S2) were
420 consistently resolved as being more closely related to each other than to *O. niloticus niloticus*, but there
421 was poorer resolution of *O. niloticus* subspecies in the nuDNA concatenated tree (Appendix A Figure
422 S1). Notably the Lower Congo River species *O. lepidurus* is closely related to a taxon that occurs in Lake
423 Tanganyika (or its catchment) in either tree: it is the sister taxon to *O. tanganyicae* in the mtDNA tree,
424 and sister to the clade comprising *O. upembae* and *O. niloticus* in the nuDNA tree. A connection between
425 these water bodies has been demonstrated in other lineages such as lamprologine cichlids (e.g. Day et
426 al. 2007) and mastacembelid spiny eels (Day et al. 2017).

427 However, there are areas of some congruence between the trees built from mtDNA versus
428 nuDNA. In particular, species from the Lake Malawi catchment and the formerly connected Ruvuma
429 (also known as the Rovuma) catchment (*O. shiranus*, *O. squamipinnis*, *O. karongae*, *O. chunguruensis*, *O.*
430 *placidus ruvumae*) form a well supported clade in both the mtDNA and nuDNA species trees. The
431 concatenated nuclear tree supports a variation of this grouping, with the exception of *O. placidus*
432 *ruvumae*, which conversely groups within a larger clade that is sister to Lake Malawi catchment species.
433 In both nuclear trees (species and concatenated), *O. placidus* (Zambezi river) is also a member of this
434 group, whereas this taxon groups with other largely southern African species in the mtDNA tree.

435 *Pangani relationships*

436 In both the nuDNA concatenated, and mtDNA trees, *O. jipe* (“pangani”) and the type species of the genus,
437 *O. hunteri* (both endemic to the upper Pangani system in the Tanzania/Kenya border region of the East
438 African ichthyo-province) are not monophyletic. This result is also suggested from the mtDNA tree. In
439 this tree *O. jipe* and *O. mweruensis* (from the Zambezi ichthyo-province) form a clade in which
440 constituent species are non-monophyletic, although the *O. jipe* sample ZSM 1065 (not included in the
441 nuDNA analysis) forms a clade with *O. hunteri* and *O. korogwe*, highlighting that mtDNA loci may not
442 always correctly resolve species boundaries. However, when our nuclear data was analysed using
443 species tree methods *O. hunteri* and *O. jipe* are resolved as monophyletic, although with weak support.
444 A recent study focused on *O. hunteri* (Moser et al. 2018) based on mtDNA control region (830 bp) also
445 supported a close relationship between *O. jipe* and *O. hunteri*, but this study only included a small subset
446 of *Oreochromis* species.

447

448 *Oreochromis monophyly*

449 The inclusion of samples from GenBank within the mtDNA analysis (see Supplementary Figures S2)
450 allowed us to test the monophyly of *Oreochromis*. With the exception of sequences uploaded as *O. aureus*
451 (for which we did not have access to voucher specimens), *Oreochromis* was resolved as monophyletic,
452 or rather as paraphyletic with *Alcolapia* nested within it. The position of *O. aureus* (a Nilo-Sudanic
453 species) grouped within the Lake Barombi Mbo radiation, and outside of *Oreochromis* likely implies that
454 the sampled taxa are hybrids or were originally mis-identified. However, although *Oreochromis aureus*
455 has not been included in recent molecular studies of tilapiine relationships (e.g. Schwarzer et al 2009;
456 Dunz and Schliewen 2013), an allozyme study previously resolved *O. aureus* at the base of the
457 *Oreochromis* clade (Pouyaud and Agnèsè 1995). Of the four GenBank *O. aureus* samples used to sequence
458 NADH, only one is in a published paper (DQ465029.1; Cnaani et al. 2008), and was collected from stocks
459 of *O. aureus* in Israel that were originally sourced from Lakes Hula (Israel) and Manzala (Egypt), both of
460 which are also inhabited by *S. galilaeus*. Trewavas (1983) notes several characters that distinguish *S.*
461 *galilaeus* from co-occurring *O. aureus* and *O. niloticus*, including the depth of the pre-orbital bone.

462 Intergeneric hybrids between *Oreochromis* and *Sarotherodon* are viable and have been produced in
463 aquaculture strain development (using *in vitro* fertilisation; Bezault et al. 2012), but we are not aware
464 of any reports of intergeneric crosses in the wild, especially in natural sympatry zones. Further samples
465 of *O. aureus* are required to investigate this placement fully and ensure that *S. galilaeus* samples have
466 not been mis-identified as *O. aureus*.

467

468

469 3.2 Assessment of hybridisation

470 Results from the JML analysis revealed no support for introgression, with no significant signal of
471 hybridisation after applying the Benjamini-Hochberg correction in any of the loci tested (mtDNA, TYR,
472 BMP4). These results suggest that incomplete lineage sorting could explain the incongruence in mtDNA
473 and nuclear datasets (rather than a signal introgression). However, the large number of pairwise
474 comparisons (630) mean that testing across the entire phylogeny is unlikely to uncover signals of
475 hybridisation, and future analyses may focus on specific pairwise comparisons of interest. We suggest
476 that additional data would need to be included to help refine this analysis, but that ultimately
477 examination of species of *Oreochromis* using genome-wide data would provide a powerful approach to
478 test hybridisation hypotheses.

479

480 3.3 Diversification and ancestral state reconstruction

481 The BayesTraits analysis for environmental tolerance traits (salinity and thermal tolerance) using the
482 Discrete model for the nuclear *BEAST species tree gave a marginal log likelihood for the independent
483 model of -26.50 (with a standard deviation of 0.04 across 5 runs), while the dependent model had a
484 marginal log likelihood of -24.72 (s.d. 0.02). These resulted in a log Bayes Factor of 3.56, indicating
485 moderate support for the dependent model, suggesting that the shifts in adaptation to salinity and
486 thermal tolerance may be correlated. Results when using the nuclear concatenated MrBayes tree were
487 more conclusive, with the 5 runs resulting in a log Bayes Factor of 6.78, indicating strong support for
488 correlation of the traits. For the morphological traits (genital tassel and extended male jaw morphology)
489 using the nuclear *BEAST species tree the independent model marginal log likelihood was -39.82 (s.d.

490 0.06) while that for the dependent model was -39.18 (s.d. 0.04). The log BF was 1.30, indicating that
491 there was no support for the complex model (dependence of trait shifts), and suggesting that the two
492 phenotypic traits do not exhibit correlated rate shifts. Results when using the nuclear concatenated
493 MrBayes tree were similar, with the 5 runs resulting in a log Bayes Factor of -0.22, indicating no support
494 for correlation of the phenotypic traits.

495 The ancestral state reconstruction indicated that adaptation to increased salinity and/or
496 temperature has occurred multiple times within the genus *Oreochromis*, but that adaptation to soda lake
497 conditions has likely occurred once, in the lineage leading to *Alcolapia* + *O. esculentus* + *O. amphimelas*
498 (Figure 2A). The results were similar (and more conclusive) in the analysis using the concatenated
499 nuclear phylogeny (Figure S4A), where soda adaptation is likely to have occurred only once in the
500 lineage leading to *Alcolapia* + *O. amphimelas*. Reconstructing thermal and salinity tolerance
501 independently also showed that adaptation is likely to have occurred multiple times throughout the
502 phylogeny (Figure S5). The reconstruction of the phenotypic traits (Figure 2B) indicated that the
503 secondary sexual characteristics or extended jaw and genital tassel are not correlated, and that both are
504 likely to have evolved multiple times, suggesting that they are not useful taxonomic diagnostic
505 characteristics for this genus. The reconstruction of phenotypic characters on the MrBayes phylogeny
506 gave similar results to that using the *BEAST phylogeny, and suggested that the morphological traits
507 evolved independently in multiple clades (Figure S4B).

508

509 4. Discussion

510 Here, we present the first comprehensive phylogenetic analysis of the cichlid genus *Oreochromis* using
511 multi-marker molecular datasets comprising nuclear and mitochondrial loci, and reveal high levels of
512 incongruence between them. This incongruence could either represent incomplete lineage sorting
513 and/or introgression, and while we did not find a signal for the latter mechanism it cannot be ruled out.
514 Incongruence as a result of these mechanisms is commonly reported in other cichlid studies (e.g.,
515 Genner & Turner 2012; Willis et al. 2013; Meier et al. 2017). We suggest that the nuDNA phylogeny is
516 likely to be a better estimate of the species tree, although we acknowledge that additional data would
517 help to resolve conflicting relationships. Based on the nuDNA trees, we show that adaptation to adverse

518 environmental conditions (i.e. increased salinity and temperature) has occurred multiple times, but that
519 adaptation to extreme (soda) conditions is likely to have occurred once. Irrespective of the dataset
520 (nuDNA or mtDNA), we demonstrate that the *Alcolapia* clade is consistently resolved within the genus
521 *Oreochromis*.

522

523 4.1 Taxonomy of the genus *Oreochromis*: effects of mito-nuclear discordance

524 We observed substantial mito-nuclear discordance in the phylogenetic analysis (Figure 1). We note that
525 several of the relationships in the nuclear analysis are concordant with previous phenotypic
526 classifications based on phenotypic features, but that certain relationships within the mtDNA analysis
527 are also plausible based on phenotypic and geographical range data. The results suggest reticulate
528 evolution could have played a role in the existing genetic relationships, and could be a result of the fact
529 that many tilapiine species are known to have been widely translocated for stocking and aquaculture
530 purposes, although we do not find significant evidence of introgression using JML analysis. Alternative
531 explanations include incomplete lineage sorting that is widely reported in cichlids (e.g., Genner & Turner
532 2012; Meier et al. 2017; Meyer et al. 2017). Previous analysis of mito-nuclear discordance in the tribe
533 Oreochromini suggested that ancient hybridisation was the more probable explanation of this
534 discordance (Dunz & Schliewen 2013).

535 The translocation and establishment of non-native species (*O. leucostictus*, *O. niloticus*) within
536 Tanzania has been recently documented (Shechonge et al. 2018). We note two additional non-native
537 species occurrences in Tanzania from our sampling: *O. leucostictus* (AF042-04) sampled from fish ponds
538 in the Lake Eyasi basin (reportedly stocked from streams surrounding Lake Eyasi), and *O. urolepis*
539 (AF014-01) sampled from irrigation canals draining into Lake Manyara. Male specimens collected from
540 the latter site also exhibited the distinctive extended jaw morphology of sexually mature male *O.*
541 *urolepis*. To our knowledge, this is the first report of *O. urolepis* sampled in a natural water body outside
542 of its native catchments, that includes the Wami, Ruvu and Rufiji basins. However, we are aware of
543 aquaculture centres rearing *O. urolepis* in Tanga (Mmochi 2017).

544 We also find taxonomic discrepancy in the resolution of *O. placidus* samples from different
545 geographic areas. Trewavas and Teugels (1991) synonymised *O. placidus placidus* and *O. placidus*
546 *ruvumae*, but other researchers have reported substantial morphological differences between *O.*
547 *placidus* specimens from the type locality (Buzi River) and those found in the Ruvuma River (Bills 2004).
548 Our data support this latter finding as in both the nu- and mtDNA phylogenies, *O. placidus ruvumae*
549 samples form a distinct clade from *O. placidus placidus*. However, we find that within the mtDNA tree
550 and nuDNA species tree *O. placidus ruvumae* is either sister or groups within the Lake Malawi catchment
551 clade, whereas in the concatenated nuDNA tree it is more distantly related. The close relationship
552 supported in several of these trees is consistent with recent suggestions that the Ruvuma River was
553 formerly the outflow of Lake Malawi (Ivory *et al.* 2016), supported by the shared presence of *O. shiranus*
554 in the Lake Malawi catchment, in Lake Chiuta (Ruvuma catchment) and Lake Chilwa (endorheic but
555 formerly connected to Ruvuma) (Trewavas 1983). However, the mitochondrial and nuclear trees
556 disagree with morphological hypotheses (Trewavas 1983), although these are not based on cladistic
557 analyses, which placed *O. squamipinnis*, *O. karongae* and *O. chunguruensis* with the other tasseled
558 species in the subgenus *Nyasalapia*, but grouped *O. shiranus* and *O. placidus* with other species from East
559 coast rivers showing enlarged male jaws in a division of subgenus *Oreochromis*.

560 The molecular phylogenies and ancestral state reconstruction (Figure 2B) suggest that the male
561 secondary sexual phenotypic characteristics previously used to group species do not represent
562 phylogenetically conserved characters. Specifically, the presence of a genital tassel in males, a defining
563 character of the *Nyasalapia* subgenus rank erected by Thys (1968), does not reliably distinguish clades
564 resolved in our molecular phylogeny, and is likely to have evolved multiple times. Trewavas (1983)
565 reported that other than genital tassel, there were no defining phenotypic characteristics distinguishing
566 *Nyasalapia* from the rest of *Oreochromis* and suggested that the subgeneric value of the tassel was open
567 to question.

568 *Alcolapia* is consistently resolved within *Oreochromis* irrespective of dataset and forms a strongly
569 supported clade with *O. amphimelas* and *O. esculentus* irrespective of nuclear analyses performed. All
570 previous phylogenetic studies including the two genera have also resolved *Alcolapia* within
571 *Oreochromis*, albeit with less comprehensive sampling of either genus (Seegers *et al.* 1999; Nagl *et al.*

572 2001, Schwarzer *et al.* 2009, Dunz & Schliewen 2013, Kavembe *et al.* 2013, Matschiner *et al.* 2017,
573 Rabosky *et al.* 2018). However, the sister group of *Alcolapia* is contentious, as *O. amphimelas* is strongly
574 supported as its sister group based on concatenated nuclear analyses, whereas, species tree analyses
575 placed *O. esculentus* as sister, albeit with weak support. A species tree analysis of the nuclear data
576 without removing the hyper-variable 42 bp (data not shown) did support the *Alcolapia* + *O. amphimelas*
577 relationship, and it is likely that the uncertainty in the species tree may be attributed to a lack of
578 synapomorphies.

579

580 4.2 Systematics Account: Revised classification of *Alcolapia*

581 Based on the results of our phylogenetic analyses, we propose a revised classification of *Alcolapia*. Given
582 the position of *Alcolapia* within the comprehensively sampled molecular phylogenies presented here,
583 and concordant with previous molecular work, we propose that *Alcolapia* is synonymised with the
584 genus *Oreochromis*, retaining the subgeneric allocation of *Alcolapia*. We recognise *Alcolapia* Thys van
585 den Audenaerde, 1969 as a subgenus within *Oreochromis* Günther, 1889. The synonymy is necessary to
586 reflect a monophyletic taxonomy; *Oreochromis* is paraphyletic unless *Alcolapia* is subsumed within it.
587 While both Trewavas (1983) and Seegers & Tichy (1999) noted several morphological characters for
588 the diagnosis of *Alcolapia* as a sub-genus, most of the characters were shared with *O. amphimelas* and
589 several overlapped with other *Oreochromis* species. The elevation of *Alcolapia* to genus rank was
590 ultimately based on molecular (mtDNA) data (Seegers *et al.* 1999). However, this is not supported by
591 subsequent molecular analyses, including the present study. As such, the revised classification we
592 propose here follows the previous taxonomy of Seegers & Tichy (1999), namely: *Oreochromis*
593 (*Alcolapia*) *alcalicus*, *Oreochromis* (*Alcolapia*) *grahami*, *Oreochromis* (*Alcolapia*) *latilabris*, and
594 *Oreochromis* (*Alcolapia*) *ndalalani*.

595 An alternative solution to the synonymisation would be to split *Oreochromis* into several genera
596 representing the constituent reciprocally monophyletic groups; however, given the differences in
597 groups between datasets, the current data would not support this taxonomic treatment. In addition to
598 the molecular evidence for synonymising these genera, we note the phenotypic similarities between the
599 species of *Oreochromis* (*Alcolapia*) and *O. amphimelas* reported by Trewavas (1983).

600

601 4.3 Timing and colonisation of extreme conditions

602 Our study shows that there has been repeated adaptation to elevated salinity and temperature
603 throughout the evolutionary history of *Oreochromis* irrespective of phylogenetic hypothesis, but that
604 adaptation to soda conditions (high temperature, salinity, alkalinity, and low dissolved oxygen) has
605 likely occurred once. The placement of *O. esculentus* in a clade with *Alcolapia* and *O. amphimelas* in the
606 species tree analyses (Figure 1A, Supplementary S3), raises the possibility that the adaptation to soda
607 conditions was also gained in *O. esculentus* (Figure 2A), although it does not currently inhabit soda
608 conditions (Table 1). While *O. esculentus* is native to the freshwater Lake Victoria (Njiru et al, 2005;
609 Hallerman and Hilsdorf, 2014), our samples are from Lake Rukwa, a relatively shallow saline lake, where
610 they have been introduced from Lake Victoria (Seegers, 1996). Lake Rukwa became saline around 5,500
611 years ago (Barker et al, 2002), and although conditions (pH 9.19-9.26; temperature 27-32°C; salinity:
612 6,000 mg/L, Haberyan, 1987; Bathymetric survey report, 2014) are not as extreme as the springs
613 inhabited by *Oreochromis (Alcolapia)* (e.g. pH 8-12, temperature 27-42°C, salinity 34,000 mg/L) or *O.*
614 *amphimelas*, they are much higher than Lake Victoria, for example (pH: 8.2-9, temperature: 23-28
615 [surface water temperature], salinity: 97 mg/L) (vanden Bossche & Bernacsek 1990). Of course, Lake
616 Victoria has experienced phases of desiccation (Johnson et al. 1996) and so it is likely that species such
617 as *O. esculentus* will have encountered periods of higher salinity in the past. This is probably true of
618 many other *Oreochromis* populations and thus it is perhaps unsurprising given that there has been
619 multiple adaptations to these conditions throughout the evolution of this group, indicating a likely
620 shared genetic mechanism allowing fish from this genus to adapt to such conditions.

621 Our age estimates of the diversification of the *Oreochromis (Alcolapia)* adaptive radiation at 1.73
622 Ma (95% HPD: 3.20-0.57) coincide with estimates of the date of basin formation for Lakes Natron and
623 Magadi at 1.7 Ma and the formation of the single palaeolake (Orolonga) preceding Natron and Magadi,
624 around c.700 Ka (Eugster 1986). The Lake Magadi species *O. (A.) grahami* is estimated to have diverged
625 from the Lake Natron species *O. (A.) alcalicus* at 0.70 Ma (95% HPD: 1.55-0.007 Ma), suggesting these
626 taxa may have already diverged prior to the separation of the lakes. However, although these dates are

627 generally well before the time that these lakes are suggested to have separated, during an aridity event
628 dated at c.11 ka (Williamson et al. 1993) the upper bound is after this timeframe. It is likely that the
629 nuclear loci selected for this study are too slowly evolving to provide a precise estimate of divergence
630 dates for a potentially recent radiation (Ford et al. 2015). More nuclear loci and broader outgroup
631 sampling including additional fossil calibrations should be considered in future studies to test the
632 accuracy of these dates.

633 It has been suggested that *O. amphimelas* (occurs in Lakes Manyara, Eyasi, Sulungali, Kitangiri
634 and Singida) might be a close relative of *Oreochromis (Alcolapia)* based on adaptation to soda conditions
635 - although *O. amphimelas* experiences less extreme conditions (Trewavas 1983) - supporting the
636 findings presented here. There is also a hydrological connection between the two basins, with
637 groundwater flowing northwards from Manyara to Natron and the lowest border of Manyara (~80m
638 above the current lake level) forming an overspill to Natron (Hillaire-Marcel & Casanova 1987; Bachofer
639 et al. 2014). However, the suggestion that the two basins were joined in a palaeolake as recently as 10
640 ka (Holdship 1976) has not been supported by geological evidence (Casanova & Hillaire-Marcel 1992).
641 As for Magadi, fossils indicate that Lake Manyara also was inhabited by a larger freshwater cichlid in a
642 previous palaeolake (Schluter et al. 1992). However, unlike Natron-Magadi, Manyara now contains only
643 one native species (*O. amphimelas*).

644

645 5 Conclusions

646 The comprehensive molecular phylogenies of *Oreochromis* presented here represent the first attempt
647 to clarify species relationships for this relatively young and widespread African cichlid genus. Trees
648 reconstructed from nuclear sequence data likely give the best hypothesis of relationships, although we
649 recognise that nuclear genomes may also show introgression (e.g. Nevado et al. 2011). The multispecies
650 coalescent approach is preferred over concatenation methods, as it accounts for gene tree- species tree
651 incongruence that arise due to population level processes and has been shown to be especially suited to
652 the estimation of shallower evolutionary relationships (e.g. Ogilvie et al. 2016, 2017; Flouri et al. 2018),
653 but we acknowledge that we include a limited number of loci for these types of analyses. To clarify
654 relationships and better understand the substantial mito-nuclear discordance that we report, further

655 work should focus on genomic data e.g. ultraconserved element or reduced representation genome-
656 wide sequencing to resolve potential causes of this incongruence and better clarify the areas of conflict
657 (currently in progress). Genomic data will also enable the likely shared genetic mechanism allowing
658 these fish to adapt to adverse aquatic conditions to be investigated. Our results highlight the importance
659 of establishing species relationships within this genus, which contains several commercially important,
660 and many endangered, species.

661

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666

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672 earlier version of this manuscript.

673

674 Appendix A. Supplementary material

675 Table S1. Specimen list and GPS coordinates of samples included in the present study, including
676 GenBank accession numbers for molecular sequences used in phylogenetic analysis.

677 Table S2. Primers and reaction conditions for each gene.

678 Table S3. Trait coding (adaptation to high temperature, high salinity and high pH, and phenotypic traits)
679 for each species, as implemented in the BayesTraits analysis.

680 Figure S1. Bayesian phylogeny of *Oreochromis* based on concatenated nuclear data (3092 bp) including
681 101 samples (*Coptodon* sp. samples [outgroup] are removed from the figure). Support values shown

682 below nodes are Bayesian Posterior Probabilities (BPP). Those above the nodes are bootstrap (BS)
683 values generated using Maximum Likelihood.

684 Figure S2. Bayesian phylogeny of *Oreochromis* based on concatenated mitochondrial data (1582 bp)
685 including 116 samples, including additional sampling of other Oreochromini taxa (*Coptodon* spp.
686 samples [outgroup] are removed from the figure). Support values shown below nodes are Bayesian
687 Posterior Probabilities (BPP). Those above the nodes are bootstrap (BS) values generated using
688 Maximum Likelihood.

689 Figure S3. Species tree based on nuclear data and generated using BPP. Support values are given below
690 branches.

691 Figure S4. Ancestral state reconstruction from BayesTraits analysis based on the MrBayes nuclear
692 concatenated phylogeny. Details, abbreviations and colour coding are as per Figure 2 in the main paper.
693 A) Ancestral state reconstruction of thermal/salinity tolerance (TS) and soda adaptation (So). Pie charts
694 at internal nodes indicate probability of presence/absence of ancestor exhibiting adaptation to soda
695 conditions, from BayesTraits analysis. (pie above node: temperature/salinity tolerance ancestral state
696 reconstruction; pie below node: soda adaptation ancestral state reconstruction). B) Ancestral state
697 reconstruction of phenotypic male secondary sexual characteristics: genital tassel (GT) and extended
698 jaw morphology (EJ). (pie above node: extended jaw morphology ancestral state reconstruction; pie
699 below node: genital tassel ancestral state reconstruction).

700 Figure S5. Ancestral state reconstruction of thermal and salinity tolerance as independent traits. A)
701 Reconstruction using the *BEAST species trees; B) reconstruction using the MrBayes concatenated
702 nuclear phylogeny. (pie above node: thermal tolerance ancestral state reconstruction; pie below node:
703 salinity tolerance ancestral state reconstruction).

704

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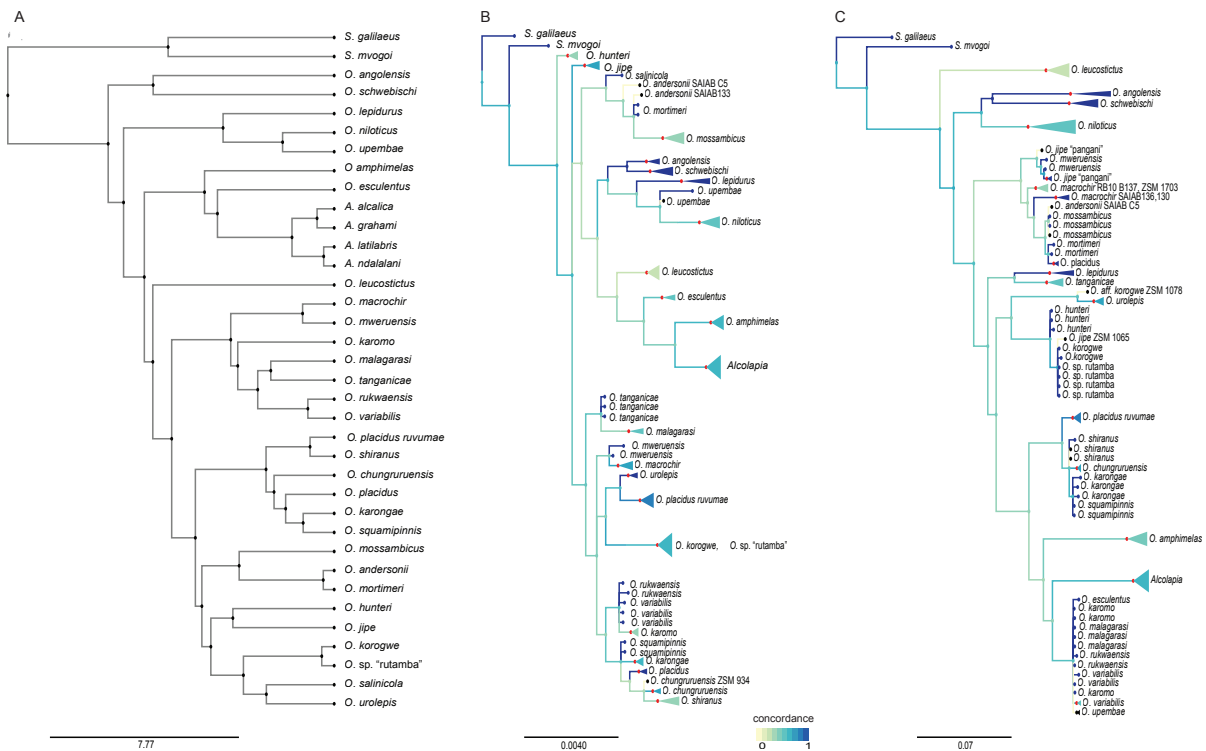
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962 **Figures**

963 Figure 1. Comparison of the A) nuclear DNA species tree (generated using *BEAST); B) nuclear DNA
 964 Bayesian concatenated tree, and C) mitochondrial DNA Bayesian concatenated tree (generated using
 965 MrBayes). Figures B + C are compared using Phylo.io software (Robinson et al. 2016). Species that are
 966 monophyletic are collapsed. Differences and similarities of both trees are highlighted on the branches,
 967 in which the lighter to darker colour indicates the similarity of best matching subtrees between the two
 968 trees. Black circles below nodes show >95% BPP support values (see supplementary Figures S1 and S2
 969 for complete trees and support values for BPP and BS). *Coptodon* spp. are removed for clarity.

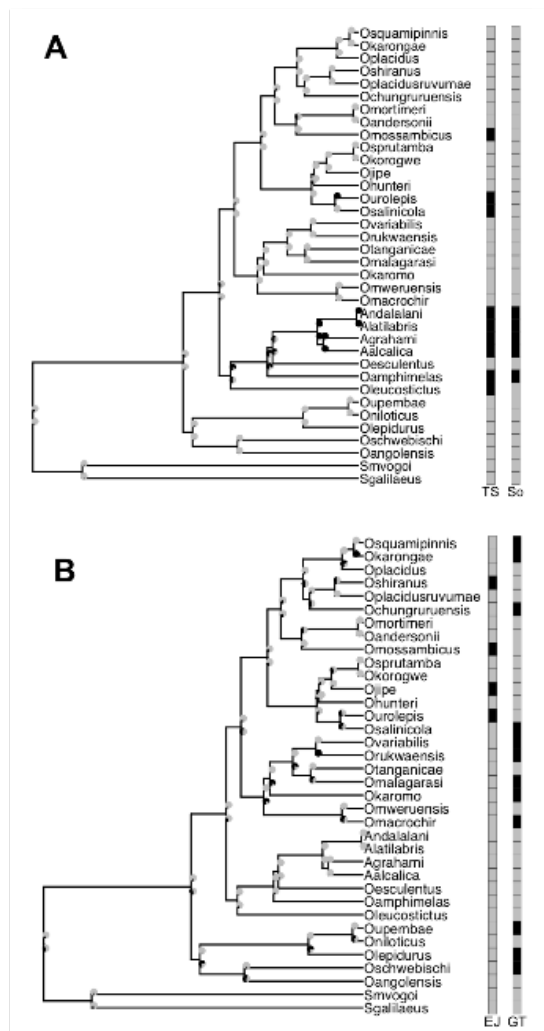
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973 **Figure 2.** Ancestral state reconstruction from BayesTraits analysis based on the species tree nuclear
 974 phylogeny (generated using *BEAST). A) Ancestral state reconstruction of thermal/salinity tolerance
 975 (TS) and soda adaptation (So). Colours at tips represent adaptation reported in extant species (listed in
 976 Table 1) (black=present; grey=absent). Pie charts at internal nodes indicate probability of
 977 presence/absence of ancestor exhibiting adaptation to soda conditions, from BayesTraits analysis. (pie
 978 above node: temperature/salinity tolerance ancestral state reconstruction; pie below node: soda
 979 adaptation ancestral state reconstruction). B) Ancestral state reconstruction of phenotypic male
 980 secondary sexual characteristics: genital tassel (GT) and extended jaw morphology (EJ). Colours at tips
 981 represent phenotypic characters in extant species (black=present; grey=absent). Pie charts at internal
 982 nodes indicate probability of presence/absence of ancestor exhibiting trait, from BayesTraits analysis
 983 (pie above node: extended jaw morphology ancestral state reconstruction; pie below node: genital tassel
 984 ancestral state reconstruction).



985

Species	Natural distribution	Temp°C	Salinity ‰	pH	Ref.
A. alcalica (Hilgendorf 1905)	Natron, TZA	20-42	>40	>10	2,3
A. grahami (Boulenger 1912)	Magadi, Nakuru, KEN	20-42	>40	>10	1,2,3
A. latilabris (Seegers & Tichy 1999)	Natron, TZA	20-42	>40	>10	3
A. ndalalani (Seegers & Tichy 1999)	Natron, TZA	20-42	>40	>10	3
O. amphimelas (Hilgendorf 1905)	Soda lakes, TZA	20-30	58	>9	1,5
O. andersonii (Castelnau 1861)	South-central Africa	18-33	20	nd	1
O. angolensis (Trewavas 1973)	Southern Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
<i>O. aureus</i> (Steindachner 1864)	Eurasia, Africa,	12-32	45	nd	1,2
O. chungruruensis (Ahl 1924)	Chungruru, TZA	nd	freshwater	nd	2
O. esculentus (Graham 1928)	Nile, East African Lakes	23-29	freshwater	nd	1,2
O. hunteri (Günther 1889)	Chala, TZA	nd	nd	nd	2
<i>O. ismailiaensis</i> (Mekkaway 1995)	EGY	nd	nd	nd	
O. jipe (Lowe 1955)	Jipe, Pangani, TZA	nd	nd	nd	2
O. karomo (Poll 1948)	Tanganyika, E. Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. karongae (Trewavas 1941)	Malawi, E. Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. korogwe (Lowe 1955)	Eastern Africa	nd	freshwater	nd	2
O. lepidurus (Boulenger 1899)	Central Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. leucostictus (Trewavas 1933)	Edward, George, UGA	15-38	freshwater	7-9	2
<i>O. lidole</i> (Trewavas 1941)	Malawi, Chungruru, TZA	nd	nd	nd	2
O. macrochir (Boulenger 1912)	S. Africa	18-32	20	nd	1,2
O. malagarasi (Trewavas 1983)	Eastern Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. mortimeri (Trewavas 1966)	Southern Africa	19-32	26	nd	1,2
O. mossambicus (Peters 1852)	SE Africa, widely introduced	17-35	>100	nd	1
O. mweruensis (Trewavas 1983)	Congo River system	nd	nd	nd	2
<i>O. niloticus</i> sp 'Bogoria'	Lake Bogoria, KEN	36	nd	7	4
<i>O. niloticus baringoensis</i> (Trewavas 1983)	Baringo, KEN	nd	nd	nd	2
O. niloticus cancellatus (Nichols 1923)	Awash Basin, ETH	17-26	nd	nd	2
<i>O. niloticus eduardianus</i> (Boulenger 1912)	Edward, UGA	nd	nd	nd	2
O. niloticus filoa (Trewavas 1983)	Hot springs, Awash, ETH	32-39	nd	nd	2
O. niloticus niloticus (Linnaeus 1758)	NE Africa	14-32	30	nd	1
<i>O. niloticus sugutae</i> (Daget 1991)	Karpeddo soda springs,	33-38	nd	nd	2
<i>O. niloticus tana</i> (Seyoum 1992)	Lake Tana, ETH	nd	nd	nd	2
<i>O. niloticus vulcani</i> (Trewavas 1933)	Crater lake, Turkana, KEN	nd	nd	nd	2
O. placidus placidus (Trewavas 1941)	Southeastern Africa	nd	freshwater	nd	2
O. placidus ruvumae (Trewavas 1966)	Ruvuma, SE Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. rukwaensis (Hilgendorf 1903)	Lake Rukwa, TZA	nd	nd	nd	2
<i>O. saka</i> (Lowe 1953)	Lake Malawi, East Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. salinicola (Poll 1948)	Central Africa	nd	25-35	nd	2
O. schwebischi (Sauvage 1884)	West-Central Africa	nd	nd	nd	2
O. shiranus chilwae (Trewavas 1966)	Lake Chilwa, MWI	21-37	30	nd	1,2
O. shiranus shiranus (Boulenger 1896)	Lake Malawi and drainage	nd	nd	nd	2
<i>O. spilurus niger</i> (Günther 1894)	Kibwezi River, KEN	19-32	nd	nd	1,2
<i>O. spilurus percivali</i> (Boulenger 1912)	Hot springs, KEN	20-38	'alkaline'	nd	1, 2
<i>O. spilurus spilurus</i> (Günther 1894)	KEN	20-31	nd	nd	2
O. squamipinnis (Günther 1864)	Lake Malawi	nd	nd	nd	2
O. tanganyicae (Günther 1893)	Lake Tanganyika	nd	nd	nd	2
O. upembae (Thys van den Audenaerde)	Congo river basin	nd	nd	nd	2
O. urolepis urolepis (Norman 1922)	TNZ	25-38	>35	8.4	2
O. variabilis (Boulenger 1906)	Lake Victoria and drainage	23-28	nd	nd	1,2

986 Tables

987 Table 1. *Oreochromis* adaptations to soda conditions.

988 Taxa in bold indicate samples included in the present study (see Table S1). Temperatures and
989 salinity/alkalinity conditions are the maximum at which the species naturally occur. Several studies
990 have shown species are able to tolerate/survive higher levels in laboratory conditions (though fewer
991 have explored successful reproduction at extreme conditions). For the present study, temperature
992 tolerance >35°C, salinity tolerance >30‰, and pH tolerance >pH 9 were considered to represent

993 elevated environmental tolerance; and tolerance to all three elevated parameters to indicate soda
 994 adaptation. Species names in grey were coded as temperature/saline tolerant for ancestral state
 995 reconstruction analyses, and those in dark grey were also coded as soda tolerant (see Table S3).
 996 References: 1. Philippiart & Ruwet 1982; 2. Trewavas 1983; 3. Seegers et al. 1999. 4. Ndiwa et al.
 997 2014. 5. Present study.
 998 nd: minimal data indicating elevated tolerance, presumed not to occur in soda conditions.
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1000

1001 Table 2. Substitution models by partition used for the Bayesian and ML analyses.

Partitions	Best Fitting Model
nuDNA exon vs. intron	
nuDNA exons	HKY+I+G 1003
nuDNA introns	GTR+I+G
nuDNA loci 1004	
BMP4	HKY+I+G
S7, CCNG1	HKY+G
GAPDHS, TYR, b2m	HKY+I+G
mtDNA	
ND2 pos1, 12S	HKY+I+G
ND2 pos2	TRN+I
ND2 pos3	TRN+G
mtDNA	GTR+I+G