The genome sequence of the Clifden nonpareil, *Catocala fraxini* (Linnaeus, 1758) [version 1; peer review: awaiting peer review]

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**Abstract**

We present a genome assembly from an individual male *Catocala fraxini* (the Clifden nonpareil; Arthropoda; Insecta; Lepidoptera; Erebidae). The genome sequence is 781 megabases in span. The majority of the assembly (99.99%) is scaffolded into 31 chromosomal pseudomolecules, with the Z sex chromosome assembled. The mitochondrial genome was also assembled, and is 15.6 kilobases in length.

**Keywords**

Catocala fraxini, Clifden nonpareil, genome sequence, chromosomal, Lepidoptera

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**Species taxonomy**
Eukaryota; Metazoa; Ecdysozoa; Arthropoda; Hexapoda; Insecta; Pterygota; Neoptera; Endopterygota; Lepidoptera; Glossata; Ditrysia; Noctuoidea; Erebidae; Erebinae; Catocala; *Catocala fraxini* (Linnaeus, 1758) (NCBI:txid423510).

**Background**

*Catocala fraxini* (Clifden nonpareil or blue underwing) is a large noctuid moth (75-100 mm wingspan) with zigzag markings on broad silver-grey forewings and striking lilac blue flashes across the hindwings. The moth has been recorded across much of the Palaearctic, from central and northern Europe to Russia, Japan and Korea, primarily in dense woodlands containing stands of its larval food plant aspen, *Populus tremula*. In the UK, *C. fraxini* was first recorded in the 1740s at ‘Cleifden’, Buckinghamshire (now Cliveden, famous for the Profumo scandal); the common name derives from the location plus the French ‘non pareil’ meaning ‘without equal’ (Wilkes, 1749).

Through the 1800s and early 1900s, *C. fraxini* was considered an extreme rarity in the UK with small populations in southern and eastern counties, until it became locally extinct by the 1960s. The moth achieved near mythical status amongst entomologists of the time; P.B.M. Allan was obsessed with the species and wrote that if he ever succeeded in catching the moth he would “go to Fortnum & Mason’s and buy rare syrups and syllabubs for it” (Allan, 1947). Sporadic records after 1960 were attributed to occasional dispersing individuals reaching the UK from eastern Europe and Scandinavia (Waring et al., 2003). Since 2010, however, there has been a dramatic increase in UK records and the species is now thought to be breeding in woodlands in the south of England (Randle et al., 2019).

In northern Europe *C. fraxini* has a single generation per year, overwintering as an egg before larval development from April to July. Late instar larvae have a distinctive fringe of hairs that breaks their outline such that they are effectively camouflaged on woody twigs of the host plant. After pupation, adults emerge around September and have a short flight period; they are strictly nocturnal and can be attracted to sugary substances and to light.

The genome of *C. fraxini* was sequenced as part of the Darwin Tree of Life Project, a collaborative effort to sequence all of the named eukaryotic species in the Atlantic Archipelago of Britain and Ireland. Here we present a chromosomally complete genome sequence for *C. fraxini*, based on one male specimen from Wytham Woods, Oxfordshire, UK.

**Genome sequence report**
The genome was sequenced from one male *C. fraxini* (Figure 1) collected from Wytham Woods, Oxfordshire (biological vice-county: Berkshire), UK (latitude 51.772, longitude -1.338). A total of 41-fold coverage in Pacific Biosciences single-molecule long reads and 107-fold coverage in 10X Genomics read clouds were generated. Primary assembly contigs were scaffolded with chromosome conformation Hi-C data. Manual assembly curation corrected 12 missing/misjoins, reducing the scaffold number by 23.26%.

The final assembly has a total length of 781 Mb in 33 sequence scaffolds with a scaffold N50 of 27.8 Mb (Table 1). The majority of the assembly sequence (99.99%) was assigned to 31 chromosomal-level scaffolds, representing 30 autosomes (numbered by sequence length), and the Z sex chromosome (Figure 2–Figure 5; Table 2). The assembly has a BUSCO v5.2.2 (Manni et al., 2021) completeness of 99.0% (single 98.2%, duplicated 0.8%) using the lepidoptera_odb10 reference set. While not fully phased, the assembly deposited is of one haplotype. Contigs corresponding to the second haplotype have also been deposited.

**Methods**

Sample acquisition and DNA extraction
A single male *C. fraxini* (iICatFrax1) was collected from Wytham Woods, Oxfordshire (biological vice-county: Berkshire), UK (latitude 51.772, longitude -1.338) by Douglas Boyes, UKCEH, using a light trap in woodland. The sample was identified by the same individual, and preserved on dry ice.

DNA was extracted at the Tree of Life laboratory, Wellcome Sanger Institute. The iICatFrax1 sample was weighed and dissected on dry ice with tissue set aside for Hi-C sequencing. Thorax tissue was cryogenically disrupted to a fine powder using a Covaris cryoPREP Automated Dry Pulveriser, receiving multiple impacts. Fragment size analysis of 0.01-0.5 ng of DNA was then performed using an Agilent FemtoPulse. High molecular weight (HMW) DNA was extracted using the Qiagen MagAttract HMW DNA extraction kit. Low molecular weight DNA was
Table 1. Genome data for *Catocala fraxini*, ilCatFrax1.1.

| Project accession data         |
|-------------------------------|
| Assembly identifier           | ilCatFrax1.1               |
| Species                       | *Catocala fraxini*         |
| Specimen                      | ilCatFrax1                 |
| NCBI taxonomy ID              | NCBI:txid423510            |
| BioProject                    | PRJEB50461                 |
| BioSample ID                  | SAMEA8603175               |
| Isolate information           | Male, thorax (genome assembly), abdomen (RNA-Seq), head (Hi-C) |

| Raw data accessions           |
|-------------------------------|
| Pacific Biosciences SEQUEL II | ERR8482049-ERR8482050       |
| 10X Genomics Illumina         | ERR8373760-ERR8373763       |
| Hi-C Illumina                 | ERR8373759                 |
| PolyA RNA-Seq Illumina        | ERR8373764                 |

| Genome assembly               |
|-------------------------------|
| Assembly accession           | GCA_930367265.1             |
| Accession of alternate haplotype | GCA_930367255.1       |
| Span (Mb)                     | 781                        |
| Number of contigs             | 47                         |
| Contig N50 length (Mb)        | 26.8                       |
| Number of scaffolds           | 33                         |
| Scaffold N50 length (Mb)      | 27.8                       |
| Longest scaffold (Mb)         | 31.7                       |
| BUSCO* genome score           | C:99.0%(S:98.2%,D:0.8%),F:0.2%,M:0.9%,n:5286 |

* BUSCO scores based on the lepidoptera_odb10 BUSCO set using v5.2.2. C= complete [S= single copy, D=duplicated], F=fragmented, M=missing, n=number of orthologues in comparison. A full set of BUSCO scores is available at https://blobtoolkit.genomehubs.org/view/ilCatFrax1.1/dataset/CAKNFB01/_busco.

removed from a 200-ng aliquot of extracted DNA using 0.8X AMPure XP purification kit prior to 10X Chromium sequencing; a minimum of 50 ng DNA was submitted for 10X sequencing. HMW DNA was sheared into an average fragment size between 12-20 kb in a Megaruptor 3 system with speed setting 30. Sheared DNA was purified by solid-phase reversible immobilisation using AMPure PB beads with a 1.8X ratio of beads to sample to remove the shorter fragments and concentrate the DNA sample. The concentration of the sheared and purified DNA was assessed using a Nanodrop spectrophotometer and Qubit Fluorometer and Qubit dsDNA High Sensitivity Assay kit. Fragment size distribution was evaluated by running the sample on the FemtoPulse system.

RNA was extracted from head tissue of ilCatFrax1 in the Tree of Life Laboratory at the WSI using TRIZol, according to the manufacturer’s instructions. RNA was then eluted in 50 μl RNAsæ-free water and its concentration RNA assessed using a Nanodrop spectrophotometer and Qubit Fluorometer using the Qubit RNA Broad-Range (BR) Assay kit. Analysis of the integrity of the RNA was done using Agilent RNA 6000 Pico Kit and Eukaryotic Total RNA assay.

**Sequencing**
Pacific Biosciences HiFi circular consensus and 10X Genomics Chromium read cloud sequencing libraries were constructed
Figure 2. Genome assembly of *Catocala fraxini*, ilCatFrax1.1: metrics. The BlobToolKit Snailplot shows N50 metrics and BUSCO gene completeness. The main plot is divided into 1,000 size-ordered bins around the circumference with each bin representing 0.1% of the 780,602,067 bp assembly. The distribution of chromosome lengths is shown in dark grey with the plot radius scaled to the longest chromosome present in the assembly (37,687,137 bp, shown in red). Orange and pale-orange arcs show the N50 and N90 chromosome lengths (27,836,421 and 20,022,594 bp), respectively. The pale grey spiral shows the cumulative chromosome count on a log scale with white scale lines showing successive orders of magnitude. The blue and pale-blue area around the outside of the plot shows the distribution of GC, AT and N percentages in the same bins as the inner plot. A summary of complete, fragmented, duplicated and missing BUSCO genes in the lepidoptera_odb10 set is shown in the top right. An interactive version of this figure is available at https://blobtoolkit.genomehubs.org/view/ilCatFrax1.1/dataset/CAKNFB01/snail.
Figure 3. Genome assembly of *Catocala fraxini*, ilCatFrax1.1: GC coverage. BlobToolKit GC-coverage plot. Scaffolds are coloured by phylum. Circles are sized in proportion to scaffold length. Histograms show the distribution of scaffold length sum along each axis. An interactive version of this figure is available at https://blobtoolkit.genomehubs.org/view/ilCatFrax1.1/dataset/CAKNFB01/blob.

according to the manufacturers’ instructions. Sequencing was performed by the Scientific Operations core at the Wellcome Sanger Institute on Pacific Biosciences SEQUEL II (HiFi), Illumina NovaSeq 6000 (10X) and Illumina HiSeq 4000 (RNA-Seq) instruments. Hi-C data were generated from head tissue using the Arima Hi-C+ kit and sequenced on NovaSeq 6000.

Genome assembly

Assembly was carried out with Hifiasm (Cheng et al., 2021); haplotypic duplication was identified and removed with purge_dups (Guan et al., 2020). One round of polishing was performed by aligning 10X Genomics read data to the assembly with longranger align, calling variants with freebayes.
Figure 4. Genome assembly of *Catocala fraxini*, ilCatFrax1.1: cumulative sequence. BlobToolKit cumulative sequence plot. The grey line shows cumulative length for all scaffolds. Coloured lines show cumulative lengths of scaffolds assigned to each phylum using the buscogenes taxrule. An interactive version of this figure is available at https://blobtoolkit.genomehubs.org/view/ilCatFrax1.1/dataset/CAKNFB01/cumulative.

(Garrison & Marth, 2012). The assembly was then scaffolded with Hi-C data (Rao et al., 2014) using SALSA2 (Ghurye et al., 2019). The assembly was checked for contamination as described previously (Howe et al., 2021). Manual curation (Howe et al., 2021) was performed using HiGlass (Kerpedjiev et al., 2018) and Pretex. The mitochondrial genome was assembled using MitoHiFi (Ultiano-Silva et al., 2021), which performs annotation using MitoFinder (Allio et al., 2020). The genome was analysed and BUSCO scores generated within the BlobToolKit environment (Challis et al., 2020). Table 3 contains a list of all software tool versions used, where appropriate.

Ethics/compliance issues
The materials that have contributed to this genome note have been supplied by a Darwin Tree of Life Partner. The submission of materials by a Darwin Tree of Life Partner is subject to the
Figure 5. Genome assembly of *Catocala fraxini*, ilCatFrax1.1: Hi-C contact map. Hi-C contact map of the ilCatFrax1.1 assembly, visualised in HiGlass. Chromosomes are shown in order of size from left to right and top to bottom. An interactive version of this map is available here.

Table 2. Chromosomal pseudomolecules in the genome assembly of *Catocala fraxini*, ilCatFrax1.1.

| INSDC accession | Chromosome | Size (Mb) | GC%  |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|------|
| OV884025.1      | 1          | 31.69     | 36.5 |
| OV884026.1      | 2          | 31.05     | 36.6 |
| OV884027.1      | 3          | 30.58     | 36.4 |
| OV884028.1      | 4          | 30.14     | 36.2 |
| OV884029.1      | 5          | 29.81     | 36.6 |
| OV884030.1      | 6          | 29.74     | 36.4 |
| OV884031.1      | 7          | 29.27     | 36.3 |
| OV884032.1      | 8          | 28.82     | 36.6 |
| OV884033.1      | 9          | 28.63     | 36.3 |
| OV884034.1      | 10         | 28.17     | 36.2 |
| OV884035.1      | 11         | 27.97     | 36.3 |
| OV884036.1      | 12         | 27.84     | 36.4 |
| OV884037.1      | 13         | 27.64     | 36.1 |
| OV884038.1      | 14         | 27.17     | 36.2 |
| OV884039.1      | 15         | 26.59     | 36.5 |

| INSDC accession | Chromosome | Size (Mb) | GC%  |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|------|
| OV884040.1      | 16         | 26.40     | 36.8 |
| OV884041.1      | 17         | 25.72     | 36.5 |
| OV884042.1      | 18         | 25.44     | 36.4 |
| OV884043.1      | 19         | 24.95     | 36.8 |
| OV884044.1      | 20         | 23.33     | 36.6 |
| OV884045.1      | 21         | 23.28     | 36.7 |
| OV884046.1      | 22         | 21.38     | 37.0 |
| OV884047.1      | 23         | 21.28     | 36.8 |
| OV884048.1      | 24         | 21.04     | 37.0 |
| OV884049.1      | 25         | 20.02     | 36.7 |
| OV884050.1      | 26         | 18.44     | 37.0 |
| OV884051.1      | 27         | 15.26     | 37.5 |
| OV884052.1      | 28         | 14.85     | 37.9 |
| OV884053.1      | 29         | 14.70     | 38.2 |
| OV884054.1      | 30         | 11.69     | 37.9 |
| OV884055.1      | Z          | 37.69     | 36.0 |
| OV884056.1      | MT         | 0.02      | 19.2 |
| -                | Unplaced   | 0.01      | 39.1 |
Darwin Tree of Life Project Sampling Code of Practice. By agreeing with and signing up to the Sampling Code of Practice, the Darwin Tree of Life Partner agrees they will meet the legal and ethical requirements and standards set out within this document in respect of all samples acquired for, and supplied to, the Darwin Tree of Life Project. Each transfer of samples is further undertaken according to a Research Collaboration Agreement or Material Transfer Agreement entered into by the Darwin Tree of Life Partner, Genome Research Limited (operating as the Wellcome Sanger Institute), and in some circumstances other Darwin Tree of Life collaborators.

Data availability
European Nucleotide Archive: Catocala fraxini (Cliften non-pareil). Accession number PRJEB50461; https://identifiers.org/ena.embl/PRJEB50461.

The genome sequence is released openly for reuse. The C. fraxini genome sequencing initiative is part of the Darwin Tree of Life (DToL) project. All raw sequence data and the assembly have been deposited in INSDC databases. The genome will be annotated using the RNA-Seq data and presented through the Ensembl pipeline at the European Bioinformatics Institute. Raw data and assembly accession identifiers are reported in Table 1.

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| Software tool | Version | Source |
|---------------|---------|--------|
| Hifiasm       | 0.15.3  | Cheng et al., 2021 |
| purge_dups    | 1.2.3   | Guan et al., 2020 |
| SALSA         | 2.2     | Ghurye et al., 2019 |
| longranger align | 2.2.2 | https://support.10xgenomics.com/genre-exome/software/pipelines/latest/advanced/other-pipelines |
| freebayes     | 1.3.1-17-gaa2ace8 | Garrison & Marth, 2012 |
| MitoHiFi      | 2.0     | Uliano-Silva et al., 2021 |
| HiGlass       | 1.11.6  | Kerpedjiev et al., 2018 |
| PretextView   | 0.2.x   | https://github.com/wtsi-hpag/PretextView |
| BlobToolKit   | 3.0.5   | Challis et al., 2020 |

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