

**Construction of a high-density high-resolution genetic map and its integration with BAC-based physical map in channel catfish**

by

Yun Li

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Approved by

Zhanjiang Liu, Chair, Professor of School of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences  
Rex Dunham, Professor of School of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Aquatic Sciences  
Nannan Liu, Professor of Insect Molecular Toxicology and Physiology  
Charles Y. Chen, Associate Professor of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences

## Abstract

Catfish is the leading aquaculture species in the United States of America. However, the catfish industry is facing great challenges due to devastating diseases, high production cost, high feed and energy cost and international competition. Exploiting fish genetics and genomics can greatly contribute to production efficiency and enhancing performance. Construction of genetic linkage map is essential for genetic and genomic studies. Recent advances in sequencing and genotyping technologies made it possible to generate high-density and high-resolution genetic linkage maps, especially for the organisms lacking extensive genomic resources. In the present work, we constructed a high-density and high-resolution genetic map for channel catfish with three large resource families genotyped using the catfish 250K SNP array. A total of 54,342 SNPs were placed on the linkage map, the highest marker density among all aquaculture species. The estimated genetic size was 3,505 cM with a resolution of 0.22 cM for sex-averaged genetic map. The sex-specific linkage maps spanned a total of 4,495 cM in females and 2,594 cM in males, representing a ratio of 1.7:1 between female and male in recombination rate. After integration with previously established physical map, over 87% of physical map contigs were anchored to the linkage groups which covered a physical length of 867 Mb, accounting for about 90% of the catfish genome. The integrated map provides a valuable tool for validating and improving the catfish whole genome assembly, and facilitates fine-scale QTL mapping and positional cloning of genes responsible for economically important traits.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Channel catfish, *Ictalurus punctatus*, is a member of order Siluriformes, and it belongs to the bullhead catfish family, Ictaluridae, and is the primary aquaculture species in the United States. However, as culture of catfish intensifies, outbreaks of diseases are becoming increasingly common and cause an annual loss of almost 100 million dollars. In addition, the industry is currently struggling to unprecedented challenges due to the increasing feed and energy cost, production inefficiencies and international competition (Hanson and Sites, 2012). The future of catfish industry, the leading aquaculture industry in the US, is threatened if the production and production efficiency are not improved. Although incremental improvements can be made in various aspects of aquaculture practices such as use of more efficient culture systems. E.e., in pond raceways, improvements in feed, reduction in energy cost and various other measures, exploiting genetics can greatly contribute to increasing production efficiency and improving performance traits.

For the purpose of genetic improvement, genetic linkage maps are essential for the understanding of genomic levels of organization of inheritance of traits (Myers et al., 2005), for comparative genome analysis (Liu et al., 2009), and fine-scale QTL mapping and positional cloning of genes responsible for performance and production traits (Palti et al., 2012). In addition, genetic linkage maps are valuable resources for the generation of chromosome-level assembly of

whole-genome sequences and for comparative genome analysis (Kucuktas et al., 2009). In most of the recent whole genome sequencing cases, whole genome sequences are generated using next generation sequencing. Short sequencing reads are assembled into contigs. Such contigs are generally still relatively short in size although they vary in sizes from several kilobases to tens of kilobases. Increases in genome sequencing coverage and sequencing libraries can increase the quality of the assembly allowing the sizes of contigs to be increased. However, next generation sequencing methods alone cannot provide the resources to assemble complex genomes at the chromosomal level. Genome sequence assemblies at the chromosomal level require the assembly of tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of contigs.

Highly segmented genome assemblies prohibit efficient genome analysis. Therefore, various genome resources have been created to reduce the segmentation of the genome assemblies. One of these resources is physical maps constructed by analysis of the large-insert genomic libraries. Historically, several types of large insert libraries have been used. These include yeast artificial chromosomes (YACs, Burke et al., 1987), bacterial artificial chromosomes (BACs, McPherson et al., 2001) and Cosmid-based libraries (Eiglmeier et al., 1993). YACs have the largest capacity for cloning very large inserts, but they are relatively instable leading to inter-clone recombinations, and therefore their use in genome studies has been limited. Cosmid libraries have the smallest capacity for cloning the large inserts, most often limited to approximately 40 Kb, and therefore, their use in large insert libraries has also been limited. BACs are the most popular large insert libraries as they are stable, and can hold inserts of up to 200 kb. BAC-based physical maps can organize the entire genome into restriction fingerprints-based contigs. Such contigs are similar to the whole genome sequencing contigs, but are constructed using overlapping restriction enzyme fingerprints rather than overlapping sequences themselves for the whole genome sequence

assemblies. By analysis of restriction fingerprints of overlapping genomic clones of BAC inserts, the whole genome can be organized into a limited number of contigs, most often in the thousands. For instance, the catfish physical maps had 3,307 contigs (Xu et al., 2007) and 1,891 contigs (Quiniou et al., 2007). The integrated catfish physical map included over 2500 contigs (unpublished).

Integration of physical maps and whole genome sequence contigs allows the relationship to be established between the sequence-based contigs and the restriction fingerprints-based contigs, thereby reducing the levels of segmentation of the genome. One of the major applications of genetic linkage map is to integrate physical maps and whole genome assemblies. Integration of genetic map with physical map is useful for understanding genomes from different dimensions, and is essential for comparative genome analysis (Liu et al., 2009), fine-scale QTL mapping and positional cloning of genes responsible for performance and production traits (Ninwichian et al., 2012; Palti et al., 2012). In aquaculture fish species, genetic maps have been constructed in a few species, such as Asian seabass (Wang et al., 2011), Atlantic salmon (Lien et al., 2011), half-smooth tongue sole (Song et al., 2012), rainbow trout (Rexroad et al., 2008), common carp (Zhao et al., 2013) and catfish (Kucuktas et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2003; Ninwichian et al., 2012; Waldbieser et al., 2001). These maps harbor several hundreds to a couple of thousands of markers. The marker densities with these maps are relatively low, with which QTL for agriculturally important performance and production traits can only be mapped in large genomic intervals.

Integrated maps have been developed in several aquaculture fish species using low-density genetic maps. In Atlantic salmon, bacterial artificial chromosome (BAC)-anchored SNP markers were developed to enable the integration of physical and genetic maps by assigning 73 BAC contigs to Atlantic salmon linkage groups (Lorenz et al., 2010). The second generation of rainbow

trout integrated map anchored up to 265 contigs to the genetic map, covering approximately 11% of the genome (Palti et al., 2012). In common carp, a total of 463 physical map contigs and 88 single BACs were integrated into the genetic linkage map, which covered 30% of the common carp genome (Zhao et al., 2013). In catfish, 2,030 BAC end sequence (BES)-derived microsatellites from 1,481 physical map contigs were used for linkage map construction, which anchored 44.8% of the catfish BAC physical map contigs, covering approximately 52.8% of the genome (Ninwichian et al., 2012). Apparently, the level of integration is dependent on the density and resolution of the genetic maps.

The first objective of my study was to construct a high-density and high-resolution genetic linkage map by using a large number of molecular markers covering the entire genome and a large resource panel for linkage mapping analysis. In addition to this primary goal, the second goal was to increase integration of the linkage and physical maps using markers derived from BAC end sequences for genetic linkage analysis.

Our previous genetic linkage analysis used mostly microsatellite markers. In spite of their high polymorphism, and low cost of single marker genotyping, an analysis of tens of thousands of microsatellites with a large number of mapping fish is extremely laborious and cost-prohibitive. Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) overcome these difficulties by providing high efficiency and low cost large-scale genotyping. SNPs have become markers of choice because of their abundance, even genomic distribution, and easy adaptation to automation (Baird et al., 2008). Recent advances in next generation sequencing (NGS) have allowed rapid discovery of genome-wide SNPs in any organism in a cost-effective manner (Davey et al., 2011). With the availability of large numbers of SNPs, high-density SNP array platform can be developed for high-throughput and efficient genotyping. Alternatively, NGS-based genotyping by sequencing (GBS) (Baird et al.,

2008; Davey et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2007) is also highly efficient. SNP arrays and GBS have both been used to genotype large-scale SNPs for genetic mapping and association analyses (Anderson et al., 2012; Everett et al., 2012; Gonen et al., 2014; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Houston et al., 2014; Lien et al., 2011; McCue et al., 2012; Palaiokostas et al., 2013). Compared to GBS, SNP arrays are more cost-effective. In addition, they provide a greater level of genome coverage. For instance, in most cases, the total number of commonly analyzed SNPs is limited to several thousand while millions of SNPs can be analyzed by using very high density SNP arrays. In addition, GBS of large resource panels for high resolution maps are cost-prohibitive.

Channel catfish is the primary aquaculture species in the United States. Since the initiation of genome research over two decades ago, several genetic maps have been constructed with different types of molecular markers and various resource families (Kucuktas et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2003; Ninwichian et al., 2012; Waldbieser et al., 2001). Up to date, the highest density map was developed to contain 2,030 microsatellites and 100 SNPs (Ninwichian et al., 2012). Although this genetic map has been very useful for genetic and genomic analysis (Jiang et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2013), marker density in this map was still fairly low and only facilitated integration to the physical map for approximately 52% of catfish genome. Recently, following efforts on expand catfish genomic resources, we have identified millions of SNPs in channel catfish (Liu et al., 2011; Sun et al., 2014) and developed high-density SNP arrays (Liu et al., 2014), which provided the opportunity to develop a high-density and high-resolution SNP-based genetic map. Here we report the construction of genetic linkage map with over 54,000 SNPs in channel catfish, which is, to the best of our knowledge, the highest density genetic map for any aquaculture species. Along with the high density of markers, the utilization of BAC-associated SNPs also allowed significant increase of the integration of the genetic linkage map with the BAC-based physical map in catfish,

allowing over 90% of the catfish genome physical map contigs to be mapped to linkage groups. This genetic map should serve as a valuable framework for validating the reference whole-genome sequences, extensive comparative and functional genomic studies, and fine-scale QTL mapping and association studies in catfish.

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## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **History of genetic mapping**

Genetics as a branch of science has a relative short history of less than 160 years. It started in the mid-1800s, when Gregor Johann Mendel conducted a series of experiments with inheritance of a number of traits in peas. Through observations of phenotypes and analysis of the distribution of phenotypes among individuals in different generations, Mendel established his groundbreaking principles of inheritance, the so-called Mendel's Laws, which included the law of segregation (the "First Law"), the law of independent assortment (the "Second Law"), and the law of dominance (the "Third Law"). The law of segregation stated that during gamete formation, the alleles for each gene segregate from each other so that each gamete carries only one allele for each gene; the law of independent assortment states that genes for different traits segregate independently during the formation of gametes; and the law of dominance states that some alleles are dominant while others are recessive, recessive alleles are masked by dominant alleles (Bateson and Mendel, 1909; Miko, 2008; Wilson, 1902). These principles of inheritance set the foundation for genetics. However, with what known today as genetic linkage, Mendel was only partially correct because genes next to each other most often do not segregate independently because of their linkage.

In 1905, William Bateson, Edith Rebecca Saunders and Reginald Punnett examined flower

color and pollen shape in sweet pea plants by performing crosses similar to those carried out by Gregor Mendel, but they observed severe deviations from the predicted Mendelian independent assortment ratios (Bateson et al., 1909). They hypothesized that there was coupling, or connection between the parental alleles for flower color and pollen shape, and this coupling resulted in observed deviation from independent assortment. By 1910, geneticist Thomas Hunt Morgan made similar discoveries with the fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*), where he found that the trait of eye color was correlated or “connected” with the sex factor. By analysis of the phenotypic ratios of the traits (Morgan, 1910), he hypothesized that the two traits were “linked”. Thus, the term of “genetic linkage” was born, i.e., when two genes are closely associated on the same chromosome, they do not assort independently as Mendel initially proposed in his law of independent assortment (Morgan, 1911). With this knowledge in place, Morgan’s student, Alfred Sturtevant, developed the first linkage map.

Genetic linkage maps are developed by placing “genes” on chromosomes based on the distances among them. If two genes segregate absolutely independently, they are considered to be located on two separate chromosomes, i.e., the original Mendel’s law of independent assortment. However, if two genes are on the same chromosome, they do not assort independently, rather they are linked and therefore, assort depending on the distances between them. The greater the distance between linked genes are, the greater the chance that non-sister chromatids would cross over in the region between the genes. Therefore, recombination rate between genes is used as a measurement of genetic distance. This original concept for the measurement of genetic distance between genes is the basis for construction of genetic linkage maps.

The entire history of genetic linkage analysis is a mirror of technologies for the detection of polymorphisms. In the earliest days, polymorphisms were detected at the level of phenotypes or

traits. It was only possible to detect linkage among simple traits at the phenotypic level due to the lack of molecular markers. The discovery of DNA in 1953 (Watson and Crick, 1953) allowed the start of genetic analysis at the DNA level. However, for over 20 years after the DNA was discovered, the progress of linkage analysis has been slow because it was difficult to analyze genomic DNA with very high molecular weight. Then it was the discovery of restriction endonucleases in 1973 that made molecular analysis possible. With restriction endonucleases, high molecular weight DNA can be digested into smaller pieces that can be readily examined for their polymorphism. Even faster advances were made possible by the invention of DNA sequencing technologies in 1977 (Maxam and Gilbert, 1977; Sanger et al., 1977) that allowed greater abilities for the detection of polymorphism at single nucleotide level. Thereafter for the following decade, then considered rapid progress was made in the area of linkage mapping through the use of DNA markers, mostly in the form of restriction fragment length polymorphisms (RFLP), the most popular marker system by mid-1980's. Then it came 1986, when PCR technology was invented. The coupling of DNA sequencing technologies with PCR technology allowed rapid progress in DNA marker technologies. In particular, the application of microsatellites allowed much progress in linkage mapping. For almost another decade and a half, linkage mapping was among the most hot research areas in genetics using various polymorphic DNA markers such as microsatellites, RFLP, rapid amplification of polymorphic DNA (RAPD), amplified fragment length polymorphism (AFLP), among many types of polymorphic markers. However, all these technologies were relatively slow, laborious, and costly, as compared to the current marker technologies.

Further progress in linkage mapping was limited by the lack of large numbers of polymorphic markers and automated technologies. Although single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) was

discovered as early as 1970's, effective technologies were not available for efficient and cost-effective analysis of SNPs until the beginning of this century. Similarly, methodologies for identification of large numbers of SNPs were not available. It was only with the most recent advances in next generation sequencing (NGS), was it possible to identify SNPs at a genome scale in a cost-effective manner (Davey et al., 2011). Along with the availability of highly efficient genotype array platforms, development of high-density and high-resolution genetic linkage maps became possible.

### **Principles of genetic mapping**

Genetic mapping is the procedure for the construction of a genetic map (Van Ooijen and Jansen, 2013). A genetic map is made with markers or genes in a linear arrangement on chromosomes with relative distances between them. In contrast to physical distances where the distances between markers are measured by the physical length between genes or markers in base pairs, genetic distances are measured by frequencies of recombination between markers during crossovers of homologous chromosomes. The basic principles of linkage mapping lie in the fact that the farther apart the two markers on the same chromosome, the more likely that recombination can happen between the two markers, and conversely, the closer the two markers, the less likely that recombination can happen between them.

As stated in Mendel's law of independent assortment, chromosomes assort randomly into gametes, thus the segregation of alleles of one gene is independent of alleles of another gene if they reside on different chromosomes. However, independent assortment does not apply to genes residing on the same chromosome, simply because they are physically linked together. Unless recombination occurs, alleles carried on the same chromatids go together as a "unit", and they are

said to be linked (Semagn et al., 2006).

For two genes located at different chromosomes, they are unlinked. The chance that A/B or a/b co-inherit to the offspring is 0.5. Increases of this chance indicate linkage. If aB and Ab did not appear in the parental cells, they were called recombinants due to recombination. Recombination is the process that, during meiosis, the chromosome often breaks and the rejoins with the homologue chromosome (indicated as crossover), resulting in the production of the new alleles, the recombinant alleles aB and Ab (Whitehouse, 1982). The greater the frequency of recombination between two genetic markers or genes, the further apart they are on the same chromosome, and when the recombinant frequency increases to 0.5, the two genes are independently assorted, reflecting that they are indefinitely distant--they are on different chromosomes.

The recombination frequency (also called recombination fraction) between two loci is defined as the ratio of the number of recombinants to the total number of gametes produced (Xu, 2013). Therefore the minimum recombination fraction is 0, indicating no recombinants (i.e., the two genes are absolutely linked together). Maximum recombination fraction is 0.5, indicating the genes are on different chromosomes.

## **Important concepts of genetic mapping**

### **Linkage phase**

Two types of gametes are generated following genes or alleles on the same chromosome:

If crossing over does not occur, the products are parental gametes.

If crossing over occurs, the products are recombinant gametes.



The two possible arrangements of alleles on the homologous chromosomes are referred to as linkage phase. The allelic composition of parental and recombinant gametes depends upon whether the original cross involved genes in coupling or repulsion phase (Semagn et al., 2006). In diploid species, the most prevalent gametes in a coupling phase are two dominant alleles or two recessive alleles linked on one chromosome. For repulsion phase, gametes containing one dominant allele linked with one recessive allele will be most abundant type.

The distribution of gamete types should allow the differentiation of parental types from the recombinant types. In general, the two most frequent types of gametes are parental types while the two least frequent types of gametes are recombinant. This is because recombinant gametes can never account for more than 50% of the gametes. In addition, by examination of the frequency of gametes, one can determine if the original cross was a coupling or repulsion phase cross, which is important for estimating linkage distances (Lake et al., 2003).

### **The LOD score**

linkage maps are made based on the genetic distances between markers, and genetic distances are estimated based on the chances for recombination. When chances are in question, statistical significance must be in place to assure the confidence one would have on the map. In this context, one key concept in genetic linkage analysis is the LOD score [logarithm (base 10) of odds], which is the most commonly used statistic to test whether or not two loci are truly linked. This method was developed by Newton E. Morton (Morton, 1955), which is an iterative approach where a series of LOD scores are calculated from a number of proposed linkage distance. The LOD score compares the likelihood of obtaining the test data if the two loci are indeed linked, to the likelihood of observing the same data purely by chance. The LOD score is calculated from the formula below:

$$\text{LOD} = \log_{10} \frac{\text{likelihood if the loci are linked}}{\text{likelihood if unlinked}} = \log_{10} \frac{(1-\theta)^{NR} \theta^R}{0.5^{(NR+R)}}$$

Where R denotes the number of recombinant offspring, NR denotes the number of non-recombinant offspring,  $\theta$  denotes the recombinant fraction. In linkage analysis, LOD of more than 3 is considered strong support for linkage, as it indicates the linkage is 1,000 times more probable than no linkage. On the contrary, a LOD score less than -2 is required for linkage exclusion. However, this criterion should be modified depending on the type of species, complexity of traits, and number of genetic markers (Morton, 1955).

### **Mapping function**

In linkage mapping, the distance between two genes is determined by their recombination fraction. Map construction based on distance and order of genetic markers. However, is it difficult to use only recombination fraction as a linkage metrics, because recombination fractions themselves are not additive. Consider the loci A, B and C. If the recombination fraction between A and B is 0.2 and between B and C is 0.4, the recombination fraction between A and C should not be 0.6, as the maximum should be 0.5. Therefore, recombination fraction between A and C is not equal to the sum of the recombination fractions AB and BC. Furthermore, the distance between AC depends on the existence of interference, which is the effect in which the occurrence of a crossover in a certain region reduces the probability of a crossover in the adjacent region (Kinghorn and van der Werf, 2000). In that case, mathematical transformations were called mapping function, with the most well-known ones being Haldane (Haldane, 1919) and Kosambi (Kosambi, 1943).

The Haldane function assumes that there is no interference (all crossovers occur independently of one another):  $D = -1/2 \ln (1-2\theta)$ . Whereas Kosambi map function allows the occurrence of interference:  $D = 1/4 \ln [(1+2\theta) (1-2\theta)]$ .

Where  $D$  represents the genetic map distance between two marker loci, and  $\theta$  represents the recombination fraction. Mapping functions translate recombination fractions between two loci into a map distance in cM (centiMorgan). In theory, 1% of recombinants equal approximately to 1 cM. Both mapping functions act over the range  $0 < \theta < 0.5$ . From the practical point of view, the Kosambi's function has been more widely used because of its advantage over Haldane's function for interference. And studies reported that the Kosambi's distances are more accurate than Haldane's in a multi-point analysis of data (Huehn, 2010; Vinod, 2011).

### **Requirements for genetic mapping**

Genetic mapping requires four elements: 1) Genetic markers, 2) genotyping platforms, 3) mapping families and 4) mapping software.

### **Genetic markers**

For linkage map construction one should first decide the type of molecular markers. Some commonly used types of genetic markers are described as following.

**RFLP:** RFLP is a type of polymorphism that results from variation in the DNA sequence (single nucleotide changes, insertions and deletions, repeat length polymorphism) recognized by restriction enzymes, and can be assayed by Southern hybridization (Kruglyak, 1997). RFLP was first used as a tool for genetic analysis in 1974. In that study, linkage of temperature-sensitive mutations of adenovirus to specific restriction fragment length differences was used to locate the mutations on a physical map of the restriction fragments (Grodzicker et al., 1974). In 1980, Botstein et al., proposed the original concept for construction of genetic map using RFLPs (Botstein et al., 1980). The first RFLP map of human genome was reported in 1987, which based

on the pattern of inheritance of 403 polymorphic loci, including 393 RFLPs (Donis-Keller et al., 1987). RFLP analysis was the first DNA profiling technique inexpensive enough to see widespread applications, and made human molecular genetics a reality. The major strength of RFLP is codominant marker. In the past, RFLP markers have been popular in linkage mapping. However, RFLPs are often not very polymorphic, and the vast majority of point mutations and small sizes of insertions or deletions are hard to detect due to the low resolution of agarose gel electrophoresis. Moreover, the combined process of marker developing, probe labeling, DNA fragmentation, electrophoresis, blotting, hybridization, washing and autoradiography made the technique for RFLP time-consuming and laboriously (Liu and Cordes, 2004).

**RAPD:** RAPD is based on the amplification by the PCR of random DNA segments, using single primers or arbitrary nucleotide sequence (8-10-mer). The amplified DNA fragments, referred to as RAPD markers, are able to differentiate between genetically distinct individuals (Williams et al., 1992). RAPD offers many advantages as it require no DNA probes and sequence information for primer design, it involves no blotting or hybridization steps, a large number of loci and individual can be easily screened. Therefore, RAPD analysis appears to offer a cost- and time-effective alternative to restriction fragment-length polymorphism (RFLP) analysis (Penner et al., 1993). It has been widely used in genetic mapping studies. However, shortcomings of RAPD markers are also obvious. It is difficult to distinguish whether a DNA segment is amplified from a locus that is heterozygous or homozygous because nearly all RAPD markers are dominant. In addition, mismatches between the primer and the template (different DNA regions which have the same lengths and thus appear to be a single locus) made the results difficult to be interpreted. In addition, RAPD are subject to low reproducibility due to the low annealing temperature used in the PCR amplification (Liu and Cordes, 2004). All these difficulties have limited the application

of this marker.

**AFLP:** AFLP is a technique that is capable of producing multilocus and reliable fingerprints of genomes basing on the selective PCR amplification of restriction fragments from a total digest of genomic DNA (Vos et al., 1995). The unique feature of AFLP technique is the addition of adaptors of known sequence to DNA fragments generated by digestion, which allows for the subsequent PCR amplification of a subset of the total fragments for ease of separation by gel electrophoresis (Liu and Cordes, 2004). There are many advantages to AFLP when compared to RAPD and RFLP methods discussed above. It has higher reproducibility, resolution and sensitivity at the whole genome level (Mueller and Wolfenbarger, 1999). In addition, it allows for the specific amplification and analyzed of high numbers of restriction fragments simultaneously instead of analyzing one locus at a time. Like RAPDs, it does not require any prior sequence information for amplification. As a result, AFLPs have emerged as a replacement of RAPDs and AFLPs are also as good choice for genetic mapping for organisms with barely genomic information. Unfortunately AFLP technique also has its weaknesses. The main disadvantage is just like RAPD markers, AFLP markers suffer from their general dominant nature, rendering this method less useful for studies that require precise assignment of allelic states (Mueller and Wolfenbarger, 1999).

**Microsatellites:** Microsatellites, also known as simple sequence repeats (SSR), are stretches of a short, tandemly repeated DNA motif (1-6 bp). Microsatellites are highly polymorphic with respect to motif reiterations due to their inherent mutation mechanism (Ellegren, 2004). There are several advantages of microsatellites marker over the other genetic markers. The primary advantage is that they are inherited in a Mendelian fashion as codominant markers. Moreover, they are selectively neutral because they randomly distribute throughout the genome. Furthermore,

high polymorphism rates, high abundance and a broad distribution have made microsatellites as ideal markers for genetic mapping (Hearne et al., 1992). Many successive genetic maps in humans have been constructed based mainly on this type of marker (Dib et al., 1996; Murray et al., 1994; Weissenbach et al., 1992). However, significant drawbacks do exist with respect to using microsatellite-based methods, including the necessity to know sequence information, relatively high development costs and technical challenges during the construction of enriched libraries and species-specific primers (Miah et al., 2013).

**SNPs:** After a whole decade of domination in the molecular genetics field for genomics and genetics studies by the microsatellite markers, a new marker type, named SNP, for Single Nucleotide Polymorphism, is now on the scene and has rapidly become the marker of choice for many applications. A SNP is a DNA sequence variation occurring when a single nucleotide in the genome differs between members of a species or between paired chromosomes in an individual (Srivastava and Mishra, 2009). SNP is becoming a focal point due to its potential for high genotyping efficiency, automation, data quality, genome-wide coverage and analytical simplicity (Davey et al., 2011; Frazer et al., 2009). Prior to the emergence of next-generation sequencing (NGS) technologies, the identification of SNPs has been fueled by mining large numbers of expressed sequence tags (ESTs) available in many species. However, it was severely limited by sequence coverage and depth (Liu et al., 2011). Now, the advent of next-generation sequencing technologies has revolutionized genomic and transcriptomic approaches to SNP discovery. Theoretically, SNPs may be bi-, three- and four-allelic; however, in practice even three-allelic SNPs are very rare (less than 0.1% of all human SNPs (Lai, 2001)). The overwhelming majority of SNPs are biallelic. There are four types of biallelic SNPs including one transition C/T (G/A), and three types of transversions: C/A (G/T), C/G (G/C) and T/A (A/T). The most abundant are

transitions, originating from the deamination of 5'-methylcytosine to thymine (Holliday and Grigg, 1993). The biallelic nature of SNPs leads to the lower polymorphism information content (PIC) value as compared to most other marker types which are often multiallelic (Kruglyak, 1997), but this shortcoming is greatly compensated by their high frequency.

### **SNP Genotyping platforms**

With the availability of large numbers of SNPs, the challenge is how to genotype these SNPs efficiently and economically. The high-density SNP array platforms have been developed, which allow large-scale genotyping of SNPs in parallel in a large set of individuals (Syvanen, 2005). The BeadChip-based Infinium assay (Illumina) (Oliphant et al., 2002), GoldenGate Genotyping Technology (Illumina) (Fan et al., 2003), SNPStream (Beckman Coulter) (Bell et al., 2002), GeneChip (Affymetrix) (Dalma-Weiszhausz et al., 2006) and Affymetrix GeneChip Custom Array (Affymetrix, Santa Clara, CA) are widely used. These platforms differ in their requirements for sample size, SNP marker numbers, cost and automation (Liu et al., 2014). The appropriate platform for SNP genotyping needs to be chosen depends on specific project goals and budget levels. Alternatively, NGS-based genotyping by sequencing (GBS) (Baird et al., 2008; Davey et al., 2011b; Miller et al., 2007) is also highly efficient. GBS is widely used in numerous organisms, especially species lacking of prior genomic resources. Both SNP array and GBS have been used to genotype large-scale SNPs for genetic mapping and association analyses (Anderson et al., 2012; Everett et al., 2012; Gonen et al., 2014; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Houston et al., 2014). Compared to GBS, SNP arrays are more cost-effective. In addition, they provide a greater level of genome coverage. For instance, in most cases, the total number of commonly analyzed SNPs is limited to several thousand while millions of SNPs can be analyzed by using very high density SNP arrays. In addition, GBS of large resource panels for high resolution maps are cost-prohibitive.

## **Mapping families**

The design of reference families is the foundation of a genetic mapping program because reference families affect the quality and cost of the linkage maps (Da et al., 1998). F1 families generated by crossing genetically diverse individuals, F2 populations derived from F1 hybrids, and backcross populations derived by crossing the F1 hybrid to one of the parents are the most commonly used types of mapping population for aquaculture species (Yue, 2013). Although some studies attempted to determine the ideal population size and type for constructing accurate maps (Ferreira et al., 2006; van der Beek et al., 1993), there are no standard rules for creating reference families. Based on previous experience, some universal comments that apply to any type of mapping population can be made as follows: 1) The amount of effective information available for mapping is based on the number of informative meioses. In general, the informative meiosis means we can identify whether or not the gamete is recombinant. In practice, full-sib families are more efficient than half-sib families as full-sib family can yield more informative offspring. In that case, the requirement for the number of genotyping is lower for the same number of informative meioses. 2) It is better to use more mapping families because one pair of parents may be homozygous at the locus that will not produce informative meioses. 3) The greater the number of individuals, the higher the map resolution is. In practice, although any number of individuals can be used, a large population size is needed for high-resolution mapping (van der Beek et al., 1993).

## **Linkage mapping software**

There are a number of software packages available for linkage mapping. The detailed list of software for linkage mapping, QTL analysis and related studies can be found in website <http://www.jurgott.org/linkage/ListSoftware.html>. The type of software used is mainly dependent



on the experimental design, including the population structure and the number of genetic markers.

JoinMap (Stam, 1993), CRI-MAP (Green et al., 1990), MAPMAKER (Lincoln, 1992), LINKMFEX (Danzmann, 2001) and Map Manager QTX (Manly et al., 2001) for linkage map construction and MapChart (Voorrips, 2002) for map drawing are the most widely used tools in aquaculture species. As marker density becomes very high, which leads to the exponential increase in computational intensity (van Os et al., 2005), several new packages like OneMap (Margarido et al., 2007), MSTmap (Wu et al., 2008) and HighMap (Liu et al., 2014) have been developed for constructing high-density linkage maps. Each package has its own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it is wise to evaluate several software packages with genotype data before choosing a specific package for linkage analysis. It is also often productive to utilize combinations of software packages. For instance, using OneMap to place large numbers of markers into linkage groups, and then use JoinMap to order the markers and estimate their spacing.

### **Genetic map in aquaculture fish species**

Genetic linkage maps have been constructed for a number of aquaculture species, such as Asian seabass (*Lates calcarifer*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), Japanese flounder (*Paralichthys olivaceus*), channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*), half-smooth tongue sole (*Cynoglossus semilaevis*) and common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) (Castano-Sanchez et al., 2010; Cheng et al., 2010; Coimbra et al., 2003; Gilbey et al., 2004; Guyomard et al., 2012; Kocher et al., 1998; Kucuktas et al., 2009a; Lien et al., 2011b; Liu et al., 2003; Moen et al., 2008; Ninwichian et al., 2012; Sakamoto et al., 2000; Sun and Liang, 2004; Waldbieser et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2007). In the past decade, the relative high density genetic maps have been constructed in only a few species. The second generation linkage map of Asian seabass was spanned a genetic length of 2411.5 cM,

which harbored 790 microsatellite and SNP markers, with an average inter-marker distance of 3.4 cM or 1.1 Mb (Wang et al., 2011). The linkage map for Atlantic salmon was developed with a total of 5650 SNPs based on genotyping of 3297 fish from 143 families. The sex-specific map spanned a total of 2402.3 cM in female and 1746.2 cM in males, highlighting a difference in sex specific recombination rate 1.38 : 1 (Lien et al., 2011). High-density genetic linkage map of half-smooth tongue sole were developed with 1007 microsatellite markers and two SCAR markers in 21 linkage groups, covering a total of 1624 cM with an average interval of 1.67 cM. The male map covered a total of 1447.3 cM and the female map spanned 1497.5 cM (Song et al., 2012). 1124 microsatellite markers were mapped to 29 linkage groups of rainbow trout, covering a total of 2927.1 cM. The female having a map length of 4317.6 cM and the male map 2564.1 cM, with the female : male recombination ratio 1.68 : 1 (Rexroad et al., 2008). The genetic map of common carp contained 1209 genetic markers on 50 linkage groups, spanning 3565.9 cM on in genome (Zhao et al., 2013). Although these linkage maps provided a valuable resource for addressing important aquaculture, ecological, comparative genetics and evolutionary questions, only several hundred to thousand markers were mapped, with which QTL for agriculturally important performance and production traits can only be mapped in large genomic regions.

### **Genetic maps in channel catfish**

For channel catfish, since the initiation of genome research over two decades ago, several genetic maps have been constructed with different types of molecular markers and various resource families.

One Microsatellite-based genetic linkage map for channel catfish was built using two reference families (two hundred full-sib offspring) in 2001, which harbored 293 microsatellite loci.

A total of 262 loci were placed into 32 multipoint linkage groups as  $LOD = 3.0$  or greater, with an average of 171 informative meioses per locus. These linkage groups range in length from 11.9 to 110.5 cM with the total length of 1958 cM. The overall recombination rate between female and male was 3.18-fold (Waldbieser et al., 2001).

In 2003, an AFLP-based genetic linkage map of channel catfish was constructed by using an interspecific hybrid resource family. The resource families were made by backcrossing the F1 hybrids of channel catfish females and blue catfish males. In this genetic map, a total of 418 AFLP markers were assigned to 44 linkage groups, which covered 1593 cM (Liu et al., 2003). Both the microsatellite-based and the AFLP-based linkage map constructed at that time showed nonequivalence between chromosome number and linkage groups produced. Obviously, more markers are needed to fill the gap to bring linkage groups belonging to the same chromosome number.

A genetic linkage map of channel catfish was built using EST-based microsatellite and SNP markers with interspecific family. In this map, 259 microsatellites and 72 SNPs were mapped to 29 linkage groups, which covered a genetic distance of 1811 cM with an average marker interval of 6.0 cM. The recombination rate for females was 1.6 times higher than that for males (Kucuktas et al., 2009). Although the number of linkage groups in this map equal to the chromosome number, this map harbor only a couple of hundred markers. In that case, high density linkage map are crucially important for further genetic studies.

The latest genetic map of catfish was reported in 2012, including 2099 BES (BAC-end sequence)-based microsatellites, 235 EST-derived microsatellites, 127 anonymous microsatellites, 17 next-generation sequence-based microsatellites and 79 SNPs. The total length of this map was approximately 2550 cM. The average number of mapped markers per linkage group was 63

markers, with an average intermarker distance of 1.4 cM (Ninwichian et al., 2012). This was a great improvement on the density and resolution of catfish genetic map. However, that work only anchored 44.8% of the catfish BAC physical map contigs, covering 52.8% of the genome.

## **Physical map**

Genetic maps are based on the genetic linkage information measured in Centi-Morgans (CM), while physical maps use actual physical distances usually measured in number of base pairs. A physical map is a linear ordering of a set of clones encompassing one or more chromosomes. Physical maps are usually obtained by first digesting clones with restriction enzymes and then detecting the clone overlaps by matching the lengths of the fragments produced by digestion (Smith et al., 1987). Historically, several types of large-insert based physical maps have been used. These include YACs (Burke et al., 1987), BACs (McPherson et al., 2001), and Cosmid-based libraries (Eiglmeier et al., 1993). YACs have the largest capacity for cloning the large inserts, but they are relatively unstable, and therefore their use in genome studies has been limited. Cosmid libraries have the smallest capacity for cloning the large inserts and therefore, their use in large insert libraries has also been limited. BACs are the most popular large insert libraries as they are stable, and can hold inserts of up to 200 kb. BAC-based physical maps can organize the entire genome into restriction fingerprints-based contigs. Such contigs are similar to the whole genome sequencing contigs, but are constructed using overlapping restriction enzyme fingerprints rather than overlapping sequences themselves for the whole genome sequence assemblies. By analysis of restriction fingerprints of overlapping genomic clones of BAC inserts, the whole genome can be organized into a limited number of contigs, most often in the thousands. A BAC-based physical map is important for the understanding of genome structure and organization and for position based

cloning of economically important genes. It can also provide a material and information basis for comparative mapping (Xu et al., 2007).

Because of their importance, physical maps have been constructed in several aquaculture fish species including Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), Medaka (*Oryzias latipes*), rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and channel catfish (Katagiri et al., 2005; Matsuda et al., 2001; Ng et al., 2005; Palti et al., 2009; Quiniou et al., 2007; Xu et al., 2007). In Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), a physical map was generated based on HindIII fingerprints of a publicly available BAC library. A total of 11.5 haploid genome equivalents (185,938 clones) were successfully fingerprinted. Contigs were first assembled via FPC using high-stringency, and then end-to-end joins yielded 4354 contigs and 37,285 singletons (Ng et al., 2005). A genome-wide physical map of the tilapia genome was constructed by restriction fingerprinting 35,245 BAC clones using high-resolution capillary polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. The map consists of 3,621 contigs and is estimated to span 1.752 Gb in physical length (Katagiri et al., 2005). The first-generation physical map of the medaka genome in BAC clones contains 902 map segments that cover about 74% of the genome. The map contains 2721 markers which include a non-redundant set of 2328 loci from 2534 expressed sequences and 934 markers anchored to the medaka genetic map (Matsuda et al., 2001). The physical map of the rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) was constructed by fingerprinting 192,096 BAC clones using the 4-color high-information content fingerprinting (HICF) method. The map consists of 4,173 contigs and 9,379 singletons. The total number of unique fingerprinting fragments (consensus bands) in contigs is 1,185,157, which corresponds to an estimated physical length of 2.0 Gb (Palti et al., 2012). In channel catfish, a BAC based physical map was generated using four-color fluorescence-based fingerprint. A total of 3,307 contigs, based on 30,582 BAC clones were assembled by FingerPrinted Contig software

(FPC) using a cutoff of  $1 \times 10^{-20}$ . Each contig contains an average of 9.25 clones with an average size of 292 kb. The BAC-end-associated polymorphic markers would allow integration of the genetic and physical map (Xu et al., 2007).

### **Integrated map**

Map integration is to place the same set of markers on both linkage and physical maps such that one can relate genetic map positions and physical sequence (Ninwichian et al., 2012). Integration of genetic map with physical map is useful for understanding genomes from different dimensions. The integrated map will be a possible framework for whole genome sequence assembly and is essential for comparative genome analysis, fine-scale QTL mapping and positional cloning of genes responsible for performance and production traits (Liu et al., 2009; Ninwichian et al., 2012). BAC-anchored genetic markers can be identified through BAC-end sequencing, and then the integrated map can be constructed by mapping of molecular markers from BAC-end sequences. Integrated maps have been developed in several aquaculture fish species using low-density genetic maps. In Atlantic salmon, BAC-anchored SNP markers were developed to enable the integration of physical and genetic maps by assigning 73 BAC contigs to Atlantic salmon linkage groups (Lorenz et al., 2010). The second generation of rainbow trout integrated map anchored up to 265 contigs to the genetic map, covering approximately 11% of the genome (Palti et al., 2012). In common carp, a total of 463 physical map contigs and 88 single BACs were integrated into the genetic linkage map, which covered 30% of the common carp genome (Zhao et al., 2013). In catfish, 2,030 BAC end sequence (BES)-derived microsatellites from 1,481 physical map contigs were used for linkage map construction, which anchored 44.8% of the catfish BAC physical map contigs, covering approximately 52.8% of the genome (Ninwichian et al., 2012).

Nowadays, BAC-based physical map construction and its integration with high-density genetic maps have benefited from NGS and high-throughput array platforms (Ariyadasa and Stein, 2012).

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## # CHAPTER III

# **CONSTRUCTION OF A HIGH-DENSITY HIGH-RESOLUTION GENETIC MAP AND ITS INTEGRATION WITH BAC-BASED PHYSICAL MAP IN CHANNEL CATFISH**

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Resource families and DNA preparation**

A total of 576 fish, with 192 full-sib individuals from each of three full-sib channel catfish families, were used for linkage mapping. The parent and grandparent samples were also obtained. All DNA for these samples used in this study were provided by USDA-ARS Warmwater Aquaculture Research Unit which were prepared following the procedures as previous described (Waldbieser et al., 2001). In brief, the fish were euthanized with tricaine methanesulfonate (MS 222) at 300 mg/l before blood collection. For each individual, 500 µl blood samples were collected in a 1-ml syringe and immediately expelled into a 50-ml tube containing 20-ml of DNA extraction buffer (10 mM Tris, 100mM NaCl, pH8, 25 mM EDTA, 0.5% SDS, and freshly added proteinase K 0.1 mg.ml). Total DNA was isolated using the DNeasy Blood & Tissue Kit (Qiagen, Valencia, CA, USA) following the manufacturer's protocol.

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## **SNP genotyping**

DNA samples were arranged in 96-well microtiter plates and diluted to a final concentration of 50 ng /  $\mu$ l with the final volume of 10  $\mu$ l. Genotyping was conducted by GeneSeek (Lincoln, NE, USA) using the catfish 250K SNP array (Liu et al., 2014). Affymetrix CEL files were analyzed using Affymetrix Genotyping Console software (version 4.0) for quality control analysis and SNP genotype calling using the Affymetrix AxiomGT1 algorithm. Samples passing the quality control (Dish value > 0.85) and SNP call rates threshold (>95%) were retained for analysis. Following genotyping, an R package, SNPolisher, was used to generate the genotyping outputs. The package produced SNP quality control metrics and divided SNPs into several classes based on the quality of genotype calls (Liu et al., 2014). The polymorphic markers with high resolution of cluster separation (high genotyping quality) were retained for further analysis. The CHP files generated from the Affymetrix Genotyping Console were imported into SNP & Variation Suite (SVS version 7, Golden Helix Inc) for further filtering to remove SNPs with missing genotypes >10% and minor allele frequency <5%.

## **SNP filtering**

For SNPs, only those had high quality of genotype calls and were heterozygous in at least one parent were retained for linkage analysis. Based on segregation patterns, SNPs were categorized into three types: 1:2:1 type (AB x AB, segregating in both parents), 1:1 type (AB x AA or AB x BB, segregating only in female), and 1:1 type (AA x AB or BB x AB, segregating only in male). The other types were removed initially because they are not informative for linkage mapping.

Markers with segregation distortion can also lead to inaccuracy in linkage mapping. In many cases, markers that are distorted significantly should not be used in the linkage mapping because

they could create inaccurate distances and false linkages (Cervera et al., 2001; Recknagel et al., 2013). In our study, the Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were performed to examine the segregation distortion. Markers with significant segregation distortion were excluded ( $P < 0.001$ ).

It was also observed that genetic recombination rates could be artificially inflated when genotyping errors occur or when markers with large amounts of missing data are included in the analysis (Ronin et al., 2012; Ronin et al., 2010). Missing data can lead incorrect marker orders, especially in map regions with dense markers. Furthermore, it was reported that missing values tend to reduce the map lengths for widely separated markers, particular under the weighted least-squares criterion (Hackett and Broadfoot, 2003). In our case, SNPs with more than 10% missing values were removed before further analysis.

## **Linkage map construction**

### **Assigning markers into linkage groups**

Linkage maps were initially developed independently for the three mapping families. Sex-specific maps were constructed for each parent using 1:1 segregation type markers only (AB x AA or AB x BB for female map and AA x AB or BB x AB for male map). The markers of segregation type 1:2:1 (AB x AB) were used to build the sex-averaged map. The LINKMFEX software (version 2.4, <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~rdanzman/software.htm>) was used to perform linkage analysis for sex-specific markers and OneMap (R package, version 2.0) was used for linkage analysis of sex-averaged markers. Linkage between markers was examined by estimating LOD scores for recombination fraction ( $\theta$ ). In linkage analysis, LOD of more than 3 is considered strong support for linkage, as it indicates the linkage is 1,000 times more probable than no linkage. On the contrary, a LOD score less than -2 is required for linkage exclusion. However, this criterion should be modified depending on the type of species, complexity of traits, and number of genetic

markers. In our study, a LOD threshold of 8.0 was used, and a maximum  $\theta$  of 0.35 was set to assign markers into linkage groups.

The availability of a large number of SNP markers and efficient SNP genotyping technology allow the construction of high-density linkage map. However a new problem arises. In many practical cases, the number of markers may exceed the resolution of recombination for the given population size, which lead to marker stacking, i.e., mapping of many markers to a single genetic location. In this study, for markers falling into ‘zero recombination clusters’, only one marker was picked which had the most informative meiosis as the “representative marker” of each cluster for linkage map construction in order to reduce the power required for computation of linkage. After building the map with “representative markers”, the stacked markers with “zero recombination clusters” that were excluded during the initial mapping steps should be relocated onto the linkage maps based on the positions of their representative anchor marker. Such stacked markers are still valuable for the chromosome-scale scaffolding of genomic sequence.

### **Ordering markers within each linkage group**

Map ordering in each group were constructed using JoinMap software version 4.0 with the regression mapping algorithm (Van Ooijen, 2006). The positions of markers were determined according to the sequential buildup of the map (Stam, 1993). First, the most informative pair of markers was selected, followed by adding other loci one by one. The best position of newly added marker was searched by comparing the goodness-of-fit test (Chi-square) of the calculated map for each tested position. A big normalized difference in goodness-of-fit Chi-square before and after adding a locus (jump) indicated a poor fit of the added marker. When the newly-added marker caused large jump or negative distance estimated in the map, the marker was removed. This procedure was repeated until all loci were tested once (first round). Some markers that have been

removed in the first round would be added to the map in the second round, however, the markers that produce too large a jump or negative distances should still not be used. In the third round, all markers previously removed were forced to add into the map without constraints of maximum allowed jump and no negative distances. In that case the results from the third round should not be considered as a map of high quality because some poor-fitting loci still exist. In that case, we only use the ordering results from the second round.

### **Determining the map distance**

In linkage mapping, the distance between two genes is determined by their recombination fraction. Map construction based on distance and order of genetic markers. However, is it difficult to use only recombination fraction as a linkage metrics, because recombination fractions themselves are not additive. Furthermore, the distance depends on the existence of interference, which is the effect in which the occurrence of a crossover in a certain region reduces the probability of a crossover in the adjacent region (Kinghorn and van der Werf, 2000). In that case, mathematical transformations were called mapping function, with the most well-known ones being Haldane (Haldane, 1919) and Kosambi (Kosambi, 1943). Mapping functions translate recombination fractions between two loci into a map distance in cM (centiMorgan). We chose the Kosambi mapping function to convert the recombination frequencies into map distances (centiMorgans) because of its advantage over Haldane's function for interference. For the sex-specific markers, the linkage phases were inferred automatically, while for the markers with 1:2:1 segregation type (AB x AB), the linkage phase was deduced based on the genotypes of grandparents to assist the map construction.

### **Constructing the consensus maps**

The consensus maps were then established using the MergeMap (Wu et al., 2011) by



integrating individual maps from three reference families through shared markers. In brief, the individual genetic maps were given as directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) internally, which were then merged into a consensus graph on the basis of shared vertices. Cycles in the consensus graph indicated ordering conflicts among the individual maps. Conflicts were resolved using a parsimonious approach that takes into account two types of errors that may be present in the individual maps, namely, local reshuffles and global displacements. Local reshuffles referred to inaccuracies in the order of nearby markers, whereas global displacements referred to the cases where a few markers were placed at wrong positions far from the correct ones. MergeMap resolved conflicts by deleting a minimum set of marker occurrences. To use MergeMap, map files of each individual genetic linkage map and a configuration file in the following format were needed. The configuration file was like following format: map1\_name map1\_weight map1\_path. The weight represented the user's confidence in the quality of the map (High weight was associated with high quality). When MergeMap tried to resolve conflict, the minimum-weight set of marker occurrences were deleted. The following command was executed to construct the consensus map: Consensus\_map.exe configuration\_file.

Four output files were generated after running the MergeMap command. There were three graphs in the .dot format (lgx.dot, lgx\_consensus.dot and lgx\_linear.dot) and one text file showing the final consensus map. The lgx.dot graph highlighted the conflicts among the individual maps and showed the solution by MergeMap as to which marker occurrence was deleted. The lgx\_consensus.dot showed the simplified consensus DAG, while the lgx\_linear.dot showed the final linear consensus map.

Lastly, the markers falling into “zero recombination clusters” that were excluded during map construction were anchored to the linkage map based on the positions of their corresponding

representative markers.

### **Drawing linkage maps**

All genetic linkage maps were drawn using MAPCHART 2.2 (Voorrips, 2002). MapChart read the linkage information (i.e. the locus and their positions) from text files, which were created with JoinMap. The text containing the map data specified the order of linkage groups. Each linkage group specification consisted of a header line followed by a loci section.

### **Differences in recombination rates between families and sexes**

To assess differences in recombination rates among the three resource families, the sex-averaged map was used following the M-test according to Ott's method (Ott, 1999).

$$X^2 = 2 \times \ln(10) \left[ \sum Z_i(\hat{\theta}_i) - Z(\hat{\theta}) \right]$$

Where  $Z_i(\hat{\theta}_i)$  represents the LOD scores of maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) for the  $i$ th reference family for common marker pairs among the three families. The  $Z(\hat{\theta})$  represents the total LOD scores of MLE for all three families. The recombination fractions for all mapped locus intervals from each family were obtained from JoinMap.

To investigate sex-specific heterogeneity throughout each linkage group, common marker pairs were used to compare the locus intervals across the male-specific map and female-specific map using contingency G-test (Garcia-Dorado and Gallego, 1992).

### **Integration of linkage map with physical map**

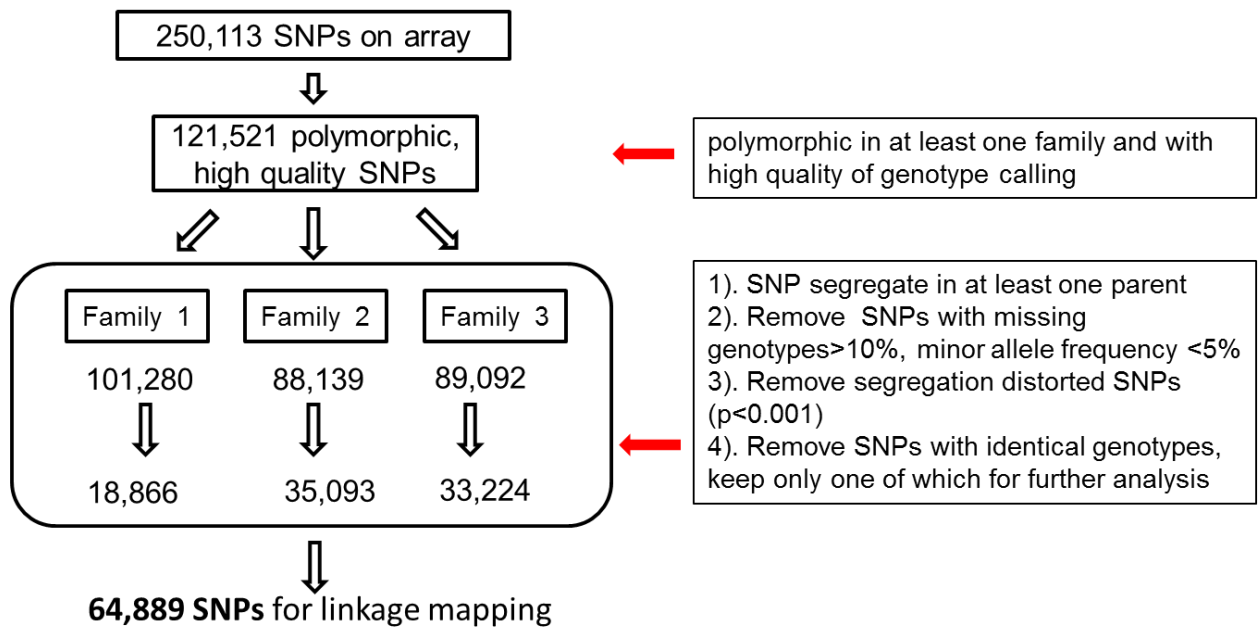
To integrate previously developed physical map (Xu et al., 2006) with the high-density linkage map constructed in the present work, all the mapped SNPs with 70-bp flanking sequences

were aligned with BAC end sequence (BES) (Liu et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2006) and BAC-based physical map contig-specific sequences (PMCSS) (Jiang et al., 2013) using BLAST with the E-value cutoff of 1E-10, minimal alignment length of 36 and minimal identity of 95%. The relationship of physical map and genetic map was built up based on the SNP associated BES and PMCSS. The BAC physical map contigs that harbored BAC-derived BES and PMCSS were anchored onto the genetic map based on the SNP positions.

## **RESULTS**

### **Selection of SNP markers**

SNP genotypes were obtained from 576 samples of three mapping families (192 samples per family). According to the assessment of genotyping quality and polymorphism in all samples from the three mapping families, genotypes of a total of 121,521 SNPs were used (Figure 1). Due to the low genotype calling rate (< 95%), nine individuals were excluded for analysis, including one individual from family 1, three individuals from family 2, and five individuals from family 3. After further filtering to remove SNPs with low calling rate (< 97%) and non-Mendelian inheritance ( $P < 0.001$ ), a total of 18,866 SNPs from family 1, 33,224 SNPs from family 2 and 35,093 SNPs from family 3, were retained for linkage mapping. Taken together, a total of 64,889 SNPs that were informative in at least one of the three mapping families were used. The SNPs filtering process was illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. SNPs filtering process for linkage mapping**

## Linkage mapping

Linkage maps were first constructed for each of the three families, separately. For all three mapping families, 29 linkage groups (LGs) were obtained, which was consistent with the number of chromosomes of the catfish haploid genome. The consensus genetic linkage maps were obtained by merging separate maps from three mapping families. A total of 31,387 markers with unique genetic positions (hereafter referred to as unique markers) were placed on the consensus linkage maps, which included 8,644 SNPs from family 1, 13,477 SNPs from family 2 and 14,343 SNPs from family 3 (Table 1). After anchoring the previously excluded markers that fell into “zero

recombination clusters” based on the genetic positions of representative markers, a total of 54,342 SNP markers were placed onto the current linkage map (Table 1).

**Table 1 - SNPs placed on the linkage maps**

Item	Number
Unique SNPs from family 1 mapped to linkage map	8,644
Unique SNPs from family 2 mapped to linkage map	13,477
Unique SNPs from family 3 mapped to linkage map	14,343
Total unique SNPs mapped to linkage map	31,387
Total SNPs mapped to linkage map	54,342

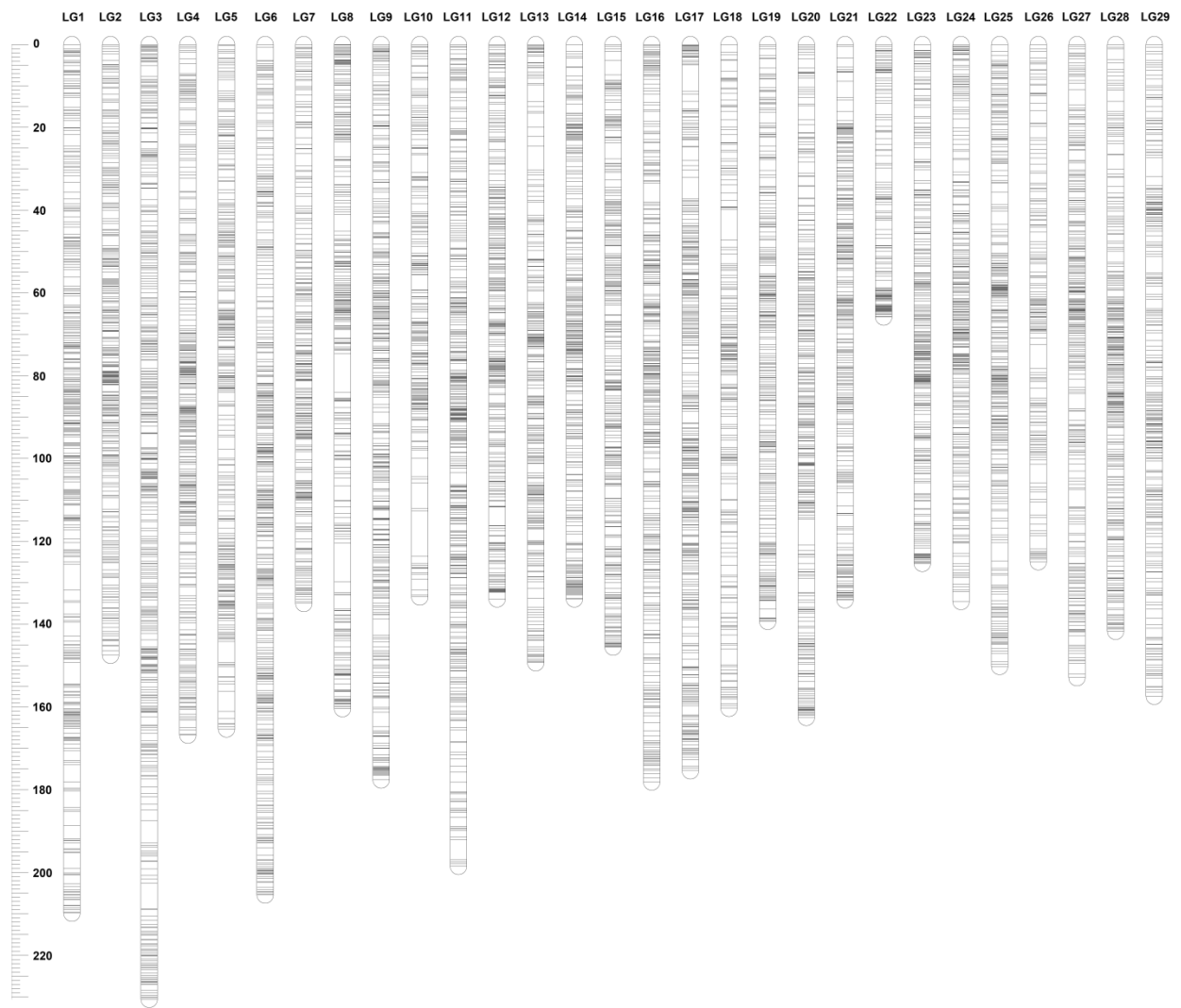
The sex-specific maps were constructed using markers that were heterozygous in only female or male parent. The female genetic map consisted of 18,444 SNPs including 9,746 unique markers, with a total genetic length of 4,495.1 cM (Table 2, Fig. 2). The marker intervals estimated based on the unique marker positions ranged from 0.37 cM/marker pair in LG12 to 0.7 cM/marker pair in LG18 with the average marker interval of 0.46 cM/marker pair in female genetic map.

The male genetic map was comprised of 15,148 SNPs with 7,250 unique markers and a total genetic length of 2,593.7 cM, which was much shorter than female genetic map. The marker intervals of male genetic map ranged from 0.25 cM/marker pair (LG18) to 0.55 cM/marker pair (LG1), with an average marker interval of 0.36 cM (Table 3, Fig. 3). It should be noted that these distances refer to intervals where recombination was detected and of course it should be recognized that in both sexes the minimum distance observed was 0 cM for completely linked markers. The

female and male-specific maps were illustrated in Figure 2 and 3, respectively. The detailed map information was provided in Additional file 1.

**Table 2 - Summary of the female linkage map of channel catfish**

Linkage group	Female-specific map			
	Mapped markers	Unique positions	Genetic length (cM)	Marker interval (cM)
1	810	397	209.8	0.53
2	616	370	147.1	0.4
3	934	481	230.6	0.48
4	774	380	166.8	0.44
5	643	353	165.3	0.47
6	821	470	205.3	0.44
7	583	313	134.9	0.43
8	550	326	160.4	0.49
9	751	399	177.6	0.45
10	488	238	133.4	0.56
11	815	434	198.5	0.46
12	695	361	133.9	0.37
13	604	311	149.3	0.48
14	598	340	133.9	0.39
15	651	332	145.5	0.44
16	799	385	178.1	0.46
17	792	420	175.4	0.42
18	473	230	160.3	0.7
19	542	302	139.3	0.46
20	657	344	162.5	0.47
21	576	318	134.1	0.42
22	308	153	65.8	0.43
23	668	319	125.3	0.39
24	518	296	134.5	0.45
25	665	348	150.2	0.43
26	389	181	124.9	0.69
27	595	327	152.9	0.47
28	663	334	141.7	0.42
29	466	284	157.4	0.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,444</b>	<b>9,746</b>	<b>4,495.10</b>	<b>0.46</b>

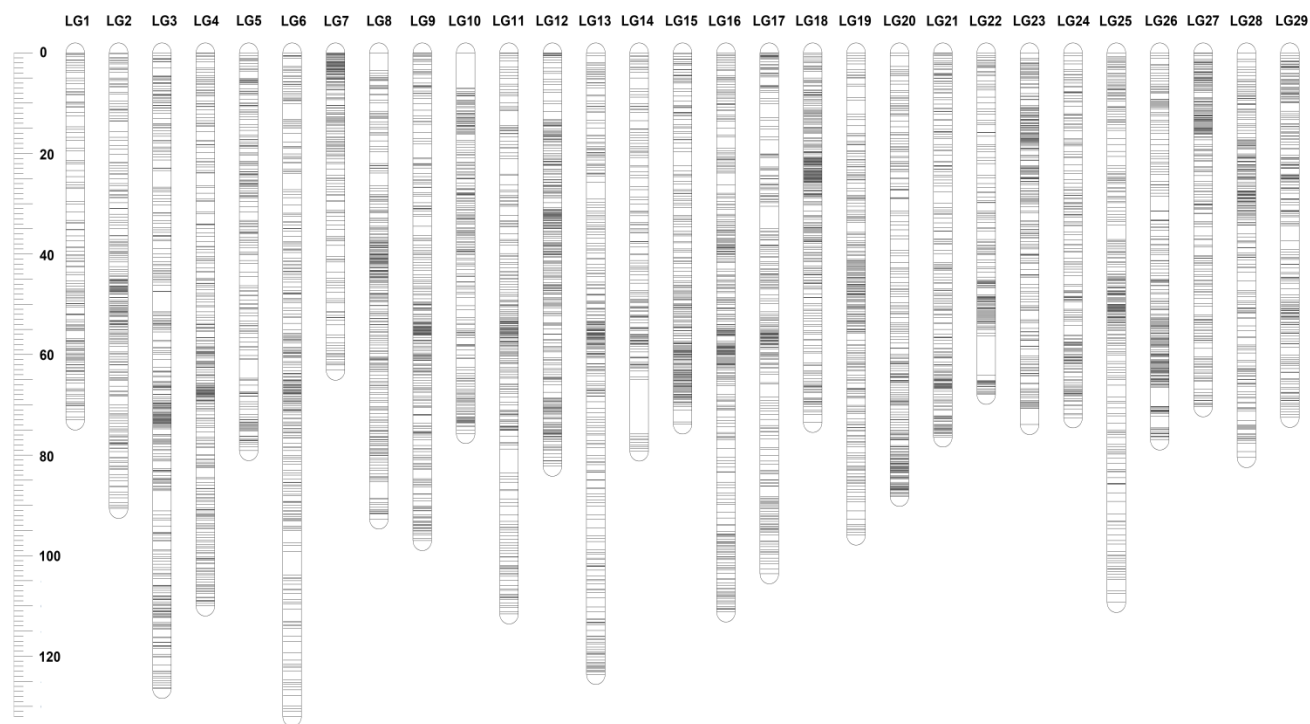


**Figure 2 - Illustration of female-specific linkage map**

**Table 3 - Summary of the male-specific linkage maps of channel catfish**

Linkage group	Male-specific map				F:M ratio
	Mapped markers	Unique positions	Genetic length (cM)	Marker interval (cM)	
1	374	153	83.9	0.55	2.50
2	517	251	90.6	0.36	1.62
3	665	342	126.4	0.37	1.82
4	699	313	110	0.35	1.52
5	441	199	79.1	0.40	2.09
6	606	300	132.1	0.44	1.55
7	370	196	63.1	0.32	2.14
8	615	297	92.7	0.31	1.73
9	546	291	97.1	0.33	1.83
10	516	228	75.7	0.33	1.76
11	616	273	111.6	0.41	1.78
12	727	311	82.2	0.26	1.63
13	557	285	123.6	0.43	1.21
14	351	150	79.2	0.53	1.69
15	524	248	73.8	0.30	1.97
16	635	337	111.2	0.33	1.60
17	506	264	103.6	0.39	1.69
18	640	290	73.5	0.25	2.18
19	495	256	95.9	0.37	1.45
20	557	244	88.2	0.36	1.84
21	437	217	76.4	0.35	1.76
22	380	169	67.9	0.40	0.97
23	478	245	73.9	0.30	1.70
24	408	195	72.6	0.37	1.85
25	535	269	109.3	0.41	1.37
26	512	242	76.9	0.32	1.62
27	522	233	70.4	0.30	2.17
28	484	237	80.5	0.34	1.76
29	435	215	72.5	0.34	2.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,148</b>	<b>7,250</b>	<b>2,593.7</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>1.73</b>



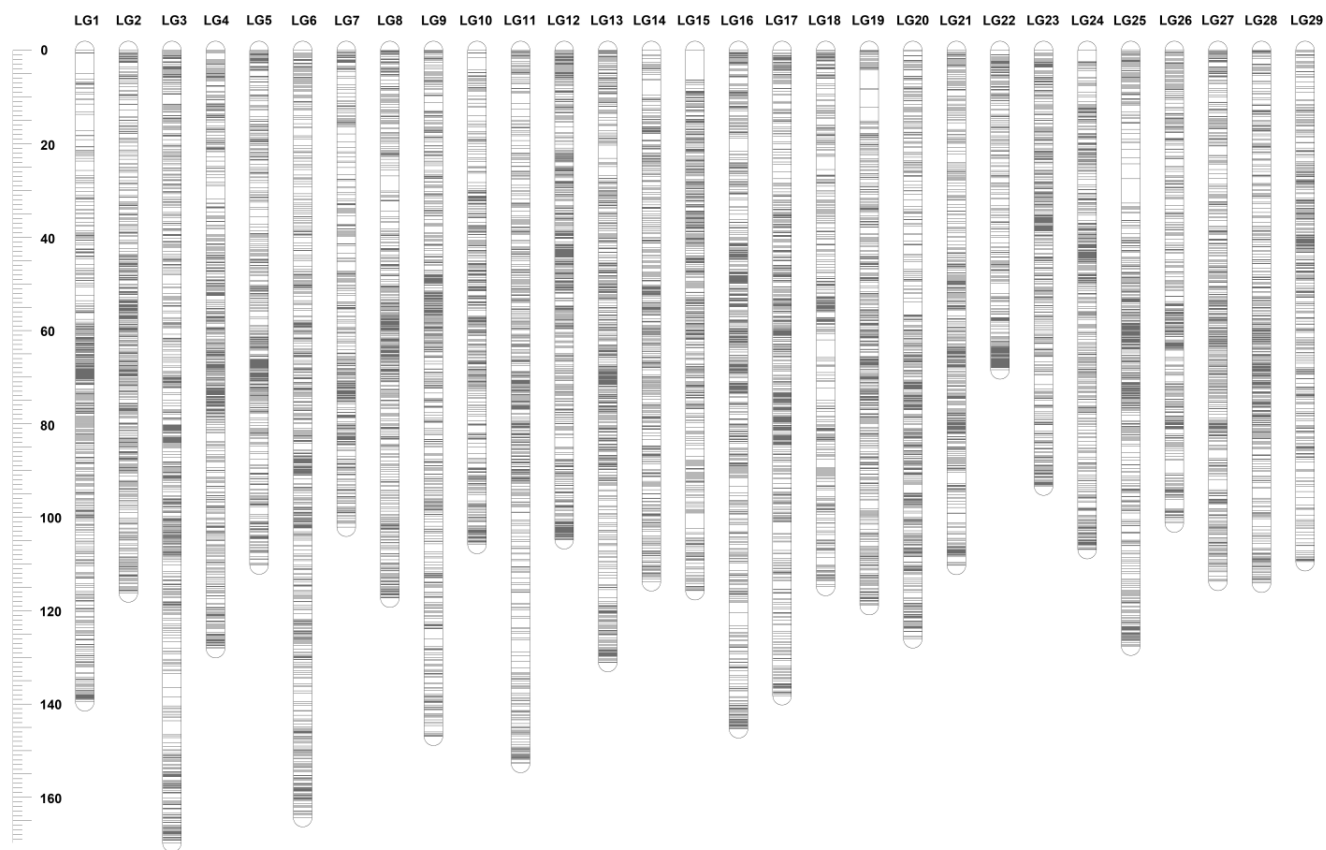


**Figure 3 - Illustration of male-specific linkage map.**

The sex-averaged map was constructed using markers that were heterozygous in both parents. As summarized in Table 4, a total of 29,081 SNPs were mapped, which consisted of 15,598 unique markers. The sex-averaged map spanned 3,505.4 cM with an average marker interval of 0.22 cM, ranging from 0.17 cM/marker (LG12) to 0.30 cM/marker (LG18). The genetic map was illustrated in Figure 4. The detailed map information was provided in Additional file 1 (Example shows on Table S1).

**Table 4 - Summary of the sex-averaged linkage map of channel catfish**

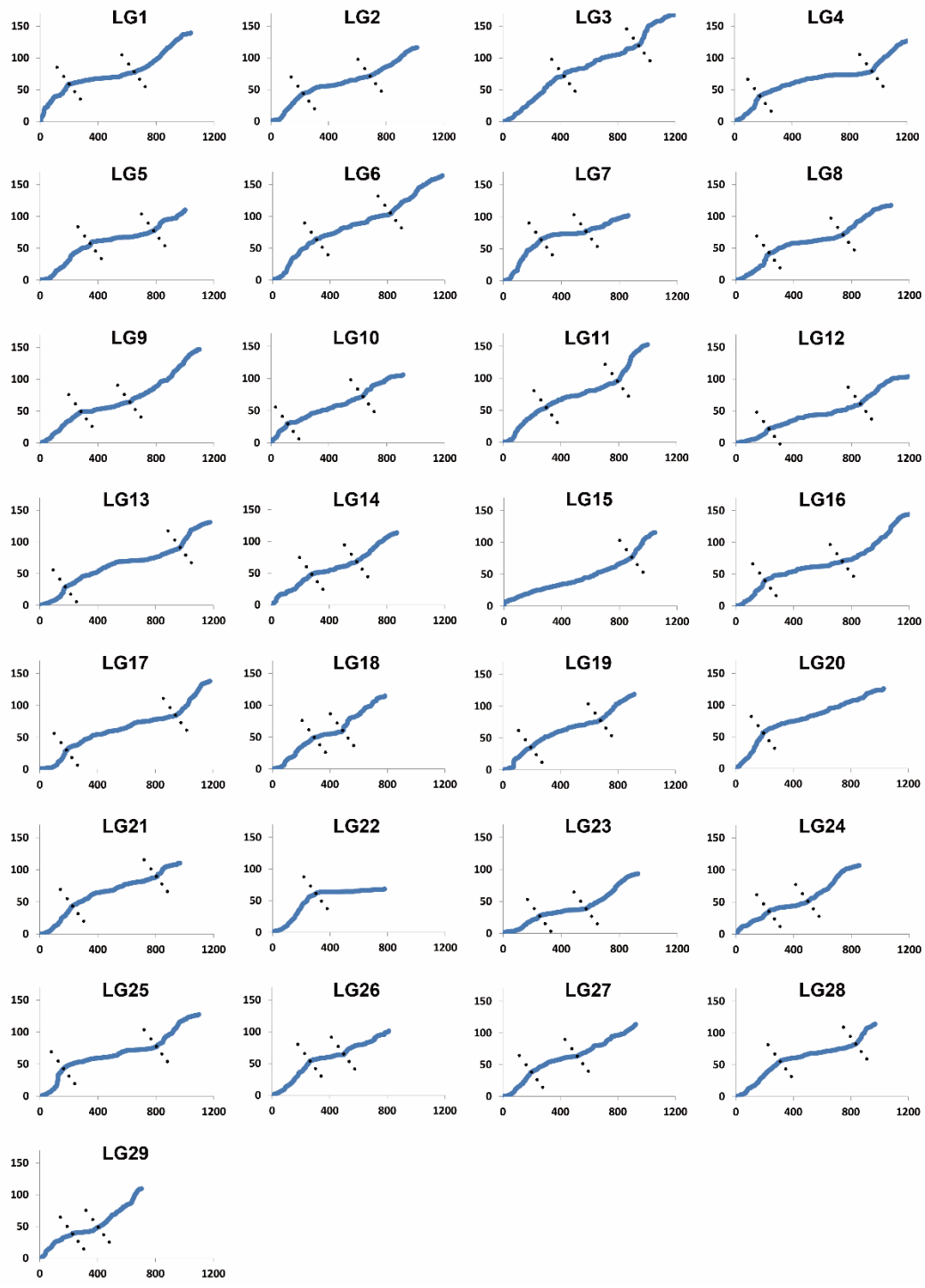
Linkage group	Sex-averaged map			
	Mapped markers	Unique positions	Genetic length (cM)	Marker interval (cM)
1	1,039	556	139.5	0.25
2	1,014	557	116.2	0.21
3	1,212	673	169.7	0.25
4	1,220	653	128.1	0.20
5	1,002	491	110.2	0.22
6	1,183	680	163.3	0.24
7	861	422	102.1	0.24
8	1,073	557	117.3	0.21
9	1,100	604	146.9	0.24
10	913	475	105.8	0.22
11	999	572	152.7	0.27
12	1,216	625	104.8	0.17
13	1,176	630	131.1	0.21
14	868	472	113.8	0.24
15	1,047	562	115.7	0.21
16	1,219	695	145.3	0.21
17	1,178	623	138.2	0.22
18	782	388	114.8	0.30
19	914	523	118.9	0.23
20	1,029	550	126	0.23
21	968	484	110.3	0.23
22	779	364	68.4	0.19
23	929	486	93.3	0.19
24	854	492	106.9	0.22
25	1,097	584	127.6	0.22
26	811	427	101.2	0.24
27	925	516	113.7	0.22
28	969	516	114.1	0.22
29	704	421	109.5	0.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,081</b>	<b>15,598</b>	<b>3,505.4</b>	<b>0.22</b>



**Figure 4 - Illustration of sex-averaged linkage map.**

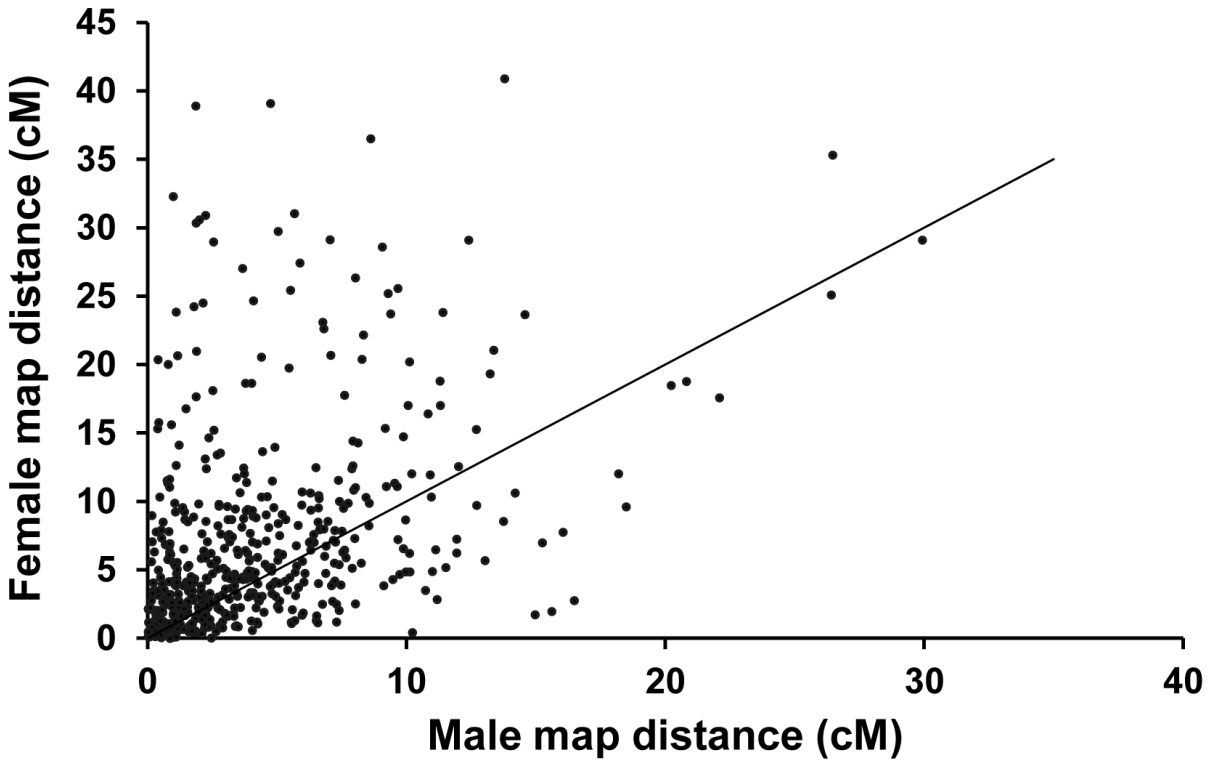
## **Analysis of recombination rates**

Within each linkage group, mild to strong localized specific recombination pattern were observed, whereby recombination rates were usually elevated towards the end and suppressed in the middle of the map (Figure 5). Clustered markers that fell into “zero recombination rate” were observed in every linkage group, especially in positions close to the centromeres in contrast to the telomeres (Additional file 1).



**Figure 5 - The patterns of localized regional recombination rates along each linkage group.**

There is no significant difference in recombination rate among three mapping families based on the examination with common marker pairs among the three families (see Methods section). In contrast, significant higher recombination rates were observed in a majority of the linkage groups of the female genetic map than that of male genetic map ( $p < 0.01$ ). Overall, the female genetic map was 1,901.4 cM longer than male-genetic map, with an average female-to-male ratio of 1.7:1 (Table 3). The ratio varied by linkage groups, ranging from 0.97:1 in LG22 to 2.50:1 in LG1 (Table 3). The largest differences in recombination rate between the female and male maps were observed in LG1, LG5, LG7, LG18, LG27 and LG29. Across all these linkage groups the female: male recombination ratios exceeded 2.0. LG22 was unusual in that: recombination rates were very similar between the sexes (i.e., 0.97:1). Within unique map positions, 504 SNPs were commonly shared between the two sexes, while significantly higher recombination rates we observed in majority of common locus intervals ( $p < 0.01$ ) (Figure 6, Additional file 2).



**Figure 6 - Comparison of the recombination rate between female and male.** The inter-marker distances (cM) for all pairs of adjacent markers from both female and male-specific maps were used. The diagonal line represents sex-equal recombination rates.

## **Integration and validation with physical map**

The integration of the genetic map with the BAC-based physical map anchored 2,728 (83%) of the 3,307 physical map contigs (Table 5). Together with the 1,481 (44.8%) physical map contigs that were anchored previously (Ninwichian et al., 2012), we were able to anchor a total of 2,880 (87.1%) physical map contigs consisting of 28,416 BAC clones (92.9% of total BAC clones). The sizes of anchored physical map contigs varied from 66.0 kb to 2,005.8 kb (Additional file 2), with an average size of 301 kb. Together, a total of 867.4Mb of the physical map were integrated by genetic linkage map which accounted for about 90% of the channel catfish genome (Table 5). Detailed information regarding integration of linkage map and physical map is provided in Additional file 2.

The integration of linkage map and physical map enabled the cross-validation of the quality of the physical map and the genetic map (Table 6). A total of 1,467 physical map contigs containing 2,961 BES-associated SNPs were placed onto linkage maps. With 615 physical map contigs, two or more SNP markers were mapped that allowed the determination of orientation of the physical map contigs along the chromosome. With such contigs, the quality of physical map contigs was assessed based on the mapped markers. An illustration with linkage group 12 was provided in Figure 7. The vast majority of physical contigs were validated, but a small fraction of physical map contigs was found incorrectly assembly, or the ordering of the SNP markers onto the map was in error.



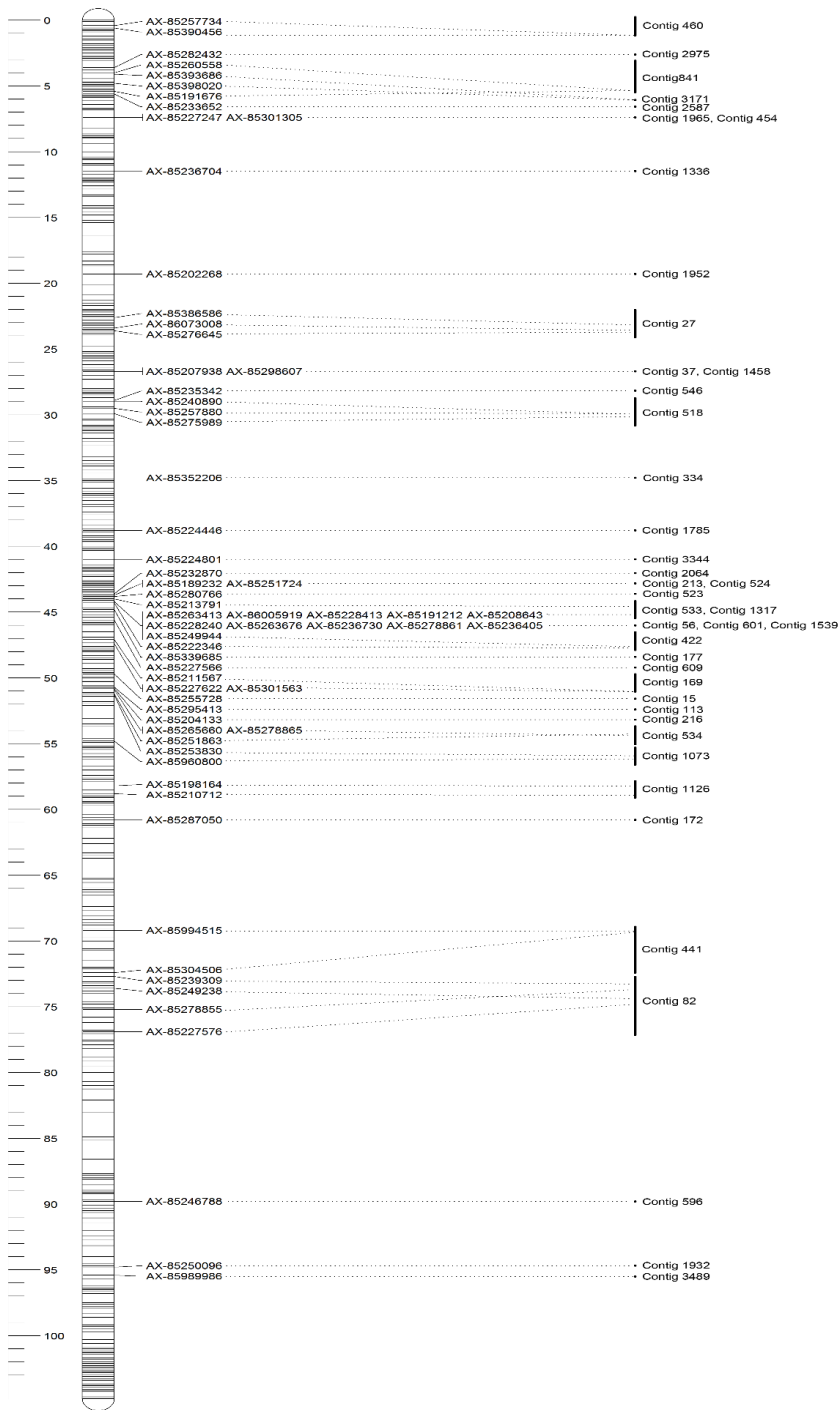
**Table 5 - Integration of channel catfish linkage map with physical map.**

Item	Number	Percentage
Number of physical map contigs*	3,307	100%
Number of physical map contigs with SNP markers	3,243	98.1%
Number of physical map contigs anchored to linkage map in this work	2,728	82.5%
Number of physical map contigs anchored in previous study <sup>#</sup>	1,481	44.8%
Total physical map contigs mapped to linkage map	2,880	87.1%
Total BAC clones in the catfish physical map*	30,582	100%
Total BAC clones mapped on the linkage map	28,416	92.9%
Total size of physical map contigs*	965,279	100%
Total size of anchored physical map contigs	867,364	89.9%

\*Data obtained from Xu et al (Xu et al., 2007); <sup>#</sup>Data obtained from Ninwichian et al (Ninwichian et al., 2012)

**Table 6 - Cross-validation between linkage map and physical map.**

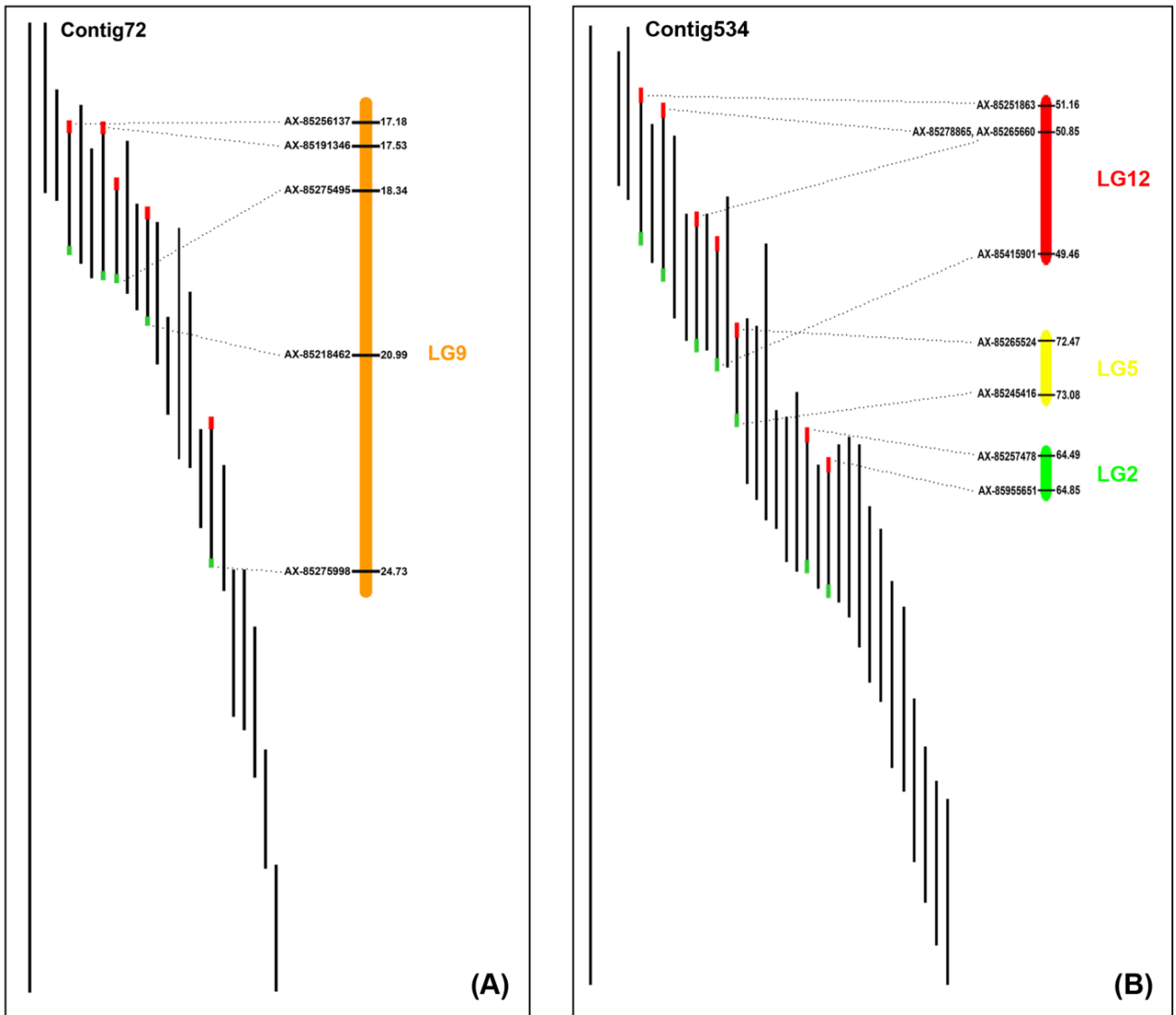
Item	Number
Number of physical map contigs with BES-associated SNPs	2,790
Number of physical map contigs anchored through BES-associated SNPs	1,467
Number of physical map contigs with at least two BES-associated SNPs	615
Number of physical map contigs mapped onto different LGs	47
Number of BAC clones with BES-associated SNPs	2,707
Number of BAC clones with at least two BES-associated SNPs	238
Number of BAC clones mapped onto different LGs	7



**Figure 7- Illustration of integration of the linkage map (left) with the physical map (right).**

The linkage group 12 (LG12) was used for the illustration. Vertical bars represent physical map contigs containing at least two SNPs mapped onto the linkage map, and the dot spots indicate physical map contigs with only one SNP.

A total of 47 physical map contigs had markers that were mapped in different linkage groups, indicating the potential errors of the physical map assembly or the mapping errors of incorrectly assigned SNPs. These errors could be caused by SNPs falling into duplicated regions of genome. Moreover, of the 2,707 BAC clones with BES-associated SNPs, 238 BAC clones contained at least two BES-associated SNPs. Within this group, 7 BAC clones were mapped onto different LGs, suggesting the misplacement of those SNP markers onto the linkage groups. As an illustration, the integration of sex-averaged linkage map with physical map Contig72 and Contig534 were shown in Figure 8, presenting the correct and incorrect physical map assembly, respectively. The manual check of the potential assembly or mapping error warrants the correctness of both physical map and linkage map in the next step.



**Figure 8 - Example of validation of physical map using the linkage map.** (A) shows the correct physical map contig using Contig72 as an example; (B) shows the incorrect physical map contig using Contig534 as an example.

Physical distances were estimated based on position of SNP markers within each physical map contig, which allowed for estimation of the ratios of physical distance to genetic distance (Additional file 3). On the other hand, recombination frequencies can be calculated for physical

map contigs with multiple SNP markers mapped onto the linkage map. With the sex-average linkage map, the genetic size of 3,505.4 cM and the physical size of 965,279 kb based on the physical map, providing the average genetic size of 3.6 cM per Mb. The ratios observed from the 250 physical map contigs that contained multiple SNPs mapped onto the linkage map ranging from 0 cM to 2.26 cM. The markers with higher ratios might indicate the potential loci of recombination hot spots.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the present work, we constructed a high-density genetic map for channel catfish. This map possesses the highest marker density among all the genetic linkage maps constructed for any aquaculture species. Taking advantage of the catfish 250K SNP array, we were able to efficiently and cost-effectively genotype 250,000 SNPs in the 576 fish from three mapping families (192 fish per family). Such a high-density linkage map should be valuable resource for analysis and fine-scale QTL mapping in catfish.

While the efficient SNP genotyping technology allowed the construction of high-density linkage map, the high-resolution was still not achieved. A large number of markers fell into ‘zero recombination clusters’ where no recombination events occur during meiosis between the markers among the fish used for mapping analysis. These represent closely arrayed adjacent SNP positions and their ordering is likely best achieved by assessing their order within the aligned physical map contigs. Cluster markers were mapped at the same position, however they add to the calculation efforts (Joinmap manual tutorial), and the genetic sizes were overestimated. In fact, the first version of our sex-average linkage map had genetic size at over 7,000 cM, which was double size of current genetic length. When “representative markers” (unique markers) were used, significant smaller genetic sizes were observed (Supplemental Figure 1). This phenomenon is common

happened in ultra-high density map building, which was considered be caused by presence of genotyping errors and missing data (Hackett and Broadfoot, 2003). In zebrafish, the genetic sizes of initial map were over 1,000 cM per chromosome. After removal of genotyping errors, the genetic sizes were reduced to around 100 cM (Howe et al., 2013). The genotype errors can also increase the proportion of incorrectly ordered maps, and this problem will be more severe as the distances between loci decreases. To reduce the effect of clustered markers on the map construction and reduce the computing load, we picked one representative anchor marker that had the most informative meiosis from each of these clusters in the linkage map construction. Afterwards, we rejoined the markers within the “zero recombination clusters” that were excluded during the initial mapping steps. This procedure relocated the informative markers onto the linkage maps based on the positions of their representative anchor marker. Such clustered markers are still valuable for the chromosome-scale scaffolding.

With the availability of such high-density mapped SNPs, the patterns of marker distribution across chromosomes can be examined. It appears that clustered markers were commonly found in regions around centromeres while less frequently found around the telomeres. This was consistent with observations in various genetic maps previously developed in fish species, such as tilapia (Kocher et al., 1998), medaka (Naruse et al., 2000), rainbow trout (Sakamoto et al., 2000), Atlantic salmon (Lorenz et al., 2010) and catfish (Liu et al., 2003; Ninwichian et al., 2012). One potential explanation is that the centromeres contain abundant tandemly repeated, heterochromatic DNA sequences (Choo, 1998). As shown in Figure 5, the distribution of linkage SNP markers cross chromosomes in channel catfish is consistent with the observation of telomere and centromere effects (Nachman and Churchill, 1996), which would result in a higher recombination rate near the telomeres while a lower recombination rate near the center of the chromosomes. The

recombination rates might be positively correlated with GC content, as in human (Coop and Przeworski, 2007a), pig (Tortereau et al., 2012), chicken (Groenen et al., 2009), rodent (Jensen-Seaman et al., 2004) and yeast (Petes, 2001), or correlated with some other genomic features such as gene density and the presence of genes determining recombination hotspots. The PRDM9 gene was recently found to determine the recombination hotspots in the mammalian genomes (Baudat et al., 2010; Myers et al., 2010; Parvanov et al., 2010). Future investigations on recombination landscape warrant the characterization of genomic features affecting the meiotic recombination in catfish upon the availability of fully-assembled genome sequences.

The suppression of recombination in males relative to the females observed in channel catfish (averaged female-to-male ratio is 1.7: 1) was consistent with our previous observation (Kucuktas et al., 2009) as well as many other studies. Recombination rates differ between the two sexes in many organisms where recombination occurs more frequently in the homogametic sex than in the heterogametic sex (Coop and Przeworski, 2007; Singer et al., 2002). The similar phenomenon was reported in many other fish species such as Atlantic salmon (1.38:1), rainbow trout (1.68:1), European sea bass (1.60:1), Arctic char (1.69:1) and silver carp (1.52:1) (Chistiakov et al., 2005; Guo et al., 2013; Lien et al., 2011; Rexroad et al., 2008; Singer et al., 2002a; Woram et al., 2004). Striking recombination differences between the sexes was observed in zebrafish (2.74:1) (Singer et al., 2002) and grass carp (2.0:1) (Xia et al., 2010). These observations indicated that even closely related fish species differ in genetic sizes and the extent of sexual dimorphism for recombination fraction (Coop and Przeworski, 2007) similarly as in mammals. Although the genetic basis for recombination bias between sexes remains unknown, several theories were proposed to explain this observation. One explanation from selection perspective suggests that selection pressure is stronger in male gametes than in female gametes during the haploid life stage. This difference

could lead to male specific selection to maintain beneficial haplotype to decrease the male recombination rate (Lenormand and Dutheil, 2005; Singer et al., 2002). An alternative explanation is that the female recombination rate is higher to compensate for the apparently less stringent checkpoint for achiasmatic chromosomes compared with males (Coop and Przeworski, 2007). In human, cytological studies suggested that sex specific differences in recombination may derive from chromatin differences established prior to the onset of the recombination pathway (Gruhn et al., 2013).

The high-density and the relatively high-resolution genetic map provide valuable resource for integrating the physical map and whole genome assemblies. In the present study, we anchored the catfish physical map to genetic linkage map through BES and physical map contig-specific sequences that contain SNP markers. With this linkage map of channel catfish, we were able to anchor 87% of the catfish BAC physical map contigs, covering approximately 92% of the catfish genome. This is a great improvement on map integration compared to our previous efforts that only anchored 44.8% of the catfish BAC physical map contigs accounting for 52.8% of the catfish genome. To our knowledge, this is also the highest percentage of physical maps integration with genetic maps that were obtained in any aquaculture species. The well-integrated map is useful for comprehensive comparative genomic analyses, fine-scale mapping of QTL and positional cloning for candidate genes (Palti et al., 2012). Moreover, the integrated map can be used as an important resource for the validation of the catfish whole genome assembly.

## **Conclusions**

A high-density genetic linkage map was constructed in channel catfish, which provides a framework for validating and scaffolding the reference whole-genome sequences. With this map, we were able to integrate 87% physical map contigs which covered 92% of catfish genome. The



integrated map is a valuable resource for validating and improving the catfish whole genome assembly, and facilitates fine-scale QTL mapping and positional cloning of genes responsible for economically important traits. These resources will also be valuable for comparative genomic analysis with other teleost fish species.



**Supplemental Figure 1. Example of linkage map (LG4 of male map) constructed with all markers (left) and unique markers (right). Genetic size was overestimated due to the large number of clustered marker regions**

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**Table S1 (1): Example (LG1) of detailed information of sex-average linkage map**

**LGs MarkerID Map position(cM)**

LG1	AX-85238541	0
LG1	AX-85375738	0
LG1	AX-85410631	0
LG1	AX-85410374	0.5
LG1	AX-85237828	0.61
LG1	AX-85275059	0.61
LG1	AX-85437510	5.01
LG1	AX-85308625	6.09
LG1	AX-85330376	6.09
LG1	AX-85316136	6.82
LG1	AX-85293889	6.92
LG1	AX-85359715	7.11
LG1	AX-85323305	7.22
LG1	AX-85272198	7.4
LG1	AX-86097766	7.89
LG1	AX-85281635	8.21
LG1	AX-85295991	9.03
LG1	AX-85310229	9.03
LG1	AX-85383123	9.03
LG1	AX-85228614	9.26
LG1	AX-85204340	10.33
LG1	AX-85254174	10.62
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LG1	AX-85947692	13.7
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LG1	AX-85300238	18.24
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LG1	AX-85315730	19.06
LG1	AX-85395535	20.63
LG1	AX-85357756	20.65
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LG1	AX-85245154	21.83
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