
HELD BY:
Far Eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences,
A.V. Zhirmunsky Institute of Marine Biology FEB RAS,
Institute of Biology and Soil Science FEB RAS,
Far Eastern Federal University,
Administration of Nakhodka City District,
Vladivostok Public Foundation for Development of Genetics

SPONSORS:
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Editors: Yuri Ph. Kartavtsev, Alexey P. Kryukov


ОРГАНИЗАТОРЫ:
Дальневосточное отделение РАН,
Институт биологии моря им. А.В. Жирмунского ДВО РАН,
Биолого-почвенный институт ДВО РАН,
Дальневосточный федеральный университет,
Администрация г. Нахodka,
Владивостокский общественный фонд развития генетики

ФИНАНСОВАЯ ПОДДЕРЖКА:
Российский фонд фундаментальных исследований,
ООО «Химэксперт», ООО «ДИА-М»,
ООО «Арго»

Ответственные редакторы: Ю.Ф. Картацев, А.П. Крюков

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ALLOZYME DIVERSITY AND GENETIC DIVERGENCE OF THREE OXYTROPIS SPECIES FROM THE KAMCHATKA PENINSULA

Kholina A.B., Nakonechnaya O.V.

Institute of Biology and Soil Science of Far Eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok 690022, Russia

The Kamchatka Peninsula is a unique part of the Northwest Pacific area, a region with intense volcanism. The colonization of the volcanic substrates is undertaken primarily by pioneer plant species. Among them the representatives of the Oxytropis genus have a great importance. Due to their root system they are active anchors of the moving substrates; oxytropes occupy the areas without soil cover, and a result of their activity is the formation of favorable soil conditions for the establishment of other plants. Studies on the genetic variability of pioneer plants are interesting and actual with respect to biodiversity conservation. We evaluated allozyme polymorphism of three Oxytropis species (section Arctobia, O. kamtschatica Hult., O. exserta Jurtz., O. revoluta Ledeb.) from the Kamchatka Peninsula. O. exserta and O. kamtschatica are both an endemic species, the range of O. revoluta includes the coast of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. Twenty genetic loci controlling 13 enzyme systems were analyzed in 6 populations. The maximum values of genetic variation parameters were found in O. exserta (P = 42.9%, H_e = 0.156) indicating a moderate level of polymorphism; the minimum values are in O. revoluta populations, almost 2 times lower than that of O. exserta. Cluster analysis based on genetic distances did not reveal clear groups among the studied populations appropriated traditional subsections. The divergence time of the studied Oxytropis species is about 280 thousand years, i.e. belongs to the middle Pleistocene. The level of genetic diversity and differentiation pattern of three Oxytropis species is probably explained by the ecological features, the impact of genetic drift and the species history in Pleistocene.