# 1 **Title:** Recent Asian origin of chytrid fungi causing global amphibian declines<sup>\*</sup>

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- **One Sentence Summary:** East Asia is the source of amphibian panzootic chytrid fungi causing global amphibian declines that have emerged during the 20<sup>th</sup> century

#### 92 Abstract:

93 Globalized infectious diseases are causing species declines worldwide but their source often remains elusive. We use whole-genome sequencing to solve the spatiotemporal origins of the 94 95 most devastating panzootic to date, caused by the fungus Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis, a 96 proximate driver of global amphibian declines. We trace the source of *B. dendrobatidis* to the 97 Korean peninsula where one lineage, *Bd*ASIA-1, exhibits the genetic hallmarks of an 98 ancestral population that seeded the panzootic. We date the emergence of this pathogen to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century coinciding with the global expansion of commercial trade in amphibians 99 100 and show that intercontinental transmission is ongoing. Our findings point to East Asia as a 101 geographic hotspot for *B. dendrobatidis* biodiversity, and the original source of these lineages

102 that now parasitize amphibians worldwide.

#### 103 Main Text:

104 Discovery of the amphibian-killing fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (1, 2) was a 105 turning point in understanding why amphibian species worldwide are in steep decline. 106 Amphibian declines and extinctions had been recorded by herpetologists as early as the 107 1970s, but were only recognized at a landmark meeting in 1990 as a global phenomenon 108 which could not be explained by environmental changes and anthropogenic factors alone (3). 109 The emergence of *B. dendrobatidis* and the disease that it causes, amphibian 110 chytridiomycosis, as a causative agent of declines has been documented across six different 111 regions: Australia (~1970s and 1990s) (4), Central America (~1970s) (5), South America 112 (~1970s and 1980s) (6, 7), the Caribbean islands (~2000s) (8), the North American Sierra Nevada (~1980s and 1990s) (9), and the Iberian Peninsula (~1990s) (10). The panzootic has 113 114 been attributed to the emergence of a single *B. dendrobatidis* lineage, known as *Bd*GPL 115 (Global Panzootic Lineage) (11). However, twenty years after identification of the disease, 116 the timing of its worldwide expansion remains unknown and previous estimates for time to 117 most recent common ancestor (TMRCA) for BdGPL span two orders of magnitude, from 100 118 ybp (11) to 26,000 ybp (12). The geographic origin of the pathogen is similarly contested, 119 with the source of the disease variously suggested to be Africa (13), North America (14), 120 South America (15), Japan (16) and East Asia (17).

#### 121 Global diversity of *B. dendrobatidis*

122 To resolve these inconsistencies, we isolated *B. dendrobatidis* from all the candidate source

123 continents and sequenced the genomes of 177 isolates to high depth then combined our data

124 with published genomes from three prior studies (11, 12, 18) to generate a globally

representative panel of 234 isolates (Fig. 1A). This dataset covers all continents from which

126 B. dendrobatidis has been detected to date, and spans infections of all three extant orders of

127 Amphibia (Fig. S1 and Table S1). Mapped against the *B. dendrobatidis* reference genome 128 JEL423, our sequencing recovered 586,005 segregating single nucleotide polymorphisms 129 (SNPs). Phylogenetic analysis recovered all previously detected divergent lineages (Fig. 1B 130 and Fig. S2). The previously accepted lineages BdGPL (global), BdCAPE (African), BdCH (European) and BdBRAZIL (Brazilian), were all detected (19), but our discovery of a new 131 132 hyperdiverse lineage in amphibians native to the Korean peninsula (BdASIA-1) redefined 133 these lineages and their relationships. The BdCH lineage, which was previously thought to be 134 enzootic to Switzerland (11) now groups with the BdASIA-1 lineage. A second Asian-135 associated lineage (BdASIA-2) was recovered from invasive North American bullfrogs in 136 Korea and is closely related to the lineage that is enzootic to the Brazilian Atlantic forest 137 (BdBRAZIL) (20). It was not possible to infer the direction of intercontinental spread 138 between isolates within this lineage so it was named BdASIA-2/BdBRAZIL. Conditional on 139 the midpoint rooting of the phylogeny in Fig. 1B, we now define the main diverged lineages 140 as BdGPL, BdCAPE, BdASIA-1 (which includes the single BdCH isolate) and BdASIA-141 2/BdBRAZIL. Previous phylogenetic relationships developed using the widely used 142 ribosomal intragenic spacer ITS-1 region do not accurately distinguish B. dendrobatidis lineages (Fig. S3) and this likely explains much of the place-of-origin conflict in the literature 143 144 (15-17).

Pairwise comparisons among isolates within each lineage show that the average number of segregating sites is three-fold greater for *Bd*ASIA-1 than for any other lineage (Fig. 1A and Table 1) and that nucleotide diversity ( $\pi$ ; Fig. S4) is two to four-fold greater. Seven of our eight *Bd*ASIA-1 isolates were recently cultured from wild South Korean frogs while the other came from the pet-trade in Belgium, all of which were aclinical infections. These isolates show that the Korean peninsula is a global centre of *B. dendrobatidis* diversity and that East Asia may contain the ancestral population of *B. dendrobatidis*, as suggested by Bataille *et al* 

152 (17). We investigated this hypothesis further using Bayesian-based haplotype clustering (21)153 and found the greatest haplotype sharing among isolates within BdASIA-1 and between 154 BdASIA-1 and all other lineages. This provides direct genetic evidence that BdASIA-1 shares 155 more diversity with the global population of *B. dendrobatidis* than any other lineage (Fig. 156 S5). In an independent test of ancestry, we used OrthoMCL (22) to root a B. dendrobatidis 157 phylogeny to its closest known relative *B. salamandrivorans* which currently threatens 158 salamanders (23). This tree indicates that the Asian and Brazilian isolates of B. dendrobatidis 159 lie outside a clade comprising all other isolates (Fig. S6 and Table S2). To identify the 160 signature of demographic histories across lineages we used Tajima's D(24). Genome scans 161 of most lineages showed highly variable positive and negative values of D with maxima 162 exhibited by BdGPL (-2.6 to +6.2; Fig. 2F), indicating that these lineages (BdASIA-163 2/BdBRAZIL, BdCAPE and BdGPL) have undergone episodes of population fluctuation, 164 strong natural selection, or both, that are consistent with a history of spatial and host 165 radiations. In striking contrast, BdASIA-1 shows a flat profile for Tajima's D (Fig. 2F) 166 indicating mutation-drift equilibrium likely reflective of pathogen endemism in this region.

#### 167 **Dating the emergence of** *Bd***GPL**

The broad range of previous estimates for the TMRCA of BdGPL spanning 26,000 years (11, 168 169 12) can be explained by two sources of inaccuracy: (1) unaccounted recombination and (2) 170 the application of unrealistic evolutionary rates. To address these, we first interrogated the 171 178,280 kbp mitochondrial genome (mtDNA), which has high copy number and low rates of 172 recombination compared to the nuclear genome. To resolve the structure of the mtDNA 173 genome we resorted to long-read sequencing using a MinION device (Oxford Nanopore 174 Technologies, Cambridge, UK), which allowed us to describe this molecules unusual 175 configuration; Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis carries three linear mitochondrial segments, 176 each having inverted repeats at the termini with conserved mitochondrial genes spread over

two of the segments (Fig. S7). Additionally, we sought regions of the autosomal genome with
low rates of recombination to obtain an independent estimate of the TMRCA of *Bd*GPL.

179 Detection of crossover events in the *B. dendrobatidis* autosomal genome (18) using a subset 180 of the isolates in this study revealed a large (1.66Mbp) region of Supercontig 1.2 in BdGPL 181 that exhibits several features that identified it as a recombination 'coldspot': (1) a continuous region of reduced Tajima's D (Fig. 2D); (2) sustained high values of  $F_{ST}$  when compared 182 183 with all other lineages (Fig. 3A); (3) a continuous region of reduced nucleotide diversity ( $\pi$ , Fig. S4) and (4) shared loss-of-heterozygosity (Fig. S8). We expanded sampling to infer the 184 185 temporal range of pathogen introductions using a broad panel of isolates with known date of 186 isolation (n = 184, ranging from 1998 to 2016) and whole-genome RNA-baiting to obtain 187 reads from preserved amphibians that had died of chytridiomycosis. We then investigated whether our dataset contained sufficient signal to perform tip-dating inferences by building 188 189 phylogenetic trees using PhyML (25) (Fig. 2A and 2C) then fitting root-to-tip distances to 190 collection dates both at the whole-tree and within-lineage scales. We observed a positive and 191 significant correlation within *Bd*GPL only, for both the mitochondrial and nuclear genomes, 192 demonstrating sufficient temporal signal to perform thorough tip-dating inferences at this 193 evolutionary scale (Fig. 2B and 2D).

Tip-dating in BEAST was used to co-estimate ancestral divergence times and the rate at which mutations accumulate within the *Bd*GPL lineage. The mean mitochondrial substitution rate was  $1.01 \ge 10^{-6}$  substitutions/site/year (95% highest posterior density (HPD)  $4.29 \ge 10^{-7} 1.62 \ge 10^{-6}$ ). The mean nuclear substitution rate was  $7.29 \ge 10^{-7}$  substitutions/site/year (95% HPD  $3.41 \ge 10^{-7} - 1.14 \ge 10^{-6}$ ), which is comparable to a recent report of an evolutionary rate of  $2.4 - 2.6 \ge 10^{-6}$  substitutions/site/year for another unicellular yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* beer strains (*26*). These estimates are over 300-fold faster than the rate used in a

201 previous study (12) to obtain a TMRCA of 26,400 years for BdGPL. Accordingly, we 202 estimate the ancestor of the amphibian panzootic BdGPL originated between 120 and 50 203 years ago (Fig. 2E), with HPD estimates of 1898 [95% HPD 1809-1941] and 1962 [95% 204 HPD 1859-1988] for the nuclear and mitochondrial dating analyses respectively (Fig. 2F). 205 We considered an additional calibration approach for the TMRCA of the mitochondrial 206 genome where we included informative priors on nodes around the dates for the first 207 historical descriptions of *Bd*GPL detection in Australia (1978), Central America (1972), 208 Sierra de Guadarrama (Europe) (1997), and the Pyrenees (Europe) (2000). We did not 209 include priors for nodes where observed declines have been reported, but where the lineage 210 responsible for those declines is unknown. This mixed dating method based on tips and nodes 211 calibration yielded very similar estimates (TMRCA estimates of 1975 [95% HPD 1939 -1989] (Fig. S9)), further strengthening our confidence in a recent date of emergence for 212 *Bd*GPL. An expansion of *Bd*GPL in the  $20^{th}$  century coincides with the global expansion in 213 214 amphibians traded for exotic pets, medical and food purposes (27, 28). Within our phylogeny, 215 we found representatives from all lineages among traded animals (Figs. S10-14), and 216 identified ten events where traded amphibians were infected with non-enzootic isolates (Fig. 217 4). This finding demonstrates the ongoing failure of international biosecurity despite the 218 listing of *B. dendrobatidis* by the World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE) in 2008.

219 I

#### Hybridisation between recontacting lineages of *B. dendrobatidis*

To determine the extent to which the four main lineages of *B. dendrobatidis* have undergone recent genetic exchange, we used the site-by-site based approach implemented in STRUCTURE (*29*). Although most isolates could be assigned unambiguously to one of the four main lineages, we identified three hybrid genotypes (Fig. 3B), including one previously reported hybrid (isolate CLFT024/2) (*20*), and discovered two newly identified hybrids of

225 BdGPL and BdCAPE in South Africa. Furthermore, BdCH (isolate 0739) appears to be a 226 chimera of multiple lineages that may represent unsampled genomic diversity that resides in 227 East Asia, rather than true hybridisation. These hybrid genomes demonstrate that B. 228 *dendrobatidis* is continuing to exchange haplotypes among lineages when they interact following continental invasions, generating novel genomic diversity. We analysed isolate 229 230 clustering using principle components analysis on a filtered subset of 3,900 SNPs in linkage 231 equilibrium, revealing an overall population structure that is consistent with our phylogenetic 232 analyses (Fig 3C). In addition, the putatively identified hybrid isolates of *B. dendrobatidis* 233 were shown to fall between main lineage clusters (Fig. 3C) further strengthening our hypothesis of haplotype exchange occurring during secondary contact between lineages. 234

### 235 Associations among lineage, virulence and declines

236 Genotypic diversification of pathogens is commonly associated with diversification of traits associated with host exploitation (30), and is most commonly measured as the ability to infect 237 238 a host and to cause disease post-infection. We tested for variation of these two phenotypic 239 traits across four *B. dendrobatidis* lineages by exposing larval and post-metamorphic 240 common toads (Bufo bufo). Larvae are highly susceptible to infection but do not die before 241 metamorphosis, in contrast to post-metamorphic juveniles, which are susceptible to infection 242 and fatal chytridiomycosis (31). In tadpoles, both BdGPL and BdASIA-1 were significantly 243 more infectious than BdCAPE and BdCH (Fig. S15 and Tables S3 & S4). In metamorphs, 244 *Bd*GPL was significantly more infectious than the other treatments, compared to the control 245 group, and significantly more lethal in experimental challenge, than the geographically more 246 restricted BdCAPE, BdASIA-1 and BdCH (Fig. 2G). We further tested for differences in 247 virulence among lineages by using our global dataset to examine whether chytridiomycosis was non-randomly associated with B. dendrobatidis lineage. We detected a significant 248

the three parental lineages (*Bd*ASIA-1 and *Bd*ASIA-2/*Bd*BRAZIL were grouped due to low sample sizes), and *post hoc* tests indicated significant excess in virulence in both *Bd*GPL and *Bd*CAPE lineages relative to the combined *Bd*ASIA-1 and *Bd*ASIA-2/*Bd*BRAZIL (all p <0.05). However, we did not detect a significant difference between *Bd*GPL and *Bd*CAPE (Fig. S16 and Table S5). These data suggest that although *Bd*GPL is highly virulent, population-level outcomes are also context dependent (*32*); under some conditions other lineages can also be responsible for lethal amphibian disease and population declines (*33*).

difference (p < 0.001) in the proportion of isolates associated with chytridiomycosis among

## 257 Historical and contemporary implications of panzootic chytridiomycosis

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258 Our results point to endemism of *B. dendrobatidis* in Asia, out of which multiple panzootic 259 lineages have emerged. These emergent diasporas include the virulent and highly transmissible BdGPL which spread during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century via a yet unknown route to 260 261 infect close to 700 amphibian species out of ~1300 thus far tested (34). With over 7800 262 amphibian species currently described, the number of affected species is likely to rise. The 263 international trade in amphibians has undoubtedly contributed directly to vectoring this 264 pathogen worldwide (Fig. 4; 35.36), and within our phylogenv we identified many highly supported ( $\geq$  90% bootstrap support) clades on short branches that linked isolates collected 265 266 from wild amphibian populations across different continents (Fig. 4; Fig. S10-S14). 267 However, the role of globalised trade in passively contributing to the spread of this disease 268 cannot be ruled out. It is likely no coincidence that our estimated dates for the emergence of 269 *Bd*GPL span the globalisation 'big bang', the rapid proliferation in intercontinental trade, 270 capital, and technology that started in the 1820s (37). The recent invasion of Madagascar by 271 Asian common toads hidden within mining equipment (38) demonstrates the capacity for amphibians to escape detection at borders and exemplifies how the unintended anthropogenic 272

dispersal of amphibians has also likely contributed to the worldwide spread of pathogenicchytrids.

275	The hyperdiverse hotspot identified in Korea likely represents a fraction of the
276	Batrachochytrium genetic diversity in Asia and further sampling across this region is
277	urgently needed because the substantial global trade in Asian amphibians (39) presents a risk
278	of seeding future outbreak lineages. Unique ribosomal DNA haplotypes of B. dendrobatidis
279	have been detected in native amphibian species in India (40, 41), Japan (16) and China (42).
280	Although caution should be observed when drawing conclusions about lineages based on
281	short sequence alignments (Fig. S3), other endemic lineages probably remain undetected
282	within Asia. Significantly, the northern European countryside is witnessing the emergence of
283	B. salamandrivorans, which also has its origin in Asia. The emergence of B.
284	salamandrivorans is linked to the amphibian pet trade (43), and the broad expansion of
285	virulence factors that are found in the genomes of these two pathogens are testament to the
286	evolutionary innovation that has occurred in these Asian Batrachochytrium fungi (23). Our
287	findings show that the global trade in amphibians continues to be associated with the
288	translocation of chytrid lineages with panzootic potential. Ultimately, our work confirms that
289	panzootics of emerging fungal diseases in amphibians are caused by ancient patterns of
290	pathogen phylogeography being redrawn as largely unrestricted global trade moves
291	pathogens into new regions, infecting new hosts and igniting disease outbreaks. Within this
292	context, the continued strengthening of transcontinental biosecurity is critical to the survival
293	of amphibian species in the wild (44).

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587

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592

593 **Competing interests:** KAM sits on an expert panel at the European Food Safety Authority 594 addressing the risks of importation and spread of the salamander chytrid *Batrachochytrium* 595 *salamandrivorans*, a species of fungus that is the closest known relative to the pathogen 596 addressed in this manuscript.

597

598 Data availability: Sequences have been deposited in the National Center for Biotechnology
599 Information (NCBI) Sequence Read Archive (SRA). All sequences are available from NCBI
600 BioProject accession PRJNA413876

601 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/bioproject/PRJNA413876). The supplementary materials

602 contain additional data. Phylogenetic trees are available from TreeBASE, project accession

603 url: http://purl.org/phylo/treebase/phylows/study/TB2:S22286. A browsable version of the

604 phylogeny and metadata in Fig. 1B is accessible at: https://microreact.org/project/GlobalBd

## 605 List of supplementary materials:

- 606 Materials and Methods
- 607 Figs. S1 to S15
- Tables S1 to S5
- 609 Data S1 to S3
- 610 References (45-92)

## 611 **Tables:**

Lineage	Number of Isolates	Total segregating sites	Average pairwise- segregating sites	Total homozygous segregating sites	Average pairwise- homozygous segregating sites	π	Tajima's D
BdASIA-1	8	327,996	142,437	108,353	21,716	0.0044	0.2540
<i>Bd</i> ASIA-2 / <i>Bd</i> BRAZIL	12	148,021	51,069	48,722	6,216	0.0018	0.9825
<i>Bd</i> CAPE	24	146,466	38,881	53,884	4,977	0.0016	0.3143
<i>Bd</i> GPL	187	127,770	26,546	68,493	3,101	0.0009	0.9792

612

613 Table 1. Comparison of common genetic diversity measures among Batrachochytrium 614 dendrobatidis lineages. Total segregating sites for each lineage include all segregating sites 615 where genotype calls were made in at least half of the isolates. Average pairwise-segregating 616 sites is the average number of sites with different genotypes between all pairs of isolates 617 within a lineage. Total homozygous segregating sites includes all sites within a lineage where there is at least one homozygous difference between isolates. Average pairwise homozygous 618 619 segregating sites is the average number of sites with different homozygous genotypes 620 between all pairs of isolates within a lineage. Nucleotide diversity ( $\pi$ ) is the mean of the per-621 site nucleotide diversity. Tajima's D is reported as the mean over 1 kbp bins.

# 623 Figures:

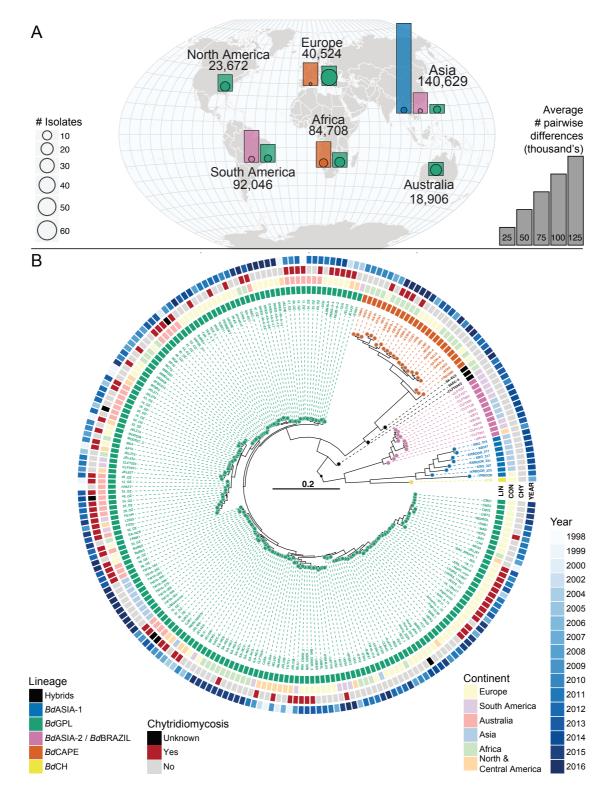
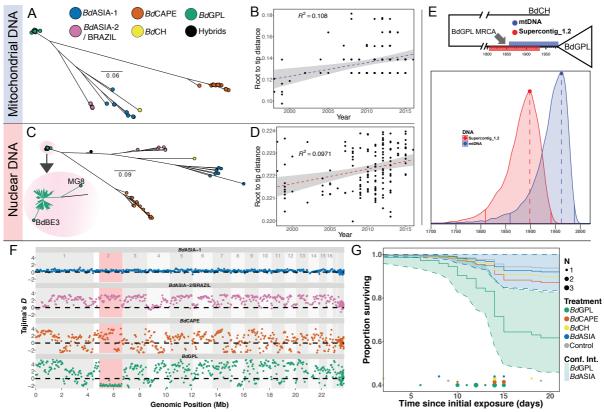
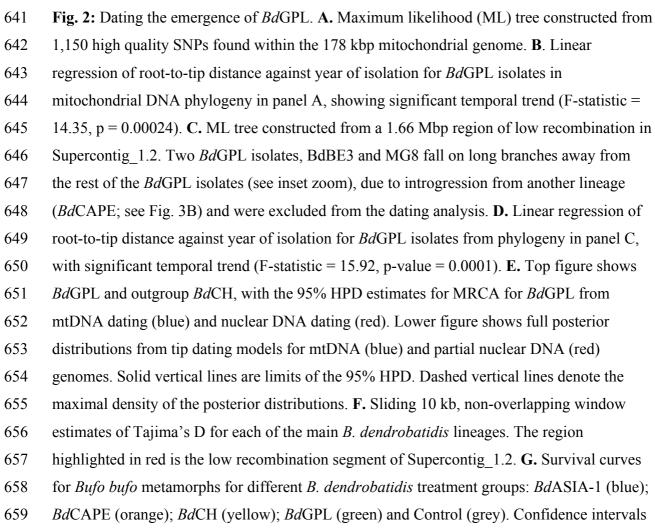


Fig. 1: Genetic diversity and phylogenetic tree of a global panel of 234 *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* isolates. A. Map overlaid with bar charts showing the relative diversity of isolates found in each continent and by each major lineage (excluding isolates from traded animals). The bar heights are the average number of segregating sites between all pairwise

- 629 combinations of isolates of each lineage in each continent (therefore only lineages with two
- 630 or more isolates from a continent are shown). Outlined points at the base of each bar are
- 631 scaled by the number of isolates for each lineage in that continent. The numbers around the
- outside of the globe are the average number of segregating sites between all pairwise
- 633 combinations of isolates grouped by continent. Colours denote lineage as given by the legend
- 634 in Fig 1B. **B.** Midpoint rooted radial phylogeny supports four deeply diverged lineages of *B*.
- 635 *dendrobatidis*: *Bd*ASIA-1; *Bd*ASIA-2/*Bd*BRAZIL; *Bd*CAPE and *Bd*GPL. All major splits
- 636 within the phylogeny are supported by 100% of 500 bootstrap replicates. See Fig. S2 for tree
- 637 with full bootstrap support values on all internal branches.





- are shown for *Bd*GPL and *Bd*ASIA-1, showing no overlap by the end of the experiment.
- 661 Instances of mortalities in each treatment group are plotted along the x-axis, with points
- 662 scaled by number of mortalities at each interval (day).

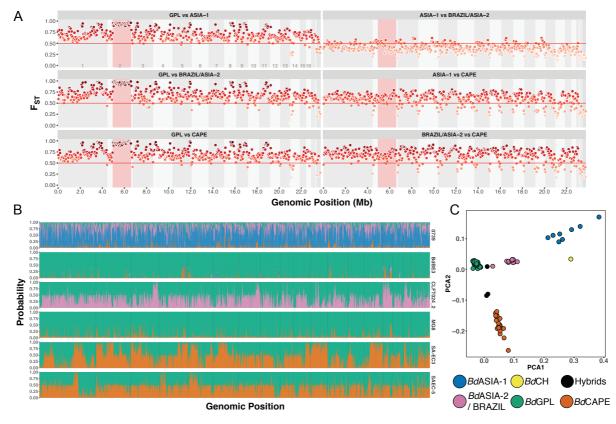
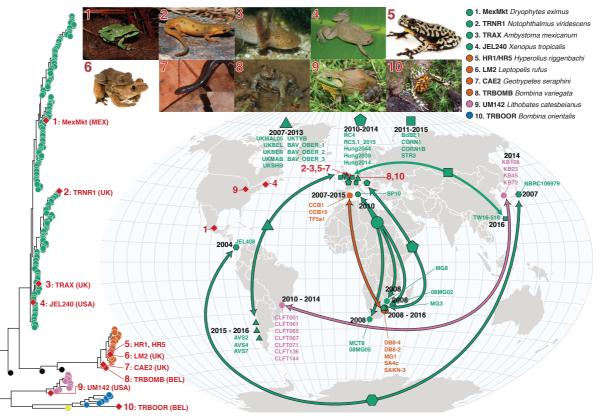


Fig. 3: F<sub>ST</sub> and site-by-site STRUCTURE analysis. A. Non-overlapping, 10 kb sliding 666 window of  $F_{ST}$  between lineages. The region highlighted in red is Supercontig 1.2:500,000-667 668 2,160,000 low recombination region. B. Site-by-site analysis of population ancestry for a 669 random selection of 9,905 SNPs. Results show those isolates found to be either hybrid (SA-670 EC3, SA-EC5 and CLFT024/2), or with significant introgression from non-parental lineages (isolates BdBE3 and MG8) or a chimera of un-sampled diversity, likely originating from East 671 672 Asia (0739, the *Bd*CH isolate). Each column represents a bi-allelic SNP position. The column is coloured according to the joint-probability of either allele copy arising from one of four 673 674 distinct populations. Colours represent assumed parental lineages as given in Fig. 3C. C. 675 Principle Components Analysis (PCA) of 3,900 SNPs in linkage equilibrium. Each point 676 represents an isolate, coloured by phylogenetic lineage. The isolates separate into clearly 677 defined clusters. The axes plot the first and second principle components. 678





680 Fig. 4: Genotypes of *Bd* isolated from infected amphibians in the international trade and 681 phylogenetically linked genotypes from segregated geographic localities. The red diamonds 682 on the phylogeny indicate isolates recovered from traded animals. Their geographic location 683 is displayed by the red diamonds on the map. The red numbers link each trade isolate to the 684 relevant picture of the donor host species atop the figure panel and their placement in the 685 phylogeny. The arrows on the map link geographically separated isolates which form closely 686 related phylogenetic clades with high bootstrap support ( $\geq 90\%$ ). Each clade is denoted by a 687 different shape point on the map with the names of isolates within each clade displayed on 688 the map. The dates displayed indicate the sampling time-frame for each clade. The 689 phylogenetic position of each clade is displayed in Figs S10-14. The colours of points and 690 arrows on the map indicate lineage according to the legend in Fig 1. A browsable version of 691 this phylogeny can be accessed at https://microreact.org/project/GlobalBd. Photo credits: (1) Hyla eximia Ricardo Chaparro, (2) Notophthalmus viridescens Patrick Coin / CC-BY-SA 2.5, 692 (3) Ambystoma mexicanum Henk Wallays, (4) Xenopus tropicalis Daniel Portik, (5) 693 Hyperolis riggenbachi and (6) Leptopelis rufus Brian Freiermuth, (7) Geotrypetes seraphini 694 695 Peter Janzen, (8) Bombina variegata and (9) Rana catesbeiana and (10) Bombina orientalis 696 Frank Pasmans