

MITOCHONDRIAL COI GENE BASED MOLECULAR IDENTIFICATION AND PHYLOGENETIC ANALYSIS IN EXOTIC FISH (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Tilapia *Oreochromis* spp. are exotic fish introduced in Pakistan from Malaya in 1951. Due to its omnivorous feeding habits and adaptability to harsh environmental conditions, such as salinity and temperature, is considered suitable for aquaculture in Pakistan. However, to date, classification and phylogenetic relationship among the tilapia cultured in Pakistan are poorly understood. In the present study, samples of tilapia were collected from different aquatic systems of Pakistan and Cytochrome c Oxidase subunit I (COI) of mitochondrial genes were investigated to elucidate molecular characterization and find out phylogenetic relationships. DNA extraction was performed from the fin tissue of collected specimens using modified salt extraction method and COI gene of mtDNA was amplified using universal primers for fish and finally the amplified products were sequenced. Sequencing results showed that specimens belonged to species *O. mossambicus*, of family Cichlidae. Sequence analysis was done by the MEGA 7 software, and cladogram were constructed. The sequence analysis of the genes also showed that there was no significant divergence among all the specimen studied. The species of *O. mossambicus* was not only confirmed but also separated from other species of family Cichlidae with the help of molecular approach using mtCOI sequence.

Key words: *Oreochromis mossambicus*, Exotic, COI, mtDNA, molecular identification, phylogenetic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The exotic species are important because of the role they play in biological communities especially in aquatic ecosystems. (Carey and Wahl, 2010; Strayer, 2010; Kornis *et al.*, 2013; Gu *et al.*, 2016). Exotic fish species can alter the local community in aquatic environment and reduce biodiversity. Sometimes, it adverse effects if the inhabiting aquatic ecosystem can be seen (Meador *et al.*, 2003; Zambrano *et al.*, 2006; Strayer, 2010; Giannetto *et al.*, 2012; Lowe *et al.*, 2012).

Among the eight exotic fish species found in Pakistan, tilapia is probably the most important due to its economic importance (Rafique and Khan, 2012). Tilapia belongs to African cichlids (D'amato *et al.*, 2007) which are local towards the Southwestern, Middle East and Africa (Bhassu *et al.*, 2004; Canonico *et al.*, 2005; Gu *et al.*, 2016). Tilapia species are euryhaline teleost, ideal candidates and most profitable in the aquaculture industry due to their adaptation to extreme environmental conditions including salinity, alkalinity, and high water temperature (Stickney, 2005; Lin *et al.*, 2016). They may be farmed in freshwater, brackish as well as in salt water. Tilapia species are opportunistic feeders, omnivores (Hassanien and Gilbey, 2005; Stickney, 2005; Briñez *et al.*, 2011). Tilapia exhibit robust reproduction habit; they can spawn about once a month if proper temperature is

maintained. Their growth rate is higher as compared to other perciforms; they can attain maturity as early as 3 month after hatching. That is why they are easy to culture and their aquaculture is viable financially. Tilapia are second most farmed fish throughout the world (Stickney, 2005; Lacerda *et al.*, 2008; Briñez *et al.*, 2011; Gu *et al.*, 2016).

Tilapia were introduced to Pakistan from Malaysia in 1951 (Mirza, 1994; Canonico *et al.*, 2005). Three tilapia species have by far been reported in Pakistan including *O. mossambicus*, *O. aureus* and *O. niloticus* (Khan *et al.*, 2011). Whereas, *O. mossambicus* commonly, also known as Mozambique tilapia, have been popular in aquaculture in Pakistan and have been farmed in numerous localities of Pakistan; the same is also farmed in part of south China, where it represent 81% of the aggregate of tilapia production. Fillets of Mozambique Tilapia is favored for its white to reddish colour, flavorful taste, firm and succulent flesh (Josupeit, 2007).

Although numerous studies have done concerning Mozambique tilapia in Pakistan, but its molecular identification and phylogenetic analyses has never been done to date. Traditionally, morphological based identification is used to identify Mozambique tilapia. However, there is need that their characterization should done using molecular approaches which will also

help to establish phylogenetic relationship between different species. In this context, studies involving Cytochrome Oxidase type I (COI) Mt DNA, 16S ribosomal DNA (rDNA), 12S (rDNA), 18S (rDNA), and ribulose-biphosphate carboxylase are suitable (Hebert *et al.*, 2003; Ward *et al.*, 2009; Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2016).

Study of COI region of Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is generally used to establish phylogenetic relationship in animals, microbes and plants (Stoneking and Soodyall, 1996; Chinnery, 2006; Knudsen *et al.*, 2006; Storey *et al.*, 2013; Kamran, 2017). This technique is reliable, simple and can trace even fast evolutionary rate (Curole and Kocher, 1999; Shin *et al.*, 2004; Wan *et al.*, 2004; Arif and Khan, 2009; Daravath *et al.*, 2013; Patwardhan *et al.*, 2014; Kamran, 2017). It also can be accessed in all stages of life from egg to adult (Ward *et al.*, 2009). Hence, COI sequences are reliable for the identification and phylogenetic investigations of animals (Avisé, 2000; Abdel-Mawgood, 2012; Kamran, 2017).

It is important to retrieve phylogenetic analyses of alien species to regulate and control the species in a habitat (Gu *et al.*, 2016). The current study has been designed to investigate the COI gene sequences of mtDNA for the molecular identification and phylogenetic analysis of tilapia species (presumably Mozambique tilapia) found in the Pakistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling and isolation of DNA: Fin samples were collected from 12 Mozambique Tilapia specimen from three different localities (Table 01). Samples were taken from both, female and male. Genomic DNA was extracted by salt extraction method. Nano Drop 2000/2000c (Thermo scientific USA) was used to quantify the DNA samples.

PCR Amplification and Sequencing: Reported primers (Ward *et al.*, 2005) were used for the amplification of 655bp barcode region of the mitochondrial DNA. Primers were synthesized from MACROGEN Inc., Seoul, Korea.

Primer	Primer sequence (5'- 3')
Fish F1	TCAACCAACCACAAAGACATTGGCAC
Fish R1	TAGACTTCTGGGTGGCCAAAGAATCA

PCR reaction was carried out using Q cycler using following reaction conditions; an initial denaturing for 4 min at 94°C, 35 amplification cycles comprising of i) denaturation for 60 sec at 94°C, ii) annealing for 45 sec at 45°C, iii) extension for 60 sec at 72°C, and a final extension step at 72°C then storage at 4° C. PCR was followed by confirmation of product at 1.5 % agarose gel. PCR products, which yielded good quality bands, were selected for sequencing and sent to MACROGEN, Korea.

Sequencing was done by using forward and reverse primers.

Bioinformatics analysis: Bioedit software and Clustal X1.83 was used to edit and align all the sequences respectively (Thompson *et al.*, 1997). For the purpose of phylogenetic analyses, sequences of Tilapia spp. were obtained from BOLD, already reported in various parts of the world (Table 02) and maximum likelihood tree with 1000 bootstrap value was inferred on the basis of Kimura 2- parameter (K2P) model using MEGA version 7 (Molecular Evolutionary Genetics Analysis, MEGA Inc., Englewood, NJ) (Kumar *et al.*, 2016). Tree was constructed in BOLD (ID Accession No. YTC005-12.CYTB-) as an out-group. The COI based pairwise genetic distance values (K2P) as well as intraspecific distance were calculated using MEGA version 7 (Molecular Evolutionary Genetics Analysis, MEGA Inc., Englewood, NJ) (Kumar *et al.*, 2016).

RESULTS

Figure 01 shows the gel electrophoresis picture of 655 bp amplified PCR product of mtDNA COI gene region. mtDNA COI sequences with an aligned length of 655 bp were obtained from 12 specimens. No insertions and/or deletions were observed in all the obtained sequences. Eleven sequences of Mozambique Tilapia were obtained from BOLD representing 11 different countries, one sequence of *Homo sapiens* was used as an out-group.

All obtained sequences were compared with already reported *O. mossambicus* sequences based on mtDNA uploaded on BOLD (www.boldsystems.org) and NCBI (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.com), BLAST results showed that all the sequences belonged to tilapia species and sequences of studied specimen are already available in Gene Bank data. But there were no barcode records from Pakistan for Mozambique Tilapia in Gene Bank or BOLD.

The constructed Maximum Likelihood (ML) tree based on kimura 2-parameter (K2P) model for the twelve specimens of tilapia from Pakistan and eleven specimens from world. ML trees based on the DNA sequences of 23 Mozambique Tilapia groupings were built by utilizing K2P model. Figure 02 shows the ML tree. The ML tree uncovered indistinguishable phylogenetic relationship among all the specimens from world. All the 23 Mozambique Tilapia sequences belong to one species as shown in cluster. The ML tree demonstrates two groups. One cluster was among Tilapia species and other was showing out-group.

The COI sequences showed pairwise genetic distance and nucleotide sequence divergences from *O. mossambicus* (Table 03). The highest sequence divergence based on COI of studied sequences was

0.082% which was against the Tilapia sequence obtained from Egypt and lowest divergence was 0.003% against

Indian Mozambique tilapia (Figure 03). Figure 4 shows the Clustal alignment of all the Tilapia species.

Table 01. Sampling details of *O. mossambicus* samples used in this study.

Sample Number	Location	Coordinates	
		Latitude	Longitude
04	Head Balloki	31.561920	74.348080
04	Trimmu Head works	31.028090	35.361351
04	Tawakkal Fish Hatchery Muzaffargarh	36.735640	-83.269190

Table 02. COI based sequence of *O. mossambicus* obtained from BOLD/GENE BANK and used for phylogenetic analysis with Exotic Fish (*O. mossambicus*) of Pakistan.

Country	BOLD Sequence ID	Gene bank accession Number	Coordinates	
			Latitude	Longitude
Indonesia	BIFD929-14.COI-5P	KU692686	-5.939	106.118
Canada	BNAF301-09.COI-5P	JN027866	NA	NA
Israel	FISH051-08.COI-5P	FJ348094	NA	NA
Philippines	FPHL196-16.COI-5P	KU565839	14.413	121.218
Egypt	GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P	LC052673	NA	NA
Australia	GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P	KF228005	-27.25	152.38
India	GDK592-13.COI-5P	NA	19.505	75.373
French_Polynesia	MBFB016-07.COI-5P	JQ431946	-17.483	-149.772
Mexico	MEFM196-05.COI-5P	EU751879	18.308	-95.775
Ontario	RFE283-05.COI-5P	EU752140	NA	NA
Zimbabwe	TSM015-14.COI-5P	KM438533	NA	NA

Table 03. Pairwise genetic distances (based on p distances) below the diagonal and Nucleotide sequence divergence (based on K2P model) above the diagonal in COI sequences derived from Tilapia species.

	INO	CAN	ISR	PHI	EGY	AUS	IND	FRN	MAX	ONT	ZIM	MZ-1	MZ-2	MZ-3	MZ-4	MZ-5	MZ-6	MZ-7	MZ-8	MZ-9	MZ-10	MZ-11	MZ-12
INO		-0.000	0.038	-0.000	0.078	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
CAN	0.00		0.038	-0.000	0.078	-0.00	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
ISR	0.036	0.036		0.038	0.090	0	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.045	0.043	0.043	0.041	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.005	0.043	0.043	0.050	0.041
PHI	0.00	0.00	0.036		0.078	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.084	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
EGY	0.073	0.073	0.083	0.073		0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.086	0.084	0.083	0.080	0.083	0.084	0.084	0.005	0.080	0.084	0.089	0.082
AUS	0.00	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.073		-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
IND	0.00	0.00	0.036	0.00	0.073	0.00		-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
FRN	0.00	0.00	0.036	0.00	0.073	0.00	0.00		-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
MAX	0.00	0.00	0.036	0.00	0.073	0.00	0.00	0.00		-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
ONT	0.00	0.00	0.036	0.00	0.073	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		-0.000	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
ZIMB	0.00	0.00	0.036	0.00	0.073	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.009	0.005	0.005	0.012	0.003
MZ-1	0.007	0.007	0.043	0.007	0.080	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007		0.007	0.007	0.010	0.007	0.009	0.007	0.005	0.009	0.007	0.014	0.009
MZ-2	0.005	0.005	0.042	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.007		0.007	0.009	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.014	0.005
MZ-3	0.005	0.005	0.042	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.078		0.009	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.009	0.007	0.007	0.014	0.007
MZ-4	0.005	0.005	0.040	0.005	0.075	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.010	0.009	0.009		0.007	0.009	0.009	0.007	0.007	0.009	0.010	0.009
MZ-5	0.005	0.005	0.042	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007		0.007	0.007	0.003	0.005	0.005	0.016	0.007
MZ-6	0.005	0.005	0.042	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.09	0.005	0.005	0.07	0.09		0.007	0.007	0.007	0.005	0.014	0.007
MZ-8	0.005	0.005	0.042	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.09	0.07	0.07		0.005	0.007	0.012	0.005	
MZ-9	0.005	0.005	0.038	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.009	0.005	0.005	0.09	0.007	0.003	0.007		0.007	0.005	0.012	0.007
MZ-10	0.005	0.005	0.042	0.005	0.078	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.007	0.005	0.007	0.009	0.005	0.005	0.007	0.005		0.007	0.012	0.005
MZ-11	0.012	0.012	0.049	0.012	0.083	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.014	0.014	0.010	0.016	0.014	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.014		0.014	0.007
MZ-12	0.003	0.003	0.040	0.003	0.076	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.009	0.005	0.007	0.009	0.007	0.007	0.005	0.007	0.005	0.007		0.012

INO= Indonesia, CAN= Canada, ISR= Israel, PHI= Philippines, EGY= Egypt, AUS= Australia, IND= India, French_ FRN= Polynesia, MAX= Mexico, ONT= Ontario, ZIMB= Zimbabwe, MZ01-12= Samples from Pakistan

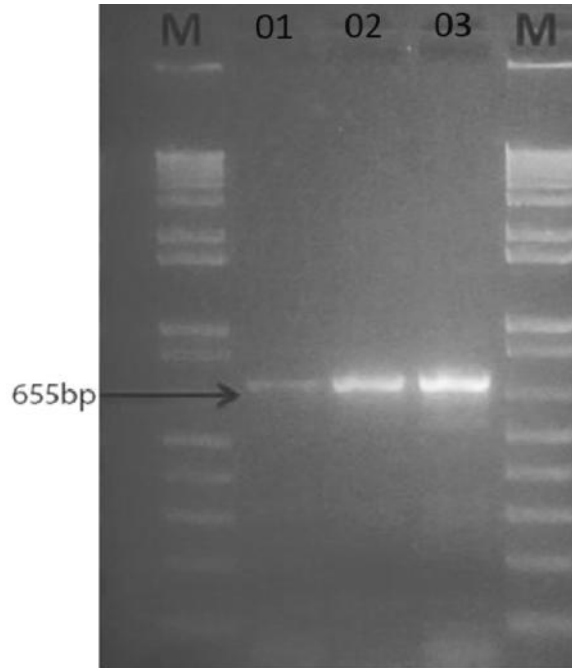


Figure 01. Agarose gel of PCR product of 655 bp fragment of COI gene. M: DNA Ladder; 01-03: Samples of *O. mossambicus*.

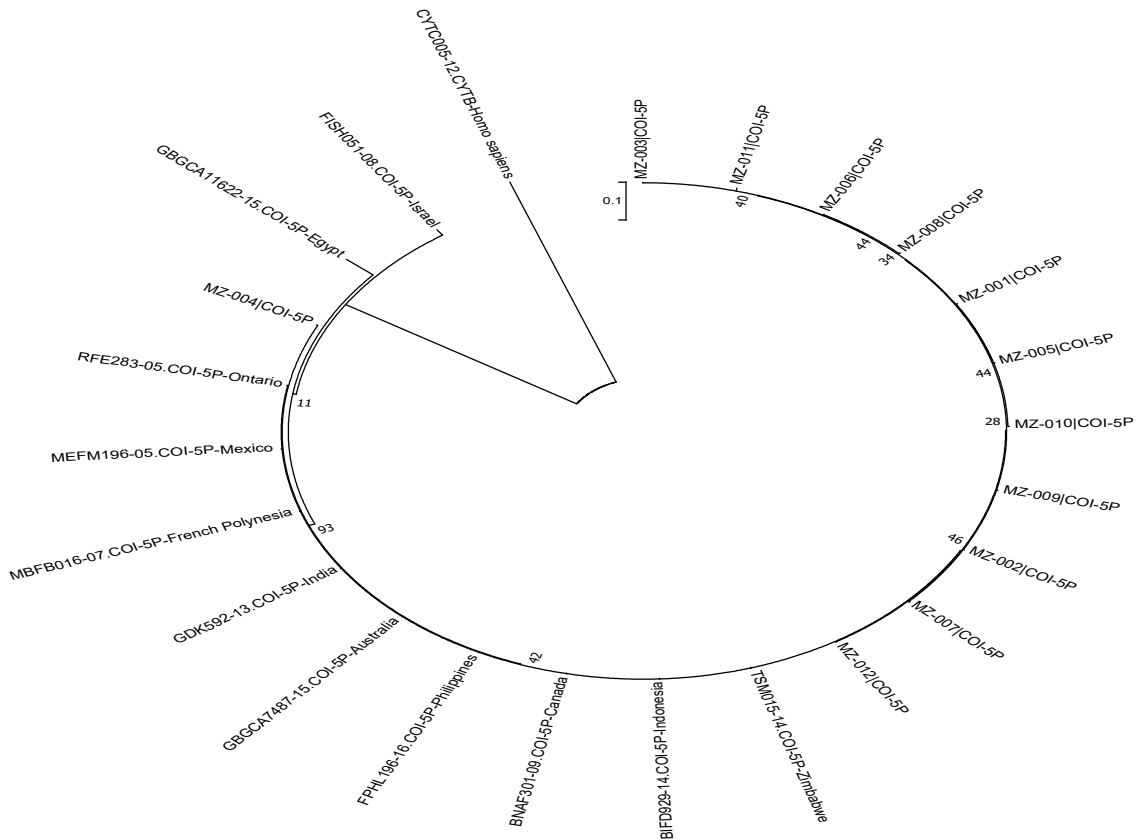


Figure 02. Maximum likelihood (ML) Molecular phylogenetic tree of *Oreochromis mossambicus* inferred from mtDNA sequences.

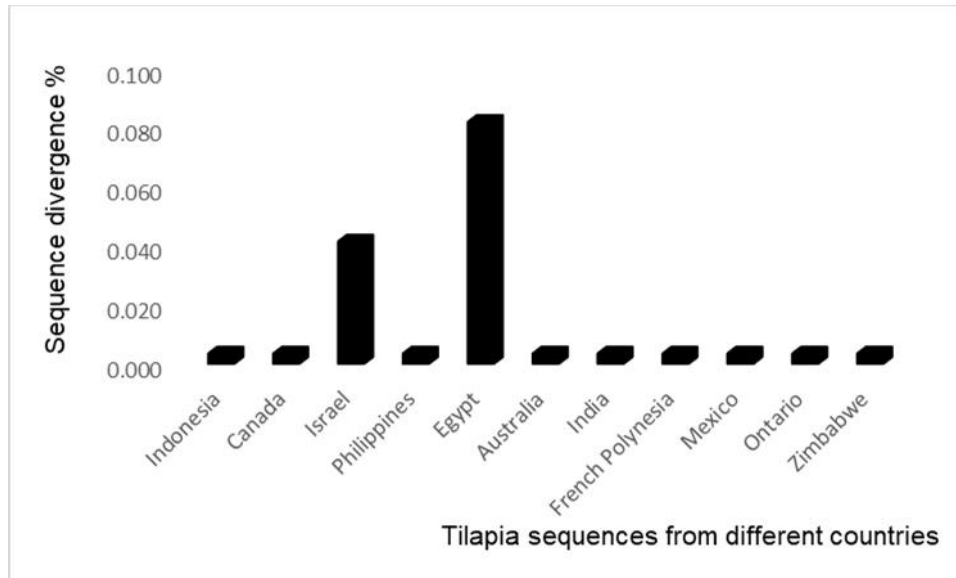


Figure 03. Pairwise sequence divergence among Tilapia from Pakistan and different countries.

GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt	-----	0
FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel	-----GGAAGTGCCTAAGTCTC	18
MZ-011 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-004 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-012 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe	-----	
TGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC	40	
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India	-----	
CTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		54
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia	-----ATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC	24
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	-----	
GCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC	36	
BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	--	
CACCCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		58
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines		
GGCACCCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		60
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	-----	
CTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		54
MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-001 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-005 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-009 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-007 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-003 COI-5P	----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55

MZ-002 COI-5P	-----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-006 COI-5P	-----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-008 COI-5P	-----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
MZ-010 COI-5P	-----	
CCTCTATCTAGTATTTGGTGCTTGAGCCGGAATAGTAGGAACTGCATTAAGCCTC		55
GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt	---	
ATTTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		57
FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel		
CTTATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		78
MZ-011 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-004 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-012 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		100
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		114
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		84
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		96
BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		118
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		120
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		114
MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-001 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-005 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-009 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-007 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-003 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-002 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-006 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-008 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115
MZ-010 COI-5P		
CTAATTCGGGCAGAACTAAGCCAGCCCGGCTCTCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTATAAT		115

GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTTGTAAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATGATT 117
 FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATACCAATTATAAATT 138
 MZ-011|COI-5P
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 175
 MZ-004|COI-5P
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 175
 MZ-012|COI-5P
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 175
 TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 160
 GDK592-13.COI-5P-India
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 174
 GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 144
 BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 156
 BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 178
 FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 180
 MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French Polynesia
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 174
 MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 175
 RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario
 GTAATTGTTACAGCACATGCTTTCGTAATAATTTCTTTATAGTAATGCCAATTATAAATT 175
 MZ-001|COI-5P
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 MZ-005|COI-5P
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 MZ-008|COI-5P
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 MZ-010|COI-5P
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt
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 FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTGGTGCCACTTATGATTGGGGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 198
 MZ-011|COI-5P
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 MZ-004|COI-5P
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MZ-012|COI-5P
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 TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 220
 GDK592-13.COI-5P-India
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 234
 GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 204
 BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 216
 BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada
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 FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 240
 MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 234
 MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 235
 RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario
 GGAGGTTTTGGAAACTGACTAGTGCCACTAATGATTGGTGCACCAGACATGGCCTTCCT 235
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 MZ-005|COI-5P
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 MZ-009|COI-5P
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 MZ-007|COI-5P
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 MZ-003|COI-5P
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 MZ-008|COI-5P
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 MZ-010|COI-5P
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt
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 FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel
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 MZ-011|COI-5P
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 MZ-004|COI-5P
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 MZ-012|COI-5P
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 TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe
 CGAATAAATAACATGAGTTTTTCTGACTCCTCCCCCCTCATTCTCCTTCTCCTCGCCTCA 280
 GDK592-13.COI-5P-India
 CGAATAAATAACATGAGTTTTTCTGACTCCTCCCCCCTCATTCTCCTTCTCCTCGCCTCA 294
 GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia
 CGAATAAATAACATGAGTTTTTCTGACTCCTCCCCCCTCATTCTCCTTCTCCTCGCCTCA 264

BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	
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BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	
CGAATAAATAACATGAGTTTTTGACTCCTCCCCCCTCATTTCCTTCTCCTCGCCTCA	298
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines	
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MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	
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MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico	
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RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario	
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MZ-001 COI-5P	
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MZ-008 COI-5P	
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MZ-010 COI-5P	
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FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel	
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MZ-011 COI-5P	
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MZ-004 COI-5P	
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MZ-012 COI-5P	
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TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe	
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GDK592-13.COI-5P-India	
TCCGGGGTTCGAAGCAGGGGCCGGTACAGGATGGACTGTTTATCCCCACTCGCAGGCAAT	354
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia	
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BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	
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BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	
TCCGGGGTTCGAAGCAGGGGCCGGTACAGGATGGACTGTTTATCCCCACTCGCAGGCAAT	358
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines	
TCCGGGGTTCGAAGCAGGGGCCGGTACAGGATGGACTGTTTATCCCCACTCGCAGGCAAT	360
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	
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MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico
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RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario
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MZ-008|COI-5P
TCCGGGGTTCGAAGCAGGGGCCGGTACAGGATGGACTGTTTATCCCCACTCGCAGGCAAT 355
MZ-010|COI-5P
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt
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FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel
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MZ-011|COI-5P
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MZ-004|COI-5P
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MZ-012|COI-5P
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 415
TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 400
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 414
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 384
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 396
BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 418
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 420
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 414
MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 415
RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario
CTCGCCCATGCTGGGCCTTCCGTTGACTTAACCATCTTCTCCCTCCACTTGGCCGGGGTG 415
MZ-001|COI-5P
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 MZ-007|COI-5P
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt
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 MZ-011|COI-5P
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 MZ-004|COI-5P
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATCTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 475
 MZ-012|COI-5P
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 TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 460
 GDK592-13.COI-5P-India
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 474
 GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 444
 BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 456
 BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 478
 FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 480
 MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia
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 RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATTTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 475
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 MZ-002|COI-5P
 TCATCTATTTTAGGTGCAATTAATCTTATTACAACCATTATTAACATAAAAACCCCTGCC 475

MZ-006 COI-5P	
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MZ-008 COI-5P	
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MZ-010 COI-5P	
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt	
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FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel	
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MZ-011 COI-5P	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	535
MZ-004 COI-5P	
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MZ-012 COI-5P	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	535
TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	520
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	534
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	504
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	516
BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	538
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	540
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	534
MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	535
RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario	
ATCTCCAATATCAAACACCCCTCTTTGTATGATCCGTTCTAATTACCGCAGTACTACTC	535
MZ-001 COI-5P	
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MZ-005 COI-5P	
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MZ-010 COI-5P	
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt	
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FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel	
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MZ-011 COI-5P	
CTACTATCCCTACCCGTTCTTGCCGCCGGCATCACAATACTTCTAACAGACCGAAACCTA	595
MZ-004 COI-5P	
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MZ-012 COI-5P	
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TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe	
CTACTATCCCTACCCGTTCTTGCCGCCGGCATCACAATACTTCTAACAGACCGAAACCTA	580
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India	
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GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia	
CTACTATCCCTACCCGTTCTTGCCGCCGGCATCACAATACTTCTAACAGACCGAAACCTA	564
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	
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BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	
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FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines	
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MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	
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MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico	
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RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario	
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MZ-001 COI-5P	
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MZ-005 COI-5P	
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MZ-002 COI-5P	
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MZ-006 COI-5P	
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MZ-008 COI-5P	
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MZ-010 COI-5P	
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GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt	
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FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel	
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MZ-011 COI-5P	
AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-004 COI-5P	
AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655

MZ-012 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	640
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCC	633
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	624
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTA---	633
BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	658
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	660
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTA---	651
MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTA---	652
RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTA---	652
MZ-001 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-005 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-009 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-007 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-003 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-002 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-006 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-008 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655
MZ-010 COI-5P	AACACAACCTTCTTTGACCCTGCCGGAGGAGGAGACCCCATCCTTTACCAACACTTATTC	655

GBGCA11622-15.COI-5P-Egypt	TGATTCTTAG-----	607
FISH051-08.COI-5P-Israel	T-----	619
MZ-011 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-004 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-012 COI-5P	-----	655
TSM015-14.COI-5P-Zimbabwe	TGATTCTTCGG-----	651
GDK592-13.COI-5P-India	-----	633
GBGCA7487-15.COI-5P-Australia	TGA-----	627
BIFD929-14.COI-5P-Indonesia	-----	633
BNAF301-09.COI-5P-Canada	-----	658
FPHL196-16.COI-5P-Philippines	TGATTCTTCGGTCAACCCTGAAGTGT	685
MBFB016-07.COI-5P-French_Polynesia	-----	651
MEFM196-05.COI-5P-Mexico	-----	652
RFE283-05.COI-5P-Ontario	-----	652
MZ-001 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-005 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-009 COI-5P	-----	655

MZ-007 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-003 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-002 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-006 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-008 COI-5P	-----	655
MZ-010 COI-5P	-----	655

Figure 04. Clustal alignments of twenty-three sequences of *Oreochromis mossambicus*.

DISCUSSION

In Pakistan, no validated data about phylogeny of Mozambique Tilapia species was reported before; ours is the first in this regard. We also report phylogenetic relationship between the exotic cultured fish Tilapia in Pakistan. The precise and quick fish identification is vital for logical studies as well as for sustainable aquaculture. Previously, identification key for freshwater fish species of Pakistan is available (Mirza, 1994; Rafique and Khan, 2012), which is based on morphological characters only. There have been limitations to this identification key. For the species identification, mtCOI gene offers the open door for an institutionalized arrangement and scientific research (Hebert *et al.*, 2004; Ward *et al.*, 2009; Hebert *et al.*, 2003; Ward *et al.*, 2005). A variety of Tilapia species are available in Pakistan, and their identification based on morphological characteristics is very equivocal and not applicable to every life stage (Zhu *et al.*, 2013; Gu *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, this study was the first in Pakistan to identify the Mozambique Tilapia specie by using molecular tools. Phylogenetic analyses of Mozambique Tilapia species are very important especially which are found in Pakistan because this information will be useful for administration and management of alien tilapia species in the country.

Our results indicate that the molecular approach using sequences of COI gene could be effectively used for the purpose of identification and phylogenetic analysis of the exotic fish species *O. mossambicus* of Pakistan. In our investigation, there were no significant variations found among all the Mozambique Tilapia sequences, indicating that the mtDNA COI gene can be used for phylogenetic analyses. Phylogenetic analysis showed that *O. mossambicus* from Pakistan showed highest genetic distance and lowest genetic distance against Egypt and India respectively.

Conclusion: mtDNA COI gene is an effective barcoding marker for the precise identification and phylogeny of exotic Mozambique tilapia. The phylogenetic relations appeared in this examination are helpful for broadening the Linnaean framework and can be utilized to enhance the sustainability of Mozambique Tilapia species in aquaculture industry of Pakistan.

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