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2 **High connectivity in a long-lived High-Arctic seabird, the ivory gull *Pagophila eburnea***

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42 genetic structure, overlapping generation model

44 **Abstract**

Species may cope with rapid habitat changes by distribution shifts or adaptation to new  
46 conditions. A common feature of these responses is that they depend on how the process of  
dispersal connects populations, both demographically and genetically. We analyzed the  
48 genetic structure of a near threatened High Arctic seabird, the ivory gull (*Pagophila eburnea*)  
in order to infer the connectivity among gull colonies. We analyzed 343 individuals sampled  
50 from 16 localities across the circumpolar breeding range of ivory gulls, from northern Russia  
to the Canadian Arctic. To explore the roles of natal and breeding dispersal we developed a  
52 population genetic model to relate dispersal behavior to the observed genetic structure of  
worldwide ivory gull populations. Our key finding is the striking genetic homogeneity of  
54 ivory gulls across their entire distribution range. The lack of population genetic structure  
found among colonies, in tandem with independent evidence of movement among colonies,  
56 suggests that on-going effective dispersal is occurring across the Arctic Region. Our results  
contradict the dispersal patterns generally observed in seabirds where species movement  
58 capabilities are often not indicative of dispersal patterns. Model predictions show how natal  
and breeding dispersal may combine to shape the genetic homogeneity among ivory gull  
60 colonies separated by up to 2800 km. Although field data will be key to determine the role of  
dispersal for the demography of local colonies and refine the respective impacts of natal  
62 versus breeding dispersal, conservation planning needs to consider ivory gulls as a genetically  
homogeneous, Arctic-wide metapopulation effectively connected through dispersal.

64

## Introduction

66 The distribution of natural habitats worldwide is currently changing as a direct consequence  
of global climate trends, and this is happening particularly fast in the Arctic, where climate  
68 warming is maximal (ACIA 2004; IPCC 2007). Species that live in the Arctic or in other  
rapidly changing environments might cope with this rapid change by shifting their  
70 distributions, by adjusting through phenotypic plasticity or by evolving adaptations to the new  
local climatic conditions (reviewed by Chen et al. 2011; Gienapp et al. 2008; Gilg et al. 2012;  
72 Hoffmann and Sgro 2011; Parmesan 2006). These responses partly depends on the process of  
dispersal; that is, the movement of individuals between birth and reproduction (natal  
74 dispersal), and possibly between successive reproduction events (breeding dispersal). Besides  
its role in the spatial structure and demographic dynamics of populations, dispersal is  
76 important in the context of habitat change because it is one key driver of the potential rate of  
spread of a population and, as the process by which genes are moved among populations, it  
78 influences the rate of adaptation to changing conditions and the potential for evolutionary  
rescue (Bell and Gonzalez 2011; Travis et al. 2013). Thus, understanding, predicting and  
80 managing biodiversity responses to rapid climate change demands a full consideration of a  
species' dispersal characteristics and their demographic and genetic consequences.

82 We focus here on the ivory gull *Pagophila eburnea*, a bird that completes its life-cycle  
entirely in the Arctic. Over its entire breeding range (Canadian Arctic, Greenland, Svalbard  
84 and Russian Arctic islands) it breeds either on inland cliffs and 'nunataks', *i.e.* rocky outcrops  
emerging from icecaps, or on high-Arctic barren islands or flatlands (Gilg et al. 2009;  
86 Mallory et al. 2008). In Canada, where the status of the species has been designed  
'Endangered' (COSEWIC 2006), studies indicated that 80% of the breeding population was  
88 lost during the past 20 years (Gilchrist and Mallory 2005). The species is listed as Near  
Threatened by the IUCN (BirdLife International 2012) and an international circumpolar

90 'Conservation Strategy and Action Plan' has been presented by leading seabird experts from  
Arctic countries to gain more insight into how this bird responds to increasing threats from  
92 disappearance of sea ice habitat, natural resource exploration and increased contaminant loads  
(Gilchrist et al. 2008).

94 Ivory gulls are capable of travelling thousands of kilometers either on single foraging  
trips or to reach wintering grounds in the north Pacific (Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk) and  
96 in the northwest Atlantic (Davis Strait and Labrador Sea) where most of the world population  
is thought to spend the winter (Gilg et al. 2010; Mallory et al. 2008). However, most seabirds  
98 have an extraordinary ability to travel long distances and yet show evidence of restricted gene  
flow and exhibit high levels of philopatry, sometimes returning to breed within a few meters  
100 of their natal nest (Friesen et al. 2007). A species' movement capabilities thus do not  
automatically inform us about demographic and genetic connectivity among colonies. This is  
102 the "seabird paradox", *i.e.*, the apparent paradox between high vagility and low effective  
dispersal (Milot et al. 2008).

104 Dispersal may take place at different stages of an individual's life. For ivory gulls, natal  
dispersal may happen during the two first years of life before the individual becomes sexually  
106 mature and joins a breeding colony. However, the behavior of ivory gulls during that time is  
almost completely unknown. In addition, adult ivory gulls may disperse among colonies from  
108 one breeding season to the next. Such breeding dispersal could effectively contribute to  
demographic and genetic exchanges among colonies, but our knowledge of these aspects for  
110 ivory gulls currently relies only on incidental observations (O. Gilg, A. Aebischer and M.L.  
Mallory, unpubl. data).

112 Here we take a genetic approach to investigating dispersal in order to complement  
ongoing mark-recapture and satellite tracking efforts (Gilg et al. 2010; Spencer et al. 2014).  
114 Genetic data can complement other approaches to measure dispersal either by providing direct

information on individual movements (e.g., through parentage or population assignment) or  
116 indirect signatures of dispersal patterns (e.g., through analyses of genetic structure).

Disentangling the effects of natal dispersal and breeding dispersal on realized gene flow is,  
118 however, challenging, and has rarely been addressed in the molecular ecology literature  
(Broquet and Petit 2009), although Rousset (2001) and Laporte and Charlesworth (2002)  
120 present general class-structured models that lay the foundations to such an endeavor.

The aim of this study was to explore population structure and spatial dispersal pattern in  
122 the ivory gull and to infer natal versus breeding dispersal among colonies. For that purpose,  
we analyzed a genetic data set representative of the entire species range and developed a  
124 population genetic model to infer lower bounds on natal and breeding dispersal consistent  
with the observed genetic structure of ivory gull populations worldwide.

126

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **128 Study species**

The ivory gull is a long-lived High Arctic seabird (annual survival estimated to 0.86;  
130 Stenhouse et al. 2004; and maximum record 28 years; Mallory et al. 2012), which is  
associated with sea ice all year round (Gilg et al. 2010; Spencer et al. 2014). Breeding  
132 colonies are scattered in Arctic Canada, Greenland, Svalbard, and the northern islands of  
Russia in the Barents and Kara seas (Table 1). The current total global population of the ivory  
134 gull was estimated to be approximately 19,000-27,000 breeding pairs (BirdLife International  
2012). The Russian population is estimated to number in the range of 14,500-22,000  
136 individuals (Gavrilo 2011). The population in Canada has declined since the 1980s (Mallory  
et al. 2008). In Norway (Svalbard) the population probably declined in the first part of last  
138 century, but after 1970 the trend is uncertain (Mallory et al. 2008). Population trends in  
Greenland are unclear due to sparse historical information (Gilg et al. 2009). Ivory gulls are

140 thought to first breed after their second year, based on the fact that they acquire adult plumage  
in their second winter, and that individuals in less than full adult plumage are rarely seen at  
142 breeding colonies (Mallory et al. 2008). Unlike most gulls, which regularly lay 3 eggs, the  
ivory gull usually lays 1–2 eggs, more rarely 3 eggs. Most of the world population is thought  
144 to spend the winter in two main wintering grounds (Mallory et al. 2008): the north Pacific  
(Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk) and the northwest Atlantic (Davis Strait and Labrador Sea,  
146 Figure 1).

### 148 **Sample collection**

Field works took place in summers 2006 to 2012, during the breeding season (late June to  
150 August). Sample locations were distributed across the entire breeding range of the species,  
including the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, north-eastern Greenland, Svalbard Archipelago,  
152 Franz Josef Land Archipelago, Severnaya Zemlya Archipelago and Kara Sea islands (16  
sampling locations overall, listed in Table 1 and Figure 1). We collected samples either in  
154 breeding colonies or opportunistically near two military stations where ivory gulls are  
attracted by food remains (namely Alert, Canada and Station Nord, Greenland). Three  
156 nondestructive DNA sampling methods (mouth swabs, plucked feathers and blood) and a  
noninvasive sampling method (shed feathers) were used. Pieces of tissue were also  
158 opportunistically collected on dead birds.

Juveniles (chicks of the year) were sampled in two sites from Greenland in 2009: Amdrup  
160 Land and Station Nord (Table 1 and Figure 1) in order to perform parentage analyses. In these  
cases, buccal swabs and tissue samples were used as DNA sources. All other samples were  
162 taken from adult birds, where we considered two classes of individuals according to their  
breeding status. Field observations suggest that non-breeding adults visit or stay in colonies  
164 during the breeding season. Moreover, satellite transmitters indicated that breeding birds



visited colonies as far as 200 km from their own breeding colony (O. Gilg & A. Aebischer,  
166 unpublished data). Hence in any one site adult birds were classified as "breeding" only if they  
were seen hatching eggs or raising chicks, and "unknown status" otherwise. Thus, "unknown"  
168 birds included: i) the non-breeding component of the population (the so-called "floaters";  
Penteriani et al. 2011), but also ii) birds found in colonies but that were not reproducing  
170 locally and that may reproduce elsewhere in an unknown colony; and ii) birds that they were  
identified from shed feathers collected on the ground. This distinction is relevant for  
172 analyzing the genetic structure of colonies since non-breeding birds or individuals lacking  
information on their breeding location (all called here "unknown") could be transient visitors.  
174 Due to field constraints we generally have information on only one of these two classes of  
adults within each sampling site (reported in Table 1), either because samples were taken only  
176 from breeding individuals or because the breeding status was ignored altogether (e.g., shed  
feathers or transient birds). However in one repeatedly visited site from Greenland (called  
178 Station Nord), we could collect precise mark-resight data on both breeding and unknown (see  
above) individuals, and obtain sizable samples from these two classes of birds (referred to as  
180 "breeding" and "unknown" in Table 1).

All samples from Greenland, Norway and Russia (Table 1) were obtained using non-  
182 destructive (collection of mouth swabs and plucked feathers) and non-invasive DNA  
sampling methods (collection of shed feathers) as described in Yannic *et al.* (2011). In  
184 addition, birds from Alert (Canada) were caught with rocket nets near a military base.  
Immediately following capture, a blood sample (about 0.3 ml) was collected from the brachial  
186 vein in heparinized micro-hematocrit capillary tubes, before release. Blood samples were  
centrifuged on site at 13,200 g for 15 min. Red blood cells and plasma were separated and  
188 stored frozen at -20°C until laboratory analyses).

190 **DNA extraction and genotyping**

Genomic DNA from all individuals was extracted from shed and plucked feathers, tissue,  
192 blood or buccal swab following protocols described in Yannic *et al.* (2011) (see also  
Supplementary material 1). Previously optimized microsatellite markers were used in four  
194 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) multiplexes, totaling 22 markers (Yannic et al. 2011). For  
samples obtained from shed feathers we performed three independent PCR replicates of each  
196 locus to obtain reliable genotypes (see Yannic et al. 2011). The microsatellite amplicons were  
loaded on an ABI PRISM 3100 (Applied Biosystems Foster City, CA, USA) automated DNA  
198 sequencer. Microsatellite alleles were detected, scored, and manually verified using  
GENEMAPPER 3.7 (Applied Biosystems).

200

**Genetic structure**

202 All loci were found to be independent of one another (linkage disequilibrium test performed  
in FSTAT 2.9.4 (Goudet 2005), using 10 000 permutations and *p-values* adjusted for multiple  
204 comparisons using the Benjamini and Yekutieli false discovery rate procedure with initial  $\alpha =$   
0.05). We used two sets of loci depending on downstream analyses. All 22 loci were used for  
206 the parentage analyses because: i) all genetic data from the juveniles came from good quality  
samples (tissue and buccal swab); and ii) genotyping errors or null alleles can be identified  
208 and taken into account (see below). For the analysis of spatial genetic structure some data  
come from "low quality" samples (shed feathers, Table 1). Hence for these analyses we used a  
210 subset of 13 loci (listed in Table 2) chosen for their polymorphism and reliability as reported  
in Yannic et al. (2011).

212 We investigated the differentiation among ivory gulls sampling sites by estimating  $F_{ST}$  (Weir  
and Cockerham 1984). We ran some of the analyses using only the samples with >10 adults.

214 Global  $F_{ST}$  was computed with FSTAT for different combinations of samples: overall adults ( $n$

= 15 localities), over sites with >10 adults ( $n = 9$  localities), and among breeders only ( $n = 6$   
216 localities). The significance of the differentiation was tested using two approaches. First we  
used the log-likelihood  $G$  statistic calculated for observed data and compared to that of 10 000  
218 randomized datasets obtained through permutation of individuals among samples (as  
implemented in Fstat; Goudet 2005; Goudet et al. 1996). Second, for a strict comparison with  
220 results from our evaluation of power (see below), we also used Fishers' Exact Test as  
implemented in GENEPOP. In that case the distribution of alleles within individuals is ignored  
222 and thus genic rather than genetic differentiation among samples is tested. Furthermore, the  
null distribution is obtained using a Markov Chain algorithm rather than permutations,  
224 performed here with defaults GENEPOP parameters. Pairwise  $F_{ST}$  among all samples were also  
calculated with FSTAT.

226 The statistical power to detect a significant genetic heterogeneity at various true levels of  
differentiation for the present set of samples, number of loci and allele frequencies was  
228 evaluated using POWSIM 4.1 (Ryman and Palm 2006). POWSIM simulates samples of genes  
from a specified number of populations that have drifted to an expected predefined level of  
230 differentiation (measured as  $F_{ST}$ ). These samples are then used for testing genetic  
homogeneity using Fisher's Exact Test. With this procedure we estimated the power that we  
232 had when looking for genetic differentiation using all adults and breeders only (see Table 1).  
Estimates of power were given by the proportion of significant outcomes when repeating the  
234 simulations 1000 times for each level of simulated  $F_{ST}$ . The use of post hoc power analyses  
should however be used with caution as stressed by Hoenig and Heisey (2001). But, here our  
236 goal is not to modify a hypothesis test a posteriori (the problematic situation identified by  
Hoenig and Heisey (2001)) but rather to give an idea of the degree to which our data are  
238 informative.

## 240 **Reproductive success and effective number of breeders**

To interpret our observations of genetic structure across colonies we needed an estimate of  
242 effective colony sizes. This can be approximated using the effective number of breeders ( $N_b$ )  
( $N_b$ ; Waples and Teel, 1990), a parameter that depends on the census number of adults in a  
244 colony (here noted  $N_c$ ) and the distribution of reproductive success among individuals within  
colonies following (Kimura and Crow 1963):  $N_b = (N_c k - 1) / [k - 1 + (V_k / k)]$ , where  $k$  is the  
246 mean and  $V_k$  the variance in reproductive success among individuals. As a first approximation  
we estimated these figures from field observations of the number of juveniles per nest in  
248 colonies Amdrup Land and Station Nord, considering that there are two and only two adults  
associated with a given nest.

250 This approach assumes that juveniles within a nest descend from the adult pair providing  
parental care to these offspring. This is a weak assumption since extra-pair paternity is  
252 frequent in socially monogamous birds (Westneat and Stewart 2003), meaning that some  
males may not have sired the juveniles they are taking care of, whilst other males may have  
254 parented offspring with more than one female. Hence males may have a slightly higher  
variance in reproductive success than those calculated from field observations. To check  
256 whether social monogamy reflects the actual breeding system we performed genetic parentage  
assignments in colony Station Nord, where we had DNA samples from a number of juveniles  
258 (n=20) and presumed parents (n=24), that is, adults seen hatching eggs or raising chicks.

Details of the parentage analysis, performed with the method implemented in COLONY 2.0.4.5  
260 (Jones and Wang 2009; Wang 2012) are described fully in Electronic Supplementary Material  
(Supplementary material 1). We repeated these analyses in the colony of Amdrup Land,  
262 where 65 juveniles (but no parents) were sampled.

## 264 **Model of genetic structure: overlapping generations, natal and breeding dispersal**

Interpreting genetic differentiation in terms of connectivity and dispersal behavior is not  
266 trivial given that it requires some knowledge of the effective number of breeders within  
colonies ( $Nb$ , which we investigated in this study) and the effect of life-history traits such as  
268 longevity and the potential movement behavior of juveniles (natal dispersal) and adults  
between breeding seasons (breeding dispersal). We therefore used a 2-sample coalescent  
270 approach to describe an island model, with overlapping generations and both natal and  
breeding dispersal. The model is used to explore the dispersal scenarios that are consistent  
272 with the observed level of population differentiation (global  $F_{ST}$ ) among arctic-wide  
populations of ivory gulls.

274 The model builds upon Yearsley et al. (2013) to introduce overlapping generations following  
the general approach laid out by Laporte and Charlesworth (2002). Each deme contains  $N$   
276 diploid non-selfing individuals, of which  $N_a = \nu N$  are adults who have survived at least one  
breeding cycle and  $N_j = (1 - \nu) N$  are first-year juveniles ( $\nu$  is the adult survival probability per  
278 breeding cycle). One breeding-cycle going forward in time represents a unit time step and is  
composed of: reproduction, mutation, dispersal, adult mortality, juveniles either mature into  
280 adults or die, population regulation (*i.e.*, the population size remains constant at every  
breeding cycle). The model simplifies certain aspects of the ivory gull's life-history.

282 Maturation for ivory gulls is known to be longer than one year whereas our model, to enable  
an analytical solution, assumes that a maximum juvenile period of one year. From numerical  
284 simulations (results not shown) the effect of a prolonged juvenile stage on  $F_{ST}$  is small when  
adult mortality is low (as for the ivory gull). All adults in the model are assumed to have  
286 equal reproductive success. Individual variation in reproductive success and non-breeding  
adults must be accounted for by the effective population size,  $N$ . The model also does not  
288 describe sex-linked differences in life-history, such as dispersal or survival. At present we do

not have sufficient sex-specific data for the ivory gull to know whether such differences exist  
290 for this species.

292 The model estimate expected coalescence times, genetic diversities, and  $F$ -statistics for a  
DNA sequence under the infinite-sites model (Kimura 1969) with a mutation rate  $\mu$  /  
294 generation/sequence. For our model parameterizations the force of mutation upon genetic  
diversities is weak compared to the forces of genetic drift and gene flow. Our model considers  
296 the coalescent for a sample of two DNA sequences that are randomly sampled just prior to  
population regulation. We define three states for a pair of sampled sequences: two sequences  
298 in the same diploid individual, two sequences in different individuals in the same deme, and  
two sequences in different individuals in different demes (states 1, 2 and 3 respectively).

300 The ancestral history of a pair of sequences can be defined by a transition matrix,  $\mathbf{G}$ , where an  
element,  $G_{i,j}$ , gives the probability that a pair of sequences in state  $i$  had ancestors from the  
302 previous generation in state  $j$  (the rate of coalescence per generation for a pair of sequences in  
state  $i$  is then given by  $G_{i0} = 1 - \sum_j G_{i,j}$ ). Using first-step analysis (Wakeley 2009) the expected  
304 times to coalescence of two lineages in state  $i$ ,  $T_i$ , can be calculated by solving

$$306 \quad T_i = 1 + \sum_{j=1}^3 G_{i,j} T_j \quad (1)$$

308 This equation is analogous to equation 8 in Laporte and Charlesworth (2002), and details of  
the approach used to derive equation 1 are given in Yearsley et al. (2013). Using Slatkin's  
310 approximation (Slatkin 1991), these coalescence times can be used to approximate  $F$ -statistics  
in the small mutation limit as

$$312 \quad F_{IS} = \frac{T_2 - T_1}{T_2}$$

$$F_{ST} = \frac{T_3 - T_2}{T_3} \quad (2)$$

314 Alternatively, mutations can be included in the matrix  $\mathbf{G}$  and  $F$ -statistics calculated from  
recurrence relationships for identity by descent.

316 We specified the transition matrix,  $\mathbf{G}$ , by identifying three types of sequence pair: sequences  
from two juveniles (*i.e.* newly born in the current breeding cycle), sequences from two adults  
318 (*i.e.* individuals surviving from the previous breeding cycle), and sequences from one juvenile  
and one adult (these types are labelled -, +,  $\pm$  respectively). The transition matrix can be

320 written as  $G = G^- + G^\pm + G^+$  where

$$G^- = (1-\nu)^2 \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1/(1-\nu) & 0 \\ \alpha^-/2N & \alpha^-(N-1)/N & 1-\alpha^- \\ \beta^-/2N & \beta^-(N-1)/N & 1-\beta^- \end{pmatrix} \quad (3a)$$

322 is the transition matrix when the both sequences in the pair are from juveniles (possibly the  
same juvenile),

$$324 \quad G^\pm = 2\nu(1-\nu) \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ \alpha^\pm/2N & \alpha^\pm(N-1)/N & 1-\alpha^\pm \\ \beta^\pm/2N & \beta^\pm(N-1)/N & 1-\beta^\pm \end{pmatrix} \quad (3b)$$

is the transition matrix when one sequence is from a juvenile and one from an adult and

$$326 \quad G^+ = \nu^2 \begin{pmatrix} 1/\nu & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \alpha^+ & 1-\alpha^+ \\ 0 & \beta^+ & 1-\beta^+ \end{pmatrix} \quad (3c)$$

is the transition matrix when the both sequences in the pair are from adults (possibly the same  
328 adult). The other parameters in the many-deme limit are  $\alpha^- = (1-m_j)^2$ ,  $\alpha^\pm = (1-m_j)(1-m_a)$ ,  $\alpha^+ =$   
 $(1-m_a)^2$ , with  $m_j$  and  $m_a$  the juvenile and adult migration rates, respectively (*i.e.*,  $m_j$  and  $m_a$   
330 represent natal and breeding dispersal). The parameters  $\beta^x$  make a negligible contribution to  
 $F_{ST}$  in the many-deme limits because they are inversely proportional to the number of demes.

332

Substituting equation 3a-c into equation 1 and solving, and taking the many-deme limit gives

$$T_1 = T_2 = 2 N_a D / (1 - \nu^2) \quad (4a)$$

$$T_3 = T_2 + D (1 - m_j) (1 + p) M / [(1 - M^2) (1 + \nu)] \quad (4b)$$

where  $M = (1 - \nu) (1 - m_j) + \nu (1 - m_a)$ ,  $p = \nu (1 - m_a) / M$  and time units are in breeding cycles. To express these coalescence times in numbers of generations they should be divided by generation time (equal to  $1 / (1 - \nu)$ ).

Substituting equations 4 into equations 2 gives the  $F$ -statistics,  $F_{IS} = 0$  and an expression for  $F_{ST}$  in the small mutation limit of

$$\frac{1 - F_{ST}}{F_{ST}} = 2 N_a \frac{1 - M^2}{M^2} \frac{1}{1 - p^2} \quad (5)$$

For non-overlapping generations ( $\nu = 0$ ) and small migration rates equation 5 gives the classic result  $(1 - F_{ST}) / F_{ST} = 4 N_a m_j$  (Wright 1931). The model also correctly predicts the inbreeding effective population size  $N_e = N_a / (1 + \nu)$  for a single isolated population with overlapping generations (Felsenstein 1971; Hill 1972), equivalent to the case when  $m_j = m_a = 0$ .

Equation 5 shows how the genetic differentiation among ivory gull colonies depends upon adult survival ( $\nu$ ), effective colony size ( $N_a$ ), natal dispersal ( $m_j$ ) and breeding dispersal ( $m_a$ ).

Adult annual survival rate was estimated to  $\nu = 0.86 \pm 0.04$  (95% CI: 0.75;0.91) (Stenhouse et al. 2004). We used our model with the mean annual survival rate,  $\nu = 0.86$  and the upper limit of the confidence interval  $\nu = 0.91$ . Using a higher survival value will tend to underestimate migration rates, making our interpretation more conservative. Effective colony size  $N_a$  cannot be precisely parameterized because contrary to our model's assumptions the number of breeding adults is variable across colonies. Known colony sizes (reviewed in Table 3) show a skewed distribution, with a few large colonies (in the order of 100 – 2000 breeding pairs) and many smaller ones (below 100 pairs). Furthermore we did not know the prevalence and year-to-year behavior of adults that are apparently non-breeding at some observation time point.



Such individuals can inflate  $N_a$  if they have or will enter reproduction at some other breeding  
358 season. Based upon i) field observations of colony sizes (Table 3), ii) the fact that low  
variance in reproductive success should inflate local effective numbers of breeders (see results  
360 for  $N_b/N_c$  in colonies Amdrup Land and Station Nord), and iii) remaining uncertainties about  
the resulting parameter  $N_a$ , we explored the model behavior for  $N_a$  ranging 50-1000. Using  
362 equation 5 we then worked out the conditions of juvenile and adult migration that would  
result in a  $F_{ST}$  value equal to the observed global  $F_{ST} = 0.001$ . This allows us to estimate and  
364 discuss the lower bound on migration rates for ivory gulls.

## 366 RESULTS

### Genetic structure

368 Number of alleles, observed and expected heterozygosity in each sample and for each of the  
13-microsatellite loci are shown in Table 1 and in Electronic Supplementary Material (Table  
370 S1 in Supplementary material 1), respectively. With 13 loci examined in 15 samples, nine  
locus/site combinations showed a significant deficit in heterozygotes. There was no consistent  
372 pattern across samples or loci, and only one locus in one sample (B125, Schmidt Island,  
Russia) remains significant if one corrects for multiple testing. Yet it is plausible that a small  
374 number of allelic dropouts remained undetected in genotypes obtained from shed feathers  
despite marker selection and genotyping repetitions. The number of genotyping repetitions  
376 that we used is based upon average error rates reported in Yannic et al. (2011) but individual  
shed feathers may happen to be unusually poor sometimes (Yannic et al. 2011). For this  
378 reason, we reported differentiation statistics with and without data from shed feathers. The  
mean observed heterozygosity (0.63–0.85) and mean expected heterozygosity (0.73–0.82)  
380 across loci are shown in Table 1.

No genetic differentiation was observed among breeding samples ( $n = 6$ ,  $F_{ST} = 0.000$ , 95%CI: -0.006;0.005;  $G$  statistic permutation test  $p = 0.61$ , Fisher's Exact Test  $p = 0.40$ ; Table 2) or among samples containing more than 10 individuals ( $n = 9$ ,  $F_{ST} = 0.000$ , 95%CI: -0.002;0.003;  $G$  statistic permutation test  $p = 0.15$ , Fisher's Exact Test  $p = 0.14$ ; Table S2 in Supplementary material 1), while very low and non-significant differentiation was found overall adult samples ( $n = 15$ ,  $F_{ST} = 0.001$ , 95%CI: -0.002;0.005;  $G$  statistic permutation test  $p = 0.09$ , Fisher's Exact Test  $p = 0.09$ ; Table 2). This figure was unaffected when removing all shed feather samples ( $n = 8$ ,  $F_{ST} = 0.000$ ). Pairwise  $F_{ST}$  values were also very low, ranging from -0.032 to 0.043 and none of these pairwise values was significant after correction for multiple testing (Benjamini–Yekutieli correction; Table S3 in Supplementary material 1). There was no significant difference in relatedness among breeders vs among unknown birds sampled the same year in the same colony (*i.e.*, Station Nord in 2009: “Effect of transient individuals on genetic structure” section in Supplementary material 1), suggesting that breeders and unknown birds belong to a homogeneous pool. These results were further confirmed by model-based clustering that suggests that our ivory gulls most likely form one worldwide population (“Model-based clustering” section in Supplementary material 1) and by the absence of isolation-by-distance over long distance (“Isolation by distance” section in Supplementary material 1).

Simulations demonstrated that our sample sizes and genetic markers provided sufficient power to detect weak population structure. Population structure was found significant for all simulated populations (*i.e.* power = 100%) with an  $F_{ST}$  of 0.006 when using all adult sampling sites ( $n = 17$ ; Figure 2). Even when  $F_{ST}$  was reduced to 0.0035, structure was correctly detected in 90% of the simulations. For  $F_{ST}$  values as low as, or lower than the observed value (*i.e.*, global  $F_{ST}$  among all adults = 0.001), power drops to 25%. When using only breeders sampling sites ( $n = 6$  sites), the sample sizes and the genetic markers contain

406 sufficient power to detect population structure with 90% accuracy for simulated populations  
with  $F_{ST}$  values  $\geq 0.007$  (Figure 2).

408

### **Reproductive success and effective number of breeders**

410 In the colony Amdrup Land, we counted 98 adults (49 nests) with one offspring, 82 adults (41  
nests) with two offspring, and 12 adults (6 nests) with an unknown number of offspring  
412 (Yannic et al. 2014a). Assuming that the latter show the same distribution of reproductive  
success than all other adults, this gives  $k \approx 1.46$ ,  $V_k \approx 0.25$ , and  $N_b \approx 445$ . In Station Nord we  
414 observed 24 adults with one offspring and 48 adults with two, which gives  $k \approx 1.67$ ,  $V_k \approx 0.23$ ,  
and  $N_b \approx 148$ .

416 Genetic parentage assignment at Station Nord identified the two parents (from our sample of  
adults) for 6 juveniles out of 20. Twelve additional juveniles had one of their parents  
418 identified from the candidate adults. The "second parents" of these juveniles and the two  
parents of the remaining juveniles ( $n = 2$ ) were not identified from the adult samples but their  
420 genotype was reconstructed by the software COLONY, meaning that these adults could still be  
used to check for extra-pair paternity (*e.g.*, if one unsampled male had sired three of our  
422 offspring with different unsampled females, this would be visible in the data). As it turned  
out, the parent-offspring relationships observed in the field were all confirmed by the genetic  
424 assignment (that is, for all the individuals with a DNA sample available), with one exception:  
one adult that was observed caring for a juvenile did not appear to be its genetic parent.  
426 Moreover, this true parent was identified from our sample of adults and it was found to have a  
second offspring with a different mating partner (field observation, independently confirmed  
428 by the genetic data). This suggests one plausible event of extra-pair paternity.

We repeated these analyses in the colony of Amdrup Land, where 65 juveniles (but no  
430 parents) were sampled. But with such small clutch size (one or two offspring in general) and

without any actual parent genotyped, we did not succeed to recover reliable sibship  
432 information in this colony (data not shown).

In summary, observable parental behavior seems a reliable indicator of parentage, and field  
434 observations suggest that the effective breeding size  $N_b$  is approximately twice the census  
colony size  $N_c$ . This figure results from the near-zero variance in breeding success among  
436 birds seen in colonies. This variance could be slightly inflated by extra-pair paternity, but  
with very little consequences for the  $N_b/N_c$  ratio (*e.g.*,  $N_b$  decreases from 148 to 142 in colony  
438 Station Nord if one considers one event of extra-pair paternity where one bird has no success  
and another one has fathered three offspring).

440

### **Model of genetic structure: natal versus breeding dispersal**

442 We explored the conditions of natal dispersal (dispersal of juveniles) and breeding dispersal  
(movement of adults among colonies across breeding seasons) that would be consistent with  
444 the low level of observed genetic structure.

A general result obtained with the model is that breeding dispersal is very effective at  
446 homogenizing the distribution of the genetic variation across populations in long-lived species  
with overlapping generations. For instance with the ivory gulls, with  $v = 0.91$  (Figure 3B) and  
448  $N_a = 1000$  and no natal dispersal (that is, perfect philopatry) then a breeding dispersal of only  
4.6% is required to yield an  $F_{ST}$  as low as 0.001. By contrast, above 30% natal dispersal  
450 would be required in the absence of breeding dispersal.

The above scenario is conservative, providing lower bounds on dispersal rates because we  
452 used our highest observation of global  $F_{ST}$  ( $F_{ST} = 0.001$ ; see Table 2), large colony size, and  
high survival. A slightly less conservative scenario ( $F_{ST} = 0.001$ ,  $N_a = 500$ ,  $v = 0.86$ , visible in  
454 Figure 3A) gives: 14% breeding dispersal or 48% natal dispersal (or any combination along  
the  $F_{ST} = 0.001$  contour line in Figure 3A). Any smaller (*i.e.*, less conservative) value for  $N_a$

456 or  $F_{ST}$  will increase the minimum level of dispersal. As expected, predictions of genetic  
structure were highly sensitive to effective colony size (as shown by the different contour  
458 lines within Figures 2A and 2B) and survival (compare Figure 3A against 3B).

## 460 **Discussion**

The key finding from this research is the striking genetic homogeneity of the ivory gull across  
462 its entire distribution range. Even with conservative assumptions for local effective breeding  
numbers and survival rate this suggests that gene flow regularly occurs among distant regions  
464 in order for populations to become, and remain, genetically homogenous. We develop below  
the interpretation of these results indicating genetic homogeneity among populations  
466 separated by up to 2800 km.

### 468 **A single Arctic-wide population**

Information retrieved from microsatellites suggests that the ivory gull represents a single,  
470 Arctic-wide metapopulation. We found no significant genetic differentiation among breeding  
colonies of ivory gull ( $F_{ST} = 0.000$ ,  $CI_{95\%}$ : -0.006; 0.005) or among overall adult samples ( $F_{ST}$   
472  $= 0.001$ ,  $CI_{95\%}$ : -0.002; 0.005). We did not observe significant isolation-by-distance among  
breeding colonies and among overall adult samples across the range of the species (“Isolation  
474 by distance” section in Supplementary material 1). These results agree with the weak  
differentiation found using mitochondrial data (Royston and Carr 2014 and this study;  
476 Supplementary material 1).

This absence of genetic structure is *a priori* not surprising for a species capable of travelling  
478 thousands of kilometers either on single foraging trips or to reach its wintering grounds (Gilg  
et al. 2010). Genetic homogeneity is, however, not the rule in seabird species with similar  
480 flying capability. Out of forty-seven seabird species reviewed by (Friesen et al. 2007), only

few were reported to have as little genetic structure as the ivory gull. The grey-faced petrel  
482 *Pterodroma macroptera gouldi* (Lawrence et al. 2014), the little auk *Alle alle* (Wojczulanis-  
Jakubas et al. 2014) and the wandering albatross *Diomedea exulans* (Milot et al. 2008) are  
484 examples of seabird that present weak genetic structure throughout their distribution. But the  
vast majority of seabird species rather seem to show a stronger level of genetic divergence,  
486 even among geographically proximate colonies (*e.g.*, the Hawaiian petrel *Pterodroma*  
*sandwichensis* (Welch et al. 2012) or Cory's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* (Genovart et  
488 al. 2013). Genetic divergence among seabird populations inhabiting the Polar Regions seems  
then to be generally lower in comparison with those breeding at lower latitudes.

490 Patterns of genetic structuring in species capable of long-distance dispersal may be driven by  
multiple mechanisms, including restricted gene flow as a result of high natal philopatry,  
492 cryptic barriers to dispersal, or behavioral mechanisms (Friesen et al. 2007). In addition, local  
adaptation to differing ecological conditions and strong selective pressures may promote  
494 geographic patterns of differentiation. Our results show that such gene flow limiting processes  
are not at work in the ivory gull population and high intercolony dispersal genetically  
496 homogenizes the populations. It is however worth noting that our results are based on neutral  
genetic loci (*i.e.*, microsatellite loci) and adaptive differences could exist among colonies.

498

Our interpretation of the data assumes that the  $F_{ST}$  is at migration-drift equilibrium. With  
500 small deme size and large migration rates,  $F_{ST}$  reaches equilibrium very rapidly [*i.e.* in the  
order of a few dozen of generations, Rousset (2004)], contrary to gene diversity which may  
502 take a much longer time to reach equilibrium (Crow and Aoki 1984). The hypothesis that we  
believe to be most parsimonious in the case of ivory gulls is that  $F_{ST}$  has long been  
504 equilibrated and there is large-scale genetic exchange between colonies, most likely due to a  
combination of natal and breeding dispersal. An alternative hypothesis may be that the

506 worldwide population is sub-structured into poorly connected demes and the genetic  
homogeneity observed in ivory gull today is a consequence of the evolutionary history of the  
508 species, *i.e.*, a northward expansion of population from a single homogeneous refugia after  
the deglaciation of the Arctic region (e.g., Wojczulanis-Jakubas et al. 2014). However, while  
510 it is temperate species were restricted to refugial area during glacial stages, taxa found in  
more northern latitudes today are known to have had greater distributions during the glacial  
512 phases (e.g., Lorenzen et al. 2011; Yannic et al. 2014b). This suggests that colder adapted  
species were in more restricted areas during interglacial and not during glacial stages (Stewart  
514 and Dalen 2008; Stewart and Lister 2001). From this perspective, ivory gulls could be said to  
be in “refugia” today and not necessarily in the Late Pleistocene.

516

### **Natal versus breeding dispersal**

518 To disentangle the respective role of natal dispersal, *i.e.* the movement from the natal site to  
the site of first reproduction (Greenwood and Harvey 1982), and breeding dispersal, *i.e.*  
520 movement between successive breeding attempts in the ivory gull, we developed an infinite  
island model with overlapping generations that we used to calculate the expected global  $F_{ST}$  at  
522 equilibrium for a range of adult and juvenile migration rate scenarios. Our results show that  
breeding dispersal is very effective at reducing genetic differentiation across populations in  
524 long-lived seabird with overlapping generations. We used this model here in an attempt to  
better understand the demo-genetics of a featured high-artic seabird species, but the modeling  
526 framework that we presented here is very general. Our model could be used further to look at  
the effect of overlapping generations and variations in natal vs breeding dispersal, two aspects  
528 that have largely been ignored from empirical molecular ecology research so far.

530 Long-term field data are lacking for the ivory gull (see next section below), but breeding  
dispersal is thought to be less than natal dispersal for seabirds in general (e.g., Gauthier et al.  
532 2010). In many long-lived seabird species with low reproductive rate, breeding philopatry is  
believed to be very high, although actual dispersal rates have been rigorously quantified for a  
534 few species only: roseate tern *Sterna dougallii* ( $m_a=0.00-0.09$  yr<sup>-1</sup>; Lebreton et al. 2003),  
common tern *Sterna hirundo* ( $m_a=0.04-0.08$  yr<sup>-1</sup>; Nisbet and Cam 2002), wandering  
536 albatross ( $m_a=0.00-0.30$  yr<sup>-1</sup>; Gauthier et al. 2010) or Adélie penguin *Pygoscelis adeliae*  
( $m_a < 0.01$  yr<sup>-1</sup>; Dugger et al. 2010). In these species, breeding dispersal rates appear to be  
538 very low and strongly limited by the distance among colonies, although dispersal could vary  
with ice conditions (e.g., Dugger et al. 2010). These observations suggest that there are  
540 behavioral constraints on adult movement amongst breeding colonies (Friesen et al. 2007).  
Many seabirds have an extraordinary ability to travel long distances and yet show evidence of  
542 restricted gene flow and exhibit high levels of philopatry, sometimes returning to breed within  
a few meters of their natal nest (Friesen et al. 2007). The ultimate causes for such philopatric  
544 behavior are not known, although familiarity with natal and/or previous breeding habitats  
(Friesen et al. 2007) and fitness costs incurred by dispersal itself (Clobert et al. 2001) seem  
546 likely to be involved.

Our results contradict in some ways the general pattern found in the literature (Friesen et al.  
548 2007). According to our models (and recalling that we are considering lower bounds on  
migration rates), it seems unlikely that the low breeding dispersal rates reported above for  
550 seabirds are compatible with the genetic pattern observed here for the ivory gull, even if natal  
dispersal is strong. To be compatible with our observations, a level of breeding dispersal  
552 below 0.1 would have to be associated with extremely frequent natal dispersal (that is, a  
complete mixture of young adults, see Figure 3 with  $m_a$  in 0-0.1). Demographic data from the



554 field will be very important to test this suggestion. Information on the movement behavior of  
juvenile birds and additional estimates of adult survival would be particularly valuable.

556

### **Movement of adult ivory gulls inferred from ecological data**

558 Ring recoveries are in line with large-scale movement in ivory gulls and suggest long distance  
travel events (> 3400 km; Gaston et al. 2008; Lyngs 2003). However, it is often not known  
560 whether recovered birds were actually breeding in the areas where they were found, making  
inferences about the frequency of effective dispersal at large spatial scales difficult. Recent  
562 advances in movement ecology using satellite transmitters indicated similar post-breeding  
flyways over long distance for ivory gulls breeding in the north east Atlantic, *i.e.*, for birds  
564 breeding in north Greenland, Svalbard and Franz Josef Land, Russia (Gilg et al. 2010).

Wintering grounds were reached in December, in southeast Greenland and along the Labrador  
566 Sea ice-edge, where Canadian birds also overwinter or in the Bering Strait region (Gilg et al.  
2010; Mallory et al. 2008). Data also indicate that birds from different colonies, however,  
568 migrate eastwards towards wintering area in the Bering Strait region, hence demonstrating a  
bi-directional migration pattern (Figure 1).

570 Similar flyways and wintering area for birds from different colonies over the entire species  
range may result in the recruitment of birds to distant colonies after the overwinter period  
572 (*i.e.*, birds never return to the natal colony). Such movement events may be accidental (*i.e.*,  
birds are unable to return to the natal area) or may reflect behavioral variation in philopatry  
574 among individuals (Weatherhead and Forbes 1994). The tendency for birds to disperse may  
also be linked to the conditions in the natal colony the year they were born and to the local  
576 dynamics of the colonies that they recruit to. Such long-distance dispersal events or  
reshuffling of individuals on the pre-breeding flyways may be sufficient to eliminate the  
578 traces of regional structure among populations. The fidelity of ivory gulls to the breeding site

is unknown but at least some marked individuals return to the same breeding colony from one  
580 year to the next (MacDonald 1976), and an example of extreme breeding site fidelity has been  
reported (Mallory et al. 2012). Populations that breed on flat land of Russia, where the highest  
582 census population size are observed (Table 3), are often prone to move from site to site (de  
Korte and Volkov 1993).

584

### **Dispersal and connectivity under climate change**

586 Climate change is geographically shifting the climatic envelope of many species and this is  
predicted to occur rapidly in the Arctic (up to  $\sim 0.40$  km/yr; Loarie et al. 2009). The capacity  
588 of populations to respond to climate change will depend of evolutionary and demographic  
processes (*i.e.*, plasticity, adaptation or migration) (Bourne et al. 2014). Specifically, level of  
590 additive genetic variance within population can directly influence evolutionary outcomes in  
response to environmental change by providing the necessary genetic variation upon which  
592 selection can act (Bourne et al. 2014; Lande and Shannon 1996). Now, our genetic results  
suggest high connectivity and gene flow among populations that furthermore still maintain  
594 high level of genetic diversity and higher evolutionary potential within each population,  
despite recent declines in population census size in some regions (*e.g.*, Canada).

596 Following these results, two important points call however for further investigations. First, the  
very high level of genetic connectivity revealed by this study remains difficult to translate  
598 into an estimate of demographic connectivity. We have made some efforts to disentangle the  
effects of dispersal from local population size, but there remains too much uncertainty in our  
600 estimates to determine whether the extent of dispersal that ensures genetic homogeneity is  
enough to have an effect on local demography (a relevant issue in high gene flow species;  
602 Waples 1998; Waples and Gaggiotti 2006). Information on the behavior of first- and second-  
year ivory gulls and adult survival estimates will be key to reduce the space of dispersal

604 parameters that are compatible with our genetic findings. We need to know more about the  
movement of birds between their natal site and first breeding attempt. Second, while our  
606 findings show that the genetic diversity within colonies is currently high, further studies will  
have to determine whether this state is stable or show signs of disequilibrium (*e.g.* in line with  
608 findings from demographic surveys that show a strong decline in colony numbers and size).  
The effects of overlapping generations and metapopulation functioning will have to be taken  
610 into account when looking for genetic signatures of demographic stability or decline (Broquet  
et al. 2010; Chikhi et al. 2010; Leblois et al. 2006).

612

### **Conservation implications**

614 Resources for conservation management of endangered species are always limited, and  
therefore an understanding of population differentiation and connectivity can help identify  
616 conservation priorities and inform management decisions. Here our results indicate that the  
ivory gull should be considered a wide-range, genetically homogeneous metapopulation. The  
618 lack of population genetic structure found among colonies, in tandem with independent  
evidence of movement among colonies, suggests ongoing effective dispersal is occurring  
620 across ocean basins. This intercolony movement over large spatial scales can potentially  
enhance the persistence of highly fragmented seabird colonies. The generally large  
622 nonbreeding component of populations may also play an important role on the structure,  
dynamics and persistence of populations in buffering the effects of mortality with  
624 compensatory recruitment (although it may also hide a recent population decline, Penteriani et  
al. 2011; Votier et al. 2008). Our study suggests immigrant recruitment from distant  
626 populations could have similar effects. Understanding patterns of connectivity among disjunct  
populations of highly vagile colonial seabirds is vital to appropriately manage their  
628 populations and help predict the effect of future environmental change.



630

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646

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performances using feathers and buccal swabs for the ivory gull (*Pagophila eburnea*).  
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840 **Table 1.** Estimates of genetic variability for sampled sites of ivory gull (*Pagophila eburnea*). *N* gives the number of samples genotyped at 13  
 842 microsatellite markers. Statistics include number of alleles (*nA*), allelic richness (*Ar*; estimated for  $n \geq 10$  individuals and based on min. sample  
 size of 8 diploid individuals successfully genotyped at 13 loci), observed heterozygosity ( $H_O$ ) and expected heterozygosity ( $H_E$ ). Sampled areas  
 are identified by their abbreviation (Abbr.) throughout the study

ID	Country	Estimated regional population	Region	Site	Abbr.	Latitude	Longitude	Status	DNA source	N	<i>nA</i>	<i>Ar</i>	$H_O$	$H_E$		
#1	Greenland	> 2000 pairs <sup>a</sup>	National Park	Station Nord	StNo	81.60	-16.66	adult unknown	swab	81	9.9	6.01	0.76	0.78		
#2						StBr	81.61	-16.49	adult breeding	swab	25	8.3	6.08	0.77	0.78	
#3							StJv	81.61	-16.49	juvenile	swab/tissue	19/1	7.6	5.95	0.82	0.79
#4					Amdrup Land	AmLa	80.85	-14.63	juvenile	swab/tissue	33/12	9.2	6.04	0.79	0.79	
#5	Norway	350-500 pairs <sup>b</sup>	Svalbard	Svenskoya	Sven	78.72	26.63	adult breeding	blood	9	6.8	-	0.84	0.82		
#6					Auga	Auga	78.50	21.74	adult breeding	swab/blood	1/17	7.5	6.05	0.76	0.78	
#7					Hübnerbreen	HübN	78.41	21.69	adult breeding	swab	7	5.7	-	0.85	0.76	
#8					Freemanbreen	Free	78.38	21.43	adult breeding	swab/plucked feathers	34/2	9.7	6.50	0.76	0.80	
#9	Russia	14,500 – 22,000 pairs <sup>c</sup>	Franz Josef Land	Nagurskoje	Nagu	80.72	48.22	adult unknown	shed feathers	5	3.9	-	0.63	0.73		
#10					Rudolf Island	Rudo	81.75	58.39	adult unknown	shed feathers	17	7.4	6.12	0.67	0.79	
#11					Eva-Liv Island	EvLi	81.64	63.22	adult unknown	shed feathers	5	4.8	-	0.70	0.80	
#12			Severnaya Zemlya	Schmidt Island	SchI	81.04	90.76	adult unknown	shed feathers	12	6.6	5.94	0.73	0.76		
#13					Domashny Island	Doma	79.51	94.84	adult unknown	shed feathers/swab	17/6	8.5	6.19	0.80	0.77	
#14					Komsomalets Island	Koms	80.77	91.05	adult unknown	shed feathers	6	5.7	-	0.83	0.80	
#15					Sukhaya River	Sukh	80.77	96.75	juvenile	shed feathers	7	5.8	-	0.76	0.80	
#16				Kara Sea Islands	Heiberg Islands	HeiI	77.61	101.51	adult unknown	shed feathers	4	4.2	-	0.73	0.77	
#17	Canada	900 pairs <sup>d</sup>	Nunavut	Seymour Island	SeyI	76.80	-101.27	adult breeding	Swab/plucked feathers	11	6.5	5.84	0.75	0.78		
#18					Ellesmere Island (Alert)	AlEI	82.50	-62.33	adult unknown	blood	12	6.7	5.87	0.80	0.77	
		19,000 – 27,000 pairs											343			

844 <sup>a</sup> Gilg *et al.* (2009); <sup>b</sup> Gilchrist *et al.* (2008); <sup>c</sup> Gavrilov (2011); <sup>d</sup> Environment Canada (2013)

846 **Table 2.**  $F_{ST}$  and exact  $G$ -test probability values obtained for each autosomal microsatellite and over all loci for two different datasets of ivory gull (*Pagophila eburnea*)

Loci	All adults sites ( $n = 15$ )		Breeding colonies ( $n = 6$ )	
	$F_{ST}$	$P$ -value	$F_{ST}$	$P$ -value
A111	-0.005	0.78	-0.014	0.94
B125	0.002	0.32	0.004	0.61
C7	0.009	0.83	0.003	0.45
D126	0.004	0.27	0.002	0.62
D5	0.004	0.17	0.013	0.16
D9	-0.008	0.76	0.001	0.23
A112	-0.003	0.65	-0.012	0.99
A132	0.010	0.37	-0.011	0.85
B114	-0.009	0.76	-0.010	0.92
D103	0.006	0.11	-0.004	0.62
C6	0.002	0.20	0.018	0.54
B103	0.008	0.62	-0.006	0.08
D1	0.007	0.04	0.013	0.04
<b>Over all loci</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>-0.000</b>	<b>0.61</b>
Jackknifing over loci	0.001		0.003	
Bootstrapping 95% CI	-0.002;0.005		-0.006;0.005	

**Table 3.** Census colony size across the breeding distribution of ivory gull (*Pagophila*

850 *eburnea*)

Country	Number of ivory gulls	Number of colonies
Greenland <sup>a</sup>	Records between 1854 and 2009	
	<5	13
	5-24	6
	25-99	11
	100-300	5
Norway <sup>b</sup>	Maximum records	
	<5	7
	4-10	5
	11-30	19
	31-60	7
	61-100	3
Russia <sup>c</sup>	Historically maximum records	
	2 – 20	>10
	22 – 100	19
	200 – 700	13
	800 – 1600	7
	2000 +	5
	1990s - 2000s	
	2 – 20	0
	22 – 100	17
	200 – 700	11
800 – 1600	6	
2000 +	3	
Canada <sup>4</sup>	Historically records	
	Between 1976 and 1992	
	<5	0
	5 – 24	3
	25 – 50	6
	50 – 99	6
	100 – 340	2
	Recent time records between	
	2001 and 2003	
	<5	10
5 – 24	9	
25 – 50	2	
50 – 99	1	
100 – 300	0	

<sup>1</sup> Gilg et al. (2009); <sup>2</sup> Norwegian Polar Institute; <sup>3</sup> Maria Gavrilo, unpublished data; <sup>4</sup> Gilchrist and Mallory

852 (2005)

854 **Titles and legends to figures**

856 **Figure 1.** Map of the study area illustrating the Holarctic distribution of ivory gull (*Pagophila*  
858 *eburnea*) breeding colonies. Sampling localities are indicated by the ID corresponding with  
860 Table 1; orange dots depict known breeding sites (Gilchrist et al. 2008). Dashed lines:  
862 wintering grounds (variable during the winter and among years according to the extension of  
864 the sea-ice; modified from Gilg *et al.* (2010)). Background map represent the maximum sea-  
ice extent in July between 1979-2013 (light blue) and the sea-ice extent in July 2013 (dark  
blue) (data from the National Snow and Ice Data Centre, Boulder, Colorado;  
<http://nsidc.org/>).

866 **Figure 2.** Statistical power for obtaining significant outcomes in tests of genetic  
868 differentiation involving the specific marker characteristics and sample sizes of ivory gull for  
870 i) all adults localities and ii) breeding colonies only. Simulations were performed using  
POWSIM version 4.1 (Ryman and Palm 2006). The dotted lines indicate the level of genetic  
differentiation that can be detected with 90% statistical power for the two data sets.

872 **Figure 3.** The parameter space (natal dispersal,  $m_j$ , breeding dispersal,  $m_a$ , effective colony  
874 size,  $N_a$  (contour lines) and adult survival probability,  $v$ ) of an overlapping generation model  
that predicts a global equilibrium  $F_{ST}$  (equation 5) equal to the observed value for ivory gull  
(using all samples  $F_{ST} = 0.001$ ). Given  $N_a$ , the plot shows the combinations of natal and  
breeding dispersal that are required to yield the observed genetic structure in ivory gulls  
876 across its distribution range. The dashed lines in panel A show an example: with  $v = 0.86$  and  
 $N_a = 250$ , a combination of 25% natal dispersal and 16.5% breeding dispersal would predict  
878  $F_{ST} = 0.001$  in the simplified conditions of our model





