



HAL
open science

Magic Traits in Magic Fish: Understanding Color Pattern Evolution Using Reef Fish

Pauline Salis, Thibault Lorin, Vincent Laudet, Bruno Frédérick

► **To cite this version:**

Pauline Salis, Thibault Lorin, Vincent Laudet, Bruno Frédérick. Magic Traits in Magic Fish: Understanding Color Pattern Evolution Using Reef Fish. *Trends in Genetics*, 2019, 35 (4), pp.265-278. 10.1016/j.tig.2019.01.006 . hal-02344534

HAL Id: hal-02344534

<https://hal.sorbonne-universite.fr/hal-02344534>

Submitted on 4 Nov 2019

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Trends in Genetics

Magic Traits in Magic Fish: Understanding Color Patterns using Reef Fish

--Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	
Article Type:	Review
Keywords:	Pigmentation pattern, Ecology, Evolution, Development, Chromatophores, Modularity
Corresponding Author:	Vincent Laudet CNRS-UMR5242/INRA-UMR1288 Lyon, FRANCE
First Author:	Vincent Laudet
Order of Authors:	Vincent Laudet Pauline Salis Thibault Lorin Bruno Frédérick
Abstract:	<p>Color patterns provide an easy access to phenotypic diversity and allow the questioning of the adaptive value of traits or the constraints acting on phenotypic evolution. Reef fish offer a unique opportunity to address such questions because they are ecologically and phylogenetically diverse and have the largest variety of pigment cell types known in vertebrates. In addition to recent development of their genetic resources, reef fish also constitute experimental models that allow the discrimination of ecological, developmental and evolutionary processes at work. Here, we emphasize how the study of color patterns in reef fish can be integrated in an Eco/Evo/Devo perspective and we illustrate that such an approach can bring new insights on the evolution of complex phenotypes.</p>

1 **Magic Traits in Magic Fish: Understanding Color Patterns using Reef Fish**

2

3 Pauline Salis¹, Thibault Lorin², Vincent Laudet^{1,*} and Bruno Frédérick^{3,*}

4

5 ¹ Observatoire Océanologique de Banyuls-sur-Mer, UMR CNRS 7232 BIOM, Sorbonne
6 Université, 1 avenue Pierre Fabre, 66650 Banyuls-sur-Mer, France7 ² Institut de Génomique Fonctionnelle de Lyon, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, UMR 5242
8 CNRS, Université Claude Bernard Lyon I, Université de Lyon, 46 Allée d'Italie, 69364 Lyon
9 Cedex 07, France10 ³ Laboratory of Functional and Evolutionary Morphology, FOCUS, University of Liège, Liège,
11 Belgium12
13 * Correspondence: vincent.laudet@obs-banyuls.fr (V. Laudet); bruno.frederich@uliege.be (B.
14 Frédérick)15
16 Bruno Frédérick - ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3438-024317
18 Key words: Pigmentation pattern, Ecology, Evolution, Development, Chromatophores,
19 Modularity

21 **Abstract**

22 Color patterns provide an easy access to phenotypic diversity and allow the questioning of the
23 adaptive value of traits or the constraints acting on phenotypic evolution. Reef fish offer a
24 unique opportunity to address such questions because they are ecologically and
25 phylogenetically diverse and have the largest variety of pigment cell types known in vertebrates.
26 In addition to recent development of their genetic resources, reef fish also constitute
27 experimental models that allow the discrimination of ecological, developmental and
28 evolutionary processes at work. Here, we emphasize how the study of color patterns in reef fish
29 can be integrated in an Eco/Evo/Devo perspective and we illustrate that such an approach can
30 bring new insights on the evolution of complex phenotypes.

31

32 **Why studying reef fish and their color patterns?**

33 Questions regarding the diversity, evolution, and ecological significance of color patterns have
34 caught scientist's attention for centuries [1]. Pigmentation has been studied using a wide variety
35 of animal models from hexapods to vertebrates [1,2]. Fruit fly and mouse are still important
36 models to study pigmentation genes [3] but, over the last years, teleost fish also became efficient
37 systems for addressing questions related to color patterns. Zebrafish and medaka are helpful
38 models for combining genetic manipulations with live imaging, and their study provided new
39 insights on the cellular and molecular mechanisms that drive the development of color patterns
40 [4]. Other fish such as cichlids and guppies have also provided valuable insight into genes and
41 molecular mechanisms underlying specific traits (egg-spots, stripes) and various color
42 ornaments [5–7].

43 While mammals only possess melanocytes, the teleost lineage harbors the highest
44 number of pigment cell types – also called chromatophores (*e.g.* melanophores, xanthophores,
45 iridophores) [8]. This diversity can explain the diversity of color and their patterns and implies
46 the involvement of many pigmentation genes. The list of identified genes increased in recent
47 years **(Box 1)** and the whole genome duplication that occurred at the basis of the teleost lineage
48 has been identified as a major contributor to this diversity [9].

49 To be able to fully understand the evolution of traits such as those displayed in color
50 patterns and the genetic mechanisms underlying the responses of organisms to their natural
51 environment, it is important to perform **Eco/Evo/Devo** approaches. However, ecological and
52 behavioral roles of color pattern have not been studied in the model organisms cited above
53 leading to a black box concerning how do proximate factors shape color patterns and their
54 diversity over evolution. Reef fish offer promising models to address such questions because
55 they do express much of the amazing diversity of color patterns as well as associated behavioral
56 and ecological variation. Their original color patterns include dark or conspicuous colors, and

57 can be made of a diverse combination of spots, stripes, bands and eyespots. Reef fish exhibit
58 many other chromatophores than the melanophores, xanthophores, and iridophores present in
59 zebrafish (Box 2) and they are thus of particular importance to fully grasp the range of possible
60 pigmentation systems in vertebrates. In addition, these fish live in a complex environment with
61 extremely rich intra- and inter-specific communication, and their color patterns may vary
62 according to developmental stage, sex, social status and ecology (including colour
63 polymorphism) [10–12]. Finally, extensive phylogenetic studies now provide a good
64 comparative framework (*e.g.* damselfishes [13], snappers [14], etc.).

65 Here, we aim to illustrate how the analyses of functions of color patterns in reef fish
66 combined with developmental knowledge and phylogenetic information will provide new
67 insights into processes generating complex phenotypes. For this, we focus on the diversity of
68 color patterns in reef fish and relate this to what is known from the development of pigmentation
69 in zebrafish. We then argue why reef fish constitute excellent models to understand the
70 evolution of color patterns.

71

72 **Diversity and function of color patterns in reef fish**

73 Reef fish harbor a myriad of colors and associated patterns. Some display uniform body color
74 such as the blue-green damselfish *Chromis viridis* (Fig. 1A) whereas others show complex
75 patterns as seen in the clown triggerfish *Balistoides conspicillum* (Fig. 1B). The latter combines
76 a series of large ventral white spots, with a dorsal yellow shield punctuated with small brown
77 spots. Strikingly, some reef fish species share ornamental similarities whereas others have the
78 exact same color pattern (Fig. 1).

79 The functionality of these patterns can be diverse however. It has often been assumed
80 to be related to camouflage and/or communication [10] and the “prey-predator” relationship
81 probably led to a large variety of color patterns. Caudo-rostral stripes have been shown, for

82 example, to have a role in inducing a confusion effect during shoaling behavior of snappers
83 (*Lutjanus* spp) (Fig. 1C) [15] or serving as cues for intra-school orientation [16]. On the other
84 hand, a comparative study in butterflyfishes provided evidence that the number of diagonal
85 body stripes are associated with social behavior and dietary complexity: social species, living
86 in groups, have fewer diagonal stripes while species with greater dietary diversity have more
87 of these markings [17]. Another frequently observed ornaments in reef fish, **eye stripes**, have
88 been attributed as serving to camouflage the eyes from predators, hence hiding a primary target
89 [18]. **Eyespots** have also been linked to various antipredatory functions such as deterring
90 hunting predators to initiate an attack (intimidation hypothesis) or diverting their attacks toward
91 less vital body parts (deflective hypothesis) [19]. For example, it was largely assumed that the
92 large eyespot of the comet fish *Callopleksiops altivelis* has such an antipredatory function (Fig.
93 1D). However, the roles of eyespots might also be plural. In the juveniles of the ambon
94 damselfish *Pomacentrus amboinensis*, these markings serve as a signal of subordination from
95 juveniles to reduce aggression by mature males [20]. Moreover, the function of eyespots in *P.*
96 *amboinensis* changes over ontogeny. Indeed, some mature males of *P. amboinensis* retain
97 eyespots, when others do not (*i.e.* the mature dominant males), and adopt a deceptive
98 appearance [21]. These studies from *P. amboinensis* reveal that markings may have multiple
99 roles and beautifully illustrates the (sometimes conflicting) effects of natural and sexual selection.

100 The taxonomic diversity of reef fish [22] facilitates the identification of cases of parallel
101 evolution (See examples on Fig. 1) and this might help to identify ecological and molecular
102 mechanisms underlying convergence in color patterns. Methods for the quantification of color
103 pattern become available [23] but, often, even the most complex patterns can be interpreted by
104 the combination of several simpler elements/markings. Usually, we can reduce this complexity
105 by fragmenting them into well-characterized modular sub-patterns defined by their nature (*e.g.*
106 lines, spots, borders) and associated body regions. This property offers a unique opportunity to

107 explore the evolution of color patterns through the biological concepts of integration and
108 modularity [24]. The above-mentioned comparative study of butterflyfishes provided a first
109 demonstration that some markings evolved differently: eyespots are evolutionary labile
110 whereas eye stripes are more phylogenetically conserved [17]. Correlated evolution of some
111 specific markings, such as “spots and eye stripes” or “eyespot and adjacent eye stripe” in
112 butterflyfishes [17], allows the suggestion of **ultimate** and **proximate mechanisms** driving the
113 pigmentation patterns. Fragmenting complex patterns and isolating markings with extensive
114 comparative studies across various reef fish families will help for delineating repeated modes
115 of trait evolution (Fig. 2).

116

117 **Understanding the ontogeny of color patterns using fish models**

118 Developmental studies are needed to provide additional information on proximate mechanisms
119 allowing the emergence of various color patterns during development and evolution. Up to now,
120 cellular and molecular studies have mainly been carried out using zebrafish (*Danio rerio*), a
121 widely used model. Thanks to the genetic and live imaging tools developed in this species, it
122 has been possible to investigate the mechanisms underlying color pattern formation and
123 evolution.

124

125 *The cellular context of adult pigmentation*

126 In zebrafish, three distinct types of chromatophores are present: black melanophores, yellow
127 xanthophores and iridescent iridophores [25]. As in most teleosts, the zebrafish shows two very
128 different pigmentation patterns during ontogeny: a larval pattern and an adult one. The larval
129 pattern consists of loose longitudinal stripes of melanophores, in the dorsal and ventral apex as
130 well as laterally at the level of the myoseptum on a subtle yellowish background caused by
131 scattered xanthophores (Fig. 3A). At the onset of metamorphosis, the adult pattern starts

132 developing. It is composed of longitudinal dark stripes of melanophores and iridophores
133 contrasting with light inter-stripe regions containing xanthophores and iridophores (Fig. 3A).
134 The generation of the adult color pattern is complex due to the variation in adult pigment cell
135 origin. Experimental genetic analyses revealed that the largest number of melanophores and
136 iridophores found in adults (often called metamorphic chromatophores) differentiate during
137 metamorphosis and later [26–28], whereas almost all adult xanthophores differentiate earlier,
138 during the larval stage [29]. Additionally, the melanophores found in adults have a dual origin:
139 the largest number of melanophores differentiates at the adult stage whereas a minority
140 corresponds to persisting embryonic melanophores [30]. These results demonstrated that the
141 underlying genetic architectures of the larval and adult patterns are only partially overlapping.

142 An important feature of this two steps-process that corresponds to a metamorphosis, is
143 the role of thyroid hormones (TH). As in other teleosts, these hormones trigger and coordinate
144 this elaborate transformation [31]. Interestingly, the different types of chromatophores are
145 differentially sensitive to alterations of TH levels. For example, treatment with TH leads to a
146 marked xanthophores excess and deficiency in melanophores in adults [32]. The role of TH is
147 therefore central for controlling the differentiation and the ultimate presence of the three types
148 of chromatophores, generating the observed adult pattern.

149 *Cell-cell interactions are instrumental for patterning*

150 Genetic studies in zebrafish have revealed the major role of the interactions among the three
151 types of chromatophores in the development of the color pattern. For example, in some
152 xanthophore-deficient mutants (*pfeffer* mutants), the melanophore stripes are reorganized into
153 spots [33]. Mutants in which two chromatophores types have been deleted (*e.g. shady:pfeffer*
154 having neither iridophores nor xanthophores) reveal that the single remaining chromatophore
155 type (melanophores) is not able to form the precise pattern [33]. Moreover, such

157 interdependency is also important for sustaining formation and/or survival of chromatophores.
158 For example, it was shown that iridophores promote and sustain melanophore differentiation
159 [26,33], whereas depletion of xanthophores leads to a reduction in melanophore number [34].
160 These interactions go beyond pigment cells as it was shown in an elegant study that
161 macrophages participate, via long distance cytoplasmic projections reaching xanthophores, to
162 the network of cell interactions that govern the stripe patterning .

163 These dynamics of cell interactions are predicted by Turing models (also known as
164 reaction-diffusion models), which is a standard for the modelling of complex pattern formation
165 (Box 3). The Turing model effectively explains the formation of color pattern observed in
166 zebrafish. Interestingly, artificial disturbance of the striped pattern by using laser irradiation
167 (which ablates chromatophores) induces changes that can effectively be predicted by the model
168 (Fig. 3B) [36]. Moreover, ablation experiments of chromatophore types in different regions
169 leads to the disruption of various short-range and long-range interactions that are essential in
170 the Turing model. For example, when part of a xanthophores stripe is ablated, only
171 xanthophores will arise in the cleared area (Fig. 3C - upper panel). Conversely, when the two
172 adjacent black stripes are also ablated in addition to the same part of the xanthophore stripe (Fig
173 3C-middle panel), melanophores will emerge in the former xanthophores domain suggesting
174 that melanophores in the neighboring stripes had a repressive effect on the development of
175 melanophores at a distant place [34]. Together, this puts forward that long-range interactions
176 (*e.g.* xanthophores promoting melanophores emergence and melanophores inhibiting other
177 melanophores) as well as short-range interactions are important in setting up final width of the
178 stripes. Altogether, this reveals that this network of interactions possesses the properties
179 necessary to form the Turing pattern (Fig. 3D) [34]. Another fundamental characteristic of
180 Turing model is that the number of repeated stripes or spots is intimately connected to body
181 size, and therefore to the growth of the organism. Such characteristics were observed in *long-*

182 *fin* zebrafish mutant (for which the fins never stop growing) which continues to form perfectly
183 new stripes as the fins grow [28].

184 If cell interdependency shapes the width of the stripes, the global directionality of the
185 pattern has to be established. Some biological indicators must specify the direction of stripe
186 formation. Accordingly, the pigmentation pattern of zebrafish body trunk needs initial
187 information and this is provided by the horizontal myoseptum in which iridophores precursors
188 migrate to form the first horizontal stripe. The melanophores and xanthophores that will
189 subsequently develop are then influenced by the position of iridophores. The crucial role of the
190 horizontal myoseptum in providing directionality information was illustrated by the *choker*
191 mutants in which the myoseptum is lost. In adult mutants, the pigmentation develops into a
192 labyrinth-like pattern because of the loss of the initial positional indicator [33,37].

194 *Evolution of color patterns*

195 The study of cellular and molecular mechanisms of color pattern generation in *D. rerio* and
196 their closely related species showing different pigmentation patterns allowed deciphering some
197 evolutionary mechanisms controlling the evolution of color patterns. For example, an
198 interesting case is provided by *Danio albolineatus*, a non-striped *Danio* species characterized
199 by the presence of intermingled populations of the three pigment cells. In this species,
200 differentiation of xanthophores occurs earlier than in *D. rerio* because of an increased
201 expression of *csfl* (due to a change in its gene regulatory region), a growth factor supplied by
202 iridophores and other cells in the skin [38]. This earlier differentiated population of
203 xanthophores in *D. albolineatus* modifies the positioning information provided to
204 melanophores compared to *D. rerio*. Consequently, *D. albolineatus* individuals do not form
205 stripes [38]. It was shown experimentally that increased expression of *csfl* in zebrafish results
206 in similar cascading effects giving rise ultimately to a similar intermingling of all three pigment

207 cell types and stripe loss [38]. Recently, the secreted peptide Endothelin-3, a known
208 melanogenic factor, was shown to contribute to the reduced iridophore proliferation and fewer
209 stripes observed in another species, *D. nigrofasciatus* [39]. These data illustrate how changes
210 of expression of key molecular factors coupled with changes in cell-cell interactions can lead
211 to the evolution of a new color pattern.

213 **Integrating ecology with Evo/Devo to understand the color patterns of reef** 214 **fish**

215 Integrating ecology with evolution and development allows addressing how developmental
216 mechanisms modified during evolutionary changes are selected. If zebrafish with its unique
217 toolkit is an excellent model to understand the development of reiterated striped pattern, their
218 ecological diversity is limited and thus how the developmental mechanisms at the origin of
219 variation in the pigmentation patterns have been selected remains unknown. This is why reef
220 fish, with their diversity of pigment cell types (Box 2), combined with the vast knowledge
221 gathered on their ecology and the new development of genomic resources [40,41] are becoming
222 attractive models to reach a full understanding of the diversity and the evolution of color
223 patterns. Moreover, amongst those advantages, most of color patterns observed in reef fish are
224 not reiterated patterns but rather results from the combination of simpler elements that cannot
225 be explained by the Turing mechanisms. Thus, whereas Turing model have been successfully
226 applied to angelfishes (*Pomacanthus* spp) [42], it is clear that it will only explain a subset of
227 the patterns observed in reef fish and that other mechanisms must be at work.

228 To exemplify analyses that beautifully illustrate the potential of incorporating the
229 ecological and developmental approaches in the evolution of complex color patterns, we have
230 chosen three recent studies. The first concerns phenotypic plasticity, a major tenet of
231 **Eco/Evo/Devo**. It is well exemplified by the dusky dottyback *Pseudochromis fuscus*, a small

232 predatory fish [11,12]. This species can exhibit numerous uniform color morphs from orange
233 to brown, yellow, pink or gray. At the Great Barrier Reef, the yellow morph inhabits living
234 coral heads with yellow damselfishes (*e.g. Pomacentrus amboiensis*) whereas the brown one is
235 associated with brown damselfish species (*e.g. Pomacentrus chrysurus*) on coral rubble.
236 Experiments revealed that yellow morphs can transform into brown morphs within 2 weeks if
237 translocated from living corals to coral rubble [43]. Strikingly, however, the dottyback does
238 not change color because of the environment but because of the presence of colored
239 damselfishes. The advantages of this strategy are double for *P. fuscus*. First, by mimicking
240 adults of a damselfish species, it increases its predation success on their juveniles. Second, the
241 color change helps the dottyback to escape its own predator by providing a habitat-associated
242 crypsis. The study of associated cellular mechanisms revealed that this change in color is
243 explained by a change in the respective proportions of xanthophores and melanophores [12]. In
244 a fascinating follow-up study, this color change has been placed upon an ontogenetic trajectory
245 and it has been shown that, in fact, dottybacks change color twice during development: once
246 during metamorphosis, when a pelagic translucent larvae is transformed into a grey juvenile, and
247 then when the large-enough juvenile starts its mimicry strategy and select either yellow or
248 brown victims [11]. This study therefore addresses how developmental plasticity can promote
249 ecological adaptation.

250 The two other cases incorporate this time, evolution together with development and
251 ecology. One concerns the radiation of the Caribbean hamlets (*Hypoplectrus* spp) and shows
252 how color polymorphisms allow the understanding of the ecological and developmental basis
253 of phenotypic adaptation. Detailed analysis of their radiation revealed that a single trait, color
254 pattern, has driven incipient speciation in this fish [44]. It is often considered that, as a predatory
255 fish, *Hypoplectrus* mimics harmless fish in order to increase their predation success on their
256 preys ([44] but see [45]). Genetic analysis allowed to identify divergent loci among color

257 morphs [46–48]. Among them, an analysis using SNPs identify the HoxC cluster as being
1 associated with color variation [47]. Hox genes have never been associated with pigmentation
2 258 associated with color variation [47]. Hox genes have never been associated with pigmentation
3
4 defect in teleosts but they have been linked to body pigmentation and eyespot formation in
5 259 defect in teleosts but they have been linked to body pigmentation and eyespot formation in
6
7 insects [49]. Developmental studies are much needed to better understand the role, if any, that
8 260 insects [49]. Developmental studies are much needed to better understand the role, if any, that
9
10 these genes could play in the divergence of color patterns.
11 261 these genes could play in the divergence of color patterns.

12 262 Clownfish offers a third case in which the mechanisms controlling pattern formation
13
14 can be deciphered. These fishes are forming a tribe composed of 30 species within the
15 263 can be deciphered. These fishes are forming a tribe composed of 30 species within the
16
17 damselfishes and displays a relatively simple color pattern made of zero to three white stripes
18 264 damselfishes and displays a relatively simple color pattern made of zero to three white stripes
19
20 containing iridophores well visible on a darker body background [50,51]. Vertical white stripes
21 265 containing iridophores well visible on a darker body background [50,51]. Vertical white stripes
22
23 likely play a role in species recognition [50] but it was also suggested that this varied striped
24 266 likely play a role in species recognition [50] but it was also suggested that this varied striped
25
26 pattern might serve for camouflage or use as an aposematic signal [52]. Recently, we mapped
27 267 pattern might serve for camouflage or use as an aposematic signal [52]. Recently, we mapped
28
29 the occurrence of these stripes on the clownfish phylogeny to reconstruct the ancestral state in
30 268 the occurrence of these stripes on the clownfish phylogeny to reconstruct the ancestral state in
31
32 terms of white stripes presence/absence [50]. Through this analysis, we provide evidence that
33 269 terms of white stripes presence/absence [50]. Through this analysis, we provide evidence that
34
35 the diversification of clownfish color pattern results from successive caudal to rostral losses of
36 270 the diversification of clownfish color pattern results from successive caudal to rostral losses of
37
38 stripes during evolution. Interestingly, the juveniles of some species have supplementary stripes
39 271 stripes during evolution. Interestingly, the juveniles of some species have supplementary stripes
40
41 that disappear caudo-rostrally later on. The reduction of stripes number over ontogeny totally
42 272 that disappear caudo-rostrally later on. The reduction of stripes number over ontogeny totally
43
44 matches the sequences of stripe losses across evolution, demonstrating that the diversification
45 273 matches the sequences of stripe losses across evolution, demonstrating that the diversification
46
47 in color pattern among clownfish lineages results from changes in developmental processes.
48 274 in color pattern among clownfish lineages results from changes in developmental processes.
49
50 This analysis illustrates that the clownfish model is very different from the zebrafish since the
51 275 This analysis illustrates that the clownfish model is very different from the zebrafish since the
52
53 number of stripes is independent to body size [50]. Thus, Turing like mechanism cannot explain
54 276 number of stripes is independent to body size [50]. Thus, Turing like mechanism cannot explain
55
56 the disappearance of stripes during clownfish ontogeny and other mechanisms are obviously
57 277 the disappearance of stripes during clownfish ontogeny and other mechanisms are obviously
58
59 involved in white stripes formation. Genetic analyses are now required to understand the
60 278 involved in white stripes formation. Genetic analyses are now required to understand the
61
62 molecular mechanism at the origin of such color pattern evolution within clownfish.
63 279 molecular mechanism at the origin of such color pattern evolution within clownfish.
64
65

281 **Concluding remarks and Future Perspectives**

282 Color patterns in reef fish, with their extreme divergence and plasticity, can indeed be
283 considered as a "magic trait" that may easily lead to speciation [53]. Thanks to works on the
284 zebrafish model, we have more knowledge about the developmental mechanisms generating
285 color patterns. The combination of ecological analysis with genomic and/or developmental
286 analysis using reef "magic" fish as model systems (in addition to other valuable models such as
287 cichlids and guppies) will help to provide an integrated understanding of the evolution of such
288 complex phenotypes. We have identified several concrete directions in which the study of reef
289 fish could have specific advantages. The first is the study of the numerous color polymorphisms
290 existing in these fish (*e.g.* dottybacks, melanic clownfish, etc.) as well as the link between
291 behaviour and color. In both cases, the vast ecological knowledge accumulated can be
292 advantageously combined with the transcriptomic and functional approaches to understand how
293 ecological and developmental constraints intermingle to generate novel phenotypes. Another
294 promising aspect is to study the developmental and evolutionary rules governing the assembly
295 of various patterns. For all these questions, it will be critical to bring together proximate and
296 ultimate causations to understand the "Magic traits".

297

298 **Acknowledgments**

299 Works from our laboratories are funded by the CNRS (France), the Sorbonne Université
300 (France), ENS Lyon (France) and the FNRS (Belgium). We thank Germain Boussarie, Franck
301 Merlier, Philippe Bourjon, Alan Sutton, Guido Poppe and Philippe Poppe for the pictures used
302 in the Figures. We also thank Natacha Roux, Laurence Besseau and Mathieu Denoël for critical
303 reading of the manuscript.

304

305 **Glossary box**

- 1
2 306 - **Color pattern:** distribution of color across the body
3
4 307 - **Eyespots (or ocelli):** concentric markings that contrast with the surrounding area.
5
6 308 - **Eye stripes:** a dark bar that runs through the eye, matching the eye color and therefore hiding
7 309 the eye.
8
9 310 - **Proximal causation:** explanation of a trait when considering direct mechanistical aspects
10 (for instance, a change in the levels of a given hormone explain a particular color change).
11 311
12 See [54].
13 312
14 313 - **Ultimate causation:** explanation of a trait when considering long-term evolutionary forces
15 (for instance, prey-predator interactions can lead to better background matching in preys).
16 314
17 See [54].
18 315
19 316 - **Eco/Evo/Devo:** the interactions between an organism's environment, genes and
20 development, and their consequences on evolution.
21 317
22 318 - **Melanosome:** in melanophores, organelles that effectively contain the dark pigment,
23 melanin. This pigment is synthesized by enzymes through a process called melanogenesis.
24 319
25 320 - **Color pattern polymorphism:** consequence of developmental plasticity, in which the
26 trajectories of developing organisms diverge under the influence of ultimate cues
27 321
28 322 - **Magic trait:** a trait subject to divergent selection and a trait contributing to non-random
29 mating that are pleiotropic expressions of the same gene(s). Often these two traits will be
30 one and the same. Thus, pleiotropy in the context of magic trait refers to the phenotypic
31 323 effects on both selection and mating, rather than necessarily to two distinguishable
32 phenotypic traits. See [53].
33 324
34 325
35 326
36
37
38
39
40 327
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

328 REFERENCES

- 1
2 329 1 Cuthill, I.C. *et al.* (2017) The biology of color. *Science*. 357, eaan0221
3 330 2 Harris, M.P. *et al.* (2005) Molecular evidence for an activator-inhibitor mechanism in
4 331 development of embryonic feather branching. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*. 102, 11734–
5 332 11739
6
7 333 3 Hoekstra, H.E. (2006) Genetics, development and evolution of adaptive pigmentation
8 334 in vertebrates. *Heredity*. 97, 222–234
9 335 4 Parichy, D.M. and Spiewak, J.E. (2015) Origins of adult pigmentation: Diversity in
10 336 pigment stem cell lineages and implications for pattern evolution. *Pigment Cell*
11 337 *Melanoma Res.* 28, 31–50
12
13 338 5 Santos, M.E. *et al.* (2016) Comparative transcriptomics of anal fin pigmentation
14 339 patterns in cichlid fishes. *BMC Genomics* 17, 712
15 340 6 Santos, M.E. *et al.* (2014) The evolution of cichlid fish egg-spots is linked with a cis-
16 341 regulatory change. *Nat. Commun.* 5:5149
17
18 342 7 Kottler, V.A. *et al.* (2015) Adenylate cyclase 5 is required for melanophore and male
19 343 pattern development in the guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*). *Pigment Cell Melanoma Res.*
20 344 28, 545–558
21 345 8 Schartl, M. *et al.* (2016) What is a vertebrate pigment cell? *Pigment Cell Melanoma*
22 346 *Res.* 29, 8–14
23
24 347 9 Lorin, T. *et al.* (2018) Teleost fish-specific preferential retention of pigmentation gene-
25 348 containing families after whole genome duplications in vertebrates. *G3*
26 349 g3.200201.2018
27 350 10 Justin Marshall, N. (2000) Communication and camouflage with the same “bright”
28 351 colours in reef fishes. *Philos. Trans. R. Soc. B Biol. Sci.* 355, 1243–1248
29
30 352 11 Cortesi, F. *et al.* (2016) From crypsis to mimicry: changes in colour and the
31 353 configuration of the visual system during ontogenetic habitat transitions in a coral reef
32 354 fish. *J. Exp. Biol.* 219, 2545–2558
33
34 355 12 Cortesi, F. *et al.* (2015) Phenotypic plasticity confers multiple fitness benefits to a
35 356 mimic. *Curr. Biol.* 25, 949–954
36 357 13 Frédéricich, B. *et al.* (2013) Iterative ecological radiation and convergence during the
37 358 evolutionary history of damselfishes (Pomacentridae). *Am. Nat.* 181, 94–113
38 359 14 Frédéricich, B. and Santini, F. (2017) Macroevolutionary analysis of the tempo of
39 360 diversification in snappers and fusiliers (Percomorpha: Lutjanidae). *Belg. J. Zool.* 147,
40 361 17–35
41
42 362 15 McRobert, S.P. and Bradner, J. (1998) The influence of body coloration on shoaling
43 363 preferences in fish. *Anim. Behav.* 56, 611–615
44 364 16 McFarland, W.N. *et al.* (1979) The influence of light on the twilight migrations of
45 365 grunts. *Environ. Biol. Fishes.* 4, 9–22
46
47 366 17 Kelley, J.L. *et al.* (2013) Spots and stripes: ecology and colour pattern evolution in
48 367 butterflyfishes. *Proc. Biol. Sci.* 280, 20122730
49
50 368 18 Barlow, G.W. (1972) The attitude of fish eye-lines in relation to body shape and to
51 369 stripes and bars. *Copeia*. 1972, 4
52 370 19 Stevens, M. (2005) The role of eyespots as anti-predator mechanisms, principally
53 371 demonstrated in the Lepidoptera. *Biological Reviews.* 80, 573–588
54 372 20 Gagliano, M. (2008) On the spot: The absence of predators reveals eyespot plasticity in
55 373 a marine fish. *Behav. Ecol.* 19, 733–739
56
57 374 21 Gagliano, M. and Depczynski, M. (2013) Spot the difference: Mimicry in a coral reef
58 375 fish. *PLoS One.* 8, e55938
59 376 22 Price, S.A. *et al.* (2015) Phylogenetic insights into the history and diversification of
60 377 fishes on reefs. *Coral Reefs.* 34, 997–1009
61
62
63
64
65

- 378 23 Van Belleghem, S.M. *et al.* (2018) Patternize: An R package for quantifying colour
 1 379 pattern variation. *Methods Ecol. Evol.* 9: 390-398
- 2 380 24 Klingenberg, C.P. (2008) Morphological integration and developmental modularity.
 3 381 *Annu. Rev. Ecol. Evol. Syst.* 39, 115–132
- 4 382 25 Hirata, M. *et al.* (2003) Pigment cell organization in the hypodermis of zebrafish. *Dev.*
 5 383 *Dyn.* 227, 497–503
- 6 384 26 Patterson, L.B. and Parichy, D.M. (2013) Interactions with iridophores and the tissue
 7 385 environment required for patterning melanophores and xanthophores during zebrafish
 8 386 adult pigment stripe formation. *PLoS Genet.* 9, e1003561
- 9 387 27 Singh, A.P. *et al.* (2014) Proliferation, dispersal and patterned aggregation of
 10 388 iridophores in the skin prefigure striped colouration of zebrafish. *Nat. Cell Biol.* 16,
 11 389 604–611
- 12 390 28 van Eeden, F.J. *et al.* (1996) Genetic analysis of fin formation in the zebrafish, *Danio*
 13 391 *rerio*. *Development.* 123, 255–262
- 14 392 29 Mahalwar, P. *et al.* (2014) Local reorganization of xanthophores fine-tunes and colors
 15 393 the striped pattern of zebrafish. *Science.* 345, 1362–1364
- 16 394 30 Johnson, S.L. *et al.* (2011) Mitfa is required at multiple stages of melanocyte
 17 395 differentiation but not to establish the melanocyte stem cell. *Dev. Biol.* 350, 405–413
- 18 396 31 Laudet, V. (2011) The Origins and evolution of vertebrate metamorphosis. *Curr. Biol.*
 19 397 21, R726–R737
- 20 398 32 McMenamin, S.K. *et al.* (2014) Thyroid hormone-dependent adult pigment cell lineage
 21 399 and pattern in zebrafish. *Science.* 345, 1358–1361
- 22 400 33 Frohnhöfer, H.G. *et al.* (2013) Iridophores and their interactions with other
 23 401 chromatophores are required for stripe formation in zebrafish. *Development.* 140,
 24 402 2997–3007
- 25 403 34 Nakamasu, A. *et al.* (2009) Interactions between zebrafish pigment cells responsible
 26 404 for the generation of Turing patterns. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.* 106, 8429–8434
- 27 405 35 Eom, D.S. and Parichy, D.M. (2017) A macrophage relay for long-distance signaling
 28 406 during postembryonic tissue remodeling. *Science.* 355, 1317–1320
- 29 407 36 Yamaguchi, M. *et al.* (2007) Pattern regulation in the stripe of zebrafish suggests an
 30 408 underlying dynamic and autonomous mechanism. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.* 104,
 31 409 4790–4793
- 32 410 37 Svetic, V. *et al.* (2007) Sdf1a patterns zebrafish melanophores and links the somite and
 33 411 melanophore pattern defects in choker mutants. *Development* 134, 1011–1022
- 34 412 38 Patterson, L.B. *et al.* (2014) Pigment cell interactions and differential xanthophore
 35 413 recruitment underlying zebrafish stripe reiteration and *Danio* pattern evolution. *Nat.*
 36 414 *Commun.* 5, 5299
- 37 415 39 Spiewak, J.E. *et al.* (2018) Evolution of Endothelin signaling and diversification of
 38 416 adult pigment pattern in *Danio* fishes. *PLoS Genet.* 14, e1007538
- 39 417 40 Lehmann, R. *et al.* (2018) Finding Nemo’s Genes: A chromosome-scale reference
 40 418 assembly of the genome of the orange clownfish *Amphiprion percula*. *Mol. Ecol.*
 41 419 *Resour.* 00:1–16
- 42 420 41 Marcionetti, A. *et al.* (2018) First draft genome of an iconic clownfish species
 43 421 (*Amphiprion frenatus*). *Mol. Ecol. Resour.* 18:1092–1101
- 44 422 42 Painter, K.J. *et al.* (1999) Stripe formation in juvenile *Pomacanthus* explained by a
 45 423 generalized turing mechanism with chemotaxis. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.* 96, 5549–
 46 424 5554
- 47 425 43 Messmer, V. *et al.* (2005) Genetic and ecological characterisation of colour
 48 426 dimorphism in a coral reef fish. *Environ. Biol. Fishes.* 74, 175–183
- 49 427 44 Puebla, O. *et al.* (2007) Colour pattern as a single trait driving speciation in
 50 427

- 428 *Hypoplectrus* coral reef fishes? *Proc. R. Soc. B Biol. Sci. USA.* 274, 1265–1271
- 1 429 45 Robertson, D.R. (2013) Who resembles whom? Mimetic and coincidental look-alikes
2 430 among tropical reef fishes. *PLoS ONE.* 8, e544939
- 3 431 46 Holt, B.G. *et al.* (2011) Searching for speciation genes: Molecular evidence for
4 432 selection associated with colour morphotypes in the caribbean reef fish genus
5 433 *Hypoplectrus*. *PLoS ONE.* 6, e20194
- 6 434 47 Puebla, O. *et al.* (2014) Genomic atolls of differentiation in coral reef fishes
7 435 (*Hypoplectrus* spp., Serranidae). *Mol. Ecol.* 23, 5291–5303
- 8 436 48 Picq, S. *et al.* (2016) Population genomics of local adaptation versus speciation in coral
9 437 reef fishes (*Hypoplectrus* spp, Serranidae). *Ecol. Evol.* 6, 2109–2124
- 10 438 49 Jeong, S. *et al.* (2006) Regulation of body pigmentation by the Abdominal-B Hox
11 439 protein and its gain and loss in Drosophila evolution. *Cell.* 125, 1387–1399
- 12 440 50 Salis, P. *et al.* (2018) Ontogenetic and phylogenetic simplification during white stripe
13 441 evolution in clownfishes. *BMC Biol.* 16, 90
- 14 442 51 Salis, P. *et al.* Developmental and comparative transcriptomic identification of
15 443 iridophore contribution to white barring in clownfish.
- 16 444 52 Merilaita, S. and Kelley, J.L. (2018) Scary clowns: adaptive function of anemonefish
17 445 coloration. *J. Evol. Biol.* 10, 1558–1571
- 18 446 53 Servedio, M.R. *et al.* (2011) Magic traits in speciation: “magic” but not rare? *Trends*
19 447 *Ecol. Evol.* 26, 389–397
- 20 448 54 Laland, K.N. *et al.* (2011) Cause and effect in biology revisited: Is Mayr’s proximate-
21 449 ultimate dichotomy still useful? *Science.* 334, 1512–6
- 22 450 55 Bennett, D.C. and Lamoreux, M.L. (2003) The color loci of mice - A genetic century.
23 451 *Pigment Cell Res.* 16, 333–344
- 24 452 56 Nüsslein-Volhard, C. and Singh, A.P. (2017) How fish color their skin: A paradigm for
25 453 development and evolution of adult patterns. *BioEssays.* 39, 1600231
- 26 454 57 Cal, L. *et al.* (2017) BAC recombineering of the agouti loci from spotted gar and
27 455 zebrafish reveals the evolutionary ancestry of dorsal-ventral pigment asymmetry in
28 456 fish. *J. Exp. Zool. Part B Mol. Dev. Evol.*
- 29 457 58 Nagao, Y. *et al.* (2014) Sox5 functions as a fate switch in medaka pigment cell
30 458 development. *PLoS Genet.* 10, e1004246
- 31 459 59 Fadeev, A. *et al.* (2016) Zebrafish leucocyte tyrosine kinase controls iridophore
32 460 establishment, proliferation and survival. *Pigment Cell Melanoma Res.* 29, 284–296
- 33 461 60 Nagao, Y. *et al.* (2018) Distinct interactions of Sox5 and Sox10 in fate specification of
34 462 pigment cells in medaka and zebrafish. *PLOS Genet.* 14, e1007260
- 35 463 61 McGrath, C.L. *et al.* (2014) Differential retention and divergent resolution of duplicate
36 464 genes following whole-genome duplication. *Genome Res.* 24, 1665–1675
- 37 465 62 Braasch, I. *et al.* (2009) Pigmentation pathway evolution after whole-genome
38 466 duplication in fish. *Genome Biol. Evol.* 1, 479–493
- 39 467 63 Kimura, T. *et al.* (2014) Leucophores are similar to xanthophores in their specification
40 468 and differentiation processes in medaka. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.* 111, 7343–7348
- 41 469 64 Goda, M. and Fujii, R. (1995) Blue chromatophores in two species of Callionymid fish.
42 470 *Zool. Sci.* 12, 811–813
- 43 471 65 Stieb, S.M. *et al.* (2017) Why UV vision and red vision are important for damselfish
44 472 (Pomacentridae): structural and expression variation in opsin genes. *Mol. Ecol.* 26,
45 473 1323–1342
- 46 474 66 Goda, M. *et al.* (2011) Integumental reddish-violet coloration owing to novel
47 475 dichromatic chromatophores in the teleost fish, *Pseudochromis diadema*. *Pigment Cell*
48 476 *Melanoma Res.* 24, 614–617
- 49 477 67 Goda, M. *et al.* (2013) Novel dichromatic chromatophores in the integument of the
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

478 mandarin fish *Synchiropus splendidus*. *Biol. Bull.* 224, 14–17
1 479 68 Goda, M. (2017) Rapid integumental color changes due to novel iridophores in the
2 480 chameleon sand tilefish *Hoplolatilus chlupatyi*. *Pigment Cell Melanoma Res.* 30, 368–
3 481 371
4 482 69 Wakamatsu, Y. *et al.* (2001) The see-through medaka: A fish model that is transparent
5 483 throughout life. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.* 98, 10046–10050
6 484 70 Michiels, N.K. *et al.* (2008) Red fluorescence in reef fish: A novel signalling
7 485 mechanism? *BMC Ecol.* 8, 16
8 486 71 Wucherer, M.F. and Michiels, N.K. (2012) A fluorescent chromatophore changes the
9 487 level of fluorescence in a reef fish. *PLoS ONE.* 7, e37913
10 488 72 Ban, E. *et al.* (2005) The signaling pathway in photoresponses that may be mediated by
11 489 visual pigments in erythrophores of Nile tilapia. *Pigment Cell Res.* 18, 360–369
12 490 73 Turing, A.M. (1952) The Chemical Basis of Morphogenesis. *Philos. Trans. R. Soc. B*
13 491 *Biol. Sci.* 237, 37–72
14 492 74 Hiscock, T.W. and Megason, S.G. (2015) Mathematically guided approaches to
15 493 distinguish models of periodic patterning. *Development.* 142, 409–419
16 494 75 Kondo, S. and Asai, R. (1995) A reaction diffusion wave on the skin of the marine
17 495 angelfish *Pomacanthus*. *Nature.* 376, 765–768
18 496 76 Kondo, S. and Miura, T. (2010) Reaction-Diffusion model as a framework for
19 497 understanding biological pattern formation. *Science.* 329, 1616–1620
20 498 77 Sick, S. *et al.* (2006) WNT and DKK determine hair follicle spacing through a
21 499 reaction-diffusion mechanism. *Science.* 314, 1447–1450
22 500 78 Miura, T. and Shiota, K. (2002) Depletion of FGF acts as a lateral inhibitory factor in
23 501 lung branching morphogenesis in vitro. *Mech. Dev.* 116, 29–38
24 502

30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

503 **Figure Legends**

1 504

2
3 505 **Figure 1. Illustrations of some pigmentation patterns in reef fishes.** (A) The blue-green
4
5
6 506 damselfish, *Chromis viridis*; (B) the clown triggerfish, *Balistoides conspicillum*; (C) the
7
8 507 snapper, *Lutjanus kasmira*; (D) the comet fish, *Callopleysiops altivelis*; (E-H) Illustration of
9
10
11 508 cases of convergence. The vertical black striped pattern is observed in (E) the surgeonfish,
12
13 509 *Acanthurus triostegus* and three damselfishes (F) *Abudefduf sexfasciatus*; (G) *Dascyllus*
14
15
16 510 *aruanus*; (H) *Chrysiptera annulata*. The horizontal white bars evolved in (I) the eel catfish,
17
18 511 *Plotosus lineatus* and (J) the cardinalfish, *Ostorhinchus nigrofasciatus*. Photo credits: Mark
19
20 512 Rosenstein (A), Derek Ramsey (B), Alan Sutton (C), Guido & Philippe Poppe (D), Franck
21
22
23 513 Merlier (E-G), Joe De Vroe (H), Philippe Bourgeon (I), Anders Poulsen (J).

24
25 514

26
27
28 515 **Figure 2. Evolution of some markings in two groups of reef fish.** Example from the
29
30 516 clownfish *Amphiprion* (A) illustrating the caudal to rostral losses of white stripes during
31
32
33 517 evolution [50]. The example from the snappers *Lutjanus* (B) shows the diversification of color
34
35 518 patterns by disappearance of spots and longitudinal stripes. Phylogenetic hypothesis of snappers
36
37
38 519 is from [14].

39
40 520

41
42 521 **Figure 3. Understanding the ontogeny of pigmentation patterns using *Danio rerio* (A)**
43
44
45 522 Pigmentation pattern of larval (left) and adult *D. rerio* (right). (B) Regeneration of labyrinthine
46
47 523 pattern of adult zebrafish after laser ablation (ablation of pigment cells) (upper panel) and its
48
49
50 524 computer simulation (lower panel): the stripes developed but the directionality is lost (picture
51
52 525 from [52]). (C) Ablation experiments showing long and short range interactions between
53
54
55 526 xanthophores and melanophores. (D) Cartoon summarizing interactions between xanthophores
56
57 527 and melanophores consistent with Turing Model: I. a short-range activation resulting on a
58
59
60 528 negative feedback loop between xanthophores and melanophores; II. an overall long-range

529 inhibition resulting on a long-range positive effect of xanthophores on melanophores and III. a

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

530 long range auto-inhibition of melanophores. ((C) and (D) are adapted from [34]).

531

532 **BOXES**

1
2 533 **Box 1: Pigmentation genes**

3
4 534 Pigmentation patterns are mainly controlled by genes deployed during the development of
5
6 535 chromatophores [8]. In vertebrates, these cells are neural crest cell (NCC) derivatives and the
7
8
9 536 acquisition of a functional, pigment NCC-derived cell is a multiple step process that requires a
10
11 537 fine orchestration of the expression of specific set of genes [8].
12

13
14 538 Pigmentation genes have been studied in mammals, in which melanocytes are the only
15
16 539 chromatophore type. Genes involved in (i) melanocyte differentiation, (ii) **melanosome**
17
18 540 biogenesis, (iii) melanogenesis regulation and (iv) melanosome transport are often
19
20
21 541 distinguished [55]. The situation is even more complex in other vertebrates, and in particular in
22
23 542 teleosts, that have more chromatophore types (see Box 2) [8]. Studies in zebrafish and medaka
24
25
26 543 have identified genes involved in specific teleost chromatophore differentiation [56]. To date,
27
28 544 this makes a total of ca. 200 genes known to be involved in pigmentation [9]. Some genes, such
29
30
31 545 as *mitf* (important for melanocyte development) and *agouti* (controls dorso-ventral patterning),
32
33 546 have conserved mechanisms of action throughout vertebrates [57]. Others are specifically
34
35 547 involved in teleosts: for example, both *ltk* and *sox5* are known to be required for iridophores
36
37
38 548 and xanthophores development [58,59]. Recent work has shown that the same gene can be
39
40
41 549 involved in the development of the same pigment cell type but in different ways in various fish
42
43 550 species. For instance, xanthophore differentiation requires the expression of *sox5* in medaka
44
45 551 whereas the repression of this gene is needed in zebrafish [60].
46

47
48 552 During vertebrates' evolution, the pigmentation gene repertoire has been shaped by
49
50 553 several whole-genome duplications (WGDs). After a WGD event, genes are either retained or
51
52 554 lost. The retention pattern greatly varies with the function of the encoded protein, and genes
53
54
55 555 that are retained in two copies often provide the raw material for the acquisition of new
56
57 556 functions [61]. Interestingly, it was recently demonstrated that pigmentation genes have been
58
59
60 557 globally more frequently retained as duplicates than other genes after teleosts-specific WGDs
61
62
63
64
65

1
2 558 [9,62]. This high pigmentation gene repertoire is thus expected to be linked to the highest
3 pigment cell diversity and the great diversity of pigmentation patterns observed in teleosts.

4
5 560

6
7 561 **Box 2: The diversity of pigment cells in reef fish**

8
9 562 Reef fish contains many chromatophores in addition to the three types observed in zebrafish
10
11 563 (*i.e.* melanophores, xanthophores, and iridophores) [8]. Reef fish are therefore of particular
12 importance to fully grasp the range of possible pigmentation systems in vertebrates.
13
14 564

15
16 565 Some of the extra pigment cells present in reef fish appear to be variants of the three
17 main types. This may be the case of leucophores responsible for the white coloration in medaka
18
19 566 that have been recently described as similar to xanthophores [63]. White hue is also present in
20
21 567 clownfish and has been shown to be based on iridophores [50,51].
22
23 568

24
25 569 However, new chromatophore types have also been recently described. For example,
26
27 570 the blue color observed in the mandarin fish *Synchiropus splendidus* is linked to a specialized
28
29 571 cell type, the cyanophores [64]. The molecular nature of the pigment present in their specialized
30
31 572 organelles has not been identified to date. Another fascinating case is provided by the red
32
33 573 fluorescent system observed in the pigmy reef goby *Eviota pellucida* [65]. Reef fish are also
34
35 574 providing the only known case of dichromatic pigment cells. The erythro-iridophores, found in
36
37 575 the diadem dottyback *Pseudochromis diadema*, contain both a reddish carotenoid pigment and
38
39 576 reflecting platelets similar to those found in iridophores [66]. The mandarin fish *S. splendidus*
40
41 577 also possesses dichromatic cells, the cyano-erythrophores [67].
42
43 578

44
45 579 Lastly, the mechanism allowing color change of some species have started to be
46
47 580 analyzed. The chameleon sand tilefish *Hoplolatilus chlupatyi* can exhibit color change from
48
49 581 blue to red in a matter of few seconds and this very fast color change is linked to a novel type
50
51 582 of iridophores in which the reflecting platelets are concentrated in the periphery of the cell.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

582 Adrenergic stimulation leads to changes in the reflecting platelet organization and therefore in
1
2 583 fish color [68].
3

4
5 584 **Figure Box 2: Reef fish harbor a high diversity of pigment cells.** (A) Chromatophores found
6
7 585 in teleost. (B) Chromatophores only found in reef fish. Pictures of fishes are from: *O. latipes*
8
9 586 [69]; *H. chlupatyi* [68]; *P. diadema* [66]; *E. pellucida* [70]. Pictures of chromatophores are from
10
11 587 [14, 15, 41, 51, 73, 76–79]. Photo credit: Germain Boussarie (goby larva and *S. splendidus*).
12
13

14 588
15

16 589 **Box 3: Turing Models**

17
18
19 590 Originally introduced by the mathematician Alan Turing in 1952, the Turing or reaction-
20
21 591 diffusion model (RD) explains the spontaneous formation of periodic biological patterns
22
23 592 [73,74]. It involves two diffusing molecules that are interacting: a slowly-diffusing activator
24
25 593 and a rapidly-diffusing inhibitor. As the inhibitor molecule diffuses more rapidly than the
26
27 594 activator, it impairs activation at long range (see Box Figure, panel A). If the activator is
28
29 595 sufficiently efficient and/or is in sufficient amount, it can prevent its inhibition at short range.
30
31 596 It is the balance between the reaction of the two molecules and their diffusion that explains how
32
33 597 various periodic patterns can spontaneously emerge from an initially homogeneous pattern. The
34
35 598 parameters that can vary in models (relative strengths of the activator and inhibitor and their
36
37 599 diffusion abilities) explain the wide variety of patterns (stripes, spots, etc).
38
39
40
41
42

43 600 An illustration of the RD has been provided in the *Pomacanthus* marine angelfish [75].
44
45 601 Juveniles of *Pomacanthus semicirculatus* display three vertical white stripes on a dark
46
47 602 background. During growth, new stripes insert between the preexisting ones, and this process
48
49 603 is repeated several times to give rise to the final pattern. The RD can predict this dynamic
50
51 604 change. The same authors also show how rearrangement of the parallel striped pattern of the
52
53 605 adult *Pomacanthus imperator* can also be predicted. During growth, the number of horizontal
54
55 606 stripes increases proportionally to body size and the space between them remain constant (See
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

607 Box Figure, panel B). By incorporating cell growth and movement in the models, it is possible
608 to explain in a detailed manner the dynamic of stripes formation [42]. Recently, the arrangement
609 the zebrafish stripes was also shown to be consistent with a RD [36,76].

610 RD has also been applied in a variety of other biological systems. As it is particularly
611 easy to implement in a simple two dimensional space they have been used to better understand
612 the formation of several ectodermal appendages such as hair follicle spacing in mouse [77], or
613 feathers patterning in birds [2]. More complex systems such as branching morphogenesis in the
614 lung, or teeth patterning have also been explored [78]. By changing the parameters and initial
615 conditions of the systems, RD can generate a virtually unlimited variety of spatial pattern [76].
616 We thus expect that a large proportion of pigmentation patterns observed in reef fish could be
617 explained through RD.

618 **Figure Box 3: Stripes formation is predicted by Turing model in fishes**

619 (A) The activator stimulates the production of both itself and its inhibitor (arrows). The inhibitor
620 turns off the production of the activator (dashed line). As the inhibitor molecule diffuses more
621 rapidly than the activator, it impairs activation at long range. (B) Rearrangement of the stripe
622 of the same adult *Pomacanthus imperator* (up panel) and its computer simulation (down panel):
623 as they grow, the number of lines increases proportionally to body size whereas the width
624 remains constant. At t_0 , *P. imperator* contains a branching point, during growth, the branching
625 point move horizontally (to the anterior) like a zip resulting in its fusion and thus in the addition
626 of a new line [75].

Highlights

Organisms live in continuously changing environments. Eco/Evo/Devo aims to uncover the rules that underlie the interactions between an organism's environment, genes and development, and by doing so aims to expand our current view of how evolution works to reach an integration of proximate and ultimate mechanisms.

Color patterns have a clear ecological and behavioral significance, with a wide range of functions in animals and in particular in teleosts.

Study of model species such as zebrafish allows the understanding of the developmental mechanisms underlying phenotypic evolution.

Changes in expression of key molecular factors coupled with changes in cell-cell interactions can lead to color pattern diversification during evolution.

Recent studies about color patterns in reef fishes emphasize the need to address such questions in this group in an eco/evo/devo perspective, integrating proximate and ultimate causations.

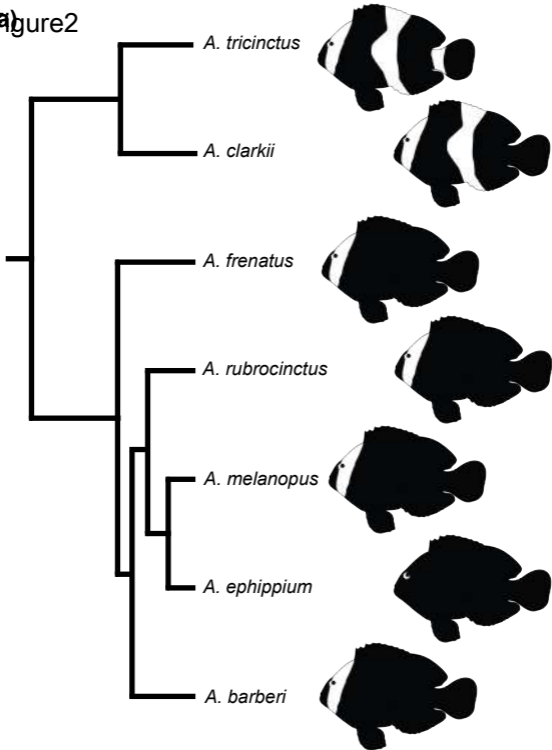
Outstanding questions box

- What are the molecular, cellular processes shaping color pattern during development in reef fish? What genes and developmental pathways contribute to the variation of their color patterns?
- The frequent occurrence of some specific ornaments in different reef fish species suggests that they are formed by shared developmental modules. What are the genes and pathways controlling the formation of these typical domains?
- How changes in the molecular, cellular and developmental processes result in beneficial trait differences that are favored by selection during the course of evolution?
- How does the organism integrate the environment to give an appropriate answer *i.e.* changes in colors or associated patterns?

Figure 1



Figure 2



(b)

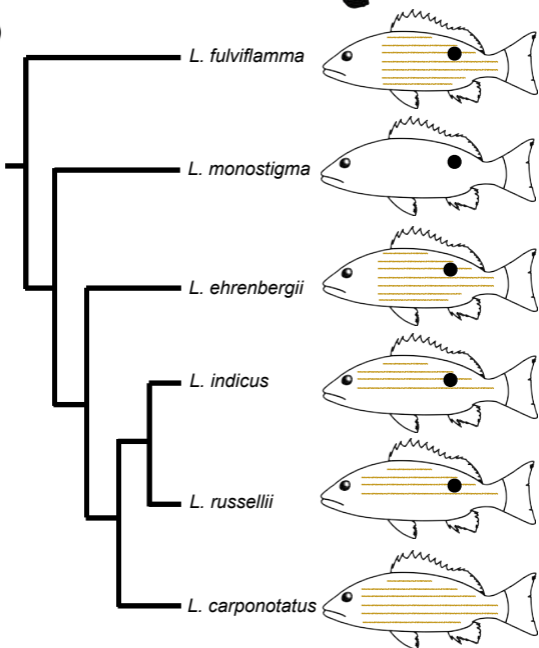
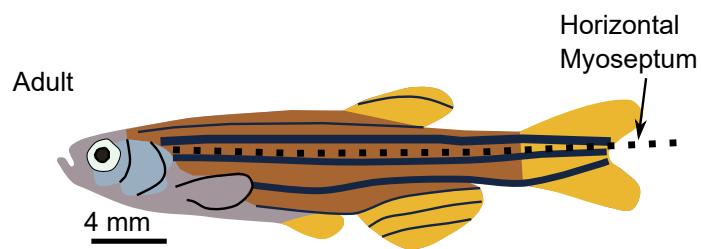
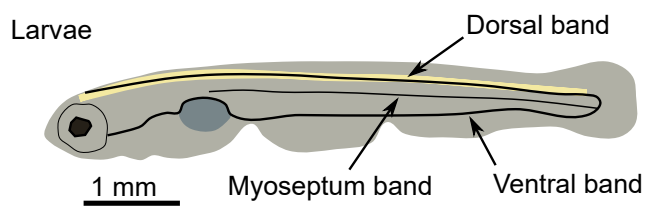
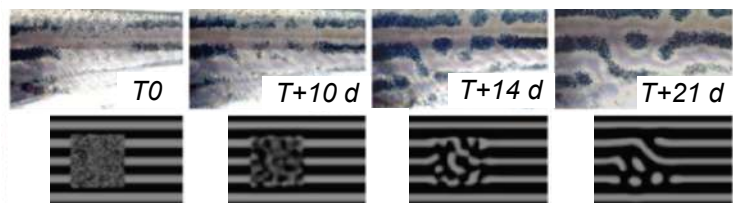


Figure3

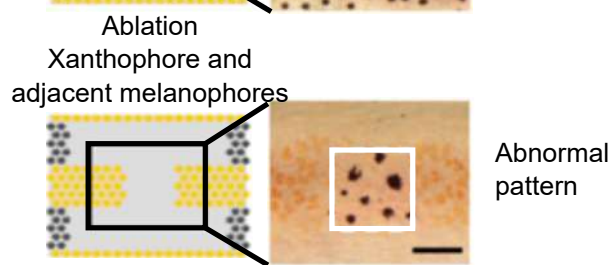
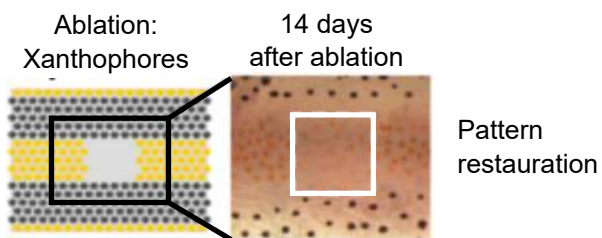
(A) Larval and adult pattern



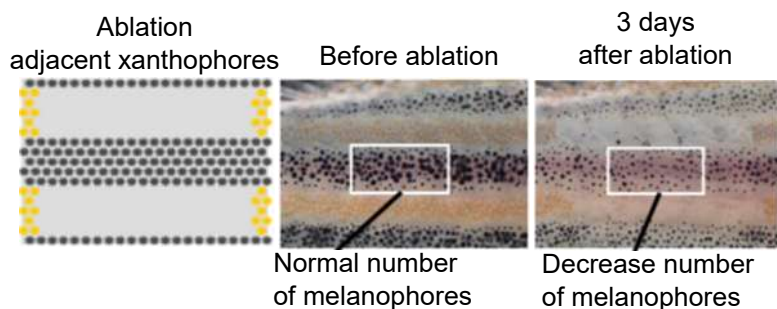
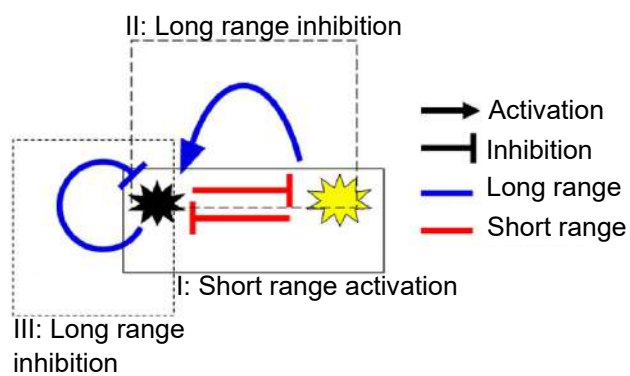
(B) Turing in *Danio rerio*



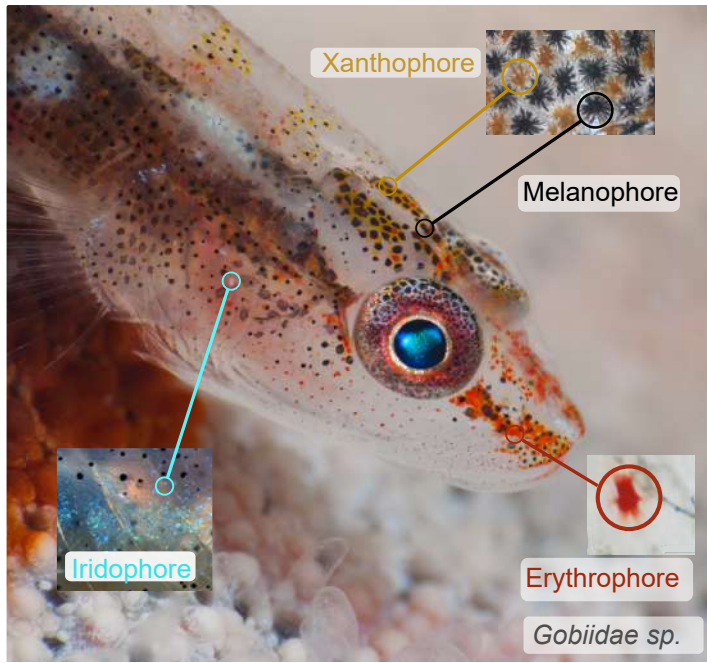
(C) Interaction between chromatophores



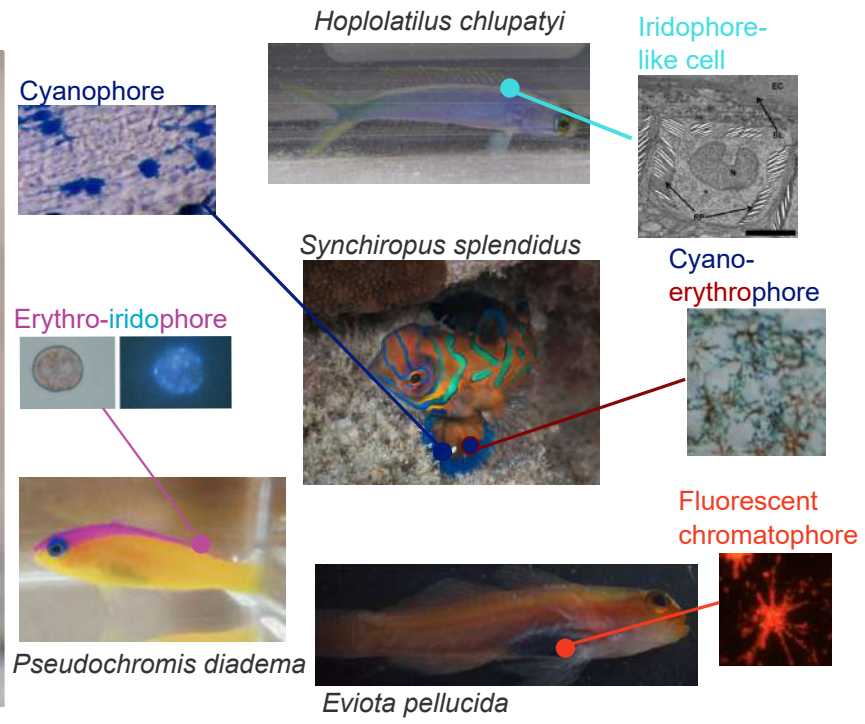
(D) Summary of interactions between chromatophores



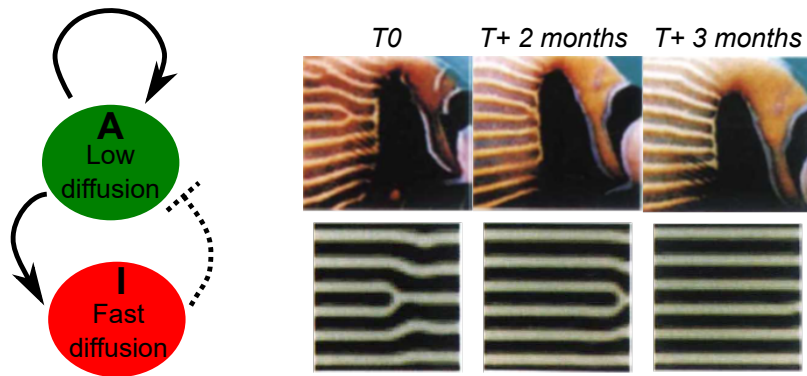
(A) Chromatophores found in teleosts



(B) Chromatophores found in coral reef fishes



(A) The Turing model (B) Turing in adult *Pomacanthus imperator*





Dr. Caryn Navarro, PhD
Editor
Trends in Genetics

Banyuls/Mer, December 17th 2018

**Observatoire Océanologique de
Banyuls/Mer
Laboratoire Arago**

FR3724

**1 Avenue Pierre Fabre
66650 BANYULS/MER**

Tel : 04 68 88 73 00
Fax : 04 68 88 73 36

Mail :
laudet@obs-banyuls.fr

N/Ref : Direction/VL/SS/2018 - n°

Dear Caryn,

Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled "*Magic Traits in Magic Fish: Understanding Color Patterns using Reef Fish*" by Pauline Salis, et al., that we would like to submit to *Trends in Genetics*

In addition to the main text, the manuscript contains 3 short boxes of text and 5 figures including 2 in the boxes.

As discussed during our exchanges of e-mails this review presents an eco/evo/devo interdisciplinary perspective to understand the origin of pigmentation pattern diversification using reef fish as an example. We made all possible efforts to link the field discussed to broader, underlying questions of developmental biology and evolution. Our aim is effectively to attract a broad readership and to convince them that they should consider these fishes as interesting models. The first part focuses on the diversity and functions of color patterns in reef fishes. Then we reviewed the molecular, cellular and developmental basis for color pattern formation studied mainly in zebrafish. Finally, the last section explains how integrating ecology together with evo/devo allows uncovering the mechanisms promoting pigmentation diversity in these fishes.

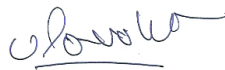


As this review brings in information from a number of scientific disciplines in the service of a question of basic science we hope you will find it appropriate for the wide audience of *Trends in Genetics*.

Hoping that our manuscript will be regarded favourable, we look forward to hearing from you.

We would like to thank you in advance for taking care of our manuscript.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Laudet', with a horizontal line underneath.

Vincent Laudet