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Molecular ecology of insect pests of agricultural importance: the case of aphids

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Abstract. 1. Ongoing environmental change is predicted to have a strong impact on biodiversity. Studies have already noted a range shift in many species as they track their favoured environments. A key challenge entomologists are facing is to understand how insect pest species are responding to this rapid environmental change, and molecular ecology has a central role to play in this task. In the present paper, I argue that molecular ecology has much relevance in relation to the monitoring of insect pests of agricultural importance, with a focus on aphids.

2. First, I examine how the combination of phylogeography and species distribution modelling can be a powerful approach to understanding species responses to climate change and to forecasting future distributions. Despite such a joint approach being increasingly used to understand these questions (e.g. in conservation biology), there are still very few studies that concern pest species of agricultural importance.

3. I then discuss how the use of samples from natural history collections represent an opportunity to directly observe the evolution of species, enhancing our knowledge of the evolutionary processes occurring at ecological time scales. I introduce the Rothamsted Insect Survey (RIS) sample archive and the central role it plays in the studies of pest species of agricultural importance.

4. Lastly, I assess how the advances in DNA sequencing technologies have allowed us to investigate genetic variation at the genome-wide level. Thus, they provide us with the opportunity of studying a variety of questions about the dynamics of pest insects that were previously impossible as well as unmanageable.

Key words. Agricultural landscapes, aphids, landscape genetics, migration, natural history collections, next generation sequencing, phylogeography, species distribution models.

Introduction

Climate exerts a strong selective pressure on organisms, and climatic alteration is seen as being largely responsible for the evolutionary and ecological processes that shape diversity (Parmesan, 2006). Ecosystems are changing fast as a result of the ongoing environmental change and species can respond to it by either tracking their most suitable environment (e.g. Austin & Rehfisch, 2005); by adapting to the new conditions by means of genetic changes (e.g. Umina *et al.*, 2005); or by means of phenotypic plasticity (e.g. Thackeray *et al.*, 2016). Those species unable to track their favoured climate or adapt to new conditions will most likely become extinct. Understanding how diversity has been shaped by past environmental change provides important clues to help forecast how species will

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be affected by the ongoing climate change. Paleoecological data indicate that ecosystems are robust and dynamic, and the species extinction rate during past periods of rapid climate change has not been elevated (Blois & Hadly, 2009; Willis & MacDonald, 2011). Furthermore, these studies of fossil data have provided evidence for range shifts, adaptation to new environments, and ecological community shuffling. In light of this, similar responses are expected to occur as a consequence of the ongoing alterations. Several studies have shown that a large proportion of species in the temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere are tracking their favoured environments by shifting their ranges northwards (Parmesan & Yohe, 2003; Root et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2011). However, these studies have also noted that the extent and rate of the range shifts vary among species. The observed differences in response have been attributed to particular intrinsic characteristics of the species such as their physiology, as well as to different ecological and environmental factors (Loxdale & Lushai, 1999). This lack

of taxonomic consistency in the degree and direction of the response to environmental alteration highlights the importance of studying the effect of climatic factors at the species level and shows up the weakness of generalising to a higher taxonomic level. It also indicates a requirement to identify the common traits of species responding similarly, independently of their taxonomic classification, to be used as predictors to improve our understanding of how the global diversity is potentially going to be reshaped. Nevertheless, this task is proving difficult to achieve in practice (Angert *et al.*, 2011).

A key challenge is how to mitigate the negative consequences that will ensue from the ongoing rapid climate change. Central to this challenge are concerns about a potential increase in diversity and abundance of insect pests due to the alteration in weather patterns (e.g. Cannon, 1998). A key aspect that needs to be explored if we are to rationally manage insect pests and control their damaging effects on crops is how their distribution range is likely to be modified and identify the areas under risk of invasion concomitant with future climate projections. In this respect, phylogeography represents an important approach to understanding the distribution dynamics of species and the processes that underlie the geographic distribution of their genetic variation (e.g. migration, geographic barriers, etc.) (Marske et al., 2013). It provides the means to investigate the consequences of past climatic events on species diversity and distribution, knowledge which can be used to forecast the potential response to the ongoing alterations. Our understanding of species response and the processes underlying it can be enhanced with the incorporation of historical samples to the phylogeographic analyses. Indeed, these samples provide direct evidence of the changes that occur within species or populations over time, which otherwise could only be inferred indirectly using present day samples (e.g. Fountain et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2016).

Advancements in niche theory and modelling (Elith et al., 2006; Chase, 2011) have generated an increasing interest in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to describe the factors that constitute a species environmental niche and use these to generate models of species geographic distribution (Kozak et al., 2008; Alvarado-Serrano & Knowles, 2014). Species distribution modelling (SDM) or ecological niche modelling (ENM), which differ on whether the focus is on the geographic distribution or on the ecological factors that make up the species niche (Araujo & Peterson, 2012; Peterson et al., 2015), use associations between known locations where a species is present and climate aspects to define a series of environmental conditions under which species are most likely to maintain viable populations. Such a climatic envelope is then used to generate a model of geographic distribution. These models are applied to address a variety of different questions [reviewed by Araujo and Peterson (2012)], including the prediction of species ranges and the identification of regions under the potential risk of invasion.

In the present paper, I make a case for a combined approach of distribution modelling and phylogeography to enhance our understanding of the distribution dynamics of insect pests and thus improve the forecasts of the future agricultural areas under risk. I focus mostly on aphids (Hemiptera: Aphididae), which comprise some of the most pernicious insect pest species (Van Emden & Harrington, 2017). These have been predicted to increase in abundance (Cannon, 1998) due to their positive response to present and predicted climate change (e.g. Bell *et al.*, 2015; Sheppard *et al.*, 2016). Understanding the movement and distribution of aphids is fundamental to be able to plan sound control schemes that help rationalise the use of pesticides and reduce economic losses to the agricultural industry.

Understanding the distribution dynamics of insect pests

One challenge in the study of insect pests is the characterisation of the extensive cryptic variation (Loxdale et al., 2016). Aphids, in particular, are rapidly evolving organisms that show great levels of variation that ranges from species complexes that comprise a number of sibling species to populations and lineages that differ in their host preference (see Blackman & Eastop, 2007; Loxdale & Lushai, 2007; Loxdale et al., 2017). In some cases, like in the pea aphid Acyrthosiphon pisum Harris, there is an extensive variation in the host preference of different lineages within species (Muller, 1985a; Peccoud & Simon, 2010). These host races exhibit different levels of reproductive isolation as a result of local adaptation to the different hosts, which could eventually lead to an incipient speciation process (Ferrari et al., 2006, 2008; Muller, 1985b; Peccoud et al., 2009a). Other species, like the black bean aphid Aphis fabae Scopoli, are part of species complexes that include a number of closely related species and subspecies that are difficult to differentiate, independent of the degree of reproductive isolation they present (Coeur d'Acier et al., 2004; Raymond et al., 2001). Despite these taxonomic hindrances, the reliable identification of species and forms remains essential for the integrated management of pest insects and pest risk analysis. Microsatellite markers have been developed to identify species, host races, and reproductive modes within species (e.g. Simon et al., 1999, 2001; Delmotte et al., 2002; Caillaud et al., 2004; Coeur d'Acier et al., 2004; Wilson et al., 2004); however, the new DNA sequencing technologies provide the means to identify genetic variation at a more detailed scale potentially helping uncover genetic variation at a finer scale. Furthermore, these technologies provide us with the opportunity to tackle the nature of clones (Loxdale, 2008).

Dispersal of pest species mediated by human trade or by climate change has resulted in economically- and environmentally-adverse impacts on the native biodiversity of the newly invaded regions. Defining the geographic distribution of pest species and the cryptic variation thereof is an essential step towards understanding and to some degree managing their movement and dispersal potential and, therefore, to reduce the damage they do to agriculture. Species distribution modelling (SDM) is increasingly being used to map the ranges of pest insects (e.g. Aragon et al., 2010, 2013; Aragon & Lobo, 2012; Macfadyen & Kriticos, 2012; Kriticos et al., 2015b; Godefroid et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2016). As mentioned above, these models define the realised niche of species and by delineating the potential areas that have the required environmental conditions to maintain viable populations, they can be used to identify the areas under risk of invasion under present climatic

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conditions (e.g. Wharton & Kriticos, 2004; Wang et al., 2010; Aragon et al., 2013; Kriticos et al., 2015a,b; Kumar et al., 2016). Nevertheless, many such studies that aim at identifying areas under risk of invasion do not forecast future distributions nor consider the potential effect of climate change on species ranges. In this respect, species distributions can be projected into a number of past and future climatic scenarios (e.g. IPCC) (Peterson et al., 2002, 2008). These projections require the assumption that the environmental and biotic requirements of the species have not changed through time, what is known as ecological niche conservatism (Wiens & Graham, 2005; Wiens et al., 2010; Peterson, 2011). Interestingly, the inferred models of past distributions provide a null hypothesis that can be tested using demographic reconstruction analyses that estimate the relative population sizes over time. This combined approach has proven a powerful tool to predict the response of species to the effects of environmental change, whether they will adapt to the new environmental conditions or shift their range tracking their preferred environment (e.g. Sillero et al., 2014; Lagerholm et al., 2017). Despite the evident potential of this combined approach, it is still rarely used to understand the distribution and adaptation capacity of insect pests. Studies of the SDMs of insect pests tend to be mostly concerned with the identification of potential areas of invasion, and usually do not include information about the phylogeographic history of the species or its geographic genetic structure (Aragon & Lobo, 2012; Aragon et al., 2013; Godefroid et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2016). Furthermore, when studying the spatial distribution and the factors that shape it, few studies acknowledge the genetic variation that occurs across a given species' geographic range, and that can affect the capacity of species to disperse to new areas. Incorporating genetic structure information, thus recognising the potential for local adaptation, into ENMs increases the accuracy of predictive models (Ikeda et al., 2017). One study of agricultural pests that took into consideration the variability within species is that of Macfadyen and Kriticos (2012), who used distribution models to infer the potential geographic distribution of the bird cherry-oat aphid, Rhopalosiphum padi (L.), sexual and asexual lineages, independently. Modelling of these two life history types separately allowed the authors to confirm the *a priori* expectation that colder regions are more likely to be invaded by the sexual lineages of R. padi, depending on the presence of the overwintering host bird cherry, Prunus padus L. However, the study did not take into account the ongoing climate change and the SDMs were not projected using models of future climatic conditions. In addition, they did not test the hypothesis of niche conservatism, and thus it is not certain how the species and different reproductive lineages will respond to climate change. Equally, there are many studies on the phylogeography and population genetics of insect pests that do not include models of the species distribution (e.g. Llewellyn et al., 2003; Peccoud et al., 2009b; Lesieur et al., 2016; Popkin et al., 2017), limiting their capacity to understand the factors defining their ranges and the capacity to forecast the future distributions. It is important that these available approaches are employed in combination to provide better predictions for integrated pest management of aphids, or indeed any other type of pest organisms.

A relevant aspect of pest management is insect migration, which partly underlies the capacity of a species to disperse and ultimately helps shape its distribution. Migration and movement of aphids are difficult to study due to the small size of individuals, which makes them challenging to track by suction trapping (Harrington, 2014) and using the current radar technologies (Chapman et al., 2003, 2011). However, advances in population genetics methods provide the analytical tools to infer the pattern and degree of migration between populations more precisely (e.g. Excoffier & Heckel, 2006; Knowles, 2009). Population genetics approaches have been used to establish the genetic structure and gene flow levels across populations of different aphid species, inferring in this way their migratory capacity. For example, R. padi and Sitobion avenae (F.), the grain aphid, were shown to have little genetic differentiation in the U.K. and France as a result of high levels of gene flow (Simon et al., 1999; Delmotte et al., 2002; Llewellyn et al., 2003). As a result, the authors suggested that these species are long-distance migrants, which is in agreement with the large numbers that show up in traps [e.g. Rothamsted Insect Survey (RIS) suction-traps]. It is interesting to note that taxonomic classification does not condition the migratory capacity of a given species. For example, the genetic variation of the holocyclic blackberry-grain aphid, Sitobion fragariae (Walker), is structured at the local scale, which is indicative of restricted levels of gene flow across short distances in contrast to the closely related and predominantly anholocyclic S. avenae (Loxdale & Brookes, 1990). Although migration appears to be the main driver of the genetic distribution, the selection is also a relevant force that shapes the distribution of the different genotypes (e.g. Kasprowicz et al., 2008; Gilabert et al., 2015). Understanding the processes underlying the genetic distribution of aphids will allow us to monitor them better. For example, the currant-lettuce aphid, Nasonovia ribisnigri (Mosley), is very rarely observed in traps, whether suction or water traps. This argues that N. ribisnigri is not a highly migratory species, and therefore the surveillance of its migration should be done at a local scale rather than national. Studying the population genetics of the species will allow us to answer these questions and improve control of this pest (Loxdale & Lushai, 2007; Loxdale et al., 2017).

The use of sample collections to understand ecological and evolutionary processes in agricultural landscapes

The availability of historical samples in museums and other collections allows the study of the evolutionary processes at an ecological timescale. Thus, patterns of variation in present-day samples can be used to infer changes that occurred in the past; however, samples from natural history collections provide the opportunity to study genetic and phenotypic changes in species directly. Thus, these type of samples are very valuable in ascertaining the effects of ecological or environmental events on the genetic variation of species (Mikheyev *et al.*, 2015; Carew *et al.*, 2016; Fountain *et al.*, 2016; Holmes *et al.*, 2016; Lagerholm *et al.*, 2017; Ruane & Austin, 2017). Collection samples within an agricultural landscape context represent

a unique tool to obtain a more comprehensive insight into the selective forces that shape pest diversity and distribution dynamics and, in this way deliver information that can be used to monitor better and control crop pests.

Despite the relevance of monitoring the movement and population dynamics of insects of economic importance, few countries have in place a system of surveillance and forecast. The RIS operates two networks of suction- and light-traps to monitor insects of agricultural importance across the U.K. (Storkey et al., 2016). The suction-trap network currently consists of 16 suction traps across Great Britain that monitor the migration of small- to medium-sized insects at the height of 12.2 m (Fig. 1). The height of the traps was estimated as the logarithmic mean of aphid flight to optimise the collection of aphid species of agricultural importance (Taylor, 1974; Macaulay et al., 1988; Bell et al., 2015). This network was put in place in 1964, and the RIS hosts the longest running data sets of insect populations in the world (Harrington, 2014). The RIS provides essential information for early warning and prediction of aphid (and other organisms) migration and abundance. During spring and summer, the trap samples are collected daily and the catches sent to the RIS for taxonomic identification. The aphids are identified to species or species group (e.g. A. fabae sp. group) from the trap catches, counted, and recorded onto a database. The information about the counts of the different species of agricultural interest is circulated to the farming industry on a weekly basis. During late autumn and winter, when aphids have already migrated back to their overwintering primary host, traps are emptied weekly and the catches, if any, are identified to species and recorded onto the database. The use of these traps has allowed the identification of a very significant relationship between the winter temperature and the first-flight time of aphids and this allows the RIS to forecast when the different species will migrate from the winter host into the crops (Harrington et al., 2007; Bell et al., 2015). In addition, some of the aphid species collected in the traps are tested for plant virus presence (TuYV, BYDV, and BMV) and insecticide resistance status (Anstead et al., 2008; Foster & Williamson, 2015). The network thus provides essential information about the risks that aphids pose and has allowed farmers to rationalise the use of insecticides (Harrington, 2014).

The long-term, standardised dataset held by the RIS is a very valuable resource to study ecological questions of insects. It has been used to understand the effect of climate change in the synchrony and phenology of aphid species (Harrington et al., 2007; Thackeray et al., 2010, 2016; Bell et al., 2015). In these studies, analyses of time series data sets that included aphid and moth data, show that the phenology of organisms changes in the U.K. at different rates across taxonomic groups, hence revealing a potential disruption of habitats as a result of the mismatch. In addition, the factors that affect patterns of aphid flight (first flight, last flight, and duration of the flight season) and abundance in the U.K. were identified to be related to the North Atlantic current and winter temperatures (Thackeray et al., 2010, 2016; Bell et al., 2015). Other aspects that have been investigated using the RIS data are the trophic interactions of parasitoids and predators of aphid species. For example, using radar data for identifying ladybird flight and the RIS data on aphid abundance, the main factors affecting the migration



Fig. 1. Map of Great Britain showing the locations of the Rothamsted Insect Survey's suction traps. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com].

pattern of ladybirds were shown to be temperature and aphid abundance (Jeffries *et al.*, 2013). The effects of parasitism by hymenopterous parasitoids of aphids (e.g. braconids) are seen to function somewhat differently from predation by generalist arthropod predators such as ladybirds and spiders (Snyder & Ives, 2003). Analysis of samples from 1976 to 2013 from the RIS archive revealed a positive regulation of parasitoid braconid populations in response to their aphid host *S. avenae* (Perez-Rodriguez *et al.*, 2015). There was also a broad synchronisation of the migration time of the parasitoids and that of the aphid within a season.

The other available resource at the RIS is the sample archive. All the catches since 1974 have been preserved and are held at the RIS archive. Until 2003, aphid specimens were macerated in lactic acid before identification to enhance recognition of morphological features by clearing the majority of the body contents. The non-aphid samples between 1974 and 2003 were preserved in 70% ethanol and 5% glycerol. From 2003 onwards lactic acid was no longer used, and both aphid and non-aphid

samples were preserved in 95% ethanol and 5% glycerol. These samples are also a very valuable resource to study the action of evolution through time. For example, they have been used to understand demographic processes of aphids, and have been fundamental to investigate the dynamics of insecticide resistance in *Myzus persicae* (Sulzer) populations in Scotland (e.g. Fenton *et al.*, 2005; Kasprowicz *et al.*, 2008). They have also been used to study the population structure and migration patterns in aphid populations in the U.K. (e.g. Foster *et al.*, 2002; Llewellyn *et al.*, 2003; Malloch *et al.*, 2006).

The genomics revolution in molecular ecology

The development of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) (Mullis et al., 1986) brought about a transformative technical advance that served as the starting point of molecular ecology as a fully-fledged field. The use of allozymes as molecular markers to study population diversity led to the neutral theory of molecular evolution (Kimura, 1968; King & Jukes, 1969), and they enabled information on population genetic structure and dynamics of aphid species to be acquired (Loxdale et al., 1985a,b). However, the development of the PCR meant that for the first time any genomic region could be amplified and the genetic diversity of field populations could be analysed using a larger number of samples than before. The significant advances in DNA sequencing technologies that we are currently experiencing are again providing a new thrust to the field of molecular ecology by allowing researchers to study many questions that were unmanageable before. Most importantly, the new tools allow the study of non-model species (Ekblom & Galindo, 2011). For example, it is now possible to study the responses to different environmental factors and identify the genetic bases of phenotypes by sequencing the transcriptomes of individuals, tissues or cells and analysing the genes expression levels (e.g. Nayduch et al., 2014; Keeling et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2016; Braden et al., 2017). Similarly, they have also revolutionised the area of phylogeography and evolution allowing the discovery of genome-wide molecular markers that could not be used before to study genetic variation in natural populations. These genome-wide single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) provide an excellent opportunity to have a precise population history and geographic structure of our species of study and for this reason it is widely used in phylogeographic and systematic studies (e.g. Misof et al., 2014; Rasic et al., 2014; Dussex et al., 2016; Fountain et al., 2016). These techniques will improve our knowledge of the population dynamics and the evolution of aphids, although their use within the agricultural landscape context is still in its infancy (Eyres et al., 2016, 2017). It is expected that the availability of genomes of economically important species of aphids like M. persicae, A. pisum, A. glycines, Diuraphis noxia Kurdjumov and Daktulosphaira vitifoliae (Fitch) (Richards et al., 2010; Nicholson et al., 2015), and available in AphidBase (Legeai et al., 2010), will encourage an increase in the number of studies using Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) techniques to investigate the molecular ecology of these organisms (Tagu et al., 2010). The sequencing technologies have also improved our ability to understand ecological networks. In a recent, opinion paper, Evans et al. (2016)

proposed a new approach to study and define species interaction networks using a combination of nested tagging metabarcoding and network analysis to identify specific interactions between tree-herbivore-parasitoid food webs using the forest systems as a model. One of the advantages of using NGS methods versus the classic PCR approach is the possibility to process and analyse a larger number samples faster. A second advantage is that NGS allows identification of new interactions and new species as part of networks. A central question that remains to be answered is how stable are the associations between species through time and how environmental change modifies them. The new sequencing technologies and the use of collection samples (e.g. RIS archive) provide a unique opportunity to explore the evolution of associations at historical time scale (i.e. using specimens collected and stored since the 1960s) and to test how environmental change has modified species associations.

The emergence of the nanopore-based DNA sequencing platform, the minION (Oxford Nanopore Technologies, Ltd, Oxford, U.K.), is revolutionising the genomics field. It is a highly portable, USB-powered sequencing device that runs connected to a computer and provides long reads in real-time. The technology is very attractive as it can be easily deployed in the field under a diversity of conditions and it provides data in real-time that gives control of the sequencing experiment as it is running. One area of research where it is increasingly being used is in the metagenomics field. It was also successfully used in West Africa during the Ebola outbreak to characterise the evolution of the virus genome at the outbreak happened (Quick et al., 2016). Similarly, it has been used in the Brazilian outbreak of the Zika virus to identify infections in remote areas and test mosquito populations for the presence of the virus (Faria et al., 2016). This technology has, therefore, proven to be useful in a wide variety of field conditions and is potentially a very beneficial methodology to use in agriculture-related pest research. Given the characteristics of the minION and the uses where it has been shown to be useful, we are currently testing it at the RIS for identifying aphid pest species and the viruses they vector with the final goal of applying it in the field for crop protection.

Challenges of using NGS in molecular ecology

One fundamental aspect of molecular ecology studies is the need to reveal as much of the genetic variation as possible. This involves surveying nucleotide polymorphisms in the genome and estimate their frequencies within and among populations. An aspect that needs to be considered when inferring population parameters is the fact that allele frequencies are usually estimated using a sample set drawn from the larger populations. Therefore, the sampling strategy in terms of sample size and geographic range covered is critical and should be considered carefully. Ideally, sampling should be extensive to maximise the genetic diversity examined, but this is not always possible. Previous knowledge of the biology and natural history of the species of study (e.g. life history, population size, and structure etc.) and clear hypotheses of study help design the sampling strategy. For example, in the case of asexual aphids, sampling within the same or adjacent plants could lead to an underestimation of the genetic

diversity producing erroneous demographic parameters because a large proportion of the samples would represent the same asexual lineage. If there is no *a priori* knowledge, then it will be important to run preliminary analyses to assess the adequacy of the sampling strategy.

In addition to sample size and geographic cover, it is also fundamental to use an appropriate number of unlinked markers to obtain reliable estimates of genetic variation. The new sequencing technologies have facilitated the use of large numbers of genome-wide molecular markers allowing the inference of more robust population parameters. However, designing a comprehensive sampling scheme could imply a sequencing cost that can be prohibitive. To decrease these costs, different strategies have been developed to reduce the fraction of the genome that is sequenced in a large number of samples. These methods include exome sequencing (Ng et al., 2009), RNA sequencing (Wang et al., 2009), and restriction-site associated DNA sequencing (genotyping by sequencing - GBS, RADseq) (Baird et al., 2008). Because such methods target different specific regions of the genome, the polymorphisms that result from experiments will be most useful for different questions. Thus, the method of choice should be carefully considered depending on the study question. These techniques can also be combined with pooling samples to reduce sequencing costs further. For example, 96-384 samples may be multiplexed to obtain a sequencing depth of $5 \times$ to $20 \times$ per tag. The number of pooled samples can be optimised depending on the intended number of tags, the coverage, and the size of the genome. At present, a GBS project for an organism with a genome size of ~500 Mb and sequencing of around 100 000 tags (average 8× coverage) can be performed for approximately \$30 per sample (based on a recent quotation for an aphid project). Thus, molecular ecology projects with a comprehensive sampling scheme are becoming more feasible.

The MinION (ONT) is a very promising sequencing technology, especially because its portability makes sequencing projects possible in the field. Nevertheless, the price of sequencing in the MinION (\$900 per flow cell plus the cost of the required kits for the library preparation) can also be prohibitive if the intention is to sequence single individuals in a molecular ecology study. To reduce these costs, it is also possible to multiplex up to 96 samples and run them on a single flow cell, which equates the cost of a project to that using other sequencing technologies. One of the most promising uses of the MinION discussed above is its deployment in the field to identify pest species and viruses in situ. The positive ID of any species relies on their genome being available in the public databases, which is not the case for many of the species of agricultural interest (as with many other species). Thus, the use of a metabarcoding protocol along the lines of that proposed by Evans et al. (2016) to study ecological networks in combination with the MinION is at present the best way forward in pest surveillance.

Summary

1 The combination of phylogeography and species distribution modelling in an agricultural context will improve our forecasts of the global risk that insect pests pose to agriculture in the near future. It is vital that insect pest research continues taking advantage of the methodological progress that these fields are experiencing. Mapping the potential global risk of pest establishment should take into account genetic diversity of species and the future climate projections. Another aspect to be explored within the agricultural context is the application of community phylogeography approaches (e.g. Hickerson & Meyer, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2011; Stone *et al.*, 2012) to understand the dynamics of pests, the virus they vector, and hosts.

- 2 Crop surveillance is one aspect that can benefit greatly from improved methods of species identification. One of the most exciting advances in sequencing technologies is the development of fast, highly portable instruments that can be deployed to the field. Their use within an agricultural context may lead to a 'real-time' monitoring of pests and pathogens in crops. Work is in progress at the RIS to develop protocols specific for agricultural pest and pathogens.
- **3** Understanding ecosystem functioning is extremely relevant in agriculture (Wood *et al.*, 2015). The new sequencing technologies will play an important role in the identification of interactions between organisms that were unknown before. One vital application will be the identification of new viruses that circulate in insect pest populations and the description of these interactions. This field of research can potentially provide new ways of pest control.
- 4 Implementing insect monitoring schemes is essential to promote the early detection of pests and prevent outbreaks. However, insect surveys can also play a key role in understanding pest dynamics and evolution at ecological time scales. It is clearly important that we emphasise the value of the samples collected in such schemes to promote their preservation for future studies thereby.

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