1 Evaluation of strategies for the assembly of diverse bacterial genomes using MinION long-

2 read sequencing

- 3
- 4 Sarah Goldstein^a, Lidia Beka^a, Joerg Graf^{b, c}, Jonathan L. Klassen^{b, c}
- 5 University of Connecticut, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, Storrs CT USA
- 6
- 7
- 8 ^{a, b}These authors contributed equally to this work
- 9 ^cTo whom correspondence should be addressed: jonathan.klassen@uconn.edu,
- 10 joerg.graf@uconn.edu
- 11

12 Abstract

13 **Background:** Short-read sequencing technologies have made microbial genome sequencing 14 cheap and accessible. However, closing genomes is often costly and assembling short reads 15 from genomes that are repetitive and/or have extreme %GC content remains challenging. Long-16 read, single-molecule sequencing technologies such as the Oxford Nanopore MinION have the 17 potential to overcome these difficulties, although the best approach for harnessing their 18 potential remains poorly evaluated. 19 **Results:** We sequenced nine bacterial genomes spanning a wide range of GC contents using 20 Illumina MiSeg and Oxford Nanopore MinION sequencing technologies to determine the 21 advantages of each approach, both individually and combined. Assemblies using only MiSeq 22 reads were highly accurate but lacked contiguity, a deficiency that was partially overcome by 23 adding MinION reads to these assemblies. Even more contiguous genome assemblies were 24 generated by using MinION reads for initial assembly, but these were more error-prone and 25 required further polishing. This was especially pronounced when Illumina libraries were biased, 26 as was the case for our strains with both high and low GC content. Increased genome contiguity 27 dramatically improved the annotation of insertion sequences and secondary metabolite 28 biosynthetic gene clusters, likely because long-reads can disambiguate these highly repetitive 29 but biologically important genomic regions. 30 **Conclusions:** Genome assembly using short-reads is challenged by repetitive sequences and 31 extreme GC contents. Our results indicate that these difficulties can be largely overcome by 32 using single-molecule, long-read sequencing technologies such as the Oxford Nanopore

33 MinION. Using MinION reads for assembly followed by polishing with Illumina reads generated

the most contiguous genomes and enabled the accurate annotation of important but difficult to sequence genomic features such as insertion sequences and secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters. The combination of Oxford Nanopore and Illumina sequencing is cost effective and dramatically advances studies of microbial evolution and genome-driven drug discovery.

40 Introduction

41	Microbial genome sequencing has revealed how microorganisms adapt, evolve, and
42	contribute to health and disease [1, 2]. Although these were once enterprise-level projects,
43	technological advances have now reached the point where microbial genomes can be
44	sequenced routinely by small teams for a few hundred dollars [1]. These advances have
45	particularly been driven by the maturation of short-read sequencing technologies such as those
46	marketed by Illumina, which generate highly accurate reads (>99%) with lengths ranging from
47	75-300bp [1]. Although Illumina technologies currently dominate the sequencing market [1, 2],
48	difficulties remain that require further technological advances to fully realize the potential of
49	microbial genome sequencing.
50	By their very nature, short reads alone cannot disambiguate repetitive genomic regions
51	that are longer than their read length. Unfortunately, such repetitive regions are common in
52	microbial genomes [3–6], and include ribosomal genes, transposons, insertion sequences,
53	CRISPR arrays, <i>rhs</i> toxins, secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters, and many others
54	[5]. Repeats lead to unresolvable loops in the underlying genome assembly graph that are
55	ultimately fragmented into contigs [5, 7]. Because of this, short reads are theoretically
56	incapable of closing most microbial genomes.
57	Genome assembly using most short-read datasets is also challenged by biases that occur
58	during library preparation and that cause some genomic regions to be excluded from
59	sequencing libraries. Common short-read library preparation methods (e.g., the Illumina
60	Nextera protocol) include PCR amplification steps that are biased against regions of the genome
61	with extreme GC contents [8–12]. Such regions are common among bacteria, whose average

62	GC content ranges widely from 25% to 75% [13]. Library preparation protocols that use
63	transposases to fragment DNA may also non-randomly shear genomes during library
64	preparation [14], causing further biases that limit the utility of short-read sequencing.
65	De novo genome assembly algorithms struggle to assemble genomes when intergenic
66	repeats are present and GC biases skew sequencing coverage [15, 16]. Fragmentation of such
67	genomes prevents the accurate identification of mobile elements, the detection of horizontal
68	gene transfers, the determination of gene copy number, and the discovery of biotechnologically
69	important gene clusters such as those that encode for the production of secondary metabolites
70	[16, 17]. These deficiencies significantly lower the informational value of draft-quality genomes
71	[18, 19].
72 73	Recently, long-read, single-molecule sequencing has overcome some of the deficiencies
74	of short-read sequencing. Library preparation protocols for single-molecule sequencing
75	typically avoid bias-prone PCR steps, and long read lengths span genomic repeats to
76	unambiguously resolve complex genomic regions. Some Illumina-based technologies such as

78 generate positionally linked sequences that span complex genomic repeats [1], but these

77

79 technologies still require library preparation protocols that are subject to the biases discussed

mate pair libraries and linked reads (e.g., as commercialized by 10X Genomics) can also

80 above. Pacific Biosciences (PacBio) currently markets the most widely used single-molecule

81 sequencing technology, which can produce > 7 Gb per run with read lengths averaging >12 kbp

82 [1]. Although the error rate for PacBio sequencing is high (~13%), these errors are near-

83 randomly distributed and can largely be corrected during assembly with adequate sequencing

84 coverage [7]. Unlike some Illumina sequencers (e.g., the MiSeq and MiniSeq), all PacBio

85	sequencers require considerable capital investment, limiting general access to these
86	technologies in individual laboratories. Nevertheless, PacBio sequencing has shown the
87	enormous potential for long-read, single-molecule sequencing to routinely produce high-quality
88	microbial genome assemblies that overcome many of the deficiencies of short-read sequencing.
89	The Oxford Nanopore Technologies (ONT) MinION is a more recently developed long-
90	read, single-molecule sequencing instrument. The MinION is a small benchtop device that can
91	plug directly into a laptop via a USB3 port [20] and that requires a relatively small upfront
92	financial investment relative to PacBio instruments [1]. This affordability and simplicity has
93	enabled the rapid uptake of MinION sequencing by individual labs worldwide, and facilitated
94	new applications such as tracking disease outbreaks in low-resource environments [21].
95	MinION read lengths have no theoretical limit and reads >2 million bp long have been reported
96	[22]. As with PacBio, MinION read quality is low compared to short read sequencing
97	technologies [23, 24]. These errors are less randomly distributed than for PacBio sequencing
98	[25], meaning that increased read depth alone cannot completely overcome this high error
99	rate, at least currently. However, error rates and bias profiles are expected to improve as the
100	MinION and its associated base-calling software continues to develop, e.g., as demonstrated by
101	the increased accuracy of the new Scrappy base caller that is currently under development by
102	ONT [26].
103	Two main strategies have been used to assemble bacterial genomes using MinION
104	sequencing [27, 28]. In the first, MinION reads are used to enhance genome assemblies that are

105 generated from short-read Illumina data. Here, MinION reads can scaffold contigs generated by

106 Illumina sequencing [29–31] or be directly used in the assembly process to disambiguate

107 regions of the assembly graph that cannot be resolved by Illumina sequencing alone (e.g., as 108 implemented in the popular SPAdes and Unicycler software [32, 33]). Alternatively, MinION 109 reads alone are used to generate an initial genome assembly [34, 35] that can then be further 110 polished using either MinION or Illumina reads [34, 36]. Such polishing is highly recommended 111 for MinION-based genome assemblies due to their higher error rates relative to assemblies 112 based on Illumina data [17, 26, 27, 37, 38]. The increasing maturity and throughput of MinION 113 sequencing is leading to its adoption for routine microbial genome sequencing [39–41]. 114 Both MinION-only [34, 35] and Illumina-hybrid methods [32, 33] have been validated 115 extensively for bacteria with low and average GC contents. However, whether these 116 approaches offer advantages when assembling bacterial genomes with high GC content remains unclear [42] (but see [43]). We therefore compared the ability of Illumina and MinION 117 118 sequencing technologies to produce high-quality assemblies of genomes from three bacterial 119 genera (Flavobacterium, Aeromonas, and Pseudonocardia) that range in GC content from 31-120 73% (Table 1). Flavobacterium spp. are gliding bacteria that can be found in diverse 121 environments and that include important fish pathogens. Aeromonas spp. are ubiquitous in 122 aquatic environments and can cause diseases in humans and fish or form beneficial symbioses, e.g., with fish and leeches [44]. Pseudonocardia sp. are members of the Actinobacteria and, like 123 124 many other members of this class, are important producers of antibiotics such as those 125 involved in defensive symbioses with ants (e.g., [45]). Our results validate MinION sequencing's 126 ability to generate high-quality assemblies for all of these genomes, and especially emphasize 127 the advantages of MinION sequencing when unbiased Illumina sequencing libraries are difficult to generate, e.g., for Actinobacteria with high GC content. These improved genome assemblies 128

129	dramatically improve the annotation of repetitive genomic regions such as insertion sequences
130	and secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs). MinION sequencing therefore has
131	strong potential to overcome current limitations of short-read sequencing technologies and
132	catalyze improved understanding of genome evolution and exploitation of genomic data for
133	drug discovery.
134 135	Methods
136	Description of Strains
137	Three Aeromonas strains were used in this study. Aeromonas hydrophila str. CA-13-1
138	(hereafter Ah CA-13-1) was isolated from the wound of a patient undergoing post-operative
139	leech therapy in 2013 [46]. <i>Aeromonas veronii</i> str. CIP107763 ^T (hereafter Av CIP107763 ^T) was
140	isolated from a mosquito midgut in France in 2015 and sequenced previously [47]. A. veronii str.
141	JG3 (hereafter Av JG3) is a derivative of a medicinal leech isolate Hm21 [48]. All Aeromonas
142	strains were grown either in LB broth or on agar plates for 16 hours at 30°C.
143	The Flavobacterium strains used in this study were all isolated from necrotic gill tissues
144	of farmed rainbow trout, Onchorhyncus mykiss. Flavobacterium sp. str. ARS-166-14 (hereafter
145	Fs ARS-166-14) was isolated in October 2014, Flavobacterium columnare str. FC-081215-1
146	(hereafter <i>Fc</i> FC-081215-1) was isolated in August 2015, and <i>F. columnare</i> str. FC-100715-19
147	(hereafter <i>Fc</i> FC-100715-19) was isolated in October 2015, all on TYES agar. Frozen cells were
148	grown on TYES agar, incubated for three days at 20°C, and then grown in liquid TYES broth for
149	another 3 days at 15°C for <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14 and 25°C for <i>Fc</i> FC-100715-19 and <i>Fc</i> FC-08-1215-1
150	[49].

151	The Pseudonocardia bacteria sequenced during this study were isolated from individual
152	Trachymyrmex septentrionalis ants collected from three locations within the United States:
153	Paynes Creek Historic State Park, FL (<i>Pseudonocardia</i> sp. str. JKS002056, hereafter <i>Ps</i>
154	JKS002056), Magnolia Springs State Park, GA (<i>Pseudonocardia</i> sp. str. JKS002072, hereafter <i>Ps</i>
155	JKS002072), and Jones Lake State Park, NC (<i>Pseudonocardia</i> sp. str. <i>Ps</i> JKS002128).
156	Pseudonocardia were visible as white patches on the ants' propleural plates, which were
157	scraped using a sterile needle under a dissecting microscope to isolate Pseudonocardia
158	following Marsh [50].
159	DNA Isolation
160	DNA was extracted from Aeromonas and Flavobacterium isolates following a modified
161	version of a previously published protocol for large scale genomic DNA isolation [51, 52]. DNA
162	in solution was not micropipetted during these extractions to minimize DNA fragmentation.
163	DNA was extracted from single <i>Pseudonocardia</i> colonies using the Epicentre MasterPure
164	Complete DNA and RNA kit following the manufacture's protocol. Each Pseudonocardia
165	extraction was performed in triplicate using wide bore tips and taking care to pipette slowly to
166	prevent DNA shearing.
167	Library Preparation and Sequencing
168	The quality of all extracted DNA was assessed using an Agilent TapeStation 2200
169	protocol for genomic DNA, an Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer (High sensitivity DNA chip), and/or a
170	Nanodrop spectrophotometer. All libraries were quantified using a Qubit® 2.0 fluorometer. For

171 the Aeromonas and Flavobacterium strains, NexteraXT Illumina sequences were constructed by

172 following the manufacturer's instructions for genomic tagmentation, PCR of tagged DNA, and

- 173 PCR product cleanup. Libraries were diluted to 4nM for loading onto an Illumina MiSeq. TruSeq
- 174 DNA PCR-Free libraries were created for each *Pseudonocardia* strain following the
- 175 manufacturer's protocol, shearing the DNA to 550 bp fragments using a Covaris M22 Focused-
- 176 ultrasonicator. All Illumina libraries were sequenced on an Illumina MiSeq using the 2x250bp
- 177 protocol at the University of Connecticut Microbial Analysis Research and Services (MARS)
- 178 facility. Demultiplexing was performed using Illumina Basespace
- 179 (<u>https://basespace.illumina.com/home/index</u>).
- 180 All genomes were also sequenced on a MK1B MinION device using R9.4 flow cells.
- 181 Aeromonas and Flavobacterium libraries were prepared using the ONT EXP-NBD103 Barcode kit
- and the ONT "Native Barcoding Genomic DNA Sequencing for the MinION Device" protocol
- 183 (downloaded from <u>https://nanoporetech.com/resource-centre/protocols</u> on Oct 20, 2017) and
- 184 performed without optional shearing steps to select for long reads. *Pseudonocardia* libraries
- 185 were prepared using the ONT "1D gDNA Selecting for Long Reads Using SQK-LSK108" protocol
- 186 (downloaded from <u>https://nanoporetech.com/resource-centre/protocols</u> on Dec 20, 2016) All
- 187 strains were sequenced using the ONT MinKNOW NC_48h_Sequencing_Run_FLO-MIN107_SQK-
- 188 LSK108 protocol, except for JKS002056, which was sequenced using the older
- 189 NC_48h_Sequencing_Run_FLO-MIN106_SQK-LSK108 MinKNOW protocol. The run duration
- ranged from 12 to 48 hours. Strains Av JG3, Fc FC-100715-19, and Ps JKS002072 were
- 191 sequenced using two separate MinION runs that were combined for all analyses, except for the
- 192 Av JG3 Canu+Nanopolish assembly where the few MinION reads (<3000) from the first run were
- 193 excluded because of their being processed using base calling software that was incompatible
- 194 with Nanopolish.

195 Base calling and Read Preparation

196	MinION reads for <i>Ps</i> JKS002056 and the first <i>Av</i> JG3 run were base-called using the ONT
197	Metrichor 1D protocol and locally using MinKNOW (ONT; Oct 20, 2017 release) respectively. All
198	other MinION reads were based-called using Albacore (v.1.2.4). These software choices were
199	determined by changes made by ONT to their cloud-based base calling system. All raw data was
200	deposited in the NCBI database under the BioProject number PRJNA477342.
201	We assessed Illumina read quality using FastQC (v.0.11.5, available from
202	http://www.bioinformatics.babraham.ac.uk/projects/fastqc/). Trimmomatic (v.0.36; [53]) was
203	used remove Illumina adapters, bases at each end of the read with an average Phred score <15
204	over a 4 bp window, and reads ≤36 basepairs long. Poretools version 0.6.0 [54] was used to
205	assess the quality of each MinION dataset and to generate fastq files from basecalled fast5 files.
206	Barcodes and reads that contained an internal barcode adapter sequence were removed using
207	Porechop version 0.2.3 (available from https://github.com/rrwick/Porechop). Nanofilt (v.1.0.5,
208	available from, https://github.com/wdecoster/nanofilt) was used to remove reads shorter than
209	500 basepairs or having an average quality score <9.
210	Genome Assembly
211	We used several approaches to construct <i>de novo</i> assemblies of each genome. First, we
212	constructed MiSeq-only short read assemblies using SPAdes (v.3.11.1) [33] and Unicycler
213	(v.0.4.3) [32] (v.0.4.3), representing the current state of the art. Second, we added MinION
214	reads to these MiSeq-based assemblies to disambiguate ambiguous regions in the MiSeq
215	sequencing graph, creating SPAdes-hybrid and Unicycler-hybrid assemblies. Third, we

216 constructed MinION-only long-read assemblies using Canu (v.1.5) [35]. These MinION-only

217	Canu assemblies were polished using the same MinION reads to create Canu+Nanopolish
218	assemblies by aligning MinION reads to the Canu assembly using BWA (v.0.7.15) [55] and
219	Samtools (v.1.3.1) [56], and then using Nanopolish (v.3.2.5) [34] for assembly polishing. A
220	second iteration of Nanopolish was completed for strain <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 but did not significantly
221	improve its accuracy (data not shown), and so this strategy was not pursued further. The Canu
222	assemblies were alternatively polished using MiSeq reads to create Canu+Pilon assemblies.
223	MiSeq reads were aligned to the Canu genome using BWA (v.0.7.15) and Samtools (v.1.3.1) and
224	then Pilon (v.1.22) [36] was used for assembly polishing. In total, we created seven assemblies
225	for each genome: four based primarily on MiSeq data (SPAdes, Unicycler, SPAdes-hybrid, and
226	Unicycler-hybrid) and three based primarily on MinION data (Canu, Canu+Nanopolish,
227	Canu+Pilon). All commands used for the computational analyses in this study are included in
228	the Supplementary Material.
228 229	the Supplementary Material. Depth of Coverage
229	Depth of Coverage
229 230	Depth of Coverage MinION data was subsampled from Av JG3, Fs ARS-166-14, and Ps JKS002128 to
229 230 231	Depth of Coverage MinION data was subsampled from Av JG3, Fs ARS-166-14, and Ps JKS002128 to determine the minimum read depth required to create contiguous MinION-based assemblies.
229 230 231 232	Depth of Coverage MinION data was subsampled from <i>Av</i> JG3, <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14, and <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 to determine the minimum read depth required to create contiguous MinION-based assemblies. Fast5-formatted reads for each strain were subsampled in the order that they were acquired
229 230 231 232 233	Depth of Coverage MinION data was subsampled from <i>Av</i> JG3, <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14, and <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 to determine the minimum read depth required to create contiguous MinION-based assemblies. Fast5-formatted reads for each strain were subsampled in the order that they were acquired from the MinION sequencer to achieve 10X, 20X, 30X, 40X, 50X, (for <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14, Av JG3 and
229 230 231 232 233 234	Depth of Coverage MinION data was subsampled from <i>Av</i> JG3, <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14, and <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 to determine the minimum read depth required to create contiguous MinION-based assemblies. Fast5-formatted reads for each strain were subsampled in the order that they were acquired from the MinION sequencer to achieve 10X, 20X, 30X, 40X, 50X, (for <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14, Av JG3 and <i>Ps</i> JKS002128), 60X (<i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14 and <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 only), and 70X (<i>Ps</i> JKS002128 only)
229 230 231 232 233 234 235	Depth of Coverage MinION data was subsampled from Av JG3, Fs ARS-166-14, and Ps JKS002128 to determine the minimum read depth required to create contiguous MinION-based assemblies. Fast5-formatted reads for each strain were subsampled in the order that they were acquired from the MinION sequencer to achieve 10X, 20X, 30X, 40X, 50X, (for Fs ARS-166-14, Av JG3 and Ps JKS002128), 60X (Fs ARS-166-14 and Ps JKS002128 only), and 70X (Ps JKS002128 only) coverage of the Canu assembly for each strain, calculated using the mean MinION read length

239	The contiguity and quality of each genome assembly was assessed using Quast (v.4.6.3)
240	[57]. Because we lacked reference genomes for comparison, we instead assessed the quality of
241	our genomes using two strategies, focusing on the <i>Pseudonocardia</i> genomes for detailed
242	comparison. First, we compared all genome assemblies to each other based on their shared k-
243	mer composition using Mash (v2.0) [58]. These Mash distances were used to construct a
244	phylogeny using Mashtree (v.0.33, available at https://github.com/lskatz/mashtree). Second,
245	we aligned each assembly to their respective Canu+Pilon assembly using MUMmer (v3.1) [59]
246	to identify SNPs and indels relative to the Canu+Pilon assembly. We selected the Canu+Pilon
247	assemblies as references because of their high contiguity and error profiles that were similar to
248	the MiSeq assemblies. However, we stress that this does not comprise a "gold standard"
249	comparison and the relative nature of these comparisons.
250	Biosynthetic gene cluster prediction
250 251	Biosynthetic gene cluster prediction Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i>
251	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i>
251 252	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 assembly using antiSMASH (v.4.1.0) [60]. Fragmented BGCs were annotated by their
251 252 253	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 assembly using antiSMASH (v.4.1.0) [60]. Fragmented BGCs were annotated by their occurring at contig ends. This likely overestimates the number of fragmented BGCs due to
251 252 253 254	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 assembly using antiSMASH (v.4.1.0) [60]. Fragmented BGCs were annotated by their occurring at contig ends. This likely overestimates the number of fragmented BGCs due to antiSMASH's tendency to conservatively extend BGCs past their true boundaries. Identical BGCs
251 252 253 254 255	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 assembly using antiSMASH (v.4.1.0) [60]. Fragmented BGCs were annotated by their occurring at contig ends. This likely overestimates the number of fragmented BGCs due to antiSMASH's tendency to conservatively extend BGCs past their true boundaries. Identical BGCs were identified using the ClustCompare pipeline (available from, <u>https://github.com/klassen-</u>
251 252 253 254 255 256	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 assembly using antiSMASH (v.4.1.0) [60]. Fragmented BGCs were annotated by their occurring at contig ends. This likely overestimates the number of fragmented BGCs due to antiSMASH's tendency to conservatively extend BGCs past their true boundaries. Identical BGCs were identified using the ClustCompare pipeline (available from, <u>https://qithub.com/klassen-</u> <u>lab/ClustCompare</u>). Briefly, PfamScan (v.1.6) [61] was used to annotate protein domains
251 252 253 254 255 256 257	Secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) were annotated in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 assembly using antiSMASH (v.4.1.0) [60]. Fragmented BGCs were annotated by their occurring at contig ends. This likely overestimates the number of fragmented BGCs due to antiSMASH's tendency to conservatively extend BGCs past their true boundaries. Identical BGCs were identified using the ClustCompare pipeline (available from, <u>https://github.com/klassen-</u> <i>lab/ClustCompare</i>). Briefly, PfamScan (v.1.6) [61] was used to annotate protein domains encoded by each BGC and these domains were compared to each other using BLASTp [62].

261	of the domains in the smaller BGC being homologous to domains in the larger BGC. The
262	resulting homology networks were visualized using Cytoscape (v.3.6.1) [63] to identify clusters
263	of homologous BGCs. Singleton clusters were aligned to the Canu+Pilon genome and individual
264	Canu+Pilon antiSMASH BGCs using MUMmer v3.1 [59] to identify homologies that occurred at
265	the nucleotide level but not at the protein level (e.g., due to high error rates that might
266	confound gene prediction). Nucleotide-level BGC comparisons were also conducted using Mash
267	(v.2.0) [58].
268	Insertion Sequence identification
269	Insertion sequences (ISs) were annotated in the <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14 Canu, Canu+Pilon,
270	SPAdes, and Unicycler assemblies using ISSaga2 [64]. Full and partial IS sequences were
271	identified by comparing each assembly genome sequence to the ISfinder database. The default
272	detection algorithm and parameters were used for all assemblies in this experiment, and both
273	the total number of hits and those with >70% amino acid similarity to ISs in the ISfinder
274	database were recorded.

275 **Results**

276 Sequencing

We sequenced the genomes of nine bacterial strains using both Oxford Nanopore
MinION and Illumina MiSeq technologies, together spanning a wide range of GC content
(*Flavobacterium*: 31%; *Aeromonas*: 59-61%; *Pseudonocardia*: 74%). MinION sequencing
coverage ranged from 40-135X and generated median read lengths of 1,629-9,665 bps (Table
2). Median MinION read lengths for *Ah* CA-13-1 and *Av* CIP107763^T were considerably shorter
than for the other MinION libraries due to difficulties in extracting high molecular weight DNA

from these strains. Illumina Nextera libraries were sequenced for all *Aeromonas* and *Flavobacterium* strains with coverage ranging from 30-169X (Table 3). Preliminary Nextera
libraries were also constructed for the *Pseudonocardia* strains, but these were highly biased
and generated extremely fragmented assemblies (1000s of contigs; data not shown). We
therefore instead generated Illumina TruSeq PCR-free libraries for these strains, with coverage
ranging from 71-246X (Table 3).

289 Genome Assembly

290 Seven assemblies were generated for each strain, four based on MiSeq data either alone 291 (SPAdes, Unicycler) or with MinION data to deconvolute the MiSeq assembly graph (SPAdes-292 hybrid, Unicycler-hybrid), and three based on MinION data either alone (Canu), polished using 293 the same MinION data (Canu+Nanopolish), or polished using MiSeq data (Canu+Pilon). Both the 294 SPAdes and Unicycler assemblies had the largest number of contigs out of all assemblies 295 generated for each strain (Figure 1). These assemblies also typically had the lowest N50 values compared to the other assemblies. Ah CA-13-1 and Av CIP107763^T were exceptions to this 296 297 trend, likely due to their lower quality MinION libraries. The addition of MinION reads to 298 deconvolute the SPAdes and Unicycler assembly graphs lowered the number of contigs and 299 increased the N50 for all assemblies (Figure 1). This highlights the ability of long MinION reads 300 to resolve genomic repeats that otherwise stymied assembly of these genomes from short 301 reads. Unicycler consistently outperformed SPAdes during hybrid assembly (the only exception being Av CIP107763^T) but not when assembling MiSeq reads only. 302

303 Canu assemblies were more contiguous and had higher N50 values than all MiSeq-based 304 assemblies, except for *Av* CIP107763^T Unicycler-hybrid and SPAdes-hybrid assemblies and the 305 Ah CA-13-1 Unicycler-hybrid assembly (Figure 1A, B). These two strains had lower quality 306 MinION libraries (Table 2) that likely compromised the Canu assemblies, even if they were still 307 more contiguous than the MiSeg-only SPAdes and Unicycler assemblies. Canu assemblies were 308 used as the base for polishing with either Nanopolish or Pilon, and so the number of contigs 309 was the same for the Canu, Canu+Nanopolish, and Canu+Pilon assemblies (Figure 1). The Canu 310 assembly sizes were greater than those of any MiSeq-based assembly for all Flavobacterium 311 and *Pseudonocardia* strains (up for ~14% for *Ps* JKS002128; Figure 1), likely reflecting the 312 MinION's ability to overcome biases in the Illumina libraries for these genomes with low (31%) 313 and high (74%) GC content, respectively. This was not true for the Aeromonas assemblies, likely 314 reflecting fewer biases in the Illumina libraries for these strains with more moderate GC 315 content (59-61%). Taken together, these assemblies demonstrate that MinION sequencing 316 improves assembly contiguity, especially where Illumina sequencing libraries are the most 317 biased.

318 Assembly Accuracy

319 Because we lacked high-quality reference genomes for our strains, we instead used several 320 comparative analyses to assess the accuracy of our assemblies. We focused on *Pseudonocardia* 321 for these analyses because these appeared to be the most challenging to assemble based on 322 the substantial differences in their assembly sizes and contiguities (Figure 1). We used Mash 323 [58] to compare all of our *Pseudonocardia* assemblies to each other according to their shared k-324 mer content and to construct a distance-based phylogeny (Figure 2). Canu assemblies were the 325 least similar to the MiSeq-based assemblies, followed by the Canu+Nanopolish assemblies. This 326 suggests that MinION data alone cannot produce accurate *Pseudonocardia* assemblies using

327 current technologies. These data might alternatively be interpreted to mean that the MiSeq-328 based assemblies have lower accuracy compared to the Canu and Canu+Nanopolish assemblies, 329 but we consider this unlikely based on previous research that argues against this interpretation 330 [17, 27, 37, 38]. Canu+Pilon assemblies were more similar to the MiSeq-based assemblies, 331 suggesting that polishing MinION-based assemblies with MiSeq reads is an effective strategy to 332 generate microbial genome assemblies that are both accurate and contiguous. However, some 333 divergence was observed between the Canu+Pilon and MiSeg-based genome assemblies. This 334 was especially true for *Ps* JKS002128, which appeared to have the most biased MiSeq library in 335 our study based on differences in the sizes of the MiSeq-based and MinION-based assemblies 336 for this strain (Figure 1). These differences are consistent with the existence of regions in the 337 Canu assembly that lacked mapping MiSeg reads, leaving these regions uncorrected [65]. All 338 genome assemblies for the same strain clustered together in the Mashtree analysis (Figure 2), 339 indicating that even the high error rates of the Canu and Canu+Nanopolish assemblies did not 340 obscure strain-level phylogenetic differences.

341 Based on the Mash analysis, the Canu+Pilon assemblies were used as a reference 342 against which to compare the other assemblies based on their higher contiguity and substantial 343 accuracy. The high accuracy of MiSeq sequencing meant that all MiSeq-based assemblies had 344 few SNPs and Indels relative to the Canu+Pilon assembly (Figure 3). In contrast, the Canu 345 assemblies had many more SNPs and indels relative to the Canu+Pilon assembly, especially for 346 *Ps* JKS002056 (Figure 3). Polishing these Canu assemblies using Nanopolish reduced the number 347 of indels, and the number of SNPs to a lesser extent (Figure 3). However, the numbers of SNPs and indels were still much higher than for the MiSeq-based assemblies. 348

349 MinION Sequencing Depth

350	Canu assemblies were performed using 5-7 different levels of coverage for strains Av
351	JG3, <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14, and <i>Ps</i> JKS002128. These assemblies suggest that the amount of coverage
352	needed for a high-quality MinION-based genome assembly is relatively low, but also depends
353	somewhat on the complexity of each genome. Assemblies for strains Av JG3 and Fs ARS-166-14
354	did not improve substantially above 30X coverage, consistent with previous findings [66].
355	However, assemblies for strain <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 improved incrementally up to 70X coverage
356	(Figure 4), suggesting that higher coverage may be necessary for genomes with high GC
357	content. Even though they were assembled into a few contigs, these assemblies were not error-
358	free based on the different genome sizes and N50 values obtained for assemblies using
359	different high-coverage datasets. The single 50X Av JG3 assembly also lacked a plasmid that was
360	present in assemblies for the lower coverage datasets (data not known). Researchers should
361	therefore assess their goals for MinION sequencing before progressing with a run and consider
362	stopping data collection at a certain threshold to conserve flow cells and to decrease
363	sequencing time and cost.
264	Riosynthetic gape cluster prediction

364 Biosynthetic gene cluster prediction

365 One expected benefit of high quality genome assemblies is that they will substantially 366 improve the annotation of repetitive genomic regions relative to lower quality assemblies. To 367 test this, we compared antiSMASH [60] secondary metabolite biosynthetic gene cluster (BGC) 368 annotations for all of our *Ps* JKS002128 assemblies. Actinobacteria such as *Pseudonocardia* 369 typically possess many BGCs, although they are often difficult to assemble correctly [16]. 370 AntiSMASH consistently predicted 12 and 13 BGCs for the SPAdes and Unicycler assembles, 371 respectively, and 12 BGCs for both the SPAdes-hybrid and Unicycler-hybrid assemblies (Figure 372 5). The extra BGC in the Unicycler assembly is due to there being two separate fragments of 373 BGC 1 annotated in this assembly. More BGCs were predicted for the Canu (17), 374 Canu+Nanopolish (19), and Canu+Pilon (18) assemblies, including 4 BGCs that were found in at 375 least two of these genomes but not in any of the MiSeq-based genomes (Figure 5A). These 376 BGCs may lie at particularly repetitive or bias-prone regions of the Ps JKS002128 genome such 377 that they are omitted from MiSeg-based assemblies but present in MinION-based assemblies 378 that are much less sensitive to these issues. Despite their greater contiguity, the Canu, 379 Canu+Nanopolish, and Canu+Pilon assemblies lacked some combination of BGCs 1, 9, 12, and 380 13, all of which were found in all of the MiSeg-based assemblies (Figure 5A). The Canu assembly 381 lacked all 4 of these BGCs, the Canu+Nanopolish assembly lacked BGCs 9, 12, and 13, and the 382 Canu+Pilon assembly only lacked BGC 13. These omissions are likely due to gene prediction 383 errors that decreased the ability of antiSMASH to detect these BGCs. Such errors may have also 384 been responsible for the prediction of BGCs 18 and 19 solely in the Canu and Canu+Nanopolish 385 assemblies (Figure 5A), which are likely false positive annotations based on these BGCs only 386 appearing in individual error-prone assemblies. MinION-based genome assemblies therefore 387 substantially increase the sensitivity of BGC annotation, but require polishing to limit 388 annotation errors. 389 Improved genome assembly also reduced the number of BGCs that were fragmented. 390 i.e., that overlapped with a contig end (Figure 5B). Approximately half of all BGCs in the SPAdes

to resolve these repetitive genomic regions. The Unicycler hybrid, and to a lesser extent the

and Unicycler assemblies were fragmented, reflecting the inability of short-read Illumina data

391

393 SPAdes hybrid, assemblies produced fewer fragmented BGCs, reflecting the increased 394 contiguity of these assemblies. The Canu, Canu+Nanopolish, and Canu+Pilon assemblies all had 395 very few fragmented BGCs, based on BGCs overlapping with contig ends. MinION-based 396 genome assemblies therefore do not only increase the frequency of BGC detection, but also 397 more completely assemble these BGCs and thus increase their value for genome-guided drug 398 discovery. The Canu, Canu+Nanopolish, and Canu+Pilon assemblies did have several annotated 399 gene clusters that were aggregated into a single BGC in other assemblies (Figure 5A). Whether 400 these represent single BGCs that were fragmented in the MinION-based assemblies or multiple 401 BGCs that were located adjacent to each other on the *Ps* JKS002128 genome is difficult to 402 predict computationally.

403 Insertion Sequence Prediction

404 To further investigate the effect of genome assembly on the annotation of repetitive 405 genetic regions, insertion sequences were predicted in the Fs ARS-166-14 Canu, Canu+Pilon, SPAdes, and Unicycler assemblies using ISSaga2 and the ISfinder database [64]. The total 406 407 number of full or partial hits to the ISfinder database and the number of hits with amino acid 408 sequence similarities >70% are reported in Figure 6. The Canu+Pilon assembly had the most 409 unique insertion sequences with 70% or greater sequence similarity to the ISfinder database 410 (20), followed by the Canu assembly with 15, and then the Unicycler and SPAdes assemblies 411 with 4 and 3, respectively. Interestingly, the Canu+Pilon assembly also had the greatest total 412 number of hits, but these likely contain many false positive results that require further curation. 413

414 **Discussion**

415	Single-molecule, long-read sequencing technologies such as the Oxford Nanopore
416	MinION have strong potential to revolutionize the sequencing and <i>de novo</i> assembly of
417	bacterial genomes. Existing short-read sequencing technologies frequently produce genome
418	assemblies that are broken into 10s-100s of contigs, such as in our assemblies generated using
419	only short-read MiSeq data (Figure 1). Fragmented genome assemblies prevent accurate
420	annotation of important genome features such as insertion sequences and secondary
421	metabolite biosynthetic gene clusters (Figures 5 and 6). Technological improvements are
422	therefore necessary to fully understand and exploit these genomic features to cure disease and
423	foster biotechnology.
424	One key reason for poor genome assembly is the inherently limited length of short-
425	reads. By increasing the read length, long-read sequencing technologies such as the MinION
426	disambiguate genomic repeats and generate fewer contig breaks (e.g., [38]). This was clearly
427	evident from our SPAdes- and Unicycler-hybrid assemblies, where the long MinION reads were
428	able to deconvolute the assembly graph produced from the MiSeq data and yielded fewer and
429	longer contigs compared to the MiSeq-only assemblies (Figure 1). Such improvements are likely
430	to continue as MinION-compatible extraction methods for high-molecular weight DNA are
431	refined.
432	However, this approach assumes that the entire genome is represented in the Illumina
433	sequencing graph, which may not be true because of biases in short-read sequencing library
434	preparation. As a result, some regions of the genome are sequenced to low coverage or

435 excluded entirely, resulting in assembly fragmentation due to missing data. These problems

436 include PCR biases against extreme %GC sequences [8–12] and due to biased insertion of

transposases during library preparation [14]. Reflecting such biases, our initial *Pseudonocardia* 437 438 sequencing experiments that used the Illumina Nextera library preparation method (which 439 includes both transposases and PCR) produced genome assemblies with 1,000s of contigs (data 440 not shown), compared to the 10s-100s of *Pseudonocardia* contigs produced using Illumina 441 TruSeq PCR-free libraries (Figure 1). Single-molecule sequencing methods such as the MinION 442 avoid many of these biases by sequencing individual template DNA molecules without using 443 PCR. This is reflected by the higher contiguity of our *Pseudonocardia* Canu genome assemblies 444 compared to the SPAdes- and Unicycler-hybrid assemblies that used MinION reads to 445 deconvolute the potentially biased Illumina assembly graphs (Figure 1). All of our 446 Flavobacterium and Pseudonocardia Canu assemblies are also larger than those based on Illumina reads, reflecting the inclusion of sequences that were missing from the Illumina 447 448 sequencing libraries. For *Pseudonocardia*, these differences were sometimes substantial (up to 449 a 13.7% increase in genome size). These results point to library preparation bias as a second 450 source of error common to short-read sequencing that can be overcome by long-read, single-451 molecule sequencing technologies such as the MinION, in addition to the ability of MinION 452 reads to span long genomic repeats. 453 Our results also highlight the importance of efficient high molecular weight DNA

extraction methods for MinION sequencing. Of the 9 genomes that we sequenced during this
study, the two with the lowest median read length (*Ah* CA-13-1 and *Av* CIP107763^T) produced
the least contiguous Canu assemblies (14 and 32 contigs, respectively). However, this is still
more contiguous than the MiSeq-only SPAdes and Unicycler assemblies for these strains.
MinION reads also improved these SPAdes and Unicycler assemblies when run in hybrid mode.

demonstrating the utility of long reads even if DNA extraction remains suboptimal. There is a
current need for reliable protocols to produce high molecular weight genomic DNA that is
compatible with the MinION sequencer, and the Oxford Nanopore Voltrax and Ubik devices
(https://nanoporetech.com/about-us/news/clive-g-brown-cto-plenary-london-calling) show
strong potential to overcome these issues. The degree to which such devices are compatible
with diverse cell wall chemistries remains to be validated.
Although most of our MinION-based assemblies were more contiguous than the MiSeq-

466 based assemblies, they were less accurate. Assemblies generated using Canu contained a large number of SNP and indels relative to our Illumina-based assemblies (Figures 2 and 3). These 467 468 differences were reduced by using Nanopolish to correct the Canu assembly using MinION reads, and even better results were obtained using Pilon to correct the Canu assembly using 469 470 MiSeq reads (Figures 2 and 3). However, differences still existed between these polished 471 assemblies and the Illumina assemblies in some cases (most obviously for *Pseudonocardia* sp. 472 JKS002128). Although it is possible that the MiSeq assemblies contained errors relative to the 473 MinION assemblies, this would be inconsistent with previous work comparing MinION 474 assemblies to high-quality reference genomes [17, 27, 37, 38]. Illumina reads are also unable to 475 correct repetitive genome sequences that cannot be unambiguously mapped using short reads, 476 and so these regions will be uncorrected even in Canu+Pilon assemblies [65]. A tradeoff 477 therefore exists between the higher contiguity of MinION-based assemblies relative to their 478 higher number of SNP and indel errors. Minimizing such errors is a current technological focus of ONT (https://nanoporetech.com/about-us/news/clive-g-brown-cto-plenary-london-calling) 479

480 and so this tradeoff may lessen in the near future.

481 The importance of these assembly trade-offs is highlighted by our analysis of repetitive 482 genomic regions. For example, antiSMASH annotated ~1/3 more secondary metabolite 483 biosynthetic gene clusters (BGC) in the MinION-based assemblies of *Pseudonocardia* sp. 484 JKS002128 compared to the MiSeq-based assemblies (Figure 5), confirming our previous 485 observations that BGCs are poorly resolved by Illumina sequencing [16]. Similar results were 486 obtained when annotating insertion sequences in *Flavobacterium* sp. Fs ARS-166-14, as 487 expected due to the highly repetitive nature of these genomic regions (Figure 6). The BGCs that were annotated in the Illumina-only assemblies were highly fragmented, highlighting the 488 489 challenge of sequencing these complex genomic regions (Figure 5). Interestingly, the genome 490 assemblies that contained the highest number of SNP and indel errors (Figure 2) contained several BGCs that were unique to those particular genomes (Figure 5), and lacked several BGCs 491 492 that were annotated in the MiSeq-based assemblies. These differences are likely due to the 493 difficulty in accurately predicting gene structures in highly error-prone genomes due to gene 494 truncation or misplaced start sites. Indeed, our initial ClustCompare analysis to compare BGCs 495 based on their protein sequences did not detect many true homologies between BGCs 496 annotated in the Canu and Canu+Nanopolish assemblies to those annotated in assemblies that 497 were generated or polished using MiSeq data due to the large number of misannotated gene 498 structures in the Canu and Canu+Nanopolish assemblies (data not shown). These homologies 499 only became clear using comparisons between nucleotide sequences. High numbers of SNP and 500 indel errors can therefore prevent accurate genome annotation due to errors in gene structure 501 prediction. Several homologous BGCs were also annotated as having different biosynthetic classes in different genomes (represented by the different colors in Figure 5). Together, these 502

503 analyses highlight the importance of contiguous and accurate genome assemblies for the 504 prediction of repetitive elements such as BGCs, and highlight the utility of MinION sequencing 505 in this application, especially when polished using accurate Illumina reads. 506 In summary, our data highlights the ability of long-read, single-molecule MinION 507 sequencing to overcome current limitations of short-read sequencing, particularly its inability to 508 disambiguate repetitive genome regions and avoid biases introduced during library 509 preparation. Overcoming these limitations greatly improves the annotation of many clinically-510 and biotechnologically-important genomic regions such as insertion sequences and BGCs 511 (Figures 5 and 6). However, SNP and indel errors remain problematic in *de novo* assemblies 512 generated from MinION data. This is likely to improve in the near future given the extensive 513 research underway in this area. Because twelve microbial genomes can currently be sequenced 514 to sufficient coverage (40-50X; Figure 3) on a single MinION or MiSeq flowcell, combining these 515 data currently requires ~\$100-\$200 for the MinION and ~\$150 for Illumina sequencing in 516 reagent and consumable costs per genome. Combining these two data types is therefore an 517 affordable means to dramatically increase the quality of any bacterial de novo genome 518 assembly, regardless of their genome complexity or %GC content, and compares favorably to 519 the cost of PacBio sequencing. Future technical advances will likely decrease these costs 520 further, and we anticipate that highly contiguous and accurate de novo assembly of bacterial 521 genomes will become standard in the field in the very near future.

522 Acknowledgements

Funding for this work was provided by NSF IOS-1656475 and the University of Connecticut (J. L.
K.) and by USDA-ARS agreement 58-1930-4-002 (J. G.). We thank the UConn Microbiology

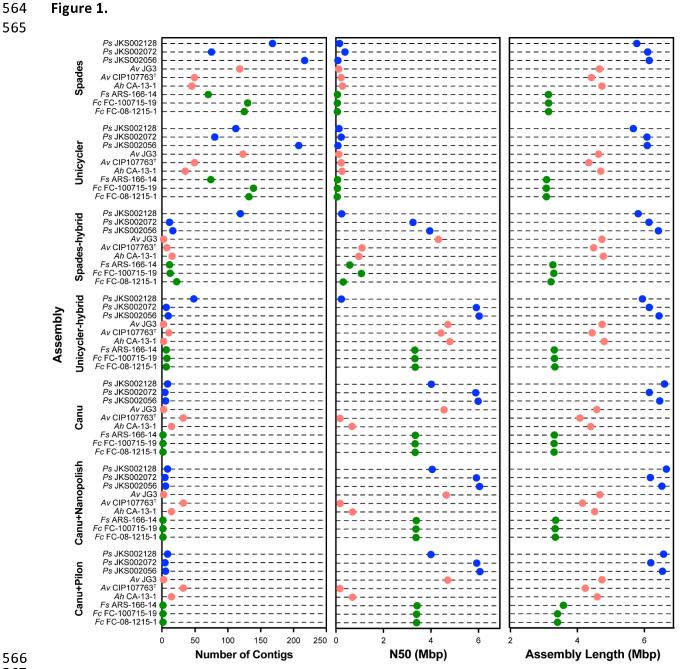
- 525 Analysis, Resources, and Services (MARS) and Center for Genomic Information (CGI) facilities for
- 526 assistance with the Illumina sequencing and Susan Janton for excellent technical assistance in
- 527 preparing some of the Illumina libraries. We also thank the Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina
- 528 Departments of Environmental Protection for permission and assistance with our ant
- 529 collections on state lands, and Drs. Greg Wiens and Tim Welch from the USDA National Center
- 530 for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture, Agriculture Research Service, Kearneysville, West
- 531 Virginia, USA for providing the *Flavobacterium* strains.

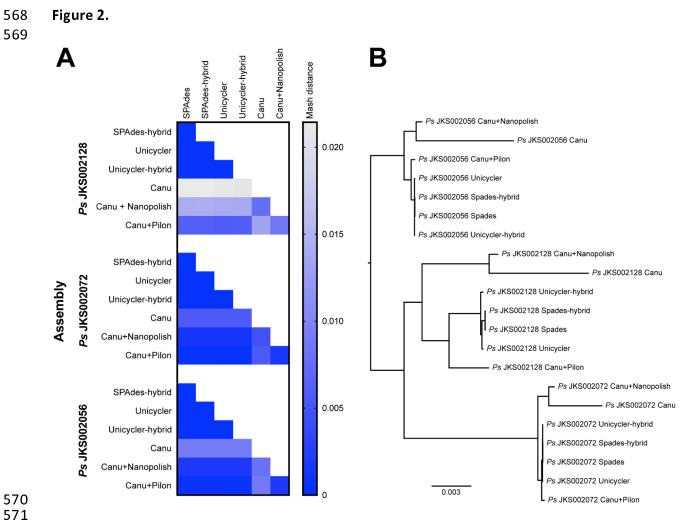
532 List of Figures

533	Figure 1: MinION reads improve assembly contiguity. The number of contigs (left), N50 (in Mbp,
534	center), and assembly length (in Mbp, right) are shown for each of the MiSeq-based (SPAdes,
535	Unicycler, SPAdes-hybrid, and Unicycler-hybrid) and MinION-based (Canu, Canu+Nanopolish,
536	Canu+Pilon) genome assemblies. Results for <i>Pseudonocardia, Aeromonas,</i> and <i>Flavobacterium</i>
537	are shown in blue, red, and green, respectively.
538	Figure 2: Comparison of <i>Pseudonocardia</i> assemblies generated during this study. (A): Heatmaps
539	depicting Mash distances between the assemblies of each Pseudonocardia strain based on their
540	shared k-mer content. Whiter colors indicate greater Mash distances between assemblies. (B):
541	Mashtree analysis showing the relationships of all <i>Pseudonocardia</i> assemblies to each other,
542	based on Mash distances. The scale bar represents a Mash distance of 0.003.
543	Figure 3: Quantification of insertion/deletions (indels, left) and single nucleotide
544	polymorphisms (SNPs, right) in all <i>Pseudonocardia</i> strains sequenced during this study, as
545	determined by aligning each assembly to the Canu+Pilon assembly for that strain as a
546	reference.
547	Figure 4: The effect of coverage on Canu genome assembly contiguity. The number of contigs
548	(Left), N50 (in Mbp, Center), and assembly length (in Mbp, Right) are shown for subsets of the
549	<i>Ps</i> JKS002128 (blue), <i>Av</i> JG3 (red), and <i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14 (green) MinION reads used in Figure 1.
550	Figure 5: <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 genome assembly quality affects secondary metabolite biosynthetic
551	gene cluster annotation. (A) Homologies between BGCs predicted for each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128

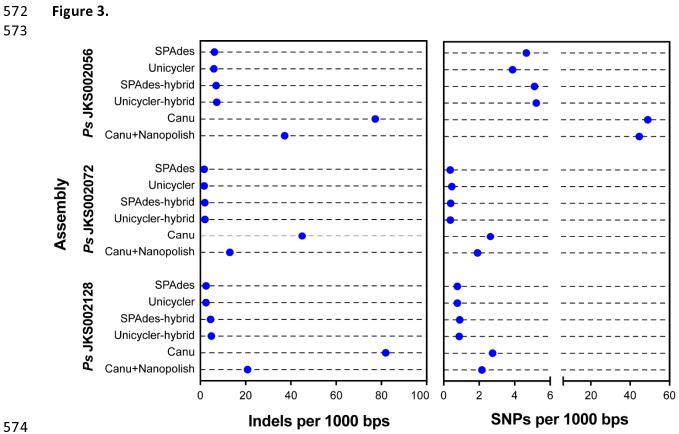
552	assembly, with each row representing a unique BGC in the <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 genome. Filled boxes
553	indicate the BGCs found in each assembly, colored according to the type of secondary
554	metabolite that it is predicted to encode. White boxes indicate BGCs that were not found in
555	that assembly. Some BGCs occur on multiple contigs or are separated into multiple gene
556	clusters on the same assembly, indicated by either two or three polygons within a single box.
557	BGCs may still be fragmented even if represented by a single box. (B) The total number of
558	complete and fragmented BGCs predicted in each <i>Ps</i> JKS002128 genome assembly.
559	Figure 6: Fs ARS-166-14 genome assembly quality affects insertion sequences annotation. Both
560	the total number of hits and hits with >70% amino acid identity to insertion sequences in the
561	ISfinder database are shown. The former likely includes false-positive annotations while the
562	latter is more conservative.

563

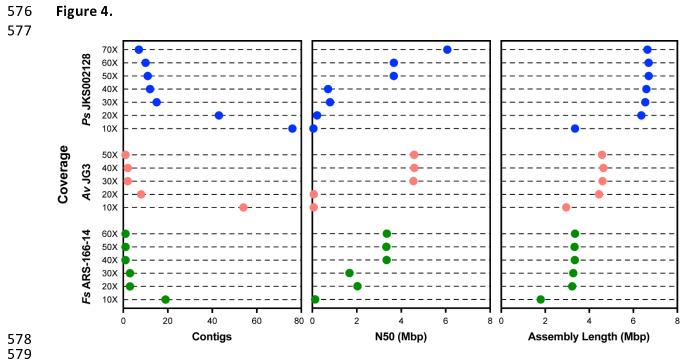




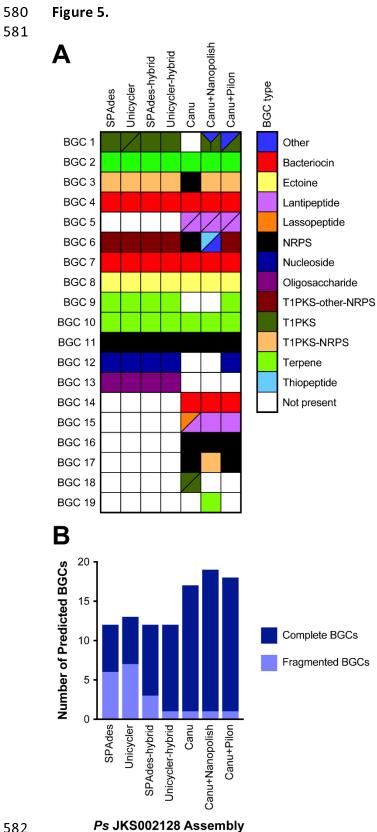
571

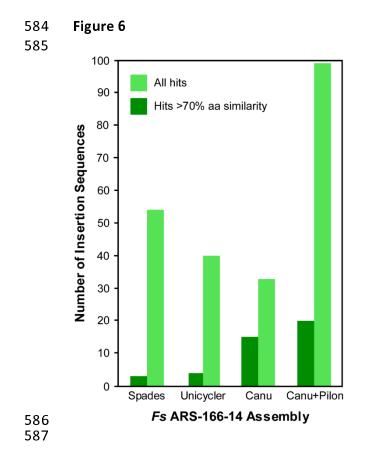


575









588 List of Tables

- 589 **Table 1.** Bacteria used in this study
- 590 Table 2. Summary of MinION sequencing
- 591 Table 3. Summary of Illumina sequencing

592

Strain ID	Phylum	Genus	Species	% GC Content	Expected Genome Size (Mbps)
<i>Ps</i> JKS002128	Actinobacteria	Pseudonocardia	sp	73.12	6.60
<i>Ps</i> JKS002072	Actinobacteria	Pseudonocardia	sp	73.69	6.21
<i>Ps</i> JKS002056	Actinobacteria	Pseudonocardia	sp	73.31	6.54
Av JG3	Proteobacteria	Aeromonas	veronii	58.64	4.49
<i>Av</i> CIP107763 ^T	Proteobacteria	Aeromonas	culicicola ^a	58.80	4.34
Ah CA-13-1	Proteobacteria	Aeromonas	hydrophila	61.29	4.76
<i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14	Bacteroidetes	Flavobacterium	sp	31.61	3.31
<i>Fc</i> FC-100715-19	Bacteroidetes	Flavobacterium	columnare	31.59	3.32
<i>Fc</i> FC-08-1215-1	Bacteroidetes	Flavobacterium	columnare	31.56	3.31

^{*a*}CIP107763^T is the type strain for *Aeromonas culicicola*, which is a later subjective synonym of *A. veronii*.

Strain ID	Total Raw Reads	Total bases (Mbps)	Mean Length (bps)	Median Length (bps)	Max Length (bps)	N50 (bps)	Coverage (fold)	Total Reads After Filtering
<i>Ps</i> JKS002128	119,358	499	9,665	2,510	244,268	7,797	80	87,836
<i>Ps</i> JKS002072	135,898	311	2,289	729	678,379	7,142	50	70,035
<i>Ps</i> JKS002056	41,096	397	4,184	6,207	105,595	16,572	64	21,874
<i>Av</i> JG3 (run1)	2,718	25	7,232	5,710	85,387	17,143	5	74 477*
<i>Av</i> JG3 (run2)	42,301	306	9,176	4,807	90,470	11,741	63	34,473*
<i>Av</i> CIP107763 ^T	200,362	645	1,629	1,299	98,351	7,545	135	110,391
Ah CA-13-1	136,486	222	1,629	808	62,567	2,840	46	65,195
<i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14	53,171	289	5,442	1,583	1,149,252	18,107	90	36,648
<i>Fc</i> FC-100715-19 (run1)	39,376	146	3,709	836	84,881	17,593	45	45 104*
<i>Fc</i> FC-100715-19 (run2)	31,121	187	5 <i>,</i> 996	1,137	157,214	26,227	58	45,194*
<i>Fc</i> FC-08-1215-1	39,938	236	5,908	1,252	106,525	22,063	74	26,486

* indicates the combined total of both runs for that strain

Table 3. Summary of Illumina sequencing

	Total Raw Reads	Total Bases (Mbps)	Coverage (fold)	Total Reads After Filtering
<i>Ps</i> JKS002128	6,120,982	1,536	246	5,475,000
<i>Ps</i> JKS002072	1,766,572	443	71	1,638,060
<i>Ps</i> JKS002056	5,038,846	1,265	203	4,736,206
Av JG3	1,488,761	372	79	942,391
Av CIP107763 ^T	566,606	142	30	536,504
Ah CA-13-1	950,886	238	51	873,417
<i>Fs</i> ARS-166-14	2,164,975	541	169	890,703
<i>Fc</i> FC-100715-19	2,072,592	518	162	1,130,797
<i>Fc</i> FC-08-1215-1	1,145,425	286	89	987,428

References

 Goodwin S, McPherson JD, McCombie WR. Coming of age: ten years of next-generation sequencing technologies. Nat Rev Genet. 2016;17:333–51. doi:10.1038/nrg.2016.49.
 Shendure J, Balasubramanian S, Church GM, Gilbert W, Rogers J, Schloss JA, et al. DNA sequencing at 40: past, present and future. Nature. 2017;550:345–53.

doi:10.1038/nature24286.

3. Whiteford N, Haslam N, Weber G, Prügel-Bennett A, Essex JW, Roach PL, et al. An analysis of the feasibility of short read sequencing. Nucleic Acids Res. 2005;33:e171.

doi:10.1093/nar/gni170.

4. Haubold B, Wiehe T. How repetitive are genomes? BMC Bioinformatics. 2006;7:541.

5. Kingsford C, Schatz MC, Pop M. Assembly complexity of prokaryotic genomes using short

reads. BMC Bioinformatics. 2010;11:21. doi:1471-2105-11-21 [pii] 10.1186/1471-2105-11-21.

6. Cahill MJ, Köser CU, Ross NE, Archer JAC. Read length and repeat resolution: Exploring

prokaryote genomes using next-generation sequencing technologies. PLoS One. 2010;5:e11518.

7. Koren S, Harhay GP, Smith TP, Bono JL, Harhay DM, Mcvey SD, et al. Reducing assembly

complexity of microbial genomes with single-molecule sequencing. Genome Biol.

2013;14:R101. doi:10.1186/gb-2013-14-9-r101.

8. Chen YC, Liu T, Yu CH, Chiang TY, Hwang CC. Effects of GC bias in next-generation-sequencing data on *de novo* genome assembly. PLoS One. 2013;8:e62856.

9. Cheung M-S, Down TA, Latorre I, Ahringer J. Systematic bias in high-throughput sequencing data and its correction by BEADS. Nucleic Acids Res. 2011;39:e103. doi:10.1093/nar/gkr425.
 10. Benjamini Y, Speed TP. Summarizing and correcting the GC content bias in high-throughput

sequencing. Nucleic Acids Res. 2012;40:e72. doi:10.1093/nar/gks001.

11. Aird D, Ross MG, Chen W-S, Danielsson M, Fennell T, Russ C, et al. Analyzing and minimizing

PCR amplification bias in Illumina sequencing libraries. Genome Biol. 2011;12:R18.

doi:10.1186/gb-2011-12-2-r18.

12. Marine R, Polson SW, Ravel J, Hatfull G, Russell D, Sullivan M, et al. Evaluation of a transposase protocol for rapid generation of shotgun high-throughput sequencing libraries from nanogram quantities of DNA. Appl Environ Microbiol. 2011;77:8071–9.

13. Muto A, Osawa S. The guanine and cytosine content of genomic DNA and bacterial evolution. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 1987;84:166–9.

14. Lan JH, Yin Y, Reed EF, Moua K, Thomas K, Zhang Q. Impact of three Illumina library construction methods on GC bias and HLA genotype calling. Hum Immunol. 2015;76:166–75. doi:10.1016/j.humimm.2014.12.016.

15. Acuña-Amador L, Primot A, Cadieu E, Roulet A, Barloy-Hubler F. Genomic repeats, misassembly and reannotation: a case study with long-read resequencing of *Porphyromonas gingivalis* reference strains. BMC Genomics. 2018;19:54.

16. Klassen JL, Currie CR. Gene fragmentation in bacterial draft genomes: extent, consequences and mitigation. BMC Genomics. 2012;13:14.

17. Sović I, Križanović K, Skala K, Šikić M. Evaluation of hybrid and non-hybrid methods for de novo assembly of nanopore reads. Bioinformatics. 2016;32:2582–9.

18. Fraser CM, Eisen JA, Nelson KE, Ian T, Salzberg SL, Paulsen IT. The value of complete microbial genome sequencing (you get what you pay for). J Bacteriol. 2002;184:6403–5. doi:10.1128/JB.184.23.6403.

19. Mardis E, McPherson J, Martienssen R, Wilson RK, McCombie WR. What is finished, and why does it matter. Genome Res. 2002;12:669–71.

20. Leggett RM, Clark MD. A world of opportunities with nanopore sequencing. J Exp Bot.

2017;68:5419-29.

21. Quick J, Loman NJ, Duraffour S, Simpson JT, Severi E, Cowley L, et al. Real-time, portable genome sequencing for Ebola surveillance. Nature. 2016;530:228–32.

doi:10.1038/nature16996.

22. Payne A, Holmes N, Rakyan V, Loose M. Whale watching with BulkVis: A graphical viewer for Oxford Nanopore bulk fast5 files. bioarXiv. 2018;:312256.

23. Ip CLC, Loose M, Tyson JR, de Cesare M, Brown BL, Jain M, et al. MinION Analysis and Reference Consortium: Phase 1 data release and analysis. F1000Research. 2015;4:1075. doi:10.12688/f1000research.7201.1.

24. Jain M, Tyson JR, Loose M, Ip CLC, Eccles DA, O'Grady J, et al. MinION Analysis and Reference Consortium: Phase 2 data release and analysis of R9.0 chemistry. F1000Research. 2017;6:760. doi:10.12688/f1000research.11354.1.

25. Lu H, Giordano F, Ning Z. Oxford Nanopore MinION sequencing and genome assembly. Genomics Proteomics Bioinformatics. 2016;14:265–79. doi:10.1016/j.gpb.2016.05.004. 26. Senol Cali D, Kim JS, Ghose S, Alkan C, Mutlu O. Nanopore sequencing technology and tools for genome assembly: computational analysis of the current state, bottlenecks and future directions. Brief Bioinform. 2018. doi:10.1093/bib/bby017.

27. Magi A, Semeraro R, Mingrino A, Giusti B, D'Aurizio R. Nanopore sequencing data analysis: state of the art, applications and challenges. Brief Bioinform. 2017. doi:10.1093/bib/bbx062. 28. de Lannoy C, de Ridder D, Risse J. A sequencer coming of age: *de novo* genome assembly using MinION reads. F1000Research. 2017;6:1083. doi:10.12688/f1000research.12012.1.
29. Ashton PM, Nair S, Dallman T, Rubino S, Rabsch W, Mwaigwisya S, et al. MinION nanopore sequencing identifies the position and structure of a bacterial antibiotic resistance island. Nat Biotechnol. 2015;33:296–300.

30. Risse J, Thomson M, Patrick S, Blakely G, Koutsovoulos G, Blaxter M, et al. A single chromosome assembly of *Bacteroides fragilis* strain BE1 from Illumina and MinION nanopore sequencing data. Gigascience. 2015;4:60. doi:10.1186/s13742-015-0101-6.

31. Karlsson E, Lärkeryd A, Sjödin A, Forsman M, Stenberg P. Scaffolding of a bacterial genome using MinION nanopore sequencing. Sci Rep. 2015;5:11996. doi:10.1038/srep11996.

32. Wick RR, Judd LM, Gorrie CL, Holt KE. Unicycler: Resolving bacterial genome assemblies from short and long sequencing reads. PLOS Comput Biol. 2017;13:e1005595.

33. Antipov D, Korobeynikov A, McLean JS, Pevzner PA. hybridSPAdes: an algorithm for hybrid assembly of short and long reads. Bioinformatics. 2016;32:1009–15.

34. Loman NJ, Quick J, Simpson JT. A complete bacterial genome assembled *de novo* using only nanopore sequencing data. Nat Methods. 2015;12:733–5. doi:10.1101/015552.

35. Koren S, Walenz BP, Berlin K, Miller JR, Bergman NH, Phillippy AM. Canu: scalable and accurate long-read assembly via adaptive k-mer weighting and repeat separation. Genome Res . 2017;27:722–36.

36. Walker BJ, Abeel T, Shea T, Priest M, Abouelliel A, Sakthikumar S, et al. Pilon: An integrated tool for comprehensive microbial variant detection and genome assembly improvement. PLoS One. 2014;9:e112963.

37. Judge K, Hunt M, Reuter S, Tracey A, Quail MA, Parkhill J, et al. Comparison of bacterial genome assembly software for MinION data and their applicability to medical microbiology. Microb Genomics. 2016;2. doi:10.1099/mgen.0.000085.

38. George S, Pankhurst L, Hubbard A, Votintseva A, Stoesser N, Sheppard AE, et al. Resolving plasmid structures in Enterobacteriaceae using the MinION nanopore sequencer: assessment of MinION and MinION/Illumina hybrid data assembly approaches. Microb Genomics. 2017;3:DOI 10.1099/mgen.0.000118.

39. Wick RR, Judd LM, Gorrie CL, Holt KE. Completing bacterial genome assemblies with multiplex MinION sequencing. Microb Genomics. 2017;3. doi:10.1099/mgen.0.000132.
40. Bayliss SC, Hunt VL, Yokoyama M, Thorpe HA, Feil EJ. The use of Oxford Nanopore native barcoding for complete genome assembly. Gigascience. 2017;6:1–6.

doi:10.1093/gigascience/gix001.

41. Todd MS, Settlage RE, Lahmers KK, Slade DJ. *Fusobacterium* genomics using MinION and Illumina sequencing enables genome completion and correction. bioRxiv. 2018;:305573. 42. Laver T, Harrison J, O'Neill PA, Moore K, Farbos A, Paszkiewicz K, et al. Assessing the performance of the Oxford Nanopore Technologies MinION. Biomol Detect Quantif. 2015;3:1– 8. doi:10.1016/j.bdq.2015.02.001.

43. Bainomugisa A, Duarte T, Lavu E, Pandey S, Coulter C, Marais B, et al. A complete nanonpore-only assembly of an XDR *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* Beijing lineage strain identifies novel genetic variation in repetitive PE/PPE gene regions. bioRxiv. 2018;:256719. doi:10.1101/256719.

44. Marden JN, McClure EA, Beka L, Graf J. Host matters: medicinal leech digestive-tract

symbionts and their pathogenic potential. Front Microbiol. 2016;7:1569.

45. Oh D-C, Poulsen M, Currie CR, Clardy J. Dentigerumycin: a bacterial mediator of an ant-fungus symbiosis. Nat Chem Biol. 2009;5:391–3. doi:10.1038/nchembio.159.
46. Beka L, Fullmer MS, Colston SM, Nelson MC, Talagrand-Reboul E, Walker P, et al. Low-level antimicrobials in the medicinal leech select for resistant pathogens that spread to patients.

mBio. 2018;9:e01328-18.

47. Colston SM, Fullmer MS, Beka L, Lamy B, Peter Gogarten J, Graf J. Bioinformatic genome comparisons for taxonomic and phylogenetic assignments using aeromonas as a test case. mBio. 2014;5:e02136-14.

48. Indergand S, Graf J. Ingested blood contributes to the specificity of the symbiosis of *Aeromonas veronii* Biovar Sobria and *Hirudo medicinalis*, the medicinal leech. Appl Environ Microbiol. 2000;66:4735–41.

49. Cain KD, LaFrentz BR. Laboratory Maintenance of *Flavobacterium psychrophilum* and *Flavobacterium columnare*. Curr Protoc Microbiol. 2017;6:13B.1.1-13B.1.12.

50. Marsh SE, Poulsen M, Gorosito NB, Pinto-Tomás A, Masiulionis VE, Currie CR. Association between *Pseudonocardia* symbionts and *Atta* leaf-cutting ants suggested by improved isolation methods. Int Microbiol. 2013;16:17–25.

51. Rio RVM, Anderegg M, Graf J. Characterization of a catalase gene from *Aeromonas veronii*, the digestive-tract symbiont of the medicinal leech. Microbiology. 2007;153:1897–906.

52. Nelson K, Selander RK. Analysis of genetic variation by polymerase chain reaction-based nucleotide sequencing. Methods Enzymol. 1994;235:174–83.

53. Bolger AM, Lohse M, Usadel B. Trimmomatic: a flexible trimmer for Illumina sequence data.

Bioinformatics. 2014;30:2114–20.

54. Loman NJ, Quinlan AR. Poretools: a toolkit for analyzing nanopore sequence data.

Bioinformatics. 2014;30:3399–401.

55. Li H, Durbin R. Fast and accurate short read alignment with Burrows-Wheeler transform. Bioinformatics. 2009;25:1754–60.

56. Li H, Handsaker B, Wysoker A, Fennell T, Ruan J, Homer N, et al. The sequence alignment/map format and SAMtools. Bioinformatics. 2009;25:2078–9.

57. Gurevich A, Saveliev V, Vyahhi N, Tesler G. QUAST: Quality assessment tool for genome assemblies. Bioinformatics. 2013;29:1072–5.

58. Ondov BD, Treangen TJ, Melsted P, Mallonee AB, Bergman NH, Koren S, et al. Mash: fast genome and metagenome distance estimation using MinHash. Genome Biol. 2016;17:132. doi:10.1186/s13059-016-0997-x.

59. Kurtz S, Phillippy A, Delcher AL, Smoot M, Shumway M, Antonescu C, et al. Versatile and open software for comparing large genomes. Genome Biol. 2004;5:R12.

60. Blin K, Wolf T, Chevrette MG, Lu XH, Schwalen CJ, Kautsar SA, et al. antiSMASH 4.0 improvements in chemistry prediction and gene cluster boundary identification. Nucleic Acids Res. 2017;45:W36–41.

61. Finn RD, Coggill P, Eberhardt RY, Eddy SR, Mistry J, Mitchell AL, et al. The Pfam protein families database: towards a more sustainable future. Nucleic Acids Res. 2017;44:D279–85. 62. Camacho C, Coulouris G, Avagyan V, Ma N, Papadopoulos J, Bealer K, et al. BLAST+: architecture and applications. BMC Bioinformatics. 2009;10:421. doi:10.1186/1471-2105-10-421. 63. Shannon P, Markiel A, Ozier O, Baliga NS, Wang JT, Ramage D, et al. Cytoscape: a software environment for integrated models of biomolecular interaction networks. Genome Res. 2003;13:2498–504.

64. Varani AM, Siguier P, Gourbeyre E, Charneau V, Chandler M. ISsaga is an ensemble of webbased methods for high throughput identification and semi-automatic annotation of insertion sequences in prokaryotic genomes. Genome Biol. 2011;12:R30. doi:10.1186/gb-2011-12-3-r30. 65. Watson M. Mind the gaps - ignoring errors in long read assemblies critically affects protein prediction. bioRxiv. 2018;:285049. doi:10.1101/285049.

66. Giordano F, Aigrain L, Quail MA, Coupland P, Bonfield JK, Davies RM, et al. *De novo* yeast genome assemblies from MinION, PacBio and MiSeq platforms. Sci Rep. 2017;7:3935.