

A Comparison of Bacteria Cultured from Unionid Mussel Hemolymph between Stable Populations in the Upper Mississippi River Basin and Populations Affected by a Mortality Event in the Clinch River

Authors: Leis, Eric, Erickson, Sara, Waller, Diane, Richard, Jordan, and Goldberg, Tony

Source: Freshwater Mollusk Biology and Conservation, 22(2) : 70-80

Published By: Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.31931/fmbc.v22i2.2019.70-80>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

REGULAR ARTICLE

A COMPARISON OF BACTERIA CULTURED FROM UNIONID MUSSEL HEMOLYMPH BETWEEN STABLE POPULATIONS IN THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN AND POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY A MORTALITY EVENT IN THE CLINCH RIVER

Eric Leis^{1*}, Sara Erickson¹, Diane Waller², Jordan Richard³, and Tony Goldberg⁴

¹ La Crosse Fish Health Center, Midwest Fisheries Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 555 Lester Ave, Onalaska, WI 54650 USA

² Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, U.S. Geological Survey, 2630 Fanta Reed Rd, La Crosse, WI 54603 USA

³ Southwestern Virginia Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southwestern Virginia Field Office, 330 Cummings Street, Abingdon, VA 24210 USA

⁴ University of Wisconsin–Madison, Department of Pathobiological Sciences and Global Health Institute, 1656 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706 USA

ABSTRACT

The diagnosis of bacterial disease in freshwater unionid mussels has been hindered by a lack of baseline information regarding the microbial communities associated with these animals. In this study, we cultured and identified bacteria from the hemolymph of stable mussel populations from Wisconsin portions of the upper Mississippi River basin and compared the results to those from mussel populations experiencing a mortality event in the Clinch River in Virginia and Tennessee. Several bacterial genera were consistently identified across mussel species and locations, appearing to be part of the natural bacterial flora. One noteworthy bacterial species identified from the Clinch River was *Yokenella regensburgei*, which occurred in relatively high prevalence during the mortality event but was absent from samples acquired afterward. Its role in the mortality event, if any, is unknown but deserves further investigation. We suggest that future studies of freshwater mussel health incorporate hemolymph as a sample type due to its relative separation from the aquatic environment, its role in the circulatory system, and the fact that it can be collected nonlethally.

KEY WORDS: freshwater mussel, Unionidae, microflora, bacteriology, hemolymph, disease

INTRODUCTION

Freshwater mussels are exposed to the microorganisms that they filter and accumulate from the aquatic environment. Bacteria are a food source, but also can be found in body tissues outside of the gut, including the hemolymph, in apparently healthy animals (Starliper et al. 1998, 2008; Antunes et al. 2010). In general, the characteristic bacterial flora of freshwater mussels is largely unknown, despite the

emergence of microbiome research examining correlations between bacterial and archaeal communities and health and resilience across a variety of animal species (e.g., gut biota of humans and fish, livestock, etc.; see Ingerslev et al. 2014; Ghanbari et al. 2015; Reese et al. 2018; Trinh et al. 2018). In mussels, bacterial diversity in fluids and tissues has been associated with healthy, responsive animals (Starliper et al. 2008), whereas high bacterial loads have been associated with sick or moribund animals (see Sparks et al. 1990, Starliper et al. 2011).

*Corresponding Author: eric_leis@fws.gov

Historically, mass mortality events of freshwater mussels have occurred that suggest infectious causes (Neves 1987), but in most cases, the causative agent has not been identified (see review in Grizzle and Brunner 2009). While samples may be collected and analyzed from such events, the lack of data regarding the normal microbiota of healthy mussel populations has made it difficult to identify potential pathogens as well as other potential commensal or mutualistic relationships (Starliper et al. 1998; Starliper 2008). The reports by Starliper, focused on populations from the southeastern USA (Starliper et al. 1998; Starliper and Morrison 2000; Starliper 2001, 2005, 2008, 2011; Starliper et al. 2008, 2011), constitute much of the knowledge base regarding the bacterial communities associated with freshwater mussels. To develop much-needed specific diagnostic assays, we must better understand mussel-microbe interactions and identify pathogens, tasks feasible only with bacteriology data from diverse unionid species across broader geographic regions.

Standardized diagnostic methods for freshwater fish typically utilize the kidney for the collection of bacteriological samples (USFWS and AFS–FHS 2012) due to its function as a filtration organ. However, similar methods are lacking for freshwater mussels, primarily because of limited attention to the diseases of these taxa (Grizzle and Brunner 2009). Typically, previous bacteriology studies of unionids have utilized lethal sampling to collect fluids and mixed tissue or whole body homogenate samples (Starliper et al. 1998, 2008, 2011; Starliper and Morrison 2000; Starliper 2001, 2005), while others compared the microbiota between specific tissues (Sparks et al. 1990; Chittick et al. 2001; Nichols et al. 2001; Antunes et al. 2010). Although bacteria were cultured from most tissue types, interpretations are confounded by lack of organ specificity (mixed tissue or whole body homogenates) as well as the risk to sample integrity due to the closeness of the internal organs to the aquatic environment and the disinfection procedures used to reduce contamination. Moreover, whole body and soft tissue samples generally require sacrifice of the mussel, which should be avoided, especially for imperiled fauna.

A sample type that has received less attention in the assessment of freshwater mussel health is hemolymph (Sparks et al. 1990; Starliper 2008; Antunes et al. 2010). This fluid, which plays an important role in immunity as well as many other critical functions, makes up approximately 50% of the weight of mussel tissue (Thorp and Covich 2010). The interaction of hemolymph with the organs and tissues of the mussel, its relative compartmentalization from the aquatic environment, and the accessibility through the adductor sinus for nonlethal sampling provide many advantages (Gustafson et al. 2005; Burkhard et al. 2009). Furthermore, this sample may be particularly useful in examining potential septicemia (Sparks et al. 1990).

In this study, we cultured and identified bacteria from the hemolymph of unionid mussels from apparently stable populations in the Wisconsin portion of the Upper Mississippi River (UMR) basin as well as from samples obtained from a mussel mortality event in the Clinch River in Tennessee and

Virginia. Our primary objective was to determine the community composition of the culturable bacteria present within these populations and the prevalence of specific taxa.

METHODS

We collected a variety of freshwater mussel species on June 16, 2017, August 23, 2017, August 29, 2017, October 6, 2017, and October 26, 2017, from the Wisconsin stretches of the La Crosse River (43°54'52.51"N, 91°4'34.93"W), Chippewa River (44°45'38.80"N, 91°40'44.80"W), Lake Onalaska (a backwater lake of Pool 7 of the UMR; 43°53'45.85"N, 91°16'10.41"W), Black River (43°52'18.65"N, 91°14'42.39"W), and Goose Island (Pool 8 of the UMR; 43°44'46.20"N, 91°13'34.17"W), respectively (Fig. 1). We obtained samples from Pheasantshell (*Actinonaias pectorosa*) mussels from the Tennessee reaches (Wallen Bend, 36°35'2.65"N, 83°0'49.96"W; Kyle's Ford, 36°33'57.05"N, 83°2'29.57"W) of the Clinch River on November 2, 2017, during an active mortality event (Richard 2018) and postmortality event on February 1, 2018, again from Kyle's Ford as well as Sycamore Island (Virginia, 36°37'16.36"N, 82°49'6.20"W) (Fig. 1). Mussels were hand-collected and held in source water until a sufficient sample size (~20–30) was acquired for each site. During the postmortality sampling event, we processed approximately half of the Pheasantshells in the field and, due to inclement weather, transported the others in source water to the laboratory, where they were held (up to 72 h) before sampling. Following collection, we used either a reverse pliers or a child's nasal speculum and stopper to open the shell slightly. The anterior adductor mussel was cleaned using an individually wrapped sterile rayon swab soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol. We withdrew approximately 100 µL of hemolymph from the anterior adductor muscle using a 1 mL insulin needle and syringe. The hemolymph sample was then sinuously streaked onto a tryptic soy agar (TSA) plate using a sterile inoculation loop. TSA plates were incubated for 1 wk in a 21°C incubator. Bacterial colonies with unique macroscopic morphologies were sampled from each plate using a sterile bacteriology loop and placed in sterile 2.0 mL microconical screw-cap collection tubes. Following the manufacturer's instructions, we then extracted DNA using 100 µL of PrepMan™ Ultra Sample Preparation Reagent (ThermoFisher Scientific). Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) primers targeting the 16S rRNA gene (Table 1) were used to amplify and sequence this gene from each isolate. The master mix consisted of 46 µL Platinum PCR Supermix as well as 100 pmol of each selected forward and reverse primer (Table 1). Two µL of extracted DNA was added to the master mix for each reaction. PCR products were exoSAP purified, and Sanger sequencing was performed by the Whitney Genetics Laboratory (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Onalaska, WI). We edited sequences using Geneious (version 11.1.5) and conducted BLASTn queries using the NCBI database (<https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>). Accession numbers reported in the Supplemental Data represent the top listed, named species that shared the most similarity to our

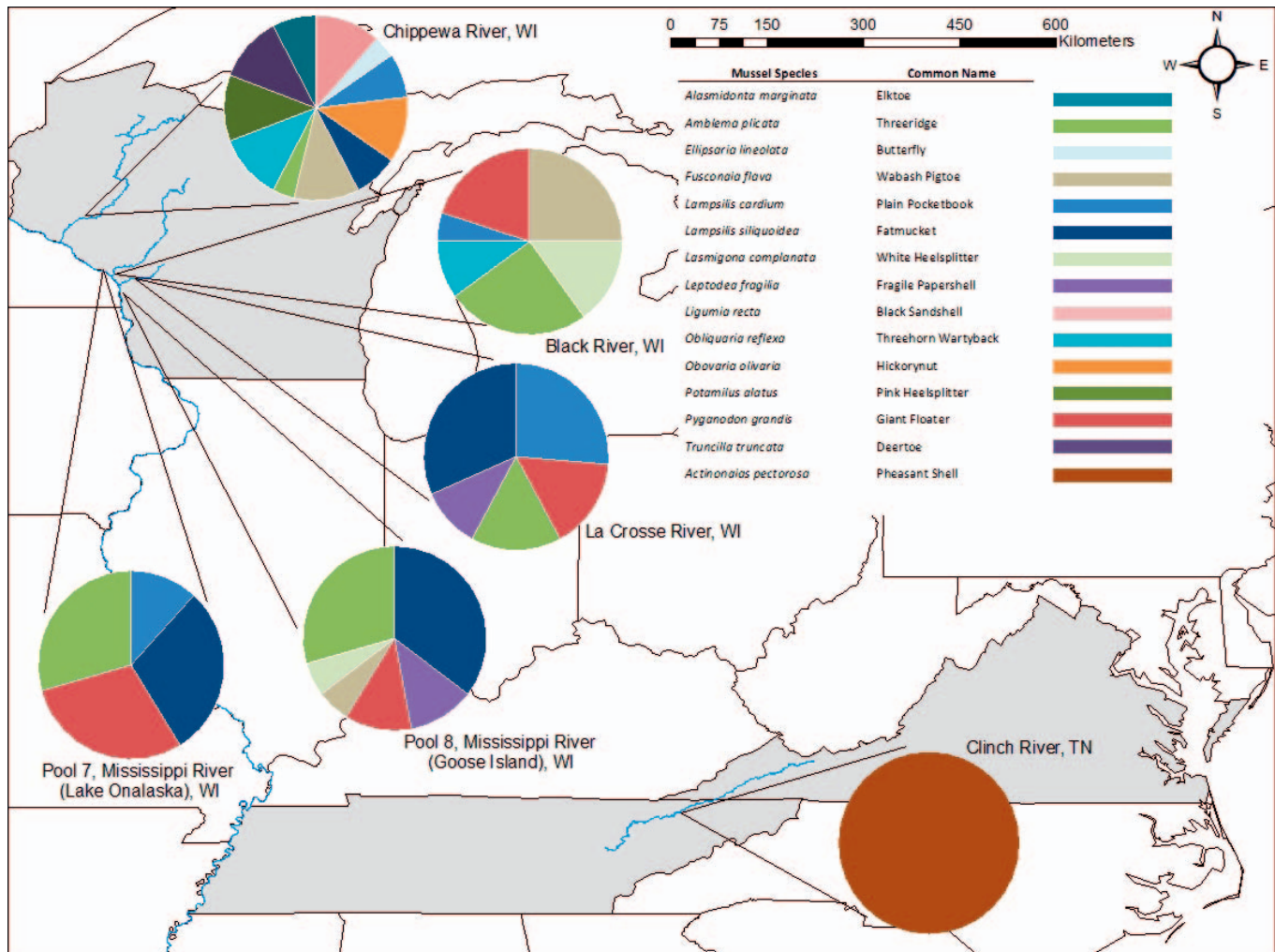


Figure 1. Relative proportion of mussel species sampled at each location.

query. Ambiguities are also reported (i.e., multiple species, or in a few cases genera, that shared the same degree of similarity).

RESULTS

We obtained unionid mussels ($n = 99$) representing 14 species from five sites in the Upper Mississippi River Basin

Table 1. Primers used in PCR amplification and sequencing of 16S rRNA genes of bacterial isolates cultured from unionid mussels.

Primer	Sequence (5'–3')	Reference
8F	AGAGTTTGATCCTGGCTCAG	Turner et al. 1999
27F	AGAGTTTGATCMTGGCTCAG	Lane 1991
518F	TACCAGGGTATCTAATCC	Faisal et al. 2017
800R	CCAGCAGCCGCGGTAATACG	Faisal et al. 2017
1160F	AATCATCACGGCCCTTACGC	Faisal et al. 2017
1387R	GGGCGGWGTGTACAAGGC	Marchesi et al. 1998
1492R (I)	GGTTACCTTGTTACGACTT	Turner et al. 1999
1541R	AAGGAGGTGATCCAGCCGCA	Löffler et al. 2000

(Fig. 1). We cultured bacteria representing 47 genera (Table 2) from the hemolymph of 73 mussels (74%), identifying 190 colonies through molecular methods. Two colonies were not identified. The most prevalent bacterial genera from the UMR overall were *Bacillus* spp. (19%) and *Aeromonas* spp. (21%). Most genera had a prevalence <10%, and approximately half were single-incidence isolates. Mussels sampled from the UMR basin were healthy in appearance with the lone exception being one gaping Plain Pocketbook (*Lampsilis cardium*) from the La Crosse River; we identified only *Pseudomonas* spp. from this animal. We detected bacteria displaying high levels of similarity to two fish pathogens, *Yersinia ruckeri* and *Aeromonas salmonicida*. We identified *Y. ruckeri* from one Black Sandshell (*Ligumia recta*) and one Three Horn Wartyback (*Obliquaria reflexa*) from the Chippewa River (Supplemental Data). We identified *A. salmonicida* from one Plain Pocketbook, one Wabash Pigtoe (*Fusconaia flava*), two Deertoe (*Truncilla truncata*), one Fat Mucket (*Lampsilis siliquoidea*), and one Hickorynut (*Obovaria olivaria*) in the Chippewa River; one Giant Floater and one Plain Pocketbook from the Black River; two Fat Muckets and one Wabash Pigtoe from the Goose Island

Table 2. Bacteria cultured and identified from hemolymph collected from mussels in the upper Mississippi River basin.

Location	Mussel species	Number sampled	Bacteria	Prevalence (% of mussels)
La Crosse River	Fatmucket <i>Lampsilis siliquoidea</i>	6	<i>Agrococcus</i>	17
			<i>Bacillus</i>	33
			<i>Erwinia</i>	17
			<i>Exiguobacterium</i>	33
			<i>Kocuria</i>	17
			<i>Microbacterium</i>	17
	Fragile Papershell <i>Leptodea fragilis</i>	2	<i>Bacillus</i>	50
			<i>Pseudomonas</i>	50
			Giant Floater <i>Pyganodon grandis</i>	3
	Plain Pocketbook <i>Lampsilis cardium</i>	5	<i>Bacillus</i>	67
			<i>Chryseobacterium</i>	50
			<i>Aeromonas</i>	50
			<i>Pseudomonas</i>	50
			<i>Acinetobacter</i>	20
			<i>Brevundimonas</i>	20
	Threeridge <i>Amblyma plicata</i>	3	<i>Chryseomicrobium</i>	20
			<i>Comamonas</i>	20
			<i>Exiguobacterium</i>	80
			<i>Microbacterium</i>	20
			<i>Pseudarthrobacter</i>	20
<i>Bacillus</i>			67	
Chippewa River	Black Sandshell <i>Ligumia recta</i>	3	<i>Brevundimonas</i>	33
			<i>Erwinia</i>	33
			<i>Exiguobacterium</i>	33
			<i>Stenotrophomonas</i>	33
			<i>Luteimonas</i>	33
	Deertoe <i>Truncilla truncata</i>	3	<i>Aeromonas</i>	33
			<i>Deefgea</i>	33
			<i>Yersinia</i>	33
			<i>Aeromonas</i>	67
			<i>Bacillus</i>	33
			<i>Brevundimonas</i>	33
			<i>Chromobacterium</i>	33
			<i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> (<i>Serratia</i> , <i>Yersinia</i> , <i>Rahnella</i>)	33
	Elktoe <i>Alasmidonta marginata</i>	2	<i>Microbacterium</i>	33
			<i>Pseudomonas</i>	67
			<i>Sporosarcina</i>	33
			<i>Aeromonas</i>	50
			<i>Chromobacterium</i>	50
			<i>Leuconostoc</i>	50
			<i>Pantoea</i>	50
Fatmucket <i>Lampsilis siliquoidea</i>	2	<i>Pseudoxanthomonas</i>	50	
		<i>Stenotrophomonas</i>	100	
		<i>Acidovorax</i>	50	
		<i>Aeromonas</i>	50	
		<i>Chromobacterium</i>	50	
Hickorynut <i>Obovaria olivaria</i>	3	<i>Aeromonas</i>	33	
		<i>Bacillus</i>	33	
Pink Heelsplitter	3	<i>Agrobacterium</i> (<i>Rhizobium</i>)	33	

Table 2, continued.

Location	Mussel species	Number sampled	Bacteria	Prevalence (% of mussels)
Mississippi River	<i>Fusconaia flava</i>		<i>Bacillus</i>	20
			<i>Flectobacillus</i>	20
			<i>Morganella</i>	20
			<i>Rhodococcus</i>	20
			<i>Serratia</i>	20
			<i>Staphylococcus</i>	20
	White Heelsplitter	3	<i>Acidovorax</i>	33
	<i>Lasmigona complanata</i>	6	<i>Aeromonas</i>	66
	Fatmucket		<i>Acidovorax</i>	17
	<i>Lampsilis siliquoides</i>		<i>Acinetobacter</i>	33
			<i>Aeromonas</i>	50
			<i>Arthrobacter</i>	17
			<i>Bacillus</i>	50
			<i>Chryseobacterium</i>	17
			<i>Microbacterium</i>	33
			<i>Pseudomonas</i>	17
			<i>Shewanella</i>	17
			<i>Staphylococcus</i>	17
			<i>Chitinibacter</i>	50
		Fragile Papershell	2	
	<i>Leptodea fragilis</i>	2	<i>Bacillus</i>	50
	Giant Floater		<i>Bosea</i>	50
	<i>Pyganodon grandis</i>		<i>Chryseobacterium</i>	50
	<i>Rheinheimera</i>		50	
	<i>Stenotrophomonas</i>		50	
Threeridge	5	<i>Brevundimonas</i>	20	
<i>Amblema plicata</i>		<i>Microbacterium</i>	20	
		<i>Stenotrophomonas</i>	60	
		<i>Variovorax</i>	20	
		<i>Acidovorax</i>	100	
White Heelsplitter	1	<i>Bacillus</i>	100	
<i>Lasmigona complanata</i>		<i>Flavobacterium</i>	100	
		<i>Staphylococcus</i>	100	
		<i>Stenotrophomonas</i>	100	
		<i>Pseudarthrobacter</i>	100	
Wabash Pigtoe	1	<i>Pseudarthrobacter</i>	100	
<i>Fusconaia flava</i>		<i>Aeromonas</i>	100	

backwater of Pool 8 in the UMR; one Giant Floater from the La Crosse River; and three Pheasantshells from the Clinch River (Supplemental Data). Note that some ambiguity (see Supplemental Data) was observed in the identifications of *A. salmonicida*, likely due to the diversity of genetically similar taxa within *Aeromonas* species.

During an active mortality event, we sampled 19 Pheasantshells from the Clinch River in Tennessee and cultured bacteria from 89% of the hemolymph samples. Again, *Bacillus* (16%), *Aeromonas* (42%), and *Pseudomonas* (21%) were among the most prevalent genera (Table 3). We also identified *Yokenella regensburgei* from 42% of the Pheasantshells; this bacterium was not observed in samples obtained from the UMR.

In the postmortality sampling event of 14 Pheasantshells, we cultured bacteria from 100% of the samples with the most prevalent isolates identified as *Bacillus* spp. (53%) and *Pseudomonas* spp. (53%) (Table 3). It was noteworthy that *Y. regensburgei* was not identified from this later sampling event.

DISCUSSION

Hemolymph from 74% of the mussels from the UMR, 89% of Pheasantshells sampled during the mortality event, and 100% of Pheasantshells sampled after the mortality event yielded at least one bacterial colony. In both geographic areas, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas*, and *Aeromonas* were among the most

Table 3. Bacteria cultured and identified from hemolymph collected from mussels in the Clinch River.

Date	Mussel species	Number sampled	Bacteria	Prevalence (% of mussels)
November 2017	Pheasantshell <i>Actinonaias pectorosa</i>	19	<i>Aeromonas</i>	42
			Micrococcaceae (<i>Arthrobacter/</i> <i>Pseudarthrobacter</i>)	5
			<i>Bacillus</i>	16
			Enterobacteriaceae (<i>Yokenella/</i> <i>Klebsiella</i>)	5
			<i>Flavobacterium</i>	5
			<i>Lysinibacillus</i>	5
			<i>Massilia</i>	5
			<i>Moraxella</i>	5
			<i>Pseudomonas</i>	21
			<i>Streptococcus</i>	11
			<i>Yokenella</i>	42
February 2018	Pheasantshell <i>Actinonaias pectorosa</i>	14	<i>Arthrobacter</i>	7
			<i>Bacillus</i>	53
			<i>Cellulomonas</i>	7
			<i>Exiguobacterium</i>	7
			<i>Klebsiella</i>	7
			<i>Kocuria</i>	7
			<i>Massilia</i>	7
			<i>Microbacterium</i>	13
			<i>Paeniglutamicibacter</i>	7
			<i>Planococcus</i>	7
			<i>Pseudomonas</i>	53
			<i>Sanguibacter</i>	7
			<i>Sphingomonas</i>	7
<i>Streptomyces</i>	7			

prevalent bacterial genera identified from mussel hemolymph. Many of the species identified from the UMR and Clinch Rivers also had been reported previously from unionid mussels in the Mississippi, Illinois, Clinch, and Tennessee rivers (Sparks et al. 1990; Starliper et al. 2008, 2011).

Aeromonas spp., a group known for varying levels of pathogenicity (Sreedharan et al. 2011), were identified with the highest prevalence (42%) during the peak of the mortality event on the Clinch River. This genus was not identified during the postmortality sampling and was reported from only 21% of the mussels sampled from apparently healthy populations in the UMR. In previous studies, *Aeromonas* spp. have been among the most prevalent bacteria cultured from both healthy and diseased mussels (Sparks et al. 1990; Atunes et al. 2010; Starliper et al. 2011). We suggest that future work investigate associations between *Aeromonas* spp. and unionid health and disease, especially studies examining bacterial growth and mussel immune function under stressful conditions.

Yersinia ruckeri and *A. salmonicida* are important fish

pathogens with regulatory implications. Fish infected with these bacteria are not only at risk for disease, but they may not be approved for stocking, thereby putting them at risk for depopulation. Since captive mussel propagation efforts typically occur in fish hatcheries, we suggest testing mussels for these pathogens before incorporating them into hatchery operations. Additionally, strong consideration should be given to depurating the mussels, in isolation, before introducing them to hatchery facilities, because this has been shown to effectively eliminate *A. salmonicida* (Starliper 2005).

The diversity of the microbial community in the hemolymph may be an important indicator of population health. Measures of bacterial diversity reportedly decrease in stressed Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) (Gu and Mitchell 2002) and diseased Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) (Lokmer et al. 2016). In fact, the diversity of microbial communities in the hemolymph of Pacific oyster was a predictor of response to environmental stress (Lokmer et al. 2016). Our results provide baseline data on microbial diversity

in native mussel populations in the UMR for comparison, especially if future stressful events occur.

An important next step is to compare microbial community composition in nonnative bivalves that co-occur with native mussels, such as dreissenids and *Corbicula*. Other studies have investigated bacterial communities associated with Zebra mussels, but none, to our knowledge, have concurrently examined native mussels (e.g., Frischer et al. 2000; Gu and Mitchell 2002; Winters et al. 2010, 2011). Zebra mussels have caused significant shifts in bacterial community structure (Frischer et al. 2000; Lohner et al. 2007), which could have consequences for the stability of native mussel microbiota. Similarly, *Corbicula* are efficient filter feeders that reduce bacterial abundance in streambeds (Hakenkamp et al. 2001) and could also potentially alter the microbial community composition.

Bacteria have been routinely isolated from the hemolymph of aquatic invertebrates in varying stages of health (see the table in Zhang et al. 2018). It is therefore plausible that mussels are under constant invasion from bacteria in the aquatic environment. However, the consistent presence of taxonomically related bacteria across mussel species and geographic locations suggests a characteristic unionid hemolymph microbiome. Members of the genus *Bacillus* have several characteristics that appear probiotic in nature. For example, several *Bacillus* spp. (including some sharing high levels of similarity to species identified in this study; see Supplemental Data) convert urea into calcium carbonate (Wei et al. 2015; Anbu et al. 2016), a major component of the freshwater mussel shell. Furthermore, members of this group also are known for their antimicrobial properties (Yilmaz et al. 2006). The well-studied *Bacillus subtilis* is a calcium carbonate producer that has been used as a probiotic in chicken feed to thicken eggshells and inhibit pathogens (Fathi et al. 2018; Hosseindoust et al. 2018). This species also has been shown to produce fructooligosaccharides (Silva et al. 2016), which reportedly increase calcium absorption in mammals (Morohashi et al. 1998). *Bacillus subtilis* also has been recommended as a probiotic in shrimp culture due to its inhibition of *Vibrio*, a common shellfish pathogen (Vaseeharan and Ramasamy 2003). Similarly, other genera were identified that have species and/or strains with similar potential probiotic characteristics: *Exiguobacterium* (production of the shell component chondroitin, Bhotmange and Singhal 2015), *Brevundimonas* (calcium carbonate production, Wei et al. 2015), *Chromobacterium* (violacein production, Durán and Menck 2001), *Sporosarcina* (calcium carbonate production, Wei et al. 2015; Kim et al. 2016), *Pseudomonas* (calcium carbonate production, Li et al. 2015), *Stenotrophomonas* (production of osmoprotective and antifungal properties, Wolf et al. 2002), *Lysinibacillus* (calcium carbonate production, Lee et al. 2017; chondroitin production, Bhotmange and Singhal 2015; antimicrobial properties, Ahmad et al. 2014), *Acinetobacter* (calcium carbonate production, Zamarreno

et al. 2009), and *Microbacterium* (calcium carbonate production, Xu et al. 2017).

Many of the bacteria isolated from unionid mussels were similar genetically to genera with species and/or strains targeted for bioremediation efforts (see Supplemental Data). There are many examples describing the use of environmental bacteria, including some genetically similar to the hemolymph isolates, with the potential for environmental detoxification (Schippers et al. 2005; Hegazi et al. 2007; Genovese et al. 2008; Seeger et al. 2010; Chatterjee et al. 2011; Irawati et al. 2012; Wanjohi et al. 2015; Huët and Puchooa 2017; Poornima and Velan 2018). Historical issues with contamination have been documented in both the Mississippi (Schramm 2004) and Clinch river (Price et al. 2014) systems. Although water quality in the UMR has improved significantly since the 1970s (Schramm 2004), the presence of these bacterial species in freshwater mussels in the UMR may be a response to persistent pollutants, especially in the sediments where mussels reside. The microbiome of an animal plays a critical role in chemical detoxification within the host (see the review in Adamovsky et al. 2018), and we do not know the extent to which the bacteria residing within the mussels may be providing this service. Future research examining whether the species and strains of bacteria associated with freshwater mussel hemolymph are indeed active in the detoxification of aquatic pollutants will be critical in examining this aspect of symbiosis as well as to assess whether mussel microbiomes may be an indicator of environmental pollutants.

In the Clinch River, *Y. regensburgei* was identified from 42% of the Pheasantshells sampled during an active mortality event but, interestingly, was not detected from the same population just a few months later. Isolates from the *Yokenella* genus have been shown to degrade hydrocarbons from soils contaminated with oily sludge (Bhattacharya et al. 2003); its presence could indicate elevated levels of contaminating hydrocarbons during the period of peak mortality, levels that may have subsided thereafter. Interestingly, *Y. regensburgei* also was identified during the peak of a mortality event involving Ebonyshell (*Fusconaia ebena*) from the Tennessee River, Alabama (Starliper et al. 2011). In human medicine, *Y. regensburgei* is considered an opportunistic pathogen (Lo et al. 2011; Jain et al. 2013); it also has been identified from a variety of environmental samples including well water and the gastrointestinal tracts of insects (Kosako et al. 1984). Such observations warrant further investigations of the relationship of *Y. regensburgei* with freshwater mussels, perhaps including *in vivo* exposures of mussels to hydrocarbons and experimental assessment of the mitigating effects (if any) of *Y. regensburgei* on toxicosis.

The occurrence of a bacterial species in both apparently healthy and sick mussels does not necessarily indicate either a commensal or pathogenic relationship. Changes in the environment, condition of the host, and balance of the microbial community can facilitate pathogenesis. Additionally, the virulence of a bacterial species can vary significantly

among strains (see, e.g., Olivier 1990). Indigenous bacteria isolated from Zebra mussel whole body homogenates were pathogenic when administered in high doses and under elevated water temperatures (Gu and Mitchell 2002). Studies of the pathogenicity of suspect bacteria under different conditions are needed to elucidate the mechanisms and conditions that encourage bacterial pathogenesis in freshwater mussels.

In our study, the TSA media and culture conditions undoubtedly limited the diversity of bacterial species that were identified. Incubation temperature, time, and media are all important factors to consider when attempting to recover specific bacteria of interest (Starliper and Morrison 2000) or to maximize growth of greater microbial diversity. For example, incubation of digestive gland samples from *Elliptio complanata* at both 20°C and 35°C yielded a greater number and type of isolates than at a single temperature (Chittick et al. 2001). Additional research is needed to determine optimal media and culture conditions for growth of bacteria from freshwater mussels. Furthermore, research using metagenomic analysis will help identify unculturable species as well as examine functional profiles of all hemolymph bacteria, especially in regard to pathways pertaining to calcium carbonate production and pollutant detoxification.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study established reference data on the diversity of culturable bacteria from the hemolymph of unionid mussels across multiple species and geographic regions in the USA. Hemolymph proved highly suitable for assessing the microbiota of freshwater mussels by nonlethal methods. Isolates genetically similar to two potential fish pathogens, *A. salmonicida* and *Y. ruckeri*, were detected in mussels from two sites in the upper Mississippi River basin. *Yokenella regensburgei* was identified from Pheasantshell mussels during a mortality event, and further work is necessary to determine the importance of this bacterium.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For assistance collecting mussels, we would like to thank Kyle Mosel, Katie Lieder, and Nick Bloomfield (La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office); Teresa Newton, Patricia Ries, Andrea Fritts, and Eric Lord (Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center); and Megan Bradley and Nathan Eckert (Genoa National Fish Hatchery). We also would like to thank John Fisher (National Conservation Library, National Conservation Training Center, USFWS) for assistance finding reference materials. The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the USFWS. Any use of trade, firm, or product names is for descriptive purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the USFWS or the U.S. Government.

LITERATURE CITED

- Adamovsky, O., A. N. Buerger, A. M. Wormington, N. Ector, R. J. Griffith, J. H. Bisesi, and C. J. Martyniuk. 2018. The gut microbiome and aquatic toxicology: An emerging concept for environmental health: The microbiome and aquatic toxicology. *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* 37:2758–2775.
- Ahmad, V., A. N. M. Z. Iqbal, M. Haseeb, and M. S. Khan. 2014. Antimicrobial potential of bacteriocin producing *Lysinibacillus* jx416856 against foodborne bacterial and fungal pathogens, isolated from fruits and vegetable waste. *Anaerobe* 27:87–95.
- Anbu, P., C.-H. Kang, Y.-J. Shin, and J.-S. So. 2016. Formations of calcium carbonate minerals by bacteria and its multiple applications. *SpringerPlus* 5(1):250.
- Antunes, F., M. Hinzmann, M. Lopes-Lima, J. Machado, and P. Martins da Costa. 2010. Association between environmental microbiota and indigenous bacteria found in hemolymph, extrapallial fluid and mucus of *Anodonta cygnea* (Linnaeus, 1758). *Microbial Ecology* 60:304–309.
- Bhattacharya, D., P. M. Sarma, S. Krishnan, S. Mishra, and B. Lal. 2003. Evaluation of genetic diversity among *Pseudomonas citronellolis* strains isolated from oily sludge-contaminated sites. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 69:1435–1441.
- Bhotmange, D. U., and R. S. Singhal. 2015. Identification of chondroitin-like molecules from biofilm isolates *Exiguobacterium indicum* A11 and *Lysinibacillus* sp. C13. *Journal of Applied Microbiology* 119:1046–1056.
- Burkhard, M. J., S. Leavell, R. B. Weiss, K. Kuehn, H. Valentine, G. Thomas Watters, and B. A. Wolfe. 2009. Analysis and cytologic characterization of hemocytes from freshwater mussels (*Quadrula* sp.). *Veterinary Clinical Pathology* 38:426–436.
- Chatterjee, S., G. B. Sau, and S. K. Mukherjee. 2011. Bioremediation of Cr(VI) from chromium-contaminated wastewater by free and immobilized cells of *Cellulosimicrobium cellulans* KUCr3. *Bioremediation Journal* 15:173–180.
- Chittick, B., M. Stoskopf, M. Law, R. Overstreet, and J. Levine. 2001. Evaluation of potential health risks to Eastern *Elliptio (Elliptio complanata)* (Mollusca: Bivalvia: Unionida: Unionidae) and implications for sympatric endangered freshwater mussel species. *Journal of Aquatic Ecosystem Stress and Recovery* 9:35–42.
- Durán, N., and C. F. M. Menck. 2001. *Chromobacterium violaceum*: A review of pharmacological and industrial perspectives. *Critical Reviews in Microbiology* 27:201–222.
- Fathi, M., I. Al-Homidan, A. Al-Dokhail, T. Ebeid, O. Abou-Emera, and A. Alsagan. 2018. Effects of dietary probiotic (*Bacillus subtilis*) supplementation on productive performance, immune response and egg quality characteristics in laying hens under high ambient temperature. *Italian Journal of Animal Science* 17:804–814.
- Faisal, M., A. Diamanka, T. P. Loch, B. R. LaFrentz, A. D. Winters, J. C. García, and B. S. Toguebaye. 2017. Isolation and characterization of *Flavobacterium columnare* strains infecting fishes inhabiting the Laurentian Great Lakes basin. *Journal of Fish Diseases* 40:637–648.
- Frischer, M. E., S. A. Nierzwicki-Bauer, R. H. Parsons, K. Vathanodorn, and K. R. Waitkus. 2000. Interactions between zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and microbial communities. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 57:591–599.
- Genovese, M., R. Denaro, S. Cappello, G. Di Marco, G. La Spada, L. Giuliano, L. Genovese, and M. M. Yakimov. 2008. Bioremediation of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes-contaminated soil: A biopile pilot experiment. *Journal of Applied Microbiology* 105:1694–1702.
- Ghanbari, M., W. Kneifel, and K. J. Domig. 2015. A new view of the fish gut microbiome: Advances from next-generation sequencing. *Aquaculture* 448:464–475.
- Grizzle, J. M., and C. J. Brunner. 2009. Infectious diseases of freshwater mussels and other freshwater bivalve mollusks. *Reviews in Fisheries Science* 17:425–467.

- Gu, J.-D., and R. Mitchell. 2002. Indigenous microflora and opportunistic pathogens of the freshwater Zebra mussel, *Dreissena polymorpha*. *Hydrobiologia* 474:81–90.
- Gustafson, L. L., M. K. Stoskopf, W. Showers, W. G. Cope, C. Eads, R. Linnehan, T. J. Kwak, and J. F. L. Andersen. 2005. Reference ranges for hemolymph chemistries from *Elliptio complanata* of North Carolina. *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms* 65:167–176.
- Hakenkamp, C. C., S. G. Ribblett, M. A. Palmer, C. M. Swan, J. W. Reid, and M. R. Goodison. 2001. The impact of an introduced bivalve (*Corbicula fluminea*) on the benthos of a sandy stream. *Freshwater Biology* 46:491–501.
- Hegazi, R. M., N. El-Gendy, E.-Z. A. El-Feky, Y. M. M. Moustafa, S. El-Ezbewy, and G. H. El-Gemaee. 2007. Impact of heavy metals on biodegradation of phenanthrene by *Cellulomonas hominis* strain N2. *Journal of Pure and Applied Microbiology* 1:165–175.
- Hosseindoust, A., M. Mohammadi, Z. P. Yao, M. Jung, and I. H. Kim. 2018. Dietary *Bacillus subtilis* B2A strain in laying hens challenged with *Salmonella gallinarum*: Effects on egg production, egg quality, blood haptoglobin and targeted intestinal *Salmonella* shedding. *Journal of Applied Animal Research* 46:512–517.
- Huët, M.A.L., and D. Puchooa. 2017. Bioremediation of heavy metals from aquatic environment through microbial processes: A potential role for probiotics? *Journal of Applied Biology & Biotechnology* 5:14–23.
- Ingerslev, H.-C., M. L. Strube, L. von G. Jørgensen, I. Dalsgaard, M. Boye, and L. Madsen. 2014. Diet type dictates the gut microbiota and the immune response against *Yersinia ruckeri* in rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). *Fish and Shellfish Immunology* 40:624–633.
- Irawati, W., Patricia, Y. Soraya, and A. H. Baskoro. 2012. A study on mercury-resistant bacteria isolated from a gold mine in Pongkor Village, Bogor, Indonesia. *HAYATI Journal of Biosciences* 19:197–200.
- Jain, S., R. Gaiind, K. B. Gupta, R. Dawar, D. Kumar, P. Paul, R. Sardana, and M. Deb. 2013. *Yokenella regensburgei* infection in India mimicking enteric fever. *Journal of Medical Microbiology* 62:935–939.
- Kim, H. J., H. J. Eom, C. Park, J. Jung, B. Shin, W. Kim, N. Chung, I.-G. Choi, and W. Park. 2016. Calcium carbonate precipitation by *Bacillus* and *Sporosarcina* strains isolated from concrete and analysis of the bacterial community of concrete. *Journal of Microbiology and Biotechnology* 26:540–548.
- Kosako, Y., R. Sakazaki, and E. Yoshizaki. 1984. *Yokenella regensburgei* gen. nov., sp. nov.: A new genus and species in the family Enterobacteriaceae. *Japanese Journal of Medical Science & Biology* 37:117–124.
- Lane, D. J. 1991. 16S/23S rRNA sequencing. Pages 115–176 E. Stackebrandt and M. Goodfellow, eds. *in* *Nucleic Acid Techniques in Bacterial Systematics*. John Wiley, New York.
- Lee, Y. S., H. J. Kim, and W. Park. 2017. Non-ureolytic calcium carbonate precipitation by *Lysinibacillus* sp. YS11 isolated from the rhizosphere of *Miscanthus sacchariflorus*. *Journal of Microbiology* 55:440–447.
- Li, X., D. L. Chopp, W. A. Russin, P. T. Brannon, M. R. Parsek, and A. I. Packman. 2015. Spatial patterns of carbonate biomineralization in biofilms. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 81:7403–7410.
- Lo, Y.-C., Y.-W. Chuang, and Y.-H. Lin. 2011. *Yokenella regensburgei* in an immunocompromised host: A case report and review of the literature. *Infection* 39:485.
- Löffler, F. E., Q. Sun, J. Li, and J. M. Tiedje. 2000. 16S rRNA gene-based detection of tetrachloroethene-dechlorinating desulfuromonas and dehalococoides species. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 66:1369–1374.
- Lohner, R., V. Sigler, C. Mayer, and C. Balogh. 2007. A comparison of the benthic bacterial communities within and surrounding *Dreissena* clusters in lakes. *Microbial Ecology* 54:469–477.
- Lokmer, A., S. Kuenzel, J. F. Baines, and K. M. Wegner. 2016. The role of tissue-specific microbiota in initial establishment success of Pacific oysters: Microbiota and oyster establishment. *Environmental Microbiology* 18:970–987.
- Marchesi, J. R., T. Sato, A. J. Weightman, T. A. Martin, J. C. Fry, S. J. Hiom, D. Dymock, and W. G. Wade. 1998. Design and evaluation of useful bacterium-specific PCR primers that amplify genes coding for bacterial 16S rRNA. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 64:795–799.
- Morohashi, T., T. Sano, A. Ohta, and S. Yamada. 1998. True calcium absorption in the intestine is enhanced by fructooligosaccharide feeding in rats. *Journal of Nutrition* 128:1815–1818.
- Neves, R. J. 1987. Recent die-offs of freshwater mussels in the United States: An overview. Pages 7–18 *in* R. J. Neves ed. *Proceedings of the Workshop on Die-Offs of Freshwater Mussels in the United States*. United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, Davenport, IA.
- Nichols, S. J., J. Allen, G. Walker, M. Yokoyama, and D. Garling. 2001. Lack of surface-associated microorganisms in a mixed species community of freshwater Unionidae. *Journal of Shellfish Research* 20:329–335.
- Olivier, G. 1990. Virulence of *Aeromonas salmonicida*: Lack of relationship with phenotypic characteristics. *Journal of Aquatic Animal Health* 2:119–127.
- Poornima, P., and M. Velan. 2018. A novel laccase producing *Brevundimonas* sp. MVSP from paper and pulp industry waste water. *Journal of Environmental Biology* 39:447–453.
- Price, J. E., C. E. Zipper, J. W. Jones, and C. T. Franck. 2014. Water and sediment quality in the Clinch River, Virginia and Tennessee, USA, over nearly five decades. *Journal of the American Water Resources Association* 50:837–858.
- Reese, A. T., and R. R. Dunn. 2018. Drivers of microbiome biodiversity: A review of general rules, feces, and ignorance. *mBio* 9(4):e01294-18.
- Richard, J. 2018. Clinch River mussel die-off. *Ellipsaria* 20:1–3.
- Schippers, A., K. Bosecker, C. Spröer, and P. Schumann. 2005. *Microbacterium oleivorans* sp. nov. and *Microbacterium hydrocarbonoxydans* sp. nov., novel crude-oil-degrading Gram-positive bacteria. *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 55:655–660.
- Schramm, H. L., Jr. 2004. Status and management of fisheries in the Mississippi River. Pages 301–333 *in* R. Welcomme and T. Petr, editors. *Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on the Management of Large Rivers for Fisheries*, Vol. 1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, RAP Publication 2004/16, Bangkok, Thailand..
- Seeger, M., M. Hernández, V. Méndez, B. Ponce, M. Córdova, and M. González. 2010. Bacterial degradation and bioremediation of chlorinated herbicides and biphenyls. *Journal of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition* 10:320–332.
- Silva, P. B., S. Garcia, C. Baldo, and M. A. P. C. Celligoi. 2016. Prebiotic activity of fructooligosaccharides produced by *Bacillus subtilis* natto CCT 7712. *Acta Alimentaria* 46:145–151.
- Sparks, R. E., K. D. Blodgett, L. Durham, and R. Horner. 1990. Determination whether the causal agent for mussel die-offs in the Mississippi River is of chemical or biological origin. Report ILENR/RE-WR- 90/09. Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Office of Research and Planning, Springfield, IL.
- Sreedharan, K., R. Philip, and B. Singh. 2011. Isolation and characterization of virulent *Aeromonas veronii* from ascitic fluid of oscar *Astronotus ocellatus* showing signs of infectious dropsy. *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms* 94:29–39.
- Starliper, C. E. 2001. The effect of depuration on transmission of *Aeromonas salmonicida* between the freshwater bivalve *Amblema plicata* and Arctic char. *Journal of Aquatic Animal Health* 13:56–62.
- Starliper, C. E. 2005. Quarantine of *Aeromonas salmonicida*—harboring Ebonyshell mussels (*Fusconaia ebena*) prevents transmission of the pathogen to brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*). *Journal of Shellfish Research* 24:573–578.
- Starliper, C. E. 2008. Recovery of a fish pathogenic bacterium, *Aeromonas salmonicida*, from Ebonyshell mussels *Fusconaia ebena* using nonde-

- structive sample collection procedures. *Journal of Shellfish Research* 27:775–782.
- Starliper, C. E. 2011. Pathogens and diseases of freshwater mussels in the United States: studies on bacterial transmission and depuration. Pages 47–55 in R. C. Cipriano, A. W. Bruckner, and I. S. Shchelkunov, editors. *Bridging America and Russia with Shared Perspectives on Aquatic Animal Health*. Proceedings of the Third Bilateral Conference between Russia and the United States, 12–20 July, 2009, held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation, Landover, MD.
- Starliper, C. E., and P. Morrison. 2000. Bacterial pathogens contagion studies among freshwater bivalves and salmonid fishes. *Journal of Shellfish Research* 19:251–258.
- Starliper, C. E., R. J. Neves, S. Hanlon, and P. Whittington. 2008. A survey of the indigenous microbiota (bacteria) in three species of mussels from the Clinch and Holston Rivers, Virginia. *Journal of Shellfish Research* 27:1311–1317.
- Starliper, C. E., J. Powell, J. T. Garner, and W. B. Schill. 2011. Predominant bacteria isolated from moribund *Fusconaia ebena* Ebonyshells experiencing die-offs in Pickwick Reservoir, Tennessee River, Alabama. *Journal of Shellfish Research* 30:359–366.
- Starliper, C. E., R. Villella, P. Morrison, and J. Mathias. 1998. Studies on the bacterial flora of native freshwater bivalves from the Ohio River. *Biomedical Letters* 58(229):85–95.
- Thorp, J. H., and A. P. Covich, editors. 2010. *Freshwater Invertebrates*, 3rd ed. Elsevier and Academic Press, Boston. 1021 pp.
- Trinh, P., J. R. Zaneveld, S. Safranek, and P. M. Rabinowitz. 2018. One Health relationships between human, animal, and environmental microbiomes: A mini-review. *Frontiers in Public Health* 6:235.
- Turner, S. K., P. W. Miao, and J. D. Palmer. 1999. Investigating deep phylogenetic relationships among cyanobacteria and plastids by small submit rRNA sequence analysis. *Journal of Eukaryotic Microbiology* 46:327–338.
- USFWS and AFS–FHS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and American Fisheries Society–Fish Health Section). 2012. Standard procedures for aquatic animal health inspections. In *AFS–FHS (American Fisheries Society–Fish Health Section). FHS Blue Book: Suggested Procedures for the Detection and Identification of Certain Finfish and Shellfish Pathogens*, 2012 edition. AFS–FHS, Bethesda, Maryland.
- Vaseeharan, B., and P. Ramasamy. 2003. Control of pathogenic *Vibrio* spp. by *Bacillus subtilis* BT23, a possible probiotic treatment for black tiger shrimp *Penaeus monodon*. *Letters in Applied Microbiology* 36:83–87.
- Wanjohi, L., L. Mwamburi, E. Too, B. Aloo, and J. Kosgei. 2015. Isolation and identification of bacteria with bioremediation potential of oil spills in Lake Nakuru, Kenya. *Asian Journal of Microbiology, Biotechnology and Environmental Sciences* 17:831–838.
- Wei, S., H. Cui, Z. Jiang, H. Liu, H. He, and N. Fang. 2015. Biomineralization processes of calcite induced by bacteria isolated from marine sediments. *Brazilian Journal of Microbiology* 46:455–464.
- Winters, A. D., T. L. Marsh, and M. Faisal. 2010. Bacterial assemblages associated with zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) populations in the Laurentian Great Lakes Basin (USA). *Journal of Shellfish Research* 29:985–987.
- Winters, A. D., T. L. Marsh, and M. Faisal. 2011. Heterogeneity of bacterial communities within the zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) in the Laurentian Great Lakes Basin. *Journal of Great Lakes Research* 37:318–324.
- Wolf, A., A. Fritze, M. Hagemann, and G. Berg. 2002. *Stenotrophomonas rhizophila* sp. nov., a novel plant-associated bacterium with antifungal properties. *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 52:1937–1944.
- Xu, G., D. Li, B. Jiao, D. Li, Y. Yin, L. Lun, Z. Zhao, and S. Li. 2017. Biomineralization of a calcifying ureolytic bacterium *Microbacterium* sp. GM-1. *Electronic Journal of Biotechnology* 25:21–27.
- Yilmaz, M., H. Soran, and Y. Beyatli. 2006. Antimicrobial activities of some *Bacillus* spp. strains isolated from the soil. *Microbiological Research* 161:127–131.
- Zamarreno, D. V., R. Inkpen, and E. May. 2009. Carbonate crystals precipitated by freshwater bacteria and their use as a limestone consolidant. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 75:5981–5990.
- Zhang, X., Z. Sun, X. Zhang, M. Zhang, and S. Li. 2018. Hemolymph microbiomes of three aquatic invertebrates as revealed by a new cell extraction method. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 84(8):e02824–17.