

# Diversity and Convergence of Sex-Determination Mechanisms in Teleost Fish

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## Keywords

hotspot genes, convergent evolution, sex chromosome turnover, neo-sex chromosome, global warming, environmental sex determination, ESD

## Abstract

Sexual reproduction is prevalent across diverse taxa. However, sex-determination mechanisms are so diverse that even closely related species often differ in sex-determination systems. Teleost fish is a taxonomic group with frequent turnovers of sex-determining mechanisms and thus provides us with great opportunities to investigate the molecular and evolutionary mechanisms underlying the turnover of sex-determining systems. Here, we compile recent studies on the diversity of sex-determination mechanisms in fish. We demonstrate that genes in the TGF- $\beta$  signaling pathway are frequently used for master sex-determining (MSD) genes. MSD genes arise via two main mechanisms, duplication-and-transposition and allelic mutations, with a few exceptions. We also demonstrate that temperature influences sex determination in many fish species, even those with sex chromosomes, with higher temperatures inducing differentiation into males in most cases. Finally, we review theoretical models for the turnover of sex-determining mechanisms and discuss what questions remain elusive.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual reproduction is prevalent across diverse taxa, suggesting that sexual reproduction can confer fitness advantages to many organisms (1, 2). For example, in diploid organisms, segregation enables an advantageous mutation that appeared in only one chromosome to be brought together and produces a homozygous state in the descendant generations (3). This contrasts with a parthenogenetic population, where the population must wait for two independent advantageous mutations to arise in the same individual (3). Sexual reproduction also accompanies recombination, which removes deleterious mutations efficiently. Without recombination, deleterious mutations tend to accumulate continuously and reduce organismic fitness (4). Recombination also produces new combinations of alleles every generation, which is advantageous in the arms race against rapidly evolving pathogens (5, 6). In animals, sexual reproduction generally occurs between males that produce smaller sperm with high motility and females that produce larger eggs with deposited nutrients. Such anisogamy, i.e., different gametic sizes between sexes, is thought to result from disruptive selection (7–9).

Despite the prevalence of sexual reproduction between males and females in animals, sex-determination mechanisms are so diverse that even closely related species often differ in sex-determination systems (1, 2). What molecular mechanisms underlie the transitions of sex-determining mechanisms? What evolutionary and ecological factors drive such turnovers? Taxa with frequent turnovers of sex-determining mechanisms provide us with great opportunities to answer these questions. Teleostei is a taxonomic group containing species with a variety of sex-determining mechanisms (10–12). In addition, as we review below, sex-determining genes and sex chromosomes have been identified in many teleost fishes.

Here, we review current knowledge on sex-determination mechanisms and the turnover of sex chromosomes in teleost fish. We focus on genetic sex determination (GSD) and temperature-dependent sex determination (TSD). For other types of environment-dependent sex determination, such as social determination, please see other reviews (13–15). We also review theoretical models for the turnover of sex-determination mechanisms and discuss future studies needed to explore unsolved questions.

## 2. DIVERSITY AND CONVERGENCE OF MSD GENES

### 2.1. Comprehensive List of Teleost MSD Genes

Recent advances in genome sequencing technologies have identified master sex-determining (MSD) genes in an increasing number of teleost fishes (**Table 1, Figure 1**). To date, MSD genes have been identified in 114 species (**Table 1, Figure 1**). Genes related to transforming growth factor- $\beta$  (TGF- $\beta$ ) signaling, which are known to induce gonadal masculinization, are widely used as MSD genes across teleost fishes. The *anti-Müllerian hormone* (*amb*) gene has been identified as an MSD gene of 33 species across 12 genera, including the Patagonian pejerrey (16), threespine stickleback (17), Nile tilapia (18), northern pike (19), and Japanese flounder (20). The gene encoding its receptor, *amb receptor 2* (*ambr2*), is also used in 30 species across 9 genera, such as the tiger pufferfish (21), Midas cichlids (22), and Pangasiidae catfishes (23). Other genes encoding TGF- $\beta$  ligands, *gonadal soma-derived factor* (*gsdf*) and *growth differentiation factor 6* (*gdf6*), are also used in 6 species of 4 genera and 3 species of 2 genera, respectively. More recently, a TGF- $\beta$  receptor gene, *bone morphogenetic protein receptor type 1b* (*bmpr1b*), and a downstream factor of TGF- $\beta$  signaling, *inhibitor of DNA binding 2b* (*id2b*), have been identified as MSD genes. Interestingly, most fish species (73 of 75) using the TGF- $\beta$ -related genes as the MSD genes have an XX/XY sex chromosome system; exceptions are the Pacific halibut, which uses *bmpr1ba* for the MSD gene in a

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**Table 1 Master sex-determining genes identified in teleost fishes**

Order	Genus	Species	Gene	Function	Chr	Mutation	Reference
Anabantiformes	<i>Betta</i>	<i>splendens</i>	<i>dmrt1</i>	TF	Y	Allelic	27
Atheriniformes	<i>Odontesthes</i>	<i>hatcheri</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	16
		<i>bonariensis</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	54
		<i>argentinensis</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	149
		<i>incisa</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>mauleanum</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>perugiae</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>piquava</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>regia</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>smitti</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>bumensis</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>mirinensis</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
	<i>nigricans</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T		
	<i>Hypoatherina</i>	<i>tsurugae</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	150
Beloniformes	<i>Oryzias</i>	<i>latipes</i>	<i>dmy</i>	TF	Y	D&T	26
		<i>sakaizumii</i>	<i>dmy</i>	TF	Y	D&T	
		<i>sinensis</i>	<i>dmy</i>	TF	Y	D&T	112
		<i>curvinotus</i>	<i>dmy</i>	TF	Y	D&T	151
		<i>luzonensis</i>	<i>gsdf<sup>Y</sup></i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	92
		<i>dancena</i>	<i>sox3<sup>Y</sup></i>	TF	Y	Allelic	29
		<i>eversi</i>	<i>amb</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	152
		<i>marmoratus</i>	<i>sox3<sup>Y</sup></i>	TF	Y	Allelic	30
		<i>profundicola</i>	<i>sox3<sup>Y</sup></i>	TF	Y	Allelic	
Carangiformes	<i>Seriola</i>	<i>quinqueradiata</i>	<i>bsd17b1</i>	Steroid	W	Allelic	32
		<i>dumerili</i>	<i>bsd17b1</i>	Steroid	W	Allelic	
		<i>lalandi</i>	<i>bsd17b1</i>	Steroid	W	Allelic	
		<i>dorsalis</i>	<i>bsd17b1</i>	Steroid	W	Allelic	153
		<i>aureovittata</i>	<i>bsd17b1</i>	Steroid	W	Allelic	154
	<i>Pseudocaranx</i>	<i>georgianus</i>	<i>cyp19a1a</i> -like	Steroid	Y	D&T	33
Characiformes	<i>Astyanax</i>	<i>mexicanus</i>	<i>gdf6b</i>	TGF- $\beta$	B	D&T	25
Cichliformes	<i>Oreochromis</i>	<i>aureus</i>	<i>paics</i>	Other	W	Tandem	42
		<i>niloticus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Tandem	18
	<i>Ambloplites</i>	<i>amarillo</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	22
		<i>astorquii</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>chancho</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>citrinellus</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>flaveolus</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>globosus</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>labiatus</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>sagittae</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>tolteca</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>viridis</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>xiloaensis</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
<i>zalisus</i>	<i>ambr2Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T			

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

Order	Genus	Species	Gene	Function	Chr	Mutation	Reference
Clupeiformes	<i>Clupea</i>	<i>harengus</i>	<i>bmpr1bbY</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	155
Cyprinodontiformes	<i>Nothobranchius</i>	<i>furzeri</i>	<i>gdf6Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	156
		<i>kadleci</i>	<i>gdf6Y</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	157
Esociformes	<i>Esox</i>	<i>lucius</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	19
		<i>aquitanicus</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	158
		<i>cisalpinus</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>reichertii</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>masquinongy</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>americanus</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>niger</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
	<i>Novumbra</i>	<i>hubbsi</i>	<i>ambby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
Gadiformes	<i>Gadus</i>	<i>morbua</i>	<i>zkY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	39
		<i>macrocephalus ogac</i>	<i>zkY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
	<i>Arctogadus</i>	<i>glacialis</i>	<i>zkY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
Osmeriformes	<i>Plecoglossus</i>	<i>altivelis</i>	<i>ambr2bY</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	159
Osteoglossiformes	<i>Arapaima</i>	<i>gigas</i>	<i>id2bbY</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	160
Perciformes	<i>Perca</i>	<i>flavescens</i>	<i>ambr2bY</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	161
	<i>Gasterosteus</i>	<i>aculeatus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	17
		<i>nipponicus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	162
		<i>wbeatlandi</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
	<i>Culaea</i>	<i>inconstans</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	163
	<i>Ophiodon</i>	<i>elongatus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	164
	<i>Anoplopoma</i>	<i>fimbria</i>	<i>gsdfY</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	165
	<i>Sebastes</i>	<i>schlegelii</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	166
		<i>koreanus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
		<i>pachycephalus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	D&T	
<i>Cyclopterus</i>	<i>lumpus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Tandem	167	
Perciformes?	<i>Selenotoca</i>	<i>multifasciata</i>	<i>dmrt1Y</i>	TF	Y	Allelic	168
Pleuronectiformes	<i>Cynoglossus</i>	<i>semilaevis</i>	<i>dmrt1</i>	TF	W	Allelic	28
	<i>Hippoglossus</i>	<i>stenolepis</i>	<i>bmpr1ba</i>	TGF- $\beta$	W	Allelic	24
	<i>Scophthalmus</i>	<i>maximus</i>	<i>sox2</i>	TF	W	Allelic	31
	<i>Solea</i>	<i>senegalensis</i>	<i>fsbr</i>	Other	Y	Allelic	41
	<i>Hippoglossus</i>	<i>hippoglossus</i>	<i>gsdf</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	169
	<i>Paralichthys</i>	<i>olivaceus</i>	<i>amby</i>	TGF- $\beta$	Y	Allelic	20
Salmoniformes	<i>Oncorhynchus</i>	<i>mykiss</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	36
		<i>masou</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	37
		<i>tshawytscha</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
	<i>Stenodus</i>	<i>leucichthys</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
	<i>Thymallus</i>	<i>thymallus</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
	<i>Salvelinus</i>	<i>malma malma</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
		<i>alpinus</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
		<i>fontinalis</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
		<i>namaycush</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
	<i>Salmo</i>	<i>trutta</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T	
<i>salar</i>		<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T		

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Table 1 (Continued)

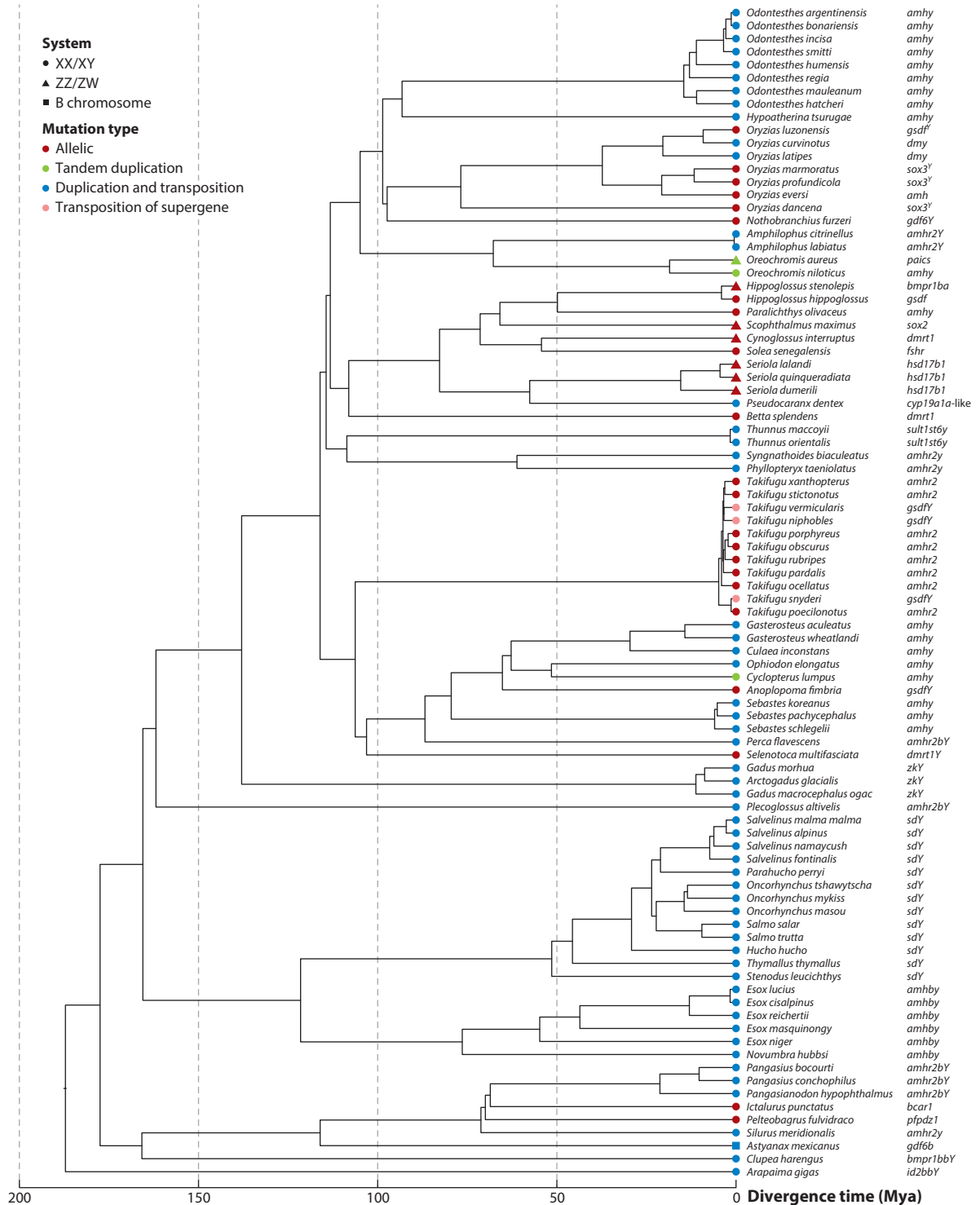
Order	Genus	Species	Gene	Function	Chr	Mutation	Reference	
	<i>Hucho</i>	<i>bucbo</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T		
	<i>Parabucbo</i>	<i>perryi</i>	<i>sdY</i>	Other	Y	D&T		
Scombriformes	<i>Thunnus</i>	<i>orientalis</i>	<i>sult1st6y</i>	Steroid	Y	D&T	34	
		<i>maccoyii</i>	<i>sult1st6y</i>	Steroid	Y	D&T		
Siluriformes	<i>Silurus</i>	<i>meridionalis</i>	<i>ambr2y</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T	170	
	<i>Ictalurus</i>	<i>punctatus</i>	<i>bcar1</i>	Steroid	Y	Allelic	35	
	<i>Pangasianodon</i>	<i>hypophthalmus</i>	<i>ambr2by</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T	23	
	<i>Pangasius</i>	<i>bocourti</i>	<i>ambr2by</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T		
		<i>conchophilus</i>	<i>ambr2by</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T		
	<i>djambal</i>	<i>ambr2by</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T			
	<i>Pelteobagrus</i>	<i>fulvidraco</i>	<i>pfpdz1</i>	Other	Y	Allelic	40	
Syngnathiformes	<i>Phyllopteryx</i>	<i>taeniolatus</i>	<i>ambr2y</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T	171	
	<i>Syngnathoides</i>	<i>biaculeatus</i>	<i>ambr2y</i>	TGF-β	Y	D&T		
Tetraodontiformes	<i>Takifugu</i>	<i>rubripes</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic	21	
		<i>obscurus</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic	93	
		<i>ocellatus</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic		
		<i>xanthopterus</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic		
		<i>stictonotus</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic		
		<i>porphyreus</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic		
			<i>poecilonotus</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic	172
			<i>chrysops</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic	93
			<i>pardalis</i>	<i>ambr2</i>	TGF-β	Y	Allelic	172
			<i>nipbables</i>	<i>gsdfY</i>	TGF-β	Y	Super	93
			<i>snyderi</i>	<i>gsdfY</i>	TGF-β	Y	Super	
			<i>vermicularis</i>	<i>gsdfY</i>	TGF-β	Y	Super	

Abbreviations: allelic, allelic mutation; Chr, chromosome; D&T, duplication and transposition; steroid, steroidogenesis; super, supergene; tandem, tandem duplication; TF, transcription factor; TGF-β, TGF-β signaling.

ZZ/ZW system (24), and the Pachón cavefish, which uses *gdf6b* for a B chromosome-mediated sex-determination system (25).

Similar to in mammalian species, transcription factor genes have been identified as MSD genes in several teleost fishes. The *doublesex and mab-3 related transcription factor 1 (dmrt1)* gene, which has a DNA-binding domain conserved among the genes controlling sexual dimorphism in insects (*doublesex*) and nematodes (*mab-3*), is used in 7 species of 4 genera of teleosts, including the Japanese medaka (26) and Siamese fighting fish (27). The *dmrt1* gene contributes to the XX/XY system in most species (6 of 7) but also contributes to the ZZ/ZW system in the Chinese tongue sole (28). Furthermore, two *sex-determining region Y (SRY)*-related HMG box (Sox) genes, *sox3* and *sox2*, are used in the XX/XY system of *Oryzias* fishes (29, 30) and the ZZ/ZW system of turbot (31), which share a DNA-binding domain with a mammalian MSD gene, *SRY*.

Recent studies also demonstrated that genes encoding enzymes for steroidogenesis can become MSD genes in teleost fishes. The MSD gene in the W chromosome of four *Seriola* fishes is *17β-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase 1 (bsd17b1)* (32). This gene encodes hydroxysteroid 17-β dehydrogenase 1, which is responsible for the interconversion of estrone/estradiol or androstenedione/testosterone (32). A duplicated copy of the *cytochrome P450 family 19 subfamily A member 1a (cyp19a1a)* gene, encoding an aromatase transforming testosterone to estradiol, is used in the XX/XY system of the New Zealand silver trevally (33). Furthermore, several novel genes



**Figure 1** (Figure appears on preceding page)

Master sex-determining (MSD) genes mapped to a time-calibrated phylogenetic tree of teleost fishes. The MSD genes and their chromosomal systems and mutation types compiled in **Table 1** were mapped on a timetree of The Fish Tree of Life (<https://fishtreeoflife.org/downloads/>) (193). Of 114 species, 90 could be mapped to the timetree. The x-axis indicates the time scale in millions of years ago (Mya).

potentially involved in steroidogenesis have been identified as MSD genes. For example, the MSD gene of tunas is *sulfotransferase family 1, cytosolic sulfotransferase 6 (sult1st6)*, which encodes an enzyme potentially involved in the inactivation of estrogen by sulfation (34). *Breast cancer antiresistance 1 (bcar1)*, the MSD gene on the Y chromosome of the channel catfish, is also suggested to inhibit estrogen signal transduction (35).

Other types of genes have also been identified as MSD genes. *Sexually dimorphic on the Y chromosome (sdY)* is used as the MSD gene on the Y chromosome of rainbow trout (36) and other salmonid fishes (37). This gene is homologous with the C-terminal domain of interferon regulatory factor 9 (36) and may prevent the activation of the feminizing pathway by interacting with the *foxl2* gene (38). *Zinc knuckle on the Y chromosome (zkY)* is the Y chromosome-specific copy encoding the zinc knuckle protein in cod fishes (39). A novel PDZ domain-containing gene (*ppdz1*) and *follicle-stimulating hormone receptor (fsbr)* have been identified as the MSD genes of the yellow catfish (40) and Senegal sole (41), respectively. Furthermore, a tandemly duplicated copy of *phosphoribosylaminoimidazole carboxylase (paics)* becomes the MSD gene on the W chromosome of the blue tilapia (42). However, how these novel MSD genes regulate sex-determination processes remains largely elusive.

## 2.2. How MSD Genes Determine the Sex

In several fishes, detailed molecular mechanisms by which MSD genes activate sex differentiation pathways have been elucidated (**Figure 2**). In the Japanese medaka fish (*Oryzias latipes*), *dmy*, the Y-specific paralog of autosomal *dmrt1*, is isolated as the MSD gene (26). The expression of *dmy* in gonadal somatic cells triggers the male pathway and represses the female pathway (26). DMY upregulates *gsdf* and *dmrt1* expression in Sertoli cell precursors (43–47), which may activate other genes involved in testis differentiation. Loss of *ambr2* function leads to male-to-female sex reversal (48), suggesting its involvement in the male pathway. Differentiating Sertoli cells assemble into seminiferous tubule structures with germ cells and androgen-producing Leydig cells, followed by spermatogenesis. *cyp11b* and *11 $\beta$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase (hsd11b)* encode two enzymes downstream in the male pathway, and their expression in Leydig cells promotes the conversion of testosterone to the active androgen, 11-ketotestosterone (11-KT), which induces the male phenotypes but is not involved in spermatogenesis (49–51).

Absent *dmy*, *forkhead box L2 (foxl2)* is expressed in gonadal somatic cells, and it is considered to upregulate other downstream genes involved in granulosa and theca cell differentiation (52). In addition, *foxl3* is necessary for female fate decision in germ cells through repressing the initiation of spermatogenesis (51). Such a female pathway leads to oocyte production and ovarian follicle formation. Next, the expression of *cyp19a1a*, encoding aromatase in theca cells, converts testosterone to 17 $\beta$ -estradiol, which induces the female phenotype and maintains the ovarian structure but is not involved in early oogenesis (50, 53).

Similar sex-differentiation pathways are also observed in the pejerrey (*Odontesthes bonariensis*), which has another MSD gene, *amby*, the Y-specific paralog of autosomal *amb* (*amba*) (54). Expression of *amby* and *amba* can initiate the male pathway (54). However, their downstream components look similar between the medaka and the pejerrey. For example, *dmrt1*, *cyp11b*, and *hsd11b* are expressed in a male-specific manner, whereas *foxl2* and *cyp19a1* are expressed in a



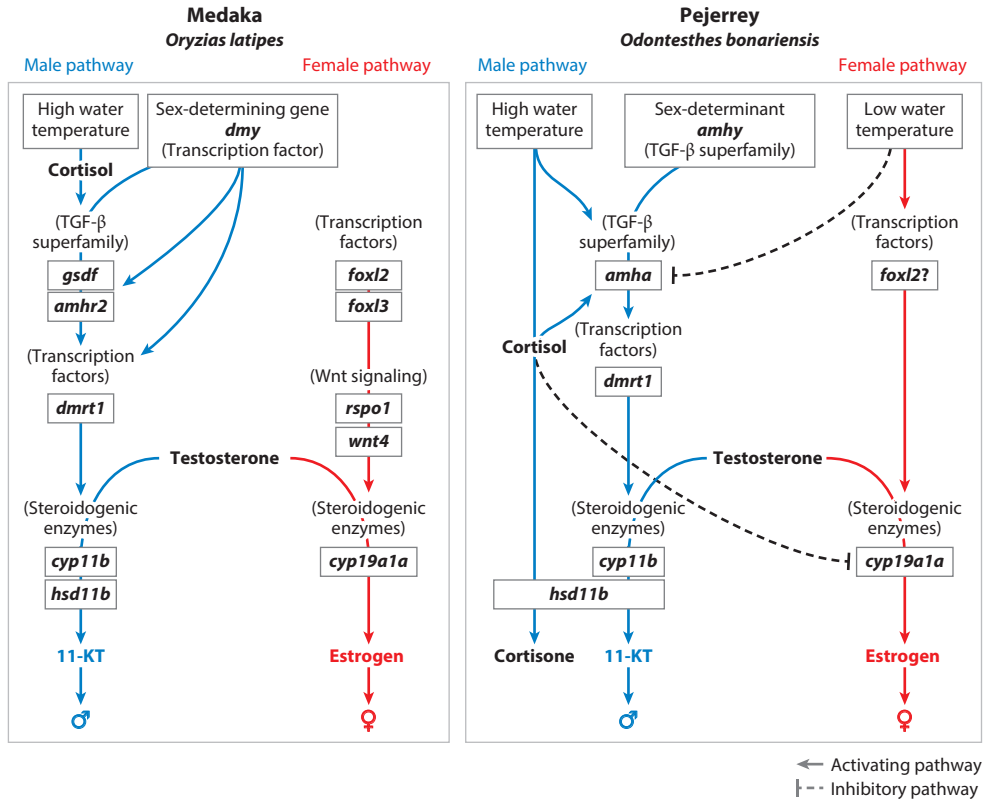


Figure 2

Sex-determining genes mapped to the sex-determining pathways in the Japanese medaka (*Oryzias latipes*) and the pejerrey (*Odontesthes bonariensis*). Blue lines indicate the male pathway, red lines indicate the female pathway, and dotted lines indicate the inhibitory pathways.

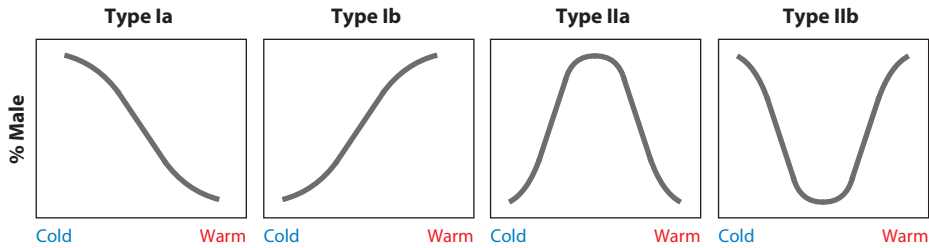
female-specific manner (55, 56), suggesting their conserved roles in sex differentiation among different fish species. Compared to XY systems, how MSD genes in ZW systems are involved in female determination remains unknown.

### 3. DIVERSITY AND CONVERGENCE IN TSD AND TEMPERATURE EFFECTS

#### 3.1. Comprehensive List of Teleost TSD

Environmental temperature during early development can influence sexual differentiation and determine sex in several species, a process called temperature-dependent sex determination (TSD) (57, 58). Depending on the relationship between temperature and frequency of the production of one or another sex, TSD can be classified into several types (57). Here, we follow a previous classification used for reptiles, with a few modifications (Figure 3). In Type Ia, exposure to high temperatures during development induces differentiation into females. Type Ib is the converse case, where high temperatures induce differentiation into males. Type II refers to the case where extreme temperatures (high or low) induce differentiation into a particular sex. In several reptilian species, extreme temperatures induce differentiation into females (57), which we call Type IIa.





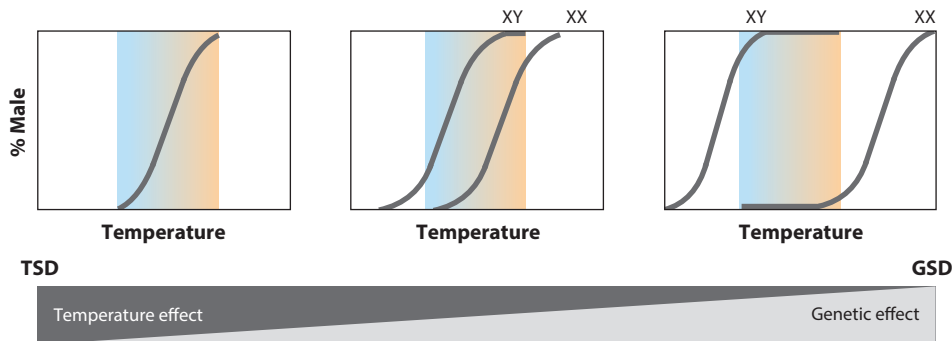
**Figure 3**

Schematic illustrations of distinct types of temperature-dependent sex determination. The x-axis indicates the temperature experienced during the early embryo stage; the y-axis indicates the percentage of individuals differentiated into phenotypic males (% Male). Here, we assume that the relationship between environmental temperature and % Male is composed of sigmoidal curves, but the shape of the function would depend on the species.

In contrast, when extreme temperatures induce differentiation into males, we call it Type IIb. It should be noted that Type Ia and Type Ib may be one side of Type IIa and Type IIb, but fish cannot survive at one side of the extreme temperatures.

Although TSD and GSD were once thought to be mutually exclusive, they are now considered to be opposite ends of a continuum, with many species having a mixture of TSD and GSD (59–61) (**Figure 4**). Therefore, we cannot draw a clear line between GSD and TSD. In this review, we include cases with any thermal effects on sex determination in the category of TSD, following a previous study (62).

In fish, TSD was first reported in the Atlantic silverside (63). Since then, temperature effects on sex determination have been observed in many fish species across diverse taxa (62). Here, we have compiled the data reported to date on how temperature affects sex determination in fish (**Table 2**). We have found that TSD has been reported in 77 species (**Table 2**). The existence of sex chromosomes has not been confirmed in 43 species, whereas 34 species show evidence for the presence of sex chromosomes (XX/XY in 28 species, ZZ/ZW in 6 species). Even MSD genes have been identified in 19 species. Thus, GSD and TSD coexist in many teleost species.



**Figure 4**

Spectrum between temperature-dependent sex determination (TSD; Type Ib in this figure) and genetic sex determination (GSD; XX/XY system in this figure). TSD and GSD represent opposite ends of the continuum. Here, we assume that the relationship between the temperature and the percentage of individuals differentiated into phenotypic males (% Male) is a sigmoidal curve, but the shape of the function depends on the species. The temperature range that organisms experience is shown in color gradients.

**Table 2** Compilation of the data on the temperature effects on sex determination in fish

Order	Genus	Species	SC type	MSD gene	TE type	Reference	
Anabantiformes	<i>Trichogaster</i>	<i>lalius</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ia	173	
Atheriniformes	<i>Chirostoma</i>	<i>estor</i>	ND	ND	Ib	174	
	<i>Hypoatherina</i>	<i>tsurugae</i>	XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ib	65	
	<i>Leuresthes</i>	<i>tenuis</i>	ND	ND	Ib	175	
	<i>Menidia</i>	<i>menidia</i>	ND	ND	Ib	62	
		<i>peninsulae</i>	ND	ND	Ib		
	<i>Odontesthes</i>	<i>argentinensis</i>	XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ib		
		<i>bonariensis</i>	XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ib		
<i>hatcheri</i>		XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ib			
Beloniformes	<i>Oryzias</i>	<i>latipes</i>	XX/XY	<i>dmy</i>	Ib		67
		<i>sakaizumii</i>	XX/XY	<i>dmy</i>	Ib		
Centrarchiformes	<i>Lepomis</i>	<i>macrochirus</i>	ZZ/ZW	ND	Ia/Ib	176	
Cichliformes	<i>Apistogramma</i>	spp. (33 spp.)	ND	ND	Ib	62	
	<i>Oreochromis</i>	<i>aureus</i>	ZZ/ZW	<i>paics</i>	Ib		
		<i>niloticus</i>	XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ia/Ib		
		<i>mossambicus</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib		
Cypriniformes	<i>Carassius</i>	<i>auratus</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib	177	
		<i>gibelio</i>	Microchromosomes	ND	Ib		
		<i>carassius grandoculis</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib		
	<i>Cyprinus</i>	<i>carpio</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib		179
	<i>Danio</i>	<i>rerio</i>	(ZZ/ZW in wild)	ND	Ia/Ib		62, 180
	<i>Gnathopogon</i>	<i>caerulescens</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib		181
	<i>Misgurnus</i>	<i>anguillicaudatus</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib		62
Cyprinodontiformes	<i>Limia</i>	<i>melanogaster</i>	ND	ND	Ib	182	
	<i>Poecilia</i>	<i>spbenops</i>	ZZ/ZW	ND	Ib		
	<i>Poeciliopsis</i>	<i>lucida</i>	ND	ND	Ib		
Gadiformes	<i>Gadus</i>	<i>chalcogrammus</i>	ND	ND	Ib	182	
Perciformes	<i>Anoplopoma</i>	<i>fimbria</i>	XX/XY	<i>gsdfY</i>	Ib	183	
	<i>Dicentrarchus</i>	<i>labrax</i>	ND	ND	Ia/Ib	62	
Pleuronectiformes	<i>Cynoglossus</i>	<i>semilaevis</i>	ZZ/ZW	<i>dmrt1</i>	Ib	28	
	<i>Paralichthys</i>	<i>olivaceus</i>	XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ib	62	
		<i>letostigma</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib/Ib	62, 184	
		<i>dentatus</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib	185	
	<i>Pseudopleuronectes (Limanda)</i>	<i>yokobamae</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib	62	
	<i>Scopelogadus</i>	<i>maximus</i>	ZZ/ZW	<i>sox2</i>	Ia/Ib	186	
	<i>Solea</i>	<i>senegalensis</i>	XX/XY	<i>fsbr</i>	Ib <sup>a</sup>	187	
	<i>Verasper</i>	<i>moseri</i>	XX/XY	ND	Ib	62	
Salmoniformes	<i>Oncorhynchus</i>	<i>nerka</i>	XX/XY	<i>sdY</i>	Ia/Ib	188	
		<i>mykiss</i>	XX/XY	<i>sdY</i>	Ia/Ib		
Scorpaeniformes	<i>Sebastes</i>	<i>schlegelii</i>	XX/XY	<i>amby</i>	Ia/Ib	62, 189	
Siluriformes	<i>Clarias</i>	<i>gariepinus</i>	XX/XY (ZZ/ZW)	ND	Ib	190	
	<i>Hoplosternum</i>	<i>littorale</i>	ND	ND	Ib	62	
	<i>Ictalurus</i>	<i>punctatus</i>	XX/XY	<i>bcar1</i>	Ia	191	
	<i>Tachysurus</i>	<i>fulvidraco</i>	XX/XY	<i>pfpdz1</i>	Ib		
Tetraodontiformes	<i>Takifugu</i>	<i>rubripes</i>	XX/XY	<i>ambr2</i>	Ia	192	

<sup>a</sup>Based on an unpublished observation.

Abbreviations: MSD, master sex-determining; ND, not determined; SC, sex chromosome; TE, temperature effect.

Among fish showing TSD, Type Ib is the most common (64 out of 77 species) (**Table 2**). In contrast, few species showed Type Ia (3 species: dwarf gourami, channel catfish, and tiger pufferfish) or Type IIb (1 species: olive flounder). Type IIa has never been found in fish. In addition, some species exhibit different types of TSD even within the same species. Such phenomena are commonly observed in popular aquaculture species, such as the Nile tilapia (Type Ia or Ib), the European sea bass (Type Ia or Ib), and the southern flounder (Type Ib or IIb). Therefore, the mixture of different types may result from intentional or unintentional multigenerational selective breeding or phenotypic plasticity induced by a specific aquaculture environment. Whether variations in TSD types within species are common in natural populations remains elusive. Because most cases listed in **Table 2** were identified based on laboratory experiments, how TSD acts in natural populations is not well understood, except for a few cases (64, 65).

Type Ib TSD postulates that exposure to high temperatures induces sex reversal from genotypic females (e.g., XX or ZW) to phenotypic males, and exposure to low temperatures induces sex reversal from genotypic males (e.g., XY or ZZ) to phenotypic females. Although the former has been observed in most fish species classified as Type Ib, the latter is rare and found in only a few species, such as fish belonging to the order Atheriniformes (66). Furthermore, Type Ib is more likely to coexist with an XX/XY system (19 of 22 species with sex chromosomes and/or MSD genes) than with a ZZ/ZW system. Taken together, there are many cases of XX individuals becoming males through exposure to high temperatures, whereas the other types of sex changes are rare. We discuss the possible reasons for this in Section 7.

### 3.2. How Does Temperature Modulate Sex Determination?

As described in the previous section, both the medaka and pejerrey show GSD, yet temperature can significantly affect their sex determination and differentiation. In the medaka, a high water temperature (32°C) during gonadal development produces XX males via an elevation of the glucocorticoid stress hormone cortisol (67, 68). This temperature-/cortisol-induced masculinization is correlated with *gsdf* expression (69) and is not observed in *gsdf*- or *ambr2*-deficient mutants (70), suggesting that high temperatures can drive the male pathway through activating *gsdf/ambr2* signaling.

Similarly to in the medaka, high temperatures (25°C or higher) produce XX males by increasing cortisol in the pejerrey (56). However, different genes are involved in this process between these two species (56). In the pejerrey, high temperatures induce elevated cortisol and 11-KT levels, concomitant with upregulation and downregulation of genes associated with testicular (e.g., *amba* and *dmrt1*) and ovarian (e.g., *cyp19a1a*) differentiation, respectively. A pivotal player in the crosstalk between the stress and reproductive axes is the steroidogenic enzyme HSD11B (71, 72). This enzyme converts 11- $\beta$ -hydroxytestosterone to 11-KT as a by-product of its primary function of inactivating cortisol to cortisone. Thus, in the pejerrey, the androgen production induced by the cortisol-mediated stress response is thought to be the central mechanism of high-temperature-induced masculinization.

The pejerrey is one of the few species in which exposure to low temperatures (25°C or lower) induces XY females. Interestingly, *amby* expression is significantly downregulated during the critical period of sex determination, independent of environmental temperature (56). At high water temperatures, *amba* is upregulated as *amby* begins to be downregulated, whereas *amba* expression is maintained as low at low water temperatures. This unique spontaneous downregulation of *amby* during the critical period of sex determination may be key to the sex reversal of XY males to phenotypic females by low temperatures. In contrast, expression of *cyp19a1a* is maintained at a relatively high level during the critical period of sex determination in the pejerrey,

regardless of sex genotype or temperature (56). These observations suggest that ontogenetically programmed ovarian development is a default state that is self-sustained without any timely and potent masculinization signals (AMH and/or high water temperatures) (66).

In other teleost species, epigenetic regulation is another potential key mechanism underlying TSD (73). In European sea bass, high-temperature-induced masculinization was associated with hypermethylation of the *cyp19a1a* promoter and downregulation of its expression (74). In the half-smooth tongue sole, *dmrt1* hypermethylation and downregulation occur in ZW females without high-temperature stimuli (28). But this hypermethylation pattern can be eliminated via incubation at high temperatures during the sex-determination period, leading to the masculinization of ZW females (28). Notably, this epigenetic modification in the half-smooth tongue sole can be transmitted from parents to offspring: Sex reversal occurs at higher rates without high-temperature stimuli in the offspring of sex-reversed individuals (28, 75). These examples demonstrate that even in fish species with GSD, temperatures can alter sexual fate through the stress hormone-mediated pathway and/or epigenetic regulation.

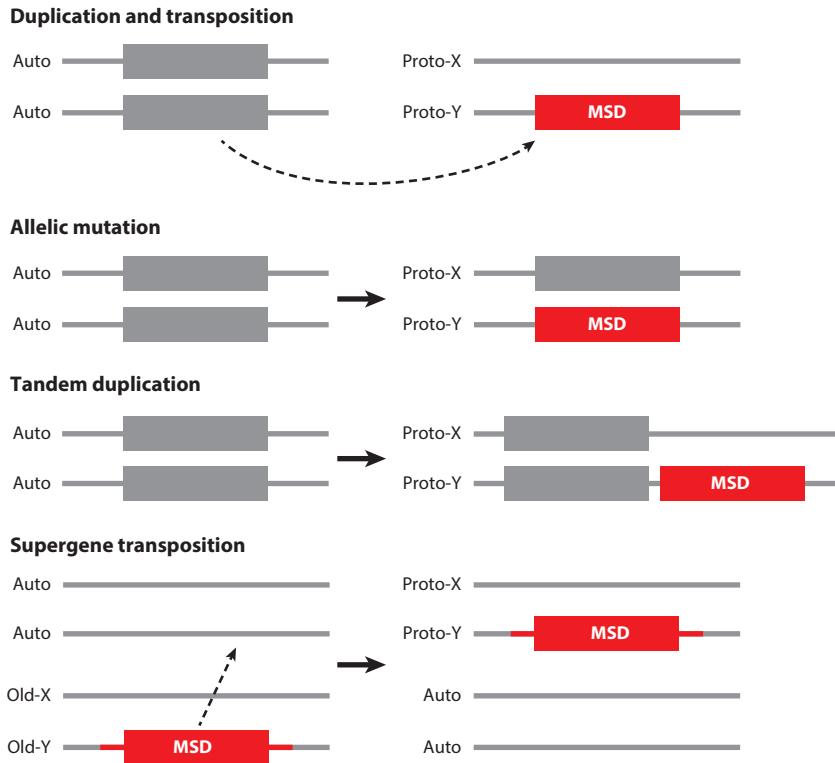
#### 4. HOTSPOT GENES IN THE CONVERGENT EVOLUTION OF GSD

Molecular mechanisms of the evolution of sex-determining genes can provide great insights into several fundamental questions in convergent evolution, namely, the repeated evolution of the same phenotype/system in phylogenetically independent lineages. One long-standing question in convergent evolution is whether the same genes cause repeated phenotypic changes (76–79). If this is the case, another fundamental question would be why particular hotspot genes are used repeatedly for convergent evolution (76, 80, 81).

A potential explanation for the repeated use of the same gene is limited options (82). If limited numbers of genes can change sex, the same genes would repeatedly become MSD genes (83). However, the most up-to-date compilation shows several options for MSD genes (**Figure 1** and **Table 1**). Another hypothesis is that genes located at a hub between upstream regulators and downstream effectors are likely to become hotspot genes, such as the case of *shavenbaby* in the evolution of cuticle in *Drosophila* and *MYB* in the evolution of plant pigmentation (80, 81). This hypothesis relies on the idea that mutations at genes in the upstream pathways will change so many traits that the effects are deleterious, but that mutations at genes in the downstream pathways would change only a few traits and have minor phenotypic effects. Therefore, genes located at a hub may have optimal pleiotropy.

As **Figure 1** and **Table 1** show, genes in the TGF- $\beta$  signaling pathway, particularly *amb*, are used frequently for sex determination in fish (see also 84). Many MSD genes are duplicated copies of genes in the TGF- $\beta$  signaling pathway, with the ancestral copy retaining the original function. Therefore, the MSD genes can regulate the TGF- $\beta$  signaling pathway while maintaining the core male and female pathways (85). The TGF- $\beta$  pathway may be located at a hub between input signals triggering sex determination and hormonal outputs. Changes in the upstream pathway, such as temperature-sensing systems, would alter many physiological functions and be detrimental to organisms. In contrast, changes in the downstream pathway, such as steroid-dependent expression of sexual dimorphism in peripheral tissues, would not change the gonadal sex itself. Therefore, the TGF- $\beta$  signaling pathway may be an optimal place for changing the gonadal sex differentiation.

Although at first glance the core male and female pathways seem to be conserved between the medaka and pejerrey, a closer look shows that they differ at several points (**Figure 2**). Further comparative studies on the molecular pathways of sex determination in many fish species will improve our understanding of the evolution of gene regulatory networks and their association with convergent evolution.



**Figure 5**

The origin of master sex-determining (MSD) loci. Several mechanisms by which a new male-determining locus appears. The examples here depict the XY system. Gray boxes indicate ancestral genes; red boxes indicate male-determining genes.

## 5. THE EVOLUTION OF GENES WITH NEW FUNCTIONS

Molecular studies of the evolution of MSD genes will also elucidate how genes with new functions originate. The evolution of new genes is a rich source of genetic variation that can fuel adaptation and speciation (86). Although new genes are proposed to arise by tinkering with old genes (86, 87), there are yet few empirical examples of functionally important young new genes. Therefore, studies on fish sex-determination genes provide a great opportunity to explore the evolution of new genes.

The compilation of sex-determining genes in fish shows four mechanisms by which a new sex-determining locus evolves (**Figure 5**). First, an MSD gene can arise via duplication and transposition. An autosomal gene encoding a protein in the pathway of sexual differentiation is duplicated and transposed to a different chromosome, where it acquires a dominant sex-determining effect. In the Japanese medaka, the MSD gene, *dmy*, is a duplicate copy of an autosomal *dmrt1* gene (26, 88). *dmy* is expressed earlier during embryogenesis in somatic cells of XY gonad than the ancestral *dmrt1*, indicating that *cis*-regulatory mutations occurred on *dmy* (26, 88). This *cis*-regulatory change may be caused by a transposon insertion (89). A recent study further showed that an amino acid change in DMY enhances its functional activity as a transcription factor (90). These results indicate that multiple mutations, both *cis*-regulatory and amino acid mutations, contribute to the acquisition of the male-determining function. *sly* in salmonids is another example of MSD

originating from the duplication-and-transposition mechanism (36, 37). Although the ancestral gene is involved in immunity and has nothing to do with sex determination, the duplicated copy comes to interact with the *foxl2* gene to function as an MSD (38, 91).

Second, allelic mutations can also create a new MSD gene. One allele becomes dominant over another located at the same locus and becomes an MSD gene. In the tiger pufferfish, a single SNP in *ambr2*, which changes an amino acid in the kinase domain, is responsible for the evolution of MSD (21). Similarly, in *Seriola* fishes, a nonsynonymous SNP in *bsd17b1* is likely accountable for the MSD function (32). *Cis*-regulatory mutations without amino acid changes can also lead to the evolution of MSD genes, such as *sox3* in *Oryzias dancena* (29) and *gsdf* in *Oryzias luzonensis* (92).

Third are cases in which tandem duplication occurred and one allele acquired a dominant sex-determining effect. Such cases are rare but found in the Nile tilapia, where one duplicated copy of *amb*, *amby*, carries a missense SNP and acquires the male-determining function (18).

Finally, recycling of a supergene containing a sex-determining gene and a few other genes has been found in congeneric species of *Takifugu* (93). This supergene contains *gsdf*, which is likely to be an MSD gene. The functions of other genes in the supergene remain elusive. This supergene is flanked by transposons and can be transposed from one chromosome to another, creating a new sex-determining locus. This type of supergene is thus far reported only in Tetraodontiformes (93), and its prevalence is unknown.

Although more case studies are necessary to make solid conclusions, our compilation indicates that duplication-and-transposition and allelic mutations seem to be two prevalent modes of the evolution of new sex-determining genes in fish (**Figure 1, Table 1**). Further detailed molecular studies will reveal how many and what types of mutations are necessary for an ancestral gene to get a new function.

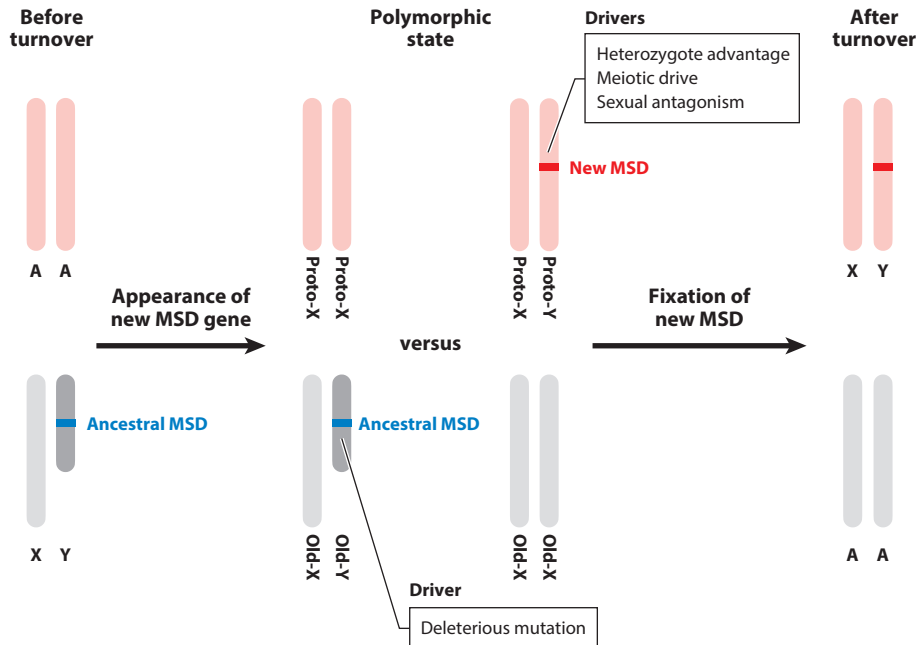
## 6. EVOLUTIONARY FORCES OF SEX CHROMOSOME TURNOVER

We have thus far reviewed the proximate mechanisms by which new mutations with sex-determining effects originate. How are such new mutations fixed in populations, and how might they take over the MSD functions? Here, we review the ultimate causes of the turnover of sex-determination genes and sex chromosomes.

We first consider a case in which sex chromosome turnover starts with a new sex-determining gene appearing in a population with a preexisting MSD gene (94). Another possible route for sex chromosome turnover would include the transition from GSD controlled by one locus to environmental sex determination (ESD), followed by the transition from ESD to GSD controlled by another locus. In this case, the population does not pass a polymorphic state. Evolutionary forces that can drive the transitions between GSD and ESD are discussed in the next section.

Following the polymorphic state with two sex chromosomes, the turnover is completed by the loss of the old MSD gene and the fixation of the new sex-determining gene. When a new sex-determining gene first appears in a population, the initial allele frequency of the new sex-determining gene is generally lower than that of the old MSD gene. Therefore, the new sex-determining gene has a lower probability of fixation than that of the old MSD gene and is likely to be lost by genetic drift unless the population size is very small.

What can drive the fixation of the new sex-determining gene? If the new sex-determining gene has any fitness advantage over the old MSD gene, the new sex-determining gene will spread and can be fixed (94, 95). Theoretical studies have proposed several possible scenarios (**Figure 6**). First, the presence of a sexually antagonistic allele near a new sex-determining gene can induce a sex chromosome turnover (96, 97). For example, if a new male-determining gene is linked to a male-beneficial allele, males that carry the new sex-determining gene will have higher fitness over males that carry the old MSD gene. Second, a new sex-determining gene linked to an allele with



**Figure 6**

Model of sex chromosome turnover. Here, we show the case of the nonhomologous transition between XY systems: A nonhomologous turnover means that a new master sex-determining (MSD) gene appears on a chromosome different from that with the old MSD gene. Sex chromosome turnover starts with the appearance of a new MSD gene (*red*). Once the new MSD gene is fixed after the transition state with polymorphism of the ancestral and the new MSD genes, the sex chromosome turnover is complete. The presence of alleles with sexually antagonistic effects (male-beneficial and female-detrimental), heterozygote advantage, and meiotic drive near the new MSD gene can drive the fixation of the new MSD gene. Deleterious mutations near the ancestral MSD gene can drive the loss of the ancestral MSD gene, namely, the fixation of the new MSD gene.

heterozygote advantage will also increase its frequency because the sex-determining locus can be heterozygous in the heterogametic sex (98). Third, when a new sex-determining gene is linked to a meiotic driver, it will also increase its frequency because of the advantage of transmission to the next generation (99, 100). Because meiotic drive of sex chromosomes can skew the sex ratio, suppressors of drivers will soon evolve within populations to restore the sex ratio to 1:1 (101). However, the meiotic drive will increase the allele frequency at the initial stage, preventing a loss caused by genetic drift. Fourth, the presence of deleterious mutations near the old MSD gene would reduce the fitness of individuals carrying the old MSD and increase the relative fitness of individuals carrying the new sex-determining gene, leading to the sex chromosome turnover (102, 103). Accumulation of deleterious mutations on nonrecombining regions of sex chromosomes is observed widely in diverse taxa (104), although sex chromosomes show no apparent degeneration in several fishes (2). These mechanisms do not necessarily work alone. The combination of multiple mechanisms can induce repeated turnover cycles (105). For example, a combination of sexually antagonistic selection for a new sex chromosome and deleterious mutations on an old sex chromosome can induce endless cycles of sex chromosome turnovers (105).

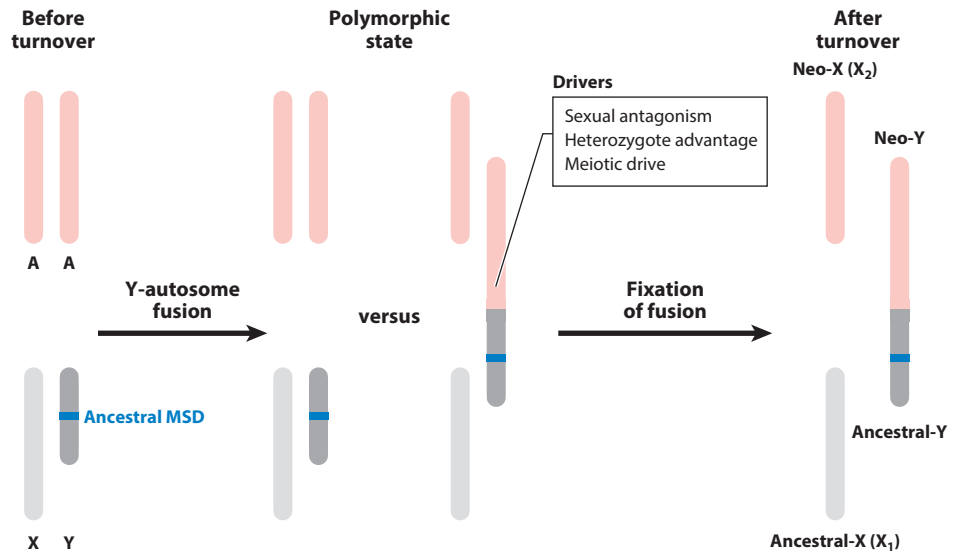
In the case of the transition between an XY and a ZW system, selection for a 1:1 sex ratio can promote the fixation of a dominant sex chromosome even absent fitness difference between the



old and new sex-determining loci (106, 107): If *W* is dominant over *Y*, *W* is likely to be fixed, and vice versa. Drift-induced stochastic fluctuation of the sex ratio produces selection for a 1:1 sex ratio, leading to increased frequency of a dominant sex chromosome (106). This evolutionary force is called drift-induced selection (106).

All of these studies were either theoretical or simulation based. Hence, we lack empirical studies testing these hypotheses. The prevalence of the polymorphic state, where two or more sex-determining genes segregate within a population, also remains elusive, as there are just a few examples in fish, such as the platyfish (108), Lake Malawi cichlids (109), and blue tilapia (110). A recent study with the Japanese medaka showed that artificial removal of an MSD gene from a wild-derived strain revealed a cryptic autosomal locus, a potential modifier of sex determination (111). This result suggests that sex-determining alleles with minor effects may be segregating in natural populations. Therefore, polygenic sex determination may be more common than thought previously. Furthermore, XY females with mutations in the MSD gene occasionally are found in natural populations of the Japanese medaka (26, 112). If a new sex-determining gene originates in such a population, the new sex-determining gene will take over the MSD function. Similarly, the zebrafish (*Danio rerio*), which has a ZW sex chromosome system in nature (113, 114), likely lost an MSD gene during domestication and shows polygenic sex determination in laboratory strains (115). Further empirical studies on natural fish populations will elucidate the evolutionary processes and mechanisms of sex chromosome turnover.

A sex chromosome turnover can also occur via sex chromosome–autosome fusion without the evolution of new MSD genes (116–118) (Figure 7). When an autosome is fused to a preexisting sex chromosome, the previously autosomal region becomes sex linked. This newly sex-linked chromosome is called a neo-sex chromosome. The fused neo-sex chromosome can replace the unfused ancestral sex chromosome via similar evolutionary forces, such as through the linkage of the neo-sex chromosome to alleles with sexually antagonistic effects (119–121), heterozygote advantage (98), and meiotic drive (122, 123). Previous meta-analyses showed that a Y-autosome fusion is



**Figure 7**

Model of sex chromosome–autosome fusion. Here, we show the case of Y-autosome fusion. Abbreviations: A, autosome; MSD, master sex-determining.

more common than other types of fusion in fish (116, 117, 124). The predominance of Y-autosome fusion is likely an outcome of the combination of slightly deleterious effects of chromosomal fusion and male-biased mutation rate or female-biased reproductive sex ratio (124). Alternatively, female meiotic drive for unfused chromosomes could explain the prevalence of Y-autosome fusions (124). Further empirical studies are necessary to test these hypotheses.

## 7. EVOLUTIONARY FORCES THAT DRIVE THE TRANSITION BETWEEN TSD AND GSD

As reviewed above, there is crosstalk between the GSD and TSD pathways (**Figure 2**). Therefore, it is not surprising that sex determination in fish with GSD is influenced by the environmental temperature. This supports the idea that GSD and TSD represent opposite ends of a continuum (**Figure 4**).

What evolutionary forces drive the transition from GSD to TSD, the move from the right to the left in the continuum of **Figure 4**? Charnov & Bull (125, pp. 828–29) proposed that ESD is advantageous “when an individual’s fitness (as a male or female) is strongly influenced by environmental conditions and where the individual has little control over which environment it will experience.” Conover (126) presented a nice empirical example consistent with this scenario in the Atlantic silverside, which has the Type Ib TSD. In this species, offspring produced early in the breeding season are exposed to low temperatures and tend to become females. In contrast, offspring born later in the breeding season are exposed to high temperatures and tend to become males. Individuals born earlier have more time to grow and reach a larger size in the breeding season than those born later. Because a larger body size benefits females more than males during reproduction in this species, this TSD is considered advantageous (126). When TSD is advantageous, it will invade organisms with GSD (127). However, further empirical studies are necessary to test these hypotheses.

As described in Section 3.1, Type Ib TSD is the most common in fish. Among species with Type Ib TSD, sex reversal from genotypic females with XX to phenotypic males is the most common. There are several possible explanations for this pattern, although none of them alone can explain it. First, it may be relatively easy to reverse an XX genotype that does not carry an MSD gene to a phenotypic male via temperature stimuli (see Section 3.2), whereas it may be difficult to override the genotypic effect of the dominant sex determinator on the Y chromosome by temperature stimuli alone. Second, the predominance of XX males compared with XY females in Type Ib may be attributable to an accumulation of deleterious mutations on the Y chromosome (see Section 6). When XY females mate with XY males, some progeny will show the YY genotype, which may be deleterious. Therefore, alleles that can change XY individuals into females may not spread within populations. However, as mentioned in Section 6, fish sometimes do not show any degeneration of Y chromosomes, so it is unclear how deleterious the YY genotype is in fish. Third, hot temperatures may be more stressful for fish than cold temperatures, and stressful conditions may favor a male-biased sex ratio (128). As seen in Section 3.2, sex reversal is mediated by the glucocorticoid stress hormone. Producing eggs requires more energy than producing sperm. Therefore, under stressful conditions with limited resources, the production of males may be adaptive (128). The combination of some of these may lead to the predominance of sex reversal of XX fish to males.

What evolutionary forces drive the transition from TSD to GSD? In TSD, spatial variation and temporal fluctuation of environmental temperatures can cause fluctuations in the sex ratio. A 1:1 sex ratio is generally optimal because of the frequency-dependent selection of the minority sex (129). If the sex ratio is strongly biased due to environmental fluctuations, monogenic GSD,

which can ensure a stable 1:1 sex ratio, would become favored (95, 130). For example, suppose that a fish population with Type Ib TSD becomes exposed to warmer temperatures. Then, the sex ratio would be male biased, favoring the evolution of a female sex-determining gene (131).

## 8. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

### 8.1. Key Questions in Evolutionary Genetics of Sex Determination

What genes become hotspots? Why are there hotspot genes? Although particular genes in the TGF- $\beta$  pathway seem to be hotspot genes for MSD, we cannot exclude the possibility of publication bias. When a sex-linked locus is identified, we would first search for previously known MSD genes at that locus. If we find known MSD genes at the locus, we can publish them quickly. Unless any known MSD genes are present, it would take more time to identify novel causative genes. However, recent technological advances in haplotype-resolved genome assembly and genome editing will help to identify more sex-determining genes across more diverse taxa (132–134), leading to a more unbiased list of MSD genes in the near future.

How many and what types of mutations are necessary for MSD function? To answer this question, a detailed analysis of causative mutations is essential. If multiple mutations are necessary, linkage among these mutations would be required for exerting the MSD function, favoring recombination suppression at the MSD gene locus (1). Once recombination suppression evolves around MSD, regions with recombination suppression would further expand without sexually antagonistic selection (135–137). Thus, identification of causative mutations of MSD can help to resolve the question of how recombination suppression evolves on sex chromosomes (138–140). Base editing and gene replacement technologies will help to provide answers.

What are the drivers and consequences of sex chromosome turnover? Although there are many theoretical studies on the evolutionary forces driving sex chromosome turnover, empirical support is lacking. Furthermore, sex chromosome turnover may promote the evolution of new sexually dimorphic traits and reproductive isolation (116), but this also requires solid empirical evidence. Several studies have identified loci involved in sexually dimorphic traits (141, 142) and signatures of sexually antagonistic selection (143) on neo-sex chromosomes. However, whether these loci drove or evolved after the turnover remains elusive. Further comparative studies of the functions of genes located on the newly evolved sex chromosomes, as well as on the ancestral chromosomes across diverse taxa, may help to answer these questions.

### 8.2. Applications to Aquaculture and Conservation Biology

A better understanding of the sex-determination mechanisms in teleost fishes also has benefits for aquaculture. Identifying MSD genes and/or their causal mutations enables us to determine the sex of farmed fish via molecular genetic techniques, even those in premature or nonbreeding conditions. Genotyping of the MSD gene/mutation allows for easy and precise identification of sex-reversed fish (e.g., XX males and XY females) in aquaculture stocks of tiger pufferfish (144) and Chinook salmon (145). Additionally, understanding the detailed mechanisms of GSD and TSD will facilitate the development of efficient and robust techniques for artificial sex reversal using temperature control, steroid hormone administration, and genetic/chromosome engineering. Both molecular sexing and sex-reversal techniques will be helpful for the sex control of aquaculture stocks (e.g., production of all-female stocks) and for the broodstock management of salmonids, flatfishes, and other cultured fish (146).

As we have seen, temperature influences the sex determination of many fish species. Therefore, global warming would affect the sex ratio of organisms with TSD. A strongly biased sex ratio may bring these species to the risk of extinction (147). However, if they could quickly evolve GSD or

other counter-mechanisms, such as transgenerational plasticity for temperature-induced sex bias (147, 148), they could persist. Therefore, investigating the evolutionary mechanisms of GSD and TSD in fish can help us understand how fish diversity will change in response to future global warming and climate change.

## 9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The diversity of sex-determining mechanisms remains a mystery. However, detailed molecular mechanisms of sex determination, including GSD and TSD, have now been revealed in several teleost species. The findings to date provide clues to the proximate mechanisms of the transition between different sex-determining systems. Furthermore, many theoretical studies have presented models for the ultimate causes of the transitions. However, we still lack empirical data testing the theoretical models. Further integrative studies of detailed molecular mechanisms of sex determination in diverse taxa, as well as evolutionary ecology research on sex-determining systems in natural populations, will elucidate the evolutionary mechanisms creating the diversity of sex-determining mechanisms, one of the mysteries of life.

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