GENETICS =====

Siberian Roe Deer (*Capreolus pygargus* Pallas, 1771) in Ukraine: Analysis of the Mitochondrial and Nuclear DNA

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Abstract—A molecular-genetic analysis of the nucleotide sequences of the cytochrome *b* gene (1140 base pairs) of the mitochondrial DNA and 17 microsatellite loci of eight samples of roe deer from the Samara forest of Dnipropetrovsk oblast (Ukraine) was carried out. For comparison, 212 corresponding mtDNA sequences of the Siberian and European roe deer and data on the variability of microsatellite markers in 49 representatives of these species were included in the study. It was noted that all the analyzed mitochondrial sequences of individuals from the Samara forest are characteristic of the Siberian roe *Capreolus pygargus* Pallas, 1771. Four haplotypes were described, all of which belonged to the haplogroup typical for the western part of the range of *C. pygargus*. A fragment analysis of the microsatellite loci of nuclear DNA confirmed the identification of the investigated group with the Siberian species.

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INTRODUCTION

Does the Siberian roe *Capreolus pygargus* exist in Ukraine? This question has long been of interest to zoologists and game experts and has become particularly acute in recent years in connection with the discussion on the taxonomy of the genus *Capreolus* and the speciation and the boundaries of the historical habitats of the European *C. capreolus* L. and the Siberian roe.

Fossil remains of roe deer in Ukraine and southwestern Russia are known from early Ouaternary sediments, but they are especially abundant in the Holocene strata (Gromov, 1948; Pidoplichko, 1956; Bibikova, 1963, 1975; Tatarinov, 1970; Timchenko, 1972; etc.). Beginning with the Pleistocene, the existence of C. capreolus and C. pygargus is clearly discernible. Remnants of the small European roe deer are common in many archaeological sites of Western and Central Europe, with remains of large Siberian deer in Asia and Eastern Europe (Korotkevich and Danilkin, 1992; Danilkin, 1992a, 1999, 2014). Remains of the Siberian roe deer, dating mainly to the last centuries B.C. and the beginning of the second millennium A.D., have been found in many settlements on the Upper Volga; in the Oka basin; in Moscow, Orel, Kursk, and Voronezh oblasts; in the lower reaches of the Don in the ancient settlement of Sarkel; in the middle Dnieper region; in the archeological monuments of Poltava and Kharkov oblasts; and in the peat layers near the Zavorichi station of Kiev oblast (Gorbachev, 1915; Gromova, 1948; Korneev, 1952; Tsalkin, 1956, 1961, 1963; Vereshchagin, 1959; Timchenko, 1972).

In Ukraine, in the Holocene, the ranges of the European and Siberian roe deer were, apparently, in contact and superimposed one each other. During this period, some individuals or groups of the Siberian roe deer, most likely, reached Central Europe. Here, as in Ukraine, hybridization could have occurred, as a result of which large specimens with "Siberian-type" horns sometimes appeared in the populations of the European roe deer (Cotta, 1969; Lehmann, 1976).

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, roe deer were almost destroyed by man on the territory of Eastern Europe (Geptner et al., 1961; Kirikov, 1966; Danilkin, 1992a, 1999, 2014). In the vast area from the Dnieper to the Urals, only a few small foci have survived, including the Black Forest in Kirovograd oblast and the Samara forest in Dnepropetrovsk oblast, where the roe deer could have survived (Brauner, 1915, 1923, 1928; Migulin 1927, 1929; Sharleman', 1937). The famous zoologist Brauner (1915) reported the following: "Considering the number of skulls and horns of roe from the provinces of Podolia, Bessarabia, Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, and the Crimean mountains, you can see that the roes of Novomoskovsk, Alexandrov, and Pavlograd counties of Ekaterinoslav province belong to the species of the Siberian goat (*Capreolus pygargus* Pall.), in other areas of Southern Russia and the Crimea, they belong to the European species (*Capreolus capreolus* L.)." The sizes of their skulls and horns given by him leave no doubt of the correctness of this conclusion.

Some experts considered the Siberian roe deer in these foci to be a glacial relic or a Siberian or Caucasian interloper (Migulin, 1927, 1929; Charleman', 1937; Korneev, 1952). Heptner (1961) wrote, however, that this "question requires special investigation, systematic as well; however, it is highly doubtful that the true Siberian roe lived in these places." Kryzhanovskii (1965) and Karpenko (1977) believed that the forests of right-bank Ukraine and the Samara forest are inhabited by the European species, since the morphometric indices of the individuals studied do not exceed the species limits.

Special morphometric, karyological, and biochemical studies (Sokolov and Danilkin, 1981; Sokolov et al., 1986; Danilkin, 1992b) showed that four roe deer caught on the right bank of the Dnieper in Kirovograd oblast were the European species. On the left bank of the Dnieper, in the population of roe deer of the Samara forest, out of nine individuals studied, two did not have additional chromosomes (microchromosomes), which makes it possible for them to be considered European: three contained one, and four individuals had two B chromosomes; i.e., they had the traits of the Siberian roe deer. However, the latter, in terms of the biochemical parameters, color, size and weight of the body, the size of the skull, and for males, in the size and structure of the horns, did not differ significantly from the European roe deer obtained in Ukraine. It was suggested that the grouping of the Samara forest is mixed.

Volokh (2007) considered, however, that the existence of a "micro isolate" of the Siberian roe "within the range of the European species is even theoretically impossible. Therefore, it is not surprising that our research in Dnepropetrovsk oblast (2001–2003) showed a complete absence of the Siberian roe deer in all its administrative regions."

The aim of this work is to solve the phylogenetic, taxonomic, and, to a great extent, hunting problems using molecular genetic methods.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A molecular-genetic analysis of eight samples of muscular tissue of the roe deer inhabiting the Samara forest of Dnepropetrovsk oblast, Ukraine, was carried out. The cytochrome b gene was used as a mitochondrial marker. Complete nucleotide sequences (bp) of this gene (1140) were obtained. For comparison, 212 corresponding nucleotide sequences of mitochondrial (mt) DNA of the Siberian and European roe deer from the collection of the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, were included in the analysis (Table 1). As nuclear markers. we used 17 microsatellite loci (RT1, RT5, BM4513, RT27, RT9short, BM6506, NVHRT30, BMS1788, RT6, OheQ, BL42, NVHRT16, BMC745, Roe09, Roe01, RT24, and IDVGA8) (Buchanan and Crawford, 1993; Bishop et al., 1994; Moore et al., 1994; Stone et al., 1995; Kappes et al., 1997; Wilson et al., 1997; Roed and Midthjell, 1998; Jobin et al., 2008). For the comparison of the microsatellite loci of the nuclear DNA, 49 samples of the Siberian and European roe deer were analyzed: from Samara oblast (29) and Altai krai (8) in Russia and 12 samples from Chernivtsi, Odessa, and Ternopil oblasts of western and Southwestern Ukraine.

DNA was isolated using the Diatom DNA Prep 200 (Isogen, Moscow) and Invitek (Germany) kits and the KingFisher Flex automatic system (Thermo Fisher Scientific, United States). Amplification was performed in 10 μ L using 2 μ L of the 5× Master Mix kit for the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) (Dialat, Russia) with the addition of the Smart Taq polymerase (Dialat, Russia) at a concentration of 2.5 units/ μ L of 0.1 μ L per sample, 1 μ L of the obtained solution of DNA, and 1 μ L of forward and reverse primers (5 pmol/ μ L). For amplification of the cytochrome b gene, the following primers were used: Cytb-ung-F (5'-GAAAAACCATCGTTGTYATTCA-3') and Cytb-ung-R (5'-TTTTCTGGTTTACAAGACCAG-TRT-3'). The reaction was carried out in the following mode: 94°C, 3 min (1 cycle); 94°C, 30 s; 62°C, 30 s; 72° C, 2 min (35 cycles); 72° C, 6 min (1 cycle). The amplification product was purified by precipitation with a solution of ethyl alcohol supplemented with 3 M sodium acetate. The polymerase chain reactions with microsatellite primers were performed under the following conditions: 95°C, 2 min 15 s; 60°C, 15 s (for primers BM6438 and BM203, 57°C); 72°C, 1 min; 60°C, 15 s (30 cycles) (for primers BM6438 and BM203, 57°C and 35 cycles); 72°C, 5 min (1 cycle); 15°C, 3 min 30 s. In addition, three multilocus PCRs were carried out (the first one: OheO, BL42, NVHRT16, BMC745; the second: RT24, BM6506, NVHRT30, BMS1788, RT6; and the third one: RT1, RT5, BM4513, RT27, RT9short) (Buchanan and Crawford, 1993; Bishop et al., 1994; Moore et al., 1994; Kappes et al., 1997; Wilson et al., 1997; Roed and Midthjell, 1998; Jobin et al., 2008). A multiplex PCR reaction was carried out using $5 \times$ Master Mix (Dialat, Russia) in the following mode: 95°C, 15 min (1 cycle); 94°C, 30 s; 57°C, 1 min; 72°C, 1 min 20 s (35 cycles); 60°C, 30 min (1 cycle). PCR was performed using a Tetrad 2 Termal Cycler (Bio-Rad, United States). Fragment analysis of the amplification product was performed on an 3130 Genetic Analyzer (Applied Biosystems, United States) using the LIZ500 size standard (Applied Biosystems). The results of the fragment analysis were deciphered using the Gene-Mapper 4.1 program (Applied Biosystems) and the

Sample collection sites	Numbers of samples in the collection of the Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, species status	Studied molecular- genetic markers	Source of information, numbers of haplotypes in GenBank (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)	
Samara forest, Dnepropetrovsk oblast, Ukraine*	3483–3486, 3509–3512, C. pygargus	Cytochrome <i>b</i> gene of mtDNA, 17 microsat- ellite loci	Collection of the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, new samples	
Altai krai, Russia	1507—1514, C. pygargus	17 microsatellite loci	Plakhina et al., 2014	
Samara oblast, Russia	2506, 2507, 2509, 2511–2515, 2517–2527, 2757–2763, <i>C. pygargus</i>	The same	The same	
Western, Southwestern Ukraine	594–596, 786–792, 797, 798, C. capreolus	"	"	
Kazakhstan, Russia: Orenburg, Sverd- lovsk, and Kurgan oblasts, Altai and Krasnoyarsk krai, Tuva, Khakassia, Irkutsk oblast, Buryatia, Yakutia, Khabarovsk and Primorskii krai	149, 150, 154, 161, 179, 300–303, 310–325, 327, 333, 334, 493, 494, 496, 497, 685, 692, 721–725, 754, 765, 767–783, 1072–1074, 1156, 1158–1163, 1165–1170, 1172–1176, 1374–1376, 1508–1516, 1554, 1915, 1916, 1200, 1201, <i>C. pygargus</i>	Cytochrome <i>b</i> gene of mtDNA	Zvychaynaya et al., 2011b	
Krasnodar krai, Crimea	586–588, 802–804, 849, 851, 854–857, 858–863, 1234, 1237, 1243, 2396, <i>C. capreolus, C. pygagrus</i>	The same	Kholodova et al., 2009; Zvychaynaya et al., 2013	
Moscow, Smolensk and Tula oblasts	1379, 1461–1465, 1472–1475, 1483–1485, 1487–1489, 1491–1495, 1497–1505, 1517–1523, 1525–1528, <i>C. capreolus,</i> <i>C. pygagrus</i>	"	Collection of the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, new samples	
Stavropol krai	1909–1914, C. pygagrus	"	Zvychaynaya et al., 2014	
Samara oblast	2504–2515, 2517–2520, 2522–2527, <i>C. pygagrus</i>	"	Collection of the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, new samples	
Western, Southwestern Ukraine	589, 592–596, 600, 785–800, 831–835, C. capreolus	"	Zvychaynaya et al., 2013	

Table 1	. List	t of	samples	of Ca	preolus	pygarg	us and	С.	capreolus	inc	luded	in the	analysis

* According to the results of this study.



Fig. 1. Median network of haplotypes of mitochondrial DNA of roe deer built in the Network program on the basis of phylogenetic analysis of 1140 nucleotide sequences of the cytochrome *b* gene. (*1* and *2*) Haplogroups of *Capreolus capreolus* and *C. pygargus*, respectively. (I) Samples from the Samara forest, (II) other samples. The length of the branches is proportional to the number of mutations, and the size of the nodes is proportional to the number of samples; for Figs. 1 and 2.

genetic diversity indices were processed, including counting, using the MS-tools (Park, 2001) and GenAlEx 6.4 programs (Peakall and Smouse, 2006) for Microsoft Office Excel, and the Structure 2.3.4 (Pritchard et al., 2000) and Arlequin 3.5.1.3 (Excoffier and Lischer, 2010) programs, as well.

RESULTS

The variability of the cytochrome b gene of the mtDNA of the roe deer from the Samara forest in Dnepropetrovsk oblast was small. A total of 10 mutations (0.88%) were found, of which five (0.44%) were single for a sampling of eight samples.

All the sequences obtained were identical or very close to the fragments of mtDNA of the Siberian roe deer (Fig. 1), which were discovered earlier (Zvychaynaya et al., 2011a, 2011b; Danilkin et al., 2012). Four haplotypes were found, all of which belonged to the mitochondrial line (Figs. 1, 2), typical of the western part of the range of C. pygargus, and also widespread in the artificially formed eastern European populations of Capreolus. Haplotype I was described in seven samples from the Urals (Orenburg, Sverdlovsk, and Kurgan oblasts), three from Moscow oblast, one from Altai krai, and one from Kazakhstan. Haplotype III was found in three samples from Moscow oblast. Haplotypes II and IV were unique: II was separated by a single substitution from the sequence of the gene common in the Urals (n = 9) and registered in Altai krai (n = 1), and IV was separated from the sequence obtained for ten samples from Samara oblast by two substitutions. The haplotypes were placed into the international NCBI database under the numbers KT964431-KT964433.

Fragment analysis of the microsatellite loci of the nuclear DNA confirmed the identification of the study group with the Siberian species. A compulsory separation of the mixed sample, which included all samples from the Samara forest of Dnepropetrovsk oblast in Ukraine and representatives of C. capreolus from southwestern Ukraine and C. pygargus from Altai krai, into two clusters (k = 2, $\ln = 1064.3$) united the individuals of this group with representatives of C. pygargus. The smallest value of the logarithm of probability was found for k = 3 and equaled 966.7 (against $\ln = 1241$ for k = 1, $\ln = 1064.3$ for k = 2, and $\ln = 1006$ for k = 4) (Fig. 3). However, when a sampling of only Siberian roe deer was divided into two clusters, the samples from Dnepropetrovsk oblast showed a significant difference from those of Altai krai and Samara oblast (Fig. 4a). With an increase in k (k = 3), the picture remained the same (Fig. 4b): the grouping of the roe deer from the Samara forest of Dnepropetrovsk oblast retained its integrity as opposed to other representatives of C. pygargus, and the rest of the sampling tended to divide further. With a further step-bystep increase in the number of putative groups (parameter k) for the roe deer of Dnepropetrovsk oblast, the probability of falling into one common cluster remained at the level of 100%; i.e., the intrapopulation differentiation at the studied microsatellite loci was absent.

The observed heterozygosity (H_0) of the population under study is 0.32 ± 0.043 , while the expected one (H_e) is 0.44 \pm 0.081, whereas in the roe deer from Southwestern Ukraine and Altai krai of Russia, these parameters are higher (Zvychaynaya et al., 2013) (Table 2). In the roe deer of the Samara forest of Dnepropetrovsk oblast, 57 alleles were found; in the animals from southwestern Ukraine, 75; from Altai krai, 73; and from Samara oblast, 117. In Dnepropetrovsk and other Ukrainian roe deer, 31 common alleles were found; in those from Dnepropetrovsk and from Samara oblast, there were 35; in Dnepropetrovsk and Altai deer, 30. In the studied animals of the Samara forest, 13 specific alleles (in seven loci) were found, according to which they can be distinguished from other Siberian roe deer.



Fig. 2. Median network of haplotypes of the mitochondrial DNA of the Siberian roe deer, cytochrome *b* gene (1140 bp). (I–IV) Haplotypes of mtDNA of samples from the Samara forest; (*1*) Ukraine (Samara Forest), (*2*) European part of Russia (Moscow and Samara oblasts, Krasnodar and Stavropol krais), (*3*) the Pre-Urals, the Urals, Kazakhstan, (*4*) Central and Eastern Siberia, Yakutia, Far East.



Fig. 3. Species differentiation of roe deer from Dnepropetrovsk oblast of Ukraine (1–8, *Capreolus pygargus*), Southwestern Ukraine (9–20, *C. capreolus*), and Altai krai (21–28, *C. pygargus*) according to the results of analysis of 17 microsatellite loci with k = 3. The histogram is built using the Structure 2.3.4 program. The abscissa axis shows the serial numbers of the samples, and the ordinate axis gives the probability of falling into one of the *k* clusters (Admixture model and allele frequencies are independent).

The statistical index F_{st} in the grouping from the Samara forest in Dnepropetrovsk oblast and Southwestern Ukraine turned out to be the maximum (0.51) for the described sampling of four populations (Table 3), which may indicate the genetic isolation of the Samara forest population.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained confirm the existence of a local grouping of the Siberian roe deer on the territory of the Samara forest in Dnepropetrovsk oblast in Ukraine. Its gene pool, apparently, was not subjected to significant transformations in historical time,

579

BIOLOGY BULLETIN Vol. 44 No. 6 2017



Fig. 4. Population differentiation of tissue samples of roe deer from Dnepropetrovsk oblast, Ukraine (1–8, *Capreolus pygargus*), Altai krai (9–16, *C. pygargus*), and Samara oblast (17–45, *C. pygargus*) based on analysis of 17 microsatellite loci for (a) k = 2 and (b) k = 3. The abscissa axis shows the serial numbers of the samples, and the ordinate axis is the probability of falling into one of the *k* clusters.

except for the inevitable loss of genetic diversity in the conditions of severe anthropogenic pressure. In the 1920s, the total number of roe deer in Samara forest was probably a few dozen (Barabash, 1928; Brauner, 1928; Volokh, 2007).

Related mitochondrial lines were found by us in the populations of the Siberian roe deer from the Trans-Volga region, the Urals, and Altai krai, as well as in the artificially formed population of Moscow oblast, where the descendants of individuals imported from the western part of the range of this species were preserved (Zvychaynaya et al., 2011a, 2011b; Danilkin et al., 2012). It is possible that these haplotypes are a relict legacy of the Siberian roe, which has been preserved in Ukraine to the present day. The results of microsatellite analysis confirm this hypothesis and attest to the genetic originality of the Samara forest grouping.

Nevertheless, the question arises: could the grouping of the Samara forest have formed as a result of artificial introduction? No reliable information about releases of the Siberian roe deer in Ukraine in the 19th century or earlier is available, but this possibility cannot be excluded. In 1929, 1959, and 1968, 72 Siberian roe deer imported from Primorskii krai (Boldenkov et al., 1971; Pavlov et al., 1974; Pavlov, 1999) were released in Kiev oblast, and their descendants could have colonized Ukraine. In addition, in 1953, 20 individuals from the Caucasus were introduced into the Pavlograd hunting enterprise of Dnepropetrovsk oblast (Volokh, 2007). Our analysis, however, did not reveal mitochondrial genes in either the Far Eastern or Caucasian animals.

Interestingly, the investigated grouping of the Siberian roe deer has inhabited the modern range of the European roe deer for a long time (Danilkin, 1992a, 1999, 2014; Volokh, 2007), which is confirmed by molecular genetic analysis of the western Ukraine and Crimean populations (Zvychaynaya et al., 2013). However, we did not find any "genetic traces" of confusion with the European species. The same situation

Table 2. Observed and expected heterozygosity values in the roe deer from the Samara forest of Ukraine, southwestern Ukraine, Samara oblast, and Altai krai in the Russian Federation

Sample collection sites	Species status	Heterozygosity			
	Species status	observed (H_0)	expected (H_e)		
Samara forest, Ukraine	C. pygargus $(n = 8)$	0.32 ± 0.043	0.44 ± 0.081		
Southwestern Ukraine	C. capreolus $(n = 12)$	0.379 ± 0.035	0.497 ± 0.078		
Samara oblast	C. pygargus $(n = 29)$	0.455 ± 0.24	0.668 ± 0.56		
Altai krai	The same $(n = 8)$	0.415 ± 0.044	0.598 ± 0.074		

	Samara forest, Ukraine	Altai	Samara oblast	Southwestern Ukraine
Samara forest, Ukraine	0	_	—	—
Altai	0.36017	0	—	—
Samara oblast	0.3304	0.03325	0	—
Southwestern Ukraine	0.51191*	0.36597	0.2914	0

Table 3. F_{st} (fixation index, *F*-statistic) values for the roe deer from the Samara forest of Ukraine, southwestern Ukraine, Samara oblast, and Altai krai in the Russian Federation

* All values are significant (p < 0.05).

is typical of the Stavropol population of the Siberian roe (Zvychaynaya et al., 2014). The Siberian roe deer, obviously, has advantages in the joint habitat with the European one, which allows its local groupings to persist (or preserve their gene pool), even within the habitat of the latter.

Nevertheless, mixed populations of European and Siberian roe deer also exist. In the Moscow oblast population formed as a result of artificial introduction of both species, 78% of the specimen with the Siberian mitotype prevail (Zvychaynaya et al., 2011a). Whether the latter are purely Siberian or hybrids with the European roe deer or the introgression of the mitochondrial genome is observed, further studies will show. It has been revealed that the share of hybrid individuals in a sampling (n = 42) of roe deer groups in the European part of Russia is 4.8% (Plakhina et al., 2014). The mtDNA of the Siberian type has also been found in a number of individuals in the populations of roe deer from Belarus (Zvychaynaya, 2010), eastern Poland (Matosiuk et al., 2014), and Lithuania (Lorenzini et al., 2014), which may indicate more significant genetic consequences of the artificial introduction of the Siberian roe deer than previously thought. However, it is very likely that the "Siberian" genome in individual populations is the result of the postglacial habitat of C. pygargus in Eastern and, probably, Central Europe.

The modern grouping of roe deer of the Samara forest in Dnepropetrovsk oblast is typically "Siberian" by genotype, but according to a relatively recent study, its phenotype is "European," although only 100 years ago it was undoubtedly "Siberian" in the phenotype as well (Brauner, 1915). This fact does not lend itself to reasonable explanation. The phenotype could have changed during the critically low numbers at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, it went through the notorious "bottleneck," which theoretically could have led to inbreeding and the subsequent decrease in the size of animals. However, our results only indicate a slight decrease in the indicators of genetic diversity (heterozygosity and the number of microsatellite alleles). It can also be assumed that the reason for changing the phenotype of this "island" grouping could be the selective hunting elimination of large individuals. It is known, for example, that in the European part of Russia and in the south of Siberia and the Far East, as a result of a prolonged selective shooting, the elk became smaller, the typical shovel-shaped horns in the males became a rarity, and its populations actually lost their trophy value. The populations of the Siberian roe deer in the Pre-Urals and Trans-Urals related to the genotype of the Samara forest individuals were also subjected to strong hunting pressure, but retained the "Siberian" phenotype. Nevertheless, local hunters claim that the roe deer of the Samara forest are large in size and weight, and the males have powerful widely spaced horns that are different from the horns of the European species (the survey was conducted by A.V. Domnich in April 2014).

Obviously, a careful study of the roe deer of both the Samara forest and neighboring populations in leftbank and right-bank Ukraine, using a large volume of material, is necessary. This can lead to unexpected findings and specification of the speciation hypotheses (Danilkin, 1999, 2014; Zagorodnyuk, 2002) and taxonomy of roe deer.

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