

# Supplementary Material

## Early sexual dimorphism in the developing gut microbiome of northern elephant seals

Authors names and addresses:

Stoffel, M.A.<sup>1,2,3\*</sup>, Acevedo-Whitehouse, K.<sup>4,5+</sup>, Nami Morales-Durán<sup>4</sup>, Grosser, S.<sup>6</sup>, Chakarov, N.<sup>1</sup>, Krüger, O.<sup>1</sup>, Nichols, H.J.<sup>1,7</sup>, Elorriaga-Verplancken, F.R.<sup>8</sup>, Hoffman, J.I.<sup>1,9+</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Animal Behaviour, Bielefeld University, Postfach 100131, 33501 Bielefeld, Germany

<sup>2</sup>School of Natural Sciences and Psychology, Faculty of Science, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool L3 3AF, United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup>Current address: Institute of Evolutionary Biology, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, EH9 3FL, United Kingdom

<sup>4</sup>Unit for Basic and Applied Microbiology, School of Natural Sciences, Autonomous University of Queretaro, Avenida de las Ciencias S/N, Queretaro 76230, México

<sup>5</sup>The Marine Mammal Center, 2000 Bunker Road, Sausalito, CA 94965, USA.

<sup>6</sup>Division of Evolutionary Biology, Faculty of Biology, LMU Munich, Planegg-Martinsried, Germany

<sup>7</sup> Swansea University, Department of Biosciences, College of Science, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP, United Kingdom

<sup>8</sup>Department of Fisheries and Marine Biology, Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas, Instituto Politécnico Nacional (CICIMAR-IPN), La Paz, Mexico.

<sup>9</sup>British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Cambridge, CB3 OET, United Kingdom

Key index words:

gut microbiome, health, sex-differences, life-history, pinnipeds, wild mammal

<sup>+</sup> Shared senior authors

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author:

Martin A. Stoffel

Postal address: Institute of Evolutionary Biology, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

E-mail: [martin.adam.stoffel@gmail.com](mailto:martin.adam.stoffel@gmail.com)

## Supplementary Material 1 – Tables and Figures

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Genus	Species	Mean rel. abundance %
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	17.22
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	NA	7.84
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	mortiferum	2.04
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	mortiferum	1.99
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	fragilis	1.67
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	1.22
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Anaerococcus	NA	1.04
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	NA	NA	0.97
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Odoribacter	NA	0.93
Bacteria	Proteobacteria	Gammaproteobacteria	Aeromonadales	Succinivibrionaceae	Anaerobiospirillum	NA	0.89
Bacteria	Proteobacteria	Gammaproteobacteria	Enterobacteriales	Enterobacteriaceae	Escherichia/Shigella	NA	0.72
Bacteria	Proteobacteria	Gammaproteobacteria	Aeromonadales	Succinivibrionaceae	Anaerobiospirillum	NA	0.60
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Negativicutes	Selenomonadales	Acidaminococcaceae	Phascolarctobacterium	NA	0.51
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Peptoniphilus	NA	0.49
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Peptostreptococcaceae	Peptoclostridium	NA	0.49
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	0.48
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Negativicutes	Selenomonadales	Veillonellaceae	Dialister	NA	0.44
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Anaerotruncus	NA	0.35
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Lachnospiraceae	Blautia	NA	0.14
Bacteria	Actinobacteria	Coriobacteriia	Coriobacteriales	Coriobacteriaceae	Collinsella	NA	0.11
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Parabacteroides	merdae	0.08

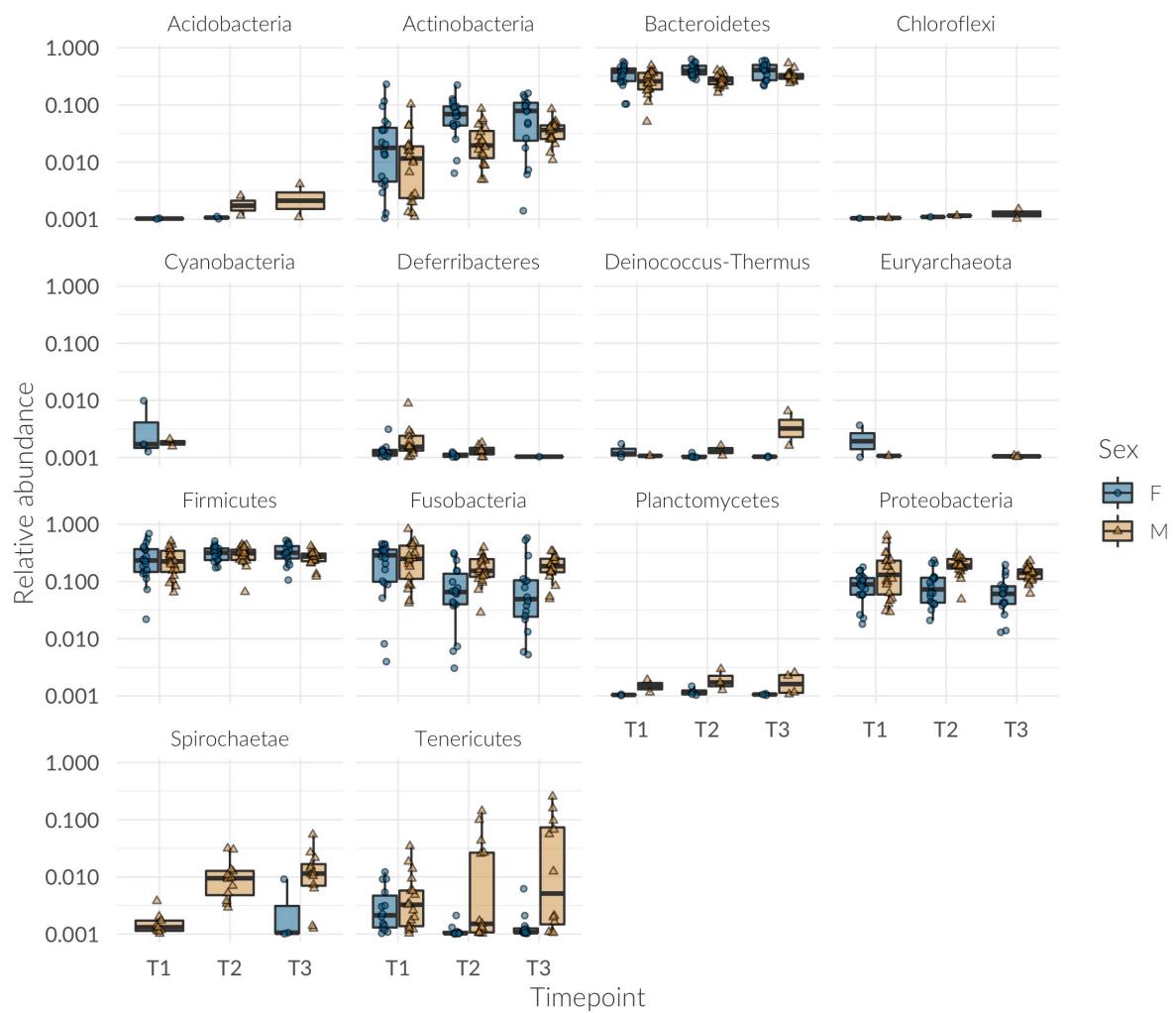
**Supplementary Table 1:** Core microbiome (ASVs) shared among at least 95 % of individuals during sampling time point one (T1). In some cases, a taxonomic level could not be assigned (NA). Shown is also the mean relative abundance of each core ASV across all samples at T1.

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Genus	Species	Mean rel. abundance %
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Ezakiella	NA	4.37
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	3.22
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	NA	2.75
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	fragilis	2.30
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Odoribacter	NA	1.40
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	mortiferum	1.02
Bacteria	Actinobacteria	Actinobacteria	Corynebacteriales	Corynebacteriaceae	Lawsonella	NA	0.97
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Negativicutes	Selenomonadales	Veillonellaceae	Dialister	NA	0.94
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Peptoniphilus	NA	0.86
Bacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	mortiferum	0.73
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Anaerococcus	NA	0.69
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Ruminococcaceae_UCG-005	NA	0.50
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Anaerococcus	NA	0.48
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Faecalibacterium	NA	0.35
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Rikenellaceae	Alistipes	NA	0.24

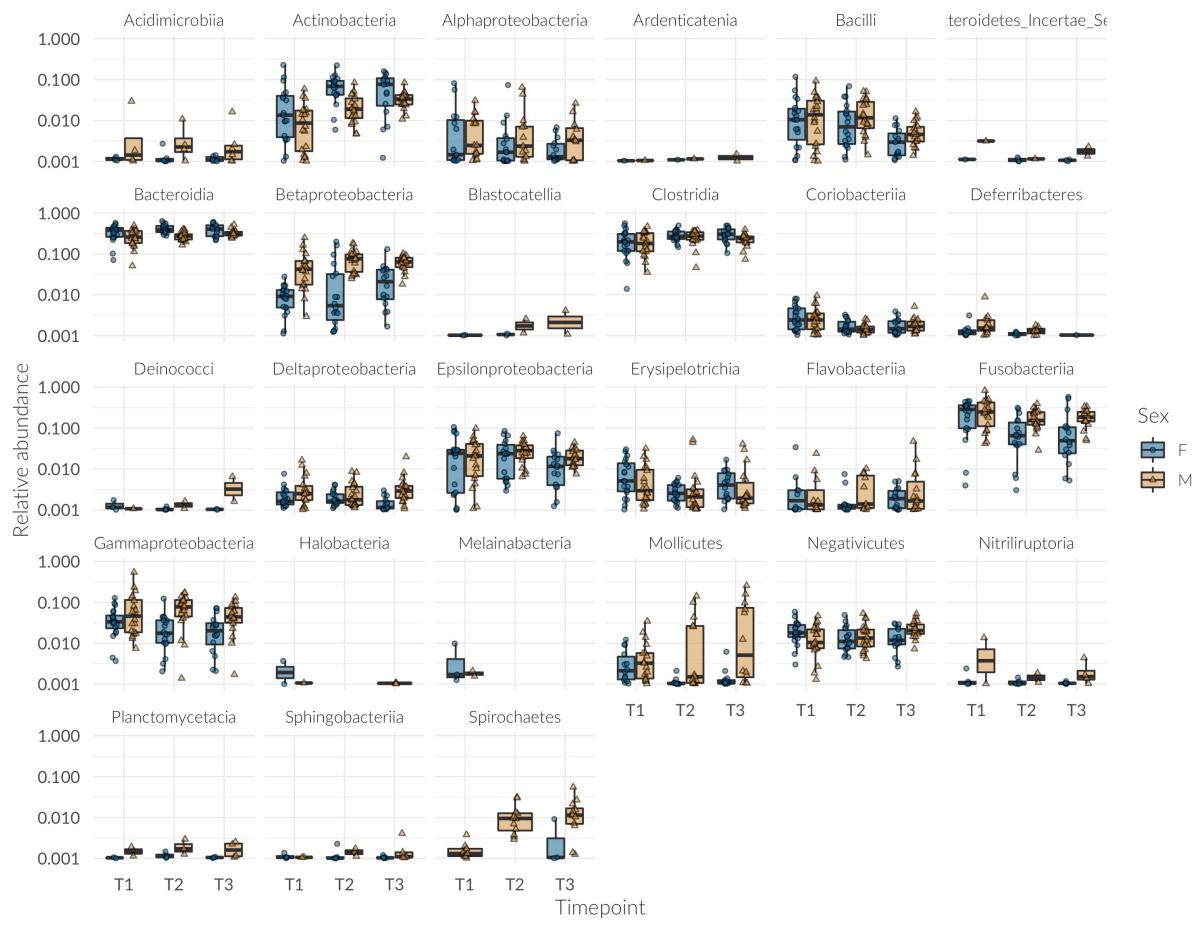
**Supplementary Table 2:** Core microbiome (ASVs) shared among at least 95 % of individuals during sampling time point two (T2). In some cases, a taxonomic level could not be assigned (NA). Shown is also the mean relative abundance of each core ASV across all samples at T2

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Genus	Species	Mean rel. abundance %
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Ezakiella	NA	4.23
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Prevotellaceae	Prevotella	NA	4.22
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Porphyromonas	NA	3.05
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Proteiniphilum	NA	3.02
Bacteria	Fusobacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	2.85
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	NA	2.68
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Porphyromonas	NA	2.00
Bacteria	Actinobacteria	Actinobacteria	Corynebacteriales	Corynebacteriaceae	Lawsonella	NA	1.37
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	NA	1.11
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Negativicutes	Selenomonadales	Veillonellaceae	Dialister	NA	0.90
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Ruminococcaceae_UCG-005	NA	0.90
Bacteria	Actinobacteria	Actinobacteria	Corynebacteriales	Corynebacteriaceae	Lawsonella	NA	0.86
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Anaerococcus	NA	0.86
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Anaerococcus	NA	0.83
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Porphyromonadaceae	Odoribacter	NA	0.79
Bacteria	Fusobacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	mortiferum	0.75
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Ruminococcaceae_UCG-005	NA	0.71
Bacteria	Fusobacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	mortiferum	0.66
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Peptoniphilus	NA	0.51
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Bacteroidaceae	Bacteroides	fragilis	0.48
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	NA	NA	0.46
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Anaerotruncus	NA	0.43
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Ruminococcaceae_UCG-005	NA	0.40
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Ruminococcaceae_UCG-005	NA	0.30
Bacteria	Fusobacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	0.28
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Erysipelotrichia	Erysipelotrichales	Erysipelotrichaceae	NA	NA	0.27
Bacteria	Bacteroidetes	Bacteroidia	Bacteroidales	Rikenellaceae	Alistipes	NA	0.14
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Anaerotruncus	NA	0.11
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Ruminococcaceae	Ruminococcaceae_UCG-005	NA	0.11
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XIII	NA	NA	0.10
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Family_XI	Peptoniphilus	NA	0.10
Bacteria	Firmicutes	Clostridia	Clostridiales	Lachnospiraceae	Blautia	NA	0.10
Bacteria	Proteobacteria	Gammaproteobacteria	Pseudomonadales	Moraxellaceae	Psychrobacter	NA	0.09
Bacteria	Proteobacteria	Gammaproteobacteria	Pseudomonadales	Moraxellaceae	Psychrobacter	NA	0.09
Bacteria	Fusobacteria	Fusobacteriia	Fusobacteriales	Fusobacteriaceae	Fusobacterium	NA	0.07

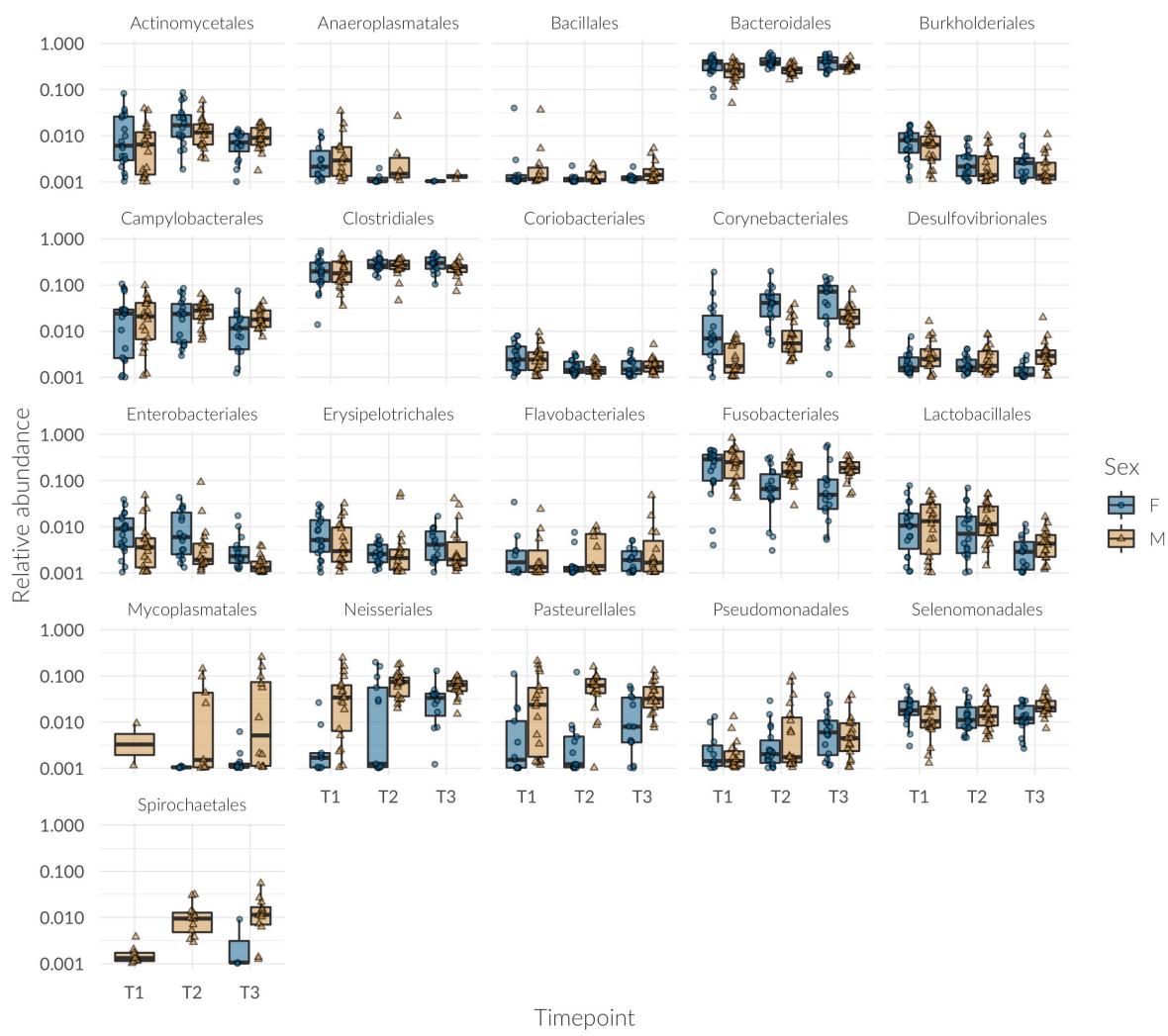
**Supplementary Table 3:** Core microbiome (ASVs) shared among at least 95 % of samples during sampling time point three (T3). In some cases, a taxonomic level could not be assigned (NA). Shown is also the mean relative abundance of each core ASV across all samples at T3.



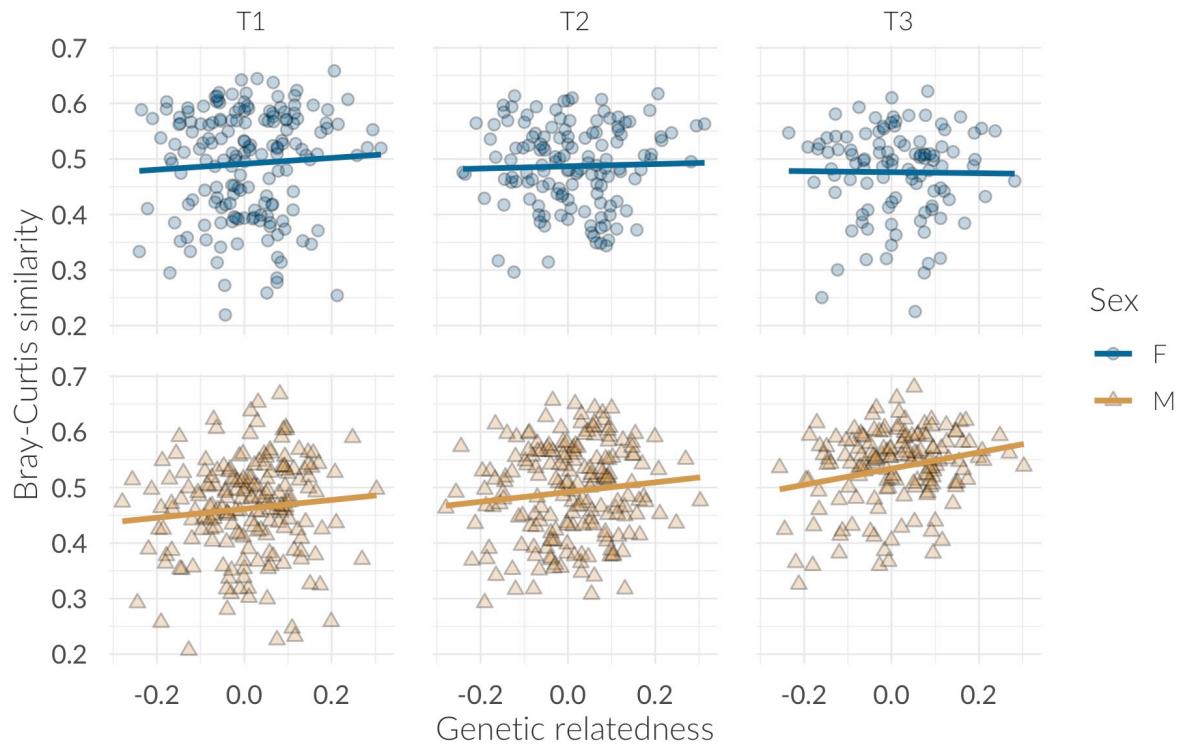
**Supplementary Figure 1:** Relative abundance of all bacterial taxa analysed in this study at the *Phylum* level across time points and colored by sex. Before visualization on the log scale, taxa with zero abundance were discarded and 0.001 was added to all remaining relative abundances.



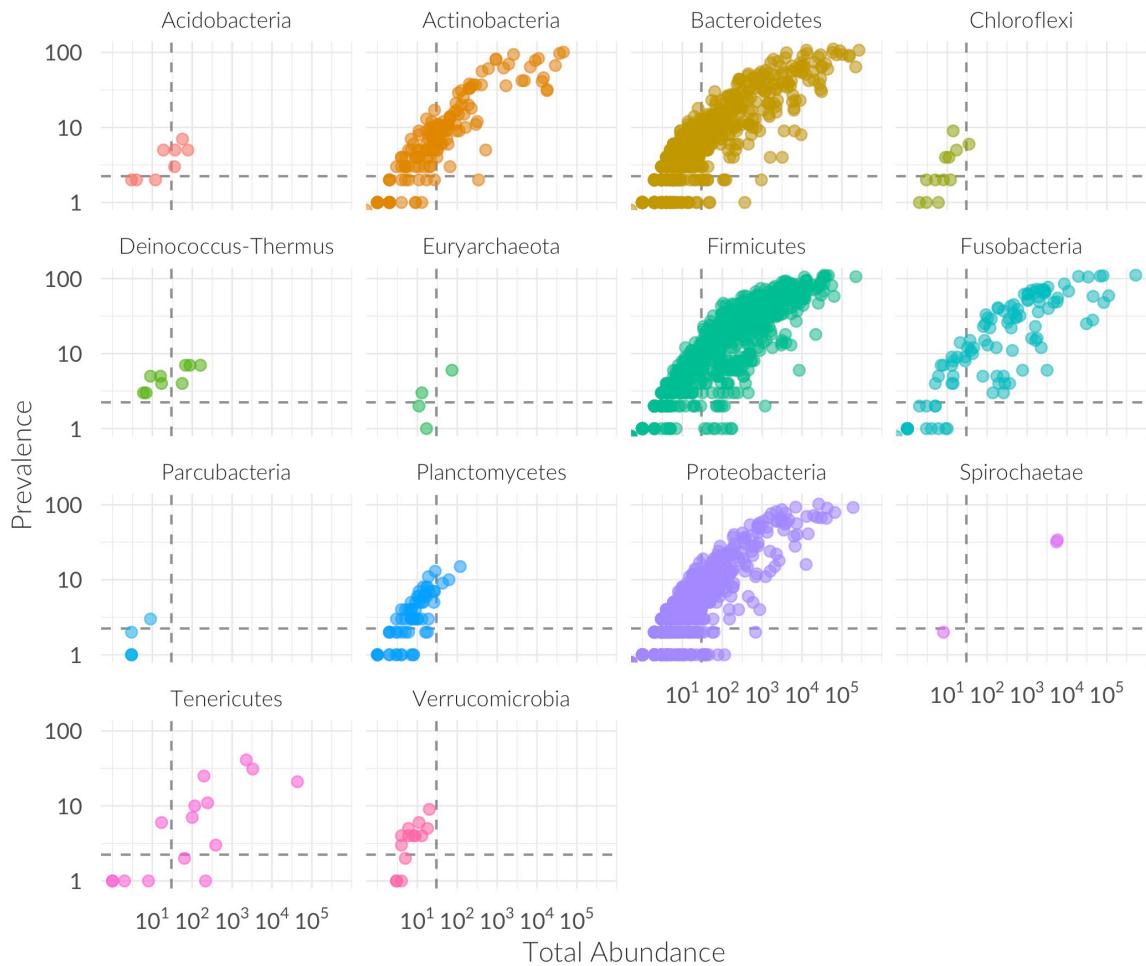
**Supplementary Figure 2:** Relative abundance of all bacterial taxa analysed in this study at the *Class* level across time points and colored by sex. Before visualization on the log scale, taxa with zero abundance were discarded and 0.001 was added to all remaining relative abundances.



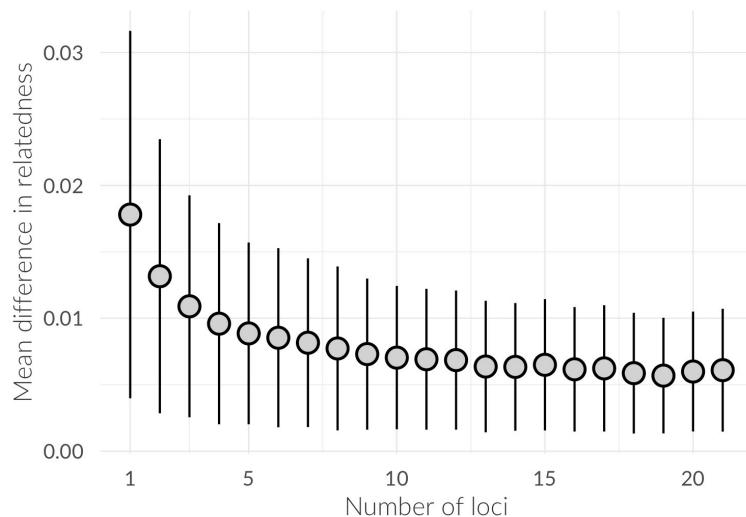
**Supplementary Figure 3:** Relative abundance of bacterial taxa analysed in this study at the *Order* level across time and colored by sex. Before visualization on the log scale, taxa with zero abundance were discarded and 0.001 was added to all remaining relative abundances. Shown is a subset of bacterial orders with interesting patterns and/or high prevalence across samples.



**Supplementary Figure 4:** Correlations between microbial similarity and genetic relatedness at three time points, split by sex.



**Supplementary Figure 5:** Prevalence and total abundance of taxa split by phylum. The horizontal and vertical dashed lines represent the cut-offs for filtering, with taxa present in fewer than three individuals and/or with an overall read count lower than 30 being discarded.



**Supplementary Figure 1: Sensitivity of the Loiselle relatedness estimator to the number of loci used.** Plotted are the mean and standard deviation (SD) of differences in pairwise genetic relatedness against the number of loci used. SDs were calculated from 1000 bootstrap replicates per locus number.

## Supplementary Material 2 – Differential abundances of specific taxa

### Differential abundance of specific taxa with age

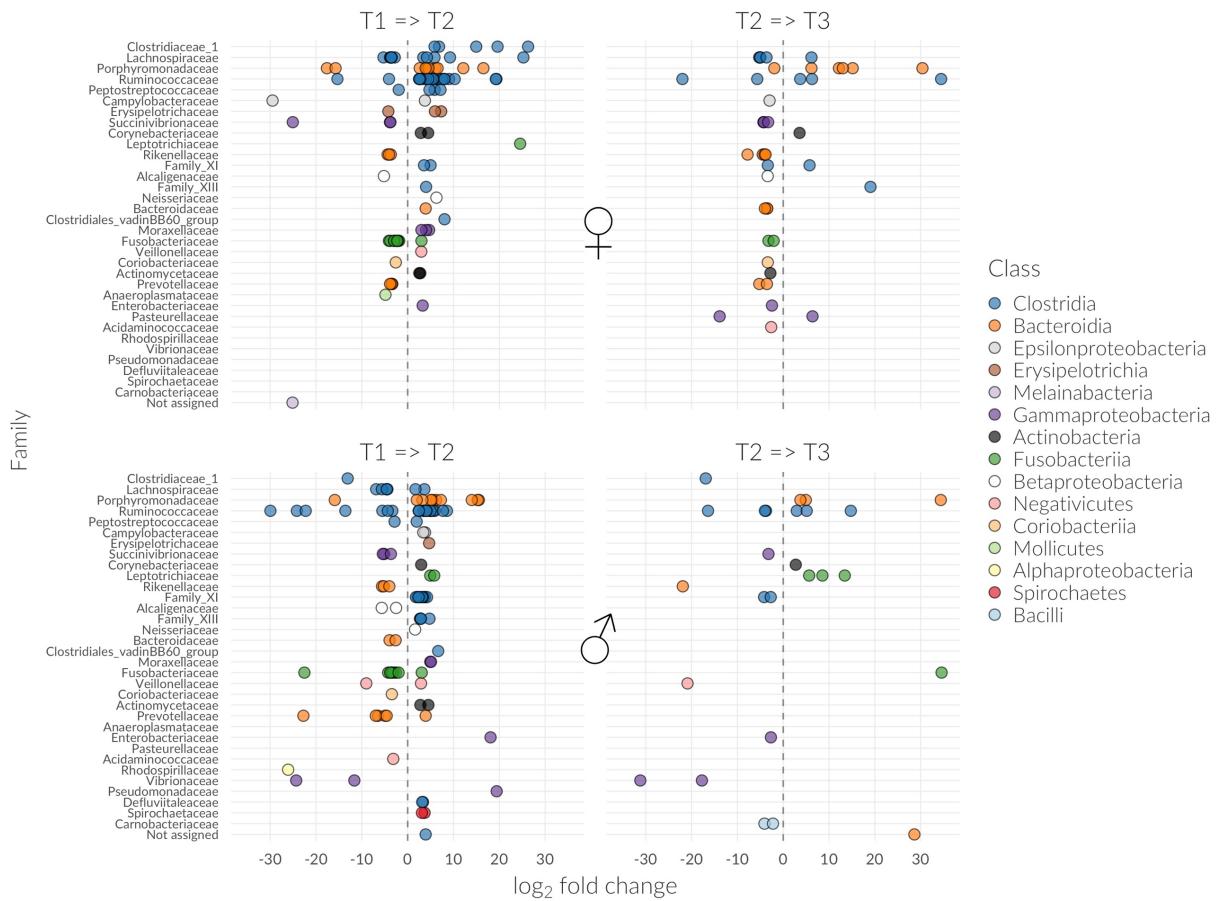
Despite the apparent similarity of phyla across all three time points (Figure 1), on a finer scale a large number of bacterial taxa changed in abundance over time (Supplementary Figure 7 and 8). Most significant changes happened early on, with a large number of taxa varying from T1 to T2 for each sex (F: n = 100, M: n = 106) followed by a smaller number of significantly different abundances of taxa between T2 and T3 (F: n = 43, M: n = 26). On a taxonomic scale, most bacterial classes changed substantially (Supplementary Figure 7). Between T1 and T2, most of the bacteria that changed abundance belonged to the Clostridia in both sexes (F: 47%, M: 44%), followed by the Bacteroidia (F: 18%, M: 20%) and Fusobacteria (F: 13%, M: 12%), a pattern that is very similar for the transition between T2 and T3 in males (Clostridia 35%, Bacteroidia 19%, Fusobacteria 15%), while in females the Bacteroidia (37%) changed substantially, more so than the Clostridia (30%) and Gammaproteobacteria (14%). Several interesting changes were also apparent in some of the less abundant bacterial classes. While Deferribacteres went extinct over time, the Spirochaetes increased in relative abundance, mainly in males (Supplementary Figure 3), and started to colonise females at T3. The Bacilli and Fusobacteria depleted rapidly over time, while the Actinobacteria increased in their relative abundances by nearly ten-fold in females and by more than five-fold in males (Supplementary Figure 2).

### Sex specific patterns of changes

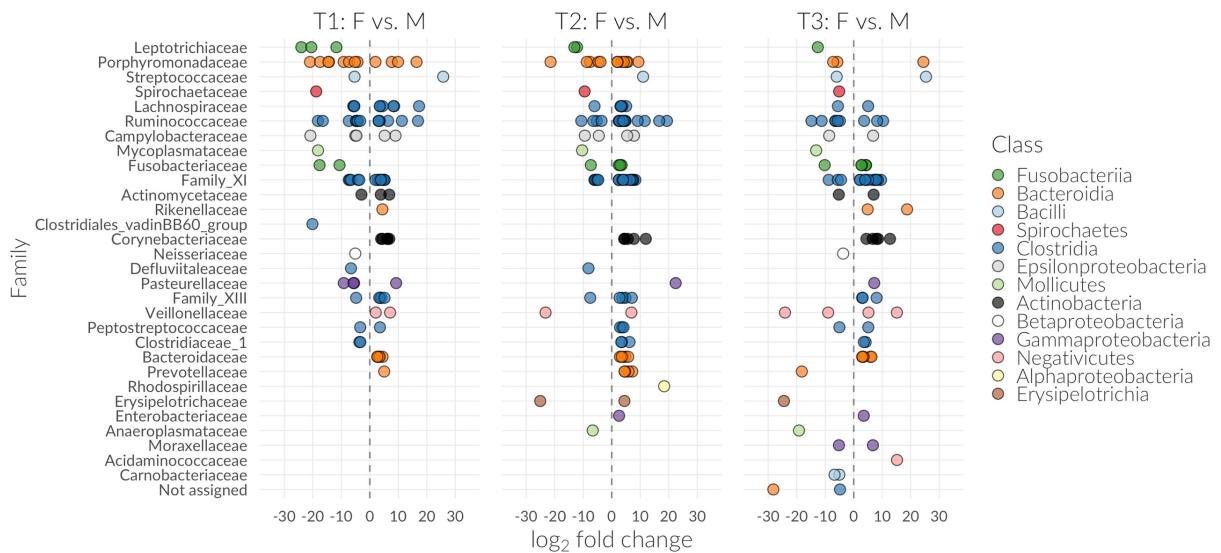
Bacterial communities in both sexes showed similar dynamics throughout the weaning period, although the ‘baseline’ abundances of many species differed substantially (Supplementary Figures 1-3, Supplementary Figure 8). On the phylum level, the microbial shift from T1 to T2 in both females and males consisted mostly of taxa belonging to the Firmicutes (F: 51%, M: 48%) followed by Bacteroidetes (F: 18%, M: 20%) and Fusobacteria in males (13%) but Proteobacteria in females (14%). Interestingly, a few bacterial families underwent large changes in abundance from T1 to T2 and made up a major part of the significantly different taxa, especially the Ruminococcaceae (F: 22%, M: 19%) followed by the Fusobacteriaceae (F: 12%, M: 10%) and Lachnospiraceae in females (12%) but the Porphyromonadaceae in males (9%). Bacterial community composition changes between T2 and T3 mainly occurred in the phyla Bacteroidetes (37%), Firmicutes (32%) and Proteobacteria (19%) in females and in the Firmicutes (46%), Bacteroidetes (19%), Fusobacteria (15%) and Proteobacteria (15%) in males. The majority of differentially abundant taxa belonged, similarly to the first transition, to the Ruminococcaceae (F: 12%, M: 23%), Porphyromonadaceae (F: 16%, M: 12%) and the Lachnospiraceae (12%) in females as well as the Leptotrichiaceae (12%) in males.

### Differential abundance of taxa across the sexes

Despite showing similar dynamics over time, many taxa were significantly differentially abundant in males and females within all three time points (T1: n = 96, T2: n = 102, T3: n = 80, see Figures 3 and 5). Although many phylogenetically different taxa contributed to these sex-specific differences, three families contributed disproportionately. The Clostridiales Family XI contributed 15% of differentially abundant taxa at T1, 16% at T2, and 18% at T3. The Ruminococcaceae contributed 15% of the taxa at T1, 19% at T2 and 13% at T3. The Porphyromonadaceae differed considerably at T1 (13%) and T2 (12%) but less so at T3 (4%).



Supplementary Figure 7: Differential abundance of taxa between sampling points, split by sex.



Supplementary Figure 8: Differential abundance of microbes between sex, split by sampling points

## Supplementary Material 3 - Genotyping methods

Total genomic DNA of 40 *Mirounga angustirostris* samples was extracted from each sample using silica-gel membrane technology (DNeasy Blood and Tissue kit, Qiagen) and genotyped at 21 previously developed microsatellite loci (see Supplementary Table 4 for details). The microsatellite loci were amplified in singleplex or multiplex reactions. The following PCR profile was used: one cycle of 3 min at 94 °C; 30 cycles of 30 s at 94 °C, 30 s at Ta °C and 40 s at 72 °C; 8 cycles of 30 s at 94 °C, 30 s at 47 °C and 40 s at 72 °C; and one final cycle of 10 min at 72 °C (see Supplementary Table 14 for Ta). Magnesium concentrations varied among the PCR mastermixes as shown in Supplementary Table 14. Fluorescently labelled PCR products were resolved by electrophoresis on an ABI 3730xl capillary sequencer and allele sizes were scored automatically using GeneMarker v1.85. To ensure high genotype quality, all traces were manually inspected and any incorrect calls were adjusted accordingly.

Locus	Literature source	Mg (mM)	T <sub>a</sub> (°C)
71HDZ441	Huebinger et al. (2007)	1.5	54
Hg4.2	Allen et al. (1995)	1.5	56
Lw-8	Davis et al. (2002)	1.5	47
ZcCgDh4.7	Hernandez-Velazquez et al. (2005)	1.75	56
PV9	Goodman (1997)	2	53
ZzCgDh3.6	Hernandez-Velazquez et al. (2005)	2	39
Hl-8	Davis et al. (2002)	2	53
PVC1	Garza (1998)	1.5	52
71HDZ301	Huebinger et al. (2007)	1.5	42
ZzCgDh1.8	Hernandez-Velazquez et al. (2005)	1.5	42
ZcwA12	Hoffman et al. (2007)	1.75	49
ZcwF07	Hoffman et al. (2007)	1.75	49
Ag-9	Hoffman et al. (2008)	2	57
ZcwC01	Hoffman et al. (2007)	2	57
ZcwE04	Hoffman et al. (2007)	2	52
ZcwG04	Hoffman et al. (2007)	2	52
Mango01	(Sanvito et al., 2013)	1.5	55
Mango44	(Sanvito et al., 2013)	1.5	55
Mango43	(Sanvito et al., 2013)	1.5	55
Mango35	(Sanvito et al., 2013)	1.5	53
Mango06	(Sanvito et al., 2013)	1.5	55
Mango09E19	(Sanvito et al., 2013)	1.5	52
PV9.1	This study	1.5	53

**Supplementary Table 4: Microsatellite loci genotyped in the northern elephant seal.** “Mg” denotes the concentration of magnesium used in the PCR mastermix and “T<sub>a</sub>” denotes the annealing temperature used.