

# The complete mitochondrial genome of *Spilonota lechriaspis* Meyrick (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae)

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**Abstract** We determined the nucleotide sequence of the mitochondrial genome (mtgenome) of *Spilonota lechriaspis* Meyrick (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae). The entire closed circular molecule is 15,368 bp and contains 37 genes with the typical gene complement and order for lepidopteran mtgenomes. All tRNAs except tRNA<sup>Ser(AGN)</sup> can be folded into the typical cloverleaf secondary structures. The protein-coding genes (PCGs) have typical mitochondrial start codons, with the exception of COI, which uses the unusual CGA one as is found in all other Lepidoptera sequenced to date. In addition, six of 13 PCGs harbor the incomplete termination codons, a single T. The A + T-rich region contains some conserved structures that are similar to those found in other lepidopteran mtgenomes, including a structure combining the motif 'ATAGA', a 19-bp poly(T) stretch and three microsatellite (AT)<sub>n</sub> elements which are part of larger 122+ bp macrorepeats. This is the first report of macrorepeats in a lepidopteran mtgenome.

**Keywords** Mitochondrial genome · Lepidoptera · Tortricidae · *Spilonota lechriaspis* Meyrick

## Introduction

Complete mitochondrial genome (mtgenome) sequences are seeing wider use as molecular markers for phylogenetic, phylogeographic and ecological studies of insects [1–5] plus as a model system for genome biology [6–9]. Wolstenholme and Clary [10] reported the first insect mtgenome sequence in 1985 for *Drosophila*. Up to 2006, there had been 46 complete or near complete mtgenome sequences lodged in GenBank [11], and the number has rapidly increased in the last five years, with to 198 ones in April, 2010. The mtgenome of insects as with other metazoans is a closed-circular molecule ranging in size from 14 to 20 kb, which encodes 37 genes, consisting of 13 PCGs, two ribosomal RNA (rRNA) genes, and 22 transfer RNA (tRNA) genes [12]. Additionally, it contains a major non-coding area, termed the control region or the A + T-rich region, which regulates and initiates replication and transcription [13].

The major insect order Lepidoptera, the moths and butterflies, has more than 160,000 described species and a cosmopolitan distribution [14]. The family Tortricidae is one of the largest lepidopteran families with more than 5,000 described species and several serious pests of the forests, agricultural crops and fruit trees [15]. The larvae eat leaves, stems and roots, and folivorous species include leaf rollers, leaf webbers, and leaf miners [16]. Species in the genus *Spilonota* have a Holarctic distribution including China, Japan, Korea, Russia, North America and European regions [17]. *Spilonota* includes notorious pest species of fruit and tea trees with the larvae feeding primarily on leaves as leaf rollers, but also occasionally attacking fruits [18].

The identification of species in the genus *Spilonota* is difficult and complicated, because of the similarity of

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morphological characteristics and genital structures across the genus. So it is not straightforward to definitively identify them, and some species of the genus are vaguely delimited till now. Despite a lot of studies have been reported about the morphological, physiological and biological features, few have been done on molecular biology yet. And the ranges of the host species are apple, pear, loquat, hawthorn and so on [17]. It is a common pest of apple and pear. So we get more studied on molecular biology. The present study describes the complete mtgenome of *Spilonota lechriaspis*, a second mtgenome from the family of Tortricidae, and the first one for the subfamily of Olethreutinae.

## Materials and methods

### Specimen collection and DNA extraction

Individual larvae of *S. lechriaspis* were collected in an organic apple orchard in Beijing, China. Raised in the laboratory, the hatched adults were collected, preserved in 100% ethanol and stored at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . DNA extraction from a single specimen was performed using the DNeasy Tissue kit (QIAGEN) following the manufacturer instructions.

### Primers design and PCR amplification

First, short fragment amplifications were performed with the universal PCR primers from Simon et al. [19] and tortricid specific primers from Lee et al. [11] (Table 1). Primer pairs to amplify the Gln-ND2 and whole COI were designed by comparison of lepidopteran sequences available in the GenBank. Species-specific primers were designed using Primer Premier 5.0 software and sequence alignments of the complete mtgenome of *Adoxophyes honmai* [11]. PCR products covering the remaining regions of the mtgenome were amplified using universal and species-specific primers (see Table 1). The entire genome of *S. lechriaspis* was amplified in 15 fragments (Table 1). All the primers were synthesized by Shanghai Sangon Biotechnology Co., Ltd. (Beijing, China). In order to decrease time in sequencing and walking, we used the standard PCR technique rather than long PCR techniques. PCR conditions were as follows: an initial denaturation for 5 min at  $95^{\circ}\text{C}$ , followed by 34 cycles of denaturation 30 s at  $94^{\circ}\text{C}$ , annealing 30 s at  $50\text{--}55^{\circ}\text{C}$  (depending on primer combinations), elongation 1–3 min (depending on putative length of the fragments) at  $68^{\circ}\text{C}$ , a final extension step of  $72^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 10 min. For most fragments, we used  $2\times$  Taq PCR MasterMix (TIANGEN BIOTECH CO., LTD., Beijing, China) in the amplification, but the srRNA-ND2 region was amplified using Takara LA Taq (Takara Co., Dalian,

China). All amplifications were performed on an Eppendorf Mastercycler and Mastercycler gradient in 50  $\mu\text{l}$  reaction volumes. The reaction volume of  $2\times$  Taq PCR MasterMix contains of 22  $\mu\text{l}$  sterilized distilled water, 25  $\mu\text{l}$   $2\times$  Master Mix, 1  $\mu\text{l}$  of each primer (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) and 1  $\mu\text{l}$  of DNA template; and the one of Takara LA Taq consists of 26.5  $\mu\text{l}$  of sterilized distilled water, 5  $\mu\text{l}$  of  $10\times$  LA PCR Buffer II (Takara), 5  $\mu\text{l}$  of 25 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$ , 8  $\mu\text{l}$  of dNTPs Mixture, 2  $\mu\text{l}$  of each primer (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ), 1  $\mu\text{l}$  of DNA template and 0.5  $\mu\text{l}$  (1.25 U) of TaKaRa LA Taq polymerase (Takara).

### Cloning, sequencing and sequence assembling

The PCR products were detected via electrophoresis in 1% agarose gel, purified using the 3S Spin PCR Product Purification Kit, and sequenced directly with ABI-377 automatic DNA sequencer. All amplified products were sequenced directly using upstream and downstream primers from bi-directions except the COIII-ND5, ND5-ND4 and srRNA-ND2, which were sequenced after cloning. They were ligated to the *pEASY-T3* Cloning Vector (Beijing TransGen Biotech Co., Ltd., Beijing, China), and then sequenced by M13-F and M13-R primers and walking. Sequencing was performed using ABI BigDye ver 3.1 dye terminator sequencing technology and run on ABI PRISM 3730  $\times$  1 capillary sequencers. Raw sequences were manually checked and assembled using the software BioEdit [20], Chromas 2.22 and SeqMan (DNAStar, Steve, 2001).

### Gene annotation and analysis

Transfer RNA genes analysis was found using tRNAscan-SE software v.1.21 [21]. Putative tRNAs, which were not found by tRNAscan-SE were confirmed by sequence alignment with the homologous gene in *A. honmai*. Secondary structure was manually inferred using DNASIS (Ver.2.5). Annotation was checked by comparison with tRNA determined for other Lepidoptera. Protein-coding genes (PCGs) were identified by similarity of inferred open reading frames to published lepidopteran mt gene amino acid sequences. Translation of PCG open reading frames was made in MEGA ver4.0 [22]. Ribosomal RNA genes (rRNAs) were identified by NCBI Internet BLAST search and annotated with reference to secondary structure features.

## Results and discussion

### Genome organization and base composition

The mtgenome of *S. lechriaspis* is a closed-circular molecule of 15,368 bp and has been lodged with GenBank

**Table 1** Region, primers and sequences for PCRs in this study

Region	Primer pairs (F/R)	Sequennce (forward and reverse) 5' → 3'
Gln-ND2	Gln10486 <sup>a</sup> /ND2-N-784 <sup>b</sup>	TAAACTATATCTAATAATATCAAAAATTATTGTGC/TTAATCCTCCGATAGCTCCAAT
ND2-COI	ND2-J-687 <sup>b</sup> /COI-N-1636 <sup>b</sup>	ATTTCCTTATTATCTTCTTTC/CAATAGTATTATAAAATTTGATCATC
COI	COIF1 <sup>b</sup> /COIR1 <sup>b</sup>	TATCGCYTAWAHCTCAGCCA/TCAWGGTGGCATTCTA
Leu-Lys	Leu-J-3029 <sup>b</sup> /Lys14111Re <sup>a</sup>	CTAATATGGCAGACTATATGTAATGGA/GACCATTACTTGCTTTCAGTCATCTAATG
COII-COIII	C2-J-3696 <sup>d</sup> /C3-N-4732 <sup>b</sup>	GAAATTTGCGGAGCAAACCATAG/ACTTCACTAGCATAAAGATTTTC
Lys-COIII	Lys14111 <sup>a</sup> /C3-N-5460 <sup>d</sup>	CATTAGATGACTGAAAGCAAGTAATGGTC/TCAACAAAGTGTCAATATCA
COIII-ND5	C3-J-5098 <sup>b</sup> /ND5-2183Re <sup>a</sup>	TTGAAATTTGGGATAATATGACCT/TGCTGGCATATTAACGCTTTATCT
ND5-ND4	ND5-2183 <sup>a</sup> /N4-N-8718 <sup>d</sup>	AGATAAAGCAGTTAATATGCCAGCA/GCCTATTCATCWGGTGGCTCA
ND4-CytB	N4-J-8479 <sup>b</sup> /CB-J-11139 <sup>b</sup>	ATATTCCTGTGAAACTCCTATAC/ATTACAGTTGCTCCTCAGAATGA
CytB	CB-J-10612 <sup>d</sup> /CB-N-11367 <sup>d</sup>	CATCTAACATCTCAGCATGATGAA/TAACTCCTCCTAATTTATTGGGA
CytB-IrRNA	CytB-5971 <sup>a</sup> /LR-N-12866 <sup>c</sup>	CAAACAGGATCTAATAACCCTTTAGG/ACATGATCTGAGTTCAAACCGG
ND1-IrRNA	N1-J-12585 <sup>c</sup> /LR-N-13398 <sup>c</sup>	GGTCCCTTACGAATTTGAATATATCCT/CGCCTGTTTAACAAAAACAT
IrRNA-srRNA	LR-J-13375 <sup>d</sup> /SR-N-14588 <sup>c</sup>	TCAGTGGGCAGATTAGAC/AAACTAGGATTAGATACCCTATTAT
srRNA	SR-J-14233 <sup>d</sup> /SR-N-14588 <sup>c</sup>	GAAAGCGACGGGCAATATG/AAACTAGGATTAGATACCCTATTAT
srRNA-ND2	12S-9493 <sup>a</sup> /N2-N-199 <sup>b</sup>	TTTTAATAATAGGGTATCTAATCCTAGTTTTT/CAATTCAACATCCAAATCAAGAA

<sup>a</sup> Primers from Lee et al. [11]

<sup>b</sup> Primers newly designed for this genome

<sup>c</sup> Primers from Simon et al. [19]

<sup>d</sup> Primers modified from Simon et al. [19] up to this mtgenome

(sequence accession number HM204705). It encodes 13 PCGs, 22 tRNAs and 2 rRNAs. The arrangement of mitochondrial genes is the same as that reported for other Lepidoptera, and differs from the ancestral insect mtgenome by the rearrangement of tRNA<sup>Met</sup>. This mtgenome includes 18 non-coding regions, ranging in size from 1 to 441 bp, among which seven spacers span longer than 10 bp; a total of 21 bp overlapping nucleotides scatter in 5 locations. The longest overlapping nucleotides fragment is 8 bp long, located between tRNA<sup>Trp</sup> and tRNA<sup>Cys</sup>, which overlap in many insect species.

Composition of the J-strand of mtDNA is 39.9% A, 41.3% T, 7.6% G and 11.2% C, with a total A + T content of 81.2%. This value is well in the range of the other arthropods, which show a remarkable variability, from 69.5 to 84.9% [23, 24], and is slightly higher than that of *A. honmai* (80.4%).

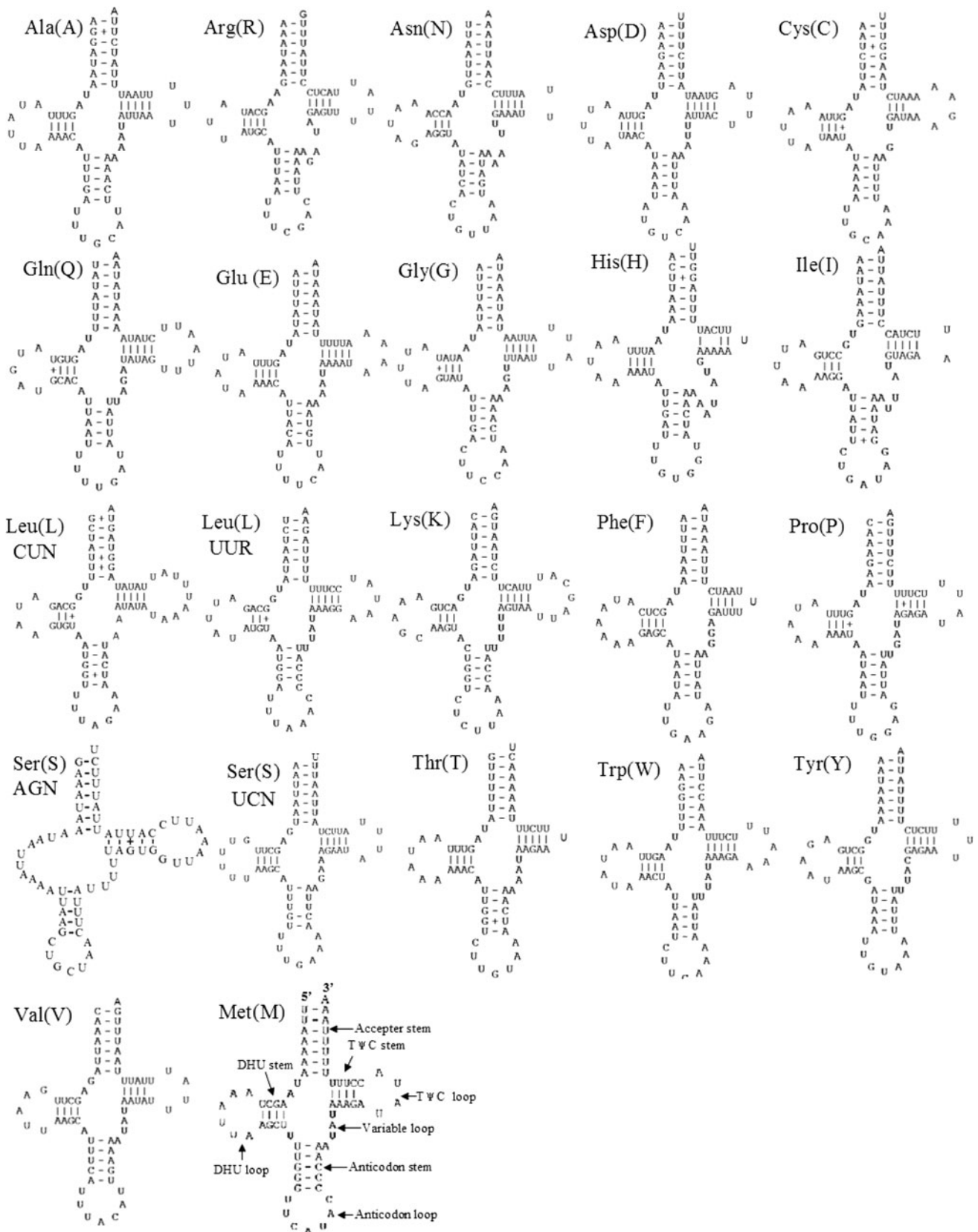
#### Protein-coding genes and codon usage

The mtgenome of *S. lechriaspis* contains the canonical 13 PCGs present in most bilateral animals. The initial and terminal codons of all PCGs are shown in Table 2. 12 PCGs utilize the standard ATN start codons (ATT for ND2, ATP8, ND3, ND5, ND6; ATG for COII, ATP6, COIII, ND4, ND4L, CytB, ND1). COI in *S. lechriaspis* has the start codon CGA (Arg) as in *A. honmai* and most other

lepidopteran species sequenced to date [25]. It is noteworthy that the COI gene often starts with non-standard putative codons, which have been extensively discussed about for several arthropod species [26]. Alternatively, there is also 4-bp stretch, TTAG within tRNA<sup>Tyr</sup>, which has been proposed as a non-standard start codon for the COI gene in other insects. This stretch is found in several lepidopteran species, such as *Bombyx* [27, 28], *Coreana raphaelis* [29], *Antheraea pernyi* [30], and *Antheraea yamamai* [31] (Fig. 1); however it is not universal in Lepidoptera whereas the CGA codon is found in all species studied to date. More studies for mRNA transcripts are needed to clarify the prediction of COI initiation; however, one of the few mRNA studies of this region in Lepidoptera doesn't support the utilization of tetrad start codons in this order [32].

Six PCGs (ND2, COI, COII, ND5, ND4 and CytB) have incomplete stop codons consisting of just a T-nucleotide, and others stop with standard terminal codon (TAA). There is also a high degree of conservation of incomplete stop codon across the order. COI and COII usually have incomplete stop codon in lepidopteran species, such as *C. raphaelis* [29], *A. honmai* [11], *Bombyx mandarina* [28], *Phthonandria atrilineata* [33], *Manduca sexta* [34], *Ochrogaster lunifer* [35], *A. pernyi* [30], *Artogeia melete* [36], *Eriogyna pyretorum* [37]. The common interpretation of this phenomenon is that TAA terminator is created via post-transcriptional polyadenylation [38].





**Fig. 2** Putative secondary structures for the tRNA genes of the *S. lechriaspis* mtgenome

## Transfer RNA and ribosomal RNA genes

The *S. lechriaspis* mtgenome contains the typical set of 22 tRNA genes, which are intersperse between rRNAs and PCGs. Fourteen tRNAs are coded on the J-strand and eight on the N-strand, which is the same organization as in other lepidopterans. Complete cloverleaf secondary structures can be inferred for 21 of the 22 tRNAs, with tRNA<sup>Ser(AGN)</sup> lacking the DHU arm (Fig. 2). Anticodon sequences for *S. lechriaspis* tRNAs are all identical to those found in homologous tRNA isotypes across Lepidoptera. 19 tRNA genes show 40 pairs of mismatches in their stems, including 12 pairs in the DHU stems, nine pairs in the amino acid acceptor stems, nine pairs in the T $\Psi$ C stems and ten pairs in the anticodon stems. The mismatched bases are mainly G.U, U.G, U.U, AC or AA, and some are A.G, G.A, G.G or C.G ones. These mismatches are possibly corrected by RNA-editing mechanisms [39].

As in other mtgenome sequences, there are two rRNA genes in *S. lechriaspis*, small and large ribosomal genes (srRNA and lrRNA). The lrRNA locates between tRNA<sup>Leu(CUN)</sup> and tRNA<sup>Val</sup>, and srRNA between tRNA<sup>Val</sup> and the A + T-rich region. The length of lrRNA of *S. lechriaspis* is 1,382 bp long with 85.17% A + T content; and the srRNA is 778 bp with 86.25% A + T. The length is well located in the range 1,330 bp (*C. raphaelis* [29]) to 1,412 bp (*Diatraea saccharalis* [Unpublished, GenBank accession number NC\_013274]), 806 bp (*O. lunifer* [35]) to 774 bp (*Caligula boisduvalii* [40]), respectively. There is two (TA)<sub>n</sub> microsatellites in the range of lrRNA, one is (TA)<sub>13</sub> and the other is (TA)<sub>12</sub>. The *A. honmai* has only one (i.e., (TA)<sub>16</sub>) at the location of the first one, and a little larger than *S. lechriaspis*.

## Non-coding and overlapping regions

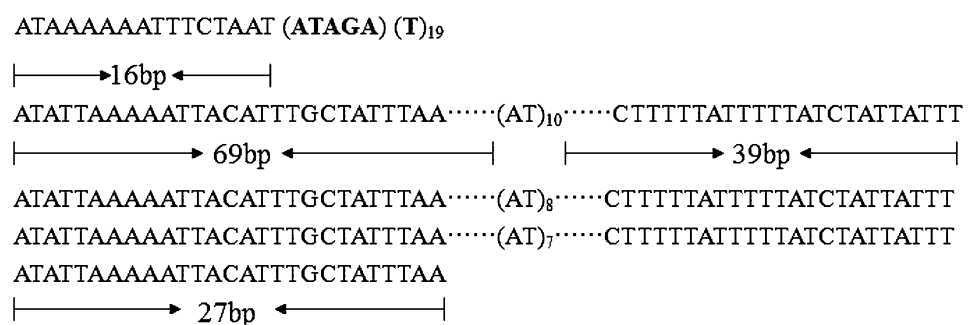
In addition to the A + T-rich region (the largest non-coding region), the mtgenome of *S. lechriaspis* contains 17 non-coding regions, ranging from 1 to 47 bp and dispersing throughout the whole genome (Table 1). The length of the 17 non-coding regions is 164 bp in total and content of A + T is much more than that of G + C (i.e., 92.1 vs.

7.9%) (Table 1). The larger non-coding region is 47 bp long between tRNA<sup>Gln</sup> and ND2, with the A + T content of 89.4%, which is lower for this non-coding region than in the equivalent region found in other lepidopterans, which typically has a higher A + T content (93–100%) has been reported [27, 41]. Besides this non-coding region, there is another more interesting one between tRNA<sup>Ser(UCN)</sup> and ND1. This region is common to most insect mtgenomes, such as Lepidoptera, Coleoptera and Hymenoptera, and may correspond to the binding site of mtTERM, a transcription attenuation factor [13]. In Lepidoptera, all the species in the GenBank up to date have a 7 bp motif (ATACTAA) [34] including *S. lechriaspis* in this paper. In Coleoptera, there is a 5 bp motif (TACTA) [42]. And in Hymenoptera, the motif is a little lesser extended, with a 6-bp conserved motif (THACWW) [43]. Obviously this motif of Lepidoptera is the most conserved one. And there are five overlapping regions varying in size from 1 to 8 bp (21 bp total).

## A + T-rich region

The A + T-rich region of *S. lechriaspis* is 441 bp with 92.74% A + T content, and 48 bp longer than the most closely related species for which mtgenome data is available (*A. honmai*). It regulates the transcription and replication of the mtgenome [44], and includes the O<sub>N</sub> (origin of minority or light strand replication) identified by the motif ATAGA, which is located at 16 bp upstream from srRNA and followed by a 19 bp long polyT stretch. This O<sub>N</sub> motif is conserved among all lepidopterans; however, the polyT stretch varies in length between species ranging in size from 18 to 22 bp. We have an important finding that there are three tandem 122 + bp repeats (plus one partial repeat 27 bp in length). The tandem repeats vary only in the size of an (AT)<sub>n</sub> microsatellite, which is located roughly in the middle of the repeat. Due to variation in the number of AT repeats, the tandem repeats are 128, 124 and 122 bp long, with the repeats containing 10, 8 and 7 dinucleotide repeats respectively (Fig. 3). This is the first report of AT region macrorepeats within lepidopterans, but they are common in other insects where they have been reported to include

**Fig. 3** The similar tandem repeats of *S. lechriaspis* in A + T rich region





compound macrorepeats in termites [45] or even tRNA tandem repeats in wasps [46].

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