

Supporting Information for

Efficient Electrosynthesis of Hydrogen Peroxide in Neutral Media using Boron and Nitrogen Doped Carbon Catalysts

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Table of Contents

Section S1. Methods and Reactor Designs	4
Figure S1 Three-electrode GDE flow cell set-up.....	4
Figure S2 Two-electrode MEA solid electrolyte flow cell set-up.	5
Figure S3 H ₂ O ₂ quantification UV-vis calibration.	6
Section S2. Material Characterization	7
Figure S4 SEM images.....	7
Figure S5 EDS elemental mapping.	8
Figure S6 PXRD.	9
Figure S7 Pore size distributions.....	9
Figure S8 XPS survey spectra.....	10
Figure S9 Fitting for B 1s and N1s XPS spectra for h-BN.	10
Figure S10 Ratio of nitrogen species to total nitrogen content.	11
Figure S11 Deconvoluted C 1s and O 1s XPS spectra.....	12
Figure S12 Carbon K-edge XAS.....	12
Section S2. Rotating Ring-Disk Electrode Measurements	13
Figure S13 700-BNC ECSA measurement.	13
Figure S14 800-BNC ECSA measurement.	13
Figure S15 900-BNC ECSA measurement.	14
Figure S16 1000-BNC ECSA measurement.	14
Figure S17 1100-BNC ECSA measurement.	15
Figure S18 900-NC ECSA measurement.....	15
Figure S19 Summary of ORR performance relationships.....	17
Figure S20 Summary of pore structure effects on ORR performance.	19
Figure S21 Summary of O species effects on ORR performance.....	20
Figure S22 Calculated H ₂ O ₂ molar selectivity.	21
Section S3. Electrochemical Flow Cell Measurements	22
Figure S23 Contact angle measurements.	22
Figure S24 CA measurement vs. time.....	22
Figure S25 CP measurements for 900-BNC.	23
Figure S26 CP stability test for 900-BNC.....	24
Figure S27 900-BNC performance in MEA solid electrolyte flow cell.....	24
Section S4. Supplementary Tables	26

Table S1 Raman Spectra.	26
Table S2 N ₂ adsorption-desorption isotherms.	26
Table S3 XPS elemental analysis.	26
Table S4 XPS elemental analysis of different N species.	27
Table S5 XPS elemental analysis of different B species.	27
Table S6 XPS elemental analysis of different C species.	27
Table S7 Kinetic current density of catalysts.	28
Table S8 ICP-MS after electrochemical testing.	28
Table S9 Comparison of different carbon-materials in RRDE.	29
Table S10 Comparison of different carbon-materials in flow cells.	30
Section S5. References	31

Section S1. Methods and Reactor Designs

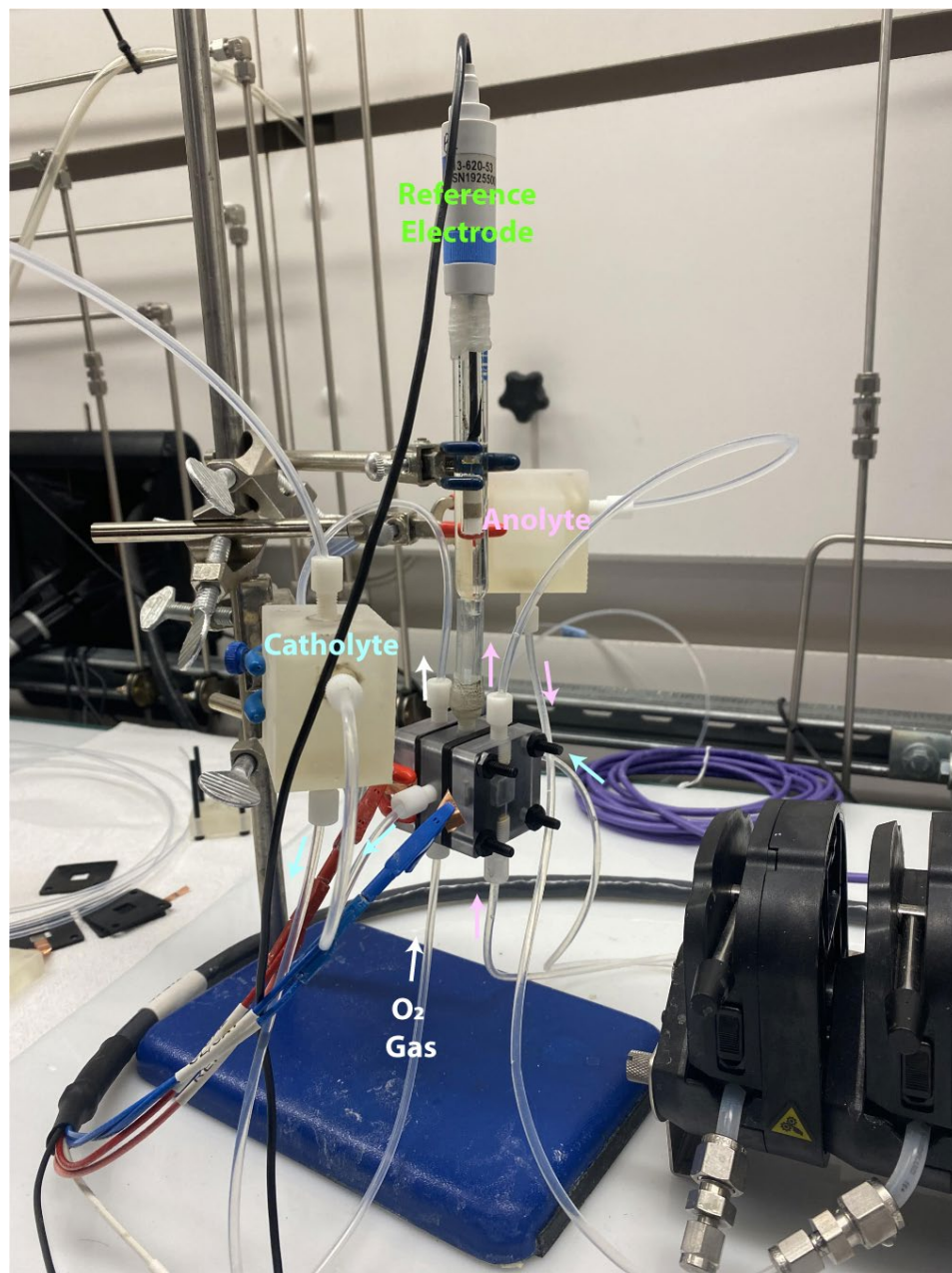


Figure S1. Demonstration of three-electrode gas diffusion electrode (GDE) electrochemical flow cell set-up.

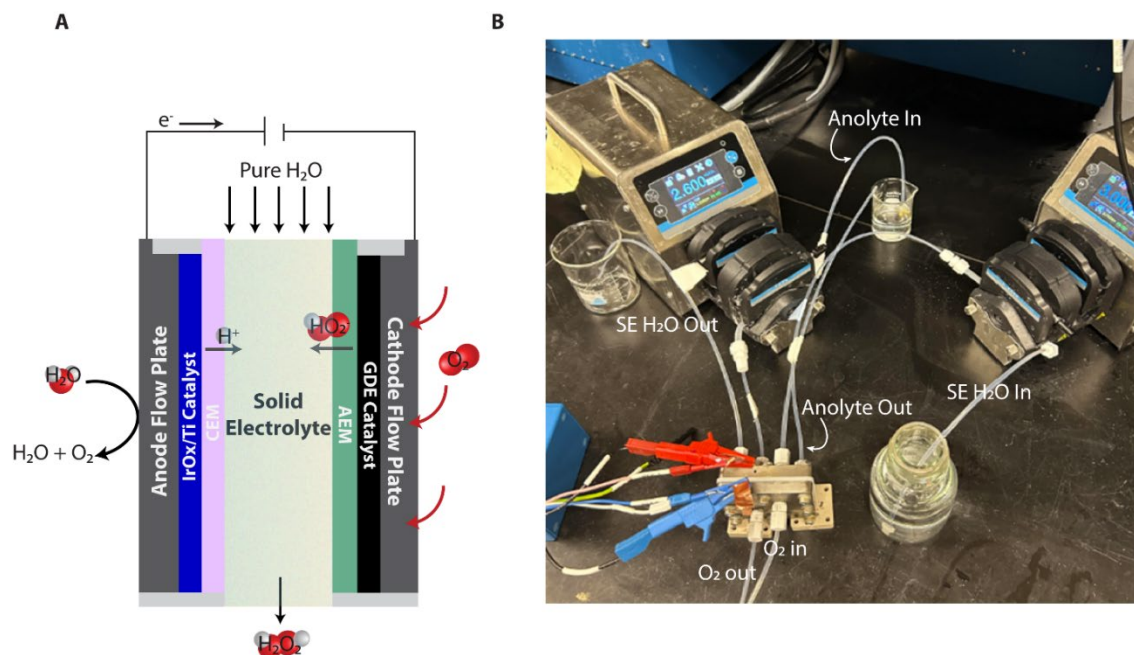


Figure S2. A) Schematic and B) set-up demonstration of H_2O_2 electrosynthesis in a two-electrode dual membrane electrode assembly (MEA) solid electrolyte flow cell. Note schematic not drawn to scale.

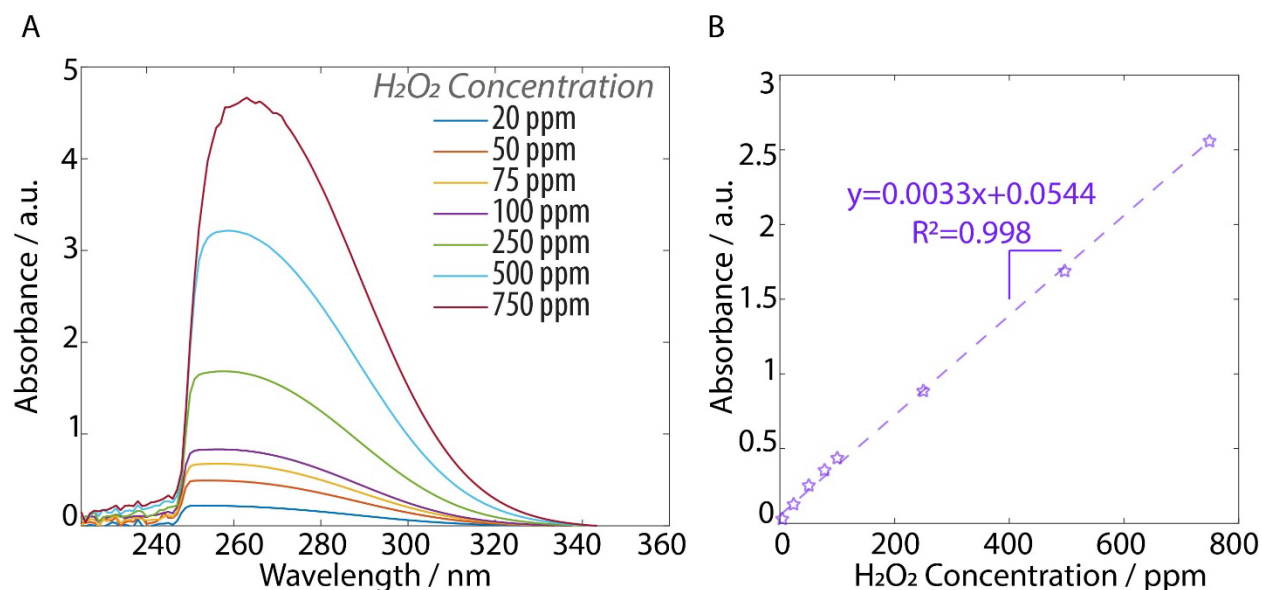


Figure S3. H₂O₂ quantification. A) UV-vis spectra of Co/CO₃ assay with various concentrations of H₂O₂ (ppm) and B) its corresponding calibration curve.

The produced H₂O₂ was quantified using a cobalt-carbonate (Co/CO₃) assay coupled with UV-vis spectrophotometry.¹ The Co/CO₃ assay contains a mixture of KHCO₃ and cobalt sulfate heptahydrate (CoSO₄·7H₂O) both of which dissociate in water and exhibit a light pink color solution. H₂O₂ oxidizes Co²⁺ in the presence of bicarbonate likely forming a ‘carbonatocobaltate’ complex (Co(CO₃)₃³⁻) which strongly absorbs at 290 nm and weakly in the visible region (440 and 635 nm), exhibiting a dark green color. The 290 nm feature was used for quantification unless otherwise specified. The absorbance of the Co(CO₃)₃³⁻ complex is measured which is linearly proportional to the concentration of H₂O₂ present. The Co/CO₃ assay was prepared by first mixing 1.35 mL of 2 M KHCO₃ and 35.8 μl of 2 mM CoSO₄·7H₂O in a cuvette. Next, 35.8 μl of our H₂O₂ sample (known or unknown concentration) was added to the cuvette and mixed. Immediately afterward, 1.425 mL of 2 M KHCO₃ was added to the cuvette and mixed. The absorbance of these samples was measured in the wavelength range 200-800 nm with 1 nm resolution and scanning rate of 2 nm/s (Agilent Cary 6000i). The UV-vis spectra were background-subtracted using a baseline measurement of the same analyte solutions with 35.8 μl of H₂O added instead of H₂O₂ containing samples. A typical calibration curve was plotted by linear fitting the absorbance values at wavelength of 290 nm for various known concentrations of H₂O₂ from 20 ppm to 750 ppm.

Section S2. Material Characterization

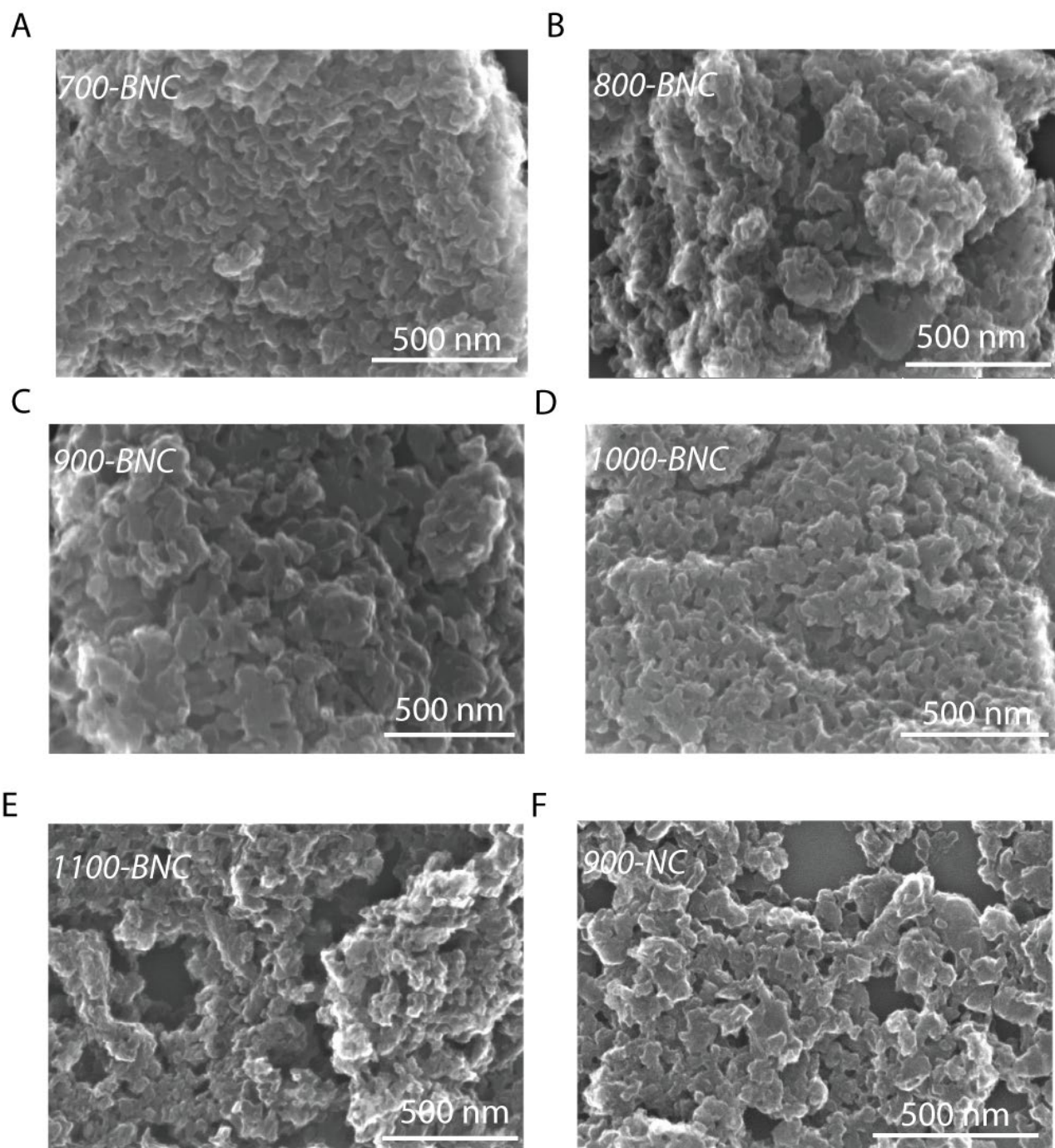


Figure S4. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) reveals morphological evolution of the BNC catalysts pyrolyzed at A) 700°C, B) 800°C, C) 900°C, D) 1000°C, and E) 1100°C. F) Nitrogen doped carbon pyrolyzed at 900°C (900-NC).

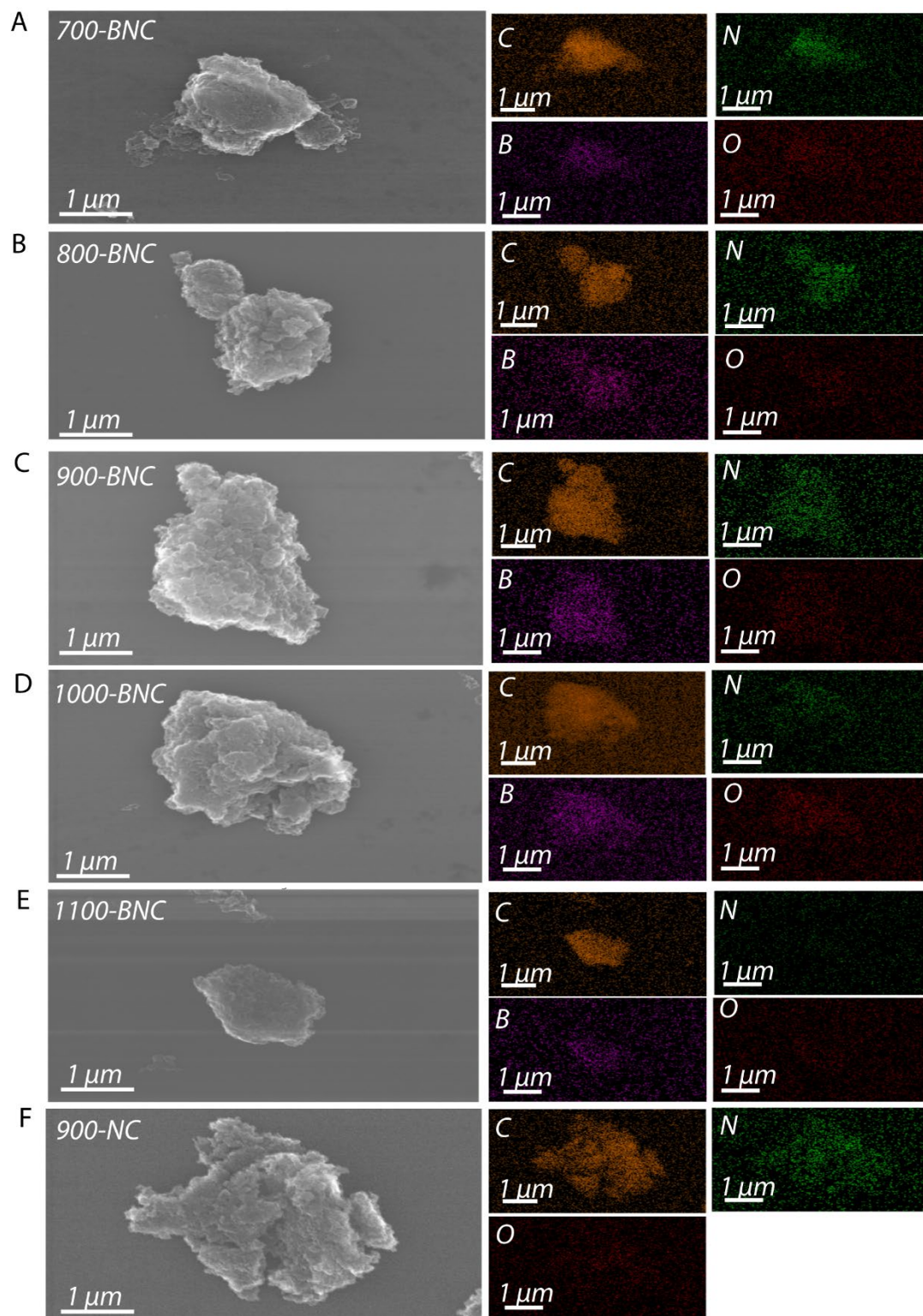


Figure S5. Energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) elemental mapping of the BNC catalysts pyrolyzed at A) 700°C, B) 800°C, C) 900°C, D) 1000°C, and E) 1100°C. F) Nitrogen doped carbon pyrolyzed at 900°C (900-NC).

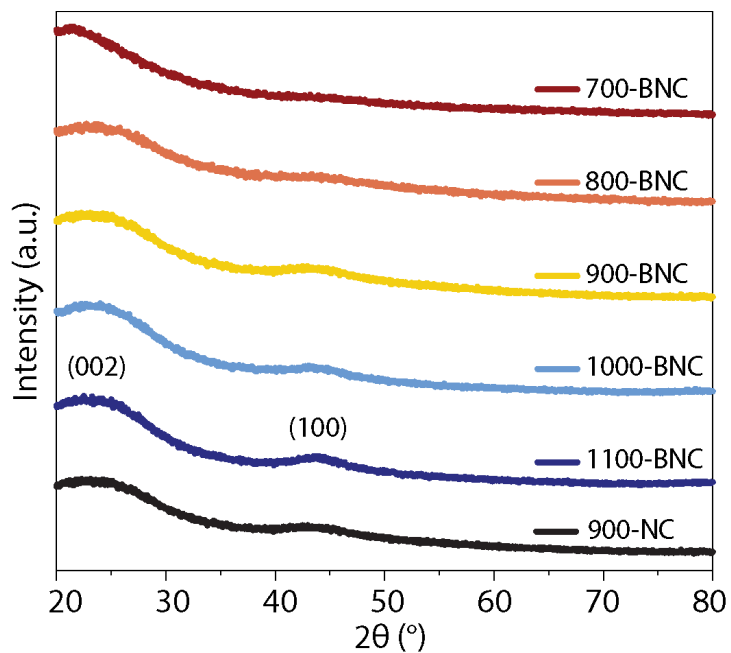


Figure S6. Powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) patterns of the as-prepared catalysts.

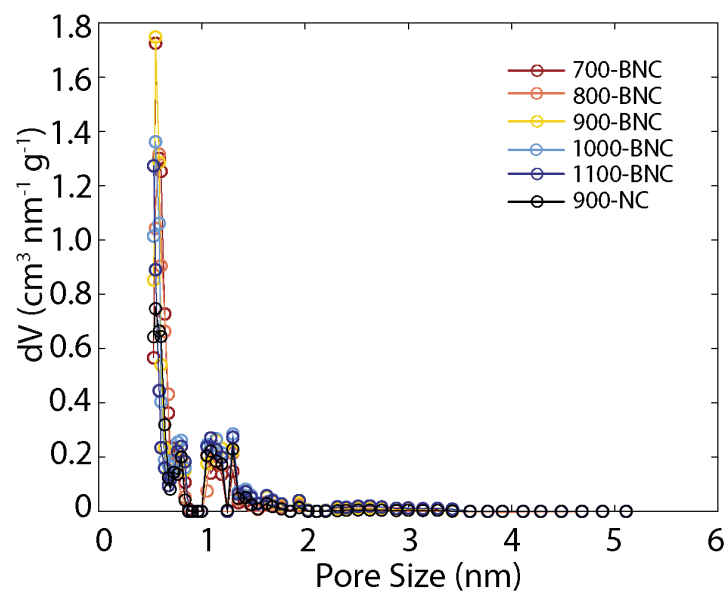


Figure S7. Pore size distributions of the as-prepared catalysts derived non-local density functional theory analysis of N_2 adsorption-desorption isotherms.

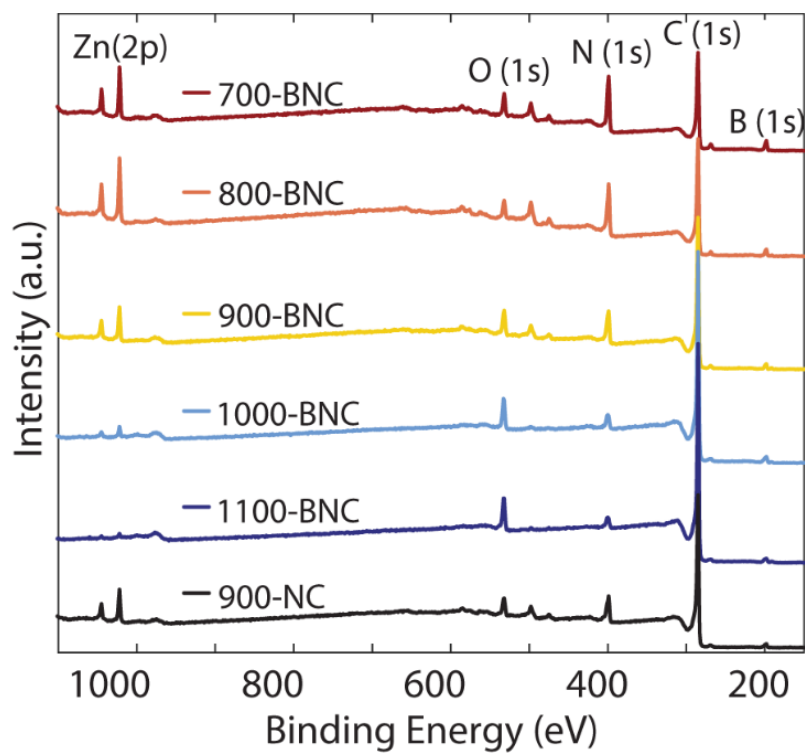


Figure S8. X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) survey spectra of the BNC and NC catalysts.

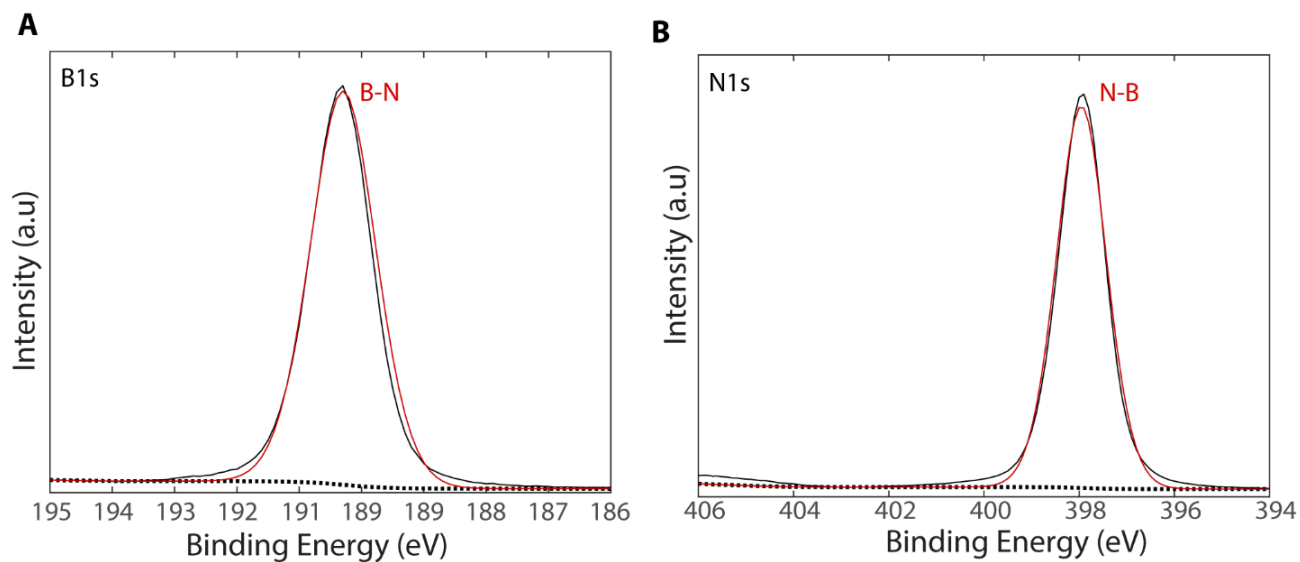


Figure S9. Fitting for A) B1s and B) N1s XPS spectra for boron nitride (*h*-BN) reference material derived from XPS measurements.

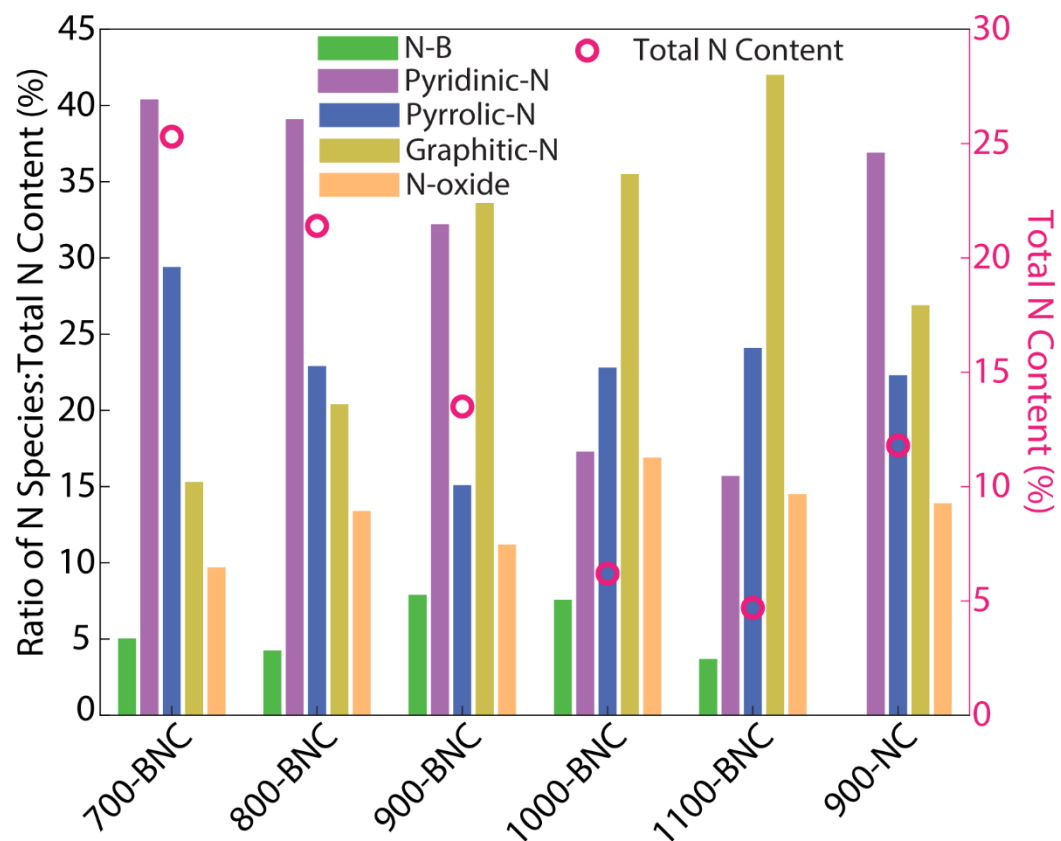


Figure S10. Ratio of nitrogen species to total nitrogen content in as-prepared BNC samples derived from XPS measurements. 900-NC included for comparison.

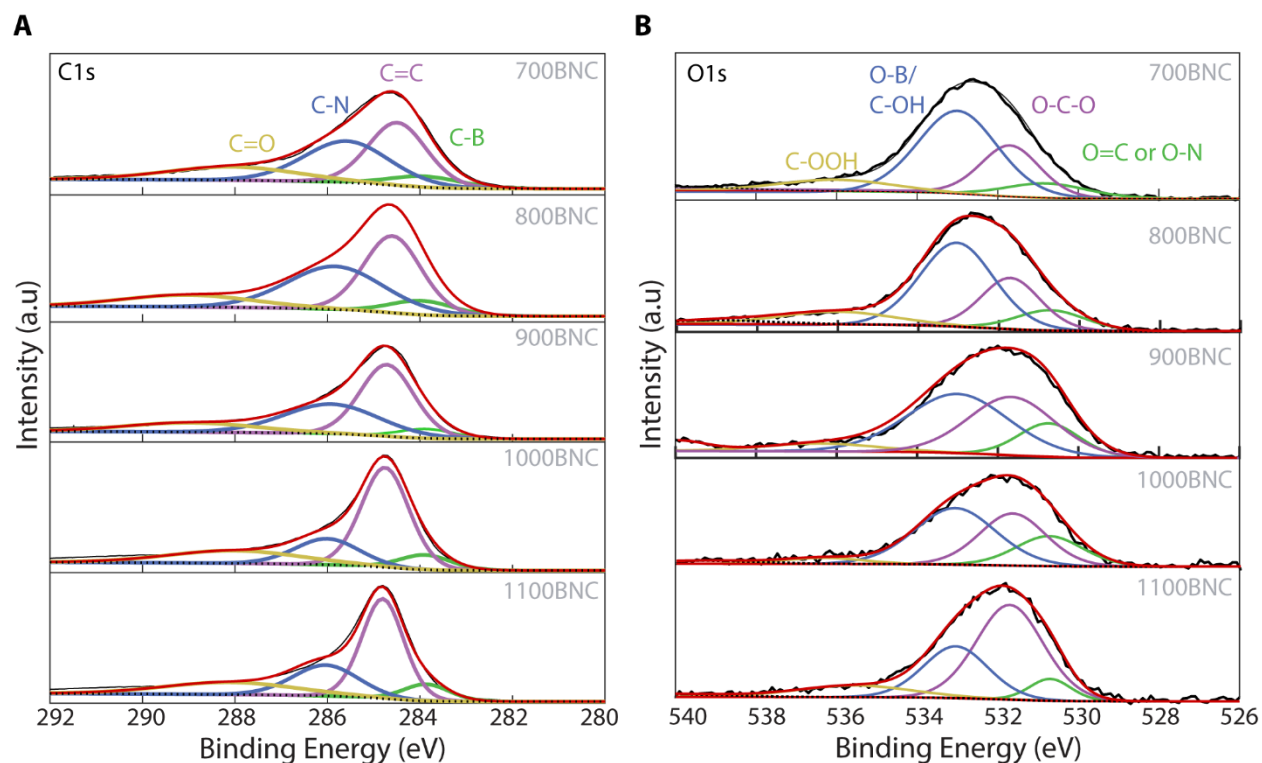


Figure S11. Deconvoluted A) C 1s and B) O 1s XPS spectra of BNC catalysts.

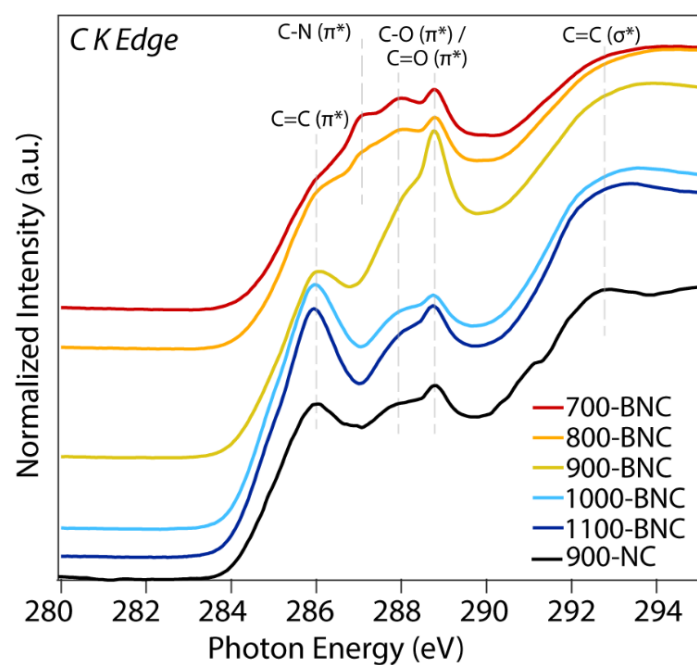


Figure S12. Carbon K-edge X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS) spectra for the different as-prepared catalysts.

Section S2. Rotating Ring-Disk Electrode Measurements

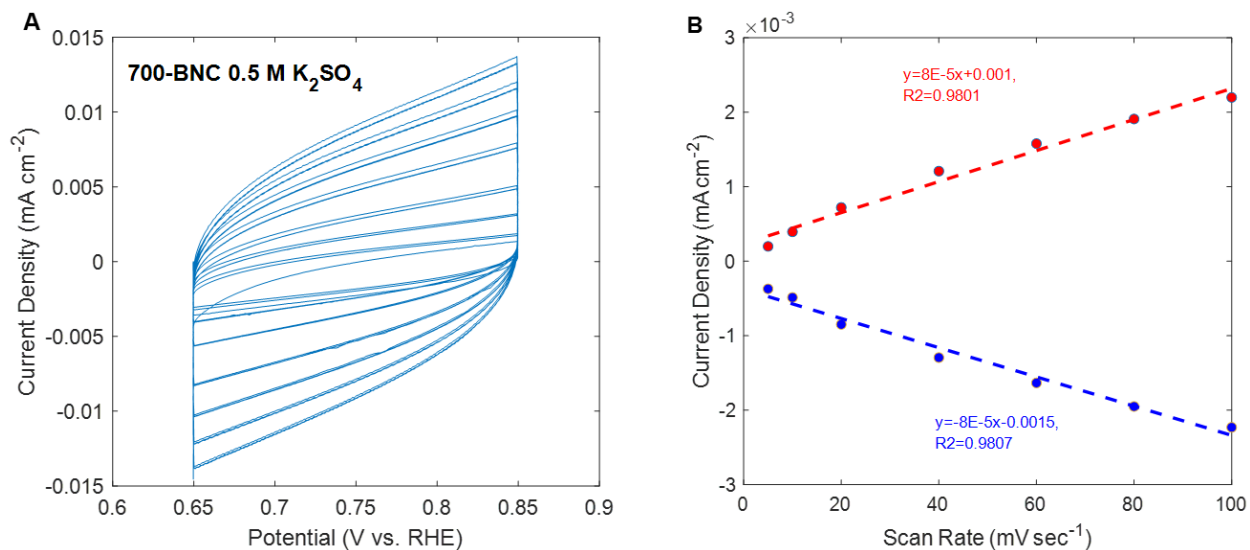


Figure S13. A) Cyclic voltammogram (CV) curves of 700-BNC in the double layer region at scan rates 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mV s⁻¹ in 0.5 M K₂SO₄ aqueous electrolyte; B) Current density (taken at 0.75 V vs. RHE) as a function of scan rate derived from CV curves.

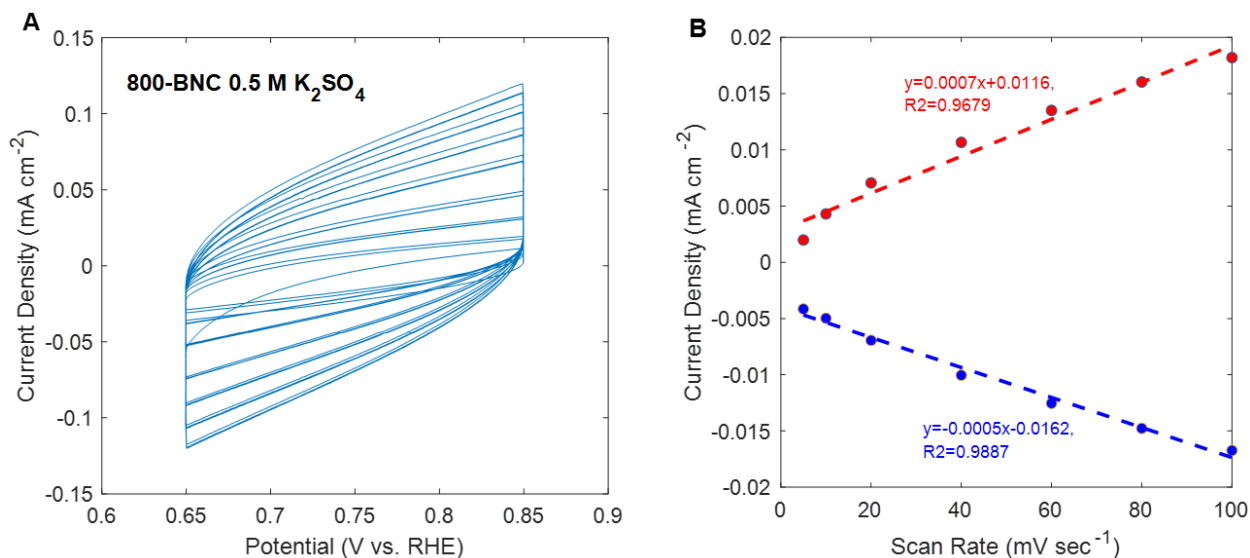


Figure S14. A) Cyclic voltammogram (CV) curves of 800-BNC in the double layer region at scan rates 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mV s⁻¹ in 0.5 M K₂SO₄ aqueous electrolyte; B) Current density (taken at 0.75 V vs. RHE) as a function of scan rate derived from CV curves.

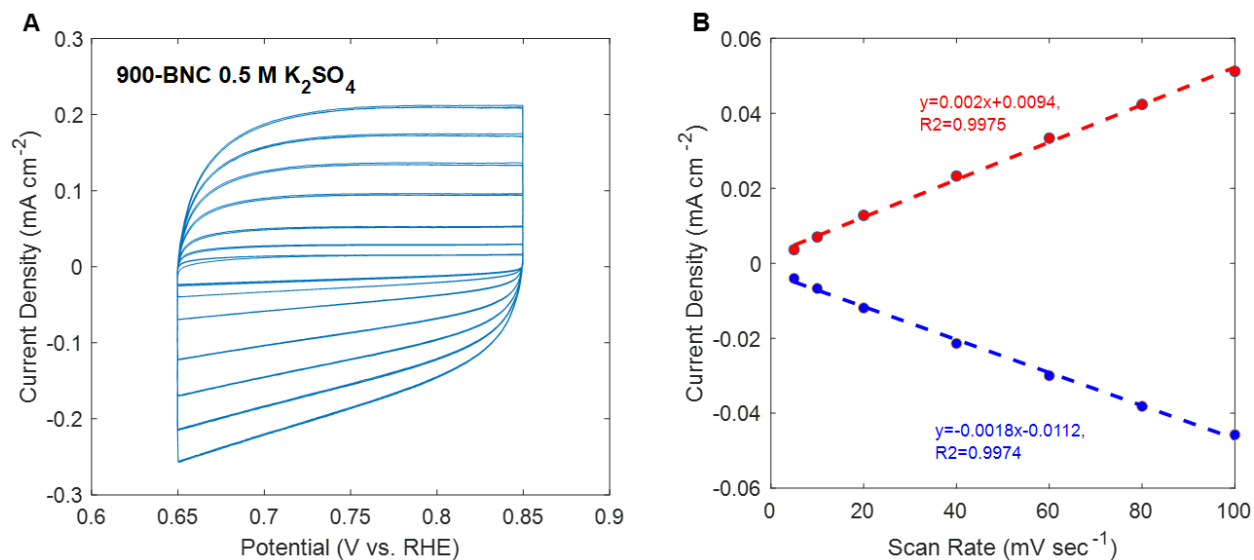


Figure S15. A) Cyclic voltammogram (CV) curves of 900-BNC in the double layer region at scan rates 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mV s⁻¹ in 0.5 M K₂SO₄ aqueous electrolyte; B) Current density (taken at 0.75 V vs. RHE) as a function of scan rate derived from CV curves.

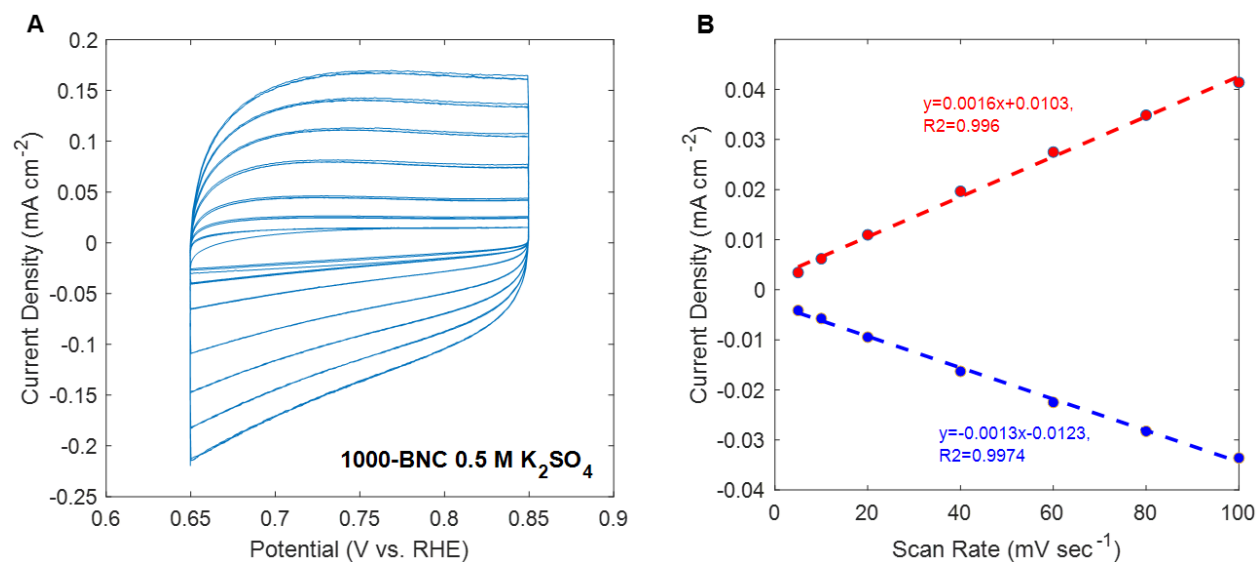


Figure S16. A) Cyclic voltammogram (CV) curves of 1000-BNC in the double layer region at scan rates 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mV s⁻¹ in 0.5 M K₂SO₄ aqueous electrolyte; B) Current density (taken at 0.75 V vs. RHE) as a function of scan rate derived from CV curves.

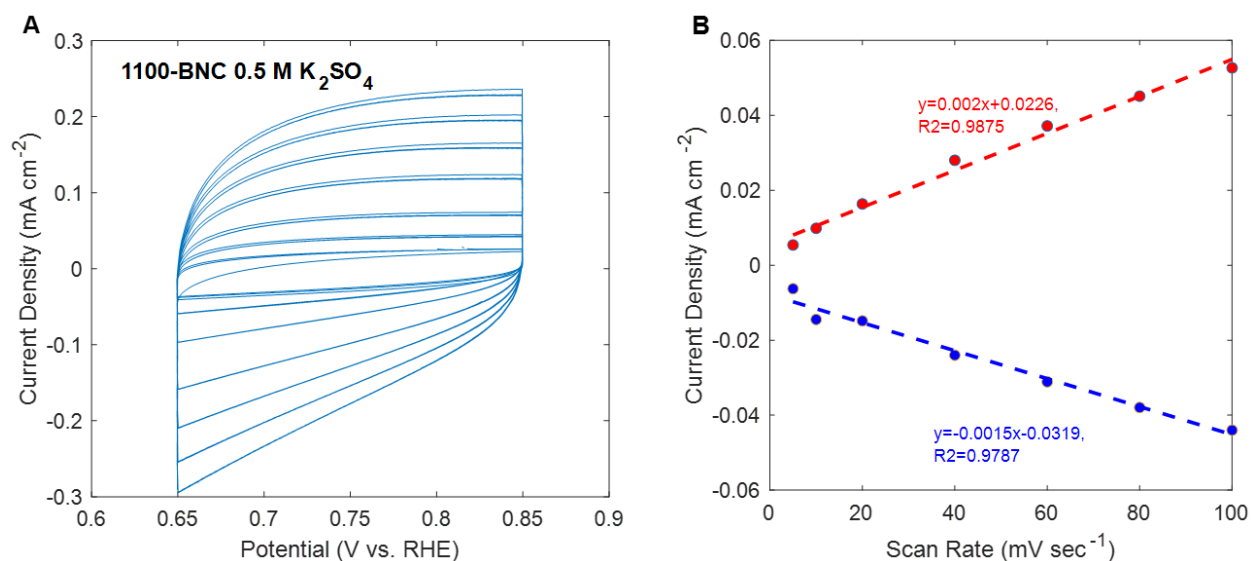


Figure S17. A) Cyclic voltammogram (CV) curves of 1100-BNC in the double layer region at scan rates 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mV s^{-1} in 0.5 M K_2SO_4 aqueous electrolyte; B) Current density (taken at 0.75 V vs. RHE) as a function of scan rate derived from CV curves.

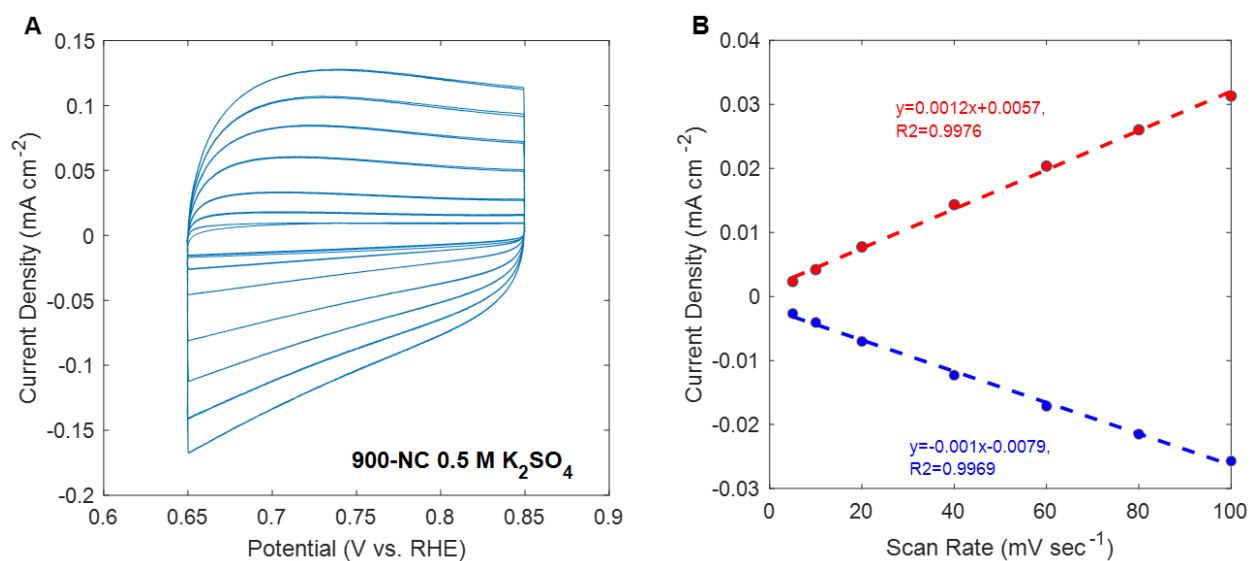


Figure S18. A) Cyclic voltammogram (CV) curves of 900-NC in the double layer region at scan rates 5, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 mV s^{-1} in 0.5 M K_2SO_4 aqueous electrolyte; B) Current density (taken at 0.75 V vs. RHE) as a function of scan rate derived from CV curves.

Electrochemically active surface area (ECSA) was estimated by measuring the electrochemical double-layer capacitance (C_{dl} , Fig. S13-S18) via performing multiple CV curves over a 0.20 V potential range near the open circuit voltage (OCV) where no Faradaic reaction occurs with various scan rates between 5 to 100 mV s^{-1} . The double layer capacitance is calculated as

follows: $C_{dl} = J / \frac{dV}{dt}$ where J is the current density at the center of the potential range, C_{dl} is the capacitance, and dV/dt represents the CV scan rate.

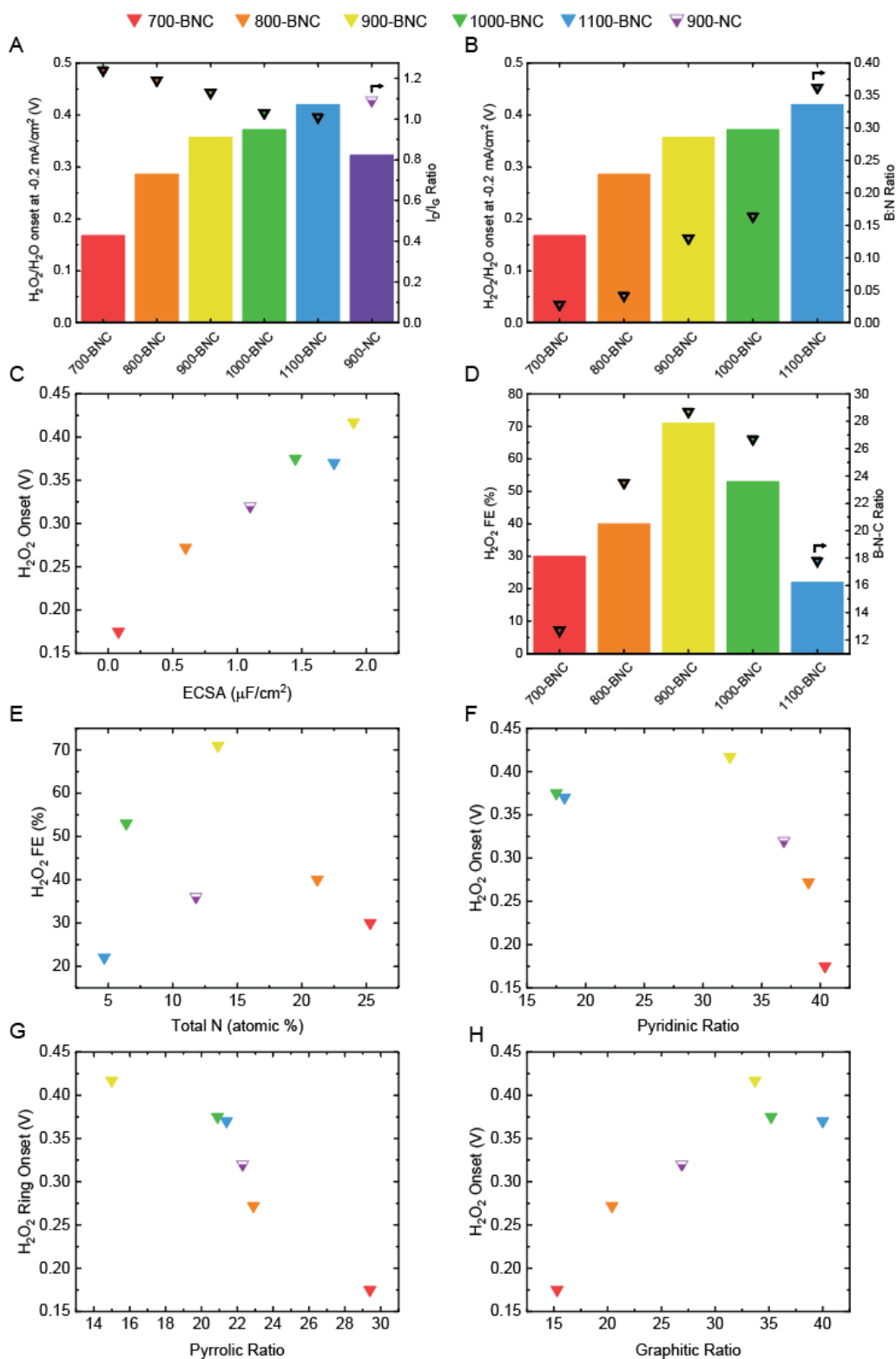


Figure S19. A) $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}$ onset potential at $-0.2 \text{ mA}/\text{cm}^2$ disk vs. I_D/I_G ratio measured by Raman. B) $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{H}_2\text{O}$ onset potential at $-0.2 \text{ mA}/\text{cm}^2$ disk vs. B:N ratio measured by XPS. C) H_2O_2 ring overpotential vs. ECSA measured by double-layer capacitance of catalysts. D) H_2O_2

ring overpotential vs. pyrrolic ratio measured by XPS. E) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. graphitic ratio measured by XPS. F) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. pyridinic ratio measured by XPS. G) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. B-N-C ratio measured by XPS. H) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. total N content measured by XPS. Ratios represent the relative content of specified species compared to the total content. Values are displayed in Table S1, S4, and S5.

Figure S19 displays the key performance metrics as a function of the catalyst material properties. Figure S19A-B demonstrates the improvement in H₂O₂/H₂O onset potential (overall ORR onset) trends with a higher degree of graphitization (I_D/I_G ratio) and an increase in the B:N ratio. Figure S19C displays a linear relationship between H₂O₂ (ring) onset potential and ECSA. Figure S19D further shows how a higher content of local B-N-C dopant configurations leads to a more favorable selectivity toward H₂O₂. Figure S19E-H explores the relationship between N content and configurations with respect to H₂O₂ performance. Figure S19E shows how moderate N doping is more favorable for 2e⁻ ORR to H₂O₂. Figure S19F-G shows how pyrrolic and pyridinic moieties impede H₂O₂ formation, while Figure S19H demonstrates how graphitic-N improves H₂O₂ performance.

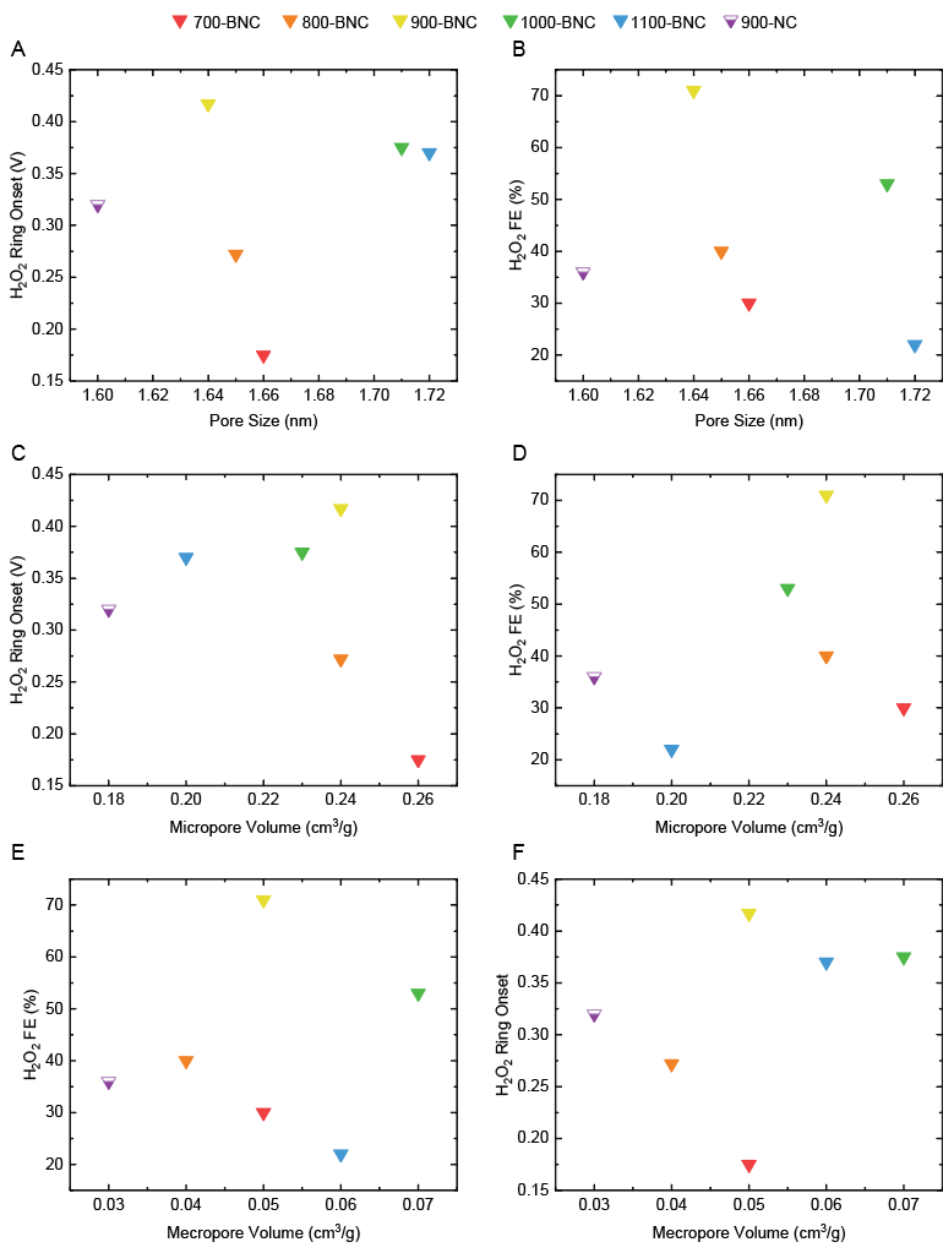


Figure S20. A) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. pore size measured by N₂ adsorption. B) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. pore size. C) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. micropore volume measured by N₂ adsorption. D) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. micropore volume. E) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. mesopore volume measured by N₂ adsorption. F) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. mesopore volume. Values are displayed in Table S2.

Figure S20 displays the effects of pore size, micropore volume, and mesopore volume on the performance of H₂O₂ electrosynthesis (activity onset and FE). No significant contribution to changes in performance is observed with varying pore structures.

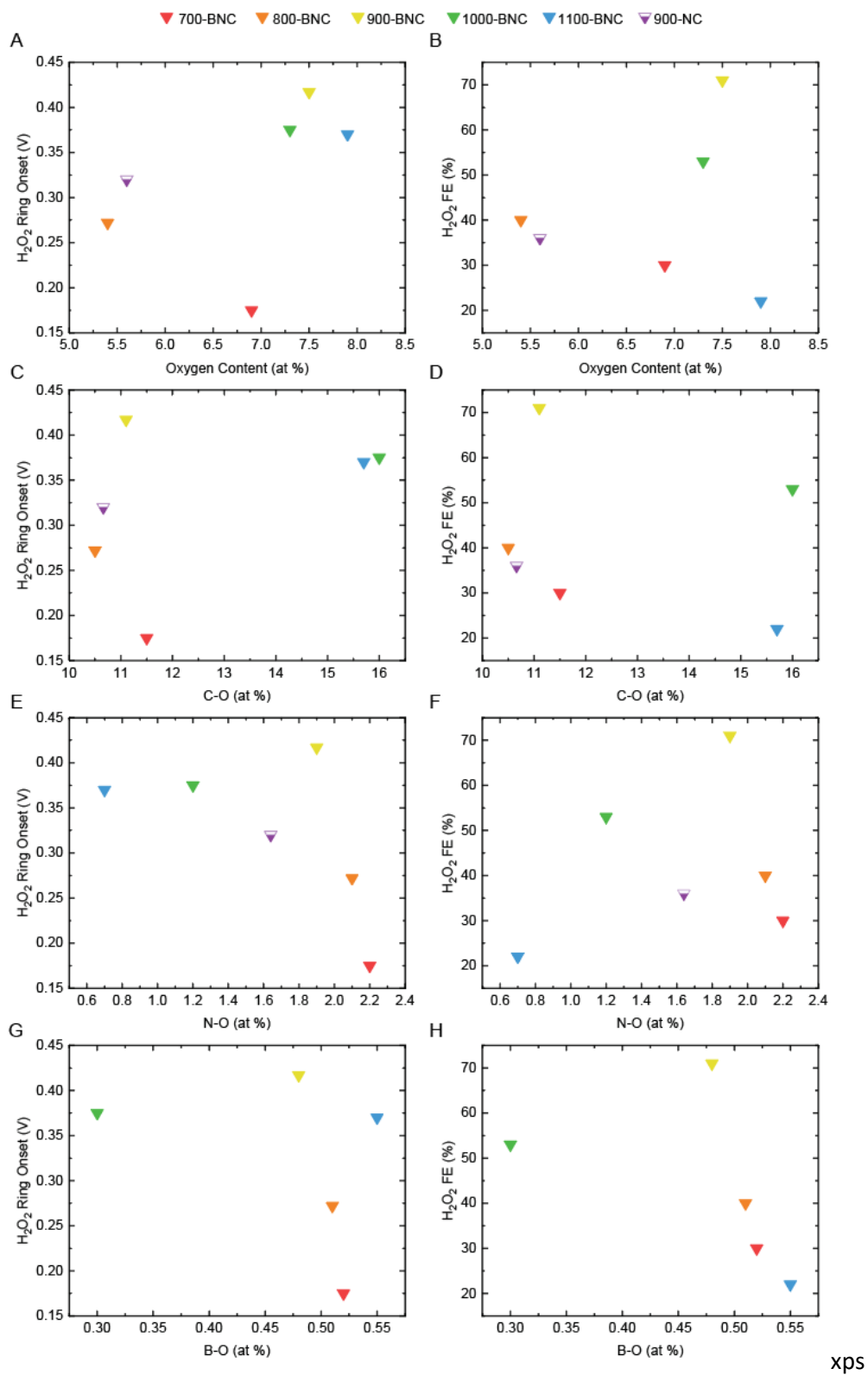


Figure S21. A) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. O content measured by XPS. B) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. O content. C) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. C-O bond ratio measured by XPS. D) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. C-O bond ratio. E) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. N-O bond ratio measured by XPS. F)

Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. N-O bond ratio. G) H₂O₂ ring overpotential vs. B-O bond ratio measured by XPS. H) Maximum H₂O₂ FE vs. B-O bond ratio. Values are displayed in Table S3-6.

Figure S21 shows the effect of O in BNC and NC catalysts on H₂O₂ electrosynthesis performance. The total O content and amount of C-O bonds do not affect the performance. The H₂O₂ FE shows a maximum at 1.9 at % N-O bonds (out of all N bonds) and 0.48 at % B-O bonds (out of all B bonds).

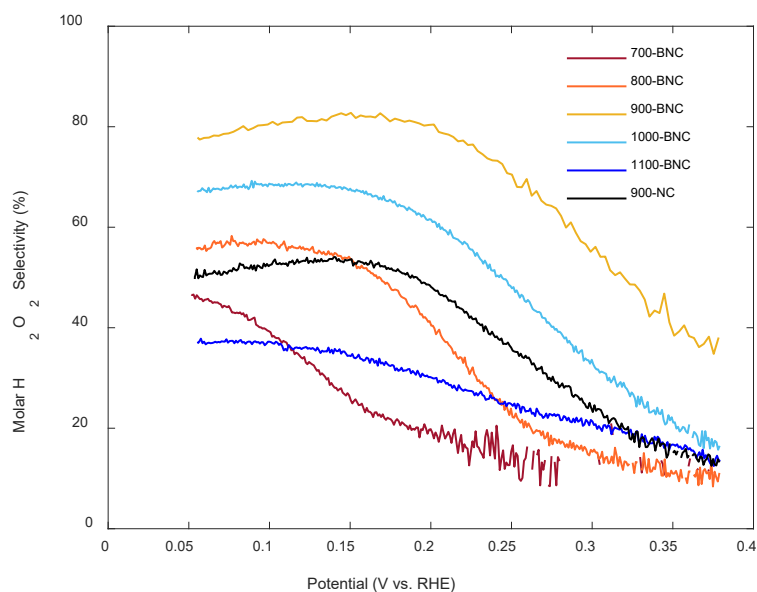


Figure S22. Calculated molar H₂O₂ selectivity as a function of applied potential for the different BNC catalysts in 0.5 M K₂SO₄. 900-NC is included for comparison.

Section S3. Electrochemical Flow Cell Measurements

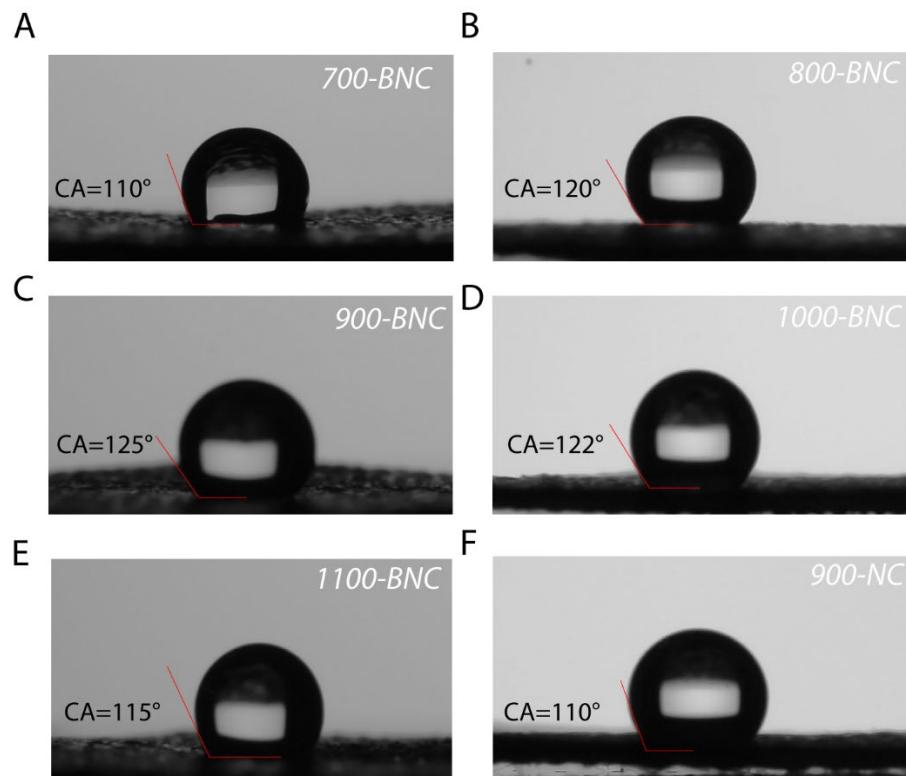


Figure S23. Contact angle measurements for the as-prepared catalysts spray coated on a carbon cloth electrode. A) 700-BNC, B) 800-BNC, C) 900-BNC, D) 1000-BNC, E) 1100-BNC, and F) 900-NC.

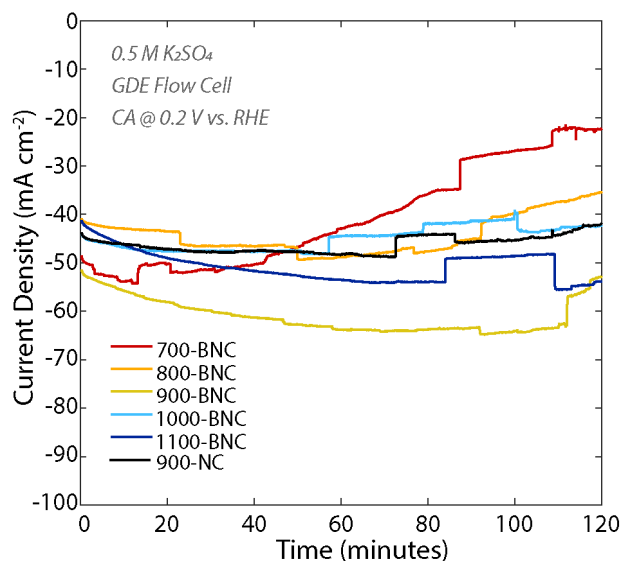


Figure S24. Chronoamperometry (CA) held at 0.20 V vs. RHE for 2 hours for different BNC catalysts in 0.5 M K₂SO₄ in three-electrode gas diffusion electrode (GDE) flow cell. 900-NC included for comparison.

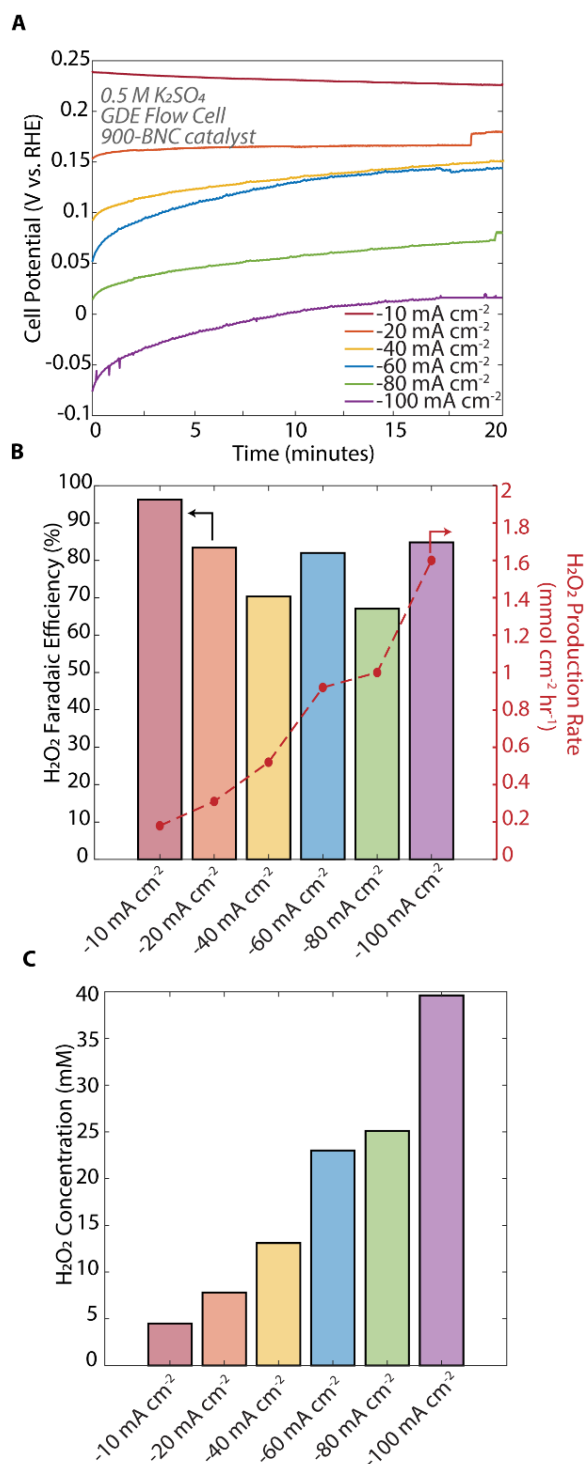


Figure S25. Chronopotentiometry (CP) measurements held for 15 minutes at different applied current densities (-10, -20, -40, -60, -80, and -100 $mA\ cm^{-2}$) for 900-BNC catalyst in three-electrode GDE flow cell. A) Cell potential vs. time. B) H_2O_2 Faradaic efficiency (right axis) and H_2O_2 production rate (left axis). C) Final H_2O_2 concentration measured after 15 minutes under various applied current densities.

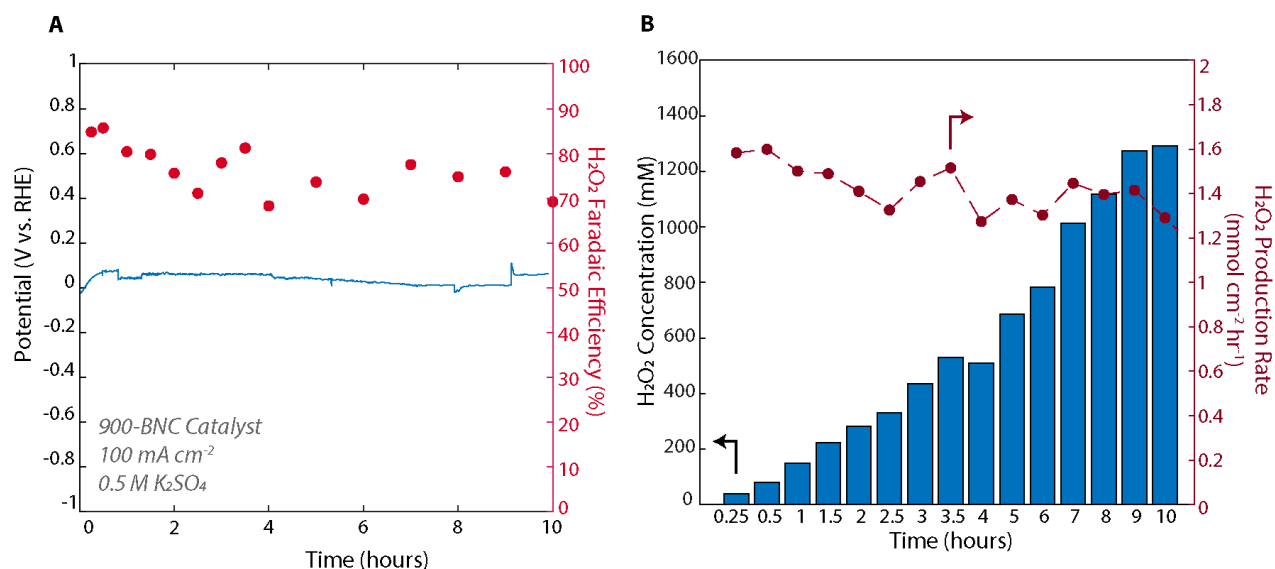


Figure S26. Stability test of 900-BNC in a three-electrode GDE flow cell at 100 mA cm^{-2} in $0.5 \text{ M K}_2\text{SO}_4$ electrolyte. A) Corresponding potential response (left axis) and H_2O_2 Faradaic efficiency (right axis). C) H_2O_2 concentration measured over 10 hours (left axis) and calculated H_2O_2 production rate (right axis). H_2O_2 was collected in the recycled catholyte stream.

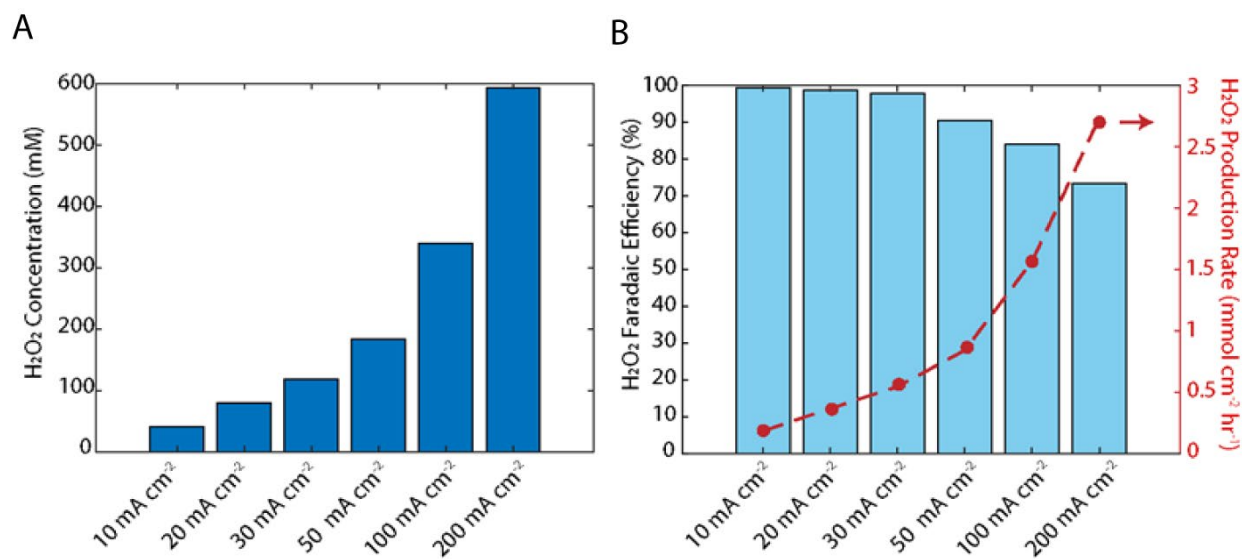


Figure S27. H_2O_2 production performance for 900-BNC in a two-electrode MEA solid electrolyte flow cell as a function of applied current density. A) Measured H_2O_2 concentration and corresponding B) Faradaic efficiency (right axis) and production rate (left axis) measured after 30 minutes. H_2O_2 was collected as a single pass rinse through solid electrolyte chamber.

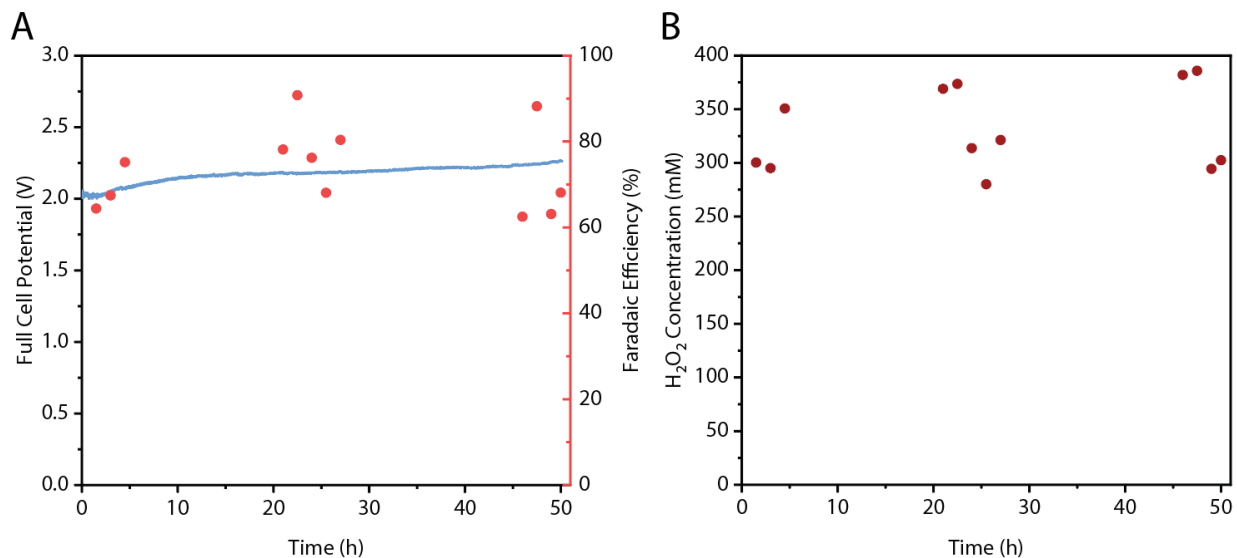


Figure S28. H₂O₂ production stability test for 900-BNC in a two-electrode MEA solid electrolyte flow cell as a function of applied current density. A) Full cell potential and corresponding Faradaic efficiency (right axis) and B) H₂O₂ concentration over chronopotentiometry hold at 50 mA cm⁻². H₂O₂ was collected as a single pass rinse through solid electrolyte chamber

Section S4. Supplementary Tables

Table S1. Raman I_D/I_G intensity band ratios.

Sample	D Band Intensity (1350 cm ⁻¹)	G Band Intensity (1580 cm ⁻¹)	I _D /I _G Ratio
700-BNC	10400	8400	1.24
800-BNC	11300	9500	1.19
900-BNC	5200	4610	1.13
1000-BNC	5730	5546	1.03
1100-BNC	1420	1400	1.01
900-NC	1655	1521	1.09

Table S2. N₂ adsorption-desorption isotherms.

Sample	Specific Surface Area (m ² /g) ^a	Total Pore Volume (cm ³ /g) ^a	Micropore Volume (cm ³ /g) ^b	Mesopore Volume (cm ³ /g) ^c	Average Pore Width (nm) ^d
700-BNC	760	0.31	0.26	0.05	1.66
800-BNC	680	0.28	0.24	0.04	1.65
900-BNC	715	0.29	0.24	0.05	1.64
1000-BNC	700	0.30	0.23	0.07	1.71
1100-BNC	620	0.26	0.20	0.06	1.72
900-NC	530	0.21	0.18	0.03	1.60

a – specific surface area and total pore volume is a calculated with BET theory

b – micropore volume is calculated with *t*-plot value

c – mesopore volume is the difference of single pore volume and *t*-plot micropore volume

d – pore size is calculated with a non-local density functional theory model assuming slit carbon pores

Table S3. Elemental analysis of the catalyst materials obtained by different temperature treatments derived from XPS measurements.

Sample	C at%	N at%	O at%	Zn at%	B at%	B:N ratio
700-BNC	64.6	25.2	6.9	2.6	0.71	0.028
800-BNC	68.6	21.7	5.4	3.2	0.98	0.045
900-BNC	75.4	13.8	7.5	1.6	1.78	0.130
1000-BNC	85.0	6.3	7.3	0.4	1.01	0.161
1100-BNC	85.6	4.7	7.9	0.2	1.63	0.350
900-NC	80.9	11.7	5.6	1.8	-	-

Table S4. Elemental analysis of the different boron species in the catalyst materials derived from XPS measurements. The ratio represents the percentage of a specific B functional group in the total B content. The atom percent (at%) reflects the amount of a certain B functional group in the entire material.

Sample	Total B at%	B-N-C ratio/at% (190 eV)	B-N ratio/at% (191 eV)	B-O ratio/at% (192 eV)	Total B-N + B-N-C ratio
700-BNC	0.71	12.7 / 0.09	14.1 / 0.10	73.2 / 0.52	26.8
800-BNC	0.98	23.5 / 0.23	24.5 / 0.24	52.0 / 0.51	48.0
900-BNC	1.78	28.7 / 0.51	44.4 / 0.79	27.0 / 0.48	73.0
1000-BNC	1.01	26.7 / 0.27	43.6 / 0.44	29.7 / 0.30	70.3
1100-BNC	1.63	17.8 / 0.29	48.5 / 0.79	33.7 / 0.55	66.3

Table S5. Elemental analysis of the different nitrogen species in the catalyst materials derived from XPS measurements. The ratio represents the percentage of a specific N functional group in the total N content. The atom percent (at%) reflects the amount of a certain N functional group in the entire material.

Sample	Total N at%	N-B ratio/at% (397.7 eV)	Pyridinic ratio/at% (398.5 eV)	Pyrrolic ratio/at% (399.5 eV)	Graphitic ratio/at% (400.7 eV)	N-oxide ratio/at% (403.5 eV)	Total N-C ratio
700-BNC	25.2	4.0 / 1.0	46.1 / 11.7	28.2 / 7.1	13.2 / 3.4	8.5 / 2.2	87.5
800-BNC	21.7	4.8 / 1.1	45.5 / 9.9	27.0 / 5.9	12.9 / 2.8	9.8 / 2.1	85.3
900-BNC	13.8	7.5 / 1.0	39.2 / 5.4	18.3 / 2.5	21.2 / 2.9	13.8 / 1.9	78.7
1000-BNC	6.3	6.1 / 0.38	17.7 / 1.1	21.2 / 1.3	35.8 / 2.24	19.2 / 1.2	74.8
1100-BNC	4.7	5.6 / 0.26	18.1 / 0.84	19.8 / 0.92	41.4 / 1.9	15.1 / 0.7	79.3
900-NC	11.7	-	36.9 / 4.34	22.3 / 2.63	26.9 / 3.17	13.9 / 1.64	86.1

Table S6. Elemental analysis of the different carbon species in the catalyst materials derived from XPS measurements. The ratio represents the percentage of a specific C functional group in the total C content. The atom percent (at%) reflects the amount of a certain C functional group in the entire material.

Sample	Total C at%	C-B ratio/at% (283.9 eV)	C=C ratio/at% (284.5 eV)	C-N ratio/at% (286 eV)	C-O ratio/at% (288.3 eV)	Total C-B + C-N ratio
700-BNC	64.6	7.8 / 5.0	37.7 / 24.3	36.8 / 23.7	17.8 / 11.5	44.5
800-BNC	68.6	7.8 / 5.4	39.7 / 27.5	37.4 / 25.9	15.1 / 10.5	45.1
900-BNC	75.4	6.1 / 4.6	46.0 / 34.9	33.3 / 25.3	14.6 / 11.1	39.4
1000-BNC	85.0	8.7 / 7.4	53.6 / 45.5	18.9 / 16.0	18.9 / 16.0	27.6
1100-BNC	85.6	9.1 / 7.8	48.9 / 41.7	23.6 / 20.1	18.4 / 15.7	32.7

Lower concentration of C-B suggests higher concentration of B-N-C moieties are present.

Table S7. Calculated partial H₂O₂ kinetic current density values at 0.20 V vs. RHE.

Catalyst	H ₂ O ₂ Kinetic Current Density ($J_{\text{kin, H}_2\text{O}_2}$)
700-BNC	0.012
800-BNC	0.16
900-BNC	0.82
1000-BNC	0.58
1100-BNC	0.29
900-NC	0.22

Table S8. Catholyte composition of boron measured via ICP-MS after electrochemical testing for 2 hours at 0.20 V vs. RHE.

Sample	Boron (ppm)
700-BNC	0.016
800-BNC	0.011
900-BNC	0.015
1000-BNC	0.012
1100-BNC	0.009
0.5 M K ₂ SO ₄	0.007

Based on an initial catalyst loading of 0.5 mg/cm² for the 900-BNC electrode that contains 9 μg of total B, ICP-MS results indicate that only 0.08 μg B dissolved in the catholyte after 2 hours of ORR testing, corresponding to < 1 % dissolution. This suggests that the boron content of the 900-BNC catalyst remains highly stable under the explored reaction conditions.

Table S9. Comparison of H₂O₂ performance of different carbon-based catalysts using RRDE.

<i>Material</i>	<i>pH</i>	<i>Onset Potential (V_{RHE})</i>	<i>H₂O₂ Selectivity (%)</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Boron nitride islands	0.1 M KOH	0.8	78	8
Mesoporous nitrogen carbon (MNC-600)	0.1 M KHCO ₃	0.7	85	9
Hierarchically porous carbon	7	0.16	70.8	10
Activated carbon/carbon fiber	7	0.31	26.5	11
NCMK3IL50_800T	7	0.2	75.7	12
N-doped carbon (0.05 mg cm ⁻²)	0.5 M H ₂ SO ₄ 0.1 M K ₂ SO ₄	0.49	>90	13
		0.52	90	
Co–N–C	7.4	0.3-0.4	>60	14
O-CB (0.2 mg cm ⁻²)	0.1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	0.47	55	15
Boron doped carbon	0.1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	0.35	80	16
Mesoporous nitrogen-doped carbon	1	0.1	>90	17
Mesoporous nitrogen doped carbon	0.5 M H ₂ SO ₄	0.2	>90	18
Oxidized CNTs	0.1 M KOH 0.1 M PBS 0.1 M HClO ₄	0.70	~90	19
		0.40	~85	
		0.15	~50	
Co–N–C	1	0.3	>40	14
Single site Co-N-C (0.1 mg cm ⁻²)	0.1 M K ₂ SO ₄ 0.5 M H ₂ SO ₄	0.71	55	20
		0.83	80	
F-doped carbon (0.86 mg cm ⁻²)	0.05 M H ₂ SO ₄	0.425	97.5	21
900-BNC (0.1 mg cm ⁻²)	0.5 M K ₂ SO ₄	0.35	~80	This work

Table S10. Comparison of H₂O₂ performance of different catalysts using different flow cells.

Material	Cell	pH	H ₂ O ₂ Faradaic Efficiency (%)	H ₂ O ₂ Production Rate (mmol cm ⁻² sec ⁻¹)	Reference
CoPc-CNT(O) CoPc-CNT CNT(O) (0.2 mg cm ⁻²)	Flow Cell	1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	92 90 90	1.43E-3 1.4E-3 9.3E-3	²²
B-C (0.5 mg cm ⁻²)	Flow Cell	1 M KOH	80	2.6E-4	¹⁶
N-doped carbon (0.2 mg cm ⁻²)	Flow Cell	0.5 M Na ₂ SO ₄ 0.1 M KOH 0.5 H ₂ SO ₄	70 59.5 34.3	1.37E-4 1.17E-4 6.7E-5	²³
OCNS ₉₀₀ (1 mg cm ⁻²)	Flow Cell	0.1 M KOH	89.6	2.14E-6	²⁴
900-BNC (0.5 mg cm ⁻²)	Flow Cell	0.5 M K ₂ SO ₄	78	2.4E-4	This work

Section S5. References

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