

Reference Sequence (RefSeq) Database Non-redundant genomic, RNA and protein sequence records, from microbes to human

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseg

National Center for Biotechnology Information • National Library of Medicine • National Institutes of Health • Department of Health and Human Services

Scope

The Reference Sequence (RefSeq) database is a collection of standard sequences intended to represent genomic sequences, transcripts, and translated products that occur naturally in an organism (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseq/). The taxonomic range of the collection spans much of the planet's diversity and includes eukaryotes, bacteria, archaea, and viruses. The table to the right sums up entries available for key taxonomic nodes for release 207. More up-to-date information is available from the release note at ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseq/release/release-notes/.

Automatic processing of public sequence records, collaboration with authoritative scientists or groups outside NCBI, and curation by biological experts at NCBI are at the center of the RefSeq processing pipelines. The product is a collection that is richly annotated with structural and functional features, actively maintained, and flexible enough to provide sequence standards to meet the needs of different research communities. For example, RefSegGene records support clinical laboratory testing for human disease,

curated vertebrate transcript records support genome annotation pipelines and genome browsers, and ribosomal RNA records are provided as type standards for bacterial and archaeal genomes. The RefSeq collection is also a key element unifying several of the molecular resources provided by NCBI.

RefSeq also started to annotated experimentally verified functional elements onto genomic records, with NG initialed accession (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseg/functionalelements/).

Each sequence record is based on public sequence data submitted to the International Nucleotide Sequence Database Collaboration (INSDC), but in contrast to the public sequence archives, the RefSeg collection is largely non-redundant. The table to the right lists other attributes that distinguish RefSeq from INSDC records.

Taxonomic Node	Release 207 Count	
Archaea	1351	
Bacteria	66541	
Fungi	15048	
Invertebrate	4598	
Mitochondrion	11757	
Plant	6530	
Plasmid	5563	
Plastid	6696	
Protozoa	605	
Vertebrate_mammalian	1378	
Vertebrate_other	4831	
Virus	11557	

Attribute	INSDC*	RefSeq	
Accession includes underscore ('_')	No	Yes	
INSDC member	Yes	No	
Source of sequence	Submitter	INSDC	
Source of annotation	Submitter	Multiple	
Owner of sequence record	Submitter	NCBI	
Redundancy	High	Low	
Archive of experimental data	Yes	No	
Review of experimental data	No	Yes	
Curation by NCBI	No	Yes	
Regular update schedule	No	Yes	
* The INSDC includes NCBI (USA), ENA (Europe), and DDBJ (Japan)			

Access

RefSeg records are available by

- Searching in the nucleotide or protein databases (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore and www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/protein)
- BLASTing against selected databases (blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), and
- Downloading through FTP (ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseq/ and ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genomes/refseq/)

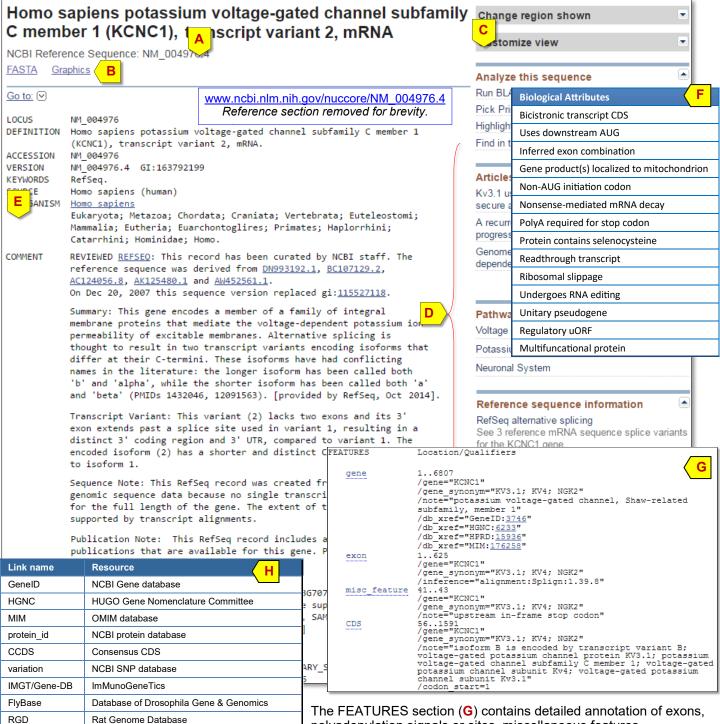
RefSeg records are also available through hyperlinks displayed from many NCBI resources, including Gene, Genome, BioProject, dbSNP, ClinVar, Genome Data Viewer tool, and more. RefSeq filters in the Entrez Nucleotide and Protein databases allows the quick retrieval of relevant RefSeq records from the query result. This filter (refseq[filter]) is also available to the Entrez Programming Utilities (EUtils, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK25501/) for programmatic access. RefSeq records are found in the general nucleotide (NT) and non-redundant protein (NR) BLAST databases. RefSeqonly databases are also available from the Database pull-down list:

- Reference RNA sequences (refseq rna)
- Reference protein sequences (refseq_protein)
- Reference genome sequences (refseq_genomes)
- Reference representative genomes (refseg representative genomes, less redundant)
- 16S ribosomal RNA sequences (Bacteria and Archaea)

In addition, RefSeg sub-project and organism-oriented BLAST databases are available from organism-specific BLAST pages, e.g., Human genome, Microbes, as well as the RefSeqGene project page. The complete RefSeq collection, subsets defined by taxonomic node (e.g., plants) or type of molecule, or key model organisms can be downloaded through FTP (ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseg/release/ and ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genomes/refseg/).

Record Display

The Nucleotide database displays a retrieved Reference Sequence record in GenBank format by default (**A**). You can access the FASTA and graphical displays using links (**B**) at the top of the page. Use links in the collapsible sections to the right (**C**) to access relevant records from other sources, such as PubMed and Gene (**D**). Refer to the COMMENT section (**E**) for information about the INSDC source data used to derive the record. For some records, this section may also include a review status, a summary of the gene function in the summary paragraph, as well as structured reports of transcript evidence, gene and sequence attributes of biological interest, and more. Refer to the table (**F**) for summary of biological attributes that may be included in the COMMENT section. For more details, see www.pubmed.gov/26553804.



EcoGene Database

The Arabidopsis Information Resource

Saccharomyces Genome Database

hymenoptera genome database

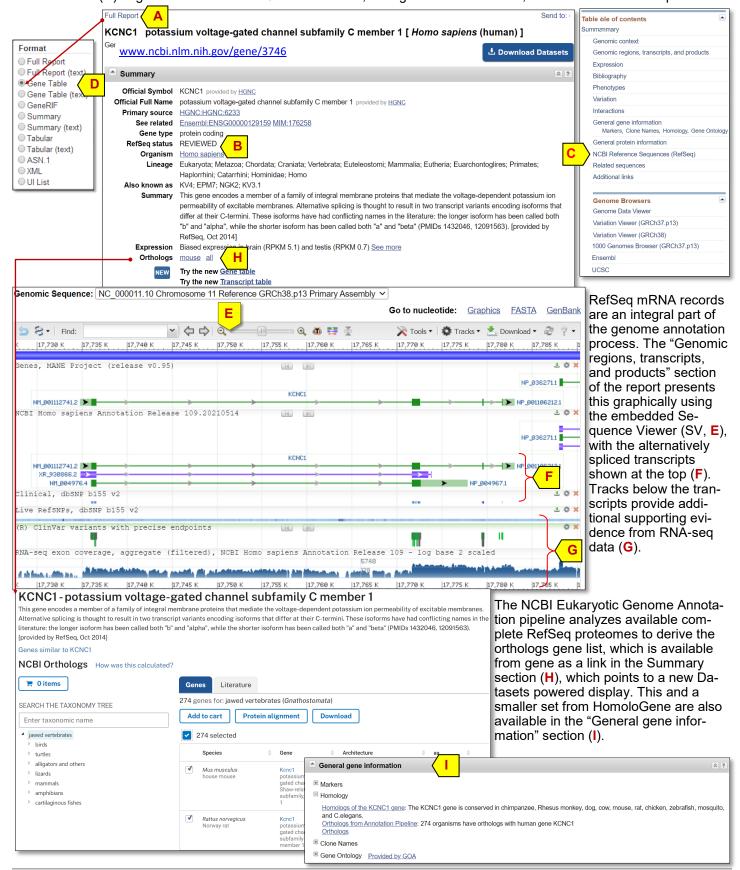
EcoGene

TAIR

SGD

Links to RefSeg Entries from Other Resources

RefSeq records are integral parts of many other NCBI resources. For example, the Gene full report page (A) reports the RefSeq curation status (B). Click the in-page navigation link "NCBI Reference Sequences (RefSeq)" (C) to bring the section in focus and see a detailed summary of individual RefSeq entries for the Gene record. Display the record in "Gene Table" format (D) to get details on the exon/intron structure, their genomic coordinates, and links to FASTA sequence.

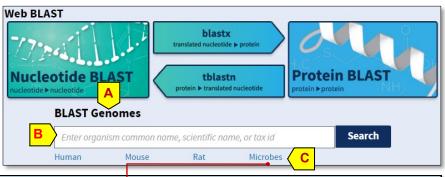


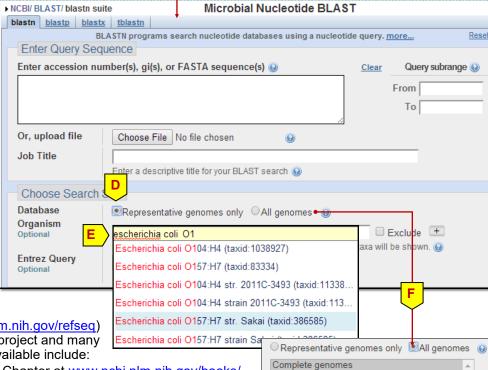
Searching RefSeq Using BLAST

The NCBI BLAST web service (<u>blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov</u>) provides a way to search the available NCBI RefSeq datasets using sequences as query. You can search against RefSeq entries using search pages listed under the "Basic BLAST" section by selecting RefSeq-only databases, i.e., *refseq rna*, *refseq representative genomes*, *refseq genomes*,

refseq_protein, and the newly introduced refseq_select for RNA and protein entries. To search against reference genome assemblies of a specific organism, use the organism-specific BLAST pages listed in the "BLAST Genomes" section (A) of the BLAST homepage. For organisms not listed, search with the organism name and select from the suggested list (B). This will retrieve a customized search page with the best dataset set as the target database.

RefSeq genomes for bacteria and archaea are also available through the Microbes link (C) from the BLAST homepage. This link points to the Microbial Genome BLAST page (partially shown to the right). The default database is set to a representative subset (D) selected by the research community and/or by NCBI computation. Use the Organism input box (E) to limit the search to specific taxa by typing and selecting from the suggested list. Check the "All Genomes" radio button (F) to see other microbial genomes available for selection. Hold ctrl key and click to select multiple datasets.





Additional Information

Documentation

The RefSeq homepage (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseq) contains a general description of the project and many technical details. Other documents available include:

- The NCBI Handbook RefSeq Chapter at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK21091
- The RefSeq FAQ at <u>www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK50680</u>
- Release notes at ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseq/release/release-notes
- Pruitt KD, et. al. 2014. RefSeq: an update on mammalian reference sequences. Nucleic Acids Res. 42 (Database issue):D756-63 (www.pubmed.gov/24259432).
- RefSeg: expanding the Prokaryotic Genome Annotation Pipeline reach with protein family model curation.
- RefSeq: an update on prokaryotic genome annotation and curation. Li W, et al. Nucleic Acids Res. 2021 Jan 8;49(D1):D1020-D1028 (www.pubmed.gov/33270901)

Alternative ways for data access

The RefSeq sequence data are released on a regular schedule. Data files from the release are available from the RefSeq FTP site (ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/refseq) and the genomes ftp site (ftp.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genomes/refseq). The Aspera download site (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/public) provides a faster alternative, which requires Aspera browser plugin. The Entrez Programming Utilities can be used to access the RefSeq dataset from the Nucleotide and Protein databases programmatically (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK25501/). The Entrez Direct package provides Unix command line access to RefSeq data and allows flexible workflow and data parsing (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK179288).

Feedback and technical assistance

- For RefSeq record update requests, use this web form www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/RefSeq/update.cgi
- For questions and feedback on NCBI resources in general, contact info@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
- For questions and problems encountered during BLAST searches, contact <u>blast-help@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov</u>

Draft genomes

Complete plasmids Complete bacteriophages