

Sequencing all the animals

Genome sequencing technologies are getting faster, more accurate, and cheaper. That's opening up new opportunities for researchers working with a particular species to delve more deeply into its genetic code. With genomes in hand, researchers can ask what makes each animal unique, and whether those attributes, like the regenerative capacity of the axolotl, the social behaviors of canines or birds, or the disease resistance observed in long-lived bats, could shed new light on human health and disease.

Though there are still technical challenges to sequencing genomes from scratch, there are many efforts underway to assemble genomic data for many animals, from species-by-species projects to ambitious endeavors like the Vertebrate Genome Project that hopes to sequence all the vertebrates out there. From short reads to long, assemblies and annotations, read more about genome sequencing technology and the building of a genomic ark in the April Technology Feature.

See page 105

Measles and nonhuman primates

After years of decline and declarations of eradication in parts of the world, incidences of measles are unfortunately on the rise again. The airborne disease circulates among unvaccinated people, but it has the potential to spread beyond human populations: measles can also afflict nonhuman primates. Transmission of measles from humans to nonhuman primates is a potential risk to research populations that facilities and animal veterinarians and care takers are careful to control for with a number of preventative measures. The recent measles outbreaks are a reminder that such precautions are both important and necessary.

See page 95

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