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Policy statement: Nature Publishing Group to publish genomes using Creative Commons licence

Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is introducing the [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported licence](#) for those original research articles, in any of the *Nature* journals, publishing the primary sequence of an organism's genome for the first time.

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Nature Publishing Group has been honoured to publish first reports on many significant publicly-funded genome sequencing and analysis projects, most notably the human genome, published in *Nature* in February 2001. *Nature* has also published genome sequences of the [Y chromosome](#), [mouse](#), [opossum](#), [honeybee](#) and [chimpanzee](#) among others.

The articles reporting these novel primary genome-wide sequences have regularly been published in *Nature* journals without access control. This is in keeping with the spirit of genomics community agreements, including statements from meetings in [Bermuda](#) and [Fort Lauderdale](#), that genome sequences should be placed in the public domain to maximize benefits to society. NPG now has the opportunity to formalise this position with the introduction of the [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike licence](#). Wherever possible, NPG will apply the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike licence retrospectively to all original research articles, previously published in *Nature* journals, which report novel primary genome-wide sequences.

Only original research articles publishing the primary sequence of an organism's genome for the first time will be offered to users under the Creative Commons licence. All other articles published by the *Nature* journals will remain under NPG's existing licensing and copyright agreements. Under these agreements authors of original research articles retain their copyright, giving NPG an exclusive [licence-to-publish](#). All authors of research articles are encouraged to self-archive the accepted version of their manuscript six months after publication. This policy is in line with the requirements of all major funding bodies, including the NIH, the Wellcome Trust, BBSRC, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and many others (see SHERPA's [JULIET project](#) for more details of research funder's policies).

NPG has always believed an inherent principle of publication is that others should be able to replicate and build upon the authors' published claims. Therefore, a condition of publication in a *Nature* journal is that authors are required to make materials, data and associated protocols available. All novel sequences or structure data must be made available to editors and referees either as Supplementary Information or by an accession number to an appropriate publicly accessible database that can be accessed before publication. NPG's new policy on primary genome papers is in the spirit of this approach to sharing data to facilitate science. NPG also endorses the STM and ALPSP statement on database, data sets & data accessibility, published last year (available in [PDF format](#)).

NPG recognises the interests of all the relevant stakeholders in scientific communications, and will continue to review publishing policies on an ongoing basis. Our aim is to ensure that authors can publish with confidence in all *Nature* journals, in line with requirements of their funders and employers, while receiving authoritative peer review and maximum impact in the scientific community and beyond.

More information on the NPG author license policy can be found on NPG's [License to publish page](#).