BACK TO BERT IN 2026: MODERNGENA AS A STRONG, EFFICIENT BASELINE FOR DNA FOUNDATION MODELS

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ABSTRACT

Recent progress in DNA language models has been increasingly driven by large and complex systems, which can obscure the impact of improvements to standard NLP architectures. In this work, we study whether and how a modernized BERT-style backbone (ModernBERT) can be adapted to genomic sequence modeling to improve computational efficiency, training stability, and long-context handling. Under controlled experimental settings, we benchmark efficiency across a range of sequence lengths and evaluate downstream performance on the Nucleotide Transformer benchmark. The resulting model, ModernGENA, achieves a strong efficiency–quality trade-off and ranks among the top-performing models in our evaluation suite. To support reproducibility and to provide a solid default reference point for future architectural work in genomics, we release the full implementation and configuration of ModernGENA as an open, reusable baseline.

1 INTRODUCTION

DNA encodes a vast amount of biologically meaningful information, including regulatory logic, evolutionary constraints, and functional signals, that we are still far from fully decoding. Deep learning offers a promising route to learn general-purpose representations directly from sequence.

Existing approaches in genomics broadly follow two paradigms. Task-specific supervised models are trained end-to-end for particular tasks, such as Enformer (Avsec et al., 2021), Borzoi (Linder et al., 2025) and AlphaGenome (Avsec et al., 2026). In contrast, DNA foundation models first learn general-purpose sequence representations via self-supervised pretraining and are then adapted to downstream applications. Motivated by the goal of a single reusable backbone that transfers across many genomic tasks, DNA foundation modeling has expanded across architectural families, including CNN-based models such as ConvNova (Bo et al., 2025), Transformer models such as DNABERT (Ji et al., 2021), GENA (Fishman et al., 2025), DNABERT-2 (Zhou et al., 2023), and Nucleotide Transformer (Dalla-Torre et al., 2025), and SSM-inspired methods such as Caduceus (Schiff et al., 2024). Recent progress increasingly relies on composite, multi-module systems that integrate representations across scales, such as GENERator (Wu et al., 2025), Evo2 (Brixi et al., 2025), and Nucleotide Transformer v3 (Boshar et al., 2025). While often effective, these designs tend to increase computational cost by simultaneously scaling sequence length, representational resolution, and model size, thereby raising both the memory footprint and runtime requirements for training and inference.

Amid this emphasis on scaling and architectural complexity, it is easy to overlook continued progress in standard architectures. Recent Transformer refinements improve computational efficiency, training stability, and long-context handling, as in ModernBERT (Warner et al., 2025). Here we evaluate how well these improvements transfer to the genomics setting. This yields a strong baseline for systematic comparison of future advances and provides a modernized Transformer module that can be reused when building more efficient architectures, where Transformers often serve as a key component.

Contributions. We evaluate how modern Transformer refinements transfer to genomics. Specifically, we

1. adapt and evaluate modern Transformer refinements for DNA foundation modeling, following ModernBERT advances;
2. benchmark efficiency–quality trade-offs under controlled experimental settings;
3. release training & finetuning code, configuration, and pretrained models ModernGENA-base (135M) and ModernGENA-large (377M) as a strong baselines for future work.

2 RELATED WORK

Among contemporary encoder-style foundation models for DNA, three widely used baselines are DNABERT-2 (Zhou et al., 2023), GENA-LM (Fishman et al., 2025), and Nucleotide Transformer (Dalla-Torre et al., 2025). While all follow masked-language pretraining (MLM), they differ most clearly in positional mechanisms, attention efficiency choices, and tokenization.

Tokenization: NTv2 uses fixed k-mer tokens (6-mers), whereas DNABERT-2 and GENA-LM rely on variable-length BPE tokenization (Sennrich et al., 2016).

Positional information: NTv2 incorporates rotary positional embeddings (RoPE) (Su et al., 2024) and expands its token-level context window; GENA-LM uses absolute positional encodings, while DNABERT-2 replaces explicit positional embeddings with ALiBi attention biases (Press et al., 2021) to reduce reliance on a learned position table and improve length extrapolation.

Attention efficiency: DNABERT-2 explicitly integrates FlashAttention (Dao et al., 2022) to speed up and reduce memory use in self-attention. While DNABERT-2 provides a FlashAttention-based implementation, we were unable to enable it in our environment due to software incompatibilities: the installation procedure recommended in the official repository pins a Triton version that is incompatible with the released code. GENA-LM uses BERT-like full attention for shorter sequences and provides a specialized long-context variant with sparse attention (BigBird) (Zaheer et al., 2020). NTv2 retains full attention but modernizes the transformer block (including RoPE and more efficient MLP variants) to support a larger context window.

3 EXPERIMENTS

3.1 ARCHITECTURE

We instantiate two model sizes: **ModernGENA base** (135M parameters) and **ModernGENA large** (377M parameters). ModernBERT (Warner et al., 2025) serves as the backbone, which is an encoder-only Transformer modernized for stable training and high throughput on long sequences. The architecture incorporates the following key design choices:

- It scales better to long contexts in both representation quality and computational efficiency: it replaces absolute positional embeddings with RoPE (Su et al., 2024), and uses a hybrid attention pattern that alternates local sliding-window attention with global attention, with separate RoPE parameterizations for local and global layers.
- It improves optimization stability via a pre-norm block design (Xiong et al., 2020), an additional LayerNorm after the embedding layer, simplified normalization in the first attention block, and GeGLU in the FFN for a more expressive nonlinearity (Shazeer, 2020).
- It reduces unnecessary parameterization by disabling bias terms in most linear layers and in LayerNorm (except for the final linear layer).
- It accelerates training and inference through end-to-end unpadding (Zeng et al., 2022), variable-length kernel implementations (FlashAttention v3 (Shah et al., 2024) for global layers and v2 (Dao, 2023) for local layers), and compilation of compatible modules with torch.compile (Ansel et al., 2024).

Further details on the model architecture are provided in Appendix A.

3.2 TRAINING

3.2.1 DATA, SPLIT, AND TOKENIZATION

The training corpus comprises all vertebrate species with genome and transcript annotations available in NCBI RefSeq as of December 2024 (443 assemblies; 353,574,093,776 bp; Appendix F). We train on promoter-centered intervals, extracting a $[-16\,\mathrm{kbp}, +8\,\mathrm{kbp}]$ window around each unique transcription start site for genes and pseudogenes, merging overlapping windows with BEDTools, including both strands, and excluding sequences with ambiguous nucleotides. Data are split at the chromosome level: for all assemblies except human (GCF_000001405.40), approximately 10% of genome length is used for validation and the remainder for training, while for human, chromosomes 8, 20, and 21 are held out for validation. We use a 32k BPE vocabulary over A/T/G/C/N with special tokens [CLS], [SEP], [PAD], [UNK], and [MASK] following (Fishman et al., 2025); long runs of N are collapsed into a single token during preprocessing.

3.2.2 TRAINING SETTINGS

Models were pretrained on 8 NVIDIA A100 80GB GPUs with dynamic sequence packing and AdamW optimization; full training hyperparameters and throughput details are provided in Appendix B.

3.3 COMPARISON GROUP

To isolate the effect of modern Transformer-block refinements on performance and computational efficiency, the evaluation focuses on a *primary baseline set* of encoder-only Transformer models with fewer than 500M parameters: DNABERT-2, NTv2, and GENA-LM. For NTv2, we use the 100M and 250M variants to match the size of the ModernGENA models. When directly comparable metrics are available for other models with different architectures and model sizes, they are included as additional reference points, but they are not part of the primary baseline set.

3.4 INFERENCE EFFICIENCY EVALUATION

Inference efficiency is measured as throughput (tokens/s) on fixed-length sequences using an NVIDIA A100 (80 GB) GPU. The evaluation considers the *primary baseline set* of encoder-only Transformer models. For each sequence length L, the maximum batch size that fits in memory is determined via exponential growth until an error, followed by binary search. Using this batch size, throughput is averaged over 10 timing runs per model (Appendix C).

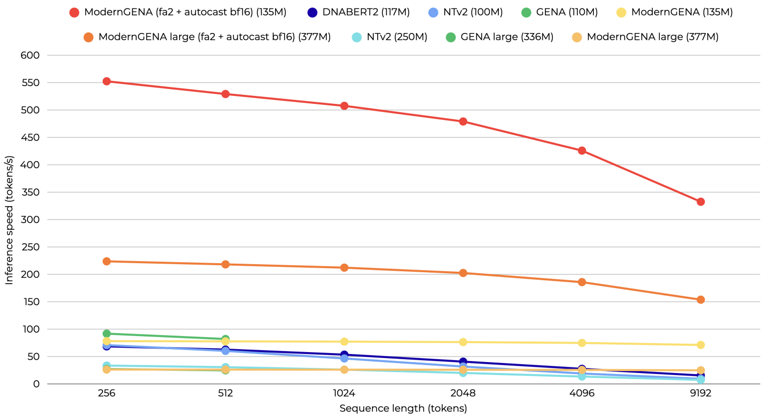

Figure 1: **Inference efficiency on an NVIDIA A100 (80 GB).** Models from the *primary baseline set* are benchmarked. Throughput is averaged over 10 timing runs per model.

Across these settings, ModernGENA achieves slightly higher throughput under the standard inference configuration and substantially higher throughput with FlashAttention 2, for both ModernGENA and ModernGENA Large (Figure 1).

3.5 RESULTS ON NT BENCHMARK

To enable fair comparison with prior architectures, ModernGENA is evaluated on the NT benchmark (Dalla-Torre et al., 2025), which consists of 18 tasks. ModernGENA is fine-tuned on each task without reverse-complement (RC) augmentation or conjoining; full training details are provided in Appendix D. Performance is reported as Matthews correlation coefficient (MCC) under 10-fold cross-validation. For each task, the rank of each model is computed and averaged across tasks. Results for the other models are taken from (Dalla-Torre et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2025).

Table 1: **NT Benchmark results (*primary baseline set*).** 10-fold cross-validation, reported as 100×MCC in the format *mean* ± *std* across folds. The final row reports each model's average rank across tasks.

Task	**DNABERT-2 (117M)**	**NTv2 (100M)**	**NTv2 (250M)**	**GENA (110M)**	**ModernGENA (135M)**
H2AFZ	49.0 ± 1.3	49.2 ± 1.2	51.3 ± 1.7	49.5 ± 1.1	52.2 ± 0.7
H3K27ac	49.1 ± 1.0	48.7 ± 1.6	49.7 ± 1.4	49.8 ± 1.7	51.2 ± 1.3
H3K27me3	59.9 ± 1.0	59.5 ± 1.3	60.0 ± 0.9	60.0 ± 0.7	60.8 ± 0.4
H3K36me3	63.7 ± 0.7	61.7 ± 0.6	63.6 ± 1.2	62.3 ± 0.9	63.8 ± 0.9
H3K4me1	49.0 ± 0.8	48.5 ± 1.1	49.1 ± 0.6	48.6 ± 0.9	49.3 ± 1.0
H3K4me2	55.8 ± 1.3	55.1 ± 1.0	57.0 ± 0.9	55.4 ± 0.8	57.5 ± 1.1
H3K4me3	64.6 ± 0.8	63.3 ± 1.5	64.0 ± 0.9	65.7 ± 1.2	64.9 ± 1.4
H3K9ac	56.4 ± 1.3	53.8 ± 1.5	56.5 ± 2.1	54.3 ± 1.0	57.3 ± 0.8
H3K9me3	44.3 ± 2.5	44.5 ± 1.7	46.7 ± 1.6	49.1 ± 1.4	48.2 ± 1.8
H4K20me1	65.5 ± 1.1	64.8 ± 0.8	65.2 ± 0.6	65.6 ± 0.9	66.9 ± 0.6
Enhancer	51.7 ± 1.1	50.7 ± 0.9	52.5 ± 1.0	53.6 ± 0.7	54.5 ± 0.6
Enhancer type	47.6 ± 0.9	46.5 ± 0.9	49.2 ± 1.0	49.3 ± 0.7	51.2 ± 1.3
Promoter all	75.4 ± 0.9	75.3 ± 0.5	77.4 ± 1.3	74.1 ± 1.1	77.4 ± 0.6
Promoter non-TATA	76.9 ± 0.9	76.6 ± 1.4	78.5 ± 1.0	75.7 ± 0.8	77.9 ± 0.9
Promoter TATA	78.4 ± 3.6	82.6 ± 1.9	87.0 ± 1.9	80.7 ± 4.9	90.6 ± 2.0
Splice acceptor	83.7 ± 0.6	94.7 ± 0.3	95.0 ± 0.8	80.5 ± 0.9	85.1 ± 0.3
Splice site all	85.5 ± 0.5	96.0 ± 0.5	96.5 ± 0.3	82.3 ± 0.8	87.6 ± 0.3
Splice donor	86.1 ± 0.4	94.7 ± 0.8	96.7 ± 0.4	81.9 ± 0.7	86.8 ± 0.6
Average rank	**3.67**	**4.17**	**2.22**	**3.33**	**1.50**

ModernGENA (135M) achieves competitive performance across a broad range of tasks. Compared to GENA, it improves results on most benchmarks and places first by average rank within the *primary baseline set* (Table 1). When including additional reference models from other architectural families and scales, ModernGENA ranks second overall, behind GENERator (1.2B) (Appendix Table E).

4 CONCLUSION

Standard Transformer encoders continue to improve through practical architectural and training modernizations that increase computational efficiency, robustness, and long-context capability. Here, we study how these advances transfer to genomic sequence modeling by adapting ModernBERT for DNA pretraining and introducing ModernGENA.

We evaluate ModernGENA along two practically relevant axes: efficiency and downstream transfer. Under controlled settings, we benchmark inference throughput across sequence lengths and evaluate downstream performance on the Nucleotide Transformer benchmark. ModernGENA supports FlashAttention-based implementations and achieves higher inference throughput in our experiments while delivering strong benchmark performance. It ranks first among encoder-only models of comparable size and second overall in our evaluation suite, reflecting a favorable efficiency–quality trade-off. Because ModernGENA builds on the ModernBERT design, it is also intended to support long genomic contexts, a key requirement in many genomics applications.

Our results also expose a broader evaluation challenge. On the NT benchmark, performance differences across architectures, and even across substantially different model scales, are often modest and can partly be narrowed by careful fine-tuning, making small metric gaps difficult to interpret. This leaves open whether scaling reliably improves downstream genomic modeling beyond what can be achieved with smaller models and strong training recipes. Addressing this will require both closer analysis of benchmark properties and fine-tuning variance, and broader evaluation across regimes such as longer-context tasks. In this context, we position ModernGENA as a strong, reproducible baseline and a practical component for building and testing more complex architectures.

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APPENDIX A. ARCHITECTURE CONFIGURATION

Additional architecture configuration details for ModernGENA Base and Large are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Architecture configuration.

Parameter	**ModernGENA Base**	**ModernGENA Large**
parameters	135M	377M
num_hidden_layers	22	28
hidden_size	768	1024
intermediate_size	1152	2624
num_attention_heads	12	16
attn_out_dropout_prob	0.1	0.1
mlp_layer	glu	glu
mlp_out_bias	false	false
activation_function	gelu	gelu
rotary_emb_base	10000	10000
sliding_window	128	128
global_attn_every_n_layers	3	3

APPENDIX B. PRETRAINING SETTINGS

ModernGENA was pretrained on 8 NVIDIA A100 (80GB) GPUs with a global batch size of 4096 sequences. To improve robustness to variable input lengths, we used dynamic sequence packing with sequence lengths sampled uniformly from 10 to 1024 tokens (average length $\approx$ 700 tokens). Optimization used decoupled AdamW with learning rate 4×10^{-4}, $\beta_1 = 0.9$, $\beta_2 = 0.98$, $\epsilon = 10^{-6}$, and weight decay 10^{-5}; weight decay was not applied to bias parameters or normalization layers. We used a warmup–stable schedule in token space, linearly warming up over the first 3×10^9 tokens and then keeping the learning rate constant for the remainder of training.

ModernGENA base was trained for 158 epochs and processed 1,510B tokens in total. ModernGENA large was trained for 138 epochs, corresponding to 1,320B processed tokens. On 8×A100 (80GB), the observed pretraining throughput was 1.33M tokens/s for ModernGENA base and 0.486M tokens/s for ModernGENA large.

APPENDIX C. INFERENCE EFFICIENCY DETAILS

Inference efficiency is evaluated on an NVIDIA A100 (80 GB) using fixed-length sequences, reporting throughput (tokens/s) for models in the *primary baseline set*. The resulting batch sizes and tokens/s are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: **Inference efficiency evaluation.** For each sequence length L, the table reports the maximum batch size that fits in memory (bs) and throughput in tokens/s (mean over 10 runs).

Model	**Sequence length L (tokens)**											
	256		**512**		**1024**		**2048**		**4096**		**9192**	
	bs	**tokens/s**	**bs**	**tokens/s**	**bs**	**tokens/s**	**bs**	**tokens/s**	**bs**	**tokens/s**	**bs**	**tokens/s**
ModernGENA (FA2 + autocast bf16) (135M)	3631	**552.44**	1811	**529.18**	901	**507.61**	446	**479.04**	218	**425.88**	92	**332.54**
ModernGENA (135M)	3631	78.12	1811	77.73	901	77.20	446	76.38	218	74.83	92	71.15
GENA (110M)	6637	91.78	2206	81.98	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
DNABERT-2 (117M)	3802	68.57	1433	62.63	376	53.42	90	40.68	15	27.57	5	15.48
NTv2 (100M)	5941	70.88	1845	60.28	519	46.46	132	31.72	26	19.02	5	9.37
ModernGENA Large (FA2 + autocast bf16) (377M)	2721	**223.77**	1356	**218.23**	673	**212.24**	332	**202.51**	161	**185.82**	67	**153.77**
ModernGENA Large (377M)	2721	26.20	1356	26.11	673	26.01	332	25.85	161	25.56	67	24.86
GENA Large (336M)	4922	27.13	1633	24.79	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
NTv2 (250M)	4107	33.47	1649	30.62	486	26.07	127	20.05	26	13.49	5	7.35

APPENDIX D. HYPERPARAMETERS PER NT TASK

ModernGENA is fine-tuned using a grid search over learning rates $\{1\times10^{-5},\ 3\times10^{-5},\ 5\times10^{-5}\}$, weight decay $\{1 \times 10^{-4},\ 1 \times 10^{-3},\ 1 \times 10^{-2}\}$, and effective batch sizes $\{32,\ 64\}$. GENA is fine-tuned using a grid search over learning rates $\{1 \times 10^{-5},\ 3 \times 10^{-5},\ 5 \times 10^{-5}\}$, weight decay $\{1 \times 10^{-4},\ 1 \times 10^{-3}\}$, and effective batch sizes $\{32,\ 64\}$. The selected hyperparameters for each task are reported in Table 4.

APPENDIX E. NT BENCHMARK RESULTS ACROSS ALL MODELS

For completeness, Table 5 reports the full NT benchmark comparison including additional reference models from other architectural families and model scales. These models are not part of the *primary baseline set* used in the main text, but are included here to provide broader context.

APPENDIX F. GENOMIC ASSEMBLIES FOR MULTISPECIES PRETRAINING

Table 4: **Selected hyperparameters per NT task.** lr: learning rate; wd: weight decay; bs: batch size.

	GENA			**ModernGENA**		
Task	**lr**	**wd**	**bs**	**lr**	**wd**	**bs**
H2AFZ	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64
H3K27ac	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32
H3K27me3	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32
H3K36me3	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32
H3K4me1	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32	1×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32
H3K4me2	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32	1×10^{-5}	1×10^{-2}	64
H3K4me3	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-2}	32
H3K9ac	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	64	1×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32
H3K9me3	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	64	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64
H4K20me1	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-2}	32
Enhancer	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32
Enhancer type	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	64	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32
Promoter all	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	64	1×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32
Promoter non-TATA	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32	3×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64
Promoter TATA	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32
Splice acceptor	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64
Splice site all	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	32	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-4}	64
Splice donor	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	64	5×10^{-5}	1×10^{-3}	64

Table 5: **NT Benchmark results (all models).** 10-fold cross-validation, reported as 100×MCC in the format *mean* ± *std* across folds. The final row reports each model's average rank across tasks.

Task	**ModernGENA (135M)**	**NTv2 (500M)**	**NT-multi (2.5B)**	**Enformer (252M)**	**HyenaDNA (55M)**	**Caduceus-Ph (8M)**	**Caduceus-PS (8M)**	**GROVER (87M)**	**GENERator (1.2B)**	**GENERator-All (1.2B)**
H2AFZ	52.2 ± 0.7	52.4 ± 0.8	50.3 ± 1.0	52.2 ± 1.9	45.5 ± 1.5	41.7 ± 1.6	50.1 ± 1.3	50.9 ± 1.3	52.9 ± 0.9	50.6 ± 1.9
H3K27ac	51.2 ± 1.3	48.8 ± 1.3	48.1 ± 2.0	52.0 ± 1.5	42.3 ± 1.7	46.4 ± 1.8	46.4 ± 2.2	48.9 ± 2.3	54.6 ± 1.5	49.6 ± 1.4
H3K27me3	60.8 ± 0.4	61.0 ± 0.6	59.3 ± 1.6	55.2 ± 0.7	54.1 ± 1.8	54.7 ± 1.0	56.1 ± 3.6	60.0 ± 0.8	61.9 ± 0.8	59.0 ± 1.4
H3K36me3	63.8 ± 0.9	63.3 ± 1.5	63.5 ± 1.6	56.7 ± 1.7	54.3 ± 1.0	54.3 ± 0.9	60.2 ± 0.8	58.5 ± 0.8	65.0 ± 0.6	62.1 ± 1.3
H3K4me1	49.3 ± 1.0	49.0 ± 1.7	48.1 ± 1.2	50.4 ± 2.1	43.0 ± 1.4	41.1 ± 1.2	43.4 ± 3.0	46.8 ± 1.1	50.4 ± 1.0	49.0 ± 1.6
H3K4me2	57.5 ± 1.1	55.2 ± 1.3	55.2 ± 2.2	62.6 ± 1.5	52.1 ± 2.4	48.0 ± 1.3	52.6 ± 3.5	55.8 ± 1.2	60.7 ± 1.0	56.9 ± 1.2
H3K4me3	64.9 ± 1.4	62.7 ± 2.0	61.8 ± 1.5	63.5 ± 1.9	59.6 ± 1.5	58.8 ± 2.0	61.1 ± 1.5	63.4 ± 1.1	65.3 ± 0.8	62.8 ± 1.8
H3K9ac	57.3 ± 0.8	55.1 ± 1.6	52.7 ± 1.7	59.3 ± 2.0	48.4 ± 2.2	51.4 ± 1.4	51.8 ± 1.8	53.1 ± 1.4	57.0 ± 1.7	55.6 ± 1.8
H3K9me3	48.2 ± 1.8	46.7 ± 4.4	44.7 ± 1.8	45.3 ± 1.6	37.5 ± 2.6	43.5 ± 1.9	45.5 ± 1.9	44.1 ± 1.7	50.9 ± 1.3	48.0 ± 3.7
H4K20me1	66.9 ± 0.6	65.4 ± 1.1	65.0 ± 1.4	60.6 ± 1.6	58.0 ± 0.9	57.2 ± 1.2	59.0 ± 2.0	63.4 ± 0.6	67.0 ± 0.6	65.2 ± 1.0
Enhancer	54.5 ± 0.6	57.5 ± 2.3	52.7 ± 1.2	61.4 ± 1.0	47.5 ± 0.6	48.0 ± 0.8	49.0 ± 0.9	51.9 ± 0.9	59.4 ± 1.3	55.3 ± 2.0
Enhancer type	51.2 ± 1.3	54.1 ± 1.3	48.4 ± 1.2	57.3 ± 1.3	44.1 ± 1.0	46.1 ± 0.9	45.9 ± 1.1	48.1 ± 0.9	54.7 ± 1.7	51.0 ± 2.2
Promoter all	77.4 ± 0.6	78.0 ± 1.2	76.1 ± 0.9	74.5 ± 1.2	69.3 ± 1.6	70.7 ± 1.7	72.2 ± 1.4	72.1 ± 1.1	79.5 ± 0.5	76.5 ± 0.9
Promoter non-TATA	77.9 ± 0.9	78.5 ± 0.9	77.3 ± 1.0	76.3 ± 1.2	72.3 ± 1.3	74.0 ± 1.2	74.6 ± 0.9	73.9 ± 1.8	80.1 ± 0.5	78.6 ± 0.7
Promoter TATA	90.6 ± 2.0	91.9 ± 2.8	94.4 ± 1.6	79.3 ± 2.6	64.8 ± 4.4	86.8 ± 2.3	85.3 ± 3.4	89.1 ± 4.1	95.0 ± 0.9	86.2 ± 2.4
Splice acceptor	85.1 ± 0.3	96.5 ± 0.4	95.8 ± 0.3	74.9 ± 0.7	81.5 ± 4.9	90.6 ± 1.5	93.9 ± 1.2	81.2 ± 1.2	96.4 ± 0.3	95.1 ± 0.6
Splice site all	87.6 ± 0.3	96.8 ± 0.3	96.4 ± 0.3	73.9 ± 1.1	85.4 ± 5.3	94.1 ± 0.6	94.2 ± 1.2	84.9 ± 1.5	96.6 ± 0.3	95.9 ± 0.3
Splice donor	86.8 ± 0.6	97.6 ± 0.3	97.0 ± 0.2	78.0 ± 0.7	94.3 ± 2.4	94.4 ± 2.6	96.4 ± 1.0	84.2 ± 0.9	97.7 ± 0.2	97.1 ± 0.2
Average rank (all)	**4.22**	**4.33**	**7.28**	**7.28**	**13.06**	**11.94**	**10.28**	**9.39**	**1.44**	**5.72**

Table 6: **List of genomic assemblies** used to create the multispecies pretraining dataset. Assembly accessions correspond to the genome and annotation identifiers processed by the NCBI Eukaryotic Genome Annotation Pipeline.

Assembly	Species
GCF_021347895.1	Acanthochromis polyacanthus
GCF_904848185.1	Acanthopagrus latus
GCF_027475565.1	Acinonyx jubatus
GCF_902713425.1	Acipenser ruthenus
GCF_903995435.1	Acomys russatus
GCF_020745825.1	Agelaius phoeniceus
GCF_028640845.1	Ahaetulla prasina
GCF_002007445.2	Ailuropoda melanoleuca

Assembly	Species
GCF_030867095.1	Alligator mississippiensis
GCF_017589495.1	Alosa alosa
GCF_018492685.1	Alosa sapidissima
GCF_010909765.2	Amblyraja radiata
GCF_036373705.1	Amia ocellicauda
GCF_027887145.1	Ammospiza caudacuta
GCF_027579445.1	Ammospiza nelsoni
GCF_022539595.1	Amphiprion ocellaris
GCF_900324465.2	Anabas testudineus
GCF_963932015.1	Anas acuta
GCF_015476345.1	Anas platyrhynchos
GCF_013347855.1	Anguilla anguilla
GCF_018555375.3	Anguilla rostrata
GCF_035594765.1	Anolis carolinensis
GCF_037176765.1	Anolis sagrei
GCF_031753505.1	Anomalospiza imberbis
GCF_027596085.1	Anoplopoma fimbria
GCF_040182565.1	Anser cygnoides
GCF_016432865.1	Antechinus flavipes
GCF_040054535.1	Antennarius striatus
GCF_041296385.1	Aphelocoma coerulescens
GCF_947179515.1	Apodemus sylvaticus
GCF_036417845.1	Apteryx mantelli
GCF_020740795.1	Apus apus
GCF_900496995.4	Aquila chrysaetos chrysaetos
GCF_007364275.1	Archocentrus centrarchus
GCF_011762505.1	Arvicanthis niloticus
GCF_903992535.2	Arvicola amphibius
GCF_900246225.1	Astatotilapia calliptera
GCF_929443795.1	Astur gentilis
GCF_023375975.1	Astyanax mexicanus
GCF_009819795.1	Aythya fuligula
GCF_949987535.1	Balaenoptera acutorostrata
GCF_009873245.2	Balaenoptera musculus
GCF_028023285.1	Balaenoptera ricei
GCF_900634795.4	Betta splendens
GCF_027579735.1	Bombina bombina
GCF_000247795.1	Bos indicus
GCF_003369695.1	Bos indicus x Bos taurus
GCF_032452875.1	Bos javanicus
GCF_002263795.3	Bos taurus
GCF_040956055.1	Brachionichthys hirsutus
GCF_023856365.1	Brienomyrus brachyistius
GCF_019923935.1	Bubalus bubalis
GCF_029407905.1	Bubalus kerabau
GCF_023091745.1	Budorcas taxicolor
GCF_905171765.1	Bufo bufo
GCF_014858855.1	Bufo gargarizans
GCF_011100555.1	Callithrix jacchus
GCF_036013445.1	Caloenas nicobarica
GCF_003957555.1	Calypte anna
GCF_901933205.1	Camarhynchus parvulus
GCF_036321535.1	Camelus dromedarius
GCF_009834535.1	Camelus ferus
GCF_035149785.1	Candoia aspera
GCF_003254725.2	Canis lupus dingo
GCF_011100685.1	Canis lupus familiaris
GCF_001704415.2	Capra hircus

Assembly	Species
GCF_032405125.1	Capricornis sumatraensis
GCF_003368295.1	Carassius auratus
GCF_963082965.1	Carassius carassius
GCF_023724105.1	Carassius gibelio
GCF_017639515.1	Carcharodon carcharias
GCF_023653815.1	Caretta caretta
GCF_009819885.2	Catharus ustulatus
GCF_030273125.1	Centropristis striata
GCF_019320065.1	Cervus canadensis
GCF_910594005.1	Cervus elaphus
GCF_033026475.1	Channa argus
GCF_024489055.1	Chanodichthys erythropterus
GCF_902362185.1	Chanos chanos
GCF_018320785.1	Cheilinus undulatus
GCF_017976325.1	Chelmon rostratus
GCF_015237465.2	Chelonia mydas
GCF_004010195.1	Chiloscyllium plagiosum
GCF_950005125.1	Chionomys nivalis
GCF_009829145.1	Chiroxiphia lanceolata
GCF_015220235.1	Choloepus didactylus
GCF_963924245.1	Chroicocephalus ridibundus
GCF_011386835.1	Chrysemys picta bellii
GCF_963662255.1	Cinclus cinclus
GCF_024256425.1	Clarias gariepinus
GCF_900700415.2	Clupea harengus
GCF_028858725.1	Colius striatus
GCF_033807715.1	Cololabis saira
GCF_036013475.1	Columba livia
GCF_963514075.1	Conger conger
GCF_020615455.1	Coregonus clupeaformis
GCF_000738735.6	Corvus cornix cornix
GCF_020740725.1	Corvus hawaiiensis
GCF_009650955.1	Corvus moneduloides
GCF_030265065.1	Corythoichthys intestinalis
GCF_900634415.1	Cottoperca gobio
GCF_001577835.2	Coturnix japonica
GCF_003668045.3	Cricetulus griseus
GCF_019924925.1	Ctenopharyngodon idella
GCF_017976375.1	Cuculus canorus
GCF_009769545.1	Cyclopterus lumpus
GCF_013377495.2	Cygnus atratus
GCF_009769625.2	Cygnus olor
GCF_027409185.1	Cynocephalus volans
GCF_000523025.1	Cynoglossus semilaevis
GCF_018340385.1	Cyprinus carpio
GCF_033118175.1	Dama dama
GCF_903798145.1	Danio aesculapii
GCF_000002035.6	Danio rerio
GCF_030445035.1	Dasypus novemcinctus
GCF_949987515.1	Delphinus delphis
GCF_900700375.1	Denticeps clupeoides
GCF_009764565.3	Dermochelys coriacea
GCF_022682495.1	Desmodus rotundus
GCF_020826845.1	Diceros bicornis minor
GCF_030265055.1	Doryrhamphus excisus
GCF_036370855.1	Dromaius novaehollandiae
GCF_019393635.1	Dromiciops gliroides
GCF_014839835.1	Dryobates pubescens

Assembly	Species
GCF_027744805.1	Dunckerocampus dactyliophorus
GCF_900963305.1	Echeneis naucrates
GCF_013358815.1	Electrophorus electricus
GCF_036324505.1	Eleginops maclovinus
GCF_024166365.1	Elephas maximus indicus
GCF_035609145.1	Eleutherodactylus coqui
GCF_023053635.1	Elgaria multicarinata webbii
GCF_028017835.1	Emys orbicularis
GCF_034702125.1	Engraulis encrasicolus
GCF_033978785.1	Entelurus aequoreus
GCF_011397635.1	Epinephelus fuscoguttatus
GCF_005281545.1	Epinephelus lanceolatus
GCF_006386435.1	Epinephelus moara
GCF_027574615.1	Eptesicus fuscus
GCF_016077325.2	Equus asinus
GCF_002863925.1	Equus caballus
GCF_021613505.1	Equus quagga
GCF_950295315.1	Erinaceus europaeus
GCF_900747795.2	Erpetoichthys calabaricus
GCF_028021215.1	Eschrichtius robustus
GCF_011004845.1	Esox lucius
GCF_013103735.1	Etheostoma cragini
GCF_008692095.1	Etheostoma spectabile
GCF_028564815.1	Eubalaena glacialis
GCF_028583425.1	Eublepharis macularius
GCF_029931775.1	Euleptes europaea
GCF_023638135.1	Falco biarmicus
GCF_023634085.1	Falco cherrug
GCF_017639655.2	Falco naumanni
GCF_023634155.1	Falco peregrinus
GCF_015220075.1	Falco rusticolus
GCF_018350175.1	Felis catus
GCF_000247815.1	Ficedula albicollis
GCF_011125445.2	Fundulus heteroclitus
GCF_026213295.1	Gadus chalcogrammus
GCF_031168955.1	Gadus macrocephalus
GCF_902167405.1	Gadus morhua
GCF_016699485.2	Gallus gallus
GCF_019740435.1	Gambusia affinis
GCF_016920845.1	Gasterosteus aculeatus aculeatus
GCF_030936135.1	Gavia stellata
GCF_902459505.1	Geotrypetes seraphini
GCF_021462225.1	Girardinichthys multiradiatus
GCF_963455315.1	Globicephala melas
GCF_007399415.2	Gopherus evgoodei
GCF_025201925.1	Gopherus flavomarginatus
GCF_029281585.2	Gorilla gorilla gorilla
GCF_900634775.1	Gouania willdenowi
GCF_016433145.1	Gracilinanus agilis
GCF_028858705.1	Grus americana
GCF_018139145.2	Gymnogyps californianus
GCF_027477595.1	Haemorhous mexicanus
GCF_026419915.1	Harpia harpyja
GCF_019097595.1	Hemibagrus wyckioides
GCF_027244095.1	Hemicordylus capensis
GCF_020745735.1	Hemiscyllium ocellatum
GCF_035084215.1	Heptranchias perlo
GCF_036365525.1	Heterodontus francisci

Assembly	Species
GCF_032191835.1	Heteronotia binoei
GCF_025434085.1	Hippocampus zosterae
GCF_009819705.1	Hippoglossus hippoglossus
GCF_022539355.2	Hippoglossus stenolepis
GCF_030028045.1	Hippopotamus amphibius kiboko
GCF_015227805.2	Hirundo rustica
GCF_000001405.40	Homo sapiens
GCF_029633855.1	Hoplias malabaricus
GCF_029499605.1	Hyla sarda
GCF_030144855.1	Hypanus sabinus
GCF_040937935.1	Hyperolius riggenbachi
GCF_021917145.1	Hypomesus transpacificus
GCF_023375685.1	Ictalurus furcatus
GCF_001660625.3	Ictalurus punctatus
GCF_016881025.1	Ictidomys tridecemlineatus
GCF_027791375.1	Indicator indicator
GCF_020740685.1	Jaculus jaculus
GCF_026419965.1	Kogia breviceps
GCF_001649575.2	Kryptolebias marmoratus
GCF_022985175.1	Labeo rohita
GCF_963930695.1	Labrus bergylta
GCF_963584025.1	Labrus mixtus
GCF_009819535.1	Lacerta agilis
GCF_949774975.1	Lagenorhynchus albirostris
GCF_023343835.1	Lagopus muta
GCF_029633865.1	Lampris incognitus
GCF_000972845.2	Larimichthys crocea
GCF_001640805.2	Lates calcarifer
GCF_037157495.1	Lathamus discolor
GCF_037176945.1	Latimeria chalumnae
GCF_020740605.2	Lemur catta
GCF_018350155.1	Leopardus geoffroyi
GCF_033115175.1	Lepus europaeus
GCF_015708825.1	Lethenteron reissneri
GCF_028641065.1	Leucoraja erinaceus
GCF_963576545.1	Limanda limanda
GCF_005870125.1	Lonchura striata
GCF_030014295.1	Loxodonta africana
GCF_902655055.1	Lutra lutra
GCF_007474595.2	Lynx canadensis
GCF_037993035.1	Macaca fascicularis
GCF_003339765.1	Macaca mulatta
GCF_024542745.1	Macaca thibetana thibetana
GCF_027887155.1	Malaclemys terrapin pileata
GCF_030020395.1	Manis pentadactyla
GCF_900324485.2	Mastacembelus armatus
GCF_008632895.1	Mastomys coucha
GCF_020497125.1	Mauremys mutica
GCF_016161935.1	Mauremys reevesii
GCF_000238955.4	Maylandia zebra
GCF_018812025.1	Megalobrama amblycephala
GCF_013368585.1	Megalops cyprinoides
GCF_017639745.1	Melanotaenia boesemani
GCF_000146605.3	Meleagris gallopavo
GCF_922984935.1	Meles meles
GCF_012275295.1	Melopsittacus undulatus
GCF_028018845.1	Melospiza georgiana
GCF_035770615.1	Melospiza melodia melodia

Assembly	Species
GCF_030254825.1	Meriones unguiculatus
GCF_025265405.1	Mesoplodon densirostris
GCF_901765095.1	Microcaecilia unicolor
GCF_000165445.2	Microcebus murinus
GCF_021292245.1	Micropterus dolomieu
GCF_000317375.1	Microtus ochrogaster
GCF_027580225.1	Misgurnus anguillicaudatus
GCF_963921235.1	Mobula hypostoma
GCF_037042795.1	Molothrus aeneus
GCF_012460135.2	Molothrus ater
GCF_027887165.1	Monodelphis domestica
GCF_015832195.1	Motacilla alba alba
GCF_022458985.1	Mugil cephalus
GCF_963930625.1	Muntiacus reevesi
GCF_900094665.2	Mus caroli
GCF_000001635.27	Mus musculus
GCF_900095145.1	Mus pahari
GCF_009829155.1	Mustela erminea
GCF_030435805.1	Mustela lutreola
GCF_022355385.1	Mustela nigripes
GCF_963259705.1	Myotis daubentonii
GCF_902150065.1	Myripristis murdjan
GCF_040869285.1	Myxine glutinosa
GCF_019703515.2	Myxocyprinus asiaticus
GCF_014905685.2	Nematolebias whitei
GCF_027579695.1	Neoarius graeffei
GCF_028018385.1	Neofelis nebulosa
GCF_020171115.1	Neogale vison
GCF_002201575.2	Neomonachus schauinslandi
GCF_033978795.1	Nerophis ophidion
GCF_006542625.1	Nomascus leucogenys
GCF_009762535.1	Notolabrus celidotus
GCF_002078875.1	Numida meleagris
GCF_013368605.1	Nyctibius grandis
GCF_027406575.1	Nycticebus coucang
GCF_030435755.1	Ochotona princeps
GCF_029582105.1	Oenanthe melanoleuca
GCF_021184085.1	Oncorhynchus gorbuscha
GCF_023373465.1	Oncorhynchus keta
GCF_002021735.2	Oncorhynchus kisutch
GCF_036934945.1	Oncorhynchus masou masou
GCF_013265735.2	Oncorhynchus mykiss
GCF_034236695.1	Oncorhynchus nerka
GCF_018296145.1	Oncorhynchus tshawytscha
GCF_903995425.1	Onychomys torridus
GCF_012432095.1	Onychostoma macrolepis
GCF_937001465.1	Orcinus orca
GCF_013358895.1	Oreochromis aureus
GCF_001858045.2	Oreochromis niloticus
GCF_004115215.2	Ornithorhynchus anatinus
GCF_009806435.1	Oryctolagus cuniculus
GCF_002234675.1	Oryzias latipes
GCF_002922805.2	Oryzias melastigma
GCF_963692335.1	Osmerus eperlanus
GCF_038355195.1	Osmerus mordax
GCF_016772045.2	Ovis aries
GCF_011077185.1	Oxyura jamaicensis
GCF_029289425.2	Pan paniscus

Assembly	Species
GCF_028858775.2	Pan troglodytes
GCF_027358585.1	Pangasianodon hypophthalmus
GCF_018350215.1	Panthera leo
GCF_028533385.1	Panthera onca
GCF_018350195.1	Panthera tigris
GCF_023721935.1	Panthera uncia
GCF_008728515.1	Papio anubis
GCF_900634625.1	Parambassis ranga
GCF_001522545.3	Parus major
GCF_036417665.1	Passer domesticus
GCF_036971685.1	Patagioenas fasciata
GCF_036321145.2	Pelmatolapia mariae
GCF_036172605.1	Pelobates fuscus
GCF_004354835.1	Perca flavescens
GCF_010015445.1	Perca fluviatilis
GCF_009829125.3	Periophthalmus magnuspinnatus
GCF_023159225.1	Perognathus longimembris pacificus
GCF_949786415.1	Peromyscus eremicus
GCF_004664715.2	Peromyscus leucopus
GCF_003704035.1	Peromyscus maniculatus bairdii
GCF_010993605.1	Petromyzon marinus
GCF_016906955.1	Phacochoerus africanus
GCF_963921805.1	Phalacrocorax carbo
GCF_963924675.1	Phocoena phocoena
GCF_008692025.1	Phocoena sinus
GCF_024500275.1	Phycodurus eques
GCF_024500385.1	Phyllopteryx taeniolatus
GCF_004126475.2	Phyllostomus discolor
GCF_002837175.3	Physeter macrocephalus
GCF_002776525.5	Piliocolobus tephrosceles
GCF_949316205.1	Platichthys flesus
GCF_008729295.1	Plectropomus leopardus
GCF_031143425.1	Pleurodeles waltl
GCF_947347685.1	Pleuronectes platessa
GCF_004329235.1	Podarcis muralis
GCF_027172205.1	Podarcis raffonei
GCF_030490865.1	Poecile atricapillus
GCF_000633615.1	Poecilia reticulata
GCF_015220805.1	Pogoniulus pusillus
GCF_017654505.1	Polyodon spathula
GCF_016835505.1	Polypterus senegalus
GCF_028885655.2	Pongo abelii
GCF_028885625.2	Pongo pygmaeus
GCF_021018805.1	Prinia subflava
GCF_016509475.1	Prionailurus bengalensis
GCF_022837055.1	Prionailurus viverrinus
GCF_009764475.1	Pristis pectinata
GCF_019279795.1	Protopterus annectens
GCF_902827115.1	Pseudochaenichthys georgianus
GCF_029220125.1	Pseudoliparis swirei
GCF_028390025.1	Pseudophryne corroboree
GCF_036250125.1	Pseudopipra pipra
GCF_024679245.1	Pseudorasbora parva
GCF_039906515.1	Pseudorca crassidens
GCF_949316345.1	Pungitius pungitius
GCF_018831695.1	Puntigrus tetrazona
GCF_015220715.1	Pygocentrus nattereri
GCF_905171775.1	Rana temporaria

Assembly	Species
GCF_036323735.1	Rattus norvegicus
GCF_011064425.1	Rattus rattus
GCF_028389875.1	Rhea pennata
GCF_901001135.1	Rhinatrema bivittatum
GCF_021869965.1	Rhincodon typus
GCF_030035675.1	Rhineura floridana
GCF_004115265.2	Rhinolophus ferrumequinum
GCF_007565055.1	Rhinopithecus roxellana
GCF_028500815.1	Rissa tridactyla
GCF_036850765.1	Saccopteryx bilineata
GCF_036850995.1	Saccopteryx leptura
GCF_902148845.1	Salarias fasciatus
GCF_905237065.1	Salmo salar
GCF_901001165.1	Salmo trutta
GCF_029448725.1	Salvelinus fontinalis
GCF_016432855.1	Salvelinus namaycush
GCF_002910315.2	Salvelinus sp. IW2-2015
GCF_008315115.2	Sander lucioperca
GCF_902635505.1	Sarcophilus harrisii
GCF_963854185.1	Sardina pilchardus
GCF_020382885.2	Scatophagus argus
GCF_019175285.1	Sceloporus undulatus
GCF_902686445.1	Sciurus carolinensis
GCF_900964775.1	Scleropages formosus
GCF_027409825.1	Scomber japonicus
GCF_963691925.1	Scomber scombrus
GCF_022379125.1	Scophthalmus maximus
GCF_902713615.1	Scyliorhinus canicula
GCF_015220745.1	Sebastes umbrosus
GCF_022539315.1	Serinus canaria
GCF_021018895.1	Seriola aureovittata
GCF_014805685.1	Silurus meridionalis
GCF_020085105.1	Siniperca chuatsi
GCF_019176455.1	Solea senegalensis
GCF_958295425.1	Solea solea
GCF_027595985.1	Sorex araneus
GCF_900880675.1	Sparus aurata
GCF_027358695.1	Spea bombifrons
GCF_902148855.1	Sphaeramia orbicularis
GCF_021028975.2	Sphaerodactylus townsendi
GCF_030684315.1	Stegostoma tigrinum
GCF_004027225.2	Strigops habroptila
GCF_040807025.1	Struthio camelus
GCF_024139225.1	Suncus etruscus
GCF_006229205.1	Suricata suricatta
GCF_000003025.6	Sus scrofa
GCF_009819655.1	Sylvia atricapilla
GCF_028878055.3	Symphalangus syndactylus
GCF_027744825.2	Synchiropus splendidus
GCF_019802595.1	Syngnathoides biaculeatus
GCF_901709675.1	Syngnathus acus
GCF_024217435.2	Syngnathus scovelli
GCF_033458585.1	Syngnathus typhle
GCF_015852505.1	Tachyglossus aculeatus
GCF_022655615.1	Tachysurus fulvidraco
GCF_030014155.1	Tachysurus vachellii
GCF_003957565.2	Taeniopygia guttata
GCF_003711565.1	Takifugu flavidus

Assembly	Species
GCF_901000725.2	Takifugu rubripes
GCF_902500255.1	Thalassophryne amazonica
GCF_009769535.1	Thamnophis elegans
GCF_003255815.1	Theropithecus gelada
GCF_914725855.1	Thunnus albacares
GCF_910596095.1	Thunnus maccoyii
GCF_963924715.1	Thunnus thynnus
GCF_035046505.1	Tiliqua scincoides
GCF_017976425.1	Toxotes jaculatrix
GCF_013100865.1	Trachemys scripta elegans
GCF_030014385.1	Trichomycterus rosablanca
GCF_011100635.1	Trichosurus vulpecula
GCF_015846415.1	Triplophysa dalaica
GCF_024868665.1	Triplophysa rosa
GCF_011762595.1	Tursiops truncatus
GCF_023065955.2	Ursus arctos
GCF_026979565.1	Vidua chalybeata
GCF_024509145.1	Vidua macroura
GCF_018345385.1	Vulpes lagopus
GCF_017654675.1	Xenopus laevis
GCF_000004195.4	Xenopus tropicalis
GCF_016859285.1	Xiphias gladius
GCF_001444195.1	Xiphophorus couchianus
GCF_003331165.1	Xiphophorus hellerii
GCF_002775205.1	Xiphophorus maculatus
GCF_025860055.1	Xyrauchen texanus
GCF_009762305.2	Zalophus californianus
GCF_028769735.1	Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii
GCF_963506605.1	Zootoca vivipara

APPENDIX G. DECLARATION OF LLM USAGE.

Large Language Models (LLMs) were used solely to improve the readability and clarity of the manuscript text. No parts of the analysis, results, or conclusions were generated by LLMs.