PublisherInfo		
PublisherName	:	BioMed Central
PublisherLocation	:	London
PublisherImprintName	:	BioMed Central

Xenopus: from tadpole to model organism

ArticleInfo		
ArticleID	:	3585
ArticleDOI	:	10.1186/gb-2000-1-1-reports211
ArticleCitationID	:	reports211
ArticleSequenceNumber	:	76
ArticleCategory	:	Web report
ArticleFirstPage	:	1
ArticleLastPage	:	4
ArticleHistory	:	RegistrationDate : 1999–10–25 Received : 1999–10–25 OnlineDate : 2000–3–17
ArticleCopyright	:	BioMed Central Ltd2000
ArticleGrants	:	
ArticleContext	:	130591111

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Abstract

Developmental biology, primarily work with the embryos of *Xenopus* species *X. laevis* and *X. tropicalis*, is the focus of this site.

Mirror site

Xenopus molecular marker resource at the Institut de Génétique Humaine in France, maintained by Denis Pugnére.

Content

Developmental biology, primarily work with the embryos of *Xenopus* species *X. laevis* and *X. tropicalis*, is the focus of this site. It contains a large collection of experimental protocols and very high quality images of histological stains. It also has a 'latest news' section, details of suppliers and *Xenopus* researchers, and movies of development. It incorporates a full site-archive search facility and is part of the WWW Virtual Library catalog. All the listed molecular markers are illustrated with images; they have a varying degree of annotation and are linked to associated references in PubMed.

Navigation

The structure of the site is a simple hierarchy, with most pages available from the main page or the layer below; most of this second layer comprises large index pages. Each page has a footer menu listing the main pages. There are at least three search engines for the site to choose from, Htdig, LookSmart, and WrebGlimpse, although the last is linked only from the footer menu.

Reporter's comments

Timeliness

The 'What's new?' section was last updated on the 16 September 1999 and lists changes made elsewhere on the site.

Best feature

Because of the site's simple architecture, all information is available in one or two clicks, and if you still can't find what you are looking for, the plethora of search engines should help solve the problem. The images on the 'Marker' pages are of excellent quality and many of them are thumbnailed to decrease loading time.

Worst feature

The site is directed solely at those within the *Xenopus* community, making it difficult for non-specialists to negotiate, and the Moon lab's URL, on the front page, was a dead link.

Wish list

More background information on the project and where it is going would be useful. To this end, the site could summarize the NIH recommendations on the main page. The front page would benefit from a more structured layout of the site overview. One idea might be to link together all marker pages for a specific tissue type, and to standardize them to contain the same categories of information - such as image, image annotation, PubMed search, short information summary for marker, and sequence download. Many of the tissue-type pages only have some, rather than all, of the above.

Related websites

There are a number of sites devoted to model organisms of which Zebrafish information network and HGMP-RC *Fugu* project are two examples.

Table of links

Xenopus molecular marker resource

Xenopus molecular marker resource at the Institut de Génétique Humaine

WWW Virtual Library catalog

PubMed

NIH recommendations

Zebrafish information network

HGMP-RC *Fugu* project

References

1. *Xenopus* molecular marker resource.