

Scientists hope largest ever coral gene database can help save ocean ecosystem

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Coral reefs – stunning, critical habitats for an enormous array of prized fish and other species – have survived five major extinction events over the last 250 million years.

Now, an international team of scientists led by Rutgers faculty has conducted the world's most comprehensive analysis of coral genes, focusing on how their evolution has allowed corals to interact with and adapt to the environment. A second study led by Rutgers researchers with colleagues at the University of Hawaii shows – for the first time – how stony corals create their hard skeletons, using proteins as key ingredients.

“There are a few key genes in corals that allow them to build this house that laid down the foundation for many, many thousands of years of corals,” said Debashish Bhattacharya, a professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers. “It couldn’t be any more fundamental to ocean ecosystems.”

Read full, original post: [Scientists Create World's Largest Coral Gene Database](#)