



# IQ-TREE

Efficient software for phylogenomic inference

Stable release 1.6.12 (August 15, 2019)

[Download v1.6.12 for macOS](#)

Latest release 2.2.2.6 (May 27, 2023)

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[All Downloads](#)

[Documentation](#)

## IQ-TREE has been developed by 12+ contributors:

From ANU:



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Thomas Wong



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Plyumal Demotte

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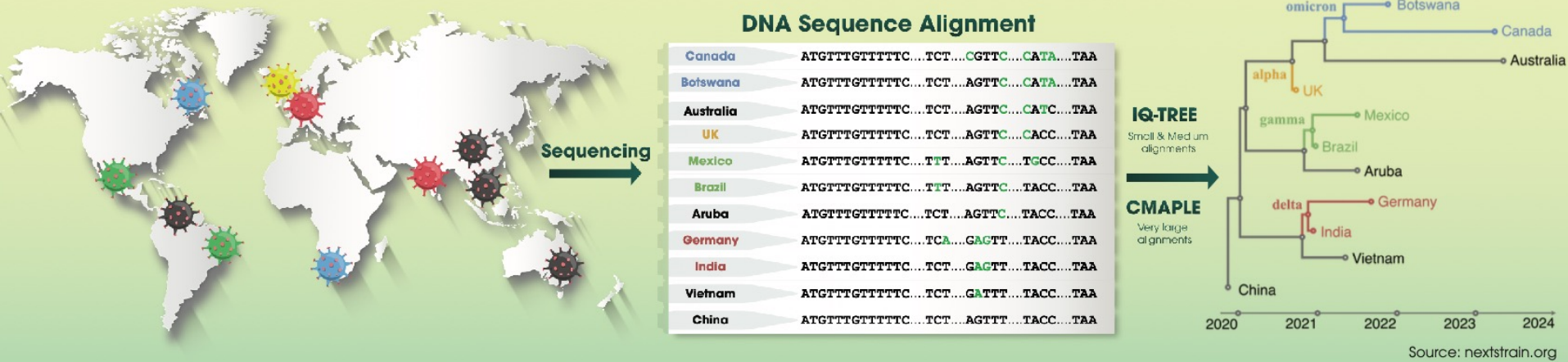
Past members:

Lam Tung Nguyen

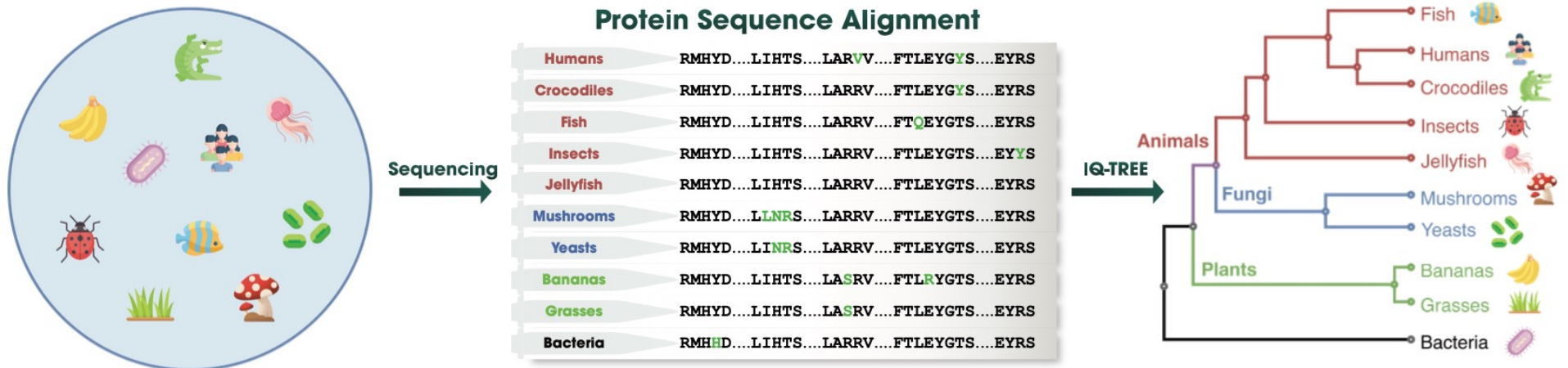
Jana Trifinopoulos

# IQ-TREE enables to infer phylogenetic trees of “SARS-CoV-2” virus

For identifying new variants and key mutations for vaccine design



# IQ-TREE enables to infer the origins of life on earth





IQ-TREE is a software program for phylogenetic inference, which means it is used to construct evolutionary trees that represent the relationships between different biological sequences such as DNA or protein sequences. The name "IQ-TREE" stands for "Intelligent Quartet Tree" and it is a reference to the algorithm used to infer the phylogenetic trees, which is based on the analysis of quartets of sequences.

IQ-TREE uses a number of advanced algorithms and statistical models to estimate the evolutionary history of the sequences, including models that account for rate heterogeneity among sites, among lineages, and among partitions. It also includes a number of tools for visualizing and interpreting the resulting trees.

IQ-TREE is widely used in molecular evolution and phylogenetics research, and is considered to be one of the fastest and most accurate programs available for phylogenetic inference. It is available for download as a standalone software package and also as a web server for users who prefer a graphical user interface.

# Typical phylogenetic analysis under maximum likelihood

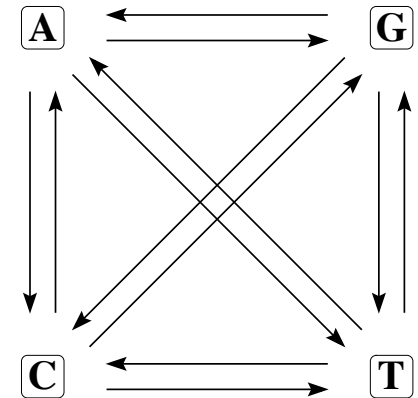
## Multiple sequence alignment

```
ACGGGAT--C--C----CATTAC
ACGGGAT--C--C----CACTAC
CCGGGATAGCTTC----CATTAC
ACCCCCTATC--CACTGGATTAC
ACGACATATC--CACTGGATTCC
```

Model selection

ModelFinder (2017)

## Substitution model

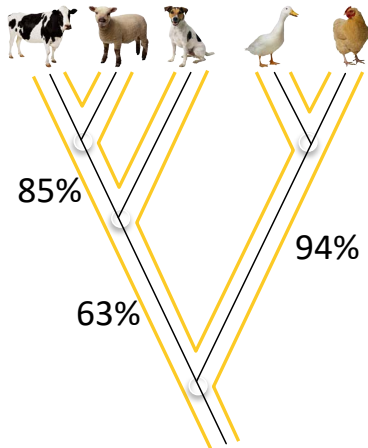


We focused on improving all three steps for large datasets!

IQ-TREE (2015, 2020)

Tree reconstruction

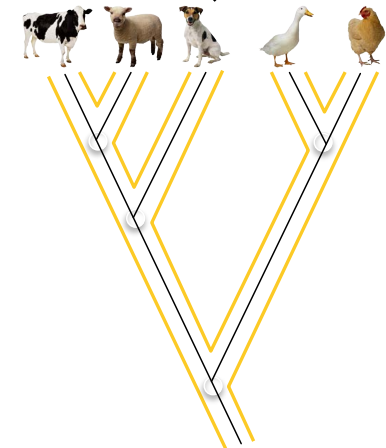
`iqtree2 -s ALN_FILE -B 1000`



Tree with branch supports

Ultrafast bootstrap (2013, 2018)

Assessment of branch supports



Phylogenetic tree

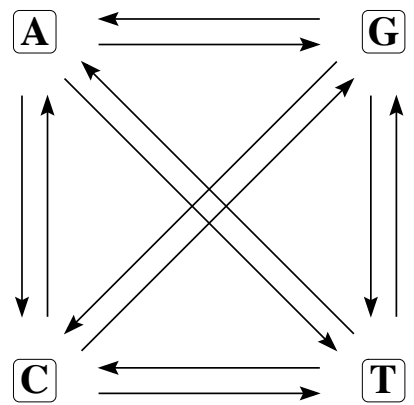
# IQ-TREE tree search algorithm

## Multiple sequence alignment

```
ACGGGAT--C--C----CATTAC
ACGGGAT--C--C----CACTAC
CCGGGATAGCTTC----CATTAC
ACCCCCTATC--CACTGGATTAC
ACGACATATC--CACTGGATTCC
```

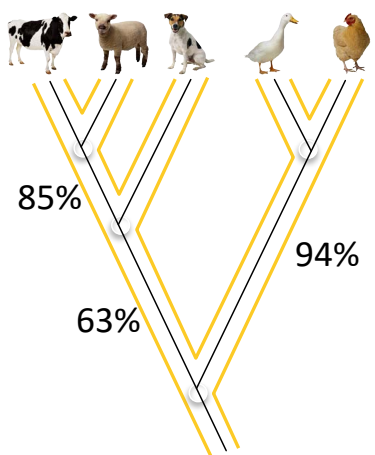
Model selection

## Substitution model



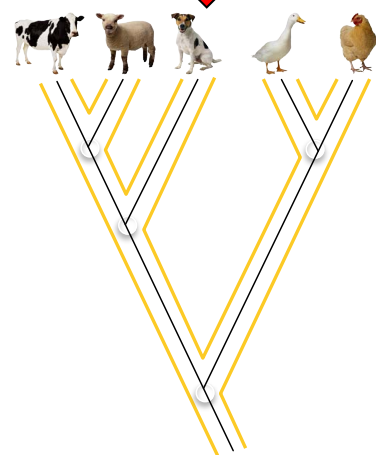
IQ-TREE (2015, 2020)

Tree reconstruction



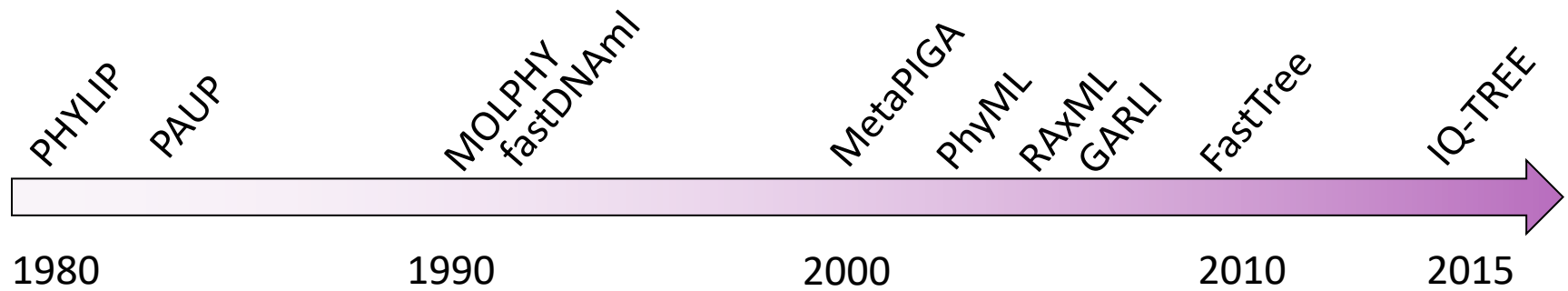
Tree with branch supports

Assessment of branch supports



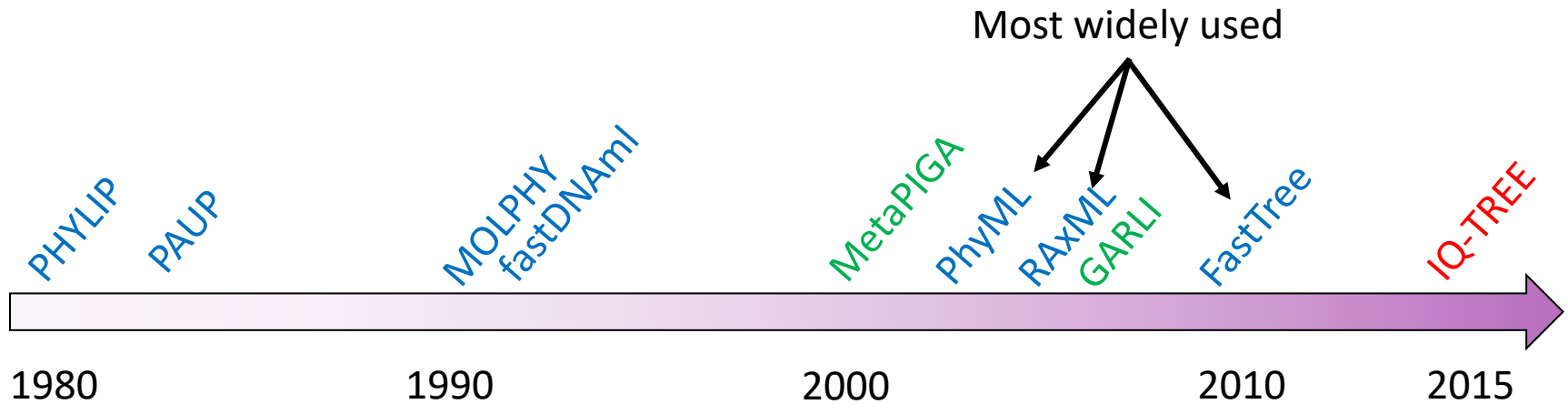
Phylogenetic tree

# Search heuristics for finding maximum likelihood trees

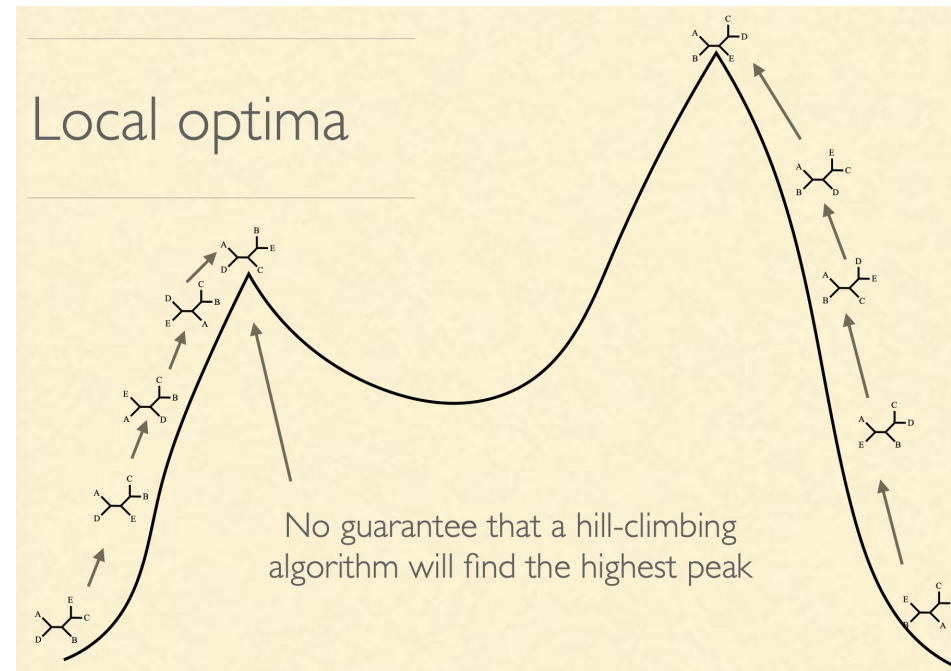




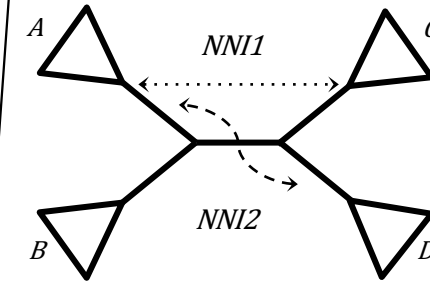
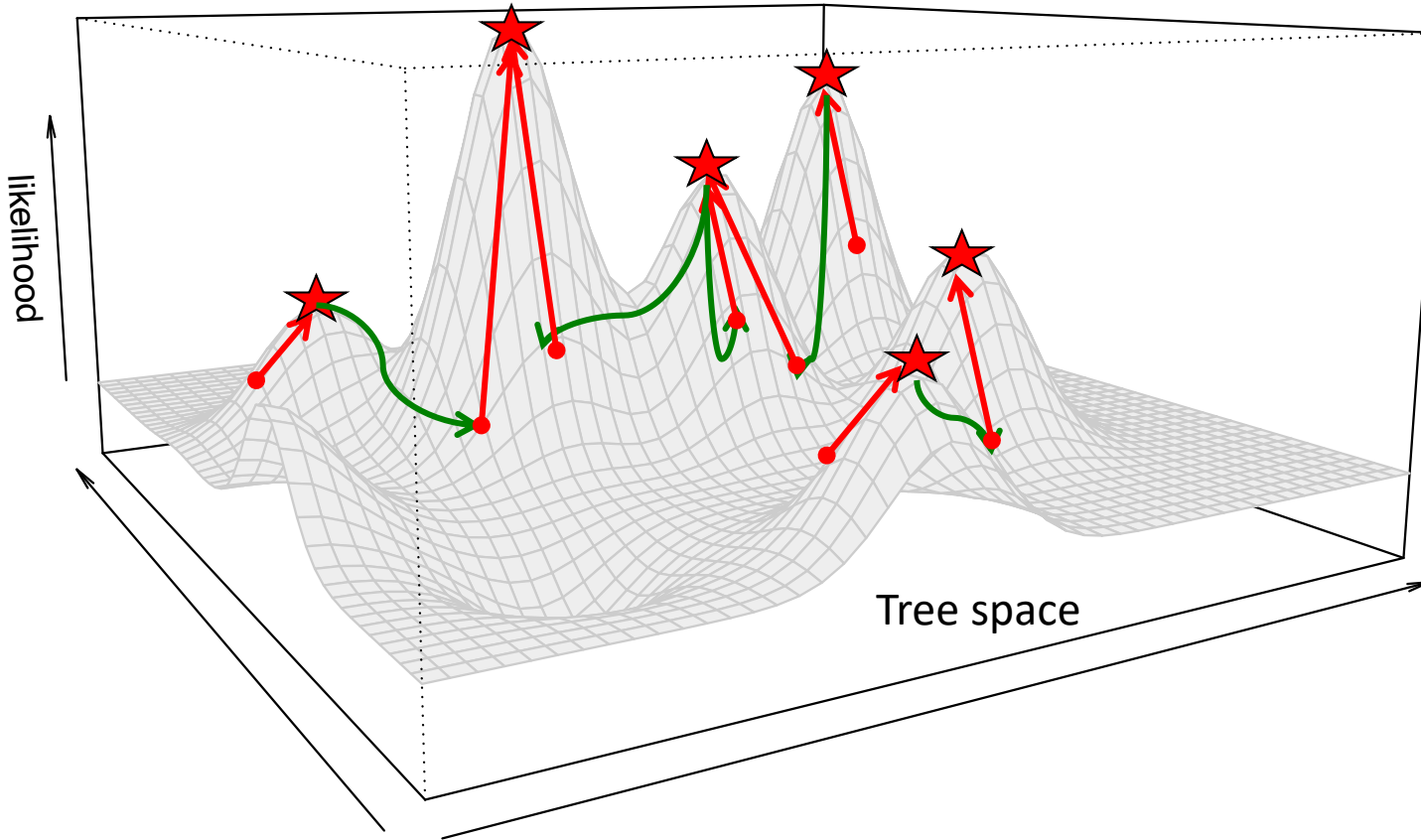
# Search heuristics for finding maximum likelihood trees



1. Hill-climbing / greedy algorithms:  
Fast but local optimum
2. Genetic algorithm:  
Slow but escaping local optima
3. IQ-TREE:  
Fast and escaping local optima



# IQ-TREE: A new stochastic algorithm



Nearest neighbor interchange

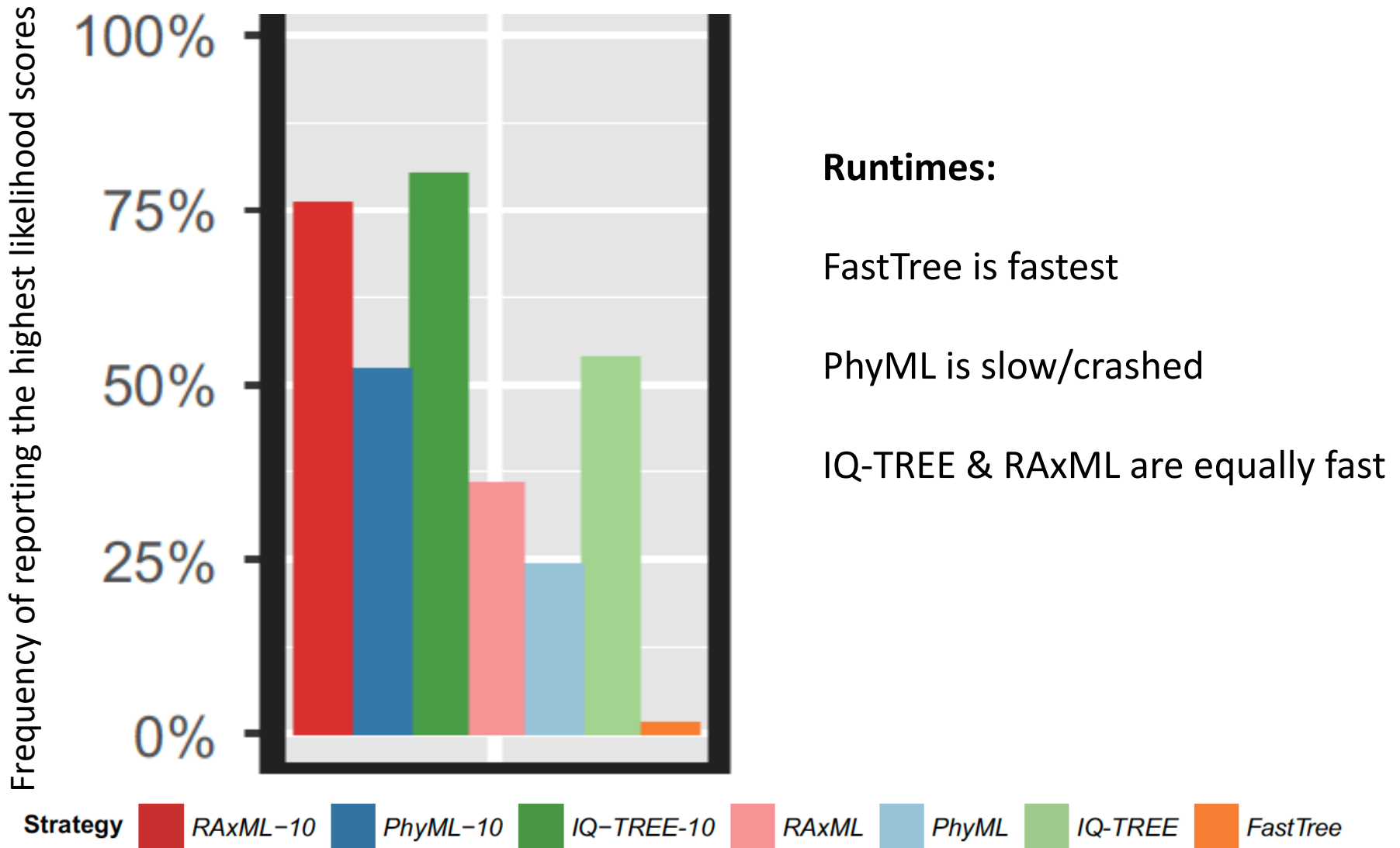
- \* 100 starting trees (99 parsimony, 1 NJ)
- \* Keeping a “population” of 20 best trees
- \* Stop if unsuccessful for 100 consecutive down-hill + up-hill moves

Lam-Tung Nguyen Heiko Schmidt Arndt von Haeseler





# An independent benchmark by Zhou et al. (2018)



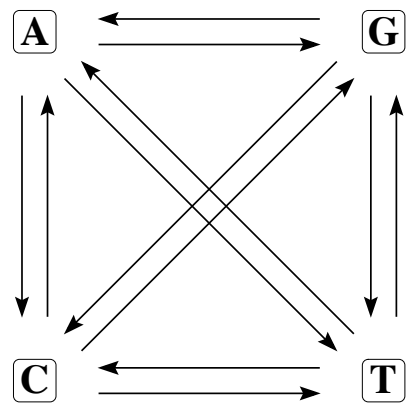
# IQ-TREE tree search algorithm

## Multiple sequence alignment

```
ACGGGAT--C--C----CATTAC
ACGGGAT--C--C----CACTAC
CCGGGATAGCTTC----CATTAC
ACCCCCTATC--CACTGGATTAC
ACGACATATC--CACTGGATTCC
```

Model selection

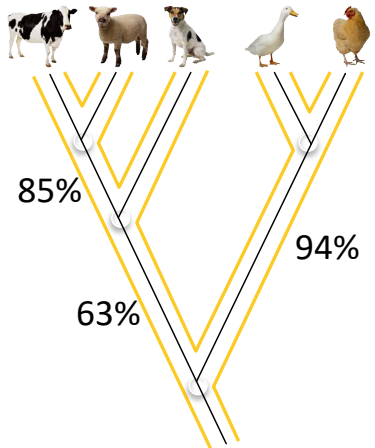
## Substitution model



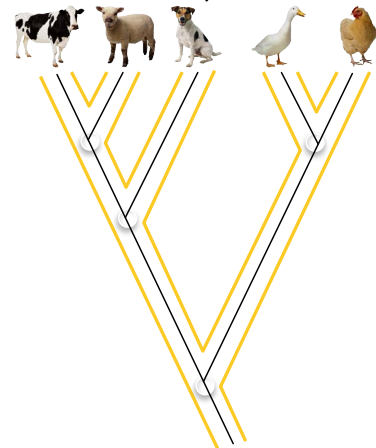
IQ-TREE algorithm efficiently explores tree space

IQ-TREE (2015, 2020)

Tree reconstruction



Assessment of branch supports



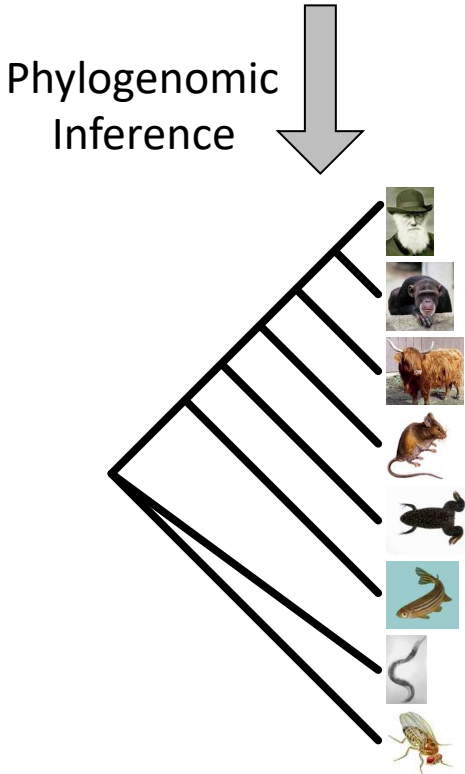
Tree with branch supports

Phylogenetic tree

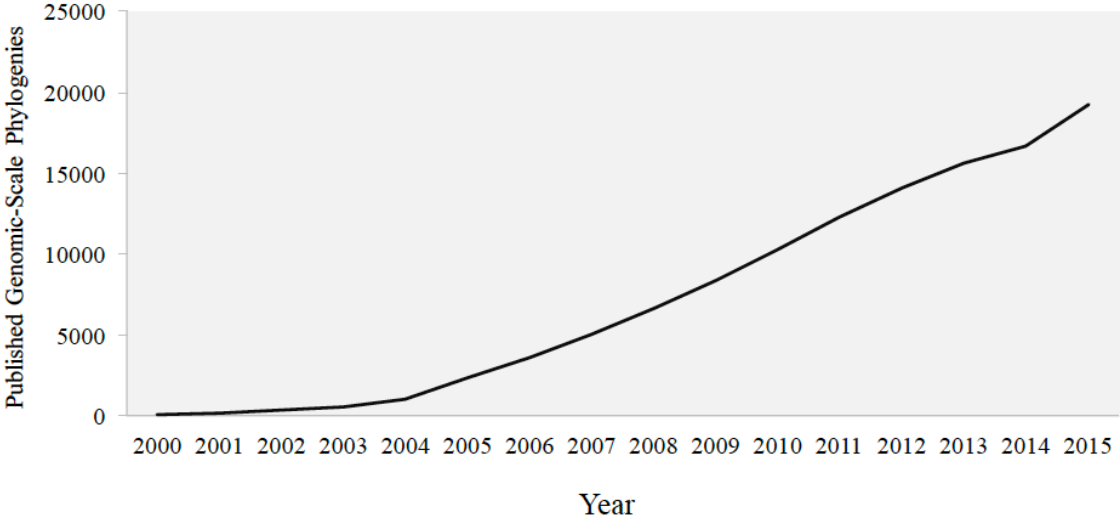
# Genome-scale data: Concatenation methods

**Supermatrix**

Gene 1	Gene 2	.....	Gene 1,000
CACCTGTCGT	-----	-----	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGTCGT	GCTCTTTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGCCGT	GTTTTCTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTACAG
CAGCTGCCGC	GTTCTCTCCG	-----	TCTGGTGCAA
CTCCTGCCGG	GTGCTCTCAG	-----	-----
CTCCTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCGGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CTCTTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCTTG	-----



*Species tree of life*



30 days of computation and 280 GB RAM for an insect data set!

# Partition model

## Supermatrix

Gene 1	Gene 2	.....	Gene 1,000
CACCTGTCGT	-----	-----	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGTCGT	GCTCTTTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGCCGT	GTTTTCTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTACAG
CAGCTGCCGC	GTTCTCTCCG	-----	TCTGGTGCAA
CTCCTGCCGG	GTGCTCTCAG	-----	-----
CTCCTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCGGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CTCTTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCTTG	-----

Substitution models:

JC

HKY+G

.....

GTR+G

**Model of branch lengths**

**Gene trees**

Universally shared



`iqtree2 -s ALN_FILE -q PARTITION_FILE`

Proportionally linked



`iqtree2 -s ALN_FILE -p PARTITION_FILE`

Unlinked

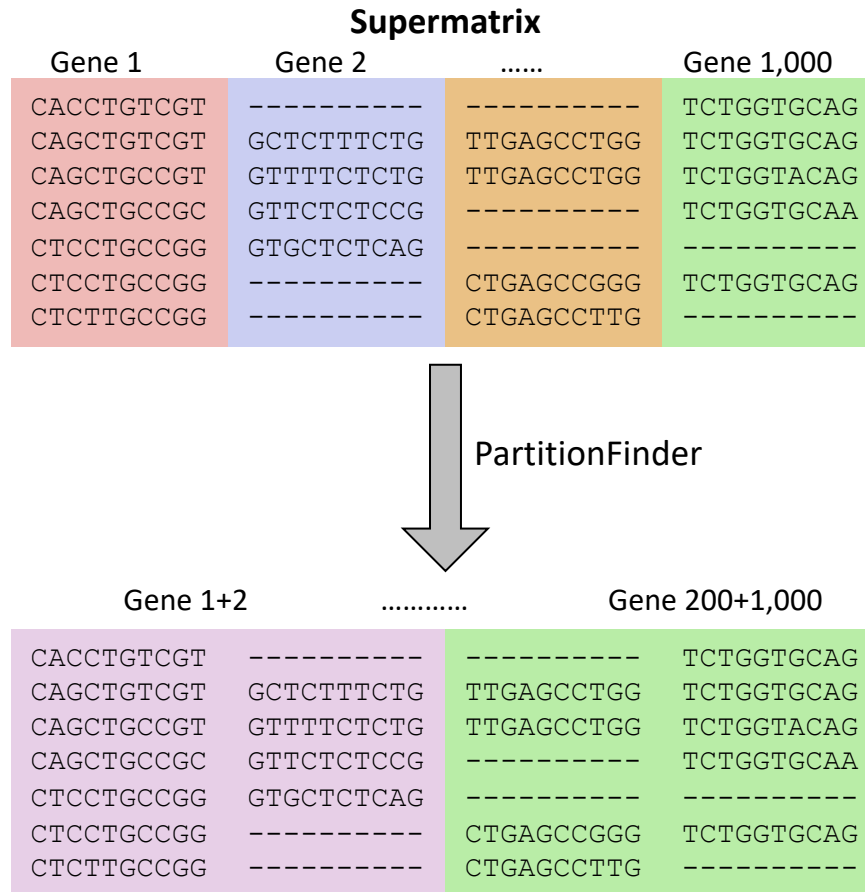


`iqtree2 -s ALN_FILE -Q PARTITION_FILE`

# Example partition file (turtle.nex)

```
#nexus
begin sets;
  charset ENSGALG0000000223.macse_DNA_gb = 1-846;
  charset ENSGALG0000001529.macse_DNA_gb = 847-1368;
  charset ENSGALG0000002002.macse_DNA_gb = 1369-2040;
  charset ENSGALG0000002514.macse_DNA_gb = 2041-2772;
  charset ENSGALG0000003337.macse_DNA_gb = 2773-3738;
  charset ENSGALG0000003700.macse_DNA_gb = 3739-4623;
  charset ENSGALG0000003702.macse_DNA_gb = 4624-6168;
  charset ENSGALG0000003907.macse_DNA_gb = 6169-6648;
  charset ENSGALG0000005820.macse_DNA_gb = 6649-7224;
  charset ENSGALG0000005834.macse_DNA_gb = 7225-7920;
  charset ENSGALG0000005902.macse_DNA_gb = 7921-8490;
  charset ENSGALG0000008338.macse_DNA_gb = 8491-9282;
  charset ENSGALG0000008517.macse_DNA_gb = 9283-9822;
  charset ENSGALG0000008916.macse_DNA_gb = 9823-10368;
  charset ENSGALG0000009085.macse_DNA_gb = 10369-11298;
  charset ENSGALG0000009879.macse_DNA_gb = 11299-11895;
  charset ENSGALG0000011323.macse_DNA_gb = 11896-12795;
  charset ENSGALG0000011434.macse_DNA_gb = 12796-13242;
  charset ENSGALG0000011917.macse_DNA_gb = 13243-14223;
  charset ENSGALG0000011966.macse_DNA_gb = 14224-14691;
  charset ENSGALG0000012244.macse_DNA_gb = 14692-15444;
  charset ENSGALG0000012379.macse_DNA_gb = 15445-15963;
  charset ENSGALG0000012568.macse_DNA_gb = 15964-16593;
  charset ENSGALG0000013227.macse_DNA_gb = 16594-17895;
  charset ENSGALG0000014038.macse_DNA_gb = 17896-18456;
  charset ENSGALG0000014648.macse_DNA_gb = 18457-18954;
  charset ENSGALG0000015326.macse_DNA_gb = 18955-19551;
  charset ENSGALG0000015397.macse_DNA_gb = 19552-20145;
  charset ENSGALG0000016241.macse_DNA_gb = 20146-20820;
end;
```

# How to reduce potential model overfitting?



## PartitionFinder algorithm

(Lanfear et al. 2012):

1. Evaluate all pairs of genes.
2. Find the pair with best score.
3. If score improves, merge two genes and repeat steps 1-3.
4. Otherwise, stop.

```
iqtree2 ... -m MFP+MERGE
```

## Relaxed clustering algorithm

(Lanfear et al. 2014):

In step 1: only examine the top k% of most “promising” pairs.

```
iqtree2 ... -rcluster 10
```

Substitution models:

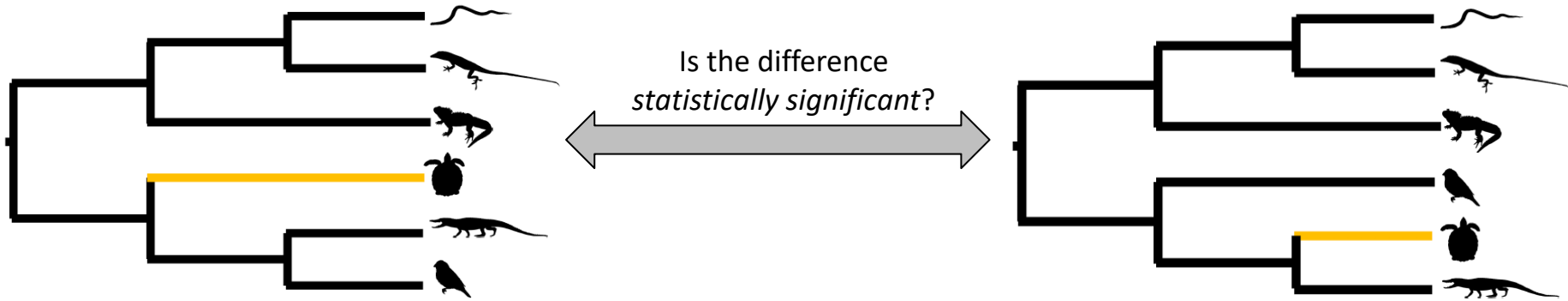
HKY

.....

GTR+G



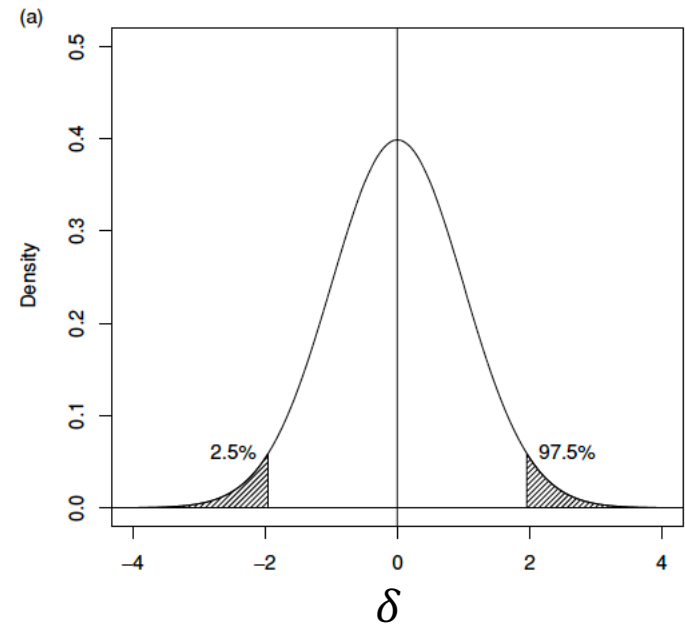
# Tree topology tests



## Testing two trees (Kishino & Hasegawa, 1989):

1. Statistic:  $\delta = \log(\text{likelihood}(T_1)) - \log(\text{likelihood}(T_0))$ .
2. Generate distribution of  $\delta$  from many “random” data (e.g. by 10,000 bootstrap resampling).
3. Compare the statistic between original and random data to obtain *p-value*.
4. If **p-value < 0.05**: YES! two trees are significantly different.
5. If p-value  $\geq 0.05$ : NO! they are not.

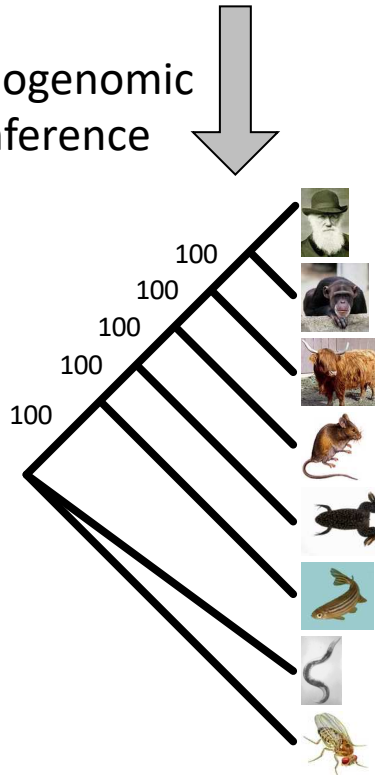
```
iqtree2 -s ALN_FILE -p PARTITION_FILE  
-z TREES_FILE -zb 10000 -au -n 0
```



# Concatenation methods: Limitation

Supermatrix			
Gene 1	Gene 2	.....	Gene 1,000
CACCTGTCGT	-----	-----	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGTCGT	GCTCTTTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGCCGT	GTTTTCTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTACAG
CAGCTGCCGC	GTTCTCTCCG	-----	TCTGGTGCAA
CTCCTGCCGG	GTGCTCTCAG	-----	-----
CTCCTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCGGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CTCTTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCTTG	-----

Phylogenomic  
Inference



*Species tree of life*

Bootstrap supports and Bayesian posteriors  
tend to 100% as #genes increases!

Concatenation assumes a single tree  
across all loci

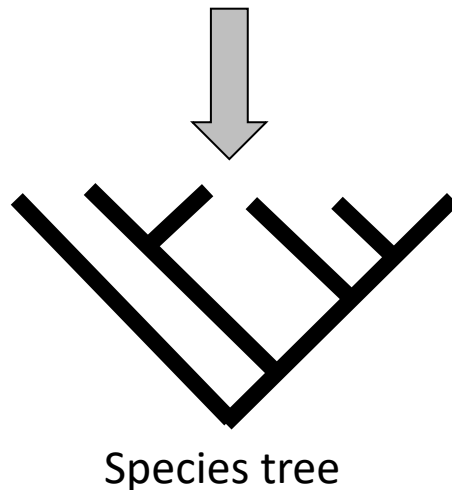
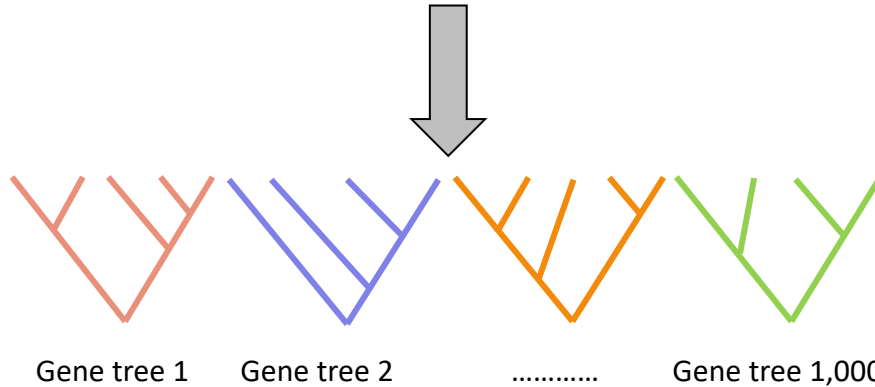
Potential *systematic bias*

*“When the method of inferring phylogenies  
is one with undesirable statistical properties  
such as inconsistency, the bootstrap does not  
correct for these” (Felsenstein, 1985)*

# Coalescent methods

**Supermatrix**

Gene 1	Gene 2	.....	Gene 1,000
CACCTGTCGT	-----	-----	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGTCGT	GCTCTTTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGCCGT	GTTTTCTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTACAG
CAGCTGCCGC	GTTCTCTCCG	-----	TCTGGTGCAA
CTCCTGCCGG	GTGCTCTCAG	-----	-----
CTCCTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCGGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CTCTTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCTTG	-----



*Gene Concordance Factor (gCF):*  
How often a branch in species tree is found among gene trees?  
**0% ≤ gCF ≤ 100%**

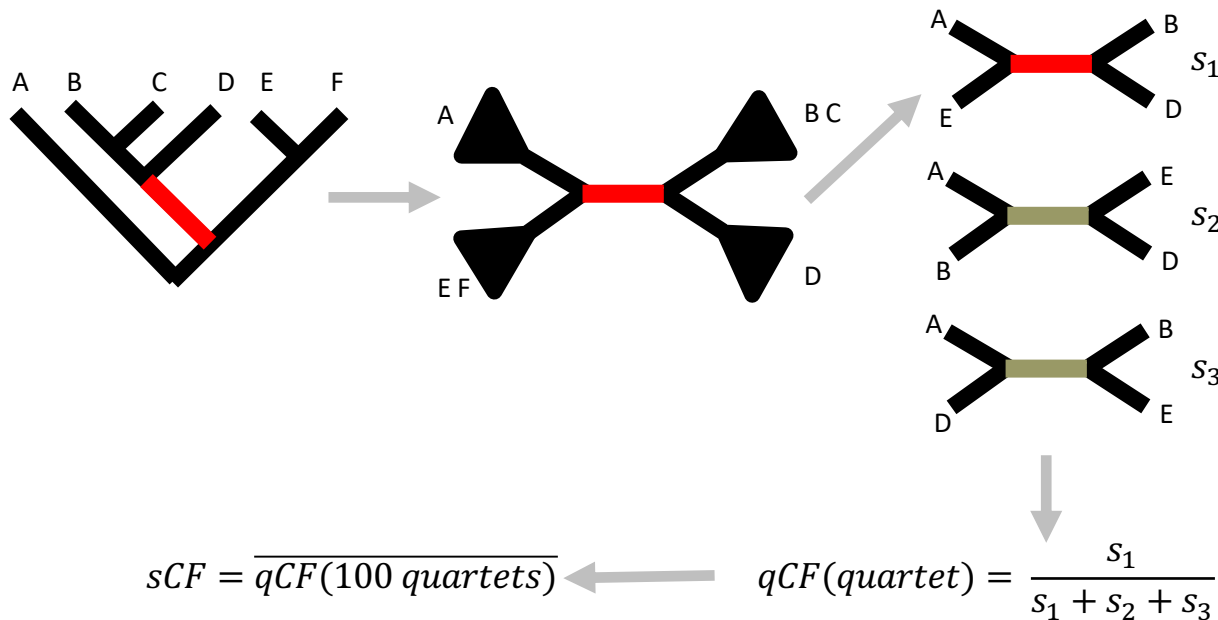
Implementation in IQ-TREE fully accounts for missing data

**Problem: Uncertainties in gene trees!**

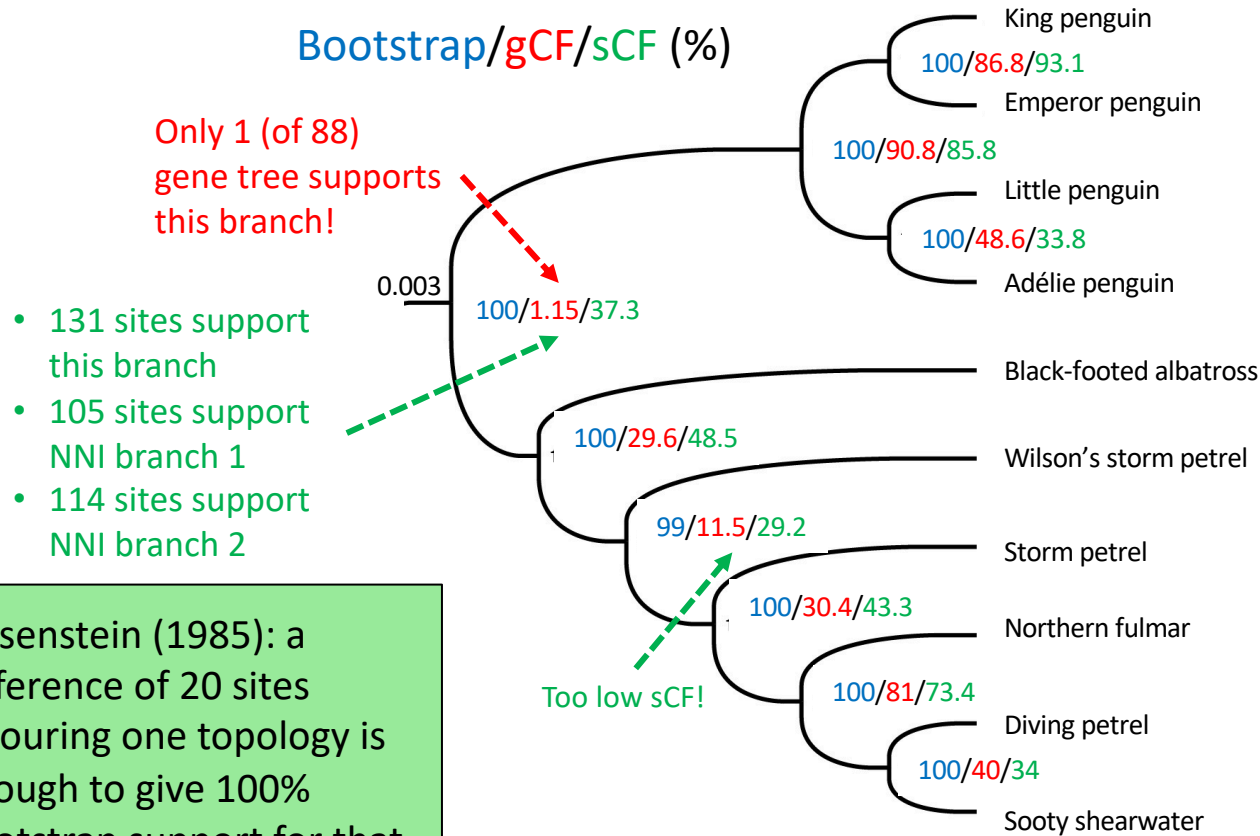
# Site Concordance Factor (sCF)

Supermatrix			
Gene 1	Gene 2	.....	Gene 1,000
CACCTGTCGT	-----	-----	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGTCGT	GCTCTTTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CAGCTGCCGT	GTTTTCTCTG	TTGAGCCTGG	TCTGGTACAG
CAGCTGCCGC	GTTCTCTCCG	-----	TCTGGTGCAA
CTCCTGCCGG	GTGCTCTCAG	-----	-----
CTCCTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCGGG	TCTGGTGCAG
CTCTTGCCGG	-----	CTGAGCCTTG	-----

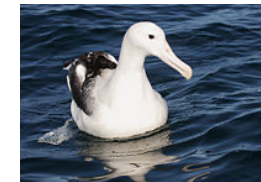
*Site Concordance Factor (sCF):*  
 How often a branch is  
 “supported” by alignment sites?  
**33.3%  $\leq$  sCF  $\leq$  100%**



# An example birds data set (Reddy et al., 2017)



Penguins



Tubenoses

Felsenstein (1985): a difference of 20 sites favouring one topology is enough to give 100% bootstrap support for that one topology!

- gCF and sCF are useful when bootstrap supports reach 100%.
- CAUTION when gCF ~ 0% or sCF ~ 33%, even if BS ~ 100%.
- GREAT when gCF and sCF > 50%.

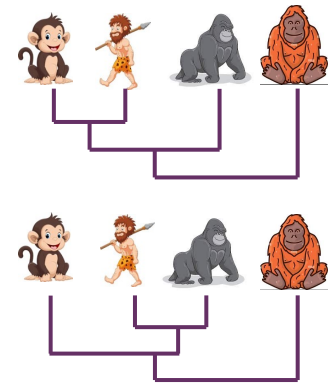
# Mixture Across Sites and Trees (MAST) model

Concatenated alignment

S1:	A	A	-	T	A	A	A	T
S2:	T	A	A	C	C	T	T	T
S3:	T	A	T	A	A	G	T	T
S4:	A	C	-	A	C	A	A	A

$L_1^1$      $L_2^1$      $L_3^1$      $L_4^1$      $L_5^1$      $L_6^1$      $L_7^1$      $L_8^1$

$L_1^2$      $L_2^2$      $L_3^2$      $L_4^2$      $L_5^2$      $L_6^2$      $L_7^2$      $L_8^2$



Likelihood for site  $i$ :  $L_i = w_1 L_i^1 + w_2 L_i^2$

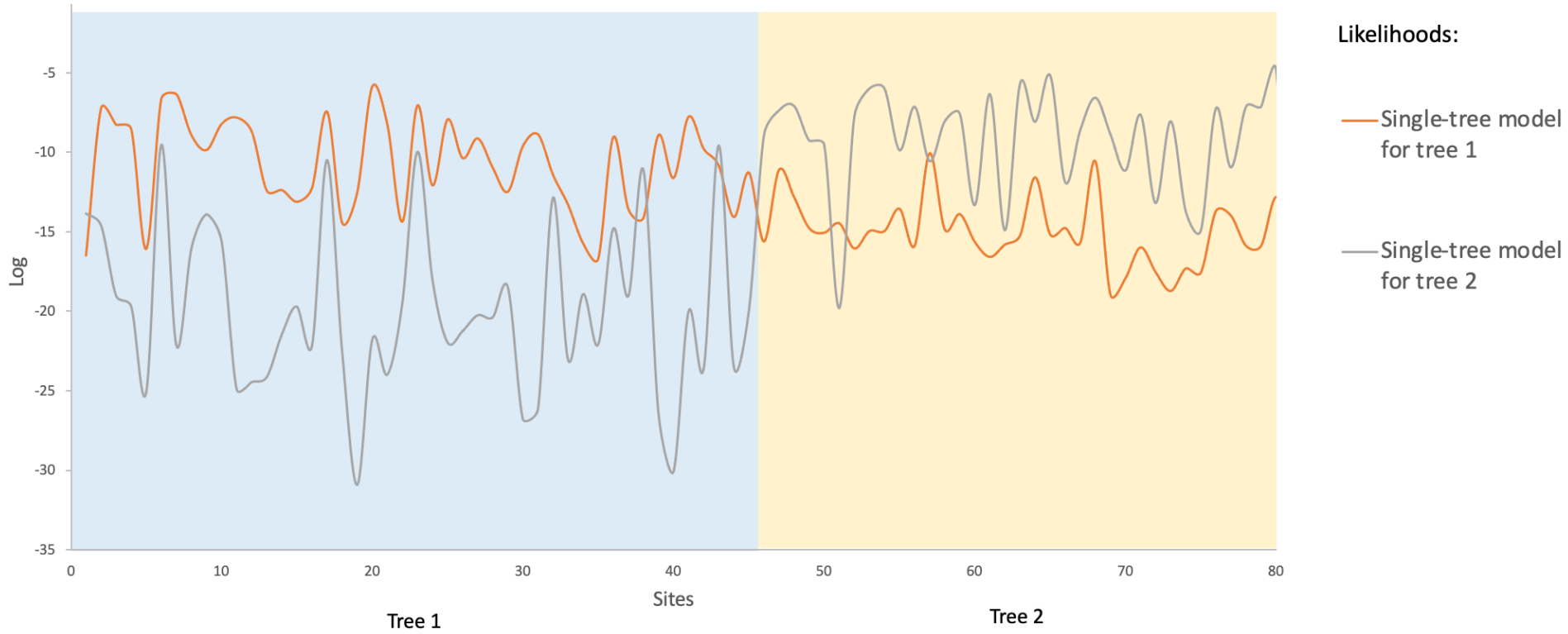
where  $w_j$  represents the portion of sites belonging to tree  $j$

Log-likelihood of the trees:  $\sum_i \log(L_i)$

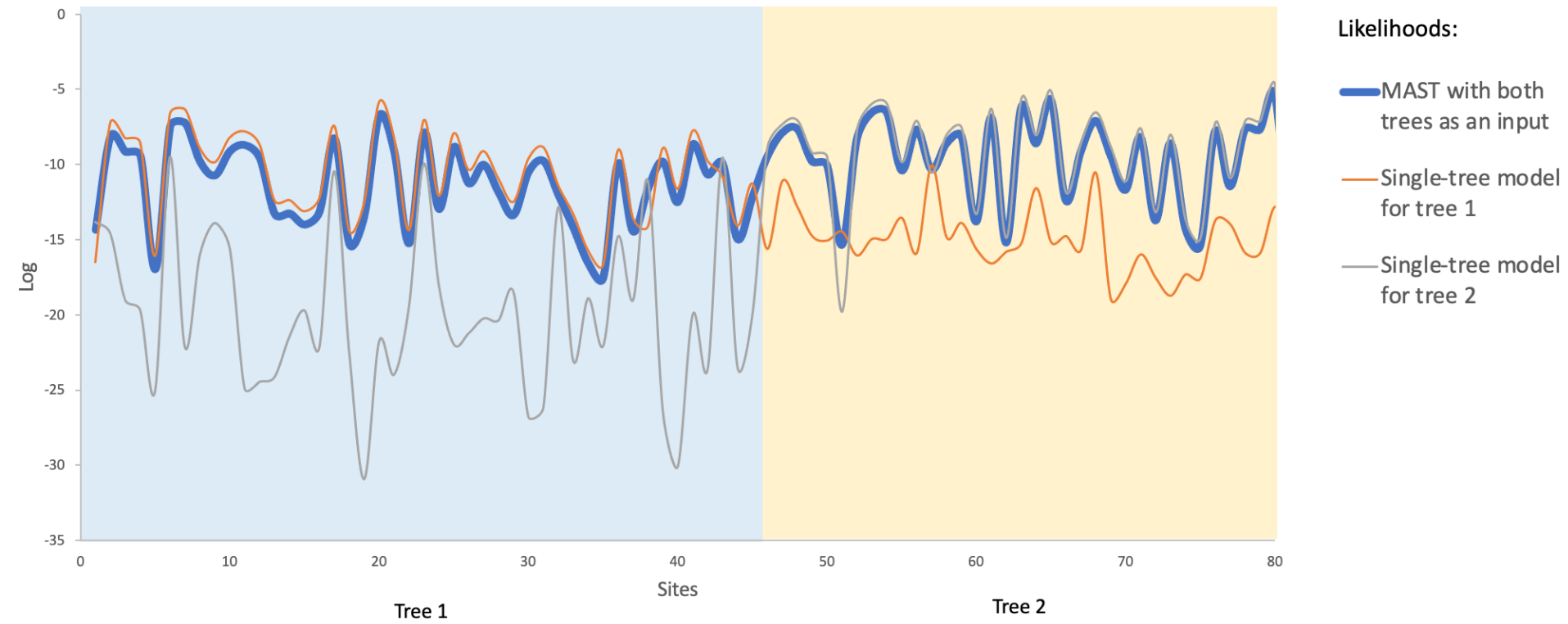
**iqtree2 -s ALN\_FILE -te TREES\_FILE -m GTR+G+T**



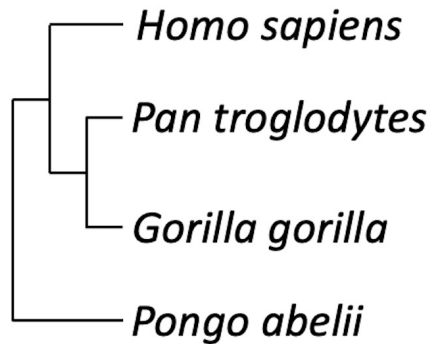
# Toy example: Site log-likelihood



# Toy example: Site log-likelihood



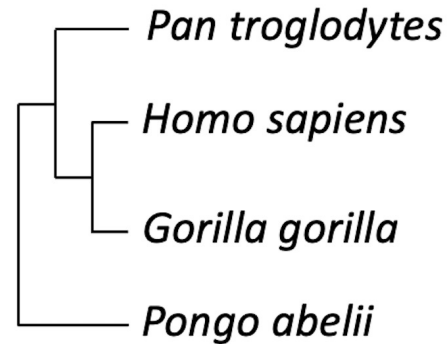
# The classical example of Human, Chimp, Gorilla



$T_{A1}$

Gene tree frequencies: 19.8%

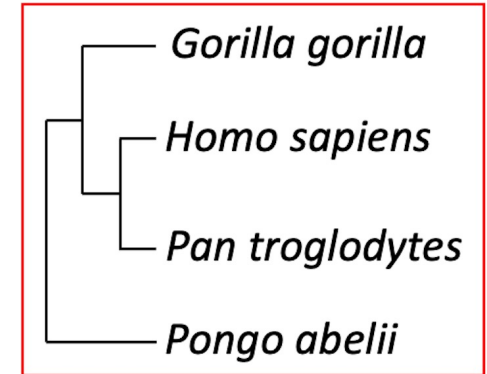
**MAST model weights: 17.9%**



$T_{A2}$

20.1%

**17.4%**



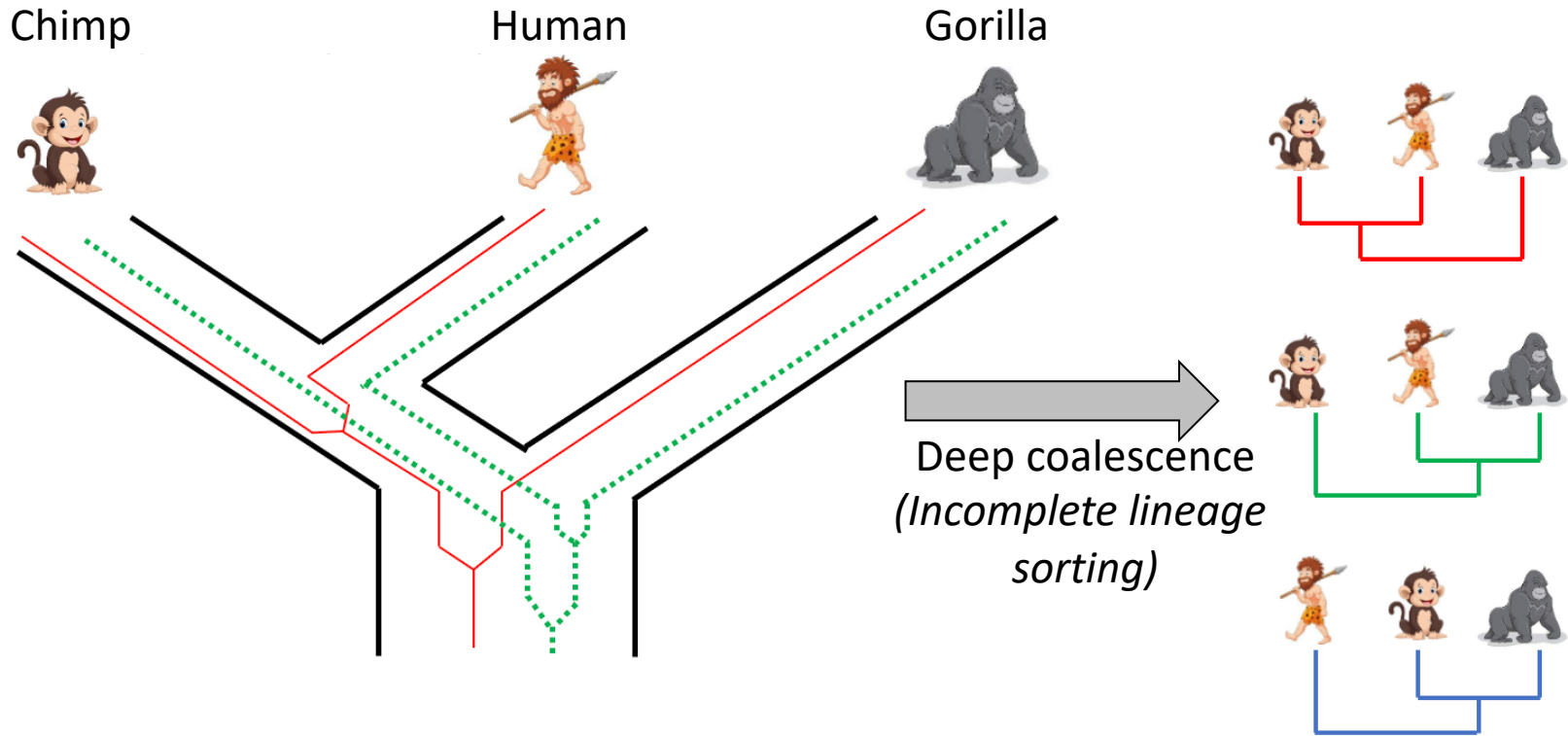
$T_{A3}$

60.1%

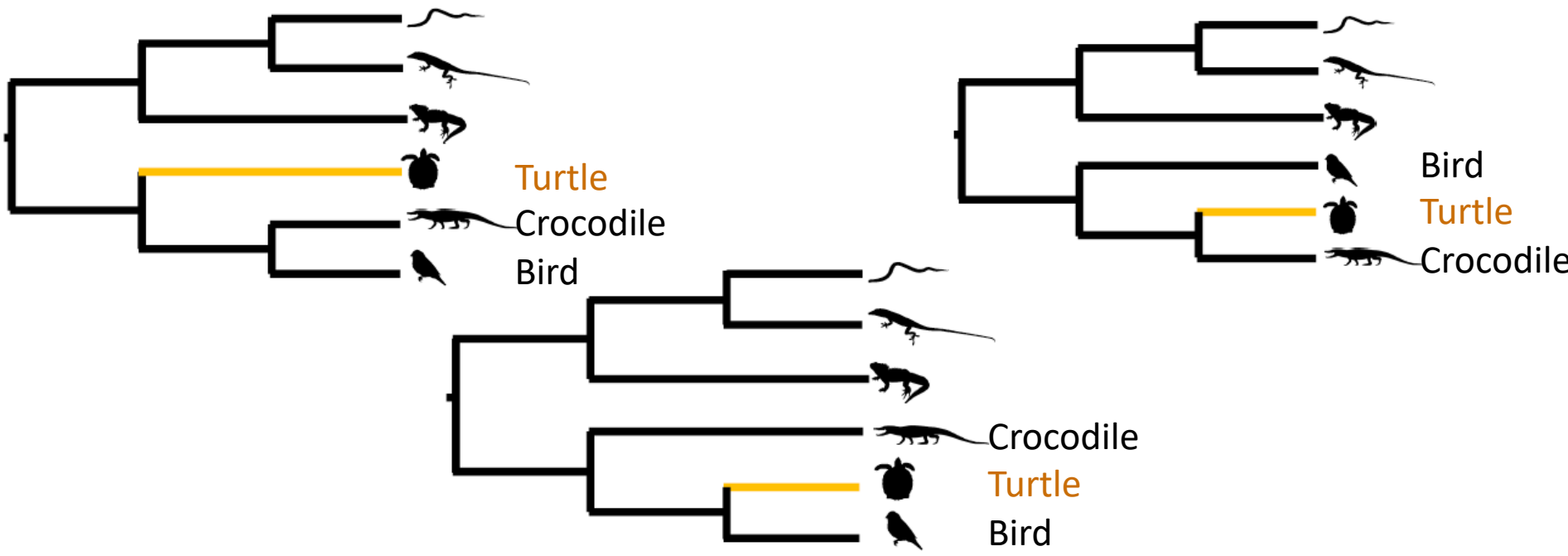
**64.7%**

Data: 1,595 genes; 1,618,506 bp ([Vanderpool et al. 2020](#))

# Gene trees discordance due to deep coalescence

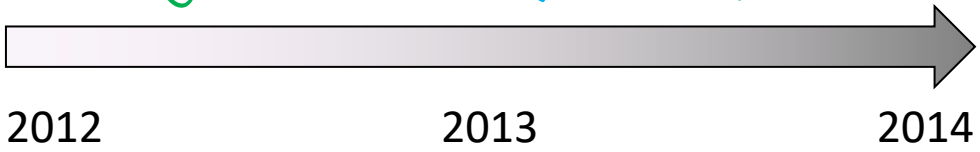


# Dataset for IQ-TREE lab: Where is Turtle in the tree?



*Chiari et al.*  
*Crawford et al.*  
*Fong et al.*

*Wang et al.*  
*Lu et al.*  
*Shaffer et al.*



Dataset: 16 species, 29 genes,  
20,820 bp  
(a subset of Chiari et al. 2012)

Different studies led to different trees!

Thanks Jeremy Brown

1. Input data
2. Inferring the first phylogeny
3. Applying partition model
4. Choosing the best partitioning scheme
5. Tree topology tests
6. Tree mixture model (**NEW**)
7. Identifying most influential genes
8. Removing influential genes
9. Concordance factors (\*advanced)

<http://www.iqtree.org/workshop/molevol2023>

Fill out your answers in a Google form (shared via Slack)