Table 1 Estimates of per cell mRNA inventories for laboratory bacterial cultures (top) and natural marine bacteria (bottom)

Cells	*Method*	*Total RNA content (fg cell^{-1})*	*mRNAs cell^{-1}*	*Reference*
Laboratory studies				
Escherichia coli	Biochemical analysis	NA	1380	Neidhardt and Umbarger, 1996
Escherichia coli	Single-cell microscopy	NA	1800[a]	Taniguchi *et al.*, 2010
Vibrio alginolyticus	RNA recovery	28	2288[b]	Kramer and Singleton, 1992
Natural communities				
Coastal bacterioplankton, GA	Internal standard	NA	142–238	Gifford *et al.*, 2011
Bacterioplankton, Amazon Plume	Internal standard	NA	85–255	Satinsky *et al.*, in preparation
Coastal bacterioplankton, GA	RNA recovery	0.6–1.3	96–190[b]	Gifford *et al.*, 2011
Coastal bacterioplankton, NY	RNA recovery	1.6–5.4	135–458[b]	Lee and Kemp, 1994
Coastal bacterioplankton, CA	RNA recovery	1.9–9.5	161–805[b]	Simon and Azam, 1989

Abbreviation: NA, not available.
[a]Calculated by extrapolation from 137 genes (see text).
[b]Calculated by assuming total RNA contains 4% mRNA by mass (Neidhardt and Umbarger, 1996) and bacterial mRNAs have an average length of 924 nucleotides (Xu *et al.*, 2006) and therefore an average weight of 4.72×10^{-4} fg.

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