

## Are 'gene drives' scary or promising?

Perhaps you've followed that teeny tiny controversy around genetically modified foods, the "GMO" debate. Or you watched the fierce back-and-forth over whether it was a good idea to modify a strain of avian flu in the lab to make it spread more easily, in order to study it.

If this is your kind of spectator sport, it's time to learn about gene drives, a powerful new genetic technology that basically flips Charles Darwin on his head, allowing a sort of artificial selection to help chosen genes come to dominate in a population.

A paper just out in the journal eLife outlines a way to use gene drives to spread just about any altered gene through wild populations that use sex to reproduce. And a related paper just out in the journal Science calls for greater oversight and a public discourse about the potential risks and benefits of gene drive technology — now, while it's still in early stages and confined to labs.

**Read the full, original Q&A story here: [Please discuss: 'Gene Drives,' sci-fi scary or cool leap forward?](#)**