

'Functionally' extinct northern white rhino could be saved through genetic engineering

The last male northern white rhino has seen better days. At the advanced age of 43, arthritic in leg and blind in one eye, Sudan struggles to get around. Since he now finds other rhinos intolerable, he has his enclosure at the Ol Petja Conservancy in Kenya all to himself.

... Before they were poached near out of existence, northern whites roamed central and eastern Africa...Today just three individuals remain...the subspecies is considered "functionally" extinct.

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The plan is two-pronged. First, a team of scientists at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research in Germany, along with international specialists, are attempting to grow a northern white embryo in-vitro, using oocytes, or eggs, from the two living females and frozen sperm...it will be implanted in a surrogate southern white rhino, a sister subspecies, who will carry the northern white calf to term.

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So, for step two...Their aim is to transform skin cells from the living animals and from tissue samples kept in cryonic storage into stem cells. These cells, called induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS), have the capacity to develop into any type of tissue, including eggs and sperm, which could be used to produce gametes.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Genetic engineering could bring the northern white rhino back from extinction](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP on Wikipedia](#)