

100 endangered animal species now safely stored in UK's living biobank



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Nature's SAFE, one of Europe's largest living biobanks for preserving endangered animal species, and home to some of the planet's most precious natural resources, is celebrating banking it's 100th species. In a race against time, The Living Biobank began its work in late 2020, and acts as an insurance policy to preserve rare, and threatened animals, so they can be protected for generations to come.

Currently, 100 species are lost each day to extinction, and as the last few species die, their genetic blueprint is removed forever from our planet. Nature's SAFE partners with accredited zoos to collect and process tissue and reproductive cell samples from threatened and endangered species, storing them in an indefinitely cryopreserved living state at -196oC. Once thawed, these stored living cells could one day be used in cell culture or assisted reproductive technologies to maintain genetic diversity in the species gene pool.

"With gene pools shrinking, cryopreservation is a critical piece of the conservation puzzle, providing a safeguard for animals the world is currently on track to lose." said Dr Sue Walker Head of Science at Chester Zoo and Co-Founder of Nature's SAFE.

As a centre of excellence in reproductive science, Nature's SAFE has to date cryo-preserved multiple cell types from many endangered animal species, including the critically endangered mountain chicken frog, Javan green magpie, pied tamarin, and jaguar. The 100th species to join The Living Biobank, is the Owston's civet; a beguiling animal on the brink of extinction in the wild across South East Asia.

Dr Veronica Cowl, Reproductive Biology Coordinator for

Chester Zoo and the European Association for Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) said “We’ve been working on understanding reproduction in the elusive Owston’s civet for more than three years, and it’s fantastic that we can now preserve the genes from the current zoo population in Nature’s SAFE, The Living Biobank. It’s a great step forward in our work to prevent the extinction of this beautiful species, and it’s a pleasure to work with such a passionate group of people”.

Nature’s SAFE has an ever-expanding, global network of expertise to enable cutting-edge reproductive and biobanking science to be delivered to zoological collections for free and invites queries from potential new biobank partners or supporters.

Tullis Matson, Chair and Founder said “Without Nature’s SAFE, for many species already so near the brink of extinction, there will be no return. With Nature’s SAFE and other biobanking partners – there is optimism. We know the 6th mass extinction on Earth is underway, and there will be rough times ahead. The question is what do we want to do about it? And our answer is: we want to secure future options for biodiversity, by acting now.”

To find out more about conservation charity Nature’s SAFE’s science and conservation work, head to www.natures-safe.com

Tullis Matson, Founder and Chair of Nature’s SAFE. Tel: 01948 666295 / 07801 592111 email: office@[natures-safe.com](mailto:office@natures-safe.com)
Nature’s SAFE is a registered charity No 1192876.

Nature’s SAFE is a Living Biobank on a mission to save animals from extinction by collecting, indefinitely storing, and regenerating reproductive cells and cell lines from endangered animal species. Our science-led charity is setting the bar in cryoconservation technologies, uniting biotech with conservation management stakeholders to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. Our work is entirely funded by donations. Please visit www.natures-safe.com to find out more or get in touch via office@[natures-safe.com](mailto:office@natures-safe.com).

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