

Reversing Extinction

By: Lina Mai 10/2/2017

Bringing species back from extinction (destruction) may seem more like science fiction than reality. But scientists are close to being able to bring animals back from the dead.



The first major breakthrough in de-extinction came just over 15 years ago. A team of Spanish researchers collected tissue samples from the last living beige mountain goat nicknamed Celia. They inserted Celia's preserved DNA, the chemical that carries the structure for a living thing, into the egg cells of a closely related species of goat. After an electric shock, the cells began to form embryos (animals in first stages of life).

Scientists then implanted the embryos into female goats. Only one of the embryos survived. But the newborn died in less than 10 minutes. As a result, this beige mountain goat is the only species to have gone extinct twice. But, scientists were thrilled that their experiment worked for a short amount of time.



In 1985, the gastric-brooding frog went extinct. Michael Archer, a scientist who specializes in animal science, decided to work with others to bring the species back.

"People have a moral obligation to bring back animals that gone extinct because of humans," he claims. "We now have an approach to make it happen." So, far, Archer's team has brought the species back for only a matter of days.

Restoring vanished species is an exciting field but some experts are worried about the effects of bring extinct species back. Many are worried that it could lead to dangerous changes within the food chain or cause other species to become extinct.