

## Cape buffalo conceived through IVF

The first Cape Buffalo conceived through IVF was unveiled recently by [Embryo Plus](#), a specialist family-run practice in bovine embryo transfers and semen collection. The three-month old bull calf Pumelelo was born in June this year on a ranch in Limpopo.



Image source: [www.embryoplus.com](http://www.embryoplus.com)

“Extensive preliminary research was necessary to mature and fertilise the eggs, and to incubate the embryos to an advanced stage of development, as all species have different requirements for growth and utilise different nutrients during the laboratory phase of the largely uncharted path of IVF/IVP in African game species,” said Dr Morné de la Rey (BVSc), who heads up Embryo Plus.

The techniques developed by Embryo Plus has the potential to save critically endangered wildlife.



Image source: [www.embryoplus.com](http://www.embryoplus.com)

“The use of assisted reproductive techniques (ARTs) in wildlife management, although still in its infancy, is becoming more of a reality. This success is of major importance for the prospective breeding of endangered species, and that is the reason why we are undertaking this work,” he said.

## **Saving the Northern white rhino**

Dr De la Rey’s work is considered to be among the first steps in an international collaborative effort to save endangered wildlife species such as the northern white rhino. There are only three northern white rhino left in the world.

The San Diego Zoo Global has pledged to work with a team of scientists including Embryo Plus to save this rhino species and has created a herd of southern white rhinos that have been trained for non-invasive procedures that are providing unprecedented information about the reproductive physiology of rhinos.



By Sheep81 – [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Southern_White_Rhino.jpg)

Rhinos are considerably more difficult to work with than most other species, due to the size and sensitive nature of the animals. Specialised equipment will have to be designed, tested and manufactured for effective use on rhino. Once these procedures have been successfully implemented with Southern white rhino, the techniques could be applied on the

Northern white rhino to try and save them from extinction.

This will be Dr. De La Rey and the research team's next goal, and parallel to this there is the possibility of doing similar work with the extremely endangered mountain bongo of Kenya. There are only 30-50 bongo left in three areas in Kenya. The planned research for this project will be conducted at the envisaged endangered species breeding centre to be established at Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya.

For more info, go to [www.embryoplus.com](http://www.embryoplus.com).

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