

Elephant impregnated with frozen sperm from wild male

August 13 2012



A five-day old male elephant is pictured with his mother, Numbi, in Schoenbrunn zoo in Vienna on August 11, 2010. An African elephant in Vienna Zoo has been impregnated using frozen sperm from a male living in the wild, in what the Zoo said Monday was a world first.

An African elephant in Vienna Zoo has been impregnated using frozen sperm from a male living in the wild, in what the Zoo said Monday was a world first.

Pregnancy has been achieved before elsewhere using frozen sperm in two cases, once with an [African elephant](#) and once with an Asian one, but both times the males were in captivity and the foetuses died, a zoo spokeswoman told AFP.

"If this calf is born it will be the first time worldwide that this works

with frozen sperm," she said.

"Already this is the first successful insemination using frozen sperm from a wild male. This is something very special."

Tonga, the 26-year-old elephant, is nine months into her 22-month pregnancy. The sperm came from a wild [bull elephant](#) in South Africa.

Using sperm from [wild elephants](#) is seen as particularly important in order to widen the narrowing gene pool of elephants living in zoos and animal parks around the world caused by a shortage of suitable bulls living in captivity.

More information including [ultrasound images](#) is due to be presented at a news conference on Tuesday.

[Artificial insemination](#) using sperm that is frozen and then thawed has worked in other mammals, including rhinos, but with elephants, an endangered species, it has proven problematic.

Tiergarten Schoenbrunn or Vienna Zoo, the world's oldest, teamed up with the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research in Germany, Zooparc de Beauval in France and Pittsburgh Zoo in the United States for the project.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Elephant impregnated with frozen sperm from wild male (2012, August 13) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2012-08-elephant-impregnated-frozen-sperm-wild.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.