

Brazil eyes cloning to bolster endangered species

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A jaguar is seen in a zoo in San Salvador. Scientists in Brazil will try cloning endangered animal species like the jaguar, a researcher said Wednesday.

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"The idea is to start with an animal that is endangered, or where [species numbers](#) have gone down sharply, such as the jaguar, the maned wolf or

even the local deer," said Carlos Frederico Martins, a researcher with Embrapa Cerrado.

State-run Embrapa, the government's [animal research](#) unit, is launching the effort jointly with the Brasilia Zoo, the institutions told AFP. They are set to sign a joint agreement.

The research will also include experiments on artificial insemination and embryo transplants for species at risk.

A cloned animal would not be released back to nature, and would contribute little to saving its species in the short run.

But over time, animals that underwent [artificial insemination](#) or embryo transplants could be released.

Martins said it could be a few years before a wild animal is cloned in Brazil. A cow has already been cloned in the country and was born in March 2001.

Researchers clone [farm animals](#) to improve their desirable characteristics and efficiency. Brazil is the world's top beef exporter.

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