



Kurt, the First-ever Cloned Przewalski Horse, Preserves Rare Breed

San Diego Zoo collaborated with ViaGen Equine, a cloning company, and Revive & Restore, a wildlife conservation group, to create the first cloned horse who is an actual copy of a Przewalski stallion named Kuporovic that once lived at the San Diego Zoo between 1975 to 1998.

Little Kurt was born on August 6, 2020 at Timber Creek Veterinary facility in Texas. He was named after Dr. Kurt Benirschke, a UC San Diego geneticist, who was pivotal to the creation of the 'Frozen Zoo' at the San Diego Zoo. The Frozen Zoo has the largest and most diverse collection of its kind in the world containing 10,000 living cell cultures, oocytes, sperm, and embryos representing 1,000 taxa, according to the Zoo.

The Przewalski horse (also known as the Mongolian wild horse) was native to central Asia. The last confirmed sighting of one in the wild was in 1969. The breed was named after the Russian geographer and explorer, Nikolaj Przewalski.

Twelve ancestors of these wild Mongolian wild horses were captured between 1899 and 1902 and were put into a breeding program which, over time, spawned 2,000 of these horses.

In 1990, the horses were reintroduced back into the wild in central Asia at the Khustain Nuruu National Park, Takhin Tai Nature Reserve, and Khomiin Tai.

The birth of Kurt is so important since he carries a rare DNA and can contribute to the much-needed diversity of his breed. The plan when Kurt is weaned from his surrogate mother is to live at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park with others of his species and someday become a breeding stallion.