

NEWSLETTER



THE EAST AFRICAN
WILD LIFE SOCIETY

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World's last male northern white rhino dies



Northern white rhino in OI Pejeta Conservancy.

PHOTO BY: OI PEJETA CONSERVANCY

On March 19, 2018 the world's last male northern white rhino, christened Sudan died at the age of 45. The OI Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya where Sudan has been living for the last seven years reported that he died while being treated for age-related complications that led to degenerative changes in muscles and bones combined with extensive skin wounds.

When his condition had worsened significantly and suffering a great deal and being unable to stand up

the veterinary team from the Dvůr Králové Zoo in the Czech Republic, OI Pejeta and Kenya Wildlife Service made the decision to euthanize him.

Sudan was born in 1973 in South Sudan an area that later became Shambe Game Reserve. He escaped extinction of his kind in the wild when he was moved to Dvůr Králové Zoo. Throughout his existence, he significantly contributed to survival of his species as he sired two females. Additionally, his genetic material was collected at the time of his death and provides a hope for future attempts

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at reproduction of northern white rhinos through advanced cellular technologies.

In his statement, OI Pejeta's CEO Richard Vigne said: "We at OI Pejeta are saddened by Sudan's death. He was a great ambassador for his species and will be remembered for the work he did to raise awareness globally of the plight facing not only rhinos, but also the many thousands of other species facing extinction as a result of unsustainable human activity. One day, his demise will hopefully be seen as a seminal moment for conservationists worldwide,"

According to Jan Stejskal the Director of International Projects at Dvůr Králové Zoo, the death of Sudan is a cruel symbol of human disregard for nature and we should not give up but take advantage of the unique situation in which cellular technologies are utilized for conservation of critically endangered species. He further says, "It may sound unbelievable, but with the newly developed techniques even Sudan could still have an offspring."

The poaching crisis of the 1970s and 80s, fueled by demand for rhino horn in Traditional



Retired Chinese basketballer Yao Ming when he visited OI Pejeta for a wildlife documentary shoot.

PHOTOS BY: OI PEJETA CONSERVANCY

Chinese Medicine in Asia and dagger handles in Yemen, wiped out the northern white rhino populations in Uganda, Central African Republic, Sudan and Chad. In 2009, the last four fertile northern white rhinos – two males and two females – were moved to OI Pejeta from Dvůr Králové Zoo, with support from Fauna & Flora International and the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Sudan's death, now leaves just two female northern white rhinos on the planet; his daughter Najin and her daughter Fatu, who remain at OI Pejeta. The only hope for the preservation of this subspecies now lies in developing in vitro fertilization (IVF) techniques using eggs from the two remaining females, stored northern white rhino semen from males and surrogate southern white rhino females.

