

According to members of the Initiative to Protect the Political Middle (IPPM), centrist Republicans, who once freely roamed the nation calling for both economic deregulation and a return to Reagan-era tax rates on the wealthy, are in dire need of protection, having lost large portions of their natural terrain to the highly territorial Evangelical and Tea Party breeds.

"Our new program is designed to isolate the few remaining specimens of moderate Republicans, mate them in captivity, and then safely release these rare and precious creatures back into the electorate," said IPPM's Cynthia Rollins, who traces the decline of the species to changes in the political climate and rampant, predatory fanaticism. "Within our safe, enclosed habitats, these middle-of-the-road Republican Party members can freely support increased funding for public education and even gay rights without being threatened by the far-right subgenus."



A mated pair of centrist GOP politicians in captivity.

Working within a narrow three-election-cycle window to reverse the decline before extinction becomes imminent, political conservationists told reporters they have already begun the arduous process of tracking down members of the elusive breed of sensible, non-reactionary public officeholders, which a generation ago was one of the most plentiful GOP species in existence.

IPPM officials also said that while there is no guarantee they will ever be able to restore the moderate-Republican population to its once-teeming levels, "every effort must be made" to forcibly breed the species and at least keep it alive in the Midwest and Northeast, where its chances for survival remain highest.

"Last week we shot Gov. Mitch Daniels with a tranquilizer dart from a blind we'd set up near the Indiana Capitol, and we plan on mating him very soon with a senator we trapped up in Maine," said IPPM reproductive expert Gabriel Burke, adding that forced breeding of centrist Republicans in captivity is a humane, carefully regulated procedure designed to simulate mating in the wild. "While captive specimens tend to be wary around each other at first, once they sense they're both opponents of labor unions yet also willing to

make tough compromises on collective bargaining rights, the sexual ritual begins almost instantly."

Added Burke, "In fact, one of our specimens, Sen. Scott Brown of Massachusetts, has already been mated with five or six other regional lawmakers in the past week alone."

Though hopes for the captive breeding program remain high, many leading political conservationists note the number of optimal habitats for moderate, freethinking Republicans across the country has shrunk drastically, with studies showing the species may never again be able to recover in areas where it has been totally eradicated, such as the South and the GOP caucus in the House of Representatives.

As they continue to search for nonextremist conservatives with the vaguest ability to compromise on social issues like abortion in cases of rape and incest, IPPM officials acknowledged they may be fighting a race against time.

"The most difficult task we have is preserving members of this disappearing breed before the desperate need for votes forces them to begin parroting borderline racist anti-immigration ideologies and accusing their opponents of being socialists," tracker Phil Gandelman said. "We thought we had captured and tagged a truly exemplary specimen a few weeks ago, but when we studied the creature more closely, we realized it was just John McCain."

"The poor little guy was so far gone we had to put him out of his misery," Gandelman added.

Representatives for the IPPM said they hope their current effort will prove more successful than past attempt to propagate moderates by crossbreeding highly liberal and extreme conservative politicians, which ended in tragedy when Vermont senator Bernie Sanders was physically mauled and torn apart by Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS).