

Dodo



Photo by [Via Tsuji](#)

An extinct flightless bird that inhabited the island of Mauritius, the Dodo was about one meter tall and may have weighed 10–18 kg. The Dodo's appearance is evidenced only by illustrations and written accounts from the 17th century but because these vary considerably, its exact appearance in life remains unresolved. It is presumed that the Dodo became flightless because of the ready availability of abundant food sources (seeds, bulbs, nuts, roots and fallen fruits) and a relative absence of predators on Mauritius. The first recorded mention of the dodo was by Dutch sailors in 1598. In the following years, the bird was hunted to extinction by sailors, their domesticated animals, and invasive species introduced during that time. The last widely accepted sighting of a Dodo was in 1662.

Passenger Pigeon



Photo by [Cotinis](#)

Native to North America and once the most abundant birds in the world, the Passenger or Wild Pigeon has been extinct since the early 20th century. It is estimated 3 to 5 billion Passenger Pigeons were in the US when Europeans arrived in North America, but their settlement led to mass deforestation resulting in habitat loss and a reduction in the bird numbers. In the 19th century pigeon meat was commercialized as a cheap food for slaves and the poor, which resulted in hunting on a massive scale. The Passenger Pigeon died out in the wild around 1900 with the last survivor dying in captivity in 1914.

http://www.onekind.org/education/top_10_lists/extinct

Great Auk



Photo by [Biodiversity Heritage Library](#)

A large and flightless bird that was found in the North Atlantic and as far south as northern Spain. It had an average height of 75-85 cm and weighed about 5kg. The Great Auk was flightless but was a powerful swimmer which aided hunting in the water.

Humans hunted the Great Auk for more than 100,000 years using the bird as fishing bait and as a food source, this resulted in the bird's numbers being reduced. High demand for the bird's feathers in Europe almost eliminated the European population during the mid-16th century.

The last colony of Auks lived on the island of Eldey, southwest of Iceland, in 1835 - they were killed for their skins. The last of these birds in the British Isles was killed on St Kilda, Scotland in 1844; three men caught it and kept it alive for three days. A large storm arose and believing that the auk was a witch and caused the storm, they killed it.

Tasmanian Tiger



Photo by [Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office](#)

Native to Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea during prehistoric times, the Tasmanian Tiger was a large carnivorous marsupial which became extinct on the Australian mainland around 2000 years ago but survived on the island of Tasmania until the 1930s. Not related to tigers, the creature had the appearance of a medium-to-large-size dog (it weighed around 30kg with a nose to tail length of almost 2 meters) but dark stripes that radiated from the top of its back gave it a tiger-like appearance. It is believed to have been hunted to extinction – this was encouraged by bounties – but other contributing factors could have been human encroachment into its habitat, the introduction of dogs and disease. The last wild Tasmanian Tiger was killed between 1910 and 1920 with the last captive one dying in Hobart Zoo, Tasmania in 1936.

Sabre-toothed Cat



Photo by [Jim Linwood](#)

Often called Sabre-toothed Tigers or Sabre-toothed Lions they existed 55 million to 11,700 years ago. Sabre-tooth Cats were carnivores named for the elongated bladelike canine teeth in their upper jaw, which in some species were up to 50cm long. Quite bear-like in build, they were believed to be excellent hunters and hunted animals such as sloths and mammoths. These felines could open their jaws at an angle of 120 degrees – almost twice as wide as a modern lion! It is thought the Sabre-tooth Cat's extinction may be linked to the decline and extinction of large herbivores, which were replaced by smaller and more agile ones like deer. Being specialized at hunting large prey they may have been unable to adapt. Other explanations include climate change and competition with humans.

Baiji White Dolphin



Photo by [Quinn Norton](#)

Also called the Chinese River Dolphin, found only in the Yangtze River in China. The Baiji could grow to eight feet long and weigh up to a quarter of a ton. With tiny eyes and a long thin rostrum, the Baiji had very poor eyesight and relied on echolocation to navigate and hunt for prey. Living in the Yangtze for 20 million years, the Baiji's numbers declined drastically from the 1950s onwards. As China industrialized, it made heavy use of the river for fishing, transportation and hydroelectricity. A dwindling food supply, massive pollution and boat propeller accidents were wiping the creatures out. The restriction of fishing, establishment of nature reserves and banning of deliberate killing of the mammals in the 1970s all came too late. Although not officially recorded as extinct, no one has seen a Yangtze River Dolphin since 2002.

Stellers Sea Cow



Photo by [Flikker Photos](#)

Named after George Steller, a naturalist who discovered the creature in 1741, Stellers Sea Cow was a large herbivorous mammal that had a seal-like appearance with a tail which resembled that of a whale. It is believed that Stellers Sea Cow which grew to at least 8-9 meters and weighed around 8-10 tons, inhabited the Near Islands, southwest of Alaska and the Commander Islands in the Bering Sea. Its closest living relatives are the Dugong and the Manatee. It is believed that the mammal was tame and spent most of its time eating kelp; this, and the fact that it was unable to submerge its enormous body, is possibly what made it so vulnerable to human hunters. Within 27 years of discovery by Europeans, the slow-moving Steller's Sea Cow was hunted to extinction.

Woolly Mammoth



Photo by [Rob Pongsajapan](#)

An enormous mammal, believed to be closely related to the modern-day elephant. Its ancestors migrated out of Africa about 3.5 million years ago, spreading across northern Eurasia and North America; it is thought the Woolly Mammoth first appeared more than 400,000 years ago. The creature could reach heights of 4 meters or more and could weigh over 6 tons! Covered in fur with an outer covering of long hairs, short ears and tail to minimize heat loss and frost bite, it was well adapted to the cold environment it existed in during the last ice-age. Its curved tusks could easily be up to 5 meters long! The Woolly Mammoth eventually disappeared from its mainland range 10,000 years ago, the cause of this is most likely through a combination of hunting by humans, climate change (rapidly melting ice had an enormous impact on their demise) and the disappearance of its habitat. The last of the isolated woolly mammoth populations is believed to have vanished from Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean around 1700BC.

Pyrenean Ibex



One of four subspecies of the Spanish Ibex or Iberian Goat that was found in the Iberian Peninsula. It tended to live in rocky habitats with cliffs and trees on high mountain slopes in summer and warmer valleys during the winter. The Ibex had greyish brown fur that grew thicker in winter with the males having black coloring on their legs, neck and face. The males also had large, thick, ridged, curving horns but the females were much shorter and thinner. The Ibex would grow to a height of 60-76cm at the shoulder and weigh 24-80 kg and fed mainly on grasses and herbs. They were thought to have numbered 50,000 historically, but by the early 1900s its numbers had fallen to fewer than 100. The exact cause of the Pyrenean Ibex's extinction is unknown; scientists think a number of different factors contributed including poaching, disease and the inability to compete with other mammals for food and habitat. The last Pyrenean Ibex was found dead in northern Spain in the year 2000, killed by a falling tree.

West African Black Rhinoceros



Photo by [Fisserman](#)

The West African Black Rhinoceros is a sub-species of the Black Rhinoceros which was found in several countries towards the southeast region of Africa. Measuring 3-3.8 meters long and 1.4-1.7 meters in height this rhino would have weighed 800-1,300 kg. It had two horns, one measuring 0.5-1.3 meters and the other between 2-55cm. Their diet included leafy plants and shoots. Some people believe their horns had medicinal properties – though this had no grounding in scientific fact - this led to heavy poaching. Preservation actions were taken in the 1930s to try to protect the dwindling Rhino numbers but since these protection efforts declined over the years, so did the number of rhinos. By 1980 the numbers were in the hundreds and further widespread poaching brought the species to extinction. The last West African Black Rhino was seen in Cameroon in 2006. It was declared officially extinct in 2011.