A Few African Species Extinct in the Wild

Barbary Lion
Panthera leo leo
North Africa
The Barbary (also called Atlas or Nubian) lion was found throughout northern Africa from Morocco to Egypt. Studies have concluded that the Barbary lion was most closely related to Asian lions. The last known individual in the wild was killed in the Atlas Mountains in 1922.

Pinstripe Dambo
Panagropus menarambo
Madagascar
The pinstripe dambo was endemic to a small region of Madagascar but is presumed extinct in the wild. Despite targeted surveys, no specimens have been collected in recent years. However, breeding populations of this species are maintained in captivity. The main cause for the loss of this species were deforestation, introduced alien species, and overhunting.

West African Black Rhino (Extinct)
Diceros harrisoni longipes
Central West Africa
Among two of Africa’s most threatened rhinoceros subspecies in the West African Black Rhino. According to the African Rhino Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Species Survival Commission, the West African Black Rhino is now feared extinct. An intensive survey of the West African black rhinoceros in early 2006 has failed to locate any sign of their continued presence in their last refuges in northern Cameroon. Poaching for rhino horn is the main cause of their demise.

Quagga (Extinct)
Equus quagga
South Africa
The quagga, a grazing mammal closely related to zebras, was native to desert areas of southern Africa. It was especially abundant in South Africa’s Cape Province. Quaggas were distinguishable from zebras by the fact that they had brown- and tan stripes on the front part of the body only. The species faded toward the headquarters, which were solid brown. Prowled for its meat and holes, the quagga was hunted to extinction in the 1870s. The last specimen in captivity died in 1883.

Blue Antelope or Bluebuck (Extinct)
Hippotragus leucophaeus
South Africa
The bluebuck, or blue antelope, was the first large African mammal to become extinct in historical times. Bluebuck numbers began dropping about 2,000 years ago and the species was already rare by the 1700s. Various factors have been suggested as the cause of their extinction, including the change of grassland into bush and forest when the climate became warmer, and the human introduction into their habitat of livestock, particularly sheep, at about that time. Competition with sheep, diseases, or hunting may all have contributed to a decline in bluebuck. The last bluebuck was reportedly killed in 1799.

Haplochromis Ishmaeli
Lake Victoria in Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda
A haplochromis—is a special snail-eating fish—not only extinct in the wild but also rare in the aquarium fish industry. This small muscular fish eats mollusks. But unlike other snail-eating fish, which extract the mollusk from its shell, Haplochromis Ishmaeli ingests the entire animal, shell and all.

Egyptian Barbary Sheep
Ammotragus lervia anatia
Egypt
The native range of the Egyptian Barbary sheep was the arid hills south of Cairo, Egypt, and the rugged terrain bordering both sides of the Nile River in southern Egypt. It is thought that the Egyptian Barbary sheep probably became extinct in the wild in the 1970s or 1980s. The species does survive, however, in captive breeding programmes.

Mauritius Blue Pigeon (Extinct)
Alectroenas nitidissima
Mauritius
This beautiful red, white, and blue pigeon was also named Pigon Hollandais because of its resemblance to the colours of the Dutch flag. It was hunted extensively and had already become rare by the 1730s. Monkeys and rats preyed on the pigeon’s eggs and chicks, and deforestation fragmented its habitat. The last specimen was collected in 1820, and hunting and habitat loss eventually brought about the species’ extinction in the 1830s. There are three survivng skins of this species, one in Edinburgh, England, one in Paris, France and one in the Mauritius Institute, the latter belonging to the last surviving individual.

The Seychelles parakeet was endemic to the Seychelles group. This small, primarily green parrot was already rare when it was first described by Europeans in the 1860s. The Seychelles parakeet was finally driven to extinction in 1906, largely due to the clearing of its forest habitat for coconut plantations and eradication efforts to keep it from eating crops.

The Cape lion was once found throughout southern Africa from the Cape of Good Hope to the Province of KwaZulu Natal. Cape lions were the largest and darkest of all sub-Saharan lions. The last known Cape lion in the wild was killed in 1816. Until recently, researchers disputed whether the extinct Cape lion was a true species, or merely a subspecies, of African lion. Genetic research, published in 2006, did not support the “distinctness” of the Cape lion. It now seems probable that the Cape lion was only the southernmost population of the extant southern African lion.


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