

# 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**  
*Paretroplus 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 causes for the loss of this species were deforestation, introduced alien species, and overfishing.



**West African Black Rhino (Extinct)**  
*Diceros bicornis longipes*  
Central West Africa

Among two of Africa's most threatened rhinoceros subspecies is 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 rhino 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.



**Giant Tortoise**  
*Cylindraspis*  
Mauritius, Seychelles

Giant tortoises were considered extremely valuable by early mariners for food as they could survive for months in captivity without food and water. Their flesh and oil was considered a cure for scurvy. Sadly, thousands were wastefully harvested, with many specimens being left to rot after their valuable liver and oil had been removed. Most sub-species became extinct in the early years of the 18th century.



**Egyptian Barbary Sheep**  
*Ammotragus lervia ornata*  
Egypt

The native range of the Egyptian Barbary sheep was the arid hills east 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.



**Seychelles Parakeet (Extinct)**  
*Psittacula wardi*  
Seychelles

The Seychelles parakeet was endemic to Mahé and Silhouette, two islands in 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.



**Scimitar Oryx**  
*Oryx dammah*  
Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara

The scimitar oryx, or scimitar-horned oryx is a species of oryx which once inhabited the whole of North Africa and was one of the most common large mammals of the region. There are conflicting reports as to whether it is extinct in the wild, or whether small populations still survive in central Niger and Chad. Currently listed as extinct on the IUCN Red List, the scimitar oryx is now part of a major captive breeding and reintroduction programme.



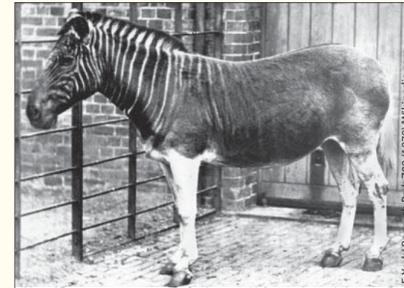
**Dodo (Extinct)**  
*Raphus cucullatus*  
Mauritius

The Dodo was a flightless bird that lived on the island of Mauritius. Related to pigeons and doves, it stood about one metre tall, lived on fruit, and nested on the ground. The dodo has been extinct since the mid-to-late 17th century. It is commonly used as the archetype of an extinct species because its extinction occurred during recorded human history and was directly attributable to human activity. The birds were killed by sailors and settlers for food, and their eggs and young were devoured by cats, dogs, and other non-native animals that were introduced to Mauritius.



**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.



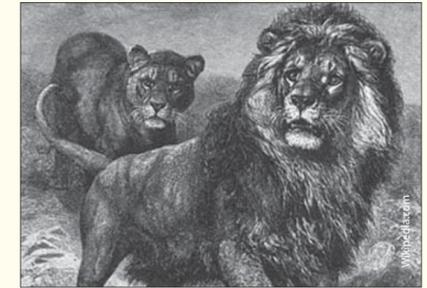
**Quagga (Extinct)**  
*Equus quagga*  
South Africa

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 stripes faded toward the hindquarters, which were solid brown. Prized for its meat and hides, the quagga was hunted to extinction in the 1870s. The last specimen in captivity died in 1883.



**Mauritius Blue Pigeon (Extinct)**  
*Alectroenas nitidissima*  
Mauritius

This beautiful red, white, and blue pigeon was also named Pigeon 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 1826, and hunting and habitat loss eventually brought about the species' extinction in the 1830s. There are three surviving 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.



**Cape Lion (Extinct)**  
*Panthera leo melanochaitus*  
Cape of South Africa

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 1858. 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.



**Haplochromis Ishmaeli**  
*syn. Labrochromis ishmaeli*  
Lake Victoria in Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda

*Haplochromis ishmaeli*—a specialized snail eater—is 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.