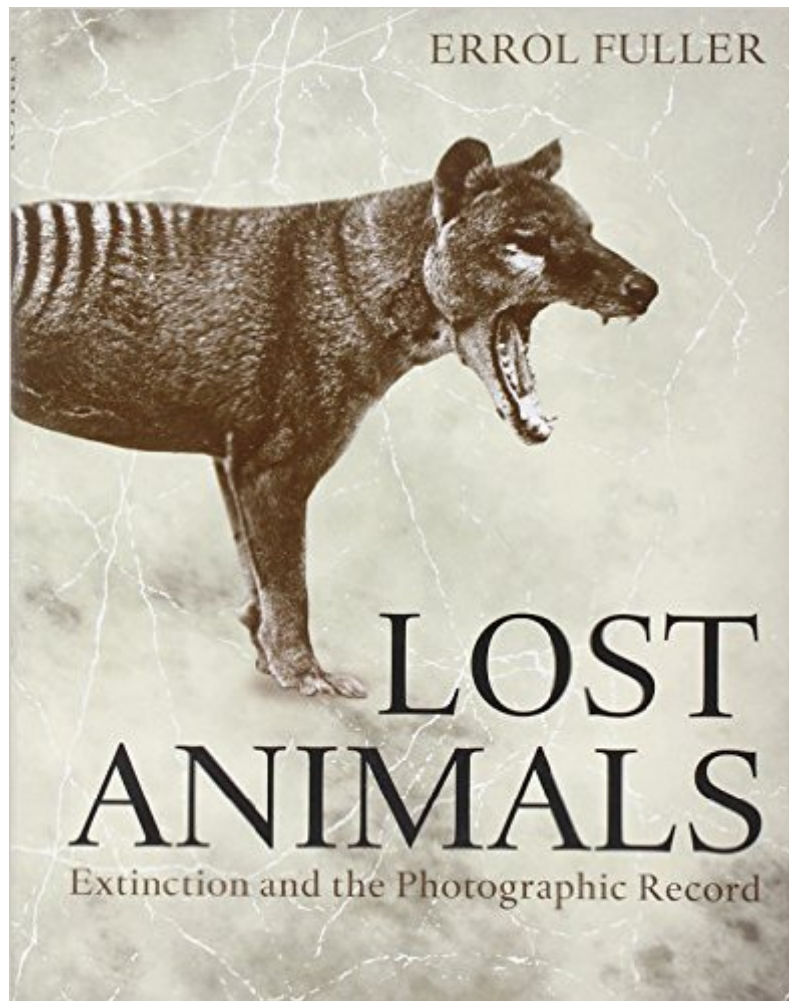


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# Lost Animals: Extinction And The Photographic Record



## Synopsis

A photograph of an extinct animal evokes a greater feeling of loss than any painting ever could. Often black and white or tinted sepia, these remarkable images have been taken mainly in zoos or wildlife parks, and in some cases depict the last known individual of the species. *Lost Animals* is a unique photographic record of extinction, presented by a world authority on vanished animals. Richly illustrated throughout, this handsome book features photographs dating from around 1870 to as recently as 2004, the year that witnessed the demise of the Hawaiian Po'ouli. From a mother Thylacine and her pups to birds such as the Heath Hen and the Carolina Parakeet, Errol Fuller tells the story of each animal, explains why it became extinct, and discusses the circumstances surrounding the photography. Covering 28 extinct species, *Lost Animals* includes familiar examples like the last Passenger Pigeon, Martha, and one of the last Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, photographed as it peers quizzically at the hat of one of the biologists who has just ringed it. But the book includes rare images as well, many never before published. Collected together here for the first time, these photographs provide a tangible link to animals that have now vanished forever, in a book that brings the past to life while delivering a warning for the future. Poignant and compelling, *Lost Animals* also includes a concise introduction that looks at the earliest days of animal photography, and an appendix of drawings and paintings of the species covered.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have no evidence that Errol Fuller is an embittered man, but if he were, he'd have reason to be. He

is an expert on animal extinction, and has written good-looking volumes on bird extinction in general and on the dodo and on the great auk specifically. He'd lots rather have the birds back than have these accomplished books to his credit, I am sure. He noticed that when people looked at his previous books, they paid especial attention to the photographs of animals that are now extinct. The photographs meant an immediacy that paintings and prints could not convey, even if the photos were sepia-toned from the early days of photography in the nineteenth century. Thus Fuller has brought us *Lost Animals: Extinction and the Photographic Record* (Princeton University Press), a review of the lost birds and mammals for which we have photographs. Some of the photos here are so recent that they are in color, indicating a relatively immediate loss. Even the recent ones are not always of the best photographic quality, and the old ones had all the liabilities coming from cumbersome equipment and relatively insensitive film. Usually the photographers had no idea that they were producing something like a last image of an animal that soon no one would see again. Even the indistinct images here, though, are evocative; if they weren't among the last visions of these species, we probably would not pay so much attention to them. But here they are, scores of images, sometimes of low quality, reproduced in a large-format book, along with as much as can be known about how they happened to be taken, and with short histories of the demise of the depicted species. Many times the reason for the animal's extinction is not known. The Pink-headed Duck, for instance, was not hunted within its home grounds in India, and by the time it had left in the 1920s, there was still unspoiled country wherein it could have thrived. The population crashed, though, and we will never know why. The photos were only black and white, so we don't have a photographic record of its peculiar pink plumage. The causes of the respective demises of other animals here are well known. Starving soldiers on tiny Wake Island wiped out the Wake Island Rail that could barely fly; when US forces recovered the island in 1945, there were no Rails left. The tiny Hawaiian island of Laysan was home to the Laysan Rail, until someone had the atrocious scheme to make money by introducing rabbits and guinea pigs to the island to be raw materials for a proposed meat cannery. Honeybees introduced to the Americas by European settlers made hives in hollow trees so that Carolina Parakeets could not use them for roosts and nests. Dingoes were brought to Australia by Aborigines, and eventually eliminated the dog-like Thylacine. (Then, Fuller points out, humans from elsewhere wiped out the Aboriginal Tasmanians.) Ships have rats, and rats go after eggs, and so went the New Zealand Bush Wren (and countless other island species which rats have finished off). Somehow the Brown Tree Snake was introduced to Guam, probably hitchhiking on American naval vessels after WWII, and took away the Guam Flycatchers. There are losses due to habitat destruction by humans, of course, and more to come if we are warming up our planet. It's all sad,

and part of the sadness comes from the photos that indicate not only what we have already lost, but what knowledge we can never recover. The Laughing Owl, for instance, is gone from New Zealand, and we will never know: did it actually laugh? Some observers said it did, and others said it did not laugh but shrieked; we have these old photos here, but no old recordings, so the sound is gone forever, and we will never know. Repeatedly Fuller explains that we cannot be absolutely certain some of the species here are gone; there was the 2004 sighting of an Ivory Billed Woodpecker, for instance (but he explains the many reasons why that sighting was probably erroneous).

Cryptozoologists might report a sighting of a Thylacine now and then, but it will take more than such sightings to be real evidence against the animal's extinction. The lost Quaggas and Heath Hens might be reintroduced by breeding because they are not actual independent species, but races of species that are still in existence. The others here, well, it would be some sort of miracle if they were not all gone. Years ago the BBC had a series "Last Chance to See" about endangered animals. Here, though, are the last recorded chances of seeing animals not just endangered, but gone forever. It is a beautiful book; the species deserve to be remembered this way, but they didn't deserve destruction.

It's heartbreaking and I stared at it a long time. It's one of the only photos ever taken of the *Ōmāhu*, a gorgeous little yellow-headed bird found in the Hawaiian islands. As Erroll Fuller tells us in his exceptional book, *Lost Animals*, published by Princeton University Press, "During the 20th Century, *Ōmāhu* populations plummeted. By the 1970s the species was almost extinct, with just a few surviving pockets. One of the last reasonably stable colonies lived on the slopes of the volcano, Mauna Loa. During 1984 a lava flow demolished the habitat. Lest you think extinctions are ancient history, we lost many of the animals in Fuller's book on our watch. I turned the pages of Fuller's book slowly, pondering each of the 28 animals profiled. On page 134, a darling Bachman's Warbler stares at me in a fuzzy photo taken by Robert Barber on March 30, 1977, in Florida. It may have been the last of its species. Fuller obviously scoured the world for these rare photos, presented as is, without enhancement. Because many are unclear, the book includes beautiful paintings of the animals in the appendix. But it's the photos and the stories of each animal that caused me to read this book cover to cover three times and stare longingly at each photo. Some of these animals are famous: Martha, the last Passenger Pigeon, and Doodles, one of the last Carolina Parakeets. You know about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. But have you ever heard of the Imperial Woodpecker, the world's largest woodpecker? You can see it in *Lost*

Animals, the last ever photographed, the photo taken by William Rhein in 1956 in Mexico. Some of the mammals are particularly intriguing, such as the Quagga (good news, there are five known photos of this funny colored zebra), and the Schomburgk's Deer, shown in a photograph taken in 1911 at the Berlin zoo. It was first described in 1863 by the British consul in Bangkok, where it inhabited swampy plains. Well, what happened to these animals? The answer is more complex than you might think. Here's what Fuller reports about the Schomburgk's Deer: "Standing around a metre (3.5 feet) high at the shoulder, with rich chocolate-brown coloring and spectacular antlers, they made an attractive target for hunters. During times of flooding the small herds in which the animals generally lived were often forced to crowd onto higher ground and these high points sometimes became 'islands' that could easily be surrounded by humans with guns or other weapons. The inevitable massacres followed. However, it was probably not this that caused the species extinction. Increasingly large-scale production of rice led to the destruction of the very areas that the deer inhabited, and the species became rare as the 19th century passed into the 20th. As far as is known, the animals were extinct in the wild by the early 1930s. While some might like to point the finger at hunters or habitat destroyers for the loss of these animals, the causes of their demise are often complex. Consider Fuller's report on the very first species in the book, the Atitlan Giant Grebe. Sometimes the extinction of a species can be traced back to a single cause. More often there are a number of contributory factors. But the case of the Giant Grebe of Lake Atitlan has everything: murder, habitat destruction, political interference, the introduction of an alien species, dilution of the bloodstock by hybridization, the effects of tourism, pollution, civil war, and an earthquake. Wow! Fuller explains the haunting power of the photos in his book, despite the fact that many are of poor quality, taken in difficult circumstances, and showing little detail, "It seems that a photograph of something lost or gone has a power all of its own, even though it may be tantalizingly inadequate. In some of the photos, he noted, the animals "are close enough to touch almost, but not quite. And not ever again. Review by George Smith, [...]"

Striking. It really adds a weight to animals that you normally just see as a name on a list. Some of the pictures aren't great, but that is not the point. The point is that a bad picture are all that we have left as evidence of a unique species. Excellent for somebody in the biology field (such as myself); it is a reminder of why I do what I do. For somebody outside of the field but with an interest in animals, it's a reminder for why we should care.

Not every animal in this book is extinct because of humans, but there's a lot of them. This book has photos of animals which have only in the last century, become extinct. It should be in every library as a reminder of their passing.

Loved it. The grainy, out of focus photo of these extinct animals make it even more special as most of these animals were not considered rare or endangered at the time those photos were taken.

I consider this to be a very special book! Gave to my son as a gift because he's very interested in animals and he instantly treasured it. I read some reviews criticizing the book for blurry pics and such, but to us, it just adds to the mystery and rarity of the animals and there's many great shots as well. A remarkable book worth owning or giving as a gift!

I just LOVE Errol Fuller. His books are a beautiful mixture of science and sentiment; they bring home the tragedy of lost species. There's something so poignant about the photos in this book, and the back stories are riveting. I've been reading one chapter a day just to make it last. A wonderful addition to any library.

A more descriptive title would be "21 Lost Birds and 7 More Animals." I should've used the "look inside" feature to preview the Table of Contents. The photos are good and my middle aged eyes especially appreciated the larger than average font.

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