

Record: 1

THEY'RE BACK! By: TIME, Bryan Walsh for. Time for Kids (Grades 3-4).
5/3/2013, Vol. 3 Issue 24, p4. 1p. Reading Level (Lexile): 620.

Database:Primary Search

THEY'RE BACK!

Long-extinct species are not quite back, but scientists may soon be able to re-create the creatures. Should they?

Each year, an estimated 10,000 to 100,000 animal species die off. Countless species have gone extinct over the course of Earth's history. Extinction means an animal is gone forever.

At least it used to mean that. Scientists are now closing in on the ability to bring back extinct species. No, this doesn't mean the plot of Jurassic Park is going to become a reality. Researchers need DNA to bring back a species. DNA is the chemical that carries the structure for every living thing. Dinosaurs have been gone too long for any of their DNA to remain in fossils.

But there's a real chance that we'll be able to bring back more recent species (see "Coming Soon?"). This could include Ice Age animals like the woolly mammoth. In 2003, a team of Spanish and French scientists re-created the Pyrenean ibex. The new animal didn't survive long. But advances should change that.

Correcting Mistakes

Just because we can bring species back from the dead doesn't mean that we should. There may be benefits. But there's no way to know how it will turn out. For example, would a passenger pigeon fit into its old habitat? Or might it crowd out existing species? And will people work less hard to protect animals if scientists can reverse our mistakes?

But many extinctions are our mistakes to correct. "Humans have made a huge hole in nature," businessman and environmentalist Stewart Brand recently said. "We have the ability now ... to repair some of that damage."

We would do well to remember the lesson of Jurassic Park: Proceed with caution. And maybe leave the velociraptors be.

Coming Soon?

Scientists are trying to bring back extinct species. These four animals are already in the works.

The GASTRIC BROODING FROG was native to Australia until the 1980s.

The PASSENGER PIGEON numbered in the billions. It went extinct in 1914.

The THYLACINE is known as the Tasmanian tiger. It went extinct in the 1930s.

The PYRENEAN IBEX lived in Spain and Portugal. It went extinct in 2000.

SOURCES: LONG NOW FOUNDATION; CLONING AND STEM CELLS

Power Words

proceed: to move ahead

reverse: to go back or change; to undo

Learn about animal-conservation efforts at timeforkids.com/earthday.

THINK!

If you could bring back any extinct species, which would you choose? Why?

PHOTO (COLOR): The extinct woolly mammoth, drawn here, may soon be alive again.

PHOTO (COLOR)

PHOTO (COLOR)

PHOTO (COLOR)

PHOTO (COLOR)

~~~~~

By Bryan Walsh for TIME

---

This content is for personal, non-commercial use, and can only be shared with other authorized users of the EBSCO products and databases for their personal, non-commercial use.