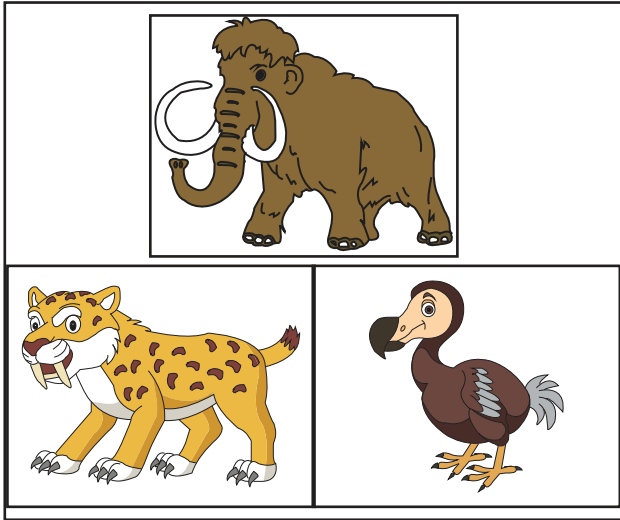


Extinct Animals on Planet Earth



Many people love a cute animal. Kittens, puppies, birds, zebras, and elephants amaze people from all walks of life. Animals have been inhabiting this planet for thousands of years, and while the animals we see today might be different from those we would have seen long ago, this world is still their home.

Over the years, the earth has changed. Climates warmed or cooled, land masses shifted, and human populations migrated. This meant changes for various animal groups.

Changes can be good, but these changes led to extinction of certain species. Extinction means a situation in which an animal stops existing. Slowly, certain animal species died out and no longer live on planet earth.

If you've ever seen pictures of dinosaurs and the creatures that lived during those times, you may have seen pictures of a woolly mammoth or a saber-toothed tiger. These are two animal species that lived thousands of years ago but cannot be found today.

The saber-toothed tiger is believed to have lived 11,000 years ago. It was large like a bear, but its teeth were razor-sharp and very long. These were fearsome creatures! No one knows why the saber-toothed tigers died out. Some believe it's because the animals they hunted for food died out first. This meant the

Extinct Animals on Planet Earth

saber-toothed tigers had nothing to eat.

The woolly mammoths are not as old as the prehistoric tigers. These large animals looked like an elephant; the only difference was they had long fur and huge tusks. The last recording of a woolly mammoth was around 1,700 B.C. That's almost 4000 years ago! Just like the saber-toothed tigers, no one really knows what happened to the woolly mammoths. Some people believe the earth became too warm for them to survive. Others believe the shifting human populations harmed them.

The dodo is a bird that once lived in the Northern Hemisphere. This bird lived off the coast of Mauritius, near Madagascar. It was discovered in the 1500s, and at that time, it became a hunted bird. The numbers of dodos slowly declined. The last record of the dodo was in the 1600s.

Today, people must work hard to protect earth's animals. We understand this better than ever in modern society. Conservation organizations make us aware of shrinking numbers of different animal species. They also help pass laws to protect habitats and outlaw the hunting of certain species.

Great pandas, gorillas, and orangutans are a few animals on the endangered species list. Blue whales and whooping cranes are a few others. It is good to protect these animals and others to keep them from becoming extinct like other animals from the past. We can all do our parts!

Extinct Animals on Planet Earth

1) What factors meant changes for various animal groups?

2) What is extinction of an animal?

- a) a situation in which an animal can't find food
- b) a situation in which an animal stops existing

3) According to the last paragraph, what other animals are on the endangered species list?

4) The reason why the saber-toothed tigers died out is not known for sure.

- a) true
- b) false

Extinct Animals on Planet Earth

- 5) Read the text to compare and contrast the woolly mammoth, the saber-toothed tiger, and the dodo. Check the correct boxes.

	The Woolly Mammoth	The Saber-Toothed Tiger	The Dodo
believed to have lived 11,000 years ago			
was discovered in the 1500s			
couldn't survive the earth's heat			
looked like an elephant			
lived thousands of years ago			
lived off the coast of Mauritius			
had razor-sharp, long teeth			