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# Extincta

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Extinction Events in Earth History  
 The Sixth Extinction  
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 Extinct Animals  
 Extinctions in Near Time

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## RAMOS COOK

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**Extinction Events in Earth History** University of Chicago Press  
 Uses the geological record to trace historical and modern views on five mass extinction events, including the disappearance of dinosaurs.

**The Sixth Extinction** Oxford University Press, UK  
 Paleobiologist Anthony D. Barnosky weaves together evidence from the deep past and the present to alert us to the looming Sixth Mass Extinction and to offer a practical, hopeful plan for avoiding it. Writing from the front lines of extinction research, Barnosky tells the overarching story of geologic and evolutionary history and how it informs the way humans inhabit, exploit, and impact Earth today. He presents compelling evidence that unless we rethink how we generate the power we use to run our global ecosystem, where we get our food, and how we make our money, we will trigger what would be the sixth great extinction on Earth, with dire consequences. Optimistic that we can change this ominous forecast if we act now, Barnosky provides clear-cut

strategies to guide the planet away from global catastrophe. In many instances the necessary technology and know-how already exist and are being applied to crucial issues around human-caused climate change, feeding the world's growing population, and exploiting natural resources. Deeply informed yet accessibly written, *Dodging Extinction* is nothing short of a guidebook for saving the planet.

**The Worst of Times** Indiana University Press

A noted naturalist shares his fascinating exploration of the life and death of animal species.

*The Call of Distant Mammoths* Univ of California Press

The invasion of land by ocean-dwelling plants and animals was one of the most revolutionary events in the evolution of life on Earth, yet the animal invasion almost failed—twice—because of the twin mass extinctions of the Late Devonian Epoch. Some 359 to 375 million years ago, these catastrophic events dealt our ancestors a blow that almost drove them back into the sea. If those extinctions had been just a bit more severe, spiders and insects might have become the ecologically dominant forms of animal life on land. This book examines the profound evolutionary consequences of the Late Devonian extinctions,

which shaped the composition of the modern terrestrial ecosystem. Only one group of four-limbed vertebrates now live on Earth while other tetrapod-like fishes are extinct. This gap is why the idea of “fish with feet” seems so peculiar yet these animals were once a vital part of our world.

*Quaternary Extinctions* Columbia University Press

To help us understand what happened during the Ice Age, Peter Ward takes us on a tour of other mass extinctions through earth's history. He presents a compelling account of the great comet crash that killed off the dinosaurs, and describes other extinctions that were even more extensive. In so doing, he introduces us to a profound paradigm shift now taking place in paleontology: rather than arising from the gradual workings of everyday forces, all mass extinctions are due to unique, catastrophic events. Written with an irresistible combination of passion and expertise, *The Call of Distant Mammoths* is an engaging exploration of the history of life and the importance of humanity as an evolutionary force. "Carefully argued...an intelligent and compelling book."-THE OLYMPIAN, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON "Ward deftly summarizes a large body of scientific literature, simplifying complex ideas for the general reader without condescension."-PUBLISHERS WEEKLY "Did the overkill really happen?...Peter Ward deftly summarizes the arguments...Ward tells (the story) well."-THE NEW SCIENTIST

**Genetics and the Extinction of Species** Tab Books

A finalist for a Los Angeles Times book award, this contagiously enthusiastic book eloquently recreates the dramatic history of life and its great extinctions, and issues an unprecedentedly compelling call to act to preserve our planet's biodiversity. Line art & photos.

*Dying Planet* OR Books

A haunting, beautifully illustrated memorial to this iconic extinct bird At the start of the nineteenth century, Passenger Pigeons were perhaps the most abundant birds on the planet, numbering literally in the billions. The flocks were so large and so dense that they blackened the skies, even blotting out the sun for days at a stretch. Yet by the end of the century, the most common bird in North America had vanished from the wild. In 1914, the last known representative of her species, Martha, died in a cage at the Cincinnati Zoo. This stunningly illustrated book tells the astonishing story of North America's Passenger Pigeon, a bird species that—like the Tyrannosaurus, the Mammoth, and the Dodo—has become one of the great icons of extinction. Errol Fuller describes how these fast, agile, and handsomely plumaged birds were immortalized by the ornithologist and painter John James Audubon, and captured the imagination of writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, Henry David Thoreau, and Mark Twain. He shows how widespread deforestation, the demand for cheap and plentiful pigeon meat, and the indiscriminate killing of Passenger Pigeons for sport led to their catastrophic decline. Fuller provides an evocative memorial to a bird species that was once so important to the ecology of North America, and reminds us of just how fragile the natural world can be. Published in the centennial year of Martha's death, *The Passenger Pigeon* features rare archival images as well as haunting photos of live birds.

**Modeling Extinction** Springer Science & Business Media

"Near time" -an interval that spans the last 100,000 years or so of earth history-qualifies as a remarkable period for many reasons. From an anthropocentric point of view, the out standing feature of near time is the fact that the evolution, cultural diversification, and global spread of *Homo sapiens* have all occurred within it. From a wider biological perspective, however, the hallmark of near time is better conceived of as being one of enduring, repeated loss. The point is important. Despite the sense of uniqueness implicit in phrases like "the biodiversity crisis," meant to convey

the notion that the present bout of extinctions is by far the worst endured in recent times, substantial losses have occurred throughout near time. In the majority of cases, these losses occurred when, and only when, people began to expand across areas that had never before experienced their presence. Although the explanation for these correlations in time and space may seem obvious, it is one thing to rhetorically observe that there is a connection between humans and recent extinctions, and quite another to demonstrate it scientifically. How should this be done? Traditionally, the study of past extinctions has fallen largely to researchers steeped in such disciplines as paleontology, systematics, and paleoecology. The evaluation of future losses, by contrast, has lain almost exclusively within the domain of conservation biologists. Now, more than ever, there is opportunity for overlap and sharing of information.

*The Humans Who Went Extinct* A&C Black

What we need to know on a personal and societal level to reverse current trends for our planet.

**Mass Extinctions and Their Aftermath** Stanford University Press

This volume is dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of dynamic biological changes through the Phanerozoic which are associated with mass extinction events and similar biotic crises, and their causal mechanisms. In particular, it documents in detail the complex nature of terrestrial and extraterrestrial feedback loops that are associated with many mass extinction intervals. Authors have been asked to represent most of the known mass extinction events through time, and to comment on the complex earthbound or extraterrestrial causes (or both) for global biotic crises. The reader is offered new perspectives of extinction boundaries, a more innovative and diverse approach to causal mechanisms and mass extinction theory, blended views of paleobiologists, oceanographers, geochemists, volcanologists, and sedimentologists by an international cast of authors. No other book on extinction presents such a broad spectrum of data and theories on the subject of mass extinction.

*The Sixth Extinction* Springer

A history of scientific ideas about extinction that explains why we learned to value diversity as a precious resource at the same time as we learned to “think catastrophically” about extinction. We live in an age in which we are repeatedly reminded—by scientists, by the media, by popular culture—of the looming threat of mass extinction. We're told that human activity is currently producing a sixth mass extinction, perhaps of even greater magnitude than the five previous geological catastrophes that drastically altered life on Earth. Indeed, there is a very real concern that the human species may itself be poised to go the way of the dinosaurs, victims of the most recent mass extinction some 65 million years ago. How we interpret the causes and consequences of extinction and their ensuing moral imperatives is deeply embedded in the cultural values of any given historical moment. And, as David Sepkoski reveals, the history of scientific ideas about extinction over the past two hundred years—as both a past and a current process—is implicated in major changes in the way Western society has approached biological and cultural diversity. It seems self-evident to most of us that diverse ecosystems and societies are intrinsically valuable, but the current fascination with diversity is a relatively recent phenomenon. In fact, the way we value diversity depends crucially on our sense that it is precarious—that it is something actively threatened, and that its loss could have profound consequences. In *Catastrophic Thinking*, Sepkoski uncovers how and why we learned to value diversity as a precious resource at the same time as we learned to think catastrophically about

extinction.

**The Mass-Extinction Debates** Columbia University Press  
Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Dobzhansky's *Genetics and the Origin of Species* have been the cornerstones of modern evolutionary and population genetic theory for the past hundred years, but in the twenty-first century, biologists will face graver problems of extinction. In this collection, a team of leading biologists demonstrates why the burgeoning field of conservation biology must continue to rely on the insights of population genetics if we are to preserve the diversity of living species. Technological and theoretical developments throughout the 1990s have allowed for important new insights into how populations have evolved in response to past selection pressures, while providing a broad new understanding of the genetic structure of natural populations. The authors explore these advances and argue for the applicability of new genetic methods in conservation biology. The volume covers such topics as the reasons for extinctions, the best ways to measure biodiversity, and the benefits and drawbacks of policies like captive breeding. *Genetics and the Extinction of Species* is a rich source of information for biologists and policymakers who want to learn more about the host of tools, theories, and approaches available for conserving biodiversity. In addition to the editors, the contributors to the volume are William Amos, Rebecca Cann, Kathryn Rodriguez-Clark, Leslie Douglas, Leonard Freed, Paul Harvey, Kent Holsinger, Russell Lande, and Helen Steers.

**The Late Devonian Mass Extinction** Princeton University Press  
In 1962 the Green River was poisoned and its native fishes killed so that the new Flaming Gorge Reservoir could be stocked with non-native game fishes for sportsmen. This incident was representative of water management in the West, where dams and other projects have been built to serve human needs without consideration for the effects of water diversion or depletion on the ecosystem. Indeed, it took a Supreme Court decision in 1976 to save Devils Hole pupfish from habitat destruction at the hands of developers. Nearly a third of the native fish fauna of North America lives in the arid West; this book traces their decline toward extinction as a result of human interference and the threat to their genetic diversity posed by decreases in their populations. What can be done to slow or end this tragedy? As the most comprehensive treatment ever attempted on the subject, *Battle Against Extinction* shows how conservation efforts have been or can be used to reverse these trends. In covering fishes in arid lands west of the Mississippi Valley, the contributors provide a species-by-species appraisal of their status and potential for recovery, bringing together in one volume nearly all of the scattered literature on western fishes to produce a monumental work in conservation biology. They also ponder ethical considerations related to the issue, ask why conservation efforts have not proceeded at a proper pace, and suggest how native fish protection relates to other aspects of biodiversity worldwide. Their insights will allow scientific and public agencies to evaluate future management of these animal populations and will offer additional guidance for those active in water rights and conservation biology. First published in 1991, *Battle Against Extinction* is now back in print and available as an open-access e-book thanks to the Desert Fishes Council.

**Dodging Extinction** World Conservation Union

With gripping narrative power, *The Condor's Shadow* traces the ways in which human greed and ignorance have wreaked havoc on our ecological landscape. The heir apparent to Peter Matthiessen's 1959 classic *Wildlife in America*, *The Condor's Shadow* is a brilliant and compulsively readable study of the state of North American wildlife and what is being done to reverse the damage humans have caused. With equal respect for the

smallest feather-mite and the fiercest grizzly, the frailest flower and the stateliest redwood, David S. Wilcove illustrates—in jargon-free, often witty prose—nature's delicate system of checks and balances, examining the factors that determine a species' vulnerability and the consequences of losing even the tiniest part of any ecosystem. An examination of both the heart-wrenching failures and stunning successes of our conservation efforts, *The Condor's Shadow* chronicles the destruction and resilience of our American wilderness and offers an insightful, eloquent overview that will appeal to avid conservationists and recreational nature-lovers alike.

**Evolutionary Paleobiology** Oxford University Press

Scott Weidensaul chronicles scientists' search for extinct species, discussing how some plants and animals have reappeared after being lost for hundreds of years.

**When the Invasion of Land Failed** University of Arizona Press  
Everyone is familiar with the dodo and the woolly mammoth, but how many people have heard of the scimitar cat and the Falkland Island fox? *Extinct Animals* portrays over 60 remarkable animals that have been lost forever during the relatively recent geological past. Each entry provides a concise discussion of the history of the animal—how and where it lived, and how it became extinct—as well as the scientific discovery and analysis of the creature. In addition, this work examines what led to extinction—from the role of cyclical swings in the Earth's climate to the spread of humans and their activities. Many scientists believe that we are in the middle of a mass extinction right now, caused by the human undermining of the earth's complex systems that support life. Understanding what caused the extinction of animals in the past may help us understand and prevent the extinction of species in the future. *Extinct Animals* examines the biology and history of some of the most interesting creatures that have ever lived, including: The American Terror Bird, which probably became extinct over 1 million years ago, who were massive predators, some of which were almost 10 feet tall; the Rocky Mountain Locust, last seen in 1902, formed the most immense animal aggregations ever known, with swarms estimated to include over 10 trillion insects; the Giant Ground Sloth, which was as large as an elephant; and the Neandertals, the first Europeans, which co-existed with prehistoric *Homo sapiens*. *Extinct Animals* includes illustrations—many created for the work—that help the reader visualize the extinct creature, and each entry concludes with a list of resources for those who wish to do further research.

**Citizen Scientist** Springer

"Over the last half billion years, there have been five major mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on Earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around the cataclysm is us. In this book the author tells us why and how human beings have altered life on the planet in a way no species has before. She provides a moving account of the disappearances of various species occurring all around us and traces the evolution of extinction as concept, from its first articulation by Georges Cuvier in revolutionary Paris up to Lyell and Darwin, and through the present day. The sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy, compelling us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human". -- Back cover.

**When Life Nearly Died** Anchor

Based on two decades of research, *The Late Devonian Mass Extinction* reviews the many theories that have been presented to explain the global mass extinction that struck the earth over 367 million years ago, considering in particular the possibility

that the extinction was triggered by multiple impacts of extraterrestrial objects.

*Catastrophic Thinking* CreateSpace

Some thousands of years ago, the world was home to an immense variety of large mammals. From woolly mammoths and saber-toothed tigers to giant ground sloths and armadillos the size of automobiles, these spectacular creatures roamed freely. Then human beings arrived. Devouring their way down the food chain as they spread across the planet, they began a process of voracious extinction that has continued to the present. Headlines today are made by the existential threat confronting remaining large animals such as rhinos and pandas. But the devastation summoned by humans extends to humbler realms of creatures including beetles, bats and butterflies. Researchers generally agree that the current extinction rate is nothing short of catastrophic. Currently the earth is losing about a hundred species every day. This relentless extinction, Ashley Dawson contends in a primer that combines vast scope with elegant precision, is the product of a global attack on the commons, the great trove of air, water, plants and creatures, as well as collectively created cultural forms such as language, that have been regarded traditionally as the inheritance of humanity as a whole. This attack has its genesis in the need for capital to expand relentlessly into all spheres of life. Extinction, Dawson argues, cannot be understood in isolation from a critique of our economic system. To achieve this we need to transgress the

boundaries between science, environmentalism and radical politics. *Extinction: A Radical History* performs this task with both brio and brilliance.

**The End of Evolution** Oxford University Press on Demand  
260 million years ago, life on Earth suffered wave after wave of cataclysmic extinctions, with the worst--the end-Permian extinction--wiping out nearly every species on the planet. This book delves into the mystery behind these extinctions and sheds light on the fateful role the primeval supercontinent, known as Pangea, may have played in causing these global catastrophes. Drawing on the latest discoveries as well as his own field expeditions to remote corners of the world, Paul Wignall reveals what scientists are only now beginning to understand about the most prolonged period of environmental crisis in Earth's history. He describes how a series of unprecedented extinction events swept across the planet in a span of eighty million years, rapidly killing marine and terrestrial life on a scale more devastating than the dinosaur extinctions that would come later. Wignall shows how these extinctions--some of which have only recently been discovered--all coincided with gigantic volcanic eruptions of flood basalt lavas that occurred when the world's landmasses were united into a single vast expanse. Unraveling one of the great enigmas of ancient Earth, this book also explains how the splitting apart of Pangea into the continents we know today ushered in a new age of vibrant and more resilient life on our planet.--Adapted from book jacket.