

The Book of Extinction

Extinct animals returning to life through Dungeons & Dragons

Animals lost to the environment are getting a second life in a surprising new way: through Dungeons & Dragons.

A new project from Mage Hand Press called **Book of Extinction** gives game statistics and lore for the 5th edition of the roleplaying game, alongside real-world history for some of the world's most famous extinct animals.

“The biodiversity of our natural world has created the history, folklore, and mythology that power fantasy stories,” said creator Lucas Zellers. “The oral storytelling we do when we play D&D is the best way to remind people what that truly means: fascinating creatures with beautiful and bizarre stories that tell us so much about the world we live in.”

The first three animals are already released as a pay-what-you-want preview through Mage Hand Press' online store. The thylacine, New Zealand's marsupial wolf, becomes an incorporeal ghost tiger. The great auk, a giant penguin from the most inaccessible reaches of Iceland, becomes a magic-casting celestial beast. And the passenger pigeon, once North America's most numerous bird, becomes a gargantuan swarm reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*.

[Free Preview](#)

Launch Date

Preview: 11/8/21
Full Book: Q3 2022

Compatible with

5th Edition DnD

Developer

Scintilla Studio

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Conservation

Any money earned from this preview will go to support conservation organizations working to preserve endangered species. “‘The Book of Extinction’ is a big swing for us,” said executive editor Mike Holik, “but we’re really excited to give people a way to make a difference in the climate crisis through this project.”

The project comes at a critical time as earth’s sixth mass extinction accelerates, with more species likely to disappear in the next 20 years than in the last century alone according to the National Academy of Sciences. In September of 2019, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared 23 more species extinct, the largest single group of species designated as extinct since the Endangered Species Act went into effect in 1973.

Experts agree bringing attention to these stories is the first step to reversing the loss of species. “Most of our neighbors don’t know what a passenger pigeon is or what it represents,” said Steve Sullivan, director of the Hefner Museum of Natural History at Miami University. “Those of us who do know have an opportunity to be leaders and say we should care about this and articulate the reasons why.”

Features

Book of Extinction will contain more than 70 species when it comes to Kickstarter in 2022, including the Pyrenean ibex, Carolina parakeet, Yangtze river dolphin, and, of course, the dodo.

Companion Podcast: Making a Monster

A companion podcast called *Making a Monster: Extinction* will expand on the strange and exhilarating stories behind these real-world animals and the monsters inspired by them. “I have all these crazy stories I can’t fit into the 1,000 words or so I’ll have for each animal in the book,” said Zellers, who also hosts and produces the podcast. “It’s my way of showing how tragic and urgent the climate crisis is while sharing things the D&D community will love: fossilized cyclops remains, the natural history of the griffin, and the housecat who ended a species.”

Mage Hand Press

From its humble beginning as two friends writing a blog called “Middle Finger of Vecna”, Mage Hand Press has grown into an international team of writers and artists creating top-of-the-line content for D&D 5th Edition. The team has produced some of the most successful expansions of the last decade, including *Dark Matter* and *Valda’s Spire of Secrets*. Mike Holik is the madman doing the writing, editing, and graphic design for all Mage Hand Press books, while Alexander Binns helps with writing and logistics. Samantha Muir serves as the team’s community manager, Twitter personality, and “con-mom”. Longtime artists include Martin Kirby-Jackson, Lucas Ferreira CM, and Agustín Marceillac.

