

Extinctopedia

Serenella Quarello

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Serenella Quarello's delightful and thoughtful reference text *Extinctopedia* focuses on various animals in danger of disappearing, with suggestions for what can be done to save them.

Quarello catalogs more than 150 types of animals, including extinct and endangered species, creatures of "least concern," and newly discovered varieties. Many of the book's examples are tragic, mourning the permanent loss of species like the regal Pyrenean ibex. Others are more hopeful thanks to successful conservation attempts. The passages are succinct and entertaining, as when they detail various animal nicknames (as with the "cabbage-eater" sea cow) or when they recount stories of individual animals like Martha, the last passenger pigeon.

Soft colored pencil illustrations complement the book's animal descriptions. Some are grayscale; others burst with a rainbow of pastels. All are charming and expressive, bringing to life the book's menagerie. A bright-eyed kakapo parrot perches above a frisky, termite-eating numbat; a shy vaquita whale swims beneath a description of its peculiar markings.

Also explored are the ethical questions that scientists face in deciding whether to revive extinct species. While emphasizing the seriousness of the environmental situation, with a potential three million species in danger of extinction by the end of the century, the book concludes on a positive note, listing ways to get involved with conservation efforts. These include supporting animal protection organizations and practicing responsible consumerism by not purchasing certain animal products like shark teeth or turtle shells.

Emphasizing the importance of protecting endangered animals, *Extinctopedia* is a colorful reference text filled with intriguing facts about species past and present.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (March / April 2024)

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