

THE DIMMING LIGHTS — ANIMAL EXTINCTION REFERENCE SHEET

The Animal Celebration and Endangered Animal Documentation Project

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Research compiled with assistance from Claude Sonnet 4.6 / Anthropic

PROJECT SCOPE

Over 40,000 animals currently face total extinction. This reference sheet documents sources for the first three animals featured in The Fading Lights post. Each animal documented receives a nonfiction record, a conservation organizations profile, and a children's narrative.

ANIMAL ONE — THE VAQUITA PORPOISE

Phocoena sinus — Little Cow of the Sea

Status 2025: 7 to 10 individuals remaining. Population 1997: 567. Population lost: 99 percent. One location on earth: northern Gulf of California, Mexico.

NOAA Fisheries — Vaquita Species Profile

Official U.S. government species profile. Physical description, habitat, population data, conservation status.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/vaquita>

WWF — Vaquita

Population history, totoaba black market connection, gillnet bycatch mechanism, conservation efforts.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/vaquita>

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

Maintains permanent large vessel inside Vaquita Refuge year-round. Works alongside Mexican Navy. Primary active conservation vessel on site.

<https://www.seashepherd.org>

IUCN Red List — Phocoena sinus

Critically endangered classification. Population assessment. Acoustic and visual survey data confirming 7 to 10 individuals including calves. Female Frida identified by bent dorsal fin.

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/17028/214503113>

IMAGE CREDIT — Vaquita photograph

By Paula Olson, NOAA. Public Domain.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=30588297>

NOTE: Genome sequencing of vaquita captured 2017 revealed species survived ancient population bottleneck before human arrival. Remaining individuals appear genetically healthier than expected. Mexico placed 193 concrete blocks on seafloor in Zero Tolerance Area to snag illegal nets. Illegal totoaba fishing continues under cartel control.

ANIMAL TWO — THE NORTHERN WHITE RHINOCEROS

Ceratotherium simum cottoni

Status: 2 females alive — Najin and Fatu, mother and daughter. Functionally extinct. Last male Sudan died March 19, 2018 at OI Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya.

OI Pejeta Conservancy — Kenya

Home of Najin and Fatu. Armed rangers guard around the clock. Primary caregiver Zacharia Mutai. Location of all conservation and embryo transfer work.

<https://www.olpejetaconservancy.org/wildlife/rhinos/northern-white-rhinos/>

BioRescue Consortium

38 pure northern white rhino embryos produced using frozen sperm from deceased males. Embryo transfers attempted July 2024, December 2024, May 2025 into southern white rhino surrogates. No lasting pregnancy yet but procedure proven possible. Quote: We will save them — Jan Stejskal, BioRescue Project Coordinator, 2025.

<https://www.biorescue.org>

IUCN Red List — Ceratotherium simum cottoni

Functionally extinct classification. Historical population data. By 1970s poaching reduced population to 700. By mid-1980s only 15 remained in wild.

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/4185/45813880>

IMAGE CREDIT — Northern white rhinoceros photograph

By Sheep81. Public Domain.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4745820>

NOTE: Fatu is approximately 24 years old — energetic, mischievous. Najin is her mother — calmer, measured. Scientists racing to achieve pregnancy while both are still alive because only they can teach a new calf how to be a northern white rhinoceros.

ANIMAL THREE — RABBS' FRINGE-LIMBED TREE FROG

Ecnomiohyla rabborum

Status: EXTINCT. September 26, 2016. Discovered 2005. Last call heard in wild 2007. Last individual Toughie died at Atlanta Botanical Garden. 11 years from discovery to extinction.

Atlanta Botanical Garden

Home of Toughie, the last known individual. Toughie's caregiver recorded the only advertising call of the species ever captured on a phone in 2014. Contact for audio permission and caregiver testimony.

<https://www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org>

IUCN Red List — Ecnomiohyla rabborum

Extinct classification. Species discovered central Panama mountains 2005 during emergency rescue before chytrid fungus wave. Formally named 2008. Males guarded water-filled tree trunk holes. Tadpoles fed from living skin of fathers' backs — only known frog species with this behavior.

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/136003/53945529>

IMAGE CREDIT — Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog photograph

By Brian Gratwicke from DC, USA. CC BY 2.0.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18339583>

National Geographic — 2014 film documentation of Toughie

Video documentation of last known individual. Toughie's call captured same year. Image projected on United Nations Building New York and St. Peter's Basilica.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com>

NOTE: Permission needed from Atlanta Botanical Garden caregiver for audio recording of Toughie's call — the only call of this species ever recorded. Priority first contact for the project. Named after conservationists George and Mary Rabb. Last female died 2009. Last other male euthanized 2012 at Zoo Atlanta. Toughie was alone from 2012 until his death in 2016.

CLONING AND GENETIC RESCUE — GENERAL NOTE

Scientists attempting to clone or genetically rescue species face the challenge of combining genetics from deceased individuals due to missing pieces. In the case of the northern white rhinoceros, frozen sperm from deceased males is combined with eggs from the last two living females. Whether the resulting individual carries the full cultural and behavioral knowledge of the original subspecies remains an open scientific and philosophical question documented in the post.

CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS REFERENCED

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society — www.seashepherd.org
Ol Pejeta Conservancy Kenya — www.olpejetaconservancy.org
BioRescue Consortium — www.biorescue.org
Atlanta Botanical Garden — www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org
IUCN Red List — www.iucnredlist.org
NOAA Fisheries — www.fisheries.noaa.gov

RESEARCH CREDIT

Statistical research for this project compiled with assistance from Claude Sonnet 4.6 by Anthropic on behalf of Dream Writer Lady Ariarose. All sources independently verifiable at links provided above.

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