

5 AUROCHS

Europe and Asia (1627)

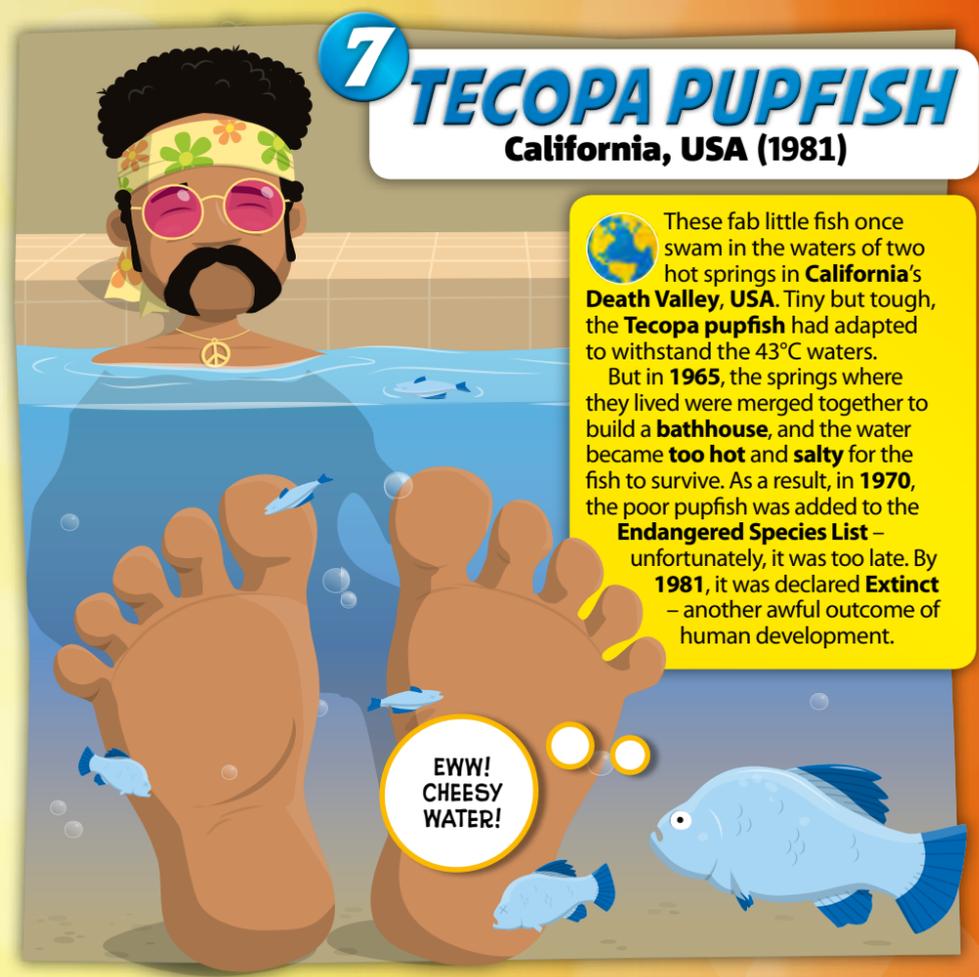
Turn the clocks back several centuries, and you'll find huge, horned **urochs** roaming the **forests of Europe** and parts of **Asia** – perfect hunting fodder for early humans. Today, all that remains of these colossal cattle are a few skeletons in museums, along with some prehistoric **cave paintings** of the big beasts in **Lascaux Cave, France**, which may date back 20,000 years! It's highly likely that aurochs are the ancestors of today's cows, but they were much, much bigger, growing up to **1.85m in height** (way taller than the average man!). The last of the aurochs lived in **Poland**, where the bulky breed died out in 1627.



7 TECOPA PUPFISH

California, USA (1981)

These fab little fish once swam in the waters of two hot springs in **California's Death Valley, USA**. Tiny but tough, the **Tecopa pupfish** had adapted to withstand the 43°C waters. But in **1965**, the springs where they lived were merged together to build a **bathhouse**, and the water became **too hot** and **salty** for the fish to survive. As a result, in **1970**, the poor pupfish was added to the **Endangered Species List** – unfortunately, it was too late. By **1981**, it was declared **Extinct** – another awful outcome of human development.



THE IUCN RED LIST...

We often hear about animals and plants being 'Endangered' or 'Vulnerable', but what does this actually mean? To help work out which species need most help, the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, created the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species** in 1964 – a system for classifying species according to the **risk of extinction** they face. So, how does the **Red List** work? After scientists have thoroughly evaluated a certain animal, plant or fungus, they place it in one of several categories on the Red List...

- Least Concern (LC)**
Widespread and not in imminent danger of being threatened. Phew!
- Near Threatened (NT)**
A species that could in the near future be placed in a 'threatened' category (below).
- Vulnerable (VU)**
Facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.
- Endangered (EN)**
A species that's facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.
- Critically Endangered (CR)**
Facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
- Extinct In The Wild (EW)**
No longer found in the wild. Populations are only found in zoos, botanical gardens or breeding programmes.
- Extinct (EX)**
No individuals exist in the wild, in captivity or cultivation.

Different factors are taken into account before selecting the correct category, including **current population size**, **rate of decline** and **geographic range**. Scientists around the world regularly **reassess the different species** to see if there are any changes to the status of the species on the list. In this way, we can help preserve and protect our world's incredible nature. Fingers crossed! Find out more about the **IUCN Red List** at iucnredlist.org

6 GASTRIC BROODING FROG

Australia (1980s)



Tadpoles swim in ponds, right? Not the incredible **gastric brooding frog's**. The females would 'eat' their own **frogspawn**, brooding the tadpoles in their **stomachs** for 6-7 weeks, having 'turned off' their digestive juices and stopped eating food. They then 'gave birth' to a brood of baby frogs by **projectile vomiting** them out of their mouths. Wow! Sadly, the **Australian amphibians** were wiped out within a decade of being discovered in **1973**. But we have exciting news... by taking cells from gastric brooding frogs **frozen in labs** years ago, and inserting them into the eggs of today's living frogs, scientists hope to **bring this super species back to life**. Sick!

8 BAIJI RIVER DOLPHIN

China (2004)



In ancient Chinese folklore, the almost blind **Baiji River dolphin** was said to be the reincarnation of a princess who was drowned after refusing to marry a man she did not love. Sadly, the real-life story of the Baiji is just as tragic. Up until the 1950s, thousands of the small, pale grey aquatic animals splashed about in the **murky waters** of China's **Yangtze River**. But, due to **overfishing**, **collisions with ships** and **pollution**, it's believed these mammals are now **Extinct**. While they're still listed as **Critically Endangered** on the **IUCN Red List** (see right), there have been no confirmed sightings of this spectacular swimmer since 2004.

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