

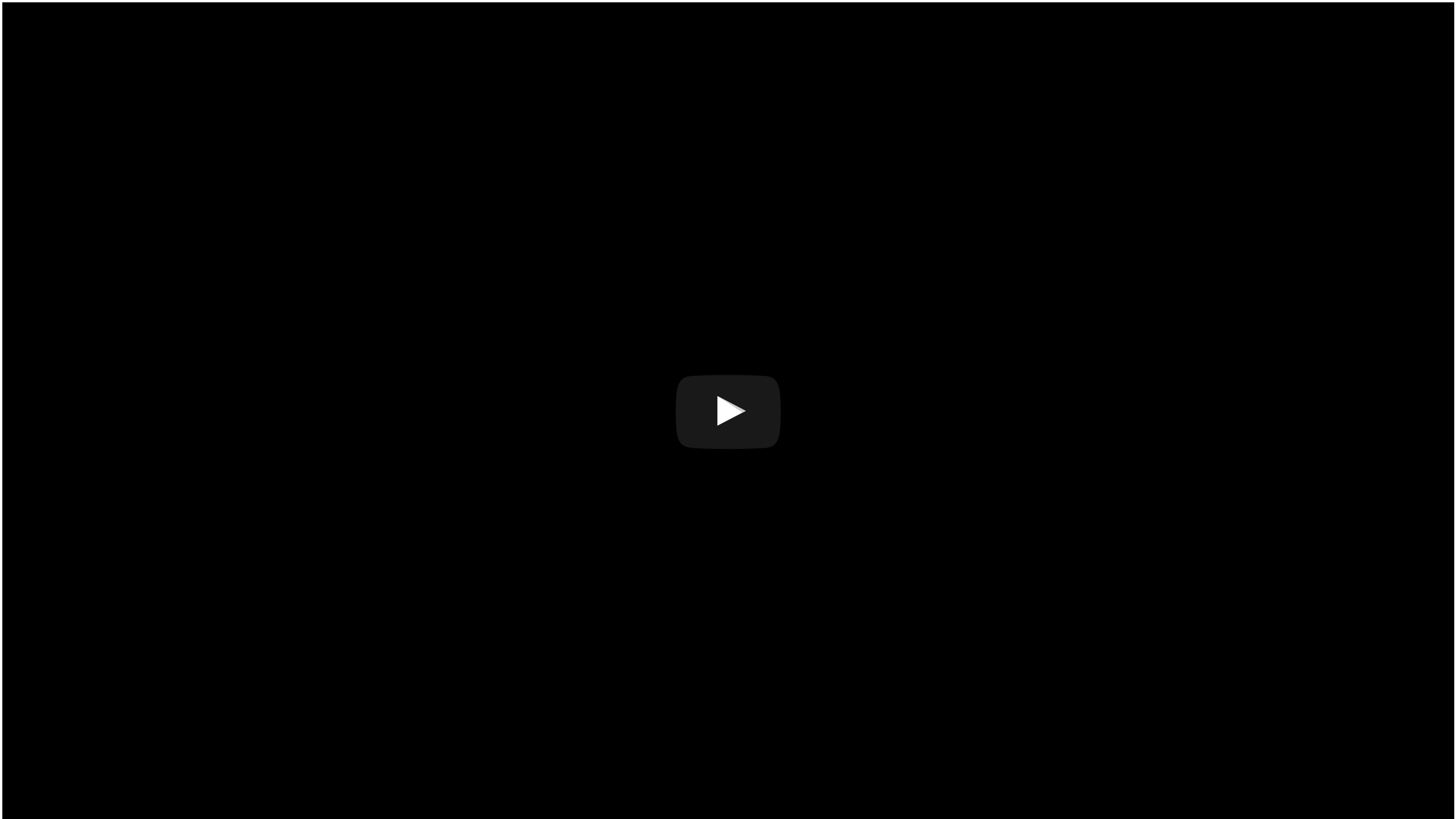
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Scientists Launch Global Quest To Track Down Long-Lost Species

“It’s a message of hope and opportunity,” one project leader said.



By Chris D’Angelo



WASHINGTON — The race is on to rediscover [a list of 25 species](#) that collectively have not been seen in more than 1,500 years.

There’s the [Wondiwoi tree kangaroo](#), last spotted in 1928 in Indonesia; the [pink-headed duck](#), missing since 1949; and the [bullneck seahorse](#), a species native to Australia never before seen in the wild.

This week, Texas-based [Global Wildlife Conservation](#) launched “[The Search for Lost Species](#),” described as the

“largest-ever global quest to find and protect” animals and plants missing for decades.

[Don Church](#), GWC’s president and director of conservation, said the organization’s “most wanted” list includes “cute and cuddly” species, the kind people are drawn to and that provide an opportunity to raise awareness about today’s biodiversity crisis.

“It’s about raising the profile both of the species that we’re looking for, but more so the places where they occur,” he told The Huffington Post. “The reason those places are important is because they have extreme biodiversity value, but very few people have heard about them. People hear about the Amazon basin, but they don’t think about the forests of Côte d’Ivoire or some of the other places where these flagship species and many of the other species occur.”

The current mass extinction of animals [claims an estimated 150-200 species every day](#). Humans have sped up the species loss rate by [roughly 1,000 times](#), according to a 2005 assessment.



SPR DARTA SHOVELNOSE STURGEON
LAST SEEN 1960, KAZAKHSTAN

THE SEARCH FOR LOST SPECIES 25 MOST WANTED



WUNDOWI TREE KANGAROO
LAST SEEN 1928, INDONESIA



BULLNECK SEAHORSE
NEVER SEEN IN WILD, AUSTRALIA



DE WINTON'S GOLDEN MOLE
LAST SEEN 1936, SOUTH AFRICA



ZUGS-MONITOR
LAST SEEN 1980, INDONESIA



WALLACE'S GIANT BEE
LAST SEEN 1981, INDONESIA



ATTENBOROUGH'S LONG-BEAKED ECHIDNA
LAST SEEN 1963, INDONESIA



WELLINGTON'S SOLITARY CORAL
LAST SEEN 2000, GALÁPAGOS



SIERRA LEONE CRAB
LAST SEEN 1955, GUINEA FORESTS



JACKSON'S CLIMBING SALAMANDER
LAST SEEN 1977, GUATEMALA



HIMALAYAN QUAIL
LAST SEEN 1876, INDIA



PINK-HEADED DUCK
LAST SEEN 1949, MYANMAR



PONDICHERY SHARK
LAST SEEN 1979, INDIA



NANDAPHA FLYING SQUIRREL
LAST SEEN 1981, INDIA



ILIN ISLAND CLOUDRUNNER
LAST SEEN 1953, THE PHILIPPINES



SILVER-BACKED CHEVROTAIN
LAST SEEN 1990, VIETNAM



MISS WALDRON'S RED COLOBUS
LAST SEEN 1978, CÔTE D'IVOIRE



VOELTZKOW'S CHAMELEON
LAST SEEN 1913, MADAGASCAR



SCARLET HARLEQUIN TOAD
LAST SEEN 1990, VENEZUELA



NEW ZEALAND GREATER SHORT-TAIL BAT
LAST SEEN 1967, NEW ZEALAND



SINÚ PARAKEET
LAST SEEN 1999, COLOMBIA



VELVET PITCHER PLANT
LAST SEEN 1918, INDONESIA



SOMALI SENGI
LAST SEEN BEFORE 1968, SOMALIA



FERNANDINA GALÁPAGOS TORTOISE
LAST SEEN 1906, GALÁPAGOS



OMILTEMÍ COTTONTAIL
LAST SEEN EARLY 1900S, MEXICO

GLOBAL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



ART BY ALEXIS ROCKMAN
JOIN THE SEARCH AT LOSTSPECIES.ORG

GLOBAL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The group's list of 25 flagship species — none of which have been officially declared extinct — comes from a larger list of 1,200 species considered “lost” in more than 160 countries. GWC compiled the lengthy list with the help of experts at the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The organization is hoping to launch expeditions to track down

species this fall. In addition to roughly \$500,000 in funding that GWC plans to allocate to the project, the organization is looking for corporate sponsors and private donations.

Robin Moore, a conservation biologist and GWC’s communications director, said in a statement that for many of these species, “this is likely their last chance to be saved from extinction.”


To meet GWC’s definition of “lost,” the species must have been unseen by scientists for at least a decade. In some cases, species are thought to have gone extinct due to threats like hunting, habitat loss and disease. In others, species were believed to have existed in extremely small numbers or remote, inaccessible habitats, before their population was decimated or totally wiped out.

Church told HuffPost he expects some will be found. But even if they aren’t, there’s an excitement in the journey, he said, which could lead to a greater appreciation for the world’s biodiversity hotspots or the discovery of a species never seen before.

“It’s a message of hope and opportunity to still save these places and the species within,” he said. “And it’s not a message that’s going to put people into sort of their despair and lead them to throwing their hands up and saying — giving up, giving up on the biodiversity of our planet — which is easily done by people when all they hear the magnitude of the environmental crisis across the planet.”

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Chris D’Angelo 
Reporter, The Huffington Post

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