

As Dead as a Dodo

If you tried looking for a dodo today, you would be looking for a very long time. You would not find one in a zoo, nor would you find them in the wild. The only place you can see a dodo today is in a museum. This is because it is extinct.

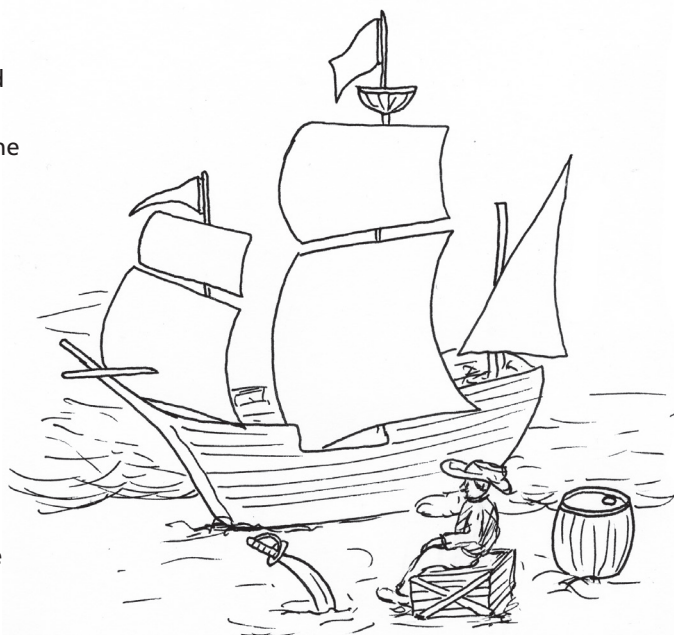
When an animal, fish or bird is extinct, it means that every one of that type of creature is dead.

So why are all the dodos dead and what can we learn from the dodo's tragic story?

The dodo was an ugly bird. It had a funny-looking head and short stubby wings. You would think it had no friends. But you would be wrong. Before man came along the dodo was very happy living with all the other animals on the island of Mauritius.

One day in 1507, some sailors from Portugal saw the island and wanted to stop there. The quiet life of the dodo had changed forever and 170 years later all the dodos were dead.

Dodos were very friendly birds and would waddle up to new visitors to see what was happening. Little did they know that the sailors wanted them



on their dinner table. As big as turkeys, they tasted great! The sailors called them 'doudo' which meant 'stupid' in their language.

Along with the sailors came dogs, pigs and rats. They scared the dodos from their nests and probably ate their eggs too. These poor flightless birds could not stop their young from being attacked.

In 1681 the last dodo was killed.

Today lots of other animals, fish and birds are nearly extinct. If we can learn a lesson from the story of the dodo, then perhaps the dodo would not have died in vain.

