



Scientists Warn: This Animal Could Thrive After Human Extinction

Description

If humans were to vanish from Earth, life would continue, but the hierarchy among species would change significantly. The key question is not just which species would survive, but whether any could rise to a position of dominance.

For tens of thousands of years, human activity has altered ecosystems and caused many species to go extinct. Reports suggest that humans arriving in Australia around 47,000 years ago coincided with the extinction of large marsupials like Diprotodon.

This long-standing impact has created a considerable ecological gap. Filling this gap would require not just resilience but also intelligence, cooperation, and the ability to alter environments sustainably.

Chimpanzees and gorillas are often viewed as the closest relatives to humans. Their cognitive skills and opposable thumbs enable them to use basic tools. However, their communication methods remain limited, depending mostly on sounds and gestures rather than complex language. Professor Tim Coulson from the University of Oxford noted that primates rely heavily on social networks for survival, which might hinder their adaptation to major environmental changes.

In contrast, marine mammals like dolphins and whales show high intelligence and social structures. However, their anatomy limits their ability to manipulate their surroundings because they do not have dexterous limbs.

Certain species like brown rats would likely thrive without humans. Already found on nearly every continent, they adapt quickly and reproduce prolifically. However, their lack of complex reasoning and communication, coupled with predation risks, may restrict their long-term success.

Feral cats and dogs could see population growth as they currently survive in urban areas without human intervention, but they would eventually face competition from larger predators such as wolves.

Birds, particularly corvids and New Caledonian crows, may be the most promising candidates for future dominance. These species demonstrate advanced problem-solving skills, such as using cars to open nuts or creating tools, showing cognitive abilities similar to great apes. Parrots also exhibit meaningful use of language, suggesting advanced intelligence.

However, no existing species possesses all the traits needed to take over from humans. If we were to disappear, ecosystems would certainly reorganize, but a new dominant species is not guaranteed to emerge.

Vocabulary List:

1. **hierarchy** /'haɪərərki/ (noun): a system with different levels or ranks



2. **extinct** //ɪk'stɪŋkt// (adjective): no longer living anywhere on Earth
3. **resilience** //rɪ'zɪliəns// (noun): ability to recover quickly after problems
4. **cognitive** //'kɒgnətɪv// (adjective): related to thinking and understanding situations
5. **dexterous** //'dekstrəs// (adjective): skillful and careful with hands or limbs
6. **manipulate** //mə'nɪpjə,leɪt// (verb): to move or control something skillfully

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What would continue to exist if humans vanished from Earth?
Option: Only humans
Option: Life
Option: Cities
Option: Technology
2. How long ago did humans arrive in Australia?
Option: 10,000 years
Option: 25,000 years
Option: 47,000 years
Option: 100,000 years
3. Which creatures are considered the closest relatives to humans?
Option: Dolphins
Option: Chimpanzees and gorillas
Option: Brown rats
Option: Feral cats
4. What hinders primates' adaptation to environmental changes?
Option: Limited intelligence
Option: Social networks
Option: Physical limitations
Option: Lack of communication
5. Which species is known for its advanced problem-solving skills?
Option: Brown rats
Option: Corvids



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- Option: Dolphins
 - Option: Feral dogs

6. What limits marine mammals' ability to manipulate their surroundings?

- Option: Lack of intelligence
- Option: Social structures
- Option: Anatomy
- Option: Lack of water

True-False

- 7. If humans were to vanish completely, a new dominant species is guaranteed to emerge.
- 8. Brown rats could thrive in the absence of humans.
- 9. Corvids are less intelligent than dolphins.
- 10. Chimpanzees use complex language to communicate.
- 11. Feral cats and dogs do not survive in urban areas without human help.
- 12. Marine mammals can easily manipulate their surroundings due to their anatomy.

Gap-Fill

- 13. The extinction of large marsupials like Diprotodon coincided with humans arriving around _____.
- 14. Primates rely heavily on social networks for _____.
- 15. The ability to alter environments sustainably requires intelligence and _____.
- 16. Birds like New Caledonian crows show advanced skills such as using cars to _____.
- 17. Certain species like brown rats would likely thrive without _____.
- 18. No existing species possesses all the traits needed to take over from _____.



Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Life 2. 47,000 years 3. Chimpanzees and gorillas 4. Social networks 5. Corvids 6. Anatomy

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. 47,000 years ago 14. survival 15. cooperation 16. open nuts 17. humans

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