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# 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.

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## 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** //ˈkɒgnətɪv// (adjective): related to thinking and understanding situations
5. **dexterous** //ˈdɛkstrəs// (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



- 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

## Vocabulary quizzes

### Multiple Choice ( Select the Correct answer for each question. )

1. What process describes the end of a species on Earth?

Option: Evolution

Option: Extinction

Option: Adaptation

Option: Migration

2. What type of processes in the body relate to metabolism?

Option: Mechanical

Option: Metabolic

Option: Chemical

Option: Physical

3. What term describes the path an object takes as it moves around another object in space?

Option: Rotation

Option: Orbit

Option: Revolution

Option: Transition

4. What are released pollutants into the atmosphere commonly referred to as?

Option: Outflows

Option: Emissions

Option: Discharges

Option: Exhausts

5. What word describes the ability to recover from difficult situations?

Option: Weakness

Option: Failure

Option: Resilience

Option: Fragility



6. What adjective describes someone who is skillful with their hands?

- Option: Clumsy
- Option: Awkward
- Option: Dexterous
- Option: Fumbling

7. What term means to force something out?

- Option: Inhale
- Option: Compel
- Option: Expel
- Option: Retain

8. What is the term for experiences that fully engage one's senses?

- Option: Dull
- Option: Boring
- Option: Immersive
- Option: Superficial

9. What term describes the action of providing energy for something?

- Option: Cooling
- Option: Fueling
- Option: Hindering
- Option: Stalling

10. What term relates to mental processes such as perception and memory?

- Option: Physical
- Option: Emotional
- Option: Social
- Option: Cognitive

**Gap-Fill ( Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

11. The gas was heated until it became \_\_\_\_\_, reaching extreme temperatures.
12. The pilot executed a series of \_\_\_\_\_ to safely land the aircraft.
13. Before the rocket launch, the team initiated a \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure everything was ready.
14. Scientists study a \_\_\_\_\_ to understand the history of life on Earth.
15. Many people experience \_\_\_\_\_ before taking an important exam.



16. The \_\_\_\_\_ worked tirelessly to prepare the ship for its next voyage.
17. The \_\_\_\_\_ of water from the dam must be carefully regulated.
18. The caterpillar will \_\_\_\_\_ into a butterfly.
19. The organization established a \_\_\_\_\_ to define roles and responsibilities.
20. The woolly mammoth is an example of a species that is \_\_\_\_\_ today.

**Matching Sentences ( Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

21. The music album is a collection of various artists' best hits, making it a perfect compilation.
22. The community came together to mourn the loss of their beloved leader.
23. The car's mechanics are vital for ensuring it operates smoothly and efficiently.
24. Vaccination helps the body become immune to certain diseases.
25. The process of fueling the rocket required precision and timing.
26. The velocity of the spacecraft increased as it entered the gravitational field of the planet.
27. The volcano has been erupting for several days, spewing ash into the atmosphere.
28. Many individuals experience anxiety during stressful situations or major life changes.
29. Cognitive therapy is focused on changing unhelpful thought patterns.
30. The community showed incredible resilience in the face of disaster and rebuilt their homes.

**Answer**

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Extinction 2. Metabolic 3. Orbit 4. Emissions 5. Resilience 6. Dexterous 7. Expel  
8. Immersive 9. Fueling 10. Cognitive

**Gap-Fill:** 11. superheated 12. maneuvers 13. countdown 14. fossil 15. anxiety 16. crew 17. outflow  
18. transform 19. hierarchy 20. extinct

**Matching sentence:** 1. compilations 2. mourn 3. mechanics 4. immune 5. fueling 6. velocity 7. erupting  
8. anxiety 9. cognitive 10. resilience



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