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'De-extinction' plan to bring Dodo back

An audacious plan between geneticists and conservationists to bring back the extinct [Dodo](#) has been announced.

Attempts to bring the species back to its former habitat in Mauritius are set to be led by US-based biotechnology and genetic engineering company, Colossal Biosciences, which is pursuing the 'de-extinction' of various other species.

The company has entered a partnership with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to find a suitable location for the large flightless birds, with the belief that its return to Mauritius could also benefit Dodo's immediate environment and other species.



An illustration of a Dodo (Colossal Biosciences).

Colossal first announced its intention to resurrect Dodo in January 2023. Exactly if or when it will be able to do so remains unclear, but fresh details regarding how it plans to recreate the species have been revealed.

The full genome of Dodo has been sequenced by Beth Shapiro, lead paleogeneticist at Colossal. In addition, the company says it has now sequenced the genome of [Rodrigues Solitaire](#), an extinct relative of Dodo from Rodrigues Island, close to Mauritius, and [Nicobar Pigeon](#), Dodo's closest living relative, which resides on islands in South-East Asia.

Geneticists at Colossal have found cells that act as a precursor for ovaries or testes in Nicobar Pigeon can grow successfully in a chicken embryo. They are now researching to see if these cells can turn into sperm and eggs.

Vikash Tatayah, director of conservation at the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, said the charity approached Colossal earlier this year about a partnership, and is planning a feasibility study for where best to locate Colossal's birds when they are born.

Black River Gorges National Park, with has pockets of restored forest, is one location being considered; neighboring nature reserves at Round Island and the islet of Aigrettes are two others.

Dodo has been extinct since 1681, following predation by humans and introduced animals.

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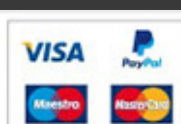
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