

The five: back-from-the-brink species once thought extinct

From wild dogs to horned frogs, all manner of animals are still capable of keeping out of our sight, some for over 100 years



The horned marsupial frog. Photograph: Brian Gratwicke/Wikipedia

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Horned marsupial frog

This week, scientists in South America **spotted a rare frog previously thought to be extinct**. The Tropical Herving research group found a colony of horned marsupial frogs in a recent expedition into the Chocó rainforest. The species had last been seen in Ecuador in 2005. The frogs' natural habitat is in the high canopy of the rainforest, threatened by deforestation.

Fernandina Island giant tortoise



Photograph: Rodrigo Buendía/AFP/Getty Images

Chelonoidis phantasticus, a giant tortoise that had not been seen in over 100 years **was recently rediscovered on the Galapagos Islands**. The solitary adult female tortoise was removed to a breeding centre for giant tortoises. Conservationists hope that a male mate can be found.

Coelacanth



Photograph: Gerald Hoberman/UIG via Getty Images

This large fish had been considered extinct for 65 million years, until a South African museum curator rediscovered the species on a fishing trawler in 1938. However, they **are now under threat of extinction** due to oil exploration off the coast of South Africa. This is a huge species of fish, growing up to 2 metres (6.5ft) in length and weighing up to 90kg (200lbs.)

New Guinea highland wild dog



Photograph: NGHWDF

In 2017, scientists were able to confirm the existence of the **New Guinea wild dog**, which had not been seen in over 50 years. Photographs captured images of at least 15 wild dogs living in a remote location in the Sudirman Mountains in Indonesia. The rare species is thought to be one of the most primitives canines alive and related to the Australian dingo.

Terror skink



Photograph: nixunhuan.com

This lizard was rediscovered in New Caledonia in 2003, after not being seen since 1876. Individuals of the species have since been found in 2009, 2013, and 2018. Also known as Bocourt's terrific skink, the species is characterised by its long, curved teeth and can grow up to 50cm in length. **Inigo Alexander**