

THE EXTINCTION OF THE DODO BIRD

The dodo was a large flightless bird which used to inhabit the island of Mauritius.

History

- 1507 – Portuguese ships transporting **31** stopped at the island to collect food and water.
- 1638 – The Dutch established a **32** on the island.
- They killed the dodo birds for their meat.
- The last one was killed in 1681.

Description

- The only record we have is written descriptions and pictures (possibly unreliable).
- A Dutch painting suggests the dodo was very **33**
- The only remaining soft tissue is a dried **34**
- Recent studies of a dodo skeleton suggest the birds were capable of rapid **35**
- It's thought they were able to use their small wings to maintain **36**
- Their **37** was of average size.
- Their sense of **38** enabled them to find food.

Reasons for extinction

- Hunting was probably not the main cause.
- Sailors brought dogs and monkeys.
- **39** also escaped onto the island and ate the birds' eggs.
- The arrival of farming meant the **40** was destroyed.