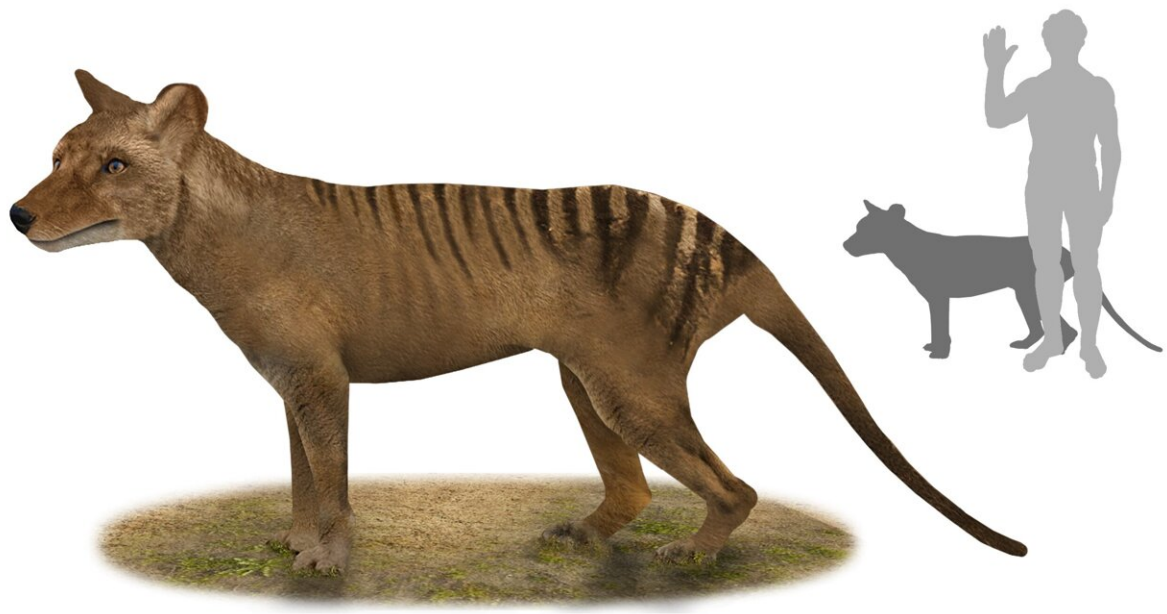


De-extinction company plans to bring back the Tasmanian tiger

August 18 2022, by Alexandra Skores



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Colossal Biosciences, a Dallas company pursuing plans to bring woolly mammoths back to the Arctic tundra, is setting its sights on bringing back another extinct species: the Tasmanian tiger.

The Tasmanian [tiger](#), otherwise known as the thylacine, is an Australian marsupial that has been extinct since 1936 after roaming the earth for millions of years. This is the second announced animal de-extinction

project from Ben Lamm, co-founder and CEO of Colossal, which uses breakthrough gene-editing technologies for a new wave of wildlife and ecosystem conservation.

"Our goal is to really identify species where de-extinction can help existing degraded ecosystems," Lamm said. "After we got the right infrastructure and people in place to be working on the mammoth, we started to look at other potential species."

Colossal has partnered with the University of Melbourne and its Thylacine Integrated Genetic Restoration Research Lab, headed up by Andrew Pask, the leading marsupial evolutionary biologist. Pask, who has been studying the Tasmanian tiger for over 15 years, has also joined Colossal's Scientific Advisory Board.

The partnership with Colossal, Pask said, will accelerate the science.

"We lost this incredibly unique animal that sat right at the top of a food chain," Pask said. "It does destabilize all the species that sit beneath them in that ecosystem. So there's already been a lot of ripple effects that have happened as a result of the loss of the thylacine."

According to the National Museum of Australia, there were about 5,000 Tasmanian tigers in Tasmania, Australia, at the time of European settlement in the late 1800s and early 1900s. But excessive hunting, combined with factors such as [habitat destruction](#) and introduced disease, led to the rapid extinction of the species.

Unlike the with woolly mammoth, the team has DNA from the Tasmanian tiger and the marsupial has an "easier" gestation period to work with, according to Lamm.

"There's a lot of really good preserved museum specimens that leave that

DNA quite intact, which makes putting that genome back together a lot easier than for older specimens," Pask said.

The timeline for the woolly mammoth is still five to six years, Lamm said. For the Tasmanian tiger, Colossal says it won't release an official timeline, but with a promising gestational period, it could be the first species to be brought back.

In March, Colossal secured \$60 million from investors to accelerate development of its genetic tools and technologies. The funding is led by billionaire investor Thomas Tull and San Francisco-based venture capital firm At One Ventures. Other investors include socialite Paris Hilton, Arch Ventures co-founder Robert Nelson, Ethereum blockchain co-founder Charles Hoskinson and a host of growth capital firms.

Colossal now has \$75 million in backing to develop software and artificial wombs to advance species preservation and restoration and further develop human genetic technologies.

Pask and Lamm say they are confident in their plan and the technology they have created.

"This would be transformative," Pask said. "This will be absolutely changing the way that we think about [species](#) management ... [and] ecosystem management for the whole planet."

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Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: De-extinction company plans to bring back the Tasmanian tiger (2022, August 18)

retrieved 22 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-08-de-extinction-company-tasmanian-tiger.html>

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