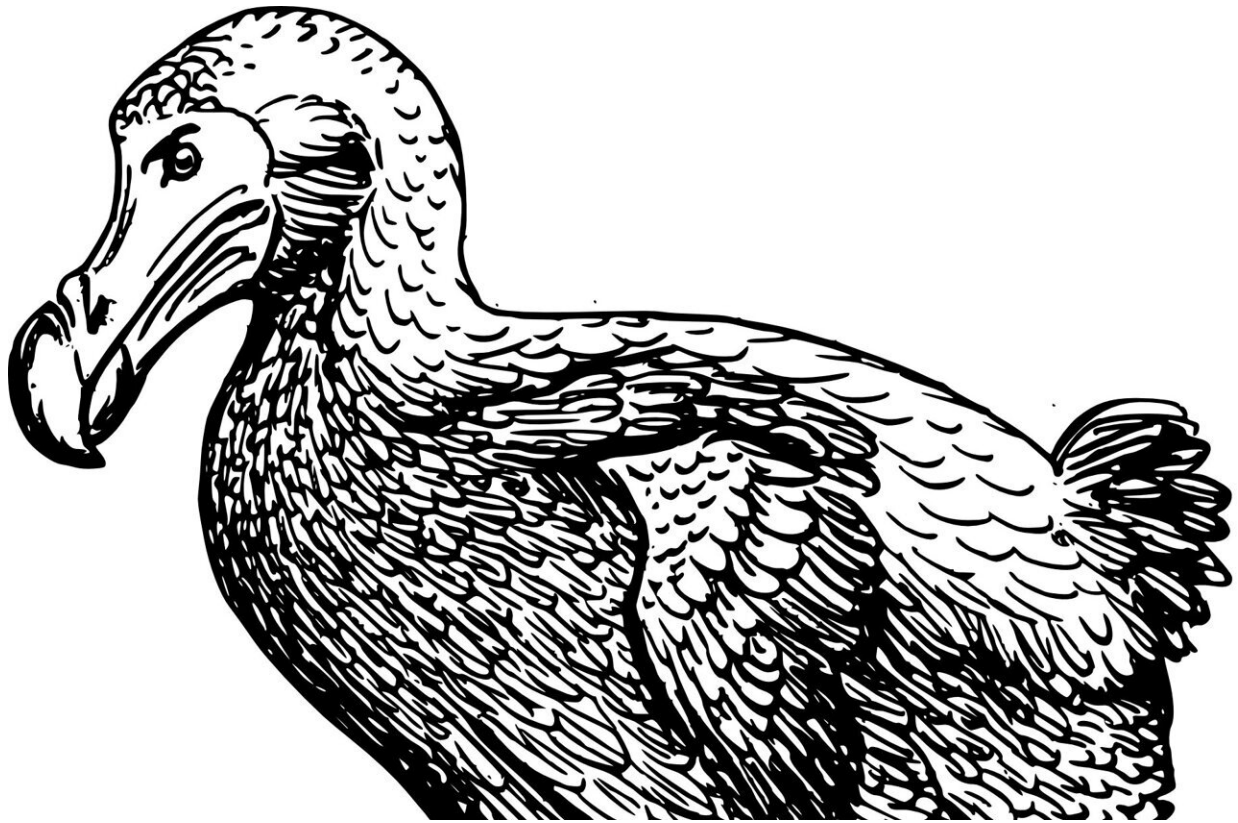


# Colossal Biosciences finds a home for one extinct species

November 22 2023, by Irving Mejia-Hilario, The Dallas Morning News

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

After years of working on bringing back one of the most popular extinct animals—the dodo—Colossal Biosciences has found a home for its bird in Mauritius in a new partnership with the Mauritian Wildlife

Foundation.

The Dallas-based company has previously announced it's trying to wake the Tasmanian tiger and woolly mammoth from their eternal slumber. Colossal's progress on the dodo would lead the bird back to its native home in East Africa and potentially give the company the power to save other soon-to-be [extinct species](#), Ben Lamm, co-founder and CEO of Colossal Biosciences.

"Our goal with all the [species](#) we work on is to bring them back into their [natural habitat](#)," Lamm said. "This endorsement and collaboration from the Mauritian Wildlife is a big testament to the incredible work that not only our scientific teams are doing to bring back the dodo but the team to successfully wild them back into their natural habitats."

Though Colossal still doesn't have a timetable for the dodo's return, its comeback could turn the tides for birds, like the pink pigeon, which are close to meeting the same fate, Matt James, Colossal's chief animal officer, said.

The pink pigeon, a 15-inch tall herbivorous bird native to Mauritius, is also facing extinction due to habitat degradation, diseases and inbreeding, according to the Natural History Museum.

"The dodo is going to help the pink pigeon," he said. "As we develop these Colossal de-extinction programs, we're identifying species that would benefit directly from those technologies. All the technologies that we're going to develop around the dodo have become tools that we can start to apply to the pink pigeon and other pigeon conservation projects."

There are currently only about 500 pink pigeons left in Mauritius, according to the company.

The technology Lamm, James and the Colossal team are using to resurrect its species from the dead is genomic editing technology; a method to alter the DNA of a cell or organism. By teaming up with Mauritius, Colossal thinks it will be able to advance its efforts even further, James said.

"We can apply these high-quality reference genomes with no gaps to all these amazing species that exist today, like the Mauritius pink pigeon, but that's a first step," he said. "Mammalian cloning was unlocked in the late 90s but that doesn't exist today for [avian species](#). So investing in places where we can actually use new methods to achieve cloning-like technologies for birds is really integral."

The company is pursuing its dreams of bringing back the [dodo](#) with heavy backing behind it. In January, Colossal landed an investment from over a dozen companies, including Dallas private equity financier Victor Vescovo and CIA-backed In-Q-Tel.

Lamm said he expects Colossal to put members of its team in Mauritius next year to work with the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation and the local government.

The collaboration between Mauritius and Colossal may help dispel some of the Jurassic Park comparisons the company has received in the past, Lamm said.

"We've heard all of those comments over the years," Lamm said. "But we have an opportunity to do it for good reasons because when you remove an animal from an ecosystem, that ecological void is felt. We're not out to build things that shouldn't exist. We're focused on undoing the sins of the past and bringing back species to their native homes that mankind had a role in its demise."

2023 The Dallas Morning News. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Colossal Biosciences finds a home for one extinct species (2023, November 22)  
retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2023-11-colossal-biosciences-home-extinct-species.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.