



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Undergraduate Student Discussion - Genomics and Wildlife

Description

Part of unit 5 of the [Course on Genomics, Ethics and Society](#), this undergraduate-level case study looks at issues of genomics and wildlife.

Body

Directions: Read the following scenario to prepare for the discussion.

Though once the most abundant birds in North America, passenger pigeons have been extinct now for 100 years, the last member of the species dying in a zoo in 1914. However, some scientists have proposed using passenger pigeon genes to revive the species—a process called “de-extinction.” If the process is successful, scientists could potentially bring other species back from extinction, particularly those thought to be important for conservation.

However, various challenges have been raised to the idea of bringing passenger pigeons back from extinction. One is that it’s not clear whether any extinct species could be important for conservation. Another is a prediction that thousands of passenger pigeons would be needed in order to sustain the recreated population, thus requiring major resources if it is to be fully brought back from extinction. Lastly, it is not clear whether we should reintroduce de-extinct animals into their original habitats. A sudden influx of thousands of passenger pigeons would potentially strain ecosystem resources.

Imagine you are supervising a taskforce including scientists and others from different disciplines, charged with overseeing the passenger pigeon de-extinction process. In this discussion forum, discuss the ethical issues that would arise and the implications that you think the process of de-extinction has for conservation. We expect a lively discussion, not an essay, and it is OKAY to change your views more than once during the discussion or stick to your initial view throughout the discussion. Post your brief initial entry on the FIRST DAY so that everyone can respond to others' ideas throughout the discussion. You should contribute at least three times to the discussion. The [undergraduate discussion grading rubric](#) explains what we're looking for in this discussion: good writing quality, clarity and relevance, a response on the first day of discussion, then a collegial exchange with other members of the discussion; your posts should show knowledge and understanding of the readings, and you should try to develop an argument for which you provide support, and that engages critically and thoughtfully with the course materials.

[Continue to Graduate Student Discussion](#)

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Instructor Materials

Topics

Sustainability

Environmental Justice

Discipline(s)

Animal Science

Genetics and Genomics

Life and Environmental Sciences