

Alaotra Grebe extinction ? Do you care?

Today we announced that Alaotra Grebe, a waterbird from Madagascar, is officially extinct on the Red List ([more](#)). The Dodo is the undoubted 'celebrity' among extinct species with its depiction in books, cartoons and the well-used expression 'Dead as a Dodo'. Less well known about the Dodo is that it heads up a group of single island flightless birds that became extinct either at the hands of man, or by the introduction of predators that came along with the arrival of people to their islands. More than 130 species of birds have become extinct since AD 1500, mostly because of human actions. A closer look at the extinct bird list reveals a suite of familiar bird groups such as petrels, herons, ducks, moorhens, pigeons, doves, parrots, thrushes, warblers and starlings that have been lost. Alaotra Grebe also joins two other species of grebe which have become extinct as recently as the last quarter of the 20th Century - Colombian Grebe and Atitlan Grebe. Next week marks the anniversary of another - more famous - bird extinction. On 3 June 1844, the last pair of Great Auks was slaughtered, the female still incubating an egg at Eldey Rock of the coast of Iceland. One of the most intriguing of the planet's vanished birds, whose first name was the original penguin, ironically one of the best loved groups of birds on our planet. If a penguin species were to become extinct it would very likely enter the celebrity status alongside the dodo. Alaotra Grebe will have been unknown to most people but, like a great painter whose work is recognised only after they have died, it will now become better known because of its extinction. The extinction of Alaotra Grebe is a reminder of the perilous state that many species find themselves in now. Today's Red List update includes 190 species which are listed as Critically Endangered. This includes Junín Grebe which has a population of less than 250 individuals and recent surveys indicate a further population decline. The BirdLife Partnership is committed to stopping any extinction ([click here to find out more](#)). Today marks a black day in this year of **International Year of Biodiversity**. When we publicise news of threat or extinction the first question posed by the media will be: 'Why should we care?' ***Please add your thoughts on why people should care when a species goes extinct using the comments list below.***



Image credit: [Chris Rose](#).