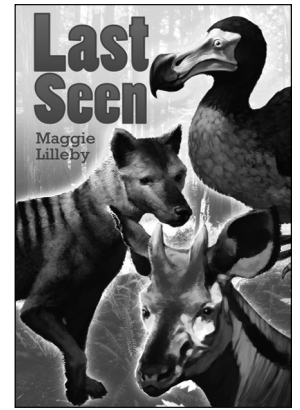


# Last Seen

by Maggie Lilleby



## Book Summary

Once, Earth was home to an even greater variety of living things than it is today. This book looks at some of the amazing animals that have become extinct and those that have been saved from extinction. It also discusses how people can protect plants and animals from dying out.

## Features of the Book

- Scientific explanation
- Explanations of “how” and “why”
- Illustrations, photographs, maps, diagrams, and captions
- Cause and effect
- Table of contents, glossary, and index

## Purpose

*Last Seen* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** evaluating ideas and information;
- S** identifying an author’s purpose and point of view;
- S** identifying cause-and-effect relationships;
- S** exploring reasons for the extinction of plants and animals and how people have contributed to this process.

## Investigation Tools

- What’s the Background? – The Last Ice Age, page 6
- Digging Deeper – No Escape, page 10
- Weighing Both Sides – Hunting – Helpful or Harmful?, page 14
- Looking Closer – Scaly Survivors, pages 18–19
- Step by Step – Saving the Buffalo, page 22
- Making Connections – Our Lost Cousins, page 27

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Evaluating ideas and information
- S** Identifying an author’s purpose and point of view
- S** Exploring reasons for the extinction of plants and animals and how people have contributed to this process

## Introducing the text

Discuss how readers can find out if a story, article, or report is accurate or influenced by a particular point of view.

- *Is it OK for a writer to have a point of view on a science topic? Why/why not?*
- *How can you find out if information is accurate or if it only supports a personal opinion?*

Draw out the idea that all writers have a point of view and that when the writer states their opinion upfront, the reader can use this to help evaluate the fairness or accuracy of the information.

Explain that the students will be evaluating the information in the book and identifying the author’s purpose. Examine the front and back cover together and ask the students to think about the author’s views as they read.

## Reading and discussing the text

Read pages 3 and 4 with the students, noting the various facts.

- *Does the information fit with what you already know? How could we check the facts?*
- *How have scientists found out this information?*

As the students read the next chapter independently, ask them to think about the sources of information that scientists use. The students can work with a partner, identifying the sources (such as fossils and frozen animals) and explaining what could be learnt from each source.

Check that the students are familiar with the expression “as dead as a dodo”. Ask them to read chapters 2 and 3, thinking about the author’s purpose and point of view. They can then discuss the following question with a partner:

- *Does the writer express an opinion about extinction? Why do you think that?*

The students can read chapters 4 and 5, noting and discussing the author’s point of view.

- *Does the writer convince you that the information is true? If so, how does she do this? How could you check?*

As the students read the last chapter, offer support to follow the information on page 28. Discuss the comparisons that the author makes between natural causes of extinction (asteroids, in this chapter) and the actions of humans.

Read the conclusion on page 30 with the students, then discuss their assessment of the author’s purpose and point of view.

- *What do you think the author’s purpose was? Has she achieved her purpose? Why/why not?*
- *Do you agree with her point of view? Why/why not?*


## Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

**S** Identifying cause-and-effect relationships

**S** Exploring reasons for the extinction of plants and animals and how people have contributed to this process

Discuss the causes and effects of extinction, using examples from the text that involve the actions of people rather than nature. Take time to ensure that the students understand why a species was vulnerable (for example, the dodo had no fear of people, was easy to catch, was flightless, unable to swim), the actions of people (cutting forests that provided food for the dodo, introducing predators), and how the relationship could have been changed.

 The students can use the blackline master to identify other human causes of extinction and to comment on how the effects could have been avoided.

**S** Identifying an author’s purpose and point of view

The students can consider other perspectives on extinction issues. For example, they could consider the need to protect people from dangerous animals (see page 14) or the need to clear forests to provide land for food crops in areas of food shortages. Ask the students to find one issue that they can research from at least two points of view. They can then record their findings.