



Komodo Dragon

Why in News

A recent study conducted by Australian universities has found out that the **Komodo dragon could become extinct** in the next few decades due to [climate change](#).

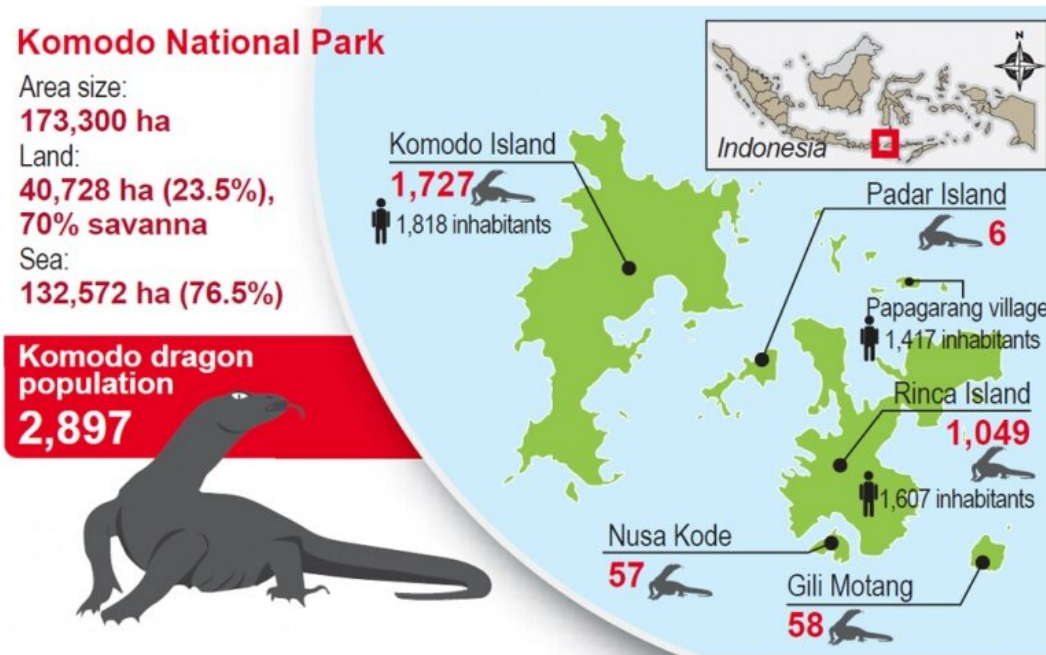
- In **February 2019**, the government of Australia officially [declared the first known extinction of a mammal \(Bramble Cay melomys\)](#) as a result of human-induced climate change.

Key Points



- **Scientific Name:** *Varanus komodoensis*.
- Komodo dragons are the **largest and heaviest lizards** on Earth. They have long, flat heads with rounded snouts, scaly skin, bowed legs, and huge, muscular tails.
- Komodo dragons **can eat almost anything**, including invertebrates, birds, and mammals like deer, pigs, and even large water buffalo.
- They have **venom glands loaded with toxins** which have been shown to secrete **anticoagulants**.
 - An anticoagulant is a compound which **prevents the victim's blood from clotting**, causing it to bleed to death.
 - The venom lowers blood pressure, causes massive bleeding, and induces shock.
- **Habitat:**
 - Komodo dragons have thrived in the harsh climate of **Indonesia's Lesser Sunda Islands** for millions of years. They **prefer the islands' tropical forests** but can be **found across the islands**.

- **Komodo National Park**, a [UNESCO World Heritage site](#), is situated in the **Island of Komodo** (eastern Indonesia) and is the only habitat for this lizard species.



▪ **Threats:**

- Anthropogenic factors.
- Small size of population, less prey and higher inbreeding factors.
- Climate change is likely to cause a sharp decline in the availability of habitat, reducing their populations even further.

▪ **Conservation:**

- **IUCN Status: Vulnerable.**
- **CITES: Appendix I.** (The commercial trading of live specimens or any parts, dead or alive of Komodo is prohibited.)
- In August 2019, the **Indonesian government ordered the relocation of the residents** of the Island of Komodo in a bid to conserve Komodo dragons and the Komodo National Park.

Source: DTE