

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 <u>declared the first known extinction of a mammal</u> (Bramble Cay melomys) as a result of human-induced climate change.

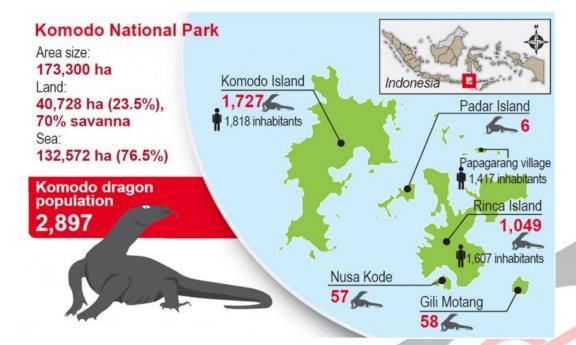
Key Points



- 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 <u>UNESCO</u> <u>World Heritage site</u>, 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.
- <u>CITES</u>: **Appendix I.** (The commercial trading of live specimens or any parts, dead or alive of Komodo is prohibited.)
- In August 2019, the <u>Indonesian government ordered the relocation of the residents</u>
 _of the Island of Komodo in a bid to conserve Komodo dragons and the Komodo National
 Park.

Source: DTE

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