



Kashmir's Papier Mache Revives the Dodo

[Source: TH](#)

Papier mache artisans in **Srinagar** are **crafting and exporting** large quantities of **dodo** figurines, primarily to **Mauritius** (where the dodo was native and is a national symbol) and **Europe** around Christmas 2024.

- **Dodo:**

- The dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*) is an **extinct** (since 1681) **flightless bird** that was **endemic to the island of Mauritius**, which is **east of Madagascar** in the Indian Ocean.
- It belonged to the **Columbidae family** (doves and pigeons).
- It became extinct due to **human activity** and the **introduction of invasive species** like pigs, rats, and cats, which preyed on its eggs and chicks.

- **Papier Mache Art:**

- Papier mache, a **600-year-old handicraft in Kashmir**, involves the **use of paper pulp** to create colorful, intricately decorated objects.
- This craft has its **origins to the 15th century** under **King Zain-ul-Abidin**, who invited **Central Asian artisans**.
- Traditionally influenced by **Persian motifs**, the craft recently incorporated dodos, introduced around two decades ago, possibly by Mauritian tourists.

- **Other Crafts of Kashmir:**

- Seven Kashmiri crafts, including **carpets, pashmina, sozni, kani shawls, walnut wood carving, khatamband, and papier mache**, have got **Geographical Indication (GI) tags**.

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Dodo facts

Here is some information about the dodo bird:

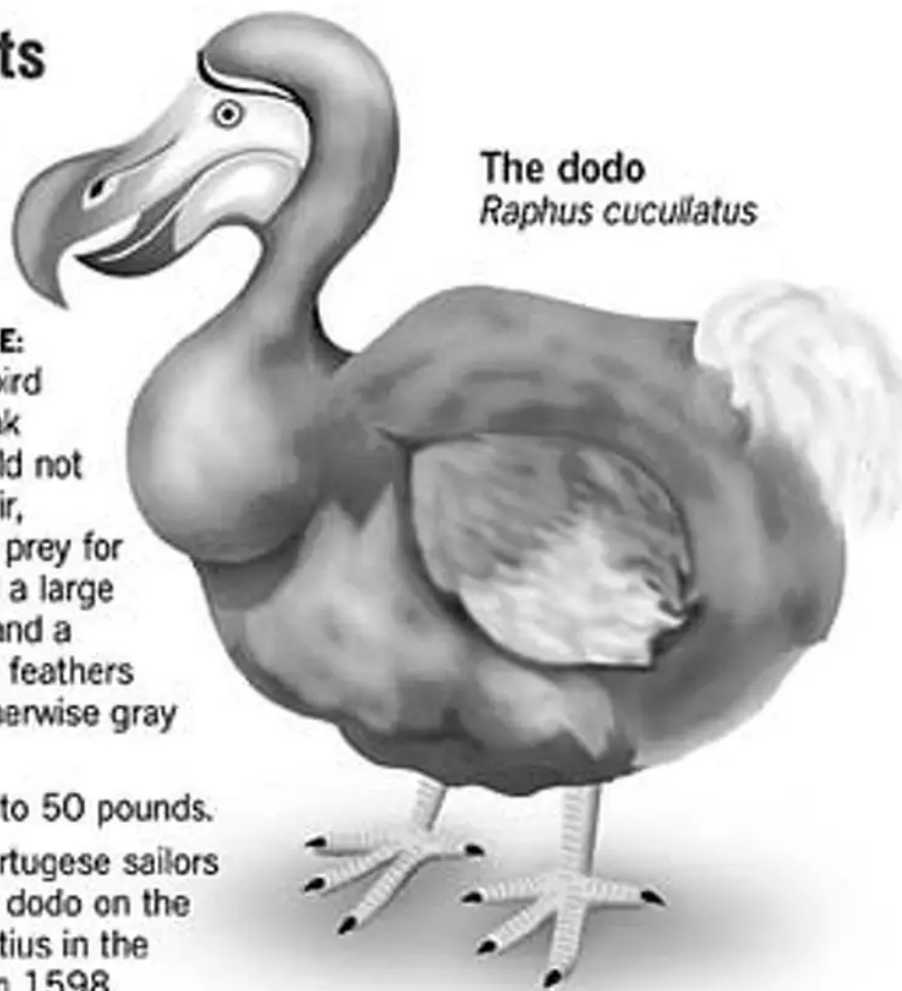
■ APPEARANCE:

Large, plump bird with small, weak wings that could not lift it into the air, making it easy prey for humans. It had a large hooked beak, and a plume of white feathers adorned its otherwise gray body.

■ WEIGHT: 40 to 50 pounds.

■ **HABITAT:** Portuguese sailors discovered the dodo on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean in 1598. Having never seen humans, the bird was not frightened. Sailors mistook its lack of fear as stupidity, and dubbed the bird "dodo."

■ **EXTINCTION:** Many dodo birds were killed by humans. Dogs and pigs introduced onto the island of Mauritius preyed on its eggs. By 1681, the dodo was gone, making it the first example of how humans can drive another species to extinction.



The dodo
Raphus cucullatus



Source: Chronicle research

TODD TRUMBULL / The Chronicle

Read More: [Cultural Exchange and Growth of Kashmir's Craft Industry](#), [Human-induced Extinction of Dodo](#)

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