Quaggas were beautiful pony-sized zebras in southern Africa that had fewer stripes on their bodies and a browner body coloration than other zebras. Indigenous people hunted quaggas, portrayed them in rock art, and told stories about them. Settlers used quaggas to pull wagons and to protect livestock against predators. Taken to Europe, they were admired, exhibited, harnessed to carriages, illustrated by famous artists, and written about by scientists. Excessive hunting led to quaggas’ extinction in the 1880s but DNA from museum specimens showed rebreeding was feasible and now zebras resembling quaggas live in their former habitats. This rebreeding is compared with other de-extinction and rewilding ventures and its appropriateness is discussed against the backdrop of conservation challenges— including those facing other zebras. In an Anthropocene of species extinction, climate change, and habitat loss, which organisms and habitats should be saved, and should attempts be made to restore extinct animals?

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The world's biological diversity faces unprecedented threats. The urgent challenge facing the concerned biologist is to understand ecological processes well enough to maintain their functioning in the face of the pressures resulting from human population growth. Those concerned with the conservation of biodiversity and with restoration also need to be acquainted with the political, social, historical, economic and legal frameworks within which ecological and conservation practice must be developed. The new Ecology, Biodiversity and Conservation series will present balanced, comprehensive, up-to-date and critical reviews of selected topics within the sciences of ecology and conservation biology, both botanical and zoological, and both ‘pure’ and ‘applied’. It is aimed at advanced final-year undergraduates, graduate students, researchers and university teachers, as well as ecologists and conservationists in industry, government and the voluntary sectors. The series encompasses a wide range of approaches and scales (spatial, temporal and taxonomic), including quantitative, theoretical, population, community, ecosystem, landscape, historical, experimental, behavioural and evolutionary studies. The emphasis is on science related to the real world of plants and animals rather than on purely theoretical abstractions and mathematical models. Books in this series will, wherever possible, consider issues from a broad perspective. Some books will challenge existing paradigms and present new ecological concepts, empirical or theoretical models, and testable hypotheses. Other books will explore new approaches and present syntheses on topics of ecological importance.

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Significance for Conservation

PETER HEYWOOD
Brown University
For Nancy, Ela, Wesley, Margaret, Ray, Hazel, Amos, Simon, and Marie
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