



STAR WARS ARTIST CREATES EPIC FANTASY FEATURING EXTINCT AND ENDANGERED ANIMALS...OR ARE THEY?

Called “ Remarkably beautiful. It’s a lyrical, lovely book” by STAR WARS creator George Lucas, “The Katurran Odyssey” follows the journey of an adventurous young lemur named Katook whose quest to save his village exposes him to great peril and marvels and many strange and wonderful creatures, many of whom are endangered or extinct. Written by David Michael Wieger, the 192 page book is published in October by Simon and Schuster.

“Katurran” creator and illustrator and STAR WARS conceptual artist, Terry Whitlatch says, “It’s my hope that the world of the Katurran Odyssey will inspire children’s interest in the amazing variety of animals that have walked the earth, encourage them to work for their preservation”.

This is happening right now: one of the featured animals in “The Katurran Odyssey” is the quagga, which the last of its kind died on August 12, 1883 in Amsterdam Zoo . Today, through scientific breeding and genetic engineering, the quagga is being brought back in a program in Cape Town, South Africa.

DNA analysis has shown that the Quagga was not a separate species of zebra but in fact a subspecies of the plains zebra (Burchell's Zebra) The Quagga, formerly inhabited the Karoo and southern Free State of South Africa. Like other grazing mammals, quaggas had been ruthlessly hunted. They were seen by the settlers as competitors for the grazing of their livestock, mainly sheep and goats.

By breeding with selected southern plains zebras an attempt is being made to retrieve at least the genes responsible for the Quaggas colouration.

The project, if successful, will rectify a tragic mistake made over a hundred years ago through greed and short sightedness. Once again herds of 'Quaggas' will roam the plains of the Karoo.

Another animal featured in The “Katurran Odyssey” is also being bread back from extinction. The Tarpan, prehistoric wild horse, ranged from Southern France and Spain eastward to central Russia. Cave drawings of Tarpan horses can be found in France and Spain, and artifacts showing this breed can be found in Southern Russia where this horse was domesticated by Scythian nomads in about 3000 B.C. The last tarpan died in a Russian game preserve in 1876.



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Today, Heinz and Lutz Heck, two German zoologists working at the Tierpark Hellabrunn (Munich Zoo) in Germany have recreated the tarpan. They believed that all living creatures were the result of their genetic make-up and that genes could be rearranged like the pieces of a puzzle to recreate certain vanished species. Only breeds that still had living descendants could be recreated because those living breeds would be a source for genetic material.

Several European pony breeds had descended from the prehistoric Tarpan. Primarily the Heck Brothers selected Polish Koniks, [Icelandic Ponies](#), [Swedish Gotlands](#) and Polish Primitive Horses from the preserve in Bialowieza. Mares from these breeds were then mated to [Przewalski](#) stallions because the Heck brothers felt that the blood of the wild [Przewalski](#) would serve as a catalyst to draw out the latent Tarpan characteristics dormant in these more modern breeds. The first bred back Tarpan, a colt, was born May 22, 1933 at the Tierpark Hellabrunn in Munich, Germany.

Even though modern science is working wonders in bringing these animals back to life, TerryL feels there is something we all can do. "By learning more about these magnificent creatures and supporting programs that protect and nurture them, we will preserve their beauty to be shared and appreciated for generations to come".

To learn more about the Quagga project, please visit:
www.museums.org.za/sam/quagga/quagga.htm

To learn more about the return of the tarpans, please visit:
<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/horses/tarpan/>

To learn more about The katurran Odyssey, please visit:
www.katurranodyssey.com

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