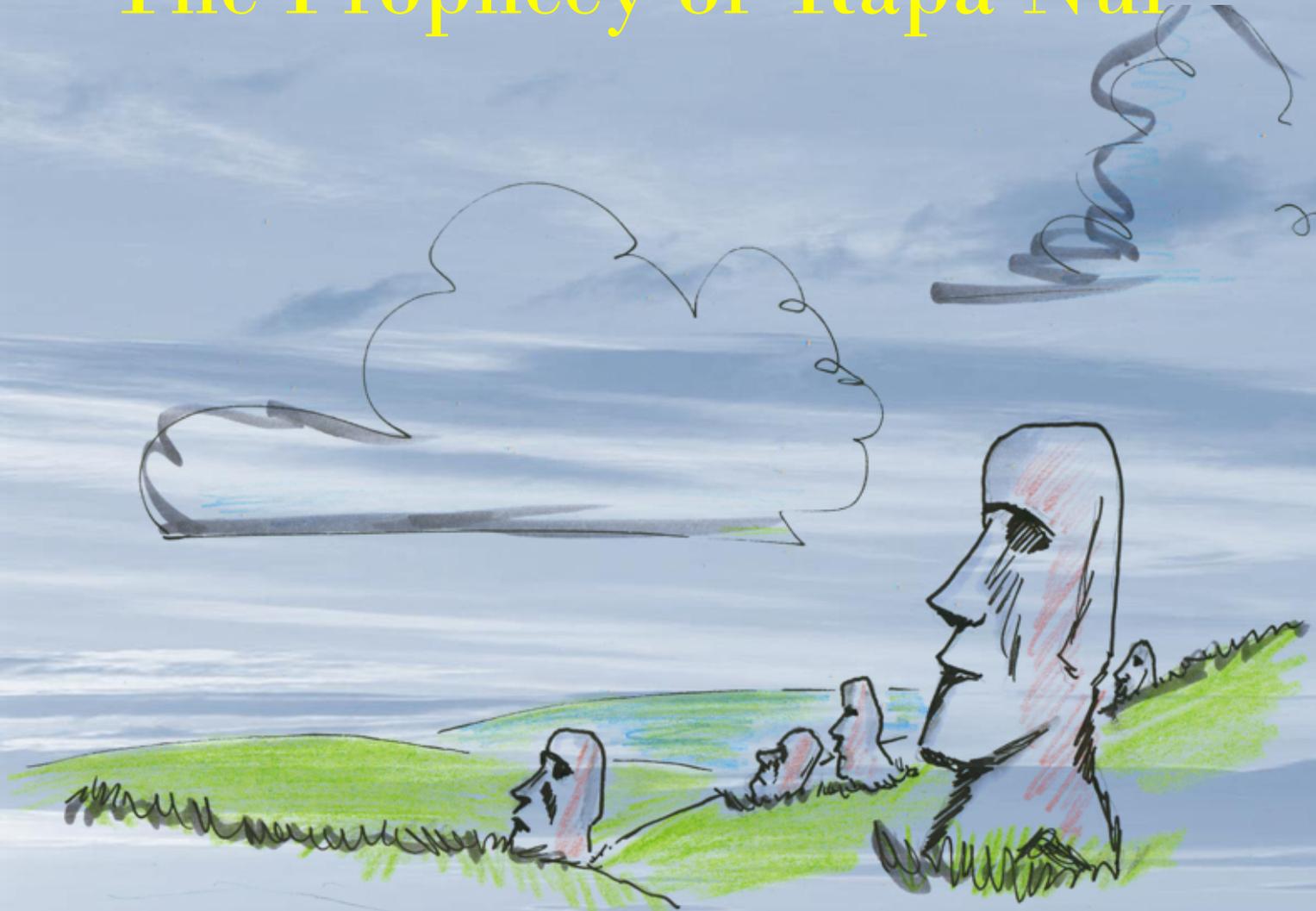


# The Prophecy of Rapa Nui





Hi, guys, I'm  
David  
Attenborough

I am here today to  
tell you a story, a  
true story of a  
distant Island in the  
Pacific Ocean...

...EASTER ISLAND

**David Attenborough**



*Very distant, indeed.....*



The first Polynesian  
settlers arrived in **Easter  
Island** with their large  
canoes more than a  
thousand years ago



They found a  
luxuriant, heaven like  
land covered with  
palm trees

The island was volcanic,  
both temperatures and  
humidity were high  
and the only fresh water  
available was from the  
lakes inside the extinct  
volcanoes





Only a few species of plants and animals inhabited the land: there were no mammals, only few insects and two types of small lizards.

The waters that surrounded the island weren't very fishy

To cut a long story short, the island was less hospitable than it seemed!!



The first inhabitants  
had to learn to live  
basically mainly on  
sweet potatoes and  
chickens.

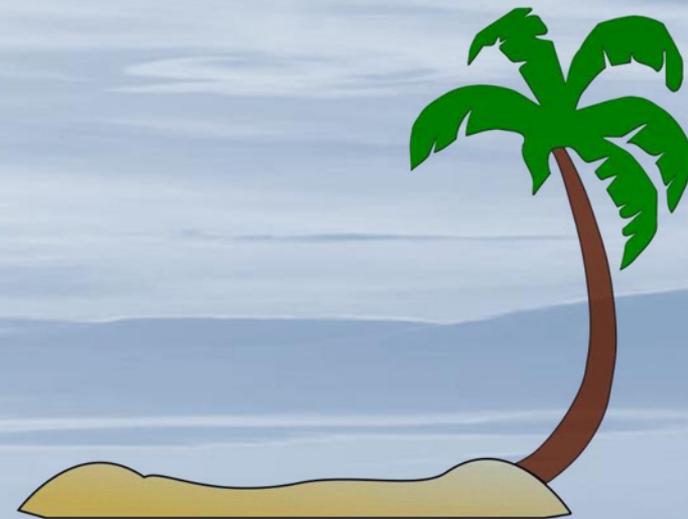


# Raw Materials Available

- Giant palms:
  1. Shelters
  2. Canoes
- Toronimo trees and basswood:
  1. Fuel
  2. Fibers for ropes or fishing nets

**BUT**

- The forests were slowly cleared:
  1. To improve farming
  2. To grow sweet potatoes



More food was available, so there was a rapid increase in **population**



But, as the island was very small, its natural resources **declined** rapidly.



They did not think  
about taking  
measures of life  
sustainability,

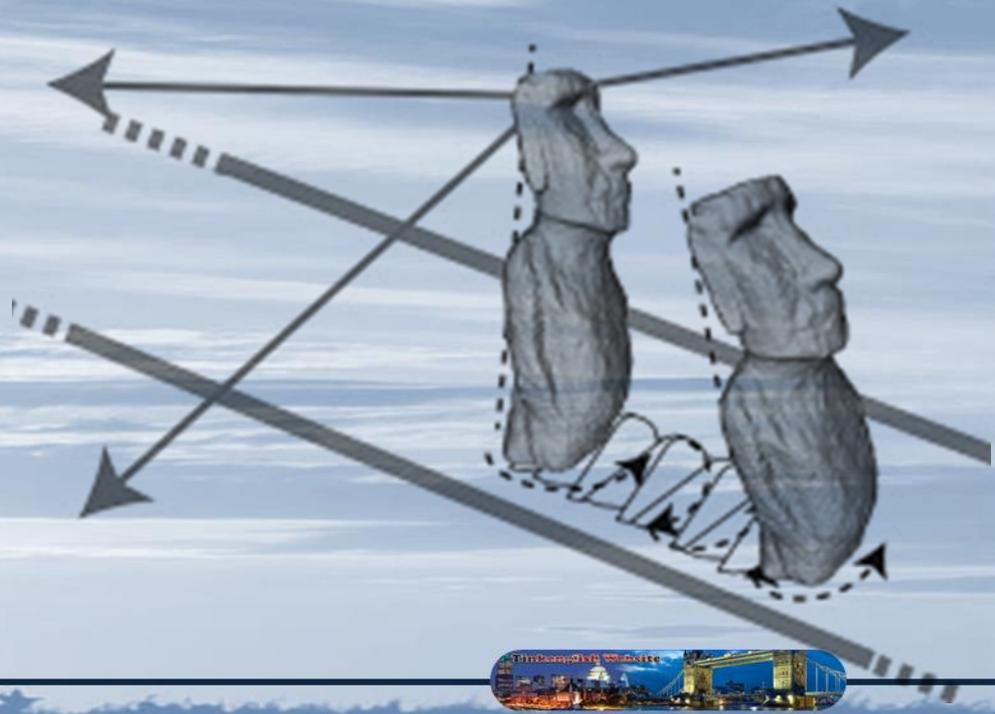


But rather, they started to  
build large stone  
platforms, known as **Ahu**,  
on which they placed huge  
monolithic stone statues  
called **Moai**



So, they dragged the statues across the island using tree trunks as wheels

They had no draught animals





The heads of the Moai were huge and it seems they represented their deified ancestors.

In time they were made bigger and bigger as symbol of the power of the clans.

Can you guess at what price?



Deforestation!





By 1600 as the island was almost completely deforested

The statue erection had to be stopped. But, when did they exactly stop?

When it was too late!!!



# OUTCOMES

- Because of the shortage of trees:
  1. people stopped building houses from timber and found shelter in caves
  2. Canoes couldn't be built

HENCE

It was now impossible to go fishing or even abandon the island

3. Nets for fishing couldn't be made
4. Early deforestation had brought the island to a rapid desertification



Chickens became precious and primary object of theft.

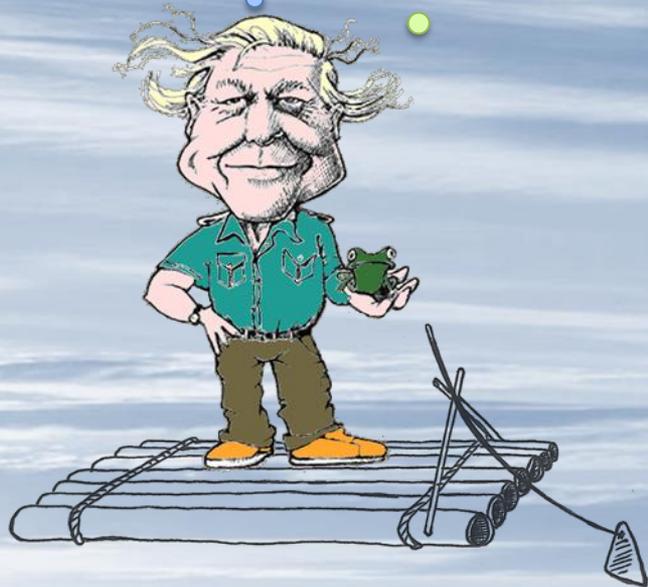
No arable land = no food

Eventually, they became cannibals



The drop of the resources resulted in a state of almost permanent **warfare**

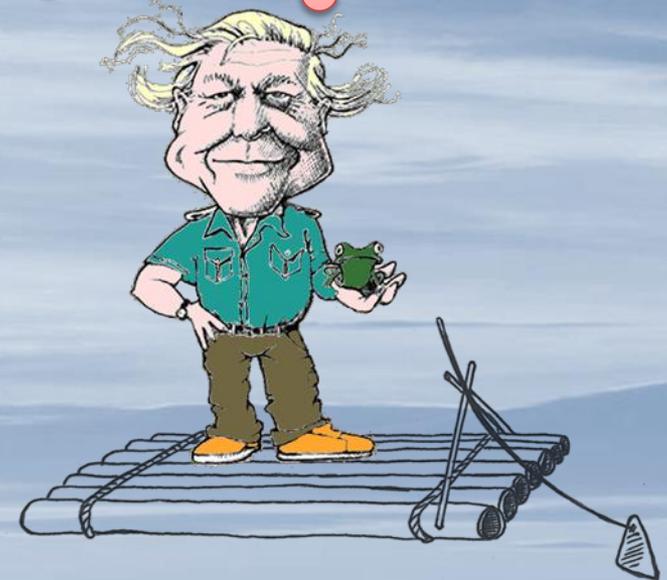
This led to a fall in the belief of the Moai's power and numerous statues were pulled down



When the Dutch  
Admiral Roggeveen  
visited Rapa Nui on  
Easter Sunday 1722,  
the island had now  
become a barren  
wasteland

3,000 inhabitants  
lived in a  
primitive state in  
squalid reed huts  
or caves

They had  
resorted to  
cannibalism to  
escape famine



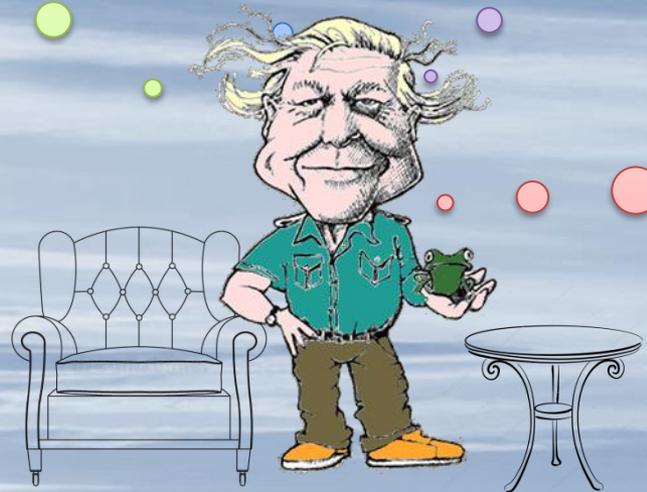


Now, I have  
some  
questions for  
you:

Didn't they realize  
what they were  
doing to their  
environment?

Why didn't  
they stop in  
time?

Will we be  
able to stop  
in time?





*Thanks for your attention*

*Stefania Gioffrè*

