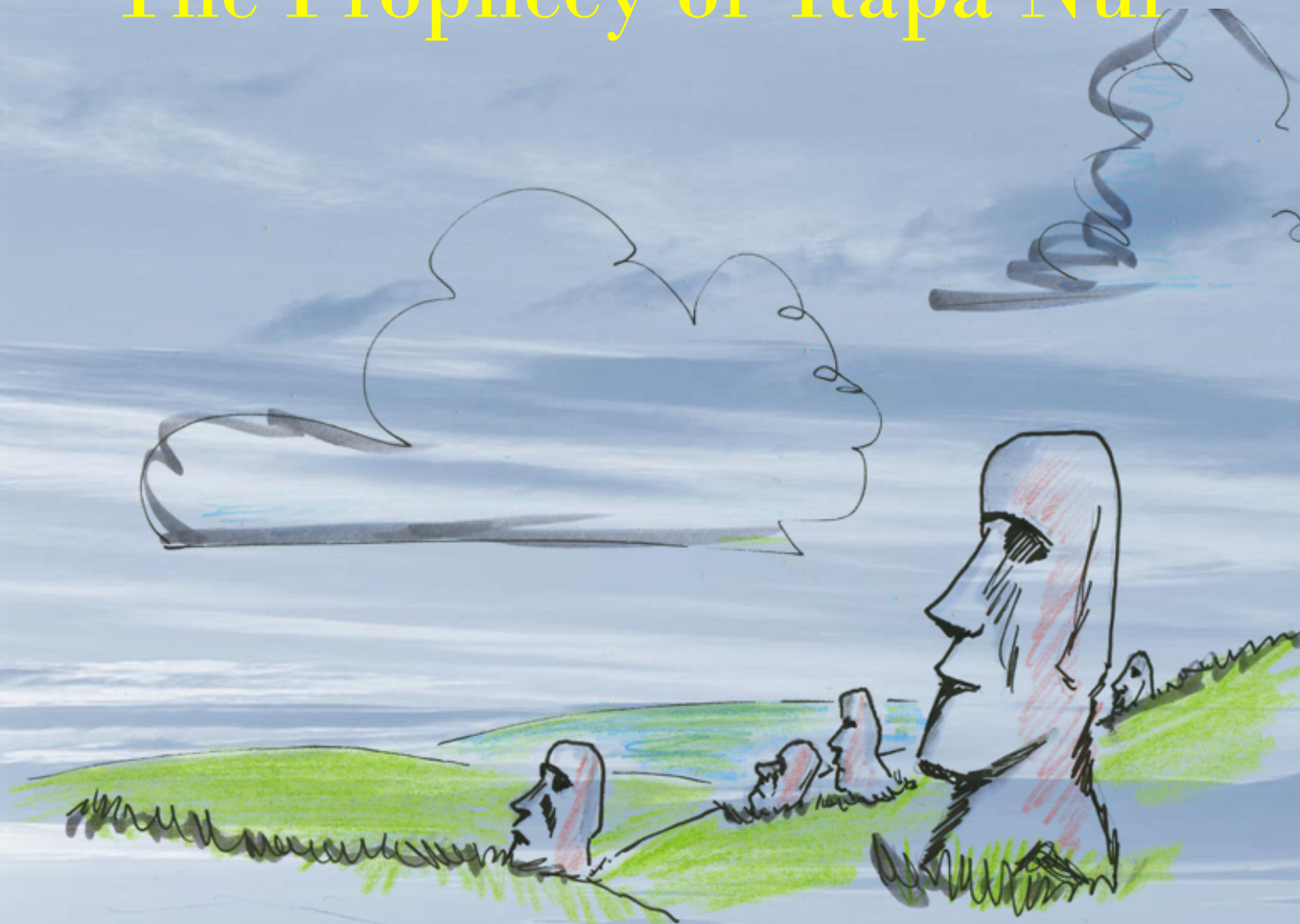




# The Prophecy of Rapa Nui





**David Attenborough**

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







*Very distant, indeed.....*





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

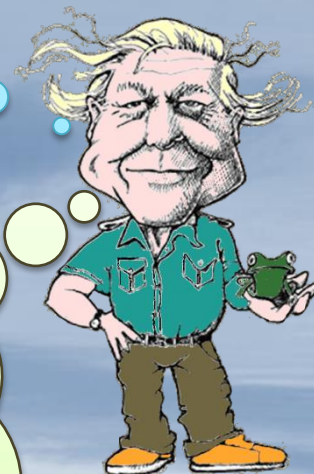






They found a  
luxuriant, heaven like  
land covered with  
palm trees

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.



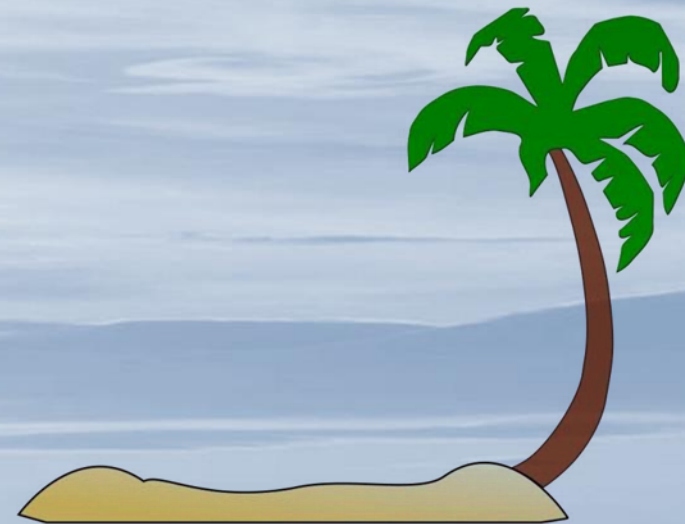


# Raw Materials Available

- 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  
cannibles

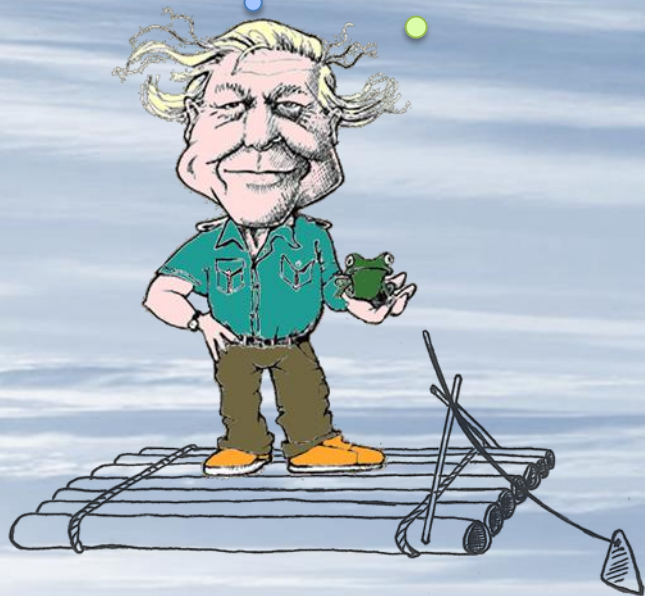






The drop of the  
resources resulted  
in a state of almost  
permanent **warfare**

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



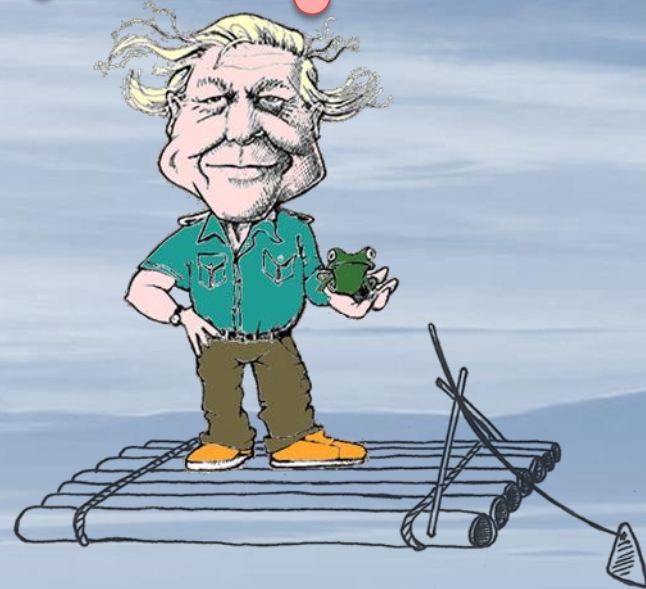




When the Dutch  
Admiral Roggeveen  
visited Rapa Nui on  
Easter Sunday 1722,  
the island had now  
become a barren  
wasteland

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

They had  
resorted to  
cannibalism to  
escape famine





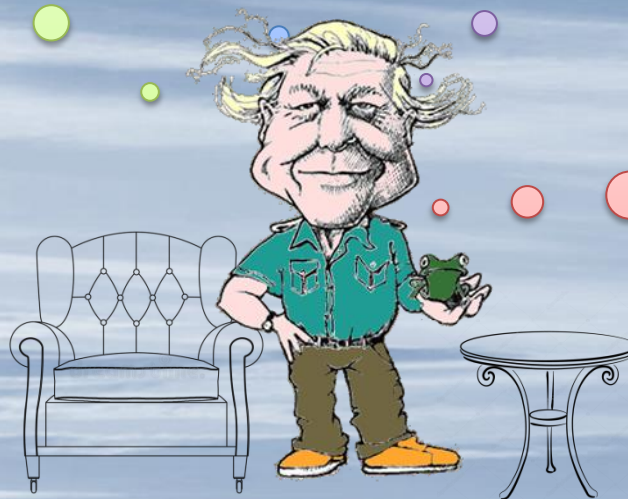


Now, I have  
some  
questions for  
you:

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*

