

DNA shows early humans killed off giant ostrich

The moa, a giant, ostrich-like bird, lived on New Zealand until the late 13th century, when it went extinct. But exactly when and why the moa disappeared has been debated. Some argue that the birds population collapsed before humans got to them. But now, researchers are even more confident that it was indeed humans who offed the big bird.

The study looked at 281 moas, using both DNA analysis and radiocarbon dating to see what kind of trouble birds ran into before they dropped off the planet. But, according to the study, “The extinction event itself was too rapid to be manifested in the moa gene pools.” In other words, they found no signal that would indicate that the birds were in trouble or declining in numbers before humans got to New Zealand. “Contradicting previous claims of a decline in moa before Polynesian settlement in New Zealand, our findings indicate that the populations were large and stable before suddenly disappearing,” the authors write.

Read the full, original story: [Humans Killed the Moa, Genetics Study Suggests](#)