

## If humans go extinct, what ‘smart’ animals might evolve to ‘rule the world’?

What if humans suddenly went extinct? What other animals might evolve to have the smarts and skills to create large, complex societies like we have?

With modern gene-sequencing technology and our understanding of [evolution](#), “we’re pretty good at making short term predictions,” Martha Reiskind, a molecular ecologist at North Carolina State University, told Live Science.

For example, we can predict that if humans were to suddenly go extinct tomorrow, [climate change](#) would continue to drive many species toward drought resiliency in order to survive.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

One feature that makes humans uniquely good at building and spatial reasoning is our dexterous hands, according to research from the [University of Manchester](#). In order to fill the same ecological role as humans — that is, building cities and heavily modifying our environment — another species would need to develop a similar capacity to manipulate objects. In other words, they would need opposable thumbs — or at least thumb equivalents.

Other primates, like [chimpanzees](#) (*Pan troglodytes*) and bonobos (*Pan paniscus*), our closest living relatives, already have opposable thumbs that they use to make tools in the wild.

It’s possible that if humans go extinct, these hominids might replace us hominins, à la “Planet of the Apes.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.\*\*](#)