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## Rochester Museum & Science Center

1 of 2

### In Brief:

**Title:** Passenger Pigeon Exhibit at Rochester Museum & Science Center Explores “Jurassic Park”-like De-Extinction

**Location:** 657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607

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### *Passenger Pigeon Exhibit at Rochester Museum & Science Center Explores “Jurassic Park”-like De-Extinction*

ROCHESTER, NY—A way to get geared up for the new “Jurassic World” movie arriving in theaters this summer is to visit the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC) and learn about real-life possibilities of de-extinction in its *Passenger Pigeon* exhibit. After more than 100 years after the last Passenger Pigeon died, the potential for cloning this species has led to a proposal for their de-extinction and the RMSC has a major role in the possible revival of this bird.

In just a few decades, the study of ancient DNA has gone from a scientific curiosity to an extremely powerful method for understanding and reconstructing past life. A popular theme in the movies, de-extinction could possibly become a reality. The exhibit is currently on display in the *Expedition Earth* exhibition at the RMSC through January 2016.

“The RMSC collection of extinct passenger pigeons is one of the nation’s largest,” said Kate Bennett, president, RMSC. “Once thought impossible, the technology presently exists to reconstitute the Passenger Pigeon genome, and we are excited to be a part of such ground-breaking science.”

The RMSC, with more than 25 study skins and mounts as well as numerous skeletal remains, has supplied bones and DNA fragments from Passenger Pigeon specimens to the San Francisco, California-based Long Now Foundation’s “Revive &

Restore” project. These fragments are currently being studied using techniques such as cloning and genetic engineering to revive this long-extinct bird species.

“Even if the genome can be reconstructed, what are the implications of reintroducing this long-lost bird species into the wild?” added George McIntosh, director of collections, RMSC. “It’s remarkable that science has allowed us to even ask this question not as hypothetical, but take it into real consideration. Here we are on the forefront of exciting cutting-edge science.”

Years ago, Passenger Pigeon flocks were huge, numbering in the billions. As settlers moved across the continent and cleared the forests, they removed large portions of the pigeons’ habitat and over-hunted these birds. The coming of the railroads and telegraph, which allowed commercial hunters to rapidly locate Passenger Pigeons and ship their meat to market, spelled the end of this once-abundant species. More than one hundred years ago on September 1, 1914, the last Passenger Pigeon, named Martha, died in captivity at the Cincinnati Zoo.

The *Passenger Pigeon* exhibit admission is free with regular museum admission: \$13 adults, \$12 seniors and college students with ID, \$11 ages 3 to 18, free for children under 3 and RMSC members. Visit [www.rmhc.org](http://www.rmhc.org) for hours and details.

For high-resolution images and additional information, contact Amanda Bayer, Communications Specialist, RMSC at 585.697.1962 or [amanda\\_bayer@rmhc.org](mailto:amanda_bayer@rmhc.org).

Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC) includes the Science Museum, Strasenburgh Planetarium and Cumming Nature Center. Offering experiences at the Museum with more than 200 interactive exhibits, Planetarium with a 65-foot dome and Nature Center on 900 acres, the RMSC stimulates community interest in exploration. In addition, the more than 1.2 million RMSC collection items tell the story of Rochester’s past including its rich history of innovation and invention. RMSC receives major funding from Monroe County, where it is one of the top three most visited attractions serving children and families. For more information about RMSC, visit [www.rmhc.org](http://www.rmhc.org). Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and Instagram.

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