



## Komodo Dragon

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### Why in News

A recent study conducted by Australian universities has found out that the **Komodo dragon could become extinct** in the next few decades due to climate change.

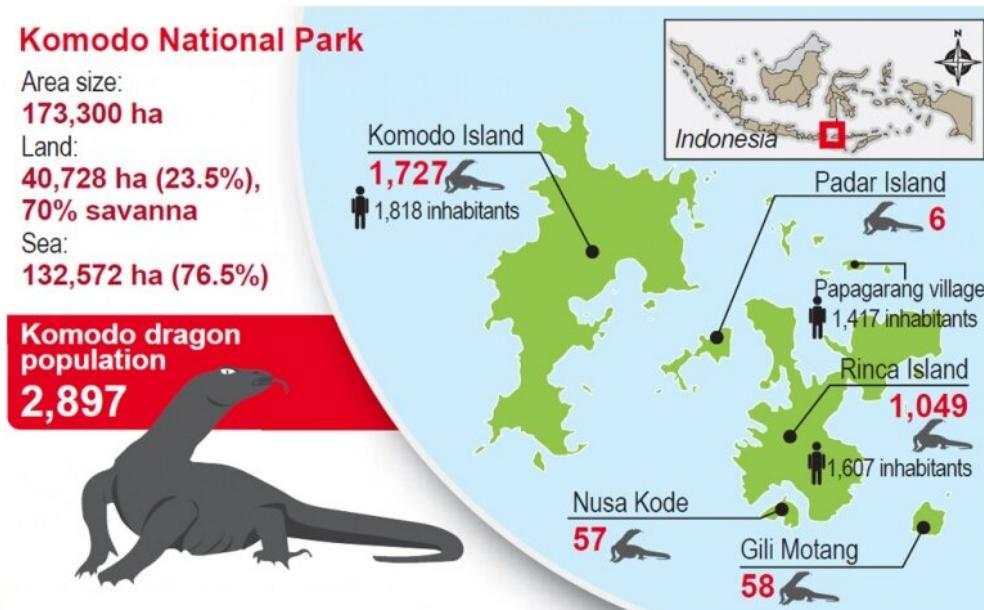
In February 2019, the government of Australia officially declared the first known extinction of a mammal (**Bramble Cay melomys**) as a result of human-induced climate change.

### Key Points



- **Scientific Name:** *Varanus komodoensis*.
- Komodo dragons are the **largest and heaviest lizards** on Earth. They have long, flat heads with rounded snouts, scaly skin, bowed legs, and huge, muscular tails.
- Komodo dragons **can eat almost anything**, including invertebrates, birds, and mammals like deer, pigs, and even large water buffalo.

- They have **venom glands loaded with toxins** which have been shown to secrete **anticoagulants**.
  - An anticoagulant is a compound which **prevents the victim's blood from clotting**, causing it to bleed to death.
  - The venom lowers blood pressure, causes massive bleeding, and induces shock.
- **Habitat:**
  - Komodo dragons have thrived in the harsh climate of **Indonesia's Lesser Sunda Islands** for millions of years. They **prefer the islands' tropical forests** but can be found **across the islands**.
  - **Komodo National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is situated in the **Island of Komodo** (eastern Indonesia) and is the only habitat for this lizard species.



- **Threats:**
  - Anthropogenic factors.
  - Small size of population, less prey and higher inbreeding factors.
  - Climate change is likely to cause a sharp decline in the availability of habitat, reducing their populations even further.
- **Conservation:**
  - **IUCN Status: Vulnerable.**
  - **CITES: Appendix I.** (The commercial trading of live specimens or any parts, dead or alive of Komodo is prohibited.)
  - In August 2019, the Indonesian government ordered the relocation of the residents of the Island of Komodo in a bid to conserve Komodo dragons and the Komodo National Park.

**Source: DTE**