


THE		
NATIONAL		
ARCHIVES		
	Photograph of an American bull Bison taken at the Zoological Gardens, London, 1906. COPY 1/501/32.	
Extinction and hope: Navigating animal encounters in the archive		
	Research Routes	

This resource pack includes information and links to research projects relating to animal histories in the archives.

Dolly Jørgensen's new book, [Ghosts Behind Glass: Encountering Extinction in Museums](#), will be available from December 2025.

Animal Histories in The National Archives collections

As the archive of the government, the records we hold on this subject mostly relate to human interactions with animals: through legislation and conservation policies, or copyrighting images.

Records relating to game laws and licenses and their evolution into conservation and reserves often describe attempts to regulate animal hunting.

We also hold photographs of individual animals. Many of these photos are in the series known as COPY 1, records of the Copyright Office with original forms of application for the registration of proprietorship under the Copyright Acts in force from 1842 to 1912. Other images can be found in INF 10, the British Empire Collection of Photographs.

Examples of animal fibres used to make textiles can also be found in the archives, including a [Faroese wool sweater](#) found in our Prize Papers collection.

Some examples of records, include:

- [COPY 1/501/32](#) A photograph of an American bull Bison taken at the Zoological Gardens, London, 1906
- [COPY 1/56/341](#) A photograph of Jumbo the elephant, 1882
- [E 101/376/7](#) A Royal Wardrobe and Household account book from 1309 to 1318, bound with 'hair vellum' likely made of calf skin
- [FT 1/9](#) A Nature Conservancy species file for coypu, musks and beavers
- [INF 10/369/4](#) A photograph of 'The rare white Rhino' in Uganda, August 1962, as part of a collection of photos compiled by Central Office of Information
- [CO 536/147/11](#) A file on the preservation of white rhinoceros and proposed Uganda game preservation legislation, 1927-1932

We are developing a guide to researching environmental histories in our records, please look out for this soon on [our website](#).

Heritage Science animal history projects

[Read more](#) about Marc Vermeulen's work on a minimally invasive method to extract lipids from historical parchments. Other examples of heritage science research projects exploring animals in historic documents include:

- [Archivess](#), University of Copenhagen, exploring beeswax seals and the value for research into historic bee diversity and behaviour
- [Beasts to Craft](#), Universities of Copenhagen and Bristol and the Royal Library of Denmark, researching the use of animal products in the creation of writing materials

Blogs

We regularly publish blog posts on the stories behind and about our records. These can include stories about the presence of animals in the archive. Some examples include:

- [Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the hairiest of them all?](#)
- [List of animals held in the 'Bear Garden' in Elizabethan Southwark](#)

Further reading

['From Habitat to Service Equipment: The British Government Book as Container in 'the Tropics'](#)
by Lucy Razzall, Lora Angelova, and Elizabeth Haines

[Vanished: An Unnatural History of Extinction](#), by Sadiya Quereshi

Get in touch!

[Record access and inquiries](#).

Research collaborations and partnerships: research@nationalarchives.gov.uk. [Find out more about our research and academic collaboration](#).