



SOME ISLAND IMMIGRANTS evolve to become supreme predators and competitors and as such shape the nature of other animals. Descended from an Australian monitor lizard ancestor, Komodo dragons grow up to three metres long and can kill and eat pigs, goats and rusa deer that have been introduced to the island. "These reptiles have become the tigers that never got there," says Morris. Dragons are safe on Komodo Island, an internationally recognised nature reserve, but are less common on nearby Rincha Island where dogs are present. On adjacent islands in the Indonesian archipelago it has become extinct because of mammalian predators.

