GREAT AUK

Swift and agile in water, great auks lived most of their lives at sea. But each spring, they came with their life-long partners to mate on the isolated rock islands of the North Atlantic.

Flightless and awkward on land, they were easy targets. By the mid-1500s, their numbers had taken a drastic decline as **hunters sought their meat, eggs, oil, and especially their feathers.**

The last documented pair of great auks was killed on Eldey Island, off the southwestern tip of Iceland, on **June 3, 1844.**