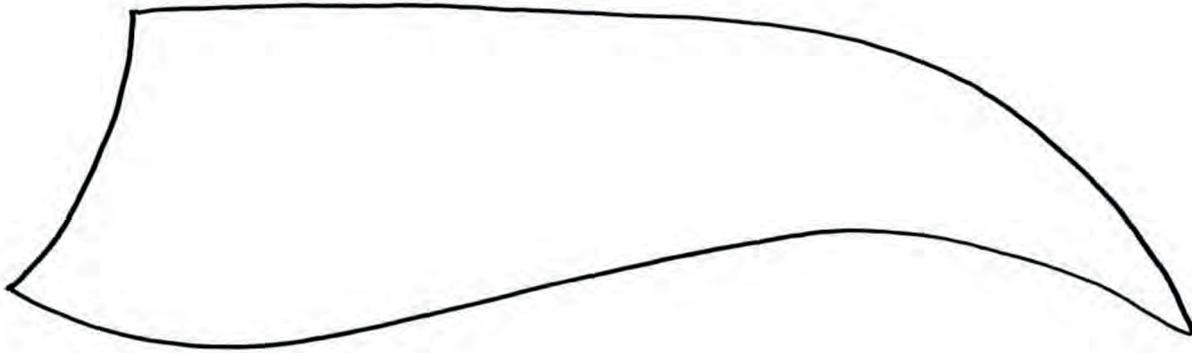




The Aurochs: A Biblical Beast Gone Forever

Equipment: Two cardboard aurochs horns, 80cm long, shaped like this:



Plan:

-  Hold up the horns and ask if anyone knows what creature they belong to. Use this to lead into a talk about the Aurochs.
-  The Aurochs (or wild ox) was the ancestor of all the domestic cattle, but far larger and MUCH fiercer than the cows we see in the fields. Bulls probably had an average shoulder height of 155cm-180cm (which translates to around 5'1 to 5'10 in Imperial. With luck there will be a handy adult of about the right height you can point to)!
-  There are lots of passages in the Bible which talk about how impressive the Aurochs are: e.g. numbers 23:22 'God who brings them out in Egypt is like the horns of a wild ox to them'; Job 39:9-12. 'Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will it spend the night at your crib? Can you tie it in the furrow with ropes, or will it harrow the valleys after you? Will you depend on it because it's strength is great, and will you hand over your labour to it? Do you have faith in it that it will return, and bring your grain to your threshing-floor?' and Psalm 22:21b 'From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me'.
-  Sadly however, we won't get a chance to see these magnificent animals this side of heaven. Now we can only imagine what the Biblical writers were trying to describe. The Aurochs was the first animal extinction to be noticed and recorded by human beings. The last one died in Poland in 1627. Human farming habits and hunting played a very big part in this. People did realise that the Aurochs was dying out, and restricted and then banned hunting; but it was too little too late.

Purpose/Teaching: Needlessly losing any species is a tragedy. We should play our part in trying to ensure that animals don't fall victim to human greed or carelessness. Once they are gone, they are gone forever.