

What happened on Easter Island?

What actually happened on Easter Island and why:

Easter Island (also known as Rapa Nui) is located 2000 miles west of the coast of Chile and is 8 miles x 8 miles big (or 64 miles²). Originally the island was covered in beautiful tropical forest; the soil was new, fertile and had been protected from erosion by the lush trees. The population eventually at its peak reached 10,000

The first people to land on Easter Island were experienced sailors that came in wooden boats. The people used the wood that was cut down from the tropical forest to make boats; the wood was also used (with palm thatch) to make houses for them to live in. The land was cleared to make room for farms, which the people used to grow tropical crops and also raise livestock for meat (like chickens and pigs); the farms produced a lot of food for the people to eat.

The people were clever, creative and healthy; all of these were essential to how their moai statues were built: the people created 600 moai statues in all (and they ranged up to 20 feet tall or about 6m and weighed up to 150 tonnes) and they had to move these statues from where they were carved to where they were to be positioned. How they carved the statue showed creativity from how it was designed and skill to actually make and carvings of the 150 tonne giants. Skill and technical knowledge was needed to move the statues around as was it important for the people to be healthy to do the actual labour. The statues were transported by 'roads'; these roads were actually log used to roll the statues about to their future location, technical knowledge was needed just to think, design and organise the construction of these roads and how they pulled them, skill was important to how the roads were made (because if skill was not used to make the roads they wouldn't have worked and the statues would never have been placed where they were) and the people had to be healthy to pull the statues (over 70 men were needed to pull just one statue) so it must have been hard work if that many people were needed.

The impacts of the people arriving varied some being good some being bad:

- Some of the better/good impacts of the people arriving are:
 - They decorated the landscape with Moai statues
 - They colonised the island
 - They bred the animals and livestock
 - They created farms and grew crops
 - They discovered the island
- Some of the worse/bad impacts of the people arriving were:
 - When they made room for farms they chopped down the forest to make way
 - They ate **all** of the animals and livestock
 - They ate **all** of the crops (and as a result there was no crops to grow more crops from)
 - The farms (when all of the crops had been eaten) became dry and turned into barren wastelands because they weren't protected from the forest any more
 - The land looked worse as some of the moai statues had been destroyed (from anger?)

In 1722ce Admiral Roggeveen landed on the island (1322 years after the first people to land on it) and found that there were only 3,000 people living on the

island, living in small huts and caves whilst living very basic lives: what happened to the population of 10,000?

On an island as small as 64 miles² it has only enough space to produce enough food and once the population is large enough it will be consuming more than they produce. So because there was not enough space to produce enough food for 10,000 people they probably would have started fighting (and killing) other people/groups to get the last bit of food so that they could survive, so the population decreased. After that period the food probably would have run out so even more people would have started dying from starvation and at that point (as Admiral Roggeveen discovered) the people would turn to cannibalism to survive so as a result that caused the population to decrease from the flourishing 10,000 to the dismal 3,000 people.

The people on the island could have prevented this from all happening but it would have been hard work. The people could have tried to ration the food before it ran out whilst working as hard as possible to produce more food and any attempt at this would not have been helped by the people fighting over the last scraps of food and consuming it in a panic where as they could have tried to all pull together to produce more food and used all of that effort in producing the food. The people could have survived and pulled through but it would have been unlikely as there most likely would have been groups on the island that only thought of themselves so they wanted the food and started to fight over the food when they should have been pulling together.

Could this happen on a worldwide scale:

The issues the example of Easter raises are whether the same thing could happen on a worldwide scale or whether the earth's resources will actually run out and all the food will be gone. It all relates to us as what happened on Easter Island happened to real people and could happen on a worldwide scale, it just happened that there was quite a high population density (around 150 people per square mile) so everything occurred much quicker than it would on a worldwide scale which on average would have a much lower population density because of all the sparsely populated areas. The things that would be the same between Easter Island and a worldwide scale would be how most people would probably react (fighting), how there could be a maximum food output that might not be able to provide enough food for the population to survive and how there would be groups or bands of people (countries on a worldwide scale) that would think of themselves. I don't think the same thing will happen to us on a worldwide scale because I think that the different countries would have the problem of different points in time (e.g. if a poorer country like Zimbabwe was running out of food a rich country like England would not be running out of food and then would have no reason to fight another rich country like France) and in a situation like in the example the world at the moment as has already happened the richer countries that are not suffering will take pity on the poorer countries so that they would survive and then when and if the situations are reversed the same thing would most likely happen, so I don't think that this will happen on a world wide scale because even though countries fight between themselves the will help each other when they need it the most. Again I think it would be very unlikely that something like this will happen over the world but if it did I think that it could be solve if the countries were to pull together before it was too late and use the sparsely populated land to grow crops and raise livestock to accommodate for the extra food needed, if the countries could work together...