Vanished Giants
The collapse of Easter Island
Westernmost of the Pacific Islands.

Small, isolated, and remote.

It had a large thriving population.

Abruptly vanished about 1600
Moai

• Easter Island has hundreds of large stone statues (moai).
  – 13-32 feet tall
  – 10-87 tons in weight
Thriving Population

• Evidence suggests that Easter Island had a large and rich thriving society.
  – Many house foundations
  – Agricultural Intensification
  – Society was broken into 11-12 territories or clans
Society ended abruptly about 1600 A.D.

- Housing stock, and agricultural implements abandoned
- Incomplete statues still embedded in quarry
- Stone carving tools left to lie
- Roads left in disrepair
What happened?  Collapse!

• Chiefs did not gain stature by trading, raiding, exploration, or colonization
• Society was directed inward in a game of statue one-upmanship
• Statue-building was more important than survival
  – Statue-building led to deforestation and unchecked resource consumption in non-survival areas
  – Food supply became limited
  – Fuel supply limited
  – Unrest