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# The Guano Age: How Bird Poop from Peru led to the Imperialistic Expansion of the United States

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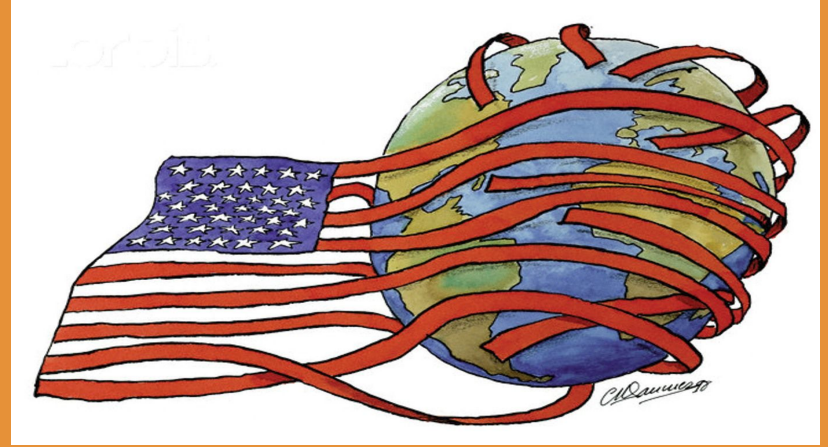
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Research question: Did bird poop from Peru contribute to the imperialistic expansion of the United States?



Hypothesis: Yes, in fact Guano was initially the driving force behind the imperialistic expansion of the United States.

Findings: Britain's monopoly on the Peruvian Guano market forced the U. S. to search for other sources of Guano, opening U.S. doors to far reaching imperial expansion

# THE GUANO AGE 1840-1880

## -Peruvian Guano-Nature's miracle grow

In the early 19th century

-Europe & North America suffered from soil depletion

-Growing populations and famines created a Huge demand for agricultural fertilizers

Guano -also known as bird poop- rooted in

South American Indigenous culture and folklore

-extremely high in fixed nitrogen and phosphorus necessary elements for plant growth

-1802- explorer Alexander Van Humboldt came across the lucrative mines on the Chincha islands off the Pacific coast of Peru- lack of rain allowed guano to collect for centuries- samples brought back to Europe led to a frenzy for Peruvian guano- considered

-the most effective fertilizer in the world-



Fun Fact: guano is a mix of bird pee and poop- high urine content makes it even more valuable!



# When the world ran on crap

## Say What??

Guano was - revered, protected and controlled by native guano Lords until 1840- Peruvian government classified Guano as:

a "property without owner subject to state control"

Making Peru's economy completely dependant on the Guano trade Eco

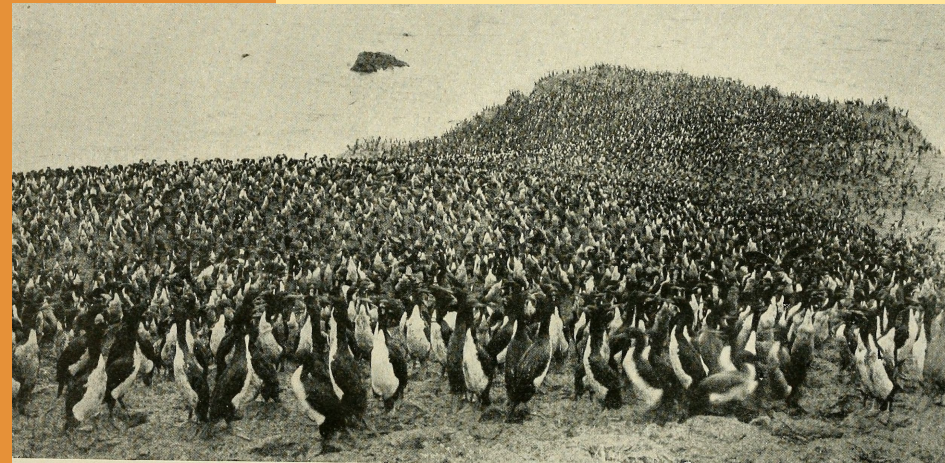
Imperialism: Guano was viewed as a free resource, there for the taking

-However, eventually Peru's Guano was depleted: birds became endangered due to lack of conservation:

destruction of their habitats and food sources

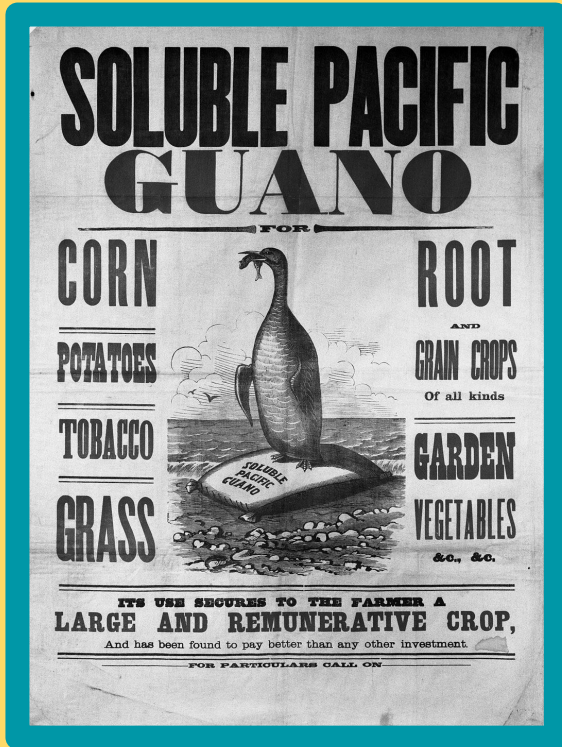


-specifically the kind accumulated for centuries on the Pacific coast of Peru-  
-Chincha Islands- nesting grounds of cormorants, creators of the highest quality guano in the world-



GUANAYS (CORMORANTS, *Phalacrocorax bougainvillei*) AT NESTING-GROUND, SOUTH CHINCHA ISLAND, JUNE 15, 1907  
Photographed by R. E. Coker

# When bird poop was more valuable than gold



- British monopolized Peruvian Market
  - British farmers/ scientists were already on the search for fertilizers
  - Peruvian government made exclusive contracts with British traders in hopes of paying off debts
- By the height of the Guano age Britain imported an average of 209,610 tons of Peruvian guano/year
- 1840-1880- Peru exported 12 million tons of guano

# PRESIDENT FILLMORE'S 1850 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

PERUVIAN GUANO HAS BECOME SO DESIRABLE AN ARTICLE TO THE AGRICULTURAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO EMPLOY ALL THE MEANS PROPERLY IN ITS POWER FOR THE PURPOSE OF CAUSING THAT ARTICLE TO BE IMPORTED INTO THE COUNTRY AT A REASONABLE PRICE. NOTHING WILL BE OMITTED ON MY PART TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING THIS DESIRABLE END.





# Guano Islands Act 1856

-Led to U.S. imperialistic Expansion in the Pacific



-exploitative nature-

-Islands could be

Discarded when the

Guano was gone - allowing for extractive use with no responsibility

-following a Guano Island revolt on Navassa- Supreme Court ruled that The United States did have legal jurisdiction over the islands

-criminals would be tried in U.S. courts

-set precedent for U.S. imperial expansion

-Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines

Whenever any citizen of the United States discovers a deposit of guano on any island, rock, or key, not within the lawful jurisdiction of any other government, and not occupied by the citizens of any other government, and takes peaceable possession thereof, and occupies the same, such island, rock, or key may, at the discretion of the President, be considered as appertaining to the United States."

# U.S. Pacific territories

In the 50 years after the Guano Islands act- U.S. claimed 100 guano islands. Most were exploited & abandoned





# Eco Imperialism

- Mining guano was a dirty job
- Conditions were dangerous
- workers had no representation
- work was literally hard and shitty
- Guano trade
  - relied on labor from indentured servants, prisoners, Chinese slaves & migrants
  - opened the doors to imperialist domination in the Pacific
- The exploitation of Guano
  - an Expropriation of Indigenous knowledge and resources for the benefit of the imperialistic power



*what a lot of shit!*

## WILD JACU COFFEE: DID YOU KNOW?



### 5. Bird Poop Coffee

#### Origin

The Camocim Estate, located in Pedra Azul, Espirito Santo, Brazil, is populated with a native South American bird called the Jacu. These birds inhabit the forest and feast on only the very ripest coffee cherries grown organically in the forest shade



Price Per Pound: \$330



#### Tasting notes

A full-bodied cup, with a unique, nutty flavor and nuances of sweet aniseed



#### Science

The herbivorous Jacu bird feasts on ripe coffee cherries and later defecates them. The process that occurs inside the Jacu further enhances the natural qualities of beans, altering the molecular structure of the bean in a way that can be visibly observed.

## 5 Popular Animal Poop Coffees The most expensive coffee in the world!

- Civet cat coffee (kopi Luwak)
- Monkey poop coffee
- Elephant poop coffee
- Bat poop coffee
- Bird poop coffee

<https://www.homegrounds.co/poop-coffee/>

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