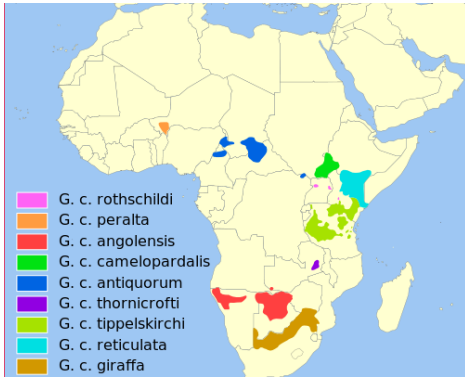


Giraffe

Giraffa camelopardalis



Range: Sub-Saharan Africa

Size: :550cm(20 ft)

:450cm(14ft 9 in)

Weight : : 1930 kg (4246 lbs)

: 1180 kg (2596 lbs)

Horns : : 13.5 cm (43 in)

: 13.5 cm (43 in)

Habitat: savannah

Estrus cycle: 15 days

Estrus: 1 day

Gestation : 420-434 days

Litter: 1

Weaning: 6- 17 months

Sexual maturity: 7 years

: 4 years

Activity: Diurnal

Social: Gregarious

Breeding: polygamous

Movement : sedentary

Food: leaves

IUCN: Least Concern

Subspecies : 8 two disputed

Longevity: captive: 24 yrs

Wild: 25 years

Order: Artiodactyla Family: Giraffidae

At twenty feet tall the giraffe is the tallest animal on Earth. Males and females are similar with males being larger and having bony protrusions on the skull in addition to the horns. The giraffe has many adaptations to deal with its great height. The vessels in both its neck and legs have valves to prevent backflow. The heart is very large, weighing 25 pounds, in order to pump the blood to the brain.

There are a large number of subspecies based primarily on coat pattern. The exact number between six and nine is still being determined. Although the species is listed by the IUCN as vulnerable many of the subspecies are listed as Endangered.

Males will often participate in a form of combat called necking. This highly ritualized fighting helps to most likely establish dominance. They repeatedly swing their long neck to deliver powerful head-butts to their rival's body and underbelly. A reinforced skull usually absorbs the impact of these blows, but occasionally an animal is knocked unconscious and very rarely even dies during such a fight.