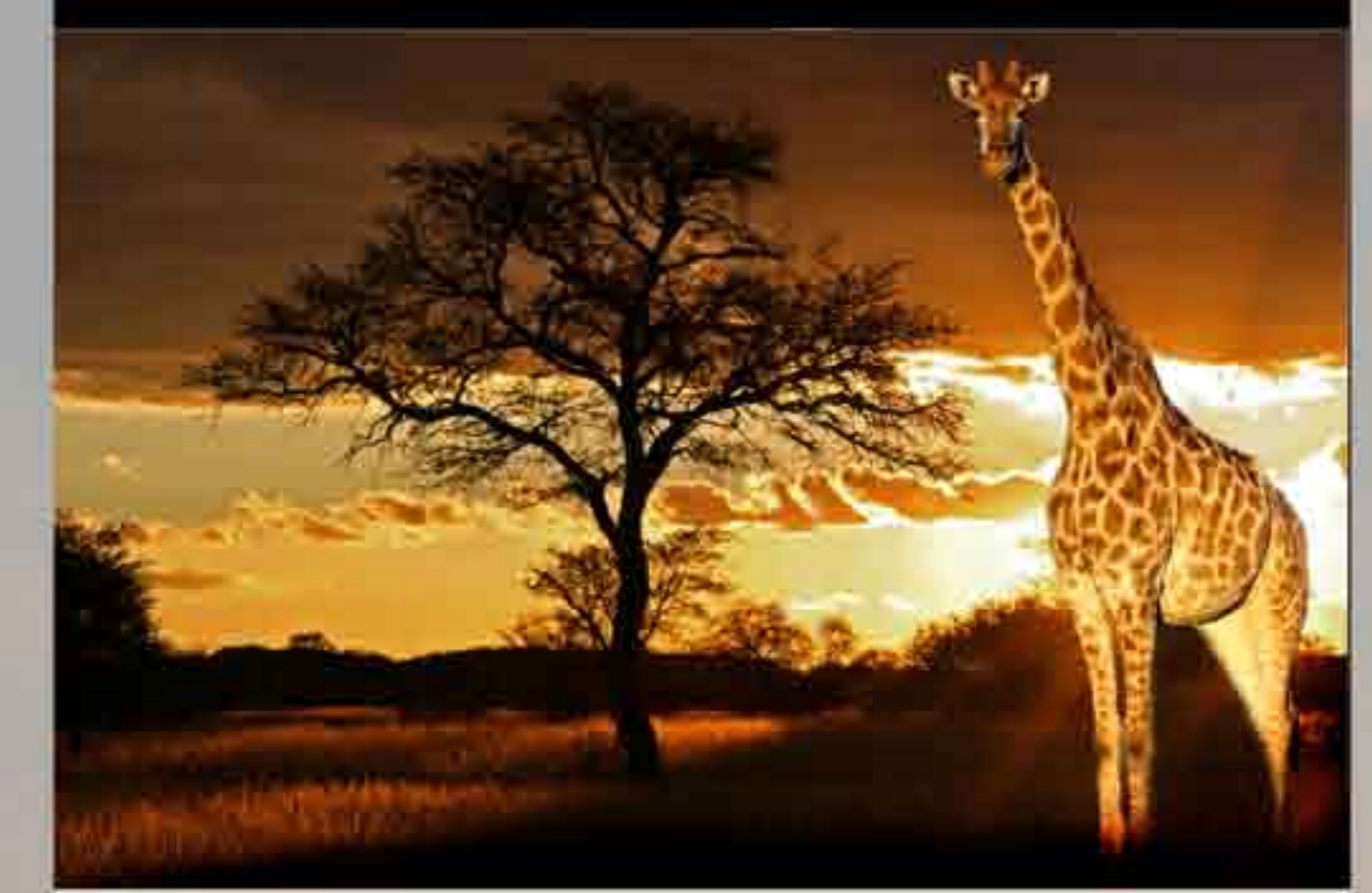


AFRICA'S GIRAFFE

Conservation Guide

We are grateful for the support of all the photographers, who have generously allowed us to reproduce their images free of charge: Francois Deacon, Donna Hanson, Mike Kock, Ludwig Siegel, Nico Smit and Megan Strauss, as well as Black Eagle Media for producing the map.



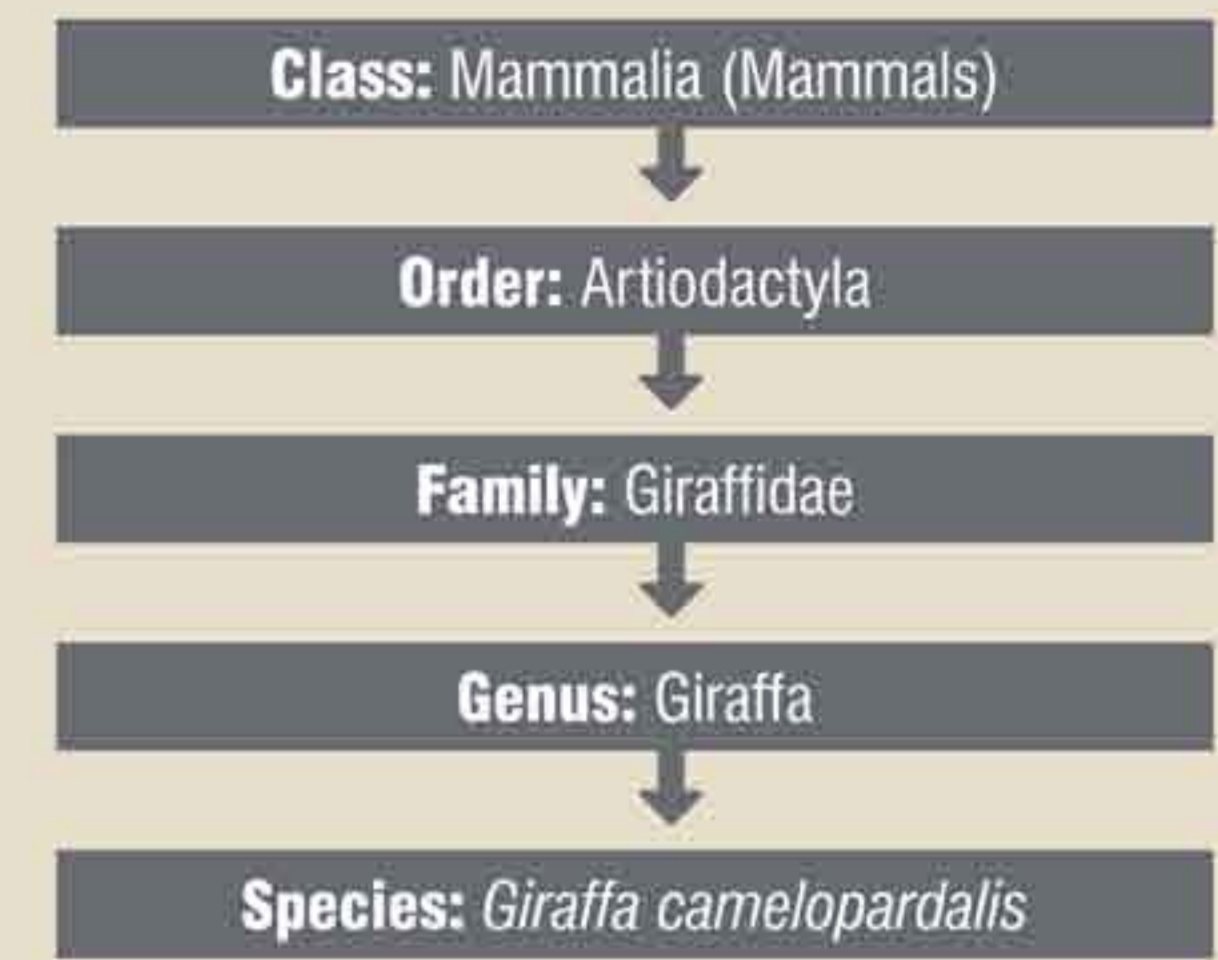
Conservation Status

- IUCN — Least Concern (LC): as a species
- Endangered (2008): *G. c. peralta* (West African or Nigerian giraffe)
 - Endangered (2010): *G. c. rothschildi* (Rothschild's, Ugandan or Baringo giraffe)

CITES — Not Listed

In 1998 the total number of giraffe in Africa was estimated by IUCN at greater than 140,000 individuals. In 2013, best estimates by the GCF have the Africa-wide population at less than 80,000 individuals — encompassing all (sub)species. Efforts are underway to build up a more accurate census of the Africa-wide population in collaboration with the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group (GOSG) and other conservation partners.

Taxonomy & Populations



Conservation Significance

Giraffe are agents of habitat and landscape change. They open up areas and promote growth of new forage for themselves and other wildlife.

Moderate giraffe browsing has been shown to stimulate shoot production in certain *Acacia* species. Giraffe browsing can furthermore benefit *Acacia* species as seed consumption favours seed dispersal into non-shaded habitats and enhances the potential for seed germination through the beneficial effects of its digestive processes.

Giraffe are also thought to play a role in pollination. Research in Kenya highlighted that, in areas protected from giraffe and other mega-herbivores, some *Acacia* species declined and the knock on effect to other species was considerable.

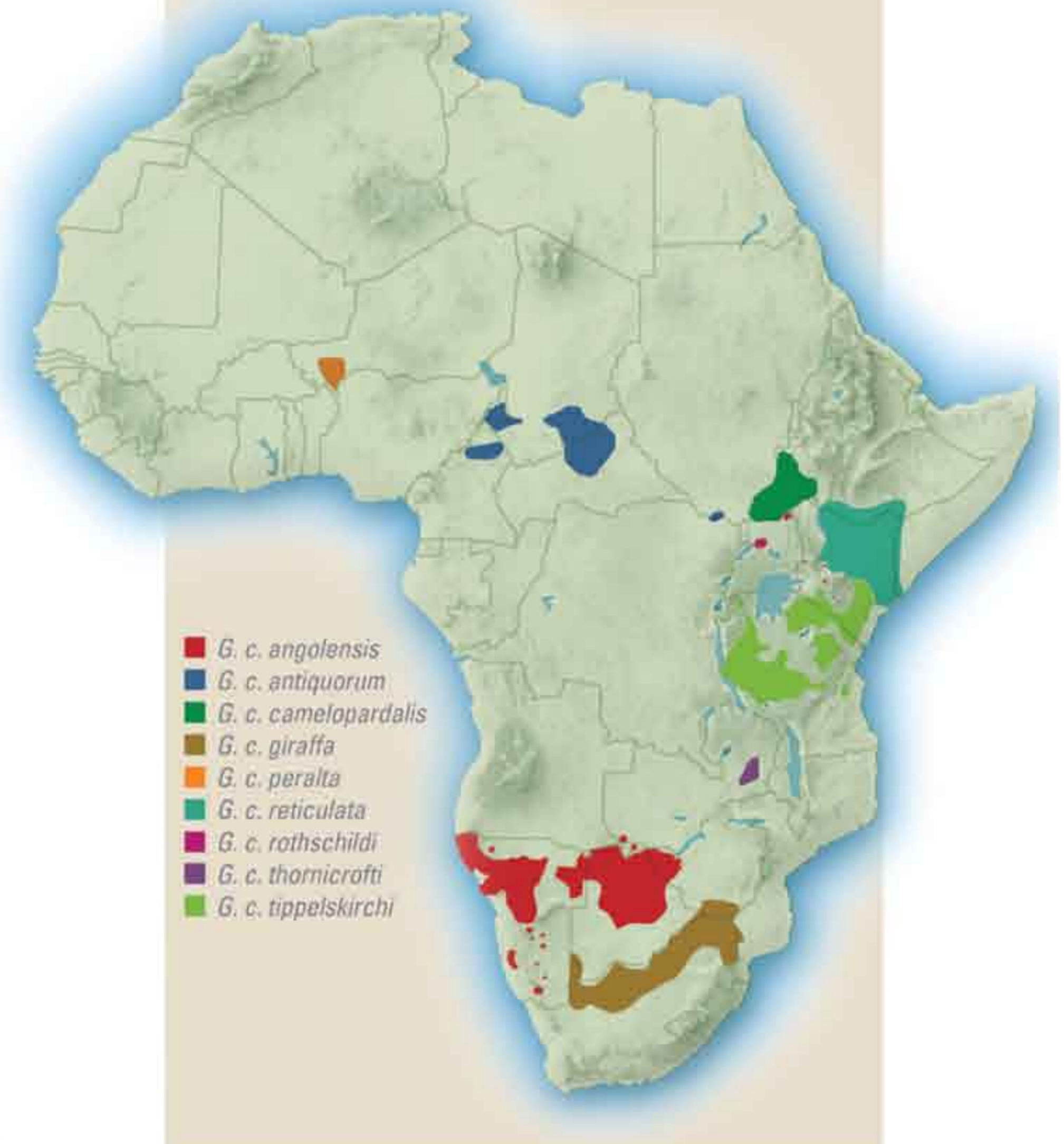
There is a mutually beneficial relationship between giraffe and oxpecker birds, or obligates in the absence of oxpeckers. Giraffe are host to various parasitic ticks and the benefit from oxpeckers and other birds removing ticks is considerable.

Economic Significance

The giraffe's primary economic benefit is its evolutionary uniqueness. Images of giraffe are used daily around the world. Their unmistakable silhouettes and evocative images are regularly used in advertising to sell anything from tea bags to wine, from whisky to mobile phones and even the FIFA World Cup.

However, it is the tourist dollar which interests 'stakeholders' most. There is barely a safari brochure or travel operator in the world that does not use a giraffe to sell Africa as an exciting holiday destination. In essence, giraffe market Africa!

In comparison to other large herbivores like elephant and buffalo, and highly lucrative predators, giraffe cannot compete as a significant source of revenue in the trophy hunting market.



Management Priorities

- Promoting the importance and profile of giraffe conservation on the international stage, increasing awareness for the plight of the giraffe.
- Securing viable, and protecting existing, habitat for giraffe and other wildlife.
- Supporting dedicated and innovative research to better understand giraffe ecology, conservation and management.
- Establishing the current status of all giraffe populations and (sub)species to support and inform their conservation and management.
- Identifying key threats to giraffe and innovative ways to mitigate these.
- Developing a world class network of individuals and organisations dedicated to securing the future of giraffe.
- Providing a platform and forum for giraffe related research, conservation and management discussion.
- Promoting and supporting giraffe conservation initiatives and work collaboratively with local communities to develop a sustainable future for both people and wildlife.

<i>G. c. angolensis</i>	<20,000
<i>G. c. antiquorum</i>	<3,000
<i>G. c. camelopardalis</i>	<650
<i>G. c. giraffa</i>	<12,000
<i>G. c. peralta</i> *	<300
<i>G. c. reticulata</i>	<4,700
<i>G. c. rothschildi</i> *	<1,100
<i>G. c. thornicrofti</i>	<1,000
<i>G. c. tippelskirchi</i>	<37,000

Threats

Poaching, human population growth, impact of war and civil unrest, diseases, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and habitat degradation combined impact giraffe distribution across the African continent.

Many threats arise from conflict and competition (direct, indirect or perceived) for resources with humans and their domestic stock. Habitat degradation and destruction is caused by the increase of agriculture, pastoralism, uncontrolled timber and fuel wood harvesting. Damages to crops are another cause of human-wildlife conflict and potential disease transmission can result from close contact with domestic livestock. Giraffe outside of protected areas are even known to have been hit by vehicles!

Habitat fragmentation caused by human population expansion and encroachment isolates giraffe populations from gene flow and exchange of genetic diversity. This has restrictive implications on the evolutionary potential of the species. Isolated populations and populations having undergone bottlenecks are in danger of progressive mating of relatives that will eventually result in increased levels of inbreeding.

Limiting Factors

Scientific

A lack of long-term research including ecology, physiology and taxonomy, and reliable historical and current data, remain the most limiting factors in understanding giraffe. More essential baseline knowledge is required across the board. As an example, there has never been a long-term ecological research project on giraffe.

Excitingly, advances in all the above scientific fields are slowly increasing whilst ongoing genetic research on giraffe populations across the continent is providing invaluable baseline for their future conservation and management, and promises to unravel their taxonomic mystery.

Ecological

Giraffe populations are regulated in part by natural mortality caused by predation (varying from population to population across the continent). Even adult male giraffe can be preyed by lions, but sub adults and calves are particularly vulnerable and can be taken by hyena, leopard, cheetah, crocodile, and of course, humans!

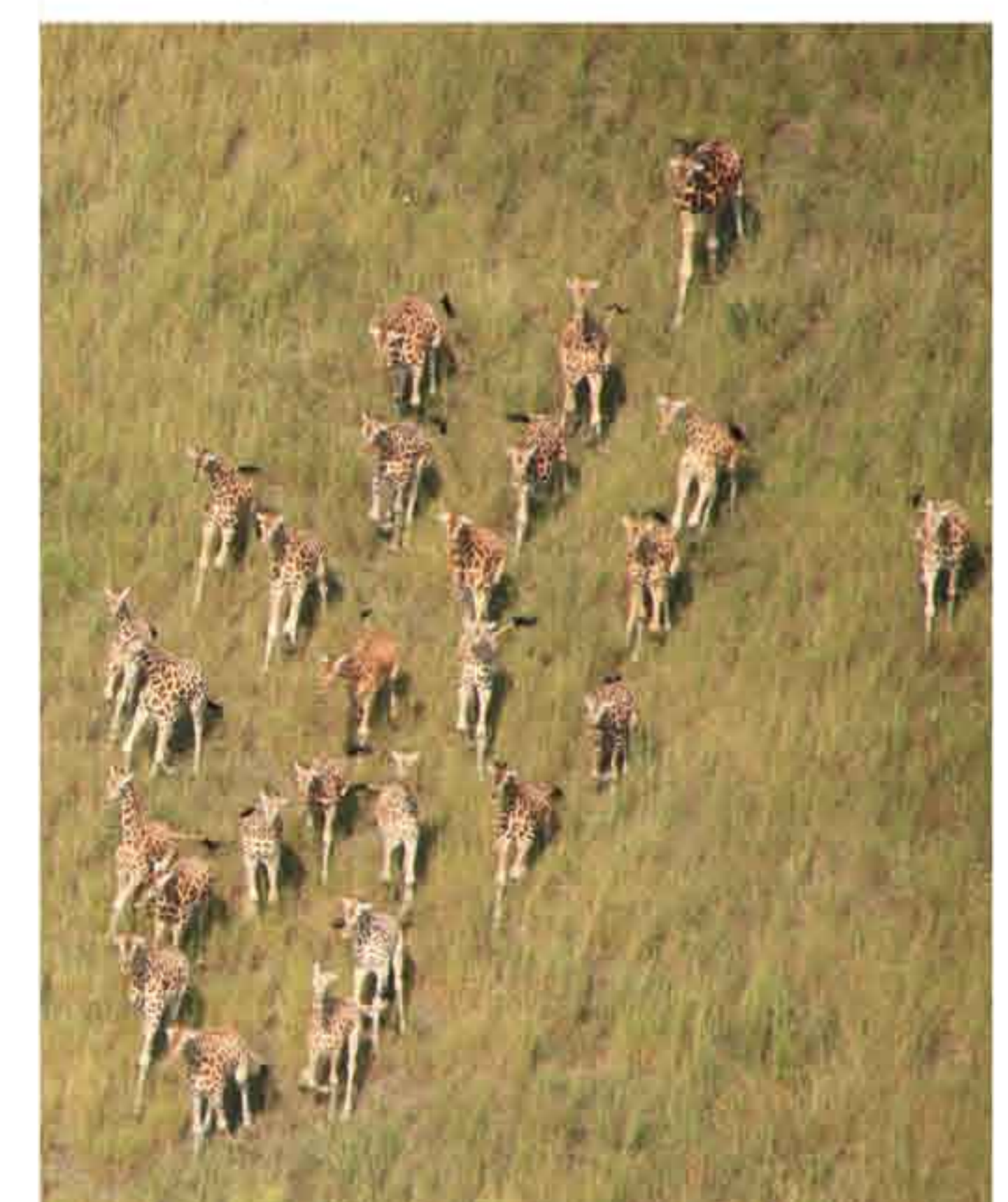
Additionally, malnutrition, a result of limited dry season food quality and quantity, and diseases including anthrax and rinderpest play a role in limiting population growth.

Social

Giraffe are competing with other more charismatic creatures. The common misconception that there are abundant giraffe around is exacerbated by their currently outdated conservation status and profile.

It is estimated that giraffe numbers are less than a fifth of those of the African elephant which is currently classified as 'vulnerable', while giraffe is classified as 'least concern'.

The magnitude of illegal hunting and its role in driving change in giraffe population dynamics is an aspect that is still poorly understood.



Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) is dedicated to securing a future for all giraffe populations in the wild. GCF is the only charity in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation of this most quintessential of Africa's mega-herbivores and its habitat.

www.giraffeconservation.org