AFRICA’S GIRAFFE

Subspecies

The Nubian giraffe is the nominate subspecies, meaning its Latin subspecific name is the same as that of the entire species, because it was the first specimen from which it was named and first recorded. The estimated number of Nubian giraffe is below 650, of which fewer than 300 are believed to occur in western Ethiopia and 450 or less may be in the Sudan. However, recent genetic research indicates that Nubian giraffes may not be genetically distinct. Large herds have been reported in Ethiopia but while it is thought that these giraffes may belong to two other subspecies, exact identification of this subspecies has not been possible. The current population is extremely difficult to ascertain and their numbers might be much lower than previously estimated.

The reticulated giraffe has large, irregular, chestnut-brown blotches on an off-white to beige background. It has no markings below the hocks. This species, once thought to be widespread in Africa, is now known to occur only in Ethiopia and northern Somalia.

The South African giraffe ranges from west to east across southern Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Extralimital populations have been translocated to South Africa and likely represents the same subspecies.

The Kordofan giraffe’s spots are pale and irregular. It has a curved range of Kordofan giraffe.

The Angolan giraffe is larger and longer than its African counterparts. Its markings are darker and more pronounced. This giraffe is also found in southern Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

The Masai giraffe is a subspecies of the Masai giraffe and is found in Kenya and Tanzania. Its distinctive spots are large, dark, and notched spots that cover the whole leg.

Thomson’s giraffe is a subspecies of the Masai giraffe and is found in Kenya and Tanzania. It is the most widespread subspecies and is characterized by its large, dark, and notched spots that cover the whole leg.

Rothschild’s giraffe is a subspecies of the Masai giraffe and is found in southern Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. It is characterized by its large, dark, and notched spots that cover the whole leg.

Taxonomy & Populations

Class: Mammalia (Mammals)
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Giraffidae
Genus: Giraffa
Species: Giraffa camelopardalis

Current status is the number of individuals in the wild, based on the latest data available. The estimated number of Nubian giraffe is below 650, of which fewer than 300 are believed to occur in western Ethiopia and 450 or less may be in the Sudan. However, recent genetic research indicates that Nubian giraffes may not be genetically distinct. Large herds have been reported in Ethiopia but while it is thought that these giraffes may belong to two other subspecies, exact identification of this subspecies has not been possible. The current population is extremely difficult to ascertain and their numbers might be much lower than previously estimated.

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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.