



Giraffe

Why in News?

About 150 years ago, British colonists brought batches of northern giraffes from their other colonial possessions in Africa.

What are the Key Points About Giraffes?

▪ General:

◦ Physiological Characteristics:

- Giraffe, (genus Giraffa) are any of the four species in the genus Giraffa of long-necked cud-chewing hooved mammals of **Africa**, with long legs and a **coat pattern of irregular brown patches** on a light background.
- Giraffes are the **tallest of all land animals**, males (bulls) may exceed 5.5 metres (18 feet) in height, and the tallest females (cows) are about 4.5 metres.
- Using prehensile (**grabby**) tongues almost half a metre long, they are able to browse foliage almost six metres from the ground.
- Giraffes grow to nearly their full height by four years of age but gain weight until they are seven or eight. Males weigh up to 1,930 kg, females up to 1,180 kg.
- **Both sexes have a pair of horns**, though males possess other bony protuberances on the skull.

◦ Eating Habits:

- Giraffes prefer to eat new shoots and leaves, mainly from the **thorny acacia tree**.
- Giraffes **obtain most water from their food**, though in the dry season **they drink at least every three days**.

◦ Geographical Location:

- Giraffes are a **common sight in grasslands and open woodlands in East Africa**.

▪ Indian Giraffe:

- The **largest captive herd of the northern Giraffe** (29 individuals) in India is at the **Alipore Zoological Garden in Kolkata**.
 - A recent genealogical study has confirmed that the individuals in this facility, at least, are most likely the **Nubian giraffes** or the **Rothschild giraffe**.
- The Nubian giraffe is the nominate subspecies of giraffe which used to be widespread everywhere in Northeast Africa. However, **95% of the population of Nubian Giraffe has declined in the past 3 decades**.
 - Rothschild's giraffe is **one of the tallest subspecies**, growing up to 6m tall. Its colouring is unique compared to other giraffes as their markings stop halfway down their legs.
- **IUCN Red List Status:**
 - Nubian giraffes - Critically Endangered
 - Rothschild giraffe - Endangered

[Source: TH](#)

