

# GIRAFFE, MASAI

## RANGE:

Africa, south of the Sahara Desert.

## HABITAT:

Grasslands with trees and scrub.

## SIZE:

**Height:** 15-18 feet (tallest living mammals)

**Weight:** 1200-1800 lbs.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY:

**Wild:** 15 - 20 Years

**Captivity:** 20-30 Years

## REPRODUCTION:

- Single birth, after gestation period of 14-16 months.
- Offspring are six feet tall at birth.
- The mother gives birth while standing and the young fall six feet upon delivery.

## DIET:

**Wild:** Leaves (Has 18 inch prehensile tongue.)

**Captivity:** Timothy hay, alfalfa, grain, carrot surprise, Vita-kelp.

## BEHAVIOR:

- Usually stay in small herds of 15-20 called a family group.
- They run up to 30 mph.
- Sleeping is usually done standing up, but resting is done in a sitting position.
- Giraffes are shy, timid and get spooked easily at night.
- Head horns are present at birth, but only used in male-to-male combat.
- Legs are powerful enough to break concrete and are used in defense.

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Noted for their long neck, they have only seven vertebrae (as do humans).
- They have valve in their neck veins, which prevent blood from rushing back.
- Giraffes have a massive heart and extremely high blood pressure. This is necessary to force blood up 7-8 feet to the brain.
- Due to their high blood pressure, they have a wonder net, or series of small arteries, just outside the brain to reduce the pressure before the blood enters.
- Extremely long feet, with ankle joints halfway up the leg.
- Giraffes have protective coloration resembling tree bark with the shadows of branches.
- They are ruminants or cud chewers.
- Horns (called ossicones) are covered with skin and hair.
- In order to drink or pick up food from the ground, the forelegs are spread wide and well to the front or are bent at the knee until the head can reach the ground.

## STATUS:

Stable.

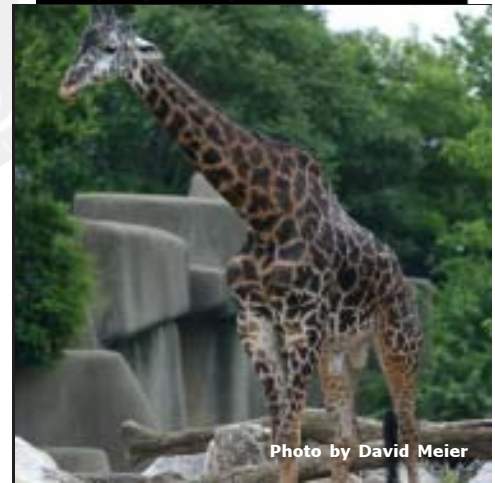
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theZOO  
LOUISVILLE



Order: **Artiodactyla**  
Family: **Giraffidae**  
Genus: **Giraffa**  
Species: **camelopardalis**  
Subspecies: **tippelskirchi**