

Giraffe ... a conservation crisis that needs to be shared!



MEASUREMENTS

Height: 14-17 feet
(top of head)

Weight: 1,800-
2,600lbs



Savanna



Africa

IUCN
LEAST
CONCERN

<80,000 in
the wild

Care and Husbandry

GREEN SSP (generic): 189,265 (454) in 86 AZA institutions (2019)

YELLOW SSP (Masai): 52,751 (128) in 35 AZA institutions (2019)

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Social nature: Herd-living. Females of all ages can be housed with a single male.

Adult males will not tolerate each other in the presence of females; isolated bachelor groups have had mixed success.

Mixed species: The TAG strongly recommends adding other hoofstock to giraffe exhibits to maximize space use. Giraffe mix well with many ungulates and larger birds. Young giraffe may chase smaller species; creep areas can help.

Housing: Heated housing (70° F) needed in colder conditions (less than 50°F); cold weather exacerbates underlying medical concerns. Custom barns needed.

Medical notes: Several medical conditions (e.g., urolithiasis and peracute mortality due to poor body condition), are linked to nutrition. Hoof care needs vary.

Special requirements: Browse is an essential dietary component. Feeders should be positioned to allow giraffes to eat in a normal posture. The use of enrichment to extend feeding time is highly recommended.

Keeper resources: Protected contact recommended. Many institutions have had great success in training giraffes for voluntary medical care.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>

A crisis for wild giraffes

- Wild giraffe populations have declined by over 40% in the past 15 years, and fewer than 80,000 giraffes now survive in the wild.
- Habitat destruction and fragmentation, poaching, and disease are key concerns for wild giraffes.
- Recent genetic studies suggest that living giraffes may represent several distinct species, not subspecies as previously thought. Five of these (sub)species have fewer than 5,000 living individuals and two are listed as “Endangered,” magnifying the need for conservation efforts.

Leveraging the popularity of giraffes

- Giraffes mix well with many ungulates. Consider adding other hoofstock to existing (and new) giraffe exhibits to maximize use of space.
- AZA has two distinct giraffe programs (generic and Masai)—the Masai giraffe SSP is the higher-priority program for the TAG.
- The popularity of giraffes and the prevalence of feeding platforms provide a perfect opportunity to communicate the giraffe conservation issue, and are an excellent way to raise funds.

Stewardship Opportunities

Northern Rangelands Trust (Kenya)

<http://www.nrt-kenya.org/>

