|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Giraffe**  **Temporal range: 11.61–0**[**Ma**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megaannum)  [**Miocene**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miocene)**to**[**Recent**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene) | |
| [IMG_256](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Giraffe_Mikumi_National_Park.jpg) | |
| [Masai giraffe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masai_giraffe) (*G. c. tippelskirchi*) at the [Mikumi National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikumi_National_Park" \o "Mikumi National Park), [Tanzania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzania) | |
| [**Scientific classification**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_(biology))**[IMG_258](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Taxonomy/Giraffa)** | |
| Kingdom: | [Animalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal) |
| Phylum: | [Chordata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chordate) |
| Class: | [Mammalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal) |
| Order: | [Artiodactyla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Even-toed_ungulate) |
| Family: | [Giraffidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giraffidae) |
| Genus: | ***Giraffa*** [Brisson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathurin_Jacques_Brisson), 1762 |

**GIRAFFE**

The **giraffe** (*Giraffa*) is an African [artiodactyl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Even-toed_ungulate) [mammal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal), the [tallest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Largest_mammals#Even-toed_Ungulates_(Artiodactyla)) living terrestrial animal and the largest [ruminant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruminant). It is traditionally considered to be one [species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species), *Giraffa camelopardalis*, with nine [subspecies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subspecies). However, the existence of up to eight [extant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neontology#Extant_taxa_versus_extinct_taxa) giraffe species has been described, based upon research into the [mitochondrial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA) and [nuclear DNA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_DNA), as well as morphological measurements of *Giraffa*. Seven other species are extinct, prehistoric species known from fossils.

Giraffes may be preyed on by [lions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion), [leopards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard), [spotted hyenas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotted_hyena) and [African wild dogs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_wild_dog). Giraffes live in herds of related females and their offspring, or bachelor herds of unrelated adult males, but are gregarious and may gather in large aggregations. Males establish social hierarchies through "necking", which are combat bouts where the neck is used as a weapon. [Dominant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominance_(ethology)) males gain mating access to females, which bear the sole responsibility for raising the young