

150 years of Northern Giraffe in India

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In news– About 150 years ago, British colonialists brought batches of what they thought were a single species of the northern giraffe to India, from their other colonial possessions in Africa.

About Northern Giraffe-

- The **northern giraffe, also known as three-horned giraffe**, is the type species of giraffe, *G. camelopardalis*, and is **native to North Africa**, although alternative taxonomic hypotheses have proposed the northern giraffe as a separate species.
- Once abundant throughout Africa since the 19th century, Northern giraffes ranged from Senegal, Mali and Nigeria from West Africa to up north in Egypt.
- The similar West African giraffes lived in Algeria and Morocco in ancient periods until their extinctions due to the Saharan dry climate.
- **The current IUCN taxonomic scheme lists one species of giraffe with the name *G. camelopardalis* and nine subspecies.**
- A 2021 whole genome sequencing study suggests the northern giraffe as a separate species, and postulates the existence of three **distinct subspecies**. They are:
 1. Kordofan giraffe(*G. c. antiquorum*).
 2. Nubian giraffe(*G. c. camelopardalis*).
 3. West African giraffe(*G. c. peralta*).
- **These now comprise a captive population of 29**

individuals of northern giraffes across the country.

- Both the Nubian and Rothschild giraffes are listed as 'critically endangered' and 'endangered' by the IUCN respectively.
- Often mistaken with the Southern Giraffes, **Northern giraffe's are differentiated by their distinctive two horn-like protuberances known as ossicones** on their foreheads, which are longer and larger than those of southern giraffes'.
- Bull Northern giraffes have a third cylindrical ossicone in the center of the head just above the eyes, which is from 3 to 5 inches long.
- Northern giraffes live **in savannahs, shrublands, and woodlands**. After numerous local extinctions, Northern giraffes are the least numerous giraffe species, and the most endangered.
 - The earliest ranges of the Northern giraffes were in Chad during the late Pliocene.

