

# New discovery



## Did you know that there are four species of giraffe and not only one?

Until recently everyone thought that there was only one species of giraffe and nine different subspecies. But researchers from the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) here in Windhoek together with partners in Germany found out that there are actually four different species of giraffe. We always knew that some giraffe looked very different from others: they have different patterns or different numbers of ossicones (horns).

## How did they find that out?

For more than 10 years GCF researchers have been collecting tissue samples (skin samples) from giraffe all over Africa. These were then sent to a laboratory in Germany where they were analysed. The results show that giraffe in different parts of Africa are very different from each other. The different species of giraffe are as different as polar bears and brown bears.

## Why does it matter?

Knowing that giraffe are classified in four different species will help conservationists hugely. Governments and wildlife managers can make informed decisions and ensure each species thrives in their different habitats throughout Africa.

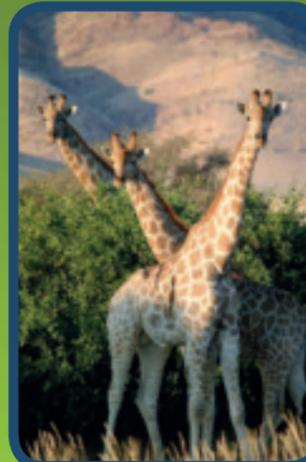


## What does it mean?

This means giraffe are more diverse than we thought. Protecting each species is important for biodiversity. Biodiversity is the variety of living things in a place, in your home or on Earth. In your home every person adds something different from making money or washing clothes to cooking food. It is exactly the same in nature, all the different animals add something important, including giraffe. The more we understand about giraffe, the higher the chance that we can protect them now and in the future.

## Do you know what kind of giraffe we have here in Namibia?

Here in Namibia we have Angolan giraffe. They are a subspecies of the southern giraffe that live all over southern Africa. Take a look at the map below to learn more about where the four species of giraffe and their five subspecies live.



Southern giraffe, two subspecies.

## Angolan giraffe.

This giraffe has large and uneven patches in a pale brown – in the Namibian desert the patches of some giraffe almost disappear. You can find them in Namibia and Botswana, sadly they are almost extinct in Angola where their name comes from.

**South African giraffe.** This giraffe has star shaped patches in different shades of brown. You can find them in Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa.



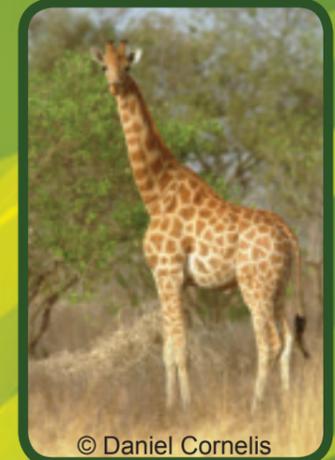
Northern giraffe, three subspecies.  
**West African giraffe.** This giraffe has rectangular and light brown patches. You can find them in Niger.

**Nubian giraffe.** This giraffe has large rectangular brown patches. You can find them in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda.

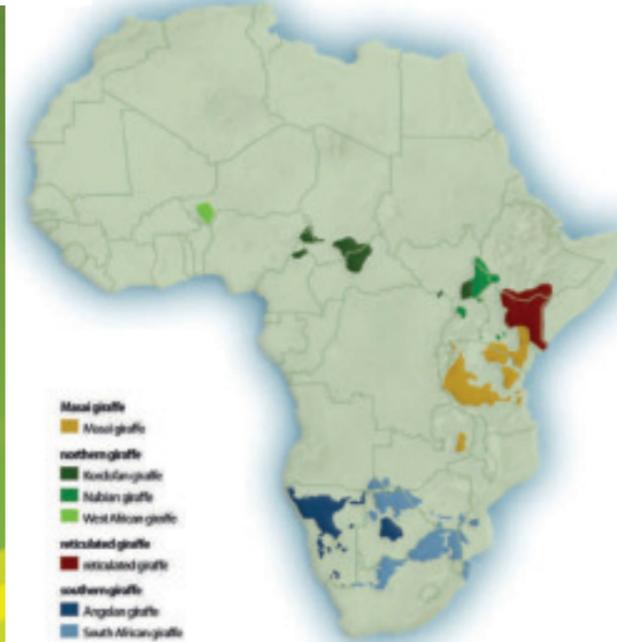


## Kordofan giraffe.

This giraffe has pale and irregular patches. You can find them in Chad, CAR, Cameroon, DCR and South Sudan.



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## Masai giraffe:

This giraffe has large dark brown patches with jagged edges. You can find them in Kenya, Tanzania and northern Zambia.



**Reticulated giraffe.** This giraffe has dark brown patches with clear white lines surrounding them. You can find them in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

