

Rare white giraffes killed by poachers in Kenya: conservationists

March 11 2020



A image by the Ishaqbini Hirola Community Conservancy shows the rare white giraffe and her calf in Kenya

Kenya's only female white giraffe and her calf have been killed by poachers, conservationists said Tuesday, in a major blow for the rare

animals found nowhere else in the world.

The bodies of the two giraffes were found "in a skeletal state after being killed by armed poachers" in Garissa in eastern Kenya, the Ishaqbini Hirola Community Conservancy said in a statement.

Their deaths leave just one remaining white [giraffe](#) alive—a lone male, borne by the same slaughtered female, the conservancy said.

"We are the only community in the world who are custodians of the white giraffe," said Mohammed Ahmednoor, the manager of the conservancy.

"Its killing is a blow to tremendous steps taken by the community to conserve rare and unique species, and a wakeup call for continued support to [conservation efforts](#)."

The white giraffe stirred huge interest in 2017 when she was first spotted on the conservancy and again when she birthed two calves, the latest in August last year.

Their alabaster colour is caused not by albinism but a condition known as leucism, which means they continue to produce dark pigment in their soft tissue, giving them dark eyes.

Ahmednoor said their deaths, confirmed by rangers and community members, was a "sad day" and a major loss for researchers and tourism providers working in the remote corner of Kenya.

Giraffes under threat

The population of the gentle giants has fallen by around 40% in 30 years: IUCN

151,702 - 163,452

Estimated population



1985

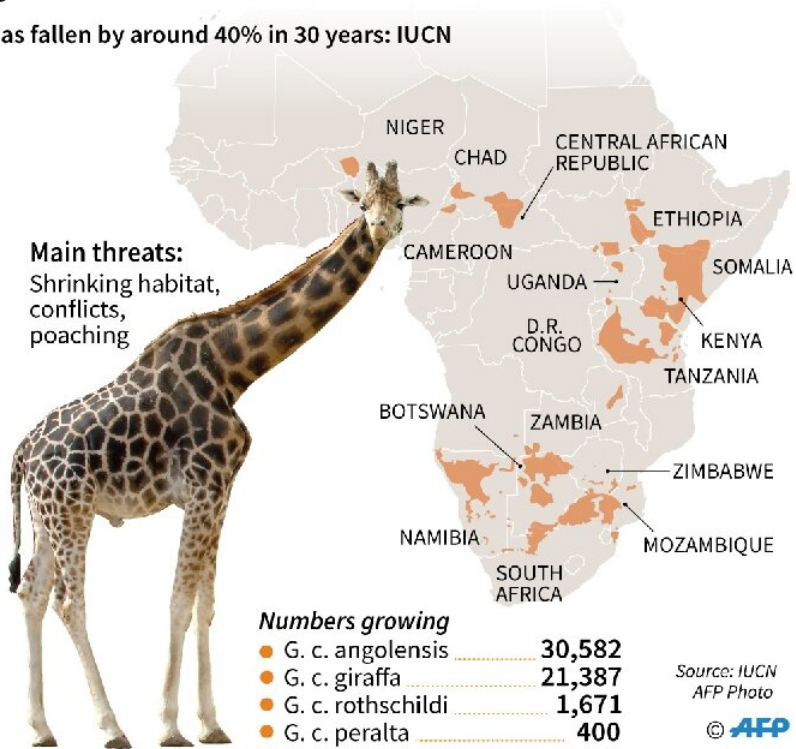
97,562
(68,293 mature individuals in the wild)



2015

Main threats:

Shrinking habitat, conflicts, poaching



9 subspecies threatened

Population declining Individuals

- G. c.* tippelskirchi 35,000
- G. c. reticulata 8,661
- G. c. antiquorum 2,000
- G. c. camelopardalis 650

Stable *Giraffa camelopardalis

- G. c. thornicrofti 600

Numbers growing

- G. c. angolensis 30,582
- G. c. giraffa 21,387
- G. c. rothschildi 1,671
- G. c. peralta 400

Source: IUCN
AFP Photo



Population for different giraffe species and range

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