



## Reticulated Giraffe

*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*

**Geographical Range:** The tallest living land animal in the world, the reticulated giraffe is found in Africa south of the Sahara Desert.

**Habitat:** Giraffes prefer open woodland and wooded grasslands.

**Exhibit Location:** The giraffe house is located near the front corner of the Zoo, next to the rhino exhibit.

**Physical Characteristics:** Giraffes Range in height between six and 18 feet and can weigh up to 3,000 pounds. Their head is small with a long, narrow snout and long, flat nostrils. They have a prehensile tongue that can be up to 18 inches in length which helps them strip the leaves from tree branches. The giraffe has a tawny coat with brown patches. Their reticulated (net-like) pattern helps them hide their enormous form in the trees and thickets that they inhabit. When in groups, the pattern acts as a disruptive camouflage, confusing predators. Like fingerprints, the markings of a giraffe's coat are unique to each individual.

**Diet:** In the wild, they eat leaves, buds and small branches of trees. In captivity, they receive grain, hay and an occasional treat of greens, fruits and vegetables.

### Did you know?

- Giraffes have extremely keen eyesight and can see great distances. They also have excellent hearing. These sharp senses help giraffes be alert to predators.
- The giraffes' habitat loss is due to human encroachment and hunting. They are poached for meat and body parts. Their hair is used to make bracelets and thread. Their skin is used for shield covers and their sinew is used for bow strings.
- The giraffe's long neck has the same number of vertebrae (seven) as most other mammals. The giraffe's are greatly elongated.

**Status:** Numbers are stable at this time but giraffes are considered near threatened.