

# GALAPAGOS TORTOISE

## Description

Galapagos Tortoises are the largest tortoises in the world. They are commonly split into two groups depending on the shape of their shell or 'carapace'. The saddle-back carapace has a curved shell front which allows the tortoise's neck to extend and reach food in higher places.

## Diet

Galapagos Tortoises are **herbivores** and feed on leaves and flowers. One of their favourites is the Opuntia cactus, or 'Prickly Pear'.

## In the wild

When male tortoises are competing for females, they have a height fight. The males stand tall and stretch their neck up as high as they can go. The male that is the highest wins the fight. Some tortoises can reach heights of 1.5 m.

## Threats

There are 14 recognised subspecies of Galapagos Tortoise, three of which are extinct. In the past, nearly 200,000 tortoises were taken from the island by sailors and pirates for food. Today, there are less than 20,000 tortoises living on the Galapagos archipelago. Introduced species are now the greatest threats to these tortoises. Pigs, cats and dogs eat tortoise eggs and hatchlings. Competition from feral goats and cattle has caused a shortage of food.

## At Perth Zoo

Perth Zoo's Galapagos Tortoises can be seen opposite the entrance to the **Lesser Primates** area.

## Did you know?

Galapagos Tortoises are one the longest living of all known animals. The oldest recorded tortoise was 175 years old!



**Scientific Name**  
*Geochelone nigra*

### Conservation Status

Extinct

Extinct in the Wild

Critically Endangered

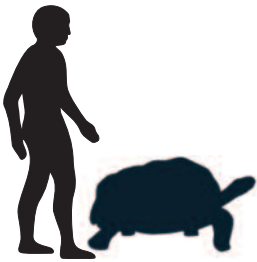
Endangered

Vulnerable

Near-Threatened

Least Concern

Data Deficient



**Body Length:** up to 1.2 m

**Weight:** 51–320 kg

**Gestation:** 4–5 months

**Number of eggs:** 2–16

Distribution



**Distribution:** Galapagos Islands

