

Seychelles Giant Tortoise

Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance | Species

Why in News?

Recently, the world's oldest living land animal, at 193 years, Jonathan, a nearly 200-year-old tortoise, trended globally after death rumours on the island of St. Helena.

- **Scientific name** - *Aldabrachelys gigantea hololissa*
- **Family** - Testudinidae
- It is a *rare subspecies of the Aldabra giant tortoise* native to the granitic islands of the Seychelles.
- **Commonly known as** - the Seychelles giant tortoise or the Seychelles domed giant tortoise.
- **Habitat** - They inhabit grasslands, scrub forests, and coastal dunes.
- **Distribution** - *Native to the Seychelles*, its largest surviving population today is found on the *Aldabra Atoll*, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- It was once found on many islands of the Indian Ocean.
- For conservation purposes, they have also been introduced to other islands of Seychelles to safeguard their survival.
- **Size** - Males can weigh up to 250 kg, females around 150-160 kg.
- **Physical Appearance** - It has a broad, brownish-grey carapace that is flattened on the back with raised scutes.
- This distinguishes it from the more roundly-domed *A. g. gigantea* and the saddle-backed *A. g. arnoldi*.



- **Morphology** - Dome-shaped shell, strong limbs, herbivorous diet, slow-moving reptile with an extraordinary lifespan.
- **Reproduction** - Females lay clutches of 9-25 eggs. Hatchlings are vulnerable to predation, requiring conservation efforts for survival.
- **Adaptation** - Adapted to arid island ecosystems, capable of surviving on limited vegetation and water, their slow metabolism supports longevity.
- **Diet** - Primarily herbivorous, feeding on grasses, leaves, fruits, and woody plant stems.
- **Conservation Status**
 - **IUCN** - Vulnerable
 - **CITES** - Appendix II
- **Threats** - Habitat loss, illegal hunting, and climate change.

References

1. [The Hindu | Jonathan](#)
2. [Nature seychelles | Aldabra-giant-tortoise](#)

