# 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



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