

Lonely and Looking for Love?

Lonesome George

Lonesome George is the last known individual of the Pinta Island Tortoise (*Geochelone nigra abingdoni*) which is one of eleven subspecies of Galápagos tortoise, all of which are native to the Galápagos Islands. He has been labelled the rarest creature in the world, and is a potent symbol for **conservation** efforts in the Galápagos and internationally. It is thought that he was named after a character played by American actor George Gobel.

Galapagos Tortoise

Tortoises on the Galápagos have been hunted for their meat by sailors and fishermen to the point of **extinction**. Charles Darwin, when he arrived in the Galápagos in 1835, described how he and the crew of the Beagle lived entirely on tortoise meat. Also, the **habitat** of the tortoises has been eaten away by goats introduced from the mainland.

The Demise of the Giant Tortoise

Giant tortoises once occurred on all continents, except Antarctica. However, the evolution of humans and their rapid **colonization** of the earth meant that the giant tortoises, large, tasty, and easy to kill, were quickly hunted to **extinction** in all but the most inaccessible regions of the globe.

George's History to date

George was first seen on the island of Pinta on 1 December 1971 by American snail biologist Joseph Vagvolgyi. The island's **vegetation** had been **decimated** by introduced **feral** goats, and the **indigenous** *G. n. abingdoni* population had been reduced to a single individual.

Relocated for his safety to the Charles Darwin Research Station, George was penned with two females of a different **subspecies**, but although eggs have been produced, none have hatched.

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Galapagos Tortoise

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The Demise of the Giant Tortoise

Giant tortoises once occurred on all continents, except Antarctica. However, the evolution of humans and their rapid **colonization** of the earth meant that many giant tortoises, large, were quickly hunted to most inaccessible

How is the page made clearer by placing the paragraphs into different text boxes?

What is the purpose of the subheadings?

What is the information in the brackets?

Some of the words on the page stand out because they are in **bold** print.

Why have these words been put in **bold**?

Why are some words in italics in the yellow text box?

History to date

George was last seen on the island in December 1971 by biologist Joseph Powell. The island's **vegetation** was **destroyed** by introduced the **indigenous** *G. nigra*. The population had been reduced to one individual.

Efforts for safety to the research station, with two **subspecies**, have been made, none have hatched.



Lonesome George' at the breeding centre Fausto Llerena on the Galapagos' Santa Cruz Island.

Photograph: AFP/Getty Images

Lonesome George Key Facts

Species: *Geochelone abingdoni*

Common name: Pinta giant tortoise, "Lonesome George"

Size: 102cm across shell, 88kg in weight

Habitat: Charles Darwin Research Station corral

Diet: herbivore

Range: None present on Pinta, "Lonesome George" resides at Charles Darwin Research Station

Status: Pinta species is nearing Extinction

Threatened by: introduced species, habitat destruction, historical predation by humans

GIANT Tortoise Facts

- Are the largest terrestrial reptiles on earth.
- Weigh up to 300kg
- May live for more than 150 years
- Colonized Galapagos from South America some 2-3 million years ago
- Once occurred on 10 islands. Today, wild tortoises are restricted to just 6 islands
- May have comprised 15 sub-species, while today only 11 are recognized.

Further Details

There is a reward of \$10,000 for the discovery of a Pinta female

There are other giant tortoises which are located on other islands of the [Galapagos Islands](#).



Lonesome George' at the
Llerena on the Galapagos
Photograph: AFP/Getty Im

Why are the fact boxes an efficient way to give the reader information?

What do we call the text under a photograph?

There are two different functions of the caption?
What are they?

If this was a web page how would the underlined /
coloured words be useful?

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