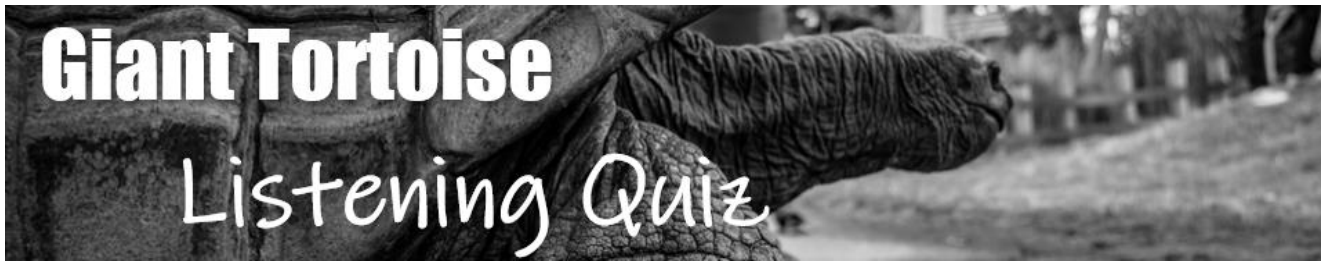


NAME: _____

DATE: _____



1. What is the maximum lifespan of the Galapagos giant tortoise?

- 100 years
- 225 years
- 255 years
- 330 years

2. How does the shape of the carapace of the giant tortoise help them in their environment?

- It allows them to move quickly.
- It helps them to hide in bushes easily.
- It enables them to reach high vegetation.
- It protects them from predators.

3. Why did the Galapagos giant tortoise population decline in the 19th century?

- climate change and rising sea levels
- hunting and habitat destruction
- disease
- natural disasters

4. What is one strategy used to increase the Galapagos giant tortoise population?

- creating captive breeding programs
- relocating tortoises to different islands
- building artificial habitats
- introducing new plants for them to eat

5. How are new animal populations, that compete with the giant tortoises for food, controlled?

- relocation to different islands
- construction of fences around their habitats
- sterilization
- hunting

6. What is the main goal of education the public about the giant tortoises?

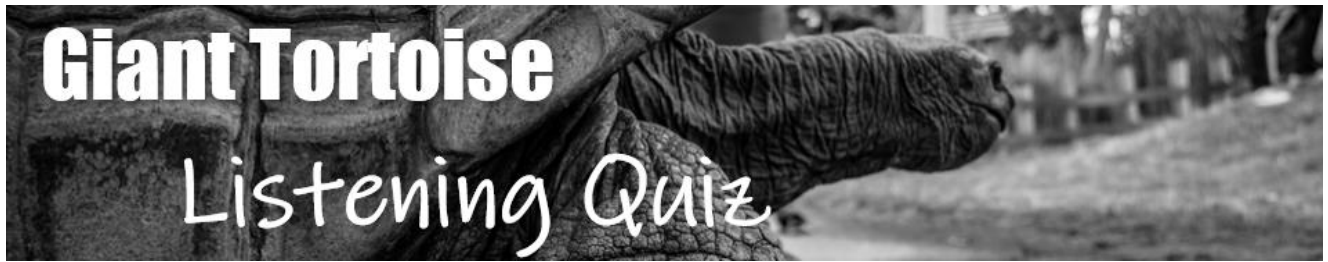
- to raise money for conservation efforts
- to increase tourism to the islands
- to raise conservation awareness
- to increase the popularity of tortoises as pets

Discuss these questions with a friend or classmate.

1. What information from the lecture did you find the most interesting? Why?
2. Have you ever had a pet tortoise? Why? / Why not?
3. Why do you think tortoises can live to be so old?
4. Would you like to live as long as a tortoise (200+ years)? Why? / Why not?
5. Do you think these tortoises might be dangerous? Why? / Why not?
6. What three questions would you like to ask a giant tortoise?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



Audio Script

The giant tortoise is a majestic and ancient species that can be found on the Galapagos Islands, located off the coast of Ecuador. These tortoises are known for their large size and long lifespan, with some individuals living more than 100 years. Incredibly, captive Galapagos tortoises can live much longer, with one captive individual, Harriet, living for at least 175 years. She lived from 1830 to 2006. Another particular tortoise, Adwaita, is thought to have lived as long as 255 years.

The Galapagos giant tortoise is one of the most famous and easily recognizable animals in the world. It is the largest living species of tortoise, with some males weighing over 900 pounds. The Galapagos giant tortoise has a unique dome-shaped carapace and a long neck which allows them to reach high vegetation, and their hind legs are shorter than the front legs, a feature that makes it easy for them to walk on rough terrain.

The Galapagos giant tortoise is also known for its incredible ability to adapt to different environments. These tortoises can be found in a variety of habitats, including dry scrubland, wet lowland forests, and even high-altitude grasslands. This adaptability is due in part to the fact that the tortoises can survive on a diet of more than 30 different plant species, allowing them to thrive in a wide range of conditions.

Despite their impressive adaptability, the Galapagos giant tortoise population has faced many challenges over the years. In the late 19th century, hunting and habitat destruction caused their population to decline dramatically. Today, conservation efforts are in place to protect and preserve these magnificent animals.

One of the most effective conservation strategies has been the establishment of captive breeding programs, which have helped to increase the population of giant tortoises on the islands. These programs involve collecting eggs from wild nests and raising the hatchlings in captivity until they are large enough to be released into the wild. Additionally, the Galapagos National Park Service has implemented a number of measures to protect the tortoises in their natural habitat, including hunting and controlling the populations of introduced animals such as feral goats and pigs, which compete with the tortoises for food.

Another important aspect of conservation is educating the public about the giant tortoises and the importance of protecting them. Many organizations, such as the Charles Darwin Foundation, work to raise awareness about the plight of these animals and to promote conservation efforts.

ANSWER KEY

1. 255 years
2. It enables them to reach high vegetation.
3. hunting and habitat destruction
4. captive breeding programs
5. hunting
6. to raise conservation awareness