

World Giraffe Day:

Make your own ossicones!



In this activity, kids will learn about giraffes, ossicones, and recycling!

Age: Children ages 8 - 10 years old

Gather your Gear

- Two toilet paper rolls
- Egg carton (you will use two of the “cups” on the bottom of the carton)
- Wide shoelaces or ribbon
- Scissors
- Glue
- Optional: construction paper, markers, fabric (for decoration)



**Glue and optional materials not pictured*

Get Ready *You can help your child make connections by thinking about concepts before the activity.*

Few other animals are as instantly recognizable as the giraffe. Reaching heights of up to 20 feet, giraffes are the tallest land mammals in the world! There are several types of giraffes. At Zoo Atlanta, we have reticulated giraffes. Reticulated giraffes have large, polygonal brown spots outlined by cream colored lines. This “network” of markings is the origin of their name: reticulated. Another distinctive physical feature of a mature giraffe are the horn-like projections on their heads called ossicones. Ossicones are bony (formed from ossified cartilage) and covered in skin. Both female and male giraffes have ossicones on their heads. In male giraffes, they add weight which helps them to deal a bigger blow in fights. When giraffes fight, they swing their necks and hit their heads.

You can be like a giraffe by making your own wearable ossicones from recyclable materials!

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Create

Follow the instructions to create your own ossicones!

Using scissors, make two cuts (one inch in width) toward the bottom of the toilet paper roll on both sides (front and back). Do this for both toilet paper rolls.



Thread the wide shoelace or ribbon through the small slits in both toilet paper rolls.



Cut two cups off the bottom of the egg carton (these will be the tops of your ossicones).



Glue the egg carton cups to the top of the toilet paper rolls (the ends that do not have a shoelace or ribbon going through it).



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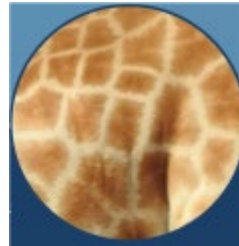


Decorate *Choose between the different giraffe patterns to decorate your ossicones.*

There are nine different subspecies of giraffe. Zoo Atlanta currently has reticulated giraffes. Did you know that each subspecies has different spot patterns? Check out six of the patterns below. Choose a pattern and decorate your ossicones accordingly!



Masai Giraffe



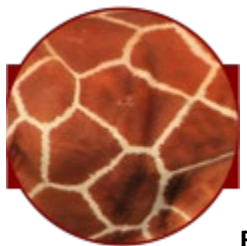
Angolan Giraffe



Nubian Giraffe



West African Giraffe

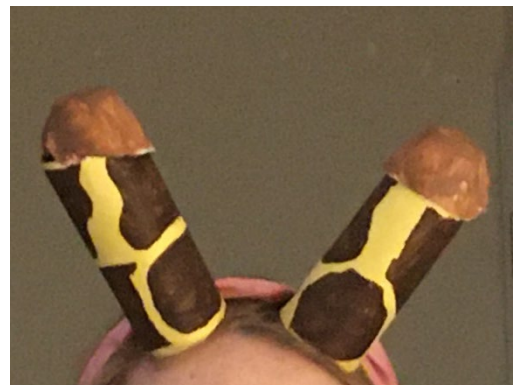


Reticulated Giraffe



Southern African Giraffe

Place the ossicones on the top of your head and tie the shoelace/ribbon under your chin.



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Recap *Have a conversation about what you saw/did and questions your child may have.*

- How tall can a giraffe grow to be?
- What type of giraffes are at Zoo Atlanta?
- What are ossicones?

Relate *Create connections to the idea through activities.*

Reticulated giraffes, one of the nine giraffe subspecies, are listed as Endangered by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). Reticulated giraffe populations have declined by more than 50 percent in the last 30 years, and it is estimated that there are only about 8,700 individuals in the wild. Their decline is attributed to habitat loss, deterioration of habitat and illegal poaching. To learn more about this specific subspecies, visit the IUCN Red List page:

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/88420717/88420720>

You can help by sharing what you know about giraffes and their conservation status in the wild. You can also reduce your carbon footprint by recycling and saying no to single-use plastics like straws and plastic bags.

It takes a team.... join ours

Help us save species by joining the “Zoo Conservation Corps” and raise awareness about wild animals, their habitats and why conserving both is so important. If your family members are on social media, post to show what you have learned, and use the hashtags #OnlyZooATL and #WorldGiraffeDay so that we can see all your great work!

Want to know more?

- To learn more about World Giraffe Day and giraffe conservation: <https://giraffeconservation.org/world-giraffe-day/>
- To learn about the giraffes at Zoo Atlanta: <https://zooatlanta.org/animal/giraffe/>