

CCT Weekly Practice English

Introducing Jonathan, the world's oldest animal on land at 187 years old

By Adam Millward

Published 27 February 2019

Born circa 1832 – five years prior to the coronation of Queen Victoria – Jonathan the tortoise is due to turn 187 years old in 2019. That makes him the oldest-known land animal alive today.

Jonathan the tortoise pictured in February 2019

This puts him just one year away from the title of oldest chelonian ever, currently held by Tu'iMalila, a radiated tortoise that reached at least 188 years old. She was owned by the royal family of Tonga between c. 1777 and 1965, and had been presented to them by British explorer Captain James Cook during his third – and final – Pacific voyage (1776–80).



In his lifetime, Jonathan has lived through two world wars, the Russian Revolution, seven monarchs on the British throne and 39 US presidents.

His estimated year of birth also predates the release of the Penny Black, the first postage stamp (1840), the building of the first skyscraper (1885) and the completion of the Eiffel Tower (1887) – the tallest iron structure.

Other human milestones to have taken place in his long life include the first photograph of a person (1838), the first incandescent light bulb (1878) and the first powered flight (1903).

Now the oldest animal in the world – among terrestrial animals – Jonathan has outlived the oldest person ever by around 65 years. The greatest authenticated age for a human is a "mere" 122 years 144 days, achieved by Jeanne Calment (1875–1997) from France.

Although originating from the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, Jonathan has resided on the remote island of St Helena in the South Atlantic since 1882.

St Helena is perhaps best known for being the final resting place of Napoleon Bonaparte – who was exiled here after his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. The banished emperor and Jonathan would never have met, though, as the former died more than six decades prior to the arrival of this record-breaking reptile.

When Jonathan was brought to St Helena, he was already fully grown. Based on known data for this species, that would indicate he was about 50 years of age at the time (hence his estimated birth year of 1832 to make him the longest-lived animal on land). Jonathan was gifted to the then-governor of the Overseas British territory, William Grey-Wilson (in office 1890–97), and he has lived at the governor's residence ever since.

Jonathan's home is the manicured lawns of "Plantation", a Georgian mansion built by the East India Company in 1791–92. Today, he shares the grounds with three other giant tortoises: David, Emma and Fred.

1. The writer of this piece seems to be a :

- (a) Archaeologist
- (b) Travel writer
- (c) Zoologist
- (d) Philanthropist

2. Match the columns

<u>Word</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
(a) Coronation	(i) Trimmed
(b) Monarch	(ii) Bestowal of a crown
(c) Authenticated	(iii) Hereditary sovereign
(d) Manicured	(iv) Verified

3. Who am I?

With the help of the clues given, identify the person /animal/ place being talked about:

- (a) The longest-lived tortoise owned by a royal family:
- (b) I have lived to see 39 US presidents :
- (c) This island is best known to be the resting place of Napoleon Bonaparte:
- (d) A Georgian mansion built by the East India company:
- (e) Birthplace of Jonathan :

4. Fill in the blanks to complete the human milestone table:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Human Achievement</u>
1840	- _____
_____	- first skyscraper
1878	- _____
_____	- first powered flight

5. Complete the notes made by Sasha to help her talk about Jonathan in class.

THE BICENTENNIAL

1. Claim to fame

- 1.1 Is 187 years old
- 1.2 _____
- 1.3 _____
- 1.4 _____

2. Origin and present home

- 2.1 _____
- 2.2 At present, resides in St. Helena
- 2.3 _____

Created by:-

Ms. Shivani Mehta, Delhi.

CCT Weekly Practice English

Introducing Jonathan, the world's oldest animal on land at 187 years old **By Adam Millward**

Answers:

1. (c) Zoologist
2. a – (ii)
b – (iii)
c – (iv)
d – (i)
3. (a) Tu'i Malila
(b) Jonathan
(c) St Helena
(d) Plantation
(e) Seychelles
4. 1840 - first postage stamp
1885 - first skyscraper
1878 - first light bulb
1903 - first powered flight
5. 1.2 One year away from the title of oldest chelonian.
1.3 Has lived through two world wars.
1.4 Out lived the eldest person by 65 years.

2.1 Originating from Seychelles
2.3 His home is a Georgian mansion built in 1971.

Created by:-

Ms. Shivani Mehta, Delhi.