Giants of the Galapagos

It has been almost 185 years since Charles Darwin made the discovery of the Galapagos Islands. When Charles discovered the islands, he found so many different types of animals such as the giant tortoises and the penguins. What we thought had become extinct are still alive today! The giant tortoises are still here, alive and well, and all the other animals that live here as well.

The reason why the tortoises are still alive and healthy is that they can live up to 100 years and over. That is really impressive. So that could mean the baby tortoises that were there when Charles Darwin found them, could still be alive today. The oldest tortoise that ever lived was 250 years old! But sadly this tortoise died in 2006. But did you know that Darwin had one these as a pet! The tortoise was called Harriet and lasted for 175 years. Harriet also died in 2006.

The expedition that was led by the Galapagos Parks authority and the Galapagos Conservancy found these tortoises and they spread the word that they are still alive. This expedition led to a breeding program that started in the 1960s. Since then the programme has been successful with producing more than 2000 giant tortoises. The programme is now finished and the 100 year old, Diego, tortoise will soon be heading back into his native island of Espanola. He will join a 1,800-strong tortoise population, at least 40% of which park rangers believe he has fathered.

We already know some of the animals that live on the Galapagos Islands but how many exactly live there, including all the different species? With all the different species of animals there are 219 animals. I don’t think that is a lot.

If these animals are still alive, could this mean other animals that we think are extinct could be still alive today? Well if they are, how old will they be? And what creatures are they?