

AFRICAN LION

Panthera leo

The lion is the only truly social big cat & may live in a family group called a pride of about 15 lions. Female cubs will usually remain with their pride. However, males, once they have reached maturity will be driven away from the pride by the dominant males. The young males will live as a bachelor group until they are strong enough to take over a pride of their own.

DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

Found in countries in the southern and eastern parts of the African continent.

DIET

Lions hunt a variety of prey including zebra, buffalo, wildebeest, warthogs, antelope & even larger animals such as giraffe. They will also steal food from other predators such as hyenas & wild dogs.

LIFE EXPECTANCY & BREEDING

In the wild: 15-18 years. Lions are the second longest living cats, after the tiger. Females reach breeding maturity at 4 years & males at 5 years. They can breed throughout the year. Gestation length is approximately 110 days; the female gives birth to 1 - 4 cubs. Lion cubs face many dangers in the wild including starvation if older stronger cubs out-compete them for food & other carnivores will prey upon



cubs. Mortality rates for wild cubs can be as high as 80%.

CONSERVATION STATUS

VULNERABLE (IUCN Red List of Threatened Species). In West Africa, the species is now classified as **Critically Endangered**.

Just over a century ago, there were more than 200,000 wild lions living in Africa. Today, there maybe less than 20,000.

PORT MACQUARIE, NSW
BILLABONG
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