

*Made By Robin Khaider*

# LIONS

## Where Can Lions Be Found ?

Long ago there were lions almost everywhere in the world, mostly in Europe, Africa and Asia, but this has changed dramatically.

\*By the 10<sup>th</sup> century there were no lions left in Europe.

\*In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries lions died out in the North Africa and in large parts of Asia. Today most lions live in specific areas of Africa's south.



## Why Are Lion Numbers Declining ?

There are several reasons why the world's lion population is under pressure.

\****Their natural habitat is getting smaller***, more and more land in Africa is being used for agricultural purposes. This means lions' living areas are getting smaller and sometimes can't sustain them. This limitation on their living space is unnatural. Lions need large areas for hunting, between 20 and 200km<sup>2</sup> for every male lion. Even a national parks of a few hundred kilometers are too small for large numbers of lions.

\****Man, money and guns***, Lions are hunted for several reasons. Farmers sometimes shoot them to protect their livestock but much more alarming are poachers and trophy hunters. Poachers hunt lions illegally and sell the skin, head and other parts all over the world for lots of money. Trophy hunters kill lions for fun and to have a trophy to show off.

\****Inbreeding***, Experts warn that this is another threat to lions' survival. Because prides of lions are so widely scattered, the animal often don't get to breed with other groups. This causes inbreeding which endangers their existence.

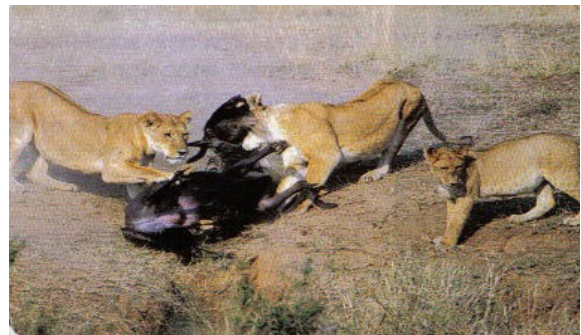
## Hunting Habit

They usually prefer to eat fresh meat, particularly that of the zebra, antelope, giraffe, and buffalo. The lion often hides beside a trail leading to a water hole and then attacks upon the shoulder or flank of a passing animal. It drives its claws deep into the flesh and kills its victim with a stabbing and crunching bite on the throat or the back of the neck. When hunting a herd,

the lion creeps up from the side toward which the wind is blowing, taking advantage of cover until the moment of the last quick rush. A pride of 4 to 12 lions sometimes hunts together, working as a team. The males roar loudly to scare up the animals, while the females lie and wait along the trails to pounce on the scurrying animals. After the lionesses have had time to make a kill, the males stop roaring and come to eat.

## **Lifestyle Of The Modern Lion**

Lions are predators and are called carnivores, which are meat eaters. They live in groups called prides. A pride usually consists of their cubs and about two males who mate with the lionesses. A pride can consist of about three and forty lions but usually about fifteen.



## **How Do The Male And Females Differ ?**

Lionesses do a lot of work for the pride. They are responsible for hunting and looking after the cubs. A cub can drink from one lioness or all of them. Lionesses are lighter, more agile and faster than the male, which is why they do most of the hunting. They usually hunt at night in groups of two or three. They team up, tire their prey, circle it and go for the kill. It isn't always easy and sometimes they have to try several times to make a kill, after the kill they bring the meat to their cubs. Male lions also have responsibilities. They patrol their territory and protect the pride and in exchange the lionesses allow them to eat. Male lions often fight, either to maintain their position or win another males position in the pride. Because males are the dominant members of the pride they usually eat first, then the lionesses, then the cubs. They rest after eating and that's when social contact takes place. They lick one another, purr and rub heads.

## **The Lions Roar**

Males usually roar after sunset, you can even hear the roar from more than five kilometers away. Males roar to make their mark and keep outsiders away from the pride. The roar also wins fear and respect from pride members and stops them wandering away.

## **How Long Do Lions Live ?**

Lions live in their lifetime for about 30-40 years, although this may be little, compare it to other animals and you will realize that they live for quite a while.

## **Lion Man-Eaters**

The man-eater of Mfuwe ate six people in a village in Zambia in the early 1990s. It was shot 1991 and its body was placed in a museum in Chicago in America. Other famous man-eating lions were a pair that roamed near Tsavo in Kenya. They dragged 19<sup>th</sup> century railway workers out of their tents and devoured them. These man-eaters were all without manes, extremely large and probably had teeth problems. Experts say that most lions that attack humans are probably hungry, wounded or sick and to them people are easy prey.

## **Did You Know ?**

- \*A male lion marks his territory by spraying a mixture of urine and glandular secretions against trees and bushes
- \*Lions live for 12-16 years in the wild and 25 years in captivity.
- \*Adult males weigh 150-225kg and females 120-150kg.
- \*African lions prefer grasslands and plains to forested areas and deserts.
- \*When males are kicked out of their prides they form small free-roaming groups.
- \*Unlike most cats, lions are excellent swimmers.
- \*A lion can see as well at night as people can in daylight.

## **Scientific Classifications**

### **The Lion**

|         |                     |
|---------|---------------------|
| Class   | <i>Mammalia</i>     |
| Order   | <i>Carniva</i>      |
| Family  | <i>Felidae</i>      |
| Genus   | <i>Panthera</i>     |
| Species | <i>Panthera leo</i> |