

LION

Panthera leo



TAXONOMY

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Family: Felidae

Genus: Panthera

Species: leo



DISTRIBUTION

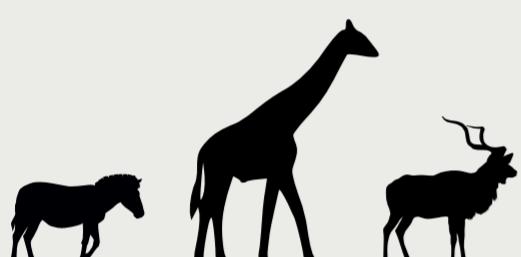
AT A GLANCE

Body Length:	2.5-3.3 m
Height:	120 cm
Weight:	120-250 kg
Lifespan:	8-14 years
Gestation:	105 days
Litter-size:	1-6 cubs



Despite a uniform, brown to beige fur the African lion (*Panthera leo*) is unmistakable. Standing at a shoulder height of a metre, the lion is the second-largest cat on the planet (after the tiger). Males develop a massive mane that varies in coloration from bright blond to dark black. While males can weigh up to 230 kg, females average at about 150 kg. Subadult lions are recognizable by a set of faint spots on their fur, which slowly disappear as they age. In contrast to leopards and cheetahs, which both have a white tail tip, a lion's tail tip is black.

PREY



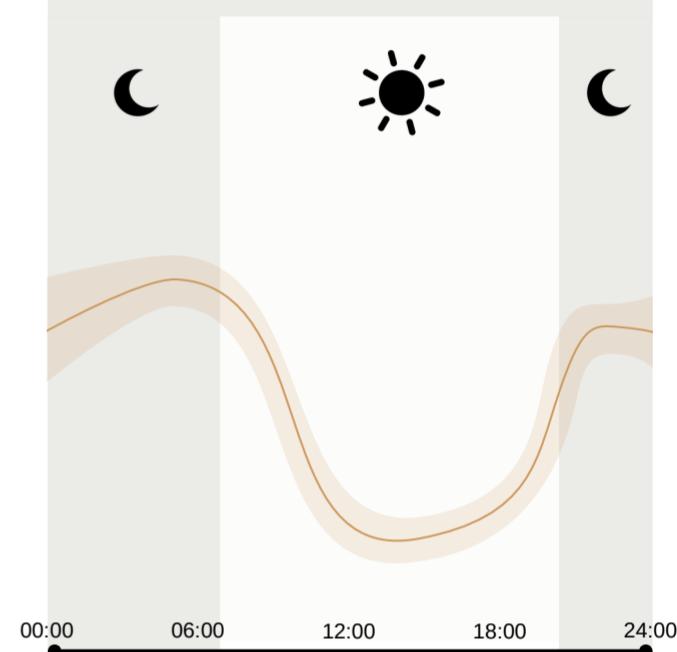
Lions are the undisputed apex predators and fear little threat from other carnivores. Unless substantially outnumbered, lions will stand their ground against hyenas and wild dogs. They primarily predate on medium- to large-sized prey, including buffalo, zebra, giraffes, kudu, and, in some cases, even elephants. The species is a generalist and able to survive in virtually any habitat condition.

COMPETITORS



Lions live in prides, which improves their hunting success and enhances survival of their offspring. Although females conduct most of the hunting, males will typically feed first at a kill. Males that move into an already occupied territory will kill all cubs.

ACTIVITY PATTERN



Lions are primarily active at night (nocturnal) and usually rest during the day. Overall, they are only active for about four hours each day.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Lions used to range across entire Africa, as well as across parts of Asia. In response to human persecution, trophy hunting, habitat loss, and a loss of their prey base, lions nowadays only occupy a small fraction of their historic range. The most recent IUCN red list assessment estimates that between **23'000 and 39'000 wild-living lions** remain. Even though lions are largely extirpated from Asia, a small but isolated

subpopulation of around 600 lions has survived in the Gir-Nationalpark in India. At present, the species is listed as **endangered** by the IUCN. Trophy hunting of lions is still legal in many African countries and is an important source of income. The species also faces particular challenges due to it being mystified in Chinese medicine, thus often becoming victim to poachers that sell lion bones abroad.

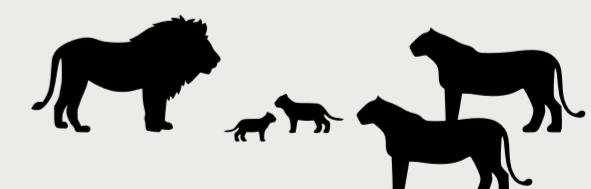


OUR RESEARCH PROGRAM

BPC has been monitoring local lion prides using GPS radio collars, activity sensors and through behavioral follows. This has resulted in an extensive database on pride composition and vital rates. We also study interactions between lions and other large carnivores, including leopards and wild dogs, in order to learn how climate change affects intra-guild competition.



SOCIAL ORGANIZATION



Lions live in prides comprising 3-30 individuals. A pride is usually composed of 1-4 adult males, several related females, and their offspring. Males may associate with multiple prides at the same time.



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