|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lion**  **Temporal range: Pleistocene–Present**  **↓** | |
| [D:\midterm-assi\wild animals\lion1.jpglion1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lion_waiting_in_Namibia.jpg) | |
| Male lion in [Okonjima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okonjima" \o "Okonjima), [Namibia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namibia" \o "Namibia) | |
| [IMG_257](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Okonjima_Lioness.jpg) | |
| Female (lioness) in Okonjima | |
| **[Scientific classification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_(biology)" \o "Taxonomy (biology))[IMG_259](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Taxonomy/Panthera)** | |
| Kingdom: | [Animalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal" \o "Animal) |
| Phylum: | [Chordata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chordate" \o "Chordate) |
| Class: | [Mammalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal" \o "Mammal) |
| Order: | [Carnivora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnivora" \o "Carnivora) |
| Suborder: | [Feliformia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feliformia" \o "Feliformia) |
| Family: | [Felidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae" \o "Felidae) |
| Subfamily: | [Pantherinae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantherinae" \o "Pantherinae) |
| Genus: | *[Panthera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera" \o "Panthera)* |
| Species: | ***P. leo***[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion" \l "cite_note-MSW3-1) |
|  | |

**LION**

The **lion** (*Panthera leo*) is a [species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species" \o "Species) in the family [Felidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae" \o "Felidae) and a member of the [genus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genus" \o "Genus) *[Panthera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panthera" \o "Panthera)*. It has a muscular, deep-chested body, short, rounded head, round ears, and a hairy tuft at the end of its tail. It is [sexually dimorphic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexually_dimorphic" \o "Sexually dimorphic); adult male lions have a prominent mane. With a typical head-to-body length of 184–208 cm (72–82 in) they are larger than females at 160–184 cm (63–72 in). It is a [social species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_species" \o "Social species), forming groups called *prides*. A lion pride consists of a few adult males, related females and cubs. Groups of female lions usually hunt together, preying mostly on large [ungulates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ungulate" \o "Ungulate). The lion is an [apex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apex_predator" \o "Apex predator) and [keystone predator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_predator" \o "Keystone predator); although some lions scavenge when opportunities occur and have been known to hunt humans, the species typically does not.

Typically, the lion inhabits [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland" \o "Grassland) and [savannas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savanna" \o "Savanna), but is absent in dense [forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest" \o "Forest). It is usually more [diurnal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diurnality" \o "Diurnality) than other big cats, but when persecuted it adapts to being active [at night](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nocturnality" \o "Nocturnality) and [at twilight](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crepuscular" \o "Crepuscular). In the [Pleistocene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleistocene" \o "Pleistocene), the lion ranged throughout Eurasia, Africa and North America, but today it has been reduced to fragmented populations in [sub-Saharan Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa" \o "Sub-Saharan Africa) and one critically endangered population in western India. It has been listed as [Vulnerable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulnerable_species" \o "Vulnerable species) on the [IUCN Red List](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IUCN_Red_List" \o "IUCN Red List) since 1996 because populations in African countries have declined by about 43% since the early 1990s.