



African Lion

Panthera leo

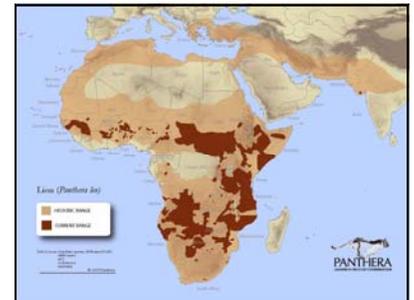
Description: Lions are a tawny brown with lean bodies. Males are distinguished by their mane. The mane is very light when the males are still young and darken with age. They weigh between 265–460 pounds, with males generally weighing more than females. Retractable claws stay sharp while walking and are extremely lethal when hunting and running.



Range: They once used to roam in parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa but are now only found in parts of the sub-Saharan Africa, and a very small area in India's Gir Forest. A single pride can inhabit a 100 square mile territory.

Habitat: They are found in open grasslands, scrub or woodlands.

Behavior: Lions are the only cats to live in groups, called prides. There is normally only one male in the pride and he will mark off his territory with tree scratching, urine and his roar— which can be heard up to 5 miles away! Females are the pride's primary hunters. They raise the young and bring food to the male. Lions can sleep up to 20 hours a day to conserve energy for the hunt.



Life Span: In the wild lions can live 10-14 years and in captivity they can live into their 20s.



Natural Diet: In the wild lions will not eat every day but will instead take down large prey, like antelope or zebras and gorge themselves. They will stay full for days before needing to hunt again.

Zoo Diet: At the zoo the lions are fed a commercially prepared beef diet, which is supplemented with vitamins and minerals, and beef bones.

Reproduction: Lionesses will have 2-3 cubs on average every 2 years. They stay with their mom until they can hunt independently, then males leave the pride to establish their own pride while the females stay with their mother.

Status: Vulnerable