



# LION

*Panthera leo*



A group of lions is called a pride. There can be anywhere from two to 40 lions in a pride, although pride members come and go and are rarely all together at once. In an area with bountiful prey, lions spend approximately twenty hours per day sleeping. They become most active in the late afternoon, mainly socializing with the pride. Hunting typically takes place at night and into the hours of the early morning. The roar of a lion can be heard up to five miles away and can be quite intimidating up close. Territorial roaring is usually heard an hour after sunset. As a result of widespread persecution, cats in the wild have become one of the most threatened major groups of land animals. Nevertheless, the African lion numbers perhaps 100,000 individuals.



## SPECIES QUICK FACTS

### SIZE

A typical mature male stands 4 feet at the shoulder and is 8.5 feet long including the tail.

### WEIGHT

A male will average 450 pounds. Females are considerably smaller, weighing less than 300 pounds.

### FOOD HABITS

Lions feed on a variety of large and medium-sized prey. They prefer wildebeest (or gnu) to all others when the annual migration brings vast herds of those animals through the lion's range. Otherwise they eat buffalo, zebra, antelope, giraffe, and warhogs. They also steal kills and carrion from other predators.

### HABITAT

African lions live in plains or savanna habitat with a large prey base (mostly ungulates) and sufficient cover. In these optimal habitats, lions are the second most abundant large predator, after spotted hyenas. Lions can live in forested, shrubby, mountainous, and semi-desert habitats.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

African lions (*Panthera leo*) live in most of sub-Saharan Africa except in desert and rainforest habitats.

### FUN FACT

The lion's tail is the only one in the cat family with a tassel at the tip. This tassel conceals a spine, which is made up of the last few tail bones that have been fused together.