

# STATE OF THE LION



## LION THREAT LEVEL

NEAR THREATENED VULNERABLE ENDANGERED

*Although the lion is known as one of Africa's most iconic animals, few people realize that illegal killing, relentless habitat loss and fragmentation has left this species teetering precariously on the brink of extinction.*

## POPULATION

- Perhaps only a century ago, there were as many as 200,000 lions living in the wild in Africa. However, the latest surveys estimate that there are fewer than 30,000 lions living in the wild in Africa today.
- Lions are currently listed as “Vulnerable” on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. In West and Central Africa, the species is now classified as “Endangered.”

## HABITAT

- Lions have vanished from over 80 percent of their historic range.
- Lions exist in 28 countries in Africa and one country in Asia.
  - Lions are extinct in 26 countries.
  - Only 7 countries- Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe- are thought to each hold more than 1,000 lions.

## THREATS

- Retaliatory persecution by herders and farmers who perceive lions as a threat to their livelihood. Lions are coming into increasingly closer contact with humans, as their habitat is converted for human use, and livestock replaces their natural prey. This fuels intense conflict situations where lions are speared, shot, or even poisoned.
  - Kenya alone loses approximately 100 of its 2,000 wild lions every year due to killing by people. At this rate, there will be no more wild lions in Kenya by 2030.

- Habitat loss and fragmentation due to agriculture and other human development. Lions are being confined to isolated islands of habitat, increasing their risk of extinction.



Luke Hunter/Panthera

- Scarcity of wild prey due to overhunting by humans. When wild prey is over-hunted by people, lions are forced to feed on livestock, especially when cattle are not actively herded, allowing them to stray into protected areas.

## SAVING THE LION

- Through Project Leonardo, Panthera is creating a Pan-African Lion Corridor that protects key lion habitat and connects core lion populations in order to preserve the species' genetic diversity.
- In partnership with the Living with Lions organization, Panthera developed the unique Lion Guardians Program in southern Kenya to address retaliatory and traditional spearing of lions by Maasai warriors. The program involves training local Maasai warriors to respond to conflict situations; they become the front line in reducing human-lion conflicts by informing herders of areas occupied by lions, helping farmers improve their cattle husbandry and track down lost livestock, and by discouraging other Maasai warriors from hunting lions in the future.

**For more information visit [Panthera.org](http://Panthera.org)**



Current Lion Range



Historic Lion Range



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