



Facts and Figures on the African Lion

Scientific name: *Panthera leo*

Type: Mammal

Diet: Carnivore

Mass: Adult Male (± 190 kg) and Adult Female (± 130 kg)

Shoulder Height: Male: 1.2 m and Female: 1.1 m

Habitat: Savannah, grasslands, dense bush and woodlands.

Group name: Pride

Gestation period: 110 days

Lifespan: 10-14 years in the wild & 20 years in captivity

Top speed: 81 km/hr., for short distances and can leap as far as 11 m

Did you know?

Lions are symbols of strength and courage and have been celebrated throughout history for these characteristics. They are also common symbols for royalty and stateliness, hence the phrase 'king of the jungle'. Lions are the national animal of Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Ethiopia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Singapore.

Lions are the most social cat, living and hunting together. Lions enjoy relaxing and can spend between 16 and 20 hours each day resting and sleeping. They have few sweat glands so they conserve their energy by resting during the day and become more active at night. Female lions perform most of the hunting, usually at night to avoid detection.

Prides are territorial, males roar to communicate with other prides and use scent markings to establish their domain. A lion's roar is the loudest of any big cat and can be heard up to 8 km away!

Within the pride related female lions often reproduce at the same time and cross-suckle their cubs. At birth, the cubs are ± 1.5 kg and are completely dependent on their mothers. The lion cubs begin hunting at 11 months but remain with their mother for at least two years. The mothers often do not wean their cubs until they are 2-3 months old. When the cubs are near a year old they join their parents in the hunt.

Most lions drink water daily if available, but can go four or five days without it. Lions in arid areas seem to obtain needed moisture from the stomach contents of their prey.