

Lion (*Panthera leo*)



Daughter#3 - Cecil, CC BY-SA 2.0

Introduction

Lions are the second largest members of the cat family. They can be found in sub-Saharan Africa although many exist in captivity: in zoos or safari parks. Lions live in groups called prides. The females rear the cubs and hunt. It is the responsibility of the males to protect the pride. Males leave after three years to establish a pride of their own. Lions in captivity can live up to 25 years but in the wild they rarely last 10 years.



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Description

Adult lions weigh between 265lbs - 420lbs and can be up to 10 feet long. The adult coat is yellow-gold and males have a mane which can be darker in colour. A pride consists of between two and 40 lions. Lions roar to communicate with one another, more often than not to signal their ownership of territory. Their roar can be heard up to five miles away.

Habitat

Lions used to live in all of Africa and parts of Asia and Europe. Today, they can only be found in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Although they can live in a wide variety of habitats, they prefer grasslands, scrub and open woodlands where they can easily hunt. A pride's territory can cover up to 100 square miles.

Diet

Lions are carnivorous and feed on antelope, zebra and wildebeest. The females often work together to ensure success. Even so, their success rate is only 30%. They eat around 20lbs of meat a day, but some can consume 100lbs.