



Roaring Forward

**A 2017 PROGRESS REPORT FOR
THE LION RECOVERY FUND**



**Lion
Recovery
Fund**



In the past 25 years, the African lion population has been cut in half. But thanks to the generous support of our donors, 2017 was a turning point for lions. Last year, the Wildlife Conservation Network and the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation launched the Lion Recovery Fund (LRF)—**an unprecedented approach to solve the lion crisis.** WCN Partners Niassa Lion Project and Ewaso Lions played an invaluable role guiding the development of the LRF. This report highlights the progress made by the Lion Recovery Fund in 2017, and reveals the opportunities for lion recovery that 2018 will bring.

The Lion Recovery Fund had its public launch on August 10th, buoyed by promotion by Leonardo DiCaprio and the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. In just the first six months, the LRF has channeled more than \$1 million to more than a dozen projects across nine countries. **With your commitment going forward, the LRF is on track to fund more than double that number of projects in 2018.**

The LRF Impact in 2017

9	13	11	\$4M
Countries	Projects	Partners	Raised

The Strategy for Recovery

One thing is clear: the Lion Recovery Fund alone cannot recover lions. Only by bringing governments, nonprofits, philanthropists, and the public together can we recover Africa's top predator, restore its landscapes, and revive all of the wildlife and ecosystem services that those areas support. Through such a united coalition, catalyzed by support from the Lion Recovery Fund, we will expand lion conservation coverage across Africa, build the public and political will for conservation, and scale the funding necessary to recover lions and their landscapes.

The LRF Investment Portfolio

CONSERVATION Invest in conservation projects that support protected areas and other key landscapes, promote human-wildlife coexistence, and tackle illegal wildlife trade.

CAMPAIGNS Invest in campaigns that build public, political, and philanthropic will for lion conservation.

COLLABORATION Incentivize collaboration to expand conservation and financing for lion and landscape recovery.

THE COMPLETE LRF STRATEGY IS AVAILABLE AT [LIONRECOVERYFUND.ORG](https://lionrecoveryfund.org)



1. EXPAND CONSERVATION COVERAGE

Increase the extent and effectiveness of management of lion landscapes across Africa.



2. BUILD THE WILL

Build the public, political, and philanthropic will to bring lions back.



3. SCALE THE FUNDING

Elevate the scale of funding available for the conservation of lions and their landscapes.



What makes the LRF different?

100% Model

Our 100% model ensures every cent of your donated dollar is invested in lions, with zero administrative or overhead fees.

Lions not Logos

No one organization can recover lions single-handedly. The LRF works to unite efforts and investments through collaborative efforts.

A VC for Lions

Like a conservation venture capital firm, the LRF seeks out innovative ideas and provides seed funding for new projects, or bolsters approaches known to work.

Ideas not Institutions

We support the best ideas, not any one single institution, whether those ideas come from individuals, small organizations, or larger nonprofits.

Range-Wide

The LRF believes all lions matter, and invests in projects to recover lions throughout their entire range.

Leadership

The LRF is governed by a committed team of conservation and philanthropic professionals, with a Board, a Granting Committee, a Campaigns Committee, and a team of technical advisors that bring sound conservation, philanthropy, and communications.

Projects Supported in 2017

Protecting the Core Areas for Lions

Recent research indicates that if properly managed, Africa's parks and reserves could support **three to four times more lions** than exist today. However, many of Africa's vast protected parks and reserves lack the financing and capacity to keep their wildlife secured. Supporting the management of these areas is central to the LRF strategy.

In its first six months, the LRF provided grants to nonprofits working in six different African parks to help

them support wildlife authorities' management and protection of those areas. First investments included:

- Niokolokoba and Dinder National Parks, which hold the last lions in Senegal and Sudan;
- Pendjari National Park in Benin, which is the stronghold of the West African lion;
- Nsumbu National Park in Zambia, which has enormous potential for lion recovery;
- Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, which is a key lion

population with more than 600 individuals;

- Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, which has seen a rapid decline in its lions due to targeted poaching.

Promoting Coexistence Between People and Lions

It's hard to live with lions. Retaliatory killing as a result of human-lion conflict is one of the foremost threats facing lions. In

2017, the LRF provided grants to two projects aimed at tackling this threat, and in 2018 we will make many more. The Ruaha Carnivore Project received support to expand their innovative performance-payments scheme, which incentivizes local communities to live with lions through payments in health, education, or veterinary services as a reward for protecting and living with wildlife without conflict. The LRF also supported the Wildlife Conservation Society to help address a major spike in retaliatory killing in Uganda's iconic Queen Elizabeth National Park.



Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade

The illegal wildlife trade threatens lions directly, as lions are targeted for their bones, teeth, and skins. It also hits them indirectly, as the bushmeat trade and its associated snare traps dramatically reduce the populations of both prey and predator alike. In 2017, the LRF was honored to support an innovative campaign designed to reduce demand for illegally sourced bushmeat in urban areas of Zambia. Further, despite the worrying spike in targeted poaching of lions for body parts across Africa, little is known about this threat. We supported Wildlife Crime Prevention to determine where the demand is coming from, how the trade operates, and what weak points could be targeted by law enforcement agencies.



WHERE WE WORK: LION RECOVERY FUND PROJECTS



Partnerships

It is only through strategic partnerships that lions can come back. The LRF is engaging Wilderness Safaris and Singita, two of the premier wildlife safari companies in Africa, to collaborate in lion recovery in key landscapes, generate increased awareness of lion decline, and to raise significant additional funding for lion recovery. We are coordinating with the National Geographic Society to collaboratively fund lion conservation projects of mutual interest, a model for collaborative grantmaking that will make lion conservation happen bigger, better, and faster.

Support

With your support, the LRF raised \$4 million by the end of 2017. This generosity will enable us to make at least 30 grants averaging \$100,000 to the highly vetted, best efforts to recover lions and their landscapes. That impact will grow with your continued commitment and the expansion of donor support. More commitment and support is needed to successfully recover lions across their range, and we will continue to grow the Fund as much as possible to **Bring Lions Back.**

DONATE AT WILDNET.ORG/LRF

Looking Ahead in 2018

We have identified and vetted more than 30 potential projects across Africa for consideration for grants in 2018. Encompassing 14 countries, these include:

- More than a dozen projects to support the management and security of reserves in lion range.
- A similar number of projects to promote coexistence between people and lions.
- Multiple projects to tackle illegal wildlife trade.
- Exciting campaign investments to grow the public and political will for lion conservation, including promotion of the economic, social, and cultural value of lions for people.

YOU

The launch of the Lion Recovery Fund and its swift progress in less than one year would not have been possible without our donors.

THANK YOU.

Your support is immensely important at this early stage by showing what is possible and leveraging additional funds. We look forward to your continued engagement in 2018 and beyond to help bring back one of the world's most iconic species.

If you are interested in becoming a supporter, please visit wildnet.org/lrf or contact paul@wildnet.org.



Lion
Recovery
Fund



Wildlife Conservation Network



LEONARDO
DICAPRIO
FOUNDATION

lionrecoveryfund.org

