

AUGUST 2019

# Progress Report



# LION RECOVERY FUND



SINCE FEBRUARY 2019:

\$1.63 Million granted

Partners supported:

African Parks, Desert Lion Conservation, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Greater Limpopo Carnivore Program, Kalahari Research and Conservation, Lion Landscapes, Panthera, SORALO, Wildlife Conservation Society, WildCRU, Wildlife Crime Prevention/Conservation Lower Zambezi, Zoological Society of London

LRF IMPACT TO DATE:

- 57 Projects
- 17 Countries
- 34 Grantees
- \$5.5 Million deployed
- 26.5% of Africa’s lion range covered by LRF grantees
- 31.2% of lion population affected by grants
- 20,487 Snares removed
- 332 Poachers arrested
- 7,610 kg (16,777 pounds) of bushmeat confiscated
- 614 People in total that LRF has helped employ
- 64 Lions fitted with tracking collars
- 333 Rangers, warriors, and scouts trained
- 663 Patrols
- 24,750 km (or 15,378 miles) walked by law enforcement



# Teaming Up to Recover Lions

Halting the decline of lions and bringing numbers back to stable levels is going to take a coordinated effort. No single organization can do it alone, which is why collaboration is at the heart of the Lion Recovery Fund. At the Fund’s two-year mark, we note movement towards shaping a more aligned, more coordinated effort for conservation. In May, we teamed up with the Disney Conservation Fund to host an unprecedented gathering of lion conservationists, philanthropists, and other specialists at the Lion Footprint Forum (see page 5). More than 80 people from 16 countries worked together to produce shared declarations for lion recovery and new ideas for collaborative projects in lion landscapes across the continent.

Meanwhile, the Lion Recovery Fund continued to issue grants to effective partner organizations to help catalyze new projects in new areas, or supporting ongoing efforts that have demonstrated impact (see page 3). In some cases, we provided funding

to multiple conservation groups that are working together on joint projects.

People outside of conservation circles have a critical role to play, too. First, we recognize the need to minimize the burden on local communities who share landscapes with lions, and make benefits available to them. At the government level, we must build political will for conservation. And globally, we are helping donors, brands, and members of the public support and celebrate lion conservation – as indicated by our work with Disney around The Lion King (see page 5). After all, lions are a global treasure. The Lion Recovery Fund strives to help bridge these various players because only as a united effort we will help bring lions roaring back.

We are humbled by the work achieved in the Lion Recovery Fund’s two years – all thanks to your support. The road to recovery is long but we remain hopeful for the future of Africa’s lions. ■



# Projects Supported

## Protecting Core Areas for Lions

Habitat loss is a top threat to lion populations throughout Africa. The LRF is working to secure conservation of these essential lion landscapes through population management and planning, research, and removal of threats like bushmeat poaching.



Photo: Marcus Westberg/African Parks

**AFRICAN PARKS REINTRODUCED THE FIRST LIONS BACK TO MAJETE WILDLIFE RESERVE IN 2012 AS PART OF THE RESTORATION OF THE PARK.**

- With an additional LRF grant in 2017, **African Parks** took significant steps to prevent lion populations from going extinct in **Malawi** through the reintroduction of lions into Majete and Liwonde National Parks. Now, the LRF is continuing to support African Parks with the development of a lion population management plan and the protection of the lions in **Liwonde National Park**.
- **Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve** is one of Africa's largest protected areas and might contain one of the largest lion populations in the world. Yet, it is under-resourced when it comes to conservation. The LRF funded the **Frankfurt Zoological Society** to support the deployment of a new de-snaring team as well as support measures to tackle poisoning of lions and other

wildlife species. Additionally, LRF has funded Dr. Amy Dickman of the **University of Oxford's WildCru**, and founder of the **Ruaha Carnivore Project**, to survey lions in the Selous and to engage key communities in the area to identify the key threats to lions.

- In 2017, the LRF funded **Greater Limpopo Carnivore Program** to support Lion Rangers who patrol in **Limpopo National Park in Mozambique**. Now, two years later, the LRF granted additional funding to further protect lions from targeted poaching and to prevent bushmeat poaching through satellite collar monitoring.
- The **Zoological Society of London** was funded by LRF to survey wildlife in the lands adjacent to **Liuwa Plains, Angola**. The survey results will be used to lobby the Angolan government to establish a new national park and transfrontier area; therefore, creating more protected habitat for lions and other wildlife.
- A grant was provided by the LRF to **Panthera** to support the anti-poaching unit that was established in the Busanga Plains of **Kafue National Park in Zambia**. This is an area with huge potential for lion conservation and tourism, but also greatly impacted by bushmeat poaching.



Photo: Panthera

**DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SCOUTS PLANNING PATROLS FOR THE MONTH TO REDUCE BUSHMEAT POACHING.**

- LRF provided the **Frankfurt Zoological Society** with a grant in 2017 to bring bushmeat poaching under control in **Nsumbu National Park in Zambia**. This initiative is part of a wider program designed to rehabilitate the park and adjacent game management areas. Next, their plan is to reintroduce zebra and buffalo as a prelude to reintroducing lions in 2-3 years. LRF is supporting those reintroductions, de-snaring activities, and more rigorous ecological monitoring.

## Promoting Co-existence Between People and Lions

With LRF's goal of doubling lion populations by 2050, it is crucial to mediate human-lion conflict. This conflict is continuing to rise as a result of human populations both growing and encroaching on what has historically been lion rangeland.

- **SORALO**, with the help of LRF, is focusing on securing and improving connectivity for lions in the rangelands that occur between the **Maasai Mara** and the **Amboseli** ecosystem in Kenya. They are going to achieve this through protecting lion prey populations and habitat, monitoring the lions' movements, and preventing human-lion conflict.
- **Northern Kenya's Laikipia** district faced local instability in 2017 while at the same time facing the arrival of large numbers of poorly managed livestock. This resulted in increasing incidences of human-lion conflict which persisted after the instability ended. **Lion Landscapes** received a grant from LRF for a Lion Ranger program and a Community Co-existence Training, both with the intent to reduce this conflict and conserve lions.
- With support from LRF, **Desert Lion Conservation** (DLC) will be able to continue its role in monitoring the unique desert lions in

**Damaraland, Namibia**. The grant will allow DLC to obtain a new vehicle that will enable them to monitor the area better and mitigate conflicts quickly, and to obtain funding to train community lion rangers.



Photo: Desert Lion Conservation

**WITH THE LRF GRANT, DESERT LION CONSERVATION MONITORS THESE RARE LIONS TO MITIGATE CONFLICTS.**

- In 2017, LRF granted funds to the **Wildlife Conservation Society** (WCS) to mitigate the increasing human-lion conflict in **Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda**. The LRF's rich history with WCS continues with a grant designed to strengthen their efforts to support law enforcement and mitigation of human-lion conflict.
- **Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve** (CKGR), the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, and the adjacent Wildlife Management Areas form critical habitats for lions with a population of at least 1,475 individuals. The region is changing as a result of more human development. **Kalahari Research and Conservation**, in conjunction with a WCN Partner organization, **Cheetah Conservation Botswana**, created a project

(Continued...)



designed to support land use planning in these critical lion landscapes that tackle human-lion conflict.

Investigating the Lion Trade



Photo: François d'Elbee/Conservation Lower Zambezi

CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WILDLIFE CRIME PREVENTION, USING SNIFFER DOGS TO PREVENT THE TRADE OF ILLEGAL WILDLIFE PRODUCTS, SUCH AS IVORY AND LION BODY PARTS.

While little is known about the details of the emerging trade in lion bones and parts, it is known that there has been an increase in levels of illegal poaching.

Wildlife Crime Prevention (WCP) received a follow-up grant from LRF to use sniffer dogs on the major arterial roads that enter the capital city of **Zambia, Lusaka**. The project, which is run in

partnership with Conservation Lower Zambezi, aims to identify criminal actors involved in the illegal trade of wildlife products like ivory, lion bushmeat, and cat skin.

Building Local Leadership

The LRF aims to see more Africans in leadership positions within the conservation field. The LRF is helping support an internship with **Panthera** for Moreangels Mbizah, a Zimbabwean national who recently qualified for a PhD in lion conservation from the University of Oxford. Her internship will directly benefit initiatives related to lion conservation in the **KAZA Transfrontier Conservation Area** while at the same time giving her the skills necessary to become a future conservation leader. ■

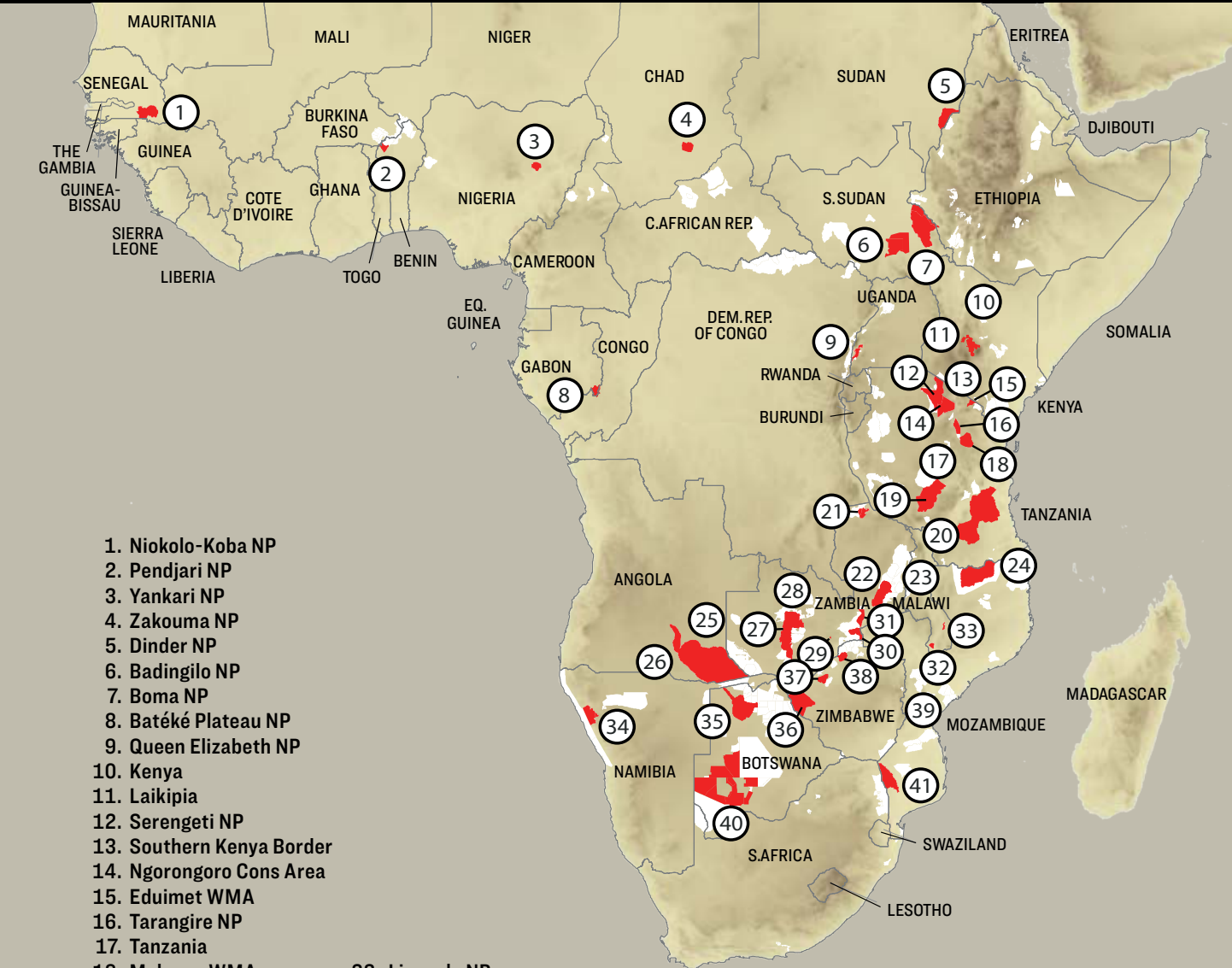


Photo: Gabby Salazar

PANTHERA INTERN, MOREANGELS MBIZAH, CONDUCTING LION RESEARCH IN KAZA TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA.

Where We Work

LION RECOVERY FUND SITE-BASED PROJECTS



- 1. Niokolo-Koba NP
  - 2. Pendjari NP
  - 3. Yankari NP
  - 4. Zakouma NP
  - 5. Dinder NP
  - 6. Badingilo NP
  - 7. Boma NP
  - 8. Batéké Plateau NP
  - 9. Queen Elizabeth NP
  - 10. Kenya
  - 11. Laikipia
  - 12. Serengeti NP
  - 13. Southern Kenya Border
  - 14. Ngorongoro Cons Area
  - 15. Eduimet WMA
  - 16. Tarangire NP
  - 17. Tanzania
  - 18. Makame WMA
  - 19. Ruaha NP
  - 20. Selous GR
  - 21. Nsumbu NP/Tondwa
  - 22. South Luangwa NP
  - 23. Malawi
  - 24. Niassa Natl Res
  - 25. Mussuma Angola
  - 26. Luengue-Luiana
  - 27. Kafue NP
  - 28. Zambia
  - 29. Lusaka
  - 30. Rufunsa GMA
  - 31. West Petauke GMA
  - 32. Majete NP
  - 33. Liwonde NP
  - 34. Damaraland
  - 35. Okavango Delta
  - 36. Hwange NP
  - 37. Chizarira NP
  - 38. Charara Safari Area
  - 39. Mozambique
  - 40. CKGR-KTP
  - 41. Limpopo NP
- NP = National Park  
NR = National Reserve  
WMA = Wildlife Management Areas  
GMA = Game Management Areas

PROTECTED AREA IN LION RANGE  
LION RECOVERY FUND SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Map does not display LRF campaign and illegal wildlife trade projects.



# Disney and WCN Team Up to Support Lion Conservation



**T**wenty-five years ago, Disney released *The Lion King*, which became a global cultural phenomenon. Since that film was released, we have lost half of all lions in Africa. For the release of the new *The Lion King* in July 2019, Disney teamed up with the Wildlife Conservation Network's Lion Recovery Fund and its partners to help bring back lions in the wild. Disney and WCN launched a global campaign called "Protect the Pride," helping people learn about the lion crisis and encouraging conservation of lions and their habitats.

In just the first few weeks of the campaign there was wide coverage from television (Good Morning America) to print (National Geographic) to social media (the film's stars made a video calling fans to support the LRF). With this and other funding from

the "Protect the Pride" campaign the LRF will be able to support more projects across the continent that protect lions and their landscapes, and benefit the local people living alongside lions.

Saving lions requires collaboration and cooperation across geographies and industries, no one can do it alone. As a kickoff to the "Protect the Pride" campaign, WCN and Disney convened more than 80 leading conservation experts from 16 countries—the first meeting of its kind in 20 years—aimed at expanding collaboration to grow conservation impact for lions. During this Lion Footprint Forum conservationists from across Africa established their own "Declarations to Recover Lions." For the first time, the lion community will be sharing these messages in one voice, communicating their cause to the world:

## Stop the Loss

We must work to protect lions, their prey, and their landscapes.

## Reduce the Cost

Living with lions is not easy. We must work to minimize the financial and emotional burden on people in Africa who share landscapes with lions.

## Unlock the Value

We must uncover and magnify the cultural, economic, and ecological benefits lions and their landscapes bring to communities, national economies, and the global community.

Both the Lion Footprint Forum and *The Lion King* "Protect the Pride" campaign have exemplified that protecting lions requires a united, collaborative effort. The road to lion recovery is a long one, but we can get there by traveling it together. ■





# What is the Lion Recovery Fund?

The Lion Recovery Fund (LRF) is a collaborative granting initiative created by the **Wildlife Conservation Network** (WCN) in partnership with the **Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation**, with a bold vision to double the number of lions in Africa, bringing back the half we have lost. The LRF is managed by WCN and draws on a coalition of advisors with expertise in conservation and philanthropy to guide grantmaking and ensure that decisions made are rooted in sound science and financial integrity.

## How does it work?

- The LRF is managed by WCN. The LRF directs 100% of every donation directly to the best projects to recover lions, with zero administrative or overhead fees taken.
- The LRF team—including a granting committee comprised of conservation experts—identifies and vets the best lion projects across Africa. This team does the groundwork for our donors, ensuring that their dollars are spent where they can have the greatest impact and with the most trusted players.
- The donations raised by the LRF are deployed quickly so grantees can get to work.
- The LRF team monitors and tracks progress and impact towards our goals and reports back to our donors.

## How will we succeed?

Recovering lions and their landscapes cannot be done by any single organization or single fund. A key element of the LRF strategy is to bring together governments, nonprofits, philanthropists, and the public through various forums to allow for greater impact than would be possible through our efforts alone.

The LRF is like a venture capital firm for lions: we seek innovative approaches, bolster tactics known to work, disperse funds quickly, and track results.

# Strategy for Lion Recovery



## 1. EXPAND CONSERVATION FOOTPRINT

Increase the extent and effectiveness of the 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 amount of funding available for—and encourage greater focus on—the conservation of lions and their landscapes.



# Standing Together for Lions

**The Lion Recovery Fund is now at the two-year mark** and we are inspired by the work accomplished by our partners on the ground in that short period. Equally impressive is the community of donors that has coalesced around the LRF in these two years. Your support – financially, emotionally, in-kind – is driving the real change needed for both lions and the people who share landscapes with them. All of us at the Wildlife Conservation Network who manage the Lion Recovery Fund are humbled and appreciative for those who share our vision to keep lions alive and thriving.

Please visit [lionrecoveryfund.org](http://lionrecoveryfund.org) for more information about the great work made possible thanks to you. If you are interested in making a donation to the LRF, please visit [wildnet.org/lrf](http://wildnet.org/lrf) or contact [kelly@wildnet.org](mailto:kelly@wildnet.org).



Lion  
Recovery  
Fund



[lionrecoveryfund.org](http://lionrecoveryfund.org)

