

# LION RECOVERY FUND

FEBRUARY 2020  
**PROGRESS REPORT**





# PROTECTING LIONS ACROSS AFRICA

Since the Lion Recovery Fund (LRF) was established in 2017, we have supported incredible projects that are protecting lions in 20 countries across the African continent. Thanks entirely to the generous contributions of donors, the LRF has invested \$8.2 million dollars into highly effective lion conservation projects, and the pace of granting has increased rapidly as the Fund has gained momentum.

To offer a deeper understanding of what these numbers mean, this Progress Report highlights projects supported since August 2019. In these six months, the LRF supported 25 projects that are tackling the threats lions are facing and equipping conservationists with resources they need to bring lions roaring back.

We know there are many challenges ahead. As Africa's human population continues to expand, the threats to lions and their habitats are growing accordingly. We are paying particularly close attention to the targeted poaching of lions for their body parts, which, if allowed to flourish, could easily become an existential threat to the species. This is a critical point in time for lions, but we are confident that by supporting the best projects on-the-ground, we will continue to see a big impact in lion conservation.

We invite you to browse through this report and get a closer look at the progress we have made towards our bold vision of recovering lions and landscapes.



**86**  
PROJECTS



**20**  
COUNTRIES



**35**  
GRANTEES





SINCE AUGUST 2019:

**\$2.78** MILLION GRANTED

PARTNERS SUPPORTED:

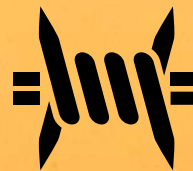
- African Parks
- BioCarbon Partners
- Conservation Capital
- Conservation Lower Zambezi
- Desert Lion Conservation
- Endangered Wildlife Trust
- Fauna & Flora International
- Frankfurt Zoological Society
- Honeyguide
- KopeLion
- Lion Landscapes
- Musekese Conservation
- Panthera
- SORALO
- WildCRU
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Wildlife Crime Prevention Project

LRF IMPACT TO DATE:



**\$8.2**

MILLION GRANTED



**25,417**

SNARES REMOVED



**947**

POACHERS ARRESTED



**35%**

OF AFRICA'S LION RANGE COVERED BY LRF GRANTEES



**52%**

OF LION POPULATION AFFECTED BY GRANTS



**28,523**

POUNDS OF BUSHMEAT CONFISCATED





# PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

## Protected Area Management

Habitat loss is a top threat to lion populations throughout Africa. The LRF is working to protect these essential lion landscapes through incentive programs, collaboration with local authorities, monitoring, and removal of threats like bushmeat poaching.

## Human-Wildlife Coexistence

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

## Tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade

The illegal wildlife trade negatively impacts lions through both the trafficking of their body parts and the trade in bushmeat, which diminishes their prey and kills lions who inadvertently become entangled in snares. While little is known about the details of the emerging trade in lion bones and parts, it is clear that there has been an increase in levels of illegal poaching.

## Conservation Planning

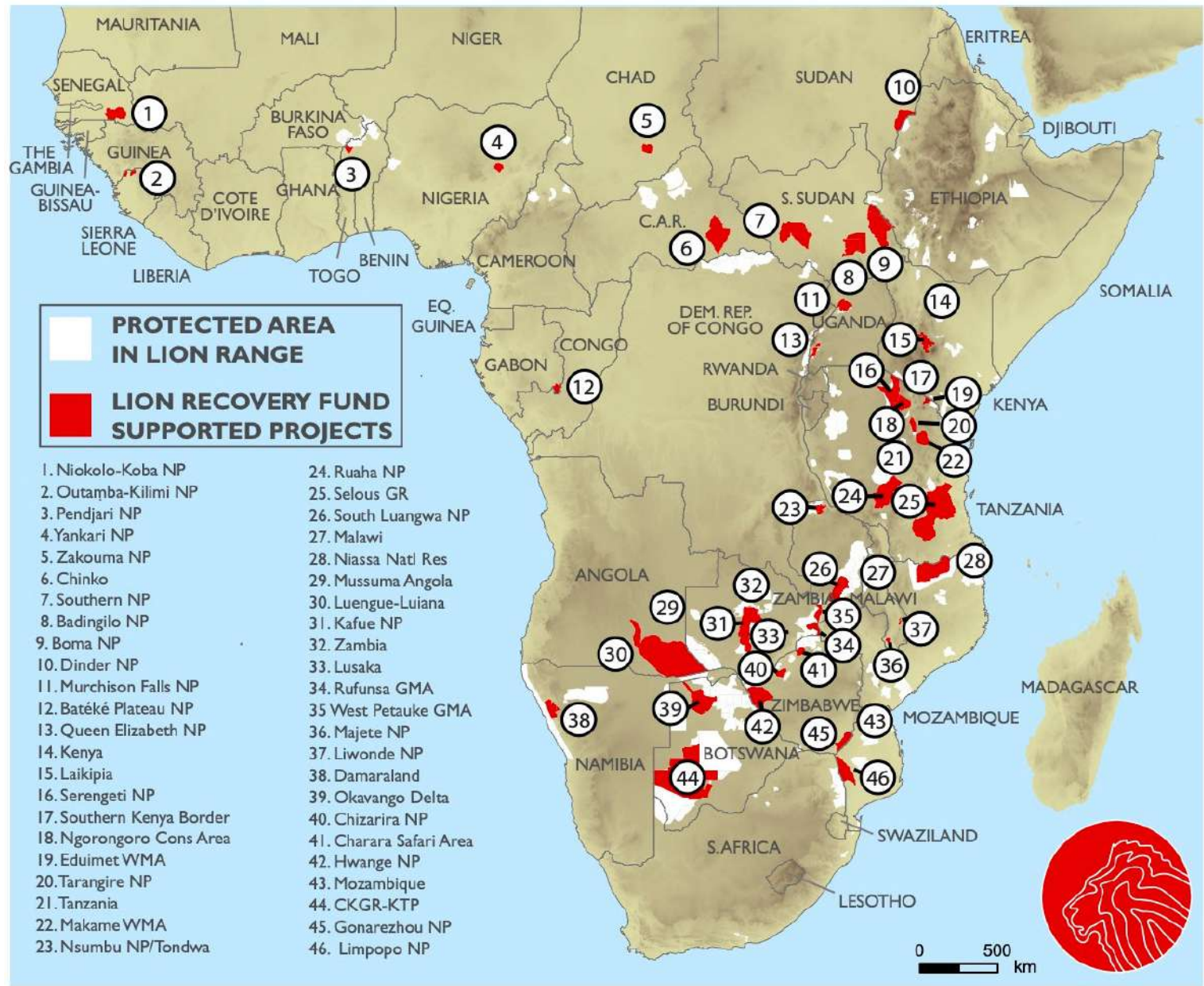
The LRF supports the development and implementation of strategies and processes that lay the groundwork for effective conservation. Such planning is important to help groups work together to prioritize and monitor conservation efforts.

## Campaigns

The LRF supports campaigns designed to build public, philanthropic, and political will for conservation, as well as campaigns designed to increase public awareness around issues that are pertinent to lion conservation, like bushmeat poaching.

# WHERE WE OPERATE

Lions once roamed from Europe to the southern tip of Africa, and from West Africa all the way to India. Today, that distribution has been dramatically reduced to just 8% of their historic range. Populations are now restricted to pockets of sub-Saharan Africa (and a relict small population in northern India).



# PROJECTS SUPPORTED FROM AUGUST 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020

## Protected Area Management

- BioCarbon Partners in partnership with Lion Landscapes, established a carbon offset project to protect a key wildlife area linking the **Lower Zambezi** and **Luangwa Valley** in **Zambia**. With LRF funding, they are now selling specific "lion carbon credits" to financially benefit local communities in the area, thereby incentivizing communities to protect habitat as well as lions and other wildlife. This project also provides funding for law enforcement to prevent deforestation and tackle poaching.
- As **South Sudan** returns to peace after decades of civil war and political instability, there is now opportunity to reestablish effective management in its national parks. The LRF granted Fauna and Flora International to aid their work with the South Sudanese authorities to reassert control in South Sudan's largest protected area, Southern National Park, as it has massive potential for lion recovery, but it currently lacks a proper management presence.
- Musekese Conservation is working with Panthera to set up a second intensive protection zone in **Zambia's Kafue National Park** to tackle the threat posed by bushmeat poaching. LRF funding allows Musekese to obtain the necessary equipment for their anti-poaching unit operations.
- Characterized as having low human population densities and vast wilderness

areas, Central African Republic (CAR) represents a place where there can be significant long-term potential for lion conservation. The LRF issued a grant to help African Parks expand its protection of the Chinko wilderness block of eastern CAR by working with pastoralists to create corridors for livestock movements.



Photo: Gael YannLe Martin

**RANGERS GOING THROUGH A TRAINING PROGRAM WITH AFRICAN PARKS, ENABLING THEM TO PROTECT THE VAST CHINKO RESERVE.**

- The LRF continued its support of Frankfurt Zoological Society's efforts to remove snares and keep illegal incursions of livestock out of **Serengeti National Park, Tanzania**. This grant also supports intelligence work designed to better understand and tackle the commercial trade in bushmeat. As lions are often caught and killed in bushmeat snares, understanding the bushmeat trade will help conservationists' ability to address this threat.
- The LRF issued a second grant to Panthera to strengthen their law enforcement efforts in **Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal**, as well

as provide a platform where they can expand their operational footprint in the park. Not only does this grant provide safer lands for the last remaining lions in Senegal, but it also enables Panthera to unlock significant additional funding.

- The LRF issued its second grant to Wildlife Conservation Society in **Yankari National Park, Nigeria** for close monitoring and protection of the critically endangered West African lion populations.
- The LRF issued its third grant to Panthera to continue their law enforcement work for lions in **Kafue National Park, Zambia**. Panthera's efforts are having a significant impact on reducing poaching in the area of their operation.

## Human-Wildlife Coexistence

- With the rising threat of targeted poaching and the bushmeat trade, the LRF provided a grant in Tanzania to support authorities conducting a variety of anti-trafficking interventions.
- The LRF funded Frankfurt Zoological Society, in partnership with Gonarezhou Conservation Trust, to develop a trial human-lion conflict mitigation project to tackle this issue in **Gonarezhou National Park, Zimbabwe**. Should the project be successful, it will be more broadly implemented.
- The LRF has granted WildCRU funds to support their 'Long Shields' program, which

is designed to help prevent lions from killing livestock in the areas adjacent to **Hwange National Park** and **Matetsi Safari area, Zimbabwe**. This should reduce the retaliatory killing of lions by livestock farmers.



Photo: WildCRU-TKPP/ Liomba Mathe

**LION GUARDIANS TRACKING AND MONITORING LIONS IN ORDER TO PROTECT LIVESTOCK FROM LIONS.**

- A second grant was issued to KopeLion to strengthen their management team in **Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area**, therefore expanding their capacity to drive organizational change. As a result, their implementation in field conservation will become more effective.
- The LRF issued a grant in **southern Kenya** to SORALO to enable their work strengthening Maasai communities' traditional conservation and natural resources management systems.
- The LRF granted funding to Lion Landscapes in early 2019 to reduce the increasing human-lion conflict in **Laikipia, Kenya**. A second



# PROJECTS SUPPORTED FROM AUGUST 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020

grant was then issued to help strengthen Lion Landscapes' management, helping them cope with the rapid growth of their field conservation programs.

- The LRF continues to support Desert Lion Conservation's efforts to monitor unique population of desert lions in **Namibia** and reduce the conflict between lions and livestock farmers.



Photo: Desert Lion Conservation

**A LIONESS STROLLS ALONG THE BEACH IN NAMIBIA, AWAY FROM CONFLICT WITH LOCAL LIVESTOCK FARMERS.**

## Tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade

- The LRF's grant to Conservation Lower Zambezi contributed to their Detection and Track Dog Unit in the areas surrounding the **Lower Zambezi National Park, Zimbabwe**. This unit was formed to cease the movement of illegal wildlife products and to act as a deterrent to wildlife crime in the park.



Photo: Francois D'elbee

**THE DETECTION AND TRACKING DOG UNIT PATROLS LOWER ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK TO FIGHT ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING.**

## Conservation Planning

- Current literature states that there aren't any lions in Sierra Leone, but in 2017, a camera trap caught a photo of a male lion in the southwestern region of **Outamba Kilimi National Park**. Sarah Bell, of Pan Verus Project, received a grant from the LRF to conduct an exploratory camera trap survey of the national park in order to determine if lions are present there.
- Endangered Wildlife Trust was granted funding to convene the lion conservation and science community across Africa to create a set of guidelines for park managers to survey lions and their prey. Lions and their prey have been surveyed using a variety of methods which has created a lack of continuity, so these guidelines are meant to standardize survey methods in order to have reliable population estimates.

- Africa has an extensive network of protected areas that includes 'semi-protected' lands, that are not full national parks. These lands are managed by private sector operators for sustainable purposes, but many of these areas have been gradually falling into a state of disrepair due to under-investment. The LRF granted funds to Conservation Capital to aid their work revitalizing these areas by attracting diversified conservation investments.
- African Parks, in partnership with the Chadian government, have achieved an incredible turn around in **Zakouma National Park**; the park was once rife with poaching and is now a secure area with increasing wildlife populations. The LRF issued a second grant to African Parks to undertake research that will identify the factors limiting the lion population, as well as patrol the areas where lions are found.



Photo: Zakouma National Parks

**A MALE LION CAUGHT ON CAMERA IN ZAKOUMA NATIONAL PARK IN CHAD.**

- SMART law enforcement monitoring is a valuable tool to help manage anti-poaching rangers and produce rapid reporting of poaching activity in national parks. The LRF's grant to Panthera will enable them to provide SMART training to three recent LRF grantees in **Zimbabwe** and **Zambia**.

## Campaigns

- The Wildlife Crime Prevention Project has created an awareness campaign to educate the public in **Zambia** about the negative impacts of consuming bushmeat sourced from poachers. Given its success, this is the third round of funding provided by LRF.



Photo: Wildlife Crime Prevention

**MIRRIAM NASILELE, WCP AWARENESS OFFICER, EXPLAINING THE BUSHMEAT CAMPAIGN AND ANSWERING SOME TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRADE AND HOW DANGEROUS IT IS TO ZAMBIAN WILDLIFE (IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA).**



# YOU ARE THE KEY TO LION RECOVERY

You are part of a vital network of donors that has helped the Lion Recovery Fund support a large number of lion conservation projects spread across 20 countries. This impact is not just seen in the funding deployed, but also in the growing collaborations and sense of alignment emerging within our grantees. Now, more than ever, we are seeing the lion conservation community work together towards a shared goal of saving Africa's lions.

Everyone at the Wildlife Conservation Network would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all of you who have supported the Lion Recovery Fund. We know there's hope for lions and the people they coexist with.



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**[lionrecoveryfund.org](https://lionrecoveryfund.org)**

