

LION RECOVERY FUND

MARCH 2022
PROGRESS REPORT





FUNDING LION CONSERVATION GOES BEYOND BIG CATS.

As we begin a new year,

conservation in Africa continues to grapple with a combination of old and new challenges. The solutions to these challenges may take a lot of effort, but we believe they are achievable. Before COVID, it was clear that conservation across the continent was undermined by a lack of funding—and that situation has been greatly exacerbated by the pandemic. Travel restrictions continue to hamper the tourism industry, cutting revenues to government wildlife authorities and community conservancies. The COVID crisis has emphasized how critical it is to increase and diversify funding sources for conservation in Africa. Your investment in the LRF is a key part of getting much needed funding to conservation that does not rely on tourism.

Funding lion conservation goes beyond big cats—it helps important swaths of critical landscapes across Africa. Recent research, co-authored by LRF Director Dr. Peter Lindsey, highlights the precarious status of conservation areas (parks and other lands under conservation management): 82% of savanna protected areas are in a state of failure or deterioration, and only 10% are in a state of recovery. Rapid human population growth, rising demand for land for agriculture and settlement, and increasing opportunity costs associated with setting aside land for conservation only exacerbate this problem. If we cannot expand effective management, we are simply

going to lose large tracts of conservation land. In many areas, these issues represent an existential crisis that goes beyond just lions. If we lose conservation lands, we will also lose most of the biodiversity in those areas, and risk a massive release of carbon. The LRF is trying to tackle this problem head on by expanding the footprint of effective management. This means investing in promising new projects in neglected landscapes and expanding effective existing projects. Many of these areas have enormous potential for lion recovery, and so with your help, we are working to turn a crisis situation into an opportunity. One of the most effective elements of turning neglected landscapes around is by engaging and partnering with local people, positioning and rewarding them as custodians over lions on behalf of the world.

We hope that from this mission, you will see that the LRF has an impact on more than lions alone. Our investments affect biodiversity, climate, and the people who live in and around Africa's majestic conservation areas. With lions as our primary focus we can address all of these issues together. Fortunately, there are early signs that lions are recovering or stable in roughly 80% of the sites that are supported by the LRF where lion numbers are monitored. With that, please read through the latest LRF progress report to see all the ways in which your investment is saving lions and so much more.

Since its inception, The Lion Recovery Fund has helped remove 70,502 snares from critical lion habitat and confiscated 108,932 pounds of illegal bushmeat.

HIGHLIGHTS

1

Lion Recovery Fund support enabled SORALO to continue working with Maasai communities in Kenya's southern rangelands to reduce retaliatory lion killings due to livestock predation. With assistance from the LRF, SORALO reached 11 new communities across an additional 2,500 square miles, promoting human-lion coexistence and habitat connectivity. This work has helped double the number of lions in the region since 2018 to about 60 today.

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2

In conjunction with authorities, Zambezi Delta Conservation (ZDC) has spent several years transforming the heavily poached Zambezi Delta into a landscape teeming with wildlife. ZDC reintroduced 24 lions in 2018, and that population has jumped to nearly 70 thanks to the abundance of prey. The Lion Recovery Fund recently funded ZDC's work with the Mozambique Wildlife Alliance to expand area under effective management and begin tackling bushmeat poaching.



3

The LRF has identified a number of African conservation leaders at early stages in their careers and provided them with support to kickstart new conservation programs. This helps vest the future of African conservation in the hands of Africans, allowing conservation messaging to better resonate with local communities. These young leaders are also provided mentoring opportunities with LRF grantees to expedite their professional development.

DEO TARIMO, PICTURED LEFT, IS A TANZANIAN NATIONAL AND A PROMISING NEW CONSERVATIONIST WORKING IN A KEY LANDSCAPE WITH LION LANDSCAPES. (SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE.)

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The Lion Recovery Fund has invested in 40.8% of Africa's lion range.



© Paul Thomson



\$24M
GRANTED



23
COUNTRIES



184
PROJECTS



CATEGORIES OF PROJECTS SUPPORTED SINCE AUGUST 2021

Human-Wildlife Coexistence

The community lands around and between protected areas have a critically important role as buffers and for connectivity, they also represent important habitat in their own right. The LRF supports a number of projects designed to promote coexistence between people and wildlife, involving approaches such as tackling human-lion conflict, creating incentives to encourage people to live with and protect wildlife, and supporting communities to establish, manage, and govern community conservation areas. The LRF's support in this context recognizes the critical role that communities play as custodians of wildlife.

Protected Area Management

The protected areas (PAs) in Africa where lions occur face recurrent funding shortages of roughly \$1 billion per year. Funding shortages make PAs vulnerable to human pressures, therefore many of them are becoming gradually depleted of wildlife, including lions. Recent research suggests that if Africa's PAs were optimally managed, they could support three to four times the current number of lions remaining in the wild. Public-private partnerships between NGOs and state wildlife authorities offer significant potential to improve the effectiveness of management in Africa's protected areas. The LRF supports a wide range of such projects.

Tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade

Lions are affected by the illegal wildlife trade through both the trade in their body parts and the trade in bushmeat (bushmeat poaching depletes lions' prey and can fatally wound lions in snares). The LRF supports efforts to disrupt the illegal trade in these products through anti-poaching, anti-trafficking, and demand reduction.

PARTNERS SUPPORTED SINCE AUGUST 2021

African Parks, CLAWS, Conservation South Luangwa, Conservation Travel Foundation, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Forgotten Parks Foundation, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Landscape and Conservation Mentors Organization, Lion Landscapes, Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, National Council of SPCAs, Panthera, Tsavo Trust, WildCru, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Crime Prevention, Zambian Carnivore Programme.



A close-up profile of a lion's head, facing left. The lion has a thick, light brown mane. There is a visible, dark, bloody wound on the lion's face, just below the eye and above the cheek. The background is blurred, showing some greenery and a wooden fence.

**WE REMAIN
DEEPLY
GRATEFUL
FOR YOUR
SUPPORT.**

The Lion Recovery
Fund is proud to
have supported
11,981 anti-poaching
patrols across
critical lion habitat
in Africa.



© Tsavo Trust and Nick Haller

Deo Tarimo / Lion Landscapes

HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

The LRF issued a grant to conservationist Deo Tarimo through the organization Lion Landscapes. Deo is a Tanzanian national and a promising new conservationist working in a key landscape. The grant will help him kickstart lion conservation in this park for the first time, and to allow him to receive significant capacity building and training from the Lion Landscapes Tanzania team. Deo will use the funding to better understand and systematically tackle the threats facing lions in the Mkomazi ecosystem.

Landscape and Conservation Mentors Organization

HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

Landscape and Conservation Mentors Organization (LCMO) is a small, grass-roots conservation organization that runs the WASIMA campaign, a multi-pronged campaign that encourages local community commitment to stop illegal lion killings in South Western Tanzania. The LRF has provided LCMO with a number of grants designed to strengthen the organization and enhance their ability to tackle lion killing and human-lion conflict.



©Willem Briers-Louw

PHOTOS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: A FEMALE LION LOUNGING IN TSAVO EAST NATIONAL PARK, KENYA. TWO LIONS WHO WERE RE-COLLARED BY MOZAMBIQUE'S WILDLIFE ALLIANCE IN MOZAMBIQUE'S ZAMBEZI DELTA TO ENSURE PROPER LONG-TERM MONITORING.

Tsavo Trust

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

The Tsavo ecosystem is a critical stronghold for lions in Kenya. However, the park is subject to serious pressure from bushmeat snaring and illegal livestock incursions. These incursions create competition for grazing with wild ungulates and also pose a risk of lions and other predators being poisoned by herders wishing to protect their cattle. The LRF issued a grant to Tsavo Trust to deploy a team, in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service, to specifically tackle these issues.

Mozambique Wildlife Alliance

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

In 2021, the LRF issued a grant to the Mozambique Wildlife Alliance designed to support the management of protected lands within the Zambezi Delta. This is an area where lions were reintroduced in 2018 and are increasing rapidly. LRF support will help expand the area under effective management, thus helping expedite recovery. There is exceptional recovery potential in this landscape, due to the very high and increasing densities of prey animals there.

Panthera

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

Panthera secured an agreement with the Angolan government to provide financial and technical support for the management in the vast Luengue-Luiana National Park, a 30,000 square mile landscape. There are few places in Africa with greater potential for lion recovery. At present, lion numbers are estimated to be as low as 30 individuals, but a park of this size could potentially support hundreds or even thousands of lions if it was adequately protected and if prey populations were allowed to recover. The LRF provided Panthera a series of grants to help them deploy community scouts and support the Angolan wildlife authorities to protect and manage part of this landscape.

Panthera

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

Niokolo-Koba National Park holds the last remaining population of lions in Senegal. It is a vast landscape, encompassing 3,513 square miles—ten times larger than New York City. The LRF has provided a series of grants to enable Panthera to gradually expand and effectively manage and protect the area. These efforts are bearing fruit, as the lion population has increased from 10-15 individuals in 2011 to 30-40 today. Prey populations are also increasing as a result of these grants.

Wildlife Conservation Society

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

There are just four known populations of the Critically Endangered West African lion subspecies, two of which occur in Nigeria. The LRF provided a grant to Wildlife Conservation Society to support the management and protection of Yankari National Park. This means WCS now supports projects at three of the four sites where West African lions remain. After issuing the first grant, it was clear that while ungulate populations in the park were increasing (providing lions with prey), the small lion population was not. Thus the LRF issued a second grant to allow for close monitoring and protection of the lions to help mitigate against any lion-specific threats. In late 2021, the LRF issued a third grant to allow for the continued support of law enforcement to protect lions, their prey, and their habitats.



PHOTOS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: TWO LUENGUE-LUIANA NATIONAL PARK COMMUNITY SCOUTS AFTER A DAY REMOVING SNARES IN ANGOLA. TWO LION CUBS DETECTED BY A RECENT CAMERA-TRAP SURVEY IN NIOKOLO-KOBA NATIONAL PARK, SENEGAL.





African Parks

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

The W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) complex, spanning Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger is the stronghold for the Critically Endangered West African lion. African Parks have a mandate to manage both Pendjari National Park and Parc W on the Beninese side and LRF has supported their work in both parks. In January 2022, the LRF granted \$150,000 to help African Parks manage the challenge posed by massive influxes of livestock. Livestock are driven into the park by nomadic pastoralists and pose an existential threat to the park both due to competition with wild ungulates for grazing and also because of the threat of retaliatory killing of predators. African Parks has a plan to gradually increase the proportion of the park that is free of livestock, while working very closely with the pastoralist communities to find solutions that work for both sides.

Frankfurt Zoological Society

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve—now split into Nyerere National Park (NNP) and Selous Game Reserve (SGR)—is one of Africa's largest protected areas and contains a critically important population of lions. The exact status of lions in Selous is not known, but it is possible that the reserve contains one of largest populations of the species in the world. The Frankfurt Zoological Society supports law enforcement in SGR/NNP, working hand-in-hand with the Tanzania Wildlife Authority and Tanzania National Parks Authority. LRF funding supports the deployment of a de-snaring team around part of the boundary that is acutely affected by bushmeat snaring, and supports general operations, including aerial surveillance and the deployment of rangers.

Wildlife Crime Prevention

TACKLING THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

The bushmeat trade is the single greatest threat to wildlife in Zambia. The LRF provided Wildlife Crime Prevention with a series of grants to develop a focused bushmeat program, designed to tackle the illegal and commercial trade in bushmeat. This threat affects lions both by reducing the prey on which they depend, and also by causing direct mortality of lions in snares. With LRF support, WCP is adopting a multi-pronged strategy to deal with this threat. This includes intelligence-based anti-trafficking to disrupt trade in bushmeat, support for the judiciary when dealing with bushmeat-related crimes, demand-reduction campaigns, and the provision of alternative legal game meat supplies.



PHOTOS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: AFRICAN PARKS RANGERS ON A DRILL IN PENDJARI NATIONAL PARK, BENIN. A LARGE BLACK-MANED LION ROAMING IN LOWER ZAMBEZI, ZAMBIA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.

Looking ahead, we know that 2022 is going to be an exciting year for the LRF. We have our sights set on opportunities to kickstart conservation work in previously neglected landscapes. This is essential so that we can help secure those areas and recover them before they are lost. We have identified the landscapes needed to recover lions, we know the approaches that work, and we know lions recover very quickly if they, their prey, and their habitats are protected. Lions are increasing at 42% of the sites where the LRF is investing, stable at another 42%, and declining in just 16%. With your support, we hope to increase the number of places where lion recovery is happening and turn things around for the king of the beasts!



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