

Animal Facts:

Lions

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Lions (along with tigers) are the biggest members of the cat family, weighing up to 230 kg. Male lions may be 3m long.



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Lions used to live through much of Europe and Asia. Now they are restricted to East and Southern Africa. Around 200 lions also live in the Gir forest in India.



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Lions usually live in grassland or scrub, in families called prides.

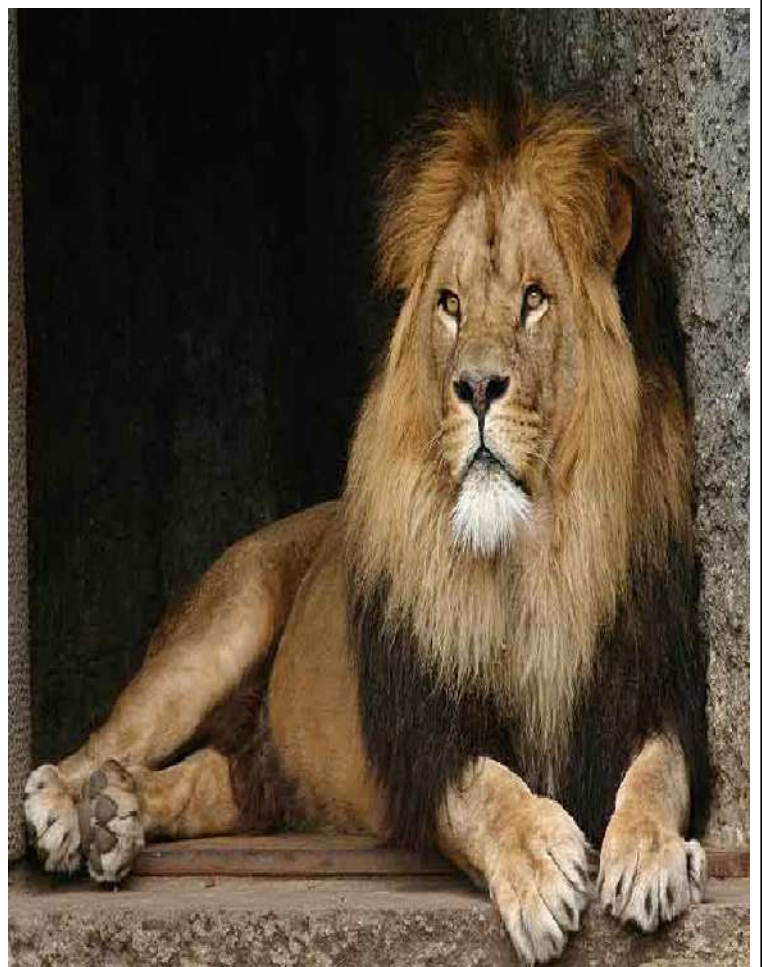


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Lions are hunters and they prey on antelopes, zebras and even young giraffes. The lionesses (females) do most of the hunting.



Male lions are easily recognizable because of their huge manes. There are usually two to five adult males in each pride and they usually eat before the lionesses and cubs.



Lions usually catch something to eat every four days or so. They can eat up to 40 kg in a single meal. Afterwards they rest for 24 hours.



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The lions in a pride usually spend about 20 hours a day sleeping and resting, and they walk no farther than 10 km or so a day.



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Lionesses catch their prey not by speed, but by stealth and strength. They stalk their prey quietly, creeping close to the ground. Then, the lionesses make a sudden dash and pull the victim down with their strong forepaws.



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Lionesses usually hunt at dusk or dawn, but they have very good night vision, and so will often hunt in the dark.



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Male lion cubs are driven out of the pride when they are two years old. When a young male is fully grown, he has to fight an older male to join another pride.

