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Do you know that the lions are large felines that are traditionally depicted as the "king of the jungle"? The purpose of this text is for you to know more about lions and give you the urge to take care of them. Now lions are found in only two areas of the world, Africa and Asia. Even though they look similar, these two species are very different in size, habitat, diet and size and characteristics. Here is some information about lions that is maybe going to make you be passionate about lions.

Size & characteristics

Lions weigh about 500 pounds (230) kilograms. Now I understand why some people say that the lions are the bigger animals, but whatever we now that the bigger are the elephants. Asiatic lions tend to be much bigger. Male lions are generally larger than females.

Habitat

African lions live in Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Lions live in Africa and Asia in groups called prides. They mainly live in areas called savannas. They hunt in tall grasses and rest under shady trees.

Habits

Lions are very social cats and live in groups called prides. Asiatic and African lion prides are very different. African lion prides consist of up to three males, around a dozen females, and their young, according to National Geographic. There are prides that have as many as 40 members, though.



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Asian lions divide themselves into two prides. The females have a pride and the males have a pride. They only come together during mating season. With both types of lion prides, the females stay put. All of the females in a pride are usually related to each other because females tend to stay with the pride in which they are born. Males, on the other hand, wander off to create their own pride when they are old enough.

Offspring

At 3 to 4 years old, males and females are ready to mate. The female has a gestation period of around four months. She will give birth to her young away from others and hide the cubs for the first six weeks of their lives. They are also completely dependent on their mother. All of the females in a group of lions mate at the same time. After the first six weeks, the cubs are taken care of by all of the females and will often nurse from females other than their mother, according to the San Diego Zoo.

Conservation status

Lions face threats from hunting, habitat loss and diseases that can be spread from domestic dogs in nearby villages, according to the National Zoo. African lions are listed as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. This is because their numbers are decreasing. Their current population is estimated at 30,000 to 100,000. The population has been almost cut in half in the past two decades because of retaliatory killings by farmers (whose livestock the lions eat), as well as from trophy hunting and habitat loss. Asiatic lions are in a much more perilous position as human encroachment has reduced their habitat. This group includes only about 175 mature individuals.

Other facts

Females are the main hunters of the pride. They form hunting parties to round up the fast animals found in their habitat. Lions also go toe-to-toe with animals much larger than themselves, according to the Smithsonian National Zoo. To kill their prey, lions use their powerful jaws to snap the prey's neck or to strangle it to death. Male African lions that are trying to take over a pride will kill all of the cubs to avoid competition. Lions and tigers are so closely related that if you shaved them you wouldn't be able to tell them apart. Their body structure is so similar only experts can tell them apart, according to the Smithsonian. Lions are also related to leopards and jaguars. Though mountain lions (pumas) are in the same family (Felidae) as Asiatic and African lions, they are not considered lions.

Now you know more about lions and I hope you got the urge to take care of them.

Source: <http://www.livescience.com/27404-lion-facts.html>