

lion encounter

REHABILITATION & RELEASE INTO THE WILD PROGRAM
ZIMBABWE & ZAMBIA 2011

experience it
walk with lions

get involved
volunteer with us

www.lionencounter.com

In the last 30 years
the population of the
AFRICAN LION has
declined by **80% to 90%**



find your pride



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The Ngamo Release & *Lion Country* TV series

Photographs courtesy of David "Baz" Jenkins (trackerbaz@gmail.com), Dror Eyal, Kirsti Marsh, Craig Alridge, David Youldon, Annabel Vere, Bike Cape2Cape, Safari Par Excellence, Wild Horizons, plus special thanks to Jenna Edwards & Andrea Green for the cover photo. And the many, many volunteers who have added to our archives – thank you.

www.lionalert.org
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Facebook: African Lion & Environmental Research Trust
Subscribe: newsletter@lionalert.org

www.lionencounter.com
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Facebook: Lion Encounter Victoria Falls / Livingstone



about lion encounter

LION ENCOUNTER is an active conservation program that is passionate about ensuring a secure future for the African lion, *Panthera leo*. It is also Africa's first genuine program to ethically reintroduce the offspring of captive-bred African lions back into the wild. Lion Encounter operates the African Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program in partnership with ALERT.

In the first stage young lion cubs are taken out into the bush to build confidence in their natural habitat. As the cubs become familiar with the environment, they start to develop and practice their stalking and hunting skills – skills that are crucial for their release into Stage 2 of the program.

By joining our lion walks or volunteering with us, you are actively assisting in the pre-release training of the cubs, as well as providing essential funding for the program's continued progress to help save Africa's iconic species.

Lion Encounter is partnered with ALERT, the African Lion & Environmental Research Trust, a conservation and community NGO that is dedicated to the future of Africa's wildlife and peoples. See more about ALERT on page 23.



How Lion Encounter works with ALERT

To develop all stages of the release program

Implement conservation and research programs to protect Africa's precious habitat and wildlife

Engage in community developments for those living in and around wildlife conservation areas.

Two projects, one program

Lion Encounter operates on both sides of the majestic Victoria Falls, within the Zambezi National Park in Zimbabwe and in the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park in Zambia.



into the wild

About the African Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild



Our aim is to successfully reintroduce lions to parts of Africa that have lost their populations, have been identified for their protection, and where the reasons for previous losses have been mitigated to ensure the future of reintroduced populations.

STAGE 1

The first stage is about introducing cubs to their natural environment by taking them on bush walks daily. Guides and handlers act as the dominant members of the pride, and the cubs are only trained to the point where it is safe for us to walk with them. They are not tamed or domesticated; they are wild animals with their natural responses and instincts intact.

As the cubs grow, they become actively involved in their surroundings and start responding to hunting opportunities – with varying degrees of success.

At 18-months old the cubs move on to Day and Night Encounters, a crucial end phase of Stage 1. The young lions are taken out early morning and at dusk to hone their hunting techniques as a pride in preparation for the next stage. During these encounters we remain on a vehicle to ensure our safety but also allowing observations and research to be carried out on their progress.

STAGE 2

Reaching adulthood at 2½ to 3 years old, the pride is now released into a fenced area populated by game such as impala, wildebeest, puku and zebra. All human contact is removed, though their progress is monitored from a research vehicle. The lions will have been disease tested, vaccinated, micro-chipped and radio-collared. They remain in Stage 2 until the pride is deemed stable and self-sustaining.

STAGE 3

The pride is now translocated to a managed ecosystem of at least 10,000 acres with no human residents, sufficient prey species to hunt and, crucially competitive species such as hyena. The lions in Stage 3 will give birth to cubs, that will be raised by the pride in their natural environment. The cubs born in Stage 3, with all the human avoidance



behaviours of wild lions, will develop the skills to enable their reintroduction into appropriate game reserves, conservancies and National Parks across the African continent once old enough.

STAGE 4

The free-born offspring of Stage 3 can be released in one of several natural social groups as required by the needs of the end release area.

CUB SURVIVAL RATES

It's a little-known fact that it's a constant fight for survival for a young cub in the wild. The first litter of a female lion may produce perhaps one to three cubs, though often none survive; as she matures, her litter may number up to a maximum of six, with a higher survival rate. When born, the cubs' eyes are closed and they are carried around by the lioness in her mouth – as domestic cats do. After a week their eyes open, and they are able to stay close to their mother in an unusual way – they follow the black tip on her tail (lions are the only animal to have such a marking). Cubs that are weak are rejected.

The mother hides her cubs as she goes to hunt, sometimes leaving them untended for days as she searches for the next meal. The cubs, meanwhile, are easy prey for other predators such as hyena, as well as elephants and buffalo that will kill cubs to prevent them from growing up and becoming a threat.



NB:

This is a short version of a complex program. Please visit our website at www.lionalert.org for an in-depth review.

In addition to the program, ALERT and Lion Encounter continue to conduct further research into the best and most effective management of lion conservation. This includes working with a variety of conservationists and ecologists who advise us along the way as we learn and adapt, always with the preservation of the species and the welfare of our animals in mind.

experience it



what happens on a lion walk?

You will be collected from your lodge and transported to the Boma, our hospitality area. Our friendly team will have a welcome soft drink ready for you, after which there is a short film (7 mins) about our lion release program and related research, community and conservation projects.

After a safety briefing, you're ready to meet the lion cubs for their bush walk. At all times you'll be accompanied by our experienced guides, handlers and scouts, allowing you the freedom to watch the lions as they play, hunt and explore their natural habitat. When the lions rest, this provides the perfect chance for you to get some once-in-a-lifetime photos! During the bush walk, please feel free to ask any questions about lions as a species, or for updates on the progress of the release program.

The lion walk lasts approximately 1hr to 1¼hr, after which there is either a full safari breakfast or drinks and snacks, depending on the time of day. Film footage of your lion walk will be shown, which you can purchase as a DVD. Other merchandise supporting the release program is also available.

walk with lions

We have a number of options available, ranging from individual to group to customised itineraries.

Lion Walks

Lion Encounter Zambia and Zimbabwe can each host 6 full-length walks a day: 2 early morning walks (AM), 2 mid-morning walks (MM), and 2 afternoon walks (PM). There is a minimum of 2 people and a maximum of 24 for each walk. Please contact us if you have more than the stated maximum, as we may be able to accommodate you.

Encounters for Prides

These are group interactions that last up to 30 minutes, and we can facilitate large groups of up to 90 people. In sets of 8 to 10 at a time, the group will meet and interact with the lions in their natural environment and learn about the release project, as well as the lion cubs themselves.



We've found that these interactions are also constructive as part of team-building exercises.

Custom Itineraries

These are open to groups, school tours and incentive groups. We can tailor an itinerary that is suited to your needs, and will give you full insight into the workings of the lion project, and a taste of life in the conservation world. Depending on your schedule, we can plan your itinerary to include activities such as lessons in the local language, a tour of Livingstone or Victoria Falls, involvement in community conservation education, snare sweeps and, of course, the lions – cub sitting, lion walks in the bush, research and data collecting – the possibilities are endless. We can also arrange your accommodation and all necessary transfers.

Encounters for Cubs

Available on request

Just because our lion walks have an age restriction, there is no reason children should miss out. Our Children's Activities means that the whole family can enjoy an unforgettable bush experience. While "the adults" are on their lion walk, your "cubs" will head off with our experienced staff for a nature exploration à la David Livingstone. Along the way they will discover some of the secrets of the African bush; its trees, plants, animals and insects, all part of the adventure to finding the cubs at the end of the trail.

Kindly note that cub viewing is from outside their enclosure.



“An unforgettable experience”



the night encounter

(Zambia only)

The Night Encounter is a total experience in the Dambwa Forest, close to our operational base in Zambia’s Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, and some 25 km from Livingstone. Here is the home of our lions that have “graduated” from walks to night (and dawn) hunting, the times when lions are naturally more active. It’s cooler, they can use the light to their advantage, and their night vision is sharp and excellent.

You’re in the African bush, under the canopy of night stars, in an open game drive vehicle, tracking the young lions as they develop and practice their night-hunting skills. More than that, this is a rare opportunity to witness lions in the bush as a pride, to watch the dynamics of their social bonding, with our experienced guides and researchers at hand to tell more about the lineage and character of each individual lion, their standing in the pride hierarchy, and their changing physical features as they mature into adults.

a drive in lion country

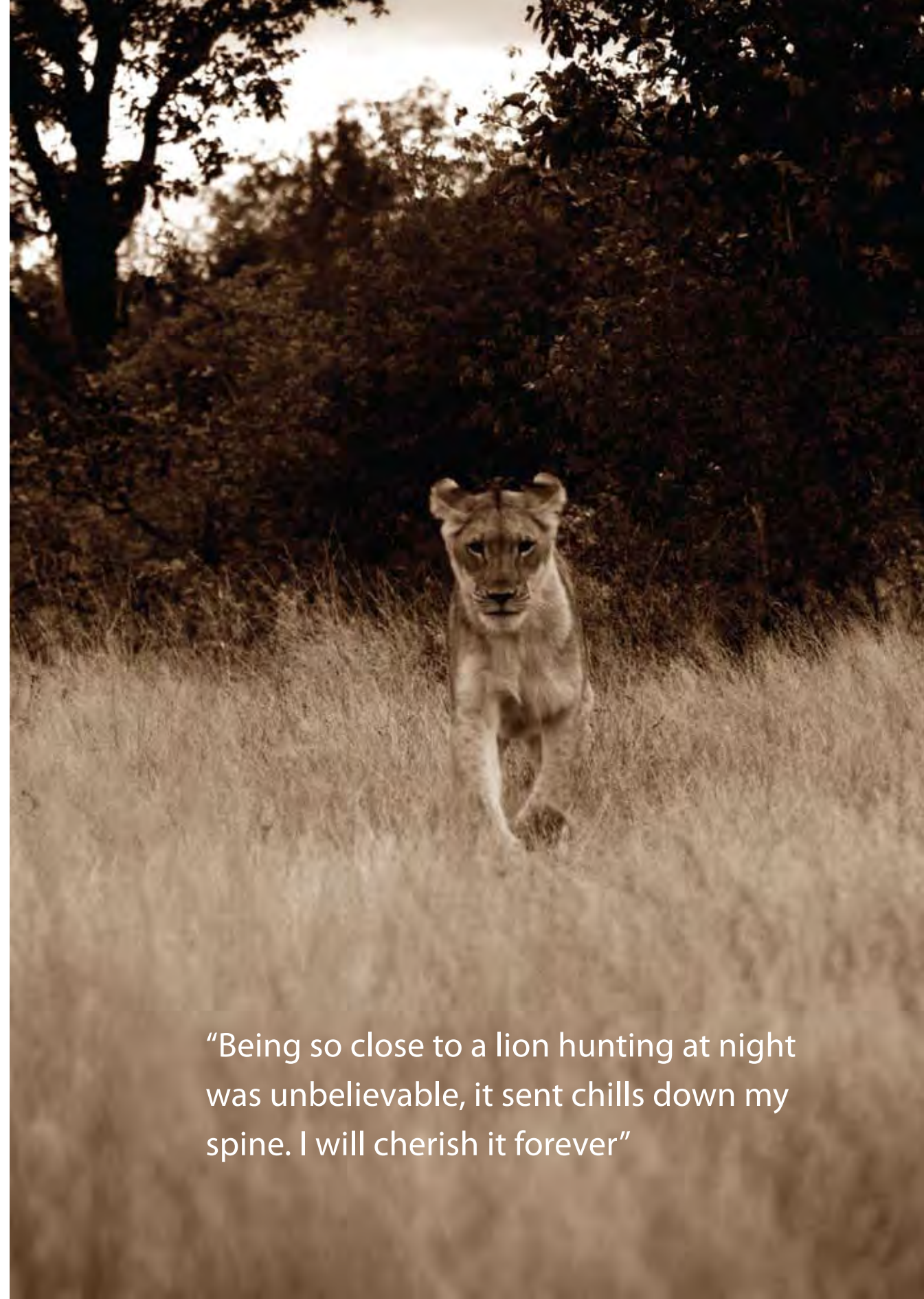
(Zambia only)

Named after the popular UK series, *Lion Country*, which features the program’s lions, these encounters can take place at dawn or later during the day. It’s a thrilling experience to watch lions roam free or around the vehicle, or race off to stalk and chase one of the game species that populate Dambwa – be it impala, puku, wildebeest, zebra, or the errant baboon.

the experience

Whether you’re on a Night Encounter or a Drive in Lion Country, the adventure starts as you enter Dambwa at our hospitality Boma, powered by solar energy – there is no electricity here. Relax and enjoy the romantic bush vista with snacks and drinks for the safety briefing, and then it’s into the game-drive vehicle to catch up with the sub-adult lions.

There is a maximum of 2 vehicles and 13 guests, and a delicious traditional dinner at the Boma tops off the evening on a Night Encounter (or safari breakfast if you’re on a dawn Drive), before you return to your hotel or lodge.



“Being so close to a lion hunting at night was unbelievable, it sent chills down my spine. I will cherish it forever”

“An absolutely amazing experience with an awesome organisation. I learned so much about these beautiful creatures” – ZOE STORER, UK



Please Note:

All activities include a safety briefing and an ALERT presentation.

Check timings with your booking agent as transfer and activity times may differ according to which option you choose.

For Lion Walks & Encounters for Prides, there is an age and height restriction of 15 years and 1.5m.

For Night Encounters and Drive in Lion Country the age requirement is 8 years.

Children up to the age of 18 need to be accompanied by a guardian.

Combinations & Options offered on this page are available year round.

journey of the pride

Meet both our younger and older cubs. Combine a Lion Walk with either a Night Encounter or a Drive in Lion Country. This is an ideal way to see how the program works, the way in which the cubs have matured and gained personalities and characters of their own.

combinations & options

VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

Excludes National Park fee

LIONS ONLY	PRICE (USD)
Lion Walk	125
Encounter for Cubs	80
Encounter for Prides	60

LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA

Excludes National Park & Forestry fees

LIONS ONLY	PRICE (USD)
Lion Walk	130
Encounter for Cubs	80
Encounter for Prides	60
Drive in Lion Country	125
The Night Encounter	145

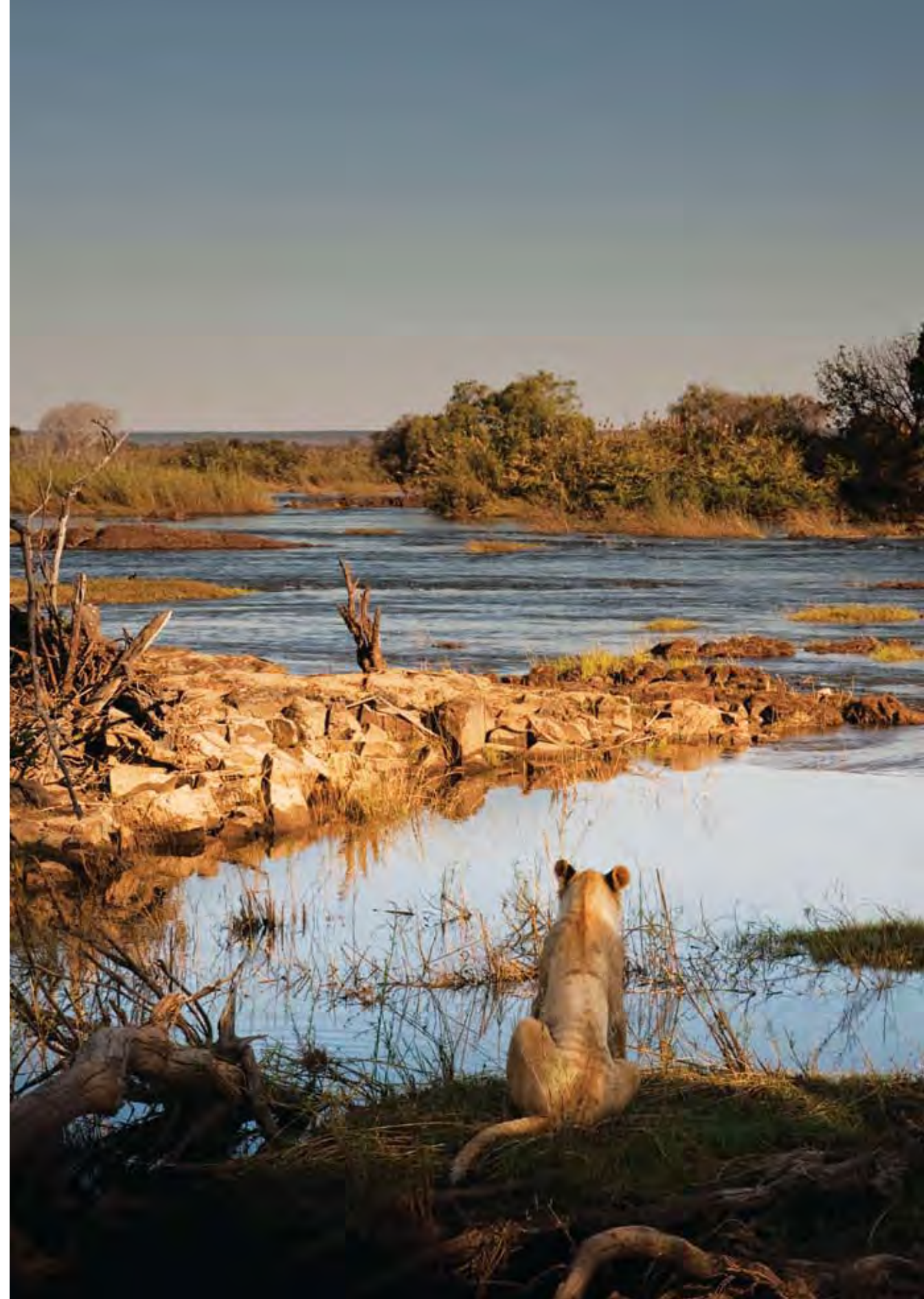
JOURNEY OF THE PRIDE

Drive in Lion Country & Lion Walk	235
Lion Walk & The Night Encounter	255

RELEASE SPECIAL

We're celebrating the Stage 2 release of the Ngamo Pride (see page 36) with these special prices. Valid until 31 March 2011.

	PRICE (USD)
Drive in Lion Country	85
Drive in Lion Country & Sunset Cruise	120



volunteering



Lion Encounter offers a unique opportunity to give something back to the people and wildlife of the places you visit. Join us as a self-funded volunteer at either our Victoria Falls or Livingstone project, and make a difference.

Short-term volunteering is ideal for overlanders and backpackers on the go. We won't say it's a cheap option, but you do get to experience a day in the life of a volunteer, and more importantly, a day with our lion cubs. You'll have a taste of what it is like being on a conservation project in Africa.

Volunteers able to spend longer than a week are welcome to look at our long term options. The longer you spend on the project, the more involved you will be in the holistic nature of the Rehabilitation & Release Program, be it in the form of snare sweeps (unfortunately poaching still exists in the National Park) or teaching a conservation class at a local community school.

All volunteer fees go towards funding both the Release Program as well as to other lion conservation programs locally and elsewhere in Africa.

short term

Space can be limited, especially in peak season, and advance bookings are always appreciated.

1. Just a Walk in the Park: ½ Day

Mornings only: 6.30am to 12.30pm

Includes:

- Introduction to the Release Program and safety briefing
- Meet the cubs for their first walk of the day
- Back to base for a full safari breakfast
- Lion walk with a different set of cubs
- Transfers to and from your accommodation



2. A Day in the Lions' Den: Full Day

Daily: 6.30am to 6.30pm

- Introduction to the Release Program and safety briefing
- Meet the cubs for their first walk of the day
- Back to base for a full safari breakfast
- Activity (for example enclosure cleaning, meat prep, behaviour enrichment)
- Lunch
- Lion walk with a different set of cubs
- Transfers to and from your accommodation

3. Life in the Pride: 2 to 7 days

On your first day you'll receive an introduction to the Release Program and an all-important safety briefing. On Day 2 there will be a training walk to give you some insight into the handling skills needed to interact with the lions daily. You'll also have the chance to begin to understand their behaviours and heighten your experience of this magnificent creature.

When not walking with the lions, you'll assist our guides in caring for the cubs (feed preparation and enclosure cleaning) or take part in other project activities such as research, waterhole maintenance and snare sweeps in the National Park.

Includes:

- Daily transfers at 6.30am and returning 6.30pm
- Breakfast & lunch

“Every morning I woke up in Africa I was happy. I really loved my time here – I gained a lot of positive experience” – JOHANN KNUTUR KARLSSON, ICELAND



long term

Living with Lions: up to 6 weeks

Residential, all meals included

Accommodation is provided at our Lion Encounter Zambia or Zimbabwe volunteer base where every day starts with a briefing for the activities of that day. After your introduction to the Release Program and the safety briefing, you'll go on the required training walk as above. Since you are spending more than a week with us as a volunteer, you may also be given an advanced training walk. This provides a deeper insight to lion behaviours, how to observe and interpret their body language and the subtleties of their interactions with each other.

Apart from lion walks, you'll help our guides to care for the cubs, including preparing their feed, enclosure cleaning, or preparing toys for the cubs to enhance their species-specific behaviours. You may also participate in one of the many other activities that form part of our project.

Volunteer activities:

- Lion walks
- Meat preparation
- Enclosure cleaning
- Snare sweeps
- Cub sitting or cub descriptions
- Conservation education
- Health education
- Elephant research
- Wildlife conflict mitigation

Be warned – it's not all glamorous work!



SHORT TERM VOLUNTEERING (Year Round) PRICE (USD)

Just a Walk in the Park (½ Day)	195
A Day in the Lion's Den (Full Day)	255
Life in the Pride (2 Days)	410
Life in the Pride (3 Days)	615
Life in the Pride (4 Days)	820
Life in the Pride (5 Days)	1,025
Life in the Pride (6 Days)	1,230
Life in the Pride (7 Days)	1,435

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING (Year Round) PRICE (USD)

VICTORIA FALLS	
Living with Lions (14 Days)	1,773
Living with Lions (28 Days)	3,366

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING (Year Round) PRICE (USD)

LIVINGSTONE	
Living with Lions (14 Days)	1,971
Living with Lions (28 Days)	3,573



Please note for all options:

Participants must be minimum 17 years old and 1.5m/5ft tall.

Short term options are non-residential, but we can assist you in finding accommodation.

Kindly allow for changes in activities (anything can happen in Africa, and usually does!)

Some activities are seasonal and not always available in both Livingstone and Victoria Falls.

If there is a specific activity that you are interested in, please let us know in advance.

All options include lion walks in the wild, which form the basis of Stage 1.

Prices valid till 30 November 2011.

activities

Every year thousands of tourists, volunteers, humanitarians and conservationists visit Victoria Falls. Here's why.

Victoria Falls is a special place, and to some, it even feels like coming home. Most people agree it is an extraordinary place on an already extraordinary continent. It's as if it straddles two entirely different, yet strangely similar, cultural and geographical worlds – East Africa and Southern Africa. Spending time at Vic Falls, whether you're on the Zambian or Zimbabwean side, is a mix of adrenaline and bush, truly magnificent thundering expanse of waterfall, and a mystical sense of ancient history being present.

Seasonal = (S); Year Round = (YR)
(MK) = Makumbi Cruise; (LL) = Lady Livingstone Cruise

victoria falls, zimbabwe

AFRICAN WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE PRICE (USD)

Lion Walk, Elephant Safari & Sunset Cruise (YR) 249

AFRICAN SAFARI EXPERIENCE

Lion Walk & Full Day Chobe Trip (YR) 285

AFRICAN ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES

Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting & Sunset Cruise (S) 249

Lion Walk, Half Day Adrenaline & Sunset Cruise (YR) 249

Lion Walk, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Sunset Cruise (YR) 249

ULTIMATE AFRICAN EXPERIENCES

Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting, Elephant Ride & Cruise (S) 339

Lion Walk, Half Day Adrenaline, Elephant Ride & Cruise (YR) 339

Lion Walk, 15 min Helicopter Flight, Elephant Ride & Cruise (YR) 339

Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting, Half Day Adrenaline & Cruise (S) 339

Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Cruise (S) 339

Lion Walk, Half Day Adrenaline, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Cruise (YR) 339



livingstone, zambia

AFRICAN WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES (YR)

Lion Walk & Game Walk 175

Lion Walk, Game Walk & Cruise (MK) 205

Lion Walk, Game Walk & Cruise (LL) 220

Lion Walk & Rhino Walk 220

Lion Walk & Elephant Safari 245

Lion Walk, Elephant Safari & Cruise (MK) 275

Lion Walk, Elephant Safari & Cruise (LL) 290

AFRICAN SAFARI EXPERIENCE (YR)

Lion Walk & Full Day Chobe Trip 295

AFRICAN ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES

Lion Walk & Half Day Adrenaline (YR) 225

Lion Walk & 15 Min Helicopter Flight (YR) 225

Lion Walk, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Cruise (YR) (MK) 255

Lion Walk, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Cruise (YR) (LL) 270

Lion Walk & Half Day Rafting (S) 255

Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting & Cruise(S) (MK) 275

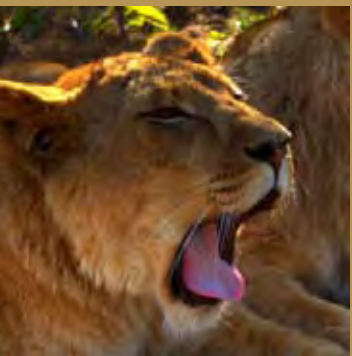
Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting & Cruise (S) (LL) 315

Lion Walk & Full Day Rafting (S) 275

Lion Walk, Full Day Rafting & Cruise (S) (MK) 295

Lion Walk, Full Day Rafting & Cruise (S) (LL) 335





ULTIMATE AFRICAN EXPERIENCES

Lion Walk, Elephant Safari & Rhino Walk	335
Lion Walk, Elephant Safari, Rhino Walk & Cruise (MK)	365
Lion Walk, Elephant Safari, Rhino Walk & Cruise (LL)	380
Lion Walk, Lion Drive & Elephant Safari	440
Lion Walk, Lion Drive, Elephant Safari & Cruise (MK)	470
Lion Walk, Lion Drive, Elephant Safari & Cruise (LL)	485
Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting & 15 Min Helicopter Flight	350
Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Cruise (MK)	370
Lion Walk, Half Day Rafting, 15 Min Helicopter Flight & Cruise (LL)	395
Lion Walk, Night Encounter, & Half Day Adrenaline	350
Night Encounter & Full Day Chobe Trip	310

For any queries on these and other activities,
 kindly contact us at info@lionencounter.com





about alert

The African Lion and Environmental Research Trust (ALERT) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the facilitation and promotion of sound conservation and management plans for the African lion. It was founded in 2005 to support the work of the 4-Stage Rehabilitation & Release Into The Wild Program initiated at Antelope Park in Gweru, Zimbabwe, in 1999.

Holistic Approach

ALERT's philosophy is a holistic one, one that believes that only through local community support can the African lion, and other vulnerable species in Africa, survive. If the livelihood of communities bordering conservation areas is intrinsically linked to the health of that environment, then the community will have reason to become involved and protect it.

ALERT also comprises the Conservation Centre for Wild Africa (CCWA) that conducts ongoing conservation and research programs for a diversity of Africa's wildlife, as well as the ALERT Communities Trust (ACT). ACT works with local communities to develop sustainable conservation management plans that restore environments and improve livelihoods.

A Sample of Current CCWA Programs

Vulture population monitoring, assessing the status of ground hornbill populations, a study of habitat selection by sable in response to hunting pressure, biodiversity and biological monitoring, large predator assessments, invasive alien plant species removal, a study of elephant ecology, waterhole restoration, wildlife-human conflict mitigation and anti-poaching.

A Sample of Current ACT Programs

Health-based programs: HIV education, contraception awareness, home-based care, family support program, health professionals support program, provision of medical supplies, urban agriculture, nutrition education, health centre building and refurbishment programs.

Education-based Programs: Community school reading clubs, adult literacy clubs, educator support programs, vocational training, school building and refurbishment programs.

Social: Care groups support, sports programs empowerment, employment, micro-business programs, holistic management of communal land.

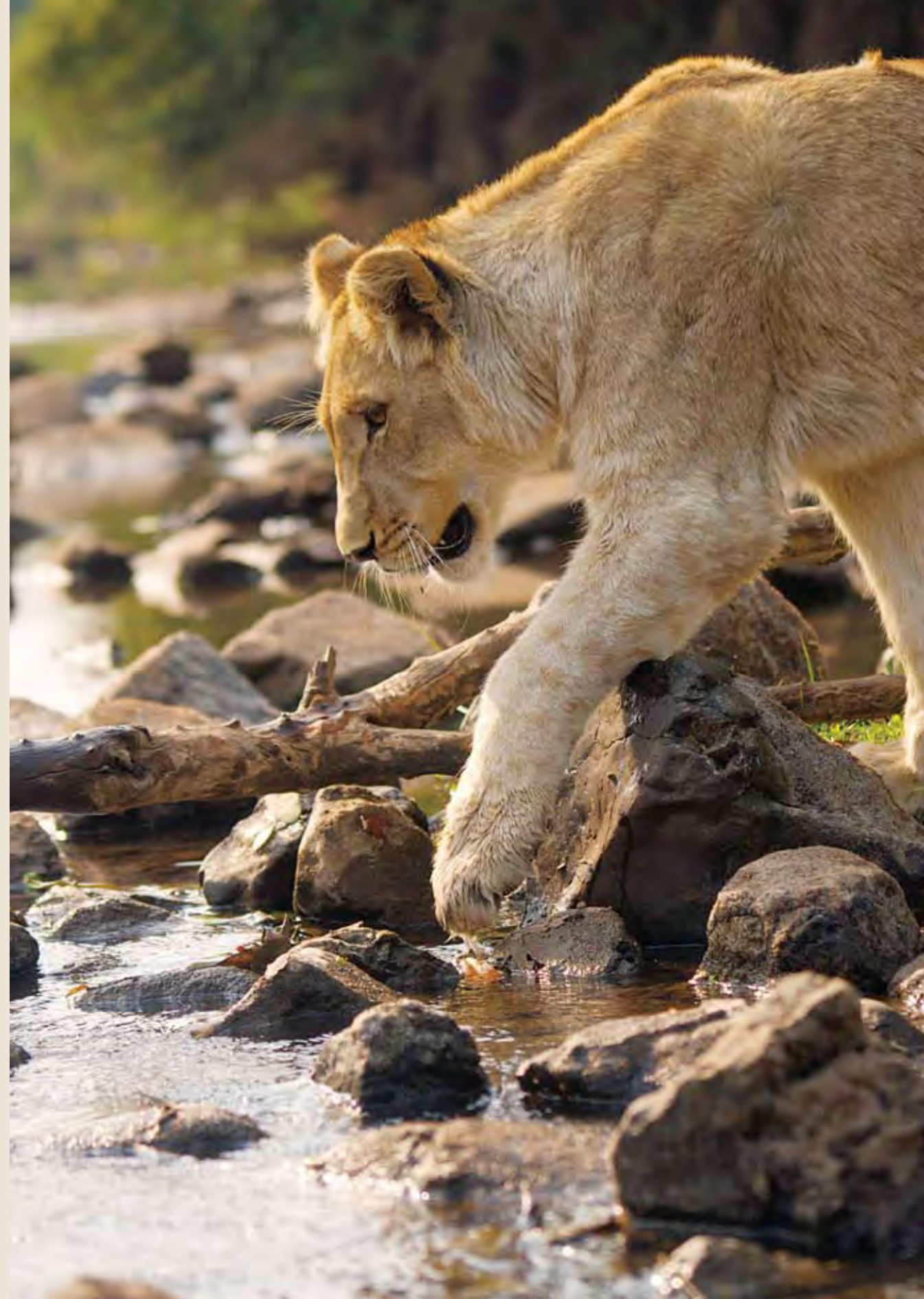


patron of ALERT

Epitomising the bravery, leadership and fortitude exemplified by the symbolism of the lion, ALERT is proud to present our patron: Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

"I am extremely proud to represent ALERT, not just because of its forward-thinking work to help save the African lion, but because they are looking at the wider issues in conservation on the African continent: looking at the whole eco-system within which the lion lives, trying to find ways to develop management plans that will work in the long term, and involving and empowering local communities every step of the way. I am also refreshed by ALERT's willingness to work alongside other organisations in partnership, to share ideas and draw different people together to try and find the best solutions to Africa's challenges."

SIR RANULPH FIENNES: ADVENTURER, EXPLORER, AUTHOR,
WORLD RECORD HOLDER
www.ranulph-fiennes.com





alert programs

In your gap year, looking to do something completely different? Or need to get work experience on your CV?

Internship/Work Experience

The ALERT Internship Program provides graduates, students and other skilled people the opportunity to learn about the complexities and challenges involved in a conservation organisation. Successful applicants will work alongside permanent staff from both the charity and commercial sides of the organisation, gaining hands-on and behind-the-scenes experience.

If you feel you could contribute to ALERTs aims and objectives and would like to experience working in Africa, we have 3 different locations and a variety of work areas from which to choose:

LOCATIONS

- Antelope Park, Gweru, Zimbabwe
- Lion Encounter, Zambezi National Park, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
- Lion Encounter, Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Zambia

WORK AREAS

- Project Management
- Animal Management
- Marketing
- Corporate & Donation Fundraising
- Research
- Hospitality Management

Other areas can include teaching, medical, construction and engineering.

HOW TO APPLY

Email: intern@lionalert.org

Candidates may apply at any time, and acceptance to the internship programme follows an internal review and assessment. The minimum stay is 2 months.



Facilitated Research

ALERT's Research Program (FRP) is open to research in the fields of wildlife, environment, community and social development.

The FRP offers unique opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines. Support is available throughout your research process, from preparing your methodology to its implementation and data analysis from our highly experienced project-based research technicians. ALERT also offers subsidies to students conducting research that directly assists in achieving the aims of the Trust.

Ten percent of all program fees paid by research students from non-African nations are retained by the Trust to provide fully funded placements to students from African universities that will enable capacity building within Africa for research.

ARRANGING YOUR RESEARCH PLACEMENT

Contact us as research@lionalert.org with your research proposal, along with a letter from your university supervisor (or equivalent) confirming that you are studying at that institution, your course title and qualification level. There is no maximum or minimum length of stay, however visa requirements may be restrictive.



“Deciding to undertake a postgraduate thesis was a huge life decision for me and the whole process seemed quite overwhelming at first. I had an idea of what I wanted to do, but turning that into a viable research study was a daunting prospect. Given that my fieldwork was to take place in Africa my university was limited in how much support it could provide.

The team at ALERT were hugely helpful as I prepared for my study. Their thorough understanding of the animals that they work with and the environment that they operate in was incredibly useful to me in establishing my methodology and making sure that it would really work on the ground. They handled all the logistical arrangements for me and have been incredibly supportive as I have embarked on this journey.

I would highly recommend their programs to anyone interested in carrying out a research study in Africa”

– LISA CLIFFORDE, MPHIL, EXETER UNIVERSITY

For further information on all ALERT programs offered, the application process, assistance and funding, payment and fees, accreditations of members of the scientific board: www.lionalert.org



Some studies that ALERT has facilitated

Andreas Doppelmayr, University of Oslo, Norway:
Undergraduate thesis in Development Studies
Economic impacts of tourism in the Livingstone area, Zambia.

Hannah Rae Kokes, Manchester Metropolitan, UK:
Masters thesis in Animal Behaviour
Influence of human presence on play behaviour and development in captive-bred lion cubs.

John Murphy of University of East Anglia, UK:
Masters thesis in Environment & International Development
Exploring the motivations of participants in volunteer conservation tourism and their understandings of biodiversity conservation.

Kristin Arguedas, Princeton University, USA:
Undergraduate thesis in Psychology
Is social influence a better promoter of conservation attitudes than education alone amongst communities affected by conflicts with wildlife?

Lisa Clifforde, University of Exeter, UK:
Masters in Philosophy
Behavioural sequencing and character development in lion cubs.

Oyvind Handberg, University of Oslo, Norway:
Undergraduate thesis in Development Studies
Voluntarily ending aid dependence.

Sibonokuhle Ncube, National University of Science & Technology, Zimbabwe:
Undergraduate thesis in Forest Resources and Wildlife Management
Influence of social upbringing on the activity pattern of captive lion Panthera leo cubs: benefits of behaviour enrichment.

Roseline Mandisodza, University of Zimbabwe:
Masters thesis in Tropical Resource Ecology
The rehabilitation of captive bred lions (Panthera leo) in a semi-wild environment for release into the wild: case study of Antelope Game Park, Zimbabwe.

Simon Jansen, Wageningen University, The Netherlands:
Masters thesis in Biology/Animal Ecology
Differences in hunting success and prey preference in different group compositions of lions.

panthera leo

As recently as 1975 over 200,000 lions may have roamed the African continent. In 2002 estimates put the population between 23,000 and 39,000. This represents an 80% – 90% decline in less than 30 years.



Historically, lions were distributed throughout the Mediterranean, the Near and Middle East as far as India, and all of Africa. Lions were eliminated from their last European strongholds in Greece by 100 AD, but survived until the 12th century in Palestine and the 20th century in Syria, Iran and Iraq.¹ The last reliable sighting of a lion in Iran was in 1941.² The Asiatic lion sub-species now only exists as a population of approximately 350 in and around the Gir Forest of northwestern India.³

In Africa, lion became extinct in Tunisia in 1891 and in Algeria in 1893. The last “Barbary lion” of northern Africa was shot in 1920, though they may have survived in the High Atlas Mountains until the 1940s. The last wild “Cape lion” of South Africa was shot in 1850.⁴ Reduced numbers of lions are still present north of South Africa and Namibia and south of the equator. North of the equator they are found in a narrow belt south of the Sahara Desert on the western side and extending further south to link with the southern hemisphere population on the eastern side of the continent.

threats to survival

Pressures on land use from increasing human populations leading to continued fragmentation of the remaining suitable habitat coupled with indiscriminate killing and prey base depletion are recognised as the principle causes for this decline.⁵ Endemic and epidemic diseases are also likely to cause fluctuations in lion populations, though few populations have been evaluated for disease threats to date. In addition, unsustainable trophy hunting rates have also affected lion numbers in some areas.⁶⁻¹⁰

“Lions (*Panthera leo*) are listed as Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II and are regarded as ‘vulnerable’ by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List [Version 3.1 2001].”

Estimating African lion populations with any accuracy is difficult and involves many uncertainties.¹¹ While the three main surveys to date all used different methods, it is widely accepted that lion populations in Africa are



AREA	MINIMUM		MAXIMUM		ESTIMATE	
	BAUER & VAN DER MERWE, 2004	CHARDONNET, 2002	BAUER & VAN DER MERWE, 2004	CHARDONNET, 2002	BAUER & VAN DER MERWE, 2004	CHARDONNET, 2002
WEST AFRICA	450	968	1,250	1,358	850	1,163
CENTRAL AFRICA	500	2,092	1,550	3,538	950	2,815
EAST AFRICA	8,000	11,268	15,000	18,811	11,000	15,744
SOUTHERN AFRICA	7,500	14,526	12,500	23,425	10,000	19,651
TOTAL	16,500	28,854	30,000	47,132	23,000	39,373

in serious decline^{12-14, 15-18}. Studies conducted in 2002 conservatively puts the number at 16,500 to 30,000, with a less conservative one of 28,854 to 47,312.^{12,13}

This represents an 80% – 90% population decline from estimates given in 1975⁶. It is also thought that 43% of this number resides in only four populations in three countries, and 45% of locations of lion prides have less than 70 members.¹²

More recent reports suggest that not only are lion populations continuing to decline, but that they are doing so at an even faster rate.

In Cameroon, populations are thought to have declined by 67% in the past decade. Vets in Kruger National Park in South Africa are predicting that 75% of all lions in the park will have succumbed to incurable bovine tuberculosis by 2030. The Kenyan Wildlife Service is predicting extinction in the country over the same time period, having already lost 28% of its population between 2002 and 2008. In Nigeria several sub-populations have already been lost.¹⁹

REFERENCES ARE ON PAGE 35



faq & the fine print

frequently asked questions

Where do we get our cubs?
 What happens to the lions when they have finished their “walking career”?
 Sometimes the lions might not want to walk, what happens then?
 I can't volunteer or come to Africa, so how can I help? (below)
 Can I buy a Lion Encounter T-shirt online?

These questions and others are answered under FAQ on our website. If you can't find an answer to your question, email us at info@lionalert.org or info@lionencounter.com and we'll reply as soon as possible.

how can i help?

There are many, many other ways to help. If you refer to the “Help Us” section on www.lionalert.org you'll see, for example, that you can become a member of ALERT (Join Our Pride), put the “fun” into fundraising and donations (we've had some crazy people do wacky things to raise money), and get involved in numerous types of sponsorships. You can choose to sponsor a cub, siblings or a pride, and you can do it personally, as a group or friends or as a corporate organisation. .

sample sponsorship



Toka (SINGLE)

	USD	GBP	EURO
3 MONTHS	45	30	36
6 MONTHS	90	60	72
1 YEAR	180	120	144



Temi & Tswana (DOUBLE)

	USD	GBP	EURO
3 MONTHS	65	45	55
6 MONTHS	130	90	110
1 YEAR	260	180	220



the fine print

Lion Encounter and ALERT activities operate in accordance with agreements made with, and regulations provided by, the following relevant ministries and agencies:

Government of the Republic of Zambia; Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA); Environment Council of Zambia (ECZ); Department of Forestry, Zambia; Department of Veterinary & Livestock Development, Zambia; Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted under the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act (EPPCA: 1990); Site inspections and report on animal management compiled by World Wildlife Fund's Southern Africa Regional Office (SARPO); Inspections by Zimbabwe Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals, Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority.

EPPCA (1990) requirements that the EIA adhere to:

National Heritage Conservation Act (1989), Water Act (1949), Zambia Wildlife Act (1998), Forestry Act (1999), Land Act (1995), Public Health Act (1930), Zambezi River Authority Act (1987), Investment Act (1993), Tourism Act (1979, amended 1985), Local Government Act (1991), Town & Country Planning Act (1962), Plumage Birds Protection Act (1915), Natural Resources Conservation Act (1970), Land Conversion of Title Act (1975, amended 1990). The International Conventions on Biodiversity (1992), World Cultural and National Heritage (1975) as well as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994) were also taken into consideration.

ALERT has no links with any lion interaction facility in Zambia, Zimbabwe or elsewhere. Our only involvement is with:

- Lion Encounter based within the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park and Dambwa Forest in Livingstone, Zambia;
- Lion Encounter based in the Zambezi National Park in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe;
- Walk with Lions based at Antelope Park outside Gweru, Zimbabwe.



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follow the pride



Milo



Ashanti



Athena



Phyre



Kenge



Kwali



Nala



Narnia

stage 2: the ngamo pride release

On 1st September 2010, the moment staff and volunteers have been working towards for many years finally arrived when Zimbabwean Minister for the Environment & Natural Resources, the Honourable Francis Nhema opened the gate to let the lions out into the Ngamo Release Site at Antelope Park in Zimbabwe.

It has taken us a while to get this point due to lack of funding, but in front of invited dignitaries, including the Director General of the Zimbabwean Parks & Wildlife Management Authority, Antelope Park volunteers and staff, the seven females were released into the next stage of the African Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program.

It was an emotional moment for those who have worked so hard to create a perfect environment for the lions to prove that they can form a socially stable and self-sustaining pride. And with the later release of the male, Milo,

to prove they can breed and naturally raise the next generation of lions that will one day be free to roam the African continent, and help save the species. To spend each day tracking the pride and gain an insight into their social dynamic, to watch them hunt, play, and simply enjoy their freedom is a pleasure and a privilege we will hold dearly forever. Thank you to all who have believed in this program and helped us achieve this next vital step on our path together.

To date, the Ngamo lions have hunted successfully and have been able to sustain themselves as a pride.

Taken from ALERT September newsletter, article by David Youldon.

Follow the online diary of the Ngamo Pride on Facebook at African Lion & Environmental Research Trust (group).

lion country

Popular British channel ITV has filmed two series of the program *Lion Country*, which follows British conservationist David Youldon from ALERT:

"David is involved in a project to help try to boost the iconic creature's population by helping captive-bred lions develop the skills they need to survive in the wild. The lions' human handlers have to establish their position as leader of the pride in order to work with the lions and draw out their natural survival instincts. The lions will then live in 10,000 acre enclosures when all human contact will be withdrawn and they must hunt for themselves. In years to come they will breed and their cubs will be released into the wilds of Africa." (www.itv.com/lifestyle/lioncountry/)

Series 1 was screened in 2010 and series 2 is scheduled for early 2011. With an average of 22 million viewers it is hoped that the predicament of the African lion will not only reach a greater audience, but create awareness of the necessity of holistic conservation programs such as ALERT. We need only to take responsibility as individuals to make sure that change happens.





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lion encounter™

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