

African Lion

Panthera leo



The lion is the only social cat. Prides comprise of females and cubs, with males only staying for short periods. Usually 2 or 3 females for each male in a pride. Males form nomadic bachelor groups and are opportunistic breeders. They live on savannah grassland and open plains. They spend around 20 hours a day resting. They are active evening, early and late when the days are cooler. They can run at up to 60 km and hour but only for short distances. Lions kill whatever are available, zebra, wildebeest, antelope, wild hogs, buffalo and sometimes young giraffes. The African lion is now rare in West Africa, exterminated in most of South Africa and much of East Africa. The rarest sub-species of Lion is the Asiatic from India there are only 300 or so left in the Gir Forest. Lions are still represented over a large area but isolated from each other, they are still being persecuted by farmers and losing their habitat. Lions can weigh up to 250 kg and have a shoulder height of 1.2 metres. They can leap up trees but they are not good climbers, they are clumsy and heavy.