

# African Lion

## Fact Sheet

**Common name:** African Lion

**Scientific name:** *Panthera leo*

**Size:** Male lions weigh 150-250 kg, while females weigh around 110-180 kg.

**Diet:** Lions are carnivores and mainly hunt large animals like zebras, buffaloes, and wildebeests.

**Habitat:** African lions live in grasslands, savannas, and open woodlands across sub-Saharan Africa.



African lions are large, powerful cats that live in the **grasslands** and **savannas** of Africa. They are known as "**apex predators**," meaning they are at the top of the food chain.

Lions have the strongest social behaviours of any cats species, living in groups called **prides** or **coalitions**. A pride can have more than 30 lions! There is a core group of female lions that are related to each other, and their cubs, as well as a coalition of male lions. A coalition is a group of 2 - 3 males lions. Usually they are either young lions who haven't established a pride yet, or old males who have had their pride taken over by another coalition.

Male lions are easy to recognise because of their thick, furry **manes**. Females are usually smaller and faster, making them better hunters.

Lions are **obligate hunters**, which means they cannot properly digest plants. To obtain proper nutrients they must hunt animals like zebras, wildebeests, and antelopes. The lionesses are the main hunters, working together to catch **prey**, while the males protect the pride and their territory. If there are cubs with the pride, 1 or 2 lionesses will stay behind to look after all of the cubs in a **creche**, while the rest of the pride hunts.



# Vocabulary

**apex predator** - an animal at the top of the food chain, with no natural predators, like lions or sharks

**coalition** - a group of male lions that may or may not control a pride

**creche** - a group of similarly aged, but not always related young animals (like lion cubs) that are cared for together by several adults

**grasslands** - large, open areas covered mostly with grass, where many animals live, like zebras and lions

**mane** - the thick, long fur around a male lion's neck, which makes them look larger and provides protection during fights

**obligate hunter** - an animal that must eat meat to survive, like lions or cats

**prey** - animals that are hunted and eaten by predators, like antelopes are prey for lions

**pride** - a family group of lions that live and hunt together, made up of females, cubs, and one or two males

**savanna** - a type of habitat with both grasslands and scattered trees, found in places like Africa where lions live

What is one fact you learnt about African lions?

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What do you like the most about African lions?

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What is one question you still have about African lions?

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