



King of Beasts

In 2003 our present lions were introduced into Lionspruit. We have Fluffy, a magnificent male, and Dezi, a beautiful female. Dezi is spayed so there will be no cubs. In the wild it is possible that Dezi may have become the grande dame, the matriarch of the pride. Fluffy wouldn't have fared so well, being ousted or killed by younger, stronger rivals. Both are collared and monitored regularly.

Lions in the wild lead precarious lives. They live in prides consisting of a number of related lionesses, their cubs and sub-adult males. One or more mature male dominates, protecting the pride, the cubs and territory. Cubs can be born throughout the year, but mainly from February to April. The births are often synchronised with lionesses allowing cubs from other females to suckle. This is known as allo-suckling. Once the cubs are weaned they are on their own, vying for food at kills. Many cubs (between 50 and 75%) die during their first year.

Lions are active at dawn and dusk, and the darker the night gets the more confident they become, even losing their fear of man. They prefer to hunt on moonless nights, the darkness aiding their hunt. A lion's roar can be heard 8km away!

An injured lion, or one that is not part of a pride, could die a slow death usually from starvation. Less than 10% of male lions reach an advanced age (12 years). Lionesses may reach 18 years. Some research states that a male has reached his peak at between 5-7 years! Up to 75% of males die at the hand of man or clashes with other males.

IT IS A SAD FACT THAT LIONS ARE LISTED AS VULNERABLE!

Koning van die Diere

Die leeus wat tans in Lionspruit is, is hier sedert 2003. Ons het Fluffy, 'n indrukwekkende mannetjie, en Dezi, 'n pragtige wyfie. Dezi is gesteriliseerd so daar sal nie welpies wees nie. In die natuur sou dit moontlik gewees het dat Dezi 'n "grand dame" kon gewees het, die matriarg van die trop. Fluffy sou nie so goed gevaar het nie, heelwaarskynlik ontsetel of doodgemaak deur jonger en sterker mededingers. Al twee dra halsbande en word gereëld gemonitor.

Leeus in die natuur lei 'n onseker lewe. Hulle lewe in troppe wat bestaan uit 'n aantal verwante wyfies, hul welpies en jong mannetjies. Een of meer volwasse mannetjies domineer en beskerm die trop, welpies en hul gebied. Welpies kan gedurende die hele jaar gebore word, maar meestal vanaf Februarie tot April. Die geboortes is dikwels gesinkroniseerd met wyfies wat toelaat dat ander wyfies hul kleintjies soog. Dit staan bekend as kruissoging. Wanneer die welpies gespeen is, is hulle op hulself aangewys en ding hulle mee vir kos by 'n slagting. Baie welpies (tussen 50% en 75%) sterf binne die eerste lewensjaar.

Leeus is aktief gedurende dagbreek en skemer, hoe donkerder die nag is hoe meer selfversekerd raak hulle en verloor hulle selfs hulle angs vir mense. Hulle verkies om op maanlose nagte te jag, die donkerte help hulle. 'n Leeu se brul kan tot 8 km ver gehoor word!

'n Beseerde leeu of een wat nie deel is van 'n trop nie, kan 'n stadige dood sterf; gewoonlik van hongerte. Minder as 10% van leeu mannetjies bereik 'n hoë ouderdom (12 jaar). Wyfies kan tot 18 jaar oud word. Sekere navorsing beweer dat 'n leeu sy fleur bereik tussen 5 – 7 jaar. Tot 75% van alle mannetjies vrek aan die hand van die mens of in gevegte met ander mannetjies.

DIT IS 'N HARTSEER FEIT DAT ONS LEEUS AS KWESBAAR GELYS IS!