



GLOBAL WHITE LION PROTECTION TRUST (WLT) December 2009 NEWSLETTER "Our Pride is Returning!"

A roar of greetings and well wishes from all at TSAU!

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The King - hunting successfully after many years in captivity!

Following many years in captivity, Mandla took his first steps to freedom in June this year with his young family – the formidable huntress, Zihra, and cubs Nebu, Matsieng and Zuhara. Recently Mandla flouted scientific scepticism that he will ever be rewilded when he hunted his first adult wildebeest – all on his own! Zihra and the cubs were resting several kilometres from the hunting location where the WLT's scientific team spotted Mandla feasting on a fresh wildebeest carcass, leaving no doubt that he had made the kill.

Zihra, who had roamed free in the WLT's primary reintroduction area with her brothers Letaba and Regeus since 2004, faced much pressure to hunt for her family following the royal release. But, she hunted successfully within the first three weeks of her release, providing amply for both Mandla and the cubs, and proving that her hunting prowess had

Please sponsor a "Day of Freedom"



Through our Days of Freedom Campaign we aim to secure "**365 Days of Freedom**" in the wild for each of the Lions in the Reintroduction Program. One Day of Freedom is calculated according to actual predation and veterinary costs, anti-poaching activities, fence maintenance, restocking of prey-animals, essential habitat management and the cost of monitoring around the clock. One Day of Freedom amounts to **R350 (\$50 or £30)**.

Donate online:
www.whitelions.org

Manual Payments:
Our Banking Details:
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**Please Sponsor ONE
DAY OF FREEDOM for
ONE WHITE LION
Today**

not suffered in the least during the months spent nurturing her new-borns in the WLT's acclimation boma prior to the release. With an 80% lion mortality rate in the wild, it was essential for the cubs to mature physically in the safety of the boma before being released into the reintroduction area.

The young family's spectacular predation record since their release in June 2009 - including Zebra, Eland, Waterbuk, Warthog, Impala and Kudu bulls – tells yet another successful lion reintroduction story. In scientific terms the test of a successful lion reintroduction is three-fold: firstly, the lions need to be rewilded in their endemic habitat; secondly, they need to reproduce without human intervention; and thirdly, they need to be able to hunt self sufficiently. Of course Zihra's Mother, Marah defied the odds when she, herself captive born, was successfully rewilded in 2004 with her sub-adult offspring, resulting in a world-first White Lion reintroduction project. Having set such an impressive precedent, the Royals can now only perfect their predation skills, leaving no doubt that they are indeed apex predators in their natural habitat.

Urgent Appeal: Given the impressive predation records of both our White Lion prides, we have an urgent need to supplement the lions' prey base with 'lion aware' wildebeest. The average cost per wildebeest is R2000. With our lions consuming an average of 2 wildebeest every 3 days, the immediate need for a herd of 40 wildebeest will amount to approximately R80 000 (USD11 000). Wildebeest are the lions' preferred prey – thank goodness – given that other prey such as Eland or Giraffe have an average cost of R16 000 or more per animal. We would value all contributions towards this critical next step!

Celebrating our living White Lion Heritage beyond 2010

This year our regional Heritage Day events included 18 local primary schools – a reflection of the enthusiasm the WLT's eco-educational program has generated among the youth in our region. The WLT celebrated Heritage Day with the community of The Oaks (Maruleng in Limpopo) in collaboration with the Maruleng Municipality, embracing the iconic White Lion as a central theme for the celebration. The central theme for the day was "Conserving our living White Lion Heritage Beyond 2010".

The event kicked off with a troupe of drum majorettes from Diphuthi Primary School welcoming more than 300 visitors from the community, local councillors, municipal representatives and invited guests from the Municipality. Four primary schools from the Oaks and Finale were invited to deliver White Lion celebratory performances. This follows a series of educational talks on White Lion conservation from the WLT in the weeks leading up to the event as part of its regional eco-education programme with local schools.

Special guests included Kgosi Sekororo and his wife, Kgosi Mnisi from Bushbuckridge and his wife and Martina Mameŧja-Kgohloane who represented Bakone ba Mameŧja Traditional Authority.

Maruleng Mayor, Mr M.J. Mafogo gave the official key-note address, emphasising the importance of protecting the White Lions as a unique living heritage in the region. He added that, in line with the municipality's present slogan "Wildlife Haven" the iconic White Lion will be a central theme for the municipality's 2010 celebrations.

Did you know...?



White lions are not classified as a 'subspecies' of *Panthera leo*, and as such are not protected in the wild or in captivity.

The lack of objectivity in lion classification means that there is no legislation that protects 'rare' and 'unique' lion groupings in certain regions [Barnett *et al.* 2006]. For instance, similar to the White Lion, the lion populations living in west and central Africa could possibly be characterized as 'critically endangered'.

But, because their status as a separate lion 'subspecies' [P. l. Senegalensis] is unclear, their need for protection has not been officially recognized [Nowell & Jackson 1996; Bauer & Van Der Merwe 2002]. The subspeciation issue today is highly controversial.

There are "Lumpers" (scientists who believe in protecting the whole species only: i.e. lions are lions) and "Splitters" (scientists who believe that sub-categorising helps to give specific protection).

Although there is evidence to suggest that White Lions should be classified as a subspecies, this is after-all only a classification. While waiting for this elaborate scientific debate to resolve itself, these rare animals need urgent protection.





Mr Mafogo also spoke of the importance of totem animals in African culture: "In African culture, we believe that our totem animals protect us and walk ahead of us to clear the path of obstacles."

"In the same way the lion as 'king of the bush' – and specifically the White Lion – is leading the way for prosperity in the region. In practical terms the White Lion is a unique draw-card for eco-tourism in the region, particularly ahead of our region's 2010 celebrations."

"But with there being only a few free-roaming White Lions in their natural habitat at this time, far too few for large groups of visitors to see first-hand, we have an urgent responsibility as a municipality and citizens of Maruleng to protect and conserve the White Lions for future generations."

"It is this ethos of responsible and sustainable conservation of our natural resources that we as Maruleng wish to show-case to fellow South Africans on this Heritage Day, and throughout the 2010 celebrations."

In addition to the Heritage Day celebrations shared with the Oaks community on the 24th of September, the WLT also hosted a second Heritage celebration with the nearby Acomhoek community. 14 Schools participated in the event held at Mafunyane cultural village on the 25th of September.



Acknowledging our
pride and joy:

Karsyn Cook



The Global White Lion Protection Trust wishes to thank Karsyn for celebrating her birthday as a White Lion fundraising event! Her generosity brought cheers (and some tears) of joy to all our staff and visiting interns.

Her White Lion fundraising birthday party raised \$1, 055.25 for White Lion conservation!

Thank you Karsyn for being a true White Lion ambassador and a glowing inspiration to all of us. We love your spirit and hope one day you will visit our project in person and track the White Lions in their natural habitat.

Your contribution has gone a long way to ensuring their safety and wellbeing in the wilderness.



Feedback from Linda on "Wild 9" - The World Wilderness Conference on global climate change



In November 2009, Mexico welcomed over 1500 delegates from 51 countries for WILD9, the 9th World Wilderness Congress. After nearly three years of preparation, WILD9's agenda for wilderness brought leaders, communities and partners from around the world to Merida, in the Yucatan. With the central theme of wilderness, people and climate change, the WILD9 process addressed the most imperative environmental issues, resulting in nearly 50 targeted resolutions, and many specific outcomes.

The WWC is the longest-running, public international environmental forum. It is a conservation project that creates coalitions, establishes time-lines, sets objectives and achieves practical outcomes. Established in 1977, it has convened on eight occasions in 30 years to review progress, debate issues, announce results and celebrate the importance and vitality of wild nature.

Just a few of the practical outcomes of WILD9, the 9th and most recent World Wilderness Congress include:

- A new wilderness law (reglamento) in Mexico (first in Latin America);
- A new wilderness protected area system with new areas declared, in Mexico;
- The first international agreement on wilderness (to be signed by Canada, US and Mexico);
- A workshop for resource attorneys from throughout the region on implementing wilderness designation;
- Training programs for wilderness managers;
- Mensaje de Merida (Message from Merida) for the Copenhagen, UNFCC climate change process, clarifying the role of wild nature in climate change mitigation and adaption;
- The first Marine Wilderness Collaborative, of NGOs and government agencies;
- The 2nd Native Lands and Wilderness Council;
- New models of private philanthropy and business to save wildlands around the globe;
- The process has been initiated to facilitate a Bi-National Wilderness designation between Mexico and Guatemala, which may not be done by the time WILD9 convenes, but the intention will likely be announced;

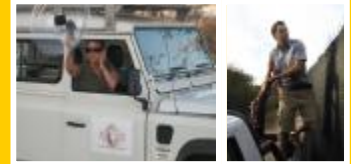
Read about these resolutions on the following link:

<http://www.wild.org/resolutions-from-wild9/>

Of specific importance to White Lion conservation efforts is Resolution 33: Protection of white, non-albino animals. The Resolution states that (quoted from the resolution):

- WHEREAS, all species of wildlife sustain and provide for our nourishment, clothing, shelter, basis for teachings about adaption in the natural world and spirituality; and,
- WHEREAS, there are animals that have their own unique features that identify them as different and unique, that include, but not limited to, the White Lions of South Africa's Timbavati region, the Spirit Bear of British Columbia, the White Buffalo of the Americas, the White Raven of Alaska, and other such white non-

Visit the TSAU White Lion Reintroduction Project: Volunteer Opportunities



Our Volunteer / Internship Program is suitable for individuals between the ages of 19 and 90! As part of this program you would form a vital part of our operational and monitoring team, with direct participation and input in both the conservation and cultural heritage/community aspects of our White Lion Program. Volunteers can expect to be involved in the following activities:

- Lion monitoring and tracking
- Field research
- Vegetation and habitat management
- Environmental educational programs
- Cultural development and educational programs
- Anti-poaching patrols
- Tracking and spoor identification with a qualified field ranger
- Optional day outings and visits to rehabilitation facilities in the area
- Optional game drives

Duration and Cost

- 3 to 12 weeks
- R3 500 / \$350 / £170 per week - 25% deposit to secure a placement

For more information contact info@whitelions.org.

albino animals; and,

- WHEREAS, white non-albino animals are considered to be sacred by indigenous peoples; and,
- WHEREAS, white non-albino animals are an important part of biodiversity in the natural world,
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 9th World Wilderness Congress supports the recognition of these animals as unique, sacred and spiritual and which should therefore be protected.
- And be it further resolved that WILD9 calls upon the Governments and appropriate bodies to take whatever measures necessary to protect these white non-albino animals through appropriate listings under international and national law.
- BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the officials of WILD9 report back on any actions taken to follow up on this resolution at the 10th World Wilderness Congress.

The resolution is sponsored by the following members of the Native Lands Wilderness Council and Supporters:

- Samuel Gargan
- Francois Paulette
- Ilarion "Larry" Mercurieff
- Linda Tucker

We will keep all our friends and members updated on how this important resolution supports the conservation efforts of the WLT in protecting the White Lions in their endemic habitat.

Unique opportunity - join our scientific team in White Lion monitoring excursions - 1st to 20th December



For the first time in our project, you can join our scientific team on their twice-daily White Lion monitoring excursions – either at **6:00AM** or **4:00PM from the 1st to the 20th December 2009**. Each monitoring session takes approximately two hours, tracking one or both White Lion prides in their natural environment.

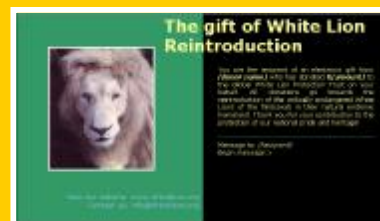
As a member of our scientific team, you will learn first-hand about the critically endangered White Lions in their endemic habitat by observing their migration and predation patterns as well as their social behaviour. Some of the lions are collared and tracked using sensitive telemetry equipment, and their behavioural activities recorded for scientific research purposes.

We welcome a **minimum donation of R350 per person joining the monitoring session**. Please **contact us at least one day in advance** to book your monitoring session – seating is limited to six persons per monitoring excursion (we use either an open game-drive or closed Land Rover scientific monitoring vehicle).

Accommodation in the area:

Whilst we are still unable to offer overnight accommodation for individual guests or families visiting the White Lion Reintroduction Project, we would like to invite you to contact our **Conservation Partner Lodge, Toki Safari Lodge**, located 5km from our main gate on the Guemsey Road. Toki, meaning "Brave" in Swahili, offers eight luxury

Send an "E-Gift" on behalf of a loved-one



Make a donation to the White Lions or sign up membership in honour of a loved-one and add a personal message.

Or, ask friends and family to make a donation to the White Lions on your behalf as a birthday gift.

We will confirm your payment and acknowledge your **"e-gift" via email** to your email address and ensure your loved-one receives their personalized "e-gift".

How?

Email your payment confirmation and the gift recipient's name and personalized message to: info@whitelions.org

Our Banking Details:

Bank account: 420070176
Standard Bank,
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International Swift Code:
SBZ AZAJJ

Banking reference: "gift+sumame"

semi-tents, four thatched chalets, two family lodge rooms, lounge, boma, dining area and rock swimming pool on the banks of the Klaserie River. WLT guests will receive a **10% discount** on their accommodation bookings.



Using Toki as your base, you are able to visit the **White Lion Reintroduction project for morning and afternoon monitoring sessions** as well as participate in some of the WLT's community or eco-education programmes in the region (by prior arrangement only).



To book at Toki, kindly email Wendy Strauss on wendy@whitelions.org or contact her on +27 (0)15 793 0657 / +27 (0)82 774 2399 - Visit: <http://www.tokisafarilodge.com>

International White Lion and White Leopard competition



In support of the 9th World Wilderness Congress's resolution to protect naturally occurring white variants around the globe, given their sacred importance to indigenous peoples, we are launching a poetry competition to celebrate South Africa's legendary White Lions and White Leopards. Poems that are worthy of publishing will be compiled into a limited edition coffee-table book, with proceeds going to the conservation of these rare animals. The overall prize for the most exceptional White Lion poem is a trip to the Tsau Centre for White Lion Reintroduction in Hoedspruit, South Africa. **Please see further competition details attached.**

From me, Linda, the team and the White Lions

White Lion Calendar 2010



Our first ever White Lion calendar for 2010 offers an intimate glimpse into the day-to-day life of the White Lions in the TSAU Reintroduction Project. Through the pictures in this calendar, we are able to present glimpses into the beauty of their world.

The photographs include works by British wildlife photographer, Karen-Jane Dudley, White Lion Ecologist, Jason Turner and Corelight representative, Leslie Anne Staller.

The pages fit in the equivalent of a standard CD jewel case or measure 5.4 inches tall by 4.65 inches wide. The case forms an "L" shaped stand when on display.

The calendar is priced at approximately \$20 / R200 £14. This cost will vary from country to country depending on exchange rate fluctuations, printing and shipping costs.

All proceeds go to the White Lion Reintroduction Project.

For more information, or to order, please email info@whitelions.org.