



SLCF **STRATEGIC PLAN** 2024 - 2027

Conservation & Education Focus

Showing our commitment to protect and monitor lion populations in the wild

Safina Lion Conservation Fund

Registered Charity in England and Wales 1172709



This **brand new strategy** considers all that we have learnt since we were founded in 2017 as well as reviewing our previous work undertaken so far

This new strategy with a focus on **conservation and education will cover our support for our conservation partners for the next three years and set two new goals that set our work for the future.**

Since we published our first conservation strategy in 2018, two of our trustees have had the privilege to visit two of our conservation partners on the ground in Kenya and Tanzania. This has given us the experience to see first hand the challenges that they face and the incredibly complex nature of conservation itself and we have seen how different variables affect these measures. In this new strategy we have tried to keep focus to where we believe our support can be best utilised but allowed for more flexibility to ensure that our support can reach where it is needed despite the challenges faced by our conservation partners.

We are a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) registered in England & Wales and like any other charitable organisation we have a set of objectives that all the work we carry out or support through another organisation, project or individual must fit under. The Safina Lion Conservation Fund goes by the following:

1) To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation and protection of lions by:

- A) Supporting conservation projects in such ways that are charitable
- B) Conserving and protecting the natural habitat of lions
- C) Supporting and publishing research into the conservation and husbandry of lions

2) To advance the education of the public in lion and wildlife conservation by such means as the trustees decide including through the support and publishing of research.

Primarily as a grant-funding organisation all the funds we raise goes towards conservation organisations that fit in line with our objects above. Our strategy has been written to show the direction of these funds to where we believe it could be have the biggest impact possible to protect and monitor lions in the wild.

We are run by a team of five trustees, who have different strengths, from a passion for conservation and the natural world, knowledge of lion behaviour and management to experience in finance management and administration. We also have a team of seven independent advisors who work as part of two advisory committees for conservation and education respectively.

A lioness is lying down on a pile of dry leaves and twigs in an enclosure. She is looking towards the camera with a calm expression. The background shows a wire mesh fence and some trees.

Working Together For Lions

Since 2017 we have worked to raise funds with our zoo partners and dedicated supporters to send to our conservation partners working across Kenya and Tanzania.

Our Vision

A future where viable lion populations thrive while coexisting with local communities in sustainable areas of habitat.

Our Mission

To work with others to protect and monitor lion populations in the wild.

Our approach is to collaborate with zoos to connect their lions to important conservation work in the field to support their wild cousins.

There are over 100 lions residing in over 30 zoos in the UK. Zoos are now obliged by growing legislation to support conservation efforts working to conserve either native species or the wild counterparts of the species that they hold in their collections. Since our inception in 2017 we have focussed particularly on working with some of the smaller privately owned zoos and that by combining funds raised through fundraising and sponsored events we are able to combine the money from multiple collections and put them towards a larger effort, increasing the impact made by these smaller collections as much as possible.

We are immensely thankful to the whole host of dedicated zoo professionals and students who have worked with a huge amount of passion to help support our work. It is from the funds raised by these people and their organisations that we have been able to raise over £23,000 within our first seven years. That total has allowed us to donate the cost required for a variety of lion monitoring and community based efforts including the strengthening of 11 bomas, sponsoring the cost of two months of fuel for a lion monitoring vehicle, the annual salary of a Lion Guardian for seven years in a row and four GPS collars along with associated data transmission and veterinary fees.

We believe that good zoos can be very important places for people to connect with nature, to experience wildlife and to learn more about them. We aim to work with our zoo partners to share educational resources about lions in the wild, to aid their efforts to educate the public about lion behaviour and the threats that they face in the wild. We believe that zoos and their lions must maintain and keep links to those in the wild as a moral obligation. We aim to work with zoos to help them with this and to join them all together as part of a conservation legacy for these zoo lions in the UK.

Our commitment to conservation is personal, our charity is named after a lioness, Safina was born at Linton Zoo in Cambridgeshire in November 2005. Her parents Riziki and Karla both descended from the prides at Woburn and Knowsley Safari Parks. She was joined by a young male Zuri from West Midlands Safari Park and together they had several litters of cubs who went to zoos all over the UK, their oldest daughter Zara even journeyed as far as the Ugandan Wildlife Education Centre in Entebbe. The idea of our charity stemmed from fundraising for lion conservation carried out by our chairman while working at Linton Zoo alongside Zuri and Safina. Sadly Safina passed away on the 31st March 2024 and even though Safina is longer with us, her legacy is still young. This is the start of the next phase of our charity as we continue to build on the conservation legacy for Safina and her family that we started seven years ago and we are proud to carry her name into the future.

Assessing the state of lions in the wild

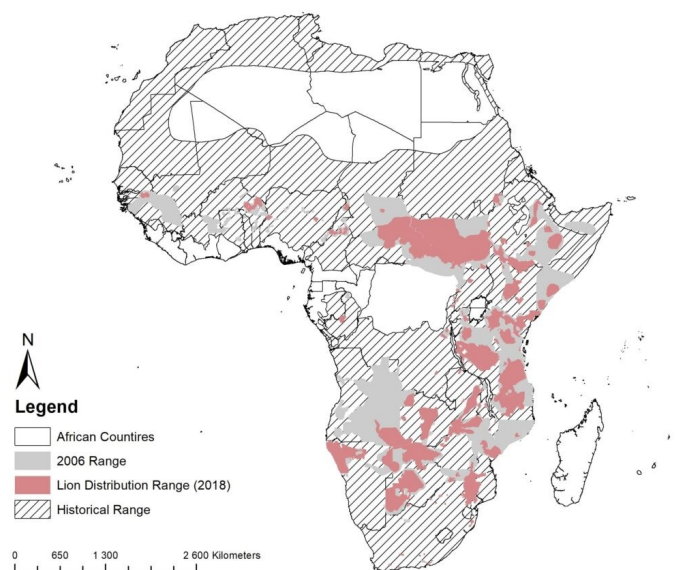
The following assessment has been made using material extracted from the **IUCN Red List Assessment** published in 2023, cited below.

The lion population once spread across most of the African continent and far into parts of Europe and Asia but over time persecution, over-exploitation and changes in land use have driven this once widespread iconic species into significant decline. It is thought that lions are now only found in approximately 7.4% of their historical range.

The African Lion has been listed by the IUCN as Vulnerable since 1996 and has been very recently reassessed as such in 2023. This was based on an estimated 36% decline in the species range over the previous 21 years (three generations approximately) a similar decline in the total population is suspected within this same timeframe. The current population trend is listed as decreasing with the number of adult and sub adult lions in Africa estimated at approximately 23,000 mature (including sub adult) individuals where it has stood for about a decade. Determining the number of lions in the wild is incredibly challenging as there are many populations that have not been properly surveyed and assessed, like many cats they can be difficult to locate and in areas with a human presence, will keep a low profile. Under the current population model the largest proportion of lions in Africa are found in Southern Africa which is home to 47.55% of the population, closely followed by 46.54% found in East Africa, 4.82% in Central Africa and 1.07% in West Africa. Although over recent years some populations throughout Southern Africa have seen an increase, the overall population trend is still listed as declining, with the biggest declines seen in Central and Western Africa.

Although overall lions have matched the criterion for Vulnerable, several smaller populations have been recognised with higher listings. The West African Lion has been listed as Critically Endangered since 2015 with the most recent survey suggesting that only 404 (269-583) remain in this region. It is believed that this population has lost almost 99% of their former range (Henschel et al, 2015). The small sub-population famously known now as the Asiatic Lion is a very small reminder of just how far this species once reached with the most recent census in 2020 recording approximately 670 lions in the Gir Forest in Gujarat, it is currently listed as Endangered by the IUCN.

Lions were previously described as two subspecies: the African Lion (*Panthera leo leo*) and the Asiatic Lion (*Panthera leo persica*). However, this has subsequently changed. Recent studies (Bertola et al. 2015, 2016, 2022) indicate that lions in Western and Central Africa are more closely related to lions found in India than they are to those found in Southern and East Africa.



Lion Distribution Map Credit: Lion Recovery Fund

The IUCN now recognises two subspecies listed as:

Panthera leo leo—Central Africa, West Africa and Asia, and
Panthera leo melanochaita—Southern and East Africa.

It is hoped that this scientific realisation should be able to push for greater protection and focus on lions in western and central Africa that have been declining at a very fast rate.

Loss of habitat to growing human populations, with the continual growth of agriculture have left lion populations incredibly fragmented, which can lead to inbreeding and more susceptibility to disease. Studies have indicated how important dispersal is to overall population health, particularly the regular flow of young males dispersing into areas where adult survival may be low.

Besides from conflict within lion society, conflict with humans is the most important cause of adult lion mortality but the reasons are incredibly complex and vary region by region. With people and lions being pushed closer and closer together, conflict and retaliation over resources, such as livestock is very common and this conflict is one of the main threats that faces wild lions today. Other threats to lions include prey depletion, bycatch in snares, trade in body parts and unregulated hunting.

Due to this huge decline, lions can be considered in urgent need of conservation support. They can also be considered an 'umbrella' species, with conservation efforts that may work to promote coexistence between humans and large apex predators like lions can also work to provide suitable measures for other animals within the same ecosystem to thrive too. Ensuring prey species are of suitable number and also that other predators and scavengers are doing well is also incredibly important for the ecosystem as a whole. As such, a healthy lion population is an indicator for a healthy ecosystem.



Having an in depth **understanding of lion behaviour** is crucial to successful long term conservation impact.

Lions, are the worlds **only truly social cat.**
Their social system requires a huge amount of space, which makes their conservation even more challenging.

Lion population density is thought to be higher than that of any other cat. The lion has evolved to become the only cat to live in large groups from where they have been able to fortify themselves against their only natural competitor, themselves. Their social system revolves around the pride. The core of the pride are the lionesses, changing with the generations, these groups protect their homeland from other intruding prides and are made up of mothers, daughters, aunties and cousins. Pride sizes can vary, with some of the largest found in our core support area in Eastern Africa of approximately 4-6 adult females, sometimes more. Lions are very territorial, and these lionesses will generally stay within this area for their whole life, with their closest bonds being with the lionesses that they have grown up with. Larger prides will often form sub groups which over time may become permanent but will generally always stay around the same territory. Lions have a broad habitat tolerance and can be found mainly on open savannahs and scrubland as well as deserts and tropical forests.

These prides will be ruled by a group of male lions known as a 'coalition'. These males are not core members of the pride and will come and go as they please, only really joining the lionesses

if they happen to be in breeding season or if there is food around. These males protect their territory and their lionesses from rival males by patrolling the fringes of their territory. Invading males will attempt to come in to take over their territory, kill their cubs and mate with their females. Male lions are very well bonded to the other males within their coalition but will attempt to drive out or kill any other male lion who attempts to take over their territory.

Coalitions are commonly made up of 2 to 4 lions (with 6 and 8 being recorded in the past as a rarity). A larger coalition has the ability to cover more ground and control multiple pride territories. As such male lions spend most of their time patrolling their territory in search for rival males leaving any time 'with the family' at a minimum. If more than one pride is controlled the males may split up at times to ensure all areas are patrolled. However when the males are in the same location as the females they can be very tolerant fathers and can be very gentle when playing with their young cubs.

The strongest bonds seen between lions are between the same sexes, often maintained throughout their whole life. Lion society is very flexible and in the case of males, coalitions can change due to circumstances, with nomadic males joining together even later in life if they find themselves alone due to the death of coalition partners. Space and dispersal are key to lion society and overall genetic health, particularly for the younger males as they leave their birth prides and seek new territories and prides of their own.

Reviewing our progress 2017 - 2024

The following section reviews our conservation output over the last seven years and our first conservation strategy.

In 2017 we sent off our first donation to aid conservation efforts by sponsoring our first Lion Guardian Longoi Ole Parsitau. In 2018 trustees wrote our first strategy to assess and to add more focus to the work that we were supporting. Within this strategy we decided how we would plan our future work and highlighted three key focus areas that our conservation and education would be based around. As a small charity we wanted to ensure that we could reach the specific areas of lion conservation that we believed would benefit most from our support. These three key focus areas formed the basis of our work for six years and are listed below:

1. Young Dispersing Male Lions

When dispersing from their birth pride, young male lions often travel into community areas to seek refuge from the much larger dominant male lions. Sadly they often conflict with communities over livestock at this time.

2. Lions Outside Protected Areas

Most African wildlife are only protected by where they happen to be. It is legal to kill wildlife if they are threat to yourself or your livestock. Working with the local community and lion monitoring is vital to promote coexistence.

3. Involving Local Communities

Wildlife conservation can't make a lasting impact unless the local communities are involved in the work in the first place. Education and ensuring that local communities can benefit from wildlife are vital to make projects successful.

In the **first three years** we fulfilled these three target areas by sponsoring two GPS collars that were fitted onto young dispersing male lions.

We also sponsored the salary of Lion Guardian Kuya Kipampa from 2018 for three years in a row which involved local communities actively through employment as well as helping to protect lions outside protected areas on the fringes of the Amboseli National Park.

In August 2021 trustees published a Conservation Strategy Review which evaluated the progress of our work so far in line with our 2018 Strategy and planned our future impact.

Within this review trustees decided on three goals to focus on for the next three years. These were realistic goals that took into account our current commitments and to add more focus to our community projects which had seen less support compared to our focus area on young dispersing male lions. These goals are seen below along with the three year progress update for each one. Over those three years we have put more emphasis into community based projects to assist in our target above to increase involvement in local community support.

1. Continue the sponsorship of our Lion Guardian Kuya Kipampa annually.

We have continued to sponsor a Lion Guardian for three years in a row. With Kuya Kipampa now no longer working for Lion Guardians since the end of 2023, our new guardian is now Olubi ole Lairumbe and we started our sponsorship of him in January 2024.

2. Save to donate and replace both lion collars with Kope Lion and the Mara Predator Conservation Programme when required due to the success seen so far.

We have donated the funds required for a GPS collar for both Kope Lion and the Mara Predator Conservation Programme. The KopeLion collar was fitted on young male lion Lendepesi and the collar with the MPCP is yet to be deployed.

3. Investigate a further organisation/project or a project run by a current conservation partner to donate towards so that we can increase our support for our focus areas to involve local communities and lions outside protected areas.

We have established a conservation partnership with Lion Landscapes which has seen us send donations towards a community camera trap programme. We have now sent £1000 to cover 4 camera traps as part of this scheme and we have now started our own boma strengthening scheme with KopeLion with £1800 sent to strengthen 10 bomas in 2023. These target areas are still important and their common themes have evolved into our new conservation goals which can be seen further on in this report.



Reviewing our progress 2017 - 2024

This section shows graphics and tables that compare our conservation output for the first seven years.

Prior to our first strategy being written we had donated towards a Lion Guardians salary for one year. This has been included in these graphics below. **Figure 1** shows the total amount of funds donated to each conservation partner and the breakdown between each previous focus area. Involving Local Communities and Lions Outside Protected Areas are linked together because of their similarity, and that efforts we have supported for these target areas, match both. Currently KopeLion is the only project to receive funds for both sets of focus areas. **Figure 2** shows the total donations to conservation partners determined by Focus Area. Overall the support is pretty similar, with Young Dispersing

Males having a slightly larger percentage of 54% overall. **Figure 3** the same information but only for the years 2017 to January 2021. This graph was analysed in our conservation strategy review as it shows the focus areas for involving local communities and lions outside protected areas only receiving 42% of funds. It was one of our goals therefore from 2021 - 2024 to make this balance fairer, which can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows the same information again but from the last three years showing that the support of those focus areas has become much more even, with involving local communities/lions outside protected areas now at 49%. We consider this the accomplishment of our goal which has been achieved through the support of our new boma strengthening scheme and the support of the community camera trapping programme with Lion Landscapes.

Figure 1: Total Donations To Conservation Partners By Focus Area Since 2017

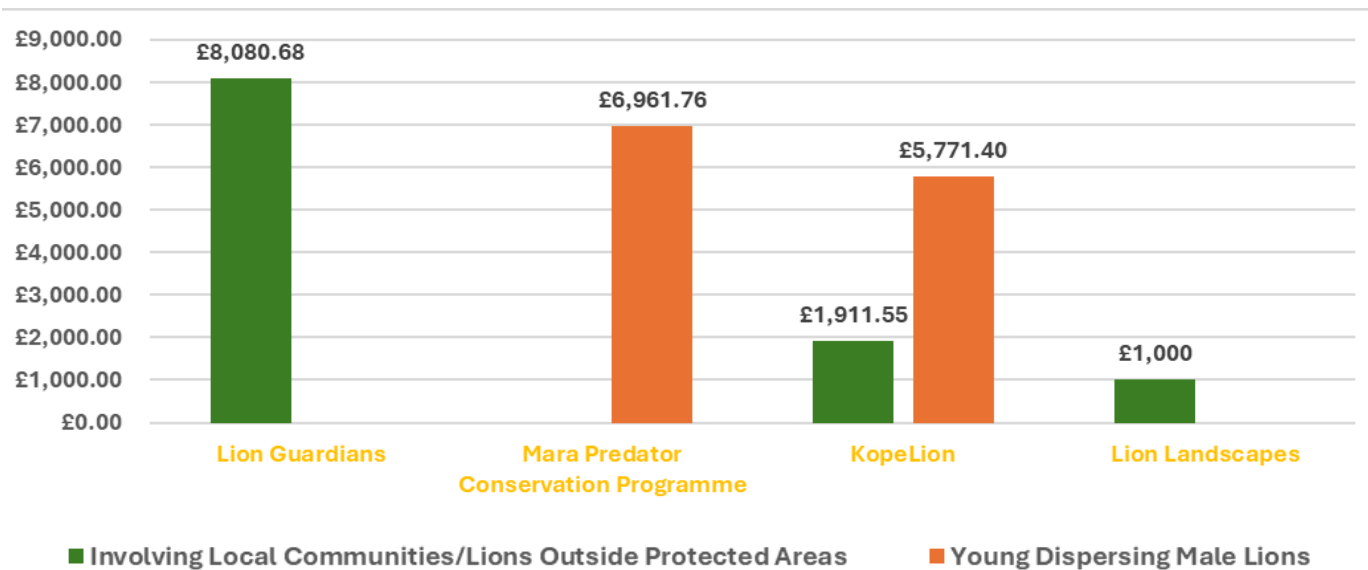


Figure 3: Donations To Conservation Partners By Focus Area 2017 - Jan 2021

Figure 2: Total Donations To Conservation Partners By Focus Area

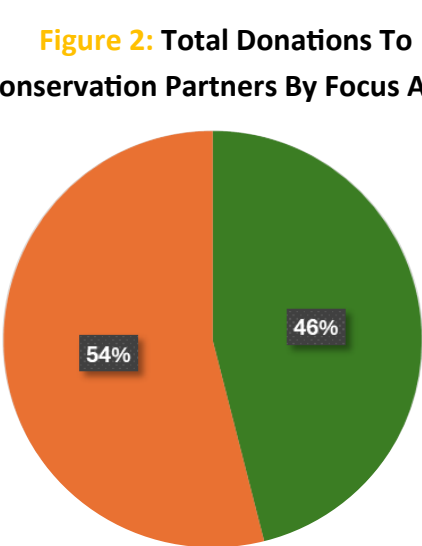
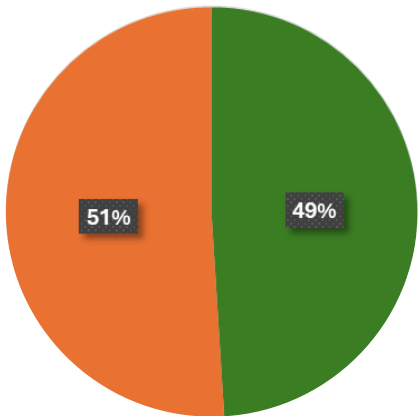
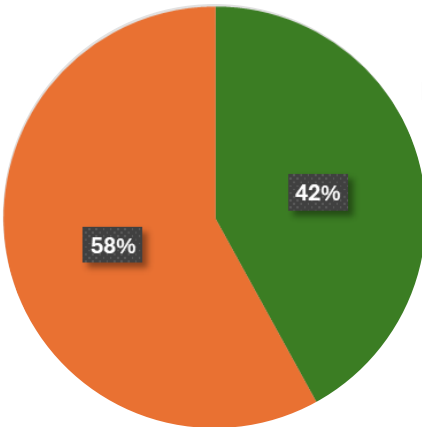


Figure 4: Donations To Conservation Partners By Focus Area Feb 2021 - 2024



Reviewing our **collaring progress** over the last six years

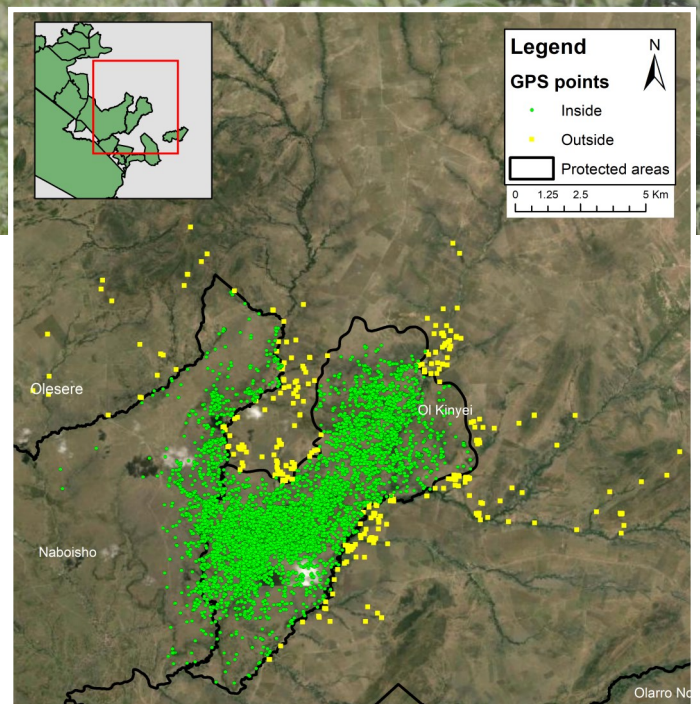


Our Future Kings Project aims to protect and monitor young dispersing male lions as they disperse into new territories away from the much larger dominant males. It is this movement that often brings them into conflict within community areas.

So far we have sponsored the cost of four collars along with associated veterinary and transmission fees. Three of which have already been deployed, more details can be seen below. In total our first three sponsored collars were on the three young male lions for a total of approximately 59 months.

In June 2020 Collar 1 was placed onto a five year old male lion in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania named **Lai-pangwa.** He wore the collar for two years and within that time he moved from the Ndutu region onto the slopes of the Ngorongoro Crater where he mated with lionesses that were born in the crater, opening up the genetic flow in and out of the crater once again and living in an area that had not seen a lion presence for several years. In August 2022 we received the news that he had been found dead, with the likely cause being conflict with other males. His legacy lives on through his cubs and the increased tolerance from the community. Laipangwa had successfully sired cubs in an area away from his birth pride, fulfilling the main objective of our Future Kings Project.

In February 2022 Collar 2 was placed onto a four year old male lion living in the Ol Kinyei Conservancy, Maasai Mara, Kenya named **Ole Cook.** Ole Cook was part of a coalition trying to increase its territory, recently they ventured further and disappeared and when they returned one brother was missing. With no trace of the brother he is believed to be dead but it is unknown whether he was killed by other lions or people. The collar



therefore is vital to track the movements of the two remaining males if they venture to the same area again. Ole Cook wore his collar for two years and it was removed in February 2024. The map above shows his GPS points over the course of the two year collaring period. His core territory inside the national park can be seen with the intensity of the GPS points, as can be seen he did travel quite far on his patrols.

In August 2022 Collar 3 was placed onto a two year old male lion named **Lendepesi in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania.** Lendepesi is a young cousin of Laipangwa and born into the Twin Hill pride in Ndutu. Living with his brother he was starting to disperse from his home territory. During this time he moved into some of the community areas within the NCA. By February 2023 his collar was noted to not be working properly. It was therefore a priority to find him and to remove the collar to allow for possible repair. Lendepesi has a very wide range so finding him was a massive challenge for the team but it was removed at the end of February 2023.

We have heard from the Mara Predator Conservation Programme that they are hoping to deploy collar 4 in 2024 which we will update our supporters on the progress.

Two new **conservation goals** will replace our previous three focus areas

Coexistence becomes our overarching focus delivered across two goals where different objectives will apply to efforts working directly at homestead level and to promote a healthy wider lion population.

Conservation Goal 1

To support local communities at homestead level to promote coexistence with the local lion population.

We will achieve this goal through continuing our sponsoring of community camera traps, strengthening bomas, GPS collars that can be tracked on the ground and promoting employment opportunities like the Lion Guardians initiative.

Conservation Goal 2

To assist efforts to monitor and protect lions at a wider level to support a healthy lion population.

We will achieve this goal through continuing our sponsoring of GPS collars and camera traps that monitor lions presence and their movements, carefully selecting field support locations for their value to lion population health.



These two new interlinking goals allow us to continue supporting our four existing conservation partners **promoting coexistence in all that we do and expanding our remit to other relevant and important efforts.**

Our three previous focus areas allowed us to use our limited funds in the best way possible by supporting conservation work already undertaken by existing organisations. As a small charity we decided it was best to focus on the three areas that we believed were in most need of our assistance and where our limited funds could make the best impact possible. These key areas allowed us to keep focus in our work, channelling the funds we have received to the same specific points of interest. These three focus areas have already been discussed in more detail earlier in this report. At times these focus areas may have limited our efforts slightly and by expanding them we can continue this focus but with a little more flexibility.

Both of our two new conservation goals require coexistence and tolerance from local communities to link areas together to promote genetic health of lion populations and promote the benefits to local people of having lions living locally.

These goals will be met by several smaller objectives, some of these may be used for both goals but they may have very different applications. For example a lion collar can allow scientists to collect important data on lion movements particularly at dispersal age but it can also allow employees on the ground the ability to track the location of the lions and to stay proactive in keeping livestock monitored within their immediate vicinity, this is a great example of how one piece of equipment can have multiple conservation applications. Showing the flexibility in these new goals, we will be continuing our Future Kings Project but we will now be open and able to collaring females in areas where they may be a problem for the community. These smaller objectives can be seen on the next page in more detail explaining how they can be used to promote coexistence and to conserve lions in many different applications.

Coexistence is crucial to the success of lion conservation efforts and their long term effectiveness

The importance of coexistence is vital as population range decline around protected areas. Lions that live on the boundaries of these areas find themselves living closely to the local people. By mitigating conflict at homestead level, aiming to prevent incidents before they occur can help to reduce the number of retaliatory killings.

Finding benefits to living with carnivores is crucial in order to secure successful opportunities for the communities and lions to thrive long term. Coexistence is important to lions both directly and at a wider level. In turn an increase in tolerance from the local people can help to create corridors between protected areas to improve genetic health of smaller wild populations. It is therefore the key to the success of both of our conservation goals.

Primarily as a grant funding organisation we aim to sponsor specific efforts. Our current projects and smaller objectives sponsored that will continue with this new strategy are listed below. By carefully selecting field support locations and objectives with multiple applications we can make an impact to lions and communities at homestead and at a wider population level.

Coexistence Example 1

Lion Landscapes **Community Camera Trap Programme**

Camera traps are an effective way of monitoring lion presence in an unintrusive way. The community scheme that we sponsor involves the local people in this effort by connecting them with conservation by showing benefits to having to live with these large predators in close proximity.

Coexistence Example 2

KopeLion **Boma Strengthening**

Bomas are used to safely secure cattle at night, traditionally made of thorns. A lack of prey species and a growing number of cattle have made these bomas more of a target for predator species. By sponsoring the strengthening of these bomas we can try and prevent incidents before they occur.

Coexistence Example 3

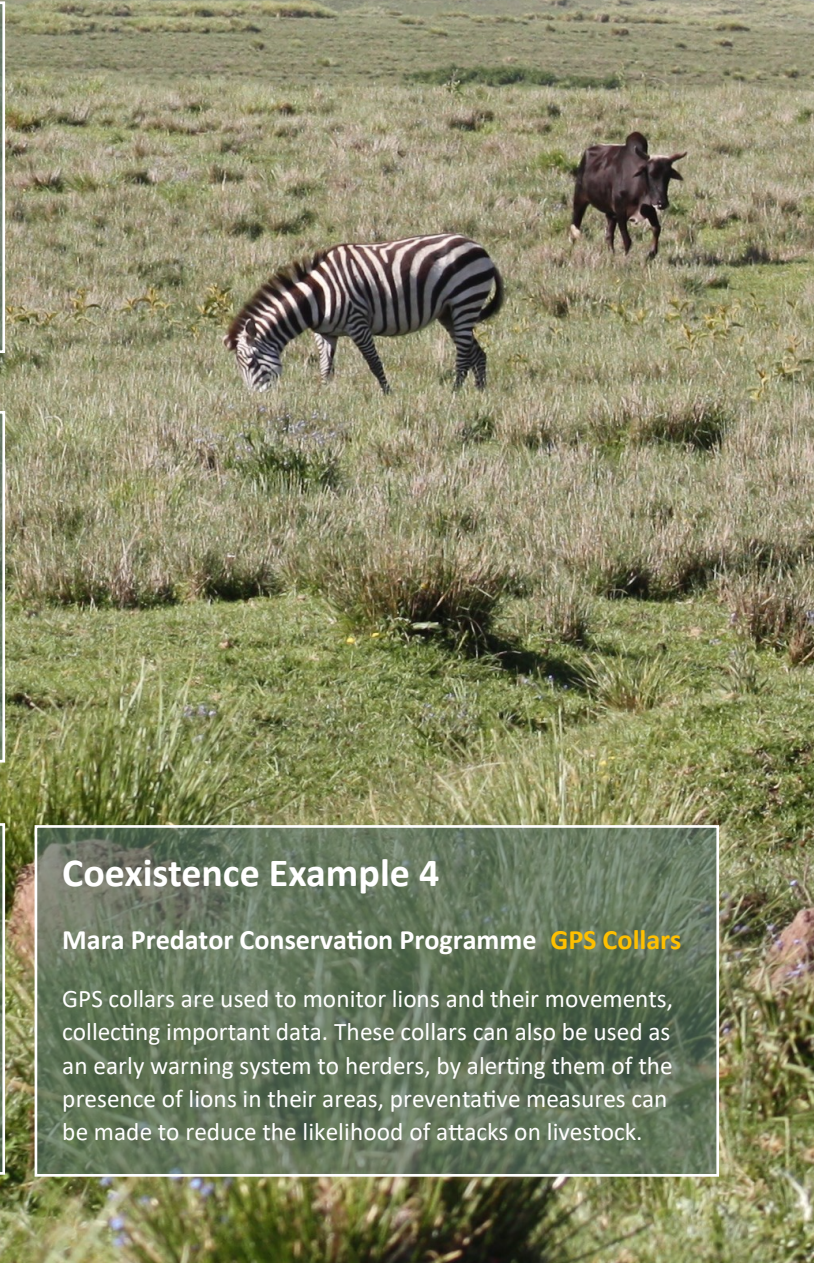
Lion Guardians **Lion Guardian Salary**

This model involves recruiting young, traditional pastoralist warriors to learn the skills needed to mitigate conflicts between people and wildlife, monitor lion populations and help their own communities live with lions. People who were once lion killers are transformed into lion protectors.

Coexistence Example 4

Mara Predator Conservation Programme **GPS Collars**

GPS collars are used to monitor lions and their movements, collecting important data. These collars can also be used as an early warning system to herders, by alerting them of the presence of lions in their areas, preventative measures can be made to reduce the likelihood of attacks on livestock.





The importance of collaring in our new conservation strategy

The Future Kings Project, our flagship project launched in 2019 has seen us sponsor GPS collars to associated resources for four young male lions. This new strategy allows us to develop this project even further to keep it relevant.

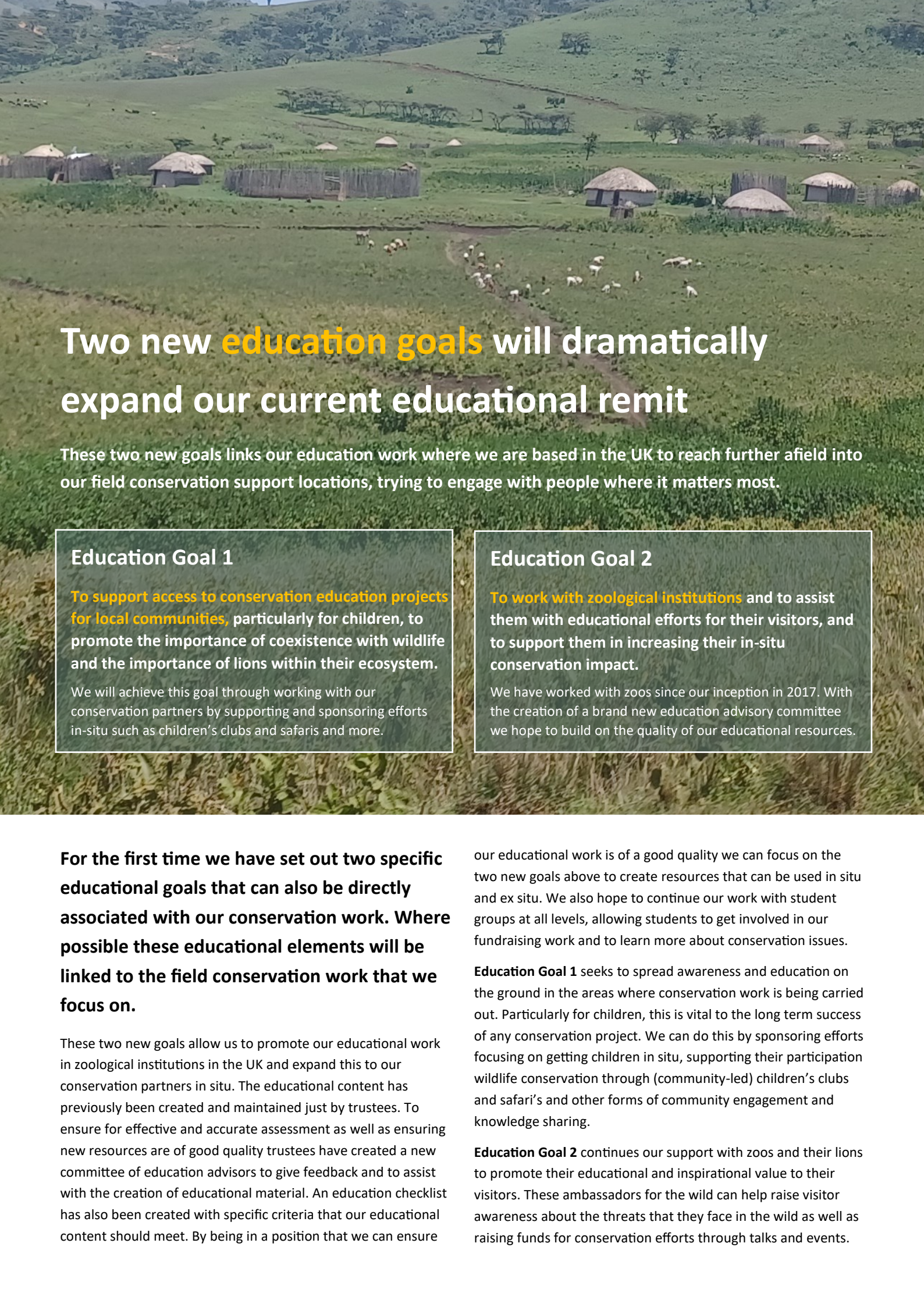
As written in our 2018 Conservation Strategy one of our three previous focus areas focussed on young dispersing male lions. These lions are our chosen demographic due to their behaviour often when dispersing. When they are forced away from their birth pride by their fathers or other invading males these young males will travel often long distances living a nomadic life and forming coalitions with others their own age. With no fixed territory they often go outside of the areas where the big dominant males reside with the prides which often brings them into the community areas to seek refuge. Sadly being in these areas often brings them into close contact with livestock and frequent attacks can see conflict occur. By targeting this demographic we are seeking to protect and monitor this vital demographic needed for the future, promoting genetic health and also trying to prevent incidents before they occur.

So far since 2019 we have sent the money required for four GPS collars in total, two for the Mara Predator Conservation Programme, and two for KopeLion with three having been deployed so far and have served their use. In total these three collars were on the lions for approximately 59 months as reviewed previously in this report.

One more collar with the Mara Predator Conservation Programme is yet to be deployed but a problem young male lion has been identified by the team with collaring hoping to take place in summer 2024. With our two new conservation goals to support lions and communities at homestead and a wider population level we will be adding more flexibility to our collaring project, allowing other demographics to be collared if they are considered a problem within their local area to promote coexistence measures at the heart of our new strategy while still focussing on young dispersing males.

The importance of collars are two fold as they are an important conservation tool to collect data on movements and behaviour but also allow teams on the ground to know their whereabouts and alert herders of their presence to try and prevent incidents and conflict before they occur to keep livestock and communities safe. We have already been in contact with the KopeLion team and plans are in place to fundraise for a fifth collar for Winter 2024/25. This will be, as with the previous collars be used in a multi-use area where people and wildlife live together, collars are a vital tool for promoting coexistence in this area.





Two new **education goals** will dramatically expand our current educational remit

These two new goals links our education work where we are based in the UK to reach further afield into our field conservation support locations, trying to engage with people where it matters most.

Education Goal 1

To support access to conservation education projects for local communities, particularly for children, to promote the importance of coexistence with wildlife and the importance of lions within their ecosystem.

We will achieve this goal through working with our conservation partners by supporting and sponsoring efforts in-situ such as children's clubs and safaris and more.

Education Goal 2

To work with zoological institutions and to assist them with educational efforts for their visitors, and to support them in increasing their in-situ conservation impact.

We have worked with zoos since our inception in 2017. With the creation of a brand new education advisory committee we hope to build on the quality of our educational resources.

For the first time we have set out two specific educational goals that can also be directly associated with our conservation work. Where possible these educational elements will be linked to the field conservation work that we focus on.

These two new goals allow us to promote our educational work in zoological institutions in the UK and expand this to our conservation partners in situ. The educational content has previously been created and maintained just by trustees. To ensure for effective and accurate assessment as well as ensuring new resources are of good quality trustees have created a new committee of education advisors to give feedback and to assist with the creation of educational material. An education checklist has also been created with specific criteria that our educational content should meet. By being in a position that we can ensure

our educational work is of a good quality we can focus on the two new goals above to create resources that can be used in situ and ex situ. We also hope to continue our work with student groups at all levels, allowing students to get involved in our fundraising work and to learn more about conservation issues.

Education Goal 1 seeks to spread awareness and education on the ground in the areas where conservation work is being carried out. Particularly for children, this is vital to the long term success of any conservation project. We can do this by sponsoring efforts focusing on getting children in situ, supporting their participation wildlife conservation through (community-led) children's clubs and safari's and other forms of community engagement and knowledge sharing.

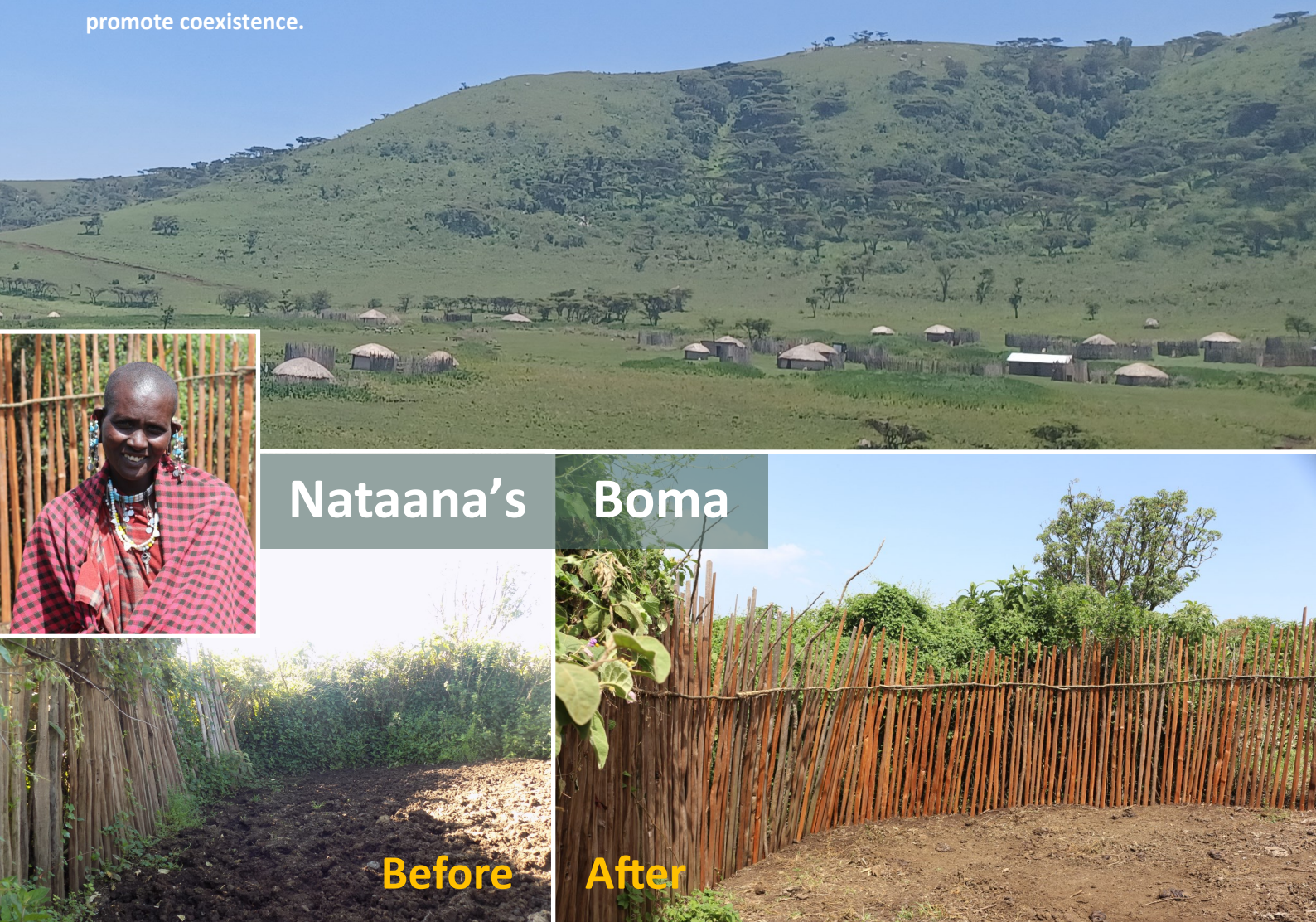
Education Goal 2 continues our support with zoos and their lions to promote their educational and inspirational value to their visitors. These ambassadors for the wild can help raise visitor awareness about the threats that they face in the wild as well as raising funds for conservation efforts through talks and events.

Learning what it's like to live amongst lions and other predators and helping by **building better bomas**

Two of our trustees have had the incredibly opportunity to visit two of our conservation partners. In 2020 James and Pete visited the Mara Predator Conservation Programme at their headquarters in the Ol Kinyei Conservancy in the Maasai Mara, and in 2023 they visited the KopeLion team at their base in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Effective long term conservation requires patience. There is no one scenario that can solve the problems that occur when communities live amongst lions and other predators. A boma is an enclosure where livestock are secured at night away from predators, they are traditionally made from thorns and branches. If hungry enough predators like lions, hyenas and leopards will break into bomas at night to take livestock. In 2023 we launched our brand new boma strengthening scheme in conjunction with KopeLion. We sent £1800 to strengthen 10 bomas within the NCA. These bomas are strengthened by using thicker, taller and more robust wooden poles and branches as well as the possibility of planting several layers of *commiphora* bushes within the walls of the boma. An example of before and after strengthening takes places can be seen below.

By supporting efforts at homestead level we are working to try and prevent incidents before they occur, working together for the communities and the wild lion population to reduce conflict within the NCA and the Mara ecosystem. We hope that by helping to reduce conflict at homestead level, helping people and lions to promote coexistence.



Nataana's

Boma

Before

After

"Kopelion has given us more than a fence; they have given us a future. My cows are now safe and we can sleep peacefully at night." - Nataana, Misigiyo Village, Ngorongoro Conservation Area



Linking fundraising to our conservation partners with our new **Ilchokuti Challenge**

In 2023 we set up our own fundraising challenge inspired by the dedicated team who we met in our visit to Tanzania in February. These “Lion Custodians” known by the Masai word “Ilchokuti” spend most of their days walking on foot completing their daily tasks within their communities. The average distance walked per day is 12.5km, but it is often much more as they keep walking to continue their work to keep livestock, lions and communities safe.

For the first time we have directly linked our fundraising activities to the work of one of our conservation partners in a unique and exciting way.

Since we were founded in 2017 our major income has come from our zoo partners and their keepers. We have been truly amazed by the number keepers who have approached us to support our work to raise funds for conservation organisations and to raise awareness. This support has varied from handing out our educational resources at events during summer holidays to organised fund raising events, talks and even sponsored runs and marathons! We have also run several talks to different zoos to share information about the threats that lions face in the wild and conservation practices used to conserve them with their keepers, volunteers, supporters. Without this support from a great many individuals and their institutions we would not have

been able to hit the ground running on the conservation efforts that we have been able to support so far. This support from zoos and their keepers has been the bedrock of our fundraising success and we are indebted to their support.

Through our ‘Ambassadors For The Wild’ project we have encouraged zoos to try and connect their lions to those in the wild. Our Ilchokuti Challenge takes this one step further by introducing and linking the local people who work on the ground trying to protect and monitor lions in the wild. We hope that this challenge will inspire people to take more of an interest in the conservation of lions in the wild and provide a more exciting and interesting story to our fundraising here at home. A series of these challenges in 2023 from keepers at different zoos helped to fund the first year of our boma strengthening scheme, for which we are extremely grateful.

We hope to grow our ‘Ambassadors For The Wild’ project by increasing the number of zoos that we work with.

For the **next three years** we will work towards these new goals through these new objectives

In summary our new conservation and education goals that we have set in our new strategy are as below:

- 1. To support local communities at homestead level to promote coexistence with the local lion population.**
- 2. To assist efforts to monitor and protect lions at a wider level to support a healthy lion population.**
- 3. To support access to conservation education projects for local communities, particularly for children, to promote the importance of coexistence with wildlife and the importance of lions within their ecosystem.**
- 4. To work with zoological institutions and to assist them with educational efforts for their visitors, and to support them in increasing their in-situ conservation impact.**

To ensure focus we have set the following small objectives for us to meet that work alongside these new goals over the next three years. We will endeavour to meet these objectives to the best of our ability. We will continue to support our existing four conservation partners and sponsor efforts through them. The following objectives are subject to successful partnerships with the mentioned conservation organisations and may be subject to change by discretion of the trustees.

1. Continue the sponsorship of a pastoralist warrior working in lion conservation on an annual basis.

We have supported the Lion Guardians organisation for 7 years by sponsoring the salary of a Lion Guardian. The Lion Guardian model involves recruiting young, traditional pastoralist warriors to learn the skills needed to effectively mitigate conflicts between people and wildlife and has been adopted by several other organisations throughout Africa.

We will continue this effort annually.

2. Continue to support efforts to monitor lions and their movements through sponsoring more GPS collars.

As has already been explained previously, these collars collect important data on lion movements but can also be used to prevent incidents before they occur by pre-warning herders of their whereabouts. **In the next three years we will aim to sponsor two more collars** which will focus on our target demographic of young male lions but can be also be used on other lions that may cause problems within their local areas.

3. Continue to support and expand our boma strengthening scheme.

Trustees are already exploring further development of our boma strengthening scheme to include more of our conservation partners which may include the building of brand new bomas as well as further strengthening. **We will**

aim to contribute to this project annually, strengthening and building new bomas every year.

4. Develop our contribution to in-situ education programmes.

As part of our new education goals trustees will explore the possibility of supporting education in-situ, particularly those aimed at children and **we will start to sponsor education efforts in-situ** through an existing conservation partner/s after further research and discussions.

5. Encourage and establish more zoo partners.

Over the next three years we hope to **encourage more zoos to join our efforts to connect their lions to their wild cousins** and to get involved with our conservation projects. With conservation becoming more of a prominent part of modern zoo strategy we are hopeful that more zoos, particularly smaller collections we will want to join our cause.

As well as working with zoos for the benefit of raising funds to protect and monitor wild lions we also provide zoos access to a 'Lion Keepers Resource Group' hosted on our website to share information on all aspects of lion care and husbandry. We hope to continue the progress of this aspect of our zoo support in the next three years.

Trustees will continue to update our supporters on the progress of these objectives in the next three annual reports and annual reviews. We look forward to further developing these smaller objectives to develop our conservation and education work further into the future. Members of the conservation and education advisory committees may also be involved in the planning and development of our conservation and education programmes into the future.



We would like to recognise those **individuals and organisations** who have supported us

Being a small charity we rely heavily on our supporters to help us in our fundraising and we would not be able to achieve anything without their support. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has donated and therefore allowed us to support such important work over the last seven years. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

Cotswold Wildlife Park, in particular to the support of General Manager Jamie Craig and Managing Director Reggie Heyworth and all staff that have helped raise funds for us.

Knowsley Safari, and all of the carnivore keepers that have raised funds for us over the years.

Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo, in particular to Tim Morpewh and Rosie Badger for starting the connection and to Conservation Officer Jack Gradidge for his constant enthusiasm and drive to organise events and activities as well as of the zoo team who always get involved and show their support.

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Wild Arena Ltd, for their technical support and donations since we started.

Sean Robinson for his regular donations and enthusiasm.

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To everyone, including all students, zookeepers and all of our supporters who have been involved in a sponsored fundraiser or activity to raise funds for our conservation projects over the last seven years.

We would also like to thank all of the dedicated conservationists who are associated with our conservation partners who have provided us with many updates but have also shown us support and encouragement in our work and some having also provided us with opportunities to visit them on the ground to see the work that we have been supporting. These include **Sally Capper**, **Ingela Jansson**, **Niels Mogensen** and **Dr Amy Dickman**.

We would also like to thank our conservation partners for use of several photographs and maps that have been used throughout this strategy.



Several articles, papers and books have been used as references within this strategy. We would recommend all of these as interesting reading material. They are listed below:

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