

Registered Charity number 1172709

www.safinalionconservationfund.org



A Message From Our Chairman

2020 has been an incredibly difficult year not only for wildlife conservation organisations like ourselves but for every single one of us with the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason we decided to focus just on our basic commitments for the year as we were unable to guarantee the support of our usual zoo partners and our supporters who would have all been feeling pressures of their own from the pandemic. Despite this however we have seen some amazing efforts of support across the country from individuals and other organisations in particular from Apex Extreme and Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo.

As you will see our year began with a truly awe-inspiring trip to the Maasai Mara in February to visit our new conservation partner the Mara Predator Conservation Programme. Together with two representatives from our supporters Wild Arena Ltd and Knowsley Safari we were able to meet Niels Mogensen of the MPCP and his team and shadow them on their work to monitor the lion and predator populations in the region. We learnt so much and we were delighted that with the help of David from Wild Arena Ltd we could present our adventures to you in the form of a video blog. It really was such an incredible opportunity to be able to see the work first hand that we support out in the field.

Thanks again to everyone who has supported us and please take the time to read our annual review which details all of the work we have undertaken throughout the year.

Our Team

The Safina Lion Conservation Fund is made up of small team of likeminded people each with their own differing skills to help achieve our objectives to our best ability. All of our trustees and advisors work completely voluntarily and no expenses are ever taken.



James Welch

Chairman



Matthew Lloyd

Trustee



Sophie Cole

Trustee



Sue Welch

Trustee

In order to help the trustees to achieve our charitable objectives a group of Conservation Advisors with varying skills, knowledge and experience have been selected to offer advice on the best ways to help impact lion conservation and share their views on potential organisations that we would support in the future.

The Purpose Of Our Annual Review

In compliance with the Charity Commission we are obliged to write a Trustees Annual Report and Financial Accounts. As a small charity we have decided to stick to the Charity Commission templates which are simple but unsightly for the general reader. The purpose of this Annual Review is to include everything we have done this year in a more aesthetically attractive manner.

Our Aims & Objectives

Like any other charitable organisation we have a set of objectives that all of the work we carry out or support through another organisation, project or individual must fit under. Here at the Safina Lion Conservation Fund we go 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.

This year we have altered our mission and added a vision (which can be seen below) to better reflect the work that we carry out alongside our two core objectives which are to:

CONSERVE AND TO **EDUCATE**

OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

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

It is estimated that there are now no more than 23,000 lions left in the wild throughout the African continent and that populations are still declining. The African lion is listed by the IUCN as a vulnerable species with those in Western Africa listed as Critically Endangered. The single but now stable population found in the Gir Forest in Northern India is now listed as Endangered having been previously listed as Critically Endangered.

Our Fourth Year At A Glance

2020 has been a fairly quiet year for us, due to the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic we were unable to carry out our traditional educational events around World Lion Day. Despite this however zoos like Noah's Ark Zoo Farm continued to share educational material through social media during the day and our new friends at Apex Extreme organised a COVID-19 safe event at Borth Wild Animal Kingdom to celebrate World Lion Day. Regarding our conservation projects, our new Future Kings project combines our two GPS collaring sponsorships via our new conservation partnerships made last year with the Mara Predator Conservation Programme and Kope Lion in Tanzania. We have enjoyed good communication with all of our conservation partners and we were incredibly fortunate to visit the headquarters of the Mara Predator Conservation Programme in the Olare Motogori Conservancy in the Maasai Mara before the restrictions came place following the outbreak of Covid-19 to launch our new Future Kings Project. We were pleased to be able to support our three of our conservation partners throughout the fallout of the Pandemic.



Financial Review

Our fourth year has seen us raise only £285 less than last year which considering the impacts of the pandemic has left us in a very fortunate position. Without a doubt financially one of the most important donations this year was a donation of £1283.42 from Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo which accounted for almost half of our income this

UK Zoos

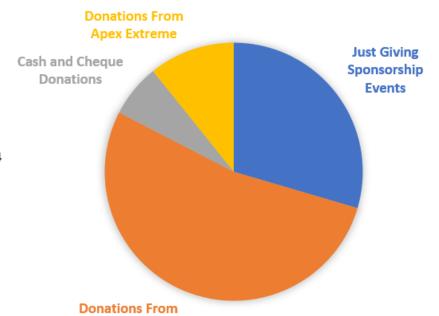
year and they were the only zoo to donate to us this year.

As in previous years Just Giving has also been a vital source of income allowing us to raise money online for sponsorship events. A first this year was a donation from our new friends at the conservation charity Apex Extreme of £260.50.

Trustees deliberately decided to leave £684 at the end of the year to give us a head start for next year in case the impact from the pandemic continues further.

TOTAL INCOME = £2420.12

TOTAL EXPENDITURE = £1885.56 of which £92.43 were bank transfer fee related.



INCOME 2020



In February just weeks before the global lockdown we had the privilege to visit the headquarters of one of our conservation partners, the Mara Predator Conservation Programme. James Welch, our chairman along with Peter Johnson, carnivore keeper at one of our zoo partners Knowsley Safari and David Southard of our supporter Wild Arena Ltd were there to see first hand the work carried out by the Programme to monitor and conserve the lions in their study area. This was an amazing opportunity to meet the team and to get an idea of how they carry out their work. You can find out more below!

Wednesday 12th - After a night in Nairobi we set off on our small flight to the Maasai Mara, after being dropped off in the reserve we were picked up by Julius the maintenance manager for the MPCP. After about an hour of driving and stopping to see the wildlife on the way we arrived at where we would be staying - the Maa Guest House. There to greet us was chef and guest house staff Steve and Hilary along with Niels Mogensen, Senior Programme Scientist for the MPCP. Niels has been our primary contact for our partnership and who I have been emailing for the past two years. It was great to have the opportunity to meet Niels and straight away he was quick to welcome us to the Mara and we planned our itinerary with him for the rest of our week before he headed back up to his office further up the hill.

Thursday 13th - We woke up the next morning at 5:30am and we were picked up by research assistant Saitoti and we set off on our first drive looking for lions. Saitoti explained that he was on a mission to ID some new cubs from a pride within his research area which covered the western side of the main reserve bordering with the Olare Motogori Conservancy where we were based. It took us a long time to find any lions and after 2 hours of searching and after a rather risky river crossing we came across a group of 6 sub adult male lions resting in a series of deep bush thickets. After going back to our base we were joined by Niels for lunch after which he gave us a presentation on the history of the programme and the work that they carry out in more detail. After this fascinating talk Niels took us to his headquarters at the Tony Lapham Predator Hub where he showed us their information centre complete with mini replica boma made of sturdy chain-link and recycled plastic poles, as Niels explained this is what he and his team are encouraging the locals to use as it is the best way to keep lions and other predators out. He also showed us how their identification process works and their database with more than 1500 lions past and present all with their specific details. We then tried using one of David's photos trying to identify one of the young males we saw this morning, after a bit of searching we found a match.





Friday 14th - We were picked up by Research Assistant Grace and we headed further into the Olare Motogori Conservancy near the Olare Airstrip. There is a pride of lions that inhabits this particular area and they are known as the Hammerkop Pride. We managed to quickly stumble across an adult female who was sat with a young cub, sadly after rolling over she moved back into the bush after five minutes and we could no longer see her. We saw two further young cubs around the corner who quickly ran towards the bush playing and once again became invisible. After returning back to base we met Niels again for lunch who explained to us that his original plan was to arrange for us to go out looking for potential sub adult male candidates for which the collar would be attached to. Sadly due to the recent rains and the long grass the areas where these lions live were either very hard to get to or visibility was extremely poor due to the long grass. However Niels had word that a group of sub adults in one of those areas had killed a cow in broad daylight the day before so we headed to the border of the conservancy with Saitoti to see if we could spot them and to have a look at the area where they lived. As we arrived at the border we saw many herds of cattle grazing there, these conservancies have what is known as a limited grazing agreement, cattle can be grazed during the day in limited numbers and in rotated areas. All lions in the conservancies may be used to the cattle being grazed nearby but these lions living along the boundaries may start to get used to spending time around the bomas where they are housed at night. It is uncommon for cattle to be killed during the day, normally lions are killed by the lions breaking into the bomas during the night. Sub adult males at the age of the males we saw yesterday are the ones most likely to stray into community land as they are no longer tolerated by the dominant males in the pride territories. Sadly there was no sign of any lions visible here.

On the way back we got our best lion sighting so far. A young female eating the remains of what looked like a warthog. She had beautiful spots and markings on her forehead and when she stood up it became very clear that she was lactating, she had cubs somewhere and this would explain why she was keen to eat and on her own. After posing for enough time for David to get some great photos she moved into the long grass and disappeared into the distance.

For the weekend we had planned to do the tourist thing and to hire a vehicle and a guide to take us into the main reserve. Naturally though we were still out looking for lions but we weren't in official MPCP vehicles or with their staff as they enjoyed their days off.

Saturday 15th - Our guide Ben picked us up at 5:30 and we headed off into the reserve trying to see what we could find. Our first lion sighting involved a young cub in a clearing a few yards away from a couple of lionesses and more cubs. At first glance it appeared to be dead but was actually still slightly breathing and clearly not long for this world. It was a very stark reminder of the tough life these wild lions lead. A group of reserve wardens were on hand to ensure the tourists remained sensible and to monitor the situation. Soon after we had our best sighting so far. A big male lion sat on the open plain with a topi carcass and another female for company. We later found out that this male was 'Doa' and he was part of a group of six related males known as the six pack that rules the Topi and the Marsh prides. About 5 minutes away was another lioness who had made her way up a tree and was resting away from the flies and the midday sun. This made for a great picture opportunity as she hang from the branches. We also had a brilliant sighting of two adult leopards, the female was in season and was not too keen on the males attentions so was very active and ran straight past our land cruiser! After getting stuck for 2 hours on a river crossing (after many attempts to tow us out!) we arrived back at base.

Sunday 16th - Ben, our guide took us out at 2pm and within an hour we had found 2 lionesses, the first we found walking in a vegetated area between two rivers. After wandering she picked up pace and started to hunt some impala the other side of the river. However it didn't take long for them to spot her and she gave up on the idea. As she moved away we decided to move on and came across two young cubs about 6 months old who had just come out of the undergrowth. The three of them then moved to the second lioness who appeared to the mother and the cubs started suckling. It was fascinating to see them all interacting with each other and the cubs playing together, we were also very lucky by being the only people around watching them. This made for some brilliant photo and video opportunities for David! We later bumped into them further down the river as the four were basking on a rocky outcrop in the evening sun.

Monday 17th – We were back to an early start and were picked up by Saitoti who planned to take us to the eastern side of the reserve, an area where we hadn't yet visited. Ten minutes after entering through the Talek Gate (the picture below shows how close the Talek town is in the background) we came across a very large pride of about seven lionesses, two males and at least six cubs. Saitoti explained that this was the Fig Tree pride currently ruled by males Kaka and Maridadi and that it was very unusual to see the whole pride together. They were just finishing on a carcass that must have been killed earlier this morning. It was great to see such a large number of lions together but it was incredibly busy and as the rangers tried to organise the vehicles we decided to head off further into the reserve. Our luck for the morning didn't end as we were fortunate enough to see another leopard, a young female who was very calm around our vehicle and four cheetahs a mother and three sub adults.

After a busy morning in the reserve Saitoti took us out in the afternoon and we went for a smaller drive around the Olare Motogori Conservancy. After 2 hours (and very close to a herdsman resting under a bush watching his herd!) we found a group of lions resting in amongst the vegetation. We spotted two adult males first which were slowly joined by a couple of cubs from around the corner and then a lioness from a few yards away. Eventually the adult male laying closer to us sat up for a few seconds allowing us to take pictures and Saitoti to ID him. His name is Lolparpit and he and his companion Olbarnoti are some of the oldest males currently living in the Mara. Incidentally they are reckoned to be the fathers of the subadults that we saw on the Thursday and last year had also come into contact with Kaka and Maridadi from the neighbouring Fig Tree Pride last year, Lolparpit on all accounts was badly injured and took a long time to recover. Currently the two old boys seemed to be making the most of things, fathering their latest generation of young cubs. As the evening went on three lionesses and six cubs came out of the bush and continued to roll around and play with one another. It was lovely to see them interacting with one another especially the lionesses as they head rubbed and played together. We waited patiently to see if the big males would join them but sadly it wasn't meant to be and we left the pride to make sure we got back to our base before dark.

Tuesday 18th - As our flight back to Nairobi wasn't until 3pm Niels arranged for us to have one last morning drive before we left. Grace picked us up at 6:15am and we headed into the neighbouring Naboisho Conservancy. This was a great way to end the trip as this was the conservancy that I stayed in when I visited on a volunteering programme in 2017. After a bit of searching we soon came across three lions. Unusually there were two male lions with a female clearly in season, one male who looked slightly older was sat guarding the female with his companion about 20 yards away sat respectfully keeping his distance. These males looked like they were around 3 years or a bit older and from what we gathered were starting to make their claim for this particular territory. Grace was just as fascinated as we were about the presence of two males and it was very interesting to see them wary but still respectful of one another.

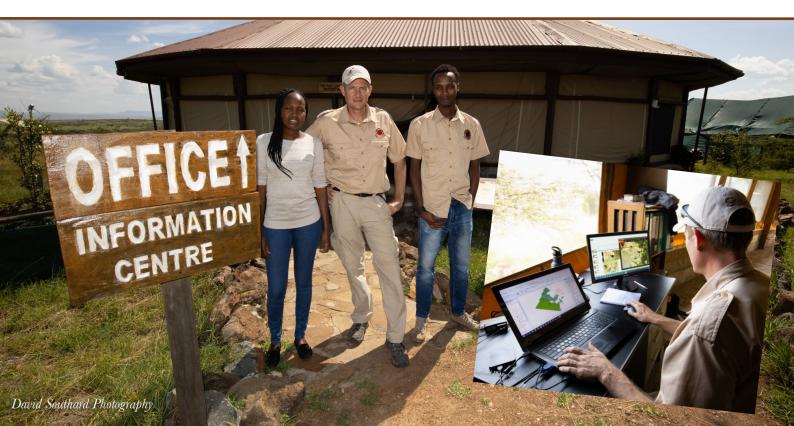


What we learnt from our trip...

With the whole week over we were now ready to reflect on how the trip had been. It was brilliant to meet Niels and his team and to see the work they do, how they work and how the sponsorship of a GPS collar will help them to monitor lions. It was also great to hear from Niels himself about the challenges that they face in trying to conserve the Mara's predator populations and it certainly made us think about a whole host of other issues that we hadn't even considered before. This trip continued to highlight to us how much of a balancing act wildlife conservation is, Niels continued to push how important it is that the communities are involved otherwise all work that may be done just wont be sustainable. He also talked to us about more recent issues such as the fencing of private land which is blocking migration routes, which means less potential prey species arriving for the predators. One thing that clearly excited Niels was the arrival of hunting dogs back in the Mara for the first time in decades. Clearly a symbol of hope for the future, and an indication of the good work being done by the Mara Predator Conservation Programme and other conservation organisations within the Mara eco-system. A massive thank you again to Niels, Saitoti and Grace for their time and effort in showing us around the conservancies and reserve, it was a pleasure to meet them all and we look forward to continuing our support in the coming years.

This time of year is tough for lions. Without the wildebeest and zebra migration from the Serengeti between July to October the number of prey species is significantly reduced. The animals that are left are always on high alert due to the constant risk of predation due to these lower numbers and as such catching prey is difficult in these months.

Conservation is complicated. The work of the MPCP involves collecting behavioural data on the predators as well as crucial population surveys and the locations in which they are found and the monitoring of individuals via GPS collars. The data collected can be used and interpreted by the scientists in line with other data, for example when compared to human settlement and livestock density which can allow them to come to conclusions on the human impact of the Mara predator populations. This information can then be passed onto the National Park authorities and the conservancy managers to help create more sustainable practices to work positively alongside these predator populations. However the authority to actively protect individuals remains with these authorities and the MPCP conservation and community work is based largely on the collection of data, engaging and advising the communities and presenting different pieces of evidence from their studies to the authorities. Niels stressed that the local people must be involved with every conservation programme as they share the habitat with these animals and they are crucial to the successful development of any conservation project long term.







mammal and bird species, some of which are here for you all to see including Secretary bird, Maasai giraffe, Plains zebra, leopard, cheetah, Southern ground hornbill, Elephant and Banded mongoose.



We would like to say a massive thank you to our friends at Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo who donated a huge £1283.42 towards our conservation projects despite the troubling circumstances that have surrounded the Covid-19 Pandemic. Folly Farm donate 10% of their profits from adoption sales towards their several conservation partners, due to public sympathy and additional support from higher adoption sales this has made a much higher total for conservation than has ever been seen before. Folly Farm have now donated a total of £2700 towards our conservation projects which makes them our largest supporter to date.

Introducing our new partner...



At the beginning of the year we were approached by experienced zoo manager David Crumpton who with the help of several friends and colleagues had created Apex Extreme, a new predator conservation based Registered Charity no. 1183466. They were looking for conservation organisations to work and partner with and we were delighted with the offer of support. David and his team organised a covid-19 safe event at Borth Wild Animal Kingdom, who at the time housed Zulu, an offspring of our name-sake Safina and her companion Zuri. From their fundraising efforts on the day they were able to donate £260.50 towards our conservation projects. We look forward to working with David and the rest of the team at Apex Extreme closely in the future on different conservation and education projects and we thank them for their help so far this year.



One of these projects still in formative stages is the 'Lion Keepers Resource Group'. This will be a free resource hosted on our website which will be password protected and open to zoo keepers to browse. Zoo keepers will be encouraged to share information relating to any aspects of lion care, husbandry and anything else that may be useful to lion keepers. The idea of this is to give something back to our zoo supporters by providing a place to share knowledge and ideas that can advance lion care and husbandry and zoos in the UK and further afield. This is still a working progress and plans are in place to launch it formally in Spring 2021.



As well as working with and donating towards the Mara Predator Conservation Programme we also continued our support for our two other conservation partners Kope Lion and Lion Guardians. The picture above was a proud moment for us to see, our first sponsored collar being deployed by the Kope Lion team onto a five year old male lion living wild in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania.

In December 2019 we donated £2587.83 (\$3278) to go towards a brand new collar to be used on a sub adult male lion. Kope Lion works exclusively in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania where certain areas are considered multi-use and inhabited by both people and wildlife. In June 2021 the collar was put on a five year old male lion named Laipangwa who was born in the nearby Ndutu region location in between the crater and the Serengeti National Park he now spends most of his time in the multi-use area where he has occasionally predated on livestock.

The Kope Lion team have provided us with regular updates on Laipangwa and his whereabouts. We have also been sent the maps that have been used to track his movements and show the distance that he has been covering. The GPS collar allows the Kope Lion team to have a very reliable and up to date location on Laipangwa while the team on the ground, the Ilchokuti (lion custodians) are able to shadow the lions closely when they wander into community areas. Together both approaches allow the team to try and manage the fragile coexistence between the lions and the pastoralists while collecting important data without constant interference. Since the collar was deployed Laipangwa has spent more time headed towards community areas and has been seen spending more and more time with a group of females. There have been some predations on livestock but most of the conflict has been successfully mitigated by the Kope Lion team. Laipangwa and his lionesses have settled in an area on the North west slopes of the Ngorongoro Crater, this is an area that has not seen a lion presence for quite some years. This is very positive news for two reasons. The first is that it has seen lions and people coexisting in an area that lions have not utilised for many years and the second is that a male lion from the Ndutu region has settled with a group of lionesses from the crater itself and sired cubs. This means that the work that Kope Lion has put in place to increase the tolerance of the local people towards lions has proved to be successful and in turn has opened up the genetic flow of lions in and out of the crater.





Walk For Lions!

On the 25th June two trustees and three keepers from the Cotswold Wildlife Park walked 23 miles in a day to raise awareness and funds for the 23 thousand lions left in the wild. The walk saw the 5 of us walking around the surrounding Oxfordshire countryside and villages. However the day chosen happened to be the hottest day of the year so far (second hottest day in 2020 overall!) so to stay safe we started early at 6am and had a break in the middle of the day before starting again at 4pm. £461 was raised online through Just Giving. Thanks to everyone involved and for the support of the Cotswold Wildlife Park allowing us to walk on the site finishing up at the Asiatic Lion enclosure at about 9pm!

Thank You From Us

We would also like to thank the staff at Dartmoor Zoological Park, who unable to fundraise for us as they normally would organised a staff collection and donated £200 to our conservation projects and everyone who donated via Just Giving including Rosie Brathwaite who walked 23 miles over the course of a week in her spare time to raise awareness alongside our walk for lions - well done! Thanks also goes to the team at Noah's Ark Zoo Farm who organised a social media awareness event on their Facebook and Instagram to raise awareness about their lions and our conservation work which they support. Thanks also to David Southard of Wild Arena Ltd for his assistance in taking and sharing great photos while in Kenya and making the videos for our Kenya Lion Expedition 2020 blog. These videos allowed us to bring our experiences and sightings in the Maasai Mara to your screens within hours.



Our Contribution To Conservation 2020

Thanks to the support shown by our supporters, both zoos, other charities and the general public during the Covid-19 pandemic we have still been able to send off donations to our three conservation partners throughout this financial year. This support has been able to ensure that they are able to continue their work to protect and monitor lions in the wild throughout this crisis.

Mara Predator Conservation Programme



To assist the MPCP team throughout the pandemic, in January 2021 trustees decided to donate a sum of \$475 (£357.92) which is the monthly fuel budget for one of their lion monitoring vehicles. Fuel is vital to the team being able to get out and monitor the lions within the area and as we know from our visit in February they spend a lot of their time travelling over a truly vast area to try and get sightings of them.

Kope Lion



In January 2021 trustees donated the sum of \$438 (£328.61) to cover the cost of the next year collar transmission fee to allow the Kope Lion team to access the data collected by the collar on Laipangwa. We look forward to receiving further monthly reports on Laipangwa and his progress from the Kope Lion team. Any updates will go on to our Facebook page and our website.

Lion Guardians



We once again renewed our sponsorship of Lion Guardian Kuya Kipampa by sponsoring his yearly salary of \$1500 (£1106.60). We were delighted to receive a letter from Kuya this year thanking us for our sponsorship and informing us of the work that he has carried out this year. In particular he and other colleagues had to focus their attentions on a lioness with cubs who was involved in numerous daytime predations. Thankfully due to the efforts of Kuya and the other Guardians they mitigated the conflict by diverting the livestock around the area where the lioness was and reduced the number of incidents, the lioness moved off to a further location and her and her cubs lived to see another day. It is easy to see how important Lion Guardians like Kuya are to keep these iconic predators safe in the wild. Below is the letter we received from Kuya, with his picture, credit to Lion Guardians, John Merishi.

Dear James,

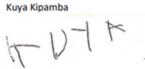
I hope this letter finds you well. I believe you and your family are in good health. I would like to express my whole-hearted appreciation for your generous support throughout the year 2020. This year has been the toughest year to the whole world due to the outbreak of corona virus. Despite this, you still stood by my side and supported me by paying for my salary.

Apart from the disruption caused by the pandemic, the year has been a busy one to our organization. We experienced human-lion conflict across the ecosystem. My zone and several other zones within our areas of operation were hugely affected. In my zone, a lioness with cubs was involved in numerous daytime depredations. Her den was close to human settlement. The attacks were so frequent that the community got angry and tension went up. I decided to put more focus on the area where the lioness's den is located in order to prevent escalation of conflict. Three neighboring Guardians joined me in mitigating the conflict. For close to two weeks we diverted the livestock from going towards the den. After this period, the cubs grew up and the pride moved to a far location with a lot of wild prey. Due to our efforts and those of other conservation stakeholders, the lioness and her cubs lived to see another day.

During this year, I used my salary to pay hospital bills for my ailing grandfather and also bought food for my family. This couldn't have been possible without your kind support. Please receive my appreciation and that of my family members for all the support you have accorded me.

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year 2021!

Best regards,







We thank you all for reading this years Annual Review and we look forward to updating you with our progress next year. For up to date information please follow our Facebook Page and website.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has had a part in our efforts to raise awareness or have helped to raise funds for us this year.

- Knowsley Safari
- Noah's Ark Zoo Farm
- Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo
- Linton Zoo Conservation Park
- Dartmoor Zoological Park

- Apex Extreme
- Wild Arena Ltd
- Cotswold Wildlife Park
- Everyone who has organised or donated towards sponsorship events online via Just Giving.

We are proud to work with and sponsor the work of:







www.marapredatorconservation.org



www.kopelion.org

Contact Us

We are nothing without our supporters and we cannot achieve anything without their support. Being a small charity we rely heavily on one off donations and individually organised sponsorship events.

If you are interested in our work in lion conservation please follow our website and Facebook page:

www.safinalionconservation.org

Or if you want to ask us anything directly please email us at:

info@safinalionconservation.org