



FUTURE KINGS PROJECT

This is the first large scale conservation project to be launched by the Safina Lion Conservation Fund and will see the charity work with multiple conservation projects to work towards the same goal - the monitoring and protection of young male lions that live near local human communities. This project is unique to us as it will be able to grow over time to see more projects supported in potentially many different countries. This document aims to share everything you will need to know about the project.

Figure 1 - Young male lion, Naboisho Conservancy, Maasai Mara Ecosystem, Kenya - February 2020

The Safina Lion Conservation Fund is a UK registered charity founded in April 2017 by a small group of four trustees interested in lion and wildlife conservation and dedicated to supporting efforts to protect them in the wild. The charity is run entirely by volunteers and 100% of all funds that reach us go towards our charitable objectives and do not cover administration costs or expenses.

Our mission: To ensure the survival of lions in the wild for generations to come.

Through our mission we aim to support conservation projects to protect and monitor lions in the wild and to ensure that these individuals have the chance to see the population into the next generation.

Our Objectives

Like any other charitable organisation we have a set of objectives that all of the work we carry out must link to. 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.

Fitting in to our Conservation Strategy

In 2018 trustees wrote and approved a conservation strategy 'Fighting For Their Future'. This strategy was to become the framework for all conservation work carried out by the charity and three main areas of interest were selected to be the focus of our conservation support. These were:

Young Dispersing Male Lions | Lions Outside Protected Areas | Involving Local Communities

All conservation work supported by the Safina Lion Conservation Fund must fit one or more of these focus points. The Future King Project focuses on **Young Dispersing Male Lions** but will also work to protect lions outside protected areas and in many cases involve the local communities to help carry out this work via other conservation organisations that we are supporting.

About Our Future Kings Project



Figure 2- Young lion cubs, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya - September 2017

Why are we focusing on young sub adult males?

Wild lion populations are suffering massively due to habitat fragmentation and conflict with humans. Lion society has evolved to need a lot of space with male lions travelling nomadically across long distances away from their birth prides before they take over a territory of their own. It is at this time when they are most likely to wander into community areas and potentially predate on livestock leading into conflict with local people, these conflicts can lead to severe injury or fatality often through poisoning. Without these male lions travelling to new areas there will be no males to sire new cubs but also a lack of genetic diversity as fathers are then more likely to mate with their daughters. It is therefore crucial that we protect these young males and help them to become, the future kings.



We currently focus our support on projects working throughout East Africa.



Conflict with local communities is a major problem as many lions turn to hunting livestock.



The growing agricultural industry has caused wild spaces and animal habitat in Africa to shrink.

In order to protect these young males it is vital for conservationists to know exactly where they are and to collect evidence on their dispersal, without any evidence on conflict or dispersal into community areas it is hard to implement potential mitigation methods and to involve the right authorities. Primarily we intend to monitor young males but also mature males who are nomadic and could run into the same difficulties.

How will the project work and who will we work with?

The project will see us working with already established conservation organisations. Due to our focus on a particular age group it is an issue that is seen in many populations close to communities, allowing us more opportunities to sponsor mitigation efforts via different organisations all over the continent over time.



Trustees identify conservation projects which fit our charitable objectives and our interest in sub adult male monitoring



These organisations are then scrutinised by our trustees and conservation advisory committee to ensure they tick every aspect of our donation criteria.



Agreements will then be signed to purchase the sponsored equipment and the donation made quickly to ensure our impact is felt in real time.

What will the project do?



Figure 2 - Used radio collar courtesy of the Mara Predator Conservation Programme

The Future Kings Project will see us sponsoring equipment that conservationists can use to protect and monitor sub adult male lions so that they can continue to disperse into other territories naturally and to ensure they reach the age that they can sire the new generation. GPS collars allow the conservationists to track the movements of these young lions as they move between different territories which allows them to know exactly where they are but can also give a better idea of how these lions are living and how they behave. Any advance in knowledge of lion behaviour can help the conservationists make their mitigation

methods as appropriate as possible for the lions in their area. Thanks to increasing technology it is now possible as data can be reached and analysed within hours meaning that conservationists can prepare for mitigation efforts if they are required if they can see that the lions are heading towards community areas. This time for extra preparation can help to keep both lions, livestock and the communities safe.



Figure 3 – Sub adult and adult male lions, Olare Motorogi Conservancy, Maasai Mara Ecosystem, Kenya - February 2020

Linking the project to our zoo supporters

We are proud of our connections to zoological parks within the UK and we have been fortunate enough to have many collections support our work. All zoos that have donated towards this project will receive updates from us whenever we receive them from our conservation partners and will be given educational resources to share with their guests about the work we carry out to help protect lions in the wild. We will always endeavour to keep our public and zoo supporters as up to date and informed as we possibly can.

Figure 4 – African male lion 'Mojo' - Knowsley Safari, June 2018



Dedicated To Mojo

To show our commitment to working with zoos our Future Kings Project is dedicated to Mojo. Mojo was born at Knowsley Safari in 2011 and died in February 2019. He was an individual who was well known to our trustees, conservation advisory members and supporters, many of which had worked with him. He was a larger than life character who inspired many visitors and staff alike. We hope that through this project he will inspire people to learn more about the threats lions face in the wild and how we can work to protect them. We aim to ensure that Mojo will be recognised and remembered as a part of our on the ground conservation work symbolising our commitment to cooperation.

We are very grateful to the donations raised by the zoos listed below as well as the smaller donations made by our public supporters that have allowed us to secure the funding required to sponsor our first two GPS collars throughout 2019.



Our Projects on the ground

Throughout 2019 along with the assistance of our Conservation Advisory Committee trustees were able to send off donations to two different conservation organisations for GPS collars to be used on sub adult and potentially nomadic mature male lions. Our first donation was sent to the Mara Predator Conservation Programme operating in the Maasai Mara, Kenya in Autumn 2019 and to Kope Lion, operating in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania in Christmas 2019. We hope that these collars will be deployed at some point in 2020 and we are awaiting progress updates from both organisations regarding the collars. Both of these organisations work in areas where lions are living alongside the local people, mitigation efforts in these areas are crucial to keep the lion populations stable and tensions down.

For up to date information on our new conservation partners please check our conservation projects page on our website as our partners and contributions may potentially change and grow as the project develops in the coming years.



Figure 5 - Adult male lion, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya - February 2020

Launching The Future Kings Project

We were delighted to visit the Mara Predator Conservation Programme in February 2020 to meet one of the teams involved in the lion collaring and to see the areas where these young lions live in order to launch our brand new Future Kings Project. Our chairman along with representatives from two of our supporters David Southard of Wild Arena Ltd and Peter Johnson, Carnivore Keeper at Knowsley Safari



Figure 2 - Our Chairman James Welch with Niels Mogensen of the Mara Predator Conservation Programme and Peter Johnson of Knowsley Safari in the Maasai Mara, February 2020

joined us to meet Senior Programme Scientist Niels Mogensen of the Mara Predator Conservation Programme and his team. Together we joined the research assistants as they headed to look for lions in the reserve and the neighbouring conservancies. Niels showed us their headquarters and between us we tried to identify the lions that we spotted during our trips out. We also visited one of the areas where potential candidates for our sponsored collar currently live. Niels also explained to us in detail the work of the organisation and the challenges that they face in trying to protect the lions and to work alongside the local communities.

Bringing our work to your screens

Our friends at Wild Arena Ltd have not only donated towards our conservation work but also joined us on our trip to visit the Mara Predator Conservation Programme in February 2020 to create various small videos and pictures for social media and our website. We hope that these videos will not only help to connect our supporters to our on the ground conservation work but also help to educate our supporters about the threats lions face in the wild and in particular sub adult males through our new Future Kings Project. We hope to share these pictures and videos with the Mara Predator Conservation Programme for their use also.



Figure 6 - Young lion, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya - February 2020

Do you want to know more about our work?

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 from our zoo supporters or our general supporters.

If you are interested in our work in lion conservation please follow our website and Facebook page. To view our full conservation strategy 'Fighting For Their Future' which we completed in 2018 which covers our whole plan to conserve lions in the wild visit our 'About Us' Page on our website www.safinalionconservation.org

If you have any comments or you have any feedback on our Future Kings Project please contact us at info@safinalionconservation.org

All information correct as of February 2020 - Check website and social media for further updates