



# WORLD LION DAY

10 AUG 2024

## Significance of Lion day celebration

The main objective of World Lion Day is to raise awareness about the conservation and protection of Lions from threats. World Lion Day is celebrated to spread awareness and educate people about the importance of lions. Lions wandered through Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East some three million years ago. Asiatic lions are smaller than African lions. Lions are the apex predator that helps in maintaining ecological balance. World Lion Day helps in creating more natural habitats for Lions by improving more spacious natural parks and sanctuaries.

## Threats to Lions

- The main threats to lions in India include habitat loss, conflict with humans, and poaching.
- Habitat loss is a major problem because lions need large areas of land to roam and hunt.
- As human populations grow, the Gir Forest is being encroached upon by agriculture and development.
- This is forcing lions to live in smaller and smaller areas, which makes them more vulnerable to conflict with humans.
- Conflict with humans is another major threat to lions in India.
- Lions often prey on livestock, which can lead to retaliation from farmers.
- In some cases, lions have even been poisoned or shot by farmers.
- Poaching is also a major problem for lions in India. Lions are killed for their fur, bones, and meat.

## THE ECOLOGICAL ROLE OF LIONS

Lions are the apex predator of the forest. They play the critical role of managing large herbivore populations of buffalos, impalas, zebras, and even elephants and giraffes. In a balanced ecosystem, the number of herbivores needs to be kept in check. If there are too many herbivores, the vegetation is overgrazed and habitats inevitably degrade.

Lions help maintain healthy and resilient herbivore populations. The natural course is that lion prides hunt and kill the weakest of the herd—typically those that may be afflicted with parasites, disease, or are feeble from a hereditary defect. Lions prevent the spread of afflictions and ensure improved genetic health in ungulate populations.

When lions disappear, smaller carnivores in the food chain flourish. This is problematic because these carnivores cannot regulate large herbivore populations and can also lead to disease transmissions. A case in point took place in Ghana after a systemic culling of lions. Thereafter, olive baboons proliferated, and intestinal parasites soon plagued other animals and nearby villagers.

As a keystone species and apex predators, lions are crucial to the habitats they occupy. Without lions, disease spread is likely across species, and vast savanna grassland ecosystems would disintegrate into dysfunctional, barren landscapes impacting all life within.

## LOUDER ROARS OUTSIDE SANCTUARY

### POPULATION INCREASED OUTSIDE FOREST



#### LION LANDSCAPE IN INDIA

Lion Population	2015	2020
Outside Forest	167	329
Inside Forest	356	345

## Population Increase in the Home Range

Location	2015	2020	Difference	Change (%)
Gir National Park Sanctuary	304	334	30	10
Pania Sanctuary	11	10	-1	-9
Mitiyala	8	16	8	100
Girnar	33	56	23	70
South Western Coast	32	20	-12	-38
South Eastern Coast	18	67	49	272
Savarkundla Liliya and Amreli	80	98	18	23
Bhavnagar Mainland	37	56	19	51
Bhavnagar Coast	-	17	17	NA