



World Lion Day

10 August 2019

“ While others look
for what he can
take, a true king
gives back.” ”

- MUFASA



INTRODUCTION

World Lion Day is celebrated on the 10th August in order to create awareness, and pay tribute to, these beautiful animals.

Among the list of **endangered** species sits the 'King of the Jungle', with numbers that have declined dramatically. According to the IUCN*, the lion population has reduced by approximately 43% over the past 21 years. These numbers are staggering considering that **millions** of lions roamed Africa some 2000 years ago, and it is now estimated that there are only about 20 000 left in the wild. Lions are considered to be regionally 'extinct' in 15 African countries.

*The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is an international organization working in the field of nature **conservation** and **sustainable** use of natural resources. It is involved in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, protection, and education. IUCN's mission is to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is **equitable** and **ecologically** sustainable".

LESSON PLAN

Read through the lesson plan in order to organise your Eco-Club session. Make use of the vocabulary list at the end of this lesson plan. Any word that is **bolded in red** in the lesson, will be in the vocabulary list.

Thereafter, follow the numbered steps in order to conduct your lesson. Make sure that you work through this step by step to ensure all parts of this important lesson are covered.



STAGE 1 – ENERGISER



1. DISCUSSION - ALL ABOUT LIONS

Time – 10mins

Location – Under the trees

1. Sit under the trees outside with the children and talk to them about lions, using the notes below.
2. Be sure to talk about this special lesson on World Lion Day.

This is just a quick discussion to introduce the children to lions – you will go more in depth later in the lesson.



ECO-MENTOR NOTES:

- All about Lions
 - The lion is the second largest cat in the world. It is dwarfed slightly by the tiger (which does **not** occur in Africa)
 - Lions are very social animals. They live in groups, called prides, of around 30 lions.
 - Pride members keep track of one another by roaring. Both males and females have a very powerful roar that can be heard up to 8 km away.
 - Antelope, zebra, and wildebeests are common prey for this big cat. However, scavenged food provides more than 50 percent of their diets—lions will often take over kills made by other carnivores.
 - Female lions are the primary hunters of the group. They are smaller and more agile than males. But since their prey is still generally faster than them, they use teamwork to bring an animal down. Fanning out, they form a semicircle, with the smaller, weaker lionesses herding the prey towards the centre. Then the stronger females and males knock the animal down and make the kill. This is called 'cooperative hunting', since they cooperate and work together. Cooperative hunting enables them to take down prey as large as buffaloes, rhinos, hippos, and giraffes.
 - When resting, which may be up to 20 hours a day, lions seem to enjoy good fellowship with lots of touching, head rubbing, licking, and purring.
- **World Lion Day** is celebrated on the 10th August in order to create awareness, and pay tribute to, these beautiful animals.
- Among the list of **endangered** species sits the 'King of the Jungle', with numbers that have declined dramatically.
- According to the IUCN*, the lion population has reduced by approximately 43% over the past 21 years. These numbers are staggering considering that **millions** of lions roamed Africa some 2000 years ago, and it is now estimated that there are only about 20 000 left in the wild. Lions are considered regionally 'extinct' in 15 African countries.



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2. ENERGISER – PREDATOR-PREY

Time – 10mins

Location – Under the trees

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have all the children sit in a circle.
2. Chose one child to be the lion.
3. The lion must walk around tapping the other players' heads saying, "impala" each time.
4. If the lion says, "LION!" the player whose head has been tapped must chase the lion around the circle trying to catch the lion before the lion can sit in his spot.
5. If the child doing the chasing catches the lion, then the first lion is the lion again. If the lion manages to run around the circle and sit back in the child's spot, then the child that was doing the chasing, is now the new lion.
6. Keep playing until most of the children have had a turn to be the lion



STAGE 2 – THEORETICAL LESSON



DISCUSSION – ALL ABOUT LIONS

Time – 15mins

Materials – Paper and pens / markers

Location – Under the trees. Children should bring a piece of paper along so that they can take notes about what they have learnt.

1. Use the notes below to teach and talk to the children about the threats which lions face.

Do not just read the notes to the children, but rather try to engage them during the lesson.

You can do this by asking them for their opinions. Encourage them to try to answer questions you might ask around these notes (for example, you could ask: “Why do you think lions might be in danger coming in to your village” or “Why do you think it is important to protect lions?”).



ECO-MENTOR NOTES

All about lions

Lions are among the most widely recognised and admired animals across the world. Tourists spend a lot of money to come to Africa to see these special cats. However, today these predators are facing many and threats, which are mostly caused by human activities. Overall, their populations are declining at a disturbing rate due to loss of habitat and prey, conflicts with people, poaching and illegal trade.



ECO-MENTOR NOTES

Why are lions in danger?

Lions are in danger for a number of reasons:

- **Habitat** loss: big cats are losing their habitats due to increasing human populations and the resulting growth of agriculture, settlements, and roads.
 - This also has an effect on their prey, which are also at threat.
- Human-wildlife **conflict**: Due to habitat loss, lions are being forced into areas where there are humans. This, along with a decrease in their natural prey, causes big cats to attack livestock. In turn, farmers, oftentimes, retaliate and kill big cats.
- Poaching: Big cats are being killed in rituals of bravery, as hunting trophies, and for their perceived medicinal and magical powers.
- Illegal trade: In South Africa alone, both lion and tiger farming for **commercial** trade in animal parts is allowed. There are presently between 6 000 and 8 000 lions in **captive** facilities as well as 280 tigers in 44 facilities. This big cat farming is



forming part of the **illegal** trade, as these 'farmers' make money by selling lion parts to people in Asia and Africa for traditional rituals and beliefs.



ECO-MENTOR NOTES

Why it is important to ensure lions are protected, and what can you do to protect them

Why lions need to be protected:

- They attract tourists to our countries. This creates jobs for local people as guides and camp staff.
- They play an important **ecological** role by **regulating** prey populations and structuring animal communities.
 - Lions play a key role in the food chain by helping to control the herbivore population. If the herbivore population is not regulated, the increase of competition among them would cause some to go extinct and thus reduce **biodiversity**.
- It is important that we conserve and preserve our natural heritage for ourselves, and future generations to come.

What you can do to protect them:

- Work with your communities to help them realise the value of lions and to help them protect their families and livestock from large carnivores
- Gain an understanding of carnivores' populations, behaviours, movements, and interactions with people in order to develop appropriate conservation actions.

STAGE 3 – DIRECT EXPERIENCE



ROLE PLAY – ALL ABOUT LIONS

Time – 15mins to prepare, 15mins to present

Materials – children to decide what they need

Location – Under the trees

1. The children are now going to prepare a role play.
2. Divide them into groups of about 4 or 5.
3. Using what they've learnt in this lesson, they should prepare a role play. Try not give them too much direction – let them be creative about what they present. However, give them these two examples to spark a few ideas:

- a. A lion wanders into your village. Act out the right and wrong way to deal with this problem (for example: the wrong thing to do would be to kill the lion, the right thing would be to ensure that cattle is kraaled away properly, and that local authorities are alerted to the fact that the lions are in the village)
- b. Act out how lions are important for the **Tourism** industry.



4. Give the children 15mins to prepare their role plays, and then come back together and let each group present what they've prepared.

STAGE 4 – DEBRIEF



At the end of a lesson, ask the children to turn to a partner and tell them as much as they can remember about the lesson in two minutes. The teacher times this activity, and after two minutes, signals it is time to change roles. The second person now takes two minutes to tell as much as they can remember about the lesson.

Important Debrief for the Eco-Mentor

Make sure you have summarised the key points with the children **before they leave the Eco-Club lesson**:

- Why are lions important to protect?
- What we can do to help protect them?

VOCABULARY



- **Biodiversity** - the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.
- **Conservation** – looking after / protecting something
- **Ecologically** - in a way that involves the relation of living organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings.
- **Endangered** - seriously at risk of extinction.
- **Equitable** – fair; equal
- **Sustainable** - able to be maintained at a certain rate or level
- **Tourism** - When people travel for pleasure they are called **tourists**. **Tourism** is the business of encouraging and supporting **tourists**.

