



# South Africa to End Captive Breeding of Lions

[Source: DTE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, South Africa has decided to end **captive breeding of lions (*Panthera leo*)** due to concerns over **trophy hunting** and the use of lion **bones in traditional Chinese medicine** marks a significant shift in wildlife conservation.

## What are the Key Traits of Lions?

- **Subspecies:** There are two subspecies of lions found in the wild. The **African lion** (*Panthera leo leo*) and the **Asiatic lion** (*Panthera leo persica*).
  - African lions used to be spread across most of the African continent, but now are only found in sub-Saharan Africa, with **80% in eastern or southern Africa**.
    - Asiatic Lions are found at [Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary](#) in Gujarat, India.
  - Although both subspecies of lions look very similar, there are some differences.
    - Male Asiatic lions tend to have darker, shorter manes compared to African Lions.
    - Additionally, both male and female Asiatic lions are smaller than African lions.

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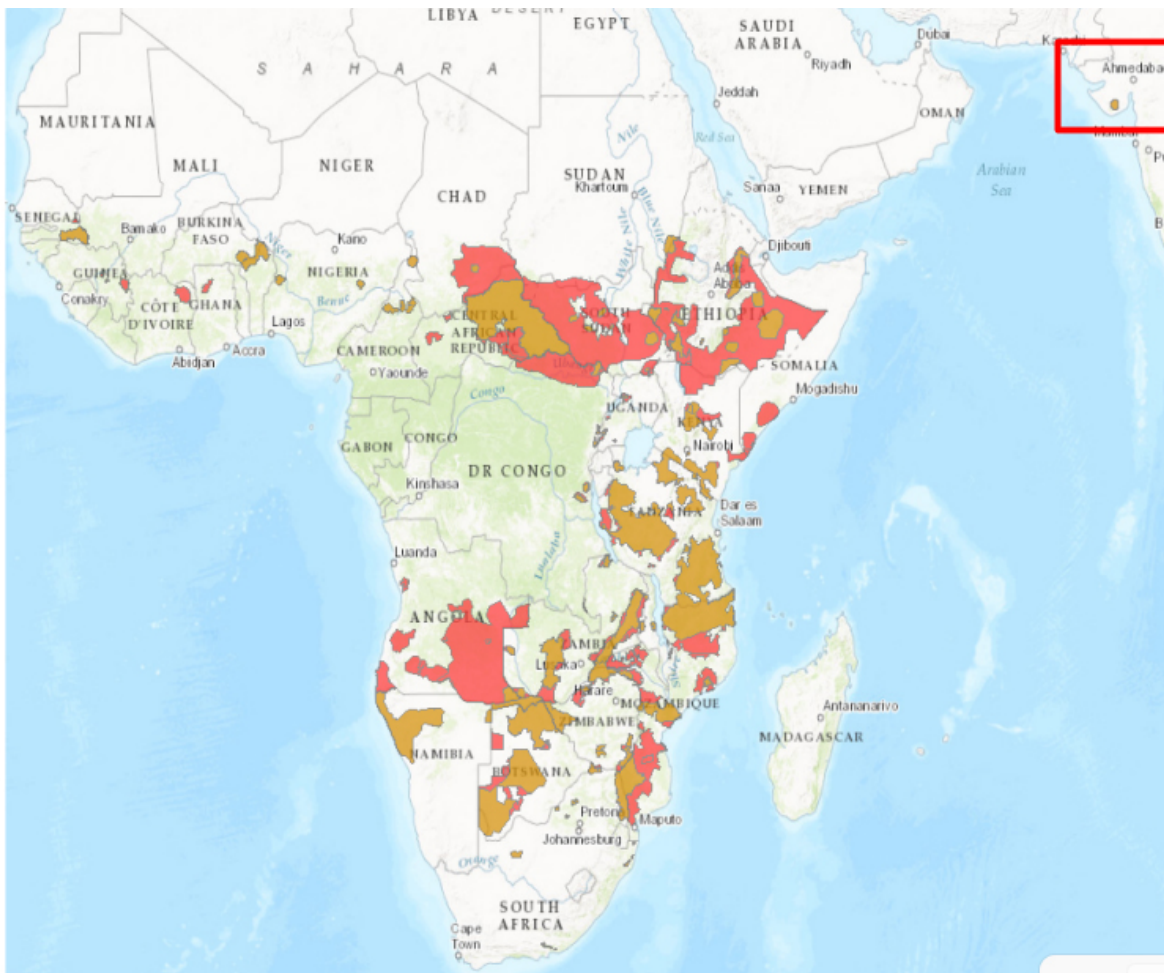


**African lion**



**Asiatic lion**

- **Habitat:** They are most active at night and live in a variety of habitats but prefer **grassland, savanna, dense scrub, and open woodland.**
- **Social Structure:** Lions are the most social big cat, living in groups called **prides.**
  - A pride typically consists of several related females, their cubs, and a few adult males (coalition).
  - **Lionesses are the primary hunters**, while dominant **males are responsible for protecting the pride's territory.**
- **Hunting and Diet:** Lions are apex predators and primarily hunt large ungulates like **wildebeest, zebra, and antelope.**
  - They typically hunt cooperatively, using their agility and teamwork to take down prey.
  - Also, lions are **opportunistic feeders** and will not hesitate to scavenge when the opportunity arises, often stealing kills from other predators.
- **Threats:**
  - They face a multitude of threats from habitat loss and fragmentation to climate change and the reduction of available prey.
  - They are also **targeted by trophy hunters.**
    - Trophy hunting is a form of hunting where the **primary goal is to kill animals for their body parts, such as horns, tusks, or skins**, which are then kept as trophies or souvenirs (and not primarily as food).
- **Conservation Status:**
  - [IUCN Red List](#): **Vulnerable**
  - [CITES](#): **Appendix I**
  - [Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#): **Schedule I**



## Distribution Map Panthera Leo

### Note

- In India, [Project Lion](#) envisages **landscape ecology based conservation** of the Asiatic Lion in Gujarat by integrating conservation and eco-development. The Gujarat government has planned to translocate 40 adult and sub-adult lions to the **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary** in the state, according to a 2023 report by Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

#### Prelims:

#### Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Asiatic lions are naturally found in India only.
2. Double-humped camels are naturally found in India only.
3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only



- (c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

**Q.2 Recently there was a proposal to translocate some of the lions from their natural habitat in Gujarat to which one of the following sites? (2017)**

- (a) Corbett National Park  
(b) Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary  
(c) Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary  
(d) Sariska National Park

**Ans: (b)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/south-africa-to-end-captive-breeding-of-lions>

