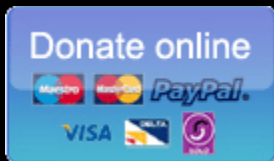
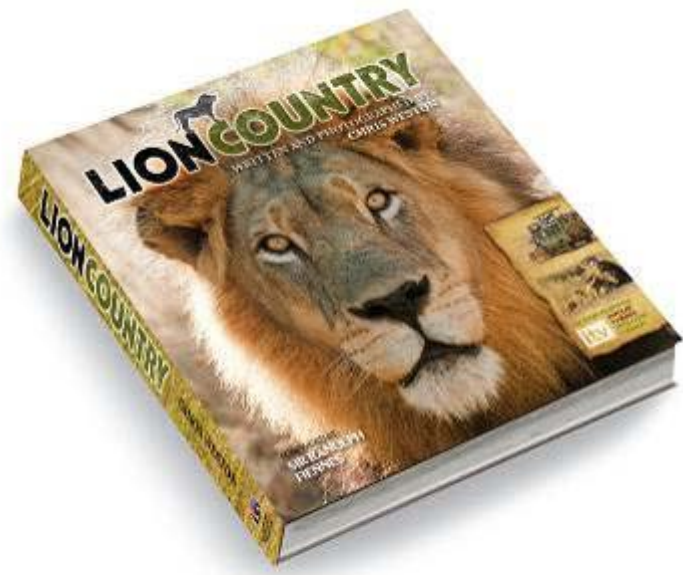




April 2011



find your pride @ [www.lionalert.org](http://www.lionalert.org)



## Win a copy of Lion Country!

We have one copy of the new *Lion Country* book by wildlife photographer Chris Weston to give away, courtesy of Evans Mitchell Books [www.embooks.co.uk](http://www.embooks.co.uk). For your chance to win simply tell us:

***What is the name of the pride we released in Zimbabwe last year?***

If you know the answer, send us an email at [info@lionalert.org](mailto:info@lionalert.org) including your name, postal address and of the course the answer before the 30<sup>th</sup> April. Good luck!

The rules:

- 1) Anyone is free to enter this competition.
- 2) Only one entry per person will go into the prize draw.
- 3) Entries that fail to include the full name and postal address of the entrant along with the answer will not be included in the draw.
- 4) The winner will be chosen at random from all valid entries received by the closing date.
- 5) The prize will be posted to the winner using the postal address provided.
- 6) The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered in to.
- 7) The competition will run until midnight (GMT) 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The winner will be announced in the May edition of the ALERT newsletter.
- 8) ALERT reserves the right to publish the name and country of residence of the winner in any promotional material.
- 9) ALERT takes every step to ensure that the prize is received by the winner in good condition. ALERT however accepts no responsibility for any damage or loss to the prize caused during carriage by postal providers.
- 10) Employees of ALERT, Lion Encounter and Antelope Park are not eligible to enter.

***Coming to the end of their*** hunting career, the 4RTs made a successful kill on a day encounter on the 26<sup>th</sup> March at our Dambwa Forest site. More specifically Tswana did on a sub-adult wildebeest.

It was actually her sister Temi who had drawn everyone's gaze as she chased down one of the group but couldn't get closer than a few metres. Once she had given up, Tswana was finally spotted in the opposite direction jumping on breakfast, and Temi, Rusha and Rundi rushed over to lend a helping hand.



## Life in the Pride...

**When discovering a pride of lions** in the wild such encounters are usually characterised by the subjects being at rest and relaxed; *"poured out like honey in the sun"* as Lindbergh put it in 1966. Perhaps best summing up the lion's daily repertoire of behaviours came from Packer and Pusey who stated; *"to the list of inert noble gases, including krypton, argon and neon, we would add the lion"*.

Schaller noted that visitors often assume that this is because the pride is taking a well-earned rest in the heat of day after a night out on the prowl for prey. But this is not necessarily true as lions will often spend most of the night resting too. Following a study of activity patterns on lions of the Serengeti, he concluded that lions rest 20-21 hours a day, or put another way 87% of their life is spent dormant.



Similarly in Ngamo, we are trying to discover whether the activity levels and behaviours of the pride are comparable to wild lions. By the middle of March, 3120 data points had been recorded with each type of behaviour being further categorised as either active or inactive. The results for the pride as a whole show that the Ngamo lions are relatively spritely; spending a mere 78% of their time in a restive state. But it is the variation between individuals that proved most interesting.

## Lessons in the art of cat-napping: key steps to a good 21 hours of sleep a day

1



At the first signs of tiredness... give in immediately.

2

Don't worry if you're out and about, sleep can take place anywhere... like under a bush, on a rock – even in the middle of the road!



3

Sleep is fine on your own, or you can make a real event of it and get a group of friends together for a nap



4



A word of caution, once you have found a good place to take your nap, others will try and steal it – don't let them.



5

If you can't find time to sleep, take a leaf out of Narnia's book here on the left and multi-task. A half-eaten zebra carcass also makes a perfect head rest.

6



If someone wakes you, do not attempt to get up!...



Just roll over, close your eyes and you'll soon fall asleep again

7



Finally, if you intend to get your 21 hours all in one go, make sure others know you do not wish to be disturbed.



## Such devoted sisters?



Ashanti & Athena



Kenge & Kwali



Nala & Narnia

**Above:** Ashanti keeps an eye out

The laziest of the lot are Nala, Kenge and Milo. Given the option, these three can be found slumbering up to 83% of the time.

Narnia and Kwali fair slightly better at 82% and 81% respectively. A much more respectable and concerted effort then comes from Athena, who only spends 71% of her time in the land of nod, then Phyre who spends a miniscule 69% of her time asleep. Finally, Ashanti – who must be an insomniac - clocks in 66% of time inactive; but given such a large discrepancy what is she up to while the rest of the pride are dreaming of unsuspecting herds of impala?

If we take Kenge, a much more Schaller-like lion in her daily schedule, and compare her activity budget results to those of Ashanti's it actually isn't that Ashanti is swinging on a trapeze or running laps around the release site while the others sleep. Her "activeness" is primarily due to her alertness of her surroundings, spending far greater time visually exploring her environment, and also on grooming and social behaviours.

Another area of the research looks at group dynamics. In theory siblings should have the strongest relationship, but the three sets of sisters all have different levels of association prior to release meaning that some of the strongest bonds that have formed are not necessarily the most traditional. Starting with social interactions between sibling pairs, excluding the period over which Athena and Kenge have been away from the pride, we looked at all interactions that took place between the siblings as a per cent of all interactions that the lion engaged in. We have also shown the name of the lion and percentage each interacts with most.

Ashanti & Athena	9.4%	Ashanti & Phyre	24.5%
Athena & Ashanti	9.3%	Athena & Phyre	32.7%
Kenge & Kwali	13.4%	Kenge & Phyre	17.0%
Kwali & Kenge	22.7%	Kwali & Phyre	31.8%
Nala and Narnia	25.7%	Narnia was the lion Nala interacts with most	
Narnia and Nala	23.7	Nala was the lion Narnia interacts with most	

Nala and Narnia centre their social attentions on one another whilst all others interact with Phyre more than any other lion. Kwali's second choice is her sister, whilst Kenge, Ashanti and Athena interact with their sisters less than with at least two other lions. Next we focussed on how often a sibling pair was together when either one was found on the first sighting of each research session. Again, for the lions that have absent sisters due to mothering duties, this data was removed before making calculations.

Ashanti and Athena	57.6%
Kenge and Kwali	73.4%
Nala and Narnia	86.4%

Finally, we look at the likelihood of a lion's sister being their nearest neighbour. Again, we show the percentage to their sister and the percentage of the lion they are most often nearest to.

Ashanti and Athena	12.8%	Ashanti and Kenge	21.2%
Athena and Ashanti	16.4%	Athena and Kenge	25.9%
Kenge and Kwali	12.0%	Kenge and Ashanti	21.0%
Kwali and Kenge	17.1%	Kwali and Phyre	21.8%
Nala and Narnia	37.5%	Narnia is most likely to be Nala's nearest neighbour	
Narnia and Nala	39.7%	Nala is most likely to be Narnia's nearest neighbour	

Over the course of their lives Ashanti and Athena have spent the most time apart, being raised in separate walking groups for most of stage one. The sisters were reunited in 2008 at Dollar Block. Kwali and Kenge were split after stage one when Kenge was moved to Dollar Block in 2007's release, only being reunited when the pride was brought back at Antelope Park to later be released in the Ngamo site. Nala and Narnia have never spent a day apart in their lives; and as such the data reflects this kinship.

Of course Milo is a special case all by himself when it comes to interactions with the rest of the pride. The group dynamic and social interaction data from 100 research sessions over February and March has been used here to represent his relationship with the female members of the pride.

The group dynamic portion of the data records which lions are present at any given sighting, who their closest associate is at the time and the distance between them. Social interactions look at initiators and receivers of greetings, grooming and play interactions between pride members.

Using the first sighting of Milo on each of these research sessions, we can see that he spends his time accordingly:

- 8% of occasions Milo was not located, or the group dynamic could not be determined.
- 35% of occasions Milo was found on his own.
- 57% of occasions Milo was with at least one female.

Of this final category, the females least likely to be in the group that Milo was found with were, not surprisingly, Kenge (31.6%) and Athena (38.6%) – not surprisingly, due to cub duties.

Of the other five females, Kwali and Narnia are equal on 77.2%, Nala at 80.7%, Ashanti at 87.7% and Phyre 92.2% was the female most likely to be in the group that Milo was found with; however both Ashanti and Phyre have been in oestrus over this time, which is bound to have gotten Milo’s attention.

Milo seems to have clear preferences for his nearest neighbour, however the lion least likely to be his closest associate (Kenge: 7%) is also the lion he is likely to be closest to when she is (1.33m).



Neighbour	% observed as nearest	Av. distance to Milo
Kenge	7%	(1.3m)
Kwali	9%	(26.25m)
Nala	9%	(5.25m)
Narnia	9%	(3.25m)
Athena	13%	(9.83m)
Phyre	20%	(2.33m)
Ashanti	33%	(4.13m)

Turning to Milo’s social interactions over this period we observed Milo initiating only one social interaction; towards Phyre. Receiving them however is an entirely different matter. Over the same time period, he received 26 social interactions, but of course these are heavily affected by absent mothers and other ladies on heat. So for comparison we’ve included the numbers each female initiated on Milo over the same length of time at the end of last year:

Initiating lion	2011	2010
Ashanti	10	5
Athena	3	4
Kenge	1	8
Kwali	0	1
Nala	3	1
Narnia	0	7
Phyre	12	11

ALERT, through the Charities Aid Foundation, has established an SMS service for donations if you want to contribute to our work with the African lion. Simply text **LIONS** to 70303 to donate GB £3\*. Please note that this will only work for UK-based mobile phones, and please ensure that you have the bill payer’s permission before making this donation.

*\*Texts will cost £3, plus your standard network rate for messaging. ALERT will receive at least £2.60.*



## This is still Lion Country...

**With the second series of Lion Country** now finished, ALERT would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took the time to tune in each week. Judging by the comments you left us on our Facebook pages, one or two people seemed to enjoy it.

But just because the lions aren't on your TV screens anymore it doesn't mean you can't stay up to date with them. Just visit on our Facebook group and page (African Lion & Environmental Research Trust) to find out what they've been up to since the cameras stopped filming.

*"I've thoroughly enjoyed having a glimpse into the world of the lion release project you and your team are involved with and the wonderful **lives of the lions** through Lion Country. Thank you so very much for all that you've shown us and even more importantly the marvellous work that is being undertaken."*

*"Wonderful, wonderful programme, **completely fascinating!**"*

*"Just wanted to say well done – it was a really **great series.**"*

*"Loving this week's programme, but sad it's the last in the series. **Can't wait** for the next one."*

*"Lion Country has been an excellent programme, I have really enjoyed it. You all do amazing work."*

*"Watching the programme is amazing, we only get to see a snippet of the hard work you do but it's not difficult to see how dedicated you are. Although emotional it must be really rewarding when you've raised them from babies and then get to see them **released back** to how nature intended. Watching each week just leaves me awestruck!"*

*"Absolutely love the programme and watching the cubs on their **walks, learning** about their surroundings. It's the best hour of the week."*

*"Watched Lion Country last night. **Incredible work** you are doing. So many people are right behind you and supporting you all the way. Had a lump in my throat watching as [the pride] was released."*

*"Fantastic programme again tonight... am loving it. Great to see Milo released with the girls and the all the **successful kills** they've made. All credit to your team."*

# Another great competition

ALERT is proud to announce a special competition to our supporters. This image has very kindly been donated by Steve Bailey, official photographer for the 2011 Safari Awards annual Gala Dinner and Prize Giving Ceremony. <http://www.stevebailey.co.za/>

Born in Liverpool England, Steve moved to Africa at the age of ten. Always having an interest in photography he eventually studied Graphics/Photography. Steve spent 25 years in Zimbabwe before moving to Cape Town in 1983; now living in the Eastern Cape.

The image is a line conversion of a Kalahari black maned lion; photograph and artwork by Steve Bailey. The winner of the competition will receive a print on canvas of dimensions 50 X 36 cm with white surround, unframed, rolled and postage paid. Prize value estimated at ZAR 2,000.

To enter simply make a minimum donation to ALERT of GBP 10.00 by clicking on the donation button (right). See competition rules for multiple and free entries. All funds raised through this promotion will be used by ALERT to source, prepare and maintain suitable release sites for African lions. Good luck!

## Competition rules

- \* Entry to the competition is automatic for anyone making a minimum GBP 10.00 donation to ALERT via the designated on-line donation system located at <http://www.justgiving.com/africanlion/Donate> You may also enter the completion free by sending a letter to ALERT, PO Box 60701, Livingstone, Zambia stating your intention to enter the competition and providing your full name, postal address and contact email.
- \* Anyone is free to enter this competition.
- \* You may enter the competition as many times as you like however each separate donation to ALERT will constitute one entry. Each free postal entry will also constitute one entry
- \* Entries that fail to include the full name, postal address and contact email of the entrant will be disqualified!
- \* The winner will be chosen at random from all valid entries received by the closing date.
- \* The winner will be contacted via email to confirm their postal address. Once done the prize will be posted.
- \* The Judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered in to.
- \* The competition will run from until midnight GMT 30th April 2011 for online entrants and midnight GMT+2 on 15th May 2011 for postal entries. The winner will be announced on 31st May 2011.
- \* ALERT reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition in the event that insufficient funds have been raised through this promotion to cover the costs of operating the competition.
- \* ALERT reserves the right to publish the name and country of residence of the winner in any promotional material.
- \* ALERT takes every step to ensure that the prize is received by the winner in good condition. ALERT however accepts no responsibility for any damage or loss to the prize caused during carriage by the postal provider to the winner.
- \* Employees of ALERT, Lion Encounter and Antelope Park are not eligible to enter.

