

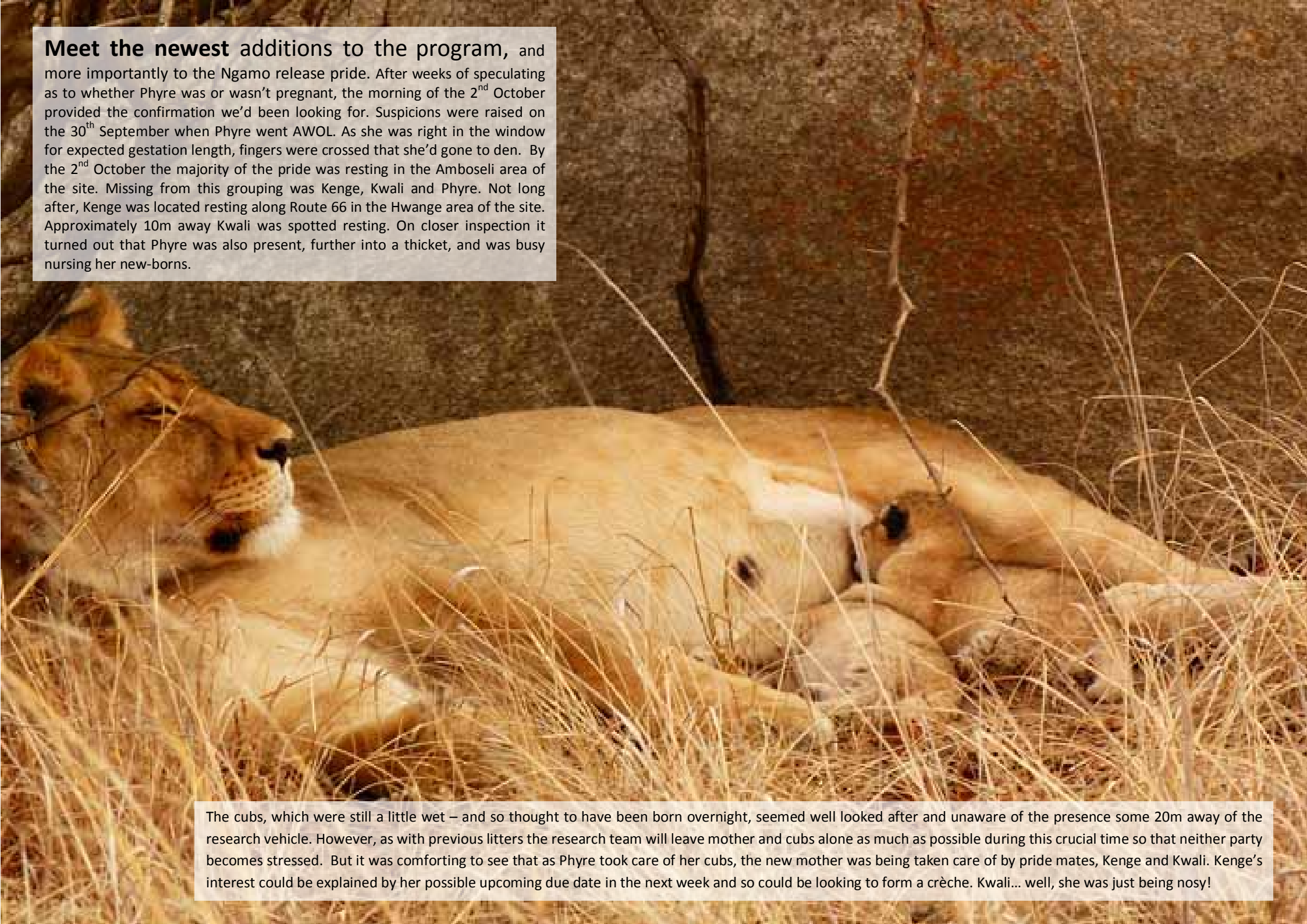


**ALERT**



## Meet the newest additions to the program,

and more importantly to the Ngamo release pride. After weeks of speculating as to whether Phyre was or wasn't pregnant, the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> October provided the confirmation we'd been looking for. Suspicions were raised on the 30<sup>th</sup> September when Phyre went AWOL. As she was right in the window for expected gestation length, fingers were crossed that she'd gone to den. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> October the majority of the pride was resting in the Amboseli area of the site. Missing from this grouping was Kenge, Kwali and Phyre. Not long after, Kenge was located resting along Route 66 in the Hwange area of the site. Approximately 10m away Kwali was spotted resting. On closer inspection it turned out that Phyre was also present, further into a thicket, and was busy nursing her new-borns.

A lioness is lying in tall, dry grass, nursing her cubs. The lioness is on the left, looking towards the right. Her cubs are clustered together in the center and right, nursing. The background is a dry, brownish landscape with some sparse vegetation.

The cubs, which were still a little wet – and so thought to have been born overnight, seemed well looked after and unaware of the presence some 20m away of the research vehicle. However, as with previous litters the research team will leave mother and cubs alone as much as possible during this crucial time so that neither party becomes stressed. But it was comforting to see that as Phyre took care of her cubs, the new mother was being taken care of by pride mates, Kenge and Kwali. Kenge's interest could be explained by her possible upcoming due date in the next week and so could be looking to form a crèche. Kwali... well, she was just being nosy!



Elsewhere in Ngamo this month, AT1 has been keeping the pride on their toes – as usual. Especially mum, Athena.

As AT1 approaches eight months old, Athena has been making increasingly forceful attempts to wean her daughter on to a purely meat diet. But the cub is non-too-happy about this and will often wait until Athena is sleeping and off-guard to steal a pint or two.

But more worrying for the pride was when at the end of the month their young charge disappeared; seemingly into thin air.

Up until this point, the longest mother and cub had spent apart from one another was around half-an-hour. But on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> September she was nowhere to be found. At first, it seemed she might be with aunts Kenge and Phyre who also weren't present, but Athena's behaviour was worrying. Patrolling the site seemingly in search of something, she would often stop to sniff the ground and the air, and also to scan her surroundings. As other lionesses and even dad, Milo, joined in, concern began to mount.

Later in the day, there was still no sign of the cub and Athena's behaviour was becoming increasingly agitated. Pythons are known to frequent the release site, and an eight-month old cub is certainly a vulnerable target.

More than 12 hours later, AT1 was still missing. Just as darkness was falling and hope was fading several members of the pride were found in Amboseli - with AT1. Relief all round, especially for Athena who for the next couple of days kept her mischievous daughter on a rather short leash!

**Five weeks into the Dambwa pride's release,** and the girls have made themselves right at home, thank you very much.

Making kills every few days – and on a couple of occasions making two kills at one time – they're having no trouble sustaining themselves at all. They've focussed primarily on the wildebeest, but have also preyed on impala, puku and as of the 1<sup>st</sup> October made their first kill on the site's biggest and most challenging species; zebra.

What's really stood out however is the incredible bond these six lionesses share. While it isn't uncommon for pride mates to be found in smaller sub-groupings, sometimes for several days at a time before coming together to feed and socialise, these girls simply don't want to be apart. On the few occasions they have been found in smaller groups these separations never last long; and are usually as a result of someone (Kela) sleeping through a move when the rest of the pride head off to drink or hunt.

But one element of pride life has pushed the boundaries of these bonds on occasion. Over the month, we've seen Kela come in oestrus twice and Kwandi on one occasion. With no male presently in the site, the oldest sisters have turned their attentions elsewhere; Kela has directed most of her energies during this time in Leya's direction, while Kwandi seems to find that there's something about Rusha.

With Kela having two of these "episodes" in quick succession, Leya's patience has started to wear a little thin. Although you can't really blame her – who wants a lump like Kela rolling around in your face when you're trying to sleep off the latest meal of wildebeest?





One aspect that has proved challenging – for monitoring the pride, not for the lions themselves – is the terrain and vegetation of the Dambwa Forest. Every few days the signals from the lions' collars will lead us to an impenetrable wall of bushes and trees.



As we head into the hottest months of the year, the lions naturally want to use the best shade they can find to escape the sun. This can be a little frustrating, but they always reappear when stomachs start rumbling!



**Joyce La Vertue** has volunteered at Antelope Park and Lion Encounter over the last 12 months. Now she's taking on more than just the lions:

*"Myself and a group of friends wanted to travel somewhere different and chose to climb Mount Kilimanjaro as a personal challenge. I also decided to take this opportunity to raise money for ALERT."*

*I've volunteered at AP and Livingstone for a total of four months over the last year. Being able to interact with lions and meeting such amazing people was a most incredible experience. I'm hoping to raise \$800 for the project.*

*The climb will take place at the end of February 2012 and will take 10 days to complete reaching the highest point in Africa of 5,895m above sea level. I'm now in training to improve my fitness levels for the trek but altitude sickness is going to be the main problem.*

*I'll be travelling around South America later this month and will be trekking up Machu Picchu in Peru. Though only 2,430m above sea level it'll hopefully give me a good idea of what to expect next year!*

*For anyone able to help me raise my target I've set up an online donations site [here](#)*



**ALERT would like to extend our grateful** thanks to Jenny and John Constable, who took part in the Great North Run. As well as raising funds for their official charity, took extra measures to raise funds for our programs.

*"Some days you really have to push yourself to put those smelly running shoes on. It's one thing getting a place for the Great North Run but it's another actually getting out there and running. Cold winter months, spring rains and hot, sunny days all have to be endured. It's hard work but is so worth it because on the day the atmosphere is second to none. You are one of 54,000 people trying to raise money for a cause that you believe in."*

*Once you are over the start line nothing can prepare you for the sound of thousands of people running together and the cheers of supporters along the route. People even hand out sweets, fruit ice pops, baby wipes and beer, yes beer, all at a cost to themselves.*

*The people of the North East are so generous and hospitable, encouraging every step of the way. On the way round you remind yourself that someone is relying on. Plus those who have pledged to give so generously in these hard times are also relying on you.*

*Finally you cross the finish line and WOW! At this point you feel a little lost; but a welcome cup of tea and a sandwich helps to set you straight.*

*We personally chose the same charity to run for but also independently as a family wanted to raise money for ALERT. We did this weekly by cake sales, and adding what was left of our saved expenses money after the event. We chose ALERT because we genuinely believe in what ALERT is doing, (the fact that lions are my favourite animal has nothing to do with it whatsoever!). We would like to donate £192.00 to ALERT and hope it goes some way towards helping."*

# The Daily Pride

World  
Tourism Day

Intern 2012 [here](#)



## Lion Encounter Zim clean-up for World Tourism Day 2011

The 27<sup>th</sup> of September marked World Tourism Day. A week-long series of events was planned in the town of Victoria Falls and project staff and volunteers got stuck in.



*While the project's volunteers took part in a town clean-up, Lion Encounter Zimbabwe staff took part in a march through the town centre*

This year's theme was a celebration of tourism's role in linking the cultures of the world through travel. The town of Victoria Falls is one of Zimbabwe's prime tourist attraction; primarily as being home to the Falls themselves, but also for its setting within the Zambezi National Park.

With buffalo and elephant being regular visitors through the town centre, volunteers set to work on a litter pick while LE staff joined a march. Hopefully with less litter in the high street this urban big 5 spectacle can continue for everyone to enjoy – litter free!

### Chisa's got talent!

Chisa at Vic Falls played host to Britain's Got Talent judge, David Hasslehoff.

While Chisa kept his cool around his celebrity guest, the Hoff was a little more star-struck. And rightly so.



Buffalo-botherer, Zambezi

With so much going on in later stages of the program at the moment, it's important to remember where those prides came from; stage one. Without this valuable time spent in the African bush as youngsters neither the Ngamo nor Dambwa prides would be experiencing the success which both are currently enjoying.

From the walking cubs the most sterling effort this month has to be from 10-month old Zambezi at Livingstone. On the 10<sup>th</sup> September's she and group mates, Munali and Madoda, zeroed in on a lone buffalo... Seconds later Zambezi had jumped on its back as her companions circled the beast.

Perhaps a little ambitious at such a young age, but having already made her first kill in August on a vervet monkey it's clear she's going to give the game a lot to think about in the coming months.

The Night Encounter lions in stage one are also impressive; one most notably – Kutanga of Antelope Park's 3K group.

Over the last month alone she's made a very tidy three kills; on impala, duiker and a juvenile kudu.

Approaching two-and-a half years old the Ks are nearing the end of their encounter program, but just starting his is Moyo.

On an early morning day encounter for the MKs on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September he brought down a sub-adult zebra. Not bad for a first effort!



## Internship update

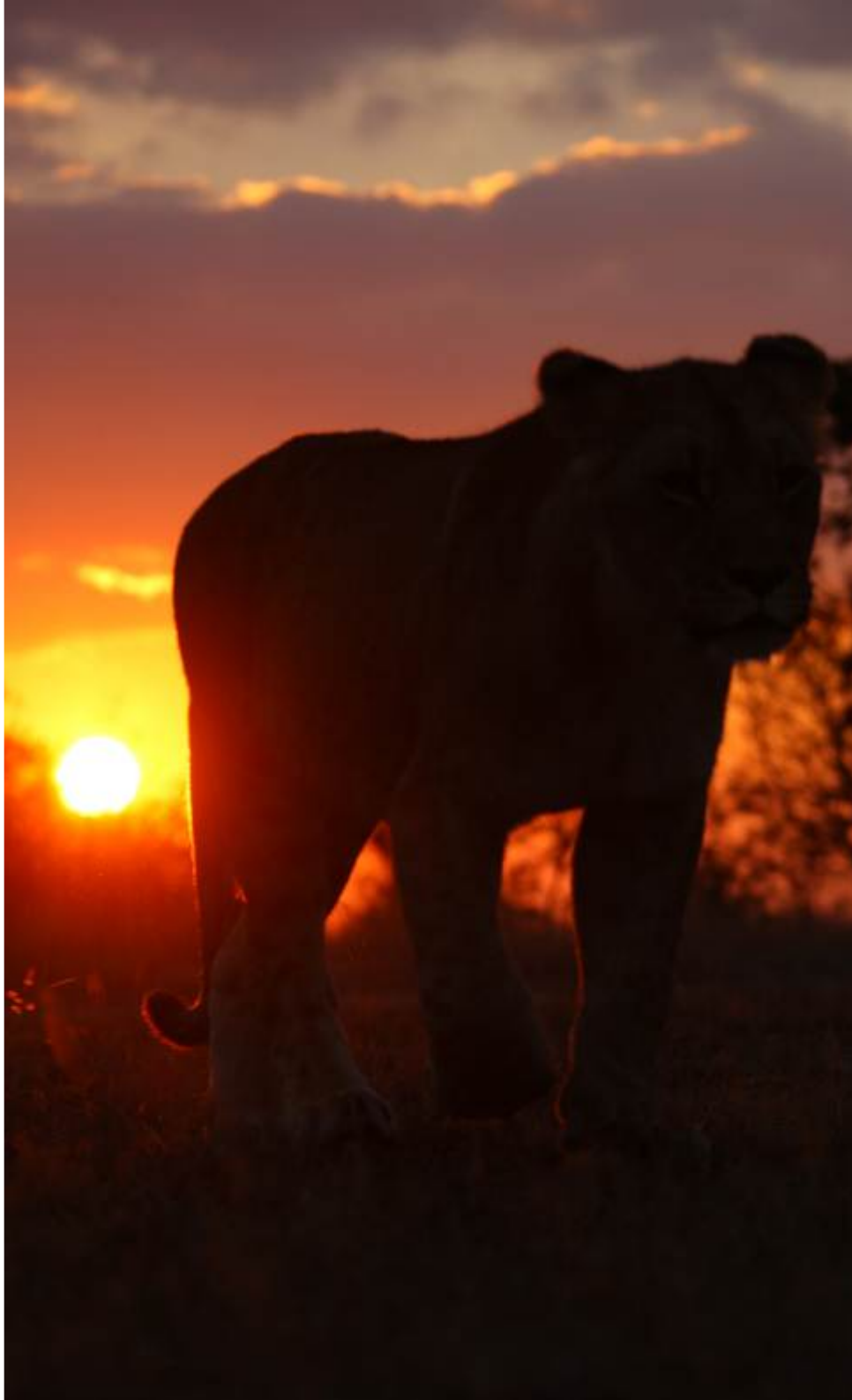
**Currently onsite at Lion Encounter Zambia** is intern, Brittanie Broughton. In Livingstone for two months, Brittanie is assisting the lions' manager as an Animal Management & Welfare intern.

*"My reasons for becoming an intern with Lion Encounter are that I wanted to gain hands-on experience with lions. I'm greatly interested in practical conservation and feel that there is little opportunity for people wanting to gain such experiences with wildlife. I feel that the internship that Lion Encounter offers is perfect for me to gain the skills I need for a future career in wildlife conservation."*

*As an Animal Management Intern my roles and responsibilities involve daily health checks on the lions and preparing meat for the lions. The part which I find most interesting is researching any health issues with the lions or their main food source "donkey meat". I am also finding meat prep very interesting as I can really get stuck in and learn about the anatomy of the animal.*

*I am enjoying getting to know and understand the behaviours and individual characters of the lions. I feel privileged to be a part of a conservation breeding programme, working towards a brighter future for the African Lion."*

Lions' Manager, Cara Watts: *"Brittanie has been a great help for the lion team, especially helping out in training sessions for the staff covering such areas as parasites and diseases that may affect the lions and their feed. Brittanie has worked really hard to get to know all the lions, which is vital for monitoring any changes in behaviour and any problems."*



# Bemba, Bisa and Rwanda move to the Dambwa Forest

**October 4<sup>th</sup> was a huge day at Lion Encounter Zambia.** Bemba, Bisa and Rwanda were moved from Lion Encounter's base in the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park to the Dambwa Forest.

Before the move there was a small, or rather large problem to take care of first. Having undergone a vasectomy earlier this year, two-year old Rwanda was castrated. The vasectomy was opted for originally as this meant he would continue to produce testosterone and keep his mane whilst also preventing him from breeding. However, he contracted numerous infections and has suffered for some time with painful swelling. Despite the best efforts to treat this with antibiotics the decision was made to castrate him.

Dr Ian Parsons performed the procedure, as well as the anesthetizing of Bemba and Bisa. Once all three were asleep and Rwanda had been dealt with, the trio were loaded up and moved the 10km to the Dambwa site. The trio was moved into Hwange enclosure, which is next door to Mala Mala that currently houses Rundi and Tswana; two lionesses of three-years old who grew up with the Dambwa Pride.

The intention is to let the two groups get to know one another through the fence line over the coming weeks and eventually introduce them to one another for a larger social grouping.



**Above:** Bisa gives Rwanda a rude awakening at Dambwa

Bisa was the first to come around once the reversal was administered. Bemba soon followed, and Rwanda was last. Although his recovery was speeded up when Bisa jumped all over him.

Sadly, their entire grouping couldn't join them at Dambwa. Rwanda's sisters, Ruma and Rufiji, have suffered for some time with what has been diagnosed as a degenerative joint disorder. As their quality of life had deteriorated rapidly over recent months and would only worsen in future the decision was made, after lengthy consultation, to euthanize the sisters. They are greatly missed.