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The year 2020 will be remembered in history as an unpredictable and tragic time that affected the entire globe. Whilst the Blood Lions team did not escape the pandemic by any means, it did not halt or deter their incredible dedication, passion and drive to make a difference and to create change in the commercial predator breeding industry.

The addition of Dr Louise de Waal as the campaign manager at the start of the year was a significant boost for the campaign. She soon became an important member of the team, adding her vital knowledge and experience to the work that we do.

This coming year will be no different as we strive for even greater public awareness and policy change in respect of captive lion breeding and keeping in South Africa.

Nicola Gerrard
I was fortunate to join this small but passionate team at the start of 2020 and to say that this turned into a challenging year for everyone around the globe is an understatement. The COVID-19 pandemic and its related unprecedented restrictions had a direct impact on our team and many of our activities. However, this situation proved yet again that people are resilient, and our team is no different, quickly adjusting to the “new normal”, working remotely and online.

The travel bans that were in place for most of the year and the restrictions on face-to-face meetings and events, brought a new set of challenges and impacted on some of our planned initiatives. It forced us to become even more creative in reaching our audiences around the world for awareness raising and educational campaigns. This led to among others the creation of a successful series of webinars unpacking South Africa’s captive lion breeding industry. Our main focus for the year was reaching the High-Level Panel appointed by the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. In collaboration with World Animal Protection, we made a substantial submission and a presentation to the High-Level Panel on policies, welfare issues and zoonotic diseases relating to the commercial captive lion breeding industry.

Lockdown created unexpectedly conducive conditions for serious scientific research. We are very proud to have our first peer-reviewed paper on African Lions and Zoonotic Diseases: Implications for Commercial Lion Farms in South Africa published in the scientific journal Animals. A second paper on the welfare challenges relating to commercial captive lion breeding has been submitted to the Journal of Animal Welfare and is awaiting peer-review. Both have been in collaboration with and made possible by the generous support of the World Animal Protection.

We look back on an exciting and successful year despite all its hardship for so many people around the world. A special thank you to our primary donor, the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust, for their continued support as well as all other Blood Lions supporters. A big thank you to the team for their never diminishing energy, support and hard work, and for being patient with me while settling into the job.

Dr Louise de Waal
Policy Reform

Policy reform and lobbying remains one of Blood Lions main objectives to achieve lasting change within South Africa’s commercial captive lion breeding industry. Our focus for 2020 was mostly on the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), the Minister of DEFF, and the High-Level Panel appointed by the Minister: an advisory committee tasked to review policies, legislation and practices related to the management, breeding, hunting, trade and handling of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros.

The High-Level Panel engagements as well as the specific campaigns described below offer a good overview of our 2020 policy reform activities.

High-Level Panel Engagements

In collaboration with the World Animal Protection, we sent a joint submission to the High-Level Panel in June, consisting of three in-depth documents:

1. A review of national legislation and policy as well as the history of ongoing welfare issues pertaining to commercial captive lion breeding industry in South Africa.

   We suggested that the policy governing the industry is inadequate, regulation deficient and lacking transparency. Furthermore, we highlighted a history of animal welfare concerns and non-compliance with regards to a host of relevant legislation, including the Animal Protection Act, National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, and the Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations.

2. A baseline inventory for pathogenic organisms known to affect both captive and wild lions from data obtained in a review of the scientific literature.

   We pointed out that it is likely that farmed lions could play a central role in the emergence, amplification and transmission of zoonotic diseases.

3. A summary of the welfare challenges facing lions in captivity and its significance for lion farming.

   We highlighted the lack of publicly available scientific data on welfare issues in commercial captive lion breeding operations and the lack of transparency from the industry.

   We believe that the findings presented to the High-Level Panel highlighted the urgent need for DEFF to change the status quo of the commercial captive lion breeding industry in South Africa. Given the considerable scale of farming and trade of lions in our country, we concluded that the only effective way to safeguard both people and animals throughout the industry is to shift away from commercial captive breeding operations. We recognised that a phased approach may be required to provide long-term solutions with minimal impact to livelihoods.
Specifically, we strongly recommended that the High-Level Panel and the Minister should take steps necessary to facilitate:

- An immediate end to activities that involve high levels of direct interaction between people and lions and their derivatives.
- A commitment to phase out breeding practices on commercial farms, to ensure the current lions are the last generation bred in captivity.
- The provision of adequate veterinary care for the lions currently housed in commercial facilities, to ensure a high standard of health and welfare for the remainder of their lives in captivity.
- The implementation of a zero annual export quota for lion parts and derivatives in conjunction with the destruction of pre-existing stockpiles of lion bone, to reduce the demand for commercial captive breeding operations.
- A full national audit to bring increased transparency to the industry and the steps taken to end commercial breeding of lions on farms. At the same time, ensure that full details are publicly available and updated regularly on the progress made to scale back and shut down commercial facilities.
Furthermore, based on the evidence we provided in our three submission documents, failure to act to end the commercial captive breeding of lions in South Africa could carry potential severe consequences for not only increasing welfare issues for captive lions and other big cats, but also the health and safety of the public and individuals working within the industry.

Subsequently, in November, we were invited to do a presentation and Q&A session relating to our submission. Part of the presentation focus went beyond the submission content and highlighted aspects of the lion breeding industry, such as the lack of conservation value, the threat to lions in the wild, the economic insignificance, equitability and the potential damage to Brand South Africa.

The High-Level Panel turned over their recommendations to Minister Barbara Creecy in mid-December and the Minister is yet to announce her decision.
With the world in hard lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in partnership with the Lion Coalition we embarked on a World Health Day campaign (WHD) (7 April 2020). To signify this more than usual imperative day, we sent an Open letter to the World Health Organisation (WHO) calling for them to:

“Publicly and unequivocally state the proven link between live wildlife markets, and the serious and established threats to human health.”

The letter was originally signed by 240+ leading animal welfare and conservation organisations from around the world and sent to the Director General of the WHO. The letter was resent on World Environment Day (21 April 2020) with an additional 100 signatures calling on the WHO to release a formal position statement containing clear advice to governments to institute comprehensive and rigorously enforced bans on live wildlife markets, and to close down the commercial wildlife trade, which pose serious risks to public health.

In collaboration with the Lion Coalition, we also initiated and hosted a successful and impactful Twitter Chat with the hashtag #BanWildlifeMarkets on WHD. The event aimed to highlight the facts and future threats associated with zoonotic pathogens and a means of getting members of the public involved in the conversation.

The hashtag #BanWildlifeMarkets trended in 7th position in South Africa and in 2nd in Kenya during the event. It was used in over 7,400 posts by 6,700 accounts, reaching 39.8 million people over a month period.
Following the World Health Day campaign, one of our Youth Ambassadors proposed a photo and nomination challenge to get the youth involved in the call to ban wildlife markets using the #BanWildlifeMarkets hashtag. The campaign called on members of the public to post a picture using the hashtags #BanWildlifeMarkets and #StopTheSpread, copying prescribed text to their post, and nominating their friends to do the same. The challenge quickly snowballed and became particularly popular on Instagram.

In further collaboration with our Youth Ambassadors, the #BanWildlifeMarkets Pledge and a video were created motivating the public to become involved. During 2002, the pledge has been signed by 671 people and the video received over 3,500 views on Facebook.

To commemorate Youth Day in South Africa (16 June 2020), the campaign continued with an Open Letter to the various Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Environment, Agriculture, Tourism and Health of the South African Government urging them to set a zero CITES lion bone export quota in support of the global call to ban live wildlife markets, as well as the use of wildlife products for Traditional Chinese Medicine. The letter was signed by 622 people, but it sadly did not receive any response.
Raising awareness and educating the public on issues relating to the commercial captive predator breeding industry in South Africa remains a major objective for both the Blood Lions and Youth For Lions campaigns.

During 2020, our digital campaign focused on the social (un)acceptability of being involved in the captive breeding, tourism-related interactions, bone trade and traditional medicine, as well as facilitating reputational damage by stigmatising the captive breeding industry and highlighting the serious potential risks to human health.

To this end, we ran mini-campaigns during the various environmental days in the global calendar, including World Tiger Day, World Animal Day and World Tourism Day. All mini-campaigns spoke to our overall goals, but the main activation of course took place on World Lion Day.

Much of this work has been made possible through the generous support of the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust and the World Animal Protection, for which we are extremely grateful.
In honour of World Lion Day (10 August 2020), Blood Lions in partnership with World Animal Protection launched the unique **800 Voices for 800 Lions** campaign to mobilise the public and urge the South African government to set a zero CITES lion bone export quota. The campaign title aimed to express through art the legal CITES export quota of 800 lion skeletons per year.

Our first artwork was the powerful mural by the well-known Durban street artist, Giffy Duminy, on the promenade in Durban (KZN). We wanted to inspire the public to raise their voice for lions by letting their imagination flow freely in creating a lion masterpiece, whether in painting, drawing, photography, music, poetry or dance. We aimed for 800 pieces of lion art, representing the quota of 800 lion skeletons South Africa exported every year for use in traditional medicine that have no proven curative benefits.

To inspire people to get involved and submit their artworks, a [video clip](#) was produced explaining the issues and the campaign. The full and short versions of the video clip were viewed over 430,000 times on the various social media platforms.

We are incredibly proud that the #800Lions campaign, as it has become known, reached 163% of its goal, with over 1,300 lion art submissions from across the globe with a large percentage coming from the global youth. To showcase just 100 of these beautiful pieces of lion art that were submitted to the campaign, a video clip was created. The full gallery of lion art can be found on the #800Lions webpage.

Campaign statistics and the overview video were submitted to Minister Barbara Creecy together with a request for a meeting, urging the Minister to decide against a continuation of the legal trade in lion bones and other body parts. Unfortunately, the Minister has been unwilling to speak to us in person and is still deliberating on the High-Level Panel recommendations that were presented to the Minister just before Christmas 2020.
Blood Lions Official
@Blood_Lions

A1 - Lion bones are used to make into jewellery with pink bones being the most sought after.

Pink bones are marketed as having been created by deboning the animal alive, #WorldLionDay #800Lions
@BarbaraCreecy_ how is this okay?
@MoveTheWorldAF @environmentza

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Blood Lions

Save the Date

10 August | 15h00 SAST

World Lion Day

Twitter Storm

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Trends

1 - Trending
#InfluencerChallenge
40.8K Tweets

2 - Trending
#ImTiredOfThisLockdown
3.577 Tweets

3 - Trending
#29AugustCitizensMarch
3.950 Tweets

4 - Trending
#WorldLionDay
34K Tweets

5 - Trending
#youpromisedtomarryme
6,589 Tweets
#800Lions

The legal CITES lion bone export quota set in 2018 was 800 skeletons per year. The 800 pieces of lion art represent the TWO lions killed per DAY in South Africa for their bones to be used in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

1,301 people submitted lion art

- **UNDER 16 YR OLDS**: 51%
- **SOUTH AFRICANS**: 66%
- **ASIA, INCL. VIETNAM & CHINA**: 6%
During a year of lockdown and major restrictions, the Blood Lions and Youth For Lions campaigns proudly launched the very first Webinar series aimed at unpacking the various elements of the captive predator breeding industry in South Africa.

The episodes took place every third Thursday and were hosted by Cath and Louise covering topics, including CON in conservation, animal welfare, wild versus captive lions, and a virtual screening of the Blood Lions film followed by a live Q&A.

Each webinar episode attracted on average 45 participants, who were actively engaged with the webinar hosts. All the webinars were recorded and have a permanent home on the Blood Lions YouTube Channel.
A particular focus during this lockdown year was on scientific research in collaboration with researchers from World Animal Protection. This led to a joint study, reviewing 150 scientific peer-reviewed papers on pathogens associated with captive and wild lions. The study identified more than 63 pathogens that affect both wild and captive lions, as well as 83 diseases and clinical symptoms associated with these pathogens, highlighting the potential harm these pathogens can cause to the health of both domestic and wild animals and people.

This research led to Blood Lions first peer-reviewed paper published in the scientific journal Animals: African Lions and Zoonotic Diseases: Implications for Commercial Lion Farms in South Africa.

A similar literature review was carried out on the welfare challenges relating to commercial captive lion breeding in South Africa and another research paper was submitted to the Journal of Animal Welfare and is awaiting peer-review.
**Awards**

We are proud to announce that Blood Lions in conjunction with Love Africa Marketing won "Most Compelling Digital Story" in the inaugural African Travel Week Travel & Tourism Awards in May 2020. The WTM Awards aimed to shine a spotlight on "exceptional individuals and businesses which have written the most compelling stories in the book of African travel for 2019/20".

Blood Lions welcomed positive outcomes of two monumental court cases in 2020. In June, we won a court application lodged by Jacobs Safaris CC - trading as Ukutula Lodge. Ukutula Lodge felt it was defamed by the Blood Lions documentary after being included in the film as one of the largest captive predator facilities that offers cub petting. The court application, which was launched against the Blood Lions film in September 2019, was dismissed with costs by Honourable Mr Justice Koen in the High Court of South Africa. The full Blood Lions Statement can be read [HERE](#).

In September, Blood Lions won their second court case, this time against Zanchieta Wild Cat Farm. The court application, launched by Zanchieta in 2015, sought urgent injunctive relief against the Blood Lions® film producers for alleged defamatory images and footage of Zanchieta included in the film. The application was originally heard and dismissed in the High Court in 2015. Subsequently, Zanchieta filed an application for leave to appeal, which was granted in 2017. The Appeal was eventually heard and dismissed on the same day (4 September 2020) by the full bench of the High Court of South Africa in Pietermaritzburg. The full Blood Lions Statement can be read [HERE](#).

A huge thank you goes to our legal team of Bowman Gilfillan and in particular our Advocates AJ Dickson SC and Andrea Gabriel SC for their incredible support on both these court cases.
2020 Campaign Growth

ONLINE & PRINT MEDIA
Advertising Value Equivalent: ZAR 19 Million
Circulation: 223 Million

VIDEO CLIPS
Views: >1 million

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS *
Facebook: 119,284
Twitter: 9,068
Instagram: 3,658

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH *
Facebook: 7,292,238
Twitter: 1,925,100
Instagram: 429,722

* Stats are Blood Lions & YouthForLions combined

The Youth’s Call to #BanWildlifeMarkets

World Lion Day – 800 Voices for 800 Lions

World Health Day – Ban Wildlife Trade

World Tourism Month – Let’s Do Better. Be Better.

Blood Lions Marks its Milestones – There is Hope?
Blood Lions endeavours to spend the vast majority of funding granted on the intended project objectives, by keeping its overheads as low as possible. We do not for example have dedicated office space. Our core cost for admin and overhead is around the 10%.

A 2020 financial statement can be obtained upon request.