On Sunday, Minister Creecy announced that she and her department would support the majority findings of the High Level Panel, and to end the commodification of this iconic species. Since my decision to make the film Blood Lions almost ten years ago, our objective has always been to end the captive lion breeding industry and we, together with our colleagues and our partners worldwide who have worked so long and hard to bring this about, applaud the minister for this courageous decision. Blood Lions will do all that we can to support those implementing these recommendations.

Pippa Hankinson
Founder and Director, Blood Lions
May 2021
Message from Blood Lions

Although significant COVID-19 challenges continued to create havoc for the global population throughout 2021, the widespread distribution of vaccines combating the virus also gave us hope for a level of normality.

However, for the Blood Lions team “hope” got a very different meaning when Minister Barbara Creecy of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, made her landmark announcement on Sunday 2nd May 2021. In a live press conference, she stated that South Africa would no longer breed captive lions, keep lions in captivity, or use captive lions or their derivatives commercially. This crucial and long-awaited step towards changing the status quo of South Africa’s commercial captive lion breeding and keeping industry literally had our team in tears of joy.

The subsequent release of the High-Level Panel’s nearly 600-page report and the ensuing draft Policy Position document on the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros shaped to a large extent the focus of our remaining 2021 campaigns. The road ahead to a responsible and successful phase-out of this industry will no doubt be a long and bumpy one, but we sense an important change in attitude and we applaud the Minister, her department and the HLP for taking such bold steps.

While we look back on a momentous year, I would like to thank all our donors and in particular our longstanding donors - the Marchig Animal Welfare Trust and the World Animal Protection. Without their generous support we would not be able to realise our achievements. Also, a heartfelt thank you to all our loyal supporters around the world for their continued backing. And of course, a big thumbs up to the Blood Lions team for their never diminishing passion, energy and camaraderie.

Dr Louise de Waal
Campaign Manager and Director
Message from Youth For Lions

Despite the unavoidable COVID-19 related restrictions during 2021 that created challenges for any in-person Youth For Lions presentations and Blood Lions film screenings, the Youth For Lions team worked hard throughout the year to raise the profile of the campaign, while still supporting the Blood Lions campaigns and joint endeavours.

Youth For Lions now has its own online home with a dedicated website that is more vibrant and youthful than ever. One can’t help but smile when scrolling through the colourful webpages with downloadable learning resources, species facts and various ways to help the campaign.

Our redesigned Ambassador Programme grew in leaps and bounds this year and we are very proud of our two Youth Ambassadors, Makaira Kerkhof and Stephanie-Emmy Klarmann, who achieved Silver Level of the programme.

Following the Minister’s momentous announcement in May, the overarching feeling is one of optimism and we are incredibly proud of Minister Creecy for taking this vital step in the right direction. The youth showed up in a big way for our Youth Day campaign with their many messages of support for the Minister, which really warmed the heart and inspired all of us to do better.

Our wildlife is our heritage.
Our youth are our future.
Both need nurturing and protection.

Cath Jakins
Coordinator
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 and keeping industry. Our focus in 2021 built on 2020 campaign achievements. We continued to call for a zero CITES lion bone export quota in the short term, with a view to revoke the CITES Appendix II annotation for African lion and to ultimately end the lion bone quota system.

Our stakeholder engagements have focused mostly on the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the Minister of DFFE, and the High-Level Panel (HLP), as well as on strengthening our relationships with like-minded NGOs to facilitate a united lobbying voice from the animal welfare and conservation sector.

Minister’s HLP Announcement

On Sunday 2nd May 2021, Minister Barbara Creecy announced that South Africa would no longer breed captive lions, keep lions in captivity, or use captive lions or their derivatives commercially. She stated that she had instructed her Department (DFFE) to put processes in place to halt the sale of captive lion derivatives, the hunting of captive bred lions and tourist interactions with captive lions, including so-called voluntourism.

"The HLP identified that the captive lion breeding industry poses risks to the sustainability of wild lion conservation resulting from the negative impact on ecotourism, which funds lion conservation and conservation more broadly, the negative impact on the authentic wild hunting industry, and the risk that trade in lion parts poses to stimulating poaching and illegal trade", said Minister Creecy in her announcement.

BREAKING NEWS

This decision is highly significant and we commend the Minister in her decisive leadership to bringing an end to the commercial captive lion breeding industry. At the time, we pointed out that there may be grey areas in the HLP recommendations and its proposed implementations. Hence, we urged the Minister and DFFE to be cognisant of such potential loopholes that could be utilised by the commercial captive lion breeding industry in continuing the various spin-off activities.

Given the considerable scale of farming and trade of captive lions in our country, to responsibly end this industry will take a considerable period of time and Blood Lions would welcome the chance to play a role in assisting the Minister, the various Departments and entities in the phasing out process to come.
Draft Policy Position

Following the Minister’s announcement, in June 2021 DFFE released a draft Policy Position for public comment on the Conservation and Ecologically Sustainable use of Elephant, Lion, Leopard and Rhinoceros.

We are hugely encouraged by the absolute shift and transformation in policy thinking, to see animal welfare and wellbeing front and centre of South Africa’s future wildlife sector, as well as a redefinition of the concept of ecologically sustainable use. In our comments submitted, we voiced our general support of the draft Policy Position and in particular the section on halting the domestication and exploitation of lion, and close captive lion facilities. However, we also highlighted some gaps and loopholes.

On behalf of our 200 Born to Live Wild signatories, half are internationally recognised South African tour operators and representing 2,738 members worldwide, we sent a letter of support of the goals in the draft Policy Position to end the predator breeding industry in South Africa. Our Born to Live Wild signatories have pledged not to support any facility that contributes to the cycle of commercial exploitation of lions and other wild animal species.

Implementation of the intended policy objectives in the draft Policy Position will enable the restoration of South Africa’s reputation as a leader in wildlife conservation and as an ethical, responsible and authentic tourism destination with iconic wild lions.

The final Policy Position is yet to be released.

General Policy Position Objectives Blood Lions Supports:
• Intention to increase wildness, naturalness and wellbeing of fauna in conservation policy.
• Adoption of the One Welfare Approach.
• Enhanced and updated approach to ecologically sustainable use.
• Adoption of transformative African approach to conservation and ecologically sustainable use, consistent with Ubuntu.
On 15 March, the Blood Lions Campaign Manager did a full presentation on the commercial captive lion breeding industry for the newly appointed shadow and deputy-shadow Ministers for Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment from the Democratic Alliance, which was well-received.

On 5 May, Blood Lions had an engagement with Luke Pollard, British Labour MP and Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, through collaboration with the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, to inform him further on South Africa’s captive lion breeding industry, the HLP process and the importance of a trophy importation ban to curb this industry.

On 17 June, Blood Lions took part in a welfare and advocacy NGO engagement with Minister Creecy with a major outcome - the Minister’s commitment to instigate a Welfare Forum.

On 29 June, we were invited by the US Department of State together with Panthera and the Environmental Investigation Agency for an analytical exchange on the impact of South Africa’s lion bone trade on efforts to combat wildlife trafficking.
Raising awareness and educating the public on issues relating to the commercial captive lion breeding and keeping industry in South Africa remains a major objective for both the Blood Lions and Youth For Lions campaigns.

During 2021, our campaigns focused predominantly on the HLP report, the Minister’s announcement and the ensuing draft Policy Position document. To this end, we ran a number of panel discussions, webinars, petitions and mini-campaigns throughout the year as well as coinciding with the various environmental days in the global calendar, such as Youth Day, World Tiger Day, World Lion Day and World Tourism 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.

“Minister Creecy’s commitment to develop a Policy on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use and to "adopt a one welfare approach for wildlife" is not only welcomed but also applauded by SATSA and our large member base across the tourism industry. There is a long and hard road ahead for her and her department and we will support their efforts in whatever way we can as it's imperative that the recommendations are implemented, and done so effectively. In our representations we argued against captive lion breeding and its ancillary activities - I can't be happier that this day has come.

David Frost, CEO
SATSA
Panel Discussions & Webinars

Blood Lions hosted two very successful virtual Panel Discussions in March 2021 to debate the future of South Africa’s captive lion breeding industry. We invited various experts in the field to sit on both panels, including Dr Paul Funston (lion ecologist), Prof Werner Scholtz (environmental and animal welfare law specialist), Dr Peter Caldwell (carnivore specialist veterinarian), and Dr Jan Schmidt-Burbach (wildlife veterinarian and animal welfare specialist). We invited representatives from the commercial lion breeding industry as well, but they unfortunately declined to attend politely. Both sessions were expertly moderated by Jeremy Maggs [ex-eNCA news anchor].

Both panel discussions were hosted on Zoom, streamed live to Facebook, and recorded for upload to YouTube. The panel discussions attracted a total attendance of 335 people on Zoom and reached an incredible 14,040 people on Facebook.

After the Minister’s announcement in May, we also hosted a live webinar “Reflecting and Reporting on the HLP Recommendations”. Our four directors took a closer look at the HLP report, its captive lion recommendations and the consequences these may have for the captive lion breeding industry and the lions held at those facilities. We received an abundance of questions during the webinar, which led to the Unpacking the HLP Recommendations social media campaign answering the Top 10 most frequently asked questions.

Links to all three YouTube recordings can be found on the media page at the end of this report.
During the week following the Minister’s unexpected announcement, our directors and campaign team reflected on the ground-breaking news and shared their thoughts with our followers. We asked various South African partner organizations, including Tourvest, SATSA, Panthera and Wildlife ACT, for their thoughts on the HLP recommendations. The quotes collected reached nearly 150,000 people online.

It quickly became clear that there were lots of unanswered questions following the HLP recommendations and, where possible, we felt it prudent to raise awareness and educate the public on the recommendations and the consequences these may have for the captive lion breeding industry.

We narrowed down approximately 40 questions received during the webinar and on social media and compiled the 10 most frequently asked questions into a mini-campaign titled Unpacking the HLP Recommendations:

1. What has Minister Creecy decided in terms of the captive lion breeding industry in South Africa?
2. What will happen to all the lions currently in captivity?
3. Why can’t they just be rewilded?
4. What about poaching of wild lions and other illegal activity?
5. What is going to happen to the breeders and keepers of big cats, and those who offer tourist interactions?
6. Will some of the lions go to sanctuaries and will those sanctuaries be financially supported by the Government?
7. Does this apply to other species, like cheetah and tigers?
8. Will the permitting system be updated and how will the DFFE overcome the 9+1 issue?
9. Will this mean that certain regulations, like the Animal Improvement Act [AIA], may be repealed?
10. What is the timeline for implementation?

This impromptu campaign has proven to be very popular on both the Blood Lions and Youth For Lions platforms reaching nearly 100,000 people and receiving over 2,300 interactions on the Blood Lions Facebook page alone.
For Youth Day [16 June], our youth showed their full support to the Minister and her Department for their intention to develop and implement a responsible phase-out plan for the commercial captive lion breeding industry. Together with our Youth Ambassadors and other Youth For Lions supporters, we produced an inspiring video clip showcasing their thoughts and reflections on the HLP recommendations for captive lions.

We also asked young South Africans to be a part of the solution and the future by sending messages of support to Minister Creecy and DFFE using Kudoboard – a virtual bulletin board. The Kudoboard with nearly 60 messages of support was sent to Minister Creecy on 19 July.

For World Lion Day [10 August] we had good reason for celebration as the beginning of the end of the commercial captive lion industry in South Africa is insight. We edited the convayer belt video clip previously produced for the Billboard campaign, giving it a more positive feel and showing why we have more hope than ever for our lions. We still wanted to call on the public to keep the conversation going to drive the change that is now within our reach. Watch the video HERE.

To encourage the public to add their voice of support for the draft Policy Position, we partnered with four NGOs in creating an online petition, asking the public to support a joint letter addressed to Minister Barbara Creecy and her Department. The letter showed support for the transformational draft Policy Position and encouraged the Minister to implement the New Deal for People and Wildlife without further delay. The letter, accompanied by a list of signatures from 76,820 global citizens, was submitted to the Minister and DFFE.

Youth For Lions launched a #SupportTheEnd campaign on social media with a series of eye-catching graphics, using Patrick George illustrations, and dealing with different aspects of the industry.
In 2020, Blood Lions published a peer-reviewed paper following a joint scientific study with the World Animal Protection highlighting how the commercial captive lion breeding industry in South Africa poses a real and serious health risk to thousands of tourists, industry workers and local communities at large.

In early 2021, we unpacked our research findings in a popular science document and created The Sick 5 online campaign, where we primarily focused on the human health risks associated with the 63 pathogens identified. A total of 23 diseases were identified in our study that can potentially be transmitted from lions to people with five major zoonotic diseases that can inflict serious health issues for people, namely Human Ehrlichiosis, Human Babesiosis, Toxocariasis, Trichinosis, and African Sleeping Sickness.

At the end of the campaign, we created #TheSick5 campaign page on the Blood Lions website summarising the campaign. The webpage has been viewed 361 times since it was launched on 18 March 2021.
Red Flags Campaign

In March 2021, the Youth For Lions team launched the #RedFlagsForLions campaign, highlighting the red flags that people should look out for when visiting a captive wildlife facility. The aim was to provide the public with relevant information to stay informed and equip people with questions they can ask facilities, to be a voice for our captive lions.

To test our supporters’ knowledge on the red flags, we hosted an interactive quiz using Instagram Stories, involving questions about the five red flags and explanations given over the previous few weeks. This was a fun way to create more engagement around the campaign.

The Red Flags raised included:

- If you can interact in any way with the lions, lion cubs or any other predators.
- If the facility you are visiting always has cubs to play with.
- If there are always baby predators present, but not many adults live at the facility.
- If they are breeding their captive lions and other predators.
- If the tourism facility is trading (buying and/or selling) their lions and other predators.

The campaign did extremely well, reaching over 56,000 people across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and over 7,000 people engaged with the posts by commenting, reacting, sharing and clicking on links.
In celebration of Tourism Month and in the lead up to World Tourism Day (27 September), we unpacked the SATSA Captive Wildlife Attractions & Activities Guidelines in our #ThinkBeforeYouGo social media campaign.

The campaign aimed to dive deeper into the world of ethics and wildlife tourism and draws attention to the SATSA Guidelines, which were launched in October 2019. SATSA drew a firm line in the sand concerning captive wildlife attractions in South Africa’s tourism space, which is a dynamic concept based on ethics. The guidelines state that “the interests of animals should not be subordinate to the benefits humans derive from their existence”. Meaning, if a captive wildlife facility clearly prioritises human interest (which can be financial, gratification, entertainment, information) over the animal’s wellbeing, it can immediately be considered unethical. This stance is very much aligned with the High-Level Panel recommendations and DFFE’s draft Policy Position paper.

It was a tough campaign to pin down due to the wealth of information provided in the SATSA guidelines. We chose to emphasize the five groups of captive wildlife activities to AVOID (as highlighted by SATSA) and juxtapose them with activities to SUPPORT.

We created a campaign page on the Blood Lions website summarising the overall campaign, which did very well on both the Blood Lions and Youth For Lions social media platforms, reaching over 92,000 people on Facebook and over 2,500 interactions on Instagram.
In 2021, we continued to undertake scientific research on various topics relating to the commercial captive lion breeding industry in South Africa to underpin our campaigns and to lobby government. In collaboration with researchers from the World Animal Protection, we interrogated responsible and well-managed ways to end the captive lion industry using a gap analysis approach.

The ensuing paper provides action points to develop a comprehensive and well-managed plan required to ensure a responsible transition away from the current captive lion industry. It not only speaks the same language, but also complements the High-Level Panel recommendations and draft Policy Position document on captive lions.

This research led to the publication of our second peer-reviewed paper in the scientific journal Animals: Ending Commercial Lion Farming in South Africa: A Gap Analysis Approach.

Although accepted by the Journal of Animal Welfare, we are still awaiting the publication of another peer-reviewed paper on the welfare challenges relating to commercial captive lion breeding in South Africa, a piece of research conducted and submitted for peer-review in 2020.
Billboard Campaign

In early 2021, Blood Lions was privileged to embark on an exciting nationwide South African billboard campaign with Primedia. We had six different static billboards designs on display across five major cities in South Africa. The messaging of the billboard designs aimed to raise public awareness about the legal breeding, canned hunting, and trade in lion bones and body parts, encouraging people to stop the tourism interactions in order to stop the trade.

In addition, an animated billboard was designed to bring attention to the life cycle of captive lions in South Africa and encourage people to be part of the solution rather than the problem. The billboard video clip can be viewed [HERE](#).

The various billboards, both static and animated in design, were flighted more than 205,000 times on freeways and in urban areas across the main urban centres in South Africa, reaching more than 4.8 million people. A very big thank you to Primedia for their partnership and valuable support on this campaign and making it such a huge success.

Other Achievements

Book Releases


South African author Liz McKenzie’s latest book *The Boy, the Bird and the Lions* was officially launched in October 2021. Another one of our directors, Pippa Hankinson, worked closely with Liz to provide valuable information on the captive lion breeding industry and a small section on Blood Lions has been included at the end of the book. For orders contact Liz on lizmck@telkomsa.net.
2021 Campaign Growth

ONLINE & PRINT MEDIA
Advertising Value Equivalent: ZAR 10.7 million
Circulation: 2 billion

VIDEO CLIPS
Views: 109,370

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS *
Facebook: 135,796
Twitter: 9,273
Instagram: 4,636

* Stats are Blood Lions & Youth For Lions combined

Blood Lions reached over 7 million people
Youth For Lions reached nearly 1 million youth
World Tiger Day

Youth Day
South African youth show government support

World Lion Day
There is hope for our lions

Panel Discussion 1
Future of South Africa’s commercial lion breeding industry

Panel Discussion 2
How could the commercial lion breeding industry be phased out?

Webinar
Reflecting and reporting on the HLP recommendations
Blood Lions endeavours to spend the vast majority of its funding granted on the intended project objectives and activities, by keeping its overheads as low as possible. We do not, for example, have dedicated office space and as such our core cost for admin and overheads is around 10%.

A 2021 financial statement can be obtained upon request.