



L I O N G U A R D I A N S
ANNIVERSARY EDITION 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Shifting Paradigms



In the last 50 years, an estimated 50% of Africa's lions have disappeared. At Lion Guardians, we believe the fate of the lion lies in the hands of communities. By engaging in conservation, people who once killed lions are transformed into lion protectors. Our innovative approach has helped to reduce lion killing by more than 90%. Where once lions were disappearing, their populations are now booming. We would like to see this happen elsewhere.

We remain focused on furthering our impacts across the African continent by using the rigor of science to inform conservation and by sharing our knowledge via our training and customized coaching services. In the years to come, Lion Guardians will continue to shift paradigms by staying true to our core values of coexistence, community participation, trust, collaboration, and science.


*“Eyan ele turreur
lcolowuarak ebcita sidai
eseriani colowuarak onkishu”*

Lion Guardians brings harmonious coexistence between livestock and lions

- Guardian Lipap



Letter From The Founders




S. Dolrenry
Dr. Stephanie Dolrenry
Director of Science

When we look back at our humble beginnings, we can truly see how far Lion Guardians has come since those first moments when we voted on our name with the original five Guardians under an acacia tree. The evolution from research and testing hypotheses to a functional conservation solution has been one of the most challenging, yet satisfying, journeys we have been on. There have been many highs and lows, but what is most apparent is that we could not have done it without the support of so many individuals and organizations. So first and foremost, thank you to all the Guardians, the communities that live with the wildlife, our collaborators, and our donors who believe in us and the successes we have together.

Since inception, the Lion Guardians' journey has been filled with exciting new developments and meaningful outputs. As we look forward to our next decade, we are committed to pushing

the boundaries of conservation solutions by pioneering innovation through scientific inquiry, research, and community participation. We will also continue to broaden the scale of our impacts through knowledge sharing and explore how we can do this in the virtual world. On the ground, a new generation of warriors and leaders have taken responsibility for ensuring African lions continue to thrive for future generations, but this is no easy task and they cannot do it alone. We are steadfast, working tirelessly side by side with them and their communities. And we ask you to join us - you have enabled us to save lions, help communities, and preserve cultures. Because of you, the world has more lions in it than it did ten years ago – *Asante sana!*

Ashe Oleng
(‘Thank you’ in Maasai)



*‘Esipa ore enduata
natabawua enkata enye,
nemibococoyum’*

L. Hazzah
Dr. Leela Hazzah
Executive Director

A dream whose time has come cannot be stopped - Maasai Proverb

A Decade of Milestones

A little over a decade ago, the lion population in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem was dwindling rapidly. Persecuted by warriors as a rite of passage and in retaliation to livestock depredations, the threat of local extinction was real. But every challenge births an opportunity, and this one led to the formation of the Lion Guardians organization. Here is a look back at all the seminal moments of our journey so far.



2004

Data collection starts on lions and their mortality rates, as well as Maasai culture and motivations behind lion killing.

2006

Lion Guardians is piloted in one group ranch in southern Kenya with five Guardians. We receive our first major gift from Dr. Luke Hunter, previously with the Wildlife Conservation Society, Great Cats Program.

2007

In January, Lion Guardians is officially founded and named. This is the first year where no lions are killed in our area of operation.

2008-9

Given the positive impact of our pilot, leaders and communities invite us to expand the program to Eselenkei and Olgulului Group Ranches. We add 1,700 kms² to our areas of operation and 18 more Guardians to the team.





2010

We successfully execute our final expansion and expand our total coverage area to 3,684 kms² and our team to 30 Guardians. Male lion Sikiria comes back home and his travels change our perspective on lion movements. We document the largest known home range of any lion in East Africa.

2011

Survival of cubs skyrockets, leading to a growing population for the first time since lion monitoring began in 2004. We share our model with a lion conservation group in Zimbabwe, called the Long Shields, which protects lions north of Hwange National Park.

2012

We test our model in a different country (Tanzania with Ruaha Carnivore Project) and with a different cultural group (the pastoralist Barabaig). David Attenborough covers us for Planet Earth and we secure the prestigious St Andrews Prize for the Environment.

2013

We develop the Lion Guardians Resource and Learning Center on 10 acres of land granted to us by the community. The Lions for Life program is initiated with an eye clinic for the residents of the Amboseli group ranches.





2014

Working with KOPE Lion, we implement the Lion Guardians model in Ngorongoro, Tanzania to provide connectivity between Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater. We officially launch the Lion Guardians Training program and are nominated as a top 10 CNN Hero.

2015

The Lion Guardians team refines our vision to increase our impact in the conservation space. Ruaha Lion Defenders becomes a certified project. We conduct our first customized coaching service in Rwanda with African Parks in Akagera National Park.

2016

We begin our transition and start developing the building blocks of our new vision. We focus on elaborating a sound research agenda that will inform on the ground conservation impacts, and our partnered projects branch out on their own.

2017

We expand our conservation outputs by conducting five different knowledge sharing services, including customized coaching on human-wildlife conflict, community visits, and poisoning protocol training. The entire team celebrates ten years of conservation success together.



10 Years of Impact



Building Tolerance

Through proactive conflict mitigation, Lion Guardians has reduced the negative impacts of lions on communities. Today our data shows that where Guardians and other conservation stakeholders work, communities are more than 60% less likely to retaliate against lion depredations than when we started ten years ago. This tolerance has been built through the following actions:

90,000 ...head of lost livestock have been recovered by Guardians, helping communities to avoid approximately \$13 million in potential losses

2,457 ...bomas (livestock corrals) reinforced, 98% of which reported no further incursions, resulting in decreased numbers of depredations occurring at bomas

137 ...lost herders and children safely returned to their families

Improving Livelihoods

Through community participation, Lion Guardians has increased the benefits that communities receive from conservation. Today many community members look to employment in conservation as a way to support their families, as well as assistance from conservation organizations in times of need. Through our work, we have positively impacted livelihoods in the following ways:

\$1 million ...in direct economic benefits to the community; from 5 community members employed in Amboseli in 2007 to more than 50 employed

~10,000 ...community members assisted with emergency transport to medical care facilities, transport and treatment of injured livestock and support of community-led initiatives

'Kemelok ilng'anayia le nyuata'

The fruits of labor are the most rewarding
- Maasai Proverb



PROMOTING
COEXISTENCE

*'Ore danyok naa
kedunyui'*

One who persistently works hard will eventually succeed
- Maasai Proverb



Conserving Lions

Through participatory monitoring and social interventions, we have supported the recovery of the lion population in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem and beyond.

>90%

...reduction in lion killing documented in the areas where we operate, and an increase in lion density from an average of 1.2 lions per 100 km² to more than 5 lions per 100 km²

193

...lions currently monitored by 40+ Guardians, up from 5 Guardians monitoring 32 lions in 2007

80%

...decrease in lion hunts by community members after Lion Guardians mock-hunt interventions

205

...lions documented dispersing out of our areas, up from zero between 2004 and 2006, transforming a sink population into a source

259

...hunts stopped; approximately 65% of these in collaboration with Big Life and Kenya Wildlife Service

Enhancing Capabilities

Through training, collaborating, and sharing knowledge, we have helped organizations across the continent build up their capabilities to promote coexistence. In particular, we have:

6

...organizations in three African countries inspired and fostered by us and who are now running their own Lion Guardians-based projects

10

...additional sites where we have trained hundreds of individuals; all of whom are now actively conserving lions and helping their communities

Ten Year Reflections



“Lion Guardians transformed my life and the landscape I live in. Today, there are many more lions on community lands than when we first started. And even after ten years of going out, I still enjoy my job every single day. I believe in always trying and never giving up because as we Maasai say **“Menyanyuk inyuaat o nkidimat.”**”

- Olubi Mitiaki Lairumbe, Guardian

“**“Etaa ana ampuni oo lowuarak, elong’o namitu ilowuarak tenakop”** Lion Guardians have become a shield -- protecting lions (and people) in this area. I deeply appreciate the swiftness with which the organization responds to community issues.”

- Ming’ati Kitipai, Community member

“I joined Lion Guardians when the organization was still quite small. And as the organization has grown, so have I as a person. I have also managed to build a good house and send my children to good schools. **“Eaku nameni erroi.”** – Never discount something small. It has the ability to become something big!”

- Maria Saruni, Head Chef and Trainer

“Our entire life consists ultimately in accepting ourselves as we are. Maintaining our cultural values and working closely with local people is what allowed us to be successful as an organization.”

- Luke Maamai, Program Manager





Looking Ahead


To us, a world without wildlife is unacceptable and we believe local communities represent the greatest hope for the future. As human populations continue to increase, wildlife around the globe is rapidly disappearing, making the work that we do at Lion Guardians even more critical. We imagine a tomorrow where coexistence is bred through community conservation organizations that skillfully combine cultural values, participation, traditional knowledge, and science for the betterment of all animals – human and non-human.

As we marked our decade anniversary, we also celebrated the coming-of-age of a new set of warriors in Maasailand, the *Iltuati*. The *Ilkiponi*, the warriors who initiated Lion Guardians, have now become Junior Elders and have handed over their legacy to the *Iltuati*; we are excited to see what the next ten years bring. Together, we intend to cross new frontiers by engaging in rigorous research on problem lions and changing cultures, initiating innovative mitigation techniques, and

elevating conservation capabilities to have more impact on species and wild places.

With the *Ilkiponi* we took our first steps beyond Kenya, with the *Iltuati* we are taking our first steps beyond Africa and beyond lions. We have seen that the lessons learned, the challenges faced, and the successes gained are not limited to our work in the Amboseli ecosystem. And therefore, through knowledge sharing, we are building conservation capabilities across the world, so conservation solutions and lessons learned such as ours can have wider impact.

A decade ago, we dreamed about the possibility of peaceful coexistence between lions and people in one ecosystem. Today, we dream about the possibility of peaceful coexistence between carnivores and local communities across the globe.



*'Ore olaata
enduata, nebaya
enelakua'*

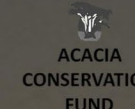
One who has a dream will go far - Maasai Proverb

Thank You

From the moment we started on this journey, as supporters from across the world, you have been key in helping us to achieve measurable and sustained conservation outputs. Beyond impact, you have boosted our morale and allowed us to innovate and pilot our radical ideas that enabled us to build our model and our organization. Since 2007, you have invested a little over five million dollars in Lion Guardians and together we have achieved significant outcomes. We look forward to continuing this journey together in the next decade to come.

Ashe Oleng

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It takes a community to conserve

lions and preserve cultures, we are grateful

that you are a part of ours.



*'Esipa ore naboisha
armarei naa dupota'*

The greatest of assets is a united family - Maasai Proverb

