



# LION RECOVERY FUND

August 2023  
**PROGRESS REPORT**

# SAFEGUARDING AFRICA'S UNTAMED LANDSCAPES FOR LIONS

In this latest report, we focus on projects aimed at protecting Africa's wildest places. There are certain landscapes in Africa that, by chance of historical circumstance, have remained extremely wild and remote. Some of these areas have lacked significant conservation investment until very recently, and in some cases, have been subject to significant political unrest. Somehow, lions and other wildlife have managed to hang on. These areas are home to incredible biodiversity and have amazing potential for lion recovery.

Fulfilling this potential poses real challenges, not least because of the remoteness, lack of functioning infrastructure, and distance from urban centers. These characteristics make it challenging to ensure that conservation operations are supported with the supplies and materials needed. However, a number of conservation organizations are rising to the challenge, and the LRF is proud to support their work. This report will highlight efforts to support lion conservation in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, northern Mozambique, and southern Tanzania.

We hope you'll appreciate the accomplishments in this report with the knowledge that your support is ensuring that some of the world's most enigmatic, wild, and captivating landscapes are protected for lions and countless other species.



# THE LRF HAS INVESTED IN 45% OF LION RANGE.



23  
COUNTRIES

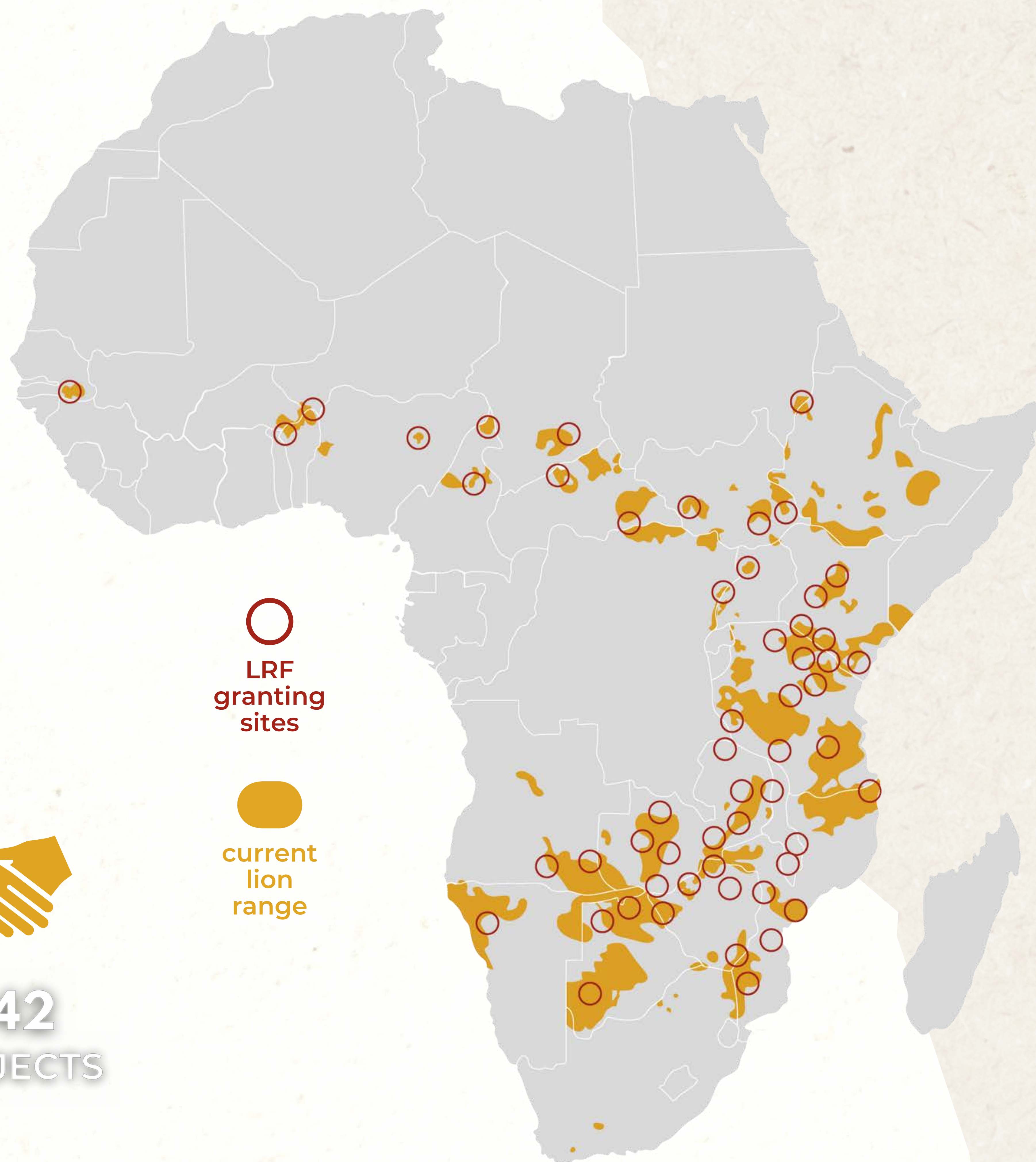


\$32.4M  
GRANTED

*Since 2017*



242  
PROJECTS



An aerial photograph taken from the perspective of someone looking out of an airplane window. The view shows a vast, dense, and lush green forest stretching to the horizon. The canopy is thick and textured with various shades of green. In the top right corner, a portion of the airplane's wing and a small window are visible, indicating the viewer's position inside the aircraft. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

# SECURING AFRICA'S WILDEST PLACES

Among Africa's expansive savanna landscapes, a few stand out for their wildness and vastness, such as southern Chad, northern and eastern Central African Republic (CAR), and eastern South Sudan. One of the most significant of these wild landscapes is a block of land in eastern CAR and neighboring South Sudan, encompassing approximately 77,000 sq. miles (slightly larger than Washington state) virtually uninhabited by people. At its heart is the vast Chinko Conservation Area, which has perhaps the greatest potential for lion recovery of any area in Africa.



Chinko is managed by African Parks and is one of the LRF's most significant investment sites. This landscape transitions from forest to savanna, meaning it contains wildlife from both ecosystems—lions, wild dogs, chimpanzees, pangolins, giant eland, bongo antelope, and many more species—making it incredibly valuable for conservation. But between the 1980s and late 2000s, wildlife suffered in Chinko and throughout CAR due to pressures from poaching, unregulated influxes of cattle from nomadic herding, and a lack of resources to protect wildlife.

For several years, the LRF has been supporting African Parks' work in Chinko. They have been collaborating in law enforcement to reduce poaching and working closely with nomadic herders to create corridors that enable their cattle to move around wildlife areas, not through them. This prevents any disruption or conflict with Chinko's wildlife, such as competition between wildlife and cattle for grazing pastures or the persecution of predators by herders. To incentivize their use of these corridors, African Parks provides the herders with veterinary support for their

livestock and helps improve protections for livestock from lions and other carnivores.

These collaborative, non-confrontational interventions are well-received and very successful at garnering community support for African Parks' conservation measures. With bushmeat poaching and livestock incursions largely reduced, Chinko's wildlife is now recovering after decades of decline. It's estimated that thanks to these efforts, Chinko now houses about 9,200 buffalos, 2,700 bongo antelope, 1,400 giant eland, 2,500 chimpanzees, at least 100 wild dogs, and between 100-150 lions. These numbers continue to increase across the board.

Investing in Africa's wildest areas not only gives lion populations a chance to recover, but also helps to secure countless other species living there, in addition to preserving vast carbon sinks within soil and vegetation, which help mitigate climate change. The LRF is committed to supporting the NGOs and governments tasked with protecting these rich landscapes for as long as it takes to see lions and their ecosystems bounce back.

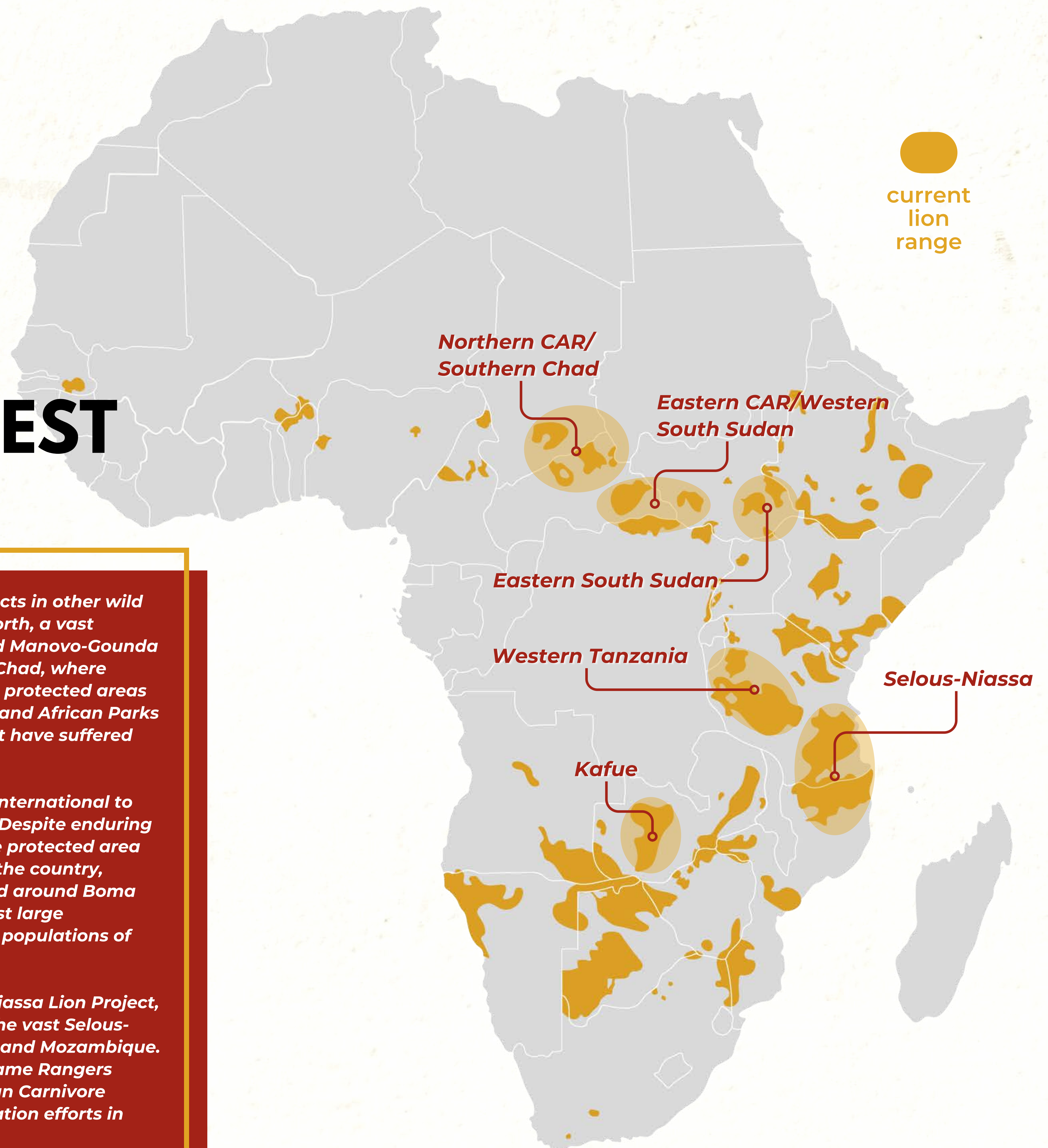
**THE LRF IS PROUD TO HAVE FUNDED OVER 80 PARTNERS SINCE 2017.**


# LRF GRANTS PROTECTING AFRICA'S WILDEST PLACES

*In addition to Chinko, the LRF is also supporting projects in other wild landscapes in CAR to promote lion recovery. To the north, a vast wilderness encompasses Bamingui National Park and Manovo-Gounda St. Floris National Park, and extends all the way into Chad, where Zakouma National Park and a large complex of other protected areas exist. The LRF supports Wildlife Conservation Society and African Parks to protect and rehabilitate these wild landscapes that have suffered from underfunding and severe human pressures.*

*To the east, the LRF has granted to Fauna and Flora International to help manage South Sudan's Southern National Park. Despite enduring decades of civil unrest, lions have held on in this huge protected area and have enormous recovery potential. Elsewhere in the country, African Parks is securing the unprotected lands in and around Boma National Park and Badingilo National Park, which host large migrations of prey species and potentially significant populations of lions.*

*The LRF also supports Frankfurt Zoological Society, Niassa Lion Project, and Lion Landscapes, who support management of the vast Selous-Nyerere-Niassa system that extends across Tanzania and Mozambique. Additionally, the LRF funds the efforts of Panthera, Game Rangers International, Muskese Conservation, and the Zambian Carnivore Programme, who support management and conservation efforts in Zambia's vast Greater Kafue Ecosystem.*



A lioness is sitting on a small, grassy mound in the foreground, looking towards the right. The background is a soft-focus savanna landscape with green grass and trees under a warm, golden light.

# **SINCE FEBRUARY 2023, THE LRF HAS SUPPORTED:**

African Lion Conservation

African Parks

CLAWS

Tsavo Trust

National Park Rescue

Conservation Lower Zambezi

Frankfurt Zoological Society

International Anti Poaching Foundation

Kalahari Research and Conservation

South Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO)

Musekese Conservation

Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust

Victoria Falls Wildlife Fund

Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust

Wildlife Conservation Action

Wildlife Research and Training Institute

Landscape and Conservation Mentors Organization (LCMO)

# COEXISTENCE, PROTECTION, AND REINTRODUCTION EFFORTS



CLZ's K9 unit patrolling Lower Zambezi National Park to prevent poaching. (c) Francois d'Elbee/CLZ

## Promoting Coexistence Through Conflict Mitigation Wildlife Conservation Action Zimbabwe

Wildlife Conservation Action is helping local communities' sustainably protect and manage their wildlife by engaging Community Guardians who report and respond to human-wildlife conflict. The Community Guardians are implementing human-carnivore conflict mitigation measures, including early warnings to villagers, flashlights, predator-proof livestock bomas, and education on improving livestock husbandry. With LRF funding, this project will reduce livestock predation by lions and other carnivores, safeguard community livelihoods, and protect lions from retaliatory killing.



Mobile boma constructed by the WCA team to protect livestock by reducing predation by lions and other carnivores. (c) Peter Lindsey

## THE LRF HAS SUPPORTED THE BUILDING OF OVER 3,300 LIVESTOCK BOMAS TO PREVENT HUMAN-LION CONFLICT.

### Securing Lower Zambezi National Park Conservation Lower Zambezi Zambia

Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) is committed to the conservation of wildlife and their habitats in Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park. CLZ supports the Department of National Parks and Wildlife to mitigate threats to wildlife, such as poaching. Lower Zambezi National

Park is home to a number of iconic species, but despite efforts from law enforcement, bushmeat poaching remains a major threat to wildlife, specifically lions. With funding from the LRF, CLZ supports the training and deployment of rangers throughout the park to tackle poaching. This helps prevent the decline of lion prey species and the incidental capture of lions in snares set to catch other animals for bushmeat.



A meeting between Kalahari Research and Conservation and the local community in the Kgalagadi.  
(c) Peter Lindsey

### Scaling up Conservation Incentives for Protecting Lions Kalahari Research & Conservation Botswana

Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, and the connecting Wildlife Management Areas form critical habitat for lions, but they are threatened by the expansion of livestock industry. With support from the LRF, Kalahari Research and Conservation will expand its Livestock Conservation Performance Payment project in the Kgalagadi system, which rewards communities for managing livestock in a manner conducive to wildlife conservation. This program, in addition to the Camera Trap Coexistence Incentive Program, will increase farmers' tolerance for lions and other carnivores.

### Protecting Lions and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's northwestern region is a stronghold for lions and connects to other lion populations in northeastern Botswana. However, lions in this region are threatened by human-wildlife conflict and associated retaliatory killings. The LRF has granted to Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust to support their Community Guardians program, which is designed to help prevent livestock predation in the areas adjacent to Zambezi National Park and Fuller Forest. This project will support rural villages with a lion early warning system and support the construction of mobile bomas which both protect livestock and fertilize fields, thus

enhancing cropping yields and improving livelihoods. These interventions will reduce conflict and the loss of lions.

### Reintroduction Assessment for Lions African Parks Angola

Using LRF funds, African Parks will conduct an assessment in Angola's Iona National Park to determine the potential of reintroducing lions into the landscape. This assessment will encompass ecological, social, and security factors to inform park management and develop a risk-benefit analysis and intervention plan, with potential to reintroduce lions in 2025. Such a reintroduction would significantly boost lion conservation in Angola, as lions have disappeared from most of its protected areas in the last few decades.



(c) Jack Swenson/ExpeditionGallery.com



Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust's Community Guardians program building a boma to prevent human-lion conflict. (c) Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust

# WE APPRECIATE YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

We take immense care to make sure that the funding generously provided by our supporters is well spent, and we genuinely enjoy sharing all of the impactful work that your donations make possible. The future promises to be quite challenging for lion conservation as people and livestock populations encroach more on wild habitat, foreign countries and corporations continue to exploit Africa's natural resources, and as funding for conservation remains so restricted.

Our efforts in the coming years will focus on working to prevent lion decline in their strongholds, preventing further local extinctions of lion populations, and aggressively pursuing opportunities to foster lion recovery and reintroductions as they occur. The task ahead is huge, but we are confident that between the amazing suite of conservation groups that we support and our growing supporter base, the LRF can significantly improve the prospects for conserving the King of the Beasts. Our deepest thanks to every single person who has supported the LRF's mission. We are truly grateful for your continued trust.



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