

MEDIA STATEMENT

THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS GAZETTES THE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE AFRICAN LION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

22 APRIL 2015

The Minister of Environmental Affairs on Friday, 17 April 2015, published the Biodiversity Management Plan for the African Lion (*Panthera Leo*) in Government Gazette No. 38706 for public comment.

This is the first national Biodiversity Management Plan compiled for lions in South Africa. The Plan has been developed in close consultation with an encompassing group of stakeholders since 2013. The Plan will be reviewed at five-year intervals to ensure it is appropriate for the circumstances at the time.

The gazettement of this Management Plan is in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 and the National Norms and Standards for Biodiversity Management Plans for Species which were gazetted for implementation in 2009. In addition, the plan was developed in response to the Regional Strategy for Lions in East and Southern Africa in 2005 (IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group 2006) to which South Africa contributed during the development phase. In line with the Regional Strategy, this Plan will be regarded as the national strategy for African Lions in South Africa.

This Biodiversity Management Plan allows for the monitoring and review of actions taken to conserve species in the wild amidst a changing environment. It also requires that, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 all management plans compiled by conservation authorities are approved by the Minister for public participation and implementation respectively.

The main purpose of the proposed Plan is outlined in the vision for the South African lion population: Through the existence of stable, viable and ecologically functional populations of managed and wild lions, along with well-managed captive populations that have minimal negative conservation impacts, lions will provide key opportunities for biodiversity conservation, economic development, social benefits and improved management capacity.

The Plan makes a clear distinction between wild lions in national parks, managed wild lions in smaller reserves and captive lions.

The key objectives of the BMP for lion are:

- Improve the conservation status of lions within a broader conservation context, considering the respective roles of wild, managed wild and captive populations
- Encourage the development of opportunities for economic and social benefit from responsibly managed wild and captive lion populations
- Ensure legislative alignment both provincially and nationally and improve capacity to implement legislation effectively
- Establish a lion forum or working group
- Align this Biodiversity Management Plan with lion conservation plans in neighbouring countries and link with international working groups.

Members of the public are invited to submit to the Minister, within 30 days of the publication of the notice in a Gazette, written representations on, or objections to the draft Biodiversity Management Plan to the following addresses:

By post to: The Director-General : Department of Environmental Affairs
Attention: Ms Humbulani Mafumo
Private Bag X447
PRETORIA
0001

Hand delivered to:
Environment House (reception)
Attention: Ms Humbulani Mafumo
473 Steve Biko Street
Arcadia, Pretoria

By fax to: 0865411102; or (012) 359 3636;
By Email to: hmafumo@environment.gov.za

An electronic copy of the draft BMP can be downloaded from the link:
https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/gazetted_notices/nemba_africanlion_managementplan_gn351g38706.pdf

Comments received after the closing date may not be considered.

For media inquiries contact Albi Modise on 083 490 2871
ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS.

NOTE:

The lion is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. It is also

listed as Vulnerable on the South Africa list of Threatened or Protected Species (ToPS) in terms of Section 56 (1) of the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No 10 of 2004). In addition, the lion is protected under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).