



SERENGETI PROVERB: Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows that it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death.

It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle, when the sun comes up, you'd better be running.

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JANUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER

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1. Message from the Chief Operating Officer

Dear Friends

Everyone here at ALERT and all our program locations wishes you a very happy new year. I hope, that like us, you have many plans for the year ahead and the desire to overcome all the challenges that may present themselves in order to meet those goals.

For ALERT we are looking to start work on setting up a stage one in Zambia, stage two & three release sites in both Zimbabwe and Zambia as well as developing our conservation, research and community development activities.

In this issue you can read an update on our cubs in stage one, and, after many requests, we are now able to offer you the opportunity to sponsor a lion, or if you'd like, even a whole litter. You can also read about a very successful event recently held in London, our first outside of Africa.

We thank you for your support and hope to work with many of you over the coming year as we strive to meet our many objectives for 2008.

Kindest regards

David Youldon

ALERT Chief Operating Officer

2. What is ALERT?



The African Lion & Environmental Research Trust (ALERT) is a non-profit organization working with governments, wildlife authorities and private organizations to identify suitable release sites for African lions. ALERT will also provide infrastructure to those sites to facilitate the release and to protect local communities. It was founded in 2005 to support the work of the four stage African Encounter Lion Rehabilitation and Release into the Wild Program, founded in 1999 at Antelope Park in Gweru, Zimbabwe.

ALERT also carries out scientific research through the **Conservation Centre for Wild Africa (CCWA)**, either in its own right or in conjunction with external conservation organizations and educational institutions. CCWA engages in a diversity of research and conservation related programs, not just for lions but on a wide range of African wildlife to ensure that we can pass on balanced ecosystems to future generations. CCWA is already undertaking a number of research activities throughout Zimbabwe's National Park system.

In addition, the **ALERT Communities Trust (ACT)** is a means to give back to communities bordering conservation areas such that they receive tangible benefits for supporting those conservation programs. A primary element of this is our community education and awareness program to further understanding of the importance and relevance of sound conservation practices. Local communities are involved in eco-tourism ventures related to the conservation programs, and money generated by those programs goes back into development schemes agreed as priorities with the local community, such as building schools or providing medical supplies.

The evidence is too great to deny that action must be taken now to ensure the future of the African lion



3. Stage One Update

Who's Who in 2008

At our Antelope Park stage one site, we have six sets of cubs currently walking:



Acacia and Amghela (female, 1y 5m) & **Chengeta** (male, 1y 4m) are nearing their end of their walking career and will soon be moving on to start their *Night Encounter* campaign. Over the last month they have been running the zebra ragged that they frequently meet on their walks. We have high hopes for their future success as they show great boldness in approaching any game, even giraffe.

Chaka (male, 1y 4m) and **Nandi & Nduna** (female / male, 1y 4m) are an independent group, but playful and constantly interested in exploring. The 2N's are still a little timid, but they are getting bolder all the time. They will be soon moving enclosure which will give them plenty of opportunity to encounter game on their walks, further preparing them for release.



Msasa and Mana (female, 1y 1m) & **Luangwa** (male, 1y 0m) are also due to move enclosure soon. Luangwa since he was young has been a highly vocal lion, although lazy. The two girls however are energetic and frequently chase after zebra and have made contact on several occasions. Lozi was recently removed from the group, so we will have to watch closely as the group dynamic changes.

Masai (male, 1y 1m) and **Lisha & Lozi** (female / male, 1y 0m) are also adjusting to a change in grouping after Lozi was recently joined with Masai & Lisha. Masai is a particularly naughty cub, whilst Lisha is a typical female, playful and cunning. Masai recently made his first kill, and with the athletic Lozi now in the gang we think this crew will do very well at hunting practice.



The two brothers of **Echo & Etosha** (male, 9m) are very different. Echo is a bold, sociable lion, whilst his brother remains reserved. This is quite common in sets of two brothers and is very similar to the dynamic that we have seen in Phoenix & Penduka, Ltalo & Landela and Lokothula & Langa. They are still young, and with a move to a new enclosure and whole new area of the Park to explore, we hope their Bush confidence will grow quickly over the coming months.

Sango, Sahara & Swahili (1 male / 2 females, 3m) are very young, and consequently they are easily scared by the big wide world around them. Gentle and patient interaction with the handlers however is slowly bringing them out of their shell, and allowing the opportunity to explore.

The process of moving them over from a milk diet to a meat one is also well underway. It actually takes a while for a cub to learn to eat meat using their dew claw, but the girls are getting the hang of it very well. Sango is getting there, slowly.





At Victoria Falls stage one site we currently have two sets of lions:

Amandla (male, 1y 5m) and **Chando & Chabalala** (male, 1y 4m) will be returning to Antelope Park in the near future to start their *Night Encounter* campaign. Having already jumped on and brought down a young buffalo, only to be chased off by its mother, these lads should do well, especially with Amandla's bulk behind them.



Brother & sister **Lungile & Lina** (male / female, 1y 0m) are an unusual pair for us. Both are independent and pretty much walk themselves, deciding where to go and what to see. They have already shown interest in game, but at the moment are a little young to do much about it. Through repeated exposure to the game however they will become more confident and start to chase.

Back at Antelope Park, there are six lions in our *Night Encounter* program:



Nala (female, 2y 2m) has had an exceptional hunting career to date. She made her first kill at only 13 months old, and has gone on to make a further 9 kills including mongoose, impala, ostrich and wildebeest. Further, she has brought down a further 11 animals but was unable to make the killing bite. Across the history of the program she is currently joint 2nd for number of kills and number of near misses. With her sister Narnia they are 4th most successful hunting group achieving a success rate of 52% on *Night Encounters*, whilst on her own she has achieved 31% and places her 5th in the table.



Narnia (female, 2y 2m) has made 7 kills to date including rabbit and wildebeest as well as an impressive ten foot leap to pluck a Kori Bustard out of the sky. She is placed 5th in the list of most kills. Narnia has a tendency to wait for her sister to do all the work, and once the prey is selected, rushes in to assist to bring it down and then, through her aggressive nature, takes more than the lion's share of the meat.



Ltalo (male, 1y 8m) only recently started taking part in the *Night Encounter*. However, on the six he has taken part in he so far he has an astonishing 83% success rate, the highest success rate ever achieved by any lion in the program's history. The question is...can he maintain this exceptional start? Only time will tell.



Landela (male, 1y 8m) has made two kills so far, a rabbit and an impala, but with Ltalo, the two have a group success rate at the moment of 100% having killed on every night encounter, and on one occasion, twice, when each managed to take an impala in the same chase. These are the first lions ever to achieve such a result. Long may it continue!



Langa (male, 1y 8m) has just returned to Antelope Park to take part in the *Night Encounter*. He already has one kill to his name from his walks in Victoria Falls, having taken a baboon. We are just getting him used to his new area, and group, as he has been put back with his two brothers, and he will start being taken out at night soon.



Lokothula (male, 1y 8m) is one to watch. Already, whilst in Victoria Falls he has killed two baboon, a warthog and a buffalo. The hunting masters of Phoenix & Penduka who went on to achieve such success during *Night Encounters* had only one kill between them by this age. So watch, Loko is coming!



Sponsor A Lion

Have you ever thought about **sponsoring one of our lions**? Maybe one that you walked with, or helped raise! Well, we are happy to now offer you that opportunity. All of the 28 lions listed in the previous two pages in our stage one program are available to sponsor.

By sponsoring a lion you will help pay for its food, housing, veterinary bills, micro-chipping, radio collaring, permits, research and its release. You can sponsor an individual lion, or make a big saving for sponsoring multiple lions in a group or a litter, and can pay in either monthly or annual installments:

Sponsored Lion/s	Example	Cost Per Month	Cost Per Year	Saving
Single Lion	Acacia	£ 10.00	£ 120.00	n/a
Two Lions	Echo & Etosha	£ 15.00	£ 180.00	£ 60.00
Three Lions	Acacia, Amghela & Chengeta	£ 17.50	£ 210.00	£ 150.00
Four Lions	Langa, Ltalo, Landela & Lokothula	£ 20.00	£ 240.00	£ 240.00
Five Lions	Lungile, Lina, Lisha, Lozi & Luangwa	£ 22.50	£ 270.00	£ 330.00

For your generous donation, you will receive the following:

- A copy of the ALERT DVD
- A photo and biography of your sponsored lion by email
- The monthly ALERT newsletter by email
- Quarterly updates and photos by email of your sponsored lion
- A 5% discount off of any stage one Lion Walk
- A 5% discount off any African Impact volunteer program (www.africanimpact.com for details of available programs)
- Priority booking to attend the release of your sponsored lion.

We would ask you to read and agree to the terms and conditions below before sponsoring a lion:

- There will be more than one person sponsoring each lion
- If you sponsor a litter or group, please note that lion groupings change and the litter or group may be split up and placed with other lions
- Sponsorship does not entitle the donor to any rights of ownership or decision making over the future of the sponsored lion
- ALERT reserves the right to use sponsorship money to go to the general use of ALERT to further the program, and not necessarily towards the specific lion being sponsored
- The sponsored lion may not be released if we select that lion to be kept back for breeding
- If your sponsored lion dies or has to be put down for some reason, then you will be offered the option to cancel your sponsorship or to select another lion. No refunds due on sponsorship paid.

For your chance to make a difference to these lions simply email alert@africanencounter.org with the following details, stating "Lion Sponsorship" in the subject line:

- Full name
- Confirm the email address you would prefer that we use to send you your invoice and updates
- Your mailing address so that we can send you your copy of the ALERT DVD
- Whether you would prefer to make monthly or annual payments
- Whether the sponsorship is for yourself or as a gift. If it is a gift we will also need the recipients mailing and email addresses.

Please note that we will be processing sponsorship requests from the end of February 2008 onwards. Payments will be taken using the PayPal system. You do not need to be registered with PayPal in order to make a payment using this system.



4. Fundraising Event in London

On the evening of Friday 18th January; a surprisingly warm winter's evening in London; in fact the warmest January night in London since record began, some 250 people came to the **Royal Geographical Society** in London's South Kensington to support ALERT's first ever event outside of Africa.



The evening started with David Youldon, ALERT Chief Operating Officer, thanking the RGS and its members for allowing ALERT use of its state of the art auditorium.

Thanks also went to **Bubble & Squeak**, the London based agency who had worked so hard to stage the event on our behalf.

Messages and donations were read out from those that were unable to attend. These included a seat bought by Darrell Hallett in memory of the late **Andy & Netta Macdonald**. Andy, a former Rhodesian rugby international & Netta were strong supporters of conservation, and Darrell felt that they would have very much liked to attend the event and support ALERT's mission.

A donation was also received from twice Oscar nominated **actor Ralph Fiennes**. Ralph is the star of many films including Schindler's List, Red Dragon, The English Patient, The Constant Gardener and the Harry Potter Films amongst many others.



Guests on the evening, including **John Simpson, the BBC's World Affairs Editor**, were first entertained by a film about the work of ALERT, highlighting the Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program, but also learning about CCWA, the Conservation Centre for Wild Africa and ACT, the ALERT Communities Trust.

The film was followed by a presentation detailing the sharp decline in lion populations and an update on ALERT's progress so far. Particular mention was made of our stage two release pride at Dollar Block where the lions had recently successfully brought down an adult giraffe.

The presentation by David Youldon was finished by a film, entitled "Pride" showing stage one of the release program in action.

The main speaker was introduced; **Sir Ranulph Fiennes**, explorer extraordinaire and patron of ALERT gave a lecture entitled "Living Dangerously". As ever, Fiennes is an inspiration to all, to take on the challenges, and succeed.

Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, 3rd Baronet, OBE (usually simply Ranulph Fiennes, born March 7, 1944) is a British explorer and holder of several endurance records. He was the first man to visit both the North and South Poles.

Fiennes was born in England shortly after the death of his father, Lieutenant Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes, 2nd Baronet, who was killed in action in World War II. On his birth Fiennes automatically inherited the Baronetcy, becoming the 3rd Baronet. After the war his mother moved the family to South Africa where he remained until he was twelve. Ranulph then returned to be educated at Eton, after which he joined the British Army.

He is the third cousin of Hollywood film actors Joseph and Ralph Fiennes, and is a distant cousin of Britain's royal family. Ranulph Fiennes was on the shortlist of those considered to replace George Lazenby in the role of James Bond (despite Fiennes having little acting experience). Fiennes was summarily rejected on meeting Bond producer Cubby Broccoli, who said he had "a face like a farmer's". Ranulph Fiennes owns and operates a sheep and cattle farm on Exmoor.



Soldier

Fiennes served eight years in the British army, first with his father's regiment the Royal Scots Greys and later on secondment to the Special Air Service, where he specialized in demolitions.

Offended by the construction of a concrete dam built for a film production of Doctor Doolittle at Castle Coombe, Wiltshire, Fiennes and an SAS comrade demolished the dam (using explosives Fiennes had obtained for authorized demolitions, but which by dint of efficiency he had been able to save). Both fled, and Fiennes (who had recently completed a training course on evading dogs) escaped capture - but his comrade did not, and both were subsequently discharged from the SAS and returned to their regiments.

Following his service in the British Army, Ran Fiennes served in the private army of the Sultan of Oman.

Adventurer

Since the 1960s Fiennes has been an explorer. He led expeditions up the White Nile on a hovercraft in 1969 and on Norway's Jostedal Glacier in 1970. Perhaps his most famous trek was the Transglobe Expedition that he undertook from 1979 until 1982. Fiennes and Charles Burton journeyed around the world on its polar axis using surface transport only, covering 52,000 miles and becoming the first people to have visited both poles by surface travel.

In 1992 Fiennes led an expedition that discovered the lost city of Ubar in Oman; Ptolemy's long-lost Atlantis of the Sands, the frankincense centre of the world. The following year he joined with nutrition specialist Mike Stroud to become the first to cross the Antarctic continent unaided. Their journey of 97 days is the longest in south Polar history.

In 2000 he attempted to walk solo and unsupported to the North Pole. The expedition failed when his sleds fell through weak ice and Fiennes was forced to pull them out by hand. He sustained severe frostbite to the tips of several fingers, forcing him to abandon the attempt. On returning home, his surgeon insisted the necrotic fingertips be retained for several months (to allow re-growth of the remaining healthy tissue) prior to amputation. Impatient at the pain the dying fingertips caused, Fiennes removed them himself (in his garden shed) with an electric saw.

Despite suffering from a heart attack and undergoing a double heart by-pass operation just four months previously, Fiennes joined up with Stroud again in 2003 to carry out the extraordinary feat of completing seven marathons in seven days on seven continents.

The 16th of November 2005 marked the 150th Anniversary of David Livingstone's first glimpse of the Victoria Falls. Ran led an expedition to recreate the last part of Livingstone's epic trip down the Zambezi River to 'Livingstone Island' on the edge of Victoria Falls. (This expedition started on 2 November, and originally took David Livingstone four years).

In March 2007, despite a morbid, lifelong fear of heights, Fiennes undertook a personal challenge to climb the Eiger by its much-feared North Face

Author

Fiennes' career as an author has developed alongside that of explorer. He is the author of seventeen books. In 2003 he published a biography of Captain Scott which proved to be a very robust defense of Scott's achievements and reputation which had been strongly questioned by biographers such as Roland Huntford. Although others have made comparisons between Fiennes and Scott, Fiennes himself says that he identifies more with Captain Oates, another member of Scott's doomed Antarctic team.



Fiennes visited the lion program in Zimbabwe in August 2007 and was present at our first stage two release at Dollar Block. ALERT is very grateful to him, and his wife Louise, who have offered such huge support.



Following the lecture, 50 guests retired to another of the RGS's many beautiful rooms to enjoy dinner and an auction. **Noel Lynch** very kindly offered his services to ALERT as auctioneer and to him we are very grateful.



Special mention also goes to the individuals & organizations that offered the auction prizes, including:

Guy Hammond – two paintings

Paul Bussell – two photographic prints

Sony – Limited edition PSP

African Impact – eco-tourism placement at one of our ALERT programs in Africa

Tom Parker-Bowles – Signed cook books

The Wombats – tickets to watch the band live and meet them after the show

An extremely enjoyable evening was had by all, and ALERT thanks everyone who helped to host, organize and attend the event.

5. Charities Aid Foundation Online

ALERT has recently joined the Charities Aid Foundation that gives supporters an easier method to make donations to further the work of the program.

With a proven 80 year track record CAF handles over £1 million in charitable donations every working day and offers a secure way to make payments to your favoured charities.

If you would like to make use of the CAF donation system, simply visit www.cafonline.org and type “African Lion” in the charity keyword search.

Donors can still pay by **bank transfer** (details on the front page of this newsletter) or using the **PayPal** system at www.paypal.co.uk. If you have a PayPal account, log in and under the “Send Money” tab, enter “alert@africanencounter.org” in the “To” field. When prompted to review your payment we ask that you enter “Donation from”...and your name in the message field.

You can also purchase **ALERT merchandising** at www.cafepress.com/lionalert

ALERT offers corporate sponsors and grant giving organizations a range of **sponsorship opportunities** from general sponsorship to individual projects. Benefits include joint marketing and publicity opportunities as well as discounts on eco-tourism placements with our sister organization African Impact for staff. To receive more information about the opportunities available, please contact us at alert@africanencounter.org

* Note: All donations given to ALERT may be used for any of the projects of ALERT, CCWA and ACT at the discretion of the trustees based on their assessment of the various priorities of those projects at the time the donation is received. Any donor wishing for their donation to be used by a specific division of ALERT, CCWA or ACT, or for a specific project undertaken by any of those divisions should write to alert@africanencounter.org specifying the intended division or project for that donation. Should restricted donations be for projects that are fully funded at the time of the donation, ALERT will contact the donor, where practicable to do so, offering alternative projects for the donation to go towards or offer a refund of that donation.