

Women in Wildlife Conservation

Insights from the Pride Lion Conservation Alliance

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Women in science: some key issues

- 2015 study of Australian women in STEM: Over half directly discriminated against, mainly because of gender
- Over 60% said having children had negatively affected career
- Over a third expected to leave science within 5 years
- More widely: women in science paid less, promoted less
- Women more likely to drop out, especially in early career
- Research seen as all-consuming, incompatible with family
- Women twice as likely as men to leave science after children
- Mentorship & role models important for women to promote a sense of belonging, but very limited
- Queen Bee effect: women can perpetuate division

Particular issues in conservation

- Huge, urgent global issue, but very under-resourced
- Compete against one another for funding: disincentive to share ideas, means successful ideas are not scaled up
- Lack of trust, willingness and ability to build networks
- Lack of representation of women as decision-makers, particularly within many biodiversity-rich countries
- Few or no options for female mentorship, few role models
- Field conservation requires huge amount of time, travel and dedication: particularly hard to balance with family life
- Lack of support and advice on how to make it all work

6 colleagues (all women, half African) saw issues



Issues we had with existing conservation model

System made us competitors not colleagues: competed for same limited funds, could not share best methods or scale them up



Issues we had with existing conservation model

Meant we all kept repeating same mistakes: exhausting and frustrating, waste of time, energy and resources



Issues we had with existing conservation model

All found it very challenging to maintain work life balance with intense fieldwork – lots of challenges, such as raising a family with work in the bush, individual-focused media, no support



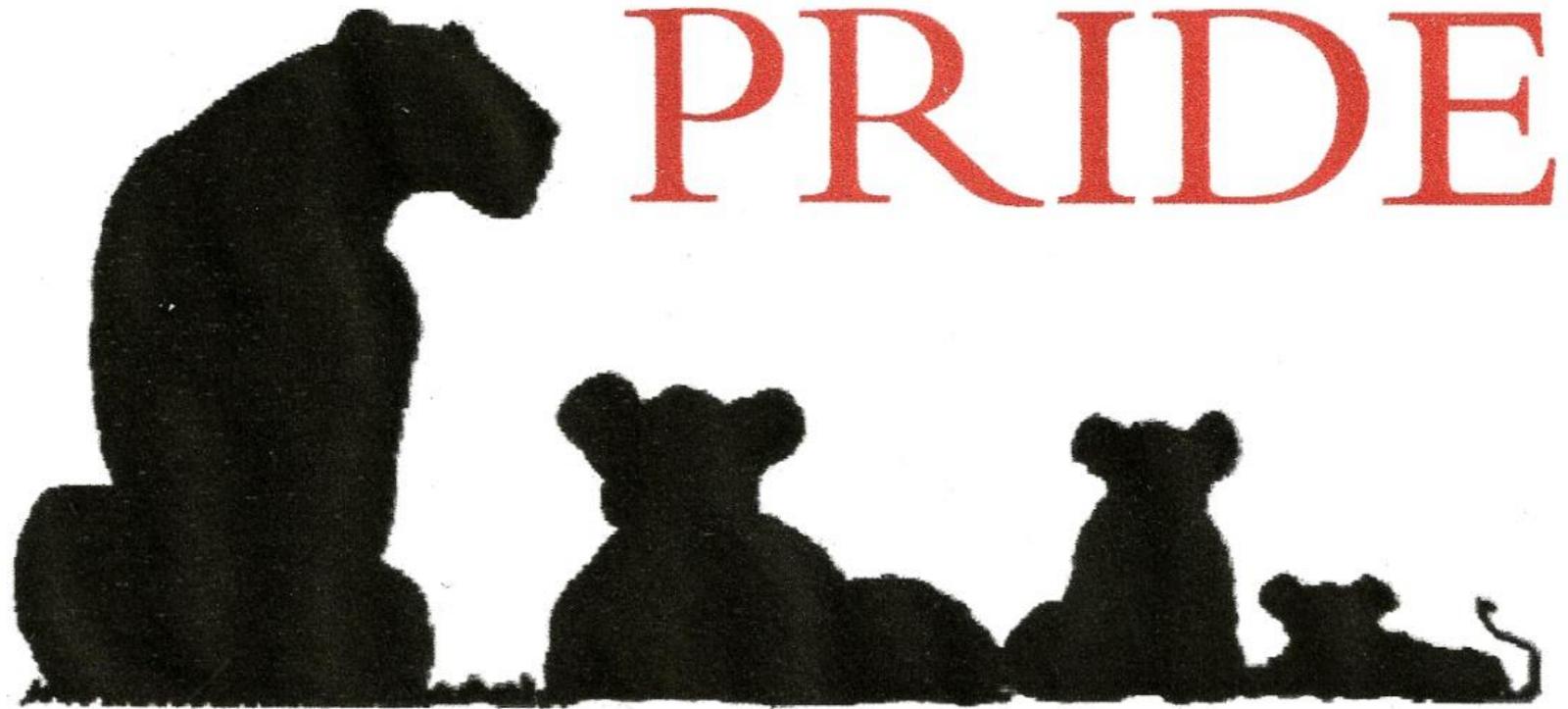
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Issues we had with existing conservation model

All felt it meant our work was not as effective as it could be, and often felt like giving up field conservation: needed it to change



Wanted to try a new approach in lion conservation



PRIDE

LION CONSERVATION ALLIANCE



Alliance based upon strong, trusted network



Overview of how Pride works

- Currently just the six of us, but could be expanded in future
- Not necessarily restricted to women: mindset is critical
- Constant, trusted support network, mainly through Whatsapp
- Provide guidance, advice, friendship, tangible help
- Meet at least once a year in person, usually more
- Fundraise together & split equally between all members
- Supported by administrator through Houston Zoo
- Openly share everything – data, successes, failures, methods; knowledge exchange between teams
- Use our individual strengths to build each other up, e.g. leadership skills, training, papers etc
- Improves our personal capacities & project successes

Sharing knowledge, approaches, failures & data

Need to put our heads together for effective conservation; task is too big & daunting to do alone. Need to share successful methods to scale up; only way forward for rangewide conservation



Knowledge
exchange
visits

Learning &
adapting
skills at
larger scale



Sharing individual expertise to make us all stronger

State of the Lion report
IUCN Lion conservation
Leadership skills
Academic papers
On the ground skills
Fund-raising

Report background and summary map

This report aims to summarise some key information from a recent analysis on the fragility of lion populations, in case it is relevant for the WCN Lion Footprint Forum. This is a multi-authored piece of work (see Appendix), and full details can be obtained from amy.dickman@zoo.ox.ac.uk or amy.hinks@zoo.ox.ac.uk

This study collated the most recent available data on wild lion range and estimated population sizes (which are often very vague). Then each lion population was assessed on its ecological fragility and socio-political fragility. Our latest map on the range and populations of wild lions is provided below. Darker red populations are those with larger estimated wild lion numbers.



Providing support to achieve work:life balance

Support when any one of us having a hard time; advice on raising children in the bush; providing perspective & help



Having each others' backs at all times

Know each others' projects well; can reach new donors, can defend projects and colleagues if needed, share any issues



Focus on
reducing
gender
inequality
within our
teams

Work with
women,
children &
marginalized
groups



Joining forces: more effective at larger scale

Collaboration improves each of our projects; has positive impact for lions and communities across nearly 20% lion range





Empowering the
next generation
of women,
within & outside
our teams

Often unexpected
consequences of
focusing on
women: e.g. lion
hunting ban and
abducted girl



Pride is launching WE Africa in 2020: aimed at building next generation of female African conservation leaders

Demonstrating a new, collaborative model

Present a united front to donors; have found additional funding, reduced competition, learned what methods can be scaled up, improved conservation efficiency and wider success

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Pride has literally kept us in conservation



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Potential role model for women – and men!

Need to show not only that women belong, they are vital and must be included. We can only achieve if we work together!

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Challenges & questions

- How do we effectively scale up this kind of model, if it is based on trust and personal knowledge?
- How can we change the competitive funding model?
- How do we support women (and men) with families?
- How do we demonstrate additive success, and communicate the value to funders?



Thank you very much!

