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Lions



Lions



Up until about one hundred fifty years ago, there were four different kinds of lions roaming the lands of Africa and Asia. It is possible that two kinds are extinct, the third is very close to being gone forever. The animal we know as the African lion is on the threatened wildlife list.

An American mountain lion is not a real lion, it is not in the Panthera group. All adult male lions have a collar of fluffy, rough fur around their heads called a mane. The color and size of the mane is what separates the types.

The two types of lions that might be extinct are the Barbary lion and the Cape lion. These lions lived on opposite ends of the African continent.

Both lions had manes on the males that grew past their shoulders. It grew down their chests and along the belly to the back legs. The mane was usually a dark color and quite fluffy.

The average weight was about 500 pounds for males. They were about ten feet long from nose to tail tuft. These groups also had clear irises in the eye instead of the full brown or yellow eyes of Asian and African lions.



Read each word below. Write a definition for each word.

1. extinct _____

2. iris _____

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The second way to tell the African lion from the Asian lion apart is to look at the mane and ears of the male. The mane of the African lion is full and so fluffy that it usually hides his ears. The Asian lion has a much smaller mane and the ears are easy to see.

The lions of India used to roam from eastern Europe to areas of Turkey, India, and Iraq. They lost almost all of their habitat as people spread over the continents of Europe and Asia. A rich Indian ruler made a safe haven for the lions on his property in the Gir Forest during the late 19th century.

Over the last one hundred years, people have been invading this sanctuary. Local tribes bring their cattle to graze on the grasslands. Others cut the lower branches of trees in the forest to use as firewood. These close growing branches are where the female lions like to hide with their newborn cubs.



Logging companies have built roads through the Gir to make their work easier. These roads bring more and more people into the area.



Read each sentence. Circle the correct answer.

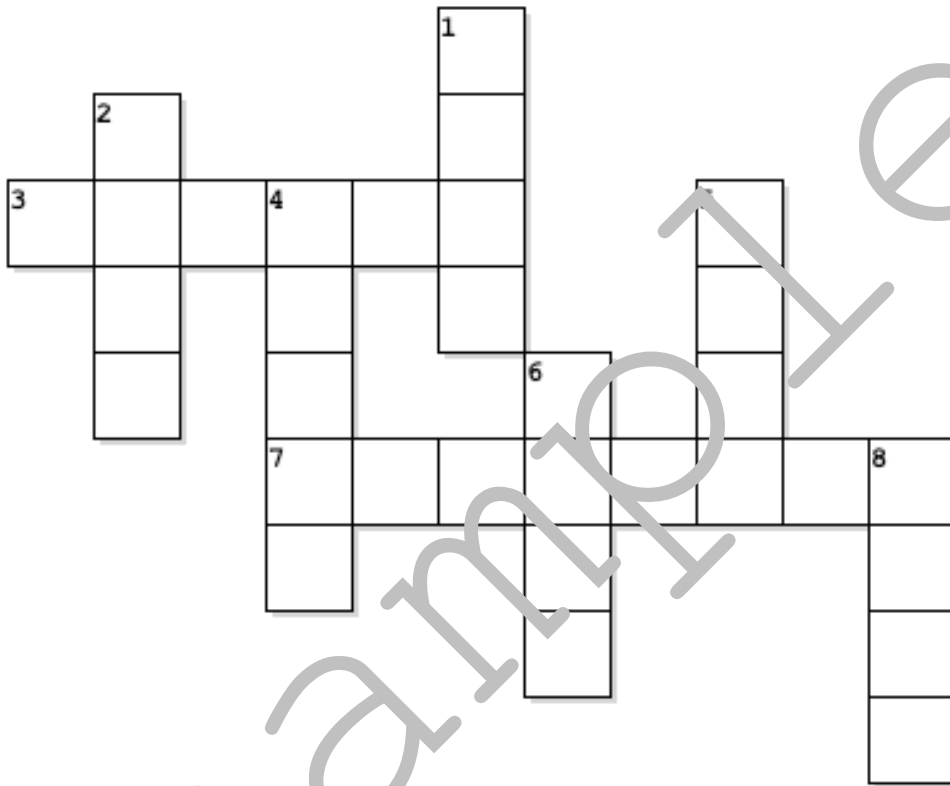
1. The mane of the (African Persian) lion is full and so fluffy that it usually hides his ears.
2. The Persian lion has a much small (mane tail) and the ears are hard to see.
3. A (poor rich) Indian ruler made a safe haven for the lions on his property.
4. (Trucking Logging) companies have built roads through the Gir to make their work easier.

Lions

Criss Cross

Can you fit these words into the criss cross?
Use a pencil so you can erase if you need to.

male savannah hunt prey
cubs jungle grass lion



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