

## Lion/Big Cat Station Station

<b>Habitat Station/Topic-</b> Lions
<b>Theme-</b> Lions and other big cats need a strong enrichment program to keep them healthy and active, and to allow visitors to see natural behaviors.
<b>Tangibles/Intangibles/Universal Concepts-</b> Tangibles- lions in habitat, lion and/or tiger skull, tiger pelt piece, enrichment ball, photos of enrichment in action Intangibles- play, welfare, enrichment Universal Concepts- health, well-being (physical and mental)
<b>Intended Audience-</b> zoo visitors, generally families with school age children
<b>Goal-</b> To explain what enrichment is, why it is important for the well-being of big cats, and some examples of types of enrichment the zoo offers.
<b>Objective-</b> Zoo guests will gain a basic understanding of what enrichment is and why we use it. 50% of audience will be able to name an example of enrichment they see or saw in another habitat.
<b>Biofacts or Other Resources to be Used</b> Boomer ball Pictures of enrichment in action Tiger and/or lion skull Tiger pelt piece
<b>CONTENT</b>
<b>Introduction-</b> Hello! Would you like to learn more about our lions? We have two, a male (Kota) and a female (Ulana).
<b>Natural History-</b> Range: sub-Saharan Africa Habitat: Plains, semi-desert savanna, shrubby mountainous areas. The males are usually much larger than females (avg. 416 lbs. vs avg. 277 lbs.) and have a thick mane of long fur around their neck and shoulders. Diet (wild): large herbivores like zebra and wildebeest, birds, rodents, fish, eggs, reptiles, may scavenge kills from other predators. Diet (zoo): feline meat diet, bones, and some prey items (rabbit, chicken). Lions are the only social big cat species, and live in groups called prides. Males and females defend a home territory. Females work together to bring down large prey. Lions, like other cats, sleep a lot, up to 20 hours per day.

100 years ago, there were 200,000 lions in Africa. Today there are about 20,000. Main threats include conflict with humans, habitat loss, bushmeat trade/poaching, and inbreeding. Many populations have become isolated and have little to no genetic migration

### Conservation Messages/Action Steps

In the wild, when they are awake, lions have to hunt to find food, patrol their territory, and find mates. Since they don't have to do those things at the zoo, we need to provide enrichment for them. Enrichment is an object or stimuli that allow our animals to perform natural behaviors to improve their overall physical and mental wellbeing. There are five main types; food, sensory, cognitive, social, and habitat (see sample script for descriptions and examples).

Lions at PPZ get daily enrichment opportunities such as scents being applied to their enclosure, "bone-sicles", live fish in their pool, toys such as boomer balls and the occasional whipped cream on the exhibit windows.

Creating a strong enrichment program allows the animals to have mental and physical activity and stimulation, which is an important part of good overall health, welfare, and wellbeing. It also allows zoo visitors the opportunity to see some natural behaviors.

**Conclusion-** I hope you have learned a little bit about enrichment, and why it is important for our animal's health, welfare, and wellbeing. As you visit the zoo today, see if you can find examples of enrichment in other zoo habitats. If you would like to help provide enrichment items to our zoo animals, we have a wish list on Amazon (show QR code to scan). Also, think about how you can add enrichment to your own pets' lives! Many of the things we do for the zoo animals can be adapted for pets.

### Sample Script

(This is just a suggested script, make it your own! There are likely to be questions, answer them as you go)

Hello! Would you like to learn more about our lions? We have two, a male (Kota) and a female (Ulana). Lions are big cats that live in Africa on the plains, in semi-desert savanna, and shrubby mountainous areas. The males are usually much larger than females (avg. 416 lbs. vs avg. 277 lbs.) and have a thick mane of long fur around their neck and shoulders. They are carnivores and predators, which means that they hunt other animals for food. In the wild, they eat large herbivores like zebra and wildebeest, birds, rodents, fish, eggs, reptiles, or may scavenge kills from other predators. In the zoo, they are fed a feline meat diet, bones, and some prey items (rabbit, chicken). Lions are the only social big cat species, and live in groups called prides. Males and females defend a home territory. Females work together to bring down large prey. Lions, like other cats, sleep a lot, up to 20 hours per day.

Lions have a loud roar that they use for communicating between members of their pride, and to warn off competing lions.

Fun Fact: Did you know that lions can sleep up to 20 hours a day, and that their roar can be heard as far as 5 miles away!

In the wild, when they are awake, lions have to hunt to find food, patrol their territory, and find mates. Since they don't have to do those things at the zoo, we need to provide enrichment for them. Enrichment is an object or stimuli that allow our animals to perform natural behaviors to improve their overall physical and mental wellbeing. There are five main types: (show pictures as you talk about each one)

Food: different ways of delivering food (hiding it, putting it in a different location or many locations), novel food (something they don't receive regularly, like venison)

Sensory: engages any of the senses (different scents (spices/perfumes), different tastes (whipped cream), something to rub against, different sights and sounds)

Cognitive: enhance mental stimulation and occupy the animal's time (puzzle, training session)

Social: Interacting with animals of the same or different species (lions are social, most other big cats prefer to be alone)

Habitat: making good use of the space; hiding food or scents in different parts of the exhibit, moving around the "furniture" (logs, branches, shelters); natural elements like a water feature; providing toys (boomer balls, etc)

Lions at PPZ get daily enrichment opportunities such as scents being applied to their enclosure, "bone-sicles", live fish in their pool, toys such as boomer balls and the occasional whipped cream on the exhibit windows. (have guests scan the QR code to see an enrichment video)

Creating a strong enrichment program allows the animals to have mental and physical activity and stimulation, which is an important part of good overall health, welfare, and wellbeing. It also allows zoo visitors the opportunity to see some natural behaviors.

I hope you have learned a little bit about enrichment, and why it is important for our animal's health, welfare, and wellbeing. As you visit the zoo today, see if you can find examples of enrichment in other zoo habitats. If you would like to help provide enrichment items to our zoo animals, we have a wish list on Amazon (show QR code to scan). Also, think about how you can add enrichment to your own pets' lives! Many of the things we do for the zoo animals can be adapted for pets.

Thank you for stopping! Please let me know if you have any questions! Enjoy the rest of your visit!