

Study: African lions slowly disappearing

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It may still be "king of the beasts," but the African lion's kingdom is shrinking, the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society reported.

The organization issued a 200-page saying African lions have disappeared from 82 percent of their historic distribution during the past several decades.

The report looked at the conservation status of the 20 largest species of African carnivores and ranked them by various external factors, from the state of current knowledge on the species, to the threats facing each of them.

The number of lions -- listed in the report as "most vulnerable" -- has dropped steadily during recent decades, primarily due to conflicts with humans, destruction of habitat and the loss of prey, the report said.

Also making the most-vulnerable list are cheetahs and African wild dogs, which have vanished from up to 89 percent of their historical habitat, and Ethiopian wolves, which have vanished from an astonishing 98 percent of their range, the WCS said.

Other species of concern include the leopard, spotted hyena and golden cat.

Only a few species seem to thrive among humans, including the African civet and several species of jackals.

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