

African lion deserves 'endangered species' protection

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The US Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the African lion as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, as loss of habitat and prey are putting them in danger of extinction

Loss of habitat and prey are putting African lions in danger of extinction, and the majestic creatures need protection in order to save their species, the US government said Monday.

"Following a review of the best available [scientific information](#), the US Fish and Wildlife Service today proposed listing the African lion as threatened under the Endangered Species Act," the FWS said in a statement.

"The agency's analysis found that lions are in danger of extinction in the foreseeable future."

Such protection would allow US authorities to toughen enforcement and monitoring of imports and [international trade](#), the FWS said.

Listing an animal under the Endangered Species Act can also help raise awareness and money to help conservation efforts.

These lions still roam across a wide swath of Africa, but the majority of the population has dwindled to 10 major strongholds.

Human settlements are encroaching on lions' territory, putting livestock within easy reach of the big cats and causing conflict with people.

Even more, the animals that lions typically eat are being increasingly hunted and consumed by people.

"As a result, lions kill more livestock, which then leads to retaliatory killings by humans," said the FWS statement.

The FWS decision comes after a 2011 petition from a coalition of organizations requesting the African lion be listed as endangered.

A 90-day comment period will now begin, in which the public can weigh in on the proposed rule. The window closes January 27, 2015.

"It is up to all of us, not just the people of Africa, to ensure that healthy,

wild populations continue to roam the savannah for generations to come," said FWS Director Dan Ashe.

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