

# Fuel sponsorship for Desert Lion Project


*Conserving desert-adapted lions along Namibia's Skeleton Coast.*



**Field Research** and collecting sound scientific data on lion movements, dispersal, and population ecology are necessary for their conservation. The Desert Lion Project was started in 1999 with the aim to gather this information. To study lions is difficult, and especially so in the harsh and arid landscapes of the Kunene Region. Marking individual lions with radio collars, and observing them in their natural habitat, is the only way to go about this. But it requires field research in harsh and difficult conditions.

*Namibia is home to a unique population of desert-adapted lions. The "Desert" lions are valuable to tourism but not to local communities and livestock farmers, due to frequent conflicts over livestock. Namibia has received wide recognition (e.g. IUCN) for successful conservation efforts (e.g. Communal Conservancies), and significant increases in wildlife numbers, especially in the Kunene Region. However, this increase in wildlife populations, has led to heightened conflict between lions and the local people. Lions prey on domestic livestock, and farmers respond by shooting lions. There is an urgent need for applied research on the ecology of the Kunene lion population, and proactive management of human-lion conflicts.*

## THE INVALUABLE ROLE OF A "BUSH" PLANE



Tracking down lions, using radio telemetry, and observing them in the field is a fundamental part of the research project. The field observations and monitoring of individual lions form the basis of studying the ecology of the population. Locating radio-collared lions in the 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> study area is a daunting task. Lions live in an area of up to 9000 km<sup>2</sup> and can cover more than 100 km in one night. The only way to track them in the harsh terrain, is with a specialised and well equipped aircraft.

**Sponsorship is requested for AvGas used by the aircraft to study and conserve the "Desert" lions of Namibia. The Desert Lion Project is addressing a high priority conservation problem, and it attracts much local and international publicity.**

**Budget** Tracking and observing the radio-collared lions require  $\pm$  165 hours of flying per year. This amounts to 45 drums of AvGas (N\$ 110,000 or US\$ 14,700) per year.

**Conclusion** *The Desert Lion Project is a long-term scientific study that feeds information to Government, local communities, and NGO's. The project produces an annual Research Report and maintains an active web site where information on lions and the study is made available to the world.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P Stander'.

Dr. P Stander  
Desert Lion Conservation, Wereldsend  
c/o Box 349, Henties Bay, Namibia

[pstander@desertlion.info](mailto:pstander@desertlion.info)  
[www.desertlion.info](http://www.desertlion.info)