

WHITE LION FACTS

- For centuries the myth of the White Lion has been etched in African folklore. Legend has it, that once every hundred years, magical White Lions will be born bringing joy to all that see them.
- White Lions first came to the public's attention in the 1970s in Chris McBride's book *The White Lions of Timbavati*.
- In 1975, two White Lion cubs were found amongst a litter of three and, in 1976, another was spotted in a neighboring pride and legend of the White Lions of Timbavati was born.
- White Lions are virtually extinct in the wild and we have the only professionally trained White Lion for films and live events on the West Coast.
- White Lions are not a separate subspecies and they have never been common in the wild. The White Lion is a rare color mutation of the Kruger subspecies of lion (*Panthera leo krugeri*), a rare species of lion only to be found in a 200 square mile area called Timbavati.
- Why this condition occurs amongst lions only in the Timbavati area is unclear but even today Kruger Park rangers spot the occasional solitary White Lion - a rare event though as they are practically extinct in the wild and there are no more than 70 in the world today.
- White Lions are not albino as they do have pigmentation, which is apparent in the eyes, paw pads and lip color. This is a condition called "leucism" where there is loss of pigmentation in the skin and fur with almost normal eye color. This occurs too in the white tiger.
- If a cub receives a dominant "tawny" gene from either parent, its coat will be tawny. Thus a litter may be comprised of both tawny and white cubs, similar to leopards and panthers.
- This coloration gives White Lions a distinct disadvantage in nature because they are highly visible. This gives them away to their prey and makes them an attractive target for hunters.