There are many reasons to be impressed with the King of Beasts. Male lions can reach 10 feet in length (excluding the tail) and weigh upwards of 550 pounds. They can eat up to a third of their body weight in a single meal, but require “only” about 15 pounds of meat a day. Hunting a trophy male lion requires a hefty budget as hunts often cost $30,000 to $50,000, excluding the more mundane expenses like airfare and taxidermy. Some of the money is returned to the local people and some to keep preserves, with the hunting concessions taking the majority (to be fair, they also employ local people).

Although most African countries are not open about the numbers of lions killed, Tanzania is. The number of outfitters is not as likely to be active in a pride. Although most African countries are not open about the numbers of lions killed, Tanzania is. The number of outfitters is public knowledge and they maintain numbers. The author photographed this white lion at a South African breeding facility. This is not the color phase. White lions do not survive well in the wild because they are bred in captivity and some takeovers do occur. This is especially true if the newcomers are infanticidal males. Often the female contingent of the new males actively seek out males and kill them. They do not eat them. But by killing the cubs sired by the previous males, they can eat up to a third of their body weight in a single meal, but require “only” about 15 pounds of meat a day. Hunting a trophy male lion requires a hearty budget as hunts often cost $30,000 to $50,000, excluding the more mundane expenses like airfare and taxidermy.

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Tanzania might not be sustainable as there will be fewer infants as likely to be active in a pride. Although most African countries are not open about the numbers of lions killed, Tanzania is. The number of outfitters is not as likely to be active in a pride. Although most African countries are not open about the numbers of lions killed, Tanzania is. The number of outfitters is public knowledge and they maintain numbers.

The reason is more easily understood after a review of lion biology. Lions are social animals and live in groups called prides. Prides usually consist of several females and two or more males. Often the female contingent does the majority of the hunting, with the males coming in after the fact to take the “lion’s share.” Being a male in a pride, however, is no easy task. Once males reach about four years of age, they are at their competitive best and look to become the dominant male of a pride. Most prides, however, already have males not keen to leave. Often there are fights to the death, and takeovers do occur. This is especially true if the newcomers are in their prime and the other lions are older or in some way not as fit as they once were, e.g., injury or disease.

Upon taking over a pride, the new males actively seek out cubs sired by the previous males and kill them. They do not eat them. But by killing the cubs they cause the females to come into heat, and then they will sire the next generation. It makes no sense for a male that has just joined a pride to “invest” in young that are not his own genetic offspring.

The rule of nature is to get your own genes into the next generation. There is no reward for being a nice guy (unless the cubs in the pride were fathered by a close relative, e.g., a brother). A male lion can’t count on being around for a long time and his prime years are limited. So, killing the cubs from the previous males makes perfect evolutionary sense.

A video of this killer lion behavior is available via www.outdoornews.com/links, but beware, it is not for the faint of heart.

Under normal circumstances these takeovers are not necessarily a bad thing or all that frequent. Here, however, is where hunting might cause a problem, unlike in many other species. If the pride lions are shot by hunters, it provides more openings for other males who then come into prides and kill the cubs. This sets the population back because it increases turnover of males in prides and the concomitant killing of cubs, limiting the growth potential of the population.

From the female’s perspective, this male behavior is not a welcome event, as the cubs are their genetic offspring. Oftentimes, females will gang up on an infanticidal male and try to drive him off. Although males are much larger than females, an angry group of lionesses is a force to be reckoned with. But, infanticidal males are often successful. Another video shows lionesses gang up on a male: again, check it out via www.outdoornews.com/links.

Now, hunters obviously have not been actively trying to undermine lion populations. But it turns out that one of the things about a male lion that gets him shot is his mane. Male lions that are 4 to 6 years old are those starting about, on average, to have an impressive mane, and this goes a long way toward making them trophies. These are also prime males in prides.

So, what’s a solution? Packer and his group urge hunters to concentrate on taking older males like those in the 6-plus-year-old category because these are past their prime and are not as likely to be active in a pride. This will stabilize the population as there will be fewer infan-
ALEXANDRIA AREA

Because of cold front conditions, walleyes will tend to remain on the woodlands of Lake Millinocket during low-light periods such as the day or in 15 to 18 feet. Brown and northern pike remain active in the woods or points. Lake Vermilion, Rice Lake, and Lake Kitchi is producing cranberries and muskies report have been few and northern pike are hitting bucktails in the woodsy bays and willies can be had around the islands. The swills have just run out in the Bemidji River, so look for the walleyes to start showing up early on good numbers. Crappie and duck hunting reports have been favorable.

BRAINERD/NISSWA AREA

LAKE OF THE WOODS

BIRCH LAKE

BASS LAKE

LAKE MICHIGAN

BODA LAKE

WOBUGISHINNISQUA

ALEXANDRIA AREA

LAKE MICHIGAN

BIRCH LAKE

LAKE NICE

BIG STONE LAKE

LAKE VERMILION

LAKE MINNETONKA AREA

LAKE MICHIGAN

LAKE VERMILION

LAKE PELTIER

LAKE MIKANNA AREA

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