

# JOIN OUR PRIDE

**BECOME A BORN FREE  
CHAMPION**



**Keeping Wildlife in the Wild**  
Every animal deserves to be treated with compassion





# INTRODUCTION AND INVITATION TO JOIN OUR PRIDE

– by Executive President and Co-Founder Will Travers OBE.

You can Join Our Pride  
and be an inaugural  
Born Free Champion  
with a minimum gift of  
£1,000 a year.

The Born Free Foundation was ‘born’ almost 40 years ago, when Co-Founders Dame Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers MBE (AKA my parents) and I were horrified at the unnecessary death of a young African elephant in London Zoo. Her name was ‘Pole Pole’ (Slowly in Swahili).

Since then, Born Free has campaigned for an end to keeping wild animals in circuses, zoos and as private ‘pets’, and has rescued numerous animals, taking them to sanctuaries. Those who can be returned to the wild have been released. Those who cannot live a full life in their natural surroundings, embraced by care, compassion and dignity.

Born Free, as you know, believes in keeping wildlife in the wild. To achieve this we must establish co-existence between humans and wildlife. Co-existence is at the heart of why we exist.

We still have so much to do, notwithstanding the successes (and challenges) of the last 40 years. We cannot do what needs to be done for wild animals without you. We need people who share our values and convictions – people who want to be part of the change we wish to see and be directly informed of the work we are doing.

As a valued part of the Born Free ‘family’, your generosity has been such a rock, a constant presence we can rely on through thick and thin. I hope you know how much I appreciate your commitment. Thank you.

Now, as we approach 40, I am delighted and honoured to invite you to Join Our Pride and become a Born Free Champion. It is a special opportunity to become part of an exclusive group of like-minded people who share our passion. Should you accept, you will become part of a group of select supporters who come together and jointly fund and deliver a Born Free priority in the year ahead, and each year into the future, with a minimum gift of £1,000 a year.

It’s all about collective impact and helping Born Free where we need it most. These may not always be aspects of our work that attract the headlines, but we promise that funding our most important work will always be at the forefront of our Born Free Champions support. And we shall keep you informed about our challenges, progress and successes along the way.

This inaugural 40th year, and to launch this new and special group, we are going back to our roots - the plight of animals in captivity and the care of those we can rescue from captive abuse. This is what spurred Bill, Virginia and me into action all those years ago. It is such an important part of Born Free’s ethos, and needs funding in 2023/4.

I do hope you can Join Our Pride and become an inaugural Born Free Champion in 2023/4! Please say yes. Virginia and I would be thrilled to have you as part of this very special initiative. Thank you in anticipation,

Will Travers OBE  
Executive President  
will@bornfree.org.uk



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## THE CONTEXT - EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF WILD ANIMALS – THE ILLEGAL TRADE

Born Free provides care for an array of rescued animals every year. We step in to help rescue, rehabilitate and find homes for abused, captive wild animals, and we campaign for an end to wild animal exploitation and suffering. We also work with and support partner organisations to provide a safety net for wild animals across the world, enabling the rescue and care of thousands of neglected and exploited captive wild animals and the protection of animals in the wild – where they belong.

The way that wild animals are used by humans for ‘entertainment’ seems to know no bounds. Whether this is through the legal and illegal pet trade, the circus industry, being used as ‘photo props’ for #Selfishselfies, zoo performances, as ‘pets’ or in private breeding facilities...the reality is the same, these animals are deprived of the life nature intended for them. They often live in appalling unnatural conditions, without space, friends of their own kind, choice, or the ability to express natural behaviours. They may be terrified, fighting for their very survival, or worse, waiting for death. They deserve better!

Wildlife crime, and particularly the illegal wildlife trade, is big business and it's on the rise. Did you know it is the fourth largest illegal trade in the world – only arms, drugs and people trafficking are worth more money?

This multi-billion-dollar industry increasingly involves organised criminal gangs, who see wildlife as a low risk, high-value commodity. Every year, millions of wild animals are brutally shot, trapped, poisoned, and mutilated, or kept in appalling conditions and traded by criminal networks.

Wildlife crime is becoming increasingly sophisticated – criminals are using complex technology and weaponry, non-traditional trade routes and increasing levels of violence. Creative accounting methods, shell companies, and tax havens are being used to hide the financial profits of this disgusting trade. In addition, rebel militias are using profits from the illegal wildlife trade as a way of funding their campaigns of insecurity and terror.

Live wild animals are widely-traded by these criminal networks, often taken when they are young, their parents killed. These animals do not get the right nutrition and care at the start of their lives which, should they survive, leads to ongoing health problems as they grow, an additional problem to add to their already grim prospects as a wild animal kept in captivity. Stolen animals often end up as ‘exotic’ pets in the United States, Europe, or Japan, while many never leave their native countries, being installed in hotels and restaurants to attract customers.



© Bittia Jaschunski/BFF and Aaron Gekoski/BFF

## WHAT HAPPENS TO CONFISCATED ANIMALS?

Despite a lack of training, capacity and resources, many authorities in countries across the world are doing what they can to counter this terrible trade. However, there are often huge landscapes to cover and limited resources to carry out effective anti-poaching and wildlife law-enforcement, so illegality continues to flourish. Some animals are intercepted and apprehended, yet once a wild animal has been confiscated from an owner or a trafficker, that is often not the end of its woes as inadequate legislation, rescue facilities and welfare training means that animals are rarely looked after in a way that protects their safety and wellbeing.

Illegally traded wild animals face huge issues; disease, injury, functional impairment, environmental challenges (such as temperature extremes), behavioural or interactive restrictions; anxiety, fear, pain, distress; and food and water deprivation or malnutrition.



© Aaron Gekoski/Caters News



Live animals rescued from traffickers and taken into custody by enforcement agents can be re-victimised. For example, animals confiscated and seized may be:

- Housed long-term in unsuitable accommodation, as the authorities have nowhere to pass the animals on to, or they do not have adequate guidance, protocols and training to ensure the welfare of the confiscated animal;
- They are often placed in zoos - many of which have inadequate infrastructure/space/funds/expertise to care for the animals. If rehomed to zoos, there is also a risk they will be used in performances – in countries where that is still allowed;
- Rehomed to unregulated and unlicensed organisations, which may return them to the illegal trade;
- Killed because there is nowhere suitable to home them. Those not euthanised, will, with few exceptions, experience the rest of their lives in captivity.

## BORN FREE'S WORK TO HELP CAPTIVE ANIMALS

Repatriation of wildlife can be difficult, not least if the country of origin is unknown, as well as expensive – including housing and transportation back to their country of origin. Animals may not survive the journey or their country of origin might reject them as such captive animals may introduce diseases into wild populations.

# BORN FREE RESCUES WILD ANIMALS IN NEED



© georgelogan.co.uk

**This is where Born Free and our supporters come in and make a real difference.** We are a group of people who care passionately about individual animals and are determined to end wild animal exploitation. We work tirelessly to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect and can live their lives according to their needs. Born Free's work to improve wild animal welfare around the world focuses on areas where we can have most impact.

Rescuing a wild animal is just the first step in ensuring their second chance at a new life. Born Free works in partnership with other rescue organisations around the world. We may not have people on the frontline (except in Ethiopia where we have a rescue sanctuary but not the legal authority to confiscate animals and in South Africa where we have a co-management agreement with our friends at Shamwari), to enable us to step in and take animals out of their horrendous situations, but we work with and support partners who can take this first step with us.

And rescue is not the whole story. Each individual animal needs to recover, be rehabilitated, and then either released or given an appropriate lifetime care home in which to spend the rest of their lives...this is also Born Free's commitment.

Where possible, we release rehabilitated rescue animals back into the wild. Sadly, many of those we rescue have been too damaged by their previous experience for this to be a realistic outcome, but our sanctuaries and those we support offer the next best option, a place they can live in peace, free from harm, and with the best care to meet their needs.

**We currently provide lifetime care to nearly 200 wild animals and our rescue efforts continue.**

Without the generosity of our amazing supporters, the vital work that our team does would be impossible. The passion of our Animal Care team ensures the well-being of the big cats in our care and the dedication of our Education team who work tirelessly in our local communities and schools to spread the message of 'Keeping Wildlife in the Wild'.

Catherine Gilson  
Born Free Manager  
Big Cat Rescue Centre,  
Shamwari

© Tongga Terre d'Accueil

## February 2022, the Lions of Lockdown reach their new home

Four adult lions, all born in captivity, housed in cramped, rusty trailers, and compelled to perform in a travelling circus for most of their lives, finally took their first, precious steps on African soil. Initially sold as young cubs, Angela, Bellone, Saïda, and Louga were eventually removed from a circus in France in 2018 after their owner surrendered them. They were rescued and cared for by experts at a rescue centre near Lyon.

In early 2019, Born Free became aware of the lions and their heart-breaking story, and promised to give them a forever home at our Big Cat Sanctuary at Shamwari, in South Africa. In 2022, following two years of restrictions during the pandemic, the move was completed.



## March 2022 – four rescued serval cats

Balozi, Lekanya, Kamegelo and Mahaba, likely bred in captivity and sold illegally as pets in Belgium, were given a fresh start on African soil. The four servals made their epic journey from Brussels, Belgium, to Cape Town, South Africa, in specialist transport crates and climate-controlled conditions. When they reached their destination and forever home, our friends at Panthera Africa were delighted to see the servals relaxed, gently walking out of their crates into their night-houses, immediately taking their first meal and drink of water and, very soon after, confidently and curiously starting to explore their large enclosures.



Since their confiscation in 2019 and 2021, the servals were cared for by an expert, dedicated team at Natuurhulpcentrum, a wildlife rescue centre in Belgium, but they needed a lifetime home. So, when Born Free heard about the cats, we knew we could help by offering them a future in the Born Free Rescue Section at Panthera Africa Big Cat Sanctuary near Cape Town. We funded and built four new enclosures designed especially for the needs of the servals. And it is here, nestled in the South African landscape, surrounded by space, naturally occurring vegetation, and with purpose-built climbing platforms and a night house, that the servals are now relaxing and adjusting to their new life.



© Panthera Africa

## MAKING A VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO LIFETIME CARE IN 2023/4

**This is where we need your help most as Born Free Champions in 2023/4.** To continue our essential work, there is a pressing need for funds. The cost of feed, veterinary care and any medication, as well as maintaining the wild sanctuaries, and staffing them with well qualified people, all needs funding.

**We are fortunate to have funding partners and supporters for part of these costs, which leaves £210,000 to be raised.**

For example, to pay for standard veterinary care for a rescued lion is £610 annually; to pay for a lion's food for a year is around £3,900 and £978 for a serval. The costs below are the main financial commitment of our Rescue and Care programme:

**By Joining Our Pride and becoming a Born Free Champion, you can, together with other Champions, contribute towards our Big Cats' Lifetime Care.**

Big cat species	Number in care	Average cost per animal in 2023/4	Total FY 2023/4
Lion	27	£10,758	£290,466
Leopard	3	£10,000	£30,000
Cheetah	8	£10,000	£80,000
Serval	4	£3,520	£14,080
Tiger	1	£10,255	£10,255
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>£44,533</b>	<b>£424,801</b>

Your collective contribution will enable us to carry out our responsibilities towards these magnificent creatures, who deserve compassion and dignity after their terrible previous experiences.

# JOINING OUR PRIDE

Join our Pride – and, as a Champion, we will be able to offer you the following exclusive benefits as our special thanks:

- A special pin badge for Champions that can be worn with pride;
- Online or physical updates three times a year on our animals in Lifetime Care – their challenges and progress across all of our sanctuaries, including Shamwari, Ethiopia, Panthera.
- An exclusive Annual Lecture to which only Champions are invited. Presentations will be given by the frontline rangers, vets, and Programme leaders highlighting the difference your generous contribution has made. It's a unique opportunity to meet other Champions, ask questions, and hear exclusively from our Executive President and Co-Founder, Will Travers, and the Born Free Team about the work they have been doing with your help.
- Special invitations to Born Free events.
- A dedicated contact at Born Free, for any questions or support needed – Joanne Bartholomew



# WAYS TO JOIN

## Credit/Debit Card

Visit [bornfree.org.uk/champions](http://bornfree.org.uk/champions)

or call  
01403 240170

## Bank Transfer

The Born Free Foundation Ltd

HSBC Bank plc

Acc no: 41283677  
Sort code: 40-19-22

(please advise BF Champion on the reference, so we can thank you!)

## Cheque

Made out to Born Free Foundation and sent to:  
Joanne Bartholomew  
Born Free Foundation  
2nd Floor Frazer House,  
14 Carfax, Horsham,  
RH12 1ER

## Direct Debit

(minimum £83.30 per mth)

Visit [bornfree.org.uk/champions](http://bornfree.org.uk/champions)

or call  
01403 240170

## Thank you for considering Joining Our Pride



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[www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk)

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