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&BEYOND CONTRIBUTES TO LION CONSERVATION THROUGHOUT AFRICA *September 2017*

Conservation-led travel company &Beyond recently celebrated World Lion Day, a global initiative to raise awareness for the conservation and preservation of these majestic cats. Part of Africa's famous Big Five, the lion is an iconic species that, like so many others, is now in grave decline. Classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, lion populations the world over are under threat.

&Beyond remains committed to saving the lion, not only by conserving the populations on its own game reserve but also by helping to diversify the species' gene pool through regular translocations. The company's successful lion management programme has meant that many of &Beyond's lions have been translocated not only to neighbouring reserves but also to other African countries in an effort to ensure a future for the species.

The company's flagship reserve, &Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve in South Africa, has been involved in several critical lion translocations, all aimed at strengthening and diversifying the genetic makeup of current lion populations.

Recent DNA results have proven that &Beyond Phinda is home to one of the most genetically diverse lion populations in South Africa, second only to the Kruger National Park. &Beyond Phinda has also helped to successfully reverse a 15-year local extinction of lions in Rwanda and, more recently, donated three healthy lions to Somkhanda Community Game Reserve in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

&Beyond Phinda has a long history of lion conservation, having been one of the first private game reserves in South Africa to introduce lions, thus extending the species' historical range. Since the first 13 lions were introduced to the reserve in 1992 and 1993, an impressive 70 litters of close to 250 lion cubs have been born on the reserve. &Beyond Phinda has also helped to establish lion populations in private game reserves in South Africa's Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West and Limpopo Province, as well as in neighbouring Mozambique and even Rwanda. The genetic diversity of the reserve's lions is a testament to the carefully managed introduction of many unrelated lions in the beginning, as well as the regular addition of new males over the years.

&Beyond Phinda is also proud to have been home to one of the oldest lions known outside of a zoo. Born in the Sabi Sand Game Reserve around December 1990, the lioness was introduced to &Beyond Phinda as an 18-month-old with her sisters in May 1992. She was one of the longest-living



free-roaming lions on record at the age of 18 years and 3 months when she died in February 2009.

&Beyond Phinda was also the source for five lionesses that were donated to the country of Rwanda as part of an African Parks translocation project aimed at reversing a local extinction in Akagera National Park. The big cats became extinct in the region nearly two decades ago, as Rwanda experienced a period of intense upheaval following the 1994 genocide, resulting in the lack of management of its national parks and the subsequent poisoning of lions by cattle herders.

The five lionesses that were to become the nucleus of Akagera’s founder population were carefully selected based on the fact that they were disease-free, genetically diverse and habituated to vehicles. They travelled to Rwanda along with two males that were donated by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Successfully released and settled in their new home, the lions have since mated, with the first lion cubs in decades born at Akagera less than a year after the lions’ arrival.

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ABOUT &BEYOND

&Beyond is one of the world’s leading luxury experiential travel companies, designing personalised high-end tours in 15 countries in Africa, five in Asia and four in South America. We also own and operate 29 extraordinary lodges and camps in Africa’s iconic safari and island destinations. In addition, &Beyond operates small group, set-departure expeditions throughout Africa and Asia. This enables us to positively impact more than 9 million acres of wildlife land and 2 000 kilometres of coastline.

Established in 1991, &Beyond takes exceptional care of our guests in order to make a difference; our commitment to sustainable responsible travel, conservation and community empowerment has been globally recognised with multiple awards over the years. We offer warm local hospitality and sublime natural luxury that combine with interpretive natural experiences, led by highly-skilled guides and rangers.

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