

South Africa's Sanbona Wildlife Reserve gives two white lions to the United Arab Emirates

Rare 18-month-old white lions, Shamwari and Sanbona, have recently become ambassadors for the endangered white lion cause. The Sanbona Wildlife Reserve has donated the two young siblings to Al Ain, an ecologically sensitive wildlife park located in the desert of the United Arab Emirates.

The lions' unusual color serves as a magnet, drawing visitors and thus raising awareness of the catastrophic decline in the world's lion population. While, at one time, the African lion habitat encompassed South Africa to the Atlas Mountains in North Africa and also included Mesopotamia to India, today's lions live mostly in Africa's protected reserves. Over the years, the wild African lion population has seen its numbers plummet and scientists fear that they may die out completely..

White lions: About 300 white lions live in captivity and they are believed to be extinct in the wild. Their striking coloration makes them especially visible on the savannah where they are vulnerable to predators and poachers. The Sanbona Wildlife Reserve outside of Cape Town is one of the few places in the world where these beautiful beasts live and breed in the wild.



Also known as blond lions, white lions are not a separate sub-species of the African lion, nor are they colorless albinos. Their eyes, paw pads and lips contain a bluish pigment. Their blonde coloring is thought to be the result of a recessive gene originating from their ancient ancestors whose native habitat once included desert and snowy environments where their pale fur color served as camouflage.

On the reserve, the lions boost their genetic integrity by mating their offspring to the tawny wild lion, thus breeding in survival skills lost through successive generations that have been bred in captivity.

Lee Daley - Travel Writer / Photographer
www.leadaleytravelwriter.com www.epicureanddestinations.com



Lake and Mountain View at Sanbona Wildlife Reserve.

You can see an actual confrontation between a male white lion and a rhinoceros as it happened in the Sanbona Reserve by clicking [here](#).

Read more about **Sanbona and the white lions** [here](#).

Read more about **Cape Town** [here](#).

Read about the **Cape Wine Lands just outside Cape Town** [here](#).

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For travel arrangements to Sanbona, Cape Town and the Cape Wine Lands, visit Gilt-Edge Travel's website at www.gilt-edge.com.

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