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**Lions of West Africa : ecology of lion (*Panthera leo* Linnaeus 1975) populations and human-lion conflicts in Pendjari Biosphere Reserve, North Benin**

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## Stellingen

### Behorend bij het proefschrift

Lions of West Africa. Ecology of lion (*Panthera leo* Linnaeus 1975) populations and human-lion conflicts in Pendjari Biosphere reserve, North Benin.

1. Livestock species selection for depredation is related to the size of the predator involved, with predators of large body mass predating livestock of larger body mass (this thesis).
2. Disturbance by humans is one of the main drivers for the small lion group sizes observed in West and Central Africa (this thesis).
3. Despite their small group size, lions in West and Central Africa prefer larger prey and eat more medium sized prey only because these are more abundant (this thesis).
4. Culture and traditions determine local people perceptions and attitudes towards lion and other large predators around West African protected areas (this thesis).
5. The weakening of taboos and their value for conservation, by modern conservation rules, need to receive a greater attention from conservation biologists for an improved effectiveness of conservation through local communities (this thesis, Jones *et al.*, 2008).
6. To help conserve fragmented populations of lion and carnivores in general, inside protected areas of West and Central Africa lion populations should be managed as subpopulations of meta-populations across the different national parks.
7. Despite the fact that sport hunting provides important economic incentives for conserving lions, it also contributes significantly to the decline of lion populations throughout Africa (eg. Packer *et al.*, 2009).
7. A combination of several methods, such as individual identification, call-ups, radio-tracking, photo capture and molecular techniques, is necessary to better monitor lion- and other predators' populations in West Africa.
8. The extirpation of lions in West and Central Africa will represent a crucial loss in lion genetic diversity (Bertola *et al.*, 2011).

9. Institutional weakness is one of the most important constraints for the conservation of African large cats, especially with regard to the illegal trade of body parts (Bennett, 2011).

10. The development of economic incentives and the improvement of local populations' livelihoods, more than awareness and education, will guaranty a secure future for endangered predators and wildlife species.

11. The limited interest of international conservation organizations in wildlife research in some francophone countries of Africa restricts conservation in these countries.

12. The predominant gender of academic staff has an impact on the gender gap found in science (Carrell *et al.*, 2010).