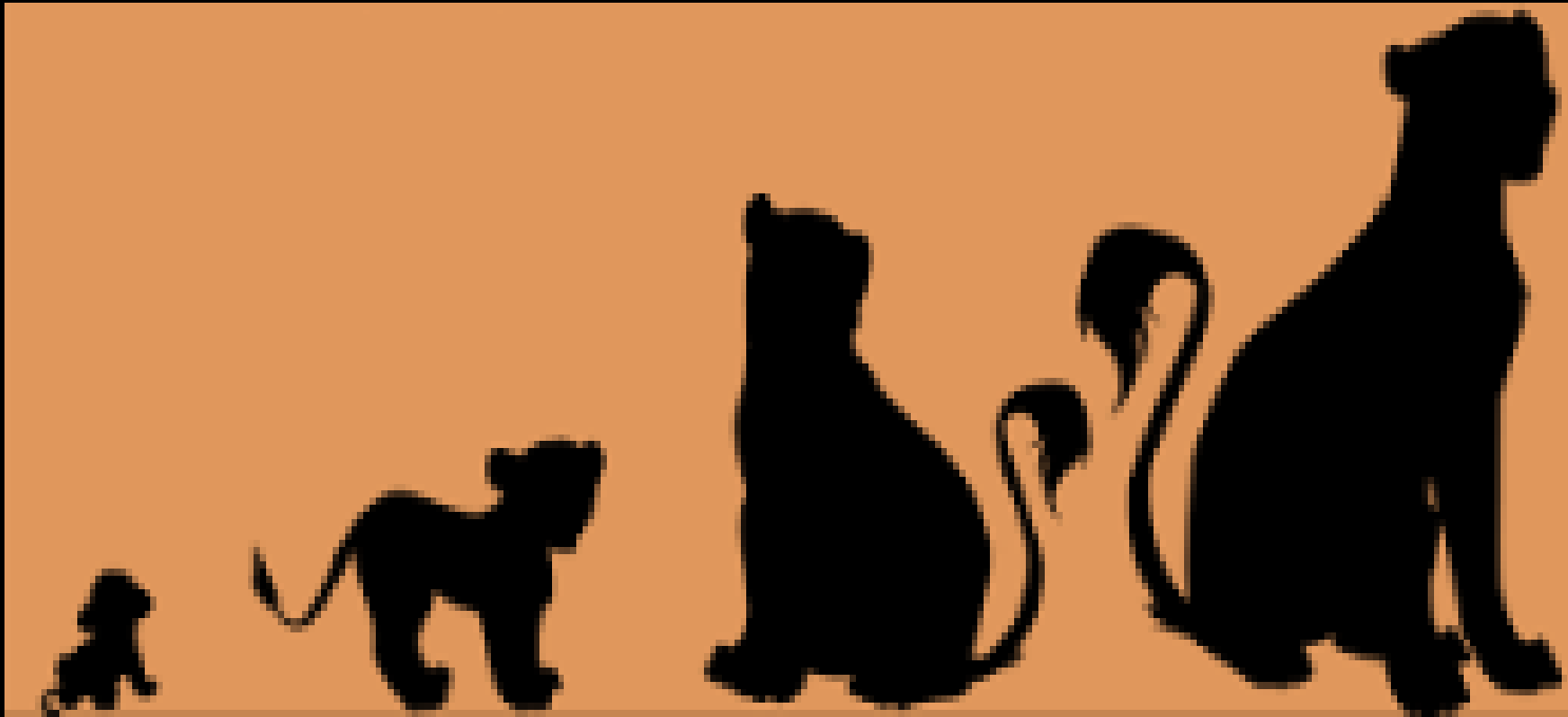


The life cycle of a lion



new born

cub

adolescent

adult

Some female lions remain with their pride while others must find new prides or become solitary lionesses. All male lions must leave the pride at three years old. Many remain solitary with little opportunity to mate while others devote their adulthoods to attempting to take over a pride. Adult lions may form alliances to strengthen their efforts to conquer a pride.

If successful, the new pride leaders often kill the young cubs in the pride to facilitate mating with the lionesses.

Lions in the wild rarely survive longer than eight or 10 years. Wild lions most commonly succumb to injuries resulting from attacks by humans or other lions or defensive wounds from prey animals



New born cubs are blind, helpless, and stay in the den close to their mother until they are 2 to 3 weeks old. Mother lionesses hunt alone in this duration in places that are near to their new den where the cubs are. These cubs weigh 1.2-2.1 kg at the time of birth and begin to crawl in 2 to 3 days. It takes the cubs three weeks before they can start walking. Being helpless, they are vulnerable to attack by other predators. In

order to avoid attracting the attention of predators, the lioness moves her cubs to a new den several times a month, carrying them one-by-one.

When cubs are 6 to 8 weeks old, the mother lion introduces the cubs to their pride. The cubs aren't brave enough; in fact, they lack the confidence to be confronted by the other members of the pride. The cubs slowly get acquainted with the lions in the pride and begin to play among themselves and with the other adult lions. Lionesses with cubs are seen to be more tolerant of the cubs than the male lions.