

Local award winning documentary wins at WTM Africa 2020

The Blood Lions campaign in conjunction with Love Africa Marketing has won **Most Compelling Digital Story** in the inaugural African Travel Week Travel & Tourism Awards.



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The Blood Lions campaign was launched following the release of the Blood Lions feature film documentary in July 2015. Currently, in South Africa, an estimated 10,000–12,000 predators, mostly lions, tigers, caracals and cheetahs, are held in captivity for commercial purposes.

Many are used in exploitative tourism activities, such as cub petting, 'walking with lions' attractions, as photo props, and in voluntourism. The next stages in their short and unethical lifecycle is the captive ("canned") hunting for their trophies and/or the legal export of lion bones to South East Asia for traditional medicine, contributing further to the escalating commoditisation of these wild animals.

The mission of the Blood Lions campaign is to reach a broad global audience to increase awareness and knowledge around interactive captivity wildlife attractions and "canned" hunting, demonstrating that these can never be sustainable tourism options. It is a "call to action" to not only affect behavioural change around how to treat wildlife ethically but also to precipitate change in policy through garnering support from the world's most influential individuals and organisations.

Building industry awareness

"Blood Lions will continue to tell this heart-breaking South African story of the captive breeding and keeping of lions and other predators for commercial purposes," says Dr Louise de Waal, Blood Lions campaign manager. "We will continue to work together with the South African tourism industry, so that tourism becomes part of the solution rather than the problem."

"New features and technologies on websites and social media platforms are enabling marketers to get even more creative and innovative with campaigns. That is why we wanted to recognise the most compelling digital story that showcased a holistic digital strategy that effectively marketed products and services in the African travel industry - WTM Africa."

"Our team was ecstatic when we were initially nominated as finalists in the **Agency and Digital** categories, alongside some big names across Africa. Today we are even more so, after hearing we have won with Blood Lions - a truly passionate team that works hard every day to create change. A huge thank you to our team, partners and the public who have supported this campaign every year," says Nicola Gerrard, Love Africa Marketing managing director.

Love Africa Marketing is the digital media and strategy agency for a number of travel, tourism and environmental companies, NGO's and campaigns in South Africa. Some of these include Blood Lions, Ranger Protect, Shark Attack, Afriski Mountain Resort and Semonkong Lodge.

Eight categories were established to celebrate the success of national, regional and city tourist boards and to recognise outstanding private sector companies and individuals, with the winners in each announced as:

- **Most Compelling Tourism Story:** Spring Marketing Campaign by Northern Cape Tourism Authority.
- **Most Compelling Innovation and Technology Story:** Virtual Reality for Tanzania by Views4D.
- **Most Compelling Agency Story:** CNN International Commercial for Farm to Table (Dangote).
- **Most Compelling Luxury Story:** Table Mountain Ring by Shimansky.
- **Most Compelling Sustainability Story:** International Dark Sky Certification Campaign by !Xaus Lodge.
- **Most Compelling Digital Story:** Blood Lions Campaign and Love Africa Marketing.
- **Most Compelling Adventure Story:** Pioneer Trail by Gondwana Game Reserve.
- **Most Compelling Foodie Story:** Africa's Original Elephant Dung Gin by Indlovu Gin.

Megan Oberholzer, Portfolio Director for Africa Travel Week says that the judging panel was impressed by the standard of entries. "There is some sterling work being done out there to showcase the best of our continent to the world on a variety of different platforms.

"It's a privilege to have been able to see these fantastic campaigns collected in one place, as we judged them – and we can't wait to see how the creators apply their creativity to continuing to share Africa's beauty and diversity with the world in the face of the challenges the global travel industry faces for the foreseeable future."

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