

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **NOKANDA, WHITE LIONESSE** **Pride of the Toronto Zoo**



**1996-2011**

Nokanda, the Toronto Zoo's majestic white lioness, has passed away at the age of 15. Nokanda was born in 1996 at Philadelphia Zoo. She arrived at the Toronto Zoo the next year and was one of the highlights of the opening of the new African Savanna area in 1998. Nokanda sired three male cubs, one in 1999 and two in 2000, who still live here at the Zoo with father Rowdy. Her first cub, Simba, currently resides at Parc Safari in Quebec. He has sired 4 cubs, 3 female and 1 male. One of the females remains with Simba in a pride, while the remaining 2 females and 1 male have formed another pride at Parc Safari.

Nokanda's declining health was noticed a few weeks ago. She was transferred to the Zoo's Wildlife Health Centre where ultrasound examination and blood work suggested a liver/gall bladder problem. Zoo vets performed an exploratory laparotomy and cancerous masses were discovered. The Toronto Zoo veterinary staff made

the difficult decision to euthanize the ageing white lioness.

Her keepers remember her as a pretty nervous large cat, and it took a while for her to warm up to people, but she became very cooperative during training and gentle with the Zoo keepers. She was very playful with Rowdy, her male companion for the last 15 years, and she loved playing with toys that her keepers gave her for enrichment. She was very curious, and would eagerly investigate new things in her exhibit. Her keepers will miss her, remembering her fondly as a very beautiful big cat.

Nokanda's legacy will live on, which is important because the wild lion population is rapidly decreasing. An estimated 30-50% decline has been documented in the last two decades primarily due to habitat loss and lion/human conflict (listed as vulnerable with IUCN).

The Toronto Zoo is a member of CAZA (Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums) and AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums). The AZA works to ensure a professional level of zoo operations with high standards of excellence. The AZA outlines the primary objectives for zoos and aquariums including conservation, research and education. Events are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25<sup>th</sup>).

**[torontozoo.com](http://torontozoo.com)**

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