

# United Rescue for Lions - Neglected Lions in Canada Find New Life in U.S.

*In partnership with other animal welfare organizations, The Wildcat Sanctuary assists in the rescue of 7 African lions from troubled roadside zoo in Canada.*

SANDSTONE, MN, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a powerful demonstration of international collaboration, [The Wildcat Sanctuary](#) (TWS) in Minnesota, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) in Arkansas, and Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Canada, with the assistance of Humane World for Animals, have partnered together to secure a safe and permanent future for seven African lions rescued from a troubled roadside zoo in Canada.

These lions—victims of neglect, inbreeding, and repeated facility closures—are now headed to lifelong sanctuary at globally accredited sanctuaries committed to ethical, individualized care.



The Wildcat Sanctuary assists with transfer of lions to temporary facility

The big cats were temporarily housed at Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Ontario, Canada until necessary permits allowed for transport to facilities in the United States.

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Now, they'll live out their days in peace, with free-roaming habitats, enrichment, and the dignity every wild animal deserves.”

*Tammy Thies*

“This rescue showcases what’s possible when organizations come together across borders with a shared commitment to protecting animals who’ve endured far too much,” said Tanya Smith, Founder and President of Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge. “We’re honored to work alongside our friends at Aspen Valley and The Wildcat Sanctuary to give these lions the security and specialized care they deserve.”



## From Crisis to Care: A Race Against Time

Although Aspen Valley primarily rehabilitates native wildlife, its team quickly constructed safe emergency habitats under a tight deadline to accommodate the rescued lions.

“While this wasn’t typical for us, we knew we had to say yes,” said Jan Kingshott, Aspen Valley’s Director of Wildlife Services. “We built the habitat in record time, knowing these lions needed a place to go—and quickly.”

With CITES permits expedited, The Wildcat Sanctuary will begin transporting the first group of lions to their new forever home.

“These lions have been through so much, but they’re resilient,” said Tammy Thies. “Now, they’ll live out their days in peace, with free-roaming habitats, enrichment, and the dignity every wild animal deserves.”

TWS and TCWR are working closely with international authorities and veterinary teams to ensure a smooth and compassionate transition.

“They’re individuals, and we’ve grown incredibly fond of them,” added Jan Kingshott. “It will be bittersweet to say goodbye, but knowing they’re heading to a lifelong sanctuary makes all the difference.”

Photos, videos, and updates about each lion will be shared on social media in the coming weeks. As the sanctuaries finalize travel logistics, supporters are encouraged to follow along and contribute to the lions’ journey home.

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### About The Wildcat Sanctuary

Based in Sandstone, Minnesota, The Wildcat Sanctuary, has been a leader in international rescues from 4 countries including lion cubs from war-stricken Ukraine. TWS provides a natural





sanctuary to 150 wild cats in need and inspires change to end the captive wildlife crisis. The Wildcat Sanctuary meets the highest standard of care and is accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries.

#### About Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary

Located in Ontario, Canada, Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the country's leading rehabilitation centers for native wildlife. The sanctuary occasionally partners on specialized rescues requiring emergency response and expert care.

#### About Turpentine Creek Animal Refuge

Founded in 1992, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and rescue operation protecting survivors of the exotic animal trade. The 459-acre Refuge, located 7 miles south of Eureka Springs, is an ethical animal tourism destination accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS). They are members of the American Association of Zoo Keepers and licensed by the USDA and Arkansas Game and Fish. Their mission is to rescue and provide lifetime sanctuary for captive wild animals. Since its inception, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge has rescued and provided sanctuary and assisted other accredited sanctuaries and zoos in rescuing and transporting over 500 animals.

Tammy Thies

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