



A film about the adventures  
with Big Cats over 30 years  
by Dereck and Beverly  
Joubert, as they piece  
together the clues to what  
makes these animals so iconic  
and threatened.

By Dereck and Beverly  
Joubert

Narration by Jeremy Irons

For 30 years Dereck and Beverly Joubert have worked through the night, droughts and floods following lions and then leopards trying to piece together the puzzle of what makes cats unique in this environment. Their odyssey leads them to understand that these are both specialists and adapting generalist hunters and yet they are both in drastic decline because of hunting and poaching, poisoning and the advance of civilization. The film also looks at some of the most extreme scenes of cats ever filmed.

This odyssey of Dereck and Beverly, National Geographic Explorers in Residence, filmmakers and researchers has resulted in one of the greatest understanding of big cats, in particular lions and leopards. The film covers today's investigations by drawing on footage and moments from the past as examples. Scenes from classic films like *Eternal Enemies*, *Ultimate Enemies* and others in the past bring alive famous moments that can now be explained by the filmmakers.

Each bone in the field tells a story about a kill that they witnessed and every lion is an old friend. A leopard stole their hearts and changed their lives and turned them from admirers and observers into more active advocates for big cats that often don't have a voice in matters regarding their future. Most disturbing to the Jouberts and other conservationists is the serious decline due to a surge in human population, hunting, poaching and the advance of man.

The plight of lions is closely linked to the perception that lions are doing well because they are such iconic animals and everyone feels that lions at least should be doing well. As the human population reaches 7 billion people lion numbers drop proportionately and over the past 50 years the numbers have dropped from 450,000 to 20,000 while leopards dropped from 700,000 to under 50,000 so this is a crisis. The film delves into the lives of two people who are dedicated and even obsessive about big cats.

Besides highlighting the growing problems with big cats this film is a celebration of these great cats and ironically that is how they started their lives with cats, in celebration and the atmosphere of the film is very much about how these people respect the wild and these predators.

With the National Geographic Society they set up the Big Cats Initiative as an emergency fund to raise awareness and to take real action.

Produced by Wildlife Films and National Geographic

*Available as 45, 52 mins.*

# Big Cat Odyssey

*Winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2011 Japan Wildlife Film Festival.*

