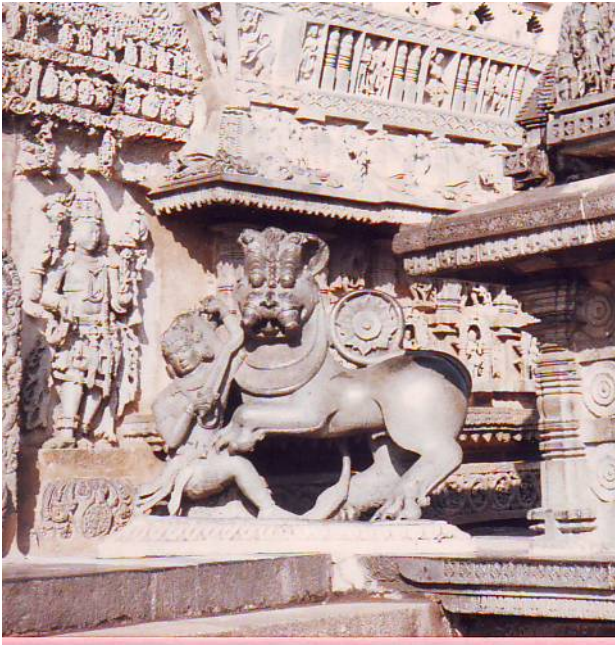


# Ecological Tales from India



## Learn about the ASIATIC LION

Ask your students to recollect stories from Panchatantra, Hitopadesh, and Jatakas. Count how many of these stories include a lion or a tiger.

Though India's national animal is the tiger, though Shere Khan is the undisputed king of India's jungles, how is it that almost all stories feature lions rather than tigers??

What is usually not known is that once upon a time in India, lions were as common as tigers. Lions, not tigers, were considered the kings of the jungle. Possibly their mane made them more impressive than tigers! Ask your students to brainstorm to find more reasons that could explain why lions rather than tigers have been considered kings of the jungle.

In British times, lions were hunted down till almost complete extinction. Work in cooperative groups to further research interesting facts about Asiatic lions and tigers. Try to discover what has made lions more vulnerable than tigers.

For that, each group will be assigned to compare:

- lion and tiger's habitat;
- lion and tiger's behaviour: eating habits, hunting skills...;
- lions and tiger's camouflage;

Ask your students to take help of the old hunting books written by British officers (available on Internet).

The students will also discuss the reasons why Asiatic lions, though not hunted anymore, remain endangered: destruction of habitat, man-animal conflict...



List ways in which Asiatic lions may be protected. Contact organizations or groups that work for the protection of Asiatic lions.

Invite your students to make their own lion and tiger puppets. Let them act out the story of *The Runaway Lion*. Ask them to add new arguments to the lion/tiger eternal fight.