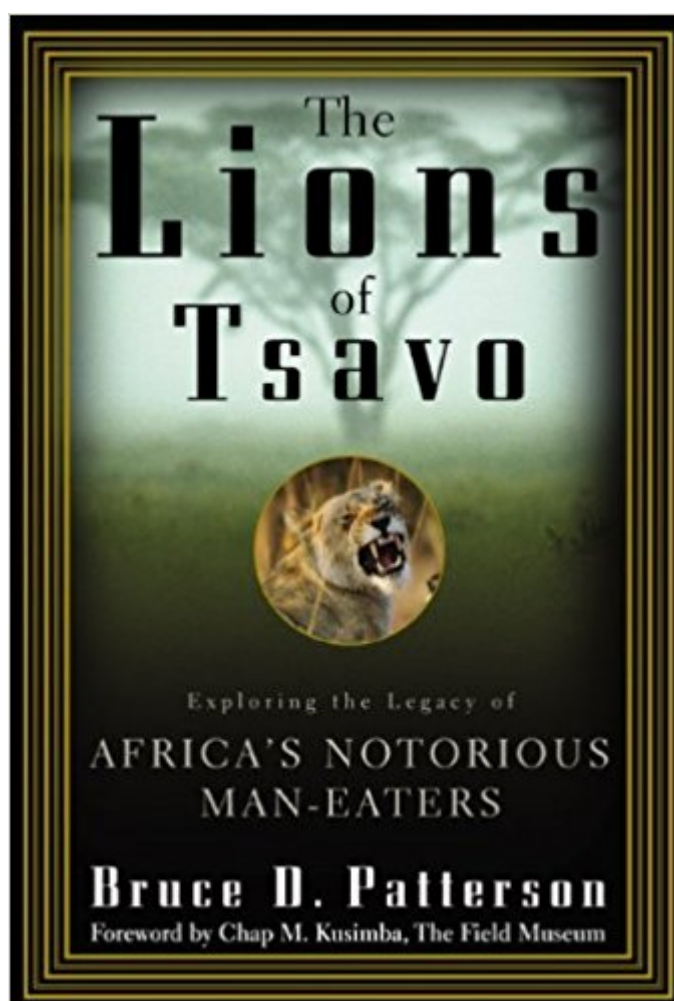


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# The Lions Of Tsavo : Exploring The Legacy Of Africa's Notorious Man-Eaters



## Synopsis

"Deftly written . . . Patterson's book must now be considered the definitive Tsavo lion study... one of the world's leading experts on lions as well as an important conservationist."--Publishers Weekly

Through field research and forensic evidence, a scientist reveals his theory on why two Kenyan lions killed humans and then ate their prey In March 1898, the British began building a bridge over the Tsavo River in East Africa. In nine months, two male lions killed and ate nearly 135 workers, halting construction. After a long hunt Colonel J. H. Patterson killed the lions, which are now on display at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. As codirector of the Tsavo Research Project, Bruce Patterson has conducted extensive fieldwork throughout the region on these lions. In *The Lions of Tsavo*, Patterson retells the harrowing story of those bloody nights in Kenya. He presents new forensic evidence on these maneless lions and argues that the man-eating behavior exhibited in 1898 came from the encroachment of human populations on wild habitats. Patterson continues this theory by exploring man's interaction with the changing Kenyan environment, creating a complete, up-to-date, and scientific look behind this intriguing murder mystery.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The culmination of a wildlife expert's life-long work on the "man-eating" lions of Tsavo, this deftly written study examines the history of two male lions who systematically hunted, killed and ate 135 railroad workers when the British built a railroad across Africa a century ago. The fascinating and horrifying story of these killings has already be the subject of a popular nonfiction book (*The Man-Eaters of Tsavo and other East African Adventures*, first published in 1907 and still in print

today) and a Hollywood film (1996's *The Ghost and the Darkness*), but Patterson's book must now be considered the definitive Tsavo lion study. Patterson's research at Chicago's Field Museum and his work establishing the Tsavo National Park--the most important wildlife preserve in East Africa--have established him as one of the world's leading experts on lions as well as an important conservationist. These credentials lend authority to his analysis as he sifts through often competing and inaccurate records about the lions. Patterson also devotes some time to the culture of the railway camps, detailing how the varied burial customs of these multinational communities encouraged lions to prey on corpses. But the author's focus is primarily on the habits and behaviors of lions themselves, and, by describing the "novel social system" of the Tsavo lions, he makes a strong case for the continued existence of the Tsavo National Park, which has turned a "virtual wasteland" into an area where lions now provide important answers to ecological issues related to animal survival. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Deftly written . . . Patterson's book must now be considered the definitive Tsavo lion study. Patterson's research at Chicago's Field Museum and Tsavo National Park--the most important wildlife preserve in East Africa--have established him as one of the world's leading experts on lions as well as an important conservationist."--*Publishers Weekly* "It was a great relief to find this wonderfully thorough, scientific, and hugely accurate tome . . . the thrill of so many new details (and newly found photos) put together in historical (Darwinian) biological and ecological perspective. Not a stone is left unturned in this cunning cat and mouse game (on a big scale) where the hunter is the hunted and the jungle beast appears like a ghost at night to kill."--Peter Beard, Photographer, Naturalist, and Author of *The End of the Game* "Through tenacious research and in elegant words, Bruce Patterson has demystified one of Africa's most celebrated tales of derring-do. Thanks to the spirited curiosity of this 21st Century researcher and his team, history can, at last, be told, and the lion can take its place, in a fashion, as king of the beasts. Even man-eaters, we may conclude, are worthy of our admiration."--John Heminway, filmmaker, producer, and Author of *Yonder: A Place in Montana* "The man-eating lions of Tsavo are but two of more than 22 million specimens in the Field Museum's collections. Each has stories to tell. Like the Tsavo lions, each can speak to evolutionary origins, growth and development, ecology, functional morphology, and behavior. Patterson's account criss-crosses these now-disparate fields, recalling a time when all were unified as 'natural history.'"--John W. McCarter, Jr., President and CEO, The Field Museum A little over a century ago, at the height of European colonial expansion in Africa, the British undertook to "tame the wilderness" with a trans-Kenya railroad from Mombasa on the Indian Ocean to Lake Victoria. One

hundred and thirty miles in, at what is now the Tsavo National Park, one of the world's largest wildlife preserves, nature struck back in the form of two male lions, which began to systematically hunt, kill, and devour railroad workers. The rampage lasted for more than nine months and is thought to have claimed the lives of 135 people. More lives would have been lost if not for Colonel John H. Patterson, a civil engineer tasked with building a bridge across the Tsavo River who, after an arduous 9-month hunt, killed the lions, earning the title of "liberator" among his crews and international acclaim as a sportsman. The story of the Tsavo man-eaters has captivated the public's imagination for more than a century while giving rise to considerable scientific debate. What compelled those lions to prey on human beings--was it a matter of necessity, self-defense, or simply one of opportunity? And why are the lions indigenous to this region maneless? Is there something about maneless lions that makes them especially prone to becoming man-eaters, or is human predation by lions more common than we have been led to believe? What can the events of 1898 teach us about the extraordinary Tsavo lions and about lions in general? In an effort to answer these questions, Bruce Patterson, principal investigator of the Tsavo Research Program and curator at the Field Museum, where the Tsavo man-eaters are on exhibit, has conducted extensive field research throughout the region. Now, in *The Lions of Tsavo*, he shares his findings. Working from original accounts, he retells the harrowing story of those bloody nights in Kenya. In a balanced discussion of competing alternatives, he presents forensic evidence that the man-eating behavior exhibited in 1898 was likely due to pathology, but argues that most man-eaters and stock-raiders today result from human encroachment on wild habitats. In attempting to solve the century-old mystery of the Tsavo rampages, Patterson goes beyond the "Reign of Terror" of 1898 to offer a fascinating natural history of *Panthera leo*. A leading expert on lions and their ecology, he shares much about the evolutionary biology, anatomy and physiology, social behavior, mating patterns, and hunting strategies of the king of predators. And in the process, he comes to the somewhat disconcerting conclusion that, for lions, once they have tasted human flesh, "man-eating very quickly becomes a habit, a routine, a way-of-life."

This book is very thorough in its investigation of the Tsavo lions and man-eating lions in general, as can be observed from the table of contents:

Chapter 1 The Reign of Terror: The Lions of the Tsavo Attack  
Chapter 2 The Terror Continues: Man Eating Lions Today  
Chapter 3 Killing Behavior and Man Eating Habits  
Chapter 4 Why Do Lions Kill People  
Chapter 5 Lion Biology: Evolution and Geographic Distribution  
Chapter 6 Hunting and Social Behavior  
Chapter 7 The Lion's Mane: Geographic and Individual Variation  
Chapter 8 Why the Lions of Tsavo are Maneless  
Chapter 9

Conservation and Tsavo National ParksIt takes a subject that has been imbued with a sense of mystery and horror and lays it out in very scientific terms. However, it tends to read like a collection of academic papers. If you are looking for a nice read, I'd recommend you choose another book. However, if you truly want to learn about the lions of Tsavo, this book is invaluable.

I remembered this book from my teenage years. NOT a good bedtime read for a youngster! Re-read as an adult and was enthralled all over again. If you saw the movie 'Ghost and the Darkness', this book is the foundation for the script. The book is better!! Read the real story behind the man eating lions of Tsavo.

Good product, good price, good delivery

just ok but good reading

An excellent work that is in a class by itself.

The history of the Tsavo lions is Ok but it gets quiet technical.I finished the book but was left with a feeling that the author was trading off their name.There seemed to be too much left to conjecture.

It was different book than I expected, but a good read

This book was in great condition.

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