

# India's top court orders state to share its lions

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(AP)—India's Supreme Court on Monday ordered western Gujarat state to share some of its endangered lions with a neighboring state to create a second home for them.

The Asiatic lion has been almost wiped out in India, but intense [conservation efforts](#) by Gujarat over the last 50 years have brought them back from the brink of extinction. There are now around 400 Asiatic lions in Gujarat's Gir forests.

[Political leaders](#) in Gujarat have resisted efforts to relocate some of the lions to a forest sanctuary in neighboring Madhya Pradesh, but the top court ordered Gujarat to transfer some of the lions next door within the next six months.

The court said the lions should have a second home to ensure that the endangered species is not wiped out in an epidemic or a fire.

Wildlife experts warn that the Gir sanctuary is getting crowded, making the lions more vulnerable to disease. There is little new territory for young males to claim, increasing chances for [inbreeding](#), territorial conflict or males killing the young.

[Conservationists](#) had also recommended the setting up of a second sanctuary outside Gujarat to ensure genetic diversification.

The court said the number of lions to be transferred to the Kuno game

sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh would be decided by a group of [wildlife experts](#).

The Madhya Pradesh government told the court that it had created a proper environment for the lions in Kuno.

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