

More Security for Rare Lions

Thirteen poaching deaths occurred throughout two months.

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The rare lions at Gir National Park in India will have increased protection soon. (Stock photo) Officials in India have announced plans to increase security at a sanctuary for rare lions because of 13 poaching lion deaths throughout the last two months.

The western Indian state of Gujarat, home to the country's entire lion population of about 350, says it will dedicate \$9 million to protect the lions in Gir National Park. Plans to increase security include more guards, adding advanced security equipment and installing video cameras. The state forests department plans to perform DNA tests and keep profiles of the remaining lions. In addition, the department plans to recruit nearly 300 volunteers to help patrol the sanctuary.

Lions used to roam much of Asia, but their numbers have dwindled for many reasons, according to the Wildlife Institute of India, such as the poaching of their claws for amulets and for use in Chinese medicine.

"These initiatives ... will be adopted soon, and [the] government has agreed to sanction funds for buying these systems at once. This will help us to protect Asiatic lions here better and also all the other animals in the major forests in Gujarat," Forest Officer Bharat Pathak said April 8.