

## **ASIA'S LAST LIONS**

I find this article in National Geographic, June 2001. I read it because I love animals.

Asia's lions once ruled the wild from the Mediterranean to India. Today only 300 remain.

Most people think of lions as strictly African beasts, because lions have been killed off almost everywhere else. In Asia for example only 300 remain. These lions live primarily in sanctuary (Gir forests in India). But in Gir, there is not enough space for all animals and they plan to move some Gir's lions.

Animals in Gir are smaller than they are in Africa. And they have shorter manes and a long fold of skin on their undersides.

Perpetuating the species is no easy work, because Asiatic lions have small gene pool, 70 to 80 percent of sperm is deformed.

And one more speciality of these lions: those DNA fingerprint actually look like identical twins.

In ancient India was the greatest test to fight a lion, today it may be to save one.