1. Procedural History
The applicants filed an application for intervention before the Supreme Court to have it decide on the necessity of a second home for the Asiatic lion, an endangered species. Applicants seek to have the Court direct the Respondents to implement the re-location program for Asiatic lions, as recommended and approved by the Government of India.

2. Facts
After considerable research work, the Indian Government concluded to the necessity of providing a second home to Asiatic lions in Gir, located in the State of Gujarat in view of their conservation, and spent important funds for the re-location of villages in the site selected for relocation in Kuno, also a historical habitat of the species, located in the State of Madhya Pradesh. Despite all the research and expenses engaged by the Indian Government, the State of Gujarat, where the endangered animals are located, refused to provide the lions.

3. Issue
The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL), the paramount scientific body and policy regarding conservation under the 1972 Wildlife Act supported the re-introduction project. However, the State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) of Gujarat and the Gujarat Government. Although not statutorily endowed but with the same functions as the NBWL, opposed the re-introduction, contending that the re-introduction could further endanger the species, based on the unsuitability of the second habitat in Kuno, and whereas the number of animals had increased in Gir.

4. Ruling
The Supreme Court sided with the applicants, considering that the view of the NBWL should prevail over that of the SBWL. In regards to the international conventions, the Court further held that the best interest of species approach, or eco-centric approach, was directed to implement the policy decision of re-introduction of Asiatic lions at Kuno, in the State of Madhya Pradesh.

Based on art. 21, 32, 48-A, 51-A, the Court held that species had rights other than the rights afforded to human beings. Accordingly, the eco-centric or species-best-interest approach, as opposed to the anthropocentric approach, and the mandate of the Constitutional public trust doctrine had to be followed. Such approach is consistent with the need to for effective species protection regimes.

5. Extracts
“Sustainable development it has been argued by various eminent environmentalists, clearly postulates an anthropocentric bias, least concerned with the rights of other species which live on this earth. Anthropocentrism is always human interest focused thinking that non-human has only instrumental value to
humans, in other words, humans take precedence and human responsibilities to non-human are based on benefits to humans. Ecocentrism is nature-centred, where humans are part of nature and non-humans have intrinsic value. In other words, human interest does not take automatic precedence and humans have obligations to non-humans, independently of human interest. Ecocentrism is, therefore, life-centred, nature-centred where nature includes both humans and non-humans.

We reiterate that while examining the necessity of a second home for the Asiatic lions, our approach should be ecocentric and not anthropocentric and we must apply the “species best interest standard”, that is the best interest of the Asiatic lions. We must focus our attention to safeguard the interest of species, as has equal rights to exist on this earth. Asiatic lion has become critically endangered because of human intervention. […] Asiatic lion currently only exists as a single sub-population and is thus vulnerable to extinction from unpredictable events, such as an epidemic or large forest fire, etc. and we are committed to safeguard this endangered species because this species has a right to live on this earth, just like human beings”

Paragraphs 46-47