Likweli – New Monkey Species in Africa

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Why in News?

Recently, scientists have identified the Likweli, a previously unknown monkey species, in the rainforests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; this marks Africa's 5th new monkey species discovery in 75 years.

- **Common name –** Likweli
- **Scientific name –** Colobus congoensis (to honour Congo's biodiversity)
- **Family –** Colobus
- **Appearance –** Glossy black fur, orange-pink lips, and a distinctive roaring call.

- **Diet –** Herbivores, they rely on specialised, ruminant-like digestive systems to process plant matter.

Ruminant-like digestive system *uses foregut fermentation to break down plant-based cellulose using symbiotic gut microbes.*

- **Unique trait –** Colobus monkeys lack a functional thumb.

- **Ecological role – *Herbivores of the canopy***.
- They eat canopy plants, spreading seeds through waste; this grows new trees, opens sunlight, and fertilizes the rainforest floor.
- **Conservation –** Small estimated population, already at risk due to hunting and deforestation.
- **Evolutionary insight –** Reshapes understanding of primate evolution in Central Africa.

Reference

BBC | Likeweli

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