

New cat species 'Tilcayo'

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Why in News?

Researchers have confirmed a new species of tiger cat in Bolivia named Tilcayo (Leopardus tilcayo), marking the first such feline discovery in the country in over a century.

- **Genetics & Evolution** - Genetic analysis confirms the Tilcayo lineage split from other tiger cats approximately 1.4 million years ago.
- Tiger cats are cryptic species, meaning they are visually indistinguishable by appearance alone and require DNA data for classification.
- **Habitat** - Inhabits the mountainous, lush Yungas forest of Bolivia.
- **Physical Features** - Smaller than a domestic cat, measuring about 18 inches (46 cm) in length and weighing around 3 pounds (1.4 kg).
- **Diet & Behavior** - Camera traps indicate nocturnal activity, while scat analysis shows small rodents form part of its diet.
- **Conservation Status** - The IUCN Red List currently categorizes tiger cats under two "Vulnerable" species with declining global populations.
- The research team also described a new tiger cat subspecies in Peru's Yungas, naming it *Leopardus tigrinus antisuyo* after Antisuyu (region of the old Inca Empire).



Reference

[The Hindu](#) | New cat species 'Tilcayo'



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