

# Asian Golden Cat

## Origin

The Asian golden cat, also known as the Asiatic golden cat, is a wild cat species native to the forests of South and Southeast Asia. Its scientific name is *Catopuma temminckii*.

The exact origin and ancestry of the Asian golden cat are not well understood, but it is believed to be closely related to other species of wild cats found in Asia, such as the clouded leopard and the marbled cat. It is thought that the Asian golden cat reached its current range through a combination of historical range expansion and genetic mixing with other wild cat species. This process is thought to have taken place over thousands of years, and is likely the result of a combination of environmental and ecological factors, as well as genetic drift.

## Distribution and Population in India

In India, the Asian golden cat has been recorded in several protected areas, including the Eastern Himalayas, the Northeast Indian states, and some parts of central and western India.

The distribution of Asian golden cats in India is patchy and fragmented, with the species being mostly confined to tropical and subtropical forests. However, there is limited information available on the population size and distribution of Asian golden cats in India. Not to forget, they are listed as “Near Threatened” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List

# Features

The Asian golden cat is a medium-sized wild cat species, with a distinctive appearance. The average weight of an adult Asian golden cat ranges from 9 to 16 kg (20 to 35 lb) and they can reach a length of up to 1.2 m (3.9 ft) including the tail. They have a compact and muscular body, with a relatively short tail and long, powerful legs.

In terms of fur color, Asian golden cats can be either reddish-brown or grayish-brown, with black spots and stripes. The fur pattern of this species is highly variable, ranging from solid reddish-brown to black and gray with spots and stripes.

There are some physical differences between male and female Asian golden cats, with males being slightly larger than females on average.

# Lifestyle

Asian golden cats are solitary animals, and they are mainly active at night. They are elusive and shy, and are typically found in dense forest habitats. They are excellent climbers and swimmers, and are known to have a speed of up to 60 km/h (37 mph) when running. In terms of reproduction, female Asian golden cats give birth to litters of 1 to 4 kittens, which are born with a spotted coat and gradually develop their distinctive fur patterns as they grow. The kittens reach adulthood at around 1 to 2 years of age.

# Food Habits

The diet of the Asian golden cat mainly consists of small mammals, such as squirrels, rabbits, and rodents, as well as birds and reptiles. They are also known to feed on domestic livestock in areas where they come into conflict with humans.

# Habitats

In terms of habitat, Asian golden cats are found in a range of forested habitats, including tropical and subtropical forests, as well as temperate and subalpine forests in the Himalayas. They are able to tolerate a wide range of weather conditions, from tropical heat to cold and snow in the high elevations of the Himalayas

# Vulnerable Species

The Asian golden cat is considered to be a “Near Threatened” species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The species was first listed as “Near Threatened” on the IUCN Red List in 2008, due to the decline in its population size and distribution.

The Asian golden cat is vulnerable due to a combination of threats, including habitat loss and degradation, hunting pressure, and human-wildlife conflict. In some parts of its range, the species is hunted for its fur, meat, and body parts, which are considered valuable in traditional medicine. In addition, the conversion of forests to agricultural lands and other human activities is resulting in the destruction and fragmentation of the species’ habitat, making it difficult for the Asian golden cat to survive.

# Protected Areas

Manas National Park is located in the northeastern Indian state of Assam and is known for its diverse flora and fauna, including several rare and endangered species, such as the Asian golden cat.

Namdapha National Park is located in the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh and is known for its diverse habitats, including tropical forests, bamboo forests, and

alpine meadows. The park is also known to support populations of Asian golden cats and other wildlife species.

Nameri National Park is located in the northeastern Indian state of Assam and is known for its rich biodiversity, including several species of primates and birds, as well as the Asian golden cat.

These protected areas play a crucial role in conserving the remaining populations of Asian golden cats in India, as well as other wildlife species.