

Fishing cat

June 8, 2022

In news– The first-ever survey of the elusive Fishing cat in and around Asia's biggest brackish water lagoon, the Chilika lake in Odisha was conducted by Chilika Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with The Fishing Cat Project (TFCP) recently (**Phase-I in 2021** and **Phase II in 2022**). As per survey, Chilika Lake has 176 fishing cats.

About Fishing cat-

- **About twice the size of a typical house cat, the fishing cat** (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) **is a feline** with a powerful build and stocky legs.
- **The size of an adult ranges from 57-78 cm and weighs between 5-16 kg.**
- **It is known to dive to catch fish.**
- **The fishing cat is nocturnal and apart from fish also preys on frogs,** crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals.
- **They are globally threatened cats that occur in wetlands like marshlands,** mangroves and flooded forests in major South and Southeast Asian river basins starting from Indus in Pakistan till Mekong in Vietnam and in the island nations of Sri Lanka and Java.
- **In India, they are mainly found in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans,** on the foothills of the Himalayas along the **Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys and in the Western Ghats.**
- **They are found in 10 Asian countries** but have remained undetected in Vietnam and Java since the last decade or so.
- It has been designated as ambassador of Chilika since 2020.
- It is **capable of breeding all year round** but in India its peak breeding season is known to be between March

and May.

- In the wild, **fishing cats live up to an age of 12 years on an average.**
- IUCN status- **Endangered**
- One of the major threats facing the fishing cat is the destruction of wetlands, which is its preferred habitat.
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (**CITES**) **lists the fishing cat on Appendix II part** of Article IV, which governs international trade in this species.
- It is included in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and thereby protected from hunting.