

Wild cats and their colour morphs

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Why in news?

Indian scientists from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and University College London (UCL) have discovered six colour morphs of the golden cat in Dibang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh. **Six colour morphs include tightly-rosetted, cinnamon, melanistic, grey, golden, and ocelot types.**

What are Colour morphs?

- Colour morphs are basically occurrences of two or more discrete colour forms of the animal within a population. E.g. Black panther is a colour morph of the common leopard.
- They arise from random genetic mutations.
- **Dibang Valley hosts the world's most diverse range of colour morphs of a wild cat species ever reported on one site.**

Asiatic Golden Cat

- It is a wild cat native to the north-eastern Indian subcontinent.
- IUCN status – **Near threatened**
- It is placed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife protection act.