

PRESS RELEASE

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First photographic record of rare marbled cat in Nepal

A team of wildlife researchers has photographed one of the world's mysterious cats on camera for the first time in Eastern Nepal.

The rare marbled cat *Pardofelis marmorata* — a small arboreal felid slightly larger than a domestic cat — was captured by a camera trap set up in a forest in Panchthar district in Eastern Nepal. This is the first photographic evidence of a marbled cat in Nepal.

Researchers from Lincoln University, New Zealand and Red Panda Network (RPN) have published a paper, 'First photographic record of marbled cat in Nepal', where they confirm the presence of one the world's most elusive and less studied cat, published in a peer-reviewed open-access journal Nature Conservation.

This exciting discovery is the result of an intensive camera trap mammal survey — in collaboration with RPN, Rotterdam Zoo, Wildlife Conservation Network and Lincoln University — in the Kangchenjunga landscape of Eastern Nepal. The study has provided 5,176 photographs of Himalayan mammals including red panda, Assamese macaque, barking deer, leopard, and Himalayan black bear.

"This is an exciting news for wildlife biologists and conservationists in Nepal," said Sonam Tashi Lama, a lead author and RPN's Program Coordinator. RPN citizen scientists, Forest Guardians and wildlife researchers have been monitoring Community Forests in Eastern Nepal for a decade but didn't find any of signs he marbled cat. "Use of camera traps for wildlife monitoring has helped us take the first picture of this rare cat in Nepal," added Lama.

"Cameras are revolutionizing how we detect and count cryptic species," said Adrian Paterson, associate professor in Zoology and Head of Department of Pest Management and Conservation at Lincoln University, New Zealand and co-author of the research paper. "Detecting the marbled cat in Eastern Nepal is a great example of the benefit of using cameras and will add significantly to conservation in Nepal," he said

The marbled cat is categorised as 'Near Threatened' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, listed in CITES Appendix I and nationally data deficient in Nepal. The forest-dependent marbled cat is distributed throughout Southeast Asia, from the Himalayan foothills of India and Bhutan to China to Malaysia and Indonesia.

The forest area where the marbled cat was detected has been naturally restored as a secondary forest after a fire that occurred nearly three and a half decades ago. Small wild cats are not presently a research priority in Nepal and the sighting of a marbled cat has been received as a big achievement. It has been recommended that camera trap surveys be conducted year-round in this region, as well as a threat assessment to guide conservation management plans for the marbled cat.

Notes to Editors:

The research article- First photographic record of marbled cat *Pardofelis marmorata* Martin, 1837 in [Nepal](#) was published in open-access Nature Conservation on January, 2019.

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About Red Panda Network (RPN)

RPN is a conservation organization committed to the conservation of wild red pandas and their habitat through the education and empowerment of local communities.