

Rare African Golden Cat Captured on Camera

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Yale anthropologists camera catches a rare African Golden Cat in the Kibale National Park in Uganda.

(PhysOrg.com) -- A Yale anthropologist has captured photographic images of a rare, cougar-like cat ranging at night in an endangered Ugandan forest.

The images of the African golden cat (*Profelis aurata*) were taken by a digital [infrared camera](#) trap set last year by the [anthropologist](#) who was studying [primate](#) behavior in the wild.

“It is a very cryptic animal. Almost nothing is known about it,” said Gary P. Aronsen, research associate in the Department of Anthropology, who described the photographs in the online edition of the *African Journal of Ecology*.

“The camera traps often capture images of elephants, chimpanzees, and small antelopes, so seeing this cat was a very welcome surprise,” Aronsen said.

Aronsen showed the images to three experts, who confirmed the identification as the golden cat.



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The cat is so rare few researchers working in African forests have seen it. A colleague of Aronsen’s has worked for years in Kibale National Park, Uganda where the photos were taken, and has seen the animal only once, Aronsen said.

Aronsen knows of only one other published photograph of the cat in the wild, taken in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The cat looks much like a mountain lion of the American West and is much smaller than the lions and leopards that once roamed the park. While these larger cats have been eradicated by human encroachment in the park, the golden cat’s smaller size may have helped it survive in

Uganda's shrinking forests, said Aronsen.

“Hopefully, the presence of this predator is a good sign of the forest's health - even though it's a smaller cat the forest has to have enough resources to sustain it.”

More information: www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo.../122591035/abstract

Provided by Yale University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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