

New Cat Species Discovered

Genetic tests reveal that the Bornean clouded leopard is unique to the Borneo and Sumatra islands.

Posted: March 16, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

The Bornean clouded leopard is genetically different than its Southeast Asian cousin. (Photo courtesy of the World Wildlife Fund) A new wildcat species lives on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The Bornean clouded leopard, which lives in the rainforest jungles of the area known as the Heart of Borneo, is not the same species as the clouded leopard found in the jungles of mainland Southeast Asia. Genetic tests performed at the National Cancer Institute revealed that the two cats are distinctly different.

“Who said a leopard can never change its spots? For over a hundred years we have been looking at this animal and never realized it was unique,” said Stuart Chapman, WWF international coordinator of the Heart of Borneo program, in an Associated Press report.

The Bornean clouded leopard differs from its mainland cousin in several ways. Bornean clouded leopards have the longest canine teeth relative to body size of any cat species. Its coat is darker in color, with many spots appearing within its cloud markings. A double dorsal stripe appears in its grayer fur.

The WWF estimates that 5,000 to 11,000 Bornean clouded leopards live in the jungles of Borneo, with 3,000 to 7,000 living in Sumatra.