

Discovery of the tilcayo (October 6, 2026)

TEACHING GUIDE

What? The discovery of a new wild cat species—the first described by scientists in over 100 years. 🐾

Who? The tilcayo, a small, spotted wild cat that is smaller than a domestic cat, and Bolivian biologist Paola Nogales-Ascarrunz, who led the research with an international team.

Where? In Bolivia, in the Yungas—a humid, often cloud-covered mountain forest on the eastern slopes of the Andes. 🌿

When? The study officially classifying the tilcayo as a new species was published on Thursday, September 17, 2026, following years of analysis and research. 🕒

Why is it important? Because you can only protect a species if you know it exists, and the tilcayo could be at risk.

Your goal for this activity is to learn a little more about the tilcayo.



OBJECTIVES

- Discover how the tilcayo was identified as a new species
- Understand a news report
- Locate Bolivia and identify its five neighboring countries
- Understand what a landlocked country is
- Estimate a distance using a map scale
- Complete a fact sheet on a little-known feline



SUBJECTS

• Science and Technology

- The concept of animal species
- Feline habitats
- Threatened species and their protection

• Social Studies / Geography

- Locating places on a map of South America
- Neighboring countries and landlocked countries
- Capital city and seat of government

• Mathematics

- Using a scale
- Measuring and estimating distances
- Units of measurement (cm, km, kg)

• English

- Comprehension of a report
- Reading information sheets
- Writing short answers



COMPETENCIES

- Locate and interpret information (video, map, website)
- Understand a news report
- Read and interpret a map
- Use a scale to estimate distance
- Select and organize information on a worksheet
- Provide short, precise answers



DURATION

- Approximately 60 minutes



GETTING STARTED

- Ask the students if they think scientists already know all the animals on the planet.
- Ask them if they have heard about a new species of wild cat discovered recently.
- Gather their hypotheses: how can we tell that an animal belongs to a previously unknown species?

Discovery of the tilcayo (October 6, 2026)

TEACHING GUIDE



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STEP 1 — A Surprising Discovery. Watching of a Global News report on the discovery of the tilcayo, followed by answers to five multiple-choice questions.

Q1 — More than 100 years. (The last new wild cat species, the Pampas cat, was described in 1923.)

Q2 — A domestic cat.

Q3 — It behaved like a wild animal.

Q4 — A humid mountain forest.

Q5 — Habitat loss, particularly due to deforestation.

STEP 2 — A Closer Look at Bolivia. Exploration of Bolivia using Google Earth, identification of its five neighboring countries on a map, then answers to two written questions.

Country A — Brazil

Country B — Paraguay

Country C — Argentina

Country D — Chile

Country E — Peru

Q6 — Yes, Bolivia is a landlocked country.

Q7 — Approximately 420 km.

STEP 3 — Five Unique Cats. Exploration of the Kiddle encyclopedia entries, choice of one cat out of five, then completion of its fact sheet and answers to two questions.

Fact sheet — Answers vary depending on the cat chosen. Example for the caracal:

- **Continent(s) and countries where it lives:** Africa (especially south of the Sahara) and Asia, from the Arabian Peninsula to western India.
- **Habitat:** Dry areas with places to hide. Also forests, savannas, semideserts and mountains up to 3,000 m.
- **Length and weight:** 78 to 108 cm long from head to body for males (females slightly smaller: 71 to 103 cm), 8 to 19 kg.
- **What it eats:** Mostly birds, rodents and other small mammals. Mammals make up over 80% of its diet.

Q8 — Pallas's cat (manul), sand cat, jaguarundi and caracal: Least Concern. Iberian lynx: Vulnerable (since 2024).

Q9 — Open-ended answer, based on the entry consulted. Example for the caracal: it can jump over 3 m high to catch birds in midair. It has black ear tufts 4.5 cm long. Its name comes from a Turkish word meaning "black ears."



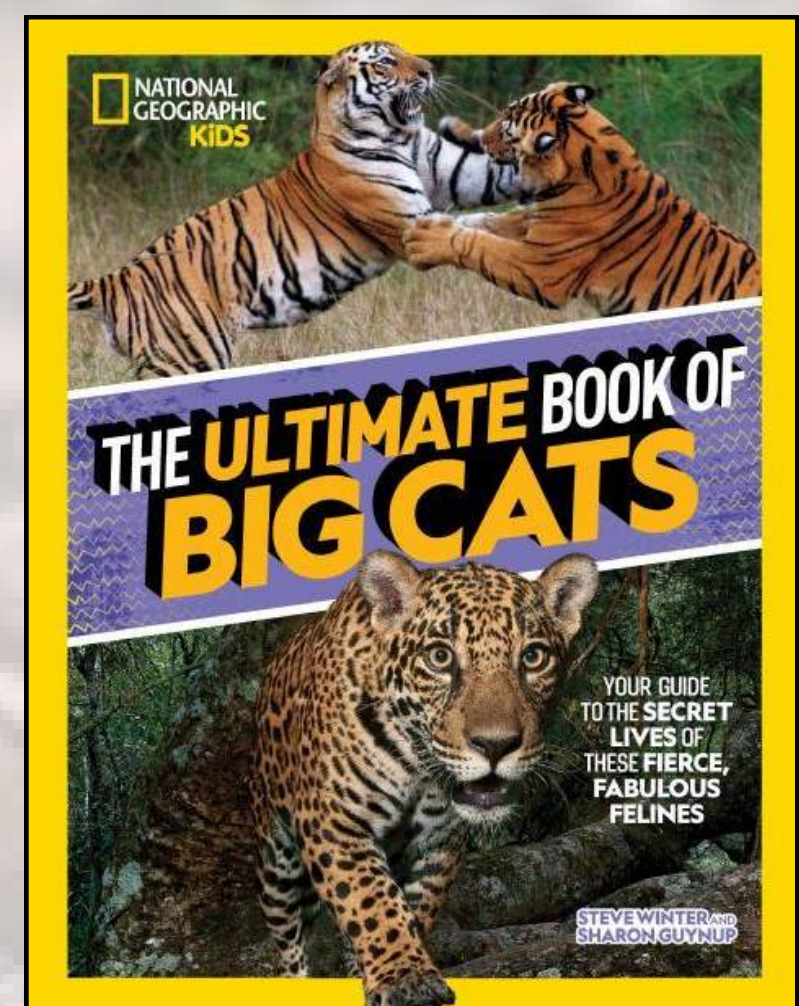
WRAPPING UP

- Review what the students have learned as a group.
- Compare the chosen felines: which is the smallest? The most threatened? The most surprising?
- Discuss what surprised them the most (e.g., a wildcat mistaken for a domestic cat, a landlocked country, a city that is not the capital but houses the government).
- Ask: why is it important to discover and name new species?



FURTHER EXPLORATION

 Sharon Guynup & Steve Winter. *The Ultimate Book of Big Cats*. National Geographic



- **Garfield — Garfield — Jim Davis — 1978 (accept 1976) — Orange tabby**
- **Le Chat — Le Chat — Philippe Geluck — 1983 — Grey**
- **Felix the Cat — Felix the Cat — Pat Sullivan and Otto Messmer — 1919 — Black (accept black and white)**
- **Sylvester — Looney Tunes — Friz Freleng — 1945 — Black and white (tuxedo)**

Q1 — $9.58 - 5.95 = 3.63$ seconds

Q2 — $112,000 \div 3,600 \approx 31$ metres per second

Q3 — $2,401 \div 100 \approx 24$ times.





Discovery of the tilcayo (October 6, 2026)

Some Famous cats

Some cats never actually existed... yet everyone knows them! 🐱

For over a century, comic book and cartoon creators have been dreaming up cats that become true stars.

A big tabby who loves lasagna, a grey cat in a suit who offers humorous food for thought, a black-and-white cat born in the silent film era, and another who relentlessly chases a little yellow canary... Quite the cast of cats!

Discover them by checking out their Wikipedia entries and filling in their fact sheet! 🐾

FELIX THE CAT — GARFIELD — SYLVESTER — LE CHAT

cat	Series	creator(s)	Appeared in	Fur
				
				
				
				

Speaking of cats...

1. Sarah, a female cheetah at the Cincinnati Zoo, ran the 100-meter dash in 5.95 seconds. The human world record, set by Usain Bolt, is 9.58 seconds. By how many seconds would Sarah beat Usain Bolt?
2. A cheetah reached a record speed of 112 km/h. How many meters does it cover in one second at that speed? (Hint: 1 km = 1,000 m and 1 hour = 3,600 seconds)
3. In 2002, fewer than 100 Iberian lynxes remained. In 2024, a total of 2,401 were counted. How many times bigger is the population now?