

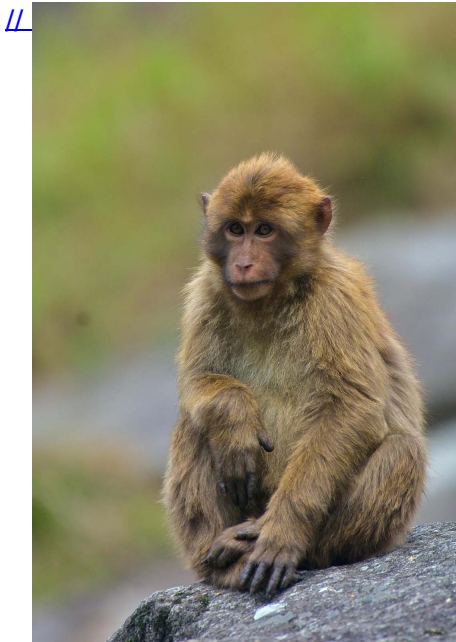


Sela Macaque

Why in News?

A new species of old-world monkey recorded from Arunachal Pradesh has been named after Sela Pass, which is a strategic mountain pass at 13,700 ft above sea level, and the New Species has been named Sela Macaque.

- It was identified and analysed by a team of experts from the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the University of Calcutta.**
- Sela is situated between **Dirang and Tawang towns** in western Arunachal Pradesh.



What are the Findings?

- The phylogenetic analysis revealed that the **Sela macaque was geographically separated from the Arunachal macaque (*Macaca munzala*)** of Tawang district by Sela.
 - Phylogenetics relate to the evolutionary development and diversification of a species or group of organisms.
- It was found to be **genetically different from the other species of monkeys reported from this region.**
- The study describes the **Sela macaque as genetically closer to the Arunachal macaque.**
- The two have some similar physical characteristics such as **heavy-build shape and long dorsal body hair.** Both species have troops that either avoid proximity to humans or are used to human presence.
- There are some **distinct morphological traits to differentiate the two species.** While the Sela macaque has a pale face and brown coat, the Arunachal macaque has a dark face and dark brown coat.

- Sela macaque has a **tail longer than the Tibetan macaque, Assamese macaque, Arunachal macaque** and the white-cheeked macaque but **shorter than the bonnet macaque and toque macaque**.
- Sela macaque **belongs to the sinica species-group of Macaca**, but it **differs from all other members of this group through attributes such as brown collar hair** and muzzle, thick brown hair around the neck and the absence of chin whiskers.
- Sela macaque is a **major cause of crop loss in the West Kameng district of the State**.

What is the Zoological Survey of India?

- The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), a **subordinate organization of the Ministry of Environment and Forests** was established in 1916.
- It is a national **centre for faunistic survey and exploration of the resources leading to the advancement of knowledge** on the exceptionally rich faunal diversity of the country.
- It has its headquarters at Kolkata and 16 regional stations located in different geographic locations of the country.

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