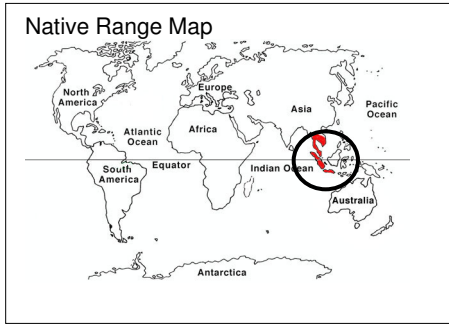


Prevost's Squirrel



Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Rodentia
Family: Sciuridae
Genus: *Callosciurus*
Species: *prevosti*



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Prevost's squirrels are found in the canopy of lowland forests and in cultivated areas and gardens of Southeast Asia.
- **Exhibit Location:** Adaptation of Animals

Characteristics

- Length of head and body: 11 inches; Length of tail: 6-9 inches; Weight: about 2 pounds
- The Prevost's squirrel's tail, head, and back are glossy black. Its belly and legs are bright chestnut red. A white band extends along the sides from the nose to the base of the tail.
- Their teeth consist of a single pair of chisel-shaped incisors in each jaw which are separated by a large gap in the front of the premolars due to an absence of canine teeth. The incisors grow continuously and are worn back by use. The lower jaw is quite movable.
- Squirrels have short forelimbs with a small thumb and longer hind limbs. The soles of their feet are soft pads. They have small ears. Their large protruding eyes with sharp vision are specialized for distinguishing vertical objects.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 10 years; **In Captivity** 15 years

Behaviors

- The Prevost's squirrel is arboreal (lives in trees). It is diurnal (active during the day), and at night rests in hollows of trees or nests built of leaves and twigs. This squirrel does not hibernate.
- They are the most agile of the tree dwelling mammals and excellent at climbing and jumping. Their toes are well adapted with sharp claws for clinging to tree trunks and they are able to jump considerable distances between trees.
- When upset or excited, they trill and also have an ear-piercing whistle which may be used for locating or warning other squirrels. The tail, used as a flag to communicate social signals, also serves as a balance when running and climbing and as a rudder when it jumps. It wraps its tail around itself when sleeping.
- On the ground the squirrel moves in a sequence of graceful leaps, pausing to raise its head and look around. When it eats, it squats on its haunches holding the food between its front paws.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** food in balls, paper bags, and tubes to encourage foraging for food

Reproduction

- Prevost's squirrels reach sexual maturity at about 1 year of age.
- Breeding can occur throughout the year, but peaks in June through August. They can have up to 3 litters each year, with 1-4 young per litter. The gestation period is about 40 days.
- Infant squirrels are born naked, toothless, and helpless with their eyes closed. They weigh about 0.4 ounces at birth. By 6 weeks of age, they are fully furred and independent enough to be able to leave the nest.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** fruits, nuts, seeds, buds of flowers, vegetable matter, ants, termites, beetle larvae, bird eggs, small reptiles

- **At the Zoo:** mixed fruit, rat pellets, sunflower seeds, peanuts, other nuts

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** not listed; **CITES Appendix:** not listed
- The Prevost's squirrel is not currently endangered but is considered vulnerable by some due to habitat destruction and over exploitation; some are taken for the pet trade.
- Predators: birds of prey, small carnivores, snakes

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- The genus name *Callosciurus* means "beautiful squirrel."
- It is also known as the "Ornamental, Beautiful, or Tri-colored Squirrel."
- The Prevost's squirrel is one of the most colorful of all squirrels.
- There are 25 Malaysian species of squirrels, 11 being nocturnal (active at night) and 14 diurnal (active during the day).

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