

# Squirrel Monkey



Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Mammalia  
Order: Primates  
Family: Cebidae  
Genus: *Saimiri*  
Species: *Saimiri Sciurius*



## Status

- The squirrel monkey is the most common monkey in South America. Habitat loss for farming and pet trade are threats to populations.

## Natural Habitat

- Guianas south to northern Brazil, west to Venezuela. They live in the canopy of tropical rainforest trees up to 3000 ft. They have been found in cultivated, forested areas usually along rivers and streams.

## Features

- The head and body of the squirrel monkey measure 12.5 inches and the tail is approximately 16 inches. They typically weigh 1.5 – 2.5 pounds, the smallest in the Cebidae family. It has short, thick fur. The top of the head is black to gray with white around the eyes, ears, throat and sides of neck, and not much hair around the lips and nostrils. Its appendages are reddish or yellow and the shoulders and hind feet are gray, and underparts are whitish to yellowish. The tail has a black tip and is only partially prehensile. The thumb is short but well developed. The males are larger than females and have well developed teeth.

## Behaviors

- They are diurnal and move silently through the canopy of the trees in troops. The troop size depends on the amount of habitat available. The average size of a troop is 25 providing many eyes for searching for food as well as keeping an eye out for predators. Their thighs are shorter than their lower legs, which allows them to jump from tree to tree. They marking their territory utilizing scent glands which are throughout their fur—especially the tail. This allows other troop members to follow a trail through the trees. Squirrel monkeys also follow other monkeys in search of food.

## Diet

- Fruit and insects, some leaves and seeds

Life Expectancy: 14-16 years

## Reproduction and Development

- Several females in the group produce a single young per year. Births are seasonal and synchronous. During the mating season males establish a dominance hierarchy by fighting, and the higher ranking ones then interact with the females. Gestation is 5.5 months and usually one baby is born. Squirrel monkey births typically occur during time of greatest rainfall as there is abundance of food and water. Males do not rear the young, but other females in the troop assist. For the first month an infant rides on the mother's back. At six weeks the young begin to eat solid foods, though they continue to nurse until they are about six months. Females reach sexual maturity at 2.5 – 3 years. At that time they leave their natal

group and join another. Males are sexually mature at 3 to 5 years and either stay in their family group or relocate.

**References:**

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