

Squirrel Monkey

General Information

Squirrel monkeys are small primates that live in the rainforests of South and Central America. They are arboreal meaning that they spend most of their time in trees. They are very vocal and you can hear them making a variety of unique sounds.

Size

The squirrel monkeys grow to be about 10-16 inches long with tails that are about half of their length.

Appearance

They have soft thick short fur that can be brightly colored. They have hairless skin around their nostrils and lips. Their tail is non-prehensile and that helps them to balance.

Lifespan

The lifespan of a squirrel monkey in the wild is 15-20 years but can live up to 30 years in captivity.

Habitat

They live in the treetops of the rainforests in Central and South America.

Diet

Squirrel monkeys are omnivores. They eat both plants and animals such as birds, eggs, fruit, flowers, insects, and leaves.

Reproduction

Females give birth during the rainy season. Gestation is 150-170 days. Females reach sexual maturity at about 2.5 years while males reach theirs at about 4 years.

Other facts

Squirrel monkeys are considered to be one of the smartest monkeys due to having such a large brain compared to their body size. They are very social animals and are very vocal. They have around 25-30 different call types.

Basic Care

Feeding

Provide your squirrel monkeys with a variety of foods such as fruits, vegetables, flowers, leaves, insects, eggs and small vertebrates can be given. Try to make their food interesting by chopping it up, scatter it around or you can freeze it into ice blocks. **As a baby we use Ebsilac Advanced with rice cereal and a scoop of baby banana food. Also offer the baby a small cup of cut up fruit.**

Water

Always provide fresh water.

Cleanliness

Clean the enclosure daily.

Enclosure

The squirrel monkey enclosure should be large and secure that allows them to be outside if possible. Provide them with round perches. Using flat shelves can cause pressure sores on their tails.

Temperature

Squirrel monkeys are susceptible to cold weather so provide them with an area where they can sleep as a group. You may need to provide them with a heating source if it gets too cold but make sure they are not able to touch the heating element to prevent injury.

Exercise

Squirrel monkeys are very active, provide them with areas where they can jump from perch to perch such as they would do in the wild by jumping from tree branch to tree branch.

Handling

As a baby you will be holding to bottle feed. Be gentle, let the tail rotate between your hands to avoid twisting, try to use as little restraint as possible. As they become adults you may need to use leather gloves to avoid injury to both you and your monkey.

Toileting

Squirrel monkeys like to mark with their urine, they will urinate on their feet and even their hands and rub it on their bodies. You can partially potty train a young squirrel monkey.

Enrichment

Squirrel monkeys are very social animals and will do best with another or more squirrel monkeys. They love their social groups and spend most of their day playing, grooming and even displays of aggression. They need a lot of intellectual stimulation to decrease any stress that can be caused by boredom. Squirrel monkeys require a lot of attention and a lot of care. You must provide them with a diet that includes a variety of foods, a large secure enclosure with lots of toys, shelter and exercise equipment.

Requirements

For **one** Squirrel monkey, owl monkey, talapoin, titis or other similar sized monkey you are required to have a cage that is 4 foot by 5 foot and 5 feet high. For each additional monkey you must increase the cage size by 25% of the original floor area.

Each cage must have perching areas and a nest box or boxes that will accommodate all of the animals in the enclosure at one time. The cage must also have climbing apparatuses.

In addition to the above mentioned requirements you must provide your monkey with devices, toys, equipment that provide physical stimulation that is compatible with your animal. All equipment, toys and devices shall be non injurious.