

Plantain squirrel gathering mangrove algae

Subjects: Plantain squirrel, *Callosciurus notatus* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Sciuridae).
Mangrove glass wool algae, *Chaetomorpha gracilis* (Chlorophycota: Cladophoraceae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, along gravel track next to mouth of Sungei Buloh Besar near the boardwalk, facing Straits of Johor; 26 June 2012; 1020-1025 hrs.

Habitat: Mangrove at low tide.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A plantain squirrel was observed to hop and clamber along several mangrove tree trunks, before it descended to the base of a tree and proceeded to rummage around the roots of the tree. There were tufts of the mangrove glass wool algae which aggregate around the mangrove tree roots and on the muddy substrate (Ng & Sivasothi, 1999). The squirrel proceeded to harvest these algae filaments and stuff them into its mouth (Fig. 1). After it had gathered a whole mouthful (Fig. 2), it clambered up the tree and disappeared from the observer's sight.

Remarks: The algae could be consumed as food, but it seems more likely that it was used for lining a nest. Nests of plantain squirrels usually consist of twigs and leaves (Baker & Lim, 2012), so this record would appear to be unusual.

References:

Baker, N. & K. K. P. Lim, 2008. *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes*. Draco Publishing and Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.

Ng, P. K. L. & N. Sivasothi (eds.), 1999. *A guide to the Mangroves of Singapore I*. Singapore Science Centre, 160 pp.

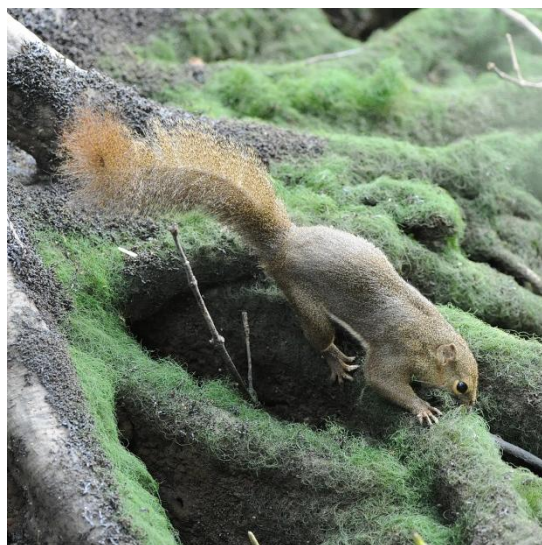


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Photographs by Tan Heok Hui.

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