

Antagonistic interaction between plantain squirrel and Tanimbar corella

Subjects: Plantain squirrel, *Callosciurus notatus* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Sciuridae);
Tanimbar corella, *Cacatua goffiniana* (Aves: Psittaciformes: Cacatuidae);
Starfruit tree, *Averrhoa carambola* (Magnoliophyta: Oxalidales: Oxalidaceae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor & Marcus A. H. Chua.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Kent Ridge, Conservatory Drive next to the Ayer Rajah Expressway; 11 November 2014; 1110-1123 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Two corellas were seen near the top of a starfruit tree, clambering about among the branches and eating starfruit. A squirrel climbed up to the birds and tried to attack one of them. In defence, the bird threatened to bite the squirrel, sending the rodent scurrying back down (Fig. 1). Thereafter, the birds continued to forage (Fig. 2). The video, shot by the contributor with her mobile phone, can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/YYCkChpuVc0>.

Remarks: This interaction between the squirrel and the corella seems to be antagonistic, and apparently due to competition for a food resource.

The plantain squirrel seems to be the only native squirrel in Singapore to have successfully adapted to life outside the forest. It is locally common in urban areas (Baker & Lim, 2012: 137). The Tanimbar corella is a parrot that is native to the Tanimbar Islands in Maluku, eastern Indonesia. A feral population has been established in Singapore (Yong et al., 2013: 76), which is likely to have originated from escaped or released pet birds. *Averrhoa carambola* is cultivated in Singapore for its fruit (Corlett, 2011).

References:

- Baker, N. & K. K. P. Lim, 2012. *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes*. Updated edition. Draco Publishing and Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.
- Corlett, R. T., 2011. Oxalidaceae. In: Ng, P. K. L., R. T. Corlett & H. T. W. Tan (eds.). *Singapore Biodiversity – an Encyclopedia of the Natural Environment and Sustainable Development*. Editions Didier Millet & The Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore. p. 403.
- Yong D. L., K. C. Lim & T. K. Lee, 2013. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, Oxford, England. 176 pp.

Contributor: Kate **Pocklington**

Contact address: nhmhcp@nus.edu.sg



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Photographs extracted from video by Kate Pocklington