

Interaction between an adult and a juvenile slender squirrel

Subjects: Slender squirrel, *Sundasciurus tenuis* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Sciuridae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Central Catchment Nature Reserve, MacRitchie Nature Trail; 4 January 2016; around 1150 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest.

Observers: Contributor.

Observation: An infant slender squirrel was heard emitting a nearly continuous high-pitched squeak, accompanied by rapid tail-flicking, from a 5-metre tall sapling (Fig. 1). Some minutes later an adult, presumably its mother, appeared (Fig. 2). The larger squirrel responded with a less continuous squeak of lower pitch, and then picked up the infant in its mouth (Fig. 3). The infant was initially grasped at the base of the tail, but after some manoeuvring, it was able to cling onto the adult with its forelimbs and its tail wrapped around the adult's neck.

Still holding on to the young, the adult squirrel then descended the sapling, leaped onto the boardwalk (Fig. 4), and moved about 20 metres away from the observer. It then leaped onto the thick trunk of a tall tree, which it rapidly ascended. The juvenile was released high up in the tree, but within a few minutes it has descended near to the ground, and was squeaking again (Fig. 5). At this time, a female olive-backed sunbird became interested in the noise, and flew near to the juvenile squirrel for a closer look, hovering about one metre away. The adult squirrel then descended from the tall tree and stayed close to the juvenile thereafter (Fig. 6).



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Photographs by Nick Baker



Fig. 3.

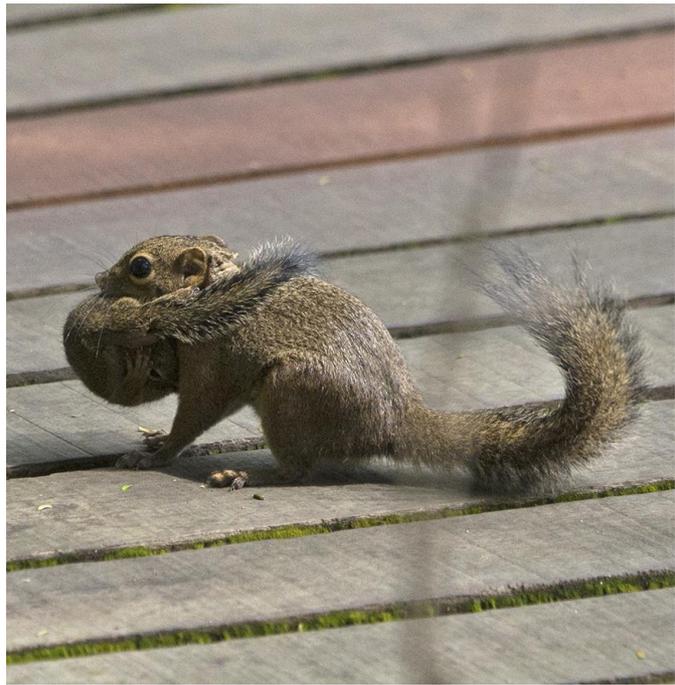


Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.

Photographs by Nick Baker

Remarks: The slender squirrel tends to move about in small groups of between two to five individuals. Around two to four young are born in each litter (Medway, 1983: 61). Not much else appears to be known about the reproductive habits of this species. *Sundasciurus tenuis* was described based on specimens from Singapore in 1824 (see Chua, 2015: 63).

References:

Chua, M. A. H. (ed.), 2015. *Temasekia. 50 Plants and Animals Native to Singapore*. Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, Singapore. 87 pp.
Medway, L., 1983. *The Wild Mammals of Malaya (Peninsular Malaysia) and Singapore*. Second edition reprinted with corrections. Oxford University Press, Malaysia. xxiii + 131 pp.

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