

Long-tailed macaques and mushrooms

Subjects: Long-tailed macaque, *Macaca fascicularis* (Mammalia: Primates: Cercopithecidae);
Parasol mushroom (Agaricomycetes: Agaricales: Agaricaceae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park; 20 January 2017; 1105 hrs.

Habitat: Parkland at the edge of secondary forest.

Observers: Contributor, with Shawn Lum.

Observation: A group of three macaques, comprising one adult male and two adult females (one of them carrying an infant) was active at the base of a sea almond tree. One of the female macaques, with bulging cheeks, was seen running away from the base of the tree, on her hind legs, and carrying two large mushrooms (Figs. 1 & 2). Pursued by the other two macaques, she dropped one of her mushrooms. The female macaque who was carrying an infant picked up the dropped mushroom and proceeded to quickly bite the fungus (Figs. 3-5), including the stem (Figs. 6-8). It is not known if she had swallowed the pieces, or stored these in her cheek pouches which appeared to be bulging. The male macaque was not seen biting the mushrooms. He also made no attempt to take the mushrooms from the females (Fig. 5). If the macaques had indeed swallowed the mushrooms, they did not appear to be adversely affected.

Remarks: Long-tailed macaques are omnivorous and highly flexible in their diet (see Lucas, 1995; Phillipps & Phillipps, 2016) and it is probably not surprising that they eat mushrooms. The identification of the mushrooms relished by the macaques in the featured observation is unknown, but they appear to be parasol mushrooms of the family Agaricaceae. *Chlorophyllum molybdites*, is a member of the family that can be seen fruiting on lawns, and is known to be poisonous (Tham, 2009). While they appear to be edible to macaques, the fungi featured here may not be safe for human consumption.

References:

- Lucas, P. W., 1995. Long-tailed macaques. *The Gardens' Bulletin, Singapore*. Supplement No. 3: 105-119.
Phillipps, Q. & K. Phillipps, 2016. *Phillipp's Field Guide to the Mammals of Borneo*. John Beaufoy Publishing Ltd., United Kingdom. 400 pp.
Tham F. Y., 2009. *The Hidden World of the Fungi*. The Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore. Guidesheet.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Photographs by Nick Baker



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.

Photographs by Nick Baker

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