

How to 'Speak' Squirrel Monkey

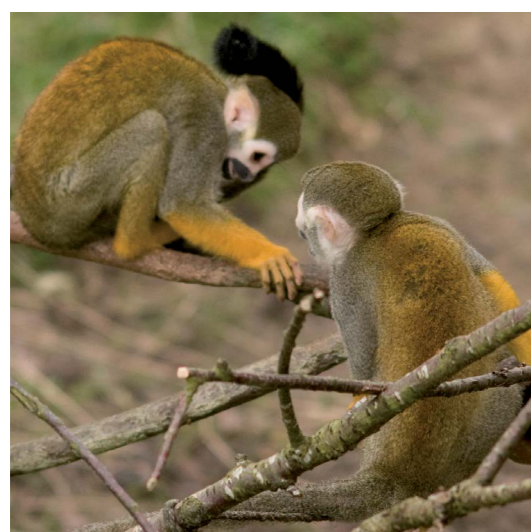
As well as screams and high pitched 'peep' and 'twitter' calls, squirrel monkeys communicate with visual signals and social behaviours. This poster shows just some of the many behaviour patterns. You have to watch these monkeys very carefully to see some of these behaviours, because squirrel monkeys live life at a fast pace!

Visual Signals and Behaviours



Grimace

When a squirrel monkey shows its teeth in a 'grimace', this can signal aggression. The squirrel monkey may grimace when it feels threatened.



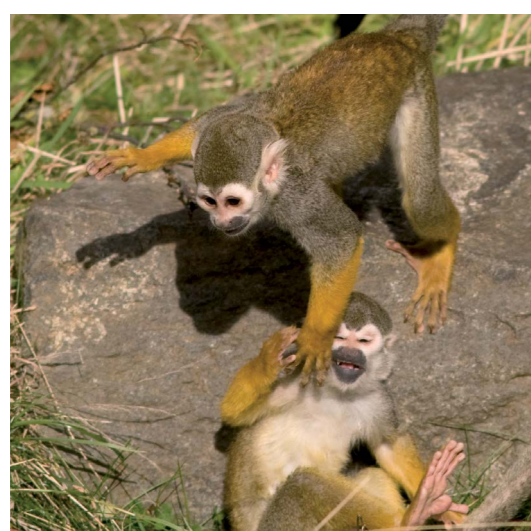
Submissive Huddle

When a squirrel monkey feels threatened, it might crouch and curl up with its head down and its tail wrapped around its body. It may also grimace at the other monkey.



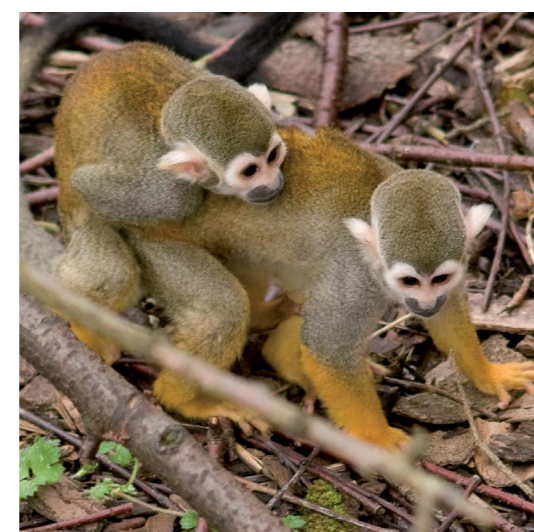
Pull Tail

Squirrel monkeys may pull each other's tails when they are playing, but it can also be used as an aggressive action. The squirrel monkey sometimes even do this to the capuchins!



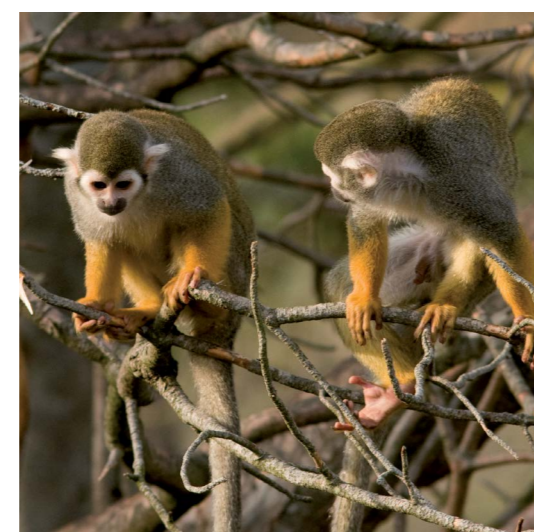
Play

Squirrel monkeys are very active, and a lot of the chasing and fighting that you might see is actually play. Both adult and young monkeys are very playful.



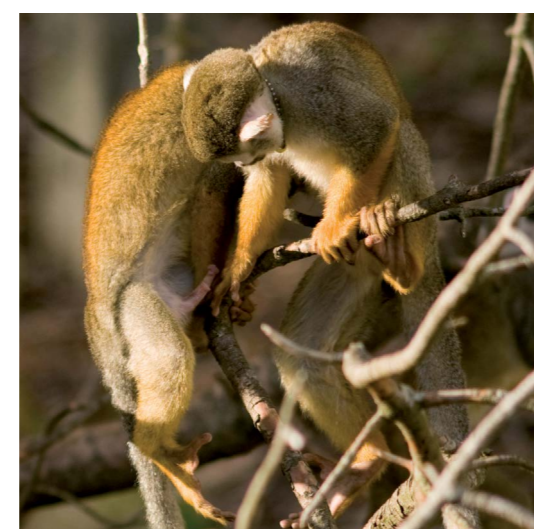
Mount

In young squirrel monkeys this is a common part of play, and may also be a dominant gesture. Adult males are more likely to mount females during the breeding season.



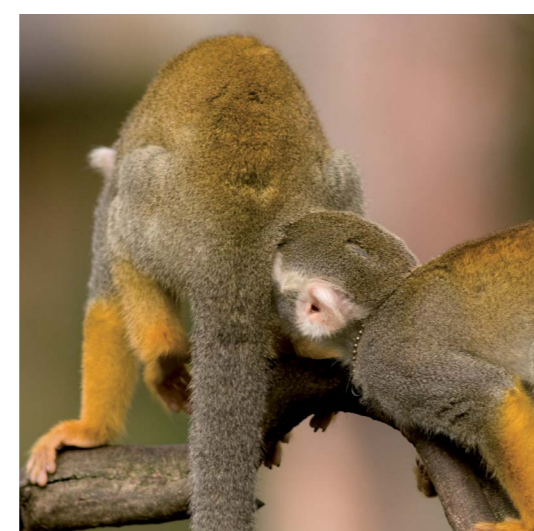
Genital Display

Both males and females perform this display. One leg hangs below a branch to reveal the genitals, signalling excitement in young, and dominance or courtship in adult males.



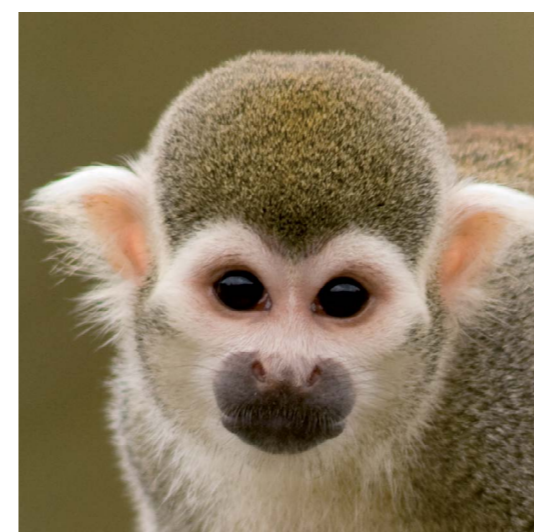
Mutual Genital Display

When two monkeys are 'testing' each other, they might both perform a genital display and examine each other closely. Both males and females perform this display.



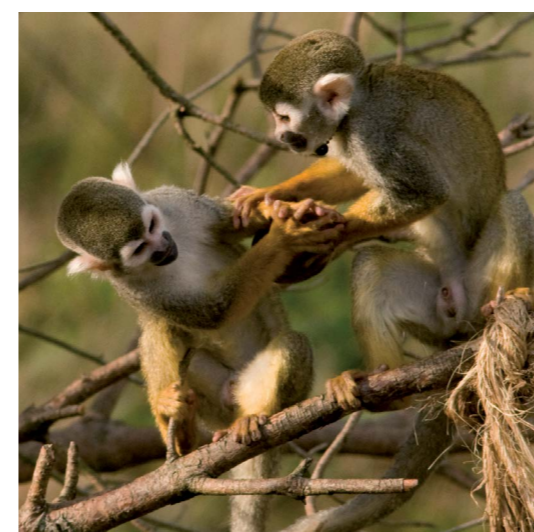
Lick or Sniff

Smell is very important to squirrel monkeys, and they can learn about other group members by sniffing or tasting the interesting odours they produce.



Ear Wiggle

Squirrel monkeys can communicate with their ears. This male is relaxed with his ears forward, but he might flatten them backwards when approaching a female.



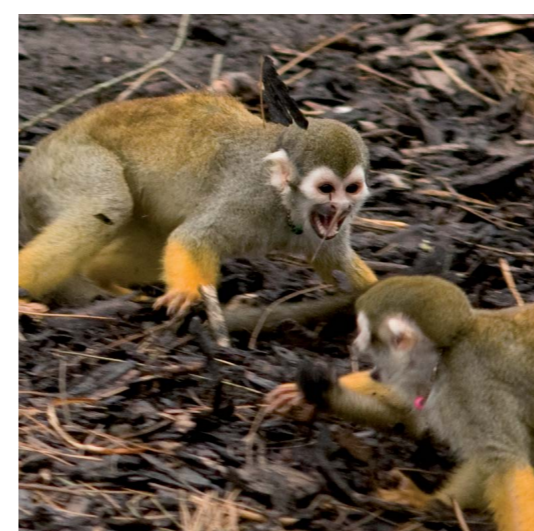
Push

Squirrel monkeys will often push each other away when they get too close. This happens especially when one monkey is trying to take another monkey's food!



Arched Back

Here, an adult male is arching his back to make himself look bigger, perhaps defending the female by his side. This may be used as a threat toward other males.



Fight

Squirrel monkeys are very active and often squabble. Most of the chasing at Living Links is actually play. Real fights are much noisier. These arguments are rarely serious.



Squirrel Monkey Social Behaviour Guide

Part of the Living Links 'Measuring behaviour teacher pack'

For further information and more resources go to www.living-links.org

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