

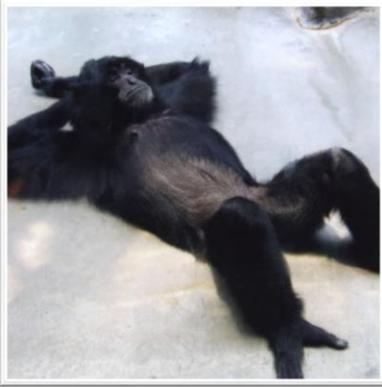
Robust Black Spider Monkey

Scientific Name: *Ateles fusciceps robustus*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Primates

Family: Atelidae



Males and females are about the same size and weigh 17 to 19 pounds. The tail is prehensile, long, and extremely flexible. The naked skin on the lower third of the tail is specialized, bearing "fingerprints," sweat glands, and sensory nerve endings, as in the hand.

Range

Their range is Southern Mexico to central Bolivia and Brazil.

Habitat

They inhabit tropical and mountain forests.

Gestation

226-232 days

Litter

1

Behavior

They are entirely diurnal, and feed intensively in the early morning, then rest for most of the remainder of the day. They are arboreal, and probably only the gibbon exceeds this animal in agility in the trees. Their slender limbs give them diverse locomotor abilities. During travel they use both arboreal quadrupedalism and suspensory brachiation. They move bipedally in trees and can leap. During feeding they almost always hang by their tails and use all four limbs to seize and open fruit. Their social structure is like that of chimpanzees. Groups are generally large, comprising a dozen or so individuals of both sexes and all ages. During feeding the large group breaks up into smaller ones that call to one another for cohesion. Spider monkeys share their food with one another, an unusual behavior. Only rarely do they descend to the ground. When approached in the wild, they sometimes break off dead branches and drop them, attempting to hit the ground observer. They also emit terrier-like barks when approached. The most frequently heard call resembles the whinny of a horse, and is made when monkeys are separated. They will defend their territory, but prefer to make a discrete retreat.

Reproduction

There appears to be no regular breeding season. The estrous cycle is 24 – 27 days, and gestation 226 to 232 days. Normal litter size is one. Sexual maturity is achieved in males at about 5 years, and in females at about 4 years. There is no sexual dimorphism in body size.

Wild Diet

Fruits, nuts, seeds, buds, flowers, leaves, insects, arachnids, eggs