



Care For Us

Marmosets and Tamarins
(Callitrichidae)

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be positive, neutral or negative.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have good welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare throughout their entire life.



Understanding that animals can be sentient and have cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry provisions for all captive animals, to ensure good welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.





Callitrichid is the collective name for the group of new world monkeys known as marmosets and tamarins.

Whilst there are many different species, they are all typically very small with the largest weighing 600 grams. All species are arboreal, and all typically raise twins with other members of the social group helping to raise babies.

Their numbers have declined rapidly in recent years and some are classified as critically endangered by the IUCN, due to large-scale deforestation and the demands of the pet trade

Callitrichids like to Climb and Jump



Marmosets and tamarins are very good at climbing through trees and jumping far. They have a long tail to help them balance but they cannot grip anything with it. They have claws on their hands and feet to help them to grip as they climb. Callitrichids like to explore and forage within their environment.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

To make their enclosure more interesting for them, give them lots of climbing opportunities. Provide branches that swing and move and some that stay still, as well as using ropes and rocks too. Different and novel environmental choices encourages movement and exploration.

It is important for them to have rough surfaces to climb on so they can wear their claws down.



Callitrichids like to Search for Food

Marmosets and tamarins are constantly foraging for food. They will chase after insects, find fruit in trees and marmosets will gouge tree bark in search of gum. If they are unable to do this, it can lead to poor welfare.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

They need to be fed multiple times throughout the day to mimic their foraging behaviours. Chopping food into smaller pieces, scattering/hiding it around an enclosure and using enrichment devices to make it trickier to access are all great ways of encouraging callitrichids to forage.

Callitrichids are Clever

Marmosets and tamarins are very clever and like to investigate everything new around them. They quickly get used to novel objects and love to manipulate things with their hands. They will scent mark routes along branches with their urine. If these are cleaned/replaced too frequently it can be distressing. Callitrichids are diurnal so are most active during the day.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Give them high places to act as vantage points. Give them lots of new and stimulating items to interact with. These could be puzzle feeders, lots of ropes and branches to climb on and scent mark, different sounds and smells and a complex environment.

Callitrichids like to be Social



Marmosets and tamarins live in pairs or family groups of up to 10 individuals. They communicate with each other using a series of different chirps and squeaks. There is a basic dominance hierarchy formed around the adult pair having more authority. Other family group members will be offspring from previous years. They will sometimes help carry around new babies. Callitrichids usually give birth to twins.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

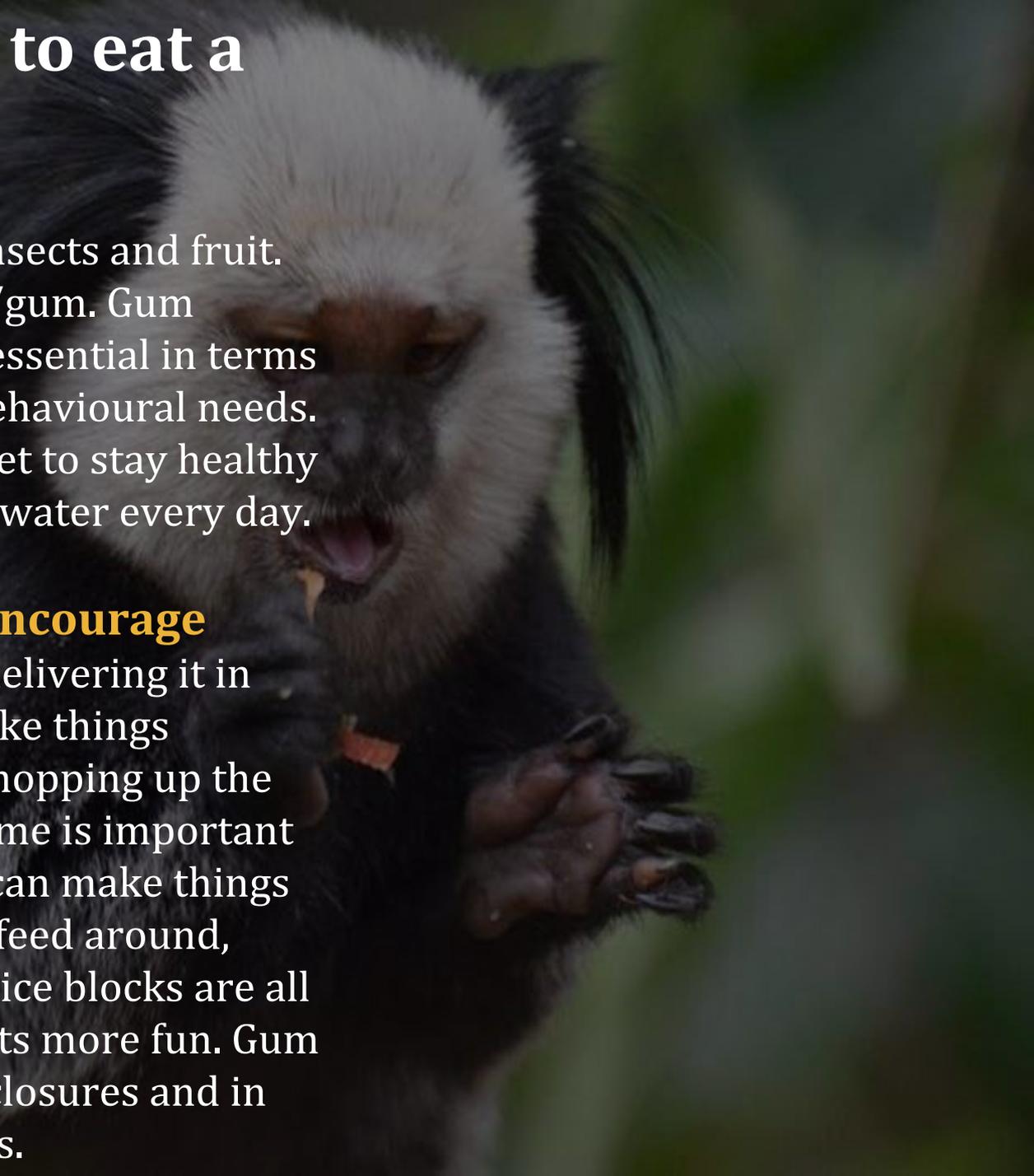
Providing a large and complex enclosure for callitrichids to live alongside each other with plenty of space to be together or apart if they would like. Use multiple entrances and exits into enclosures so that certain individuals do not guard them. Provide shelves for social resting. Never have a solitary callitrichid. Be aware that certain species of callitrichid can interbreed.

Callitrichids like to eat a Varied Diet

Callitrichids eat all sorts of insects and fruit. Marmosets also eat tree sap/gum. Gum provision for marmosets is essential in terms of meeting nutritional and behavioural needs. Callitrichids need a varied diet to stay healthy and access to plenty of fresh water every day.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing a varied diet and delivering it in lots of different ways can make things interesting to callitrichids. Chopping up the diet so that everyone gets some is important but choosing different sizes can make things more interesting. Scattering feed around, creating fruit smoothies and ice blocks are all ways to make callitrichid diets more fun. Gum should be spread around enclosures and in trickle feeders for marmosets.



Callitrichids like to Keep Warm.

Marmosets and tamarins are from tropical rainforests therefore need to be kept warm and in a humid environment. Ideally the temperature should never fall below 16°C. Heated slabs and shelves where they can sleep together in a group are ideal.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Giving marmosets and tamarins a choice of places that experience different temperatures will create a more stimulating environment for them.

They should always have access to heated indoor (minimum of 18°C) areas when it is cold.



Callitrichids Enjoy...

Eating different foods and having to search for their food. They enjoy climbing, investigating new things and living together in a social group.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours, so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

