



# *Care For Us*

Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri* spp.)

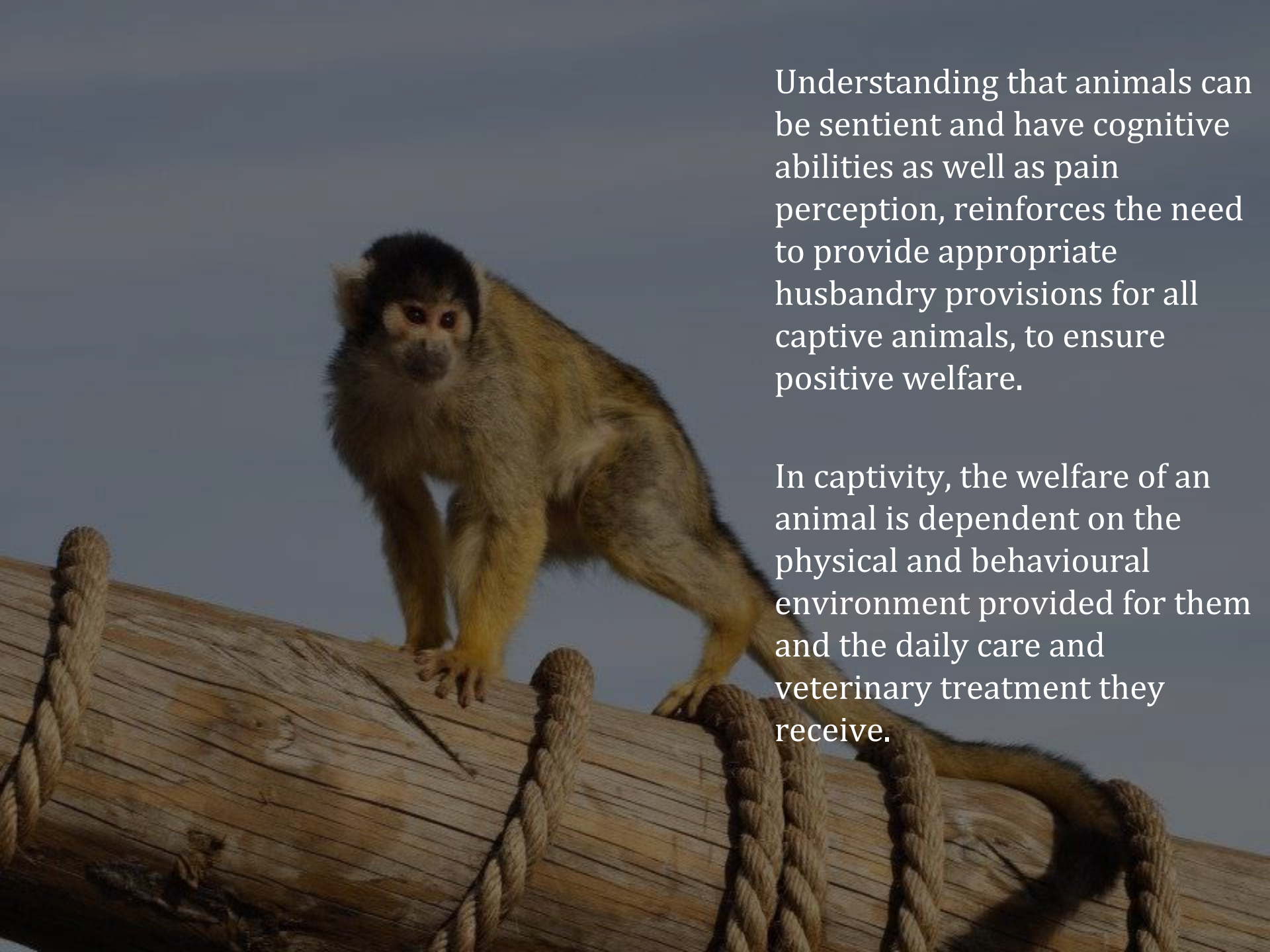
# Animal Welfare

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.

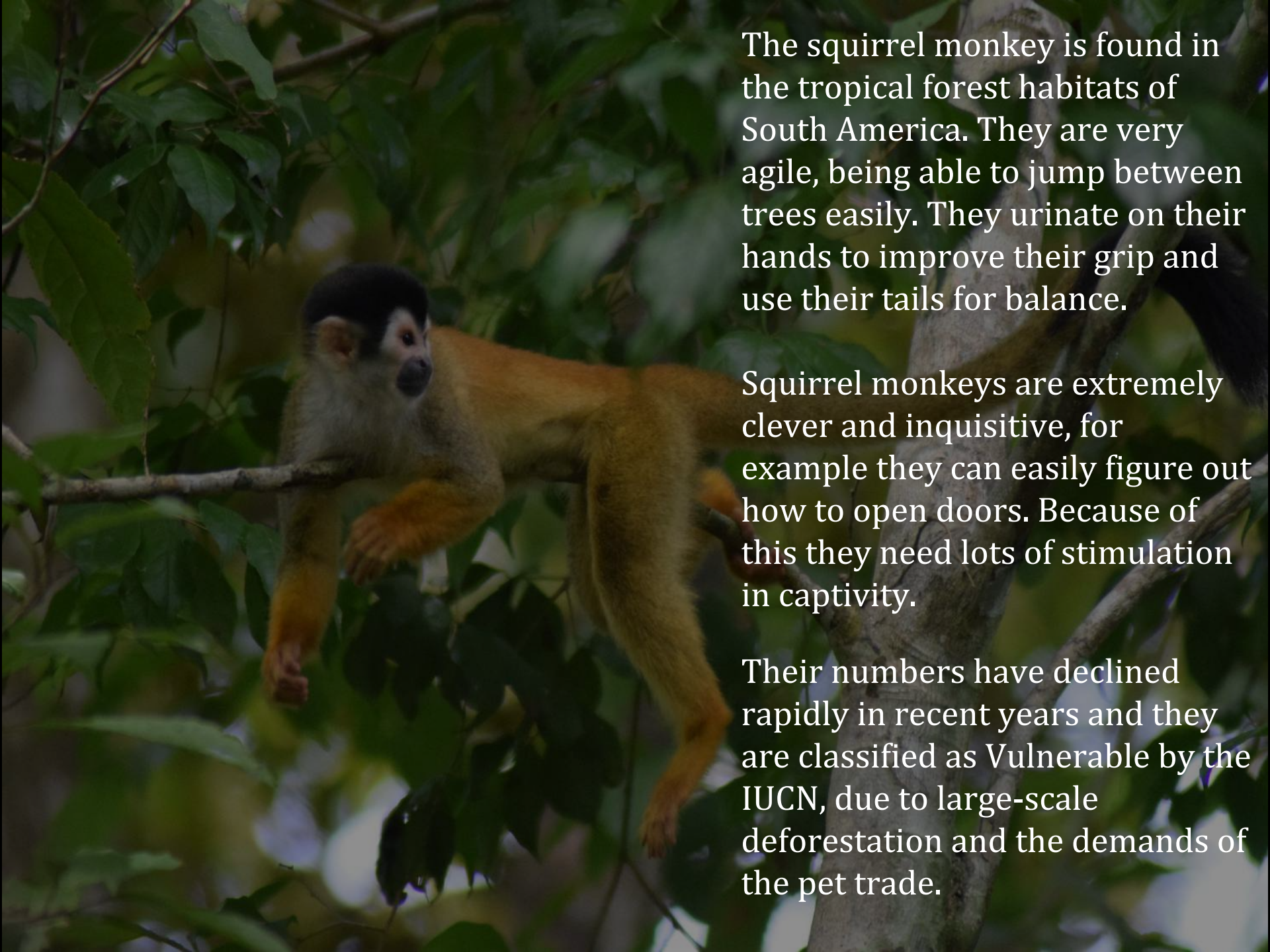




Understanding that animals can be sentient and have cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry provisions for all captive animals, to ensure positive welfare.

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





The squirrel monkey is found in the tropical forest habitats of South America. They are very agile, being able to jump between trees easily. They urinate on their hands to improve their grip and use their tails for balance.

Squirrel monkeys are extremely clever and inquisitive, for example they can easily figure out how to open doors. Because of this they need lots of stimulation in captivity.

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



# Squirrel monkeys like to Climb and Jump

A squirrel monkey is shown in profile, climbing a thick, dark brown tree branch. The monkey has a black cap and a long, thin tail that is curled around the branch. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The overall scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

Squirrel monkeys 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 do have an opposable big toe on their feet as well as thumbs on their hands to grip with.

Squirrel monkeys are inquisitive and will constantly be exploring their environments.

## **Positive Behaviours to Encourage**

Encourage activity by providing an interesting environment is very important. The enclosure should provide lots of climbing opportunities. Some branches that swing and move and some that stay still are a great way of making things different, as well as using ropes and rocks too so texture and substrate is changing.

# Squirrel Monkeys Like to Forage

Squirrel monkeys are constantly foraging for food. They will chase after insects, browse leaves from trees and find fruit on trees too. They also like looking for insects in the ground. They are always looking for more food.

## Positive Behaviours to Encourage

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 squirrel monkeys to forage.





A squirrel monkey is shown in profile, looking down at a bright yellow, circular object it is holding in its hands. The monkey has brown and grey fur. The background is a blurred natural setting with trees and a blue sky.

# Squirrel Monkeys are Clever

Squirrel monkeys 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 an object to claim it as theirs. Squirrel Monkeys are always on the alert in case there is a predator. They are hunted by snakes, birds and larger monkeys so they always need to be on the lookout for danger.

## **Positive Behaviours to Encourage**

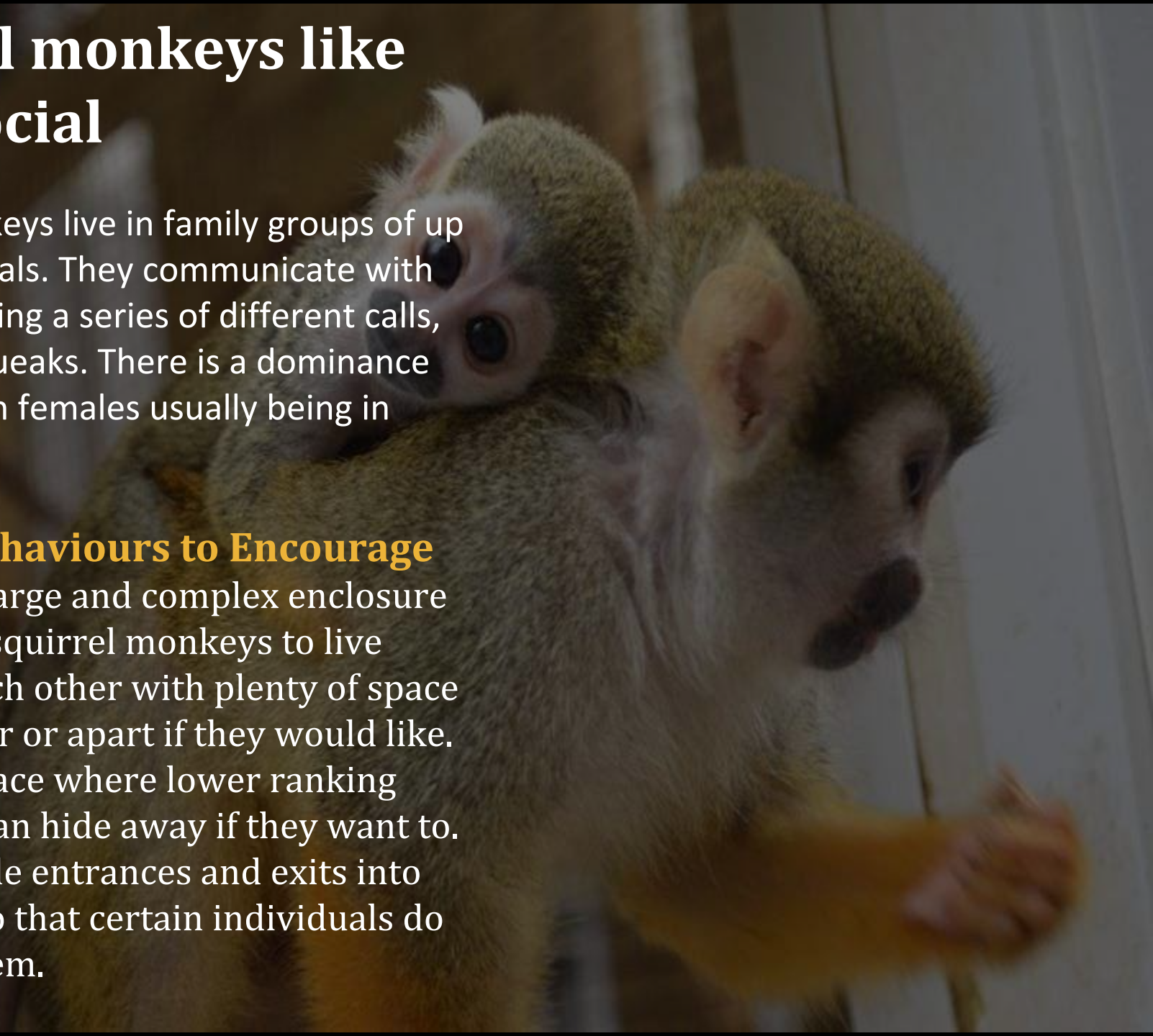
Give them high places to act as vantage points. Give them lots of new and stimulating items to interact with. These could be puzzle feeders, positive reinforcement training sessions, different sounds and smells and a complex environment.

# Squirrel monkeys like to be Social

Squirrel monkeys live in family groups of up to 50 individuals. They communicate with each other using a series of different calls, chirps and squeaks. There is a dominance hierarchy with females usually being in charge.

## **Positive Behaviours to Encourage**

Providing a large and complex enclosure for multiple squirrel monkeys to live alongside each other with plenty of space to be together or apart if they would like. Providing space where lower ranking individuals can hide away if they want to. Using multiple entrances and exits into enclosures so that certain individuals do not guard them.



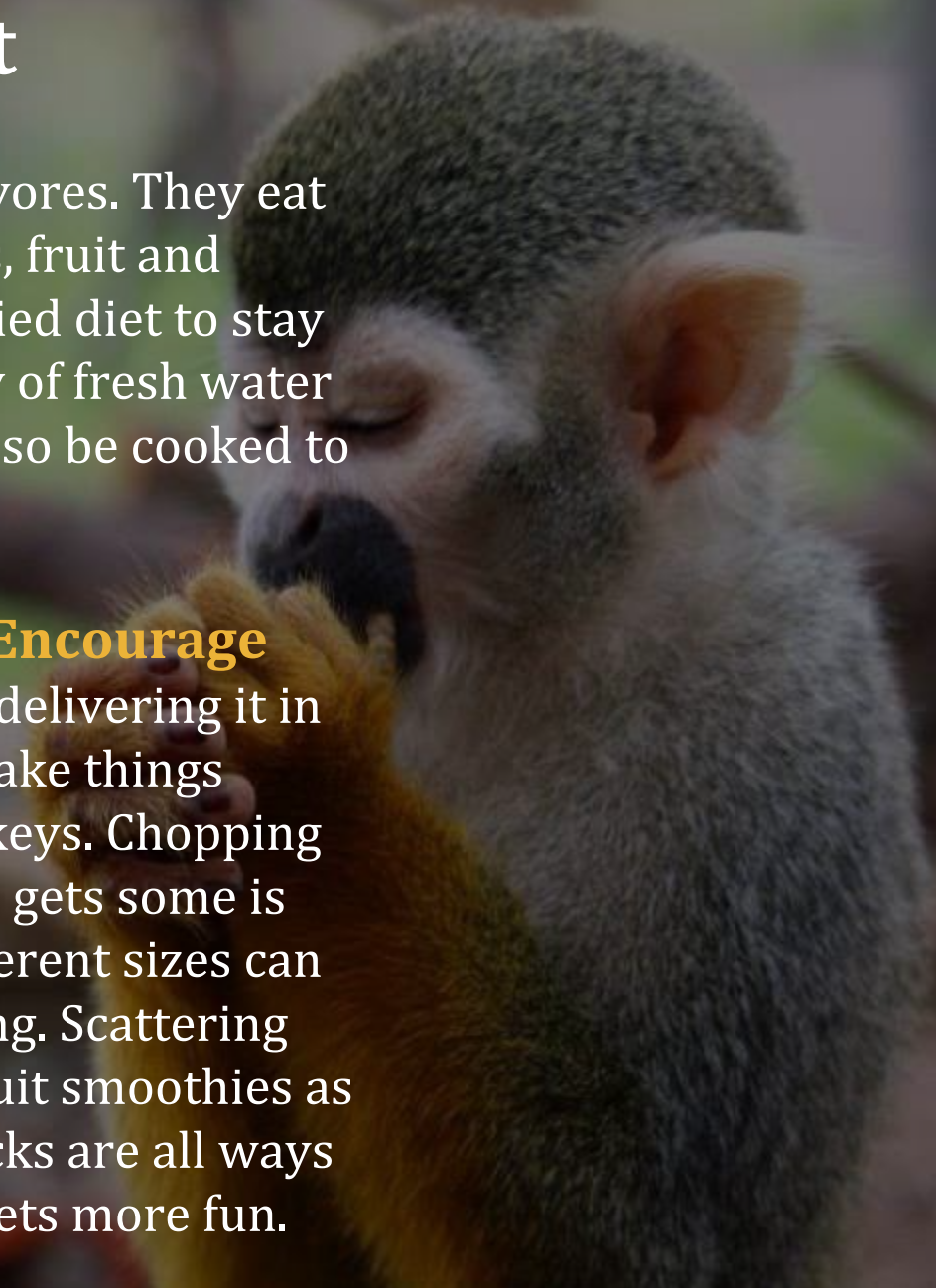


# Squirrel Monkeys like to eat a Varied Diet

Squirrel monkeys are omnivores. They eat all sorts of plant-life, insects, fruit and vegetables. They need a varied diet to stay healthy and access to plenty of fresh water every day. Vegetables can also be cooked to make them tastier.

## **Positive Behaviours to Encourage**

Providing a varied diet and delivering it in lots of different ways can make things interesting to squirrel monkeys. Chopping up the diet so that everyone gets some is important but choosing different sizes can make things more interesting. Scattering feed around and creating fruit smoothies as well as freezing it in ice blocks are all ways to make squirrel monkey diets more fun.



A close-up photograph of a squirrel monkey resting on a wooden log. The monkey's eyes are closed, and its head is tucked down. The background is blurred, showing more of the log and some greenery.

# Squirrel Monkeys like to Sleep and Sunbathe

Squirrel monkeys like to nap during the day. They will often sleep together in a large group with a few individuals looking out for danger. Sometimes they will find warm spots such as logs that have warmed in the sun and will lie on them.

## **Positive Behaviours to Encourage**

Providing areas for squirrel monkeys to sleep as a group is important. Squirrel monkeys are susceptible to the cold so their inside enclosure should never go below 17 degrees Celsius and they should always have access inside, especially when it is cold.



# Squirrel Monkeys

## Enjoy...

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

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

