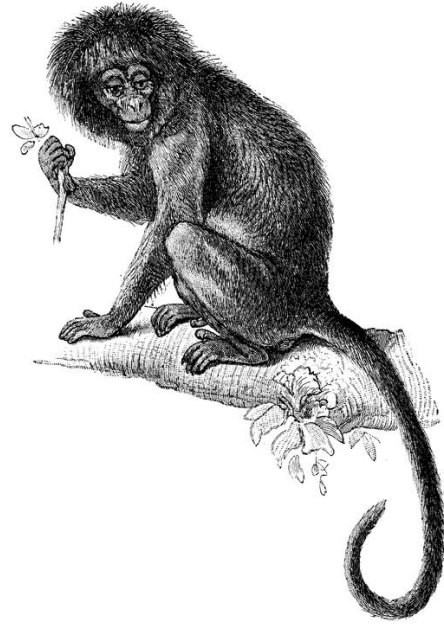


## The Callimico

The rainforest has many delightful surprises. One of them is the callimico (kuh-LIM-muh-ko). Its name comes from the Latin for “beautiful little monkey.” It is also known as Goeldi’s (GOLD-ies) marmoset, but it is not a marmoset. It is a separate species\* in the same family as marmosets and tamarins.



Callimicos live in the Amazon Basin. It is rare to see them in areas where people live because they are timid and reclusive. For this reason, scientists don’t know much about callimico behavior.

Callimicos are small. An adult weighs about one pound and is about nine inches tall with a twelve-inch-long tail.

Callimicos have soft, bushy brown-black fur and some have small white spots. They have big hands (for their size) and claws on the tips of their fingers and toes. Callimicos use their long, prehensile tails to grasp food and hold onto branches and vines.

Callimicos spend up to fourteen hours every day looking for food. They travel by leaping from branch to branch, tree to tree, which is called “brachiating.” They are nimble climbers and can scramble up and down tree trunks.

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\*What is a species? “Species” is often defined as a group of animals or plants that are able to produce fertile offspring together but not with other groups. Individuals in a species share the same common and scientific names. For example, callimicos are a species with the scientific name *Callimico goeldii*. Human beings are the species *Homo sapiens*.

## Callimicos are Unique!

The callimico has some unique characteristics that set it apart from marmosets and tamarins. First, marmosets and tamarins have 32 teeth. Callimicos have 36. (Some scientists think that callimicos may someday evolve to have fewer teeth.)

Second, marmoset and tamarin mothers breed once a year and often have twins. In the wild callimicos seldom have twins, but they usually breed twice a year. Like marmosets and tamarins, callimicos have two babies a year, but theirs are born at different times.

Third, callimicos have an unusual eating habit. Like other primates, most of the time they eat fruit, leaves, flowers, and insects. Unlike other primates, in the dry season when fruit is scarce, callimicos eat the fungi\* that grows on bamboo and rotting wood. They are the only primate known to have fungi as a major food source.

These three characteristics set callimicos apart from marmosets and tamarins and make them a unique type.

Scientists recognize this unique standing by classifying callimicos in this way:

Class	Mammalia
Order	Primates
Family	Callitrichidae
Genus	<i>Callimico</i>
Species	<i>Callimico goeldi</i>

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\*What are fungi? Fungi are organisms that live by decomposing and absorbing dead plant or animal material. Fungi are neither plants nor animals, themselves. They include mushrooms, toadstools, molds, and yeasts. Fungi are essential members of most food webs. Without them, our Earth would soon be covered by dead plants and animals.

Callimicos are in the Callitrichidae family. This family includes four “genuses”—or four types. Three of these types include a total of 25 different species of tamarins and marmosets.

The fourth genus, called *Callimico*, contains just one species, the unique *Callimico goeldi*.



# Callimico



Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. Callimicos are in the same family as which other primate?  
 ape     marmoset     monkey     lemur
2. An adult callimico weighs about how much?  
 1/2 pound     3/4 pound     1 pound     1 1/2 pounds
3. How long is an adult callimico's tail?  
 4 inches     6 inches     10 inches     12 inches
4. Which word does not describe callimicos' fur?  
 coarse     brown-black     bushy     soft
5. Callimicos spend up to how many hours a day looking for food?  
 6     10     14     18

6. Callimico's have prehensile tails. What do they use them for?

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7. What does the name "callimico" mean?

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8. Why don't scientists know much about callimicos' behavior?

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## Callimicos are Unique!

Put a T next to TRUE statements. Put an F next to FALSE statements.

1. \_\_\_\_ Marmosets and tamarins have 32 teeth. Callimicos have 36.
2. \_\_\_\_ Callimico mothers have one offspring twice every year.
3. \_\_\_\_ Marmoset and tamarins often have twins.
4. \_\_\_\_ Callimicos rarely eat fruit and insects.
5. \_\_\_\_ When other food is scarce, callimicos eat fungi.
6. \_\_\_\_ Fungi are plants that grow on rotting wood.
7. \_\_\_\_ Several primates rely on fungi as a major food source.
8. \_\_\_\_ Fungi decompose dead plant and animal material.
9. List three things that make callimicos different from marmosets and tamarins.

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Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

10. The callimico is the only species in its \_\_\_\_\_.  
 family     genus     order     class