

**Facing page:** Dusky Titi Monkeys form monogamous pairs. When producing milk, the mother leads the family while the male carries the infant.



# Titi Monkeys

Titi monkeys form devoted pairs that are very close emotionally, and they become extremely distressed when separated. They remain close at all times and spend a lot of time grooming each other, which further strengthens their bond. Other signs of affection include intertwining their tails, holding hands, huddling, nuzzling, lip-smacking, and gently cuddling.

Titi monkeys were once thought to make up only a moderately diverse group, but a number of recent taxonomic revisions suggest there may be anything up to 30 species in their genus (*Callicebus*). This makes them second among the New World monkeys in terms of number of species (marmosets and tamarins top the diversity chart, with 41 species currently recognized).

Titi monkeys represent that rare phenomenon: monogamous primates that mate for life. They live in dense vegetation in the Amazonian and Atlantic forests of South America. Breeding pairs are accompanied by offspring, so groups may grow to include as many as seven members. Youngsters leave the family at two to four years old and may even be allowed a piece of their parents' territory to start them off in life.



**Above:** The Masked Titi Monkey has a black forehead and sideburns. Its tail has a thick coat of fur and is not prehensile (able to grasp).

The first infant is born about a year after a new pair is established, and subsequent births are usually at one-year intervals. During the first week of an infant's life, the mother will only carry it around for 20 percent of the time, with the father taking over at other times. Later he becomes the youngster's chief caretaker, carrying it at all times except when it needs suckling. The mother refuses to hold the baby any longer than necessary, and when it has finished feeding, she will nip it or rub it against a branch until the father takes over again. The reasons for this unusually high level of paternal care (seen only in titi and night monkeys within primates) are not fully understood, but some scientists have suggested that it may be related to the high energy demands that producing milk places on the female. Also, a male may be

more willing to put effort into infant-rearing in a monogamous relationship, because he can be more certain the infant belongs to him and not one of his rivals.

## Life at lower levels

Titi monkeys live in trees, spending most of their time in the lower levels of the forest, although they occasionally visit the canopy at the top. They do not come to the ground often, but when they do, they bound along the floor, reaching heights of up to 3 ft (1 m) with each leap. When moving through the trees, they tend to clamber and leap using all four limbs.

At dawn, a titi group will emerge from the tangled vines in which the monkeys have rested together. The first activity on the family's agenda is to head to the edge of their territory to reinforce the boundaries and see if any neighboring groups are nearby. Loud, distinctive vocalizations reverberate around the trees during these shows of territoriality, and these can be heard throughout the forest. The adult male begins the call, and if it is

answered by a nearby group, the adult female joins in to perform a resonant duet. When these vocal exchanges between groups are over, a final retort is uttered—a characteristic “gobbling,” promptly returned by the neighbors.

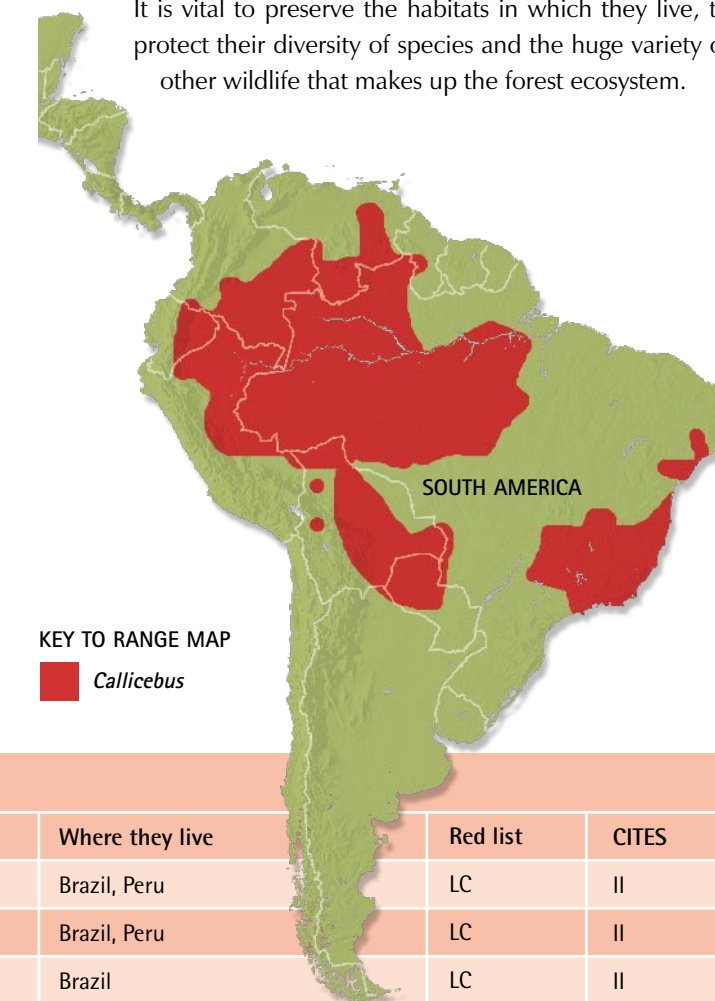
## Fruit eaters

After these elaborate displays comes breakfast. Titi monkeys are primarily fruit eaters, but they also eat leaves, and some species include invertebrates in their diet. They are able to cling onto vertical trunks when feeding, using their fingers and toes to hold on. Titis catch insects such as ants, spiders, and butterflies by snatching them from branches or even out of the air. Feeding normally takes place in two sessions, one in the morning and the other later in the afternoon, after a midday rest. A family of titis

ranges between ¼ and 3 miles (0.4–5 km) in a day, with typical territories covering up to 2 square miles (5.5 square km). As dusk approaches, the group will head back toward a sleeping site to settle down for the night.

All titi species are considered vulnerable, being threatened by hunting and loss of habitat for road building and agriculture.

It is vital to preserve the habitats in which they live, to protect their diversity of species and the huge variety of other wildlife that makes up the forest ecosystem.



**KEY TO RANGE MAP**  
■ *Callicebus*

## PRIMATE PROFILE

### TITI MONKEYS

**SIZE** Head and body length: 9½–24 in (24–61 cm); weight: 1–4 lb 8 oz (0.5–2 kg)

**APPEARANCE** Thick fur of variable coloration; often with contrasting face and tail markings

**HABITAT** Wide range of forest habitats, including rain forest, gallery forest, coastal forest, montane forest, flooded forest, and swampland

**DIET** Fruit, seeds, leaves, insects, small vertebrates

**LIFE HISTORY** Not known

**BEHAVIOR** Active in the day; tree-living; usually monogamous; lives in family groups of 2–7 individuals, usually led by the male parent; reinforces social bonds by grooming; birdlike vocalizations

## MAIN TITI MONKEY SPECIES

Scientific name	Common name	Where they live	Red list	CITES
■ <i>Callicebus brunneus</i>	Brown Titi Monkey	Brazil, Peru	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus caligatus</i>	Chestnut-bellied Titi Monkey	Brazil, Peru	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus cinerascens</i>	Ashy Titi Monkey	Brazil	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus cupreus</i>	Red Titi Monkey	Brazil, Peru	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus donacophilus</i>	Bolivian Gray Titi Monkey	Bolivia	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus dubius</i>	Hershkovitz' Titi Monkey	Brazil	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus hoffmannsi</i>	Hoffmann's Titi Monkey	Brazil	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus modestus</i>	Rio Beni Titi Monkey	Bolivia	VU	II
■ <i>Callicebus moloch</i>	Dusky Titi Monkey	Brazil	LC	II
■ <i>Callicebus oenanthe</i>	Andean Titi Monkey	Peru	VU	II
■ <i>Callicebus olallae</i>	Beni Titi Monkey	Peru	VU	II
■ <i>Callicebus personatus</i>	Masked Titi Monkey	Brazil	VU	II
■ <i>Callicebus torquatus</i>	Collared Titi or Widow Monkey	Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela	LC	II

**RED LIST:** CR = Critically Endangered EN = Endangered VU = Vulnerable NT = Near Threatened LC = Least Concern DD = Data Deficient NE = Not Evaluated 📍 = Best place to watch