

Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse *Chiropodomys gliroides* at Panti Forest, Peninsular Malaysia

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Observer: Nick Baker.
Photographs by: Nick Baker.
Subject identified by: Nick Baker.

Location: Gunung Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.
Elevation: 30 metres.
Habitat: Lowland dipterocarp forest.
Date and time: (i) 25 November 2016, 11:26 hrs. (ii) 28 November 2016, 19:18 hrs.

Identity of subject: Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse, *Chiropodomys gliroides* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Muridae).

Description of record: A vertical tree hole measuring 50 cm in height and 15-20 cm in width, and with its base around 2.5 metres from the ground, was discovered on 25 November in a tall tree amongst forest-edge secondary growth, at the margin of extensive lowland forest (Fig. 1). Close inspection of the hole revealed the presence of a single rodent peering down from a recess at the top of the hole. On 28 November the tree hole was monitored and two small murids, with an estimated head-body length of 10 cm, were seen to emerge at 19:18 hrs and immediately make their way up the tree trunk (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1 : The red arrow marks the location of the tree hole.

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Fig. 2 : The pair of *Chiropodomys gliroides* leaving the tree hole and making their way up the trunk. Inset : close-up of the brush-like tip of the tail.

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Remarks: The features which identify these murids as *Chiropodomys gliroides* are (i) small size (estimated head-body length of 10 cm), (ii) fur which is grey-brown dorsally and white ventrally and (iii) the tail, which has a brush-like tip formed by longer hairs (Fig. 2 inset). (Francis, 2008).

Chiropodomys gliroides occurs in a variety of habitats: in Peninsular Malaysia the author has also seen the species in lowland dipterocarp forest on the eastern flank of the Titiwangsa mountain range in Pahang, and in lower montane forest at Fraser's Hill at an elevation of 900 metres. It reportedly also occurs in areas with extensive bamboo (Francis, 2008).

This is apparently the first published record of the species at Gunung Pantu Forest Reserve. Lunde et al (2016) list the range of this species as " ... northeastern India, south China (including Hainan island), Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, eastern Cambodia, Viet Nam, Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia (Java, southern Sumatra, the Mentawai Islands and other islands)".

References:

- Francis, C. M. (2008). *A Field Guide to the Mammals of South-East Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. 392 pp.
- Lunde, D., Aplin, K. & Molur, S. (2016). *Chiropodomys gliroides* The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/4680/0>> (Accessed 07 January 2017).