

## Whiskered Flying Squirrel *Petinomys genibarbis* at Mount Kinabalu, Sabah, Borneo

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**Observer:** Paul Carter.  
**Photographs by:** Paul Carter.  
**Subject identified by:** Paul Carter.

**Location:** Power Station Road, Mount Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.  
**Elevation:** 1840 metres.  
**Habitat:** Lower montane, primary forest at road edge.  
**Date and time:** 26 May 2016, 20:20 hrs.

**Identity of subject:** Whiskered Flying Squirrel, *Petinomys genibarbis* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Sciuridae).

**Description of record:** A medium-sized, reddish-brown flying squirrel was observed active around 5 metres from the ground, beneath a low canopy. Upon being illuminated by a flashlight, the squirrel was observed in the same place for around 20 minutes whilst photographs were taken, after which the observer left the site.



Fig. 1. Lateral view, with inset showing dark wart bearing long whiskers (arrowed).

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**Remarks:** The squirrel illustrated here is identified as *Petinomys genibarbis* based on the diagnostic tuft of long, dark whiskers growing from a dark wart behind the eye (Fig. 1 and inset). It appears to be an adult of unknown sex.

The upperparts appear to have agouti hairs, which are reddish at the tip and darker towards the base. The forehead is brownish, with dark grey around the eyes (apart from behind the rear of the eye). The cheek and temple are orange. From the viewing angle in Figure 1, the upperside of the patagium appears black as illustrated in Francis (2008): this is in contrast to Phillipps & Phillipps (2016) in which it is illustrated as reddish. The patagium has a white margin and is pale on the underside. Its belly is orange-tinged white or cream. It appears to have a damaged left eye which exhibits an unusual pale bluish reflectance: it is possible that, as a consequence, the squirrel remained in view and was not disturbed by flashlight or camera flash.

The most recent IUCN assessment of the species (Clayton, 2016) quotes a maximum elevation of 450 metres, which is an historical record from Bukit Lagong Forest Reserve, Selangor, Peninsular Malaysia (Lim, 1965). This latest record, at an elevation of 1840 metres, represents a considerable altitudinal increase.

There do not appear to be any previously published photographic records of this species in the wild. The only photographs known to the author are of the individual photographed by Lim (1965) and these were of a captured animal photographed in the interior of a bungalow.

*Petinomys genibarbis* is a medium-sized flying squirrel, with a head-body length of 179.8 mm and a tail length of 192.5 mm (Thorington *et al*, 2012). Its range includes "peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah (Malaysia); Brunei Darussalam; and Kalimantan, Java, and Sumatra (Indonesia)" (Thorington *et al*, 2012).

Mount Kinabalu National Park is centered on Mount Kinabalu, the summit of which is at 4095 metres. The Power Station Road is a sealed, narrow, access road connecting the park's headquarters (at 1570 metres elevation) to Tympohon Gate at 1860 metres.

**Acknowledgements:** Thanks to Paula Bohaska for sourcing the reference by Lim Boo Liat (1965).

#### References:

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- Lim, B. L. (1965). *The Malayan Whiskered Flying Squirrel*. In Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, 144 (4): 565-567.
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