

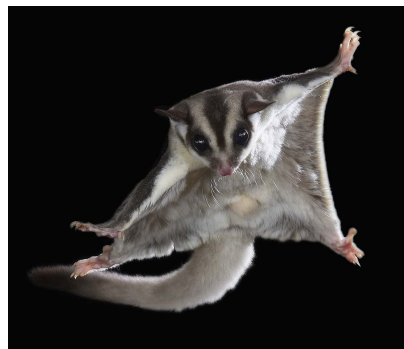
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Animal #26

Sugar Glider

The **sugar glider** (*Petaurus breviceps*) is an **omnivorous**, **arboreal** and **nocturnal possum** belonging to the **marsupial** infraclass which – as the name itself suggests – is used to gliding through the air while leaping from branch to branch. Its name also hints at its preference for **sugary foods**. Its gliding skills are ascribable to the **patagium**, a gliding membrane extending from the forelegs to the hind legs. This animal has fine-tuned this gliding skill in millennia of evolutionary development, as gliding enables it to both reach food and evade predators. The sugar glider is covered in pale grey to brown **fur**, which is lighter in color on the underside; despite looking similar to a **squirrel**, these two animals are not related to each other. The sugar glider is endemic to parts of mainland **Australia**, **New Guinea** and a few **Indonesian islands**; it was also introduced to **Tasmania** by European settlers in the 1830s. Sugar gliders can bear ambient air temperatures of up to **40 °C** through such behavioral strategies as moistening their coat with saliva and exposing the wet area, as well as drinking small quantities of water. In cold weather, sugar gliders huddle together to avoid heat loss, and usually enter a **torpor state** to conserve energy.



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