

Nocturnal mammal rescued after getting stuck in drain in Singapore house



PHOTO: ACRES

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If you're going to secretly raid the kitchen for food at night, the rule of thumb is to not get caught.

But a pair of common palm civets, which are native to Singapore and often mistaken for being a breed of cat, not only got caught in the act, one ended up getting stuck in a drainage pipe while trying to escape.

That's when officers from the Animal Concerns Research & Education Society (Acres) were called in to help free the poor mammal, which is fond of eating fruits and small insects.

The incident took place at about 8pm last Friday (March 18) in a bungalow along Kuo Chuan Avenue, off East Coast Road.

The expatriate family living in the house had initially called the Acres wildlife rescue hotline to say that a "cat-like animal" was trapped in their kitchen.

The caller later gave a more detailed description, and sent over a photograph of the animal to Acres.

The family told Acres that they were startled when a pair of civets tumbled down a chimney in their kitchen, right above their cooking stove top.

But when the animals landed on the stove and failed to climb back into the chimney despite repeated attempts, they darted for a hole leading into the kitchen drainage pipe as the hatch had been left open.

But that was when their seemingly sensible escape plan went awry.

The first civet got into the drainage pipe and got stuck while the second civet tried its best - but failed - to push his friend through.

But when two Acres officers arrived at the scene and tried to catch the second civet, it escaped the nets and ran behind a cabinet to hide.

"The residents (who watched this unfold) found it quite funny," said Mr Kalai, manager of Acres' wildlife department, who, along with another colleague, eventually rescued the civet from the drain after almost an hour.

The second civet was trapped after Mr Kalai and his colleague removed a metal bracket which had been holding the cabinet.

The good news is, both civets did not suffer any physical injuries and were released back into the wild. Under the Animals and Birds Act, anyone who neglects to supply the animals with food and/or water or subjects them to unnecessary suffering and distress is guilty of animal cruelty. First offenders may be fined up to S\$15,000 and/or be jailed for up to 18 months.

Anyone who has information regarding the death of the python can inform the Acres Animal Crime Investigation Unit at acrescrime@gmail.com.