

# PRIMATE OF THE MONTH: TARSIERS

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Tarsiidae*

*Tarsiidae* encompasses a unique family of Haplorrhine primates known as tarsiers, primarily inhabiting the forests of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Tarsiers get their name from the elongated bones of their ankles and heels, termed tarsal bones, which grant them the ability to leap incredible distances; some species can cover upwards of 15 ft in a single bound. These tiny, noctur-

nal primates lack a tapetum lucidum, which is a reflective tissue present in the eyes of most nocturnal animals. In order to

maximize their vision at night, tarsiers have huge eyes, each larger than their brain or stomach. Their eyes are too big for them to move, so tarsiers compensate by rotating their heads 180° in each direction. Tarsiers are truly some of the strangest primates, and their alien appearance makes them the perfect primate for *Cosmosis*!

