

Incus' name

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 04 Aug 1998

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mary whalen — 04 Aug 1998, 09:04

This is Sean Whalen (prion).

It was asked earlier in this list by someone about what animal Patera Jerboa confuses Incus' name with when he thinks that an incus is an animal because he doesn't know it's a bone.

As far as I can tell, he mistakes it for a tree shrew. These are members of the order Scandentia (climbing) and its only family Tupaiidae. They are related to the earliest mammals and similar to both insectivores and primates. The largest species are no more than 9 inches long. They live mostly in trees and physically resemble shrews. They have long tails, large ears, and large eyes. They have sharp claws, longer hind feet, and long snouts. Various species eat insects, small animals, fruit, and birds' eggs. Males are bad-tempered toward one another.

Now, I would think that Wolfe would have put this in just because Incus is about the most shrew-like individual ever, but it just so happens that the primitive mammals that the tupaiids were related to had something that their reptile ancestors lacked. The members of family Dryolestidae were the first animals whose jaw bones had lost three of their bones into the structure of the middle ear, one of these being the incus.

prion