

## CREATURE

# *It is an omnivore*

**T**HE animal featured under "Can anyone identify this animal?" (NST, July 9) has been identified as *Echinosorex gymnurus* by Prof Yong Hoi Sen, Professor Emeritus (Genetics and Zoology), Institute of Biological Sciences of University of Malaya and by the zoologist, Martin Cross.

*Echinosorex gymnurus*, or moonrat is a species of mammal in the *Erinaceidae* family. It generally has white fur, but also sports a small

number of black hairs although it appears white or dirty light grey, like ordinary rats. This specimen is unusual in that its head is white and its body is shiny, velvet jet black.

It is a nocturnal omnivore. Earthworms and arthropods are the main components of its diet but it is also known to eat fish, snails, crabs, small vertebrates and fruit.

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*The 'Echinosorex gymnurus' or Moonrat is a species of mammal in the 'Erinaceidae' family. See also Page 23*