

Glacier National Park
September 4th-10th 2013
Curtis Hart and Lindsay Gedacht
15 species, plus one heard and one dead.

I visited Glacier NP for 6 days in early September. The goal was to spend time at high elevation in hopes of finding a Wolverine. From talking to my cousin Brian, who is a former Park Ranger at Glacier (and also can't go anywhere without stumbling on to some excellent mustelid), this seemed to be the best method for this time of year. We did not find one, but the odds were low to start with and it was a good time either way. I'm sure we could have added another 4 or 5 species with another day of driving in the park.

September 4th

We arrived late and found most of the campgrounds already full. We headed to the Cut Bank primitive campground and saw a Red Squirrel and a Red-tailed Chipmunk before dark.

September 5th

We drove across the park today, seeing a couple Red Squirrels before stopping at Logan Pass. There was a light rain, but we hiked the trail anyways. We saw no mammals from the trail, but did see a Mountain Goat and a Columbian Ground Squirrel from the parking lot. We continued on outside the park and saw a couple of White-tailed Deer and a Red-tailed Chipmunk on the drive to Bowman Lake. In the campground, we saw a couple more White-tailed deer and 2 Yellow-pine Chipmunks. At the lakeshore we found the body of a Little Brown Bat. Just after dark, there was a 40+ minute continuous chorus of Wolves. They howled randomly for the next few hours as well.

I've seen 4 Wolves before, and this was my favorite wolf encounter by far.

September 6th

Late the next morning we hiked from the lower campground 7.1 miles to the upper Bowman Lake campground. I saw a few Red Squirrels and Yellow-pine Chipmunks along the way. There was a Snowshoe Hare hanging around one of the camp trails. After dark, I checked the food prep area for rodents and saw 2 North American Deer Mice and a Western Jumping Mouse.



September 7th

We hiked up to Hole-in-the-Wall today, 8+ miles and 2600 ft elevation gain. I saw a few Red Squirrels and we found a badly injured, but breathing, Southern Red-backed Vole on the trail. I also saw a couple of Columbian Ground Squirrels near the top.

September 8th

We were fogged in and it rained most of the day. We didn't leave the tent much. I did see one Red-tailed Chipmunk while eating lunch.

September 9th

It was still overcast, but we decided to hike the 4 miles to Boulder Pass anyways. It ended up clearing up and we saw and heard several American Pika, Hoary Marmots, and Golden-mantled Ground Squirrels. We also saw 2 Columbian Ground Squirrels early on, and a Red Squirrel and Least Chipmunk near Boulder Pass. That night I saw a North American Deer Mouse at the food prep area.



September 10th

Early on in the day we hiked most of the way to Boulder Pass, seeing lots more American Pikas, Golden-mantled Ground Squirrels, Columbian Ground Squirrels, and one Hoary Marmot. We also saw a very small, brown backed, light bellied, short tailed Shrew. My best guess is that was an American Pygmy Shrew. Right as we were returning to Hole-in-the-Wall, I saw a vole briefly. I'm pretty sure it was another Southern Red-backed Vole. There were lots of small mammal burrows up there, and we saw several other voles/shrews disappear wit too brief a view. I'm sure it would make for some excellent trapping if it were not a National Park.

About noon we decided to hike the 15 miles out to the car. On the way out we saw a Red Squirrel and a Yellow-pine Chipmunk. There were many Wolf tracks along the trail along Bowman Lake. There were multiple sizes going both directions. We reached the parking lot just after dark.



Species Encountered

Red Squirrel
Hoary Marmot
Columbian Ground Squirrel
Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel
Yellow-pine Chipmunk
Least Chipmunk
Red-tailed Chipmunk
Western Jumping Mouse
Southern Red-backed Vole
North American Deer Mouse
American Pika
Snowshoe Hare
White-tailed Deer
Mountain Goat
American Pygmy Shrew

Wolf – Heard only
Little Brown Bat – Dead