

# CHIAPAS, MEXICO, OCTOBER 2015

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From October 2 to 22, I travelled to Chiapas, Mexico, to conduct botanical field work in El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve. El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve covers 120.000 hectares between 450 m and 2450 m with a wide range of forest types, most notably the most extensive cloud forest area in Mexico. It has a list of 112 mammal species (Espinoza *et al.* 1998, Rev. Mexicana Mastozool. 3: 79-94).

I first spent a day birdwatching at Sumidero NP just outside of Tuxtla Gutierrez and at various forest sites around San Cristobal de las Casas with excellent guide Alberto Martínez Fernández (highly recommended: [ambirdingtours@gmail.com](mailto:ambirdingtours@gmail.com)). We then traveled to Jaltenango for a night from where it is 2 hours by truck to the trailhead and 5 hours on foot to the ranger station at 1950 m in the cloud forest at El Triunfo. We stayed there for 6 nights before moving to Limonar campsite at 1300 m on the Pacific slope for 5 nights (5 hours walk). From there, we exited the park at towards Mapastepec where we spent another 3 nights to work the lower elevations. Finally, we returned to Tuxtla Gutierrez and made a touristy daytrip to the famous Palenque ruins.

## Species seen

Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*): one in broad daylight at the UNICACH university campus at Tuxtla Gutierrez.

Mexican Fruit-Bat (*Artibeus jamaicensis*): Several in the tunnel systems at Palenque.



Pygmy Fruit-Bat (*Dermanura (Artibeus) phaeotis*): one flushed from its dayroost at 1000 m below Limonar.

Toltec Fruit-Bat (*Dermanura (Artibeus) tolteca*): one flushed from its dayroost at 1200 below Limonar.



Pallas's Long-tongued Bat (*Glossophaga cf. soricina*): one of presumably this species roosting deep in a hole in the tunnel systems at Palenque.

Southern Yellow Bat (*Lasiuris ega*): flying around at night at Limonar campsite.

Black Myotis (*Myotis cf. nigricans*): several of presumably this species flying around in the evenings around El Triunfo clearing.

Many other unidentified bats seen/heard.

Mantled Howler (*Alouatta palliata*): a group at Palenque.

Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*): common at 1200-1800 m in El Triunfo, heard and seen daily. Seasonally move higher and lower.



Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*): one crossing the road at 350 m between Mapastepec and El Triunfo.

(Jaguar (*Panthera onca*): many tracks at El Triunfo and Limonar. One crossed our campsite at Limonar at night and passed within 2 m of my tent. I heard the movement, but by the time I stuck my head out of the tent, all that was left were tracks and the smell. Bummer...)

Cacomistle (*Bassariscus sumichrasti*): very noise around Limonar campsite at night. Seen well, but too fast and high in the canopy for photographs.

Note: If you want to see this species, an easier site would be Xalapa, Veracruz. According to one of the botanists on the team, it is common around that town in forest remnants and coffee plantations, and even in gardens and parks within Xapala.

White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*): a group at Sumidero NP; seen every other day at El Triunfo and Limonar.

Central American Tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*): a male comes every 1-2 weeks to El Triunfo clearing to lick at salt left out for the mules. We watched it for 20 minutes or so.



Red Brocket Deer (*Mazama americana*): one at El Triunfo clearing at night.

Collared Peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*): plenty of tracks at El Triunfo; seen several time by others of the group.

Red-bellied Squirrel (*Sciurus aureogaster*): one at Sumidero; one at 2200 m above San Cristobal de las Casas; several at elevations below 1800 m in El Triunfo and Limonar.

Deppe's Squirrel (*Sciurus deppei*): one at 2500 m near San Cristobal de las Casas; 1-2 daily in cloud forests above 1800 m at El Triunfo.

Toltec Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon toltecus*): one visiting our trash bag at Limonar campsite.

Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*): one at night at Limonar campsite.

Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*): one at night close to San Cristobal de las Casas.

Honorary mammal: the animal of the trip was undoubtedly the unique, endemic, and endangered Horned Guan (*Oreophasis derbianus*)

