



WESTERN USA 12 JULY – 22 AUGUST 2015

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This is a brief report on the mammals seen during a family holiday to the western USA in the summer of 2015. While we all enjoy mammal watching, of course there many other interests and we spent time with friends, sightseeing, shopping, enjoying pools, or just lazing around at the campsites. Thus, our coverage of the different sites was quite uneven. At the end, we sample ran out of speed...

We flew into Idaho Falls from where we drove for 4 days to Grand Teton NP, followed by 4 in Yellowstone NP. We then drove to Laurel, spending the evening in the prairie N of town all the way to Eastlake Pond NWR. Next day we flew to Phoenix, spending the following morning at the botanical garden before driving to Seligman (night drive in Aubrey Valley). Then, we drove to Grand Canyon (1 night), Page (1 night), Arches NP (2 nights), Bryce Canyon NP (2 nights), Las Vegas (1 night), King City (1 night) and finally ending at Manresa SB between Santa Cruz and Monterey on the California coast for 5 nights, taking a whalewatch tour to the bay and visiting Año Nuevo SP. After that, we visited with friends in Orinda for two weeks, without much in the way of mammals except for a visit to Muir Woods and Muir Beach and some strolls in Tilden Regional Park.

I will not describe all sites in detail, they are well covered by Vladimir's book. Just some notes:

- Grand Teton NP: We found Antelope Flat, mainly along Mormon Road and the dirt road that branches off to the east very good for day and night drives, including Badger, Long-tailed Weasel, Brush Mouse, etc.
- Yellowstone NP: Bridge Bay campground was just teeming with rodents.
- Arches NP: no bats at dusk at Wolfe Ranch, despite plenty of potential food that was feeding on us. However, the Salt Valley dirt road was good for a night drive (Kit Fox, Ord's Kangaroo Rat, etc.).

Species recorded

Little Brown Myotis: several of presumably this species seen at night in the Yellowstone Falls area.

California Myotis: several in the evening at the Mohave Point lookout in Grand Canyon NP.

Canyon Bat: several in the evening around the campground in Page.

Spotted Bat: the surprise of the trip was catching one of these in the beam of the torch flying over Devil's Garden campground in Arches NP.

Pallid Bat: a few in the evening at the Mohave Point lookout in Grand Canyon NP.

Mexican Free-tailed Bat: several in the evening at the Mohave Point lookout in Grand Canyon NP.

Big Free-tailed Bat: 1 in the evening at the Mohave Point lookout in Grand Canyon NP.

(many other bats went unidentified)

Virginia Opossum: 1 at night in Orinda.

American Pica: several right next to the upper cablecat station above Teton village.



Mountain Cottontail: many at night north of Laurel.

Bush Rabbit: abundant at Manresa campground.

Eastern Cottontail: a few at night in Aubrey Valley.

Desert Cottontail: common in Phoenix and around Seligman/Aubrey Valley.

Black-tailed Jackrabbit: common in sage brush, especially on Salt Flat in Arches NP.

White-tailed Jackrabbit: 1 in Grand Teton NP.

Muskrat: many in Grand Teton NP; a few in Yellowstone NP.

American Beaver, several in Grand Teton NP, especially at Schwacher Road, where incredibly tame in the late afternoon.



Yellow-bellied Marmot: common around the upper cablecar station above Teton village; a few in Yellowstone NP.

Eastern Fox Squirrel: obnoxious in Orinda and Berkeley.

Western Gray Squirrel: 1 in Tilden Regional Park.

Red Squirrel: common in Grand Teton NP and Yellowstone NP.

Abert's Squirrel: 1 in Mather Campground in Grand Canyon NP.

White-tailed Prairie Dog: common along the highway between Moab and Green River. Other prairie dogs south of Moab went unidentified because I was uncertain about the overlap zone between this species and Gunnison's.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog: many in the prairie north of Laurel.

Gunnison's Prairie Dog: common around Seligman.

Utah Prairie-Dog: easy at the colony in Bryce Canyon NP, but also seen at several sites on the drive between Bryce Canyon NP and Zion Canyon NP.

California Ground Squirrel: common on the California coast.

Rock Squirrel: several in Phoenix Botanical Garden and Grand Canyon NP.

Uinta Ground Squirrel: common in Grand Teton NP and less so in Yellowstone NP.

Richardson's Ground Squirrel: 1 near Laurel.

Spotted Ground Squirrel: 1 near Grand Canyon airport. I left as soon as I saw it, feeling uneasy about watching an airport with a scope...

Round-tailed Ground Squirrel: several in Phoenix Botanical Garden.

Harris's Antelope Squirrel: 2 in Phoenix Botanical Garden.



White-tailed Antelope Squirrel: common around Page and in Arches NP.



Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel: 1 in Beartooth Mts, common in Bryce Canyon NP.

Least Chipmunk: fairly common in Grand Teton NP, Yellowstone NP, Grand Canyon, Arches NP, and Bryce Canyon NP.

Yellow-pine Chipmunk: common in Grand Teton NP and Yellowstone NP.

Uinta Chipmunk: common in Bryce Canyon NP.

Sonoma Chipmunk: obnoxious around the cafeteria in Muir Woods, but not seen elsewhere in the forest.

Cliff Chipmunk: fairly common in Grand Canyon NP.

Hopi Chipmunk: common in Arches NP.



Colorado Chipmunk: 1 on LaSal mountain above Moab.

Northern Pocket Gopher: 1 at Bridge Bay campground in Yellowstone NP.

Botta's Pocket Gopher: 1 in Tilden Regional Park.

Ord's Kangaroo Rat: several in Aubrey valley and along Salt Flats road in Arches NP.

Deer Mouse: a few in Yellowstone NP, especially in Bridge Bay campground.

Brush Moue: 1 at night in Grand Teton NP.

Northern Grasshopper Mouse: 1 at night in Aubrey Valley.

Bushy-tailed Woodrat: 1 in Grand Teton NP.

Meadow Vole: several in Yellowstone NP.

Montane Vole: 1 in Grand Teton NP while watching beavers at Schwabacher Road.

California Vole: despite abundant holes and runways in Manresa SB, only one glimpsed.

Long-tailed Vole: common in Bridge Bay campground in Yellowstone NP.

Water Vole: 1 along Soda Butte Creek between the NE entrance to Yellowstone NP and Silver Gate.

Southern Red-backed Vole: 1 along the trail to Artist's Paintpots in Yellowstone NP.

Bobcat: 1 crossing the road in agricultural land between Idaho Falls and Swan Valley.

Gray Wolf: 2 watched for 2 hours in Hayden Valley, Yellowstone NP, while strategizing how to steal parts of a carcass from 2 grizzlies. The trip highlight.

Coyote: only 1 at night in Grand Teton NP.

Red Fox: 1 in Yellowstone NP.

Kit Fox: 1 at night along Salt Flats road in Arches NP.

Black Bear: 1 in Grand Teton NP, 2 in Yellowstone NP.



Grizzly: 2 watched for 2 hours in Hayden Valley; a single one a few days later on Mt. Washburn might have been one of the two individuals, nicknamed „scarface“ (radio collared; large bald patch on right side of head) as in Hayden Valley.





Northern Raccoon: 2 at night in Orinda.

Northern River Otter: after dipping on this one in Yellowstone NP (despite considerable effort), it was an unexpected relief to see one in the slough behing Muir Beach.

American Badger: 1 along Mormon Road in Grand Teton NP; 2 at night in Aubrey Valley.

Long-tailed Weasel: 1 along Mormon Road in Grand Teton NP.

Black-footed Ferret: 1 at night in Aubrey Valley.

Striped Skunk: 1 north of Laurel.

California Sea Lion: common along the California coast.

Steller's Sea Lion: several scoped on the island in Año Nuevo SP.

Harbor Seal: common along the California coast.

Northern Elephant Seal: about 200 in Año Nuevo SP.



Pronghorn: common in Grand Teton NP, less so in Yellowstone NP (Lamar Valley), a few around Seligman and in Bryce Canyon NP. My favourite mammal of the trip, just outrageously beautiful.



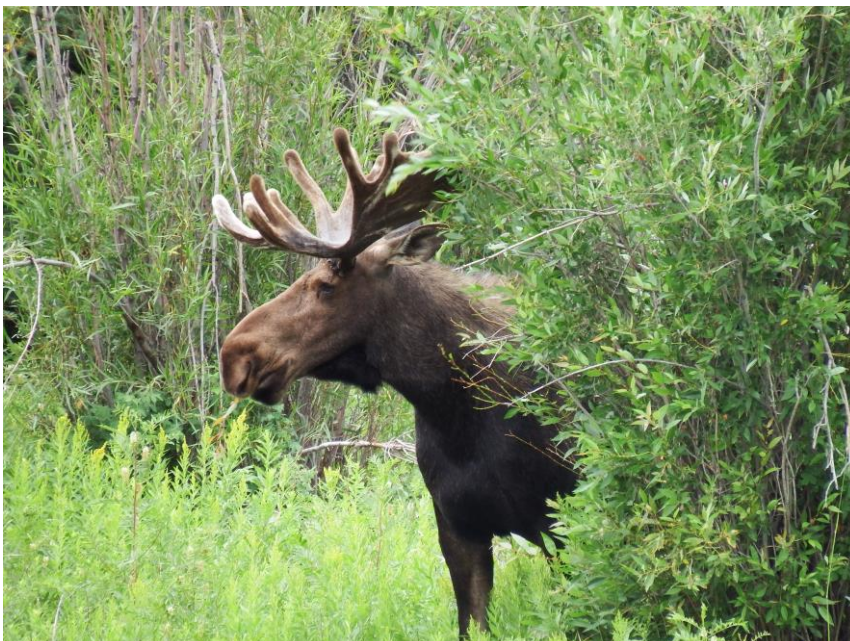
Mountain Goat: several scoped on various mountains in NE Yellowstone NP.

Bighorn Sheep: small groups seen three times from different lookouts in the Tower Falls area in Yellowstone NP.

American Bison: common in Grand Teton NP and Yellowstone NPs.

Elk: a few in Grand Teton NP, many in Yellowstone NP.

Moose: 2 in Grand Teton NP.



Mule Deer: everywhere.

White-tailed Deer: 1 near Laurel.

Humpback Whale: about 12 in Monterey Bay, also seen from the beach in Manresa SB.

Minke Whale: 1 in Monterey Bay.

Risso's Dolpin: a pod in Monterey Bay.

Bottlenose Dolphin: daily next to the beach in Manresa SB, also a few off Muir Beach.

Northern Rightwhale Dolphin: a small pod in Monterey Bay.

Long-beaked Common Dolphin: many in Monterey Bay.

Dalls' Porpoise: a small pod in Monterey Bay.

Harbour Porpoise: a few off Muir Beach.