

Arizona (and New Mexico) Mammal Report: 13 - 27 April 2013

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Introduction

Two weeks in Arizona was primarily designed as a wildlife watching trip with a strong emphasis on mammals and reptiles. Some time was also dedicated to shopping and general sightseeing as I was accompanied by my girlfriend, Sarah.

Our itinerary was designed around the biodiverse hotspots of Cave Creek and Madera Canyon in South East Arizona together with four nights in Phoenix. We ended the trip in the Seligman/Flagstaff area.

For the majority of the trip we were following a well worn mammal watching trail blazed by other enthusiasts (see mammalwatching.com for details). Site information for some of our targets was so detailed it was impossible to return home empty handed. However, as always with these things we managed to miss several 'nailed on' species, mostly in the Cave Creek area.

It was still a successful trip and we managed to record around 35 mammals to species level. Amongst these were the majority of my main targets including Ringtail, Black-footed Ferret and White-nosed Coati.

Travel details

We flew direct from London Heathrow to Phoenix with British Airways and hired a Jeep Grand Cherokee from Dollar. If travelling alone I may have considered a cheaper, non direct flight and a less expensive car rental. However, at least the Jeep was comfortable and we tested its off-road capability a number of times.

Cave Creek: 14 - 18 April 2013

Cave Creek Ranch (www.cavecreekranch.com)

Following a night in Phoenix, we wasted little time the next day driving to Cave Creek, stopping only for supplies in Tucson and fuel for the car in Willcox. We had booked four nights accommodation at Cave Creek Ranch, a delightful place we visited once before in 2009.

Unfortunately Reed Peters (the owner) was ill for most of our visit so I was unable to get any up-to-date information on the local mammal movements. His assistant was still able to give us our first bit of bad news, namely we were too early in the season to see Black Bears (the same was true in Madera Canyon). In April they have young and tend to stay high up in the mountains where there is still plenty of food.

The local sightings board gave us some hope where other mammals were concerned. Amazingly a Mountain Lion had been seen drinking from the bird fountain outside the office only a couple of evenings before! The usual suspects were also noted although it had been at least a week since the White-nosed Coati had been recorded.

We stayed in Stone Cottage located in a quiet corner of the property. **Cliff Chipmunks** were common and seen daily, mostly around our accommodation. **Rock Squirrels** were also present although they seem especially timid at Cave Creek.

The feeding station in front of the office usually had a **Coues's White-tailed Deer** or two in attendance, especially at dusk and dawn. On one occasion we were treated to a sounder of **Javelina** (Collared Peccary) as they came to the bird feeders late afternoon.

Spotlighting around the ranch wasn't as successful as our previous visit, perhaps because of the strong wind which lasted throughout our stay. In addition it seemed that every guest was out and about at night looking for the Elf Owls (easy enough to find). Unfortunately the recent Mountain Lion sighting had failed to keep people indoors at night!

I did manage to spotlight a **Grey Fox** at the feeding station late one night but there was no sign of any skunks actually on the ranch.

Cave Creek surrounds

We walked the start of the South Fork Trail a couple of times on a fruitless quest for Apache Fox Squirrel, a creature I failed to connect with on my last visit. This species is also seen at Cave Creek Ranch although I'm not sure how often.

A drive to the settlement of Paradise produced another Rock Squirrel and I also found a solitary **Western Pipistrelle** roosting under a bridge. Early one morning we found a sounder of **Javelina** feeding at the roadside between Cave Creek Ranch and Portal.

Night drives up Cave Creek Canyon and to Paradise failed to turn up anything other than a **Grey Fox** and a **Striped Skunk**.

Quailway Cottage (Portal) (www.quailwaycottage.com)

Two visits to the Quailway Cottage birdfeeders failed to produce the Spotted Ground Squirrel that was hanging around last year and there was no one around to ask if it still shows. We did see a confiding **Desert Cottontail** and a **Javelina** along with some interesting birds. I would consider staying here in the future if rooms at Cave Creek Ranch were unavailable.

Rodeo surrounds

While not as picturesque as Cave Creek Canyon, the desert scrub on the Arizona/New Mexico border proved good for small mammals. Details of a well studied trapping site are kept out of the public domain for understandable reasons, but it wasn't too difficult to find my own (the same?) trapping area in the scrub around a well vegetated stock tank.



Merriam's Kangaroo Rat *Dipodomys merriami*

I trapped over four nights and enjoyed a very high capture rate. In total I recorded five **American Deer Mice** (desert form), three **Western White-throated Woodrats**, three **Desert Pocket Mice**, two **Tawny-bellied Cottonrats** and a single **Merriam's Kangaroo Rat**. I also spotted a **Coyote** early one morning while checking the traps.



Western White-throated Woodrat *Neotoma albigula*

Black-tailed Jackrabbits were common on the roads at night, especially on Highway 80. **Desert Cottontails** were also seen along with several unidentified rodents including a couple of probable **Merriam's Kangaroo Rats** (they are the common K-rat on gravel soil).

On the night we tried for the Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rats on Sunrise Road there was a severe dust storm reducing visibility down to a couple of metres. Needless to say we were unsuccessful.

Animas (New Mexico)

We spent an evening looking for White-sided Jackrabbits on Cloverfield Road south of Animas (see mammalwatching.com for details). The rabbits are most active on moonlit nights so the fact we were out searching on a half moon wasn't the best of starts. Around Animas there were plenty of Black-tailed Jackrabbits but these seemed to disappear as the wind picked up in strength. We also spot-lit a small herd of **Mule Deer** around mile marker 20.

By the time we reached marker 30 visibility was extremely poor due to dust blowing across road and we were unable to spotlight properly. After a short while, headlights from what initially appeared to be a single vehicle turned in to three Border Patrol trucks and they pulled us up for questioning. Explaining what we were doing down a dirt track so close to the Mexican border, at midnight, in a dust storm made for some interesting conversation. We parted on good terms but as the storm was worsening we decided to head back to Cave Creek seeing little of note other than a few unidentified mice.

Chiricahua National Monument

A brief call one afternoon produced a nice Gopher Snake but we failed in our mission to find Apache Fox Squirrel or White-nosed Coati. A ranger suggested that the squirrel is much rarer at the park since a big fire a year or two ago. To top off an unsuccessful visit, the continuing dust storms closed the main highway delaying us in Willcox for several hours.

Note: The Hidalgo County Sheriff deputies who patrol Highway 80 in New Mexico are notorious for handing out fines for minor traffic violations. I was informed of this by the Cave Creek Ranch website although this didn't stop me picking up a speeding ticket on my way back to I-10. Be warned!

Madera Canyon: 18 - 21 April 2013

Madera Canyon (www.chuparosainn.com)

We stayed at Chuparosa Inn, one of the three lodges actually situated in Madera Canyon (an alternative would be to stay in Green Valley 20 minutes away). Relatively luxurious and rather expensive, it was nonetheless a good choice. While the comfy beds and delicious breakfast may be wasted on the more seasoned wildlife traveller, the mammals most certainly won't! Owners Nancy and Luis are very knowledgeable about the local fauna and maintain a fantastic garden stocked throughout the day with plenty of bird food.

Arizona Grey Squirrels were easy to see on the various feeders, especially early morning and **Rock Squirrels** inhabited the boulder piles that formed part of the landscaping. Even more exciting were the two **White-nosed Coatis** that we saw over our stay, both solitary males that made good use of the free food on offer. Luis said a large family group coatis also passes through the garden from time to time.



White-nosed Coati *Nasua narica*

Four species of skunk are seen around the property although the three individuals we saw were all **Striped Skunk**. I did spend some time spotlighting for the other flavours, but apparently only the Hooded is seen with any regularity.

When I asked Luis how often he sees Ringtails he told me they visit the big seed feeder every night. One even lived in the building while it underwent a renovation. I managed to spotlight a **Ringtail** around the property on all three nights, but only once actually on the feeder. They were all pretty timid and views were never long enough for a photo.

Other interesting wildlife found in the garden of the Chuparosa includes Black-tailed Rattlesnake and an impressive range of hummingbirds.

Arizona Grey Squirrels were also seen at the feeders of Santa Rita Lodge, while a skunk that crossed the road one night further down the road may have been Hooded but views were brief.

Grey Fox and **White-tailed Deer** were both seen at the foot of the canyon after dark.

Continental

The road south from the town of Continental to Madera Canyon is a reliable place to see Antelope Jackrabbit, especially between the school and the junction with the Box Canyon Road. We found two in the roadside scrub easily enough by driving slowly late afternoon. Another three were seen early the next morning including two on the road.

Box Canyon Road

I drove this dirt road several times midmorning looking for reptiles and another time after dark. A **Harris's Antelope Squirrel** crossed the road a couple of miles from the junction with Madera Canyon Road and **Rock Squirrels** were common further up. Incidentally, Western Patch-nosed Snake was the herp highlight.

While walking a dry wash I managed to catch a *Peromyscus* mouse which was probably a **Cactus Mouse** (*P. eremicus*). The other possibility is Brush Mouse (*P. boylii*) although the low elevation may help rule out this species.

The night drive failed to provide any mammals apart from **Black-tailed Jackrabbit**.

Phoenix: 21 - 25 April 2013

We based ourselves at a nondescript hotel in the suburb of Chandler for four nights. This part of the trip was mostly dedicated to general sightseeing and shopping although I managed to see some interesting mammals nonetheless.

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument

We made an easy detour here on our way to Phoenix primarily to see the colony of **Round-tailed Ground Squirrels**. Despite the early afternoon heat, the squirrels were easy to find around the picnic area next to the car park.



Round-tailed Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus tereticaudus*

Desert Botanical Gardens (www.dbg.org)

Like many public gardens around the world, the Desert Botanical Gardens in Phoenix are a great place to see and photograph a wide range of habituated wildlife. We spent a morning here and easily found **Round-tailed Ground Squirrel**, **Rock Squirrel** and **Desert Cottontail**. Harris's Antelope Squirrel is also commonly seen although we didn't actively search for them. By midmorning it had become very hot and busy with school groups etc.

The gardens are also a great place to see desert birds like Gila Woodpecker, and reptiles such as Desert Spiny Lizard and Tiger Whiptail. The food in the main restaurant is highly recommended.

Gilbert Riparian Institute (www.riparianinstitute.org)

This fantastic bird reserve in the suburb of Gilbert is also known as the Gilbert Water Ranch. While bird activity was understandably low on our late morning visit we did see **Desert Cottontails** and several **Arizona Cottonrats**. The rats were first spotted crossing the paths that run between the lagoons and later on one was observed feeding in the centre of a bush.

Other mammals recorded at the reserve include Muskrat, Coyote and even Ringtail. I suspect an evening visit would turn up plenty of bats.

'Phoenix Bat Cave' (Metropolitan Area)

Actually an underground tunnel forming part of the Maricopa County Flood Control, the 'Bat Cave,' as the locals call it, is a summer breeding roost for over 20,000 Mexican Free-tailed Bats.

I was unsure if the bats would have arrived by late April but we thought we would give it a try anyway. It was fortunate that we did because just after sunset we were treated to decent numbers of **Mexican Free-tailed bats** as they emerged from the tunnel entrance. Clearly the spectacle would be greater in June when maximum numbers of bats are present.

To get to the 'cave', park near 40th Street and Camelback Road (there is a retail area and a couple of restaurants) and walk along the north side of the Arizona Canal for about half a mile. The tunnel entrance is north of the canal, behind Judson School. The roost is fenced off but viewing is easy from a designated watchpoint on the topside of the entrance. Smaller numbers of Western Pipistrelle also live in the tunnel and typically emerge earlier than the free-tails.

Canyon Lake

Located an hour east of Phoenix, I was told Canyon Lake is a good place to see Desert Bighorn Sheep. Unfortunately the only reliable way to see them is by taking the Nature Cruise on the Dolly Steamboat (www.dollysteamboat.com). Not exactly my cup of tea, we joined the other tourists for an early afternoon cruise and managed to see two **Bighorn Sheep** feeding on the cliffs above the lake. The rest of the tour was bearable although it helped that we also passed an active Bald Eagle nest.

The sheep are seen on most trips (although not the one that preceded ours) and Black Bear, Bobcat and even Mountain Lion are seen from time to time. This trip is extremely popular, even midweek, so pre-booking is highly recommended.

Harris's Antelope Squirrel is also pretty common around the lake and I managed to spot two from the main road.

West of Phoenix

I was given the details of a tar road an hour's drive west of Phoenix which is popular with the local field herping community. I drove it a couple of nights, finding Sidewinder and Western Diamondback on my first attempt. On the second evening the temperature quickly dropped below 70F so I turned my attention to mammals finding only a **Coyote** and **Black-tailed Jackrabbits** in the spotlight. As the road hardly saw any traffic and cut through some excellent habitat I suspect it would be good for other mammals such as Kit Fox.

I would be happy to provide details of the road on request.

Seligman/Flagstaff: 25 - 27 April 2013

Aubrey Valley, Seligman

Once on the brink of extinction, to see a Black-footed Ferret in the wild would have been inconceivable several years ago. However, thanks to a successful reintroduction programme in the Aubrey Valley near Seligman, the odds of seeing these fantastic creatures in their natural environment have greatly increased.

For most of the time the only realistic chance of seeing a ferret is by spotlighting the private land that borders Route 66, West of Seligman (full details on mammalwatching.com). Luckily for me, my visit coincided with the twice annual ferret survey conducted by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. At this point I should mention that the AGFD Ferret Recovery Team are extremely friendly, going out of their way to offer advice to those wanting to see the Black-footed Ferret. When I contacted them for advice, I was invited to join them on the survey.

Sarah and I arrived in Seligman early afternoon and immediately drove into the valley for a recce. Good numbers of **Gunnison's Prairie Dogs** were spotted pretty much every time we stopped the car, although they seemed especially numerous in the ten mile stretch that starts three miles west of Seligman (on Route 66).

After checking in at Canyon Lodge - www.route66canyonlodge.com (highly recommended) we had a quick dinner before meeting Jennifer Cordova and her team at the field centre. There were quite a few volunteers packed into the room where we received a full briefing on surveying techniques before heading into the valley where our mobile HQ was based.

Each small team was allocated a transect of one of the many private dirt tracks north of Route 66. The idea was to spotlight the area until dawn, looking for the distinctive green eyeshine of the ferrets. Once a ferret was found we had to locate the hole it disappeared down and set a covered cage trap at the entrance (while making sure all other exit holes were blocked). The idea was the ferret would think the cage was an extension of the burrow and thus be easily captured on exit.

The survey weekend was planned to coincide with a full moon when the ferrets are most active. Even on moonlit evenings they don't really emerge until well after midnight so we had several hours of driving up and down the track spotlighting **Black-tailed Jackrabbits**, **Desert Cottontails** and the same, rather disgruntled pair of Burrowing Owls.

Things improved an hour or two later with good views of several Ord's Kangaroo Rats (Merriam's do not occur in the area) although news began to filter through that none of the teams were having any luck with the ferrets.

Knowing that our transect ran through part of the ranch with a high density of Gunnison's Prairie Dogs gave us optimism to keep looking. It took longer than I thought, but sometime in the early hours we finally spotted that green eyeshine. Typically the animal was on the other side of a high barbed wire fence and I ripped a huge hole in my backside climbing over it! Still the **Black-footed Ferret** watched, as I ran towards it, trying to keep the animal in the beam of my spotlight. At this point it was supposed to bolt down the hole, but my ferret had not read the script. In fact I almost had to push it down the burrow with my foot giving me fantastic views of one of the world's rarest mammals.

We set the trap and continued spotlighting, checking back every hour to see if we'd been successful. Two hours later we had our ferret in the trap and were able to take it back to HQ for a check up. It turns out the animal had been captured before so didn't need any vaccinations etc. It was then time to take it back to the field where it was given a chunk of prairie dog meat on its release.



Black-footed Ferret *Mustela nigripes*

By now it was daylight and as we returned to the highway there was one last treat in store. An **American Badger** was spotted as it crossed the landscape in front of the car, no doubt heading back to its set after a nights hunting.

Needless to say it was a fantastic experience and an excellent way to see a Black-footed Ferret. Unfortunately we could only spare one night out of our busy schedule so we never found out if the other nights scored a higher ferret capture rate.

Surveys are run over three nights, twice a year (Spring and Autumn/Fall) and the public are encouraged to volunteer. Contact the AGFD Ferret Recovery Team for more details (email: azferret@azgfd.gov).

Flagstaff

The drive to Flagstaff from Seligman along I-40 produced more **Gunnison's Prairie Dogs** and several **Pronghorn**.

Little America Hotel (www.flagstaff.littleamerica.com)

Our main reason for visiting Flagstaff was to catch up with Abert's Squirrel and a couple of chipmunk species. All can be found at the Flagstaff Arboretum which was still closed for winter on our visit.

A little research indicated that the squirrel is often seen in the grounds of the Little America Hotel on the edge of Flagstaff, so it made sense to book our last night of the trip there. The hotel itself was quite nice, if not slightly overpriced. The 'nature trail' turned out to be fantastic, even in the middle of a rather hot afternoon when wildlife viewing is not typically at its best.

The two mile trail is well signposted from the grounds behind the hotel and loops through an area of Ponderosa Pine. Within minutes we had seen several **Grey-collared Chipmunks** and a couple of **Rock Squirrels**. Further up the trail we saw our first **Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel** which was quickly flushed by a huge Cooper's Hawk. Incidentally, the woods were full of bird life including good numbers of Pygmy Nuthatch.



Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis*

We finally found a very cooperative **Abert's Squirrel** a mile into the trail which posed nicely for a couple of photos. With all three targets under our belt we headed back to the hotel seeing several more **Golden-mantled Ground Squirrels** in quick succession.



Abert's Squirrel *Sciurus aberti*

Returning back (almost at the trail entrance) we decided to follow a second, poorly marked path leading past a pond and to the rear of the neighbouring truck stop parking area (NE of hotel). On the rocky slope leading up to the truck stop we found a mixed colony of **Rock Squirrels** and **Gunnison's Prairie Dogs**. An **Eastern Cottontail** back at the hotel ended a successful afternoon stroll.

Arizona Snowbowl

We drove up the mountain as far as the barrier late afternoon seeing four **Mule Deer**. The parking area next to the barrier overlooked a meadow which would be good for spotlighting after dark. Unfortunately when we returned at night some type of police incident was taking place and we were swiftly moved on!

A colony of **Gunnison's Prairie Dogs** was also noted around the Flagstaff city limits en route to the Snowbowl.

Species seen

1.	Gunnison's Prairie Dog <i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>	-Good numbers seen from Route 66, west of Seligman (Aubrey Valley). - A couple of colonies noted in Flagstaff.
2.	Rock Squirrel <i>Spermophilus variegates</i>	-Small numbers seen in most places visited including Cave Creek, Madera Canyon, Phoenix and Flagstaff.
3.	Harris's Antelope Squirrel <i>Ammospermophilus harrisi</i>	-One seen on Box Canyon Road (nr Madera Canyon). -Two in vicinity of Canyon Lake (east of Phoenix).
4.	Round-tailed Ground Squirrel <i>Spermophilus tereticaudus</i>	-Several seen around picnic area of Casa Grande Ruins National Monument. -Also common in Desert Botanical Gardens, Phoenix.
5.	Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel <i>Spermophilus lateralis</i>	-Several seen on nature trail behind Little America Hotel, Flagstaff.
6.	Cliff Chipmunk <i>Tamias dorsalis</i>	-Common at Cave Creek Ranch.
7.	Grey-collared Chipmunk <i>Tamias cinereicollis</i>	-Several seen on nature trail behind Little America Hotel, Flagstaff.
8.	Abert's Squirrel <i>Sciurus aberti</i>	-One seen well on nature trail behind Little America Hotel, Flagstaff.
9.	Arizona Grey Squirrel <i>Sciurus arizonensis</i>	-Common at Madera Canyon, especially around the bird feeding stations of Chuparosa Inn and Santa Rita Lodge.
10.	Desert Pocket Mouse <i>Chaetodipus penicillatus</i>	-Three small <i>Chaetodipus</i> trapped near Rodeo were initially identified as <i>C. eremicus</i> based on the range maps in my field guide. Further research indicates that they are more likely to be <i>C. penicillatus</i> (at least according to most other range maps including IUNC Red List).

11.	Ord's Kangaroo Rat <i>Dipodomys ordii</i>	-Several seen while spotlighting for ferrets in the Aubrey Valley, Seligman. Merriam's Kangaroo Rat does not occur in the area so identification was straightforward.
12.	Merriam's Kangaroo Rat <i>Dipodomys merriami</i>	-One trapped near Rodeo. -Several K-rats seen crossing road in areas of gravel soil in SE Arizona were most likely this species
13.	American Deer Mouse <i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	-Five trapped over four nights near Rodeo.
14.	Cactus Mouse <i>Peromyscus eremicus</i>	-A <i>Peromyscus</i> captured in a dry wash on the Box Canyon Road (nr Madera Canyon) was most likely this species. <i>P. boylii</i> is another possibility although low elevation may help rule it out.
15.	West. White-throated Woodrat <i>Neotoma albigula</i>	-Three trapped over four nights near Rodeo.
16.	Arizona Cotton Rat <i>Sigmodon arizonae</i>	-Several observed around the lagoons late morning at the Gilbert Riparian Institute, Phoenix.
17.	Tawny-bellied Cotton Rat <i>Sigmodon fulviventer</i>	-Two trapped over four nights near Rodeo.
18.	Desert Cottontail <i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>	-Common in desert scrub in all places we visited including central Phoenix.
19.	Eastern Cottontail <i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>	-One observed in Flagstaff in grounds of Little America Hotel. -Possibly overlooked in other areas.
20.	Black-tailed Jackrabbit <i>Lepus californicus</i>	-Common in desert scrub in all places we visited. Mostly nocturnal.
21.	Antelope Jackrabbit <i>Lepus alleni</i>	-Small numbers seen both late afternoon and early morning on Madera Canyon Road heading south from Continental.
22.	Western Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus hesperus</i>	-Single animal found roosting under road bridge between Portal and Paradise. -Many of the small bats seen flying around at dusk were most likely this species.
23.	Mexican Free-tailed Bat <i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>	-Good numbers seen exiting flood control tunnel just after sunset in Phoenix Metropolitan area.
24.	White-tailed Deer <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	-Coues's White-tailed Deer common at Cave Creek Ranch. -Several also seen at foot of Madera Canyon early evening.
25.	Mule Deer <i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	-Small herd noted south of Animas (New Mexico) late evening. -Four late afternoon at roadside, Arizona Snowbowl, Flagstaff.
26.	Collared Peccary (Javelina) <i>Tayassu tajacu</i>	-Common in Cave Creek Canyon and Portal area.

27.	Pronghorn <i>Antilocapra americana</i>	-Several seen from I-40 between Seligman and Flagstaff.
28.	Bighorn Sheep <i>Ovis canadensis</i>	-Two females seen on cliffs above Canyon Lake, east of Phoenix.
29.	Coyote <i>Canis latrans</i>	-One observed early morning near Rodeo. -A single animal spot-lit late at night an hour west of Phoenix.
30.	Common Grey Fox <i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	-Two seen in Cave Creek Canyon after dark. -One seen late at night crossing road at foot of Madera Canyon.
31.	Ringtail <i>Bassariscus astutus</i>	-Three seen over three nights around the bird feeders of the Chuparosa Inn, Madera Canyon.
32.	White-nosed Coati <i>Nasua narica</i>	-Two individual males (Coatimundis) seen over three days at the Chuparosa Inn, Madera Canyon.
33.	American Badger <i>Taxidea taxus</i>	-One observed 30 minutes after sunrise on private land in Aubrey Valley, Seligman.
34.	Striped Skunk <i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	-One seen late evening in Cave Creek Canyon. -Three individuals noted around Chuparosa Inn, Madera Canyon. -Another animal seen briefly in Madera Canyon may have been a Hooded Skunk (<i>Mephitis macroura</i>).
35.	Black-footed Ferret <i>Mustela nigripes</i>	-Outstanding views down to a metre of a male in Aubrey Valley, Seligman. The same animal was later trapped.

Conclusion

Overall, our two weeks in Arizona produced some fantastic mammal watching opportunities with 35 different species identified.

The Cave Creek section of the trip gave us the most dips, including the localised Apache Fox Squirrel and the White-sided Jackrabbit. It was too early in the year for Black Bear and the nectar-feeding bats and I was also disappointed not to get conclusive views of Hooded Skunk.

The rest of the trip went like clockwork. Even in the Phoenix area we managed to pick up some interesting species such as Bighorn Sheep and Arizona Cottonrat.

Trip highlights were undoubtedly the Ringtail, American Badger, White-nosed Coati and Black-footed Ferret. I also enjoyed the small mammals although some of the Deer Mice were a challenge to ID.

I'd like to end this report by thanking those at mammalwatching.com who helped me plan this trip and who also helped me with some rodent identification on my return.