



I have long been a fan of mammalwatching.com and have drooled over others trip reports every time I see them. I consider myself an avid traveler; however I do not always get to focus on mammals like I really want. Not because nothing would make me happier to do this, but because all of my current travel companions either like to do a mixture of things (history, culture and wildlife) and/or the thought of sitting or walking for hours to try to find something does not interest them. Maybe one day. Peru was no exception to my above fate. However in the mix I did get the chance to have some good mammal sightings.

This was my second trip to Peru. I went with my parents who enjoy traveling and a good friend Colleen who lives in California. I used Yampu tours which have a base company in the US and have always put together great trips in Latin America for me. We all decided on a travel itinerary which involved the Chappari lodge, the Colca Canyon and the Nazca/Paracas area. I will try to keep all historical and cultural things to a minimum. There will be some birds pointed out but only the ones that did not interfere with me trying to look a mammal.

29 October 2012- I left the US on a late night flight to Lima. I have little memory of the flight other than the pillow that my head was wedged up against. By the time we got to our hotel, it was time to sleep again.

30 October 2012 – We were able to sleep in and catch a 3:45 pm flight to the city of Chiclayo. Chiclayo sits in the north of Peru and is the starting off point for the Chaparri reserve. I went there hoping to see a spectacled bear of course, as well as anything else the place could offer. My parents both enjoy looking at those feathered creatures so I figured there would be enough to keep them entertained. We were picked up by our guide Jeremy Flanagan. Jeremy is originally from the UK and currently lives in Peru. He is friends with the owners of Chappari and helps out with English speaking guests from time to time. He is a great guy to be around and was willing to put in the extra time to try to find things for me. I can highly recommend him! The drive to Chappari takes about 1.5 -2 hours depending on traffic and the dirt road you have to take once you enter the reserve. The best part of the drive for me was close to the turn off point to the reserve a pampas cat was crossing the road. Of course I do not have a photo because a) I didn't have my camera out (when will I ever learn) and b) pampas cats can move pretty fast when startled. We stopped at a small gift shop/interpretation center to collect our local guide. The drive in was a little rough and it started to rain just as we were getting close. A few sechuran foxes were in the road on the way in. Chappari has two sets of rooms, both being pretty much the same. The newer ones involve a walk across a suspension bridge and up a few wide faced steps. The older ones are close to the restaurant area. My friend and I ended up with a newer room and my parents an older room. I liked our room a little better, but maybe not the white winged guans (the signature bird of Chappari) that liked to run on our tin roof (it sounded like there were 500 of them) and squabble every morning at 5 am. I guess I really didn't need to bring an alarm clock.

31 October 2012 – I picked three full days to try to maximize my chance of seeing a wild bear. The morning started good enough when a family of collared peccaries decided to hang out close to the kitchen. One of



the females in the group (Ponchita) was rescued and raised there so she had no fear to come close with her two piglets. We walked up to the “oso lookout” a place I became very familiar with over

the next few days. It involves a lookout point towards an old trap area that is baited with dry kibble. Wild bears come to chow down from time to time. With no bears in sight we left our local guide on lookout and head



out to the captive bears. All were rescued from different situations in Peru. I had seen them before in zoos, but not this close.



Beautiful creatures. We decided to do a walk on one of the trails close to the bears. With the heat of the day it pretty much turned up no mammals, but I did see two king vultures. All the meals at Chappari are wonderful! Not only because of the good food but because of the sechuran foxes that hang close by. They had one mom who had two

small kits (I saw one briefly) and a young male that were pretty relaxed.



Photo opportunities for them were wonderful. I bought the guide book for Chappari from the small gift shop and decided a black-eared opossum

would be a nice mammal to “tick”. After dinner Jeremy and I planned to do some spot lighting. He decided to head out before me to see if he could find anything. As I was finishing up one of the staff told me Jeremy had found a marsupial. I was excited and ran to the spot where he was and got my first spotting of a Peruvian.....rodent. I am pretty sure it is a bicolored arboreal rice rat but if someone could take a look at one of the pics and set me straight that would be wonderful.



1 November 2013 – full day two in the reserve. Breakfast included more foxes and more peccaries. We decided to do a hike in an area where we thought we could see a bear as

nothing had turned up at the lookout. The only thing the hike turned up was a lone male white tail deer. It is still a beautiful place. We decided to concentrate our efforts at the lookout in the afternoon. Jeremy went ahead of me by about an hour. When I went to meet him a young white tailed deer was in the path. He was very uninterested in me getting by and stomped at me multiple times. I felt like I could take him if need be so decided to pass anyway. A few hours



staring off at the bear area went by when I saw a large black mass walking up the hill. I think I screamed “BEAR” so loud they could hear me in Ecuador. Jeremy was with me and started to scan the area not seeing what I saw. I knew what I saw was big and black so what else could it be? Well what else it could be was a family group of peccaries that decided the food there was delicious. They even taught themselves how to jump into and out of the cage area to eat more. The peccaries ended up showing up like clockwork every day from that point onward at 9 am and 5 pm. I re-named my trip “why I hate the collared peccary”. No bears... I did have one non mammal animal I really wanted to see and that was a Peruvian boa. At dinner one of the workers came running from a building telling us to come quickly. On top of the building was a boa who had just grabbed a rat. It was still vocalizing and kicking so since it was alive when I first saw it (maybe not a minute



later) I am going to count it. If anyone can help me with the rodent ID from the picture that would be great. It was a pretty neat thing to see in the wild, well not for the rat.



2 November 2012 – I spent a lot of time this day at the oso/peccary lookout with no bear luck. No new mammals this day.

3 November 2012 – This was the day we left and went back to Chiclayo to spend the night. Despite not seeing my target species I still really enjoyed my time here and would recommend it to anyone. There is a small natural pool by the restaurant that each morning around 6 am amazilia and tumbes hummingbirds would come to bathe. We visited the pyramids at Tucume which were a nice way to kill a few hours in the afternoon.

4 November 2012 – From Chiclayo we flew back to Lima then on to Arequipa. It is a beautiful city. We stayed at the Casa Andina which is a beautiful hotel as well. This was a complete animal free day. A city tour

was what the afternoon held for us.



5 November 2012 –We left early in the morning to head to the Colca Canyon. En route we drove through the Salinas and Aguada Blanca National

reserve. My main goal was to try to see a viscacha. I have read that the species here is the southern viscacha and the northern on others sites. So not really



sure which one to pick. Luckily our driver knew of a couple good spots to look and found me 17 all in all. I met German tourists later at our hotel who had also wanted to see some, but could not find one. There are many rocky areas that you drive by in the reserve, but the one just past the 4920 meter lookout was the best place. Unlike the earlier ones these ones did not run in what I like to call the “stanger/danger” run I see other small mammals do from time to time. These ones were pretty chill and let me take pictures at pretty close range. Right around viscacha number 8 I did have to start listening to my father mumble “are we seriously stopping for another rabbit”. That did not deter me however. Our driver told us back in the day (not sure what day exactly that is) guides use to bring carrots for tourists to feed them.

The other easily seen mammal is the vicuna. They are pretty much



guaranteed in the pampa canahuas and tocra area of the reserve. There are many small lagoons as well in the reserve that support a small number of birds. Andean geese and coots and black ibis were easy to see. I also saw a lone Andean caracara. We ended

up staying at the Casitas del Colca for two nights. A beautiful place I can recommend.

6 November 2012 – we visited the Cruz del condor



to see the Andean condors this day as well as a city tour to Chivay. I had seen Andean condors before, but not at this close range. No mammals for the day.

7 November 2012 – We headed back to Arequipa. Saw more viscachas and vicunas then flew back to Lima for the night.

8-9 November 2012 – Involved a trip to Nazca to see the lines, some mummies and drink some Pisco sours. I maybe saw a pigeon...



10 November 2012 – We had spent the night at the Libertador Paracas the night before to take an early morning boat trip to the Ballesta Islands. I usually hate being crammed into a boat with a bunch of other tourists who are all trying to get that “good spot” for photos. I really did feel this was going to be the case when I saw the size of the tourists getting onto the boat.



After being knocked over by some Japanese in New Zealand once (long story) I now know how to hold my own. The bird life on the

islands is amazing. The only mammals are the South American sea lions but they are fun to watch. What seemed like a kabillion brown pelicans, red legged comorants, Peruvian boobies, Inca terns and an occasional humbolt penguin were on the islands. My friend Colleen kept mumbling in my ear, what if that one bird takes the lead to attack us and all the others follow..... I figured with the numbers involved it would at least be quick death. I did get a brief nanosecond view of some species of dolphin as it surfaced to breathe, however I cannot ID it. We flew home that night.

All in all a good trip. No bears like I hoped for but I did learn how much I do not like peccaries.

Cheryl Antonucci