

## Northern Ecuador, February 13th – March 5h 2010

This was mainly a birding trip made by myself, Steven De Saeger and Filiep T’Jollyn, but we all have an interest in all kinds of animals. This was also one of my last trips without a decent camera, so the few pictures in this report were all taken with a compact camera. The highlight of the trip in fact was one of the triggers for me to buy a decent camera... Most of the report will be some short notes about which species were seen where (I wrote this more than four years later, so I don’t recall all details about trails etc. – a good lesson to myself: don’t wait too long to write a report!).

### Saturday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2010

Filiep and I flew in via Atlanta, and Steven from Madrid. Upon arriving in Atlanta, we experienced a huge snow storm, with many flights being delayed or even cancelled. Fortunately, after waiting for some hours, our flight left with a delay of about 5 hours. We met Steven and our guide for the first day at the airport well after midnight, and quickly set off towards Pulumahua Crater. This night drive resulted in the first mammal of the trip, a **Tapiti**. The rest of the day I got a first impression of birding in South America, but no more mammals were seen.

### Sunday February 14<sup>th</sup> 2010

An early drive to the airport, for a short flight over the Andes, brought us to Coca, from where we would be taken to the Amazon. We had booked a week at Shiripuno Lodge, a place not as famous as some of the other Amazon lodges, but with a nice list of birds and mammals. We boarded the boat with high expectations, especially since the group leaving the lodge had seen a swimming Tapir! We were not that lucky, but we saw our first **Common squirrel monkeys**. In the evening at the lodge, a **rice rat** *Oryzomys spec.* was seen and photographed (see picture). If somebody is able to identify this animal, please let me know!



**Rice rat** *Oryzomys spec.*, Shiripuno Lodge.

#### Monday February 15<sup>th</sup> 2010

Our first full day at Shiripuno resulted in some nice additions to our mammal list: **Red howler monkey** (heard only), **White-tailed titi monkey** (heard only), **Poepig's woolly-monkey** (5+), another **Common squirrel monkey**, and 3 **Spix's night monkeys** near the lodge in the evening. We also saw tracks of Lowland tapir, White-lipped and Collared peccary, and Paca.

#### Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup> 2010

A quiet day mammalwise, with only some **Common squirrel monkeys** and **Red howler monkeys** (heard only).

#### Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> 2010

Today we walked some other trails, and saw a **Northern Amazon red squirrel**, and heard **Poepig's woolly-monkeys** and **White-bellied spider-monkeys**. At the lodge in the evening, the **Spix's night monkeys** were heard.

#### Thursday February 18<sup>th</sup> 2010

A new mammal for the trip was seen today, a **Red brocket**. Otherwise we saw a group of **Poepig's woolly-monkeys** and heard some **White-tailed tit monkeys**. In the evening, Steven walked around with his torch and saw five **Monk sakis** too, which I unfortunately didn't see...

#### Friday February 19<sup>th</sup> 2010

More of the same today, with a **Red brocket**, a **Northern Amazon red squirrel** and five **White-tailed tit monkeys**. Near the river, we found some tracks of Capybara. Steven scored again in the evening, with a sighting of a **Paca**.

#### Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup> 2010

Today we left Shiripuno Lodge, we heard some more **Red howler monkeys**, and a **Red brocket** crossed the river in front of our boat.

All in all, this was an amazing experience, and I think a trip focused on mammals could result in a lot more species here. There is a clay lick in the area, where Lowland tapir is doable, and another boat saw one of the river dolphins near the lodge while we were in the forest. Several bats were also seen, none of them were identified however. My first week in the Neotropics certainly made a big impression!

#### Sunday February 21<sup>st</sup> 2010

After leaving Shiripuno, we headed for Wild Sumaco Lodge, where we saw an **Amazon dwarf squirrel**, and at night Steven (who else!) found a **Common opossum** in the lodge grounds.



**Common opossum**, Wild Sumaco.

Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010

A **Nine-banded armadillo** close to the lodge was the only mammal of the day.

Tuesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010

Today we went to Cabañas San Isidro, no mammals were seen.

Wednesday February 24<sup>th</sup> 2010

Two **Red-tailed squirrels** at Guacamayos were the only mammals seen today.

Thursday February 25<sup>th</sup> 2010

At Cabañas San Isidro, we saw a **Black agouti** near the hummingbird feeders, and some more **Red-tailed squirrels**.

Friday February 26<sup>th</sup> 2010

On our visit to Papallacta Pass, we saw a **White-tailed deer** and several **Tapitis**. After this we left towards Quito, with a **Long-tailed weasel** crossing in front of the car. Upon arriving in Mindo, Steven left for the airport, and Filiep and I took a bus to Mindo. Upon arriving in Mindo, Filiep saw that his binoculars were taken out from his bag. Luckily he could borrow a pair from the owner of Ruby's Guesthouse, where we decided to stay.

Saturday February 27<sup>th</sup> 2010

Only some **Red-tailed squirrels** near Mindo today.

Sunday February 28<sup>th</sup> 2010

Today we decided to bird along the famous Yellow House trails in Mindo. This started well, with two **Central American agoutis**, some **Red-tailed squirrels** and a smelly dead **Nine-banded armadillo**. After a while we saw two people watching a tree and when they saw us, they told us to come closer, after which they softly spoke the words “bears, there are bears!”. We didn’t immediately understand this (I actually thought they were saying “pears”), but as we looked at the tree, two juvenile **Spectacled bears** were sitting there, watching us! This was one of the species we had talked about, but never expected to see, especially not two animals sitting in a tree just a few meters away! I quickly took some pictures with my compact camera, but since the cubs were now looking down and we heard something walking through the vegetation, we didn’t want to meet an angry mother bear so we left them and continued. This was truly the highlight of the trip, and something I will never forget. If only I had a decent camera back then...



**Spectacled bear**, Yellow House Trail Mindo.



Cub nr. 2.

Monday March 1<sup>st</sup> 2010

Along the Waterfall Trail near Mindo, we saw some **Red-tailed squirrels**, and also a **Western dwarf squirrel**.

Tuesday February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010

Another **Western dwarf squirrel**, this time at Mindo Loma.

Wednesday February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010

Today we visited Bellavista, but without any mammals seen.

Thursday February 4<sup>th</sup> 2010

A **Nine-banded armadillo** at the access road to Mindo was the only mammal of today.

Friday February 5<sup>th</sup> 2010

For our last day in Ecuador, we visited the Antisana Reserve, mainly to see Andean Condors. We had some nice views of them, in a great scenery, and also saw a **Tapiti** and two **White-tailed deer**.

## Mammal list

1. **Common opossum** *Didelphis marsupialis*: one was spotlighted in the grounds of Wild Sumaco Lodge.
2. **Spectacled bear** *Tremarctos ornatus*: obviously the highlight of the trip, two young animals were seen in a tree at the Yellow House Trail near Mindo.



3. **Long-tailed weasel** *Mustela frenata*: One crossed to road on our way from Guanco Lodge to Quito.
4. **Red brocket** *Mazama americana*: A few were seen at Shiripuno Lodge, with one crossing the river in front of our boat.
5. **White-tailed deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*: one was seen near Papallacta Pass, and two at Antisana.
6. **Tapiti** *Sylvilagus brasiliensis*: The first mammal of the trip, with one seen at Pululahua Crater. Also seen at Papallacta Pass and Antisana.
7. **Black agouti** *Dasyprocta fuliginosa*: one was seen near the hummingbird feeders at Cabañas San Isidro.
8. **Central American agouti** *Dasyprocta punctata*: two at the Yellow House Trail near Mindo.
9. **Amazon dwarf squirrel** *Microsciurus flaviventer*: one at Wild Sumaco Lodge.
10. **Western dwarf squirrel** *Microsciurus mimulus*: seen on two days near Mindo.
11. **Red-tailed squirrel** *Sciurus granatensis*: the most commonly encountered squirrel, seen on five days.

12. **Northern Amazon red squirrel** *Sciurus igniventris*: only seen at Shiripuno, with two sightings.
13. **Common squirrel monkey** *Saimiri sciureus*: the most commonly seen monkey in the Amazon.
14. **Spix's night monkey** *Aotus vociferans*: seen near the lodge at Shiripuno, heard on another night.
15. **White-tailed titi monkey** *Callicebus discolor*: a group of five was seen at Shiripuno.
16. **Monk saki** *Pithecia monachus*: Steven saw five during spotlighting near the lodge at Shiripuno.
17. **Red howler monkey** *Alouatta seniculus*: heard (but not seen) on several occasions at Shiripuno.
18. **White-bellied spider monkey** *Ateles belzebuth*: one was heard calling at Shiripuno.
19. **Poepig's woolly monkey** *Lagothrix poeppigii*: seen and heard several times at Shiripuno.
20. **Paca** *Agouti paca*: seen by Steven while spotlighting near the lodge at Shiripuno.
21. **Rice rat sp.** *Oryzomys spec.*: one seen and photographed at Shiripuno.

#### **Tracks only**

**Lowland tapir** *Tapirus terrestris*: tracks noted on several days at Shiripuno Lodge.

**Collared peccary** *Pecari tacaju*: tracks noted on several days at Shiripuno Lodge.

**White-lipped peccary** *Tayassu pecari*: tracks noted on several days at Shiripuno Lodge.

**Capibara** *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*: : tracks noted at Shiripuno Lodge.