

MAMMALS and AMPHIBIANS seen in Chile Nov 3 – 25 2014

Stefan Lithner



marine otter

Photo Stefan Lithner

This compilation is an English, somewhat extended version for mammals and amphibians. The trip was a birding trip arranged by the Swedish travel agency for birders, Heliangelus Nature Tours (Naturresor) and conducted by Albatross Birding and Nature Tours ; Fred Homer and Roberto Silva Santiago, Chile (For addresses see below).

The complete report is written in English by Fred Homer and Rodrigo Silva.

This report also presents a few data on a rather rarely reported mammal that we did not see, but may still be of interest to mammal-enthusiasts.

Participants in the trip were Jonas Ellerström Stockholm & Lund (JE), Stefan Lithner Karlshamn (SL), Elisabeth Månsén Lund & Stockholm (EM), Karl-Lennart Nilsson Falkenberg (KLN), Hans Johansson (HJ) , and Cecilia Wide Lund (CW), all from Sweden.

First part of the trip, around Santaiugo was conducted by Fred Homer. We visited the area around Lampa and Batuco, Farellones and El Yeso in the Andes, Mahuida outside Santiago. Then we went by car about 350 km south to Lago Colbun, Altos de Lircay National Park. Then we started our return trip, visited El Peral north of San Antonio and overnigheted in Cartagena. The following morning we spent at Punta de Tracla by the coast. We then visited Maipo Rivermouth before we returned to Santiago.

The rest of the trip was managed by Rodrigo Silva. We took a flight to Puerto Montt and went by rented cars to Puyehue National Park. We spent the night in Puyehue. During the following day we continued south, crossed Chacao Channel to reach Chiloe Island. We overnigheted in

Ancud on the northern side of the island. The following morning we took a boat-trip on Chepu River. The river is known to host southern river otter (*Lontra felina*), and in the early mornings there is a good chance to find southern pudu (*Pudu pudu*) coming down to drink water. In the afternoon we returned to the mainland and drove back to Puerto Montt.

Following morning we drove to Punta Arenas in Patagonia and continued to Seno Otway and Puerto Natales. We then spent three days in Torres del Paine National Park including a visit to Sierra Baguales. We started our return-trip to Puerto Natales and visited Punta Delgada situated at the coast of Magellan Strait. We then continued to Pali Aike National Park. In the afternoon we reached Primera Angostura where we took a ferry to Tierra del Fuego. Here we visited Laguna de los Cisnes. We overnighted in Porvenir. Following morning we drove to Pingüino Rey situated at the point of Bahía Inútil (Ulysses Bay) and then returned to Punta Arenas and took a flight back to Santiago.

We then continued to Arica in northern Chile. Here we used a mini-buss and headed for Putre situated about 3500 metres a.s.l. The following day we spent most of the time in Lauca National Park around 4000 metres a.s.l. and around Putre. Next day we drove to Azapa Valley. In the afternoon we spent time at the coast outside Arica.

Our our last day we took a flight back to Santiago for transfer back to Sweden.



southern viscacha

Photo © Stefan Lithner

MAMMALS

Taxa presented in order according to Duff/Lawson; Mammals of the World, a Checklist 2004. Names also follow Duff/Lawson except for splits after 2004.

For determinations we used: Redford & Eisenberg, *Mammals of the Neotropics, The Southern Cone, vol. 2* 1992

Chester: *A wildlife guide to Chile*, Princeton University Press 2008.

Muñoz & Yáñez; *Mamíferos de Chile*, aug 2009,

Iriarte; *Mamíferos de Chile* 2008, and

Shirihai & Jarrett; *Whales Dolphins and Seals a Field Guide to the Mammals of the World* 2006.



coipú

Photo © Stefan Lithner



grey fox

Photo © Stefan Lithner

European rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

Two were seen on Nov 8, one was seen on Nov 14. Three were seen on Nov 17 and one was seen Nov 20.

European hare

Lepus europeus/capensis

During our trip we found hares looking like the northern population of European hares (*Lepus europaeus*) with long ears, but also hares with ears appearing shorter, more resembling those of mountain hares (*Lepus montanus*). On at least two occasions I saw dorsum of tail on the short-eared variety, showing a distinct black central line only a few millimetres wide on dorsum of tail, unlike the dorsum on tail of the long-eared hares, which were black nearly all the way to the edge. These hares also seemed smaller than the long-eared ones.

Iriarte deals with European hare (*Lepus europaeus*). They also present a history of introduction of European hare to southern South America, starting with efforts in southern Argentina 1880.

Munoz & Yáñez deals with Cape hare (*Lepus capensis*). They on the other hand present the history of introduction of Cape hare to southern parts South America, starting in Chile 1886. The IUCN-list does not recognize *L. capensis* in South America:

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41277/1>), while it does the *L. europaeus* as introduced (<http://maps.iucnredlist.org/map.html?id=41280>) .

It is well known that the different taxa man has appointed to species within the genus *Lepus* reproduce without any repression, and also that many subspecies have been described. Some of these are currently under studies to determine if they should be treated as full species.

L. europaeus and *L. capensis* have sometimes been considered to be the same species.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_hare The Mediterranean subspecies of European hare (*Lepus europaeus mediterraneus*) is smaller, has slightly shorter ears and more yellowish-reddish pelage than the north European subspecies. We therefore treat all the hares we saw as European hare despite their sometimes rather different features.

Hares were seen in all parts of Chile, some days up to ten individuals.



vicuña

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Andean field-mouse

Abrothrix andinus

Features we observed on this individual were body size, shape and size of ears, shape of nose and colour of pelage. Considering geographical distribution, altitude and habitat exclude almost all of the remaining rodents in Chile. The pelage of this specimen appeared more grey than brown, which is still within known variation for this species. We found it at about 4600 metres a.s.l. This is about hundred metres higher than Iriarte (2008) suggests for this species. On the other hand he also suggests maximum altitude for southern vizcacha (*Lagidium viscacia*) to be up to 4000 metres, which in Lauca National Park was exceeded with about 500 metres.

We believe our determination is correct, but we are open to consider alternatives.

One was found in puna-altiplano-habitat about 25 meters from the road near Chungará Lake inside Lauca National Park Nov 22 (SL, AH).

yellow-nosed grass-mouse

Abrothrix xanthorhinus

One was found at Otway penguin breeding colony (Magellanic penguin) Nov 13. In the far end of the loop in the reserve there is an observation hut for the penguin-watchers. On the shore is a lot of driftwood. A fence made of driftwood starting at the hut runs some 25 metres onto the turf. The mouse ran back and fourth between the fence and pieces of driftwood nearby.

Magellanic pygmy rice rat

Oligorysomys magellanicus

One was seen running on a path in Torres del Paine National Park on Nov 15.

coipu

Myocastor coypus

Nine were seen in Cartagena Lagoon on Nov 9 and one was found in Chepu River on Chiloé Island during a boat-trip Nov 12.

southern vizcacha

Lagidium viscacia

At least eight were seen by the side of the road in Las Cuevas area inside Lauca National Park, at the altitude of about 4000 meters a.s.l. on Nov 21. Several were found along a loop in Lauca National Park at about 4600 meters a.s.l. and a few were seen in the small village of Parinacota Nov 22.. Animals in this village are kept as food-supply.

southern river-otter

Lontra provocax

One was found in Chepu River on Chiloé Island during a boat-trip in on Nov 12.



southern river otter

Photo © Stefan Lithner

marine otter

Lontra felina

Three were seen at Algarrobo and one was seen on a boat-trip around Puñihuil Islands on Chiloé Island Nov 12.

grey fox

Pseudalopex griseus

We saw two in Torres del Paine Nov 15, seven Nov 17 and at least one on Nov 18.

culpeo fox

Pseudalopex culpaeus

One was seen in Parque Mahuida Nov 9. Two were seen in Sierra Baguales Nov 14 and one was seen in Lacuna National Park Nov 21.

Humboldt's hog-nosed skunk

Conepatus humboldti

About five were seen along the roads in Patagonia Nov 14 and Nov 15.

BATS

With my ultra-sound bat-recorder Pettersson 240X I recorded 28 individuals. I analysed the calls with Pettersson Batsound 4.1. I assessed maximum intensity for echolocation calls (FmaxE), initial frequency, final frequency and duration. Among the genera of bats I am familiar with sonograms from eight genera we have in Sweden, one genus from Slovenia and another one in Sri Lanka. In Chile there are some genera I am not familiar with.

Two of the recordings were *Myotis chiloensis*, three were *Tadarida brasiliensis*, and two were probably *Histiotus montanus*. For these specimens two to three of the parameters match this species.

Our guide Rodrigo Silva mediated contact with Gonzalo Ossa, the number one expert on bats in Chile. Gonzalo Ossa confirmed my two first mentioned species, and agreed with me on the third one: "It ought to be a *Histiotus montanus*".

Chilean myotis

Myotis chiloensis

The species was detected by ultra-sound-bat-recorder in the garden of our lodge Hosteria de Vilches about 10 minutes by bus from Altos del Licray National Park in the evening of Nov 8.

small big-eared brown bat

not assessed

Histiotus montanus

At least two recordings by ultrasound bat-detector indicate this species in the garden of our lodge Hosteria de Vilches about 10 minutes by bus from Altos del Licray National Park in the evening of Nov 8.

Mexican free-tailed bat

Tadarida brasiliensis

This species was recorded by ultrasound bat-detector at least twice in the garden of our lodge Hosteria de Vilches about 10 minutes by bus from Altos del Licray National Park in the evening of Nov 8, and one was recorded along the bed of Putre River on Nov 22.



culpeo fox

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Humboldt's hog-nosed skunk

Photo © Stefan Lithner

SEALS & SEA-LIONS

As novices on marine mammals we initially had some problems separating seals from sea-lions swimming until we saw them together in the harbour of Arica Nov 23. Once we had done that we could identify a few individuals we had seen earlier during our trip.

South American fur-seal

Arctocephalus australis

One was seen from Punta del Tralca on Nov 11. One was seen in Chacao Channel on our ferry trip to Chiloé Island Nov 11 and one seen during our ferry-trip back to the mainland Nov 12. In the harbour of Aricaia on Nov 23 South-American fur-seals gathered at water-front because

they were fed here, by people throwing food to them as well as fish-waste dumped here. Also a number of this species were resting on the southern pier.

South American sea-lion

Otaria flavescens

First individuals, at least three were seen resting on a rock while we were driving along the coast on Nov 9. One was found about five kilometres upstream from river mouth of Chepu River on Chiloé Island during a boat-trip in on Nov 12 and two were seen off the pier in Arica Harbour on Nov 23 (AH, SL).



South American fur seal

Photo © Stefan Lithner

southern elephant seal

Mirounga leonina

At least one was seen at "King penguin private reserve" in Tierra Del Fuego, Bahía Inutil while we studied the king penguins on Nov 18 (SL).

It is stated that southern elephant-seals often occur near colonies of king penguins.

common bottle-nose dolphin

Tursiops truncatus

Two were seen swimming about 300 meters from land at Arica on Nov 23.

This species is one of the most frequently seen dolphins from land in northern Chile.

Here it occurs with two types of behaviours. One consists of large herds off the coast and the other consists of pairs close to shore (SL).

Peale's dolphin

Lagenorhynchus australis

Two were seen in Chacao Channel on ferry trip to Chiloé Island Nov 11, and at least five were seen simultaneously during our ferry-trip back to the mainland Nov 12.

Our guide Rodrigo Silva told us that the general opinion in Chile is that there are about three times more animals present than you can see in flocks of dolphins.

Commerson's dolphin

Cephalorhynchus commersonii

One was seen twice during our ferry-boat-trip from Primera Angostura to Tierra del Fuego Nov 18 (SL, AH) and about ten were seen from the ferry-boat on our way back to the mainland Nov 19.



Commerson's dolphin

Photo © Stefan Lithner

guanaco

Lama guanicoe

Once we reached Puerto Natales on Nov 13 and through Nov 18 this species was very common and numerous. On Nov 17 we estimated the number seen, to exceed 600.

vicuña

Vicugna vicugna

A group of five individuals was seen in Las Cuevas area inside Lacuna National Park Nov 21.

northern huemul

Hippocamelus antisensis

On the slopes outside the village of Putre eight huemuls were seen on Nov 21.

southern huemul

this species not seen

Hippocamelus bisulcus

This species occur under several common names. The estimated world population today is less than 1500. Between 800 and 1000 are found in Chile. The population is declining, mainly due to fragmentation of the population and loss of habitat.

The southern huemul is part of [Chile's National Coat of Arms](#) and since 2006 it is a National Natural Monument.

According to rangers of Torres del Paine National Park, the park holds about 35 heads of this species. One or two groups consisting of six to eight heads are regularly seen on the rugged mountain slopes behind the headquarter. Animals are also regularly encountered crossing the last kilometer of the road leading to the headquarter, particularly at dawn and dusk but also at night. Despite a rather ambitious effort to spot these animals we did not see any.

southern pudu

Pudu pudu

One southern pudu was seen crossing the dirt road during, our drive to our boat-trip on Chepu River, Chiloé Island. The animal then gently stayed on the side of the road on Nov 12.

Southern pudu is the world's smallest *Cervidae* ("true deer") and also the continent's smallest ungulate with an average total body-length of 82 centimetres and weight of 9,1 kg. Smaller ungulates in the world are found among African dik-diks, *Bovidae*. (Silver dik-dik [*Madoqua piacentinii*] 48 – 54 cm and 2 – 3 kg). Even smaller ungulates are found in Asia among chevrotains/mousedeer, *Tragulidae* (silver-backed mousedeer [*Tragulus versicolor*]: 46 – 54 cm and average weight 1,7 kg, and lesser mousedeer [*Tragulus kanchii*] 46 – 64 cm and 1,4 – 2,5 kg).



northern huemul

Photo © Stefan Lithner



southern pudu

Photo Stefan Lithner

AMPHIBIANS

The species are listed in alphabetic order for their scientific names, even though common names or "work-names" are placed first.

For amphibians we had access to Chester: *A wildlife guide to Chile*, Princeton University Press 2008. This book however only contains about 40 species of lizards, while about 150 species are known to occur in Chile.

black-green tree-iguana

Liolaemus nigroviridis

One was seen near Farellones at about 2500 meters a.s.l. on Nov 5

peak tree-iguana

Liolaemus monticola

One was seen and photographed at Valle Nevado road Nov 5

thin tree-lizard

Liolaemus tenuis

One seen in Altos del Licray National Park on Nov 8.

undetermined. tree-lizard

Liolaemus sp

One seen and photographed in Paeque Mahuida on Nov 7.



Liolaemus nigroviridis

Photo © Stefan Lithner

chilean pacific iguana (inoff. name)
One seen on the rock at coast in Aricia on Nov 23.

Microlophus heterolepis

yanezi pacific iguana (inoff. name)
One seen in Azapa Valley Nov 23

Microlophus yanezi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Liolaemus tenuis

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Liolaemus sp.

Photo © Stefan Lithner

ADRESSES and LINKS

Full trip report English compiled by Fred Homer and Rodrigo Silva:

www.heliangelus.se/files/Colombia%202013%20II.pdf

(see under Chile November 2014)

Albatross Birding and Nature Tours: www.albatross-birding.com

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Photos from this trip available on: http://www.pbase.com/stefan_lithner



guanaco

Photo © Stefan Lithner