

Nicaragua, July 2010: mammals

1. Corn Islands

The islands have outstandingly poor terrestrial wildlife: in a week we saw just 4 species of landbirds (the density of white-crowned pigeons was exceptionally high) and 4 species mammals (Norway rat being the most common one). Swarms of *A. jamaicensis* could be seen feeding in coconut palms just after dusk; they didn't visit the same tree on two consecutive nights. Smaller flocks *A. watsoni* seemed to replace them in remnant forest patches of the interior hills. In the tiny swamp near the N end of the airstrip I saw a rice rat that looked suspiciously like *Oryzomys dimidiatus* rather than the ubiquitous *O. couesi*.

2. Volcan Mombacho

There's good cloud forest at the summit, but very little to see during the day, and they charge you \$40 pp to stay overnight. The clearing has forest rabbits and common opossums. The surrounding forest is said to have lots of 2-toed sloths, collared peccaries and white-tailed deer, but due to stormy weather we saw only one *Ototylomys phyllotis* and a bat that was probably *Sturnura ludovicii*.

3. Masaya Volcano

This park is within a half-day-trip distance from Managua, and has the best dry tropical forest left in the country, with wildlife reportedly similar to Santa Rosa Nat'l Park in Costa Rica. There are two lava tubes at the summit; the one open to tourists has *Micronycteris silvestris*, *Carollia perspicillata* and some *Artibeus* (the latter roost beyond the tourist zone and can only be seen in flight). The second tube is closed due to the presence of volcanic gases, but if you sneak in, you'll see different *Carollias* (probably *C. brevicauda* and *C. subrufa*) and *Glossophaga soricina* (possibly also a few *G. leachii*). In the visitor center bathroom was one small short-headed *Glossophaga* that was probably *G. commissarisi*.

4. Laguna del Apoyo

This crater lake with forested shores has the only lowland rainforest on the Pacific side of Nicaragua. There's plenty of howler monkeys, and probably some interesting stuff on the side of the lake with no road access. We were there for only one evening, and saw *Tylomys nudicaudus* on the grounds of the research station cum hostel called Spanish School.

5. Managua

The historic center is half-deserted, and houses huge bat colonies. The old cathedral has *Molossus ater* and *M. sinaloae*; the art museum has some *Molossus* on the third floor, but I couldn't get a close look.