

The Black Forest 2011 – 2012



We visited the Black Forest twice. In 2011 we spent 4 days in the Northern part of the Black Forest during a family holiday and after that we spent 3-4 more days in the Southern part specifically to look for wildlife. In 2012 we only visited the Northern part, again to spend some days with the family.

Trip list

Mammals:

1	red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
2	roe deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
3	red deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>
4	wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
5	wood mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>
6	European hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>

General info:

In the Northern part (at least the limited region we visited) there were lots of nice forests and fields bordering the forests and the towns. There are a few larger roads which are quite busy with traffic (Germans drive really fast – so no safe spotlighting possibilities here). There are also a few tarred roads which are less busy after dark. We spotlighted these from around 11pm and we only came across one or two cars. Then there are lots of great forest tracks which are wide and easily accessible by car. Unfortunately none of them are open to public and apparently the police sometimes checks for trespassers (and in general Germans don't like people who break the law and they love their forests, so if they see you with your spotlight, they might certainly rat on you). The Southern part is more mountainous and spotlighting opportunities are very limited. Most tarred roads are big and traffic is heavy. The spotlighting along these roads is also poor because of the topography. There are plenty of great dirt roads, but all of them are closed to the public (even the once that were on our Michelin map and looked great). All in all, the Black Forest is not a mammalwatcher's paradise if you want to move around by car. The fauna is nice, but not that exclusive that there wouldn't be any better/more accessible places to go. For those who like to hike it is a nice place with always a (rather small) chance to run into some wildlife. Maybe it is worthwhile to go with a good guide (if there are any) who knows some good stake outs (maybe hunters?). Those who go to see the lynx...well, you'd certainly better get some really good and reliable information first if you want to have any chance. I don't think they are seen at all regularly (that is, if they are seen at all).



Northern part

In 2011 as well as 2012 we stayed in a small village called Igelsberg. In 2011 there was no more snow and spring was already starting. We took easy hikes to villages around Igelsberg (Kälberbronn, Musbach and Besenfeld). During these walks we saw once a male **red deer**. This was during a hike to Kälberbronn, after crossing road K4775. We didn't have a lot of spotlighting opportunities (family holiday of course). We walked into the forest, direction Besenfeld, for around 3km. We saw nothing and heard nothing. Our only other effort was a walk into the fields surrounding the village (Stutztalstrasse). We saw two **roe deer** and far away on the border of the forest and the fields we saw what was most likely a **fox**.

In 2012, there were still lots of snow and we did basically the same routes as in 2011 but this time with langlauf skis. There were plenty of tracks in the forest. We saw lots of tracks and signs of **wild boar**, **hare** and **roe deer**. We also regularly encountered tracks of carnivore species. Some of them were most likely **foxes** but we saw even more which were clearly of **marten** species and some seemed to be of **badgers**. There seems to be quite a large population of the different marten species in the forest. Once we saw tracks of which seemed to be a **wild cat**. Surprisingly we saw no tracks of **red deer**.

We only managed to go out for spotlighting once. We focused on the streets around Kälberbronn. We saw three times a mouse next to the road or crossing the road. These were all **wood mice or yellow-necked mice**. In the village of Kälberbronn we saw a **hare** which posed beautifully in the snow. Mainly in the forest along road K4730, connecting the Nagoldtalsperre and Kälberbronn, we saw quite a few **roe deer** (around 5+). We saw three **red deer** in a snowy field along road K4728 to Grömbach. There we also saw two **red foxes**. On road K4728 direction Kälberbronn, we saw twice a lone large **wild boar** (might have been the same individual twice). We also encountered a group of around eight very young **wild boars** here. They gave great views as they tried to line up to get into the forest. They were in a hurry but they clearly didn't get yet what was going on, softly squealing as they moved along.





Wood mouse or
Yellow-necked mouse



Southern part

There was still a little bit of snow while we visited. We stayed in Bernau. As mentioned above, the spotlighting possibilities were extremely limited because of the topography and because of the lack of (legally) accessible roads. We only found three stretches that we could do with the spotlight. The first stretch went to a semi-isolated hotel called "Berggasthaus Pränger-Böden (at a very sharp bend on road L149 between Bernau and Präg). The road went through some nice habitat with beech forest, rocky areas and some small open grass fields. The second was a short loop through the village of Präg. It went through some hilly grassland. The third stretch was the longest. Just before reaching the crossing of L149 and L317 there is a small village. In the village a tarred road leads up the mountains (Gisibodenstrasse). The road went through some beech forest habitat and in the end there are some grass fields. All roads only produced **roe deer**. We also saw one probable **fox**. The roads did look more promising than they turned out to be, so maybe we were just unlucky. Other than that we saw two hares in the field next to our hotel in Bernau. We also tried for owls, but we heard or saw none and none replied to our playback. During the day we went hiking to look for some target bird species (three-toed woodpecker and wood grouse). We visited the Feldsee and surroundings but although we had some (limited) information on both bird species, we failed to see them. We did see a pair of peregrine falcons at the Feldsee itself. They seemed to be living in the rocky parts around the lake. We also did one hike which seemed promising (more forest-y and a bit more remote). We parked the car at the crossing of road L149 and L146 and walked the first part of the hike (quite steep up). Once we reached the higher part of the walk, there was suddenly a sign that the walk was closed due to the wintertime. This went a bit too far, they could also have put that sign at the start of the walk! So we did go on and saw heaps of tracks of **red deer** and some of **wild boar**. Hence, this spot seemed to be quite promising. As the previous nights the spotlighting was utterly disappointing, we decided to try a different approach for our last night and before dark we went back. We planned to wait in a hunter's tower for wildlife to come out and feed on a patch of grass. We were a little late and unfortunately we already startled a young male red deer while we were moving to our stake out. We waited over an hour. By then it was completely dark and we had seen nothing. As we decided to start packing up to go back to our hotel, we suddenly heard a lot of noise in the bushes. Three large male **red deer** came out. They were feeding right under the tower and although it was already dark, we could clearly make out their mighty silhouettes. It was a great moment, until one of them looked up and decided that something was going on. All three took off and we at least had one unforgettable wildlife encounter that trip!





Badger



Wild Boar



Mouse sp.