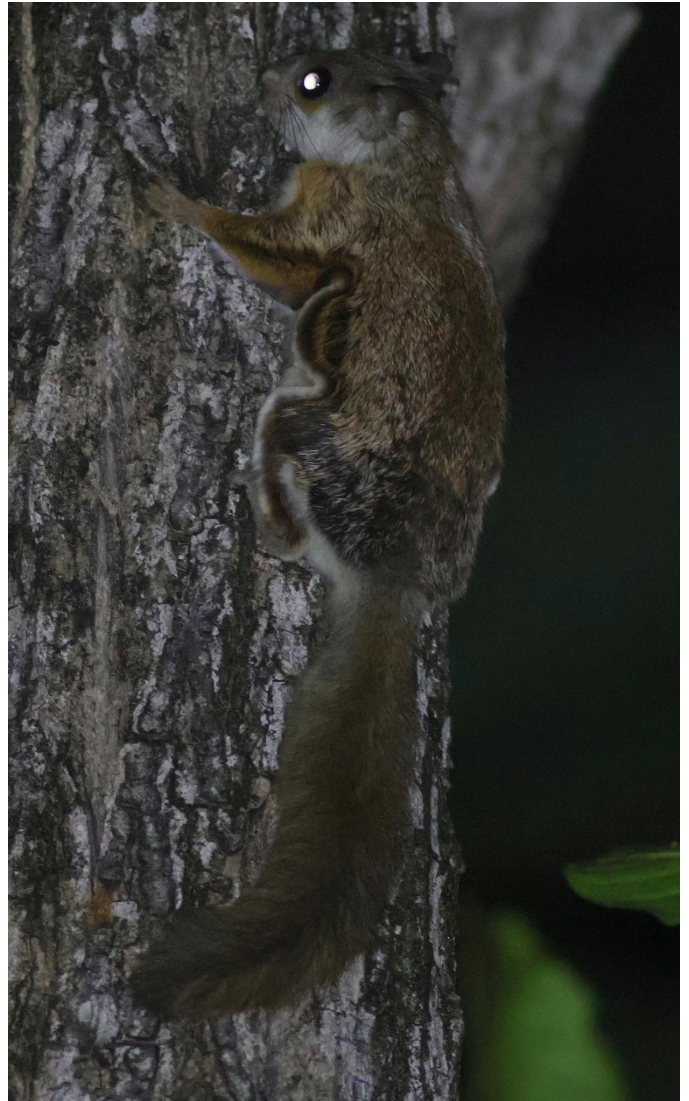


Thailand 22.7. – 1.8.2024

Jan Ebr & Ivana Ebrová

This short trip to Thailand was inspired by our friend Pavel who was going to freedive with Humpback Whales in Tonga and proposed to do some vacations with us and his partner Martina “somewhere halfway”. This didn’t work all that great for him (as it took him three more flights to get from Bangkok to Tonga), but pretty well for us (since EVA now flies Bangkok direct from Vienna). We spent three days on Koh Tao snorkelling and lost some time around the logistics of Pavel and Martina’s departure, yet we found 27 mammal species. Even after two previous trips to Thailand, we still got 15 lifers - however only 4 of those were not bats. With the ubiquitous caves, Thailand really is a great bat destination - also encouraging is that the bats can often be IDed to species. A useful book “Cave dwelling bats of Thailand” is [available online](#)

After landing in Bangkok layover, we went out for a couple of hours to the park complex around Mo Chit BTS station. It was oppressively hot and humid, but even in the middle of the day, **Finlayson’s Squirrels** and **Northern Treeshrews** were everywhere. I really don’t know where I got the idea that treeshrews were supposed to be difficult ... After another flight to Koh Samui, we made a brief night walk around our hotel,



Hylopetes sp. (probably Indochinese Flying Squirrel)



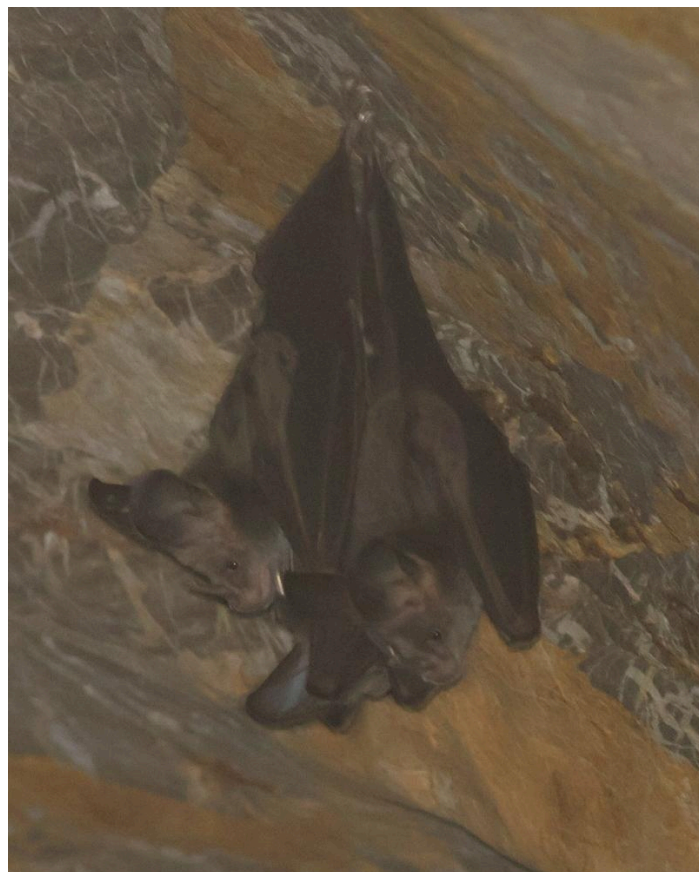
Lesser Oriental Chevrotain

but found nothing. In three days on Koh Tao, we enjoyed mostly brilliant snorkelling and the occasional **Grey-bellied Squirrel**. One evening, we stayed late at a hippie bar in Hin Wong bay and saw huge bats around fruiting trees. We had no useful gear with us, but this must have been **Island Flying Foxes**. We watched the sea carefully all the way from Koh Samui and then back and to Surat Thani, but saw no cetaceans.

At Surat Thani airport we rented a car and headed north to eventually drop Pavel and Martina in Bangkok. On the way we stopped at relatively random but fun places. Wat Tham Khao Kriap had a rather open cave, where we found a **Lesser Sheat-tailed Bat**; further bats were flying around but could not be photographed roosting;

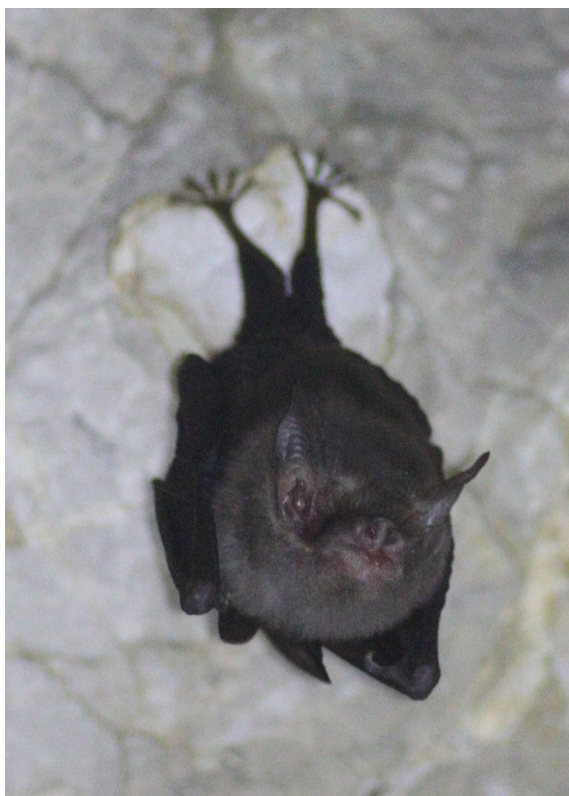


Lesser False Vampire Bat



Greater False Vampire Bat

Himalayan Striped Squirrel and **Dusky Leaf Monkey** were around the entrance. We reached Somdet Phra Sinagarindra Park already after dark, but there were still many **Black-bearded Tomb Bats** in the cave; more interestingly, there was also a small group of Cynopteruses that we IDed boldly (using the book) as **Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bats**. **Long-tailed Macaques** congregated on trees right outside the cave.



Bumblebee Bat

In the morning, we went to the mangroves at Mu Ko Chumphon, as Martina wanted to see monkeys better - for this, there is hardly a better choice, as here we could even watch as the **Long-tailed Macaques** hunted for crabs in the mud; there was also an unidentified rat that got away quickly. A little bit to the north we visited a site which Google Maps call very descriptively "Suspension Bridge - deer" (Nong Yai) which has a herd of **Sambar** of unclear wildness and a lot of vendors selling feed that tourists can give them.

Two reservoirs in the mountains - Khlong Chakra and Khlong Chong made for a fun detour but brought no mammals, so we checked into Baan Maka and went looking around the property. Unfortunately we learned that the Slow Loris is not usually present in this season, so our hopes to show it to Pavel and Martina were unfounded. The only mammals found in Baan Maka were many **Grey-bellied Squirrels**, **Himalayan Striped Squirrel**, **Northern Treeshrew** and most importantly the **Lesser False Vampire Bats** in the foundations of cottage no. 8 as promised in Paul Carter's report; we also found another rat in a shed outside of the



Greater Roundleaf Bat

property, but it also hid immediately. From non-mammal sightings, the resident Blue-winged Pittas were the biggest surprise - I really had no idea that any kind of pitta could be this easy anywhere in the world (and the last time here, we were out of season for them).

The next day I drove to Bangkok and back to drop off Pavel and Martina. In hindsight, I could have just called them a taxi. We were in Kaeng Krachan before, but this time, we were wiser - or so we thought - and we stayed in Baan Maka for two more nights, planning to take advantage of the ironically longer hours to access the park available when staying outside. What we did not take into account was that in July, the sun rises early and sets late and thus even with access between 5 a.m. and 7 p.m., we didn't have that much of darkness; our three attempts - morning evening, morning to

spotlight/IR around the road between the gate and Ban Krang brought nothing but a few likely **Sambars**; we also saw **Grey-bellied Squirrels** and **Dusky Leaf Monkeys** around the road and Ban Krang.

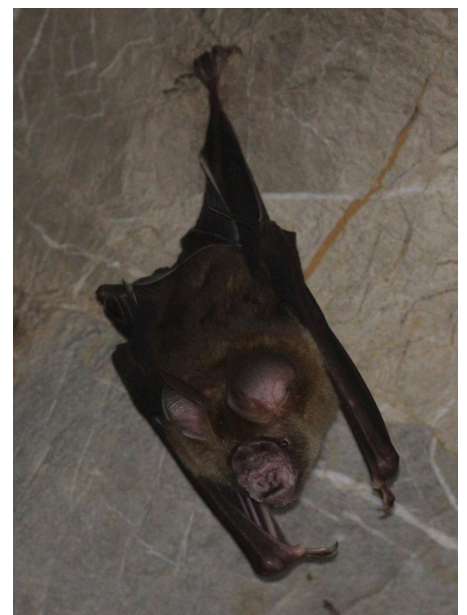
On the first day in the park, the water was really high and we did not even try to cross the 1st stream crossing on foot. On the second morning, it was much more reasonable, so we easily walked across the stream, still in the early morning after the dawn game drive. Just before the stream crossing we saw very fresh elephant dung and broken bamboo across the road (if anything, it was not there the evening before). Immediately after the crossing, we took the trail that leads back towards Ban Krang on the opposite bank of the stream and after a few hundred meters, we heard weird rustling and then saw a very confusing set of signals in IR. When I saw the foot a couple dozen meters in front of me on the trail, we quickly realized that it was not many animals, but different parts of the **Asian Elephant** seen through holes between branches



Exotic Roundleaf Bat



Intermediate Roundleaf Bat



Shield-faced RL bat

and very quickly retreated to the road. After the second crossing, we found a **Lesser Oriental Chevrotain** - I saw it briefly wander along the side of the road and then we found it with IR hiding a few meters away in the forest. The rest of the stay in KK we spent mostly looking into bamboo, inspired by Jon, Carlos and even the Baan Maka owner to look for Woolly bats, but we had no luck. There were some suspiciously warm bamboos, but always too high to look into. Even with not that many mammals, KK is always a delight to be in; we also found that while trying to get anywhere into the forest from Ban Krang attracts the rangers' attention and they will try to make you take a guide, there are several trails leading from the roads and nobody is gonna stop you from walking there.



Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat



Lesser Sheat-tailed Bat

With a few extra days, we drove to Kanchanaburi with the unclear idea of trying some bat caves. Not long after leaving Baan Maka, a **Javan Mongoose** ran across the road (in the middle of the day, no photo). We found the following bats: **Great** and **Shield-faced Roundleaf Bat** in Tham Lawa Cave, **Great**, **Intermediate** and **Exotic Roundleaf Bat** and **Bumblebee Bat** in Khang Khao Cave, some 2 kms from Sai Yok visitor center (clearly signposted), **Great** and **Shield-faced Roundleaf Bat**, **Stoliczka's Trident Bat** and **Greater False Vampire Bat** in Phra That Cave. All these caves were quite stunning even without taking into account the bats and we could visit all of them without a guide, just for a small entry fee. In Phra That a guy walked with us all the way up to the cave, but then, probably when he saw how much gear we had, did not feel the need to go inside with us. The main downside of the

caves is that some are really hot and humid inside, making mere existence there challenging. However the biggest danger turned out to be all the stairs and wooden bridges, one more slippery in the rainy weather than the other. Eventually, I managed to fall twice, each time destroying one camera - so we had at one point to drive to Kanchanaburi to buy a new camera; on the way we saw a **Pallas's Squirrel** at a random place where we stopped to eat our 7/11 supplies.



Black-bearded Tomb Bat



Stoliczka's Trident Bat

For the last night, we chose the road 3139/4041 leading north from Erawan. After passing through a rather developed area (in which we found a fun accommodation called “NaKan home” on booking.com), the road zigzags along the shores of the huge reservoir through a nice wild forest. Continuing north, there is an agricultural area and then the road climbs to the Samphao Thong Chedi Viewpoint, which has a panoramic view of the reservoir. In this last part we found two arboreal rodents after dark, but the photos probably aren't good enough for ID (sadly, the new camera was not compatible with our external flash due to Canon idiocy); back in the agricultural part, we found a *Hylopetes* sp. flying squirrel clinging to a tree right next to the road. The ID is difficult, but we lean towards **Indochinese Flying Squirrel** (the other option is Red-cheeked). Driving back through the quietest section through the forests around the reservoir brought two **Bengal Slow Lorises**, some distant Macaques ... and then a **Yellow-throated Marten** ran across the road, not giving us any chance for a photo.

[iNaturalist observations](#)



*Left: possibly unusually colored Great Roundleaf bat?
Left bottom: best photo of the arboreal rodent
Right bottom: roundleaf bat of unclear species*

