



French Guiana 15.12.2024 – 6.1.2025

Jan Ebr, Ivana Ebrov

In 22 days in French Guiana (FG), we recorded roughly 40 species of mammals (28 lifers), which means the trip is tied with our trip to Pantanal and Emas for the best neotropical result.. This quite surprised me considering that I have not found any previous mammalwatching reports from FG at all. Maybe we will now start a new trend?

For years, I have been searching for a place where I could just wander around the rainforest as I please and nobody would tell me what I can or cannot do. This has been surprisingly difficult as in most places around the world, any tract of reasonably preserved yet accessible rainforest is under some kind of restrictions. The irony in the fact that the solution to my woes is colonialism, which I have always staunchly denounced as Europe's largest evil in history, is not lost on me. But French Guiana, thanks to being an actual part of France – just in the rainforest – is really the perfect answer. Not only there there are no restrictions, but there are even marked and maintained hiking trails - because of course, that's what you expect when you are in France! And there are also extensive networks of dirt roads used for logging, facilitating even more access to the forests.

The ease of access obviously has drawbacks – because it is not only wildlife enthusiasts who take advantage of it. Besides the widespread gold mining (both legal and illegal) and logging, there is also ample hunting - again, not really unexpected in France, as that's a problem even in the mainland. Even though large animals are still present around and people regularly report incidental carnivore sightings, we speculate not only that the hunting may be the reason why we saw relatively few of those, but also why FG is so productive for small mammals, which are subject to less predation. Even with all this human activity, most of the territory is covered by really dense and well-preserved rainforest – in fact, the vast majority of the area is not accessible at all, except for cutting your own path with a machete.

Overall, FG is a very easy destination to visit, particularly for us Europeans, because it is really in France and thus the EU, so we get free healthcare and cell service (well, I did on T-Mobile, while Ivana mostly had no data connection on her Vodafone for



Northeastern Silky Anteater



Giant Armadillo

some reason) and can actually fly with just an ID card. The main hurdle is the cost of flights, as competition is limited. We managed to get to Cayenne from Prague and back for about 1100 EUR pp with Air Caraibes and Transavia; the cost includes a night in a hotel in Paris as we had to buy the tickets separately, because connecting flights (with Air France) were terribly expensive. Locally, we then spent about 55 EUR per day per person, with main expenses being the car rental and local flights; we could have probably saved some money if we looked more into local car rental companies, because in FG we saw adverts for rentals that were less than half the price that we got through rentalcars.com.

The only other issue was the climate – while temperatures during the “small rainy season” rarely exceeded 32 degrees in the day and 26 in the night, it was often very humid. Since we both always struggle in such conditions, our hiking, in particular in the consistently hilly terrain, was largely limited by our physical abilities – any fitter traveller could easily have explored much more ground than we ever did. This is also why we have chosen to do a lot of mammalwatching from the car on the coastal part of the trip. From tropical diseases, there is only dengue (there was a reported outbreak in Cayenne) – Malaria is almost eradicated and remains mostly around illegal gold mining. Note that a yellow fever vaccination certificate is needed to enter even from France. We had only trail running shoes with us and it was a good choice, even in the “small rainy season” – the only place where we always got covered in mud was the “street” in Saul leading towards Chez Kami and the “grocery store”.

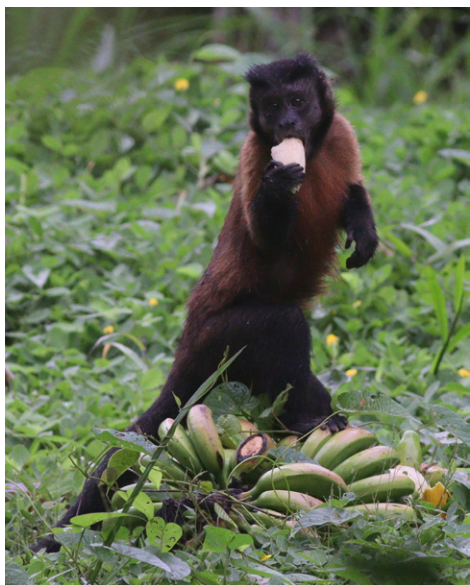
There is relatively little information about FG, particularly in English – almost all tourists we ever met were French, except at Iles du Salut. The main inspiration for the trip and source of sites was Josh Beck’s birding report – https://www.cloudbirders.com/be4/download?filename=BECK_FrenchGuiana_1112_2023.pdf . To get around, we relied on mapy.cz, a Czech app that uses OpenStreetMap data for world coverage and allows offline use. It is clearly a bit outdated as some tracks shown there are already overgrown and a lot of newly built lodging tracks



Linnaeus's Two-toed Sloth



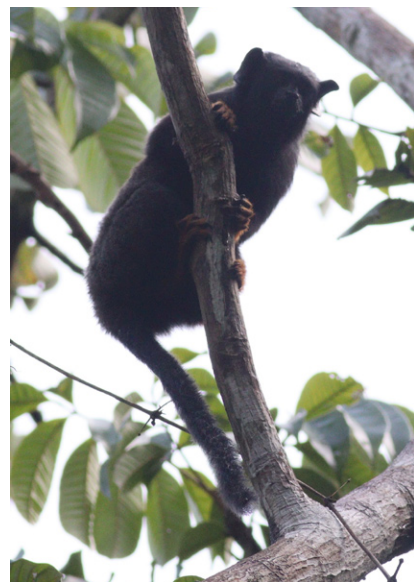
Pale-throated Three-toed Sloth



Brown Capuchin



Guianan Red Howler



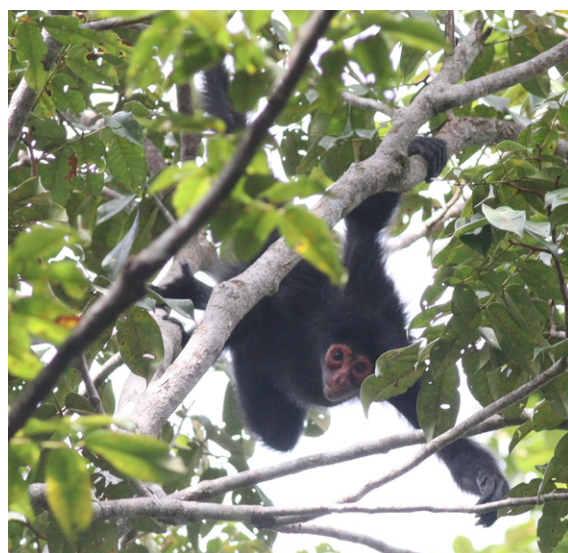
Golden-handed Tamarin

are not shown, but it shows hiking trails very well – and most importantly, it is years ahead of Google Maps, which sometimes show entirely non-existent tracks as main roads with a number.

From the 22 nights in FG, we spent only 4 nights in “normal” accommodations near Cayenne/Kourou (easily found through booking.com) – for the rest we either wild camped or stayed in carbets. A carbet is a brilliant concept that is very common in FG – basically an open wooden pavilion that is primarily intended for sleeping in hammocks, but since we do not like being all twisted and bent in hammocks, we simply slept on camping mats on the floor, using the inner part of our tent to protect against mosquitoes. While this looks almost like camping, the resulting setup is much more fresh and airy and the presence of a roof is very welcome during the tropical downpours that – at least in this season – happen at any moment without much of a warning and sometimes go on for hours. Some places rent smaller carbets to individual groups, others have large halls intended for many people, but we were lucky to always have the entire structure to ourselves. There are also some “wild” carbets just somewhere in nature, but we often found them in a state of a dire disrepair or occupied by other travellers. Josh regrets in his report not having a tent with him, because camping “would have been easy at most sites” – this has become a running joke of the trip, mainly during all the hours we spent looking for a place to camp, as flat ground not completely overgrown by bushes, yet not in deep mud, was a very rare occurrence anywhere, but eventually we always managed to find a good place. Camping in the full tent was often a hot and sweaty affair – we concluded that for our next tropical camping, we would bring only the inside of the tent and a large tarp to hang high above it to keep the air flowing, instead of the outer waterproof layer of the tent.



Common Squirrel Monkey



Guiana Spider Monkey

Adding to the discomfort was the weird fact that – despite all the water falling down everywhere – it was often very difficult to find a river or a creek suitable for a bath.

FG is not a large territory - roughly the size of the Czech Republic. Around the coast, there are a few hundred kilometers of roads, from which tracks, often driveable in a normal car for at least some part, depart towards the interior in a few places. To get deeper inland, one option is to explore some of the deeper tracks, in particular Piste de Belizon in the East and Piste Paul Isnard in the West, but we were not successful in that in a Clio – at least an SUV would have been needed to pass some of the blockades due to fallen trees. The other options are taking a boat on one of the two large border rivers, or flying. (Or, if you are really insane, you can trek the entire length of Piste du Belizon on foot in two weeks – <https://lastfrontiersonfoot.com/french-guiana/>). We have taken a combination of the two approaches. First, we flew to Saul for a week and then we rented a car in Cayenne for the remaining two weeks.



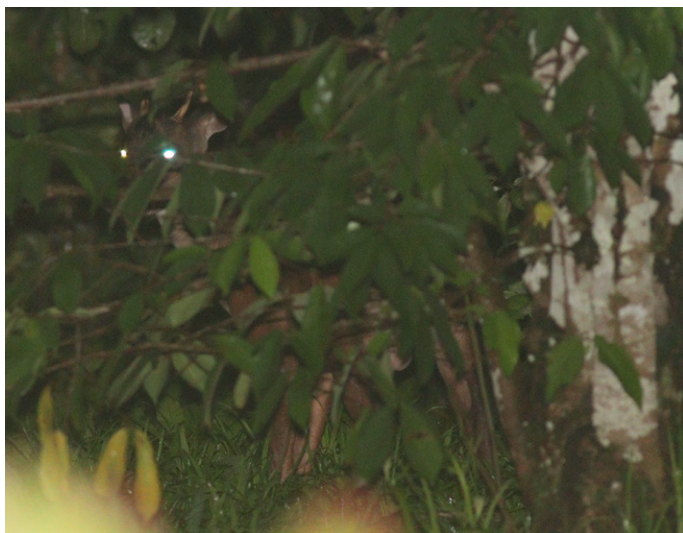
Tayra

Saul is a tiny village mostly isolated from the rest of the world – in principle it is connected to the road system through Piste de Belizon, but the intrepid trekkers linked above reported issues traversing it even on foot, so I would assume that flying is the only practical way in. Here, “practical” has to be understood in relative FG terms, as getting the tickets to Saul was an adventure in itself. The previous company operating the inland flights has reportedly gone bankrupt recently and even the current one seemed to have two almost identical websites under different names, from which only one sometimes worked, but ultimately, we got the tickets from airguyane.fr for 140 EUR pp return. The flight itself, both ways in a 20-seater turboprop, was smooth and with interesting views of the endless forest. The company also serves Grant Santi and Maripasoula on the border with Suriname and Camopi on the border with Brazil; they all look a bit bigger than Saul and do not seem to have any hiking trails around but may in principle be also interesting to explore.

Once you get to Saul, you have several dozen kilometers of very good hiking trails at your disposal plus several longer non-maintained paths deeper into the forests. While the trails are primarily designed for one-day trips from Saul, we turned the yellow trail into a very slow “three-day trek”, in order to survive the effort and have night-time access to the more remote parts of it. The official map – https://www.parc-amazonien-guyane.fr/sites/parc-amazonien-guyane.fr/files/available_docs/carte_sentier_2022.pdf –



Kinkajou



Northwestern Red Brocket

shows a carbet in Popote, but that's now closed down – instead we stayed for two nights at the nearby Point Chaud, which is a really pleasant site, where one can camp for free under a roof, almost like in a carbet, and take unlimited baths in a small river. On the trails, we typically met a handful of people per day; all were on day trips from Saul, so nights were really quiet.

In Saul itself, there are several accommodations, ranging from really overpriced bungalows to reasonable carbets. We originally considered camping, but as that's not easy to do in Saul, we ultimately chose to rent a carbet instead for our four nights in Saul, which was anyway much more comfortable. We then did some late-night and early-morning walks on the trails around the village. Our carbet – in a place called

Chez Kami – even had a sink, stove and some dishes, so we could cook some food. That came really handy after we found out that the possibilities to buy food in Saul were highly limited – there is only one store, basically in someone's living room, selling only canned goods, biscuits, jam and frozen bread, for prices appropriate to their monopoly on not starving. Note that while the luggage allowance for the flight is restricted to 11 kg checked + 6 kg carry on, the overweight fees are very small and it would have been probably worth it just paying it to bring in cheaper food from the coast. Also note that there is no ATM in Saul (once you see the village, you will immediately understand how funny such an idea even would be) and only one ATM in Cayenne airport. The latter was out of order when we were there and thus we came to Saul relatively low on cash; the owner of Chez Kami would be willing to take a bank transfer though.

Back from Saul, we rented a Clio at the airport and in the two weeks explored almost any site we could think of. Note that while a lot of the “pistes” are quite good, there are a lot of fallen trees that are sometimes difficult to cross in a small car, because everyone else who crosses them has a large 4x4 and thus they are cleared only with that in mind. Thus I had to often get out of the car and remove branches and stuff – this hilariously backfired on Piste de Belizon, where a major obstacle on the road was a huge ant nest. With hindsight, I would not recommend trying to remove that without a bulldozer, but I did, in the end, get all the ants off me. After two weeks of careful driving, I finally did some mild damage to the undercarriage on the last off-road night, but it was purely cosmetic and the rental company did not notice anything. However, I am aware that there were some risks - firstly, at any point, a new tree could have fallen and blocked us in; secondly, some tracks (in particular some deeper parts of Piste Mataroni) had very soft surface, which may be periodically impassable uphill after rain.



White-lipped Peccary

Visited sites, systematically from the East

Saut Maripa: good dirt road ending in an area of dilapidated car-bets (good for bats), but with quite a lot of traffic. Near the end, there is a trailhead for a hiking trail further along the river, where we went overnight – it's only 5 km, but of a relatively difficult trail. The shelters shown on maps have broken down, but camping was good (3.7918N, 51.9114W). We parked the car for a few Euros at a rafting company for security. Due to the lack of good places to stay outside of the trail system, we did not do a night drive here (it was too busy for wild camping). The huge lagre “no entry” board at the start of the road actually applies only to the broken car-bets at the end.

Piste Mataroni: the most extensive network of logging tracks. It has a “no entry for motor vehicles” sign at the entrance (4.1134N, 52.0746W), but birders have been ignoring it for a long time without any repercussions and so have we. Further inside, you meet some logging infrastructure and a lot of machinery and lumber. We were there on Christmas Eve and then later on a random Friday night (this was the only site to which we came back, because we liked it a lot) and in both cases it was very quiet; may be more problematic when logging actually happens. We explored over 70 km of tracks and there were still more directions left for which we had not enough time. No clear hiking paths exist there, but several tracks are abandoned/impassable for cars and thus nice to hike on. Despite the huge extent, we only ever found two reasonable campsites (4.0739N, 52.1603W and 4.0586N, 52.1253W) in the entire system, because every other clearing by the road was a big muddy puddle.

Piste de Belizon: an exciting entry point into the interior. After a few kilometers (4.3460N, 52.3407W), a short detour leads to Camp Bonaventure, a well-known birding site with a network of hiking trails and a large selection of nice car-bets (if you can, get the secluded one by the creek). Immediately beyond the Bonaventure turnoff, there is a police checkpoint, but tourists are allowed to pass unhindered -- sadly, the ant-nest barrier mentioned above was only a short drive after that, so we never got to know how deep this actually could be followed --

but iNat and faune-guyane observations suggest, that probably quite far.

Route de Kaw: a good paved road at first quickly becomes a broken and rather difficult track, which eventually ends at a jetty on a river. Close to the beginning, RNR Tresor offers nice, if short hiking trails, further in there are a few car-bets (we stayed at Camp Caimans) and another short trail to the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock lek (4.5507N, 52.1746W). Next to the lek, there are caves with bats, but entry is prohibited in breeding season (Nov-Mar) and even without that, I am not sure how climbing down to the caves would really work. The road itself was surprisingly quiet at night and very good for a night drive.

Piste de Risquetout: a promising track system, however after going through an area with many clearings and houses, it was gated (across both



Southern Opossum



Bare-tailed Woolly Opossum

branches from 4.8847N, 52.6187W) just before the continuous forests started. Josh's report does not mention the gate to be closed, so it's probably varied in time. The track shown on mapy.cz past the gate on the southern branch is actually abandoned and replaced with a new one, so it was nice for hiking. Then somehow we found two parked cars, so maybe the gate can be opened if you know how? The only acceptable campsite in the car-accessible part was at 4.9196N, 52.5469W, but it was a little bit of a dump.



Linnaeus's Mouse Opossum

Montagne des Singes: nice hiking trail in forest accessed from a side road near Kourou

Roche Corail/Piste Denis: a popular birding area which I did not really like too much (enter at 5.1024N, 52.7733W). It seems to me that local people here are just taking the clearings left by logging and building whatever shacks they manage to cobble together on them, so the entire area is a bit of a posh slum. The actual layout is very different from what mapy.cz shows – at first sight it looks like a network of roads, but the topology is almost perfectly tree-like, all turn-offs lead to dead ends. Mapy.cz shows here a hiking trail to Camp Fabert, but it does not exist in reality, at least not as shown; neither is there any passable connection to the roads behind Montagne des Singes. Most branches end rather quickly; one promising one towards the south was sadly impassable due to water erosion. Too many people here, even someone drove to us in the morning to our camp and tried to talk to us in French (without any success, so they left).



North-eastern Woolly Mouse Opossum

Petit Saut: good paved road all the way to the dam. A lot of activity around the dam, quite a lot of traffic on the road, but it died very fast after sunset. I had high hopes for night drives on the road, because it follows a broad clearing under a high-voltage line, so there is, uncharacteristically for FG, a good view around the road, but it didn't help much. A reasonable campsite is about half of the way

in (5.0761N, 52.9766W); side tracks are not driveable.

Central savannas: besides the rainforest, there is a small area of open country around the coast, which is only really accessible at a few places – the main road goes through it for many kilometers, but it has a lot of traffic even at night and local drivers are really impatient, so I wouldn't recommend using it for night drives. Good points to check are **Route de Guatemala** (east of Kourou), **Kourou golf course** (walk in from next to CSG) and the initial parts of **Route de Saint Elie** and **Piste de Trou Poissons**. One could also likely walk around at night around **Pripris de Yiyi** – however all these sites, at least in January, have a terrifying mosquito problem. There is also a warning sign with a picture of a Giant Anteater on the road that goes through CSG, but there are “no stopping” signs everywhere ... and probably security? Explore at your own risk. **Route de Saint Elie** can be followed into the forest (there is a public carbet at 5.2973N, 53.0521W, which can be reserved on a phone



Marmosops sp.



Red-rumped Agouti



Spotted Paca

number shown in Pripris de Yiyi, but it was empty when we were there, so we just took it), but – despite Google’s bold suggestions that it’s a through road, it ends shortly after the carbet, at the parking lot for the nature trail.

Piste de Trou Caiman: long, reasonable piste into the forest that was completely blocked by a freshly fallen tree some 36 km in, just before a major junction (5.3096N, 53.2973W). Interestingly, the “bigger” branch of that junction according to mapy.cz (that Google again believes to be a through road) was a bit overgrown, the main track goes to the south instead. A carbet is shown on mapy.cz a bit back from the blockage (5.3337N, 53.2225W) – it was empty, but a bit dirty and inaccessible by car for the last two hundred meters or so, so we camped on the access track instead.

Piste Paul Isnard: an exciting road that leads all the way to Chutes Voltaire, which looks like a brilliant site with hiking trails and even an inselberg. Sadly, it was blocked by a tree which people started bypassing through pretty deep mud, from which I would never be able to dig our poor Clio out if we ever got stuck, so we turned back. We tried a night drive around the new road to Apatou instead (which Google doesn’t know and thinks that Paul Isnard is the road to Apatou, which it almost certainly isn’t nowadays), but it had too many cars and too little animals, so we drove to **Piste de Crique Naille**, which was blocked by some logging machinery, so we just hiked a side trail (shown on mapy.cz as the main track south from 5.4406N, 53.8472W, where we camped; not passable in anything bigger than a motorbike), which was not very productive ... overall not our best night. Even if not blocked by machinery, Crique Naille has a gate in the entrance that is sometimes closed, but it should be possible to drive around it

Mana-Awala road: a surprisingly good night-driving road, quiet after sunset. We stayed in a “carbet with beds” Chez Rita in Awala. Originally we wanted to focus more on walking along Digue de Panato, as it leads through some interesting marshes, but the mosquitoes changed our mind.

Iles du Salut: possibly the only real tourist destination in FG (maybe besides CSG). We took a catamaran for a day trip for 45 Euro pp and then a local transfer so that we could visit both of the accessible islands (check the schedule of that while on the large boat).

Mammals

As I have already announced, we saw some 40 mammal species (plus or minus a few depending on some difficult IDs). Since many of the sites are quite similar (“a track in a forest”), I believe that “what we saw where” was, to some extent, more of a question of luck than a systematic reflection of the animals’ presence, so it’s perhaps more appropriate to discuss the sightings by species than by sites, as I would usually do.



Long-tailed Porcupine



Brazilian Spiny Tree Rat



Ferreira's Spiny Tree Rat



White-faced Spiny Tree Rat

Primates:

- **Golden-handed Tamarins:** the most common monkey - Saul, Maripa Trails, Tresor, Montagne des Singes and its access road, Saint Elie, Roche Corail
- **Brown Capuchin:** Saul (even directly in Chez Kami), Camp Bonaventure, Iles du Salut
- **Common Squirrel Monkey:** only seen on the last day in Saul, near village - and then many sleeping monkeys found along the Mana-Awala road
- **Guiana Spider Monkey:** the most common monkey around Saul - and then not seen anywhere else
- **Guianan Red Howler:** clearly common by voice around Saul, but only seen once. It is possible that we heard them somewhere along the coast, but we are somehow not sure.

Ungulates:

- **Northwestern Red Brocket:** at night several grazing in Saul village, one crossed the road on Piste Mataroni. The species was split from Common Red Brocket just in time!
- **White-lipped Peccary:** Saul near Point Chaud and then a large herd on Piste Mataroni. Peccaries make a clicking sound, which we also heard on Piste Paul Isnard and Maripa Trails, but I am not sure if we can exclude Collared Peccary when heard only. A ranger in Tresor explained to us that they are numerous there and have a large impact on the forest understory, in particular by disturbing Heliconia plants and thus removing potential Disc-winged Bat roosts.

Carnivorans:

- **Kinkajou:** common on the night hike in Piste de Risquetout and somewhat surprisingly also in the savanna areas (any time there were more trees), one near Saul Airport.
- **Tayra:** often reported, but we went three weeks without any sightings besides a dead one on N1 near Roche Corail. Then, on the last morning, one showed very well on trees on Montagne des Signes. It was also very vocal.

Opossums:

- **Bare-tailed Woolly Opossum:** common in many places – Saul, Kaw road, Roche Corail, Petit Saut, Awala
- **Southern Opossum:** Saul, savanna, Petit Saut, Risquetout, Awala and for some reason many, many dead on the roads – no other animal comes even close to this amount of roadkill
- “Small opossums”: with IR at night, we found quite a few of small opossums in many places (Saul, Kaw road, Piste Mataroni, Petit Saut, Trou Poissons, Trou Caimans) – you can often guess that the small signal is an opossums, because small rodents have a ten-



Common Water Rat



Proechimys sp.

dency to run around, but opossums often freeze in place. They are all likely *Marmosa* or *Marmosops*, but according to the current iNat taxonomy, those two genera are not closely related, so there is no single category for them. Venkat has looked into them and IDed **North-eastern Woolly Mouse Opossum** from Trou Poissons and **Linnaeus's Mouse Opossum** from Petit Saut, while two individuals from Kaw road are likely **Marmosops sp.**, but parvidens vs. pinheiroi may not be possible without teeth.

Xenarthra:

- From the two species of sloths, **Pale-throated Three-toed Sloth** is far more common on iNat, but we saw as many of them as we saw of **Linnaeus's Two-toed Sloth**. The best sloth sites were Piste Mataroni and – weirdly – the palm plantations around Awala-Mana road, but we also saw some in Kouru golf course, Route de Guatemala nad Roche Corail

- **Northeastern Silky Anteater:** it took us a while to decipher the furry ball hanging just above the Kaw road at night, but it eventually began slowly moving. Another one was found already after daybreak on Montagne des Singes – this one was really curled up and took us a lot of effort to understand what we were seeing
- **Giant Anteater:** crossed Route de Guatemala close to midday, no photo.
- **Giant Armadillo:** appeared out of the blue in the middle of the road while driving Piste Trou Caimans. The name does not lie, the animal is absurdly large. It walked away rather slowly, but we only had a very long lens (the shorter one broke) and thus we have rather dismal photos – still I think the record is clear.

Rodents:

- **Red-rumped Agouti:** seen in Saul and Piste Mataroni, but with no chance for a photo -- then we found that the introduced population on Iles du Salut was tame and could get as many photos as we would ever wish. A quickly running Agouti can be a confusing sight – at Mataroni, I was considering a Bush Dog for a while, before I realized that it would have to be running backwards.
- **Red Acouchi:** darted across the trail in Saul and Trou Caimans, no photo, but very easy to tell from Agouti by size and color.
- **Spotted Paca:** my greatest nemesis. First we saw one next to the Point Chaud campsite, but only could get a blurry photo behind leaves before it ran away. Then one slowly walked in front of me across the road that continues SW behind Saul Airport, but I could not focus on it, so I got no pictures – and during the process, I did not have any time to look at it. So when the third one walked again slowly in front of me on one of the Camp Bonaventure trails, I did not even pick up the camera and just enjoyed the show.
- **Long-tailed Porcupine:** Awala-Mana road
- **Guianan Squirrel:** seen only once on Montagne des Singes in early morning
- **Common Water Rat** (*Nectomys rattus*): Kouru golf course – I first thought this was just a Brown Rat, but Venkat convinced me that the sharply bicolored tail and the fur color are better for this species. We saw some more rats on Iles du Salut, but without a photo.
- **White-faced Spiny Tree Rat:** a rather distant animal was sitting high on a tree at Piste Mataroni, not moving and looking away from us, while it was quite foggy and pictures with flash were coming out terribly. Yet Ivana found out that the tail, the only really visible part of the animal, was weird enough to be completely diagnostic.



Splendid Climbing Mouse
or (for the top one) possibly *Oecomys sp.*



Greater Spear-nosed Bat

Sigmodontinae; at least one of them should be **Splendid Climbing Mouse** (*Rhipidomys nitela*) according to Venkat, another one could be also that or some *Oecomys* sp. Many other small rodents were very active and could not be photographed at all; in general some areas were super lively in IR just thanks to these.

Bats:

- **Dog-like bats:** under a bridge at Piste Mataroni (4.0692N, 52.1148W), in abandoned buildings in Roura (4.7252N, 52.3263W and across the street), in derelict carbets in Maripa
- **Proboscis bat:** in the closed carbet in Popote (3.6094N, 53.1749W), under a wooden pier on Maripa Trail, under another bridge at Piste Mataroni (4.07404N, 52.1602W)
- **Spix's Disk-winged Bat:** apparently common in still-curlled-up Heliconia plants in Tresor, but also found hiking the abandoned course of Piste de Risquetout
- **Greater Spear-nosed Bat:** eating palm fruit near Awala
- **Flat-faced Fruit-eating Bat:** night-roosting with fruit in hands on the trail south from Saul
- **Great Stripe-faced Bat:** night-roosting on La Fumee trail near Saul
- **Frosted Sac-winged Bat:** roosting on a tree early in the morning on La Fumee trail near Saul + more *Saccopteryx* sp. in derelict carbets in Maripa
- **Pallas's Long-tongued Bat:** inside Chez Rita in Awala
- **Carollia sp.:** under an old bridge next to N1 just west of Tonate (5.0193N, 52.4804W)
- **Molossinae sp.:** in abandoned building on the beach at the end of Awala road (5.7458N, 53.9457W), hiding and difficult to see

- Other Echimyinae are not that easy and we needed Venkat to ID them – he found three different things in our photos: **Brazilian Spiny Tree Rat** from Saul, savannah and Awala, **Ferreira's Spiny Tree Rat** from Maripa and Camp Bonaventure and **Proechimys sp.** from Saul
- Finally there were quite a few small, brightly bicolored arboreal rodents, which were all probably



Flat-faced Fruit-eating Bat



Proboscis Bat

From these 40 species, only 4 required the trip to Saul – Guiana Spider Monkey, Guianan Red Howler Monkey, Flat-faced Fruit-eating Bat, Great Stripe-faced Bat – so a pretty reasonable trip can be had just driving along the coastal road system. On the other hand, in just 6 nights in Saul, we saw 19 species of mammals (and it was a really glorious experience overall), so one could actually do just that and have a pretty great time.

Even though we may be the first mammalwatchers to “officially” report an FG trip, there is a large amount of data coming from there, simply because it's not an obscure remote country, but, you know, France. Besides a reasonable amount of records on iNaturalist, there is a lot of sightings recorded on faune-guyane.fr – unfortunately, I was never able to set an account there, so I have only seen the “last 15 days” snapshots, which are available without a login. Based on these sources, we knew what more species to look for: the most com-



Saccopteryx sp.



Frosted Sac-winged Bat

mon potential lifers that we missed was Gray Four-eyed Opossum (seen at Kourou golf for example, where we looked for it), Ocelot (we are notoriously bad with cats) and Guiana Dolphin, which was the main motivation to go to Iles du Salut and then we tried looking for it from various places along the coast just East of Cayenne – note that the vast majority of the coast is completely inaccessible without a boat due to extensive mangroves. (We were told that the best site for dolphins was Mon-

travel peninsula, but that's now sadly closed off and locked.) Other mammals relatively commonly reported include neotropics staples such as Capybara, Giant Otter, Southern Tamandua, Nine-banded Armadillo, Crab-eating Raccoon, South American Coati ... but we did not specifically look for any of those, since we have already seen them. A rather large animal we saw crossing the Kaw road at night in the distance might as well have been a Tapir, but we are not sure. Apparently, Jaguarundis are not rare - there is only one observation on iNaturalist, but I have seen a record on faune-guyane and a birder has randomly seen one on Piste Mataroni not long before our trip. iNaturalist has also Guianan White-eared Opossum, Bushy-tailed Opossum, Chestnut Weeper Capuchin, White-faced Saki (for which we tried on Montagne des Singes) and Guiana Shield Long-nosed Armadillo, but all of that is probably very rarely seen. iNaturalist also has a huge list of bat species, including three more families that we are still missing, but often only single records with imprecise locations.



Great Stripe-faced Bat



Carollia sp.

Moustached bats are reported in Tresor (probably in the off-limits caves near CotR lek) and under the bridges west of Tonate, Thumbless bat in Saul (we identified the photos with the inside of the abandoned school next to the church) and Funnel-eared bats at Awala beach (we did not find the place from the photo) – none of these searches were successful, but in general, roosting bats were common in all kinds of suitable spaces and always flying everywhere at night. Jaguars are reportedly present, but mostly far away from human settlements and are not seen as a significant danger (probably because they aren't being habituated and fed like in Pantanal).

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?d1=2024-12-15&d2=2025-01-06&taxon_id=40151&user_id=opisska



Spix's Disk-winged Bat



Pallas's Long-tongued Bat



Dog-like Bat sp.