

This year again, I spent about 3 weeks in the USA in July for work. I took this opportunity to visit the Denver area since I was there for a Sales meeting in the very nice town of Estes Park. My wife and I visited the nearby Rocky Mountain National Park for a day and a half and afterwards, we drove south to Boulder and then to Mount Evans for another day. Before taking our plane back to Boston we stopped by the Denver zoo to look for thirteen-lines ground squirrels but we failed to see them.

The Rocky Mountain National Park is really a beautiful park with many different landscapes: forests, alpine fields and lakes and is quite rich in wildlife. We always entered the park very early in the morning, which was the best time to see most of the wildlife since in July it was only quiet at that moment before hundreds (if not thousands) of cars and other visitors also came into park. I was amazed to even experience traffic jams along the main road during mid-day! Mount Evans was another great place to visit and indeed a great place for mountain goats that are easy to see there. The tared road up to the top is very scenic as we drive through the forest, along a few beautiful lakes and the Rocky Mountains chain view on the top is simply gorgeous, especially early morning with the rising sun. Here also, there were a lot of people during the week end and going there early morning to see mammals is highly recommended. We visited all the Denver area on our own with a rental car, which was very easy thanks to all the information we could find on Mammal Watching.

When we came back to Buffalo – Albany - Boston for the rest of my business trip and our second weekend in the USA, we went back to the Trustom Pond wildlife refuge that we already visited a few years ago. We had a fairly good experience on our first visit but that weekend in July, the weather was incredibly hot and except for a few eastern cottontails, Eastern chipmunks and white-tailed deers early in the morning, the park was “deadly” quiet. We even had to leave the park earlier that wat we planned because there were literally thousands of annoying mosquitos and flies that prevented us from enjoying calmly the place. We then drove to Cape Cod and Mashpee to look for New England Cottontails. Indeed, based on a Jon’s trip there in 2013 where it was written that “*Matt had heard that Eastern Cottontails are not present in the Mashpee area in Cape Cod so any rabbit should be one of the New England flavor*” I said to myself that we should give a try.

From the observations we made there in July 2019, I can say that this is apparently no longer true and that Eastern cottontails are now in Mashpee. We observed 4 rabbits on the same late afternoon in people’s lawns on Surf Drive in Mashpee and to me, one was clearly an Eastern cottontail given the white spot on its forehead. I can’t really say for two other rabbits but I’m pretty sure the fourth one had all the New England Cottontail diagnostics: no white spot on the forehead, a dark spot between the ears and black leading edges to the ears.

The rest of our weekend in Cape Cod was spent to drink piña colada and eat lobsters ☺ and do a couple of whale watching trips from Provincetown in order to escape from the insanely hot temperature on those days. We really enjoyed the boat cruises as usual even if we didn’t see anything exceptional besides the usual suspects like humpback whales, fin whales and Minke whales.

Below is the list of mammals observed during these few days in the USA (lifers in red):

Mammals with photos or well seen				
Species	Espèces	Latin Name	Where seen	Pic
Colorado				
Yellow-bellied marmot	Marmotte à ventre jaune	Marmota flaviventris	Several seen at close range and very well in the Rocky Mountain National Park and Mount Evans	X
Gunnison’s prairie dog	Chien de prairie du Colorado	Cynomys gunnisoni	Several seen in a field outside of Boulder	X
Black-tailed prairie dog	Chien de prairie à queue noire	Cynomys ludovicianus	A lot seen in the suburbs of Boulder	X
Wyoming ground squirrel	Spermophile du Wyoming	Spermophilus elegans	A few seen near the Fall River entrance of Rocky Mountain NP	X
Golden-mantled ground squirrel	Spermophile à manteau doré	Spermophilus lateralis	Commonly seen in Rock Mountain NP and around Boulder	X
Least chipmunk	Tamia mineur	Tamias minimus	Several seen in Rock Mountain NP, Bear Lake area	X
Uinta chipmunk	Tamia Uinta	Tamias umbrinus	One seen in Mount Evans forest	X
Colorado chipmunk	Tamia du Colorado	Tamias quadrivittatus	A few seen in Rocky Mountain NP	X
Spruce squirrel	Ecureuil roux américain	Tamiasciurus hudsonicus	Two seen in Rocky Mountain NP & Mount Evans	X
Eastern fox squirrel	Ecureuil fauve	Sciurus niger	Several seen in the Denver zoo parking lot	X
American pika	Pika américain	Ochotona princeps	Only a few seen at the highest elevation in both Rocky Mountain NP and Mount Evans	X
Desert cottontail	Lapin d’Audubon	Sylvilagus audubonii	Several seen in the suburbs of Boulder	X
Eastern cottontail	Lapin à queue blanche	Sylvilagus floridanus	A few seen in the Denver Zoo parking lot	X
Coyote	Coyote	Canis Latrans	One seen early morning near the Fall River entrance of Rocky Mountain NP	X
Red Fox	Renard roux	Vulpes vulpes	2 individuals crossing the road in front of our car while driving up to Mount Evans	O
Mule deer	Cerf mulet	Odocoileus hemionus	Quite common in Rocky Mountain NP, especially along Bear Lake road	X
Elk	Wapiti	Cervus canadensis	Common everywhere in Rocky Mountain NP	X
Moose	Elan	Alces alces	A family seen very well along the main road in the Kawuneeche Valley area of Rocky Mountain NP	X
Bighorn sheep	Bighorn	Ovis canadensis	A few seen in Mount Evans	X

Mountain goat	Chèvre des montagnes Rocheuses	Oreamnos americanus	Many seen very well at the top of Mount Evans	X
New England				
Woodchuck	Marmotte commune	Marmota monax	Several seen along the highway between Buffalo and Albany in NY state	O
Eastern grey squirrel	Ecureuil gris de Caroline	Sciurus carolinensis	Two seen in the Trustom Pond wildlife refuge, RI	X
Eastern chipmunk	Tamia rayé	Tamias striatus	Several seen in Trustom Pond wildlife refuge, RI	X
Eastern cottontail	Lapin à queue blanche	Sylvilagus floridanus	Several seen in the Trustom Pond wildlife refuge in RI and in Mashpee, Cape Cod	X
New England cottontail	Lapin de Nouvelle Angleterre	Sylvilagus transitionalis	For sure, at least one seen in Mashpee, Cape cod	X
White-tailed deer	Cerf de Virginie	Odocoileus virginianus	Several seen in the suburban area around the Trustom Pond wildlife refuge, RI	O
Humpback whale	Baleine à bosse	Megaptera novaeangliae	A few seen during whale watching from Provincetown in Cape Cod	X
Fin whale	Rorqual commun	Balaenoptera physalus	2 seen during whale watching from Provincetown in Cape Cod	X
Minke whale	Baleine de Minke	Balaenoptera acutorostrata	1 seen during whale watching from Provincetown in Cape Cod	O
Grey seal	Phoque gris	Halichoerus grypus	One big individual observed in the Provincetown harbor in Cape Cod	X
		Total Species Recorded = 28		

I'm adding to this report some pictures of the species we observed during that short trip:



Yellow-bellied marmot



American pika



Gunnison's prairie dog



Black-tailed prairie dog



Golden-mantled ground squirrel



Wyoming ground squirrel



Uinta chipmunk



Colorado chipmunk



Eastern chipmunk



Least chipmunk



Eastern grey squirrel



Desert cottontail



Spruce squirrel



Eastern fox squirrel



Mule deer



Elk



Eastern cottontail



New England cottontail



Moose



Mountain goat

