From 23/04/2016 to 13/05/2016 with my wife we visited Uzbekistan. Our targets were tulips, mammals and 3 historic cities.

With the very clement winter Uzbekistan experienced this year, there was a month of delay to see tulips in bloom in the desert!
No problem for the monuments! Regardless of the weather report they are always there!
For mammals we knew that it would be difficult! We had found neither trip report nor book to help us prepare…
Another complication: nature conservation is not a priority for Uzbekistan. Hunting seems to be a common practice, if it is not poaching!
For example in the historic city of Khiva, tourists buy Caps made of skin of wolf, fox and snow leopard !!!!
Other complication: as a foreigner you are obliged to stay in accredited accommodations, which do not exist outside tourist zone! Entering reserves and parks is very difficult for tourist and in some case it is forbidden!

So we contacted a local travel Agency and specially Salokhiddin who is not a naturalist but very interested in wildlife (for more informations please contact me). For mammals, he planned for us a trip 130 km north of Uchquduq with hunters, staying first near Aydarkul lake, then in mountains of Nouratau and finally in Chimgan (Foothills of the mountain Thian Chan).

Thian Chan was in the clouds during the 3 days of our visit. So we don’t see any mammals except one little rodent with very long incisors that was not identified!

In Nouratau we stayed in Hayat near the reserve of Nuratinsky which unfortunately we were not authorized to enter! On crests we were able to observe several Argali (Ovis severtzovi). The first night I tried a night walk. But the owner of the guest house stopped me quickly – I had just enough time to take picture of Eurasian Scops Owl. We negociated to look at porcupine’s hole that are numerous in the valley! We easily find one occupied and wait 3 hours in the night. Nothing except two yapping of fox!

Argali (Ovis severtzovi). Picture took in a paddok near the guest house.

On the road from Navoiy to Nurota (Qoratov Hills), in the first bend North of the pass, some Long tailed Marmot (Marmota caudata) near their holes.
Uchquduq: On the road est of Uchquduq, and after mid day, many Yellow Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus fulvus*).

We left at night the town of Uchquduq to the north (road N° 4P211). During more than 1 hour many small mammals crossed the road (1 on average every 30 seconds): Great Jerboa, and others species of gerboa and gerbil, voles, shrews, rats, mouses, hares (perhaps *Lepus capensis ssp tolai*) and two Long eared Hedgehog (*Hemiechinus auritus*).

At midnight we arrived near a yurt. After a meal, the shepherd accompanied us on off road drive with strong light... We saw 4 Turmen Gazelle (*Gazella gracilicornis*), 1 fox sp and 1 Pallas’s Cat (*Felix manul*). Unfortunately our guides were hunters that wanted to charge at animals: it was the first time they accompanied tourists! So we did not have the pleasure to admire animals!!

Hunters said: wolf very rare, last migration of Saïga in winter in 1990s.

Near Aydarkul lake, no mammal during a night walk! In the morning some Jerboa, perhaps Northern tree toed Jerboa (*Dipus sagitta cf*) jump near their holes.

Little cat left tracks on the sand.