

## Southeastern Europe, July-August 2016

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Southeastern Europe (here defined as everything between the N border of Hungary, the W border of Slovenia, the S coast of Crete, and the Bosphorus) is a fascinating part of the world, with rich history, colorful culture, beautiful scenery, diverse flora and fauna, and well-developed travel infrastructure. But, of course, the main reason to visit it is the presence of 18 species of Cricetine rodents, many of them endemic (although some can be considered chromosomal races rather than species). Other endemics include five more rodents, a mole and a shrew. The regional checklist includes 130+ species, not counting accidental cetaceans.

The most common natural vegetation is luxurious broadleaf forest. Most of Greece and the Adriatic Coast are covered with various types of Mediterranean vegetation. Lowlands of Hungary, Transylvania and the Black Sea Coast used to be temperate grasslands, but have been almost entirely ploughed over. At higher elevations there are coniferous forests and meadows. Many mountain ranges, particularly the Dinaric Alps, consist mostly of limestone, so there are extensive karst landscapes (the word “karst” and many speleological terms come from Slovenian language), with low-elevation meadows and thousands of caves; from the air these sinkhole-cratered areas often look like WWII battlefields. There are lots of islands along the Adriatic Coast and around Greece, but none in the Black Sea; the only surviving island endemic (not counting a few subspecies) is Zimmerman’s shrew on Crete. Marine mammals tend to become less numerous and diverse as you move from W to E Mediterranean, but sightings from numerous ferries are still possible. In the Black Sea there are three endemic cetacean subspecies, while Greece has a few small populations of Mediterranean monk seal.

All these countries were once united and prospering under the Eastern Roman Empire. Later almost all of the region was occupied by the Ottoman Empire; during that time local peasantry enjoyed the highest living standards in Europe. Now, after three centuries of vicious wars, revolutions, and recently IMF depredations, a new age of peace and prosperity is being brought by the EU, although some countries are not in it yet, or a bit slow to benefit from the membership. Thanks to non-industrial economies and shrinking rural populations, the environment away from cities is in reasonably good condition. There are numerous protected areas, and a network of narrow rural roads with almost no nighttime traffic.

At the time of writing the region has become the arena of an epic battle between Russia and the West over political influence. The West offers high standards of living, working legal system, political freedom and personal safety. Russia, which floods Europe with its propaganda (both directly and through the incredibly gullible Western media), offers cheap gas, corruption-based economy, dysfunctional services, fake democracy, the cult of Putin the Great Leader, and the aggressive sense of national pride paradoxically combined with the paranoid idea of being chronically wronged by the evil USA. Ethnic groups with Orthodox faith and/or Cyrillic alphabet tend to be particularly vulnerable to Russian propaganda, although there are exceptions. In such places (you can instantly recognize them by unfriendly border guards, stupid entry fees, bad roads, and lack of hares and deer in the fields) a traveler would be wise to abstain from political discussions, as local residents tend to be immersed in a fake reality, not unlike Fox News viewers in the US.

The information below is from a 6-week trip in July-August 2016, during which I saw 100+ species, including all endemics and near-endemics and at least 13 lifers. A few bits are from four short visits in the early 1990s, when I got 15 additional species. I note the time of my visit in every site description. I didn’t use traps or mistnets during those trips.

Late summer is the worst time for travel in the region, as days are often brutally hot, hotels and ferries overbooked, and rental cars unavailable or overpriced. Late April-May (when everything is blooming) and late September-early October (when the seas are still warm) are much better: there will be more bats in caves, more daytime activity by generally nocturnal species, and a lot more non-mammalian wildlife. Hitchhiking is easy, but there is no international one-way car rental, and in some countries (notably Greece) rental companies don’t allow driving to other countries (if you are planning to do it anyway, email me for tips). In June-September, ferries and rental cars should be booked in advance if possible. Finally, I’ve never seen a single refugee anywhere in the region; the whole issue is blown way out of proportion.

### Albania

One of the poorest countries in Europe, now rapidly recovering from a total collapse brought upon by massive Ponzi schemes, Albania is actually a friendly place with a surprisingly good system of protected natural areas, including a few national parks worth checking. See the Greece account below for Prespa Lakes and the Macedonia account for Lake Ohrid.

Shebenik-Jabllanice National Park (August 2016) is the easiest place to access alpine meadows in the S part of Dinaric Alps, and a good site to see the rare southern subspecies *grebenscikowi* of **Martino's vole**. I saw one in broad daylight (on an overcast day with some rain) within two hours of getting to the meadows (at 41.1572°N 20.48°E). **Chamois** of ssp. *balkanica* were easy to see, but shy and impossible to approach closely. After sunset I saw a **Thomas's pine vole** (nominate ssp.) at the tree line. As I was leaving the park late at night, a **brown bear** with two cubs ran across the road in front of the car. The park also has Balkan mole, Eurasian lynx (very rare), gray wolf, wild boar, and Eurasian otter.

Of the places I haven't visited, Llogara National Park on the coast is said to have fallow and roe deer, wildcat, chamois, gray wolf and Eurasian otter, while Mount Dajti (a. k. a. Dajti National Park) has wild boar, brown bear, gray wolf, wildcat, and a few bat caves. Albanian boars are reportedly of the nominate subspecies.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

B&H is a fragile amalgam of three ethnic domains (Croatian, Muslim and Serbian), forming a checkerboard pattern and held together mostly by international pressure. Separatism, populist rhetoric and cult of Putin are particularly intense in Republika Srpska, which also happens to have the best natural habitats.

Jon Hall recommended Cemerno (August 2016), an area accessible by taking a turnoff marked with a microscopic sign from M20 (near the Montenegro border) and driving through the village and past the end of pavement. The dirt road then passes through a small forest and skirts a beautiful meadow (43.25°N 18.2824°E) covered with large sinkholes. Piles of rocks accumulated at the bottom of the sinkholes are classical **Martino's vole** habitat; you can theoretically see the voles by watching these places with a red lamp. I didn't see any at the bottoms of the sinkholes, but eventually spotted one perching pika-style on a rock in the middle of a small talus slope. It took me about four hours. Note that the meadow has mysteriously cool microclimate; prepare for a very cold wait. At dawn a **red deer** (ssp. *hippelaphus*) with a fawn walked along the far edge of the meadow. The road continues into more forests and meadows, and although its quality eventually deteriorates, it is good for night drives: I saw **northern white-breasted hedgehogs** (nominate ssp.), **yellow-necked mice**, **red foxes** (ssp. *crucigera*) and one **European pine vole**. Meadows with lots of junipers a few miles down the road are a well-known site for the local subspecies of common and meadow vipers, and had a lot of lesser mole rat mounds.

Nearby Sutjeska National Park (August 2016) has a lot of mammals including brown bear and grey wolf, but the only ones I saw in a couple hours spent there were a **wildcat** kitten that ran across the road and a Balkan **chamois** in Perucica Forest (said to be one of the very few forests in Europe that have never been logged).

Vagan's Cave (Vaganska pecina) is reportedly one of the most beautiful caves in the Balkans, and a good place to find common barbastelle and Bechstein's and Geoffroy's myotis in winter.

### **Bulgaria**

A pleasant country with lots of well-preserved natural habitats and relatively light road traffic, Bulgaria was the only part of the region where I saw some interesting wildlife while driving at night on major roads. Elsewhere it mostly didn't work until I turned onto really small tracks, preferably in nature reserves.

#### *The interior*

Rila Monastery (Рилски манастир, April 1993) in the Rodopi Mts. is surrounded by old-growth coniferous forest where **Eurasian red squirrels** of dark *balkanicus* race were very common; I also saw a **bank vole** (ssp. *isticus*) and a **wood mouse** during an evening walk. Tiny myotis bats were roosting in one of the buildings; I now think they were **Alcathoe myotis**, but it's impossible to be sure. A forestry worker who lived in a nearby village had a wild **Eurasian lynx** (ssp. *balkanicus*); it had been rehabilitated after being hit by a car and lived freely in the forest, but came to his house almost every evening to play with him. I visited the old man and got a chance to pet the lynx, which I think was perfectly countable.

Pleven (October 1993) is a large city in the N; tame **common hamsters** were easy to see in Skobelev Park there.

Orlova Chuka (Орлова чука; 43.59°N 25.9603°E; October 1993) is the most important bat cave in Bulgaria, with 25 recorded species. During the pupping season (May-June) it is closed, but cameras are installed and births can be observed from a nearby cabin. It has large numbers of **greater**, **lesser**, **Mediterranean** and **Mehely's horseshoe bats** and **common bentwings** year-round. In October it also had **Geoffroy's** and **Daubenton's myotis**, **serotines** and **common noctules**.

## The coast

Cape Kaliakra (August 2016), once home to the last monk seal population in the Black Sea, is still good for seawatches. I didn't see any cetaceans, but apparently they are seen often. The rule for identifying the three endemic cetacean subspecies of the Black Sea is as follows: anything seen in a small group is most likely bottlenose dolphins; anything seen in a huge herd far on the horizon is common dolphins; anything found dead on the beach is usually a harbor porpoise. I spent a night driving and walking various roads and trails, looking for marbled polecats that are supposedly still present, but didn't see any mustelids other than one **badger** in the canyon north from the cape (also saw a **raccoon dog** pillaging a garbage pile at Bolata Beach, 43.383°N 28.47°E). Rodents were sparse, and all were seen outside the reserve in or near agricultural fields: one each of **striped field mouse**, **steppe mouse**, and **sibling vole** (pale ssp. *epiroticus*). Very light-colored **soprano pipistrelles** roosted in old walls near the cape tip; also of note were blind mole rat mounds around the numerous abandoned military buildings. An hour before dawn I returned to the highway to drive S, and within ten minutes saw a **golden jackal** and a **Romanian hamster** (it so calmly trotted across the road that I barely avoided hitting it).

Nesebr (a. k. a. Nessebar, August 2016) is a charming old city on a small peninsula. A friend of mine who lives there told me of **Roach's mouse-tailed dormice** living in his friend's garden a few km to the S, and arranged a visit. I briefly saw one animal in a dense shrub after four hours of wait. A few miles N, E87 crosses a forested ridge (42.766°N, 27.761°E) where I saw wild **boars** (apparently of the small, pale *lybica* race). My friend reported seeing wolves there a couple times.

Burgas, a large coastal city, is surrounded by wetlands. Lake Atanasovsko (April 1993) was a good place to see **water voles** (ssp. *corabensis*), while **sibling voles** (ssp. *epiroticus*) were very common in surrounding fields. I also saw a slender-billed curlew there. Pomorie Salinas (August 2016; 42.59°N 27.61°E) had **Günther's voles** of endemic subspecies *stranzensis* scurrying around in daylight; 2016 was apparently a very good year for this species in the region.

## Croatia

A decisively Western country, Croatia has good roads and everything generally works there, but it hasn't yet joined the Schengen agreements, so crossing into Slovenia or Hungary by a major highway can take hours in summer. Use less popular border crossings in the mountains.

### Inland Croatia

Plitvice Lakes National Park (August 2016) is the country's most popular. The lakes are pretty, although if you've been to Jushaigou or Hualong Xi, you'll be a bit disappointed (Semuc Champey in Guatemala is also a bit similar). There's a lot of good forest growing on countless sinkholes, but I didn't explore it much because it was mostly raining when I was there. I hand-caught a disoriented **hazel dormouse** running in circles in the middle of the road (interestingly, two years earlier I had a similar experience with a garden dormouse in Spain). There were lots of **roe deer**. Lawns in developed parts had insane density of molehills, and should be a good place to look for common mole (the only species there). The park is said to have large populations of brown bear, grey wolf, Eurasian lynx, and wildcat, and 20+ species of bats.

Bunić (August 2016) is a village S from Plitvice Lakes with access to a beautiful upland meadow called Krbavsko Polje (44.66°N 15.6164°E). I stopped there because the meadow was literally dug up by voles; it took just two hours to see **field voles** (subspecies *punotus*) and **Lichtenstein's pine voles**, plus a **striped field mouse**.

Risnjac NP (August 2016) is a small national park, reportedly good for chamois and brown bear. I was there in poor weather and saw only **roe deer** and one **Eurasian harvest mouse**. In one meadow I ran into a lesser spotted eagle that took off with a wiggling **least weasel** in its talons (the local subspecies is the large, long-tailed *boccamela*).

### Dalmatia

Krka NP (August 2016) has typical habitats of the Dalmatian Coast: sparse stunted oaks and other shrubs barely surviving on heavily eroded limestone. I spent only a short time there, but saw a **western broad-toothed mouse**, a **garden dormouse**, a family of **boars** (of dark nominate subspecies), and at least a dozen **northern white-breasted hedgehogs** (nominate ssp.), plus some interesting snakes and lizards. The park is said to be a good place to look for Eurasian otter. Don't miss the view of Skradin (a small town) from a gas station on northbound E65 (signed "Krka Belvedere").

## Greece

Greece has changed a lot between my visits in 1993 and 2016. Although the changes are not as unbelievable as in China, I still think Greeks should add an article to their constitution requiring the country's president to visit Strasbourg annually

and crawl on his belly around the Europarlament building, kissing the dust every 50 cm. The most interesting place in terms of mammals is western Crete (see below), but there is also plenty to see on other large islands and the mainland. As the lowlands are arid and heavily modified, high-elevation sites tend to have a lot more wildlife overall, although some nice species (particularly stone marten) are common pretty much everywhere.

### Mainland Greece

In Athens (April 1993, July 2016), there is a large area of overgrown and largely neglected ruins W and NW of the Acropolis, with lots of rocks and small caves (invariably gated). It is usually marked on city maps as Agora or Areopagus, and is best accessed from Thissio metro station. In 1993 I found a **western broad-toothed mouse** there at night, and a small colony of **European freetails** in Apollo Cave on the N slope of the Acropolis. In 2016 that colony wasn't there.

Meteora (August 2016) is mostly worth a visit for the views, although it's nice to see and hear hundreds of **European freetails** as they leave or enter their roosts in inaccessible crevices at dusk. Upper and lower trails to Roussanou Monastery pass through shady oak forest with lots of leaf litter; I walked them a few times and saw a bunch of **wood mice**, one **edible dormouse** and one **lesser white-toothed shrew**. **Cape hare** (ssp. *parnassius*) and **red fox** are common in the surrounding area at night. During the day look for huge marginated tortoises crossing the roads.

Prespa Lakes (August 2016), two lakes on the borders with Albania and Macedonia, are mostly known as a birding destination, but the lakeshores are excellent for bats, as there are lots of abandoned houses used as roosts by huge bat swarms that feed over the lakes. This is one of the best places to see **steppe myotis** (it was present in 3 out of 4 houses I checked). I also found a cluster of **Daubenton's myotis**, one **long-fingered myotis**, and a few **soprano pipistrelles** (all under sheets of peeling-off plaster on the walls), plus one **bicolored shrew** under a piece of plywood near one of the houses. I also got binocular views of a **water vole** swimming across a pond. Juniper-covered hills on the W side of Mikra Prespa (40.79°N 21.06°E) had **Macedonian mice** at dusk. **Sibling voles** of isolated subspecies *brauneri* were easy to see at night in freshly mowed meadows between the lakes (this is a good place to twitch them as the very similar common vole doesn't occur in the area). Balkan mole has been recorded in surrounding mountains, and Greek tortoise is common.

Akritas (40.815°N 21.3°E, August 2016) and Ano Klines (40.845°N 21.382°E, August 2016) are two nearly abandoned villages near the border with Macedonia. I searched about a dozen houses in each village. Akritas is at higher elevation and surrounded by forest, so it is more interesting: I found one **Nathusius's pipistrelle**, one **mountain long-eared bat** and one **lesser noctule**. Ano Klines had only **steppe myotis** and **Savi's pipistrelles**. I also saw a **northern white-breasted hedgehog** (of dark ssp. *drozdovskii*) in Akritas, a **Günther's vole** (possibly of subspecies *martinoi*) in an abandoned field at the edge of Akritas, and a wild **boar** of the small, pale *lybica* race on the road between the villages.

Axios Delta National Park (April 1993; August 2016) near Thessaloniki is a large area of marshland and farmland. In spring I saw a **Günther's vole** of pale subspecies *hartingi* just off the highway (now E75), but in summer the area was parched and looked totally lifeless. The park reportedly has European sousliks, Eurasian otters, and gray wolves.

Allistrati Cave (August 2016) once had huge bat colonies, but as it became too touristy, the bats have disappeared. I saw only one sad **steppe myotis** there. The cave is still worth visiting for its exceptional beauty.

**Macedonian mice** were easy to see in a ravine at the edge of Vergina (40.4834°N 22.3212°E, August 2016).

Mount Olympus (April 1993, August 2016) is probably the best place in Greece to see dark **Eurasian red squirrels** (try the area around Agya Dionysios Monastery). **Edible dormice** are everywhere in beech forests, while **hazel dormice** occur in hazel patches near the bridge halfway to the so-called Holy Cave (40.0932°N 22.43°E; the trail is signposted at the monastery parking lot). I also found two tawny owl chicks near the cave. **Forest dormice** were common along the summit trail just above Prionia; I also briefly saw a tiny shrew that was likely a **Eurasian pygmy shrew** (ssp. *gymnurus*).

In Delfi (August 2016) I found a **western broad-toothed mouse** in the rocks facing the highway just E of Sanctuary of Athena (38.48°N 22.51°E), and heard European freetails around Castalia Spring (38.483°N 22.5052°E).

### Peloponnese Peninsula and Ionian Islands

Mistras, a. k. a. Mystras (July 2016), the last Byzantine capital, is a very scenic area of ruins and ancient churches on a steep slope overlooking Sparta (Sparta) in the far S Greece. Some buildings in the upper part were used as night roosts by **Savi's pipistrelles** (common) and **Kolombatovic's long-eared bats** (rare; try the roped-off building at 37.07363°N 22.36716°E), and as both day and night roosts by **greater** (common) and **lesser** (rare) **horseshoe bats** and **Natterer's myotis** (rare; try Pantanassas Monastery). To enter the site after hours, take a trail that branches off to the left near the upper gate; it will soon lead you to another gate, and if you look to the left of it, you'll see a segment of the wall that's low

enough to climb over. **Badgers** and **Etruscan shrews** patrolled the ruins at night; look also for cat-eyed snakes, rock scorpions, Greek predatory bush-crickets, Mediterranean house geckos, and (during the day) endemic wall lizards, rock nuthatches, and blue rock thrushes. Plan on spending a full night to explore the ruins thoroughly. Just before the upper gate's parking lot, look for a road to the right marked Vlachochori; it leads to a semi-abandoned village. This road had the highest density of **stone marten** (of Balkans ssp. *bosniaka*) I've ever seen: in a few hours I saw five different individuals, two of which approached me closely. In the same few hours I saw a family of **badgers**, two **red foxes**, and heard an **edible dormouse**. A steep side trail just before the village leads to a fir forest at higher elevation, where **yellow-necked mouse** was common. We stayed in nice Mazaraki Guesthouse in Pikouljanika (close to the upper gate) where lots of bats came to drink from the swimming pool; would be interesting to mistnet there.

Vodoikilias Beach (July 2016) across Navarino Bay from Pylos is mostly famous for mainland Greece's only population of chameleons (extremely difficult to find even at night) and great herping overall. The adjacent dunes had lots of introduced **European rabbits**; there were also tracks of northern white-breasted hedgehog and red fox. Above the S end of the beach is Nestor's Cave (36.96°N 21.6579°E), a major bat wintering site; in July it had zero bats during the day and a few **lesser horseshoe bats** at night. The slope below the cave was a great place to practice identifying three local species of *Apodemus* mice (**western broad-toothed**, **yellow-necked** and **wood mice**) by sight and sound, as all three were very common. I also saw one **stone marten** there, and found a tail of an edible dormouse.

Kato Samiko (July 2016) is a small village on the W coast of Peloponnese. A dirt road (signposted "Ancient acropolis", impassible when wet) leads up into a forest reserve and to the hilltop ruins of ancient Samia, now overgrown with large pine trees. Former buildings have become grassy terraces framed with stone walls; they were inhabited by **Thomas's pine voles** of rare *atticus* subspecies (difficult to see, but worth the effort since this species is never easy) and **western broad-toothed mice**. A rock cliff (37.5347°N 21.5987°E) near the lower entrance had a colony of **Nathusius's pipistrelles**, generally uncommon in Greece. Near the upper end there was a hole in the ground (37.5324°N 21.6°E) from which a few dozen **greater myotis** emerged at dusk, but it would be pretty much impossible to find if I didn't happen to be there at the right time. Look also for large **Cape hares** (ssp. *parnassius*) in the area, as well as for nice birds such as Cretchmar's bunting, Rueppell's and olive-tree warblers, and honey buzzard. Just N of Kato Samiko, the 4-km paved road to Vrina is worth a night drive as it flanks a wetland area (I got a **badger** and a *domesticus* **house mouse**).

Ancient Olympia, a. k. a. Archea Olimpia (July 2016) is a small town where I had to spend a week for family reasons. Its vicinity has remarkably sparse wildlife (a white wagtail would make a highlight of your birding day). As you leave the town along Olympia-Krestenon Rd., look for a blue sign "Tabepna Cofeteria Gril 50 m". A large house just before the sign (37.6444°N 21.6141°E) had a huge colony of **Kuhl's pipistrelles** under roof tiles; at dawn you could see them well as they landed on the walls before crawling in. A few km farther, the road crosses Alfeus River over a dam; this general area was a good place to see "wild" **Norway rats**. Past the dam the road goes through some forest where **wood mouse** was common. A short trail (37.631°N 21.5811°E) accesses the river at a point where **Eurasian otters** were sometimes visible at dusk. Another place to access the river is a few miles E of the town (37.6422°N 21.668°E); here you'll find dense floodplain jungle where I saw a very shy **golden jackal** (of large ssp. *moreoticus*) with cubs. Watch also for Aesculapian snake, Hermann's tortoise and (in archeological sites) Peloponnesian wall lizard.

Limnon Cave (August 2016) used to be the best bat cave in the Peloponnese, but now it's too touristy and the bat numbers are low, especially in summer. I saw a few **greater**, **Mediterranean**, and **Mehely's horseshoe bats**, a few dozen **common bentwings** and one cluster of **greater myotis** in the bat chamber. You need binoculars to see them well.

Acrocorinth (August 2016) is a sprawling hilltop fort overlooking the city of Korynth. It is open from 8 to 3 (contrary to what most websites claim), and I strongly recommend getting there five minutes before 8 am so that you can make the long climb to the largest tower early (the climb can be rather unpleasant unless it's before 9 and you are also interested in birds and lizards – there's a lot of diversity). The tower used to have a huge colony of greater, lesser, Blasius's & Mediterranean horseshoe bats and common bentwings, but all I found there was a few very shy **Blasius's horseshoe bats** and one **common bentwing**. There were one **common pipistrelle** and one **Alcathoe myotis** (both difficult to see well – I was fortunate to have small binoculars that worked well at short range) in small holes in the arch of the first gate, and two *oxygnathus* **lesser myotis** in a small crack on the upper level of the second gate. The area looks great for western broad-toothed mouse and Etruscan shrew, and there were stone marten droppings everywhere, but I didn't have time to figure out how to get inside at night; you can try looking for all three by walking along the walls on the outside. In the Ancient Korynth ruins in town, one **Kuhl's pipistrelle** was roosting inside Glauka's Fountain, and there were some fox tracks.

Zakynthos (a. k. a. Zante) Island (July 2016), famous for the world's first democracy (1060-410 B.C.), has few land mammals, but its N, W, and S shores are mostly high cliffs perfect for seawatches, with countless caves and small isolated beaches inhabited by the island's population of about a dozen Mediterranean monk seals. The seals are occasionally seen

from boat trips to the caves (you can rent a boat and explore the coast at dawn or at dusk, but it will have to be an expensive multi-day rental as rental companies are only open 9 to 7) or while scuba diving (local dive guides see them 1-3 times per year), but most often from high lookouts. The best lookouts are in the S of the island: Keri Lighthouse (walk for ~100 m N from the parking lot at the end of the road) and Keri Lighthouse Tavern about 200 m before it (37.6543°N 20.81°E). Fin whales are seen occasionally. The best times for seawatches are early morning and sunset; we tried it a few times and never spotted any marine mammals, but saw Eleonora's falcons and lots of pallid swifts. Common and striped dolphins are occasionally seen from the ferry to the island (I saw only a few Cory's shearwaters). I glimpsed a **bottlenose dolphin** during a diving trip to Keri Caves (reportedly a common occurrence), and one **monk seal** in a cave I swam into while snorkeling on the W side of the island (I'm not giving the exact location to prevent disturbance and also because it's not a safe place to swim). Shrubby barrens of the W coast are inhabited by an isolated population of **steppe mouse**; this population belongs to the Dalmatian form that doesn't build mounds as often as the eastern one, so finding these mice takes a lot of spotlighting on foot in rugged terrain. Try Keri Lighthouse area or the slopes above Limnionas. **Western broad-toothed mouse** was common in rocky areas, such as the summit plateau of Mt. Vrachionas. Ancient olive groves (best around 37.7072°N 20.848°E) have lots of small tree hollows and were good for seeing **wood mice** and **Kuhl's pipistrelles** at night. Land mammals historically recorded on the island include lesser white-toothed shrew, least weasel, Eurasian badger, Eurasian otter, and Cape hare, but I saw only introduced **European rabbits**, a **northern white-breasted hedgehog** (ssp. *bolokay*) and a **stone marten** (in a pine forest above Gerakas Beach) during night drives. Only two species of bats (Kuhl's pipistrelle and common bentwing) have been recorded on the island according to Hanak et al. (2004). I found **soprano pipistrelles** to be abundant around the marshes in Limni Keriou (you can see them really well as they catch moths in your flashlight beam), while darker-colored **common pipistrelles** preferred the town of the same name, and would often fly into our balcony around sunset. The marshes also have **Norway rats**, **domesticus house mice**, Peloponnesian frogs, two species of turtles, and natural tar lakes first described by Herodotus and Pliny. There are a few bat caves on the island; one called Sulfur Cave is only accessible by scuba diving and reportedly has lots of bats in August-October, but I was there in July and still don't know what species roost(s) there. Other caves I explored had small numbers of **greater horseshoe bats**, **common bentwings** and **black rats**, plus, surprisingly, recent offerings to Hades.

### Crete and other Aegean Islands

Samaria National Park (August 2016) on Crete is one of the most interesting mammalwatching sites in Europe. In addition to endemic and near-endemic species, it has a bunch of distinctive subspecies of land mammals that are supposedly ancient introductions. (It is sometimes claimed that all land mammals of Crete except bats are of such origin, but this is questionable, particularly in the case of the recently extinct Cretan wildcat, which apparently belonged to *sylvestris* rather than *lybica* group and was often depicted in local art as early as 1700 BC.) The most famous mammal is *kri-kri*, or Cretan wild goat; it is now known to be a descendant of primitive domestic goats, so if you follow ICZN recommendation and list domestic animals under separate scientific names, the *kri-kri* should be called *Capra hircus cretica* and is the most countable *Capra hircus* worldwide. The high-elevation portion of the park is accessed by bus from Chania (pronounced "khanyA") to Omalos. Two kilometers before Omalos, and visible on the right side of the road, is Tzani Cave (35.3491°N 23.9077°E), from which virtually all Cretan bats have been collected. I found single individuals or small groups of **greater** (of the distinctive *creticum* subspecies) and **Blasius's horseshoe bats**, **lesser myotis** (of the large Asian race *omari*), **long-fingered myotis**, **steppe myotis**, and **common bentwing**. The cave has two passages; the upper one is short and easy to explore, but the lower one has a pit near the entrance that is annoyingly difficult to pass through. Bring ~5 m of rope for rappelling; I didn't have it and so had to do some dicey rock-climbing that in hindsight wasn't very smart. The passage is almost 3 km long and very beautiful in places, but it gets increasingly technical as you proceed. I flipped lots of rocks just outside the cave entrance and found one **Zimmerman's shrew**, Greece's only endemic mammal (both endemic lizards of Crete were also present there). Forested hills above Omalos are good for night walks: I saw the island subspecies of **northern white-breasted hedgehog**, **Eurasian badger**, **stone marten**, **edible dormouse** (in oaks), **wood mouse**, and **Cape hare**. The main reason people come to Omalos is the famous Samaria Gorge, a beautiful, mostly shady 15.5 km hike with 1250 m elevation change. There are numerous stone cabins housing firefighting equipment along the trail; the one at Km 2.8 had two **lesser horseshoe bats** of the local *minus* race. At Kms 3-8 there are large plane trees in places where the trail crosses the streambed, often with hollows worth checking: I found a **Kolombatovic's long-eared bat** in a tree at Km 3.5. **Cretan wild goats** were hanging out at Km 3.8, Km 8, and (much shier individuals in more photogenic habitat) in the narrow part of the gorge at Kms 9-12. If you wait until dusk at Km 9-12, you can see huge flocks of **European freetails** emerge from rock crevices, and two interesting species of mice: **Cretan spiny mouse** (an endemic subspecies of Cairo spiny mouse, now known to originate from an ancient introduction) and **eastern broad-toothed mouse** (which occurs in Europe only on Crete and Rodos). After you pass the lower entrance at Km 13, the trail enters the village of Agia Roumeli. At Km 13.5 there was a large abandoned house with **Hanaki's pipistrelles** hiding in wall cracks. This recently described species is known to occur only on Crete and (a different subspecies) in a small part of

Libya. If you'd rather not climb the fence around that house, look for these bats roosting in the castle ruins on a hill above central Agia Roumeli, or watch them fly around the village (they are the only really tiny bats on Crete; the noticeably larger ones with similarly fluttering flight are **Kuhl's pipistrelles**). To return from Agia Roumeli to the road network, you need to hike back through the gorge or take a 2-hr ferry to Hora Sfakion. I saw a distant herd of **common dolphins** from the ferry; the captain told me that they are seen 3-4 times per month, and also that he had seen whales twice in many years; from his description they were probably sperm whales.

Another good place for bats on western Crete is Katolikos Monastery with surrounding caves, located on Acrotiri Peninsula near Chania. It reportedly has greater, lesser and Blasius's horseshoe bats, lesser, steppe and Geoffroy's myotis, Kuhl's pipistrelle, Kolombatovic's big-eared bat, common bentwing, and European freetail.

The steep hill (accessible at 35.3°N 25.17°E) overlooking Knossos Palace in Heraklion (August 2016) had **Cretan spiny mouse**, but here it was more difficult to find than in Samaria Gorge. There are also **European rabbits** of ssp. *cnossius* in the thickets at the base of the hill (look also for Cretan frogs in the reeds there). The old city of Heraklion has lots of crumbling old walls and vaulted ruins, so I expected it to be swarming with bats at dusk, but saw none.

Lesbos has Caucasian squirrel, Chios has Nehring's blind mole rat, while Rhodes has southern white-breasted hedgehog, the distinctive *anatolicus* race of Botta's serotine, eastern broad-toothed mouse, and a genetically distinct population of fallow deer. I've never been on either. In April 1993 I traveled by ferry from Haifa to Athens via Cyprus and Kos, but wasn't allowed on the islands due to having an Untermensch passport; the only marine mammals seen were a small pod of **Risso's dolphins** W of Kos. My friends who travel this route frequently reported seeing striped dolphins in Greek waters.

### Hungary

Despite their unusual history and non-Indoeuropean language (most closely related to Mansi of W Siberia), Hungarians have a mostly Western mentality: roads are excellent, everything works and you see hares and roe deer on roadsides.

Budapest (April 1993) has not just gorgeous architecture, but also nice nature reserves (where **Urals mouse** was surprisingly common, along with **wood mouse**) and bat caves. Pálvölgy Cave had lots of **greater** and **lesser horseshoe bats** and a few *oxygnathus* **lesser myotis**. There was a **European souslik** colony near the international airport terminal.

Aggtelek National Park (April 1993) in the far N is a large area of forest with beautiful caves. I used one of the caves to cross the border from Slovakia, and saw a few **common barbastelles** and **Daubenton's myotis** there. I also spotted a locally rare **root vole** (of isolated subspecies *mehelyi*) on a marshy stream bank at the edge of the forest.

Eger (April 1993) is a charming town famous for stopping the Ottoman conquest of Europe against all odds in 1552 (be sure to read *Eclipse of the Crescent Moon* by Geza Gardonyi if you are planning to visit). **Field voles** (ssp. *pannonicus*) were very common on grassy slopes below the walls. This is also one of the best places in Europe to see imperial eagles.

Lake Balaton (April 1993) has a nature reserve on its N shore (Balaton-felvidéki Nemzeti Park) where **European pine voles** (usually difficult to see) of endemic subspecies *transsylvanicus* were abundant. It is reportedly a good place to look for Eurasian otters and common polecats. There are also a few caves possibly worth exploring (they are listed as "strictly protected", but have electric lights and regular boat tours). I also saw a **golden jackal** there (ssp. *ecsedensis*).

Hortobagy National Park (Hortobágyi Nemzeti Park, pronounced "Horto-bUd" with soft "d", August 2016) is the largest remaining chunk of steppe west of Ukraine. Hungarian *puszta* (pronounced "pushta") is not the true feathergrass steppe found in more arid areas farther E, but what is called "meadow steppe" or "woodland-steppe" in Russia and "tallgrass prairie" in North America. It is also the westernmost part of the great grassland belt stretching almost all the way to the Sea of Japan, which is why many waves of nomads from the East have settled here over the centuries. Much of the park can't be accessed without a guide; official guides are very expensive and private guides are often booked weeks in advance. But for mammalwatchers it's not as important as for birders (unless you are after European souslik, for all its colonies are in closed areas). A night of driving and walking around the grasslands resulted in seeing **red foxes**, **badgers**, **northern white-breasted hedgehogs** (nominate ssp.), **Cape hares** (ssp. *transsylvanicus*), **roe deer**, and **field** (ssp. *pannonicus*) and **common** (nominate ssp.) **voles**. The fishponds area (47.6°N 21.06°E) had **boars** of the large pale *attila* subspecies, a **Eurasian water shrew**, a **Natterer's myotis** night-roosting under a gazebo roof, and **common noctules** flying around. For me the main reason for visiting the park was the largest herd of **Tauros cattle**, a stunningly beautiful animal produced in an ongoing attempt to recreate the extinct auroch. It is a bit similar to banteng in coloration and to Cape buffalo in behavior. The huge bulls are aggressive, so the area where they live is partially fenced off. To get there, take a bus to Wild Animals Park (Malomházi) from the museum across the road from the park visitor center in Hortobagy;

it's better to take the first bus and leave with the last one, as the herds are not always near the viewing area and you might have to sneak through the electric fence and walk for a while. This area is the best example of puszta in Hungary; I saw a beautiful **western birch mouse** (I think this should be the common name for the recently split *Sicista trizona*) there in broad daylight (at 47.55°N 21.1511°E). There were also introduced Przewalski's horses in the same area.

### Kosovo

Kosovo is a pain to visit legally, but its borders with Albania and Macedonia are not well guarded, so it's easy to enter the scenic Malet e Sharit Nature Reserve (August 2016) by hiking in from the latter. The main reason to do this is a colony of rare and little-known **Felten's vole** located just 500 m inside the border, at 42.1879°N 21.1757°E. I spent an hour there and easily spotlighted one running between burrows. If you meet border guards, just tell them you got lost: the area is difficult to navigate. The colony is much easier to access from the Kosovo side (5 min walk from the road to Dragomacë).

### Macedonia

A small country sparsely populated away from the capital area, Macedonia is mostly forested mountains with lots of mammals. Unfortunately, accessing the best part (the SW) takes forever as the roads leading there are narrow, winding, and chocked with slow-moving trucks. Note that if you don't have pan-European insurance ("the green card"), you'll be charged a minimum of 50+ euro at the border for one week of insurance coverage.

Lake Ohrid (known as "poor man's Baikal" for being Europe's oldest lake with lots of endemics, although the only lake mammal is Eurasian otter, very rare) and Lake Prespa (see the Greece account above for details) are overlooked by two nice national parks. Galičica National Park has a road (P504 from Trpejca to Oteshevo) leading to alpine meadows with views of both lakes. The rare S subspecies *grebenscikowi* of Martino's vole occurs there (look for burrows and droppings at the bottom of sinkholes); I didn't see the animal itself, but spotted a more common **snow vole** (ssp. *malyi*). There were also a **red fox** during the day and **roe deer** grazing at the tree line at night. Pellister National Park has dirt roads leading to even higher elevations (ask for directions to Baba Gora), and is said to have brown bear, gray wolf, boar, roe and fallow deer, and chamois, but I had time to explore only the lowest part near Magarevo. This area is the stronghold of the rare **Balkan mole**; I didn't expect it to be findable in the heat of the dry Mediterranean summer, and was happy to find a bunch of fresh molehills on a moist streambank in the forest (41.039°N 21.236°E). I opened a couple of tunnels and watched them for three hours without success, then flipped a few rocks and logs in the area and got a half-second view of a mole as it was retreating into a tunnel. While waiting, I saw a **red squirrel** (of brown ssp. *lilaeus*) and a **bank vole**.

### Moldova

A small rural country, made even smaller by Russian occupation of its more industrialized NE part (currently known as the self-proclaimed Transistria and ruled by a gang of career criminals in typical post-Soviet fashion), Moldova is a land of rolling hills, beech-oak forests, and rocky grasslands.

Kodry Nature Reserve (September-October 1990) is a forest near Chisinau. I easily found a **greater noctule** and a **forest dormouse** in bird nestboxes there (the reserve was once considered the best place in the former Soviet Union to look for both species), plus a few **Bechstein's myotis**. Introduced **sika deer** was common. At that time the "people's war on vermin" was still ongoing in more remote corners of the Soviet Union, and one of its components was an all-out souslik extermination campaign. I met a team of exterminators in a meadow outside the reserve; they were capturing **European** and **speckled** (ssp. *odessanus*) **sousliks** by "flushing" (filling their simple vertical burrows with water from a truck). Kodry is not officially open to visitors nowadays, but nearby is a new Orhei National Park with similar fauna.

Padure Grasslands (47.134°N 29.248°E; October 1990) used to be a good place to see **steppe polecats**; I found one in just one night of spotlighting on foot. There were lots of souslik burrows everywhere, but the animals were already hibernating. Watch for Eurasian eagle owls nesting in riverside crags, and for Orsini's ipers in the grasslands.

### Montenegro

Once known for the extreme militancy of its people (it was considered embarrassing, if not outright dishonorable, for a healthy male who was not a priest to live past the age of 40), Montenegro is a peaceful, beautiful country. Alas, I had only a few morning hours there, and visited Durmitor National Park. It is huge, with deep canyons and high mountains, and would take many days to explore properly. I saw a few **fallow** and **roe deer** and a **boar** (apparently of the nominate subspecies) from P14 which crosses the park, and a **common vole** (supposedly of subspecies *levis*) near the W entrance.



## Romania

Romania is a poor country, long plagued by pervasive corruption and bad infrastructure. But recently corruption has been largely put under control, and the first stretches of freeways have been built. It might soon become a great country for mammalwatching, as it has lots of excellent habitats both in the lowlands and in the mountains.

### Transylvania

Juc-Herghelie and Feiurdeni, two villages near Cluj-Napoca, are known for the recent rediscovery of an isolated population (possibly a subspecies) of the recently split western birch mouse (*Sicista trizona*). I spent a few hours around the former (46.7515°N 23.7512°E) and didn't see any birch mice, but saw a **Balkan blind mole** (its tunnel opened into a steep ravine, so the head was visible every time the animal pushed out another pile of dirt) and a **steppe mouse**.

Meziad Cave (Peștera Meziad, 46.7628°N 22.4787°E, August 2016) is a large showcave; the entrance hall can be visited without a tour at any time. In winter it reportedly has huge colonies of greater horseshoe bat, common pipistrelle, greater myotis and common bentwing, with many other species present (see Bücs et al. 2012). In summer there were lots of **common bentwings** and a few **common pipistrelles**. There are some nice grasslands in the area.

Leshului Valley Water Cave (Peștera cu Apă din Valea Leșului, 46.9167°N 22.683°E, August 2016) has the highest bat diversity in Romania, with 14 species, most of them recorded in winter. It is difficult to find, and is gated, so I could explore just the entrance area, where I found a single **particoloured bat**. While driving back to the highway I saw a female **European mouflon** run across the road, but didn't record the exact location.

### The South Carpathians

Piatra Craiului National Park (August 2016) is great for hiking; the best area for mammals is Zarnesti Gorge (Prăpăștiile Zărneștilor, trailhead at 45.5229°N 25.2723°E). At night I saw an **Alpine shrew** on the road just before the trailhead gate. The forest was swarming with dormice; I saw only a couple **edible dormice** and one **garden dormouse**, but heard also forest and hazel dormice. I was mostly looking for the Carpathian subspecies of **chamois**, the largest and most beautiful; they are usually higher up in summer, but I eventually met one as it was crossing the gorge on its way from one ridge to another. During the same hike I heard yelping from the forest upslope, walked there, and found a family of **grey wolves**; the two half-grown cubs disappeared immediately, but the parents remained long enough to be photographed. There are numerous caves in gorge walls; some but not all are gated. I explored two caves and found **Geoffroy's** and **Brandt's myotis** (both identifications a bit uncertain), plus one very noisy **Blasius's horseshoe bat** in a crack in a canyon wall. **Cape hares** in the area are of *karpathorum* subspecies; I saw a few in the fields between Zărnești and Bran.

Busegi National Park (August 2016) has high-elevation habitats accessible by cable car from Sinaia. In the alpine meadows there were **snow** (ssp. *ulpius*) and **Tatra** (undescribed Romanian subspecies) **voles**, both active in late morning thanks to cloudy weather with cold fog and wind. Below the tree line I briefly saw a **bank vole**, supposedly of ssp. *nageri*.

### The coastal plain

Danube Delta in NE Romania is mostly known for its birds, but has some nice mammals as well. In September 1989 I spent some time in Ukrainian part of the delta just across the border, and saw **lesser blind mole** (caught by a local farmer in Izmail and released by me), **southern birch mouse** (near Vilkovi), and lots of **wild boars** (pale *attila* subspecies) and **field voles** (ssp. *levernedii*) pretty much everywhere. European mink is said to occur in the Delta, too.

Cernavodă (August 2016) is a small city on the E bank of Danube River, crossed by E81 freeway. A grassy slope below Axiopolis Monastery (44.335°N 28.02°E) is an old site for marbled polecat, European souslik and southern birch mouse, but I didn't find either, and it seemed to me that the habitat is now too modified, probably due to the freeway construction. Floodplain forest on the low W bank of the river was still in good condition: I spent half an hour there watching a **European polecat** (of pale ssp. *rothschildi*) hunting **European pine voles** (supposedly of endemic subspecies *dacius*).

## Serbia

Serbia was the first European country since the Nazi Germany to create siege mentality among its people and use it to attempt territorial conquests and ethnic cleansings. Serbs and their neighbors paid dearly for this, but these policies have now been adopted by Russia on a much greater scale, so there's still plenty of anti-Western propaganda and people of Serbia still have a distorted view of their recent history. The least mountainous and thus the least interesting of the Balkan countries, Serbia has many caves worth checking out for bats in winter and a few national parks.

Tara National Park (August 2016) on the border with Bosnia is large and rugged; driving anywhere takes a lot of time, so plan on spending a few days there. It has Serbia's largest populations of grey wolf and brown bear, while wildcat and Eurasian otter are said to be common; there is also an isolated population of Alpine shrew. The park has some of very few forest patches in Europe that have never been logged, and a few hundred Serbian spruces, Europe's rarest and most beautiful conifers. The most accessible place to see the spruces is below the large dam in the south of the park (43.8634°N 19.4037°E); I found a **common shrew** under a log there. At night, beech forests were teeming with **edible dormice** and **wood mice**, while coniferous forests were mostly quiet except for an occasional **bank vole** (of pale ssp. *isticus*). Tiny grey bats flying along forest trails were apparently **Alcathoe myotis**; I found one of them night-roosting under the roof of a horse barn in the woods. Night drives were a bit disappointing, with just one **pine marten**, one **common polecat** (of nominate subspecies), a few **European hares**, and lots of housecats even in the most remote corners of the park.

Fruška Gora, a grassy slope around Čortanovci and Stražilovo near the Hungarian border, is said to have the largest population of Vojvodina blind mole rat, a chromosomal race of and possible split from lesser blind mole rat. The population has about a hundred animals inhabiting a 0.5 km<sup>2</sup> area. They are too rare and endangered to risk catching them with a shovel, so I'd recommend either joining a researcher studying them or looking for juveniles dispersing overland. This happens most often in late May-late July; a Ukrainian folk tale says that the best night to look for them is the night of Ivan Kupala's Day (July 6), and, indeed, I once saw a dispersing Podolsk blind mole rat on exactly that date.

### Slovenia

A beautiful gem of a country, Slovenia was the part of the region I enjoyed the most, and would really like to visit again, preferably in winter. It is particularly remarkable for outstandingly extensive karst, with countless caves almost everywhere. The caves are cold and are used by bats mostly in October-April. I visited two of them.

Križna Jama (August 2016) had only a couple of **lesser horseshoe bats**, although in winter there are said to be thousands. I checked a few abandoned houses in the area, and found the same species there. The cave was once an important wintering site for hundreds of cave bears; you can arrange a visit to a side gallery with lots of tracks and some bones.

Planina Jama (August 2016) had single **lesser** and **greater horseshoe bats**, a few small clusters of **steppe** and **pond myotis** (all of them within 100 m of the entrance), and one freshly dead (still with mites) common pipistrelle found almost 3 km inside. There were also hundreds of olms and thousands of white *Titanethes albus* isopods; look for common dippers outside the entrance and for endemic Slovenian wall lizards at the base of the old tower at the trailhead. You need a guide (available through the cave's website) to explore the cave and see the olms (better on the longer trip, which is still very cheap), but bats are mostly in the part before the gate, although this might not be so in winter.

Tomaž Jagar and Erika Ostanek, local herpetologists, took me to a hill above Postojna (August 2016) to look for horn-nosed and common vipers; while searching we stumbled upon a **brown bear**, but didn't see it well. At night I saw a *musculus* **house mouse** and a **stone marten** (nominate subspecies) on the road to Planina.

Nanos Mountains (August 2016) are a forested limestone range best accessed from Strane (ask for directions to Suhi Vrh). **Chamois** (of the Alpine subspecies) occur in small clearings in the forest, and **roe deer** are very common. While looking for chamois I met a surprisingly cooperative **wildcat** that climbed a tree and remained there. The summit of Suhi Vrh is pierced by a WWI-era tunnel (45.7963°N 14.0683°E), where I found an **Alpine shrew** at the entrance and a **serotine** in one of the side rooms. **Liechtenstein's pine voles** were very active at the summit at dusk. The only animal seen during night drives was a **wood mouse**. European hedgehog is said to occur at higher elevations.

Triglav National Park in the far N of Slovenia is reportedly one of the best places to see mammals of the High Alps, including northern bat, Alpine marmot, red squirrel of polymorphic *fuscoater* subspecies, snow vole (possibly of ssp. *wagneri*), bank vole of ssp. *nageri*, Alpine ibex, and mountain hare.

### Turkey

Once the only working democracy in the Muslim world, Turkey has turned into an Islamist dictatorship almost overnight. This great travel destination has become a bit unsafe to visit, particularly the SE. Turkey's small European part has some interesting natural areas, but I've never had a chance to explore them. Istanbul (October 1993) has two lines of ancient walls with numerous chambers where many bats reportedly roost in summer. I spent a night there and saw a **grey hamster** (ssp. *atticus*) in a shrubby patch under the wall, but no bats. Roach's mouse-tailed dormouse reportedly occurs around Edirne.

A few photos



Steppe boars (*Sus scrofa attila*), Hortobagy National Park, Hungary.



Carpathian chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra carpatica*), Piatra Craiuli National Park, Romania.



Common bentwing (*Miniopterus schreibersii*), Limnon Cave, Greece.



Edible dormice (*Glis glis*): left - Tara National Park, Serbia; right – Mt. Olympus, Greece.



Lesser myotis: left – *Myotis blythii omari*, Samaria National Park, Crete; right – *M. b. oxygnathus*, Acrocorinth, Greece.



Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia.



European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes crucigera*), Galičica National Park, Macedonia.



Brandt's myotis (*Myotis brandti*), Piatra Craiuli National Park, Romania.



European wildcat (*Felis silvestris silvestris*), Nanos Mountains, Slovenia.



Cretan wild goats (*Capra hircus cretica*), Samaria National Park, Crete.



Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), Zakynthos Island, Greece.



Common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*): left – Acrocorinth, Greece; right – Planina Cave, Slovenia (DOA).



European roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), Durmitor National Park, Montenegro.



Balkans red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris balcanicus*), Mount Olympus, Greece.



Lesser horseshoe bats: upper row – *Rhinolophus hipposideros hipposideros* (near Križna Jama, Slovenia); lower row – *R. h. minimus* (Samaria National Park, Crete).



Northern white-breasted hedgehog (*Erinaceus roumanicus*), Cemerna, Bosnia & Herzegovina.





Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*), Meziad Cave, Romania.



Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), Piatra Craiuli National Park, Romania.