

**14 hours at Anza Borrego-** 6:30 pm May 4th to 8:30 am May 5<sup>th</sup> 2019

When I first arrived I quickly saw a group of 3 white tailed antelope squirrels, which are certainly not hard to find at Palm Canyon. I looked under rocks for a while (more for herps) and after it was dark for a short while I saw this young black tailed jackrabbit. This is the youngest one I have ever seen, so kind of new in a way.



I didn't see a ton of mammals at first but I did see a cool sidewinder and lots of mating toads and frogs. I waited around the pond near the trailhead for bats but wasn't finding any so I decided to drive a bit.

I drove towards Digorgio road first and on the way out of palm canyon I did see a pocket mouse looking creature and a k-rat streak across the street. There were too many cars behind me to get a good look, so after walking that road for a while I continued to drive to Digorgio road. After seeing several scorpions I found this Bottas Pocket gopher wandering around the road and nearby areas.





I watched it for a good 10 minutes, it kept almost running into my shoes and then I decided to press on and headed towards the road to the slot canyon hike. Before I was off Digorgio road I got a good gecko sighting.



On the way to it I saw a pretty kingsnake and then by the time I got to the road it was very windy and a quite a bit colder(probably 11pm by then). I walked it for an hour and came up empty except one really well behaved Desert Kangaroo Rat





After this I headed to Scissors crossing and saw a couple of Krats and a mouse scurry across too quickly to identify. I decided to head back to Digorgio Road and walk around some. I quickly ran across this K-rat



Shortly after that I ran into what I consider to be the best spotting of the night, a Desert Kangaroo rat. It was very fast and at one point did a 5 foot straight up jump that was absolutely sick.





I watched it for as long as possible and then headed back to Palm canyon for one last look before first light and to try for Bighorn sheep in the canyon. On the way to the trailhead I found this deer mouse who was fairly cooperative.



I checked the pond again once I got to palm canyon trailhead and found what I guess were yellow bats and maybe canyon bats. I walked around some and saw some sort of mouse I couldn't get close enough to and then started the trail to the oasis right after first light at 5 something am. By about 6am I was at the oasis and right before heading back I had an awesome encounter with 4 bighorn rams, who I watched for an hour. I got to see them eat, scramble, and be generally visible most of the time. It was a very cool and dramatic backdrop to observe them in .







I left the oasis feeling super lucky and before too far some other hikers told me there was a family of sheep by the pond about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the trailhead. I was fortunate to see a mom, dad, and baby sheep right next to the trail.





This was only the 2<sup>nd</sup> time I have ever seen a lamb and the only time up close



They didn't stick around for too long but it was an awesome experience. Before I left for home at about 8:30 I saw a couple of black tailed jackrabbits and also a family of quail.



It's not easy but I really like doing the dusk to dawn schedule for warm months in Anza Borrego, I tried it another time last year and it was really great then too.

Mammals I saw overall were:

1. Bottas pocket gopher
2. Desert Woodrat
3. American Deer Mouse
4. Desert Kangaroo rat
5. Merriam's kangaroo rat
6. White tailed antelope squirrel
7. Black tailed jackrabbit
8. Desert Bighorn Sheep
9. Desert Cottontail
10. Yellow bat ( I think)
11. Canyon Bat (I think)
12. A couple of identified mice
13. California Ground Squirrel

Can't wait to try this with even better weather.