



Armenia Mai 2018

Sophie and Manuel Baumgartner

General Informations

We went to Armenia for a voluntary project (Barev trails) with the WWF Armenia. We still did as much mammal watching as possible (night drives on every night). When we did, we were accompanied by wildlife expert of the WWF and guide Alik (amalkhasyan@wwfcaucasus.org). Alik is probably the best guide we had so far: He is very passionate, has the right attitude and always tried his best to show us mammals. We could really feel that he enjoyed being out as much as we did and he wasn't shy to show us his favourite mammal watching places. We are very grateful to be able to share this precious information on mammal watching. Alik has tons of knowledge mainly about mammals but also about plants and other animals as well as a great general knowledge. The only side back is that his English is not fluent, but we never had any trouble to communicate.

We will go back to Armenia next year (in the very promising Khosrov forest where there are good chances to see the eurasian lynx and brown bear) and are already looking forward to this time.

Tatev

In Armenia we met the most welcoming people so far. The food is great there is a great historical heritage and most importantly true wilderness: No need to look for a long time where to put a camera trap so that people wouldn't be photographed by it or find it. Sadly, hunting is not yet well regulated and out of a few hundred wolves in the country 200 can be shot in a year. Indian porcupines are a delicacy and are therefore threatened in Armenia. There is much education to be done but the WWF is working hard to get there. Armenia is a small country and different national parks and protected areas are therefore reachable in quiet a short time. We can therefore strongly recommend visiting this country 😊

We visited three very promising habitats.

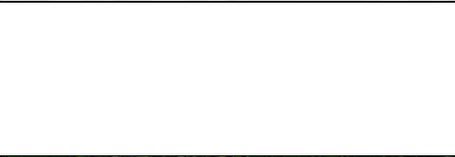
- The first habitat was in steep forested slope of Vorotan River canyon east of the village of Tatev. We found lots of Bezoar goat, Wild boar and Porcupine tracks. This is a walk where you can scan around but also quietly walk into a very wild forest (caution: there are only animal trails). Camera traps of this place also revealed eurasian badger, red fox, roe deer, golden jackal, grey wolf, jungle cat, wild cat, brown bear, eurasian lynx and leopard in the past.

- The second place was in a more arid habitat in the rocky slope north of the Devil's Bridge Natural Monument at 1250m, perfect for the eurasian badger, jungle cat, golden jackal and wild cat. This is also a good place to scan around for bezoar goats.
- Finally, we went high to the Tarkatar Mt at the eastern limit of the Bargushat Mountain Rangeon at 2850m mainly to look for brown bears. We definitively discovered lots of tracks and this beautiful place is also home to grey wolf, red fox, lynx and a passage of the very elusive caucasian leopard!

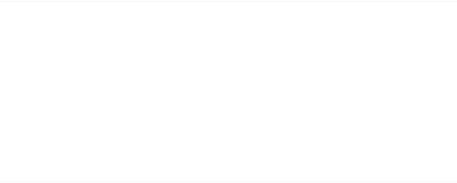


Mammals (seen or evidence found)

List of mammals that can be found in Tatev surroundings: **Seen**, *tracks* / *evidence*.

<p>Southern white - breasted hedgehog</p>	<p><i>Erinaceus concolor</i></p>	<p>One sighting during one night drive.</p>	
<p><i>Indian porcupine</i></p>	<p><i>Hystrix indica</i></p>	<p>We saw a whole lot of tracks of this elusive animal everywhere between the Vorotan river and 1400 m altitude.</p>	
<p>European hare</p>	<p><i>Lepus europaeus</i></p>	<p>Sighting of three individuals on one night drive at around N 39°24'03.2 E 46°12'00.1.</p>	
<p>Stone Marten</p>	<p><i>Martes foina</i></p>	<p>Seen one on a night walk around the field of Tatev village and again on a night drive around Aghvani village.</p>	
<p><i>Eurasian badger</i></p>	<p><i>Meles meles</i></p>	<p>Our cameratraps photographed four different individuals.</p>	

			
Brown bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	<p>Probably seasonally different (although the males don't hibernate). We looked for them high up at almost 3000m altitude and found lots of tracks.</p> <p>A group of our volunteer saw a bear close to Devil's Bridge. Since they unfortunately didn't have any binoculars they are 80% sure of their sighting.</p>	
Grey wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	<p>One sighting of a young male nearby Aghvani village and older excrements found on nearly 3000m above sea level.</p>	 
Golden jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	<p>One sighting on a night walk and then two individuals on a night drive between Tatev and Aghvani village.</p>	

<p>Red fox</p>	<p><i>Vulpes vulpes</i></p>	<p>We saw three individuals on a night drive around N 39°24'03.2 E 46°12'00.1 and lots of excrements everywhere we went.</p>	
<p>Wild cat</p>	<p><i>Felis silvestris</i></p>	<p>Sighting of two different individuals again on the road between Tatev and Aghvani village during a night drive.</p>	
<p>Wild goat (Bezoar ibex)</p>	<p><i>Capra aegagrus aegagrus</i></p>	<p>We found lots of tracks, some excrements and sleeping places. Finally, on the last day they were spotted around Tatev. A good spotting place is the Bell Chapel at N 39°23'22.2 E 46°16'40.1.</p> <p>We also photographed two different individuals with our camera traps.</p> <p>One more individual was spotted around Arpi village on the way back to Yerevan.</p>	

			
<i>Wild boar</i>	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	<p>A couple of sleeping places were spotted in the forest around Tanzatap village and two different individuals were photographed on our camera traps in the mountains between Tatev and Devils bridge.</p>	 

Mammals (not seen nor evidence found)

As you can see we were not able to find any **rodent** (besides porcupine tracks). We heard that they were definitively around though. We found lots of signs that they were around: Nutshells, turned over stones from bears ect.

We saw a couple of **bats** which we were sadly not able to identify. We saw a couple flying around during night drives and a colony was even living behind a signboard fixed on a house in Tatev village.

Caucasian shrew	<i>Sorex satunini</i>	
Caucasian pygmy shrew	<i>Sorex volnuchini</i>	
Transcaucasian water shrew	<i>Neomys teres</i>	Can be found nearby the river of Vorotan.
Lesser shrew	<i>Crocidura suaveolens</i>	
Bicolored shrew	<i>Crocidura leucodon</i>	
Greater Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	
Mediterranean horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus euryale</i>	
Lesser horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	
Lesser mouse-eared bat	<i>Myotis blythi</i>	
Geoffroy's bat	<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	
Whiskered bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	
Golden bat	<i>Myotis aurascense</i>	
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctule</i>	
Lesser noctule	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	
Botta's Serotine	<i>Eptesicus bottae</i>	
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	
Kuhl's pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus kuhlii</i>	
Mountain long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus macrobullaris</i>	
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	
Schreiber's bat	<i>Miniopters schreibersii</i>	
Williams's Jerboa	<i>Allactaga williamsi</i>	
Transcaucasian mole vole	<i>Ellobius lutescens</i>	
European snow vole	<i>Chionomys nivalis</i>	
Common vole	<i>Microtus arvalis</i>	
Social vole	<i>Microtus socialis</i>	
Brandt's hamster	<i>Mesocricetus brandti</i>	Found high up in the mountains.
European water vole	<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	
Grey Dwarf Hamster	<i>Cricetulus migratorius</i>	
Macedonian Mouse	<i>Mus macedonicus</i>	
House mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>	
Brown rat	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	
Pygmy field mouse	<i>Apodemus uralensis</i>	
Steppe field mouse	<i>Apodemus witherbyi</i>	
Forest dormouse	<i>Dryomys nitedula</i>	They can be found on fruit trees around Tatev village.
Edible dormouse	<i>Glis glis</i>	

Persian jird	<i>Meriones persicus</i>	
Eurasian otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Can be found in the river of Vorotan.
Least weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	
Marbled polecat	<i>Vormela peregusna</i>	
Jungle cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>	
Eurasian lynx	<i>Lynx lynx</i>	
Leopard (Caucasian leopard)	<i>Pantera pardus ciscaucasica</i>	
European roe deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	
Mouflon (Armenian mouflon)	<i>Ovis orientalis gmelini</i>	

Birds

Carrion Crow	
House Sparrow	
White Wagtail	
Blue Tit	
Wallcreeper	
Eurasian Jay	
Tawny Owl	
Red-billed Chough	
Black Redstart	

<p>Red-backed Shrike</p>	
<p>Dark morph Steppe Buzzard</p>	
<p>Egyptian Vulture</p>	
<p>Golden Eagle</p>	
<p>Eurasian Griffon</p>	
<p>Caspian Snowcock</p>	

Bearded Vulture



Long-tailed Tit



Great Tit



Water Pipit





Picture by Lukas Bärlocher

sophie.betrisey@bluewin.ch









