

## CALIFORNIA-ARIZONA 2017

SEPTEMBER 8TH-October8th

During this trip I visited places regularly visited by mammalwatchers. So I won't give informations about this places. To prepare this trip I used Mammal Watching Website and the Field guide to Finding Mammals in North America of Vladimir Dinets.

### I-CALIFORNIA

California Ground Squirrels and dead Striped Skunks (I never saw the last one alive in this state) were regularly seen. Dead Raccoons were also several times seen.

#### MONTEREY:

- I was with my friend Dominique ROCHE and his wife Rebecca.
- 12hours with Monterey Whale Watch was a little disappointing for me. Of course I had never seen so many whales, but the nearly lack of dolphins (specially Northern Right Whale Dolphin) or beaked whales was frustrating. I saw many Hump-backed whales, 5 Blue Whales and 2 Fin Whales, Risso's Dolphins (a group of +- 30), 2-3 (very bad sightings) Pacific White Sided Dolphins and 2 very distant Harbor Porpoise. In the harbor there were a lot of California Sea Lions, several Harbor Seals and 10+ Sea Otters.

#### YOSEMITE NP:

Crowded except if you walk. I have always seen that in american national parks. I crossed the park from west to east and slept outside.

I visited only the eastern part, walking both mornings to Mono Pass. I saw Mule Deer, Alpine Chipmunk and 3 American Pika (above tree line), Panamint Chipmunk, Lodgepole Chipmunk, Golden Mantled Ground Squirrel, Belding's Ground Squirrels (many), Douglas's Squirrels (common), Mule Deers and droppings of hares (above the tree line). No sign of Black Bears in a meadow I was told 2 females with cubs were regularly seen; same for Yellow Bellied Marmot (snow was present very late this year and it may explain that).

#### LAKE MONO:

Least Chipmunk (very common), Desert and Mountain Cottontails, signs of Broad footed Mole (area at the north west border of the lake) and several Kangaroo-Rats.

#### SEQUOIA NP:

Another crowded place where I stayed a few hours (I wanted to see White headed Woodpeckers). Golden Mantled Ground Squirrels were common. I camped in the State Park close by and got an American Marten looking if there was food in the metallic box where you must store food.

Yellow Bellied Marmot: 2.

Again no bear (many scats) at a meadow where a ranger told me a female with cub was regular. Scats also at Mineral King.

#### CARRIZO PLAIN NM:

One of the highlight of the trip. By day I saw 15+ Nelson's Antelope Squirrel, California Ground Squirrel and 5 Pronghorns and by night hundreds of Kangaroo Rats (Giant, Hermann's and Fresno (the good rains of the spring explains their huge number), 14 Kit Fox the first night (3 of them pished and coming close to the car), at least 20 Coyotes (day and night; twice I pished them and got them very close to the car) and Black Tailed Jackrabbits..

#### SANTA CRUZ ISLAND:

I spent 1 night there specially for Western Pygmy Skunk that I didn't see. I smelt one. I saw at least 14 different Island Gray Fox, 1 Blue Whale, a group of Long Beaked Common Dolphins, 1 Northern Elephant Seal and 1 Harbor Seal.

#### VENTURA:

North of the city I saw 10+ Brush Rabbit.

#### MONO BAY:

23 Sea Otters including a female grooming her dead baby.

#### SAN SIMEON:

300 Northern Elephant Seals; California Sea Lions and Harbor Seals.

#### NACIMIENTO FERGUSON ROAD:

By day : several Western Grey Squirrels. By night: no mammal. But early morning when I left the place where I camped there was a freshly dead Western Spotted Skunk. What a pity!

#### PINNACLES NM:

I stopped here for no more than 1 hour.

Desert Cottontail.

#### LOS PADRES ANTIONAL PARK

I went there to see California Condors and I saw 5, plus 2 Merriam's Squirrels.

#### EASTERN PART MOJAVE DESERT:

1 White Tailed Antelope Squirrel.

## **II ARIZONA**

#### ORGAN PIPE NM:

At this place nasty White-throated Wood Rats are known to build their nest near the engine of cars, causing sometimes a lot of damage. I was unfortunate to get 1 and was unable to sleep. Even I chased it several times, it always came back. Finally I parked my car a little away. But it had begun to do some damage. I spent only 1 night and saw only birds.

You have the right to go everywhere. It is just forbidden to camp near the border.

#### BUENOS AIRES GAME RESERVE

3 males Sonoran Pronghorns approached by walking were the target at this place. I saw also Coyotes and Mule Deers, but missed the White Nosed Coatis despite a lot of fresh signs at Ariviaca trail. Also footprints of Collared Pecaries.

#### MADERA CANYON:

A very disappointing place. By day I also 10+ Arizona Grey Squirrels (at both lodges with feeders along side the road) and a few Rock Squirrels. By night only Mexican Long-Tongued Bats and North American Long-Nosed Bats at the feeders. Along the access road: several Eastern Cottontails, 1 Virginia Opossum and 2 Antelope Jackrabbits. Coue's White Tailed deers were common. Several persons told me that White Nosed are seen sometimes.

I dead Collared Peccary west of Madera Canyon.

#### CHIRACAHUA NM

Plenty of signs of White Nosed Coatis (I was told they were in the camping 1 week ago).

4 Striped Skunks and 1 Hooded; 2 Cliff Chipmunks and 1 Gray Collared. A dead Bobcat west of the NM.

#### CAVE CREEK CANYON:

Another great place.

Mexican Fox Squirrels: along South Fork Road and Trail and 1 close to the visitor centre.

Several Rock Squirrels, Eastern Cottontails, 1 Gray Fox (rabies was reported on this species), several fresh scats of American Black Bear, old signs of White Nosed Coatis, 2 or 3 Hooded Skunks (close to the Southwestern Research Station) at least 6 Striped Skunks (seen every night), 1 Collared Peccary on the road just west of Portal in the middle of the afternoon, several Coue's White Tailed Deers.

At the visitor center and at the research station I was told that the 4 species of Skunks of western USA had been caught last summer in the property next to the research station. The visitor center advised me to look for Western Pygmy Skunk in the village, what I did without success.

#### SELIGMAN AND AUBREY VALLEY

Thanks to my friend Dominique ROCHE I was booked as a volunteer with the Game and Fish Department for catching Black Footed Ferrets during one night. We were 3 cars of volunteers. In the car I was we saw one very close. It disappeared in a den and we never caught it. Three other ferrets

were caught during the night. And with another volunteer we released 2 at dawn. I must also thank the people of the Game and Fish department, Jennifer Cordova and her colleague who were very helpful.

By night I saw also Eastern and Desert Cottontails, Coyotes, Black Tailed Jackrabbits. The others saw 1 American Badger and 1 Kit Fox. By day I got Coyotes again, 3 Pronghorns, a lot of Gunnison's Prairie Dog and Kangaroo Rats (Ord's?).

## GRAND CANYON NP

This time I visited only South Rim. I stayed less than a day, tired of the number of people. I saw an Elk, 1 Mule Deer, 1 Albert's Squirrel and a few Cliff Chipmunks.

I tried both airports for Spotted Ground Squirrels (Vladimir Dinets mentioned there around the airport, but they are 2 airports. Because of the soil I think the southern one is the right place. But it may have been too late in the year.

## III NEW MEXICO

### ANIMAS VALLEY:

When I was in Cave Creek, one afternoon I went to Animas to buy petrol. I stayed the afternoon there. By the end of the day I drove south intending to look for White Sided Jackrabbit. By the beginning the road was quiet. At dusk I began to spotlight but it became very busy with the border patrols and I left.

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