

MAMMALS OF THE CHIRICAHUAS (& SURROUNDS), AZ & NM
Venkat Sankar and Nicole Haseley (videos) – September 8-11, 2023

Southeast Arizona and the adjacent “bootheel” region of SW New Mexico are one of the very finest places in North America for mammal watching. This is particularly true of the region surrounding the Chiricahua Mountains, where the Rockies, Sierra Madre Occidental, Sonoran Desert, and Chihuahuan Grasslands meet, generating exceptionally high mammalian diversity. Thanks to the presence of numerous rare, primarily Mexican species that only occur in this part of the US, the Chiricahuas are very popular with naturalists. So much so that I often felt that I was the only US-based mammal watcher who hadn’t been there!

I had my reasons, or rather excuses. I’d already seen a Ringtail in CA, I thought I’d see all those species in Mexico, or maybe it’s a tad overrated. And now that I’m back, how wrong I was! The Chiricahuas are mammal watching paradise – I had my best and second-best nights of mammal watching in North America on this trip, and as I write this, I already wish I was back.

PLANNING AND STRATEGY:

The best times to visit SE AZ for mammals seem to be May and the tail end of the monsoon season in late Aug-mid Sep. Given my own schedule constraints, I chose the monsoon. The monsoon rains cause slightly cooler temperatures and a rush of activity and breeding for many species (thanks to vegetation growth and insect emergences). This season is often termed Arizona’s “Second Spring” as a result. This year was atypical as rodent numbers were very high thanks to excellent rains last summer and winter, but the monsoons largely failed so it was



The attractive Mexican Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus nayaritensis*) is one of several primarily Mexican species that just makes it into SE Arizona

very dry and about 10F hotter than usual. On the flip side, vegetation was lower than expected, which eased spotting. Normally such a drought is bad news as very hot, dry conditions apparently reduce activity of many species, from pocket mice to spotted & hog-nosed skunks. But thankfully, some rain did come through about 2 weeks before my visit, which according to the people at Southwestern improved wildlife activity. So, as I’d also scheduled my trip over a period of little to no moon, the conditions were about as optimal as one could hope for.

Normally I’d put the acknowledgements at the end of the report, but so many people gave me info that contributed to the success of my trip that I’d be remiss if I didn’t recognize them first. So, a big thank you in particular to Jose Gabriel Martinez Fonseca, Brian Keelan, Josh Covill,

Peggy Faucher, and Adam Walley for their detailed and always accurate advice. It was like I could plan a trip to a new place for me while already knowing it like the back of my hand.



The Chiricahuas are an outstanding place to see a wide diversity of rodents, like the Ord's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys ordii*)



And this Western Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*)

Daytime mammal watching here can be a little sparse, and given my deep interest in bats and rodents, I opted to prioritize night work. We did night trips every night lasting 6-10 hours and they were always productive. I pre-planned the routes, timed site visits based on each target species' period of peak activity, and adjusted plans based on real-time, local info. Generally, we noticed that mammal activity was highest from ~5PM-1AM and dropped markedly afterward. Surprisingly, I didn't notice a pre-dawn (3-5AM) peak in kangaroo rat and pocket mouse activity, which I find in California. Pocket mice in particular were much less common than expected for some unknown reason, and we generally saw few to none. I've been getting really into bat acoustics over the last year or so, so I also worked in a fair bit of time "relaxing" in a promising spot to watch and record bats, especially toward the end of the trip. Besides being a break from rushing around like a madman, it was great to grow my skills and knowledge with a variety of species not present in California (the area has the US's highest bat diversity). I could already see my ID skills improving toward the end of the trip, especially for tricky groups like the 40kHz *Myotis*.

The Portal area is surprisingly remote and there aren't that many nearby options for food, and especially gas. For gas, my recommendation is to fill up anytime your fuel level goes below $\frac{1}{4}$ tank, and $\frac{1}{2}$ if you're going well off the beaten track (e.g. Geronimo Trail). Most previous reports seem to self-cater at Cave Creek Ranch, but being a lazy and bad cook and trying to maximize efficiency, we chose to stay at Southwestern Research Station (SWRS) as they provide 3 meals/day – important in an area where dining options are sparse (though a friend's report of "common"



White-sided Jackrabbit (*Lepus callotis*) is another major specialty of the region, with only ~60 left in the US

Spotted Skunks there last year was admittedly an equally important factor!). The rates (at \$100ppn) are probably the area's most affordable, considering the included meals.

SWRS is run by the American Museum of Natural History as a base for research and field courses, but outside the busy summer season keen naturalists can stay. You'd be advised to book a few months in advance, though, for visits in Apr-May or Sep, as the station can fill up with birders and herpers. In all, I can't recommend SWRS highly enough! The accommodation and food are great, everyone is very friendly, and the grounds are full of mammals. All this is to say – don't fret if your desired accommodation choice is fully booked. I think any lodging in the general area (Cave Creek Ranch, SWRS, George Walker House, etc.) would be a great base for a mammal trip to the Chiricahuas.

DAILY ACCOUNT:

(9/8/23) We arrived in Tucson airport at 12:30PM, an hour later expected thanks to a delayed flight from SF. We picked up a rental Nissan Titan from Hertz and began our journey to the Chiricahuas. While rather large and certainly not fuel-efficient, the high clearance, powerful engine, 4WD, and large fuel tank gave us the confidence to explore some off the beaten track parts of the region without fear of car trouble or flat tires. We stopped en route in Willcox to top the tank and went to the golf course (32.2367, -109.8247), where we saw a **Spotted Ground Squirrel** well – the first mammal of the trip. Continuing onward, we saw another **Spotted Ground Squirrel** and a **Desert Cottontail** on NM-80 just before Rodeo, followed by a **Rock Squirrel** and some **White-tailed Deer** (of the small, grayish ssp. *couesi*) in Cave Creek Canyon. The latter is an omnipresent species in the Chiricahuas and I won't mention further sightings.



Spotted Ground Squirrel (*Xerospermophilus spilosoma*) is easy to see in Mexico but rather uncommon and localized in the US



Cliff Chipmunks (*Neotamias dorsalis*) were abundant

We checked in at SWRS, our accommodation for the next 3 nights. As we went for dinner, a **Desert Cottontail** (ID by smallish body, relatively large ears, and orange nape) was grazing on the lawn. Holzner's Cottontail is also confirmed at SWRS, but I never saw any here.

Canyon Bats foraged over the clearing at dusk and in the first 20 minutes after nightfall, the hummingbird feeders were overrun with **Mexican Long-tongued Bats**, a key target of mine ([video](#)). This seemed to be the only nectar bat present here this early in the night, based on my photos.

We then went to the Portal Rd for a night drive from 8-9:30PM, seeing 3 **Brush Mice** en route in the canyon. Around mi6 of the Portal Rd (where I'd scouted out their burrow mounds on the drive in), we had good views of 3 **Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rats**, a spectacular species and key target. We also saw 2 **Gray Foxes**, a *Mephitis* skunk we couldn't ID, many smaller **Merriam's/Ord's Kangaroo Rats**, 2 **Coyotes**, several **Desert Cottontails**, a **Desert Pocket Mouse**, and 2 **Western Small-footed Myotis** (near Portal Store; ID'd by acoustics + visual features) in this area.



A Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys spectabilis*) and its truly spectacular tail

On the return trip through the canyon, we added a few **Striped Skunks**, another **Gray Fox**, many 40kHz *Myotis* (including a possible Southwestern *Myotis*), and then a lovely **Ringtail**, which I spotlit from the bridge on South Fork Rd. This was one of Nicole's most-wanted species, and we both enjoyed watching it for several minutes. We went back to SWRS at 11PM to look for *Leptonycteris*, but nectar bat activity had died down by now. However, I got a great surprise as an **Allen's Big-eared Bat** flew over the clearing, giving good flight views and recordings of its diagnostic call (a low, linear FM sweep with high slope). We also added **Big Brown** and **Mexican Free-tailed Bats** here. Very pleased, we did another night drive through the canyon and our luck continued with a great



sighting of a **White-backed Hog-nosed Skunk** at ~12:30AM near Stewart CG, quickly followed by the trip's first confirmed **Merriam's Kangaroo Rats**. 2 of them were on rocky soil, surprisingly far up the canyon near Idyllwild CG. We continued to Portal, where we saw a **Cactus Mouse** and a young **White-throated Woodrat** close-up ([video](#)), then went to Foothills Rd to look for pocket mice. No luck on that front, but we did see (and record) a **Western Yellow Bat** at the wash 0.5mi in. We returned to SWRS at 2:30AM totally exhausted but thrilled from a great first night that already produced many of our most-wanted species for the area.

(9/9/23) A quick pre-breakfast walk produced a few **Cliff Chipmunks** and very brief glimpses of presumed **Yellow-nosed Cotton Rats**. Based on advice from others at the station, we set off at 8AM for South Fork to look for **Mexican Fox Squirrels** and saw 2 well along Cave Creek Rd just before the turnoff ([video](#)). No more at South Fork, but we did see **Rock Squirrels** and **Cliff Chipmunks** there, as well as another **Mexican Fox Squirrel** back at SWRS upon our return.

We took a long nap after lunch and set off for Animas around 5:30PM, where we planned to do a very long night drive. On the way, we saw **Harris's Antelope Squirrel** well at the cattle grate just past Cave Creek Ranch. Entering the Animas Valley at dusk, we saw many **Mule Deer**, 3 **Hispid Cotton Rats** (Chihuahuan Desert ssp. *berlandieri*), and a few short-tailed *Peromyscus*.

Once darkness fell, the road was overrun with kangaroo rats. Over the course of the night, we must have seen ~150, with ~50 **Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rats** ([video1](#), [2](#)), and over 100 of both smaller species ([video](#)) – **Merriam's** and **Ord's Kangaroo Rats** (confirmed by counting toes on roadkills). The latter were associated with deep sandy soils and seemed to have a darker, more olivaceous back, darker lower tail stripe, and a shorter tail than the gravel-dwelling Merriam's. Watching so many of the charismatic Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rats was totally unexpected and a huge highlight, as many were quite confiding. If you go, PLEASE drive at 25mph or less to avoid hitting them or worse, White-sided Jackrabbits.



This Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis*) was the last mammal we saw in the Animas Valley, just before entering town

Continuing slowly into the southern part of the valley, we added **Silky Pocket Mouse**, a few short-tailed *Peromyscus*, 2 **Coyotes**, **Mexican Free-tailed** (plus maybe another, lower molossid) and **Hoary Bats**, and then a very small mouse which darted off the road edge into weedy bunchgrass. I relocated it in the thermal scope and watched it in the light, appreciating its short bicolored tail and blackish dorsal blaze – a **Plains Harvest Mouse!** A huge surprise, as I was certainly not expecting to see this rarity. Shortly after, we got great views of the first of 5+ **Western Harvest Mice** climbing up roadside sunflower stalks for comparison (located by thermal scoping). We then drove the first few miles of the Geronimo Trail for Collared Peccary and Rock and Hispid Pocket Mice, but struck out save for more kangaroo rats, **Desert Cottontails**, and the trip's first **Black-tailed Jackrabbits**.

We continued toward the Lake Cloverdale basin as a rain shower began around 11PM. In the very dry hills near mi32, we had a great sighting of a white-phase **Hooded Skunk** with a big neck ruff, white back, and a remarkably long, fluffy white tail peppered with blackish grizzle. Once we entered the open, tall Chihuahuan grasslands at mi34, I began spotlighting for the rare White-sided Jackrabbits. Shortly afterward, the game warden of Diamond A Ranch pulled us over; once



These photos may be distant and blurry, but they're priceless to me as I've waited 10 years to see a real, wild Puma (*Puma concolor*) in the American West

he confirmed that we weren't poaching, he gave us permission to spotlight from the road. As we turned the car around for another pass of the road at mi38, the headlights lit up a pair of beautiful **White-sided Jackrabbits** just off the road! We also saw 2 **Pronghorn**, at least 5 **Black-tailed Jackrabbits**, and a few tiny dark mice (I guess either *Perognathus* or *Baiomys*) in this area.

As I was expecting, we were stopped by the Border Patrol soon after we started the drive back. The officer was friendly and professional, and after checking our IDs radioed his colleagues so we weren't stopped again.

It had been a great night and we were really pleased with our sightings, but the Animas Valley had a huge surprise in store. Near Clanton Draw, I spotted a large mammal walking along the edge of brushy riparian woodland in the thermal scope. I'd seen dozens of Mule Deer in similar situations over the course of the night, but lighting it up, it was clearly a carnivore (my first thought was a big Coyote). When I aimed for a record shot through my 300mm lens, my heart skipped a beat as I saw a large felid and the unmistakable face of a **Puma!** Speechless, I watched it for the next minute as it stared back, then turned and walked along the forest edge, giving a good side view before it disappeared never to be seen again. The fruition of a childhood dream and my top mammal sighting of the year, easily beating out a Long-beaked Echidna!

Overjoyed, we carried on toward the Double Adobes area of the central Animas Valley late into the night, adding 2 **White-throated Woodrats** en route. Here, we [videoed](#) a **Chihuahuan Grasshopper Mouse** at close range followed by good views of another short-tailed *Peromyscus*. I was able to confirm this animal as a **White-footed Mouse** (ssp. *arizonae*), its paler brownish gray color and bicolored but less furry tail separating it from the similar Southern Deer Mouse (a roadkill of which I was able to study later in the night for comparison). In the last 1-2mi before Animas, we saw a **Kit Fox** well before taking a short rest in a gas station parking lot.

We struck out on Rock Pocket Mouse in the lava flow W of Animas and drove back to Portal, watching a **Coyote** pup catch a short-tailed *Peromyscus* (which nearly escaped) on the Portal Rd, 2 **White-throated Woodrats**, and barely avoiding running over several **Black-tailed Jackrabbits**. At the Portal store, we observed and recorded a **Cave Myotis** before returning to SWRS at the ungodly hour of 5:30AM, still floating on the Puma high.



Top: Mexican Long-tongued Bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*); Bottom: Lesser Long-nosed Bat (*Leptonycteris yerbabuena*); note the differing uropatagium shapes

(9/10/23) The previous long night merited a lazy start to the day, and we only left SWRS around 10AM for a visit to Cave Creek Ranch in search of the resident White-nosed Coati. The proprietor mentioned that it hadn't visited yet, and an hour's wait only produced **Cliff Chipmunks** and **Rock Squirrels**. We then returned to SWRS for lunch and a nap.

Around 5PM, we were poking around the creek between the rooms and cafeteria when Nicole spotted a **Yellow-nosed Cotton Rat!** A bit of quiet waiting produced great views ([video](#)) of this distinctive species foraging unperturbed along the mostly dry creek. We scouted the Trans-Mountain Rd between SWRS and Turkey Creek from 5-6PM, seeing 5 Montezuma Quail, **Rock Squirrels**, and I had a very brief glimpse of an **American Black Bear** as it darted off the road.

I wanted to focus on a few bat targets early in the evening so based on the advice of others at the station, set up to record bats at the "swimming pool" at 6:30PM (a popular netting spot on the station's field courses). Pretty soon the usual **Canyon, Big Brown, and Mexican Free-tailed Bats** arrived as well as several **California Myotis**, allowing me to contrast their appearances and flight styles through careful close-range viewing as they drank from the pool. A couple of relaxed **Striped Skunks** came to drink and I also had a great view of a **Hoary Bat**, seeing its distinctively colored wings well. Nicole was keeping track of the hummingbird feeders, and around 7:40PM, like a switch, **Lesser Long-nosed Bats** arrived. Their numbers quickly grew until they dominated the feeders, vastly outnumbering the **Mexican Long-tongued Bats**, and were very fun to watch. As we prepared to leave the station around 8PM, I heard loud bat calls and got great flight views and recordings of **3 Big Free-tailed Bats** shooting over the clearing, no doubt in transit from a roost site in the nearby cliffs. Fantastic!

We continued into the canyon, where I wanted to record bats in the oak/sycamore riparian habitat. Thanks to the drought, it was a bit difficult to find sites with high bat activity as most of the Cave Creek channels were totally dry, but we eventually found a good spot at the bridge near Sunny Flag CG. In an hour of walking and fixed recording, we observed plenty of **Big Brown and Mexican Free-tailed Bats**, a few **Hoary Bats**, and dozens of 40kHz *Myotis* – I eventually got enough of a sample of decent quality calls, allowing me to conclude that we found mostly **Western Small-footed Myotis**, with smaller numbers of **Long-legged** and very likely **Cave Myotis** here. Another highlight was



Brush Mouse (*Peromyscus boylii*) and Yellow-nosed Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon ochrognathus*) were pretty common in the mid-elevation canyons of the Chiricahuas

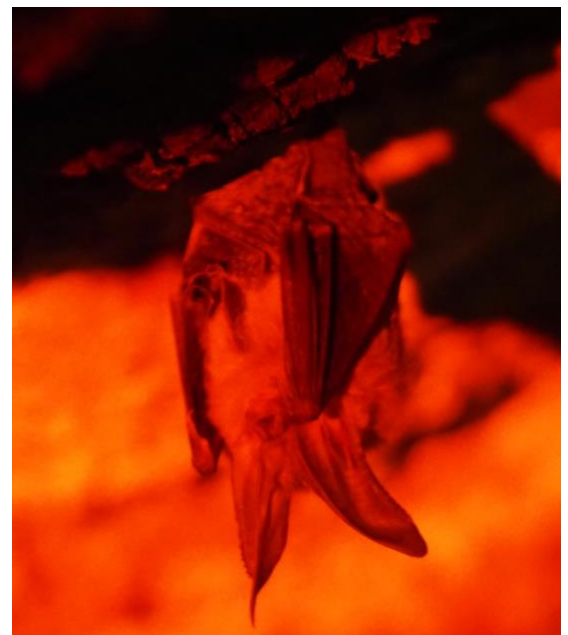
observing a **Southwestern Myotis**, which I identified from its distinctive calls. This bat is a specialist of the sycamore-dominated riparian habitat and only occurs in the US in AZ and NM. The Chiricahuas are the best place to record this species in the US, as it is both common and the acoustically near-indistinguishable Long-eared Myotis does not occur. Surprisingly, we didn't find any Western Red Bats, which are often common here. Perhaps the wrong season? **Striped Skunks** and a **Gray Fox** walked by as we recorded.



It's always a joy to see the cute, curious Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*)

We finished the night with a drive from SWRS up and back to Paradise via the Trans-Mountain and E Turkey Creek Rds from 10PM-12:30AM. Few mammal watchers seem to visit this area at night, but I was keen to try as I've heard reports of Puma, spotted and hog-nosed skunks, and higher-elevation species like Mexican Woodrat here. It was excellent. We saw 2 **Ringtails** very well (1 on the Trans-Mountain Rd and another on the upper part of Turkey Creek; they were really relaxed under red light), 2 **Gray Foxes**, many **Brush Mice**, and what I'm pretty sure was a **Northern Rock Mouse**. This species seems tricky to ID if not in the hand, so I feel this sighting is best left as probable, but it really was quite distinctive (vs. the abundant *P. boylii*): dark gray with no clear lateral line, and most importantly, a sharply bicolored (black & white), remarkably long tail. Quite different from the dull pinkish gray tail of *P. boylii*. This was seen well on a mostly bare, rocky slope in pine-oak forest on the upper part of E Turkey Creek Rd. Lower, we entered some dense scrub oak thicket and found an impressively large cottontail near the road. Grizzled brownish gray, without an orange nape, and with a seemingly oversized body compared to its head and ears – a **Holzner's Cottontail!** I was concerned about IDing this uncommon species beforehand, but this sighting really left me in little doubt. I was even more convinced when we saw a couple of – very different – **Desert Cottontails** closer to Paradise. A brilliant final night in the Chiricahuas.

(9/11/23) We were both a bit sad to say goodbye to SWRS and leave this wonderful area. After looking for 3 days, we finally saw a **Botta's Pocket Gopher** (montane ssp. *collinus*) on the station lawn and another **Mexican Fox Squirrel** near the parking area as parting gifts. As usual, **Rock Squirrels**, **Cliff Chipmunks**, and a **Desert Cottontail** were also around. Visiting birders told us they'd just seen a coati at Cave Creek Ranch, so we rushed over (seeing yet another **Mexican Fox Squirrel** near Idyllwild CG), but it had gone when we arrived. We drove back toward Tucson,



The tiny, adorable Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) was a nice last-minute addition

encountering an unannounced road closure on NM-80 and a monsoon storm before arriving at Colossal Cave. Although quite developed, we were lucky to have a private cave tour, which gave us the chance to see 7 roosting **Townsend's Big-eared Bats** and 2 **Cave Myotis**. Just before dropping the car off at the airport, we swung by Sweetwater Wetlands, missing the Arizona Cotton Rats but finding 2 **Round-tailed Ground Squirrels** on a nearby road verge. Tucson airport was small and nearly empty, so we were quickly on our flight home.

SPECIES LIST:

1. Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) – widespread in the arid lowlands
2. White-sided Jackrabbit (*Lepus callotis gaillardi*) – 2 in the big pasture near Lake Cloverdale in Animas Valley (mi38)
3. Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – widespread in small #s
4. Holzner's Cottontail (*Sylvilagus holzneri holzneri*) – 1 above Paradise on FR42B
5. Mexican Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus nayaritensis chiricahuae*) – common in Cave Creek Canyon, between Idyllwild CG and SWRS
6. Harris's Antelope Squirrel (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) – 1 near Cave Creek Ranch
7. Rock Squirrel (*Otospermophilus variegatus*) – common in Cave Creek Canyon
8. Spotted Ground Squirrel (*Xerospermophilus spilosoma*) – 1 at Willcox + 1 near Rodeo
9. Round-tailed Ground Squirrel (*Xerospermophilus tereticaudus*) – 2 near Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson
10. Cliff Chipmunk (*Neotamias dorsalis*) – common in Cave Creek Canyon
11. Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae collinus*) – 1 at SWRS
12. Merriam's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys merriami*) – widespread in the arid lowlands, where mostly associated with rocky, gravelly, or compacted clay soils
13. Ord's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys ordii*) – widespread in the arid lowlands but localized to deep sand; only recorded with certainty in the Animas Valley
14. Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys spectabilis*) – 3 on Portal Rd (near mi6) and surprisingly abundant in the Animas Valley (50+ seen, mostly in the central part)
15. Sonoran Desert Pocket Mouse (*Chaetodipus penicillatus*) – 1 on Portal Rd (ca. mi2)
16. Silky Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus flavus*) – 1 in the central Animas Valley, perhaps more seen further S but views insufficient for ID
17. White-throated Woodrat (*Neotoma albigula*) – small #s on Portal Rd and in the Animas Valley
18. Chihuahuan Grasshopper Mouse (*Onychomys arenicola*) – 1 in central Animas Valley, near a roadside gravelly slope just after regaining the pavement
19. Brush Mouse (*Peromyscus boylii*) – abundant in the Chiricahuas
20. Cactus Mouse (*Peromyscus eremicus*) – 1 very near Portal
21. White-footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus arizonae*) – 1 (probably more) in central Animas Valley
22. Northern Rock Mouse (*Peromyscus nasutus*) [probable] – 1 above Paradise on FR42B
23. Western Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*) – several in the southern Animas Valley
24. Plains Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys montanus*) – 1 in the southern Animas Valley

25. Hispid Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon hispidus berlandieri*) – a few in the northern Animas Valley
26. Yellow-nosed Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon ochrognathus*) – common on the grounds of SWRS
27. Mexican Long-tongued Bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*) – common at the SWRS feeders immediately after nightfall
28. Lesser Long-nosed Bat (*Leptonycteris yerbabuenae*) – abundant at the SWRS feeders later than the prior species
29. Big Free-tailed Bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*) – 3 flying over the clearing at SWRS
30. Mexican Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) – widespread & common near water
31. Southwestern Myotis (*Myotis auricolus apache*) – at least 1 in riparian habitat in Cave Creek (e.g. Sunny Flat CG)
32. California Myotis (*Myotis californicus*) – several noted at SWRS, may have been missed at other sites
33. Western Small-footed Myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum melanorhinus*) – common in Cave Creek Canyon
34. Cave Myotis (*Myotis velifer*) – uncommon; small #s in Cave Creek Canyon and near Portal, and noted roosting at Colossal Cave
35. Long-legged Myotis (*Myotis volans interior*) – small #s in Cave Creek Canyon
36. Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) – abundant in Cave Creek Canyon
37. Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) – small #s in riparian habitat in Cave Creek Canyon and Animas Valley
38. Western Yellow Bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*) – 1 in riparian habitat on Foothills Rd
39. Canyon Bat (*Parastrellus hesperus*) – abundant at nightfall in SWRS, may have been missed elsewhere
40. Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens*) – 7 in Colossal Cave
41. Allen's Big-eared Bat (*Idionycteris phyllotis*) – 1 at SWRS, possibly more elsewhere in Cave Creek Canyon but recordings inconclusive
42. White-backed Hog-nosed Skunk (*Conepatus leuconotus*) – 1 near Stewart CG in Cave Creek Canyon; quite distinctive, with a very different gait, posture & tail shape vs. *Mephitis* (besides the obvious hog nose)
43. Hooded Skunk (*Mephitis macroura*) – 1 in dry hills in southern Animas Valley; not seen in Cave Creek (despite seeing about a dozen Striped Skunks there); the tail is impressive
44. Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) – abundant in Cave Creek Canyon
45. Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*) – 3 in the Chiricahuas (1 at S Fork, 1 above SWRS on Trans-Mountain Rd, and 1 on FR42B above Paradise)
46. American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) – 1 very briefly on the Trans-Mountain Rd
47. Coyote (*Canis latrans*) – widespread & common in arid lowlands (e.g. Animas, Portal Rd)
48. Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – common in Cave Creek Canyon
49. Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis*) – 1 in N Animas Valley (~1mi S of Animas)
50. Puma (*Puma concolor*) – 1 at Clanton Draw in the Animas Valley; a huge surprise
51. Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) – 2 in the big pasture near Lake Cloverdale (Animas Valley)
52. Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – abundant in the Animas Valley
53. White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus couesi*) – abundant in the Chiricahuas

STUFF I MISSED:

Honestly, I couldn't realistically have seen much more than I did. This was already more than I'd expected or even hoped for. But we never saw a Desert Spotted Skunk or Desert Shrew, which were always going to be unlikely. It would've been fun to see a White-nosed Coati or Collared Peccary; the latter seems common in the morning in Portal village, at least. Nor did we find a Desert Red Bat, which I was expecting to see or record, or a Pocketed Free-tailed Bat (which I wasn't). Beyond that, there are always more rodents out there. Bailey's, Hispid, and Rock Pocket Mice should all be findable, as well as Northern Pygmy Mouse, Northern Grasshopper Mouse, Southern Deer Mouse, and Tawny-bellied Cotton Rat, which are locally common in parts of the Animas Valley. Mexican Woodrat and Black-eared Mouse occur in the high Chiricahuas, but the former is rare and we didn't go to Barfoot Park, the main locality for the latter. But these are all good reasons to come back to this wonderful place.



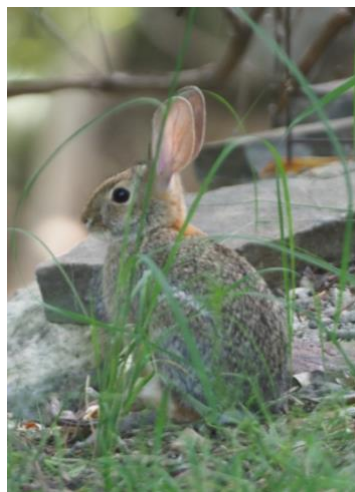
Harris's Antelope Squirrel (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*)



Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*)



Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)



Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) at SWRS



Rock Squirrel (*Otospermophilus variegatus*)