

Cyprus March 30 – April 1 2025

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In three days on Cyprus we saw 8 species of mammals. Considering the general lack of expected mammals, we did only two brief nighttime IR explorations, both motivated by the remote chance for rare endemic rodents – at Cape Greco for Cyprus Spiny Mouse (which has been found there and only there by a recent survey) and in some vineyards south of Pano Panagia for Cypriot Mouse (simply based on habitat requirements). At both sites, **Black Rats** and **Long-eared Hedgehogs** were common, Cape Greco also had **Brown Hare**, but no endemics were found. We also spent the better part of a day scanning for the Mouflons from the endless possible viewpoints along the roads between Pano Panagia and Troodos, but with no success, so the remaining 5 species were all roosting bats in mines.

Romain Bocquier's report mentions three possible locations with mines: Kalavassos, Akamas peninsula and Troodos without further details. Mapy.com (formerly mapy.cz, using OSM data) indeed shows mines in all three locations, so we just followed that. Basically all the mines were either a bit falling apart, or outright locked, but some of the locks were broken open – in general I would assume that the access conditions can change quickly due to both lock repairs and cave-ins. Note that with Cyprus being seismically active, entering any underground space, in particular one as unstable as most of the mines, is inherently risky.

In Kalavassos, there are three mines on the map. The one at 34.8004N, 33.2664E was flooded – one could wade through the water, but it would have been unpleasant. The smaller from the other two at 34.7949N, 33.2704E had a lone **Greater Horseshoe Bat**, while the rather large system of tunnels at 34.7937N, 33.2591E had all of **Lesser**, **Greater** and **Mediterranean Horseshoe Bats** as well as a colony of **Hovel's Myotis**. In Akamas, only the mine at 35.0439N, 32.3305E had any accessible length to explore, with just two individuals – a **Greater Horseshoe Bat** and a **Schreiber's Long-fingered Bat**. In Troodos, we found three mines with various levels of access around 34.9228N, 32.8631E, but no bats. A map installed nearby showed a handful of more mines in the hills around – we only had time to visit the one at roughly 34.9515N, 32.8622E, but it was not accessible.



Above: Greater, Lesser and Mediterranean Horseshoe Bats

Left: Schreiber's Long-fingered Bat

Right: Hovel's Myotis

