

I've just got back from a conference in Miami, where over a couple of days I managed to fit in a bit of mammal/other wildlife watching. First off, a massive thanks to everyone that replied with suggestions of where to go and look for various things, both in the request for information here, and in the North America Mammalwatching facebook page, and over email (Josh Holbrook and Jon Svenson). I've copied bits of that information below.

In the end, I use my first day (1st June) to visit the **Everglades NP**. I drove straight to Flamingo Marina, and then worked my way back, stopping at the Anhinga trail. There are two marinas at Flamingo within about 3 min walk of each other. The further, green water, marina was full of **manatee**. The second, black water, marina, the far side of the shop, had a couple of American crocodile resting on the bank. Driving back, I had an unidentified mammal on the side of the road around Marzek lake area. It was briefly on the verge. It looked like a large mustelid/mid-sized cat from the day that it was walk, brown (but not dark brown) colouration, with a long (and quite thick/bushy) tail and seemingly large paws/feet. Unfortunately, it disappeared before I could get any better view. This happened at about 1pm. I then walked the Aningha trails – they're nice and pretty, and had a bunch of interesting non-mammals: alligator, Florida gar, Florida red bellied cooter and Florida softshell turtle.

Within Miami area, I saw **Eastern grey squirrel** in the downtown area. At **Green Cay** (3rd June) I saw plenty of **March rabbit** (as well as at least one **Eastern cottontail**) – this was in the last hour before sunset, but the rabbits were very easy to find – both on these raised grassy ridges, and then in more native looking swampy grass. Jon Svenson had visited the site ~1 week before and had found **Eastern woodrat** in the water works area that is just the other side of the road. I saw one there too in just the same spot: cross the main road from Green Cay into the water works area, and then head to the parking lot that is on the right-hand side after maybe 150m or so. From there, my woodrat was in the area that has a bunch of yuca like plants, between the parking lot and the lake (this was just after dark. Note, I think that the "tow" zone just applies to the road itself. There is also seemingly no restrictions on when you can stay in the car park until). There was also another cottontail on the large area of grass near the parking lot.

I then headed off to the western end of Big Cypress for a night (4th/5th June). I booked on a manatee tour with <https://www.see-manatees.com/> and they delivered (I had been in contact with <https://floridaislandtours.com/> but booking a tour as just one person wasn't possible). While we saw fewer **manatee** than at Flamingo marina (only four here) the views were really great – including a tiny (~2mo old) baby riding on top of its mum. Plenty of alligators and tarpon too. I spotlighted, just road cruising along the 837, 839 and 841 (all good dirt roads, a 2WD would be absolutely fine) but only turned up a **white-tailed deer** mammal-wise (plus an NID, dead, large rat being carried off by a hawk in the late evening, on the little track by the wildlife inspection centre). Plus lots of pig frog, cane toad, and a Florida green water snake. I had been on the look out for tall forests that were accessible (to look for southern flying squirrel) but to no avail. The next morning I walked the Big Ben Boardwalk. There was a sign saying high levels of bear activity, but unfortunately no luck. There was a squirrel (saw too briefly to know if it was grey or fox), lots of alligators and 3 woodpecker species. I suspect that it would be a good site for flying squirrel, tho technically it is only open until sunset (there seemed to be an electronic thing checking if there were people going in/out by the sign board at the entrance).

Bird list is below in case it is of interest; species are only listed at the first site I saw them at:

Everglades

1. Brown Pelican
2. Double Crested-Cormorant
3. Anhinga
4. Great Blue Heron
5. Great Egret
6. Tricolored heron
7. Green heron
8. White ibis
9. Wood stork
10. Black vulture
11. Turkey vulture
12. Osprey
13. Swallow tailed kite
14. Bald eagle
15. Red-shoulder hawk
16. White crowned pigeon
17. Eurasian collared dove
18. Mourning dove
19. Common nighthawk
20. Chimney swift
21. Belted kingfisher
22. Red bellied woodpecker
23. American crow
24. European starling
25. Northern cardinal
26. Red-winged blackbird
27. Brown-headed cowbird
28. House sparrow

Green Cay

29. Pied-billed grebe
30. Least bittern
31. Snowy egret
32. Little blue heron
33. Black-crowned night heron
34. Yellow-crowned night heron
35. Glossy ibis
36. Black bellied whistling duck
37. Purple gallinule
38. Common moorhen
39. White-winged dove
40. Blue Jay
41. Purple martin
42. Rusty blackbird
43. Common grackle
44. Boat-tailed grackle

Big cypress

45. Red-tailed hawk
46. Killdeer
47. Downy woodpecker
48. Pileated woodpecker
49. Eastern kingbird
50. Loggerhead shrike
51. Carolina wren

Facebook:

Jeremy Cohen

Bobcats are being seen well at green cay. That spot or wakodahatchee have marsh rabbits
Hannes Lk

A couple of Manatees stay the whole year in Homossasa River. For Skunks, look on the Map from FWC as they are currently Monitoring them.

For Florida panther, as it is Nearly impossible, the best chance would be along tamiami trail on the naples side. You could combine that with Road cruising along Loop road or a stroll through Corkscrew swamp sanctuaty

Mammalwatching:

On a tip from a friend went to Wakodahatchee Wildlife Preserve last night, Feb 20,2020 looking for Marsh Rabbit. The preserve is quite small and easy to get into and out of with ample close parking if you are short on time. Walked the half mile boardwalk 30 minutes before sunset and had 8 different Marsh Rabbits. The rabbits were all on the dikes that separate the impoundment areas.

Friend of a friend's advice

- Opossum? Best bet is roadkill. Next best bet is to be out at night near a garbage receptacle in or near Big Cypress. Or my backyard at night. We have them wander through at times.
- Spotted skunk? No clue - I have a friend who saw one recently purely on accident but I don't know details.
- We do have Big Cypress fox squirrels and I have seen them at Fakahatchee.
- Marsh rabbit? Side of the road after dawn or before dusk in Big Cypress along Wagon Wheel Road or Turner River Road north of Wagon Wheel. Or in Fakahatchee along Jane's Scenic Drive. These are all dirt (limestone) roads but they're very close to each other.
- Everglades minks. We've seen them in Fakahatchee along Jane's.

Josh Holbrook

- a. Virginia Opossum – you'll almost certainly end up with one or a few as bycatch by driving country roads at night.
- b. Spotted Skunk – two sites in central Florida [Josh asked that I didn't share details publicly, but email me directly – ben DOT balmford AT gmail DOT com – are both good for them. I find it easiest to turn them up by road cruising (full moons are best, unfortunately), on dirt roads in the area. One site closes the gate at dark, but you can drive it if you camp there (they give you the gate code), the other is open all night.
- c. Flying squirrels are really unpredictable. Best advice I can give on those is to try some of the oak hammock/tree islands that you see [at the two sites above] – walking them at night and listening for them (high pitched chirps), or hoping to catch a glimpse of them gliding.

Hope that helps. I would imagine Big Cypress would have flying squirrels, but I've never seen spotted skunks there. The west end of BCY is good for panthers, as is Picayune Strand State Forest (it's also excellent for Florida Black Bear.)