

**Nicaragua Trip Report, focusing on mammals seen
March 15-22 and extension Mar 22-27, 2014**

By Fiona Reid (www.fionareid.ca)

Mar 15. Arrived in Managua, transferred in 2 trucks to **Finca Las Nubes (FLN)** for 7 nights. Saw our first **Variegated Squirrels** today. Although this lodge isn't usually frequented by naturalists, it was an excellent base for us, with a lot of mammals (and birds) on site, good food, great pool, very nice and helpful staff they also provided a wonderful driver, Alberto Rivera, who thoroughly enjoyed the wildlife we showed him and had a keen eye.

Common Long-tongued Bat



Mar 16. Explored FLN in morning, including a visit to an abandoned building where we saw some **Common Long-tongued Bats**, and in afternoon went to river mouth in San Juan del Sur where there were a number of water birds. Set up three nets on dry creek in evening, and caught 6 species of bats (see list). On way to and from nets saw 4 **Common Opossum** and 2 **Virginia Opossum**.

Common Vampire



Mar 17. Drove to El Abuelo private reserve near Colon, in Cardenas area, south of Lake Nicaragua. At reserve entry the first vehicle had good but brief looks at a **Jaguarundi**. In caves we saw **two Funnel-eared Bat** species, **Seba's Short-tailed Bats**, **Common Vampires** and **Greater Spear-nosed Bats**. We saw a few groups of **Mantled Howler** on our way to and at the reserve. At the lake shore we saw Swallow-tailed Kites dipping to drink. Later we saw **Eastern Cottontail**. After we returned to the Finca we saw

a **Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth** near our lodge.



Mar 18. Morning visit to Mombacho Volcano, walk in cloud forest around crater, with some nice orchids and green anole as well as a few highland birds. Lunch in Granada and tour of islets near Granada in afternoon. This tour provided good views of purple Gallinule, Black-necked Stilts, Bare-throated Tiger Heron and other waders, as well as close views of **Central American Spider Monkeys** (left) in a semi-captive situation. After dark we

went out in the pick-up to Escameca and Escamequita. Our first sighting was at the Finca where Jose saw a **Kinkajou** in the same area we had seen the sloth the previous night. At Escameca we saw Pacific Screech Owl and Common Opossum, and at Escamequita we had great looks at a **Central American Woolly Opossum**, two **Northern Raccoons** and a **Striped Hog-nosed Skunk**, as well as seeing both Common and Virginia Opossum. We also found a Common Potoo.

Kinkajou



Mar 19. Morning trip to La Flor turtle beach and estuary. It was inspiring to see that the turtles (mainly Olive Ridleys) are well protected at this beach, the eggs are kept in bags of sand and the young carried to the water when they hatch. Afternoon at Finca Las Nubes. One net set (caught one **Great Fruit-eating Bat**) and night walk at lodge. At our "hot-spot" we saw a **Hooded Skunk**, which was kind enough to reappear later when other members of the group showed up. The usual opossums were also seen, and a Kinkajou was back in the same area as the previous night, as was the Two-toed Sloth.

Mar 20. Day trip to Ometepe Island. A visit to Charco Verde reserve allowed great views of **Greater White-lined Bats** and **Proboscis Bats** (a group of 39 of the latter), a new race of

Variegated Squirrel and a number of lizards. Later near our lunch site at Santo Domingo on beach, we saw a group of **White-faced Capuchins**, and we were helped with lunch by White-throated Magpie Jays. Afternoon swim at Ojo de Agua mineral pools, where there were several large Striped Basilisks. Took ferry back to mainland. Our drive back onto the lodge property gave us views of a very pale race of **Central American Spider Monkey**, two individuals only, but as they are wary and scarce it was a good sighting. Also we saw a two-toed sloth and Mantled Howlers on the finca grounds. Night walk at lodge.

Great Fruit-eating Bat

Mar 21. Early morning trip to Chocoyero Private reserve. This was our birdiest stop of the trip, with a very nice diversity. Close views of a pair of Mottled Owls, Green Parakeets and many other species. One **Greater Fruit-eating Bat** was seen in a leaf tent. **Central American Agoutis** are common here. Evening trip to Escameca



Grande for batting where we set up 2 nets in front of the truck and one behind.

Lesser Mustached Bat



We were in the middle of the forest on a small path behind several closed gates, but some shouts alerted us to the arrival of 6 bicyclists who had run into a brand new mist net! They were very cheerful about being caught, but I was not so happy! We caught 8 species of bats here including many **Lesser Mustached Bat, *Pteronotus personatus***. Jose saw a **Spotted Skunk**, but this was only glimpsed by me and Regina and not seen by the rest of our group. He also caught a **Salvin's Pocket Mouse** and I saw another scurrying about. On the way back we stopped in at Escamequita for night spotlighting where We saw 3 **Gray Four-eyed Opossums**, as well

as 3 Woolly, 2 Virginia and 2 Common Opossums, 2 Kinkajous and 1 two-toed Sloth and also a Great Potto.

Mar 22. Return to Managua region and dropped off the group at the airport.



Our group, from left: Cathy Koehler, Ken West, Regina Ribeiro, Jose Gabriel Martinez, Jean West, Gwen Brewer, Fiona Reid, Alberto Rivera, Nobue Block, Andrew Block

At the waterfall at Chocoyero

Mammal list

Opossums

Common Opossum, *Didelphis marsupialis*

Virginia Opossum, *D. virginiana*

Central American Woolly Opossum, *Caluromys derbianus*

Gray Four-eyed Opossum, *Philander opossum*

Bats

Proboscis Bat, *Rhynchonycteris naso* (Mar 20)

Greater White-lined Bat, *Saccopteryx bilineata* (Mar 20)

Greater Spear-nosed Bat, *Phyllostomus hastatus* (Mar 17)

Little Big-eared Bat, *Micronycteris microtis* (Mar 20)

Greater Fruit-eating Bat, *Artibeus lituratus* (Mar 16, 19)

Jamaican Fruit-eating Bat, *A. jamaicensis* (Mar 16, 21)

Watson's Fruit-eating Bat, *A. watsoni* (Mar 21)

Common Long-tongued Bat, *Glossophaga soricina* (Mar 16, 21)

Common Yellow-shouldered Bat, *Sturnira lilium* (Mar 16, 21)

Seba's Short-tailed Bat, *Carollia perspicillata* (Mar 16, 17, 21)

Common Vampire, *Desmodus rotundus* (Mar 17, 21)

Common Mustached Bat, *Pteronotus parnellii* (Mar 16, 21)

Lesser Mustached Bat, *Pteronotus personatus* (Mar 21)

Mexican Funnel-eared Bat, *Natalus mexicanus* (Mar 17)

Woolly Funnel-eared Bat, *Natalus lanatus* (Mar 17) (I am making up a common name as I can't find one anywhere!)

Carnivores

Jaguarundi, *Herpailurus jaguarondi*

Striped Hog-nosed Skunk, *Conepatus semistriatus*

Hooded Skunk, *Mephitis macroura*

Northern Raccoon, *Procyon lotor*

Kinkajou, *Potos flavus*

Monkeys

Mantled Howler, *Alouatta palliata*

Central American Spider Monkey, *Ateles geoffroyi*

White-faced Capuchin, *Cebus capucinus*

Rodents

Variegated Squirrel, *Sciurus variegatoides*

Central American Agouti, *Dasyprocta punctata*

Salvin's Spiny Pocket Mouse, *Liomys salvini*

Rabbits

Eastern Cottontail, *Sylvilagus floridanus*

Sloths

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth, *Choloepus hoffmanni*

Extension with Jose Gabriel Martinez and Regina Ribeiro

Mar 22. Drove to Finca El Jaguar in Jinotega. On the way we passed an area where people sell iguanas for food – a lot of animals were being held. Though this is illegal it is a daily occurrence. Afternoon and evening walk at reserve – Virginia Opossum and Kinkajou seen, and our first **Nine-banded Armadillo** of the trip. Jose caught a small snake, *Ninia* sp., then grabbed a **Nicaraguan Pocket Gopher**! He had never seen one before, so when he saw the size of its teeth he asked for help to bag it up! We put the gopher in a big barrel with some soil and plants. Night mothing and set traps near cabins.



Nicaraguan Pocket Gopher

Mar 23. Early morning birding at El Jaguar with Moises. Good birds and we had great views of **Richmond's Squirrel** by the cabins (not seen by Jose), a new species for me. **Deppe's Squirrels** were also seen. Then we spent time getting pictures of the gopher and released him at capture site. It was great to watch him dig a new burrow. In about 30 minutes he completely disappeared. Jose saw a **Long-tailed Weasel** (*Mustela frenata*) near his room. Georges Duriaux, the owner arrived before lunch and took us on an afternoon trip to more distant parts of reserve. He is really helpful and knows a lot about the birds. Night spotlighting (several kinkajous, opossums seen) and good mothing in this area.

Mar 24. Morning trip to pine forest and coffee at San Rafael del Norte. Many warblers and other migrants seen. Back to El Jaguar to pack up, leaving after lunch. About 3-4 hour drive to Penas Blancas near Abisinia. Set traps on trail to stream, set out moth light near rooms. Night spotlighting yielded several kinkajous and large opossums, and a two-toed sloth.

Mar 25. Caught a **Handleyomys alfaroi** in traps. Hike to cliff face at PB – very steep, some warblers, Collared Trogon. Back for late lunch, set traps in buildings and set 3 nets parallel to stream, moth light on path to stream. Spotlighting in area. We caught 3 species of bats, 2 **Carollia** and a **Riparian Myotis**. The big excitement was Jose dashing across the stream (through a barbed wire fence) and returning with a **Brown Four-eyed Opossum** with pouch young! We took photos fairly speedily so we could release her. Lovely and unexpected animal.

Brown Four-eyed Opossum



frogs and geckos as usual. We set our 10 traps in Edgar's room (he had photographed a *Micoureus alstoni*, a rather uncommon mouse opossum on his rafters the previous night) and near a bamboo thicket where Jose had seen a rat the previous night.



Mar 26. Caught 2 **Vesper Rats** (left) in Edgar's room, but no mouse opossums. Packed up and left about 10 a.m. Arrived Selva Negra for lunch. Reached Masaya about 4:30 p.m. checked into Masaya Hotel in town. Cheap and basic but clean and with hot water and AC. Evening trip to volcano and Lake Masaya for skunk and porcupine. Jose saw a **Southern Spotted Skunk** and R and I got good looks at it with our binoculars. We followed it to a hollow tree where it hid inside for some time, but eventually it came out and we saw it really well. I got one picture as it went back inside the tree. On the way back we saw a **White-tailed Deer**, our first of the trip, and then two **Mexican Porcupines**, mom and youngster, eating leaves. Great views and a great ending for our trip. Back to hotel about 10:30 p.m.



Southern Spotted Skunk



Mexican Hairy Porcupine

Mar 27. Taxi to Montibelli and brief tour of reserve. Variegated Squirrel and CA Agouti common here. Taxi to airport for my flight out at 2:20 p.m.

Mammals seen in addition to those listed above:

Brown Four-eyed Opossum, *Metachirus nudicaudus*
Richmond's Squirrel, *Sciurus richmondi*
Deppe's Squirrel, *Sciurus deppei*
Nicaraguan Pocket Gopher, *Orthogeomys matagalpae*
Alfaro's Rice Rat, *Handleyomys alfaro*
Mexican Hairy Porcupine *Sphiggurus mexicanus*
Nine-banded Armadillo, *Dasybus novemcinctus*
Sowell's Short-tailed Bat, *Carollia sowellii*
Riparian Myotis, *Myotis riparius*
Southern Spotted Skunk, *Spilogale angustifrons*
White-tailed Deer, *Odocoileus virginiana*

Total mammal species seen = 43



Edgard, Fiona, Jose Gabriel, and Regina at Penas Blancas