

## Nicaragua Mammal Extravaganza! Trip Report, Jan 30 to Feb 12, 2016

**Leaders:** Fiona Reid, Jose Gabriel Martinez Fonseca, Marlon Francisco Chavez Velasquez, Milton Salazar (Bartola)

**Participants:** Hazel Ryan, John Puckett, Deb Bradley, Karen Baker, Phil Telfer, Steve Morgan  
**Report and Photos** by Fiona unless noted otherwise (in blue)

### Jan 30



We made our way to Laguna del Apoyo and stayed one night at Posada Ecologica la Abuela. A nice hotel at end of road, but a bit noisy on weekends. Our first mammals were **Mantled Howler** and **Variegated Squirrel**, seen almost daily here on. I found a roost of **Lesser White-lined Bats** on a fig tree on the hotel grounds, and later Deb located a group of **Proboscis Bats** under the dock (despite all the teenagers jumping off said dock!). After an early supper we went to a patch of nearby forest, heavily grazed by resident sheep but still a great spot! We caught 8 species of bats: **Heller's Broad-**

**nosed, Pale Spear-nosed, Greater, Pygmy, and Jamaican Fruit-eating, Seba's Short-tailed, Common Long-tongued,** and my personal favorite of the night, **Hairy Big-eyed Bat**. We had reasonable views of **Common** and **Central American Woolly Opossums**, but a better view of both on the drive back (woolly and at the hotel (common)). We also saw sleeping White-necked Puffbird and Turquoise-browed Motmot. A real highlight at the netting site was a very close **Mexican Hairy Porcupine** (above left, Phil T), snuffling about and walking right up to some of us. On our way back we stopped to check a hollow tree and saw a group of **Greater** and **Pale Spear-nosed Bats**. John and Hazel were delayed but arrived later that night.

### Jan 31

Before dawn some of the group managed to see a **Gray Four-eyed Opossum** and a **Northern Climbing Rat**, both seeking food at the hotel. We had a long travel day by van to San Carlos, then ferry to El Castillo and on to Bartola in private boat. We quickly set a few traps and after dinner set off on our first trip up the Bartola River in search of Yapok. We saw a Cat-eyed Snake swimming, and Jose caught it and later caught a rather large **Spectacled Caiman** (right), but sadly no Yapok. We did spot a **Tomes's Spiny Rat**, but no other mammals.



### Feb 1

We had two full days at Refugio Bartola. This morning the traps provided us with close looks at **Dusky Rice Rat** (below left) and **Long-whiskered Rice Rat** (below right). We also located roosting **Smoky Bats, Common Tent-making Bats, Greater White-lined Bats**, and **Proboscis Bats** around the property. We found some great frogs and

other herps on forest trails, and got to see Orange-bellied Swamp Snake as well. **Central American Spider Monkeys** put in an appearance near the dining area in the afternoon. That night we split into two groups, Yapok hunters and batters.



Batters found the first **Common Vampire** and a couple of new *Carollia* species (**Sowell's** and **Chestnut**). The yapok hunters didn't succeed in their goal, but actually found an animal of more scientific interest, the **Rufous Tree Rat** (below right, Phil T), previously known only from Central and eastern Panama.



## Feb 2

We caught more **Dusky Rice Rats**, had a good forest hike, and later in the day Julio took us to see roosting **Crested Owls** (left), really impressive birds. We also saw a nice mixed flock including a few woodpeckers. The **spider monkeys** (above left) put on a great show again at the lodge. Later we headed upriver by boat and kayak to an old banana patch, where Jose and Julio disappeared and later came back bearing the rare **Greater Doglike Bat**, a new species for Jose. We set nets across the river and caught **Lesser** and **Greater Fishing Bats**, **Black Myotis** and a few common species.

### Feb 3

We left very early and took the slow boat (no fast boat unfortunately) back to San Carlos. Then drove by van to Managua, picked up a rental truck and went on to Cabañas Encantadas, in Nindiri, very close to Masaya Volcano.



Sadly the volcano was closed, but after a nice dinner at Mi Viejo Ranchito we went in on the Masaya Lake road, to a hot spot for **Southern Spotted Skunk** (left, Phil T).



We were able to see several individuals, and also had views of a woolly opossum, Great Potoo, and Pacific Screech Owl. Milton located a **Big-eared Climbing Rat** in a vine tangle, and it was nice enough to stick around until everyone had seen it. On our way out we saw **Gray Fox**. When we finally made it back to our hotel we were met by two of Jose's friends, Marlon and Luis, bearing gifts in form of three new bats – **Sinaloa** and **Little Mastiff Bats** and **Wagner's Bonneted Bat** (above right).



### Feb 4

We set off with Marlon to Playa Coco where we stayed in a very comfortable condo on the lovely beach. We went to a private reserve nearby, where we set a few nets and also explored on foot. We were able to see **Striped Hog-nosed Skunk**, **Kinkajou** and a **Gray Fox** heading to the water. The netting was excellent, with the prized **Great False Vampire** (left) being caught! Also we caught **Pygmy Round-eared Bat**, **Central American Yellow Bat**, and two mustached bats, **Common** and **Big Naked-backed**, as well as others seen earlier on the trip.

### Feb 5

We set off before dawn for El Abuelo, and on the way saw an **Eastern Cottontail** (surprisingly this was a new species for some). We also had good looks at a **Kinkajou** munching flowers. Near El Abuelo we saw some great mixed flocks with good



looks at elusive Bare-crowned and Bicolored Antbirds (male and female of both). Deb outdid herself by spotting our first **White-faced Capuchin** shortly followed by our first and only **Northern Tamandua** (above, Karen B). All three species of monkeys were seen well in this area. We visited several caves and added a number of new bats: **Fringe-lipped, Long-legged, Lesser Dog-like, Gray Sac-winged**, and both **Mexican (left) and Woolly (right) Funnel-eared Bats** (below, Deb B).



Steve stopped to put on his shoes and noticed a rat rush off. Jose and Marlon found it inside a hollow log and we were able to shake it into our hand net – a **Hispid Cotton Rat** (right, Deb B), quite put out by the fuss! On the way back we stopped for lunch in Cardenas than continued back to Coco. On the way back the army guards were kind enough to tell us there was an arribada of **Olive Ridleys** (below), so we headed to Playa Flor to see the amazing spectacle of thousands of turtles coming up to lay eggs. We also found our first **Hooded Skunk** in the parking area. In the later evening we headed to Ostional where we caught a good variety of bats but only added one new species, Lesser Mustached Bat.



We had terrific views of **Gray Four-eyed Opossum** (left, Phil T) hiding in mangrove roots, also saw our first **Virginia Opossum**, and woolly opossum. We saw **Hooded Skunk** again, and by the end of the night had seen three, also a **Common Raccoon** and several more **Kinkajous**. A number of wading birds were also seen.



**Feb 6**

We went back to Playa Flor in the morning to see turtles by day. There were still quite a lot on the beach. We had a wonderful lunch in Ostional then went to Escameca to a private forest. The dry zone is traversed by a creek and we saw numerous birds (Yellow-naped and White-fronted Parrots to name a few).

A **Striped Hog-nosed Skunk** (right, Karen B) wandered down to the hot spring to drink in broad daylight – a lovely sight, while all three species of monkey were seen overhead. Marlon found a porcupine sleeping in a hollow tree and some of the group climbed up to take a look (not without incident...). We split into two groups to net bats. There was a high wind which reduced our success, but we did capture the rare **Pale-faced Bat** (below)



and our first **Tiny Big-eared** and **Stripe-headed Round-eared Bats**. Several more porcupines were seen, along with **Hooded Skunk** and **Kinkajou**, and on the way out I found a **Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth**. Roadside and Broad-winged Hawks were also caught in the spotlight.

**Feb 7**

We had a long travel day to Managua and on north to El Jaguar near Jinotega. It was misty and cold when we arrived. We did not set nets but got a few traps out. We took a walk after dinner and saw **Gray Four-eyed** and **Common Opossum**, and a **Forest Rabbit**. Numerous birds were seen at the feeder before dark.



**Feb 8**

We caught **Mexican Deer Mouse** and a **House Mouse**. **Variegated** and **Deppe's Squirrels** were seen, and some of the group saw **Richmond's Squirrel**. **Central American Agoutis** were wandering around, but Steve who wanted to see one kept missing it. We found a **Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** (right, Karen B) near cabin 1, which I rudely woke up (Marlon was pleased as he had never seen this species). We toured

the property and saw a good variety of birds including many migrants. It was another cold, misty night and we set several nets but only caught a couple of bats. One at least was new, the **Montane Yellow-shouldered Bat**. We searched for Olingo but only saw various opossums. Nothing at the far cabins was good.



#### Feb 9

We caught our first **Vesper Rat**, unfortunately it had a broken tail. Numerous **Mexican Deermice** were also caught. Some of us headed to the pine forest near San Rafael where we had some great birding including the lovely Painted Redstart. We had lunch at a windswept restaurant then went on to La Bastilla. Set on a hill this is a lovely spot adjacent to Datanli El Diablo Reserve. We set our traps on the back side of the Datanli site I visited last year. Later we put up some nets across a small creek. There was

a huge insect emergence and we caught a good number of bats including **Riparian** and **Hairy-legged Myotis**, **Toltec Fruit-eating Bat** and **Salvin's Big-eyed Bat** and a **Common Yellow-shouldered Bat**, as well as other widespread species. We later went for a night drive and had good looks at **Northern Raccoon**, **Kinkajou (above)**, numerous **Common Opossum (below, Phil T)** including one raiding a house, and later a nice look at a **Gray Fox** along a coffee plantation, shortly followed by our first definite **Bushy-tailed Olingo**.

#### Feb 10

We set a few traps near the creek and had a **Gray Four-eyed Opossum** which was really nice to see in the hand, a colorful beast. Later we checked our forest traps and had our first **Forest Spiny Pocket Mouse**, **Alfaro's Rice Rat** and the usual **Mexican Deermice** crowds. After lunch Rodrigo, the Datanli guide, came over and we walked with him to Datanli, setting traps en route. The traps were very widely spaced. Marlon and Jose drove around so we could go one-way. We arrived at sunset and enjoyed sandwiches, and a bit of teasing for Steve who had walked over the mountain with no water, no flashlight, no real boots, but was fully prepared with teabags in pocket! Some bat nets were set but



didn't produce any new species. Deb and I did some fun mothing with black light. Rodrigo had recently seen a yapok in the stream near his house, so we went there but had no luck. Spotlighting produced a lot of Common Opossums and a spectacular Mottled Owl.

#### Feb 11

On our way to the trap area, Steve finally got his **Central American Agouti** (everyone else had





already seen it). We walked back over the mountain collecting traps and releasing animals on the way. We had two lovely **Vesper Rats** (above) with complete tails, and 2 forest **Spiny Pocket Mice**. One of the **Mexican Deermouse** (left) we released came right back and found an avocado on the ground, dragged it off and ate it, even allowing me to remove foreground weeds so we could take pictures! In the very last trap I had a **Zeledon's Mouse Opossum** (below), very close to the location where I caught one last year. It was a fantastic end to a nice hike. We said goodbye to Rodrigo and Datanli and headed off, stopping in Abisinia for a basic but good lunch. We arrived at Penas Blancas and enjoyed a nice night with real electricity and abundant but cold water! We didn't locate any new mammals but had a good evening nonetheless, with various anoles, a snake and other diversions.

### Feb 12

Our traps only provided more Mexican Deer Mice. We had a very scenic hike to a waterfall, before the group headed back to Managua. I stayed on at Penas. Jose took everyone to see the volcano (with a certain amount of greased palms) and they all had excellent looks at **Southern Spotted Skunk**. It was a great end to an excellent trip.



Our group, without me!



Jose, Rodrigo and Marlon

## Mammal List

### Opossums

Common Opossum	<i>Didelphis marsupialis</i>
Virginia Opossum	<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>
Central American Woolly Opossum	<i>Cauromys derbianus</i>
Gray Four-eyed Opossum	<i>Philander opossum</i>
Zeledon's Mouse Opossum	<i>Marmosa zeledoni</i>

### Bats

Proboscis Bat	<i>Rhynchonycteris naso</i>
Greater White-lined Bat	<i>Saccopteryx bilineata</i>
Lesser White-lined Bat	<i>Saccopteryx leptura</i>
Gray Sac-winged Bat	<i>Balantiopteryx plicata</i>
Smoky Bat	<i>Cyttarops alecto</i>
Lesser Doglike Bat	<i>Peropteryx macrotis</i>
Greater Doglike Bat	<i>Peropteryx kappleri</i>
Greater Fishing Bat	<i>Noctilio leporinus</i>
Lesser Fishing Bat	<i>Nocilio albiventris</i>
Greater Spear-nosed Bat	<i>Phyllostomus hastatus</i>
Pale Spear-nosed Bat	<i>Phyllostomus discolor</i>
Pale-faced Bat	<i>Phylloderma stenops</i>
Tiny Big-eared Bat	<i>Micronycteris minuta</i>
	<i>Macrophyllum</i>
Long-legged Bat	<i>macrophyllum</i>
Pygmy Round-eared Bat	<i>Lophostoma brasiliense</i>
Stripe-headed Round-eared Bat	<i>Tonatia saurophila</i>
Fringe-lipped Bat	<i>Trachops cirrhosus</i>
Great False Vampire Bat	<i>Vampyrum spectrum</i>
Greater Fruit-eating Bat	<i>Artibeus lituratus</i>
Jamaican Fruit-eating Bat	<i>Artibeus jamaicensis</i>
Watson's Fruit-eating Bat	<i>Artibeus watsoni</i>
Pygmy Fruit-eating Bat	<i>Artibeus phaeotis</i>
Toltec Fruit-eating Bat	<i>Artibeus toltecus</i>
Hairy Big-eyed Bat	<i>Chiroderma villosum</i>
Salvin's Big-eyed Bat	<i>Chiroderma salvini</i>
Common Tent-making Bat	<i>Uroderma bilobatum</i>
Heller's Broad-nosed Bat	<i>Platyrrhinus helleri</i>
Little Yellow-shouldered Bat	<i>Sturnira parvidens</i>
Honduran Yellow-shouldered Bat	<i>Sturnira hondurensis</i>
Seba's Short-tailed Bat	<i>Carollia perspicillata</i>
Sowell's Short-tailed Bat	<i>Carollia sowellii</i>
Chestnut Short-tailed Bat	<i>Carollia castanea</i>



Common Long-tongued Bat	<i>Glossophaga soricina</i>
Common Vampire Bat	<i>Desmodus rotundus</i>
Common Mustached Bat	<i>Pteronotus parnellii</i>
Lesser Mustached Bat	<i>Pteronotus personatus</i>
Big Naked-backed Bat	<i>Pteronotus gymnonotus</i>
Riparian Myotis	<i>Myotis riparius</i>
Black Myotis	<i>Myotis nigricans</i>
Hairy-legged Myotis	<i>Myotis keaysi</i>
Central American Yellow Bat	<i>Rhogeessa tumida</i>
Mexican Funnel-eared Bat	<i>Natalus mexicanus</i>
Woolly Funnel-eared Bat	<i>Natalus lanatus</i>
Little Mastiff Bat	<i>Molossus molossus</i>
Sinaloan Mastiff Bat	<i>Molossus sinaloae</i>
Wagner's Bonneted Bat	<i>Eumops glaucinus</i>

### **Carnivores**

Striped Hog-nosed Skunk	<i>Conepatus semistriatus</i>
Hooded Skunk	<i>Mephitis macroura</i>
Southern Spotted Skunk	<i>Spilogale angustifrons</i>
Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>
Kinkajou	<i>Potos flavus</i>
Bushy-tailed Olingo	<i>Bassaricyon gabbii</i>
Gray Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>

### **Monkeys**

Mantled Howler Monkey	<i>Alouatta palliata</i>
Central American Spider Monkey	<i>Ateles geoffroyi</i>
White-faced Capuchin	<i>Cebus capucinus</i>

### **Rodents**

Variiegated Squirrel	<i>Sciurus variegatoides</i>
Richmond's Squirrel	<i>Sciurus richmondi</i>
Deppe's Squirrel	<i>Sciurus deppei</i>
Forest Spiny Pocket Mouse	<i>Heteromys desmarestianus</i>
Mexican Hairy Porcupine	<i>Sphiggurus mexicanus</i>
Central American Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>
Paca	<i>Cuniculus paca</i>
Tomes' Spiny Rat	<i>Proechimys semispinosus</i>
Rufous Tree Rat	<i>Diplomys labilia</i>
Long-whiskered Rice Rat	<i>Transandinomys bolivaris</i>
Dusky Rice Rat	<i>Melanomys caliginosus</i>
Alfaro's Rice Rat	<i>Handleyomys alfaro</i>
Vesper Rat	<i>Nyctomys sumichrasti</i>

Northern Climbing Rat	<i>Tylomys nudicaudus</i>
Big-eared Climbing Rat	<i>Ototylomys phyllotis</i>
Mexican Deer Mouse	<i>Peromyscus mexicanus</i>
Hispid Cotton Rat	<i>Sigmodon hispidus</i>
House Mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>

### **Rabbits**

Forest Rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus brasiliensis</i>
Eastern Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus floridanus</i>

### **Xenarthrans**

Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth	<i>Choloepus hoffmanni</i>
Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth	<i>Bradypus variegatus</i>
Northern Tamandua	<i>Tamandua mexicana</i>

**Also seen:** 201 species of birds, 34 species of herps, over 100 species of moths, and an active volcano.



Masaya Volcano