



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

31st July - 11th August 2019

## Introduction

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This was primarily a mammal survey trip, aimed at surveying an area surrounding the existing Nature Park Cicelj to hopefully provide additional records and evidence to help protect the area by expanding the park. We of course recorded any other wildlife we saw. The trip was organised by the Dutch Mammal group in conjunction with Čajniče eko centre and consisted of a multinational group of survey volunteers.

I flew with Easyjet to Dubrovnik which was fine, booked a hire car with Goldcar – pretty average; the car was already wrecked before I got it.

The weather was very hot and sunny mid 30's during the day and quite warm at night, we had one night of heavy rain.

This is my account of the species that I saw, but in total the group recorded 45 species of mammal during this survey.

The photos are hyperlinked to larger versions.

# Diary

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## 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019

I drove the short distance from the airport along the coast to the border with Bosnia a 30 min queue to cross and I was off heading to Čajniče, I stopped for a few birds **Lesser Grey Shrike, red Backed shrike** of note. I stopped at the Battle of Sutjeska memorial a famous WWII battle. I arrived at Čajniče where I was promptly stopped by the police they quickly realised I was with the survey group (the town had already been alerted to our presence) I was waved on. I joined the group some who had arrived the day before and some earlier in the day. My first task was to set a load of longworth traps by a stream, where we saw a nice dipper. After some dinner we headed back to the river to set some mist nets for bats without any luck.

## 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019

I checked the traps first thing **wood** and **yellow necked mice** the only captures, after breakfast I spent most of the day in the local area recording butterflies and plants. There was a nice selection including, **silver washed fritillary, painted lady, common blue, small heath**. Some locals who were cleaning the swimming pool invited me to partake in drinking some of the local spirit decanted from an old coke bottle, it tasted like paintstripper mixed with battery acid and had a real kick, after two large glasses I had to make my excuses and headed back to base to sober up and have an ice cream.

I checked the traps mid afternoon with nothing captured but I did see a **weasel** run across the track on my walk there.

The night trap checks also produced nothing but another team had caught a **nosed horned viper** in one of the traps and brought it back in a tank for everyone else to see.



Silver Washed Fritillary



Spreading Bellflower



Nose Horned Viper



Cross Flowered Gentian



Common Vole



## 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

Pre breakfast trap check produced plenty of **yellow necked mice** and a couple of **wood mice**. After breakfast a group of us headed to the other side of the river to explore the grasslands and investigate some barns. Two of the barns held lone **lesser horseshoe bats** and we saw **clouded yellow** and **scarce swallowtail** butterflies. I split from the group and explored another area locating **common wall lizards**, **lesser purple emperor** and lots of **Jersey tigers**. After lunch a group of us headed to an area called Trojan higher up in the hills where traps had already been set prebaited and we set them to catch and explored the area. We saw **red squirrel** and **nutcracker** on our wander and in a barn we found a roosting **lesser horseshoe bat**.



Common Wall Lizard



Wood White

## 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019

We checked the traps at Trojan before breakfast once again lots of **yellow necked mice**, and a couple of **bank voles** and a single **common vole** and a **wood mouse**. Some nice **cross flowered gentians** were in flower in the meadow and I found a couple of **wartbiters**, on the wander round.



Lesser Purple Emperor

After breakfast we investigated an orchard area not far from town and set yet more traps. After which I took a walk in the area recording plants and insects, some nice blue **dor beetles** of note and a nice selection of **butterflies**.



Lace Border

We checked the traps at Trojan mid afternoon and had both **common** and **bank voles** with a **scarce copper** butterfly of note flying about. We stopped to admire the **Sack-carrying Marsh orchids** along the roadside on the way back but had little else.



Sack-carrying Marsh orchids

We checked the traps at Trojan again, this time at night, we were stopped at a police checkpoint but they quickly recognised us and we were sent on our way. A **wildcat** crossed the road on the way giving us all a good look and this was the highlight of the day. The traps were empty and we saw nothing else of note.

## 4<sup>th</sup> August 2019

The pre breakfast trap check at Trojan produced several **yellow necked mice** and a **bank vole**.

A small group of us headed to a remote cave high up in the mountains, we had to access it with a 4x4 up a track to a dead end followed by a steep walk which was very productive with a nice selection of **butterflies** and **plants** including **Scotch argus** and **black false hellebore**. The cave only held one **lesser horseshoe bat** but the view was amazing. As we left the cave I spotted a **Alpine longhorn beetle** which is a rare species and we found another rare longhorn beetle near the car, a **Beech longhorn beetle**.

As we drove back we found a couple of abandoned buildings a notable one held a maternity colony of **lesser horseshoe bats** and an **edible dormouse** which I am pretty sure was nursing babies in a crevice.

After dinner we did some bat detecting by a bridge, it was mostly **common** and **soprano pipistrelles** but we did get a **whiskered / brants**. We checked the traps at Trojan, a **fox** on the way back was the only thing of note.

I got a surprise cake and a bottle of Rakia (a rather strong spirit brandy made from fruit) for my birthday, a new mammal would have been nice.

## 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019

The pre breakfast trap check at Trojan produced several **yellow necked mice** only and not much else about. After breakfast I took a walk to some small pools where some **fire salamander efts** were present and I photographed them underwater. I did some sweep netting of a meadow for insects mostly grasshoppers including some **wartbiters**, a **tortoise beetle** and a few ladybirds, including **scymnus interruptus**, **scymnus schmidti** and **Nephus quadrimaculatus**.

In the afternoon we drove down the valley searching for places to do bat trapping and look at any possible bat roosts. We found a few nice spots to try. We encountered a nice selection of butterflies and a couple of damselflies in what was a very picturesque valley. We headed back to town for dinner.



Scarce Copper



Bank Vole



Jersey Mocha



Yellow Bellied Toad



Trichodes apiarius



Scotch Argus



**Miller's Water Shrew**

Two of us headed back down the valley to do some bat trapping, we set a mist net over a small river and waited, as the light faded we spotted a few moths including **buff arches** and **scorched carpet**. A few bats were present on the detector, passing **serotine** and **noctule** and a few **pipistrelles** but they kept away from the net but we did eventually catch an **Alcathoe's bat**. Later in the evening I heard my name being called and saw two lights from our base yet there was only two of us, I headed over to investigate and there was a man with a large gun. He clearly spoke neither English nor Dutch and although one of the two Bosnian words I knew was Bat he did not understand what we were doing. We rang on of our local Bosnian contacts and explained what was happening, we handed him the phone but he clearly did not know what was going on and looked at it in wonder, we turned it to speaker mode and he was clearly surprised that a voice was speaking to him, a discussion over the phone was had and his fear that we were migrants was dispelled and he was clear what we were doing but perhaps not why. We declined an invite to visit his farmhouse to drink some moonshine spirit and he left us in peace. We did not catch anything else and headed back spotting a **fox** on the way.



**Hazel Dormouse**



**Idas Blue**



**Morimus funereus**

## 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019

We went to a rocky area where traps had been for a few days to do the final check and collect them for redeployment elsewhere, a couple of **yellow necked mice** the only capture. But the area was very rich in plant life with a different range of plants than the areas I had been in for the last few days some nice **house leeks** in flower.

A foraging **red squirrel** looked out of place away from any woodland where **scarce swallowtails**, **painted lady** and **hummingbird hawkmoths** were in abundance.

The afternoon I relaxed and fell asleep for a few hours recovering from many early starts and late nights. After dinner we visited the famous church in the town to see its old and very famous icons. Then we went to the river for a bat catching session and caught a **dipper** while setting up. A successful session, we had 16 bats of 6 species, **common** and **soprano pipistrelles**, **whiskered**, **Brants** and **Alcathoe's bats** but the prize was a cracking **parti coloured bat** and finally a new species for me a very nice belated birthday present.

We enjoyed a few beers by the campfire setup by the rest of the group nearby before heading back.

## 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019

More pre breakfast trap checks, this time a bit of a drive away, a forest ranger took us in a 4x4 stopping at a wood yard to see a dead **dice snake** which had unfortunately been run over. We arrived at an idyllic mountain stream to check the traps, we had a nice **Miller's water shrew** along with the obligatory **yellow necked mice**.

In the afternoon we headed to a rocky area a distance away to set traps, my little car could not take the rough track so we walked quite a distance to get there and back in very high temperatures. We found some pools full of **yellow bellied toads** on the walk back. The area was idyllic a few scattered houses amongst the mountain meadows.

After dinner we did some bat trapping catching in the area where we met the gun carrying local a few days before, it was uneventful on that count but we did catch a few more bats, 2 **leisler's bats**, and singles of **Alcathoe's**, **Parti coloured** and **Geoffroy's bats**.



Fire Salamander eft



Northern Crayfish



Scarce Swallowtail



Sticky Clary



Leisler's Bat

## 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019

I took a walk locally photographing mostly butterflies but came across a nice **red backed shrike**,

In the afternoon I cleaned some traps and took a short walk photographing some **Northern crayfish** in the stream.

I checked some traps at dusk then joined a Bat trapping session, which had caught a dipper but nothing else.

## 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019

A day of collecting traps from several sites and cleaning them followed by taking some time to relax. In the evening we had prepared a presentation on our work for the community and this was presented to them in a lecture hall in the centre followed by a leaving party.

## 10<sup>th</sup> August 2019

I was packed and said a few more goodbyes and headed off back to Croatia. I made a few stops at abandoned buildings looking for bats but found butterflies **and common wall lizards**. I crossed the border and stopped at a small supermarket for food, cold drinks and ice cream. I headed up to Velji Do a rocky area above the airport. **Eastern black eared wheatears** were abundant despite the heat and a large flock of vocal **alpine chough** was nice to see. I headed back to the town for some food before heading back up and spent a couple of hours looking for **rock partridge**, eventually from the viewpoint I had a couple of birds calling and eventually I saw them fly down the rock face. I spent most of the night spotlighting which was not very productive only spotting a **brown hare**.

## 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019

I was up at dawn and had a few hours before I had to head to the airport. So I took a walk round Velji Do , bird activity was good in the cooler conditions and I followed a couple of **Sombre tits** round the village, plenty of **Eastern black eared wheatears** and a nice **eastern olivaceous warbler**.

It was already hot as I left for the airport and headed home uneventfully.



Carthusian Pink



Blue Eryngo



Wartbiter



Four Spotted Footman



Mallow Skipper



Bright Wave

# Checklists

## Mammals - 25



**Parti Coloured Bat**

Yellow Necked Mouse	Wood Mouse	Lesser Horseshoe Bat
Common Vole	Bank Vole	Millers Water Shrew
Hazel Dormouse	Savi's Pipistrelle	Weasel
Geoffroy's Bat	Red Squirrel	Noctule
Serotine	Alcathoe's Bat	Common Pipistrelle
Soprano Pipistrelle	Brant's Bat	Edible Dormouse
Whiskered Bat	Parti Coloured Bat	Red Fox
Leisler's Bat	Wildcat	Water Shrew
Brown Hare		



**Lesser Horseshoe Bat**



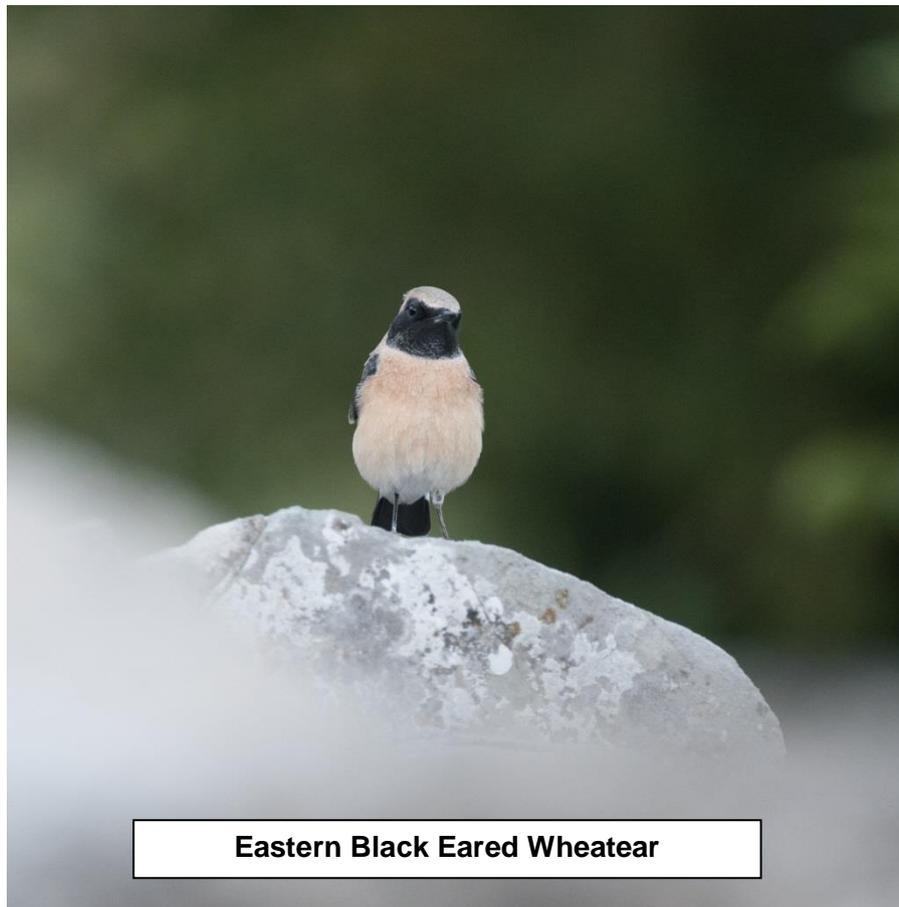
**Yellow Necked Mouse**



**Edible Dormouse**

## Birds – 46

Nutcracker	House Martin	Swallow
Grey Wagtail	White Wagtail	Red Backed Shrike
Lesser grey Shrike	Jay	Greater Spotted Woodpecker
Rock Dove	Blackbird	House Sparrow
Buzzard	Blue Tit	Great Tit
Dipper	Chaffinch	Bullfinch
Goldfinch	Goldcrest	Nuthatch
Robin	Raven	Scops owl
Black Redstart	Redstart	Spotted Flycatcher
Tawny Owl	Swift	Sombre Tit
Crested Tit	Hooded Crow	Linnet
Common Gull	Cormorant	Alpine Chough
Nuthatch	Rock Bunting	Eastern Black Eared Wheatear
Rock Partridge	Lesser Whitethroat	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler
Ring Ouzel	Goshawk	Jay
Rock Bunting		



**Eastern Black Eared Wheatear**

## Selected Others - 106



Praying Mantis

Nose Horned Viper	Common Wall Lizard	Western Green Lizard
Yellow Bellied Toad	Fire Salamander	Northern Crayfish
Alpine Salamander		
Small Tortoiseshell	Meadow Brown	Scarce Swallowtail
Jersey Tiger	Clouded Yellow	Berger's Clouded Yellow
Scarce Copper	Buff Ermine	Buff Arches
Black Arches	Wall Brown	Painted Lady
Hummingbird Hawkmoth	Nine Spotted Moth	Mother of Pearl
Ringed China Mark	Silver Washed Fritillary	Queen of Spain Fritillary
Large White	Wood White	Speckled Wood
Beautiful Demoiselle	Red Veined Darter	Amanda's Blue
Red-Brown Longhorn Beetle	Ringlet	Iolas Blue
Map	Comma	White Admiral
Common Glider	Red Admiral	Dusky Meadow Brown
Grey Bush Cricket	Pyrausta aurata	Marbled White
Agonopterix arenella	Large Skipper	Lace Border
Great Green Bush Cricket	Bright Line Brown Eye	Common Blue
Lesser Purple Emperor	Shaded Broadbar	Wartbiter
Common Carpet	Carabus violaceus	Dark Bush Cricket
Bright Wave	Dead Nettle Leaf Beetle	Spring Dor Beetle
Convolvulus hawk moth	Purple Cloud	Scotch Argus
Oncocera semirubella	The Handmaid	Spotted Antlion
European Cave Spider	Rosalia alpina	Jersey Mocha
Morimus funereus	Brown Argus	Silver Studded Blue
Praying Mantis	Trichodes apiarius	High Brown Fritillary
Wasp Spider	Green Huntsman	Woodland Grayling
Mallow Skipper	Nephus quadrimaculatus	Scymnus schmidti
Scymnus Interruptus	Dingy Shell	Field Cricket
Peach Blossom	Scorched Carpet	Hemp Agrimony Plume
Blue Winged Grasshopper	Four Spotted Footman	Two Toothed Goldenring
Silver Spotted Skipper	Straw Dot	Small Heath
Common Carpet	Dark Green Fritillary	Blood vein
Spilostethus saxatilis	Cranberry Blue	Tree grayling
Glanville Fritillary	Large Wall Brown	Violet Carpenter Bee
Southern Hawker	Snout	Balkan Pincer grasshopper
Euscorpis gamma		

## Plants - 87

Enchanters Nightshade	Dark Mullein	Spreading Bellflower
Tall Fleabane	Wood Cow Wheat	Alkanet
Selfheal	Goats Rue	Vervain
Tansy	White Melilot	Common Mallow
Yarrow	Large Thyme	Vipers Bugloss
Field Scabious	Perforate St John's Wort	Holyhock
Annual Woundwort	Common Poppy	Garden Candytuft
Nettle Leaved Bellflower	Toadflax	Wild Marjoram
Spotted Dead Nettle	Squinancywort	Small Toadflax
Large Yellow Foxglove	Large Hemp Nettle	Chicory
Cypress Spurge	Rose Campion	Brooklime
Yellow Ox Eye	Sickle Medic	Cross gentian
Carthusian Pink	Betony	Gypsywort
Wall Germander	Lady's Bedstraw	Spiny Restharrow
Dactylorhiza saccifera	Greater Yellow Rattle	Narrow-leaved Everlasting Pea
Veratrum nigrum	Crown Vetch	House Leek
Rusty Back Fern	Spanish Stonecrop	Forked Spleenwort
Heath Speedwell	Lesser Centaury	Birds Nest Orchid
Horse Mint	Woolly Foxglove	Dodder
Black Eyed Susan	Purple Loostrife	Touch Me Not Balsam
Basil Thyme	Wood Calamint	Tunic Flower
Ball clover	Euphorbia salicifolia	Wall Rue
Mouse eared hawkweed	Small Scabiuos	Birdsfoot trefoil
Wild Carrot	Dwarf Thistle	Scarlet Pimpernel
Grey Field Speedwell	Hedge Cranesbill	ox eye daisy
Black Bindweed	Dusky Cranesbill	Sticky Clary
Field Pansy	Broad Leaved Willowherb	Field Bindweed
Common Fleabane	Blue eryngo	Jersey Cudweed
Rigid Eyebright	Tree Mallow	Restharrow
Soapwort	Hoary Alison	Whorled Clary
Thyme leaved Sandwort		



The image shows the 'flickr' logo in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters 'f', 'l', 'i', 'c', 'k', and 'r' are blue, while the letter 'r' is pink.