



Wild Globe Travel Consultancy

Tailored Wildlife, Wilderness and Adventure Travel Across the Globe.

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PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Date - May 2026

Duration - 5 Days

Destinations

Prague - Radouč Nature Preserve - Česká Kamenice - Lom Alkázár - Křivoklátsko Protected Landscape Area

Trip Overview

This was mainly a work trip, but during our limited spare time my partner Karina and I visited a few potential wildlife sites in and around this beautiful old city, several of which did prove to be productive. We were helped by an old contact Jan Ebr, another wildlife enthusiast who I had been in touch with for a number of years, but had never actually met. It was great to spend time with Jan on his home patch and I very much hope that I have the opportunity to travel with him on a more significant expedition at some stage. Known as the 'City of a Hundred Spires', Prague is one of the great European cities and the classical parts of this historic medieval capital remain as compelling today as they were when I first viewed them as part of Czechoslovakia many years ago. That country no longer exists of course, as the undemocratic Communist Party was overthrown during the peaceful 'Velvet Revolution' of November 1989 and on the very first day of 1993, the country was split to form the independent nations of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Whilst I have visited Slovakia since, as recently as September 2020, I have not set foot in Czechia since those heady days and hope to return for a



longer tour in the near future. Much of Bohemia to the west and north is particularly picturesque and although most of our time was spent in or fairly close to the capital, we did venture further afield with Jan, who took us as far north as an observation tower less than ten kilometres south of the border with Germany. Given our fairly busy schedule, we really only had two opportunities to explore for wildlife, but I was at least able to arrange that these windows were extensive enough to make them worthwhile. The first totalled seventeen straight hours from 9am to 2am and a few days later we were able to devote a further eight and a half hours to the cause, from 5pm to 1.30am. Jan was with us for all but the first six hours or so of our first excursion, when we explored specific sites within the city on our own, and we had also planned to visit a local park independently after dark, but unfortunately it rained heavily for the first time in several weeks and we were forced to abandon what would have been our best chance to find an edible dormouse. Two random coypu sightings aside, which were spotted on either side of the famous Charles Bridge, all our encounters took place within these two sessions,

with eleven different mammals observed during each. If time had permitted, I would have enjoyed exploring additional sites for Eurasian beaver, but the only species we actively searched for and missed was northern chamois, as there is a small introduced population just north of Česká Kamenice on the aforementioned border with Germany, but we had limited time to attempt what was really just a long shot and were not ultimately fortunate. With just another day or two I would have expected to add probably five or six additional mammals, including the three already mentioned, most likely a northern white-breasted hedgehog, maybe one of a few small carnivores and at least one or two of several possible rodents. That said, we would have seen far fewer without Jan's invaluable assistance, as he was not only aware of the best sites to try for specific species, he actually took the time to personally drive us to them all. I have to admit, I had at least partially forgotten just how alluring this ancient city is and almost wherever you wander, you are greeted by astounding architecture in a variety of periods and styles. As many tourists will quickly learn, St. George's Basilica, within Prague Castle, was consecrated in 921, which predates London's Westminster Hall, part of The Palace of Westminster, by almost two centuries. Just as the grandeur and spectacle of the venerable old cities of central and eastern Europe keep pulling visitors back, Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest and Kraków for example, so Prague grips you from the moment you arrive and are surrounded by a captivating and often breathtaking fusion of history, culture and art. Most people who visit have no interest in wildlife at all, but as much as I still marvel at elaborate baroque palaces and ornate gothic cathedrals, for me, the real excitement of any destination is the animals that can be found living silently there. Prague has plenty, hidden quietly among the splendour and the pageantry, you just need to know where to look.



Mammal Sightings

Order Carnivora - Family Canidae (Dogs - 1)

1. Red Fox - *Vulpes vulpes*

Having already observed a red fox in the forest with the thermal imager, we spotted another dashing across the road in our headlights as we began the drive back to Prague on our first night. Apparently these habitually persecuted canids are easier to see here in early spring when they are mating and the grass is considerably shorter, which would at least partially explain why these were the only foxes encountered across each of our long nights in the field.

Order Carnivora - Family Mustelidae (Mustelids - 2)

2. Beech Marten - *Martes foina*

Although obviously not naturally an urban species, these small carnivores have adapted superbly to city life and were the last mammals observed on both of our excursions, when we encountered skulking individuals in almost identical fashion upon arriving back in the centre of Prague. The first was observed in our headlights and the second with my spotlight, although both sightings were typically brief, as each of these nocturnal creatures dashed back to the shadows.

3. Eurasian Badger - *Meles meles*

Our two encounters with one of my favourite animals could not have been a great deal more contrasting, as we all had an excellent view of a fairly large badger waddling across the road on the first of our two night drives. However, our only sighting at Křivoklátsko on our second excursion was far more frustrating, as Karina and I did at least see the same animal, but only with thermal imagers, and Jan missed it entirely whilst driving.



Order Artiodactyla - Family Cervidae (Deer - 3)

4. European Roe Deer - *Capreolus capreolus*

As is the case on so many tours across mainland Europe, roe deer were the most commonly encountered species by far and were regularly observed on both of our expeditions, initially bathed in the beautiful evening sunlight and then throughout the night. Despite their abundance, photographs were tricky, with Jan driving and Karina and I trying to stop him in time to capture something before a succession of deer inevitably turned on their collective heels and fled. Whilst I have several distant shots to show for our not inconsiderable efforts, I really struggled to get anything close and the picture above, which was taken at dusk on the second of our two excursions, was the last I would take of this archetypal European species.

5. Red Deer - *Cervus elaphus*

Red deer were relatively common within two contrasting landscapes, the open meadows that we drove through on the way north to search for chamois on our first foray with Jan and the relatively dense forests of Křivoklátsko to the west of Prague, which we spent much of our second night exploring. Again I struggled in terms of photographs, but unlike the roe deer, which I did eventually get at least a reasonable shot of, I eventually returned home with just a handful of distant and uninspiring reference shots of perhaps an even more iconic European species.

6. Fallow Deer - *Dama dama*

As is so often the case in terms of wildlife tours, local knowledge is usually indispensable and Jan was entirely responsible for our fallow deer sightings, as he knew a specific stretch of road for this species north of Prague and within maybe twenty minutes we had encountered several small groups and one fairly large herd. All of the sightings took place late on our first night drive and, as such, I have no pictures, as I very rarely attempt to photograph diurnal animals at night. As is the case across so much of Europe, fallow deer were introduced to Czechia and do not occur naturally.



Order Artiodactyla - Family Bovidae (Cattle, Goats, Sheep, Antelope and Goat Antelopes - I)

7. European Mouflon - *Ovis aries musimon*

I have used the term contrasting on a couple of occasions already, but it could never really apply more than to our two mouflon sightings, one of which took place within the grounds and even the car park of the Thomayer University Hospital, on a busy road to the south of Prague. Apparently there has been a small population of mouflon here for many years and they are clearly doing well, as they were all in good condition and had several young. This was one of the destinations that Karina and I were visiting before we met Jan and we missed the mouflon on our first circuit of the hospital grounds, eventually more or less bumping into them outside a cafe, from where we followed them at basically their leisure for perhaps half an hour. Our second sighting took place in the meadows of Křivoklátsko, where even Jan had not expected to see this species. Indeed, from a cursory glance at the colours and number, I initially thought I had spotted a large herd of red deer in a distant field, but it quickly became apparent, largely from the distinctive curved horns of the rams, that we were actually watching a herd of perhaps as many as 50 mouflon and in far more natural surroundings than our previous encounter. Just for the record, these European mouflon are wild descendants of domestic sheep and are not the original wild species, *ovis gmelina*, which occurs from Turkey and Armenia, as far east and south as Iran.

Order Artiodactyla - Family Suidae (Pigs - I)

8. Wild Boar - *Sus scrofa*

This was the main species I was hoping to observe at Křivoklátsko, which for several years was supposed to have been granted national park status, but is still currently merely a 'Protected Landscape Area', which of course offers it far less genuine protection. More or less all of our second evening was spent here and of our four wild boar sightings, the first, of a large male feeding at the side of the road, was by far the best. In fact, it was the only encounter where we could all see an actual boar, as the other three, a pair, a herd of between ten and twelve and another individual, mainly involved me describing what I was watching with my thermal imager. Karina did at least also see the pair, which were on her side of the vehicle, but again only with a thermal and the best we were able to do with the herd, was distant eyeshine, before they fled deeper into the forest. Although the sightings were consequently somewhat frustrating, it was at least heartening to encounter so many wild boar within a relatively short period, as they are being slaughtered across much of the continent in a fundamentally futile attempt to arrest the spread of African Swine Fever.

Order Lagomorpha - Family Leporidae (Rabbits and Hares - I)

9. European Hare - *Lepus europaeus*

We observed far fewer European hares than I had expected, certainly no more than ten across both outings, and none at all in daylight. Around half were seen with just the thermal imager and most of the remainder with my spotlight, as I was initially using the thermal to find animals and would then try to show everyone with my light. The system worked well enough up to a point, but photographs were practically impossible as soon as it got dark, certainly in the case of moving animals, and our best view of a hare would be our last, as we watched one sitting in the middle of the road in the full beam of our headlights, before it sprang gracefully into the long grass.

Order Eulipotyphla - Family Erinaceidae (Hedgehogs - I)

10. Western European Hedgehog - *Erinaceus europaeus*

It is possible to observe two species of hedgehog in and around Prague, as the ranges of both the western European hedgehog and the northern white-breasted hedgehog, *erinaceus roumanicus*, overlap here. We may have seen both, but our first sighting was with the thermal imager only and of course it is completely impossible to distinguish between such similar creatures in this format. It can even be difficult with a clear view in the field, but I have grown up with the western version in the United Kingdom and was fairly certain that the hedgehog encountered towards the end of our second evening was the species I am so familiar with. It was actually the last mammal observed as we departed Křivoklátsko and, as is usually the case with these charming animals, I made a point of stopping to photograph it. Just to double check, I have since confirmed my identification with a European mammal expert, who also kindly checked the two small rodents and single bat that appear here.



Order Rodentia - Family Sciuridae (Squirrels - 2)

11. Eurasian Red Squirrel - *Sciurus vulgaris*

This was the first of three mammal species we were going to attempt before we met Jan, coypu and mouflon would in turn follow, and our initial opportunity would take place at Petřín Park, which was a short walk from our hotel and would have been where we searched for edible dormouse, if torrential rain had not sadly intervened. We were more fortunate during a sunny morning on our first visit, when Karina spotted a lone squirrel on the ground within about an hour and we were able to spend several minutes watching it forage and feed just a few metres away. As these European tree squirrels can often be tricky to track down, even in public parks and gardens, we did have the option of visiting several additional sites, but this was not ultimately necessary and this would be the only red squirrel observed across both of our improvised safaris.



12. European Ground Squirrel - *Spermophilus citellus*

We also only had one ground squirrel sighting, but this involved multiple squirrels at a colony Jan had visited previously just north of Mladá Boleslav, which was about a 60 kilometre drive from where we met him in Prague. The colony is protected within the small Radouč Nature Preserve, which is basically an open public space that you would never even really consider a special area unless you stopped to read the single information board or happened to notice at least one of perhaps dozens of ground squirrels darting between their burrows. The main rule in terms of visiting the colony is that you are not allowed to feed the squirrels, but this has clearly been ignored by at least a few enthusiastic locals, as several squirrels approached and actually nudged our hands in the hope of finding something slightly more interesting than the usual grass and seeds. Whilst we had not expected quite such an intimate experience with these engaging little rodents, this was still a fabulous encounter, particularly with a number of kits appearing and playing boisterously around their burrows.



Order Rodentia - Family Echimyidae (Coypu - I)

13. Coypu - *Myocastor coypus*

This introduced species was the second mammal we would attempt without Jan and again, I was aware of multiple sites we could try. Happily, the first proved to be sufficient, when we spotted a single coypu initially being fed by hand and then swimming along the small island under Legion Bridge in the Vltava River. We watched this most endearing of rodents for around twenty minutes, during which time it left the water on three more occasions to be fed, and a couple of days later would observe two more either side of the historic Charles Bridge, which dates back to the 14th century. For those who are not aware, quite possibly because they now appear throughout Europe and even in parts of Africa, coypus, or nutrias as they are also known, only occur naturally in South America, basically from Bolivia to the most southerly mainland point of the continent.



Order Rodentia - Family Muridae (Mice, Rats and Gerbils - 2)

14. Yellow-necked Field Mouse - *Apodemus flavicollis*

I would imagine that the vast majority of the small rodents observed with the thermal imager were one or other of the two species recorded here and of the three that that we stopped and made an effort to photograph, two turned out to be yellow-necked field mice and the other was a long-tailed field mouse. As per the rather wonderful picture below, these woodland mice will often freeze in the beam of a spotlight and can be deceptively easy to photograph



15. Long-tailed Field Mouse - *Apodemus sylvaticus*

Often referred to as a wood mouse, I did initially think that this long-tailed field mouse was actually a dormouse of some description given its position on the side of a tree, as size can be very difficult to judge with a thermal imager, particularly at distance. However, as we approached, we could clearly tell that it was a mouse, which again froze in my light as I took a few quick reference shots.



Order Chiroptera - Family Vespertilionidae (Vesper Bats - I)

16. Daubenton's Bat - *Myotis daubentonii*

The Alcázar Quarry, or Lom Alkázar as it is known locally, is home to a variety of bats during the winter and Jan and I both thought that it would make sense to check what species might still be around during our visit. The answer was not many, as we tried three of the more accessible mineshafts during what was a fairly brief search and were rewarded with three individual daubenton's bats in the second tunnel and a lone bat of the same species in the third. We would observe another bat flying as we prepared to begin spotlighting later that evening, but did not try for photographs and consequently had no way of identifying it.



*Excluding a second hedgehog viewed with the thermal imager only, which could have been a northern white-breasted hedgehog, *erinaceus roumanicus*.*

*Excluding probably a third beech marten, which Jan and I had a brief view of darting across a forest road at Křivoklátsko and I then saw again high in a tree with my thermal. Although Jan considers it unlikely in this particular area, the only possible alternative would be a pine marten, *martes martes*, which do occur in this region, but are not commonly observed.*

*Excluding one unidentified flying bat and multiple small rodents observed with the thermal imager, although most, if not all, are likely to have been one or other of the two *apodemus* species already identified.*

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