

The Canary Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

26 February - 5 March 2011



Scenic views



Houbara Bustard



Whimbrels

Report compiled by Tony Clarke
Images courtesy of Bethan Evans



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leader: Tony Clarke Naturetrek Naturalist

Participants: Heather Procter
Jennifer Armitage
Marjorie Lohfink
Roger Eaton
Clive Millard
David Briggs
Elizabeth Briggs
Bethan Evans

Day 1

Saturday 26th February

Flights arrived on time and we all met up without any complications before boarding our minibus and driving to Güímar which was our base for the next four nights.

After lunch at the Finca Salamanca we hit the road and travelled to the north coast of the island where we stopped at the Mirador Lagrimona to the west of Puerto de la Cruz. It didn't take too long to locate a couple of fly-by Laurel Pigeons with their distinctive white tail tip but seeing one perched through the telescope was a completely different ball game. In fact the first pigeon we saw perched came as a bit of a surprise as it was a Bolle's Pigeon. Although it can be seen occasionally at this location it is by no means regular and certainly not perched. We all got some good views of this immature, distinguished by its dark bill, and the characteristic tail pattern was clearly visible and the dark terminal band was obvious.

Later in the afternoon we finally saw a Laurel Pigeon through the telescope and although a little obscured the white terminal band on the tail was very obvious and clearly different from the Bolle's Pigeon seen earlier. Also in this area we saw a couple of endemic Butterflies – the Canary Red Admiral *Vanessa (indica) vulcania* which was formerly treated as a subspecies of the Indian Red Admiral remained perched on the ground with its wings fully open for a long period of time. Also the Canary Large White *Pieris cheiranthi* was previously treated as a subspecies of the Large White but has been considered sufficiently different for a while now. These were less than obliging and the only one seen perched was through the telescope but the heavy wing markings could be seen well.

As an introduction to the botany we saw a couple of regional specialities including the large *Echium giganteum* and *Marsetella moquiniana* plus some more common species including *Kleinia neriifolia*, *Plocama pendula*, *Sonchus congestus*, *Aeonium canariense* and *A. tabulaeforme* and the widespread and very invasive *Oxalis pes-caprae* native to Namibia and South Africa.

Day 2

Sunday 27th February

Our first full day in the field and we were on our way to the beautiful north-western part of Tenerife.

En route our first stop was at the Barranco de Ruiz where we heard the Canary Island Robin but it would not show itself, which was a pity. However there were quite a few Canaries that were giving much better views than the ones we saw briefly yesterday. Probably the highlight at this location was a distant view through the telescope at *Limonium arborescens* growing high on the side of the barranco. This plant has a rather restricted range on Tenerife and is rather rare in the wild; this location is one of the more reliable places to find this species. Also here we got some really good looks at *Aeonium tabulaeforme*, much better than those we had yesterday.

So moving on we made a brief stop in Los Silos where we located a small group of Eurasian Coot before continuing westwards. Our arrival at Punt de Teno could not have been timed any better because as we got out of the minibus at the Mirador de la Monja and the resident pair of Barbary Falcons were displaying overhead. This was a fabulous site and I guess it was the highlight of the trip for David. The display was literally just above our heads but was rather short lived as the pair soon went their separate ways, but we did get some more views of both birds later in the day. Punta de Teno also just happens to be one of the best botanical stops on Tenerife and we were not to be disappointed with our brief excursions but first we had our picnic in a roadside pull-in under the magnificent sea cliffs.

Driving out to the lighthouse gave us the opportunity to look in the abandoned fields at the flocks of finches. This was the only place on the trip where we saw Rock Sparrow with their stripy heads and white tipped outer tail feathers. We saw about fifty of these among the more numerous Canaries and the western Canary Island race of the Common Linnet.

We then retraced our route back to Buenavista with a couple of stops to look at the local flora seeing some interesting species including *Polycarpha carnosae*, *Crambe scaberrima*, *Parolinia intermedia*, *Monanthes pallens* and *polyphylla*, *Aeonium canariense*, *Euphorbia atropurpurea* and *aphylla*, *Lavatera acerifolia*, *Limonium fruticans*, *Ceropegia dichotoma*, *Sideritis cretica*, *Vieraea laevigata* and *Cheirolophus burchardii*.

Continuing on our circumnavigation of the island we took the road from Buenavista which passes through the small isolated village of Masca. This has to be one of the most scenic parts of Tenerife but the road in and out is interesting to say the least. Apart from the magnificent scenery this is another botanically rich area that unfortunately needs more time than we could allow but a brief stop by the mobile bar on the road out gave us the opportunity to have a look at the endemic orchid *Orchis canariensis*. From here we took the road through Santiago del Teide and Guia de Isora back to Adeje where we joined the motorway back to the hotel.

Day 3

Monday 28th February

We were up early this morning and took a picnic breakfast with us down to Los Cristianos where we were getting the ferry across to the neighbouring island of La Gomera. The harbour at Los Cristianos produced the first real surprise of the trip as Bethan and Tony saw a first-winter Ring-billed Gull but unfortunately it didn't hang around for everyone else to see it. Also in the harbour area there were a couple of Sandwich Terns that were a little more obliging. Once on the ferry and underway a few Cory's Shearwaters could be seen gliding rather effortlessly over the waves and then a Northern Gannet flew past. Although regular in Canary waters this species is not seen on many tours and was a nice addition to the list.

The rest of the journey we were accompanied by many Cory's Shearwaters and what a delight it was to watch them glide effortlessly over the waves and note that occasionally the wing tip would just touch the water as a guide to the bird.

Once on La Gomera we explored the public park in San Sebastian where we located the only African Grass Blues of the tour. Next stop was on our way up the Barranco de la Villa where we took a short walk in search of plants including *Sideritis gomeraea* and *Sideritis lotsyi*, *Dicberanthus plocamoides*, and two species of *Aeonium*, *decorum* and *castello-painae*. A little further along the road we came across two more endemic succulents in the form of *Aeonium subplanum* and *Greenovia diplocycla*. Moving on we continued inland to the Parque Nacional de Garajonay where we saw a couple of Laurel Pigeons from the Mirador de El Rejo whilst on the roadsides the botanical wonders were endless, *Hedera canariensis*, *Pericallis steetzii*, *Gesnouinia arborea* and the spectacular endemic *Echium acanthocarpum*.

Today we took our lunch at the picnic area at La Laguna Grande and for the first time in three years the weather was wonderful. Maybe it was a little too good because the expected woodland species just did not appear and this was a bit of a surprise.

In the afternoon we went to the Roque de Agando where we saw two orchid species *Gennaria diphylla* and *Habenaria tridactylites* although the latter had just finished flowering. The drive back to San Sebastian produced *Argyranthemum callichrysum* but all too soon it was time to return to Tenerife on the ferry. The crossing was similar to the one this morning with Cory's Shearwater the main bird species although we did get to see a few of the resident Short-finned Pilot Whales *Globicephala macrorhynchus* but the views were a little distant.

Day 4

Tuesday 1st March

Today we were scheduled to visit the most popular tourist attraction on Tenerife, the high altitudes of the Las Cañadas National Park and the centre piece Mount Teide. We did the spectacular drive across the caldera within the national park with a few stops for scenic photos and a few high altitude plants. Although many were not in flower; these included *Bencomia exstipulata*, *Argyranthemum teneriffae*, *Spartocytisus supranubius*, *Pterocephalus lasiospermus*, *Scrophularia glabrata*, *Erysimum scoparium*, *Echium wildpretii* and *Cheirolophus teydis*.

After leaving the caldera behind us and beginning the descent towards the south of Tenerife we pulled in for our lunch at the Zona Recreativa de Las Lajas. This was a dual stop as it was also the area where we would look for the endemic Blue Chaffinch. We set out the picnic on one of the tables near the barbeques and were soon able to watch both male and female of this emblematic endemic as we consumed our lunch. The males are very distinct with their slate-blue colouration, white vent, thick based bill and broken white eye-ring. The females are similar to the males in size and shape but they have a much duller plumage and completely lack the bluish tones. Also in this area we got some great views of the local *canariensis* form of Great Spotted Woodpecker which has much 'dirtier' underparts compared to the north European forms. Atlantic Canary was another species that was fairly numerous around the picnic area as well as the Canary Blue Tit.

From here we continued down towards the coast via Granadilla and en route we saw a few examples of *Sonchus canariensis* which although common in this particular valley is generally a rather rare species.

Then from Granadilla went round the back of Las Americas and took the coast road to Armeñimes to get a look at the small reservoir there. An initial scan produced a Eurasian Coot and a Common Moorhen and then a brief view of two ducks that disappeared from view very quickly. We changed our position and it was now clear that these were the two female American Wigeons that we had come to see. The contrast between the greyish head and the rufous breast and flanks was very obvious but in the time we were viewing the birds they did not fly or raise their wings for us to see the diagnostic white axillaries. They had been seen well and photographed on an earlier date so there was no question about the identification.

Day 5

Wednesday 2nd March

Today was a bit of a mixture with the morning on Tenerife and then the afternoon on Fuerteventura. We started the proceedings with a visit to the small hamlet of Chinamada situated on the northern side of the Anaga Peninsula. From here we walked out to the Mirador Aguaide with its stunning view of the surrounding sea cliffs and the village of Punta de Hidalgo far below us. The scenery in this part of Tenerife is breathtaking and the plant life unique. We didn't see many birds, just Berethelot's Pipit, Canary Island Chiffchaff, Atlantic Canary and Common Linnet but the botanical highlights were numerous. We saw many species including *Limonium macrophyllum*, *Lotus dumetorum*, *Echium simplex*, *Aeonium lindleyi*, *Monanthes anagensis*, *Plantago arborescens* and *Sideritis dendro-chaborra*, unfortunately the endemic orchid *Habenaria tridactylites* was no longer flowering, but we did see a few that had only just turned.

From here we drove back to the Llano de Los Viejos picnic area on the slopes of Monte Las Mercedes where we had our picnic lunch early before heading to the airport at Los Rodeos to catch our internal flight across to the island of Fuerteventura.

Our first call on our new island was the Barranco de la Torre about 10 Km south of the airport. We checked the coastal section of the Barranco first which was less than productive and so moved to the inland section which was also rather lacking in birds. We continued our journey south and after checking in to our hotel, the Sol Melia Gorriones, we made our first excursion on to the desert plain behind the Costa Calma resort. This area was also a little disappointing as a few of our target species eluded our searches but we did see a group of three Black-bellied Sandgrouse and got good looks at the rare *Convolvulus caput-medusae* which is a strange cushion-like bindweed with small white flowers.

Day 6

Thursday 3rd March

This morning began with a pre-breakfast excursion back on to the Costa Calma plain and this time things went a little better. By the time we had to leave the area to return to the hotel for breakfast we had located a couple of Houbara Bustards that gave us some excellent views, about nine Cream-coloured Coursers running around the desert quite close to our vehicle, just a single Black-bellied Sandgrouse and the first two Hoopoes for the tour.

After breakfast we headed south to the Jandia Peninsula where we soon located our main quest for the area, the rare and endemic *Euphorbia handiensis* which looks as much like a cactus as its cousin the *Euphorbia canariensis*. The flowers on this plant are so tiny and insignificant that even when it is in flower they are hard to see and very easily overlooked.

So back to the tourist area of Morro Jable and the gardens of the Dunas Jandia Resort where the Monk Parakeets put on a show as they went about their daily chores including a bit of nest renovation, some preening and quite a lot of squawking and screeching.

The majority of the afternoon was spent at the small reservoir at Rosa de Catalina Garcia which had a good selection of birds including many of which that were new for the trip Ruddy Shelduck, Common Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Pintail, Wigeon, Green Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, House Martin, Sand Martin and Yellow Wagtail. The Ruddy Shelduck had bred recently because there were 3 adults accompanied by ten recently hatched youngsters. The highlight here was undoubtedly the female Blue-winged Teal but this was hard to identify because of the fact it spent most of its time asleep in a secluded spot hidden among the branches in the water. However it did show enough of itself to allow us to make a positive identification before disappearing from view among the sunken branches.

Finally we went back across the desert plain and added another Houbara as well as seeing Cream-coloured Courser again and this time close enough to take a few photos. Also today we added a couple of new butterflies in the form of Greenish Black Tip and Lang's Short-tailed Blue.

Day 7

Friday 4th March

Yet another morning on Fuerteventura that began with a trip on to the desert plain behind Costa Calma. We relocated the group of nine Cream-coloured Coursers with relative ease and watched them running around the desert and feeding from the small bushes as they went. After some searching we saw a Houbara Bustard but this may also have been one of the birds that we saw yesterday and a few Black-bellied Sandgrouse completed the triplet

Next location today was the very picturesque village of Pajara with its colourful Bougainvilleas which line the normally dry barranco that passes behind the car park and the donkey driven waterwheel in front of the church, Nuestra Señora de la Regla. Here we began our search for the local race of African Blue Tit after the very brief views of one yesterday. Unfortunately they were less than obliging here so we moved on to Vega de Rio Palmas just a few miles further north on the windy mountain roads passing en route many examples of the *Asteriscus sericeus* which is endemic to Fuerteventura. Just before the turning to the village there is a lookout, the Mirador Las Peñitas, where we saw many Barbary Ground Squirrels and had the opportunity to hand feed them.

Continuing another kilometre or so brought us to Vega de Rio Palmas and the barranco which has a small amount of running water so it is an attraction for birds and dragonflies as well. Within minutes of our arrival we had added both European Turtle Dove and Laughing Dove to the trip list and then just a short distance along the barranco we located our main quarry, the *degener* race of *Cyanistes ultramarinus*, the African Blue Tit.

Moving on towards the ancient island capital of Betancuria we called in at the recreation area at Castillo de Lara where we stopped for a quick picnic lunch on the run. Along the access road we saw Barbary Partridge and the rather unusual succulent *Caralluma burchardii* which was growing in three or four areas. Our journey today took us next to the coast and the Salinas Golf Course just south of the Caleta de Fustes resort. We were aware that a couple of American ducks had been seen here recently so we thought we would give it a go.

As soon as we were able to view the small pond on the course we could see that there were a few waterfowl present including Ruddy Shelduck, Tufted Duck and Northern Shoveler and there were the two we had come to see a male Ring-necked Duck and a female Lesser Scaup. These two American vagrants are rare birds on these islands but once discovered they usually remain until early March before departing to who knows where, maybe back to northern Europe. The addition of these two species means that on this tour we recorded four species of American duck which is a record for a Naturetrek tour and a figure unlikely to be beaten. Also here we saw a couple of new waders – Common Snipe and Common Redshank. From here we moved just along the coast to Las Salinas del Carmen where we added a few more waders to our list namely Common Ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper and Ruddy Turnstone.

Then the last destination for the day was the inland section of the Barranco de la Torre and it was unusual to see water running because of recent heavy rainfall. On the pool near the track there was a Wood Sandpiper and on the track itself five Black-winged Stilts and a pipit that remained unidentified because of its flighty nature. Also this was the only location where we encountered the endemic Fuerteventura Stonechat and we got some excellent views of both a male and a female on the fences and bushes between the barranco and the agricultural fields. This was also a good area for Spectacled Warbler and we saw four or more individuals in the same bushes as the Chats. A good day and lots of different locations checked giving us the highest day total of the week at 45 species.

Day 8

Saturday 5th March

Most of today was taken up with getting people to the airport for their flights back to the UK but some of the group got some time for birding and so we visited the sites near the airport that we had looked at yesterday. We had another look at the Barranco de la Torre where we saw a similar array of species but the difference was the pipit which today was positively identified as a Red-throated Pipit, a scarce winter visitor or accidental visitor to the islands. We also had another quick look at the Salinas del Carmen where we found our only Grey Plover of the trip and then finally visited the Salinas Golf Course pond where the species we saw yesterday were still present.

All in all another excellent trip to these diverse islands and one of the highest number of species seen here on a Naturetrek tour.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!

Species Lists

Birds (80 species)

ANATIDAE

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

The only records of this recent coloniser from North Africa were from Fuerteventura where it was recorded daily with breeding pairs with chicks seen at the Barranco de la Torre and Rosa de Catalina Garcia.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas Penélope*

We only saw one during the trip and that was an adult male on the small reservoir at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 3rd March.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*

Two rather uninspiring and drab looking females were seen at the Armeñimes reservoir on the 1st. There was more contrast between the very grey head and the more rufous breast and flanks than on Eurasian but fortunately the white underwing had been photographed by other observers as we didn't see either bird in flight.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

A male and five females were among the flooded vegetation at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 3rd.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

A female was seen associating with the male Eurasian Wigeon at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on Fuerteventura.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

This was another duck species seen on Fuerteventura at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 3rd. The pale spot at the base of the bill was seen well by some through the telescope and it was seen briefly in flight when the pale blue forewing could be seen. Unfortunately it was a female because the males are easier to identify.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

This was a nice easy one at it was a handsome male floating around on a small pond at the Salinas Golf Course near Caleta de Fuste on Fuerteventura on the 4th and 5th.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

This male showed well on the small Salinas Golf Course pond and was seen on both our visits.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

This was another species of duck on the small golf course pond on Fuerteventura and as with the other species it was seen on both the 4th and 5th.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

This was a difficult one to identify but as it was associating with the previous species this meant that the features could be directly compared. This female had no sign of a tuft, more extensive white at the base of the bill and the characteristic white bar on the upperwing restricted to the secondaries.

PHASIANIDAE

Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*

Two of these were seen well at Punta de Teno with others heard in the area, it was also heard on La Gomera and at Chinamada on Tenerife before one bird being seen well on Fuerteventura along the access road to Castillo de Lara.

PROCELLARIIDAE

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea borealis*

At least fifty of these graceful birds were seen on our ferry crossings to and from La Gomera on the 28th. If you watched carefully you could see the wing tip just occasionally touching the top of a wave as the birds sheared over the sea.

SULIDAE

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

An adult was seen during the ferry crossing from Los Cristianos to San Sebastian on the 28th.

ARDEIDAE

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One was seen in the harbour at Los Cristianos on the 28th and then it was seen daily on Fuerteventura but only in small numbers.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

There were only a few seen on the tour with records from both Tenerife and Fuerteventura.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

The only record for the trip was a single bird seen on an unnamed reservoir on Fuerteventura on the 4th.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*

On arrival on Fuerteventura this was one of the first species we saw as two birds were circling over the Barranco de La Torre as we drove south.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo insularum*

We saw this species on every day of the tour except the day we went to La Gomera when it was only heard.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

One was seen by a lucky member of the group on the first day and that was the only record for the tour.

FALCONIDAE

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* and *dacotiae*

F. t. canariensis was a common and widespread bird on Tenerife and La Gomera.

F. t. dacotiae was not as common as its western counterpart but it was still recorded daily on Fuerteventura.

Barbary Falcon *Falco peregrinoides*

Seeing the pair in display flight at close range over the Mirador de La Monja on Punta de Teno was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the tour.

RALLIDAE

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

This was a rather scarce species this year with just one on Tenerife at the Armeñimes

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Four at Los Silos and one at Armeñimes on Tenerife and then sixteen at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on Fuerteventura were the sum total for the trip.

OTIDAE

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*

As is usual this species was found on the plain behind Costa Calma on the mornings of the 3rd and 4th. We were privileged to see a fine adult male in display but seeing him fluff up his neck feathers, throw his head onto his back and then run around the desert like a headless chicken is as amusing as it is impressive.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Five were seen along the inland section of the Barranco de la Torre on the 4th. Heavy rains over the winter had caused the formation of small pools in the barranco and this is where the birds were feeding.

GLAREOLIDAE

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*

Nine were seen on each visit to the Costa Calma plain. We saw a couple of young chicks but the best views were an adult very close to the vehicle on the second morning.

CHARADRIIDAE

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

We only recorded this species on Fuerteventura where we saw one at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 3rd and a pair in the Barranco de la Torre seen on both the 4th and 5th.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

This species was only recorded from Las Salinas del Carmen on Fuerteventura.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The only one recorded was at the Salinas del Carmen on Fuerteventura on the 5th.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The only two seen were on Fuerteventura on the 4th at the Salinas Golf Course.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Rather surprisingly we only saw one on the final day at the Salinas del Carmen and five near the airport.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

This year we only recorded this species on Fuerteventura on the last two days of the tour.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was seen at Rosa de Catalina Garcia, Fuerteventura on the 3rd.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

One was seen on Salinas Golf on Fuerteventura on the 4th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totan*

Two were seen on Fuerteventura on the 4th with the one at Salinas Golf still present the following day.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A couple were seen at the Salinas del Carmen, Fuerteventura on the 4th.

LARIDAERing-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

A first winter bird was seen in the harbour at Los Cristianos by Tony and Bethan but unfortunately could not be located by others in the group.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Three were seen at Los Cristianos on the 28th and then more than a hundred were seen on Fuerteventura on the 4th.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michabellis*

This was a common and widespread species seen daily throughout the tour and on all islands visited.

STERNIDAESandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Two were in the harbour at Los Cristianos on the 28th and then another two were seen at Salinas del Carmen, Fuerteventura, on the 4th.

PTEROCLIDIDAEBlack-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

We saw this species daily on Fuerteventura but only in small numbers with a maximum of five on the 4th.

COLUMBIDAERock Dove/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

This was a common and widespread species seen daily during the tour, with some fairly genuine looking Rock Doves at Punta de Teno on the 27th.

Laurel Pigeon *Columba junoniae*

Our first encounter with this endemic pigeon was at Mirador Lasgrimonas on Tenerife during our first excursion on the 26th. It took a while but eventually we saw one perched and were able to see it well through the telescope. We then saw a couple of birds on La Gomera on the 28th from the Mirador de El Rejo.

Bolle's Pigeon *Columba bollii*

The only one of the trip was seen well through the telescope at the Mirador Lasgrimonas on Tenerife. This was a bit of a surprise not only the location as we rarely see this bird at this site but to only see one on the tour was unusual.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

This was a common and widespread species seen almost daily during the tour.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

A few were seen on Fuerteventura on the 4th and 5th.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

About seven were seen on Fuerteventura, mostly around Vega de Rio Palmas on the 4th.

PSITTACIDAEMonk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

Twenty or more were seen in the usual location at the Dunas Jandia Resort on the outskirts of Morro Jable on the 3rd.

APODIDAEPlain Swift *Apus unicolor*

About twenty were seen on La Gomera on the 28th and then the following day ten were seen on Tenerife as we drove towards Mount Teide.

UPUPIDAEEurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

This year we only saw a few of these delightful birds and all of them were on Fuerteventura.

PICIDAEGreat Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major canariensis*

Three or more were recorded from the picnic area at Las Lajas on the 1st March.

LANIIDAEGreat Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor koenigi*

One was seen on Tenerife on the 1st but otherwise all records were from Fuerteventura. The recent changes in taxonomy mean that this bird is no longer associated with *L. meridionalis* which is confined to the Iberian peninsula.

CORVIDAE

Common Raven *Corvus corax tingitanus*

This species is rare on Tenerife where we saw two pairs in the northwest on the 27th, but it is much more numerous on Fuerteventura where it was recorded daily with a maximum of more than fifteen birds in one day.

REGULIDAE

Tenerife Kinglet *Regulus teneriffae*

This controversial species was seen on La Gomera but only one bird made itself visible to us. It was also heard in the picnic area on Monte Las Mercedes but the birds themselves remained hidden in the tree tops.

PARIDAE

African Blue Tit *Cyanistes ultramarinus degener*

C. u. degener is a scarce resident on Fuerteventura, however it was quite numerous at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 4th when we saw at least half a dozen birds.

Canary Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae teneriffae*

This was a common and widespread bird on both Tenerife and La Gomera with a maximum count of more than fifteen on the 28th.

ALAUDIDAE

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens polatzeki*

This species was seen daily on Fuerteventura but getting good views was another problem.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

About five birds were seen at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 3rd.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

There was a small flock of about twenty of this species at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the same date as the previous species.

PHYLLOSCOPIDAE

Canary Island Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus canariensis*

This was a common and widespread species on Tenerife and La Gomera with a maximum of more than fifteen on the 28th.

SYLVIIDAE

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

It was most numerous in the park at San Sebastian de la Gomera, in the hotel grounds on Tenerife and heard once on Fuerteventura.

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

This species was only seen on the last two days of the tour on Fuerteventura but it showed well in the end.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala leucogastra*

A few scattered individuals on Tenerife and La Gomera but it was a bit more obvious and a bit more numerous on Fuerteventura.

TURDIDAE

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula cabreræ*

This endemic subspecies was common and widespread on Tenerife and La Gomera.

MUSCICAPIDAE

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

It was heard on La Gomera and then a couple were seen on Fuerteventura.

Canary Island Robin *Erithacus superbus*

We heard this bird on two dates but unfortunately never saw one despite considerable effort.

Fuerteventura Stonechat *Saxicola dacotiae*

This highly prized endemic was seen on the last two dates of the tour in the Barranco de la Torre.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

One was seen on the Costa Calma plain on the 3rd and was the only record for the tour.

PASSERIDAE

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

A few were seen in the park on La Gomera but it was much more numerous on Fuerteventura particularly around the hotel grounds.

Common Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

About fifty were seen in the abandoned fields on Punta de Teno, Tenerife on the 27th.

MOTACILLIDAE

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae*

One bird seen at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 3rd was the only record for the trip.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea canariensis*

A couple were seen on La Gomera and then there was one seen on each of the following two days on Tenerife.

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii berthelotii*

Not as numerous as in previous years but still quite a common species particularly on Fuerteventura.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

One was seen briefly on the 4th along the inland section of the Barranco de la Torre but it wasn't identified until it was seen much better the following day.

FRINGILLIDAECommon Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs tintillon*

The only birds seen were about half a dozen in the picnic area on Monte Las Mercedes on Tenerife. This subspecies is very distinctive in appearance and not much like the ones in our gardens.

Blue Chaffinch *Fringilla teydea*

We only recorded this bird on the day we went up Mount Teide. This large billed finch was a common feature of the Las Lajas picnic area where we stopped for our lunch that day.

Atlantic Canary *Serinus canaria*

This species was seen on four of the first five days with a maximum of a hundred and fifty on the 27th most of which were in the old fields on Punta de Teno. We also heard this bird on Fuerteventura but the population there stem from captive individuals.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*

Ten or more of this familiar species were seen at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 4th.

Common Linnet *Acanthis cannabina meadewaldoi* and *barterti*

The western subspecies *meadewaldoi* was seen at Punta de Teno and Chinamada, and the eastern birds around Vega de Rio Palmas.

EMBERIZIDAECorn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

One was seen on Punta de Teno on the 27th and then about six were seen on La Gomera the following day.

Mammal (3 species)Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

About a dozen were seen from the La Gomera ferry on the 28th.

Barbary Ground Squirrel *Atlantoxerus getulus*

A common species on Fuerteventura with a maximum count of more than thirty on the 4th when we visited the Mirador Las Peñitas.

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Seen daily on the desert plain behind Costa Calma, Fuerteventura.

Reptiles (2 species)Tenerife Lizard *Gallotia galloti*

Seen on most days whilst on Tenerife and La Gomera, this species is numerous and frequently encountered.

Fuerteventura Lizard *Gallotia atlantica*

This species is not as obvious as its western counterpart. We only recorded it on one date when we saw about six on the 4th.

Butterflies (13 species)

Canary Islands Large White *Pieris cheiranthi*

We saw this endemic on both the days we visited the north coast with two on the 26th and then six the following day.

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

A common butterfly seen on all the main islands visited during the tour.

Greenish Black-Tip *Euchloe charltonia*

Only recorded on Fuerteventura where it was a fairly common species.

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

One was seen on La Gomera on the 28th and then it was seen daily on Fuerteventura with a maximum of ten or more on the 3rd.

Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra*

One was seen on Tenerife on the 27th and then two were on La Gomera the following day.

Monarch *Danaus plexippus*

One was seen on Tenerife on the 1st but the maximum count was about twenty individuals on Fuerteventura on the 4th.

Macaronesian Red Admiral *Vanessa vulcania*

Three were seen on Tenerife on the 26th and then on the 28th we saw four on La Gomera.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Only recorded from Fuerteventura where a maximum of more than twenty were seen on the 4th.

Canary Speckled Wood *Pararge xiphioides*

The only records of this endemic for the tour were three on La Gomera on the 28th and then one on Tenerife on the 2nd.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

The only record was one on La Gomera on the 28th.

Lang's Short-tailed Blue *Leptotes pirithous*

One on Fuerteventura on the 3rd was the only record for the trip.

Canary Blue *Cyclus webbianus*

Four of this endemic were seen on Tenerife on the 1st when we went up Mount Teide.

African Grass Blue *Zizeeria knysna*

Two in the park in San Sebastian on La Gomera on the 28th was the only record of this species.

Dragonflies (1 species)

Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*

This species was seen on six dates during the tour and recorded from all the islands visited.

Plants

PTERIDOPHYTES

Aspleniaceae

Asplenium hemionitis – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Blechnaceae

Woodwardia radicans – Anaga Peninsula, Tenerife

Davalliaceae

Davallia canariensis – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Polypodiaceae

Polypodium macaronesicum – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

PINOPSIDA

Pinaceae

Pinus canariensis – en route to Vilaflor, Tenerife

MAGNOLIOPSIDA

Apiaceae

Astydamia latifolia – Airport to Güímar, Tenerife

Ferula linkii – roadside species on Tenerife

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex canariensis – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Araliaceae

Hedera canariensis – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Asclepiadaceae

Ceropegia dichotoma – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Periploca laevigata – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Asteraceae

Andryala pinnatifida – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Argyranthemum broussonetii – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Argyranthemum coronopifolium – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Argyranthemum tenerifae – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Artemisia thuscula – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Asteriscus sericeus – road between Pajara and Vega de Rio Palmas, Fuerteventura

Carlina salicifolia – Chinamada, Tenerife

Cheirolophus burchardii – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Cheirolophus teydis – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Kleinia nerifolia – common along roadsides, Tenerife

Pericallis steetzii – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Schizogyne sericea – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Sonchus acaulis – Chinamada, Tenerife

Sonchus canariensis – nr. Vilaflor, Tenerife

Sonchus congestus – Anaga Peninsula, Tenerife

Sonchus hierrensis – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Sonchus radicans – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Vieraea laevigata – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Boraginaceae

Echium acanthocarpum – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Echium aculeatum – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Echium simplex – Chinamada, Tenerife

Echium strictum – Chinamada, Tenerife

Echium virescens – above Güímar, Tenerife

Echium wildpretii – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Brassicaceae

Descurainia bourgeauana – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Descurainia millefolia – Chinamada, Tenerife

Erysimum scoparium – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Caprifoliaceae

Viburnum rigidum – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Caryophyllaceae

Dichberanthus plocamoides – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Polycarphaea carnosae – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Polycarphaea nivea – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Chenopodiaceae

Atriplex glauca – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Chenoleoides tomentosa - Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Patellifolia patellaris - Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Salsola divaricata - Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Salsola vermiculata - Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Traganum moquinii - Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Cistaceae

Cistus monspeliensis – Chinamada, Tenerife

Clusiaceae

Hypericum canariensis – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Hypericum reflexum – Chinamada, Tenerife

Convolvulaceae

Convolvulus caput-medusae – nr Costa Calma, Fuerteventura

Crassulaceae

Aeonium canariense – Chinamada, Tenerife

Aeonium castello-paivae – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Aeonium decorum - Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Aeonium haworthii – Monte del Agua, Tenerife

Aeonium holochrysum – above Güímar, Tenerife

Aeonium lindleyi – Chinamada, Tenerife

Aeonium sedifolium – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Aeonium subplanum – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Aeonium tabulaeforme – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Aeonium urbicum – seen along the northern side of Tenerife

Aichryson laxum – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Greenovia diplocycla – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Monanthes anagensis – Chinamada, Tenerife

Monanthes laxiflora – Anaga Peninsula, Tenerife

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonia verrucosa – Chinamada, Tenerife

Dipsacaceae

Pteroccephalus lasiospermus – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Ericaceae

Erica arborea – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Erica platycodon – Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia aphylla – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Euphorbia atropurpurea – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Euphorbia balsamifera – common along the coast, Tenerife

Euphorbia berthelotii – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Euphorbia broussonetii – common along roadsides, Tenerife

Euphorbia canariensis – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Euphorbia bandiensis – Jandia Peninsula, Fuerteventura

Euphorbia regis-jubae – Pajara to Vega de Rio Palmas, Fuerteventura

Fabaceae

- Adenocarpus foliolosus* – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife
Bituminaria bituminosa – common roadside plant, Tenerife
Chamaecytisus proliferus – Mount Teide, Tenerife
Ononis natrix – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura
Spartocytisus supranubius – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Geraniaceae

- Geranium reuteri* – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Lamiaceae

- Lavandula buchii* – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Lavandula canariensis – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera
Micromeria varia – Anaga Peninsula, Tenerife
Sideritis cretica – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Sideritis dendro-chaborra – Chinamada, Tenerife
Sideritis gomerae – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera
Sideritis macrostachys – road to Las Carboneras from Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife

Lauraceae

- Laurus novocanariensis* – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Malvaceae

- Lavatera acerifolia* – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Plantaginaceae

- Plantago arborescens* – Chinamada, Tenerife

Plumbaginaceae

- Limonium fruticans* – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Limonium macrophyllum – Chinamada, Tenerife
Limonium pectinatum – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Ranunculaceae

- Ranunculus cortusifolius* – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Rosaceae

- Bencomia exstipulata* - Parque Nacional Las Cañadas, Tenerife
Marcetella moquiniana – Mirador Lasgrimonas, Tenerife

Rubiaceae

- Phyllis nobla* – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Plocama pendula – common roadside plant, Tenerife

Salicaceae

Salix canariensis – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Scrophulariaceae

Isoplexus canariensis – Monte del Agua, Tenerife

Kickxia sagittata – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Scrophularia glabrata – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Scrophularia smithii – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Solanaceae

Datura innoxia – various locations

Lycium intricatum – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Nicotiana glauca – introduced pest

Tamaricaceae

Tamarix canariensis – common on Fuerteventura

Urticaceae

Forsydia angustifolia – common roadside plant, Tenerife

Gesnouinia arborea – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Urtica morifolia – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Zygophyllaceae

Zygophyllum fontanesii – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

LILIIDAE

Arecaceae

Phoenix canariensis – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Juncaceae

Juncus canariensis – Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife

Liliaceae

Dracaena draco – Chinamada, Tenerife

Orchidaceae

Habenaria tridactylites – Chinamada, Tenerife

Poaceae

Dactylis smithii – Chinamada, Tenerife