

Canary Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 - 19 November 2011

Report compiled by Tony Clarke



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Day 1

Saturday 12th November

After only a few minutes delay on the arrival from Gatwick we were soon underway and started the tour with a drive up through Vilaflor to the Zona Recreativa Las Lajas. The weather wasn't good, overcast with a light drizzle in the air and whilst having our picnic we only heard a couple of birds. We continued on and entered the Parque Nacional de Las Cañadas but the low cloud meant that we were unable to appreciate the spectacular scenery to the full. At a short stop by one of the bars at Las Cañadas we got some really good views of singing Canary and some good but rather brief looks at a fine male Blue Chaffinch skulking around in one of the flower beds.

We made a final stop on the way down the mountain at the Mirador Ortuño. The birding was quiet but we did see a few plants including a couple of *Echium wildpretii* that still had a few remaining red flowers near the base and a *Pterocephalus lasiospermus* also with a couple of flowers still in bloom. Other high altitude species such as *Spartocytisus supranubius*, *Descurainia bourgaeana*, *Argyranthemum teneriffae* and *Cheirolophus teydis* were also seen but only the last two had anything resembling flowers although neither were in a good condition, well past their best. Some of the more common roadside species at lower altitude included *Rumex lunaria*, *Kleinia nerifolia*, *Euphorbia balsimifera*, *Echium virescens*, *Aeonium holochrysum* and *Eschscholzia californica*.

Day 2

Sunday 13th November

Today started with a visit to the picnic area on the slopes of Monte Las Mercedes in the laurel forest in NE Tenerife near to La Laguna. Unfortunately being a Sunday the locals were already out in force and the barbeques were in full swing, at 09.30 in the morning! Obviously this was not good for seeing the more wary species but we did see the local race of Common Chaffinch with its peachy underparts and slate-blue upperparts, quite a different colour scheme from the garden birds in the UK. Also a few Canary Island Chiffchaffs with their very different, explosive song totally unlike that of the Common Chiffchaff.

The second location today was in the centre of the north coast at the Mirador Lagrimona. This coastal lookout has become well known in recent years as a good spot to see Laurel Pigeon but we were in for a surprise. Soon after we arrived we spotted a falcon patrolling the cliff which we presumed to be a Barbary. It kept appearing from a gully which we couldn't see into and was obviously using a regular perch but after a while it settled in view and with the scope it became clear that this was an adult Peregrine and not a Barbary as we had presumed. Understandably with a Peregrine in residence there was no sign of any Laurel Pigeons, they had either been scared off or eaten!

So continuing along the north coast we headed off to Punta de Teno, where we took lunch today. This was also the best place on the island to look for Barbary Falcon and it didn't let us down as we saw two birds during our stay. Views were a little distant but brief ones through the telescope confirmed that these were in deed Barbary Falcon and not Peregrine. This area is also very rich botanically and although very little was in flower we did see *Ceropegia dichotoma*, *Limonium fruticans*, *Cheirolophus burchardii*, *Vieraea laevigata*, *Euphorbia aphylla*, *Polycarpaea carnosa*, *Sonchus radicans* and *Monanthes silensis*.

From here we drove inland to the laurel forest in the vicinity of Monte del Agua where we saw two individual Laurel Pigeons, a pair of Bolle's Pigeons and a Sparrowhawk. The two different pigeons were seen quite well allowing us to observe the distinctive tail patterns of each species. All too soon it was time to move on because this was the furthest distance possible from our hotel and dinner was beckoning.

Day 3

Monday 14th November

Off to another island today so an early start for the drive south to catch the ferry from Los Cristianos across to La Gomera. In the harbour we added a couple of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and three Sandwich Terns before we boarded the ferry. We left on time at 08.45 and were soon seeing the occasional Cory's Shearwater as they gracefully cruised over the sea. There was only a light breeze and so the sea was very calm, conditions not conducive to seeing the shearwaters performing their usual aerobic flights. Still watching these birds and the ease with which they can cover large distances is always a pleasure. Within the first 20 minutes we had also seen a single Short-finned Pilot Whale, a solitary Flying Fish and a couple of Common Dolphins. We then went through a very quiet patch before getting close to La Gomera where we started seeing a few more Cory's Shearwaters and then that was it as the ferry turned into the harbour.

Once ashore we headed straight to the town park and as soon as we had passed through the gate we saw our first target species a fine Monarch Butterfly. We then caused much amusement to the man on the lawn mower as we all wandered around his freshly cut grass occasionally stopping and pointing cameras at the ground. We had found our second target butterfly which was the tiny African Grass Blue. Then as we made our way towards the exit three Berthelot's Pipits gave us some great views as they ran around on the paths and flower beds near the perimeter fence.

From here we went inland to the laurel forests on the boundaries of and within the Garajonay National Park in the centre of the island but the weather was bad with low visibility and rainfall at the Mirador Del Rejo. So we drove back down the hill and remarkably the weather seemed to be taking a turn for the better, in fact so much so that the visibility was now good enough to start looking for the pigeons. Within a very short period of time we had seen a single Laurel Pigeon and two Bolle's Pigeons in flight but very well. Then the icing on the cake as a second Laurel Pigeon landed on the top of a rock allowing us to get some great views through the telescope.

We proceeded back up to Mirador del Rejo as the weather improved and had our picnic lunch surrounded by a good selection of new plants including *Argyranthemum broussonetii*, *Pericallis steetzii*, *Echium acanthocarpum*, *Sonchus ortunoii*, *Aeonium subplanum*, *Arbutus canariensis* and *Greenovia diplocycla*. Continuing upwards we drove round to La Laguna Grande and got our best views of Tenerife Kinglet in the bushes just outside the restaurant, these birds showed really well down to just a few feet.

The penultimate stop for the day was near Roque de Agando where the weather had deteriorated again to a drizzle but those of us who braved the elements did see a nice specimen of the Canary Island endemic orchid, *Habenaria tridactylites*. On the way back to the ferry we took a look in the park in San Sebastian but no new additions so wandered along the seafront back to the ferry seeing what resembled Barracuda in the marina en route. The return ferry crossing was uneventful with just Cory's Shearwaters to accompany us (except for a Great Shearwater that only Tony saw)...until we neared the harbour at Los Criistianos, when the boat disturbed a succession of Atlantic Flying Fish.

Day 4

Tuesday 15th November

Today we were playing catch up, basically trying to find things we had missed previously or get better views of species not seen well by everyone. We started in the picnic ground at Monte Las Mercedes but it was still rather quiet and yet again the Canary Island Robin eluded us. We moved on to the small hamlet of Chinamada set among the stunning scenery of the northern Anaga Peninsula. Here we soon found many of the endemic orchid *Habenaria tridactylites* along with a good selection of other plants including *Echium aculeatum*, *Echium strictum*, *Canarina canariensis*, *Aeonium canariense*, *Sideritis macrostachys*, *Sideritis dendro-chaborra*, *Dracaena draco* and *Dactylis smithii*. In the area of the first lookout we came across a small pile of rotting potatoes which was attracting a small collection of birds namely a Canary Island Robin, a Canary Island Chiffchaff and a female Sardinian Warbler.

We returned to the Monte Las Mercedes picnic area for lunch and then headed up Mount Teide to repeat our efforts with Blue Chaffinch. We stopped at the restaurant in Las Cañadas and were rewarded with some really good views of a lovely adult male as it came down to the food left out, which also attracted a couple of African Blue Tits and a few Atlantic Canaries. Our drive across the caldera was much more scenic today as the sunshine and blue sky were a complete contrast from the rain and low cloud last Saturday. Then it was down to the Zona Recreativa Las Lajas where we again failed to see Blue Chaffinch but we did get to grips with a Great Spotted Woodpecker before it flew off.

Day 5

Wednesday 16th November

On the move again to another island but this time for a three night stay on Fuerteventura. Most of the morning was taken up with travelling but we did make a brief stop at one of the golf courses near Caleta de Fustes where we saw a pair of Ruddy Shelducks, a few Berthelot's Pipits, a Painted Lady and a Locust. Then on to the Hotel Gorriones for lunch and a short break before going into the desert for the first time. However, en route Jane spotted two large birds that were circling low and turned out to be our first Egyptian Vultures of the trip. These birds, an adult and an immature, had obviously just come off the ground because as we watched they circled higher and higher before eventually disappearing from view, nice one Jane.

Late afternoon we drove into the desert area behind Costa Calma where it appears there is some encroachment on the site - possibly for another unnecessary road on this already rather overdeveloped island. It didn't take us long to find one of the desert specialities, a reasonably sized group of about ten birds which allowed us to get quite close in the vehicle. We also saw five Black-bellied Sandgrouse a group of three and a pair, but they were only seen in flight and not on the ground.

We continued across the desert towards La Pared onto the ridge which is one of only two locations where *Convolvulus caput-medusae* can be found and grows in profusion. After a bit of searching we found a few with the occasional flower and then one bush with at least a dozen flowers on it. Here we turned the vehicle and were heading back to the general direction of the hotel whilst exploring other desert areas and finally there on the track in front of us was a Houbara Bustard. We were able to watch the bird well from the minibus and did get fairly close but the bird was always moving away and soon disappeared behind a ridge. Apart from these specialties we also discovered in the region of two hundred Lesser Short-toed Larks and a few Southern Grey Shrikes of the local race *koenigi*.

Day 6

Thursday 17th November

A pre-breakfast drive out into the desert started well with some great views of Stone-curlew. We were a bit worried that the dog walkers might have disturbed the birds too much but although they flushed a few they only moved short distances and stayed loyal to their usual area. In the end we got very close to a few which allowed the photographers to get some nice shots. Continuing on along various different tracks we next came across a group of about ten Cream-coloured Coursers which may well have been the same group we saw yesterday afternoon. These birds also allowed close approach but just not quite close enough for really good photos, however the views couldn't have been better as we watched them going about their business running around the desert and feeding as they went. We stopped in the desert for a while soon after this and saw three Black-bellied Sandgrouse and eight Cream-coloured Coursers in flight before Fred finally discovered a Houbara. This was a different bird from yesterday as this one walked with a distinct limp and with the scope we got some nice looks as it wandered around pecking at bushes as it went. This was our cue to return to the hotel for a well earned breakfast.

After which we were on the road again but only as far as the plantation in Costa Calma. There had been a lot of work done in this area and most of the good bird habitat had been heavily pruned or, even worse, cut down but eventually we found a few Blackcaps, a Song Thrush and about four Goldfinches. Next stop was just along the road at La Lajita where three Laughing Doves gave themselves up with ease and the scope views were enough to see the salient identification features.

We then came to one of the rare wetland areas on this island, the small reservoir at Rosa de Catalina Garcia which fortunately contained some water although the level was low. The main species present were Ruddy Shelduck, Moorhen, Coot and Black-winged Stilt with a variety of smaller waders along the shore including Dunlin, Little Stint, Little Ringed Plover, Ruff, Greenshank and Spotted Redshank. Then the surprise of the tour was seen in flight, a Eurasian Bittern which flew from the reservoir out into the desert before returning to the reservoir where it walked around on the muddy shoreline completely in the open. Then there was a second surprise in the edge of the small reed bed a winter plumaged adult Squacco Heron.

So eventually it was time to move on to the Salinas del Carmen where we stopped for lunch in the Los Caracolitos restaurant. After a very nice lunch we checked the surrounding area for birds and added Grey and Common Ringed Plovers, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-headed Gull and another rarity for the islands a first-winter Mediterranean Gull. Moving on to other areas we had a look for things in the nearby Barranco de la Torre but there was a distinct lack of birds so we continued on to the inland section of the same barranco.

There was certainly more activity here and we saw a pair of the endemic Fuerteventura Stonechat fairly quickly although rather distant. Walking down to the further fields the chats seemed to have disappeared but suddenly they were right in front of us giving us some great views before they disappeared again. We also got some close views of Spectacled Warbler on there was a Green Sandpiper on the small dam as well as more Ruddy Shelducks and Black-winged Stilts. On the way back to the hotel we called in to Rosa de Catalina Garcia for a second time and soon added Common Teal and a vagrant Blue-winged Teal. I knew the latter had been seen on the reservoir just over a week ago and had been a little surprised that we hadn't seen it this morning as usually the American ducks hang around most of the winter once they get to this island. We also saw a Common Snipe probing around in the mud and then waited till dark but no sandgrouse came to drink.

Day 7

Friday 18th November

Today started with a drive south to Morro Jable where we made our customary short stop to see the Monk Parakeets in the palms outside the Dunas Hotel. As we arrived there were a few Cattle Egrets on the grass and rather surprisingly the first parakeets we saw were the more scarce Ring-necked. This was a family group of two adults and two immatures that perched up near us in one of the palms we then watched the comings and goings of the Monk Parakeets for a few minutes before returning to the vehicle. Continuing towards the Punta de Jandia we pulled over in one of the valleys and were able to easily locate one of the more unusual of the local plants the endangered *Euphorbia handiense*. This plant looks very like a cactus but has the small green and yellow flowers so characteristic of the *Euphorbias* and after a bit of searching we did find one example with a couple of flowers on.

Retracing our steps from here back to the hotel and then north and inland to the small but very attractive village of Pajara where we were hoping to find the local race of African Blue Tit, after a short stop there was no sign so we moved on. Next location was the Mirador de Las Peñitas where we soon attracted some very tame Berthelot's Pipits and Spanish Sparrows followed by a Common Raven but the stars were keeping hidden. The Barbary Ground Squirrels that normally come running to be fed were keeping a very low profile but after a while started to appear on the slopes below the lookout. It took a while longer but eventually we had these cute little animals eating out of our hands. Did I say cute, unfortunately these are an introduced species and there is a proposal of eradication because of the fact that they have reached a remarkably high population.

Just down the road is Vega de Rio Palmas where we stopped next for a walk along this pretty barranco with its tamarisks and palm trees. This was another try to see the *degener* race of African Blue Tit but things started with a bang as we located another island rarity, a fine male Ring Ouzel. A short walk along the barranco produced five species of dragonfly, *Ischnura sabarensis*, *Anax imperator*, *Crocothemis erythraea*, *Sympetrum fonscolombii* and *Orthetrum chrysostigma*, an obliging pair of Fuerteventura Stonechats plus our target species at least three African Blue Tits of the local race *Cyanistes teneriffae degener* which is rather scarce and confined to Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. On our way back to the vehicle we saw the Ring Ouzel again but this time there was a second bird seen but not well enough to decide which sex it was although original impressions suggested this bird to be a female. A nice stop but time was moving on and we needed a stop for lunch.

We pulled into the picnic area at Castillo de Lara on the outskirts of Betancuria and along the entrance road there were about four Barbary Partridge although the views were good they were rather brief as the birds soon disappeared. Whilst having lunch the main distraction was a Plain Tiger that landed on Sylvia before being photographed in the car park by the minibus.

Also on the wall by the approach road there was an opportunity to get photos of the usually rather timid *Gallotia atlantica* Atlantic Lizard. On our way back to the main road we took a detailed look at the strange, succulent *Caralluma burchardii* and discovered that many of the plants in one group were in flower. Also we saw a few more Barbary Partridges that were scurrying off from under a roadside shrub.

Onward through the ancient island capital of Betancuria the first stop for the afternoon was at the largest reservoir on Fuerteventura, the Embalse de Los Molinos. Here there were over one hundred and twenty Ruddy Shelducks and over a hundred Eurasian Coot, plus two Common Teal, two Eurasian Wigeon and the one we had been told about yesterday two transatlantic Ring-necked Ducks. They were at the far end of the reservoir and so we had to walk from the dam wall to get some reasonable views. Other stops in the afternoon included the Barranco de Río Cabras with a pair of Fuerteventura Chats, Rosa del Taro with more Ruddy Shelducks and Salinas del Carmen which was negative again with Whimbrel. On the way back to the hotel those in the front of the bus were very fortunate in deed to see the local race of Barn Owl *T. a. gracilirostris* when it flew in front of the vehicle.

Day 8

Saturday 19th November

The last day of the tour and there was an optional excursion into the desert before breakfast. We soon located about a dozen Stone Curlew, four Cream-coloured Coursers and a pair of Black-bellied Sandgrouse. We searched the desert thoroughly for about an hour before we eventually found a Houbara Bustard, then Steve spotted a second, then there was a third, a fourth and a fifth. Five Houbaras associating together was not what we'd expected but what a privilege to be able to watch so many at quite close range, we were spellbound! One of the birds was even attempting some sort of weird display as it jumped into the air with wings open.

This was the classic way to finish the tour so there was nothing more to do than go back for breakfast, pack the minibus and head to the airport. Another successful trip to the Canary Islands was complete.

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Species Lists

Birds (85 Species)

ANATIDAE

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

A rough estimate of the number of birds seen would suggest a minimum of one hundred and eighty birds recorded over our four days on the island with the biggest concentrations at Embalse de Los Molinos and Rosa de Catalina Garcia.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Two birds were seen at Embalse de Los Molinos on the 18th

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Four including at least one male were at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 17th and then two the following day at Embalse de Los Molinos.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

One was seen with the above species at Rosa de Catalina Garcia in the afternoon of the 17th.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Having been told of the presence of these birds we made a special trip to the Los Molinos reservoir on the 18th in order to look for them. We found both birds easily but only after walking from the dam to the far end did we get any sort of reasonable views.

PHASIANIDAE

Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*

About ten birds were seen at what is rapidly becoming the most reliable site on Fuerteventura, the picnic area and approach road to Castillo de Lara just outside Betancuria.

PROCELLARIIDAE

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea borealis*

This species was seen from the ferry between Tenerife and La Gomera and watching their aerial control and skills was a very memorable experience. The subspecies *borealis*, as a breeding bird, is confined to the Macaronesian Islands of the Azores, Madeira, Selvagens and Canary Islands.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

One bird was seen well by Tony on the return crossing from La Gomera but unfortunately it moved through very quickly giving just glimpses to the fortunate.

ARDEIDAE

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

This was undoubtedly the rarest bird of the trip for the Canary Islands and certainly the biggest surprise when we saw it in flight over the reservoir at Rosa de Catalina Garcia, Fuerteventura on the 17th.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

This winter plumaged adult was another good find at the same location and on the same date as the previous species.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Six on the outskirts of Morro Jable on the morning of the 18th were the only record for the trip, but they are now seen regularly on Fuerteventura at this time of year.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

This species was recorded in small numbers on both Tenerife and Fuerteventura, but it has been much more numerous on some of our previous trips.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Two solitary birds were seen during our time on Tenerife.

CICONIIDAE

[Lesser Adjutant Stork *Leptotilos javanicus*]

One seen in flight with seven Egyptian Vultures on the 17th was a big shock to the system but was unquestionably an escape from captivity.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*

We saw this species on three consecutive dates on Fuerteventura with a maximum of eight, including seven together, on the 17th. This subspecies has only been described recently and is confined to the eastern Canary Islands.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo insularum*

This year we recorded this species on nearly all the days and on all the islands we visited, the only day we missed was on the first day. The maximum count this year was seven on Fuerteventura on the 18th. The subspecies *insularum* is confined to the Canary Islands.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

A single bird was seen at Monte del Agua, Tenerife on the 13th and was the only record during the tour. The subspecies *granti* is found on both the Canary Islands and Madeira.

FALCONIDAE

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* and *dacotiae*

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

F. t. dacotiae was not so numerous and only seen on Fuerteventura.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

This was another surprise of the trip. It was seen patrolling the cliffs near the Mirador Lagrimona and was originally thought to be a Barbary Falcon before it was seen perched. This species is a very rare winter visitor to the Canary Islands.

Barbary Falcon *Falco peregrinoides*

On Tenerife two were seen very well by the whole group at Punta de Teno on the 13th but one had been seen briefly by a few in the Parque Nacional de Las Cañadas the previous day.

RALLIDAE

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

The only record for the tour was about a dozen birds on the reservoir at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 17th.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Only recorded from Fuerteventura with about thirty at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 17th and then more than a hundred at Embalse de Los Molinos the following day.

OTIDIDAE

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*

We saw our first birds during the late afternoon of the 16th on the plain behind Costa Calma. The following morning we saw a different bird because this one was walking with a limp. Then on the final morning we located a group of five birds together that allowed us to approach fairly close and give us some excellent views.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

This species was quite numerous on both the small reservoir at Rosa de Catalina Garcia and the small dam along the Barranco de La Torre on the 17th and then one was at Embalse de Los Molinos the following day.

BURHINIDAE

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedipnemus insularum*

Good views of five birds on the 17th including one that posed nicely for the photographers and then about a dozen on the 19th in the usual desert area behind Costa Calma, Fuerteventura. This subspecies is endemic to the eastern Canary Islands.

GLAREOLIDAE

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*

This species was seen daily on the Costa Calma plain although it was never common and usually a little difficult to locate as none of these birds came close to the vehicles.

CHARADRIIDAE

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

This year this species was only recorded from Fuerteventura with about twenty on the 17th and then three the following day.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

This was another wader species that was only recorded from Fuerteventura with two birds seen at the Salinas del Carmen on the 17th.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

The only record for the tour this year was a solitary bird at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 17th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

The only one recorded on the tour was a lone individual at Salinas del Carmen, Fuerteventura on the 17th.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Two birds at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 17th were the only record for the tour.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Three were seen at the same location and on the same date as the previous species.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Another wader only recorded from Rosa de Catalina Garcia where two were seen.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Just a single bird was seen on our second visit to Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the 17th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Two were at Rosa de Catalina Garcia on Fuerteventura.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One was seen briefly at the Barranco de La Torre, Fuerteventura on the 17th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The only record for the trip was a winter plumaged bird at Rosa de Catalina Garcia, Fuerteventura on the 17th.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

All records were from Fuerteventura with two at Rosa de Catalina Garcia and one at the Barranco de La Torre on the 17th and then the following day another two at Embalse de Los Molinos.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

One was seen on consecutive days at the Salinas del Carmen on the 16th and 17th.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The only record for the trip was two at Salinas del Carmen, Fuerteventura on the 17th.

LARIDAE

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis*

A common and widespread species, which was seen daily and on all the islands visited.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

A rather poor showing this year with just two birds in the harbour at Los Cristianos on the 14th.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyophaga melanocephalus*

A first-winter bird was at Salinas del Carmen, Fuerteventura rather briefly on the 17th.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A first-winter was seen at the same location as the previous species but it was still present the following day.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Five were seen on the 14th with three in Los Cristianos harbour and two just off shore and then at least five at Salinas del Carmen on the 17th.

PTEROCLIDIDAE

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

Only recorded on Fuerteventura, where it was seen daily but most views were in flight and not very close the one time we could see them on the ground they were rather distant.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Feral Pigeon was recorded on all days of the tour but some genuine looking Rock Doves were seen in the mountainous regions of Tenerife, particularly at Chinamada.

Bolle's Pigeon *Columba bollii*

This species was seen on three dates and on both Tenerife and La Gomera but unfortunately all the views were in flight. This bird is endemic to the western Canary Islands, where it is restricted to areas of native Laurel forest.

Laurel Pigeon *Columba junoniae*

Two were seen in flight at Monte del Agua, Tenerife on the 13th and then the following day we saw two on La Gomera but this time one of them was perched and we got great views through the telescope. As with the previous species this is a western Canary Islands endemic.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

This species was seen only on Fuerteventura with three at La Lajita on the 17th. Clearly this recent coloniser is becoming well established as the years progress.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seen on all days and on all islands visited, not so many years ago this was a rare bird in the islands!

TYTONIDAE

Barn Owl *Tyto alba gracilirostris*

One bird was seen in silhouette when it flew across the road as we drove back to the hotel on the 18th.

PSITTACIDAE

Ring-necked Parakeet

A small group of three, one adult and two immatures, were seen at the same location as the following species.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

At least ten birds were seen around the Dunas Jandia Resort on the outskirts of Morro Jable, Fuerteventura.

APODIDAE

Plain Swift *Apus unicolor*

The only record for the tour were six seen briefly on the north coast of Tenerife on the 13th.

UPUPIDAE

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

This species was seen daily on Fuerteventura but it was not common on any date.

PICIDAE

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major canariensis*

The only record for the tour was a solitary bird on our second visit to the Las Lajas picnic area on the 15th. This endemic subspecies is dirtier on the underparts than the form in the UK.

ALAUDIDAE

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens polatzeki*

This was a fairly common bird on the desert plain behind Costa Calma, Fuerteventura where we recorded it on every visit with a maximum of about two hundred on the 16th.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The only record of the tour were two flying over Rosa de Catalina Garcia on the evening of the 17th.

MOTACILLIDAE

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii berthelotii*

We saw this species on six dates during the tour but it was seen daily in small numbers on Fuerteventura. The nominate subspecies is found on the Ilheus Selvagens as well as on the Canary Islands. The species is endemic to the Macaronesian Islands as it is also found on Madeira.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

We recorded this species on the first three dates on Fuerteventura with a maximum of five on the 18th.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea canariensis*

This endemic subspecies was recorded only from Tenerife and only a small number were recorded in total. Then we saw one on Fuerteventura along the Barranco de Rio Cabras but the subspecies of this bird is unknown.

TURDIDAE

Canary Island Robin *Erithacus superbus*

This species was very hard to locate this year. We heard it at Monte las Mercedes on both visits but eventually saw one very well at Chinamada feeding on insects around a small pile of rotting potatoes. This recent split is endemic to Tenerife and Gran Canaria.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

One was seen on La Gomera and then we saw it on three consecutive dates on Fuerteventura.

Canary Islands Stonechat *Saxicola dacotiae*

This species is confined to the island of Fuerteventura where we recorded it along the inland section of the Barranco de la Torre on the 17th and then the following day a pair were seen along the Barranco de Rio Cabras and another pair at Vega de Rio Palmas.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula cabreræ*

This endemic subspecies was a common feature of the avifauna on both Tenerife and La Gomera.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Two were seen at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 18th one of which was a male the other probably a female. This species is a vagrant to the islands but recent records suggest it might be regular in winter on Fuerteventura in very small numbers.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

One was seen in the Costa Calma Plantation and then another along the Barranco de La Torre on the 17th. This is a scarce winter visitor to the Canary Islands but more numerous on the eastern islands.

SYLVIIDAE

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

The vast majority of our records on this tour were from Fuerteventura where it was a fairly common resident. The best views were obtained along the Barranco de La Torre where some of the birds obligingly perched on the top of bushes. We did see one briefly on Tenerife on the 13th.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala leucogastra*

A female of this species was seen on the rotting potatoes at Chinamada, Tenerife on the 15th and then a couple were seen on Fuerteventura along the barranco at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 18th. This subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands but the taxonomy of this bird within the islands is uncertain.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

This form which is also found in mainland Spain and in North Africa was heard on La Gomera. We also recorded this species on Fuerteventura but the subspecies there is unknown.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Four birds were seen on Fuerteventura on the 17th.

Canary Islands Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus canariensis*

This recently recognised endemic species is probably one of the commonest birds on both Tenerife and La Gomera.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The only record of this species for the trip was a single bird in Tamarisk bushes along the barranco at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 18th.

Tenerife Kinglet *Regulus teneriffæ*

This year we saw this species during our visit to the Garajonay National Park on La Gomera on the 14th and then the following day in the Monte Las Mercedes area of Tenerife. The views of the birds on La Gomera outside the restaurant at La Laguna Grande were excellent, just a few feet away.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

One was seen along the Barranco de La Torre, Fuerteventura on the 17th.

PARIDAE

African Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae teneriffae* and *degener*

The *teneriffae* subspecies was common in the forested areas of Tenerife and La Gomera but the *degener* subspecies is a rare and localised bird on Fuerteventura which we only located along the barranco at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 18th. However we did hear one as we drove through Morro Jable on the same date.

LANIIDAE

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis koenigi*

One was seen briefly as we drove through the Parque Nacional de Las Cañadas on the 15th but it was recorded daily on Fuerteventura where it is a widespread and fairly common species.

CORVIDAE

Common Raven *Corvus corax tingitanus*

This species was recorded daily on Fuerteventura with a maximum of about twenty on the 18th.

PASSERIDAE

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Three in the twon park on La Gomera were the first record for the tour and then it was seen daily on Fuerteventura. It is very common around the hotel on Fuerteventura which is no surprise as its name is taken from the Spanish for sparrow which is Gorrion.

FRINGILLIDAE

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs tintillon*

This subspecies which is found on the central Canary Islands was seen well by everybody at Monte Las Mercedes on Tenerife and in the Garajonay National Park on La Gomera.

Blue Chaffinch *Fringilla teydea teydea*

This was one of the big surprises of the tour as our only records of this species came from the bird feeders at the restaurant in Las Cañadas where we saw a male on the 12th and 15th. For the first time ever this species could not be located around the Las Lajas picnic area on either of our visits.

Atlantic Canary *Serinus canaria*

This was a common and widespread species on both Tenerife and La Gomera. The bird we heard on Fuerteventura comes from a population deliberately released around Betancuria. This bird is endemic to the Macaronesian Islands of Azores, Madeira and Canary Islands.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*

This year only recorded from Fuerteventura in the plantation at Costa Calma on the 17th.

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus amantum*

Only recorded from Fuerteventura where we saw eight on the 17th and then five the following day at the entrance to the desert plain behind Costa Calma.

Mammals (4 species)

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

Two were seen from the ferry to La Gomera on the 14th.

Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

One was seen on the same crossing as the previous species.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

A couple were seen on Tenerife on the 12th but it was seen daily on Fuerteventura in small numbers.

Barbary Ground Squirrel *Atlantoxerus getulus*

This species was recorded daily on Fuerteventura but the best views were those that came to be fed at the Mirador de las Peñitas

Reptiles (4 species)

Tenerife Lizard *Gallotia galloti*

A common feature on Tenerife and seen at many different locations. Not recorded on the 12th because of the bad weather.

Fuerteventura Lizard *Gallotia atlantica*

This species was seen daily on Fuerteventura but only in small numbers and mostly young ones. The adults seem very hard to locate and the best we saw was on the wall by the entrance to the picnic area at Castillo de Lara on the 18th.

Canary Island Gecko *Tarentola delalandii*

This species was seen almost nightly on the walls of the Hotel Finca Salamanca on Tenerife with a maximum of three being observed.

East Canary Gecko *Tarentola angustimentalis*

This is the first time that this species has been recorded with a tour group. One was found under a rock on the desert plain behind Costa Calma, Fuerteventura on the 16th.

Butterflies (11 species)

Canary Islands Large White *Pieris cheiranthi*

This endemic was seen well along the north coast of Tenerife on the

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

Only recorded from Tenerife on a couple of dates.

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

About ten were seen on La Gomera on the 14th and then the occasional one was seen daily on Fuerteventura.

Monarch *Danaus plexippus*

This species was seen on all three islands visited but only in small numbers.

Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*

One was seen at Punta de Teno on the 13th and then two in the picnic area at Castillo de Lara, Fuerteventura on the 18th.

Macaronesian Red Admiral *Vanessa vulcania*

One of these recently described Macaronesian endemics was seen on Tenerife on the 13th and then on La Gomera the following day.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Only recorded from Fuerteventura where it was seen on three dates but only the occasional one or two.

Canary Speckled Wood *Pararge xiphioides*

Just one of this endemic species was seen on Tenerife on the 13th.

Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*

One of these was seen and photographed on Tenerife on the 13th.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

This was another species with just a single individual seen on Tenerife on the 13th.

African Grass Blue *Zizeeria knysna*

The smallest butterfly of the tour and only recorded from La Gomera where about ten were seen in the town park, Parque de la Torre del Conde, in San Sebastian.

Dragonflies (6 species)

Broad Scarlet *Crocothemis erythraea*

This species was only recorded along the Barranco de Las Peñitas at Vega de Rio Palmas on Fuerteventura on the 18th.

Epaulet Skimmer *Orthetrum chrysostigma*

Another species only recorded from the Barranco de Las Peñitas on Fuerteventura.

Emperor *Anax imperator*

This was probably the most widespread of the dragonfly species with records from all the main islands visited.

Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*

Only recorded from Fuerteventura where two were seen along the Barranco de la Torre, inland section, on the 17th.

Sahara Bluetail *Ischnura sabarensis*

This diminutive dragonfly was another species seen only along the Barranco de Las Peñitas on Fuerteventura on the 18th.

Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

This was the final species to be seen at the excellent Barranco de Las Peñitas on Fuerteventura.

Plants (109 species)

PTERIDOPHYTES

Adiantaceae

Adiantum reniforme – 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

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex canariensis – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Araliaceae

Hedera canariensis – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Asclepiadaceae

Caralluma burchardii – Castillo de Lara, Fuerteventura

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 cruenta – Anaga Peninsula, 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 ortunoii – Barranco de la Villa, 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 strictum – Chinamada, Tenerife
Echium virescens – above Güímar, Tenerife
Echium wildpretii – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Brassicaceae

Crambe scaberrima – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Descurainia bourgeauana – Mount Teide, Tenerife
Descurainia millefolia – Chinamada, Tenerife

Campanulaceae

Canarina canariensis – Monte del Agua, Tenerife

Caprifoliaceae

Viburnum rigidum – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

Caryophyllaceae

Polycarpha carnosae – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Polycarpha 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 symphytifolius – Mount Teide, Tenerife
Cistus monspeliensis – Chinamada, Tenerife

Clusiaceae

Hypericum canariensis – Monte Las Mercedes, 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 bolochrysum – above Güímar, Tenerife
Aeonium haworthii – Monte del Agua, Tenerife
Aeonium lindleyi – Chinamada, 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 aurea – Anaga Peninsula, Tenerife
Greenovia diplocycla – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera
Monanthes anagensis – Chinamada, Tenerife
Monanthes silensis – Punta de Teno, Tenerife

Dipsacaceae

Pteroccephalus lasiospermus – Mount Teide, Tenerife

Ericaceae

Arbutus canariensis – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera
Erica arborea – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife
Erica platycodon – Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia aphylla – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Euphorbia balsamifera – common along the coast, Tenerife
Euphorbia berthelotii – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera
Euphorbia broussonetii – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Euphorbia canariensis – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Euphorbia bandiense – Jandia Peninsula, Fuerteventura
Euphorbia regis-jubae – Pajara to Vega de Rio Palmas, Fuerteventura

Fabaceae

Adenocarpus foliolosus – Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife
Adenocarpus viscosus – Mount Teide, Tenerife
Bituminaria bituminosa – common roadside plant, Tenerife
Chamaecytisus proliferus – Mount Teide, Tenerife
Ononis natrix – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura
Retama rhodorhizoides – Mount Teide, Tenerife
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
Sideritis cretica – Punta de Teno, Tenerife
Sideritis dendro-chaborra – Chinamada, Tenerife
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

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

Solanaceae

Datura innoxia – various locations

Lycium intricatum – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

Nicotiana glauca – introduced pest

Tamaricaceae

Tamarix canariensis – common on Fuerteventura

Urticaceae

Gesnouinia arborea – Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

Zygophyllaceae

Zygophyllum fontanesii – Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

LILIIDAE**Arecaceae**

Phoenix canariensis – Barranco de la Villa, La Gomera

Lillaceae

Dracaena draco – Chinamada, Tenerife

Orchidaceae

Habenaria tridactylites – Los Roques, La Gomera and Chinamada, Tenerife

Poaceae

Dactylis smithii – Chinamada, Tenerife