

# The Canary Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 – 28 December 2014

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Tenerife Lizard *Gallotia galloti*



Southern Grey Shrike



Black-bellied Sandgrouse



*Euphorbia handiensis*

Report & images compiled by Tony Clarke



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## Day 1

Saturday 8th November

After our arrival on Tenerife, those from Gatwick, plus Barry and Jenny, went to grab a quick lunch before meeting up with the rest of the group coming in from Manchester.

After collecting Vicky, Bob and Jo, we began the tour with a leisurely visit to the coastal seepage ponds at Las Galletas. Although this area is not the best birding site in the world, Tony had received information relating to the presence of a Pectoral Sandpiper a couple of days earlier, and it did not take long to locate this North American species, which is a rare visitor to the islands. There were a few other waders in the area, and we saw Common and Little Ringed Plovers, Common Redshank, Common Sandpiper and Ruddy Turnstone, plus a Common Snipe seen by Neil and Tony. Some of the common plants in the area included *Launaea arborescens*, *Schizogyne sericea*, *Euphorbia balsamifera*, *Euphorbia canariensis*, *Datura stramonium* and *Nicotiana glauca*. We also found a few dragonflies in the area including three Sahara Bluetails, a Blue Emperor, a Broad Scarlet and a Red-veined Darter. Moving on from here, we stopped at the small dam by the entrance road to Amarilla Golf where we saw a few common waterbirds including nine Little Egrets, Common Moorhen and Common Sandpiper, but didn't see what we had hoped to find, which was Eurasian Spoonbill. Plants in the area included *Ceropegia fusca*, which was only seen at this location, *Argyranthemum gracile*, *Euphorbia regis-jubae* and *Limonium pectinatum*, among many other common species.

The last stop for the day was at La Mareta, where we were looking for a recently sighted Wilson's Phalarope but failed in our quest; however, we did see our only Sanderling of the tour. After our arrival at our base for the next four nights, the hotel Finca Salamanca in Güimar, a brief look around the gardens produced Canary Island Blue Tit, a few Canary Island Chiffchaffs, a Eurasian Blackcap, a couple of Common Blackbirds and a single Atlantic Canary.

## Day 2

Sunday 9th November

Today started with a visit to the supermarket at Punta Larga, as we needed to get the food for our picnic lunches for the next few days. Tony went shopping with a few helpers, but those who remained at the minibus were rewarded with some excellent views of a fine adult Barbary Falcon. Unfortunately, this turned out to be the only sighting of this species during the tour, despite some thorough searching. After the shopping expedition had been completed, and a brief wait to see if the falcon returned, we continued on our way and drove round onto the north coast of Tenerife and stopped again at the Mirador Lagrimona. This location is probably the best site on Tenerife for Laurel Pigeon, but, unfortunately, they remained hidden during our visit. However, we did see a

Eurasian Sparrowhawk here. Whilst waiting for a pigeon to appear, there were a few other things to occupy our attention, including the endemic Tenerife Lizard (*Gallotia galloti*), the endemic Canary Islands Large White (*Pieris cheiranthi*), the only record for the tour of *Marsetella moquiniana* and a few other plants including the scarce Canary Sea Daffodil (*Pancratium canariensis*), *Kleinia neriifolia*, *Ceropegia dichotoma*, *Argyranthemum frutescens* and *Echium giganteum*. Continuing along the north coast our next stop, all be it a brief one, was at the water tanks at Los Silos where we saw the first Common Moorhens and Eurasian Coots of the tour.

So on to lunch in the picnic area at Buenavista and then, in the early afternoon, we drove as far as we could towards Punta de Teno, but had to stop where the road was blocked by a barrier. The road has been closed for over 12 months now, so much for “It’ll be open again in a few months”. We were here to look for Barbary Falcon but, unfortunately, the birds didn’t show and, as the road is still closed, the access to one of the best botanical regions is still restricted, and so a lot of plants are no longer viewable. However, it is possible to see more examples of the scarce *Pancratium canariensis* from near to the barrier, although telescopes are needed for good views. Starting the journey back we retraced our steps along the North coast to the Mirador Lagrimona. This time, our visit was much more successful and we easily located our quarry, the endemic Laurel Pigeon. We saw five individuals, and two of these gave us some great perched views through the telescope, when both the off-white terminal tail-band and the bicoloured, whitish-with-a-red-base bill could be seen both very well and very clearly.

The penultimate stop for the day was back down the road at the Barranco de Ruiz, which was a quick drive through to see the *Aeonium tabuliforme*, and an unsuccessful look for Island Darter (*Sympetrum nigrifemur*) which has been recorded here on a previous tour. The final destination for today was the Embalse de Valle Molina, a large (by Tenerife standards) man-made reservoir in the north-east of the island, not far from the airport at Los Rodeos. We were looking for waterfowl, but the place was almost void of any avian life at all. We returned to the Finca Salamanca for our well-earned dinner. During the evening Long-eared Owl could be heard within the hotel grounds, but seeing it was another matter entirely.

## Day 3

## Monday 10th November

Today we made an early start, taking our breakfast with us, as we were heading for the neighbouring island of La Gomera, and needed to be on the ferry which departed from Los Cristianos at 8.45am. This meant we were required to be at the port at about 7.15 to purchase our tickets for the day. In the harbour, we added Lesser Black-backed Gull to our trip list before we sailed and then, on the crossing, we saw small numbers of Cory’s Shearwaters and a few Short-finned Pilot Whales.

Once we were on La Gomera, a short exploration of the town park produced a few African Grass Blues, a couple of Hoopoes and a small group of Spanish Sparrows. We then moved inland, and in to the Garajonay National Park which harbours one of the largest continuous areas of laurisilva (Laurel) forest, a habitat that has almost disappeared from southern Europe and North Africa. Almost half of the remaining forest in the Canary Islands is included in the park. The forest holds a good number of the endemic Canary Island Pigeons, but it doesn’t make them any easier to locate or observe. Our first stop, just inside the park boundary, produced nothing, and so we drove further and higher into the Garajonay National Park, to the Mirador de El Rejo. The visibility was good and the weather conditions good, but a little windy, although obviously the pigeons didn’t like it for one reason or another, because in over an hour at this location, including taking our picnic lunch, we didn’t

see a single endemic pigeon. I must admit that the group took it well, but I was disappointed as, for the first time in a few years, they just didn't show themselves. As always, the plant life around the lookout was excellent, but there was very little in flower. We did the best we could, and recorded species like *Salix canariensis*, *Pericallis steetzii*, *Sonchus gomerensis* and *S. ortunoi*, *Echium acanthocarpum* and *Teline gomerae*; many of these are Gomeran endemics, but not flowering at this time. Our first stop in the afternoon was the Mirador El Bailadero but, again, no sign of any pigeons. Continuing on our route, the next stop was at the Mirador de Los Roques, where we could see the four volcanic plugs known as Agando, Ojila, La Zarzita and Carmona. These are old volcanic vents that were filled with lava with a higher acid content than basalt. The subsequent erosive action, over millions of years, made the surrounding, and easier to erode, rocks wear down, leaving only the filling of the old vent. Here we were able to find an endemic orchid *Habenaria tridactylites* in full flower and another Mediterranean species *Gennaria diphylla* which was just in leaf. Moving back through the national park, we stopped again just outside the park boundary and observed a single Laurel Pigeon, the only pigeon of the day. The crossing from La Gomera back to Tenerife was similar to that in the morning, with a few Cory's Shearwaters, Short-finned Pilot Whale and a solitary Atlantic Spotted Dolphin.

## Day 4

## Tuesday 11th November

After a quick stop for food for our picnics, but unfortunately no repeat sightings of the Barbary Falcon, we headed off to the slopes of Monte Las Mercedes, and the associated Laurel forest at Llano de Los Viejos. It was here that we finally connected with a few Bolle's Pigeons, a couple of Tenerife Kinglets, about a dozen examples of the local endemic subspecies of Common Chaffinch and a single Canary Island Robin. From here, we drove back through the ancient island capital of La Laguna and then began our ascent towards Mount Teide, passing through the rather drawn out village of La Esperanza. A brief stop at the Mirador de Ortuño produced nothing avian, so we continued uphill and stopped next at the Restaurante Bambi in Las Cañadas. This area is frequently visited by Blue Chaffinch as the local birds have food and water put out by the restaurant staff but, today, we saw Atlantic Canaries and a pair of Canary Blue Tits.

Passing through the very scenic caldera in the Teide National Park, we started to descend towards Vilaflor, and stopped for our picnic at the recreation area of Las Lajas. This is the most well-known site for the highly prized endemic Blue Chaffinch, and more people have seen this species here than at any other location. Fortunately, we weren't to be disappointed and soon located our quarry around the picnic tables. Obviously, this caused a major distraction from our lunch, but we soon settled back to our food and could watch and eat at the same time. The male Blue Chaffinch is certainly one of the highlights of a visit to Tenerife, and it is usually fairly easy to locate. It differs from its more familiar cousin in its larger size, larger silver-grey bill, slaty-blue plumage with a white eye-ring, double white wing-bar and a white vent. Also in this area, we managed to locate the endemic race of Great Spotted Woodpecker, but it was not as easy to see as on some previous tours. However, we eventually got some great views of one bird, as it hammered away in a Canary Island Pine, but it tried its hardest to remain hidden from view among the extra-long needles.

After lunch, and a successful time birding the picnic area, we drove down the mountain to the coast and called in briefly again at the small dam by the entrance to Amarilla Golf. This time we were successful in locating three Eurasian Spoonbills along with the nine Little Egrets, these were the only Eurasian Spoonbills seen on the tour.

## Day 5

### Wednesday 12th November

The weather this morning was fairly awful with persistent rain. Our first stop for the morning was at the Bajamar Ponds, but only Tony checked the location so the group remained nice and dry. There was very little of note, but large numbers of Common Moorhen and a solitary Common Greenshank were the highlights. Moving on, we checked the coastal reef at Punta de Hidalga, where the weather was still bad and the rain was getting even heavier and more persistent. The bird life was very limited, but we did see a few Cory's Shearwaters offshore and a few Ruddy Turnstones, a couple of Whimbrels, four Common Ringed Plovers, a couple of Common Sandpipers and five Little Egrets. As it was still raining heavily, we aborted the rest of our time on Tenerife and drove to the airport for our flight across to Fuerteventura.

Once on our next island, we had little time remaining for birding but, en route to our hotel in the south, we did get the opportunity to drive through the desert area behind Costa Calma. This was a very successful detour, as we recorded three Houbara Bustards and four Black-bellied Sandgrouse, two of the highly desired species from this area, and we got some really good views of both species. Also, this area is one of only two sites on the island for the endangered *Convolvulus caput-medusae*, we saw many of these plants on their favoured ridge but only a few had an occasional flower on.

## Day 6

### Thursday 13th November

An early start this morning, as we wanted to be in the desert soon after dawn, but even before we left the hotel I heard a Yellow-browed Warbler in the gardens. However, as time was precious, we decided to do the desert first and the warbler would have to wait. This pre-breakfast excursion started very quietly but, in the time we had available, we eventually got some more good looks at Black-bellied Sandgrouse and our first, and only, views of four Cream-colored Coursers. Despite a thorough search, we were unable to locate any Houbara Bustards this morning, but they were obviously out there somewhere, and just remained out of our view.

After breakfast, a quick look in the hotel gardens soon located the Yellow-browed Warbler, and we all got some really good views even though it never stayed still, or in view, for long. The next port of call for the morning was the Barranco de La Pared where we were searching for the endemic Canary Islands Stonechat. We could not locate the chat but, in the vicinity of the cheese factory, we did find a few Ruddy Shelducks, a White Wagtail and the only Trumpeter Finches of the tour. These birds were coming to drink just outside the goat pen, and gave us some excellent views, although rather brief. Moving on further inland, our next stop was at the small finca on the right of the road, a couple of kilometres before Pajara. This was a useful stop, as it was here we saw our first Canary Islands Stonechat, the only Black Redstart of the trip, and the only Barbary Partridges that we managed to see on the tour. We then drove on to Pajara, where Tony did some shopping and, on the way back to the minibus, heard a Yellow-browed Warbler near to the church. Otherwise no real surprises in Pajara, so we moved on to the next stop at Mirador Las Peñitas. Here there was no sign of the resident pair of Egyptian Vultures, but we did have some close encounters with Spanish Sparrow, Berthelot's Pipit and Northern Raven, and even closer ones with the Barbary Ground Squirrels that came and took crisps from our hands. So, from here, we moved on to the picnic area at Castillo de Lara where we had our lunch and saw the first African Blue Tit of the tour. Also, by the access road, we found a few *Caralluma burchardii* which, unfortunately, were not in flower but are very distinctive anyway. Retracing our steps a little, the first stop of the afternoon was in the Barranco de Las Peñitas at Vega de Rio Palmas. The small amount of running water in this barranco sustains a variety of wildlife

including the dragonflies Blue Emperor, Epaulet Skimmer and Red-veined Darter and the hard to locate Stripeless Tree Frog. We saw another couple of African Blue Tits, and Tony heard another Yellow-browed Warbler which was seen by Jenny. The last stop, in what was one of our longest days in the field, was back at the coast just south of Caleta de Fustes (Costa Caleta) in the Barranco de La Torre, where we soon located a roosting adult Egyptian Vulture, which was the only one we saw during our stay on Fuerteventura.

## Day 7

## Friday 14th November

The pre-breakfast excursion onto the desert plain near to our hotel produced some good views of three Houbara Bustards, which may well have been the same three birds we saw on our first afternoon on this island, and a Southern Grey Shrike.

After breakfast, we headed south to the Jandia peninsula, an area which is home to an interesting and rare endemic plant, the *Euphorbia handiensis*. This rare plant grows in just two valleys on the peninsula and, fortunately, one of the valleys is easily accessible and the plant is viewable. They are not growing as close to the road as they used to, but the population in the area we visited is still good, and there is still a good number of plants in the area. This rare *Euphorbia* greatly resembles a New World cactus, with its fat succulent stem and the leaves reduced to sharp spines. The journey back through Morro Jable produced a few Cattle Egrets, and we continued on to Risco del Paso. Here we went in search of Kentish Plover, but a short walk on the beach produced no waders at all. After lunch in Costa Calma, we had a walk in the plantation where we saw a few Common Chiffchaffs and Goldfinches.

The last port of call for the afternoon was La Lajita, where we soon located a few Laughing Doves. This recent coloniser from Morocco is now firmly established on a few of the Canary Islands, and this area is one of the more reliable places to see it on Fuerteventura. Today was the most successful for butterflies, and we saw a total of seven species including Small White, Lang's Short-tailed Blue, African Grass Blue, Monarch, Red Admiral, Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow.

## Day 8

## Saturday 15th November

This was the final day of the tour but, before we had to report to the airport for our various check-in times for our flights back to the UK, we were able to visit the small pond on the Salinas de Antigua Golf. The first species we found was a female Ring-necked Duck, plus a couple of Eurasian Coot, a couple of Common Moorhens, a pair of Ruddy Shelducks and a Wigeon. This latter bird raised my suspicions, but we did not have the time available for a long, detailed observation and so we had to leave with Wigeon sp on our lists. I informed another British birder on the island of our record and, over the next couple of days, he saw this bird on a couple of occasions and confirmed my suspicions: the bird was in fact a female American Wigeon. So by the end of the trip we had self-found three local rarities: Yellow-browed Warbler and these two American ducks. This was the fitting climax to a great week.

## Species Lists

### Birds

#### PHASIANIDAE

##### Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*

Three birds were seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> at the roadside stop before we reached Pajara on Fuerteventura. They didn't remain in view for long but most of the group managed to see at least one of them before they disappeared.

#### ANATIDAE

##### Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

We only recorded this species on Fuerteventura with our first record coming from among the goats in the Barranco de La Pared, and then a pair were seen at the Golf Salinas de Antigua near Caleta de Fustes on our final morning.

##### American Wigeon *Anas americana*

On our final morning we discovered a female Wigeon sp. on the small pool at the Golf Salinas de Antigua. As we were on our way to the airport we did not have the time for prolonged observation and a positive identification could not be made. Future visits to the site by other birders confirmed that my suspicions were correct and it was indeed the American species and not the European.

##### Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

This was another group find on the final morning and was seen in the company of the previous species. It was a female and was quickly identified and seen well by everyone, before we had to move on to catch our flights home.

#### PROCELLARIIDAE

##### Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Undoubtedly the best views obtained were those from the La Gomera ferry, but we also recorded a solitary bird on the 9<sup>th</sup> and about twenty from Punta de Hidalgo on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### THRESKIORNITHIDAE

##### Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

The only record for the trip was from Tenerife where we saw three birds on the dam at the entrance to Amarilla Golf on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### ARDEIDAE

##### Western Cattle Egret *Bulbulcus ibis*

We saw seven birds in the Morro Jable area of Fuerteventura on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

##### Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

We recorded this species on four dates, with a maximum of four on any single day.

##### Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

This species was seen on five dates, but nine birds at Amarilla Golf on both our visits was a high concentration.

### ACCIPITRIDAE

#### Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*

One of this recently described endemic subspecies was seen roosting in the Barranco de La Torre on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

Two individuals of this Macaronesian endemic subspecies were seen on Tenerife on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo insularum*

Rather scarce on the tour this time, with records from Tenerife, La Gomera and Fuerteventura, but only single birds seen on various dates.

### FALCONIDAE

#### Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* and *dacotiae*

*F. t. canariensis* is a common and widespread species on both Tenerife and La Gomera, a maximum of six were seen on any single date.

*F. t. dacotiae* is not as numerous as its western counterpart, but still recorded daily on Fuerteventura.

#### Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

The only bird seen was on the 9<sup>th</sup> at Punta Larga whilst some of us were shopping for our lunches, apparently the views were very good but unfortunately I was in the supermarket.

### OTIDAE

#### Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*

Three birds were seen well on two occasions on the plain behind Costa Calma on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> and the early morning of the 14<sup>th</sup>. This species is becoming harder to locate in this area because of site protection and the closure of desert tracks, but we still maintain a 100% success rate with our Naturetrek groups.

### RALLIDAE

#### Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Only a few birds were seen during the tour both on Tenerife and on our final morning on Fuerteventura.

#### Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

This species was numerous at Los Silos on Tenerife and a couple of birds were at the Salinas de Antigua Golf on Fuerteventura.

### BURHINIDAE

#### Eurasian Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus insularum*

I heard this species from our hotel on Fuerteventura late in the evening on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

### CHARADRIIDAE

#### Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The only records of this species were from Tenerife with two at Las Galletas on the 8<sup>th</sup> and then four near the lighthouse at Punta de Hidalgo on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

This species was seen at just two locations on Tenerife and at the Goat Farm in the Barranco de La Pared on Fuerteventura.

## SCOLOPACIDAE

### Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

The only record for the trip was a single bird seen at Las Galletas during our first afternoon on Tenerife.

### Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Two individuals were seen at Punta de Hidalgo, Tenerife on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

This was another wader species with just a single record for the tour, a lone bird at Las Galletas on Tenerife.

### Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The only individual for the tour was recorded by Tony at Bajamar Ponds on Tenerife, in the pouring rain on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A few individuals were seen at different locations on Tenerife and one was heard on La Gomera.

### Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

The best views were at Punta de Hidalgo on Tenerife but we also saw birds at Las Galletas and on Fuerteventura.

### Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Just a single bird at La Mareta, Tenerife, on the 8<sup>th</sup> was the only record during the week.

### Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

There was a single record of this accidental transatlantic visitor at Las Galletas, Tenerife, on the 8<sup>th</sup>. This was not a group find as Tony knew the bird had been seen at this location two days earlier.

## GLAREOLIDAE

### Cream-colored Courser *Cursorius cursor*

Rather surprisingly we were only able to locate this species on our first visit onto the Costa Calma plain on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup>.

## LARIDAE

### Atlantic Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michabellis atlantis*

This was a common and widespread species seen on all dates of the tour and on all islands visited.

### Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

This species was unusually scarce this tour with just two birds being seen in the harbour at Los Cristianos, Tenerife, on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

## STERNIDAE

### Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Six were seen on the beach in front of the Hotel Gorriones during the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup>.

## PTEROCLIDIDAE

### Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

Four birds, two pairs, were seen well on the Costa Calma plain on our first visit on the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> and then, the following morning, we saw another five individuals.

## COLUMBIDAE

### Rock Dove *Columba livia*

A couple of very genuine looking wild Rock Doves were seen at the Mirador Lagrimona on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup>.

### Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* (feral)

A common and widespread bird seen on all the islands visited.

### Bolle's Pigeon *Columba bollii*

Four birds were seen at Llano de Los Viejos on the slopes of Monte Las Mercedes on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the views were not as good as we would have liked, but a Bolle's Pigeon is better than none at all.

### Laurel Pigeon *Columba junoniae*

A total of five birds were seen at the Mirador Lagrimona on our second visit, including a couple of individuals that were seen perched through the telescope. We also saw one the following day on La Gomera in the Garajonay National Park.

### Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A common and widespread species seen on all dates and on all islands visited although some birds seemed to have obtained some strange genes.

### Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Five examples of this species, a fairly recent coloniser on the Canary Islands, were seen at La Lajita, Fuerteventura on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

## PSITTACIDAE

### Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

At least one bird was seen as we drove through the Costa de Silencio on our first afternoon on Tenerife.

## STRIGIDAE

### Long-eared Owl *Asio otus canariensis*

This species was heard in the grounds of the Hotel Finca Salamanca on every evening of our stay, and Tony saw a single bird on one occasion.

## APODIDAE

### Plain Swift *Apus unicolor*

We recorded this species on four dates during the tour with a maximum of about fifty individuals close to Puerto de la Cruz as we were returning to our hotel on the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup>.

## UPUPIDAE

### Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Two were seen in the Parque del Conde, San Sebastian de La Gomera on the 10<sup>th</sup>, one on Tenerife the following day and finally one on Fuerteventura on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

## PICIDAE

### Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major canariensis*

One seen and others heard at the Las Lajas picnic area on the 11<sup>th</sup>; this endemic subspecies is dirtier on the underparts than its more northern counterparts.

## LANIIDAE

### Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis koenigi*

This species was recorded daily on Fuerteventura with a maximum of six on any single date.

## CORVIDAE

### Northern Raven *Corvus corax tingitanus*

We saw one in the Garajonay National Park on La Gomera on the 10<sup>th</sup> and then it was seen daily on Fuerteventura, with a huge maximum count of more than forty on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

## PARIDAE

### African Blue Tit *Cyanistes ultramarinus*

Only recorded on the 13<sup>th</sup> on Fuerteventura, when birds were seen at Castillo de Lara picnic area just outside Betancuria and along the barranco at Vega de Rio Palmas.

### Canary Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae*

This endemic species was seen daily in small numbers on Tenerife and La Gomera during the first part of the tour.

## PHYLLOSCOPIIDAE

### Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

About seven birds were seen on Fuerteventura on the 14<sup>th</sup>, with most birds seen around the Costa Calma plantation.

### Canary Islands Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus canariensis*

This endemic was a common and widespread species on both Tenerife and La Gomera. It was recorded daily, with a maximum count of more than twenty individuals.

### Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

This species is becoming a regular feature of the tour, as it becomes an increasingly more common visitor to the Canary Islands in the late autumn/winter. We recorded three birds, all on Fuerteventura, one found by Tony in the garden of the hotel Gorriones on 13<sup>th</sup> and seen again on the 14<sup>th</sup>, one heard by Tony and seen by Jenny in the Barranco Las Peñitas at Vega de Rio Palmas on the 13<sup>th</sup> and, finally, one in Pajara which was heard by Tony had been reported previously by other observers.

## SYLVIIDAE

### Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

Most numerous in the gardens of the hotel Finca Salamanca on Tenerife where it was a commonly heard species but much less frequently sighted.

### Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

A couple of birds were seen on Tenerife but on Fuerteventura where the species is more numerous we, rather surprisingly, only heard it.

### Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala leucogastra*

The only birds seen during the tour were two birds on Fuerteventura on the 13<sup>th</sup>; both of them were seen in the Barranco Las Peñitas.

REGULIDAETenerife Kinglet *Regulus teneriffae*

This rather dubious species was seen well at Llano de Los Viejos, Tenerife on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Formerly regarded as a distinct species, some authors now treat this form as a subspecies of Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*.

STURNIDAECommon Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The only record was seen by Jenny in San Sebastian, La Gomera on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

TURDIDAECommon Blackbird *Turdus merula cabreræ*

This endemic subspecies was a common and widespread species on Tenerife and La Gomera where it was seen daily.

MUSCICAPIDAEEuropean Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Two were seen in the gardens of the hotel Gorriones on Fuerteventura on the 13<sup>th</sup> and it was heard the following day as well.

Canary Islands Robin *Erithacus superbis*

One of these endemics was seen at the Mirador Lagrimona on the 9<sup>th</sup> and then one at Llano de Los Viejos on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The only record for the trip was one seen at the roadside stop before reaching Pajara on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Canary Islands Stonechat *Saxicola dacotiae*

Three were seen on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the best being the first one at the roadside stop near Pajara. This individual was a female and was on view long enough for us to get some nice views through the telescope.

PASSERIDAESpanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

A few were seen on our first afternoon on Tenerife, then about a dozen were in the Parque del Conde on La Gomera and, finally, it was seen daily on Fuerteventura, where the name of our hotel, the Gorriones, translates into English as Sparrows.

MOTACILLIDAEGrey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea canariensis*

One was seen during our first afternoon on Tenerife and then one was heard on the 11<sup>th</sup>; these were the only records for the tour.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

The only bird seen on the trip was at the Goat Farm in the Barranco La Pared, Fuerteventura on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii berthelotii*

We recorded this species on all islands visited but it was obviously more numerous on Fuerteventura.

FRINGILIDAECommon Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs tintillon*

This very distinctive endemic subspecies was seen around the picnic area at Llano de Los Viejos on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Blue Chaffinch *Fringilla teydea*

As is now customary, we saw this species at the Las Lajas picnic area on Tenerife where we saw about ten birds, both males with their stunning slate-blue plumage and the more drab grey/brown females.

Atlantic Canary *Serinus canaria*

Recorded from both Tenerife and Fuerteventura but, on the latter, this species is an introduction.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*

This was only seen on Fuerteventura at the Barranco de Las Peñitas on the 13<sup>th</sup> and in the Costa Calma plantation the following day.

Common Linnet *Acanthis cannabina harterti*

Rather surprisingly, we didn't see this species and only heard a couple of individuals at La Lajita on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus amantum*

We got some good views of this species at the Goat Farm in the Barranco de La Pared but this was the only location where we saw it.



Laurel Pigeon



Houbara Bustard

## Plants

**PTERIDOPHYTES**ADIANTACEAE

*Adiantum reniforme* seen at Llano de Los Viejos, Tenerife

BLECHNACEAE

*Woodwardia radicans* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

DAVALLIACEAE

*Davallia canariensis* seen at Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

DENNSTAEDTIACEAE

*Pteridium aquilinum* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

POLYPODIACEAE

*Polypodium macaronesicum* seen at Los Roques, La Gomera

**PINOPSIDA**PINACEAE

*Pinus canariensis* seen from the Finca Salamanca, Tenerife

**MAGNOLIOPSIDA**AIZOACEAE

*Aizoon canariensis* seen on the Jandia peninsula, Fuerteventura

APIACEAE

*Ferula linkii* last years flower heads were seen on Mount Teide, Tenerife

*Foeniculum vulgare* seen near the reservoir Valle Molina, Tenerife

AQUIFOLIACEAE

*Ilex canariensis* seen in the forests of the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

ARALIACEAE

*Hedera canariensis* seen at the Mirador El Rejo, La Gomera

ASCLEPIADACEAE

*Caralluma burchardii* seen at Castillo de Lara, Fuerteventura

*Ceropegia dichotoma* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Ceropegia fusca* seen at Amarilla Golf, Tenerife

*Periploca laevigata* seen along the roadsides, Tenerife

ASTERACEAE

- Ageratina adenophora* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Andryala pinmatifida* seen at Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife  
*Argyranthemum broussonetii* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Argyranthemum frutescens* seen at Mirador Lagrimona, Tenerife  
*Argyranthemum gracile* seen at Amarilla Golf, Tenerife  
*Artemisia canariensis* seen at Mirador Lagrimona, Tenerife  
*Asteriscus sericeus* seen near Mirador Las Peñitas, Fuerteventura  
*Carlina salicifolia* seen by the Valle Molina reservoir, Tenerife  
*Carlina xeranthemoides* seen in the Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife  
*Cheirolophus teydis* seen in the Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife  
*Dittrichia viscosa* seen at Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife  
*Kleinia nerifolia* seen on roadsides, Tenerife  
*Launaea arborescens* seen at Las Galletas, Tenerife  
*Pericallis steetzii* seen at Mirador El Rejo, La Gomera  
*Schizogyne sericea* seen at Las Galletas, Tenerife  
*Sonchus gomerensis* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Sonchus hierrensis* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Sonchus leptcephalus* seen at Punta de Teno, Tenerife  
*Sonchus ortunoi* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

BORAGINACEAE

- Echium acanthocarpum* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Echium virescens* seen near Vilaflor, Tenerife  
*Echium wildpretii* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife

BRASSICACEAE

- Crambe gomeræ* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Descurania bourgeauana* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife  
*Erysimum bicolor* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera  
*Erysimum scoparium* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife  
*Lobularia canariensis* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

CACTACEAE

- Opuntia ficus-indicus* seen on roadsides on Tenerife

CAPRIFOLIACEAE

- Viburnum rigidum* seen at Monte Las Mercedes, Tenerife

CISTACEAE

- Cistus symphytifolius* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife

CONVOLVULACEAE

- Convolvulus caput-medusae* seen between Costa Calma and La Pared, Fuerteventura

*Convolvulus floridus* seen in the Barranco de Ruiz, Tenerife

#### CRASSULACEAE

*Aeonium canariense* seen at Mirador de Lagrimona, Tenerife

*Aeonium holochrysum* seen at Mirador de Lagrimona, Tenerife

*Aeonium subplanum* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Aeonium tabulaeforme* seen in Barranco de Ruiz, Tenerife

*Aeonium urbicum* Las Mercedes, Tenerife

*Aichryson parlatorei* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Greenovia aurea* seen between La Esperanza and Las Cañadas, Tenerife

*Greenovia diplocycla* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

#### DIPSACACEAE

*Ptercephalus lasiospermus* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife

#### ERICACEAE

*Arbutus canariensis* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Erica arborea* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Erica scoparia* seen at Cruz del Carmen, Tenerife

#### EUPHORBIACEAE

*Euphorbia balsamifera* seen at Las Galletas, Tenerife

*Euphorbia berthelotii* seen in the Barranco de La Villa, La Gomera

*Euphorbia canariensis* seen on the roadside, Tenerife

*Euphorbia handiensis* seen in the Jandia National Park, Fuerteventura

*Euphorbia lambii* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Ricinus communis* seen near the Finca Salamanca, Tenerife

#### FABACEAE

*Adenocarpus viscosus* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife

*Bituminaria bituminosa* seen at Buenavista, Tenerife

*Chamaecytisus proliferus* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife

*Lotus campylocladus* seen between Las Cañadas and Vilaflor, Tenerife

*Lotus lancerrottensis* seen on Costa Calma plain, Fuerteventura

*Spartocytisus supranubius* seen in Las Cañadas National Park, Tenerife

#### GERANIACEAE

*Erodium moschatum* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Geranium reuteri* seen at Llano de Los Viejos, Tenerife

#### LAMINACEAE

*Micromeria varia* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Sideritis lhotskyi* seen at Los Roques, La Gomera

LAURACEAE

*Laurus novo-canariensis* seen in the Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

MYRICACEAE

*Myrica faya* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

OROBANCHACEAE

*Cistanche phelipaea* seen near the Hotel Gorriones, Fuerteventura

PAPAVERACEAE

*Eschscholzia californicum* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

PLUMBAGINACEAE

*Limonium pectinatum* seen at Amarilla Golf, Tenerife

POLYGONACEAE

*Rumex lunaria* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

ROSACEAE

*Marcetella moquiniana* seen at Mirador Lagrimona, Tenerife

*Rubus bollei* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

RUBIACEAE

*Phyllis nobla* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

*Plocama pendula* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

SALICACEAE

*Salix canariensis* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

SCROPHULARIACEAE

*Campylanthus salsoloides* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

*Isoplexis canariensis* seen on roadsides on Anaga Peninsula, Tenerife

*Scrophularia smithii* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

SOLANACEAE

*Datura stramonium* seen at Las Galletas, Tenerife

*Nicotiana glauca* seen at Las Galletas, Tenerife

*Lycium intricatum* seen at Jandia, Fuerteventura

*Solanum nigrum* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

TAMARICACEAE

*Tamarix canariensis* seen on the roadsides, Tenerife

THYMELACEAE

*Daphne gnidium* seen above La Esperanza, Tenerife

URTICACEAE

*Forsydia angustifolia* seen at Buenavista, Tenerife

*Gesneria arborea* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

VALERIANACEAE

*Centranthus ruber* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

LILIIDAEARECACEAE

*Phoenix canariensis* seen in Barranco de La Villa, La Gomera

DRACAENACEAE

*Dracaena draco* seen at Icod, Tenerife

JUNCACEAE

*Luzula canariensis* seen in Garajonay National Park, La Gomera

LILIACEAE

*Pancratium canariensis* seen at Mirador La Grimona, Tenerife

ORCHIDACEAE

*Gennaria diphylla* seen at Los Roques, La Gomera

*Habenaria tridactylites* seen at Los Roques, La Gomera

POACEAE

*Arundo donax* seen at Mirador Lagrimona, Tenerife

*Pennisetum setaceum* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

XANTHORRHOEACEAE

*Agave americana* seen on roadsides, Tenerife

## Butterflies

Canary Islands Large White *Pieris cheiranthi*

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

Bath White *Pontia daplidice*

Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*

Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra*

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*

Lang's Short-tailed Blue *Leptotes pirithous*

African Grass Blue *Zizeeria knysna*  
Monarch *Danaus plexippus*  
Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*  
Macaronesian Red Admiral *Vanessa vulcania*  
Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*  
Canary Speckled Wood *Pararge xiphioides*

### Dragonflies

Sahara Bluetail *Ischnura sabarensis*  
Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*  
Broad Scarlet *Crocothemis erythraea*  
Epaulet Skimmer *Orthetrum chrysostigma*  
Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

### Amphibians & Reptiles

Stripeless Tree Frog *Hyla meridionalis*  
Tenerife Lizard *Gallotia galloti*  
Fuerteventura Lizard *Gallotia atlantica*  
Canary Islands Gecko *Tarentola delalandii*

### Mammals

Atlantic Spotted Dolphin *Stenella frontalis*  
Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*  
Barbary Ground Squirrel *Atlantoxerus getulus*  
Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

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