

Go Slow... in Gran Canaria

Naturetrek Tour Report

7th – 14th March 2020



Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch



Canary Islands Red Admiral

Report & images by Guillermo Bernal



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Summary

Gran Canaria may be well-known as a popular sun-seekers' destination, but it contains so much more, with a wealth of magnificent scenery, fascinating geology and many endemic species or subspecies of flowers, birds and insects. On this, the second 'Go Slow' tour, we were able to enjoy some of the best of the island's rugged volcanic scenery, appreciating the contrasts between the different habitats such as the bird- and flower-rich Laurel forest and the dramatic ravines, and the bare rain-starved slopes of the south. The sunset from the edge of the Big Caldera in the central mountains, the wonderful boat trip, with our close encounters with Atlantic Spotted Dolphins and Cory's Shearwater, the Gran Canarian Blue Chaffinch and the vagrant Abyssinian Roller, the echoes of past cultures in the caves of Guayadeque, and the beauty of the Botanic Garden with its Giant Lizards were just some of the many highlights. There was also time to relax and enjoy the pools in our delightful hotel overlooking the sea. Good weather with plenty of sunshine, comfortable accommodation, delicious food and great company all made for an excellent week.

Day 1

Saturday 7th March

Fly to Gran Canaria; transfer to Agaete

Nine group members flew from several UK destinations to Gran Canaria's Airport, arriving at different times throughout the afternoon. Belén and Guillermo, living locally, were able to meet all of them as they were arriving. The transfer to Agaete was smooth, along the main roads round the north coast of the island, with views of the Atlantic rollers breaking on cliffs, plenty of Feral Pigeons and the odd Azorean Yellow-legged Gull.

We arrived at the Spa Roca Negra hotel, our base for the week, and checked in, the last arrivals going straight to dinner, after which we were all very ready to retire to our comfortable rooms for much-needed sleep.

Day 2

Sunday 8th March

Las Palmas; Botanic Garden; Bandama caldera

With daylight, we could see the sea from our rooms as we woke to a cloudy and breezy morning, with the north-easterly Trade Wind blowing. We met up for briefing at 8.45am and we left the hotel just after 9am.

Our first destination was not on the official itinerary: an Abyssinian Roller had taken up residence on the remains of the old sand bank, now waste ground, in Las Palmas. This North African vagrant had been present for several weeks, so we were keen to try to see it. We took the coast road back to Las Palmas, and parked by the sandy area, an open hill in the middle of the city. In the same spot where we were looking for the roller, another birding party was scanning the place in search of vagrants. Guillermo knew the roller's favoured area, so we walked across to where we could look down on the streets below and an overhead line. And there it was! This beautiful turquoise bird with a chestnut back and long forked tail was sitting on a lamp post. It did not move during our time observing it, but Guillermo and Belén told the group that the roller is there because it has found one of the last remnants of habitat in Las Palmas where it can hunt for beetles: the endemic Darkling Beetle *Pimelia*

granullicolis, itself a rare species in this location. We also managed to spot another one of the vagrants or migrants that arrived on the island after the big sandstorm that took place a couple of weeks ago: it was a Subalpine Warbler! Also here, Northern Wheatear was showing well. Plants included the very spiny Prickly Pear *Opuntia dillenii*, Fagonia (*Fagonia cretica*) with purple flowers, the pink Dock *Rumex vesicaria* and Canary Samphire (*Schizogyne sericea*).

We then moved on to the Jardín Botánico Viera y Clavijo, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria's Botanic Garden, the largest in Spain. The garden was created by the Swedish botanist Eric Sventenius in 1952, around the Guinguada ravine, and is very beautiful. As we entered, we saw Monarch butterflies, African Blue Tit (the Gran Canarian subspecies *bedwigeae*), European Robin (Gran Canarian subspecies *marionae*), Canary Islands Chiffchaff and Atlantic Canaries. One of the many highlights of the garden were the Gran Canarian Giant Lizards which were basking on rocks: the largest we saw must have been about 40 centimetres in length. The garden contains examples of the endemic and special species of the islands, set out in different ecosystems, so Guillermo explained about some key species and habitats as we walked round. Iberian Water Frogs were sitting on water lily pads in a pond calling loudly, Canary Speckled Woods and Small Whites were flitting round, and among the species we looked at, were *Pistacias*, *Echiums*, *Euphorbias* and the constituents of Laurel forest. We had our picnic here, enjoying delicious local wines, breads and cheeses among other delights.

Refreshed, we continued to explore, as we gently made our way back to the entrance, noting the variety of *Aeoniums*, and learning about the endemic Gran Canaria Dragon Tree (*Dracaena tamaranae*), restricted to one gorge in the wild.

We returned to the minibuses and then drove the short distance to the Bandama crater, the road climbing steeply past vineyards. Technically a maar rather than a caldera, because it was formed when groundwater came into contact with the hot lava causing a massive explosion, it rises 569 metres above sea level and the crater is one kilometre across and 200 metres deep, with dramatic cliff-like walls. Here we saw Canary Red Admiral as well as the 'ordinary' Red Admiral and could see the differences. A Berthelot's Pipit showed well, and Canary Islands Chiffchaff and Canaries were around. Plants here included Canary Dock (*Rumex lunaria*), a very common bush with rounded, shiny leaves, Gran Canaria Bugloss (*Echium decaisnei*), with white flowers, looking green when they were over, the endemic pink daisy *Pericallis webbii*, and several *Aeoniums*, probably *Aeonium arboreum*, each with a succulent rosette on a woody stem.

Back at the hotel, we had time for a break before meeting to do our checklists and enjoying a delicious meal, after a fascinating introduction to the island's riches.

Day 3

Monday 9th March

The west coast; boat trip from Puerto Rico

We woke to a lovely sunny and not windy morning and, after another good breakfast, we had the briefing and left at 9.15am to drive to the south of the island through the mountains of the west coast. Janet and David stayed at the hotel as Janet had not been feeling very well since the night before, so we were all in one minibus. Initially passing through the Parque Natural Tamadaba, the views along this narrow twisty road were stunning, and we drove very slowly to enjoy the many and varied panoramas. The vegetation on the dry slopes was mainly

bushes of Balsam Spurge (*Euphorbia balsamifera*) and Common Canary Spurge (*Euphorbia regis-jubae*), with Canary Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) planted in the barrancos, and a very rare local endemic lotus in the sides of the road *Lotus callis-viridis*. As we were going from north to south, we could definitely start to notice the change in the ecosystem. We stopped at El Balcon viewpoint to stretch our legs and further enjoy the dramatic cliffs. Here, we noted common plants such as Barbed-wire bush (*Launea arborescens*), but also the rare and localised Leafless Spurge (*Euphorbia aphylla*) in little green clumps, the very local endemic white daisy *Agyranthemum lidii*, and the yellow daisy-like *Asteriscus stenophyllus*, both island endemics found only in this west coast area of Gran Canaria. Yellow-legged Gulls were below us giving the perspective and reference point to be aware of how high we were. Belén spotted a Sardinian Warbler that was very active on the spurges. We continued on the new road to La Aldea, where we stopped at El Charco, a brackish pool by the sea. We found another non-expected species resting in that shady quiet area: Siskin were in the trees. We had an early picnic at the tables under the Sheoak trees (*Caruarina equisetifolia*).

We then continued on our route to Puerto Rico, passing through an area burnt by recent fires that had been fanned by the calima gales (sandstorm). On our way we could still be delighted by the contrast of the island. At this point all the dramatic ravines and slopes of the south were absolutely desert-like. We could admire some of best showing natural green volcanic rocks called Azulejos formed by hydrothermal alterations. We reached the busy port at Puerto Rico (one of the most touristic areas of the island) and boarded the 'Spirit of the Sea' for our pelagic boat trip in beautiful sunshine (if a bit windy and choppy, definitely more than what it usually is there). As we sailed out to sea, we started seeing Cory's Shearwaters gliding low over the waves as we were looking for dolphins. It took a while, but our patience paid off and we encountered a small pod of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins which were so playful, swimming, jumping and diving round the boat. Soon another boat joined us, and the dolphins were delighted to play and race from one boat to the other as skippers were just throttling up a bit. An amazing experience! As we left to return towards shore, we spotted a number of Sandwich Terns close to the ship and a very big flock further away. Several Gannets were noted. The boat moored near the shore for those who wished to swim. Conditions had improved during our trip and when we arrived back to the port, we had some time to stretch our legs and have some coffee and ice creams before we headed back to the hotel using the motorway

After time to freshen up, we met for another good dinner, after going round the island in another fascinating day.

Day 4

Tuesday 10th March

Maspalomas dunes and la Charca; Barranco de Guayadeque

In the original itinerary we were supposed to go to the central mountains today but, seeking for the best weather conditions, the central mountains were going to be visited on day six, and, today, we were heading to the south and south-east of the island.

So we left, after our briefing, at 9am, taking the motorway past Las Palmas and the airport. It was cloudy in the north, with a little drizzle, very windy on the coastal plain, but the sun was shining strongly in the south. This extensive protected area of mostly stable sand dunes has very little vegetation and gives a dramatic, desert-like appearance. As we parked and walked along the street to the access point, Canary Island Chiffchaffs, Canaries

and Sardinian Warblers were all around, calling loudly. We walked to the top of the first dune. The wind was definitely blowing more strongly than usual for that area, and it was nice to see that the dunes looked so “fresh” without loads of footprints. Guillermo explained the origin of the ecosystem and some of the main species, like tamarisks, *Pimelia* beetles and the local *Limonium tuberculatum*.

We then moved to the other side of the dune system, to La Charca lagoon. Monk Parakeets were heard, and Rose-ringed Parakeets were flying noisily overhead. Around the water we noted Grey Herons, (including some ‘Blue Heron subspecies’ – of course, this was just a joke but it was true that the morning light made some of the herons look blue rather than grey), Little Egrets, Moorhen, a group of six Eurasian Whimbrel, one Common Greenshank, two Little Ringed Plovers, a lovely Avocet and a very nice Squacco Heron spotted by Nigel. A solitary gull turned out to be the Laughing Gull, an American vagrant which has been there for about three months. There were plants of *Schizogyne glaberrima*, a brighter-green version of the Canary Samphire (*S. sericea*), we had seen on day two. We were then pleased to return to the cool of the air-conditioned minibus to drive east.

Before leaving the very touristic Maspalomas area, we took just 20 minutes to have a look at a municipal park where we could spot Waxbills and the largest concentration of Monarch butterflies in the whole week.

On our way to Guayadeque ravine we had a quick scan in the south east steppe plains. This is a very dry and usually very windy area (but not at all today: it was very calm). We were looking for Trumpeter Finches and Lesser Short-toed Larks, but after some slow driving scanning the area, we just saw a Berthelot’s Pipit. We were about to leave when we spotted a beautiful vagrant that turned to be a Desert Wheatear that showed really well and fairly close! It was a lifer for everybody, including the guides! Very happy with that encounter, as we were leaving the area we also spotted a Barn Swallow on our way back to the road, before turning north through Agüimes and into the Barranco de Guayadeque, one of the steep-sided ravines which radiate from the centre of the island.

This ravine carries water, so is well-vegetated, and has been home to Indigenous peoples through history, with many cave dwellings, some still in use today, and storage silos. We drove about half-way up the barranco, to Restaurante El Centro, set in a series of caves carved into the cliff. Here we enjoyed a delicious Tapas lunch of local specialities: corn bread, padron peppers, gofio (from roasted grain), sweet sausage and goat being among the tasty dishes on offer. To drink there was ‘avocado’ their own blend of red and white wine, fruity and delicious. We then drove to the end of the road, where we had coffee and ice cream with stunning views down to the sea. African Blue Tit, Buzzard, Kestrel and Raven were seen.

We then drove back down the gorge, passing Canary Tree Mallow (*Malva canariensis*) and stopping to look at *Kickxia pendula* with its yellow Toadflax-like flowers, a plant restricted to this part of this island. Further down again we noted the rare endemic *Parolinia platypetala*, a shrub in the Cabbage family with greyish needle-like leaves, also restricted to this ravine, *Allagopappus viscosissimus*, with narrow, bright-green, sticky leaves and yellow flowers, and Canary Island Sage (*Salvia canariensis*), another shrub with grey leaves but showy pink-purple flowers and bracts. We then continued down to the motorway, and made our way back to the hotel, with time to relax again before dinner.

Day 5

Wednesday 11th March

The Laurel forest – Firgas & Los Tiles

We left at 9am, to journey to the Laurel forest of the northern hill slopes- an absolute contrast to yesterday's landscapes. We drove about half-way along the north coast before turning inland, taking the road to Firgas, our first destination. Here the ravine is green and lush, and full of birds. Where we pulled off the road, Common Chaffinches were coming in to the fruit of the Loquat tree over our heads, as were Eurasian Blackcaps (Canary Islands subspecies *heineken*); Canary Island Chiffchaffs, African Blue Tits, Blackbirds, Robins, a great flock of House Martins, Plain Swifts and Canaries were all active.

However, our target species here was the Laurel Pigeon, a species confined to the Laurel forests of the western Canary Islands. Thought to have become extinct on Gran Canaria due to habitat destruction and hunting (although some question whether the species was ever actually present) it has been re-introduced over recent years through a conservation project using eggs from La Palma (where the Laurel Pigeon is more abundant) fostered by Collared Doves in a captive-breeding programme. There has also been a major plant-breeding and forest-restoration scheme alongside (in which our guide Belén took part during one year, visiting schools to give lectures and speeches and taking school children to replant their island's green forests). The birds are now successfully re-establishing themselves and breeding in the wild, with just over 200 birds released between 2013 and 2017, but at least 30 non-ringed young ones found by the end of the project in 2017. We waited patiently and we could see a couple of these magnificent pigeons flying by, but none perched close enough. So we decided to walk a little bit, and just then, Belén saw a lovely one which came in and perched just over our heads in a very tall introduced Norfolk Pine tree. We could hear their distinctive deep cooing: we probably saw about 10 birds in total while we were there. We also had the chance to see Honey Bee next to some local endemic Canary Flower Bee looking for nectar in a Purple Viper's-bugloss (*Echium plantagineum*). We wandered slowly up the road in the increasing heat. Butterflies here included Red Admirals, Painted Lady and Canary Speckled Wood, with abundant bushes of Canary St. John's-wort (*Hypericum canariense*), Canary Dock and Giant Reed lining the road. Further up, we encountered the shrubby Canary Sow-thistle (*Sonchus canariensis*) and Tree Heath (*Erica arborea*), and several non-flowering *Aeoniums* were on the cliffs, plus *Aeonium undulatum* in bud. A Common Buzzard (subspecies *insularum*) was perched on top of a wooden post

We then moved on to Los Tiles, where we could experience more closely some of the remains and restored Laurel forest. We had our picnic in the shade at the Visitor Centre, accompanied by very tame Common Chaffinches (Gran Canarian subspecies *bakeri*), showing their characteristic colours very clearly. We took a shady walk under the trees, seeing Azores Laurel (*Laurus novocanariensis*), Stinkwood (*Ocotea foetens*), Canary Laurel (*Apollonias barbujana*) with its typical galls caused by the spider mite *Eriophyes barbujana*, and Canary Island Guelder Rose (*Viburnum rigidum*), among others. The green-flowered orchid Gennaria (*Gennaria diphylla*) was just going over, but the island-endemic, blue *Echium callithyrsum* was flowering well along the road. Returning to the minibuses, the ones in the group that wanted to keep it easy were picked up by Belén and went back to the hotel, while the others walked with Guillermo back to the Visitor Centre using a different path over high ground.

We arrived back at 3.30 and 3.45pm, with plenty of time to relax and swim or to explore the surroundings. Relaxed and happy, we met at 6.30pm to update our lists and have dinner.

Day 6

Thursday 12th March

The central mountains – Llanos de la Pez; Roque Bentayga; Parador Hotel

Today was the big day! We were aiming for the central mountains to look for the very scarce and exclusive Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch. If landscapes had been beautiful so far, today the best was still to be seen! We set out at 9am this morning, following the motorway to head inland through Teror and Valleseco, winding our way up the north side of the central volcanic cone. We drove past some of the Pine forest that was affected by fires last August, and we could definitely see the damage and how the *Pinus canariensis* is already recovering! We also had time to admire the Atlantic Islands Buttercup (*Ranunculus cortusifolius*).

We had a technical stop at parador Cruz de Tejada for some coffee and toilets. It was just the Alpha and Omega of our mountain journey as we were starting and finishing our day in those beautifully located facilities with perfect vistas to make a briefing of our journey through those gorges and dramatic landscapes. Our first destination was an area of Canary Pine forest, where there is a small population of the very rare Gran Canarian Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla polatzekae*). This species, split from the Tenerife Blue Chaffinch (*Fringilla teydea*), is much rarer and harder to locate. As we arrived at the picnic area of Llanos de la Pez a group of forest workers were just cleaning and cutting some branches with their chainsaws... what made the area noisier than expected... but anyway most of the group walked slowly through the Pine forest (just Belén and David stayed at the meeting point, like 1.5 km away). On our way we were listening to and seeing Canary Island Chiffchaffs, African Blue Tits and the occasional Robin and Common Chaffinch. Buzzard and Kestrel were seen overhead, plus a few Plain Swifts. Round our feet, especially round the bases of the trees, were the purple stars of Canary Crocus (*Romulea columnae* subsp. *grandiscapa*, a Sand Crocus rather than a true Crocus), and other plants included the white endemic daisy *Agyranthemum adauctum* subsp. *canariense*, Common Asphodel (*Asphodelus aestivus*), Sticky Broom (*Adenocarpus foliosus*) and *Genista microphyllus*, the latter having smaller, more silvery leaves. There were plants of the Gran Canaria Carline Thistle (*Carlina canariensis*), Stemless Sow-thistle (*Sonchus acaulis*), the leaf rosette of which is stemless but the flower spike tall, the False Sage *Sideritis dasygnaphala*, and the fragrant thyme-like *Micromeria lanata*. Canary Speckled Wood and Small White butterflies were among the insects. On our way we were scanning very slowly and carefully, stopping often to try to find a clue of the presence of our blue treasures. We could spot Great Spotted Woodpecker (Gran Canarian subspecies *thanneri*). Suddenly, Guillermo heard a young female! She moved fairly close to the group long enough for everybody (but David and Belen) to admire her. Success! It was a great sight. According to the coloured rings in its legs, Guillermo later found out from people in the conservation programme that it was a female born in the wild and ringed in 2018. Once the young bird left, we kept walking towards the meeting point where Belen and David were waiting for us to be picked up to the picnic area and they also had great news! They managed to spot not just one but two! Oh, we were so lucky! But not just that. When we were commenting our respective sightings (Belén and David spotted two youngsters) suddenly, Guillermo heard them calling and we had the most beautiful moment when an adult female and a beautiful blue adult male came close and stayed around for at least five minutes, making our day. What a moment! We saw at least four individuals (which is around a 1% of the total world population!)

Some of the group were collected by minibus and others walked back to the picnic site, where we enjoyed another feast in the shade of the Pine trees. We finished our lunch and drove on through the area where we could see Roque Nublo, the Big Central Caldera and the Roque Bentayga, with Buzzards circling overhead. Plants here included the white-flowered *Echium onosmifolium*, the yellow Mustard-like Canary Flixweed (*Descurania preauxiana*), the mauve wallflower *Erysimum albescens* and *Aeonium arboreum* (formerly separated out as *Aeonium*

manriqueorum), a large succulent with bright-yellow flowers. We moved on to Roque Bentayga, past numerous Almond (*Prunus dulcis*) trees, a speciality of the area, where Guillermo explained the significance of the sacred mountain. We looked round the museum, and we noted the large thistle Cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus*). The members of the group who wanted to keep it easy, again, were taken by Belén to Parador to relax, while the other part of the group was taken by Guillermo on a short but breath-taking (in many senses) hike towards the indigenous Bentayga Sanctum.

We then drove on to the Parador hotel at Cruz de Tejada, where we refreshed ourselves and relaxed in their café, with stunning views of the mountains. There was plenty of time to relax and enjoy the surroundings. Canaries were flying around, as were African Blue Tits, and a female Kestrel was favouring a particular area. The white Broom *Chamaecytisus proliferus* was in fine flower, and Canary Red Admiral was seen. We gathered to watch the stunning sunset, as the sun dropped into the sea of cloud over the sea, before going down to the hotel restaurant to enjoy a delicious dinner as the sunset colours deepened then faded. Afterwards, we made our way back to the minibuses, enjoying the night sky, for the winding roads back down to the coast and to the Roca Negra. And as a perfect end to a perfect day, we spotted a Long-eared Owl (subspecies *canariensis*) with its catch on the road (lucky owl that the first vehicle that came across it was a Naturetrek minibus!) What a day over the petrified storm.

Day 7

Friday 13th March

Valle de Agaete; Finca La Laja

We woke to a dull but windy dawn; however, the weather cleared to a sunny, bright and breezy afternoon. After breakfast, we left at 10am, taking the winding road through Agaete and up into the ravine beyond. The light breaking through onto the mountain sides reminded us of Scotland, but the roadside flora did not! Canary Tree Bindweed (*Convolvulus floridus*) was particularly fine and, as well as many now-familiar species. At the end of the public road, at El Sao, we parked up and explored our surroundings, Opium Poppy (*Papaver somniferum* subsp. *setigerum*), Buzzards showed in a good number (at least half a dozen) and Kestrels were overhead, plus the ever-present Feral Pigeons. We marvelled at the mountainside homes, and Guillermo explained something of the history and culture of the area.

We then moved down to Finca La Laja, a farm which grows tropical fruit and coffee and makes its own wine. Here, we enjoyed looking at Avocado, Orange, Papaya and Mango trees, amongst others, and Guillermo explained about the coffee and wine production meanwhile Belen managed to spot the clearest Blackcap of the whole week. Canary Island Chiffchaffs, Canaries, African Blue Tits, Robins and Spanish Sparrows were all singing, and Small White, Speckled Wood and Monarch butterflies were seen. After our tour, we moved to a covered seating area, where we enjoyed local cheese, chorizo and white wine spread, apple-and-coffee jam, and cake, while tasting a selection of the wines and finishing with home-grown coffee. It was a lovely relaxed time.

On our way down the ravine we went to the indigenous Necrópolis of Maipes but unfortunately, due to the recently declared “Alarm Status” because of Covid-19, all Govern managed sites just closed, so we explained some interesting facts from the fence of the site (that was particularly windy) and we returned to the hotel at 2.30pm for a free afternoon.

We met up again at 6.30pm to complete our lists, before dinner which, tonight, was in a lovely little restaurant in Puerto de las Nieves, the port below the hotel. The restaurant had plate-glass windows overlooking the sea, and we could see the Tenerife ferry coming and going. Our meal was a series of local dishes, including calamari, as well as salad and desserts. Replete, we drove back up the hill to the hotel, after a very pleasant final evening together!

Day 8

Saturday 14th March

Journey home

Today was the final day of the tour and, after breakfast, we said our farewells to each other and the hotel. Those with earlier flights left at 8am and 9am while the later ones had the morning to finish packing and relax, before leaving just before midday.

We all agreed that we had had an excellent week in good company and had enjoyed some wonderful scenery and fascinating wildlife. The group found it hard to find one highlight among so many, and we felt our eyes had been opened to all Gran Canaria has to offer. This was in no small part due to Guillermo and Belén's extensive knowledge and good humour, as excellent guides to an island they love so much. Belén and Guillermo would like to thank the group for their interest, good humour and spotting skills, and we hope to see you again on future occasions.

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Species Lists

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	TL	March							
				7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Our tour checklist follows the names and taxonomy, including species order, of the International Ornithological Congress list of the birds of the world (version 10.1, Jan 2020) which seems destined to become the global standard in future. The species included are based on those thought most likely to be recorded together with what has been seen on previous tours											
* = Near Endemic Species (also occurring on Madeira & Azores)											
** = Endemic Species											
1	Plain Swift *	<i>Apus unicolor</i>				x	X	x	X	x	x
2	Rock Dove (Feral)	<i>Columba livia feral</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	x	
3	Laurel Pigeon**	<i>Columba junoniae</i>							x		
4	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			X	X	X	X	X	x	
5	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>			X		X	X			
6	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>					X				
7	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>					X				
8	Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>					X				
9	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>					X				
10	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					X				
11	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>					X				
12	Laughing Gull (Vagrant)	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>					X				
13	Yellow-legged Gull (C.Is.& Atlantic Is*)	<i>Larus michahellis atlantis</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
14	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>				X					
15	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris borealis</i>				X					
16	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>				X					
17	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>					X				
18	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>					X				
19	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>					X				

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	** = Endemic Species										
20	Common Buzzard (C.Is. & Azores*)	<i>Buteo buteo insularum</i>					X	X	X	X	X
21	Long-eared Owl (C.Is.**)	<i>Asio otus canariensis</i>							X		
22	Abyssinian Roller (Vagrant)	<i>Coracias abyssinicus</i>			X						
23	Great Spotted Woodpecker (GC**)	<i>Dendrocopos major thanneri</i>							X		
24	Common Kestrel (e. C.Is.**)	<i>Falco tinnunculus dacotiae</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
25	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>					X				
26	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>			X		X				
27	Great Grey Shrike (Vagrant)	<i>Lanius excubitor elegans</i>			X						
28	Northern Raven (C.Is.**)	<i>Corvus corax canariensis</i>					X	X		X	X
29	African Blue Tit (Gran Canaria**)	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae hedwigae</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	
30	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>					X				
31	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>						X			
32	Canary Islands Chiffchaff**	<i>Phylloscopus canariensis</i>			X	X	X	X	X		
33	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla heineken</i>			X	X	X	X		X	
34	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans (Calima influx)</i>			X						
35	Sardinian Warbler (C.Is.**)	<i>Sylvia melanocephala leucogastra</i>				X	X				
36	Common Blackbird (C.Is.& Mad*)	<i>Turdus merula cabrerae</i>			X	X	X	X			
37	European Robin (Gran Canaria**)	<i>Erithacus rubecula marionae</i>			X	X			X	X	
38	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			X						
39	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti (Calima influx)</i>					X				
40	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>				X	X				
41	Common Waxbill (Int)	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>					X				
42	Berthelot's Pipit*	<i>Anthus berthelotii berthelotii</i>			X	X	X				
43	Common Chaffinch (Gran Canaria**)	<i>Fringilla coelebs bakeri</i>						X	X		

	Common name	Scientific name	TL	March						
				7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Our tour checklist follows the names and taxonomy, including species order, of the International Ornithological Congress list of the birds of the world (version 10.1, Jan 2020) which seems destined to become the global standard in future. The species included are based on those thought most likely to be recorded together with what has been seen on previous tours										
	* = Near Endemic Species (also occurring on Madeira & Azores)									
	** = Endemic Species									
44	Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch**	<i>Fringilla polatzeki</i>							X	
45	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>				X	X			
46	Atlantic Canary*	<i>Serinus canaria</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X
47	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				X				

Plants

	Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
	NB.			
	* = Atlantic Islands endemic			
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	[] = Introduced or planted			
Please Note: Nomenclature contained within this list follows the taxonomic amendments, based on DNA analysis, made by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the Missouri Botanic Garden, and following The Plant List, an internationally accepted list of vascular plant families, published and maintained by these two institutions.				
1	PTERIDOPHYTES	FERNS & ALLIES		
2	Leptosporangiate Ferns	True Ferns		
3	Davalliaceae	Hare's-foot Fern Family		
4	<i>Davallia canariensis*</i>	Hare's-foot Fern	2	Bandama

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5				
6	GYMNOSPERMS	CONIFERS		
7	Pinaceae	Pine Family		
8	<i>Pinus canariensis</i> **	Canary Islands Pine	3,6	Widespread
9				
10	ANGIOSPERMS	FLOWERING PLANTS		
11	Pre-Dicots	Primitive Angiosperms		
12	Lauraceae	Laurel Family		
13	<i>Apollonias barbujana</i> *	Canary Laurel	5	Laurel Forest
14	<i>Laurus novo-canariensis</i> *(<i>L. azorica</i>)	Azores Laurel	5	Laurel Forest
15	<i>Ocotea foetida</i> *	Stinkwood	5	Laurel Forest
16				
17	Eu-Dicots	True Dicotyledons		
18	Adoxaceae	Moschatel Family		
19	<i>Viburnum rigidum</i> **	Canary Island Guelder Rose	5	Los Tiles
20				
21	Amaranthaceae (Chenopodiaceae)	Goosefoot Family		
22	<i>Bosea yervamora</i>		5	Firgas
23				
24	Anacardiaceae	Sumach Family		
25	<i>Pistacia atlantica</i>	-	2	Botanic Garden
26	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Lentisk	2	Botanic Garden
27				
28	Apiaceae	Carrot Family		

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29	<i>Astydamia latifolia</i>	Canary Samphire	2	Las Palmas
30	<i>Athamanta (Todaroa) montana</i> **	-	6	Caldera viewpoint
31	<i>Bupleurum salicifolium</i> *	A Hare's-ear	7	Valle de Agaete
32	<i>Ferula linkii</i> **		5	Firgas
33	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel	5	Firgas
34				
35	Apocynaceae	Periwinkle Family		
36	<i>Periploca laevigata</i>	-	2 to 5	widespread
37	<i>Vinca major</i>	Greater Periwinkle	5	Firgas
38				
39	Aquifoliaceae	Holly Family		
40	<i>Ilex canariensis</i> **	Canary Island Holly	5	Los Tiles
41				
42	Boraginaceae	Borage Family		
43	<i>Echium callithyrsus</i> ***		5	Los Tiles
44	<i>Echium decaisnei</i> **	Gran Canaria Bugloss	2	Bandama
45	<i>Echium onosmifolium</i> ***		6	Big Caldera
46	<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Purple Viper's-bugloss	5	Firgas
47	<i>Echium strictum</i> **	Rough-leaved Bugloss	7	Valle de Agaete
48				
49	Brassicaceae	Cabbage Family		
50	<i>Descurainia preauxiana</i> ***	Canary Flixweed	6	Caldera viewpoint
51	<i>Erysimum albescens</i> ***		6	Caldera viewpoint
52	<i>Erysimum bicolor</i> *	-	6	Caldera viewpoint

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53	<i>Parolina platypetala</i> ***		4	Guayadeque
54				
55	Cactaceae	Cactus Family		
56	[<i>Opuntia dellinii</i>]	-	x	widespread
57	[<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>]	Barbary Fig	x	widespread
58				
59	Campanulaceae	Bellflower Family		
60	<i>Canarina canariensis</i> **	Canary Bellflower	5	Firgas
61				
62	Casuarinaceae	Sheoak Family		
63	[<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>]	-	3	La Aldea
64				
65	Compositae (Asteraceae)	Daisy Family		
66	<i>Allagopappus viscosissimus</i> **		4	Guayadeque
67	<i>Argyranthemum adauctum</i> ssp. <i>canariensis</i> ***		6	Llanos de la Pez
68	<i>Argyranthemum lidii</i> ***		3	El Balcon
69	<i>Argyranthemum escarrei</i> ***		3	El Balcon
70	<i>Artemisia thuscula</i> (<i>A. canariensis</i> **)	-	5	Valle de Agaete
71	<i>Asteriscus graveolens</i> ssp. <i>stenophylla</i> ***		3	El Balcon
72	<i>Carduus tenuiflorus</i>	Slender Thistle	2	Botanic Garden
73	<i>Carlina canariensis</i> ***	Gran Canaria Carline Thistle	6	Llanos de la Pez
74	<i>Carlina salicifolia</i> *	Canary Carline Thistle	5	Firgas
75	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	Cardoon	4	Roque Bentayga

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76	<i>Kleinia neriifolia</i> **	Canary Islands Candle Plant	x	widespread
77	<i>Launaea arborescens</i>	Barbed-Wire Bush	x	widespread
78	<i>Pericallis webbii</i> ***		2	Bandama
79	<i>Schizogyne glaberrima</i> ***		4	Maspalomas
80	<i>Schizogyne sericea</i> *	Canary Samphire	2	Las Palmas
81	<i>Sonchus acaulis</i> **	Stemless Sow-thistle	2	Bandama
82	<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle	5	Firgas
83	<i>Sonchus canariensis</i> **	Canary Sow-thistle	5	Firgas
84	<i>Sonchus leptocephalus (Atalanthus pinnatus)</i> **	-	5	Firgas
85				
86	Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family		
87	<i>Convolvulus althaeoides</i>	Mallow-leaved Bindweed	3	Roadsides
88	<i>Convolvulus floridus</i> **	Canary Tree Bindweed	2	Bandama
89	<i>[Ipomoea purpurea]</i>	Common Morning Glory	2	Near Botanic Garden
90				
91	Crassulaceae	Stonecrop Family		
92	<i>Aeonium arboreum</i> **	-	2	Bandama
93	<i>Aeonium canariense</i> subsp. <i>virgineum</i> ***	Canary Houseleek	5	Firgas
94	<i>Aeonium percarneum</i> ***		5	Firgas
95	<i>Aeonium simsii</i> ***		6	Caldera viewpoint
96	<i>Aeonium undulatum</i> ***	-	5	Firgas
97	<i>Aichryson porphyrogenetos</i> **		5	Los Tiles
98	<i>Aichryson punctatum</i> **	-	5	Los Tiles
99				

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100	Ericaceae	Heather Family		
101	<i>Arbutus canariensis</i> **	Canary Strawberry Tree	5	Firgas
102	<i>Erica arborea</i>	Tree Heather	5	Firgas
103				
104	Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family		
105	<i>Euphorbia aphylla</i> **	Leafless Spurge	3	El Balcon
106	<i>Euphorbia balsamifera</i>	Balsam Spurge	3	El Balcon
107	<i>Euphorbia canariensis</i> **	Canary Island Cactus-spurge	2	Slopes above (& in) Botanic G.
108	<i>Euphorbia regis-jubae</i> **	Common Canary Spurge	3	El Balcon
109				
110	Fagaceae	Beech Family		
111	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	6	mountains road
112				
113	Geraniaceae	Geranium Family		
114	[<i>Pelargonium capitatum</i>]	Rose Geranium	5	Near Firgas
115				
116	Hypericaceae	St.John's-wort Family		
117	<i>Hypericum canariensis</i> *	Canary St.John's-wort	5	Firgas
118				
119	Lamiaceae	Dead-nettle Family		
120	<i>Cedronella canariensis</i> *	-	5	Los Tiles
121	<i>Lavandula (multifida subsp.) canariensis</i> **	Canary Island Lavender	5	Firgas
122	<i>Lavandula minutolii</i> **	-	4	Guayadeque
123	<i>Micromeria lanata</i> ***		6	Llanos de la Pez

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124	<i>Salvia canariensis</i>	Canary Island Sage	4	Guayadeque
125	<i>Sideritis dasygnaphala</i> ***	Gran Canaria False Sage	6	Llanos de la Pez
126				
127	Leguminosae (Fabaceae)	Pea Family		
128	<i>Adenocarpus foliolosus</i> **	Sticky Broom	6	Llanos de la Pez
129	<i>Bitumaria bituminosa</i>	Pitch Trefoil	3	widespread
130	<i>Chamaecytisus proliferus</i> **	Tagasaste	6	mountains
131	<i>Genista (Teline) microphylla</i> ***	-	6	Llanos de la Pez
132	<i>Lotus callis-viridis</i> ***		3	Aldea Road
133				
134	Myricaceae	Sweet Gale Family		
135	<i>Myrica faya</i> *	Wax Myrtle	5	Los Tiles
136				
137	Nyctaginaceae	Bougainvillea Family		
138	[<i>Bougainvillea glabra</i>]	Bougainvillea	3	Roadsides
139				
140	Oxalidaceae	Wood Sorrel Family		
141	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda Buttercup	2	Very widespread
142				
143	Papaveraceae	Poppy Family		
144	<i>Fumaria bastardii</i>		4.5	Guayadeque & Laurel forest
145	<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	2	Near Bandama
146	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	Opium Poppy	2	Near Bandama
147				

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148	Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family		
149	<i>Campylanthus salsoloides</i> **	Sea Rosemary	4	Guayadeque
150	<i>Kickxia pendula</i> ***	-	4	Guayadeque
151	<i>Plantago arborescens</i> *	Canarian Shrubby Plantain	5	Firgas
152				
153	Plumbaginaceae	Thrift Family		
154	<i>Limonium tuberculatum</i> ***	(V rare in wild)	2	Botanic Garden (planted)
155				
156	Polygonaceae	Dock Family		
157	<i>Rumex lunaria</i> **	Canary Dock	2	Las Palmas, but very widespread
158	<i>Rumex vesicarius</i>	-	2	Las Palmas
159				
160	Primulaceae	Primrose Family		
161	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i> var. <i>caerulea</i>	Blue Scarlet Pimpernel	5	Firgas
162				
163	Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family		
164	<i>Ranunculus cortusifolius</i> *	Atlantic Islands Buttercup	6	Llanos de la Pez
165				
166	Rosaceae	Rose Family		
167	<i>Bencomia caudata</i> **	-	5	Los Tiles
168	[<i>Prunus dulcis</i>]	Almond	6	Mountain areas (Tejeda)
169				
170	Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family		
171	<i>Plocama pendula</i> **	Balo	3	El Balcon

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172	<i>Rubia fruticosa</i>	Madder	2	Bandama
173				
174	Salicaceae	Willow Family		
175	<i>Salix canariensis</i> *	Canary Willow	2	Botanic Garden
176				
177	Solanaceae	Nightshade Family		
178	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	Shrub Tobacco	2	Las Palmas
179	<i>Solanum vespertilio</i> **		5	Los Tiles (planted)
180	Tamaricaceae	Tamarisk Family		
181	<i>Tamarix africana</i>	African Tamarisk	4	Maspalomas dunes
182	<i>Tamarix canariensis</i>	Canary Tamarisk	3	La Aldea
183				
184	Urticaceae	Nettle Family		
185	<i>Urtica morifolia</i>	Membranous Nettle	5	Firgas
186				
187	Zygophyllaceae	Caltrop Family		
188	<i>Fagonia cretica</i>	Fagonia	2	Las Palmas
189	<i>Tetraena (Zygophyllum) fontanesii</i>	Canarian Bean-Caper	3	Aldea
190				
191				
192	Monocots	Monocotyledons		
193	Araceae	Arum Family		
194	<i>Dracunculus canariensis</i>	Canary Dragon Arum	5	Los Tiles (leaves)
195				

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196	Areaceae	Palm Family		
197	<i>Phoenix canariensis</i> **	Canary Palm	2	Very widespread
198				
199	Asparagaceae	Asparagus Family		
200	[<i>Agave americana</i>]	Century Plant	2	Widespread
201	<i>Dracaena draco</i>	Dragon Tree	2	Botanic Garden surroundings
202	<i>Dracaena tamaranae</i> ***	Gran Canaria Dragon Tree	2	Botanic Garden (planted)
203	<i>Semele androgyna</i> *	-	5	Los Tiles
204	<i>Semele gayae</i> ***		5	Los Tiles
205				
206	Iridaceae	Iris Family		
207	<i>Romulea columnae</i> subsp. <i>grandiscapa</i> **	Canary Crocus	6	Llanos de la Pez
208				
209	Orchidaceae	Orchid Family		
210	<i>Gennaria diphylla</i>	Gennaria	5	Los Tiles
211				
212	Xanthorrhoeaceae	Aloe Family		
213	[<i>Aloe vera</i>]	-	2	Widespread
214	<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	Common Asphodel	6	Llanos de la Pez
215				
216	LICHENS:			
217	<i>Roccella canariensis</i>	Orchilla (purple dye lichen)	3	El Balcon

Invertebrates

	Common name	Scientific name	TL	March								
				7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	BUTTERFLIES:											
1	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>			X		X			X	X	x
2	Bath White	<i>Pontia daplidice</i>					X	X			X	
3	Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>			X		x	x				X
4	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>			X							
5	Canary Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa indica</i> **			X						x	
6	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>			X							
7	Canary Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge xiphioides</i> **			X			X	x			x
	OTHER INVERTEBRATES:											
1	Blue Emperor	<i>Anax imperator</i>	X									
2	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	X									
3	Canary Flower Bee	<i>Anthophora alluaudi</i> **	X									
4	Honey Bee	<i>Apis mellifera</i>	X									
5	An endemic Darkling Beetle	<i>Pimelia sparsa</i> **	X									
6	A Seven-spot Ladybird	<i>Coccinella algerica</i>	X									
7	Tropical Tent Web Spider	<i>Cyrtophora citricola</i>	X									
8	A Sally Lightfoot Crab	<i>Grapsus adscensionis</i>	X									