

Go Slow in Gran Canaria

Naturetrek Tour Report

15th – 22nd November 2025



Common Waxbill



Canary Islands Chaffinch



Gran Canaria Giant Lizard



Giant Squill

Tour report by Jessica Turner
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Summary

Gran Canaria is an amazing island: it is so much more than just a tourist resort, and we were fortunate to experience some of its wildlife treasures, as well as the dramatic scenery, with plenty of time to relax as well. The great views of Stone-curlews, African Blue Tits, Canary Island Chaffinches, Great Grey Shrikes and Gran Canaria Giant Lizards were a delight. The very rare Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch gave us an exciting new species, although much searching was required this year and, despite a decent pre-trip weather forecast for the week, the conditions were not ideal. Laurel Pigeons were also initially elusive, but eventually rewarded us with great sightings. November is not the best month to see the fascinating flora of the island at its best, but there was still plenty of colour, and we were struck by the number of Tree Aeoniums in full flower, their yellow cones glowing against the brown lava soils. Another delight came in the form of Canary Sea Daffodils with their white flowers, especially the swathes of flowers in the west. We also enjoyed Monarch butterflies and their caterpillars, as well as plenty of other insects, many of them endemic. Out at sea, an encounter with a Blainville's Beaked Whale was special, as this is a very shy species and a new one for both leaders. Guillermo's encyclopaedic knowledge of the island, its history and culture, as well as the wildlife, added immeasurably to the trip and our understanding of this fascinating island. With good company, a comfortable hotel, plenty of opportunities to swim, relax, and enjoy the sea, everything added up to an excellent week.

Day 1

Saturday 15th November

Fly Gran Canaria, transfer Agaete

Most of the group members arrived at Gran Canaria airport, having flown in from Gatwick at about 6.45pm. Having negotiated the new passport system, they met with Guillermo and two clients who had arrived previously. Jorge, our driver, was waiting with the bus, so luggage was stowed and they quickly set off for the journey to the hotel in the dark, past the capital (Las Palmas) and along the north coast to Agaete. They arrived at the Hotel Occidental Roca Negra, our base for the week, checked in and went straight to dinner, enjoying a tasty buffet meal. Jessica and another couple, who had just finished "The Canary Islands" tour, flew over from Tenerife. Their plane was delayed, so they arrived at the hotel at 9.45pm, meeting the others the following morning. After a long day's travel, everyone was ready for their beds.

Day 2

Sunday 16th November

Botanical Garden, Arucas

We woke to a beautiful morning and, after a delicious breakfast, we gathered at 9.30am to meet up Jorge with the bus. Our first stop was to collect Guillermo from the supermarket, where he had been shopping for the picnic. We then drove east towards Las Palmas, enjoying great waves crashing onto the beaches.

Our first destination was 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 Guiniguada Ravine, and is very beautiful. It contains examples of the endemic and special species of the islands, set out in

different ecosystems, and we looked at some key species and habitats as we walked through. As we arrived, two Common Buzzards (subspecies *insularum*) and two Ravens (subspecies *canariensis*) were above the distant hill slope, and Yellow-legged Gulls (subspecies *atlantis*, also known as Azores Gull) drifted over. Canary Islands Chiffchaffs were flitting about, and we had some lovely views of African Blue Tit (Gran Canaria subspecies *hedwigae*), European Robin (Gran Canaria subspecies *marionae*), Blackbird (Canary Island and Madeira subspecies. *cabrerae*) and Common Kestrel (west Canaries subspecies *canariensis*). Monarch butterflies glided overhead and a Long-tailed Blue was active. Near the entrance Canary Sea Daffodil (*Pancratium canariense*) was flowering, and Guillermo showed us the two species of Dragon Tree (*Dracaena draco* and *D. tamaranae*). The latter, Gran Canaria Dragon Tree, is almost extinct in the wild, and is preserved mainly through the Botanic Garden. They only flower very sporadically (about every ten years, although sometimes a far longer period) and the specimen we saw was flowering this year, so all the seed will be collected.

We walked slowly through the different areas noting, among many other species, Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*), Canary Island Cactus-Spurge (*Euphorbia canariensis*), Balsam Spurge (*Euphorbia balsamifera*), which has sweet sap, and its bitter relative, King Juba's Spurge (also called Common Canary Spurge, *Euphorbia regis-jubae*) and Canary Islands Candleplant (*Kleinia neriifolia*). Canary Dock (*Rumex lunaria*), Fine-leaved Sow-thistle (*Sonchus leptocephalus*) and Gran Canaria Bugloss (*Echium decaisnei*) are all shrubs, unlike the representatives of those genera in the UK. We also looked at the constituent species of *laurisilva* and thermophilic forest, and saw Tree Aeoniums (*Aeonium arboreum*) with their yellow flowers. Flowering Giant Squills (Autonoe, formerly *Scilla*, *latifolia*) appeared to have naturalised. There was a good number of dragonflies around a pond, with Broad Scarlet, Epaulet Skimmer, Blue Emperor and Sahara Bluetail noted, and we had nice views of Little Egret, Grey Wagtail and Canary Speckled Wood. Rose-ringed Parakeets were noisy, while Common Waxbills were heard but not seen. A few, relatively small, Gran Canaria Giant Lizards were in the rocky walls of the ravine. As we left the garden a Barbary Falcon (now considered 'just' a subspecies of Peregrine) was glimpsed. A light shower started, so we ate our picnic on the bus, but the drizzle didn't last long.

We then drove a short distance to the town of Arucas. Here we visited a dry reservoir, where we quickly started to see Stone-curlews (of the west Canaries subspecies *distinctus*): maybe flew birds flew a short distance as we arrived, but many were still visible. Once we got our eye in, we could pick them out, amazingly camouflaged, but the yellow eye-rings glowing. Another fifteen or more were still closer to us, so there must have been over fifty birds there. In the light drizzle, we could see them preening and running, as well as hear them calling. Several Kestrels was hunting below us, and Red-legged Partridge was heard.

We arrived back at the hotel just after 4.30pm; some walked just below the hotel to see the much larger Giant Lizards in the rocks by the path. There was then plenty of time to relax, walk down to the port or swim, before we met at 7.00pm to update our lists. We had dinner at 7.45pm, agreeing that it had been a great first day in the field.

Day 3

Monday 17th November

Bandama crater, Guayadeque Ravine

It was a fine morning and, after another good breakfast, we were ready to leave at 9.00am. Our first destination was close to the Guiniguada Ravine, where we had been yesterday, but this morning we visited the two most recently-active volcanoes on the island, which erupted about two thousand years ago and then collapsed, leaving a

caldera. While we drove, Guillermo explained more about the history of the islands, and a Hoopoe was seen en route. We parked and walked to the viewpoint, and Guillermo explained how the name 'Bandama' came from a sixteenth-century Dutch wine grower, Van Damme. Canary Island Chiffchaffs, African Blue Tits, Blackbirds and Robin were early sightings, along with Blackcap (subspecies *heineken* of Macaronesia, SW Iberia and NW Africa); Guillermo saw a Sardinian Warbler (Canary subspecies *leucogastra*). Over the caldera we saw more Kestrels, and later had good views of the pair of Barbary Falcons which hold territory there.

A Prickly Pear (*Opuntia maxima*) was infected with Cochineal Scale Insects. Other plants included the Canary Wild Olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *guanchica*) in fruit, *Aeonium percarneum* with glaucous leaves edged with pink, and Sea Rosemary (*Campylanthus salsooides*) with pink flowers, as well as species we had noted previously: King Juba's Spurge (*Euphorbia regis-jubae*), Canary Islands Candleplant (*Kleinia nerifolia*), Gran Canaria Bugloss (*Echium decaisnei*) and Tree Aeonium (*Aeonium arboreum*), with plenty of yellow flowers. Bees on the Aeonium flowers were the endemic Gran Canaria subspecies of Canary Islands Cellophane Bee, and we also saw a few hoverflies, at least one of which, *Chrysotoxum triartuum*, is endemic. A Berthelot's Pipit was located under some bushes.

After a coffee in the sun, we walked up the road, seeing several Gran Canaria Giant Lizards sticking their heads out of holes in a stone wall, and a Canary Red Admiral, as well as having another sighting of Barbary Falcon. A Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Canary subspecies *granti*) was also seen briefly.

Next, Jorge drove us to 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 and storage silos, some still in use today. Its relative isolation also means there are at least two plants in the ravine which are found nowhere else in the world. We stopped to view the first of these, the yellow-flowered *Kickxia pendula*, also seeing Canary Tree Mallow (*Malva acerifolia*), and had the opportunity to visit one of the cave houses, excavated and extended by the grandparents of the lady who spoke to us. The family have all lived in the ravine all their lives, the grandmother having 'come from' just a little further up the barranco.

We drove to the top of the public road up the barranco, to Restaurante Tagoror, set in a series of caves carved into the cliff. Here we enjoyed a delicious *tapas* lunch of local specialities: padron peppers, *gofio* (from roasted grain) and Canary sausage were among the dishes on offer. To drink there was *abocado*, their own blend of young and old, sweet and drier red wines, and one client's ice cream came complete with a birthday candle! Afterwards, we drove back down the ravine, stopping to look at the other ravine-endemic, *Parolinia platypetala*, a shrub in the cabbage family with greyish needle-like leaves and the local name *Dama de Guayadeque*, and *Allagopappus viscosissimus*, with narrow, bright-green, sticky leaves.

There was time for a siesta on the journey home, and we reached the hotel at 5.45pm with time for R&R. We met at 7.30pm for lists before, for most of us, a light dinner.

Day 4

Tuesday 18th November

The central mountains

The morning was bright, but the first shower came during breakfast. We left at 9.00am to head to the top of the island. We took a narrow and winding road, expertly driven by Jorge, and as we climbed we could see how the vegetation changed and became more lush, with terraces and fields for livestock and crops. We saw several Buzzards and Kestrels, and paused to scan (unsuccessfully) for Stone-curlew, seeing instead some fine Canaries and a flock of Cattle Egrets, one of which perched on a wire. We also paused to look down on the archaeological site of Risco Caído, where we could see caves used for housing, ceremonial purposes and grain storage by pre-Hispanic people. Guillermo explained how one of the caves appears to be a solar marker, aligned to the period between the summer solstice and autumn equinox.

We then took a leg stretch at the Mirador Astronomico de Pinos de Galdar, but unfortunately the cloud had rolled in and views were replaced by chill and drizzle. A bush of Canary St John's-wort (*Hypericum canariense*) was flowering, as well as a clump of the Scabious-like *Pterocephalus dumetorum*, the Broom *Genista microphylla*, and the Micromint *Micromeria benthami*, all of which only grow round the caldera on Gran Canaria. A nearby wall held Canary Carline Thistle (*Carlina canariensis*) with a straw-coloured flower, small green, spiky rosettes of *Aeonium simsii*, the blue-grey rosettes of *Aeonium aureum*, Golden Rustyback fern (*Asplenium aureum*), and some new leaves of Canary Orchids (*Orchis canariensis*). We soon retreated to the bus and continued climbing up to the Parador Hotel at Cruz de Tejeda, where we enjoyed morning coffee and hot chocolate, as well as stunning views, since it was clear to the south and west.



Canary Speckled Wood



Epaulet Skimmer



Maspalomas dunes



Monarch

Warmed and refreshed, we continued climbing to the picnic area at Llanos de la Pez. This is a site for the very rare Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch, maybe the rarest passerine in the Western Palearctic: there are only about 430 individuals. The conditions were not very favourable, being cold and damp with only occasional bursts of sun. Guillermo knows the territories, and was listening hard. Meanwhile, we had lovely views of Great Spotted Woodpecker (Gran Canaria subspecies *thanneri*), African Blue Tits and Canary Islands Chaffinch (Gran Canaria subspecies *bakeri*). This last species was recently split from Eurasian Chaffinch, and we could see the characteristic deep slate-blue and peach colours very clearly. Ravens were abundant and vocal.

Having not located the Blue Chaffinch initially, we had our rather chilly picnic, enjoying local cheeses and wines. We then drove a little further down the road to try again near the camping area of Bailico. The weather cleared slightly and eventually we located two birds, a male and a female. We had brief views, but could see the size and colour difference from Canary Islands Chaffinch. A subsequent female/juvenile may have been a different bird, or one of the pair. Delighted to have seen such a rare species, we returned to the bus, also noting the endemic plants *Genista microphylla*, Sticky Broom (*Adenocarpus foliosus*) and Gran Canaria False Sage (*Sideritis dasygnaphala*).

As it was by then 4.40pm, and the weather was closing in, we returned to the Parador for refreshments and to see if there were still some views. When we arrived, the grey cloud and the light on the mountains was very dramatic, especially round the Roque Bentayga, but as the time progressed, the cloud came down further and rain set in. There was an all-too-brief window when it cleared, and around the time of sunset (just after 6.00pm) there was a patch of orange glow in the clouds beneath us; but we had to admit that the sunset was a failure. Jorge drove us back to the hotel, where it was mild and clear on the coast. We arrived back just before 8.00pm and we went straight for a late dinner.

Day 5

Wednesday 19th November

Maspalomas, Puerto Rico (boat trip)

We woke to a fine morning and, after breakfast, left at 9.15am, collecting Guillermo from the supermarket in Puerto de las Nieves, where he had brought filled rolls for lunch. We drove east and then south along the motorways, with Guillermo telling us more about the history, geography and culture of Gran Canaria. There was cloud to the north-east and some showers, but the weather cleared again as we moved south, and we enjoyed plenty of warm sun.

Our first stop was at the sand-dune field of Maspalomas, formed by sand exposed from a marine shelf during the last Ice Age, and blown by the ever-present wind. The dunes are an impressive four hundred hectares of golden sand, constantly shifting, although not greatly, and held together by occasional clumps of Canary Tamarisk trees (*Tamarix canariensis*). Near the path were plants of the yellow-flowered Smooth Canary Samphire (*Schizoglyne glaberrima*) and the very rare Sea-lavender *Limonium tuberculatum*, both of which are restricted to this area, as well as flowering Barbed-wire Bush (*Launaea arborescens*), Perennial Heliotrope (*Heliotropium ramosissimum*) and Canary Bean-caper (*Zygophyllum fontanesii*). Canaries were flitting round the palm trees, and a pair of Berthelot's Pipits showed well. One of the Barbed-wire Bushes held at least half a dozen Canarian Pincer Grasshoppers, with red hind legs, while we found tracks in the sand of a darkling beetle, *Pimelia granulicollis*, and saw examples of the smaller *Pimelia sparsa* running around. These beetles get their moisture from dew.

We drove on to La Charca, a brackish lagoon in the heart of Maspalomas, on the edge of the extensive sand-dune area. We spent time enjoying the bird life here: we saw two Spoonbills feeding, six Black-winged Stilts, several Little Egrets, Grey Heron, a roosting Whimbrel, a couple of Greenshanks, both Little Ringed and Common Ringed Plovers, and Common Sandpiper. A Black-crowned Night Heron flew in, but circled and left again, Cattle Egrets stayed a little longer, and a couple of Black-headed Gulls were with the Yellow-legged Gulls. A Common Waxbill perched for some time in a chain-link fence, while Monk Parakeets flew overhead. Several large jumping fish were probably *Tilapia*, and we noted the invasive plant Shoreline Purslane (*Sesuvium portulacaoides*), which is covering all the muddy shores, causing problems for the waders. Being very drought-, flood- and salt-tolerant, it was often planted to help stabilise sand dunes. We had our picnic here, with Gran Canaria Giant Lizard seen, too. As we were leaving, a flock of Plain Swifts flew low over the bus.

Our next destination was the harbour of Puerto Rico, where we boarded the 'Spirit of the Sea', for our boat trip in search of cetaceans and other marine wildlife. We left at 1.30pm, heading out to the south-west of Gran Canaria. We saw several flying fish, which took off in front of the boat; these may well have been Mediterranean Flying Fish, but several other species also occur in these waters. A single Cory's Shearwater glided past: most have already migrated south. Initially, everything was very quiet but, after much scanning, the boat's spotters picked up a movement, and we had good but brief views of a Blainville's Beaked Whale. This is a small whale which is generally very wary of people; we could see its fin located well back on the body, a feature which was visible a few times before it dived. This was a new species for the whole group, including the leaders, so we were all thrilled! We eventually located a small pod of Bottlenose Dolphins a long way out, and travelled to see them, with five being seen briefly. We could not spend time with them, as it was already late, and we had to return to harbour. We got back at 4.40pm (the trip was officially two-and-a-half hours long; we had been out for more than three!). On the way back, we saw a couple more Cory's Shearwaters and some more flying fish and, as we entered the harbour, we could see many East Atlantic Sally Lightfoot crabs on the rocks. We were delighted with our trip.

After a little time to regain our land legs, we set off home along the west coast. As the crow flies, this route is much shorter than the motorway route, but it winds through the 'wild west' of the island. The scenery and evening light were magnificent as we climbed through the mountains towards Aldea. An unexpected sight was an enormous swathe of Canary Sea Daffodils (*Pancratium canariense*) starring a hillside with white, probably flowering after the previous week's rain. We admired the geology, especially the dramatic volcanic dykes and amazing colours of the rocks at Los Azulejos, and the colours of the sky as the sun set. It was dark when we reached the hotel at 7.10pm, after a long but fascinating day. After time to freshen up, we went to dinner, and were then ready for our beds. Two of the group had enjoyed a very relaxing day around the hotel.

Day 6

The *laurisilva*

Today we again left at 9.15am, with three opting to take a day off for other activities. It was another fine day, with plenty of sun and only occasional showers. The north-east face of the island has more cloud and moisture, which allows the *laurisilva* species to flourish: most of the laurel forest on Gran Canaria is restored/replanted. We drove about half-way along the north coast before turning inland, taking the road to our first destination, the Barranco de la Virgen, just beyond the water-bottling plant at Firgas. Here the ravine was green and lush, and full of birds. Our target species was Laurel Pigeon, a species confined to the *laurisilva* of the western Canary Islands. Thought

Thursday 20th November

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 reintroduced over recent years through a conservation project using eggs from La Palma (where the Laurel Pigeon is more abundant) fostered by Turtle Doves, in a captive-breeding programme. This is now complete, and the birds are flourishing and spreading.

Our first stop was in a layby, over which a pair of Buzzards and several Kestrels circled. At one point we could see six Kestrels together, apparently catching something in the air, maybe grasshoppers? Blackcap, African Blue Tit, Canary Islands Chiffchaff and Canaries were vocal, and Feral Pigeons were flying around. However, despite extensive searching, we could neither see nor hear Laurel Pigeons this morning. An abundant creeper was Bosea (*Bosea yervamora*). We walked up the road, seeing Small White and Canary Speckled Wood butterflies, as well as a very battered Southern Brown Argus.

Jorge picked us up, carefully negotiating a narrow gateway with inches to spare, and drove us up to the next area, passing several large bushes of Canary Sow-thistle (*Sonchus canariensis*) which were not flowering. Other plants included abundant bushes of Canary St. John's-wort (*Hypericum canariense*), Canary Dock (*Rumex lunaria*) and Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*), with small plants including Purple Viper's-bugloss (*Echium plantagineum*), Field Marigold (*Calendula arvensis*) and Canary Alison (*Lobularia canariensis*). As well as Tree Aeonium, here was also Stalked Aeonium (*Aeonium undulatum*) with large rosettes on unbranched stalks, and the stemless large rosettes of the Gran Canaria subspecies of Canary Aeonium (*Aeonium canariense* subsp. *virginicum*), named after this barranco and restricted to the north of the island. A Red-legged Partridge was glimpsed under some bushes before it flew off down the barranco. A Barbary Falcon circled overhead, and when we looked at an area favoured for nesting, we could see one perched on the cliff face.

Having spent longer here than intended in our pigeon quest, we moved directly to Los Tilos (also known as Los Tiles), where we could experience more closely the restored *laurisilva*. We had our picnic at the visitor centre under a Canary Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus canariensis*), during which Canary Islands Chaffinches came for any crumbs. Laurel Pigeons have recently colonised this area and, at last, our luck changed, and we had some good views of birds in flight, when we could see the white tail clearly, and perched. Around the visitor centre walls were (flowering) Canary Islands Lavender (*Lavandula canariensis* subsp. *canariae*), being visited by Canary Flower Bees and holding a fine Tropical Tent Web Spider, and the very rare Damara Nightshade (*Solanum vespertillo* subsp. *damarae*), known in the wild only from this ravine and one other location on Gran Canaria. We took a short walk through the forest, looking at the characteristic species including Azores Laurel (*Laurus novocanariensis*), Canary Laurel (*Persea barbujana*), with its typical galls caused by the spider mite *Eriophyes barbujana*, Stinkwood (*Ocotea foetens*), which has the local name *Til*, after which the area is named, and Canary Island Guelder Rose (*Viburnum rigidum*). We found stems of Canary Bellflower (*Canarina canariensis*), but not any flowers. Rain started, so we retraced our steps, but it was only a brief shower.

It was fine again at the hotel, and there was plenty of time to relax before our 7.00pm meeting. Those who had stayed locally had enjoyed the Giant Lizards and East Atlantic Sally Lightfoot Crabs, as well as the sun, the sea and the pool.

Day 7**Friday 21st November****Valle de Agaete**

Our final full day dawned bright, but with increasing cloud. We had a leisurely start, leaving at 9.45am. A Pubescent Carpenter Bee, a recent coloniser now spreading through the island, was around the *Euphorbias* by the hotel entrance. We drove the short distance to the archaeological site of Maipes, just north of the town of Agaete. The park houses a large necropolis, where the indigenous people of the island used to bury their dead, mainly between the eighth and tenth centuries CE. It is on a three-thousand-year-old lava flow, which is still almost unvegetated (Maipes comes from the Spanish *mal pais*, which means 'bad lands'); in an area of over a square kilometre, there are about seven hundred tumuli, built of lava boulders. Different styles indicated the status of the occupants; some were topped with extra stones like a little hat. It was a fascinating place, and Guillermo guided us around. The rain started to fall quite heavily, so we retreated to a covered area where Guillermo explained the conquest of the islands and the origin of the name Gran Canaria: 'gran' because it took so long to conquer, compared to the other islands, and 'canaria'...we don't really know, but possibly after a North African tribe called the 'Canarii'.

We had excellent views of Great Grey Shrike (Canary subspecies *koenigi*), and Buzzard and Kestrel were seen. New plants here included Fagonia (*Zygophyllum creticum*), Narrow-leaved Forsskaolea (*Forsskaolea angustifolia*, in the nettle family) and Canary Bryony (*Bryonia verrucosa*). Insects included a Southern Green Shieldbug, and a type of Sahara ant, which stick their abdomens in the air to reduce heat exposure.

It was by now nearly lunchtime, and so we drove up the valley to Finca La Laja, a farm which grows tropical fruit and coffee, and makes its own wine. Here, we enjoyed local cheese, chorizo-and-white-wine spread, apple-and-coffee jam, and cake, while tasting two of their wines and finishing with home-grown coffee. A couple of Monarch butterflies were on the wing, and we found their caterpillars on planted Mexican Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias curassavica*). Canary Islands Chiffchaffs were calling and flitting around in the fruit trees. After lunch, we thanked our driver Jorge for his skills and help through the week. We returned to the hotel at 3.00pm; some of the group opted to visit the port to explore and do a little shopping before walking back up the path to the hotel.

We met again at 7.00pm to update our lists, before walking down to the natural pools and the little port of Puerto de las Nieves in the dark. We walked along the promenade, enjoying the Atlantic rollers despite a little drizzle, to the Restaurant Dedo de Dios, where we enjoyed a delicious final dinner together. Afterwards, Guillermo drove some back up to the hotel, but most opted to walk back through the mild night. En route, we encountered several American Cockroaches, and an endemic species of rhinoceros beetle.

Day 8**Saturday 22nd November****Journeys home**

Our wonderful week in Gran Canaria was, sadly, at an end. Two of the group on a later flight opted for a lunchtime taxi, so we said farewell to them, as well as to Guillermo, our superb guide. The rest of us left at 9.15am, when Jorge drove us to the airport. We said farewell and thanked him again, before checking in for our flights back to the UK. Jessica and Guillermo would like to thank the group for their part in a great week Going Slow in Gran Canaria!

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Species lists

Birds

E=endemic, Es=endemic subspecies, N=near-endemic, Ns = near-endemic subspecies, I=introduced		November 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Red-legged Partridge - I	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>		H		H		✓		
Plain Swift - N	<i>Apus unicolor</i>					✓	✓		
Feral Pigeon - I	<i>Columba livia feral</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laurel Pigeon - E	<i>Columba junoniae</i>							✓	
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓				✓			
Eurasian Stone-curlew - Es (w.Ca)	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus distinctus</i>	✓							
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>						✓		
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>						✓		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>						✓		
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>						✓		
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			✓		✓			
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>						✓		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>						✓		
Yellow-legged Gull - N	<i>Larus michahellis atlantis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris borealis</i>						✓		
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>						✓		
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>						✓		
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓				✓		
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>					✓	✓		
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓				✓		
Eurasian Sparrowhawk - Ns (C.Is.& Mad)	<i>Accipiter nisus granti</i>				✓				
Common Buzzard - Ns (C.Is. & Azores)	<i>Buteo buteo insularum</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>			✓					
Great Spotted Woodpecker - Es (GC)	<i>Dendrocopos major thanneri</i>					✓			
Common Kestrel - Es (w.C.Is.)	<i>Falco tinnunculus canariensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peregrine Falcon (Barbary Falcon)	<i>Falco peregrinus pelegrinoides</i>	✓	✓					✓	
Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>							✓	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>		✓						
Great Grey Shrike - Es	<i>Lanius excubitor koenigi</i>							✓	
Northern Raven - Es	<i>Corvus corax canariensis</i>	✓	✓	✓					
African Blue Tit - Es	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae hedwigae</i>	✓		✓				✓	
Canary Islands Chiffchaff - E	<i>Phylloscopus canariensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla heineken</i>	✓	✓					H	
Common Blackbird - N (C.Is.& Mad)	<i>Turdus merula cabrerae</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓		H
European Robin - Es (GC)	<i>Erithacus rubecula marionae</i>	✓	✓				✓		H
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	✓							✓
Common Waxbill - I	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>						✓		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓						
Berthelot's Pipit - N	<i>Anthus berthelotii berthelotii</i>			✓		✓			✓
Canary Islands Chaffinch - E (GC - Es)	<i>Fringilla canariensis bakeri</i>					✓			✓
Gran Canaria Blue Chaffinch - E (GC only)	<i>Fringilla polatzeki</i>					✓			
Atlantic Canary - N	<i>Serinus canaria</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mammals

I=introduced, S=signs, D=dead		November 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
European Rabbit - I	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>			S		✓			
House Mouse - I	<i>Mus musculus</i>							D	
Blainville's Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i>					✓			
Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>					✓			

Reptiles

E=endemic		November 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Gran Canaria Giant Lizard - E	<i>Gallotia stehlini</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Fishes

		November 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
a flying fish	<i>Cheilopogon</i> sp.						✓		
a tilapia	<i>Tilapia</i> sp.					✓			

Butterflies & moths

E=endemic		November 2025							
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		✓	✓				✓	
Long-tailed Blue	<i>Lampides boeticus</i>		✓						
Canary Red Admiral - E	<i>Vanessa vulcania</i>		✓	✓					
Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Canary Speckled Wood - E	<i>Pararge xiphiooides</i>		✓				✓		
Barbary Spurge Hawk-moth	<i>Hyles tithymali</i>								✓

Other invertebrates

E=endemic, Es=endemic subspecies, I=introduced	
Common name	Scientific name
Damselflies & dragonflies	
Sahara Bluetail	<i>Ischnura saharensis</i>
Blue Emperor	<i>Anax imperator</i>
Epaulet Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum chrysostigma</i>
Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>
Island Darter	<i>Sympetrum nigrifemur</i>
Grasshoppers and allies	
Arabian Sickle Bush-cricket	<i>Phaneroptera sparsa</i>
a red-winged grasshopper	<i>Acrotylus insubricus</i>
Canarian Pincer Grasshopper - E	<i>Calliptamus plebeius</i>
a grasshopper	<i>Acrididea</i> sp.
Cockroaches	
American Cockroach - I	<i>Periplanata americana</i>
Shieldbugs	
Southern Green Shieldbug	<i>Nezara viridula</i>

E=endemic, Es=endemic subspecies, I=introduced	
Common name	Scientific name
Scale insects	
Coccineal Scale Insect	<i>Dactylopius coccus</i>
Deadly Coccineal Scale Insect	<i>Dactylopius opuntiae</i>
Flies	
a hoverfly - E	<i>Chrysotoxum triarctuatum</i>
Band-eyed Drone-fly	<i>Eristalinus taeniops</i>
Common Drone-fly	<i>Eristalis tenax</i>
a beefly	<i>Villa nigrifrons</i>
Ants, bees & wasps	
a Sahara ant	<i>Cataglyphis albicans</i>
a Wasp (cf. German Wasp)	<i>cf. Vespula germanica</i>
cf. Paper Wasp	<i>Polistes dominula</i>
European Bee-wolf	<i>Philanthus triangulum abdelcader</i>
Canary Flower Bee - E	<i>Anthophora alluaudi</i>
White-banded Digger Bee	<i>Amegilla quadrifasciata</i>
Honey Bee	<i>Apis mellifera</i>
Canary Cellophane Bee - Es (GC)	<i>Colletes dimidiatus canariensis</i>
a black-and white cuckoo bee	<i>Thyreus histrionicus</i>
Pubescent Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylocopa pubescens</i>
Beetles	
a darkling beetle - E	<i>Pimelia granulicollis</i>
a darkling beetle - E	<i>Pimelia sparsa</i>
a rhinoceros beetle - E	<i>Oryctes prolixus</i>
a seven-spot ladybird	<i>Coccinella algerica</i>
Spiders	
a jumping spider	<i>Macaroeris sp.</i>
Tropical Tent-web Spider	<i>Cyrtophora citricola</i>
Crabs	
cf. Tidal Spray Crab	<i>Plagusia depressa</i>
East Atlantic Sally Lightfoot Crab	<i>Grapsus adscensionis</i>

Fungi

Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
<i>Laurobasidium lauri</i>	Laurel Fungus	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Incertae sedis</i>	a bracket fungus	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Geastrum sp.</i>	an earthstar	4	Llanos de la Pez

Lichens

Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
<i>Lobaria pulmonaria</i>	Lungwort Lichen		
<i>Roccella canariensis</i>	Orchilla (purple dye lichen)	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Stereocaulon vesuvianum</i>	a snow lichen	7	Agaete Necropolis
<i>Usnea sp.</i>	a beard lichen	6	Los Tiles

Plants

GCE=Gran Canaria endemic, E=Canary Islands endemic, N=near-endemic (Macaronesian), []=introduced or planted			
Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
PTERIDOPHYTES	FERNS & ALLIES		
Leptosporangiata Ferns	True Ferns		
Aspleniaceae	Spleenwort Family		
<i>Asplenium aureum</i> - N	Golden Rustyback	4	Pinos de Galdar
<i>Asplenium onopteris</i>	Irish Spleenwort	6	Los Tiles
Davalliaceae	Hare's-foot Fern Family		
<i>Davallia canariensis</i> - N	Hare's-foot Fern	2	Botanical Gardens
Dennstaedtiaceae	Bracken Family		
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	4	Roadsides
Polypodiaceae	Polypody Family		
<i>Polypodium macaronesicum</i> - N	Macaronesian Polypody	6	Los Tiles
GYMNOSPERMS	CONIFERS		
Cupressaceae	Cypress Family		
<i>Juniperus cedrus</i> - N		2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Juniperus turbinata</i>		3	Bandama
Pinaceae	Pine Family		
<i>Pinus canariensis</i> - E	Canary Islands Pine	2	Botanical Gardens
ANGIOSPERMS	FLOWERING PLANTS		
Pre-Dicots	Primitive Angiosperms		
Lauraceae	Laurel Family		
<i>Laurus novocanariensis</i> - N (<i>L. azorica</i>)	Azores Laurel	6	Los Tiles
<i>Ocotea foetens</i> - N	Stinkwood	6	Los Tiles
<i>Persea (Apollonias) barbujana</i> - N	Canary Laurel	2	Botanical Gardens
Monocots	Monocotyledons		
Amaryllidaceae	Daffodil Family		
<i>Pancratium canariense</i> - E	Canary Sea Daffodil	5	Near Aldea
Arecaceae	Palm Family		
<i>Phoenix canariensis</i> - E	Canary Palm	2	Botanical Gardens
[<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>]	Date Palm	5	Maspalomas
Asparagaceae	Asparagus Family		
[<i>Agave americana</i>]	Century Plant	3	Bandama
<i>Asparagus arborescens</i> - E	Tree Asparagus	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Asparagus pastorianus</i>	-	7	Agaete Necropolis
<i>Asparagus umbellatus</i> - N		6	Los Tiles
<i>Autonoe (Scilla) latifolia</i>	Giant Squill	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Dracaena draco</i>	Dragon Tree	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Dracaena tamaranae</i> - GCE	Gran Canaria Dragon Tree	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Semele androgyna</i> - N	Climbing Butcher's-broom	6	Los Tiles
<i>Semele gayae</i> - GCE		6	Los Tiles
Asphodelaceae	Aloe Family		
[<i>Aloe vera</i>]	Aloevera	7	Roadsides
Orchidaceae	Orchid Family		
<i>Orchis canariensis</i> - E	Canary Orchid	4	Pinos de Galdar (leaves)
Poaceae	Grass Family		
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant Reed	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Cenchrus (Pennisetum) setaceus</i>	Fountain Grass	2	Very widespread

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Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
Eu-Dicots	True Dicotyledons		
Aizoaceae	Dewplant Family		
<i>Aizoon canariense</i>	-	7	Agaete Necropolis
[<i>Malephora crocea</i>]	Red Ice Plant	7	Near hotel
<i>Sesuvium portulacoides</i>	Shoreline Purslane	5	Maspalomas Charca
Amaranthaceae (Chenopodiaceae)	Goosefoot Family		
<i>Achyranthes aspera</i>	Devil's Coach-whip	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i>	-	7	Agaete Necropolis
<i>Bosea yervamora</i>		6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Patellifolia procumbens</i>	-	7	Agaete Necropolis
Anarcardaceae	Sumach Family		
<i>Pistacia atlantica</i>	-	2	Botanical Gardens
[<i>Schinus terebinthifolia</i>]	False Pepper-tree	5	Maspalomas
Apiaceae	Carrot Family		
<i>Astydamia latifolia</i>	Canary Samphire	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Fennel	3	Bandama
Apocynaceae	Periwinkle Family		
<i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	Mexican Butterfly Weed	7	Finca La Laja
<i>Periploca laevigata</i> - N	Small-flowered Silk-vine	2	Botanical Gardens
Aquifoliaceae	Holly Family		
<i>Ilex canariensis</i> - E	Canary Island Holly	6	Los Tiles
Araliaceae	Ivy Family		
<i>Hedera canariensis</i> - E	Canary Ivy	3	Bandama
Asteraceae (Compositae)	Daisy Family		
<i>Allagopappus viscosissimus</i> - GCE		3	Guayadeque
<i>Artemisia thuscula</i> (A. canariensis - E)	Canary Wormwood	3	Bandama
<i>Asteriscus graveolens</i> subsp. <i>stenophyllus</i> - GCE		2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Bidens pilosa</i>	Bur Marigold	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field Marigold	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Carlina salicifolia</i> - N	Canary Carline Thistle	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	Cardoon	4	Roadside stop
<i>Kleinia nerifolia</i> - E	Canary Islands Candle Plant	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Launaea arborescens</i>	Barbed-Wire Bush	5	Maspalomas
<i>Pericallis webbii</i> - GCE	Gran Canaria Cineraria	6	Los Tiles (leaves)
<i>Schizogyne glaberrima</i> - GCE	Smooth Canary Samphire	5	Maspalomas
<i>Schizogyne sericea</i> - N	Canary Samphire	7	Near hotel
<i>Senecio angulatus</i>		6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Sonchus acaulis</i> - E	Stemless Sow-thistle	4	Cruz de Tejeda
<i>Sonchus canariensis</i> - E	Canary Sow-thistle	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Sonchus leptocephalus</i> - E	A fine-leaved Sow-thistle	2	Botanical Gardens
Boraginaceae	Borage Family		
<i>Echium decaisnei</i> - E	Gran Canaria Bugloss	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Heliotropium ramosissimum</i>	Heliotrope (commoner)	6	Maspalomas
Brassicaceae	Cabbage Family		
<i>Lobularia canariensis</i> - N	Canary Islands Alison	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Parolinia platypetala</i> - GCE	Dama de Guayadeque'	3	Guayadeque
Cactaceae	Cactus Family		
[<i>Opuntia dellinii</i>]	-	3	Bandama
[<i>Opuntia maxima</i>]	Barbary Fig	3	Bandama

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Campanulaceae	Bellflower Family		
<i>Canarina canariensis</i> - E	Canary Bellflower	6	Los Tiles
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle Family		
<i>Valeriana rubra</i>	Red Valerian	3	Bandama
<i>Pterocephalus dumetorum</i> - E	a scabious-like flower	4	Pinos de Galdar
Caryophyllaceae	Pink Family		
<i>Silene tamaranae</i> - GCE	An endemic Catchfly	2	Botanical Gardens
Convolvulaceae	Bindweed Family		
<i>Convolvulus althaeoides</i>	Mallow-leaved Bindweed		
<i>Convolvulus canariensis</i> - E	Canary Bindweed	6	Los Tiles
<i>Convolvulus caput-medusae</i> - E	Medusa's Head Bindweed	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Convolvulus floridus</i> - E	Canary Tree Bindweed		
<i>Convolvulus glandulosus</i> - GCE			
<i>Convolvulus scoparius</i> - GCE			
<i>Convolvulus siculus</i>	Small-flowered Bindweed		
<i>Cuscuta approximata</i>	Small-seeded Dodder		
<i>[Ipomoea purpurea]</i>	Common Morning Glory	6	Barranco de la Virgen
Crassulaceae	Stonecrop Family		
<i>Aeonium arboreum</i> - E	Tree Aeonium	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Aeonium (Greenovia) aureum</i> - E	Golden Houseleek	4	Pinos de Galdar
<i>Aeonium canariense</i> subsp. <i>virginicum</i> - GCE	Canary Houseleek	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Aeonium percarneum</i> - GCE		3	Bandama
<i>Aeonium simsii</i> - GCE		4	Pinos de Galdar
<i>Aeonium spathulatum</i> - E	-		
<i>Aeonium undulatum</i> - GCE	-	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Aichryson laxum</i> - E	Annual Houseleek	6	Los Tiles
<i>Umbilicus gaditanus</i>	A Wall Pennywort	3	Bandama
Cucurbitaceae	White Bryony Family		
<i>Bryonia verrucosa</i> - E	Canary Bryony	7	Agaete Necropolis
Ericaceae	Heather Family		
<i>Arbutus canariensis</i> - E	Canary Strawberry Tree	6	Los Tiles
<i>Erica canariensis</i> - E	Canary Tree Heather	6	Los Tiles
Euphorbiaceae	Spurge Family		
<i>Euphorbia aphylla</i> - E	Leafless Spurge	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Euphorbia balsamifera</i>	Balsam Spurge	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Euphorbia canariensis</i> - E	Canary Island Cactus-spurge	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Euphorbia regis-jubae</i>	King Juba's Spurge	3	Bandama
<i>[Ricinus communis]</i>	Castor Oil Plant	2	Arucas
Fabaceae (Leguminosae)	Pea Family		
<i>Adenocarpus foliolosus</i> - E	Sticky Broom	4	Llanos de la Pez
<i>Bitumaria bituminosa</i>	Pitch Trefoil	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Chamaecytisus proliferus</i> - E	Tagasaste	4	Roadsides
<i>Genista (Teline) microphylla</i> - GCE	-	4	Llanos de la Pez
Fagaceae	Beech Family		
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	4	Roadsides
Geraniaceae	Geranium Family		
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Erodium malacoides</i>	Mallow-leaved Stork's-bill	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>[Pelargonium capitatum]</i>	Rose Geranium	3	Bandama

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Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
Hypericaceae	St.John's-wort Family		
<i>Hypericum canariensis</i> - N	Canary St.John's-wort	4	Pinos de Galdar
<i>Hypericum grandifolium</i> - N		6	Los Tiles
Lamiaceae	Dead-nettle Family		
<i>Lavandula canariensis</i> subsp. <i>canariae</i> - GCE	Canary Island Lavender	2	Botanical Gardens
<i>Micromeria benthami</i> - GCE		4	Pinos de Galdar
<i>Salvia canariensis</i>	Canary Island Sage	7	Agaete Necropolis
<i>Sideritis dasygnaphala</i> - GCE	Gran Canaria False Sage	4	Llanos de la Pez
Malvaceae	Mallow Family		
<i>Abutilon grandiflorum</i>	Abutilon	2	Arucas
<i>Malva acerifolia</i> - E	Canary Tree Mallow	3	Guayadeque
Moraceae	Fig Family		
<i>[Ficus carica]</i>	Common Fig	4	Roadside stop
Myricaceae	Sweet Gale Family		
<i>Myrica faya</i>	Wax Myrtle	6	Los Tiles
Nyctaginaceae	Bougainvillea Family		
<i>[Bougainvillea glabra]</i>	Bougainvillea	2	Widely planted
Oleaceae	Olive Family		
<i>Olea europaea</i> subsp. <i>guanchica</i>	Canarian Wild Olive	3	Bandama
<i>Picconia excelsa</i>	Picconia	6	Los Tiles
Oxalidaceae	Wood Sorrel Family		
<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	Bermuda Buttercup	2	Botanical Gardens
Pentaphylaceae			
<i>Visnea mocanera</i> - N	Visnea	2	Botanical Gardens
Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family		
<i>Campylanthus salsoloides</i> - E	Sea Rosemary	3	Bandama
<i>Kickxia pendula</i> - GCE	-	3	Guayadeque
Plumbaginaceae	Thrift Family		
<i>Limonium tuberculatum</i>		5	Maspalomas (v. rare in GC, also Africa)
Polygonaceae	Dock Family		
<i>Rumex lunaria</i> - E	Canary Dock	2	Botanical Gardens
Rosaceae	Rose Family		
<i>Bencomia caudata</i> - N	-	6	Barranco de la Virgen
<i>Marcerella moquiniana</i> - E	Red Shrubby Burnet	3	Bandama
<i>[Prunus amygdalus]</i>	Almond	3	Guayadeque
<i>Rubus ulmifolius</i>	Bramble	6	Barranco de la Virgen
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family		
<i>Plocama pendula</i> - E	Balo	2	Botanical Gardens
Salicaceae	Willow Family		
<i>Salix pedicellata</i> subsp. <i>canariensis</i> - N	Canary Willow	2	Botanical Gardens
Solanaceae	Nightshade Family		
<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	Shrub Tobacco	7	Agaete Necropolis
<i>Solanum vespertillo</i> subsp. <i>doramae</i> - GCE	Doramas Nightshade	6	Los Tiles
<i>Withania aristata</i>	Withania	7	Finca La Laja
Tamaricaceae	Tamarisk Family		
<i>Tamarix canariensis</i>	Canary Tamarisk	2	Arucas
Tropaeolaceae	Nasturtium Family		
<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	Garden Nasturtium	6	Barranco de la Virgen

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Scientific name	Common name	Day	Location
Urticaceae	Nettle Family		
<i>Forsskaolea angustifolia</i> - E	Narrow-leaved Forskaolea	7	Agaete Necropolis
Viburnaceae	Viburnum Family		
<i>Viburnum rugosum (rigidum)</i> - E	Canary Island Guelder Rose	6	Los Tiles
Zygophyllaceae	Caltrop Family		
<i>Zygophyllum (Fagonia) creticum</i>	Fagonia	7	Agaete Necropolis
<i>Zygophyllum (Tetraena) fontanesii</i>	Canarian Bean-Caper	5	Maspalomas