

Whales & Dolphins of the Azores

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 – 17 August 2010



Atlantic Spotted Dolphin



View to Faial from Pico



Sperm Whale – diving fluke



Bottle-nosed Dolphins



Sowerby's Beaked Whale



Bottle-nosed Dolphin

Report and images compiled by Ed Drewitt



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Summary: This six day tour in the Azores was a fabulous opportunity to see the diversity and abundance of wildlife using the Atlantic Ocean surrounding these islands in the summer months. Six boat trips enabled everyone to see and experience close hand five species of dolphin, two species of whale, turtles, fish and much more. A bird-watching tour of the island also provided the chance to see some of the local subspecies of common birds, explore rock pools and view unique volcanic landscape. Meanwhile, the tour enjoyed Cory's Shearwaters both during the day at sea and at night when they came back to their nests, with males serenading overhead.

Day 1

Thursday 12th August

After leaving Heathrow we had a good two hour flight across southern England, north-west France and the mountains of Portugal before changing flights in sunny Lisbon for a further two hour flight across the Atlantic to the Azores, 1,000 miles west of the Portuguese coastline. We flew over the north edge of the island of Pico, with excellent views of Pico Volcano and the island's varied landscape including forest, pastoral farmland and small villages. As we flew in across the sea to land on the island of Faial, beautiful coastal cliffs greeted us and Cory's Shearwaters glided low over the waves.

Families waved us into the airport as the sun shone and a buzzard hovered in the distance. We arrived to clear skies and 25 degrees Celsius, the hottest day so far for the islands. We were transferred along the coast to the ferry port in Horta. On the way, feral pigeons, house sparrows and blackbirds were easily spotted. While waiting for our ferry connection, Pico Volcano dominated the backdrop. Common Terns flew noisily through the port in ones and twos. Some of the original boats used in the whale industry up to the 1970s were out on the water; and rowers were preparing for a regatta on the weekend. We left Faial as blackening cloud shrouded its hills and took the thirty minute ferry across to the island of Pico. We had wonderful views of Cory's Shearwaters - at least twelve joining us in the wavy conditions. The odd Yellow-legged Gull also flew past. As we neared Pico, the remains of a volcanic crater, now standing cliffs, hosted a Tellow-legged Gull colony and Common Terns. One adult was still carrying food for well-grown chicks.

At the town of Madalena where we docked we met Dania, who was going to be organising our trips to see whales and dolphins during our stay. After settling in to our rooms we went for a late dinner in a restaurant next to the hotel called the Platano, where we met Enrico who would be joining us on some of our trips. We left around 10.30pm to prepare for an early start and our first boat trip.

Day 2

Friday 13th August

We were greeted by a lovely, sunny morning. After a quick but wholesome breakfast we met at 8am on the seafront for a briefing from Justin, one of our guides for the tour. We learnt about the range of whales and dolphins that visit the Azores and which ones we were most likely to spot during our stay. At 8.30am we set off on the 12 seat Zodiac and went for an exhilarating trip for forty-five minutes along the coastline with stunning views of Pico (slowly being shrouded in cloud), the rich green vegetation and black coastal basalt rocks. A shearwater flying close to land was smaller than a Cory's, with distinctive black rather than sandy coloured wings – it was a Manx Shearwater. Up in the hills we were shown where one of the Vigias called Antero, a whale hunter turned whale watcher, sits during the day. Antero was there spotting whales for various whale-watching boats including ours.

Around 5 miles out from land we got the call that Sperm Whales were feeding deep under water. They were due up any time soon. We quickly went to the zone, an area one to two miles in the direction away from where the Sperm Whales deep-dived. It wasn't long before we had stunning views of three Sperm Whales, two females and a calf, three to four years old. We watched as the young animal frequently dipped underwater to suckle, from either female. After ten minutes, the two females deep-dived, revealing their distinctive flukes...meanwhile, the calf now alone decided to focus its inquisitive energy on us and circled the boat, occasionally spy hopping (lifting head out of water to spot what's going on above the water's surface), turning upside down (revealing its pale belly) and logging (resting at the surface).

It wasn't long before we had a call that dolphins were nearby – we left the calf and headed inland where we spotted dolphins surfacing from the water in their characteristic curved rainbow shapes. Soon the dolphins surrounded us. These were Common Dolphins characterised by the yellowish tinge on their flanks. This species is not often seen in these waters at this time of the year. The odd male was leaping out of the air; one did this three times in a row! They do this to communicate with other dolphins and to show off to potential female mates and rival males. Small calves swam alongside their mothers. There were at least 60 individuals in this group, often only twenty surfacing at any one time. Just as Justin mentioned that Striped Dolphins are often found with Common Dolphins, a group of fifteen to thirty suddenly appeared! Although not easy to spot at first, their bluer flanks and paler, pinkish bellies and on closer inspection, dark stripe along their sides, revealed their identity. Shy creatures in the Azores, the group of Striped Dolphins kept their distance from the boat. As the boat speeded up, the dolphins also gathered momentum. A flock of twelve Cory's Shearwaters sat on the sea nearby. We stayed with the school for twenty minutes before a call of a breaching whale came through.

We headed closer in land and witnessed a huge splash in front of us – a Sperm Whale had just breached, using all its energy to lift itself out of the water before crashing back down in the water again. This is a brilliant way of communicating to other female Sperm Whales after becoming separated during deep dives – the sounds waves travelling huge distances under water.

As we got closer to the whale we could see its pale belly when it rotated under water, often showing part of its tail or fluke in the process. We followed it for a while, carefully staying behind it. As it swam off we broke away and headed back to port – our three hours was almost up. During our trip Common Terns and Yellow-legged Gulls also passed by.

Before our next session at sea we had lunch, with some of us dining at a recommended café bar in the main square of Madalena – a place to soak up the relaxing culture and enjoy local, fresh food. Indeed, when we were expecting pork we were served fish – a delicious locally sourced fish known as pork fish (hence the confusion) or grey trigger fish. We gathered again at 1.45pm and had a twenty minute drive along the coast passing houses made from volcanic rock; vineyards with volcanic rock walls built in the pattern of mazes, ideal for the vines to grow along; and masses of the deep, lush green, Australian tree *Pittosporum undulatum*. On the way plenty of blackbirds flew across the road from one vineyard to the next, while the local, resident population of blackcaps were still singing.

Once on the boat we ventured out to sea. It was quiet to begin with but then the boat slowed and we were told we were once again in ‘the zone’. A whale was spotted in the distance but no blow followed. After waiting ten minutes, a male or bull Sperm Whale (the only male seen on the whole tour) surfaced – he was clearly much longer than the females we had seen earlier and had a ridged, more pronounced forehead. He spent some time logging before swimming away. We followed him for a little while before he took some quicker breathes, arched his back (a clue that a deep dive is due to follow) and performed a deep dive, revealing his huge fluke as he disappeared. We then didn’t have to go far before we found three Common Dolphins – these were most probably scouts, leaving the main group in search of fish shoals before reporting back. They stayed with us for some time.

As we headed back to port, the splash of a breaching whale was spotted. It quickly became clear these were beaked whales. We then saw two breaching, glistening in the sunshine as they exited the water. Unusually, we saw them again, coming of the water to breathe in a distinctive arched shape with a small dorsal fin and greenish-grey skin. As they came closer they were identified as the rarely seen Sowerby’s Beaked Whales. As we watched further we could see their beak (elongated snouts/mouths) come out of the water first. They were moving fast but we kept up. Their whereabouts was revealed sometimes only by the circular, still impression left on the water’s surface – their ‘footprint’ formed by the powerful movement of their tail fins deeper under water. We saw them a further four or five times. Before they disappeared we counted at least four, perhaps five animals. As we continued back a large splash on the left of the boat caused us to slow down. The culprit was a White Marlin in hunting mode. It was an exhilarating sight as it quickly cut through the water in fast pulses, like a cheetah. It was long-bodied with a blunt dorsal fin and a pointed tail fin. From a distance it just looked like a black shape shooting along the water’s surface in short spurts. On our way back an adult and a juvenile Roseate Tern flew past the boat calling. An object on the water caught our eye and as we edged closer we could see it was a fish crate covered in a colony of goose barnacles, waving their feather-like modified legs and filtering the water. Below the crate a few grey trigger fish were staying beneath the shadows while some black drift fish ventured out enough for us to see them well. A little way on a young flying fish scuttled along the water’s surface and then glided over the sea – it’s blue, kingfisher-like iridescence shining off its skin before it dipped back into the sea.

We stopped for Justin to check a recently dead Cory’s Shearwater for any leg rings – an opportunity to see the bird’s tubenose and pink legs. During this trip we saw many Cory’s Shearwaters, Common Terns, juvenile

Yellow-legged Gulls and two Turnstones. A Loggerhead Turtle was also spotted by one fortunate member of the team. After a busy day, we had a few hours rest before making our way to the best restaurant in town, the Ancoradoura. We were entertained by the meals that involved extraordinary hanging skewers – they were delicious. We walked back to the sounds of crickets and cicadas while in the night sky the waxing crescent of the moon and the bright white light of Venus shone down.

Day 3

Saturday 14th August

After a later morning start, we set off mid-morning for another incredible boat trip off the coast of Pico. We had hot sunshine, a flat calm sea and amazing wildlife. After seeing two female Sperm Whales both deep dive in succession quickly after finding them, we ventured further east. Interrupting the flat, glassy water was a dark object sticking slightly out of the water. As we edged closer we realised we were looking at a young adult Loggerhead Turtle! It was coming up for a few breaths and resting. After a while it slipped away into the depths – there was a drop of 1,000 metres below the surface. A little further along we came across a younger, much smaller turtle with more obvious ridges on its shell. The skipper picked it out of the water for a closer look. Once back in the water it dived a short distance before coming back to the surface. We left it to rest. As we moved on we passed a small, two inch wide jellyfish with orange spots – a Mauve Stinger.

In front of us twenty Bottlenose Dolphins suddenly appeared, making their way relaxingly in front of our path. They came up with a gentle watery sound as they exhaled, softly spurting water out and inhaled before going under again. They dived for a few minutes before reappearing just a short while. We left the dolphins as we went in search of what else the ocean had to offer. We didn't have to go far before a dark silhouette caught our eyes. At first it looked like a shearwater sitting on the sea but as we got closer we could see it was a dorsal fin of something. There then appeared to be two swimming around, almost in a figure of eight. As we got very close, the two fins revealed themselves as the dorsal and tail fin of a Swordfish! It was moving round in circles before it dived away out of sight. A Flying Fish was then spotted – you have to be quick to spot them before they disappear into the sea. Another, much smaller, translucent individual then took to the air. A little earlier we had seen a flock of eighty Cory's Shearwater rafting on the water's surface. With the still air and lack of waves, almost all had decided not to fly.

We moved out of the smooth, calm area into slightly wavier waters. It was time for some deep-diving Sperm Whales to be surfacing for air. The blow of one was seen and we quickly found the female logging, breathing every twenty seconds or so. After excellent views she decided to dive again. We then moved on to another female who had just been tagged by the University of Azores who were in a nearby boat. We could see the small white transmitter attached to her back. It records everything that can help scientists find out more about the movements and behaviour of the animals including temperature, salinity and depth. We had great views of her before she decided to dive. Nearby, we spotted the tagging boat – a small boat with a long rod which is used to attach the transmitter to the backs of the whales. We headed back after a fulfilling trip, finishing off with excellent views of a Flying Fish and scenic coastline.

After a few hours break in the hot sunshine we had a later afternoon trip out for further whale and dolphin watching. The water was less calm than earlier but conditions were still very good. We watched two female Sperm Whales logging and a little later deep diving, showing off their beautiful, distinctive flukes. We got our eye in on the typical arching of the back – a sure sign a whale is about to do a deep dive. We then found a school of

twenty to thirty Striped Dolphins – we followed them for five to ten minutes as they swam away from us but close enough for us to observe their behaviour and look closer at their colouration that distinguishes them from other dolphins.

We then ventured all the way back to the coastline – the skipper had a tip off that Risso's Dolphins were about. Only twenty or thirty metres away from the shore where we stopped the water drops away to 800 metres or more. The Risso's Dolphins will happily feed in these deep waters so close to shore. After a deep dive, the group of fifteen or more individuals of various ages surfaced. They had tall, curved (falcate) dorsal fins. The younger ones were dark-coloured while older ones were scarred white from social fighting. They dived for a few minutes before resurfacing giving lovely views on this calm, quiet Saturday evening.

We stayed close to shore and ventured into some of the caves carved out by the power of the sea, eroding out weaknesses in the andesitic rock. Some had corridors funnelling into the cliffs. As we went into one cave we noticed an Azorean Noctule Bat flying at the top of the cliff, followed by six or seven others. This species likes to come out during the day; it doesn't have to compete for other insect eaters or worry about aerial predators. Feral pigeons were in the caves too – the descendants of rock doves which specialise in living on rocky, coastal cliffs. Two separate Starlings also flew out while a buzzard perched in a tree at the top of the cliff face. Red Rock Crabs climbed on the vertical walls stained orange from the presence of iron while others stood on the flatter, horizontal rocks, silhouetted by the sinking sun. The tide level was evident by the pink and grey encrustations of algae. Lots of Moon Jellyfishes were in the water – at least twenty to thirty surrounded the boat.

As we headed back Pico Volcano was completely absent of any cloud – we had incredible views of the dry, vegetated riverines which become gushing waterfalls during heavy rain and the shadows produced by the mountains huge, rugged presence. A large flock of Cory's Shearwaters was flying in a tight group on the horizon – as we approached them they surrounded us. They effortlessly twisted and turned over the sea, often pulling back and changing direction, reflecting the orange glow of the sun off their pale bellies. We had them flying right past the boat, some within touching distance. Astonishing! On our way back to port we watched the sun set behind the island of Faial. Pico was glowing in beautiful evening sunshine before giving way to the inevitable darkness. Cory's Shearwaters flew low over the water as silhouettes while Yellow-legged Gulls and Common Terns sat on the rocks. The members of the gull colony on the isolated cliffs just outside Madalena were all in the air as we passed by. A few Flying Fish took to the air including one showing good views of its pale belly. We arrived back to Madalena at just gone 9pm. After a quick stop at the hotel we finished with some traditional foods in the Platano next door.

Day 4

Sunday 15th August

After two days on the sea, today was a chance to explore Pico Island itself, in particular the birdlife. It was another beautiful day and very hot. Six of us joined Justin and ventured along the southern coast.

We first stopped just beyond the suburbs where basalt boulders lined the shore. As we looked closer not only could we see plants such as sea campion finding enough nutrients and moisture to survive but white bird droppings coating some of the rocks. These were the telltale signs of bird activity – Cory's Shearwaters to be precise. In gaps between or under many of the boulders the fluffy chicks were sheltering, visited by their parents only under the cover of darkness. Justin briefly took a large chick out from its nest for a quick view and to assess whether it was ready for ringing. This youngster was almost ready – part of a long term study Justin is doing on a

selection of nests. Up to twenty Canaries, many juveniles hatched this year, were flying around and resting on the boulders.

We then moved on to a quiet lane full of vineyards and maize fields with woodland beyond. They were full of the Azorean subspecies of blackbirds, chaffinches (which sounded very different to the UK subspecies) and woodpigeons. Canaries were abundant including some very yellow males, although less bright than in the spring. At least six Red-legged Partridges scuttled away along the maze walls. Singing Blackcaps could be heard all around. A few Grey Wagtails rested on the walls while the odd Madeiran Wall Lizard darted in between the wall crevices.

We drove on past rural houses and beautiful landscapes before visiting where Antero is stationed. The area covered in the alien species *Pittosporum undulatum*, was full of singing Blackcaps – many young birds still learning their song and missing some of the key, distinctive notes. We explored an old lookout hut (with an air-dried lizard inside) and out to sea managed to spot a logging Sperm Whale on the calm, flat water. We then wandered up the lane to listen for Goldcrests in the pine trees. A few Grey Wagtails were feeding along the stone walls while two Goldfinches flew overhead. Three Goldcrests were calling and with a little encouragement using some sound recordings one came close enough to see – despite being in moult it was subtly darker than those we may see in the UK. Two or three lizards rustled the leaves as they darted into the undergrowth. We took a moment to marvel at the bright yellow flowers of *Canna indica*, a tropical American species with a sweet aroma.

We moved along the coast to Lajes Harbour where a blue-green Garfish was hunting a shoal of fish. With its prey in sight, it suddenly made a quick dart into the shoal before retreating. A few hundred Common Terns, adults and juveniles were noisily resting on the mud banks and flying past. A Whimbrel energetically fed in amongst some rocks. In the shallows a few Bloody Henry Starfish with their thick red arms were easy to spot. We spent a little time fish watching and with some help from Justin identified Cow Bream, Turkish Wrasse (with lovely almost kingfisher blue markings), Striped Bream, Island Grouper and bright red and yellow female Parrotfish. Meanwhile, a young buzzard called from the hills nearby.

On the other side of the town we explored a huge boulder beach and saltmarsh. Justin showed us some examples of volcanic rock that had begun to harden and had then been splattered with fresh, hot new lava thousands of years ago. Other boulders contained the shiny mineral mica. A calling Whimbrel flew along the tideline and perched on a rock. Two Grey Herons sat in the shade while a flock of nine Turnstones flew past. With the hot temperatures and low tide the birds were quiet so we did more rock pooling. The rock pools were full of life and very easy to see. The most interesting species was a Boar Fish, a small, pretty red/pink fish normally found in deeper waters. It was trying to seek shelter and had no doubt been washed into the pool and was stranded as the tide retreated. We also saw Rock Blennies, shrimps, Grey Mulletts, Striped Bream, Auxiliary Wrasse and some spotted a Short-spined Scorpion Fish before it hid.

To escape the heat we ventured up to the higher ground stopping off at a viewpoint looking down on a weedy lake. From here we had good views of the island São Jorge. A few Emperor Dragonflies were hunting over the water while the odd Marsh Frog was marked by the movement of water it made. Close by Blue-tailed Damselfly and a red darter species rested while graylings flew quickly past (too quick to identify!), stopping just briefly. One or two Chaffinches called nearby.

On our way to stop for lunch we saw hedgerows or wind breaks made from rows of blue flowering *Hydrangeas*. A second pool we decided to stop at was dried up so we went back along the track and stopped for lunch with splendid views of Pico and surrounded by very old juniper forest, now quite sparse and wind-blown. This rare habitat only now survives in small areas of the Azores. After lunch we explored the trees – Justin pointed out a rare laurel with its silver birch-like bark. Many different varieties of ferns were also thriving in this usually wet and bogging terrain. As we travelled back along the hills we stopped at another pool after a duck caught our eye. It was difficult to identify, but the duck's overall dark colour, beak and crown all pointed to it being a Black Duck. A Grey Heron fished nearby. Meanwhile, a fresh juvenile Ruff and two Grey Wagtails fed nearby while a Buzzard soared overhead. We headed back along a straight road taking us right past Pico – almost every field we went past there was a pair of Grey Wagtails; a common species here in the absence of other wagtails and many other insect feeders. The temperature rose as we dropped in altitude. The sea was flat and we could just make out the fourth close island - Graciosa.

After a mid-afternoon rest we gathered early evening and ate at the Ancoradoura. It was a public holiday, the Feast of Assumption, so with most places closed the restaurant was busy and thriving. After some wonderful food we walked back on a very warm evening.

Day 5

Monday 16th August

An overcast day and cooler... As we headed out we had good views of a Flying Fish. Not far out from the coastline the water was very calm and ideal for spotting turtles and other animals. One dark lump on the water revealed itself to be a coconut – all the way from the Caribbean! We then came across a school of twenty or more Risso's Dolphins. They were spread out around us, mainly in female and calf pairs. We had wonderful views and watery sounds as they surfaced. One adult even swam right under the boat. As we moved further out we found Atlantic Spotted Dolphins – a school of one hundred and fifty to two hundred individuals moving through the sea. They were everywhere and very playful. Younger, unspotted dolphins swam by the boat, followed later by the spotted adults. We had prolonged views of them all around including males leaping from the water and landing with a big splash while one pair could be seen mating underwater.

After a quieter patch, Justin spotted a breaching whale and as we approached we all saw a Sperm Whale breach, lifting itself right out of the water before landing with a huge splash. Unexpectedly, the whale breached a further four times! Breaching is an excellent way in which the whale can communicate with other whales, especially if they have all become separated during feeding. It's also a good indication of health as it takes a huge amount of energy to do. The female Sperm Whale did a shallow dive and disappeared for a while. Justin then saw the breach of another whale and we spotted her blow. We then spotted an even closer blow and followed another female for a short while before she also shallow dived – we could see part of her tail fluke as she twisted round.

As we began to head back a younger Sperm Whale was zooming past (in the direction of one of the adult females) – it came very close to the boat and rose quite high out of the water showing its dome-shaped head. It then shallow dived and we followed it under water as a pale form. There must have been at least four or perhaps five Sperm Whales just in this area, closing in on each other using the breaches and other forms of communication. A raft of one hundred or so Cory's Shearwaters sat on the sea giving lovely views as we sailed past. We headed back, not before stopping to see fifteen to twenty Bottlenose Dolphins investigating another

boat where people were snorkelling to see them. Some of the dolphins came very close to our boat – their larger size compared to the other dolphins we had seen was very obvious.

After a relaxing lunch we headed back out for our final boat trip of the tour. Our first port of call was the two standing cliffs (the remains of a crater), now home to colonies of Yellow-legged Gulls and terns just outside Madalena. The softer, browner volcanic rock (looking like sedimentary rock) showed pleated patterns after its repeated erosion by the sea. Nuggets of harder, black basalt were sticking out from the rock rather like cherries on a cake. The water was amazingly clear. Above we watched the Yellow-legged Gull colony – all the young birds were now flying. We ventured back out to sea, passing the school of Risso's Dolphins we had met earlier. They were swimming closer to each other this time round. We stopped to check out some debris in the water – it was a telescope bag still containing some equipment. Underneath, some small stripy Pilot Fish were already using the bag for shelter. Further along we found a large Loggerhead Turtle – it had just surfaced but didn't stay long. Its shell was covered in green algae. We were able to follow it underwater before it swam too deep to see. Mauve Stingers were common in the water around here. Further along the coast the blunt fin of something was visible before slipping under water. A close examination from a photo revealed it to be another optics bag (probably related to the one found earlier)!

Mid-afternoon a seven to eight metre female Sperm Whale breached producing a huge splash. As we crept closer, she was very obliging and swam towards us in the calm, glassy water and hot sunshine. The bumpy, prune-like skin was easy to see. She had a small white area on her dorsal fin – a sign of sexual maturity, although not found on all adult females. She shallow dived, her fluke clearly visible as she changed direction. There were four Sperm Whales in this area – all in close proximity to each other. When she deep-dived we moved on to see another female nearby. Leaving her we then moved on to another which then deep-dived in front of us. Meanwhile, the first female we had seen surfaced. During our last thirty minutes we watched as the different whales were logging on the surface and deep-diving at different moments, giving us our final memories of the huge tail flukes disappearing under water.

After six successful boat trips and some unprecedented whale and dolphins moments, we celebrated the end of our trip and Julie's birthday at the Ancoradoura. The restaurant staff members were happy to see us again and all the restaurant goers helped sing happy birthday to Julie as she was presented with an Azorean apple tart with candles.

However, the tour wasn't quite over and at 10.15 pm Justin and Luko met us and took us further down the road to listen for the Cory's Shearwaters. As we travelled up the road, we could see the shearwaters as they flew over the road, reflecting the light from the vehicles' headlights.

When we stopped we could immediately hear the weird and unexpected calls of the males as they flew low the breeding colony while females 'growled' from the vegetation. Justin briefly shone a torch on a pair sitting on a rock – they had probably been coming back to their nest site for many years as they are all long-lived birds. We left them to it and made our way back to the hotel.

Day 6

Tuesday 17th August

A calm, overcast day but very warm... We all had a gentle morning packing and relaxing before our ferry back to Faial. A tuna boat had recently arrived and was unloading tuna into a huge bucket which then emptied it into a small lorry destined for a factory just down the road. We said our goodbyes to Dania and Enrico as well as Julie and Lucy who were staying for a few extra days. We had a good ferry journey back to Horta and saw at least fifty Cory's Shearwaters rafting, a flying Turnstone as well as Common Terns and Yellow-legged Gulls.

We had an hour and a half in Horta – a great opportunity to find some lunch and explore the busy town. Around the marina, decorated tarmac and paving stones told stories of past events and visitors who have left their mark by drawing a colourful logo or picture. Large white butterflies and clouded yellows occasionally drifted past. Low cloud quickly moved in and Pico had virtually disappeared by the time we left Horta for the airport.

We departed the Azores mid-afternoon and arrived in Lisbon in sunshine and 28 degrees Celsius. As some of us boarded the next plane back to the UK a Cattle Egret and two Crested Larks fed on the dry verges. A Kestrel hovered by the edge of the runway and a swift flickered past.

We arrived back at London Heathrow earlier than scheduled – we said our goodbyes and departed our separate ways, happy that we had all be very privileged to experience the whales and dolphins of the Azores.

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2010 Naturetrek Group



Loggerhead Turtle



Cory's Shearwater Chick



Pico Volcano

Species Lists

Mammals

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2010					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Azores Noctule Bat*	<i>Nyctalus azoreum</i>			√			
2	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>			√		√	
3	Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>			√		√	
4	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>		√				
5	Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>		√	√			
6	Atlantic Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella frontalis</i>					√	
7	Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>		√	√	√	√	
8	Sowerby's Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon bidens</i>		√				

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2010					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea borealis</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	Manx's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>		√				
3	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>				√		
4	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>				√		
5	Black Duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>				√		
6	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo rothschildi</i>	√		√	√		
7	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>				√		
8	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		√		√		√
9	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus phaeopus</i>				√		
10	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>				√		
11	Western Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis atlantis</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
12	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
13	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougalli</i>	√	√				
14	Feral Pigeon / Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
15	(Common) Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus azorica</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
16	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea patriciae</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
17	(Common) Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula azorensis</i>	√	√		√		√
18	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla gularis</i>		√		√		
19	Goldcrest (Pico)	<i>Regulus regulus inermis</i>				√		
20	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris granti</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
21	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
22	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs moreletti</i>	√	√		√		√
23	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>				√		
24	Atlantic Canary	<i>Serinus canaria</i>		√		√		

Marine

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2010					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Warty or Yellow Shore Crab	<i>Eriphia verrucosa</i>				√		√
2	Red Rock Crab	<i>Cancer bellianus</i>		√	√	√	√	√
3	Rockpool Prawn	<i>Palaemon elegans</i>				√		
4	Limpet	<i>Patella piperata</i>				√		
5	Rock Goby	<i>Gobius paganellus</i>				√		
6	Atlantic Flying Fish	<i>Cypselurus heterurus</i>		√	√		√	
7	White Marlin	<i>Tetrapturus albidus</i>		√				
8	Swordfish	<i>Xiphias gladius</i>			√			
9	Grey Triggerfish	<i>Balisten capriscus</i>		√				
10	Drift Fish	<i>Schedophilus ovalis</i>		√				
11	Goose Barnacles	<i>Lepas anatifera</i>		√				
12	Blood Henry Starfish	<i>Henricia oculata</i>				√		
13	Parrot Fish	<i>Sparisoma cretense</i>				√		
14	Spiny Starfish	<i>Marthasterias glacialis</i>				√		
15	Thick-lipped Grey Mullet	<i>Chelon labrosus</i>				√		
16	Striped Bream	<i>Lithognathus mormyrus</i>				√		
17	Auxillary Wrasse	<i>Crenilabrus mediterraneus</i>				√		
18	Short-spined Scorpion Fish	<i>Myoxocephalus scorpius</i>				√		
19	Puffer Fish sp					√		
20	Boar Fish	<i>Capros aper</i>				√		
21	Cow Bream	<i>Sarpa salpa</i>				√		
22	Island Grouper	<i>Mycteroperca fusca</i>				√		
23	Sea Cucumber	<i>Holothuria forskali</i>				√		
24	Mouve Stinger	<i>Pelagia noctiluca</i>				√	√	
25	Moon Jellyfish	<i>Aurelia aurita</i>			√		√	

Plants

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2010					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Bracken	<i>Pteridium auilinum</i>				√		
2	Japanese Holly Fern	<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	Soft Shield Fern	<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>				√		
4	Fishbone Fern	<i>Nephrolepis cordifolia</i>		√		√		
5		<i>Elaphoglossum semicylindricum</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
6	Japanese Cedar	<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>		√		√		
7	Common Fig	<i>Ficus cerica</i>				√		
8	American Pokeweed	<i>Phytolacca americana</i>		√		√	√	√
9	Garden Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum major</i>				√		
10	Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>				√		
11	Woodland Strawberry	<i>Fragria vesca</i>				√		
12	Hypericum	<i>Hypericum foliosum</i>				√		
13	Sweet Pittosporum	<i>Pittosporium undulatum</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
14	Spurge-laurel	<i>Daphne laureola</i>				√		
15	Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>		√		√		
16	Blue Morning Glory	<i>Ipomea indica</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
17	Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>		√		√		
18	Century Plant	<i>Agave americana</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√
19		<i>Festuca francoi</i>				√		
20	Giant Cane	<i>Arundo donax</i>	√					√
21	Kahili Ginger/Ginger Lily	<i>Hedychium gardneranum</i>				√		

Other

	Common name	Scientific name	August 2010					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
	BUTTERFLIES:							
1	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>		√	√	√	√	√
2	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea failiae</i>		√		√		√
3	Azores Grayling* or Le Cerf's Grayling*	<i>Hipparchia azorina</i> or <i>H. miquelensis</i>				√		
	OTHER INVERTEBRATES:							
1	Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>				√		
2	Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura pumilio</i>				√		
3	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolumbii</i>				√		
4	Cicada sp		√	√	√	√	√	√
5	Cockroach sp					√		
	AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES:							
1	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>		√	√		√	
2	Madeiran Wall Lizard	<i>Lacerta (Teira) dugesii</i>		√	√	√	√	√
3	Marsh Frog	<i>Rana ridibunda</i>				√		