

MADDEIRA

JULY 28 - AUGUST 4, 2003



Roseate Tern, Funchal Harbour

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Introduction

It started off just like the usual charter thing. A group of eight buying a week's holiday with a stay at a hotel in Funchal included (around kr. 3000). As we did not plan to stay at the hotel much we chose the cheapest of those offered by My Travel. We slept well in spite of the noise coming from the street. It was quite all right. We rented two cars (€267 each) as a van was not available and had plenty of time to go for the target species as well as checking locations all over the island that looked promising on the map. We also included a trip to Porto Santo and a "whaling trip" off Funchal. We had tried to book the Porto Santo Ferry on the Internet, but they did not bother replying. However, there were no problems getting tickets in Funchal Harbour three days before we went. Our only problem was finding a parking lot near the port when going.

We had arranged a guided tour to the breeding place of the Zino's Petrel with Amilcar Vasconcelos (geral@madeiraventura.com). Though not on the cheap side (€60/each) it was a very successful arrangement, swift and precise communication before arrival to Madeira and very informative once we were there. He picked us up at our hotel on the time agreed, sharp and most important of all: showed us the bird! Weather was very appropriate on the whole trip; this will be dealt with below.

Itinerary

July 28

Funchal Airport. 12.05–12.35.

Common Kestrel 3, Yellow-legged Gull 3, Rock Dove 1, Plain Swift 1.

Airport – city centre. 12.35-13.30.

Common Kestrel 3, Yellow-legged Gull 20, Plain Swift 35, Grey Wagtail 1, Blackbird 1, Canary 1.

Funchal Harbour. 16.50-17.00.

Yellow-legged Gull 50, Common Tern 6.

Ponta da Cruz. 17.00-21.00.

Fea's/Zino's Petrel 1 E, Bulwer's Petrel 71 E, Cory's Shearwater 150 + 2000 E, Little Shearwater 3 E, Common Kestrel 1, Yellow-legged Gull 40, Common Tern 15, Plain Swift 4, Grey Wagtail 1.

July 29

Ponta da Cruz. 7.00-9.15.

Bulwer's Petrel 1, Cory's Shearwater 1700 W (7.20-8.10), Little Egret 1 W, Common Kestrel 1, Lesser Black-backed Gull 1 ad, Yellow-legged Gull 140, Common Tern 5, Grey Wagtail 2, Blackcap 3, Common Waxbill 6, Canary 7, European Goldfinch 11, [Dolphin sp. 10 W].

Funchal Harbour 9.30-9.50.

Yellow-legged Gull 300, Common Kestrel 5, Plain Swift 70.



Yellow-legged Gull (*Atlantis' type*'), Funchal Harbour

As weather looked promising (no clouds) we headed for Balcões to see the Long-toed Pigeons and found ourselves on the east coast on our way to Machico and the peninsula of Ponta de São Lorenzo....

Machico – on the small beach. 11.30-12.00

Little Egret 2, Yellow-legged Gull 150, Grey Wagtail 2, Blackcap 1.

Prainha. Just above the whaling station on the plateau.12.20-13.00. The pipits proved very cooperative indeed: Common Kestrel 2, Berthelot's Pipit 9.

Then we headed for the pigeons from another angle.

Canival – Faial – Ribo Frio. 13.10-14.30

Common Buzzard 1, Plain Swift 22, Blackbird 3, Blackcap 7, Firecrest 6, Chaffinch 6, European Goldfinch 4.

Balcões 14.35-17.10

Long-toed Pigeon 8, Plain Swift 5, Robin 1, Blackbird 2, Blackcap 6, Firecrest 12, Chaffinch 20.



Balcões or balcony as it translates, with the focus on Long-toed Pigeon.

N Funchal. 17.45

Eurasian Sparrowhawk 1 female.

Ponta da Cruz. 18.10-21.00.

Bulwer's Petrel 76 E, Cory's Shearwater 153 + 1980 E, Little Shearwater 1 E, Yellow-legged Gull 10, Common Tern 5 [Fin Whale 2 W + E, Dolphin sp. 10 W].

July 30

This morning we had a try at the other end of the island. The route Funchal - Ribeira Brava- through the tunnel to São Vicente - Porto Moniz took one and a half hours. The migration was somewhat disappointing:

Porto Moniz. 7.30-9.30

Cory's Shearwater 50 + 80 E, Manx Shearwater 2 E, Ruddy Turnstone 3, Common Tern 4, Plain Swift 3, Grey Wagtail 4, Blackbird 2, Blackcap 2.

Porto Moniz – Ponta do Pargo. 10.00 – 10.45 + 14.45 – 15.40

Plain Swift 6, Grey Wagtail 1, Blackbird 2, Blackcap 4, Firecrest 2, Chaffinch 4.

Ponta do Pargo. 10.45 – 14.45

Cory's Shearwater 15, Common Buzzard 3, Common Kestrel 4, Red-legged Partridge 1, Common Quail 5 (one seen), Yellow-legged Gull 8, Common Tern 6, Plain Swift 15, Berthelot's Pipit 4, Blackbird 2, Spectacled Warbler 2, Canary 30, Common Linnet 4, European Goldfinch 1, (Hammer-head 4, quite a surprise just below the cliff!).

Porto Moniz. 15.45 – 19.00

Bulwer's Petrel 12 E, Cory's Shearwater 300, Yellow-legged Gull 5, Common Tern 10, Blackcap 2.

Porto Moniz – São Vicente – Funchal. 19.00 – 20.30

Common Kestrel 1, Ruddy Turnstone 1, Plain Swift 40, Grey Wagtail 11, Blackbird 5, Blackcap 4, Chaffinch 2, Canary 3.

Hotel Victoria, Funchal, from a balcony. 20.45-21.00

Bulwer's Petrel 2 E, Cory's Shearwater 100 E.

July 31

Funchal Harbour. 7.30 – 8.20

Lesser Black-backed Gull 2 ad, Yellow-legged Gull 500, Roseate Tern 2 ad, Common Tern 5, Plain Swift 10.

Funchal – Porto Santo. 8. 20 – 10.30. We paid €53,20 each for a return ticket. Weather was a bit rough with quite a few passengers who were not occupied with bird watching feeling sick.

Fea's Petrel 2, Cory's Shearwater 40, Yellow-legged Gull 3.

Porto Santo. 10.30 – 19.10. We went along the beach, through the scrubs and up to the road leading to the airstrip, then back towards the ferry.

Common Kestrel 1, Common Quail 1, Lesser Black-backed Gull 1, Yellow-legged Gull 20, Common Tern 13, Plain Swift 6, Hoopoe 5, Berthelot's Pipit 14, Blackcap 10, Spanish Sparrow 230, Rock Sparrow 10, Canary 80, European Goldfinch 50.



Almost Bounty Land, Porto Santo

Porto Santo – Funchal. 19.10 – 21.20. The last bit along the Madeiran coast was in the dark. Bulwer's Petrel 327, Cory's Shearwater 600, Yellow-legged Gull 200, Common Tern 6 [Dolphin sp. 2].

August 1

Funchal Harbour. 7.30 – 10.45

Little Egret 2, Ruddy Turnstone 1, Black-headed Gull 1 1st cy, Yellow-legged Gull 200, Roseate Tern 1 ad feeding 1 young on the pier, Common Tern 15, (Fin Whale 2, Dolphin sp. 1).

Cabo Girão. 11.45 – 12.15

Common Buzzard 4, Common Kestrel 2 with young (heard), Yellow-legged Gull 50, Plain Swift 4, Blackcap 1, European Goldfinch 1.

Câmara de Lobos. 12.30 – 14.00

Yellow-legged Gull 10, Blackcap 2, Spanish Sparrow 2, Canary 1.

Punta da Cruz. 18.10 – 20.10

Bulwer's Petrel 5, Cory's Shearwater 150, Whimbrel 1, Yellow-legged Gull 30, Common Tern 5, Plain Swift 4, Grey Wagtail 1.

Pico de Arieiro. 22.30 – 1.00.

Zino's Petrel 4 or 5.

Amilcar Vasconcelos picked us up at our hotel and drove us to Pico de Arriero. From there we walked into the area following an old path enlightened by our torches. It was a nice and quite eerie

atmosphere in the mountains at this time of the night, especially when the first sounds of the birds were heard. We might not have experienced more than 4 or 5 birds according to our guide, but the sounds surrounded us constantly. At one occasion one bird passed our heads and gave us a swift but exciting view. It was very overcast and dark, which we were told was quite an advantage as the birds tended to be more active under such conditions.

August 2

Funchal Harbour. 10.30 – 11.30.

Black-headed Gull 1 1st cy, Lesser Black-backed Gull 1 3rd cy, Yellow-legged Gull 500, Common Tern 15.

Funchal – Ribeira Brava – Ponta do Pargo. 11.30 – 14.00. This time we followed the south coast to this westernmost point of the island.

Common Buzzard 2, Common Kestrel 2, Yellow-legged Gull 18, Common Tern 2, Plain Swift 3, Grey Wagtail 2, Blackbird 1, Blackcap 4.

Ponta do Pargo. 14.00 – 15.30

Cory's Shearwater 1, Common Buzzard 4, Common Kestrel 3, Common Quail 2, Yellow-legged Gull 1, Plain Swift 4, Berthelot's Pipit 2, Blackbird 2, Canary 20, Common Linnet 15.

Ponta do Pargo – Porto Moniz – Paúl da Serra – Ponta do Sol. 15.30 – 18.30.

Common Buzzard 1, Plain Swift 17, Grey Wagtail 2, Blackbird 3, Blackcap 2, Chaffinch 4.

Ponta do Garajau. 20.30-23.15

Bulwer's Petrel 1, Cory's Shearwater 320, Madeiran Storm-petrel 1, Grey Heron 1, Common Kestrel 1, Yellow-legged Gull 15, Common Tern 2, Plain Swift 15, European Goldfinch 1.

The Cory's Shearwaters were lying on the sea until about 21.30 when they began to approach land vociferously. Quite a treat! By walking down a path (bring a torch to find it) to the right of the big statue of Christ to a little cottage we managed to isolate the sound markedly. A few seemed to mock attack us. At about 22.45 they were so quiet we managed to hear another sound – that of a Madeiran Storm-petrel coming from close by to the right. A few days later when we had left the island another group of Danish birders not only heard these bird(s) but also managed to spot one close up!

August 3

Pico do Arieiro. 8.25-12.20

Common Buzzard 2, Common Kestrel 4, Yellow-legged Gull 30, Rock Dove 1, Plain Swift 30, Berthelot's Pipit 6, Blackbird 4, Chaffinch 2, Canary 40, European Goldfinch 8, Common Linnet 8.



Did we walk there in pitch darkness?

Pico do Arieiro – Santo da Serra - CaniVal. 12.20 – 13.10

Eurasian Sparrowhawk 1 female (with prey), Common Buzzard 1, Yellow-legged Gull 10, Plain Swift 15, Blackcap 3, Chaffinch 2.

CaniVal. 13.10-13.35

Common Buzzard 1, Yellow-legged Gull 10, Common Tern 8, Grey Wagtail 2, Spanish Sparrow 3, Canary 1, European Goldfinch 2.

Ponta de São LorenVo. 13.40-14.55

Cory's Shearwater 13, Common Buzzard 1, Common Kestrel 1, Whimbrel 7, Yellow-legged Gull 8, Plain Swift 3, Berthelot's Pipit 11.

Sailing-trip from Funchal Harbour. 18.45-21.15.

We hired a boat that brought us about an hour out on the sea to where there might be whales, dolphins and thus also some petrels. We had excellent views of both Cory's Shearwater and Bulwer's Petrel.

Cory's Shearwater 200, Bulwer's Petrel 157, Yellow-legged Gull 300, Roseate Tern 1 ad (seen in Funchal Harbour when sailing), Common Tern 10.

Systematic List of Birds Observed

In case of many observations of one species only the highest numbers are mentioned. Gatherings at a spot are here preferred to counts of a stretch of road. If a spot is visited more than once counts varying are mentioned by means of /. Date, time and other specifications do not occur on this list as they are supposedly easy to find in the itinerary once you know the place of observation. Observations are mentioned chronologically. Bold numbers indicate numbers of birds, bold letters, direction of migration. If numbers and letters are not bold they refer to itinerary and locations.

Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae*

2 Funchal – Porto Santo, **1 Fea's /Zino's E** Ponta da Cruz.

Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira*

4-5 (1 seen) Pico do Arieiro.

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*

71 E / 1/ 75 E/ 5 Ponta da Cruz, **327** Porto Santo – Funchal, **1** Ponta do Garajau, **2 E** Funchal, **12 E** Porto Moniz, **157** off Funchal.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

150 + 2000 E/ 1700 W/ 153 + 1980 E/ 150 Ponta da Cruz, **50 + 80 E/ 300** Porto Moniz, **15/ 1** Ponta do Pargo, **100 E** Funchal, **40** Funchal – Porto Santo, **600** Porto Santo - Funchal, **320** Ponta do Garajau, **13** Ponta do São Lorenzo, **200** off Funchal.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

2 E Porto Moniz.

Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*

1 E/ 3 E Ponta da Cruz.

Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro*

1 heard Ponta do Garajau.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

1 E Ponta da Cruz, **2** Machico, **2** Funchal Harbour.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

1 Ponta do Garajau.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

1 female N Funchal, **1 female** Pico do Arieiro – Caniçal.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Observed from time to time, the biggest “counts” being **4** Ponta do Pargo and **4** Cabo Girão.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Seen commonly most of the island, highest numbers were **4** Ponta do Pargo, **4** Pico do Arieiro, **5** Funchal Harbour.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

1 Ponta do Pargo.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

5 (1 seen)/ 2 Ponta do Pargo, **1** Porto Santo.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

1 Ponta da Cruz, **7** Ponta de São Lorenzo.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

3 Porto Moniz, **1** São Vicente, **1** Funchal Harbour.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

1 1st cy Funchal Harbour.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

1 ad Ponta da Cruz, **2 ad. + 1 3rd cy** Funchal Harbour, **1** Porto Santo.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* (*atlantis* ‘type’)

A rather common bird on the coast, but mostly seen in flocks of 10-40. Highest estimations being **500** Funchal Harbour, **140** Ponta da Cruz, **150** Machico.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Seen at several occasions in Funchal Harbour. All in all it concerned **2 ad. and 1 juv.**, the latter being fed on the pier. It was seen trying hard to catch its own prey once – a feather. Very cute!



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

6/ 5/ 15/ 10 Funchal Harbour, 1/ 10 Porto Moniz, 6 Ponta do Pargo, 13 Porto Santo, 15/5 Ponta da Cruz, 2 Ribeira Brava, 2 Ponta do Garajau, 8 Caniçal.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

1 Funchal Airport, 1 Pico do Arieiro.

Long-toed Pigeon *Columba trocaz*

8 Balcões.

Plain Swift *Apus unicolor*

A common bird all over the area. Highest numbers: 70 Funchal Harbour, 30 Pico do Arieiro.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

5 Porto Santo.

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii*

9 Praínha, 4/ 2 Ponta do Pargo, 14 Porto Santo, 6 Pico do Arieiro, 11 Ponta de São Lorenzo.



Berthelot's Pipit, Praínha

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi*

Seen whenever suitable habitats, highest numbers were 4 Porto Moniz and 11 on a count Porto Moniz – São Vicente – Funchal.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

1 Balcões.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula cabreræ*

Only seen in small numbers, highest being **4** Pico do Arieiro.

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

2 Ponta do Pargo.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

6 Balcões, **10** Porto Santo were the highest numbers, besides it was often heard from the wooded landscape on the island.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla madeirensis*

6 Caniçal – Faial – Ribo Frio, **12** Balcões, **2** Porto Moniz – Ponta do Pargo.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

230 Porto Santo, **2** Câmara de Lobos, **3** Caniçal.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

10 Porto Santo.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

6 Ponta da Cruz.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs maderensis*

Often heard along the way, but far the most were **20** Balcões.

Canary *Serinus canaria*

Highest counts: **30** Ponta do Pargo, **80** Porto Santo, **40** Pico do Arieiro.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Highest counts were **11** Ponta da Cruz, **8** Pico do Arieiro, **50** Porto Santo.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina guentheri*

4/ 15 Ponta do Pargo, **8** Pico do Arieiro.

LITERATURE

- A number of reports found on the Internet
- Ole Gylling Jørgensen og Carl Erik Mabeck, "Madeira og petreller i mørket", Fugle i Felten July 2003
- Andreas Bruun Kristensen, "Madeira – et must for havfuglefolk", DOFNYT, January 1999
- John and Pat Underwood, Landscapes of Madeira, London 1988