

Birding Madeira

August 2026



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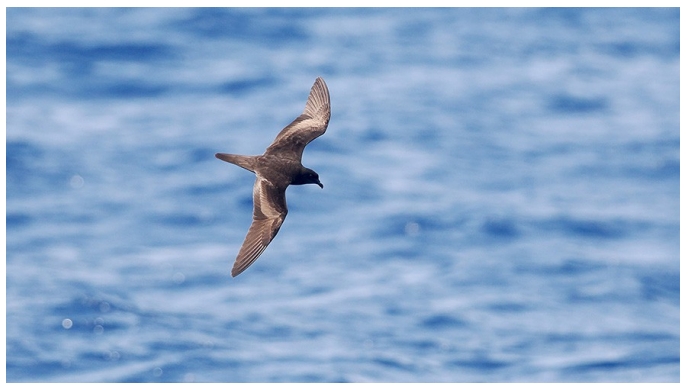
Madeira, August 1st-8th 2026

Front cover

Desertas Petrel *Pterodroma deserta*, Desertas Islands, Madeira.

Participants

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Bulwer's Petrel, Funchal – Desertas pelagic.



Desertas Petrel, Funchal – Desertas pelagic.



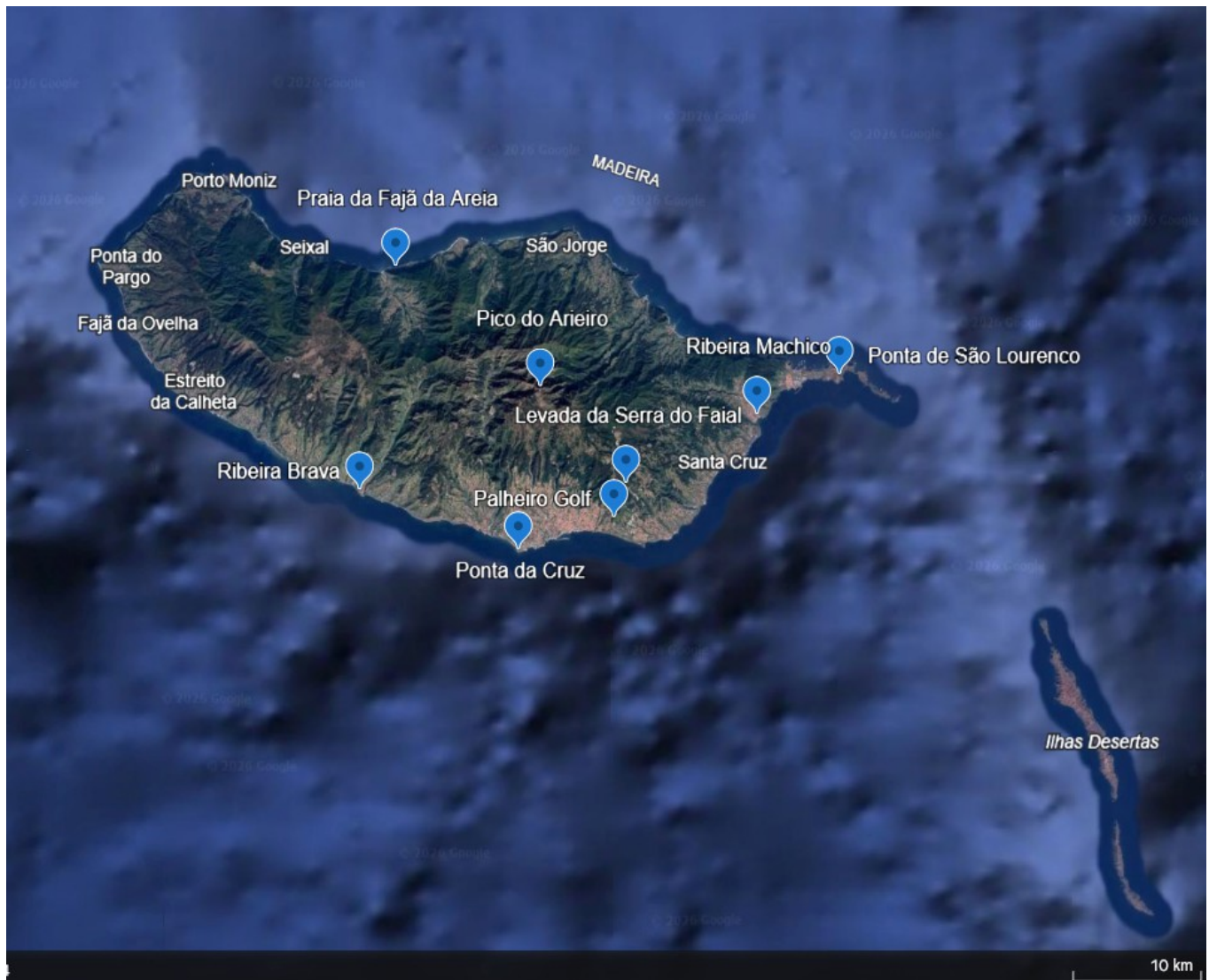
Plain Swift at Lugar de Braixo.



Trocaz Pigeon at Palheiro Golf.

Itinerary at a glance

- 1/8: Late arrival at the airport, pick-up rental car from Thrifty/Hertz went very smoothly. Drove to Funchal.
- 2/8: Morning sea-watching from Ponta da Cruz, Funchal 07.15-09.15.
- 3/8: Palheiro Golf, E Funchal 07.10-08.00. Levada da Serra do Faial 08.10-09.30. Pelagic SE from Machico with Madeira Wind Birds 16.00-18.00.
- 4/8: Ribeira Brava 07.40-08.40. Lugar de Baixo 08.55-09.35. Praia da Fajã da Areia 16.10-16.30.
- 5/8: All day pelagic from Funchal to Desertas 10.00-18.30 (including 2 hours stop at Desertas) with Bonita da Madeira. Night excursion to Pico do Arieiro for Zino's Petrels with Madeira Wind Birds 21.00-01.00.
- 6/8: Morning sea-watching from Ponta da Cruz, Funchal 07.30-09.15.
- 7/8: Ponta de São Lourenço 07.00-08.30. Ribeira de Machico 08.45-09.30.
- 8/8: Afternoon flight back to Stockholm.



Map of Madeira with main sites. Boat-trip Funchal to Desertas Islands takes 3h15min. Easy driving around the island with generally good roads, sometimes narrow in the mountains. Most of the island can be reached within 1 hour from Funchal.

General information

This popular tourist destination has plenty to offer a visiting birder, even on a family holiday. Landbirds are generally few and non-diverse. You could probably wrap-up the endemic landbirds and specialities in a single day, a few mornings felt enough to cover most of the desired landbirds. Madeira is better known among birders for its rich waters, with several good seabirds around. The star is the endemic Zino's Petrel which only breeds on the highest peaks of Madeira. But there is a good list of other sought-after seabirds. The best chance is probably to contact Madeira Wind Birds (www.madeirawindbirds.com) and book a series of three pelagics to increase the chances of encounter most of the good birds. Some of them are easier earlier in the season some later. The summer months seem to offer the best birds. Zino's Petrels are at their breeding grounds from late April until the end of August. Besides birding Madeira offer some unexpectedly good snorkling. Beside the night excursion for Zino's Petrel and one afternoon pelagic with Madeira Wind Birds I opted for a full day trip from Funchal to Desertas Islands with Bonita da Madeira (www.bonitadamadeira.com) which gave great sea-watching opportunities as well a short visit to the remote Desertas Islands. Another option worth mentioning might be a day trip from Funchal to Porto Santo which should be productive with seabirds as well. Check ebird.org for more precise locations.

List of birds: Madeira, August 1st-8th 2026

Following AviList: The Global Avian Checklist, v2025 (<https://doi.org/10.2173/avilist.v2025>). In total: 168 species (16 heard only (HO)), 29 species on The IUCN Red List for Threatened Species (2014.3). Subspecies notations are foremost literature-based. Observations are also reported on ebird.org.

- 1 **Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata* **Introduced**
Common at many rivers.
- 2 **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* **Introduced**
A few at many rivers, mostly domestic types. Some might have been genuine Mallards.
- 3 **Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa* **Introduced**
15 Ponta de São Lourenço (7.8).
- 4 **Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*
Common.
- 5 **Trocaz Pigeon** *Columba trocaz*
1+2+1+3 Palheiro Golf (3.8), 1+1+3 Levada da Serra do Faial (3.8).
- 6 **Rock Dove** *Columba livia*
Common.
- 7 **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus chloropus*
2 Lugar de Baixo (4.8), 3 Ribeira de Machico (7.8).
- 8 **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra atra*
6 Lugar de Baixo (4.8).
- 9 **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
1 Ribeira de Machico (7.8).
- 10 **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres interpres*
4 Ribeira de Machico (7.8).
- 11 **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo hirundo*
Common.
- 12 **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii dougallii*
1 ad Praia da Fajã da Areia (4.8).
- 13 **Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michaellis*
Common.
- 14 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graellsii*
Less numerous than Yellow-legged Gull.
- 15 **Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii*
Common at sea, also from headlands.
- 16 **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris borealis*
Common at sea.
- 17 **Zino's Petrel** *Pterodroma madeira*
c10 Pico do Arieiro, calling birds seen with thermal(5.8).
- 18 **Desertas Petrel** *Pterodroma deserta*
1 on pelagic from Machico heading SE 16.00-18.00 (3.8), 12 on pelagic Funchal to Desertas (5.8).
- 19 **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta garzetta*
1 Ponta da Cruz (2.8).
- 20 **Plain Swift** *Apus unicolor*
Common.
- 21 **Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo buteo*
1 Levada da Serra do Faial (3.8), 1 Lugar de Baixo (4.8).
- 22 **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus canariensis*
Several sightings throughout.
- 23 **Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*
Common.
- 24 **Spectacled Warbler** *Curruca conspicillata orbitalis*
7 Ponta de São Lourenço (7.8).
- 25 **Madeira Firecrest** *Regulus maderensis*
10 Levada da Serra do Faial (3.8).

- 26 **Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula cabrerae*
Common.
- 27 **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula rubecula*
1 Palheiro Golf (3.8), 1 Levada da Serra do Faial (3.8),
- 28 **Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* **Introduced**
8 Ponta da Cruz (2.8), 3 Lugar de Baixo (4.8), 5 Ribeira de Machico (7.8).
- 29 **Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia petronia*
1 Ponta de São Lourenço (7.8).
- 30 **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi*
Common.
- 31 **Berthelot's Pipit** *Anthus berthelotii madeirensis*
5 Deserta Grande (5.8), 3 Ponta de São Lourenço (7.8).
- 32 **Madeira Chaffinch** *Fringilla maderensis*
1m Palheiro Golf (3.8), 2m1f Levada da Serra do Faial (3.8).
- 33 **European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis parva*
Common.
- 34 **Atlantic Canary** *Serinus canaria*
Common, also on Deserta grande (5.8).

Comments on some birds NOT seen

Barn Owl

Seem to be well-spread across the island, down-town Funchal probably not the easiest place to find them, better in more rural areas.

Spanish Sparrow

Scattered sightings although not so commonly seen.

Seabirds

Rarer seabirds that you will be searching for are: Madeiran (Band-rumped) and White-faced Storm Petrels, Barolo Shearwater. The latter ones probably easier earlier in the summer. There is a long list of potential vagrant seabirds.

Additional record shots



Cory's Shearwater on the Machico Pelagic.



Spectacled Warbler easy at Ponta de São Lourenço.



Palheiro Golf at dawn, Trocaz Pigeon was quite easy to find at the entrance.



The barren and remote Deserta Grande. Berthelot's Pipit and Atlantic Canary omnipresent.



Berthelot's Pipit easy at Ponta de São Lourenço.



Common Waxbill at Ribeira Machico.



Monarch (Danaus plexippus), Ribeira Machico.



Desertas Petrel, Funchal – Desertas Pelagic.



Large pod of Short-finned Pilot Whales (Globicephala macrorhynchus) on the Machico Pelagic.