

TENERIFE
(+FUERTEVENTURA)
2009



Blue Chaffinch

Trip between 12th May 2009 – 19th May 2009 by:

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Tenerife (+Fuerteventura)

One-week charter-trip with my girlfriend Ulrika to Tenerife (Playa de las Americas). Stayed at Park Santiago 4 apartment-hotel, just by the beach-walk. The target for me was to, swiftly, try to locate 4 Teneriffe WP-specialities (Bolle's pigeon, Laurel pigeon, Blue chaffinch, Canary islands chiffchaff) and some distinct races, without ruining our short week-vacation. In addition I had (with allowance from Ulrika) pre-booked a one-day "excursion" to try to locate the 2 additional Canary Island species at Fuerteventura (Fuerteventura chat and Fuerteventura bustard). Other species had been seen previously on trips to Madeira, Azores and Morocco.

In other words: This report say very little of what a full week of birding could provide on Tenerife!

Tuesday 12 May

Arrival day at Tenerife in the afternoon. Collared doves scavenging, in manners like feral doves. Most looking like Eurasian collared doves but also smaller white collared doves ("Barbary-type" doves - domesticated form of African collared dove). Intermediate types and very dark looking large Eurasian types also occurred. Hmmm...

Loads of Cory's shearwaters over the sea. Spanish sparrows and the first WP-tick of the trip: Canary Island Chiffchaff. This species seem to be common all over the island. Listen for the very hurried chiffchaff song (sometimes approaching Cetti's Warbler in tempo). Calls close to Common (*collybita*) Chiffchaff but also unique metallic calls not heard from Common Chiffchaff.



Canary Island Chiffchaff

Wednesday 13 May

Some short birdwatching in the morning before breakfast. 2 whimbrels, 1 gray wagtail, 5 ring-necked parakeets. Lots of Cory's Shearwaters over the sea.

Thursday 14 May

A pre-booked one-day trip to Fuerteventura. Drove up to Los Rodeos Airport (La Laguna). An approximate 1 h 15 minute drive. A flight-ticket Tenerife – Fuerteventura leaving at 07.00 and returning at 21.30 in the evening at about 140 EUR with Binter Canarias airline. Which with a below hour flight would give me at least 10 hours on Fuerteventura to try to connect with the Bustard and the Chat.

Had a first go at the Bustard at the plains SW of Pared (Costa Calma area). Spent almost 3 hours in the area without luck. Mornings are said to be the best. There was a very strong wind and in addition I found it hard to locate good spots to get good area-coverage from. Got a bit distressed and rescheduled to try to locate the Chat first (this species more important) and then to put the rest of the day on the Bustard.

A good/safe site for the chat should be the Barranco de la Torre located a short distance after the main road turns inland (going south) at Las Salinas. It may be hard to find a parking-spot here but the vegetated "Barranco" (deep Wadi) is quite obvious when passing. I found a parking-spot just by a hut and walked down to the northern end (at the Barranco south of the main road). In the bushy vegetation I soon located a male and a female (and, because of time-constraints, decided not to spend any more time here). A good note could be to look in the real bushes (as opposed to the low scrub). This higher vegetation is what the species seem to favour (as opposed to common Chat). The Canary Island Chat is also said to be more reluctant perching in high tops, exposing itself. Still: I had no problems locating my birds.

A short lunch and another 5 hours before having to go back to the Airport. The northern parts of the Islands are sometimes said to be better for the Bustard. I spent hours searching the plains NW of Tindaya (almost reaching El Cotillo), which looked promising for the species.

Probably the most boring 5 hours of my birding career and unfortunately I had to leave Fuerteventura without finding the Bustard.

Some of the other species noted on Fuerteventura: Kestrel, Gray Wagtail, Ruddy Shelduck, Trumpeter Finch, Raven, Turtledove, Cream-coloured Courser, Egyptian Vulture, Berthelot's pipit.

Friday 15 May

Back on Tenerife. Drove up north to Puerto de la Cruz to visit Loro Parque. When doing a very good site for Laurel Pigeon is passed. When driving from Icod de los Vinos on the main road to Puerto de la Cruz a few Km's before (W of) Puerto de la Cruz there is a watch-point ("Mirador") called Mirador la Grimora. You pass it soon after passing a gas-station on your left. It might be hard (due to traffic) to reach it going eastbound. Going westbound it is located immediately after the second of two short tunnels. When parked you only have to look up-hill (inland) for the pigeons. We had at least 10 observations of (at least) 4 different birds in half an hour. Also African blue tit and female Sardinian warbler on site.



Laurel Pigeon



Sardinian Warbler

Saturday 16 May

Early Morning (last day with a car) and a drive up the mountains for the final two target species: Blue Chaffinch and Bolle's pigeon.

A good site for Blue Chaffinch is 11 km N Vilaflor (main road towards Parque Nacional Del Teide). According to the literature there should be a "Barbeque-site". In the early morning/dark we did not see it. Passed a "Restaurant"-sign in the woods which might have been this site. Instead we parked just a km further north where the woods opened up a bit. Parking on the left side of the road (going N). Here were a few different signs "Corona Forrestral" and "El Teide" and one "fire hazard warning throwing out cigarettes". At this site we had 6 Blue Chaffinches in full song even before daylight. Waiting out daylight we also got very good views. Chaffinches, Canaries, Great-spotted woodpecker. Driving a km north towards Teide two Barbary partridges run across the road. 2 Berthelot's pipits.



Barbary Partridge



Plain Swift

A good site for Bolle's pigeon is in the small village of Erjos (located along the main road in NW, between Santiago del Teide and Icod de los Vinos). We struggled a few minutes finding the site. At the immediate entrance of the village (from S) a small house with a large sign amongst other things stating something like "Casa de Forrestral" is located to your right. On

the opposite side of the road a drivable dirt-track begins, soon sharp-turning left. We parked our car just behind a sign 10 m down the track.

Some authors have mentioned driving about 4 km along this (rough!) track into the Laurel forest to reach the pigeons. We would say you do not need to. After walking only a 100 m (at a small hut) where the dirt-track makes an U-turn (and also branches off) we scanned the mountain and immediately had 4+1 distant Bolle's pigeons flying by. Another 2+2 observations was made approx 400 m up the track (by a station and an obvious red/white antenna). After the antennas you dig into the forest and will not have visibility over the mountains for a while (a sign also tells you it is not allowed to drive further without permit). On the way back we flushed another Bolle's pigeon. (Sardinian Warbler, African Blue tit, Teneriffe goldcrest and Chaffinches – the two latter in overload). The pigeons seem to flush very easily and all our observations were on birds flying away (=making the tail-pattern an important clue identifying them).



Bolle's pigeon



Canary

It is early afternoon and we decide to have a lunch at Santiago del Teide. From a high tree I hear a dove calling I cannot immediately place. An odd two-toned song with the second "tone" outdrawn with a "turtle-dove" character. Soon locate the bird and see it is a Collared dove. But with this song, an African Collared dove (in a plumage very similar to Eurasian). The song is heard later from smaller whiter birds in Playa de las Americas (=the Barbary-type-doves).

When returning the car in the evening four Nanday parakeets fly by.

Sunday 17 May

An hour of seawatching before breakfast. Not much except tons of Cory's shearwaters and some Pilot-whales to watch. Then a humpy, large and dark bird flying by in the horizon. A heavy and dark skua with broad white wing-flashes. It is definitely a Great skua type (short tail, heavy straight flight, gull-sized and stocky overall). The immediate identification is "Great skua". No character on the bird wrong for this species and the distance to far anyway for safely identifying the only alternative - a South-polar skua. The interesting thing is the time of the observation.

According to “Clarke” Great skua occurs on passage and in winter, not in May. South polar skua only one record: in summer 2002 between Tenerife and La Gomera (=right where I am watching). Let’s just hope it was a Bonxie! ;)



Whimbrel (and a crab in full “ threat” position)

Monday 18 May

A morning stroll around town. A Ruddy Turnstone and (oddly end of May) a Sanderling.
Manage to intercept a pack of Nanday parakeets.



Sanderling and Ruddy Turnstone



[Nanday Parakeet]

Tuesday 19 May

Another morning stroll around town, before takeoff to Sweden. Only interesting thing a “hope soon-to-become category-C species”... Senegal Parrot:



[Senegal Parrot]

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SPECIES ACCOUNT

1	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	Gulnäbbad lira
2	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Rostand
3	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Smutsgam
4	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo insularum</i>	Ormvvråk
5	Kestrel (Teneriffe)	<i>Falco tinnunculus canariensis</i>	Tornfalk
6	Kestrel (Fuerteventura)	<i>Falco tinnunculus dacotiae</i>	Tornfalk
7	Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>	Klipphöna
8	Cream-coloured cursor	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	Ökenlöpare
9	Common ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Större strandpipare
10	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sandlöpare
11	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Småspov
12	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Roskarl
13	Great skua? / (South-polar Skua)	<i>Stercorarius skua? / (Stercorarius maccormicki)</i>	Storlabb? / (Sydpolslabb)
14	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis (atlantis)</i>	Medelhavstrut
15	Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Fisktärna
16	[African Collared Dove]	[<i>Streptopelia roseogrisea 'risoria'</i>]	[Afrikansk turkduva]
17	Eurasian Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Turkduva
18	Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turturduva
19	Bolle's pigeon	<i>Columba bollii</i>	Kanarieduva
20	Laurel Pigeon	<i>Columba junoniae</i>	Lagerduva
21	Feral Dove/Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Tamduva/Klippduva
22	Rose-ringed parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Halsbandsparakit
23	[Nanday parakeet]	[<i>Nandayus nenday</i>]	[Nandayparakit]
24	[Senegal Parrot]	[<i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>]	[Senegalpapegoja/Morhuvad papegoja]
25	Plain swift	<i>Apus unicolor</i>	Enfärgad seglare
26	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Härfågel
27	Great-spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendroscopus major</i>	Större hackspett
28	House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Hussvala
29	Berthelot's pipit	<i>Anthus berthelotii</i>	Kanariepipilärka
30	Gray Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea canariensis</i>	Forsärla
31	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula superbus</i>	Rödhake
32	Fuerteventura Chat/Canary Island stonechat	<i>Saxicola dacotiae</i>	Kanariebuskskvätta
33	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula cabrerare</i>	Koltrast
34	Sardinian warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	Sammetshätta
35	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Svarthätta
36	Canary Island Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus canariensis</i>	Kanariegransångare
37	Canary Island goldcrest/kinglet	<i>Regulus teneriffae</i>	Kungsfågel (teneriffae)
38	Spotted flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	Grå flugsnappare
39	African blue tit	<i>Cyanistes ultramarinus canariensis</i>	Koboltmes
40	Southern grey shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis koenigi</i>	Ökenvarfågel
41	Common raven	<i>Corvus corax tingitanus</i>	Korp
42	Spanish sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Spansk sparv
43	Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Grönfink
44	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Steglits
45	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs canariensis</i>	Bofink
46	Canary	<i>Serinus canaria</i>	Kanariesiska

47 Blue Chaffinch
48 Trumpeter Finch

Fringilla teydea teydea
Bucanetes githagineus

Blåfink
Ökentrunderare