

Boa Vista, Cape Verde

January 8 – 15th 2018



Hans-Åke & Karin Gustavsson
Exercisgatan 30 B
SE-212 13 Malmö
Sweden
E-mail: hans-ake.gustavsson@telia.com

General

This short report contains the bird observations made on the island of Boa Vista during a one-week charter trip together with my wife. Most of our stay was spent relaxing and birding was confined to early morning walks close to our hotel as well as during a half day guided trip to the southern and interior parts of the island and during a half day visit to the Rabil Lagoon by taxi.

Travel & arrangements

The journey was a one week charter trip with TUI from Copenhagen and we stayed in the Marine Club Beach Resort just north of Sal Rei, on the northern part of the island. The accommodation was of good standard and included a nice buffet breakfast.

A visa is necessary for visiting Cape Verde. This can be obtained in the airport upon arrival or, as in our case, be handled by the tour operator. Cost 25 Euros.



Street view Sal Rei

Food

In Sal Rei there are quite a few restaurants serving a variety of food. Some of the restaurants served food of unexpectedly high quality and we like to recommend especially the following ones:

- **Manera**, close to the church in Sal Rei: Italian style food of high quality
- **Porton di nos Ilha**: Rua Marginal at the south end of Praia Diante: rooftop 2nd floor with sea view and very good seafood
- **El Mirador**, beach front just south of the main square: rooftop 2nd floor with sea view with Spanish style food which tasted homemade.

Getting around

Local transport is easily done by taxi (Aluguer). Prices are fixed and there are normally plenty of cars around.

A reliable taxi driver for longer trips is Germano Lima, phone +238 982 4725. He can often be found outside the Marine Club Beach Resort.



The market in Sal Rei

Birding guides

In order to get around also to other parts of the island, we contacted the local company Naturalia, web www.naturaliaecotours.com and mail naturalia.cv@hotmail.com for a half day (08:00-13:30) guided birding tour to a number of sites. These included the Rabil Lagoon, the Pedreira Quarry, Ribeira Cruzinha Brito Lagoon (close to the Riu Touareg resort), Curral Velho shore, Fonte Vicente and Monte Trigo.

We were guided by Strava Delgado in a 4x4 car, which is a necessity in many places, and we had a very pleasant tour also getting a lot of general information about the island.

Birds

The number of species present is quite limited but two of the Cape Verde land bird endemics are easily found on Boa Vista: **Alexander's Swift** and the ubiquitous **Cape Verde Sparrow**. On top of this, **Cape Verde Shearwater** breeds in small numbers but is normally difficult to see outside the breeding season.

Other birds of interest are a number of species otherwise difficult to see within the Western Palearctic such as **Helmeted Guineafowl**, **Brown Booby**, **Red-billed Tropicbird** and **Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark**. Also the local races of **Kestrel**, **Cream-colored Cursor** and **Greater Hoopoe-Lark** deserve attention.

The small island Ilhéu dos Pássaros is well known for its colony of **White-faced Storm-Petrels** for which a night time visit however is necessary to see the birds.

One of the former high-lights of Boa Vista were the last remaining breeding **Magnificent Frigatebirds** of the eastern Atlantic. It however seems that the latest breeding took place in 2016 and even if single birds still might linger in the area, especially around the former breeding site, Ilhéu de Curral Velho, you nowadays need to have a lot of luck to find them.

Further, any area with water deserves a check and the potential of Nearctic vagrants is quite high.

Sites

The **Sal Rei Lagoon** refers to the area of former saltpans just north of Sal Rei. Bird numbers vary with water level but normally a good number of shorebirds are present. E.g. White-rumped Sandpiper has been recorded in the area.

The **Rabil Lagoon**, also known as Ribeira d'Aqua is situated a few km south of Sal Rei and can easily be reached by taxi. The area is under pressure from the activities of a large nearby resort (e.g. kite surfing lessons in the lagoon itself) but is still one of the best sites on the island.

The **Riu Touareg Lagoon** refers to the wetland just east of the Riu Touareg Resort on the southern part of the island, close to the Ilhéu de Curral Velho. We only made a fairly short visit but found odd birds such as Marsh Sandpiper and Black-headed Gull. High potential!

List of species

1. **Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris galeatus*
1 bird flushed in the scrub along the north shore of the Rabil Lagoon 12.1.
2. **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus mesonauta*
Up to 10 birds recorded around the cliffs of Ponta do Sol, north of the Marine Club Beach Resort, Sal Rei 9-11.1.
3. **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster leucogaster*
Up to 15 birds regularly seen along the beaches between the Rabil Lagoon and Sal Rei 10-15.1, about 60 breeding birds at Curral Velho 11.1.



4. **Gray Heron** *Ardea cinerea cinerea*
1 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 2 Sal Rei Harbor 12.1.
5. **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta garzetta*
5 Sal Rei Harbor 9.1, 1 Marine Club Beach Resort 10-15.1.
6. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis ibis*
Fairly common. Totally 27 birds recorded 8-14.1.
7. **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*
3 Rabil Lagoon 11.1.

8. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus haliaetus*
1-3 birds recorded daily 8-15.1.
9. **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
5 Sal Rei Lagoon 9.1, 20 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 20 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 30 Rabil Lagoon 12.1,
3 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.
10. **Cream-colored Courser** *Cursorius cursor exsul*
3 Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 10.1, 3 south of Rabil 11.1.



11. **Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
1 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 2 Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 1 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1, 2 Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 15.1.
12. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*
Common. 20 Sal Rei Lagoon 9.1, 10 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 10 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 30 Rabil
Lagoon 12.1, 60 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.
13. **Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula hiaticula*
5 Sal Rei Lagoon 9.1, 3 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 5 Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 9 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.
14. **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*
2 Marine Club Beach Resort 8.1, 1 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 1 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 1 Marine Club
Beach Resort 12.1, 1 Sal Rei Lagoon 12.1, 1 Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 15.1.
15. **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica lapponica*
2 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
16. **Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres interpres*
Common. Totally 43 birds recorded 8-15.1.
17. **Ruff** *Calidris pugnax*
1 Rabil Lagoon 12.1.
18. **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*
1 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
19. **Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
Common. 50 Sal Rei Lagoon 9.1, 20 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 15 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 50 Rabil
Lagoon 12.1, 50 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.

20. **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*
1 Rabil Lagoon 12.1.
21. **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
2 Sal Rei Lagoon 9.1, 5 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 2 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.
22. **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
1 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 2 Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 1 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.
23. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
1 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
24. **Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
5 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 7-8 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1, 9 Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 1 Sal Rei Lagoon 13.1.
25. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
1 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
26. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
1 Sal Rei Lagoon 9.1, 1 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
27. **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus totanus*
3 Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
28. **Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
1 adult Riu Touareg Lagoon 11.1.
29. **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica nilotica*
1 Rabil Lagoon 12.1.
30. **Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*
1 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 1 Marine Club Beach Resort 11.1, 2 adults Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 1 Praia Estoril, Sal Rei 14.1.



Caspian and Gull-billed Terns

31. **Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis sandvicensis*
1 Sal Rei Harbor 9.1, 4 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 7 Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 1 Marine Club Beach Resort 12.1, 5 Praia Estoril, Sal Rei 14.1.
32. **Feral Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia var. domestica*
1-10 birds recorded daily 8-15.1.

33. **Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*
10 Riu Touareg 11.1, 1 Sal Rei 14.1.
34. **Alexander's Swift** *Apus alexandri*
A party of 2-9 birds foraging along the ridge just above the Marine Club Beach Resort every afternoon 8-14.1, 1 south of Rabil 11.1.
35. **Eurasian Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus alexandri*
Common. 1-7 birds recorded daily 8-15.1.
36. **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis*
2-3 birds daily Sal Rei 9-15.1, c.30 Sal Rei-Riu Touareg 11.1, c.10 Rabil Lagoon 12.1.



37. **Greater Hoopoe-Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes boavistae*
2 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 2 Curral Velho shore 11.1, 5 Riu Touareg-Sal Rei 11.1.



38. **Bar-tailed Lark** *Ammomanes cinctura cinctura*
2 Marine Club Beach Resort 9.1, 7 just north of the Marine Club Beach Resort 10.1, 6 Praia Cabral 10.1, c.10 Riu Touareg-Sal Rei 11.1, 5 Rabil Lagoon 12.1, 4 Marine Club Beach Resort 14.1.

39. **Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps nigriceps*
c.10 Riu Touareg 11.1, 1 Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 13.1, 2 Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 15.1.



40. **Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata*
1 male Marine Club Beach Resort 9.1, 2 females Marine Club Beach Resort 10.1, 1 Rabil Lagoon 11.1, 1 Riu Touareg-Sal Rei 11.1, 1 female Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 12.1, 1 Praia Cabral, Sal Rei 15.1.
41. **Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis hispaniolensis*
Rather common. Totally 35 birds recorded 10-15.1.
42. **Cape Verde Sparrow** *Passer iagoensis*
Abundant. 25-50 birds recorded daily 8-15.1.

