

# Trip Report

# Madeira

1-9 September 2004

By Bosse Carlsson & Niklas Holmström, Sweden

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## Itinerary

Flight with Air Portugal (TAP) on 31st August from Arlanda to (via Copenhagen) Lisbon and Lisbon to Funchal. On the way back we left Funchal early in the morning on 10th September, along the same route. The price of the flight ticket was 3300 SEK per person, both ways. We hired a car at the airport for the whole period, cost 3000 SEK. We stayed at Gordon Residencial in centre of Funchal the first four nights as the last one and four nights at Residencia Calhau in Porto Moniz in-between. This to a cost of 40 and 35 Euro per night for a double respectively, divided by two and including breakfast, which mean 20 and 17,5 Euro per person.

**1 September:** Seawatching at Ponta da Cruz in early morning. Travel on the island: Funchal harbour–Ribeiro Frio (Balcões)–Porto da Cruz (seawatching 15:50-16:30 hours)–Santana–Santo de Serra–Machico–Caniçal (the harbour) and finally Pico do Arieiro at night (seeing Zino's Petrel).

**2 September:** The sister island Porto Santo: Tanque Pond, Vila Baleira and surroundings, Ponta da Calheta back to Vila Baleira. Seawatching from the ferry crossing.

**3 September:** A full day pelagic tour to Desertas with the boat Ventura do Mar. Ponta do Garajau in the evening (trying to hear Madeiran Storm-petrel).

**4 September:** Seawatching at Ponta da Cruz in early morning. Ribeira Brava–Lugar de Baixo–Ponta do Pargo and Porto Moniz (seawatching on the latter place).

**5 September:** Seawatching at Porto Moniz in morning and afternoon. A short visit to Ribeira da Janela during mid day (the mouth of the valley close to Porto Moniz).

**6 September:** Seawatching at Porto Moniz in morning and afternoon. A short visit to Ponta do Pargo at mid day.

**7 September:** Seawatching at Porto Moniz nearly all day long.

**8 September:** Seawatching at Porto Moniz in the morning and afternoon. Travel on the north-western part of the island a few hours during the middle of the day: Ribeira da Janela–Fonte da Pedra–Rabaçal–Paúl de Serra–Bica da Cana–Boca da Encumeada–São Vicente–Seixal–Porto Moniz.

**9 September:** Seawatching at Porto Moniz in morning to noon. Ponta de São Lourenço in the afternoon.

**10 September:** We left Madeira early in the morning.

## General information

For further info such as travel info, accommodation, descriptions on birding sites and an bird species see the web site Birding Madeira: <http://madeira.seawatching.net>

## Hours of seawatching at Porto Moniz

Date	4/9	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9
Morning to noon	–	3,5 hrs	2,5 hrs	3 hrs	1 hrs	4 hrs
Afternoon/evening	3 hrs	5,5 hrs	5,4 hrs	6,5 hrs	4,5 hrs	–

## Species List (English, Scientific and Swedish names)

A total of 53 species were recorded on the trip.

### Zino's Petrel – *Pterodroma madiera* – Madeirapetrell

One single bird seen on four occasions in the moon light at Pico do Arieiro about 24:20-30 hours. The bird offered close, but brief views and it never called. We visit the breeding area along with the guide Amílcar Vasconcelos and the British birders Richard and Erica Klim.

**Fea's/Zino's Petrel** – *Pterodroma feae/madiera* – Atlant-/Madeirapetrell

**2** – flew west in the morning at Ponta da Cruz 1/9. **2** – from the ferry crossing to Porto Santo (one very close to the ferry) 2/9, at least **21** were seen on the pelagic tour to Desertas 3/9 (15 on the way out and 6 on the return), which included many excellent and relatively long views!

**Porto Moniz:** A total of **22** were seen between 5 and 8/9. Daily totals as follows: **5** in the morning 5/9, **1** in the morning and **1** in the afternoon 6/9, **6** passing in the morning and **1** in the afternoon 7/9. The afternoon on 8th September was memorable as we saw in all **6** Fea's/Zino's Petrels (+ **1** distant) passing westwards slowly and close to the shore! Also two passing together. One single seen in the morning 8/9.

In total **47** birds were recorded on the whole trip (23 at sea and 24 from land).

**Bulwer's Petrel** – *Bulweria bulwerii* – Spetsstjärtad petrell

**37** – from Ponta da Cruz (07:20-08:50 hours) 1/9. **1** – off Porto da Cruz (15:50-16:30 hours) 1/9. **8** – seen from the ferry to Porto Santo and **26** within 45 minutes before the dusk on the return 2/9. At least **23** were seen on the pelagic tour to Desertas 3/9 (16 on the way out and 7 on the return). **1** – off Ponta da Cruz in the morning 4/9.

**Porto Moniz:** Daily totals as follows: **19** 5/9, **63** flew west and east 6/9, **22** mainly east 7/9, **18** mainly east 8/9 and finally **21** in the morning 9/9.

In total **239** birds were recorded on the whole trip.

**Cory's Shearwater** – *Calonectris diomedea borealis* – Gulnäbbad lira

**200** – from Ponta da Cruz (07:20-08:50 hours) 1/9. **500** – off Porto da Cruz (15:50-16:30 hours) 1/9. **100** – off Caniçal 1/9. **35** – seen from the ferry to Porto Santo and **28** on the return 2/9. At least **132** were seen on the pelagic tour to Desertas 3/9 (72 on the way out and 60 on the return). **100** – off Ponta da Cruz 4/9.

**Porto Moniz:** Daily totals as follows: **162** in the afternoon 4/9, **279** mainly towards west 5/9, **255** mainly passing west 6/9, **374** to west 7/9, **176** 8/9 and finally **102** in the morning 9/9.

This species can be expected anywhere along the coast. At least **2.443** birds were recorded on the whole trip.

**Great Shearwater** – *Puffinus gravis* – Större lira

**Porto Moniz:** **4** passing towards west in the afternoon 4/9 and **2** in the afternoon 5/9. These were probably stragglers from the big day on 2nd September, when approximately 1000 birds passed Porto Moniz (Richard and Erica Klim). On 3rd September there was no coverage and counting at all at Porto Moniz.

**Sooty Shearwater** – *Puffinus griseus* – Grålira

**Porto Moniz:** One west in the morning of the 6/9.

**Manx Shearwater** – *Puffinus puffinus* – Mindre lira

**28** – passing west off Porto da Cruz (15:50-16:30 hours) 1/9.

**Porto Moniz:** Daily totals as follows: **115** passing west in the afternoon 4/9, **220** towards west 5/9, **359** to west 6/9, **730** passing west 7/9, **813** west 8/9 and finally **844** passing west 9/9.

In total **3.109** birds were counted flying west!

**Little Shearwater** – *Puffinus assimilis baroli* – Dvärglira

**Porto Moniz:** One west in the evening 6/9 and two singles passing to west in the evening 7/9.

**Madeiran Storm-petrel** – *Oceanodroma castro* – Oceanlöpare

**1** – the bird was discovered close to shore off Porto Moniz about 19:40 hours on 8th September. It was seen for a minute, then it suddenly disappeared as the bird probably settled on the sea.

**Little Egret** – *Egretta garzetta* – Silkeshäger

**1** – in the harbour of Caniçal 1/9 and **1** – off Porto Moniz 9/9 (together with a single Grey Heron!).

**Grey Heron** – *Ardea cinerea* – Gråhäger

**5** – Funchal harbour 3/9, **1** – Ponta do Pargo 4/9, **1+2** – Porto Moniz 5/9, **2** – Ponta do Pargo 6/9, **2** – Porto Moniz 7/9, **1** – Fonte da Pedra 8/9 and **1** – off Porto Moniz 9/9.

**Sparrowhawk** – *Accipiter nisus granti* – Sparvhök

**1** – Ponta do Pargo 4/9, **3** – soaring together at Fonte da Pedra 8/9 and **1** – Ponta de São Lourenço 9/9.

**Buzzard** – *Buteo buteo* – Ormvråk

Widespread and conspicuous. At least **32** birds were seen in total.

**Kestrel** – *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* – Tornfalk

Widespread and conspicuous. Seen daily.

**Eurasian Hobby** – *Falco subbuteo* – Lärkfalk

One hunting insects at Ponta do Pargo 4/9. The species is rarely seen in the archipelago and it's interesting that a Dutch trio saw one bird at the very same location in late August 2004 (+ another one at Ponta do Garajau)!

**Common Quail** – *Coturnix coturnix* – Vaktel

1 calling – Porto Santo 2/9.

**Common Moorhen** – *Gallinula chloropus* – Rörhöna

8 – the pond at Lugar de Baixo 4/9.

**Eurasian Coot** – *Fulica atra* – Sothöna

2 – at Tanque Pond, Porto Santo 2/9. 19 – the pond at Lugar de Baixo 4/9.

**Little Ringed Plover** – *Charadrius dubius* – Mindre strandpipare

1 juvenile – at Tanque Pond, Porto Santo 2/9.

**Ringed Plover** – *Charadrius hiaticula* – Större strandpipare

1 – at the ferry berth of Porto Santo 2/9.

**Kentish Plover** – *Charadrius alexandrinus* – Svartbent strandpipare

1 adult – on the jetty in the harbour of Caniçal 1/9.

**Sanderling** – *Calidris alba* – Sandlöpare

1 – on the beach at Funchal Marina 3/9. 1 – at Porto Moniz 5-6/9.

**Whimbrel** – *Numenius phaeopus* – Småspov

17 – passing west at Porto Moniz 4/9, 1 – west Porto Moniz 5/9, 28 – passing west Porto Moniz 5/9, 14 – to west Porto Moniz 7/9, 16 – to west Porto Moniz 7/9 and 1-2 – Ponta de São Lourenço 9/9.

**Common Sandpiper** – *Actitis hypoleucos* – Drillsnäppa

1 – in the harbour of Caniçal 1/9.

**Ruddy Turnstone** – *Arenaria interpres* – Roskarl

The commonest wader found in Madeira. One or two could usually be found on rocky beaches and harbour walls. Seen daily.

**Pomarine Skua** – *Stercorarius pomarinus* – Bredstjärtad labb

**Porto Moniz:** 2 (pale adult + immature) – towards west in the afternoon 4/9; 1 (pale adult) – passing west in the evening 5/9, 1 (pale adult) – passing west in afternoon 6/9. All the adult birds showed long and twisted tail projection.

**Arctic Skua** – *Stercorarius parasiticus* – Kustlabb

**Porto Moniz:** 1 (juvenile) – towards west 4/9, 2 (juveniles) – to west 5/9, 3 (juveniles) – passing west 6/9, 3 (juveniles) – to west 7/9, 1 (juvenile) – to west 8/9.

**Long-tailed Skua** – *Stercorarius longicaudus* – Fjälllabb

**Porto Moniz:** 7 (6 adult + 1 juvenile) – towards north-west (also soaring several times) 5/9 and the adults had lost their tail streamers. 2 (adults, with tail streamers) – towards north-west 6/9.

**Arctic/Pomarine Skua** – *Stercorarius parasiticus/pomarinus* – Labb/Bredstjärtad Labb

**Porto Moniz:** 1 + 1 distant birds – towards west 5/9, 2 – to west at Porto Moniz 7/9 and 1 – to west 8/9. All five birds were too distant to be identified.

**Atlantic Herring Gull** – *Larus michahellis atlantis* – ”Medelhavstrut”

Common along the coast particularly in Funchal harbour, Caniçal harbour, Ponta da Cruz, Porto Moniz and Porto Santo.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** – *Larus fuscus graellsii* – Silltrut

2 adults – Funchal harbour 2/9. 1 adult – Porto Santo 2/9. 3 adults – on the beach at Funchal Marina 3/9.

**Black-headed Gull** – *Larus ridibundus* – Skrattmås

2 – Porto Moniz 5/9.

**Sandwich Tern** – *Sterna sandvicensis* – Kentsk tärna

1 juvenile – seen from the Porto Santo ferry in Funchal harbour 2/9.

**Common Tern** – *Sterna hirundo* – Fisktärna

Small numbers and flocks were seen daily along the coast. Good numbers in Caniçal harbour (c. 30), Funchal harbour (16), Ponta da Cruz (10) and Porto Moniz (10-15).

**'Commic' Tern** – *Sterna hirundo/paradisaea* – Fisk-/silvertärna

150 (37+20+70+23) – distant flocks flew west at Porto Moniz 5/9, 73 – west in the evening at Porto Moniz 6/9, 69 – west in the evening at Porto Moniz 7/9 and 9 – to west in the evening at Porto Moniz 8/9. The majority were probably Common Terns.

**Feral Pigeon** – *Columba livia* – Stadsduva

Common, but we didn't find any pure Rock Doves.

**Trocaz Pigeon** – *Columba trocaz* – Madeiraduva

1 – at Balcões, Riberio Frio 1/9. At least 10 (two perched) Ribeira da Janela 5/9 and 10 at the same site 8/9.

**European Turtle Dove** – *Streptopelia turtur* – Turturduva

2 – at Tanque Pond, Porto Santo 2/9.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** – *Streptopelia decaocto* – Turkduva

2 – seen on a high concrete building in Caniçal 1/9. The pair displayed several times! This species is rare in the Madeira archipelago and hasn't been recorded for many years.

**Pallid Swift** – *Apus pallidus* – Blek tornseglare

1 – over Funchal with Plain Swifts 1/9. At least 10 at Ribeira Brava 4/9.

**Plain Swift** – *Apus unicolor* – Enfärgad seglare

Common everywhere, often seen in small flocks, of up to ten birds. Most numerous in localities at higher altitudes and steep cliffs along the coast.

**Eurasian Hoopoe** – *Upupa epops* – Härfågel

34 – Porto Santo 2/9, of which 25 were seen on the golf course!

**Grey Wagtail** – *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi* – Forsärla

Common and seen almost anywhere, seen daily.

**Berthelot's Pipit** – *Anthus berthelotii madeirensis* – Kanariepiplärka

At least 40 – Porto Santo 2/9. Several at Ponta do Pargo 4 and 6/9. Several along the road Rabaçal–Paúl de Serra–Bica da Cana 8/9. 40 – Ponta de São Lourenço 9/9.

**Robin** – *Erithacus rubecula* – Rödhake

1-2 heard at Ribeira da Janela and 4 in all heard along the route Rabaçal–Paúl de Serra–Bica da Cana 8/9.

**Blackbird** – *Turdus merula cabreræ* – Koltrast

Heard and seen almost everyday, with up to 10 birds. Easiest to see at dawn and in the evening.

**Spectacled Warbler** – *Sylvia conspicillata bella* – Glasögonsångare

1 – at Ponta do Pargo 4/9. Probably the most reliable site on the main island.

**Blackcap** – *Sylvia atricapilla heineken* – Svarthätta

Heard calling and singing everyday, especially on higher altitudes, but also in centre of Funchal. Rarely seen. Many in song especially in the valley of Ribeira da Janela.

**Madeira Firecrest** – *Regulus madeirensis* – Madeirakuningsfågel

At least **15** at Ribeiro Frio (adult and juveniles) 1/9. At least **10** at Ribeira da Janela 5/9 and 8/9. Several heard here and there at stops in the right habitat during our travels by car.

**Spanish Sparrow** – *Passer hispaniolensis* – Spansk sparv

C. **15** – in the palm trees near the harbour in Caniçal 1/9, which is the most reliable site for the species on the main island. Many seen in Vila Baleira on Porto Santo 2/9.

**Rock Sparrow** – *Petronia petronia*– Stensparv

C. **15** – at the end of the path on Ponta de São Lourenço 9/9, close to the National Park wardens house. Unfortunately we didn't see the species on Porto Santo. We meet an English birder there who told us about a big flock close to the airport, but we were running out of time and couldn't visit the area.

**Chaffinch** – *Fringilla coelebs madeirensis* – Bofink

Heard and seen when visiting higher altitudes, with up to 20 birds. Many singing at Ribeiro Frio and Ribeira da Janela.

**Common Linnet** – *Carduelis cannabina* – Hämpling

At least **30** – Porto Santo 2/9, **6** – Ponta do Pargo 4/9, several at Fonte da Pedra 8/9 and one at Paúl de Serra 8/9.

**Canary** – *Serinus canaria* – Kanariesiska

Beware of this species which is both common and extremely vocal. The calls sometimes are very like Linnet, Greenfinch, Twite and Goldfinch! The most numerous and widespread landbird on the main island.

**Goldfinch** – *Carduelis carduelis parva* – Steglits

**6** – Ribeiro Frio 1/9, **30** – Porto Santo 2/9, **20** – Ponta do Pargo 4/9, **50** – Ponta do Pargo 6/9 and **20** – Ponta de São Lourenço 9/9.

**Common Waxbill** – *Estrilda astrild* – Helenaastrild

**20** – in the lush river bed in Macchico 1/9. This species has increased in the area in recent years. Sightings of up to 200 birds have been reported in 2004!

## **Cetaceans**

**Common Dolphin** – *Delphinus delphis* – Springare

One school of at least 20 were seen from the ferry to Porto Santo 2/9. The afternoon on 7th September was great seeing numerous schools of mainly Common Dolphins (some Spotted and Striped could have been involved) off Porto Moniz, feeding for two hours and attracting many Cory's in dense flocks.

**Bottlenose Dolphin** – *Tursiops truncatus* – Flasknosdelfin

A school of about 20 was seen off Ponta da Cruz in the morning of 4/9. A nice school of approximately 30 were seen feeding off Porto Moniz 6/9 and at least 15 feeding off Porto Moniz in the morning 7/9.

**Unidentified Dolphins** (most likely Common or Spotted)

Two schools of smaller dolphins were seen from the ferry to Porto Santo 2/9. At least 10 smaller dolphins off Porto Moniz 5/9.

**Sperm Whale** – *Physeter macrocephalus* – Kaskelot

At least 6-7 were seen about 20 occasions off Porto Moniz 7/9, breathing motionless at surface for 10-15 minutes before the deep dive and showing the fluke! As the sea was calm it was easy to detect the whales. We also saw a mother with calf twice, side by side. A beautiful and unforgettable experience!

**Sei Whale** – *Balaenoptera borealis* – Sejval

One seen relatively close to shore off Porto Moniz on three occasions 7/9. Easy to detect as the sea was very calm.

**Unidentified Whales**

One distant Fin/Sei Whale off Ponta da Cruz 1/9. One or two Fin/Sei Whales were seen on the pelagic tour to Desertas 3/9. A small pod off Ponta do Sol 4/9 was first considered to be Pilot Whales, but the dorsal fin on each whale were too pointing and clearly visible, which may suggest False Killer Whale. According to the whale watcher

Filipe Alves several small pods of False Killer Whales have been recorded along the Madeiran coast in August 2004. Two distant Sei or Fin Whales were seen off Porto Moniz in the evening 8/9. In the bay south of the Ponta de São Lourenço peninsula we saw many distant whale blows during the afternoon 9/9. The blows were regular for 10-15 minutes and involved many scattered individuals, which may suggest Sperm Whales.

## **Fishes**

### **Flying Fish**

**3** –seen on the pelagic tour to Desertas 3/9, **1** – off Porto Moniz 5/9 and **1** – off Porto Moniz 6/9.

## **Reptiles**

### **Madeiran Wall Lizard**

Seen everywhere and this is also the 'only' reptile species on the island. However, there are three different subspecies that are sometimes treated as species. They occur on Porto Santo, Desertas (Deserta Grande and Bugio) and Salvage Islands. In the Botanical Garden in Funchal you can also find the Canarian Lizard, which was recently introduced from Tenerife.

## **Butterflies**

### **Monarch**

Seen on several occasions, but not daily. At least 10 were seen along the river bed in Machico 1/9. Worthy of mention, this species is resident in the archipelago as in Canaries and do not have its origin from North American migraters.

### **Clouded Yellow**

### **Small White**

### **Painted Lady**

### **Madeiran Speckled Wood**

## **Knowledgement**

Many thanks to Tom Brereton who have read through the report and corrected errors in the English language.

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