

Trip report Madeira 29 March-5 April 2005

Together with my wife we spend a vacation week on Madeira. The trip was mainly a vacation trip and not planned for bird watching.

We travelled with STS solresor from Gothenburg to Madeira and stayed at hotel Tropical at Canico do Baixo, approx 10 km east of Funchal. The cost for 1 week 2 persons was 11870 SEK. We rented a Renault Clio from the local agent insularcasr.com. The cost was 134 Euro for 6 days including unlimited mileage.

The weather was nice sunny with light winds. We had rain half a day. The temperature was around 20 during daytime except for high altitudes in the mountains where there were a bit colder and even some night frosts.

In total 28 different species were seen

I had very good help of previous trip reports and Niklas Holmströms excellent home page <http://madeira.seawatching.net>

Hotel area

Sea watching from the Hotel balcony was excellent during the evenings, especially when the wind bowed from SW. In an hour I could easily see more than 100 Cory's Shearwater and 25 Manx Shearwaters flying west. When sitting at the balcony after darkness we heard the calls of the Cory's Shearwaters every evening and some even came so close to the hotel area that we could see them in the lamplight.

Thursday 31 March

Riberio Frio

Levada de Furado 8,50-10,30

Followed Stefan Cherrugs detailed road description: Take the path by the yellow sign Portella 8 at Victor's restaurant. After crossing the small river walk along the levada for 25 minutes. Two minutes after passing a tunnel to the right you reach a flat hexagonal stone in the middle of the path with circular indentations. Just after this place there is a small opening to the left with good views across the valley.

The pigeons were found lower in the valley.

2 Grey wagtails
15 Trocaz pigeon
10 Madeira Firecrest
30 Chaffinch
1 Common Buzzard

Riberio frio approx 2 km north of the first parking lot where the roads bend 90 degrees and there are is a rest area with 2 tables. 12-13,00

2 Common Buzzard
6 Trocaz pigeon
2 Madeira Firecrest
2 Black cap

Ponta de Sao Lourenco 15,15-19,00

50 Berthelots pipit
30 Rock Sparrow
1 Common Quail

Saturday 2 April

Ponta do sol 8,25-8,40

1 Common Sandpiper
2 Grey Wagtail
6 Moorhen
2 Coot
10 Turnstone
50 Feral Pigeon
50 Yellow-legged Gull
10 Cory's shearwater (in the bay outside the pond)

Porto Moniz 14,20-18,15

100 (approx) Cory's shearwater
6 Common tern
16 Manx Shearwater
2 Common Dolphin

Sunday 3 April

Pico do Arieiro 22,00-00,30

Visited this famous place for Zino's Petrel together with the excellent guide Amílcar Vasconcelos from Madeira Aventura. According to Amílcar, who was a bit sceptical to the possibility of hearing and seeing the Zino's this early in season, he had never been at the breeding ledges earlier than late April. Although he had heard that there has been some birds cleaning the nests up there already: I had contacted him via email before my trip and he promised to call me when he thought that the wind and lights conditions were right for making an attempt.

This night the conditions were perfect, no wind at all and no moonlight

The first bird arrived called twice at 22,35 then there were silence until about 23:30 when a 'new' Zino's were heard calling in the dark and for half an hour there were great activity with this bird and a few times it was even seen briefly close to the breeding ledge! That was a night I'll never forget!

Species list

Zino's Petrel (*Pterodroma madeira*)

1-2 heard and seen at Pico de Arieiro

Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*)

Common. Seen every day.

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)

Seen almost every day mostly after 18,00

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

1 seen from the hotel balcony 2 April

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) 1 Assomada 30 March 1 Hotel 4 April

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) seen almost every day aprox 25 individuals

Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus canariensis*)

1 Everyday at the hotel, sitting in a palm tree, 2-5 also seen everyday along the roads

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

6 at the pond Ponta do sol 2 April

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

2 at the pond Ponta do sol 2 April

Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*)

1 at the pond Ponta do sol 2 April

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Seen several places along the cost

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

2 Funchal harbour 1 April and 2 seen from Hotel 2 April

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis atlantis*)

Common

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

3 Funchal harbour 1 April and 6 Porto Moniz 2 April

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common

Trocaz Pigeon (*Columba trocaz*)

21 Riberion Frio 31 March

Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

1 heard at Ponta de Sao lourenco 2 April

Plain Swift (*Apus unicolor*)

2 seen from hotel every day and several groups observed around the island

Berthelot's Pipit (*Anthus berthelotii madeirensis*)

Common at Ponta de Sao lourenco, a few seen around the island.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea schmitzi*)

2-5 seen every day around the island

European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Common in many places

Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus merula cabreræ*)

Common in many places

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla eincken*)

Common in many places

Madeira Firecrest (*Regulus madeirensis*)

10 at riberio frio 31 March also heard and seen many places in the inland.

Rock Sparrow (*Petronia petronia madeirensis*)

Common at ponta de Sao lourenco

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs madeirensis*)

Common in the mountains

Canary (*Serinus canaria*)

Common around the island

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis parva*)

Common around the island

Mammals

Common Dolphin

2 seen from Porto Moniz 2 April

Reptiles

Madeira Wall lizard

Common

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