

The Canary Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

7 – 14 March 2015



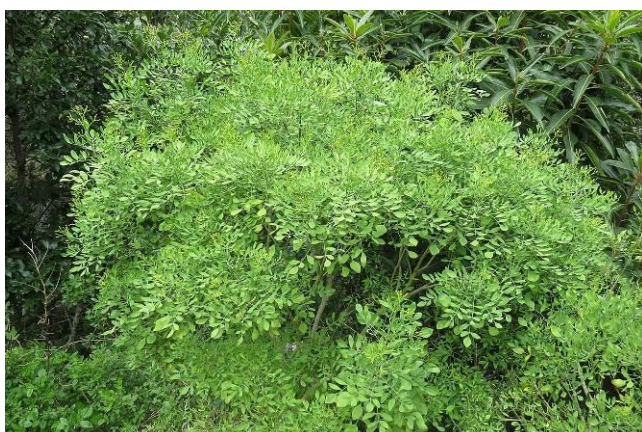
Barbary Partridge by Dave Stewart



Bolle's Pigeon by Tony Clarke



Houbara Bustard by Tony Clarke



Ruta microcarpa by Tony Clarke

Report compiled by Tony Clarke
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with 12 Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Saturday 7th March

Both the flight from Gatwick and that from Bristol arrived at Tenerife on time and the majority of the group met before collecting the minibuses. There was a minor problem with each bus which was resolved before we drove a short distance from the airport along the motorway to the next exit where we turned off for our lunch at Casa Pedro. En route we passed our first obvious plant species of the trip, the very cactus-like *Euphorbia canariensis*.

The trip started in earnest after lunch with a visit to Amarilla Golf where the dam at the entrance held three Eurasian Spoonbills, a Common Sandpiper and a Common Moorhen. The Eurasian Spoonbills turned out to be the only record of this species for the tour at what is now a regular site for this species on Tenerife during the winter. A wander around the nearby natural vegetation gave us a chance to look at some of the local plants including *Ceropegia fusca*, *Kleinia nerifolia*, *Launaea arborescens* (Barbed-Wire Bush or Spiny Lettuce), *Schizogyne sericea*, *Bassia tomentosa*, *Euphorbia balsamifera*, *Euphorbia lamareckii*, *Frankenia capitata*, *Limonium pectinatum*, *Plocama pendula*, *Lycium intricatum* and *Nicotiana glauca*.

From here we started our uphill journey to Vilaflor but we stopped on the way to observe the rare endemic *Sonchus canariensis* and other plants including *Pinus canariensis*, *Ferula linkii*, *Periploca laevigata*, *Argyranthemum gracile*, *Carlina salicifolia*, *Sonchus acaulis*, *Cistus monspeliensis*, *Convolvulus althaeoides*, *Adenocarpus foliolosus*, *Bituminaria bituminosa*, *Chamaecytisus proliferus*, *Spartium junceum*, *Oxalis pes-caprae*, *Eschscholzia californicum*, *Papaver somniferum*, *Rumex lunaria*, *Rubus ulmifolius* and *Forsskaolea angustifolia*.

Continuing on from Vilaflor up towards Mount Teide we passed many *Cistus symphytifolius* but unfortunately not a single example was in flower. Our next stop was in the Zona Recreativa de Las Lajas which is probably the best known site for the most popular of Tenerife endemic birds; the Blue Chaffinch. We soon located our first example before we had even stopped the minibuses and the show carried on once we got out. We saw both slaty-blue males with their large silvery-grey beaks, prominent broken eye-ring and striking white vent and the duller olive-brown females as they went about their business on and around the picnic tables and surrounding Canary Pines. There were also a few Atlantic Canaries in the picnic area and the local race of Great Spotted Woodpecker, but they took a bit of finding. This subspecies, predictably *canariensis*, is much duskier grey-brown on the underparts compared to the familiar north European *major* and its white underparts.

Moving on and up we next entered the Teide National Park but before this encountered a few high altitude endemic plants such as *Argyranthemum teneriffae*, *Cheirolophus teydis* and *Erysimum scoparium*. Inside the huge caldera of the volcano the vegetation is dominated by just a few very numerous species like *Descurania bourgeauana*, *Pterocephalus lasiospermus*, *Adenocarpus viscosus*, *Lotus campylocladus* and *Spartocytisus supranubius*. Mixed in with these dominant species we found a few additional species including the spectacular *Echium wildpretii* which when in flower has a large red flower spike. Unfortunately these plants don't come into flower until May/June but we did glimpse one plant with a few red florets. Also noted were a few *Carlina xeranthmoides*.

The next thing of note on our journey this afternoon was the interesting geological formation known as La Tarta (the cake) formed by the deposit of coloured layers from different eruptions of the volcano. Also in this area we saw a couple of Berthelot's Pipits that flew across the road as we were driving but they didn't stop for prolonged observation. The last part of the journey today was the descent of the mountain on the road to Arafo and Guimar which produced a few plants including *Artemisia canariensis*, *Echium virescens*, *Greenovia aurea* and *Sideritis oroteneriffae*.

We finally arrived at our base for the first few nights, the Finca Salamanca. After dinner a Long-eared Owl was heard by the leaders from their room but the bird was a long way away.

Day 2

Sunday 8th March

Today started with a shopping excursion to the supermarket at Punta Larga to purchase our picnic food for the next few days. As is now customary, a few of the group came with us to help whilst others remained with the vehicles to see if they could see any birds and identify any of the common plants on the waste ground near the parking area. No avian highlights here but the plants in the area included *Aizoon canariensis*, *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, *Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum*, *Echium plantagineum* and *Anagallis arvensis*.

After completing the shopping and getting it all loaded into the minibuses we continued on our way to the Anaga Peninsula and our first stop at the picnic area of Llano de Los Viejos. Here we had our first encounter with the Laurel forest and its inhabitants and the first bird noted was a Canary Island Robin. Some authorities now regard this bird as a species in its own right and separate from its European counterpart on account of its smaller, more red bib with a more extensive blue-grey surround, darker brown upperparts, whiter underparts and an obvious white eye-ring. The actual picnic area was closed off which restricted our movements in the area but we saw the local race of Common Chaffinch with its dark slate-blue upperparts and peachy-buff underparts, a possible split in the future, and the Tenerife Kinglet which has been split from Goldcrest in the past but seems now to be regarded as a subspecies again. It differs from the one in the UK in having the black lateral crown-stripes meeting on the forehead. The highlight of the day for the birdwatchers were the excellent, but brief, views of a few Bolle's Pigeons that came and perched in trees not far from the car park. Unfortunately they didn't stay in view for long and not everyone was able to observe them but for the fortunate ones the views were good and the important identification features of bill colour and tail pattern could be seen well. The plants among the Laurel forest included *Davallia canariensis*, *Ilex perado* ssp. *platyphylla*, *Hedera canariensis*, *Canarina canariensis*, *Viburnum rigidum*, *Erica arborea*, *Mercurialis annuus*, *Laurus novo-canariensis*, *Persea indica*, *Ranunculus cortusifolius*, *Phyllis nobla*, *Scrophularia smithii* ssp. *smithii* and *Arisarum vulgare*.

From here we drove the short distance through the laurel forest to the visitors centre at Cruz del Carmen where we added a couple more species to our ever increasing plant list: *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Erica scoparia* and *Luzula canariensis*. We then took the scenic road through the laurel forest to the village of Las Carboneras and then on to the tiny settlement of Chinamada. The roadsides were particularly rich in plant life and the new species included *Woodwardia radicans*, *Vinca major*, *Argyranthemum broussonetii*, *Aeonium holochrysum*, *Geranium reuteri* and *Sideritis macrostachya*.

Once we arrived in Chinamada we took advantage of the current good weather and had our picnic in the small square by the tiny church. As this was mainly a botanical stop we went for a walk in the early afternoon to the

Mirador de Aguaide concentrating on the very special plants on this part of the Anaga Peninsula. These included quite a few species seen nowhere else on the tour, and others a bit more widespread: *Selaginella denticulata*, *Polypodium macaronesicum*, *Achyranthes aspera*, *Daucus carota*, *Foeniculum vulgare*, *Andryala pinnatifida*, *Galactites tomentosa*, *Gonospermum fruticosum*, *Silybum marianum*, *Echium leucophaeum*, *Echium strictum*, *Descurainia millefolia*, *Paronychia canariensis*, *Polycarpha nivea*, *Stellaria media*, *Aeonium canariense*, *Aeonium lindleyi*, *Aichryson punctatum*, *Monanthes anagensis*, *Monanthes wildpretii*, *Fumaria capreolata*, *Sideritis dendro-chaborra*, *Plantago arborescens*, *Limonium macrophyllum*, *Rumex bucephalophorus*, *Rubia fruticosa*, *Cymbalaria muralis*, *Hyoscyamus albus*, *Parietaria filamentosa*, *Parietaria judacia*, *Dracaena draco*, *Romulea grandiscapa* and *Habenaria tridactylites*.

On our way back through Las Carboneras we saw a couple of basal rosettes from *Echium simplex* but these were not genuine wild examples. Once back on the Anaga Ridge we turned east and took the road towards El Bailadero and made the odd roadside stop on the way and as always there were a few new plants such as *Crambe strigosa*, *Sambucus palmensis*, *Aeonium ciliatum* and *Gennaria diphylla*. After a brief coffee stop at the new hostel at El Bailadero we drove down the Barranco de San Andres seeing *Hypericum canariensis* en route.

We wound our way down from the Anaga ridge to the south coast and were planning a visit to the beach at Las Teresitas but the number of people enjoying the good weather and a very well patronised triathlon in the area enforced a very brief stop. Not many gulls were present however we did see the first Lesser Black-backed Gulls of the tour before returning to our hotel for a well-earned dinner.

Day 3

Monday 9th March

Up early this morning and armed with our picnic breakfasts we boarded the minibuses for our drive to Los Cristianos where we were intending to catch the ferry to the neighbouring island of La Gomera. Upon arrival in the harbour we were advised that the Guardia Civil were conducting a security operation in the port which meant that getting on the ferry wasn't going to be as straightforward as normal. Basically everyone had to go through an airport style metal detector and x-ray machine which meant that the ferry was about 15 minutes late in departing.

On the way over we had some great views at Cory's Shearwaters as they effortlessly glided over the waves using their supreme control of the breeze. We also saw a few dolphins on the crossing, most of them were Atlantic Spotted Dolphins but some of us also saw a small pod of Short-beaked Common Dolphins; just three or four animals.

Once on La Gomera we visited the Parque del Conde where we saw our first Spanish Sparrows of the tour and a very diminutive African Grass Blue butterfly. Leaving the capital San Sebastian behind us we headed towards the interior of the island along the Barranco de La Villa and stopped between two of the tunnels for a short walk along a small section of the old road. Among plants such as *Echium aculeatum*, *Dicberanthus plocamoides*, *Monanthes laxiflora* and *Lavandula canariensis* we found our first few endemic Gomeran plants: *Aeonium castello-palvae*, *Aeonium decorum*, *Euphorbia bethelotii*, *Sideritis gomerae* and *Sideritis spicata*. Looking down the valley we noted *Phoenix canariensis* for the first time on the tour. A little further along the main road we saw *Sonchus hierrensis* and *Aeonium subplanum* before passing through the final tunnel and approaching the National Park.

As we turned off the main road to Hermigua we saw some worrying signs that were indicating the road we wanted to travel on through the National Park was closed. We drove past the first barrier and got to the edge of the National Park where we made a brief stop to look at an example of *Arbutus canariensis*, and along a small trail we saw *Echium acanthocarpum* and *Ruta microcarpa*. We continued as far as we could along the road towards El Cedro but soon came to where there was a barricade across the road by the footpath through the mountain to El Cedro. We could go no further so we stopped here and took our picnic lunch at this spot. This proved to be a very good choice as there was a good period of pigeon activity during our lunch break when we saw at least half a dozen examples of both Bolle's and Laurel Pigeons. We didn't see any of these birds perched but the in-flight views were excellent and we could see the distinctive tail pattern on many of the birds we observed. During our time in this area the mist covering the higher parts of the valley lifted to reveal the reason for the road being blocked; a large landslide in the vicinity of the Mirador El Rejo was clearly the problem and may even have taken the road with it. Other plants of interest seen within the National Park included *Ageratina adenophora*, *Pericallis steetzii*, *Phagnalon rupestre*, *Sonchus ortunoi*, *Erysimum bicolor*, *Convolvulus canariensis*, *Aichryson laxum*, *Aichryson parlatorei*, *Greenovia diplocycla*, *Myrica faya*, *Galium aparine* and *Gesnouinia arborea*.

All too soon it was time to return to San Sebastian for our return crossing to Tenerife which was unfortunately less entertaining than the outward one with no sightings of Cetaceans and only Cory's Shearwaters as the avian highlight. Once back on Tenerife we went straight back to the hotel. En route some of the group in Tony's minibus saw *Astydamia latifolia* as we drove past on the motorway.

Day 4

Tuesday 10th March

Today was a day for a circumnavigation of the island and so after breakfast we took the TF 1 towards Santa Cruz turning off towards La Laguna on the TF 2 and then joining with the TF 5 and driving along the north coast of the island. Our first stop for the day was at the Mirador de Lagrimona to the west of Puerto de la Cruz and a known site for Laurel Pigeon on Tenerife. The birds were not being very obliging but we did see a few in flight, albeit rather briefly. Also at this lookout we saw the endemic Canary Large White butterfly, the endemic Tenerife (West Canaries) Lizard and a few plants including *Argyranthemum frutescens*, *Echium giganteum*, *Limonium arborescens* (planted by the lookout) and *Marvetella moquiniana*.

Moving a short distance along the north coast in a westerly direction our next stop was at the spectacular Barranco de Ruiz. This was going to be a quick stop to get a good look at *Aeonium tabulaeforme* but as is so often the case we found some other things of interest. We had only been out of the vehicles a few minutes when Barbara brought our attention to a raptor flying high over the western side of the barranco. It was quickly identified as a Barbary Falcon, or Barbara Falcon as it became affectionately known. The bird remained in view long enough for everyone to see it but unfortunately it was a little distant and plumage details could not be seen clearly. We didn't know it at the time but this was going to be the only encounter with Barbary Falcon during the tour. It appeared briefly on two other occasions but each time it was more distant and it was barely identifiable as a Falcon rather than a Kestrel. Not long after this we all had some excellent views of a Laurel Pigeon in flight showing its distinctive tail pattern in all its glory. Also here we saw a wild example of *Limonium arborescens* growing on the east side of the barranco but only viewable through a telescope plus other plants including *Sonchus leptocephalus*, *Convolvulus floridus* and *Juniperus turbinata* ssp. *canariensis*.

Moving on again, the next stop was at the irrigation tanks at Los Silos where we added Eurasian Coot to the bird list. By now it was getting late and so the last stop for the morning was the picnic area in Buenavista where we stopped for our lunch. After our picnic we took the road to Punta de Teno expecting to be stopped by the barrier but for some unknown reason it was unlocked today. We took advantage of this situation and drove in a short way to the Mirador de La Monja and then a little further to an area about 400 metres the other side of the tunnel. Both of these brief stops were made purely for botanical interest and were made in haste because we were not aware if the barrier we had come through might get locked again with us on the inside! The plants we saw in this area included *Ceropegia dichotoma*, *Argyranthemum coronopifolium*, *Cheirolophus burchardii*, *Pericallis echinata*, *Sonchus radicans*, *Sonchus capillaris*, *Vieraea laevigata*, *Crambe scaberrima*, *Polycarpaea carnosa*, *Monanthes polyphylla*, *Euphorbia aphylla*, *Lavandula buchii*, *Sideritis cretica*, *Lavatera acerifolia* and *Limonium fruticans*.

We removed ourselves before the barrier was closed and continued our journey around Tenerife by heading through probably the most scenic area of the island; driving through the Masca Valley with its high peaks, hairpin bends and small isolated village (this is the second most popular excursion with the tourists). For us it was another area where we could add to the ever increasing plant list with species like *Argyranthemum foeniculaceum*, *Aeonium haworthii*, *Aeonium pseudourbicum*, *Euphorbia atropurpurea*, *Spartocytisus filipes*, and finally just before leaving the valley a few *Orchis canariensis*.

We were now about as far away from the hotel as we could possibly get and continued our circumnavigation by going through Santiago del Teide, Tamaimo, Chio and Guía de Isora before joining the motorway near to Adeje and returning to the hotel via the Reina Sofía airport. This was a long day with a lot of kilometres being driven but we saw some of the most spectacular views on the island combined with some rare endemic birds and many endemic plants. Today was indeed a great day.

Day 5

Wednesday 11th March

Today we were travelling across to Fuerteventura so we didn't have a large amount of time before having to be at the airport. Our first stop after breakfast and checking out of Finca Salamanca was a brief look, from the outside, at the Pyramids of Guimar. Although thought to be a connection between the Egyptians and the pyramid civilisations of Central and South America, it is now believed that these were constructed as recently as the 19th century.

From here we drove a few kilometres along the old south road to the now disused hotel Valle de Guimar near the Mirador Don Martin. We parked here and then walked a short way back along the road to view the plant life of the Ladera de Guimar which included species like *Alagopappus dichotomus*, *Pericallis lanata*, *Sonchus gummifer*, *Crambe arborea*, *Lobularia canariensis*, *Pterocephalus dumetorus*, *Lotus sessilifolius* and *Rhamnus crenulata*.

It was time to turn our minds to another island but first we had to get to the northern airport of Los Rodeos where we had a snack before boarding the plane. After the short 45 minute flight and a short time sorting out the minibuses, we were underway on Fuerteventura and our first stop was at the Salinas de Antigua Golf and the small pond therein. Here we saw a pair of Ruddy Shelduck with their very cute ducklings, Little Egret, Eurasian Coot and two female Ring-necked Ducks. The latter are a rare visitor to the Canary Islands from North America but have been at this location for a while, in fact one of them was found by the Naturetrek tour which visited this island in November last year.

As there was still plenty of daylight left we headed south towards our hotel and then took the scenic route through the desert before checking in at the Sol Gorriones. Taking the scenic route meant driving through the natural park giving some good observation time in prime habitat for the Fuerteventuran avian desert specialities. At our first stop on the edge of the Costa Calma plain we had close up looks at the endangered endemic *Convolvulus caput-medusae*. Whilst most of the group were looking at the plants a displaying Houbara Bustard was spotted on a nearby ridge but it quickly disappeared from view and could not be relocated. Further along the track between La Pared and Costa Calma we located another Houbara Bustard and this one allowed us some good views before we ran out of time and had to proceed to our hotel for dinner; but not before we also had some good looks at a couple of Lesser Short-toed Larks

Day 6

Thursday 12th March

We were up early this morning for a pre-breakfast excursion into the nearby desert area where Lesser Short-toed Larks and Southern Grey Shrikes were singing, we had good views of a displaying male Houbara Bustard, and we heard a solitary Black-bellied Sandgrouse. The plants in this area included *Launaea nudicaulis*, *Pulicaria canariensis*, *Reichardia tingitana*, *Heliotropium ramosissimum*, *Atriplex glauca* ssp *ifniensis*, *Patellifolia patellaris*, *Suaeda mollis*, *Tragacanthum moquinii*, *Helianthemum canariense*, *Lotus lancerottensis*, *Ononis hesperia*, *Ononis laxiflora*, *Reseda lancerotae*, *Kickxia heterophylla* and *Zygophyllum fontanesii*.

After breakfast we headed off to explore the inland and our first stop was in the Barranco de La Pared where we came across our first Canary Islands Stonechat of the tour; a fine male which came and sat on the fence near to the cheese factory. Soon the dull female came down as well and we were able to watch the pair for a few minutes before they disappeared as quickly as they came.

Moving on, the next stop was in Pajara where the group had a wander around this very picturesque village whilst picnic provisions were purchased. The next scheduled stop was the Mirador above the Presa de Las Peñitas but our plans were changed when we discovered the road blocked by a bus which had gone into the roadside gully, and various recovery vehicles including a tow truck, two fire engines and a couple of Guardia Civil vehicles. As it was close to lunch time we had a rather impromptu roadside picnic whilst waiting for the road to clear. Whilst we were here we could walk back along the road to get good close up views of the endemic *Asteriscus sericeus* and a few members of the group saw a couple of Egyptian Vultures fly over at a great height. Fortunately the rescue vehicles were able to extract the bus from the gully fairly quickly and we were able to resume our journey after finishing our picnic.

A brief stop at the Mirador de Las Peñitas gave us some intimate interactions with the introduced Barbary Ground Squirrels. The next stop was in the Barranco de Las Peñitas which we accessed from the village of Vega de Rio Palmas. This area is usually one of the best on the island for dragonflies as there is usually a small trickle of fresh water in the valley bottom. The flash floods during the winter had obviously had an effect on the local Odonata species as very few were present. However the variety was good and we saw Sahara Bluetail *Ischnura sabarensis*, Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*, Broad Scarlet *Crocothemis erythraea*, Epaulet Skimmer *Orthetrum chrysostigma* and Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*. Also along this barranco, which is possibly one of the greenest natural areas on the island, we found the only example for the tour of Stripeless Tree Frog *Hyla meridionalis*, had some excellent views of Greenish Black-tip *Elphinstonia charlonia*, and saw the only African Blue Tits of the trip.

Continuing a short way along the Barranco de Betancuria we turned off towards the picnic area of Castillo de Lara and along the entrance road we soon located our only examples of *Caralluma burchardii* for the tour. This is an interesting succulent with huge winged seed pods and the only example of its genus in the Canary Islands. We found quite a few plants in a fairly brief period of time but unfortunately none of them were in flower.

By now the time was getting on in the afternoon but there was just enough time to check out the barranco near Casillas del Angel and the coastal section of the Barranco de La Torre for a roosting Egyptian Vulture before returning to our hotel for dinner. At the first location we saw very little and by the time we reached the latter the sun was very low in the sky and we were looking directly towards it. There was an Egyptian Vulture roosting on the cliff but the views were not good because of the light conditions.

We all met up again at the hotel after a long, but fulfilling day and we all enjoyed dinner before retiring early to bed.

Day 7

Friday 13th March

Today was our last full day in the field and we started with an early morning excursion to the desert plain behind Costa Calma. This morning we found the same displaying male Houbara Bustard, heard a Black-bellied Sandgrouse and finally located a single Cream-coloured Courser. The latter is possibly the most attractive of the Fuerteventura specialities with its sandy plumage and striking head pattern. We had some great views before it just continued running through the desert and out of view.

After breakfast we headed south onto the Jandia Peninsula in search of the rare and very locally distributed *Euphorbia handiensis* which looks very like a small cactus with thick succulent stems covered with spines. It is found in only a two known locations but fortunately one of those is easily accessible. We found the plants with ease but finding one in flower was another problem, in fact so much so we failed to find one. Returning towards the hotel we stopped in Morro Jable for the parakeets and were treated to both Ring-necked as well as the more numerous Monk.

Next we had a quick look at the beach at Risco del Paso before calling into Costa Calma for a snack lunch at the Pizza place. In the afternoon our first stop was at La Lajita just along the coast from Costa Calma. We were looking for Laughing Dove and we soon located some fine examples of this species. Laughing Dove is an African species which reached Fuerteventura some years ago now, liked what it found and then stayed on the island to become a resident breeding species. We also looked for butterflies in this area and the main find was a Lang's

Short-tailed Blue. Moving on, at the Barranco de Tarajalejo we saw *Limonium thouinii* and a species of Orobanche. From here we went back to the Barranco de La Pared and the Costa Calma plain before returning to our hotel

Day 8

Saturday 14th March

As today we were flying home we had little time for anything before checking in at the airport. However we did manage to squeeze in a very brief visit to the inland section of the Barranco de La Torre where we saw a few Trumpeter Finches drinking briefly at the edge of the small dam, a couple of Black-winged Stilts, a couple of Ruddy Shelduck, and over the nearby tamerisks were a group of hirundines consisting of a few Barn Swallows

and at least three Red-rumped Swallows. Spectacled Warbler was heard but unfortunately not seen. This was a nice final flurry to the tour.

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Species Lists

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

PHASIANIDAE

Barbary Partridge *Alectoris Barbara*

It was heard from the Finca Salamanca in the early morning on three dates and then two birds were seen on Fuerteventura on the 12th, one of which posed well enough for David to get a good photo of. This photo is reproduced on the front page of this report.

ANATIDAE

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

The only records of this recent coloniser from North Africa were from Fuerteventura. It was recorded from the Salinas de Antigua golf course where we saw a couple of pairs with chicks, and at the Barranco de La Pared.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Two immatures/females were on the pond at the Salinas de Antigua Golf Course on Fuerteventura on the 11th. This transatlantic species is a vagrant to the Canary Islands and occasionally one is found somewhere on the islands during the winter months.

PROCELLARIIDAE

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea borealis*

We saw more than four hundred of these graceful birds from the ferry crossings to and from La Gomera on the 9th. If you watch carefully you can see the wing tip just occasionally touch the top of a wave as the birds 'shear' over the sea.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Six feral birds were seen in the gardens of the Dunas Jandia Resort near Morro Jable on Fuerteventura on the 13th.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

The only record for the tour was three birds at Amarilla Golf dam on Tenerife on the 7th.

ARDEIDAE

Western Cattle Egret *Bulbulcus ibis*

The only record for the tour was unusually on Tenerife where one was seen at Las Chafiras on the 7th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

We saw a single bird on Tenerife on the 10th and then another individual on Fuerteventura on the 13th.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Just two single birds on Tenerife and one on Fuerteventura were the total for the tour.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*

The only records for the tour were two seen high over the mountains near Presa de Las Peñitas and a single adult on the cliff in the Barranco de La Torre on Fuerteventura on the 12th.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

One flew over the car park at the Hotel Finca Salamanca on the evening of the 9th but was not seen by a group member.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo insularum*

This species was surprisingly scarce on this tour with only two birds seen on Tenerife and a single on La Gomera.

FALCONIDAECommon Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* and *dacotiae*

F. t. canariensis was a widespread bird on Tenerife and La Gomera with a maximum of more than ten on the 10th.

F. t. dacotiae was recorded on three dates on Fuerteventura but a maximum count of only four birds in one day.

Barbary Falcon *Falco peregrinoides*

The only one recorded on the trip was a single or possibly two birds high over the Barranco de Ruiz on Tenerife on the 10th.

RALLIDAECommon Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

This was a rather scarce species this year with one at Amarilla Golf on the 7th and then two at Los Silos on the 10th, both locations on Tenerife.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Very few remained this year with just three at Los Silos on Tenerife on the 10th and one at the Salinas de Antigua Golf, Fuerteventura on the 11th.

OTIDAEHoubara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*

As is usual, this species was found on the plain behind Costa Calma and we recorded it on three dates but the maximum on any date was just two birds. It was nice to see that a male had returned to one of the traditional display sites and fortunately for us he was displaying.

BURHINIDAEStone Curlew *Burhinus oedipnemus insularum*

This species was heard by the leaders from their hotel balcony during the evenings of the 12th and 13th March.

RECURVIROSTRIDAEBlack-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Two were seen in the Barranco de La Torre (inland section) during our last morning on Fuerteventura.

CHARADRIIDAELittle Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Only seen on Fuerteventura this year where we saw two in the Barranco de La Pared and then another two along the barranco near to Casillas de Angel on the 12th and a couple in the Barranco de La Torre on the final morning of the tour

SCOLOPACIDAE

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One was seen at Amarilla Golf on Tenerife on the 7th and then one on Fuerteventura at the Salinas de Antigua Golf on the 11th.

GLAREOLIDAE

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*

We saw this species on the Costa Calma plain but this year it was a difficult bird to locate and after all our excursions into the correct habitat we only managed to find a single individual on the 13th.

LARIDAE

Atlantic Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michabellis atlantis*

This was a common and widespread bird seen almost daily throughout the tour and on all islands visited.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

This species was recorded from coastal areas of Tenerife with four at Playa de Las Teresitas on the 8th and Los Cristianos on the 9th.

PTEROCLIDIDAE

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

One bird was heard in the desert behind Costa Calma early morning on the 12th and 13th but unfortunately we could not find any others during the trip.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

This was a common and widespread species seen daily during the tour, with some fairly genuine looking Rock Doves seen on three dates on Tenerife.

Laurel Pigeon *Columba junoniae*

Our first encounter with this endemic pigeon was in the laurel forest of the Garajonay National Park on La Gomera where we saw at least six birds during our picnic stop. Then the following day at the Mirador Lagrimona on Tenerife where we saw a similar number of birds but the views were briefer and not as good.

Bolle's Pigeon *Columba bollii*

The first records of this species on the tour were from the forest around Llano de Los Viejos on Tenerife; the views were good but brief and not everyone managed to see the birds. The following day we saw at least half a dozen whilst having lunch on La Gomera and it was here that everyone saw this species. The dark terminal tail band was seen clearly on all the birds and made for easy identification.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

The only bird seen during the tour was at Vega de Rio Palmas, Fuerteventura on the 12th in was seen calling from the flower spike of an Agave.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

This was a common and widespread species seen daily during the tour.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

The only record for the tour of this recent coloniser was about six birds at La Lajita, Fuerteventura on the 13th.

PSITTACIDAERose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

One was seen in the same area as the following species.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

We saw four of this introduced species around the Dunas Jandia Resort, Morro Jable on Fuerteventura on the 13th. The numbers of this species in this area seems to have been declining in the last couple of years.

STRIGIDAELong-eared Owl *Asio otus canariensis*

If you were lucky you could hear this species in the grounds of the Finca Salamanca during the evenings of the 7th and the 9th.

UPUPIDAEEurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

We saw one on Tenerife on our first day but it was seen daily on Fuerteventura.

PICIDAEGreat Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major canariensis*

Three were recorded from the picnic area at Las Lajas, Tenerife on the 7th March.

LANIIDAEGreat Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor koenigi*

The only records were from Fuerteventura with a maximum of six on the 12th. The recent changes in taxonomy mean that this bird is no longer associated with *L. meridionalis* which is confined to the Iberian Peninsula.

CORVIDAENorthern Raven *Corvus corax tingitanus*

This species is rare on Tenerife but we saw four birds there on the 10th. It is much more numerous on Fuerteventura where it was recorded almost daily with a maximum of six on the 12th.

PARIDAEAfrican Blue Tit *Cyanistes ultramarinus desinger*

Two birds were seen along the Barranco de Las Peñitas at Vega de Rio Palmas, Fuerteventura on the 12th.

Canary Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae teneriffae*

This was a widespread bird on both Tenerife and La Gomera but this year it was not very numerous on either of the islands.

REGULIDAETenerife Kinglet *Regulus teneriffae*

This controversial species was rather elusive this year the only record being two seen at Llano de Los Viejos on Tenerife on the 8th and it was also heard the following day on La Gomera.

ALAUDIDAELesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens polatzeki*

We only recorded this species on Fuerteventura and only on the desert plain behind Costa Calma on the 11th and 12th.

PYCNONOTIDAERed-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Two of these escapes/introductions were seen at La Lajita, Fuerteventura on the 13th.

HIRUNDINIDAEBarn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

This species was only recorded from Fuerteventura with about half a dozen at the Barranco de La Torre on the morning of the 14th.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Three were seen late in the evening over the plantation at Costa Calma on the 12th.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

At least three were seen at the Barranco de La Torre on the morning of the 14th before we went to the airport for our flights home.

PHYLLOSCOPIDAECanary Island Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus canariensis*

This was a common and widespread species on Tenerife and La Gomera but during this tour it was more often heard than seen with up to a dozen birds seen on any single date.

SYLVIIDAEBlackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

This species was recorded from all the islands visited although on Fuerteventura it is just a winter visitor and was heard much more often than seen.

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

Rather unusually we did not see this species during the tour but we heard it on four dates, two on Tenerife and two on Fuerteventura.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala leucogastra*

We recorded this species on all islands visited but it was just single birds except for two seen on Fuerteventura on the 12th.

TURDIDAECommon Blackbird *Turdus merula cabreræ*

This endemic subspecies was common and widespread on Tenerife and La Gomera.

MUSCICAPIDAEEuropean Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

The only one recorded on the trip was a single bird seen on Fuerteventura on the 12th.

Canary Island Robin *Erithacus superbis*

Four birds were seen on Tenerife on the 8th.

Fuerteventura Stonechat *Saxicola dacotiae*

This highly prized endemic was seen on two dates on Fuerteventura, perhaps the best views being the pair seen at the cheese factory in the Barranco La Pared on the 12th.

PASSERIDAESpanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

We recorded this species first in the park in San Sebastian on La Gomera but it was most numerous on Fuerteventura.

MOTACILLIDAEGrey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea canariensis*

Just a few birds of this local race were seen on La Gomera and Tenerife.

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii berthelotii*

Just a few were seen on both Tenerife and Fuerteventura. This species was rather scarce on this tour but those we saw gave some great views.

FRINGILIDAECommon Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs canariensis*

Seen on both Tenerife and La Gomera but most numerous around the picnic area at Llano de Los Viejos on the 8th. The male is very different when compared to its northern European counterpart and must be a future candidate for promotion to full species status.

Blue Chaffinch *Fringilla teydea teydea*

At least half a dozen birds were seen well at the traditional site, the Las Lajas picnic area, on the day we arrived on Tenerife. This bird really is one of the highlights of the trip and on this tour is proved relatively easy to find and get good views of.

Atlantic Canary *Serinus canaria*

This species was seen on both Tenerife and La Gomera with the best views obtained around the drinking pool at Las Lajas on our first day.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*

Rather surprisingly the only record of this species on the tour was from La Gomera where we saw on the 9th.

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus amantum*

We struggled to find this species on Fuerteventura during the tour but we did see two on the 13th and then the following day a group of about eight birds came to drink briefly at the small dam in the Barranco de La Torre.

List of Reptiles and Amphibians

Stripeless Tree Frog *Hyla meridionalis*

Tenerife Lizard *Gallotia galloti*

Fuerteventura Lizard *Gallotia atlantica*

Canary Island Gecko *Tarentola delalandii*

List of Butterflies

Canary Islands Large White

Small White

Greenish Black-tip

Cleopatra

Small Copper

African Grass Blue

Monarch

Red Admiral

Macaronesian Red Admiral

Painted Lady

Canary Speckled Wood

Lang's Short-tailed Blue

List of Dragonflies

Sahara Bluetail

Epaulet Skimmer

Blue Emperor

Red-veined Darter

Broad Scarlet