

Madeira

8–12 July 2017

Pelagic Extension to 15 July

Participants

John Thorogood

Brian Roberts-Wray

Emma Rees-Wray

Massimiliano Dettori

James and Vivienne Harvey

Frederick Alway

Bahar Bilgen

William Dixon

Robin Griffiths



Leaders Catarina Correia-Fagundes and Hugo Romano

Trocaz Pigeon

Day 1 Most of the group arrived at Madeira's airport around 19:30 after a 40-minutes delay on the flight schedule and our guides were waiting for us outside the baggage claim to take us to the hotel. The drive to the hotel was only five minutes and after check-in we had dinner and a nice rest after it.

Day 2 We started the day visiting the most arid area in Madeira, on the eastern tip, Ponta de São Lourenço, where we watched Berthelot's Pipits, Eurasian Kestrels and Clouded Yellow Butterflies. We only had a glimpse of two Rock Petronias flying and sitting on a rock for less than 20 seconds which did not allow everyone to have a good look at them through the telescope. Then we drove to the centre of the village of Caniçal where we looked for Spanish Sparrows and where a male displayed quite well. A male Blackcap and Eurasian Collared-doves were also observed here. After we headed to the north side of the island, to Faial, in search for the endemic Trocaz Pigeon and where we were very successful watching a few flying and others sitting on branches on open view. Lunch was taken at a restaurant with a really nice view over the green cliffs diving into the blue of the ocean and from where we saw more Eurasian Kestrels and Trocaz Pigeons flying and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk. After lunch we walked around the gardens of the restaurant and enjoyed an amazing view of a Madeira Firecrest which we could even watch through the telescope as it was sitting so still. A few European Greenfinches called on the top of some cypress trees together with Island

Canaries, European Goldfinches and Eurasian Blackbirds. The drive back towards Faial was along the old road, avoiding the long tunnels of the new road so we could stop to admire the view and to look for the endemic race of Common Chaffinch. We also heard a lot More Madeira Firecrests had and had some glimpses of them together with a Blackcap singing in the canopy of the trees below us but unfortunately we could not see it. We also had a good view of a Eurasian Sparrowhawk mobbing a Common Buzzard. Our last stop before getting back to Machico was at Porto da Cruz for some seawatching but only distant Cory's shearwaters were seen. Closer to the coast we had Yellow-legged Gulls, Common Terns and Plain Swifts. At night we were picked up at 21:15 and driven up to Pico do Arieiro, the third highest peak of Madeira at 1810 metres (approx. 6000 feet), where we started our 30-minute strenuous walk up the mountain. The night was amazing with very light wind, full moon and not cold and our observations of Zino's Petrels were equally successful with many heard and a few silhouettes seen. We arrived back at the hotel around 1:00am.

Day 3 After the long day before we started at 10:30 am with a sea trip on *Oceanodroma* rib, which departed from Machico harbour. There was some wind which helped to bring the seabirds closer to shore and so we had close views of lots of Cory's Shearwaters and a few Fea's Petrels. We only had one Bulwer's Petrel flying away from us but then we were gifted with some nice sightings of a group of Bottlenose dolphins and two Bryde's Whales. After a short stop at the hotel we went for lunch at Caniçal and then drove to Paul da Serra, the plateau on the west side of Madeira, where it was really cold (12°C) and windy which only allowed us to see a couple of Berthelot's Pipit and a few Eurasian Kestrels. We heard Common Quail and Red-legged Partridge but was not able to see either but Madeira Grayling was seen sitting on a rock. We then drove down to Ponta do Sol on the southwest tip of Madeira and observed a few Roseate Terns before heading back to the hotel in Machico

Day 4 First stop was at São Vicente to watch Trocaz Pigeons again. At this same spot there were Eurasian Kestrels flying around, Island Canaries and a European Robin singing. At the beach we saw both adults and juvenile Common and Roseate Terns and some Yellow-legged Gulls. We then drove to Chão da Ribeira, a valley covered in the native forest where we searched for Madeira Firecrests but only heard them. We did see Common Chaffinches and three different species of trees that belong to the *Lauraceae* family and which gave the name to the native forest, the Laurel Forest. Lunch was taken at Porto Moniz where we also spent some time seawatching but again, small numbers of Cory's shearwaters were the only seabirds species observed. The afternoon was spent at Ponta do Pargo, the westernmost tip of Madeira where we had good views of Pallid Swifts, Berthelot's Pipit, an Eleonora's Falcon – quite a rare record for Madeira, lots of Eurasian Kestrels, a few Eurasian Linnets and Spectacled Warblers. As for butterflies we observed Clouded Yellow, Long-tailed Blue and a Painted Lady. Then we returned back to Machico which took around 75 minutes.

Day 5 Not everyone on the group joined the extension of the program, which is a three-consecutive-afternoons pelagic expedition, so Emma, Brian and Massimiliano flew back today. The participants on the pelagic had a free morning and then departed for the pelagic at

15:00. The wind was light, blowing from NNE up to 8 knots and waves were from the same direction up to one metre. This first day was not so successful with mostly the very common species at the chum: Cory's Shearwaters and Bulwer's Petrels with only four Manx Shearwaters and one Great Shearwater which was unexpected so early as they normally pass by Madeira on their migration at the end of the summer. We also saw a pod of Common Bottlenose Dolphins together with two Bryde's Whales and later on a group of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins.

Day 6 A free morning allow us to rest the body from the physically demanding sea trip of yesterday. Then, after lunch at the hotel, we met Catarina and Hugo at Machico harbour to board the *Oceanodroma* rib for another adventure in the North Atlantic ocean. Stronger winds between 15 to 20 knots from a northerly quadrant and northeast waves up to 1.5 metres brought to the chum some really nice seabirds: five Fea's Petrels, eight Band-rumped Storm-petrels and two White-faced Storm-petrels were the highlights between the hundreds of Bulwer's Petrels and Cory's shearwaters. No sea mammals were observed today.

Day 7 Again, the morning was taken to relax and the afternoon for another pelagic trip. A rougher day at sea with the northerly wind blowing up to 13 knots and a 2-metre swell from northeast – conditions that made the trip less comfortable for some people but really nice for the seabirds. We saw only one Zino's Petrel but it was really well observed by all on board while flying close to the boat and to the chum slick and consequently, easily identified as *Pterodroma madeira*, specially after having seen five Fea's Petrels on the day before. Other seabirds watched were a Wilson's Storm-petrel, three Band-rumped Storm-petrels and nine Manx Shearwaters – seven while sailing up to the chumming area and two while drifting along the chum. A pod of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins and two Loggerhead Turtles were also observed while riding towards the chumming area.

Day 8 The group had a free day and were picked up at 17:00 to be taken to the airport in order to check-in and fly back to UK. Although Madeira does not have many breeding species (only 47 in the whole archipelago) we did see 36 bird species on the main tour, including two species heard only and two introduced and on the pelagic extension we added another five more species to the list.

Species List

Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae/deserta*

Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira* - some silhouettes were seen on the night tour

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata* **Introduced**

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo buteo*

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis*

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* **Heard only**
Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix coturnix* **Heard only**
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*
Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*
Trocaz Pigeon *Columba trocaz*
Rock Dove *Columba livia*
Eurasian Collared-dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus brehmorum*
Plain Swift *Apus unicolor*
Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii*
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi*
European Robin *Erithacus rubecula rubecula*
Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula cabreræ*
Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*
Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*
Madeira Firecrest *Regulus madeirensis* **Endemic**
Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*
Rock Petronia *Petronia petronia petronia*
Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs maderensis*
European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*
Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina guentheri*
European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*
Island Canary *Serinus canaria*
Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* **Introduced**

Pelagic Extension Only

Band-rumped Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro*
White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina hypoleuca*
Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*
Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus puffinus*
Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*



Spectacled Warbler



White-faced Storm-petrel



Berthelot's Pipit



Trocaz Pigeon

Zino's Petrel



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