

Tenerife, October 26th – November 1st 2012



A relaxing holiday with plenty of opportunities to look for the endemics on this 'sunny island'. Unfortunately the weather chose otherwise and the 3mm October rainfall average was exceeded by over 150 !!

Staying half-board in the Villalba hotel in the mountain village of Vilaflor.

Due to the fires of the Summer and the bad weather of this week one of the more traditional sites at Erjos was not visited due to the extensive loss of the trees around the ponds while an attempt to walk to La Rasca lighthouse in the far south west and to check out the El Fraile reservoir were thwarted by a massive new banana plantation that prevents access to the road described in the old Gosney guide and an enormous metal fence prevents access to the reservoir walking from El Fraile in the east.

Sites visited

Las Lajas

The 'legendary' site was just 10 kilometres from the hotel and was visited four times during the week. The first of these was the most successful on the afternoon we arrived with the hot sunny weather resulting in water being scarce. The birds were queuing at a water puddle right at the back of the site next to a maintenance shed which gave ample opportunities to see and photograph Blue Chaffinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker (ssp. *Canariensis*), African Blue Tit and Atlantic Canary all at close range. The subsequent rain meant that birds were no longer tied to visiting this spot and the following visits meant the birds could still be found but much more elusive. Don't expect to use the café that the books and maps all list, this looked like it had been closed for a while.

Las Canadas

The vast Caldera that houses Mount Teide was home to Berthelot's Pipit, African Blue Tit and the Canarian subspecies of the Common Kestrel which looked smaller than its British counterpart and was certainly much more tolerant of people.

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Mirador La Grimona

With the cover around Erjos ponds destroyed by the August wildfires based on other trip reports this was the only location where we had any real hope of seeing the endemic pigeons. Located 5km west of Puerto de la Cruz on the TF5 this Mirador is a narrow pull off from the seaward side of the carriageway (it does have a signpost). With only Feral Pigeons early on it was not looking good but after 40 minutes a Buzzard lifted off the ridge and sent Pigeons scattering in all directions and a close fly-by revealed 3 Bolle's closely followed by a Laurel. If you visit this site take time to look over the wall opposite the ridge as we saw well in excess of 20 Canarian Lizards. A further Bolle's was sitting in a gully to the west of the Petrol station.



Canarian Lizard at Mirador La Grimona

Golf Costa Adeje

The most productive trips in terms of numbers of species were the two made to the scrubland just north of the golf course and south of the driving range, although the latter is being prepared for building. The first visit saw a peak of 6 Hoopoe's feeding together and both trips produced good views of Barbary Partridge, Canary Island Chiffchaff, Spectacled Warbler, 3 Southern Grey Shrikes (ssp. koenigi), Bethelot's Pipits and Broad Scarlet, Red-veined Darter and Red-veined Dropwing dragonflies.

Punta de Teno

The lighthouse down the 'closed road' and surrounding cliffs are meant to be the main area for Barbary Falcon but a combination of the time of year and lack of access due to the rain and high winds meant our only visit was unsuccessful. Spectacled Warbler, a vast flock of Canaries and Yellow legged Gulls were seen in this area but no Rock Sparrows were obvious.

Vilafior

The area and tracks around the village and hotel produced Barbary Partridge, Robin (ssp. Superbus), Blackbird and 6 Kestrel insect catching together in the valley just above the village. Birds from the hotel room also included Blue Chaffinch, a fly-through Grey Wagtail and the Canary Island Kinglet. Red-veined Darter, Island Darter and an unidentified large dragonfly species were all in this area.

Pico del Ingles

An arrival in mist was quickly rewarded by the strengthening wind clearing the stunning vista – only as it turned out as a precursor to driving rain ! The brief clearance allowed for a Buzzard circling below us and a fly through Bolle's Pigeon before the rain descended. Again if the information suggests there is a café here ignore it.

San Andres

The beach here had what looked like two different races of Yellow legged Gull with the more expected pale grey backed birds outnumbered by ones with a colour more closer to the Lesser Black Backed Gull.

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Species list

Barbary Partridge - *Alectoris barbara*

3 in flight together at Adeje golf on 28th followed by 2 more singles in flight. A pair and a single in separate locations around Vilaflor during the week and 2 separate groups of 2 back at Adeje Golf on 1st (below left).

Egret

A single distantly in flight towards El Fraile on 28th could not be identified as both Cattle and Little are now regulars here.

Common Buzzard - *Buteo buteo insularum*

Seen twice, once at Mirador La Grimona on 27th and another at Pico del Ingles on 30th

Kestrel - *Falco tinnunculus canariensis*

The Canarian Kestrel was common throughout, the peak was 6 hunting above Vilaflor catching insects 'Hobby-style' in mid air on 29th. Close birds were observed at Masca and near the Mount Teide visitor centre (below).



Yellow legged Gull - *Larus michahellis atlantis*

Atlantic sub species at Teno on 27th and again at Las Mercedes beach on 30th, others seen in flight throughout trip.

Laurel Pigeon - *Columba junoniae*

A single bird in flight at Mirador La Grimona on 27th

Bolle's Pigeon - *Columba bollii*

3 at Mirador La Grimona in flight together and another further along the road on 27th. 1 at Pico del Ingles on 30th

Collared Dove - *Streptopelia decaocto*

Widespread

Hoopoe - *Upupa epops*

6 together at Adeje golf on 28th (below) with further singles on the same day and again on 1st



Great Spotted Woodpecker - *Dendrocopos major canariensis*

8 'grey chests' were fighting in the 3 trees around the water hole at Las Lajas on 26th totally oblivious to anything else.

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Berthelot's Pipit - *Anthus berthelotii*

Everywhere. The 'tamest' birds seemed to be at altitude at the Parador de Canadas where they quite happily walked about under buses and cars (above).

Grey Wagtail - *Motacilla cinerea canariensis*

One flew through the hotel complex on 29th

European Robin - *Erithacus rubecula superbis*

This bright chested sub-species was only seen once at Vilaflor singing in front of the hotel on 29th

European Blackbird - *Turdus merula*

3 at Adeje golf on 28th, singles at other locations around the island

Spectacled Warbler - *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

Singles seen at Teno on 27th and Adeje on 28th and 1st

Canary Island Chiffchaff - *Phylloscopus canariensis*

Widespread. Best views were had at the Adeje Golf complex of singing birds.

Canary Island Kinglet - *Regulus regulus teneriffae*

Heard throughout, the only sightings of this bird were on the 29th near Vilaflor and La Caldera recreational area on 1st

African Blue Tit - *Cyanistes teneriffae teneriffae*

Las Lajas had 3 on 26th (below) and 10+ on 30th, also present in most locations across the island, call more like that of a Great Tit



Southern Grey Shrike - *Lanius meridionalis koenigi*

Seen at Adeje golf (above), birds singing in the drizzle on 28th and then 4 seen together having a territorial 'debate' on the 1st

Raven - *Corvus corax*

Seen at the recreation areas of Las Lajas on 30th and 3 at Chio on 27th and 1st

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Blue Chaffinch - *Fringilla teydea*

Las Lajas: 2 males and 2 females on 26th, 3 including 2 males on 29th, and 4 males on 30th feeding on the ground in heavy rain, while a pair were around the hotel grounds throughout the week.



Atlantic Canary - *Serinus canaria*

Groups of 20-30 common throughout, especially at Las Lajas on 29th and 100+ at Teno on 27th



Other wildlife

Canarian Lizard

Large numbers of varying sizes enjoying the sun at Mirador La Grimona on 27th

Bath White

The only butterfly of the trip seen at Parador Las Candas on 27th and Adeje on 1st

Red-veined Darter (left & centre below)

Females seen at Las Lajas on 29th and Adeje golf on 28th and 1st, while a male was found near Vilaflor on 29th

Red-veined Dropwing (below right)

Took a while to identify what this was but females were seen at Adeje golf on 28th and 1st

Broad Scarlet

A male at Adeje golf on 28th

