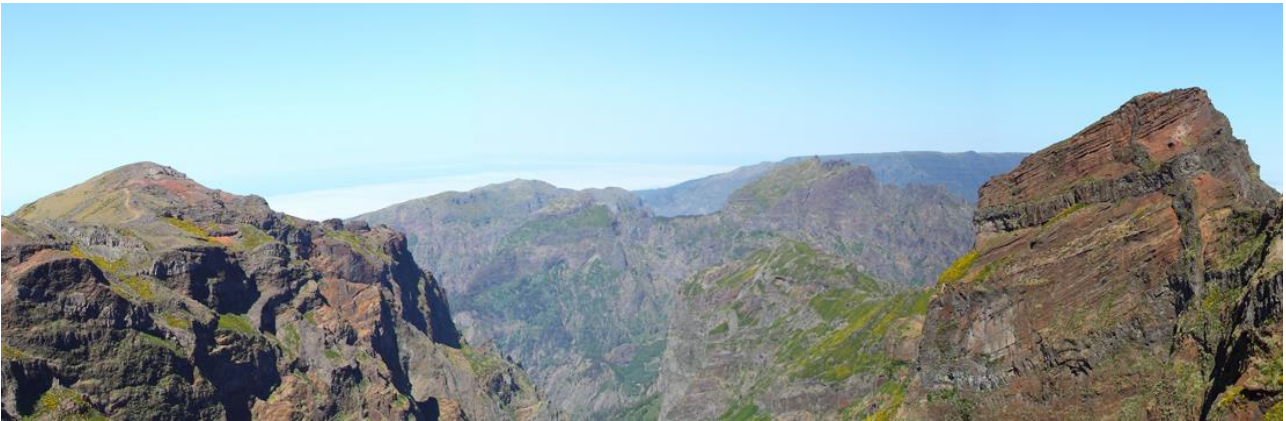


# Madeira

25<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 – Chris Barlow



A family holiday to Madeira, the first three afternoons spent on the Zino's Petrel Pelagic expertly run by Madeira Wind Birds out of Machico, the rest exploring the island looking for the endemics and island subspecies.

## 25<sup>th</sup> May

A late afternoon arrival with Canary at the airport and Plain Swift, Common Tern and Yellow-legged Gull from the hotel that overlooked the main harbour of Funchal.

## 26<sup>th</sup> May

A quiet morning before the 8 hour afternoon pelagic. With an hour to fill in Machico before the boat sailed, the river mouth held Goldfinch, Canary, Moorhen, Common Waxbill and a single Turnstone as well as Clouded Yellow and Monarch butterflies. Buzzard and Kestrel were both seen on the drive between Funchal and Machico.



The pelagic headed north east of the main island towards Porto Santo, as soon as the rougher seas were reached Cory's Shearwater and Bulwer's Petrel's started showing in good numbers. On reaching the chumming position the engines were barely off and the bait over the side before a close fly by of a Fea's Petrel, close enough for positive identification. Another pterodroma was too distant to identify and Yellow-legged Gull quickly found the chum line along with 2 European Storm Petrels. During the 4 hours in position 3 Zino's Petrel also passed close to the boat and a Manx Shearwater was also seen along with a pod of Atlantic Spotted Dolphin.

*Zino's Petrel at sea*

## 27<sup>th</sup> May

The Plain Swift's morning hunt over the hotel was joined by 3 Pallid Swift and several House Martin while this time further up river at Machico we found the long staying Ruddy Shelduck and several pairs of Grey Wagtail. The second boat trip headed due east out under Porto Santo the sea was calmer; not ideal conditions for seabirds but the chum line still picked up two new species for the trip with a lingering Wilson's Storm Petrel while a single Madeiran Storm Petrel passed over twice along with at one point 5 European Storm Petrel all on the chum together. The chum also drew in a Blue Shark just before dusk.



(left) *Wilson's Storm Petrel at sea*

### 28<sup>th</sup> May

With 'sea legs' now developed a morning venture to the freshwater at Lugar de Baxio was rewarded by two Spoonbills and a fly-over adult Night Heron as well as two Grey Herons. Flat calm and sunny conditions were not ideal for the final pelagic which headed south out between Madeira and the Desertas Islands and early on a Loggerhead Turtle was looking like being the highlight. After two hours though the wind and swell picked up and a 'crazy' two hours followed with 2 European Storm Petrel, 5 Fea's Petrel, another Wilson's Storm Petrel and then the bird top of everyone's wish list on the boat White-faced Storm Petrel came onto the chum with its amazing trampoline like bouncy flight while feeding. While we were watching the Petrel a 1<sup>st</sup> summer Sabine's Gull passed over the boat and within a few minutes an adult Long-tailed Skua. On the return voyage large rafts of Cory's Shearwaters started forming and a total of 7

Madeiran Storm Petrel's flew across the boats path. A pod of playful Common Short-beaked Dolphin halted the return trip while a Flying Fish flew over the boat just after dark !



*White-faced Storm Petrel*

### 29<sup>th</sup> May

The first full day on land was rewarded with strong sunshine. On the way west Lugar de Baxio was revisited, 1 Spoonbill remained along with a juvenile Night Heron that had joined the adult.

Ponta do Pargo on the far North West corner holds some scrubland around the lighthouse, Berthelot's Pipit was easy to find and a pair of Spectacled Warblers were tracked down in the gorse. While watching those a Kestrel was hunting and another bird of prey appeared which quickly turned out to be a female Red-footed Falcon (right), the sole remnant of a huge influx of 18 birds the week before. The Falcon provided some stunning views as it landed close by on a fence post before the Kestrel chased it away. Around the lighthouse the Plain Swift were joined by several Barn Swallow.

Walking along the Jardim Levante proved fruitless in the search for Trocaz pigeon but excellent views of Madeiran Firecrest and Madeiran Chaffinch were a good reward. After dark back at the hotel we were rewarded with close flyby views of calling Cory's Shearwater from the balcony.



### 30<sup>th</sup> May

Another calm sunny day so a trip to the high tops. More good views of Berthelot's Pipits and Plain Swift on the way up before another attempt to find the Trocaz Pigeon at Balcoes was unsuccessful although the Chaffinch were stunningly tame here. The roadside verges of Ribeiro de Frio at the start of the walk to Balcoes viewpoint held the endemic Madeiran Marsh Orchid and Pride of Madeira which attracted Madeiran Cleopatra butterflies. The return trip was scuppered by encountering the Monte Rally, unadvertised anywhere which resulted in a 2 hour delay in roasting heat. The silver lining to this however was the dead-end we were detoured down to the Pico Alto picnic area disturbed a Trocaz Pigeon from a road side puddle !

After getting back to the hotel another trip out to Ponta de Lourenco in the late afternoon was rewarded with a much quieter track as a result of most walkers having finished and a large flock of Canaries, Goldfinch and Berthelot's Pipit also revealed several Rock Sparrow, one determinedly pursuing a Hummingbird Hawkmoth across the rock face.



*Madeiran Chaffinch at Balcoes*

### 31<sup>st</sup> May

A quieter day on the Sunday with the botanic gardens in Funchal and Monte both visited. The walk to the cable car to the former produced a lone Whimbrel (below) feeding on a roundabout. Blackcap were very visible in both parks as was the sub-species of Robin found on the island and the Madeiran Firecrest was constantly heard.



## 1<sup>st</sup> June

A revisit to Ponte do San Lourenco before flying home in the afternoon produced no new species; the sheer volume of people walking the path meant that only Berthelot's Pipit and Canaries were heard.

Overall a very successful trip, the pelagic run by Catarina and Hugo of [www.madeirawindbirds.com](http://www.madeirawindbirds.com) despite being expensive cannot be recommended enough, their knowledge and identification skills in the deep ocean provided excellent close views of all the specialist seabirds and other wildlife.

### Bird Species List - 41

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* – long staying adult on Machico river on 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>



Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* (above) – Seen on all three pelagics and nightly from hotel balcony

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* – 1 on 26<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>



Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* (above) – On all three pelagics in good numbers

Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae* – 1 on pelagic on 26<sup>th</sup> & 5 on 28<sup>th</sup>

Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira* – 2 on pelagic on 26<sup>th</sup>

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* – 5 on 26<sup>th</sup>, 6 on 27<sup>th</sup> & 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* – 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>

Madeiran Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma castro* – 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 7 on 28<sup>th</sup>

White-faced Storm Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* – 1 on chum on 28<sup>th</sup>

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – Adult at Lugar de Baixo on 28<sup>th</sup> joined by a Juvenile on 29<sup>th</sup>

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* – 2 at Lugar de Baixo on 28<sup>th</sup>

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* – 2 at Lugar de Baixo on 28<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 29<sup>th</sup>

Buzzard *Buteo buteo* – Machico

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – Machico

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* – female near Ponte do Pargo lighthouse

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – Machico

Coot *Fulica atra* – 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> at Lugar de Baixo

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* – Machico

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* – Funchal on 31<sup>st</sup>

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* – adult on 28<sup>th</sup>

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis* – Daily around the harbour and seen on all the pelagics

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini* – 1<sup>st</sup> summer on pelagic on 28<sup>th</sup>

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* – Machico

Trocaz Pigeon *Columba trocaz* – 30<sup>th</sup> near Pico Alto picnic area

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* – 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> in Funchal



Plain Swift *Apus pallidus* (above) – Daily

House Martin *Delichon urbicum* – A few hunting on sea front from hotel balcony in Funchal

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – Ponte do Pargo lighthouse on 29<sup>th</sup>

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii madeirensis* – on the barren ground at Ponte do Pargo on 29<sup>th</sup>

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi* – 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* – Botanic Gardens, Funchal on 31<sup>st</sup>

Blackbird *Turdus merula cabrerae* - Daily

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla (heineken)* – Seen most days

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata bella* – pair walking to Ponte do Pargo lighthouse on 29<sup>th</sup>

Madeiran Firecrest *Regulus madeirensis* – 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>



Rock Sparrow *Petronia Petronia madeirensis* – 30<sup>th</sup> at Ponte do San Lourenco

Madeiran Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs madeirensis* – 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva* – Machico

Atlantic Canary *Serinus canaria* – Machico on 26, 27 & 28<sup>th</sup>, Ponte do San Lourenco on 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* – Machico

## Butterflies



Monarch (above) *Danaus plexippus* – Funchal & Machico

Lang's Short Tailed Blue *Leptotes pirithous* - Funchal

Long Tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*

Small White *Artogeia rapae* – Machico riverbed

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea* – Machico riverbed & Ponte do San Lourenco

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* – Most wooded areas now out numbers the Madeiran Speckled Wood

Madeiran Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas phlaeoides* – single on 30<sup>th</sup> May heading into the mountains

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* – On roadside near the high summit

“Macronesian” Red Admiral *Vanessa vulcania* - On roadside near the high summit

Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra* – Balcoes

## Other notable wildlife

Madeiran Wall Lizard *Teira dugesii* – common in the parks of Funchal

Atlantic Spotted Dolphin *Stenella frontalis* – Pelagic on 26<sup>th</sup>

Blue Shark *Prionace glauca* – Pelagic on 27<sup>th</sup>

Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta* – Pelagic on 28<sup>th</sup>

Common Short-beaked Dolphin *Delphinus delphis* – Pelagic on 28<sup>th</sup>



Madeira Marsh Orchid (below) *Dactyloriza foliosa* - Ribeiro de Frio roadside on 30<sup>th</sup>