

Lanzarote 19th -26th November 2020

We decided to have a short winter break on Lanzarote, flying direct from Edinburgh with Ryanair. Accommodation was arranged via Booking.com in a self-catering apartment in Arrecife. Finally we booked a car getting a good deal from Autoreisen.

19th November. We arrived around midday and picked up the car from the very efficient Autoreisen staff at the airport. Drove into Arrecife and down to the shore to search for the Belted Kingfisher that had been present since the 8th November. There was a strong northerly wind and despite searching much of the shore we could not find the bird. The rocky platforms along the shoreline, especially around Castillo de San Gabriel held a variety of waders with small numbers of **Ringed Plover**, **Kentish Plover**, **Grey Plover**, **Sanderling**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Turnstone**, **Whimbrel** and a single **Dunlin**. There were also **Little Egrets**, **Grey Heron** and two **Great Cormorant**. In the bay a large flock of **Yellow-legged Gulls**, with up to three **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and a first winter **Mediterranean Gull**. Offshore up to nine **Sandwich Tern**.

20th November. An early start as I headed back down to the shore for first light. Soon I located the immature male **Belted Kingfisher** on the rocks by the road just beyond the castle. It then flew across the road to a large pool on the rock platform, where I watched it catch, dispatch and devour a reasonably large fish. It then spent a lot of time sitting and preening. After breakfast I returned with Dora but there was no sign of the bird.

We then drove north to Costa Teguisse and birded in some of the parks/gardens around the resort. Lots of **Collared Doves**, our first **Common Kestrels**, a few **Linnets** and **Spanish Sparrows**, a couple of **Black Redstart** and the highlight - a **Yellow-browed Warbler**. Returned back to the shore for high tide, but still no further sign of the kingfisher, so had to make do with a nice ice cream.

21st November. A more leisurely start as we headed north to Costa Teguisse golf course, entering through a gap in the fence at the southern boundary of the course. We walked around outer edge of the golf course and were struck by the large numbers of often very confiding **Barbary Partridges** (c50). Also lots of **Berthelot's Pipits**, a pair and a singing **Hoopoe**, another two **Black Redstart** and a **Common Chiffchaff**. Nice views of a single **Plain Swift** and also had **Ravens** flying overhead. As the morning progressed the course began to get busier and although no one asked what we were doing we decided to move on.

Drove south to Lanzarote's other golf course – Tias Lanzarote Golf just above Puerto del Carmen. Arrived to find the course was closed but that access was easy. Walked round the fairways finding a couple of **Cattle Egrets**, two **Great Grey Shrike**, lots of **White Wagtails** and **Berthelot's Pipits** and more surprisingly a small flock of 12 **Red-throated Pipit**. Nice views of six **Trumpeter Finch**. Unfortunately the pool at the top end of the golf course, which can be a bit of a magnet for birds, was completely dry.

22nd November. Drove to one of Lanzarote's top birding sites – the Teguisse plain. Entered it just off the LZ402 and crisscrossed the various tracks between that road and the villages of Tao and Munique. The vegetation was very desiccated and bird numbers very low. Found a couple of **Spectacled Warblers**, a few **Great Grey Shrikes** and eventually two **Houbara Bustard**, both in areas of slightly greener vegetation higher up on the southern slope. In a large ploughed field below Teguisse found a flock of c80 **Lesser Short-toed Larks**.

Stopped for lunch in Teguisse then drove south on LZ30 before turning off left on LZ408 towards Nazaret. After 1km turned right onto a dirt track that headed up to an agricultural area around 9.036N, 13.587W. I then walked around the extensive area of fields. This was a very good area for birds. Had large flocks of **Lesser Short-toed Larks** (c300) and a few **Skylark**. In one carrot field two **Yellow Wagtail**, a **Red-throated Pipit**, two **Blackcap**, a **Common Chiffchaff**, a **Stonechat**, a **Song Thrush** and a few **Linnet**. By a large pile of chicken droppings 14 **Cattle Egret**, 10 **Stone Curlew**, a few **Hoopoe** and a flock of 25+ **White Wagtails**. In one harvested field flushed three **Barbary Partridges** and in another excellent views of a wee group of five **Cream-coloured Courser**. We drove right across the area to the LZ34 near the wind turbines getting excellent close views of five different **Houbara Bustards** feeding in some of the weedier crop fields. A very nice area!

23rd November. Drove over to the west side of the island to the Salinas de Janubio. It is not possible to get entry, but we found we could walk along the east side of the salt pans following a track from the parking area by the gift shop. Later we drove to the seaward side of the lagoon, where there is a car park above the beach. From here you can access the west side of the lagoon and check some small pools just behind the beach. Out on the lagoon were 55 **Black-necked Grebe**, mostly in one tight flock. Scattered about the site were at least 24 **Ruddy Shelduck**. Waders

comprised 26+ **Black-winged Stilts**, 20 **Sanderling**, 15 **Common Redshank** along with a few **Greenshank**, **Ringed Plover**, **Turnstone**, a **Little Stint** and 8+ **Common Sandpiper**.

Eventually headed into Timanfaya NP and did the tourist thing by getting the bus tour round the volcanic craters. Quite spectacular and well worth the 12Euro fare.

24th November. Today we went north. First stop was at Tabayesco where we parked the car on the western edge of the village and waked up through Baranco de Chafaris. There were some gardens with good cover and near the top some agricultural holdings which held quite a few birds. Saw several **African Blue Tit**, a pair of **Sardinian Warbler**, a few **Spectacled Warbler** and at least six **Canary**. Near the top, with the **Collared Doves** were three **Laughing Doves**. Continued north to Mirador de Rio, but did not pay to enter as you get a good view by just waking a wee bit down the road. Scanned the salinas down by the shore seeing another pair of **Ruddy Shelduck**. Then went to Mirador de Guinate where down on the rocky shore I picked out two **Spoonbills** feeding in the larger rock pools.

Returned to Arrecife for another look at the shore and to our delight refound the **Belted Kingfisher** on the island by the wooden bridge. Got excellent views. As we returned to the car disturbed two noisy **Ring-necked Parakeets**.

25th November. Our final full day. Returned to Costa Teguisse golf course in the morning. It was much quieter than on our previous visit, though with the exception of a **Sardinian Warbler** and a small flock of **Linnet** birdwise things were pretty much the same as on our previous visit.

Returned to the agricultural area near Nazaret. Being a weekday there was a lot more activity in the fields and so many fewer birds. For instance only found one **Houbara Bustard** and just three **Stone Curlew**. New species located included a **Northern Wheatear** and couple of small flocks of **Meadow Pipit**. Returned to Arrecife for a final look at the shore, but nothing much of note seen so treated ourselves to a final ice cream.

We thoroughly enjoyed our trip, which was fairly relaxing. Saw 58 different species, including the key target bird.

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Belted Kingfisher



Houbara Bustard



Cream-coloured Courser



Red-throated Pipit