

Tenerife

March 27th 2013 - April 3rd 2013

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We decided to go to Tenerife for a week on a family holiday. I spent a few hours per day and one full day on bird watching. With the right preparation it is possible to see all target species in one day, which I did on April 2nd. A telescope is not really needed. I only used my Zeiss 8 x 42 binoculars.

Preparation:

I contacted an ex-colleague who moved to Tenerife some years ago. He owns a house in Grandilla de Abona and the top floor is a fully equipped apartment which is for rent. Fortunately, it was available for that week. We booked a flight via Transavia, having a direct flight from Amsterdam Schiphol to Tenerife South Airport. A car was rented via doyouSpain.com which is a car rental broker with very low tariffs. We ended up with a Volkswagen Up from Avis, for less than 20 euro per day.

Flight and accommodation:

We left Schiphol Airport at 14:30 and arrived on Tenerife at 18:00. There is one hour time difference with The Netherlands. We collected the car and drove to Granadilla, which was only a 20 minutes drive. The village is located 600 above sea level, close to Villaflor, which is the highest village in Spain. The self contained apartment is absolutely great. It is located in a very quiet “suburb” of Grandilla and the motorway, which surrounds most of the island is only 10 minutes away. In Granadilla itself and the surrounding area there are a number of excellent restaurants. Interested birders can contact the owner at

birdingaccommodation@gmail.com

I certainly recommend this place. It is a perfect central location for birdwatchers. Besides, the owner knows the directions to all the birding hotspots, as he joined me on most trips this week.

March 28th 2013.

I went to Las Lajas, the “famous” picknick area above Villaflor. On our way, we saw one **Barbary Partridge**, being the only one for this trip. Las Lajas is easy to find. Follow road TF-21 and after approx 10 km from Villaflor you will find the place properly signposted at the left side of the road. Early in the morning **Blue Chaffinch** and **Atlantic Canary** are numerous. I saw about 10 each. **African Blue Tit** (Tenerife subspecies), **Raven** and the Canarian subspecies of the **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were easy. After the 2011 fire, Tenerife Goldcrests, by some considered as full species, are not seen here anymore. We also saw 2 **Barbary Falcons** circling above the picknick place, for at least 10 minutes. They were much bigger than the **Kestrels** that were present as well.

In the afternoon, we took the road TF-24 to Port de la Cruz. The lava fields from the Teide were very impressive. On the few stops we made, we saw some **Berthelot's Pipits**.

From Port de la Cruz, you follow the TF-5 westwards. Where the motorway continues as a dual carriageway there are two tunnels, about 50 meters length each, close to each other. Immediately after the second you can park your car at Mirador (=viewpoint) Las Grimonas, which is properly signposted. I scanned the slope and at the left hand side of the hill I had at least 3 **Laurel Pigeons** easily recognised by the white tail band. Soon after I saw some

pigeons flying at the right side of the hill. No white in the tail, so probably Bolle's Pigeons, but I was not sure whether this species was seen here before. Note: Other trip reports indicated the presence of Bolle's Pigeon here.

Plain Swifts and **Canary Islands Chiffchaffs** were abundant at all places around the island.

March 29th 2013

I only spent two hours and went to the Amarilla Golf Course, which is located a few km south west of the airport. There is a concrete reservoir north of the golf course where I saw 6 **Eurasian Spoonbills** a **Grey heron**, **Little Egrets**, a **Green Sandpiper**, **Yellow-legged Gulls** and a group of **Spanish Sparrows**.

At the rough edges of the course and the Barranco's in that area, I had **Hoopoe**, **Southern Grey Shrike** and many **Berthelot's Pipits**.

March 30th 2013.

I spent the morning in El Fraile / Las Galletas, which is the most south-western corner of the Island. Most people park their car next to the old football "stadium" at the end of the Calle Fuerteventura and walk in this semi desert area. I did the same, but took the car with me a few days later. It was hard work. Besides the **Plain Swifts** and **Berthelot's Pipits** it was quite disappointing. Only two **Southern Grey Shrikes** and some **Linnets**. Going back, I found the same birds as yesterday, plus a **Ringed Plover** in the Amarillo reservoir.

We were in Tenerife in the week before Easter, called Semana Santa. In the afternoon we visited a procession in La Laguna, which was impressive.

March 31st 2013.

We spent the whole day visiting the western part of the Island, including the beautiful drive on the TF-346, passing Masca. We stayed a few hours in the Punto Teno area. I saw hardly any birds that I had not seen the days before. In Masca I spotted a **Sardinian Warbler** and **Song Thrush** and at Punto Teno just a few short views on **2 Spectacled Warblers**. I stopped at the famous spot for Barbary Falcon, but could not find it. I did not spend too much time, as I saw them already and because parking was difficult and dangerous.

April 1st 2013.

I spent the whole morning driving around in the El Fraile area. Roads were a bit rough, but that was not too big of a problem. Passing the Amarilla reservoir, I had **Common Greenshank** and **2 Common Moorhens**, in addition to the species I saw on the previous days. El Fraile delivered the following species: **2 Pallid Swifts** amongst the many plain ones, **2 Hoopoes** displaying very well, **4 Southern Grey Shrikes**, a **Grey Wagtail** and the abundant **Berthelot's Pipits**.

At the end of the morning I went to Las Galletas, which is only a few km from El Fraile. From the pebble beach I saw many **Cory's Shearwaters** and on some small off shore rocks I had **4 Cormorants**. These were never mentioned in any trip report. Did I discover a new species for Tenerife? Back home, searching the internet, I noticed that these birds were only recently spotted.

April 2nd 2013.

This was the day I wanted to see all Tenerife target species in one day. We left the house at 06:30 to be on time the known Bolle's Pigeon spot North-east of Las Mercedes. Via the motorway up north we drove to San Cristobal de la Laguna. From here we took the TF-12 north passing Las Mercedes. Just a few km north of Las Mercedes you will find the well

signposted picknick area called El Llano de las Viejos. We parked the car and walked to the picknick area where we were the first visitors this morning. The Wood Pigeon-like sound of the wing flapping alarmed us and it was not difficult to find the **Bolle's Pigeon**. We saw 3 roosting in the trees and at least another 4 flying around. This absolutely the best spot to see this rare pigeon, since the Erjos area has been burned down. We also had one **Robin** of the Canarian subspecies *superbus* and at least 15 **Chaffinches**, which look completely different from the ones in Europe. **African Blue Tits** were numerous and I had a glimpse of the **Tenerife Kinglet** and saw one **Grey Wagtail**.

From here we drove to the Mirador Las Grimonas (see March 28th), where we easily found 5 **Laurel Pigeons**. **Yellow-Legged Gulls** and **Cory's Shearwaters** were not too far.

Next stop was the Erjos ponds, which was quite disappointing due to the fires, but we still managed to see **Blackbirds**, **Blackcap** (subspecies *Heineken*), **Sardinian Warbler** and a few **Eurasian Coots**, 2 **Moorhens** and a **Casarca** on the ponds. Two **Buzzards** were circling and on our way we had 2 **Barn Swallows**, **Kestrels**, **Sparrowhawk** and a **Laughing Dove**. **Plain Swifts**, **Berthelot's Pipits** and **Canary Island Chiffchaffs** were abundant.

It was still only mid day and the next stop was Teno Alto, a place that we passed on the 31st. You will find the small road to Teno Alto from the TF-346 in the north western part of the Island. In fact, Teno Alto is only a km from Punto Teno, but just at the other side of the mountain. After a curvy road, you arrive in the village, which is not more than a few houses. Pass it and search wires, roads and fields for the target species. We found 5 **Corn Buntings** on the wires and 2 **Rock Sparrows** on the small walls surrounding the fields. It's a beautiful area to walk around for an hour or so. Also the forest around Teno Alto looks promising, although we did not had time to do so.

Last stop of the day was another picknick area in the pine forest near the Teide. The area is called Zona recreativa Chio Pinar. Coming from Teno Alto, you take the TF-38 in Chio. Only a few km's before you reach the TF-12 you find the picknick area at your right hand side and is well sign posted.

This area is better than Las Lajas (see March 28th) as the fire never reached this place. We saw at least 25 **Blue Chaffinches**, 10 **Atlantic Canaries**, 5 **Great Spotted Woodpeckers**, many **Ravens** and some **Berthelot's Pipits** and **African Blue Tits**. Unfortunately no **Tenerife Kinglets**.

This was the end of a full day birding where we saw all Tenerife species and subspecies.

April 3rd 2013.

On this last day of the holiday, we would make a boat trip to see dolphins and whales, with the possibility to see some seabirds as well. Arriving in Los Cristianos there was a very hard southern wind, which made it impossible to sail that day. Because of the hard wind, seabirds were quite close to the shore and amongst the many **Yellow-legged Gulls** and **Cory's Shearwaters**, I found one bird that was smaller, all black and had long pointed wings; the **Bulwer's Petrel**. **Turnstones** were present on the beach.

From there I drove to Montana Roja the distinctive mountain just south of the airport. Just next to the car parking I finally had very good sights of 2 **Spectacled Warblers**.

Before leaving Tenerife, I spend more than an hour in the pine forests between Granadilla and Villaflor to have a better view of **Tenerife Kinglet**, but unfortunately, I didn't because of the hard wind.

This was the end of a nice holiday break, where I managed to see all the target species. We left Tenerife and arrived in Amsterdam at midnight.