A quest for island endemics (and some very localized sub-species) and a great opportunity to catch-up with old friends from Venezuela brought me to Tenerife in Spain’s Canary Islands for a weekend from Geneva. With a hire car, Tony and Rita Crease, Paula Sifontes and Mathias Gonzalez and I spent a very productive day covering most of the top birding sites (and bagging all the wanted birds) on 9 April.

We started out from the island capital, Santa Cruz at dawn and started birding at a site, La Grimona, along the coast road, north of the city. From the road (and with scope), we managed most of our key targets:

1. **Bolle’s Pigeon, *Columba bollii* (E)** – distinguished by its dark tail, crossed with a grey band. Several were seen perched in the early morning sun and later feeding in laurel trees.
2. **Laurel Pigeon, *Columba junoniae* (E)** – one seen flying with distinct white tail tip. Later several more seen in laurels at other sites.
3. **Rock Dove, *Columba livia*** – the original ‘wild’ form of the Feral Pigeon; relatively common on cliff sides (not in urban areas).
4. **Atlantic Canary, *Serinus canaria* (E)** – very common in low heath, often perched and singing
5. **(European) Robin, *Erithacus rubecula superbus*** – one seen, and quite a distinct sub-species with more extensive and redder breast
6. **Eurasian Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*** – common, especially around towns
7. **Common Swift, *Apus apus*** – in a large group on the ocean side of the road
8. **Plain Swift, Apus unicolor** — several seen, later seen in the afternoon in much greater numbers in the interior of the island.

Having gotten the pigeons under our belts, we spent the rest of the day birding a number of sites on the way up to Mt. Teide. At our first site, (Tony please give me the name), we left the road for morning coffee and alkwed a series of trails:

9. **Sardinian Warbler, Sylvia melanocephala** — apparently the most common warbler and seen at most sites

10. **Grey Wagtail, Motacilla cinerea** — two seen at different sites, in stunning breeding plumage

11. **Barbary Partridge, Alectoris barbara** — a pair seen flying over vineyards. Interesting conjecture as to whether naturally occurring, or introduced as a game bird by early Iberian settlers (?)

12. **(European) Turtle Dove, Streptopelia turtur** — one seen feeding under grape vines

13. **Canary Islands Chiffchaff, Phylloscopus canariensis** (E) — commonly occurring at most sites

14. **African Blue Tit, Cyanistes teneriffae teneriffae** — several sightings of this gorgeous *electric blue* bird; (but should it be better termed ‘African Blue Tit’, or ‘Teneriffe Blue Tit’?)

15. **(Teneriffe) Goldcrest, Regulus regulus teneriffae** — one seen at a reliable spot and attracted by playback; has been split into a full species in some taxonomical accounts

16. **Common Kestrel, Falco tinnunculus** — commonly encountered hunting by the roadside

17. **Spanish Sparrow, Passer hispaniolensis** - common

18. **(Common) Blackbird, Turdus merula** — common

19. **(Common) Chaffinch, Fringilla coelebs tintillon** — the local Canary Island sub-species, seen at lower elevations and quite distinct form the mainland race
Driving up to a viewpoint on Mt. Teide, we stopped for a cold beer and admired a new species in the carpark:

20. **Berthelot’s Pipit, Anthus berthelotii** – the only common pipit found in the Canaries (and Madeira)

Later in the afternoon, we descended from Teide and birded the dry, rocky terrain of ancient lava flows:

21. **Southern (Iberian) Grey Shrike, Lanius meridionalis koenigi** – the Canary Island subspecies; one seen perched atop a thorn bush

Our last stop was a popular picnic area, well-known for its population of the island endemic:

22. **Blue Chaffinch, Fringilla teyda** (E) – obliging found feeding on scrumbs on and under picnic tables; usually in m/f pairs
23. **Great Spotted Woodpecker, Dendrocopos major canariensis** – the local sub-species appears to be more buff than the mainland race.

Our final stop was on the southern coast, where we stopped at a managed duck pond at Las Chafiras:

24. (Eurasian) Spoonbill, Platalea leucorodia – a pair
25. Common Sandpiper, Actitis hypoleucos
26. (Common) Greenshank, Tringa nebularia
27. Little ringed Plover, Charadrius dubius

We ended the day having dinner at a very special family-run restaurant, *Las Arenas* at San Miguel de Tajao. Superb local fish meals served simply and deliciously; great local wines, and *muy económico*!
On my last morning, Tony Crease and I took the morning car ferry from Los Cristianos on Teneriffe across to La Gomera Island (San Sebastian) and back to do a spot of seawatching:

28. Cory’s Shearwater, *Calonectris diomedea boealis* – 100s seen from the ferry
29. **Great Skua, Stercorarius skua** – this bird was a surprise and not listed on the Avibase Checklist for Canaries; a single dark bird with white wingtips seen flying low over the sea in a group of Cory’s Shearwaters (later confirmed by resident authorities)
View of Mt. Teide from Santa Cruz at dawn

Bird species seen: 30

**Total lifers: 13**

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