

Fuerteventura 20th -27th November 2018

We decided to have a short break on Fuerteventura, flying direct from Edinburgh with Ryanair. Accommodation was arranged at Corralejo Surfing Colors Hotel in the north of the island. Finally we booked a car at a reasonable price (77Euros) with Autoreisen, which we picked up at the airport.

21st November. After a good breakfast drove south through La Oliva and took turn off to Tefia, following the FV221 towards Las Parcelas. A few km after Tefia turned off left and drove down a track towards a goat farm (28.526021, -14.016268). Out amongst the goats in one of the fields were 4 adult and one juvenile **Egyptian Vulture** and a pair of **Common Buzzard**. A group of 15 **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** flew out of one of the fields, where there were also some feeding **Trumpeter Finch**. In the surrounding stoney desert there were several singing **Lesser Short-toed Larks** and some **Berthelott's Pipits**.

Returned to the road and drove to Las Parcelas where at the far end of the village (before the road turns right and starts to go down into the barranco) we turned left down a track towards the dam. At the side of the track found our first pair of **Fuerteventura Chats**. Parked by the dam and then walked up side of Los Molinos reservoir. There was plenty of water in it so lots of birds, in particular 100+ **Ruddy Shelduck**, 1 **Eurasian Teal**, 1 **Mallard**, 2 **Northern Shoveler**, 3 **Northern Pintail** and 36 **Coot**. Feeding in the shallows were 36 **Black-winged Stilts**, 2 **Common Sandpipers**, 2 **Greenshank** and a **Spotted Redshank**. Also present were c20 **Little Egret**, a **Grey Heron** and 2 **Black-headed Gulls**. We then walked out across the stoney desert towards some goat enclosures. As we approached them we flushed six **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** and a flock of 60+ **Lesser Short-toed Larks**.

Returned to Las Parcelas where we found a confiding **Stone Curlew** by the side of the track. Checked fields round the village but little seen bar lots of **Collared Doves**, a pair of **Trumpeter Finch** and flocks of **Spanish Sparrow**. Drove a bit further west to a small car park and walked down the south side of the barranco. A couple of **Green Sandpipers**, another **Grey Heron**, **White Wagtails** and many **Rock Doves** of different degrees of purity. Overhead **Common Ravens** and a **Common Kestrel**.

22nd November. Woke to find it was cloudy and raining! Headed south again to La Oliva. At end of village turned off right down FV10 then at far end of village (just before the La Oliva sign) turned left onto a track which we followed past the cultivations and up to the T junction by the bustard protection fence. Turned left then drove on for c500m to c28.630531, -13.960703. Started scanning the area, hindered by regular heavy showers. Found a few **Great Grey Shrikes** and then eventually on north side of track picked out a **Houbara Bustard** walking across a 'green' patch and then up to some 'fields' where it began to feed. Drove a bit further north to view the field area and had a group of four **Cream-coloured Courser** fly in and drop down quite near to us. The bustard though, had disappeared. Returned to the original site where we had another **Houbara Bustard** fly by on south side of road. Drove down the track to try and relocate it, but only found another (or the same) four **Cream-coloured Coursers**.

Drove back to La Oliva and then along the road towards Tindaya. Turned off onto a track to view a pool at 28.598979, -13.954241. It held a pair of **Ruddy Shelduck**, 4 **Eurasian Teal** and along the edge a small covey of **Barbary Partridge**.

Returned to Corralejo and went out for a walk along the shore from the ferry terminal round to an inlet in a bay on northwest side of the town. A good scatter of waders included many **Ringed Plover**, a few **Turnstone**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Whimbrel**, two **Grey Plover**, a **Common Redshank**, a **Dunlin** and a **Little Egret**.

23rd November. To avoid the showers we decided to head south. First stop was at Salinas Golf just south of Caleta de Fuestes. Peered through the fence to check the pool on the north course. On the edge of it were 3 **Spoonbill**, 4 **Black-winged Stilts** and 2 **Common Sandpiper**. The pools on the south course appeared to have dried out and were birdless. Turned off at the roundabout at the southern edge of the resort, following the road round and parking by the shore just south of the hotel. Walked down the rocky/stoney beach. There were a good scatter of waders with **Ringed Plover**, **Grey Plover**, **Sanderling**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Whimbrel**, **Greenshank**, **Turnstone** and **Little Egret**.

Continued on south to Costa Calma and stopped by the shopping area on the west side of the road. Parked, crossed the road and walked up through the woodland strip. Did not see much to begin with bar two **Cattle Egret**, a **Common Chiffchaff**, some **Hoopoe**, then a few flocks of **Linnets** with some **Goldfinch** feeding on the cones of the conifers. It was warm and sunny down here. Started to head back north before cutting down to Tarajejejo to get an ice cream, where a **Barbary Falcon** conveniently flew low over the resort.

24th November. Decided to visit Barranco de Rio Cabras. Parked the car on track towards the dump and walked down to the dams at c 28.474571, -13.900877. On the pool 9 **Black-winged Stilts**, 5 **Little Egret**, a **Grey Heron** and a **Moorhen**. Along the barranco a few pairs of **Common Buzzard**, c5 **Green Sandpiper**, a **Common Snipe** and 2 pairs of **Ruddy Shelduck**, whilst overhead a couple of **Egyptian Vultures**. Amongst the scrub at least three pairs of **Fuerteventura Chat**, including one pair feeding young in a nest, a pair of **African Blue Tit**, a couple of **Spectacled Warbler**, a **Common Chiffchaff** and a **Song Thrush**. Dora managed to flush the long staying **Dwarf Bittern** but we could not relocate it.

Drove up to check the top of the barranco at 28.487946, -13.926455 where followed the track before parking car and walking down the barranco. In tamarisks several **Laughing Dove**. On barranco 6 **Little Ringed Plover**, 2 **Green Sandpiper** and another **Song Thrush**.

25th November. Decided to head south again to find cloud level was very low. At La Oliva stopped to recheck the bustard area. Went back to where we had seen birds on 22nd. On north side of track on an open ridge soon located a male **Houbara Bustard** in full display. Watched it for c15 minutes and then Dora found another on the south side of the road which gave very close views.

Continued on our way south via Tefia and Betancuria. As we entered Vega de Rio Palmas turned off right and drove through the village. Parked in a small car park just before the road crossed the barranco. Walked down into an area with reeds, tamarisks and some flowing water. Here we found some singing **Spectacled Warbler**, a couple of **Sardinian Warbler**, a **Common Chiffchaff**, a few **Great Grey Shrike** and a couple of **Laughing Dove**. Continued to walk down following the track to the chapel in the gorge. Lots of **Common Ravens** overhead, but little else possibly because being a Sunday, and now warm and sunny, there were lots of people in the gorge.

Returned back north, stopping off at Los Molinos Reservoir again, but there was little new. A brief stop at the goat farm revealed 3 **Common Starling**, feeding with the **Spanish Sparrows**. On a flooded field just before Villaverde a large group of gulls comprised **Yellow-legged Gulls** with a few **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**

26th November. After breakfast headed out to El Cotillo. Followed the track south out of the village, but at the first junction where the coastal track bears right, we continued straight on driving south till the track petered out. Then walked a short distance towards a wall by a ruin. From the wall scanned the plain and soon picked out a male **Houbara Bustard** displaying amongst some bushes, giving very good views. Nice group of 8 **Trumpeter Finch** by the ruin, along with some **Lesser Short-toed Larks**. Had a nice walk north along the shore at El Cotillo but little bar a scatter of the usual waders.

27th November. Our final morning. After packing up headed back to Baranco de Rio Cabras, where we staked out the site for 3 hours but no sign of the bittern. Then drove to Salinas del Carmen. The salinas themselves only held a few **Black-winged Stilts** and a **Common Redshank** The adjacent rocky platform, held lots of waders with c40 **Ringed Plover**, 5 **Dunlin**, a few **Whimbrel**, **Sanderling**, **Common Sandpiper** and a **Bar-tailed Godwit**, whilst off shore were two **Sandwich Tern**. Returned to the airport to drop of car and get our Ryanair flight back to Edinburgh.

We enjoyed our trip, which was fairly relaxing. Saw 59 different species and got good views of all the local specialities. The weather was a bit mixed, though most days the cloud eventually broke letting it get warm and sunny.

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