

Tenerife birding trip 21.-28.1.2011

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Believe or not, I have never been in the Canary Islands. Hence I was lacking all Canarian endemics in my WP list. In early January I started to follow on whether there are any cheap last minute package trips available. And indeed on 12th January I found a good bargain, one week in 3 star hotel, only 350€ without any meals. We took it with Timo Luhtala and on 21st we were already flying towards Tenerife.

We rented a small car for 6 days, only 180€ without km limits. In the end we drove almost 1100km in 6 days. As our hotel was on the northern side in Puerto de la Cruz, we did 3 trips to the southern coast. One of them was a combined to our day's trip to the Gomera Island.

Otherwise we very well succeeded in our target species but the sea trip to Gomera return was really disappointing. We saw only few Cory's Shearwaters on both ways. No sign of Baroli's Shearwater. All other Gulls during the trip were Yellow-legged Gulls but near Los Cristianos from the ferry we saw an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull, ssp *graelsii*. Few Sandwich Terns were representing terns.

Best place to see both endemic pigeons was Mirador La Grimona which is only 10km west of Puerto de la Cruz. It's well-known layby place by the motorway towards west. Immediately after the two tunnels park the car at the layby (name Mirador Lagrimona) and skim the ridge opposite. In one hour stop on 24th we saw 2+1+1 **Laurel Pigeons** and probably 3 different **Bolle's Pigeons**. Two days earlier we had seen 6-10 Bolle's by the Monte de Agua road. Only one we saw well but most were just calling and then flying off. The call was very distinctive. We did not see any Laurels there for sure.



A distant **Bolle's Pigeon** was sitting on a dead tree at Mirador La Grimona. See the distinct tail pattern.

Canarian Chiffchaff was very common and calling very actively especially in the morning. Also **African Blue Tit**, ssp *teneriffae*, was quite common. **Blue Chaffinch** could be easily found on

many places in the Teide forests. The photo below was taken in a picnic place La Caldeira, around 10km North of Puerto de la Cruz, by the road to Teide. The well-known place Las Lajos and also Teide national park information place hosted Blue Chaffinches.



A male Blue Chaffinch (top) is larger than Common Chaffinch without any white wingbars. Canary Chiffchaff (bottom) is very brownish and its call is very distinct.

We did one evening seawatching at Punta de Teno lighthouse. The place probably is a good place to do seawatching. The weather was not very good due to partially raining though wind was rather strong. We saw 6 Manx and 1 Balearian Shearwaters in the last 30 minutes before dusk. All they flew NE.

The local subspecies of Great Spotted Woodpecker, ssp *canariensis*, had really striking reddish belly. Also local subspecies Common Chaffinch (ssp *tintillon*), Goldcrest (ssp *teneriffae*), Blackbird (ssp *cabrerae*) and Robin (ssps *superbus*) were well photographed, though the Goldcrest was not such quality to publish.



Local Common Kestrel (ssp *canariensis*) has more stripes than our Finnish birds. It looked more like Kestrels in Cape Verde. It's well seen in many places. Several Common Buzzards (ssp *insularum*) were seen and one individual in Gomera had very striking whitish underside.



We saw few times but heard several times **Barbary Partridges**, for example flying near Valle Molina Reservoir. Erjos Pools had several birds calling. Common Moorhen and Coot was in many pools and rather numerous. We saw only few ducks and they all were Common Teals. Most waders we saw in Tejina Ponds and Punta del Hidalgo shoreline. They all were common species.

Every day we saw tens of Plain Swifts flying over the town in Puerto de la Cruz. Biggest flock was over 35 birds. Berthelot's Pipits were seen in arid places and they were very tame.

Last full day we were exploring the area between the southern airport and Los Cristianos. Only one Guancho ponds had some water. The "wadi" had very striking dark-backed Spectacled Warbler, a beautiful male, ssp *orbitalis*. It was too scary to get any photos. We saw 15+ **Rose-ringed Parakeets** and at least 4 **Monk Parakeets** at Ten-Bel. A juvenile **Barbary Falcon** did there a flyby which ended our last birding day.



All target species, both Pigeons, Blue Chaffich and Canarian Chiffchaff were my new WP species. A very good trip though the sea part was disappointing. Fuerteventura birds are still waiting my next Canary Island trip.

It's worth to mention that Teide mountain was almost without snow in the beginning of our trip but at the end it had fully white snowcoverage. We had unusually much rain during the week.