

Honeyguide Holiday to Madeira

From the 18th to the 25th of February 2009

The group:

Rita & David Barker

Shirley Awcock

David Nind & Shevaun Mendelsohn

Sheila Liscoe

Eve Corder



Leaders:

Hugo Romano & Catarina Fagundes



Trip Report

Wednesday 18th February

Arrived Funchal airport at 10:50 and a few minutes later we were all gathered with Catarina and Hugo, our guides from Madeira Wind Birds. Just by the parking place David N. & Shevaun saw a spout at sea which was certainly a whale. Not bad for the first 5 minutes outdoors!

The drive to the hotel took about 20 minutes, after check-in and having a short rest we gathered again at the hotel reception to go out for lunch.

Lunch was at São Jorge on a typical house made of wood and straw on the roof. At the restaurant's gardens we saw Bermuda buttercups, red-flowering sorrels and custard apple



trees. We ate a delicious shrimp soup inside a bread and as desert we all had custard apples which was also very nice!

After lunch we went to a view point where many years ago, whilst whale hunting, was a seawatching spot that covered most of the north coast of the Island. Here we heard a Firecrest but did not see it, saw Yellow-legged gulls and Canaries flying over our heads. A *Laurus novocanariensis* was just at the edge of the cliff. Around us there were some men putting up wooden poles to hang on decorations for the Carnival festivities. Then we were driven to the beach of São Jorge, which is just by a river mouth. On the closer cliff there were some native and endemic species such as Canary Laurel, Downy Sow Thistle and Madeira Chrysanthemum.



We went for a short walk for along an old road and from the bridge that crosses the river we had a real national geographic moment: a pair of Muscovy ducks mating and a coot looking for food. Along the road we saw Pride of Madeira, Madeira Calendula, Dragon tree and several others.

For birds, we saw Grey Wagtails, Buzzard and some of us saw Trocaz Pigeons. When scoping into the sea Cory's and Macaronesian Shearwaters were seen by some of us. We returned to the hotel around 5 pm to rest a bit before dinner.

Thursday 19th February

Early start! We left the hotel at 8:20 am and arrived at Funchal marina 50 minutes later. On the boat there were some other customers besides our group, were all very nice. The trip started with a fresh but light wind and just 20 minutes later we saw Common dolphins though they were not very playful. It seems they were feeding so, not so social. We continued towards Desertas Islands and after passing the tip of Garajau the wind picked up to 22 knots and waves got a bit bigger which made the trip a bit wet for those at the front of the boat and not so comfortable. As clouds were also getting darker it got a bit scary for some of us and as there was still 2 hours to sail to get to the Desertas and the trip was not



so enjoyable we all decided to divert to the western side of Madeira as weather and sea conditions were much better on that side.

Just when we were tacking there was a kittiwake flying close to the back of the boat. We sailed downwind for some time and no birds were seen. When we were in front of Câmara de Lobos we saw the first Cory's Shearwater of the day and Helder, our skipper, after talking on the radio with other boats decided to get closer to shore, as there was a big group of dolphins. We headed there and saw some spotted dolphins which were a bit more sociable than the previous ones but still not so playful. We then went to the base of Cape Girão where we stopped for lunch.

The crew managed very well to provide us with lunch, which was scabbard fish, salad and sweet potatoes. It was delicious! While having lunch we saw a little egret flying by. After this we continued to sail while some of us were taking a siesta and other still looking for birds and cetaceans. Just in front of Ponta do Sol we had very good sightings of bottlenose dolphins. After this was time to get back to Funchal, on the way we went closer to shore to admire the geology of the coast and the landscape. We arrived at the marina close to 6 pm and walked a bit along the sea promenade until we got to a broken pier where we observed 3 Iceland gulls, 1 Laughing gull, several Black-headed gulls and some Turnstones. Then Hugo picked us up and drove us back to the hotel.

Friday 20th February

We left the hotel around 9:30 am and went towards the East of the island. When we arrived at Caniçal village we went for a walk down, aside the regional government experimental vineyards fields. During this walk we saw a Monarch flying, some Starlings, Canaries and Goldfinches. As we were heading towards the harbor we noticed several people waiting on the sides of the road so Catarina presumed there was going to be a parade of school pupils disguised. We decided to see the parade, which was with children from a nursery called "A Gaivota" (the gull). They were all disguised as recycling bins, each class with its color that matched each type of bin. Very funny!

Then we walked to the end of the North pier of the harbor where Hugo was birdwatching with David B. and Shirley. They had seen several Kittiwakes and a Ring-billed gull though we



only saw the Kittiwakes.

After we went a bit more to the East, to a viewpoint where one could see both North and South coasts and also Porto Santo Island. From there, some of us managed to see dolphins and the spout of what seemed to be a Fin whale. Catarina & Hugo also saw a Great Skua there.

We walked down to where David N. and Shevaun saw a flock of Larks and where some of us scoped Skylarks, Woodlarks, Calandra and Short-toed larks while others looked at every details of each interesting plant, such as Mandon's Chrysanthemum and Madeira Calendula.

Stop for picnic was at a viewpoint where we could admire Machico valley and the airport runway. After this we went down to Machico for a short walk along the river side and where we were able to observe several exotic fruit trees, 2 Little Egrets, Turnstones, Waxbills and a Spotted Crake with its primary feathers broken. It already passed over 4 pm and the majority of us were willing to arrive before 5 pm at the hotel to see the shop, so after Machico we went back to Santana.

Around 7 pm we went to a house in hotel facilities where we were welcomed by the hotel manager, Pedro Costa, by Mrs and Dr Zino and by a German journalist who was in Madeira as a sub-editor of Median magazine and was invited by our hosts to assist to the presentation. Dinner was after 8 pm as we waited a bit for Mrs and Dr Biscoito. Manuel Biscoito is the head of Funchal Natural History Museum and a very interesting person.

We left dinner table around 11:30 and we know that "party" has continued in Portuguese language until 3 am...

Saturday 21st February - Eve's birthday!

We were left at Funchal Market Place around 10:30 am. During the visit to the Market Place Shirley got her wallet stolen and so the rest of the morning was spent between the Police station, the Tourism information Office and Post Office to try to make a call to cancel the credit card.

Lunch was at a Beer-house next to the marina and after it we took the cable car to Monte, to visit the tropical gardens. Rita and David B. went earlier to Monte so they avoided the stressing part of the day. At 5:30 we were picked up at Monte and went back to the hotel, in Santana.



After dinner Catarina & Hugo had a surprise cake with candles to Eve, so we sang Happy Birthday and got even more full after eating that delicious chocolate cake.

Sunday 22nd February

Departure was set to 9:30 am on this beautiful morning with a clear blue sky. We were driven up to Ribeiro Frio and walked along a *levada*, through the Laurel Forest until an amazing viewpoint. On the way we saw several laurel trees, a few flowers and some strange species of flora, such as Black Parsley and Wollaston's muschia. Regarding birds we had good views of Blackbirds, Madeira Firecrests and Chaffinches. We also had a nice observation of a Glass snail which Hugo took to the viewpoint so we could have more light to photograph it and then took it back to where we first found it.



The view at Balcões is amazing and after putting some bits of cookies for Chaffinches we really had good observations and pictures of it. We returned through the same path and had very good sightings of a Madeira Firecrest inside the *levada* with no water.

Then we were driven to the third highest peak of Madeira, with 1810 meters, Pico do Areeiro. From there we had an amazing view of the central mountainous massif and added Madeira heather to our list of endemic flora. It was very windy and cold so this was a quick stop. We then went down to the Ecological Park of Funchal, where we had our picnic though wind was still blowing strongly and cool. After picnic we all needed a warmer place so we went down to Santo da Serra where we visited a Quinta that belongs to the government. Its gardens have a great diversity of exotic plants and trees and also horses and deers. After a walk on this Quinta we stopped at a water reservoir where we saw many Yellow-legged gulls, 1 Kittiwake and a few Lesser Black-backed gulls.

Last stop was at Porto da Cruz where we walked along the coast for about 20 minutes and then Hugo spotted with the scope, at sea, a big flock of gulls with some Cory's, Manx and



Macaroneasian Shearwaters flying over some dolphins and a Great Skua which after a while turned out to be 2. When we were heading to the van David N. saw a bird landing at the rocks and it was a juvenile Whimbrel. Not a bad end of the day!

Monday, 23rd February

We left the hotel at 9 am and unfortunately Rita did not join us as she was not feeling well. It took us about one hour to get to São Vicente through the winding roads of Madeira North coast. In São Vicente we walked along the riverside looking for vagrants and we found a Common Sandpiper, 2 Whimbrels and 1 Pied Wagtail.

After we head to Seixal and went up to Chão da Ribeira but it was windy, cold and light rain so we just had a quick look for the Trocaz Pigeon on the cliffs and then inside the van on the crops but with no luck.

Next stop was at Ribeira da Janela where we the wind was so strong that we could not even look through our binoculars; luckily the Green-winged teal (*left*) and the Common teal were close enough for a good observation by naked eye.



As we could not spend much time on the last two stops due to weather conditions, we were too early for lunch at Porto Moniz, so we went for a walk along the sea promenade. During this we observed Canaries, Cory's Shearwaters over the sea and then some of us saw a juvenile Black Redstart but when we gathered the group again it was already gone.

After lunch we were driven for about 35 minutes for the westernmost tip of Madeira, Ponta do Pargo. Just arriving at this IBA (Important Bird Area) we saw a Kestrel and a Berthelot's Pipit. When we got out of the van we searched for a Spectacled Warbler and for Rock Sparrows but the only birds we managed to see was a Red-legged Partridge that David B. lifted up and a Barn Swallow. For flora, Artemisia was added to our checklist.

Another 30 minutes ride through the Southwestern coast got us to Lugar de Baixo. On this



brackish water pond there were several vagrant birds such as Snipe, Greenshank, Green-wing teal, a pair of Wigeons and two Little Egrets from which one seemed much taller, with longer legs, not so yellow feet and dark bill with a line from it until below the eye. We thought to be a Reef Egret but was not sure and then Hugo said it was most probably a Little Egret. The return to the hotel took us almost one hour, a very silent one in the van as everyone was tired from a long day.

Tuesday 24th February

We left the hotel decided to find Trocaz Pigeons as some of us still did not see it, so we went down to São Jorge, where we were on the first day. There we all had good views of this endemic species on the trees on the cliffs. Then we went towards Queimadas to where we took a narrow and old road surrounded by Laurel Forest. Once we got here we went for a short walk along this Forest Park to a viewpoint where we should see Santana and São Jorge but the mist did not allow us that. After a short while the mist was clearing a bit so we could see some contours of the mountains and valley. The walk back was through a path sided by centenary tree heathers and we observed giant Ranunculus (buttercups) leaves, Muschia and Isoplexis.

On the way back to the hotel we went to look for Cattle Egrets, which a boy who worked on the hotel restaurant said to be there for some weeks already. We found the boy who led us to the place where the Cattle Egrets were and we even saw 2 Willow Warblers as well.

We returned to the hotel for 30 minutes just before heading to Caniçal for lunch.



At Caniçal village we had a typical fish lunch and then went towards east to look for the difficult Spectacled warbler and Rock Sparrows but no luck again.

It was already time to go towards Funchal as the Trickster parade was going to begin at 4 pm. When we got to Funchal the city centre was crowded with people and children disguised, all waiting for the parade to pass. We found a gap in the Municipal Garden to assist to the parade that was very satiric and funny as well. At evening Hugo picked us up near the Cable car station



and we went to Machico for a traditional dinner - Espetada (meat roast on the spit) with fried *polenta* - very tasty!

Wednesday 25th February

As check-in opened at 9:35 am we just had time to have the last breakfast at Madeira and head to the airport.

Species seen in Madeira

BIRDS - a total of 58 species seen:

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Seen twice, on the 20th and on the 23rd February - vagrant bird to Madeira

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii madeirensis*

Common bird in arid areas as Ponta do Pargo and Caniçal

Blackbird *Turdus merula cabrerae*

Seen everyday in Quinta do Furão and other places

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla Heineken*

Seen almost everyday in the hotel gardens

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Seen a group on the sea trip on the 19th

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

1 Observed in Porto Moniz

Buzzard *Buteo buteo harterti*

Common species seen almost everyday

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

Together with a group of other Larks on Caniçal, on the 20th



Canary *Serinus canaria*

Seen everyday in Quinta do Furão gardens

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Observed 4 in Santana on the 24th

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs madeirensis*

Observed on Laurel Forest

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Vagrant bird seen in São Vicente on the 23rd

Coot *Fulica atra*

Several birds seen on Lugar de Baixo on the 23rd

Cory Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea borealis*

Seen 2 to 4 birds on the sea trip

Observed everyday while seawatching

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

4 birds in Lugar de Baixo on the 23rd

Feral Dove *Columba livia feral*

Everywhere

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*

Seen on the 20th and 21st February on coastal areas

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Observed 2 while scoping the sea at Porto da Cruz

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris aurantiiventri*

Seen on the 20th

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Vagrant bird seen in Lugar de Baixo on the 23rd



Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

1st record to Madeira - still in Ribeira da Janela for more than 2 year

2nd record is in Lugar de Baixo since November 2009

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

1 seen on the 23rd

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi*

Several seen everyday

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucus*

3 individuals observed on broken pier at Funchal harbor on the 19th

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis*

Common bird observed most of days

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Uncommon vagrant with several records on the 19th, 20th and 22nd

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*

1 Seen in Funchal sea promenade on the 19th

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Total of 5 observed on Funchal and Machico,

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

1 in Lugar de Baixo on the 22nd

Macaronesian Shearwater *Puffinus baroli*

Some at sea, scoped from São Jorge and Porto Moniz

Madeira Firecrest *Regulus madeirensis*

Heard 1 on the 1st day and saw several on Ribeiro Frio and Queimadas

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Few individuals at Ribeira da Janela



Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Observed while seawatching on Porto Moniz

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Several seen in Lugar de Baixo

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus brehmorum*

Seen on the 23rd and 24th on coastal areas

Plain Swift *Apus unicolor*

Seen on the 23rd and 24th on higher areas

Quail *Coturnix coturnix confisa*

Heard in Caniçal on the 24th but none was seen

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

One seen flying in Ponta do Pargo

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Vagrant to Madeira seen 1 individual on the 20th in Caniçal

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

1 in Lugar de Baixo

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Some seen in Ribeiro Frio and Queimadas

Rock Dove *Columba livia atlantis*

In São Jorge some individuals together with feral doves

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Together with a group of Larks in Caniçal

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Together with a group of Larks in Caniçal



Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

1 in Lugar de Baixo on the 23rd

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Some observed in Caniçal village on the 20th and 24th

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

1 at Machico river

Teal *Anas crecca*

1 seen in Ribeira da Janela, together with green-winged teal

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Seen some in Caniçal on the 20th

Trocaz Pigeon *Columba trocaz*

Few seen on the 18th and on the 24th in São Jorge

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Several seen on coastal areas

Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

Observed in Machico

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

2 seen in São Vicente river bed

White/Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

1 white in a roundabout in Santana

1 pied in São Vicente on the 23rd

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A pair was at Lugar de Baixo - uncommon vagrant

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Observed 2 in Santana on the 24th



Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Together with a group of larks in Caniçal

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis atlantis*

Everywhere

BUTTERFLIES - a total of 8 species seen

African Migrant *Catopsilla florella*

Seen in the hotel gardens

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Seen on the 23rd

European Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Observed in Caniçal

Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*

Seen in Caniçal and Ponta do pargo

Madeira Speckled Wood *Pararge xiphia*

Seen on the 23rd and 24th on higher areas

Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus*

1 seen in Caniçal

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

Seen in São Jorge

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

Seen on the 18th in São Jorge



OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Glass snail *Phenacolimax* sp

Well observed on Ribeiro Frio on the 22nd

CETACEANS - total of 4 species seen

Seen on sea trip on the 19th February:

Atlantic Spotted dolphin *Stenella frontalis*

Common Bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Short-beaked Common dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

Short-finned Pilot whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Seen while seawatching in Caniçal

REPTILES

Madeira Wall Lizard *Lacerta dugesii*

Very common everywhere

FLORA - a total of 43 endemic species were seen and identified

Disc Houseleek *Aeonium glandulosum*

Madeira Stonecrop *Aichryson domosum /divaricatum*

Downy Sow Thistle *Andryala glandulosa glandulosa*

Sow Thistle *Andryala glandulosa varia*



Canary Laurel *Apollonias barbujana*

Madeira Crysanthemum *Argyranthemum pinnatifidum montanum*

Mandon's Crysanthemum *Argyranthemum pinnatifidum succulentum*

Madeira-Beifuss *Artemisia argentea*

Madeira Marigold *Calendula maderensis*

Dragon Tree *Diphasium madeirense*

Pride of Madeira *Echium candicans*

Pride of Madeira *Echium nervosum*

Madeira Bell-heather *Erica scoparia platycodon*

Small Green-flowered Heather *Erica scoparia platycodon*

Madeira Mountain Stock *Erysimum bicolor*

Melliferous Spurge *Euphorbia mellifera*

Smooth Spear-leaved Spurge *Euphorbia piscatoria*

Madeira Soft Broom *Genista tenera*

Anemone-leaved Crane's Bill *Geranium palmatum*

Globe flower *Globaria salicina*

Everlasting *Helichrysum devium*

White everlasting *Helichrysum melaleucum*

Madeira Holy *Ilex canariensis*



Isoplexis or Yellow Foxglove *Isoplexis sceptrum*

Madeira Juniper *Juniperus cedrusmadeirensis*

Bay Laurel *Laurus novocanariensis*

Bird's Foot Trefoil *Lotus glaucus*

Madeira Sea Stock *Matthiola maderensis*

Black Parsley *Melanoselium decipiens*

Wollaston's Musschia *Musschia wollastonii*

Madeira Laurel *Ocotea foetens*

Madeira Water Dropwort *Oenanthe divaricata*

Madeira Groundsel *Pericallis aurita*

Madeira Mahogany *Persea indica*

Picconia *Picconia excelsa*

Shield-fern *Polystichum falcinellum*

Madeira Buttercup *Ranunculus cortusifolius*

Madeira Moneywort *Sibthorpia peregrina*

Shrubby Sow Thistle *Sonchus fruticosus*

Sow Thistle *Sonchus pinnatus*

Sow Thistle *Sonchus ustulatus maderensis*

Madeira Mountain Ash *Sorbus maderensis*

Madeira Bilberry *Vaccinium padifolium*

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