



Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays
with
Madeira Wind Birds



Madeira
7th – 14th November 2012

Participants

Sigi Evans
Diana Greenway

Marion Hession
Desmond and Deborah Cassidi

Leaders

Catarina Fagundes and Hugo Romano

Report by Catarina Fagundes, with Saturday's account by Marion Hession.
Our base for the holiday was Quinta do Furão near Santana www.quintadofurao.com

All the photos in this report were taken during the holiday,
those edged green by Madeira Wind Birds and edged blue by Marion Hession.

Cover – Blandy's gardens and Cory's shearwaters.

Below – the group at dinner with Dr Frank and Mrs Elizabeth (Buffy) Zino.



Two things had an impact on this year's holiday. Heavy rain in previous weeks, the edge of Hurricane Sandy that hit America, damaged some roads in north Madeira, affecting the itinerary. Then a strike at the airport on the return day meant an additional night on the island.

As with all Honeyguide holidays, part of the price of this one was put towards a local conservation project, in this case for the Freira Conservation Project (FCP), working for the conservation of Zino's petrel, Europe's rarest breeding seabird, which is endemic to Madeira and once thought to be extinct. During the week the group was given a presentation by the FCP's President, Francis (Frank) Zino, son of Alec Zino who rediscovered the bird and named it as a separate species, on the conservation work undertaken by the FCP (see www.freira.org).

The conservation contribution this year of £40 per person was supplemented by Gift Aid through the Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust, and by some additional funds in the Trust. This led to a total donation of £500. This year's donation brings the total given to FCP since the first Honeyguide holiday on Madeira in 2008 to £2403. The total amount of conservation contributions from all Honeyguide holidays since 1991, as at December 2012, is £83,202.

DAILY DIARY

Wednesday 7th November

Part of the group arrived at 11:00 on the easyJet flight and after being picked up at the airport by Catarina and Hugo they were driven to Caniçal, to a viewpoint, just for a bit of fresh air, for the view and to stretch the legs after 3½ hours of flight. On the way to Quinta do Furão there was a short stop to get our snack lunch and the rest of the afternoon was spent resting and walking around the hotel gardens. At 5:00 those flying with Monarch arrived and were driven straight to the hotel.

Thursday 8th November

The morning was not so grey as the day before and we departed from the hotel at 9:00. First stop



Prismatic basalt columns at Faial

was at Faial to check if there were any vagrant birds in the river there but we only observed a coot, a mallard, two muscovy ducks, one grey heron, yellow-legged gulls, three Sandwich terns and grey wagtails. Here an interesting geological formation was shown by Hugo: prismatic basalt columns.

We were then driven up to Ribeiro Frio where we did the walk to Balcões. During the walk we saw some Madeira firecrests and Madeira chaffinches. From the viewpoint some of us did see two trocaz pigeons flying. In the middle of the levada walk there is a bar/restaurant called Flor da Selva where we stopped to have trout for lunch.

After Ribeiro Frio we drove through Santo da Serra and stopped at Portela, another viewpoint, where we saw plain swifts. Last stop of the day was at Porto da Cruz where looking out to sea we saw two Cory's shearwaters and one juvenile gannet. It then started raining and we were all looking forward to a hot drink at the hotel as this was a very cold day.

Friday 9th November

A later start today, departing at 10:00 from the hotel towards Machico. We walked along the riverside in Machico and observed turnstones and at least two pure or nearly pure rock doves at the beach and then on the pier next to it, four black-headed gulls, a Sandwich tern, a little egret and a few yellow-legged gulls. A monarch butterfly also flew around and above the river mouth.



The group, and an Island Darter dragonfly

Further on we observed several exotic fruit trees in a private garden close to the church and several other birds as canaries, kestrels, grey wagtails, blackcap and waxbills. We also had a good view of an island darter dragonfly sitting on a branch not far from us.

On the return to the car Catarina told us about a little chapel there, the Lord of the Miracles church. It once was flooded, its Christ statue taken by the sea, found by an American ship at sea and then delivered to Funchal Cathedral. We decided to have a look inside this lovely chapel.

Next stop was at a viewpoint where we could see the valley of Machico and the eastern tip of Madeira. Here we looked for spectacled warbler but there were actually no birds around, perhaps as there were at least five cats sunbathing in this area...

We went to Caniçal village to look for Spanish sparrows and though they were difficult at the beginning we then found them a bit closer to the harbour. A common sandpiper, collared doves, a little egret, a chiffchaff and waxbills were also observed. We then went to a friendly restaurant in Caniçal where we had lunch. In the meantime, Hugo went to Caniçal harbour to get a juvenile Cory's shearwater which accidentally landed at his father's office. We did not believe Hugo was telling the truth until we saw the seabird in a box, inside the minibus. It came with us to Quinta do Furão so that Frank Zino could ring it and then we released it.

After lunch we went to a viewpoint just above Ponta do Rosto where we had a Berthelot's pipit and where we saw a cloud of heavy rain approaching and felt it a bit as well. So time to move on towards Santo da Serra. On this last stop of the day we visited a public garden which once belonged to the Blandy family but though the walk was very pleasant and there was a nice view over Machico valley, there were hardly any birds around.

We got back to Quinta do Furão about 5:20 and at 7:00 we met Frank and Buffy Zino. Frank Zino made a very interesting presentation about his work with seabirds, especially Cory's shearwaters and Zino's petrels. After knowing a bit more about the seabirds of Madeira we had the pleasant company of Frank and Buffy for dinner. It was a lovely evening.



Berthelot's Pipit

Saturday 10th November (by Marion Hession)

Catarina and Hugo drove us into Funchal and we went our separate ways for the morning visiting a variety of the city's tourist sights. This was a beautiful day and we all enjoyed the warmth of the sun.

The entrance hall of the famous covered market was a riot of colour with beautiful cut flowers and flower sellers all dressed in traditional costume. The fish market also impressed.

Several of us visited the cathedral which is a very interesting building. A service was in progress while I was there but Deborah and Desmond arrived earlier and were able to appreciate some of the carvings in the stalls. Deborah and Desmond also thoroughly enjoyed their visit to one of the museums and I walked around the harbour area and the old town with its narrow streets and lively atmosphere. I also enjoyed some traditional dancing which was being performed at the entrance to the Story Museum.

Unfortunately much of the waterfront on the eastern side of the town was busy with construction machinery and was hidden from view.

We had all decided to visit Quinta do Palheiro Ferreiro (also known as Blandy's Gardens) to which we travelled by taxi or public bus and we all ate our lunch in the gardens. These gardens were enjoyable, though not as extensive as we had anticipated. We managed to get good views of trocaz pigeon, Madeira firecrest and many blackcaps in addition to red admiral, blue emperor dragonfly, island darter, lizards and various other species.

At the end of the day the very kind staff at Blandy's Gardens transported us up the hill to the entrance gates as it was quite a taxing walk for one of our party. We were collected at the gates of the gardens by Catarina and Hugo and returned directly to the hotel.

Sunday, 11th November

We started at 9:30 and drove for about one hour until Lugar de Baixo, to a pond where we observed several coots and muscovy ducks, together with a good range of vagrant ducks: one shoveler, one garganey, one teal and one wigeon. Some waxbills were calling in the reeds and a Sandwich tern flew by. As this was Remembrance Day, Desmond said a few words and we made two minutes of silence at 11:00. The funny thing was that all muscovy ducks were staring at us as if they were also listening to Desmond!

After, we drove up about 1400 metres of altitude, to Paul da Serra. Here the fog did not allow us to see much more than 20 or so teals and dozens of yellow-legged gulls. But the fog was not the only hindrance for birds as this was a hunting day and hunters were around as we heard several shots.

So we continued our way to Porto Moniz, only stopping for a short while on a small water reservoir that did not have any birds. We had a lovely lunch at Porto Moniz where we all ate the delicious and typical scabbard fish with banana.

After lunch we had a short walk along the seaside of Porto Moniz where we observed blackcaps and canaries. It followed a drive of half an hour to take us to Ponta do Pargo, the westernmost place of Madeira. Around here we saw starlings, canaries, Berthelot's pipits, skylarks and some of us saw linnets as well. The way back to the hotel was a long drive of 1½ hours during which we saw the weather changing from what felt like summer into winter...



Male Blackcap

Monday, 12th November

We left Quinta do Furão at 9:30, leaving Deborah behind as she decided to stay in the hotel due to the long walk we were going to do. We headed north, past Pico das Pedras in the direction of Achada do Teixeira, but when we got there we could hardly see further than 20 metres due to fog and rain so we did not even get out of the minibus as there would not be much to see. So we went back to Pico das Pedras where our walk started. Walking down the road most of us saw a flock of seven trocáz pigeons flying, then sitting for a brief moment in an eucalyptus tree and then off again. We also observed some linnets, canaries, chaffinches and Madeira firecrest.

The levada walk was through the laurel forest and the path was very wide. Most of the time we were surrounded by Madeira bilberry bushes, lily-of-the-valley trees, broom heather and some Madeira laurels, though the exotic species of acacia, eucalyptus, hydrangeas and agapanthus were a constant. Also, the calls of the Madeira firecrest accompanied us through the walk and now and then a chaffinch or a robin was seen.

Hugo took the minibus to the end of the walk and after we walked around the garden of Queimadas he was waiting for us with the picnics on a concrete table with seats made of heather.

After the picnic we looked for trocáz pigeon, as Desmond had not seen any until then. We drove towards Ilha and when Hugo stopped the minibus just to have a look at the valley, Catarina quickly found two pigeons on an exposed branch. We then went out of the car while Hugo set up the telescope and we could all observe this nice endemic species very well and could see all its details.

Last stop was at Calhau de São Jorge, a river mouth and a beach which had suffered a lot from the floods of the previous week and did not have any other birds than muscovy ducks, canaries and yellow-legged gulls to show us.

We were back to the hotel at 4:00 so we could rest a bit before going for the Madeira wine tasting at 6:30 and then go out for dinner. The dinner menu started with *caldo verde*, a typical Portuguese cabbage soup with *chouriço*, then tuna steak with fried pollenta and vegetables, and ended with fresh melon. A typical dinner in a popular Madeira local restaurant.

Tuesday, 13th November

The day dawned very cloudy and so the programme of going to the mountain had to be changed. So we were driven southwest to a very popular viewpoint, Cabo Girão. In most of the tourist guides this is a must-see, but now that they have built a glass-bottomed viewpoint it has become even more interesting... According to our tour leaders, the inauguration of that glass-bottomed infrastructure was just two or three weeks ago. The view is fantastic from up to 580 metres above sea level, on one of the highest sea cliffs in the world. The plain swifts were flying very close to us and there were some chaffinches calling around.

Next stop was at the start of a vertical cable car, in Fajã dos Padres. From here we could admire Ribeira Brava and Ponta do Sol as well as some kestrels, canaries and a peregrine falcon.

On the way back to we took an old road that passed through Câmara de Lobos and the hotel area of Funchal. We then went to Garajau where there is a Christ statue resembling the one in Rio de Janeiro and from where we had a very good view of a spectacled warbler.



The Diadem or False Plain Tiger, *Hypolimnna misippus* (above) is found in Africa and America. The females are mimics: though they can look like the male, they also take on the appearance of the toxic species Monarch *Danaus plexippus* (also seen on the holiday) or the Plain Tiger or African Monarch *Danaus chrysipus*.

For the picnic time we headed to Caniçal, just a little more east than the marina where the 'Oceandroma' boat is kept. Here we had an amazing sighting of a black butterfly with three white spots in each wing. There were at least three specimens of this butterfly: male diadems *Hypolimnna missippus* – a scarce vagrant to Madeira.

At 3:00 we started the boat trip which had been postponed due to the rough sea conditions since the second day of our holiday. We sailed by the east tip of the island where we observed four grey herons and then towards the west, looking for Cory's shearwaters and sea mammals though nothing was found far away from the coast. When we got closer to shore again we saw a little egret and then at the back of Caniçal harbour we saw four sanderlings, three turnstones and a dunlin. But then, close to the entrance of the marina, four Cory's shearwaters flew very close to the boat, making the highlight of the boat trip.

Wednesday, 14th November ... and Thursday 15th November

We knew that today there was a general strike in Portugal, Spain and Greece, so we had been – along with Chris in the Honeyguide office – keeping an eye on the easyJet website. (All the group was returning with easyJet.) The outbound flight left Gatwick, which seemed to be good news, but when we got to the airport we found that flight was cancelled and had returned to the UK. Chris phoned to say if the group would like to return to Quinta do Furão that was fine and Honeyguide would cover the cost. This lifted spirits, the group thought about this and decided to take the hotel and transport arrangements being organised by easyJet. In the end that meant a queue for some two hours to get a voucher for hotel and transfers, then a rather wet afternoon spent in Machico. The transfer and additional flight all went to plan on the following morning.

Species seen in Madeira, 7th – 14th November 2012

BIRDS

Berthelot's Pipit	<i>Anthus berthelotii madeirensis</i>	Seen in Caniçal.
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula cabrerae</i>	Seen almost every day in Quinta do Furão and other places.
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla heineken</i>	Seen sometimes at the hotel, in Machico and in Pico das Pedras.
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	About 5 in Machico and 1 in Calhau de São Jorge.
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Observed in Santo da Serra and in Pico das Pedras.
Canary	<i>Serinus canaria</i>	Seen every day around the island and in the hotel garden.
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs madeirensis</i>	Observed very well in Balcões, Ribeiro Frio, Santo da Serra and Queimadas.
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Seen by some in Caniçal village and in Quinta do Furão.
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1 flying over Caniçal village.
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1 bird seen in Machico and other seen in Funchal on the free-day.
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	3 in Faial and some in Lugar de Baixo pond.
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Seen by Marion in Faial.
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea borealis</i>	4 birds close to the boat near Quinta do Lorde marina.
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	1 bird at the back of Caniçal harbour during the sea trip.
Feral Dove	<i>Columba livia feral</i>	Everywhere.
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	1 in Lugar de Baixo pond.
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	1 juvenile flying along the coast at Porto da Cruz.
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis parva</i>	Seen in Machico, Pico das Pedras and at Quinta do Furão Gardens.
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1 in Faial and 5 in Ponta de São Lourenço on the boat trip.
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea schmitzi</i>	Several seen during the week, mostly in rivers.
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus canariensis</i>	Observed on several days.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	1 seen during the boat trip in Caniçal bay.
Linnets	<i>Carduellis cannabina guentheri</i>	Several in Ponta do Pargo.
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Observed in Machico and on the boat trip at Ponta de São Lourenço.
Madeira Firecrest	<i>Regulus madeirensis</i>	Easily observed in Ribeiro Frio and on the walk from Pico das Pedras to Queimadas.
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	1 in Faial.
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1 in Faial river mouth and 4 in Machico river.
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 flying above Fajã do Padres.
Plain Swift	<i>Apus unicolor</i>	Seen almost every day in Quinta do Furão and some other places along the coast.
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula rubecula</i>	In the hotel gardens and in Pico das Pedras.
Rock Dove		2 in Machico beach and 1 in Caniçal.
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	3 behind Caniçal harbour during the sea trip.
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	2 birds seen flying in Faial, 1 in Machico and 1 in Lugar de Baixo.
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	1 in Lugar de Baixo pond.
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Several observed flying in Ponta do Pargo.
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Several seen before lunch in Caniçal village.

Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus granti</i>	1 in Portela and 1 in Queimadas.
Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis</i>	1 in Garajau on the 13th.
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Several on a wire in Ponta do Pargo.
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	1 in Lugar de Baixo.
Trocaz Pigeon	<i>Columba trocaz</i>	Some seen at Balcões, Ribeiro Frio, at Palheiro Gardens and 2 well observed in the valley of Ilha, Santana.
Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Several seen in Machico & Caniçal harbour.
Waxbills	<i>Estrilda astrid</i>	Several observed at close range in Machico.
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	3 seen in Caniçal.
Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	1 in Lugar de Baixo.
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis atlantis</i>	Seen every day along the coast.



Common Buzzard

BUTTERFLIES

African Migrant *Catopsilia florella* (from group members' descriptions)

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

European Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

Madeira Speckled Wood *Pararge xiphia*

Monarch *Danaus plexippus*

Small White *Artogeia rapae*

Diadem or False Plain Tiger *Hypolimnna misippus* (vagrant to Madeira)

DRAGONFLIES

Blue Emperor *Anax imperator*

Island Darter *Sympetrum (striolatum) nigrifemur*

REPTILES

Madeira Wall Lizard *Lacerta dugesii* – everywhere.



Madeira Wall Lizards

FLORA (native species)

Disc Houseleek	<i>Aeonium glandulosum</i>
Viscid Houseleek	<i>Aeonium glutinosum</i>
Madeira Stonecrop	<i>Aichryson domosum/divaricatum</i>
Canary Laurel	<i>Apollonias barbujana</i>
Madeira Chrysanthemum	<i>Argyranthemum pinnatifidum montanum</i>
Madeira Chrysanthemum	<i>Argyranthemum pinnatifidum pinnatifidum</i>
Madeira Marigold	<i>Calendula maderensis</i>
Willow-leaved Thistle	<i>Carlina salicifolia</i>
Canary Dragon's Herb	<i>Cedronella canariensis</i>
Lily-of-the-valley Tree	<i>Clethra arborea</i>
Dragon Tree	<i>Dracena draco</i>
Pride of Madeira	<i>Echium candicans</i>
Pride of Madeira	<i>Echium nervosum</i>
Broom Heather	<i>Erica scoparia madeirensis</i>
Tree Heather	<i>Erica arborea</i>
Madeira Mountain Stock	<i>Erysimum bicolor</i>
Smooth Spear-leaved Spurge	<i>Euphorbia piscatoria</i>
Madeira Soft Broom	<i>Genista tenera</i>
Madeira Cranesbill	<i>Geranium maderense</i>
Globe Flower	<i>Globularia salicina</i>
White Everlasting	<i>Helichrysum melaleucum</i>
Silver Everlasting	<i>Helichrysum obconicum</i>
Canary Holly	<i>Ilex canariensis</i>
Yellow Foxglove	<i>Isoplexis sceptrum</i>
Sweet-scented Jasmine	<i>Jasminum odoratissimum</i>
Madeira Juniper	<i>Juniperus cedrus madeirensis</i>
Bay Laurel	<i>Laurus novocanariensis</i>
Black Parsley	<i>Melanoselium decipiens</i>
Wollaston's Musschia	<i>Musschia wollastonii</i>
Madeira Laurel	<i>Ocotea foetens</i>
Bastard Hare's Ear	<i>Phyllis nobla</i>
Madeira Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus grandifolium</i>
	<i>Rubia fruticosa fruticosa</i>
	<i>Salix canariensis</i>
Smooth Stonecrop	<i>Sedum fusiforme/nudum</i>
Madeira Pennywort	<i>Sibthorpia peregrina</i>
Narrow-leaved Rock Mustard	<i>Sinapidendron gymnocalyx</i>
Shrubby Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus fruticosus</i>
Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus pinnatus</i>
Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus ustulatus ustulatus</i>
Madeira Bilberry	<i>Vaccinium padifolium</i>