

Trip Report
Madeira
5-12 September 2000



Compiled by Niklas Holmström

Participants

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Travel Info

We booked a flight including accommodation and transfer from Stockholm via the Swedish travel agency Fritidsresor. We stayed at Hotel Casa Branca in the western part of Funchal, only a 5 minute walk to the sea (Lido) and 15 to the hot spot Ponta da Cruz. We rented a car (Renault Clio) from Moinho (best prize) via our travel agency. To get the best out Madeira's seabirds it is often necessary to get out onto the sea. Unfortunately we never get to the Desertas, because the boat only leave Funchal in optimal wind conditions. You have to check with Albatroz Organization (Phone:0-291-220327) every day. The sailing trip to Desertas cost 15000 Escudos (45 GBP) per person.

However, we took the ferry to Porto Santo (9000 Escudos/person) on 11 September. The problem was that we only had one hour birding before dusk on the way back from Porto Santo. To be true, the Porto Santo trip was not worth the money, even if we have excellent views of Cory's Shearwater and Bulwer's Petrel. But, note that many trip reports previous years could tell otherwise with Fea's/Zino's Petrel, Little Shearwater, Madeiran Storm Petrel, White-faced Storm Petrel and much more.

The trip to Desertas probably offer the best chances and excellent views of seabirds, especially Fea's/Zino's Petrel. But you never know: John Oates and company did not see any Fea's/Zino's on the trip on 23 August 2000, but Rolf de By (NL) did see up to 30 birds on 9 September 2000. So, one could never take it for granted that a trip to Desertas (or Porto Santo) would produce these species.

Weather

Hot and sunny, mostly between 24 and 28°C, the whole period. On the northern parts there are often more or less cloudy.

Recommended Literature

Trip Report: Madeira, 18 September-2 October 1999, Keith Regan
www.22briar.freemove.co.uk/madeira_1999.htm

Trip Report: Madeira, 5-12 August 1998, Andreas Bruun Kristensen
www.crosswinds.net/~birdtrips/Madeira98.html

Madeira, an attractive birding destination, Juha Laaksonen, Alula 4/99

A birdwatchers Guide to Portugal and Madeira, C. C. Moore, G. Elias and H. Costa

Itinerary

5/9 Airport-Funchal-Botanic Garden-Lido pm

6/9 Ponta da Cruz am and pm

7/9 Porto Moniz

8/9 Funchal am-Balcoes am-Prainha pm-Ponta do Rosto pm

9/9 Porto Moniz am-Ponta do Pargo pm

10/9 Ponta da Cruz am-Botanic Garden-Funchal pm

11/9 Porto Santo

12/9 Ponta da Cruz-Airport am

Seawatching

There are many headlands on the island that look as they should produce good views of seabirds under the right conditions. The current knowledge suggests that they are mostly disappointing and one reason is that many presumed hot spots are placed too high over the sea, such as Ponta do Rosto. The best and most consistent seawatching spot is Ponta da Cruz, the most southerly point of the island, or at Lido. Here a westward movement in the morning and an eastward movement in the evening should be visible representing birds traveling to and from the Desertas. The winds were predominantly light on the southside of the island and always more brisk along the northern coastline. Seawatching elsewhere was even less productive with the very notable exception of Porto Moniz – an excellent and low placed spot. We did seawatch from here on two days and the first day (7th September) was outstanding, see table below. All Great, Sooty and Manx Shearwater headed towards west, probably true migrators. It was a feast for the eye to watch this species in very good conditions and many close views! A memory for life! We found the best place to watch from was the shore parade, between the two natural swimming pools (see photo).

Species List (english, scientific and swedish names)

Fea's/Zino's Petrel – *Pterodroma feae/madiera* – Atlant-/Madeirapetrell

1 – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 07:20 to 11:45am. Unfortunately the only observed bird on the trip!

Bulwer's Petrel – *Bulweia bulwerii* – Spetsstjärtad petrell

20 – from Lido in the evening 5/9. **25** – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 07:20 to 11:45am and 17:00 to 20:15pm. **17** – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. **12** – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm. **6** – Ponta da Cruz 10/9 07:30 to 10:00am. **8** – Porto Santo Ferry 11/9 08:00 to 11:00am and 19:00 to 20:15pm.

Cory's Shearwater – *Calonectris diomedea borealis* – Gulnäbbad lira

150 – from Lido in the evening 5/9. **800** – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 07:20 to 11:45am and 17:00 to 20:15pm. **800** – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. **1000** in one big flock! – Ponta do Rosto 8/9 17:40 to 18:50pm. **460** – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm. **90** – Ponta da Cruz 10/9 07:30 to 10:00am. **270** – Porto Santo Ferry 11/9 08:00 to 11:00am and 19:00 to 20:15pm. **80** – Ponta da Cruz 12/9 07:20 to 08:30am.

Birds feeding and resting on the water can be seen almost everywhere particularly from headlands and during the ferry trip to Porto Santo.

Great Shearwater – *Puffinus gravis* – Större lira

219 – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. Mostly single birds or pairs. Small parties of 3-4 birds were also seen. 195 of the birds was counted between 15:00 and 20:00pm. Distant large shearwaters was not counted, but could have produced more of the Great one. **1** – Ponta da Cruz 9/9 in the morning (Stefan Göransson).

Sooty Shearwater – *Puffinus griseus* – Grålira

5 – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. A very unexpected shearwater on this trip!

Manx Shearwater – *Puffinus puffinus* – Mindre lira

334 – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. They passed very close and we probably missed many flocks when looking after larger shearwaters. **78** – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm. **1** – Ponta do Rosto 8/9 17:40 to 18:50pm.

Little Shearwater – *Puffinus assimilis baroli* – Dvärglira

20 – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm (all were seen in the morning). As for Manx we surely missed some birds.

Porto Moniz	7/9	9/9
Bulwer's Petrel	17	12
Cory's Shearwater	800	460
Great Shearwater	219	–
Sooty Shearwater	5	–
Manx Shearwater	334	78
Little Shearwater	20	–

Little Egret – *Egretta garzetta* – Silkeshäger

1 – Funchal Harbour 8/9. **1** towards east – Ponta da Cruz 10/9 07:30 to 10:00am.

Grey Heron – *Ardea cinerea* – Gråhäger

6 + 10 – Ponta da Cruz 6/9. **6** – Porto Santo 11/9.

Sparrowhawk – *Accipiter nisus granti* – Sparvhök

5 birds were seen in total.

Buzzard – *Buteo buteo* – Ormvråk

Widespread and conspicuous. At least **45** birds were seen in total (**5** at Ponta do Pargo 9/9).

Kestrel – *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* – Tornfalk

Widespread and conspicuous. Seen daily.

Red-legged Partridge – *Alectoris rufa hispanica* – Rödhöna

2 – Fonte da Pedra (7 km south Porto Moniz) 9/9 at dawn. The birds were heard playing.

Turnstone – *Arenaria interpres* – Roskarl

The commonest wader found on Madeira. One or two could usually be found on rocky beaches and Harbour walls (15 – Funchal Harbour walls 8/9).

Whimbrel – *Numenius phaeopus* – Småspov

1 – Porto Moniz 7/9. 1 – Funchal Harbour 8/9. 4 – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm. 1 – Ponta da Cruz 10/9 07:30 to 10:00am.

Pomarine-/Arctic Skua – *Stercorarius pomarinus/parasiticus* – Bredstjärtad-/Labb

1 distant bird – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm.

Atlantic Herring Gull – *Larus michahellis atlantis* – ”Medelhavstrut”

Common on the coast particularly around the Port at Funchal. Birds were also seen on the high plateau of Paul Da Serra.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – *Larus fuscus graellsii* – Silltrut

2 juvenile – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 07:20 to 11:45am and 17:00 to 20:15pm. 1 adult – Funchal Harbour 8/9. 2 adult – Ponta da Cruz 10/9 07:30 to 10:00am. 1 adult – Ponta da Cruz 12/9 07:20 to 08:30am.

Common Tern – *Sterna hirundo* – Fisktärna

20 – from Lido in the evening 5/9. 34 – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 07:20 to 11:45am and 17:00 to 20:15pm. 15 – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. 15 – Funchal Harbour 8/9. 20 – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm.

Arctic Tern – *Sterna paradisaea* – Silvertärna

1 adult – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 07:20 to 11:45am and 17:00 to 20:15pm. 5 – Porto Moniz 7/9 07:50am to 20:00pm. 2 – Funchal Harbour 8/9. 1 – Porto Moniz 9/9 08:20am to 14:40pm.

Feral Pigeon – *Columba livia* – Stadsduva

Common, but we did not find many ”Rock Dove”, except for 40-50 ”pure” birds at Ponta do Pargo 9/9.

Long-toed Pigeon – *Columba trocaz* – Madeiraduva

2-3 – between Faja da Cedro Gordo and Riberio Frio 8/9 15:00pm.

Barn Owl – *Tyto alba schimtzii* – Tornuggla

1 – Casa Branca 6/9. 2 – Ponta da Cruz 6/9 at dawn. Probably breeding birds. Excellent views and also heard frequently. 2 – Canhas in the evening 7/9. 3 – Ponta da Cruz 10/9 at dawn. 1 – Ponta da Cruz 12/9 07:20am.

Plain Swift – *Apus unicolor* – Enfärgad seglare

Common everywhere.

Hoopoe – *Upupa epops* – Härfågel

3 – Ponta do Pargo 9/9 16:00 to 16:45pm. 1 – Porto Santo 11/9.

Grey Wagtail – *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi* – Forsärla

Common and can be seen almost anywhere.

Berthelot's Pipit – *Anthus berthelotii madeirensis* – Kanariepiplärka

10-15 – Prainha 8/9. 2 – Ponta de São Lourenço 8/9. 10 – Ponta do Rosto 8/9 (all three spots located at the western tip of Madeira). The birds at Ponta do Rosto was nearly tame and feeded successfully with bread! 2 – Ponta do Pargo 9/9 16:00 to 16:45pm. 2 – on the high plateau of Paul da Serra 9/9. 2 – Porto Santo 11/9.

Robin – *Erithacus rubecula* – Rödhake

Heard and seen almost everyday.

Blackbird – *Turdus merula cabrerae* – Koltrast

Heard and seen almost everyday.

Blackcap – *Sylvia atricapilla obscura* – Svarthätta
Heard and seen almost everyday.

Spectacled Warbler – *Sylvia conspicillata bella* – Glasögonsångare
2 – Ponta do Pargo 9/9 16:00 to 16:45pm.

Madeira Firecrest – *Regulus ignicapillus madeirensis* – Brandkronad kungsfågel
15 – Balcoes 8/9 12:00 to 14:10pm. It was best seen and heard (the call slightly like Yellow-browed Warbler) by walking along levadas through Laurel forest such as the walk to Balcoes.

Chaffinch – *Fringilla coelebs madeirensis* – Bofink
4 – Balcoes 8/9 12:00 to 14:10pm.

Canary – *Serinus canaria* – Kanariesiska
Beware of this species which are both common and extremely vocal. The calls sometimes is very like Linnet, Greenfinch, Twite and Goldfinch! Large flocks were seen at Ponta da Cruz and Ponta do Pargo.

Goldfinch – *Carduelis carduelis parva* – Steglits
6 – Funchal Garden 5/9.

Spanish Sparrow – *Passer hispaniolensis* – Spansk sparv
20 – Porto Santo 11/9.

Dolphins (not identified)
Were seen on several occasions from Ponta da Cruz and the Porto Santo ferry.

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