



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Canary Islands Macaronesian Endemics *14th to 20th May 2018 (7 Days)* Trip Report



Tenerife Blue Chaffinch by David Hoddinott

Trip Report Compiled by Tour Leader: David Hoddinott

Trip Summary

Our Canary Islands adventure started off on the island of Fuerteventura, where we settled into our comfortable hotel for a three-night stay. After meeting up for breakfast the following morning, we set off in search of one of the main targets on the island, Houbara Bustard. A strong wind made birding difficult and there was no sign of the bustard. In a secluded wadi, we did, however, find a superb pair of Canary Islands Stonechat, which is endemic not only to the Canary Islands but to the arid island of Fuerteventura. Next, a cute pair of Spectacled Warblers put on a good show and



Canary Islands Stonechat by David Hoddinott

another target, Berthelot's Pipit, was seen. A little further on, a superb covey of Barbary Partridge showed well and then two Cream-colored Coursers were spotted and seen making darting strides across the Stoney Plains. After lunch, we made a visit to the Los Molinos reservoir, which was quite productive. Here we found flocks of Ruddy Shelduck, several Eurasian Spoonbill, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Eurasian Coot, Black-winged Stilt, Grey Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Southern Grey Shrike, Northern Raven, Spanish Sparrow and Western Yellow Wagtail.

The following day we went in search of the bustard once more, and after a lengthy search we finally found one which we enjoyed good scope views of. In the same area, we also found the cryptic Eurasian Stone-curlew, several Black-bellied Sandgrouse and Eurasian Hoopoe. Having found our key targets with time to spare, we visited some cliffs to look for Red-billed Tropicbird which had recently been seen in the area. Alas, no luck with the tropicbird, but we did see a pair of Peregrine Falcon and numerous Cory's Shearwaters close to shore. A late afternoon visit to Rio Cabras Gorge to search for a vagrant Dwarf Bittern which had been seen there recently was not successful. However, we did find African Blue Tit, European Turtle Dove, Common House Martin, loads of Trumpeter Finch, Common Redstart and Purple Heron. The habitat in the gorge looked really good, and so we decided to try again the following morning before our flight to Tenerife. This was a good decision, as a further search saw us enjoying great views of both adult and juvenile Egyptian Vultures at a carcass, numerous Common Buzzard, another key target in Plain Swift and a splendid Dwarf Bittern, a major bonus lifer for some of the guests.



Cream-colored Courser by David Hoddinott

An afternoon visit to some salt works was fairly quiet, but we did enjoy great close-up views of several Dunlin and a Common Sandpiper. We also spent a short time in the Museum, which was well laid out. After lunch, we made our way to the airport and boarded the flight to Tenerife via Gran Canaria. On arrival, we picked up our hired car and drove to our hotel for a three-night stay.

We arrived late but a wonderful buffet dinner was ready and waiting for us, and then we turned in for a good night's sleep.



Eurasian Stone-curlew by David Hoddinott

The following morning we spent a little time in the garden after breakfast, as it was quite active and here we found numerous Atlantic Canaries – several males singing their hearts out – as well as dozens of Common Blackbird and a couple of Canary Islands Chiffchaff. With a good start to the day, we set off up to Pico del Teide National Park. The mountain is 3,718 metres high and very impressive. Our first stop on the lower, well-wooded slopes saw us finding European Robin of the distinctive subspecies *superbus*, Common Chaffinch and European Greenfinch. Having not seen our main target – the Tenerife Blue Chaffinch – we continued on, and to our delight at one of the

viewpoints we found not one but five of these handsome birds, including a male, female and three sub-adult males. This area was very active and we also found a most confiding Great Spotted Woodpecker and tiny Goldcrest. Delighted, and having wrapped up our targets for the morning, we continued on through the National Park to enjoy the magnificent scenery of spring flowers, coniferous forest and vast barren lava flows.

At our lunch stop, we found a splendid male Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard and Grey Wagtail. After a delicious lunch, we continued on to some gorges where Laurel Forest grows on the steep slopes. Our quarry here was the two endemic pigeons: Bolle's and Laurel Pigeons. After a bit of a drive and some searching, we were finally rewarded with fantastic scope views of both species perched. Whilst here, we also enjoyed further views of Plain Swift. It was then time to head back to the hotel, where we enjoyed some rest. Other species seen in the hotel gardens included Rose-ringed Parakeet, Eurasian Blackcap and Sardinian Warbler.

The following day we departed early to catch the ferry to Gomera. The conditions were very calm: great for travel, but not so much for the birds. However, large numbers of Cory's Shearwaters were seen during the crossing, some really close and giving great views, but alas no other rarer species were seen. We also observed several Atlantic Bottlenosed Dolphins and a couple of pods of Long-finned Pilot Whales.



Laurel Pigeon by David Hoddinott

And so ended a fabulous adventure, where we enjoyed good accommodation, a wonderful selection of meals, great birding – finding all the endemics, near-endemics, the fabulous Houbara Bustard and some rare vagrants – and magnificent scenery. We then headed to the airport to catch our return flights home. Thanks to everyone for making this a most fun and enjoyable trip.



Dwarf Bittern by Gil Ewing

Annotated List of species recorded

Note: Number in brackets () indicate number of days on the tour the species was recorded.

List powered through the report generator of our partner iGoTerra.

Birds (64 in total: 64 seen)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2018. IOC World Bird List (v 8.1).

Status codes: **E** = Endemic, **NE** = Near-endemic, **I** = Introduced

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Ducks, Geese & Swans *Anatidae*

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

(3) 20 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 40 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 10 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos

(1) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies *Phasianidae*

Barbary Partridge

Alectoris barbara koenigi

(1) 4 Fuerteventura 15.5.

Great sighting.

Petrels, Shearwaters & Diving Petrels Procellariidae

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

(2) 15 Fuerteventura 15.5 and 500 Tenerife 19.5.

Hundreds.

Ibises, Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*

(1) 3 Fuerteventura 15.5.

Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns Ardeidae

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*

(1) 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

What a bit of luck!

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea cinerea*

(2) 3 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 16.5.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea purpurea*

(2) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta garzetta*

(3) 6 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 1 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

Egyptian Vulture (EN) *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*

(2) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 4 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Great sightings.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

(1) 1 Tenerife 18.5.

Good scope views.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo insularum*

(4) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 7 Fuerteventura 16.5, 20 Fuerteventura 17.5 and 4 Tenerife 18.5.

Common.

Bustards Otididae

Houbara Bustard (VU) *Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*

(1) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5.

Distant scope views.

Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus chloropus*

(2) 2 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 2 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra atra*

(1) 40 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Thick-knees Burhinidae

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

(2) 3 Fuerteventura 15.5 and 1 heard Fuerteventura 16.5.

Great sighting.

Stilts and Avocets *Recurvirostridae***Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

(3) 15 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 10 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 6 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Plovers and Lapwings *Charadriidae***Grey Plover***Pluvialis squatarola squatarola*

(1) 1 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Little Ringed Plover*Charadrius dubius curonicus*

(2) 3 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 2 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Sandpipers and Allies *Scolopacidae***Dunlin***Calidris alpina alpina*

(2) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5 and 15 Fuerteventura 16.5.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

(1) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5.

Common Redshank*Tringa totanus totanus*

(1) 1 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Common Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

(1) 1 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Pratincoles and Coursers *Glareolidae***Cream-colored Courser***Cursorius cursor cursor*

(2) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 16.5.

Fabulous views.

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers *Laridae***Yellow-legged Gull***Larus michahellis*

(5) 30 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 30 Fuerteventura 16.5, 200 Fuerteventura 17.5, 10 Tenerife 18.5 and 30 Tenerife 19.5.

Lesser Black-backed Gull*Larus fuscus*

(1) 1 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Sandgrouse *Pteroclididae***Black-bellied Sandgrouse***Pterocles orientalis orientalis*

(2) 10 Fuerteventura 15.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 16.5.

A few seen fairly well.

Pigeons and Doves *Columbidae***Rock Dove***Columba livia*

(4) 20 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 20 Fuerteventura 16.5, 20 Fuerteventura 17.5 and 20 Tenerife 18.5.

Bolle's Pigeon*Columba bollii*

(1) 9 Tenerife 18.5.

Superb scope views perched.

Laurel Pigeon (NT)*Columba junoniae*

(1) 13 Tenerife 18.5.

Superb scope views perched.

European Turtle Dove*Streptopelia turtur turtur*

(3) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5, 2 Tenerife 17.5 and 2 Tenerife 18.5.

Eurasian Collared Dove*Streptopelia decaocto decaocto*

(3) 3 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 10 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 1 Tenerife 18.5.

Swifts Apodidae**Plain Swift***Apus unicolor*

(4) 3 Fuerteventura 16.5, 4 Fuerteventura 17.5, 20 Tenerife 18.5 and 10 Tenerife 19.5.

Great sightings on both islands.

Pallid Swift*Apus pallidus brehmorum*

(4) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 20 Fuerteventura 16.5, 8 Tenerife 18.5 and 50 Tenerife 19.5.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops epops*

(3) 3 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 4 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Woodpeckers Picidae**Great Spotted Woodpecker***Dendrocopos major*

(1) 1 Tenerife 18.5.

Splendid views.

Falcons and Caracaras Falconidae**Common Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

(3) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 3 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 3 Tenerife 18.5.

Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

(1) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Old World Parrots Psittaculidae**Rose-ringed Parakeet***Psittacula krameri*

(1) 2 Tenerife 19.5.

Shrikes Laniidae**Southern Grey Shrike***Lanius meridionalis meridionalis*

(3) 2 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 1 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Crows, Jays, and Magpies Corvidae**Northern Raven***Corvus corax*

(3) 6 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 10 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 6 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Tits, Chickadees Paridae**African Blue Tit***Cyanistes teneriffae*

(3) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5, 2 Fuerteventura 17.5 and 4 Tenerife 18.5.

Larks Alaudidae**Lesser Short-toed Lark***Alaudala rufescens*

(2) 3 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 16.5.

Swallows Hirundinidae

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*
(2) 10 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 3 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Leaf warblers and allies *Phylloscopidae*

Canary Islands Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus canariensis*
(1) 8 Tenerife 18.5.
Fairly common.

Sylviid Babblers *Sylviidae*

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*
(1) 2 Tenerife 18.5.

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*
(2) 2 Fuerteventura 15.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.
Superb.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*
(1) 2 Tenerife 18.5.

Kinglets *Regulidae*

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
(1) 2 Tenerife 18.5.
Good sightings.

Thrushes and Allies *Turdidae*

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula cabrerae*
(2) 50 Tenerife 18.5 and 10 Tenerife 19.5.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
(1) 3 Tenerife 18.5.
Great views.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus*
(2) 1 Fuerteventura 16.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Canary Islands Stonechat (NT) *Saxicola dacotiae dacotiae*
(3) Up to 5 Fuerteventura 15-17.5.
Great sightings.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis hispaniolensis*
(4) 10 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5, 10 Fuerteventura 16.5, 10 Fuerteventura 17.5 and 2 Tenerife 18.5.

Wagtails, Pipits *Motacillidae*

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae*
(1) 1 Embalse de los Molinos 15.5.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea cinerea*
(1) 2 Tenerife 18.5.

Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii*
(3) Up to 4 Fuerteventura 15-17.5.

Fairly common.

Finches *Fringillidae*

Common Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

(1) 1 Tenerife 18.5.

Tenerife Blue Chaffinch (NT)

Fringilla teydea

(1) 5 Tenerife 18.5.

Amazing views!

Trumpeter Finch

Bucanetes githagineus amantum

(3) Up to 50 Fuerteventura 15-17.5.

Seen in large flocks.

European Greenfinch

Chloris chloris aurantiiventris

(1) 2 Tenerife 18.5.

Common Linnet

Linaria cannabina

(2) 5 Fuerteventura 15.5 and 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

European Serin

Serinus serinus

(1) 1 Fuerteventura 17.5.

Atlantic Canary

Serinus canaria

(1) 30 Tenerife 18.5.

Great sightings.

Mammals (4 in total: 4 seen)

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Rabbits, Hares *Leporidae*

European Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

(1) 6 Fuerteventura 15.5.

Squirrels *Sciuridae*

Barbary Ground Squirrel

Atlantoxerus getulus

(1) 14 Fuerteventura 15.5.

Oceanic Dolphins *Delphinidae*

Long-finned Pilot Whale

Globicephala melas

(1) 6 Tenerife 19.5.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin

Tursiops truncatus truncatus

(1) 2 Tenerife 19.5.

Rockjumper Birding Ltd

The Hive, Lot 23
Centre Commercial du Barachois
La Place Cap, Tamarin
Mauritius

Tel: (USA & Canada) toll-free: 1-888-990-5552

Email: info@rockjumperbirding.com

Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com

Website: www.rockjumperbirding.com