

Wise Birding Holidays

All tours donate to conservation projects worldwide



MADEIRA: Seabirds and Cetaceans

Monday 16th - Friday 20th June 2014

Tour Participants: Mike and Julie Lockyear and Doug Cullen

Leader: Chris Townend, Catarina Fagundes and Hugo Romano

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP

White-faced Storm Petrel: Fantastic views of two birds on the chum slick for two hours on the 17th and a bird briefly on the 18th.

Zino's Petrel: Wonderful to hear birds calling at night at Pico do Arieiro, but the highlight was seeing the birds at sea on the 17th and 19th.

Fea's (Desertas) Petrel: Good to compare *Pterodromas* side by side and a classic thick-billed male on the 17th was one of the first birds we saw.

Madeiran Storm Petrel: Rather frustratingly a bird passed close to the boat on the 17th and then disappeared into the sea troughs never to be seen again!

Great Shearwater: Great views of a single bird investigating the chum on two days.

Sperm Whale: A group of six animals logging at the surface whilst we headed out of the harbour on the 19th was a real treat.



One of the White-faced Storm Petrels seen on our first pelagic

SUMMARY

Madeira is a very beautiful island with some great birding. The number of bird species to expect is pretty small with an average trip in June consisting of around 35 species, but what Madeira lacks in quantity it certainly gains in quality! If you have good sea legs and enjoy being at sea then Madeira holds the key to fantastic views of some very special seabirds and cetaceans, which we certainly enjoyed during our five day trip in June. On land, Madeira also has a number of Macronesian endemics to keep you focused as well as a number of interesting plants and butterflies. Just over three hours flight from London and all comfortably enjoyed in 5 days, Madeira is a must for anyone keen on seabirds, cetaceans, scenery and some relaxation!

Monday 16th June

Flight from London Gatwick to Funchal.

Our flight arrived into Funchal at around 4pm and after checking into our very pleasant seafront hotel in the town of Machico, we were straight out birding! We explored the river or Ribeira in Machico, just a short stroll from our hotel. After dinner we were picked up and headed into the mountains and the famous breeding site for Zino's Petrel at Pico do Arieiro.

Areas visited: Ribeira Machico and an evening visit to Pico do Arieiro

Highlights: A Glossy Ibis was a surprise find on the river, as was a Ruddy Shelduck; both vagrants to the island. More expected were small groups of Common Waxbills that fed below us as well as our first Madeiran Wall Lizards, Monarch butterflies and Atlantic Canaries. Julie then spotted our third vagrant in the form of a very welcome Osprey making it three vagrants before dinner! After dinner we headed up to the mountains and were greeted at Pico do Arieiro by Dr Frank Zino and his wife who we had the great pleasure of enjoying their company at the Zino's listening spot. We were treated to some great calls of a number of Zino's Petrels and could clearly make out the difference in pitch between male and female birds. The odd bird made its presence known as wingbeats skimmed just metres above our heads and we all enjoyed the wonderful atmosphere whilst sipping tea and eating Madeiran biscuits!

Tuesday 17th June

After a good breakfast we all took a leisurely stroll around the Ribeira at Machico before having lunch at the hotel. We then took the five minute walk to the quay where we boarded our RIB and the first of our pelagics!

Areas visited: Ribeira Machico (am) and a pelagic north of Madeira(pm)

Highlights: On land the highlights were getting some good views of Plain Swifts as well as more views of butterflies.

However, without doubt today's highlights were at sea! Amazingly we had seen White-faced Storm Petrel, Fea's (Desertas) Petrel and Zino's Petrel in less than 20 minutes from the first chum blog being dropped overboard! The *Pterodromas* were simply superb with birds gliding past just metres from our boat. The White-faced Storm Petrel entertained us on the chum slick for a good couple of hours with two birds present for some of the time. Bulwer's Petrels were a constant distraction during the afternoon and a Madeiran Storm Petrel passed close to the boat, but rather frustratingly continued its flight path away from us and showed no interest in the chum! Other highlights included the constant flow of Cory's Shearwaters, a group of five Bottlenose Dolphins and an adult Roseate Tern on rocks as we left the harbour.

Wednesday 18th June

Today followed the same procedure as yesterday with a leisurely stroll along the Ribeira at Machico in the morning, followed by lunch and a short walk to meet our boat at the quay for our second pelagic.

Areas visited: Ribeira Machico (am) and a pelagic South-East of Madeira(pm)

Highlights: On land Once again the *Pterodroma* Petrels were the stars of the show with a number of birds that mostly seemed to be Fea's (Desertas) Petrels. A Great Shearwater showed exceptionally well as it investigated the chum slick and a brief White-faced Storm Petrel was far less obliging than yesterday's birds! The cetaceans were very impressive today with some fantastic views of a pod of 25+ Common Dolphins along with a probable Bryde's Whale and a brief Striped Dolphin.

Thursday 19th June

Again, it was the usual routine with a wander along the Ribeira in the morning and our final pelagic trip in the afternoon. Or for some, an afternoon relaxing and watching the football at the hotel!

Areas visited: Ribeira Machico (am) and a pelagic north of Madeira(pm)

Highlights: On land the definite highlight was seeing a singing male melanistic Blackcap, a very rare form and a really impressive bird!

At sea, the highlight of the day was a group of six Sperm Whales shortly after leaving the harbour (also seen from land by some of the group) and a small pod of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins. Then at our chumming spot we were treated to yet more views of both Fea's (Desertas) and Zino's Petrels before heading back into quite a lively sea!

Friday 20th June

After breakfast we were picked up by Hugo and Catarina for some terrestrial birding, focusing mostly around the north of the beautiful island.

Areas visited: A tour of the north and NW of Madeira from Sao Vicente to Porto Moniz

Highlights: Today started with some great scope views of at least four different Trocaz Pigeons near Sao Vicente before we headed up into the Laurel Forest. Here we enjoyed some good views of the very distinctive endemic race of Chaffinch along with at least one Pallid Swift flying low over the road. We then had superb views of a singing male Spectacled Warbler as it sang from the top of the Pride of Madeira flower. Excellent views were also had of Berthelot's Pipit before finishing our focused bird quest at some conifer trees where two Madeiran Firecrests gave good views. We then enjoyed some wonderful local food in the scenic town of Porto Moniz and the Scabbard Fish and Banana was very much appreciated, particularly by Julie! Our final highlight was seeing the release of a Cory's Shearwater that had been picked up disorientated in Funchal the evening before.



Fea's (Desertas) Petrel

Zino's Petrel





White-faced Storm Petrel





Great Shearwater and Presumed Zino's Petrel





Cory's Shearwater and Sperm Whales





Atlantic Canary and Melanistic Blackcap





Spectacled Warbler and Berthelot's Pipit





Madeiran Chaffinch and Madeiran Wall Lizard





Monarch and Ruddy Shelduck





The Team!

Conservation Donation – Following the successful conclusion of this tour, a £125 donation from Wise Birding Holidays was made to [FREIRA Conservation Project](#).

This project is focused on the conservation of the critically endangered Zino's Petrel and other seabirds of the Madeira archipelago. Dr Frank Zino with his father Alec Zino re-discovered the breeding site in 1969 of this almost lost species. The world population is thought to be no more than 60-80 breeding pairs. Some birds are now being fitted with data loggers which are invaluable in understanding the movements of these birds at sea and in turn help try and better protect them in the world's oceans. Our donation bought a data logger to help this project.

Wise Birding Holidays

All tours donate to conservation projects worldwide



Wise Birding Holidays Checklist: MADEIRA 16th - 20th June 2014

#	BIRD SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES
1	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	A vagrant remaining on the island from the previous autumn was seen on the Ribeira at Machico on four days
2	Fea's (Desertas) Petrel	<i>Pterodroma feae (desertas)</i>	Some excellent views of birds on at least the 17th and 18th, including a classic bulbous-billed male
3	Zino's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma madeira</i>	Male and female birds heard at Pico do Arieiro on the night of the 16th. Then, great views at sea of at least two birds on our first pelagic in the Zino's hotspot north of Madeira and again on the 19th with another 2+ birds
4	Bulwer's Petrel	<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>	Seen on all three pelagics regularly investigating the chum slick
5	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea (borealis)</i>	Seen daily at sea as well as from land and heard at night from our hotel
6	Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	A single bird investigated the chum just metres from the boat on the 18th & 19th
7	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	At least six birds were seen during the pelagic on the 19th
8	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	A single bird was seen well in amongst a group of Cory's Shearwaters on the 19th
9	Madeiran Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma castro</i>	A single bird rather frustratingly passed close to the boat and then vanished into the wave troughs!
10	White-faced Storm-Petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina (hypoleuca)</i>	Clearly one of the trip highlights as two birds performed superbly on the chum slick for a couple of hours on the 17th and a bird very briefly on the 18th
11	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Up to two birds recorded on four days on the Ribeira beside our hotel
12	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	A single vagrant bird frequenting the Ribeira at Machico on the 16th and 17th
13	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus (granti)</i>	A single bird was seen by the hotel on our first evening
14	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	A vagrant to Madeira and seen on three days near our hotel
15	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo harterti</i>	At least one bird was seen during our tour of the island on the 20th
16	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus (canariensis)</i>	A single bird was seen near the hotel on the 17th
17	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Heard on our last day whilst exploring the north of the island
18	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Heard on our last day whilst exploring the north of the island
19	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Recorded on four days

#	BIRD SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES
20	Atlantic Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis (atlantis)</i>	This very distinct race was seen daily
21	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougalii</i>	A single adult was seen very well sat on rocks near the harbour at Machico
22	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Recorded daily
23	Feral Pigeon/Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Recorded daily
24	Trocaz Pigeon	<i>Columba trocaz</i>	At least four birds gave good scope views in the north of the island near Sao Vicente
25	Plain Swift	<i>Apus unicolor</i>	Recorded daily around the town of Machico and our hotel
26	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	At least one bird showed well enough to be identified as it flew low over the road in misty conditions in the north of the island
27	Berthelot's Pipit	<i>Anthus berthelotii (madeirensis)</i>	Three birds showed very well in the NW of the island
28	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea (schmitzi)</i>	Seen daily mostly around the Ribeira at Machico
29	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	A single bird when exploring the Laurel Forest area in the NW of the island
30	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula (cabrerae)</i>	Recorded on three days
31	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata (bella)</i>	Superb views of a singing male sat on top of the endemic Pride of Madeira plant!
32	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla (heineken)</i>	Recorded daily including the very scarce melanistic black-headed form
33	Madeiran Firecrest	<i>Regulus madeirensis</i>	Two birds showed well in conifers near Ribeira de Janela
34	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs (maderensis)</i>	This very attractive endemic race showed well whilst in the Laurel Forest
35	Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina (nana)</i>	Seen on our last day whilst exploring the north of the island
36	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis (parva)</i>	Recorded daily
37	Atlantic Canary	<i>Serinus canaria</i>	Recorded daily
38	Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	Recorded on four days along the Ribeira at Machico

#	MAMMAL SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES
1	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	A single animal seen briefly on the 18th was probably this species
2	Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	A group of six animals logged at the surface just outside Machico harbour and a single animal was seen later during the pelagic on the 19th. Doug also saw what were probably part of the same group from land, including an animal breaching!
3	Beaked Whale Species	-	Seen only briefly by Chris and Catarina on the 18th
4	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Five animals were seen whilst travelling to our chumming spot on the 17th
5	Atlantic Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella frontalis</i>	At least five animals were seen as we headed to the Sperm Whales on the 19th
6	Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	A single animal breached briefly on the 18th
7	Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	A pod of at least 25+ gave great views on the 18th
8	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Seen as we headed up to the Zino's breeding site on the evening of the 16th
#	AMPHIB / REPT/ FISH	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES
1	Perez's Frog	<i>Rana perezi</i>	What was presumed to be this species was heard and seen along the Ribeira at Machico
2	Madeiran Wall Lizard	<i>Teira dugesii</i>	Recorded daily
3	Loggerhead Sea Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Good views of two animals seen on the 19th
4	Flying Fish	-	Seen briefly on the 19th

#	BUTTERFLIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES
1	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Recorded on four days
2	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>	Recorded on four days
3	Long-tailed Blue	<i>Lampides boeticus</i>	Recorded on three days
4	Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Recorded daily
5	Madeiran Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge xiphia</i>	Recorded on our last day

Wise Birding Holidays

All tours donate to conservation projects worldwide



Wise Birding Holidays Ltd

3, Moormead, Budleigh Salterton, DEVON, EX9 6QA

Website: www.wisebirding.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/wisebirdingholidays

Email: chris@wisebirding.co.uk

Telephone: 07973 483227