



Lanzarote 04 March - 16 March 2012

Once again this was essentially a family holiday and not a birding trip as such. No telescope, just binoculars – although, as usual, I did use a 2x “booster” during one of the short seawatches from Punta Pechiguera. Transport was mostly a hired mountain bike which was used for all trips except for a couple of days (the Teguisse day and an exploratory trip) when a hire car was used. Most (birding) days were between 07:00 and 09:30, and I was not out birding every day.

Once again stayed in Playa Blanca and would thoroughly recommend it for families.

The rate of development is still alarming – once again an incredible amount of building has gone on since my previous visit. Almost the entire seafront as far as the lighthouse at Punta Pechiguera is now built up and although this has been done very tastefully it can only be detrimental to the birds and other local wildlife; there has also been massive expansion towards the east.

The one advantage of this development was very apparent during this visit – the hotel gardens and the “golf course” provide good feeding areas for grounded migrants.



Figure 1 African Blue Tit, Mirador de Haria, this species was also seen in the Playa Blanca resort area



Figure 2 Houbara Bustard, near Teguise, March 2012

Cream-coloured Courser were fairly hard to find and on this trip were only found on the plains north of Playa Blanca.

The plains north of Teguise were once again well worth the drive and was, as usual, the only place I connected with Stone Curlew. Unfortunately, once again the first one I saw was freshly dead on the road.

The Salinas de Janubio were in full production. It was here some of the best Lanzarote birds of the trip was seen – two Ruddy Shelduck, an Avocet and a Black-tailed Godwit. A Green Sandpiper here was the first I have seen on the island.

Migrants were at times abundant, the resort itself producing more than its fair share of Tree Pipits, Sedge Warbler and others. The scrub behind the beaches to the east of Playa Blanca also produced some good results. Surprise locality was Rancho Texas Park which provided superb views of a White-spotted Bluethroat along with other migrants such as Subalpine Warbler and Tree Pipit.



Figure 3 Record shot of the Avocet at Salinas de Janubio



Figure 4 Record shot of Black-tailed Godwit together with a Black-winged Stilt



Figure 5 White-spotted Bluethroat, Rancho Texas Park – one of a record influx to the eastern Canary Islands during March 2012



Figure 6 Houbara Bustard and Stone Curlew territory

As per my previous visit to the plains near Teguisse the Houbara Bustards were in the north of the area (nearer Soo) in the more arid wasteland rather than in the more actively cultivated areas.

The salt works at Cocoterros are, in some references at least, regarded as better than Salinas de Janubio. This was absolutely not the case on my visit - but I may just have been unlucky. There was a fair bit of work going on here on the day of my visit – and it was in the middle of the day.



Figure 7 Salinas de Cocoteros



Figure 8 My main mode of transport with the Salinas de Janubio in the background



All in all at least 64 species were recorded – once again my best result in Lanzarote thus far..

Itinerary:

02 March Arrived. Didn't go anywhere
 03 March Stayed around the resort
 04 March Salinas de Janubio
 05 March Punta Pechiguera / El Rubicon
 06 March Stayed around the resort
 07 March Playa Mujeres and east of Playa Blanca
 08 March Timanfaya, plains north of Playa Blanca
 09 March Plains west of Teguisse and Playa Mujeres
 10 March Island round trip – Mirador de Haria, Guiente, Mirador de Rio, Los Cocoteros
 11 March Punta Pechiguera / El Rubicon
 12 March Ranchos Texas
 13 March Salinas de Janubio
 14 March Playa Mujeres and east of Playa Blanca
 15 March Salinas de Janubio
 16 March Stayed around the resort

A systematic list of the species noted is presented on the following pages.

Explanation of numbers in the following list:

- * less than 10
- ** tens
- *** hundreds

English	Scientific	Numbers	Comments
Cory's Shearwater	Calonectris diomedea borealis	***	Common offshore - often associating with dolphins
Northern Gannet	Morus bassanus	*	2+ Punta Pechiguera 11.03
Cattle Egret	Bubulcus ibis	**	Plains near Teguisse, Arrecife
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	*	Mostly singles on shore near Playa Blanca
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	*	Singles widespread
Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorna ferruginea	*	A pair at Salinas de Janubio
Egyptian Vulture	Neophron percnopterus majorensis	*	A single east of Playa Blanca
Osprey	Pandion haliaetus haliaetus	*	Single roadside bird near Playa Blanca
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus dacotiae	**	Widespread
Barbary Falcon	Falco pelegrinoides	*	Seen hunting at Salinas de Janubio. Other large falcons seen near Playa Blanca may also have been this species
Barbary Partridge	Alectoris barbara koenigi	*	Single at Mirador de Haria
Houbara Bustard	Chlamydotis undulata fuerteventurae	*	Only on plains near Teguisse this trip
Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus	**	50+ present at Salinas de Janubio
Pied Avocet	Recurvirostra avosetta	*	Single bird at Salinas de Janubio 15.03



English	Scientific	Numbers	Comments
Stone-curlew	Burhinus oediconemus insularum	**	Plains near Teguise
Cream-coloured courser	Cursorius cursor	*	Plains north of Playa Blanca
Little Ringed Plover	Charadrius dubius	*	Up to 10 regular at Salinas de Janubio
Ringed Plover	Charadrius hiaticula	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio (60 present on 13.03)
Kentish Plover	Charadrius alexandrinus	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio (20-30 on all visits)
Grey Plover	Pluvialis squatarola	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio
Sanderling	Calidris alba	*	Small flocks on various shores
Little Stint	Calidris minuta	*	2-4 present most visits
Dunlin	Calidris alpina	*	3 at Salinas de Janubio on 13.03
Black-tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa	*	Single long-staying bird at Salinas de Janubio
Whimbrel	Numenius phaeopus	*	Regular along shorelines everywhere
Common Redshank	Tringa totanus	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio
Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio
Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus	*	Single bird at Salinas de Janubio
Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola	*	Single bird seen and heard flying over Rancho Texas
Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio and on all shorelines
Ruddy Turnstone	Arenaria interpres	**	Common at Salinas de Janubio and on all shorelines
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	*	Single in the harbour at Playa Blanca, small numbers elsewhere
Yellow-legged Gull	Larus michahellis atlantis	***	Very common offshore and around Playa Blanca
Sandwich Tern	Sterna sandvicensis	**	A flock roosted at Playa Blanca during the period, otherwise much less frequent than on previous trips
Rock Dove	Columba livia canariensis	**	Common
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	***	Very common in the resorts
European Turtle Dove	Sterptopelia turtur	*	A single bird at Guiante
Pallid Swift	Apus pallidus	*	A small flock at Playa Blanca on 06.03
Hoopoe	Upupa epops	**	Widespread
Lesser Short-toed Lark	Calandrella rufescens	***	Very common away from resorts
Sand Martin	Riparia riparia	*	Three at Salinas de Janubio on 15.03
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	*	Small numbers daily from 14.03
House Martin	Delichon urbicum	*	Seen regularly at Playa Blanca
Berthelot's Pipit	Anthus berthelotii	**	Common everywhere



English	Scientific	Numbers	Comments
Tree Pipit	Anthus trivialis	*	Widespread migrant seen in a variety of habitats and locations all over the island
Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla (flava) flavissima	*	Playa Blanca "golf course"
White Wagtail	Motacilla alba	*	Widespread
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	*	A few widespread sightings
Bluethroat	Luscinia svecica	*	A single at Rancho Texas 12.03
Northern Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe	*	A single on the shore at Playa Blanca on 16.03
Sedge Warbler	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus	*	Migrants seen along the south coast
Spectacled Warbler	Sylvia conspicillata	*	Only seen in the north of the island e.g. Mirador de Haria
Subalpine Warbler	Sylvia cantillans	*	A few migrants at a variety of locations
Sardinian Warbler	Sylvia melanocephala	*	Only at Mirador de Haria
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	*	Small numbers widespread
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	**	Widespread
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	**	Widespread
African Blue Tit	Parus teneriffae	*	Playa Blanca and Mirador de Haria
Southern Grey Shrike	Lanius meridionalis	**	Widespread
Common Raven	Corvus corax	*	Widespread away from the resort
Spanish Sparrow	Passer hispaniolensis	**	Common
Canary	Serinus canarius	*	A small flock at Mirador de Haria
Common Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	**	Very common
Trumpeter Finch	Bucanetes githagineus	**	Common



Figure 9 A small flock of Cream Coloured Coursers were seen near Playa Blanca



Figure 10 Another Lanzarote “classic” – Trumpeter finch



Figure 11 Stone Curlew, a reasonably common species on the plains south-west of Teguisse



Figure 12 Cattle Egret – a regular species on the plains near Teguisse



Figure 13 Spectacled Warbler, Mirador de Haria



Figure 14 Subalpine Warbler – a relatively common migrant on this occasion



Figure 15 Tree pipit – one of the commoner migrants on island during this trip



Figure 16 Algerian Hedgehog on the seafront at Playa Blanca



Figure 17 Mirador de Haria.

I walked up this track which produced African Blue tit, Barbary Partridge, Spectacled Warbler and more.

More about birding Lanzarote can be found here:
<http://www.naturalbornbirder.com/travel/Lanzarote.html>

e-mail: jules@naturalbornbirder.com