



Lanzarote 04-19 January 2004

Essentially a family holiday and not a birding trip as such. No telescope, just binoculars. Transport was a hired mountain bike which was used for all trips except for the Teguisse day when a hire car was used. Most (birding) days were between 07:30 and 10:00, and I was not out birding every day.

Stayed in Playa Blanca and would thoroughly recommend it for families.

Had stayed in Playa Blanca previously in December 1997 and was alarmed at the rate of development since then; it must be only a matter of time before the Houbara's north of Punta Pechiguera / west of Montana Rojo are forced out – one of them was displaying on a recently built road. 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.



Figure 1 Houbara Bustard on development near Playa Blanca

Cream-coloured Courser were very hard to find and were finally tracked down by walking over the plains between the now paved road signposted Femés and the main road north out of Playa Blanca. They were quite near a lone farmstead out on the plains. Drove "all" the tracks across the plains west of Teguisse to no avail for this species. Stone Curlew not noted at all, though may have heard it calling a few times north west of Playa Blanca.

There seems to be some refurbishment/modernisation of the Salinas de Janubio going on with several larger pans seemingly in use on the northern (landward) side, though these were virtually birdless. The older and smaller pans on the west and south (seaward) side of the lagoons are still disused. Arrive early and the small pools immediately behind the beach can be good (grey plover and other species favoured this area when not disturbed). The seaward side of the lagoon is by far the most productive area and access seems to be unrestricted.



Figure 2 Salinas de Janubio

The rubbish tip mentioned in the two guides I had with me (“A Birwatchers’ Guide to The Canary Islands” and Gosney’s “Finding Birds in the Canary Islands”) has been cleaned up and is virtually birdless, although a large falcon (probably peregrine) sat on pylons between the tip and the cement factory on 15.01.

It was easy to see the Houbara’s west of Teguse with singles and small flocks of 3-4 “all over the place”. Note that for at least some hire cars the insurance does not cover the dirt tracks so this is done at one’s own risk. Alarmingly I saw a “squad” of “quads” (four wheeled motorbikes) tearing up one of the tracks, although they disappeared towards the coast. In this area I also heard both corn bunting and quail but suspect this may have been mimicry by the Lesser Short-toed Larks.

All the birding done within the Playa Blaca area was west of the harbour and the best place was a small plantation / garden beside the Natura Palace hotel. During my previous visit I had stayed and birded east of Playa Blanca as far as Punta Aguila but this area is now continuously developed.

A systematic list of the 46 species noted is presented overleaf.



Black necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Single on Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	One West of Teguisse 13.01
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1-3 Regular along the shore at Playa Blanca, 5 at Mirador de Guinate 13.01
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinera</i>	Singles at Salinas de Janubio and west of Teguisse
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Single on Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1-4 seen whenever out of Playa Blanca itself
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 juv. Laguna de Janubio 17.01, a large falcon N of Playa Blanca (near cement factory) was probably this species.
Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>	A single at Laguna de Janubio 08.01
Black winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Up to 12 noted at Laguna / Salinas de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Houbara Bustard	<i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>	1-2 seen N of Punta Pechiguera and west of Montana Rojo on 3 dates, 13-16 W of Teguisse and 1 on plains N of cement factory N of Playa Blanca 15.01
Cream-coloured Curser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	Hard to find! 6 on plains N of cement factory N of Playa Blanca 15.01
Little (ringed) Plover	<i>Charadrius dubious</i>	Laguna de Janubio Heard and 1 seen 08.01
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Laguna de Janubio, 70+ present on salt pans north side of Lagoon. Very unobtrusive and could easily have been overlooked.
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrius</i>	15+ Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Laguna de Janubio: 9 on 08.01, 3 on 17.01
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	1 Punta Pechigura 11.01 and 1 at Laguna de Janubio 17.01
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	2 at Laguna de Janubio 17.01
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	20+ Laguna de Janubio 08.01 & 17.01
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	1-3 along the shore at Playa Blanca, singles at Laguna de Janubio 17.01
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Ca 12 Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Ca 20 Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Ca 10 Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Laguna de Janubio 08.01 (14), 14.01 and 17.01(ca 40). Up to 12 on the shore at Playa Blanca
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridebudus</i>	2 Laguna de Janubio 08.01, 14.01 and 17.01
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	Extremely common everywhere. 60+ at Playa Blanca, 10 Laguna de Janubio and ca 300 over the plains W of Teguisse (flying inland early in the morning)
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	1-2 Playa Blanca and Teguisse
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	1 Playa Blanca
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	2-6 daily at Playa Blanca
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Common in Timanafaya national park
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Abundant at Playa Blanc, tens seen daily
Plain Swift	<i>Apus unicolor</i>	A single noted by a ruined hotel on the cliffs north of Playa Blanca 18.01 was the only swift of any kind seen.
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Most often seen as a roadside bird, also at Salinas de Janubio



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Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	Many singing, abundant away from built up areas, at least 100 estimated on plains west of Teguisse.
Berthelot's Pipit	<i>Anthus berthelotti</i>	Very common, though few in the resort of Playa Blanca itself.
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	4 apparently wintering in a very small plantation/ garden beside Natura Palace, Playa Blanca
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	1 seen on three dates in the vicinity of Natura Palce, Playa Blanca and 2 on the shore at Playa Montogrande
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	1 west of Teguisse 13.01 and another seen on three dates in the vicinity of Natura Palce, Playa Blanca 16.01
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	7 apparently wintering in a very small plantation/ garden beside Natura Palace, Playa Blanca
Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	1-2 in scrub beside car park at Playa Mujeres (Los Ajaches National Park), common on plains W of Teguisse.
Chiff chaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	One heard singing at Playa Blanca 09.01
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Reasonably common most places with suitable habitat.
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Ca 3 west of Teguisse, also at 2 Mirador de Haria and 2 at Mirador del Rio
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1 to 12 noted regularly in the grounds of Playa Flamingo hotel, Playa Blanca.
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Very common in the resorts
Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Pairs and small flocks common.
Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	Common in pairs and flocks of up to 10 outside Playa Blanca, a few within the resort itself. Not noted w of Teguisse or at the Miradors.

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