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NOTES ON BIRDS OBSERVED ON THE PORTO SANTO ISLANDS IN SEPTEMBER, 1984

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RESUMO. Notas sobre as aves observadas em Porto Santo em Setembro de 1984.

Vinte e duas espécies de aves foram vistas e foi confirmado que as grandes colónias de aves marinhas que dantes existiam nos ilhéus (Bannerman, 1965) estão agora muito reduzidas em especial no Ilhéu de Cima. Nenhuma evidência de Freiras (*Pterodroma feae*) foi encontrada em nenhum dos ilhéus.

The following species were observed during a brief stay in the Porto Santo Islands from 3rd to 8th September 1984. Two days were spent on the western end of Porto Santo itself, and two days each on Ilhéu de Cima and Ilhéu de Baixo. Some of the time on Porto Santo was taken up by a 90 minute walk from the west end of the beach, inland, through hills and agriculture to the outskirts of Porto Santo town. Exact counts were made of all the bird species seen on this walk and the numbers are given where appropriate in the text.

Ilhéu de Cima and Ilhéu de Baixo had been strongholds for breeding seabirds (Bannerman & Bannerman, 1965); our visit confirmed that populations are now very low, particularly on Ilhéu de Cima. We found no evidence of the presence of the Gon-Gon (*Pterodroma feae*) on either island.

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MADEIRAN PETREL *Oceanodroma castro*

One bird was caught and ringed on Ilhéu de Cima, two were ringed on Ilhéu de Baixo. Numbers were low but estimates were impossible to make on either island. Rather more were heard calling on Ilhéu de Baixo.

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea*

Several parties at sea between Madeira and Porto Santo, with up to 30 birds in some flocks. Breeding was evident on both Ilhéu de Cima and Ilhéu de Baixo with larger numbers on the latter. No estimates were made. A few downy young were found on both islands. There was evidence of recent persecution on Ilhéu de Baixo where many discarded wings were found.

LITTLE SHEARWATER *Puffinus assimilis*

A carcass of a young bird was found on Ilhéu de Cima, but no live birds were seen or heard. On Ilhéu de Baixo large numbers were heard calling, after the moon had set, on the night of 7th September. Our visits coincided with only the very beginning of this species' breeding cycle.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Two were seen at sea between Madeira and Porto Santo on 8th September.

BULWERS PETREL *Bulweria bulweria*

Eight individuals were seen at sea between Madeira and Porto Santo. Breeding was detected on Ilhéu de Cima and Ilhéu de Baixo with well grown young in burrows. After searching large areas of cliff, we estimated a minimum of 1020 pairs on Ilhéu de Cima and a minimum of 2700 pairs on Ilhéu de Baixo. Ten birds were ringed on Ilhéu de Cima and 11 on Ilhéu de Baixo. There was evidence of persecution on both islands.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Two were seen on the timed walk. One seen on Ilhéu de Baixo.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

One on Porto Santo, one adult and a nest on Ilhéu de Cima, another adult on Ilhéu de Baixo.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

A flock of five were seen flying over Ilhéu de Baixo.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

One calling at night off Ilhéu de Cima.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

A roost of ca. 330 birds on a hillside overlooking the beach at the west end of Porto Santo. Roosts of ca. 200 birds on Ilhéu de Baixo and 1000 birds on Ilhéu de Cima, evidence of breeding on both islands.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Up to six birds seen together off the beach at Porto Santo.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Several birds seen from the beach at Porto Santo. Two birds on the shore on Ilhéu de Baixo, and a few seen offshore at both Ilhéu de Cima and Ilhéu de Baixo.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Some large terns offshore at Porto Santo may have been this species but only one positively identified.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

Skull found at the coral outcrop on Ilhéu de Baixo and one seen alive on the night of 7th September on the same island.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Eight seen on the timed walk, flocks of up to six seen at other times.

PLAIN SWIFT *Apus unicolor*

At least eight birds on Ilhéu de Cima and at least 12 on Ilhéu de Baixo appeared to be nesting in cliff crevices.

SPECTACLED WARBLER *Sylvia conspicillata*

A small brown warbler seen in a well vegetated stream gully on Porto Santo was probably this species.

BERTHELOT'S PIPIT *Anthus berthelotii*

A flock of up to 150 seen on hills behind the beach at the west end of Porto Santo. Seventeen were seen on the timed walk. Ten birds on Ilhéu de Cima and ca. 40 on Ilhéu de Baixo.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

One caught on 3rd September on Porto Santo was in primary moult. Two were seen on the timed walk.

CANARY *Serinus canaria*

Twenty-seven seen on the timed walk. Flocks of 30-40 on Ilhéu de Cima and ca. 300 on Ilhéu de Baixo.

SPANISH SPARROW *Passer hispaniolensis*

Common in Porto Santo town and around other habitation. Twenty seen on the timed walk. Not seen on the smaller islands.

ROCK SPARROW *Petronia petronia*

Two seen on the timed walk on Porto Santo. Four birds present on cliffs near the lighthouse on Ilhéu de Cima and ten on cliffs on the west side of Ilhéu de Baixo.

REFERENCES

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