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NOTES ON BIRDS OBSERVED ON MADEIRA AND DESERTA GRANDE, SPRING 1983

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SUMARIO. Durante o período 16 de Março a 13 de Abril de 1983 foram levados a cabo estudos sobre invertebrados e aves na Madeira e na Deserta Grande. Esta nota sumariza as observações de aves feitas durante a visita.

ABSTRACT. During the period 16th March to 13th April 1983 we carried out a number of bird and invertebrate studies on Madeira and Deserta Grande. Details of some of this work may be found in Lacey & Jones (1984) and Lacey (1985). This note summarises some incidental bird observations made during the visit.

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea*

Common offshore between Funchal and Deserta Grande. Birds were beginning to reoccupy burrows on Deserta Grande in late March. Six burrows were occupied and thirteen showed signs of activity in a 5000 m² quadrat at the northern end of the island.

No other species of Procellariiformes were seen either on Deserta Grande or at sea during the visit despite the fact that Madeiran Storm

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Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*), Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) and Little Shearwater (*P. assimilis*) should all be present at this time of year in the area (Bannerman & Bannerman, 1965).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

A pair was seen to the west of Funchal on 18th March. A pair was seen mobbing three Buzzards on 20th March at Cabo Girão.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

A party of six was seen near the church at Prainha, on the Ponta de São Lourenço.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Up to 27 were seen in Funchal harbour in March and April. Six were seen at Câmara de Lobos on 20th March.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Up to four birds seen in Funchal harbour.

HERRING GULL *L. argentatus*

A large breeding colony was observed on the top of Ilhéu Chão, a colony not mentioned by Bannerman & Bannerman (1965).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Up to four seen feeding in Funchal harbour.

LONG-TOED PIGEON *Columba trocaz*

At least seven individuals were seen in Fajã da Nogueira on 4th April. A single bird was seen at Pico das Pedras Forest Park on 5th April. One was seen at Caldeirão Verde on 10th April.

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*

One seen on 12th April near Prainha, Ponta de São Lourenço, presumably on passage.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Single birds seen west of Funchal on 18th March and on Deserta Grande on 29th March. Two birds were seen at the old Whaling Station at Caniçal on 12th April.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Twenty were seen feeding on insects on Ponta de São Lourenço on 12th April with five House Martins *Delichon urbica*.

BERTHELOT'S PIPIT *Anthus berthelotii*

Seventeen were counted on the Ponta de São Lourenço between Prainha and Estreito on 27th March; 14 between Prainha and Caniçal on 12th April; 10 were seen at Casa do Areeiro on 7th April and one seen at the Airport (Santa Cruz) on 13th April.

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flava*

A pair showing characteristics of this subspecies of the Yellow Wagtail was observed on the Ponta de São Lourenço on 12th April.

The male had a blue crown and cheeks, a white chin and supercilium and a dark stripe through the eye. Upperparts were olive green and the breast, belly and flanks were bright yellow.

The female had greyish-brown upperparts and whitish underparts. It had a white supercilium and grey cheek patches. Both birds had black legs. They were observed following cattle and were viewed from a distance of 15 m.

This seems to be the first documented record of a Yellow Wagtail (of any subspecies) for Madeira and was recorded at the same time as a number of other passerine migrants (see Swallow, Bee-eater).

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*

A pair of this species was observed in scrub habitat at Prainha on 26th and 27th March. This is the first published record for this species on Madeira. Both birds had left the area before 12th April.

The birds had skulking habits and were seen flying between clumps of thistles. They were slightly smaller than Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* and had long tails which were flicked continuously in the manner of Dartford Warblers *Sylvia undata*. The flight was undulating and the birds uttered a tek-tek call.

The male's upperparts were completely bluish-grey. The underparts were russet-brown. It had a prominent white moustachial stripe above an orange-brown chin. Both birds had pale outer tail feathers. The female had brownish-grey upperparts and paler brownish underparts.

Both birds were observed in fine weather, on a number of occasions, from as close as five metres.

ROCK SPARROW *Petronia petronia*

Four individuals were seen near Prainha on 12th April.

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