

## Tenerife 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009

### Mike and Emma Cram & family

This was a self-catering family holiday booked over half term for sunshine and sea air and to escape the depressing British climate and all its associated illnesses! Having said that we all developed colds. However, Emma and I had plenty of opportunities to see all the endemic species and races of bird to be encountered here. We booked an apartment privately through Owners Direct in the relatively quieter resort of Los Gigantes on the North-west coast. It was overlooking the sea, so gave plenty of opportunity for casual and convenient seawatching!



**Cory's Shearwater off Los Gigantes**



**Mike, James, Holly and Emma**

Whilst it would have been nice to see some of the other island specialities, it was a family holiday first and foremost. Besides, we'd seen Barbary Partridge, Berthelot's Pipit, Trumpeter Finch and others on last year's holiday on Fuerteventura. It would have been nice to see Rock Sparrow, but you simply can't be everywhere!

### Summary / Itinerary.

**Tues 17Feb09:** Flew 0830 Bristol, landed Reina Sur 1230. Picked up Seat Altea Diesel (AVIS) drove to [Los Gigantes](#) and spent the rest of the day chilling / exploring the town. Meal out.

**Weds 18Feb09:** Chilled out locally / a couple of walks to the marina and back.

**Thur 19Feb09:** A day trip up to [Mount Teide](#) with a stop off at the [Las Lajas](#) picnic site for Blue Chaffinch. James sick in the car, again! Evening walk to town and marina.

**Fri 20Feb09:** Emma & kids to beach, 1130 – 1455 Mike drove to [Erjos](#), into forest about 1km then walked 3miles into the laurel forest of [Monte del Agua](#) (as per pages 25/26 of Clarke & Collins). Targeting both endemic species of pigeon, Goldcrest and other races. Evening walk to marina.

**Sat 21Feb09:** Chilling out in apartment / locally. Emma went on a boat trip out of [Los Gigantes harbour](#) 1130-1330. Ate out.

**Sun 22Feb09:** Day out in [Jungle Park, near Arona](#). Evening in Los Gigantes.

**Mon 23Feb09:** Emma & kids to beach, Mikes turn for a boat trip out of [Los Gigantes harbour](#) 1130-1330. Evening in Los Gigantes shopping / meal out.

**Tues 24Feb09:** A hearty breakfast in town and walk in village, leaving 1015 for 1400 flight, on time. Landed Bristol 1800, departures 1845 meet and greet = a world record for us for shortest time ever between landing and leaving the airport!

**Cost: £1,688** Flights £754 Thomson (First Choice), Apartment £400 (Owner's Direct), Meet & Greet £62 (Purple Parking), Hire Car £0 (Airmiles), Children's Car seats £87 (AVIS), All Spending money including maps £365. Petrol & Severn Bridge toll c.£20.

## Species Summary (28 species recorded)

### Atlantic Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*)

Observed on a daily basis from the apartment, off Los Gigantes in their hundreds. Stunning views of dozens on a pelagic trip out of the harbour there to observe Pilot Whales and Bottle-nosed Dolphins.

### Little Egret (*Egretta garzeta*)

2 viewed from apartment flying north to roost at Los Gigantes on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Again 2 viewed on a pelagic, roosting on rocks at base of cliffs near Masca Bay on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus granti*)

A female took a Collared Dove on 19<sup>th</sup> in apartment garden, but was scared off by a cat who appeared too stupid too benefit! The dove survived – just!

### Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo insularum*)

3 soaring at the village of Erjos a short distance along the track to Monte del Agua.

### Osprey (*Pandion hiliaetus*)

Emma saw 3 on 20<sup>th</sup> as they flew in off the sea, over the town and east inland. Later that evening one flew over the town. 2 at the base of cliffs nr Masca Bay and the Bass fish farm(!), whilst on a pelagic.

### Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus canariensis*)

Common and widespread. Several seen every day, in a variety of locations.

### Barbary Falcon (*Falco pelegrinoides*)

One soared north over Los Gigantes on the evening of 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Emma saw 1 from the car on 24<sup>th</sup> as we passed a pool outside Callao Salvaje on our way to the airport.

### Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

1 was seen flying north near the marina and out of the town.

### Azorean Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus micahellis atlantis*)

Common and widespread. Noted daily in large numbers.

### Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common and widespread. Noted daily in small numbers.

### Bolle's Pigeon (*Columba bollii*)

2 were seen flying in and out of the canopy for a few seconds at 1350h on 20<sup>th</sup>, a few hundred yards south of the “rain-gauge” view point at Monte del Agua, (as described in Clarke & Collins). The wing and tail patterns were clearly seen with binocular views.

### Laurel Pigeon (*Columba junionae*)

A cracking individual flew out of the trees at 1310h on 20<sup>th</sup>, about 200 yards to the south of the “rain gauge” view point at Monte del Agua, (as described in Clarke & Collins). The upperparts, bill and upper-tail pattern were very clearly seen with binoculars.

### Rock Dove (*Columba livia*)

Common and widespread. Noted daily in large numbers

### Plain Swift (*Apus unicolor*)

There were approx. 20 just south of Puerto Santiago on 17<sup>th</sup> and again on 23<sup>rd</sup>. There were up to 2 daily over Los Gigantes, mainly early morning and evenings.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos major canariensis*)

Two confiding birds were feeding low down in pine trees at the Las Lajas picnic site on 19<sup>th</sup>.



**Great Spotted Woodpecker and Tenerife Blue Tit at Las Lajas picnic site**

**Grey Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea canariensis*)

A cracking adult was viewed daily at or near the harbour in Los Gigantes. 2 were seen in Jungle Park, Arona on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Tenerife Robin** (*Erithacus rubecula superbis*)

A 6 mile round trip into and out of Monte del Agua only produced 3 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Blackbird** (*Turdus merula cabreræ*)

Fairly common and widespread.

**Sardinian Warbler** (*Sylvia melanocephala*)

Some authorities consider the island form to be distinct and named "leucogastra". At least 2 were seen each day around the gardens near our apartment in Los Gigantes.

**Blackcap** (*Sylvia atricapilla heineken*)

Fairly common and widespread

**Canary Islands Chiffchaff** (*Phylloscopus canariensis*)

Fairly common and widespread

**Tenerife Kinglet** (*Regulus teneriffæ*)

Despite hearing several elusive birds, I managed to finally see two at the end of my walk at the look-out point by the rain-gauge in Monte del Agua on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Tenerife Blue Tit** (*Cyanistes ultramarinus teneriffæ*)

Fairly common and widespread

**Spanish Sparrow** (*Passer hispaniolensis*)

Fairly common and widespread

**Canary Islands Chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs canariensis*)

Only 3 were noted of this distinctive race in the forest of Monte del Agua on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Atlantic Canary** (*Serinus canaria*) Common and widespread.

**Blue Chaffinch** (*Fringilla teydea teydea*)

Good views were obtained of 2 feeding on picnic tables, plus another singing high up in trees at Las Lajas on 19<sup>th</sup>. We were lucky the mist soon descended and bird life disappeared!

## **Fugitives**

We encountered 4 very sociable **Blue-crowned Conures** (aka Blue-crowned Parakeet) during the week. We saw them several times each day, always announcing their arrival with a loud shriek! They seemed to be quite capable of fending for themselves, but were not shy to take monkey nuts of several of the locals! Perhaps they are fugitives from Loro Parque?!



**Presumed escaped / feral Blue-crowned Conure**

## **Butterflies and Moths**

A **Monarch** was seen several times in the apartment garden throughout the week and we also noted **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Red Admiral** and what appeared to be **Small White**. We also saw a couple of species of pyralid moths that we've yet to identify.

## **Bibliography**

[AA Island Map of Tenerife](#) (1cm=500m, 1:50,000) – adequate for our needs, though if you are travelling widely around the island it can be a bit of a handful and tears easily at the folds.

[Birds of the Atlantic Islands](#) (Tony Clarke) (Helm) A very nice publication. Recommended, especially for the various races. A bit annoying that the text is at the back of the book.

[A Birdwatchers Guide To The Canary Islands](#) (Tony Clarke & David Collins) was particularly useful, especially during the trip planning stage.

[Finding Birds in The Canary Islands](#) (Dave Gosney) (Birdguides) Useful.

[Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe](#) (Various) (Collins) Useful, you could get by with just this.

So, it was a nice break and enjoyable for the children. Jungle Park in Arona is thoroughly recommended having one of the best raptor displays I've ever seen. Los Gigantes has a nice little black sand beach and a few easily accessible pools. The Supermarkets were well stocked and all cafes and restaurants visited were very good. The only down side was the loud music between about 10pm and 1am most nights – the kids slept through it though, even if we didn't!

It was a successful trip from a bird watching point of view too. Although the apartment was not one of the best we've stayed in, the flight with First Choice was excellent. We were well looked after and it was one of the most enjoyable flights we've had in recent times.

Mike had 5 lifers (Laurel and Bolle's Pigeon, Canary Islands Chiffchaff, Tenerife Kinglet, and Blue Chaffinch). Emma had 4 lifers (Cory's Shearwater, Canary Islands Chiffchaff, Canary and Blue Chaffinch). Some authorities consider Tenerife Robin, Tenerife Blue Tit and Canary Islands Chaffinch as separate species, so perhaps one day some armchair ticks will come our way!

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