

## Fuerteventura (Canaria Islands, Spain): 28 december 2005 → 3 january 2006

**MOST INTERESTING:** small flock of Canary at Betancouria (read below).

**LOGISTICS:** Apartment in the (awful) resort of Nuevo Horizonte, less than 2 km north on Caleta de Fuste, east coast, middle of the island.

Car: a rented Renault Clio.

**COMMENTS** (before the species list...):

I was with my girlfriend, the only birdwatcher of the couple.

Other birdwatcher I met: a bunch of about 7-8 french, well equipped, in Vega de Rio Palmas; one man (with family) from Spain, in Betancouria. For the most part, going around with a scope will attract some curiosity....

The island is pretty big, 1731 km<sup>2</sup>! It's very very easy to drive in the island, the main roads seem all new, and they are large and fairly straight, always clearly signed. Even the many "rough" tracks which are attractive for birding are often easy going, also with a small regular car (of course a 4x4 'd be better and safer)... anyway beware of the insurance if you go outside the main roads!

**ENVIRONMENT:** Fuerteventura is in the same time rather wild and natural, but also the signs of human activities are always clearly visible. I'd say downthere they are showing little respect for the island, nature-wise... you always see garbage, electric lines, excavations, awful buildings (for tourism or not) and so on, everything in a (once) beautiful natural landscape. I must admit that's something which reminds me of some parts Italia.

Another surprising thing is that it's very easy to explore the island, by car but also by feet (as we preferred). You will not find particular troubles going around for miles, I mean no fences, no walls, no hard wires, no major natural obstacles, no dogs, no dangerous people (!!), something I never experienced before (really different from Italia).

The bad side of that is that the access is easy also for those who just want to drive up and down the island just for fun, i.e. using 4x4 vehicles and so on... that's something very dangerous for the natural environment, and for some birds in particular.

Not to mention, the many tourism buildings already done and the other in the way... I guess how many people get to the island during summer and how many can be supported?!

**WIND:** usually too much of that, very annoying by itself, not to mention when using a scope, or even for digiscoping. Just one day with some rainfalls... temperature was nice, english (and "nordic") people out with t-shirts... we italians well equipped with wind proof jackets!

**PLACES AND DATES:**

28 dec. 05: Nuevo Horizonte - Antigua (FV 413 road) - Las Parcelas - Los Molinos - El Puerto de Los Molinos - Barranco de Los Molinos and back to Nuevo Horizonte.

29 dec. 05: Nuevo Horizonte - Antigua - Betancouria - Reserva Parra Medina - Betancouria - Vega de Rio Palmas - Las Penitas - Antigua and back to Nuevo Horizonte.

30 dec. 05: Nuevo Horizonte - Puerto del Rosario - La Oliva - El Cotillo - Punta de Ballena - Faro de Toston - way back to Nuevo Horizonte.

31 dec. 05: Nuevo Horizonte - Costa Calma - Istmo de la Pared (east side) - Playa de Sotavento (Hotel los Gorriones) - Istmo de la Pared (west side) - way back to Nuevo

Horizonte.

1 jan. 06: Nuevo Horizonte - Antigua - Tuineje - Rosa de Catalina Garcia - Pozo Negro / FV 420 road valley - Salinas del Carmen - Nuevo Horizonte.

2 jan. 06: Nuevo Horizonte - Morro Jable - Playa de Sotavento (surf school, S-W of los Gorriones).

3 jan. 06: short walk in Nuevo Horizonte surroundings.

BIRDING & some SITES suggestions:

I had the well known Canary b.w. Guide by Clarke & Collins, along with many Fuerteventura winter trip reports. I noticed most birders prefer to spend their time checking only the sites listed in the Clarke & Collins book. Actually, many other sites in the island are interesting and 'd be investigated while birding. Keep in mind that:

- the island is big and its coasts are surely very very broad. Many of them are not (easily) accessible, anyway I think every coast you can check, at least if not people-filled (not the case, in winter) can be very interesting for waders, gulls and so on. Bird-wise, the rock coasts are productive as well as the south beaches in the Jandia peninsula, which provided nice sand and lagoon like habitats as well. I.e., you can check the beaches you can reach detaching from the main road (FV 2) between Costa Calma and Morro Jable, not only the one at the Hotel los Gorriones.
- I did few real seawatching, and I never saw anything.
- A bonus place (vociferous Barbary Partridge, Sylvia warblers, the only buzzard...): "Riserva Parra Medina" a valley clearly visible on the left in the FV 30, from Betancouria to Vega de Rio Palmas.
- A bonus place (beautiful lava fields, Barbary Partridge, Spectacled Warbler, Trumpeter Finches...) the valley of FV 420 road, going to Pozo Negro from the main road between Antigua and Grad Tarajal.
- A bonus place: a new (??) small "lake" is found south of FV 413 road (a recently build one, not on the map they gave me for free at the airport!), between Triquivijate and FV 2 / Nuevo Horizonte.
- The "lake" at Vega de Rio Palmas is... gone!! The place was just dry.

### ***SPECIES LIST***

(the last name is the italian one):

Cattle egret (Bubilcus ibis) Aiorne guardabuoi

One flying over Morro Jable, acutally I was driving, not 100% sure.

Little Egret - (Egretta Garzetta) Garzetta

Regular on coasts (rocks and also lagoons)

Grey Heron - (Ardea Cunerea) Airone cenerino

1 north of Antigua

Ruddy Shelduck - (Tardorna Ferruginea) Casarca

4 at Embalse de Los Molinos

4 at "lake" south of FV 413 road

1 at Rosa de Catalina Garcia (not sure 100% very hidden)

Eurasian Teal - (Anas crecca) Alzavola

about 20 at "lake" south of FV 413 road

2 at Embalse de Los Molinos

Northern Shoveler - (Anas clypeata) Mestolone

about 10 at Embalse de Los Molinos

Egyptian Vulture - (*Neophron percnopterus*) Capovaccaio  
1 adult (the same??) seen three times in the same days around Los Molinos

Buzzard - (*Buteo buteo insularum*) Poiana  
1 at Reserva Parra Medina

Kestrel - (*Falco tinnunculus dacotiae*) gheppio  
Widespread, an average of 3-4 each day.

Barbary Partridge - (*Alectoris barbara*) Pernice sarda  
1 at Reserva Parra Medina  
1 at FV 420 road valley (to Pozo Negro)

Coot - (*Fulica atra*) Folaga  
Various at Los Molinos.  
Various at Rosa de Catalina Garcia.

Black-winged Stilt - (*Himantopus himantopus*) Cavaliere d'Italia  
2 at Embalse de Los Molinos

Cream-Coloured Courser - (*Cursorius cursor bannermani*) Corriente biondo.  
2 at Rosa de Catalina Garcia.

Little Ringed Plover - (*Charadrius dubius*) Corriere piccolo.  
Various at El Cotillo (Faro de Toston area)  
Various at Playa de Sotavento (Hotel los gorriones area)

Ringed Plover - (*Charadrius hiaticula*) Corriere grosso.  
Regular on coasts (rocks and also lagoons).

Kentish Plover - (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) Fratino.  
Regular on sand coasts

Grey Plover - (*Pluvialis squatarola*) Pivieressa  
Some at El Cotillo (Faro de Toston area)

Sanderling - (*Calidris mauri*) Piovanello tridattilo  
Regular on coasts (rocks and also lagoons).

Dunlin - (*Calidris alpina*) Piovanello pancianera  
2 at Salinas del Carmen.

Bar-Tailed Godwit - (*Limosa lapponica*) Pittima minore  
Some at El Cotillo (Faro de Toston area)

Whimbrel - (*Numerius phaeogrus*) Chiurlo piccolo  
Regular on coasts (rocks and also lagoons), 7 at surf school beach, S-W of los Gorriones).

Greenshank - (*Tringa nebularia*) Pantana  
3 at Playa de Sotavento (surf school, S-W of los Gorriones).

Common Sandpiper - (*Actitis hypoleucos*) Piro piro piccolo  
2 at Nuevo horizonte coast.

Turnstone - (*Arenaria Interpres*) Voltapietre  
Regular on rocky coasts.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull - (*Larus Fuscus*) Zafferano  
Various in Jandia beaches, east side.

Yellow-legged Gull - (*Larus michahellis atlantis*) Gabbiano reale mediterraneo  
Widesperad (coasts and inland).

Sandwich Tern - (*Sterna Sandvicensis*) Beccapesci  
1 at el Cotillo (Faro de Toston area)  
1 at Playa de Sotavento (Hotel los gorriones area)  
4 at Salinas del Carmen.

Black-Bellied Sandgrouse - (*Pterocles Orientolis*) Ganga  
Common at El Jable  
maybe 1 small flock around Triquivijate (i was driving).

Rock Dove - (*Columbis Livia*) Piccione selvatico  
Widesperad.

Collared Dove - (*Streptopelia Decaota*) Tortora dal collare  
Widesperad.

Monk Parakeet - (*Myiopsitta monacus*) Parrocchetto monaco  
various at Morro Jable.

Hoopoe - (*Upupa Eops*) Upupa  
Rather common, averaging 1-2 each day.

Lesser Short-toed Lark - (*Calandrella rufescens polatzeki*) Calandrina  
Widesperad, especially at El Jable .

Berthelot's Pipit - (*Anthus berthelotii berthelotii*)  
Widesperad.

Canary Islands Chat - (*Saxicola Dacotiae*) Saltimpalo delle Canarie  
1 near Pozo Negro  
1 on the FV 413 road, near the "lake".

Sardinian Warbler - (*Sylvia Melanocephola*) Occhiocotto  
1 at Vega de Rio Palmas  
1 at La Lajita

Spectacled Warbler - (*Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*) Sterpazzola di Sardegna  
Common, average of about 1 each day.

Blue Tit - (*Parus ceruleus degener*) Cinciarella africana  
1 at Betancuria.

Southern Grey Shrike - (*Lanius meridionalis koenigi*) Averla maggiore meridionale  
Widesperad, average of about 2-3 each day.

Raven - (*Corvus Corax Tingitanus*) Corvo imperiale  
Common, average of about 1-2 each day.

Spanish Sparrow - (Paroser Hispaniolensis) Passera sarda  
Widesperad in towns.

Canary - (Serinus canaria) Canarino

A small flock in the hillside between the main road (FV 30) and the small graveyard in Betancouria (the graveyard is in the end of a small and short road which goes from Betancouria up to the hill, towards south). In Betancouria there'd be some caged birds but the group I saw were made of wild individuals for sure. Note: I was checking the place... by mistake!

Trumpeter Finch - (Budanetes Githagineus Amantum) Trombettiere

Flock near Pozo Negro.

Flock in Nuevo Horizonte surroundings (south).

Other times, just heard and / or badly recognized.

### ***Missed species*** :-((

Houbara Bustard (Chlamyditis Undulate Fuerteventurae) Ubara

Stone Curlew - (Burhinus Oedicephalus Insubrum) Occhione

I missed these two arid - area species. I spent several hours checking the "right" places (which actually are... endless) but nothing to do. Maybe, the main fault goes to bad luck (surely) and also not being so keen on birdwatching from the car (we like to walk!).

Plain Swift - (Apus Unicolor) Rondone unicolore

The skies were pretty... empty. Just a couple of times in the early days I briefly saw one flock of swifts but I was not able to identify them, I was always driving.

Barbary Falcon - (Falco pelegrinoides) Falcone di Barberia

Not seen, neither a single peregrine.

Marbled Duck - (Marmaronetta angustirostris) Anatra marmorizzata

Ring-necked Duck - (Aythya collaris) - Moretta dal collare

Two interesting ducks, already found in Fuerteventura, which I missed. To mention, the "lakes" in the island are rather ugly places....

*Bye bye*

*Andrea Tarozzi*

*Bologna - Italia*