

AZORES 19th – 26th September 2005

There has been straight package holiday flights from Finland to Azores only from beginning of this year. That may be the reason why only very few Finnish birders have visited the island group. Anyway, there is quite complete "Birding Azores" web-page on the internet kept by Swedish birders. From there it is possible to find all information which is needed to plan a trip to Azores. Our (Keijo Wahlroos, Rami Lindroos) one-week trip was timed to early autumn, which should be the best time to see some North American waders.

ITINERARY

19TH SEP SAO MIGUEL

Arrived to Hotel Ponta Delgada around 14:00 and spent the evening by birding around the harbour of Ponta Delgada. Booked flights to Terceira for the next morning.

20TH SEP TERCEIRA

Flew to Terceira and rented a car for 2 days. Spent the morning by checking the quarry at Cabo da Praia. After that, checked the ponds at Praia da Vittoria, Lagoa do Ginjal, golf course, and the harbour of Angra do Heroismo. Then drove back to the quarry for rest of the evening. Slept in Recidencial Salles (recommendable, relatively cheap) at Praia da Vittoria.

21ST SEP TERCEIRA

Started the morning at the quarry. Then checked again the ponds at Praia da Vittoria and Lagoa do Ginjal. After that, took the coastal road and drove round the island. Spent the evening again at the quarry and finally took flight back to Sao Miguel.

22ND SEP SAO MIGUEL

Spent the best part of the morning by solving how to get to Sao Jorge. (Swedish birder Bosse Carlsson had American Bittern there yesterday.) After that rented a car for 2 days and started birding in eastern parts of Sao Miguel. First twitched the Wood Duck at Furnas and checked Lagoa das Furnas. Later continued via Lagoa Sega to Serra de Tronqueira and then back towards Ponta Delgada. Spent last daylight at the harbour of Ribeira Quente..

23RD SEP SAO MIGUEL

Started the day by sea watching at Mosteiros (7:30-11:30). After Mosteiros birded around Lagoa Azul and Lagoa Verde and finally checked Lagoa Fogo.

24TH SEP SAO MIGUEL – SAO JORGE

Spent the morning by birding Lagoa Azul – Lagoa Verde – Lagoa de Santiago area. Before midday drove back to Ponta Delgada airport, gave the car away and took a flight to Sao Jorge. In Sao Jorge made a deal with a local taxi to drive us to Faja dos Cubres (the American Bittern place) and later after sun set back to a Hotel Sao Jorge in Velas.

25TH SEP SAO JORGE – SAO MIGUEL

Slept late, had good breakfast and then took a taxi back to the airport. Took a flight back to Sao Miguel and arrived there around 14:00. Didn't think that it was worth to hire a car for few daylight hours we still had, so just decided to spend the afternoon in Ponta Delgada.

26TH SEP SAO MIGUEL

Flew back to Finland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hannu Huhtinen, William Velmala and Kalle Rainio – who have visited Azores earlier – gave us useful information and also informed us about recent sightings during our trip. Also Jukka J. Nurmi updated us for recent records and helped in processing photos taken on this trip. During the trip we were daily in SMS-message contact with Bosse Carlsson and shared observations.

SPECIES LIST (SM = Sao Miguel, SJ = Sao Jorge, TE = Terceira, BC = Bosse Carlsson)

WOOD DUCK *Aix sponsa*

22nd Sep SM Furnas Terra Nostra park 1 adult male. The bird has appeared to the park in autumn 2002, and has become quite tame during time. There is several captive ducks (now also a pair of Wood Ducks) in the park, but their wings have been cut. So you can recognise the “wild and free” bird about normally looking wing tips.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Anas discors*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry juvenile / female. BC saw probably the same bird already on previous week.
23rd – 24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul juv / female with a Ring-necked Duck. BC saw the bird still on 25th Sep.

NORTHERN SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

22nd Sep SM Lagoa das Furnas female.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris*

23rd – 24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul juvenile with a Blue-winged Teal.

COMMON QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix conturbans*

Was observed only at TE, in where it was particularly common at the quarry area, f ex on 21st Sep c12 individuals.

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea borealis*

Abundant. Several hundreds everywhere, where the sea area was observed. Highest estimation on 23rd Sep SM Mosteiros c2000.

GREAT SHEARWATER *Puffinus gravis*

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 11 south during sea watching in the morning.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 1 south during sea watching in the morning.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros c90 during sea watching in the morning.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 3 at the harbour and 1 near the sea watching place.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

20th Sep TE Praia da Vittoria ponds 1.

21st Sep TE Praia da Vittoria 1 flying by.

TE Cabo da Praia quarry 8+3 flying by.

TE northern coast 1 flying by.

22nd Sep SM Lagoa das Furnas 11.

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 4.

SM Lagoa Azul 1.

SM Lagoa Verde 2.

SM Lagoa Fogo 1.

24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul 2.

SM Lagoa Verde 2.

SM Lagoa de Santiago 1.

SJ Faja dos Cubres 3.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo rothschildi*

Abundant, was seen daily and at all visited islands. Highest daily total on 22nd Sep SM 22 around eastern parts of the island.

COMMON MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

20th Sep TE Praia da Vittoria ponds 3.

21st Sep TE Praia da Vittoria ponds 2.

24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul 8.

EURASIAN COOT *Fulica atra*

22nd Sep SM Lagoa das Furnas 7.

24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul 13.

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c5.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER *Charadrius semipalmatus*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 2. BC saw 2 birds at the same place already on previous week.

KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c50.

TE Praia da Vittoria ponds 2.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c40.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 3.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 4.

RED KNOT *Calidris canutus*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry juvenile.

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros juvenile at the harbour.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c90.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c70.

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 1 at the harbour.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 5 juveniles. BC saw at the same place at least 5 birds already on previous week.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 3 juveniles.

23rd – 24th SM Lagoa Azul 1 juvenile.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry adult and juvenile.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry the same adult, and c4 juveniles.

LEAST SANDPIPER *Calidris minutilla*

20th – 21st TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1 juvenile.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 2 adults on winter plumage. BC saw at the same place at least 20 birds on previous week..

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 2 juveniles. BC saw at the same place 3 birds on previous week.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1 juvenile.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 2 adults on winter plumage.

23rd – 24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul 1 juvenile.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1 juvenile.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

23rd Sep SM Zona de Lagoas 1 on a small nameless pond near the road.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER *Limnodromus griseus*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 3 juveniles. BC saw the same birds already on previous week.

24th Sep SJ Faja dos Cubres juvenile. BC saw the same bird already on 21st Sep.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa islandica*

24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul 1 juvenile.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1 on winter plumage.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*

19th Sep SM Ponta Delgada harbour 1.

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 5.

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 1 at the harbour.

24th Sep SM Ponta Delgada airport 3.

SJ Faja dos Cubres 3.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

23rd – 24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul 1 juvenile.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1 juvenile. BC saw 2 birds at the same place on previous week..

SOLITARY SANDPIPER *Tringa solitaria*

20th – 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry 1 juvenile. BC saw the same bird still on 22nd Sep.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Actitis macularius*

23rd Sep SM Lagoa Fogo 1. BC saw 3 birds at the same place few days earlier.

24.9. SJ Faja dos Cubres 1 juvenile. BC saw the same bird on 21st Sep.

RUDDY TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

19th Sep SM Ponta Delgada harbour c10.

20th Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c30.

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c50.

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros c10.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 1 juvenile flying north during sea watch. (Also probable juvenile Arctic Skua on 21st Sep TE off Angra do Heroismo.)

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros 1 adult heading south at sea watch. Seen only by RL.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus graellsii / intermedius*

21st Sep TE Lagoa do Ginjal 1 adult.

22nd Sep SM Lagoa das Furnas at least 80 birds to roost with Yellow-legged Gulls.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis atlantis*

Abundant. Highest estimation on 20th Sep TE rubbish tip c4000.

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*

19th Sep SM Ponta Delgada 1 adult in a flock of Common Terns on a pier at the marina.

22nd Sep SM Ribeira Quente 6 adults and 2 first-year birds in a flock of Common Terns on a pier at the harbour.

23rd Sep SM Mosteiros adult and first-year bird in a flock of Common Terns near the sea watching place.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Small flocks at harbours and some single birds at the sea near shore were seen. Highest numbers on 19th Sep SM Ponta Delgada harbour c60 and on 22nd Sep SM Ribeira Quente harbour c60.

ROCK DOVE / FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia atlantis / domesticus*

Abundant. Biggest part of the birds were Feral Pigeon –looking, but more Rock Dove –type birds were seen at least on 21st Sep TE at northern shore.

COMMON WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus azorica*

Rather common, was seen at all visited islands.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea patriciae*

Surprisingly common, f ex on 22nd Sep Furnas area c30 and on 24th Sep SM Lagoa Azul & Verde c20.

EUROPEAN ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Common but not very numerous.

COMMON BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula azorensis*

Abundant. F ex on 24th Sep SM Sete Cidades c20.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla gularis*

Rather common at suitable habitat.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus inermis*

21st Sep TE 1 seen and 3 heard at the north-east corner of the island near Miradoro do Raminho.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus azoricus*

SM Rather common at suitable habitats.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris granti*

Common at least on SM and TE. Highest count on 21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c80.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Abundant. F ex on 20th Sep TE several hundreds around Lagoa do Ginjal area.

COMMON WAXBILL *Estrilda astrild*

21st Sep TE Cabo da Praia quarry c20.

COMMON CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs moreletti*

Abundant. Highest count on 22nd Sep SM Serra de Tronqueira c70.

CANARY *Serinus canaria*

Abundant. Highest count on 20th Sep TE c300 around Lagoa do Ginjal area.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris vanmarli*

19th Sep SM Ponta Delgada 3.

23rd Sep SM Sete Cidades 1.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis parva*

Only few single birds were observed at SM and TE.

EURASIAN BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula murina*

22nd Sep SM Serra de Tronqueira 4 + voices.