

Whales & Dolphins of Madeira

Naturetrek Tour Report

2 - 6 June 2016



Bryde's Whale



Desertas or Zino's Petrel



Madeiran Firecrest



Atlantic Spotted Dolphin

Report compiled by Ed Drewitt
Images courtesy of Trevor Dudley



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Filipe Alves Local marine biologist guide
Rita Ferreira Local marine biologist guide
Licia Ferreira Local marine biologist guide
Zofia Halicka Local marine biologist guide
Felipe Silva Local biologist, birder and botanist

Summary

Leaving a cold very UK behind, a group of 11 arrived in Madeira with three full days of hot sunshine and calm seas ahead for bird and cetacean watching. The sea itself didn't disappoint and throughout our four boat trips (14 hours in total), we had memorable views of hundreds of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins that had just arrived for the summer, tens of Common Dolphins about to travel further north, three families of 60 (in total) Short-finned Pilot Whales, tens of Bottlenose Dolphins, usually in small groups, and a Bryde's Whale, a baleen whale that arrives in Maderia for the summer. Even during quieter moments, we were fascinated by the Portuguese Men O' War, sleeping Loggerhead Turtles and seabirds. Out at sea we had views of Cory's Shearwaters, a few Manx Shearwaters, Bulwer's Petrels and, most exciting of all, of an endangered Zino's Petrel or vulnerable Desertas Petrel. On our evening cruise, particularly, the sea was full of life everywhere, helped by the flat calm revealing the pilot whales, dolphins and turtles resting on the water's surface. Our land day took us up to 1800 metres into the mountains where a range of local butterflies, including the Macaronesian Red Admiral and Madeiran Grayling, were feeding on a variety of colourful flowers in the bright sunshine. Further down the mountains the ancient laurel forest was perfect for the endemic Madeiran Firecrests which appeared amongst the trees and mist.

Day 1

Thursday 2nd June

Transfer to Funchal, Madeira - on arrival sunny and calm, 22°C

With an early start, we all arrived separately and dropped our baggage with Easyjet. It felt more like winter outdoors but Funchal, in Madeira, was looking far more summery according to the BBC forecast. Strikes by French air traffic staff meant delays but, while we waited on the plane, our very positive and kind captain allowed us to have a peek in the control cabin where he explained about all the different instruments. We left the runway at 10.10am and headed out towards Land's End before flying south through Ireland's airspace and then into Oceanic airspace. We flew parallel with the coastline of Portugal and then headed south and west of Morocco into Madeira. We landed at around 1.45pm and were greeted at arrivals by our very friendly local coordinator and host Luís Dias - he does a superb job of managing the boats, teams and tours that we were part of over the next three days.

We had a pleasant fifteen-minute drive from the airport to our hotel, the 4-star Quinta Penha Franca, near the marina in Funchal. On the way we got a glimpse of the rocky outcrops, gorges, blue sea and myriad of colourful plants such as Jacaranda and succulents adapted to the hot weather.

After checking in, Luís gave a short welcome before everyone had a few hours to relax, get their bearings and enjoy some sunshine - it was 22 degrees Celsius, a pleasant change from the colder weather in England. The

hotel itself is spread out between the seafront and the other side of a road linked by a bridge where the older 'mother house', a small colonial-style building, is set amongst a secret garden of tropical plants from Strelitzias to Bougainvillea. There are two more recent hotel-style builds, one by the 'mother house' and the other by the seafront pool - this is where we were based.

We met again at 5.45pm and enjoyed a walk down to the marina, passing 100 Yellow-legged Gulls resting on the roofs of the fishing port. A Monarch Butterfly showed very briefly on the other side of the road and an Atlantic Canary sang from a high metal fence in front of a block of flats. In lovely evening sunshine and warmth, we met Luis at his shop and base - a comfortable, airy, light space with comfy seating, life-size model dolphins for education and splendid pieces of art installations, namely two model cetaceans made out of interesting textured and colourful materials. Here, Luis spent the next 45 minutes introducing us to Madeira, the whales and dolphins we hoped to see, the seabirds and the general itinerary for the next three days.

We sauntered back to our hotel and met together in Casa de Jantar, the hotel's main restaurant by the 'mother house'. Another magnificent Monarch Butterfly gave closer (if brief) views amongst the flowering plants, while the odd Blackbird flitted passed and a canary sang. On this warm, bright evening we enjoyed savouring the local fish delicacy in Madeira, the Scabbard Fish. We were able to savour it either lightly seared on its own or with the accompaniment of the country's small yet sweet bananas, or prawns in a tasty sauce. Others enjoyed chicken, beef, sardines or pasta, fish or watercress soup and fresh strawberries for dessert (amongst a few choices). The Scabbard Fish is a deep-sea fish with a long, black body, large eyes and sharp teeth. It swims up from the depths at night to feed on squid, prawns, and other fish. Madeira provides an important place in the Atlantic for it to spawn. After an enjoyable first evening together, we had the chance to say hello to Barbara and Ken, who popped up to say hello after just arriving on their flight from Edinburgh. After an early start for everyone, we headed back to our rooms and a night's rest ready for an exciting day ahead tomorrow.

Day 2

Friday 3rd June

Two three-hour boat trips, 21°C, sunny and calm

Breakfast was from 7.30am in the bar overlooking the sea - a very pleasant experience, especially with calm seas and a sunny day ahead.

Ed met with Barbara and Ken and took them down to the marina for 9am so they could meet Luis and have a briefing before everyone arrived ready for the first boat trip at 9.30am. We were heading out on the Ventura do Mar, a 16-metre long yacht skippered by Marco and crewed by marine biologist Zofia, a marine biologist who has studied Common Dolphins.

With beautiful sunny calm conditions, we headed out at 9.30am, admiring Funchal from the sea, a city that gets its name from the fennel that once covered the island in areas where forest was less dense. On land, one or two cetacean watchers known as vigias kept a close eye on the sea for any life. It wasn't long before we had our first cetaceans: Common Dolphins. Some 20 - 30 were a short distance away and focused on forming a tight, fast school to chase mackerel or sardines. A few small, young calves were amongst the animals, alongside their mothers. In glorious sunshine we were able to clearly see their yellow sides and whitish smudges on their dorsal fins. The Common Dolphins are here until the end of June. After then they head north probably towards the UK and cooler waters where they find more food.

As we left them we passed a flock of 80 Cory's Shearwaters sitting on the sea. As they took off, some were slow to rise, probably full of fish! It wasn't long before we found a more tropical species of dolphin, the Atlantic Spotted Dolphin. A school of 20 - 30, mainly juvenile animals and a few mothers with big calves, came to swim around the boat. In the crystal-clear seas we had remarkable views - these mostly young animals were light grey with pale or white bellies. The occasional adult female was darker with lots of pale spotting on their sides. The spotted dolphins arrive here in May, migrating up from further south, enjoying the summer's warm seas.

A little further along two Bulwer's Petrels, black, swallow-like petrels the size of Blackbird, were spotted by David flying in a zig-zag fashion over a flock of Cory's Shearwaters. Suddenly a splash revealed a dolphin and more, or the same, spotted dolphins came over the see us. One adult was particularly spotted and dark compared to the younger, greyer animals.

As we headed west the wind got up a little, making it a bit breezy - however, it was worth the breeze as we encountered a school of Bottlenose Dolphins. Over 30 were on their way east and swimming in a constant direction, spread out across the sea around us. Much larger, almost double the size of the Common Dolphins, the Bottlenose Dolphins are shy here in Madeira compared to the Azores, for example. This school was unusually resilient and happy with our presence. We watched one mother with a year-old calf following behind us and surfacing together.

Heading east, Funchal and our hotel were in view. We spent the last hour looking out for more marine life and enjoying the views of the sea and the vegetated cliffs. We celebrated our three-dolphin bonanza with a little surprise from Marco: a small serving of Madeiran wine (more of a liqueur). As we headed back in to port, the odd Common Tern flew past; just outside of the marina 100 Yellow-legged Gulls, mainly two-year-old birds, were loafing on the water.

We arrived back at 12.30pm and had till 3pm to eat lunch and relax before our next boat trip. We went to a few open-air restaurants by the marina front, enjoying a range of dishes from limpets to sardines and soup to sandwiches. It was still sunny and pleasantly hot as we headed out again at 3pm. The wind from the west was still causing a fresher breeze so we headed east out of Funchal where it was calmer. The first hour was very quiet, though pleasant. The sail was opened and helped ease us along with the engine on a gentle speed.

We stopped briefly to spot a juvenile Loggerhead Turtle - it didn't stay long although many spotted it poking its head above the water before it dived. The sailing was very relaxing - we were woken by the announcement of a Bulwer's Petrel skirting past, followed by a few more shortly after.

After a quieter period, some of the group spotted a tall, columnar blow of something in the distance towards the Desertas Islands. As we headed in that direction, we kept seeing different splashes and occasional white water but nothing certain. We encountered a flock of Cory's Shearwaters, amongst them at least three Manx Shearwaters that are smaller and black and white. As we headed on, some irregular splashes revealed themselves to be Atlantic Spotted Dolphins. A small group spent a little time around the boat. As we left them, it became clear there were 20 to 30 dolphins gathering speed and surfacing way from us. Some had pale side panels and Trevor's photographs later revealed many were in fact Striped Dolphins, a new dolphin for the trip. This species is generally shy of boats; they must have been nearby while the spotted dolphins were saying hello to us. We never found what made the blow earlier - it was probably a Bryde's Whale, a tropical, medium-size baleen whale

that arrives here about now. There had definitely been some feeding amongst the shearwaters and dolphins; the whale was no doubt part of this too before heading away or deep diving.

As we headed back towards land, David spotted a Portuguese Man O' War, a type of siphonophore (cnidarian) that forms a colony of marine zooids resembling a jellyfish-like structure. Some of these minute zooids attach to one another to form a balloon-like bubble while others form the stinging tentacles or connecting structures. Our stunning specimen was largely blue with a bright pink (described as Barbie pink) line along the length of the balloon. If it toppled over it quickly regained its upright sail to continue floating through the sea. Another was spotted a little later. From a distance they look like a plastic bag and are eaten by turtles. Indeed, turtles will mistake plastic bags for jellyfishes and men o' war, causing them an early death.

The forming clouds over Funchal shaded us from the warm sunshine as we headed in and we were soon ready for our 15-minute walk into the old town, to the restaurant O Jango, an old, converted fisherman's house that has been a traditional Madeiran restaurant since 1992. We had pre-ordered earlier in the day so our servings were relatively quick and a chance to enjoy more local cuisine from squid with bacon to chicken breast Jango and, of course, Black Scabbard fish. After some delicious desserts, most of us walked the pleasant half-hour back along the sea front to our hotel; a few chose a quick taxi. The variety of plants and trees adorning the streets and park areas was striking with their colours, textures and, in the case of some such as rosemary, smelly. After running through the checklist, we headed for bed ready for an exploration of the island and an evening boat trip the next day.

Day 3

Saturday 4th June

Land tour and early evening boat tour, 20°C, flat calm on sea

We woke to a beautiful sunny morning with calm seas. Before breakfast, Alice had been exploring the nearby gardens, spotting Plain Swifts and a Red-eared Terrapin in a garden pool. Today we were heading inland to explore different habitats, plants and wildlife. We headed out at just after 9am with Luis and Felipe, driving up into the mountains; our first attempt was foiled due to a rally closing the road. We headed back down into Funchal, dropping Chris off at the hotel on the way, as he wasn't feeling well. We then took the other road north up into the mountains, heading towards the peak, Pico do Arieiro via the village of Poiso. As we drove up, we admired the views into the various gorges and canyons, lined with non-native trees and flowering plants adapted to the Mediterranean conditions. Valleys were full of the local variety of banana trees, Giant Reeds and Nasturtiums that laced the rocks. From the early 1700s until the Phylloxera (a parasitic insect) outbreak in 1872, vines – and the wine trade – had been Madeira's most lucrative export. Phylloxera destroyed most of the vines on Madeira, after which bananas replaced the vine as the main cash crop and are still exported today.

As we headed higher into the mountains, the terrain became more temperate-like, with familiar plants such as bright yellow broom and pink Foxgloves covering the road verges, while an area of lichen-clad pine, beech and oak trees graced us at one level of our ascent. We passed through misty cloud, above which it became sunny and bright again. Before long, we had remarkable views of the rocky, mountainous terrain looking down towards the clouds, providing a picturesque landscape.

We stopped at the almost highest point of Pico do Arieiro. Here we were able to wander around, exploring the flowering plants (many introduced) including the Pride of Madeira, the island's national and endemic flower, with

tall, blue flowering spikes with pink anthers. It is related to the Viper's-bugloss, a more familiar wild plant in the UK. In the warmer sunny areas, butterflies were enjoying the sunshine and nectar of all sorts of flowers - we watched a few Macaronesian Red Admirals, a Painted Lady, Clouded Yellows, a Small Copper and a Madeiran Grayling. Broomrape, a parasitic, orchid-like plant was popping up everywhere - instead of being green the stems are red-brown as they lack any chlorophyll. They gain their nutrients from other plants.

In the crisp colder air we headed up to a viewpoint looking out across the mountains at 1,816 metres above sea level; from here, we looked across to the highest point in Madeira where a similar viewpoint of Pico Ruivo is positioned at 1,862 metres above sea level. Felipe pointed out the area where the endemic and globally endangered Zino's Petrels nest amongst the rocks. Madeira has four endemic species of birds – two are seabirds, the Zino's Petrel and Desertas Petrel, and two are land birds – the Madeiran Firecrest and the Trocaz Pigeon. In addition, the Madeiran archipelago is home to numerous subspecies and Macaronesian endemic species and subspecies of which we had already seen some. The Zino's Petrel is down to just 80 known pairs and breeds high in the mountains away from predators - cats and rats are controlled to ensure the area is predator free.

We continued on a short, circular walk looking out across the clouds below where over 50 Plain Swifts were swirling around calling. Nearby, on a rock, a Berthelot's Pipit was perched and another had been seen earlier flying across with food in its bill. The dominant plants here are large Tree Heathers supplemented by introduced broom and gorses. Remarkably, much of the water that is produced here comes not through rainfall but through water droplets forming by condensation on the spiky, modified leaves of these plants when the mist forms or moves in: a process known as occult precipitation. The water is diverted via special man-made channels known as lavadas that were built to help irrigate farmland hundreds of years ago. Some of this water is channelled to hydroelectric power stations to produce electricity. Severe fires in 2010 destroyed the vegetation surrounding the Zino's Petrels' nests, causing some deaths and erosion of the soil and rocks. Subsequent mitigation and reinforcements are helping to ensure the petrel colony is still able to nest.

At midday, we headed back down into the cloud and stopped by some pine forest for packed lunch, surrounded by eerily lichen-clad trees in the mist and the calls and songs of Robins, Chaffinches and Madeiran Firecrests. After lunch, we headed a little further down the road to Ribeiro Frio and stopped to walk through original laurisilva forest, the type of which used to cover the whole island before it was stripped away in the 1400's. It now covers just 15% of the island and forms a biosphere reserve alongside the Desertas Islands. The mist was penetrating the forest here, as we walked along through the green, leafy trees, following the trail of a lavada. Local subspecies of Blackbirds and Blackcaps were common songbirds, and a Grey Wagtail was perched on a telegraph wire with nest material in its bill. A curious fungus *Laurobasidium lauri* grew specifically out from the bark of the Bay Leaf Laurel tree like gnarled yellow-brown fingers. Madeiran Firecrests called from the trees above. We kept getting glimpses of different individuals before finally getting good views of two in a tree by a viewpoint looking out across a valley - though today it was filled with mist. The orange crests of the firecrests were easily visible on an otherwise cryptic bird. Nearby, at the viewpoint, half a dozen Chaffinches fed on food left by visitors. Here the males look more like a female with a hint of pink on the breast, a navy blue head and deep, moss green on their back and rump. Tall, obvious pink geraniums along the walk were of the endemic *Geranium palmatum*. As we headed back we took a different route, stepping down a valley surrounded by plants more familiar in the UK but at home here in the cooler, wetter mountains. We hopped back on the bus and headed back down to Funchal, passing valleys with stepped terraces where local villages grow their own crops on a small, sustainable scale.

Back in Funchal, just up the road from our hotel, we stopped briefly in a hotel's grounds looking down onto a small island outcrop where a colony of Roseate Terns and Common Terns breed. On arrival, a Common Tern and a Roseate Tern were positioned but the latter then flew behind the rocks out of view. We waited ten minutes and gradually a few more terns arrived, some with food. There was a mix of Common Terns, with bright red bills, and Roseate Terns, with whiter backs and black bills (and just a hint of red at the base).

Meanwhile, Tina and Kirsty had decided to stay behind and went on an extra boat trip this morning. In lovely conditions they saw a few Bottlenose Dolphins, a school of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins and a flying fish.

We got back with an hour before our later afternoon boat ride, a chance to quickly recharge, repack and head down to the marina for 4.45pm. We had a quick briefing with Rita, one of our marine biologist guides, who has studied the impact of tourism on the behaviour of cetaceans. This afternoon, we were heading out in a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) and met our other guide Felipe down by the boat. Felipe completed a PhD in 2013 looking at the behavioural ecology of Short-finned Pilot Whales that frequent the sea just off the coast of Funchal. We headed out in the RIB across a completely flat, calm sea. It wasn't too long before we encountered our first dolphins, a school of 30 spotted dolphins. They weren't very interested in us although a few did come quite close. We let them be, and explored more of the sea, encountering three different young Loggerhead Turtles. Each time they were sleeping; as soon as they were aware of our presence they dived. A large flying fish flew out of the water and glided many metres away before diving under. We stopped to admire a Portuguese Man O' War and saw at least four more, including a tiny, miniature one. Bulwer's Petrels were frequent and we saw more drifting past as the evening went on - 17,000 nest on the Desertas Islands, the largest colony in the Atlantic. The odd Cory's Shearwater also glided passed along with the occasional Manx Shearwater. As we headed back in later up to 70 Cory's Shearwaters were sitting on the sea; 40,000 nest around Madeira, particularly on the Desertas and Selvagens Islands.

There was news of Sperm Whales (which we didn't subsequently see) and, as we sped out to find them, an odd, dark blob-like shape on the sea, that suddenly disappeared, was thought to be that of a Pygmy Sperm Whale. However, it reappeared a little later which was unusual for this species. And then it appeared again. We edged closer and could see the blob was in fact a large, flailing fin. It was the fin of a Sun Fish, the second heaviest fish in the world (topped by the Whale Shark) and the largest bony fish in the world. It never quite allowed us to get close enough to see its full body but the fin was impressive enough.

We continued on and the next hour and a half was very exciting as we just kept happening upon more and more pilot whales and dolphins! We first stopped to watch a family of Short-finned Pilot Whales - this family was unknown to Felipe and passing through on migration. They were split into two. The seven males were resting at the surface in one area of the sea and 100 metres away a mixed school of 10 animals comprising mothers and young of various ages were resting. The males were much larger and we could see their individually shaped dorsal fins; one was quite floppy. Felipe was quickly taking photographs so he could add these animals to a database of pilot whales that he helps to run. A few Bottlenose Dolphins were amongst the pilot whales - this is a common phenomenon though no one quite knows why. After spending 20 minutes watching the group resting and occasionally dipping under the water, we let them be and headed on.

We then found a different family of pilot whales, a group of around 20 mothers and young, also with a few Bottlenose Dolphins. The young animals were very obvious, being much smaller and spending more time at the

surface. Although harder to make out than the earlier males, there was one male pilot whale here amongst the families - he was the last to slip under the water revealing his larger dorsal fin and stature.

In the distance, closer to the Desertas Islands, yet more dark fins could be seen. We headed over and found a third separate family of pilot whales. To Felipe's delight, these were a resident group that he knew very well from his studies - one male was at least 19 years old (they can live between 40 and 60 years). Felipe was explaining that pilot whales (along with Orcas) are unusual, like humans, in that females go through the menopause at middle age. It is thought this is so the older females are able to help care for younger animals while mothers deep dive for squid at night, often a few thousand metres down. During the day all the pilot whales we were seeing were resting and sleeping, waiting for darkness before they become super predators all over again. Dolphins, of which pilot whales are a type, have to consciously breathe so they don't drown. Therefore pilot whales are able to switch off half their brain at a time so they can actively still breathe.

We had been having such a great time and, around 7.30pm, were starting to head back towards Funchal, though the dolphins just kept coming! We found a school of 50 spotted dolphins that came all around us, even squeaking to a point that we could hear their calls. As we sped up, so too did the dolphins - they seemed to be waiting for us to create some waves. We enjoyed watching them surf the waves behind the boat. Dolphins only spend 10% of their time feeding and the other half doing activities that are described as play, which do not contribute towards their immediate survival. We saw lots of behaviour that could be described as this, although some obvious mating behaviour and sudden speeding off for food was also observed.

By now we were really heading back to Funchal, slowing down for a period to look for a whale that Felipe had seen blowing twice. Sadly the whale didn't reveal itself. Close towards the city more dolphins were ahead. Up to 200 spotted dolphins, the most common summer dolphin here, were spread out over a large area of the sea. Some came close to see us. This species had only arrived in Madeira within the past two weeks, swimming up from more southern tropical areas.

We arrived back in Funchal at 8.15pm and walked back to the hotel. Most of us met for dinner shortly after, enjoying a three-course meal before heading out to see the city's harbour fireworks at just after 10.30pm. Every Saturday in June there is a fireworks display at 7.30pm - hundreds of people gather to watch on land and by boat.

Day 4

Sunday 5th June

Five-hour boat trip, 21°C, sunny and calm

Today was another glorious day with calm seas. We met at 9.30am and headed out on the Ventura with Felipe and Licia. We enjoyed the sunshine in the first half hour, before turning southwest to see a school of seven or eight pilot whales. Felipe had identified them as the first group we had seen yesterday and they were gently heading east. We spent a little time watching them surfacing and occasionally spy hopping. A few other boats arrived, changing their behaviour and direction so we let them be and sailed east.

The island was completely cloudless and, looking back towards it, we could see the peak at Pico do Arieiro where we climbed yesterday, signified by a huge golf ball-like military radar system. By 10.40am some clouds were beginning to form.

We had news of a baleen whale that had been spotted earlier in the morning close to the coast near Funchal. It was heading west. So we changed direction and moved west, catching up with the whale just beyond our hotel. Gradually everyone could see its blows before the animal disappeared under water for up to 11 minutes. We stayed with it covering at least three sets of dives, the animal surfacing around three times each time before disappearing for a short while. It was difficult to see the whale's head where ridges on the rostrum would help distinguish between it being a Sei or a Bryde's Whale. Whatever it was, we enjoyed views of the animal surfacing and showing its slightly hooked dorsal fin before going under. Later on, we had a look at Trevor's photos - the trailing edge of the dorsal fin was covered in algae. The whale was continuing on in a westerly direction so we left it continue and paused for our packed lunches. Felipe had a phone call with another skipper who got a closer view of the head of the whale - he had seen the three ridges, meaning it was a Bryde's Whale, a species that stays here between June and the autumn before travelling further south.

Earlier, while we had been heading west a very obliging Bulwer's Petrel flew right by the boat. A few Cory's Shearwaters also passed by. And, most exciting of all, a Zino's or Desertas Petrel flew past - the two are very difficult to tell apart from a distance. Unlike the Bulwer's Petrel this bird had a very white belly, and grey back with some black across its wings and head.

We enjoyed cruising across the sea in the final hour, sipping a little celebratory wine liqueur, before heading back in to the marina for 2.30pm. As most of the group were staying in Madeira, many took this moment to book on to extra boat trips, including to the Desertas Islands, and some land trips. We met again at 3.15pm, to run through the checklist and then had a few hours to relax before dinner at 6pm. We met near the marina at the Beer House restaurant, enjoying meals looking out over the port. Everyone wandered back to the hotel at 8.30pm apart from Ed, who headed out with Felipe, Zofia and others from the Ventura team to hear the Zino's Petrels high up in the mountains where they nest.

Ed's trip to the mountains (Pico do Arieiro) to hear Zino's Petrels

On arrival at the peak with a beautiful sunset sky looking down to the clouds below, the odd Rabbit and a pair of Red-legged Partridges scuttled away from the road. The half-hour walk from the summit at 1,800 metres is along many steps and, on the way, we were able to admire some of the specialised, endemic mountain plants such as Madeira Saxifrage and different wallflowers and rock mustards with our torches. Walking along the paved track in the dark was exhilarating and, once at our stop, we had the chance to admire the incredible night sky with various constellations in view, along with Jupiter, Saturn and shooting stars. As we waited for the petrels, the wind dropped away, and at 10.45pm we heard our first petrel, a quiet whimper. Over the next 45 minutes, flying birds (mostly unseen) were calling all around, some quite close. There was less activity than some days, perhaps linked to the calmer seas offering fewer foraging opportunities for the birds. At night, they fly up from the ocean to visit their nests which are hidden away in holes surrounded by vegetation below our pathway. It was incredible to be in a place where these endangered seabirds live - the most endangered in the world. There are around 80 pairs here - we heard at least a dozen. After a brisk walk back up many steps (and heavy breathing with the altitude!), and a glimpse of a petrel in the torchlight dashing past, we left the car park at midnight. We passed a bat and a few Rabbits along the way, arriving back in Funchal at 12.45pm.

Day 5

Monday 6th June

With most of the group staying on for an extra few days or joining the botanical tour on Tuesday, Ed flew back on the same flight as Kirsty. Tina took the later afternoon flight. Those staying were booked onto morning or afternoon boat trips, or enjoyed other attractions in Funchal such as the botanic gardens and cable car. The first boat trip out with Tina had already spotted Sperm Whales by mid-morning.

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Dolphins below the water

Species Lists

Mammals (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	June			
			2	3	4	5
1	Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>		30	8	
2	Common or Saddleback Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>		30		
3	Atlantic Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella frontalis</i>		50	300+	
4	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>		Poss.		1
5	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>			60	8
6	Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>		6+		

Reptiles

1	Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>		1	3	
2	Madeiran Wall Lizard	<i>Teira dugesii</i>	2	1	12	

Other Marine Life

1	Portuguese Man O' War	<i>Physalia physalis</i>			6	2
2	Mullet sp.	<i>Chelon sp.</i>		100+	50+	100+
3	Sunfish	<i>Mola mola</i>				1

Butterflies and Damselfly

1	Madeiran Grayling	<i>Hipparchia maderensis</i>			1	
2	(Madeiran) Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas phlaeoides</i>			2	
3	Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>			5	1
4	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>			1	
5	Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	2	2	3	2
6	Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>				
7	Macaronesian Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa vulcania</i>			3	
8	Small Bluetail	<i>Ischnura pumilo</i>			2	

Birds

1	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>		200+	100+	6
2	Zino's or Desertas Petrel	<i>Pterodroma madeira/P. deserta</i>				1
3	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>		5	2	
4	Bulwer's Petrel	<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>		4	8	1
5	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		1		1
6	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>			1	
7	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	2	1	4	
8	Western Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis atlantis</i>	200+	500+	200+	200+
9	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		6+	6+	4
10	Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>		2	2+	
11	Ferel Pigeon / Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	
12	Plain Swift	<i>Apus unicolor</i>		20	50+	20
13	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>				1
14	Berthelot's Pipit	<i>Anthus berthelotii madeirensis</i>			3	
15	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea schmitzi</i>			2	1
16	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			✓	
17	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula cabreræ</i>	✓	✓	✓	1
18	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla heineken</i>	H	H	H	H

	Common name	Scientific name	June			
			2	3	4	5
19	Madeiran Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus maderensis</i>			6	
20	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs madeirensis</i>			8	
21	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>			H	
22	Atlantic Canary	<i>Serinus canaria</i>	1	2	2	3



Monarch butterfly in Funchal gardens



Madeiran Wall Lizard on Funchal wall