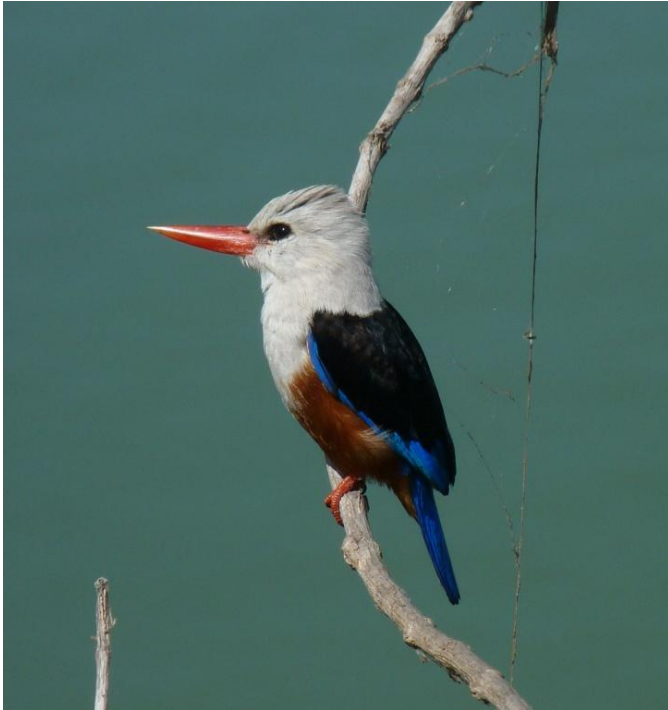


# Birdwatching Trip to The CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

02<sup>nd</sup> - 09<sup>th</sup> March 2013



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## Systematic list of observed species & a few notes

The list of observed species follows CLEMENTS (2007) : The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World (Sixth Edition) and its subsequent yearly updates, except for one species : the Purple Heron for which the taxon *bournesi* is even not included in the list even though it is widely recognized as a valid subspecies in all the relevant literature, if not as a full monotypic species. For the time being, I still consider it as a subspecies of *Ardea purpurea* in this report.

After a first trip in February-March 1999, this was my second trip to the Cape Verde Islands, resulting in sightings for 17 species not seen during the first trip and a very respectable total of 68 species recorded in only eight days compared to 71 species recorded in twenty days on the first trip which also included visits of São Nicolau, Santo Antão and Raso islands. Species in RED are new to my Western Palearctic List, respectively the 749<sup>th</sup> and 750<sup>th</sup> species recorded in the area according to Netfugl.dk's Western Palearctic list (<http://www.netfugl.dk>). As on the first trip, Kris de Rouck was my fellow birder during this trip. He took many pictures of most of the species seen but here only my photographs are included.

All birding sites mentioned in this report, but two, are well covered in most of the trip-reports relating to the Cape Verde Islands. Two other sites that we visited on Boavista seem to be barely known at all :

- Lacacão is a pool situated a few hundred meters to the east of the massive Riu Touareg resort on the southern shore, west of Curral Velho. On our visits, it was loaded with shorebirds : we counted more than 230 ex. of 17 species including two nearctic vagrants.
- Ribeira do Norte is a complex of seven newly (December 2012) built dams that will serve to provide water for irrigation of fields along the Ribeira do Norte, a narrow river which itself had some water during our visit. If those lakes fill in with rainwater, they will most probably be very attractive for birds. These dams are situated 15-16 kilometers east of Rabil village on the road to Cabeça dos Tarrafes in the north of Boavista.

The comments on the status of birds and number of records in the archipelago follow HAZEVOET (2010) : Sixth report on birds from the Cape Verde Islands, including records of 25 taxa new to the archipelago, and HAZEVOET (2012) : Seventh report on birds from the Cape Verde Islands, including records of nine taxa new to the archipelago. Both these very interesting reports can be found on <http://www.scvz.org>, the excellent website of the *Sociedade Caboverdiana de Zoologia*. The number of records given up to 2012 always include that year.

**1. Blue-winged Teal – Sarcelle à ailes bleues – *Anas discors***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : a group of 4 ex. (1 drake and 3 females). This group of birds was favouring the south-eastern shore of the lake, spending most of its time in short vegetation close to the bank or on it. Only when there was some disturbance did they fly further. A nice group including a beautiful breeding plumaged drake. These birds had already been reported here on 08-12-2012 (*Birding World* 25 (12) : 498). There are four previous records up to 2012 in the islands.

**2. Ring-necked Duck – Fuligule à bec cerclé – *Aythya collaris***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 adult drake. This beautiful bird was favouring the north-eastern shore of the lake where it spent all its time alone. It was never seen in company of the Blue-winged Teals. This male is the left-over of a group of five birds which had been reported here on 08-12-2012 (*Birding World* 25 (12) : 498). There are four previous records up to 2012 in the islands.

**3. Helmeted Guineafowl – Pintade de Numidie – *Numida meleagris galeatus***

- Drive to Barragem de Poilaõ (Santiago), 05-03 : 2 ex. on the slopes of a new road east of the main central road, still not far from Praia city, where it starts to ascend towards the central mountains. These birds were found by our taxi-driver who called them “Galinha mato” !

**4. Common Quail – Caille des blés – *Coturnix coturnix***

- Airport cliffs east of Praia (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex. flushed by Kris.
- Desert area near Ponta da Antonia (Boavista), 08-03 : 1 ex. heard singing.

**5. Fea's Petrel – Pétrel gongon – *Pterodroma f. feae***

- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : very distant views of 2 ex. Unfortunately these birds stayed far away ... They were still easily identifiable thanks to their typical flight and very dark underwings.

**6. Cape Verde Shearwater – Puffin du Cap-Vert – *Calonectris edwardsii***

- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : very distant views of 2 ex.
- Curral Velho (Boavista), 07-03 : after none at all seen during at least one hour, several tens of individuals appeared in the second part of the afternoon and came progressively closer to the shore as the night was coming. Before dusk, up to 42 ex. together were seen very well, some even flying between the shore and Curral Velho islet, giving excellent views. All details differentiating this species from Cory's Shearwater were seen : darkish headsides giving a capped effect, lighter built with a slimmer body, narrower and seemingly more pointed wings, smaller size, slenderer bill with a dark tip, narrower dark tail, darkish markings on the underwing coverts. A distinctive bird indeed, if seen close enough, and one of those that we eagerly wanted to see again !
- Ponta da Antonia (Boavista), 08-03 : very distant views of c.7 ex.

**7. Red-billed Tropicbird – Phaéton à bec rouge – *Phaethon aethereus mesonauta***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02 & 07-03 : 2 ex. seen coming to the islet or leaving it.
- Cliffs north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 03-03 : at least 9 ex.



- Airport cliffs east of Praia (Santiago), 06-03 : 8 ex.  
The very best views were obtained from the cliffs east of Praia, a well known place for this gorgeous bird. On a sad note, 9 ex. seen north of Sal Rei hardly compare with 60 ex. seen at the same place on 09-03-1999 ... This splendid bird has clearly undergone a severe decline in the islands, no doubt due to disturbance and indiscriminate killing that we had witnessed on our first trip !

### **8. Brown Booby – Fou brun – *Sula l. leucogaster***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02 & 07-03 : respectively c.130 and at least **255** ex. on the islet. On 02-03, at least 41 non-adults were counted (mostly brown juveniles) as well as 2 white chicks still in the nest, and 12 incubating adults. On 07-03, a fishing boat disturbed the colony by passing too close to the islet and presumably all the birds took off, c.200 ex. Some more birds were still coming later to the roost in almost complete darkness. Curral Velho is clearly the best site to see this beautiful booby ! No Masked Booby but only white Brown Booby chicks ...
- At sea off Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03-03 : c.10 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 2 ex.
- Airport cliffs east of Praia (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex.
- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : 6 ex.
- Ponta da Antonia (Boavista), 08-03 : c.10 ex.

### **9. Blongios nain – Little Bittern – *Ixobrychus m. minutus***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 adult male in the south-eastern corner of the lake was seen a few times, mainly on the first day. The creamy colour of the neck was supporting the palearctic subspecies *minutus* and not the african *payesii*. There are only four previous records up to 2012 in the islands (in 1969, 2007 and 2008).

### **10. Grey Heron – Héron cendré – *Ardea c. cinerea***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03, 08 & 09-03 : respectively 1, 1 & 2 ex.
- Ilheu do Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 1 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 18 ex.

- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 1 ex.

**11. Purple Heron – Héron pourpré – *Ardea purpurea bournesi***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : respectively **12** & 10 ex. including 2 adults at the roost.
- São Jorge dos Orgãos (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex. flying distantly in the hills.

After drawing a blank in 1999, it was a real relief to see this distinctive taxon endemic to the islands ! Adults are paler than *purpurea* with no dark markings on the foreneck and much browner (instead of dark grey) on the upperparts and juveniles, also paler, have a rufous instead of blackish cap. Sightings at the lake were mostly excellent, some birds perching in dead trees not too far from the viewing points. The presence of more than 80% young birds is perhaps a good sign about the sustainability of this extremely rare bird for which the population seems to number no more than 10-20 pairs and a total of 46 ex. (maximum counted on 31-10-2005).

**12. Great Egret – Grande Aigrette – *Ardea alba melanorhyncha/egretta***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 ex. staying in the western end of the lake. The entirely dark legs of this bird support the african subspecies *melanorhyncha* or the nearctic one, *egretta*. There are four previous records up to 2012 in the islands but the subspecies is not always known.

**13. Intermediate Egret – Aigrette intermédiaire – *Mesophoyx intermedia brachyrhyncha***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 ex. This bird was mostly feeding on its own on the southern shore of the lake. The species is rather regularly seen in the archipelago but this bird was my first ever in the Western Palearctic and it provided very didactic comparisons with Great, Little and Cattle Egrets ! Another individual reported to us by sms by the Finnish team (Kalle Larsson & *al.*) at

Lacacão on Boavista could not be found ! The species is regular in the archipelago with 16 previous records up to 2012 in the islands. It is the only country in the Western Palearctic where it is regular.

**14. Little Egret – Aigrette garzette – *Egretta g. garzetta***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02 & 07-03 : resp. 2 & 4 ex roosting on the islet.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 02, 03 & 08-03 : 1 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 1 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : c.15 ex. including six very aggressive birds that were feeding almost constantly in the south-eastern corner of the lake and would noisily chase away any other egret landing there.
- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex.
- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 3+2 ex.

**15. Western Reef-Heron – Aigrette des récifs – *Egretta g. gularis***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 3 dark morph individuals. These birds were very mobile around the lake and were never seen all three together, but sometimes two together. Never before these sightings had I noticed how smaller than Little Egret this species actually is. The species is a scarce but regular migrant in the islands.





**16. Black Heron – Aigrette ardoisée – Egretta ardesiaca**

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 adult in breeding plumage. This species was, at least for me, THE main reason to pay a second visit to the islands. Seeing it was therefore a huge relief ! During our two visits to the Poilão lake, the bird was almost constantly in view, mostly in the south-eastern corner (but away from the Little Egrets) where it spent long periods performing its characteristic beautiful umbrella feeding technique, mainly on 04-03. On 05-03, it was also seen during a long period perched in a dead tree in the north-eastern corner together with two (Cape Verde) Purple Herons and one Western Reef-Heron. Being in



full breeding dress with bright orange feet and very elongated nape and breast feathers, this heron was a real cracker ! After two years since the first of a long series of records at the lake began, at last patience was duly rewarded. There are five previous records up to 2012 in the islands.

**17. Cattle Egret – Héron gardeboeufs – Bubulcus i. ibis**

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : at least **1.650** ex. at the roost, apparently a record number at a single site in the islands.
- Praia (near the main beach) (Santiago), 06-03 : at least 300 ex. at a roost.

- João Galego (Boavista), 08-03 : at least 100 ex. at a roost.

Only the largest numbers are cited here. The species is (very) common on both islands, much more so than in 1999.

**18. Crabier chevelu – Squacco Heron – *Ardeola ralloides***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 2 ex. in the south-eastern corner of the lake.

Like most herons, Squacco Heron is in the process of becoming a scarce but regular migrant to the islands thanks to Barragem de Poilão providing a permanent water body. For the time being, there are still only 13 previous records up to 2012 in the islands.

**19. Black-crowned Night-Heron – Bihoreau gris – *Nycticorax n. nycticorax***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : respectively 1 & 5 ex. The 5 birds on 05-03 left the lake at dusk but they had not been seen at all during the whole day. The last one of an amazing eleven species of herons seen at Poilão dam, probably a record in the Western Palearctic ?! There are 17 previous records up to 2012 in the islands, so the species is presumably a regular migrant here.

**20. Eurasian Spoonbill – Spatule blanche – *Platalea l. leucorodia***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03 & 09-03 : respectively 2 & 1 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 10 ex., all juveniles/immatures.
- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 2 ex.

**21. Osprey – Balbuzard pêcheur – *Pandion h. haliaetus***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02 & 07-03 : 1 ex. This bird caught a big red fish, probably a grouper. There was an old nest on the ground at the rocky point opposite the islet.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03, 07 & 09-03 : 1 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 1 ex. sitting on its nest on the cliff above a holiday village. This bird was constantly harassed by up to 4 Brown-necked Ravens.
- Boavista, 03-03 : 4 x 1 ex. during a long walk south of Sal Rei.
- Ponta da Antonia, 08-03 : 1 ex. at sea.



**22. Egyptian Vulture – Vautour percnoptère – *Neophron p. percnopterus***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03-03 : 1 adult flying over. Sadly, this magnificent raptor seems to be on the brink of extinction on Boavista. This adult may be one of only 3 ex. left on the island !

**23. Eurasian Marsh-Harrier – Busard des roseaux – *Circus a. aeruginosus***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 female seen briefly independently by each observer on each day. This harrier is a regular migrant in the archipelago.

**24. Montagu's/Pallid Harrier – Busard cendré/pâle – *Circus pygargus/macrourus***

- Ilheu do Sal Rei (Boavista), 03-03 : 1 female-like bird was seen during some time patrolling the small island opposite Sal Rei before soaring and leaving on migration to the south. As we did not have our telescopes with us, we only got rather distant views of it and the possibility of it being a Pallid Harrier could not be totally excluded. There are six previous records of Montagu's Harrier and five of unidentified harriers up to 2012 in the islands.

**25. Cape Verde Buzzard – Buse du Cap-Vert – *Buteo bannermani***

- São Jorge dos Orgãos (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex. seen very distantly and briefly flying towards high peaks. Obviously, this is one of the very disappointing sightings of this trip, nonetheless because this taxon has become so rare in the archipelago !

**26. Spotted Crake – Marouette ponctuée – *Porzana porzana***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 adult feeding on the southern shore of the lake. With only three previous records up to 2012 in the islands, this Spotted Crake is actually, and perhaps surprisingly, the rarest bird that we saw during our trip !

**27. Eurasian Moorhen – Gallinule poule-d'eau – *Gallinula c. chloropus***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : **13** ex. including some locally reared juveniles. When we first visited the islands in 1999, one bird found on São Vicente was the first in the archipelago since 1969. Obviously, its local status has changed dramatically since then with this breeding population now well established on Santiago and another one also existing on Boavista.

**28. Black-bellied (= Grey) Plover – Pluvier argenté – *Pluvialis squatarola***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02-03 : 2 ex.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03 & 08-03 : respectively 2 & 4 ex.
- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex.

**29. American Golden-Plover – Pluvier bronzé – *Pluvialis dominica***

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : 1 ex. (first-summer). This nearctic vagrant had been reported to us by sms by a Finnish team (Kalle Larsson & *al.*). It was spending all its time on a rocky bar on the northern shore of the pool. We had also seen American Golden Plover on our previous trip to the islands, namely on São Vicente. There are 13 previous records up to 2012 in the islands, so the species can almost be considered a regular vagrant there.



**30. Kentish Plover – Gravelot à collier interrompu – *Charadrius a. alexandrinus***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 08-03 : **32** ex.
- Sal Rei (behind hotels and apartments on the northern shore) (Boavista), 03-03 : 16 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 5 ex.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 08-03 : 21 ex.

**31. Common Ringed Plover – Grand Gravelot – *Charadrius h. hiaticula***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02-03 : 2 ex. on the beach.
- Rabil Lagoon + beach (Boavista), 03 & 08-03 : respectively 3 & 1 ex.
- Sal Rei (behind hotels and appartments on the northern shore) (Boavista), 03-03 : 6 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 1 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : 1 ex. flying over in late afternoon.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 8 & 11 ex.
- Sal Rei (near harbour) (Boavista), 08 & 09-03 : 1 ex.

**32. Little Ringed Plover – Petit Gravelot – *Charadrius dubius curonicus***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 ex.

**33. Black-winged Stilt – Echasse blanche – *Himantopus himantopus***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03 & 09-03 : respectively 1 & 2 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : 11 ex.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 42 & **49** ex.
- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 2+2 ex.

**34. Common Sandpiper – Chevalier guignette – *Actitis hypoleucos***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03-03 : 3 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 1 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04-03 : at least 5 ex.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 07-03 : 1 ex.

- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 1 ex.

**35. Green Sandpiper – Chevalier culblanc – *Tringa ochropus***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : at least 2 ex. (perhaps 3).

Green Sandpiper is a rather scarce but regular migrant to the archipelago.

**36. Common Greenshank – Chevalier aboyeur – *Tringa nebularia***

- Curral Velho (beach) (Boavista), 02-03 : 1 ex.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03 & 08-03 : respectively 2 & 1 ex.
- Sal Rei (behind hotels and appartments on the northern shore) (Boavista), 03-03 : 1 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : respectively 12 & **15** ex. including a ringed bird which was wearing four colour rings (pale green + orange at the left leg, pale green + blue at the right leg) and an aluminium one. That almost five-year old bird had been ringed as a juvenile on 18-08-2008 at Tarty, Ythan Estuary, north-east Scotland and it has overwintered successfully during the following winters at exactly the same spot, Barragem de Poilão, where it has been reported by various observers ! There are no sightings at other sites between Scotland and Santiago.
- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : 2 ex.
- Lacacão (Santiago), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 3 & 4 ex.
- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 2+1 ex.

**37. Lesser Yellowlegs – Chevalier à pattes jaunes – *Tringa flavipes***

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : 2 ex. Excellent views of these rather tame birds were obtained. These nearctic vagrants had been reported to us by sms by a Finnish team (Kalle Larsson & *al.*). They were spending most of their time in the highest water areas of the pool. The species was new to us in the archipelago but there are already 15 previous records up to 2012 in the islands.



**38. Wood Sandpiper – Chevalier sylvain – *Tringa glareola***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03 & 08-03 : respectively 1 & 2 ex.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : respectively 2 & 3 ex.
- Lacacão (Santiago), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 5 & 4 ex.

**39. Common Redshank – Chevalier gambette – *Tringa t. totanus***

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 2 & 1 ex.
- Ribeira do Norte (Boavista), 08-03 : 1 ex.

**40. Whimbrel – Courlis corlieu – *Numenius p. phaeopus***

- Curral Velho (beach) (Boavista), 02 & 07-03 : respectively 1 & 2 ex.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : 1 ex.
- Shore north off Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 2 ex.
- Airport cliffs east of Praia (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex.





- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : 1 ex.

**41. Black-tailed Godwit – Barge à queue noire – *Limosa l. limosa***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04-03 : 1 ex. At the climax of migration for the species in Europe, this bird was probably only a resting migrant on the first visit since it was not seen at all on the second day. With only ten previous records up to 2012 in the islands, Black-tailed Godwit can surprisingly still be regarded as a rare migrant in the archipelago.

**42. Bar-tailed Godwit – Barge rousse – *Limosa l. lapponica***

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : 3 ex.

**43. Ruddy Turnstone – Tournepierre à collier – *Arenaria i. interpres***



- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03-03 : 8 ex. including 2 ex. in the inner part of the site (at the broken bridge).
- Sal Rei (Boavista), 03, 08 & 09-03 : respectively 20, **85** (52+33) & 35 ex. on the shore near the city.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : c.25 ex.
- Praia Lighthouse (Santiago), 06-03 : 9 ex.

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 2 & 1 ex.
- Ponta da Antonia (Boavista), 08-03 : 7 ex.

**44. Sanderling – Bécasseau sanderling – *Calidris alba***

- Curral Velho (Boavista), 02-03 : a tight flock of c.**60** ex.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03 & 08-03 : respectively 15 & 4 ex.
- Sal Rei (behind hotels and appartments on the northern shore) (Boavista), 03-03 : 40 ex.
- Shore north of Sal Rei (Boavista), 04-03 : 5 ex.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 28 & 45 ex.
- Sal Rei (Boavista), 08 & 09-03 : respectively 21 & 15 ex. on the shore near the city.
- Ponta da Antonia (Boavista), 08-03 : 1 ex.

**45. Little Stint – Bécasseau minute – *Calidris minuta***

- Sal Rei (behind hotels and appartments on the northern shore) (Boavista), 03-03 : 2 ex.
- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 16 & **20** ex.

**46. Dunlin – Bécasseau variable – *Calidris alpina schinzii***

- Lacacão, 07 & 08-03 : respectively 1 & 2 ex.

**47. Curlew Sandpiper – Bécasseau cocorli – *Calidris ferruginea***

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively **56** & 49 ex. A very nice gathering including some birds that were beginning to acquire some brick red breeding plumage feathers !

**48. Ruff – Combattant varié – *Philomachus pugnax***

- Lacacão (Boavista), 07 & 08-03 : respectively 7 & 5 ex.

**49. Common Snipe – Bécassine des marais – *Gallinago g. gallinago***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 2 ex.

**50. Cream-coloured Courser – Courvite isabelle – *Cursorius cursor exsul***

- Between Curral Velho and the airport (Boavista), 02-03 : 1 ex.
- Between the airport and Curral Velho (Boavista), 07-03 : 2 ex. (1 adult + 1 juvenile).
- Desert area near Ponta da Antonia (Boavista), 08-03 : 3 ex.

Our records clearly underestimate the real abundance of the species. We actually did not try to see more birds than those seen by chance.

**51. Caspian Tern – Sterne caspienne – *Hydroprogne caspia***

- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03-03 : 1 first-summer first seen flying between the shore and Ilheu do Sal Rei and later perched in Rabil Lagoon. There are ten previous records up to 2009 in the islands but apparently no record during 2010-2012. We had seen Caspian Tern at exactly the same site in 1999.

**52. Sandwich Tern – Sterne caugek – *Thalasseus s. sandvicensis***

- Sal Rei (Boavista), 03-03 : 2 ex. at the pier.
- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 08-03 : 1 ex.

Sandwich Tern is a regular migrant to the islands with at least 24 records up to 2012.

**53. Rock Pigeon – Pigeon biset – *Columba livia atlantis***

Very common species on both islands, particularly at Barragem de Poilão (Santiago) where most birds were dark but probably none was really of the pure wild *atlantis* phenotype.

**54. Eurasian Collared-Dove – Tourterelle turque – *Streptopelia d. decaocto***

- Achada Fazenda (Santiago), 05-03 : 6 ex. including 1 singing. These birds were mainly seen in the palm trees near the junction here.

There are at least ten previous records up to 2012 in the islands but the first one is as recent as 2006, so this dove is continuing its inexorable expansion to every corner of Africa, the Cape Verde Islands being just one of its newly colonized territories. It is most probably already a breeding bird here.

**55. Barn Owl – Effraie des clochers – *Tyto alba detorta***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04 & 05-03 : 1 ex. Having spent a whole afternoon and a full day at the lake, we were rewarded on both evenings with excellent views of this distinctive taxon, maybe one more “good” endemic species. On 04-03, 1 ex. was perched on a sign three meters from our taxi, calling several times, then flying off in the night, totally unconcerned by us watching it so close ! The next evening, perhaps the same bird was seen flying then perched on a stone wall. The *detorta* subspecies is much more foxy orange with numerous small rounded spots on the underparts and darker upperparts than the European taxa.

**56. Alexander’s Swift – Martinet du Cap-Vert – *Apus alexandri***

- Between Praia and Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04-03 : c.10 ex. in the lower part of Santiago during the drive to the lake, not far from where the guineafowls were also seen.

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : 2 ex. came to drink briefly near the dam.
- São Jorge dos Orgãos (Santiago), 06-03 : at least 2 ex.
- Airport cliffs east of Praia (Santiago), 06-03 : 3 ex.

The best views were obtained at the cliffs east of Praia where 3 ex. were almost constantly visible, sometimes flying very low over our heads. A smallish brown swift with a pale throat and a deeply forked tail.

**57. Grey-headed Kingfisher – Martin-chasseur à tête grise – *Halcyon leucocephala acteon***

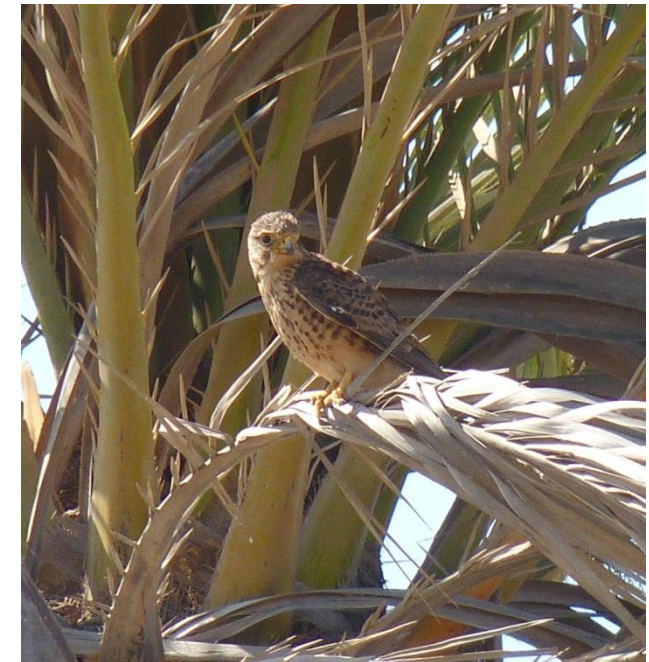
The abundance of the species on Santiago is simply amazing. It is a garden bird everywhere, even in Praia city. It was extremely cooperative at Barragem de Poilão, often perching only two or three meters from us. Altogether we saw several tens of individuals. A noisy, colourful and delightful bird !

**58. Eurasian Kestrel – Faucon crécerelle – *Falco tinnunculus alexandri***

A common bird on both islands with pairs and singles seen everywhere. Copulating was observed on Boavista near Rabil Lagoon.

**59. Brown-necked Raven – Corbeau brun – *Corvus ruficollis***

A common bird on Boavista with up to 20+ birds seen every day. Less common on Santiago with a maximum of c.15 ex. over the high ridges and peaks at São Jorge dos Orgãos. The birds seen well on Boavista always seemed smaller and browner on the neck than birds seen in e.g. Morocco.



60. **Greater Hoopoe-Lark – Sirli du désert – *Alaemon alaudipes boavistae***

A common bird on Boavista where we saw it in most parts of the island that we visited, even on the beach north of Sal Rei. It was particularly common in the desert area on the way to Ponta da Antonia. No counts of the birds seen were made.



**61. Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark – Moinelette à front blanc – *Eremopterix n. nigriceps***



- Rabil Lagoon (Boavista), 03-03 : 2 x 1 male.
  - Desert area near Praia international airport (Santiago), 04 & 06-03 : respectively 4 & 6 ex.
  - Between Sal Rei and Lacacão (Boavista), 07-03 : 4 ex.
- As for Cream-coloured Courser, we did not try to see more birds than those seen by chance from the roads and tracks. The species is actually easy to see.

**62. Bar-tailed Lark – Ammomane élégante – *Ammomanes c. cinctura***

This lark was even more common than Greater Hoopoe-Lark on Boavista. We saw it mainly around Lacacão and in the desert areas between Bofareira and Ponta da Antonia. Several tens of birds in total including groups of 5-7

individuals were seen. The local subspecies is much foxier coloured than e.g. moroccan birds.

**63. Cape Verde Swamp-Warbler – Rousserolle du Cap-Vert – *Acrocephalus brevipennis***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 04-03 : 1 ex. seen very well + 1 ex. further in a bush.
- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : 6 ex. in total : one pair showing extremely well, 2 x 1 ex. coming to drink at the lakeshore and 2 x 1 ex. heard singing in canes.
- São Jorge dos Orgãos (Santiago), 06-03 : 1 ex. heard singing + 1 ex. seen very well.

The pair which had its territory in the south-eastern corner of the lake gave outstanding views on our second visit. This species moves rather sluggishly (rather like a vireo), allowing observers to watch it for lengthy periods performing several different behaviours like alarming, drinking from the lake during the hot hours or eating in the bushes. Its remarkable calls are well known for sounding like those of a frog or a bulbul (*Pycnonotus*) and not like those of an *Acrocephalus*. Other salient features of this special bird are its dark reddish irises, its white throat and a very short primary projection. One can wonder if it really belongs to the genus *Acrocephalus* ...

**64. Blackcap – Fauvette à tête noire – *Sylvia atricapilla gularis***

Very common at high altitude sites on Santiago (Barragem de Poilão, São Jorge dos Orgãos) and c.5 ex. heard calling and singing in the greener areas of Rabil Lagoon on Boavista on 03-03, mainly around the broken bridge. In 1999, we had not recorded Blackcap on Boavista but a small population has since then established itself on the island.

**65. Spectacled Warbler – Fauvette à lunettes – *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis***



It was a delight to see so many individuals of a species that is generally scarce in most parts of its range. It was very common on both islands with several tens of birds seen and heard. Its dry rattle is one of the most common birdsounds on the islands. We saw nest-material collecting at São Jorge dos Orgãos on 06-03.



**66. Spanish Sparrow – Moineau espagnol – *Passer h. hispaniolensis***

Common on both islands but more so on Boavista. Here, it is clearly associating with humans whereas in most parts of its range it is mostly avoiding them.

**67. Cape Verde Sparrow – Moineau du Cap-Vert – *Passer iagoensis***

The first bird that every birder is likely to see immediately after entering Boavista International Airport where families are the friendly companions of travelers waiting at the gates, collecting scraps of their meals to feed their youngs, totally unconcerned by all the agitation around them. It is very common everywhere on Boavista, less so on Santiago. A cute bird indeed.



**68. Astrild ondulé – Common Waxbill – *Estrilda astrild sousae***

- Barragem de Poilão (Santiago), 05-03 : total of at least **90** ex. widespread at both extremities of the dam including groups of 10, 32 and c.50 ex., some of them giving extremely good views while they came to drink.



Group of herons at Barragem de Poilão including Cattle Egrets, Little Egret (1), Western Reef-Heron (2), Black Heron (1) and (Cape Verde) Purple Herons (1)



