

Trip Report

La Gomera

1-8 December 2002

Compiled by Niklas Holmström

Participants

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Travel Info

We booked a flight including all transfers (connecting buses and boats) and accommodation from Stockholm (Arlanda Airport) via the Swedish travel agency Fritidsresor. Unfortunately there were no last-minute-flights to Gomera that day, so we booked a full price ticket but it was truly worth it. We stayed at Villa Gomera in the centre of San Sebastián, which is a small and slow city. Ten minutes walk in any direction and you are out of town. The apartment was very nice, big and fresh, with a very modern kitchen. This trip was a combined holiday, with birding and trekking on the island. There is certainly much to see, not only just birds. Those who find Madeira attractive would certainly enjoy the beautiful landscape of Gomera!

Weather

The temperature was pleasant, mostly between 20 and 25°C along the coast and San Sebastián. Up in the mountains it was more or less cloudy. The contrast in the weather and temperature could be very striking, such as when passing the last tunnel from San Sebastián to La Carbonera (the famous Pigeon site for one day visitors). Sunny and hot before the tunnel and cloudy and much lower temperature when emerging into the next valley, after only one minute in the tunnel. Warm clothes are recommended when visiting the mountains, such as the El Cedro area. Remember, looking for the pigeons normally takes some hours, if you want good views! The winds were often brisk from a north easterly direction along the north to northeastern part and more calm at the south side, which is the part where the tourist areas are located (Playa Santiago and Valle Gran Rey).

Literature

A Birdwatchers' Guide to the Canary Islands. Clarke T. & Collins D., 1996. Prion Ltd., Perry. (The guide was very helpful when preparing the trip as well when birding and finding the sites on Gomera).

Collins Bird Guide. Mullarney, K., Svensson, L., Zetterström, D. & Grant, P., 1999. London.

Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises. Carwardine, M. & Camm, M., 1995. Dorling Kindersley, London.

Trollsländor i Europa. Sandhall Å., 2000. Interpublishing, Lund. (Photographic Guide of European Dragonflies).

When preparing our trip I read through a lot of trip reports from Canary Islands, too many to mention, and copied all information about La Gomera into one document. The simple reason is that most birders go to Tenerife and only visit Gomera for one day. The main purpose is often sea watching from the ferry and the search for the land birds, especially the Laurel Pigeon as well as the Bolle's. However, most of these trips to Gomera took place at the end of the summer and was not directly comparable with our late visit, but still very useful in many ways. I also downloaded many photos of butterflies and dragonflies that are present on the Canary's. Having all this information on my laptop was very helpful, as well as being able to transfer all the photos from the digital camera.

Reference: *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Butterflies*. Feltwell J., 1998. Grange Books, Kent.

Day-by-day Report

1st December

We arrived at the airport at 14:00 (local time) and there were only seven people to be transported to Los Cristianos for the boat to Gomera. We missed the 15:00 ferry to Gomera by a few minutes and had to wait two and half hours for the next ferry. No reason to hurry! We enjoyed the harbour café, the weather and the sun as well as many Collared Doves and a few Sandwich Terns. On the outward crossing to Gomera on one of Fred Olsens high-speed catamarans we didn't see any cetaceans, but to our surprise a single Cory's Shearwater. When we arrived at the port of San Sebastián a bus drove us to our hotel. By that time it was already dark and time for a good longed-for dinner.

2nd December

We spent most of the sunny day exploring San Sebastián and the surroundings by foot. A slow and very nice city at this time of the year, which is off season. Sea watching from the harbour wall (16:30-18:00) produced one delicate Barbary Falcon and one Little Shearwater, which passed by northwards relatively close to the jetty.

3rd December

We collected our rented car at 09:00. We headed for La Carbonera and El Cedro Valley to look for both of the Canarian pigeons. After emerging from the last long tunnel we reached the valley and soon La Carbonera. The restaurant was closed and the valley was embedded in misty clouds. The scenery was beautiful, but the chances of finding any pigeons, in these conditions, seemed to be very small. Other than the one hour walk along the footpath (1 km west of El Bailadero) between Reventón Oscuro and Roque de La Zarcita, which produced three unidentified pigeons, we didn't stay long in the area. We decided to drive around the island and go back in the afternoon. However, we did see Buzzard, Blackbird, Robin, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Tenerife Goldcrest, Blue Tit and Chaffinch. Driving to Alajeró (to see the Dragon Trees) we saw our first Barbary Partridges, three at Tajaque. We drove through Chipude, and had a stop in El Cercado to have a look at the rich homemade craftworks and a cup of coffee. At Las Hayas we saw five Chaffinches and drove to Arure to check the reservoirs, but there was not much besides many Grey Wagtails and lots of Atlantic Herring Gulls. A few kilometres northwest of Arure we stopped at Cañada de Jorge. We walked the footpath for an hour. After the walk we headed for Chorros de Espina and found two Chaffinch. After that, we stopped at various other sites along the road for birding and butterflying before returning to El Cedro Valley. The clouds were then higher up in the mountains and we looked for pigeons at the top of the small hill next to the closed restaurant at La Carbonera. During an hour (16:00-17:00) we only had brief flight views of two single and distant pigeons, unidentified of course. We moved to Caserio del Cedro and there we had a good and close flight view of one single Laurel Pigeon. Then it was time for the return to San Sebastián and dinner (great Rabbit dish!). We kept the car for the next day too, because I simply couldn't be happy with only one single Laurel Pigeon, no way!

4th December

Early in the morning we drove to the Chejelipes Reservoirs looking for Moorhen. We found one at the first reservoir and then headed for the El Cedro Valley immediately. When we emerge from the last tunnel there were no clouds at all in the valley! We stopped at Caserio del Cedro and within ten minutes we had our first Laurel Pigeon, a good flight view. Then we drove four kilometres up in the mountain and stopped at Mirador El Rejo. Between 08:50 and 09:30 we had three good flight views (1+2+1) of Laurel Pigeons, but the highlight was when I discovered one Laurel perched upon a partly dry tree at the peak of the facing mountain. Suddenly one more landed in the tree and then another... Within three minutes there was 11 Laurel Pigeons in two trees! Such total happiness, even if the birds didn't stay in the trees for more than three minutes. All birds suddenly disappeared within a few seconds, without providing any good flight views over the treetops. Next stop was at El Bailadero. One and a half hours waiting and concentrated scanning over the slopes produced four flying Bolle's Pigeon (2+2) passing by very close at the same altitude as the Mirador (viewpoint balcony), but no more Laurel Pigeons. At 11:00 the clouds started to cover the area and we drove southwards to the sunny Playa Santiago. We found a nice café near the harbour and enjoyed a slow cup of coffee. Besides a few stops at the southern part of the island we were back at El Bailadero at 15:00. Within one and a half hours we saw four Laurel Pigeons flying by, one Sparrowhawk and at least 10 Plain Swifts for a short while. Pleased with the day we went back to San Sebastián and a longed-for dinner. Lena was very happy indeed to have twitched Madeiran, Bolle's and Laurel Pigeon within only three months!

5th December

We spent the day in San Sebastián, watching butterflies and dragonflies in the park, see the heading Non-birds. Do look for the big spiders in the low bushes, pale upper parts and very colorful under parts! We also had nice views of three Hoopoes in the park. In the small park we meet a nice pair of english birdwatchers, but they weren't twitchers and hadn't searched for the pigeons. Sea watching from the harbour wall (15:40-18:00) didn't produce anything exceptional. In all the day was hot and sunny and we enjoyed the slow pace at several cafés, drinking coffee and later on tasty red wine.

6th December

Hmm... Should I tell you about this day? In the morning we took a Taxi from the Plaza de las Américas to Degollada de Pereza southwest of San Sebastián. Only 12 euro for a beautiful trip, climbing towards an altitude of 900 metres above the sea level. The taxi stopped outside the café. The café, which probably has the most extraordinary and dizzy view on the island, served excellent and tasty coffee (which means 'Cafe con leche' at it's best). We had chosen the walk because it's lead downhill to San Sebastián. When enjoying the landscape and watching birds as well, we have always preferred downhill walks (Madeira twice), instead of uphill ones. However, this walk (number 9) proved to be very dangerous! Soon we discovered that the track was not made for human trekkers, but sheep not afraid of heights. Lena was not even worried, but for me it was too much: 'I will not take a step further. We have to turn around and look for the walk number 10 to La Laja or find a lower track!' We still hadn't reached it when Lena slipped on this small track and badly cut her knee! This was not our day, nor the day for a walk! The blood was pumping out her knee. I washed it and we discussed the way back. The iron lady, Lena, put a bandage on the knee and then asked for the way to track number 10, to La Laja. At 11:05 we found it, a very nice and 'broad' footpath downwards. The highly recommended and beautiful way down to La Laja took two hours. Unfortunately this day was a public holiday, and no one stopped when we tried to hitchhike. We walked along the river valley from La Laja to San Sebastián (three hours) and watched birds, butterflies, dragonflies and of course enjoyed the wonderful scenery. We reached San Sebastián at 17:00, totally exhausted. We found the only open shop in the city, a Pharmacy. Thank God! We bought the necessary medications for Lena! The boat trip to El Hierro next day was indeed like balsam for our stiff legs! By the way, we had many birds and butterflies along the walk from Degollada de Pereza to San Sebastián. A nearly seven hour walk!

7th December

At 10:30 we left Gomera with the slow Trasmediterranea ferry to El Hierro. We had chosen this ferry in the preparation of this trip, which only goes on Saturdays, not because of Lena's injured knee. The day was sunny and hot and there were not many people onboard on both crossings. We had our chairs on the sundeck. I searched the sea for cetaceans and seabirds and Lena relaxed with a good book in her hand. On the outward crossing we saw one Little Shearwater and 15 Short-finned Pilot Whales, but no Dolphins. The visit on El Hierro was short indeed, which allowed only a 30 minutes walk in the harbour. The return crossing to Gomera was very nice with a few beers and the sun above our heads. In all we saw three Little Shearwaters and one of these came alongside the boat and offered superb views! We can highly recommend this boat trip, which takes about seven hours both ways.

8th December

In the morning we took a walk through the park and there was not many birds, but a few Chiffchaff, Blackcap and one Hoopoe. We left Gomera on the 12:00 boat. Only ten minutes from Los Cristianos we spotted a pod of five Short-finned Pilot Whales and then another pod of four animals wake-riding very close to the boat, for the latter binoculars were superfluous! This brought our birding holiday on La Gomera to a close. Bus to the airport and the plane to Sweden left Tenerife at 15:00. We arrived to a very snowy and cold Sweden, about -10°C at Arlanda Airport!

Species List (english, scientific and swedish names)

Cory's Shearwater – *Calonectris diomedea borealis* – Gulnäbbad lira

1 – from the afternoon boat to La Gomera 1/12. By this time on the year all Cory's should have gone to southerly latitudes.

Little Shearwater – *Puffinus assimilis baroli* – Dvärglira

1 – towards north in the afternoon 2/12. The bird came relatively close to the harbour wall of San Sebastián, from where we sea watched. 1 – passed relatively close to the ferry on our way to El Hierro 7/12. 3 – were seen in the afternoon on the return crossing from El Hierro 7/12. One of those three came very close alongside the ferry and allowed excellent views!

Little Egret – *Egretta garzetta* – Silkeshäger

1 – at the harbour of San Sebastián 2/12.

Grey Heron – *Ardea cinerea* – Gråhäger

2 (1+1) – at La Laja and Chejelipes Reservoirs respectively 6/12.

Marsh Harrier – *Circus aeruginosus* – Brun kärrhök

1 female – soaring over San Sebastián 2/12.

Sparrowhawk – *Accipiter nisus granti* – Sparvhök

1 – at El Bailadero in the afternoon 4/12. The subspecies confined to Macronesia.

Buzzard – *Buteo buteo insularum* – Ormvråk

2 – at El Cedro, 1 – at Stimancas, 1 – at Las Rosas, 1 – SW of Hermigua and 2 – at La Carbonera (El Cedro area) 3/12. 1 – at Mirador El Rejo and 1 – at Vegaipala 4/12. 3 – at Degollada de Pereza (in the morning) and La Laja (in the afternoon) 6/12. The subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands.

Kestrel – *Falco tinnunculus canariensis* – Tornfalk

Seen daily. Worthy of mention is a total of at least 28 along the road 3/12, 22 along the road at the southern part 4/12 and 21 along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza–La Laja–San Sebastián 6/12. The subspecies confined to Macronesia.

Barbary Falcon – *Falco pelegrinoides* – Berberfalk

1 adult – at San Sebastián 2/12. The bird was discovered far out over the sea, when we sea watched from the northern part of the harbour in the afternoon, flying straight to us (from Tenerife?). At the end the bird came very close and took a rest in a dry cactus tree in the precipice north of the harbour. We watched the beautiful falcon at rest for nearly ten minutes!

Barbary Partridge – *Alectoris barbara* – Klipphöna

3 – at Cumbre de Tajaque (along the road between El Cedro and the junction Alajeró/Valle Gran Rey) 2/12. The three birds that were walking along the road allowed very close views. Optics were superfluous! 24 – along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza and La Laja 6/12. The nearly 2 hours of walking offered many excellent views of flying and perched birds and many different calls from (not counted) unseen birds.

Moorhen – *Gallinula chloropus* – Rörhöna

1 – at (the first reservoir to the left from San Sebastián) Chejelipes Reservoirs 4/12. 6 (4+1+1) – at the Chejelipes Reservoirs 6/12.

Atlantic Herring Gull – *Larus michahellis atlantis* – Atlantformen av 'Medelhavstrut'

Common along the coast, particularly around the harbour at San Sebastián (at least 80 a day). Worthy of mention is at least 60 birds at Chejelipes Reservoirs 6/12. The majority of all birds were adults.

Sandwich Tern – *Sterna sandvicensis* – Kentsk tärna

5 – at the Port of Los Cristianos 1/12. 3 – at the Port of Los Cristianos 8/12.

Feral Pigeon – *Columba livia* – Stadsduva

Common, but we did not find many Rock Doves, except for 20 "pure" birds at El Bailadero, in the morning 4/12.

Bolle's Pigeon – *Columba bollii* – Kanarieduva

4 (2+2) – at El Bailadero in the morning 4/12. Both observations offered good but relatively brief flight views. In addition to these, two very brief flight observations (from below) were probably this species.

Laurel Pigeon – *Columba junoniae* – Lagerduva

1 – seen from Caserio del Cedro in the afternoon 3/12, which was a good and satisfactory flight view! 1 – seen from Caserio del Cedro in the morning 4/12. 15 – seen from Mirador El Cedro in the morning 4/12. In all 11 (8+3) of these were perched upon two trees early in the morning! 4 (3+1) – seen from El Bailadero in the afternoon 4/12. Look for the pigeons above (flying between the peaks) rather than below!

Collared Dove – *Streptopelia decaocta* – Turkduva

10 – at Los Cristianos (Tenerife) 1 and 8/12. At least 30-40 at San Sebastián during the whole period.

Plain Swift – *Apus unicolor* – Enfärgad seglare

We looked for this species everyday with no luck, but suddenly discovered at least 10 birds above El Bailadero in the afternoon 4/12, but after only a few minutes they were gone. The subspecies confined to Macronesia.

Hoopoe – *Upupa epops* – Härfågel

3 – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. A pair offered brilliant and close views both feeding on the ground and flying around in the park. 1 – at the Park of San Sebastián 8/12.

Grey Wagtail – *Motacilla cinerea canariensis* – Forsärla

Seen daily, but not common in any way. Worthy of mention is 17 birds along the river valley from La Laja to San Sebastián 6/12. The subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands.

Berthelot's Pipit – *Anthus berthelotii berthelotii* – Kanariepiplärka

5 – at San Sebastián 2/12. 1 – at Alajeró 3/12. 1 – at Playa Santiago 4/12. 1 – at San Sebastián 5/12. 3 – at San Sebastián 6/12. 2 – at San Sebastián 8/12. Not abundant, nor common, on Gomera as mentioned by Clarke & Collins. The main reason for this could be that the species is silent during this time of the year or we didn't visit the right dry habitat. The subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands.

Robin – *Erithacus rubecula* – Rödhake

A few were heard and seen when we visited the National Park 3-4/12. Worthy of mention is two singing and three seen at the El Cedro area in the morning and three on the walk at Cañada de Jorge (near the junction close to Valle Gran Rey) 3/12.

Blackbird – *Turdus merula cabrerae* – Koltrast

A few were heard and seen almost everyday, with up to 15 birds a day when we visited the National Park 3-4/12. The subspecies confined to Macronesia.

Spectacled Warbler – *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis* – Glasögonsångare

1 – very nice lengthy view at San Sebastián 2/12. 2 – along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza and La Laja 6/12. The subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands.

Sardinian Warbler – *Sylvia melanocephala* – Sammetshätta

1 – discovered by its call and after a while seen well in the La Laja area 6/12, when we looked at butterflies. I was a bit disappointed with the fact that this species appeared to be so hard to find.

Blackcap – *Sylvia atricapilla heineken* – Svarthätta

A few were heard (singing) and seen almost everyday. Worthy of mention is 25 observed and 6 singing birds along the river valley from La Laja to San Sebastián 6/12.

Chiffchaff – *Phylloscopus collybita canariensis* – Kanarie(gran)sångare

The most common land bird on our visit! Wherever we stopped when travelling by car we always heard a few Chiffchaff's calling. Along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza–La Laja–San Sebastián 6/12, we recorded at least 160 birds! Easily recognized by its call, a distinctive but weak 'tjii-liff', somewhat resembling that of Tree Sparrow, or by its characteristic song. The subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands. Considered by some to be a full species.

Chiffchaff – *Phylloscopus collybita collybita* – Gransångare

1 singing – at El Cercado 3/12. 2 singing – along the road between La Laja–San Sebastián 6/12. The song heard from these three was as they sing in north western Europe, monotonous and chatting 'chiff-chaff-chiff...', which is very different from the Canary subspecies song. The species is a winter visitor on the islands.

Tenerife Goldcrest – *Regulus teneriffae* – Kanariekungsfågel

Only observed in the National Park. 15 – at the El Cedro area in the morning 3/12. 2 – along the footpath at Cañada de Jorge 3/12. 5 – at Caserio del Cedro in the morning 4/12. 7 – at Mirador El Rejo in the morning 4/12. 10 – at El Bailadero in the morning 4/12. 3 – at El Bailadero in the afternoon 4/12. The subspecies is confined to the Canary Islands. Considered by some to be a full species.

Blue Tit – *Parus caeruleus teneriffae* – Blåmes

2 – at the El Cedro area 3/12. 6 – along the footpath at Cañada de Jorge 3/12. 5 – at El Bailadero in the morning 4/12. 3 – at El Bailadero in the afternoon 4/12. 11 – along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza and La Laja 6/12. Easily recognized by its call, a distinctive 'zitt'. The subspecies is confined to the Gomera, Gran Canaria and Tenerife. On La Palma you'll find the subspecies *P. c. palmensis*, on El Hierro *P. c. ombriosus* and on Lanzarote and Fuerteventura *P. c. degener*.

Raven – *Corvus corax tingitanus* – Korp

6 – at Simancas (between Vallehermoso and Agulo) 3/12. 2 – was seen from La Carbonera in the afternoon 3/12. 2 – at El Bailadero in the morning 4/12. 4 – northwest of Tejiade 4/12. 2 – at El Bailadero in the afternoon 4/12. 4 – at Degollada de Pereza in the morning 6/12.

Spanish Sparrow – *Passer hispaniolensis* – Spansk sparv

Seen daily in San Sebastián, especially at Plaza de las Américas, near the harbour, with up to 30 birds a day. Seen at several more locations during our visit. Rarely seen on the ground, mostly in the trees.

Chaffinch – *Fringilla coelebs tintillon* – Bofink

4 – at Caserio del Cedro in the morning 3/12. 5 – at Las Hayas 3/12. 2 – at Chorros de Epina in the afternoon 3/12. All Chaffinches were seen on one day. I thought that the species would be commoner on the island, especially in the El Cedro area, but it was not. The subspecies is confined to the Gomera, Gran Canaria and Tenerife. On La Palma you'll find the subspecies *F. c. palmae* and on El Hierro *F. c. ombriosa*.

Canary – *Serinus canaria* – Kanariesiska

Seen and heard daily with up to 50 birds. Commonest in cultivated and wooded areas along the coast and up to middle altitudes.

NON-BIRDS

Cetaceans

Short-finned Pilot Whale – *Globicephala macrorhynchus* – Grindval

10 + 5 – at sea about one hour from Gomera on the ferry to El Hierro 7/12. All pods were 'logging' and we could also recognize the blow from a few individuals. 5 + 4 – at sea about ten minutes from the harbour of Los Cristianos (Tenerife) 8/12. The pod of five was rather distant and 'logging', but the pod of four was very close alongside the ferry and were seen slowly wake-riding. The latter pod was a real pleasure to see and binoculars were superfluous at the beginning!

Mammals

Rabbit – *Oryctolagus cuniculus* – Vildkanin

One along the walk at Cañada de Jorge (near the junction close to Valle Gran Rey) 3/12.

Reptiles

Canary Lizard – *Gallotia gallotia gomerae*

Seen daily in small numbers, but more numerous particularly in the San Sebastián area. Was feed with bananas, which they seemed to love!

Butterflies

Large White – *Pieris brassicae cheiranthi* – Kålfjäril

As we had seen the subspecies *P. b. wollastoni* on Madeira three months earlier, we kept an eye out for this good-looking butterfly. Of course, we saw many 'perfect-looking' big whites, but all of them appeared to be Small Whites. So, in fact, we didn't identify any Large White at all.

Small White – *Artogeia/Pieris rapae* – Rovfjäril (Liten kålfjäril)

Several at San Sebastián 2/12. Several along the road 3/12. Several at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. 20 – at the La Laja area 6/12.

Bath White – *Pontia daplidice* – Grönfläckig kålfjäril

Several along the road 3/12. A few at Playa Santiago 4/12. 1 – along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza and La Laja 6/12.

Clouded Yellow – *Colias crocea* – Rödgul höfjäril

2 – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12.

Long-tailed Blue – *Lampides boeticus* – Långsvansad blåvinge

1 – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. I found this one when I was looking at the dragonflies and the spiders in the park. This one is blue overall, not blue only at the body and the base of the wings (above) like the Canary Blue, which has the same pattern but yellow/orange coloured wings above.

(Canary) Indian Red Admiral – *Vanessa vulcania* – Indisk amiral (Kanarisk underart)

1 – at San Sebastián 2/12. 1 – along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza and La Laja 6/12.

Painted Lady – *Cynthia cardui* – Tistelfjäril

1 – at the La Laja area 6/12. This beautiful lady accompanied the Plain Tigers we were looking at, when we also heard our first Sardinian Warbler as well!

Canary Speckled Wood – *Parage xiphioides* – Vitbandad kvickgräsfjäril

1 – at El Bailadero 4/12, which allowed nice photo shots. **3** – along the footpath between Degollada de Pereza and La Laja 6/12. **1** – at the La Laja area 6/12.

Monarch – *Danaus plexippus* – Monark

1 – at San Sebastián 2/12. **11** – that allowed very nice views in the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. **1** – at Chejelipes 6/12. This big and beautiful butterfly is always a pleasure to see, soaring around in the air like a small paper dragon or resting on trees and bushes!

Plain Tiger – *Danaus chrysippus* – Liten monark

1 – at Playa Santiago 4/12. **2** – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. **4** – at the La Laja area 6/12. This one, which could be overlooked as a ‘small’ Monarch, was my absolute favourite among the butterflies seen on Gomera!

Dragonflies

Ischnura saharensis

2 – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. Considered by some to be a form of *Ischnura elegans*, Blue-tailed Damselfly (Allmän kustflickslända).

Emperor dragonfly – *Anax imperator* – Kejsartrollslända

3 – at Playa Santiago 4/12. **6** – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. A colourful and heavily built dragonfly! Best viewed through binoculars rather than by eye.

Red-veined Darter – *Sympetrum fonscolombeii* – Rödnervad ängstrollslända

3 – at the Park of San Sebastián 5/12. **1** – at the La Laja area 6/12. Easier to get close to and be seen stationary than the Emperor, which is more vigilant and difficult to get close.

Orthetrum sp. – Obestämd segeltrollslända

2 – at San Sebastián 2/12. Several at Playa Santiago 4/12. **3** – at the La Laja area 6/12. All observations were of the same species, however, we couldn’t identify it. According to the literature it was an *Orthetrum* species. At La Laja we spotted one bluish male.

Costs, ferries, accommadation and car rentals (all prices is given in Euro)

Tourist office

Located at Calle Real, to the right near the Plaza de las Américas. There you will find all necessary information and useful maps for free. Web site address: www.gomera-island.com

Ferries

There are regular ferries going from Los Cristianos (Tenerife), being undertaken by two companies. During our visit the Fred Olsen Ferries ran at very regular times, but they were all high-speed catamarans with very restricted outside viewing and too fast for an enjoyable crossing looking for seabirds. We hadn’t much of a choice because our travel agency had chosen Fred Olsen to and from Gomera. However, most visitors/birders make the one day trip from Tenerife and have the opportunity to chose the ‘good old’ and much slower ferry, which is run by Trasmediterranea. The ferry goes to Gomera in the morning and return late afternoon and is also cheaper than Fred Olsens high-speed boats. Fortunately we realised that we could take the slow ferry (Trasmediterranea) to El Hierro and back on the same day (seven hours). This ferry only travelled to Gomera-El Hierro on Saturdays. When preparing a trip to Tenerife, I suggest you check the time schedule of both companies, which varies depending on season.

Trasmediterranea: www.trasmediterranea.es

Lineas Fred. Olsen: www.fredolsen.es

Price: La Gomera-El Hierro (both ways) with the Trasmediterranea ferry: 41,00 per person. The ferry makes a 40 minutes stop at El Hierro before the return to Gomera.

Gomera by bus

The buses on Gomera are very good! You can get to almost every place on Gomera cheaply! Those who would spend only a full day on the island in search of the specialities better rent a car, which is relatively cheap.

Car rental

You'll find the offices of Avis and Hertz in the harbour and the local (the cheaper ones) rentals in the city of San Sebastián, only five minutes walk from the harbour:

Cicar: Located at Calle Ruiz de Padrón 9, near the Plaza de las Américas.

La Rueda: Located at Calle Real 19, the parallel street to Calle Ruiz de Padrón. We hired a Citroen Saxo from this company for 28,00 a day.

There are many more rentals in the city and the two mention above are the ones most birders chose.

Hotel and Pensions

Compared to Tenerife it's much easier to find good and cheap Pensions (and Hotels/Apartments) without pre-booking on Gomera, especially in San Sebastián. You'll find many on the main streets Calle Real, Calle Ruiz de Padrón and Calle del Medio. Just ask in the tourist office or look for the signs.

Useful web sites

Birding at La Gomera: <http://www.eurobirding.co.uk/gomera.htm>

Alternative Gomera: <http://www.gomera.org.uk/>

General information: <http://www.gomera-island.com/inglesa/>

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