

Madeira, 13th – 20th September 2021

By late summer 2021 parts of Europe were coming out of the travel restrictions imposed due to the Covid epidemic. One place you could travel to from the UK was the Portuguese island of Madeira. It had many Covid prevention health checks that you had to comply with but that was fair enough. Although I'd been to Madeira before I just wanted to get away somewhere. So, I took a chance and booked a one week package holiday staying in Funchal the capital of Madeira. My plan was for some cetacean watching which I did and very enjoyable it was, but I didn't really see much - only 4 species.

I booked RIB excursions both with Ventura do Mar and Rota dos Cetaceos. Going out on five days and I did one boat trip out to Deserta Grande. In 2019 I saw two Monk Seals around Deserta Grande but had no luck with them on this trip.

I saw more on my previous visit to Madeira in July 2019 – see my trip report on the mammal watching website as it has far more detail in than this short report has.

Cetaceans:

Sperm Whale: Two together relaxed and loafing, seen on one day.

Short-finned Pilot Whale: A pod of c8 whales and a pod of c12 whales seen on each of two days.

Atlantic Spotted Dolphin: Pods seen on three days. Biggest pod was c80 dolphins.

Common Bottlenose Dolphins: Pods seen on five days. Biggest pod was c15 dolphins.

Best Birds: Cory's Shearwater, Manx Shearwater, Barolo Shearwater, Desertas Petrel, Bulwer's Petrel, Little Egret, Common Buzzard, Trocaz Pigeon, Plain Swift, Berthelot's Pipit, Madeira Firecrest.

Other: Madeira Wall Lizard, Loggerhead Turtle, Flying Fish.

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Photos below:

- The only Monk Seals I saw on this trip!
- Feral Goats on Deserta Grande. An old breed brought here by early settlers and then abandoned when agriculture/farming was found to be non-viable.
- Sperm Whales, Pilot Whales, Atlantic Spotted Dolphins.











