

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* on Madeira, September 2008

Batuiruçu *Pluvialis dominica* na Madeira, Setembro de 2008

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On 17 September 2008, I was birdwatching at Ponta de São Lourenço on the island of Madeira, trying to find some Rock Sparrows *Petronia petronia*, which I located there later in the day. At around 10h30, near the Miradouro, I suddenly heard an unfamiliar call of a wader. To my ear it sounded somewhat like a vibrating or scraping disyllabic 'tsuu-ie...tsuu-ie'. Searching in the direction of the call I saw a 'golden plover' flying in my direction. I immediately noticed that the bird had long and rather narrow wings and that the underwings were darkish, dull-grey in colour. After circling once, the bird landed at a distance of about 50 m from me. My first impression of the bird on the ground was of a long-legged, long-winged and pale-faced 'golden plover'. It was clearly an adult moulting out of breeding plumage and still showed a noticeably black belly-patch, although the 'face', throat, neck and upper breast had already turned pale. The upperparts retained a limited amount of golden spangling but were otherwise rather grey. A dark crown and line running from behind the eye and ending in a large spot on the ear coverts enhanced the strength of a clear, pale, bold supercilium. Its grey legs were long, the tibia clearly visible, the wings were also long, the primary tips obviously protruding beyond the tail and its stance was distinctly upright. This combination of features enabled me to identify the bird as an American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*. As I attempted to move closer to take better pictures, a tourist was ahead of me and flushed the bird, which flew in a circle over my head, calling loudly, before disappearing in the direction of the white windmills (wind turbines) near Caniçal. As it passed overhead I again noticed the long and dark underwings and was able to determine that the long legs did not protrude beyond the tail in flight, as would be the case in Pacific Golden Plover *P. fulva*.

When I returned to the same spot in the afternoon, surprisingly the bird reappeared flying over me from the direction of the windmills and disappeared, calling loudly, towards Ponta das Gaivotas.

This is the first record of American Golden Plover for the Madeira Archipelago. There are eleven accepted records for the Portuguese mainland and thirteen for the Azores.

RESUMO

No dia 17 de Setembro de 2008 foi observado na Ponta de São Lourenço, na ilha da Madeira, um Batuiruçu *Pluvialis dominica*. Este foi o primeiro registo desta espécie, efectuado no arquipélago da Madeira.



Batuiruçu, adulto, Ponta de São Lourenço, Madeira, Setembro de 2008 (P. Rozemeijer)