



## **The Great Spotted Woodpecker and The Blue Chaffinch - Endemic Treasures**

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**In partnership with Miguel Fernández del Castillo Andersen**

**Report 1 of 3**



## Report 1

### THINK DIFFERENT

Okay, so here we are. Behind me lies an epic week full of playing Crazy Bird. Well, except for the playing part. The Crazy Bird part is quite accurate though, but... I happen to be the crazy bird. Yeah, as I write these words, my highly fatigued brain is in a weird kind of state.

My project revolves around the fascinating blue chaffinch (*Fringilla teydea*) and the majestic great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major canariensis*). They're quite remarkable birds, though I know that not everyone shares my enthusiasm. Challenge accepted. How do I make other people interested in some random birds? Well... how about using the power of humor? People enjoy being entertained, I heard. So, why not blend informative nuggets with a pinch, or two, or even a "bird-teen" bits of humor? Okay, I'll stop the jokes. Perhaps you've come here primarily for information, so let's dive in:

The iconic Tenerife blue chaffinch is an endemic bird to Tenerife. Their plumage looks pretty cool – it's bright blue, well, at least for the males. The females don't need all of that "ohhh look at me" stuff and are quite happy with their grey-brown colors. The blue chaffinch prefers old pine forests in the highlands and primarily eats pine seeds. However, the young ones like to snack on a lot of insects.



Blue Chaffinch



Great Spotted Woodpecker

As for the GREAT spotted woodpecker: it also likes the pine forest, but this guy can be found in other places too. They have some really pretty black, white, and red plumage. I would love to tell you all about its amazing adaptations, but that would take too long. What I find really incredible is how they manage all this hammering action without fracturing their skulls. Anatomically, they are built in a really special way to deal with all the hammering.

By the way, the expert who took me under his wing and taught me so much about those two, and many other birds, was called Miguel. I can't help it. When I think about Miguel, I have to smile because his voice echoes immediately in my head with the word "Chiffchaff" – another bird living on Tenerife, it just sounds so cute! But this is another bird and another story.



I asked Miguel how much the population of the blue chaffinch and the great spotted woodpecker has changed over the last years. Fortunately, it has increased quite a bit due to less logging and habitat improvement. For now, it's looking quite good for them; however, there are some things that are a challenge and might become a bigger problem in the future if we don't stay on track. So what are some of those challenges?

First of all, there is one issue you might have heard about: "climate change". I know, a very niche topic here. You probably already know one or two things about climate change and how it affects almost everything within a habitat. To be a bit more detailed: It can potentially mean more drought and less water for the birds during the hot season (aka "I need water!") and a bigger risk of wildfires. The wildfire thing is actually quite a big one. While I am writing this report, there is a wildfire burning on this island.

Another problem is human pressure. Those darn tourists! With all their drones and quads and loud noise. Okay, almost everyone has been a tourist once, including me, but there are ways to behave more or less respectfully when you are in a native protected area. I will touch on that later.

Okay, now you've got some basic information. Moving on to the next part.

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