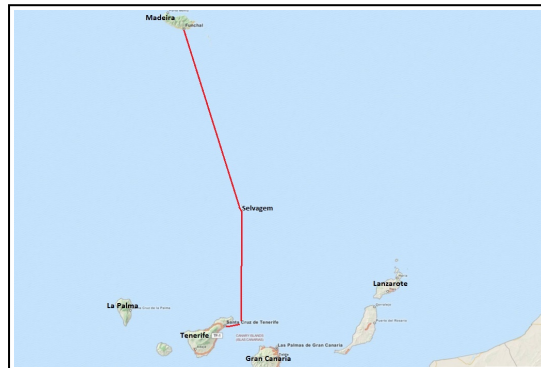




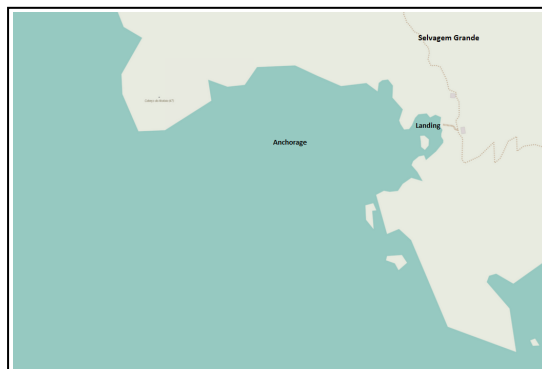
## 5. Selvagem 2013



by Johan Kjellander 2013 - 2014



The distance from Funchal to Santa Cruz on Tenerife is 280 nautical miles. However, after 160 miles you can stop and visit the Selvagem Islands. There is one bigger island, Selvagem Grande, one smaller, Selvagem Pequena and also several smaller islets and rocks. We stayed two nights, visited the guard station and listened to the fantastic sound of Cory's Shearwater.

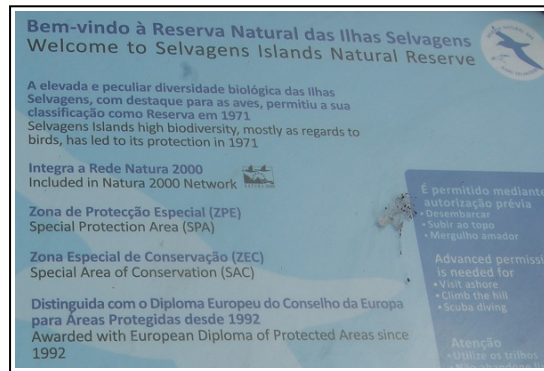


We left Madeira after lunch and headed for Selvagem Grande. With 160 nautical miles to go, we wanted to arrive to Selvagem next day in daylight.



As the sun came up, we spotted Selvagem Grande but we also found this creature on the gunwale. A 15 centimeter long squid (10-armed octopus),

probably washed up by the sea during the night.



The Selvagem Islands is a well protected Natural Reserve. We had to get permission in advance for our visit. Selvagem Grande is inhabited by two guards, the rest of the reserve is uninhabited. Due to its deserted location the islands house several endemic species. One is a lizzard that only lives here and feeds on a special plant that only lives here!



This is what the islands look like. Volcanic, full of holes and caves. Ideal for birds who can easily find protected places for nesting.



Here is the only house on the Selvagem Islands. The two guards live here together with a dog. There is also space for scientists who come here regularly to study birds and plants. Their only means of communication is through an SSB Radio.

We anchored in the bay where the house is. There is also a small landing spot for dinghies, down to the right in the picture. The bay is open to the south but winds here are usually northerly. We did experience some fall winds from the steep cliffs surrounding the bay, but nothing serious.



Many birds nest here. The most famous is probably Cory's Shearwater (Gulnäbbad Lira) which has the largest colony in the world on the Selvagem. They nest everywhere and are totally unafraid of human beings. This bird was only an armlength away when I took the picture.



In the morning they go out to sea in thousands. They seem to be good fishers. In the late afternoon they left the water to circle over our heads and as the sun went down they started singing while still in the air. A fantastic show with thousands of birds flying home and the sound of their song echoing between the steep cliffs.



Dark brown on top. And white in under. The beak is yellow.



## End of Selvagem 2013

