



BIRD'S EYE VIEW

TGHID.....

NIBQA HAJ?



An MOS publication to give members a bird's eye view of what happened, what is happening, and what will happen within the Malta Ornithological Society, the Maltese national society for the study and protection of birds.

Editor: John Azzopardi
 Design & Artwork: Alfred E. Baldacchino
 Printed for the Malta Ornithological Society
 at Malta Jesprint Co. Ltd.



Three of the winning posters of the poster-cum-slogan competition organised by the Young Members Section of the Malta Ornithological Society.



Poster drawn by Edgar Magri from Naxxar Boys' Secondary School placed first in the forms V-VI section. Slogan means: 'Orphans'.

Poster drawn by Louis McKeon from Paola Boys' Secondary School placed first in the forms III-IV section. The slogan means: 'Shall I remain alive?'



Poster drawn by Hermione Scicluna from the Convent of the Sacred Heart placed first in the forms I-II section. Slogan means: 'Why do you want to kill me?'



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COMMENT

I have been entrusted by the Council of the Malta Ornithological Society to edit this new publication BIRD'S EYE VIEW, and it is our pleasure to launch this first issue.

The exigencies of the MOS continue to grow as its work in the field of bird study and conservation continues to expand. It has been for this reason that the Council decided to start issuing BIRD'S EYE VIEW. IL-MERILL, which today does not need an introduction with our members, has been gaining more and more popularity and is finding its way into the various libraries of Societies, Museums, Universities and other scientific institutions throughout Europe, Africa, Asia and America. In the event, it has been wisely decided to purify further the publication and render it even more scientific. IL-MERILL will then retain its status as the official bulletin of the MOS; however, it will contain only scientific articles and papers.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW will be complementary to IL-MERILL and it will carry news about MOS activities, the conservation movement in Malta, articles of general interest, etc. In other words, it will be a means of recording the social history of the MOS. It will also render to members a living account of how the MOS Council is spending their subscriptions and donations.

One need not stress that the MOS is a voluntary society and that it depends virtually on members' support, which has always been willingly and heartily bestowed, and for which we are indebted. This first issue of BIRD'S EYE VIEW has been kindly sponsored by Mr Vincent Sammut, an MOS Council member. To him we would like to dedicate this special number. Thank you, Censu.

A word of thanks also goes to Mr Alfred E. Baldacchino, our dedicated General Secretary, who designed the cover and layout of BIRD'S EYE VIEW.

Members are invited to contribute articles, letters, essays, poems, etc., of general interest for publication in BIRD'S EYE VIEW. These should be addressed to the Editor at the MOS official address.

May all the readers of our new publication realise and appreciate the good work of the MOS and seek out the support of similarly minded persons to further promote the conservation ideals, so that we may confidently look towards better times ahead.

John Azzopardi
June 77

President's address at the 15th Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, February 17th, 1977 at the British Council, Valletta.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the 15th Annual General Meeting and I feel honoured because the Malta Ornithological Society is now one of the leading and most active national societies in Malta. Those who have been actively involved for many years with the MOS, are in a better position to appreciate the present situation. The early years were very difficult. We were laughed at not only by the general public, but also by our relatives and friends. For in fact, no one knew any better, no one could understand what bird conservation was. Now the picture is somewhat different. The MOS's role has been accepted, and is now respected and getting more support.

The collective conservation movement in Malta is gathering momentum and good fruits may be reaped in the not too distant future. This should not make us sit on our laurels. The years ahead will continue to provide us with serious challenges. Indeed the struggle for bird conservation knows no end.

The MOS has been gradually but steadily growing stronger and this necessitated modifications and amendments to its statute; which is why the MOS Executive Committee is today proposing a modified set of rules and regulations for your approval. The future of the MOS is sound and safe and this is borne out by the efficiency and dedication of the Young Members Section. Bearing this in mind the Executive Committee hopes to give this section more impetus in the coming year. The past year has seen the setting up of a young members section in Gozo with the help of the newly reconstituted Gozo Branch. A small nucleus of young members will in time, with the encouragement of the Gozo Committee, take root and flourish like its counterpart in Malta.

The numerous and varied activities of the past year, as will be noted in the Secretary's report, will be continued and it is hoped to make more emphasis on the education of the general public especially the younger generation. A booklet addressed to educators on the theory of nature conservation is at present being published by the Malta Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation with the help of the MOS and other Societies. 2000 copies are being printed, to be presented to the Ministry of Education for distribution in schools. A Bird Conservation week is being organised and the full programme of activities will be issued soon, while preparations for the stand at the International Fair will soon begin. These two main activities for this year will soon begin and will help to convey our conservation message to many thousands of people.

For the benefit of the members, the MOS hopes to start publishing a new bulletin — Birds Eye View — which will carry news and views and conservation articles, while *Il-Merill* will continue to be published twice yearly purely with ornithological literature.

On the other hand, the MOS Executive Committee is asking some help in return from all members. Apart from the duty of all of us to propagate the Society's conservation ideals, we expect all members to help us build an even stronger MOS. If each of us makes a small effort and enrolls a new member during 1977, collectively will be doubling our Society's strength. This would result in more work for the Executive Committee, but we are prepared for this too. We need more members. We need every subscription fee we can get — not to bulge the Society's funds — but to help us more in our educational programme.

I wish to end this address by thanking on behalf of the MOS all those who have made the past year a successful one. We are particularly indebted to the Comité de Coordination pour la Protection des Oiseaux of Belgium (in the person of Mr Roger Amhem) for supplying us with Robin stickers; to Mr Viking Olsson of the Sveriges Ornithologiska Forening for acquiring funds for a future educational activity; to Mr Robert Spencer and the Ringing and Migration Staff of the British Trust for Ornithology for their continual help to the MOS Ringing and Research Group; to the Hawk Trust and to the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey U.S.A. for helping us to produce the Birds of Prey stickers; to the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee for a donation of £15 towards Bird Ringing expenses; to the Friends of Malta G.C. who, on Mrs Fleury's initiative, donated £20 towards the Gozo Branch; to Messrs Andrews Feeds Malta Ltd for a donation of £100 (on the initiative of Major Joe Arriago) towards MOS Ringing and Research; to the Education Department for its co-operation in our educational activities in Government schools; to the Agricultural Department (in the person of the Afforestation Officer Mr Joe Borg) for the co-operation extended in the MOS tree-planting programme; to the Director of the Cultural Centre at Floriana for the frequent use of the hall; to the Representative and staff of the British Council for the regular use of the hall, projector, projectionist and loan of films; to the Victoria Boys Scouts of Gozo for the use of their headquarters and to all the local and overseas members for their moral and financial support.

My personal thanks go to Mr Joe Attard (Hon. President), whose advice never failed us; to the various MOS sub-committee members with a special mention to Mr John Azzopardi and Mr Mike Grima (Young Members Section), Messrs Charles Gauci and John Grech (Ringing Secretary and Gozo Representative), Mrs V. Grech (Chairman Gozo Committee); and last but not least to all the Executive Committee Members with a special mention for our hard-working Secretary, Mr Alfred E. Baldacchino.

I thank you all for your attention.

Joe Sultana
President
Malta Ornithological Society.

One of the last commitments of the MOS for 1976 was its participation in the Republic Day Festivities when the MOS principles and aims were clearly exhibited



Secretary's report for period February 1976 to January 1977, read at the 15th Annual General Meeting on Thursday 17th February, 1977 at the British Council, Valletta.

The 14th Annual General Meeting of the Malta Ornithological Society was held at the British Council on Thursday, 5th February, 1976 at 5.45p.m. This was preceded by the showing of 'Oliver Kite's Fawly'.

The President's address was followed by the Secretary's reading of the minutes of the 13th annual general meeting, and the annual report for the year March 1975 to January 1976. These reports appeared in IL-MERILL number 17.

The Treasurer also read the financial report as on 31st December 1976 which was later circulated to all members with circular number 2/76 dated 27th February, 1976.

The nine members who submitted their names for election on the MOS Executive Committee were deemed elected uncontested for a two year term of office. Mr Dominic Cutajar was later nominated to sit on the Executive Committee.

The MOS Executive Committee had a very busy time during 1976. 20 Executive Committee meetings were held all lasting more than three hours. 7 indoor activities and five outings were organised for the MOS members. Besides, four other lectures were given to other institutions. 7 interviews were given on Radio and Cable Radio. A debate was held on Malta Television between two MOS members and two members representing shooters. The weekly column 'Our Natural Environment' in the Times of Malta was regularly contributed to as was also the occasional column in the Maltese Sunday paper 'It-Torca': 'Nghixu man-Natura'. 21 press releases were issued by the MOS Public Relations Officer. 2 programmes for school children were produced with the help of the MOS for Malta Television.

2 issues of IL-MERILL (number 16 & 17) were published. Two posters were also issued one in conjunction with the ICBP Malta to mark the Council of Europe campaign for the conservation of wetlands. This poster was kindly designed by Mr Saviour Mallia. The other poster appealed for the appreciation of birds in their natural habitat. The design and expenses for this poster were kindly seen to by a local MOS member.

Five stickers were also issued by the MOS during the year, two of which were issued by the Young Members Section. The sticker appealing for the protection of birds of prey was issued with the cooperation of the Hawk Trust of the United Kingdom and the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey of California USA. The Robin sticker was forthcoming through the help of the Comité des Coordination pour la Protection des Oiseaux of Belgium. Two more stickers are with the printers and will soon be launched.

But perhaps the greatest impact created by the Malta Ornithological Society during the period under review was the launching of the MOS publication, 'A Guide to the Birds of Malta', which was launched at a Press Conference held at the Hotel Phoenicia on 25th February, 1976. I am glad to say that this publication has been a great success and has nearly sold out within a couple of months.

Furthermore, the Malta Ornithological Society has successfully launched its own addressed rings used for the scientific study of bird movements. This was made possible by the help received from various MOS members; through the help of the British Trust for Ornithology and recently through the help of Messrs Andrews Feeds Malta Ltd.

Another achievement of the MOS during 1976 was the setting up of a stand at the XXth International Trade Fair which gave tremendous publicity to the Society and to its aims. A great number of people visited the stand asking for information, and mostly asking for MOS stickers, which supply was soon exhausted.

In its efforts to better its educational and bird protection efforts, the Malta Ornithological Society has also sent delegations to various ministries. MOS delegations saw the Minister of Health and Environment; the Minister of Education; and the Private Secretary of the Minister of Justice, Lands, Housing and Parliamentary Affairs. An MOS delegation also met the Commissioner of Police.

One of the last commitments of the MOS for 1976 was its participation in the Republic Day Festivities when the MOS principles and aims were clearly exhibited all along the defile.

The Committees which were set up or reconstituted were:

1) The Young Members Section having Mr Michael Grima as the Young Members Officer. The Section held 8 Committee meetings, 11 outings, 3 tree planting activities and their annual general meetings. The Section published three issues of 'L-Ghasfur' and also saw to the first MOS raffle which was drawn on Monday 17th January. The Section also held a poster competition for all Government and Private Schools.

2) The Ringing and Research Committee was also reconstituted with Mr Joe Sultana as Ringing Officer. The Committee held three general meetings for the thirteen ringers registered. The Committee issued ringing permits on behalf of the MOS and introduced the signing of a declaration binding all ringers to return all nets if they ceased ringing. In October, the Committee launched MOS rings bearing the Society's address. Monthly newsletters and occasional circulars were issued. 9,509 birds were ringed during the year. Two more expeditions were held to Filfla, consolidating the fact that the MOS is the only ringing station to ring Storm Petrels in the Mediterranean.

3) The Gozo Committee was also reconstituted after a lapse of some years when it existed only on paper. Mrs V. Grech, the new chairman has made quite an impact since her appointment. The Gozo Committee held two committee meetings, 2 outings, 2 lectures, and 1 filmshow. A tree planting outing was jointly held with the YMS Malta Section and this was the start of a Young Members Gozo Section.

4) The Rarities Committee was also reconstituted. Mr Charles Gauci was appointed Chairman and Mr Martin Thake, Secretary. Two committee meetings were held.

5) Two ad hoc committees were set up. One to take care of the XX Malta Trade Fair Stand and one to see the organisation of a bird week in March. Whilst the former committee's task was well executed, the latter is still at the height of its activities.

These are the major activities which we had the pleasure to be involved in and which MOS members had the opportunity to participate in during the year under review. I must here express my thanks to all MOS members for their cooperation, to all Executive Committee members for their continuous help and for making executive committee meetings sometimes so exciting; to the ICBP Malta whose help was most appreciated.

Of particular mention is Mr John Azzopardi the Assistant Secretary with whom I daily discussed MOS problems; and also Mr Joe Sultana, the MOS President who always came to my help when I found myself under water. Considering the fact that this is my first year as MOS Secretary, after only a short time on the MOS Committee, this help is far more appreciated.

Alfred E. Baldacchino
Hon. General Secretary,
Malta Ornithological Society.

In October, the Committee launched
MOS rings bearing the Society's address.



Baldacchino

M.O.S. 15TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

The Malta Ornithological Society would like to submit the following resolutions to be urgently considered by the Government:

BEING AWARE of the increasing amount of appeals by the general public for adequate protection of birds and their natural environment, both by local Societies as well as by International Bodies;

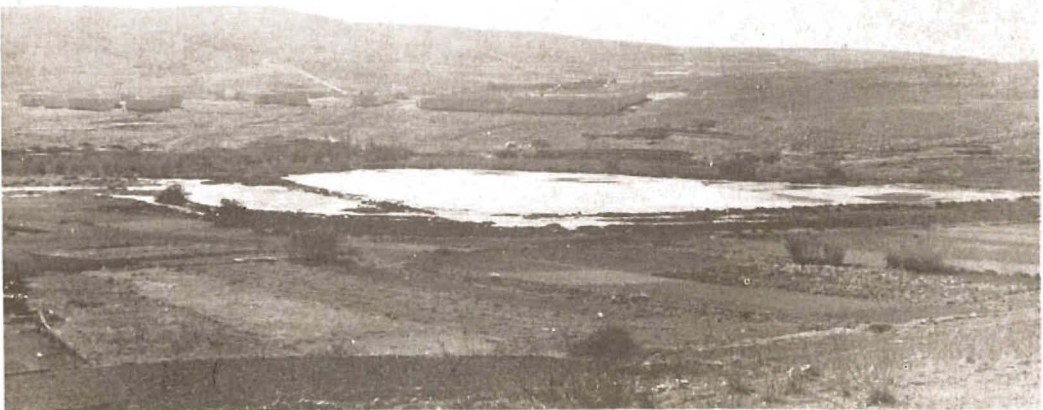
HAVING CONSIDERED the editorials and numerous letters in all sections of the local press requesting control of bird shooting and trapping;

CONSIDERING the increase of indiscriminate bird shooting and trapping which is resulting in more harmful repercussions to Malta's resident and migratory avifauna throughout the year;

REGRETABLELY noting that the people still need further educational assistance to appreciate and conserve the living natural environment with all its wildlife;

URGES GOVERNMENT to legislate and enforce strict and modern laws for the adequate protection of birds and their natural environment in the Maltese Islands so that this natural heritage may be appreciated and enjoyed by all equally;

FURTHERMORE URGES GOVERNMENT to safeguard the 'pool' and its adjacent area at Ghadira by maintaining it as a nature reserve towards which the Malta Ornithological Society will willingly give all the necessary help to care for, embellish and use for the education of the general public in the appreciation of Malta's natural heritage. ●



Baldacchino

CALENDAR OF MOS ACTIVITIES – February 1976 to January 1977

FEBRUARY

- 5 – Annual General Meeting 1976.
- 7 – I.C.B.P. Meeting (J. Sultana and A.E. Baldacchino).
- 9 – 1st Executive Committee Meeting.
- 10 – Joe Sultana on cable radio.
- 13 – Joe Sultana lecture to 4T's.
- 19 – MOS delegation composed of Messrs Joe Sultana, Charles Gauci and Alfred E. Baldacchino meets Director of Agriculture.
- 24 – Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci lecture at Ghadira.
- 25 – Launching of Guide at Press Conference at Hotel Phoenicia.
- 27 – Joe Sultana on Cable Radio.

MARCH

- 1 – 2nd Executive Committee Meeting.
- 11 – Charles Gauci lecture at British Council: 'Bird Migration Survey – Autumn 77'.
- 23 – 3rd Executive Committee Meeting.
- 28 – John Grech on Cable Radio.
- 29 – Joe Sultana and John Grech lecture at Mosta.
– Young Members Section Committee Meeting.

APRIL

- 4 – 1st Comino Outing.
- 6 – 4th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 10 – MOS outing to Hal Far.
- 18 – YMS Outing to Ghadira.
- 22 – Joe Sultana lecture at Ramla Bay Hotel.
- 26 – 5th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 27 – Joe Sultana lecture at British Council: 'Birds' Nests'.

MAY

- 1 – I.C.B.P. Meeting (J. Sultana and A.E. Baldacchino).
- 3 – 6th Executive Committee meeting.
- 6 – Joe Sultana on MTV regarding Guide.
- 9 – John Grech on cable radio.
– YMS outing to Wied Hanaq Gozo (Ramla Valley).
- 10 – YMS Committee meeting.
- 14 – Lt Col. R.M. Holman lecture at Cultural Centre Floriana: 'Birds of Ethiopia'.
- 17 – YMS Committee Meeting.
- 23 – 2nd Comino outing.
- 24 – 7th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 29 – MOS Gozo Committee outing to Ta' Cenc.
– YMS planting of prickly pears at Ghadira.
– YMS publication 'L-Ghasfur' issue no. 10.
- 12-14 – filming of school programme with the help of the MOS (J. Sultana).

JUNE

- 7 - 8th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 12 - Ringing Group's 1st visit to Filfla.
- 18 - MOS Gozo Committee slides show on breeding birds by Joe Sultana at residence of same.
- 21 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 22 - 9th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 28 - ICBP Meeting (J. Sultana & A. E. Baldacchino)
 - YMS publication 'L-Ghasfur' issue no. 11.

JULY

- 1-15 - Trade Fair stand attendance.
- 24-25 - YMS night outing to Buskett.
- 27 - 10th Executive Committee meeting.
 - Joe Sultana on cable radio.

AUGUST

- 7 - Ringing Group's 2nd visit to Filfla.
- 8 - YMS outing to Salina.
- 9 - YMS committee meeting.
- 23 - 11th Executive Committee meeting.
- 29 - YMS outing to Armier.
 - Joe Sultana on Cable Radio.

SEPTEMBER

- 5 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 6 - MOS Gozo Committee Meeting.
- 10 - MOS Gozo bird watching outing to tal-Gordan, Gozo.
- 12 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 14 - YMS Committee meeting.
- 19 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 24 - 12th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 26 - YMS outing to Buskett.

OCTOBER

- 5 - 13th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 11 - TV debate on shooters responsibility. MOS represented by Joe Sultana and Alfred E. Baldacchino.
- 12 - 14th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 17 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 18 - Mr Lishman lecture at British Council on 'Wildlife of South Africa'.
- 22 - MOS delegation to the Commissioner of Police (Joe Sultana and Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 23 - MOS Buskett outing.
- 25 - YMS Committee meeting.
- 26 - Alfred E. Baldacchino lecture at St. Andrews.
 - John Azzopardi, Alfred E. Baldacchino and Joe Sultana lecture at Lija Youth Centre.
- 28 - MOS Gozo Committee filmshow at Boys Scouts HQ Victoria, Gozo: 'Wilderness is not a place' and 'The call of the Running Tide'.
- 31 - YMS outing to Ghadira.
 - YMS Christmas Raffle launched.

NOVEMBER

- 6 - 15th Executive Committee meeting.
- 8 - 16th Executive Committee meeting.
- 14 - YMS hike Rabat/Dingli.
- 21 - MOS outing to l-Ahrax, Mellieha.
- 24 - MOS delegation to Minister of Health and Environment. (Joe Sultana, Alfred E. Baldacchino and John Azzopardi).
- 26 - Joe Sultana lecture on 'Wintering Birds' at Sqr Ldr. Nicholas's Residence, Gozo.
- 28 - YMS outing to Selmun.
- YMS poster competition launched.
- 29 - Warr. Officer Frank Smith lecture 'A Ringer's view of the birds of Malta' at British Council.
- 30 - 17th Executive Committee meeting.

DECEMBER

- 4 - I.C.B.P. Meeting (Joe Sultana).
- 7 - 18th Executive Committee meeting.
- 8 - MOS filmed at Xemxija for showing on MTV 'Malta u lil hin minnha'.
- 13 - 'Why Conserve Wildlife' illustrated lecture at Cultural Institute, Floriana.
- 17 - Alfred E. Baldacchino and Vincent Sammut receive donation of £M100 from Messrs Andrews Feeds.
- 20 - 19th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 21 - MOS delegation meets Minister of Education. (John Azzopardi, Alfred E. Baldacchino and Joe Sultana).

JANUARY

- 3 - YMS tree planting at Dwejra, Gozo, jointly with YMS Gozo.
- 7 - YMS Committee meeting.
- MOS delegation sees Secretary of Minister of Justice, Lands, Housing and Parliamentary Affairs. (John Azzopardi, Alfred E. Baldacchino and Joe Sultana).
- 9 - John Grech on Cable Radio.
- 10 - 20th Executive Committee Meeting.
- 17 - Mr Scrimgeour filmets at British Council.
Illustrated lecture 'It's their world too'.
- 12 - YMS Annual General Meeting.
- 16 - YMS outing to Hal Far.
- 17 - MOS delegation to Private Secretary to Minister of Labour, Emigration, Welfare and Culture.
(John Azzopardi and Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 19 - MOS delegation to Commissioner of Police.
(Alfred E. Baldacchino and Joe Sultana).
- 20 - MOS delegation meets Director of Museums.
(John Azzopardi, Alfred E. Baldacchino, Charles Gauci and Joe Sultana).
- 22 - John Azzopardi on Cable Radio.

TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE A/C AS AT 31 December 1976

Loss on Exchange	42-49,7	Interest received	25-63,6
Leaflet	62-00,0	Subscriptions and Donations	320-31,9
Postages	122-23,2	Il-Merill Sales	8-06,4
Il-Merill 1975:		Guide Sales	1189-95,4
Cost £100-12,0		Outings	25-39,6
Reserve <u>60-00,0</u>	40-12,0	Stickers	
Il-Merill 1976:		Receipts £154-27,1	
Cost £ 90-00,0		Cost <u>104-80,0</u>	49-47,1
Dcnations <u>85-00,0</u>	5-00,0		
Il-Merill			
Ringing Report 1975	140-00,0		
Sundries			
(Note 1)	77-22,4		
Stationery	50-63,6		
Guide Cost	870-91,4		
MOS/ICBP Poster			
Cost £ 29-00,0	17-00,0		
ICBP <u>12-00,0</u>			
Subsidies Ringing Group			
(Note 2)	80-00,0		
Posters (Note 3)	50-00,0		
Excess of Income C/F	61-21,7		
	<u>£M1618-84,0</u>		<u>£M1618-84,0</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 December 1976

CAPITAL A/C		FIXED ASSETS	
Balance b/f	£346-46,8	Equipment (Cost £25)	25-00,0
Inc & Exp. Blc	<u>61-21,7</u>	INVESTMENTS (Cost £100)	80-00,0
RESERVES (Note 4)	184-75,8	SUBSIDIARY GROUPS (Note 6)	382-14,8
CURRENT LIABILITIES		CURRENT ASSETS	
Subscriptions		Debtors	5-34,1
in advance	76-61,0	Prepayments	
		(Note 7)	85-50,0
Creditors	<u>240-00,0</u>	Cash	<u>331-06,4</u>
(Note 5)	316-61,0		421-90,5
	<u>£M909-05,3</u>		<u>£M909-05,3</u>

NOTES RE. 1976 BALANCE SHEET AND ACCOUNTS

Note 1. Sundries £77-22,4

Made up of the following items:

Expenses re Trade Fair Stand; Republic Day Posters; Telephone expenses; bank charges; projectionist fees; bird literature.

Note 2. Subsidies to Ringing Group £80-00,0

The MOS has this year started to use Malta-Addressed rings. This subsidy has been introduced in order to cut down the ringers' expenses.

Note 3. Posters £50-00,0

This poster should have been issued during the current year and is still at the printers.

Note 4. Reserves £184-75,8

Made up as follows:

For Sundry Expenses £21-75,0; Trip £48-40,0; Young Members' Section £20; Ringing and Research Group £94-60,8.

Note 5. Creditors £240-00,0

Made up as follows: Stickers £50; Il-Merill £140; Poster £50.

Note 6. Subsidiary Groups £382-14,8

Young Members' Section	£21-44,9	
Gozo Branch	5-00,0	
Ringing/Research	<u>355-69,9</u>	£382-14,8

Note 7. Prepayments £85-50,0

Shirt Transfers	£75-50,0
Lottery Tax	10-00,0

B.K. Geman
Hon. Treasurer



I LOVE BIRDS

DO YOU? JOIN

THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 498 VALLETTA, MALTA



Azzopardi

MOS T-shirt transfer

Another educational aid intended to help teachers and other educators on matters concerning the natural environment



A small sticker published by the Young Members' Section



Azzopardi.

The following is a list of birds which still breed in the Maltese Islands — an extra Maltese structure is meant to make school children familiar with these birds to be able to recognize them in their own areas and thus develop a healthy appreciation of these species and of their intimate relation with the Maltese natural environment.

- Spanish Sparrow — abundant
- Ghazzejn tal-Bieb — scarce
- Tree Sparrow — common
- Ghazzejn tal-Kieku — scarce
- Dove Pigeon — very common
- Durrāja — very common
- Short-billed Turt — common
- Babb — common
- Linnat — scarce
- Gajgi — scarce
- Southern Woodpecker — very common
- Red-tailed Woodpecker — common
- Red-bellied Woodpecker — common
- Red-headed Woodpecker — scarce
- Red-winged Blackbird — scarce
- Blackbird — very common
- Black-headed Grosbeak — very rare
- Blue Rock Thrush — very common
- Kinglet — very rare
- Parus — very rare (12 seen)
- Dull — very rare
- Parus — very rare
- Stone Parus — common
- Kinglet — very rare
- Cow's Parsnip — common
- Cuckoo — common
- Mistle Thrush — common
- Gull — common



NESTING

Nests which are built in the open are often deserted if they are disturbed.

Do avoid disturbing nesting birds.

Nests which are built in the open should never be touched in the class.

Children should be encouraged to respect nesting activity and to appreciate without damaging any nest they might find.

Nests can easily be studied without causing harm by placing a box or two nest traps in the yard. These traps should be placed in the open before the birds begin to nest. The boxes should have a lid on top so that the contents can be examined without disturbing the birds. Children under guidance may observe the boxes to record their observations, thus stimulating interest in the study of birds.

Old nests can also be dissected in class to observe how they have been built and what material was used.

All children should be encouraged to do school projects regarding observations of nesting birds.



poster appealing for the protection of all the breeding birds

MOS EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

The MOS has always recognised that the best weapon to fight prejudice is education. For this reason, the MOS has, during the past two years, intensified its information campaigns, often with help from foreign societies.

Three new car-stickers were launched in 1976-77. The first one, depicting a Robin in full colour, with a Maltese slogan which translates 'I Came, I Made You Happy, Let Me Free', was made available for the MOS through the assistance of the Comité de Coordination pour la Protection des Oiseaux (CCPO) of Belgium. This sticker is very much in demand and is being displayed on many cars and school-children's briefcases.

Another sticker depicting a Honey Buzzard in flight has been launched in March 1977. The Maltese slogan on it translates 'The Honey Buzzard is beautiful alive'. This sticker is intended to counteract the annual slaughter of Honey Buzzards and other birds of prey which takes place in the Maltese Islands.

A small sticker published by the Young Members' Section of the MOS also in March, depicts a bird in flight and carries the words 'Watch It With The MOS'. This sticker has been eagerly displayed by the younger members of the MOS.

For the occasion of the 'Bird Week - 1977', the MOS also published a poster appealing for the protection of all the breeding birds, and it carries a list of the regular Maltese breeders. The slogan on it translates: 'I Can Breed In Malta; Why Don't You Let Me?' This poster was distributed in schools, Police Stations and youth clubs.

With the assistance of the Sveriges Ornitologiska Forening, the MOS and ICBP-Malta printed a number of copybooks for school-children, with a picture of the Robin in full colour on the front cover. Although protected by Maltese Law, the Robin is trapped in large numbers in Malta in October, especially by children and youngsters. A great many die in captivity after only a few days. These copybooks are intended to increase the appreciation towards this beneficial bird, and a short note to this effect is printed on the back-cover of the copybook. Through the assistance of the Director of Education, these copybooks will be made available to school-children, directly from schools.

Another educational aid intended to help teachers and other educators on matters concerning the natural environment has just been published. It explains simply the ecological reasons which are forcing everyone to treat the concept of conservation seriously. It also supplies much useful information and points out the pitfalls to be avoided. The actual compilation is a collective and commendable effort by Joe Sultana, Guido Lanfranco and Edwin Lanfranco, whose original scripts were schematised by Alfred E. Baldacchino and John Azzopardi. The text is complemented with pleasant line drawings by Rodney Ingram and Guido Lanfranco. In the foreword, the President of the Republic, Dr. Anton Buttigieg, recommends this manual on nature conservation to all educators, while the editor, Dominic Cutajar, states that '*The purpose in compiling this manual on the theory of nature conservation is to inform educators in general on the background of ideas which are compelling present generations to discard most of the old traditional attitudes towards nature*'.

This booklet was financed by the Nederlandse Vereniging tot Bescherming van Vogels, through I.C.B.P. Malta. A novelty which, incidentally, appeals very much to the younger members of the MOS in an MOS T-shirt transfer (see page 12), which was also launched during the 'Bird Week - 1977'. The attractive blue transfer may be printed onto T-shirts by pressing with a hot iron. Transfers are available from the MOS at 25c0 each.

The 2 stickers, the poster, the copybook, the booklet and the T-shirt transfer have all been designed by Alfred E. Baldacchino. ●

BIRD WEEK - 1977

During the first week of March, the Malta Ornithological Society held a series of educational and cultural activities with the aim of creating and strengthening the public conscience towards the appreciation of birds in their natural wild state. The activity was held in March to coincide with the start of the spring migration in the Maltese Islands, a time when a wholesale destruction of birds also takes place.

The following is a programme of activities held during the 'Bird Week - 1977', which lasted from Wednesday 2nd to Saturday 12th March, 1977.

- WED. 2.3.77: 'L-Ghasafar fl-Ambjent Malti' (Birds & Maltese Natural Environment), a documentary by Joe Sultana screened on Television Malta.
- MON. 7.3.77: 'L-Ghasafar fl-Ambjent Malti', an illustrated talk by Joe Sultana, at the Libyan Cultural Institute, Valletta.
- TUES. 8.3.77: 'L-Ghanijiet u l-Attivitajiet tas-SOM' (The Aims and Activities of the MOS), a talk by A.E. Baldacchino broadcasted on Radio Malta/Cable Radio.
- WED. 9.3.77: '12 Years of Bird-Ringing', an illustrated talk by Charles Gauci, at the Malta Cultural Institute, Floriana.
- THURS. 10.3.77: 'L-Ghasafar u l-Bniedem/Konservazzjoni ta' l-Ghasafar' (Birds and Man/Bird Conservation), a talk by Joe Sultana and Dominic Cutajar, broadcasted on Radio Malta/Cable Radio.
- Evening: Presentation of prizes to the winners of the 'Poster-cum-Slogan Competition' organised in secondary schools by the YMS, at the Malta Cultural Institute, Floriana.
- FRI. 11.3.77: 'Birds of Prey over Malta', an illustrated talk by Martin Thake at the British Council, Valletta.
- SAT. 12.3.77: Members from the YMS of the MOS planted trees at Ghadira, Mellieha during the morning. An activity held with the co-operation of the Department of Agriculture.
- Evening: The 'Audubon Folio Exhibition' inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Malta, Dr Anton Buttigieg, B.A., LL.D., at the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana.

On the occasion of the 'Bird Week - 1977', a supplement carrying various articles about bird conservation in Malta and about MOS activities, was carried in 'The Sunday Times of Malta' of 6th March. A similar supplement in Maltese appeared on the same day in the Maltese Sunday newspaper 'It-Torca'. The MOS also launched two new car-stickers, and a new poster about the breeding birds of Malta, as well as a T-shirt transfer with the MOS logo and a slogan.

THE AUDUBON FOLIO EXHIBITION

To mark the closing of the 'Bird Week - 1977', an exhibition of prints of the original paintings of John James Audubon (1785-1851) was held at the Green Lounge of the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana, on Saturday, 12th March 1977 at 7.30 p.m.

The evening opened with a short history of the life of John James Audubon, delivered by the Honorary President of the MOS, Mr J.M. Attard. The President of the Republic of Malta, Dr Anton Buttigieg, B.A., LL.D., then declared the exhibition officially open. On behalf of the MOS, the Honorary General Secretary, Mr Alfred E. Baldacchino then presented Dr Buttigieg with a water colour painting of the national bird, the Blue Rock Thrush, which was expertly executed and kindly donated by the young artist Mr Freddie Fenech. Ruth, the young daughter of Mr Joe Sultana, MOS President, also presented Lady Buttigieg with a bouquet of flowers.

The set of 30 prints, collectively known as 'The Audubon Folio', was kindly donated to the MOS by Mr Stewart Perowne. Each print is 36 cm x 45 cm, and is a wonderful reproduction of Audubon's original bird paintings. The exhibition remained open until Wednesday 16th March, 1977, during which time the prints were offered for sale at only £M5 each, to raise funds for the MOS. If any members are interested, there are still a few prints left unsold.



Dr Anton Buttigieg, Alfred E. Baldacchino, Joe Sultana, Joe M. Attard.

TREE-PLANTING

On Monday 3rd January, 1977, the Young Members' Section of the MOS held a tree-planting session in Gozo. This activity was held in collaboration with the Afforestation Division of the Department of Agriculture. The planting site was by the road leading to Qawra (inland sea near Dwejra Bay) overlooking Wied l-Ilma. About 280 trees were planted, mostly consisting of acacias, tamarisks and pines.

This activity was the first tree-planting session held by the YMS in Gozo. Moreover, this special occasion also marked the birth of the Gozo Young Members' Section, of which young Joe Bajada is in charge. It is hoped that similar joint activities will be held in future between the two sessions. May we wish the Gozo YMS the best of luck.

On Saturday 29th January, 1977, the YMS helped the Department of Agriculture to plant trees at the Government Afforestation project at Wied il-Kbir, Qormi. About 250 trees were planted in three hours; they consisted mostly of pines, almonds, acacias and rhobinia.

On the occasion of the 'Bird Week - 1977', the YMS held a tree-planting session at Ghadira on Saturday, 12th March 1977. About 200 tamarisks were planted during the morning. This activity was held with the co-operation of the Department of Agriculture.

POSTER-CUM-SLOGAN COMPETITION

In the beginning of the scholastic year 1976/77, the YMS of the MOS organised a 'Poster-cum-Slogan Competition' for secondary school children. The theme of the competition had to treat the need that everyone should appreciate birds in their natural wild state, so that their beauty and the interest which they excite within us may be enjoyed by one and all, while stressing the need for a popular education about the natural environment and the creatures that live within it. Participants were requested to paint a poster which could either be of a general nature or depict a wild bird which may be met with in Malta. The posters had to have printed on them a slogan in Maltese, consistent with the theme of the competition. The competition was organised with the co-operation of the Department of Education.

Over 260 entries were submitted by 17 schools. The competition was divided into three categories, namely: CATEGORY 1: Forms I-II; CATEGORY 2: Forms III-IV; CATEGORY 3: Forms V-VI. The main prizes were distributed as well as seventeen consolation prizes. The first three winners were: CAT. 1: Hemione Scicluna (Convent of the Sacred Heart - Form I); CAT. 2: Louis McKeon (Paola Boys' Sec. School - Form III); CAT. 3: Edgar Magri (Naxxar Boys' Sec. School - Form V). De La Salle College, Cottonera (Boys) was awarded a certificate of merit and a special prize for the highest number of entries submitted by one school. The Convent of the Sacred Heart (Girls) was awarded a certificate of merit for the highest standard reached in design, originality, presentation and use of media. The entries were judged by a panel of five (an art critic, a designer and 3 artists), all amateurs, who were appointed by the YMS Committee.

The presentation of the prizes was held on Thursday, 10th March, 1977 at 6.30p.m. at the Cultural Institute, Floriana, as part of the activities of the 'Bird Week - 1977'. Chevalier Paul Naudi, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education, distributed the prizes to the winners on behalf of Dr Philip Muscat, M.D., B.Sc., B.Pharm., M.P., Minister of Education, who had been invited but was indisposed. In his address, Chev. Naudi stressed the need of educating the younger generation in nature conservation and he praised the efforts of the MOS in this respect. He also emphasised the important role which birds, especially raptors, play in the balance of nature, and that this importance of birds as part of the complete environment should be taught to children, so that they will learn to appreciate birds in their wild state.

Present for the occasion were several distinguished guests, heads of schools, teachers, parents and students. After the ceremony, the guests viewed the participating posters which were on display.

Our thanks go to Mr Dominic Cutajar, Chairman of the Malta Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation and to Professor Thorpe, Chairman of the British Section of ICBP; these two national sections kindly sponsored this competition.



NEW PROPOSED BIRD LEGISLATION

With the advent of the new year 1977, there were rumours that Government would soon introduce new bird legislation, including closed and open seasons for both shooting and trapping.

Following this, the National Shooters and Trappers Association called a mass rally for its 'members' on Sunday, 27th February 1977, to consider the proposed regulations, and in what manner these would affect their pastime. The leaders of the Association were quoted as saying that these regulations would be harmful to their interests, as they would impose 'unnecessary' restrictions. One need not stress that in Malta no sort of regulations are generally observed by shooters, and anything that flies is considered fair game, at any time of the year. It was moreover alleged that, through repeated appeals, the MOS had instigated the authorities to introduce the closed season, and that this had been done out of spite for shooters and trappers.

However, almost all national newspapers carried leaders requesting Government to impose restrictions on bird-shooting and trapping. These were: 1. 'A Closed Season' in MALTA NEWS of 2.3.77; 2. 'Game Shooting and Trapping' in TIMES OF MALTA of 2.3.77; and in Maltese: 'Harsien li hemm Bzonnu' (Protection that is Needed) in IL-HAJJA of 3.3.77; 'Kuxjenza Nazzjonali' (National Conscience) in IL-HAJJA of 5.3.77; 'Sparar' (Shooting) in IT-TORCA of 20.3.77; 'L-Isports tal-Kacca' in L-ORIZZONT of 12.4.77. Many letters from private individuals also appeared in the press urging for new legislation protecting birds. Many national societies issued press releases supporting the claim for bird protection.

Although to date there has been no official statement from Government side regarding the proposed legislation, the MOS has made draft proposals which have been forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Police Commissioner for consideration and possible incorporation in the proposed laws. The shooting seasons as proposed by the MOS would commence: (i) on 15th April and finish on 15th May, and (ii) from 1st September to 31st December. The intervening periods should be considered as forming the closed seasons. A most positive approach was adopted in formulating these draft proposals. For example, the proposals list the bird species which *may* be shot or trapped, the rest being protected. Among the latter, one finds all the breeding birds and all birds of prey and owls. A list of localities which would make potential bird sanctuaries has also been included, among them Ghadira, Filfla and Ta' Cenc.

As part of the proposed regulations, Government sought the advice of a foreign expert. On Wednesday and Thursday 23rd and 24th March 1977, Fulco Pratese, Vice Chairman of the Italian Section of ICBP was in Malta for talks with Government officials and Police officers.

One hopes that after all the obstacles are cleared, the proposed laws are enacted so that the great many birds that visit Our Islands, as well as the resident ones, are saved from the otherwise inevitable fate. In this respect Malta has a sacrosanct duty to fulfil towards the other nations.

NOTE: We would like to put on record the invaluable assistance which the MOS received from the National Racing Pigeons Society with regards to the draft proposals presented to Government.

POLICE PATROL AT BUSKETT

Buskett, a small wooded area situated in the south-western part of Malta, is a favourite spot for migrating raptors especially in the autumn. Although the place is legally protected it is infested with shooters all year round, but especially during September and October, the peak of the raptor migration. In these two months thousands of birds of prey are shot, later to be stuffed and mounted. In Malta taxidermy is the principal cause of the annual massacres of wild birds by shooters, and it is the greatest problem conservationists have to face.

To help safeguarding the migrating birds of prey, the MOS and ICBP-Malta helped the Police to organise patrols at Buskett during the autumn migration. This patrol met with some success, as shooters were deterred from entering, with the result that many raptors were saved from certain death. Unfortunately, this was not well received by shooters, and some individual hot-heads even resorted to vandalistic acts against MOS members. One member in particular who was bird-watching at Buskett, had turpentine thrown over his car as it was parked outside.

The Police on their part issued frequent reminders to shooters about the existing bird laws, especially about the protected areas. They made it clear that policemen would be patrolling these areas, and that they would prosecute anyone caught infringing the law.

This year, in Spring, the Police have also raided Buskett on a few occasions and some shotguns were confiscated.

THE MOS AT 'THE FUR & FEATHER SHOW'

The MOS is always on the look out for opportunities to publicise its aims and propagate the ideals of conservation far and wide. On Saturday and Sunday, 28th and 29th May 1977, the Malta Rabbit Club held its annual show at San Anton Gardens. Various breeds of rabbits and domestic fowl, the result of painstaking selective breeding by many fanciers, were on display. Andrews Feeds (Malta) Ltd. who sponsored the event, invited the MOS to put up a stand at the show. As usual, the MOS took the opportunity and put up a display of posters, publications and stickers. Various conservation slogans were also displayed.

Many members of the YMS took turns to stay at the stand and also helped to sell the newly published Robin copybooks, which proved to be extremely attractive to children.

On the last day of the fair, before prizes were distributed to winners, the President of the Republic, Dr. Anton Buttigieg, made a short address. He praised the effort made by the Malta Rabbit Club to instil love towards living animals. He congratulated those responsible for encouraging youngsters to take part in the fair and in a strongly worded message condemned those who wake their children in the early hours to accompany them and with a gun, destroy birds. The last bit was greeted with applause by the large crowd present for the ceremony.

MALTA IN FOREIGN MAGAZINES

A number of articles featuring the bird situation in Malta have appeared in various foreign publications.

One of two articles written by Dr Walther Theide and Dr Ulrike Theide has appeared in 'Het Vogeljaar' 24 (1976) no. 5. It gives a brief history of ornithology in Malta, as well as looks into the complicated problems facing the conservationists in Malta. It gives details of the educational campaign being undertaken by the MOS in favour of bird conservation and in favour of the establishment of bird sanctuaries at Ghadira and Filfla.

The other article by the same authors, with a similar theme was published in 'Die Vogelwelt' 97 Jahrgang, Heft 1 (1976).

In 'Fauna och flora' - 3 (Juni 1975), Viking Olsson wrote about bird-catching in Malta. A summary of his article runs: 'Studies in March-April 1975 in Malta revealed a very extensive bird-catching, mostly concerning *Fringillidae* species. All these birds seem to be caught for aviary purposes and not for food. Twenty-two species of birds are protected by law, but this is not of much value, as these species are of no particular interest to the catchers. No doubt, bird-catching in Malta is so widespread and so deep-seated in the public mind, that it seems impossible to bring it to an abrupt end. On that account bird protection activities against bird-catching in Malta, to begin with, ought to be concentrated on extensive information campaigns. It seems much more urgent and also more possible to gain success in the near future with a concentration on international actions against the very extensive and harmful shooting of migrating raptors in Malta.'

'Birds International' (Vol. I, Part 4) of the British Section of the ICBP carried an article by Joe Sultana entitled 'Bird Habitats in Malta', outlining the bird situation in Malta with regards to habitats and what action is being taken by the MOS and ICBP-Malta to improve it. The foreword of the MOS 'A Guide to the Birds of Malta', written by Dr W.R.P. Bourne, has been reproduced in the same publication under the heading of 'Malta & Bird Protection - The Story So Far.'

'L'Homme et L'Oiseau' (1-1977), the bulletin of the Comité de Coordination pour la Protection des Oiseaux (CCPO) of Belgium, carried a short note about the educational campaign undertaken jointly with the MOS in favour of the protection of the Robin. ●



We are particularly indebted to the Comité de Coordination pour la Protection des Oiseaux of Belgium (in the person of Mr Roger Arnhem) for supplying us with Robin stickers,

DONATIONS

We would like to put on record the assistance we received from the following individuals, firms and associations, in the form of financial donations, equipment, etc.

1. Mr & Mrs D. Urwick who donated a sleeping-bag for use by the Young Members' Section (February 1976).
2. Mrs E.O. Scovell who donated £M20 to the Young Members' Section (March 1976).
3. Dr D. Ristow who donated a monocular to the Young Members' Section and some nets to the MOS Ringing and Research Committee (July 1976).
4. Mr J.M. Attard, Hon. President of the MOS, who donated a set of books to the Young Members' Section (Jan. 1976).
5. Andrews Feeds (Malta) Ltd., who donated £M100 towards bird-ringing expenses.
6. A large establishment in Valletta (who wishes to remain anonymous) who donated a second-hand Imperial Typewriter to the MOS.
7. Mr H.E. Axell who donated about 80 black and white photographs by Mr Eric Hosking, who also gave his consent for their use by MOS. This is the second time that a batch of Hosking's superb photos were sent by Mr Axell.
8. The Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee who donated £15 towards Ringing expenses.
9. The Friends of Malta for donating £20 towards the MOS Gozo Committee. These were spent on binoculars for Gozo Young Members.
10. Dr W. Thiede for donating some nets to the Ringing Group Members.

CRITERIA FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF RARITIES

The aim of the Rarities Committee which is appointed by the MOS Council is to investigate claims of occurrences of very rare and irregular migrants and vagrants.

The Criteria used is:

1. The fullest possible written description of appearance, habits and calls or song from *field notes* and a report (this should include weather and light conditions, distance, magnification of binoculars, etc.)
2. Acceptance will also depend on the known ability and experience of the observer.
3. Corroboration by circumstantial evidence or from other sources where possible is also an important factor.

Any claim in respect of skins of rarities also merits a description and the location of such a skin.

The Committee may ask a recorder to present a report of any species recorded regardless of its status.

ICBP WORLD CONFERENCE ON BIRDS OF PREY

Between Wednesday, 1 October and Friday 3 October 1975, the International Council for Bird Preservation held a World Conference on the Conservation of Birds of Prey, in Vienna, Austria. In the words of the Chairman, Prof. Kai Curry-Lindahl, 'The scope of this conference was to deal with global conservation problem for the survival of birds of prey and owls in various parts of the world. Legislative measures alone are not enough to preserve birds of prey. Research, education, information and propaganda are necessary so that all groups of people may understand the biological role of raptors. Of all birds none have been so persecuted by man as birds of prey and owls. Extermination has been the goal in many countries and unfortunately this goal has been achieved.'

Unfortunately, in Malta this is very true. Our own breeding species have suffered greatly, declining drastically through human interference, almost to the point of total extermination. The Kestrel no longer breeds regularly in the Maltese Islands, and the Peregrine has been reduced to 1 or 2 breeding pairs. The Barn Owl has suffered a similar fate, with only about 10 pairs still surviving.

Migratory species (mainly Honey Buzzards, Hobbies, Lesser Kestrels, Kestrels, Marsh Harriers, Scops Owls) are slaughtered in their thousands by shooters every year. The Eleonora's Falcon, which is now being recorded more frequently, would undoubtedly breed if left unmolested.

The MOS sent its report to the Vienna World Conference, under the heading of 'The Situation of Birds of Prey In Malta 1975'. This report, which was prepared by Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci, gives a clear picture of the situation of birds of prey in Malta, while mentioning the efforts which the MOS and ICBP-Malta are doing to safeguard birds of prey both breeding and migratory. The report also includes a systematic list of birds of prey as recorded annually in Malta, together with their status and numbers shot annually.

The authors estimate that between 2500-4500 raptors are killed in Malta every year. The heaviest casualties are recorded among Kestrels, with 500-1000 killed. Next in line comes the Scops Owl with at least 400-800 deaths. Hobbies (400-600) also suffer great losses.



Another sticker depicting a Honey Buzzard in flight 'The Honey Buzzard is beautiful alive'.

ORNITHOLOGISTS IN MALTA

On 2nd April, 1977, Mr Herbert Axell MBE & Mrs Axell arrived in Malta for a 3-week visit. Mr Axell, famous for the creation of the Minsmere Bird Reserve in Suffolk, visited many places of ornithological interest both in Malta and Gozo; he also visited the island of Comino on an MOS outing.

In an interview which Mr Axell gave to Union Press reporters, he said that Ghadira is the ideal spot for turning into a bird sanctuary. He said that years ago Minsmere was very much like Ghadira, a tract of wasteland. However, today it is one of the most important bird sanctuaries in Europe, by virtue of the number and variety of bird species it supports. 'A bird reserve at Ghadira would be a feather in the cap of the Maltese people', he said.

Mr Axell emphasised the importance of education, especially with the younger generation. He said he was very pleased with the progress made by the MOS in this respect.

During his stay in Malta, Mr Axell met and discussed the bird situation with various people, among them many MOS members. Mr Axell had also visited Malta nine years ago.

We sincerely hope that this will not be Mr and Mrs Axell's last visit to Malta; we would very much like to have them among us again.

During the last two weeks of April, Malta was also host to two Dutch ornithologists, Mr Dick Van der Hoorn, journalist with the leading Dutch newspaper 'De Telegraaf' and Mr Jaap Taapken of the Dutch Royal Society for the Protection of Migratory Birds.

These two ornithologists came to Malta to see for themselves what was being done locally for bird protection. They sought the opinions of shooters, trappers as well as members of the MOS.

In an interview with Union Press reporters, Mr Taapken said that although Malta seems to be on the right track towards bird conservation, new legislation is vitally necessary. He said that the importance of Malta lies in the fact that the Maltese Islands lie in the path of one of the main migration routes, the others being Gibraltar and the Bosphorus.

He added that it is to no avail that birds be protected in Europe when they are shot while migrating through Malta. This results in the decimation of the European bird population through failure of birds to arrive safely at their breeding grounds and rear young.

Mr Taapken emphasised that if the Maltese Government introduces the closed season, European Governments would be very grateful. He also revealed that Mr I.G. Van Maasdyk, President of the Conseil Internationale de la Chasse (CIC), had written to Malta's Prime Minister, Mr Dom Mintoff, urging for the introduction of the closed season. Malta is the only country in Europe where the closed season is non-existent.

Both Mr Van der Hoorn and Mr Taapken praised the MOS for its efforts to educate the young people in matters concerning bird protection. ●

○ Honey Buzzards and Lesser Kestrels are commonly taken (at least 300-500 annually), while Short-eared Owls suffer relatively heavy losses, with an estimated 100-200 birds killed annually.

Incidentally, the paper on the situation of raptors in Turkey 'Status and Migration of Birds of Prey in Turkey', forwarded at the ICBP World Conference in Vienna, was co-authored by Belkis Acar, R.F. Porter and Mark Beaman. The latter, who also co-authored 'A Guide to the Birds of Malta', has spent many years in Malta, studying the bird situation of the Islands. ●

We are reproducing below an essay sent to us by Mr Raymond G. Testa, a Committee member of the Young Members' Section of the MOS. The theme of the essay forms the basis of the MOS education campaign amongst the younger generation.

EDUCATION FIGHTS PREJUDICE

Raymond G. Testa

The principal obstacles to conservation lie in certain qualities of human nature, exemplified by such expressions as, 'What do I get out of this?' and 'Let me get my share while the going's good!' One cannot be so naive as to think human nature can be changed, but one earnestly believes that through education voting citizens will come to realize more and more that intelligent treatment and wise use of wildlife, plants, soil and water are in their own best interest.

Education is, therefore, and must always be of vital concern to any society whose aim is the conservation of birds in their natural habitat. It can be pumped through many arteries — publications, radio and television programmes, movies, lectures, art, guided outings, camps, and, most basic of all, our Young Members' Section of the Malta Ornithological Society.

An adult often has prejudices to be overcome, but a child asks only to be seriously informed. He craves for ideals high enough to give him the thrill of standing on tiptoe to reach them.

If a child can be introduced to a robin, a barn owl's nesting site, or a bird colony and led to consider their living problems and ultimately his own dependency on the environment, one knows from experience that he will think about caring for the environment.

Child training is the prime object that furthers large scale conservation. The ornithological material that has accumulated through years of conservation work carried out by several ornithological bodies around the world can be used to win a wide acceptance by schools in Malta to work it into their regular curriculums. This early training undoubtedly will result in a powerful influence on public opinion and political action in the cause of conservation in our generation. Many of these 'alumni' can make careers of conservation.

Teachers and other youth leaders generally feel the need of more training in presenting nature and conservation from the outdoor approach. It is important that they know how to integrate these subjects effectively with others they teach. Such training is essential if we are to gain conservation objectives through education. The Malta Ornithological Society can organise summer camps for this purpose. However, this can only be done by external and internal financial support and through cooperation from the Government. ●

MOS held a tree-planting session in Gozo.



MOS COUNCIL – 1977

President: Joe Sultana
Hon. General Secretary: Alfred E. Baldacchino
Assistant Secretaries: John Azzopardi & Michael Grima
Hon. Treasurer: Brian K. German
PRO: Guido Bonett
Members: Dominic Cutajar, Charles Gauci,
Mario V. Gauci, V. Grech (Mrs),
Vincent Sammut.

YOUNG MEMBERS' SECTION COMMITTEE – 1977

Officer: John Azzopardi
Secretary: Silvio Scicluna
Assistant Secretaries: Richard Cachia Zammit & Emanuel Curmi
PRO: Louis F. Cassar
Members: Albert Attard, John Borg,
Denis Cachia, Tony Gruppetta,
Raymond G. Testa, John Zarb.

RINGING & RESEARCH COMMITTEE – 1977

Ringling & Research Officer: Joe Sultana
Ringling Secretary: Charles Gauci
Research Co-Ordinator: Martin Thake
Gozo Representative: John Grech
YMS Representative: Richard Cachia Zammit
Member: Emanuel Curmi.

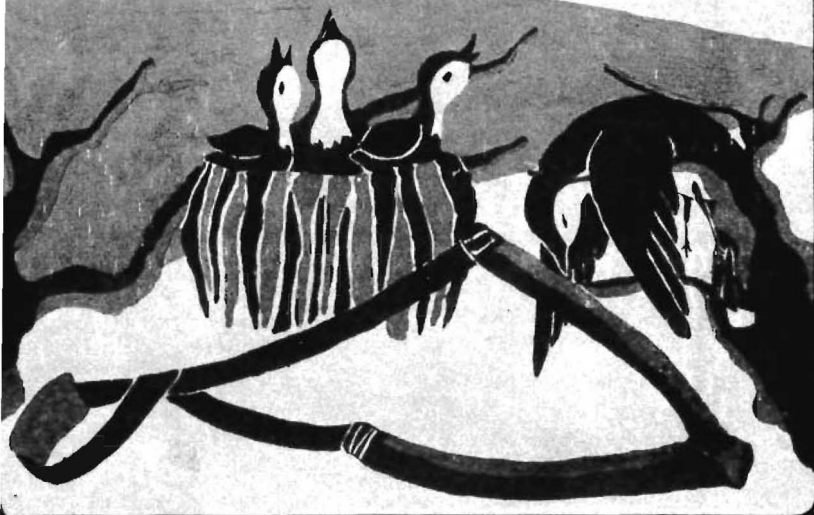
RARITIES COMMITTEE – 1977

Chairman: Charles Gauci
Secretary: Martin Thake
Members: Emanuel Curmi, Edmund McKrill,
Vincent Sammut, Joe Sultana.

GOZO COMMITTEE – 1977

Chairman: Mrs V. Grech
Members: John Grech & E.F. Nicholas

ILTIEMA!



GHALIEX

