

# Bird-talk



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## Wild bird trade - the facts



Every year millions of wild birds are trapped to be sold as pets. Europe alone takes one-and-a-half-million each year. The Wild Bird Trade is extremely profitable, parrots can be sold for thousands of pounds. If people in Europe stopped buying wild birds as pets the trade would collapse.



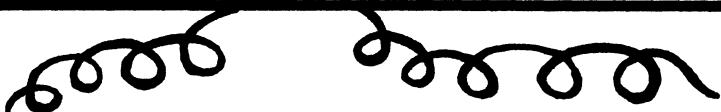
This trade must stop before more species are harmed, and not only the birds, but also their habitat. To reach rare (and hence expensive) birds, trappers will often destroy the habitat. This savage destruction has pushed several species onto the brink of extinction. Once they are gone we will have lost them forever. Obviously, the rarer the bird, the greater the demand by aviculturists.



If you buy a parrot, check that it was bred in captivity - that way you will not be depleting the wild population. Captive bred birds will have a ring on their legs. If you are not sure, buy a budgie, canary or cockatiel as nearly all are bred in captivity.



## MOS NEWS



The excavation works at Is-Simar are ready. The area will now be fenced to stop shooters from entering the Reserve. Tree planting will start as soon as the ground is wet enough for trees to survive without watering. We are pleased to inform you that as on Friday 11th September Is-Simar was officially declared a bird sanctuary. It is now illegal to shoot or trap birds at Is-Simar and within 500m of its perimeter.

A car belonging to Mr Manuel Mallia, an MOS member was shot at and extensively damaged whilst Mr Mallia was birdatching at Bahar-ic-Caghaq. MOS condemns such actions by trigger happy shooters.

The Education Committee is launching another Robin Campaign in schools. This year school children will be taught about bird tables and bird feeding.

An afforestation committee has been set up within the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. MOS is represented on this committee which has already decided to initiate an afforestation project at Manikata.

Ramla l-Hamra in Gozo was threatened by speculators. MOS joined forces with other environmental groups to protest against these speculators.

On the 28th and 29th November, MOS is holding a fund-raising ballet concert by the MaryJane and Ray Mamo Ballet School. Further details will be given in the next issue of Bird Talk. So please keep this date free.

Thanks to all our willing helpers MOS was able to raise over LM500 during the MOS Bird Week (31st Aug. to 5th Sept.). It's quite an experience especially when you know that your collecting is helping such a good cause. Thanks a lot to all collectors and donors.

MOS is still planning to hold a bazaar during Christmas-time. Please, if you have any odds and ends, second hand clothes, plant cuttings or other items bring them along to the MOS Nature Shop, 64, St. Lucia Street, Valletta.

## Editor's Box

Extinct...That word is horrifying to use when describing an animal. Everyone has heard of the tragic Dodo, the Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon, that became extinct in an age when extinction hit the headlines. Nowadays, we seem to take it for granted. What of the Glaucous Macaw, Dusty Sparrow, Huia, Labrador Duck and countless other birds that have become extinct through man's madness.

For every one that has gone, there are ten more on the brink.

Mankind seems to be too egomaniacal to realise that the world does not belong to us. We are not the ultimate creation, animals were not created for our amusement.

Animals can become extinct for countless reasons (most of them induced by humans) but for many species the pet trade has brought about their demise. Parrots, lovebirds, parakeets, cockatoos have charmed us humans for years. So what do we do? We take them out of their home where they fly free amongst orchids and butterflies and, stuff them into a metal cage.

Murderers are treated better, at least they get a trial!

*Joseph.*  
The Editor

## AIR MALTA ... carrying birds into extinction?

Members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) have been sending thousands of letters to international airlines asking them to stop transporting wild-caught birds.

Over 80 airlines from as far apart as Canada, Zimbabwe, Eire and Japan have agreed to impose bans. Air Malta do not - so far - have a total ban.

MOS has asked Air Malta to stop carrying birds caught in the wild. Air Malta replied that they do not carry birds in the CITES Convention (highly endangered species) but may carry other (endangered) species.

These "other" species might not be on the brink of extinction now but who knows what their position will be on ten years. Also, the percentage of birds that die enroute is staggering (sometimes 60%). A recent shipment was found to contain 1000 dead parrots.

Air Malta should stop transporting all wild birds - now!

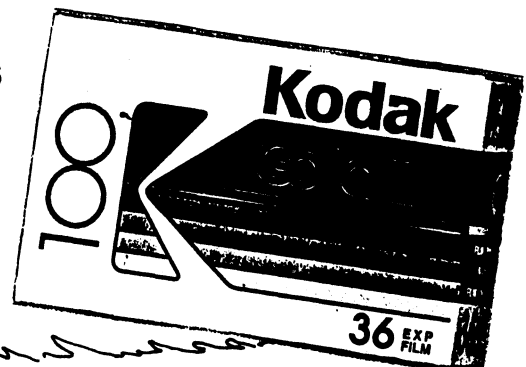
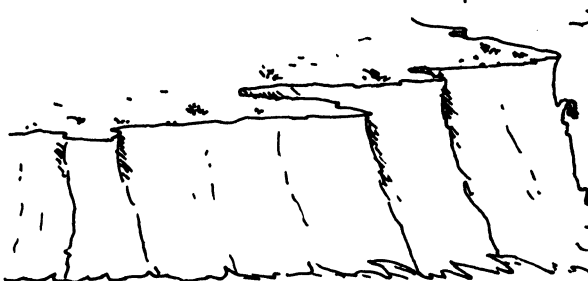
## PHOTO CLIPS

MOS is launching a series of monthly photo competitions to create a greater awareness of our countryside. All you have to do to take part is go out in the countryside and take pictures of the countryside as you see it. You may send up to three colour prints (any size). Please note that all pictures must have been taken in Malta. **The closing date for this month's competition is October 31st.**

Judging will be done soon afterwards by Mr Agostino Baldacchino and Mr Paul Portelli.

The winner will be given two rolls of Kodacolor Gold 11, 36 exposure film, donated by P Cutajar & Co.Ltd. of Mriehel.

The theme for this month's competition is **SEA CLIFFS**



## Young at Heart

The Nature Areas Working Group is one of the busiest sections of the MOS Education Unit. This group is made up of a team of teachers, and caters for schools that decide to allot part of their grounds to birds and nature. A delegation of this group would visit such sites and draw up layout plans of how best to develop such areas with nature in mind. Suggestions on plant species, pools, bird boxes, bird tables etc are put forward and discussed with the authorities concerned. Work is carried out in close co-operation with the MOS teacher delegate in that particular school.

In August the group was invited to visit a derelict area at the new Arts and Communication Centre in Bighi. The idea seems to be catching on... Anyone interested in helping out with this group is urged to call Victor Fiott on tel 896483.

Don't forget: MOS is going to organise a fabulous disco at Stownes Discotheque in Bugibba on Saturday 10th October. Young or old, raver or rocker, you should go along for an evening of fun, fun, fun. The price is Lm1.50c and you can order your ticket from MOS (simply send the money to our POBox) or from the door. See you there. (ps: There are going to be some great prizes up for grabs, so don't miss out!)

Around mid-November MOS Youths will be having a tree-planting weekend camp in Gozo. More details from Ian Mifsud (tel 440964).

## Wanted

MOS is looking for an Administrator to take charge of the Nature Shop on a part-time basis.

The person we are looking for must be a mature person who can spare a few hours every day, may have some knowledge of accounts and experience in sales. He/She must be able to prepare material for Fairs and Exhibitions. So far, the Nature Shop has proved to be a good source of income. In order to maintain and increase this income, MOS has decided to employ an administrator who will be directly responsible for stock sales and book-keeping.

Ruth

## SPIX'S MACAW - the next DODO?

The undesirable title of World's Rarest Parrot undoubtedly goes to Spix's macaw. A total of three birds survived in the wild in 1986, so it may now be extinct in its natural habitat. However, there are up to 40 of these spectacular blue birds in captivity so it hasn't gone yet. Yet if we wish to keep this bird on our planet in years to come, private owners must give up their birds to a captive breeding programme. There appears to be little chance of that... the birds can be worth up to 30,000 US dollars each.

The Spix's seems headed for extinction...another casualty of our insatiable hunger to destroy our planet!



Spix's Macaw

## 8th Nov Robin Walk '92



How does this sound: a relaxing day's stroll from Paola to Birżebbuġa? Would you like to take part in our annual Robin Walk?

The purpose of this walk is to raise awareness about robin trapping, while raising funds for next year's Robin Campaign. This year we are aiming to exceed Lm1000 which, with your help, we can easily achieve.

All you have to do to take part is collect as many sponsors as possible, then come along to Paola Square on Sunday 8th November (bring your money and enclosed sponsorsheets with you). We will meet at 8.30am. The walk starts at 9.00am.

If you require any more sponsorsheets, please phone 230684 or write to MOS POBox 498 Valletta CMR 01.

A gift voucher of Lm25 will be given to the person collecting the largest sum of money. Those collecting over Lm10 and Lm5 will be given a sweat-shirt and a T-shirt respectively.

# PUZZLE

E B E S U N B I R D P  
 R P H G T R A D E C E  
 U A E L A A D B E O T  
 N R W D V C R A D R G  
 O R H B I R T L R D N  
 C O C K A T O O I O I  
 R T N I R R R O B N L  
 A A I M Y N A H E B G  
 N N F A L C O N V L G  
 E T I C I T E S O E U  
 N G I A P M A C L U M  
 D L I W A X B I L L S

Find the hidden words - they are all connected with the wild bird trade.

- |            |           |          |
|------------|-----------|----------|
| AVIARY     | FALCON    | STARLING |
| BAN        | FINCH     | SUNBIRD  |
| CAGE       | LORY      | TRADE    |
| CAMPAIGN   | LOVEBIRD  | WAXBILL  |
| CITES      | MACAW     | WILD     |
| COCKATOO   | MYNAH     |          |
| CONURE     | PARROT    |          |
| CORDONBLEU | PET       |          |
| CRANE      | SMUGGLING |          |



The winner of last month's competition is Trevor Taliana. This month you can win an MOS Merill statuette.

