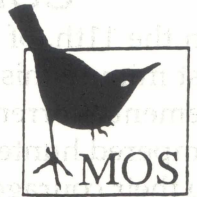


Bird-talk

ISSUE 2
MAY 92



INFO.

Help us make Bird-talk a newsletter that you will want to read and use. Send your letters, news, views, competition ideas, moans and groans to:

Bird-talk
MOS
PO Box 498
Valletta CMR01

Bird-talk is a monthly Newsletter published by the Malta Ornithological Society.

MOS is the Society that takes action for birds and the environment.

For details about MOS, and membership forms write to:-

MOS
PO Box 498
Valletta CMR 01
Tel: 230684

MEETING THE PRESS

Thursday 2nd. April before representatives of several radio stations, newspapers and TVM, MOS put forward their proposals regarding hunting laws, specifically, changes to be made. Talking to members of the press Mr Joe Doublet (MOS President) discussed topics such as the closed season, abolition of automatic shotguns as well as the eradication of the shooting of birds from boats. Asked whether MOS has discussed these proposals with the Hunters and Trappers Association Mr Paul Portelli (MOS Director) replied that talks were being held but collapsed after a letter in The Times offened the Hunters and Trappers Association. Before the talks collapsed one of MOS' proposals was discussed that is, a compulsory examination for all those applying for the hunting licence. At the moment all that is required to obtain such a licence are signatures from two licence holders.

MOS would be willing to resume talks yet hunters seem reluctant.



A.G.M.

This years MOS Annual General Meeting is to be held on the 5th of May at 6.30pm. The AGM will be held at the Giuseppe Despott Hall Ministry of Education, Floriana.

Members are urged to attend. Please bring your MOS membership cards.

The 1992 A.G.M. Agenda

1. Address by MOS President
2. Reading of minutes of the 30th AGM.
3. Reading of Director's report
4. Reading of Hon. Treasurers' finance report.
5. Statute Ammendments
6. Resolutions
7. Election of new Council.

Contestants for MOS Council

Joe Attard
Dennis Cachia
Jacky Cremona
Joe Doublet
Desiree Falzon
Victor Falzon
Max Farrugia
Raymond Galea
Ian Mifsud
Joe Sultana

COLLECTING IN THE RAIN

On the 11th. of April MOS held a flag day. Put together at the last minute this event was surprisingly successful. Braving the elements (torrential rain, howling winds, bad tempered hunters) MOS volunteers plucked up their courage to wave collection boxes at passing people. Special note must go to Mrs Psaila from Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq who single handedly collected the phenomenal amount of LM 38.28. Thanks are also due to the band of collectors at City Gate, Valletta, who in 1.5 hours managed to collect LM42.01. The collectors were Ian Mifsud, Patrick Abela, Fiona Cutajar, Daniella Ciappara, Etienne Grech, Adrian Borg and Ms Mercieca.



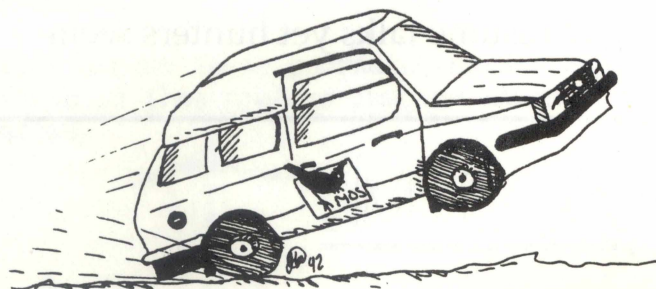
A total of LM80.29 was collected. Next time with more people, a few banners and, better weather let's double that amount. **STOP PRESS** - The total has risen to LM82.30, this being due to an extra LM 2.00 from Mario Farrugia.

MOS BIRDMOBILE

What's yellow, has four wheels and helps birds? The answer, the MOS bird-mobile.

Nils Persson from Sweden has donated a customised yellow Opel Kadett to MOS for use in environmental protection. The car was driven down to Malta from Sweden by a member of the Swedish Ornithological Society.

The car will be used by MOS to get injured birds, patrol the countryside as well as at Ghadira and Xemxija. So watch out, the MOS birdmobile is about!



Editor's Box

What a chaotic month April here at MOS. What with the flood of Xemxija donations, flag days to organise and Green Weeks to attend I've been rushed off my feet. Not that I mind, every donation or Flag day brings in funds vital for the continued existence of MOS. Without your help MOS and birds would suffer.

Spring is the time of the year that birds need our help most. Between migration and trying to nest birds have little strength left to evade the bird killers. rain of pellets.

Thousands upon thousands of birds will never complete their migration but instead will be stuck in a cabinet somewhere. To solve this problem MOS needs funds and more members. Enrol a member in our Member-get-a-member scheme and not only will you be strengthening our ranks but you will also receive a beautiful statuette of a *Merill* (exclusive to MOS) or a marvelous set of bird prints. Enrol a member and get a free gift.

Joseph.
Editor

Paid Advert

OPEN DAY AT KESTREL BOOKS

On the 9th. and 10th. of May at 'TIGAN FLATS' Flt. No. 2., C. De Brockdorff Str. MSIDA
Tel Nos. 319105/334877

Opening hours are from 9.00am to 1.00pm
2.00pm to 5.00pm

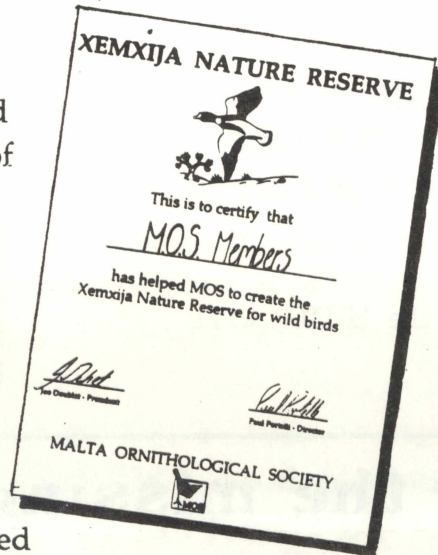
Bargains and discounts are available for these two days.

XEMXIJA APPEAL

Thankyou, Xemxija friends

You may recall that at the end of last March - a mere two weeks ago as I write this - you received a "Xemxija Appeal" form.

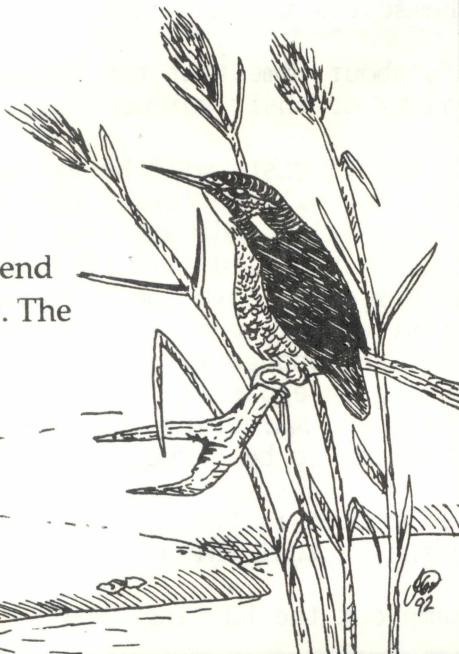
Thankfully it didn't sit around doing nothing in the houses of 200 of you! Almost 200 of our MOS adult members (that's about 20%) have sent in donations to help MOS build a Nature Reserve at Xemxija.



Every cent counts, donations have ranged from LM1 to LM100. What ever you donated went straight to the Xemxija fund. Here at MOS we have been kept busy opening envelopes and reading letters about Xemxija.

Well so far, after opening a couple of hundred envelopes we have managed to raise over LM2000. We reached the LM2000 mark almost exactly one month after we sent out our first appeal.

Obviously a project as massive as a new Nature Reserve costs many thousands of pounds so, if those of you who have yet to send in their donation, please hurry. The birds need your help.



BRIEFS

Talking with :-

28 APRIL: Dr Michael Refalo
Dr Stanley Zammit
Notary George
Bonello Dupuis

MOS Officials held talks with the above Ministers/ Parliamentary secretaries to discuss current environmental issues in Malta. Obviously bird hunting was high on the list.

Mass Media

Officials from MOS were interviewed on 'Radju ta' Kulhadd' (RTK) about the MOS position on environmental issues in Malta.

Bay Radio have also invited MOS to take part in a programme about environmental topics. Both of the above programmes go to show that people are taking an interest in the environment, it's time for government to adjust it's laws.

A.D. Forum

MOS was present at a forum entitled "Why bird hunting should stop" organised by Alternativa Demokratika on the 18th. of April. This forum was held at 10.30 am in front of the law courts, Valletta.

At the Monti

In a survey organised by MOS, seven species of protected birds were recorded for sale at the valletta Sunday bird market. The six month long survey was concluded on the 29th. of March 1992 and has revealed just how serious the problem is. An average of 413 wild birds were counted each Sunday, this figure rose to 967 birds on 3rd. November 1991.

The most numerous wild bird for sale was the Greenfinch (41.07%) followed by Goldfinch (21.62%) and Linnet (11.64%). A total of 23 species of wild birds were offered for sale at the market including 7 protected species (Robin, Dunnock, White Wagtail, Tree Sparrow, Trumpeter finch, Calandra lark and Short-toed lark).

A full report will be given in *IL-Merill* the scientific bulletin of MOS.

BIRDSEARCH

From The Times of Malta
14/04/92

Below are the names of ten Maltese birds. The names are somewhat mixed. Work out the names of the birds and then find them in the grid below.

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

NORBI
SRALIGHT
WARROPS
ELUB CROK SRUHHT
GATWILA
LUGL
NOGEPI
DRALALM
REYG ROHEN
SHMAR RIEHRAR

The first correct answer to reach the EDITOR will receive a FREE poster!!

CONFIRMED

From Mr Paul Portelli, director,
Malta Ornithological Society

Sir, - Maltese hunters have confirmed that the number of birds shot as given by MOS, is correct.

Last autumn hunters were asked to keep record of the number of thrushes shot by them between October 7 and November 10.

In an article published in the local press, Mr Lino C. Farrugia wrote that 11 hunters responded to this appeal. According to Mr Farrugia 11 hunters shot 189 thrushes.

Taking into consideration the fact that there are about 12,600 licensed bird hunters one comes to the conclusion that last autumn over 200,000 thrushes were shot in Malta.

The song thrush migration was very poor last year and it is right to assume that in "average" or "good" years the number of thrushes shot in Malta is much higher than this.

Hunters often accuse MOS of inflating figures for publicity. The hunters have now proved for themselves that these figures are correct.

Yours truly,
P. PORTELLI,
Valletta.

POLICE - the missing link

No-one can deny the fact that crimes are being committed; the use of vertical nets, shooting from the sea, shooting from roads, shooting in bird sanctuaries, shooting without licences and shooters under 21 years of age are all widespread.

No-one can deny the fact that the authorities concerned have been informed, Malta's environmental groups have reported these and other activities time and time again. For what?

Police action is so sporadic (hardly appearing at all and then to slow to catch the offenders) that hunters imagine themselves to be in heaven, the Happy Hunting Ground that is.

It's about time that the Police force woke up to the reality of their surroundings.

900,000 tourists will be visiting our islands this year only they will be taking back more than just memories of blue skies and warm seas. Tourists take home stories of our vivid wild-life (bird killers are pretty wild). Malta's entry into the European Community will not be definite until our fellow Europeans decide that we are civilised enough to join their club. From where I stand letting an egoistic minority run the country is hardly civilised. Murdering three million birds a year is not an action to be expected from a civilised country.

The problem is there, the solution is there so why not do the logical thing?

Stamp out the hunting. Now.

