



# BirdTalk



NEWSLETTER OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

OCT '93

## World Bird-Watch

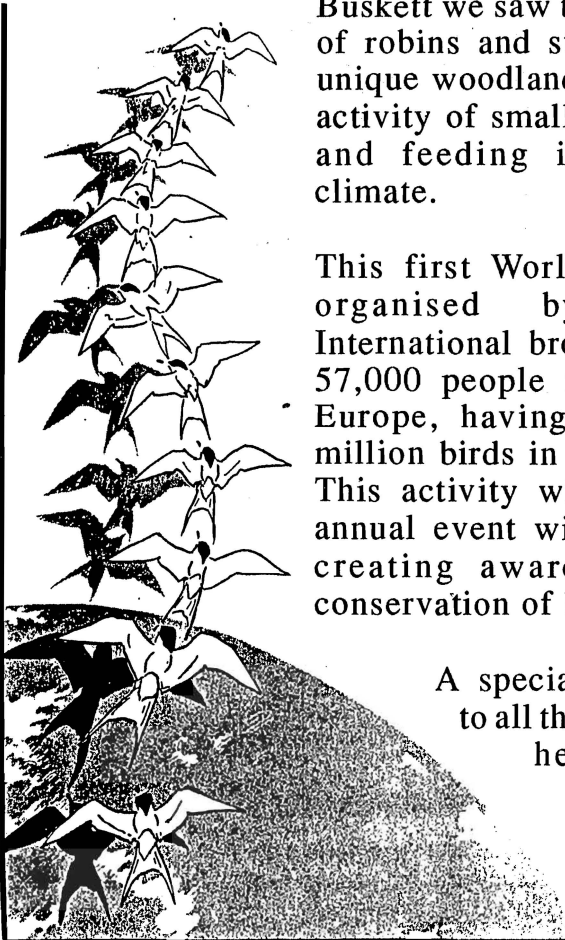
The first ever World Bird-Watch held on the 9th and 10th October was a great success for BirdLife and MOS. This activity locally attracted 127 members in two days. The areas chosen for bird watching were Buskett Gardens and Il-Kuljatt in Gozo.

Members of all ages enjoyed a few hours in the countryside appreciating birds and their habitats. Although it was too late to see the main migration of the birds of prey, we managed to see 33 different species totalling over 4000 birds. In Gozo we were fortunate to watch around 800 wagtails and at

Buskett we saw the first arrival of robins and starlings. This unique woodland was a hub of activity of small birds singing and feeding in our warm climate.

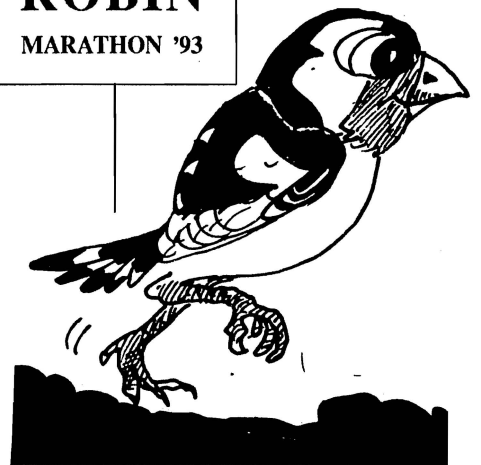
This first World Bird-Watch organised by BirdLife International brought together 57,000 people from all over Europe, having seen over 5 million birds in just two days. This activity will become an annual event with the aim of creating awareness in the conservation of birds.

A special thanks goes to all the members and helpers who made this activity a successful one.



## ROBIN

MARATHON '93



*MOS is for the 9th year organising the "Save the Robin" campaign. This will be in the form of a Marathon Walk, a Christmas Card competition for school children, and a mural painting competition in schools. This successful campaign has created over the years awareness against the illegal trapping of one of the most popular birds, the red breasted robin.*

*The first activity shall be the Marathon Walk, which will be held on the 14th November '93. This 20km sponsored walk will start at 8.30am in Paola, going through Zabbar, Kalkara, Wied il-Għajn then back to Paola. If you would like to take part in the Walk contact Darryl Grima or Peter Camilleri at the MOS office on 230684 for any information concerning your participation.*

## ~ Is-Simar Nature Reserve ~



*One of  
the hides  
at the  
Reserve*

A big thank you goes to all those who have contributed towards the appeal to build the bird-watching hides at our new reserve. So far we have collected Lm2,900 from the required Lm4,500. We are still short of the required funds,

so if you want to send in your donation, it would be most appreciated. As soon as we have enough money, the hides would be constructed as another step towards turning this area into a safe place for birds to visit.

If you have been past the reserve lately, you may have noticed that the fencing of the whole area has been completed, to stop unwanted visitors searching for trophies.

Already the reserve has been host to the extremely colourful Kingfisher, Little Egret, Moorhen, Wagtail, Coot, and Shoveler duck.

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*Any donations  
towards this cause  
will be happily received  
at the MOS Office*

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## BRIEFS .....

### Seminar on Birds

A seminar on birds, nature and habitats is going to be held on Sunday 16th January 1994 at Mount St. Joseph, Targa Gap. In this full day Seminar you can follow illustrated talks and take part in discussions. In the next newsletter we shall give you further details and how to apply. The new bird protection laws will also be fully explained. So keep this date free.

### Education Officer

Mr. Darryl Grima has joined MOS team as the Education

Campaign Coordinator. He will be taking over from Mr. Adrian Muscat Inglott. Mr. Grima will be looking after the various campaigns in schools.

### Ghadira Nature Reserve

The Ghadira Nature Reserve has now reopened after the Summer recess. Since we did not have much rain this year, the water level is not as high as we would like it to be. Notwithstanding this, the reserve attracts many birds flying over Malta. The Reserve is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 9.00 am till 4.00 pm, with admission on

the hour. In the Reserve you can spend some time appreciating the beauty of birds in their natural environment. You can also see how MOS is involved in conservation work.

### Release of Birds

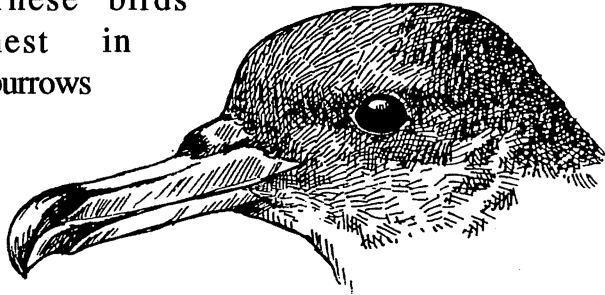
Two Grey Herons and a Black Headed Gull (which is protected under Maltese Law) were removed from the cages of San Anton Gardens by the Environment Department. These birds were released back into the wild. The herons started their migration South to spend the winter with species of the same feather.

# Cory's Shearwater

The month of October saw an unusual increase of young Cory's Shearwaters (Ċief) brought in from Gozo, Hal-Far, B'Bugia and Sliema.

After a time the parents stop feeding their young, who then will depend on their fat reserves for sustainment.

These birds nest in burrows



*Line drawing by Victor Falzon taken from Important Seabird Sites in the Mediterranean*

in cliffs such as Ta' Ċenc and the island of Filfla. At around mid-October these young birds leave their burrows after having been fed all through Summer by their parents. An interesting note about these birds is that they do not drink any water in liquid form but through the food they eat.

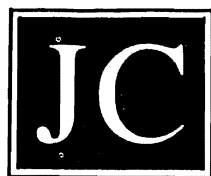
Once this runs out, they have to take their first and hardest flight to independence. Then the problems begin. The elements, the lack of flying experience and hunters take their toll. Many are shot at even whilst sitting in the water.



## Rare Visitors

During the month of October, two rare (the word *rare* here should also imply short-lived) species were sited in Malta. A Black Stork visited the Ghadira Nature Reserve and two Eagles were sighted in the Attard area.

In both cases we have reason to believe that these birds were shot down. It is worth mentioning, if it makes any difference, that these two species are protected. One might think that they are protected from all to enjoy rather than not to be shot at!!!



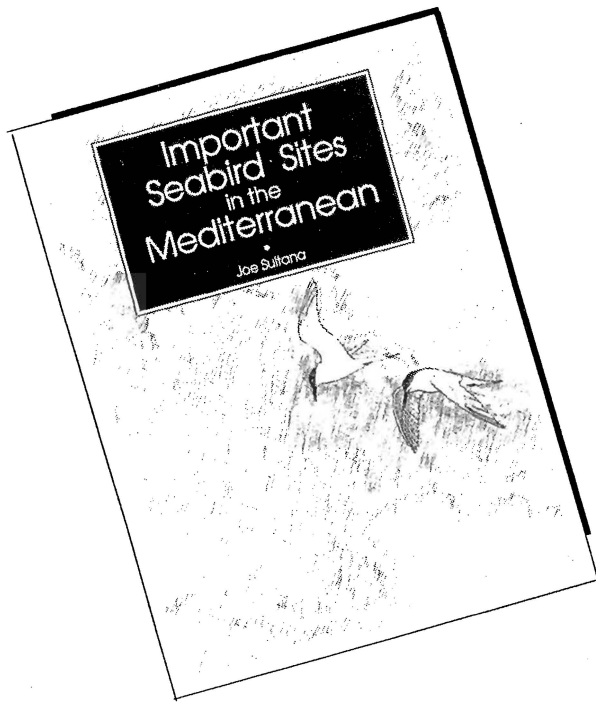
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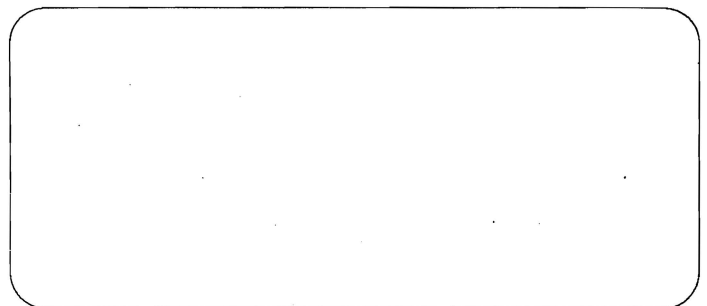
**Paul Camilleri, F.A.D.O. (Hons.)**  
Managing Director

# Important Seabird Sites in the Mediterranean

*New MOS Publication*



MOS has just published with the cooperation of Amoco Mediterranean Petroleum Co. a book entitled *Important Seabird Sites in the Mediterranean* by Joe Sultana. In this book the author identifies 139 sites in which a description and the threats are given. The sites' importance are highlighted by giving, in most cases, the number of breeding birds. The book also contains 16 pages of colour photographs, showing the various Mediterranean habitats and the birds that depend on them. This book is available for sale at the MOS Nature Shop.



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