



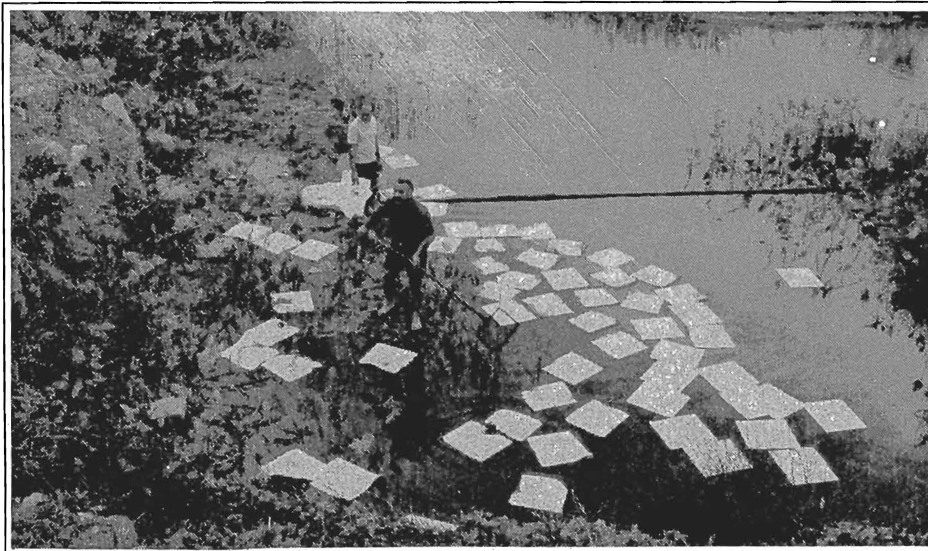
BirdTalk



NEWSLETTER OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DEC '93

MALICIOUS ACT



The problem of trying to contain this oil slick, and removing it, presented MOS with an unprecedented situation. Normally oil slicks are not found on land and the equipment available is only suitable at sea. But with the help of equipment provided by the Secretariat for the Environment and personnel of the Armed forces of Malta, a clean up operation involving placing special

During the night of the 12 and 13 November, a large quantity of oil was thrown in the water at our latest nature reserve at Is-Simar in Xemxija Bay. This was discovered by some of our volunteers who went there to plant some trees. In the area they found 11 empty jerrycans. Immediately the police were informed, and are investigating the case.

absorbent pads in the polluted areas was carried out. Every few days MOS volunteers replace the oil-filled pads to absorb as much as possible of this oil.

The Reserve is at the moment host to several birds including grebes, coots and ducks. The oil besides being hazardous to the birds could also destroy the natural vegetation, which has now started to develop.

This malicious act is another in the series of similar attempts to intimidate MOS in bringing about better bird protection in our islands. Some hunters apparently do not realise the harm these irresponsible acts have on public opinion. Instead of coming to terms with an ever growing awareness in conserving nature, they insist on blasting any flying creature out of the sky.



A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS



New Council

Nominations for new members of the MOS Council are now being accepted. The term of office is for 2 years and is open for any fully paid up adult member. The nomination is to be seconded by 5 MOS adult members. The closing date for applications is the 15th January 1994. The applications are to be sent to The Electoral Commissioner, MOS P.O. Box 498, Valletta.

Please note that this post carries a high degree of responsibility, as the Council is responsible for making of the policy as well as the well being of MOS.

The Electoral Commissioner

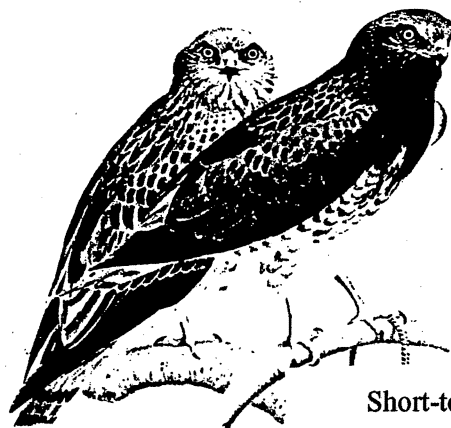
Briefs ...

❑ Mr Raymond Spiteri, a hunter from Naxxar was fined Lm100 and his shotgun confiscated for killing a protected bird, an Oystercatcher, in the closed season from a dinghy within 3kms from the coast.

❑ A birdtrapper was arrested after he allegedly attacked a Briton who apparently was filming the trapping site at Baħar iċ-Ċaġħaq. An argument ensued and the Briton was attacked by the trapper and had his camera taken away. Some men who happened to be in the vicinity intervened and informed the police.

❑ At around 2.00pm on the 16th November, 2 hunters in broad daylight cut the fence at Is-Simar Nature Reserve, and entered this protected area. There they shot a bird, retrieved it and left. This incident was reported to MOS who in turn informed the police. By the time MOS officials and the Police arrived, it was too late to do anything about it. This incident seems to be more of a show of defiance unless, hunters have now added wirecutters as part of their hunting gear.

❑ *On the 12th November, MOS issued the following Press Release:*
A flock of about 50 Short-Toed Eagles (Ajkla



Short-toed eagle

Bajda) was shot whilst migrating over the Maltese Islands.

At least 13 of the eagles were shot from Mizieb whilst another 25 were shot from Wardija. This eagle is declining and in danger of becoming extinct.

The eagles which came to Malta probably arrived from Yugoslavia where the bird is said to be rare. The shooting in Malta has probably destroyed a large percentage of this population.

The Malta Ornithological Society (MOS) strongly condemns such killing and calls upon the police to step up their efforts that illegal shooting is stopped.

❑ On a wall on the road leading from the outskirts of Mosta to San Pawl tat-Tarġa, and a boundary wall at Xemxija were the scenes of slogans painted in favour of hunting and against MOS.

★ Falko Activities ★

Falko - MOS Youths are inviting all those members under 25 years who believe that fun should not stop at the ripe "old" age of 18, to join them for the following activities:

19 DECEMBER 1993:

Hiking with a difference at Qammiegh, guaranteed to leave you tired out. We shall be meeting near the Milk Shop at Valletta Bus Terminus at 8.30 am.

7 JANUARY 1994 - 8 JANUARY 1994:

Post -Xmas Bottle Party at Villa Psaignon. You may sleep over night to enjoy the activities being organised on the 8th. Bring along your sleeping bag. For more information and booking phone Ruth Sultana on 440278 or Elaine Bonello on 320435.



BirdTalk ***Bi-Monthly Issue***

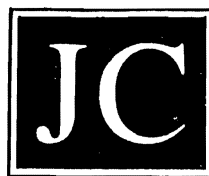
As you can appreciate, running a society like everything else involves money, the cost of maintaining MOS is increasing for reasons beyond our control. So as from the beginning of next year, we shall be making some changes to reduce the increased costs especially in the posting of material. In this way, MOS can retain its current membership fee.

This newsletter shall become a bi-monthly issue, with a saving of about Lm500. The renewal advice shall also be included in the newsletter to save another Lm1,500 on postage, envelopes and labels. This exercise will save MOS Lm2,000 which can be better spent on conservation.

Thank you for your co-operation



Don't forget you can buy your Christmas presents from MOS and at the same time help Nature. The MOS Nature Shop stocks a selection of nature books, greeting cards, stationery and soft toys. You could also buy a gift token.



JOS. CAMILLERI **O P T I C I A N**

38/39, OLD BAKERY STREET, VALLETTA VLT 09, MALTA.
TEL: 236953 - FAX: (0356) 247597

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

Birds, Nature & Habitats

MOS shall be organising a member's day on Sunday 16th January 1994. The venue shall be Mount St Joseph, Targa Gap. Members are invited to attend this full day seminar which will include illustrated talks, and discussions. The participation fee will include lunch if required, as well as coffee and biscuits during breaks. The closing date for application is the 10th January 1994. There shall be Mass said on the premises at 8.30 am before the programme starts. The following is the Programme.

9.00 am	-	9.45 am	Ecology of the Maltese Islands <i>by Prof. Patrick J. Schembri</i>
9.45	-	10.15	The Effect of habitat modification on water birds at Ghadira <i>by Charles Gauci</i>
10.15	-	10.45	Coffee Break
10.45	-	11.15	Distribution and Vulnerability of Mediterranean Seabirds <i>by Joe Sultana</i>
11.15	-	11.45	Studies on the Short-Toed Lark (Bilbla) <i>by Dennis Cachia</i>
11.45	-	12.30	The New Bird Protection Laws <i>by Paul Portelli</i>
12.30	-	14.00	Lunch
14.00	-	14.30	Malta's Structure Plan and Nature Conservation <i>by Frans Mallia</i>
14.30	-	15.00	The History of Cory's Shearwater (Ciefa) <i>by Richard Cachia Zammit</i>
15.00	-	15.30	Coffee Break
15.30	-	16.00	Focusing on the Barn Owl <i>by John Borg</i>
16.00	-	16.30	Bird Watching in Malta <i>by Raymond Galea</i>



Yes I would like to participate in Members' Day on the 16th of January '94.

Please Reserve:

_____ place/s including Lunch @ Lm3.00
per person

_____ place/s excluding lunch @ Lm1.00
per person *

* this can be paid at the door

I enclose a cheque/postal order to the amount
of Lm _____

Please return this form to MOS

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