

# BirdTalk



BIRDLIFE MALTA - MOS NEWSLETTER

MARCH/ APRIL '95

## Transport and Sustainable Development

BirdLife Malta has recently voiced its concern over the proposed development of a portion of land at Ta' Lambert in Gozo. Developers want this site for the construction of an airstrip which is supposed to serve military and civilian purposes.

The proposed plans, which have been submitted to the Planning Authority for consideration indicate the laying of an airstrip 400m long. This will then be extended to over 6 times its original intended length to serve commercial purposes. The project will have a drastic and negative effect on the landscape character of the area. Besides the displacement of agricultural land, the project will give rise to noise and air pollution problems. At the bottom of the scale is the wildlife, definitely a loser in this game.

Apparently any advantages derived from such a project will only be gained by a limited number of commuters and not by the majority of local travellers who commute frequently between the two Islands.

BirdLife Malta firmly believes that alternative solutions should be sought, one of which would be to improve the current sea-link.



## New Image BirdLife Malta-MOS



The Members' Day held at Targa Gap was a great success. Besides interesting presentations by several speakers, a video collage laid out the tasks of BirdLife International.

During the Extraordinary General Meeting held during the event, it was agreed by the members present that the name Malta Ornithological Society (MOS) be replaced by BirdLife Malta - MOS.

This move comes after our affiliation with BirdLife International two years ago. The latter association represents the major bird clubs and societies for bird protection throughout the world. It is in fact represented in over 100 countries. BirdLife International works on all levels, from local groups to international policy-making. It links developed and developing countries, amateurs and professionals, scientists and conservation managers. The main aim of the organisation is to conserve the diversity of all life through the conservation of birds and their habitats.

## Looking to the Future

BirdLife Malta's mission is to achieve the conservation of nature by protecting birds, recreating valuable habitats, propagating native trees and shrubs and much more. As a member of BirdLife Malta you too are contributing to all this. However the destruction of nature, birds in particular



is unfortunately still a daily reality. By increasing membership, the Society is in a better position to persuade government and other agencies to take firm and effective action in favour of nature. By enrolling just one other member you will be contributing further to the mission of BirdLife Malta. You will find enclosed with this edition of BirdTalk a special member-get-a-member form. What's more, you will receive a special gift as a token of our appreciation!

## Danish Imports Seized

A Danish citizen entering Malta through the airport was stopped by customs officials after a tip-off that she could be carrying illegal goods. An inspection of the contents of her suitcase revealed several bird carcasses. With the exception of a few game birds, most of the birds confiscated were protected by the Bern Convention. There were also other dead animals including a fox and the foetus of a monkey. The woman was arrested and after her court hearing was conditionally discharged for 12 months. The carcasses were destroyed. Danish police contacted BirdLife Malta the same day the incident occurred and are to follow up the case.

## Progetto Piccole Isole

BirdLife Malta conducts various research programmes. Some of these are held in partnership with foreign institutes and Universities. The Small Islands Project (Progetto Piccole Isole) is just one of these programmes. This programme involves the study of birds during their migration in spring. In 1994, the project covered 18 sites,



## A fun gift

### for children

It doesn't involve television, computer or pop stars!

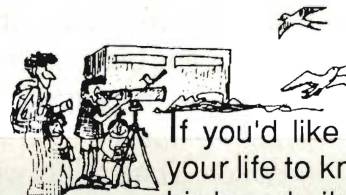


If you can see past the next video, computer game and consumer fad, then consider giving gift membership of Klabb Huttaf.

Klabb Huttaf is the young members' section of BirdLife Malta and is committed to birds, wildlife and the environment. Children love it because there's loads to do.



Klabb members receive, among other things, their bimonthly **Il-Huttafa** magazine



If you'd like the children in your life to know more about birds and wildlife, simply fill in and return the coupon today.

It's a very worthwhile gift.



I would like to make a gift of Klabb Huttaf membership to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/PO (payable to BirdLife Malta, for the amount of Lm \_\_\_\_\_)

Membership for Klabb Huttaf is open to children up to the age of 14 years. Membership fee is Lm 1 per child.



consisting of small islands and coastal areas throughout the central and western parts of the Mediterranean.

Last year, Malta participated with one site, located in a valley. Volunteers on Comino set up and daily manned a ringing station between 15 April and 15 May. During that period 1362 birds of 39 species were recorded. Besides the interesting trends revealed by the study it was the first time that **red-breasted flycatchers** were recorded in spring. Another first for the project was the netting of a **wood warbler** ringed in Latvia. This bird was released still carrying the Latvian ring. This year will be the fifth time that BirdLife Malta participates in this project which again will span from mid-April to mid-May.



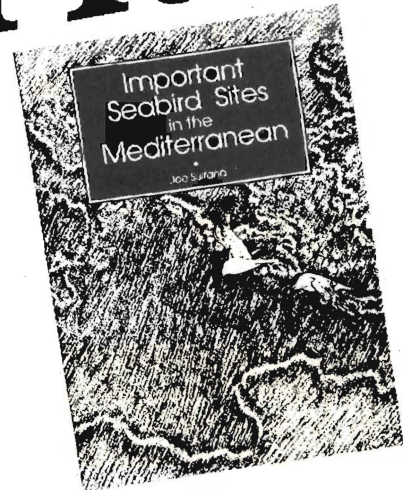
### Not to be Missed

As from this month BirdLife Malta members will be able to participate in exciting monthly activities. The first excursion will involve a **morning walk in Buskett Gardens**. Buskett attracts several species of

woodland birds during this time of year. Flowers will also be in full bloom. This activity will take place on Sunday 26 March at 9.00am. The meeting point is Buskett Car Park, under the iron canopy.

Another excursion, this time to **Kemmuna** is scheduled for 30 April. This activity will give us the opportunity to visit this protected area and enjoy one of our last unspoiled habitats. We will meet on the quay at Marfa (please note that this is on the opposite side of Cirkewwa) at 07.10. The boat leaves at 07.30 sharp; we will return at approximately 16.00. The price is Lm1.25. Since we have to charter a boat it is essential that all those interested should book by phoning (on 230684) or letter not later than 15 April. Participants should bring their own food and drink, a hat is also recommended.

# FREE!



Interested in receiving a free copy of this limited edition book?

Enrol a new member and it's yours

### New Member's details ...

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Adult member	Lm 3.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Couple	Lm 4.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	Lm 5.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overseas	Stg. 10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Falko (Youths +14)	Lm 2.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please send me my free copy of **Important Seabird Sites in the Mediterranean**.

My details...

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed \*cheque/postal order of Lm \_\_\_\_\_.

\*Cheques payable to BirdLife Malta MOS





## European Nature Conservation Year

This year, to mark the importance of environmental education, the Council of Europe has designated 1995 as European Nature Conservation Year (ENCY). Locally both governmental and non-governmental bodies are working at full steam on educating all levels of people. In fact to mark this event the Environment Secretariat has just published a book on wildlife. This book is a guide to an extensive selection of animal and plant species that can be encountered in the Maltese environment. It is written in Maltese and in a popular style. The book will be available from the BirdLife Nature Shop at 65, St. Lucia Str Valletta.

BirdLife Malta has contributed to ENCY by launching in the local schools an award-winning scheme called **Dinja Wahda (One World)**. The office is receiving very positive feedback from several schools. The aim of this project is to promote environmental awareness among young children through active involvement in environmental activities.

### Your questions... answered!

*Why do thousands of starlings gather together in trees?*

Starlings gathering to roost is a night-time spectacle. It is a case of 'safety in numbers'. Many birds roosting together have a better protection against predators, keep warmer and may be able to exchange useful information, such as good feeding sites.

If you have some query about birds and would like to have your questions replied to in this newsletter, then just write to the Editor - BirdTalk at the BirdLife Malta address.

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Mr. Eric German,  
Assistant Librarian,  
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