



BirdTalk



BirdLife
INTERNATIONAL

NEWSLETTER OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

January/February '95

European Nature Conservation Year ENCY 95

Education has long been recognised as the long-term solution to many problems. In the field of the environment, education is a vital strategy to any successful organisation intent on changing a destructive mentality. Education towards an appreciation of bird life has always been a top priority for MOS. This year, to mark the importance of environmental education, the Council of Europe has designated 1995 as European Nature Conservation Year (ENCY). This means that both locally and internationally, governmental and non-governmental bodies will be working at full steam on educating all levels of people.



MOS has taken this opportunity to launch a major environmental education campaign entitled **One World**. The initiative focuses on primary school children who, with teacher guidance, are encouraged to take part in various environmental ventures in and around their school. One World flies the flag of the ENCY spirit:

Look to the future - look after nature.

European Birds on the decline

MOS has recently launched the latest BirdLife publication which treats the conservation status of various European bird species. This publication highlights the unfortunate note, that notwithstanding the strict Euro-pean legislation protecting birds and their habitats, the numbers of several

species are decreasing. The main reason being given is agricultural practices which are incompatible with nature. The second most important reason is the shooting of birds. This factor accounts for approximately 32% of the species in decline. A few copies of this publication will shortly be available at the MOS Nature Shop.

Siberian Rarity

A Dusky Warbler has been observed feeding at Għadira Nature reserve. The bird was spotted on two separate occasions at the reserve by the warden who also managed to ring it. The warbler is a small bird measuring just 11cm from bill to tail and lives in Siberia. Its freak appearance has been duly commemorated by a prized entry in the list of birds of the Maltese Islands.



Caution - Men At Work!

Work at is-Simar Nature Reserve is progressing smoothly. Following the recent rains, MOS volunteers are busily planting trees along the embankments which surround the reserve. A variety of native trees such as pines, poplars and olives have been chosen to embellish the reserve and at the same time provide a safe resting place for migrating birds. You too can help in the fun of planting trees. So get in touch with MOS on tel: 230684.

Unfortunately during the first week of December 1994 vandals broke into the reserve. They killed most of the waterfowl



which had gathered there over the previous weeks, and uprooted and destroyed a large number of freshly planted trees. Since then MOS volunteers have replanted more saplings to make up for the damage done.



Hunting Season Over

As from the first day of February, hunting and trapping would be prohibited until the coming autumn when the hunting season opens again on the first day of September. However, a short hunting period during the months of April and May may be allowed for, pending government's approval. MOS has strongly opposed this short spring hunting period because of its destructive effect on birds at the crucial breeding period. Last year's experience, being the first taste of the new Bird Protection Legislation, has shown that the indiscriminate slaughter of protected birds during spring leaves a serious flaw in legal protection of birds. This year MOS will lobby the government even further to implement a total ban on Spring shooting. In the meantime law enforcement has been showing positive results with a partial decrease in poaching. A peak of over 90 hunters have been booked for infringement of bird protection laws in just under a month. Your help is important in ensuring adequate bird protection: report any shooting incident after the first of February to the local police station or directly to the MOS office.

MOS Annual General Meeting

The 33rd MOS Annual General Meeting will be held at Guzeppi Despott Hall (Education Building- Floriana). The meeting will take place on the 13th of March at 6.00pm.

The Agenda for the meeting is:

- Address by the MOS President
- Reading of Minutes
- Reading of Director's Report for 1994
- Reading of Financial Report
- Appointment of Auditors
- Resolutions
- Election of New Council
- Other Matters

The following members have submitted their application for a seat on the MOS Council:

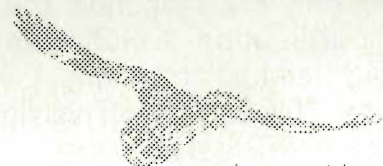
John Borg
Alex Casha
Joe Doublet
Desirée Falzon
Victor Falzon
Ray Galea
John Grech
Josef Grech
Robert Hewitt
Ruth Sultana
Antoine Vella
William Wait



Falko Youths Activities

Watch out all youths for a year full of action. Just for a starter we have organised, a weekend camp between the 9th and 12th February. This will take us to Gozo where we will be staying in Xagħra (where our ancestors built their gigantic temples for their gods!!). In the four days we will be visiting interesting spots such as the cliffs at Ta' Ċenċ and the

sand dunes at Ramla. At the end of every day we can play basketball or volleyball.. if anyone is still ready for it after a day's activity. More details may be obtained from Etienne by phoning on 335578 (evenings only).



I'd like to help!

Here are some skills that MOS is always in need of:-

- designing/art work
- youth leadership
- organising events
- fundraising
- guiding visitors at reserves on weekends
- helping at fairs
- writing for the media
- clerical work
- tree planting

Name

Address

Postcode

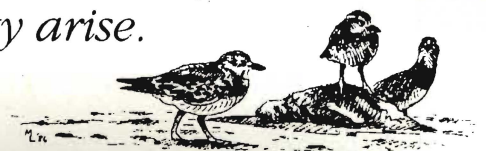
Daytime telephone

Skills/Interests

Amount/ frequency of time prepared to give

Type/s of work interested in

Thanks for your generosity. We will contact you should a suitable opportunity arise.



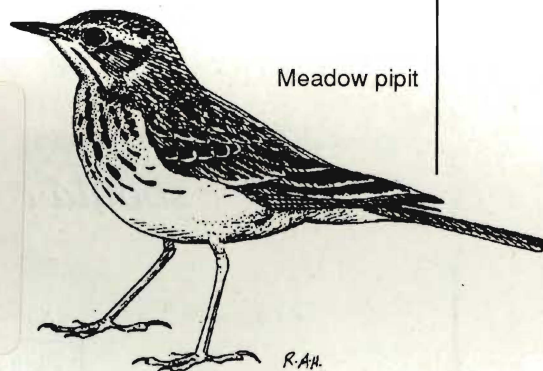
Please detach this page if interested and send to
MOS POBox 498 Valletta CMR 01

Conservation Exploration Competition

If you are an enterprising local conservationist, then this is good news for you: BirdLife International and the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society, with financial support from British Petroleum, hold an annual competition for conservation exploration projects. This conservation competition has been going on for several years now. Any proposed project must clearly address a conservation issue of international importance. The chosen project must fall within one of the following categories: Tropical Rainforest, Wetlands, Oceanic Islands & Marine, and Globally Threatened Species. The expedition must also involve local students or counterpart organisations and must have clearance from the host government. As all this will take a considerable amount of time to co-ordinate, applications are being considered for the next calendar year. Discussing your ideas with the MOS Director is essential before submitting your project proposals.



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Mr. Eric German,
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