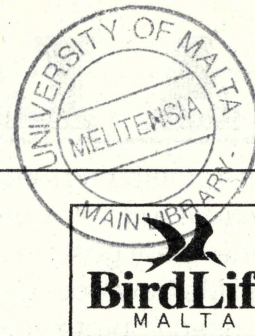


# BirdTalk



BIRDLIFE MALTA NEWSLETTER

Editor Ian Mifsud

Acknowledgement Desiree Falzon, Victor Falzon

March/ April 1996

Issue no. 34

## A New Council and a New Name...

The Annual General Meeting, held last March, elected a new council to serve BirdLife Malta for the coming year. John Grech was re-elected President, Denis Cachia as secretary and Anita Bezzina as treasurer. Other members of the new council include Oliver Cardona, Alex Casha, Norman Chetcuti, Mark Falzon, Victor Foitt, Charles Gauci, Paul Pace and Antoine Vella. The term of office for council members is one year, during which various policies on bird conservation will be drawn up.

During the AGM a motion to amend the statute was approved. The motion regarded the withdrawal of the letters MOS from the name and logo of the society. Thus the new name is BirdLife Malta. BirdLife Malta stands for the conservation of birds and their habitats.

## Stop the slaughter in Egypt

Bird-hunting tours to Egypt are still being organised by local tour operators with promises of huge catches. Bird-hunting sprees have until now centered around the Fayoum areas just south of Cairo. This is an important wetland area for rare birds. Birds protected under Egyptian laws have been shot since bird laws are not well enforced in Egypt. Only on a few occasions have Maltese hunters been discovered concealing skins of protected species in their clothes and hunting more than permitted quota. Maltese hunters were also found shooting outside organised tours and without the necessary permit.

Congratulations to the local Environment Protection Department which has helped curtail to some extent this activity by confiscating the dead birds on their return to Malta. However this is a rather retrospective approach to the problem - carcasses cannot be brought back to life! You can help by writing to Egyptian authorities to ask that the slaughter be stopped and effective surveillance be carried out in Egypt. Write to His Excellency Mr Maher El Kashef, Ambassador for Egypt, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 'Villa Mon Reve'. No.11, Sir Temi Zammit Str, Ta'Xbiex. You may help save thousands of birds.

## Influencing the decision makers



Working behind the scenes, conservationists at BirdLife, for the past few years, have been constantly reviewing the bird protection legislation and making suggestions for reform. Unfortunately BirdLife's opinions on bird protection have

not been recognised by MPs and other relevant authorities.

With the stroke of a pen the hard work put in over the past three years for better bird

# A Living Legacy

It is a comforting thought to any nature lover that the countryside will still be alive with birds and flowers, even after we have passed away. The benevolent gesture of Ms P Edwards has been a step in this direction and Ms Edwards has left a legacy of Lm 1400 to BirdLife. This sum will be used to protect an important area for wildlife. We are sure that Ms Edwards, who loved wild birds, believed this to be a tremendous tribute to nature - a fitting way to be remembered.



protection has been obliterated. For the past three years migratory birds could make a safer journey during Spring. We were optimistic that more birds managed to fly over Malta without being shot or trapped. This has also been coupled with the increase in number of breeding species in protected areas. Species such as the moorhen have now been considered as legal game. Hunters can also now shoot birds in spring from the 1 April until the 20 May. These are just two of the concessions that hunters have gained by the recent amendments to the bird protection regulations.

During the coming months, home visits from prospective candidates for the general election will be visiting our homes. This is a golden opportunity to voice your opinion with future MPs. The message should be clear :- everybody should have the opportunity to walk in the countryside without having to see birds being killed all the time. We want to stop all bird shooting and trapping in spring as soon as possible. We can help our birds again - just as we did three years ago. - Help us do it.

## Boat trip to Kemmuna

Kemmuna offers a great opportunity for spotting migratory birds. The tranquil garigue is a guarantee that birds present may be seen at closer range than elsewhere in Malta. The iridescent bee-eater, hoopoe, wood chat shrike and the rock thrush are just some of the more spectacular birds one might expect to see at this time of year. For the more intent on bird studies, a visit to the

ringing station at Wied l-Ahmar will reveal a variety of passerines such as white throats, flycatchers, and garden warblers.

This excursion is scheduled for the 1 May (further details are given below). Participants should bring their own food and drink, a hat is also recommended.

**The trip to Kemmuna will be made by chartered ferry so don't forget to fill in the application if you want to join the party!**

Date: **Wednesday 1 May**

Meeting Place: **on the quay at Marfa (please note that this is on the opposite side of Ċirkewwa)**

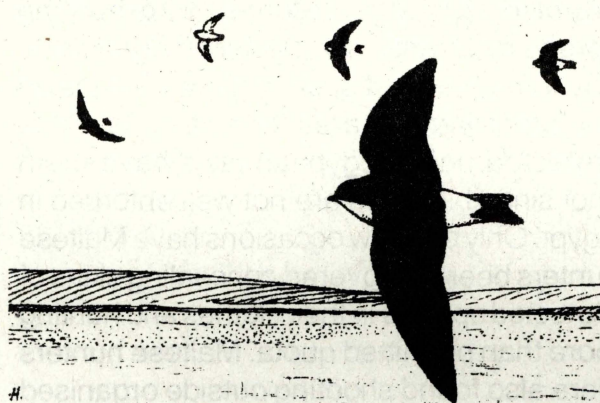
Time: **07.10hrs sharp**

Back at Marfa: **around 16.00hrs**

Price: **Lm 1.50 per person (Lm 1.00 for children under 14)**

Closing date: **send application (opposite page) before the 20 April**

\* for more details call BirdLife Malta on 230684/250229





## A Wetland in Spring

Wetland habitats are highly valued for their rich diversity of life. Extensive areas covering this type of environment have long since disappeared from our islands. Places such as Marsa and Burmarrad, once extensive marshlands have been drained over the past centuries. Is-Simar situated at the fringe of Pwales valley, has also suffered the same fate. The area has been repeatedly disturbed and modified by human activity.

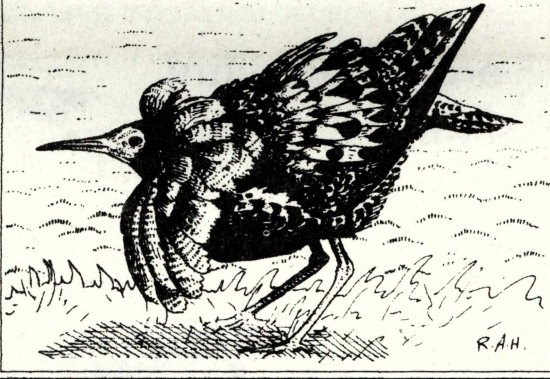
Work has been undertaken over the past few years in order to restore some of the former attraction of Is-Simar. In just 3 years, the site is already a prime area for wetland birds. The reeds provide suitable habitat for skulking birds such as bitterns and rails. The tamarisk grove provides ample space for roosting herons and the planted embankments provide a suitable habitat for foraging species like moorhen.

BirdLife Malta will be organising an excursion to this reserve on **Sunday 21 April**. Join BirdLife for a morning birdwatch. The group will meet at **9.30 am** at the main gate, located midway along the secondary road (Triq Pwales) coner with the car park on Xatt il-Pwales,

## Nature Reserve still open

Ghadira nature reserve will remain open at week-ends till the end of May. The gate opens between 9 am and 12.30 pm, and from 2 pm to 4 pm. Members as well as their relatives stand good chances of spotting various birds as egrets, herons and other waders as these birds stopover at the reserve to rest and refuel on their journey to their breeding grounds. If you want to watch birds in a relaxed atmosphere, visit the reserve in the mornings and avoid the afternoon crowds.

BirdLife members may avail themselves (on presenting their membership card) of a 10% discount on books, stationery and other items available at the sales point in the reception centre. This offer is also valid at the BirdLife Nature shop - 64 Sta Lucia Street, Valletta.



Cut here

Yes I would like to attend the BirdLife Boat trip to Kemmuna

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places.

I enclose a postal order/cheque\* to the order of

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*cheques and postal orders should be made payable to BirdLife Malta post to BirdLife Malta PO Box 498 Valletta CMR 01

Boat Trip

Boat Trip

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Mr. Eric German,  
Assistant Librarian,  
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