

plumage seen in the usual migrant birds of the nominate *striata*. Darker rusty shades were noted along the flanks and throat. The throat markings were finely streaked rather than spotted as in *striata* and these almost merged with the rest of the flank feathers; this plumage is characteristic of the race *tyrrhenica* (Brichetti & Fracasso 2008). All Spotted Flycatcher nests found locally have always been located in wooded areas (Buskett, Addolorata Cemetery, Howard Gardens, San Anton Gardens and Ta'Qali National Park). This pair chose to nest inside a building surrounded by high walls with the only access to the outside is by flying up onto the roof.

This is the first time that the race *tyrrhenica* is reported from the Maltese islands not only as a passage migrant but also breeding.

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Unusual nesting behaviour in Zitting Cisticolas *Cisticola juncidis*

In Malta, Zitting Cisticolas *Cisticola juncidis* typically nest in rushes, grasses or shrubs, where they build a bottle-shaped nest out of grasses and cobwebs (Sultana & Gauci 1982). In 2010, I recorded two nests of this species built in sapling Aleppo pines (*Pinus halapensis*). Both nests were approximately 95 cm off the ground and were woven into the upper branches of young pines. They were found on the 29th of May and were 5 metres apart. The first nest was completely built and appeared to have already been used (the young seemed to have fledged), while the second nest was in the process of being built by a male. A few days later it was completed but was never used. This area is part of the first plantings carried out in the Foresta 2000 afforestation project, with tree planting undertaken six years ago and there are many Lentisk (*Pistacia lentiscus*) shrubs which are now over a metre high. The Aleppo Pines that the nests were located in were replanted three years ago after a vandal attack destroyed 1000s of tree saplings in the area.

In 2009, a used Zitting Cisticola nest was also found in a metre high Aleppo Pine, in a Cypress/Pine grove where long grass is not usually present. Nests found previously in the area have always been in various grasses or Fleabane (*Dittrichia viscosa*) and always at a much lower height above the ground. The area in question holds up to 5-6 singing males in spring, but the population surrounding the area is much higher.

There is only one published record of a Zitting Cisticola nest in Malta situated in similar conditions – a nest found in a grove of Tamarisk trees and situated two metres above the ground (Sultana & Gauci 1982). However, there are no published records of this species nesting in the tops of Aleppo saplings in Malta.

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