

~~(Despott & Conti Meli 1931). Sporadic individuals were recorded until the next small irruption which occurred in September 1963, when over 50 birds were trapped near Rabat. A small influx took place from July to September 1972 when at least 14 birds were recorded (Sultana & Gauci 1982).~~

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A Linnet's *Carduelis cannabina* nest on Gozo

On 11 March 1990 at 1420 hrs while walking through an area of garigue largely dominated by Tree Spurge *Euphorbia dendroides* and Wolfbane *Periploca angustifolia* a female Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* was flushed ca. 4-5 meters away from me. This piece of garigue is very near a sea cliff in the NE part of the Island of Gozo. On a closer examination, a nest containing 5 eggs was found in a 75cm tall Tree Spurge. It was very well concealed by the leaves, 45cm above the ground. A bulky cup of dry grass, plant stems and small twigs, lined with hair, down and feathers. The eggs were bluish-white with some purplish spots and speckles, mostly at the wider end. On 17 March it still contained 5 eggs.

The site was last visited on 24 March at 1315 hrs, when five young of 6-7 days were present in the nest. Some grey down was still present, mainly on the head. Gape flanges were pale pink and the inside of mouth a pinkish-red. The pulli were ringed. On both three occasions the female came calling very near while I was examining the nest.

This is the first record of a Linnet breeding in a Tree Spurge. Nests are usually built in Carob *Ceratonia siliqua*, Olive *Olea europea*, Citrus *Citrus sp.* and Almond *Prunus dulcis* trees, but also in overhanging bushy plants on steep slopes or cliffs (Sultana & Gauci 1982). The Linnet is a very common autumn migrant in the Maltese Islands, repassing in smaller numbers in spring. It is common in winter. A few pairs try to breed occasionally, mostly in Gozo.

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~~Male Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* raising young by itself~~

~~During a survey of the population of Spectacled warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* in early June 1999, a nest containing four healthy young, nearly ready to fledge, was located in the morning of 5th June in a Golden Samphire *Inula crithmoides* plant at Il-Hotba tal-Qasam in the north-western part of Gozo. The nest was observed for more than an hour and only the male was seen, feeding the young frequently and regularly. The site was visited again in the afternoon to confirm that only one parent was feeding the young and again, for more than two hours, only the male could be seen. One assumes that a predator must have taken the female and the male was able to continue to raise the young by itself.~~

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