

Nest Site selection in the Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*

~~The Birds of the Western Palearctic quoting the present writer, cites only one observation of nest-site selection for the Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*. In this example/case the male chose the site and, after three days of building and singing, was apparently joined by female who three days later was seen helping male to build by adding lining (Cramp 1992).~~

~~The nest in question was located on 23rd March 1989 on the eastern slope of Dabrani hill, Gozo. The male was seen carrying nesting material to the nest site in a *Cynara cardunculus* plant in an uncultivated terraced field. On the 24th the site was again visited for half an hour during which time the male was seen carrying nesting material three times. Each time after building it flew to a perch about 20 metres away from the nest site calling and singing a few notes. Only the male was in sight.~~

~~On 25th the site was observed for two hours from 1300 to 1500hrs. During the first three quarters of an hour only the male was present. It was seen visiting the site twice with nest material, and singing frequently from various perches around the nest site, once indulging in a display song flight. At about 1400 hrs a female was noticed for the first time in the presence of the male about 20 metres away from the nest site. For the next half-hour the male was singing frequently and indulging in display song flights, after which he visited the nest at least three times without nesting material.~~

~~On 29th the site was again visited from 1230 to 1430hrs. On arrival the male was seen perched some 12 metres away and started giving 'churring' calls alarmingly, followed by a short sub song. The female was also seen nearby carrying vegetable down and flitting about. After chasing the female, the male visited the nest without any nesting material but was noticed arranging it. After a while the female flew in with the white vegetable down. The male then left the nest site while the female lined the nest with the (white) vegetable down. Afterwards both birds were noticed feeding together in a nearby field and flitting about close to each other.~~

~~By 10th April the nest contained 5 eggs.~~

References

~~Cramp, S (ed). 1992. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Vol. VI. Oxford University Press, Oxford.~~

~~Joe Sultana - 3, Dar Gajdor, Gajdor Street, Xaghra, Gozo XRA 104, Malta. jsultana@global.net.mt~~

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* moulting wing feathers while on migration

While bird-ringing at Is-Simar Nature Reserve on 23 October 1997 an adult and two first year Red-rumped Swallows *Hirundo daurica* were trapped together. In autumn these birds are rare and irregular in the Maltese Islands, passing from late September to early November. On closer examination the adult bird was noted to be partially moulting some of the primaries, as follows:

Right Wing. Innermost Primary (P 1) - Score 4 Adjacent Primary (P 2) - Score 1	Left Wing. Innermost Primary (P 1) - Score 3 Adjacent primary (P 2) - Score 2
---	--

(Moult scored as indicated by Ginn & Melville 1983.)

On both wings there was also a new primary covert. All other feathers were old and abraded. No sign of moult was noticed on the juvenile birds. All three birds had a considerable amount of fat.

After recording the data all three birds were released together as most probably they constituted a family party which were migrating south together.

References

Ginn, H. B. & Melville, D.S. 1983. *Moult in Birds*. BTO guide 19. British Trust for Ornithology.

Raymond Galea - 'Osprey' Ganu Street, Birkirkara BKR 06, Malta. raygalea@global.net.mt