

the female had already laid a second clutch of 4 eggs which hatched on 4 July. Unfortunately none of these succeeded to fledge as they were taken either by stray cats or other predators.

References

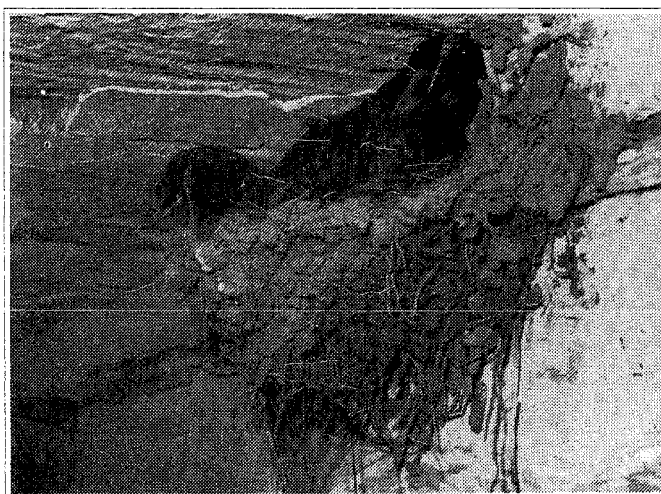
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Charles Gauci & Joe Sultana

Second breeding record of Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* is a very common passage migrant in spring and autumn. There has been only one documented breeding record in the Maltese Islands; a pair bred at Mqabba in July 1974 and raised a brood of 4 which fledged on 2 August (Sultana & Gauci 1975).

In July 1995 a pair nested in an old, derelict farmhouse limits of Bidnija. Most of the doors and windows were either broken or missing. The nest was built of mud and dry grass, and located near the middle of a wooden beam very close to the ceiling, in a small room at ground floor level. It was about 3m above the ground. A farmer informed the writer that the birds had collected the mud from the edge of a small water hole in nearby fields. On 28 July the nest contained 4 young which were ready to fledge. They must have fledged the following day as the nest was empty on 30 July.



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Fig 1. The nest of *H. rustica* at Bidnija.

Reference

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Breeding records of Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 1995-1998

The Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* is a fairly common migrant in autumn from late July to October. In spring it is generally very scarce from late March to early June (Sultana & Gauci 1982). It was first recorded breeding in Malta in July 1977 when 4 newly-fledged young accompanied by an adult were observed at Salina (Cachia-Zammit & Testa 1977-78). From 1995 to 1998 the species has been recorded breeding a number of times at Salina and Is-Simar. Following is a compilation of these records.

Breeding records at Salina

Salina consists of a network of saltpans fringed by ditches overgrown with the Common Reed *Phragmites australis*.

1995

Two adult birds were observed singing on 12 June. A nest with 4 eggs was located in the Common Reed on 21 June. The nest was 1.5m above dry ground and 2m away from the water's edge. On 30 June both adults were feeding four pulli of c.7 days. On 8 July the nest was empty and the fledged young and the adults were heard calling in the vicinity.



Fig 1. Nest of *A. scirpaceus* at Salina in 1995

young fledged successfully in the second week of July. Adults and young were frequently observed foraging together in the area up to 17 August.

1997

At least 3 pairs bred. Territorial singing by males was heard frequently from different areas of the reserve in June and July. No search for nests was carried out. Several fledged birds were handled for ringing during July and early August.

1998

Two to three pairs bred successfully in June and July. No nests were located but several fledged young were trapped for ringing during July and early August.

Some of the ringed birds have been retrapped in the following breeding seasons. A pullus ringed in the nest at Salina on 30 June 1995 was retrapped as a breeding adult at Is-Simar on 19 July 1998.

References

Cachia-Zammit, R. & Testa, R. 1977-78. An addition to the list of breeding birds of Malta - the Reed Warbler. *11-Merill*, 19: 13.
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~~Breeding records of Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*~~

~~The Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* is a common autumn migrant and winter visitor in small numbers. It is also recorded in single numbers in late spring and summer. Several of the latter are probably escaped birds, as the species is very popular with bird trappers and many are kept in captivity from year to year and used as decoys.~~

~~There have been few documented breeding records. A nest with 4 eggs was located in an Olive tree *Olea europaea* at St. George's Bay in May 1910 (Despott 1916). Two pairs nested at Rundle Gardens, Gozo in June 1965 and a pair was seen with fledged young in July 1977 below Chambray, Gozo (Sultana & Gauci 1982). Five birds (probably family parties) have been recorded at Lunzjata on 6 August 1983 and at Ghadira on 9 June 1984 (Gauci~~