

New breeding site for Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

The Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* is a common passage migrant from mid-April to early June and in smaller numbers from mid-August to mid-November. Up to 5 pairs have been recorded breeding irregularly at Buskett from 1971 to 1995; a pair probably bred at Wied il-Kbir in 1971, where 4 and 3 birds seen together on 30 June and 11 July respectively probably constituted a family party (Sultana & Gauci 1982, Galea 1987, 1991).

In late June 1995, the species was noted at Addolorata cemetery, Paola. On 6 July breeding was confirmed when a fledgling was observed in the area begging for food; an adult was later noted feeding the young bird. Further visits confirmed the presence of at least 2 adults and 3 juveniles.

The habitat within the cemetery consists of mature, mainly coniferous trees with sparse undergrowth. Aleppo Pine *Pinus halepensis* and Italian Cypress *Cupressus sempervirens* predominate.

Acknowledgement

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References

Galea, R. 1987. Some notes on Spotted Flycatchers breeding at Buskett during 1983-1986. *Il-Merill*, 24: 18.

Galea, R. 1991. Breeding of Spotted Flycatchers at Buskett in 1991. *Il-Merill*, 27: 19.

Sultana, J. & C. Gauci. 1982. *A New Guide to the Birds of Malta*. Valletta: The Ornithological Society, Valletta.

Denis Cachia

Editorial Note

A pair of Spotted Flycatchers was present from 14-16 July 1996 at San Anton Gardens. On 6 August they were seen feeding a single fledged young. This young bird was still present on 17 August, accompanied by an adult. The Spotted Flycatcher has never been reported breeding in this area (Martin Thake, pers. comm.)

~~Large flock of Short-Toed Eagles *Circaetus gallicus* in late autumn~~

~~The Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* is almost exclusively a summer visitor to the Western Palearctic with exceptional winter reports from southern Europe (Glutz *et al.* 1971, in Cramp & Simmons 1980). Southward movements from Europe begins from late August or early September to mid-October with stragglers lingering into November in central Europe and France. In Malta it is a scarce autumn migrant usually recorded from mid-September to mid-October, but occasionally in November and December (Sultana & Gauci 1982).~~

~~In the Mediterranean, large numbers migrate over the shortest sea crossings such as Gibraltar and the Bosphorus. The bird generally migrates singly or in small parties (Cramp & Simmons 1980) and in Malta it is normally seen in ones or twos, occasionally up to 3. (Sultana & Gauci, 1982).~~

~~On 10 November 1993 at 15.30, a flock of 29 Short-toed Eagles was observed over Dwejra ridge, situated in the central part of Malta. The birds were watched for 20 minutes. The majority were observed hovering less than 30m above the ground while the rest were soaring. The whole flock then glided away in a northerly direction.~~

~~The flock eventually dispersed as most of the birds were shot.~~

References

~~Cramp, S. & Simmons, K.E.L. (eds.). 1980. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, Vol II. Oxford University Press, Oxford.~~

~~Glutz Von Blotzheim, U.N., Bauer, K.M. & Bezzel, E. 1971. *Handbuch der Vogel Mitteleuropas*, 4~~

~~Sultana, J. & Gauci, C. 1982. *A New Guide to the Birds of Malta*. The Ornithological Society, Valletta.~~

Charles Coleiro