

~~interpretable as follows: the Maltese countryside is very heterogeneous and disturbed, and Maltese agricultural land is a marginal habitat for all three species.~~

~~As the wintering birds arrive and settle down for the winter, they occupy territories which are unsuitable, and other species settle nearby. As competition for food sets in, one species tries to evict other species of Turdidae in order to secure a monopoly of the food resources in the area. Robins and male Stonechats often evict female Black Redstarts which have settled in agricultural land.~~

#### Reference

~~Cramp, S. (Ed) 1988. The Birds of the Western Palearctic. Volume 5. (Tyrant flycatchers to Thrushes). Oxford University Press, Oxford.~~

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## First spring records of the Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

The Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* has always been recorded in autumn in Malta, as a scarce migrant, from early September to late November (Sultana & Gauci 1982). In 1994 three birds were recorded for the first time in spring; single birds ringed on Comino on 26th and 28th respectively and one seen at Għadira Nature Reserve on 27th, all in April. All birds were either females or immature males.

#### Reference

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

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## ~~The call note of the Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* in Malta~~

~~The Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* is a very common autumn migrant and winter visitor from early October to early April with concentrations of about 200 birds in winter in areas where food is plentiful, such as Lunzjata in Gozo (Sultana & Gauci 1982). An average of 1000 Chiffchaffs are ringed every year by ringers. It seems that both the nominate race and the subspecies *abietinus* occur, but no attempt has ever been made to assess the percentage of *abietinus* ringed, as the separation of these two races is rather difficult according to Svensson (1984). Some birds do look greyer than others and sizes also differ. But biometrics are not always helpful to separate these two races as wing and tail lengths overlap to a great extent (Williamson 1976). The other subspecies *P.c. tristis* is not difficult to separate from its plumage (Svensson 1984, & pers. obs.), and 2-5 birds belonging to this race are ringed annually.~~

~~An attempt was made to try and note whether there was any difference in the call-note of Chiffchaffs which occur in Malta. The call-note which was very commonly noted was the well-known melancholic 'hueet', but occasionally there was also another different call which can be best described as a low shrilled distress call 'wisst'. Whether this call was of a particular subspecies or not, or whether it was a variance of the usual 'hueet' could not be ascertained.~~

~~On the other hand the call-note of the *P.c. tristis* is quite distinctively different from the other Chiffchaffs' call-note. The *tristis* call can be described as resembling a chicken call 'cheep'. This call was heard from *tristis* birds when they were feeding as well as after being released after ringing.~~