

BLACK REDSTART AND WHITE WAGTAIL USING A BUILDING AS SHELTER DURING A RAIN SHOWER

On 19th December 1990, there was a moderately long rain shower (about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour) during which rain was moderately heavy, about 1 cm of rain falling during this interval. Two birds were seen taking shelter in parts of a building in the Upper Lyceum complex at Msida, about a quarter of an hour after the shower started.

A female Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochinuros*), which usually fed on the roof and grounds of the Prevocational School (Health care) during the winter of 1990-91, was seen resting inside a ventilator throughout most of the rain shower. The bird was familiar with the observer and was not disturbed at being watched.

A White Wagtail (*Monticola alba*), probably the same bird which held territory over the winter in the football pitch at the Upper Lyceum, was seen perching on a window sill of the same building at the Prevocational School. The bird was disturbed by the fact that it was being watched and flew onto another window sill where it was out of sight. This bird was not used to being watched.

The Black redstart was familiar with the building and it may well have roosted in the same place on most nights. The White Wagtail however, must have been seeking shelter in an unfamiliar place.

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MARSH HARRIERS ROOSTING IN ALEPPO PINES AT BUSKETT

Single Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* have been noted to roost occasionally in the woods at Buskett (Balzan & Fenech 1981-83). In autumn 1991, roosting in Aleppo Pines has been noted there with up to 28 birds on one evening.

Observations at Buskett were carried out daily from September to the first week of October 1991. Marsh Harriers were noted to congregate over Buskett on most days after 1630 hrs. Flocks of up to 5 birds have been recorded and roosting was observed as follows (number of migrating Marsh Harriers observed on each respective day is given in brackets): One on 5th September (9), 6 on 9th September (13), 22 on 21st September (165) and 28 on 4th October (40).

The birds always used a small area of Aleppo Pines near Verdala Castle. There is no doubt that illegal hunting in the area prevents more birds from roosting there.

Reference

Balzan, S. & Fenech, N. 1981-83. Marsh Harriers roosting in trees. *Il-Merill* 22:19.

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