

Table

Observations	6/1/91	12/1	26/1	2/2	7/2	23/2	2/3
Chiffchaffs seen	0	5	4	6	8	2	0

No observations were made to determine whether the Chiffchaffs were moving as a group from a roost site within the gardens to the feeding place as has been observed in many other species (Ward & Zahavi 1973) or whether the Chiffchaffs accumulated at the feeding place during the day by local enhancement. Given the small size of the groups observed, the former possibility is the more likely.

The feeding Chiffchaffs were not joined by any other species, although there were Starlings, Robins, Dunnocks, Blackcaps, Sardinian Warblers, Tree Sparrows and Spanish Sparrows in the garden. Due to the presence of about 30 cats in San Anton Gardens, feeding on the ground close to the canal ought to have involved some risk of predation. At no time, however, did the resident cats show any interest in the Chiffchaffs.

The Chiffchaffs, which are winter residents in the Maltese islands, had left the area entirely by 7th March but it is not clear whether the decline in numbers at the canal was due to migrant birds leaving.

Reference

Ward, P. & Zahavi, A. 1973. The importance of certain assemblages of birds as 'information centres' for food finding. *Ibis* 115: 517-534.

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 THE BLUETHROAT *LUSCINIA SVECICA* RECORDED SINGING IN MALTA

The Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* is a very scarce but annual passage migrant from March to May and again from September to November. Some birds also over winter in Malta. There have been no records of the bird singing on migration through Malta or while overwintering (Sultana & Gauci 1982).

The following are the first singing records of this species: One singing while perching on an electricity wire at Lunzjata Valley, Gozo on 11 April 1983 (John Attard Montalto, pers. comm.); a white-spotted male singing for nearly an hour while perched on a twig by the side of the Marsalforn Valley on 17 March 1985 (John Grech, pers. comm.); and another male singing perched in a Tamarisk tree on an island at Ghadira Nature Reserve on 17 December 1989. The latter was also heard singing regularly at the reserve from December to March (Charles Gauci, pers. comm.).

Reference

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

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