

Sparrows *Passer hispaniolensis* within a spell of fifteen minutes, was in an over-ripe condition, partly eaten and with the soft interior quite accessible to the bird.

- Although it has been recorded that the uncropped summer fruit of the prickly pear is a source of food in winter to several species (Sultana & Gauci 1982) we are not aware that to date any Chiffchaffs had been recorded feeding on this fruit.

The above observation was made along the road in Ramla Valley, Gozo leading from Xaghra to Ramla Bay.

References

- Snow, B. & D. 1988. *Birds and Berries*. T & A. D. Poyser. Calton.
Sultana, J. & Gauci, C. 1982. *A new guide to the Birds of Malta*. The Ornithological Society. Malta.

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THE YEAR OF THE FIRST CONFIRMED BREEDING RECORD OF THE SARDINIAN WARBLER *SYLVIA MELANOCEPHALA* IN THE MALTESE ISLANDS

Dresser (1885) in a letter to the editor of the *Ibis*, states that when he was working at the "Birds of Europe", Major Fielden had written to him to say that he had found the Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* in Malta in the summer of 1874 and had little doubt that it remained to breed. Dresser continues by stating that this surmise was shown to be correct by another letter which he had "lately received" from Dr. David Bruce, who was then quartered in Malta, reporting that he found two nests that summer. There is no doubt therefore that the first nests were located by Dr. Bruce in summer of 1884.

In Sultana *et al.* (1975) the year of the first breeding record was erroneously printed as 1874 (the year of Major Fielden's letter) instead of 1884 (the year of Dr. Bruce's letter). This error continued to appear undetected in two popular articles (Sultana 1977; 1987) and in the *New Guide to the Birds of Malta* (Sultana & Gauci 1982).

The aim of this short note is to put the record straight.

References

- Dresser, H. E. 1885. Letters, announcements, etc. *Ibis* (5)3: 453-454.
Sultana, J. 1977. The Sardinian Warbler. *Times of Malta* (Monday February 21, 1979), p. 5.
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