

RINGING REPORT FOR 1988

Joe Sultana & Charles Gauci
(Ringing & Research Committee)

This report covers the ringing activities of the Valletta Bird-Ringing Scheme of the M O S for the year 1988. The number of birds ringed was a record one and totalled 14,322 of 108 species. At the end of the year the grand total of birds ringed since 1965 stood at 189,893 of 159 species and 2 hybrids.

Four new species, namely Mallard, Kentish Plover, Turnstone and Slender-billed Gull, were added to the ringing list. Several vagrants were also ringed. These included the 5th Thrush Nightingale, the 2nd River Warbler, the 2nd Arctic Warbler, the 6th and 7th Semi-collared Flycatcher, the 8th Rustic Bunting and the 4th Little Bunting. 2 Yellow-browed Warblers brought the total to 15 birds ringed. The regular manning of the wetland reserve at Ghadira with the use of a few traps is reflected in the relatively good number of waders ringed there.

The ten species topping the list of those ringed since 1965 remained the same as in the previous year and were as follows (number of birds ringed during 1988 is also given) :

Species	1965-88	1988
Robin	28,928	3,099
Chiffchaff	21,543	1,651
Swallow	17,316	369
Storm Petrel	14,593	399
Spanish Sparrow	13,092	980
Sardinian Warbler	10,987	915
Blackcap	7,979	456
Sand Martin	7,710	257
Garden Warbler	7,166	917
House Martin	5,633	158

This report also carries a section dealing with 11 recoveries of 4 species reported during 1988. 2 of these, a Swallow and a Chiffchaff, were reported from abroad. The Swallow, the 39th to be reported from abroad, was the first to be reported from Hungary, while the Chiffchaff (the 8th abroad) was our 2nd recovered in Czechoslovakia.

The report also lists 9 recoveries in Malta of foreign ringed birds. These include the 5th Cormorant from Denmark, the 1st Grey Heron from Yugoslavia, the first Buzzard from Finland (the 2nd from abroad), the 17th Osprey from Finland, the 1st Marsh Harrier from Italy and the 1st Sedge Warbler from Great Britain. An Italian-ringed Reed Warbler is the first of this species to be recovered in Malta. The other recoveries are the 9th Turtle Dove from Italy and the 1st Starling from Bulgaria.

The scheme started the year with thirteen ringers - J. Attard Montalto, J. Borg, D. Cachia, R. Cachia Zammit, V. Cilia, Br. Edmund, R. Galea, C. Gauci, M.V. Gauci, B.K. German, J. Grech and J. Sultana - but in April the number went up to fifteen when M. Mallia and J.M. Mangion joined the group. J. Middleton, a B T O ringer, helped the group during two visits in spring and autumn respectively. As in previous years C. Gauci was the Ringing Secretary and was responsible for compiling all the ringing data, keeping the M O S ringing scheme's log books and preparing bi-monthly ringing newsletters issued exclusively for the group's ringers.

RINGING AND RECOVERY TOTALS TO 31.12.88

Species	Ringed in 1988	Grand Total ringed 1965-1988	Recovered	
			1988	Grand Total
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	-	1	-	-
Black-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	1	4	-	1
Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	121	1,812	-	28
Manx Shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	19	492	-	5
Storm Petrel <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	399	14,593	-	26
Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	2	46	-	1
Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	1	10	-	-
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	-	2	-	-
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	-	1	-	-
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	1	1	-	-
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	-	9	-	1
Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	-	1	-	-
Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	1	7	-	-
Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	18	46	-	2
Spotted Crake <i>Porzana porzana</i>	1	13	-	1
Little Crake <i>Porzana parva</i>	-	6	-	-
Baillon's Crake <i>Porzana pusilla</i>	-	1	-	-
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	39	118	-	2
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	3	6	-	-
Stone Curlew <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	-	1	-	-
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	21	65	-	1
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1	6	-	-
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	3	3	-	-
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	-	1	-	-
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	103	567	-	4
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>	1	34	-	-
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	8	51	-	3
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	13	54	2	2
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	7	42	-	1
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>	-	18	-	1
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	8	53	-	3

Great Snipe <i>Gallinago media</i>	1	8	-	1
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	-	1	-	-
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	-	2	-	-
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	7	10	-	-
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	-	1	-	-
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	2	3	-	-
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	3	23	-	3
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	21	116	-	8
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	60	241	-	-
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	3	3	-	-
Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	-	1	-	-
Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	-	1	-	1
Slender-billed Gull <i>Larus genei</i>	1	1	-	-
Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i>	75	312	-	7
Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	-	1	-	-
White-winged Black Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	-	1	-	-
Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	-	47	-	4
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	4	25	-	-
Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>	3	111	-	5
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	-	2	-	-
Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	1	14	-	1
Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	-	28	-	1
Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	21	128	-	9
Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>	3	16	-	-
Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	47	401	-	1
Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	1	145	-	1
Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	-	2	-	-
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	-	27	-	5
Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	257	7,710	-	36
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	369	17,316	2	89
Red-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo daurica</i>	1	35	-	1
House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	158	5,633	1	15
Richard's Pipit <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	-	1	-	-
Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>	-	9	-	-

Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	-	3	-	-
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	99	1,155	-	1
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	54	1,043	-	8
Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>	7	65	-	-
Rock/Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	2	14	-	-
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	246	2,785	-	19
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	18	593	-	7
White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	30	671	-	7
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	-	19	-	-
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	171	1,669	-	8
Rufous Bush Chat <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	-	7	-	-
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	3,099	28,928	5	172
Thrush Nightingale <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	1	5	-	-
Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	182	1,535	-	2
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	11	79	-	-
Black Redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	26	218	-	1
Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	75	2,034	-	3
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	36	476	-	-
Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	173	1,616	-	2
Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	-	1	-	-
Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	6	145	-	1
Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	1	4	-	-
Rock Thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	-	3	-	-
Blue Rock Thrush <i>Monticola solitarius</i>	3	72	-	3
Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	-	3	-	-
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	19	190	-	13
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	-	3	-	-
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	60	924	-	29
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	-	27	-	-
Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	100	992	-	27
Fan-tailed Warbler <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	494	4,156	-	30
Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	-	4	-	-
River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	1	2	-	-
Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	-	36	-	-

Mustached Warbler <i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	12	95	-	1
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	175	1,661	-	1
Paddyfield Warbler <i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>	-	1	-	-
Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	3	20	-	-
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	144	1,382	-	-
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	58	966	-	3
Olivaceous Warbler <i>Hippolais pallida</i>	-	3	-	-
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	109	975	-	-
Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	-	2	-	-
Dartford Warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>	2	38	-	-
Spectacled Warbler <i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	3	1,240	-	3
Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	425	4,637	-	1
Sardinian Warbler <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	915	10,987	-	35
Ruppell's Warbler <i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>	-	2	-	-
Orphean Warbler <i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	-	4	-	-
Barred Warbler <i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	-	1	-	-
Lesser Whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i>	4	50	-	-
Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	146	1,658	-	1
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	917	7,166	-	9
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	456	7,979	-	18
Arctic Warbler <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	1	2	-	-
Pallas's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	-	1	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	2	15	-	-
Bonelli's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	10	123	-	-
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	473	4,499	-	-
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1,651	21,543	1	56
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	496	4,082	-	4
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	25	201	-	-
Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	17	324	-	4
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	71	1,168	-	5
Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>	3	64	-	-
Semi-collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	2	7	-	-
Collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	25	299	-	-
Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	239	2,023	-	2
Penduline Tit <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	-	17	-	2

Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	26	179	-	6
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	10	93	-	-
Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>	5	164	-	-
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	16	90	-	6
Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	980	13,092	2	119
Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	60	407	-	1
Red-eyed Vireo <i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	-	1	-	-
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	68	618	-	6
Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	-	4	-	-
Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>	2	289	-	4
Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	2	282	-	18
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	-	15	-	1
Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	1	8	-	-
Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	3	907	-	53
Scarlet Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	-	3	-	-
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	1	2	-	-
Lapland Bunting <i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	-	1	-	-
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	-	1	-	-
Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	-	2	-	-
Rustic Bunting <i>Emberiza rustica</i>	1	8	-	1
Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	1	4	-	-
Chestnut Bunting <i>Emberiza rutila</i>	-	1	-	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	-	1	-	-
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	26	182	-	-
Corn Bunting <i>Milliaria calandra</i>	13	368	-	5
Swallow X House Martin <i>Hirundo rustica X Delichon urbica</i>	-	1	-	-
Tree Sparrow x Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer montanus x hispaniolensis</i>	-	1	-	1
Totals	14,322	189,893	13	959

N.B.: Grand total recovery totals have been corrected.

RINGING RECOVERIES

This section deals with 11 recoveries of 4 species reported during 1988. Only those found at least 5 km away from ringing site are included. The co-ordinates of the localities are given only once, when these are first mentioned.

Key to symbols and terms used in the recovery list :

- Arrangement of entry : recoveries are arranged by species, and within species usually by date of the recovery letter. Ringing details are given on the first line and recovery data on the second.
- Ring number : where this is followed by an asterisk (*) the ring has been returned.
- Age code : 1 = pullus; young bird ringed in the nest.
2 = fully grown; year of hatching quite unknown.
3 = definitely hatched during current calendar year.
3J = as above, but bird still partly or completely in juvenile body plumage.
4 = hatched before current calendar year; exact year unknown.
5 = definitely hatched during last calendar year.
(A number in brackets beside the age code 1 indicates the size of the brood).
- Sex : M = male; F = female.
- Date of recovery : where this is unknown the date of the reporting letter is given instead and is shown in brackets. An 00 in the date indicates that the exact day or month are unknown.
- Manner of recovery : v = caught or trapped, and released with ring.
+ = shot or killed by man.
x = found dead or dying.
() = caught or trapped alive and not released, or released but with ring removed.
/?/ = manner of recovery unknown.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

57.135	4F	15.04.87	Lunzjata Valley : 36.03 N, 14.14 E, Gozo.
	x	14.04.88	Fonyodleget : 46.46 N, 17.35 E, Somogy, HUNGARY.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

57.757	4	11.05.88	Lunzjata Valley.
	v	13.05.88	Bingemma : 35.54 N, 14.23 E.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

64.227	3	08.10.88	Buskett : 35.51 N, 14.25 E.
	v	12.10.88	Xemxija : 35.57 N, 14.23 E.
64.297	3	11.10.88	Buskett.
	v	27.10.88	Ramla Valley : 36.04 N, 14.14 E, Gozo.
67.216	3	26.10.88	Ghadira : 35.58 N, 14.21 E.
	v	27.10.88	Buskett.
66.825	3	25.10.88	Bingemma.
	v	29.10.88	Xemxija.
52.360	5	08.01.87	Ghajr Zejtuna : 35.58 N, 14.22 E.
	v	01.11.88	Lunzjata Valley.
59.382	3	27.10.88	Rabat : 35.53 N, 14.24 E.
	v	06.11.88	Xemxija.
66.329	3	29.10.88	Xemxija.
	v	18.11.88	Bingemma

42.306 * 3 09.10.88 Xemxija
 x 29.11.88 Birkirkara : 35.54 N, 14.28 E.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

9A.899 * 4 07.02.87 Ghadira
 x(car) 04.04.88 Vranova : 49.03 N, 16.32 E, Blansko, CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

FOREIGN RINGED BIRDS RECOVERED IN MALTA

This section deals with 9 foreign ringed birds, all different species, recovered in Malta. The symbols and terms used are the same as those in the previous section.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Copenhagen 1 28.05.85 Orneø, Glensø : 55.12 N, 11.28 E, Sjælland, DENMARK
 214.450
 (+black 403) + ca.25.10.88 Zejtun : 35.52 N, 14.33 E.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Zagreb 1 22.06.88 Obedska bara, Kupinovo : 45.43 N, 20.01 E, Oberenovac,
 K 2.164 YUGOSLAVIA.
 + 06.09.88 Anchor Bay : 35.58 N, 14.21 E.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Bologna 4F 08.04.84 Bordonchio : 44.08 N, 12.28 E, Bellaria Igea Marina
 C 0.824 (Forlì), ITALY.
 + ca.25.03.88 Malta : ca.35.50 N, 14.30 E.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Helsinki 1 01.07.87 Kitee : 62.03 N, 30.06 E, Pohjois-Karjalan (Lääni),
 H 119.229 FINLAND.
 + 21.04.88 off Mersaxlokk : ca.35.53 N, 14.31 E.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Helsinki 1 14.07.85 Yläne, Turun Ja Porin (Lääni), FINLAND.
 H 19.549 + 28.03.88 Ghaxaq : 35.50 N, 14.33 E.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Bologna 4 20.04.87 Castello Barbarossa : 40.33 N, 14.13 E, Anacapri (Napoli)
 H 14.504 ITALY.
 + ca.30.04.88 Rabat : 35.53 N, 14.25 E.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

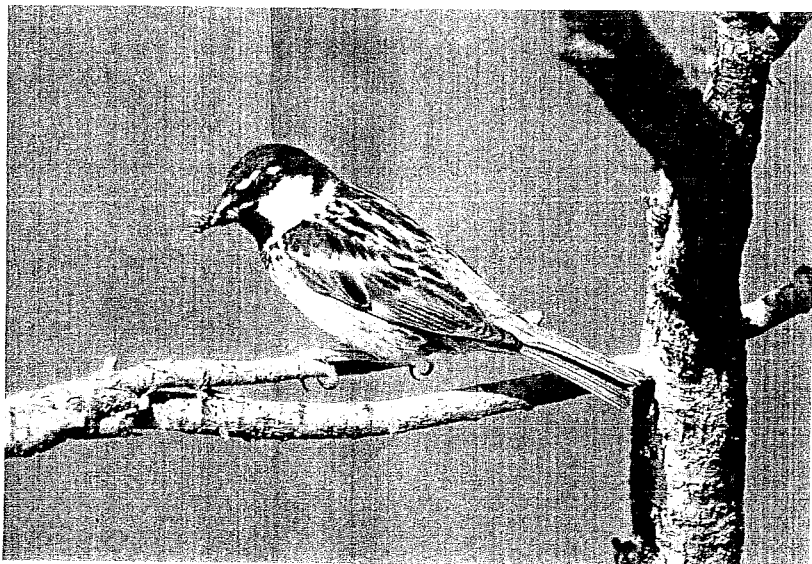
London 3 05.07.87 Shotton : 53.12 N, 03.03 W, Clwyd, WALES.
 E 424.257 v 16.03.88 Xemxija : 35.57 N, 14.23 E.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Bologna 3 03.08.86 Valle Campetto : 44.35 N, 11.51 E, Argento (Ferrara),
 A 248.328 ITALY.
 v 12.09.88 Lunzjata Valley : 36.03 N, 14.14 E, Gozo.

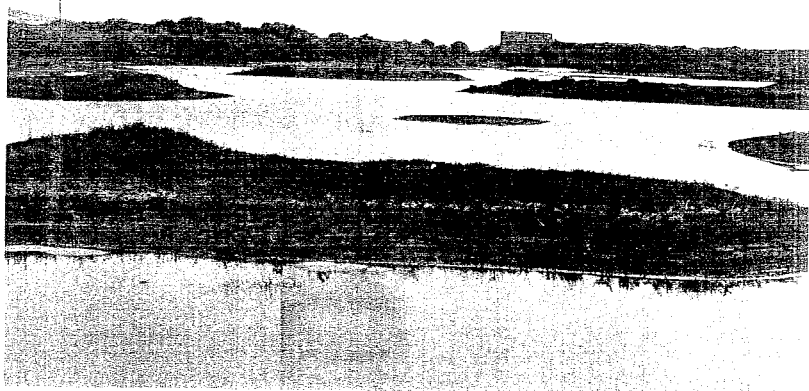
Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Sofia 1 18.05.88 Melschik : 43.57 N, 25.80 E, Ruse, BULGARIA.
 L943.111 + 11.10.88 Xemxija : 35.53 N, 14.16 E, Gozo.



Richard Coehia Zammit

Out of 13,092 Spanish Sparrows ringed up to the end of 1988, 119 have been recovered. None travelled farther than 12 km away from ringing site.



Joe Sullivan

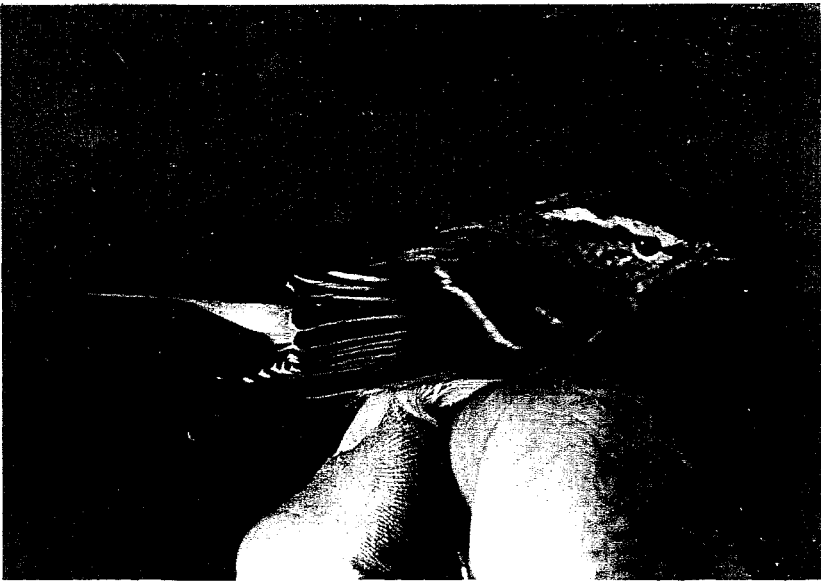
The regular mowing of the wetland reserve at Chadira is reflected in the relatively good numbers of waders ringed there.

Raymond Galea

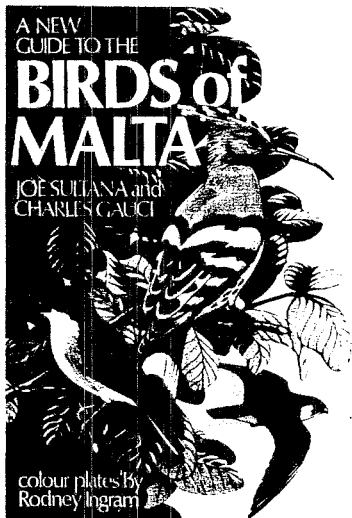


Up to the end of 1988 21,543 Chiffchaffs have been ringed. 8 have been recovered abroad, mostly in central Europe.

John Attard Mcnialto



Yellow-browed Warbler photographed before released. Two of this rare vagrant were ringed in 1988.



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ERRATUM

The ringing recovery of Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* (Ring No. T 58.539), which appeared in IL-MERILL No. 25 (1988) p. 50, should read as follows :

Bologna 4 03.05.79 Bellaria, Igea Marina : 44.09 N, 12.28 E (Forlì), ITALY.
 T 58.539 + 15.04.86 Bubaqra : 35.49 N, 14.29 E.

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