

FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE PADDYFIELD WARBLER *ACROCEPHALUS AGRICOLA* IN THE MALTESE ISLANDS

While ringing in a maize-field at Lunzjata, Gozo on 5 September 1986, an unfamiliar *Acrocephalus* warbler was found in one of the mist-nets. The bird's upperparts were similar to those of a Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* but with a slightly pale rufous rump. It had a conspicuous whitish supercilium which was well marked behind the eye. The underparts were whitish with a very pale tinge of buff on the throat, breast and belly. The flanks had a light olive-brown wash. The legs were pinkish with yellow soles, and the iris was olive brown. It was identified as a Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*.

Biometrics, taken in mm., were: wing - 55; tail - 49 (outer rectrice 42); bill (from skull) - 14.5 (from feathering) - 9.5; and tarsus 21.5. Wing point was 3rd=4th and it had emarginated 3rd and 4th, and slightly on 5th, primaries (counted ascendantly).

The bird was retrapped in the same area the following day. When released it was heard calling 'gish - gish'.

The Paddyfield Warbler breeds in S.Russia and Asia and is vagrant to Europe.

The Maltese name given is Baghal tas-Saqwi.

Joe Sultana & John Grech

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The Paddy-field Warbler and the Pallas's Warbler photographed before released.

PALLAS'S WARBLER *PHYLLOSCOPUS PROREGULUS* - 1ST RECORD FOR MALTA

~~Putting up a mist net in your back garden can produce some surprises. I regularly put up a 6m, 3 shelf net in my back garden, which is about 50 sq. m. and is situated in the outskirts of Rabat. In it I have planted ten fruit trees and also cultivated some vegetables. I have also created a small artificial pond to attract the birds. Throughout the year a different assortment of birds are ringed. These include Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*, Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*, White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*, Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*, and Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*.~~

~~On Friday, 13 November 1987 at 0640 hours, I found what I at first thought was a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* in the net, but on closer examination the bird turned out to be a Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*, a species not yet recorded in Malta. The bird was also examined by Joe Sultana and Raymond Galea who came up to see the bird after I phoned them, and a detailed description was taken. In appearance it resembled a somewhat large Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. The beak was dark horn-coloured, with the inner parts of the lower mandible orangish. It had a long yellow eyestripe which nearly met at the back of the head, and a yellow stripe along the middle of the crown. On the back parts and under the side of the supercilium it had a blackish~~