

AN UNUSUALLY LARGE INFLUX OF GLOSSY IBIS.

The Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* to the Maltese Islands is a scarce passage migrant occurring singly or in small parties of up to 20 birds, with a maximum of 50 being recorded in one day (Sultana, Gauci, Beaman - A Guide to the Birds of Malta - 1975). 6th April 1980 thus was exceptional as a much larger number of birds were involved.

At Ghadira, the authors recorded a total of 130 birds, in flocks of up to 43, between 0600 and 0930 hrs, after which time the passage apparently ceased. Most were noted flying in a W - S direction though a very few were seen moving to the North and to the East. One bird which arrived at 0800 hrs alighted at the pool and was still present at mid-day.

At Sarraflu (Gozo) two flocks of 49 and 11 and a single individual were seen between 0630 - 0900 hrs moving to the East.

Also in the morning, 300+ were sighted at Delimara, with single birds occurring at Dragonara point, Attard and St. Lucia.

During the afternoon, only 20+ at Delimara and a flock of 32 and a single bird at Luqa were recorded.

The wind direction was ENE except for a brief spell between 0400 and 0500 hrs when the direction changed to NNW. The velocity varied from 5 to 12 knots.

Thanks are due to V.Cilia, S.Balzan, M.Zerafa and L.Cassar who were with the authors at Ghadira; to J.Sultana for the Gozo records; to S.Gatt for his Delimara records and also to J.Attard Montalto, G.Bonett, D.Cachia, R.Cachia Zammit and P.Portelli for their contribution.

Natalino Fenech & Raymond Galea

~~LONG-EARED OWL ENTANGLED IN ROUGH BRISTLE-GRASS.~~

~~On 11th September 1979 a Long-eared owl *Asio otus* was found dead with open wings well entangled in a thick clump of Rough Bristle-grass *Setaria verticillata* growing by the side of an irrigated field at Lunzjata, Gozo. It had been dead for a day or two and was held firmly by the plant whose numerous panicles, which have many barbed awns, were stuck all over its body and wings. On examining the specimen no sign of gunshot wounds or any other wounds were noted. It is probable that the bird tried to catch some prey which was moving amongst this grass. A few years ago the authors had been informed by a farmer that a Barn Owl *Tyto alba* had been found dead in similar circumstances at Ramta Valley.~~

~~It may be of interest to mention another instance where a female Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* was found hanging by its right wing at Lunzjata on 6th October 1979. Its longest primaries were thickly covered by cobweb and were twisted round a leaf of *Phragmites communis* growing amongst a clump of *Rubus ulmifolius*.~~

Joe Sultana & Charles Gauci

~~A SUPERB STARLING WITH A FLOCK OF MIGRATING EUROPEAN STARLINGS.~~

~~A Superb Starling *Spreo superbus* was taken at ix-Xerriek, Limits of Marsaxlokk on 3rd October 1975. It was accompanying a flock of migrating European Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* which, at that time of the year, start to appear in good numbers.~~

~~The Superb Starling is a bird of the East African Acacia grassland. It is the most gaily coloured of the genus *Spreo*, which includes five other species, and has the same size of the European Starling (Birds of the World - Ed. J. Gooders).~~

~~On dissection the specimen, which had no fat deposits, was found to have eaten some coleoptera and ant spp. some time before. As this species is imported into Europe for zoos and aviculturists there is the probability that this bird had escaped from captivity, was living ferally in some European country with the European Starling and then joining a flock on its south bound migration.~~

Alfred Vassallo