

~~The following is a description of the specimen. The beak was red with a yellow tip with a frontal plate that was dark, almost black (due to post mortem darkening). The head was purple and the wings and back were green while the shoulders were blue. The under tail coverts were white. The belly was black while the breast and neck were purple. The legs were yellowish green and the feet yellow.~~

~~The measurements (in mm) were: wing 180; tarsus 62; bill 42 (feathering to tip, i.e. top of frontal plate to tip) and 28 (from base of frontal plate to tip); toes 53 (inside), 68 (middle), 58 (outside) and 41 (back).~~

~~There were no fat deposits in the body and the plumage and feet were in perfect condition. This suggests that if the bird was not wild it had either been long escaped or it had been kept in a large well conditioned aviary. When the contents of the stomach were examined apart from a few tiny pebbles, contained Canary grass seeds *Phalaris canariensis*, seeds of one of the sedges *Carex* and an unidentified composite. The latter is one often associated with canary-grass. The presence of Canary grass may indicate captivity. *Carex* is a plant of wet places and the bird may have ingested it after its escape.~~

~~Thanks are due to Mr. E. Lanfranco for his comments on the stomach contents and to Mr. J. Sultana for examining the specimen and commenting on the above notes.~~

~~John Attard-Montalto.~~

Copulation in the Fan-Tailed Warbler

From 0630 to 0700 hours on 10th June, 1978 a female Fan-tailed Warbler *Cisticola juncidis* was regularly observed close to a partly built nest at Wied il-Luq, Buskett. A male was singing intermittently on another part of its rather large territory (ca. 2.43 hectares), where at least another two females (one feeding newly fledged young) were present. At one time, the male came over to the partly built nest we were watching and started 'dive-bombing' the female, which was skulking in nearby vines. The male uttered its 'zip . . . zip . . .' song rapidly as it dived to within a foot of the ground. It would then rise, circle round, and repeat the process. After about twelve such dives, the female flew up to the top of a 1 m high fennel stalk and started quivering her wings. The male instantly alighted near her and the birds then copulated. Immediately after copulation, which lasted about 2 seconds, the female seemed to topple over, but held on to the twig and hung upside down. The male continued clinging to her wings and dangled upside down as well. Both birds stayed motionless in this position for about two minutes before their combined weight was finally too much for the female. They then fell down, the male still clinging to the female. From our position we could not see the birds on the ground, as they were hidden by vines. After a minute we moved in order to try to locate them. They only flew off when we were within 2 m of them, the male rising first.

Charles Gauci & Mario V. Gauci