

### Abnormal number of feathers

In the course of examining birds for moult or during the taking of biometrics one occasionally meets with birds with abnormal feathering. A first year male Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* trapped for ringing at Lunzjata on 30th October 1976 had 20 remiges on its right wing. The extra feather was between the first tertial (i.e. the outermost tertial) and the sixth secondary and was identical to the latter in size and shape. The left wing had the normal 19 remiges. On taking both wings' formulae the wing point was found to vary. That of the right wing was the fourth primary with the third being .5 mm less and the fifth 1.5 mm less. The wing point of the left was the third primary with the fourth = fifth, both being 1 mm less. (Primaries were counted from the outermost inwards i.e. ascendantly).

An adult male Sardinian Warbler trapped at Ghajn Barrani on 1st September 1977 also had 20 remiges, this time on the left wing. The extra feather was next and identical to the outermost tertial.

Another male Sardinian Warbler had 14 rectrices as against the usual 12. It was trapped at Ghajn Barrani for ringing on 17th August 1977 and retrapped on 28th. Its tail graduation, which was 10 mm., was however within the range of this species.

An adult female Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* was also found to have 14 rectrices when it was being ringed at Lunzjata on 23rd August 1978.

Joe Sultana, Charles Gauci & John Grech.

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### ~~Weasel and Nightjar run over by car~~

~~While driving along the road from Wied iz-Zurrieq to Hagar Qim on 28th September 1978 we noticed a freshly killed weasel *Mustela nivalis* on a dead Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* in the middle of the road. Both animals had no sign of having been shot but seemed to have been run over by a vehicle. The weasel which was rather greyish brown in colour was a juvenile male and was presumably carrying its prey across the road when the accident happened. This must have taken place just before our arrival (ca. 1430 hrs) as *rigor mortis* had not set in the weasel, which is usually a nocturnal hunter.~~

~~Guido Bonnet & Vincent Sammut.~~

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### ~~An unusually large influx of Spotted Flycatchers in Spring~~

~~Although large influxes (with up to 800+) of the Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* have been recorded occasionally in autumn, only up to 100+ had been previously recorded for any one locality in any single day in spring (Sultana, Gauci, Beaman — *A Guide to the Birds of Malta* — 1975).~~

~~An unusually large influx occurred on 15th May 1977. The fall was mainly concentrated on the south south-east of Malta where 500+ were counted at Wied~~