

~~the structure which is neatly woven with vegetable down, cobwebs and fine blades of dry grass.~~

~~The Fan-tailed Warbler is the fourth species which has been added to the list of Malta's breeding birds since 1966. The other three are the Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* (Bull. B.O.C. (1)89:29-31); the Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (Il-Merill 10:10); and the Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* (Il-Merill 12:7-9).~~

~~We are grateful to S. Borg and L. Attard for helping us to locate the nest at Ghadira and to Edwin Lanfranco for identifying the plants which are mentioned in the text.~~

~~J. Sultana and C. Gauci.~~

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### A PLEA FOR SAVING AUDOUIN'S GULL

For several decades we have known about the endangered existence of *Larus audouinii*. The World Wildlife Fund names this rare species on its Red List. Audouin's Gull nests only in the Mediterranean and is reduced to an estimated number of 1,000 to 1,800 birds.

While numbers of European gulls increase as a result of anthropogenic influences the population of Audouin's Gull decreases; how fast is not known.

The breeding-success is diminished by various factors: fishermen, tourists and photographers disturb adults during the breeding season. Eggs and fledglings are frequently and lastingly exposed to solar radiation and often die. Oologists collect eggs indiscriminately.

In cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund I have started a programme of collecting every information about colonies, pairs and breeding-success to form a broad and reliable basis for a study of the population dynamics and the general state of the species. I request that ornithologists and bird-watchers from Malta make available their data on *Larus audouinii* that the combined knowledge can be used to reach this goal and hopefully save the species.

Only full cooperation will make it possible to institute an efficient conservation programme.

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Editor's note: *Larus audouinii* does not breed in Malta. Any sight records, of this species will be reported by the M O S to the author.

(See drawing on Cover 3)