

UNPUBLISHED RARE OCCURRENCES BEFORE 31st DECEMBER, 1971

An examination of the specimens kept at the Natural History Museum at Mdina reveals that a number of rare occurrences have so far remained unpublished. Excepting the Egyptian Vulture and the Crossbill, all the occurrences have been recorded less than twenty times in the Maltese Islands. Apart from a list compiled from the Natural History Museum, with the kind permission of the Director of Museums, known and reliably dated specimens in private collections have been included. Unless otherwise indicated, the specimens are all found at the Natural History Museum. The records of specimens in private collections are indicated by the initials of the owners. These are S.B. (S. Borg), L.G. (L. Gera), J.P. (J. Pulis), and J.V.G. (J. Vella Gaffiero).

- Shag: Singles at Salina in November, 1944, and on 21st October, 1948.
- Great White Heron: One at Salina on 2nd September, 1948.
- White Stork: One in Gozo on 15th April, 1922.
- Black Stork: One at Zabbar on 12th September, 1939, and one at Msida in October, 1961.
- Greater Flamingo: One in Gozo on 28th September, 1917; one at Salina on 30th September, 1922; one shot from a party of ten at Marsaxiokk on 20th September, 1955.
- White-fronted Goose: One at Salina on 15th November, 1949; one in Gozo on 8th November, 1950.
- Bean Goose: 2 in Gozo on 3rd November, 1954.
- Ruddy Shelduck: One at Marsaxlokk on 10th May, 1952 (L.G.).
- Gadwall: One at Marsaxlokk in November, 1942, another on 20th October, 1952, and one at Salina on 11th October, 1965 (J.V.G.).
- Red-crested Pochard: One at Salina on 10th November, 1950.
- Tufted Duck: One at Salina on 3rd November, 1949.
- Common Scoter: One at Salina on 2nd November, 1948.

- Egyptian Vulture: One in Gozo on 4th September, 1944; one at Ghal-lis on 18th October, 1948; one at Maghtab on 20th October, 1948; and one at Bingemma on 30th Oc-tober, 1952.
- Little Bustard: One in Gozo on 4th October, 1938, one at i-Ahrax on 12th September, 1948, and one at Mellieha on 28th September, 1952.
- Oystercatcher: One at Marsaxlokk on 2nd August, 1930, and one at Salina on 13th September, 1946.
- Spur-winged Plover: One at Girgenti on 20th August, 1950.
- Common Gull: One at M'scala in November, 1937.
- Audouin's Gull: One at Marsascala on 5th October, 1967, and an- other at Qawra on 27th February, 1971 (J.P.).
- Kittiwake: One in Gozo on 25th February, 1950.
- Caspian Tern: One at Marsaxlokk on 8th October, 1961 (J.V.G.).
- Common Tern: 2 on 7th July, 1967 and another 2 on 14th Sep- tember, 1967, all four at Marsaxlokk, and one on 22nd June, 1971, at Marsascala (J.P.).
- Little Tern: One at Salina on 25th September, 1964 (J.V.G.).
- Puffin: One at Salina on 2nd November, 1938.
- Pin-tailed Sandgrouse: One in Gozo on 15th May, 1931, and one at Sig- giewi on 16th March, 1951.
- Red-necked Nightjar: One at Siggiewi on 1st April, 1934.
- Egyptian Nightjar: 2 at Wied id-Dis on 1st April, 1935.
- Shore Lark: One at Qrendi on 5th September, 1960.
- Crested Lark: One at Salina on 15th October, 1957.
- Hoopoe Lark: One at Hal Far on 25th October, 1964 (S.B.).
- Richard's Pipit: One at Marsascala on 7th November, 1970 (J.P.).
- Ruppell's Warbler: Singies at Marsaxlokk on 22nd March, 1953 (L.G.) and one in May 1966.

Black-headed Bunting: One in Gozo on 10th April, 1949.

Great Tit: One at Ta' Braxia in October, 1960.

Snow Bunting: One in Malta in December, 1955.

Crossbill: One at Portes de Bombes on 3rd October, 1933,
and one at Wied-id-Dis on 20th August, 1941.

Rose-coloured Starling: 2 at Burmarrad on 13th October, 1949.

Spotless Starling: One at St. Julian's on 16th October, 1947.

Rook: One at il-Qadi on 25th April, 1942.

Compiled by J. Vella Gaffero and S. Borg.

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~~A WEEKEND IN CYPRUS~~

~~At the end of January I was lucky enough to have two whole days free whilst serving at RAAF Akrotiri, in Cyprus. To many people, knowing of its association with the British Forces, Cyprus is thought of as a sister island to Malta. This, of course, is not true, for the island is very much larger than Malta — about the size of Crete — and boasts a large and varied resident bird population. Whilst shooting and trapping is still carried out on a large scale, conservation measures are gradually being introduced by the Government; Nature Reserves have been established and abuses of the conservation laws are usually 'pounced upon' by the Police Force.~~

~~Going to the island in January, I was too early to see the Spring passage migrants; too late to see those that pass through in the Autumn. However, my efforts were not in vain. On the afternoon of the 26th I was greeted with my first sighting of a Finsch's Wheater, but a trip to a valley near to Episkopi failed to bring into the binoculars the anticipated Wallcreeper. However, as compensation, I was lucky enough to see a pair of Griffon Vultures on a rocky crag, and a single, soaring Crag Martin.~~

~~Early on the morning of the 27th I set out to join Wilf Corris, since, unfortunately, re-posted to the UK, at his ringing site at a spot known as Bishop's Pool — the local sewage farm. None of the many birds that must now (30th March) be passing the area were to be seen on that day, although in the distance on the Salt Lake could be seen a large flock of Greater Flamingo. The first birds to enter the nets were Chiffchaffs, White Wag-~~