

# IL-MERILL

BULLETIN OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 12 December 1973

10c to non-Members



# IL - MERILL

The title of the Society's Bulletin, **IL-MERILL**, is the Maltese name for the Blue Rock Thrush, *Monticola solitarius*, which is one of the few resident species of the Islands. It was chosen as the National Bird of Malta by the local National Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation and has been the emblem of the Malta Ornithological Society since the latter's inception.

## MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Sir Anthony J. Mamo, O.B.E., Q.C., LL.D., B.A.,  
*Governor General of Malta*

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*44, Marsamxett Road,  
Valletta. (Tel. No. 25349).*

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*3, Sciberras Flats,  
Fleur-de-Lys Junction,  
Birkirkara, (Tel. No. 40278)*

ASST. SEC./P.R.O.

A. Baldacchino,  
*B1. XI, 8, Bull Street,  
Cospicua, (Tel. No. 23112).*

TREASURER

B.K. German,  
*126, Rudolph Street,  
Sliema. (Tel. No. 31303)*

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C. Gauci

---

EDITOR: 'IL-MERILL'

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New Str., off Tower Rd.,  
Msida.*

RINGING SECRETARY

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*1A1, Museum Road,  
Rabat*

GOZO REPRESENTATIVE

V. Vella Muskat  
*38, St. Dominica Street,  
Victoria, Gozo. (Tel. No. 76263).*

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**EDITORIAL**

The conscience of a conservationist will find little to comfort it when faced with the Maltese Nature setting. Pillage and destruction are so commonplace, reckless and habitual that one can only reflect upon the scene with extreme nausea. Of course only a sensitive mind will acknowledge that much. For the wreckers, having banded themselves in a caucus of self-interest, have arrogantly claimed that any improvement in conserving Nature in Malta will be suggested by themselves when the need is felt! It is a classical case of the devils organising hell; but then the man with the gun has never been remarkable for his intelligence.

The effective eradication of this mentality can only be achieved by an education designed to awaken the sensitivity lying dormant within the heart of every human being. For this reason we view with distaste the display of stuffed birds at exhibitions held under the auspices of the Education Department — of all public bodies! If the intention is to impart information a well-drawn picture can do the job perhaps more efficiently. It is foolhardy to expect to learn about the instincts, intelligence, behaviour, emotions, habits, etc., of a human being by viewing a mere corpse. The same is true for all living things.

On account of this the M.O.S. has insisted all along on the preservation of Ghadira to serve as a bird-observatory where a brief course of instruction to students can help them to learn far more on bird-life than all the books they can go through. Give our children the chance to observe closely a living bird and not a mere stuffed, amateurish, fading imitation of life.

In the following pages the reader may note a plan for the proposed amelioration of the Ghadira nature-reserve as suggested by M.O.S. The project is easy to carry out and inexpensive; it respects the nature of the ground and its present character as a habitat which it seeks to improve with as slight human interference as possible. If followed through, the Ghadira nature-reserve will be an asset to the nation and an additional attraction to a section of foreign visitors.

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The Committee of M.O.S. has decided to acknowledge gratefully the splendid help of those superb photographers, Eric Hosking and M.D. England, whose work the readers of "Il-Merill" have had the chance to admire on the cover of every issue. As a tribute to their completely disinterested aid, both gentlemen have been elected Honorary Life Members of the Malta Ornithological Society.

## MISCELLANY

### 1. DEDICATION

This issue of "Il-Merill" is dedicated to the memory of the late Captain A. M. Jacobs of Tipperary, Eire, whose wife kindly donated £20 towards the costs of producing this M.O.S. publication.

### 2. BIRD COLLECTION -- WITH A DIFFERENCE

Mr. L. Attard of Hamrun, a member of the M.O.S., has a collection of birds: - a collection with a difference. He carved his birds from Maltese Stone, the globigerina limestone (franka). In the adjoining photo Mr. L. Attard can be seen with his unique collection which does not harm the bird-life as the out-dated unscientific ones of mounted birds do. Unfortunately there exists a craze for the latter in Malta.



photo: S. Borg

### 3. FAREWELL BRO. EDMUND

Chez Francis, Bugibba, was the venue last June of a farewell dinner in honour of Bro Edmund, ex-Editor of Il-Merill, who left the island. A small token was presented to Bro. Edmund for his sterling service as committee member, editor of "Il-Merill" and an active member of the Bird Ringing Group.

### 4. ROBIN FOSTER

Posters of the Robin were again distributed and displayed at all Department of Information Notice Boards and installed in every police station in Malta and Gozo.

### 3. PROTEST WITH PLACARDS

Sunday 21st October 1973 is a red-letter day for the M.O.S. especially for the Young Members Section, which in collaboration with the 4T's paraded at Buskett in protest against indiscriminate bird shooting. Some of the placards which the youths carried were: 'Ghasafar protetti fl-Ewropa Maqtula l-Buskett' (Birds protected in Europe killed at Buskett); 'Live and Let live'; 'Qt'il f'post protett' (killing in a protected place); 'Save YOUR Birds'; 'Buskett Qerda shiha ta' Kuččard' (Buskett, a wholesale massacre of Honey Buzzards); 'Xita ta' Comb fil-Buskett' (Shower of shot-gun pellets at Buskett); 'Pellets fly, birds die'; 'Stop this indiscriminate shooting — NOW!'

The shots which could be heard at Buskett by the so-called 'sportsmen' confirmed this, while the youths showed their disapproval of such irresponsible behaviour.



photo: by courtesy of the 'Times of Malta'

### 3. R.A.F. LUQA O.S. M.O.S. VISIT FILFLA

Since 1968, the M.O.S. Ringing Group has been visiting Filfla twice yearly on bird-ringing expeditions. As a result of such visits, the M.O.S. has published a booklet in 1970 on the breeding of pelagic birds on the Islet.

This year the RAF Luqa Ornithological Society and the M.O.S. held two joint bird ringing expeditions to Filfla, one in May and one in August. Although the first visit to Filfla was not exactly successful, the latter visit proved more rewarding — 200 Storm Petrel were ringed.

### 3. SHORT DOCUMENTARY

A short documentary film on bird watching and bird ringing was taken

at Ghadira by the School Broadcasting Unit with the help of J. Sultana and M. O. S. young members. The film was subsequently televised to Primary School's children in May and October.

#### 8. M.O.S. RESOLUTION AT SEMINAR

"Nature Conservation in Malta" was the theme of a Seminar organised jointly by the M.O.S. and the Natural History Society of Malta with the participation of Din l-Art Helwa, Men of the Trees, and the Malta Geographical Society. The seminar was held on 8th July 1973 at Mount St Joseph, Targa Gap, Mosta; Mr. J. Sultana and Mr A. Baldacchino were the M.O.S. members on the Organising Committee with the latter serving as its Secretary. The Chairman at the Seminar was Profs. S. Busuttill.

The M.O.S. contributed to the Seminar an illustrated talk by Mr J Sultana on the "Bird Situation in Malta with particular emphasis on the breeding birds and their habitat"; in the afternoon Mr J. Attard delivered a talk on "Bird Conservation in relation to legislation and education".

The M.O.S. presented the following resolution which was approved: "This Seminar having noted the wanton destruction of bird-life in Malta, which is upsetting the natural balance and causing other adverse effects, and having noted inadequacies and lack of enforcement of present legislation, urges the Government to:

- a) enact new legislation, which would be strictly enforced to safeguard the bird-life.
- b) set up adequate Nature Reserves at Ghadira and Filfla where field-work in scientific studies can be carried out under proper control.
- c) hand over the ex-army barracks at Ghadira to the Department of Education solely for the purpose of such studies.

#### 9. SUPPORT FOR M.O.S.

It was good to hear Judge A.J. Montanaro Gauci, President of the Agrarian Society Committee, strongly condemn the widespread killing of birds by trigger-happy shooters. Even if the birds do not retain their wonderful instinct of feeding conveniently on types of insects which menaced our trees and crops, the killing of birds is still an act of vandalism against nature — said Judge A.J. Montanaro Gauci.

The Governor General, Sir Anthony Mamo, reiterated the urgent need to combat vandalism against nature. These speeches were delivered before distributing prizes during the Agricultural Show at Buskett on 29th June, 1973.

#### 10. M. O. S. MEMBER ON COURSE

Mr Alfred Baldacchino, Assistant Secretary and P.R.O. of the M.O.S. went over to England on the 14th August, where he was the guest of the Malta Bird Reserves overseas Committee (M. B. R. O. C.) during his stay. While in the U. K. Mr Baldacchino had the opportunity of meeting Dr Bruce Campbell.

From Banbury, England, Mr Baldacchino proceeded to North Wales for a week's intensive course at Drapers' Field Centre at Rhyd-y-creuau. The

Course "Youth Leadership in Environmental Conservation" was organised for youth leaders, teachers and others directly involved in working with young people both in U.K. and on the Continent. During the course Mr Baldacchino was invited to give a short talk on his experience in voluntary service in connection with "Conservation in Malta", which talk was well received.

The course was sponsored by the M.O.S. and the M.B.R.O.C.

#### 11. ANOTHER M. O. S. PUBLICATION

The M. O. S. has just published an illustrated two colour leaflet giving information on the Society and on its activities. These leaflets will be distributed with the aim of increasing the interest of the general public in the M. O. S., while hoping to increase membership. The printing cost was met by the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee.

#### 12. M. O. S. PRESIDENT MEETS

##### ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS

Mr. J.M. Attard, president of the Malta Ornithological Society met Archbishop Makarios, the Hon. President of the Cyprus Ornithological Society, while His Beatitude was on an official visit in Malta.

They exchanged views on bird protection in the Mediterranean and discussed bird problems in Malta and Cyprus.



(photo by courtesy of the Malta News).

#### 13. MEDITERRANEAN COMMENTS

##### (a) France —more protection

France has created seventy-eight reserves which constitute 12% of the coast where no shooting will be permitted. This action by the French Government will be of the greatest value in the protection of migratory birds.

Also, the shooting season for wild fowl was curtailed. It now opens on 29th July instead of 24th July and closes on 15th March instead of 31st March.

This is really a step forward greatly appreciated, but it must also be remembered that some other countries in Europe have far shorter seasons

which do not start until 1st September and end on 31st January.

Malta has no close season at all. So regarding this aspect, Malta is even lagging behind.

(b) Italy — ban on netting

The regional government of the Veneto t,he N.E. province of Italy surrounding and including Venice, has recently followed the lead of Piedmonte and Trento in banning bird netting and one hopes that this ban be extended further south.

(c) Spain — Wildlife disaster in the Coto Donana

World Wildlife Fund's experts on pesticides and the diseases of birds have now discovered that the disaster to wildlife in Spain was not caused by pesticides but by an outbreak of botulism, a disease, which caused so much damage in 1971 in the Netherlands. The species affected were mainly aquatic — herons, egrets, spoonbills, coots, ducks — amounting to about 50,000 birds. Great precautions are being taken to clear the infected area, and corpses are being collected and burnt to limit the outbreak. Although it is perhaps of some consolation to know that it was due to natural causes and not man-induced on account of pollution, the consequences to this reserve are very serious in that a number of species may be lost to the Reserve.

A. Baldacchino



## THE CETTI'S WARBLER *CETTIA CETTI* IN MALTA

J. Sultana & C. Gauci

The Cetti's Warbler *Cettia Cetti*, 5½ ins in length, has all its upper-parts dark rufous brown. It has a greyish white throat and belly while its breast and flanks are washed with light brown. Its short whitish supercilium is only conspicuous at close quarters. Instead of the usual twelve tail-feathers of most passerines this species has only ten, which form a much rounded tail. The under-tail coverts are broadly tipped whitish. The wings are rounded too, and rather short.

Its skulking habits in dense and coarse vegetation make it very difficult to spot. However, its presence is very often betrayed by its loud striking song of abrupt bursts resembling 'chee wee, chee wee, Chee wee you'. It is mostly found in thick vegetation and reedbeds near water. Though mainly a sedentary species showing some local wanderings, the easternmost populations migrate to eastern Iran, southern Afghanistan and north-west India.

The range of the Cetti's Warbler is southern Europe, north Africa, Mediterranean Islands and south western Asia to Iran, northern Afghanistan, Kirghiz Steppes and Russian Turkestan. Three subspecies are generally recognized; the nominate race is the one found in countries bordering the Mediterranean.

G. Despott included the Cetti's Warbler in his various lists of the Birds of Malta on account of a specimen seen stuffed in a private collection. It was labelled 'Malta —Aprile1901'. The only other record of the Cetti's Warbler previous to 1967 is that of one reported by Roberts as seen by J. Bailey at Wied Znuber, Hal Far, on 21st September, 1951.

Since members of the MOS Ringing Group started visiting Wied il-Luq & Girdenti Valley, in autumn 1967, the species has been noted present annually throughout the year. Eight to twelve males were regularly heard singing during the breeding seasons in these adjoining valleys. Farmers at Girdenti remarked that they had been hearing that type of distinctive song for the past fifteen years.

Girdenti Valley and Wied il-Luq form one of the greenest areas in Malta where freshwater is present throughout the year. Both contain a long stretch of reeds, intermingled with thickets of brambles, trees and other vegetation, flanked on both sides by cultivated fields. The uncultivated water course of Girdenti Valley contains more tangled and thicker vegetation than that of Wied il-Luq.

The Cetti's Warbler is also recorded annually outside these valleys, especially in autumn; most records come from Mtahleb and Bahrija. Breeding in these areas, which offer adequate habitat, could not be ascertained as no visits were made during the breeding season. Other birds were recorded at Ghadira (1.11.67 (2) and 9-11.12.70); Bingemma (3.3.69); Chadwick Lakes (29.8-29.9.72 and 9.9-21.10.73); Rabat (22-26.7.73) and in Gozo, at Lunzjata (5.10.70) and at Ghajn Barrani (end of 8.71).

A male ringed at Mtahleb in October 1970 was retrapped several times at Wied il-Luq between May and September, 1971. This may support the

possibility that a number of the birds recorded in various localities in autumn are the offspring of successful broods reared at Girgenti and Wied il-Luq. There is also the possibility that occasionally a few birds may arrive in autumn from nearby countries.

The Cetti's Warbler shows conspicuous population fluctuations in Europe. One of the main reasons is the high mortality rate during long and severe winters. The series of mild winters from 1948 to 1961 helped the Cetti's Warbler to push its range northward in France and from 1960, vagrants started to appear in Western Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and England. According to the farmers of Girgenti it was about the mid-fifties that singing males were first heard there, coinciding with the series of mild winters afore mentioned.

There is no doubt that the Cetti's Warbler is now a resident species in small numbers. From October 1967 to October 1973, 56 birds were ringed in Malta. These comprised 24 full grown males, 19 full grown females and 12 juveniles/pullii. Of these only 6 were trapped outside the Girgenti/Wied il-Luq area. Most full grown birds have been retrapped several times in successive areas, with the longest period between ringing and retrapping dates being 4 years.

Though breeding was thought to have occurred in 1968 and 1969, as the species was present throughout the year, the first definite proof was obtained in 1970 when on 13th April a pair was trapped for ringing at Girgenti. The female had a clear brood patch and was carrying a small caterpillar in its beak. A year later, on 23rd May, 1971, 4 newly fledged birds were seen at Wied il-Luq. They were trapped together with the adults which had already been ringed (the female on 15th September, 1969 and the male on 16th August, 1970). Two more newly fledged young were seen nearby in late July.

The first nest was discovered on 14th May, 1973, at Wied il-Luq. It contained four young and was situated under a fig tree, overgrown with ivy and brambles, growing over a wall above a wide canal. It was built upon a small projecting ivy twig among dead strands of bramble, about 14 feet high from the ground, above a small stream. It was loosely constructed with dry grasses and reed blades lined from the inside by fine grasses and feathers. Its shape was very slightly oval, 12x11 cm. on the outside and 5x4cm. on the inside; the depth was 5 cm.

On the same day a newly fledged juvenile was trapped at Girgenti. On 20th May, 1973, another family group was trapped at Girgenti; it consisted of 2 newly fledged birds and 2 adults (both adults had been ringed at the same spot on 13th April, 1970). Another family party of 4 juveniles was present at Wied il-Luq at the end of July.

The Cetti's Warbler appears to rear two broods between April and July. None of the males had the slightest evidence of an incubation patch. Only the female was noted bringing food to the young of the nest found at Wied il-Luq, though the male was singing nearby.

**Note on sex identification through wing length (measurements in mm.) and weight (in gm.)**

Williamson (1968) gives wing length at 58-64 for males and 51-57 for females. He remarks that a few females 59-61 are probably wrongly sexed. Svensson (1970) gives 58-67.5 for males and 54-60 for females. Our measurements (maximum chord) agree with Williamson: the range of 24 full grown males was 58-64 and of 19 full grown females 51.5-57.

Weight is also helpful. 24 males had a range of 13.6-16.9 (one was 12.5) with a mean of 14.7. Nineteen females weighed 10.3-13.4 with a mean of 11.5 (Most weights were recorded in the morning. Most birds retrapped in late afternoon regularly registered an increase of about 1 gm.).

#### NOTE ON MOULT

Adults moult after breeding. Males seem to start earlier than females. A male on 26th August had just finished, another was in an advanced stage on 10th August (moult completed when retrapped on 22nd August) and a third was in an advanced stage on 25th August.

A female had not yet started moulting on 4th August, one on 20th September was in an advanced stage and others, on 23rd September and 27th September, had just finished.

Juveniles have a body moult between mid-July and early September. It is thus possible to age birds in June-September according to plumage condition.

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## THE OCCURENCE OF *ALCA TORDA TORDA* (Lin) IN MALTA

Dr. C.B. Ticehurst classified separately the British razorbills from Swedish and Greenland birds under the name *britannica* on account of their smaller size. This name was accepted by the British List Commitee in 1937. It was later discovered that Iceland rozarbills were small in size like the British population and therefore Brehm's type of *islandica*, which had been obtained in southern Iceland in 1931, took precedence over *britannica*.

In 1941 Whiterby gave the following measurements for both types and these show a significant difference in bill and wing measurements:

*Alca torda torda* : Wing 201-218, Bill 30-35, Bill depth 22-26 (mm)  
*Alca torda islandica*: " 185-203, " 30-35 " " 21-23

In 1959 C. & V. De Lucca noted that the few examples they have examined all belonged to the type *islandica* ("Note Sull'Ornitologia delle Isole Maltesi" — Riv. It. Orn. (29) 2:62). But Dr C. DeLucca added the type *Alca torda torda* in his "Revised Check List of the Birds of the Maltese Islands" (No. 168) giving its status as "straggler in winter"

At the Museum of Natural History in Mdina there are to be found five specimens of Razorbills. On examination it was found that one of these five specimens belong to the Northern type *Alca torda torda*, whilst the other four (although these are birds of the year) are *Alca torda islandica*.

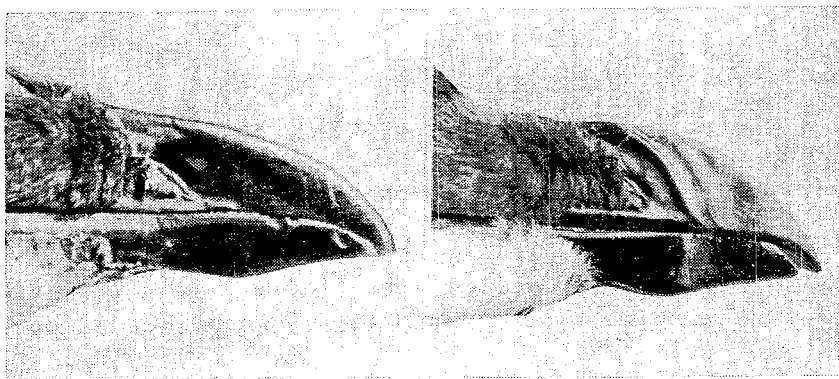


photo by courtesy of the Director of Museums

### Bills of 1st year *A.t. islandica* (left) and *A.t.torda*

The following are the measurements of these birds in mm:

Date & Locality	Wing	Bill	Bill depth
(a) No date or locality	190	33	16(*)
(b) Malta — Feb. 1891	185	34	16(*)
(c) Salina 30.9.1924	188	29(*)	14(*)
(d) Salina 10.11.1925	185	28(*)	17(*)
(e) M'Skala 6.11.1933	211	34	24

In Italy the Rozarbill is rare and irregular like it is in Malta. The type commonly taken there is that of *Alca torda islandica*, although even more rarely the *Alca torda torda* may occur (Avifauna Italica — Augusto Toschi). In the Birds of North Africa, Etchecopar and Hue state that the wintering birds off the coasts of the Canaries, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia are of the type *islandica*.

This record of the Northern Razorbill is very interesting as it is the only documented occurrence so far south recorded and may give future evidence to the winter migration of the Northern race.

J. Vella Gaffero

(\*) Bill measurements do not agree with lengths given by Witherby; but this is because Razorbills take a year before they grow their bills to the proper length.

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### RAPTORS IN MALTESE SKIES

(This is the last article on diurnal birds of prey which appear in Malta. The accidentals and rare visitors have not been included. The first three appeared in "H-Merill" Nos. 3,4 and 7 respectively.)

Merlin *Falco columbarius* Seger ta' Denbu

Merlins are nowadays scarce and irregular in our islands. They occur during March and early April and from mid-October to mid-November. They have also been recorded in January, September and December.

Both females and immatures have much the same plumage: the upper parts are brownish and the underparts are creamy-buff with dark brown markings; the tail is brown with a white tip and bands. Adult males are slate-grey above and heavily striped with rufous below; the slate-blue tail has a black terminal band.

In the air Merlins fly low and erratically over the ground as they chase the small birds on which they feed. Their flight on migration is not different and they have been observed to migrate only singly.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* Zumbrell

In spring Red-footed Falcons are normally seen frequently from mid-April to mid-May; in autumn they are scarce though fairly regular, occurring from late September to mid-October. Birds have also turned up in late March, June, July and early September.

With its dark blue-grey plumage, except for chestnut on its thighs and under the tail, the adult is a very handsome falcon. Adult females have a rufous head, with short chestnut moustachial stripes, barred greyish upperparts and sandy underparts. Immatures resemble the female, but do not have the rufous head and are browner. Both sexes have reddish beak and feet, which in juveniles are yellower.

This falcon in the air looks and flies much like a Hobby, but its wing-base is broader and it is less agile. When perched, its wings reach almost to

the tip of its tail. It feeds on large insects and occasionally small mammals and birds.

In Malta, the Red-footed Falcon is seen solely on migration, usually singly or in small parties of up to about 15 birds.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* Spanjulett Sekond

This falcon occurs irregularly in Spring, from mid-March to mid-May. In autumn, it is quite regular, appearing frequently from mid-September to mid-October.

In plumage the Lesser Kestrel looks like a bright edition of the Kestrel. It lacks the moustachial stripe, the spots on the adult male's back and has white claws and whiter underwings, but otherwise it looks like a brightly coloured Kestrel.

Lesser Kestrels, when hunting, circle above the ground, and on sighting prey hover momentarily with its body angled then stoops obliquely. It takes mostly large insects with an occasional small mammal or bird. A great favourite (also of the Kestrel) are the large flying ants that fill the air in autumn after the showers.

Migrating Lesser Kestrels keep quite high, having a direct flight composed of very long intervals of gliding with a few wing beats now and then. They are also seen sometimes soaring leisurely over the hillridges, much like Honey Buzzards which they sometimes accompany.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Spanjulett

Kestrels are very frequent in spring from early March to mid-May, and rather common in autumn, when they appear during September and October. A few winter here while a bird or two is always met with during the summer.

Male Kestrels have a slate-blue head with a black moustachial stripe, rump and tail, the latter having a broad black sub-terminal band. The upper parts of his wings and back are rufous, spotted with black. Females are rusty brown barred with black above, with the brownish head having a dark moustachial stripe. The underparts are buffish, spotted with brown. Juveniles look like females but they are darker. Both have a rusty tail barred with black, as is the sub-terminal band.

Hunting Kestrels are easily identified by their habit of protracted hovering with the body carried horizontally as they survey the ground for their prey — large insects, rodents and small birds. If a strong wind is blowing, the hunting bird 'hangs' on the wind, motionless, except for a flicker of its wing and tail as the need arises to compensate for changes in wind-speed and direction.

Migrating Kestrels have a direct flight with a few wing-beats followed by a short glide; they usually travel singly, though small parties of up to 5 may be seen.

C. Galea

## A BRIEF VISIT TO LIPARI ISLAND

The Eolie Islands, seven in all are situated off the North Sicilian coast. Lipari with an area of 37,6 sq. km. is the largest island. Its high and sloping coasts are nearly everywhere surrounded with huge rocks. Its numerous reliefs reach the maximum height of 603 m. In the middle of the island there is Piano Conte, a high plane cultivated mainly with vineyards, as in all parts of the island where farming is possible. The spontaneous vegetation is represented, as in all the Archipelago, with typical elements of Mediterranean woodland. Around the inhabited areas and in the most sheltered zones one also finds tall trees among which various imported species.

Lipari was visited for only two days, 21st and 22nd April 1973, and though birds were not the reason for the visit, the following species were recorded:

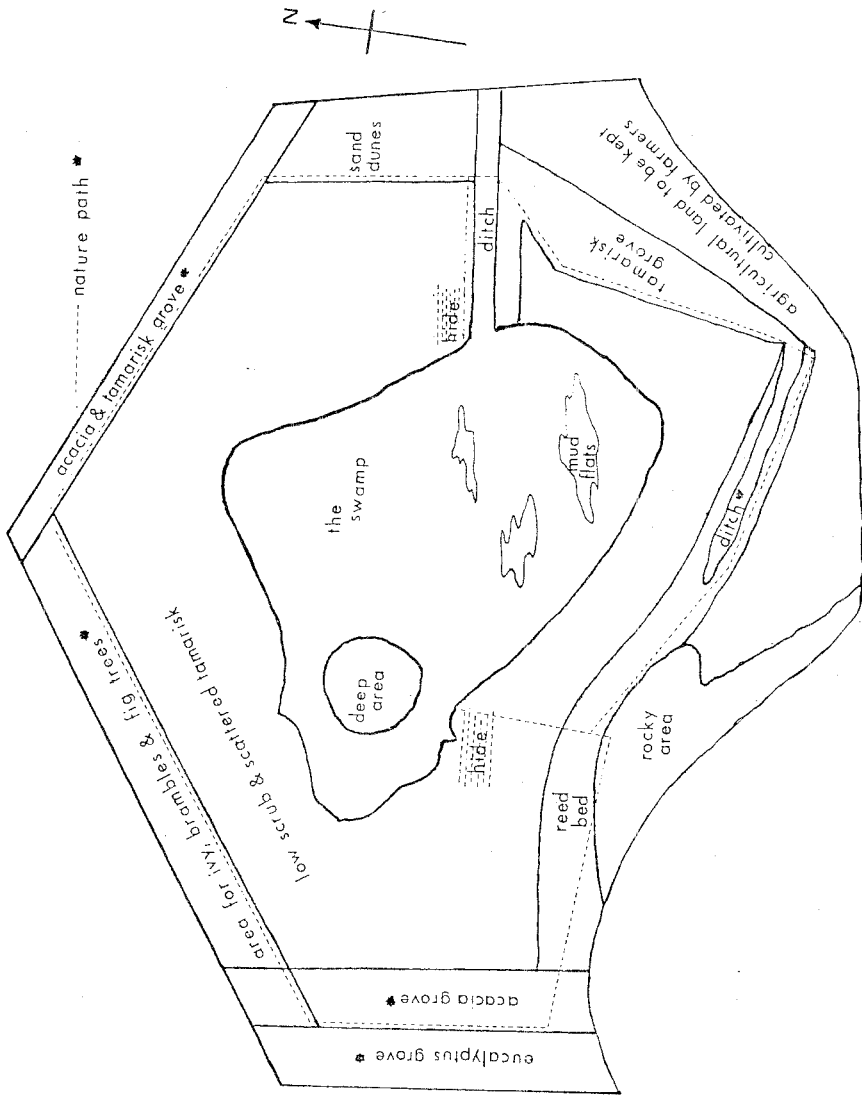
Black Kite 2, Kestrel 2, Turtle Dove 6, Herring Gull 15+, Barn Owl 1, Swift 3, Alpine Swift 2, Sand Martin 2, Swallow 7, House Martin 4, Wren 3, Blackcap 20+, Whitethroat 7, Sardinian Warbler 30+, Subalpine Warbler 20+, Spectacled Warbler 1, Willow Warbler 2, Wood Warbler 1, Pied Flycatcher 1, Black-eared Wheatear 1, Blue Rock Thrush 4, Redstart 1, Song Thrush 1, Goldfinch 30+, Linnet 3, Tree Sparrow 20+, Sparrow sp. 35+, Raven 20+.

Following is a list of species met with during the voyage:

Cory's Shearwater — 1 on 20th off Vulcano I and 10+ between Sicily and Malta on 24th; Gannet — 1 on 24th between Sicily and Malta; Kestrel — 1 on 23rd at Catania; Ruff — 1 at Augusta on 24th; Common Sandpiper — same as Ruff; Black-headed Gull — 1 on 20th at Milazzo and 2 on 24th at Syracuse; Herring Gull — 6 on 20th off Milazzo; Black Tern — 2 on 24th at Syracuse; Turtle Dove — 1 leaving Sicily in a south direction (?) on 20th Swift — 2 on 23rd at Catania and 3 on 24th at Syracuse; Swallow — 8 on 23rd at Catania; Yellow Wagtail — 1 seen between Sicily and Malta (north direction) on 24th; Woodchat Shrike — 1 on 23rd at Catania; Greenfinch — 2 on 24th at Syracuse; Linnet — same as Greenfinch; Serin — 20+ on 24th at Syracuse.

**S. Borg**

Note: The description of Lipari was taken from Gli Uccelli delle Isole Eolie — E. Moltoni & S. Frugis Riv. It. Orn. (37) 9:91-226).



Plan for the proposed educational field centre and bird reserve at Ghadixa as suggested by M.O.S. (only those marked with an asterisk (\*) have to be created). One of the nearby barracks would have to be used as a library, nature discovery room and laboratory.