



SOCIETY
IL-MERILL

BULLETIN OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 3 December 1970

1s.6d. 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.

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Cover Picture: Peregrine with Young by E. Hosking.

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EDITORIAL

With this third issue *Il Merill* comes to the end of its first year of life and it has gained quite a number of new readers. If present subscribers were each to take a New Year resolution to win one more adherent, the Malta Ornithological Society would be in a stronger financial position and would be all the more able to pursue one of its main aims — that of bird conservation. It is remarkable how many letters have been written to the Press in recent months showing that there is a growing feeling among the Maltese that something should be done, not only by people who are interested in preservation but also by the Government and the Police who are able to enforce the present existing laws on trapping and shooting.

We are very pleased to record the grant from Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee (MBROC) of the sum of £35 to assist in the production of a Report on the Ghadira area which we would like to have converted into a natural history centre which could be of great help in educating children from the New Secondary Schools by organizing educational days in the locality and making use of the Army hutments on the ridge above for residential and instructional purposes.

It was most pleasant to hear from the Teenagers Section of Din l-Art Helwa that at one of their recent meetings they passed a motion approving of the forwarding on to the Government of their support of the resolutions of the XV World Conference of the International Council of Bird Preservation (ICBP) held in Holland in September 1970. This contained two parts; the first asked Government to see to the enforcing of laws at present on the Statute Book regarding trapping and shooting and the second asked for the setting up of the nature reserve at Ghadira.

Let us hope that in the coming spring all members of the Malta Ornithological Society (MOS) will do their utmost to bring pressure to bear on the Police and other influential people so that, at least in the areas where shooting is forbidden, it shall not take place. A few weeks ago two young members of MOS on walking through the centre of Buskett picked up 15 fresh empty cartridges showing that shooting takes place inside a forbidden area; two Robin trappers were also observed inside Buskett on the same occasion. Twice a year there is a massacre of all kinds of birds from the very perimeter and over the trees. What a great step forward it would be if the Police enforced this one law. It will be interesting to see if any action takes place here and in the case of Verdala Palace.