

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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Bro. Edmund

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## MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Cover Picture: Peregrine with Young by E. Hosking.

# BULLETIN OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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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.

# MISCELLANY

## **I.C.B.P. World Conference**

In the Editorial of the last issue of *Il-Merill* the representation of the Society at the XV World Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation was announced. We have now all the proceedings of the meetings some of which deal with Malta and other countries of the Mediterranean Basin. Our representative reported on the appalling situation of the birds in Malta and distributed his report to all the members present. A resolution concerning solely the Maltese Islands was put forward and accepted by the assembly. It states: "*Having noted that large numbers of migrants which are protected in most countries of Europe pass over Malta and many are destroyed, netted or trapped indiscriminately; this world conference urges the Malta Government that these activities be strictly controlled by adequate and enforced bird protection laws, and that a review of current legislation be undertaken; further urges the creation of bird reserves such as the pool at Ghadira which can afford sanctuary to migrants and provide facilities to educate the Maltese public in the appreciation of birds in their natural wild state.*" Copies of this resolution were sent by the General Secretary of the I.C.B.P., Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith, to His Excellency the Governor-General, The Hon. Prime Minister, the Most Rev. Archbishop of Malta, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Justice, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Commissioner of Police.

## **Din l-Art Helwa's Recommendations.**

Din l-Art Helwa Association has submitted its recommendations to the Government as one of its contributions towards European Conservation Year. Most of these are in line with our thoughts and views, and the most important states:

"that the Ghadira at Mellieha and the Islet of Filfla be declared National Bird Sanctuaries and be handed over in the form of a Trust to an appropriate body for bird protection".

## **Exhibition of Maltese Natural History.**

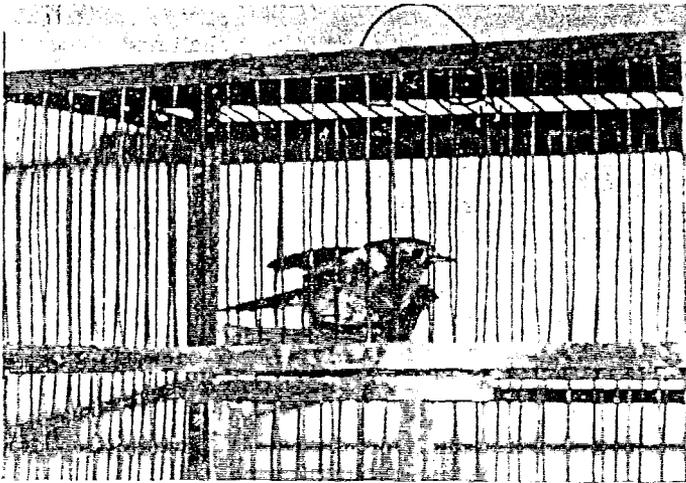
The Natural History Society of Malta, under the guidance of its hard-working President and founder, G. Lanfranco, organised an exhibition of Maltese Natural History from 18th-24th November, 1970, at the National Museum in Valletta. The aim of this highly commendable exhibition, a representation of Maltese Geology, Flora and Fauna, was mainly to instil an appreciation of our natural heritage and a desire to preserve it for the enjoyment of the present and future generations. The N.H.S.M. made it clear that the exhibited specimens of Flora and Fauna did not imply that their study should involve their destruction. On the invitation of the N.H.S.M. the Malta Ornithological Society took part in the exhibition by depicting a representation of our avifauna. By an agreement between the two Societies no stuffed birds were exhibited and instead photographs by E. Hosking were used. The guide-book of the exhibition stated, "*It will be noticed that there are no stuffed birds on view, due to the fact that*

one of the stumbling blocks in bird protection in Malta, is the excuse that birds are shot for stuffing, mounting and forming a collection. It is therefore a fairly recent decision by the Malta Ornithological Society not to make use of stuffed birds, not even for educational purposes, since the attitude of the unenlightened section of the public may interpret exhibited stuffed birds as an encouragement to kill more." Our exhibits also included models of Ghadira and Filfla, two important ornithological sites.

moreover, that less than 10% survive more than a month in captivity. Specially made traps which catch on both sides when a Robin attack the live decoy inside were on sale both in Malta and Gozo. The M.O.S. issued a press release to all the local papers condemning these acts and urging those responsible to see that such acts are stopped. Official letters were also sent to the departments concerned.

#### M.O.S. Young Members' Section

The Young Members' Section of the M.O.S. was started last year to cater for young members. The present young members' officer is B.K. German who is a dedicated and



A Robin in a cage. Though the Robin is protected, this is not an infrequent sight in Malta

(E. Caruana).

#### Acts that should make all Maltese faces blush.

Once again the influx of our winter resident, the Robin, in October was accompanied by a large number of people, young and old, roaming about in the country side, even in protected areas, trapping this protected species. It is estimated that not fewer than 20,000 robins are trapped in October and November. We are virtually certain,

been member of the Society. Outings and talks are held monthly, while leaflets with information and notes on our birds and the need to protect them are also issued exclusively to them. So far 6 leaflets have been published. The annual membership is 2s. 6d. and all youngsters under the age of 17 can join. Members of the M.O.S. and the public in general are asked to help in making youngsters

interested to join. The Young Members' Officer's address is 'Casa German', 126 Rudolph St., Sliema. **Bird-Watching introduced at the Lyceum in Gozo.**

Mr. P.P. Grech, B.A. (Hons.), M.A., Dip. Educ., Headmaster of the Lyceum, Secondary Technical School, Technical Institute and Gozo Industrial Training Centre,

in Gozo, has introduced bird-watching in his schools as one of the items of the extra-curriculum activities. He stopped the bird-stuffing club which was organised during last scholastic year and which was reported in the last issue of *il-Merill*. Mr. P.P. Grech should be congratulated for taking this action.

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## BIRD-WATCHING IN GOZO

J. SULTANA

The same general principles of bird-watching mentioned in the article — Bird-Watching in Malta — by M. Beaman in *il-Merill*, Issue No. 2 should also be applied to Gozo. I would again stress the importance of wind direction. Gozo has several valleys running seaward. During unfavourable weather, migrants funnel through these valleys against the wind when coming to land, obviously seeking the best sheltered places.

Being smaller, Gozo's best sites are within easy reach. The plateau-surfaced hills, such as *id-Dabrani* and *Ta' Ghammar*, provide excellent sites for good views of migrating flocks of Turtle Doves in spring, of Finches in autumn and of raptors (in fewer numbers) in both seasons.

The plains of *Ta' Hamet* and those round the village of *San Lawrenz* attract the plovers, larks, pipits and wheatears, while the valleys, such as *Marsalforn Valley*, provide adequate habitat for arboreal birds. The rocky areas (e.g. *Ta' Cenc* and *il-Qortin ta' Marsalforn*) also attract the larks, pipits and wheatears.

Gozo lacks adequate sites for waders, and though they can be frequently heard passing over, few can be watched. These alight on the several small dams (when rainwater is present) in various valleys, at the salt-pans at *Xwieni* and round the coast, preferring bays and inlets.

Night, Squacco, Grey and Purple Herons and Little Egrets can be seen singly or in flocks passing over, usually along the coast, where they frequently alight on rocks. Swifts and hirundines can be watched flying in every locality.

The small size of Gozo has another advantage for the bird-watcher. Species with different requirements of habitat can be noted in the same locality. Owing to the position of the Maltese Islands, one is never sure of what can turn up during migration and this makes bird-watching in Gozo, as in Malta, quite exciting. When quantity is lacking, quality is present.

*All the above applies only for the migration seasons.* Otherwise, as in Malta, few species are present during the whole year. Following is a list of the breeding birds, which, except for the Short-toed Lark (a summer resident), can be seen all the year round, and where to watch for them.

*Cory's Shearwater*: Along the southern cliffs. Can be heard only on moonless nights from March to September. During this time they can be seen offshore round the island, especially on windy days.

*Manx Shearwater*: In much fewer numbers (and much less vocal) than the Cory's. Few scattered small colonies both on the southern and northern cliffs. Very rarely seen offshore from land.

*Peregrine Falcon*: Odd pair about the southern cliffs.

*Kestrel*: Occasional pair along the sea-cliffs. (Very common in spring and autumn and a few reside in winter).

*Herring Gull*: Colony at Ta' Cenc Cliffs. Few scattered pairs at the S.W. cliffs.

*Barn Owl*: Few scattered pairs mostly along cliffs. Not infrequently noted at night in the countryside and at sparrows' roosts.

*Short-toed Lark*: Common on rocky areas, hill-sides and other open country. (March to September).

*Sardinian Warbler*: Very common everywhere except in the bare open countryside.

*Spectacled Warbler*: About the rocky areas and open countryside where low scrubby plants occur.

*Blue Rock Thrush*: Common mostly along the sea-cliffs.

*Corn Bunting*: In the bare valleys and open countryside.

*Linnet*: Few pairs round the villages of Xaghra, Nadur and Zebbug. Otherwise very common on passage in autumn. Common in winter and spring.

*Tree Sparrow*: Scattered pairs in various localities, mostly in agricultural valleys. Irregular passages take place in autumn.

*Spanish Sparrow*: Abundant everywhere.

During migration one can watch birds all over the countryside. The following list includes the best sites. Herons, raptors, Turtle Dove (in spring), swifts (also in summer), hirundines and finches, which can be noted at all the sites are not included in the list.

*Marsalforn Valley*: This valley, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles long, runs towards Marsalforn Bay from near Victoria. The lower part has a line of tamarisk, carob and mulberry trees, with irrigated land on both sides. Further inland it is relatively bare with two small dams which hold water during the rainy season. The area is best visited during S.E. wind for migrants, also during N.E. & S. winds.

*Ramla Valley*: Ramla valley runs down between the villages of Xaghra and Nadur towards Ramla Bay. The upper part, which includes a diversity of habitat, is the best area and can be visited during both northerly and southerly winds. This area can be reached from the road from Xaghra (near Nazzarenu's church). When down in the valley road, one has to turn up instead of going down towards the bay.

*Mgarr ix-Xini*: The deep valley at Mgarr ix-Xini has rocky heights on both sides with a number of scattered bushes. It is rather arid in comparison to the above localities, but is very good for migrants during North-westerly winds. Apart from the birds, this area is also geologically important. It can be reached from the village of Xewkija by a narrow but good road that leads to the opening of the valley.

*Lunzjata/Xlendi Valley*: This is the greenest area in Gozo, where a spring of water runs down during most of the year. The upper part (Lunz-

jata Valley) has a reed-bed along the middle with a wooded area (relative to Gozo) on one side and irrigated fields on the other. The lower part (Xlendi Valley) is deeper with rocky heights on both sides. It is best visited during N.W. & N.E. winds. It takes only 15 minutes on foot from the centre of Victoria, on the road to Xlendi, to reach the point between the two valleys.

Birds that can be seen during spring and autumn in the above localities: Crakes, Scops Owl, Cuckoo, Nightjar, Bee-eater & Roller (spring only), Hoopoe, Wryneck, pipits, wagtails, Woodchat Shrike, warblers, flycatchers, thrushes and chats, and Golden Oriole (mostly in spring).

*Ta' Cenc Cliffs*: This is a rocky area with a 400 foot drop to the south. The cliffs provide a magnificent view. It can be reached from the village of Sannat. Larks, pipits, wheatears, and Rock Thrush (not to be confused with the Blue Rock Thrush which is always present) are birds which frequent this area.

Other places worth a visit are Pergla Valley in Xaghra (half-way between Marsalforn and Ramla Bays), San Blass and Wied ir-Rihan in Nadur, the valleys round the village of Zebbug and the area round the village of Gharb.

The wintering birds, Water Rail (at Lunzjata), Meadow Pipit, Wagtails (White and Grey), Dunnock, Chiffchaff, Fire/Goldcrest, Stonechat, Black Redstart, Robin, thrushes, finches and Starling can be watched in various localities. Sea-cliffs round the island provide vantage points to do sea-bird watching.

While in cultivated areas, bird-watchers are advised to keep strictly to the paths. Farmers are generally hospitable and helpful, but they do not like to see people trekking across their cultivated fields. Unfortunately, as in Malta, the best areas are frequented by shooters and trappers to the 'bird-watchers' annoyance.

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## RAPTORS IN MALTESE SKIES

### A REVIEW

C. GALEA

One of the many projects that the M.O.S. has taken in hand is the appraisal of the situation of birds of prey in the Maltese Islands. It is very urgently needed and will provide, it is hoped, a basis for future efforts aimed at both the further study of these birds and at the education of the public in its appreciation of raptors — not as plucked carcasses for the pot, not as stuffed caricatures in glass-cases, but as the magnificent monarchs of the sky as they truly are.

This appraisal will take the form of a review which will consist of several parts, each dealing with a different aspect e.g. migration.

All the birds seen in Malta are of course European ones. So it is quite pertinent to take a brief look at the whole i.e. European picture.

38 species of raptors are found breeding in Europe; 28 *Accipitridae* (broad-wingeds) and 10 *Falconidae* (Falcons). They occupy every conceivable habitat, from the bleak Arctic tundra of the Gyr Falcon



A pair of Kestrels on the nest. (E. Hosking)

*Falco rusticolus* to the forests of the Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, from the swamps of the Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* to the mountain ranges of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*.

Only 9 species are resident, the rest being either partial migrants or else summer visitors. On their twice yearly journey to and from their breeding quarters large concentrations of migrating broad-wingeds are seen at Falsterbö (Sweden), at Gibraltar and at the most famous of all, the Bosphorus.

Naturally only migratory species can be observed in these Islands, and this cuts down the number of species that one can expect to meet with here. The tally is further limited by:

(a) the geographical position of the Islands, right in the centre of the Mediterranean, 60 miles S.E. of Sicily and 180 miles away from the nearest point on the African coast. This appears to be a 'long' sea-crossing to broad-winged raptors;

and (b) the known propensity of most *Accipitridae* to avoid long sea-crossings. However, Harriers do not seem to mind crossing large stretches of open water.

Thus *Accipitridae* would not be expected to be seen in any large variety or numbers; this, however, would not necessarily apply to Harriers and Falcons. Still in spite of these adverse factors, 31 species have been recorded; 11 *Falconidae* and 20 *Accipitridae*. Of this total, 12 which will be treated in a separate article are of very rare occurrence (2 are accidental for Europe),

the rest ranging from very common to rather rare.

Annually some 18 species are met with, of which 15 are regular visitors. These are the Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, all 4 European harriers *Circus macrourus*, *C. pygargus*, *C. cyaneus* and *C. aeruginosus*, Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, Sparrow Hawk *Accipiter nisus*, Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*, Merlin *Falco columbarius*, Red-footed Falcon *Falco tinnunculus*, Lesser Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, and Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*. A Short-toed Eagle *Circus gallicus*, a few Buzzards *Buteo buteo* and the odd Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* or two turn up in most years.

Only two species nest here, the Peregrine and the Kestrel. Peregrines formerly used to breed all around the coast as several place names indicate, e.g. Rdum il-Bies (the Peregrine's Hill) at M'Xlokk. Nowadays only two pairs breed. Kestrels used to breed commonly, even on the Valletta bastions. Now only the odd pair manages to breed. A. Schembri (Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta — 1843) stated, on second hand information, that the Red Kite *Milvus milvus* bred on the southern sea-cliffs of Gozo. The Red Kite is an accidental species to our Islands.

These then are the raptors that one may see in Malta. Their list is not impressive, but all things considered it is quite an imposing and interesting one.

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## SOME NOTES ON THE WHITE WAGTAIL

J. SULTANA & C. GAUCI

The White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (Maltese name: Zakak) generally arrives in October though stragglers may be seen as early as mid-Septem-

ber. It is a common autumn passage migrant and winter resident till March. Small numbers reappear in March and early April.

The White Wagtail can be seen in its winter plumage. The upperparts are grey with a dark patch on the nape and whitish forehead and cheeks. The underparts are white with a black band across its breast. The tail is black with contrasting white outer tail feathers. Its breeding plumage, which is assumed prior to its departure, includes a black nape, more contrasting white on the forehead and a glossy black throat.

J. Gibb's "Migrants through Malta & Gozo; October 1941—July 1945" (Brit. Birds 40:71-78) is the only ornithological contribution giving the first and last dates of appearance of species including those of the *Motacilla alba*. Our records for the years 1967-70 are hereunder compared with Gibb's:

	First dates	Last dates
J. Gibb 1941-45	Oct. 17 to Oct. 27	Apr. 3 to Apr. 7
Our records 1967-70	Sept. 12 to Oct. 9	Apr. 7 to Apr. 23

J. Gibb has also been the only contributor of a short paper on the singing of birds in Malta and Gozo (Brit. Birds 39:354-357). He writes 'No song' for this species, but we have heard individuals singing in early April at the Salt pans at Salina. The song always consisted of low warbling notes delivered in prolonged phrases. Its calls, as mentioned by Gibb, are a 'chizzik' and a one note 'zzik' frequently uttered while flying, also when flushed.

The White Wagtail has been noted to arrive singly or in flocks of up to 50. During winter it usually prefers to keep singly during the day while it forages round pools in valleys and manure heaps in farm yards, only to gather in a large flock at the roosting site, where they arrive in small parties.

It is an interesting fact that for many years the wintering White Wagtails have roosted in the trees in the Great Siege Square in Valletta. We have come to the conclusion that even those that are feeding in Gozo during the day cross the narrow channel to roost in this one particular area. We have no records of White Wagtails roosting anywhere in the islands except for two newly arrived flocks on 24th and 25th October, 1970, at Lunzjata in Gozo and five birds seen late in the evening at Ramla Valley, also in Gozo, in early April, 1970.

On these occasions we were virtually certain that they were passage migrants and not wintering birds. During the last two winters small parties were noted crossing the channel from Gozo at about 16.30 hrs. and from Malta at about 07.30 hrs. These have been noted both from the ferry boat and from vantage points at Marfa. A recovery in Valletta of a ringed bird at Lunzjata in Gozo also supports our conclusion.

Like other wintering species, the White Wagtail is also faithful to its wintering quarters. Those which succeed to make the trip to the continent and back return to the same localities. Three ringed birds have so far been recovered in the consecutive winter. The fact that the same roosting place is used year after year also supports this.

The subspecies *Motacilla alba yarelli* known as the Pied Wagtail and whose breeding range is mainly the British Isles has been reported to be

a straggler in autumn by G. Despott (Notes on the Ornithology of Malta. Ibis (10) 5:281-349, 466-526) who also gives a record for April, 1916. This subspecies differs from the nominate *M.a.alba* in having a black back and rump in the breeding season.

Wing-length and Weight of the White Wagtail (M.O.S. Ringing Group records):

The wing-length of 26 birds ranged from 83 to 92.5 mm. with an average of 87.5 mm. The weight of 20 birds ranged from 18.4 to 29 gms. with an average of 22.6 gms.

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## A NEW SPECIES ADDED TO THE LIST . . .

### SOOTY FALCON

Owing to the small size and position of the Maltese Islands a large number of species in the list of birds recorded are either accidental, rare or somewhat scarce visitors. Several have been recorded only once. Two American species also figure in the list, namely the American Kestrel (M.O.S. Quarterly Bull. Vol. I No. 2: J. Sultana "The Occurrence of the American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* in Malta" and the Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* (M.O.S. Quar. Bull. Vol. II No. 4: J. Sultana & C. Gauci "Systematic List — Oct.-Dec. 1969)

Another new species to be added is the Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. A specimen was taken at tal-Han-  
daq on 17th August, 1970. It was in the company of two other unidentified falcons.

The Sooty Falcon breeds from the Libyan Desert to the Red Sea Area. In the non-breeding season its range spreads to coastal areas of Eastern Africa and especially to Madagascar. It struggles to Mauritius and sometimes it is recorded in the Sudan and Lake Victorian Basin ("Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World" Leslie Brown and

S. BORG

Dean Amadon, Vol. II).

The following is a description of the skin. The specimen is 12 ins. in length. The mantle, rump and head are dove grey, the latter slightly darker. Their feathers have thin dark shafts which are shorter and more narrowly spaced on crown and nape. It has a blackish mark under the eye which seems to merge into an inconspicuous moustachial stripe. The latter contrasts with the dirty whitish chin which merges into the grey of the breast. The rest of the underparts are also dove grey retaining some juvenile feathers on belly and flanks. These juvenile feathers are light brown, edged whitish giving it a blotchy appearance. The dark shafts are also present on the underparts and under tail coverts. The wing coverts are of a dirty brownish grey colour while the primaries and secondaries (unmoulted like the coverts) are blackish brown. The tail is also unmoulted. The two centre tail feathers are dark blackish grey; the rest are broadly striped with white on inner webs and are white tipped. It seems that the bird is in transition from immature to adult

plumage. The colour of the cere is yellow with a shade of green, while the feet, which have markedly long toes and black claws, are bright yellow with a shade of orange. The closed wing is slightly longer than the tail. Measurements: Wing 270

mm., Tail 130 mm. Bill 12 mm. and Tarsus 34 mm.

The Maltese name which fits this falcon is Zumbrell Gharbi. (Zumbrell is the Maltese name for the Red-footed Falcon and Gharbi means Arabian).

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## NEWS FROM THE RINGING GROUP

All ringers were very active throughout most of the last five months of the year. The new ringers, S. Borg and J. Grech, completed their training in November and are now awaiting their permits from the British Trust for Ornithology

A number of interesting retraps was obtained in November and December. Some Chiffchaffs were ringed up to four winters back and Robins and Grey Wagtails up to two winters back.

The only birds ringed in each of the last five months were Cetti's Warbler, Sardinian Warbler and Spanish Sparrow.

### AUGUST

August was the initial month of autumn migration. Three of our ringers were away from the Island and only one ringer was active — during the latter half of the month. Ringing was mainly carried out in the early morning at Wied il-Luq, Buskett, which was visited on nine days. The most interesting birds ringed were three Cetti's Warblers and one Savi's Warbler. Three Whitethroats were also noteworthy.

### SEPTEMBER

Three ringers active in September trapped 468 birds of 22 species. J. Sultana and C. Gauci, helped by S. Borg, successfully worked a big Yellow Wagtail roost at Salina on five occasions. J. Sultana and J. Grech also manned Lunzjata Valley for roosting Swallows and Yellow Wagtails. Wied il-Luq and Mtahleb in Malta and Pergla Valley in Gozo were used several times in the mornings.

### OCTOBER

October was the best month in autumn as far as ringing was concerned. Early in the month we had the pleasure of welcoming once again to our shores Glyn Davies, who spent a fortnight in Gozo. He and V. Vella Muskat worked Lunzjata for roosting hirundines almost every day with very satisfactory results. Lunzjata Valley was the most frequented site with 21 ringing sessions to its credit. Wied il-Luq, Mtahleb, Ramla Valley and Ramla Bay were the most frequented localities. The best catches were recorded at Lunzjata on 6th and 7th, with 52 and 51 birds trapped respectively. A Water Rail ringed at Mtahleb was a new species added to the list. Other interesting birds ringed were a Red-backed Shrike, 2 Cetti's Warblers, 1 Savi's Warbler, 1 Moustached Warbler and a Bluethroat.

NOVEMBER

November proved to be yet another good month and just under 500 birds were ringed. Ringing took place in the usual places, but Wied Znuber, at Hal Far, was also visited a few times. Several good catches were recorded. The most interesting birds ringed, besides two Wrens and a Blue-throat, were undoubtedly two Dartford Warblers.

DECEMBER

No less than eight more Dartford Warblers were trapped and ringed in December. Another new species was ringed — this time a Jack Snipe trapped at Lunzjata Valley. A Wryneck ringed at Ghadira was one of the very few which remained to winter.

LIST OF BIRDS RINGED

Species	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1970 Total
Manx Shearwater	—	—	—	—	—	14
Cory's Shearwater	—	—	—	—	—	23
Storm Petrel	—	—	—	—	—	553
Kestrel	—	—	—	—	—	1
Water Rail	—	—	1	—	—	1
Little Ringed Plover	—	—	—	—	—	10
Little Stint	—	—	—	—	—	14
Green Sandpiper	—	—	—	—	—	2
Wood Sandpiper	—	—	—	—	—	4
Common Sandpiper	—	—	—	—	—	1
Snipe	—	—	—	—	1	2
Great Snipe	—	—	—	—	—	1
Jack Snipe	—	—	—	—	1	1
Herring Gull	—	—	—	—	—	3
Turtle Dove	—	—	—	—	—	1
Cuckoo	—	—	—	—	—	1
Scops Owl	—	—	—	1	—	2
Nightjar	—	—	—	—	—	1
Kingfisher	—	—	—	1	—	1
Hoopoe	—	—	—	—	—	1
Wryneck	—	4	2	—	1	10
Sand Martin	—	7	8	—	—	199
Swallow	—	57	156	—	—	732
Red-rumped Swallow	—	—	—	—	—	4
House Martin	—	—	—	—	—	304
Tree Pipit	—	5	3	—	—	32
Meadow Pipit	—	—	—	2	4	9
Yellow Wagtail	—	164	62	—	—	295
Grey Wagtail	—	—	6	12	3	22
White Wagtail	—	—	5	—	—	5
Red-backed Shrike	—	—	1	—	—	1
Woodchat Shrike	—	1	—	—	—	2

Wren	—	—	—	2	—	2
Duncock	—	—	10	21	1	34
Cetti's Warbler	3	2	2	1	2	12
Savi's Warbler	1	—	1	—	—	3
Moustached Warbler	—	—	1	2	—	6
Sedge Warbler	—	—	4	1	—	60
Reed Warbler	17	16	4	—	—	43
Great Reed Warbler	4	2	1	—	—	48
Icterine Warbler	—	—	1	—	—	12
Garden Warbler	5	73	7	1	—	119
Blackcap	—	1	3	11	1	100
Whitethroat	3	3	—	—	—	123
Sardinian Warbler	5	30	21	30	24	163
Subalpine Warbler	24	44	2	—	—	86
Spectacled Warbler	—	1	3	—	2	7
Dartford Warbler	—	—	—	2	8	10
Willow Warbler	—	7	5	—	—	51
Chiffchaff	—	—	30	148	109	491
Boneill's Warbler	—	—	—	—	—	3
Wood Warbler	—	—	—	—	—	31
Goldcrest	—	—	—	3	—	3
Firecrest	—	—	2	8	3	16
Pied Flycatcher	—	—	—	1	—	34
Collared Flycatcher	—	—	—	—	—	4
Spotted Flycatcher	—	—	1	—	—	28
Whinchat	—	—	1	—	—	30
Stonechat	—	—	2	12	3	18
Blue Rock Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	2
Black Redstart	—	—	—	2	—	3
Redstart	—	11	10	—	—	54
Robin	—	5	186	184	47	493
Nightingale	1	10	—	—	—	37
Bluethroat	—	—	1	1	—	3
Blackbird	—	—	—	2	—	4
Song Thrush	—	—	4	6	—	10
Corn Bunting	—	1	—	—	—	2
Chaffinch	—	—	3	10	2	18
Serin	—	—	—	—	—	1
Greenfinch	—	—	14	3	—	21
Linnet	—	1	36	18	—	117
Spanish Sparrow	2	23	13	11	2	142
Tree Sparrow	—	—	2	1	—	3
Starling	—	—	—	1	—	1
Golden Oriole	—	—	—	—	—	3
Totals	65	468	614	499	213	4,704

C. GAUCI