

The first record of Black-throated (Seebohm's) Wheatear *Oenanthe seebohmi* (Dixon, 1882) in Malta

Edward Bonavia

Local photographer and birdwatcher Aron Tanti took photos of a male Black-throated Wheatear *Oenanthe seebohmi*, which he found in Xrobb L-Għaġin Park, along the southeastern coast of Malta, on 30 March 2016. Aron sent his photos to me, and I visited the park with my father, Norman Bonavia, who is also a birdwatcher, on the same day. The bird was located actively feeding in the patch exactly next to the main building of Xrobb L-Għaġin park, together with a number of Northern Wheatears *Oenanthe oenanthe* and a couple of Black-eared Wheatears *Oenanthe hispanica*. The Black-throated Wheatear was very tame and easily approachable.

All diagnostic features of this species were noted, including the large black throat-patch extending to the cheeks, ash-grey upperparts, very broad white supercilium and forehead and pure white underparts. In flight it showed the typical solid black underwing coverts contrasting strongly with the pale underside of the flight feathers.

Presumably the wheatear continued its migration overnight, as birdwatchers who visited the area the following day were unable to locate it.

The Black-throated Wheatear is a localised summer visitor to the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and Algeria. It is a relatively short-distance migrant as it winters mainly close to the Atlantic coast (BirdLife International 2019). Apart from being recorded a few times in Tunisia and Libya, it has been recorded once each in Egypt, Gibraltar, Canary Islands, and recently (2017) in the Netherlands.

The sighting was submitted to the Malta Rarities and Records Committee, who accepted this as a first record on 21 February 2017. The Maltese name given to Black-throated Wheatear is *Kudat-Atlas*.

References

BirdLife International, 2019. Species factsheet: *Oenanthe seebohmi*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 09/07/2019. Recommended citation for factsheets for more than one species:

BirdLife International, 2019. IUCN Red List for birds. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 09/07/2019.

Edward Bonavia - edbon@go.net.mt



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Figure 1. *Black-throated Wheatear* as seen on 30 March 2016 in Xrobb L-Għaġin