

# BIRD'S EYE VIEW



*Two Hobbies which were found shot at Busket, a Bird Sanctuary. Natalino Fenech*



# BIRD'S EYE VIEW

No. 10 September 1987  
The Ornithological Society  
P.O. Box 498, Valletta, Malta

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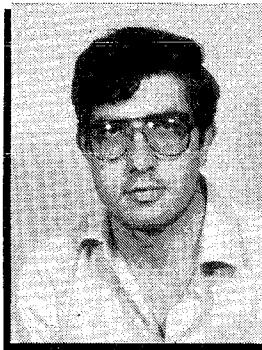
## COMMENT

This year the MOS is celebrating its 25th Anniversary, and one may therefore ponder a little and ask a few questions: What has been achieved during these years? What effect has the MOS had on the general public?

25 years ago, conservation in Malta was almost inexistent. There was no conservation movement. Now the story is different. The general public's attitude towards the natural environment has changed considerably. Awareness increased. No doubt this has been the result of the MOS incessant activities: a continuous campaign of protests, articles, talks, exhibitions and educational material. When one delves into MOS past records one notes, not without admiration, the tremendous efforts that must have been put in to carry out all that work. And behind all this there were those council and committee members, at times only a handful of them, who dedicated all their spare time. To these people, as well as to those other members, donors and supporters who gave them their backing, today we should be grateful.

In spite of all this, Malta has not been turned into a bird haven. The killing still goes on unabated. A lot of work is still needed to have a total change of heart. The bird hunting regulations of 1980, are still openly violated and lately, to add insult to injury, just before the general elections, an "ultra vires" legal notice attempted to shorten the close season for shooting and trapping. Certainly this is a grave matter which is condemned from all the conservation movement's quarters. Politics have to be put aside to solve the national problem of birdshooting and trapping. Bird protection regulations have to be enforced, respected, and adhered to. Furthermore, the present regulations should be amended to bring them in line with European standards.

Malta must also not be isolated in its international obligations and should sign and ratify those international conventions dealing with the conservation of the natural environment. So far, the frequent calls from the environmental groups in these matters, have always fallen on deaf ears. The MOS and other environmental conservation bodies must continue gearing up to halt the alarming destruction of our natural environment. Every square metre of our dwindling countryside is precious, and time is against us!



*Joe A. Doublet*

*The Ornithological Society (M.O.S.), which was founded in 1962, has as its aims the study and protection of birds and their natural environment. The MOS, with a policy of conservation through education, runs an extensive educational campaign; publishes educational material regularly including the award winning books "A New Guide to the Birds of Malta" and "L-Aghsafar"; and organises various activities for its members, which presently number over 1000, as well as for the general public. The MOS, which has been instrumental in the setting up of Malta's national nature reserve, runs the Valletta Bird Ringing Scheme and publishes its scientific ornithological magazine "IL-MERILL" and its annual magazine "BIRD'S EYE VIEW", which focuses on the activities of the Society. The MOS has a thriving and active Youth Section (M.O.S.Y.) with its own publications "IN-NATURA" and "IL-KANGU".*

# PROTESTS CONTINUE. . . .

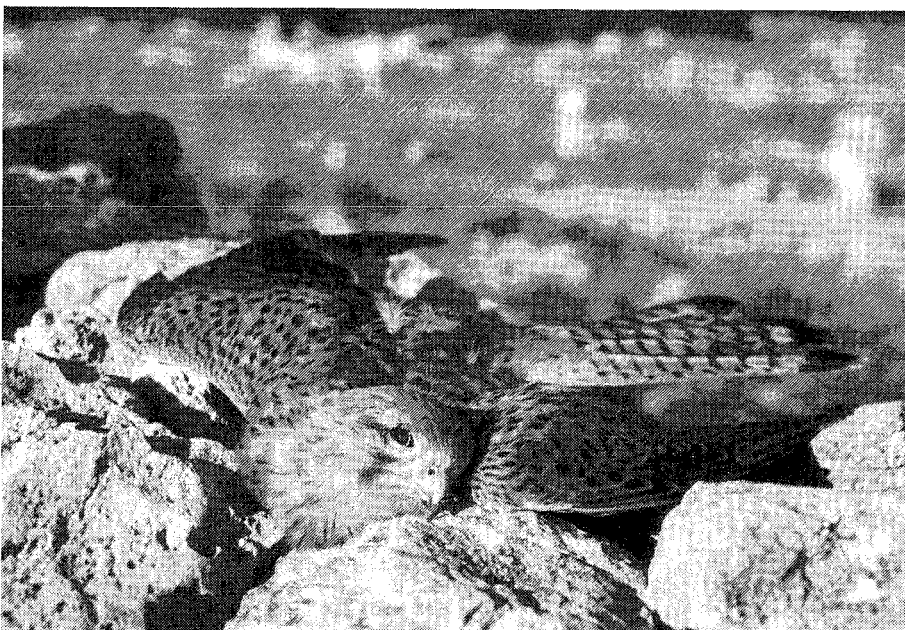
Saturday, 14th September 1985  
- City Gate, Valletta

During a street action the MOS protested publicly against the killing of Birds of Prey. Thousands of leaflets highlighting this atrocious killing and calling for its halt were distributed to members of the public entering or leaving Valletta. To attract public attention, a large banner was hung at the City Gate while helium filled balloons with slogans denouncing the illegal killing of birds were carried by the MOS Youths. The MOS also distributed an open letter addressed to Dr. K. Mifsud Bonnici, then Prime Minister of Malta, in which he was urged to enforce the bird protection laws. The MOS also recommended the setting up of a unit of environmental wardens with the police corp to enforce environmental laws. In a statement which appeared in the press, the MOS accused the authorities of doing nothing to curb the illegal shooting and trapping of birds at Buskett and other protected areas.

## BUT THE MASSACRE GOES ON!!



Lawrence Darnamin



Joe Doublier

### September 1986 - Buskett

Buskett, where several migrating birds of prey try to roost especially in late September, proves to be a leading bird cemetery due to the illegal presence of bird shooters. Just to give one glaring fact, in the first week of September 1986, most birds of a flock of 90 Night Herons, 38 Honey Buzzards, 1 Osprey, 1 Hobby, 1 Kestrel, 1 Red-footed Falcon, 3 Rollers, an unknown number of Turtle Doves, hundreds of swifts, swallows and martins, were shot down at Buskett. Not one single offender was apprehended by the police . . . and Buskett is a Bird Sanctuary!

**March 1987: –  
Ghadira Nature Reserve**

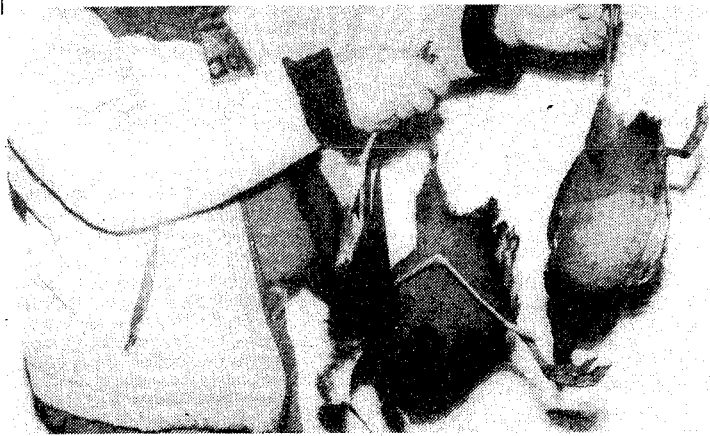
This Spring, a large number of birds started to settle down at Ghadira Nature Reserve finding food and shelter. But for most of them, refuge was not the case for long. Some unscrupulous shooters sneaked in on the night of the 14th–15th March and wrought havoc. Next morning, Ghadira provided a disturbing sight – injured waders, floating dead birds and spent cartridges. The dead birds included coots which had wintered in the reserve and Black-winged stilts which had arrived the day before. A Grey Heron, which had been at the place since early January, was also badly injured. This killing brought an outcry from various sources including, for the first time, the Shooters' Association.



Joe M. Mangion

THE TIMES, MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1987

**MASSACRE OF THE BIRDS**



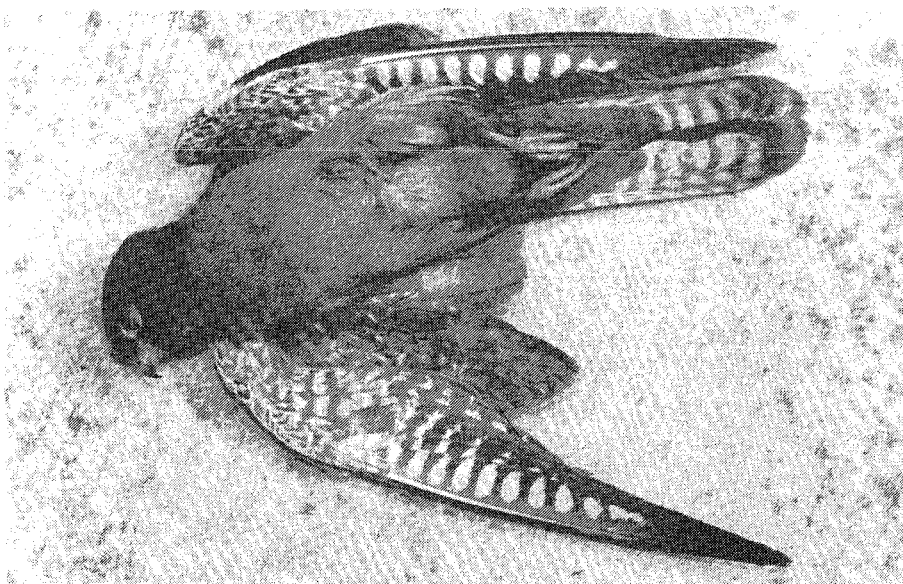
Several birds at Ghadira Nature Reserve were shot dead or injured on Saturday night, a spokesman for the Ornithological Society (MOS) said. Some of them, including coots, black-winged stilts and waders were left lying about inside the reserve. A report has been made to the Police.

**March 1987 – Salina**

A few days after the Ghadira massacre a flock of 19 Glossy Ibises, known in Maltese as "Velleran", settled down in the salt pans at Salina for a rest. A short while later, most of them were killed in the area, which is also legally protected. The Glossy Ibis, apart from being a protected species in Malta, figures also on the list of Europe's threatened birds.

**May 1987 – Various Localities**

As dawn broke on the 29th of May, after a night of highly overcast sky, an unusual sight of many Red-footed Falcons was noticed. Red-footed Falcons were seen hawking insects or perching on television aerials and telegraph lines, but their influx ended in disaster. Several hundreds of this protected species were shot down in various localities. And all this occurred during the period of the close season shortened by the infamous "ultra vires" legal notice (mentioned elsewhere in this issue). Some shooters bragged about a bag of 50 birds!! No doubt that such a massacre can have a drastic effect on the breeding population of Europe where it breeds in the east.



Natalino Fenech

# THE INFAMOUS LEGAL NOTICE

L.N. 18 of 1987

## CODE OF POLICE LAWS (CHAPTER 10)

### Protection of Birds and Wild Rabbits (Amendment) Regulations 1987

IN exercise of the powers conferred by section 214 of the Code of Police Laws, the Minister of the Interior has made the following regulations:-

1. These regulations may be cited as the Protection of Birds and Wild Rabbits (Amendment) Regulations, 1987, and shall be read and construed as one with the Protection of Birds and Wild Rabbits Regulations, 1980, hereinafter referred to as "the principal regulations".

2. In regulation 2 of the principal regulations for the interpretation of "close season" there shall be substituted the following:

"close season" means:

- (a) in respect of birds, any time between the 1st day of June and the 14th day of August of any year; and
- (b) in respect of wild rabbits, any time between the 1st day of January and the 31st day of May of any year".

ACT No. XVII of 1980

AN ACT further to amend the Code of Police Laws, Cap. 13.

BE IT ENACTED by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

1. This Act may be cited as the Code of Police Laws (Amendment) Act, 1980, and shall be read and construed as one with the Code of Police Laws, hereinafter referred to as "the principal law".

2. For section 188 of the principal law there shall be substituted the following:

188. (1) The use of guns and other firearms for sporting purposes is permitted but only as provided in the following provisions of this Part.

(2) No person shall use any gun or other firearm for the purpose of searching for, pursuing or killing game without a valid licence from the Police.

(3) A licence issued under subsection (1) of this section shall not be valid:

(a) in respect of any game, at any time between two hours after sunset of any one day and two hours before sunrise of the next following day;

(b) in respect of wild rabbits, at any time between the 1st day of January and the 31st day of May of any year;

(c) in respect of birds, at any time between the 22nd day of May and the 31st day of August of any year; and

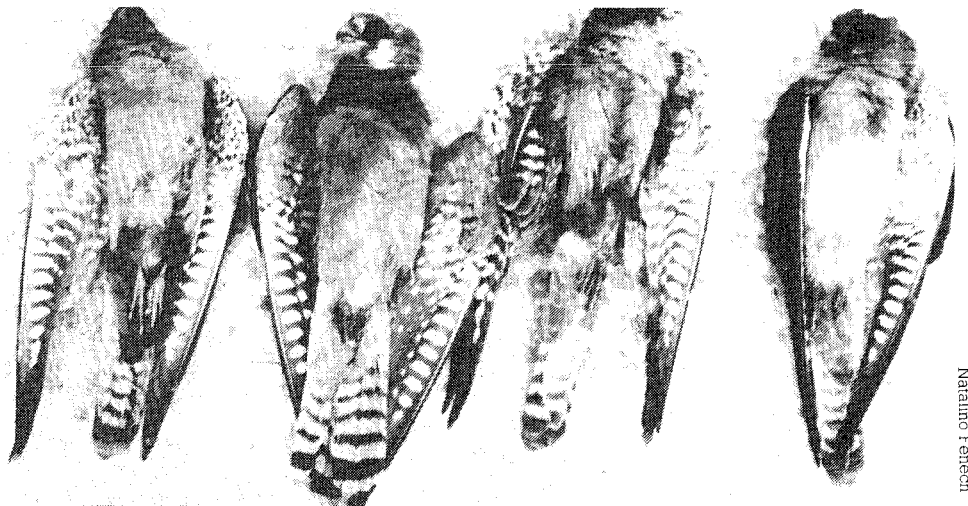
(d) during such other period as may be specified in the licence."

February saw the publication of legal notice 18 of 1987. This notice shortened the already short close season for shooting and trapping by 27 days. The original Act, which was unanimously passed through parliament on the 26th May 1980, stipulated the close season as the period of time between May 22nd and August 31st. Legal Notice 18/87 put the close season as the period between 1st June and 14th August. However LN 18/87 is "ultra vires" because it is outside the powers of the minister who issued it. In fact, the MOS was informed by its legal advisers that the close season, as stipulated by the Act of 1980, can be extended but not shortened.

The MOS, together with seven other environmental organisations, gave a press conference on Saturday, 12th February 1987, disapproving strongly that the close season was being shortened, when the need is felt to extend it to afford protection to birds during springtime. Furthermore, the MOS was not consulted prior to issuing the Legal Notice. The conservation societies made a joint appeal to the authorities to revoke this legal notice, not only because it is "ultra vires" but also because it is going to encourage the destruction of birdlife in Malta.

The Ornithological Society also wrote to the former Prime Minister, under whose jurisdiction fall the regulations, but it failed to receive any reply. Representatives of "Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent", Din l-Art Helwa, Men of the Trees, Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature, Movement '83, Society for the Protection and Care of Animals, ICBP Malta Section together with the MOS attended the joint press conference.

Several Red-Footed Falcons were shot during that part of the closed season, shortened by the ultra vires Legal Notice.



# BOV DONATION TO

Earlier this year, the Bank of Valletta management decided to give a donation of Lm5000 to the Shooters' Association, claiming that the aim is for the education of the association members. There was an immediate outcry from the general public. In fact several people withdrew their accounts from the bank in protest. Several environmental groups, including MOS advertised their protests in the local papers. Others wrote letters of protest to the Bank and in the press. The MOS also made strong representations to the Board of Directors of the Bank of Valletta, reminding them that at least on three occasions it had been refused sponsorship for educational material. At the MOS 25th Annual General Meeting, it was unanimously agreed, that the MOS withdraws its account from the Bank as a protest.

After several protests, the Bank sought a meeting with the MOS officials requesting proposals as to how it can help the society in its educational campaign.

THE TIMES, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1987

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The Ornithological Society is to withdraw its cash deposits from the Bank of Valletta in a protest gesture against the recent

## Protest against bank's donation to hunters' association

BY A STAFF REPORTER

donation of Lm5,000 to the Association of Hunters, Trappers and Conservationists.

The withdrawal was decided upon in one of the five resolutions unanimously passed at the Society's annual general meeting held recently.

They considered in the resolution that those who claim to represent all shooters and trappers in Malta had never condemned the illegal killing of birds and alleged that, on several occasions, tried to justify such killing.

They also noted that the shooters' association was officially requesting permission for shooters to be able to shoot at Buskett, a bird sanctuary; and for the removal from the list of protected species such birds as the honey buzzard and swifts.

### PROTECTION

In another resolution, the MOS urged the authorities to ensure proper protection of bird life and their natural environment by enforcing bird protection regulations, lengthening the close

season for shooting to incorporate part of the spring period when birds were preparing for breeding and stipulating a different close season for bird trapping to enable certain species, such as finches, to breed unmolested in the Island.

In another resolution, the MOS said it was alarmed by the taking over of public areas of natural importance by groups of people from where the public is barred during the shooting season and where harm was being done to the natural environment under the guise of embellishing the areas.

### COUNTRYSIDE

The MOS also showed its concern on the manner in which the

countryside was being built up and called on the Government to take immediate steps to safeguard what was left of the countryside by implementing a master-plan.

The MOS passed another resolution in which it expressed its appreciation for the intervention by the Ministry of Education and the Environment to safeguard the natural environment, for the benefit of the nation, of such

areas as Simar at Pwales. It also expressed its appreciation for the cooperation of the Education Department with the MOS in its educational campaign.

### Hunters' reaction

The hunters' association, "Għaqda Kaccaturi Nassaba Konservazzjonisti" said, the Ornithological Society was withdrawing its funds from the Bank of Valletta in protest against the donation by the bank to the association.

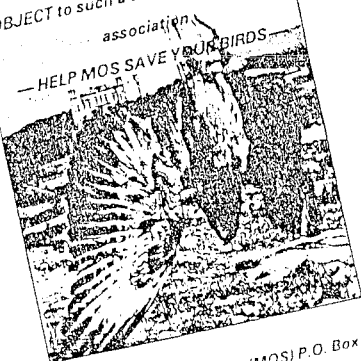
The donation, the association said, had been made to educate members on hunting regulations, meaning that although the MOS had been calling for association members to be educated, the MOS was protesting when a material way was achieved for this.

The association said it was trying to have just controls for its sport but the MOS was trying to give a wrong impression of the association.

Will the Lm.5000 donation by the Bank of Valletta STOP the ILLEGAL killing of birds?


We OBJECT to such a donation to the shooters' association.

— HELP MOS SAVE YOUR BIRDS —



the Ornithological Society (MOS) P.O. Box 498-Valletta.

WE DO NOT WANT TO SPONSOR BIRD SHOOTING



IN FACT, we object to the donation of Lm5000 to the Shooters' Association by the Bank of Valletta.

HELP US, HELP THE BIRDS.

Zghazgha Ghall-Ambient - 133, Melita Street, Valletta.

# SHOOTERS' ASSOCIATION



## Kingston, Canada June 1986

"Saving the Birds - An International Challenge" was the motto of the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) XIX World Conference, which was held at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada from the 15th to the 21st June, 1986.

About 222 delegates hailing from 57 countries discussed and reflected critically the achievements and plans for the future. The World conference is held every four years to assess the commitments made in the previous conference. Apart from the three days devoted for the general business of ICBP there were four scientific symposia, namely "Migratory Bird Populations and the loss of wintering habitats"; "Birds as Socio-Economic resources"; "Birds of Steppe and Steppe-like habitats"; and "Disease and management of threatened bird populations"; which were spread out on three other days.

ICBP continental section and specialist groups also reported on their workings of the past four years. One of the main items on the agenda was the presentation of ICBP Conservation plan 1986 to 1990. This Action Plan, meticulously prepared and presented by Dr. Christoph Imboden, ICBP's Director, highlights the major challenges and opportunities for ICBP in the next four years and attempts to establish a framework of priorities within which to develop specific projects and activities as part of the Annual Conservation programme.

The Conference came to an end with the election of the Officers and executive committee together with the adoption of the various resolutions. Joe Sultana, MOS President who attended the Conference as ICBP European Continental Section's Chairman also represented ICBP Malta and chaired the European Continental Section meeting which was held on 17th June. ICBP Malta's report was incorporated in a document of national reports presented at the conference by the secretariat.

## XVI ICBP European Continental Section Conference

Visegrad, Hungary was the venue of the 16th conference of the European Continental Section of ICBP, which was held from 14th to 17th May 1987.

The conference was chaired by Joe Sultana, MOS President, who presently occupies the chairmanship of ICBP European Continental Section. The conference was attended by well over a hundred delegates representing Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, U.S.S.R., and Yugoslavia. Paul Portelli, MOS Education Officer, also attended the conference and gave a 15-minute presentation with slides on the work of MOS.

The Conference reviewed the European Continental Section's (ECS) four main tasks and the progress achieved. The work of ECS on acid rain was noted to be completed and a final document on the consequences of acidic air pollution and precipitation for birds in Europe was presented at the meeting. Future work on this task was to be co-ordinated by the ICBP Swedish Section. The report on the bottle-neck areas for migratory birds in the Mediterranean region was also finalised and several recommendations were made to reduce the migratory bird killing. A report on the work of the ICBP Migratory Birds Co-ordinator was also presented. The ICBP main task, "The Important Birds Area Project" which was the theme of a whole day symposium, is to continue. The main aim of this task is to identify all the important bird areas in Europe and state why they are important. They will lead ICBP Europe to formulate a strategy to help it and national sections to defend these areas when they are threatened. New tasks for ECS include action for the protection of Europe's main threatened species, the Slender-Billed curlew and the formulation of a bird conservation strategy to be forwarded to IUCN, UNEP, and WWF for consideration and inclusion in their final documents.



# I.C.B.P. MALTA

*ICBP Malta Section is composed of 4 societies which are the MOS (The Ornithological Society), Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature, Society for the Protection and Care of Animals and Men of Trees (Malta Branch). In 1986 ICBP Malta issued two memoranda, one aimed at political parties and another one aimed at the Church authorities.*

## MEMORANDUM TO THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES

The Malta Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation (I.C.B.P.), while appreciating that the Church Authorities in Malta are very concerned with a number of problems, believes that they can still be of great benefit in helping to diminish the problem of the vanishing natural environment in general, wildlife in particular through the influence which they have over a large section of the Maltese population.

I.C.B.P. Malta notes with regret that the Church in Malta has rarely expressed in public any concern for the protection of the natural environment.

I.C.B.P. Malta considers that it is time for the Church Authorities to declare themselves publicly and speak strongly in favour of a policy of support of the efforts which many people, mostly youths in various organisations, are making to conserve nature and defend our natural heritage.

I.C.B.P. Malta believes that the Church Authorities should endeavour to educate the Maltese people, whom they can easily reach and influence, to appreciate nature, which is God's handiwork, because the general public not only lacks appreciation for nature but also does not disapprove of the continuous destruction of wildlife and its habitats.

I.C.B.P. Malta therefore requests the Maltese Church Authorities to reach the public through sermons during liturgical gatherings as well as through any papers and journals they publish, and endeavour to instil in the Maltese:

1. A respect for the right of life of other species;
2. A realisation that indiscriminate destruction of birds, other animals, plants and the senseless destruction of the natural environment is vandalism, which is to be condemned;
3. An understanding that no individual has a right to make use of, and much less destroy, the natural environment to the detriment of humanity, present and future. This includes the contamination of the environment with industrial wastes, pesticides, and the despoiling of our countryside with the dumping of rubbish;
4. An appreciation of the fact that God has given us a beautiful world to live in and to make use of *wisely*, and then to pass on to future generations in no worse state than that we found it in.

Church Authorities should not encourage

- (a) the use of wild flowers and trees for liturgical functions and for the embellishment of churches; and
- (b) the organisation of activities by church associated bodies during which participants are actively encouraged to capture wild animals (e.g. frogs/tadpoles and fresh water crab hunts).

In the opinion of I.C.B.P. Malta, weapons (e.g. shotguns) or other artifacts associated with the destruction of life for "pleasure" should not be allowed to figure in liturgical functions. Such activities, bringing Christian beliefs into disrepute, have been witnessed recently.

In other words, I.C.B.P. Malta is asking that the Church Authorities emphasise the appreciation of nature as Our Lord did personally and tried to make his listeners follow suit as when He told them to "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Mat. 6.28-29).

### Feedback



*The memorandum dealing with the protection of the natural environment which was presented to the Church authorities by ICBP Malta had positive reactions from various quarters. Several heads of Church Institutions commented favourably on it and it was quoted, and its requests recommended, by the authoritative Sunday Times' Roamer's Column. "Responsibility for the Environment" was the title of an article in the Sunday Times "Catholic Outlook" of the 26th October 1986, three weeks after the Memorandum was launched. But the best favourable comment came during the graduation ceremony of the Faculty of Theology. Mgr. Prof. Carmel Sant, who delivered an oration on "Natural Environment: The Biblical Perspective" referred to the environmental crises in Malta and stated that it was "within the competence of the Church authorities to intervene in the matter, as they have been urged to do by the International Council for Bird Preservation (Malta Section)". Mgr. Sant gave Biblical evidence to support the competence of the Church authorities in this matter. A concrete result from the memorandum was the fact that bird shooters were not invited to take part in the feast of "Our Lady of the Grotto" when they used to fire their "salute". This was announced in a letter in the press (Sunday Times 7/12/86) by Fr. L. E. Attard of the Dominican Fathers. (see also B.E.V. No. 9 1985 - "Sainly Shooters" page 19).*



# MEMORANDUM TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES

ICBP Malta Section requested the Maltese Political Parties to include the following proposals in their electoral programme so as to safeguard the natural environment of the Maltese Islands.

1. To take into consideration the natural environment in every planned development.
2. To set up an Environment Board, through legislation, to formulate a coherent environmental plan for the Maltese Islands.
3. To consult competent bodies and persons in the formulation of environmental plans.
4. To legislate and make it mandatory for the Environment Board or a similar Government Agency to assess any proposed development by Government or private enterprise for its environmental impact and to give said Board or Agency the right to block any such project should it be deemed to have a significant negative effect.
5. To appoint environmental wardens under the responsibility of the Environment Board or similar Government Agency for the enforcement of environmental legislation.
6. To plant indigenous trees in afforestation projects (this does not include the planting of decorative and exotic trees for public gardens, roundabouts, centre strips, etc.), and to propagate rare and endangered native trees in Government nurseries.
7. To initiate an extensive programme on environmental education, with an emphasis on natural environment, in schools.
8. To protect by the passing of an Act of Parliament
  - (a) the Maltese flora and fauna, particularly those species which are endemic, locally endangered, endangered on an international scale, and/or of particular scientific interest.
  - (b) Maltese habitats including representative habitats, rare and/or threatened habitats, and habitats which are of particular scientific importance.
9. To designate
  - (a) nature reserves where the habitats and biota are totally protected;
  - (b) reserved areas with partial protection; and
  - (c) marine parks for the protection and study of marine life.
10. To enact proper and modern environmental legislation to bring Malta in line with other countries.
11. To sign and ratify those international conventions dealing with the protection of the environment, particularly those concerning wildlife, namely Ramsar 1971 (the convention on wetlands of natural importance especially as waterfowl habitat); Washington 1973 (on the international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora); Bonn 1979 (on the conservation of migratory of European wildlife and natural habitats).

*The memorandum requested that the natural environment should be taken into consideration in every planned development.*



# MOS INTERNATIONAL TIES

## Gernant and Bird Killing in Malta

For three months in 1986, Gernant Magnin was sent by ICBP to Malta with the aim of carrying out a census of the birds killed and trapped. Gernant, soon to be nicknamed Wigi, (A Dutch "G" is too guttural for Maltese!) adapted instantaneously to the MOS social sphere.

Wigi dedicated himself totally to this census which he wouldn't have concluded had he not initiated a questionnaire with the most experienced birdwatchers on the Island. Armed with this background, Wigi launched himself into the Maltese countryside amassing personal observations of hunting and trapping activities. Wigi also gave a helping hand as a volunteer warden at the Ghadira reserve. His report, "An Assessment of Illegal Shooting and Catching of Birds in Malta" was published by the ICBP last year.

Wigi has just finished a similar project in Cyprus and his experience from Malta has helped him understand further the roots of problems regarding bird trapping and killing.



Gernant Magnin.



Photo by Gernant capturing a trapper



Alfred E. Baldacchino

## Seminar in Israel

Mr. Alfred E. Baldacchino, the former Hon. General Secretary of the MOS participated in a seminar organised by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. The seminar was held from the 23rd to the 28th March 1986. It was spread throughout various field study centres of Israel. Lectures were varied and included amongst others an insight into the Nature Protection in Israel, on educational programming, and a session on mammals. A number of interesting field trips was also organised, including one to the Judean desert, Israel's only intact ecosystem with the leopard as the top predator.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel runs 23 field study centres and is subsidised by the Government to the tune of 2 million US Dollars annually. It also employs 300 individuals, which explains why Israel is probably the Mediterranean state with the best preserved natural environment.

## "No al Bracconaggio" Reggio Calabria, May 3rd, 1986

The MOS participated in an international seminar on the migration of birds of prey at the Grand Hotel Excelsior in Reggio Calabria, Italy.

The seminar sponsored by the Lega Italiana per la Protezione degli Uccelli (LIPU) and the International Council for Bird Preservation, was opened by the then Minister of Ecology Valerio Zanone. MOS President Joe Sultana, acting also as ICBP European Chairman, presented a paper dealing with legislation on birds of prey protection in Europe, in which he emphasised that in all cases, but particularly in the case of Malta and Greece, the salient problem was the lack of enforcement of the law.

Other speakers included Mario Pastore, President of LIPU who is a well-known RAI journalist, Francesco Mezzatesta, Secretary General of LIPU, and Alfred E. Baldacchino, former General Secretary of the MOS.

During the seminar, which had the theme "Protection of Migrant Raptors", the work of LIPU was described and field excursions in the locality introduced participants to illegal bird killing problems in southern Italy. Reggio Calabria and the Straits of Messina are well known for the hundreds of shooters that line the hills waiting for the arrival of the migrating Honey Buzzard. The tradition of shooting Honey Buzzards is so deep rooted that it is said that a man who fails to kill one is a cuckold.

However the Italian government is willing and intends to stamp out illegal killing of birds, especially in the Straits of Messina. Towards this end, 45 wardens and a helicopter have been assigned to guard against the infringements of the law during the Spring migration.

Details relating to a referendum on the abolition of hunting in Italy were also given. A Communist parliamentary attempt to create public spendings in favour of hunting mobilised environment groups and the local Green Party to organise a collection of 2 million signatures (Italian law requires half a million signatures for a referendum). LIPU, together with Amici della Terra, FederNatura, Lega Anti Caccia, WWF, Liste Verde and with the financial support of the "L'Espresso", masterminded the collection of signatures for the referendum. Public polls indicate that 66% of all Italians want hunting abolished whereas 21% are in favour of hunting.

Amongst the foreign participants were Wim Verheugt, ICBP's coordinator for the migratory bird programme, Yossi Leshem, Director of the information centre for Raptors in Israel, Bernd Ulrich Meyburg, Chairman of the ICBP World working group on Birds of Prey, Francois Sagot from the Fond Intervention des Rapaces de France, Richard Porter from RSPB and Ali el Hili from Les Amis des Oiseaux (Tunisia). All in all the seminar served to act as a publicity stunt for LIPU and a medium for conservationists to meet and discuss Raptor protection.



### Medmaravis Symposium

"Population Studies and Conservation of the Mediterranean Marine Avifauna" was the theme of the 1st Mediterranean Seabird Symposium organised by MEDMARAVIS (Mediterranean Marine Bird Association) in association with the University of Sassari and under the auspices of the Director-General of the Council of Europe. The symposium was held in Alghero, Sardinia from the 26th to the 30th March 1986 and was attended by 60 seabird biologists from 10 different countries.

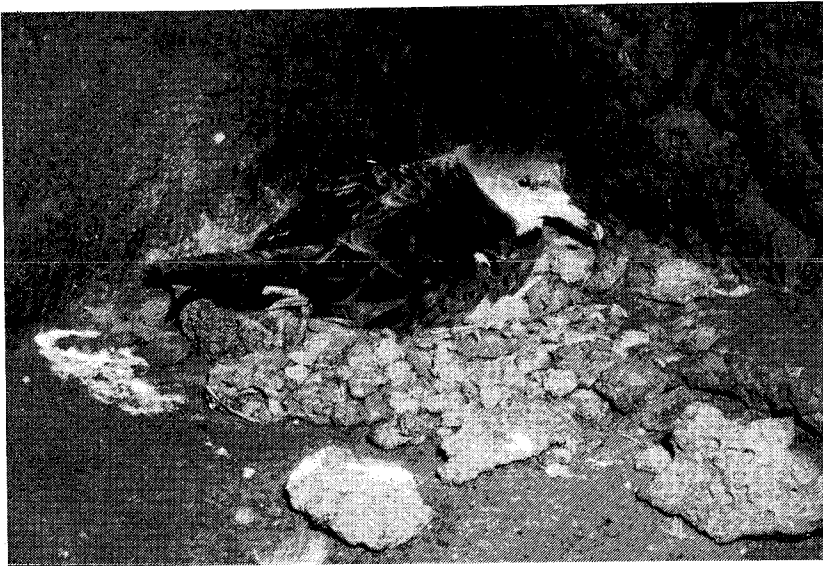
One of the sessions was wholly dedicated to "Sea-Bird Conservation in the Maltese Islands" and was presented by Joe Sultana. In this session the dramatic interference with birdlife by heavy motorised dinghies manned by hunters was highlighted. Two other participants from Malta were Richard Cachia Zammit and John Borg. The meeting ended by calling on the national and regional authorities and the international scientific community to give special protection status to the 10 most important sea bird sites in the Mediterranean including Filfla islet. The symposium also realised that there was an urgent need for further scientific research on the marine avifauna of the Mediterranean and that many sea-bird colonies and roosts were facing serious threats to their existence.



Mario Pastore, LIPU President addressing the Seminar, with (left to right) Francesco Mezzatesta, Joe Sultana and Wim Verheugt.

## Linosa's Cory's

John Borg and Richard Cachia Zammit are two Maltese ornithologists with a special interest in shearwaters. Their experience with these pelagic seabirds was sought by their Sicilian counterparts. Whilst visiting Linosa in May 1986 together with a team from Palermo University lead by Dr. Bruno Massa they ringed 800 Cory's Shearwaters. The travelling expenses to Linosa were partially reimbursed by the MOS. Back from the volcanic island of Linosa, John and Richard continued their field studies on this interesting breeding bird. Part of their studies also includes a genetic survey that should give them an insight on the affinity of our local Cory's Shearwater population.



Richard Cachia Zammit

## MOS meets French Journalists

An initiative from the newly formed Foundation for International Studies based in Valletta created an opportunity for local environmental organisations to meet a group of French environmental journalists. The meeting was attended by the MOS, SSCN, Zghazagh għall-Ambjent, the group Hagar and last but not least the Association of Hunters, Trappers and Conservationists. Each society's representative presented a brief introduction about the work of his society, followed by the journalists' questions. The climax of the meeting was when the MOS spokesman came to give the Society's version of bird problems in Malta. He was continuously interrupted by the shooters' representative and insults were not lacking. In fact the shooters' behaviour left much to be desired. At one point this representative attempted to stop the MOS spokesman from handing out a newspaper cutting. During their stay, the journalists which included staff from newspapers such as Le Monde, had the opportunity to witness the problem of hunting on the island. They were also lectured by the various members of the organisations including Joe Sultana and A.E. Baldacchino from the MOS.

## MOSY at Hallig Hooge

Philip Agius, Philip Anastasi and Ian Mifsud, three MOSY members attended a 2-week international camp, last August, organised by Youth and Environment Europe together with a German youth environmental group called DJN. The camp was held on Hallig Hooge, an island in the Waddensea. This camp was attended by youths from eight different countries including West Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Poland, Yugoslavia, Tunisia and Malta, bringing the total number of participants to 36. During this camp participants discussed the ecosystem of the Waddensea together with its problems such as the dumping of toxic heavy metals. Excursions were carried out to examine the plants and animals that live in the Waddensea. Special interest was also shown in the ecology of the salt meadows which represent one of the main types of habitat on this Island and many more throughout the extensive Waddensea.



Ian Mifsud

## Hamburg Television Feature

In the first weeks of April 1986, the NRD, German National Television of Hamburg visited Malta with the aim of filming Nature on the Maltese Islands.

Various topics were scrutinised and the conflict between the local charm and the destruction of Nature was continuously emerging in the spirit of true and fruitful documentation. The television team visited and filmed various parts of Malta. During filming at Buskett, the crew was also threatened by shooters. The programme that ensued was screened on Thursday, December 25th, 1985 at 17.15 hours in front of an estimated 2-3 million television viewers. The programme made a special emphasis on bird shooting and conservation in Malta. After leaving the islands, the crew immediately embarked on another filming project, this time in Sweden. The film there treated the life of the Cranes (*Grus Grus*). The programme screened was the first in the series of educational documentaries on the National Television.



Savour Balzan

Hamburg TV crew filming at Ghadira Nature Reserve.

## Joe at Warwick

Joe Sultana, the MOS President was the guest speaker at the RSPB's Members' Weekend at Warwick, held between 9th and 13th April 1987. Joe, who is also chairman of the European Continental Section of ICBP, gave an illustrated talk entitled "A Hostile Environment for Birds - Malta, a case study". His talk, which was very well received by the numerous members present, dwelt on bird protection problems in the Mediterranean, the natural environment and birdlife in Malta, the threats to birds in Malta and the work that MOS has been carrying out during its 25 years of existence.

## STOP PRESS



R.S.P.B.

## R.S.P.B. Birds and Countryside Awards . . . M.O.S. wins Certificate of Merit.

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales was the key speaker at the R.S.P.B. (U.K.) Birds and Countryside Awards luncheon which was held at the Institute of Civil Engineers in London on 9th July 1987. The Awards and Certificates of Merit were presented to organisations and individuals who have made the greatest commitment to wild birds and countryside conservation during 1986. There were four categories - individuals, industry, media and European. The Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli, L.I.P.U. and The Ornithological Society, M.O.S. were finalists for the European Award; with the Award going to L.I.P.U. and the Certificate of Merit going to M.O.S.

During the luncheon, Joe Sultana presented H.R.H. Prince Charles with a First Day Cover of the 25th M.O.S. Anniversary postage stamps. Several celebrities from the British world of politics, industry, show business and conservation attended the luncheon and the presentation to demonstrate their concern for the countryside.

## The Carpenters



Saviour Balzan

Draped in "puritan like" attire Petra and Dieter arrived unannounced one fine morning and offered their services to the MOS. In no time at all, they were working on the doors of the office which the MOS will be soon opening in Valletta.

Petra and Dieter hail from a German school of alternative carpentry, whose graduates offer their services in return for food and lodging. They do this for a period of 2 years and one day, and on no occasion do they work without using their outfit. The pair was indeed a spectacle in the streets of Valletta and an asset to the doors of the future MOS office.

# INTERNATIONAL HELP

## DBV Donation

On the initiative of Saviour Balzan, former PRO, the MOS German counterpart, the Deutscher Bund fur Vogelschutz (DBV) donated a photocopier to the MOS. This was brought over by the German Embassy where the official presentation took place on Wednesday, 11th February, 1987. The presentation, on behalf of DBV, was made by Dr. Gattfried Pagenstent, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to a delegation from the MOS. The MOS has always had good relations with DBV and exchange visits have been organised by both the societies' Youth Sections. DBV had also contributed financially towards the expenses for setting up the Ghadira Nature Reserve.



Joe Doubler

## ICCE Help

The British-based International Centre for Conservation Education is helping The Ornithological Society in the production of audio-visuals for local schools. This is being done by producing duplicates and overprints. The Society has already produced audio visuals on Breeding Birds of Malta, Nature in Autumn and Nature in Winter. These are in great demand by the MOS delegates in schools. These audio visuals are part of the Educational programme for local schools organised by the MOS Education Committee as part of the Society's policy of conservation through education. The Society is preparing more audio visuals for a better dissemination of the environmental message in schools. The ICCE is a company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity and stands for promoting greater understanding of conservation and the environment.

# MOS LOCAL SCENE

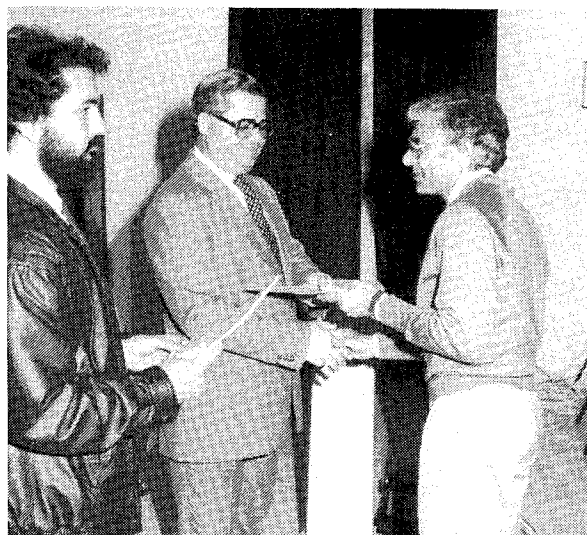
## The Education Campaign

Since its formation, the Education Committee has been organising various activities for teachers and schoolchildren alike. During the early stages the committee worked hard to enrol teacher delegates to represent MOS in as many schools as possible. These school delegates are given free membership and in return they act as a liaison between the MOS and the schoolchildren.

Various activities aimed at schoolchildren of different ages were organised. One of these was an essay competition which attracted more than 1600 essay entries which provided a hard job for the judges to select a representative number from the various categories. The success of the two anti-Robin-trapping campaigns during the last couple of years is due to the continuous effort and support from the school delegates. Both campaigns consisted of distributing leaflets, posters and stickers in schools. Together with the Movement of United Teachers, the MOS Educational Committee also organised an environmental course for teachers. Various topics regarding the natural environment with special reference to the Maltese Islands were dealt with by speakers over a span of six weeks. At the end of the course a certificate of attendance was presented by Mr. Alfred E. Buhagiar, MUT President.

A poster-cum-slogan competition was also organised for schools. Although the response was not as great as that for the essay competition, there were 260 entries from 17 different schools. The first prize was won by Anton Borg, a young lad from the special school at Wardija, while the secondary school at Dingli won the prize for the largest number of entries.

In March this year, the committee also launched "Il-Passa ta' l-Aghsafir", an educational booklet in full colour aimed at the younger generation. The booklet highlights the importance of bird migration with information on bird navigation and bird study. Its main aim is to show that bird migration should not result in the destruction of birds by shooting and trapping, but should be appreciated as a wonderful natural phenomenon. The booklet which was sponsored by the ICBP Bird Migration Programme and SLKV of Switzerland, is being distributed in schools.



Joe Doubler

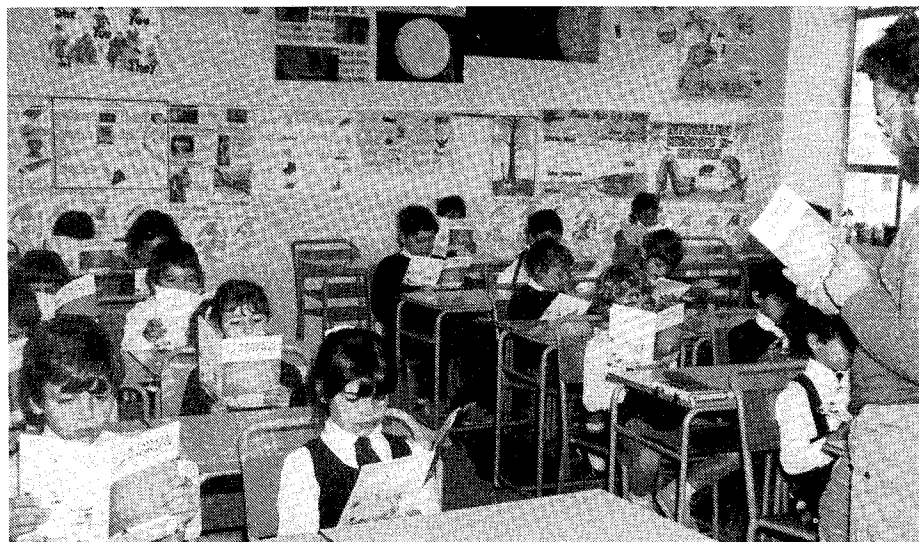
*Mr. Alfred Buhagiar, President of the Malta Union of Teachers, presenting a certificate to Mr. Victor Fiott, one of the teachers attending the course. Looking on is Paul Portelli MOS Education Officer.*



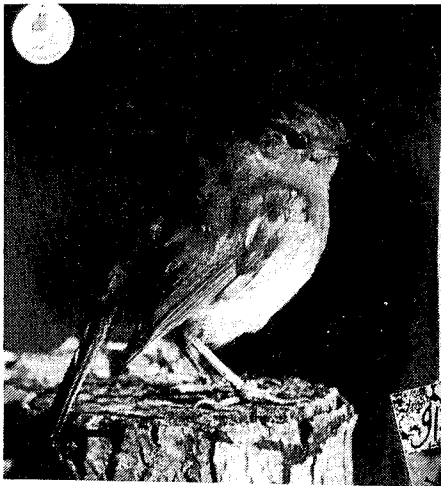
Joe Doubler

*Showing youths how to appreciate birds.*

*School children going through "Il-Passa ta' l-Aghsafir".*



Joe Sultana



**GHALIEX TAQBADNI  
BIEX TJASSARNI?**



**Anti-Robin-Trapping Campaign**

The thousands of people who visited Valletta in the morning of Saturday 5th October 1985 were greeted at City Gate by a huge banner depicting a Robin with the slogan "Hallih Hieles" (Let it free). The banner hanging from City Gate waved over a large replica of an illegal Robin trap with two MOS Youths dressed as Robins. Several other youths were "sandwiched" between two Robin posters and gave out stickers and leaflets.

This was Robin day, the MOS campaign against the illegal trapping of Robins. The campaign consisted mainly of the street action, distribution of educational material (leaflets, posters and stickers) in schools and the use of the mass media. The poster for schools was designed by Winston Attard and the leaflets were all designed by Victor Falzon. Parents were requested to discourage their children in indulging in such activities. The police authorities were also informed of various Pet shops which had robin traps for sale.

The handsome Robin is a common autumn migrant and winter visitor to Malta. Its arrival in October triggers off a craze mainly in youngsters, who indulge in this illegal trapping by putting a decoy in a specially made trap known locally as Trabokk. This is then placed in a territory which has already been occupied by a Robin. The trappers seem to derive pleasure in watching the wild bird attacking the decoy in the trap. Robins are easily caught and once caged it is only a matter of a few days before Robin Redbreast dies.

The campaign was repeated in Autumn 1986 and thousands of stickers and leaflets were again distributed in schools. Several large Robin posters, which were donated to MOS by the Norwegian Ornithological Society, were overprinted with a message in Maltese and were also distributed in schools.

The 1985 anti-Robin-trapping campaign was highlighted on BBC world service. During the programme known as Nature Notebook, Joe Sultana was interviewed on the aims of the campaign and on the situation of birdlife in Malta.

Lawrence Darmann

Lawrence Darmann

German Maghin



Joe Doubler

Joe Sultana





## A Sticker for the Youths

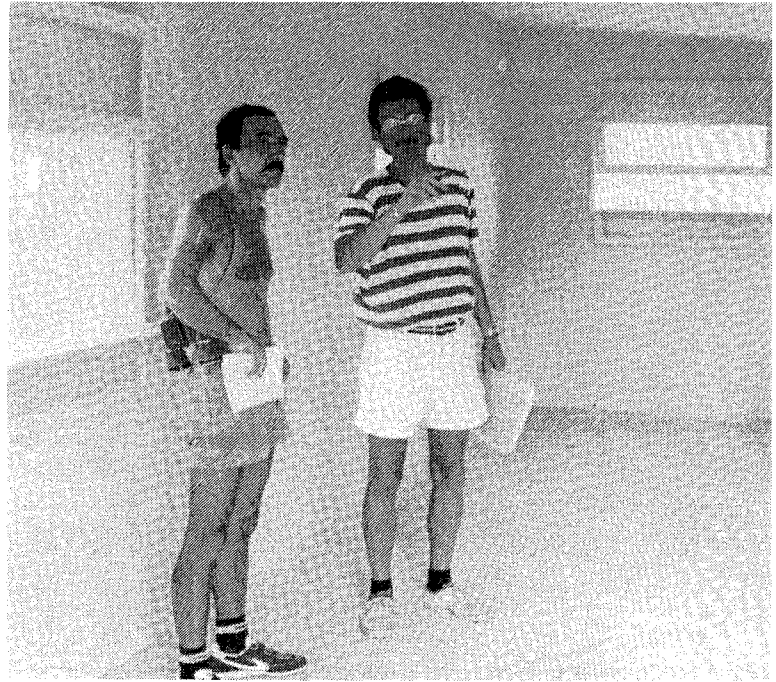
The active MOS Youths committee, this year has originated the idea of giving a gift to its youth members who renew their annual subscription. The annual gift consists of a sticker depicting a different bird every year, thus encouraging youth members to renew their subscription fee and collect the special set of MOSY stickers. This year the sticker, which has been designed by MOS able artist Victor Falzon depicts the Osprey which is one of the birds of prey migrating over our islands.

## A Warden at last

Ghadira Nature Reserve has its long awaited managing warden – Charles Gauci. Charles, who is the MOS bird-ringing secretary and who was responsible for the organisation of the MOS voluntary work at Ghadira, has been posted there by the Environment Division of the Ministry of Education. Charles is responsible for various jobs at the reserve. His most important job will be to instruct the would be visitors to the reserve. Presently however, Charles is involved in the finishing touches at the reserve, one of which consists of screening. An important spot in the reserve will be the information centre which is sited at the entrance of the reserve itself. At the MOS request, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds sent Nigel Wood, an exhibitions officer, to Malta, to make a detailed plan on how the centre should be designed.

Schoolchildren have already started visiting the reserve in their hundreds, yet the official opening of the reserve will open a new page to conservation in Malta. Faced with the opportunity of seeing wildlife at close hand in the reserve, the people who visit Ghadira can see for themselves that protecting birdlife and nature is more sane than destroying it.

Besides acting as a living laboratory, the Ghadira area is also Malta's most important wetland and serves many migrant waders. The Ghadira dream is finally becoming a reality.



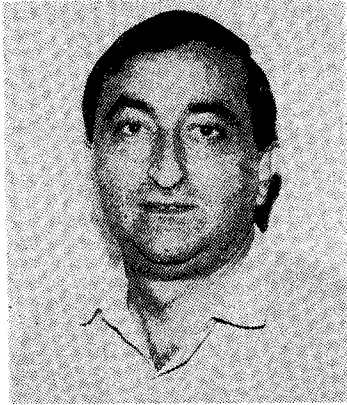
*Charles Gauci with Nigel Wood, planning the reception centre. Below – a group of students at Ghadira.*



Joe Sultana

Joe Sultana

## Nice to see you Tony



Mr. Tony D'Andria, one of the co-founders of the MOS way back in January 1962, was back in Malta in December 1985 for a holiday to visit relatives and friends after an absence of 16 years. It was nice meeting Tony again. His support for the MOS has not declined despite the fact that he has settled in Australia. He was delighted to note the growth of the MOS and to meet so many young faces. But he expressed disappointment at the expansion of building sites over the countryside and was indignant to confirm that the bird protection law of 1980 was neither respected nor enforced.



## Birdwatch Europe '87

The Ornithological Society joined other bird protection organisations to hold the biggest birdwatching event in the world.

In Malta, Birdwatch Europe '87 was divided on two days. On the 23rd May 1987, two films on Germany's Green Islands were screened for the youths. These films were kindly made available by the German Embassy in Malta. On Sunday, 24th May 1987, MOS adult and youth members and the general public were invited to visit Ghadira Nature Reserve. Although it was late in May and therefore late for migration, Ghadira still lived up to the day. In fact, there was a flock of twelve Grey Herons, two Squacco Herons, a Little Egret, a Night Heron, a Ferruginous Duck, some Moorhens and several species of waders.

## Thank You Alfred

At the 25th Annual General Meeting, Alfred E. Baldacchino, the Hon. General Secretary, announced his retirement from the Council. Although he has retired from the administration of the Society, Alfred has promised to continue with his help towards the conservation movement, with special reference to the protection of birdlife. Alfred was elected to serve on the MOS Council in 1973 and was

appointed Asst. Secretary/P.R.O. Being meticulous by nature he soon proved to be an asset to MOS and his involvement in the Council was invaluable. His dedication earned him his colleagues' esteem and three years later he was elected Hon. Secretary, a responsibility which he carried quite efficiently for ten years. After he announced his retirement, he was awarded, on the President's proposal, an Honorary Life Membership of the MOS.



*Alfred E. Baldacchino (right) being congratulated by Joe Sultana, MOS President, after being awarded Hon. Life Membership. Looking on (on left) is Joe M. Attard, Hon. President.*

Joe Doughter

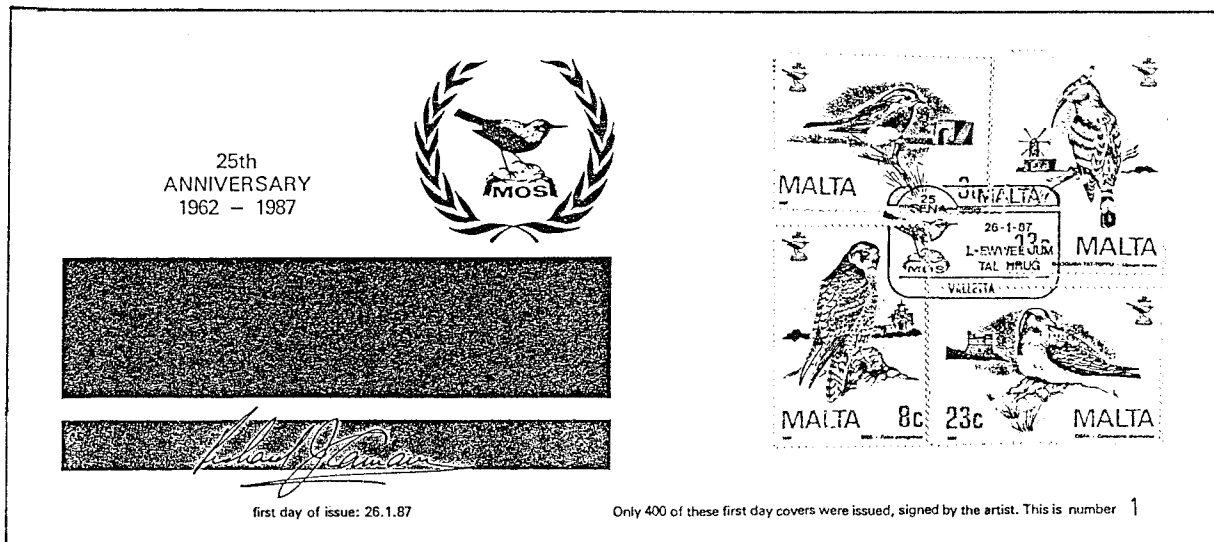


*Youths bird-watching at Ghadira on Birdwatch Europe Day. Below Joe M. Mangion, MOSY Secretary releasing a Golden Oriole on same day watched by youths. This bird was found injured by shotgun pellets two weeks earlier and was nursed back to health.*

Joe Sultana



Joe Sultana



This year the Ornithological Society is celebrating its 25th Anniversary and the local Postal Authorities have commemorated this event by the issue of a set of four stamps on the 26th January 1987. The stamps depict the Robin, Peregrine Falcon, Hoopoe and Cory's Shearwater. The stamps also carry the MOS logo together with the words "25 sena" (25 years). For the occasion the MOS has printed 400 25th Anniversary First Day Covers which are individually numbered, and signed by the artist. These special F.D.C. are available from the MOS for only Lm2 each.

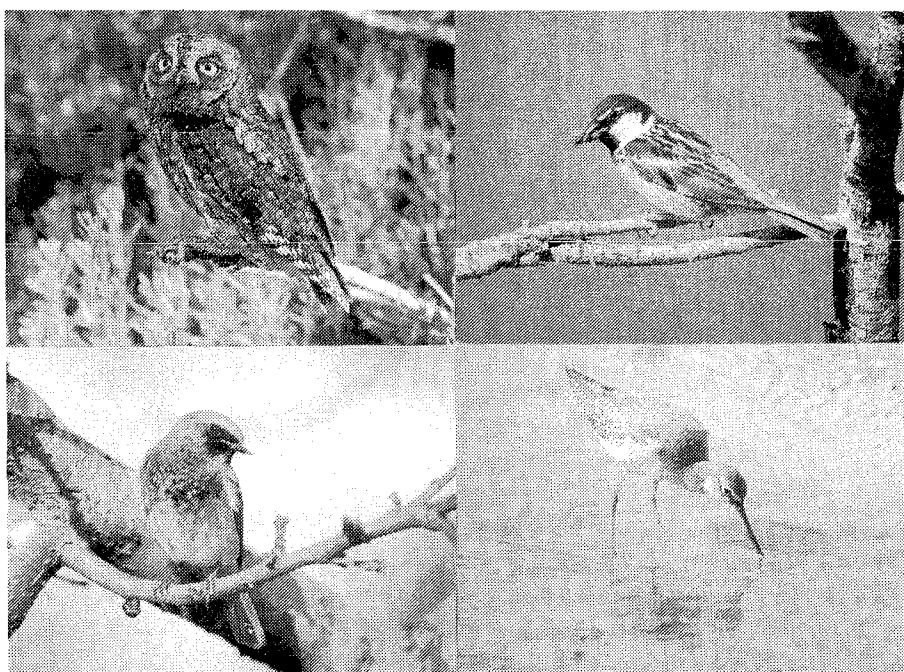
25th Anniversary Mugs carrying the MOS emblem have also been specifically ordered to commemorate this event, while a special anniversary sticker designed by A.E. Baldacchino has been sent to all members early this year.



# 1962 – 1987

## Post Cards

The third set of four postcards has just been published. These postcards depict the Scops Owl, a fairly common Spring and Autumn migrant, the Spanish Sparrow, an abundant breeding resident, both captured on film by Richard Cachia Zammit at Ghadira Nature Reserve, the Black Redstart, a fairly common autumn migrant and winter visitor photographed by Charles Galea Bonavia at Rabat, and the Spotted Redshank, a scarce Spring and Autumn passage migrant, photographed by Joe Sultana also at Ghadira Nature Reserve. The postcards were first launched in June at the Fur and Feather Show at San Anton Gardens, where the MOS put up its display stand.



# OFFICE TO BE DAR IL-MERILL

Anyone interested in seeking information on the MOS and its work or in acquiring information on conservation and Maltese birdlife and nature may soon be helped by visiting the MOS office at Sta. Lucia Str., Valletta. The office will in the near future be available both for MOS members and members of the public. Sta. Lucia Street runs across the heart of Valletta and the office-to-be lies within walking distance from the centre of the City. The office will be officially opened in October 1987 – the year of the MOS 25th Anniversary – a fitting commemoration. By centralising its administration through its office, the MOS can be more efficient and stands to grow stronger. The office will be used mainly as a conservation educational centre.

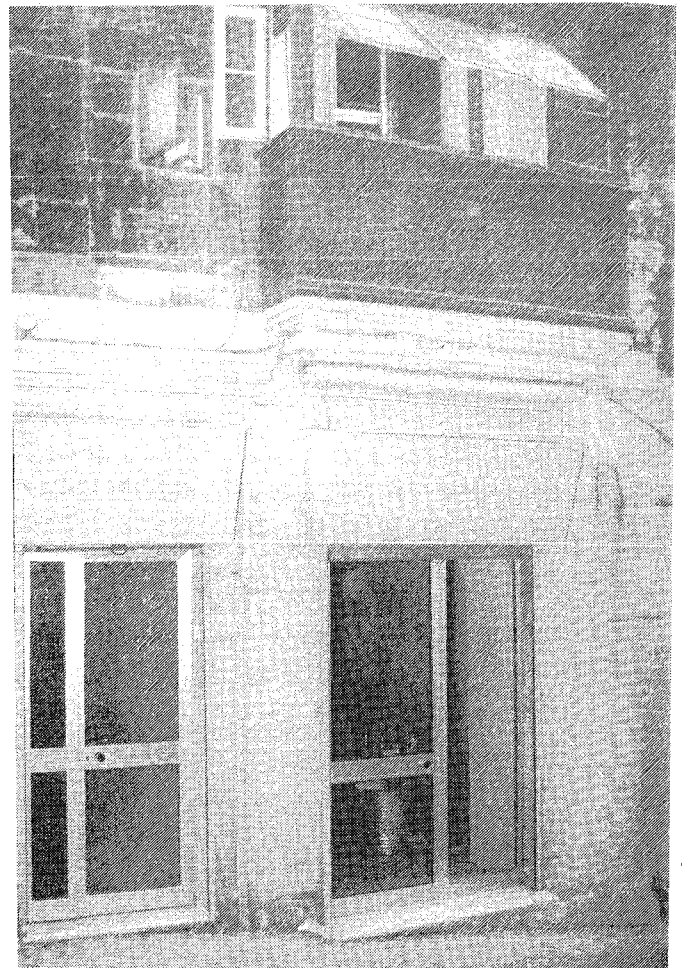
Saving money to buy the premises was not an easy task; transforming it from a long disused bakery into a decently furnished office was not easier. Joe Doublet, who has been recently elected Hon. General Secretary of MOS, was entrusted with the latter job. Together with his main helper, Paul Portelli, MOS Education Officer, he spent several hours working voluntarily on all the necessary odd jobs. Other members, notably Denis Cachia and Michael Zerafa, gave a helping hand too.

A lot of furnishing expenses have been covered by a handsome contribution by the ICBP Migratory Birds Programme, after the premises were visited by the ICBP Director, Christoph Imboden. Other visitors to the office while work was in full swing were Dr. Francesco Mezzatesta, Secretary General of Lega Italiana per la Protezione degli Uccelli (LIPU), and Nigel Wood, Exhibitions officer of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) of UK. Nigel Wood was specifically sent to Malta by RSPB to advise MOS how to set up a permanent exhibition at the visitors' centre of Ghadira Nature Reserve as well as to give MOS ideas on how to design the information centre at its office.



Joe Doublet

*Front of MOS office when bought. Members renovating the balcony and the facade.*



Joe Doublet

# ZGHAZAGH GHALL-AMBJENT



In 1985, a newly fledged movement was born. The group Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent (Youths for the Environment) brought together a handful of local organisations which in all numbered around fourteen and included political groups, religious groups and last but not least MOS Youths.

Their first action was indeed a baptism of fire. It was Saturday 23rd November 1985, when the group rallied at City Gate at Valletta, demonstrating against the onslaught by development on the countryside. However the protest was confronted by several thugs who were determined to break up the Youths' demonstration. The youths were assailed for five consecutive times in the presence of the police but none of the thugs were apprehended during or after the assaults. Various participants were beaten up and some were even hospitalised. Despite the attacks the demo continued until the end. On the initiative of the group legal action was taken against some identified culprits. However the case turned out to be quite a dragging one with the usual problematic deferrals and it is still in court. The positive outcome was that there was a general public awareness about the encroachment of buildings and roads on the countryside.

The demo action was followed by a postcard action to the Prime Minister, urging him to implement new steps to protect the countryside, while a memorandum was also addressed to all the members of Parliament on the need to protect the environment.

Throughout 1986 and 1987 the group worked incessantly to create awareness for a better appreciation of our environment. The activities ranged from street actions, to the release of a number of loggerhead turtles, an endangered species.

The group has been able to gear public opinion in its favour against projects which are causing great harm to the countryside. Notable cases were the quarrying at Wied il-Ghasel, the proposed BDA at Mistra and the siting of the tarmac plant at Burmarrad.

The group has filled a void in the local conservation movement and MOS is indeed proud that this movement is one of its offshoots.

# 24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 12th MARCH 1986  
BOYS SCOUTS' HEADQUARTERS  
FLORIANA

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the outgoing council I am pleased to welcome you to the 24th Annual meeting. Once again we can look back not without satisfaction, at the work which has been carried out by the MOS.

Although the destruction of our Natural environment, birds in particular, continued unabated, we can feel at least somewhat satisfied with an increasing support from the general public, whose conscience about the prevailing problems has been aroused.

Notwithstanding the limited resources available the MOS left no stone unturned, spared no effort and lost no opportunity to propagate its ideals. Publications, the use of the mass media, street actions, campaigns, meetings, outings, illustrated talks, bird study were all the result of the dedication of several members for whom conservation is indeed a creed.

A healthy society is one which is prepared to change, when necessary, its style and its format to current circumstances, without losing sight of its aims and ideals. Over the years the MOS, has in this respect, been very healthy. It has now moved into a format based on a three pier system, an educational committee, a study group and a youth section, all under the council's umbrella.

For the next years, the incoming council would do well to continue on these lines, to nourish these groups for a more efficient and influential MOS. It would do well to spend and direct all its energies into one educational campaign and keep hammering forcefully at the mentality which is degrading and degenerating the beauty and uniqueness of our natural environment.

Such a programme can only be executed by an efficient and strong MOS. While efficiency is the responsibility of the council and the various committees, the strength lies mainly with the general membership. That is why every member should feel it his duty to help increase the membership. And once again I appeal to every member - "Help us enrol more members."

During the past year work continued on the MOS premises which is now taking shape and hopefully we shall soon start making use of it. Work at Ghadira Nature Reserve also progressed steadily and I am pleased to inform the meeting that Charles Gauci, MOS Ringing Secretary has been appointed by the government to act as warden. Discussions on the running of the reserve has already started with the authorities and it is hoped that these will soon be finalised. This new development will definitely help to have

the reserve opened probably before the end of the current year. What a fitting tribute it would be for the MOS to celebrate its 25th Anniversary if both the premises as well as the Ghadira Nature Reserve would be officially opened this time next year.

The next Council will miss some familiar faces, namely Louis Cassar, Natalino Fenech, Charles Gauci and Mike Grima, who felt they had to call it a day. Although they won't be serving on the Council I am certain that they shall continue to support and help the MOS. I want to mention Charles and Michael in particular because they are two veteran Council members who served for 19 and 18 years respectively. They together with Louis and Natalino deserve a vote of thanks. But this is not their end with the MOS. Charles as Ringing Secretary and now also as warden of the Ghadira Nature Reserve will continue to give a sterling service. Michael, who has served for several years as MOSY Officer will continue to serve on the education committee. In this role, as well as in his official capacity as director of the Villa Psaigon field studies centre, Michael will still be playing an important role in the conservation movement.

The expertise of veteran members is essential for the MOS. However this does not mean that we should exclude the participation of new and young faces. The long serving members should be pleased to see young dedicated people who will be prepared to carry on with the burden in the future. And I urge members, younger ones in particular to come forward and offer their services. One need not be on the council to support and help the MOS. There are in fact several members, who are not Council members and yet shoulder several responsibilities for the good of the society. To these and all other members go the Council's thanks.

It will not be out of place today if I shall end by saluting the *Zghazagh ghall-Ambjenti*, a newly formed association whose founders are active MOS members. Those of us who, because of our cause, have been threatened, insulted and even beaten up know the feeling of going through the bitter experience that Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent had to go through during their first manifestation for a better environment.

May I personally thank the other members of the council for the hard work they have carried out in the past year.

Thank you all for your attention.

Joe Sultana  
President

### Activities

The Council held 12 meetings since the last general meeting. In its two years term of office the Council met 25 times. The other MOS committees held 17 meetings in all. 28 circulars were sent to full members. The number of press releases sent to the mass media were 9. Activities/outings/talks organised for the Society's members amounted to 30. There were also illustrated talks given by MOS members to other associations.

The most notable events carried out by the MOS during the last twelve months were the various street actions organised or participated in. Such activities included two street action in connection with World Environment Day; participation in the demonstration organised by "Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent", and a camp organised by the MOS Youths and DBV in Germany.

Other activities included 11 delegations/interviews. These were made as follows: attendance at the ICBP/WEBS meetings in Rapperswill (J. Sultana); meeting with the Minister of Health (J. Sultana); meeting with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Works and Sports (J. Sultana, N. Fenech, A.E. Baldacchino); meeting with the Minister of Agriculture (S. Balzan & J. Sultana); forum regarding the pressures of the environment at the University (A.E. Baldacchino); forum on the protection of the environment at the Hotel Excelsior where representatives of the two main political parties also participated (Dr. A. Sant, Dr. L. Galea, Dr. J. Friggieri, Dr. P. Schembri and A.E. Baldacchino). This was the first time that a public debate on the environment was attended by representatives of the two main political parties.

Furthermore there was a meeting with the Commissioner of Police (A.E. Baldacchino, S. Balzan, P. Portelli and J. Sultana) and a meeting with the Assistant head of Xandir (A.E. Baldacchino & M. Grima). Besides the interview on BBC's radio programme "Nature Notebooks" (J. Sultana) on the Robin campaign, other

interviews were also held on the local TV and the radio station. The usual participation at the annual flower show and the Fur and Feather Show was this year augmented by the participation in the Spring fair at Romeo Romano Gardens organised by the Department of Agriculture.

### Publications

During the last twelve months two T-shirts with a conservation message were launched. A bag depicting an MOS Youths message was also produced. "L-Ghasfur u l-Ambjent Naturali" (which as from next issue will be renamed "In-Natura") numbers 4 and 5 were published jointly with the Society for the Study & Conservation of Nature. "Il-Merill" number 23 and Bird's Eye View number 9 were also issued. Il-Kangu, numbers 14 and 15, were sent to all MOS Youths. A Robin poster, sticker and leaflet, together with other leaflets were distributed during the street action.

### Office

The MOS office which was referred to during the 21st Annual Meeting is still being redecorated. Because of financial reasons work is progressing rather slowly. We hope that during the current year the office will be ready to open and start functioning.

### Committee MOS Youths

Mr. Michael Grima was the MOS Youths Officer for the fifth consecutive year. Mr. Grima under whose leadership the MOS Youths grew from strength to strength will be as from today retiring from the post of MOS Youths Officer. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Grima for all the hardwork and all the time he devoted to the welfare of the society, especially the youth section. Mr. Grima was helped by Mr. Joseph Mangion, the newly appointed MOSY secretary for the last twelve months.

The section held 10 committee meetings, issued 6 circulars and 2 editions of Il-Kangu, which were edited by V. Falzon. 5 outings and 3 hikes, one of them a night hike and an essay competition were organised by the section. MOS youths were instrumental in the success of the street actions. Eleven MOS Youth members attended a course in Germany, organised by the MOS Youth section and DBV Germany. Michael Zerafa was responsible for the course on behalf of MOSY.

MOSY succeeded in enrolling 208 new members to bring the total number of youth to 518, though 148 did not pay their 1985 subscription.

Presently the MOS Youths are working on another poster competition in schools.

For the third consecutive year, violence erupted during a public demonstration in favour of the protection of the environment. This demonstration was organised by "Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent" a federation of youths from various organisations to which the MOS Youth section is affiliated. Those taking part were attacked at three different points during their march, but the demonstration started and finished as planned. One youth however had to be hospitalised. Various persons are being arraigned in court following such violence.

On a better note we are glad to say that a full time warden has been posted at the Ghadira Nature Reserve as from 22nd February 1986. Furthermore the Society's membership rose past the 1,000 mark, bringing the total number of members as on 31st December 1985 to 1062. This is all the result of hard work by all concerned: council members, committee members and even ordinary members and youths. When one compares this number to that of 1980 (317) one can proudly say that the Society's membership has increased by 35%, during the last five years. The society's efforts should now be directed to achieve the 2,000th mark. A look at last years' figures reveals that ordinary members increased by 5%, MOS Youths increased by 63.4%, school delegates increased by 95% and Hon life members increased by 5%. An overall increase of 35% in membership was registered over 1984. It must however be pointed out that 32% of the 1984 members did not renew their subscription.

Local	1984	1985	NEW	OUTSTANDING	RESIGNED
Full members	231	242	80	69	3
Life members	15	15	1	-	1
Hon life members	2	2	1	-	1
Youths	317	518	208	148	6
School delegates	63	124	24	22	1
OVERSEAS					
Full members	117	124	24	22	1
Life members	32	32	-	-	-
Hon. life members	5	6	1	-	-
	<b>782</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>13</b>

### Bird ringing scheme

Messrs J. Sultana and G. Gauci were once again the Ringing Officer and Secretary respectively. The number of ringers during the last calendar year was 12, as in the previous year. A number of promising trainees attended ringing sessions regularly.

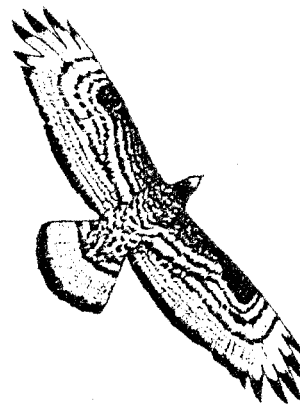
12,143 birds of 90 species were ringed during 1985. This total is the second highest ever and is also 3,000 more than the previous year. A new species was added to the ringing list - Woodcock. Besides the local movements of ringed birds, two locally ringed birds were reported from abroad; a Willow Warbler in Sweden and a Robin in Finland.

The bi-monthly newsletter published by the Bird Ringing Scheme completed twelve years of regular issues. The scheme held one meeting for ringers and two for trainees.

The Rarities sub-committee was appointed and was part of the Ringing Scheme, Mr. Richard Cachia Zammit was the sub-committee's secretary.

### Education Committee

For the second year running Mr. Paul Portelli chaired the Education Committee, helped by Miss Desirée Coleiro as secretary. The committee continued working on audio-visual programmes. A reorganisation of the committee will include the amalgamation with the audio-visual committee. The education committee held 4 meetings and has recently started a course for teachers on the teaching of nature conservation. A guide to teachers on birds observed on schoolgrounds was also distributed by the Education Committee.



### Audio visual committee

The Audio-visual Committee was chaired by Mr. Lawrence Darmanin with Tony Meli as secretary. The committee met once and produced an audio visual programme on the "Breeding Birds of Malta". This has been well received and the available sets are in great demand in schools.

As from the coming year, the committee will become a sub-committee of the Education Committee.

These are in brief the achievements of the Society during the last twelve months. Looking back one wonders how all these activities could be done voluntarily in one's free time. The results achieved are all due to the determination, dedication and hardwork put in by all concerned. One can say with certainty that there is a lot of public awareness and a strong public conscience for the better appreciation and protection of the natural environment especially birds. Despite the threats, the provocations, the narrow minded mentality that prevails, progress has again been registered. Unfortunately all this progress achieved has not reflected at all ultimately as can be seen from the lack of interest in the administrative set up of the Society. As one could see from the last circular only seven members applied for a post on the MOS Council. It is hoped that more help and interest in the running of the Society will be forthcoming from all members so that the momentum reached can be maintained!

I would like to thank all those who in one way or another have helped to better achieve the Society's aims. I would like to thank you all for your attention.

**Alfred E. Baldacchino**  
**Hon. Gen. Secretary**  
12th March 1986



TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1985

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED  
31 DECEMBER 1985

INCOME	Notes	Lm	Lm
Subscriptions			1053-28,4
Donations			281-36,0
Interest Receivable			146-04,0
<i>Proceeds from Educ. Material</i>			
'L-Aghsafar'	93-87,0		
English Guide	164-45,0		
'Il-Merill' bulletins	5-92,0		
T-Shirts	50-95,0		
Stickers	182-46,3		
Breeding Birds Charts	32-50,0		
'Dutch' Posters	35-19,2		
'S.W.G.' Posters	14-00,0		
Drawing books	3-60,0		
Exercise books	74-74,0		
Postcards	296-92,0		
Bags	44-00,0		
First Day Covers	8-40,0		
Others	7-80,0	1014-61,0	
Sundry income		182-05,0	
			2677-34,9
<i>Less EXPENDITURE</i>			
<i>Operating Expenses:</i>			
Postages			306-54,0
Stationery			340-11,0
Loss on exchange			119-91,0
Depreciation			251-22,2
Provision of Doubtful Debts	1		30-00,0
Sundry expenses	2		428-19,7
<i>Other Expenses:</i>			
'Bird's Eye View' - Cost		238-45,0	
LESS Sales		1-80,0	
LESS transfer from Reserves		236-65,0	Nil
'Il-Kangu' - Cost		24-86,0	
LESS transfer from Reserves		24-86,0	Nil
Essay Competition			85-00,0
Audio-Visuals - expenses		55-81,0	
LESS donation		30-00,0	25-81,0
Greek Posters		20-00,0	
LESS transfer from Reserves		20-00,0	Nil
Robin Campaign - expenses		789-34,0	
LESS Income from Campaign		490-84,0	
LESS transfer from Reserves		298-50,0	Nil
June 5th Activities - expenses		501-02,0	
LESS Income from June 5th Activ.		418-59,0	82-43,0
Birds of Prey Protest			44-05,0
Surplus transferred to Appropriation account			964-08,0

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT

	Notes	Lm	Lm
Balance b/f from Income & Expenditure Account			964-08,0
ADD transfer from Reserves:			
Ghadira		575-00,0	
Il-Kangu		125-14,0	
L-Ghasfur		202-34,0	
Specific Campaigns		6-62,5	
Posters		40-00,0	
Premises		1228-49,0	2177-59,5

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1985

Fixed Assets			
Premises		6000-00,0	
Renovations (1985)		1000-00,0	7000-00,0
Fixture, Furniture, Fittings	3		555-55,3
Equipment	3		1440-65,0
<b>Imprests</b>			
Valletta Bird Ringing Scheme		1000-00,0	
MOS/SSCN Joint Publication		70-00,0	
MOS Youths		26-00,0	1096-50,0
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Stocks			5089-42,8
Debtors		686-35,3	
LESS Prov. for Doubtful Debts		70-00,0	616-35,3
Cash - Funds		2925-38,2	
- General		1627-16,0	4552-54,0
			20351-02,6
<b>Accumulated Fund</b>			
Balance b/f from 31.12.84		12874-05,3	
ADD Appropriation balance		2761-02,6	15635-07,8
<i>General Reserves</i>	4		3040-10,8
<i>Loans</i>			783-05,7
<i>Current Liabilities</i>			
Advance subscriptions - 1986		378-00,0	
- 1987-90		22-00,0	400-00,0
Creditors			492-78,3
			20351-02,6

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

Note 1 - Depreciation Lm251-22,2

Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line basis. No depreciations charged on Premises while other fixed assets are depreciated at the rate of 10% per annum. (See Note 3).

Note 2 - Sundry Expenses Lm428-19,7

Made up as follows (rounded to nearest Lm1).  
Photocopies Lm69; Complimentaries Lm32; Activities Lm12; Water & Electricity Lm53; Photographic expenses Lm44; Telephone calls Lm73; Expenses re-WEBS Conference Lm11; Expenses re-Van der Ven's visit Lm22; Competition prizes Lm21; Typewriter repairs & parts Lm17; P.O. Box Rent Lm10; Other expenses Lm64.

Note 3 - Fixed assets other than Premises.

	F.F. & F'S	EQUIPMENT
Cost as on 01.01.85	184-10,0	1205-00,0
Additions during 1985	454-61,7	668-50,0
Cost as on 31.12.85	638-71,7	1873-50,0
Less accumulated depreciation	83-16,4	432-85,0
	555-55,3	1440-65,0

Note 4 - General Reserves Lm3,040-10,0

Made up as follows:  
Il-Merill Lm800, Bird's Eye View Lm500, Travel Lm361-78,0  
Educational Publications Lm396-38,8, Stickers Lm144-23,0

Other Reserves	Ghadira	Premises	Printing Machine
Balance b/f from 1984	906-99,2	1095-39,0	457-71,8
ADD donations	3-00,0	133-10,0	1-00,0
	909-99,2	1228-49,0	458-71,8
LESS t/fs re-1983 accounts	575-00,0	1228-49,0	-
ADD t/fs re-1985 accounts	-	-	44-00,0
	334-99,2	Nil	501-71,8

Denis Cachia  
Hon. Treasurer

# 25th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 9th MARCH 1987  
BOYS SCOUTS' HEADQUARTERS  
FLORIANA



## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Council, I welcome you to the 25th Annual General Meeting.

25 years ago, a handful of naturalists decided to set up the MOS. What has happened since then is an important phase in the history of bird protection in Malta. Today the MOS is still a growing body in our islands. But although this fact has been recognised even by the authorities, especially by the issue of a set of 4 stamps to commemorate the MOS 25th Anniversary, the MOS is preoccupied with the present situation.

The increased awareness amongst the general public against the indiscriminate killing and trapping of birds and the despoiling of the countryside is being matched by a deterioration of bird protection in Malta due to an increase in the widespread bird killing and trapping, the lack of bird protection law enforcement, as well as by the continual rape of the natural environment.

Three of the four resolutions which are being tabled this evening for your approval reflect our preoccupation. Those who claim that they represent all the shooters and trappers have on several occasions tried to justify what goes on in our islands. They have asked officially to shoot and trap birds at Buskett, a bird Sanctuary and are seeking to eliminate the close season and are requesting the authorities to include several birds including birds of prey and other species, such as the Swift, to be included in the list of birds that may be shot. To add insult to injury this group is being donated Lm5,000 by the Bank of Valletta to educate the shooters and trappers. The Authorities too have issued a Legal Notice which *prima facie* looks *ultra vires*, decreasing the close season, which is already too short, by 27 days.

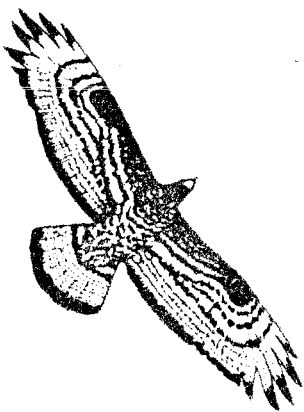
These and other preoccupations should not, however dishearten the MOS and while no stone will be left unturned to resolve these various problems, the MOS should not be distracted from following strongly and firmly its policy of education. This continual campaign, carried ably by the ever energetic MOS Youths, is already bearing fruit. There should be

no limits to the MOS educational campaign and although it should reach all the people from all walks of life, it should be emphatically aimed at the younger generation. Let there be no stalling in continuing to increase the membership of the MOS. We have to enroll more people who are prepared to stand up and be counted in our struggle for the birds and their natural environment. We have to point out to the authorities that the conservation of birds and their countryside is not a belief which is only embraced by a few environmentalists but that the public in general is against the killing of birds for fun. Before inviting the General Secretary to brief you about what the MOS has been doing during the past 12 months, I wish to inform you that the Council has prepared a programme of activities to commemorate the MOS 25th Anniversary. This includes, amongst others the opening of the MOS office and an international seminar with the Theme "Bird Migration problems in the Central Mediterranean". The MOS is also in contact with an international organisation to seek ways and means how the MOS can employ a fulltime Director to run the MOS affairs and administration. We are afraid that at present there are no other details to divulge, however we are hopeful that this may materialise before the end of the year.

I have one last announcement to make. This is going to be my last address as President at an annual general meeting. Before the end of this year, I shall be asking the Council to appoint another member to carry out the functions of the MOS President. May I therefore take the opportunity to thank all those who in one way or another helped the MOS as well as myself in the past years. This list in an extremely long one ranging from international organisations to national bodies, both local and foreign, Council, Committee and Ordinary members, many friends and the members of my family who for several years had to put up with my MOS activities. I can assure you that I shall continue to offer my services to MOS when and where these are required.

Thank you for your attention.

Joe Sultana  
MOS President



**Activities**

The Council was originally composed of seven members all of whom were elected uncontested at the last Annual General Meeting. Eventually Messrs John Borg, Charles Gauci and Silvio Scicluna were all coopted as Council members on the 15th June, 1986, bringing the number of Council members up to ten. During the period under review, Mr. John Borg resigned on the 21st October 1986 due to pressure of work. Mr. S. Balzan also resigned from the post of Public Relations Officer and from the Council on the 17th November 1986, because of personal reasons. The Council held 15 meetings, issued 6 circulars and 23 press releases. Various letters were also sent to the mass media. Of notable mention are the Society's condemnation of indiscriminate shooting of protected birds, and the Society's objections to the mismanagement of the grove at Mizieb by shooters and trappers. Besides the usual official delegations and interviews the Society called a Press Conference on the 21st February 1987 to show its disapproval of the shortening of the closed season as published in the Government Gazette in February 1987, Legal Notice 18/87. This press conference was attended by seven other conservation Societies, namely, the Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature, Men of the Trees, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent; Moviment '83, ICBP Malta Section, and Din l-Art Heiwa.

The Ornithological Society celebrated its 25th Anniversary on the 25th January 1987. To mark such Anniversary the General Post Office, on a suggestion from the Society, issued a set of four stamps depicting four protected birds which are heavily persecuted in the Maltese Islands. The Society's emblem was included on each stamp which were issued on the 26th January 1987. It is a great honour for the Society to have its Anniversary commemorated in such a way. It also shows that the aims for which the Society was founded in 1962, have not only been accepted but are also being projected by others. A public conscience has been established and this augurs well for the future.

Various other activities will be undertaken during the current year to mark such anniversary, the peak of which, it is hoped, will be the official opening of the Society's Office.

**Membership**

The Society's Membership increased by only 45 members (4.24%) bringing the total number of members up to 1107. Out of this number 27% are newly enrolled members while 26% of the members on the Society's books as on 31st December 1985, failed to renew their subscription. 49% of all the subscribed members up to December 1986 are Youths. The following is a breakdown of all MOS members:

Together with the other Societies forming ICBP Malta Section, the Society was instrumental in the formulation of two memoranda: one sent to the Political Parties and the other sent to the Church Authorities on the feast of the St. Francis of Assisi, October 4th.

Members of the Society were also involved in overseas activities. The Society's President represented the Society at the ICBP meeting, held in Kingston in Canada. Two Society members, Messrs John Borg and Richard Cachia Zammit

LOCAL	1986	1985	New	Outstanding	Deceased/ Resigned
Full Members	268	242	50	46	-
Life Members	14	15	-	-	1
Hon. Life Members	3	2	1	-	-
Youths	537	518	225	203	-
School Delegates	129	123	9	-	3
<b>OVERSEAS</b>					
Full Members	118	124	15	26	3
Life Members	32	32	-	-	-
Hon. Life Members	6	6	-	-	-
	<b>1107</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>7</b>

were assisted to visit Linosa to participate in various activities in connection with the study of the Cory's Shearwaters. Three youths represented the Society's youth section at a Youth camp in Germany. These were Messrs Philip Agius, Philip Anastasi and Ian Mifsud. Messrs Joe Sultana and Alfred E. Baldacchino both were the guests of the Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU) for a seminar on the Protection of Migratory Birds of Prey in the Mediterranean, held in Reggio Calabria in March 1986. Mr. Alfred E. Baldacchino also attended the first International Seminar on Nature Conservation and Education in Israel.

**Publications**

The Society Launched the 23rd Issue of its scientific journal IL-MERILL on the 17th March 1986. The newly titled IN-NATURA number 6 which replaced L-GHASFUR u L-AMBJENT NATURALI was jointly published with the Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature, and launched during September 1986. A Poster appealing for the protection of the Robin, together with a leaflet with popular information on the Robin were also published and, together with a sticker, were used in a campaign organised by the Society's Education and Youth Committees. The latest publications were a sticker to commemorate the Society's 25th Anniversary, a copy of which was sent to all Society's members, and another sticker depicting an Osprey sent to all those youths who renewed their 1987 subscription. IL-PASSA TA' L-AGHSAFAR, a booklet in colour was launched on the 23rd February 1987. This was published with the help of the ICBP Migratory Birds Programme and the SLKV of Switzerland. It is worth reporting that the Society's publications especially those in English are exchanged with other publications issued by foreign Ornithological Organisations, Universities and other Institutions. During 1986 the Society participated in the Fur and Feather show, the Flower Show and the Spring Fair, where on each occasion the Society's publicity and educational materials were distributed.

The German Society for the protection of Birds, DBV, through the German Embassy in Malta, donated a photocopier to the Society.

**Committees  
MOS youths**

The new Youth Officer for the last twelve months was Mr. Paul Portelli, with Mr. Josef Grech as the new Youth's Secretary. The Youths Section organised a poster-cum-slogan competition in

schools. This was well contributed to. Furthermore the Youth section helped with the Robin Campaign organised by the Education Committee.

The Section issued two editions of IL-KANGU edited by Mr. Victor Falzon and Miss Desirée Coleiro. The Youth Section succeeded in enrolling 225 new members though regrettably 203 youths failed to renew their 1986 subscriptions.

The committee held seven meetings and issued eight circulars.

### Education Committee

For the third year running Mr. Paul Portelli chaired the education committee helped by Miss Desirée Coleiro as Secretary. The committee met four times and organised the Robin campaign. They also issued two new audio visuals (through the audio-visual committee). These additional audio-visuals entitled IL-HARIFA (Autumn) and IX-XITWA (Winter) will be available to school delegates for showing in schools. The Education Committee were also responsible for the launching of the migration booklet. IL-PASSA TA' L-AGHSAFAR. Monthly information sheets were also circulated to school delegates. The total number of school delegates increased by three during the current period under review.

### Ringling & Research Committee.

Messrs Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci were once again Ringling and Research Officer and Ringling and Research Secretary respectively for 1986. During 1986, the Ringling Scheme ringed 11,414 birds of 92 different species. Though the number of birds is 700 less than the previous year, still three new species were added to the ringling list. These are the Little Egret, White Winged Black Tern and the Paddyfield Warbler, the latter being also a new addition to the list of birds recorded in the Maltese Islands. Since 1965, the numbers of birds ringed by the bird ringling scheme now totals 164,849 of 152 different species.

Eleven birds ringed in Malta were recovered during 1986. These recoveries were made in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Algeria, Russia, Italy, France, Poland and Yugoslavia, the most interesting being the first Sardinian Warbler recovered in Northern Italy.

Local interesting retraps included an eighteen year old Storm Petrel and a seventeen year old Cory's Shearwater.

All these activities were carried out by twelve qualified ringers aided by various trainees.

The Ringling and Research Committee also issued its bimonthly newsletter regularly.

The rarities subcommittee, which is a sub-committee of the Ringling and

Research Committee met only once and accepted 8 species of birds as rarities recorded in the Maltese Islands.

●

It is regretted that I have to announce that this is my 10th and last report as Hon. General Secretary of the Society. As from today I will be retiring from such office and also from the Council of the Society, on which I have served since 28th February 1973, during which time I have tried my best to put the Society on a sound basis to achieve its aims. I strongly believe that it is time that the infusion of new blood would be to the benefit of the Society. I would like to wish the best of luck and the best of success to my successor. I would like to assure him and the Council that I will always be available to help them with any advice or suggestions, in their difficult task. I can assure you all that I have no intention of abandoning the Conservation movement. Finally I would like to thank all those members and non-members alike who in some way, no matter how small, have helped me in my duties during the last fourteen years during which I have been involved with the administration of the Society. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife, Mary Rose, and my children, Claire and Keith, who have patiently accepted my involvement in the Society, whether it was during my free-time at home or away from home. Without such help, most of the work carried out would not have been possible.

I am sure that of the enthusiasm and hard work which has been carried out during the last 25 years, is maintained, there cannot be but a brighter future for birds in the Maltese Islands. I would like to wish the Council the best of luck in its efforts for the better appreciation and protection of birds and their natural habitat.

Thank you all for your attention.

**Alfred E. Baldacchino**  
Hon. General Secretary  
The Ornithological Society  
9.03.87

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1986

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED

31 DECEMBER 1986

INCOME	Lm	Lm
Subscriptions		1223-55,0
Donations - Premises Fund	1889-87,7	
- General	8-10,0	1897-97,7
Interest Receivable		131-73,0
<i>Proceeds from Educational Material:</i>		
"L-Aghsagar"	82-85,0	
English Guide	190-16,7	
T-Shirts	31-35,0	
Stickers	79-97,8	
Breeding Birds Charts	21-00,0	
'Dutch Posters'	27-22,4	
'S.W.G.' Posters	57-00,0	
Drawing books	37-20,0	
Exercise books	26-16,6	
Postcards	91-10,0	
Bags	14-00,0	
Others	6-10,0	664-13,5
Sundry income		77-91,4
		<u>3995-30,6</u>
<i>Less EXPENDITURE</i>		
<i>Operating Expenses:</i>		
Postages		317-50,0
Stationery		403-87,0
Loss on exchange		66-46,0
Depreciation (Note 1)		390-02,0
Provision for Doubtful Debts		30-00,0
Sundry Expenses (Note 2)		506-58,7
<i>Other Expenses:</i>		
"In-Natura" for MOSY members		47-00,0
"Il-Merill" - Cost	291-00,0	
Less Sales	6-40,0	
LESS transfer from Reserves	284-60,0	Nil
Travel expenses	105-00,0	
LESS transfer from Reserves	105-00,0	Nil
Robin Campaigns - Expenses	363-50,0	
LESS Income from Campaigns	297-26,4	66-23,6
Surplus transferred to Appropriation account		<u>2167-63,3</u>

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT

	Lm	Lm
Balance b/f from Income & Expenditure Account		2167-63,3
LESS transfers to Reserves		
Printing Machine	14-00,0	
Il-Merill	284-60,0	298-60,0
Surplus transferred to Accumulated Fund		<u>1,869-03,3</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1986

<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Premises		7000-00,0
Fixtures, Furniture, Fittings (Note 3)		1682-94,8
Equipment (Note 3)		1311-21,5
<b>Imprests</b>		
Valletta Bird Ringing Scheme	1000-00,0	
MOS/SSCN Joint Publication	70-00,0	
MOS Youths	27-48,0	1097-48,0

Current Assets

Stocks - Migration booklet (Note 4)	554-07,0	
- Others	4979-68,1	5533-75,1
Debtors	905-31,4	
LESS Provision for Doubtful Debts	100-00,0	805-31,4
Advance Payment - Insurance		91-14,0
Cash - Funds	4135-78,3	
- General	18-07,5	4153-85,8
		<u>21675-70,6</u>

Accumulated Fund

Balance b/f from 31.12.85	15635-07,8	
ADD Appropriation balance	1869-03,3	17504-11,1

General Reserves (Note 5)

2958-66,8

Loan

696-33,4

Current Liabilities

Advance subscriptions - 1987	229-50,0	
- 1988/1990	22-00,0	251-50,0
		265-09,3
		<u>21675-70,6</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

Note 1 - Depreciation Lm390-02,0

Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line basis. No depreciation is charged on Premises while other fixed assets are depreciated at the rate of 10% per annum. (See Note 3).

Note 2 - Sundry Expenses Lm506-58,7

Made up as follows (rounded to nearest Lm1): -

Photocopies Lm43; Complimentaries Lm19; Insurance Lm32; Water & Electricity Lm37; Telephone calls Lm71; Subscriptions Lm25; Installation of telephone Lm30; Photographic expenses Lm20; Cash discrepancy at fairs Lm17; Competition prizes Lm31; Computerized address labels Lm37; Refreshments Lm19; Book-binding Lm15; Expenses re-injured birds Lm39; Others Lm72.

Note 3 - Fixed assets other than Premises

	F.F. & F's	Equipment
Cost as on 01.01.86	638-71,7	1873-50,0
Additions during 1986	1323-63,0	64-35,0
Cost as on 31.12.86	1962-34,7	1937-85,0
Less accumulated depreciation	279-39,9	626-63,5
	<u>1682-94,8</u>	<u>1311-21,5</u>

Note 4 - Migration booklet Lm554-07,0

Cost of booklet Lm1075 less donation of Lm500-93,0

Note 5 - General Reserves Lm2958-66,8

Made up as follows:

Il-Merill Lm800; Bird's Eye View Lm500; Travel Lm256-78,0  
Educational Publications Lm396-38,8; Stickers Lm144-23,0

Other Reserves

	Ghadira	Printing Machine
Balances b/f from 1985	334-99,2	502-71,8
ADD donations	136-93,0	-
	471-92,2	502-71,8
ADD transfers re-1986 accounts	-	14-00,0
LESS expenses at Ghadira N.R.	127-37,0	-
	<u>334-55,2</u>	<u>516-71,8</u>

Denis Cachia  
Hon. Treasurer

## RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE 25th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### Resolution I

- CONCERNED: About the fact that the Bird Protection Regulations are not respected by the majority of shooters and trappers, and are rarely enforced by the Authorities;
- ALARMED: At the deterioration of the situation regarding the breeding, as well as migratory, bird-life of the Maltese Islands;
- NOTING WITH DISMAY: That the Legal Notice 18 of 1987 shortens the close season by 27 days;
- This 25th Annual General Meeting  
DISAPPROVES: Of any changes to the Bird Protection Regulations by the Authorities without the proper consultation with the MOS.
- EXHORTS: The Authorities concerned to revoke the Legal Notice 18 of 1987 as this goes against the Act XVII of 1980 which stipulates the close season dates.
- URGES: The Authorities to ensure proper protection to Bird Life and their natural environment by:
- (a) enforcing the Bird Protection Regulations
  - (b) increasing the close season for shooting to incorporate at least part of the spring period when birds are preparing for breeding; and
  - (c) stipulating a different close season for bird trapping to enable certain species (e.g. finches) to breed unmolested in our Island.

### Resolution II

- CONCERNED: About the various statements regarding the allocation of certain areas of ecological importance specifically for the killing and trapping of birds to accommodate groups of shooters and trappers;
- ALARMED: By the taking over of public areas of natural importance by groups of people
- (a) when the general public is hindered from entering during the shooting season and
  - (b) where harm is being done to the natural environment under the guise of embellishing the areas;
- NOTING WITH DISMAY: That the public cannot enjoy the natural environment in sanctuaries such as Buskett due to the illegal activities of a substantial number of bird shooters and trappers;
- This 25th Annual General Meeting  
URGES: The Authorities to take serious steps to ensure that the natural environment in all its ambit is seriously protected and that impact Assessment Reports are carried out by environment experts before the allocation of any areas.

### Resolution III

- CONSIDERING: The facts that those who claim to represent all shooters and trappers in Malta,
- (a) have never condemned the illegal killing of birds;
  - (b) have tried on several occasions to justify the illegal killing of birds;
  - (c) are asking officially to shoot Birds at Buskett – a Bird Sanctuary; and
  - (d) are requesting the deletion of a number of Birds of Prey (e.g. Honey Buzzard-Kuccarda) and insectivorous birds (e.g. Swifts-Rundun) from the list of protected species;
- NOTING: That a donation of Lm5,000 has been given by the Bank of Valletta to the Shooters' Association specifically "to educate the members on the law and rules of hunting, trapping and conservation";
- This 25th Annual General Meeting  
DISAPPROVES: Of the donation of Lm5,000 by the Bank of Valletta to the Shooters' Association and as a gesture of protest the MOS is withdrawing its money from the bank.

### Resolution IV

- CONCERNED: About the rate with which the countryside is being built up.
- ALARMED: By the indiscriminate allocation of building plots in various areas without taking into consideration the impact that these will have on the countryside;
- NOTING WITH DISMAY: The lack of awareness of the Authorities and the General Public to this problem;
- This 25th Annual General Meeting  
REQUESTS: The Government to take immediate steps to safeguard what is left of the countryside by implementing a Masterplan with which our countryside will be saved.

### Resolution V

- AFFIRMING: That one of the Policies of the MOS is the Conservation of Birds and their natural Environment through education.
- This 25th Annual General Meeting  
Expresses Appreciation: (a) For the intervention by the Ministry of Education and Environment to ensure the safeguarding of the natural environment for the benefits of the nation (e.g. Is-Simar Pwales area); and (b) To the Education Department for cooperating with the MOS in its educational Campaign.



**WILD BIRDS NEED YOUR HELP...**

Birds are an international heritage. Everybody has the right to enjoy them unharmed in their natural habitat. Besides playing an important role in the balance of nature, birds fill our country with their colour and song. They also contribute to our satisfaction when we watch them, study them and photograph them.

But not everybody knows how to appreciate birds. During migration many birds are killed year after year and those that can settle and breed are not given any chance. Bird migration offers a wonderful spectacle if studied and enjoyed in a positive way.

**...SO DOES THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Birdlife is dependent on the countryside. It is also unfortunate that not much care is being given to the protection of our countryside. The natural environment of our islands provide a variety of unique habitats comprising cliffs, valleys and pockets of maquis to large stretches of garigue. This needs protection too.

**...SO DOES THE MOS**

The MOS is working hard to protect wild birds and their natural habitat so that birds can fly freely and safely in our country to be enjoyed by one and all. However, without your support it will be difficult to achieve our aims. By becoming an MOS member, you will be offered the chance to understand and enjoy birdlife. You will also have the satisfaction of contributing towards the protection of our natural heritage.

To join the MOS, complete the application form and return it with your subscription to:

The Membership Secretary,  
MOS  
P.O. Box 498,  
VALLETTA - Malta.



**JOIN THE MOS**

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

Full member	Lm 2.00
Youth (under 18)	Lm 0.75
Life Member	Lm 50.0

Name				
Surname				
Address				
Telephone				
Date of birth	(if 24 and under)			
	I enclose my subscription* (cheque/ postal order) to the value of:			
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">LM</div>			
Signature				
Date				





*Yemruja - MOS has set eyes on this area as the future nature reserve*



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