

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

December 1979 Number 3

An MOS publication to give members a bird's eye view of what happened, what is happening, and what will be happening within the MOS, The Ornithological Society - the society for the study and protection of birds in Malta.

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FRONT COVER : The book L-Aghsagar is the latest publication of the M O S. It is being sold from all leading bookshops or directly from the M O S. For further details see page 20.



AE BALDACCHINO

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contents

PAGE

- 3 - Comment
- 5 - Annual General Meeting
President's Address
- 6 - Secretary's Report
January 78 - February 79
- 8 - Calendar of Activities
January 78 - February 79
- 10 - Treasurer's Report
December 78 - December 79
- 13 - News & Views
- 28 - Prize Crossword
- 31 - MOS Council &
Committees for 1979

BACK COVER : Ghadira Bird Sanctuary, Mellieha. Preparations are currently being made for converting it into the first-ever national nature reserve. For more details see page 14.

Comment




BirdLife®

M A L T A

The need for bird protection laws in Malta is not a fashionable craze as some would like to think. The first cry of concern was voiced as early as 1916 by Giuseppe Despott, then curator of the Natural History Museum, who stressed that "the number of breeding species is so very limited" because of "want of protection". Soon after its birth in 1962, The Ornithological Society took up the cry with increasing fervour and conviction, and during the past 17 years the MOS has not ceased to campaign for bird protection regulations which will do honour to a civilized nation.

However, none of the past Administrations has considered the matter seriously. Furthermore, despite a statement in Parliament in June 1978 that regulations on bird shooting will be issued in the future, considering that these had been discussed and agreed upon by the MOS and the Association of Shooters and Trappers, these promised laws have to date (December 1979) failed to appear. The official declaration of Ghadira as a bird sanctuary by the present Government has been by far the most welcome improvement in years. However, in practice this has made no difference whatsoever, as the Police have failed to enforce the law.

As a matter of fact, during the past year, more than ever before, the Police have simply turned a blind eye to infringements of the outdated bird protection regulations presently "in force". Bird sanctuaries, such as Buskett, Ghadira, Kennedy Grove/Salina, etc., have never witnessed such a multitude of shooters within their boundaries as this year, without a single person being prosecuted. Many birds of prey have been shot at Buskett alone in the last three weeks of September 1979. Chained pellets - which are illegal - were freely used to shoot down the larger raptors, as well as rifles to shoot down high flying birds. As if this were not enough, members of the MOS who regularly went bird-watching at Buskett and other bird sanctuaries have been threatened, insulted and abused by gun-wielding hoodlums who interpreted the birdwatchers' presence as a threat to their interests!

Protected birds (such as Robins, wagtails, and Short-toed Larks) have been unashamedly sold in open-air markets and in pet-shops. A more serious threat to birds recently becoming fashionable is a fad for stuffed and mounted birds of all species to adorn private houses. Unfortunately, this is now becoming commercialised and all sorts of stuffed birds can be seen offered for sale in various shops.

The MOS has been incessantly hammering on the serious repercussions which such irresponsible behaviour is having on our birdlife and pleading with the authorities for urgent action to halt this waste and depletion. Unfortunately, such warnings have mostly fallen on deaf ears.

However, this cannot go on for ever. Many nations are today taking collective and mutual steps at high diplomatic level to safeguard the common heritage of humanity. Elsewhere in this issue there is news about the new "Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals" which involves nations all over the world and which was signed in Bonn last June. Gradually this realisation is gaining momentum. The Council of Europe's "Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats" (for details see elsewhere in this issue) was signed by 19 countries last September. Unfortunately, Malta is among three nations which have failed to sign so far. One might be tempted to dismiss the fact as of a comparatively lesser importance if we had had a respectable set of bird protection laws. However, environmental conservation is not a whimsey but a way of life of the future. It is evident that indiscriminate destruction of wildlife is no longer tolerated among mature nations. Nevertheless, well-versed speeches and polite sympathizations will not stop the destruction of wildlife, unless translated into actions.

John Azzopardi
December 1979

NOTE: Many MOS members have been enquiring about the 3rd issue of "BIRD'S EYE VIEW". And rightly so, because it has been more than 18 months since the last one was published in June 1978.

However, members will appreciate that this delay has not been due to neglect. Last year was one of the busiest for the MOS Council and its members were fully committed all the time. The publication of the new Maltese bird book imposed a lot of work on all Council members. Obviously, this took up most, if not all, of our spare time.

However, although unintentional, the delay in issuing "BIRD'S EYE VIEW" No. 3 has proved, through your persistent enquiries, that this publication enjoys a great deal of popularity and it is eagerly awaited from year to year. So to repay you for your interest and patience, we are publishing this BUMPER ISSUE for 1979. We hope you will enjoy it. Thank you very much for your support.

The Editor

Annual General Meeting

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS at the 17th Annual General Meeting of The Ornithological Society held on Wednesday, 28th February, 1979, at 'Dar l-Emigrant', Valletta.

On behalf of the Council of The Ornithological Society I welcome you to the 17th Annual General Meeting. Today we shall give a glance at what has been done by our Society during the past year and what we hope to achieve in the present one.

All the meetings, delegations, publications, achievements and other activities have been meticulously compiled by the General Secretary in his report and in the Calendar of Activities; the report will be read later at this meeting while the Calendar will be published in the next issue of "BIRD'S EYE VIEW".

You will note from the report that the Council took every opportunity to pursue the Society's policy of Conservation through Education and to further the study of birds in our islands. No doubt we shall continue to work on these lines in the forthcoming months.

I have the pleasure to announce that the International Council for Bird Preservation Steering Committee, set up for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds, has accepted our proposals and requests to finance some of our future educational projects. These include a Maltese book with colour plates aimed at teachers and other educators, as well as for the man-in-the-street; educational booklets such as the one published on Birds of Prey; and other educational stationery such as stickers, posters, copybooks, etc., all aimed to instil better appreciation towards birds by the general public, mainly the younger generation. In fact the necessary funds will soon be forwarded to the MOS to be spent on earmarked projects, details of which will be released as each project is finalised. It is also hoped that when Government starts the work at Ghadira this year, the MOS will once again bring to Malta Mr Herbert Axell with the help of RSPB.

A problem concerning bird-ringing in Malta has been solved during the past year. Bird-ringing is a valuable scientific tool for the advancement of ornithology. This has been carried out efficiently and scientifically in the Maltese Islands since 1965 by our Society, which is also a member of EURING. EURING is an association which co-ordinates bird-ringing in European and North African countries. It was quite unethical on the part of an individual who in 1977 started a rival bird-ringing scheme using a Government Department's address. The unscientific methods used and the activities of this rival scheme were throwing bird-ringing into disrepute. As the address on the rings used fell under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, the MOS reported the whole matter to the Honorable Minister of Labour, Culture and Welfare, Miss Agatha Barbara, who took the necessary action. After a number of meetings, the Honorable Minister decided that there should be only one bird-ringing scheme in the Maltese Islands and this was to be run by the MOS. On behalf of the Council and all the members I would like to publicly thank the Honorable Minister for her understanding and intervention in this matter. This agreement, apart from giving official recognition to the MOS Bird-Ringing Scheme, will ensure that the same high standard will be maintained and that the study of birds by this method will continue unhindered by bona fide ringers.

At the last Annual General Meeting we mentioned the fact that Government was contemplating new and adequate bird protection laws. So far only the pool and its surrounding area at Ghadira have been declared a bird sanctuary. The rest of the laws seem to have stalled for the present time. We shall continue to request that these laws are enacted as soon as possible and we will be proposing a resolution at the end of the meeting in this respect.

I can assure you that The Ornithological Society has enough plans to keep the Council members busy for a long time. The support from members in general has never failed us; however, I would like to appeal for more help and support. The appeal is: Enrol more members. We need more members; we need more support. If every member enrolls a new member in the coming year, we shall be doubling the strength of our Society.

Thank you for your attention.

Joe Sultana
President
THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SECRETARY'S REPORT

SECRETARY'S REPORT for the period 1st January 1978 to 28th February 1979.

In spite of the many problems, some from the least expected quarters, which the Council had to face during the past year, progress was again registered during 1978.

A most notable change occurred during the past year, this being the name of the Society, from The Malta Ornithological Society to The Ornithological Society in compliance with Act XXII of 1978 which controls the use of the words "Malta" and "Nation" and their derivatives. The decision on the new name was taken at an extraordinary general meeting held on 26th October 1978.

The number of members of the Society has been more or less the same as for the previous year. Some foreign resident members left the island, and this was compensated for by the enrolment of local members. The number of young members also showed a slight increase.

During the period under review, the Council held 11 Council Meetings. Three general meetings, 12 committee meetings and 16 outings were organised by the Council and the various Committees. Council members took part in 20 delegations, 6 interviews on the broadcasting media, and various programmes on the local television.

Publications

Eleven circulars were sent to local members; 22 press releases and 4 letters were sent to the press. The 19th issue of "IL-MERILL" and the 2nd issue of "BIRD'S EYE VIEW" were also published. Two posters (Robin Poster kindly sponsored by the Ramla Bay Hotel and an Osprey Poster kindly sponsored by M. JF Terrasse of the Fond D'Intervention pour les Rapaces of France) were also issued. A drawing book depicting a full colour picture of the Peregrine Falcon on the front cover, with information on this species and birds of prey in general on the back cover, was also published, also with the help of M. JF Terrasse.

Agreements

A most important event for The Ornithological Society was the signing of an agreement with the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Culture regarding the Valletta Bird-Ringing Scheme. This scheme which since 1965 was run by the Society, is now officially recognised, will be the only one on the island, and will now be run by a Committee appointed by the Council of The Ornithological Society with two members representing the Government appointed by the Minister of Culture. This agreement was signed by the Honorable Miss Agatha Barbara MP, Minister of Labour, Welfare and Culture and Mr Joe Sultana, President of The Ornithological Society.

Another agreement was reached with the Birkirkara Shooting Association to hold a clay pigeon shooting competition yearly, for the next five years. The first one was held on Sunday, 28th May, 1978 at Il-Qrejtien.

Agreement was also reached with the Men of the Trees and the Malta Photographic Society (now The Photographic Society) to hold a photographic competition/exhibition on the subject "Of Birds and Trees", which was launched on 1st September 1978.

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Other Activities

Another publicity/educational stand was again set up at the National Pet Show at San Anton Gardens.

A raffle and a marathon walk were held by the Young Members' Section.

Council members of The Ornithological Society attended three conferences abroad. Mr Alfred E. Baldacchino, Hon. General Secretary, attended the 17th ICBP World Conference in Ohrid, Yugoslavia from 13th to 18th June. Mr John Azzopardi, Assistant Secretary of The Ornithological Society also attended this conference as Chairman of ICBP (Malta).

In Florence, Italy, Mr Joe Sultana, President of The Ornithological Society represented the Society at the 2nd Conference of WEBS - the Working Group of European National Bird Protection Societies. This conference was held from the 29th September to 1st October. Following such conference, The Ornithological Society became an associate member of WEBS.

Mr Louis Cassar, the YMS Officer attended a course on youth leadership in environmental conservation in Belgium from 15th to 28th July 1978.

A detailed list of all activities held during the period under review follows this report.

Committees

The Committees which were set up or reconstituted for 1978 were:-

- 1) The Ringing and Research Committee was split into two Committees: The Ringing Committee (known to foreign ringing schemes as The Valletta Ringing Scheme) had Mr Joe Sultana as Ringing Officer and Mr Charles Gauci as Ringing Secretary. Eighteen ringers were granted a ringing permit - an addition of 5 over the number of the previous year. Three more ring sizes bearing the address of the Society were introduced during the current year.

11,430 birds of 89 different species were ringed during the year, with 15 recoveries reported from abroad. Two expeditions were organised to Filfla where the study of the sea birds was continued. Newsletters for ringers at two-monthly intervals continued to be issued for the fifth year running.

Two meetings were held for all ringers and trainees. Besides bird ringing data, the Ringing Scheme was also responsible for the nest record sheets and moult forms besides the latest introduction of the species-data form.

- 2) The Research Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Martin Thake who recently resigned due to pressure of work, was responsible for compiling the records of all birds seen. This was taken over by this committee which will eventually undertake the compilation of the systematic list. One committee meeting was held. The committee also provided help in organising members to aid Dr Walter Thiede who during his stay in Malta was engaged in Spanish Sparrow counts. Mr Charles Gauci was eventually appointed Chairman of the Research Committee instead of Mr Martin Thake.
- 3) The Rarities Committee, also under the Chairmanship of Mr Martin Thake, had a meeting on the 3rd July 1978. Fifteen records were submitted for examination, of which 12 were accepted. Mr Joe Sultana was eventually appointed Chairman in lieu of Mr Martin Thake.
- 4) The Gozo Section was active through its Gozo representative Mr John Grech. Two indoor meetings were held, apart from bird-ringing demonstrations to Seminary students.
- 5) The Young Members Section Committee under its Officer Mr Louis Cassar and its Secretary Mr Silvio Scicluna held 9 committee meetings during 1978. The YMS held 13 bird-watching outings, 2 night outings, a tree-planting session, a raffle and a marathon walk. Besides, the YMS Committee members helped the organisers of the WWF exhibition on the Italian Navy School Ship "Amerigo Vespucci" during its 3-day visit to Malta.

Achievements

On 13th December, 1978, the Ghadira Pool was declared a bird sanctuary according to Government Notice no: 126 of 1978. This followed the visit of Mr Herbert Axell, who was brought over to Malta by The Ornithological Society with the help of RSPB. Mr Axell made an on-the-spot survey and after meeting the Minister responsible for Environment, the Honorable Dr Vincent Moran, and various other Government officials, drew up a detailed plan and report which was submitted to all parties concerned. Following the declaration of Ghadira, it is hoped that work will soon start to convert the area into a National Nature Reserve on international lines, where the Maltese people can appreciate the birds in their natural habitat.

Once again I would like to thank all MOS members for their co-operation and encouragement and for responding to our call for help when needed. My thanks go also to the MOS Council members without whose co-operation my task would have been much more difficult.

Alfred E. Baldacchino
Hon. General Secretary
THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 1978 TO DECEMBER 1978

JANUARY

- 1 - MOS Circular no: 1/78.
- 5 - MOS Council Meeting (32nd 1976/78).
- 11 - MOS delegation meets Secretary Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Culture (Joe Sultana).
- 12 - 16th Annual General Meeting
"Wadenzee - Bird Paradise" film shown.
- 12 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding birds ringed during 1977 (Joe Sultana).
- 17 - Press Release 1/78 - Birds ringed during 1977.
- 19 - 1st MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 24 - MOS Circular no: 2/78.
- 25 - Press Release 2/78 - Annual General Meeting Resolutions.
- 27 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 31 - Illustrated lecture at Villa Psaison on "Nature Photography" (Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 5 - YMS hike to Wied Gannotta.
- 7 - Press Release 4/78 - Launching of Robin Poster.
- 7 - MOS delegates attend ICBP Malta meeting.
- 9 - Indoor meeting at British Council
"Welcome in the Mud" film shown and Raffle Draw.
- 13 - Press Release 5/78 - Raffle winner.
- 19 - 1st Comino outing.
- 20 - 3rd MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 23 - Press Release 6/78 - Birds of Prey Poster launched.
- 25 - MOS Circular no: 4/78.

APRIL

- 4 - TV programme on "Gmiel in-Natura/Bird Conservation" (Joe Sultana).
- 5 - MOS delegation meets Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Culture (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 10 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 13 - Indoor meeting at British Council
"The Private Life of the Robin" and "Highland Heronry" films shown.
- 16 - YMS outing to Ghadira.
- 19 - MOS Circular no: 5/78.
- 20 - Press Release 7/78 - Visit to "Amerigo Vespucci".
- 23 - 2nd outing to Comino.
- 25 - 4th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 27 - Illustrated talk at Adults' Friendship Group on "Breeding Birds of Malta" (Charles Gauci).
- 29 - MOS officials at opening of floating exhibition on "Amerigo Vespucci".
- 30 - YMS outing to Ghadira.
- 30 - MOS visit to exhibition on "Amerigo Vespucci".

FEBRUARY

- 9 - Indoor meeting at British Council
"Rietland in de Randstad" film shown.
- 10 - Press Release 3/78 - Free distribution of booklet "Why Conserve Nature".
- 14 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 16 - 2nd MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 19 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 21 - MOS Circular no: 3/78.
- 23 - Film show "The Private Life of the Robin" at Corradino Boys' School.

MARCH

- 2 - Gozo indoor meeting - "Welcome in the Mud" and "Rietland in de Randstad" films shown at the Victoria Boy-Scouts Head Quarters.

MAY

- 2 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 4-7 MOS Council members meet and discuss with Drs S. Woldhek.
- 9 - Press Release 8/78 - Birds of Prey leaflet launched.
- 11 - Illustrated talk on "The Breeding Birds of Malta" at B'Kara Youth Centre (Joe Sultana/Michael Grima).
- 15 - MOS Council members meet B'Kara Shooting Association (Joe Sultana/ Alfred E. Baldacchino/Guido Bonett).
- 17 - MOS Circular no: 6/78.
- 19 - Press Release 9/78 - Launching of Clay Pigeon Shooting Competition.
- 20 - MOS outing to Buskett.
- 24 - MOS delegation meets Director of Agriculture regarding Ghadira (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino/Brian K. German).
- 24 - MOS delegation meets Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Culture (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino/Brian K. German).
- 25 - MOS delegation meets Asst. Commissioner of Police regarding bird protection regulations (Joe Sultana/Guido Bonett).
- 28 - MOS clay pigeon shooting competition at Oregiten Range, Bahar-ic-Caghaq.
- 29 - MOS delegation meets Commissioner of Police (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino)

JUNE

- 1 - MOS delegation meets Commissioner of Police (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino)
- 3-4 MOS educational/publicity stand at the National Pet Show at San Anton Gardens.
- 5 - Interview on World Environment Day on BFBS (Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 5 - General Meeting for ringers.
- 7 - MOS delegation meets Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Culture (Joe Sultana/Charles Gauci).
- 10 - MOS delegate meets Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Culture (Joe Sultana).
- 12 - Press Release 10/78 - MOS delegates at XVII World Conference of ICBP.
- 11-21 - MOS delegate and ICBP Malta Chairman at XVII World Conference of ICBP in Yugoslavia (Alfred E. Baldacchino/ John Azzopardi).
- 16 - Press Release 11/78 - Cory's Shearwater Sticker launched.
- 23 - Interview on BFBS regarding the new Cory's Shearwater Sticker (Brian K. German).
- 27 - 5th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 29 - General Meeting for trainee ringers.

JULY

- 3 - Rarities Committee Meeting.
- 8-9 YMS night outing to Gozo.
- 13 - Press Release 12/78 - YMS Officer on environmental course in Belgium.
- 14 - Louis Cassar, YMS Officer, leaves for environmental course in Belgium.

22-23 - YMS night outing.

- 24 - Press Release 13/78 - Donation by the Friends of Malta towards bird ringing.

AUGUST

- 17 - MOS delegation meets Malta Photographic Society (John Azzopardi/Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 18 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding XVII ICBP World Conference (Joe Sultana).
- 20 - YMS outing to Salina.
- 31 - MOS Circular no: 7/78.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 - Press Release 14/78 - Launching of photographic competition about birds and trees.
- 10 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 15 - 6th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 17 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 20 - Press Release - Launching "Bird's Eye View".
- 24 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 26 - Research Committee Meeting.
- 27 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 29 - Press Release 16/78 - Distribution of Robin Poster.

OCTOBER

- 1 - YMS outing to Buskett.
- 3 - 7th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 3 - Press Release 17/78 - Donation of bird rings by British High Commission.
- 4 - MOS delegation meets Dr Louis Saliba, Ministry of Health and Environment (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 5 - Indoor meeting at British Council "Bird Watching Holiday in UK" illustrated talk (Joe Sultana).
- 5 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding the Robin Poster (Brian K. German).
- 7 - MOS Circular no: 8/78.
- 18 - YMS Committee Meeting.
- 25 - MOS delegates attend ICBP Malta meeting (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 26 - Indoor meeting at British Council Extraordinary General Meeting followed by illustrated talk by Guido Lanfranco on "Bird Parasites".
- 29 - YMS outing to Ghadira.

NOVEMBER

- 6 - MOS delegation meets Minister of Health and Environment (Alfred E. Baldacchino/ Herbert E. Axell/Brian K. German).
- 7 - MOS Circular no: 9/78.
- 13 - Indoor Meeting at Civil Service Sports Club: illustrated talk by Herbert E. Axell on "Nature Reserves".
- 16 - MOS delegation meets Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Culture regarding bird ringing scheme (Joe Sultana/Charles Gauci).
- 16 - Film show "The Private Life of the Robin" at Siggiewi Catholic Action.
- 19 - YMS Marathon Walk.

TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1978

	EM	c	m		EM	c	m
Exchange loss				Subs. & Donations (2)			
Stickers at cost			83-23,0	Bags sales			827-29,1
Postages			118-32,5	Sticker sales			41-73,5
Stationery			109-29,0	Lotteries			112-30,0
Sundry Expenses (1)			126-15,0	Shirt transfers			5-35,0
Posters Cost	EM	39-83,0		Excercise Books			86-56,0
less reserves		<u>39-83,0</u>		Guide Sales			72-14,0
Bags at cost			64-70,0	Interest received			6-81,3
Leaflet at cost		77-00,0		Il-Merill sales			2-10,0
less donation		<u>2-96,0</u>		Outings			48-50,0
Conference cost		259-39,3		T-Shirt sales			183-75,0
less reserves		<u>100-00,0</u>					
T-Shirts cost			159-39,3				
Bird's Eye View			170-00,0				
cost		157-27,0					
less reserves		<u>100-00,0</u>					
Subsidies for Ringing Group			57-27,0				
Il-Merill (3)			35-66,4				
Excess of Income			7-20,0				
			368-37,7				
			<u>EM1455-23,9</u>				<u>EM1455-23,9</u>

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT NO. 1

Il-Merill reserve A/C	250-00,0	Balance B/F	368-37,7
Balance C/F	<u>118-37,7</u>		
	<u>EM368-37,7</u>		<u>EM368-37,7</u>

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT NO. 2

Depreciation (4)	9-08,3	Balance B/F	118-37,7
Balance to Capital a/c	<u>109-29,4</u>		
	<u>EM118-37,7</u>		<u>EM118-37,7</u>

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

NOTE 1. SUNDRY EXPENSES: EM126-15,0

Made up of the following items (amounts to the nearest EM):-
 Projectionist fees (EM3); Rubber Stamps (EM10); Trophies (EM15); Telephone expenses (EM21);
 Donations (EM10); Books of Account (EM3); Subscription Fees (EM8); P.O. Rent (EM10); Glue,
 Photocopies, etc. (EM18); Entertainment (EM28).

NOTE 2. SUBSCRIPTIONS & DONATIONS: EM827-29,1

The amount includes EM250 donated by the British High Commission which was utilised to purchase bird rings.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1978

<u>CAPITAL A/C</u>		<u>FIXED ASSETS (4)</u>	18-16,8
Balance b/f	£M456-97,8	<u>GROUPS</u>	
Add Approp.	<u>109-29,4</u>	Young Members	9-52,0
	556-27,2	Gozo Section	3-52,0
<u>RESERVES (5)</u>	1195-79,8	iCBP (Malta)	145-16,4
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		Ringling Group (7)	<u>700-00,0</u>
Advance Subs. (6)	151-72,0	<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>	
Creditors	<u>300-00,0</u>	Banks	1196-52,7
	451-72,0	Cash	48-87,0
		Debtors	50-08,9
		Stock	<u>41-93,0</u>
	<u>£M2213-79,0</u>		1337-41,6
			<u>£M2213-79,0</u>

NOTE 3. IL-MERILL: £M7-20,0

The exact cost of issue no. 19 is expected to be between £M240/250. A reserve has been created to this effect (vide Appropriation No. 1).

NOTE 4. FIXED ASSETS: £M18-16,8

Item	Cost	Depreciation @ 25% of Cost	Book Value
4 Binoculars	£M20-00,0	£M10-00,0	£M10-00,0
1 Tripod	16-33,4	8-16,6	8-16,8
	<u>£M36-33,4</u>	<u>£M18-16,6</u>	<u>£M18-16,8</u>

NOTE 5. RESERVES: £M1195-79,8

The amount is made up as follows:-

Il-Merill	£M400-00,0	
Posters	48-17,0	
Young Members Section	120-00,0	
Maltese Guide	125-00,0	
Filfla	5-58,5	
Conferences	200-00,0	
Stickers	150-00,0	
Bird's Eye View	147-04,3	<u>£M1195-79,8</u>

NOTE 6. ADVANCE SUBSCRIPTIONS: £M151-72,0

The amount is made up as follows:-

Year 1979	£M104-72,0	
Year 1980	35-00,0	
Year 1981	12-00,0	<u>£M151-72,0</u>

NOTE 7. RINGING GROUP: £M700-00,0

The amount is made up as follows:-

Debtors	£M 60-43,9	
Rings	647-82,2	
Equipment	11-89,5	
Cash	12-57,5	<u>£M732-73,1</u>
Less Creditors		<u>32-73,1</u>
		<u>£M700-00,0</u>

Brian K. German A.I.B.
Hon. Treasurer
THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER

- 6 - MOS Circular no: 10/78.
- 14 - Ringing Scheme Committee Meeting.
- 15 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding Herbert E. Axell's visit to Malta (Joe Sultana).
- 18 - Press Release 18/78 - Ghadira Nature Reserve.
- 31 - Press Release 19/78 - "Il-Merill" number 19 issued.

JANUARY

- 8 - 9th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 9 - 1st programme in the series "Wirt in-Natura" produced by Joe Sultana and Alfred E. Baldacchino, screened on TV.
- 12 - MOS Circular no: 1/79.
- 13 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding the photographic competition "Of Birds and Trees" (Joe Sultana).
- 15 - 10th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 17 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding the launching of the Peregrine drawing book (Louis Cassar).
- 23 - 2nd programme in the series "Wirt in-

Natura" screened on TV (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino).

- 24 - Signing of agreement between the MOS and the Minister of Labour, Welfare & Culture regarding the Valletta Bird Ringing Scheme (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino/Brian K. German).
- 26 - Interview on Cable Radio regarding the agreement on the Valletta Bird Ringing Scheme (Joe Sultana).
- 29 - Indoor meeting at Din l-Art Helwa HQ "Birds of Peru" (Hugh Salmon)

FEBRUARY

- 5 - Children's programme on MTV (Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 6 - 3rd programme in the series "Wirt in-Natura" screened on TV (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino).
- 14 - Press Release 1/79 - Launching of Peregrine Drawing Book.
- 19 - 11th MOS Council Meeting 1978/79.
- 20 - 4th programme in the series "Wirt in-Natura" screened on TV (Joe Sultana/Alfred E. Baldacchino). ●

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

1978 saw the publication of Parliamentary Act XXII, "An Act for the Control and Use of Certain Words", whereby the use of the words "Malta" and "Nation" as well as their derivatives was made illegal unless a special permission was obtained.

The MOS (like all other organisations, whether voluntary, philanthropic or commercial) had to apply for permission to retain the word Malta in its title. Like all other societies, the MOS was refused permission to retain the original name and had to drop the word "Malta". An extraordinary General Meeting was quickly convened on 26 October 1978 in order to decide on an alternative name and the present one was adopted. However, the difference is non-existent. The Ornithological Society and the MOS are one and the same. ●



News & Views

RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED AT THE 17TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The following resolutions were adopted unanimously by the 17th Annual General Meeting of The Ornithological Society.

1. In view of the agreement regarding the Valletta Bird-Ringing Scheme signed between the Hon. Minister of Labour, Culture & Welfare and The Ornithological Society, the Council and Members present at this 17th Annual General Meeting pass a vote of thanks to the Hon. Minister Miss Agatha Barbara.
2. This 17th Annual General Meeting of The Ornithological Society
 - a) Welcomes the Government's action in declaring Ghadira pool a bird sanctuary
 - b) Urges the authorities to enact as soon as possible the new and adequate bird protection laws which were being contemplated.

Copies of Resolution no. 2 were sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, Lands, Housing and Parliamentary Affairs, and to the Minister of Health and Environment. ●

VALLETTA BIRD RINGING SCHEME

January 1979 saw the MOS up another rung in the ladder of successes. The Government of Malta accorded official recognition to the MOS Bird-Ringing Scheme.

This was brought about by the signing of an agreement between the MOS and Miss Agatha Barbara, Minister of Labour, Culture and Welfare to the effect that there should be one bird-ringing scheme for Malta.

This scheme now became known as the Valletta Bird-Ringing Scheme and it is run by a Committee appointed annually by the Council of the MOS and two Government representatives appointed by the Minister.

The Committee is responsible for the issue of bird-ringing permits. It also regulates its own procedures and makes such rules and regulations as it considers appropriate in the interest of the Scheme, subject to the approval of the Minister.

All expenditure connected with the Scheme is borne by the MOS.

The MOS started bird ringing in Malta in 1965 when Joe Hardman, Mont. Hiron and his son John, Glynn Davies and David Rushforth, all members of the British Trust for Ornithology, came to Malta to train MOS members in bird ringing. Since then the MOS has worked in close co-operation with the BTO who kindly helped the MOS with bird-rings, ringing equipment, stationary, as well as expertise. The MOS has gradually but steadily earned a reputation as one of the most efficient and respectable bird ringingschemes in Europe. In October 1977 the MOS introduced the use of bird-rings bearing the MOS address and in the same month EURING honoured the MOS Bird Ringing Scheme by according it full membership among the other leading ringing schemes of Europe and North Africa already members.

Bird ringing is very important to the study and conservation of birds and the MOS holds that it should be carried out under strict control of trained personnel. ●

L to R: J. Lanzon, Hon. Miss A. Barbara, J. Suttana, B.K. German, A.E. Baldacchino



BEST NEWS FOR A LONG, LONG TIME

12th December 1978 was a red-letter day for the Maltese conservation movement. The Government of Malta declared Ghadira a bird sanctuary with a 500-metre protected zone around it. This was brought about by the publication of Legal Notice 126 of 1978, thus culminating 16 years of hard campaigning by the MOS.

This news about Ghadira was also received with great satisfaction and relief by the European and international conservation organisations who had been following the matter with great interest. This important event in the history of Maltese bird conservation was given coverage in various official publications, among which are the ICBP "President's Letter" No. 45 of December 1978, the RSPB "Birds" Vol. 7, No. 5 of spring 1979, LIPU "Pro Avibus" Anno XIV No. 3 of autumn 1979 and the Council of Europe Newsletter No. 79-3. ●

AXELL'S KISS OF LIFE

AE BALDACCHINO



On the initiative of the MOS and with the kind co-operation of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds of the United Kingdom, Mr Herbert E. Axell flew to Malta on 30th October 1978 with the aim of surveying Ghadira and formulating a plan for converting it into a nature reserve, the first of its kind in Malta. Mr Axell, who is the internationally renowned land use expert of RSPB and who has been responsible for the establishment of various reserves throughout the world, was soon on site taking the necessary notes. He then drew up a detailed plan of the 15-acre area which he submitted to the MOS. Later, Mr Axell accompanied an MOS delegation which met the Minister for Health and Environment, Dr V. Moran MD to discuss the Ghadira project; a copy of Mr Axell's plan was presented to the Minister.

Soon after Mr Axell's visit to Malta, Ghadira was declared a bird sanctuary. This started the ball rolling. World Wildlife Fund agreed to sponsor the Ghadira project and preparations are currently being made for the necessary engineering works to get under way. The main object of the reserve is to encourage new species of birds to start breeding in Malta. When the reserve is fully functional school children as well as members of the general public will be able to observe birds in their natural habitat at close quarters, through the use of specially constructed hides and nature trails. This would certainly go a long way in helping towards a gradual change in the mentality of the public, from one of destruction to one of appreciation and protection.

Before leaving, Mr Axell donated to the MOS a copy of the book which he wrote with Eric Hosking and which has now become something of a classic, "The Making of a Bird Reserve - Minsmere". He also had the opportunity to meet various members of the MOS Council. Mr Vincent Sammut, an MOS Council member, very kindly helped with Mr Axell's accommodation. The air fare was kindly seen to by the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds of ICBP. ●

'OUR BREEDING BIRDS'

The establishment of Ghadira Nature Reserve will surely help to increase Malta's small list of breeding birds. A booklet describing those species presently having a foothold on our islands despite all odds, was recently published by the MOS. The text was prepared

AE BALDACCHINO



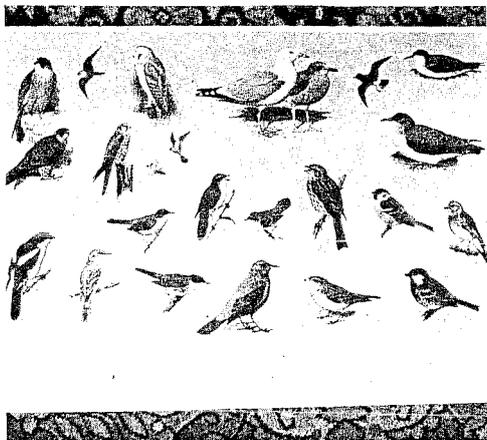
by Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci and typed by Carmen Azzopardi. The booklet, which is illustrated with line drawings by Rodney Ingram, was designed by Alfred E. Baldacchino. The European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds, through the co-operation of the local section of ICBP, financed the printing of the booklet.

"OUR BREEDING BIRDS", which is the 2nd in a planned series of educational booklets, was very well received by the general public who made a great demand for it. The booklet is also being distributed in all schools and mailed to all those who request it. ●

BREEDING BIRDS CHARTS

The Dutch Committee for the Protection of Migratory Birds donated 5000 charts depicting the breeding birds of Malta in colour, to the Malta Section of The International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP).

With the approval of the Dutch Committee, ICBP (Malta Section) handed over about 4000 charts to the Ministry of Culture to be distributed through the official channels to schools, police-stations, etc., as part of its educational campaign. ●



N FENECH

BARN OWL: STICK 'EM UP

As part of its campaign for the better appreciation and protection of birds of prey, last May, the MOS issued a new sticker depicting the Barn Owl, with the message "Naghmel il-Gid -- Hallini Nghix" (i.e. "I am Beneficial - Let Me Live").



J AZZOPARDI

Only a handful of Barn Owls still breed in the Maltese Islands and they are in constant danger of being exterminated. The Barn Owl is shot by the local gunmen for their stuffed-bird collections. The local anachronistic bird "protection" regulations do not protect any birds of prey. If the Barn Owl is not afforded urgent and total protection, it may soon follow the Jackdaw into extinction from the Maltese Islands.

The sticker has been designed by Alfred E. Baldacchino, Hon. General Secretary of the MOS and financed by the ICBP European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds. The Hawk Trust of U.K. also contributed a donation. ●

Due to heavy demand, the MOS also issued a sticker depicting the Blue Rock Thrush, the MOS emblem. The sticker, which is also available inside-fixing for car windows, was designed by Alfred E. Baldacchino.

(see page 12)

BOOK A DRAWING BOOK

The Peregrine is among the rarest of breeding birds in the Maltese Islands, with only a pair or two still nesting. Unfortunately, like all the larger birds it is eagerly sought by the local men-with-the-gun for their private collections of stuffed birds.

The MOS is always on the look-out for opportunities to exploit new ways of driving home the bird conservation message. With this in mind, the MOS recently published a drawing book for school children, with full-colour photograph of the Peregrine on the front cover. The back cover carries short information on birds of prey in general, the Peregrine, and the MOS.

The aim behind this publication is to instil in children a sense of respect and appreciation towards birds and the natural environment as a whole. The drawing book was produced with the kind help of M. JM Terrasse of the "Fond D'Intervention Pour Les Rapaces" of France, who lent us the necessary colour separations.

The drawing book contains 20 pages and it is 28cm x 20 cm in size; the price is 10c0 per copy. In buying a drawing book members will be helping towards the realization of other similar projects. ●



N FENECH

FAIR STANDS FOR MOS

Opportunities to display and distribute such educational material are surely in fairs. The MOS, last June, took part in the Annual Fur and Feather Show with the kind co-operation of The Rabbit Breeders Association. As in previous years, a display of posters, stickers and other publications was set up.

MOS members took turns to attend at the display and helped to sell various MOS publicity items.

The MOS also managed to secure a stand at the 23rd International Trade Fair of Malta, held between 1-15 July 1979. The aims, ideals and activities of the MOS were clearly displayed by means of posters, pictures and slogans.

On both events, the preparation and setting up of the stand were seen to by Alfred E. Baldacchino, Guido Bonett, Natalino Fenech and Joe Sultana. The following (in alphabetical order) also deserve special mention for volunteering to give up their evenings and act as attendants at both stands on various occasions: John Azzopardi, Saviour Balzan, Guido Bonett, Marco Buttigieg, Denis Cachia, Richard Cachia Zammit, Peter Caruana, Louis F. Cassar, Victor Cilia, Natalino Fenech, Raymond Galea, Charles Gauci, Mario V. Gauci, Tony Gauci, Brian K. German, Joe Grima, Michael Grima, Paul Portelli, Silvio Scicluna, Joe Sultana and Raymond Testa. ●

BIRDS ON SCHOOL TIME-TABLE

The MOS has used the TV as an educational medium on many occasions through the co-operation of the School Broadcasting Authority. Various films about birds in general, as well as on methods of studying birds such as bird ringing, bird watching, building nest-boxes and bird tables, etc., were screened purposely for school children as part of the school timetable. ●

VISION ON NATURAL HERITAGE

During spring 1979 Joe Sultana (MOS President) and Alfred E. Baldacchino (MOS Hon. General Secretary) produced a series of 6 programmes for television entitled "WIRT IN-NATURA" (i.e. "Our Natural Heritage"). The programmes were screened during early evening and were aimed at showing to the public the beauty of wild creatures in their natural habitat. Hopefully, such a positive outlook would help to induce in the general public a sense of appreciation and a feeling of the need to preserve and protect the natural environment with all its creatures.

During the series, various local naturalists were interviewed on local natural history folklore and other items of general interest. Each programme included also a topic on birds such as: Birds of Prey; Breeding Birds; Bird Migration; Bird Study; and Bird Conservation.

"WIRT IN-NATURA" was televised by the state broadcasting network Xandir Malta at a popular time and thousands of viewers could follow the series and note the conservation message which the producers tried to convey. ●

CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING

The 2nd Clay-Pigeon Shooting Competition for the MOS Trophy was held on Sunday, 8th April 1979 at the Qrejtn Shooting Range. The event was organised by the B'Kara Shooting Association.

Twenty-five participants competed for the trophy, which was won by John Xuereb who succeeded to hit all the 30 clay pigeons. Silvio Bonello, last year's winner, was runner-up, with 28 hits and Victor Galea placed third with 26 hits.

The aim behind this annual activity is to encourage shooters to participate in such competitions as an alternative to shooting at live birds for target practice. ●



J AZZOPARDI

Alfred E. Baldacchino, MOS Gen. Secretary presenting the MOS Trophy to the winner.

HONEY BUZZARD FLIES TO UK

In March 1979, the national airline Air Malta kindly provided transport to UK for an unusual passenger. It was a Honey Buzzard which

in September 1978 was found injured by a young member of the MOS. To avoid the risk of the bird "disappearing" again (see "Bird's Eye View" no. 2), Vincent Sammut, An MOS Council member, volunteered to keep it and care for it himself until the necessary arrangements were made for it to be flown to the Hawk Trust in UK to be rehabilitated and eventually released.

The latest news that we had from the Hawk Trust is that the Honey Buzzard which came so near death in Malta is successfully breeding in the UK and it will soon be contributing to the nucleus of young Honey Buzzards in the wild. ●

INDISCRIMINATE SHOOTING

INDISCRIMINATE SALE

The wanton destruction of birds in Malta by the trigger-happy men-with-the-gun does not seem to perturb the followers of the locally proclaimed "wonderful sport of game-bird shooting". Locally, the trade in stuffed birds is gaining momentum, and stuffed birds may be seen offered for sale both in shop-windows and even in open-air markets.

The MOS has been quick to lodge its protest with the Commissioner of Police. Besides the taking of birds which cannot be considered as legitimate game, the sale of stuffed birds is a further insult to the intelligence of the Maltese people. Some of these birds are protected locally (e.g. Golden Oriole and Kingfisher) and a great many of them (especially birds of prey and herons) are afforded international protection. Unfortunately, the taking of such birds further demonstrates Malta's notorious indifference to the safeguarding of the international heritage of humanity.

The MOS urged the Commissioner of Police to take urgent action to control the sale of stuffed birds and also to withdraw all licences (if any existed) and refrain from issuing any licences for such sales.

Following the MOS initiative, some stuffed birds have been removed from shopwindows. However, others are still on display. Taxidermy is the main cause of such indiscriminate killing of birds in Malta and only its control would put an end to the annual massacre of birds. The MOS has already asked for such measure. It is now the authorities' turn to act. ●

THE MALTESER

In the meantime, local followers of "that wonderful sport of game-bird shooting" (alias indiscriminate shooting) seem to interpret the killing of birds as signs of great capability and virility and take pride in flaunting them, at the same time not realising - or not at all minding - the bad image of Malta that they are projecting abroad.

A case in point is of one such disciple who shot and killed an immature White-tailed Eagle. However, he was now faced with a dilemma. What was the bird which he had so bravely shot? It did not look like a Turtle Dove or a Woodcock! What was it then? Being a subscriber to "The Encyclopedia of Birds" he came up with the brilliant idea of sending photographs of his UFO (now stuffed and mounted) to John Gooders himself, asking for help to identify it. I will not try to describe John's reaction on reading the letter; I will leave that to your imagination! But it is no wonder that John incredulously thumbed back through all the previous pages of his encyclopedia to convince himself that it was full of conservation emphasis. But it seems that even John Gooders has to bear with us these heart-breaks. For a couple of weeks later another member of the shooting fraternity also wrote to him relating how he had hung up his gun, having realised how beautiful birds were. He then continued to describe how he was keeping live birds and that he had a Golden Plover, a female Kestrel, four Skylarks, two Song Thrushes, one Turtle Dove, and a "wonderful Honey Buzzard". One may perhaps wonder whether the correspondent had not come across all these birds injured and saved them. But tucked away at the end of his letter was a request for information on how to stuff birds so that he could avoid paying the exorbitant fees to local taxidermists!

John Gooders confessed that despite the work of the MOS, it will take a long time for the bird shooting craze to abate in Malta. However, although most shooters try to convince themselves as well as third parties, against the need for bird protection laws, their arguments are pathetically weak. One such shooter tongue-in-cheek wrote in one of the local newspapers: "It seems that this subject is being used as an anvil on which to hammer out some faults of the present administration" and "They seem to be intended towards leading the present Government to take steps which would doubtlessly incur the displeasure of a great sector of vote holders to the advantage of others". Tut..tut..tut!!

But to return to John Gooders...Following his editorials in "The Encyclopedia of Birds" and an exchange of correspondence between him and the MOS and ICBP (Malta Section),

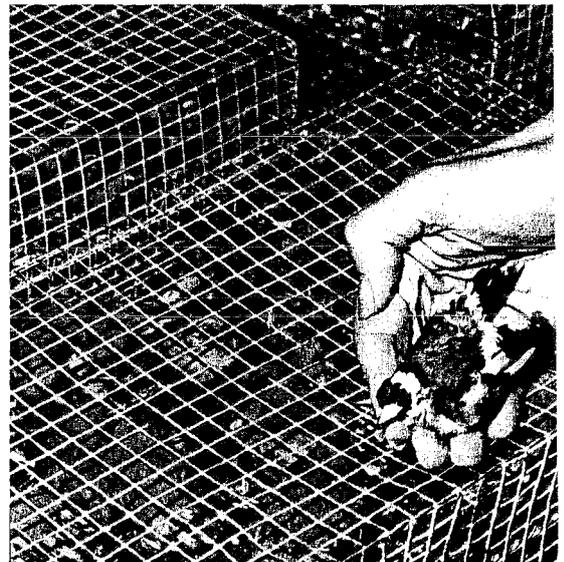
he felt the need of intervening to help. He has thought up a poster project aimed at educating the local followers of the "wonderful sport of game-bird shooting". More information on the project will be given in the next issue of "Bird's Eye View". ●

ILLEGAL IMPORTS

In Malta, the trapping of finches is indulged in both in spring and autumn, the main purpose being to sell the males for use as decoys. For this reason, spring males are much more favoured by trappers because at such time they would be in breeding plumage and more inclined to sing. However, the MOS has always disapproved of the trapping of finches in the spring. The harm that is done with the trapping of a bird which is biologically stimulated and fit for breeding is immeasurable, as it is being prevented from carrying out its natural functions, resulting in failure to rear young and the consequent depletion of the population. Besides, if left unmolested, such birds would surely breed regularly in the Maltese Islands.

Unfortunately, the ready sale for such finches is too much an attraction for most trappers. Some bird sellers even used to import finches from abroad. However, recently the Government has restricted the importation of such birds to 12 per person. This, of course, is a step in the right direction. However, it has triggered off the illegal importation of finches from neighbouring countries, mainly Tunisia and Sicily. The Maltese airport authorities regularly discover finches hidden in various ways and means in the luggage of in-coming passengers. In most cases, the birds are dead on being discovered and the weaker ones are put to sleep.

UNION PRESS



Obviously, this is resulting in an unnecessary waste of bird-life and stricter controls are needed in places where these birds originate, especially in Tunisia, where contacts supply the birds personally to Maltese smugglers. In view of this, ICBP (Malta Section) is co-operating with the ICBP National Section of Tunisia to help put an end to such a harmful traffic. ●

TOURIST FREES BIRD

In Malta, tourists come and go, like birds do. The majority of tourists that visit us come from conservation conscious countries of northern Europe. Therefore, they cannot help feel disgusted at the treatment meted out to the birds which they so cherishly protect.

Imagine the surprise of one tourist when in the garden of the hotel where he was staying he saw some wild birds, among them a Kestrel and a Robin, caged in an aviary. The tourist wrote to the MOS expressing his bewilderment.

On receiving such information, the MOS was quick to write to the Minister of Tourism and to the Commissioner of Police pointing out how the craze to kill and cage birds is irritating tourists. A letter from the Police assured us that they had taken steps to "set the birds free". ●

MIGRATORY TOURISTS

Speaking of tourists, the MOS is pleased to note that many tourists who have an interest in the protection and study of birds are getting in contact with us. Many write to us before their arrival, seeking contacts to enable them to visit the best bird-watching spots in Malta and Gozo. Others come prepared with full details on how to get the right persons who can take them round some good places. We are also pleased to note that some tourists who are not directly involved in bird protection, but who cannot bear the sight of their heritage being so much abused, also write to the MOS about disgusting incidents regarding bird shooting and trapping which they have themselves witnessed. The MOS is very appreciative of all those who show an interest in its efforts for the better protection of birds. The MOS is all out to protect our common international heritage, which is given so much protection in their countries and which is unfortunately still much abused here in Malta. ●

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

It is not just the MOS which receives letters, both from locals and foreigners, complaining about the indiscriminate destruction of birdlife in Malta. The local mass media often carries letters of complaint from the general public, especially during the spring and autumn, when shooting and trapping is more intense. The need for the control of bird shooting and trapping in Malta is being felt today more than ever before. All the local newspapers have carried, during the past year, editorials stressing the need for such control. The silent majority is in favour of controlling the indiscriminate shooting which besides denuding Malta's countryside of birdlife, is also proving a constant hazard to third parties who are out enjoying the countryside. Even a lot of shooters are today upholding the need for better legislation if not for the sake of the birds, at least for their own sake as they are being put to ridicule by many irresponsible men-with-the-gun who disregard all sorts of regulations and who have no shooting ethics whatsoever. For example, it is absolutely ridiculous to see, on Sunday afternoons, men cradling shotguns while accompanying their families on a stroll in the countryside!

But...the writing is on the wall. Sooner or later, bird protection regulations have to be legislated. In a mature nation it is the will of the majority which dictates the course of events. ●

FIRST STEP FORWARD?

July 1979 has seen Dr J. Brincat, BA, LL.D., a young Government member, step into the shoes of the Minister of Justice. The new Minister was quick to reply to an MOS request for a meeting. On meeting the Minister the MOS delegation pointed out the inadequate and anachronistic (dating back from 1937) bird protection regulations which are "in force" today. As a result of ambiguous wording in these regulations, which allow certain loopholes, many abuses were taking place. For example, in the extant regulations it is stated that no one can discharge a firearm inside protected areas. Which means that unless a person is seen firing a shotgun, he is free to carry it and still be within the law! The MOS delegation pointed out to the Minister that such a loophole was being employed by the tenants of a field at Buskett, a bird sanctuary. The field has been leased by the Department of Lands for agricultural purposes, but shooting and trapping were taking place there. It was explained to the Minister that this could serve as a precedent to attract other shooters to Buskett. This

would spell disaster, especially for migrating birds of prey. The Minister at once grasped the situation and promised to help by introducing a small amendment to the present laws by means of a legal notice, which does not normally have to go through Parliament. This amendment was intended to ameliorate the situation until the much spoken of bird protection regulations are eventually published.

The MOS delegation also had meetings with officials from the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Lands, as well as the Malta Police, regarding the field at Buskett as well as the proposed bird regulations. ●

BIRD PROTECTION REGULATIONS!

In the extant bird protection regulations one is immediately struck by the absence of a close season. The scope of a close season would be to afford protection to breeding birds as well as to late migrants which may be encouraged to stay and breed with us. However, this is rendered impossible because of heavy shooting taking place in the spring. A ban on spring shooting would also provide a haven for tired birds stopping in Malta to refuel after having crossed the hostile stretches of the Sahara and before resuming their northward migration to their breeding grounds. Killing and trapping birds which are biologically stimulated for breeding, resulting in the failure to rear young and the consequent depletion of the population, is an unforgivable crime.

The birds which are protected in Malta in accordance with Legal Notice GN 7/1937 are:

Blue Rock Thrush	Robin
Nightengale	Whitethroat
Sardinian Warbler	Garden Warbler
Wood Warbler	Chiffchaff
Great Reed Warbler	Sedge Warbler
Spotted Flycatcher	Pied Flycatcher
Spectacled Warbler	Kingfisher
Grey Wagtail	Yellow Wagtail
White Wagtail	Meadow Pipit
Short-toed Lark	Storm Petrel
Jackdaw	Golden Oriole

Out of the birds listed, those which most often fall victim to shooters are the Kingfisher, the Storm Petrel and the Golden Oriole. Occasionally some shooters also take the Blue Rock Thrush under the pretext that they had mistaken it for some other thrush. However, most often the young of the Blue Rock Thrush are stolen from the nest to be hand-reared for their song.

On the other hand, Robins are trapped in large numbers every year, the great majority of which die in captivity after a few

days. Persons from all walks of life indulge in this "national" pastime, and it is not at all surprising to see parents setting robin-traps while accompanied by children.

Children are the main culprits, although far from the exclusive ones, where wagtail trapping is concerned. Although the three species of wagtail are taken, the most commonly trapped is the Yellow Wagtail. Very often the birds are pinioned and are left to flit about after flies in backyards.

Short-toed larks, which are breeding visitors to Malta, are also trapped, being kept for their song.

The inadequacy of the extant laws is evident from the fact that the majority of the birds listed are virtually never molested because they are either too small or too drab to attract attention or are comparatively poor songsters. Consequently, they do not constitute a conservation problem. On the other hand, beneficial birds which are protected in many countries (e.g. birds of prey, herons, etc.) are not protected under Maltese law.

However, even though the majority of birds which are legally protected are not generally molested, the others suffer heavy losses mainly as a result of the local craze for stuffed-bird collections. Although general disrespect for the bird protection regulations has always been a prevailing attitude locally, nobody would have believed that it would go so far as to cause the extinction of a bird which had been on the protected list for 40 years, since the very first bird protection laws were published in 1916. The last Jackdaw was shot by a Maltese shooter in Gozo in April 1956. A shameful reminder to an equally shameful history of bird killing. ●

SHOWING THE WAYIN COLOUR

After the success of "A Guide to the Birds of Malta" the MOS embarked on the publication of a bird book in Maltese which would appeal to the man-in-the-street.

After some years of preparation the dream has finally become a reality. The book "L-AGHSAFAR" (i.e. "BIRDS") was finally published in December 1979. The book contains 190 pages and eight full-colour plates depicting over 90 species of birds. The book is also well illustrated with a large number of line drawings. The colour plates, the majority of line drawings, as well as the attractive full-colour cover were expertly executed by the artist whose name has now become as much a part of the MOS as the



birds themselves - Rodney Ingram. They all bear his intriguingly unique style. As is typical of him, Rodney very kindly executed all the drawings and paintings free of charge. Some line drawings in the book were produced by Joe Sultana, while Emanuel D. Curmi, a young MOS member, contributed some others.

The book, written by the now long-established tandem Joe Sultana & Charles Gauci, is divided into two main sections. The first part deals with general information about birds, their lives, body structure, behaviour, migration, bird study and their connections with man. The second part gives information about the birds of Malta, both resident and migratory. The book also contains three appendices about the main works on Maltese ornithology, further books to read and the MOS, as well as an analytic index. The book was offset-printed by Printex Ltd., Malta.

The authors will not receive any royalties and all proceeds from the sales of the book will go to the MOS.

The MOS dedicated the book "L-AGHSAFAR" to Joe M. Attard, Honorary President and a founder of the MOS, as a tribute to his sterling services. To him the Maltese bird conservation movement owes its very existence.

The production of the book was made possible through financial aid received from the ICBP European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds.

"L-AGHSAFAR" was officially launched on 15th December 1979 at a ceremony attended by His Excellency Dr Anton Buttigieg, BA, LL.D, President of the Republic of Malta and Patron of the MOS. The launching ceremony was

L to R: Charles Gauci, Joe Sultana, Mrs R. Ingram, Dr Anton Buttigieg, President of the Republic of Malta, Rodney Ingram, Alfred E. Baldacchino.

R TESTA



held at the British Legion Headquarters in Valletta, with the kind permission of the Secretary. Present for the occasion were various distinguished guests, including representatives of the Association of Shooters and Trappers. Rodney Ingram and his wife Sheila also came from England for this special event. The launching ceremony, as well as Rodney's visit were made possible through aid received from various donors (see below) as a result of the personal efforts of Guido Bonetti, Public Relations Officer of the MOS. For this special occasion the MOS mounted an exhibition of Rodney's original paintings.

The following is a list of individuals and business enterprises who sponsored the launching ceremony of "L-AGHSAFAR". In all approximately £M140 were collected.

Mr Angelo Agius, Major Joe Arrigo, Mr Joe M. Attard, Mr Lino Attard, Mr Gamri Axisa, Mr Frank Borg, Mr S. Cardona, Miss R. Fox, Mr Nazju Gatt, Mr E. Spiteri, JS (anon.); Andrews Feeds (Malta) Ltd., C.F. & N. Abela Bros. Ltd., Carmelo Caruana Shipping Agency Ltd., Caruana Cold Storage & Imports Ltd., Frank Borda & Sons Ltd., General Superintendence Co. Ltd., Jos. Bezzina & Co. Ltd., Marina Milling & Grain Handling Co. Ltd.; Prime Bacon Co. Ltd., Super Farm Feeds. ●

TOWARDS A SAFER WORLD

On 23rd June 1979 a wildlife convention was born which in due time may come to rank as one of the main international bulwarks against continuing depletion of species.

A 2-week Diplomatic Conference in Bonn, West Germany, culminated in the adoption of a "Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals". It will come into force when 15 nations have ratified.

Migratory species are defined as "the entire population or any geographically separate part of the population of any species or lower taxon of wild animals, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross national jurisdictional boundaries." All migratory animals throughout the world are in principle covered; there are no exceptions.

A most heartening aspect of the Conference was the strong conservationist stand taken by the Third World and western Europe. Pride of place must go to the African nations. They intervened often and eloquently to bring the Conference back on course. A "Declaration by the African States" issued

halfway through the meeting made it clear that Africans were only interested in a convention which included all migratory species everywhere.

The Declaration was seconded by over 30 delegations and thereafter it was plain that the majority would not compromise in order to "buy" the support of a handful of wealthy countries more concerned about their own fishing interests than with protecting the "common heritage of humanity".

(IUCN Bulletin - New Series Vol. 10 No. 6) ●

AND A SAFER EUROPE

During a 3-day European Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Berne, 19-21 September 1979, the Council of Europe's "Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats" was opened for signature. Described as "a new international legal instrument to protect nature", the Convention was immediately signed by nineteen countries. It will come into force when five have ratified.

The Convention has three main objects:

strict protection for 119 endangered plants and some 400 endangered animals;

prohibition of indiscriminate killing methods and a ban on live decoys which are blinded or otherwise mutilated;

tight controls on the introduction of non-native species.

Council of Europe signatories to the "Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats" are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Of the 21 members of the Council of Europe only Cyprus, Iceland and MALTA have so far not signed. Finland is so far the only non-member signatory. The Berne Conference has expressed the hope that for the sake of migratory birds other non-members - particularly from Eastern Europe and Africa - will follow Finland's example.

(IUCN Bulletin - New Series Vol. 10 No. 9)

Malta is considered as the black spot in the Mediterranean where bird conservation is concerned. The fact that Malta did not sign the Berne Convention certainly does not help

to erase such image. Is it, therefore, possible that the local shooting fraternity can exert such influence as to prevent the authorities from signing such a convention? If this is not the reason, what could the true reason be then? After all Malta is a member state of the Council of Europe and the signing of the Berne Convention would have contributed greatly to restoring the national image. ●

BUT NOT A SAFER MALTA

We are publishing hereunder a horror story. Although it narrates only names and numbers, it is guaranteed to chill your blood and at the same time make you sick.

The following is a list of birds of prey which were shot at Buskett alone between 3rd and 29th September 1979, a period of just over three weeks. For those who are not familiar with the subject, let us inform them that Buskett is a bird sanctuary where no shooting and trapping are allowed and where all species of birds are protected. The list was compiled with the kind help of John Borg, Natalino Fenech and Raymond Galea, three of the MOS young members who regularly frequent Buskett every autumn to study the raptor migration despite all threats and insults levelled at them by irresponsible men-with-the-gun.

The figures in brackets following the names of birds shot indicate the date/s on which birds of that particular species were seen shot.

N FENECH



- 1 Eleonora's Falcon (7)
- 11 Hobby (8, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29)
- 1 Lesser Kestrel (8)
- 1 Short-toed Eagle (12)
- 49 Honey Buzzards (14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29)
- 8 Kestrels (12, 17, 22, 28, 29)
- 1 Marsh Harrier (18)
- 3 Falco species (7, 13, 19)
- 10 Kestrel/Lesser Kestrel (12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29)
- 4 Broadwings - unidentified (17, 18, 19)

This is the story as it happened at Buskett. Considering the fact that similar happenings occurred in other "good" spots, the number of raptors killed during the three-week autumn migration must run into hundreds. Furthermore, when realising that this invariably happens every year, one is stupefied to think of the wholesale massacre of birds of prey which is taking place unchecked. ●

WEBS CONFERENCE NO.2

The MOS was represented for the first time at a Congress of European National Bird Protection Societies. This was the 2nd meeting and it was held in Florence, Italy, from the 29th September to 1st October 1978. The meeting was hosted by the "Lega Italiana per la Protezione degli Uccelli" (LIPU). The MOS was represented at the congress by its President Joe Sultana.

There were 11 delegations representing the leading bird protection societies in their respective countries, namely: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Spain, and Switzerland. Each delegation presented a progress report. The MOS delegate reported on the situation in Malta regarding bird legislation and dwelt on the MOS history. MOS publications were distributed among the delegates present. Opportunity was taken to hold private meetings with the Belgian, Dutch, and British delegations whose societies have deep-rooted connexions with the MOS. New contacts made included the German Bird Protection Society (represented by Dr Klaus Konig) and Director Dr Sergio Frugis and members of the Centro Italiano Studi Ornitologici. During the Congress it was agreed that this new organisation would in future be known as WEBS - The Working Group of European Bird Protection Societies.

RSPB Director Ian Prestt kindly offered to house its Secretariat at the RSPB Headquarters in Sandy, Bedfordshire. Alistair Gammell, also of RSPB, is presently the Co-ordinating Secretary of WEBS. The RSPB

also offered to host the 3rd Congress in the following year.

Amongst various resolutions adopted by the meeting was one served by the MOS. It stated: "This meeting congratulates and supports the Government of Malta for contemplating new bird protection regulations and urges the Government to issue these regulations at the earliest possible". ●

..... AND NO.3

The 3rd Conference of the Working Group of European Bird Protection Societies (WEBS) was held in London between 19th and 21st October 1979. Apart from the EEC countries, Austria, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Portugal and Switzerland were represented. The MOS was represented by the Hon. Treasurer Mr Brian K. German.



The meeting discussed various topics mainly concerning the northern European countries such as pollution; the effect of snow on bird populations; and bird problems within the EEC. When it came to conservation measures, Mr German dwelt on the problems of bird shooting and trapping in Malta. He also gave a report on the Ghadira project and the conservation problems being encountered. As a result, the Conference resolved to take up the matter with the Maltese authorities to see what has become of the proposed bird protection regulations.

Youth education was one of the principal occupations of the Conference, and "Youth groups and their activities" made an interesting afternoon discussion. New methods and ideas in recruiting young members and how to involve them were forwarded.

Such meetings also serve as a means of strengthening already established bonds with various international organisations as well as to discover new contacts. Mr German availed himself fully of such opportunity to

discuss the MOS educational efforts with representatives of foreign bird protection societies who are always eager to learn how the MOS is tackling the bird conservation problem in Malta. Such contacts and discussions are instrumental in securing for the MOS the much needed foreign help and support.

Towards the end of the Conference, Mr German was invited to spend a day at The Lodge, a bird reserve and Headquarters of RSPB. Here he had a meeting with the leading men in the organisation during which he discussed various matters such as the running of a bird reserve and administration problems of a bird protection society.

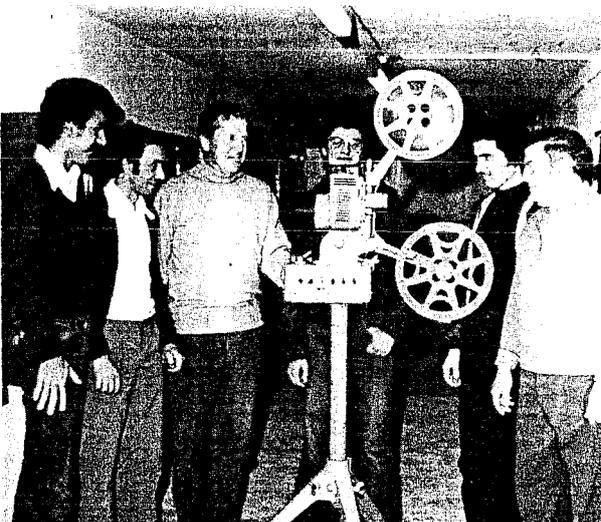
One hopes that such co-ordination between European bird protection societies will prove more effective in providing much needed protection for migratory birds in the Mediterranean Basin. ●

THE BRITISH CONNECTION

March 31, 1979 saw the departure of the last British servicemen from the island. The British Council, later in the year, followed suit. However, the MOS will long remember its British connection Lt. Col. Dick Holman, who in co-operation with the British Services Kinema Corporation donated a 16mm cine projector to the MOS before departing. After leaving Malta, Dick and his wife Wanda went to their home in Wiltshire, where they have since been blessed with the birth of a child, Cecilia Jane. Congratulations and good wishes from their many friends and well-wishers in Malta.

The British Council also donated a number of books on ornithology to the MOS before

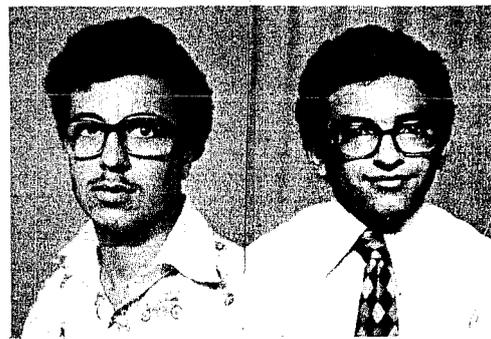
L to R: John Azzopardi, Charles Gauci, Dick Holman, Raymond Galea, Paul Portelli, Vincent Sammut



closing down. These donations will help the MOS in its efforts for the better appreciation and protection of our common international heritage - birds. The British Council also donated to the MOS a 1-year subscription in "The Ibis", bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Union, as well as in the Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club.

Before leaving the island, Mr Hugh Salmon, Director of the British Council in Malta, was presented with a token gift on behalf of the various societies, among them the MOS, who used to make regular use of the premises for their indoor meetings. ●

YOUTHS FLY TO ITALY



Natalino Fenech and Malcolm Mallia, both 16 years of age and young members of the MOS last July went to Brenzone, Italy to attend a course on environmental studies and conservation organised by the International Youth Federation (IYF) who are under the sponsorship of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

The course covered various aspects concerning the natural environment and its conservation. Lectures were held on field biology, organisation of youth environment groups, agriculture and tourism, problems of bird shooting and trapping. Various lectures and field exercises were also held. About 33 participants from 12 different countries attended for the course.

The course was made possible through the close co-operation which exists between the Young Members' Section of the MOS and the International Youth Federation for Environmental Studies and Conservation.

Natalino and Malcolm were chosen after a call for applications open to all the young members of the MOS. This is the second

year running that the MOS has sent its young members to such courses, which besides giving them first-hand experience in environmental conservation, also enables them to acquire the know-how to tackle environmental conservation problems in Malta. ●

MOS OFFICIALS IN UK

During a 25-day private birdwatching holiday in UK, Joe Sultana (MOS President), his wife Lucy, and Guido Bonett (MOS Public Relations Officer) took the opportunity to make various contacts on behalf of the MOS, with personalities and societies who have helped the MOS on various occasions.

While on a week's visit to Scotland, where they were the guests of Mark and Moira Beaman, Joe and Guido met Dr WRP Bourne of Aberdeen University, with whom they discussed bird problems and the latest developments in Malta. The RSBP Headquarters in Sandy were also visited and discussions were held with the Director Ian Presitt and Alistair Gammel regarding the Ghadira Nature Reserve. It was during this meeting that the different departments of RSPB, including the YOC and the educational department, were visited, and discussions about the organisation of youth activities and the production of educational material were held.

In London, Joe and Guido had meetings with Robin Chancellor, Secretary of ICBP, Miss Janet Barber, Secretary of WWF British National Appeal and Stanley Cramp, Chief Editor of "The Birds of the Western Palearctic". From here they proceeded to Northampton, where they were the guests of Rodney and Sheila Ingram. On one occasion Joe and Guido joined the Northampton Bird Club on a birdwatching outing to Pitsford Reservoir. They also gave an illustrated talk on the birds of Malta to the members of the same Club.

From Northampton they moved to Warrickshire where they stayed with Joe and Ann Hardman. During a two-day visit to Tenby in Wales, together with Joe Hardman, they joined the Gull Study Group in cannon-netting Herring Gulls for ringing. A meeting was also held with the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee at Mrs E. Coxon's residence in Oxfordshire. Here they gave another illustrated talk on the birds of Malta to the members of the Banbury Ornithological Society, with whom the MOS has had long connections for several years.

The following day they went with Glyn Davies and Joe and Ann Hardman to the Slimbridge Wildfowl Trust. There they had a meeting with Miss Jane Fenton, Secretary to Sir Peter Scott, and also met the Chairman of the Hawk

Trust, Captain Richard Grant Rennick.

Joe and Guido also visited the British Trust for Ornithology Headquarters in Tring where they had a meeting with Robert Spencer, who for many years has been a great help to the MOS bird-ringing scheme. In Birmingham, they visited Lambournes Ltd, manufacturers of MOS bird rings. Here they met the owner and Managing Director to discuss future orders.

As a result of their private visit in UK, Joe Sultana and Guido Bonett acquired more support as well as some financial help for the MOS. ●

FOREIGN ORNITHOLOGISTS IN MALTA

In December 1978 Dr Walter and Dr Ulwrike Theide once again returned to Malta. Their main object was to continue the survey on the Spanish Sparrow which they started some years ago. In this project they enlisted the help of members of the Young Members' Section of the MOS.

Drs Joost A. Van der Ven spent a week in Malta from 26 April to 6 May 1979. Drs Van der Ven is Head of the Nature Conservation Department at the Ministry of Forestry. He is also deeply involved with the bird conservation movement in the Netherlands.

Drs Van der Ven has travelled widely to study and photograph or film cranes, his favourite birds. He has also visited various Mediterranean countries to see for himself the methods used to kill and trap birds and he came to Malta to film sequences of bird shooting and trapping. To achieve his aim he visited places in Malta as well as in Gozo.

During his stay in Malta Drs Van der Ven had discussions with various members of the MOS Council and with the Chairman of ICBP (Malta Section) regarding future co-operation with Dutch bird protection societies. When interviewed by Xandir Malta, the state broadcasting network, about the purpose of his visit, Drs Van Der Ven said that he came to see for himself what was happening to what he referred to as "our birds" when these migrate over the Maltese Islands. Obviously he was far from amused when he found out, and on being asked whether there was adequate protection for migratory birds in Malta he replied in the negative. He further added that there was a great need for the establishment of nature reserves where the public can be taught to appreciate and protect birds which are an international heritage.

Before he left, he gave an illustrated talk to MOS members about the various birds which he had come across during his travels.

David Rushforth, who in 1965 was one of a team of British ornithologists who came to Malta to start the MOS Bird-Ringing Scheme, last April returned with his family for a short holiday on our island. ●

RETURN OF BRO. EDMUND

The older members of the MOS will surely remember Bro. Edmund who for many memorable years served on the MOS Committee, was Editor of 'Il-Merill' and Chairman of the Malta Section of ICBP. Bro. Edmund had been missing from Malta since 1973 when he migrated to Ethiopia (Eritrea) to work in the missions.

However, last September he stopped over in Malta for a short visit after his trans-Saharan flight while on his return migratory journey to England, his native land. During his short stay in Malta, Bro. Edmund had the opportunity to meet those old faces once again as well as many new ones. On our part, it was a great pleasure reliving old memories with a great friend.

Now we have had word from certain ornithologists that they have retrapped him in Tanzania, where he will be teaching in missionary schools. ●

OBITUARIES

CAPT. MARK TAYLOR

We have heard with deep regret of the death of Capt. Mark Taylor who had been a staunch supporter of the MOS for several years. Capt. Taylor had served as Treasurer of the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee, which has supported the MOS on various occasions, morally as well as financially. The MOS has lost a member and a friend.

MISS P. BARCLAY-SMITH CBE

With profound regret we record the death of Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith CBE which occurred on 2nd January 1980. Miss Barclay-Smith had devotedly served as Secretary of the International Council for Bird Preservation since 1935 and as Vice-President since 1978. The world has lost an enthusiastic conservation-

ist and the conservation movement in Malta has lost a great friend.

A detailed obituary will appear in the next issue of "Bird's Eye View".

DR D.A. BANNERMAN

Dr David A. Bannerman, a distinguished ornithologist and author of several books, died on 6th April 1979 at the age of 92 years. David Bannerman was a life member of the MOS. He was also co-author of the publication "The Birds of the Maltese Archipelago". We extend our sympathies to his wife. ●

PROJECTING THE IMAGE

ICBP (Malta Section) also received financial help from the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds to purchase a Kodak Carousel slide projector. The projector is equipped with zoom lens, remote control operation and an interval timer. It is intended for the use of the constituent societies of ICBP (Malta Section) and it is ideal for holding public exhibitions aimed at the better appreciation and protection of birds and their natural environment. ●

NEW TYPE OF TYPE

Having read up to this part, readers must have noticed the different type of print, similar to that of a typewriter, being used in this issue. In fact, with financial aid received from the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds, ICBP (Malta Section) purchased an electric golfball typewriter for the use of the constituent societies. The typewriter is intended to prepare the text of their publications for printers. This automatically cuts down on printing expenses and the money thus saved can be utilised for the printing of more educational material, which would otherwise have not been possible. ●

DONATIONS

The MOS wishes to put on record the help which it received from the following persons. With regards to financial donations, only those over £10 are being listed. Nevertheless, the MOS Council is equally appreciative and grateful to all the other benefactors whose names could not be published due to lack of space.

1. Mr Paul Herroelen of Belgium donated £16.
2. Mr Peter H. Rathbone of Cheshire sent the MOS £28. This amount was collected from among a group of RSPB members whom he led on a bird-watching trip to the continent.
3. Mrs Barbara Wilson donated £70.
4. Dr Walter Thiede donated two books written by himself in the series of Chatto Nature Guides.
5. Mr Denis Burley, Life Member, donated the RSPB book "What Bird is That?"
6. Mr Mark Beaman, Member, donated the Hamlyn large, hardbound edition of "The Birds of Britain & Europe".
7. Mr Paul Sammut, Member, donated the book "Pheasants of the World".
8. Lady L. Lamb, Member, donated the book "Adventures among Birds".
9. The late Reggie Moreau had donated the book "The Bird Faunas of Africa and its Islands".
10. Chev. JLF Sheffler-Knox donated a set of 18 gramophone records of songs of European birds. ●

DONATIONS SUCH AS THESE HELP US TO COUNTERACT THE WANTON DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS WHICH ARE THE COMMON HERITAGE OF HUMANITY.

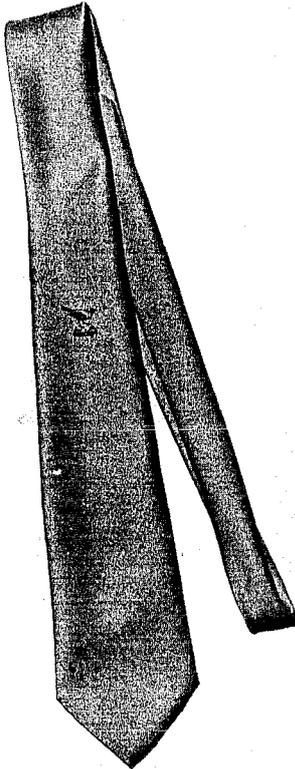
(Top) One of the many Honey Buzzards which were shot at Buskett during September 1979 (see page 22).

(Bottom) Like so many other hirundines, this Swallow was ruthlessly gunned down by one of those many followers of "that wonderful sport of game bird shooting" as it leisurely drifted over the protected area of Buskett (September 1979).



MOS TIE

The MOS has a very limited stock of neck-ties printed with the Blue Rock Thrush emblem. The ties come in two colours: blue with white emblem or grey with blue emblem. Price: £2.75 each.



Prize Crossword

This is the first time that a prize crossword about birds has appeared in any of the MOS publications. All the clues, with the exception of one, are in English (one is a scientific name), and believe me it is a nut cracker!

The winner will be entitled to choose one of the following items as a prize:-

- One tie with the MOS emblem;
- One copy of the MOS latest publication in Maltese - "L-AGHSAFAR";
- One year free subscription with MOS.

Rules

The crossword is open to all members of the MOS with the exception of Council members.

Entrants must be up-to-date in their subscriptions.

In the event of more than one correct solution, the winner will be chosen by lot at one of the activities of the MOS.

Solutions must reach the MOS by not later than 31st July 1980.

Solutions must be addressed to :-
The Ornithological Society
Prize Crossword Competition,
P.O. Box 498, Valletta,
Malta.

Solutions are not to be sent in joint names.

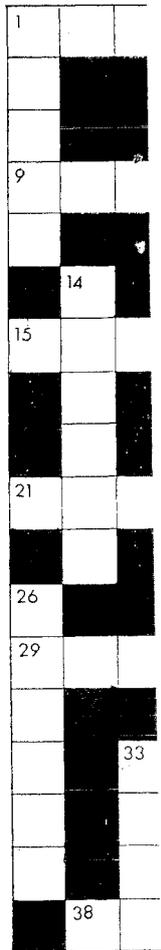
Brian K. German, AIB,
MOS Treasurer.

ACROSS

- The wagtail and shrike have this in common (4)
- The pattern on the plate (6)
- The Mig was rated as a good flier (8)
- The object in ornithology (5)
- The Italians watch this wagtial at dawn (4)
- Wader fond of stealing (4)
- Dial 10 to get this note first (9)
- The result of the match was 10 -0 (6)
- A ripped bird ? (6)
- Is the sister part of the kin ? (6)
- Does Jack find the spines ? (6)
- Talons (5)
- This finch is still a beginner (5)
- A Chinese beginning ? (8)
- Not the right sort of neck to have (3)
- More than a skua (4)
- Birds are doing this for their survival (8)
- Is this bird's food with a sting ? (3)
- 100 join the remainder on the bird's head (5)
- & 39. Rock Crane ? (4,5)
- Gold engravings of plovers (6)
- A colour film on tits and rock thrushes(4)
- See 36 across

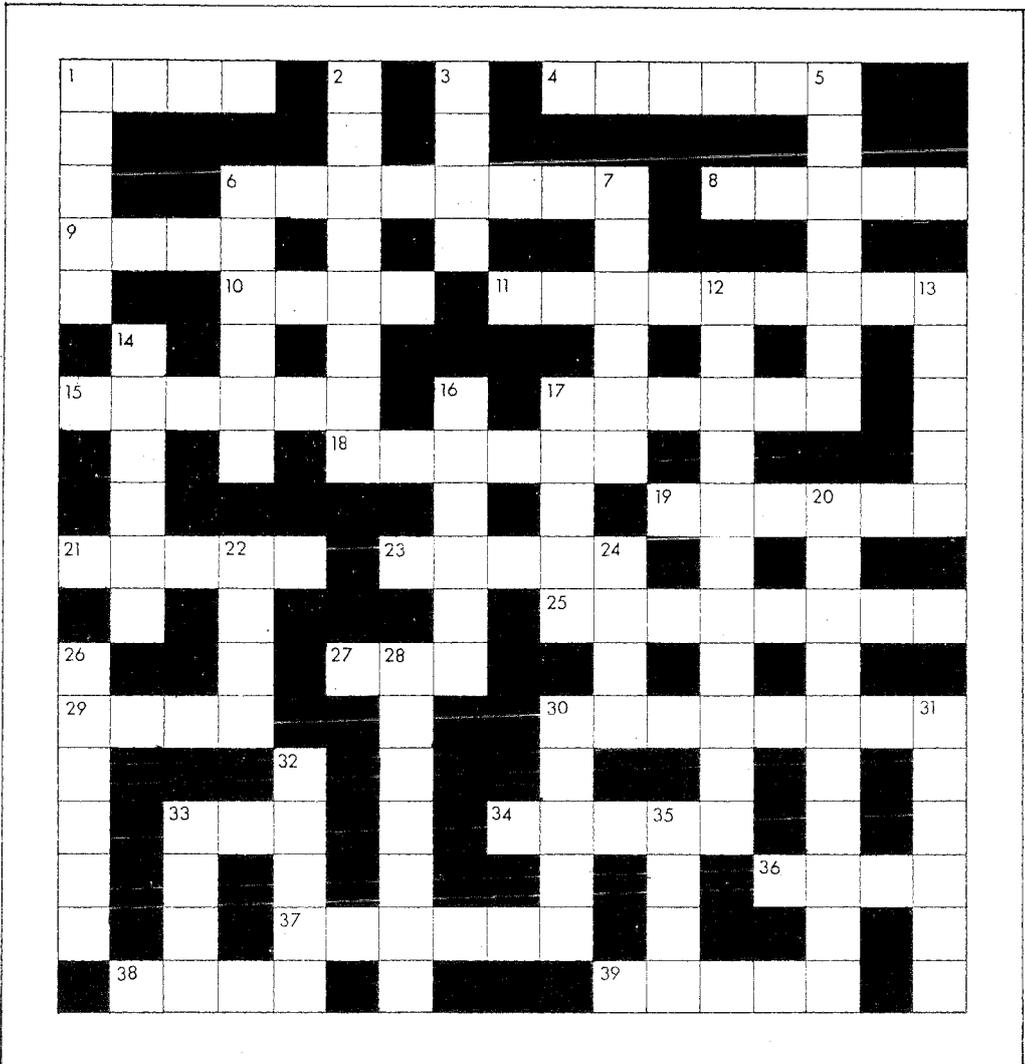
DOWN

- The grebe should get to become
- Rare ones ? (4)
- When in charge
- This family for
- The art of mal
- This wader is
- A mountainous
- Donald's frier
- A small egret
- Outer Space for



DOWN

1. The grebe shoots off the end of the target to become bigger ? (5)
2. Rare ones ? (8)
3. When in charge the hirundine loses him (4)
5. This family forms a barrel out west (7)
6. The art of making love ? (6)
7. This wader is in Lund (6)
12. A mountainous rapid ? (6,5)
13. Donald's friends ? (5)
14. A small egret (6)
16. Outer Space for this raptor (6)
17. A subaqueous bird ? (5)
20. The P.C. is on trial out east (10)
22. Moves the tail (4)
24. Sten builds this mostly from grass (4)
26. Is there a Maltese one too ? (6)
28. This bird goes to the vote in Kremlin Square ? (7)
30. Used to rinse (5)
31. Get Ann for a fish hunter (6)
32. Warbler found on rock edges ? (5)
33. The worst possible letter to receive (4)
35. This plover is a UK football team supporter (4)





MOS Council & Committees

**THIS IS WHAT THE MOS IS FACING
THIS IS WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP
TO PROTECT OUR COMMON HERITAGE**

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Hon. Gen. Secretary: Alfred E. Baldacchino
Assistant Secretaries: John Azzopardi &
Richard Cachia Zammit
Hon. Treasurer: Brian K. German AIB
Public Relations Officer: Guido Bonett
Members: Charles Gauci, Michael Grima,
Vincent Sammut, Louis Cassar.

GOZO COMMITTEE

Chairman: John Grech

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Member: Alfred E. Baldacchino
Govt. Representatives: Manuel Schembri and
Joe Vella Gaffiero

YOUNG MEMBERS SECTION COMMITTEE

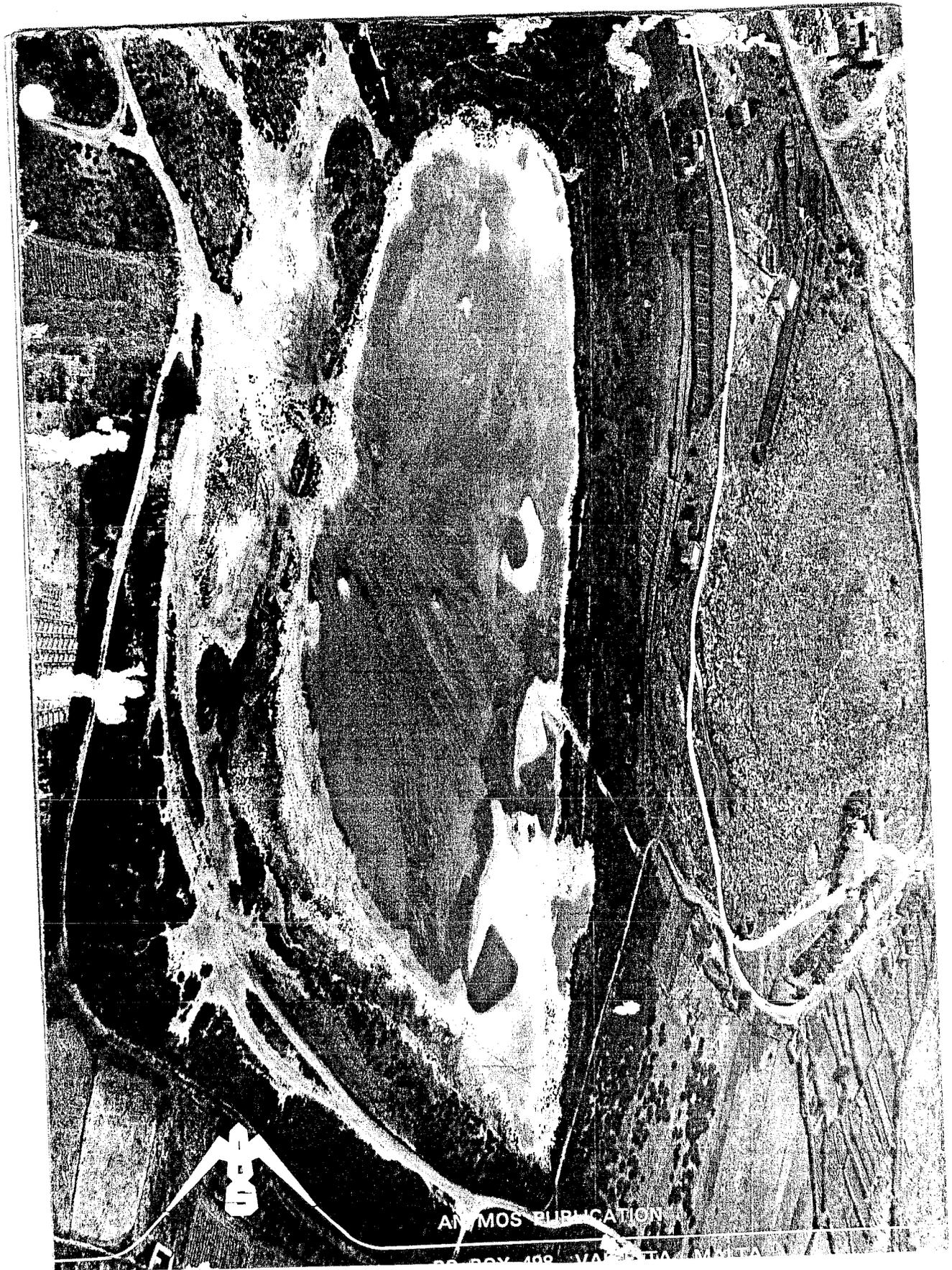
Officer: Louis Cassar
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P.R.O.: Denis Cachia
Asst. Secretaries: Ray Galea and
Tony Gruppeta
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Members: Richard Cachia Zammit, John Attard
Montalto, Joe Sultana, Raymond
Testa.

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Charles Gauci, Vincent Sammut



ANIMOS PUBLICATION

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