

Bird's Eye View

A BirdLife Malta members' magazine

Issue 59 ■ March 2019



Sticking to the plan is key for nature protection

Isn't this by far the best time of the year? I mean spring really is the season that means life. I do understand that all seasons are necessary for the entire natural cycle to take place but during spring nature's beauty is more colourful. We can also easily identify the tight chain that nature is. The flowers attract insects to pollinate them, and they become food for the larger insects and reptiles, which also in turn become food for birds and mammals.

One big mistake that is commonly made is that we normally think humans are only observers of this chain. We are part of that chain. We are part of nature and we are affected by it as much as we affect it through our actions. The way we live affects nature and we need to keep this in our focus as responsible human beings. I would add that as intelligent human beings we need to act responsibly and live sustainably to respect nature. Every day we take decisions on the go that with a little bit of thought can bring about positive change.

There is an argument I hear from a few that whatever we do as a country, whether we become more environment-friendly, reduce plastic usage, pollution and waste, plant more trees, and protect our countryside, we will have very little if any effect on a global scale. Of course, that is so true but that is not the reason why we should become responsible citizens or a responsible country. The reason is simple...because it is the right thing to do and while globally the challenges may be massive, for our tiny country it is crucial to sustain a good quality of life.

Let's keep the focus that we humans are part of nature, and that we need to respect it and treat it fairly. And on that note, please do find time to get out in the countryside this spring. Observe our beautiful nature, feel part of it and protect it like it was your own life. Because it is!

Mark Sultana CEO



EDITORIAL	2	In this issue
NEWS	3	Updates from BirdLife Malta
PROTECT	4	Common Shelduck
	5	Nature at our reserves: Simar
EDUCATE	6-7	Pollinating schools
CARE	8-9	Rocks and bays
RESEARCH	10	Left stranded!
CAMPAIGN	11	Events & Activities

Spring is the season to enjoy!

We're in spring, which for most of us is the most beautiful season of the year. So, our first issue of Bird's Eye View for 2019 will make sure that you remember it's time to get outdoors to witness the spectacle this season provides.

There are so many ways you can do this and one of them is by visiting our nature reserves which are now open to the public even during the week. In fact at the beginning of March we announced extended opening hours at Ġhadira and Simar in order to encourage more people to make the most of spring. Salina and Foresta 2000's opening hours remain unchanged – they are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With birds now on their return migration journeys and others in full breeding mode, now is the time to visit one of these natural spots if you really want to get close to nature!

Duck migration is the first to kick in, and rightly so the bird featured on our front page for this issue is the Common Shelduck, with more details about this species on the bird profile page penned by Charles Gauci. Page 3 lists our latest news whilst Victor Falzon's nature reserves page focuses on Simar. Our nature walk takes you to Majjistral Park whilst the research page is dedicated to the efforts being made by our LIFE Arcipelagu Ġarnija project to combat light pollution which has a negative effect on Malta's breeding seabird population. On page 11 you can get a glimpse of what events we have planned for the upcoming months whilst the back page features the rehabilitation work we do with injured birds, featuring a beautiful photo from one of our recent bird releases.

The Editor

Editorial Board Nathaniel Attard (Editor), Victor Falzon (Naturalist & Field Teacher), Svitlana Shevchuk (Communications Assistant), Kristina Govorukha (Communications & Events Assistant), Jose Luque (Design & Digital Media Assistant)

BirdLife Malta Council Darryl Grima (President), Saviour Balzan (Secretary General), Norman Chetcuti (Treasurer), Christian Debono (Council Secretary), Marvic Doughty, Kathleen Galea, Raymond Galea, Nicholas Galea, Eurydike Kovacs, Irene Mangion, Geoffrey Saliba (members)

BirdLife Malta Team Mark Sultana (CEO), Nicholas Barbara (Conservation Manager), Gianmarco Santirocco (Finance Manager), Nathaniel Attard (Communications Manager), Mark Gauci (Reserves Manager), Manuel Mallia (Salina Park Manager), Sarah Brady (Education Manager), Dilek Sahin (LIFE Arcipelagu Ġarnija Project Manager), Yurena Lorenzo (Project Development Manager), Janet Borg (Office Coordinator)

Contact BirdLife Malta 57/28 Marina Court, Abate Rigord Street, Ta' Xbiex XBX 1120, Malta, +356 21347645/6
info@birdlifemalta.org, www.birdlifemalta.org

Printing Poulton's Print

Front cover photo Common Shelduck by Aron Tanti

Reg. Vol. Org. VO/0052

© 2019 BirdLife Malta. All rights reserved.

Hunting and trapping seasons

Last year was a record one in the past six years for illegal hunting casualties with a total of 114 known shot protected birds. Seventy six of these were recovered during the past autumn hunting season which closed on 31st January. A month before, on 31st December 2018, the trapping season also came to an end, with many illegalities observed. These included the use of electronic callers, unattended poles and nets, use of nets of an unauthorised mesh size and illegal finch trapping. And we're now already bracing ourselves for this year's spring hunting season. Although the Ornis Committee voted down the recommendation by the hunting lobby for the moratorium on spring hunting of Turtle Dove to be lifted, the Government still adopted its recommendation for the season to open for Quail from the 10th to the 30th of April which will mean that it will overlap with the peak migration of the declining Turtle Dove. Our call on the Prime Minister not to change last year's dates by extending the season further into mid-April fell on deaf ears, effectively rendering the upcoming season into a smokescreen for hunters to still be able to illegally shoot Turtle Doves. The first weekend of spring has already been marred



BirdLife Malta

by illegal hunting, with BirdLife Malta receiving the first three illegal hunting casualties shot down since the start of spring, during the closed season: a Marsh Harrier, a Common Kestrel and a Scopoli's Shearwater.

► A shot Common Kestrel from Birgu – one of the first three illegal hunting casualties recovered this spring

Four rehabilitated birds released back into the wild

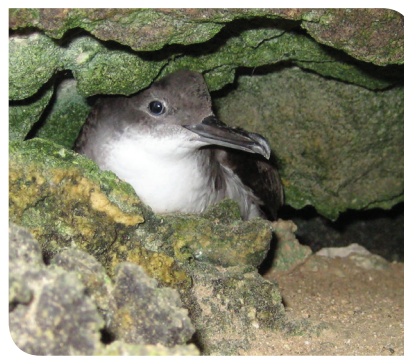
Whilst many birds which are illegally shot during the hunting seasons are never found and others which are found do not survive their injuries, fortunately there are others which are saved in time and are rehabilitated by BirdLife Malta to be released back into the wild. This year, in fact, we have already released four rehabilitated birds back into the wild. These were the lucky ones found by members of the public and they were released on Comino, a protected bird sanctuary. The four birds – a Short-eared Owl and three Common Kestrels – were all victims of illegal hunting during the last autumn hunting season.

Extended opening hours at the reserves

In order to encourage the public to make the most of spring, BirdLife Malta announced extended opening hours at Simar and Għadira Nature Reserves which are now also open to the public during the week. Għadira is now open on Mondays and Thursdays from 2pm to 6pm apart from Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm whilst Simar is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 2pm to 6pm and Sundays between 10am and 4pm. We've also launched new photography facilities at Għadira with hourly slots which can be booked for the use of the new photography hides against a donation. Those interested are to send an email to photography@birdlifemalta.org.

First #NestWatch videos for 2019 released

Our LIFE Arċipelagu Garnija project is continuing with its monitoring activities in Yelkouan Shearwater colonies across Malta for 2019. Following last year's success, this year we've decided again to follow the



Oliver Slessor

► Yelkouan Shearwater in its burrow

action at the cliffs with

#NestWatch. In February we released the first video showing mating and socialising behaviour outside the nests as the breeding season got officially underway. The second video with footage from the remote trail camera showed the nest boxes where the male Yelkouans were waiting for their female partners to return to lay their single egg. The footage can be found on the project's webpage and on our YouTube channel.

Towards an ECA in the Mediterranean

An Emission Control Area (ECA) in the Mediterranean – something which we're working for through a project with several international partners – can bring enormous air quality benefits, saving 6,000 lives each year and up to €14 billion in annual savings of health costs. A French study published earlier this year shows that air pollution from ship traffic in the Mediterranean can be significantly reduced with the introduction of such an area. This was also discussed during a workshop which we organised at the European Parliament. Shipping emissions represent 40% of all Mediterranean coastal city air pollution.

#FlightForSurvival campaign takes off

We are proud to be giving our full support to an extraordinary project launched by BirdLife Europe this spring: the Flight for Survival campaign. Right now you can follow seven migratory birds on their epic migratory journey on [flightforsurvival](https://flightforsurvival.org). Every year an average of 25,000,000 birds are illegally killed across the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Caucasus. This is why the European BirdLife partnership has decided to follow the migratory journeys of these seven birds this spring, exposing the different dangers they face at some of the worst illegal killing blackspots along the African-Eurasian flyway.



WORDS **Svitlana Shevchuk** BirdLife Malta Communications Assistant

Common Shelduck



Maltese name: Kuluvert tas-Salib

Scientific name: *Tadorna tadorna*

Length: 55-65cm

Wingspan: 100-120cm

Conservation Status: Least Concern
(BirdLife International)

Local Status: Formerly scarce, but presently much more frequent, with highest numbers in November-December

Call: Although vocal during courtship on breeding grounds, usually silent on migration

Behaviour: In the Maltese Islands feeds by upending in shallow water, mainly in BirdLife-managed nature reserves

Habitat: Seashores and lakes, mostly unvegetated larger ones

The Common Shelduck is a large goose-like duck. It has a wide range, breeding along coastal regions of northwestern Europe and scattered sites around the Mediterranean. It also occurs eastwards through central Asia to northeastern China, and southwards to Iran and Afghanistan. It breeds in burrows, under dense bushes or holes in buildings, frequenting estuaries, mudflats and the shores of salt and brackish water lakes. Following the breeding season a huge chunk of the European population gathers in impressively large flocks at Helgoland Bight, off the northwestern coast of Germany for moulting, shedding all flight feathers collectively, effectively resulting in a period of time when it is flightless. The populations breeding in northern and eastern Europe are migratory, moving west and southwest, wintering along the Atlantic coasts of France, Germany and the Netherlands, and Great Britain as well as along the Mediterranean shores. Its food consists of aquatic invertebrates such as molluscs, insects and crustaceans but is also includes salt-water snails, small fish, worms and some plant material.

The adult Common Shelduck has a black head and neck with a green sheen. Overall, the body is white. It has a bright chestnut band forming a broad collar from the upper mantle to the lower breast. The scapulars are black, the tertials are edged brown, the secondaries are a glossy green, and the primaries are dark. The tail is white with a black terminal band. On the underparts there is a broad, blackish band from the lower

breast to the vent. The undertail coverts are chestnut. The male has a bright red bill with a conspicuous knob at the base. The female has a duller plumage overall, a narrower breast band, a duller red bill lacking the knob at the base, and whitish spots at the base of the bill. Both sexes have pale pinkish legs.

In the Maltese Islands the Common Shelduck is most frequently seen during its late autumn migration, mainly from mid-October to early December. A smaller return passage is evident in most years during March. Occasional birds have also been recorded in April, August and September. It usually occurs in small flocks although larger flocks, running into high double figures, are not uncommon. Most are seen along the coast, flying in line low over the water. Small numbers spend several days at Ghadira Nature Reserve, Simar and Salina in most years and would undoubtedly stay longer were it not for illegal hunting. Although a legally protected species, the Common Shelduck is still much sought after by trophy hunting poachers. Migrating flocks are chased and shot at from high speed dinghies and boats, resulting in several dead and injured birds. There seems to be little deterrent to prevent these illegalities. Poachers have also on more than one occasion, especially in past years, broken into reserves at night to shoot wintering birds.

WORDS Charles Gauci BirdLife Malta bird ringer and former Nature Reserves Managing Warden

Simar

► Simar Nature Reserve

Common Snipe Bekkaċċ *Gallinago gallinago*

Snipes are stocky, very long-billed birds. All four European species occur in Malta but never in large numbers as we lack the marshes, wet meadows and woodlands these birds love. The most frequent of them is the Common Snipe, but it's nowhere as common as its name seems to imply. The Common Snipe is not an easy bird to see as it generally leads a solitary life, keeps a low profile and, thanks to its cryptic black-brown-white plumage blends perfectly with the vegetation. And well may it hide: the species is considered legal quarry, meaning that for five months (from September to January) hunters can pursue and kill as many as they can. Protected areas like Simar are therefore especially vital for the survival of huntable birds migrating through Malta. Despite the supposed restrictions on the controversial spring hunting season, no bird is safe from an armed hunter.



Victor Falzon

► Common Snipe

Scarlet Darter Skarlat *Crocothemis erythraea*

Dragonflies are fabulous insects and we're lucky even to have these creatures in the Maltese Islands. Dragonflies mostly live not far from freshwater lakes and streams, which are very rare here. Thanks to BirdLife's wetland restoration projects such as Simar, these insect aristocrats have more habitat where to hunt flies and mosquitoes, and where to breed. The Scarlet Darter is one of our more common dragonflies, already starting to appear on the wing as the weather heats up. As dragonflies go Scarlet Darters are medium-sized but still very conspicuous: the male is solid red throughout, eyes and legs included, while the female looks virtually gold-plated. Males are very defensive of their hunting grounds and promptly see off any other males invading their watery patch, which could be a garden fountain, an open cistern in a field... or the freshwater pond at Simar!



Victor Falzon

► Scarlet Darter

Bear's Breeches Hannewija *Acanthus mollis*

Its leaves have inspired the motif on the sculpted capitals of Corinthian pillars, and in Greek mythology Apollo once loved the nymph Acantha whom he later transformed into this flower. That a plant of such classical pedigree should be associated with bear's trousers verges on the offensive! Thankfully plants care little what we call them – they would smell as sweet, as it were! – and so every winter the Bear's Breeches cheerfully spreads its lush tresses of large baroque foliage. This plant prefers sheltered places and will readily dominate stretches of wayside with a nice rubble wall to provide shade. Part of the nature trail at Simar passes through the Olive Grove, and seems to fulfil the required criteria for this stunning species to flourish. Soon the plant will also be growing its tall cylindrical spikes of eye-catching purple-and-white flowers.



Victor Falzon

► Bear's Breeches

WORDS **Victor Falzon** Naturalist and BirdLife Malta Field Teacher

Pollinating schools

Planting nature's seeds in school grounds and young minds

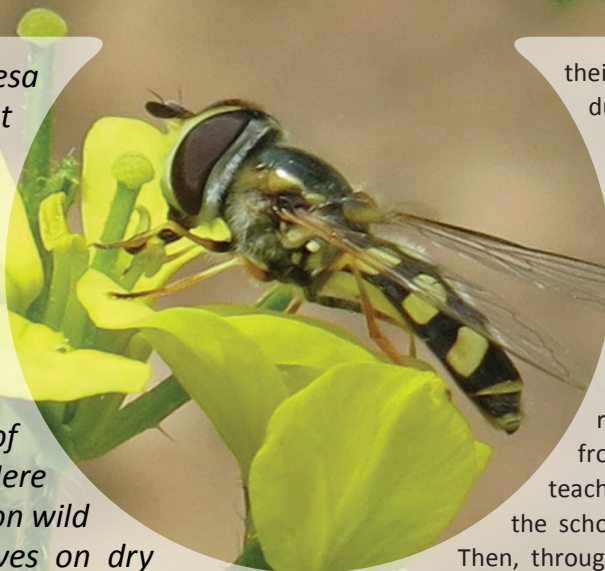
If you happen to enter St Theresa Secondary School by the west gate, prepare to be greeted by an unusual receptionist: a garden for wildlife. The West End, as the garden was nicknamed, is an 800 square metre garden of thriving indigenous trees and shrubs and the communities of animals that live within it. Here frogs spawn, butterflies feed on wild flowers, lizards sun themselves on dry stone walls and warblers feed on berries while mushrooms push through the leaf litter.

Committed to nature

The West End in Mrieħel is a paragon of school commitment to nature. Officially started in 2003, it is part of BirdLife Malta's ongoing work with schools to connect young people with nature and create urban nature hotspots. These places for nature, known as Ġonna Dinja Waħda, serve the dual purpose of increasing biodiversity on school grounds and providing a space where nature-based learning can take place.

Fifteen years ago students planted the first trees. Today, warblers nest and migrating birds rest in these trees. Nine years ago, BirdLife volunteers dug out a shallow depression and created a wildlife pond. Today, dragonfly larvae and tadpoles scour the pondwater in search of prey, and mayfly larvae nibble at the freshwater plants.

Creating gardens for wildlife is the peak of the Dinja Waħda programme, BirdLife's environmental education programme in schools. Ġonna Dinja Waħda are live examples of BirdLife's mission to protect birds and biodiversity and to work with people towards a sustainable lifestyle. Wildlife gardens are wonderful places for cross-curricular learning alongside nature appreciation: the West End has hosted science lessons, English reading, activity lessons, and vulnerable-youth projects, as well as a dedicated band of students and



their teachers who do maintenance during break time.

The first seed

How does it work? It starts with individuals in a school who understand that connecting their students with nature on the school grounds will lay the foundations for a lifelong respect for nature. With support from BirdLife's education team, teachers and administration survey the school grounds for an ideal space.

Then, through a number of steps involving staff and students, and a fundraising plan, the chosen area is gradually transformed. Ġonna Dinja Waħda designs run on the dual principles of attracting nature to the school and allowing children to participate, observe and interact with nature during or outside lessons.

The challenge

Since BirdLife's first school wildlife garden in 1993, designing Ġonna Dinja Waħda has become more and more challenging. Schools within the last ten years have been planned with diminishing appreciation for nature and its role in our health, education and wellbeing. And while children's increasingly urbanised lifestyle is widening the gap between them and nature, it is now harder for BirdLife to support schools to fill that gap. All-concrete grounds take bigger investment and more creativity to green over and get nature going.

In a bid to influence school grounds design at source, our education people have put together a team of education and landscape experts. Apart from pushing for organic school designs that include nature in the grounds as an extension of the classroom, the team has offered the authorities its support to produce design guidelines.

Ideal scenario

A glance at the outdoor learning activities that happen daily as part of the Dinja Waħda programme at San Ġorġ Preca Middle School in Blata I-Bajda highlights the validity of the

1959 design that created areas of soft landscaping between classroom blocks. These areas have been a rich source of Ġonna Dinja Waħda subject-based projects that turned one area after another into small wildlife havens.

BirdLife's education team will continue to struggle against a negative trend that is cementing over school grounds. It will continue to pollinate the idea that our children's lives are better when we make space for nature in schools.

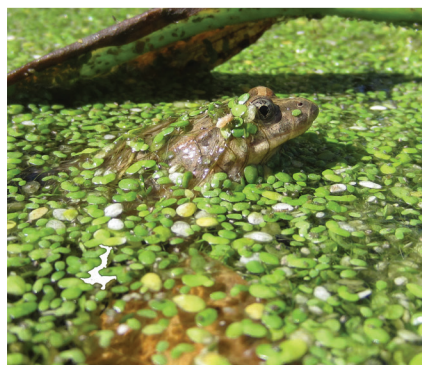
WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS **Desirée Falzon** BirdLife Malta Field Teacher



► Planting flowering shrubs for pollinators at San Ġorġ Preca Middle School



► Students enjoy a lazy moment in the sun, surrounded by nature



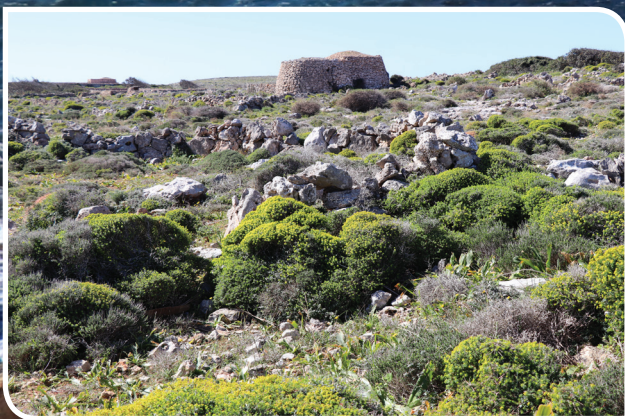
► Birds, amphibians, mammals, reptiles and plants find a safe home here

Rocks and bays

THE PERFECT MIX OF ELEMENTS TO ENJOY
NATURE IN SPRING!

Spring is the perfect time to walk in nature – especially when we are talking about areas near the sea which in a few months will be too hot and crowded to explore. On this route you will visit a lot of peaceful and wild beaches, ending with our suggestion for the best way to finish it all off ... a visit to BirdLife Malta's Għadira Nature Reserve, truly the place to be if you want to enjoy the best of nature in spring. The route is approximately 8km long and it will take you about 2-4 hours to complete depending on the stops you make.

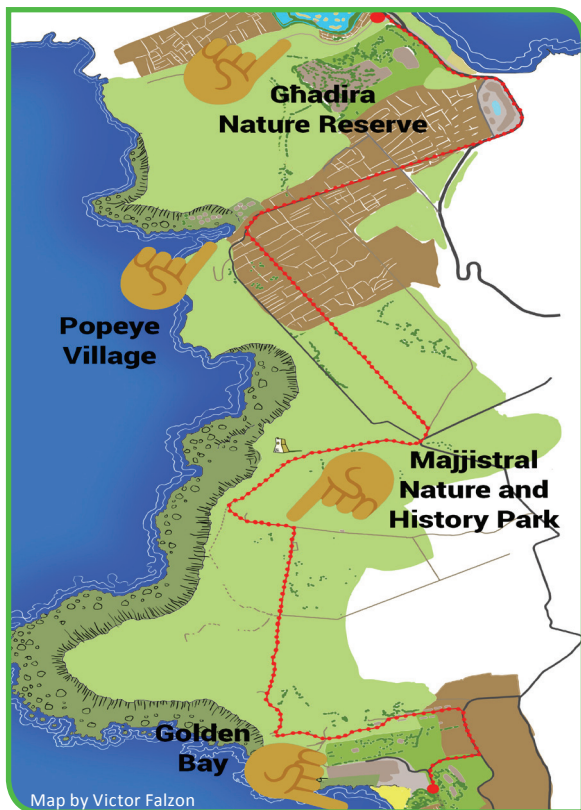
On most of the walk, you will be walking on roads exposed to the sun and unsheltered from the wind. So to make it more comfortable we recommend you take sunscreen, sunglasses, hat or cap, wind jacket, water and snacks. Parts of the route will pass through rough terrain, so they will not be accessible for pushchairs, scooters or bikes.



► Majjistral Park



► Maltese Pyramidal Orchid



Golden Bay

This is one of Malta's loveliest sandy beaches and the starting point of our walk. To enjoy the day as much as possible we suggest you take a breakfast with you and spend half an hour enjoying the sound of the waves. Following this, you will be in a great mood for walking. Be aware that if you want to have your breakfast in silence, you need to go for an early start and be at Golden Bay early in the morning.

Majjistral Nature and History Park

The park will be the main area through which our route will take you. On your way you will enjoy a few breathtaking views of the coast. You'll be standing at the top of a cliff, in front of you will be just endless views extending far out to sea and beneath you only the waves hitting the shore. Take your time to enjoy the grandeur! Pay attention to the small elements of nature surrounding you: enjoy wild flowers and bushes, birds and butterflies. Don't worry about the route – use our Google Map to find the right way.

Popeye Village

Popeye Village is a purpose-built film set village, now converted into a small attraction fun park, consisting of a collection of rustic and ramshackle wooden buildings. There are two ways to enjoy this spot: take a look from the designated viewpoint or go inside. But remember: the entrance costs €11.

Ghadira Nature Reserve

This seven-hectare reserve comprises brackish lake and saltmarsh habitat. You can walk around and watch birds from the birdwatching hide so take your binoculars with you. The reserve is open from November to May on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 4pm. Lately we've extended the opening hours to the public and the reserve is also open on Mondays and Thursdays from 2pm to 6pm. Entrance to the reserve is free but donations are welcome. You can now even book a slot at one of our photography hides at Ghadira. It costs just €2 for members and €5 for non-members.

WORDS **Kristina Govorukha** Communications and Events Assistant

PHOTOGRAPHS **Jose Luque** Communications Design and Digital Media Assistant



► Enjoying the walk



► View from the cliffs



► Popeye Village

As you probably noticed, this time round we did not delve into much detail as regards directions you need to take for this walk. That's because we've prepared an interactive Google Map for you. Copy and paste this link <https://bit.ly/2Cthlvw> and you'll get access to a detailed route with tips on all turns you need to take, and even transport instructions on how to get there and back. We suggest you save this route in your Google Maps app on your phone and use it as a guide while walking. Enjoy the walk!

Left Stranded!

Mapping the hotspots for light-induced strandings

*The number of shearwaters and petrels left stranded on our coasts as a result of light pollution is increasing at a worrying rate. The Maltese Islands support globally important populations of three seabird species, namely the Yelkouan Shearwater (Garnija, *Puffinus yelkouan*); Scopoli's Shearwater (Ċiefa, *Calonectris diomedea*) and the Mediterranean Storm-petrel (Kanġu ta' Filfla, *Hydrobates pelagicus*). The EU LIFE Arċipelagu Garnija project has analysed data from the past 40 years in order to better focus rescue efforts and conservation actions.*



LIFE Arċipelagu Garnija

▶ Scopoli's Shearwater fledgling released at Xlendi, the worst hotspot for stranded birds

Introduction

Darkness is essential for breeding Procellariiformes (hereafter petrels). These birds are adapted to low-light conditions to avoid predation when re-entering breeding colonies. Furthermore, their young fledge on the darkest nights, leaving their nests under the cover of darkness. They are so acutely sensitive to light levels that even moonlight causes a significant reduction in activity. Light pollution from artificial light at night is a major threat for petrels worldwide. Entire breeding colonies can become abandoned if they are illuminated – a phenomenon already recorded in Malta. A more immediate threat arises from the often fatal attraction of petrels to artificial lights causing them to become stranded on land.

Method

For over 40 years, BirdLife Malta has compiled a database detailing the circumstances of light-induced strandings. By analysing and mapping this data, areas with high numbers of stranded birds, so-called 'hotspots', have been identified. Recovered birds were taken to a government vet for assessment and placed into rehabilitation programmes if required. Once given the all-clear, these birds were ringed and released at night at known breeding colonies.

Results

A total of 269 stranding cases have been recorded by BirdLife Malta since 1978. The rate is increasing exponentially with a particularly dramatic increase after 2014. Scopoli's Shearwaters account for over 70% of cases with individuals recovered from each of the major hotspots identified. Yelkouan Shearwaters make up approximately 21% of cases, most are stranded in the St. Paul's Bay area. Storm-petrels are the species with least recorded stranding incidents. They are likely under-

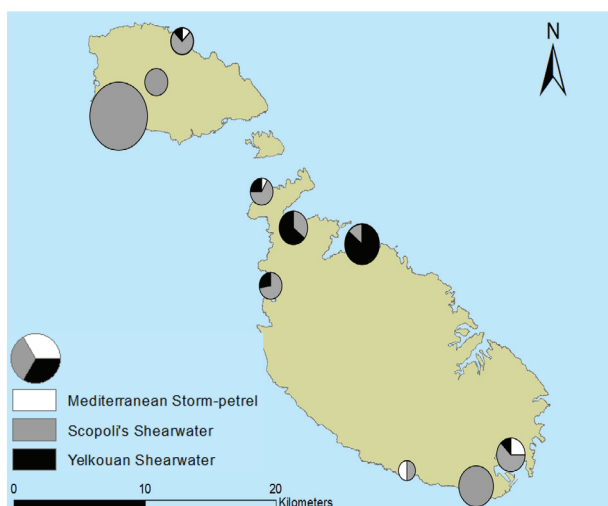
recorded as their small size makes them difficult to find. Major hotspots are commonly heavily light-polluted coastal areas situated close to large colonies of petrels. The worst was identified as Xlendi in Gozo. Other major hotspots include the St. Paul's Bay area, Marsaxlokk and the Freeport, Ċirkewwa, and Mellieħa Bay.

For all species, it is the fledglings that are most often recovered accounting for 96% of all recorded cases. These young birds display a strong attraction to artificial lights, perhaps on account of their inexperience. Once grounded, these birds are in grave danger from multiple threats. Even after recovery, they may still succumb to injuries sustained or the stress of the incident. For Yelkouan Shearwaters, 10.5% of recovered fledglings later died despite receiving veterinary care. Perhaps worse still is that the true figure for mortality is likely far higher as those birds that are never found are unlikely to take off and re-find the sea.

Next steps

The LIFE Arċipelagu Garnija project is tasked with lobbying stakeholders who can make a positive impact. By working together with local councils and other major stakeholders, we hope to effect change in the worst identified hotspots and reverse this trend.

WORDS **James Crymble**, LIFE Arċipelagu Garnija Project Warden



▶ Map of the 10 worst stranding hotspots identified

Upcoming Events

Nature and bird conservation at Science in the Citadel

Saturday 27 April 2019

10:00-18:00 | The Citadel, Victoria Gozo

You will discover more about our nature reserves and the scientific study of bird ringing which helps us to learn more about birds and monitor their movements thus giving us an insight into several aspects of their lives. Participation is free and open to all. No booking is required.

Nature Walk on Comino

Sunday 28 April 2019

09:00-16:30 | Ċirkewwa Pier (meeting point)

We will enjoy the views of the Blue Lagoon and we will also visit Santa Marija Tower and Saint Mary's Battery. This is an easy to moderate difficulty walk. Participation is open for those older than 12 years. Price is €12 for members and €15 for non-members. Booking is required. Please visit the events page on our **website**.

Sicily Day Trip

Saturday 11 May 2019

05:00-22:15 | Cava Carosello, Noto

Our BirdLife Malta Events & Activities Group is organising another day trip to Sicily. Our destination will be Cava Carosello, located in the area of Noto Antica. The area is renowned for its lush trees and ponds. The walk is approximately 10km long and is easy-to-moderate. The day trip also includes a lunch at an agritourism centre. Booking is required, so please visit the events page on our **website**.

Want to help us continue our work?

Join: www.birdlifemalta.org/become-member

Donate: www.birdlifemalta.org/donate

Want to join an event?

More details: www.birdlifemalta.org/events

Email: events@birdlifemalta.org

Call: +356 2134 7646

 birdlifemalta

 birdlife_malta

 BirdLifeMT

 birdlife_malta



► 19 February 2019. Cabinet meeting at Salina

Reuben Piscopo, DOI

Past Events



Kinga Kupska

► 19 January 2019. White Wagtail roost count 2019 in Valletta - A record edition with over 14,000 birds counted



Abbie Ferrar

► 23 February 2019. Nature-inspired workshop for children at Esplora's Kuluri Karnival



Kristina Govorukha

► 17 February 2019. Fascinating view on our 12km countryside walk at Victoria Lines



Kristina Govorukha

► 16 February 2019. Fun and activities at Simar Nature Reserve for children from Smiling with Jerome



Kristina Govorukha

► 22 February 2019. Oil Spill Response Training at Salina

A reason to CELEBRATE!

Every successful release of a rehabilitated bird is a reason to celebrate for us at BirdLife Malta! Throughout the year we receive many injured birds. Some of these unfortunately do not make it due to the injuries sustained, but others are nursed back to health successfully by our hard-working conservation team. For the backpage of this first issue of Bird's Eye View for 2019 we've chosen to share with you one of our most outstanding rehabilitation stories during the past year. The story of this Greater Flamingo, which was released at our Ghadira Nature Reserve last October, is indeed a remarkable one. The bird was rescued earlier in summer 2018 by 10-year old Isaac Bezzina and his father Christian outside Anchor Bay. Both happened to be on their boat when they noticed the flamingo in difficulty and called BirdLife Malta for assistance. Following some weeks of rehabilitation the government vet confirmed that the flamingo was ready to be released back into the wild, and for the occasion we invited Isaac to release it.

