

Bird's Eye View

A BirdLife Malta members' magazine

Issue 60 ■ June 2019



Youths for the future



One of the main challenges our organisation has is the absence of an active youth section that is a breeding ground for the torchbearers of tomorrow. This lacuna is more pronounced when one considers the catastrophic environmental issues we are facing.

In part we are the victim of our own success. As an organisation we now have a fully-fledged office with teams of people doing far more than what volunteers used to do in their spare time. We have seen this in all areas from education, to conservation, to research. So, to be clear, I do not say this as a criticism to what we have achieved as an organisation. More as a realisation that as a flipside to this success we might have lost a lot of our direct grassroots connection. One could say that the transition has eaten away the role and space of the activist.

I strongly believe we need to find (or rather create) this space again. Many of those in Council today are individuals that were involved in the past in MOS Youths. We are fortunate that we have a strong kids' section Klabb Huttatf which is spreading the word amongst the pre-teens. In fact, for the second year running all Year Four kids going to private and church schools are given a free one-year membership in Klabb Huttatf. Our gap lies in the age group after Klabb Huttatf, in what was before MOS Youths and Falko.

I totally agree with those that tell me that times have changed. The greatest environmental problem the world had when I was younger was the depletion of the ozone layer. Today we have climate change and global biodiversity loss. At least on a national level we have always been consistent! We used to talk about rampant development and illegal hunting and trapping, and we are still talking about the same issues today. Moving ahead, though, I believe we need to give our youths space within the organisation. I am inspired by seeing kids like Greta Thunberg who take on politicians on the sheer hypocrisy on environmental issues. To our youth members, there is space for you in BirdLife Malta. Come forward...we need you, we welcome you, we support you!

Darryl Grima President

EDITORIAL	2	In this issue
NEWS	3	Updates from BirdLife Malta
PROTECT	4	Sardinian Warbler
	5	Nature at our reserves: Foresta 2000
EDUCATE	6-7	Community and family fun
CARE	8-9	Il-Kalanka
RESEARCH	10	Francesco returns home!
CAMPAIGN	11	Events & Activities

Bird's Eye View turns 60!

Summer is here and we're celebrating the 60th issue of our exclusive members' magazine! The front page bird we've chosen for this issue of Bird's Eye View is the Sardinian Warbler – a very common, resident breeder in our islands. BirdLife Malta Council member and bird ringer Nicholas Galea explains all you need to know about this species on the bird profile page.

The June 2019 issue's news page is full to the brim with updates from the past months, most notably a detailed report about this year's spring hunting season but also details about a very important step we took last month when we released a manifesto ahead of the 25th May European Parliament elections. This was then discussed during a special MEP breakfast debate held at Salina.

On the reserves page, it is time again for Victor Falzon to write about Foresta 2000 whilst the spread on pages 6-7 penned by Abbie Ferrar tackles our community engagement programmes as does the back page, for which we've chosen a beautiful picture taken last month when we welcomed around 200 Girl Guides to our nature reserves for a fun-filled day aimed at inspiring them to connect with nature.

Since we are now in summer, for pages 8-9 we've prepared once again an underwater tour which we were happy to ask Prof. Mark- Anthony Falzon to help us out with. And in the research page our Conservation Manager Nik Barbara brings you up to date with the latest details from our Turtle Dove satellite-tracking project. Finally, as usual, you can take a look at what events we're planning for the upcoming months on page 11 which also brings you a photo album with pictures from some of our past events. Enjoy summer!

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, Nicholas Galea, Raymond 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 Arcipelago Garnija 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 Sardinian Warbler by Aron Tanti

Reg. Vol. Org. VO/0052
© 2019 BirdLife Malta. All rights reserved.

An 'open hunting season' on the red-listed Turtle Dove

This year's spring hunting season, supposedly open only for Quail, ran from 10-30 April. Although the hunting lobby's proposal for the moratorium on Turtle Dove hunting to be lifted was not approved, the government still extended this year's season dates further towards the end of the month, to coincide with the peak migration of the red-listed Turtle Dove. Our call to protect the Turtle Dove, even in a letter to Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, was however ignored, and as anticipated all this resulted in a massacre of protected Turtle Doves. The smokescreen season was also characterised by an increase in hunting licences and the lowest ever police presence. Whilst half

BirdLife Malta



► A shot Turtle Dove found during the spring hunting season

the illegally shot protected birds received during the season were in fact Turtle Doves, hunting illegalities so far in 2019 are already at record levels, surpassing last year's figures for the same period with a total of 44 shot protected birds picked up. Casualties keep coming in even during the closed season.

Spring Watch leads to arrests

This year's annual Spring Watch camp, fielded a total 14 international volunteers who joined staff and local volunteers to monitor the countryside for illegalities with an average of four teams at one go. Thanks to our efforts, ALE police arrested two hunters in the only known illegal hunting incident which, as far as we know, will lead to prosecution. A total of 92 illegal hunting incidents were recorded during just two weeks in which we covered 58 different hunting hotspots across Malta and Gozo. All this has been documented on video and findings from this year's spring hunting season will now be reported to the European Commission.

Government relaxes Wild Rabbit hunting regulations

We expect even more law violations with the amendments that government announced through a legal notice to the Protection of Wild Rabbit Regulations. In past years rabbit hunting was only allowed on private land if the hunter could provide proof that he had the permission of the land owner. Now hunters are not being required any more to keep any proof of this on them while hunting, and even worse rabbit hunting will also be allowed on public land from June to December, including Natura 2000 sites. The restriction of having dogs on leashes has also been removed. The repercussions are obvious. First and foremost the opening up of huntable areas and use of dogs in all areas during the breeding season of most birds will disturb or destroy the nests of many breeding birds, especially ground-nesting species. Secondly, hunters will use the revised law as an excuse to kill breeding birds and passage species that migrate in summer, such as waders. Only last August, a flock of 18 White Storks were wiped out over a week, during the open season for rabbits, which allows hunters the use of guns during such a period.

Release of illegally trapped and rehabilitated birds

On 1 May, our Spring Watch teams spotted a trapping site equipped with clap nets and live Turtle Dove decoys. Two trapping sites were seized by police officers who raided the site and confiscated all equipment and seven live Turtle Doves. The birds were certified healthy enough to be released. Our Conservation Officer Alice Tribe assisted the ALE officers in ringing all seven protected birds and releasing them at a safe location. Apart from these birds, during the last three months, BirdLife Malta released another seven birds that were rehabilitated by our conservation team from different injuries.

BirdLife Malta nature reserves close for summer

On the last weekend of May, our Ghadira and Simar Nature Reserves closed for the summer break. This year they will reopen to the public earlier than usual, in September instead of November. And following the encouraging results we had over the past months, they will reopen with the extended opening hours during selected weekdays apart from weekends. From October 2018 to May 2019 around 12,000 members of the public and school children visited our reserves. During the summer break, we plan to upgrade nature trails with new information panels for visitors, and create new areas for feeding and sheltering of migratory birds. Foresta 2000 and Salina's opening hours remain unchanged.

MEP election manifesto and debate

In view of the important European Parliament elections held on 25 May, we released a manifesto with a set of five local and global priority environmental issues. We sent it together with 10 relevant questions to the political parties in Malta and their



Kristina Govorukha

► Breakfast Debate with MEP candidates at Salina

candidates for the MEP elections and requested responses that would clarify their position on these matters. Sadly, only seven out of 41 candidates responded. Following this, on 3 May, BirdLife Malta hosted a panel of six European Parliament election candidates to discuss these issues at Salina Nature Reserve. During the event, candidates were quizzed on their environmental credentials. *Read the manifesto: <http://bit.ly/MEPmanifesto>.*

International OWL conference in Brussels

Our education team organised the first One World Learning (OWL) conference which was hosted by BirdLife Europe in Brussels. The "Inspiring Change through Nature Education" conference brought together 40 delegates from 22 countries representing different BirdLife Partners to share their experiences and resources, and to build collaborations through nature education. Funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme, OWL's main objectives are to advocate learning through nature and support the development and implementation of high-quality learning through nature programmes.

WORDS **Svitlana Shevchuk** BirdLife Malta Communications Assistant

Sardinian Warbler

Maltese name: Bufula Sewda

Scientific name: *Sylvia melanocephala*

Length: 14cm

Wingspan: 18cm

Conservation Status: Least Concern
(BirdLife International)

Local Status: Common breeding resident

Call: Chattering (che-che-che-che)

Behaviour: Feeds in bushes, short flights from one bush to another, perches on top to sing

Habitat: Wide range of habitats which offer adequate vegetation



Aron Tanti

Aron Tanti

Aron Tanti

► Sardinian Warbler nest and fledgling

The Sardinian Warbler is a small passerine bird, found in the Mediterranean region. It is a common, resident breeder in the Maltese Islands. As in most other warblers of its family, the male is easily distinguished from the female. The male has an evident black head, giving it both its Latin name and its Maltese name, a distinct red eye-ring, which in turn gives it its Italian name “Occhiocotto”, light grey upperparts and white throat and belly. The female is drabber, having a dark grey head, no red eye-ring and brown wings. Both sexes have white outer tail feathers, which are often seen when the bird is flying, typical of the *Sylvia* family of warblers.

In Malta it is found breeding in a wide range of habitats which offer enough vegetation, preferably in the form of larger bushes. It is one of the few garden birds we have in Malta, visiting and breeding in gardens in our urban areas. It often visits bird tables, especially in winter. It is mainly insectivorous but it also feeds on small berries and other fruit depending on the season.

Although it is quite a shy bird, often hiding in bushes and flying in short flights from one bush to the next, its presence is often given away by its chattering call. The length of the call given varies depending on the message the bird wants to send. A prolonged call often indicates that the bird is stressed because of the presence of a predator (most often a stray cat) whilst a repeated short call is often used as a contact call between

siblings and their parents. The male has a characteristic warbling song and during the breeding season it often sings either from a high perch or whilst performing a butterfly-like display flight.

The nesting season typically spans from May to June. It normally lays four to five brown-mottled eggs and both male and female birds tend to the nest. When the nest is approached, especially when chicks are inside, the adults often perform what is known as a distraction display where they try to attract the attention of the predator by pretending that they have a wing injury and are unable to fly.

This bird is mostly a non-migratory, resident bird in Malta, meaning that it spends its entire lifespan within the vicinity of where it was born. Following the breeding season, youngsters disperse around the area to establish new territories. This is important for the population to ensure a healthier gene pool. Some evidence of migration still exists with notable influxes in late autumn. Also, two birds ringed in Malta were recovered in Italy and Croatia. Ringing has also showed us that the average lifespan of the Sardinian Warbler is of 3-4 years but the record longevity is an 11-year-old male ringed in 2007 at Għadira Nature Reserve and retrapped in 2018.

WORDS Nicholas Galea BirdLife Malta Council member and bird ringer

Foresta 2000

Victor Falzon

► A footpath at Foresta 2000

Cat Snake *Qattus Telescopus fallax*

In winter most of our reptiles curl up in nice, dry hidey holes and sleep off the chilly weather. But now that summer is round the corner, they are all out, and among these will be our four lovely species of snakes. One of these is the Cat Snake, so called not because it's related to our feline furballs (it's not), nor because it catches moggies for lunch (it doesn't) – it's because of its vertical cat-like pupils. It's a grey snake with brown patches, and can grow to about a metre, though never thicker than your thumb. Unlike the other three species, Cat Snakes are active even at night, hunting mice and even other reptiles like geckos. Like all our reptiles, the Cat Snake is harmless to humans and it's also protected by law – our way of saying thanks for the pest control service it provides by snacking on rodents! An evening walk at Foresta might award you a rare audience with this magnificent animal.



Victor Falzon

► Cat Snake

Honey-buzzard *Kučċarda Pernis apivorus*

Several kinds of birds of prey pass through Malta on their north-bound spring migration, of which perhaps the best known in the birding brotherhood (sadly among hunters too) is the lovely Honey-buzzard. It's a bird with classic raptorial features: large, eagle-like, with broad wings, hooked bill and talons, majestic flight, etc. Many who see their first Honey-buzzard soaring overhead are amazed that such birds actually visit our shores. Honey-buzzards do not nest in Malta, indeed most that visit do not even stop, they just gain height and glide off towards Sicily. But those that arrive in the evening look for a nice bit of woodland where to spend a night. Most opt for the large chunk of mature trees at Buskett, but as Foresta slowly grows and thickens, some Honeys are starting to book a night there as well. And we're so honored to host them.



Chris Cachia Zammit

► Honey-buzzard

Araar *Għargħar Tetraclinis articulata*

Thirty years ago the Araar tree was virtually unknown to the general public. But that all changed in the early 1990s when the species was declared Malta's national tree. Suddenly this lovely, scaly-leaved, evergreen conifer became a star, and everyone wanted to plant Araar in their garden, school or afforestation project. Foresta 2000 was no exception, with about 500 Araar planted. The young trees grew well and were soon bearing thousands of cones every year. The good news is there are signs that they are now regenerating naturally, with wild saplings growing from wind-blown seed. It is such a heart-warming success story, as this tree was previously seriously rare in Malta, with very few growing wild. The Araar is not endemic to Malta, as it occurs in hilly areas across western North Africa. But in Europe it occurs only in a small area in Spain...and here!



Victor Falzon

► Araar

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

Community and family fun

BirdLife Malta strongly believes that inspiring young people to spend more time outdoors is an essential part of protecting wildlife ("No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced" – David Attenborough). It is therefore important to develop fun and exciting activities that encourage a connection with nature and help people to spend time outdoors.

Children and family events

A way to engage communities and families with the environment is with events. For each event the theme is linked to something about the environment. Recent favourites have been Pirate Day, Christmas Teddy Bear's Picnic, Flamingo Days and Easter EggCitement.

Pirate Day children created their own telescopes and then used them to explore the reserve during a treasure hunt. Whilst looking for the treasure, children learnt about different wildlife found in the reserve including the Kingfisher and butterflies. Following this pirate adventure, a pledge was made to save the seas from plastic – which is very important in preserving the environment.

At Christmas, the reserve was searched for Teddy's presents as unfortunately they had been lost in Simar. Thanks to all the hard work from the children (and some good guessing skills from clues some of Teddy's friend had left behind) all presents were reunited with Teddy! The children each got a present to open and lots of smiles all around when they saw what they were. Each was a natural item that was passed around for everyone to look at.

Partnership events

Engaging children through youth groups and organisations is another way to connect communities to nature. Only a few weeks ago we held a joint event with the Malta Girl Guides and SharkLab-Malta in Mellieħa. Bird ringing activities at Għadira gave the children an opportunity to see some of Malta's migrating birds closer than they normally would. They were even fascinated to find a mummified chameleon!

Walking through Foresta 2000 they learnt all about trees and the importance of keeping Malta clean from unnatural items. They even got to have some fun on the beach with SharkLab-Malta.

Smaller organisations have also visited the reserves for events. An activity was organised for Smiling with Jerome at Simar Nature Reserve, for the children and their families. Due to this activity being held in February, it rained a little, however all the children came prepared in warm clothing and waterproof boots so despite the rain we had lots of fun exploring the reserve for birds and minibeasts. We had lots of smiling faces among the group on the return to the visitors' centre.

We offer our thanks to the other organisations and partners: Right2Smile, Esplora, Nature Trust-FEE Malta, Eco Marine Malta, Heritage Malta and families of BOV staff (BirdLife Malta's Dinja Waħda education partners). If there are any organisations or youth groups that would like to visit our reserves for some adventures contact us on education@birdlifemalta.org to find out more.

Connecting with nature is very important for BirdLife Malta's education team, so they will continue to develop workshops and events to help families and communities feel more connected. If you would like to learn more about any upcoming events, check the events page on our website: <https://birdlifemalta.org/events> or our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/birdlifemalta>.

WORDS **Abbie Ferrar** BirdLife Malta Education Officer





Kinga Kupska



Kinga Kupska

▶ Searching for buried treasure at Simar Nature Reserve for Pirate Day

▶ Opening Teddy's missing presents at Christmas Teddy Bear's picnic



Kristina Govorkina



Kinga Kupska

▶ Searching for Chameleons at Ghadira Nature Reserve for Brownie Discovery Day

▶ Exploring Salina for minibeasts with families of BirdLife Malta's Dinja Wahda education partners, BOV



Kristina Govorkina

▶ Bird ringing demonstration at Ghadira Nature Reserve for Brownie Discovery Day



Kinga Kupska

▶ Children having fun in nature is important to preserve it for the future



Eleni Karatzia

Il-Kalanka

NATURE'S LEAGUE UNDER THE SEA

To go for a swim is to miss the point. In fact, what makes beaches or rocky shores so special is that they bring together two disparate and yet somehow complementary worlds. Tangibly, there are few things that can match the sensory dividends of walking down to the sea at the height of a parched Maltese summer. Which is why these days I look out for places where I can park my car some distance away and take a detour. There is something undescribably elemental and tactile about being among the pungent Fennel and Tamarisk one minute, and letting your toes feel the cold swell of *Cystoseira* algae fronds the next.

Il-Kalanka (or Il-Qala t-Tawwalija) at Delimara serves up such a possibility. As the names suggest, it's an elongated inlet that faces south on the southernmost length of Maltese coast. The friable limestone is sculpted with all manner of overhangs, fissures, boulders, and tiny coves. The sea, which is nowhere deeper than a few metres, is framed by gently-sloping rocky platforms, in places fashioned into salt pans. It's the kind of littoral that lends itself to snorkelling in a metre or so of water. At that depth, light does a first-class service to colour. The place where sea meets land is rich in oxygen, too, which means that marine algae grow in profusion. The sort of thing, in other words, that food chains and ecosystems thrive on.



► Moray eel at Il-Kalanka



► Tompot Blenny in full tentacle splendour at Delimara

► A cryptic *Marthasterias* starfish at Il-Kalanka

It's quite possible, in an hour of average snorkelling at Il-Kalanka, to see up to 30 different kinds of fishes. The families that are particularly well represented include the wrasses, of which many species are brightly coloured, and the sea breams. Blennies and gobies are the resident stars, especially in very shallow water. Of the 17 species of blenny that have so far been recorded in Malta, 11 are commonly found here. My personal favourites are the Montagu's and Tompot Blennies. The first spends as much time out of the water, just above the waterline, as it does in it. It can in fact breathe air outside of the water. The second, which prefers rocky places rich in algae, is a rich chocolate-brown and green colour and has fantastically-shaped tentacles above its eyes. Gobies are considerably harder to identify but the Giant Goby's huge size breaks the mould. The many other types of bottom-dwelling fishes include two species each of scorpionfish and triplefins. Scorpionfish are cryptic and not necessarily easy to spot.

For the bright red breeding male triplefins, on the other hand, the medium is the message. The bottom at Il-Kalanka is sandy in places, and shoals of sandsmelts that each number in the several thousand swim loosely in sheltered areas. When alarmed, they tighten and school in impressive choreographies. Il-Kalanka is equally a good place for finding and observing invertebrates. Octopus and cuttlefish are masters of trompe-l'œil and a challenge to the untrained eye. *Marthasterias*

starfish, too, are fairly cryptic - unlike their bright red and more familiar cousins, also commonly found here. The various kinds of sponges can be hard to identify in the field. My favourites are the Boring (*Cliona*) Sponges. There's nothing boring about them except their habit of eating into the living rock, which in turn produces excellent habitat for other small invertebrates and fishes. While invertebrates may look indestructible, they actually tend to be rather delicate. The golden rule is not to touch or disturb them in any way. Il-Kalanka is a truly magical place. On quiet days it is possible to hear the cicadas and, dare I say, smell the Fennel, even as you snorkel.

WORDS **Mark-Anthony Falzon** Anthropologist with a passion for nature

PHOTOGRAPHS **Mark-Anthony Falzon** (with thanks to Alan Deidun for helping in the identification of the invertebrates)

MAP **Victor Falzon**

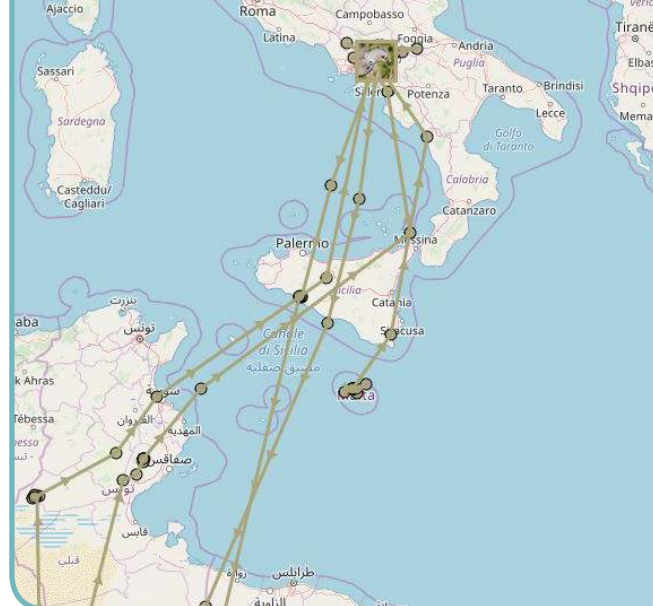


► The Neapolitan Triton in very shallow water at Il-Kalanka

► Il-Kalanka bay

► The Giant Goby (here photographed at Il-Kalanka) grows to about 25cm

Francisco returns home!



► Map (courtesy of NABU) showing the last part of Francesco's migratory route over the Mediterranean

Yet another spring has just passed us, with BirdLife Malta once again mobilising its staff and volunteers to monitor yet another spring hunting season. If there is one thing that we have certainly not given up on, this is our fight to see an end to unsustainable spring hunting. Following the narrowly-missed 2015 referendum, the cards on the table have changed. The European Turtle Dove – that which so many governments and so many hunters swear to keep hunting – is in serious decline across the European continent, recognised as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Spring 2019 has been a pivotal point for our 15-year fight to stop spring hunting. While the declining status of the Turtle Dove has triggered the Maltese Government to halt its hunting in spring through the implementation of a moratorium, in 2019 we had a 'Quail' hunting season right throughout the period when Turtle Doves migrate. And indeed it was practically an open season on this species – one that disregards Malta's obligations to ensure the protection of Turtle Doves.

While our attention was focussed on how hunters would abuse the new dates granted by government and shoot protected Turtle Doves, our fingers were also crossed on the movements of Francesco, our mascot Turtle Dove, satellite-tagged on Comino in April 2017. Francesco's solar-powered tag has been transmitting to us his movements and locations for two years now and his perfectly timed transits between Africa and Europe

meant that his arrival to Europe would be during the last days of April - right inside this year's spring hunting season.

While the Maltese Government has legally only allowed the hunting of Quail in spring over the past three spring hunting seasons, this was the first time we have had a Quail season blatantly opened during peak Turtle Dove migration. When Francesco was ringed on Comino in 2017, the hunting season did not open during the last week of April, allowing Francesco to migrate safely through. However with the hunting community demanding to still hunt Turtle Doves, dates have now been shifted back to 10-30 April period of past spring hunting seasons.

This year Francesco spent his 2018 winter in Burkina Faso (as opposed to Ghana in 2017) from where he departed on 25 March 2019 and settled in Niger, getting ready for his first hurdle – the Sahara desert. From 18-21 April, Francesco made the dangerous crossing, zipping north through Algeria, until he finally reached Tunisia. Here he paused for a whole week, probably regaining his energies and fattening up again before his next crossing over open sea in the Mediterranean. On 29 April he crossed and thankfully hit the Sicilian coast, missing the Maltese Islands. In just two days he made it back to the outskirts of the city of Avellino to the east of Naples, where he has been returning faithfully to, every spring. Francesco's journey from Africa to his

European breeding grounds spanned around 4,500km – a remarkable feat for this athlete who, facing the perils of predators, disease, deserts, seas, and hunting seasons has managed to make yet another breeding season!

Francesco's might is a source of inspiration for us, confirming that given the chance, these perfect flying machines can keep purring to European summers. It is for this reason

Francesco's feat of endurance inspires us to continue our struggle to save the Turtle Dove

that our mission is set to not having another hunting season during peak Turtle Dove migration. Satellite-tagging projects such as this one supported by NABU (BirdLife Germany), are providing us with the necessary arguments to lobby for their protection. Keep following for hopefully more updates from Francesco. Come August, his breeding season comes to an end, and along with another generation of Turtle Doves, the whole journey to Africa starts once again.

WORDS Nicholas Barbara BirdLife Malta Conservation Manager



► The satellite-tagging exercise on Comino carried out in April 2017

Timmy Micallef

Upcoming Events

A Night with the Scopoli's

Friday, 21 June

19:30-22:00 | Dwejra Tower, Gozo

Did you know that the west coast of Gozo is home to four seabird species? Join our walk to learn more about the seabirds nesting in the Maltese Archipelago, their habitats and the threats that they face. After enjoying sunset on Dwejra Tower we will go for a short walk along the cliffs to listen to the Scopoli's Shearwaters' calling frenzy. Participation fee is €5 for adults, €3 for children and students. To book please visit the events page on our website.

Family Nest Box Workshop

Saturday, 6 July

10:00-13:00 | Salina Nature Reserve

Spend some quality time with your children, build a house for Malta's breeding birds! This is a good opportunity to teach your kids to care about nature and learn something new about birds. We will provide you with all necessary materials and lead you through the process. Booking against payment will be required. More details will be announced soon, so please visit the events page on our website.

Shearwater Boat Trips

Friday, 19 & Saturday, 20 July

Friday, 26 & Saturday, 27 July

18:30-21:30 | Ta' Ċenċ Cliffs

The popular shearwater boat trips are back! Our LIFE Arcipelagu Garnija team will show you one of Malta's most spectacular natural phenomena: the Scopoli's Shearwater 'rafting' on the water before returning to their nests in the cliffs. Prepare your binoculars and camera for this amazing spectacle! Booking against payment will be required. More details will be announced soon, so please visit the events page on our website.

Our
**Birds of Malta
Memory Game**
is now in stock

€9.75

For sale from our
offices or online



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](https://www.facebook.com/birdlifemalta)

 [birdlife_malta](https://twitter.com/birdlife_malta)

 [BirdLifeMT](https://www.youtube.com/BirdLifeMT)

 [birdlife_malta](https://www.linkedin.com/company/birdlife_malta)

Past Events



Marcel Tellus

► 21-24 March. A successful weekend trip to Sicily organised by our Events & Activities Committee. A similar day trip was held in May



Kristina Govurukha

► 24 March. Celebrating the hard work during the last scholastic year to collect money as part of Dinja wahda with a Foresta Family Day



Svitlana Schewchuk

► 31 March. 132 participants joined our annual Walk for Nature and raised €1,120 with which we will buy nature explorer kits to use during nature activities



Jose Luque

► 20 April. Easter EggCitement...200 children search for 3,000 eggs around Simar Nature Reserve!



Marcel Tellus

► 28 April. Over 50 members who joined us on the 8km nature walk on Comino were delighted to spot a flock of 50 Marsh Harriers and another one of 27 Purple Herons



Jose Luque

► 5 May. Families joined us to welcome the swifts back to Mdina for the breeding season during this year's Medieval Mdina festival.

Connecting communities with *nature*

Kristina Govorkina

We strongly believe that inspiring young people to spend more time outdoors is an essential part of protecting our wildlife, which is BirdLife Malta's mission. That is why we are committed to connecting communities to nature through several environmental education programmes that reach out to families, community groups and youth. One such initiative is our ongoing partnership with the Malta Girl Guides for whom we've developed workshops, leader training and tailor-made activities to encourage further connection and time outdoors with nature. Together we have also developed four Nature Badges, each one based at a BirdLife Malta reserve. Last month we welcomed approximately 200 Girl Guides to our reserves for a day full of exciting activities aimed at getting them engaged with the environment!

