

# Bird's Eye View

A BirdLife Malta members' magazine

Issue 61 ■ September 2019



## Be our ambassadors!

Just a few weeks prior to writing this I had a bittersweet experience. A flock of flamingos were giving an amazing spectacle in Marsaskala. The unfortunate part was that they were also shot at, with at least two ending up being killed. One of them was retrieved that same evening.

We can waste a lot of time thinking about why are there people willing to kill such birds, but at BirdLife Malta we then have to put our energy on what we can do to help avoid such incidents. Can we improve our work in the field during the camps we organise to monitor migration periods, such as Raptor Camp and Spring Watch, for example? How can we engage more with people? And what about lobbying and policy work to make sure we get better laws and more efficient action from the authorities that have the responsibility to protect our nature?

I am very satisfied with the level of work we do and we know that if BirdLife Malta did not exist, our countryside and our birds would be in bigger danger. We do this thanks to your membership as well, so my appreciation towards you is immense. We are committed to answer the above questions and continue to improve.

I urge you to ask yourself the same questions. Is it enough to be a member of BirdLife Malta? Should you be voicing your concerns and values on the media, to your politician, to your friends, and to your work colleagues? How about thinking about BirdLife Malta when you want to organise an event, or buy a gift for someone? And have you asked anyone to join us recently?

As a BirdLife Malta member, you play an important role for us, and if you are reading this and you are not yet a member I encourage you to become one. Join us in this mission to make our country a better place while strengthening our voice in numbers. Be our ambassadors!



**Mark Sultana**  
CEO

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## A call for active young people!

Do you know of any young person who is passionate about nature and wants to take action to protect it? Do they want to have their say on the future of Malta's environment? We are looking for young people aged 16-19 years old who are looking for a challenge and an opportunity to be active in a youth organisation. We are creating a community for young people to campaign, participate and be innovative in creating solutions for nature protection. If you know someone who could be interested please ask them to get in touch with us or send us their contact details on [info@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:info@birdlifemalta.org).

**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)

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**Contact BirdLife Malta** 57/28 Marina Court, Abate Rigord Street, Ta' Xbiex XBX 1120, Malta, +356 21347645/6  
[info@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:info@birdlifemalta.org), [www.birdlifemalta.org](http://www.birdlifemalta.org)

**Printing** Poulton's Printv

**Front cover photo** Eurasian Hoopoe by Denis Cachia

Reg. Vol. Org. VO/0052  
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## Autumn hunting season, Raptor Camp underway

The autumn hunting season has now started and hunting is permitted until 31 January on a total of 40 different species. A lot of birds have started their migration to Africa with the peak of activity in September and October. Malta provides them with an important chance to roost and regain energy along the way, and it's crucial that Malta is a safe haven for these birds. However,



BirdLife Malta

► Shot juvenile flamingo at Marsaxlokk

we still have problems with the illegal hunting and trapping of protected species, and BirdLife Malta is running its annual Raptor Camp to try and protect these

birds. In the days before the start of the season BirdLife Malta had already received three illegally shot protected birds: a Marsh Harrier, a juvenile Greater Flamingo and a Black Tern.

## Trapping season 2019

The Ornithological Committee has voted in favour of recommending to the government the opening of a trapping season for European Golden Plover and Song Thrush this autumn, and BirdLife Malta was the only organisation that voted against. Ornithology also voted in favour of extending the season to 10 January in the case of trapping of Song Thrush. Another change being proposed by Ornithology this year is that the mesh size is decreased to 34x34mm for Song Thrush, following complaints by trappers that Song Thrush was escaping from last year's nets. This vote passed irrespective of the fact that last year trappers declared catching the highest number of Song Thrush since 2012 when the derogation started being applied.

## NGOs and ERA go to court to #SaveDwejra

BirdLife Malta is proud to have led the campaign to #SaveDwejra from further development. Gozo's Dwejra is a Natura 2000 site, a Dark Sky Heritage Area, and a designated Special Protection Area under the EU's Wild Birds Directive. Scopoli's Shearwaters and other seabirds nest and raise their chicks on the cliffs of Dwejra and any light and noise pollution can cause irreparable harm to their populations. That is why BirdLife Malta together with 14 NGOs joined forces to challenge in court the decision of the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal to grant a restaurant a permit extension. We could file the appeal thanks to the huge support from the public who donated more than €3,000 in less than 24 hours after we launched a crowdfunding campaign. A separate appeal was filed by ERA. The relevant arguments will now be presented on 16 October.

## Save stranded birds

We have received a number of stranded Yelkouan Shearwaters in 2019, victims of light pollution. These young birds were raised by their parents in the dark underground burrows of the Maltese cliffs. When the time comes to train their wings, some of them are drawn to the excessive levels of artificial light emanating

from towns and villages, disorientating them to fly inland rather than out to sea. Survival of stranded birds depends on whether they are found in time, that's why in June and July we ask everyone to keep an eye out for stranded Yelkouan Shearwaters and help us to recover these birds.

## LIFE Arcipelagu Garnija 2019 field season successes

Work of the LIFE AG team during the 2019 field season was concentrated on implementing conservation actions. This year we had the highest number of nest boxes occupied, five at Rđum tal-Madonna and one on St Paul's Islands, thanks to rat control in these colonies allowing new pairs to colonise. The number of young fledglings ringed this year is the second highest with 119 throughout the

different colonies. The number of fledgling Yelkouan Shearwaters found stranded as a result of light pollution has fallen for the first time in two years.

However, two of these were found close



LIFE Arcipelagu Garnija

► LIFE AG team ringing shearwaters

to the Ċirkewwa Ferry Terminal, where we are working with Transport Malta to reduce the light pollution. Adult shearwaters have also received a lot of attention as they have been tracked through GPS and GLS movements to identify where they go during different life stages such as incubation and winter migration.

## Filfla storm-petrels...more secrets revealed

This summer the seabird team had frequent visits to Filfla to ring Mediterranean Storm-petrels. This year with the help of local bird ringers we ringed thousands of storm-petrels. We were lucky to recapture a bird that was first ringed on the same islet in 1991, making it over 29 years old! Another bird was recovered on Filfla with an Italian ring. Interestingly, a storm-petrel ringed on Filfla in 2008 has now been recovered by our partners BirdLife Greece in a colony on the Greek Islands. This is particularly a great discovery because the connection between the storm-petrel populations in the Aegean and in the Central Mediterranean Basin has now become evident for the very first time.

## A successful year for Malta's breeding birds

Several species were recorded breeding successfully both at BirdLife Malta's nature reserves and in different areas around the Maltese Islands. House Martins are currently breeding in Valletta. Birds of prey were recorded breeding on all three main islands: Peregrine Falcons along Malta's southern cliffs and Common Kestrels in Gozo. A pair of Short-eared Owl successfully bred again on Comino. The Barn Swallow has this year had a record breeding success on Gozo. Our reserves recently became home to new families of Black-winged Stilts and Little Ringed Plovers. As soon as the little stilt chicks grew slightly older we opened our reserve for a special event to share the spectacular beauty of parenting in nature with the general public.

WORDS **Svitlana Shevchuk** BirdLife Malta Communications Assistant

# Eurasian Hoopoe

**Maltese name:** Daqquqa tat-Toppu  
**Scientific name:** *Upupa epops*  
**Length:** 25-29cm  
**Wingspan:** 44-48cm  
**Conservation Status:** Least Concern  
 (with population decrease)  
**Local Status:** Common  
**Call:** Song is a trisyllabic OOP OOP OOP  
**Behaviour:** In flight resembles a large butterfly  
**Habitat:** Open areas normally with soft sand or soil

The Eurasian Hoopoe is one of the first autumn birds to appear, with arrivals already starting in July. Although not as common as in spring, the Hoopoe can be seen in small numbers up to September. In spring the first birds appear in February and migrate right through May. It is one of the easiest birds to identify, having a crest which it opens when excited and a salmon colour with large roundish black and white wings.

It is a bird with a huge range, occurring from the Canary Islands all the way to Korea, and from Germany down to South Africa. It is fond of arable land and even sand dunes, anywhere where it is able to probe its very long bill in search of insect larvae and grubs. It takes most of its moisture from the insects it feeds on and is not known to drink. This is why it can survive in areas which are close to desert conditions. Although never known to breed in Malta there have been some recent records, not yet confirmed, of one or two pairs which might have bred. No past ornithologists seem to have mentioned any breeding records either. This is strange as it seems to occur on most of the Mediterranean islands.

The nest is usually in a hole in a tree, wall or nest box and the female may occasionally lay up to 12 eggs. The young birds can defend themselves by directing faeces at any intruder even from a young age. They fledge after 24 to 29 days and are independent after a week from fledging. The northern populations are migratory but Southern European birds are more sedentary.

In the past it was heavily hunted in Malta and persecuted more for its colours as it was not deemed good to eat (in the Bible it was one of the birds deemed as not kosher, that is not for consumption).

Today the Eurasian Hoopoe is protected by law and although still persecuted by some hunters it is now more readily seen on migration in many areas. Foresta 2000 is a good area to see the bird, especially in spring.

WORDS **Ray Vella** BirdLife Malta Nature Reserves Warden

## Salina

Opening hours  
Site: Daily 7am–8pm (Apr–Sep), 7am–6pm (Oct–Mar)  
Visitor Centre: Mon–Fri 8am–12pm  
Entrance free (donations welcome!)  
More info at <http://bit.ly/SalinaNatureReserve>

### ► Salina canal

### **Mediterranean Killifish** Buzaqq *Aphanius fasciatus*

Fish are either marine or freshwater, and generally hate ups and downs in the saltiness of their water. We have plenty of marine fish around our coast but no freshwater species as we lack rivers and freshwater lakes. We have, however, a few coastal brackish pools, the largest being the 8ha pans at Salina (12ha if you include the canal). These waters' salinity varies significantly from season to season, so most fish shun these sites. One species, however, that has adapted to this harsh habitat is the hardy little Mediterranean Killifish. No more than 6–7cm in length and not garishly coloured, it's easy to overlook, but the killifish is an important part of the Salina ecosystem, feeding on algae and small invertebrates, while getting in turn eaten by waders, grebes and gulls. Since brackish pools are rare in Malta, the killifish too is rare – both fish and the sites where it occurs are in fact protected.



Victor Falzon

► Mediterranean Killifish

### **Avocet** Xifa *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Many species of shorebirds are yearly recorded at Salina. Some are regular and common, and some are heart-stoppingly rare. Many are hard to tell apart for the untrained eye, but one unmistakable species is the Avocet, a black-and-white beauty with long pale pastel blue legs. Its most arresting feature, however, is the unusual beak: long, thin, black and bent upwards. This strange appendage makes sense when one observes the bird feeding. The Avocet walks into the water swishing its beak from side to side just under the surface, and any small fish or invertebrate that gets within range of that swipe gets snapped up and gobbled. It is the perfect tool for the job, and it's surprising why other waders didn't think of this as well. Incidentally, this unique feature explains the Avocet's Maltese name Xifa, which is also the name of a pointy tool (an awl) with a bend exactly like that fabulous beak.



Victor Falzon

► Avocet

### **Maltese Wall Lizard** Gremxula *Podarcis filfolensis maltensis*

The Maltese Wall Lizard is no rarity, as anyone with a garden patch knows. Still, would you believe that this widespread creature would be on the ticklist of any visiting foreigner with even a mild interest in reptiles? The reason is that our lizard is endemic to the Maltese Islands, so it occurs nowhere else on earth. And not only that: the species comes in more than one race, each with its own colour scheme. One race is common to the three main islands, there's another on Il-Għbla tal-Ġeneral, and then there's the stunning black lizard of Filfla. At Salina the wall lizards have the time of their life chasing insects and other invertebrates among the vegetation, and we have good news for them: an integral part of BirdLife's exciting plans for our newest nature reserve is the planting of thousands more flowering trees and shrubs; these will attract many more insects and boost the site's biodiversity.



Desirée Falzon

► Maltese Wall Lizard

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

# Natural remedies

## Can a walk in nature help your mental well-being?

► Ecotherapy session with Villa Chelsea at Simar Nature Reserve



► Blooming Minds feedback about buildings

have one yourself. In Malta, 96.2% of the population is living in an urban area<sup>2</sup>. Just by doing so there is a 40% higher risk of depression and a 20% higher risk of an anxiety disorder<sup>3</sup>. However, recent research has shown just two hours a week in nature can help lower your stress levels and improve your happiness<sup>4</sup>.

### How can nature benefit you?

Have you ever experienced being totally surrounded by nature and feeling truly at peace with yourself, just enjoying the moment of where you are? Nature is a sensory, calming and inspiring environment. No wonder the research demonstrates that spending time in nature has helped with mental health problems including anxiety



► Self-esteem evaluation<sup>6</sup>

Did you know that 1 in 4 of us are affected by a mental health problem at some point in our lives<sup>1</sup>? Have a look around you and think about all the people you know. The chances are a few of them will have a mental health problem if you don't

and depressions. In the UK, ecotherapy sessions have been prescribed by doctors to help with mild to moderate mental health illnesses. Spending time in nature can really help everyone by<sup>5</sup>:

- Increasing motivation
- Improving your mood
- Reducing ADHD systems
- Reducing feelings of stress or anger
- Improving your physical health
- Improving your self-empowerment and self-esteem.

Everyone has their individual experience of nature, it doesn't matter whether you are snorkelling or walking in the countryside. The important thing is that you spend some time really connecting with your feelings about the nature around you, appreciating the sights, sounds, smells and different textures.

### Creativity and exploring

Try to imagine yourself sat in a small room with lots of people, loud noises and bright lights and colours whilst trying to work. Do you think you could



► A quote from a Richmond Foundation client



► Results after first ecotherapy session

concentrate? Some children who have special educational needs (SEN), such as autism, often experience this inside a classroom space, making learning a stressful and overwhelming experience. Knowing that being outdoors can help reduce stress, we have worked with the SEN school Guardian Angel Secondary Education Resource Centre and a SEN class at Blata I-Bajda Middle School. With our support and encouragement they use outdoor spaces to provide a unique way for students to construct their own learning and experience across their subjects as well as developing their creativity, problem-solving, social skills and self-discipline.

This is a social project that is separate from the core activity of BirdLife Malta. To continue this project it has to be financially sustainable and we need your help! In October 2019 we are going to be launching a campaign for you to help us with this cause. Subscribe to our Facebook page **@BloomingMindsMalta** for updates and for you to spread the news. Any financial help or publicity is priceless!

WORDS **Abbie Ferrar** BirdLife Malta Education Officer

## Ecotherapy comes to Malta!

Blooming Minds is an ecotherapy programme piloted in Malta designed by BirdLife Malta and the Richmond Foundation to help people living with mental health illnesses. Ecotherapy are inclusive outdoor activities in nature. Over the summer clients have visited our Simar Nature Reserve to spend time in nature with different types of activities. With positive feedback from the staff and clients we are developing structured programmes to run throughout the year.



► Guardian Angel School enjoying time in nature



► Blata I-Bajda animal investigation activity 2018



► Blata I-Bajda nature art activity 2018



► Ecotherapy session with Attard Hostel at Simar Nature Reserve

### More information

If you or a loved one needs support please visit the Richmond Foundation's website at [www.richmond.org.mt](http://www.richmond.org.mt) for more information. If you would like to learn more about ecotherapy please contact us on [education@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:education@birdlifemalta.org).

### References

1. *World Health Organisation 2001. World Health Report*
2. *Worldometers. 2019. Malta Population*
3. *The Centre for Urban Design and Mental Health*
4. *Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and well-being*
5. *Ecotherapy – A Forgotten Ecosystem Service: A Review*
6. *A Look at the Ecotherapy Research Evidence*

# Walk with raptors

September and October in Malta are exciting months for nature lovers. The change in seasons brings with it a change in wildlife and the winds carry some spectacular birds. Summer residents of Europe fly south to Africa avoiding the cold European winters and in doing so often pass by our islands, stopping over to gather their strength before continuing their journey. This 10km walk takes us around the Ġebel Ġantar plateau (rising 220m above sea level), then along Dingli Cliffs before swooping through Buskett woodland. The raised altitude of these areas means the whole walk provides stunning views over the Maltese countryside and coast... and great birdwatching locations.

## Girgenti

The beginning of the walk skirts around Wied il-Girgenti. The reed and shrub habitats found in this valley provide great areas for birds. Yellow Wagtails and Northern or Black-eared Wheatears can turn up in the fields and the field borders, searching for food in the drying flora. Keep an eye out for reptiles also, Black Whip Snakes and Moorish Geckos love this rocky area and our team spotted a Mediterranean Chameleon in the Fennel growing in the roadside.

## Laferla Cross

The ridge where Laferla Cross stands rises high above much of Malta. From the viewpoint at the cross, the land stretches away towards the sea, offering amazing views over half of the island. This vantage point creates excellent birdwatching opportunities. Raptors are common sightings here, using the updrafts created by the warm ground for thermal soaring and gliding. High numbers of Honey-buzzards and Marsh Harriers are recorded in this area during autumn migration.



Aron Tanti

► Red-footed Falcon



Desirée Fazon

► Mediterranean Chameleon

## Fawwara

The road through Fawwara runs under the precipice of the cliffs which surround the Ġebel Ġantar plateau above you. Below, the terrain drops away to steep agricultural land, farmed and cultivated for centuries. The land around the winding road has been manipulated into steep terraced fields, with rubble walls keeping the soil from eroding into the sea. Watch out for Spectacled Warblers and Blue Rock Thrushes, which are resident here. Migrating Hoopoes forage along the rubble walls, flocks of tired herons come in from sea to roost for the night. European Nightjars can be spotted at dusk or very early in the morning before the sun has properly risen.



Aron Tanti

► Honey-buzzard

## Dingli Cliffs

After climbing up the winding path to the top of the cliffs, take a minute to enjoy the views. Sheer striated limestone cliffs plunge into the sea and the uninhabited island of Filfla sits just below the horizon. Scopoli's Shearwaters skim the waves between Filfla and the mainland. Early in the morning you might glimpse birds catching thermals high into the air before heading over the sea to Africa.

## Buskett woodland

The reason this area of Malta is so productive for birdwatching? Buskett provides a perfect roosting habitat in an otherwise barren landscape. This woodland refuge is a vital refuge for birds migrating along the Central Mediterranean Flyway. Due to its importance as a resting place for migratory birds, Buskett was identified as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife International. This charming woodland defies the heat of the surrounding countryside. Stroll through the shade under the trees and explore the edges of the forest. Most migratory birds can be found in these trees, so keep your eyes open. The joy of exploring the countryside in autumn is that you never know what might turn up. With a good pair of binoculars and suitable migration conditions, you might find yourself face to face with a rather exciting bird!

WORDS **Angus Wilkinson** BirdLife Malta Education Assistant

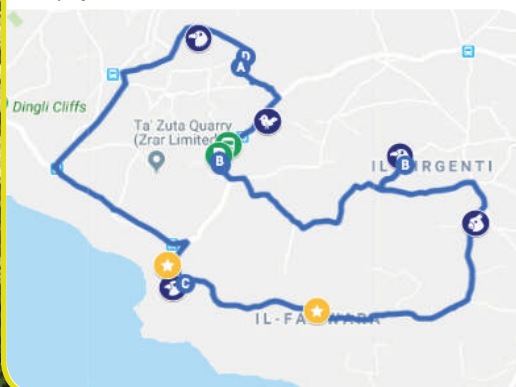


► Marsh Harrier



► Annunciation Chapel

We've prepared an interactive Google Map for you to take it with you on this walk, providing details and route directions, tips on birdwatching spots and other attractions, and details about transport and parking. Just copy and paste this link in the Google Maps app on your phone to use it as a guide while walking, and you're ready to go: <http://bit.ly/BirdWatchingRoute>. Enjoy the walk!



**Length of the route:** 10km

**Suggested starting point:** Mundu Bus Stop, Siggiewi

**Best suggested time for the walk:** For the closest raptor sightings, start your walk at 2–3pm. Birds arriving on the island in the afternoon will come down to look for roosts in the trees and shrubs, meaning closer viewings

**Peak autumn bird migration dates:** 15–30 September

**Beware of hunting:** The hunting season opens from 1 September onwards, so gunshots may be heard especially in the early morning. Permitted hunting hours are between two hours before sunrise to two hours after sunset, however on Sundays and public holidays hunting is not allowed after 1pm. For the period between 15 September and 7 October hunting is also prohibited after 7pm.

# Engaging in standardisation activities

## Another first for BirdLife Malta

BirdLife Malta has partnered with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) to take up a more active role in addressing environmental issues through standardisation. Standards set agreed rules and guidelines on materials, products, processes and services to bring benefits to society such as increases in quality, safety, reliability, inter-compatibility of devices and environmental protection. They are developed by national, regional or international bodies, which bring together all interested parties such as manufacturers, users, consumers, regulators and NGOs to discuss and agree on the contents of a standard.

The MCCAA has been entrusted to develop national standards in Malta. At European level, European Standards (identified by a unique reference code which contains the letters 'EN') are developed by one of the three recognised European Standardisation Organisations.

One of these is the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), an association that brings together the national standardisation bodies of 34 European countries and together with the other two organisations has been officially recognised by the EU and by the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) as being responsible for developing and defining voluntary standards at European level.



**ENgagement**  
Environmental  
Standardisation



**MCCAA**

MALTA COMPETITION AND  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY

So as to achieve technical harmonisation in the EU (same standards across all member states), the 34 EU and EFTA countries are obliged to adopt ENs as national standards and withdraw conflicting national standards.



Victor Falzon

► Plastic pollution

### Engaging more standard bodies and NGOs in the environmental aspects of standardisation

CEN has identified ways in which environmental protection can be enhanced by using standards. It has 34 National Standards Bodies (NSBs) as its members. It has been noted, however, that their

participation is often limited to no more than 12 countries coming from the north and west of Europe. The latest EU Regulation on European standardisation seeks to make the process more inclusive, encouraging representation and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders. So, as part of its own strategy, CEN supported a project proposal designed to overcome the disadvantages that smaller and newer countries experience.

This project, called ENgagement, is financially supported by the EU and EFTA and sees CEN partnering the NSBs of Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, the Czech Republic and Cyprus Environmental Citizens Organisation for Standardisation (ECOS).

ENgagement started in December 2018 and has a duration of 3½ years. It involves the partner standards' bodies and representatives of their stakeholder environmental organisations who join in the work of CEN dealing with environmental issues in product standards and environmental monitoring.

MCCAA has identified BirdLife Malta and Friends of the Earth as its environmental representatives in this project. Already both NGOs have participated with MCCAA in CEN standardisation activities dealing with environmental issues such as microplastics, the circular economy, eco-design and green financing.

The project will also organise in each country a stakeholders' workshop where the work of CEN will be discussed by the wider stakeholder community. The Maltese workshop is scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2020. The project ends in mid-2020 with a European workshop where lessons learned during the project will be used to engage environmental NGOs in standardisation activities. For more details on the ENgagement project visit: <https://www.sabeproject.eu>.

**WORDS Francis Farrugia** Director General, Standards and Metrology Institute, MCCAA



► Kick-off meeting of the ENgagement project



► Plastics conference by ECOS

## Upcoming Events

### Bird migration at Science In The City

**Friday 27 September** | 18:00-23:00 | Valletta

We're taking part again in Science in the City and during this year's edition we will show you our scientific tools and let you know some insights we learned from our studies on the journeys birds make every year. We will also share with you the story of Francesco the Turtle Dove who earlier this year championed another spring, travelling no less than 4,500km to make it back safely to his breeding grounds in the south of Italy. Also, your children will have an opportunity to learn about bird migration through games. No booking is required. Please visit the events page on our **website**.

### EuroBirdwatch 2019

**Saturday 5 October** | 07:30-09:45 | Għadira Nature Reserve

**Sunday 6 October** | 14:00-19:00 | Buskett

We are joining our European partners for **EuroBirdwatch19** with birdwatching and bird ringing sessions at our Għadira Nature Reserve and another guided birdwatching session at Buskett woodland, which is the best spot in Malta to experience the autumn bird migration. The highlight will be the observation of the migrating raptors. Just bring your binoculars with you...if you don't have any, we will be providing some on site. Booking is required for some activities. To book and for more details visit the events page on our **website**.

### Sicily Day Trip

**Saturday 12 October** | 05:00-22:15 | Cava d'Ispica, Modica

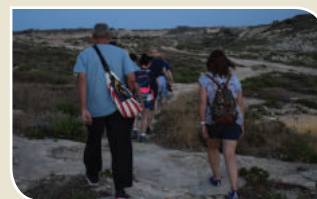
Our Events & Activities Group is organising another day trip to Sicily. Our destination this time will be **Cava d'Ispica**, a picturesque river valley between Ispica and Modica. The long canyon is a wonder in the joy of light with over 13km of nature and history. Its long history has left behind, among other sites, the prehistoric tombs of the Sicani, underground oratories, beehive tombs, Byzantine crypts and sanctuaries with traces of ancient frescoes... and a castle. Our walk will be approximately 14km long and is medium-to-difficult in some parts, mostly off-road, and includes some slippery stretches especially if wet. Participation is open for those older than 14 years. Price is €138 for members and €158 for non-members. Booking is required. To book visit the events page on our **website**.

## Past Events

July/August. Over 400 people, mostly families with children, participated in this year's sunset shearwater boat trips held during July and August. We would like to thank all those who joined us to see the Scopoli's Shearwaters rafting beneath their nests in Ta' Ċenċ cliffs. We now look forward to share this wonderful spectacle of nature with more people next year!



Aron Tanti



James Crymble

► 21 June. A Night with the Scopoli's at Dwejra, Gozo



Aron Tanti

► 29 June. The public meets the breeding birds at Għadira Nature Reserve



Jose Luque

► 6 July. Nest Box Workshop at Salina Nature Reserve



Kristina Govorukha

► 23 August. Summer Members' Evening at Għadira Nature Reserve



Jose Luque

► 27 July & 3 August. Dinosaur Days at Simar Nature Reserve



Kristina Govorukha

► 25 August. Picnic at Simar Nature Reserve



**CHECK OUT  
OUR NEW  
ONLINE SHOP!**

[http://bit.ly/BLM\\_OnlineShop](http://bit.ly/BLM_OnlineShop)

Merchandise for nature lovers that supports BirdLife Malta's work across the Maltese Islands.

### Want to help us continue our work?

**Join:** [www.birdlifemalta.org/become-member](http://www.birdlifemalta.org/become-member)

**Donate:** [www.birdlifemalta.org/donate](http://www.birdlifemalta.org/donate)

### Want to join an event?


**More details:** [www.birdlifemalta.org/events](http://www.birdlifemalta.org/events)

**Email:** [events@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:events@birdlifemalta.org)

**Call:** +356 2134 7646



# Unwinding for a cause!



In June BirdLife Malta held a special team building day at our Salina Nature Reserve where all staff gathered to unwind and socialise, but also to plan ahead. Such events are important for any organisation, and in the course of the day we set the basis for the next update of the organisation's strategy. We discussed ideas how to strengthen our work and how to adapt our ethos to reflect the changing times while maintaining our mission to conserve birds, habitats and biodiversity. Everyone pitched in with their ideas, and through discussions and workshops we outlined the objectives we hope to achieve with our work in habitat management, research, education and advocacy. It was a fruitful experience for us all at BirdLife Malta and it made us proud to be part of Malta's largest environmental NGO. The special day also strengthened our resolve to keep working for the benefit of birds, nature and the people of this country.