# il-Ħuttafa

Numru **161**

Novembru – Diċembru 2020

**Baħrija ta' Ras il-Mewt**

€2 għal min mhux membru

BirdLife MALTA

Il-magażin ta' Klabb Ħuttaf

Klabb Ħuttaf

Aron Tanti

Bufula tal-għollieq (Cetti's warbler) tifrex ġwinħajha biex ittir.

# Ħbieb Ħuttaf...

## mill-editur

Kemm ikunu sbieħ u ffullati bin-natura l-imsaġar. U għalhekk hija tant ħasra li pajjiżna nieqes minnhom. Tafu li **inqas minn 1%** ta' Malta huwa mgħotti bis-siġar? Dan huwa numru veru tal-biki!

Għalhekk fost il-proġetti tal-BirdLife, wieħed għal qalbi ħafna huwa Foresta 2000. Foresta 2000 bdejna nħawluha 20 sena ilu, u llum hemm jikbru iktar minn 21,000 siġar u arbuxxelli.

Kif taqraw f'paġna 3, issa l-BirdLife għadha kemm bdiet tieħu ħsieb masġar ġdid – fuq Kemmuna! Dan il-masġar huwa ħafna iżgħar minn Foresta 2000, imma f'Malta anke siġra waħda ġdida tgħodd, aħseb u ara 2600!

Kemmuna hija diffiċli għas-siġar biex jikbru, għax ftit hemm ħamrija, il-blat qiegħed fil-wiċċ u l-gżira mikxufa ħafna għall-irjieħ u r-raxx tal-baħar. Għalhekk is-siġar ħa jkollhom bżonn kura tajba biex jibqgħu ħajjin, u aktarx li ma jogħlewx ħafna. Imma dan ma jimporta xejn. Jekk jogħlew imqar żewġ metri jew tlieta u jiffullaw f'xulxin, dawn għad jagħmlu kenn għal ħafna għasafar tal-passa li jkunu deħlin minn fuq il-baħar għajjenin mejta.

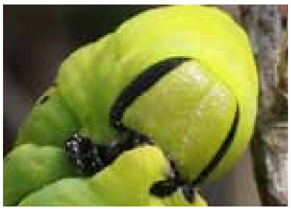
Għalhekk ħadna gost li ġejna fdati bil-kura ta' dal-masġar ġdid. U la tgħaddi l-pandemija ma ndumux ma nagħmlu ħarġa għal hemm.

F'isem il-BirdLife nixtiqilkom il-Milied it-Tajjeb u Sena Ġdida aħjar minn dis-sena diżastru li kellna!

Victor

**Victor Falzon**
L-Editur

## FUQ QUDDIEM



Ritratt ta' Aron Tanti

### Baħrija ta' Ras il-Mewt

Death's Head Moth *Acherontia atropos*

Il-baħrija ta' ras il-mewt hija l-ikbar baħrija li għandna. Jgħidulha hekk mhux għax iġġib is-seħta kif jaħsbu xi nies, imma għax fuq daharha għandha marka li qisha ras ta' mewt. Fir-ritratt jidher mhux il-baħrija imma x-xagħat (*caterpillar*) tagħha, li jiekol weraq ta' pjanti mill-familja tat-tadam u l-patata.



Klabb Ħuttaf · Dinja Waħda · BirdLife MALTA

## F'din il-ħarġa...


| | |
|---|---|
| **Mill-editur** | **2** |
| **Masġar ġdid...** | **3** |
| **Ix-Xeblieka** | **4–5** |
| **Amy's Diary** | **6** |
| **Frott Fest** | **7** |
| **Iz-Zakak tad-Dell** | **8–9** |
| **The Freshwater Crab** | **10** |
| **Art page** | **11** |
| **Il-Ħuttafa** | **12–13** |
| **Sustainable Christmas** | **14** |
| **Smiley and Grumpy** | **15** |
| **Ktieb Ġdid** | **16** |


## Wrote in this issue...

Thais Amaral (National Aquarium), Desirée Falzon, Victor Falzon, Marie Vella (BOV)

## Klabb Ħuttaf

Klabb Ħuttaf is the junior section (-18yrs) of BirdLife Malta. Members can attend many activities, including walks, visits to nature reserves, boat trips and environmental work. Members received by post the bi-monthly magazine *Il-Ħuttafa*. Families too can become members, and will then also receive the quarterly adult members' magazine *Bird's Eye View*. Subscription is €10 per annum for Klabb Ħuttaf and €29 for Family.

## contact

tel **21347645 / 21347646**
**emergency injured bird 79255697**
address **57/28 Triq Abate Rigord**
**Ta' Xbiex XBX 1120**
email **info@birdlifemalta.org**
website **www.birdlifemalta.org**

© BirdLife Malta, Diċembru 2020
Disinn u produzzjoni Victor Falzon
Stampat għand Poulton's Print
Reg.Vol.Org. VO/0052

# Masġar ġdid fuq Kemmuna

Google Earth

**Sentejn ilu fuq roqgħa art f'Kemmuna tħawlu eluf ta' siġar u arbuxxelli. X'sar minnhom?**

F'Kemmuna hemm ħafna steppa u ħafna xagħri. Dawn huma żewġ ambjenti importanti għan-natura. Imma siġar ftit hemm. Għalhekk hija idea tajba li jitħawlu xi rqajja' siġar fuq Kemmuna, għax is-siġar iżidu l-bijodiversità[1].

F'roqgħa art daqs xi żewġ grawnds tal-futbol, fl-2018 il-Ministeru tal-Ambjent flimkien mal-ERA ħawlu numru sabiħ ta' siġar u arbuxxelli. Xi xhur ilu l-kura ta' dan il-masġar żgħir għaddiet f'idejn il-BirdLife biex inkomplu nieħdu ħsiebu aħna.

L-ewwel ħaġa li għamilna kien li għoddejna s-siġar u l-arbuxxelli u sibna b'kollox **2606** ħajjin. Numru sabiħ ħafna.

L-ikbar battikata għal masġar ġdid f'pajjiż niexef bħal Malta hija biex iżżomm is-siġar u arbuxxelli ħajjin fis-sajf. Siġar żgħar ma jifilħux nixfa għax l-għeruq tagħhom ikunu għadhom fil-wiċċ, allura rridu nsaqquhom. Fuq Kemmuna din ftit iktar problema għax hija gżira maqtugħa għaliha.

Għalhekk nawguraw lill-ħabiba ħabrieka tagħna Alice Sicoli, li b'ħeġġa qiegħda bħalissa tieħu ħsieb 'trabbi' dan il-masġar.

Fost is-siġar imħawlin hemm xi għargħar

Alice Sicoli

Alice Sicoli

[1]**Bijodiversità.** Forom differenti ta' ħajja, il-varjetà tan-natura.

# Ġnien għan-Natura

Kitba Desirée Falzon
Tpinġija Victor Falzon

**Kif tiġbed in-natura lejn il-ġnien tiegħek**

## ix-Xeblieka

**Mod kif issebbaħ il-ġnien huwa li tippjana dak li se tħawwel fuq livelli differenti. B'hekk l-għajn ikollha ħafna postijiet interessanti fejn tħares. Il-forom differenti u l-leħħiet tal-weraq skuri jew ċari jżidu ma' dan l-interess. Illum se nagħtu ħarsu lejn il-pjanti xeblieka u kif dawn ikomplu jżidulek il-ħajja fil-ġnien.**

### Kenn u ikel

**Gremxula**
Maltese wall lizard

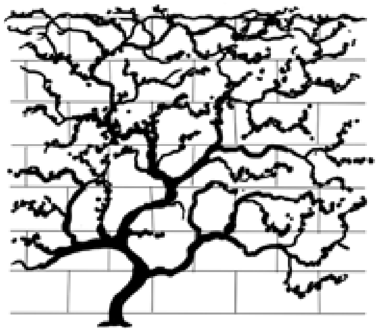
Il-post delli qalb il-weraq tal-pjanti xeblieka joħloq mini-ħabitat, fejn jgħixu jew jistkennu ħafna annimali. Pereżempju, qatt ħsibt fejn jistkennu l-insetti u l-għasafar fix-xita? Meta tkun nieżla x-xita, annimali bil-ġwienaħ ibatu biex itiru għax jixxarrbulhom il-ġwienaħ. Pjanti xeblieka jagħtu kenn lil għasafar żgħar bħal buful u vjolini u anke lil insetti bħal naħal, ġurati, grilli, friefet u tant oħrajn.

Fil-granet sħan, ix-xeblieka huma ħabitati perfetti għall-wiża'. Dawn l-ewwel joħorġu jixxemmxu fuq ħajt, u x'ħin jisħnu biżżejjed, jidħlu għad-dell qalb il-weraq tal-pjanta xeblieka. Barra minn hekk, jekk wiżgħa tkun qed taħrab minn predatur, pereżempju għasfur, tidħol tiġri tistaħba qalb il-weraq folt.

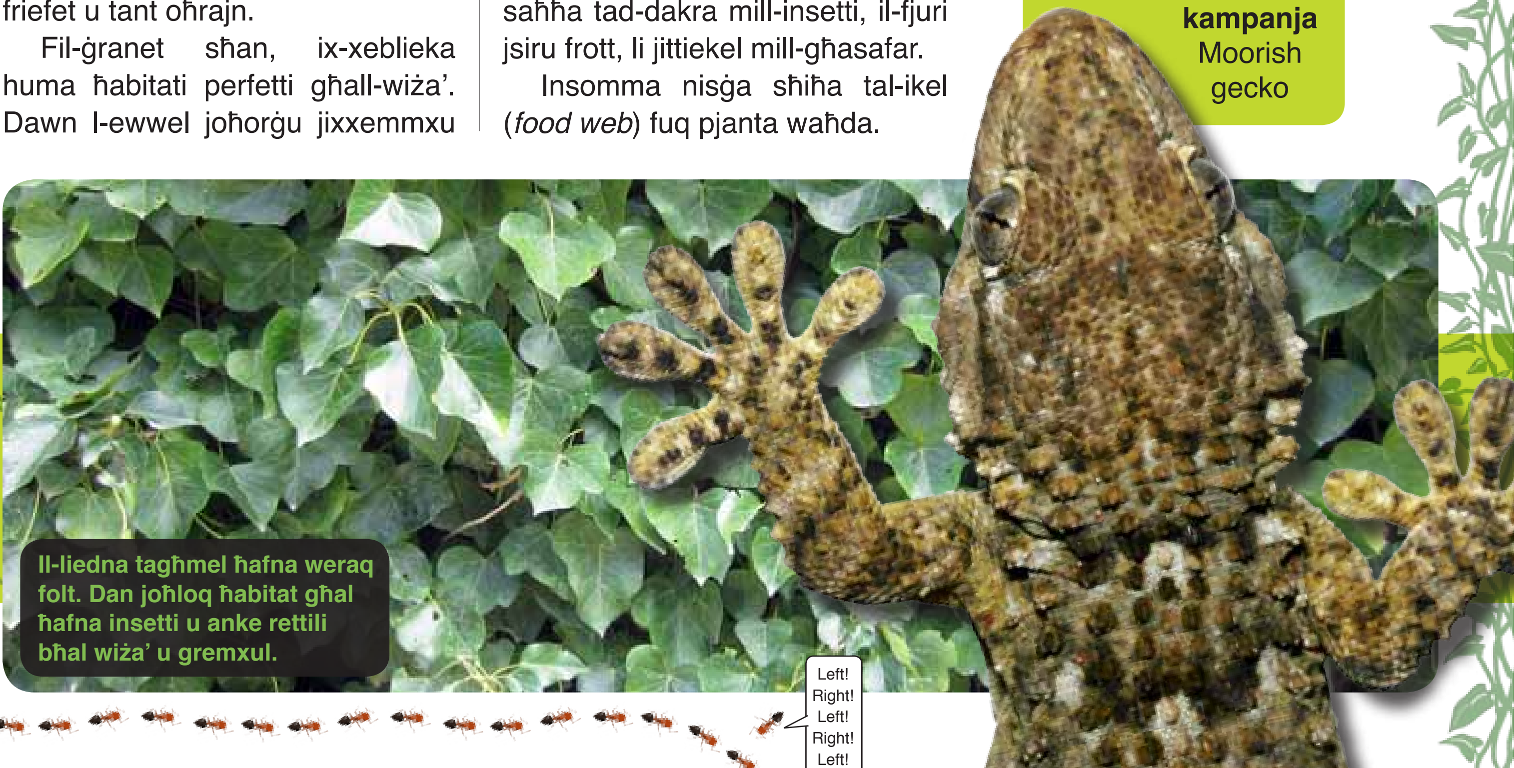
Minbarra l-weraq – li bla dubju hemm diversi dud, ġurati, ħanfus u sfiefed li jikluh – ix-xeblieka jagħmlu l-fjuri li jiġbdu insetti bħal naħal, friefet u baħrijiet. U bis-saħħa tad-dakra mill-insetti, il-fjuri jsiru frott, li jittiekel mill-għasafar.

Insomma nisġa sħiħa tal-ikel (*food web*) fuq pjanta waħda.

### X'inhi pjanta xeblieka?



Pjanta xeblieka isimha magħha. Hija pjanta li tixxeblek, jiġifieri flok ma trabbi zokk oħxon u treġġi weħidha kif jagħmlu s-siġar, din trid isserraħ ma' xi ħaġa wieqfa (aktarx ikun ħajt) u tikber magħha billi tiggranfa, teħel u tixxabbat.



**Wiżgħa tal-kampanja**
Moorish gecko

Victor Falzon

**Il-liedna tagħmel ħafna weraq folt. Dan joħloq ħabitat għal ħafna insetti u anke rettili bħal wiża' u gremxul.**

Left!
Right!
Left!
Right!
Left!

## Għandna xeblieka indiġeni?

L-għażla ta' xeblieka indiġeni (jiġifieri dawk li jikbru naturali f'Malta) li jgħoddu għall-ġonna tagħna hija żgħira. Imma kollha tajbin biex jiġbdu n-natura lejn il-ġnien tiegħek. Hawnhekk ħa nħarsu lejn tnejn.

## Pajżana

**Sarsaparilla** *Smilax aspera*

Din ix-xeblieka għandha xewk żgħir li bihom taqbad ma' affarijiet madwarha biex tixxeblek u titla' 'l fuq. Ma tridx ħafna kura u faċli tkabbarha miż-żerriegħa. Iż-żerriegħa ssir f'Novembru-Diċembru u tista' ssibha l-Buskett jew f'widien oħrajn. Il-pajżana tista' tkun mara jew raġel, jiġifieri jekk issib pjanta li fil-ħarifa ma jkollhiex frott, dik tkun raġel. Din tista' tkattarha bil-biċċa. Kemm il-fjuri u anke l-frott huma tajbin għall-insetti u l-għasafar fil-ġnien fi żmien meta ħafna arbuxxelli qegħdin bla fjuri.

Victor Falzon

**Il-fjuri tal-pajżana jiftħu fil-ħarifa u jiġbdu lejhom naħal u friefet.**

Victor Falzon

**Il-weraq għandu x-xewk mat-truf, li jgħinu l-pjanta biex tiggranfa mal-ħitan u s-siġar li tixxeblek magħhom.**

Victor Falzon

**L-għenieqed frott irqiq tal-pajżana jittiekel mill-għasafar, u dak li jaqa' jinġarr min-nemel.**

## Liedna

**Ivy** *Hedera helix*

Din hija xeblieka li kapaċi titla' ma' ħajt wieqaf mingħajr l-għajnuna ta' spag jew kannizzati. Mill-frieghi tal-liedna joħorġu għeruq speċjali li jinkullaw il-pjanta mal-ħajt. Jekk għandek ħajt bla xquq il-liedna ma tagħmilx ħsara imma jekk hemm xi xquq jew spazji bejn il-ġebel tal-ħajt, il-liedna aktarx tidħol bejniethom. L-aħjar għal-liedna huwa ħajt li jħares lejn it-tramuntana. Tajjeb ukoll li l-ħajt ikun kbir għax il-liedna tikber u tinfirex ħafna.

Il-liedna hija waħda mill-aħjar xeblieka għan-natura li jista' jkollok. Tagħmel il-fjuri fil-ħarifa, fi żmien meta ftit ikun hawn fjuri oħrajn. Jekk tinżel sal-Buskett bħalissa tara kemm ikollhom insetti l-fjuri tal-liedna. Ftit ieħor dawn isiru frott u jiġbdu għasafar bħall-kapinera u l-isturnell. Matul is-sena l-liedna jkollha ġmiel ta' weraq ħodor skuri li joħolqu kenn mill-elementi anke għall-bini li qed jikbru miegħu.

**Kull fjura hija bukkett magħmul minn ħafna fjuretti, u kull fjuretta jkollha ħafna nektar.**

Desirée Falzon

Aron Tanti

**Il-liedna tagħmel ħafna frott, li jiġbed lejh diversi għasafar.**

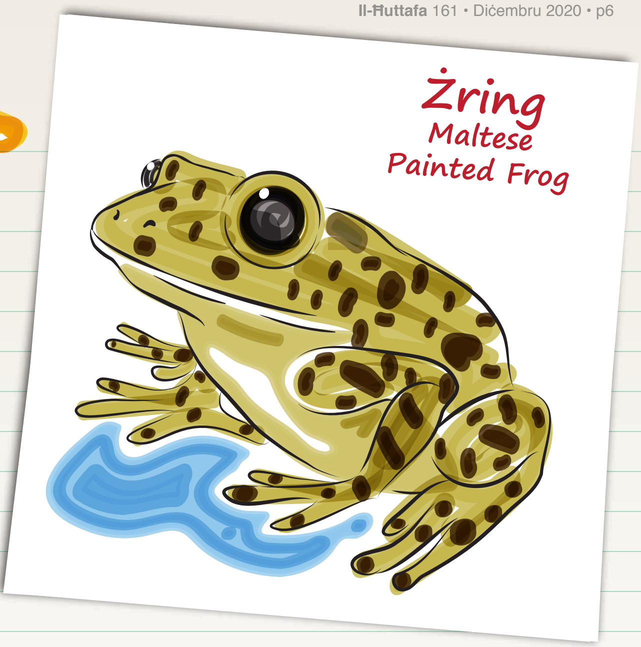
Raymond Galea

**Il-kapinera mhux biss tistkenn fil-liedna imma anke tbejjet fiha.**

Desirée Falzon

**L-isturnell iħobb ħafna l-frott tal-liedna.**

# AMY'S DIARY




Heyyy Ħuttafers,

Christmas is my absolute favourite! Even though this year we had to "tone it down".

Between you and me, I was glad Mum and Dad did most of their shopping online, because that meant we could spend a lot of weekends in the countryside. Even when it was raining!

Lots of ponds and streams where to observe shrimps and frogs! Did you know that frogs AESTIVATE? It's like 'hibernation' but in summer!

DRAWING COMPETITION ALERT!

I was just finishing my **ŻRINĠ** drawing for BOV's competition. I promise, I wasn't being messy, the Maltese frog really has those paintlike splotches all over its body! In fact, it's called the **PAINTED FROG**!

That's it for this year! I wish you all a lovely Christmas and will write to you again in 2021!

Toodles!
Amy

# WILDLIFE
## DRAWING COMPETITION

be in the chance to **WIN** prizes from BIRDLIFE MALTA ONLINE SHOP:

- 1st €50 voucher
- 2nd €30 voucher
- 3rd €20 voucher

### 1 CREATE
Draw an illustration inspired by WILDLIFE and **NATURE**

### 2 SNAP
Take a good and focused **PHOTO** of your ART

### 3 SEND
Ask your parent/guardian to **EMAIL** the photo to **competition@bov.com**

This competition is open for all primary school students & subscribers of **Il-Ħuttafa.**
Competition ends on the **18th JANUARY 2021.**
Visit **https://bov.com/content/il-huttafa-competition** for the full terms and conditions

BOV
Bank of Valletta

Issued by Bank of Valletta p.l.c., 58, Triq San Zakkarija, Il-Belt Valletta VLT 1130.

Bank of Valletta p.l.c. is a public limited company regulated by the MFSA and is licensed to carry out the business of banking in terms of the Banking Act (Cap. 371 of the Laws of Malta).

# Frott Fest

Kont taf li l-pjanti jagħmlu l-frott apposta biex jikluhulhom l-annimali? Meta għasfur jiekol frotta jibla' ż-żerriegħa b'kollox. Din tgħaddi minn ġo fih u terġa' toħroġ meta l-għasfur jagħmel tojlit! Fejn taqa' ż-żerriegħa tista' tinbet u ssir pjanta ġdida. Gawda l-għasfur għax qata' l-ġuħ bil-frotta, u gawdiet il-pjanta għax firxet iż-żerriegħa tagħha 'l bogħod. X'għaġeb in-natura hux!

Il-frott li jidher f'dil-paġna kollu jsir fil-ħarifa jew fix- xitwa. Żmien tajjeb għax fih jonqsu l-insetti, u l-għasafar ma jsibux x'jieklu.

Jekk tħawwel imqar waħda mill-ispeċi f'din il-paġna tkun qed tgħin lill-għasafar għal ħafna snin.

L-isturnell li jgħaddu x-xitwa magħna jieklu ħafna minn dan it-tip ta' frott.

# Zakak tad-Dell

## Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Ritratt ta' Aron Tanti, meħud fil-Buskett

BirdLife
MALTA

# MALTESE FRESHWATER CRAB

**WE ARE SO LUCKY! Lucky that in Malta we share our lives with so many different types of plants and animals, some of which have been crowned as National Species. In this issue we are featuring the Maltese Freshwater Crab *(Potamon fluviatile lanfrancoi)*, the National Invertebrate, popularly known as *il-qabru or il-granċ tal-ilma ħelu.***

WHERE IS IT FOUND ?

This crab lives in burrows in areas where there is water all year round and its habitat is therefore very restricted.

IS IT PROTECTED ?

The Maltese Freshwater Crab has been legally protected since 1993.* It was further protected through the list of National Species and declared as National Invertebrate in 2018. **

IS IT ENDEMIC ?

Yes, it is endemic, that is it can only be found in the Maltese Islands. It has also become very rare and endangered due to loss of habitat, water abstraction, pollution from pesticides and illegal capture.

Photo: © Analise Falzon

*L.N. 49 of 1993
**S.L. 549.120



ERA Environment & Resources Authority

Victor Falzon

# Colour the narcissus

The narcissus (or French daffodil) flowers in December and January. The flowers have a lovely smell. Narcissus is not very common in Malta but in some places (for example Foresta 2000) you should see plenty. Don't pick any flowers though. Leave them for the butterflies.

Victor Falzon

Kingfisher by Francesco Catania (7)

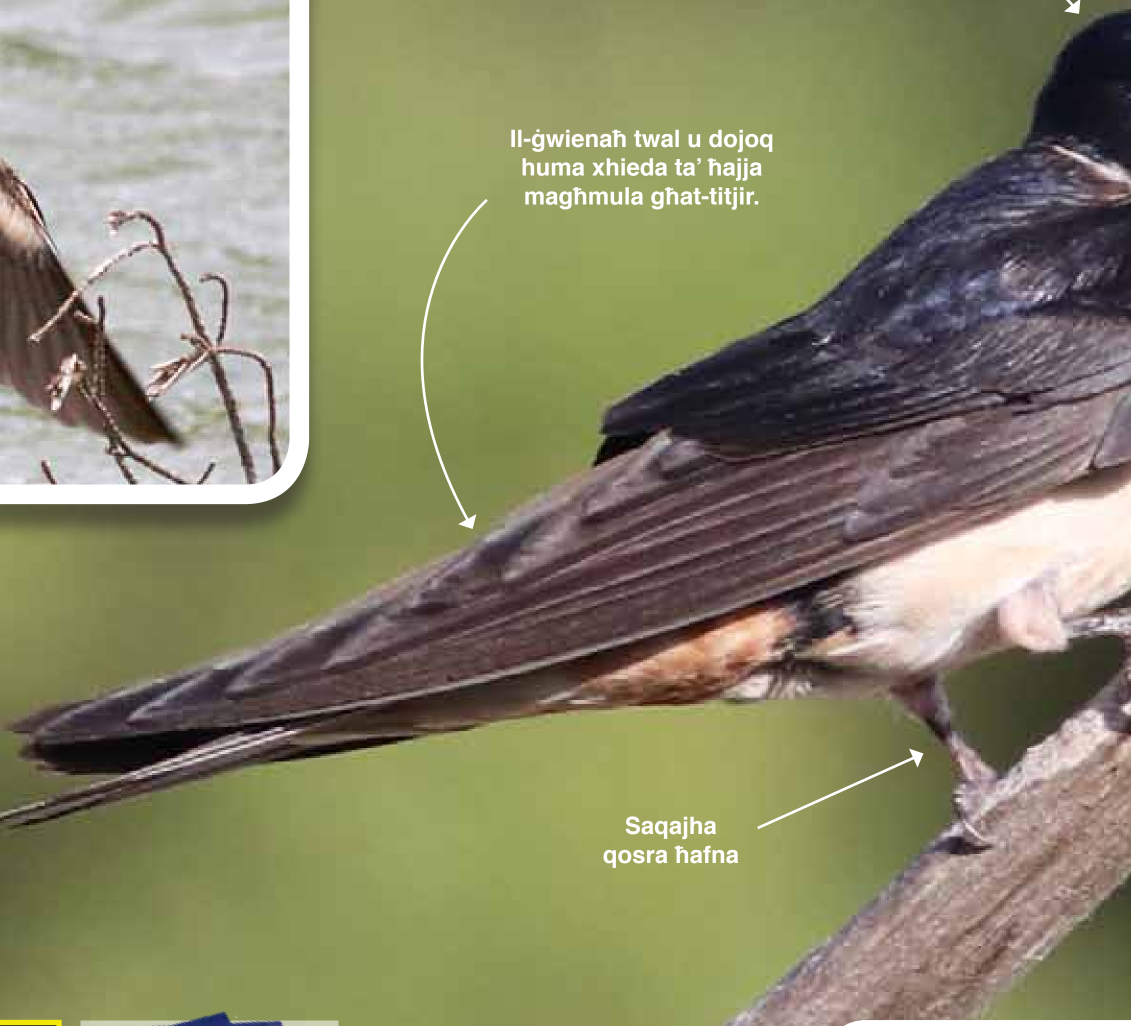
The educational magazine Saghtar is back! And we are happy to have nature features published in this famous magazine. Register online for free at saghtar.org.mt and read every monthly issue as it comes out. Thank you Saghtar!

Victor Falzon

# il-ħuttafa

## Reġina tal-ajru

Victor Falzon




Aron Tanti

**Isem xjentifiku** *Hirundo rustica*
**Isem bl-Ingliż** Barn Swallow
**Daqs** 15-20ċm
**Piż** 18g
**Ikel** insetti żgħar
**Ħabitat** beraħ, aktarx fejn hemm xi ilma.
**Status** Komuni fil-passa, ftit pari jbejtu kull sena.

Jekk trid titgħallem iktar fuq l-għasafar li jbejtu f'Malta **The Breeding Birds of Malta** huwa l-ktieb għalik. Għall-bejgħ mill-BirdLife u xi ħwienet tal-kotba.

Aron Tanti

Raymond Galea

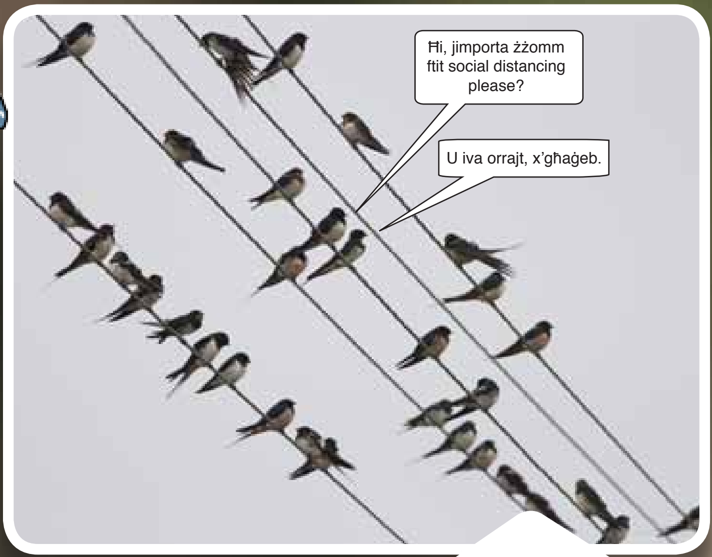
Il-ħuttaf jibni l-bejta minn tajn imħallat b'ħaxix niexef. Jibniha dejjem x'imkien imsaqqaf, bħal għerien u spiss fil-bini.

Victor Falzon

Id-daqs proprju ta' bajda tal-ħuttafa

Joe Sultana

Fil-bejta l-ħuttafa jkollha minn tlieta sa seba' bajdiet. Il-ġenituri t-tnejn jaqbdu n-nemus biex jitimgħuh lill-frieħ tagħhom.




Aron Tanti

**Il-ħuttaf m'ilux ħafna jbejjet regolari f'Malta. Sa 10 snin ilu kienet ħaġa rari imma f'dawn l-aħħar snin xi pari qed ibejtu kull sena, speċjalment f'Għawdex. Nittamaw li n-numru jkompli jikber.**

Biex jaħarbu mill-maltemp u l-kesħa, ħafna għasafar ipassu, jiġifieri jagħmlu vjaġġ twil minn art għal oħra. Qabel jibda l-passa, il-ħuttaf iħobb jinġabar fi gruppi kbar u spiss juża l-wajers tad-dawl.

Il-ħuttaf iħobb ambjenti fejn hemm l-ilma, għax f'postijiet hekk aktarx ikun hemm iktar nemus, l-ikel favorit tal-ħuttaf.

Fir-ritratt tidher qatgħa ħuttaf iħuf fir-riserva tal-Għadira.

# FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS!

MALTA NATIONAL AQUARIUM

Have you ever thought that Christmas and the ocean are actually related? During Xmas celebrations we produce a lot of plastic waste which can end up in the ocean! The whole production and transport of new objects also emit lots of $CO_2$ in the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. So, here are some tips to reduce your Xmas impact this year.

No more producing from virgin natural resources! When buying gifts, focus on charity shops and second-hand items. Or else just buy local or even make your own gifts, like a delicious jam in a reused glass jar!

You can also use flowers, sticks, leaves and newspaper to decorate your gifts and house! Or what about restyling some old fabrics or clothes you have at home, cutting them into nice and personalized gift wraps?

## Meet the ocean's Christmas tree!

This cute little thing might look like a tree, but it's actually an animal! Known as the Christmas tree worm, it is an invertebrate, specifically a marine worm that builds a tube in coral reefs. The worm itself is around 4 cm and hides inside the tube, and the colourful tree-like parts that we see are actually two appendages of the mouth used to trap food particles and bring them to the mouth. Oh, and the worm also uses them to breathe!

## MY SUSTAINABLE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS! IN 2021, I WILL:

- Stop using single-use plastics

Run away from single-use plastics, of course! No balloons or disposable cutlery and cups, for instance. And you might even consider reducing plastics as part of your New Year's resolutions! Fill out the checklist here so you plan for yourself and for the planet!

# Smiley and Grumpy

Good news and bad news from around the world

## A ginormous marine reserve

rockhopper penguin

A huge new natu reserve in the sea has just been created around Tristan da Cunha Islands. These are four small British islands in the South Atlantic Ocean. **A circle 740km around the islands is now protected**, and no fishing is allowed.

That's great news for blue sharks, penguins, albatrosses and the kelp forests that grow here. Now the penguins can catch as many fish as they like. The area of the marine reserve is 700,000km$^2$ – the fourth biggest in the world. Big Smiley!

Kelp is a giant seaweed

## Minus 4.5 million

mink

Many people still think it's cool to kill animals and take their skin and make fur coats for themselves. For this sick business, many countries raise mink on special farms. Mink is a beautiful creature that looks like a weasel.

The Netherlands have many mink farms, where they kill 4,500,000 minks every year. But **next year they are going to shut down all their mink farms**.

We hope other countries do the same, especially Denmark, where they kill 17 million minks every year! Many other countries in Europe are slowly stopping this cruel business. Way to go Netherlands. Big Grin!

Mink in a cage

## Lead-free wetlands

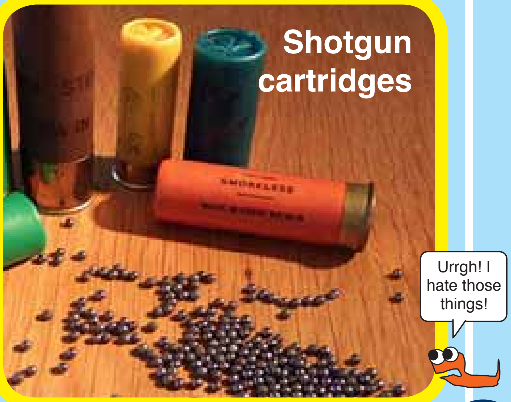
whooper swan

The EU has voted to stop hunters from using lead shot when they go out to kill water birds.

Lead is a poisonous metal, and one million water birds die every year from lead poisoning. Swans, geese and ducks swallow lots of lead shot by mistake, the lead poisons them and they die. Lead can also finish up in our own food and poison us too.

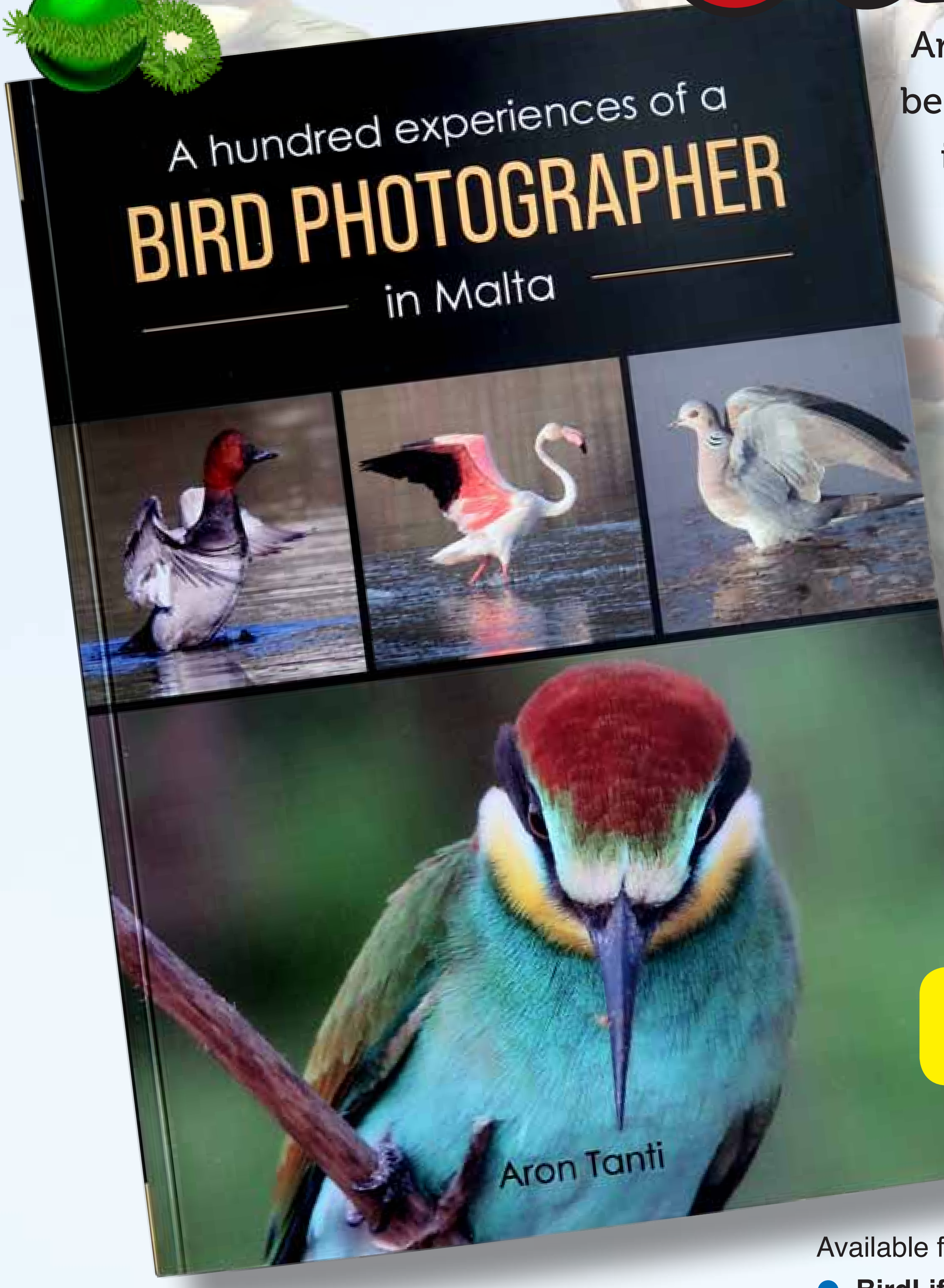
In some countries, it is already against the law for hunters to use lead shot. They use steel shot instead, which is not poisonous. Thanks to the new law, now **all EU countries will stop using lead shot for hunting water birds**.

Maltese hunters didn't like this news, they want to keep killing birds with lead shot. But we like it a lot! Big Smiley!




Shotgun cartridges

# Our latest book is just out!




Aron Tanti is one of the best bird photographers in Malta. His beautiful pictures in our books and magazines have for many years dazzled our readers. This new book is a collection of Aron's best bird photographs taken in Malta, with comments about each picture from the photographer himself.

**The perfect Christmas gift for nature lovers!**

**€15**

Available from

- **BirdLife Malta**
- **BDL**
- **Leading bookshops**
- **http://bit.ly/our_latest_book**

**WARNING**

We didn't print many copies, so make sure you get yours before this jewel of a book goes out of print!