

# Bird's Eye View

A BirdLife Malta members' magazine

Issue 69 • September 2021





# Numbers matter!



BirdLife Malta's 60th anniversary which will be commemorated next year is getting closer and I'm sure we will all have the time to celebrate and refocus our efforts. Sixty years is something we should be proud of especially because of the positive impact we have had in our country. We have helped set up bird protection laws to be in line with the

EU Birds Directive even before Malta was looking in that direction. We created the first nature reserves and today we manage four. Through our research, we helped identify our country's Natura 2000 sites and, more recently, the marine Special Protection Areas. We engaged with tens of thousands of school children through our nationwide programme Dinja Wahda.

The key word here is 'WE'. BirdLife Malta is a dynamic team of volunteers, staff, Council and members. They all have a role. The staff and volunteers have operational ones while councillors have a strategic role, but the strength lies in our members. Members are the fuel of all the work we do. They are the strength that allows us to advocate and lobby and get change. But we need more members! While there is a limit of how many staff and councillors BirdLife Malta can have, there is no limit on members – the more we have the stronger we are.

There is no doubt we have the support of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of Maltese and Gozitan people, but few know they can actually join as members. It helps us in so many ways, but primarily it gives us a louder voice. Let's face it, if there ever was the time when we needed a louder voice, when birds needed more protection, when laws needed more enforcement, when habitats needed to be preserved, when children needed to be inspired, it is surely today.

There was never a better time to become a member than today. We need you, nature needs you, the birds, the air, the seas need you and your family and your friends to join us today.

Visit <http://bit.ly/joinBLM> to become a member!

**Mark Sultana**  
CEO



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## Printing Poulton's Print

Front cover photo European Turtle-dove by Aron Tanti

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We would like to stay in touch with you, **please send us your email address** on [info@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:info@birdlifemalta.org) so we can update your contact details.

# MORE good news for Turtle-doves

BirdLife Malta welcomed a European Commission (EC) decision to regulate hunting of European Turtle-dove in autumn. Following meetings between the EC, scientists and the BirdLife Partnership (including BirdLife Malta) the European Union (EU) made its position very clear: the Vulnerable Turtle-dove must have more protection. Like all other EU countries, the Maltese Government is now obliged to implement this decision. Unfortunately, though, instead of a full hunting ban, the Maltese Government decided to opt for a reduction in the hunting quota. In an ORNIS Committee meeting held on 18 August, in fact, it was recommended that this September the hunting bag limit for Turtle-dove is reduced to 500 birds – a decision which also means that chances of a spring hunting season for Turtle-doves is now out of the question. BirdLife Malta opposed the vote stating there should not be any Turtle-dove hunting at all due to the species' Vulnerable status. BirdLife Malta CEO Mark Sultana stated that the Government's refusal to control the hunting of the endangered Gamiema reveals a cosmetic approach to environmental protection in Malta.



European Turtle-dove granted more protection to help numbers recover

## Illegal hunting in closed season

BirdLife Malta



Illegally shot Black-winged Stilt highlights persistence of illegal hunting

In June BirdLife Malta staff rescued a Black-winged Stilt after members of the public found the injured bird in St Thomas Bay. In these areas as well as Munxar and Delimara, illegal killing of waders persists over summer in private fields. Water conservation seems not to be an issue here since the practice of flooding vast swathes of farmland with water to attract waders has become commonplace. Hunters use the Wild Rabbit hunting season as an excuse to shoot birds – last year just three rabbits were declared caught nationally over a seven-month season!

## Wader trapping and finch smuggling

In July, a number of illegally caught waders confiscated in three different raids were released back into the wild by BirdLife Malta. Species included Eurasian Thick-knee, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Ringed Plover, Little Ringed Plover and Black-winged Stilt. After being checked by a vet, the birds were all ringed and released at Ghadira and Salina Nature Reserves. In a separate incident, a bird trapper filmed by a Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) team illegally catching finches last November, was found guilty on 6 July by the Gozitan Court. Trapping of songbirds in Malta remains rampant despite

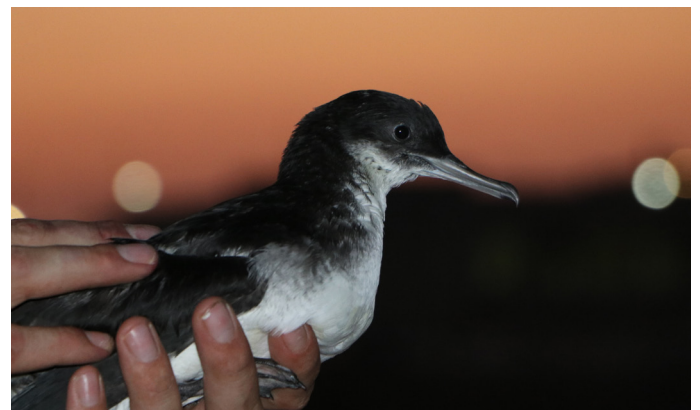
BirdLife Malta



Rescued waders set free at Ghadira

the 2018 landmark European Court of Justice judgement and the latest warning issued by the EC. Meanwhile, illegal finch smuggling between Malta and Sicily was featured in June in *la Repubblica*. The feature also touched upon the EC warning against Malta's latest charade of disguising the finch trapping season as scientific research.

## Back into the wild



Aron Tanti

Yelkouan Shearwater found stranded

Over the past few months, a number of birds have been rehabilitated and released, including young Yelkouan Shearwaters that had been disoriented by coastal light pollution and stranded on land. The rescued seabirds are rehabilitated and released back at sea. On 30 May, a Yellow-legged Gull was picked up from Qala. The bird was ill and needed medication, after which it was ringed and released at our Salina Nature Reserve. We also collected seven young Common Swifts that needed hand-rearing. Swifts' legs are so short that they struggle to take off again if they become grounded. If a young bird leaves its nest before it can fly properly, it lands on the ground and is helpless unless people help it. Four of the swifts have been successfully released so far, and all were ringed beforehand. Ringing helps us learn about their survival rates and migration routes.

## FKNK land handover can be challenged

On 14 July the Court of Appeal ruled that a number of environmental NGOs, led by BirdLife Malta, have every right to challenge the Lands Authority's decision to grant guardianship of Miżieb and Aħrax woodlands to the Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FKNK). The hunting lobby was given control over these two large woodlands – which are popular public



Nathaniel Attard



Protest in Valletta over the Miżieb and Ahrax handover

recreational areas – through a secret agreement signed on 9 October 2020. The signing was originally meant to take place on 11 October but, following backlash and outrage when the plans were exposed, the date was secretly moved forward and the agreement signed with the hunters in private.

## Appeal against db Group project filed

The Malta Independent



Appeal against db Group proposed development

On 10 June, db Group's mega development proposal to build two 18- and 17-floor towers and a 12-floor hotel on public land in Pembroke was approved, and serious backlash ensued from local councils, NGOs and the general public. This was due to the negative impact it would cause to important historical and natural sites, and disturbance to residential areas. A crowdfunding campaign raised €20,000 and on 27 June an appeal was filed with the Planning Tribunal by three local councils, nine organisations and several Pembroke residents.

The appeal detailed the project's non-conformity with many planning policies, the defective and incomplete studies submitted by the developer, and a manipulated process leading to an unfair Planning Board meeting and decision.

## Champions of the Flyway!

BirdLife Malta is proud to have been selected as one of the Champions of the Flyway's Year of the Dove BirdLife partners! Our common cause is saving the European Turtle-dove. We will be working with our partners in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey and help them as best we can with fundraising and campaigning over the coming year. We will fully integrate our campaigns and bring our teams together for the common cause of saving Europe's Turtle-doves. We will also be bringing you special video messages and updates from our recipient partners across the Mediterranean Flyway.

## Return of the Maltese Falcon

A few rare birds have been seen recently, including Peregrine Falcon. Until the 1980s, Peregrines were regular breeding birds in the Maltese Islands, but were hunted to local extinction. In the last 10 years or so, a pair or two have nested again along the sheer cliffs of Malta and Gozo. This year, a pair in Malta raised a brood of four chicks which fledged in early May. Despite their strict protected status, however, Peregrines are still hunted by Maltese collectors. If it wasn't for hunting, the species would increase in numbers as breeding habitat and food are not lacking.



Jonathan Caruana

Peregrine Falcon returns to breed

WORDS **Belinda Hodder** BirdLife Malta Communication Assistant

## BirdLife Partners in action

On 28 June, France declared an end to songbird trapping with glue traps. Following legal action by LPO (our BirdLife Partner in France), France's highest court has now ruled this practice illegal. The European Court of Justice had earlier judged this practice as incompatible with EU law. Meanwhile, Spain is doing its part in saving the declining European Turtle-dove, with most regions opting for a hunting moratorium this coming autumn, which will spare the lives of nearly a million doves. And on 6 August, after years of campaigning by SPNI (our BirdLife Partner in Israel), Israel announced an outright ban on the hunting of Common Quail and a three-year ban on the hunting of European Turtle-doves. This will also enable the study of the impact of hunting on the global decline of the species.



Steve Zammit Lupi

Israel has announced an outright ban on the hunting of Common Quail



# European Turtle-dove

Aron Tanti

If seen properly, the European Turtle-dove is visibly smaller and slimmer compared with the other common species of doves that we encounter in our islands. Its flight is agile, fast and rather erratic, not regular in pattern or movement, and quite different from that of the more common Eurasian Collared Doves and feral pigeons.

Turtle-doves prefer quiet places, usually wooded and semi-open habitats. Spotting one perched in a tree is not easy, but occasionally they perch on utility wires or electricity poles. To feed, they usually sacrifice tree cover and alight on the ground to forage. The Turtle-dove's diet mainly consists of seeds, both deriving from cultivated crops and wild plants.

Unlike our other common dove species, the Turtle-dove is a long distance migratory bird. Every year, this elegant dove must surmount the perils of very long distances from its European breeding grounds to its sub-Saharan winter quarters and vice-versa. The European Turtle-dove breeds across most of continental Europe except the far north. It also breeds around the Mediterranean basin, including North Africa and Mediterranean islands.

**MALTESE NAME:** Gamiema

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Streptopelia turtur*

**LENGTH:** 25–28 cm

**WINGSPAN:** 45–50 cm

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** Vulnerable

**LOCAL STATUS:** Common spring and autumn migrant. Numbers vary from year to year  
**CALL:** Repetitive purr, heard mostly in spring

**BEHAVIOUR:** Shy and prefers concealment in trees, but easily flushed

**HABITAT:** Wooded areas, also fields and open country when feeding

The Turtle-doves that visit us in autumn are mostly young birds, born in the recently finished breeding season. On the other hand, those visiting us in spring would be in their adult plumage and on their way to their breeding grounds. The ones we see in spring are therefore much more colourful, with a boldly scaled back, a pinkish hue on their chest and a black-and-white striped patch on the sides of their neck, beautifully complementing the whitish belly. Juvenile birds are much duller and tend to look more brownish.

The European Turtle-dove is listed as Vulnerable, an international status given to it by the IUCN (and not by BirdLife Malta, as certain local sectors would have us believe!) Unfortunately, this species has undergone a very fast decline in most of its European range. This decline is not associated with any single factor but from a combination of factors that have led to the decrease of its population. The major contributing factors are habitat modification or destruction, changes in agricultural practices, and hunting, both during migration and in its wintering grounds. While humans continue their debate on how to stop this decline, the number of European Turtle-doves continues to fall. Hopefully a solution is reached before it's too late!

**WORDS** Aron Tanti BirdLife Malta nature photographer and birdwatcher



# Nature at our reserves

# Salina



**Opening hours**  
Nature Reserve:  
Daily 6:30am–8pm  
Visitor Centre:  
Mon–Fri 8am–12pm, Sun 10am–4pm  
Entrance free  
More info at  
<http://bit.ly/SalinaNatureReserve>





## Grand Statice

Mielħa *Limoniastrum monopetalum*

The Grand Statice is one of those uncommon plants that flower in summer, which is good news for many insects that crave nectar and pollen. With its profusion of pink-lilac-white flowers, this beautiful salt-tolerant shrub thrives in coastal saltmarshes, a rare habitat today in Malta. The species was possibly native to Malta once, but if so it has been locally extinct for some time as it is absent from Maltese botanical literature. It occurs in many lands around the Mediterranean, including Tunisia and Sicily – even on tiny Lampedusa. In recent decades the species was locally grown in botanical gardens, and is (re?)establishing itself in suitable habitat... such as Salina!



Edwin Lanfranco

Grand Statice

## Yellow-legged Gull

Gawwija Prima *Larus michahellis*

Since Malta is a group of islands it's no surprise that gulls turn up regularly, but of the dozen or so species that visit, only one breeds: the Yellow-legged Gull. It's in fact our biggest regular breeding bird. Some pairs build their flimsy nest on inaccessible ledges along our seacliffs but the gulls' stronghold by far is Filfla, where over 200 pairs nest. In the past, seacliff colonies were more common but hunters saw to those. Gulls hunt fish and other prey at sea but they also go for anything edible they find floating around. In recent years they have also started making scavenging trips to the Magħtab landfills, so dropping by at nearby Salina has become a regular habit too.



Aron Tanti

Yellow-legged Gull

## Paper Wasp

Żunżan tax-Xehda *Polistes gallicus*

When most people hear wasp they think sting. Too many of us fail to understand that wasps are not out looking for humans to sting. They have better things to do, like finding food and raising a family. One common species is the Paper Wasp, that familiar black-and-yellow stripey fellow we see in gardens. Paper Wasps drink nectar from flowers, but in summer flowers are scarce, so wasps switch to other sources – like ice-cream wrappers and spilt sugary drink – to get their sugar hit, which is why they sometimes cause a bit of a buzz on the beach. Wasps are ever welcome at Salina and our other nature reserves, as they are great pollinators.



Victor Falzon

Paper Wasp

WORDS **Victor Falzon**

Naturalist and BirdLife Malta Field Teacher



# EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR A BETTER FUTURE



ESC volunteers assisting with school engagement



ESC volunteers assisting with volunteer training



ESC volunteers engaging with the public about our ongoing work



International Youth Leader training

## YOUNG AND WILLING

As time runs out, climate change starts to affect our daily lives. Many young people want to lead the changes needed to save the environment, but few understand what needs to be done. By empowering young people with the key competences we can work together for a better tomorrow. Creativity, critical thinking, leadership and resilience are some of the vital skills needed. We need the ability to think outside the box, combine ideas and generate innovative solutions to combat environmental challenges. We need to analyse situations, propose solutions and question decision-makers to make a positive change. For this, we need young people to be leaders for the environment and the future actors of change.

The EU defines a young person as anyone aged 14 to 30 years and BirdLife Malta has for decades been engaging with young people in many ways. When engaging with young people we always aim to connect them with nature and help them develop the skills necessary to explore and protect it. By supporting them with actions they can carry out themselves, young people feel more hopeful and positive about the world. This also improves their opportunities for personal development and employability.



Maltese students completing their 20-hour Systems of Knowledge project at our nature reserves



# THE RIGHT STUFF

Thanks to the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) scheme, we offer international young people opportunities to volunteer with us in education, conservation, bird rehab, management work at the nature reserves, communication, design, administration and finance. These young people help us develop trainings for youth leaders (local and international), write handbooks full of nature-based activities for youth leaders and many other activities connecting people of all ages with nature.

We empower Sixth Form students who join us to complete their Systems of Knowledge project. They join us because they want to fight for environmental protection. We welcome them at our nature reserves and help them connect with nature and gain the skills needed to make a change. At the end of the programme some of them become youth leaders in our youth group Falko. Being a Falko youth leader is a great way to gain experience for those interested in a career with conservation. By creating campaigns, organising events and volunteering, these young people are directly protecting nature. Previous Falko members are today studying and working for conservation from Peru to Sweden.

Young people have great potential to create positive changes and we as an environmental organisation need to give them the opportunity to do so.



## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Are you a young person? Would you like to be involved with protecting nature? Do you want to make a difference? Look no further, contact us at [education@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:education@birdlifemalta.org) to find out how to get more involved with our Falko youth group, become Nature Reserves Visitor Assistants or take part in our Future Environmental Leaders activities.

WORDS **Abbie Ferrar** BirdLife Malta Education Officer  
PHOTOGRAPHS **BirdLife Malta**

I learnt useful career skills, made friends for life, and experienced a lot as an ESC volunteer. It was a very memorable year and I encourage everybody to take advantage of this brilliant opportunity.

**Steph**

**Michal**

The European Solidarity Corps project was a great opportunity for me. I was able to widen my skills in environmental education and gain new knowledge about the natural world whilst also protecting nature.

**Hannah**

I learnt a lot of new skills and experiences outside of what I had initially expected as an ESC volunteer. It was also a great insight into working within an environmental NGO and meeting other staff and volunteers with many different backgrounds and experiences.



BIRDS AND NATURE NEED  
ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET

HELP US  
HELP  
THEM

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

<http://bit.ly/joinBLM>



# LET THERE BE SALT (AGAIN)!

## Salina restarts salt production

### FIVE CENTURIES OF HISTORY

Salina Nature Reserve is inescapably linked to salt production, and the site has been so for almost five centuries. The salt pans were built in the second half of the 16th century, and produced large quantities of salt right up to the 1980s, after which the site fell into disrepair. Since taking over management of Salina, BirdLife Malta has worked to restore the pans so salt can be produced again in the way their architects intended.

### SIMPLE BUT INGENUOUS

The site can be split into three functional areas: a filtration part, brine production and salt production. On the seaward side, a first large basin tames the sea, allowing large waves to wash over a thick sea wall rather than stopping them as a breakwater would. This basin captures whatever the storms churn up, be it seaweed, sand or discarded litter. Water from the first basin is then channelled to a second, more sheltered, basin, where more suspended particles in the still water settle to the bottom. From there, water now comes under full control of a network of narrow canals that channel seawater to any of the 33 inner pans. The system is ingenious but simple. By opening or closing special 'water gates' in the canals, water is moved wherever it is needed.

All this is done without pumps, using just gravity as all the salt pans are below sea level. The original system was slightly modified to facilitate frequent adjustments to the flow of water. The old system was to insert two wooden planks into matching slots in the stone of the water gates and clay is packed between them. This creates a watertight seal between the canal and the salt pan. The modifications retained the original wood-and-clay system but added irrigation-type valves through the wood and clay. With a simple twist of the valve, water flow can now be minutely regulated, as opposed to the old system that only allowed an open or shut situation.

The inner salt pans come in two types. Ten have a paved bottom, these are the pans where salt is produced. The other 23 have a clay bottom and are intended to produce brine.

### HARVESTING THE STUFF

The salt producing season starts in March or April after most of the winter storms are over. The pans earmarked for salt production are pumped dry and hand-cleaned, first with shovels and then power-washed spotless. This ensures a high

quality end product. Then, a sequence of new water valves are opened and water is let in from the sea, first through the outer silt-capture basins, then through the distribution canals and into the clean pans, all by gravity. Once the pans are full, the valves are shut and the evaporation process starts. The brine pans are filled in a similar manner.

By June, salt starts crystallising, first forming a thin crust that increases to a thick layer by the end of the month. Before the pans dry up completely, the salt is heaped into several small pyramids – using shovels and a lot of elbow grease – and allowed to dry further for two weeks. The salt is now ready for harvest. Careful not to take from the bottom layer which is still quite wet, the salt is carried to the storage barns and stored in large jumbo bags. This allows the salt to dry out while keeping out dust and other contaminants. The salt pans are then reflooded, this time with water from the brine pans. As this is already highly concentrated, salt crystallises very fast and the process repeated. Salt production can proceed until the first rains, which bring the harvest season to an end.

Alice Sticoli

Modern international food standards are very rigorous, and salt must undergo many tests in specialised food laboratories before it can be released for human consumption. In the coming weeks, we will be sending samples of the salt abroad for laboratory testing to confirm the quality. Based on the results, the salt will be packaged for sale.

In its heyday, Salina produced some of the best salt in the Mediterranean, and we hope to live up to that old standard.

WORDS **Manuel Mallia** Salina Nature Reserve Manager



# Buskett

## A prime migration magnet

Another autumn brings another migration season, and there is no better place to witness this spectacle than Buskett Woodland – not to mention that a walk in this location provides stunning views across Malta and a chance to spend time in one of the few woodland areas on the island.

### Down the valley

Starting at the car park, feel immediately the fresh air on your face, brought by the breeze flowing through the Holm Oaks surrounding you. Begin your walk through the orchards, where Orange Trees provide shelter for small songbirds like Sardinian Warblers, and the rubble walls are perfect places to spot reptiles like Maltese Wall Lizard or Ocellated Skink. Passing down an avenue of centuries old Olive trees, you reach a nice picnic area, ideal for a snack break and for kids to have a run around.

Returning up the valley, take a left up towards the main path around Buskett, where the iridescent colours of the Large Carpenter Bee, or the whirring wings of the Hummingbird Hawk Moth may catch your eye as they forage on the Lantana hedges along the path. The dark-foliaged climbing Ivy should be in flower at this time, and attracting bees and wasps in droves.

Aron Tanti



European Bee-eaters

### Under the canopy

After about 300m turn right and off the main path, and take the winding path up the hill under the immense Aleppo Pines and Italian Cypresses, immersing yourself in nature without a road or building in sight. You might be lucky and spot small mammals like Weasel or the elusive Etruscan Shrew, or even Algerian Hedgehog if you go after dark.

As you walk under the canopy, keep your eyes turned upwards and your ears open to spot a wealth of birdlife among the branches, now that it's migration season. European Bee-eaters often occur in this area, along with songbirds such as European Robins, Goldcrests, Eurasian Blackcaps, Common Nightingales and Spotted Flycatchers. The trees are also a great roosting spot for Black-crowned Night-herons.

Alvin Farrugia



Maltese Wall Lizard

Desirée Falzon



Holm Oaks form a dense canopy





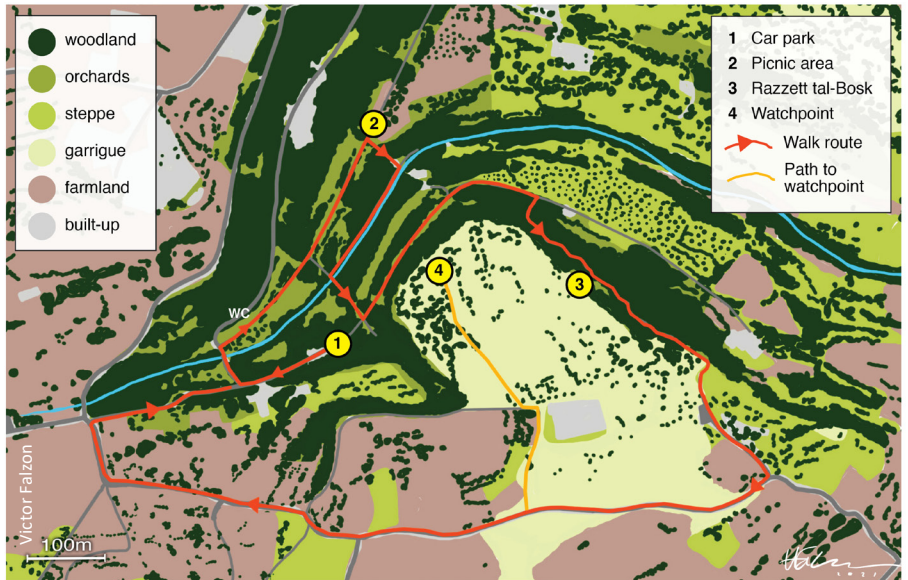
Algerian Hedgehog



European Honey-buzzard

## Watch for raptors!

Past our Razzett tal-Bosk, you eventually emerge from the trees onto a small road, with farmland all around. As you join a slightly wider road take in some stunning views across the southwest, and try to spot landmarks such as Laferla Cross and the parish church of Had-Dingli. As you walk along the road, try to spot the strange purple flowers of the ground thistle dotting the rocky garrigue on your right, but keep checking the skies for raptors such as Western Marsh-harrier and European Honey-buzzard, or Common Kestrel hunting over the farmland in the valley.



## Top birding spot

Along this road – if you have time – you can turn right and venture off the beaten track to visit the ‘watchpoint’. This is busy with birdwatchers during the autumn migration season as it is a high vantage point with views across the entire woodland and ideal for spotting incoming birds of prey from all directions. The best time is late afternoon because birds that took off from mainland Europe in the morning will reach Malta by the afternoon. Stop and watch the sun set over Dingli Cliffs from this spot, and you may be rewarded with a flock of Night-herons emerging from their slumber in the trees below and taking off to continue their journey to Africa.

As you leave the area and return under the trees to walk back to the car park, make sure to reflect on your journey. What you have seen will hopefully increase your appreciation of the beautiful plants and animals that call this area home and how important it is to provide these natural spaces for wildlife.

WORDS **Francesca Aaskov** and **Alvin Farrugia**



Western Marsh-harrier



Ground Thistle



Ivy in flower





► **24 July 2021.** Our education team held a family fun day at Salina Nature Reserve. Families joined us from 10am–2pm for a day of fun-filled activities and games. We had crafts, nature-themed board games, educational areas and an exciting scavenger hunt that everyone really enjoyed. All who completed the scavenger hunt got a certificate for their efforts.

Abbie Ferrar



► **28 July 2021.** A team from BirdLife Malta joined a beach clean-up at Armier Bay organised by the Saving Our Blue project, a campaign run by the Environment Ministry. We spent the morning scouring the sunny beach for litter, and there was plenty to collect. Using rakes, sieves and manpower we cleaned the beach of rubbish and separated the litter into four categories: cigarette butts, general waste, recyclable plastics and micro-plastics.

Giada Lampitelli



► **19 August 2021.** In preparation for the upcoming autumn hunting season we hosted a Raptor Camp training event at Salina Nature Reserve. Throughout the day, volunteers learnt how to monitor bird migration and hunting activity. We learnt how to record and collect data and the importance of monitoring the countryside during the autumn migration to ensure illegal hunting activities are reported.

Ben Metzger



► **6–7 August 2021.** To celebrate the launch of our LIFE PanPuffinus! project, we hosted BirdLife Malta members to two sunset boat trips to watch Scopoli's Shearwaters gathering in large groups near Ta' Ċenċ cliffs in Gozo (more info on back page).

Giada Lampitelli



► **20 August 2021.** Simar hosted an ecotherapy session for the Betapsi group from the University of Malta. We all got involved in some rewarding reserve management work. This was followed by some quiet reflective time as we used nature to inspire our creative minds and, using paints and nature items, we created some artworks. The students enjoyed reconnecting with nature and we all had a lovely peaceful morning in the beautiful Simar Nature Reserve.





➤ **29 August 2021.** A delightful picnic was organised at Simar Nature Reserve. Several groups and families attended and enjoyed being immersed in nature and got involved in some nature crafts, birdwatching and much more. The perfect way to spend a summer's evening.



➤ **29 August 2021.** BirdLife Malta's Blooming Minds team took part in another inspiring Walk & Talk in collaboration with Vincent's Eco Farm. We had a guided tour of the eco farm, followed by refreshments and a chance to talk openly about mental health in a safe natural setting. A hugely rewarding event.



➤ **31 August 2021.** BirdLife Malta's Events and Activities Committee organised a highly informative Zoom presentation about autumn raptor migration over the Maltese Islands, with a focus on how to identify birds of prey. This exclusive members event was led by BirdLife Malta's National Raptor Coordinator Edward Bonavia. All participants learnt a lot from our expert host.



➤ **6–10 September 2021.** Salina Nature Reserve invited families to take part in the historical process of salt production in our 16th century salt pans. People of all ages enjoyed getting involved in the revival of salt production at Salina. Participants took home a bag of freshly-harvested salt as a souvenir.

## Upcoming Events

12.09.2021

A Walk & Talk event around the delightful Simar Nature Reserve. Join our Blooming Minds team for another cathartic and rewarding walk in nature with a strong community of support.

24-25.09.2021

We're happy to have been invited to take part in another edition of Malta's science and arts festival. The theme for 2021 is 'Sowing Seeds' and this year we'll be collaborating with Science in the City and Kids Dig Science. Sean Briffa Animation will showcase the life and struggles of the Yelkouan Shearwaters in a creative and explosive live puppeteering performance.

30.09.2021

For World European Turtle-dove Day, we have asked the general public to send in their Turtle-dove artworks alongside a message as to why they think Turtle-doves deserve to be better protected. The artworks will be exhibited at Salina Nature Reserve.

02-03.10.2021

We are linking EuroBirdwatch21 with World European Turtle-dove Day by exhibiting all of our submitted Turtle-dove artworks on the weekend of Eurobirdwatch21 at our nature reserves. We will also host a birdwatching event at Buskett.

10.10.2021

BirdLife Malta's Blooming Minds team will take part in another rewarding Walk & Talk at the beautiful San Anton Gardens. Join us for a mindful stroll amongst nature.

06.11.2021

Salina Nature Reserve is hosting a tree-planting day with the aim to plant 100 trees in one day. Follow our events webpage and social media for more information.

07.11.2021

Our Blooming Minds team joins Walk & Talk for another stroll, this time it will be in one of BirdLife Malta's picturesque nature reserves, Foresta 2000. Come along for a good chat and to be immersed in a peaceful natural environment.

### WANT TO JOIN AN EVENT?

More details:  
<http://bit.ly/joinanevent>  
Email:  
[events@birdlifemalta.org](mailto:events@birdlifemalta.org)  
Call:  
+356 2134 7646

### WANT TO HELP US CONTINUE OUR WORK?

Join: <http://bit.ly/joinBLM>  
Donate: <http://bit.ly/donate-to-birdlifemalta>  
Support: <http://bit.ly/Becomeasupporter>  
Volunteer: <http://bit.ly/volunteerwithBLM>



# Spectacle at sunset

Following last year's disappointing pandemic cancellations, our members were this year thrilled to experience once again our sunset shearwater boat trips. This year we only organised two trips to make sure we could safely run the trips at half capacity. These were held in early August and this year we offered them free of charge to our members to celebrate the launch of our new LIFE PanPuffinus! seabird project. Both trips were fully-booked and those who attended truly enjoyed watching the spectacular congregations of Scopoli's Shearwaters as they rafted at the surface and waited for darkness before returning to their nests in Ta' Ċenċ cliffs.

Alexandr Krushlinsky



Aron Tanti