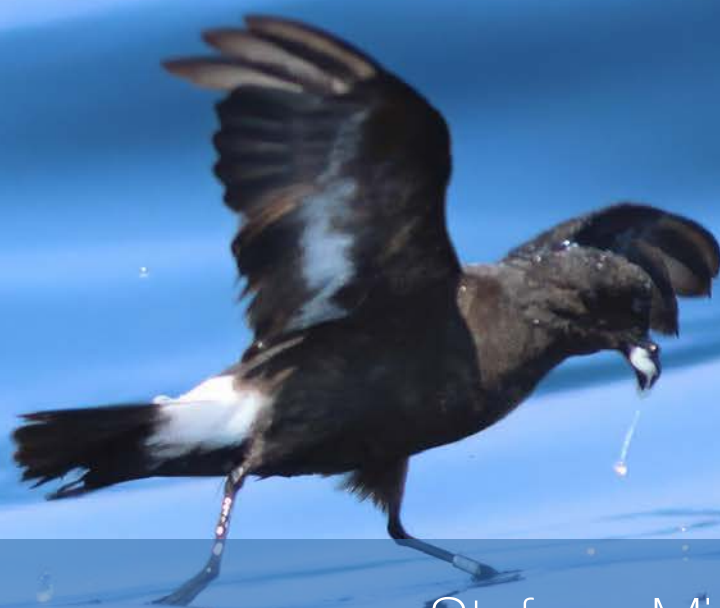


Malta

Bird Report

2023



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BirdLife Malta was set up in 1962 as the Malta Ornithological Society, with the conservation of wild birds, their habitat and biodiversity as its mission. BirdLife Malta reaches these aims mainly through environmental advocacy, education, habitat restoration, nature reserve management, and research and publication. Foremost among its study subjects are Malta's breeding seabirds, an ongoing research spanning several decades. Since 1965 BirdLife Malta has also run the Valletta Bird-ringing Scheme (a member of EURING), currently with around 25 active licenced ringers. BirdLife Malta publishes papers, reports and other ornithology-related material in its scientific journal *Il-Merill*, complemented by the annual *Malta Bird Report*.

Malta Bird Report 2023

Number 3

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Stefano Miceli (editor), Edward Bonavia, Victor Falzon, Nicholas Galea, Raymond Galea



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Cover European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus melitensis*
(photo Raymond Galea)

The Mediterranean subspecies of the European Storm-petrel is the only bird with Malta (*melitensis*) in its scientific name. Its breeding population is estimated at between 11,000 and 16,000 pairs, with the largest colony on Filfla. In 1843 ornithologist Antonio Schembri believed it was a separate species and named it *Thalassidroma melitensis*.

Great White Egret

Foreword

It is customary for rarities committees around the world to choose a rare bird to represent them. With this edition of the *Malta Bird Report*, we proudly launch the Malta Rarities and Records Committee's (MRRC) new logo, featuring an adult White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* (Kuda Rasha Bajda), beautifully designed by Victor Falzon.



is steadily becoming a very useful resource for junior and visiting birders to get acquainted with the local birding scene and learn when and where to look for different species of birds.

From this issue, the *Malta Bird Report* will also be including the BirdLife Malta

Ringling Scheme's Ringling Report. Incorporating the ringling report with the systematic list in one publication makes MBR a more complete publication about the birds observed in the Maltese Islands. This can only be possible thanks to birders and bird-ringers submitting their data in time. The MBR team is determined to sustain this effort for years to come, aiming to improve and increase the content with every issue.

Special thanks go to Stefano Miceli for writing the systematic list and compiling the *Report*, Nicholas Galea for producing the Ringling Report and Victor Falzon for the design and production of the publication. Thanks go also to all MRRC members for their support, in particular the secretary Edward Bonavia who curates sightings submitted daily in MBS.

Raymond Galea

Chairman

Malta Rarities and Records Committee (MRRC)

October 2024

We hope the new logo encourages more local and visiting birders to keep birding records and submit them to BirdLife Malta, either through the MRRC or directly into our Malta Bird Sightings (MBS) portal. This data enables studies and publications, and further conservation work. Such records naturally also feed into the annual *Malta Bird Report* which

Malta Bird Reports are now also online at <https://birdlifemalta.org/information/publications/malta-bird-report/>

Stefano Miceli

Where to watch birds in Malta

This feature gives a very general overview of where to find birds in Malta. It is recommended that this be read in conjunction with the birding calendar summary featured in the previous issue of *Malta Bird Report*

Anywhere

There is no straightforward answer to the question “Where should I go to watch birds in Malta?”. In practice, birds can turn up anywhere, particularly during migration. This may include the unlikeliest of sites and the smallest of habitat pockets. A few testaments to this from my personal experience include a Black-necked Grebe in a large rainwater puddle in an unsurfaced car park, and a Common Sandpiper on the wall of my neighbour's garden in one of Malta's most densely populated urban areas, far from any water bodies. In addition, it goes without saying that actively migrating birds may be seen (or heard) from anywhere. This could also include water birds migrating overland. For example, flocks of migrating herons can be encountered anywhere, while birds such as Garganey, Whimbrel, and Eurasian Curlew are known to migrate over the centre of Malta during the night.

Fixed-point birding

When deciding where to watch birds in Malta, specifically during migration periods, a decision should be made whether to observe from a fixed point or whether to move around. Fixed-point birding is mostly suited to observing active migration. This can be some of the most exciting and productive birding in Malta. The best places to watch active migration of ducks, large waders, Glossy Ibis and other species in early spring are at any of the sites overlooking the Kemmuna Channel bottleneck,

such as Ċirkewwa, Qammieħ, Xatt l-Aħmar, and Kemmuna itself. Otherwise, the best way of witnessing good visible migration in spring, particularly on days with moderate and strong winds, is to find a vantage point on the coast facing in the opposite direction of the prevailing wind. Therefore the best places during north-westerlies are sites facing south-east, such as Delimara and Marsaskala, the best places during easterlies are sites facing west, such as Dwejra (G) and Ċirkewwa, and the best places during north-easterlies – which generally tend to be the most productive – are sites facing south-west, such as Ġħajn Tuffieħa and Ta' Ċenċ. On good days, such a strategy should produce good numbers of harriers, falcons, herons, passerines and other migrants. On days with light winds, one could also opt for vantage points on site with high ground, such as Dwejra (M) to observe migration of raptors and other diurnal migrants. In autumn, active migration is usually observed from the north-eastern coast in the mornings, with good sites including Qawra and Qbajjar, and from the high ground in the Dingli-Siġġiewi (mainly Buskett) and Dwejra (M) areas in the afternoon. The former can produce Greater Flamingo, herons, terns and any migrants coming in off the sea, including raptors, while the latter is mainly targeted towards raptors and other soaring birds, which often roost overnight particularly in the Buskett and Ġirgenti area. In late autumn and winter, seawatching from any low-lying coast can be productive under the right conditions, namely strong north-westerlies and north-easterlies, for ducks, Northern Gannet, gulls and other winter sea birds, with popular sites including Żonqor and Tas-Safra.

A complex mosaic

Besides active migration, witnessing settled migrants resting and feeding would generally require visiting areas of suitable habitat. Due to Malta's small size and intensive human activity,

much of the landscape is a complex mosaic of different habitat types in small areas. Therefore, a few hours of walking can take a birder through several habitats.

Farmland

The vast majority of Malta's land area is arable agricultural land. However such land is also often interspersed with pockets of natural vegetation, such as field verges with carob and fig trees. Arable land is the closest thing to grasslands in Malta. They are therefore usually favoured by birds of open country, such as harriers, Lesser Kestrel and Red-footed Falcon in spring, and Meadow Pipit, Eurasian Skylark and Common Stonechat in autumn and winter. Breeding birds mainly associated with such habitats are Greater Short-toed Lark and Zitting Cisticola, while Tree Sparrow prefers cavities in rural structures. Some of the most productive open agricultural areas in Malta include Ta' Gianpula and Tal-Qadi, while Luqa Airport also attracts the same species, with the added benefit of being a protected bird sanctuary.

Garrigue and steppe

The open garrigue and steppe areas of Malta and Gozo attract many of the same birds as agricultural areas as well as several others. Such habitats vary in terms of vegetation composition and structure, with some being more bare, and others having a high coverage of large shrubs. These areas can be some of the most productive in both spring and autumn. Typical spring birds include Common Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike, Whinchat and Isabelline, Northern and Black-eared Wheatears. Typical autumn and winter birds include Short-eared Owl, Common Linnet and Corn Bunting. Spectacled Warbler breeds almost exclusively in garrigue areas, while Blue Rock-thrush prefers cliffs. Some of the more productive garrigue and steppe areas include Xrobb l-Għaġin, Tal-Hamrija, Majjistral Park, Qammieħ, Pembroke, Ta' Ċenċ, Dwejra (G) and most of the island of Kemmuna.

Woodland

Areas with significant tree cover are limited in Malta. Furthermore, most are artificial, comprising private or public gardens or other landscaped areas such as roadsides, as well as agricultural land with permanent crops such as olive and fruit trees. The semi-natural woodland at Buskett is by far the most productive wooded area in Malta, likely a combination of its relatively large size, mature vegetation and protected status. Buskett, together with the adjacent Ġirgenti valley, attract the largest numbers of roosting birds of prey in autumn, and is the best site for several wintering species, such as Eurasian Blackbird, Goldcrest, Common Firecrest, Dunnock and finches. Other sites with decent tree cover include Ta' Qali, Foresta 2000 and Miżieb, as well as vegetated valleys and other sheltered



Garrigue expanses at sites like Marfa Ridge are excellent for birds of open country.



The mixed semi-natural woodland at Buskett.

areas, and public gardens. That said, even the smallest gardens and tree stands can attract good numbers of birds if they provide feeding opportunities. Areas with trees attract several species during migration, including European Nightjar, Common Cuckoo, European Bee-eater, Eurasian Wryneck, Eurasian Hobby, Eurasian Golden Oriole, and various warblers, flycatchers and finches. Spotted Flycatcher breeds exclusively in such habitats, with a marked preference for conifers.

Wetlands

Wetlands are few and far between, and are very small in size. Indeed the number of waders and ducks that actually settle to feed and rest in Malta is minimal. The largest coastal wetlands are Ghadira, Salina and Simar nature reserves. The habitat varies between these, with Ghadira and Salina being more open and Simar being more densely vegetated, thus attracting



Freshwater streams and pools such as at Wied Ghajn Rihana provide refuge and breeding site for aquatic species.

different species. During migration, these sites can attract herons, terns, waders and various passerines. In late autumn and winter Common Kingfisher, grebes and various gulls can be seen, the latter particularly at Salina where hundreds of gulls congregate regularly. Many of these are also seen in bays and harbours, with Marsaxlokk usually being the most productive. Minor coastal wetlands include Il-Ballut ta' Marsaxlokk, which has held some good birds despite its small size.

Freshwater water bodies are mainly limited to temporary ponds formed by dams in valley systems. Some valleys hold water longer than others, with some of the most permanent including Wied Ghajn Rihana, Chadwick Lakes and Ramla Valley. Such valleys often host crakes, rails and snipes, and are often also productive for passerines, particularly those associated with wetlands, such as Sedge Warbler and Great Reed-warbler. Breeding birds associated with wetlands include Common Moorhen and Common Reed-warbler. It is also worth noting that the number of artificial freshwater ponds is increasing rapidly across the islands. However, considering these are mainly constructed on private land for hunting, they are of limited birding interest. A few wader species, such as Ruddy Turnstone and Eurasian Oystercatcher, occur almost exclusively on low-lying rocky coasts, with some of the most productive sites including Tas-Safra and Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala).

Urban

Much of the islands is heavily built up but gardens and landscaped areas can nevertheless attract several species during migration, and decent green areas can be found within a reasonable distance of most sites. Breeding birds of urban settings are mostly common species such as Eurasian Collared-

dove, Sardinian Warbler and Spanish Sparrow. Common and Pallid Swifts also breed in certain urban areas, which are also frequented by Black Redstart, White Wagtail and other wintering birds in the winter months.

Hunting issue

One important issue to consider when deciding where to go birding in Malta is hunting. During open hunting seasons (usually a few weeks in April and from September to January), most of the countryside, including public land, is occupied by hunters in very high densities, particularly in the mornings. This may make birding uncomfortable and difficult, and confrontations are always a possibility. In addition, hunting activity is likely to reduce the potential

for good sightings, since birds are continuously flushed by gunshots and hunting dogs, if not killed. Some areas, such as Mizieb and L-Ahrax, are more densely occupied than others. To observe settled migrants during open hunting seasons, especially in the mornings, it may therefore be more opportune to focus birding efforts on protected bird sanctuaries (where hunting is prohibited) such as the nature reserves and Buskett.

The same word of caution applies also to trapping, which is carried out mainly in autumn. Although trapping is mainly practised on private land, the close proximity of trapping sites to public areas and pathways may render birding uncomfortable.

In short...

To conclude, when deciding where to go birding in Malta, one should give consideration to the season and the weather. During migration, where to go depends on whether one wishes to observe active migration from a fixed position, or whether to watch birds resting and feeding in their preferred habitat. In the case of the latter, the small size of Malta offers the opportunity to visit several different habitats within a short timeframe. Nevertheless, during migration the mindset should be to take nothing for granted and be ready for the unexpected. Consideration should be given to the hunting situation to avoid disappointing and disheartening experiences. Birding opportunities are more limited outside migration periods, but visits to the right areas can still be productive and enjoyable.

Birding summary for 2023

In total, 239 bird species (and one hybrid) were recorded in the Maltese Islands in 2023 (which were verified by the MRRC). This can be considered as a slightly above average year in terms of total species richness.

The year started with an unexpected surprise when the first Bonaparte's Gull for Malta turned up at Salina Nature Reserve on 3 January. This species joins only a handful of Nearctic species on Malta's bird list. The bird, a first-winter, gave ample opportunities to be seen by many, being observed regularly at the reserve until 28 February. Although a Nearctic gull species was overdue to turn up in Malta, this particular species was not among the expected frontrunners. The first months of the year were also good for Black-legged Kittiwakes, with multiple sightings recorded from several sites.

Spring migration of ducks and waders in the Kemmuna channel was good, with generally good numbers of Garganey, Northern Shoveler, Whimbrel and other species. An exceptional day was 28 March, when 2084 Garganeys were counted in the channel, alongside 10 Northern Shovelers, 6 Eurasian Curlews, 162 Whimbrels and 37 Black-tailed Godwits. An Arctic Jaeger was the species highlight from the channel, being observed on three consecutive days in March.

An exceptional occurrence in late March was a flock of 46 White Storks in the afternoon of 30 March, most of which (even more surprisingly) managed to leave the island safely the following day. Spring migration of passerines persisted atypically well into May, possibly due to the unstable weather continuing until late May. 503 birds were ringed on 20 April across all sites, over half of which were Common Whitethroats. Notable rarities were lacking in spring, with some compensation being the fourth Iberian Chiffchaff for Malta, present at Buskett for a few weeks, enriching the valley with its diagnostic song. A stunning male Moussier's Redstart was also reported in early spring, while one lucky photographer also spotted a Trumpeter Finch.

No particularly exceptional breeding records were noted in spring and summer, despite extensive efforts as part of breeding bird surveys carried out for reporting obligations of the EU Birds Directive. The most notable occurrence was the breeding of multiple pairs of Northern House Martin at Hal Far. It later transpired that this species also bred at this site in previous years. Another notable occurrence was the breeding of Common Reed-warbler at Salina Nature Reserve after several years without breeding at this site, thanks to habitat restoration efforts by BirdLife Malta. In addition, a few pairs of Common Kestrels bred in both Malta and Gozo.

Early autumn brought an atypical influx of trans-Saharan migrants which are usually rare or scarce in autumn. This included unusually high numbers of Icterine Warblers and Common Whitethroats, a very rare Marsh Warbler, 2 Barred Warblers and the first confirmed autumn record of Olivaceous Warbler. Early autumn was also good for Greater Flamingos, with multiple records of large flocks on several days, as well as good numbers of Ruddy Turnstone, after a few consecutive poor years for this species.

Autumn raptor migration was decent, with good migration of commoner species and all regular scarce species making an appearance. 18 September was an exceptional day, with over 800 raptors counted from the main watchpoint at Buskett, comprising 609 Western Marsh-harriers, 189 European Honey-buzzard, 9 Ospreys, 6 Montagu's Harriers and 3 Black Kites. A juvenile Levant Sparrowhawk turned up on 3 October, a species that seems to be getting more regular in recent years. A Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, more typically associated with spring, was also spotted by a handful of lucky photographers on 12 September.

Continuing the trend of recent years, hot weather persisted well into autumn. Autumn migration of short-distance migrants was notable for good numbers of finches, particularly Eurasian Siskins, and good numbers of Ring Ouzels. Other species were conspicuously rare, including Red-Breasted Flycatchers and Firecrests. On 19 November, 555 birds were ringed across all sites, over half of which were Common Chiffchaffs. A Dusky Warbler on 16 November was the only notable rarity from the far east recorded.

Later in autumn, a Mute Swan turned up in Gozo on 22 November, but sadly died two days later. Seawatching from Qawra was productive, producing an exceptional record of a Common Scoter on 14 November and high numbers of Great Crested Grebes. Furthermore, seawatching from Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) produced two exceptional rarities in winter: a Razorbill on 25 November, marking the third consecutive winter when this species was recorded; and the fourth Sooty Shearwater for Malta on 9 December. An atypical but very welcome occurrence was the long-staying of a number of scarce birds at BirdLife Malta's nature reserves in late autumn and winter, which included a Gadwall at Simar Nature Reserve, and a Pied Avocet and a Greater Flamingo at Salina Nature Reserve. Furthermore, winter was exceptional for Dartford Warblers, with multiple birds recorded at different sites, recalling historical years when this species was far more regular.

Stefano Miceli

Bird systematic list for 2023

This systematic list follows the scientific and vernacular nomenclature used in the official MRRC Malta Bird Checklist (February 2024), which follows the HBW-BirdLife International Taxonomic Checklist.

References to seasons mainly refer to the migration periods of birds, which broadly correspond to meteorological rather than astronomical seasons. These vary according to the phenology and wintering areas of different taxa, e.g. for many waders autumn migration typically starts at the end of June i.e. in summer.

Records marked with an asterisk (*) refer to records made through 'nocmigging' (i.e. sound-recording of nocturnal migration). These records do not necessarily refer to the number of individuals but rather to distinct occurrences of the species in a single night.

High counts of common and frequent species should generally be considered as minimum estimates. Moreover,

these refer to high counts during individual birding sessions, rather than across all sessions on that date. It should be noted that the duration of birding sessions varies from a few minutes to whole days. Therefore it may be the case that counts are a function of session duration, rather than abundance of the species.

Where relevant, the species accounts include information on the total number of new birds ringed and the main site of ringing to give an indication of abundance and preferred habitat. This information is not provided for species in which all ringed birds were confiscated and/or rehabilitated. Instances where confiscated and/or rehabilitated were excluded from the total are marked with a dagger(†). For the species of which over 200 were ringed, the date with the highest number of birds ringed is given to give an indication of peak abundance. Further information is provided in the Ringing Report in this issue.

Common Quail (Summiena) *Coturnix coturnix*

1 at Mtaħleb on 29 Jan. Then in spring, sightings on 19 dates from 05 Mar to 07 Jun, always of singles except for 2 at Birzebbuga on 19 Mar. In autumn, sightings on 11 dates from 02 Sep to 18 Nov, always of singles. As usual this cryptic species was highly under-recorded by birders.

2 ringed† in Mar and Oct at Mtaħleb and Kemmuna respectively.

Chukar (Ċukar) *Alectoris chukar*

Introduced and established species (i.e. Category C) present on Kemmuna throughout year. Maintained breeding population as usual and regularly reported in double figures of up to 40.

1 ringed on 26 Apr at Kemmuna.

Mute Swan (Ċinju) *Cygnus olor*

1 at Mġarr ix-Xini on 22 Nov and same bird at Mġarr Harbour on 23–24 Nov (Fig. 1). Bird was weak and died on 24 Nov.

Common Scoter (Brajmla Sewda) *Melanitta nigra*

1 imm. ♂ at Qawra on 14 Nov. The 10th confirmed record for Malta (previous record in Nov 2005).

Red-breasted Merganser (Serra) *Mergus serrator*

1 at Salina NR on 18 Nov, 4 at Qawra on 20 Nov, and singles at Tas-Safra on 25 Nov, at Valletta and at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 26 Nov, at Rinella Bay on 05–06 Dec and at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 22 Dec.

Raymond Galea



Fig. 1. This Mute Swan at Mġarr Harbour on 24 Nov first turned up at Mġarr ix-Xini on 22 Nov.

Common Shelduck (Kuluvert tas-Salib) *Tadorna tadorna*

Settled birds incl. 1 at Ghadira NR from 01–03 Jan, 3 at Salina NR on 04 Jan, 2 at Salina NR on 06 Jan, 1 at Ghadira NR from 07–14 Jan, 1 at Salina NR on 14 Mar and 1 at Ghadira NR from 24–28 May. Migrating birds in spring included 30 on 12 Mar, 4 on 15 Mar, 10 on 24 Mar and 21 on 05 Apr, all at Ċirkewwa. Then in autumn/winter, most sightings at Salina NR with 1 on 31 Oct, 3 on 30 Nov, 1 from 01–07 Dec, 1 on 12 Dec and 2 from 13–26 Dec. Otherwise, 13 at Ghadira NR and 20 at Qawra on 14 Nov, 1 at Qawra on 01 Dec, 17 at Tas-Safra on 07 Dec, 13 at Qawra, 111 at Qbajjar, 13 at Valletta and 11 at Xrobb l-Għaġin on 10 Dec, 2 at Qawra on 11 Dec, and 15 at Tigné on 12 Dec.

Common Pochard (Brajmla) *Aythya ferina*

Singles at Ghadira NR on 11–12 Mar and on 04 Sep, and at Salina NR on 18 Nov.

Ferruginous Duck (Brajmla Ħamra) *Aythya nyroca*

12 on 04 Mar, 10 on 05 Mar, 16 on 06 Mar, 15 on 08 Mar and 6 on 20 Mar, all at Kemmuna Channel. Then singles at Ghadira NR on 03 May and at Simar NR from 07–20 May. In autumn, 2 at Qawra on 02 Sep, 1 at Salina NR on 07 Sep, 22 at Valletta on 29 Oct and 10 at Tas-Safra on 01 Nov.

Garganey (Sarsella Ħamra) *Spatula querquedula*

In spring, sightings almost daily from 04 Mar to 05 Apr at Kemmuna Channel, with triple figure counts on 6 dates and an exceptional max. of 2084 on 28 Mar (Fig. 2). In autumn, sightings on 11 dates from 06 Aug to 08 Oct, always in low single figures, but 17 on 25 Aug and 14 on 05 Sep, both at Qawra.

Northern Shoveler (Palettuna) *Spatula clypeata*

In spring, singles at Salina NR from 02–07 Mar, then in single to low double figures on 5 dates from 05–29 Mar, with max. 69 on first date, all at Kemmuna Channel. 1♀ at Ghadira NR on 23 Jun. In autumn, 2 on 21 Aug and 1 on 28 Aug, both at Salina NR; then in single figures regularly from 10 Sep till end of year mostly at Salina NR and Simar NR (with only 3 sightings from Ghadira NR), with max. 6 at Salina NR on 27 Sep. Outside the reserves, single to low double figures on 6 dates from 18 Nov till 08 Dec, with max. 25 at Qawra on 28 Nov.

Gadwall (Kuluvert Griż) *Mareca strepera*

5 at Kemmuna Channel on 05 Mar, 1♂ at Simar NR on 01 Oct, 16 at Tas-Safra on 29 Nov and 1♀ at Simar NR from 10–31 Dec (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. 28 Mar was an exceptional day of Garganey migration in the Kemmuna Channel, with a total of 2084 counted.



Fig. 3. This ♀ Gadwall spent most of Dec at Simar NR.

Eurasian Wigeon (Silfjun Ewropew) *Mareca penelope*

39 at Kemmuna Channel on 27 Mar, 1 at Ghadira NR on 14–15 Apr, 6 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 18 Nov and 5 at Tas-Safra on 19 Nov.

Northern Pintail (Silfjun) *Anas acuta*

In spring, sightings almost daily at Kemmuna Channel from 01–07 Mar with regular triple figure counts, incl. 223 on 04 Mar, 115 on 05 Mar and 193 on 06 Mar, followed by 4 on 21 Mar and 16 on 05 Apr. In autumn, regular sightings on 16 dates from 25 Sep to 09 Dec, incl. 27 at Valletta on 30 Sep, 20 at Salina NR on 31 Oct, 28 at Tas-Safra on 09 Nov, 18 at Tas-Safra on 17 Nov, and 11 at Valletta on 26 Nov, followed by 4 at Tas-Safra on 22 Dec.

Common Teal (Sarsella) *Anas crecca*

1 at Simar NR from 17–23 Feb, 2 at Ghadira NR on 26 Feb, 2 at Kemmuna Channel on 05 Mar, and 2 at Ghadira NR on 28–29 Mar. Then 2 at Tas-Safra on 06 Aug, 6 on 07 Sep, 4 on 17 Sep, 6 on 14 Nov and 1 on 19 Dec at Ghadira NR; 1–3 on 7 dates from 12 Sep to 12 Oct, and singles on 11 Nov, 17 Nov and 31 Dec at Simar NR. 1 at Tas-Safra on 10 Dec.

Little Grebe (Blongun Żgħir) *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

At Ghadira NR, singles from 01 Jan to 22 Feb and 1 from 04 Oct to 31 Dec, but 2 on 01 Nov. At Simar NR, 1–2 from 03 Jan to 20 Feb and 1–2 on several dates from 27 Oct to 31 Dec.

Great Crested Grebe (Blongun Prim) *Podiceps cristatus*

3 at Kemmuna Channel on 15 Mar, 1 at Salina NR from 25–27 Oct, 1 at Valletta on 29 Oct, 3 at Valletta on 04 Nov, 46 at Qawra on 14 Nov, 23 at Qawra on 20 Nov, 1 at Salina NR from 22–24 Nov, 1 at Marsaxlokk on 26 Nov, 1 at Salina NR from 29 Nov to 05 Dec and on 15 Dec, and 1 at Mistra on 16 Dec.

Black-necked Grebe (Blongun Sekond)

Podiceps nigricollis

Singles at Mġarr ix-Xini on 06 Nov and at Marsaxlokk on 26 Nov, then up to 3 present almost daily at Salina from 28 Nov till 29 Dec. 2 at Xemxija on 06 Dec, singles at Valletta on 12 Dec, at Xrobb l-Għaġin on 13 Dec, at Simar NR from 15–31 Dec, and at Il-Magħluq ta' Marsaskala from 16–25 Dec.

Greater Flamingo (Fjamingu)

Phoenicopterus roseus

Singles at Ghadira NR from 01 Jan until 09 Mar, and at Salina NR on 17–18 Mar. Then in autumn, 16 at Tas-Safra on 26 Jul, 110 at Qbajjar on 15 Aug, 12 at Marsaskala on 17 Aug, 23 at Wied Żnuber on 18 Aug, 25 at Qawra on 19 Aug, 1 at Salina NR from 22–24 Aug, 25 at Ghadira

NR on 24 Aug, 15 at Tal-Qroqq on 25 Aug, 1 at Salina NR on 28 Aug, 31 at Qawra on 29 Aug, 2 at Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq on 31 Aug, 67 at Qawra on 01 Sep, 19 at Qawra on 02 Sep, 47 at Qawra on 03 Sep, 1 at Qawra on 04 Sep, 1 at Buskett on 12 Sep, 1 at Qawra and 18 at Filfla on 13 Sep, 1 at Ghadira NR on 23 Sep, 2 at Qawra on 26 Sep, 1 at Salina NR on 09 Oct, 65 at Żebbuġ (G) on 10 Oct, 17 at Kemmuna on 13 Oct, 1 at Salina NR from 22 Oct to 22 Nov (Fig. 4), 14 at Tas-Safra on 26 Oct, 1 at Qawra on 11 Nov and 4 at Tas-Safra on 24 Dec.

Stock Dove (Tudun tas-Siġar) *Columba oenas*

Singles at Buskett on 18 Oct and at Kemmuna on 26 Oct.

Common Woodpigeon (Tudun) *Columba palumbus*

Singles at Buskett on 24 Mar, at Kemmuna on 29 Mar and 07 Apr, at Ghadira NR and Mistra on 11 Jun, at Buskett from 13–20 Jun, at Kemmuna on 10 Oct and at Buskett on 16 Nov.

European Turtle-dove (Gamiema) *Streptopelia turtur*

In spring, sporadic sightings from 23 Mar to 05 Apr, then daily from 09 Apr to 07 May, then almost daily from 10 May to 11 Jun, and late sightings on 23 and 26 Jun. Spring counts all in single figures, but 20 at Kemmuna and 12 at Salina NR on 20 Apr. 1–3 at Marfa from 27–29 Jul involved breeding pair and 1 juv. In autumn, first sighting at Mtahleb on 24 Aug, then daily from 30 Aug to 26 Sep, followed by singles on 4 dates from 30 Sep to 23 Oct. Autumn counts mostly in single figures, with max. 30 at Buskett on 09 Sep.

16 ringed† (15 in spring, 1 in autumn), most (12) at Kemmuna.

Eurasian Collared-dove (Gamiema tal-Kullar) *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and widespread resident breeder, mainly at species strongholds such as Ghadira NR and Foresta 2000 area, Mellieħa, Mosta, San Anton Gardens, Ta' Qali, Wied Għolliet, and

Santa Venera, Addolorata, Rabat and Sannat, with counts of up to 200.

11 ringed† from May to Oct, all at Ghadira NR.

European Nightjar (Buqrajq) *Caprimulgus europaeus*

In spring, first sighting at Buskett on 02 Apr, then practically daily from 07 Apr to 18 May, and late birds on 30 May, 03 Jun and 07 Jun. Spring counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Kemmuna on 20 and 25 Apr. 2 singing ♂♂ present at Kemmuna on various dates from Jun to Aug for the second consecutive summer, but breeding not confirmed. In autumn, early sighting on 25 Aug at Tas-Silġ, then almost daily from 09 Sep to 28 Sep and from 04 Oct to 12 Oct, then less regularly till 24 Oct. Autumn counts all in single figures but 14 at Buskett on 04 Oct.

68 ringed (34 in spring, 34 in autumn), most (39) at Buskett.

Alpine Swift (Rundun Żaqqu Bajda) *Tachymarptis melba*

In spring, sightings on most dates from 15 Mar to 23 Apr, then on 13 dates from 10 May to 22 Jun. Spring counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Xagħra on 17 Mar and at Dwejra (M) on 23 Apr. In summer, sightings on 5 dates from 07 Jul to 19 Aug, always singles, but 2 at Wied Ghajn Riħana on first date. In autumn, sightings on most dates from 04 Sep to 10 Oct, followed by 6 on 01 Nov and 3 on 06 Nov, both at Buskett. Autumn counts regularly in double figures, with max. 34 on 15 Sep and 22 on 16 Sep at Buskett.

Pallid Swift (Rundun Kannelli) *Apus pallidus*

Regular sightings from 12 Mar to 21 Oct, followed by 1 late sighting at Buskett on 06 Nov. Counts mostly in single and low double figures, with max. 25 at Xagħra on 07 Apr and 50 at Kemmuna on 03 May. This species is likely under-recorded due to difficulty of distinguishing from Common Swift. Breeding recorded as usual at sites such as Mater Dei Hospital and Santa Venera, as well as sea caves in Gozo.

2 ringed† in Jul at Wied il-Għasel.

Common Swift (Rundun) *Apus apus*

First sightings on 07 and 08 Mar, then practically daily from 11 Mar to 15 Oct, followed by late sightings of singles on 02 and 06 Nov at Buskett, and at Luqa Airport on 23 Nov. Regular counts in double and triple figures, with max. 300 at Luqa Airport on 11 Apr, 300 at Dwejra (M) on 04 May, and 469 at Sannat on 05 May. Breeding birds present throughout summer at usual breeding sites, including Mdina, Mellieħa and Sliema.

69 ringed† from May–Jul, most (65) at Wied il-Għasel.

Great Spotted Cuckoo (Daquqa Prima) *Clamator glandarius*

1 at Birkirkara on 08 Mar*.

Common Cuckoo (Daquqa Kaħla) *Cuculus canorus*

In spring, sightings on most dates from 05 Apr to 10 May, followed by 1 relatively late sighting at Buskett on 31 May. All spring counts of 1–2, but 3 at Kemmuna on 26 Apr. In autumn,



Fig. 4. 2023 was a good year for Greater Flamingos. This juvenile spent an entire month at Salina NR (22 Oct to 22 Nov).

singles on 4 dates from 09–27 Sep.

7 ringed, all in spring at Kemmuna.

Western Water Rail (Gallozz tax-Xitwa)

Rallus aquaticus

Up to 3 at Ghadira NR and Simar NR on most dates from 01 Jan to 23 Mar and up to 4 almost daily from 14 Aug till end of year. Sightings on 20 dates at Salina NR from 10 Sep to 01 Dec, always of singles, but 2 on 19 Oct and 22 Nov. Outside reserves, singles at Wied Ghajn Rihana on 18 Feb, 06 Apr and 08 Sep, singles at Kemmuna on 02 Nov and 12 Dec, and 2 at Rabat on 02 Dec.

3 ringed from Oct to Nov, most (2) at Salina NR.

Corncrake (Gallozz Ahmar) *Crex crex*

1 found dead at Mosta on 12 Oct.

Spotted Crake (Gallozz tat-Tikek) *Porzana porzana*

In spring, sightings on 7 dates from 18 Mar to 09 Apr, always of singles, but 3 on 07 Apr. All spring sightings at Wied Ghajn Rihana except for 1 at Ghadira NR on 19 Mar. In autumn, singles at Simar NR from 18–20 Sep, on 27 Sep and 07 Oct, and at Salina NR on 21 and 28 Sep, on 01 and 13 Oct and on 02 Nov.

Little Crake (Gallozz Żgħir) *Zapornia parva*

In spring, singles at Girgenti on 18 and 24 Mar, at Wied Ghajn Rihana on 18 Mar, from 06–08 Apr and on 5 dates from 05–19 May; 2 at Simar NR on 15 May then 1 until 19 May, and 1 at Ghadira NR on 15 May. In autumn, singles at Simar NR on 4 dates from 14–24 Sep and at Wied Ghajn Rihana on 14 and 16 Sep.

Common Moorhen (Gallozz Iswed) *Gallinula chloropus*

Sightings practically daily throughout year, mostly from Ghadira NR and Simar NR, with max. 20 at the former and 25 at the latter. Outside these sites, most regularly seen at Wied Ghajn Rihana also through most of the year with breeding confirmed as early as 16 Mar, with max. 16 on 15 Jul. Otherwise also recorded throughout year, including breeding, at various other sites, such as Ramla Valley and Wied Sara, mostly in low single figures, with max. 8 at Ramla Valley on 25 Jun and 7 at Wied Sara on 15 Jul. Other sites with low numbers of breeding pairs included Girgenti, Kirkop, Dwejra (M), Maghtab, Ghajnsielem, Marsalforn Valley, and Wied Ta' Żejta.

1 ringed† on 19 Nov at Ghadira NR.

Common Coot (Tiġieġa tal-Baħar) *Fulica atra*

Up to 4 at Simar NR from 02 Jan to 03 Mar, then 1–2 regularly till 19 Mar, then sporadically till 29 May. Then 1 on 08 Aug, followed by sightings almost daily from 11 Sep to 31 Dec with max. 15 in late Dec, all at Simar NR. At Ghadira NR, singles on 06 Oct and 26–27 Nov.



Fig. 5. Very strong winds on 9 Dec produced the 4th Sooty Shearwater for Malta at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala).

Common Crane (Grawwa) *Grus grus*

Very poor year, with single record of 2 at Msida on 20 Dec.

European Storm-petrel (Kanġu ta' Filfla) *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Exceptionally early record of 2 at Ta' Ċenċ on 16 Feb. Then sporadically on 6 dates from 04 Apr to 09 Jun. Then on most dates from 08–18 Jul and from 11 Aug to 14 Oct, with last sighting on 01 Nov. Max. 600 at Filfla on 18 Jul, 500 at South-East Aquaculture Zone on 27 Aug, and 995 at Qawra on 14 Oct. Breeding in large numbers on Filfla as usual, and in low numbers at Ta' Ċenċ, Għarb and L-Aħrax.

343 ringed† from Feb to Sep, most (334) on Filfla. Max. ringed were 329 on night of 18–19 Jul.

Sooty Shearwater (Garnija Sewda) *Ardenna grisea*

1 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 09 Dec (Fig. 5). The 4th confirmed record for Malta (previous record was in Nov 1982).

Scopoli's Shearwater (Ċiefa) *Calonectris diomedea*

Unseasonal bird at Żonqor on 21 Jan. Then regular sightings from 25 Feb through to 04 Nov and last sighting at Qawra on 14 Nov. Regular counts in high double and triple figures, with max. 600 at Kemmuna Channel on 22 Jun and 350 at Valletta on 15 Aug. Breeding in localised colonies as usual, such as Ta' Ċenċ, Filfla and Miġra l-Ferħa.

180 ringed† from Apr to Oct, including 60 pulli from various breeding colonies. Max. ringed in one day was 35 on 18 Sep. 1 ringed in Malta found dead in Libya.

Yelkouan Shearwater (Garnija) *Puffinus yelkouan*

Regular sightings from 07 Jan to 22 Jun, then sporadically on 11 dates from 04 Jul to 08 Oct, then again regularly from 26 Oct to 28 Dec. Regular counts in double figures, with max. 135 at Kemmuna Channel on 17 Mar and 130 at Armier on 03 Jun. Breeding in localised colonies as usual, such as L-Aħrax, Kemmuna, St Paul's Islands and Majjistral Park.

216 ringed† from Apr to Jul, including 40 pulli from various breeding colonies. Max. ringed on one day was 26 on 09 Jun.

Black Stork (Ċikonja Sewda) *Ciconia nigra*

In spring, 1 at Tal-Bardan and at Dwejra (M) on 07 Apr. In autumn, 1 on 15 Sep, 2 on 25 Sep, singles on 30 Sep, 07 Oct, 08 Oct and 29 Oct, mostly at Buskett and surrounding areas.

White Stork (Ċikonja Bajda) *Ciconia ciconia*

In spring, exceptional flock of 46 on 30 Mar first seen from Kemmuna, then observed from various sites before roosting in Żabbar (Fig. 6). On 31 Mar, 37 observed migrating out to sea. Singles at Xaghra (G) on 01 Apr, at Luqa Airport from 31 Mar to 03 Apr, and at Santa Luċija on 03 Apr were remnants of this flock. In autumn, 1 at Xemxija on 05 Sep and 2 at Buskett on 07 Oct.

Eurasian Spoonbill (Paletta) *Platalea leucorodia*

2 at Ghadira NR on 20 Jan, 5 at Ċirkewwa on 08 Apr, 1 at Ghadira NR from 22–23 May, 1 at Kemmuna on 17 Oct, and 1 (probably same bird) at Salina NR from 18–23 Oct (Fig. 7).

1 ringed in Greece observed in Apr.

Glossy Ibis (Velleran) *Plegadis falcinellus*

In spring, 20 at Kemmuna Channel on 20 Mar, 1 at Ghadira NR on 21 Mar, 61 at Kemmuna Channel on 21 Mar, 26 at Nadur (G) on 23 Mar, 20 at Kemmuna on 30 Mar, and 2 at Xaghra on 10 Apr. In autumn, 1 at Ghadira NR on 23 Jul, 12 at Buskett on 04 Sep, 1 at Dwejra (M) on 17 Sep and 1 at Tal-Virtù on 30 Sep.

Eurasian Bittern (Kappun) *Botaurus stellaris*

1 at Mġarr ix-Xini on 09 Nov.

Common Little Bittern (Russett tas-Siġar) *Ixobrychus minutus*

A relatively good year for this species. In spring, sightings on most dates from 18 Apr to 28 May, always of 1–2 birds. In



Fig. 7. This Eurasian Spoonbill at Salina NR on 20 Oct spent almost a week at the reserve.

autumn, sightings on 4 dates from 05 Sep to 22 Oct, all of 1–2, but 8 at Buskett on 05 Sep.

4 ringed, all in spring, most (3) at Mġarr ix-Xini.

Black-crowned Night-heron (Kwakka) *Nycticorax nycticorax*

In spring, sightings on most dates from 19 Mar to 02 Jun, and from 12–18 Jun. Spring counts mostly in single figures, with max. 30 at Salina NR on 07 Apr and 35 at Majjistral Park on 23 Apr. In summer, regular sightings, mostly of singles, from 03–29 Jul, mainly at Simar NR. In autumn, first sighting on 03 Aug, then regularly from 07 Aug to 02 Nov. Autumn counts regularly



Fig. 6. Part of an exceptional flock of 46 White Storks that turned up on the afternoon of 30 Mar, here at their overnight roost on the outskirts of Haż-Żabbar.

in double figures, with max. 65 at Ta' Gianpula on 02 Sep and 43 at Buskett on 05 Sep.

Squacco Heron (Agrett Isfar) *Ardeola ralloides*

In spring, sightings on most dates from 04 Apr to 02 Jun, followed by late sightings of singles at Salina NR on 10 Jun and at Simar NR on 8 dates from 11 Jun to 09 Jul. Most spring counts of 1–2, with max. 8 at Ċirkewwa on 04 Apr, 11 at Tal-Ħamrija on 08 Apr, 6 at Manoel Island on 20 Apr, and 6 at Xatt l-Ahmar on 29 Apr. In autumn, sightings on 10 dates from 04 Aug to 22 Sep, followed by late sighting of 1 at Salina NR on 13 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures with max. 4 at Żonqor on 18 and 21 Aug and 5 at Simar NR on 26 Aug.

Cattle Egret (Agrett tal-Bhejjem) *Bubulcus ibis*

Feral population in Salina NR area present throughout year with up to 236 counted in one day. Presence of these birds can make identification of genuine wild migrants difficult. Wild birds recorded mainly in spring from 28 Feb to 01 May and in autumn from 05 Sep to 21 Dec, with max. 47 at Simar NR on 25 Feb and 34 at Valletta on 29 Oct.

Grey Heron (Russett Griż) *Ardea cinerea*

1 at Salina NR on 04 Jan, 1 at Kemmuna on 15 Jan, 1 at Mgarr (G) on 27 Jan and 2 at Salina NR on 08 Feb. Then regularly from 17 Feb to 12 Mar, almost daily from 16 Mar to 16 Apr, and on most dates from 21 Apr to 31 May. Spring counts mostly in single and low double figures, with max. 31 at Ċirkewwa on 16 Mar, 38 at Ċirkewwa on 17 Mar, 38 at Ċirkewwa on 28 Mar and 32 at Kemmuna on 16 Apr. In summer, singles at Salina NR on 30 Jun, at Filfla on 18 Jul and at Salina NR on 24 Jul. Then again almost daily from 30 Jul to 23 Nov, regularly in double figures with max. 68 at Xagħra on 02 Sep and 67 at Għadira NR on 17 Sep. Then regularly again from 01–29 Dec, including 7 at Salina NR on 15th, 27th and 28 Dec.

Purple Heron (Russett Ahmar) *Ardea purpurea*

In spring, sightings on most dates from 20 Mar to 08 May. Spring counts mostly in single figures, with max. 55 at Kemmuna on 30 Mar and 25 at Għadira NR on 20 Apr. In autumn, regular sightings from 13 Aug to 06 Oct, followed by late sightings on 21st and 22 Oct. Autumn counts mostly in low single figures, with max. 44 at Salina NR on 01 Sep and 42 at Qawra on 02 Sep.

Great White Egret (Russett Abjad) *Ardea alba*

In spring, 2 at Salina NR on 07 Mar, 6 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 15 Mar, and 4 at Majjistral Park on 05 Apr. In summer, 1 at Burmarrad on 11 Jul. In autumn, sightings on 9 dates from 02 Sep to 25 Nov, always of singles, but 4 at Filfla on 08 Oct.

Little Egret (Agrett Abjad) *Egretta garzetta*

Resident feral population present in the Salina, Simar and

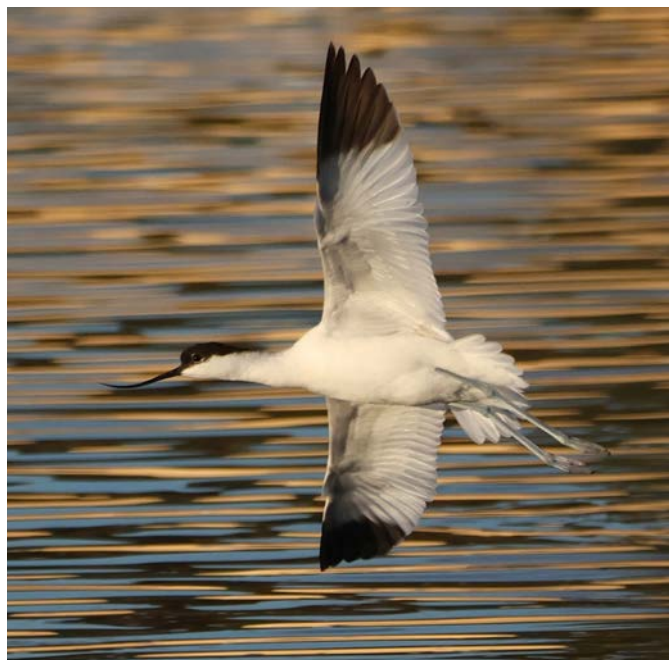


Fig. 8. Long-staying Pied Avocets are unheard of in Malta. This bird which spent 3 weeks at Salina NR (25 Nov – 16 Dec) was therefore a welcome surprise.

Għadira NR general area throughout year with up to 30 regularly present at these sites. Presence of these birds can make identification of genuine wild migrants difficult. Spring migrants noted regularly from 20 Mar to 17 May, with max. 42 on 05 Apr and 27 on 06 Apr at Ċirkewwa. Autumn migrants noted from 09 Aug to 12 Nov, with max. 49 at Qawra on 01 Sep and 45 at Valletta on 16 Sep.

Northern Gannet (Sula) *Morus bassanus*

Singles at Pembroke on 14 Jan, at Xgħajra and at Xwejni on 21 Jan, at Ċirkewwa on 21 Mar and at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 03 Apr. Then sightings of singles on 9 dates from 17 Nov to 24 Dec.

Great Cormorant (Margun) *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Sightings on most dates from 02 Jan to 04 Apr, followed by last sighting on 12 Apr. Regular counts in double and triple figures, most of which refer to wintering flock that roosts on Filfla, with max. 150 at Għadira NR on 14 Jan and 165 at Qammieħ on 18 Feb. Then practically daily from 11 Sep to 27 Dec. Regular counts in double and triple figures, with max. 150 at Tas-Safra and 130 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 22 Dec.

Note on waders. Due to widespread illegal wader trapping in Malta, it is possible that some sightings refer to birds released after having been confiscated and rehabilitated. Effort was made to exclude sightings of such birds from this list, but it is possible that some remain.

Eurasian Thick-knee (Tellerita) *Burhinus oedicnemus*

In spring, singles at Pembroke on 19 Mar, at Ta' Ċenċ on 26 Mar, at Mtaħleb on 17 Apr, at Tas-Silġ on 11 Apr and at

Kemmuna on 26–27 Apr, on 29 Apr and on 02 May. In autumn, 2 at Kemmuna on 16 Oct, 1 at Clapham Junction on 20 Oct, 1 at Kemmuna on 23 Oct, 1 at Foresta 2000 on 29 Oct, 2 at Buskett on 08 Nov and 1 at Ta' Gianpula on 22 Nov.

Eurasian Oystercatcher (Gallina tal-Baħar) *Haematopus ostralegus*

3 on 05 Aug and 18 on 07 Aug at Tas-Safra, 9 at Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq on 15 Aug, 1 at St Paul's Islands on 16 Aug and 2 at Salina NR on 18 Sep.

Pied Avocet (Xifa) *Recurvirostra avosetta*

In spring, singles at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 12 Apr and at Għadira NR from 13–20 Apr. Then in autumn, 26 at Valletta on 02 Sep, 13 at Valletta on 09 Sep, 2 at Qawra on 14 Nov, 2 at Tas-Safra on 19 Nov, 3 at Qawra on 27 Nov and 1 at Salina NR from 25 Nov to 16 Dec (Fig. 8).

Black-winged Stilt (Fras-servjent) *Himantopus himantopus*

In spring, regular sightings on most dates from 13 Mar to 17 May, followed by 1 at Simar NR on 18 Jun, 4 at Għadira NR on 19 Jun, 1 at Għadira NR from 26–28 June, 3 at Għadira NR from 29 Jun to 02 Jul. Spring counts always in single figures, but 15 at Marsaxlokk on 21 Mar and 13 on 28 Mar, 21 on 29 Mar and 12 on 27 Apr, all at Għadira NR. In autumn, 6 at Simar NR on 25 Jul, 3 at Tas-Safra on 09 Aug, 7 at Għadira NR on 09 Sep and 2 at Għadira NR on 10 Sep.

Grey Plover (Pluviera Griża) *Pluvialis squatarola*

Singles at Kemmuna on 30 Apr, at Salina NR on 12–13 May, at Delimara on 15 May, at Salina NR on 08 Jun and from 13–14 Aug (Fig. 9), 2 at Qbajjar on 30 Aug, 1 at Valletta on 05 Sep and 01 Oct, 1 at Qbajjar on 04 Oct, and 2 at Qawra and 1 at Żonqor on 09 Dec.



Fig. 10. These 3 Dotterels at Luqa Airport on 22 Sep provided a rare opportunity to see multiple settled birds.

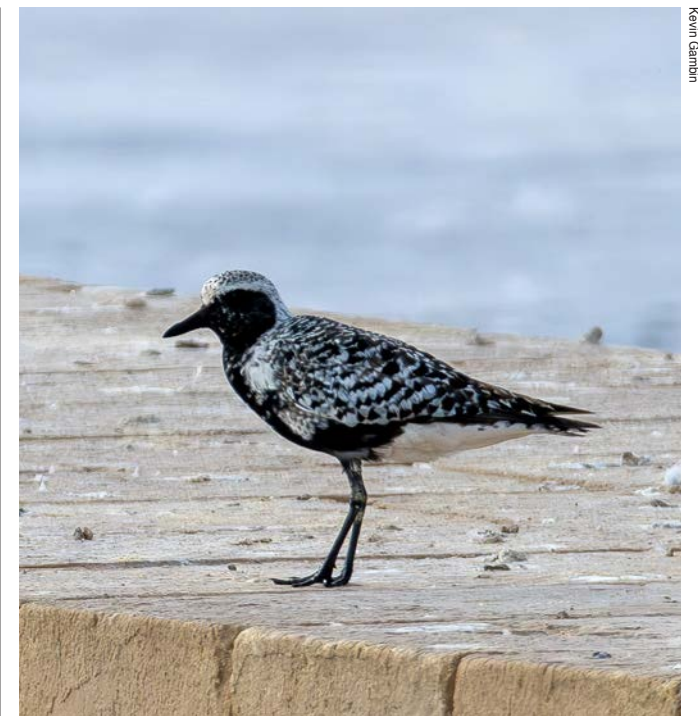


Fig. 9. Multiple sightings of the scarce Grey Plover included this one at Salina NR on 13 Aug.

Eurasian Golden Plover (Pluviera) *Pluvialis apricaria*

1 at Hondoq ir-Rummien on 22 Jan and at Luqa Airport on 25–26 Feb. Then in single or low double figures on 11 dates from 20 Nov till 29 Dec, with max. 16 at Ta' Gianpula on 27 Nov.

Eurasian Dotterel (Birwina) *Eudromias morinellus*

A good autumn for this species with 1–3 on 17 dates from 10 Sep to 23 Nov (Fig. 10), but 8 at Qawra on 20 Nov.

Common Ringed Plover (Monakella Prima) *Charadrius hiaticula*

In spring, first sighting at Għadira NR on 16 Apr, then practically



Fig. 11. Flock of 10 Northern Lapwings at Ghadira NR on 19 Nov. Due to intense hunting pressure, such flocks are a rare sight.

daily from 19 Apr to 31 May. Spring counts always in single figures, but 15 on 04 May and 11 on 05 May at Salina NR. In autumn, 1 at Salina NR on 17 Jul, then sightings on most days from 14 Aug to 22 Dec. Autumn counts always in single figures, but 10 on 21 Aug and 12 on 02 Oct at Salina NR.

4 ringed, all in autumn at Salina NR. 1 ringed in Norway observed.

Little Ringed Plover (Monakella) *Charadrius dubius*

Sightings almost daily from 03 Mar through to 03 Nov. Mainly recorded from Ghadira NR in summer, where 3 pairs bred and 8 young fledged. Counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 18 on 28 Apr and 16 on 10 Jul at Ghadira NR.

10 ringed (all in summer/autumn), including 1 pullus, most (6) at Ghadira NR. 1 ringed in Hungary observed.

Kentish Plover (Monakella Żgħira) *Charadrius alexandrinus*

1 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 11 Aug.

Northern Lapwing (Venewwa) *Vanellus vanellus*

Singles at Mġarr ix-Xini on 24 Oct, at Tas-Safra on 11 Nov, and at Ghadira NR from 12–26 Nov, the latter joined by flock of 10 on 19 Nov (Fig. 11), when singles were also observed at Buskett and at Xagħra. 1 at Xrobb I-Għaġin on 10 Dec.

Whimbrel (Gurlin Sekond) *Numenius phaeopus*

A very good spring for this species. Recorded on 8 dates from Kemmuna Channel from 27 Mar till 06 Apr with triple figures on 5 dates: 105 on 27 Mar, 162 on 28 Mar, 174 on 29 Mar, 120 on 30 Mar and 122 on 02 Apr, otherwise up to 70. At other sites, 30 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 04 Apr, 1 at Kemmuna on 13 Apr and 1 at Luqa Airport from 23–28 Apr. In autumn, 1 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 11 Jul, 2 at Xrobb I-Għaġin and 1 at Munxar (M) on 14 Jul, and singles at Qawra on 19th, 22nd and 27 Aug.

Eurasian Curlew (Gurlin) *Numenius arquata*

4 at Mellieha on 17 Mar, 1 at Birkirkara on 20 Mar*, 1 at Ċirkewwa on 22 Mar, 6 at Ċirkewwa on 28 Mar, 1 at Birkirkara on 29 Mar*, 1 at Kemmuna on 08 Jun (Fig. 12) and 1 offshore southeast Malta on 11 Aug.

Black-tailed Godwit (Girwel Prim) *Limosa limosa*

65 on 16 Mar and 27 on 28 Mar in Kemmuna Channel.

Ruddy Turnstone (Monakella Imperjali) *Arenaria interpres*

In spring, singles at Żonqor on 03 May, at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 06th and 08 May and at Torri l-Abjad on 11 May. Then in autumn most sightings at Qawra, with sightings on 18 dates from 22 Aug to 29 Sep, with max. 10 on 18 Sep. Otherwise singles at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 11 Aug, 19 Aug and 06 Sep, at Żonqor on 16 Aug, at Salina NR on 06–07 Sep, at Buġibba on 23 Sep and 2 at Qalet Marku on 24 Sep.

Red Knot (Pispisella Prima) *Calidris canutus*

1 at Salina NR on 08 May.

Ruff (Girwel) *Calidris pugnax*

In spring, first sighting at Salina NR on 24 Mar, then daily from 26 Mar to 09 Apr and from 16 Apr to 15 May, followed by one at Ghadira NR on 26 May. Spring counts always in single figures, but 300 migrating at Kemmuna Channel on 04 Apr, 30 at Ghadira NR on 09 May and 15 at Ghadira NR on 10 May. In autumn, sightings on 19 dates from 08 Jul to 12 Oct, always of 1–2.

Curlew Sandpiper (Pispisella Hamra) *Calidris ferruginea*

In spring, sightings practically daily from 14 Apr to 19 May.



Fig. 12. Eurasian Curlew at Kemmuna on 08 Jun, an atypical date for this species.

Counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 25 on 13–14 May and 27 on 15 May at Ghadira NR. In autumn, sightings almost daily from 25 Jul to 11 Aug and from 31 Aug to 06 Oct, followed by last sightings on 12 and 16 Oct at Salina NR. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Ghadira NR on 16–17 Sep.

6 ringed (all in autumn), most (5) at Ghadira NR.

Temminck's Stint (Tertuxa Griza) *Calidris temminckii*

Recorded only from Ghadira NR and Salina NR.

In spring, sightings on 11 dates from 27 Apr to 18 May, with max. 3 at Ghadira NR on 06 and 08 May. In autumn, regular sightings on 14 dates from 18 Jul to 18 Aug, with max. 3 at Ghadira NR on 22 and 26 Jul, followed by singles at Salina NR on 25 Sep and at Ghadira NR from 29 Oct to 10 Nov.

2 ringed in Jul at Ghadira NR.

Sanderling (Pispisella Bajda) *Calidris alba*

1 at Ghadira NR on 15 May (Fig. 13), 2 at Żonqor on 10 Aug, 1 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 12 Aug and 1 at Qawra on 08 Sep.

Dunlin (Pispisella tad-Dabra) *Calidris alpina*

In spring, sightings on 10 dates from 04 Mar to 08 May, always at Salina NR and always of singles, but 2 at Salina NR on last date. In autumn, sightings almost daily from 21 Jul through to 23 Dec. Autumn counts always in single figures, with max. 9 at Salina NR on 29–30 Nov.

10 ringed (all in autumn), most (6) at Salina NR.

Little Stint (Tertuxa) *Calidris minuta*

In spring, early sightings from 26 Feb to 05 Mar, then on most dates from 21 Mar to 04 Jun. Spring counts often in double figures, with max. 38 at Salina NR on 03 May and 66 at Ghadira NR on 09 May. In autumn, sightings on most dates from 06 Jul to 05 Dec, followed by 1 late sighting at Salina NR on 17 Dec. Autumn counts often in double figures, with max. 30 on 01 Aug and 46 on 07 Aug at Ghadira NR.

84 ringed (all in autumn), most (69) at Ghadira NR.

Eurasian Woodcock (Gallina) *Scolopax rusticola*

1 at Kemmuna on 15 Jan (ringed) (Fig. 14). Then singles at Lija on 10 Nov, at Buskett on 29 Nov, at Rabat and at Ghadira NR on 02 Dec, at Majjistral Park on 11 Dec, and at Xemxija on 13 Dec. As usual this species is highly under-recorded by birders.

Great Snipe (Bekkaċċ ta' Mejju) *Gallinago media*

Singles at Għar Ilma on 23 Apr and at Fiddien on 24 Apr.



Fig. 13. More typical of rocky shores, this Sanderling was at Ghadira NR on 15 May.



Fig. 14. Eurasian Woodcocks are heavily persecuted in Malta. This one was lucky enough to find itself in the Kemmuna bird sanctuary where it was ringed on 15 Jan.

Common Snipe (Bekkaċċ) *Gallinago gallinago*

In spring, sightings almost daily from 14–31 Mar, then singles on 05 Apr, from 10–13 Apr, on 05 May and from 13–15 May. All spring counts in low single figures, with max. 3 at Ghadira NR on 18–19 Mar and on 29 Mar. In autumn, sightings on 8 dates from 31 Aug to 16 Sep, then almost daily from 28 Sep to 13 Nov, followed by singles from 20–22 Nov, on 10 Dec and on 22 Dec. All autumn counts of 1–2.

1 ringed on 22 Nov at Simar NR.

Jack Snipe (Ċinkonja) *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Singles at Ghadira NR on 26 Feb and on 18 Mar, at Il-Hofra on 25 Mar, and at Ghadira NR on 29 Mar. Then 1 at Salina NR on 6 dates from 26 Oct to 03 Nov, but 2 on 31 Oct, and singles at Qawra on 14 Nov, at Ta' Ċenċ on 19 Nov and at Salina NR on 20 Dec.

Common Sandpiper (Pispisella) *Actitis hypoleucos*

Sightings practically daily from 01 Jan to 01 Jun and from 11 Jun to 31 Dec. Counts regularly in double figures, with max. 24 in spring at Salina NR on 05 May and 41 in autumn at Tas-Safra on 27 Jul.

59 ringed (14 in spring, 45 in summer/autumn), most (26) at Salina NR. 1 ringed in Hungary controlled.

Green Sandpiper (Swejda) *Tringa ochropus*

In spring, first sighting at Simar NR on 07 Feb, then sightings on most dates from 20 Feb to 14 Apr followed by last sightings on 20th and 23 Apr. Spring counts always in low single figures,



Fig. 15. Multiple sightings of Spotted Redshanks in 2023 included this one at Ghadira NR on 5 Sep.



Fig. 16. This first-winter Little Gull spent most of Dec at Salina NR (photo taken on 16 Dec).



Fig. 17. Most Black-legged Kittiwakes seen in Malta are first-winter birds. This adult at Salina NR on 11 Feb was therefore a first for many birders.

with max. 4 at Ghadira NR on 26 Mar and at Ta' Gianpula on 27 Mar. In autumn, early sightings on 4 dates from 04–12 Jun then regularly on most dates from 18 Jun to 27 Sep, followed by late sightings on 4 dates from 05 Oct to 01 Nov. Autumn counts always in low single figures but 7 on 30 Jun and on 01 Sep at Ghadira NR.

5 ringed, all in autumn at Ghadira NR.

Spotted Redshank (Ċuvett) *Tringa erythropus*

1 at Salina NR on 08 Mar, 1 at Kemmauna on 30 Mar, and 6 at Salina NR on 05 Apr. Then singles on 30 Jun, 31 Jul, 05 Sep (Fig. 15) and 2 on 26 Sep, all at Ghadira NR.

Common Greenshank (Ċewċewwa) *Tringa nebularia*

In spring, regular sightings on 26 dates from 22 Mar to 06 May, always of 1–2. In autumn, sightings on most dates from 19 Jun to 04 Sep, followed by sporadic sightings on 17 Sep, 06 Oct, 23 Oct and 06 Nov. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 on 07th and 10 Aug at Ghadira NR.

Common Redshank (Pluverott) *Tringa totanus*

In spring, 1 at Ċirkewwa on 21 Mar. In autumn, singles at Ghadira NR and at Salina NR on 3 dates from 18 Jun to 09 Jul, then 1–2 on 6 dates from 24 Jul to 15 Aug, but 4 at Ghadira NR on first date.

Wood Sandpiper (Swejda Ċara) *Tringa glareola*

In spring, sightings on most dates from 16 Mar to 19 May. Then on most dates from 28 May to 30 Jun and from 01 Jul to 27 Sep, with 1–2 lingering at Ghadira NR through Jun, followed by sightings on 9 dates from 10–28 Oct. Counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 20 at Simar NR on 11 Apr and 26 at Salina NR on 09 Jul.

6 ringed† (1 in spring, 5 in autumn), at Salina NR (3) and Simar NR (3).

Marsh Sandpiper (Ċewċewwa Żghira) *Tringa stagnatilis*

Singles at Ghadira NR on 21–22 Mar and on 24 Mar.

Collared Pratincole (Perniċjotta) *Glareola pratincola*

1 on 11 Apr and 2 on 26 Apr at Luqa Airport.

Little Gull (Gawwija Żghira) *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Most sightings at Salina NR, with singles on 02 Jan, 06–07 Feb, 17–18 Feb, 20 Feb, 28 Feb and 06 Mar, then almost daily from 12–29 Dec (Fig. 16). Otherwise singles at Simar NR on 20 Jan, at Xghajra on 21 Jan, at Simar NR on 08 Feb and 48 offshore NE Malta on 08 Dec.

Black-legged Kittiwake (Gawwija tal-Ingilterra) *Rissa tridactyla*

A good year with several sightings, mostly at Salina NR with sightings on 27 Jan, 29 Jan, 02 Feb, 08 Feb, 11–12 Feb (Fig. 17) and 28 Feb. Other sightings were 1 at Żonqor on 21 Jan, 1 at Ċirkewwa on 04 Feb, an exceptional 5 offshore NE Malta on

Mario V Gaudi



Fig. 18. This first-winter Bonaparte's Gull on 3 Jan was probably the most exceptional record of the year, and is the first Nearctic gull species on Malta's bird list.

06 Feb, 1 at Qammieh on 12 Feb, 2 offshore NE Malta on 17 Feb, 1 at L-Aħrax on 04 Mar, 1 at Ċirkewwa on 09 Mar. Then singles at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 25 Nov, at Salina NR from 04–06 and 08 Dec, at Qawra on 22 Dec and at Salina NR on 23 Dec.

■ Bonaparte's Gull (Gawwija Amerikana) *Larus philadelphia*

First-winter bird at Salina NR on 22 dates from 03 Jan to 28 Feb (Fig. 18). The first confirmed record for Malta of this species and of any Nearctic gull species.

Slender-billed Gull (Gawwija Munqarha Rqiq) *Larus genei*

Sightings on most dates from 02 Jan to 12 Apr, mostly at Salina NR. Most counts in low single figures, with max. 6 at Salina NR on 12 Mar and at Ċirkewwa on 25 Mar and 02 Apr. 2 at Ghadira NR on 11 May. In autumn, sightings on 12 dates from 31 Aug to 25 Oct, then daily from 05 Nov to 29 Nov, mainly at Salina NR. Regular counts in high single figures, with max. 11 on 21 Nov at Salina NR.

Black-headed Gull (Gawwija Rasha Kannella) *Larus ridibundus*

Sightings practically daily from 01 Jan to 10 Jun, with regular quadruple figures till early Mar, decreasing to triple figures till mid-Mar, double figures till late Apr and single figures till early Jun. Max. 3400 at Salina NR on 03 Jan and 3200 at Maghtab on 13 Jan. Then sightings on 28 dates from 19 Jun to 02 Sep, always of 1–2, then daily from 05 Sep to 29 Dec, with triple figures from end of Oct increasing to quadruple figures from mid Nov. Max. 2300 on 15 Dec and 2200 on 22 Dec at Salina NR.

2 ringed in Croatia, 7 ringed in Hungary, 1 ringed in Poland, 1 ringed in Slovenia and 2 ringed in Ukraine observed.

Mediterranean Gull (Gawwija Rasha Sewda) *Larus melanocephalus*

Sightings daily from 02 Jan to 12 May, with regular triple figures

till late Mar, decreasing to double figures till late Apr, mainly at Salina NR. Max. 500 at Salina NR on 09 Jan, 1400 at Xghajra on 14 Jan, and 500 at Xghajra on 21 Jan. A leucistic bird was observed on several dates at Salina NR (Fig. 19). 1 lingered at Salina NR throughout summer. Then new birds noted regularly from 25 Jul, then daily from 13 Oct to 29 Dec, with regular triple counts from early Nov, with max. 350 at Xghajra on 18 Nov and 400 at Salina NR on 17 Dec.

2 ringed in Jan and Feb at Salina NR. 1 ringed in England observed.

Audouin's Gull (Gawwija Munqarha Aħmar) *Larus audouinii*

Regular sightings from 02 Jan to 20 Mar, mostly of low single figures, with max. 18 on 31 Jan and 8 on 23 Feb at Birżebbuġa. Then sporadic sightings on 14 dates from 03 Apr to 18 Jul,

mostly at Salina NR, and regularly from 28 Jul to 04 Nov from the coast, always of 1–2. Then sightings on only 5 dates from 30 Nov to 21 Dec, always in singles and mostly at Salina NR.

1 ringed in Italy observed.

Mew Gull (Gawwija Sekonda) *Larus canus*

Singles at Salina NR on 6 dates from 05–14 Jan, on 09 and 11 Feb and on 07 Mar. Then singles at Valletta on 26 Nov and on 13 dates at Salina NR from 11–27 Dec (Fig. 20).

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Gawwija Daharha Iswed) *Larus fuscus*

Sightings almost daily from 02 Jan to 20 Apr, regularly in double figures at Salina NR with max. 19 on 04 Jan and 27 on 12 Jan. Then sporadically on 9 dates from 26 Apr to 05 Jun, including 7



Fig. 19. This leucistic Mediterranean Gull at Salina NR on 04 Apr was seen regularly at the site.



Fig. 20. This Mew Gull at Salina NR on 19 Dec was seen on multiple dates in Dec.

at Salina NR on 17 May. Then regularly from 13 Jun to 16 Aug and from 31 Aug to 22 Sep, always in low single figures. Then almost daily from 08 Oct to 29 Dec, mostly in single figures with max. 12 on multiple dates at Salina NR and at Qawra.

1 ringed in Finland and 1 ringed in Germany observed.

Yellow-legged Gull (Gawwija Prima) *Larus michahellis*

Resident species present throughout year, with highest single counts of 1000 at Qawra on 03 Nov. Breeding mainly on Filfla as usual, but also at smaller scattered colonies such as St Paul's Islands and Kemmuna. 1 pair bred for the first time at

Salina NR, where a rehabilitated ♀ paired up with a ♂ and fledged 3 young (Fig. 21).

91 ringed†, of which 87 pulli from breeding colonies on Filfla and St Paul's Island. 1 ringed in Malta observed in Serbia.

Caspian Gull (Gawwija tal-Kaspju)

Larus cachinnans

Regular sightings from 02 Jan to 20 Apr, followed by late sightings on 27 Apr and 06 May. Almost all sightings at Salina NR in single figures, with max. 9 on 28 Mar. Then regularly from 04–29 Dec, mostly at Salina NR and always in low single figures, with max. 4 on 14 Dec.

1 ringed on 09 Feb at Salina NR. 1 ringed in Hungary and 1 ringed in Poland observed.

Common Gull-billed Tern (Ċirlewwa Bumunqar)

Gelochelidon nilotica

Singles at Salina NR on 02–03 Apr, 11–14 Apr (Fig. 23), 20–21 Jun and on 08 Jul. Then singles at Ghadira NR and Valletta on 08 Sep, at Mtaħleb on 10 Sep, and at Qawra on 24 Nov, 27 Nov and 07 Dec.

Caspian Tern (Ċirlewwa Prima) *Hydroprogne caspia*

In spring, 1 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) and at Salina NR on 15 Mar, 4 at Ċirkewwa on 05 Apr, 1 at Ghadira NR on 03 May and 1 at Hondoq ir-Rummien on 24 May. In autumn, 2 on 22 Oct, 1 on 23 Oct and 5 on 25 Oct at Salina NR (Fig. 22), and 4 at Ghadira NR on 08 Nov.



Fig. 21. The first breeding record of Yellow-legged Gull at Salina NR involved a rehabilitated ♀ staying at the reserve and successfully fledging 3 young.



Fig. 22. Caspian Terns are mostly seen in singles settling inside nature reserves, so 5 together at Salina NR on 25 Oct was a rare occurrence.



Fig. 23. 2023 produced multiple sightings of Common Gull-billed Terns, including this one at Salina NR on 11 Apr.



Fig. 24. This Whiskered Tern at Simar NR on 18 Jun spent several days at the reserve.



Fig. 25. This Black Tern at Salina NR on 30 Nov was an unusual record, more typically seen far offshore in early autumn.

Whiskered Tern (Ċirlewwa tal-Mustaċċi) *Chlidonias hybrida*

1 at Salina NR on 13 Jun then at Simar NR from 14–22 Jun (same bird) (Fig. 24). Then singles at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 15 Jul, at Salina NR on 17 Jul, at Simar NR from 17–20 Jul and at Ghadira NR on 23 Jul (same bird), and at Ghadira NR on 08 Sep.

Black Tern (Ċirlewwa Sewda) *Chlidonias niger*

Regular sightings from 09 Aug to 24 Sep, regularly in triple figures with max. 293 offshore southeast Malta on 11 Aug and 400 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 19 Aug. Then a late record of 1 at Salina NR from 28–30 Nov (Fig. 25).

Sandwich Tern (Ċirlewwa tax-Xitwa) *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Sightings almost daily from 02 Jan to 24 Apr, always in single or low double figures, with max. 15 at Salina NR on 28 Mar. Then 2 late birds at Kemmuna on 22 Jun. Then in autumn, sporadic sightings on 6 dates from 06 Aug to 16 Sep, on 07–08 Oct, on 22nd and 24 Oct, and on 07th, 09th and 11 Nov. Then daily from 24 Nov to 29 Dec, always in low single figures of up to 3.

Arctic Jaeger (Skuwa tal-Artiku) *Stercorarius parasiticus*

1 at Kemmuna Channel from 09–11 Mar.

Pomarine Jaeger (Skuwa) *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Singles offshore northeast Malta on 06 Feb, then at Ċirkewwa on 6 dates from 25 Mar to 05 Apr.

Great Skua (Skuwa Prima) *Catharacta skua*

Singles offshore northeast Malta on 06 Feb, at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 03 Apr and at Tas-Safra on 23 Dec.

Razorbill (Mus) *Alca torda*

1 at Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 25 Nov (Fig. 26) – the 20th confirmed record for Malta (previous records in Dec 2022). This also marks the 3rd consecutive winter with sightings of this species.

Nicholas Cutajar



Fig. 26. A few lucky birders seawatching from Ras il-Gżira (Marsaskala) on 25 Nov spotted this Razorbill, marking the third consecutive winter with sightings of this species in Malta.

Common Barn-owl (Barbaġann) *Tyto alba*

Singles at Sannat on 23 Jul and 15 Aug. The possibility of this bird being an escapee cannot be excluded.

Eurasian Scops-owl (Kokka) *Otus scops*

1 at Bidnija on 12 Feb. In spring, sightings on 17 dates from 28 Mar to 01 May, always of singles but 2 on 30 Mar, 5 on 16 Apr and 4 on 20 Apr, all at Kemmuna. Then in autumn, sightings on 13 dates from 05 Oct to 08 Nov, always of singles but 3 at Buskett on 11 Oct.

42 ringed† (28 in spring, 14 in autumn), most (19) at Kemmuna.

Raymond Galea



Fig. 27. This Short-eared Owl at Qammieħ on 16 Dec was the last sighting of this species in 2023.

Northern Long-eared Owl (Qattus) *Asio otus*

1 ringed at Kemmuna on 23 Oct.

Short-eared Owl (Kokka tax-Xagħri) *Asio flammeus*

1 at Kemmuna on 17–18 Feb. Then in spring, sightings on 9 dates from 06 Mar to 21 Apr, all of 1–2 but 5 at Kemmuna on 06 Mar. Then in autumn, sightings on 20 dates from 16 Oct to 16 Dec (Fig. 27), always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Kemmuna on 29 Oct.

5 ringed (1 in spring, 4 in autumn), all at Kemmuna.

Osprey (Arpa) *Pandion haliaetus*

In spring, sightings on 7 dates from 21 Mar to 10 May, always of singles, but 3 at Ċirkewwa on 21 Mar. In autumn, regular sightings from 27 Aug to 22 Oct, always in low single figures, but 9 at Buskett on 18 Sep.

1 ringed in Latvia observed (later collected injured and died).

European Honey-buzzard (Kuċċarda) *Pernis apivorus*

In spring, first sighting on 11 Apr, then regularly from 20 Apr to 03 Jun. Spring counts mostly in low single figures, with max. 33 at Kemmuna and 20 at Ghajnsielem on 02 May, and 10 at Kemmuna on 03 and 04 May. In autumn, first sightings on 22–23 Aug, then practically daily from 29 Aug to 15 Oct, and late birds on 22 Oct, 24 Oct, 06 Nov and 09 Nov. Autumn counts regularly in mid-double figures, with max. 189 at Buskett on 18 Sep.

Egyptian Vulture (Avultun Abjad) *Neophron percnopterus*

1 juv. seen from several locations around Buskett area on 26 Sep (Fig. 28).

Short-toed Snake-eagle (Ajkla Bajda) *Circaetus gallicus*

1 seen from several locations around Buskett area on 29–30 Sep (Fig. 29).

Lesser Spotted Eagle (Ajkla tat-Tikek) *Clanga pomarina*

Singles seen from different locations, mainly around Buskett and Dwejra (M) areas, on 01 and 07 Oct (Fig. 30).



Fig. 28. This juvenile Egyptian Vulture at Buskett on 26 Sep gave exceptional views.

Raymond Galea



Fig. 29. A Short-toed Snake-eagle in the evening sun at Buskett on 30 Sep.

Nicholas Cutajar



Fig. 30. Lesser Spotted Eagle being mobbed by Western Marsh-harrier at Buskett on 07 Oct.

Booted Eagle (Ajkla tal-Kalzetti) *Hieraaetus pennatus*

1 light morph bird seen from different locations, mainly around Buskett area, on 26–27 Sep (Fig. 31).

Western Marsh-harrier (Bagħdan Aħmar) *Circus aeruginosus*

In spring, practically daily from 05 Mar to 18 May and from 25–29 May, followed by late sighting on 28 Jun. Spring counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 47 at Luqa Airport on 05 Apr and 35 at Tas-Silġ on 11 Apr. In autumn, first sightings on 19th, 20th and 23 Aug, then practically daily from 25 Aug to 13 Nov, then more sporadically on 9 dates from 17 Nov to 28 Dec. Autumn counts regularly in triple figures, with max. 609 at Buskett on 18 Sep.

Hen Harrier (Bagħdan Ikħal) *Circus cyaneus*

1♀ at Buskett on 04 Dec and 1♂ at Majjistral Park on 25 Dec.

Aaron Tanti



Fig. 31. Light morph Booted Eagle at Buskett on 27 Sep.

Kevin Gambin



Fig. 32. This juvenile Levant Sparrowhawk at Buskett on 03 Oct was the 5th for Malta.

Pallid Harrier (Bagħdan Abjad) *Circus macrourus*

In spring, regular sightings on most dates from 14 Mar to 23 Apr. Spring counts always in low single figures, with max. 4 at Ċirkewwa and at Sannat on 21 Mar, and at Dwejra (M) on 23 Mar. In autumn, sightings on 6 dates from 16 Sep to 17 Oct, always of singles, followed by late sighting at Mellieħa on 12 Nov.

Montagu's Harrier (Bagħdan Griż) *Circus pygargus*

In spring, sightings almost daily from 01 Apr to 04 May. Spring counts always in single figures, but 26 at Tas-Silġ and 10 at Xaghra on 11 Apr. Then in autumn, sightings almost daily from 02–25 Sep, always of 1–3 but 6 at Buskett on 18 Sep.

Levant Sparrowhawk (Sparvier tal-Lvant) *Accipiter brevipes*

1 juv. at Buskett on 03 Oct (Fig. 32) – the 5th confirmed record of this species in Malta (previous record in Oct 2022).

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Sparvier) *Accipiter nisus*

In spring, singles on 7 dates from 30 Mar to 04 May. In autumn, first sightings on 11th, 13th, 17th and 19 Sep, then daily from 26 Sep to 19 Oct, then sporadically on 10 dates from 24 Oct



Fig. 33. Red Kites are very rare and not annual in Malta. This one was seen at Buskett on 2 Oct.

to 19 Nov, followed by late sighting at Kemmuna on 13 Dec. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 3 at Buskett on 02 Oct.

Red Kite (Astun Aħmar) *Milvus milvus*
1 at Buskett on 02 Oct (Fig. 33).

Black Kite (Astun Iswed) *Milvus migrans*

In spring, regular sightings on 16 dates from 23 Mar to 08 May, followed by late sighting at Simar NR on 01 Jun. Spring counts always in low single figures, with max. 3 at Luqa Airport on 04 Apr, at Kemmuna on 12 Apr, at Dwejra (M) on 28 Apr and at Xagħra on 29 Apr. In autumn, first sightings on 07 and 20 Aug, then on most dates from 31 Aug to 19 Sep and from 26 Sep to 04 Oct, followed by late sightings on 10 Oct, 20 Oct and 10 Nov. Autumn counts mostly in low single figures, with max. 8 at Buskett on 29 Sep.

Eurasian Buzzard (Kuċċarda Prima) *Buteo buteo*

Singles at Buskett and Dwejra (M) on 30 Sep and at Buskett on 06 Oct, the latter a Steppe Buzzard (subspecies *vulpinus*) (Fig. 34).

Common Hoopoe (Daqquqa tat-Toppu) *Upupa epops*

In spring, early sighting at L-Iklin on 17 Feb, then almost daily from 07 Mar to 27 Apr, followed by late sightings at Majjistral Park on 12 May and at Buskett on 31 May. Spring counts always in low single figures but 11 at Qammieħ on 31 Mar. In autumn, early sightings at Chadwick Lakes on 27 Jul and at Simar NR on 30 Jul, then regularly on 25 dates from 08 Aug to 08 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 3 at Qawra on 05 Sep.

12 ringed (11 in spring, 1 in autumn), most (5) at Kemmuna.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (Qerd in-Naħal Aħdar) *Merops persicus*
1 at Buskett on 12 Sep – the 14th confirmed record for Malta (previous record in May 2022).



Fig. 34. This dark Steppe Buzzard was spotted at Buskett on 06 Oct.

European Bee-eater (Qerd in-Naħal) *Merops apiaster*

In spring, first sightings on 31 Mar and 05 Apr, then practically daily from 12 Apr to 01 Jun, then sporadically on 6 dates from 07–29 Jun. Spring counts regularly in triple figures, with exceptional max. counts of 1500 at Kemmuna and 860 at Xagħra on 30 Apr. In Jul, 2 unusual sightings of 10 at Majjistral Park and 20 at Tas-Silġ on 05 Jul. In autumn, 2 early birds at Buskett on 02 Aug, then daily from 30 Aug to 07 Oct, followed by late sightings on 18 Oct at Buskett and Kemmuna, on 19 Oct at Ghadira NR, and an exceptionally late sighting at Wied Ghajn Rihana on 16 Dec. Autumn counts often in triple figures, with max. 874 on 14 Sep and 730 on 15 Sep at Dwejra (M).

130 ringed† (57 in spring, 73 in autumn), most (61) at Sannat.

European Roller (Farruġ) *Coracias garrulus*

In spring, sightings on 11 dates from 25 Apr to 10 Jun, always 1–2 birds. In autumn, sightings on 7 dates from 09–23 Sep, always of singles but 4 at Dwejra (M) on 11 Sep and 2 at Buskett on 13 Sep.

Common Kingfisher (Ghasfur ta' San Martin) *Alcedo atthis*

Sightings almost daily from 01 Jan to 29 Mar, mainly at Ghadira NR, Simar NR and Salina NR, always of 1–2 but 4 at Simar NR on 17 Feb. Then daily from 10 Aug to 31 Dec, always in single figures, with max. 7 at Salina NR on 05–06 Oct.

61 ringed (all in autumn), most (26) at Simar NR. 1 ringed in Germany controlled.

Eurasian Wryneck (Bulebbiet) *Jynx torquilla*

Singles at Buskett on 4 dates from 03 Jan to 04 Feb. Then in spring, sightings almost daily from 18 Mar to 20 Apr, always in low single figures, with max. 4 at Għarb on 29 Mar. In autumn, first sightings on 23rd, 27th and 29 Aug, then on most dates from 04 Sep to 07 Oct, then more sporadically on 19 dates from

15 Oct to 10 Dec. All autumn counts in low single figures, with max. 3 at Salina NR on 02 Nov.

30 ringed (18 in spring, 12 in autumn), most (15) at Ghadira NR.

Lesser Kestrel (Spanjulett Sekond) *Falco naumanni*

In spring, early sighting at Dwejra (M) on 23 Feb, then almost daily from 03 Mar to 26 Apr, followed by late sightings on 10th and 11 May. Spring counts always in single figures but 22 at Ċirkewwa on 21 Mar, and 15 at Dwejra (M) and 12 at Luqa Airport on 22 Mar. In autumn, first sighting on 12th and 15 Sep, then almost daily from 18 Sep to 11 Oct, followed by last sightings on 17 Oct. Autumn counts always in single figures but 36 at Buskett on 21 Sep, 28 at Dwejra (M) on 22 Sep and 20 at Dwejra (M) on 23 Sep.

Common Kestrel (Spanjulett) *Falco tinnunculus*

1 at Xagħra on 01 Jan. Then sightings on most dates from 14 Jan to 04 Feb, and regularly from 12 Feb to 01 Mar. Then almost daily from 04 Mar to 28 May, always in single figures but 10 at Ċirkewwa on 06 Apr and 15 at Tas-Silġ on 11 Apr. Then sightings on 7 dates in summer from 04 Jun to 29 Jul. Breeding confirmed in western cliffs of Gozo and at Naxxar. Then in autumn, sightings on most dates from 16 Aug to 29 Dec. Autumn counts always in single figures, with max. 9 at Dwejra (M) on 12 Oct.

1 ringed in Finland was controlled (recovered injured).

Kestrel species. *Falco sp.*

Unidentified kestrels recorded regularly from 25 Feb to 12 May and from 02 Sep to 03 Nov, with max. 12 at Ċirkewwa on 21 Mar and 10 at Kemmuna on 01 May.

Red-footed Falcon (Żumbrell) *Falco vespertinus*

In spring, an exceptionally early sighting at Luqa Airport on 15 Mar. Then sightings on most dates from 13 Apr to 01 Jun, followed by a late sighting at Salina NR on 06 Jun. Spring counts always in single figures but 10 at Haż-Żebbuġ on 16 Apr, 10 at Kemmuna on 30 Apr, 12 at Ta' Gianpula on 09 May and 14 at Ta' Gianpula on 10 May. In autumn, sightings on 4 dates from 05–11 Oct, always of singles but 2 at Buskett on 09 Oct.

Eleonora's Falcon (Bies tar-Reġina) *Falco eleonora*

In spring, sightings on 10 dates from 16 Apr to 14 Jun, always of singles but 2 at Buskett on 27 May. In autumn, first sightings on 17th, 18th and 20 Aug, then daily from 01–21 Sep, then more sporadically on 9 dates from 26 Sep to 21 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 4 at Dwejra (M) on 04 Sep.

Merlin (Seqer ta' Denbu) *Falco columbarius*

In spring, 1 at Ċirkewwa on 04 Mar. Then in autumn, sightings on 11 dates from 21 Sep to 08 Nov, always in singles but 2 at Buskett on 12 Oct.

Eurasian Hobby (Seqer tal-Mannieqa) *Falco subbuteo*

In spring, first sighting at Xagħra on 01 Apr, then practically daily from 05 Apr to 10 May, then last sightings on 15th, 27th and 28 May. Spring counts always in single figures, with max. 6 at Xagħra on 09 Apr and at Simar NR on 16 Apr. In autumn, first sightings on 30 Aug, then daily from 03 Sep to 19 Oct, followed by last sightings on 24 Oct and 01 Nov. Autumn counts always in single figures but 10 at Dwejra (M) on 11 Sep, 23 at Dwejra (M) on 18 Sep, 12 at Buskett on 21 Sep and 10 at Buskett on 05 Oct.

Saker Falcon (Bies tal-Lvant) *Falco cherrug*

1 at Buskett on 13 Oct.

Peregrine Falcon (Bies) *Falco peregrinus*

Singles at Ċirkewwa on 01 and 12 Mar, at Tal-Bardan on 17 Mar and at Kemmuna on 27 Apr. Then sightings of 1–2 on 3 dates at Dingli Cliffs from 18 May until 12 Jun, but breeding not confirmed. 1 at Sa Maison Garden on 25 Jul, then in autumn, 1–2 on 21 dates from 03 Sep to 25 Nov.

Eurasian Golden Oriole (Tajra Safra) *Oriolus oriolus*

In spring, first sighting at Buskett on 08 Apr, then sightings daily from 11 Apr to 24 May, followed by sporadic sightings on 6 dates from 28 May to 14 Jun and a late sighting at Buskett on 03 Jul. Spring counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 25 at Wied iċ-Ċawlsli on 12 May and 20 at Sa Maison on 16 May. In autumn almost daily from 30 Aug to 18 Sep. Autumn counts always in single figures, but 20 on 30 Aug, 10 on 31 Aug, 25 on 09 Sep and 10 on 10 Sep, all at Buskett.

51 ringed (49 in spring, 2 in autumn), most (24) at Kemmuna.

Red-backed Shrike (Kaċċamendula Ħamra) *Lanius collurio*

1 juv. at Buskett on 11 Sep (Fig. 35).

Woodchat Shrike (Kaċċamendula) *Lanius senator*

In spring, first sighting at Mtahleb on 23 Mar, then practically daily from 01–30 Apr and on 6 dates from 07–18 May. Spring



Fig. 35. This juvenile Red-backed Shrike turned up at the Buskett raptor watchpoint on 11 Sep.

Glen Micallef



Fig. 36. This Olivaceous Warbler ringed at Mtaħleb on 24 Aug was the first ever confirmed autumn record of this species.

Raymond Galea



Fig. 37. This Moustached Warbler at Ghadira NR on 8 Dec probably wintered at the reserve.

Glen Micallef



Fig. 38. This Marsh Warbler ringed at Mtaħleb on 8 Sep was a very rare record.

Raymond Galea



Fig. 39. Savi's Warbler ringed at Ghadira NR on 7 Apr.

counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Kemmuna on 20th and 26 Apr. In autumn, singles on 5 dates from 02–18 Sep.

21 ringed (all in spring), most (12) at Kemmuna.

Corvid species *Corvus* sp.

1 at Dingli and Siġġiewi on 02 Jan could not be identified with certainty.

Mediterranean Short-toed Lark (*Bilbla Sekonda*) *Alaudala rufescens*
1 at I-Aħrax on 08 Mar.

Greater Short-toed Lark (*Bilbla*) *Calandrella brachydactyla*
Relatively early sightings on 4 dates from 04–09 Mar, then on most dates from 16 Mar to 28 Sep, including breeding birds in summer in suitable areas. Counts generally in single or low double figures, with max. 40 at Kemmuna on 16 Apr, at Ta' Gianpula on 02 Sep, and at Luqa Airport on 21st and 23 Sep.
2 ringed in autumn at Mtaħleb.

Eurasian Skylark (*Alwetta*) *Alauda arvensis*
Regular sightings from 01 Jan to 06 Apr, mostly in single figures, with max. 27 at Dwejra (G) on 21 Mar and 28 at Luqa Airport on 23 Mar. Then almost daily from 03 Oct to end of year. Counts regularly in double figures. with max. 130 at Luqa Airport on 12 Nov and 150 at Qawra on 14 Nov.
11 ringed, all in Oct at Kemmuna.

Zitting Cisticola (*Bufula tal-Imrewħa*) *Cisticola juncidis*
Widespread resident breeder recorded daily throughout year in single and low double figures, with max. 32 at Burmarrad on 14 Jan and at Ġnejna on 01 Apr.
84 ringed throughout the year, most (35) at Manikata.

Olivaceous Warbler (*Bekkafik tal-Lvant*) *Iduna pallida*
1 ringed at Mtaħleb on 24 Aug (Fig. 36). The first autumn record of this species.

Icterine Warbler (*Bekkafik Isfar*) *Hippolais icterina*
In spring, sightings on most dates from 16 Apr to 30 May. Spring counts always in single figures but 10 at Buskett on 12 May. Then a good autumn for this species, with 1–2 on 13 dates from 23 Aug to 07 Oct, but 10 at Buskett on 23 Aug.
136 ringed (113 in spring, 23 in autumn), most (41) at Mtaħleb.

Moustached Warbler (*Bufula Qastnija*) *Acrocephalus melanopogon*
Singles at Wied Ġħajn Rihana on 5 dates from 14 Jan to 06 Feb, at Ġħajnsielem on 14–16 Jan, at Simar NR on 05th and 20 Nov, and 1 ringed at Ghadira NR on 27 Nov and re-trapped on 08 Dec (Fig. 37).

Sedge Warbler (*Bufula tas-Simar*) *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
An exceptional record of probably a wintering bird at Magħtab on 13 Jan. Then in spring, an early migrant at Ghadira NR on

John Attard Montalto



Fig. 40. The 19th Grasshopper Warbler for Malta, ringed at Buskett on 15 Oct.

15 Feb, then almost daily from 18 Mar to 02 Jun. Spring counts mostly in single figures, with max. 19 at Mtaħleb on 14 May and 15 at Simar NR on 18 May. In autumn, regular sightings from 19 Aug to 06 Oct, followed by late sightings on 24th and 27 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 4 at Mtaħleb on 07 Sep.

270 ringed (253 in spring, 17 in autumn), most (91) at Mtaħleb.
Max. ringed in 1 day was 35 on 14 May.

Marsh Warbler (*Bufula tal-Għadajjar*) *Acrocephalus palustris*
1 ringed at Mtaħleb on 08 Sep (Fig. 38).

Common Reed-warbler (*Bufula tal-Qasab*) *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
An early sighting at Ta' Gianpula on 08 Apr, then regular sightings from 27 Apr through to 06 Nov, followed by a late sighting at Salina NR on 16 Nov. Breeding confirmed at Salina NR and at Wied Ġħajn Rihana, with at least 1 pair at the former and 2 pairs at the latter fledging young. Max. counts of 10 on 29 Jul and 9 on 16 Sep, both at Wied Ġħajn Rihana.

87 ringed (16 in spring, 71 in summer/autumn including 3 pulli), most (23) at Simar NR.

Great Reed-warbler (*Bufula Prima*) *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

In spring, early sightings on 21st and 23 Mar, then almost daily from 31 Mar to 22 May. Spring counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Ghadira NR on 15 Apr. In autumn, first sighting at Ghadira NR on 13 Aug, then on 13 dates from 21 Aug to 16 Sep and on 11 dates from 01–29 Oct. All autumn sightings of 1–2.

79 ringed (58 in spring, 21 in autumn), most (20) at Ghadira NR. 1 ringed in Hungary controlled.

Savi's Warbler (*Bufula tal-Buda*) *Locustella luscinioides*
1 ringed at Ghadira NR on 07 Apr (Fig. 39).

Common Grasshopper-warbler (*Bufula tal-Ġurati*) *Locustella naevia*
1 ringed at Buskett on 15 Oct (Fig. 40). The 19th confirmed record for Malta (previous record in Sep 2021).

Northern House Martin (*ħawwief*) *Delichon urbicum*
In spring, sightings on 13 dates from 15 Jan to 17 Feb, then daily from 26 Feb to 16 Jun. Spring counts regularly in high double and low triple figures, with max. 400 on 19 Apr and 300 on 25 Apr at Salina NR. Breeding confirmed at Ħal Far, with around 10 nests found (Fig. 41). Most nests taken over or destroyed by Spanish Sparrows, and it is unknown whether any chicks fledged successfully. Sightings on 4 dates at Ħal Far from 22 Jun to 13 Jul concerned these birds. Then in autumn, first sightings at Ghadira NR on 16 Aug, then daily from 05 Sep to 09 Oct, then more sporadically on 7 dates from 15–30 Oct, followed by late sightings on 10 Nov, and 26th, 27th and 31 Dec. Autumn counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 50 at Buskett on 01st and 02 Oct.

8 ringed (all in spring), most (6) at Ghadira NR.

Red-rumped Swallow (*Reġina tal-ħutt*) *Cecropis daurica*
In spring, first sightings at Salina NR on 04 Mar, then almost daily from 15 Mar to 29 Apr and on 4 dates from 09–19 May. Spring counts mostly in low single figures, with max. 9 at Tal-Qadi on 12 Apr. In autumn, sightings on 5 dates from 05 Sep to 09 Oct, always of singles but 2 on 17 Sep and 3 on 09 Oct at Buskett.

3 ringed (all in spring), most (2) at Ghadira NR.

Barn Swallow (*ħutt*) *Hirundo rustica*
1 at Ghadira NR on 01 Jan. Then sightings from 13 Feb through to 08 Dec, followed by late sightings on 21 and 22 Dec. Max. counts in spring 300 at Ġħajn Tuffieħa on 22 Apr, at Dwejra



Fig. 41. The most exceptional breeding record of 2023 was multiple pairs of Northern House Martins breeding at Ħal Far, where this photo was taken on 08 Jun.



Fig. 42. This hybrid Barn Swallow x Northern House Martin was ringed at Ghadira NR on 30 Mar.

(M) on 23 Apr and at Salina NR on 25 Apr. Max. counts in autumn 2500 at Buskett on 01 Oct and 1500 at Għirgenti on 03 Oct. Breeding recorded at various localities in Gozo and more localised at a few localities in Malta.

821 ringed (229 in spring, 592 in summer/autumn), most (401) at Sannat. Max. ringed in 1 day was 55 on 13 Oct. 2 ringed in Malta controlled in Lithuania and Czechia.



Fig. 43. This Yellow-browed Warbler on 21 Feb wintered at Salina NR, where it was last seen on 04 Apr.

Hybrid Barn Swallow x Northern House Martin
1 ringed at Ghadira NR on 30 Mar (Fig. 42).

Eurasian Crag Martin (Hawwiefia tal-Blat) *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
Singles at Ċirkewwa on 21 Mar, at Ghadira NR on 10 Dec, at Qammieħ on 13 Dec, at Majjistral Park on 21 Dec and at Ghadira NR on 27 Dec.

Collared Sand Martin (Hawwiefia tax-Xtut) *Riparia riparia*
In spring, sightings almost daily from 09 Mar to 28 May, then more sporadically on 7 dates from 03–15 Jun. Spring counts regularly in double figures, with max. 75 at Wied is-Sewda on 09 May and 80 at Burmarrad on 10 May. In autumn, sightings almost daily from 05–25 Sep, then on 01st, 02nd and 09 Oct and a late sighting at Buskett on 10 Nov. Autumn counts always in single figures but 13 at Burmarrad on 08 Sep.

12 ringed (11 in spring, 1 in autumn), most (7) at Ghadira NR.

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler (Vjolin tal-Lvant) *Phylloscopus orientalis*
In spring, sightings on 7 dates from 19 to 30 Mar, always of singles but 2 at Ghadira NR on 21 Mar and at Nadur (G) on 24 Mar. 1 at Ghadira NR on 09–10 Jul was a very unseasonal record.
5 ringed (all in spring), most (2) at Ghadira NR.

Western Bonelli's Warbler (Vjolin Bajdani) *Phylloscopus bonelli*
1 at Marsa from 13–16 Apr and 1 ringed at Simar NR on 25 Apr.

Wood Warbler (Vjolin Ħadrani) *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
In spring, first sightings on 26 and 27 Mar, then practically daily from 31 Mar to 02 Jun, followed by late sightings on 12th and 16 Jun. Spring counts often in double figures, with max. 80 at Salina NR and Simar NR on 25 Apr and 100 at Salina NR and 80 at Simar NR on 26 Apr. In autumn, sightings on 6 dates from 20 Aug to 01 Sep, then practically daily from 05 Sep to 07 Oct, followed by late sightings on 14th, 15th and 18 Oct. Autumn counts mostly in single figures, with max. 15 at Buskett on 08 Sep and at Ghadira NR on 10 Sep.

1323 ringed (1202 in spring, 121 in autumn), most (431) at Ghadira NR. Max. ringed in 1 day was 122 on 24 Apr. 1 ringed in Albania controlled.

Yellow-browed Warbler (Vjolin tal-Faxx) *Phylloscopus inornatus*
Singles at Buskett on 04 Jan, at Salina on 5 dates from 21 Feb to 04 Apr (Fig. 43) and at Miżieb on 21–22 Mar. In autumn, sightings on 21 dates from 06 Oct to 22 Nov, always of singles but 2 at Buskett on 12th, 13th and 27 Oct.

16 ringed (from 07 Oct to 27 Nov), most (8) at Buskett.

Dusky Warbler (Vjolin Skur) *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
1 ringed at Mtaħleb on 16 Nov (Fig. 44). The 11th confirmed record for Malta (previous record in Nov 2021).

Willow Warbler (Vjolin Safrani) *Phylloscopus trochilus*
In spring, early sightings on 02nd and 04 Mar, then daily from



Fig. 44. The 11th Dusky Warbler for Malta ringed at Mtaħleb on 16 Nov.

21 Mar to 26 Apr, and more sporadically on 13 dates from 29 Apr to 02 Jun. Spring counts mostly in single figures, with max. 20 on 21st, 22nd and 27 Mar and 13 Apr, all at Ghadira NR. In autumn, sightings on most dates from 17 Aug to 05 Sep, then practically daily from 07 Sep to 19 Oct, followed by a late sighting on 31 Oct. Autumn counts always in single figures, but 20 at Burmarrad on 20 Sep, and 10 at Ghadira NR on 22 and 28 Sep.

338 ringed (245 in spring, 93 in autumn), most (158) at Ghadira NR. Max. ringed in 1 day was 24 on 21 Mar. 1 ringed in Malta controlled in Finland.

Iberian Chiffchaff (Vjolin Spanjol) *Phylloscopus ibericus*
1 at Buskett from 01 May to 13 Jun (ringed on 07 May) (Fig. 45). The 4th confirmed record for Malta (previous record in Feb–Mar 2010).



Fig. 45. The 4th Iberian Chiffchaff for Malta could be heard singing at Buskett for several weeks in late spring. This photo was taken on the first day it was found on 01 May.

Common Chiffchaff (Vjolin tax-Xitwa)

Phylloscopus collybita

Sightings daily from 01 Jan to 08 Apr, followed by late sightings on 19 Apr, 20 Apr, 05 May, 15 Jun and 26 Jun. Counts regularly in low double figures with max. 30 at Mġarr ix-Xini on 21 Jan, at Chadwick Lakes on 29 Jan and at Burmarrad on 26 Feb. Then first sightings on 29 Sep, 07 Oct and 08 Oct, then daily from 10 Oct to end of year. Counts regularly in double figures, with max. 100 at Mġarr ix-Xini on 01 Nov and 150 at Buskett on 19 Nov. A leucistic bird was also seen at Simar NR on 10th and 12 Dec (Fig. 46).

2299 ringed (433 from Jan–Jun, 1866 from Sep–Dec), most (607) at Ghadira NR. Max. ringed in 1 day was 265 on 19 Nov. 1 ringed in Croatia and 2 ringed in Norway controlled. 1 ringed in Malta controlled in Germany.

Siberian Chiffchaff (Vjolin Ċar) *Phylloscopus tristis*
Singles at Simar NR on 17 Feb, at Ghadira NR on 04 Mar and at Rabat on 02 Dec.

Cetti's Warbler (Bufula tal-Għolliq) *Cettia cetti*
Widespread resident breeder recorded throughout year, usually in single and low double figures of up to 15.

133 ringed throughout year, most (38) at Buskett.

Eurasian Blackcap (Kapinera) *Sylvia atricapilla*
Sightings daily from 01 Jan to 20 Apr, then on 6 dates from 23 Apr to 10 May, followed by late sightings at Żabbar on 27 May and 29 Jun. Counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 50 at Buskett on 29 Jan and at Għirgenti on 16 Mar. Then in autumn, first sightings on 10th and 13 Sep, then practically



Fig. 46. This leucistic Common Chiffchaff was first noted at Simar NR on 10 Dec and ringed 2 days later.



Fig. 47. Autumn produced 2 records of Barred Warbler, including this first-year ringed at Ghadira NR on 04 Oct.



Fig. 48. Lesser Whitethroats are mostly recorded in autumn. This one ringed at Ghadira NR on 15 Apr was one of 2 spring records in 2023.



Fig. 49. Moltoni's Warbler is now an expected annual rarity. This ♂ was ringed at Kemmuna on 16 Apr.

daily from 15 Sep to 31 Dec. Counts frequently in double figures, with max. 100 on 08 Oct and 120 on 29 Oct, both at Buskett.

1493 ringed (444 from Jan–May, 1049 from Sep–Dec), most (695) at Buskett. Max. ringed in 1 day was 72 on 19 Nov. 1 ringed in Belgium controlled.

Garden Warbler (Bekkaġik) *Sylvia borin*

In spring, first sightings on 08 and 09 Apr, then daily from 13 Apr to 24 May, then more sporadically from 28 May to 14 Jun.

Spring counts regularly in double figures, with max. 70 at Buskett on 08 May and 120 at Mġarr ix-Xini on 10 May. In autumn, first sighting on 13 Aug, then practically daily from 17 Aug to 01 Nov, followed by late sightings on 06th, 08th, 09th and 19 Nov. Autumn counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 50 on 23 Aug, 25 Aug and 03 Sep, all at Buskett.

2237 ringed (1413 in spring, 824 in autumn), most (686) at Buskett. Max. ringed in 1 day was 196 on 10 May. 1 ringed in Greece controlled.

African Desert Warbler (Bufula tad-Deżert) *Curruca deserti*

1 at Sannat on 07 Nov. The 8th confirmed record for Malta (previous record in Apr 2016).

Barred Warbler (Bekkaġik tal-Istrixxi) *Curruca nisoria*

First-years ringed on 27 Aug at Mtaħleb and on 04 Oct at Ghadira NR (Fig. 47). The 7th and 8th confirmed records for Malta (previous record in Apr 2022).

Lesser Whitethroat (Bekkaġik Irmiedi) *Curruca curruca*

Singles at Ghadira NR on 23 Mar, 15 Apr (Fig. 48), 09 Sep, and 29 Sep, at Mtaħleb on 03 Oct, at Kemmuna on 23rd and 26 Oct (same bird), and at Mġarr ix-Xini on 17 Oct and 01 Nov (same bird), all involving ringed or retrapped birds.

Sardinian Warbler (Bufula Sewda) *Curruca melanocephala*

Widespread resident breeder recorded throughout year, usually in single and low double figures of up to 47. Migrants also occur, particularly in autumn.

732 ringed throughout year, most (195) at Buskett. Max. ringed in 1 day was 25 on 08 Aug.

Subalpine Warbler (Bufula Passajra) *Curruca cantillans*

An exceptional record of a wintering bird at Wied Harq Hamiem on 3 dates from 16 Jan to 20 Feb. Then in spring, first sightings on 05th and 09 Mar, then practically daily from 12 Mar to 01 May followed by last sighting on 09 May. Spring counts always in single figures but 10 at Ghadira NR on 21 and 23 Mar and at Kemmuna on 31 Mar. In autumn, first sighting on 22 Jul, then sightings on most dates from 27 Jul to 20 Oct, followed by late sightings on 03rd and 07 Nov. Autumn counts always in single figures but 10 on 17 Aug and 20 on 23 Aug at Buskett.

322 ringed (103 in spring, 219 in autumn), most (98) at Buskett. Max. ringed in 1 day was 18 on 23 Aug.

Moltoni's Warbler (Bufula ta' Sardenja) *Curruca subalpina*

Singles at Kemmuna on 16 Apr (Fig. 49) and at Ghadira NR from 01–07 Oct, both ringed.

Common Whitethroat (Bekkaġik Aħmar) *Curruca communis*

In spring, sightings practically daily from 21 Mar to 25 May, then sporadically till 10 Jun. Spring counts regularly in double

figures, with max. 200 at Buskett and 100 at Kemmuna on 20 Apr. In autumn, sightings on 4 dates from 08–21 Sep, always in low single figures, with max. 4 at Mtaħleb on 10 Sep.

865 ringed† (852 in spring, 13 in autumn), most (321) at Kemmuna. Max. ringed in 1 day was 260 on 20 Apr.

Spectacled Warbler (Bufula Ħamra) *Curruca conspicillata*

Resident breeder recorded throughout year in suitable areas, with counts mostly in low single figures, with max. 17 on 29 Mar and 18 on 14 Jun at Għarb.

14 ringed (3 in spring, 11 in autumn), most (10) at Kemmuna.

Dartford Warbler (Bufula tax-Xagħri) *Curruca undata*

A good winter for this species produced a first-year ♂ at Foresta 2000 from 08–29 Dec (ringed on the first date), up to 3 (1 ♂ and 2 ♀♀) at Qammieħ from 12–16 Dec (Fig. 50), and 1 at Kemmuna from 12–13 Dec.

Common Starling (Sturnell) *Sturnus vulgaris*

Sightings practically daily from 01 Jan to 25 Mar, then sporadically on 11 dates from 31 Mar to 15 Jun. Counts regularly in triple figures, with max. 1500 on 01 Jan and 800 on 14 Jan at Ghadira NR. Then sightings practically daily from 27 Sep to 31 Dec. Counts regularly in quadruple figures, with max. 3000 at Kemmuna on 29 Oct, at Luqa on 03 Nov and at Qawra on 09 Dec.

9 ringed (3 in Feb, 6 from Oct–Dec), most (4) at Simar NR.

Mistle Thrush (Malvizzun Prim) *Turdus viscivorus*

Singles at Buskett on 01 Jan, at Kemmuna on 05 Nov, at Buskett on 11 Nov, 2 at Buskett and at Xagħra on 19 Nov, 1 at Buskett from 27–28 Nov and 2 at Buskett on 29 Nov.

Song Thrush (Malvizz) *Turdus philomelos*

Sightings on most dates from 01 Jan to 05 Apr. Counts mostly in single figures, with max. 25 at Buskett on 01 Jan, 29 Jan and 06 Feb. Then sporadic sightings of singles on 21 dates from 11 Apr to 30 Aug, mainly concerning probably an escaped bird at Buskett. Then sightings daily from 06 Oct to 31 Dec. Counts regularly in double figures, with max. 80 at Buskett on 08 Nov, 21 Nov and 05 Dec.

161 ringed† (31 from Jan to Apr, 130 from Oct to Dec), most (63) at Kemmuna.

Redwing (Malvizz Aħmar)

Turdus iliacus

Singles at Buskett on 01 Jan, 19 Dec and 25 Dec, and at Manoel Island on 26 Feb.



Fig. 50. December produced exceptional numbers of Dartford Warblers. This bird was one of three at Qammieħ on 12 Dec.

Eurasian Blackbird (Malvizz Iswed) *Turdus merula*

Sightings on 7 dates from 01 Jan to 13 Mar, always of singles but 3 at Buskett on 16 Feb. Then regular sightings on 26 dates from 18 Oct to 30 Dec. Counts always of 1–2 but 3 at Buskett on 11 Nov and 25 Dec.

5 ringed† (1 in Feb, 4 from Oct–Dec), most (4) at Buskett.

Fieldfare (Malvizzun tal-Qtajja) *Turdus pilaris*

2 on 29 Jan and 1 on 01st and 04 Feb at Buskett. Then singles at Buskett on 25 Nov and at Foresta 2000 on 08 Dec, followed by 3 at Clapham Junction on 19 Dec.

Ring Ouzel (Malvizz tas-Sidra) *Turdus torquatus*

1 on 18th and 26 Oct, then up to 4 till 05 Nov at Kemmuna, of which 1 ringed (Fig. 51), and singles at Salina NR on 01 Nov and at Buskett on 10 Nov.



Fig. 51. 2023 was a good year for Ring Ouzels. This ♀ ringed at Kemmuna on 01 Nov was one of 4 that spent multiple days in the area.



Fig. 52. This Bluethroat at Mtaħleb on 09 Nov was one of 3 ringed in 2023.



Fig. 53. ♀ Semi-collared Flycatcher ringed at Għadira NR on 01 Apr.

Rufous-tailed Scrub-robin (Rożinjol tax-Xagħri) *Cercotrichas galactotes*
Singles at Majjistral Park on 19 Apr and at Żonqor on 01 May.

Spotted Flycatcher (Żanzarell tat-Tikek) *Muscicapa striata*
In spring, sightings practically daily from 16 Apr to 11 Jun. Spring counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 43 at Burmarrad and 40 at Mġarr ix-Xini on 10 May. Breeding birds noted throughout summer, with max. counts at usual strongholds of Buskett, Ta' Qali and Ġnien Tal-Bombi of with around 12, 7 and 5 breeding pairs respectively, and an estimated 40–50 pairs across Malta. Probable autumn migrants noted almost daily from 04–20 Sep and more sporadically on 5 dates from 30 Sep to 11 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures of up to 3. Genetic and migration studies of breeding Spotted Flycatchers ongoing, with results indicating presence of both *tyrrhenica* individuals and nominate birds of the North African

clade as well as hybridisation between the two.

219 ringed (195 in spring, 24 in summer/autumn), most (63) at Kemmuna. Max. ringed in 1 day was 32 on 10 May.

European Robin (Pitirross) *Erithacus rubecula*
Sightings on most dates throughout the year. Low to mid double figure counts recorded until late Mar, followed by low single figures throughout spring and summer. Then low double figure counts regular again from early Oct, increasing to high double and low triple figure counts from mid Oct. Max. counts of 200 at Kemmuna on 25 Oct, 31 Oct and 01 Nov.
3542 ringed† (346 from Jan–May, 34 from Jun–Sep, 3162 from Oct–Dec), most (1049) at Kemmuna. Max. ringed in 1 day was 221 on 01 Nov.

Bluethroat (Rożinjol Ikħal) *Cyanecula svecica*
Singles at Simar NR on 20th and 25 Feb, at Burmarrad on 22 Feb and from 26–28 Feb, at Bidnija on 12 Mar and at Wied Għajn Riħana on 17 Mar. Then singles at Għadira NR on 08th, 13th and 15 Oct, 1–2 at Wied Għajn Riħana on 15 Oct, 26 Oct, 21 Nov and 16 Dec, 1–2 at Simar NR on 30 Oct and 04 Dec, and singles at Mtaħleb on 09 Nov (Fig. 52), Burmarrad on 18 Nov and 10 Dec, Rabat on 19 Nov, and at il-Ħofra on 08 Dec.
3 ringed, all in autumn.

Common Nightingale (Rożinjol) *Luscinia megarhynchos*
In spring, sightings practically daily from 21 Mar to 01 May. Spring counts always in single figures, with max. 8 at Kemmuna on 16 Apr and 9 at Dwejra (M) on 19 Apr. In autumn, regular sightings on 22 dates from 23 Aug to 13 Oct, followed by a late sighting at Kemmuna on 30 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 4 at Buskett on 02 Sep and at Bidnija on 09 Sep.
48 ringed (35 in spring, 13 in autumn), most (22) at Kemmuna.

Red-breasted Flycatcher (Żanzarell Żgħir) *Ficedula parva*
A very poor year with single record of 1 at Dingli on 02 Nov.

Semi-collared Flycatcher (Żanzarell tal-Lvant) *Ficedula semitorquata*
Singles at Għadira NR from 30 Mar to 02 Apr (Fig. 53) and on 07 Apr, at Għargħur on 31 Mar, at Burmarrad on 08 Apr, at Salina NR on 19 Apr, and at Fgura from 04–05 May.
1 ♀ ringed on 01 Apr at Għadira NR.

European Pied Flycatcher (Żanzarell Iswed) *Ficedula hypoleuca*
In spring, first sighting at Buskett on 30 Mar, then daily from 02 Apr to 14 May and sporadically on 7 dates from 17 May to 13 Jun. Spring counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 40 on 25 Apr and 50 on 26 Apr at Kemmuna. In autumn, sporadic sightings on 4 dates from 22 Aug to 09 Sep, followed by a late sighting at Buskett on 24 Oct. Autumn counts always of singles but 2 at Ta' Qali on 06 Sep.
359 ringed (all in spring), most (181) at Kemmuna. Max. ringed in 1 day was 53 on 26 Apr.

Collared Flycatcher (Żanzarell tal-Kullar) *Ficedula albicollis*
In spring, regular sightings on most dates from 29 Mar to 12 May, followed by last sighting at Ġirgenti on 19 May. Spring counts always in single figures, but 12 on 23 Apr, 20 on 01 May and 10 on 02 May at Kemmuna. In autumn, 1 at San Lawrenz on 16–17 Sep.
86 ringed (all in spring), most (46) at Kemmuna.

Black Redstart (Fjamma Sewda) *Phoenicurus ochrurus*
Sightings on most dates from 01 Jan to 29 Mar, followed by a late sightings at Ta' Ċenċ and at Dwejra (G) on 05 Apr. Counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 25 at Ta' Ċenċ on 13 Jan and at Salina NR on 23 Feb. Then in autumn, first sighting on 17 Oct, then on most dates from 21 Oct to 31 Dec. Counts mostly in single figures, with max. 15 at Kemmuna on 02 Nov and 18 at Santa Venera on 19 Nov.
49 ringed (17 from Jan–Mar, 32 from Oct–Dec), most (8) at Salina NR, Kemmuna and Manikata.

Common Redstart (Fjamma) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
In spring, 1 early sighting at Għadira NR on 26 Feb, then sightings almost daily from 19 Mar to 05 May, followed by late sightings at Għadira NR on 13 May and at Mġarr ix-Xini on 16 May. Spring counts always in single figures but 15 at Kemmuna on 25 Apr. In autumn, first sightings on 30 Aug and 08 Sep at Buskett, then almost daily from 10 Sep to 24 Oct, followed by late sightings on 31 Oct, 01 Nov and 10 Nov. Autumn counts always in single figures but 10 at Kemmuna on 18 Oct.
118 ringed (70 in spring, 48 in autumn), most (48) at Kemmuna.

Moussier's Redstart (Fjamma tat-Tuneżija) *Phoenicurus moussieri*
1 ♂ at Għar Lapsi from 06–08 Mar.

Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush (Ġanbublu) *Monticola saxatilis*
Singles at Delimara on 03 Apr, at Ġebel Ciantar on 11 Apr, at Kemmuna on 4 dates from 15–27 Apr (of which 2 ringed) (Fig. 54), and at Wied Qirda on 20 Apr.

Blue Rock-thrush (Merill) *Monticola solitarius*
Widespread resident breeder recorded throughout year, usually in single and low double figures of up to 20, mostly in coastal cliffs, but also regularly in urban areas.
60 ringed† throughout year, most (18) at Kemmuna.

Whinchat (Buċaqq tas-Silla) *Saxicola rubetra*
In spring, sightings on 6 dates from 21 Mar to 01 Apr, then practically daily from 05 Apr to 12 May, and on 3 dates from 17–31 May. Spring counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 40 at Majjistral Park on 20 Apr. In autumn, regular sightings on 13 dates from 31 Aug to 27 Sep, followed by a late sighting at Kemmuna on 19 Oct. Autumn counts always of singles but 2 at Luqa Airport on 22 Sep.
126 ringed (125 in spring, 1 in autumn), most (94) at Kemmuna.



Fig. 54. Rufous-tailed Rock-thrushes are one of the most sought after migrants in Malta. This ♂ was ringed at Kemmuna on 15 Apr.

Common Stonechat (Buċaqq tax-Xitwa) *Saxicola torquatus*
Sightings on most dates from 01 Jan to 21 Mar. Counts always in single figures but 10 at Luqa Airport on 13 Jan. Then sightings daily from 08 Oct to 31 Dec. Counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 15 at Salina NR on 13 Nov and at Ta' Ċenċ on 19 Nov.
96 ringed (3 from Jan–Feb, 93 from Oct–Dec), most (22) at Manikata.

Northern Wheatear (Kuda) *Oenanthe oenanthe*
In spring, sightings on most dates from 27 Feb to 01 May, followed by late sightings at Ta' Ċenċ on 20 May and at Dwejra (G) on 25 May. Spring counts regularly in low double figures, with max. 29 at Tal-Ħamrija on 21 Mar and 35 at Majjistral Park on 22 Mar. In autumn, sightings almost daily from 19 Aug to 11 Oct, then sporadically on 7 dates from 16 Oct to 07 Nov. Autumn counts always in single figures but 20 on 21 Sep and 25 on 22 Sep at Luqa Airport.
10 ringed (2 in spring, 8 in autumn), most (7) at Mtaħleb.

Isabelline Wheatear (Kuda Ramlija) *Oenanthe isabellina*
Regular sightings on most dates from 25 Feb to 26 Mar, followed by late sighting at Salina NR on 27 Apr. Counts always in low single figures, with max. 3 at Luqa Airport on 25 Feb, at L-Ahrax on 04 Mar, and at Majjistral Park on 22 Mar.
1 ringed on 06 Mar at Tal-Bardan.

Black-eared Wheatear (Kuda Dumnikana) *Oenanthe hispanica*
In spring, regular sightings on 20 dates from 20 Mar to 04 May, followed by late sightings at Burmarrad on 10 May and at Dwejra (G) on 18 May. Spring counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Ġebel Ciantar on 19 Apr. In autumn, 1 at Buskett on 04 Sep and 3 at Wied Fulija on 05 Sep.
1 ringed on 04 May at Kemmuna.



Fig. 55. This completely white, leucistic Spanish Sparrow was ringed at Ghadira NR on 13 Dec.



Fig. 56. Olive-backed Pipit ringed at Mtaħleb on 31 Oct.

Goldcrest (Bufula tal-Qamar) *Regulus regulus*

Sightings on 11 dates from 01 Jan to 23 Feb. Counts always in low single figures, with max. 5 at Salina NR on 17 Jan. Then sightings on 17 dates from 11 Nov to 29 Dec, always of 1–2.

14 ringed (1 in Jan, 13 from Nov–Dec), most (6) at Mtaħleb.

Common Firecrest (Bufula tax-Xemx) *Regulus ignicapilla*

Sightings on 4 dates from 01 Jan to 15 Feb, all at Buskett and always of singles, but 3 at Buskett on first date, followed by 1 at Mizieħ on 22 Mar. Then a poor autumn for this species, with 1 at Buskett on 01 Nov, followed by sightings on 8 dates from 09–26 Dec. Counts always in low single figures with max. 4 at Ta' Qali on 09 Dec.

3 ringed (2 from Jan–Feb, 1 in Nov), all at Buskett.

Dunnock (Żiemel) *Prunella modularis*

Regular sightings on 28 dates from 01 Jan to 09 Mar. Counts always in low single figures but 20 at Buskett on 04 Feb. Then sightings on most dates from 25 Oct to 29 Dec. Counts always in single figures but 10 at Buskett on 19 Nov.

95 ringed (21 from Jan–Mar, 74 from Oct–Dec), most (43) at Buskett.

Spanish Sparrow (Għasfur tal-Bejt) *Passer hispaniolensis*

Widespread resident breeder recorded throughout year, usually

in double and triple figures. As usual, a few apparent migrants regularly noted during migration periods, such as 30 at Ċirkewwa on 12 Apr and 20 at Mgarr ix-Xini on 30 Oct.

1265 ringed† throughout year, most (238) at Ghadira NR including 1 leucistic (Fig. 55). Max. ringed in 1 day was 59 on 10 May.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (Għgħah) *Passer montanus*

Widespread resident breeder recorded throughout year, usually in single and low double figures, with max. 50 at Salina NR on 25 Jul and 55 at Ta' Qali on 14 Dec.

149 ringed† throughout year, most (60) at Buskett.

Tree Pipit (Dizz) *Anthus trivialis*

In spring, first sighting at Binġemma on 13 Mar, then daily from 19 Mar to 02 May and more sporadically on 11 dates from 04–21 May. Spring counts regularly in double and low triple figures, with max. 450 at Xagħra on 02 Apr and 377 at Tal-Bardan on 08 Apr. In autumn, sightings on most dates from 05 Sep to 05 Oct, then more sporadically on 8 dates from 10 Oct to 07 Nov. Autumn counts always in single figures, with max. 9 at Xagħra l-Hamra on 17 Sep and 8 at Buskett on 27 Sep.

683 ringed (678 in spring, 5 in autumn), most (236) at Mtaħleb. Max. ringed in 1 day was 180 on 02 Apr.

Olive-backed Pipit (Dizz tal-Lvant) *Anthus hodgsoni*

2 at Ta' Qali on 01 Jan, 1 at Tal-Qroqq on 16 and 22 Mar, 1 at Wied Ghajn Rihana on 19 Mar and 1 ringed at Mtaħleb on 31 Oct (Fig. 56).

Red-throated Pipit (Dizz Aħmar) *Anthus cervinus*

2 at Marsa on 25 Feb were probably wintering birds. Then in spring, sightings on most dates from 17 Mar to 01 May. Spring counts always in low single figures but 15 at Luqa Airport on 01 Apr. Then in autumn, singles on 01st, 03rd and 12 Oct at Buskett, then almost daily from 16–26 Oct and sporadically on 5 dates from 31 Oct to 21 Dec. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 4 on 19 Oct and 5 on 24 Oct at Kemmuna.

Meadow Pipit (Pespūs) *Anthus pratensis*

Sightings practically daily from 01 Jan to 08 Apr. Counts regularly in double figures with max. 120 at Ta' Gianpula on 17 Mar. Then sightings practically daily from 17 Oct to 31 Dec. Counts regularly in double figures, with max. 150 at Mtaħleb and 100 at Buskett on 10 Nov and 100 at Luqa Airport on 05 Dec.

450 ringed (112 from Jan–Mar, 338 from Oct–Dec), most (151) at Mtaħleb. Max. ringed in 1 day was 42 on 09 Nov.

Water Pipit (Dizz tal-Ilma) *Anthus spinoletta*

Singles at Ghadira NR on 6 dates from 01 Jan to 11 Mar (Fig. 57) and at Wied Ghajn Rihana on 16 Jan.



Fig. 57. This Water Pipit wintered at Ghadira NR, and was seen irregularly till 11 Mar (photo taken on 07 Jan).

Richard's Pipit (Bilblun Prim) *Anthus richardi*

1 at Buskett on 06 Oct.

Tawny Pipit (Bilblun) *Anthus campestris*

In spring, first sightings on 10 and 16 Mar, then almost daily from 21 Mar to 06 May, followed by last sightings on 15 and 22 May. Spring counts always in single figures but 14 at Tal-Hamrija on 21 Mar. In autumn, regular sightings on 15 dates from 01 Sep to 07 Oct. Autumn counts always in low single figures, with max. 3 at Buskett on 10 Sep and at Żonqor on 30 Sep.

Western Yellow Wagtail (Isfar) *Motacilla flava*

In spring, sightings practically daily from 03 Mar to 17 May, followed by late sightings on 29 and 31 May. Spring counts often in double figures, with max. 200 at Ta' Gianpula on 21 and 23 Mar. In autumn, early sighting at Ghadira NR on 08 Jul, then sightings on 03rd, 10th and 12 Aug, then practically daily from 15 Aug to 17 Oct and more sporadically on 3 dates from 20–30 Oct. Autumn counts regularly in high double figures, with max. 200 on 15 Sep and 150 on 16 Sep at Buskett.

88 ringed (45 in spring, 43 in autumn), most (61) at Ghadira NR.

Grey Wagtail (Zakak tad-Dell) *Motacilla cinerea*

Regular sightings of 1–2 birds on most dates from 02 Jan to 07 Mar, then sporadically on 3 dates from 12–27 Mar. 1–2 regularly noted on 7 dates from 14 Apr to 30 Jun in the Marsa area, however breeding was not confirmed. Then in autumn first sightings on 17 and 18 Sep, then almost daily from 27

Sep to 31 Dec. Counts always in low single figures with max. 4 at Simar NR on 31 Oct.

4 ringed, all in autumn at Wied Harq Hamiem.

White Wagtail (Zakak Abjad) *Motacilla alba*

Sightings daily from 01 Jan to 13 Apr, followed by late sightings on 17 Apr, 30 Apr and 15 May. Counts often in double figures, with max. 100 at Marsa on 03 Mar. Roost counts produced counts of 962 at Qawra on 13 Jan and 11,192 at Valletta on 14 Jan. Then in autumn, first sightings on 27 Sep and 03 Oct, then daily from 07 Oct till end of year. Counts often in double figures. Triple figure counts related to roosts include 782 at Qawra on 14 Dec.

22 ringed† (3 from Jan to Feb, 19 from Oct to Dec), most (5) at Mtaħleb.

Note on finches

Due to the widespread pastime of keeping and breeding finches in Malta, it is probable that a significant share of sightings in the wild refer to escapees, particularly away from autumn and winter. In addition, information on controls of foreign-ringed birds also includes those caught as part of the finch-trapping derogation.

Common Chaffinch (Sponsun) *Fringilla coelebs*

Sightings on most dates from 01 Jan to 08 Apr, then more sporadically from 21 Apr to 31 Aug and on most dates from 05 Sep to 31 Dec. Counts often in double figures, with max. counts in autumn of 70 on 19th and 27 Nov, both at Buskett.

20 ringed† (2 from Jan–Mar, 18 from Oct–Dec), most (12) at Buskett.

Brambling (Sponsun Selvaġġ) *Fringilla montifringilla*

Singles at Buskett on 13 Nov and 21 Dec (Fig. 58), and at Rabat on 26 Nov.

1 ringed† on 21 Dec at Buskett.



Fig. 58. A good autumn for finches also produced a few scarce Bramblings (this one ringed at Buskett on 21 Dec).



Fig. 59. First-year Common Rosefinch ringed at Ghadira NR on 30 Sep.

Hawfinch (Taž-Żebbuġ) *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
1 at Buskett on 03 and 29 Jan. Then 1 at Sannat on 14 Oct, and 1 at Kemmuna, 5 at Buskett, and 1 at Haž Żebbuġ on 30 Oct.
1 ringed in Italy controlled.

Common Rosefinch (Bumunqar) *Carpodacus erythrinus*
1 first-year ringed at Ghadira NR on 30 Sep (Fig. 59).

Trumpeter Finch (Trumbettier) *Bucanetes githagineus*
1 at Għar Lapsi on 04 Mar.

European Greenfinch (Verdun) *Chloris chloris*
Sporadic sightings on 12 dates from 07 Jan to 11 Apr. Counts



Fig. 60. Autumn 2023 produced relatively good numbers of finches, particularly Eurasian Siskins, such as this one at Foresta 2000 on 09 Dec.

always in low single figures with max. 4 at Manoel Island on 07 Jan and on 20 Mar. Then regular sightings on 15 dates from 27 Oct to 29 Dec. Counts always in low single figures with max. 4 at Kemmuna on 01 Nov.

1 ringed† on 26 Dec at Buskett.

Common Linnet (Ġojjin) *Linaria cannabina*
3 at Manoel Island on 08 Jan and 1 at Majjistral Park on 25 Feb, then regular sightings from 07–29 Mar, then sporadically on 12 dates from 01 Apr to 25 Jul and on most dates from 06 Sep to 24 Dec. Autumn counts often in low double figures, with max. 30 at Kemmuna on 30 Oct and 02 Nov. However, an exceptional 90 were present at Xrobb l-Għaġin from 10 Dec onwards.
3 ringed† on 30 Oct at Kemmuna.

European Goldfinch (Gardell) *Carduelis carduelis*
Sporadic sightings on 10 dates from 19 Jan to 20 Apr, always of singles but 2 at Ċirkewwa on 16 Mar. Then 1 at Ta' Qali on 16 Jul and 1 at Majjistral Park on 26 Sep and 04 Oct, followed by sightings on 6 dates from 04 Nov to 15 Dec, always of singles but 2 at Rabat on 26 Nov.

European Serin (Apparell) *Serinus serinus*
Sightings on 4 dates from 01–19 Jan, always of singles but 4 at Manoel Island on 08 Jan. Then singles at Ċirkewwa on 05 Apr and at Ġebel Ċiantar on 19 Apr. Then sightings on 11 dates from 27 Oct to 26 Dec. Counts always in low single figures but 19 at Haž Dingli on 08 Dec.
1 ringed† on 25 Dec at Buskett.

Eurasian Siskin (Ekru) *Spinus spinus*
Sporadic sightings on 8 dates from 01 Jan to 01 Mar, on 3 dates from 22–30 Mar, and on 7 dates from 19 Apr to 20 Sep. Counts always of 1–2 but 3 at Buskett on 29 Jan. Then a very good autumn for this species, with first sightings on 06th and 08 Oct, then on most dates from 18 Oct to 29 Dec (Fig. 60). Autumn counts often in double figures, with max. 30 at Miġra l-Ferħa on 09 Nov.
16 ringed† (2 in Jan, 14 from Oct to Dec), most (6) at Buskett. 1 ringed in Belgium, 1 ringed in Denmark, 1 ringed in Finland, 10 ringed in Italy, 1 ringed in Norway, 1 ringed in Poland, 1 ringed in Russia, 1 ringed in Slovenia and 5 ringed in Switzerland controlled.

Corn Bunting (Durrajsa) *Emberiza calandra*
Sightings on 9 dates from 23 Jan to 19 Mar, mostly at Majjistral Park. Counts always in single figures with max. 6 at Majjistral Park on 16 Mar. Then 6 at Għar Hasan on 10 Apr and 1 at Majjistral Park on 28 Apr. No breeding confirmed. Then in autumn, sightings on 15 dates from 21 Oct to 15 Dec. Counts always in single figures but 11 at Majjistral Park on 01 Dec.
1 ringed on 21 Oct at Kemmuna.

Ortolan Bunting (Ortolan) *Emberiza hortulana*
1 at Il-Qaws on 18 May.

Reed Bunting (Durrajsa tal-Qasab) *Emberiza schoeniclus*
Sightings of 1–2 on 9 dates from 01 Jan to 18 Feb at Wied Ghajn Rihana and Simar NR. Then sightings on most dates from 30 Oct to 25 Dec, mostly at Simar NR (Fig. 61). Counts always in single figures with max. 7 on 24 Nov and 8 on 27 Nov at Simar NR.
14 ringed (all in autumn), most at Salina NR (5) and Simar NR (5).

Little Bunting (Durrajsa Qerqnija) *Emberiza pusilla*
1 ringed at Ghadira NR on 13 Oct.



Fig. 61. A good year for Reed Buntings, particularly at Simar NR where this one was photographed on 26 Nov.

The following people contributed to the sightings in this systematic list:

Justine Allen • Cristina Alonso • James Aquilina • David Attard • John Attard Montalto • Anne-Marie Austad • Martin Austad • Stefan Azzopardi • Ian Balzan • Nicholas Barbara • Edward Bonavia • Mark Bonello • Daniel Bonnici • John J. Borg • Cassandra Borg Muscat • Denis Cachia • Christopher Carbone • Alex Casha • Stephen Cilia • Victor Cilia • Charles Coleiro • Kevin Crisp • Nicholas Cutajar • Mark-Anthony Falzon • Victor Falzon • Jean Paul Farrugia • Jean Paul Fiott • Dominic Frendo • Nicholas Galea • Raymond Galea • Kevin Gambin • Nathan Gambin • Marie Claire Gatt • Charles Gauci • Mario V. Gauci • Mark Gauci • Stasa Gorsek • Anna Gorshkova • Benjamin Grech • Hannah Greetham • Gilbert Haber • Pamela Jorgo • Jiasheng Lau • Marion L'Huillier-Hunsinger • Manuel Mallia • Joseph M. Mangion • Caldon Mercieca • Benjamin Metzger • Glenn Micallef • Timothy Micallef • Stefano Miceli • Nimrod Mifsud • Mario Mizzi • Robert Mlinac • Simon Orland • Monika Penkert • Paul Portelli • Raphael Soler • Zak Spiteri • Mark Sultana • Aron Tanti • Vera Tokmakova • Adin Vella • Joseph Vella • Luke Vella • Raymond Vella • Steve Zammit Lupi

Information on the past records of rarities provided by Edward Bonavia

The following records are missing from previous Systematic Lists but were subsequently verified by the MRRC.

Red Kite (Astun Ahmar) *Milvus milvus*
1 at Kemmuna on 21 Oct 2021.

Moltoni's Warbler (Bufula ta' Sardenja) *Curruca subalpina*
1 at Żebbiegh on 08 Oct 2022.

species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Common Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	
Chukar <i>Alectoris chukar</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>											●	
Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i>											●	
Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>											●	●
Common Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	●		●	●	●				●	●	●	●
Common Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>			●						●	●	●	
Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>			●		●				●	●	●	
Garganey <i>Spatula querquedula</i>			●	●				●	●	●		
Northern Shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>			●			●		●	●	●	●	●
Gadwall <i>Mareca strepera</i>			●							●	●	●
Eurasian Wigeon <i>Mareca penelope</i>			●	●							●	
Northern Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>			●	●					●	●	●	●
Common Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>		●	●					●	●	●	●	●
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	●	●								●	●	●
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>			●							●	●	●
Black-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>											●	●
Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>										●		
Common Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>			●	●		●				●	●	
European Turtle-dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Eurasian Collared-dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
European Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>			●	●	●			●	●	●	●	
Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarpitis melba</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Great Spotted Cuckoo <i>Clamator glandarius</i>			●									
Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>				●	●				●			
Western Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●
Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i>										●		
Spotted Crane <i>Porzana porzana</i>			●	●					●	●	●	
Little Crane <i>Zapornia parva</i>			●	●	●				●			
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Common Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
Common Crane <i>Grus grus</i>												●
European Storm-petrel <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sooty Shearwater <i>Ardenna grisea</i>												●
Scopoli's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Yelkouan Shearwater <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>				●					●	●		
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>			●	●					●	●		
Eurasian Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	●			●	●					●		
Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>			●	●			●		●			
Eurasian Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>											●	
Common Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>				●	●				●	●		
Black-crowned Night-heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>			●	●	●			●	●	●		
Great White Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>			●	●			●		●	●	●	
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Northern Gannet <i>Morus bassanus</i>	●		●	●							●	●
Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●
Eurasian Thick-knee <i>Burhinus oedinenus</i>			●	●	●					●	●	
Eurasian Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>								●	●			
Pied Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>				●					●		●	●
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>				●	●	●		●	●	●		●
Eurasian Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	●	●	●								●	●
Eurasian Dotterel <i>Eudromias morinellus</i>									●	●	●	

species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Common Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>				●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>								●				
Northern Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>										●	●	●
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>			●	●			●	●				
Eurasian Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>			●			●		●				
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>			●									
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>					●			●	●			
Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>					●							
Ruff <i>Calidris pugnax</i>			●	●	●		●	●	●	●		
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>				●	●		●	●	●	●		
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>				●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>					●			●	●			
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>			●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Eurasian Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	●										●	●
Great Snipe <i>Gallinago media</i>				●								
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			●	●	●				●	●	●	●
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>		●	●							●	●	●
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>			●	●		●	●		●			
Common Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>			●			●	●	●		●	●	●
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>			●									
Collared Pratincole <i>Glareola pratincola</i>				●								
Little Gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	●	●	●									●
Black-legged Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	●	●	●								●	●
Bonaparte's Gull <i>Larus philadelphia</i>	●	●										
Slender-billed Gull <i>Larus genei</i>	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Audouin's Gull <i>Larus audouinii</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mew Gull <i>Larus canus</i>	●	●	●								●	●
Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Caspian Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i>	●	●	●	●	●							●
Common Gull-billed Tern <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>				●		●	●		●		●	●
Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>			●	●	●				●	●	●	
Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>						●	●		●			
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>							●	●			●	
Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandwicensis</i>	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Arctic Jaeger <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>			●									
Pomarine Jaeger <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>		●	●	●								
Great Skua <i>Catharacta skua</i>		●		●								●
Razorbill <i>Alca torda</i>											●	
Common Barn-owl <i>Tyto alba</i>							●	●				
Eurasian Scops-owl <i>Otus scops</i>		●	●	●	●				●	●		
Northern Long-eared Owl <i>Asio otus</i>									●			
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			●	●	●				●	●		
European Honey-buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>				●	●	●			●	●	●	
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>									●			
Short-toed Snake-eagle <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>									●			
Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Clanga pomarina</i>										●		
Booted Eagle <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>										●		
Western Marsh-harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>												●
Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i>			●	●					●	●	●	
Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>			●	●	●				●			

species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Levant Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter brevipes</i>										●		
Eurasian Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>			●	●	●				●	●	●	●
Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>										●		
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Eurasian Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>									●	●		
Common Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater <i>Merops persicus</i>									●	●		
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
European Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i>				●	●	●			●			
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●
Eurasian Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>		●	●	●	●				●	●		
Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco vespertinus</i>			●	●	●	●				●		
Eleonora's Falcon <i>Falco eleonora</i>				●	●	●		●	●	●		
Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>			●						●	●	●	
Eurasian Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Saker Falcon <i>Falco cherrug</i>										●		
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>			●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Eurasian Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>									●			
Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>			●	●	●				●			
Crow species <i>Corvus sp.</i>	●											
Mediterranean Short-toed Lark <i>Alauda rufescens</i>			●									
Greater Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Eurasian Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	●	●	●	●						●	●	●
Zitting Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Olivaceous Warbler <i>Iduna pallida</i>								●				
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>				●	●			●	●	●		
Moustached Warbler <i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	●	●									●	●
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		
Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>									●			
Common Reed-warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Great Reed-warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>			●	●	●			●	●	●		
Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>				●								
Common Grasshopper-warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>										●		
Northern House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Red-rumped Swallow <i>Cecropis daurica</i>			●	●	●				●	●		
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Hybrid Barn Swallow x Northern House Martin			●									
Eurasian Crag Martin <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			●									●
Collared Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>			●	●	●	●			●	●	●	
Eastern Bonelli's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>			●				●					
Western Bonelli's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>				●								
Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>			●	●	●	●		●	●	●		
Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	●	●	●	●						●	●	
Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>											●	
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			●	●	●	●		●	●	●		
Iberian Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>					●	●						
Common Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Siberian Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus tristis</i>		●	●									●
Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Eurasian Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
African Desert Warbler <i>Curruca deserti</i>											●	
Barred Warbler <i>Curruca nisoria</i>								●		●		
Lesser Whitethroat <i>Curruca curruca</i>			●	●					●	●	●	
Sardinian Warbler <i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Subalpine Warbler <i>Curruca cantillans</i>	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Moltoni's Warbler <i>Curruca subalpina</i>				●						●		
Common Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>			●	●	●	●			●			

species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spectacled Warbler <i>Curruca conspicillata</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Dartford Warbler <i>Curruca undata</i>												●
Common Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	●										●	
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	●	●										●
Eurasian Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	●	●	●							●	●	●
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	●											
Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>										●	●	
Rufous-tailed Scrub-robin <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>				●	●							
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
European Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bluethroat <i>Cyanecula svecica</i>		●	●							●	●	●
Common Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>			●	●	●			●	●	●		
Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>											●	
Semi-collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>			●	●	●							
European Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>			●	●	●			●	●	●		
Collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>			●	●	●				●			
Black Redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●
Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	
Moussier's Redstart <i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>			●									
Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>				●								
Blue Rock-thrush <i>Monticola solitarius</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>			●	●	●			●	●	●		
Common Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	●	●	●							●	●	●
Northern Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	
Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>		●	●	●								
Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>			●	●	●				●			
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	●	●									●	●
Common Firecrest <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	●	●	●							●	●	●
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	●	●	●						●	●	●	●
Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Eurasian Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>			●	●	●				●	●	●	
Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	●		●							●		
Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>		●	●	●	●					●	●	●
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●
Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	●		●									
Richard's Pipit <i>Anthus richardi</i>										●		
Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>			●	●	●				●	●		
Western Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>			●	●	●		●	●	●	●		
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●
Common Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>											●	●
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	●									●		
Common Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>										●		
Trumpeter Finch <i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>			●									
European Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●
Common Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
European Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●
European Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>	●			●						●	●	●
Eurasian Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Corn Bunting <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	●	●	●	●						●	●	●
Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>					●							
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	●	●								●	●	●
Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>										●		
Total species	79	83	151	147	114	77	66	95	138	152	130	96



Nicholas Galea
Ringing Report for 2023

This report covers the ringing activity done by the BirdLife Malta Ringing Scheme in 2023. Historically the ringing report has been periodically published in BirdLife Malta’s scientific journal *Il-Merill*. The latest ringing report, 2019–2022 is published in *Il-Merill* No.35. With the decision to start publishing the systematic list annually in a dedicated publication, the *Malta Bird Report*, starting from 2021, it was natural that the ringing report would follow. A similar structure to previous ringing reports is kept to ensure consistency.

The following were the 25 licenced BirdLife Malta Ringing Scheme ringers active in 2023: James Aquilina, David Attard, John Attard Montalto, Martin Austad, Stefan Azzopardi, John J. Borg, Denis Cachia, Victor Cilia, Charles Coleiro, Jean Paul Farrugia, Nicholas Galea, Raymond Galea, Marie Claire Gatt, Mario V. Gauci, Mark Gauci, Gilbert Haber, Manuel Mallia, Joseph M. Mangion, Rita Matos, Benjamin Metzger, Glenn Micallef, Timothy Micallef, Stefano Miceli, Alice Tribe and Adin Vella. A number of trainees and helpers also participated actively in ringing activities.

Ringing totals

A total of 20,865 of 129 species were ringed in 2023 (Fig. 1). The number of individuals of each species ringed in 2023, as well as the running total since 1965, is provided in Fig. 2. The ringing totals per species for 2023 do not necessarily tally with those reported in the Systematic List in this Report, due to the exclusion of confiscated and/or rehabilitated birds from the latter.

The 10 most commonly ringed birds in 2023, in order starting with most common, were **European Robin** (3,545), **Common Chiffchaff** (2,299), **Garden Warbler** (2,237), **Eurasian Blackcap** (1,493), **Wood Warbler** (1,323), **Spanish Sparrow** (1,268), **Common Whitethroat** (866), **Barn Swallow** (821), **Sardinian Warbler** (732), **Tree Pipit** (683).

Over 8,000 birds were ringed in Mar, Apr and May, months synonymous with spring migration. With 4,207 birds, Apr was the most intensive month of the year. Autumn migration, stretching from Aug to Nov and for some species even later, totalled over 9,800 birds in four months, with Oct and Nov alone seeing over 7,300 birds ringed.

Two new taxa were added to the list of species ringed in Malta in 2023:

Caspian Gull (1 ringed at Salina NR on 9 Feb)
Iberian Chiffchaff (1 ringed at Buskett on 7 May).

Other noteworthy species ringed in 2023 include 1 Eurasian Woodcock at Kemmuna in Jan, 1 Northern Long-eared Owl (the 5th ringed) at Kemmuna in Oct, 1 Olive-backed Pipit at Mtaħleb in Oct, 1 Isabelline Wheatear (the 10th ringed) at Tal-Bardan in Mar, 2 Rufous-tailed Rock-thrushes, both from Kemmuna in Apr, 1 Ring Ouzel from Kemmuna in Nov (the 8th ringed), 1 Savi’s Warbler at Għadira NR in Apr, 1 Marsh Warbler (the first since 2007) at Mtaħleb in Sep, 1 Olivaceous Warbler at Mtaħleb in Aug, 1 Dartford Warbler at Foresta 2000 in Dec, 2 Moltoni’s Warbler (the 5th and 6th ringed); 1 at Kemmuna in Apr and 1 at Għadira in Oct, 2 Barred Warblers (the 5th and 6th ringed); 1 at Mtaħleb in Aug and 1 at Għadira NR in Oct, 1 Dusky Warbler (the 11th record and 11th ringed) at Mtaħleb in Nov, 1 Brambling at Buskett in Dec, 1 Common Rosefinch at Għadira NR in Oct and 1 Little Bunting at Għadira NR in Oct.

BirdLife Malta’s rehab centre continued to contribute with birds that were ringed before release, following successful rehabilitation; these were birds that had been found stranded, sick or shot, or confiscated. Fourteen species were in fact ringed solely through such scenarios. These include most of the herons, 1 Greater Flamingo, a good number of wader species, most of the gulls and all raptor species. Most finches ringed were also confiscated birds.

mth	total ringed	running total	mth	total ringed	running total
Jan	415	415	Jul	770	10068
Feb	441	856	Aug	962	11030
Mar	1169	2025	Sep	1581	12611
Apr	4204	6229	Oct	3730	16341
May	2630	8859	Nov	3621	19962
Jun	439	9298	Dec	903	20865

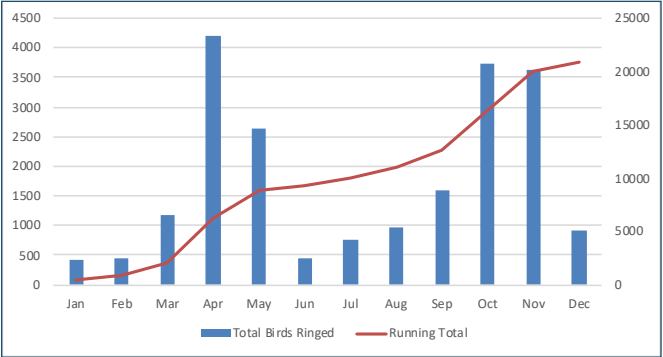


Fig. 1. Monthly ringing totals for 2023

EURING code	species	1965–2022	2023	total 1965–2023
00070	Little Grebe (Blonġun Żgħir) <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	3	0	3
00090	Great Crested Grebe (Blonġun Prim) <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	1	0	1
00120	Black-necked Grebe (Blonġun Sekond) <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	35	0	35
00360	Scopoli’s Shearwater (Ċiefa) <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	4145	216	4361
00460	Manx Shearwater (Garnija tal-Atlantiku) <i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	1	0	1
00462	Yelkouan Shearwater (Garnija) <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	3963	227	4190
00520	European Storm-petrel (Kangū ta’ Filfla) <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	41254	346	41600
00720	Great Cormorant (Margun) <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1	0	1
00950	Eurasian Bittern (Kappun) <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	4	0	4
00980	Common Little Bittern (Russett tas-Siġar) <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	151	4	155
01040	Black-crowned Night-heron (Kwakka) <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	28	1	29
01080	Squacco Heron (Agrett Isfar) <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	5	0	5
01110	Cattle Egret (Agrett tal-Bhejjem) <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	3	0	3
01190	Little Egret (Agrett Abjad) <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	8	0	8
01220	Grey Heron (Russett Griż) <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3	1	4
01240	Purple Heron (Russett Aħmar) <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	3	0	3
01440	Eurasian Spoonbill (Paletta) <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	1	0	1
01470	Greater Flamingo (Fjamingu) <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	14	1	15
01790	Eurasian Wigeon (Silfjun Ewropew) <i>Mareca penelope</i>	1	0	1
01840	Common Teal (Sarsella) <i>Anas crecca</i>	1	0	1
01860	Mallard (Kuluvert) <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	5	0	5
01890	Northern Pintail (Silfjun) <i>Anas acuta</i>	1	0	1
01910	Garganey (Sarsella Ħamra) <i>Spatula querquedula</i>	2	0	2
01950	Marbled Teal (Sarsella Mnaqqxa) <i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	2	0	2
02310	European Honey-buzzard (Kuċċarda) <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	23	2	25
02380	Black Kite (Astun Iswed) <i>Milvus migrans</i>	4	0	4
02600	Western Marsh-harrier (Baghdan Aħmar) <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	28	3	31
02620	Pallid Harrier (Baghdan Abjad) <i>Circus macrourus</i>	3	0	3
02630	Montagu’s Harrier (Baghdan Griż) <i>Circus pygargus</i>	6	0	6
02690	Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Sparvier) <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	8	0	8
03030	Lesser Kestrel (Spanjulett Sekond) <i>Falco naumanni</i>	3	1	4
03040	Common Kestrel (Spanjulett) <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	136	4	140
03090	Merlin (Sequer ta’ Denbu) <i>Falco columbarius</i>	4	0	4
03100	Eurasian Hobby (Sequer tal-Ħannieqa) <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	10	2	12
03110	Eleonora’s Falcon (Bies tar-Reġina) <i>Falco eleonora</i>	1	0	1
03550	Chukar (Ċukar) <i>Alectoris chukar</i>	29	1	30
03700	Common Quail (Summien) <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	86	5	91
04070	Western Water Rail (Gallozz tax-Xitwa) <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	324	3	327
04080	Spotted Crane (Gallozz tat-Tikek) <i>Porzana porzana</i>	87	0	87
04100	Little Crane (Gallozz Żgħir) <i>Zapornia parva</i>	56	0	56
04110	Baillon’s Crane (Gallozz tal-Faxxi) <i>Zapornia pusilla</i>	5	0	5
04210	Corncrake (Gallozz Aħmar) <i>Crex crex</i>	1	0	1
04240	Common Moorhen (Gallozz Iswed) <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	664	2	666
04250	Allen’s Gallinule (Gallozz tal-Afrika) <i>Porphyrio alleni</i>	1	0	1
04290	Common Coot (Tigieġa tal-Baħar) <i>Fulica atra</i>	16	0	16
04550	Black-winged Stilt (Fras-servjent) <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	18	0	18
04590	Eurasian Thick-knee (Tellerita) <i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	9	0	9

Fig. 2. Running totals per species since 1965, including totals of birds ringed per species in 2023 (continued overleaf).

EURING code	species	1965–2022	2023	total 1965–2023
04690	Little Ringed Plover (Monakella) <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	488	10	498
04700	Common Ringed Plover (Monakella Prima) <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	122	4	126
04770	Kentish Plover (Monakella Żghira) <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	6	0	6
04820	Eurasian Dotterel (Birwina) <i>Eudromias morinellus</i>	12	0	12
04850	Eurasian Golden Plover (Pluviera) <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	4	0	4
04860	Grey Plover (Pluviera Griża) <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	3	0	3
04930	Northern Lapwing (Venewwa) <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	1	0	1
05010	Little Stint (Tertuxa) <i>Calidris minuta</i>	3622	84	3706
05020	Temminck’s Stint (Tertuxa Griża) <i>Calidris temminckii</i>	103	2	105
05090	Curlew Sandpiper (Pispisella Ħamra) <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	215	6	221
05120	Dunlin (Pispisella tad-Dabra) <i>Calidris alpina</i>	540	10	550
05140	Broad-billed Sandpiper (Pispisella Bumunqar) <i>Calidris falcinellus</i>	2	0	2
05170	Ruff (Girwiel) <i>Calidris pugnax</i>	100	0	100
05180	Jack Snipe (Ċinkonja) <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>	35	0	35
05190	Common Snipe (Bekkaċċ) <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	192	1	193
05200	Great Snipe (Bekkaċċ ta’ Mejjū) <i>Gallinago media</i>	16	0	16
05290	Eurasian Woodcock (Gallina) <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	18	1	19
05320	Black-tailed Godwit (Girwiel Prim) <i>Limosa limosa</i>	2	0	2
05340	Bar-tailed Godwit (Girwiel Nordiku) <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	1	0	1
05380	Whimbrel (Gurlin Sekond) <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	1	0	1
05450	Spotted Redshank (Ċuvett) <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	4	0	4
05460	Common Redshank (Pluverott) <i>Tringa totanus</i>	63	0	63
05470	Marsh Sandpiper (Ċewċewwa Żghira) <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	3	0	3
05480	Common Greenshank (Ċewċewwa) <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	12	0	12
05530	Green Sandpiper (Swejda) <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	135	5	140
05540	Wood Sandpiper (Swejda Ċara) <i>Tringa glareola</i>	477	7	484
05560	Common Sandpiper (Pispisella) <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1725	59	1784
05610	Ruddy Turnstone (Monakella Imperjali) <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	8	0	8
05750	Mediterranean Gull (Gawwija Rasha Sewda) <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	10	2	12
05820	Black-headed Gull (Gawwija Rasha Kannella) <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	14	9	23
05850	Slender-billed Gull (Gawwija Munqarha Rqiq) <i>Larus genei</i>	2	0	2
05880	Audouin’s Gull (Gawwija Munqarha Aħmar) <i>Larus audouinii</i>	1	0	1
05926	Yellow-legged Gull (Gawwija Prima) <i>Larus michahellis</i>	2739	119	2858
05927	Caspian Gull (Gawwija tal-Kaspiju) <i>Larus cachinnans</i>	0	1	1
06110	Sandwich Tern (Ċirlewwa tax-Xitwa) <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	1	0	1
06270	Black Tern (Ċirlewwa Sewda) <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	2	0	2
06280	White-winged Tern (Ċirlewwa tal-Lvant) <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	1	0	1
06840	Eurasian Collared-dove (Gamiema tal-Kullar) <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	239	14	253
06870	European Turtle-dove (Gamiema) <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	484	18	502
06900	Laughing Dove (Gamiema tal-Ilwien) <i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	1	0	1
07160	Great Spotted Cuckoo (Daququqa Prima) <i>Clamator glandarius</i>	2	0	2
07240	Common Cuckoo (Daququqa Kaħla) <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	138	7	145
07350	Common Barn-owl (Barbaġann) <i>Tyto alba</i>	2	0	2
07390	Eurasian Scops-owl (Kokka) <i>Otus scops</i>	690	44	734
07670	Northern Long-eared Owl (Qattus) <i>Asio otus</i>	4	1	5
07680	Short-eared Owl (Kokka tax-Xaġħri) <i>Asio flammeus</i>	50	5	55
07780	European Nightjar (Buqrajq) <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	875	68	943
07950	Common Swift (Rundun) <i>Apus apus</i>	1688	71	1759

EURING code	species	1965–2022	2023	total 1965–2023
07960	Pallid Swift (Rundun Kannelli) <i>Apus pallidus</i>	246	3	249
07980	Alpine Swift (Rundun Żaqqu Bajda) <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	1	1	2
08310	Common Kingfisher (Għasfur ta’ San Martin) <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1237	61	1298
08400	European Bee-eater (Qerd in-Naħal) <i>Merops apiaster</i>	335	131	466
08410	European Roller (Farruġ) <i>Coracias garrulus</i>	2	1	3
08460	Common Hoopoe (Daququqa tat-Toppu) <i>Upupa epops</i>	471	12	483
08480	Eurasian Wryneck (Bulebbiet) <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	1799	30	1829
09680	Greater Short-toed Lark (Bilbla) <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	348	2	350
09740	Woodlark (Ċuqlajta) <i>Lullula arborea</i>	2	0	2
09760	Eurasian Skylark (Alwetta) <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	358	11	369
09810	Collared Sand Martin (Hawwiefat tax-Xtut) <i>Riparia riparia</i>	13470	12	13482
09920	Barn Swallow (Futtafa) <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	57547	821	58368
09950	Red-rumped Swallow (Reġina tal-Futtaf) <i>Cecropis daurica</i>	263	3	266
10010	Northern House Martin (Hawwiefat) <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	11593	8	11601
10020	Richard’s Pipit (Bilblun Prim) <i>Anthus richardi</i>	1	0	1
10050	Tawny Pipit (Bilblun) <i>Anthus campestris</i>	36	0	36
10080	Olive-backed Pipit (Diż tal-Lvant) <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	15	1	16
10090	Tree Pipit (Diż) <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	5766	683	6449
10110	Meadow Pipit (Pespus) <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	7023	450	7473
10120	Red-throated Pipit (Diż Aħmar) <i>Anthus cervinus</i>	90	0	90
10141	Water Pipit (Diż tal-Ilma) <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	25	0	25
10142	Rock Pipit (Diż tal-Blat) <i>Anthus petrosus</i>	2	0	2
10170	Western Yellow Wagtail (Isfar) <i>Motacilla flava</i>	7147	88	7235
10190	Grey Wagtail (Zakak tad-Dell) <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	923	4	927
10200	White Wagtail (Zakak Abjad) <i>Motacilla alba</i>	2746	23	2769
10660	Northern Wren (Bumistur) <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	26	0	26
10840	Dunnock (Żiemel) <i>Prunella modularis</i>	7969	95	8064
10950	Rufous-tailed Scrub-robin (Rożinjol tax-Xaġħri) <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	19	0	19
10990	European Robin (Pitirross) <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	107354	3545	110899
11030	Thrush Nightingale (Rożinjol Prim) <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	5	0	5
11040	Common Nightingale (Rożinjol) <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	4053	48	4101
11050	Siberian Rubythroat (Rożinjol tas-Siberja) <i>Calliope calliope</i>	1	0	1
11060	Bluethroat (Rożinjol Ikħal) <i>Cyanecula svecica</i>	263	3	266
11130	Orange-flanked Bush-robin (Fjamma Kaħla) <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	1	0	1
11210	Black Redstart (Fjamma Sewda) <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	1927	49	1976
11220	Common Redstart (Fjamma) <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	6251	119	6370
11270	Moussier’s Redstart (Fjamma tat-Tuneżija) <i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>	6	0	6
11370	Whinchat (Buċaqq tas-Silla) <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	5896	126	6022
11390	Common Stonechat (Buċaqq tax-Xitwa) <i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	5118	96	5214
11440	Isabelline Wheatear (Kuda Ramlija) <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	9	1	10
11460	Northern Wheatear (Kuda) <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	562	10	572
11480	Black-eared Wheatear (Kuda Dumnikana) <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	108	1	109
11620	Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush (Ġanbublu) <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	24	2	26
11660	Blue Rock-thrush (Merill) <i>Monticola solitarius</i>	553	61	614
11860	Ring Ouzel (Malvizz tas-Sidra) <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	7	1	8
11870	Eurasian Blackbird (Malvizz Iswed) <i>Turdus merula</i>	486	7	493
11950	Eyebrowed Thrush (Malvizz Nordiku) <i>Turdus obscurus</i>	1	0	1
11980	Fieldfare (Malvizzun tal-Qtajja) <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	6	0	6

(continued overleaf)

EURING code	species	1965–2022	2023	total 1965–2023
12000	Song Thrush (Malvizz) <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	4374	162	4536
12010	Redwing (Malvizz Aħmar) <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	38	1	39
12200	Cetti’s Warbler (Bufula tal-Għolliq) <i>Cettia cetti</i>	5380	133	5513
12260	Zitting Cisticola (Bufula tal-Imrewħa) <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	10487	84	10571
12360	Common Grasshopper-warbler (Bufula tal-Ġurati) <i>Locustella naevia</i>	17	1	18
12370	River Warbler (Bufula tax-Xmajjar) <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	3	0	3
12380	Savi’s Warbler (Bufula tal-Buda) <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	90	1	91
12410	Moustached Warbler (Bufula Qastnija) <i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	198	1	199
12430	Sedge Warbler (Bufula tas-Simar) <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	7338	270	7608
12470	Paddyfield Warbler (Bufula tas-Saqwi) <i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>	5	0	5
12480	Blyth’s Reed-warbler (Bufula tal-Baġħli) <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	5	0	5
12500	Marsh Warbler (Bufula tal-Għadaġjar) <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	65	1	66
12510	Common Reed-warbler (Bufula tal-Qasab) <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	4607	87	4694
12530	Great Reed-warbler (Bufula Prima) <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	3410	79	3489
12550	Olivaceous/Isabelline Warbler <i>Iduna pallida/opaca</i>	5	0	5
12551	Olivaceous Warbler (Bekkafik tal-Lvant) <i>Iduna pallida</i>	6	1	7
12552	Isabelline Warbler (Bekkafik Griż) <i>Iduna opaca</i>	19	0	19
12590	Icterine Warbler (Bekkafik Isfar) <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	5417	136	5553
12600	Melodious Warbler (Bekkafik tal-Għana) <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	11	0	11
12610	Marmora’s Warbler (Bufula Griża) <i>Curruca sarda</i>	2	0	2
12620	Dartford Warbler (Bufula tax-Xaġħri) <i>Curruca undata</i>	45	1	46
12640	Spectacled Warbler (Bufula Ħamra) <i>Curruca conspicillata</i>	1566	14	1580
12650	Subalpine Warbler (Bufula Passajra) <i>Curruca cantillans</i>	15077	322	15399
12652	Moltoni’s Warbler (Bufula ta’ Sardenja) <i>Curruca subalpina</i>	4	2	6
12660	Ménétries’s Warbler (Bufula tal-Makkja) <i>Curruca mystacea</i>	1	0	1
12670	Sardinian Warbler (Bufula Sewda) <i>Curruca melanocephala</i>	29028	732	29760
12690	Rüppell’s Warbler (Bufula tal-Pavalor) <i>Curruca ruppeli</i>	3	0	3
12720	Western/Eastern Orphean Warbler <i>Curruca hortensis/crassirostris</i>	5	0	5
12721	Western Orphean Warbler (Bekkafik Sewdieni) <i>Curruca hortensis</i>	1	0	1
12730	Barred Warbler (Bekkafik tal-Istrixxi) <i>Curruca nisoria</i>	4	2	6
12740	Lesser Whitethroat (Bekkafik Irmiedi) <i>Curruca curruca</i>	118	7	125
12750	Common Whitethroat (Bekkafik Aħmar) <i>Curruca communis</i>	16872	866	17738
12760	Garden Warbler (Bekkafik) <i>Sylvia borin</i>	47096	2237	49333
12770	Eurasian Blackcap (Kapinera) <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	32986	1493	34479
12950	Arctic Warbler (Vjolin tal-Artiku) <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	5	0	5
12980	Pallas’s Leaf-warbler (Vjolin tal-Ferq) <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	4	0	4
13000	Yellow-browed Warbler (Vjolin tal-Faxx) <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	346	16	362
13002	Hume’s Leaf-warbler (Vjolin tal-Faxx Ċar) <i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	1	0	1
13010	Radde’s Warbler (Vjolin tas-Siberja) <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>	3	0	3
13030	Dusky Warbler (Vjolin Skur) <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	10	1	11
13070	Western/Eastern Bonelli’s Warbler <i>Phylloscopus bonelli/orientalis</i>	177	0	177
13071	Western Bonelli’s Warbler (Vjolin Bajdani) <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	49	1	50
13072	Eastern Bonelli’s Warbler (Vjolin tal-Lvant) <i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>	81	5	86
13080	Wood Warbler (Vjolin Ħadrani) <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	27941	1323	29264
13100	Mountain Chiffchaff (Vjolin tal-Muntanġi) <i>Phylloscopus sindianus</i>	1	0	1
13110	Common Chiffchaff (Vjolin tax-Xitwa) <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	76163	2299	78462
13115	Iberian Chiffchaff (Vjolin Spanjol) <i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	0	1	1
13120	Willow Warbler (Vjolin Safrani) <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	16811	338	17149

EURING code	species	1965–2022	2023	total 1965–2023
13140	Goldcrest (Bufula tal-Qamar) <i>Regulus regulus</i>	899	14	913
13150	Common Firecrest (Bufula tax-Xemx) <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	785	3	788
13350	Spotted Flycatcher (Żanzarell tat-Tikek) <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	6241	219	6460
13430	Red-breasted Flycatcher (Żanzarell Żġħir) <i>Ficedula parva</i>	174	0	174
13470	Semi-collared Flycatcher (Żanzarell tal-Lvant) <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	77	1	78
13480	Collared Flycatcher (Żanzarell tal-Kullar) <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	2405	85	2490
13490	European Pied Flycatcher (Żanzarell Iswed) <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	10116	359	10475
14620	Eurasian Blue Tit (Primavera) <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	2	0	2
14640	Great Tit (Fjorentin) <i>Parus major</i>	2	0	2
14900	Eurasian Penduline-tit (Pendulin) <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	109	0	109
15080	Eurasian Golden Oriole (Tajra Safra) <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1144	51	1195
15150	Red-backed Shrike (Kaċċamendula Ħamra) <i>Lanius collurio</i>	141	0	141
15200	Great Grey Shrike (Kaċċamendula Nordika) <i>Lanius excubitor</i>	1	0	1
15230	Woodchat Shrike (Kaċċamendula) <i>Lanius senator</i>	2106	21	2127
15820	Common Starling (Sturnell) <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1261	9	1270
15830	Spotless Starling (Sturnell Iswed) <i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	1	0	1
15920	Spanish Sparrow (Ghasfur tal-Bejt) <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	48314	1268	49582
15980	Eurasian Tree Sparrow (Ġaħġaħ) <i>Passer montanus</i>	3158	150	3308
16330	Red-eyed Vireo (Virju) <i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	1	0	1
16360	Common Chaffinch (Sponsun) <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1756	36	1792
16380	Brambling (Sponsun Selvaġġ) <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	17	3	20
16400	European Serin (Apparell) <i>Serinus serinus</i>	410	10	420
16490	European Greenfinch (Verdun) <i>Chloris chloris</i>	621	13	634
16530	European Goldfinch (Gardell) <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	160	6	166
16540	Eurasian Siskin (Ekru) <i>Spinus spinus</i>	194	74	268
16600	Common Linnet (Ġojjin) <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	1211	22	1233
16660	Red Crossbill (Kruċjat) <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	26	0	26
16760	Trumpeter Finch (Trumbettier) <i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	1	0	1
16790	Common Rosefinch (Bumunqar) <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	12	1	13
17170	Hawfinch (Taż-Żebbuġ) <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	194	10	204
18470	Lapland Longspur (Durrajsa Nordika) <i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	1	0	1
18560	Pine Bunting (Durrajsa Rasha Bajda) <i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	1	0	1
18570	Yellowhammer (Durrajsa Safra) <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	1	0	1
18580	Cirl Bunting (Ortolan Iswed) <i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	1	0	1
18660	Ortolan Bunting (Ortolan) <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	15	0	15
18680	Cretzschmar’s Bunting (Ortolan Rasu Blu) <i>Emberiza caesia</i>	1	0	1
18730	Rustic Bunting (Durrajsa Qastnija) <i>Emberiza rustica</i>	21	0	21
18740	Little Bunting (Durrajsa Qerqniġa) <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	19	1	20
18750	Chestnut Bunting (Durrajsa tal-Lvant) <i>Emberiza rutila</i>	1	0	1
18760	Yellow-breasted Bunting (Ortolan tal-Lvant) <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	1	0	1
18770	Reed Bunting (Durrajsa tal-Qasab) <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	670	14	684
18820	Corn Bunting (Durrajsa) <i>Emberiza calandra</i>	450	1	451
90100	Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i> x House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	6	1	7
90540	Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i> x Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	2	0	2
90740	Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i> x Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>	1	0	1
Total		706,706	20,865	727,571

Local retraps

Figure 3 shows a number of interesting local retraps, varying from significant longevity records of local breeding birds to returning migrant/wintering birds. Perhaps the most unusual record was a European Robin ringed on Kemmuna in Oct 2022 that was subsequently found in a Short-eared Owl pellet at the same site in Feb 2023.

Ringing sites

Different ringing sites around the Maltese Islands were used by ringers in 2023. These included Ghadira NR and Simar NR, where ringing was carried out on most days of the year. Ringing was also carried out in Wied I-Aħmar in Kemmuna as part of the scheme’s long-running spring and autumn migration ringing campaigns at the Kemmuna Bird Observatory. A summary of these campaigns is given below. Buskett is also another important site surveyed throughout the year. Other important sites used include privately owned sites at Mġarr ix-Xini, Mtaħleb and Manikata. In total, these 7 sites alone resulted in more than 17,000 birds ringed in 2023. Other sites included Salina NR, Foresta 2000, Wied Ħarq Ħamiem and Ta’ Ġjammar.

Seabird colonies were also monitored through ringing at various sites on mainland Malta, Gozo and Kemmuna and also at islets such as Kemmunett, Filfla and St Paul’s Islands. 1,319 individuals of the 3 breeding tubenose species were handled during capture-mark-recapture sessions at colonies in 2023.

Kemmuna Bird Observatory

Ringing campaigns at the Kemmuna Bird Observatory were successfully run again during spring and autumn migration of 2023. A total of 22 consecutive days of ringing were carried out in spring (14 Apr to 5 May), with a total 1,533 birds of 37 species ringed. The daily totals of birds ringed for spring 2023 together with species diversity is given in Figure 4A, while the totals for each species is given in Figure 4B. The three most numerous species were Common Whitethroat (319), Wood Warbler (261) and Garden Warbler (202). Highlights included 1 Short-eared Owl, 2 Rufous-tailed Rock-thrushes and 1 Moltoni’s Warbler.

Similarly, in late autumn, 22 days of daily ringing were carried out from 16 Oct to 6 Nov, with a total 1,347 birds of 33 species ringed. Figure 5A gives the daily totals and daily species

ring no.	species	ringing date	ringing site	recovery date	recovery site	time elapsed	notes
FF02485	Scopoli’s Shearwater	23.09.2001	Xlendi	19.06.2023	Xlendi	21y 8m 27d	1st encounter
S13126	European Storm-petrel	16.07.2005	Filfla	19.07.2023	Filfla	18y 0m 3d	Retrapped also in 2011, 2019
EE01305	Yelkouan Shearwater	25.02.2008	L-Aħrax	10.05.2023	L-Aħrax	15y 2m 15d	1st encounter
NT56326	Little Ringed Plover	05.07.2012	Ghadira	26.07.2023	Ghadira	11y 0m 21d	Breeding adult, also present in Jun/Sep 2020
GG2101	Yellow-legged Gull	18.05.2013	Filfla	11.09.2023	Salina	10y 3m 24d	Taken to rehab
B38027	Spanish Sparrow	08.05.2014	Ghadira	30.03.2023	Ghadira	8y 10m 22d	Ringed as 3J, retrapped also in 15,16,17,19,21 (5/8)
301297	Cetti’s Warbler	23.05.2015	Salina	25.04.2023	Simar	7y 11m 2d	Moved to Simar from Mar to Oct 2016
294663	Sardinian Warbler	04.09.2015	Mġarr ix-Xini	22.02.2023	Mġarr ix-Xini	7y, 5m, 18d	
BV4260	Common Sandpiper	16.08.2016	Ghadira	12.08.2023	Ghadira	6y 11m27d	
312314	Eurasian Blackcap	07.10.2016	Ghadira	26.03.2023	Manikata	6y 5m 19d	
319629	Eurasian Blackcap	22.02.2017	Ghadira	27.03.2023	Ghadira	6y 1m 5d	
316651	Common Reed-warbler	05.09.2017	Simar	28.08.2023	Ghadira	5y 11m 23d	Also retrapped at Ghadira in 2018
40P268	Common Chiffchaff	20.12.2018	Ghadira	21.03.2023	Ghadira	4y 3m 1d	
38P625	Common Chiffchaff	28.12.2018	Simar	27.12.2023	Simar	4y 11m 29d	
B47621	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	01.05.2019	Mtaħleb	20.05.2023	Mtaħleb	4y 0m 19d	
SS1190	Common Kingfisher	28.08.2020	Simar	01.01.2023	Manikata	2y 4m 4d	Also retrapped at Simar in 2021
353595	European Robin	31.10.2020	Ghadira	15.01.2023	Ghadira	2y 2m 15d	
354696	Cetti’s Warbler	20.02.2021	Buskett	22.02.2023	Mġarr ix-Xini	2y 0m 2d	
BB0228	Little Ringed Plover	10.07.2021	Ghadira	14.08.2023	Simar	2y 1m 4d	
405052	White Wagtail	13.11.2021	Ghadira	15.01.2023	Ghadira	1y 2m 2d	
62P255	Common Chiffchaff	15.11.2021	Mġarr ix-Xini	04.12.2023	Ħarq Ħamiem	2y 0m 19d	
407014	Eurasian Blackcap	24.11.2021	Wied Ghollieqa	17.03.2023	Mtaħleb	1y 3m 21d	
SS3263	Common Swift	30.05.2022	Wied il-Għasel	25.07.2023	Wied il-Għasel	1y 1m 25d	2 other CS from 2022 also retrapped
415436	Subalpine Warbler	14.08.2022	Buskett	10.09.2023	Buskett	1y 0m 27d	
407408	Garden Warbler	25.09.2022	Żebbiegh	10.09.2023	Żebbiegh	0y 11m 16d	

Fig. 3. Interesting local retraps

diversity while Figure 5B shows the total per species. Over 70% (996) of the birds ringed were European Robins, which remains the most common bird ringed annually at the station. Highlights from this campaign include 1 Long-eared Owl, 4 Short-eared

Owls, 1 Ring Ouzel, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Yellow-browed Warbler and 1 Corn Bunting. Formerly a regular breeding species, the Corn Bunting has unfortunately become a bird that is seldom seen and even more so ringed in the Maltese Islands.

A	date	daily total	species	B	species	total	species	total
	14.04.2023	11	6		Chukar	1	Sedge Warbler	20
	15.04.2023	24	10		European Turtle-dove	12	Great Reed-warbler	10
	16.04.2023	94	22		Common Cuckoo	7	Icterine Warbler	19
	17.04.2023	14	7		Eurasian Scops-owl	15	Spectacled Warbler	1
	18.04.2023	43	17		Short-eared Owl	1	Subalpine Warbler	29
	19.04.2023	103	17		European Nightjar	23	Moltoni’s Warbler	1
	20.04.2023	124	14		European Bee-eater	51	Sardinian Warbler	6
	21.04.2023	11	6		Common Hoopoe	3	Common Whitethroat	319
	22.04.2023	45	18		Eurasian Wryneck	1	Garden Warbler	202
	23.04.2023	74	17		Barn Swallow	1	Eurasian Blackcap	5
	24.04.2023	109	15		Tree Pipit	2	Wood Warbler	261
	25.04.2023	169	21		European Robin	8	Willow Warbler	38
	26.04.2023	176	23		Common Nightingale	16	Spotted Flycatcher	63
	27.04.2023	32	12		Common Redstart	37	Collared Flycatcher	46
	28.04.2023	19	8		Whinchat	93	Pied Flycatcher	181
	29.04.2023	81	17		Northern Wheatear	1	Eurasian Golden Oriole	24
	30.04.2023	73	17		Black-Eared Wheatear	1	Woodchat Shrike	12
	01.05.2023	205	18		Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush	2	Spanish Sparrow	11
	02.05.2023	38	11		Blue Rock-thrush	10		
	03.05.2023	19	8					
	04.05.2023	60	14					
	05.05.2023	10	5					

Fig. 4. **Kemmuna spring migration campaign**

(A) daily totals and species diversity

(B) totals for each species

A	date	daily total	species	B	species	total	species	total
	16.10.2023	11	4		Common Quail	1	Song Thrush	43
	17.10.2023	59	7		European Turtle-dove	1	Common Reed-warbler	1
	18.10.2023	45	4		Eurasian Scops-owl	1	Spectacled Warbler	9
	19.10.2023	56	7		Northern Long-eared Owl	1	Subalpine Warbler	3
	20.10.2023	32	4		Short-eared Owl	4	Sardinian Warbler	71
	21.10.2023	26	5		European Nightjar	1	Lesser Whitethroat	1
	22.10.2023	42	6		Eurasian Skylark	11	Garden Warbler	2
	23.10.2023	46	10		Meadow Pipit	8	Eurasian Blackcap	83
	24.10.2023	78	11		White Wagtail	1	Yellow-browed Warbler	1
	25.10.2023	178	10		Dunnoek	1	Common Chiffchaff	56
	26.10.2023	44	5		European Robin	996	Common Starling	1
	27.10.2023	65	7		Common Nightingale	1	Spanish Sparrow	7
	28.10.2023	42	4		Black Redstart	8	Common Chaffinch	2
	29.10.2023	61	9		Common Redstart	6	Eurasian Siskin	5
	30.10.2023	68	13		Common Stonechat	9	Common Linnet	3
	31.10.2023	171	11		Blue Rock-thrush	7	Corn Bunting	1
	01.11.2023	129	10		Ring Ouzel	1		
	02.11.2023	80	7					
	03.11.2023	31	8					
	04/11/2023	11	5					
	05/11/2023	44	5					
	06/11/2023	31	6					

Fig. 5. **Kemmuna autumn migration campaign**

(A) daily totals and species diversity

(B) totals for each species

Ringing recoveries

Key to symbols and terms used in the recovery list

ARRANGEMENT OF ENTRY

Recoveries are grouped by species, sorted according to their EURING code. Within each species, recoveries are sorted by recovery date (oldest first).

Ringing details are given on the first line and recovery data on the second.

SCHEME

The EURING code of the ringing scheme to which the metal ring belongs is given before each metal ring. Below is a list of schemes and their codes featuring in this report.

code	country	ringing centre
ABT	Albania	Tirana
BLB	Belgium	Bruxelles
CZP	Czechia	Praha
DEH	Germany	Hiddensee
DEW	Germany	Wilhelmshaven (Helgoland)
GBT	UK & Ireland	London (British Museum)
GRA	Greece	Athens
HES	Switzerland	Sempach
HGB	Hungary	Budapest
HRZ	Croatia	Zagreb (Ornit. Inst.)
IAB	Italy	Bologna Ozzano (BO)
LIK	Lithuania	Kaunas (Zool. Mus.)
LVR	Latvia	Riga
MLV	Malta	Valletta
NOS	Norway	Stavanger Museum
PLG	Poland	Gdansk; Varsovia
RSB	Serbia	Belgrade
RUM	Russian Fed.	Moskwa
SFH	Finland	Helsinki Museum
SLL	Slovenia	Ljubljana
UKK	Ukraine	Kiev

RING NUMBERS

The unique identifier is always the metal ring number. If present, any other markers such as flags and colour rings, are also given. Colour rings are described as follows: Code (ring/flag colour)

AGE CODES

EURING age codes are used. Only age at ringing is given.

- 0

Age unknown, i.e. not recorded.
- 1

Pullus in nest, nestling.
- 1J

Chick, out of nest but unable to fly freely, still able to be caught by hand.
- 2

Full-grown: able to fly freely but age otherwise unknown.
- 3

First-year: full-grown bird hatched in the breeding season of this calendar year.
- 4

After first-year: full-grown bird hatched before this calendar year; year of hatching unknown.
- 5

2nd year: a bird hatched last calendar year and now in its second calendar year.
- 6

After 2nd year: full-grown bird hatched before last calendar year; year of hatching unknown

SEX CODES

M male, F female

DATE OF RECOVERY

Where this is unknown, the date of the reporting letter is given instead and is shown in brackets. A 00 in the date indicates that the exact day and/or month are unknown.

ACCURACY OF COORDINATES

Accuracy of coordinates is accurate to the given coordinates (defined by EURING as somewhere in the radius of 1km) unless the coordinates are given in brackets. In such cases accuracy may vary by case. For locations within the Maltese Islands, if exact coordinates were not reported, no coordinates are given.

MANNER OF RECOVERY

The field ‘manner of recovery’ used in previous Ringing Reports in *il-Merill* has been replaced with more accurate combination of [Condition of Bird] followed by [Circumstances of Recovery] as described below.

CONDITION OF BIRD

The condition of the bird at moment of recovery is given and coded numerically as per list below. This is based on EURING’s exchange code.

- 0

Condition completely unknown.
- 1

Dead but no information on how recently the bird had died (or been killed).
- 2

Freshly dead – within about a week.
- 3

Not freshly dead – information available that it had been dead for more than about a week.

- 4

Found sick, wounded, unhealthy, etc. and known to have been released (including ring or other mark identified on a bird in poor condition without the bird having being caught).
- 5

Found sick, wounded, unhealthy etc. and not released or not known if released.
- 6

Alive and probably healthy but taken into captivity.
- 7

Alive and probably healthy and certainly released (including ring or other mark identified on a healthy bird without the bird having being caught).
- 8

Alive and probably healthy and released by a ringer (including ring or other mark identified on the bird by a ringer without the bird having being caught).
- 9

Alive and probably healthy but ultimate fate of bird not known.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF RECOVERY

The circumstances of the encounter are given and coded numerically as per list below. This is based on EURING’s exchange code. All Primary Divisions defined by EURING are given below while only the specific codes used in this report are shown.

- 0

Unknown circumstances or unknown whether through man’s agency or naturally (includes attracted to domestic animals)

- 01

Bird or body found
- 1

Intentionally by man: shot
- 10

Shot
- 2

Intentionally by man: other means (including trapped, poisoned, ring number read in field, etc.). All captures (= ringing data) and recaptures (caught and released)
- 20

Intentionally taken: hunted, trapped (including all captures by ringers)
- 3

Accidentally by man: pollution
- 4

Accidentally through human agency (not pollution): includes traffic accidents, collision with wires, etc., entering man-made artefacts, accidents with machinery, drowned at artificial water
- 5

Natural causes: diseases and other natural ailments
- 58

Sick
- 6

Predation by any animal other than man
- 7

Other natural causes. Drowned (natural water bodies), trapped, tangled and collided with natural objects and also weather and starvation or thirst
- 8

Bird identified from something other than metal ring
- 81

Bird identified from coloured or numbered leg ring(s)
- 9

Other special circumstances
- 99

Totally unknown circumstance: not even stated to be ‘found’

Foreign-ringed birds recovered in Malta

[01440] Eurasian Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>			
GRA X22410	1	05.06.2020	Axios Delta, Kentriki Macedonia, GREECE . 40°30’342”N 22°44’53”E
TADJ (white)	[7][81]	08.04.2023	Nadur, Gozo
[03010] Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			
LVR ET8905	1	04.07.2023	Blīdene, Saldus, LATVIA . 56°39’39.6”N 22°40’22.8”E
ENR (red)	[5][10]	05.10.2023	Buskett, l/o Siġġiewi. 35°51’28.5”N 14°23’52.4”E
[03040] Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			
SFH S437.97	1	17.06.2021	Artjärvi, Päijät-häme, Uusimaa, FINLAND . 60°46’ 00.0” N 25°58’ 00.0”E
	[4][10]	20.10.2023	Wied Qannotta, Burmarrad. (35°56’09.5”N 14°24’18.6”E)
[04690] Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>			
HGB N390263	3	21.07.2022	Sarród (Borsodi-dűlő, DK-i sarok), Győr-Moson-Sopron, HUNGARY . 47°40’47.0”N 16°50’40.0”E
LU (green flag)	[7][81]	08.04.2023	Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56’42.2”N 14°25’23.8”E
[04700] Common Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			
NOS 8B13973	4M	20.06.2022	Finnmark, Vardø, Domen, NORWAY . 70° 21’ 00”N 031° 00’ 00”E
P30 (yellow flag)	[7][81]	30.04.2023	Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58’12.5”N 14°20’56.4”E
[05560] Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			
HGB SX02182	3	05.08.2023	Nyíregyháza (Szelkő-tó, GPS), Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, HUNGARY . 47°53’15.0”N 21°41’8.0”E
	[8][20]	22.08.2023	Simar Nature Reserve, San Pawl il-Baħar. 35°56’46.4”N 14°22’53.3”E
[05750] Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			
GBT EA84536	1	21.07.2021	Pagham Harbour, West Sussex, UK, ENGLAND 50°44’ 00.0”N 0°47’ 00.0”W
2N84 (yellow)	[7][81]	03.04.2023	Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56’42.2”N 14°25’23.8”E
[05820] Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>			
HRZ LS03613	3	04.12.2016	Jakuševac, Zagreb, CROATIA . 45°45’54.0”N 16°01’24.8”E
S0EC (white)	[7][81]	11.01.2023	Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56’42.2”N 14°25’23.8”E

UKK K002558 U558 (yellow)	1 [7][81]	08.06.2017 11.01.2023	Chervona Sloboda, Cherkassy, UKRAINE . 49°22'00.0"N 32°13'00.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH03702 HA37 (red)	3 [7][81]	08.11.2015 08.02.2023	Szeged (Baktó), Csongrád, HUNGARY . 46°18'25.0"N 20°8'25.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH01994 HA29 (red)	3 [7][81]	08.11.2015 09.12.2023	Szeged (Baktó), Csongrád, HUNGARY . 46°18'25.0"N 20°8'25.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
PLG FS35946 TNAR (yellow)	1 [7][81] [7][81] [7][81]	14.06.2019 02.01.2023 12.12.2023 21.12.2023	Walendow, POLAND . 52°04'58.7"N 20°50'26.7"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH08590 H573 (yellow)	1 [7][81] [7][81]	19.06.2019 23.01.2023 08.02.2023	Nyékládháza (Debreczeni-tó), Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, HUNGARY . 47°58'38.0"N 20°51'59.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH07111 H7TJ (red)	1 [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81]	02.06.2019 14.11.2023 15.11.2023 16.11.2023 17.11.2023 04.12.2023 06.12.2023 14.12.2023	Rétság, Fejér, HUNGARY . 46°50'46.0"N 18°34'29.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
SLL VT1445 B391 (black)	1 [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81]	19.07.2023 13.11.2023 14.11.2023 28.11.2023 30.11.2023 07.12.2023 14.12.2023 15.12.2023 22.12.2023	Ptujsko jezero, SLOVENIA . 46°24'30.73"N 15°53'24.99"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH01164 HU8R (red)	3 [7][81] [7][81] [7][81] [7][81]	30.08.2014 04.12.2023 11.12.2023 14.12.2023 15.12.2023	Szeged (Baktó), Csongrád, HUNGARY . 46°18'25.0"N 20°8'25.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH09406 H358 (yellow)	1 [7][81]	29.05.2018 15.12.2023	Sárbogárd, HUNGARY . 46°50'8.0"N 18°34'28.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HGB SH09471 H443 (yellow)	1 [7][81]	12.06.2021 03.03.2023	Sárbogárd, HUNGARY . 46°50'8.0"N 18°34'28.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
UKK J006879 U655 (yellow)	1 [7][81] [7][81] [7][81]	0.06.2017 13.11.2023 16.11.2023 21.11.2023	Zdolbuniv's'kyi, Rivne Oblast, UKRAINE . 50°31'0.0" N 26°17'0.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
HRZ LS07951 S0041 (yellow)	3 [7][81] [7][81] [7][81]	12.12.2021 10.01.2023 15.12.2023 21.12.2023	Jakuševac, Zagreb, CROATIA . 45°45'54.0"N 16°01'24.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
[05880] Audouin's Gull <i>Larus audouinii</i> IAB N0026404 INLP (white)	1 [7][81]	13.06.2014 18.02.2023	Vendicari Island, Noto, Siracusa, ITALY . 36°47'30.9"N 15°06'15.5"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E

[05910] Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> SFH HT275340	1 [7][81]	09.07.2020 08.02.2023	Taipalsaari. Etela-Karjala, FINLAND . 61°09'05.4"N 27°58'56.9"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
DEW N142158 H084T (yellow)	1 [7][81]	12.07.2021 04.04.2023	Trischen, Wadden Sea, GERMANY . 54°04'00.0"N 08°40'00.0"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
[05927] Caspian Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i> HGB DN40460 P:XJ8 (yellow)	1 [7][81]	05.06.2022 04.01.2023	Jeziórko, Grębów, Podkarpackie, HUNGARY . 35°56'49.3" N 14°25'24.5"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
PLG DN37442 P:2PZ (yellow)	1 [7][81]	07.06.2023 22.12.2023	Szczecin: Stocznia Wulkan, Zachodniopomorskie, POLAND . 35°56'49.3" N 14°25'24.5"E Salina Nature Reserve, Naxxar. 35°56'42.2"N 14°25'23.8"E
[08310] Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> DEH SA59156	3F [8][20]	06.08.2022 04.03.2023	Sächsische Schweiz-Osterzgebirge, Sachsen, GERMANY . 50°57'00.0"N 13°46'00.0"E Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E
[12530] Great Reed-warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i> HGB XA42154	3 [8][20]	05.08.2018 15.04.2023	Sárród (Mekszikópuszta, CES pont), Győr-Moson-Sopron, HUNGARY . 47°40'37.0"N 16°49'27.0"E Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E
[12760] Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i> GRA A322762	4 [8][20]	12.05.2023 20.08.2023	Antikythira Bird Observatory, GREECE . 35°52'05.0" N 023°18'10.0"E Mtaħleb, l/o Rabat, Malta. 35°52'50.1"N 14°22'01.5"E
[12770] Eurasian Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> BLB 17689667	3F [8][20]	09.09.2022 05.10.2023	Bierwart, Namur BL26, BELGIUM . 50°19'48.0"N 5°00'36.0"E Mtaħleb, l/o Rabat, Malta. 35°52'50.1"N 14°22'01.5"E
[13080] Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> ABT X22410	4 [8][20]	17.04.2022 04.04.2023	Vishaj, Tirana, ALBANIA . 41°16'14.2"N 19°48'37.8"E Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E
[13110] Common Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> NOS HM44880	3 [8][20]	16.09.2022 20.03.2023	Hunndalen (Oppland, Gjøvik), NORWAY . 60° 47' 05.0" N 10° 38' 36.0"E Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E
NOS 6A3120	2 [8][20]	23.09.2022 22.03.2023	Dansarberget (Nord-Trøndelag, Stjørdal), NORWAY . 63°30'47.0"N 10°49' 03.0"E Manikata, l/o Mellieħa. 35°56'25.2"N 14°22'02.9"E
HRZ AA70666	2 [8][20]	11.10.2022 09.03.2023	Vransko jezero, Pakoštane, CROATIA . 43°56'14.0" N 015°30'57.0"E Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E
[16540] Eurasian Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i> SFH HB84168	5M [9][20]	08.05.2019 23.11.2023	Rautjärvi, Etelä-karjala, Kymi, FINLAND . 61°19'00.0"N 29°05'00.0"E Qrendi, Malta
PLG K178229	3M [9][20]	27.09.2022 22.11.2023	Łomianki:ul.Krokusa, Mazowieckie, POLAND . 52°20'02.2"N 20°52'34.1"E Birżebbuġa, Malta.
IAB 4J7832	4M [9][20]	03.10.2022 13.11.2023	Passo della Berga, ITALY . 45°47'56.0"N 10°25'14.3"E Benghisa, Malta.
IAB 5J1288	4M [9][20]	16.10.2022 17.11.2023	Passo della Berga, ITALY . 45°47'56.0"N 10°25'14.3"E Kerċem, Gozo.
HES B766540	3M [9][20] [9][20]	17.10.2022 16.11.2023 18.11.2023	Col de Jaman, SWITZERLAND . 46°26'57.0"N 006°58'26.0"E Rabat, Malta. Dingli, Malta.
HES B739659	3M [9][20]	19.10.2022 05.11.2023	Col de Bretolet, SWITZERLAND . 46°08'36.0"N 006°47'48.0"E Nadur, Gozo.

BLB 17985152	6M [9][20]	25.03.2023 21.11.2023	Limerle Luxembourg, BELGIUM . 50°09'00.0"N 5°55'00.0"E Bahrija, Malta.
RUM RR12934	3F [9][20]	20.09.2023 06.11.2023	Zelenogradskiy distr., Rybachiy, Kalliningrad, RUSSIA . 55°05' 00.0" N 20° 44' 00.0"E San Lawrenz, Gozo.
IAB 62J685	3M [9][20]	26.09.2023 12.11.2023	Bocca di Caset, ITALY . 45°51'34.4"N 10°41'27.4"E Gharb, Gozo.
HES B768607	3M [9][20]	27.09.2023 14.11.2023	Col de Jaman, SWITZERLAND . 46°26'57.0"N 006°58'26.0"E Ħal-Far, Birżebbuġa, Malta.
IAB 23J312	3M [9][20]	03.10.2023 16.12.2023	Monte Pizzoc, ITALY . 46°02'43.4"N 12°20'13.7"E Ħal-Far, Birżebbuġa, Malta.
IAB 95J304	3F [9][20]	04.10.2023 16.11.2023	Bocca di Caset, ITALY . 45°51'34.4"N 10°41'27.4"E Bahrija, Malta.
IAB 96J507	4M [9][20]	11.10.2023 08.12.2023	Bocca di Caset, ITALY . 45°51'34.4"N 10°41'27.4"E Gharb, Gozo.
HES B787450	3M [9][20]	12.10.2023 19.11.2023	Col de Jaman, SWITZERLAND . 46°26'57.0"N 006°58'26.0"E Nadur, Gozo.
SLL KK05443	3F [9][20]	14.10.2023 26.11.2023	Sedlo Suha, Golica, Jesenice, SLOVENIA . 46°29'00.0"N 14°05'00.0"E Dingli, Malta.
IAB 64J503	4M [9][20]	16.10.2023 24.11.2023	Bocca di Caset, ITALY . 45°51'34.4"N 10°41'27.4"E Mellieħa, Malta.
[17170] Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>			
IAB Z408509	3F [9][20]	14.10.2022 23.10.2023	La Passata, Alpi, ITALY . 45°47'36.4"N 9°43'33.1"E Ħaż-Żebbuġ, Malta.

Malta-ringed birds recovered abroad

[00360] Scopoli's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>			
MLV FF04690	1 [2][01]	31.08.2014 19.03.2023	Filfla, Malta. 35°47'14.5"N 14°24'35.2"E Misrata, LIBYA .
[05926] Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>			
MLV GG3622	1	17.05.2011	Filfla, Malta. 35°47'14.4"N 14°24'35.3"E
M043 (green)	[5][58]	28.07.2023	Viline Vode, Belgrade, SERBIA . 44°49'31.4"N 20°29'09.1"E
[09920] Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>			
MLV 423424	3 [8][20]	11.10.2022 13.09.2023	Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E Ventės ragas, Šilutės r., LITHUANIA . 55°20'30.0"N 21°11'30.0"E
MLV 405302	4M [8][20]	17.04.2022 17.04.2023	Ghadira Nature Reserve, Mellieħa. 35°58'12.5"N 14°20'56.4"E Hulín (Záhlinice), Zlínský kraj, CZECHIA . 49°16'10.99"N 17°28'25.36"E
[13110] Common Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			
MLV 62P274	3 [8][20]	15.11.2021 26.06.2022	Mġarr ix-Xini, Gozo. 36°01'15.0"N 14°16'10.0"E Röhrsdorf, Pirna Sächsische Schweiz-Osterzgebirge, Sachsen, GERMANY . 50°58'00.0"N 13°49'00.0"E
[13120] Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			
MLV 66P567	4 [8][20]	21.04.2023 07.05.2023	Mtahleb, l/o Rabat, Malta. 35°52'50.1"N 14°22'01.5"E Långskär Bird Observatory, Lemland, Åland, FINLAND . 59°49'58.0" N 19°55'58.0"E

