



BIRD'S
EYE
VIEW

THE TIMES

NEW GAME SHOOTING LAWS

CAPUCCI MISSION

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FEBRUARY 1981

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

February 1981 Number 4

An MOS publication to give members a bird's eye view of what happened, what is happening, and what will be happening within the MOS, The Ornithological Society - the society for the study and protection of birds in Malta.

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FRONT COVER : *Newspaper poster announcing the new bird protection regulations.*

THE TIMES

NEW GAME SHOOTING LAWS

CAPUCCI MISSION OVER

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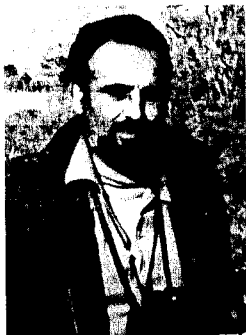


BACK COVER : *Aerial view of Ghadira showing the first phase of the habitat engineering works. (See page 10).*

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1980 has been quite an eventful year. The start of the engineering work in the conversion of the area at Ghadira into a National Nature Reserve, the publication of the new bird protection legislation and the holding of the XII Conference of the ICBP European Section in Malta have all contributed to make 1980 a year to remember.

Though we consider these new bird protection regulations as a milestone in the local history of bird protection there is still much to be desired. The list of birds that may be shot include species such as the Herons, Egrets and the Nightjar which in our opinion should have been afforded protection. The close season, too, is not adequate. However these regulations are the first proper step in the right direction. Knowledge and enforcement of these laws are now greatly needed.

In the Malta Government budget speech of November 1980 we find a sentence that should interest all Maltese conservationists. Amongst the things to which the 'highest' priority would be given in 1981, the finance Minister included 'the protection of the environment for the preservation and enhancement of the country's natural beauty and wealth'. This is encouraging. Much work is still needed to preserve and enhance the reserve at Ghadira and a lot of care should be exercised to conserve the natural environment. Bird conservation by itself is meaningless unless we also conserve birds' natural habitat. It is greatly hoped that in future there will be no repetition of what happened during the past two decades, when great chunks of Maltese countryside were spoilt for ever under the guise of progress. Malta's minute area with a relatively large population cannot afford to loose or maltreat any parts of its countryside, no matter how small.

No doubt you have noted a change of Editorship which was brought about by the emigration to Australia of John Azzopardi the former editor. Johnny, as we affectionately called him, served on the MOS Council for several years as Young Members Officer and lately as Asst. Secretary. He had joined the MOS as a young member and his contribution towards bird conservation in Malta reached its peak during the past three years during which he also served as Chairman of ICBP Malta Section. During this time he edited Bird's Eye View in its first three crucial years. We wish him and his wife Carmen the best of luck in their newly adopted country. The best present we can give to John is the keeping the standard of this publication which had been reached due mainly to his dedication and efficiency.

Joe Sultana
Editor
February 1981

New Bird Protection Regulations

REGULATIONS' OUTLINES

It may be said that hunting laws in Malta date as far back as 1499, but these were enacted to safeguard hunting for the overlords and not to protect birds. The first proper bird regulations, though inadequate and hardly ever enforced, were issued in 1911. Since then various amendments, additions and deletions to these regulations were made; however, they remained inadequate and very rarely enforced.

The new regulations which were published in the Malta Government Gazette of the 8th of August 1980, though leaving much to be desired, can be regarded as a milestone in local bird protection legislation.

CLOSE SEASON

These regulations introduce for the first time a close season for all bird-shooting and trapping from 22nd May to 31st August of each year. This is rather a short season and covers very little of the seasonal migration. However, it may afford protection to some late spring and early autumn migrants as well as the local breeding species which, in any case, are also covered by another section of the regulations.

BIRD SANCTUARIES

The main areas regarded as bird sanctuaries which were added to the previous list include Filfla Islet and Ta' Gali complex, as well as Ta' Cenc Cliffs. At the latter, however, shooting and trapping are only prohibited within 50 metres from the edge of the cliffs so as to safeguard the breeding birds below the cliffs, among which there is a pair of Peregrine Falcons and the largest colony of Cory's Shearwaters breeding in the Maltese Islands. Altogether the list comprises some of the best areas in Malta, amongst which are Buskett with a protective belt of 200 metres, the whole island of Comino, which had already been included in the list of 1969, and Ghadira with a 500-metre protective belt, which had been included in 1978.

These new regulations make it much easier for the police to enforce the law, as it is now prohibited even to carry a gun or ammunition as well as any bird trapping device in these areas, which also include all public gardens and cemeteries, the Marsa

Sports Ground, Manoel Island, Portes-des-Bombes area and Kennedy Grove, the latter with a 200-metre protective belt.

Furthermore, it is now illegal to discharge a firearm while afloat within 3 kilometres from any foreshore.

PROTECTED SPECIES

These regulations include two schedules of species; the first including those that may be shot and the second those that may be trapped. Otherwise, all other species, which include all birds of prey as well as many other species, are protected. It is clearly stated that outside the close season no person shall shoot or attempt to shoot at any bird other than a bird included in the first schedule, or trap or attempt to trap any bird other than a bird included in the second schedule. Furthermore, no person shall keep in captivity any bird other than a bird included in the second schedule unless he proves that such a bird was lawfully imported or was bred in captivity.

SCHEDULE I (Birds that may be shot)

1. Collared Dove
2. Curlews
3. Dotterel
4. Egrets
5. Golden Plover
6. Herons
7. Lapwing
8. Nightjar
9. Quail
10. Rails, Crakes
& Coots
11. Skylark
12. Snipes
13. Spanish Sparrow
14. Starling
15. Stock Dove
16. Stone Curlew
17. Thrush (except
Blue Rock Thrush)
18. Turtle Dove
19. Woodcock
20. Wood Pigeon
21. Wild Duck

SCHEDULE II (Birds that may be trapped)

1. Chaffinch
2. Golden Plover
3. Goldfinch
4. Greenfinch
5. Hawfinch
6. Linnel
7. Ortolan Bunting
8. Quail
9. Serin
10. Siskin
11. Skylark
12. Spanish Sparrow
13. Starling
14. Thrush (except
Blue Rock Thrush)
15. Turtle Dove

Previous to these regulations only 22 were protected. These were mainly small insectivorous species. Though there are still species in the above lists, such as Nightjar, Egrets and Herons, that should have been afforded protection, one can see the enormous positive progress that has been achieved in this part of the regulations.

All breeding birds, with the exception of the abundant Spanish Sparrow, are protected for the first time. These regulations state that no person shall shoot at, attempt to shoot at, take or disturb any bird's nest or its young.

BIRD TRAPPING

Bird trapping cannot be carried out by bird lime, mist-nets, tree-covering nets or net-cage traps. The use of any electrical device or gas, poisonous or stupefying bait to trap birds is also illegal. Furthermore, no person shall sell, offer for sale or expose for sale any of the above trapping devices.

TAXIDERMISTRY

Mounted stuffed-bird collections are very popular and are one of the main reasons for the indiscriminate shooting and taking of birds. Now taxidermists must have a police licence and cannot stuff or mount any bird other than those included in the 1st and 2nd schedules, as listed above. This is one of the main positive aspects of the regulations, which also introduce a police licence for bird-ringers who cannot use any bird-rings without the approval of the Commissioner of Police.

ENFORCEMENT

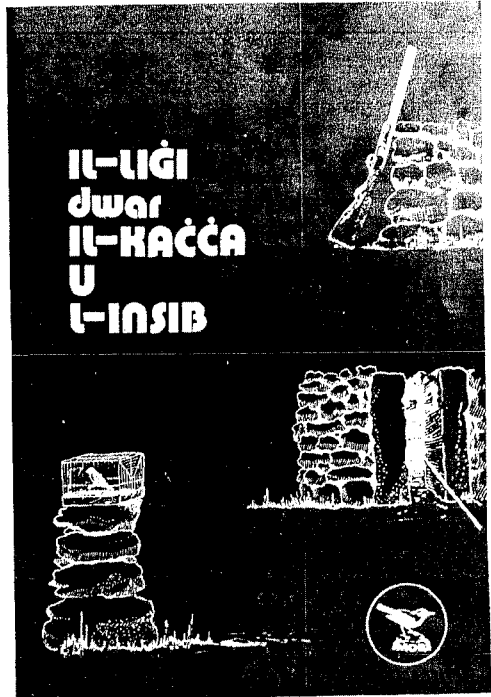
We have yet to see to what extent the above regulations are going to be respected by shooters, trappers and taxidermists, as well as to what extent they are going to be enforced by the police in general. When sought co-operation from the police authorities have never failed us. Since the regulations were issued the police raided Buskett as well as other non-shooting and trapping areas and at least 22 persons have been taken to court. Six were carrying guns in the Buskett area, fourteen for carrying guns in the Luqa Airport non-shooting boundary and two for keeping guns in a restaurant which falls within the 500-metre protective belt at Ghadira National Nature Reserve.

HONEY BUZZARD BLACK SUNDAY

In spite of the above, Sunday the 28th of September 1980 was indeed a Black Sunday for the migrating Honey Buzzard, a protected species. Flocks of up to 15 were fre-

quently seen on that black afternoon on the south western part of Malta. At least 45 Honey Buzzards were seen brought down by gunshots which were reminiscent of a festa's fireworks in their frequency. The irony is that these were shot down in and around Buskett, one of the main bird sanctuaries in Malta and that this massacre took place a day after the Police raided the area and confiscated six guns.

REGULATIONS BOOKLET



Many shooters and trappers are ignorant of the contents of the new bird protection regulations and though they may know they actually imply. To remedy this the MOS has just published 'IL-LIGI DWAR IL-KACCA U L-INSIB' an illustrated booklet in Maltese explaining in simple terms the regulations. This booklet which has been approved by the Commissioner of Police was published with the help of the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds. 16,000 copies have been printed, 12,000 of which are being officially distributed by the Police to shooters and trappers when they renew their licence. ○

X77 I.C.B.P. European Conference

The XII European Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation was held at Ramla Bay Hotel, Malta, from 2nd to 9th November 1980. There were many items on the agenda which included amongst others, the future role of ICBP European Continental Section and European National Sections; a report on International Conventions; traffic in European birds, including taxidermy; endangered species in Europe; threats to important bird habitats in Europe; list of birds in need of special protection; pollution of the sea and inland waters by oil and other chemicals; misuse of poison with special reference to birds of prey; co-operation with and involvement of Africa in European bird protection; and reports of National Sections.

47 countries participated representing 18 countries, namely Austria, Azores, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Tunisia. There were also representatives of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, International Association of Falconry and the Conseil Internationale de la Chasse.

The organizing committee was composed of Messrs. John Azzopardi, Alfred E. Baldacchino, Guido Bonetti, Brian K. German, Joe Sultana and Stephen Turner.

The whole conference was chaired by the new Chairman, Dr. John Temple Lang of ICBP Ireland and the Irish Wildlife Conservancy, who was elected during the Executive Board Meeting held on the first day. He succeeded Prof Dr. Mauritz F. Morzer Bruyns of the Netherlands Section, who together with Dr. Cristoph Imboden, ICBP Director, helped Dr. Temple Lang chair the meeting. The Executive Board, which is composed of National Sections' Chairmen, was informed that Brian K. German was elected Chairman of the Malta Section in lieu of John Azzopardi, who was leaving for Australia after the Conference. At the meeting Brian K. German was also elected with acclamation one of the Vice Chairmen of the ICBP European Section.



D. ZAFARISE

Brian K. German has been elected Vice Chairman of the European Section. He was earlier elected Chairman of ICBP Malta. Mr. German is Hon. Treasurer of MOS.

The Conference was officially opened by Dr. Anton Buttigieg, President of the Republic, who was accompanied by Mrs. Buttigieg. The President was introduced by John Azzopardi who in a brief speech on behalf of ICBP Malta and the organizing committee, said that Malta's National Section felt very honoured that ICBP European Section decided to trust it with the organization of the conference. He said that Malta was the smallest country represented but one that had relatively the largest problems regarding the bird situation.

In the opening speech the President of the Republic said that he has the honour to be

ICDP SUMMIT
CONTINENTAL ISLANDS
MALTA 1980



H. CALIA

1. The President of the Republic opening the Conference.



H. CALIA

2. All the delegates with the President after the official opening of the Conference.



3. Dr. J. Temple Lang and Dr. C. Imboden discussing the next item on the agenda during the break.



H. CALIA

4. The Conference ended with a banquet. Joe Sultana, MOS President, presented a silver tankard to John Azzopardi as a small token for his work in the local conservation movement.

The patron of the Malta Ornithological Society which is the leading society forming ICBP Malta. He said that he is also patron of many other societies but, he continued, he does not think that there is any other organization with whose aims he is more in agreement than those of the MOS. At the end of his address, the President of the Republic stated that in spite of the laws the bird hunters carry on their devastating work and that the only hope in eradicating shooting and trapping, which he referred to as 'the plaque', is through education.

This was an official start to a week of long sessions of discussions on the various subjects on the agenda. When the item regarding the report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds was discussed Mr. Alfred E. Baldacchino, Hon. General Secretary of the MOS was elected a member on the Committee. This Committee's function is to allocate funds towards bird conservation projects in various countries and both ICBP Malta and MOS have already benefitted from this scheme. This was the 2nd European Committee appointed for MOS Council Members.

Alfred E. Baldacchino was appointed a member on the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds. Mr. Baldacchino is the Hon. General Secretary of the MOS.

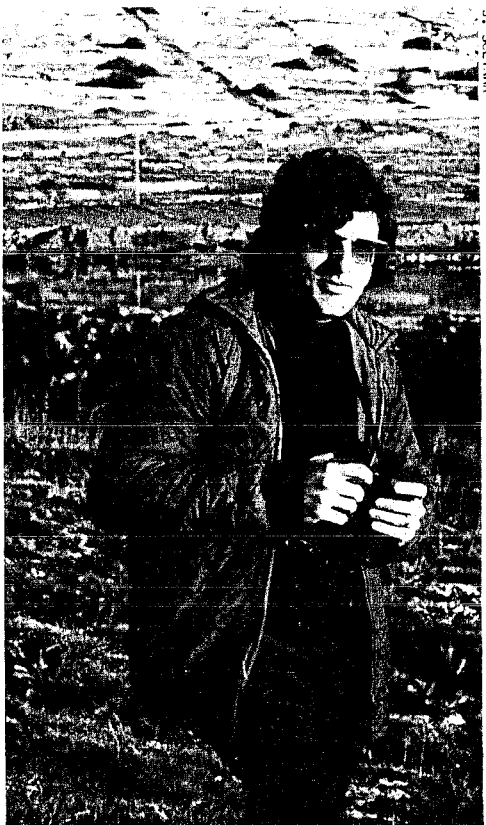


The sticker, which was issued to commemorate the Conference, was sponsored by the Ramla Bay Hotel.

The Maltese delegation presented the papers for the conference namely (a) the report of the Malta Section for the year 1978-80 prepared by John Azzopardi; (b) a review of the new bird protection legislation by Joe Sultana; and (c) the development of Ghadira as a National Nature Reserve prepared by Mr. H.E. Axell, who was brought to Malta again by MOS to form part of the Maltese delegation. During Mr. Axell's visit opportunity was taken to discuss further future work at Ghadira. Mr. Axell also gave an illustrated talk to the delegates on the development of Ghadira. Another illustrated talk on the situation of the Birds of Malta, past and present, was given by Joe Sultana. During the first evening, Prof. Ali Hilli, Tunisian delegate, showed a magnificent film 'Birds of Tunisia'.

Two afternoons were devoted to outings so that the delegates could see something of Malta. One outing included a visit to Ghadira where the delegates could see the project about which they already had heard a lot, and to Buskett which they viewed from the top roof of Verdala Palace. The second outing was historical with a visit to the Neolithic Temples of Haqar Qim and a visit to the silent city - Mdina. During two evenings they were generously entertained by Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Turner at their residence.

The last session of the Conference was devoted to the resolutions. Three of these were discussed and accepted as follows.



RESOLUTION 7

- Noting: the desirability of the Republic of Malta participating fully in International Conventions for the protection of wildlife;
- Urges the Government to take appropriate steps to ratify the Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species; the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance; and to participate fully in IUCN's cooperative programme for Mediterranean Coastal States.

RESOLUTION 8

- Having Noted with satisfaction Malta's recent bird protection regulations which should, when effectively enforced, safeguard in great measure many of the resident and European migratory birds under threat from hunters, trappers and taxidermists.
- Congratulates the Government of Malta for taking an important step forward particularly with regard to the protection of birds of prey;
- Confides that the Ghadira National Nature Reserve will contribute to a greater understanding of the need to conserve the international wildlife heritage in Malta's care,
- Commends the Maltese authorities for their far-sightedness in declaring the National Nature Reserve at Ghadira and for beginning measures to preserve and maintain the habitat there.

RESOLUTION 15

- Recalling the success of the XII Conference of the European Continental Section hosted by the Malta Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation and the hospitality and generosity shown towards delegates to this conference
- Thanks Sincerely the organizing committee of the Malta Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation for all their hospitality and work and wishes them and the Government of Malta success in their future bird conservation projects in Malta

In a long letter to 'The Times' of Malta, Dr John Temple Lang, Chairman of the European Section summed up the organization of this conference when he wrote 'Last week's conference, which was outstandingly well run by the Maltese organizers, was of historic importance because it confirms that Malta is now beginning to play its full part in European Wildlife Conservation'. ○

Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith, General Secretary of ICBP for many years, was one person whose absence was felt at the meeting. She had passed away in January 1980. Her loss was every Section's loss. Phyllis had dedicated her life to bird preservation and she helped the local conservation movement on many occasions.



GHADIRA *The making of a reserve*

When the machines, contracted by the Department of Health & Environment, rolled onto GHADIRA in May 1980 to start the habitat engineering work at the National Nature Reserve, it was like a dream come true.

The 'struggle' for Ghadira had been a long one and at times bitter. But an unending perseverance, a strong will and an unwavering belief in conservation finally won the day. Those of us who have been long involved in the local conservation movement know too well that the early 'battles' for Ghadira were not to convince the authorities of the need of the development of the area into a reserve, but to save it from a different development - a misguided one that would have eliminated its very existence.

This unique area in Malta was saved in the mid-sixties by the swift action taken by the MOS. It had been found that a coastal road was planned to cut right through the heart of Ghadira. Local and foreign bodies were quickly alerted. After many protests the plan was shelved and the projected road was diverted.

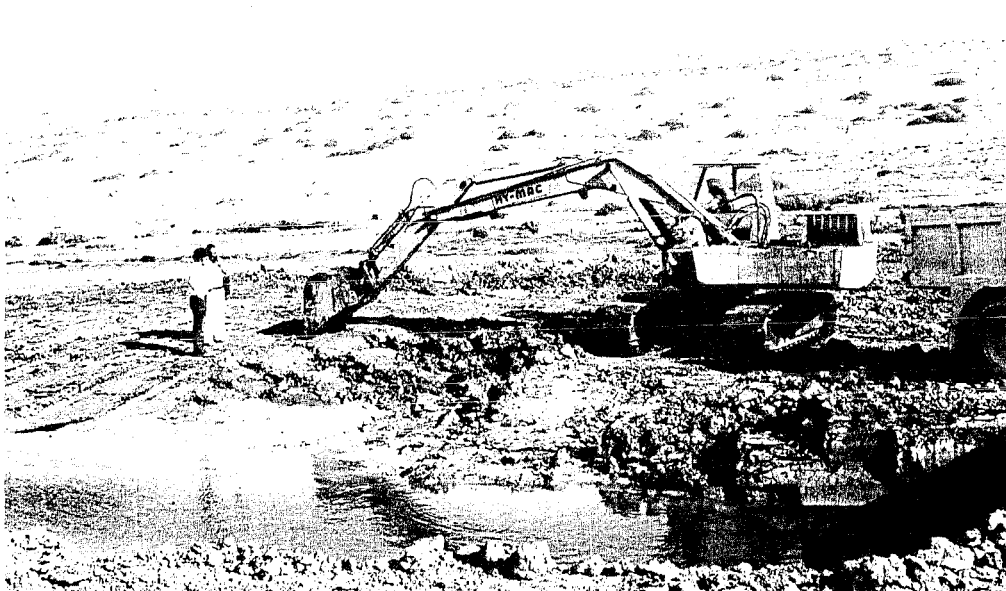
This stimulated the MOS to suggest to the authorities the development of Ghadira into a reserve. At that time Ghadira was still being leased for bird-shooting and MOS' new approach found strong opposition.

In 1967 the MOS presented a report on the Natural and Historical features of Ghadira to the Malta House of Representatives and since then the ball kept being rolled in one direction until eleven years later (December 1978) the Government of Malta declared Ghadira a bird sanctuary. Two months earlier Mr. H.E. Axell, then Land Use Adviser of the RSPB, had been brought to Malta by the MOS to draw up proposals for the development of Ghadira as a National Reserve. His plan was immediately accepted by the Department of Health & Environment, which is now responsible for the area.

Previous to all this the MOS, jointly with the ICBP Malta, had striven for many years to get a grant from WWF for such a project. Our case was so impressive that this international organisation offered the Government a grant of 25,000 dollars towards the work of converting Ghadira into a reserve.

After the Government accepted Mr. Axell's plan, the Minister of Health & Environment appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. L.J. Saliba, Principal Environment Officer, to be responsible for the setting up and running of the Ghadira Reserve. Two of the appointed members on this Committee are Alfred E. Baldacchino, a Government official with the Department of

The machines working under the scorching summer sun. Fresh rain water will flow into the scrape from the new perimeter ditch via three pairs of inlet pipes and held there by controllable sand bags dams.





W. J. LAMIA



R. CALLA

As we look from the first bird watching hide in Malta (donated by MBROC and erected by V. Sammut for the MOS) we shall watch birds, such as these Little Stints, which would not have landed safely in former years. The shooting butt was left standing on an island in the middle as a reminder of the bad old days.

the Environment, and Joe Sultana, representing the Education Department.

The WWF grant initiated the first phase of the engineering work which started in May 1980, under the supervision of Alfred E. Baldacchino. Mr. Axell was brought again to Malta in July, when he took over the supervision of the works.

With the WWF Initial grant about half of the necessary habitat engineering was accomplished. The pond area has been enlarged and some islands have been constructed. A defensive ditch and a bank surrounding most of the area were also constructed to provide valuable new habitats as well as some security from disturbance.

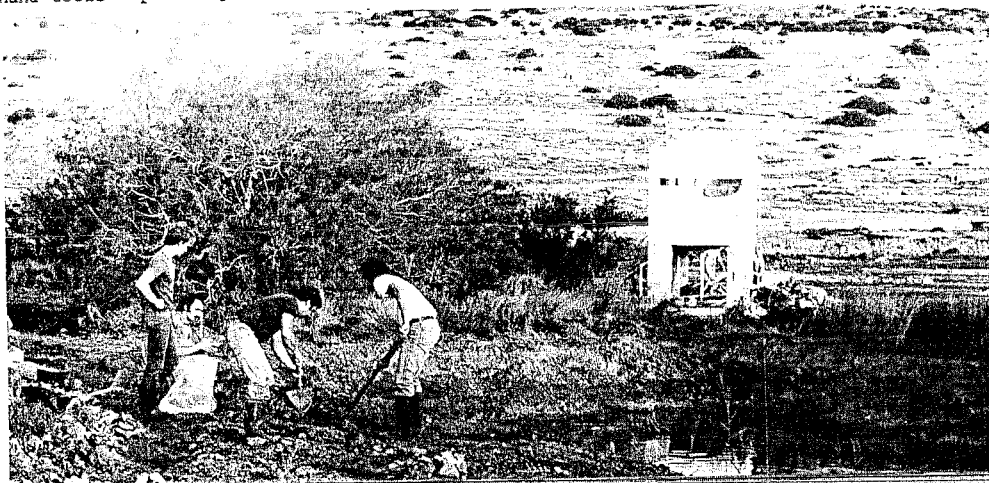
After the machines moved away the momentum has been maintained by MOS members, who, with the blessing of the Department of Health & Environment, have been working with hand tools, filling sand bags to build the necessary small dams, constructing small islands, putting up fences and most important planting a few thousands of trees and shrubs, mainly Tamarisk, Shrubby Orache and Bramble, on the surrounding embankment. Charles Gauci, Guido Ronnet, Victor Cilia

and Joe Sultana have been mainly responsible for the organization of voluntary work at Ghadira, where several members have been devoting many hours every weekend. Most of the trees and shrubs have been supplied by the Agricultural Department, whose cooperation (in the persons of Messrs. J. Boro and D. D'Andria, both on the Government Committee representing their Department) never fails the MOS when possible.

There is still much to be done at Ghadira. Two more hides, an educational centre for visitors and school parties, and a warden's residence are needed. More engineering work is still essential for extending the scrape and to dig a reservoir for a supply of water. The Ghadira Project is indeed an ambitious one, which still needs a sum of about EM34,000. But the MOS is determined to help in its success as it is a fact that Ghadira in future will go a long way in the education of the public in nature conservation, birds in particular. With this in mind the MOS has lately launched the Ghadira Fund Appeal and various members have already contributed generously towards the project. ○

After the machines left the area MOS members have been maintaining the momentum of work by hand tools - planting trees and shrubs, constructing islands and fencing the area.

J. W. LAMIA



The MALTA BIRD RESERVES OVERSEAS COMMITTEE was formed in February 1966 by a group of British field ornithologists who were already familiar with Malta's bird conservation problems since, during the previous year, they had been instructing members of the embryo Malta Ornithological Society in fieldwork methods.

The objective was to persuade the international conservation organisations to use their influence and funds to improve the situation in the Maltese Islands by helping the MOS to create bird reserves which would give some refuge to migrating birds in spring and autumn. This policy was vigorously opposed by the blood sports section of the Maltese community which included a number of people prominent in public life.

It has taken fifteen years of frustration, disappointment and persistence to produce a change of heart by the Maltese authorities and to persuade controllers of international organisations to change their attitude of 'moral support' to one of financial and practical involvement. At last this has been achieved now that the unique habitat of Ghadira has been declared a reserve by the Maltese Government, and the World Wildlife Fund has given a substantial grant towards its development. This achievement, combined with the introduction of new legislation for the protection of birds, has done much to bring Malta into line with the standards set by most European countries.

The main credit for these successes must go to the MOS who has waged a constant publicity battle to persuade the authorities and public that conservation is a worthwhile issue.

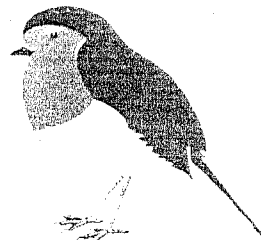
The MOS is now one of the most effective ornithological societies in the world and needs little advice on how to conduct its own affairs, but it has always appreciated the help given by MBROC who has never contented itself with being merely the link between Malta and international conservation. It has always been well aware that demands on the world organisations from elsewhere could prevent any help being given to Malta, or at least delay it for many years. MBROC has tried to fill this gap by long term planning and step by step improvements. It would be too long a story to list all its efforts, successes and failures in the past fifteen years.

Fundamentally it realised that there was little hope of improvement unless the Maltese naturalists themselves built up a unified and effective society which could influence public opinion and produce individuals capable of managing reserves and field centres if these were eventually created.

Initially therefore MBROC, with the blessing of the British Trust for Ornithology, continued to send field instructors to train Maltese ornithologists in modern field techniques, including ringing. The latter proved that to study a live bird in the hand before releasing it, yielded more scientific information than shooting it and keeping it as a specimen.

MBROC then launched appeals to raise money to finance visits by MOS members to the

GHADIRA TA'GHOD F'GADDA



META
 DSEY' BAWDIE FILGONNA F' TIEKAMPANA LILLI SQA' NABE
 HISSINA
 U
 IAGOMI HAPNA CIBLILLI U'LU TAMPANA
 U
 DHA HASRAH FIEF JINQABOK KULLI HARBIA F' LILLI BOKA L'KAPNA
 MNNOM M'LU F'GASR M'IN

SKOND IL-LIGI DWAR IL-HARSJEN TA' L-GHASAFAR
 (G. N. 7/1937) "HADD MA GHANDU IZOMM IEW
 IAQBAD B'XI MEZZ F'EBDA ZMIEN MATUL IS-SENA
 LILL-PITIROSS".

MALTA BIRD RESERVES OVERSEAS COMMITTEE

1981

The sponsorship of this Robin Poster was the first help received from MBROC.



British Isles, in order that they might attend field centre courses, visit reserves and observatories and study the administration and construction of ornithological and conservation units.

Publicity campaigns organised by the MOS were backed by MBROC which over the years provided grants towards the cost of booklets, leaflets and posters. MBROC have given lectures in Malta and have shown films kindly lent free of charge by the RSPB.

Education of the young was not neglected, money being provided to finance educational material prepared by the MOS and prize money being awarded for nature essay competitions in schools. From time to time grants were made to enable MOS to buy rings and ringing equipment.

The conservation projects did not always succeed; well meant ideas were sometimes

dropped on the advice of the MOS that they would not be suitable for the Maltese public. MBROC has never given up trying to act in the interests of Maltese conservation. It can no longer give ornithological advice as Maltese standards of knowledge are now as good as anywhere in Europe. The MOS administration can be used as an example of how things can be done and in the field of conservation publicity they are outstanding. Yet as late as 1980 MBROC was able to assist by organizing and financing a visit to England by a young student so that he might study methods employed in treating injured wild birds and the systems used in returning them to the wild.

It is now hoped that a bird hospital will be set up in Malta; there will be no shortage of patients, unfortunately, as shooting is still a popular pastime and its control is not yet effective.

All MBROC members have given their services freely over the years and have willingly given hospitality to MOS members visiting Britain. All are specialists in their own spheres: fieldwork, administration, education, publicity and finance, but special mention must be made of its Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Coxon, who originated MBROC and who has been solely responsible for communication with all the organisations and individuals whom she persuaded to use their influence and funds in order to improve conservation in Malta.

Contributed by Mr. G. Davies of MBROC.

Ed. Presently MBROC Committee Members are Mrs. E. Coxon, Mrs. A. Hardman, and Messrs. G. Davies, J. Hardman and M. Hiron.

Mrs. A. Hardman was appointed as Hon. Treasurer after the death of Capt. M. Taylor (see BEV No.3 p.26). ○

Mrs. E. Coxon, founder and secretary of MBROC, opening a bird photography exhibition at the Xaghra Cultural Centre, Gozo, during her second visit to Malta in March, 1965, prior to forming MBROC.



Annual General Meeting

The 18th Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday, 27th February 1980, at the British Legion Malta Branch Headquarters, Valletta. Following is the President's Address, the Hon. General Secretary's Report and Calendar of Activities for 1979 and the Financial Report for 1979.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While you all know the agenda for this 18th Annual General Meeting, you may not be aware that the agenda of the Maltese Parliament for this week includes a bill entitled "An Act further to amend the Code of Police Laws". This bill introduces amongst others a close season for the shooting of birds from 22nd May till 31st August and the need of a Police licence for persons to act as taxidermists and bird ringers. In many respects, however, this bill falls short of what is needed. We are also still waiting for the promised new regulations for the protection of birds. Due to this we shall be proposing later this evening that this gathering sends letters to the Government and the Opposition on this matter.

Our far-sighted educational programme which we launched some years back will continue to dominate the MOS future activities. Everybody agrees that we must concentrate as much attention as possible in influencing the minds of the next generation. With this in mind the MOS must reorganise the youth section, must enroll more young members, must cater for them and must continue to publish educational material. The enormous number of requests from youngsters of different ages from various schools from all parts of the islands for educational material is most encouraging and always welcome, even though this entails a lot of work to distribute. However, the major problem which arises, is lack of funds; and the educational material is costly. Funds are generally acquired from membership fees and donations. We rely mainly on membership fees and therefore we must concentrate forcefully to enroll more members. There are many people, who, though they agree with our principles, do not enroll because, they say, they cannot take part or help in the Society's activities. Little do they know that by just paying their membership fee they are already supporting the MOS. Many large societies on the continent have thousands of members who take no part in any activities, but they simply pay the fee. The MOS needs these kind of members too, therefore appeal to all members to do their best to enroll the much needed new members.

After the successful launching of the Maltese publication 'L-AGHSAFAR' it is earnestly hoped that we'll publish a revised and enlarged edition of 'A Guide to the Birds of Malta'. Other publications in the pipeline are a book on Filfla and its bird life, as well as more educational booklets. It is also hoped to issue new stickers as well as posters. In fact we have already printed a poster which will be launched next month.

The MOS will also be involved with the Governmental project at Ghadira. We have been in contact with Mr. H. Axell who, on our initiative, will be coming again to Malta with the help of the WWF and the RSPB, this time to supervise the work at Ghadira, which it is hoped will start in May.

The MOS will also be helping the ICBP Malta Section to organise the European Conference of the ICBP which will be held at Ramla Bay Hotel later this year. With the help of the Hawk Trust and the MBROC we shall be sending this year a member to UK to train in the care of injured birds. And above all, apart from all these activities the MOS will continue its ringing and research programme. Results from such a programme in past years have been most encouraging and are a credit not only to the MOS but also to Malta.

I must apologise on behalf of MOS for being so late in publishing IL-MERILL No. 20 and BIRD'S EYE VIEW No. 3. They are going to print next month and will be sent to all members in due course. It is hoped that future publications will be issued in time.

The list of individuals who have helped the MOS in the past year is quite long. To them and to all members, the Council's and my thanks and appreciation are not lacking.

Thank you for your attention.

Joe Sultana
President

SECRETARY'S REPORT

SECRETARY'S REPORT for the period 1st March 1979 to 27th February 1980.

Progressing by leaps and bounds during the last couple of years, the MOS seems to have reached a stage when further progress can only be achieved by the involvement of more members, both directly and indirectly. The plans drawn up by the Council can only be executed by the help of more active members.

Once again the number of members on the MOS books for 1979 was almost the same as for 1978. There were 146 local ordinary members including 26 new ones; 13 local life members including 2 new ones plus one new honorary life member. 20 members failed to pay their 1979 subscription, though 4 of these left the island. Overseas ordinary members totalled 65 showing 17 new members. Overseas life members totalled 30, while overseas Hon. life members totalled 4. 12 overseas members did not pay their 1979 subscription. From the above figures one can conclude that 1979 ended with an overall increase of 14 new members.

During 1979 the MOS Council held 7 Council Meetings. Besides the various committees held 8 meetings in all. Council members took part in 5 interviews/debates on the broadcasting media and participated in two programmes on the local television. 33 activities, such as indoor and outdoor meetings were organised for the MOS members. 8 circulars were sent to MOS full members while 6 were sent to the young members. 9 press releases were issued to the press. One MOS delegate attended a conference abroad while 4 MOS delegations attended local meetings. 2 MOS young members attended a course in Italy. A detailed list of all these activities will be published in Bird's Eye View.

Publications

In its efforts for the better appreciation and protection of birds, the MOS published its best ever publication so far. L-AGHSAFAR, the first ever book on birds in Maltese written by Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci, with eight full colour plates plus a similar full colour cover, all purposely drawn by Rodney Ingram, another MOS member, was launched in December 1979. This publication would not have been possible had it not been for the financial assistance received from the ICBP European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds.

Other publications include: 'Our Breeding Birds' the second in the series of educational booklets; the 12th poster which was taken from the winning posters in the poster-cum-slogan competition organised by the YMS in 1977. This poster was forwarded to the printers and will soon be launched. The 7th MOS sticker was also issued this time depicting a Barn Owl with the message 'I am beneficial - let me live'. All the above publications were sponsored by the ICBP European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds. Besides an MOS member, Mr. I. Lishman financially contributed towards the 12th poster and the Hawk Trust of UK contributed as well towards the Barn Owl sticker. The MOS also made available to its members a sticker depicting the Blue Rock Thrush and the Society's aims. Because of heavy pressure of work the publication of 11-Merill No. 20 and Bird's Eye View No. 3 are overdue, but these two publications will soon be available and posted to all members who were on the MOS books for 1979.

Other Activities

For the second year running according to the agreement reached between the B'Kara Shooting Association and the MOS, a clay-pigeon shooting competition was organised by the B'Kara S.A. for the MOS trophy. This 2nd competition was held at 11-Orejten on 8th April 1979.

The MOS, jointly with the Men of the Trees and The Photographic Society, held a photographic competition/exhibition entitled 'Of Birds and Trees'. However this venture did not produce the desired amount of participants. Mr. B.K. German, the Hon. Treasurer, represented the MOS at the 3rd conference of the Working Group of European Bird Protection Societies (known as WEBS) held in England in October 1979.

Messrs. N. Fenech and M. Mallia, both MOS young members, attended for a ten day course at Brezone, Italy, in July 1979. The course was organised and sponsored by the International Youth Federation. Publicity and educational stands were once again set up both at the annual Fur & Feather show at San Anton Gardens and at the Malta International Trade Fair at Naxxar.

Achievements

Such report would not be complete without mention of the Bill to amend the Code of Police Laws, Cap.13, which was published in the Government Gazette of 22nd February 1980. Although such amendments are far from the MOS' suggestions, nonetheless they may be considered as a first step towards decent bird protection regulations. These amendments include the first ever introduction of a close season for birds and a close season for the wild rabbit, though the legal shooting of one during the close season of the other makes the enforcement of this law difficult, if not impossible. Other amendments include the prohibition of shooting two hours before sunrise and two hours after sunset; the prohibition of shooting while afloat within three kilometres from any foreshore; and the need of a licence for bird-ringers and for taxidermists. The Bill will be debated in Parliament in the coming days before it becomes an Act.

Committees

During 1979 the following Committees were set up and/or reconstituted :

1) Young Members Section :

The Young Members Section had Mr. Louis Cassar as YMS Officer and Mr. Silvio Scicluna as Secretary. Five Committee meetings were held by the Section, besides 16 bird-watching outings to various sites in Malta, one night outing to Buskett, one day outing to Gozo and one bird watching hike. The YMS also helped with the MOS stands at the Malta International Trade Fair and at the Fur and Feather Show. The YMS also acquired the course from IYF for the two MOS young members. The YMS had 38 subscribed members on their books as on 31st December 1979. 17 of these were new members. 43 members who were subscribed for 1978 failed to pay their 1979 subscription. One young member became a full member. The number of young members for 1979 was 26 less than for 1978.

2) Valletta Ringing Scheme Committee :

The Ringing Scheme Committee for 1979 had Mr. J. Sultana as Ringing Officer and Mr. C. Gauci as Ringing Secretary. 18 permit holders were active during the year and a total of 9397 birds of 85 species were ringed. The study of moult and breeding was given more attention. Filfla was visited twice in summer for the additional collection of more data on sea birds breeding there. The Committee also issued quarterly newsletters. 8 ring sizes are being used by the Committee with the MOS address. The Committee held two meetings during the year.

3) Rarities Committee :

The Rarities Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. J. Sultana held one committee meeting.

4) Research Committee :

Mr. J. Sultana chaired the committee which was responsible for the distribution of log sheets and the compilation of records.

5) Gozo Committee :

The Gozo Committee was chaired by Mr. J. Grech.

From the above one can see the way that the MOS is tackling the problem of the study and protection of birds in Malta. One can also judge for oneself the onus and responsibility being shouldered by Council and Committee members and the need of all possible help from every MOS member, young and old. The solution to the negative attitude towards birds in Malta is close at hand, but every effort from all MOS members is essential.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who in some way or other have helped the MOS in its work, and all those who have helped to make my work less difficult. Thank you.

Alfred E. Baldacchino
Hon. General Secretary

(N.B. The Calendar of Activities for February 1979 - February 1980 will be published in BIRD'S EYE VIEW No. 5 due to lack of space in this number).

TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1979

	EM	c m	EM	c m		EM	c m
Stickers cost	208	00 0			Subscription & donations (2)	2897	03 1
-resv.	<u>150</u>	<u>00 0</u>	58	00 0	Lotteries & fund raising		30 30 0
Postages			113	31 0	Outings		12 25 0
Stationery			133	28 0	Exchange gain		22 05 0
Sundries (1)			184	84 0	Sticker sales		143 75 5
Leaflets cost	147	00 0			Shirt transfers		7 00 0
-resv.	<u>112</u>	<u>00 0</u>			Exercise books		106 91 0
	<u>35</u>	<u>00 0</u>			Bags		1 85 0
-donation	<u>1</u>	<u>60 0</u>	33	40 0	T-shirt sales		26 00 0
London Conference					Il-Merill sales		2 20 0
cost	90	50 0			English guide		60 92 1
-resv.	<u>90</u>	<u>50 0</u>	--	-- --	Malfese guide sales	48 25 0	
Il-Merill cost	240	00 0			-cost	<u>26 60 0</u>	21 65 0
-resv.	<u>240</u>	<u>00 0</u>	--	-- --	Interest received		68 38 2
Excess income over expenditure							
c/f			<u>2877</u>	<u>46 9</u>			
			<u>3400</u>	<u>29 9</u>			<u>3400 29 9</u>

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT NO. 1

	EM	c m		EM	c m
Conference reserve	100	00 0	Blc.b/f from Inc. & Exp. a/c	2877	46 9
Il-Merill reserve	100	00 0			
Bird's Eye View reserve	100	00 0			
English guide reserve (3)	500	00 0			
Blc.c/f to Appropriation 2 a/c	<u>2077</u>	<u>46 9</u>			
	<u>2877</u>	<u>46 9</u>		<u>2877</u>	<u>46 9</u>

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT NO. 2

	EM	c m		EM	c m
Projector depreciation	25	00 0	Blc.b/f from Appro. No.1 a/c	2077	46 9
Binoculars depreciation (6)	5	00 0	Profit on sale of assets (5)		15 00 0
Tripod depreciation (6)	8	16 8			
To Capital a/c	<u>2054</u>	<u>30 1</u>			
	<u>2092</u>	<u>46 9</u>		<u>2092</u>	<u>46 9</u>

Abbreviations used
 resv.=transferred from reserve account
 Blc.= balance

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1979

	£M	c	m	£M	c	m		£M	c	m	£M	c	m
CAPITAL A/C							FIXED ASSETS (9)						
B/c. b/f from 1/1/79	566	27	2				GROUPS				225	00	0
App. A/C	<u>2054</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>1</u>	2620	57	3	YMS	3	63	7			
RESERVES (7)				2927	65	6	VBRS	<u>1000</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>0</u>	1003	63	7
LOAN A/C (8)				2000	00	0	CURRENT ASSETS						
CURRENT LIABILITIES							Stocks (10)	4230	92	4			
Advance sub.	128	00	0				Prepayment (3)	423	62	0			
Creditors	<u>144</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>3</u>	272	64	3	Cash	1838	37	8			
							Cash reserve (8)	13	13	3			
							Call A/C	<u>86</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6592</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>5</u>
				<u>7820</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>2</u>					<u>7820</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>2</u>

Abbreviations used

App. A/C = Balance from Appropriation Account ; sub. = subscriptions;
 YMS = Young Members' Section; VBRS = Valletta Bird Ringing Scheme.

NOTES ON 1979 ACCOUNTS

- Note No. 1 Sundry Expenses A/C : This is made up of the following items rounded up to the nearest pound - telephone 45, gifts 26, glue etc. 14, photos 20, bank charges 6, trophies 23, rubber stamps 3, rent 16, projection 6, entertainment 6, others 18.
- Note No. 2 Subscriptions and Donations : Included in this item are (1) a donation of a sound projector book-valued at £M250; and (2) a donation of £M1980 by the Dutch Committee to cover part of the cost of printing the Maltese Guide.
- Note No. 3 English Guide 2nd Edition : The Society will, over the next 2/3 years start work on the issue of a second edition of 'A Guide to the Birds of Malta'. A reserve of £M500 has been set aside in anticipation of costs. Furthermore the Society has printed 2000 extra colour plates used in the Maltese Guide to be used in the 2nd edition of the English guide. The £M200 is included in the item 'prepayments' in the balance sheet
- Note No. 4 Maltese Guide Cost : The actual cost of 3000 copies of this guide is £M3980.76.0. The amount represented in the Balance Sheet is the cost price of the unsold stock.
- Note No. 5 Profit on Sale of Assets : Profit made on book value following sale of two binoculars.
- Note No. 6 Binoculars & Tripod : As the book values involved are somewhat minimal it has been decided to write off these amounts.
- Note No. 7 Reserves : These are made as follows - Il-Merill £M260; Posters £M48.17; YMS £M120; Conferences £M209.50; Bird's Eye View £M247.04.3; Maltese Guide £M143.56.3; Stickers £M156.36; Educational publications £M1238; Ringing Group £M5; English Guide £M500.
- Note No. 8 Loan : The loan was made by the Dutch Committee in connection with the Maltese Guide publication. Repayment from sales (interest free) using formula -

$$\frac{\text{Amount of Loan}}{\text{No. of books printed}} \times \text{Number of books sold.}$$
 Repayment is to commence in 1980. As some books have already been sold, a cash reserve has been set aside for eventual repayment next year.
- Note No. 9 Fixed Assets : A practically brand new projector was donated to the Society. When new the projector is estimated to cost £1000 and we have book-valued it at £M250. Depreciation will be calculated at £M25 per annum with effect from 1980.
- Note No. 10 Stocks : These are valued at cost and consist of the following items - Maltese Guide (vide Note 4) £M3954.18; Posters £M48.96.4; Ties £M36.43; and Drawing Books £M191.35. Total £M4230.92.4.

Brian K. German A.I.B.
 Hon. Treasurer

News & Views

YMS WEEKEND CAMP

The Young Members Section organized a weekend camp at the field studies centre at Villa Psaigon, Dingli, which was made available to the MOS for the last weekend of September by the Education Department. The young members organized bird watching outings, a bird ringing session, as well as evening slide shows. While at Biskett, they witnessed a police raid in the area for shooters on the morning of Saturday the 27th, when 6 guns were confiscated. However they had the misfortune to witness a massacre of Honey Buzzards the next day in the afternoon (see Black Sunday for Honey Buzzards in this number). This indeed was a sour ending to an otherwise enjoyable camp. ○

BIRD WEEK

Paola Boys' Secondary School held a bird week to coincide with the XII ICBP European Conference which was held in Malta. The bird week which was organized with the help of the MOS was very successful and focused all the school's students' attention on the need of bird appreciation and conservation. Michael Grima, MOS Council Member and Teacher at the same school was the mind behind this bird week, whose success was due to his ability in youth leadership. The main activities at the school included a poster competition and exhibition, an essay

competition, a play and a filmshow, which all had bird conservation as their theme. If other schools in Malta & Gozo follow Paola Boys' Secondary School's example the future of Malta's bird situation would be brighter. ○

BEST MALTESE PUBLICATION

Dr. Ph. Muscat, Minister of Education presented a cheque of EM 80 to Joe Sultana and Charles Gauci, co-authors of the MOS Maltese publication 'L-AGHSAFAR'. 'L-AGHSAFAR' was the winner of a competition for the best book in Maltese published in 1979. The judges of the competition, who included Prof. W. Gulia and Prof. J. Aquilina, found 'L-AGHSAFAR' to be of a great linguistic level in its descriptive passages and use of Maltese. The presentation took place at the Ministry of Education.

Complimentary copies of 'L-AGHSAFAR' were given by MOS officers to various personalities including Miss A. Barbara, Minister of Labour, Culture & Social Welfare, Dr. J. Brincat, Minister of Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Ph. Muscat, Minister of Education, Dr. E. Fenech Adami, Leader of the Opposition and Dr. U. Mifsud Bonnici, Opposition spokesman for Education. A copy was also presented to the Prime Minister, Mr. D. Mintoff, during a parliamentary sitting debating amendments to the Code of Police Laws dealing with firearms, bird-shooting and trapping licences. MOS representatives were invited by the Minister of Justice & Parliamentary Affairs for the

TL GRITTA



sittings as consultants together with representatives of the Association of Shooters and Trappers. Another complimentary copy was presented to the Commissioner of Police Dr. L. Pullicino, during a meeting with the Police authorities and representatives of MOS and AST to discuss the bird regulations.

Furthermore the Ministry of Culture bought several copies of 'L-AGHSAFAR', which were distributed as presents by Miss A. Barbara Minister of Labour, Culture & Welfare to Maltese communities during her official visit to Australia.○

BIRD PAINTING EXHIBITION

The MOS takes every opportunity to arouse interest in birds. The MOS helped Mr. F. Fenech to hold an exhibition under its auspices of 42 water colour bird paintings at the National Museum of Natural History, in Mdina, in December. Freddie, who is a 23 year old youngster from Rabat, attended the Government School of Arts where he got his first lessons. His interest in birds dates back to a very young age when he used to accompany his relatives on bird shooting outings. Eventually he also tried his hand at taxidermy. However, Freddie soon realised that, through his gift of painting, he could capture all the birds with his brush and water colours. This was Freddie's second exhibition where one can see his ability in the use of colours to bring out minute details of his birds.○



MOS IN ACTION OVERSEAS

During 1980 no fewer than five MOS members were abroad taking part in various courses.

MICHAEL GRIMA, MOS Council Member, who is a Science Teacher, attended a course on environmental studies and conservation. This was organised for European young teachers by the international Youth Federation who, through the MOS, sponsored Michael's visit.



It was held in Salo, Italy, from 15th to 30th July and 17 participants from 10 countries took part. Two of the main topics included environmental education strategy and programming fieldwork. Every participant had to make a presentation and Michael's dwell mainly on conservation work carried out in Malta by the MOS. Several proposals were made urging Governments of participants' countries to promote natural environmental education. Michael brought back with him new ideas on environmental education for young people, as well as new experiences in Nature Conservation, which were useful to him when organising a successful bird week at his school, Paola Boys' Secondary School, last November.

SAVIOUR BALZAN and PAUL PORTELLI, 2 active young members, who sit on the MOS Young Members Section Committee, also attended an IYF activity in July. This was a 12-day camp at Vravron, in Greece. The participants had the chance to exchange ideas and discuss matters on environmental conservation. The experience which the two youths acquired would no doubt be useful to the MOS Young Members Section. Their visit to Greece was sponsored both by the IYF as well as by the MOS. This was the third consecutive year that MOS sent its young members on such courses.



Paul Portelli & Saviour Balzan

It was during a meeting with Miss Jane Fenton of the Hawk Trust in the summer of 1979 at Slimbridge (see BEV No.3 p.25) that this lady had hinted that it would be a good idea if MOS sends a member to UK on a course in the care of injured birds. This idea was also taken up by the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee (see M.B.R.O.C. in this issue) and together with the Hawk Trust made possible the idea to materialise. NATALINO FENECH, the Young Members Officer, who is very keen in the care of injured birds, was chosen from amongst a few applicants and was given a crash course by experienced people during a fortnight's visit to UK last August. Part of the course was arranged by the Hawk Trust of UK and the

Natalino Fenech examining a bird patient with his instructor Mr Cliff Christie.



rest by MBROC who also paid his air-fare. The MOS paid other travelling expenses. While in UK Natalino was the guest of experts in the care of injured birds, namely Messrs. John E. Cooper, James Kirkwood and Cliff Christie. He was also the guest of Mr. & Mrs. A. Poosie in London, where he attended a Hawk Trust Committee Meeting. There he discussed the problems of raptor conservation in Malta. He also met Mrs. E. Coxon of MBROC.

When with John E. Cooper, Natalino was shown the various techniques of handling and treating wild birds including broken wings and legs and how to perform anaesthetics on birds. When visiting the Department of Animal Husbandry, Mr James Kirkwood showed him how Kestrels are bred in captivity to study their food requirements. He also visited the Hawk Trust aviaries in Shropshire as well as the investigation department of the R.S.P.B., where he was entertained by Richard Porter. When he was the guest of Cliff Christie, whose house including the garden has been literally transformed into a bird hospital, he was instructed in the care of injured birds as well as in techniques of feeding young helpless birds. He also met Sir Michael Leighton and David Myatt.

Presently Natalino is busy caring for a Herring Gull and a Short-eared Owl.

JOE SULTANA, MOS President, who is in charge of the Field Studies Centre of the Government's Education Department, at Villa Psaigon, near Buskett, was awarded a Council of Europe bursary through the Education Department. This consisted of a 10-day course at Dudley College of Education on Ecology and Fieldwork. After the course he stayed for a private visit, during which made various contacts on behalf of the MOS.

He held discussions with Mr. Robert Spencer at the Headquarters of the British Trust for Ornithology on the bird ringing situation in Malta and on future cooperation. He also attended a committee meeting of MBROC. At this meeting it was decided that MBROC would pay Natalino Fenech's airfare to UK, as well as to arrange for Natalino to stay for a few days with Cliff Christie of the Banbury Ornithological Society, who would instruct him in certain techniques of caring for injured birds and young birds. On Joe's suggestion MBROC were delighted to help in the Ghadira project by financing the building of the first bird watching hide in Malta's National Nature Reserve. ○

PRIZE CROSSWORD RESULT

The winner of the Crossword Puzzle which appeared in BIRD'S EYE VIEW No. 3 is Mr. Michael Tullock of Carlisle, U.K. ○

BIRD STAMPS

The Maltese Postal Authorities were surprisingly very quick in accepting an MOS suggestion to issue a set of bird stamps. Furthermore they also accepted the species which MOS suggested, as well as consultations on the choice of the designs which were submitted by various Maltese artists.

The set of four stamps, which feature Maltese breeding birds, were issued by the General Post Office on January 20th, 1981, and are of 3c, 8c, 12c and 23c denominations. The stamps were designed by Mr. Maurice Tanti Burlò and have been printed by Printex Ltd. They feature the Barn Owl, the Sardinian Warbler, the Woodchat Shrike and the Storm Petrel. These four species are

now protected under the new bird protection regulations.

While the Sardinian is one of the few common resident birds, very few pairs of Barn Owl and Woodchat Shrike manage to breed with us. The Storm Petrel breeds in large numbers but is only restricted to one colony on Filfla, a very small island, 3 miles south of Malta. These stamps will further contribute to arouse interest in the appreciation of birds.

(A small number of first day covers and mint sets are available from the MOS. Those interested in acquiring any of these sets should write to the MOS). ○



MOS IN SHOWS

The MOS takes every opportunity which turns up to propagate its ideals and during 1980 has taken part in three shows by setting up exhibition stands. Apart from the various educational messages reaching the public by such exhibitions, distribution of literature and sale of various articles are also carried out at such stands.

One of the main fairs in which the MOS has taken part regularly for the past few years is the Malta International Trade Fair, which is held annually at Naxxar from 1st to 15th July. Another stand was set up in May during the weekend Fur & Feather Show, held at San Anton Gardens. The prizes distributed by the organizing body, Rabbit Breeders Association, to the competing rabbit breeders, pet owners and aviculturists, included a number of the MOS Maltese publication 'L-Aghsafar'.

An MOS stand was also set up for the first time at the Festival of Friendship organized by A.Z.A.D. (Akkadenji għal Zvilupp ta' Ambjent Demokratiku) and held at San Anton Gardens from 5th to 9th August. ○

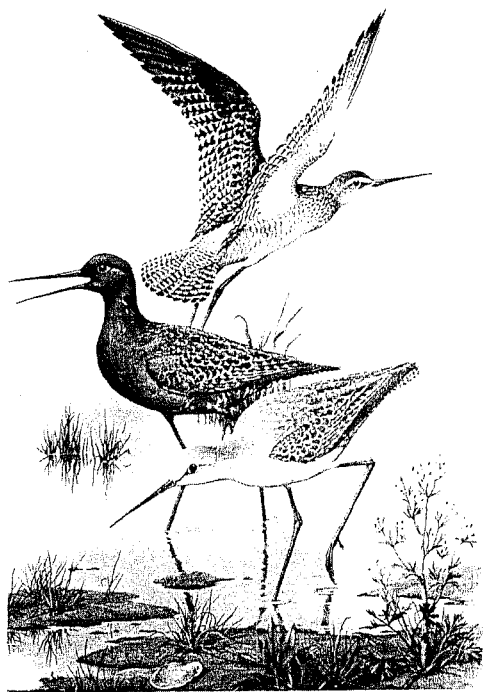
POSTERS



MALTESE - The MOS Launched a new poster in April 1980. This was designed by Louis McKeon, a student of Paola Boys' Secondary School, and was one of the winning posters in the poster-cum-slogan Competition organised by the Young Members Section in Secondary Schools. The caption 'Tghid Nibqa' Haj' means 'Shall I remain Alive'. The printing of the poster, which was distributed in schools as well as in other public places, was sponsored partly Mr. I. Lishman, an MOS member, and partly by the European Committee for the Prevention of Mass Destruction of Migratory Birds. Such posters are continuously used in the MOS educational campaign.

DUTCH - 300 sets of three large, attractive posters depicting 3 species, Red-backed Shrike, Spotted Redshank and Barnacle Goose respectively, by the artist H.J. Slipjer, have been donated to the MOS by the Dutch Society for the Protection of Birds. They had been promised by Mr. C. De Bruin, director of the Dutch Society, when he visited Malta in 1978. These are being used to acquire some of the necessary funds which are needed by the MOS to make ends meet in its running expenses, which are increasing yearly as can be seen from the Treasurer's Report.

BRITISH/GREEK - 550 copies of coloured posters depicting various photos of colour-



ful birds have been donated by Mr. R. Hodgins, Director of Town & Gown Travel of Summertown, Oxford, through the initiative of Mr. M. Hirons of the Malta Bird Reserves Overseas Committee. This poster which originally was printed for use in Greece can be used locally after overprinting Maltese captions and a conservation message by the MOS, to be distributed in schools and public places.○

OBITUARY

M. D. ENGLAND

M.D. England, whose contribution to British Ornithology was outstanding, died on 24th February 1980. He was an excellent bird photographer and recorder of bird behaviour and wrote many ornithological notes and papers. His photographs appeared in many books. His excellent photographs of the Blue Rock Thrush, Malta's national bird and MOS emblem, some of which had appeared in British Birds were to be the first link of a long association with M.D.England. A request for a Blue Rock Thrush photograph was answered in a matter of days with a set of photographs with his compliments to be used by MOS. These were followed by other photographs of Cefti's Warbler and Fan-tailed Warbler which appeared in the MOS bulletin Il-Merill. He was pleased when he was elected Hon. Life Member of the MOS. To his wife Joan, goes our sincerest sympathy.○





AN MONTHLY PUBLICATION

BOSSON VALLETT