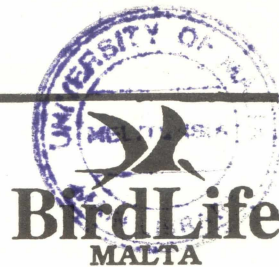


BirdTalk



BIRDLIFE MALTA NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1998 Issue 50

Editorial Board: Ian Mifsud, Antoine Vella

BirdLife meets new Ministers

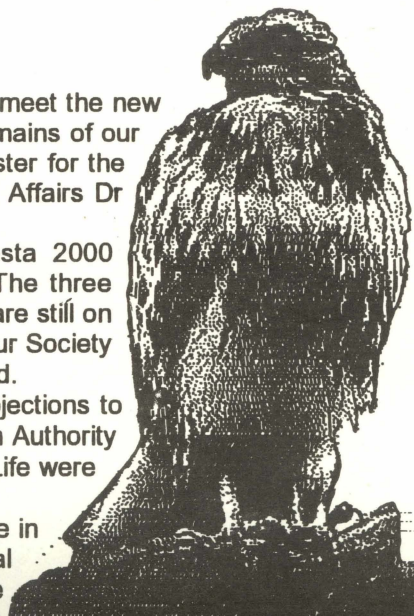
In the past months since the general elections, BirdLife has sought to meet the new ministers who are in some way responsible for the survival of what remains of our natural heritage. We have so far been successful in meeting the Minister for the Environment Dr Francis Zammit Dimech and the Minister for Internal Affairs Dr Tonio Borg.

Dr Zammit Dimech told us he is all in favour of our Foresta 2000 afforestation project and is willing to help towards its completion. The three national parks which had been planned by the previous administration are still on the books of the present government and the Minister promised that our Society would be consulted as the actual setting up of the parks is taken in hand.

The BirdLife delegation also spoke to the Minister about the objections to the amended 1997 Hunting Regulations and the necessity to set up an Authority of Review to examine our case. Various other items of interest to BirdLife were also discussed.

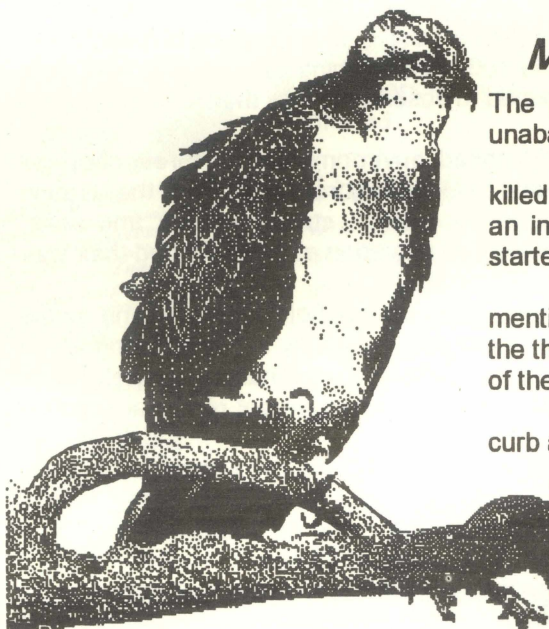
Dr Tonio Borg explained the difficulties encountered by the police in enforcing effectively the hunting regulations and other environmental laws. Statistical information presented to the Minister by the BirdLife delegation prove that, in the rare cases that the police make their presence felt by regular patrolling, the situation immediately improves and illegal hunting decreases dramatically. On the other hand, BirdLife showed Minister Borg its concern that only Buskett is being protected (albeit relatively) while other important areas such as Delimara and Mizieb are practically abandoned by the police, who seem to have given up hope of enforcing the law in such places.

Both meetings were friendly and cordial and the Ministers assured us of their readiness to preserve our natural environment. Of course, even while trying not to be too sceptical, we cannot help thinking that the proof of the pudding will be all in the eating.



Watchful

BirdLife will have to remain on guard and monitor carefully the developing environmental situation in our country.



Meanwhile at Buskett

The indiscriminate killing of raptors and other birds continued unabated especially during this year's autumn migrations.

Dozens of harriers, ospreys and other birds of prey have been killed and the massacre diminished only when the police, goaded by an intense media campaign organized and instigated by BirdLife started regular patrols of Buskett.

Other areas such as Mizieb, Delimara and Dingli - not to mention Gozo - have however been left completely in the hands of the thousands of unscrupulous men and boys who make up the bulk of the shooting community gracing the Maltese countryside.

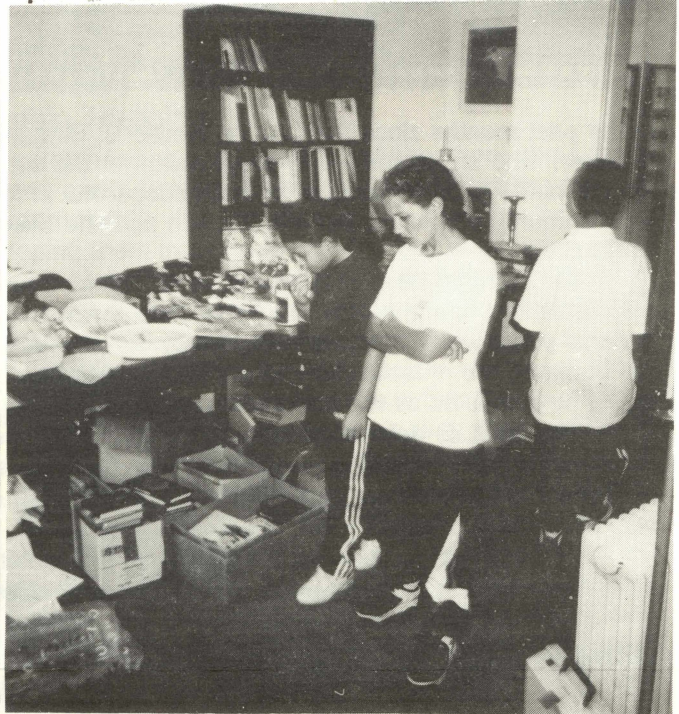
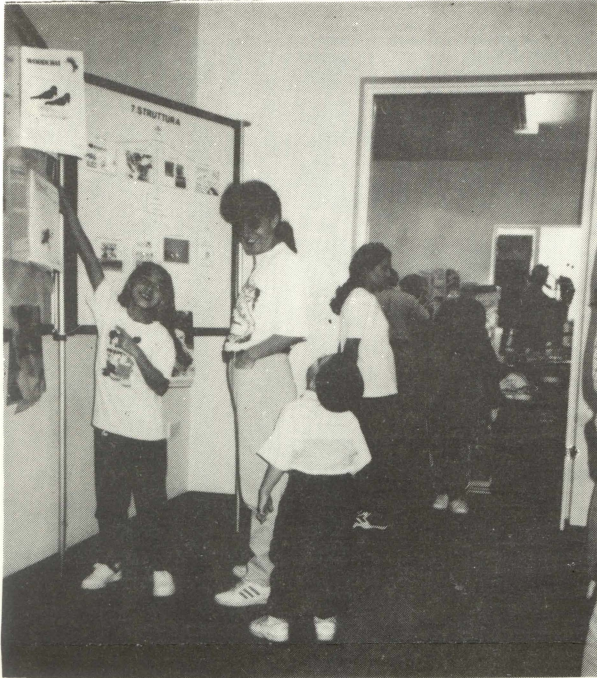
This contrasts sharply with the much-vaunted political will to curb abuses and enforce the law .

Ospreys are among the most persecuted birds in Malta. Will politicians' promises be enough to save them from the guns of local hunters?

Open Weekend at BirdLife offices

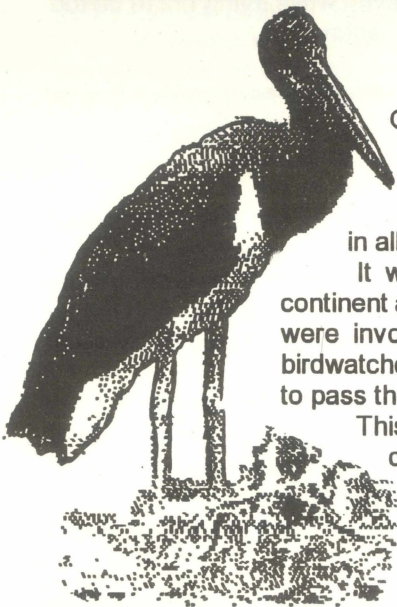
Over one hundred members visited our new offices during the open weekend held late last October. They could tour the new premises that BirdLife Malta has acquired and which are meant to serve not just as an administration centre and offices but also as a club and meeting place for people interested in birdwatching and environmental issues in general.

A jumble sale held during this event was a great success and we managed to raise over LM 180. We still have in stock some Christmas cards (from 3c each) and various gift items, available from our selling-point at the Ghadira Nature Reserve which is open during week-ends.



Premises for sale

BirdLife is offering for sale the premises where its shop used to be situated at 64/65 St Lucia Street, Valletta. Phone our offices for further detail.



European Birdwatch

On the weekend of the 3rd and 4th October 1998, BirdLife International organized a joint European event aimed at raising awareness on bird migration. More than 40,000 people flocked to 1000 birdwatching sites all over Europe to participate in this activity and managed to observe no less than 1.5 million birds in all.

It was an occasion that symbolically united environmentalists throughout the continent as twenty-nine countries, from Finland to Malta and from Andorra to the Ukraine were involved. Across frozen lakes and over mountains, conifer forests and seas, birdwatchers assisted to the marvellous spectacle of migration as birds winged their way to pass the winter in their warmer quarters in the south.

This event also highlighted the fact that birds do not belong to any one single country and focussed on the need for protection not only in the breeding areas but all along the migratory routes including the final destinations in Africa. With over 1100 species threatened with global extinction, urgent remedial action is called for.

In Malta, more than 200 birds were seen in both the nature reserves of Ghadira and Simar as well as during a boat trip round Gozo and Comino. Among the interesting and unusual birds that made an appearance, pride of place must surely go to a black stork observed at Ghadira.

What happened this year

These past twelve months were characterised mainly by the early general elections which practically overshadowed anything else that happened during the year. BirdLife Malta - together with the other main ecological groups - lobbied the political parties to include clauses favourable to the environment in their respective electoral programmes.

When the two main parties seemed to be giving in to hunters, BirdLife denounced this as a cynical exchange of environmental principles for votes and sought to talk directly to representatives of the parties. Such a meeting was held with representatives of the PN while a similarly planned meeting with the MLP could not take place due to a misunderstanding.

Meanwhile the situation in the field, with all its problems of illegal developments, encroaching quarries and hunting abuses kept on deteriorating. In particular, one might say that the hunting situation reached (and surpassed) crisis point, with the regulations being openly flaunted and record numbers of protected birds being killed.

BirdLife Malta made its presence felt, keeping as high a profile as possible and availing itself of every opportunity to draw attention to the problems faced by our wildlife.

Full use was made of the media, especially newspapers and over 300 press releases or news items featuring BirdLife were published by the Maltese and English dailies. This works out at one BirdLife item appearing almost every day on the printed media. Moreover, the Society participated in various radio talk shows.

Other forms of lobbying, not directly linked to the elections, were also carried out in the past year. BirdLife Malta has held several meetings with ministers and officials, both of the previous and the present administration, in order to obtain support for its policies and projects.

An important change for our Society has been the move to new premises at Ta' Xbiex. The main reason was the need to have premises that would not serve only as administration offices but also as a club. It is now up to the members to make use of the facilities that are being offered.

For 1999

Our plans and hopes for the coming year include the official launching of the Foresta 2000 project, a professionally-run media campaign to raise awareness about the plight of the environment in general and birds in particular, various educational campaigns, a drive to increase membership and of course the One World competition for schools.

These and other dreams can only come about with the active participation of members. We urge our readers to make use of the new premises which we hope to turn into a flourishing club where birdlovers and environmentalists can meet informally.

irdlife video shows n f birds at Buskett

A video recording of the birds at Buskett was shown to the public...

Hsara bla bżonn

FL-ISTAGUN tal-kacca kellha hafna diletanti Mal-tin li għew jikkaccjaw Għawdex. Sa hawn n'hemm xejn hazin. Il-hazin huwa H...

discover... boat ra

Discover the hidden world of birds at sea...

Bad day for protected birds

Millions of birds were killed in a bad day for protected birds...

Il-Gvern Egizzjan s... tal-Gvern Malti dwa

Il-Gvern Egizzjan s... tal-Gvern Malti dwa...

Hunters shoot down White Stork

Hunters shoot down White Stork...

Illegal hunters apprehended

Illegal hunters apprehended...

Flowers breeding at Ghadira reserve

Flowers breeding at Ghadira reserve...

Birdlife riedu li jiltaqgh ad-Deputat Prim Ministr

Birdlife riedu li jiltaqgh ad-Deputat Prim Ministr...

Birdwatchers hit by shotgun pellets at Buskett

Birdwatchers hit by shotgun pellets at Buskett...

egal shooting caturi għall...

egal shooting caturi għall... siru fit-3 ta' Ottubr...

accaturi u l-Birdlife Malta

ur, fovement Kaccaturi Nassaba Ambjentalisti qed josserva li fid-dawl ta' l-avvenimenti li graw dan l-ahhar, il-kaccatan aba, jidhr... li se jkunu l-mira ewlenija fiz-zmien li għej f'd... delizzija tal-kacca u l-insib...

New breeding bird at nature reserve



ting at Buskett curbed



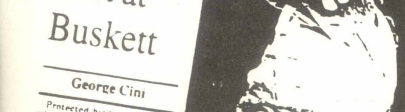
kampant" illegal bird shooting

Birdlife vestrday coneratu... supposed to be a protected one... There was a large number of hunters even on... noon, a pu... Minister Francis Zammit Dimech... that illegal shooting of protected birds "is still rampant". A Birdlife spokesman... filed reports... dail...

fittex il-koperazzjoni kaCCA minn Maltin

...mal- l-sabah sar għal tal-Ministru ta' l-Affarijiet Barran... Eazzjan Amos Muscat, qal li l-Ministru ierghu kem se... quddiem baw jillaga mal-Ministru Malti għ... Hija qal li hemmnek il-Ministru... mal-Ministru l-entreo is-relaz... għal għad ukoll li... ratur Malt...

Protected birds shot at Buskett



Protecting birds of prey and other migratory species were being shot down near Buskett... Birdlife Malta said yesterday... Birdlife picked up a dead white stork... The night heron... protected species... shot... birds migrate from northern Europe living thousands of miles south in a warmer climate at this time of year... According to the Birdlife... her birds ne... in the off... if... members of the... these low... birds... Birdlife... e shot... used... were a... were a...

Ghasafar protetti bbalzmati

L-Ghaqda Kaccaturi Nassaba Konservazzjoni... li wara l-ahhar laqgħa li kellha mal-Ministru ta' u ta' l-Ambjent, George Vella, hija bi pjacir t... zamn ma' l-ispiritu tal-fetħim li kien intlaħaq t... l-istess għaqda għal dak li jidher wardj... għaqda qalet li jidher wardj...

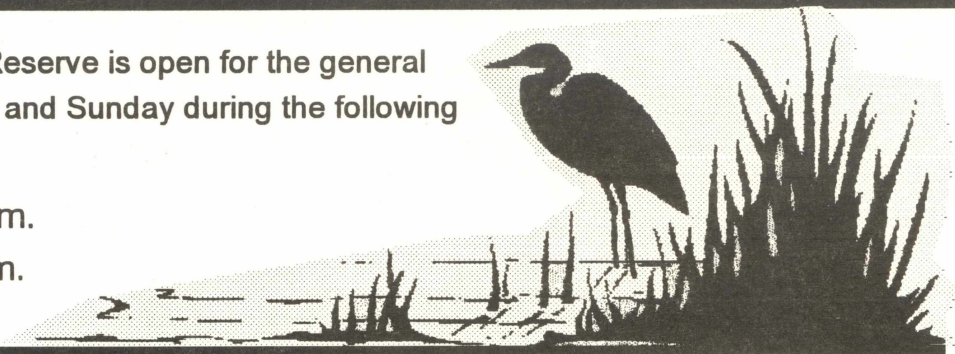
Songbird haul in Mellieha spe



The Ghadira Nature Reserve is open for the general public every Saturday and Sunday during the following times.

9.00a.m. - 12.00 a.m.

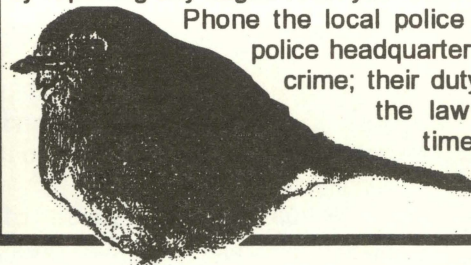
2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.



*The editorial board
of BirdTalk and the
BirdLife Malta
Council wish all
our readers and members
a joyous Christmas
and a prosperous
New Year*

Robin Trapping

The robin is one of the best-loved birds throughout the world and a universal symbol of the Christmas spirit. Unfortunately, the practice of trapping robins and keeping them in absurdly small cages is again on the rise in Malta. BirdLife is launching a campaign to curb this cruel, stupid and illegal "pastime". Give us a hand by reporting any caged robin you know of.



Phone the local police station or the police headquarters to report this crime; their duty is to enforce the law and it's high time we started reminding them of it.

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of BirdLife Malta will be held early next year. Among the functions of this meeting will be the election of a new Council, the policy-making body of our Society.

Members are encouraged to contribute to the development of BirdLife and help in saving our natural heritage by taking an active part and sitting on the Council.

Applicants for the Council have to be nominated by five adult members. Applications are to be sent before the 15th of January to:

The Electoral Commissioner
BirdLife Malta

A2235
Mr. Eric German,
Assistant Librarian,
Melitensia Special Collection,
University of Malta Library,
Msida.



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