

SOME NOTES ON BREEDING SPECIES FOR 1982.

1982 turned out to be quite remarkable for breeding records of certain species as well as for the absence of others. Apart from the two pairs of House Martins *Delichon urbica* and the new breeding record of the Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* (both reported elsewhere in this issue) other scarce species were also recorded nesting.

Three pairs of Spotted Flycatchers *Muscicapa striata* bred at Buskett, each raising two broods and fledging a total of 12 young. In previous years only up to two pairs had been recorded in one season. The Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* bred at 2 localities. A pair nested in a carob tree at Ghaxaq and raised 4 young which fledged in the third week of July. A female with 3 fledged young was also present in early July at Burmarrad. Two pairs of Serins *Serinus serinus* bred at Buskett and at least one pair raised three young. The adults were seen feeding 3 fledged young with *Ulmus* sp. seeds on 7th May.

On the other hand Ta' Cenc Cliffs lost its pair of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus*. The birds were not seen there in spring and we were later informed that both birds were shot in February from a seacraft from below the cliffs. The Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, too, has not been recorded breeding. Although a pair was noted present in late July and early August in one locality there has been no sign of breeding. In fact none were seen or heard when the locality was visited twice at night in mid-August. Another pair was shot by rabbit hunters at Fomm-ir-Rih during summer.

The Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*, a fairly common breeding resident, has recently declined drastically. The start of the decline coincided with the relatively severe winter of 1980/81 though this cannot be the cause of the decline as the species has shown no sign of recovering. The following Table shows the number of nests located in five selected areas which were regularly under observation throughout the five-years period 1978 - 1982.

Spectacled Warbler's nests

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Wied l-Isperanza	7	4	4	none	none
Nr. Chadwick Lakes	4	3	none	none	none
Rabat/Mtarfa	4	1	11	none	none
Ghajn Rihana	4	10	none	none	none
Ta' Qali	no obs.	48	44	16	6
Total	19	66	59	16	6

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