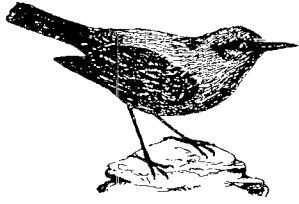


an M.O.S. publication
P.O. Box 498, Valletta, MALTA

Lux Press

OF THE
MALTA
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



IL-MERILL

January - June 1975
No. 15



'IL-MERILL' is a Malta Ornithological Society publication. The Editor welcomes articles, and other features treating aspects of the Ornithology concerning the Maltese Islands and the Mediterranean.

IL - MERILL

No. 15

Editor: Dominic Cutajar

All the opinions expressed are those of the authors and may not reflect the views of the M.O.S.

Copyright: All rights are reserved by the Malta Ornithological Society.

Information concerning the M.O.S. may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary — M.O.S. — P.O. BOX 498, VALLETTA, MALTA.

President: J.A. Attard

Secretary: J. Sultana

Asst. Sec. P.R.O.: A. Baldacchino

Treasurer: B.K. German

Committee Members:—

C. Gauci — Ringing Secretary

M. Grima —
Young Members Officer

J. Azzopardi —
Young Member, Sec.

V. Sammut

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
Editorial	
<i>Dominic Cutajar</i>	1
Eight Ornithological Notes 1974-75	
<i>Joe Sultana & Charles Gauci</i>	3
Bird's Eye View	
<i>Alfred Baldacchino</i>	5
The Four Seasons of a Conservationist	
<i>Dominic Cutajar</i>	8
To a Robin in my Garden	
<i>V. Randon Sceberras</i>	11
The 1975 Annual General Meeting	
<i>Joe M. Attard / Joe Sultana</i>	12
M.O.S. Young Members Section	
<i>John Azzopardi</i>	15

Cover Picture: Spectacled Warbler.

(Photo by S. Borg)

EDITORIAL

Civilization and progress are the products of Man's ingenuity at harnessing the forces of Nature to yield him an increasing measure of comfort and leisure. The main casualty is unfortunately the countryside. Over the centuries enormous inroads have been made and this ruinous process is ever accelerating due to the headlong pace of modern urbanisation.

Conservationists, aesthetes and the ordinary lovers of Nature are bewildered the instant a familiar nostalgic landmark goes by the board, or every time some well-loved landscape is marred. Protectionists raise an anguished cry of protest whenever a species of animal or some variety of plant-life arrives at the point of extinction and not infrequently proceeds beyond that point. Clearly the problem is grave: equally clearly an answer must be found and pretty urgently too.

But first of all we must get our priorities right, for nothing can be more damaging to the cause of conservation than the oft-repeated charge of impracticability and effete idealism. The march of material progress is always overwhelming. All objections placed in its way, *unless they are well-founded*, are bound to come to naught. But it is equally manifest that mere material welfare, unmatched and unproped by a higher cultural structure, is doomed to decay into a shoddy vulgar scramble. The decline of once stately rows of houses into grubby smelly slums should provide ample warning to all responsible men. For no less is at stake than the health, culture, morals and future ambition of all nations.

Slowly this realisation is gaining ground all over the world. Only the pace is slow and often a corresponding comprehension is lacking even in high places. We all need to work harder, to use all our influence and power of persuasion in order to avert in our own times the calamitous repetition of the same old errors perpetrated by former generations.

The fondest hope of all conservationists in our Island is that this new enlightenment does not pass us by, and that the little ring of light from the beacon we lighted six years ago¹ will continue to shine brighter and steadier, diffusing tolerance and an intelligent understanding of Nature.

Dominic Cutajar

¹Note: The above was written in 1968; we are reproducing it unchanged for the hopes and fears expressed in it are still very topical.

Honorary Life Membership

The Committee of the Malta Ornithological Society has awarded an Honorary Life Membership to Mr. Rodney Ingram of Headlands, Northampton, who very generously donated a large number of line-drawings of birds to be used in future Society's publications.