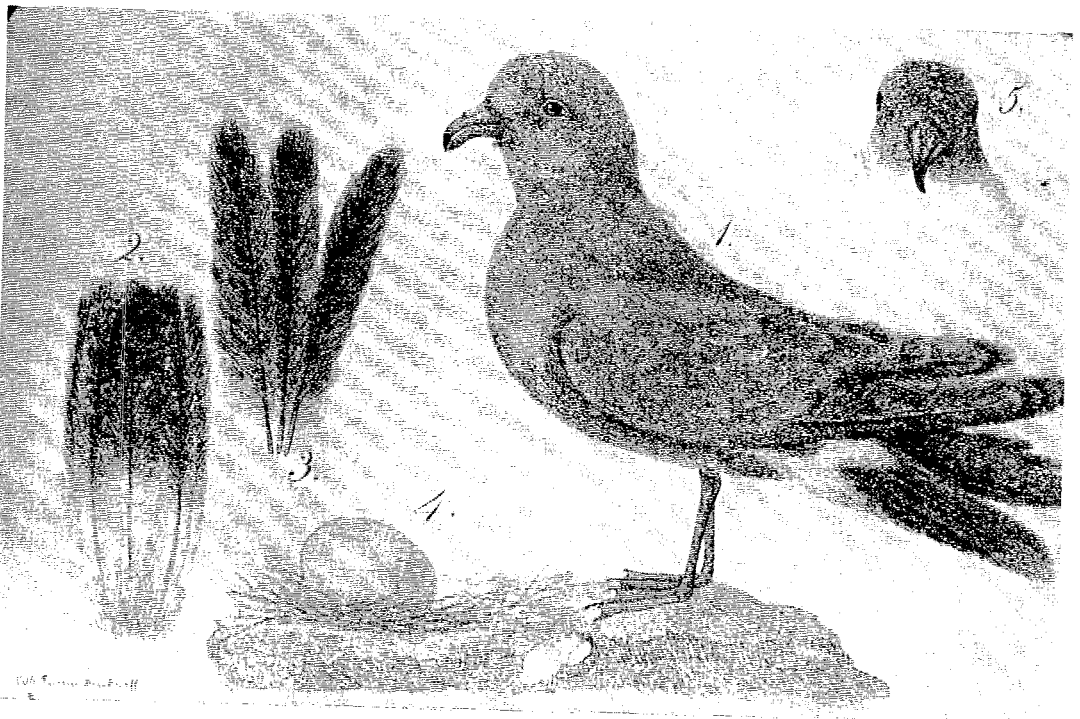


IL-MERILL

BULLETIN OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 9 December 1972

10c for non-Members



IL-MERILL

The title of the Society's Bulletin, IL-MERILL, is the Maltese name for the Blue Rock Thrush, *Monticola solitarius*, which is one of the few resident species of the Islands. It was chosen as the National Bird of Malta by the local National Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation and has been the emblem of the Malta Ornithological Society since the latter's inception.

Editor

Bro. Edmund

St. Michael's Training College, St. Julian's Malta
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MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Cover Picture: Lithograph by Brockdorff which appeared in A. Schembri's Catalogo showing the characteristics of the supposed new species *Thalassidroma melitensis*.

EDITORIAL

The International Council for Bird Preservation is a world-wide society which has as its aim to bring about the preservation of all forms of bird life in every country of the world. Much has been achieved in recent years in this field but much still remains to be done, especially in countries in the Mediterranean basin. Countries like Cyprus still have an estimated annual slaughter of some 7,000,000 small birds while in the Lebanon some 200,000 shooters shoot indiscriminately at all sorts of birds and many are sold in bundles at the roadside. One argument of those who defend such slaughter is that it has gone on for centuries without reducing the total numbers of migrants. But with our higher standard of living, the diet of the countryman is no longer so meagre. The grim fact is that with increasing environmental pressure on birds, the present-day situation is quite different. The losses through trapping and shooting are now so serious that conservationists see them as the crucial factor that could tip the balance against many species.

The I.C.B.P. has achieved much in the preservation of bird life and can be proud of now being 50 years old. It has organised international meetings in many countries and brought pressure to bear on legislators to pass bird protection laws. It encourages local organisations to push forward the cause of our feathered friends, often under adverse circumstances and by its encouragement makes every national preservation group realise that they are part of a whole army fighting a noble cause which really knows no frontiers. In Malta the Ornithological Society works in close conjunction with I.C.B.P. as their aims are identical and all the efforts of the National Section of Malta are put into the M.O.S.

To all who read II-Merill we would appeal to become more active members of the Society and gain the support of more adherents. When all is said and done life is not just the earning of money and balancing of budgets, but what values we seek to enjoy. The preservation of bird-life and wild-life in general should be one which attracts all educated persons and teachers. The Church here has an obvious role to fulfil and one would like to hear the occasional sermon on this subject, for Christ taught us to "consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air," not to destroy them. St Francis of Assisi that most Christ-like of men was well-known for his love of birds as God's creatures, and we ought to follow his example.