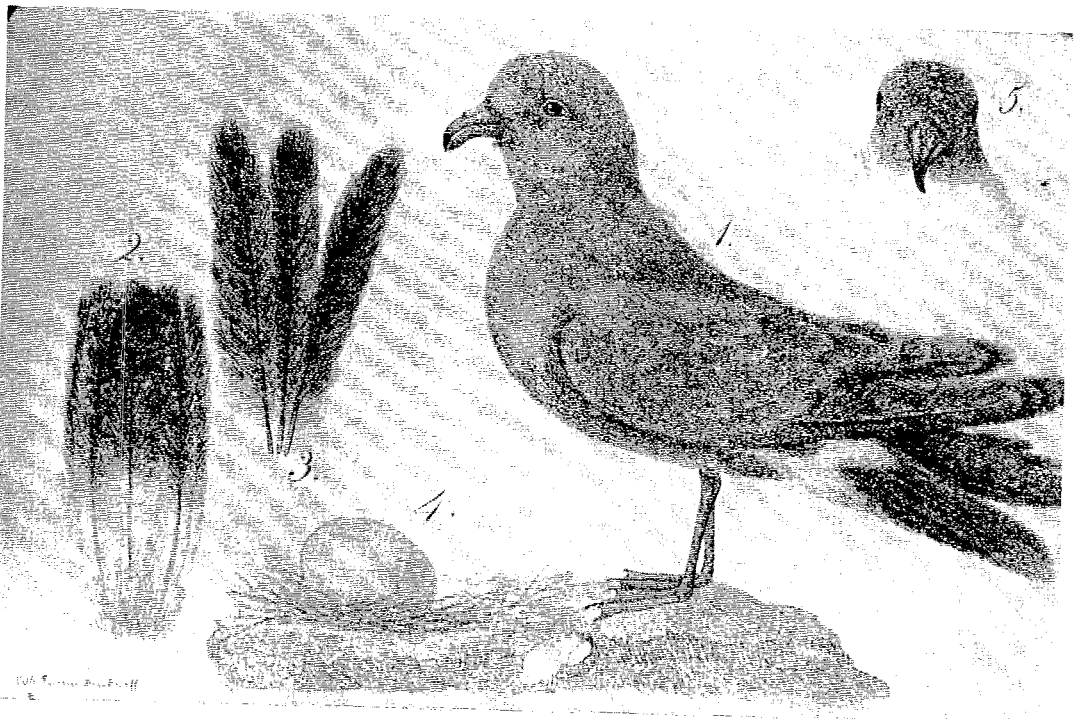


# IL-MERILL

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*  
.....

## MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**PATRON**

*H.E. Sir Anthony J. Mamo, O.B.E., Q.C., LL.D. B.A.*  
*Governor-General of Malta*

### Committee for 1972

*President*

J.M. Attard

*Secretary/Treasurer*

J. Sultana

*44, Marsamxett Rd., Valletta 3, Sciberras Flats, Fleur-de-Lys Junction*  
*Birkirkara, Malta*

*Committee Members*

*B. Genman, (Ass. Secretary), Bro. Edmund, C. Gauci (Bird Ringing Sec.)*  
*S. Borg, J. Azzopardi and C. Galea.*

---

## CONTENTS

Pages

Editorial .....	1
Miscellany .....	2
Chevalier Antonio Schembri .....	5
Golden Jubilee of L.C.B.P. ....	21
Appreciation of Capt. A. Jacob .....	25

---

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.

## MISCELLANY

### 1. Environmental Studies at Ghadira

Ghadira was the venue of a four-day course on environmental studies held for the students of St. Michael's college of Education. This was the second field course to be held at Ghadira, an excellent area for a bird reserve and a field centre. The M.O.S. has been pointing out to the authorities for the last six years, so far to no avail, the unique potentialities of this area.

The course, which was organised by Mr. J. Tanti, Science Lecturer, was quite a success and the experience gained will certainly serve the future teachers for the benefit of the children entrusted to their care. A number of such courses could be held annually by the Education Department.

### 2. The Blue Rock Thrush depicted on a Gold Coin

A set of six gold and silver (souvenir) coins, which are also legal tender, have been issued by the monetary authorities. The gold coin of the denomination of £M20 depicts the Blue Rock Thrush, the National Bird of Malta, with the sunrise as the background. We hope that the sunrise is a good augury for the birds in Malta.

### 3. Bird Conservation in the Local Press

A leader in the Times of Malta and an article in the Malta News on the need of bird sanctuaries, last

June, have started a most interesting and endless correspondence on the subject. The affair has been rather one-sided, that is, mostly in favour of reserves and controlled shooting and trapping. Some shooters also suggested some control. The M.O.S. too, aired its views on more than one occasion. It was heartening to note that, with the exception of a tourist, all the correspondents in favour of bird conservation were Maltese and Gozitans. There were times when we were criticised because only foreigners cared for any conservation, but this is no longer so.

### 4. Relations and Activities with other Local Bodies.

In the Annual General Meeting of the "Teenagers Din L-Art Helwa" the members passed a resolution supporting the M.O.S. in its efforts to turn Ghadira into a bird reserve and field centre and to control shooting and trapping in Malta.

During the 19th meeting of the Zurriq Civic Council, the Committee regretted to note that some people were destroying the breeding birds of Filfla and supported the M.O.S. by urging the authorities to declare the islet a nature reserve. The Council also invited the M.O.S. Secretary to give a talk on the wildlife of the Islet.

Five local organisations, the Teens and Twenties Talent Trust, Din l-Art Helwa, the Malta Ornithological Society, the Natural

History Society of Malta and the Geographical Society have written to the Prime Minister suggesting the area of Ta' Qali for the enjoyment and relaxation of the people. The unused airfield at Ta' Qali is frequented by many families on Sundays for picnics. During the week it is used only by speed enthusiasts. The threat of industrialisation has always worried the organisations mentioned above.

5. M.O.S. Stand at the Malta International Fair

One of the highlights of 1972 for the MOS was the erection of its stand at the Malta International Fair. It was an excellent media for advertising the Society and its aims to the many thousands of people who visited the Fair. The work and aims of the Society, the need to protect birds and the unique potentialities of Ghadira and Filfla were conveyed to the public by photos, slogans, charts and models. The Society's publications were also on sale at the stand.

6. 'Winged Aristocrats' & 'Wild Wings'.

These two films were sent to the Society by the R.S.P.B. and the British Film Transport respectively through the efforts of Mr. C. Cohen. Both were shown to members and to several thousands of students. The 'Winged Aristocrats' which has

a sequence of the shooting of a Honey Buzzard over Buskett, a supposed bird sanctuary, was also shown on the Malta Television with a Maltese commentary by J. Sultana.

7. Commemoration:  
Antonio Schembri.

The first centenary of the death of Antonio Schembri, the father of Maltese Ornithology, fell in December, 1972. The M.O.S. thought it fitting to commemorate this forgotten great man.

The commemoration started with an exhibition of his works in the various fields of study which he pursued during his life and on his connections with the various scientists of his time on the continent. The exhibition which was organised by the President, Mr. J.M. Attard, was held at the Royal Malta Library. Mr. Attard also read Schembri's Biographical Sketch at the 9th International Congress of the Mediterranean Academy which was held at the Hotel Excelsior on 2nd January, 1973. He also spoke on Antonio Schembri on the local Radio. The highlight of the commemoration was when on 14th January, 1973, H.E. the Governor General unveiled a commemorative marble plaque which was erected at Buskett by the M.O.S. A large part of this issue is taken up with an appreciation of Antonio Schembri by the President of the MOS, Mr J.M. Attard.

CHEVALIER ANTONIO SCHEMBRI



(1813 -- 1872)

# CHEVALIER ANTONIO SCHEMBRI

(1813 -- 1872)

## FATHER OF MALTESE ORNITHOLOGY

*by Joseph M. Attard*

Antonio Schembri was born in Valletta on the 10th April, 1813 (1) of Gian Battista and Rosa Maria, nee' Monteverde, on the day when the Maltese brig, 'San Nikola' departed from Marsamxett Harbour leaving behind it a plague epidemic which raged for over a year and claimed nearly 5,000 victims. Following this epidemic Antonio's father was appointed Captain of the Quarantine Port where he made a name in this appointment both in Malta and abroad after a long career in the Venetian and Austrian Navy. (2) A brother of Antonio, Gian Battista was a lawyer, (3) A step-brother, another Gian Battista was the first professor of midwifery in our University and is remembered for the first Caesarian operation to be performed on a woman living in Malta; (4) a step-sister Agnese was an active member of the Historical and Scientific Society (5) during the early part of this century and in her will she left a bursary for the teaching of music from which our children are still benefiting. This shows that Antonio like his brothers and sister was given a good and sound education.

At the age of 20 Antonio Schembri married Concetta, daughter of Francesco Zammit, of Floriana, a wealthy merchant known as 'Cejlu'. They had no children and this was perhaps a great tragedy for the Schembris as well as another for us because all Schembri's letters and papers were either destroyed or lost. Only some books which used to belong to Schembri's vast library were traced. (6) These are either autographed by Schembri or embossed with his stamp, but nothing personal could be found which could throw more light on his important connections both here and overseas. Fortunately, Schembri published quite a number of papers, books, lectures and studies on different subjects (7) most of which can be found in the Royal Malta Library. These were all written in Italian, as it was customary at that time to write in this language. An exhibition of his works has been set up by the Malta Ornithological Society at the Royal Malta Library to mark the first centenary of his death.

It is clear that Schembri was greatly influenced in his ornithological studies by Charles Bonaparte, Prince of Cambré and son of Napoleon's brother, Lucien. After Charles Bonaparte returned to Europe from America where he worked for some important ornithological studies, he established himself in Italy, as a leading naturalist. In 1832 Bonaparte started his publication of the *Monografia della Fauna Italiana* and Schembri was the only Maltese who subscribed to the issue of this important work which took place



years to complete. In this monumental work Charles Bonaparte describes the Trumpeter Bullfinch (*Rhodapechys githaginea*) (then known as '*Erythrospiza githaginea*') on a live specimen sent to him by Schembri. In describing pin-railed Sandgrouse (*Pterocles lehara*) Bonaparte wrote, "noi lo evemmo da Malta e cio fu dono del valente giovane Signor Antonio Schembri nativo di quell'isola dal suale ricevemmo insieme cento altri oggetti graditi". We have acquired this bird from Malta and it was given to us by able young man Mr. Antonio Schembri an inhabitant of this island from whom we have received also many other interesting specimens. This shows the close collaboration between Schembri and Bonaparte when the former was still in his early twenties. Schembri admired Charles Bonaparte so much as a scientist of Natural History that in 1844 he published in Malta his biography which was later translated into French by Jules Paulet and published in France.

In Malta, Schembri, also made close friendships with several local naturalists who were trying to establish the foundation of the study of our Natural History. Amongst these we find Professor Stefano Zerafa, Prof. Gian Carlo Grech Delicata and Giuseppe Mamo. Later he was also close to others like Dr. Gavino Gulia, and Charles Wright and Nicola Ardoino (8).

In December 1837, the 'Società Medica d'Incoraggiamento di Malta' was founded and besides encouraging the study of all medical aspects, also gave special importance to the study of Natural History. (9) In 1840 Antonio Schembri was accepted as an honorary member of the Società Medica and in 1844 this Society entrusted him with acting as secretary amongst forty chosen members to organise a new Society whose aim was to encourage sound agricultural methods in our Islands. (10) Schembri undertook this work with great ability. This new Society came to be known as 'Società Economico Agraria del Gruppo di Malta' and it was to it that Schembri devoted most of his later years. He served as its secretary from the time of its inception till 1855 and as its President from 1855 to 1872 after which he was struck by a serious illness and died. His contribution in starting the first agricultural shows in Malta and Gozo and then the floral exhibitions; in organising a museum of local agricultural tools and all seeds of local vegetable products at San Anton Palace (11), and in his great organisational ability in running this Society, all show his great undertaking in the social, educational and economic fields. Besides this, he was also a founder member in 1852 of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce on which Committee he served for many years. Between 1854 and 1855 he served as secretary of the Chamber of Commerce during which period his father was serving as Vice-President. (12) He was also a member of the Malta Public Library Committee and a member on the Commission of Charity and a member on other Government Boards (14).

Together with Capt. Swan of the 2nd Batt., 22nd Regiment, D., A. Commissary-General Furse, Capt. Walter Strickland R.N. (father of Lord Gerald Strickland), and others, Schembri founded the Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences. He chaired the first four preliminary meetings

of this Society which took place during December 1865 and later served as a Committee member until it came to an end in 1868. It was due to his suggestion in one of the preliminary meetings that the object of this Society happened to cover also the study of Maltese History. Soon after a Committee was elected, he proposed that a sub-committee should be set up to examine and report on the state of the monuments of Malta with the object of taking steps for their preservation. In 1866 he also proposed that a special committee should be appointed according to the statutes of the society to examine all papers tendered to the Society and to decide whether or not they were to be read or published. These two proposals were accepted and on the last mentioned committee Schembri was nominated to serve together with four others, amongst whom we find Dr. Leith Adams, Charles Wright and the Maltese historian and poet Dr. Gian Anton Vassallo. (14).

In his contribution to the study of Maltese history, Schembri is also remembered in the translation into Italian of "The Great Siege of Malta, an Extract from the History of the Reign of Philip II, King of Spain", (15) by William Prescott, which Schembri published in 1861. Six years before this work appeared Schembri had also published his 'Selva di Autori e Traduttori Maltesi', a form of dictionary of biographies of famous Maltese personalities. In it, he included as an appendix the manuscript of Fra Giuseppe Zammit M.D., 'Elogia Illustrium Melitensium.'

Schembri was an honorary, an active or a correspondent member of several local and foreign learned societies. (16) In 1854 he attended the VII Congress of Italian Scientists held in Naples (17) where he read the introduction of his 'Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici Dell'Ornitologia Europea' and presented the manuscript containing this work. Round about 1852 Schembri read his paper: 'Sulla Coltivazione della Sulla l'Erba Bruca in Malta' at the Reale Accademia dei Georgofili di Firenze which paper was later published in the Acts of this Academy. (18)

Besides these many activities Schembri was in 1849 appointed Consul for Belgium in Malta by King Leopold I, (19) a cultured man who encouraged art, science and education and for which he was frequently spoken of as 'The Nestor of Europe'. We have to consider the political situation of Europe and of Malta during that period to understand the important choice of Schembri for this appointment. In 1848 the throne of Belgium stood unshaken amidst revolutions which marked that year in almost every European country. On the other hand, Malta was the place of refuge for many escaping the effects of the Risorgimento in the Italian Peninsula. It is for a great service rendered, that the King of the Belgians awarded Schembri the Order of Leopold and Pope Pius IX decorated him with the Cross of St. Gregory the Great. (20)

Politics were the only field which did not yield any benefit to Schembri. But his involvement in politics created a landmark in Maltese political history. In February 1856 a vacancy was declared for the representative of Gozo on the Council of Government, in consequence of the death of Dr. Paolo Sciortino LL.D. Later, an election was held for another member by

order of the Governor, Sir William Reid. The result of the poll gave a majority of 276 votes in favour of Schembri over the total number of votes received by the other three contesting candidates, taking into consideration that the number of votes was 372 (21). This was a great victory for Schembri and a great sign of popularity with the Gozitans for whom a year before Schembri together with Giuseppe Gauci Azzopardi had started the first annual agricultural exhibition which is still held on the 15th August of each year. (22) His election was announced in the Government Gazette, but it was soon annulled on the pretext that he had made a declaration on oath to the King of the Belgians in his capacity as Consul for this foreign power. This was the consular declaration which Schembri had to make on being appointed Consul for Belgium. (23) The Governor interpreted this as a breach of the Letters Patent and debarred him from taking his seat as representative for Gozo on the Council of Government. (24).

Schembri protested strongly against this decision (25) and some of the local papers gave him strong backing whilst some others stood by the Governor's decision. 'Il Mediterraneo' of the 23rd April 1856 wrote these ironic remarks, 'We have no bias either for, or against Mr. Schembri as an individual. We will not even quarrel with him for having imitated Sir Robert Peel, and established free trade between Comino, and the republic of Nadur in Gozo'. (26). On the other hand 'The Malta Mail and United Services Gazette' of the 18th April, 1856, commented as follows, "We think that Mr. Schembri should have an opportunity of defending himself before his brother Councillors and not to have the door of the Council banged in his face when the people of Gozo have given him a right to walk in and take his seat..... The oath taken by Schembri and to which we beg to refer our readers, completely alters the facts of the case, and in our opinion is not sufficient to exclude him from his seat in Council as elected member for Gozo."

So far we have seen in brief the varied and chequered career of Antonio Schembri without entering into great detail. Let us now give a quick glance at his earliest works which cover his studies on ornithology and entomology. For some time Schembri interested himself in the Maltese diptera of which he slowly built a fine collection. He donated part of it to the Museum of Naples from whence some of the specimens were afterwards moved and conserved in the Museum of Monaco. (27).

The collection which was kept by Schembri has disappeared, probably destroyed through decay and neglect. Writing in 1894 the Maltese naturalist Alfredo Caruana Gatto had this to say about early entomological collections. "We regret that we have no records of these collections which have had so much valuable time and labour spent upon them, and this chiefly owing to the carelessness of those in whose charge some of our older ones, such as those of Mamo, Schembri and Gulia were placed and suffered them to decay and waste away." (28) Although we have lost this collection, the

only note written by Schembri on the Hymenoptera has survived. It is called 'Descrizioni d'una nuova spece d'Imenottero Maltese, "Leucopis Costae" che si trova nel mese di giugno e luglio in Malta.' This earliest known note on Maltese Entomology was sent by Schembri to Mons. Pierrot and after being translated into French, it was published in the *Annales de la Societé Entomologique de France*. (29)

Schembri also built up a collection of stuffed birds some of which were prepared for him by Nicola Ardoino. This was mentioned by Hugh Strickland in his paper 'Report on the progress and Present State of Ornithology'. (30) The latest information we find about this collection was given in 1932 when the Maltese Naturalist Giuseppe Despot wrote as follows about it: "Quella dello Schembri in San Giorgio a Mare, il rimanente della quale, fu venduta pochi anni fa." (The part of Schembri's collection at St. George's Bay, was sold a few years ago). (31).

The greatest contribution of Schembri is beyond any doubt his three publications on Ornithology namely the "Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta"; the "Quadro Geographico Ornitologico ossia Quadro Comparativo delle Ornitologie di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Liguria, Nizza e la Provincia di Gard", and the "Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici Dell'Ornitologia Europea." The "Catalogo Ornitologico" is the most important for us because it is the first work on the birds of Malta wherein Schembri describes 230 species of birds. This publication greatly helped later ornithologists who based their studies on this work and extended their knowledge on the birds of Malta on the foundations laid down by Schembri. In the inaugural lecture of the Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences which took place on 8th January, 1866, Dr. Leith Adams spoke of this in these words, "The Avi-fauna, first illustrated by the able memoir of Mr. Antonio Schembri, aided by the Prince of Musignano, (32) has been since greatly extended through the almost exhaustive labour of Mr. Charles A. Wright, who with great accuracy has recorded upwards of 260 species..." Soon after the "Catalogo Ornitologico" was published, Hugh Strickland commented, "The Island of Malta possesses an able ornithologist in Sigr. Schembri, who has published a 'Catalogo Ornitologico', a highly useful volume..... This forms almost the first work on zoology ever printed in the island of Malta and this shows that even in the most insulated localities an active naturalist will always find abundant occupation."

Besides giving the status of our breeding species and those of the winter and summer residents, Schembri recorded many migratory birds, some of them rare visitors. To most of these birds, he gave a Maltese name and in the compilation of this Maltese nomenclature he collected some of the names from local game-sellers, bird-shooters and bird-trappers. It is interesting to note that although most contemporary ornithologists and even those coming much later, studied birds through the barrels of the gun, Schembri made his studies on his own observations either in the field or on the skins

or live birds which he acquired from shooters and trappers. He also recorded interesting information given to him by reliable persons like Dr. G.C. Grech Delicata, Dr. C. Pisani of the Gozo Hospital and the taxidermist Baldassare Ellul. This is how he describes the robin, "In Valletta the robin is often seen on the chimney-tops and on the flag-poles of consular buildings, on which it perches to render more pleasant and beautiful the days of autumn and winter, from where one can hear its melodious song." (34) On two captive birds he commented, "In July 1834, I had two cream-coloured coursers caught alive at Mosta which remained alive for some time. I fed them on raw meat, insects and bread soaked in water. They were domesticated in such a manner that when I approached them, they used to come running to me, expecting to be fed." (34). Of a maimed black-headed gull he gave the following description, "I have one which was shot in the wing in December 1840. From this time till now, it is still with me alive." (35).

In his description of the golden oriole, we find that after he examined the ovary of some females, he discovered that the eggs were in such an advanced state, that he came to the conclusion that these birds would have laid in three or four days' time. He therefore concluded that once this species is left unmolested by the shooters, it may breed in our climate. (36).

To understand Schembri's attitude on the conservation of our sedentary and breeding species, one has to bring to mind that the protection movement in Europe had not yet started in 1843, but notwithstanding this, he stated, "Our sedentary and breeding species are also limited to very few species, because besides the many natural disadvantages one has to take into consideration the persecution of the many shooters that roam our countryside during all seasons." (39). Schembri also gave the following message to future students of our birds, "I will also be pleased if this work of mine besides succeeding to be of some usefulness to the science of ornithology, will also serve to stimulate someone interested in this study, who can make it more complete and bring it up-to-date," (39).

In his ornithological studies, Schembri made use of old as well as contemporary literature, amongst which he refers to that of C. Linnaeus, G. White, C.J. Temminck, Buffon, J. Gould, L. Benoit, C. Ranzani, G. Cara, and above all C. Bonaparte. When he was attending the VII Congress of Italian Scientists in Naples Schembri met the Italian ornithologist, Filippo di Filippi, when the latter brought to his attention the work of H. Schegel by means of which Schembri brought his list of classical ornithological synonyms more up-to-date.

In his three ornithological publications, Schembri refers to the storm petrel "*Hydrobates pelagicus*" (then known as "*Thalassidroma pelagica*") as a newly discovered species. Schembri found out that the coloration of the tail feathers of the Filfia birds were black with white at the base while the description by previous authorities was as a completely black tail. He even gave it a new name "*Thalassidroma melitensis* (Schembri). (39)

In the "Catalogo Ornitologico" he gives a full description with an illustration of this bird (this appears in the front cover of this issue) showing the alleged difference in its tail coloration and its external tubular nostril. On the 16th December, 1844, Schembri delivered a lecture on the Filfla petrel, to the members of the Societa' Medica d'Incoraggiamento wherein he gave a comparative description of the petrel found breeding on Filfla and that described by other ornithologists. (40). In the meantime, H. Strickland disagreed with Schembri and he proved that the petrel described by Schembri was the same species described by previous authors. (41). While Strickland compared specimens from Filfla with others taken elsewhere, Schembri made his comparative studies on specimens taken on Filfla and on the description which he found in available ornithological literature. Though his theory of a new species was proved wrong, his more accurate description of the storm petrel added a further step forward in the progress of ornithological studies, at the time when the science of ornithology was still in its cradle.

In 1843, Schembri also published the "Quadro Geografico-Ornitologico" which is a comparative study of the birds of Malta, Sicily, Rome, Tuscany, Liguria, Nice and the Department of Gard in France. In this work, he was inspired by the "Specchio Comparativo della Ornitologia di Roma e Filadelfia," (1827) and the "Geographical and Comparative List of the Birds of Europe and North America", (1838) of Charles Bonaparte. This work of Schembri is perhaps one of the first known publications of this type which covered the ornithology of a number of different places in Southern Europe.

On the other hand, the "Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici" was written as a work of reference for the student of ornithology. At that time there was no standard scientific nomenclature and this was the cause of confusion in every branch of natural history. Not until much later did the creation of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature bring things to an accurate standard and any such arising problem to a quick and internationally recognised solution. In this work, Schembri collected all available scientific names given so far to each individual species, keeping as a basic nomenclature that used by Charles Bonaparte in his "Catalogo Metodico degli Uccelli Europei." This compilation was then felt as a necessity as is seen in the comments of H. Strickland when he wrote about his undertaking in preparing "a complete Synonymy of all known species of birds with full references to all the works where they are figured or described." "This undertaking", he commented, "requires considerable labour and much careful comparison of specific character, as exhibited both in nature and in books but there is probably no department of natural history in which, from the multiplication of normal species and the wide dispersion of materials, such an analysis of the whole subject is more wanted than in ornithology." (42).

If today, the ornithological works of Schembri are regarded as things of the past, his contribution in relation to his time, is regarded beyond any doubt as a great effort in the progress of both Maltese and European ornithology.

After the last publication of the "Vocabulario" in 1846, Schembri apparently gave up ornithology and absorbed himself in his profession as a merchant (43), in his consular duties, in the many activities connected with different local societies and in his many publications covering various subjects. Probably the political agitation and the wars on the Italian Peninsula affected the connection with his naturalist friends on the Continent, especially when Charles Bonaparte had to leave Italy in 1849 as a consequence of the failure of the revolution in Venice and after he took an active part in politics and declared himself in favour of the independence of Italy.

After a very active life Antonio Schembri died on the 7th. December, 1872, in his home at No. 56 Merchant Street, Valletta. His death was announced in all local newspapers and journals by long and deserved appreciations. Charles Wright, a friend and colleague ornithologist of Schembri and editor of The Malta Times announced his death in this paper as follows, ".....Indeed, many are the friends who mourn over his departure, and all lovers of natural science cannot but lament the loss they have sustained. As an author he was best known by a work on Ornithology which gained for him a European reputation. He was a member of several scientific Societies and for many years President of the Societa Economico-Agraria, for which he worked hard and well....." (44). The Corriere Mercantile Maltese described him in these terms, "The much lamented Chev. Antonio Schembri enjoyed amongst his other merits, the distinction of being the founder of Maltese Ornithology as evinced by competent authorities. Meriting to be specially remembered are his studies and works, all exhibiting a talent to patient and methodical research, in this branch of natural science." (45).

The body of Antonio Schembri was buried in the crypt of the parish church of Ghaxaq in a plain tomb, according to his wishes. His funeral was attended by many of his friends, members of the Societa Economico-Agraria, by all consuls representing foreign countries in Malta, by members of the Council of Government, the Clerk of the Council, a representative of the Naval Commander-in-Chief and by members of the Nobility and Judiciary. After a century of oblivion his activities, merits and contributions are being put again on paper and his name cut in marble. The Malta Ornithological Society has erected a marble plaque at Bosketto Gardens which was unveiled on the 14th., January, 1973, by H.E. Sir Anthony Mamo, Governor General of Malta and Patron of our Society. This inscription reads in Maltese:—

L-GHAQDA ORNITOLOGIKA TA' MALTA  
 TFAKKAR LILL-  
 ANTONIO SCHEMBRI  
 MESSIER L-ORNITOLOGIJA TA' MALTA  
 F'GHĒLUQ IL-MITT SENA MILL-MEWT TIEGHU  
 Mikxufa mill-E.T. Sir Anthony J. Mamo, O.B.E., Q.C., LL.D., B.A.  
 Gvernatur Generali ta' Malta

Translation:— The Malta Ornithological Society  
 Commemorates

ANTONIO SCHEMBRI

1813-1872

Father of Maltese Ornithology  
 On the Centenary of His Death

Unveiled By H.E. Sir Anthony J. Mamo, O.B.E., Q.C., LL.D., B.A.  
 Governor-General of Malta



H.E. The Governor-General Sir A.J. Mamo reading the inscription after unveiling the plaque.





Mr. J.M. Attard, President M.O.S. addressing the guests at the unveiling ceremony. Sitting in the front row (from left) The Hon. Minister of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Tourism, Mr. P. Xuereb; H.E. Sir A.J. Mamo, Governor General of Malta, Mr. Judge A. Montanaro Gauci President of the Agrarian Society and Mr. O. Vella Acting Director of Agriculture.

## APPENDIX A

PUBLISHED WORKS BY ANTONIO SCHEMBRI

### ORNITHOLOGY

- Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta Malta 1843  
Quadro Geografico-Ornitologico ossia Quadro Comparativo  
delle Ornitologie di Malta, Sicilia, Roma, Toscana, Liguria  
Nizza, e la Provincia di Gard. Malta 1843  
Vocabolario dei Sinonimi Classici dell'Ornitologia Europea  
(Estratto dai nuovi annali delle Scienze Naturali di Bologna) Bologna 1846

### ENTOMOLOGY

- Descrizione d'una Nuova Specie D'Imenottero Maltese  
'Leucopis costae' che si trova nel mese di giugno e  
luglio in Malta tradotta in francese dal Sig. Pierrot  
e pubblicato negli 'Annales de la Société Entomologique  
de France. Vol. 5, 2da serie pag. (xxxv). France 1842

### AGRICULTURE

- Memoria sulla Coltivazione del Riso a Secco Malta 1845  
Rendiconto dei Lavori Scientifico-Pratici fatti dalla  
Societa Economico Agraria dal 12 aprile 1844 al  
5 dicembre 1845 Malta 1846  
Calendario dell'Agricoltore per l'anno 1849  
scritto dai Signori C Camilleri, G. Gauci-Azzopardi,  
G.C Grech Delicata P. Pullicino e A. Schembri Malta 1848  
Detto — per l'anno 1850 Malta 1849  
Sulla Coltivazione della Sulla l'Erba Bruca in Malta —  
Pubblicata negli Atti della Reale Accademia dei  
Georgofili di Firenze. vol XXX, 1852 Florence 1852  
Rendiconto della Prima Esibizione Agraria Malta 1855  
Various Articles which appeared on the Gazzetta Agraria  
Maltese under the initials A., S., A.S. or his full name Malta 1855 - 1856  
Sulla Coltivazione degli Asparagi Malta 1869

### ECONOMICS

- Sul Debito della Massa Frumentaria e Progetto Economico  
per Estinguerlo scritto e presentato al Governo di Sua  
Maesta Britannica Malta 1851

Sul Debito della Massa Frumentaria (Supplimento)	Malta 1852
Sui Contratti di Locazione e di Enfiteusi delle Terre	Malta 1855
Posizione Geografica-Politica Commerciale del Gruppo di Malta Avanti e Dopo l'anno 1870	Malta 1866
Brevi Cenni Sulla Questione Monetari in Malta	Malta 1866

### EMIGRATION

Osservazioni Statistiche sulla Proposta Emigrazione del Gruppo di Malta	Malta 1866
Sulla Emigrazione	Malta 1866
Osservazioni Critiche agli Articoli sulla Emigrazione del Gruppo di Malta pubblicati nell'anno 1866 dal 'Malta Observer'	Malta 1866
Considerazioni Generali sulle Emigrazioni per Ragione Politiche etc.	Malta 1867

### SHIPPING

Osservazioni Statistiche sulle Pironavi in Malta etc. Primo, Secondo, Terzo e Quarto Trimestre degli Anni 1858 al 1866	Malta 1866- 1867
--	---------------------

### CRITICAL STUDY

Le Istituzioni di Pubblica Beneficenza in Malta ed i Giornali Maltesi	Malta 1866
--	------------

### BIOGRAPHIES

Biografia del Principe di Canino	Malta 1844
Biographie du Prince Charles Bonaparte, Prince de Canino etc, fils de Lucien; traduit de l'italien par Jules Paulet. Beaune, Blendeau, Deprissieur Imprimeur (Libraire 1844 in 8vo. Page 23).	France 1844
Selva di Autori e Traduttori Maltesi	Malta 1855

### HISTORY

Il Memorabile Assedio di Malta nell'Anno 1565 descritto da Guglielmo Priscott (sic) nella Storia del Regno di Filippo II Re di Spagna	Malta 1861
---	------------

## UNPUBLISHED REPORTS PREPARED FOR THE SOCIETA ECONOMICO AGRARIA

Rapporto per indicare il modo di provvedere alla irrigazione  
di giardini e ortaggi.

Rapporto sulla 'Bohemeria Nivea'.

### APPENDIX B

SOCIETIES, INSTITUTIONS, and COMMISSIONS in which  
ANTONIO SCHEMBRI PARTICIPATED

#### MALTESE SOCIETIES

Societa Filologica Maltese — Active Member — 1840 — (18...?)

Societa' Medica d'Incoraggiamento di Malta — Honorary Member — 1840  
— 1870

Societa' Economico-Agraria del Gruppo di Malta — Secretary — 1844 — 1855  
President — 1855 — 1872

Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce — Committee Member  
—1852 — 1857

Chamber of Commerce — Secretary — 1854 — 1855

Casino Maltese — Member — 1852 — 1872

Society of Archaeology, History and Natural Sciences — Committee Member  
— 1866 — 1868

Societa' Gozitana d'Incoraggiamento — Active and Honorary Member —  
1871 — 1872

Societa' di S. Vincenzo di Paola — Member — (18...?)-1872.

Casino Maltese (1852 — 1872)

#### CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS BY 1846

Gabinetto di Scienze Naturali di Siracusa.

Gabinetto di Scienze Naturali di Gibilterra.

Accademia Gioenia di Catania

Accademia di Scienze e Lettere di Palermo

Gabinetto de' Zelanti di Aci Reale

Reale Peloritana di Messina

Aspiranti Naturalisti di Napoli

Reale Accademia dei Georgofili di Firenze

National Institute of Washington

## GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS

Board for Visitors of Corradino Prison	—	Member — 1854 - 1857
Malta Public Library Committee	—	Member — 1855 - 1856
Commission of Charity	—	Member — 1856 - 1872
Consuls for the Commercial Courts	—	Member — 1857 - 1863

N.B.

A. Schembri served also on many sub-committees of the Societa' Economico — Agraria

## REFERENCES + NOTES

- (1) Records of Births., St. Dominic's Parish, Valletta., Register (1811 — 1817) p. 169.
- (2) Dr. P. Cassar., "Medical History of Malta", London 1964, p. 295.
- (3) Records of Deaths., St. Dominic's Parish, Valletta; Register (1859 — 1867) entry of 22nd October, 1860.
- (4) Dr. P. Cassar., *op. cit.*, p. 538.
- (5) Archivum Melitense, Vol. III, December 1918 — April 1919 p.p. 303 — 304.
- (6) The "Iconografia della Fauna Italica" by Charles Bonaparte is in the possession of Dr. A. Cachia Zammit M.D. M.P. who is related to A. Schembri's wife.
- (7) Vide Appendix A.
- (8) Archivum Melitense, Vol. VIII, No. 4, August 1928, p. 129
- (9) Storia della Societa Medica d'Incoraggiamento di Malta. — Malta 1845, Vol. I, p. xxxviii
- (10) Gazzetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 1st May, 1855, No. 2, p. 17
- (11) Gazzetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 2nd July 1855., Suppl. al No. 3., p. 76
- (12) Antonio's father served from 1859 to 1861 as President of the Chamber of Commerce.
- (13) Malta Blue Books, 1852 — 1872., Section "Boards", vide Appendix B
- (14) Manuscript No. 588 Royal Malta Library., Register of Proceedings of Monthly and General Meetings of the Society of Archaeological, Historical and Natural Sciences".
- (15) This work was translated into Maltese by Ganni Vassallo and printed in 1903 by order of the Governor.
- (16) Vide Appendix B.
- (17) Prince Charles Bonaparte was the President of the Italian Scientists and he presided over the VII Congress in Naples.
- (18) Vide Appendix A.
- (19) The appointment was signed by King Leopold I on 1st July 1849;

approved by Queen Victoria and the British Foreign Minister, Lord Palmerston on 8th November, 1849 and published in the Malta Government Gazette on 14th December, 1849.

(20) The Malta Times — 14th December, 1872.

(21) The Malta Government Gazette, 14th April, 1856

(2) Gazzetta Agraria Maltese., Anno I, 18th July, 1855., No. 4., p. 202

(23) The Oath taken by Antonio Schembri on his appointment as consul for Belgium. was the following:—

I, Antonio Schembri swear to fulfill with fidelity and in all its parts the commission that has been granted to me according to the instructions and the orders that have been given me and shall be given to me from time to time and to avail with all my power to bring forward the interests of Navigation and Belgian Commerce.

(24) The Malta Government Gazette, 25th April, 1856.

(25) Il Portafoglio Maltese, 26th April, 1856., p. 3.

(26) Schembri owned Comino Island on emphyteutic basis (vide Schembri's will by Notary Giuseppe Metropoli — 4th July 1872, Notarial Archives, Reg. No. 64/943) where he kept a farm and carried out many agricultural experiments which he then reported upon to the Societa Economica Agraria.

(27) Il Barth., Morte del Cav. Ant. Schembri by Gavino Gulia., Anno II 21st February 1873., No. 12., p. 238.

(28) A Caruana Gatto., 'Common Beetles of the Maltese Islands', Malta 1894. p. 5.

(29) Vide Appendix A.

(30) 'Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science,' London 1844.

(31) G. Despott., "Ornitologia delle Isole Maltese." Rivista Italiana dell'Ornitologia; Anno II; serie II 1932, Milano p. 9.

(32) Charles Bonaparte, besides being the Prince of Canino was also the Prince of Musignano.

(33) Cat. Ornit. del Gruppo di Malta. — Malta 1843 p. 43.

(34) Ibid. p. 87.

(35) Ibid. p. 124.

(36) Ibid. p. 34.

(37) Ibid. p. 8.

(38) Ibid. p. 8.

(39) Cat. Ornit. pp. 117, 118, 119., Vocabolario....., p. 401  
Quadro ....., p. 27

(40) Storia della Società Medica ....., 1845., Vol. 1., pp. 12,13,14.

(41) H.E. Strickland., On Thalassidroma melitensis, Schembri, a supposed new species of Stormy Petrel., Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., London, — 1844. (1) 14, pp. 248, 349., J. Sultana & C. Gauci., Bird Studies on Filfla. — Malta, 1970., pp. 23, 24.

- (42) Report on the Recent and Present State of Ornithology. p. 179.
- (43) Between 1850 and 1854 Antonio's father together with other partners built up a fleet of cargo sailing vessels:— the barques "Schembri — 260 tonnage, "Osiris" — 425 tonnage, "Castor" — 265 tonnage, "Saint John" — 545 tonnage.
- (44) The Malta Times., 14th December, 1872.
- (45) Il Corriere Mercantile Maltese., 11th December, 1872.

## GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION

The idea of an international organisation for the protection of birds originated from Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, U.S.A. In 1922 he made an extensive tour of Europe, met many ornithologists and spoke at meetings of national societies for the protection of birds in various countries. During the course of his visit he found that little was known of bird protection in America, and indeed bird protectors in Europe had little knowledge of what was going on in other countries. Dr. Pearson summed up the situation as follows: "How many people in the United States and Canada know what the Germans or the Dutch or the Japanese are doing to save their birds; or what methods they are employing in the undertakings? Surely there is much we can learn from each other. Why not effect an international organisation which, among other things, will further stimulate interest in bird protection by the interchange of publications and by occasional conventions where representatives of different countries can meet in council? Also there are a number of problems that are distinctly international such as oil pollution of the high seas and the export and import of birds or their feathers."

Dr. Pearson concluded his tour in England and at midday on June 22nd 1922 he invited a group of people to meet in London for the purpose of discussing the advisability of forming an international Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds. Those present included Viscount Grey of Fallodon and Dr. Percy Lowe of Great Britain, Dr. P.G. van Tienhoven and Dr. A. Burdet of Holland and Jean Delacour from France. As a result of this meeting, the International Committee for Bird Preservation was founded with Dr. Pearson as President.

The main framework and strength of the ICBP is its National Sections which act as a focus for national opinion and information and as a channel for cooperation in international matters. The constitution of the section varies a good deal, some of them being composed of the full number of twelve organisations allowed under the Bye-laws and including scientific, sporting, agricultural and other interests, in addition to conservationists; in some there are only a few, or even one, organisation. Some National Sections are officially supported by their Governments but the ICBP as a whole is a non-governmental and entirely independent body.

For a number of years the organisation of the work of the Committee and the funds to carry this out were mainly undertaken by the President, Dr. Gilbert Pearson, but the activities grew so rapidly, especially in Europe,



that in 1928 Dr. Jean-Marie Derscheid (Belgium) was appointed European Secretary. He was succeeded by Count Leon Lippens (Belgium) who was appointed in 1935 and carried on the work of General Secretary till 1946 when he was succeeded by Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith (U.K.)

Informal meetings of the ICBP were held in Paris in 1923 and Luxembourg in 1925. At the latter meeting the inadequacy of the International Convention for the Protection of Birds Useful to Agriculture (Paris 1902) was discussed and the ICBP was requested to consider this subject and secure the ideas of representative people in various countries and give an opinion as to what course should be taken. This matter was discussed at various international conferences through the years and considered by a series of specially appointed sub-committees, and finally led to the Inter-Governmental Conference in Paris in 1950 when a draft Convention to amend the 1902 Convention was signed ad referendum by the official representatives of twelve countries. The main step forward was the adoption of the principle that all birds should be protected, with exceptions where necessary, and the concept of "harmful" and "useful" birds was discarded. The Convention came into force in 1963 with the signature of Luxembourg as the sixth adherent.

The ICBP has achieved much in promoting an international approach to bird preservation by showing that migratory birds are *not the property of one country* alone, but the responsibility of many countries, and that cooperation between several nations is necessary in order to ensure their adequate protection. This viewpoint was early recognised in the United States and Canada and has become very general in Europe. In 1960, during the world meeting of ICBP in Tokyo, an Asian Continental Section was established with one of its chief charges to provide for the protection of migratory birds of the Pan-Pacific area. This resulted in the "U.S.-Japan Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and their Environment and Birds in Danger of Extinction" which was signed by both countries on 4 March 1972.

Full details of the ICBP's work, especially for migratory birds cannot be given in this report, but one example may be mentioned. In the past few decades, the White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) has greatly decreased in a number of countries in Western Europe and even disappeared in some. The ICBP therefore organised an international census in 1958 in an effort to find out the reasons for the decrease and to propose measures to maintain the numbers of this species. The results of this work were published in the VIII Bulletin of the ICBP together with a report on the Asiatic sub-species *Ciconia ciconia boyciana*.

The scheme for a series of reserves along migration routes in Europe, especially for waterbirds and the larger migrants, was put forward at the world meeting of the ICBP in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1950 and, in conjunction

with other international organisations, great progress has been made in this direction.

In 1926 the Chairman of the Swedish National Section, Professor Lonnberg drew attention to the decrease of wildfowl in Europe and asked for reports on their status. He was strongly supported by Dr. Percy Lowe, Chairman of the British Section, and in 1927 an intergovernmental conference on the preservation of wildfowl was held in London. Recommendations were made for shortening the shooting season for wildfowl and for investigations of migratory routes by means of ringing. Nothing came of this Conference and in 1936, Dr Percy Lowe established the Wildfowl Inquiry Committee of the British Section, with the object of inquiring into the status of wild ducks and geese, and, if possible, to provide for their future welfare. From this Committee grew the International Wildfowl Research Bureau, which was established in 1947 as a specialist branch of the ICBP. The IWRB has a great list of achievements to its credit, not the least being the success in obtaining the cooperation of sportsmen.

At the 1950 Conference in Sweden, the danger of insecticides was raised and a resolution adopted supporting that agreed by the International Technical Conference for the Protection of Nature held at Lake Success in 1949. This called on the Governments to study the researches on the effects of these substances and to take steps to prevent their indiscriminate use. The fears expressed at that meeting over 20 years ago have been only too dramatically realised. The question of pesticides has remained permanently on the Agenda of the ICBP at every international meeting and many resolutions have been adopted on the various aspects of the problem. The Secretariat of the ICBP keeps the various National Sections informed of the researches and investigations being carried out in other countries and the legal and other measures being taken to control the use of toxic chemicals.

Even since its inception, the ICBP has worked on the problem of oil pollution and there is no doubt that it was owing to the constant pressure by National Sections all over the world on Governments that the International Convention for the Prevention of the Pollution of the Sea by Oil (London 1954) was agreed. But it is not until the discharge of waste oil is prohibited anywhere at any time that the seas will be free from this menace and the destruction of seabirds cease. To this end the ICBP continues to work.

At the world meeting of the ICBP in Tokyo in 1960 a resolution was adopted calling attention to the urgent need for international protection of the unique antarctic fauna and urging the inclusion in the proposed Antarctic Treaty of appropriate provisions to protect this fauna. This resolution was sent to all the Governments concerned and also to the Special Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) set up by the International Council of Scientific Union. As a result, a number of general rules of

conduct for preservation and conservation were recommended and adopted, and subsequently embodied in this Treaty.

The preservation of rare birds has been one of the prime activities of the ICBP and assistance has been given in various ways by letters to Governments, research programmes, and advice on measures to be taken.

When the IUCN was founded in 1948, a friendly agreement for cooperation was drawn up and the two organisations worked closely together. The work of the Survival Service Commission, so far as birds are concerned, is primarily the responsibility of the ICBP as is the compilation of the Volume AVES of the Red Data Book on threatened species.

At the ICBP Conference in Tokyo in 1960 a resolution was adopted urging each country to designate a species as its national bird as a means of bringing the intrinsic value of birds to the attention of the general public. This scheme has proved a great success and aroused widespread interest.

In 1938, Dr. Gilbert Pearson resigned in favour of Monsieur Jean Delacour who remained President till 1958, when he was succeeded by Professor S. Dillon Ripley who was elected at the World Meeting in Finland that year. At this meeting the title of the ICBP was changed from "Committee" to "Council" as being more suitable for the standing and scope of the organisation.

The ICBP now has 61 National Sections in every continent of the world and in a number of oceanic and other islands, which are in constant touch with the President and Central Secretariat either on account of their own problems or assisting other countries with theirs. Bulletins containing reports of international meetings, articles on various subjects and accounts of the situation of bird preservation in different countries are published from time to time, and the information pamphlet under the title "The President's Letter", containing information on the activities of the ICBP and the National Sections, is issued free to anyone interested in the work.

Each year new National Sections are formed and each year the need for the work of the ICBP becomes more evident, as the very existence of birdlife becomes ever more hazardous with the spread of modern methods of civilisation.

In 1974 ICBP will be holding two interesting Conferences. One in April will be held in Cyprus and is entitled "The Conservation of Birds and their habitats in the Mediterranean Countries." We sincerely hope to be represented there. The second, in August, will be the "XVI World Conference of ICBP", and it will be held in Australia, where Mr. A D'Andria will represent Malta.

## CAPT. ALBERT MAITLAND JACOB

We are sorry to announce the death of Capt. Albert Maitland Jacob which happened on the 1st July, 1972 in his house at the small, attractive village of Fethard, County Tipperary, Eire. Capt. Jacob was a great friend of the Malta Ornithological Society and through his generosity, two Natural History Competitions were organised in 1968 and 1970 for the schools of Malta and Gozo.

I feel glad that I had the opportunity of meeting Bertu, as all his friends knew him, and his charming wife Dodo. I spent two days with them in March 1968 after I attended the "All-Ireland Conference on Bird Protection", at Malahide, near Dublin. During the short time I spent with him I came to know Bertu much closer as a conservationist. The first time I heard about him was in 1964 when his name was mentioned to me by Philip Brown, then Secretary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In that year Capt. Jacob joined the M.O.S. as a life member and till his death his generous support for our Society was always forthcoming.

Albert Maitland Jacob was born in Liverpool in 1891 and educated at Clifton College, Bristol. After he left College he worked in his father's firm of Jacob Co. Biscuit Manufacturers, during which time he joined the West Lancashire Territorials. In 1913 he paid a short visit to Valletta when his

ship stopped for bunkering in the Grand Harbour. In the First World War (1914-1918) he saw active service in Northern France with the Royal Artillery where he was in charge of a Truck Mortar Battery and was promoted to captain.

After the war he became chairman of the Liverpool Company of Jacob's Biscuit Manufacturers and a few years later he moved to Ireland where he was also Chairman of the Dublin Company. In 1928 he married Dodo and at the age of 74 he retired from the family firm.

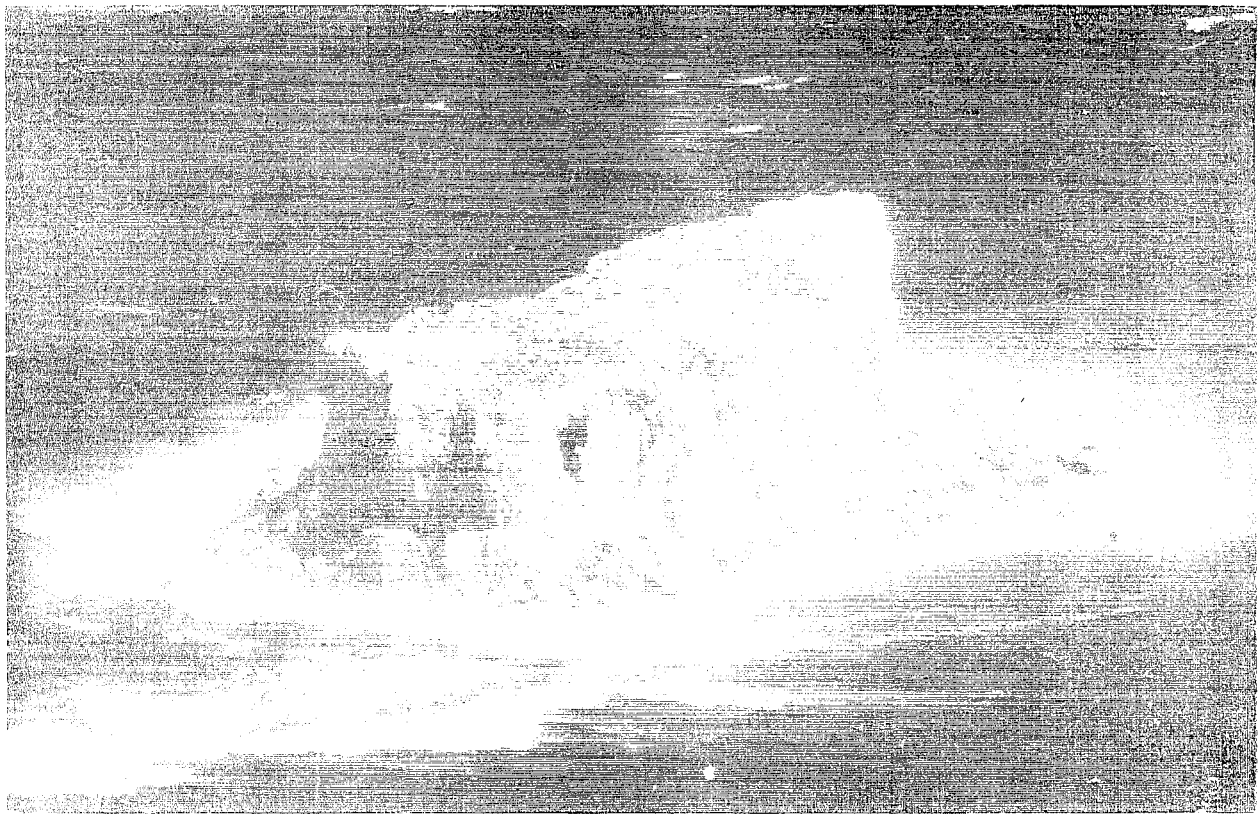
Bertu was an ardent naturalist and ornithologist and a great conservationist. He was a member of the R.S.P.B., the Preservation of Rural England, the Men of the Trees, The Organic Farming and Soil Association, the World Wildlife Fund and the British Trust for Ornithology. His knowledge of all things to do with nature was beyond belief and many years ago he foretold the ravages and destruction of the indiscriminate use of agricultural pesticides in the balance of nature.

Bertu died at the age of 81 giving untold support to the conservation movement and to the Societies in which he participated.

To his wife and family we give our heartfelt condolences. Though Bertu is no more, his great virtues of kindness and generosity will outlive his death.

J.M. ATTARD

The 1920 gold coin which depicts the Pine Rock Finch.



### AERIAL VIEW OF FILFLA

(M.C.S. still has in stock a number of copies of a booklet by J. Sultana & C. Gauci entitled: BIRD STUDIES ON FILFLA. Copies are available from the Secretary at 25c each.

## MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### *Principles and Aims:*

(a) The Society's main purpose is to initiate, foster and aid the study of avian fauna in accordance with strictly scientific methods, thereby helping to increase the sum of human knowledge on the subject.

(b) The Society solemnly affirms its belief in the conservation of nature and will pursue whatever actions it deems necessary to ensure adequate protection of wild-life, and to propagate these ideals in the Maltese Islands.

### *Membership:*

Members can join the Society and participate in all its activities, provided they subscribe to the aims of the Society and further undertake to propagate its views, each in his own sphere of life thus spreading the Society's enlightened ideal and awakening a social conscience that will brook no further depreciation of the living resources of Nature, especially birds.

### *Membership Fees:*

Life Member .....	£15
Members .....	75c
Young Member (under 17)	12c5

Anyone wishing to join the Society is welcome to write to the Secretary. The Society's Bulletin is sent free to members and illustrated talks, meetings and outings are held monthly except during the summer months.

### *Malta Ornithological Society Ringing Group:*

The Society also has its Bird Ringing Group. This Group is engaged in studying the various aspects of Maltese Ornithology, and is staffed by qualified bird ringers holding a ringing permit from the British Trust for Ornithology. Ringing Secretary: C. Gauci, 1A1 Museum Road Rabat, Malta.

*The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other features bearing on any aspect of the ornithology of the Maltese Islands and Mediterranean for publication in this bulletin.*

*The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor nor the M.O.S.*

