

## 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 depredation of the living resources of Nature, especially birds.

### *Membership Fees:*

Life Member .....	£15
Member .....	15s per annum
Young Member (under 17)	2s 6d

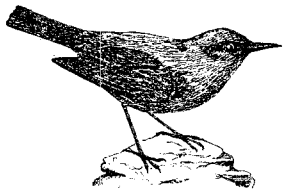
Anyone wishing to join the Society is welcome to write to the Secretary. The Society's Bulletin is sent free to members and illustrated talks, meetings and outings are held monthly except during the summer months.

### *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 or the M.O.S.*



# IL-MERILL

BULLETIN OF THE MALTA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 4 April 1971

1s.6d. to 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

### Committee for 1971

*President*

J.M. Attard

*44, Marsamxett Rd., Valletta*

*Secretary/Treasurer*

J. Sultana

*3, Sciberras Flats, Fleur-de-lys Junction,  
Birkirkara, Malta*

### *Committee Members*

B. German, (*Ass. Secretary*), Bro Edmund, C. Gauci (*Bird Ringing Sec.*)  
S. Borg, E. Spiteri Campbell, V. Velia Muscat (*M.O.S Gozo Representative*).

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Cover Picture: Scops Owl (photo by J. Azzopardi)

**EDITORIAL**

Number 4 issue of Il-Merili starts the second year of its existence and we have had quite a number of favourable comments offered this last year on its production and presentation. We were particularly pleased to receive the congratulations and best wishes of Bob Spencer, Ringing Officer and editor of the Ringers' Bulletin of the British Trust for Ornithology. The first two issues were produced at the Orphans' Press in Gozo but the third, printed on art paper, at the Lux Press was typographically a great improvement.

We are most grateful to the local press for printing letters on bird shooting and conservation and in particular to the Times of Malta which on ten occasions has put these letters at the head of the page and given them under bold and telling print with titles such as: Wild Life Conservation, Protection of Birds, Organized Bird Trapping, Indiscriminate Slaughter of Birds, etc. On three occasions the Times of Malta has carried leading articles entitled: Curb on Bird-Shooting, Massacre of Birds, Check on Bird-Shooting and in a leader on Threats to Conservation the final paragraph was taken up with the same theme. It is most heartening to have this support of the Press.

On our recent successful outing to Comino the Malta Ornithological Society was shocked to see and hear a hunter at work under the very eyes of the Police on this island where all bird-shooting is forbidden by law. We also came across a newly fitted-out clap-netting site and we have reported both these incidents to the Police.

Once again the lovely grove of tamarisk at Ghadira Pool has been invaded and damaged by campers who break off branches of these trees or allow their children to do so. A pity, for in a few years' time this beautiful site could easily be turned into a very interesting study centre for Natural History and Geography by the Education Department of Malta will become just another derelict dumping area where the camper and his junk reign supreme: is anybody really interested in this unique area in Government or Education Department? Ghadira Pool which provides an admirable resting place for migrant waders in spring and autumn could easily become an added attraction to bring bird-spotting tourists to Malta at these two times of the year. Let us hope that the incoming Government will show its interest in conserving Ghadira as a nature reserve and take up active steps to achieve this aim.