

~~trary to earlier records (Times of Malta, 18. 2. 1962 Sea Gulls over Malta).~~

~~These two gulls frequently congregate in the Grand and Marsamxett Harbours during winter, their numbers increasing during strong North-westerly wind. Frequent counts were made during the last three winters and only once (in December 1968) did the numbers of the Mediterranean Gull reach 35% of the number of the two gulls present. Otherwise it was always less than 15%.~~

~~The Black-headed Gull appears earlier than the Mediterranean Gull but the bulk of both are with us by mid-December. They both leave by the end of March but singles or small parties of the Mediterranean Gull may still be noted by mid-April.~~

~~All the ringed recoveries (19) in Malta of the Mediterranean Gull were of birds ringed as juveniles on the breeding island of Orlov in the Black Sea. Those of the Black-headed Gull (13) hail from Finland, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Germany, Yugoslavia and France.~~

~~References for the compilation of the table:~~

- ~~1843 Schembri, A.: Catalogo Ornitologico del Gruppo di Malta, Tip. Anglo-Maltese, Malta.~~
~~1864 Wright, C. A.: List of the Birds observed in the islands of Malta and Gozo. Ibis 6:42-73, 137-157.~~
~~1917 Despott, G.: Notes on the Ornithology of Malta. Ibis (10) 5:281-349, 466-526.~~
~~1951 Gibb, J.: The Birds of the Maltese Islands. Ibis 93: 109-127.~~
~~1954 Roberts, E. L.: The Birds of Malta. Progress Press, Malta.~~
~~1960 DeLuca, C.: A Revised Check List of the Birds of the Maltese Islands. E. W. Classey Ltd., England.~~

J. Sultana.

BIRD NOTES FOR JANUARY-APRIL 1971

1. Selected Occurrences.

- Black-necked Grebe: singles on 19/1 and 10/2
Bittern: singles on 16/3 at Wardija and on 27/3 at Ras il-Pelegrin.
Osprey: 3 records in April.
Buzzard: One at il-Qadi on 21/3.
Eleonora's Falcon: Single bird (dark phase) at Wardija on 23/4.
Merlin: One on 2/4 at St. Andrew's
Baillon's Crake: Single bird taken on 31/3.
Kentish Plover: 2 at Salina on 16/3.
Turnstone: 3 single birds from 21-23/4.
Spotted Redshank: One at Ghadira on 13/4.
Marsh Sandpiper: One at Ghadira from 20-23/4 and at Salina on 23/4.
Black-tailed Godwit: 5 single birds from 17/2 to 26/3.
Great Snipe: one at Salina on 6 and 7/3.
Black-winged Stilt: 2 near B'bugia on 18/2 and 9 records in April.
Avocet: 2 crossing the south Comino Channel on 14/4.

Cream-coloured Courser: 7 records from 5/2 till 1/4.
 Pratincole: singles on 24/3 at Gnejna, at Ta' Qali on 9/4 and at M'Skala on 19/4. Two at Ta' Qali on 20/4.
 Great Skua: singles taken by fishermen off south coast on 7/2, 3/3 & 5/3
 Slender-billed Gull: 2 off St. Thomas Bay on 26/3.
 Caspian Tern: 5 off Delimara on 8/4.
 Sandwich Tern: single birds on 3 dates in January, on 25/3 and on 14/4. 2 at Delimara on 4/2.
 Little Tern: single bird on 24/4 at Benghisa.
 Wood Pigeon: singles on 24/3 at Mtahleb and on 28/3 at Wardija.
 Great Spotted Cuckoo: singles on 9/1 at Siggiewi, on 3/3 at Zabbar, on 16/3 at Mgarr and 20/4 at Gudja.
 Pallid Swift: 2 on 7/4 at Rabat and 1 on 8/4 at Mtahleb.
 Kingfisher: one at San Martin on 8/2.
 Bar-tailed Desert Lark: single bird on 5/4.
 Wood Lark: One at Gircanti on 11/3.
 Red-rumped Swallow: 2 on 22/3 at Chadwick Lakes, 2 at Marsalforn on 9/4 and one at Ramia on 10/4.
 Richard's Pipit: One on 20/2 at Salina.
 Water/Rock Pipit: One at Wied li-Ghasri on 16/4.
 Great Grey Shrike: singles on 15/3 at Mellieha and on 2/4.
 Waxwing: one at Siggiewi on 9/1.
 Savi's Warbler: one at Salina on 24/3.
 Grasshopper Warbler: One on 31/3 at Ta' Zuta. (First record for Malta. It was examined in the hand by C. Gauci & S. Borg).
 Orphean Warbler: one ringed at Ghadira on 2/4.
 Fan-tailed Warbler: one in clover fields at M'Xlokk on 9-10/4.
 Rufous Bush Chat: Singles on 14, 15 and 23/4.
 Ring Ouzel: single bird at Pwales on 4/1.
 Oortolan Bunting: 3 single birds from 19-24/4 at Gharb.
 Reed Bunting: singles on 16/1 and 24/2 at Salina.

The winter-residents/visitors (from January) were about in their usual numbers, these increasing by the end of January till mid-February by those wintering south of Malta. The number started decreasing till March as these continued their northward movement. There were no records for the Great Crested Grebe while only one Coot was recorded. Apart from the Garganey, there were only two single records of ducks (Pintail on 13/2 and Mallard on 16/3). Surprisingly there was a small influx of Spoonbills in February with a max. of 20 on 27th and a larger influx of Glossy Ibis in mid-March with several flocks on the 20th. The most unusual fall was of Song Thrushes which appeared in their thousands on 16/3 during strong north-westerly winds.

2. Last dates of some wintering species.

March: 3rd Gannet; 7th Lapwing; 9th Redwing; 10th Lesser Black-backed Gull; 15th Golden Plover; 16th Fieldfare; 17th Black-headed Gull; 18th Dunnoek; 19th Starling and Dartford Warbler; 21st Mediterranean Gull and Blackbird 24th Goldcrest, Black Redstart, Stonechat and Serin; 27th Wren; 28th Grey Wagtail

April: 8th White Wagtail; 10th Chiffchaff and Meadow Pipit; 19th Blackcap; 20th Robin and Song Thrush; 23rd Skylark

The first trickle of spring migrants arrived just before the end of February. Though since mid-March there were frequent but irregular small influxes, no exceptional large falls took place and there were periods of several days with very few spring migrants about especially in April. Very unusual low numbers were recorded for some species, e.g. Wryneck, Woodchat Shrike, Whitethroat.

3 First date of appearance of selected spring migrants.

February: 21st Pallid Harrier; 27th Marsh Harrier; 23rd Green Sandpiper and House Martin; 28th Swallow.

March: 1st Purple Heron; 5th Hoopoe; 7th Tree Pipit; 8th Hen Harrier 9th Short-toed Lark (summer resident); 10th Wheatear; 12th Lesser Kestrel; 13th Little Egret, Grey Heron, Hobby, Sedge Warbler and Bluethroat; 14th Night Heron, Little Crake, Wood Sandpiper; Tawny Pipit and Redstart; 18th Red-footed Falcon and Nightingale; 20th Swift, Yellow Wagtail and Rock Thrush; 21st Little Stint, Subalpine Warbler, Willow Warbler and Black-eared Wheatear; 22nd Squacco Heron, Ruff and Sand Martin; 24th Alpine Swift, Woodchat Shrike and Bonelli's Warbler; 27th Curlew Sandpiper; 28th Greenshank, Whitethroat and Wood Warbler; 29th Red-throated Pipit and Pied Flycatcher; 30th Little Bittern.

April: 1st Montagu's Harrier and Turtle Dove; 2nd Bee Eater; 4th Cuckoo and Whinchat; 5th Wryneck (but one was wintering at Buskett); 11th Roller; 12th Garden Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher; 13th Collared Flycatcher and Golden Oriole; 16th Great Reed Warbler; 18th Nightjar; 19th Temminck's Stint; 21st Ringed Plover; 23rd Honey Buzzard; 25th Icterine Warbler.

The following members have kindly helped us by offering their records: J. Azzopardi, M. Beaman, S. Borg, G. Davies, L. Ellu, Mercer, C. Galea, T. Gauci, B. K. German, J. Grech, B. P. Grenfell, M. Pennell, D. Rushforth, D. Sherard-Smith and M. Thake.

J. SULTANA & C. GAUCI.

Errata for List Of Birds Ringed in Il-Merill Issue No. 3, December 1970, Page 12. One Swift ringed in May was accidentally omitted from the list. The Grand Total remains the same.