

Remembering...

Martin Thake

1 January 1954 – 27 November 2018

Written by John J. Borg



Martin Thake's name is synonymous with raptor migration. He was the go to person in the 1970s and 1980s when it came to anything related to raptors. During the months of September and October many of us, now old timers, remember Martin sitting on the roof of the Tal-Ispirtu Farmhouse smack in the middle of Buskett observing the raptors passing overhead. Martin was a scientist and he approached ornithology with a scientific frame of mind. His numerous publications on the migratory habits of the Honey Buzzard and other raptors are testimony to this. Later in the years, Martin shifted his ornithological interest towards pollen and nectar-feeding in passerine birds as well as many other topics. Martin contributed regularly to the bird sightings log and for a number of years he served on the Malta Ornithological Society (BirdLife Malta) rarities committee.

His research work featured regularly in *Il-Merill* but also in foreign journals such as *Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia* and many others. Martin's interests spanned over many topics including paleontology where he studied the large terrestrial tortoises of the Pleistocene as well as his excellent contributions on the Mollusca, in particular the Clausiliidae land snails of the Maltese Islands.

Martin was also a teacher and he lectured at the Junior College, when in 1991 he was seconded as a museum educator at the National Museum of Natural History in Mdina. Martin lectured thousands of schoolchildren during his time at the museum from 1991 to 2002 and was also instrumental in the setting up of the Human Evolution display. He passed away on 27 November 2018, aged 64.

Martin, a passionate naturalist and avid scientist, will be sorely missed.