

From: BirdLife Malta info@birdlifemalta.org
Subject: Spring is here... but so are the challenges! 🐦 April News
Date: April 10, 2026 at 3:11 am
To: Mary maryannsteggles@icloud.com



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April



Hello Mary!

Welcome to your BirdLife Malta monthly news update! 😊

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NEWS

🚩 Headlines 🚩



Government Ignores Science as Turtle-dove Decline Worsens

Government approved spring hunting despite clear EU data showing a 23% population decline along the Central-Eastern flyway. [Legal Notice 81 of 2026](#) was published on the same day as the March 30 Ornis Committee meeting, raising serious transparency concerns, with key documents shared only hours in advance.

BirdLife Malta was the only vote supporting a moratorium, highlighting a direct conflict between science and policy and raising transparency concerns over rushed decision-making. Days prior to the Ornis Committee meeting, BirdLife Malta presented the latest [EU Article 12 data \(2019-2024\)](#), showing declines in 13 of 15 countries along the Central-Eastern flyway, including Malta. The species remains classified as **Vulnerable**, with no signs of recovery.

[LEARN MORE](#)

⚡ In brief ⚡





[Wildlife Crime Exposed: Kestrel Killed in Illegal Trapping](#)

Footage of a protected Common Kestrel being crushed to death in Gozo has renewed concern over wildlife crime in the Maltese Islands. The cruel and revolting incident, shows a trapper who was illegally trapping birds, killing the Kestrel after it was caught in a net, exposing ongoing illegal practices.

BirdLife Malta warns such cases are not isolated and reflect weak enforcement. On 17 March, the [Malta Ranger Unit launched a petition](#) calling for an Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) Police presence in Gozo. We support the initiative and are encouraging members and the public to [sign the petition](#).

[LEARN MORE](#)



[Illegal Hunting Escalates as Spring Migration Picks Up: Flock of Cranes Shot at](#)

A rare flock of four Common Cranes was shot at, with three birds later seen flying away. Eyewitnesses reported and photographed one of the remaining three Cranes being shot down. Attempts to reach the police were futile with no response to the incident area. This is just one of numerous cases demonstrating how enforcement capacity across the island remains insufficient on the eve of the spring hunting season. With Malta already facing an EU infringement case linked to inadequate enforcement, BirdLife Malta stresses that the situation is becoming increasingly untenable.

[LEARN MORE](#)



[Noma Island Platform Sparks Environmental Concerns near Comino](#)

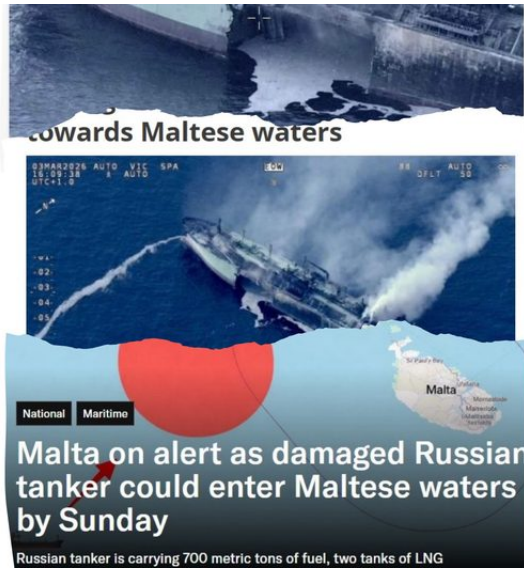
BirdLife Malta has called for immediate removal of the Noma Island platform near Comino. The floating venue threatens a protected Natura 2000 marine area and it poses risks to Yelkouan and Scopoli's Shearwaters through light, noise and disturbance. Comino is already under heavy tourism and commercial pressure. We urge authorities to enforce protections and remove incompatible activities immediately. Comino is not for sale. It is a national and ecological treasure, and its protection is a legal and moral responsibility. [Sign the petition](#) to protect Malta's marine environment and oppose Noma Island.



[Overdevelopment Risk Disguised as 'Sport Facilities'](#)

Environmental NGOs, including BirdLife Malta, are raising serious concerns over proposed changes to the Local Plans that could enable intensified construction and commercialisation under the guise of "sporting facilities". The proposals would allow large portions of developments to be used for non-sporting commercial activities. This risks further urbanisation of the countryside, undermining biodiversity and food security. These changes prioritise private interests over public good, using sport as a pretext to open more land to speculation and unsustainable development.

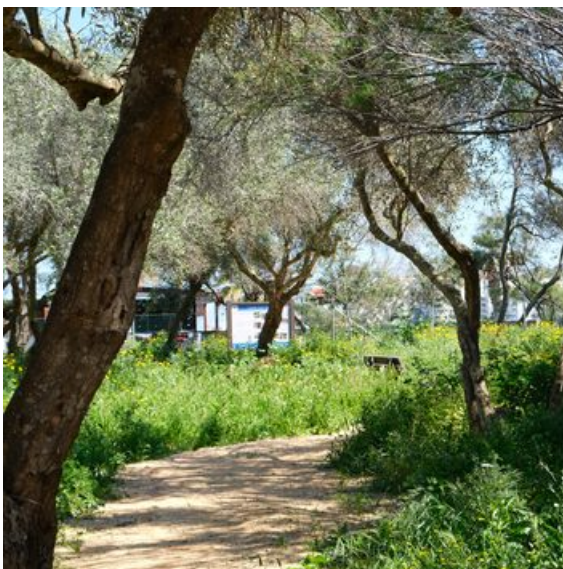
[LEARN MORE](#)



[Damaged Tanker in the Mediterranean Raises Environmental Concern](#)

BirdLife Malta has written to Transport Malta, the Environment & Resources Authority, and the Prime Minister regarding the damaged tanker currently still drifting in the Mediterranean. This is a highly sensitive marine area supporting internationally important seabird and marine mammal populations, and any release of fuel or pollutants would constitute an ecological disaster for the Maltese Islands.

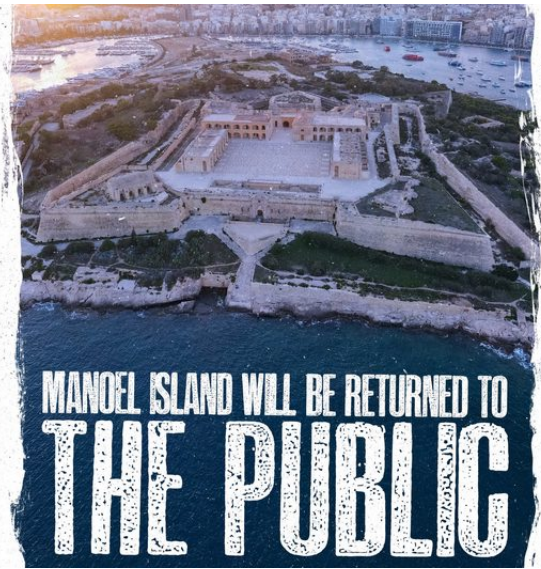
[LEARN MORE](#)



[Simar Buffer Zone Restored for Nature and Community](#)

A long neglected buffer zone next to Simar

[LEARN MORE](#)



[Manoel Island Back to the People!](#)

The government announced the termination of the Manoel Island concession following strong public pressure. The announcement follows months of public calls to transform Manoel Island into a large public green space. BirdLife Malta supported the campaign, *Manoel Island: Post Ghalina*, from its early stages. The outcome reflects the strong public demand to safeguard Manoel Island for people and nature.

[LEARN MORE](#)



[Research Highlights Benefits of Nature-based Education](#)

New research from the University of Malta

A long-neglected buffer zone next to [Simar Nature Reserve](#) has been transformed into a natural and accessible space for the public. The 3,200-square-metre site, once affected by illegal dumping, now features restored habitats, new paths, and improved access.

BirdLife Malta secured funding in 2022 through Project Green, with support from the European Union and Maltese Government. The project enhances biodiversity while creating a free, daily open space for nearby communities. It also strengthens the value of Simar Nature Reserve, an internationally recognised site under the Ramsar Convention and a protected site within the Natura 2000 network.

[LEARN MORE](#)

New research from the University of Malta underscores the educational value of **outdoor learning**. Dr. Desiree Falzon, a [Dinja Waħda](#) field teacher with BirdLife Malta, has been awarded her PhD by the Institute of Earth Systems at the University of Malta. BirdLife Malta's environmental education programme **Dinja Waħda** continues to engage over 13,000 students annually, connecting them with nature through hands-on learning experiences. Dr. Falzon is leading the flagship project at De La Salle College, where school grounds are being transformed into a nature-based learning hub. The project is supported through the regeneration scheme managed by Project Green.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Celebrating 100 Years of David Attenborough



SAVE THE DATE

Presented by Malta Environment Foundation

Friday 22nd May 2026

7pm onwards

Salina Nature Park

Benefitting Malta's Environment

Dress Code: Inspired by the Wild

A Night of Wonder Celebrates 100 years of David Attenborough

The Malta Environment Foundation, presents A Night of Wonder, an immersive fundraising evening celebrating 100 years of David Attenborough. Hosted at Salina Nature Reserve, the event honours a century of one of the world's most influential voices for nature while supporting vital conservation work in Malta. Guests are invited to dress Inspired by the Wild and enjoy an evening featuring an exciting raffle with prizes and experiences. Funds raised will directly support ongoing efforts to protect Malta's habitats and birdlife. Tickets are now on sale for this exclusive, limited-capacity event.

[BOOK YOUR TICKET](#)

ON THE FRONTLINES

↓ This month in our blog ↓



CONSERVATION

Spring Hunting Season About to Begin



SEABIRDS

Encouraging Signs from Control Efforts



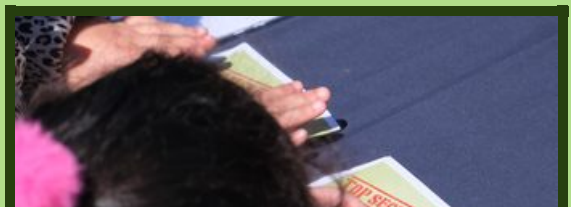
RESERVES HIGHLIGHTS

This Month in Our Reserves...



RARE & SCARCE BIRDS

Spring Migration Bringing More Birds!





POLICY

Feedbacks and Consultations



ENGAGEMENT

Learning to Stay Curious

Before you go, don't miss our new wildlife photography grant for emerging talent! [Click here](#) or check our blog to discover more.

Discover more in our monthly blog post!

Read more!

OUR PUBLICATIONS

A BirdLife Malta member's magazine

Bird's Eye View

Issue 87 • March 2026



The spring 2026 issue of Bird's Eye View is out now and has been mailed to members.

Issue 87 (March 2026) features a **Subalpine Warbler** (*Bufula Passajra*) cover photo by Mario V. Gauci, with a species profile by BirdLife Malta-licensed bird ringer and is-Simar Nature Reserve warden, Charles Coleiro.

CEO Mark Sultana calls for urgent action as planning reforms and weak protections threaten Malta's natural heritage. Public Engagement Executive Antonia Micallef reports on key developments, from renewed trapping licences and illegal shootings to conservation progress and public pressure.

Naturalist Victor Falzon explores wildlife at Ghadira Nature Reserve, while Nicholas Galea, Head of BirdLife Malta's Bird Ringing Scheme, highlights how urban areas become vital breeding habitats in spring.

LIFE PanPuffinus! Project Manager Manya Russo reviews five years of safeguarding Malta's seabirds, and BirdLife Malta Council member James Aquilina outlines the importance of Marsaskala's coastline for migratory birds.

The back cover features habitat restoration at Salina Nature Reserve, creating new breeding grounds for **Little Ringed Plovers**.

Become a member to start receiving Bird's Eye View!

[BROWSE PAST ISSUES](#)

il-Ħuttafa

Numru 192

Marzu 2026



**Papocci
Bajda**



Il-magażin ta' Klabb Ħuttaf



The front cover of Il-Ħuttafa 192 (March 2026) features the elegant Sicilian snapdragon (Papocci Bajda).

(photo by Desiree Falzon), a sub-endemic species we share with Sicily.

Editor Victor Falzon dwells on the value of windy days, despite the inconvenience they sometimes cause. Local news focus on new sand dune restoration at Għadira, while international news cover the comeback of **Bearded Vultures**.

This issue launches three new series: one about strange things in nature, by Desirée Falzon; one full of tips for budding birdwatchers, by Nicholas Galea; and a third about things in nature people often confuse (in this issue pine cones and acorns).

The issue also features evolution (National Aquarium), humped crab spiders, trans-Saharan birds, the student passport (Heritage Malta), voluntary activities (BOV) and 10 more birds from the Malta checklist. Plus, colour-in pic, members' art gallery, a "real" version of the BirdLife logo, and a beady-eyed **Squacco Heron** (photo by James Aquilina) for the poster spread.

In publication since 1994, Il-Huttafa is a quarterly nature magazine that is mailed to all Junior and Family members of BirdLife Malta, and to over 2000 primary school students.

[BROWSE PAST ISSUES](#)

Become a member to start receiving our publications!

[BECOME A MEMBER NOW](#)

MEET THE FLOCK

Staff Updates

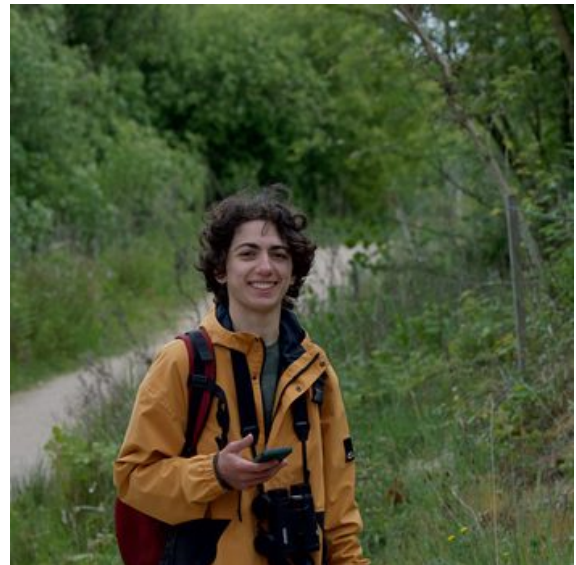
Welcome **Anita**, joining the Reserve team as our new **ESC Nature Reserves Visitor Assistant**. Born in southeast Brazil and raised in the Dolomites, she developed an early passion for wildlife and became actively involved in conservation during her Bachelor's and Master's studies, when she took part to insect and mammal monitoring projects in the Venice lagoon and in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest. During her time with us, she wants to learn more about birds and gain hands-on experience in the field of nature conservation, alongside exploring the Maltese Islands and their rich culture.





Say hello to **Shaun**, who has recently joined BirdLife Malta as our new **Conservation Officer**! Shaun is inspired by a lifelong appreciation for birds that started from his childhood. This early fascination blossomed into a deep commitment to wildlife conservation, with a special focus on bird species and education. Currently pursuing studies in environmental education and interpretation, Shaun brings fresh enthusiasm to the role. They are motivated to help making Malta a safer environment for birds, while actively supporting BirdLife Malta's ongoing conservation efforts.

Meet **Leo**, also joining us as **ESC Nature Reserves Visitor Assistant**. He has recently completed his master's studies in Evolution, Ecology and Systematics at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Being a passionate birder, he did his master's thesis on the influence of weather conditions on breeding strategies of hole-nesting passerines. He has also been working on a research project at the University of Groningen, focusing on migratory behaviour of Eurasian Spoonbills in the Netherlands. After working with a variety of bird species in academic settings, he now wishes to contribute to nature conservation first-hand, by joining BirdLife Malta's team!



Are you 7-15 years old and a nature enthusiast? Join BirdLife Malta's flock!

Join Nature Guardians







Join Young Birders Club

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



APRIL



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 	19 
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 
27 	28	29	30			




Wings & Rings at Ghadira
Nature Reserve

Saturday, 11 April
8:00 - 12:00




Songs of Spring

18&19 April 2026
10:00 - 16:00



Wings & Rings

Date: Saturday, 11 April
Time: 8:00 - 12:00
Location: [Ghadira Nature Reserve](#)

Celebrate spring migration in Ghadira! Join a public bird ringing session to witness this essential research method that tracks bird populations and migration. Spot diverse species like hirundines, flycatchers, warblers, waders, and herons. Expert birdwatchers will assist from the bird hide, with binoculars and telescopes provided - bring your own if you have them.

REGISTER NOW

Songs of Spring

18 April: [Ghadira Nature Reserve](#)
19 April: [Simar Nature Reserve](#)
Time: 10:00 - 16:00 (drop in anytime)

Join us for a self-guided spring event where you'll learn to recognise birds by sound, match songs to species, explore unusual bird calls, and mark what you hear around the reserve. Come anytime during opening hours and stay as long as you like - choose the reserve closest to you and enjoy the sounds of spring in nature. No registration required.

DISCOVER MORE





[Science in the Citadel](#)

Date: Sunday, 26 April

Time: 10:00-17:00

Location: [Citadel, Victoria, Gozo](#)

Our participation in this year's Science in the Citadel has been confirmed! Join us for a day of science, hands-on activities and education exhibits! At our stand visitors will find a variety of exciting educational activities designed to help them explore the nature that surrounds us—even in urban areas! Guests will have an opportunity to test their knowledge, try bird-themed crafts and join in fun games, all while discovering more about the birds that share our everyday spaces.

[DISCOVER MORE](#)

Find out more about our events planned for 2026
via our website or our Facebook page!



Top banner photo: Barn Swallow by Aron Tanti

All other photos by Justine Borg, Charles Coleiro, Desirée Falzon, Mario V. Gauci, Benjamin Metzger, Nadia Sodano, Aron Tanti, Vittoria Turone, Manoel Island: Post Għalina, Moviment Graffiti, BirdLife Malta

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