

# A ROCHA

OBSERVATORY REPORT  
2001



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The A Rocha Trust was founded in 1983 to put into practice the biblical call to care for all creation. A field study centre and bird observatory was established in south-west Portugal in 1986, and the Trust now supports several similar projects elsewhere and is working towards setting up others.

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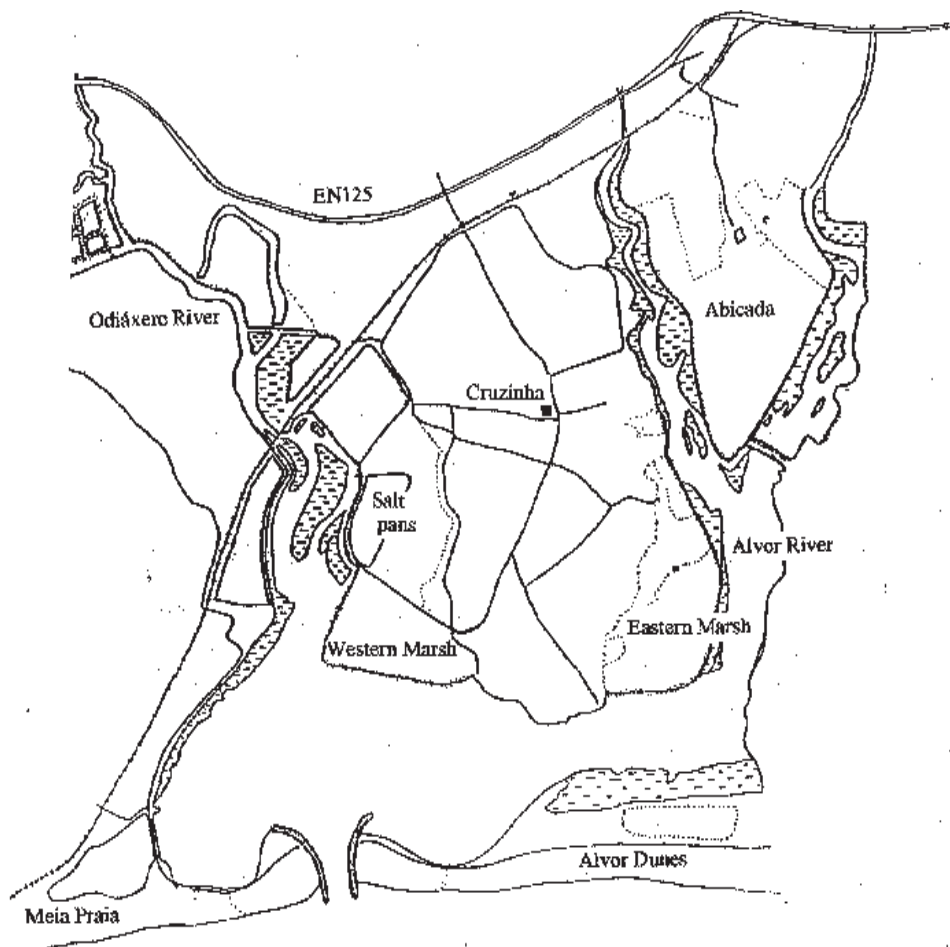
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# PREFACE

**W**e are pleased to present here reports of ornithological and other work at the Cruzinha field study centre during 2000 and 2001. These were again years of major changes to the team at the centre. George and Jan Reiss arrived in January 2000 with their children Naomi and Alex, to take on the demanding task of holding the fort for eight months as we awaited the arrival of permanent wardens. We are very grateful to them for rising to the challenge and for all their hard work and commitment to the life and work here. The arrival in September of that year of Marcial and Paula Felgueiras, and their children Beatriz and Zé, marks another milestone in Cruzinha's history. They are realising the long-cherished dream of A Rocha members to have national leadership of the Observatory. Both Paula and Marcial have worked at Cruzinha before, under the leadership of Peter and Miranda Harris, and then under Mark and Jane Bolton.

February 2001 saw the departure of Filipe Bally Jorge in April, after over five years working hard to secure the protection of the Alvor Estuary, and leading our environmental education programme. We are pleased to stay in contact with him in his new environmental role at Portimão city council. We also sadly said goodbye to Victoria who left in July after three years of sterling service as assistant warden. We wish her and former assistant warden Colin Beale much happiness together (they were married in August). Marcial, Paula and Isobel (Bébé) Soares kept the work of the Centre going throughout the rest of the year, being joined by Will and Rachel Simonson, and their two children Ben and Rosie, at the end of the year.

Once again we had a steady stream of talented and hard-working volunteers staying at the Observatory in 2000 and 2001. Jacqui Kaye was the longest-serving of 2000, arriving in February to stay for six months (which was later extended to nine) with the support of the European Volunteer Service (EVS). In addition to assisting greatly with the scientific work of the centre, she and Filipe also produced a book about the Ria de Alvor, summarising all that we know of the ecology of the area. (This was published at the beginning of 2002 – see publications list inside back cover).

Another EVS volunteer, Alan Preece, was with us December 2000 to November 2001. His main project was to investigate the yield of cockles in the Alvor Estuary, and the current level of harvesting. This was an extension of a shorter project carried out by Colin Beale in 1999 and reported in the Observatory Report of that year. By investigating growth and mortality rates during each month of the year, he worked towards a more accurate model of yield and harvest (final analysis being completed at the time of writing). Alan contributed in other ways to our work through for example the drawing up of a management plan of Cruzinha's grounds, developing our local knowledge of reptiles and amphibians, and producing an identification guide to the dragonflies of the area.

Ben Carpenter volunteered with us in May to August 2001 and carried out fieldwork for Wildlife Management degree project on the feeding ecology of Barn Owls, studying the breeding birds of Cruzinha's garden, as well as populations in central and north Portugal. His fieldwork involved the dissection of owl pellets to identify prey species.

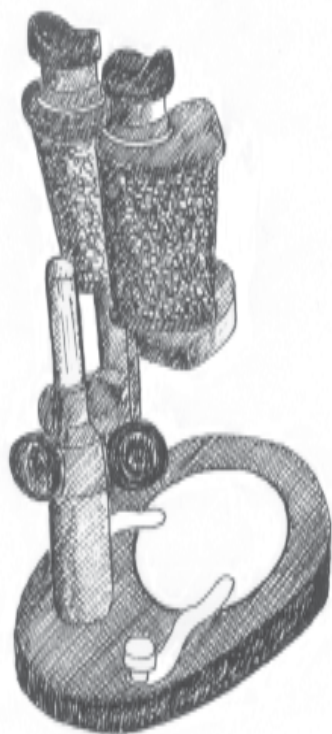
The ringing programme was maintained throughout most weeks in 2000 and 2001, though due to staff changes there was a more limited effort than usual during autumn migration and the Storm-petrel seasons of the two years. Fieldwork for The New Portuguese Atlas of Breeding Birds continued in both years, with VM continuing in her role as Regional Co-ordinator for the Algarve in 2000. A total of twenty 10x10km quadrats were surveyed within the Algarve that year, and many thanks to all the volunteers - your help was indispensable and it was great fun working as a team!

We were delighted to be able to host two short courses during the course of 2000. In April, John Busby led a course on "Painting the Natural World". Enthusiastic participants visited various locations in the Algarve during the course of the week, producing a delightful range of work of extremely high quality. A course led by Malcolm Murray in August, and was aimed at improving our listening skills and was also very well received.

As always, we are grateful to the many visitors to the Observatory who have contributed records during the course of 2000 and 2001. Particular thanks are due to Willem Scheres and Simon Mahood, who both have done much to fill in the gaps in our log book, and both of whom present rarity descriptions in this report.

In a departure from previous years, the report is illustrated by WS with drawings not of birds and other wildlife, but some of the equipment used at Cruzinha in their study. We are grateful to Ray Tipper for providing the photograph of the White-Crowned Wheatear, certainly the most exciting record of 2000, an anecdotal account and description of which is included in this report.

*Victoria Mountain and Will Simonson,  
Cruzinha, June 2002*



# SYSTEMATIC LIST

## OF THE BIRDS AT QUINTA DA ROCHA IN 2000 AND 2001

Marcial Felgueiras, Mike Archer and Victoria Mountain

**T**his list refers to observations of birds made during the course of 2000 and 2001 from the study area of the Quinta da Rocha. The area is defined here as the peninsula and tidal marshes bounded by the Alvor River to the east, the Odiáxere River to the west, their estuary to the south and the main road (EN125) to the north (see figure on page 2). For the first time in this Report, English names adapted for international use (following *Palaearctic Birds*, Beaman 1994) are used. Observations marked with an asterisk have been submitted to the Portuguese Rarities Committee and those underlined represent the first record for the Observatory. In 2000, systematic observations started in January and continued to the end of the year. Systematic counts were not made in March 2000 and during parts of 2001 due to unavailability of personnel. (2001 records for birds are not mentioned below where there is a lack of specific information.) A total of 178 species were recorded during the two years, including eight species new to the study area, four of which were sufficiently rare to be reported to the Portuguese Rarities Committee. Assuming acceptance of these, the grand total now stands at 291. Thank you very much to the many visitors and volunteers who contributed records.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A winter visitor surprisingly recorded for the first time in 2000 only in late March (one individual). Noted at the end of August and then from early October to mid December, peaking at six in late November. No evidence of breeding this year. In 2001, it was present from early January with a peak of 11 at the end of February.

Addendum for 1999 – a pair with two juveniles were seen on the Eastern Marsh at the end of October.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* Both years were good ones for this species. In 2000 two were seen on 19<sup>th</sup> November, a singleton twice in December and then four on the Odiáxere River on 30<sup>th</sup> December. A very similar pattern of numbers and dates occurred in 2001.

**Mediterranean Shearwater** *Puffinus yelkouan* Five were seen from the Alvor Dunes on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000. Recorded numbers rose to 64 on the following day, and 263 the day after that from the same spot.

**European Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus* A single bird seen from the Alvor Dunes on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000 was the first sighting in the study area since recording began in 1986. However, A Rocha ringers have ringed over 2000 Storm Petrels at various points on the south-west coast over the past ten years.

**Leach's Storm-Petrel** – *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* A single bird seen also from the Alvor Dunes on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000, the first live record in the study area. Eight birds were seen from the breakwaters at the mouth of the estuary on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2001, and another 76 on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* Under-recorded in 2000 with three birds noted in late May, three in mid August and 20 in late November. 2001 was an exceptional year, however, with numbers rising from early January onwards and a peak of 406 birds seen in early March. Present at the end of 2001, as well, with 48 birds in mid October.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Generally fewer in the first winter period of 2000 but with a maximum of 50 in mid February. However, a peak of 80 (in mid December) compares well with the 1999 peak of 91 (end November). Apart from a couple of sightings at the end of August/early September, the autumn return began in mid October, rather later than usual.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Present throughout 2000 and 2001. The peak of 750 in mid November 2000 was by far the highest number since recording began in 1986. 200 in October 1990 was the previous highest.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Also present throughout 2000 and 2001. Peaks of 30 and 31 in late July and August 2000 respectively mark a return to previous levels after two years with highest counts of 70 birds. 17 in January 2000 was the highest winter count.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Winter 2000 numbers peaked at 66 in January, dropping sharply to single figures by late March. No birds were recorded in mid May but up to six then summered with a sharp influx of 33 at the end of August and 57 at the end of September. Seasonal departures and arrivals appeared rather marked as in many previous years.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Not a single record for the whole of 2000. One bird was seen on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2001 and two in May, on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the month

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* For the fifth year running there was only a single record in 2000: three birds were seen at the end of October. In 2001 there were sightings in three consecutive weeks in October.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* 2000 started fairly typically with up to seven birds seen in many weeks up to mid August. Then there were 300 on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 160 on 15<sup>th</sup> November and 150 on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. The previous highest count was of 51 in 1997 and was only 14 during the years 1986 to 1991. Peak numbers have hitherto generally coincided with autumn passage (late August to October/November). It seems likely that the August birds were probably migrants wind-drifted off their usual course and the November birds were probably wanderers from the 300 or so birds known to have wintered north of Portimão, but we have no confirmation that this is the case. Records followed a similar pattern in 2001, but with smaller numbers and without any great flocks in the Autumn. The peak was only 76 birds at the end of February.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* A possible change in status may be occurring as this species was recorded in 29 weeks during 2000 compared with a maximum of only nine in the previous five years. Over-wintering records and frequent sightings (maximum of 14) between late March and late June contributed to this total, as did regular sightings between November to mid December when recording ceased. However, only three records for the period late June to early November was typical of previous years.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber* The year 2000 yielded the fifth to the tenth records for the study area. These involved: 18 birds in early January, 6 on 21<sup>st</sup> January at Abicada, a juvenile at Meia Praia on 7<sup>th</sup> August, another juvenile on the Western Marsh for the last three days of the year, an adult on 1<sup>st</sup> October, and nine on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. These records, tending to cluster around the winter periods, suggest increased use of the area by a species common in other parts of the Algarve. 2001 records indicated that the pattern seems to have been established, and numbers increased to 13 birds on the Western Marsh for the winter.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* A party of birds watched for half an hour over the headland on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2000 comprised the fourth record for the study area and the first since 1995.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* Two birds on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2000 were the first since 1995. In 2001 five birds were seen on 13<sup>th</sup> December on the Western Marsh.

**Common Teal** *Anas crecca* A maximum of 50 birds were present at the end of January with no records after the end of February. The first autumn arrival was on 8<sup>th</sup> September with a maximum of 25 up to the end of the year. Numbers were somewhat lower than usual. In 2001 a maximum of 125 birds were recorded at the end of February.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Recorded in most weeks in 2000 and 2001, with peaks of 50 on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2000 and 72 at the end of January 2001.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* 58 at the end of January 2000 was the only record for the first winter period. First arrivals in the second period were noted in the second week in November, rising to 190 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and easily beating the previous highest count of 99 in 1999.

**Black (Common) Scoter** *Melanitta nigra* A bird off Meia Praia on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2000 was typical and the seventh record for the recording area. The following year, two birds were seen on 3<sup>rd</sup> January by the breakwaters, 18 in front of the Alvor sand dunes on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 11 on 7<sup>th</sup> April and another two on 20<sup>th</sup> October at the same place. A peak of about 250 birds were seen out at sea off the sand dunes on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

**\* Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* The first record for the recording area and one of but a handful for Portugal was a female seen off the Western Marsh from 1<sup>st</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2000. This record will be submitted to the Portuguese Rarities Committee by Simon Wates, a friend of the Observatory.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* A female on the Odiáxere River on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> December 2000 was the first record since 1994 and the fifth for the recording area. A bird was seen on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2001 in the western part of the estuary and a female was seen on 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February by the breakwaters. These 2001 records were probably of the same bird.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* 2000 and 2001 were poor years for this species with six birds on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2000 constituting the only sighting.

**Eurasian Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* A party of 30 seen from the Western Marsh on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2000 was only the second autumn record for this scarce late autumn migrant. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 a party of about 200 birds was seen in a thermal column moving west. Probably the same flock was seen the following day at Sagres, gaining height and flying south over the sea.

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* In 2000 there were four records in late April (spring migration), a couple in mid June and four more between mid July and late August. In 2001, there were five records in May and several others throughout the Autumn.

**Eurasian Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* There were no spring 2000 records and only two for the autumn, on September 4<sup>th</sup> and October 28<sup>th</sup>. The year 2001 saw only one record, in the first week of May.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* Following an absence of records in 1999, a juvenile was present on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2000. There were no sightings in 2001. Numbers are presently well down on the late 1990s, when up to 10 were recorded annually.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* Typically scarce, singletons were seen on 21<sup>st</sup> October and on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> November. There were no sightings in 2001.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* In a poor year for this scarce winter visitor, there was but a single sighting from the recording area on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2000 over Figueira. On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2001 there was another sighting, probably of the same bird that wintered in the area.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* A bird was seen each week in 2000 until mid February. One or two were present from mid March to mid April and again for a six week period from mid October. In 2001 several birds were seen until mid June with a peak of seven late February. Present again from mid October.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* As with the year before, there no spring records for 2000. Autumn passage produced single birds on 28<sup>th</sup> October and 12<sup>th</sup> November and there were two present on 21<sup>st</sup> November. There were no spring records in 2001; three birds were seen on consecutive days from 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* 2000 was a poor year, with single birds on 28<sup>th</sup> August, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October. The following year, five birds were seen feeding

over the Odiáxere river and neighbouring fishfarms between 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October. The fishfarm owners brought to our Centre three exhausted birds, which after a well deserved rest could be safely released back into the wild. One was ringed on 31<sup>st</sup> October and the other two on 6<sup>th</sup> November, increasing our grand ringing total for this species to four!

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Recorded over 44 weeks in 2000 with a maximum of two birds, a male and a female. It was probably present the whole year around in 2001, but not always registered. There was a peak of five birds at the end of February.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* A scarce bird in the recording area, spring passage in 2000 produced a singleton on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April and there were no subsequent records.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* Two birds were seen on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2000 (just as in 1999). Three were present on 4<sup>th</sup> July and one or two thereafter for 10 of the weeks until mid December.

**Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa* Single birds were seen in the last two weeks in May 2000, the first records since 1997, suggesting that the species may still maintain a toe-hold within the study area.

**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* The first record was in the last week of February 2000 and the last record in early September 2000. Birds were recorded for all but five of the intervening weeks, with a maximum of six in mid April. Autumn passage continued until at least the end of September in recent years.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus* A singleton was noted in mid May 2000 and then up to three from mid July to early September. Up to five were present from late October until 21<sup>st</sup> November. An adult sighted with a juvenile in late July suggests breeding. Records from previous years indicate presence throughout the year but the species is doubtless easily overlooked. Several records were taken during 2001, but at the beginning of June two adults and a juvenile were seen, clearly indicating breeding.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Although seldom noted in the early part of 2000 (only four records with a maximum of three birds up to late March), it was then seen virtually weekly until the end of the year with typically nine in late November.

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra* 78 birds were at Abicada Dam on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2000, the first record since 1996. This probably reflects lack of recording at the dam until recently rather than the previous absence of this species. 57 birds on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2001 and 49 on the 16<sup>th</sup>, both the in same area, confirm this.

**Common Crane** *Grus grus* A juvenile seen at Abicada on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November was the first record since 27<sup>th</sup> October 1993. The same bird was seen in the same area between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2001 as well.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* In a fairly typical year, the peak 2000 count for this non-breeding resident and passage migrant was 48 in October. Up to 19 birds over-summered. The registered peak for 2001 was of 60 birds at the end of February, although numbers were stable in their 50s in August.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* This species is now present throughout the year. Over-wintering began as recently as 1996. The late April 2000 peak of 51 was well within the range of 48-60 for the previous five years. At least eight pairs were thought to have bred. Up to 23 birds were present during the two winter periods.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* The over-wintering flock was not recorded after late January 2000, some two months earlier than in 1999. Spring passage was light with up to 10 birds noted. Autumn passage began on 21<sup>st</sup> August with very low numbers until 13 were present in mid November. 15 was the highest count for both the winter periods. In 2001 birds were present until the beginning of April and had a peak of 36 at the end of February. They were present again from mid November until the end of the year.



**Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicanus* Although recorded from September to mid December in 1999, there were no records in 2000 until mid March, with a maximum of six birds in mid April. A couple of summer sightings preceded the autumn arrival of 23 birds on 30<sup>th</sup> August. Wintering birds were seen from early November. In 2001 birds were present until the beginning of June, with a peak of 44 in the first week of January. They were seen back in the area at the end of October with 19 on the 24<sup>th</sup>

**Little (Ringed) Plover** *Charadrius dubius* The three birds seen on 27<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2000 may well have been breeding just outside the recording area, as in previous years. There were no passage records. In 2001 there were no records during the summer, and just nine birds in mid October.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* Spring 2000 passage was again light. Interestingly, a minimum of one or two were present, save for a week in mid June, throughout the usually unrecorded period of early June to late July. Autumn passage peaked in late August, at 112, after which there were typical numbers (25 to 55) until the end of the year. In 2001 there was good presence in the winter and spring with numbers at around 10. It was not present from late May to late July when it arrived again for the Autumn migration peaking with 108 birds at the end of October.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Numbers noted in 2000 were similar to 1999 with a peak of 68 in mid July. The plover was present throughout 2001 with peaks of 106 at the end of the breeding season (beginning of August), and of 102 at the beginning of October in the period of autumn migration. No breeding surveys were undertaken these years.

**\* American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* A juvenile, observed on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2000, was the first record for the recording area. This record is described more fully on page 50 of this report.

**European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* Recorded only in January and early February of 2000, with a maximum of 70. It was recorded in the same months of 2001 but with fewer birds (a maximum of 40 in mid January).

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* Recorded virtually throughout 2000 with a gap of one week in early July, probably reflecting the departure of the last spring passage bird and anticipating the first of the autumn migrants. The highest winter

counts were a very high 109 and 73 for the first and second periods respectively, whilst spring passage peaked at 40 in mid May.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* Winter 2000 counts peaked at 62 and 65 for the two periods. A single bird on the 15<sup>th</sup> was the first record for July for six years, with autumn passage beginning on 17<sup>th</sup> September. In the first winter period of 2001 it was only recorded in January with 41 birds. Then the first winter birds were recorded in October, with 15 birds, and were not seen again until December with a total of 103 birds.

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* Three exceptionally early birds in mid February started a very poor 2000 for this species. Spring passage was virtually non-existent with a maximum of seven birds in late May (cf 200 in 1999). There were only three autumn records, with a maximum of seven birds in September. 2001 was a better year, with up to 26 birds during a longer spring migration. There was a maximum of 30 birds in early October during autumn migration.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* A single bird was noted during the first winter period of 2000 and up to 30 in the second. Spring passage peaked at 30 whereas the autumn was quieter with up to 18 birds intermittently between mid July and mid October. 2001 saw a good spring passage with 102 birds at the end of February. Autumn passage was very poor although there were 47 birds on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Two birds, one of which was an adult in winter plumage, seen on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2001 represented the fourth record for the area.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* There was a singleton present in early January 2000, and passage was light with a maximum of four birds in spring and three in autumn. In 2001 there were still very few birds, with seven in July and November.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* There were no records in Spring 2000. Autumn passage began with a singleton on 15<sup>th</sup> July and ended in early October with a peak count of 21 birds in late August. Four late birds were seen in mid November. The following year it was registered only in April, all singletons except for two birds on the 30<sup>th</sup>. During autumn migration a singleton was recorded in October.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Up to 226 birds were present during the first winter period of 2000. Spring passage numbers rose from eight in early April to 250 in mid May, declining to 11 by mid June. A few birds over-summered. Autumn

passage was seen from mid July, peaking at 171 in mid September. As usual, a good number of birds over-wintered, with 145 recorded in mid December. 2001 saw generally higher numbers: 370 in late February and 385 in early May. During the autumn passage numbers peaked at 371 in mid November.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* Two birds were seen on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2000, and a singleton at the beginning of May 2001, representing the poorest years since recording began.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus* There were only single records of this cryptic and doubtless under-recorded species in each of 2000 and 2001: on 30 December and 27<sup>th</sup> February respectively, both on the Eastern Marsh.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Numbers were again very low in 2000. Maxima of four and two birds were recorded for the first and second winter periods respectively. The first returning bird was seen on the 28<sup>th</sup> September. Spring 2001 was much better with a maximum of 13 birds in late February. No birds were seen in the autumn, however.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* The highest count in 2000 was 41 for both winter periods. A sighting of 21 birds in late April was followed by a singleton in mid July and autumn passage numbers rose until the mid November peak. In 2001 there was a good spring passage with a peak of 144 in late February, and a steady autumn passage with an average of 30 birds from mid September, peaking with 36 in late December.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* 17 birds in early February 2000 was the first late winter record since 1993. Spring passage was in single figures save for 38 birds in early May. Autumn passage spanned late August to early October, peaking at 21. The last bird passed through in late October. Two birds on 26<sup>th</sup> February were the first records for 2001. The spring migration produced 125 birds in the first week of May and the last eight spring birds were seen on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Autumn passage began mid October with the last 11 birds seen in mid November.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Up to seven birds were present at the beginning of 2000. Spring passage again peaked at over 200 in late April, dwindling to single figures by early June. Autumn passage began in mid July, peaking at 34, and 16 or so remained until the end of the year.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* A maximum of nine birds over-wintered until mid February 2000. Exceptionally, no spring passage was recorded. A single bird on 4<sup>th</sup> July started the recorded autumn passage which, peaking at seven, was over by mid September. A single bird seen on 12<sup>th</sup> December may well have over wintered. In 2001 there were very few birds during the first winter period and spring, with a maximum of four in late March. Autumn passage with 25 birds in late October and only four in mid December.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* There were two records in this not untypical year of 2000. Two birds were seen in late January, suggesting over-wintering in the area, and a juvenile was seen on 5<sup>th</sup> September. The only 2001 record was of a single bird seen on 29<sup>th</sup> March.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Whilst about a hundred over-wintering birds were present until late February 2000, spring passage was very quiet with single figures until mid June. Autumn passage then started, rising rapidly to 152 by the end of August, and counts remained at over 70 until the end of the year.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* In 2000 over-wintering birds were noted each week until mid March, with a peak of 31 in late February. Spring passage appeared to span six weeks from late March with a maximum of 20. There were no records for May but low single figures were present from June rising to 10 by the end of July. After two weeks without a sighting, 10 birds were noted at the end of August and then up to 47 until the end of the year.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* A sighting in January 2000 suggested an over-wintering bird but there were no spring records. Three singletons were seen during the autumn passage between late July and late August. Four birds were seen on 13<sup>th</sup> October and a couple more singletons concluded the year.

**\* Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* An individual seen on the Western Marsh on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2000 during the fortnightly wader count was the first record for the recording area. See p 48 in this report for a fuller treatment.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* 2000 was much the same as last year, with four birds over-wintering and a poor spring passage with a highest count of seven. Autumn passage started on 5<sup>th</sup> July with a peak of 28 in mid August (just short of the 1990 record of 30), declining to single figures, with a few remaining to the end of the year.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* 2000 was another quiet year. Two or three birds were seen occasionally in January and February. Passage maxima were eight and three for spring and autumn respectively. A couple of birds were present around the end of the year. More birds were present in 2001, with a maximum of 12 in late March. During autumn migration numbers were around three although there was a peak of 10 on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* A bird in the estuary on 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> December 2000 was the 5<sup>th</sup> record for the study area and the first since 1996.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* A bird chasing a Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000 and seen from the Alvor Dunes was the first since 1998.

**Great Skua** *Catharacta skua* An individual (again seen from the Alvor Dunes on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000) was the third for the recording area. Two were out at sea in front of the Alvor dunes a few days later on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, and two in the same area on 28<sup>th</sup> February. Another individual was seen on 21<sup>st</sup> October chasing a Sandwich Tern in the estuary.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* Again a rather poor year in 2000, with singles recorded on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> September and finally on 19<sup>th</sup> November. More birds were present in 2001: four on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, two on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 on the 6<sup>th</sup> and one on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Then another two in late February, one on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Then was present again on October with three birds at the end of the month.

**Little Gull** *Larus minutus* Four juveniles were seen in strong winds in the estuary in late August 2000.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* Up to 33 were present in the first winter period of 2000, until late April. After this there were no records until late June, with the exception of a single bird in mid May. 60 were present in early July and the gull remained present until the year end.

**Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii* The only Spring 2000 record was of two birds on 10<sup>th</sup> April. The autumn produced 15 birds, 11 of which were juveniles, in late July and August. In 2001 there was only one record, on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis* An adult reported roosting with other gulls on the Western Marsh on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2000 was the 5<sup>th</sup> record for the study area.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* This common resident was present throughout both years.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus cachinnans* Common year-round resident, breeding nearby.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna (Gelocheledon) nilotica* An adult seen flying north over the Eastern Marsh on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2000 was the first record since 1996.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia* Two over-wintered 1999/2000. Spring passage was slight with up to four birds in April and none in May. An unusual record of one on 14<sup>th</sup> July (cf one on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1995) was followed by three in late July and up to four until the end of the year.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis* As usual, present throughout most of 2000. Records were scarcer in March and May. Peak counts were a little below average. Present also throughout 2001 with two huge flocks in late October jointly comprising 111 birds.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons* The first two of 2000 were noted on 6<sup>th</sup> April with numbers rising to 16 the following week. Then seen from mid May to early August with a late bird in mid October. As usual, birds bred on the dunes. In 2001 numbers peaked at 20 individuals in mid May.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* A single bird at the end of May 2000 was the first record since 1996.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda* On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2001 nine birds were seen flying over the sea by the Alvor dunes and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> two were seen swimming by the breakwaters.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia* Some 16 birds were seen for the first time on Quinta da Rocha's old Pheasant Farm on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2001 by an experienced birdwatcher. It was verified that they were not Feral Pigeons.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* Two individuals on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2001 were the first birds since 1996, when a flock was sighted. This is, therefore, a rather unusual record.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* A single bird was noted in mid February 2000, one or two for most of April and likewise at the end of May and in early June. Up to three were then recorded from the end of June to the end of the year. Numbers were up to eight birds at the beginning of June 2001. These records demonstrate an increasing temporal presence in the recording area although breeding has yet to be proved. There were only two or three records annually in the early 1990s.

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* The only Spring 2000 records were of a single bird in each of the last two weeks in May. Autumn passage was noted from the end of August to mid October with a highest count of 14. A somewhat below average year.

**Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* A juvenile was seen on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2000, the first record since 1995. One bird was seen flying from the Quinta da Rocha pinewood on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* In what was an average year, there were three records in Spring 2000 and two in the autumn.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco* One individual was reported at the pinewood on Quinta da Rocha on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2001. It was the first record since 1997 and the fifth for the study area.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* Although a pair was recorded throughout 2000 in the Observatory garden, they did not appear to breed successfully this year. Breeding was confirmed in 2001, however, with three young ones being seen for several nights with their parents.

**Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus scops* Two birds were noted on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2000.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua* Recorded throughout both years.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* A single bird seen on the Western Marsh in early February 2000 was the first sighting since 1998. Two birds were seen in mid February 2001 and another on 27<sup>th</sup> March. Then another two were seen on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

**Red-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruficollis* The first arrival of this breeding

summer visitor was noted on 4<sup>th</sup> May and the last record was in early August. In 2001 it was recorded from early May and present until the second week of September.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus* Recorded from the first week of April 2000 until the last week in September with a highest count of 120 on 11<sup>th</sup> April.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* Not recorded before the first week of April 2000, with the last noted in early August, it is likely that this species was under-recorded this year. The maximum count was of 80 birds on the 11<sup>th</sup> April.

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba* A single bird on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000 was followed by 13 on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Up to three birds were seen regularly from late May to late July. Autumn passage was represented by four birds on 20<sup>th</sup> September. In 2001 there was a peak of 25 birds in mid April during a period of presence between the end of March and end of June.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* Wintering birds were recorded regularly in January and February 2000. A single passage bird was noted in early April. There were then regular sightings from mid July until the end of November when numbers peaked at nine.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* The first bird of Spring 2000 was seen on 28<sup>th</sup> March and the last record of autumn was in mid September. Up to nine birds were present during the summer. The highest count during autumn passage was 50 in late August.

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* A resident breeding bird seen throughout the year. 22 individuals were ringed in 2000 and 23 in 2001.

**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* Single birds were seen on passage on 16<sup>th</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2000, and just one bird during the whole of 2001, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October, in what were two quiet years.

**Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* The first recorded arrival in 2000 was a single bird on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Three were singing in early May on the Western Marsh where juveniles were noted later in the breeding season.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Present and breeding in the recording area throughout the year.

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea* A single bird was seen on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2000 in another poor year for this species. In 2001 one bird was seen on 2<sup>nd</sup> January and then seven on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Surprisingly, there were no records in the first winter period of 2000. The first records for the later winter period were in late October. Birds were present from the beginning of January 2001 with a peak of 31 birds at the end of February. Then seen again in October with a peak of 28 birds on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* The only Spring 2000 record was of five birds in early April and there were no autumn records. There were six Spring 2001 records: one at the end of February, one on 12<sup>th</sup> March, two on the 27<sup>th</sup> and another two on the 29<sup>th</sup>. No autumn records.

**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Five birds were seen on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2000 and a few for several weeks afterwards. No over-wintering birds were noted. In 2001 it was present right from the beginning of the year with eight birds in the first week of January. The last record of the first winter period was of three birds at the end of February. There was an autumn record in mid October.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* The first record of 2000 was on 25<sup>th</sup> January and the last on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Breeding occurred in the recording area and the maximum count was of 50 in late July. 18 birds were recorded on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2001 and a maximum of 61 at the beginning of June.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* On 16<sup>th</sup> March the first two birds of 2000 were recorded, with one or two then seen from time to time until 30 were present in mid June. Scattered records followed until 12<sup>th</sup> November when the last two were noted, on the latest date since 1987.

**Common House Martin** *Delichon urbica* First recorded in late March 2000 and then weekly until mid September. There were no over-wintering birds or other exceptional records this year.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* In what was a typical year, over-wintering birds were present in both winter periods of 2000.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* One record on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2001 was the best for the last two years!

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta* A single bird was noted in early February 2000 and birds were next seen from late October to the year end.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus* This record, being the first for the study area, was provided by a visitor on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2001. The bird was seen on the outside of the seawall of the Eastern Marsh, amongst some tide-line litter.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* This breeding summer visitor was recorded from early March until early September 2000 although in previous years it has stayed until mid October. 10 birds of the subspecies “flava” were observed feeding with cattle in mid April.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* The first sighting of 2000 was on 26<sup>th</sup> October and wintering birds were noted until the end of the year.

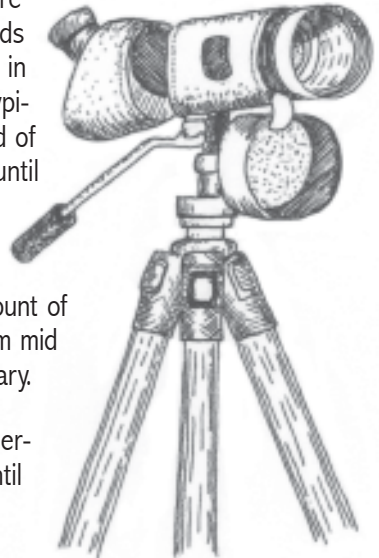
**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Over-wintering birds were present until the end of February 2000 and again from mid October until the year-end.

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* 2000 was a typical year for wintering birds. 28 arrivals were ringed in the second fortnight in October.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* There were two records in 2000, each involving two birds in mid April. The species is a common breeder in non-coastal Algarve. Very early moving juveniles, typical of the past few years, were ringed at the end of June and in early July. Low numbers were seen until the last record on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* Recorded only in late October and November 2000 with a maximum count of five on 28<sup>th</sup> October. In 2001 it was recorded from mid January with a maximum of five birds in late February.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* Over-wintering records indicated that birds were present until early March 2000, and returned in October.



**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* There were no spring records in 2000 and 2001 for the third and fourth years running. A single bird, on the typical date of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2000, was the first autumn sighting. A second bird was ringed on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* There were no spring records in 2000 and 2001, for the fourth and fifth year running. The three autumn records of 2000, each of a single bird, spanned the period 4<sup>th</sup> September to 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata* This breeding resident was present virtually throughout 2000 but not recorded in March or in late April/early May. The highest count was of four birds.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* One male seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2001 was the fourth record for the area, the last one being in 1998.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* There were no spring records for 2000. Autumn passage began with three birds on 25<sup>th</sup> August and the last three were seen on 24<sup>th</sup> September. The highest count of three was very low compared with recent years.

**Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica* A juvenile seen 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June was the only record of 2000.

**\*White-crowned Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucopyga* A first for Portugal that kindly landed on our Centre's garden on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2001 and stayed for several hours. Record submitted to Portuguese Rarities Committee and waiting for what should be an easy confirmation. See article on page 43.

**Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula* Present throughout both years and common on the cultivated and rough grazing parts of the study area. It was the fourth and fifth most frequently ringed bird in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* In the first winter period of 2000 it was regularly recorded until mid April and again for five weeks from late October, when 10 birds were ringed.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* One bird on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2001 was the only record for the last two years!

**Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed Warbler)** *Cisticola juncidis* This resident breeding species was recorded throughout 2000.

**Common Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* Single birds were reported on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 10<sup>th</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* There were records of single birds on 4<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2000. In 2001 two birds were seen in late February and another two on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

**Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Two birds were ringed in May 2000. During autumn passage, records spanned the period late August to late September and 28 birds were trapped in the Observatory garden, mostly close to the reed beds.

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* The first returning bird of 2000 was seen on 16<sup>th</sup> April, a fairly typical date. Birds were then present until 4<sup>th</sup> October and 17 individuals were ringed during this period, including eight juveniles. It is believed that they bred in the Observatory garden.

**Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata* Recorded in the first week in January 2000 and then from later October until the end of the year.

**Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* In another poor year, one was noted on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2000 and another was ringed on 10<sup>th</sup> October. Only one bird, a male on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, was seen in 2001.

**Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* This common resident was recorded throughout 2000. 27 were ringed with peak numbers in July.

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* The first spring record for two years involved a bird seen on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000. Autumn passage was first noted on 9<sup>th</sup> August and then continued until early September.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* There were no spring records in 2000. Passage in the autumn was recorded from late August to late September. 43 birds were ringed in September.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* Recorded throughout 2000 and the most frequently ringed bird (155). 25 were ringed in January, suggesting significant over-wintering numbers, with ringed birds tailing off to single figures from February to May. Ringing in October (49) and November (58) suggested a substantial late autumn movement.

**Western Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus bonelli* Two birds, ringed on 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September, were the only records in 2000.

**Chiffchaff/Iberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita/P. brehmii* Wintering birds, later supplemented by passage migrants, were seen until the end of April 2000 with a solitary record in late May. The first returning birds were seen at the end of August and numbers rose rapidly through October and November (ringing totals being 20 and 27 respectively) with a few over-wintering.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* No spring passage in 2000 was noted. Movement in the autumn began rather early with a singleton in mid July. 11 birds were ringed in August, 22 in September and 3 in October and a final bird was seen on 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus* In what was a fairly typical year, there were records over a four week period from late October 2000. Individuals were ringed on May 10<sup>th</sup> and November 31<sup>st</sup>. One record in the first week of February was the only one for 2001.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* In 2000 a singleton on the 13<sup>th</sup> was the first record for June since recording began in 1986 and may have been a late passage bird. Autumnal movement was first noted on 1<sup>st</sup> September and continued for several weeks afterwards.

**European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* There were no spring records. Passage in autumn was mainly in September, when 19 birds were ringed.

**Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus* This species is rather scarce. It was first recorded on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2000 (a pair) with single birds from time to time until 21<sup>st</sup> November. A fairly typical year.

**Great Tit** *Parus major* This common breeding species seems to be holding its own and is often ringed in the Observatory garden.

**Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus* Five birds were seen on a reed bed near the road EN 125 on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2001 - in the same area as reported in 1997. Unfortunately, the hopes expressed then that this bird would become more common on our garden's reed bed did not materialise!

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* The first record of Spring 2000 was on 11<sup>th</sup> May. A pair was recorded in the Observatory garden throughout the following four weeks, and a juvenile was present with an adult at the end of July. It seems highly likely that they bred in or very near the Observatory garden. A bird ringed on 12<sup>th</sup> September was the last record for the year.

**Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla* An individual was ringed in the Observatory garden on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2000, a typical date for recording this species.

**Southern Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis* A record in late January 2000 probably represents an over-wintering bird. There were no more records until 4<sup>th</sup> June and two birds were present for the next two months and then from time to time until November. In 2001 there were several records right from the beginning of January, culminating with five adults and two juvenile birds in early June. Six other birds were seen again in late October.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* The first returning bird was seen in mid March 2000, slightly later than usual. The last record was of four birds in early September. Several pairs bred in the study area.

**Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus* Recorded in January 2000 but then not again until late February, it was then seen regularly until the end of November. Counts peaked at 62 from late September to late October, down on the 1999 record of 149 but in line with the previous highest of 70. On 31<sup>st</sup> December, a mixed flock of 19 Azure-winged Magpies and 75 Spotless Starlings was seen in the pines at the south end of the headland. Assemblages and co-movements with three other species in the Southern Algarve have been recorded by Willem Scheres. See his account (page 46 of this report) of successful breeding in the study area occurring for the first time.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Two birds were seen in the garden of the Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2001. It was the third record for the area, the last one being in 1997.

**Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula* Up to five were seen fairly regularly until the end of April 2000 and then from early November to the year end with a highest count of 30.

**Spotless Starling** *Sturnus unicolor* Unlike 1999 there were no records for the first winter period of 2000. However, scattered records from April were followed by an influx of 50 on 5<sup>th</sup> September and an exceptionally high 700 in late October, with birds present for three more weeks. The highest ever count was of 1000 in February 1992. Records in 2001 started with 23 birds on 4<sup>th</sup> January. Numbers dropped then until early May when there were 52 birds. Very low numbers in the autumn with 15 birds present in mid October.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* This resident breeding species seems to be present in good numbers although no counts were made.

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis* There were no records for the first winter period of 2000 and just two for the later period, in late October and early November. Wintering birds were first recorded in 1994. One bird was recorded in late February followed by 36 on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. After that the only record is a flock of 52 on 25<sup>th</sup> October.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* The only record of 2000, of three ringed on 13<sup>th</sup> June, maintains the apparent decline of this species within the study area. Two birds on 4<sup>th</sup> January, another five in late February, and a further record in late October made for a slightly better 2001.

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* A common resident, recorded throughout the year.

**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* Recorded throughout the year. Ringing highpoints for 2000 were in June and October.

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus* Whilst recorded in every week, there were no flock counts in 2000. Ringing numbers peaked well in May.

**European Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris* A common resident though less numerous than Serin.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Recorded throughout the year. The first juveniles of 2000 were seen in mid April.

**Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* There were several sightings in January 2000 and a late bird on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Birds were again present for three weeks in November.

**Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina* In 2000 recorded weekly until mid February and then from late March until the end of the year, in small numbers.

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra* A common breeding resident in the study area. There were no counts in 2000 and 2001.

## Escapes

**Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* One flew over the Observatory on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2000. In 2001 one individual was seen on 26<sup>th</sup> January and two on 8<sup>th</sup> February. One was later seen on 25 February.

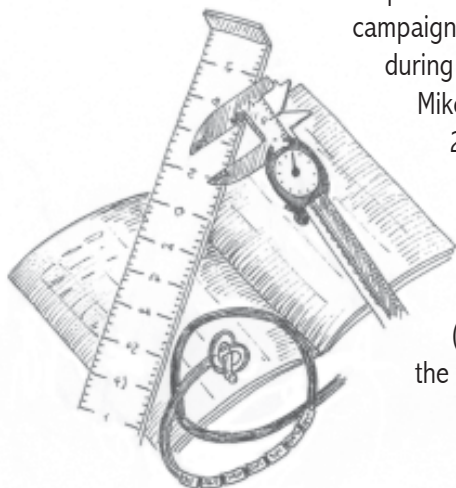
# RINGING REPORT

## FOR 2000 AND 2001

*Victoria Mountain*

**A** total of 1014 birds of 46 species were ringed during 2000 (Table 1), and 997 birds of 42 species during 2001 (Table 2). Whilst these represent lower totals than recent years (due to changes in the Observatory team and the presence of only one trained ringer during most of the time) we were pleased to be able to maintain a regular ringing schedule, covering most weeks in the year.

As in previous years, there were more intensive ringing campaigns for Storm Petrels in June and passerines during the Autumn migration season. Many thanks to Mike Archer, Colin Beale and Gerry Rawcliffe in 2000, and Mike, Heather Coats and Colin Wright in 2001, who all gave valuable assistance with the ringing at various points during the year. There were no additions to the ringing list in 2000, but one in 2001 (Collared Dove, asterixed in Table 2), bringing the total ringing list to 171 species.



**Table 1. Birds ringed by the A Rocha Observatory during 2000, and in all years together.**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2000	Gr Total
European Storm Petrel						28							28	2476
Cattle Egret						1		1					2	16
Yellow-legged Gull							1						1	23
Little Owl									2				2	79
Kingfisher								3	1		1		5	168
Hoopoe				1	6	5	4		2	3	1		22	342
Crested Lark						1							1	75
Swallow		1	1	5	6	6	8						27	1489

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2000Gr	
<b>Total</b>														
House Martin						1						1	68	
Meadow Pipit										1		1	214	
Robin	6	1							28	5		40	2183	
Nightingale				1	1	1	2	3				8	522	
Redstart									1			1	278	
Stonechat									1	1		2	255	
Blackbird			1	2	3	34	24	5	9	6	3	87	971	
Song Thrush	2	1		1						4	6	14	490	
Zitting Cisticola											1	1	346	
Sedge Warbler							1					1	244	
Reed Warbler				2			4	10	3			19	2004	
Melodious Warbler				3	3	7	2	1	1			17	689	
Subalpine Warbler									1			1	221	
Sardinian Warbler	1			1	4	4	10			6		27	1055	
Whitethroat							1	3				4	402	
Garden Warbler							3	36	4			43	3397	
Blackcap	25	5	4	4	4	1		2	49	58	3	155	8103	
Bonelli's Warbler								2				2	63	
Chiffchaff	3	3	2	1	1			2	5	20	27	2	66	7642
Willow Warbler								11	22	3		36	1060	
Firecrest				1							1	2	57	
Pied Flycatcher								19	2			21	181	
Blue Tit						1			1			2	60	
Great Tit			4	11	4	9	1					29	426	
Short-toed Treecreeper						1						1	8	
Golden Oriole								1				1	24	
Woodchat Shrike			2		3	5						10	292	
Azure-winged Magpie		1				2	2	1	3			9	37	
Tree Sparrow					3							3	184	
Waxbill	2	1	1	1	2		6	3	3	4	14	37	1146	
Scaly-breasted Munia								3		7		10	17	
Chaffinch	1	4	1	3	4	9	6	2	10	5		45	756	
Serin	1	1	6	3	12	2	2		4	5		36	1185	
Greenfinch	5		4	9	6	10	28	2	7	17	3	91	2029	
Goldfinch	1	5	13	7	26	8	25	1	2		1	89	1528	
Siskin	4	1										5	45	
Linnet	3											3	64	
Corn Bunting			2	1				1	2			6	174	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>49503</b>

Table 2. Birds ringed by the A Rocha Observatory during 2001, and in all years together.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2001	Gr. Total
European Storm Petrel					4	81							85	2561
Madeiran Storm Petrel						1							1	2
Osprey										1	2		3	4
*Collared Dove				1				1	1				3	3
Red-necked Nightjar							1						1	22
Hoopoe			2	1	2	3	4	1	10				23	365
Kingfisher						1	4	1	1				7	173
Barn Swallow			1		2	6	5						14	1502
Meadow Pipit											2		2	216
Tree Pipit				1									1	31
Robin	3	3								37	7	1	51	2234
Nightingale						2			1				3	525
Redstart										5			5	283
Stonechat										1			1	256
Blackbird	3	2	1	3	9	26	8		4	5	3		64	1036
Song Thrush	12	2	1							1	2		18	508
Cetti's Warbler										1			1	114
Reed Warbler					3				10	9			22	2036
Melodious Warbler					1	4	5	2	5	1			18	707
Sardinian Warbler			1	4	10	16	9		5	4	2		51	1106
Whitethroat									1	1			2	404
Garden Warbler									19	6			25	3422
Blackcap	21	8	5	1	2	1			5	27	20	1	91	8193
Bonelli's Warbler									2	1			3	66
Chiffchaff	6	2							1	20	28	2	59	7701
Willow Warbler									30	20			50	2110
Spotted Flycatcher									5	4			9	160
Pied Flycatcher									13	16			29	1110
Blue Tit								1		1		1	3	63
Great Tit			1		7	12	3		3	2	1		29	455
Long-tailed Tit									2				2	7
Golden Oriole									5				5	29
Woodchat Shrike					4	1			1				6	298
Azure-winged Magpie							1						1	38
Waxbill		3		2	1	2	10	2	15	3	2		40	1186
Chaffinch	3	5	3	2	15	17			3	8	1		57	813
Serin	1	4	1	4	4	5	9			2	1		31	1216
Greenfinch	2	5	2	1	7	39	18	2	1	1	3		81	2110
Goldfinch			7	10	18	17	10	3	1	2	3		71	1599
Siskin		4	1										5	50
Hawfinch	1												1	44
Corn Bunting					2		1						3	177
<b>Totals</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>4495</b>

Table 3. Species ringed 1986-1999 but not in 2000 or 2001

<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>
Aquatic Warbler	2	Golden Plover	1
Avocet	3	Grasshopper Warbler	133
Barn Owl	2	Great Grey Shrike	16
Bar-tailed Godwit	19	Great Reed Warbler	61
Bee-eater	95	Great Spotted Cuckoo	1
Black Redstart	129	Green Sandpiper	10
Black-eared Wheatear	4	Greenshank	17
Black-headed Gull	19	Grey Plover	76
Black-shouldered Kite	4	Grey Wagtail	40
Black-tailed Godwit	1	Icterine Warbler	2
Black-winged Stilt	15	Jack Snipe	13
Bluethroat	167	Japanese Nightingale	1
Brambling	1	Jay	1
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1	Kentish Plover	435
Chestnut Mannikin	1	Kestrel	5
Chil Bunting	1	Knot	132
Common Rosefinch	1	Lapwing	1
Common Sandpiper	103	Lesser Black-backed Gull	16
Common Tern	2	Little Bittern	2
Cory's Shearwater	2	Little Egret	1
Crag Martin	7	Little Grebe	2
Crossbill	36	Little Ringed Plover	12
Cuckoo	2	Little Stint	37
Curlew	4	Little Tern	21
Curlew Sandpiper	74	Long-eared Owl	3
Dartford Warbler	11	Marsh Harrier	1
Dunlin	2435	Marsh Warbler	16
Dunnock	6	Montagu's Harrier	1
Dusky Warbler	2	Moorhen	12
Goldcrest	4	Nightjar	1

<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>
Olive-backed Pipit	1
Orphean Warbler	7
Ortolan Bunting	35
Oystercatcher	1
Paddyfield Warbler	1
Pallid Swift	68
Pectoral Sandpiper	1
Penduline Tit	163
Quail	6
Red-cheeked Cordon-Bleu	1
Red-breasted Flycatcher	2
Red-legged Partridge	1
Red-rumped Swallow	1
Redshank	306
Redwing	2
Reed Bunting	37
Ringed Plover	379
Rock Sparrow	1
Rock Thrush	1
Ruff	15
Rufous Bushchat	4
Rustic Bunting	1
Sand Martin	55
Sanderling	3
Sandwich Tern	4
Scops Owl	11
Spanish Sparrow	57
Semipalmated Sandpiper	1
Short-toed Eagle	7
Short-toed Lark	58
Skylark	24
Snipe	78
Sparrowhawk	1

<b>Species</b>	<b>Total</b>
Spectacled Warbler	5
Spotless Starling	13
Spotted Crake	1
Stone-curlew	8
Swift	109
Swinhoe's Storm Petrel	1
Tawny Pipit	8
Teal	1
Thekla Lark	2
Tree Sparrow	184
Turnstone	33
Turtle Dove	15
Water Pipit	17
Water Rail	3
Wheatear	49
Whimbrel	35
Whinchat	55
White Wagtail	52
Woodlark	1
Wood Sandpiper	3
Wood Warbler	1
Wren	7
Wryneck	16
Yellow Wagtail	173
Yellow-browed Warbler	8

# RINGING CONTROLS

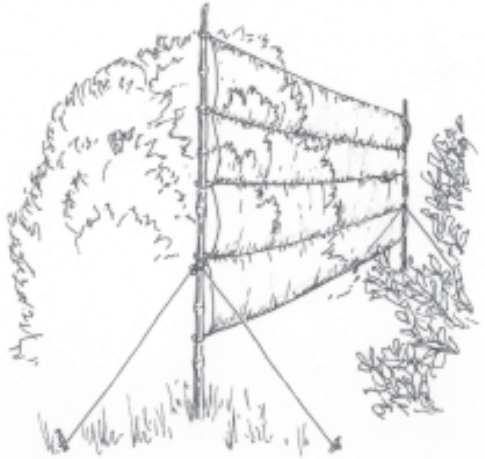
## AND RECOVERIES REPORTED DURING 2000 AND 2001

The following list refers to birds which were reported from sites other than the original ringing location. This includes two groups of birds: those ringed during the course of Observatory operations in the Algarve and subsequently reported elsewhere; and those which had been ringed elsewhere and were subsequently controlled at Quinta da Rocha or reported to the Observatory. The majority of controls refer to ringed birds which were retrapped during ringing operations, but also include ringed birds which were found dead. The recovery circumstances are given.

### The following codes are used:

#### Condition at recovery:

- X found dead
- XF found freshly dead or dying
- R caught and released by a ringer
- T trapped by hunters
- H hunted by another bird
- U condition when found unknown



#### Age when ringed

- 1 nestling
- 2 fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 ringed during calendar year of hatching
- 4 hatched before calendar year of ringing, but exact year of hatching unknown
- 5 hatched during calendar year prior to ringing
- 6 hatched before year prior to ringing, but exact year unknown etc.

#### Abbreviations used for foreign ringing schemes:

- BLB Brussels, Belgium
- BRL British Museum, London, UK
- FRP Paris, France

## Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

D10446	4	16-06-93	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	28-07-93	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney	54 13'N 10 08'W
			<b>Scotland</b>	
D14686	5	17-06-97	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	24-07-00	Calf of Man, Isle of Man, <b>England</b>	54 03'N 04 49'W
N00142	6	02-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	13-08-99	Pendeen Watch, Cornwall, <b>England</b>	50 09'N 05 41'W
N00345	4	15-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	21-06-99	Bay of Quoys, Orkney, <b>Scotland</b>	58 54'N 03 19'W
N00588	4	25-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	30-07-99	Sanda Island, Strathclyde Region,	55 17'N 05 34'W
			<b>Scotland</b>	
N00785	6	15-06-99	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	28-07-00	Hernyken, Nordland, <b>Norway</b>	67 26'N 11 52'E
N00966	6	22-06-99	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	28-07-00	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney	59 21'N 02 27'W
			<b>Scotland</b>	
BRL	4	27-08-86	Ulsta, Yell, Shetland, <b>Scotland</b>	60 29'N 01 10'W
2343021	R	10-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W

Retrapped almost 12 years after being ringed!

BRL	4	19-07-97	Bearasay, South Uist, <b>Scotland</b>	58 16'N 06 55'W
2368455	R	20-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	20-07-97	Bearasay, South Uist, <b>Scotland</b>	58 16'N 06 55'W
2412180	R	01-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	26-07-94	Sanda Island, Strathclyde, <b>Scotland</b>	55 17'N 05 34'W
2424309	R	23-05-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W

BRL	4	28-07-94	Fair Isle, <b>Scotland</b>	59 32'N 01 38'W
2426797	R	12-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	25-07-93	Eilean Nan Ron, Highlands, <b>Scotland</b>	58 33'N 04 26'W
2430041	R	22-05-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	17-08-96	Burray Ness, Orkney, <b>Scotland</b>	58 51'N 02 52'W
2445259	R	06-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	09-07-95	Power Head, Cork, <b>R. of Ireland</b>	51 47'N 08 10'W
2450162	R	19-05-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	19-07-96	Fair Isle, <b>Scotland</b>	59 32'N 01 38'W
2454616	R	25-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	25-07-95	Eilean Nan Ron, Highlands, <b>Scotland</b>	58 33'N 04 26'W
2459519	R	06-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	11-07-97	Westsandwick, Yell, Shetland, <b>Scotland</b>	60 34'N 01 11'W
2463440	R	18-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	15-08-97	Rathlin O Birne, Donegal, <b>R. of Ireland</b>	54 40'N 08 50'W
2467036	R	01-07-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	27-07-97	Fair Isle, <b>Scotland</b>	59 32'N 01 38'W
2470708	R	02-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	01-08-97	Fair Isle, <b>Scotland</b>	59 32'N 01 38'W
2470874	R	20-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	16-07-96	Gwennap Head, Cornwall, <b>England</b>	50 02'N 05 41'W
2474123	R	21-05-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	20-06-97	Calf of Man, Isle of Man, <b>England</b>	54 03'N 04 49'W
2474899	R	21-05-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	6	24-07-96	Rathlin O Birne, Donegal, <b>R. of Ireland</b>	54 40'N 08 50'W
2475209	R	13-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
BRL	4	16-08-96	Twyness, N Ronaldsay, Orkney,	59 21'N 02 27'W
		<b>Scotland</b>		
2478191	R	26-05-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W

BRL	4	16-08-97	Faraid Head, Highlands, <b>Scotland</b>	58 36'N 04 46'W
2486731	R	13-06-98	Ponta da Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W

### Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

D016255	6	02-05-95	Ria de Alvor, Portimão, Portugal	37 08'N 08 35'W
	R	26-05-00	Bragar, South Uist, Western Isles, <b>Scotland</b>	58 20'N 06 39'W

### Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

I003007	3	23-08-95	Ria de Alvor, Portimão, Portugal	37 08'N 08 35'W
	U	24-08-98	Noyelles/Sambre 59, <b>France</b>	50 10'N 03 48'E

### Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

M10216	10	25-01-92	Chinicato, Lagos, Portugal	37 03'N 08 40'W
	R	05-11-99	Westkapelle, Zeeland, <b>Holland</b>	51 19'N 03 18'E
M10223	8	25-01-92	Chinicato, Lagos, Portugal	37 03'N 08 40'W
	U	09-11-99	Portimão, Faro, <b>Portugal</b>	37 10'N 08 31'W

### Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A101151	3	29-10-93	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W
	R	18-10-96	Odelouca, Silves, <b>Portugal</b>	37 13'N 08 25'W
A68356	5	18-01-91	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W
	U	25-09-92	Genk, Antwerpen, <b>Belgium</b>	50 58'N 05 27'E

Ringling controls and recoveries reported during 2001

### Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

D14410	4	15-06-96	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	28-07-97	Sanda Island, <b>Scotland</b>	55 17'N 05 34'W

D14458	4	14-06-96	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	10-08-00	Ile de Banneg, Finistère, <b>France</b>	48 26'N 05 01'W
N00426	6	18-06-98	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	26-06-00	Lunga Island, <b>Scotland</b>	56 29'N 06 26'W
N00579	6	25-06-98	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	27-07-98	Brough of Birsay, Orkney, <b>Scotland</b>	59 08'N 03 21'W
N00663	6	30-06-96	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	X	09-07-01	Auskerry, Orkney, <b>Scotland</b>	59 02'N 02 34'W
N00713	6	30-06-98	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	19-08-98	Ila de Banneg, Finistère, <b>France</b>	48 26'N 05 01'W
N00854	6	15-06-99	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	07-09-99	Calf of Man, Isle of Man, <b>England</b>	54 03'N 04 49'W
N00889	6	17-06-99	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	05-08-00	Gwennap Head, Cornwall, <b>England</b>	50 02'N 05 41'W
N00899	6	17-06-99	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	07-06-00	Ile de Banneg, Finistère, <b>France</b>	48 26'N 05 01'W
N00908	6	17-06-99	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	24-07-00	Eilean Nan Ron, <b>Scotland</b>	58 33'N 04 26'W
N00966	6	22-06-99	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	28-07-00	Twinyess, Orkney, <b>Scotland</b>	59 21'N 02 27'W
N00977	6	22-06-99	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W
	R	24-07-00	Eilean Nan Ron, <b>Scotland</b>	58 33'N 04 26'W
FRP	2	18-05-97	Ile de Banneg, Finistère, <b>France</b>	48 26'N 05 01'W
SA894232	R	18-05-98	Ponta de Almadena, Algarve, Portugal	37 04'N 08 47'W

### Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

FRP	1	05-07-97	Saint-Etienne, Lozère, <b>France</b>	44 10'N 03 50'E
CA53006	X	15-02-98	Lagoa, Faro, Portugal	41 26'N 06 45'W

### Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

FRP	3	29-12-89	Moeze, Charente-Maritime, <b>France</b>	45 54'N 01 02'W
SA545570	R	08-05-93	Ria de Alvor, Faro, Portugal	37 08'N 08 35'W

### Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

M010216	10	25-01-92	Chinicato, Faro, Portugal	37 07'N 08 40'W
	U	05-11-99	Westkapelle, Zeeland, <b>Netherlands</b>	51 32'N 03 29'W

### Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

FRP	3	26-07-93	Trunvel, Finistère, <b>France</b>	47 55'N 04 19'W
3799979	R	20-08-93	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W

### Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

FRP	4	03-09-96	Le Massereau, Loire-Atlantique, <b>France</b>	47 14'N 01 55'W
4175717	R	23-09-96	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W

Captured only 20 days after being ringed!

FRP	4	17-08-93	Oudalle, Seine-Maritime, <b>France</b>	49 30'N 00 18'E
3879817	R	16-09-94	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W

FRP	4	27-06-92	Côtes-D'Amour, <b>France</b>	48 36'N 02 11'W
3690309	R	20-08-93	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W

### Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

A171631	3	07-10-00	Sagres, Faro, Portugal	37 01'N 08 56'W
	X	03-12-01	Budens, Faro, <b>Portugal</b>	37 05'N 08 49'W

This ring was recovered from a young boy who had trapped the bird and acknowledged that, at least, should pass on the information of the ring.

### Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

BLB	3	12-09-00	Neerpelt, Limburg, <b>Netherlands</b>	51 13'N 05 25'E
7546363	R	10-10-00	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W

### Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

BLB	3	19-09-00	Zulte, Oost-Vlaanderen, <b>Belgium</b>	50 55'N 03 26'E
7625525	R	08-02-01	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W
FRP	3	09-10-99	Villeton, Lot-et- Garonne, <b>France</b>	44 21'N 00 16'E
BB62203	R	07-12-99	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W
A129922	3	28-10-99	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W
	X	19-05-00	Bennecourt, Seine-et-Oise, <b>France</b>	49 02'N 01 33'W

### Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

A086858	3	02-10-92	Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão, Portugal	37 09'N 08 37'W
	H	15-08-95	Jaulin, Zaragoza, <b>Spain</b>	41 27'N 01 00'W

# WHITE-CROWNED WHEATEAR

*OENANTHE LEUCOPYGA, FIRST RECORD FOR PORTUGAL*

*Victoria Mountain*

“Anyone for more coffee?” The suggestion was immediately greeted with various positive replies, and so I headed for the kitchen, leaving a group of seven people grouped in a corner of the garden, peering intently through binoculars and telescopes at a small black spot on the roof.

It wasn't the normal, relaxing Sunday afternoon that we were expecting, but I wasn't complaining. In fact, I expect thousands of European birdwatchers would have given anything to be in my place. It isn't every day that a White-crowned Wheatear decides to pass an afternoon catching flies on your roof.

The White-crowned Wheatear (*Oenanthe leucopyga*) is actually a desert bird of North Africa, the Middle East and Arabia, being seen only as a vagrant in Europe. It breeds in desolate mountain deserts, stony plains, ravines, inland cliffs, or near houses and/or oases. It thrives in arid areas completely devoid of vegetation.

The species has never before been seen in Portugal, and there are only three previous records confirmed for the whole of Europe: in Spain (two individuals in 1977), England (1982), and Germany (1986). Therefore, if our record is accepted by the Portuguese Rarities Committee, it will be the first record for Portugal and the fourth for Europe. Fantastic!

The visit occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2001. We had just got out of our cars, having returned from church, when Bébé (Isabel Soares) spotted an unusual bird. Then

Simon Mahood (an English volunteer with us at the time) and I realised what we were looking at. Unfortunately, in our enthusiasm, we forgot one of the basic rules of observation and exclaimed loudly in our excitement. Of course the bird flew off, such that we had to go looking for it in the garden and by the road until we found it again half an hour later on the roof of Cruzinha.

Simon and I spent the next two hours ascending, and descending from, the roof until we had managed to take photos necessary for an accurate identification of the species. At the same time, we examined it by telescope so that we could make a good description of its characteristics. We did not have any doubt that we were dealing with a White-crowned Wheatear, given that it is the only wheatear that has all black plumage except for the white head crown and tail feathers. Closer examination also helped determine the age. It was in its first year of life, or in other words was born in Spring 2000, as the white crown on the head was still small, and the alula, the primaries, and the outer greater coverts were distinctly browner and more worn than the younger feathers which were a more shiny black. Birds of this species, like many, normally show a contrast in the coloration of the feathers during their first year. This is because soon after they leave the nest they moult some but not all of their original feathers and grow new ones. We noticed also, with some relief, that both the bill and the claws appeared fresh and without any damage. Such damage can happen when birds are kept in captivity, and often indicates that you are dealing with an escaped cage bird and not a true vagrant.

We knew that other birdwatchers would be interested in seeing this bird so we telephoned those that we knew in the Algarve. The wheatear was in this way seen by a dozen people, including the team and volunteers at Cruzinha, and other English and Portuguese birdwatchers. Some of them were so excited that they stayed at Cruzinha until late.

The bird itself stayed to nightfall, catching flies from the roof, and coming to the ground close to sunset, hiding in the bushes to pass the night. On the following day, we looked for it again, but it was no longer to be seen.

## Description

**Size and structure:** Appeared slightly larger than Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*, and of similar structure but seemingly plumper.

**Plumage:** Head, upperparts and underparts to lower belly dark sooty brown to blackish but appearing black at a distance. Browner tips to some crown feathers were discernable in direct sunlight. An 'alice-band' of white arched across the crown from a point level with the front of the eye, with ragged edges. Wings and central tail-feathers were dull and dark brown, contrasting markedly with the

colour of the body plumage. Lower back, rump, lower belly, under tail-coverts and outer retrices white.

Some dark, elongated spotting towards the tips of the white outer retrices, seemingly on both the upper- and undersides.



**Bare parts:** Bill, legs, claws and eyes all black. In profile the bill looked long and the culmen was distinctly curved downwards towards the tip.

# BREEDING OF AZURE-WINGED MAGPIE

*CYANOPICA CYANUS AT QUINTA DA ROCHA*

*Willem Scheres*

In the last eight years the Azure-winged Magpie has become a common bird in the study area and large flocks have frequently been observed (Scheres, 1999). In spring of the year 2000, signs of successful breeding were noted for the first time.

As early as mid April 1998 some individuals were already building nests in pines in the Observatory garden (Beale *et al*, 1999), but this did not result in successful breeding. In the second week of June 2000 a very young bird, just fledged and with a very short tail, was found in the pines on the southern end of Quinta da Rocha (Mahood, pers. comm). This is the first sign of successful breeding of this species within the study area. On 19th July 2000 a juvenile directing begging calls to an adult was seen by the author in the same pines. Juveniles may be fed by adults up to 27 days or more after fledging (Cramp, 1994).

In the study area both the earlier nesting attempt and the later successful breeding took place in areas of pine woodland. These same pine areas are also often used as roost sites (Scheres, 2001). At Coto Doñana, southern Spain, Azure-winged Magpies are known to nest in thick pine woods (Fernandez, 1975).

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# TEREK SANDPIPER

*XENUS CINEREUS* OBSERVED AT QUINTA DA ROCHA

Simon Mahood

Towards the end of a very hot and uneventful wader count, shortly after midday on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2000, Jacqui Kaye and I approached the last of the rapidly drying-out pools on the landward side of the western marsh. From a distance we could see that there were more waders than we had seen all morning, feeding together in the nearest pool. One wader stood out from the others, being front-heavy and zig-zagging rapidly across the pool to feed. Intrigued, I raised my binoculars and at once noticed the long up-turned beak. The bird was still in silhouette but I tentatively suggested Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*.

We moved closer, and from under 20 m watched the bird for about 30 seconds, before it and the rest of the flock flew onto a pool hidden behind a bank. During that brief time we noted the following description.

## Description

About midway between the accompanying Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Redshank *Tringa totanus* in size, the legs were comparatively short and orange in colour, and the body shape like that of the Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*. The beak was dark in colour and very long in proportion to the rest of the bird. It was noticeably up-turned and relatively thick. The upper parts and breast were pale grey and the under parts white. The bird ran leaning forward and fed at a rapid rate, picking food items off the surface of the water.

We were now certain about the identification, and moved into a position where we could count the wader flock, most of which, including the Terek Sandpiper, were about 40 m away and in bad light. Observing the bird through the telescope and

with binoculars for less than five minutes as we counted the other waders, we could not add to our description due to the light conditions. To our disappointment, the bird in question then flew off with the Redshank, passing over our heads and away from us, flying high and northwards. As it flew away we saw that the tail was pale grey, as were the back and rump. There was also a white trailing edge to the wing, similar to the pattern on the Redshank but less broad and well defined. The bird was not seen subsequently.

The presence or absence of darker areas on the wing was not noticed at the time, neither was the bird heard to call.

Though good views were brief we feel that the combination of features noted is enough to rule out any other species. A long, thickish, up-turned beak is a characteristic shared by few waders, all of which can be ruled out on the other features.

Optics used were Nikon fieldscope with 20x magnification and 8x42 Delta binoculars.

## Notes

Terek Sandpiper is a late spring migrant, arriving at its breeding grounds during the second half of May and early June. The main population breeds in the Russian taiga and there are also about thirty pairs breeding in Finland. It is now seen annually in Western Europe on spring migration and has been recorded in almost every European country. In May 2000 four were seen in France and one in Austria. This description has been submitted to the Portuguese Rarities Committee and, if accepted, will be the first record for Portugal.

# JUVENILE AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER

PLOVER *PLUVIALIS DOMINICA* OBSERVED AT QUINTA DA ROCHA

*Willem Scheres*

**A**t 3.15 pm on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2000, I detected a juvenile American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* on the Western Marsh, feeding close to the seawall on the southern rim. I was able to get a good view of the bird from a distance of 20-30 m, using a Bynolyte Spacelyth 75 telescope. It stayed for about 25 minutes before flying off to the west. The next day, 17<sup>th</sup> July, at 3.00 pm, I returned with Simon Mahood to find the bird feeding in the same place. We both observed it for about an hour and a half.

## **General appearance**

The bird was noted to be a slim-bodied plover on quite long dark-grey legs. A Redshank was feeding close by on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the bird in question was the same size. It was feeding in a muddy area with sparse vegetation.

## **Plumage**

The long, narrow wings projected far behind the end of the tail. The tertials were short, leaving a large area (at least four) of the primaries visible. Greyish axillaries and underwing-coverts were visible when the wings were lifted up. The mantle feathers were dark greyish-brown with buff fringes. The tertials were more contrasting, with more yellow fringes on dark brown feathers. The neck and breast were greyish-buff barred.

Dark brownish crown and forehead. Bold white supercilium extending into the neck. The two superciliums were not connected at the nape, as they are in Dotterel. Viewed from the front the head looked broad on a slender neck. The white superciliums accentuated the broadness of the head.

**Bare parts**

Eyes black. Bill quite short and black. Legs quite long and dark grey.

**Voice**

Only two clüee-calls heard during take-off on the 16th. Afterwards the bird flew to the west and disappeared without calling again.

**Behaviour**

On both days the bird was feeding in the same wet, muddy and open part of the Western Marsh close to the seawall.

**Notes**

This record has been submitted to the Portuguese Rarities Committee and, if accepted by them, will probably constitute the fifth record of American Golden Plover for Portugal. The species breeds in North America and is a vagrant to Europe.

# PELAGIC TRIP

## OFF SAGRES ON 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2000

Victoria Mountain

The coastal waters of south-west Portugal provide one of the best opportunities within Europe to observe seabirds, due to the concentrations of birds along the continental shelf and the range of species involved. The advent of pelagic trips to specifically search for seabirds in their natural environment is a relatively recent phenomenon and the coastal waters of Portugal in particular are poorly known.

This paper presents the observations made on a trip from Sagres on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2000. A shark-fishing boat was chartered, heading 25 km due south from Sagres. In addition, an overview is given of trips undertaken by A Rocha staff since 1987.

### Results

The results of the pelagic trip in 2000 is presented in Table 1, together with results of previous trips. The weather was very calm, sunny and warm, with winds reaching a maximum of just 20 km/h. In terms of seabirds, the trip recorded a similar range of species and numbers to previous trips. More surprising was a kestrel seen over 10 km from the coast, as well as a White Wagtail, heading east, and a Yellow Wagtail, heading south-east.

Table 1. Birds, dolphins and sharks recorded on Algarve Pelagic Trips between 1987 – 2000

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	MAXIMUM COUNT				
		11.9.87 Lagos	28-30.8.89 Portimão Sagres	10.10.96 Sagres	3.10.97 Sagres	25.9.00 Sagres
<b>BIRDS</b>						
Soft-plumaged petrel sp	<i>Pterodroma sp.</i>		1			
Manx shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>		2			

Mediterranean shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>		c.600	10	20	3-6
Great shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>		1		1	
Sooty shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	1	7		2	
Cory's shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>		42	20	60	20-40
European Storm-petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>		c.150	8-10	25-30	1-2
Wilson's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	c.50	c50	12-15	15-20	25-50
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		c.150	c.150	c.200	present
Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>					
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>				3	
Common scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>		c.20			
Marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		1		1	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>				5	
Great skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>			5	15	5
Arctic skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>			14	3	3 1
Pomarine skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>		2		3	2-4
Sabine's gull	<i>Larus sabini</i>	3	1	1		
Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>					
Yellow-legged gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>					present
Sandwich tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>		c.100		10	
Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		c.40		5	5
Black tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>		c.10			
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>					1
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>					1
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>					1
Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>					1
<b>DOLPHINS</b>						
Common dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	?			c.50	
Bottle-nosed dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>				c.30	
Risso's dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>				10-12	
<b>SHARKS</b>						
Blue shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>		2 ?			
Hammerhead shark	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>				1	
Shark sp.						1

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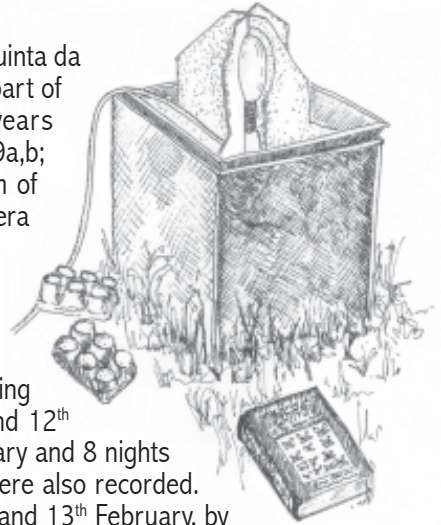
# LEPIDOPTERA

ON QUINTA DA ROCHA IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2001

Helen Gardner

## Introduction

**R**ecording of butterflies and moths on Quinta da Rocha was carried out during the early part of 2001, adding to the studies of previous years (Gardiner 1992; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1998; 1999a,b; 2000; Gardiner & Wallis 1996; 1997). The aim of this work is to increase the knowledge of lepidoptera populations in the Observatory study area.



## Data Collection

A mercury vapour lamp was used for moth trapping in the Cruzinha garden between 8<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> February, with a coverage of 17 nights in January and 8 nights in February. A few casual sightings of moths were also recorded. Butterflies were recorded between 7<sup>th</sup> January and 13<sup>th</sup> February, by casual observations on the headland, mostly in the Cruzinha garden. These records will contribute to the Algarve butterfly atlas project.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1** Lepidoptera records from Quinta da Rocha January - February 2001

Scientific name	Common name	Dates(no.) January	Dates(no.) February
ETHMIIDAE <i>Ethmia bipunctella</i> *			1-11(2)
TORTRICIDAE <i>Phtheochroa ecballiella</i>		24(1)	
PYRALIDAE <i>Acrobasis obliqua</i> *			11(1)
<i>Eudonia lineola</i>		11-30(7)	1-12(4)

Scientific name	Common name	Dates(no.) January	Dates(no.) February
<i>Evergestis isatidalis</i>		9(1)	
<i>Pyrausta despicata</i> *			7(1)
<i>Udea numeralis</i> +		17-25(3)	
<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>		15-31(14)	11-12(2)
<i>Mecyna asinalis</i>		15-24(3)	4-11(2)
<i>Nomophila noctuella</i> *	Rush veneer		12(1)
<i>Palpita unionalis</i>		10-30(3)	5(1)
PAPILIONIDAE			
<i>Papilio machaon</i>	Swallowtail		12(1)
PIERIDAE			
<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	Large white	8-31(15)	1-13(12)
<i>Artogeia rapae</i>	Small white	30-31(3)	11(1)
<i>Euchloe belemia belemia</i>	Green-striped white	18-20(3)	9(1)
<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	Cleopatra	14-31(4)	1-12(4)
<i>cleopatra</i>			
NYMPHALIDAE			
<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	Red admiral	7-31(8)	1-13(9)
SATYRIDAE			
<i>Parage aegeria aegeria</i>	Speckled wood	7-31(11)	1-13(11)
<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Wall brown	13-31(12)	1-13(6)
LYCAENIDAE			
<i>Lycaena phlaeus</i>	Small copper		1-4(3)
<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	Holly blue		11-12(2)
DREPANIDAE			
<i>Watsonella uncinula</i> + *		15-16(2)	11(1)
GEOMETRIDAE			
<i>Cyclophora puppillaria</i> + *	Blair's mocha	31(1)	12(1)
<i>Orthonama obstipata</i> +	Gem	9-16(2)	
<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	Garden carpet	8(1)	
<i>Catarhoe basochesiata</i> *		22-30(4)	11-12(3)
<i>Eupithecia centaureata</i> +	Lime-speck pug	15-31(12)	1-12(7)
<i>Rhoptria asperaria</i> +		9(2)	
<i>Menophra abruptaria</i> +	Waved umber	14(1)	
<i>Menophra jabygiara</i> *		9-30(8)	1-12(3)
<i>Aleucis distinctata</i> + *	Sloe carpet	29-31(2)	11(1)
SPHINGIDAE			
<i>Macroglossum</i>	Hummingbird	8(1)	11(1)
<i>stellatarum</i> + *	hawk-moth		

Scientific name	Common name	Dates(no.) January	Dates(no.) February
NOTODONTIDAE			
<i>Thaumetopoea pityocampa</i>	Pine processionary		6(20 larvae)
NOLIDAE			
<i>Nola chlamytnalis</i> + *		30(1)	1(1)
NOCTUIDAE			
<i>Agrostis segetum</i>	Turnip	31(1)	12(1)
<i>Agrostis trux olivana</i> +	Crescent dart	10(1)	
<i>Agrostis ipsilon</i>	Dark sword-grass	18(1)	
<i>Agrostis puta</i>	Shuttle-shaped dart		12(1)
<i>Ochropleura leucogaster</i>	Radford's flame shoulder	14-31(14)	1-12(8)
<i>Peridroma saucia</i>	Pearly underwing	14-31(13)	1-12(10)
<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous hebrew character	10-30(2)	1-11(3)
<i>Cerastis faceta</i>		8-31(41)	5(1)
<i>Dicestra sodae</i> *		31(1)	1-11(2)
<i>Orthosia cerasi</i> *	Common quaker	30(1)	4(1)
<i>Mythimna unipuncta</i>	White-speck	14-31(4)	5-12(2)
<i>Mythimna l-album</i>	L-album wainscot		1-8(2)
<i>Cucullia chamomillae</i> *	Chamomile shark		12(1)
<i>Cucullia calendulae</i> +		10-25(8)	
<i>Xylena exsoleta</i> +	Sword-grass	10(1)	
<i>Xylocampa areola</i>	Early grey	10-29(4)	4-11(2)
<i>Dryobota labecula</i>		18(1)	
<i>Blepharita spinosa</i>		9-10(4)	
<i>Caradrina clavipalpis</i> +	Pale mottled willow	16(1)	11-12(2)
<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver y	15(1)	
<i>Thysanoplusia orichalcea</i> *	Slender burnished brass		11(1)
<i>Nodaria nodosalis</i> + *		16-21(2)	4(1)
<i>Schrankia costaestrigalis</i> *	Pinion-streaked snout		5(1)

+ new record of adult for January

\* new record of adult for February

As can be seen from Table 1, several species previously recorded at Quinta da Rocha have been found in January and/or February for the first time. This is

probably due in part to the fact that moth trapping has not been carried out as intensively during the first two months of previous years, particularly as some of the moths appear to be common species. However, emergence and flight periods of adults do vary from year to year according to environmental conditions, particularly the weather. The early part of the winter (December 2000) in the Algarve was very wet which may have delayed emergence of some species. The weather in January and February 2001 was much drier, with several fine days, but there were also a few spells of heavy rain.

A few species are noteworthy as they have been infrequently recorded in the Algarve. The records of two species appear to be only the second for the region (and Quinta da Rocha): *Xylena exsoleta* (Sword-grass) in March 1993 and *Dryobota labecula* in January 1995. The record of *Schrankia costaestrigalis* (Pinion-streaked snout) could be only the third for the Algarve (second for Quinta da Rocha). It was recorded on Quinta da Rocha in December 1994 and at Vale de Fonte in April 1994 (Corley *et al*, 2000).

A number of micromoths and two geometrids have been retained for identification in the UK, as well as a number of other uncertain identifications. Therefore, any necessary additions, amendments and further comments will be made at a later stage.

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Gardiner, A.J., 2000, *Microlepidoptera Recorded on Quinta da Rocha (@ 18.3.2000)*. Unpublished.

# PUBLICATIONS

The publications listed below are available from A Rocha, Cruzinha, Apt. 41, 8501-903 Mexilhoeira Grande, Portugal (portugal@arocha.org). Please enquire for information on prices and delivery.

## A ROCHA BIRD REPORTS

for the years 1984 to 1987.

## A ROCHA OBSERVATORY REPORTS

for the years 1988 to 1999.

## A ROCHA OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS

### **No. 1 - An Atlas of Wintering Birds of the Western Algarve. M. Bolton (1987)**

This booklet describes and maps the habitats of the Western Algarve and the distribution of birds during the winter months. 82pp.

### **No. 3 - Wild Flowers of the Alvor Estuary. Will Simonson (1993)**

A checklist of 500 flowering plants with descriptions of their habitats and illustrated with line drawings and maps. Includes a field guide. 76pp.

## LIVERPOOL PAPERS IN GEOGRAPHY

Published in conjunction with the Dept. of Geography, University of Liverpool.

### **No. 2 - Survey of the Wetlands of the Western Algarve. R.A. Pullan (1988)**

This monograph traces the history of the use of Western Algarve wetlands and follows the story of their reclamation for other uses. 100pp.

### **No. 4 - A survey of the Present Ecological Status of the *Barrocal* of the Western Algarve R.A. Pullan (1992)**

A study of the historical evolution, recent land-use change, and conservation of this distinctive region of the Western Algarve. 101pp.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

### **Ria de Alvor—entre a terra e o mar**

Colour illustrated account (in Portuguese) of the natural history of the Alvor Estuary. 78pp.

### **The Birds of A Rocha - An Annotated Checklist**

12pp.

### **Under the Bright Wings. Peter Harris (1993)**

The story behind the A Rocha Christian Field Study Centre and Bird Observatory, Illustrated and with foreword by John Stott. Hodder & Stoughton, 176pp.

### **Greenhouse Theology - Biblical Perspectives on Caring for Creation. Ron Elsdon (1992)**

A lucid, biblical and stimulating approach to our understanding of creation. Monarch, 250pp.



## **A ROCHA**