



**MISSION STATEMENT:**

*Committed to the conservation of  
Maltese nature by promoting  
environmental awareness, managing  
areas of natural and scientific  
interest, and lobbying for effective  
environmental legislation.*

**In this issue:**

The President Speaks	1
A message from Our Founder	2
Ekoskola ... 10 Years On	2
Environmental Games at Xrobb l-Ghagin	3
Sharks get some Good News	4
Nature Photographer of the Year	4
Art Exhibition: <i>The Maltese Landscape</i>	4
Wied Ghollieqa ... a look at its history	5
<b>CALENDAR OF EVENTS</b>	6
Nature Photographer of the Year Rules	7-8

Coming Soon  
in 2012 ...

**ADOPT A TURTLE  
CAMPAIGN**

In collaboration with:  
**Nature Trust (Malta)**  
and **Air Malta**



Nature Trust (Malta) was officially launched by His Excellency the President of the Republic on Friday 8 January 1999 following the merger between the Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature (SSCN) founded 1962, Arbor founded 1983 and Verde founded 1997 and later in 2001 Marine Life Care Group

**THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS...**

Dear members,

The end of this year brings us closer to a more exciting one - 2012 which happens to be NTM's 50th Anniversary. In 1962, Guido Lanfranco founded the organisation, and since then the NGO has not looked back, but moved forward with time: from an NGO bringing together people with a common interest in biodiversity, to a lobby group, to an NGO working on biodiversity conservation, to an NGO expanding into new areas such as water, sustainable development and climate change and to an NGO focusing on environmental education.



We owe a big thanks to Guido Lanfranco and the founders and perhaps way back they would not have imagined that the NGO they set up then, would still be very active and playing an important role towards the protection of our natural heritage 50 years later. We are proud to say that Guido Lanfranco and Edwin Lanfranco - both founders of the organisation, are still active in NTM. In fact, with great pleasure I can announce that Edwin Lanfranco has now taken the role of the Editor of our Scientific Journal – the Central Mediterranean Naturalist. We wish Edwin all success, and thank Dr. Alan Deidun for his work on this journal over the last few years.

2012 is also a year which will celebrate the 10th Anniversary since NTM launched the First Foundation for Environmental Education International Programme: Green Flag – Eco Schools or as it is locally known EkoSkola. This was yet another major achievement, and today, thanks to the great team we have under our National EkoSkola Coordinator Dr. Paul Pace, Malta is one of the leading countries in this programme. Our role internationally has become significant and we play a leading role towards the protection of our natural heritage.

In these fifty years, NTM has been instrumental in achieving various positive results for our natural heritage through lobbying. To name a few our NGO had a great influence on the protection of mammals and reptiles in the Maltese Islands including the marine turtles, the protection of the Great White and Basking Shark species (Malta being the first European country to grant such protection), the legislation granting legal protection to indigenous trees, conservation of the frog, protection for wild plants and protection and management of various ecological sites. All this lobbying was done thanks to the past and present active volunteers and members who have always been behind the Council, supporting it in its decisions. NTM is not a militant NGO and tries to move in a more diplomatic manner as members request, and this has had its good results.

In our path during these fifty years, we also saw a merger of NGOs which made our organisation stronger and placed it as one of the biggest groups in the environment sector. Here, I thank the founders of the other NGOs who worked hard in their area, and who were also the driving force for the historic merger which showed that NGOs can work together and become one team, rather than compete, or work in isolation.

Personally, I have been active in this field since 1972, at which time I was a young student studying Biology under the tuition of Edwin Lanfranco, who was then the Vice President. Little did I know that he had enrolled me in an NGO that would make me give my life to working for its aims, and towards the preservation of our natural heritage – so here I thank Edwin too.

A big thanks goes to past and present Council members who have dedicated their free time to the NGO and worked together for its projects and objectives; at times under great stress. Last but not least, a warm thanks to you all for your constant support.

Wishing you and your loved ones a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

*Vince*

## 50 Years on ... From the Natural History Society of Malta of 50 Years Ago, to Nature Trust of today Guido Lanfranco

Since my childhood I was spontaneously greatly interested in the plants and animals in our little garden and in the countryside, an interest that continued to grow and flourish throughout my life. This I did in spite of frowns, compassionate looks and ridicule from grown-ups who believed that men should be hunters of birds and fish and destroyers of weeds and insects.

By the mid-twentieth century pre-war naturalists had died out and the Malta Historical and Scientific Society of 1909 had died out by 1949. In its stead was established the Malta Historical Society in 1950 and therefore there was no society to cater for nature enthusiasts.

I used to write nature articles in local papers and magazines through which I received a positive feedback from interested individuals. In 1961 I decided that there should be a nature society so that all interested could meet, discuss and exchange ideas to increase awareness among the general public. But I had to put my plans aside when a group of enthusiastic bird-lovers got together and invited me to join them to set up the Malta Ornithological Society. This society was founded on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1962 as the Malta Ornithological Society (MOS) which later became partner of BirdLife International as BirdLife Malta.

I resumed my plans to set up a nature society and this was eventually founded at a meeting held at the British Council, Valletta, with 46 members present, on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1962 and named The Natural History Society of Malta (NHSM). In November 1978 came into effect legislation which prohibited the use of the word "Malta" in names or titles of societies and publications and therefore, at the general meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January 1979, we changed the name of the society to Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature (SSCN). In January 1999 this society reformed into an amalgamation of several environmental societies under the name of Nature Trust (Malta).

Since 1962 membership has greatly increased and innumerable activities and campaigns have been initiated by this pressure group. During these fifty years we have seen also an increased awareness by government bodies which, nowadays, keep an eye on the environment when planning new projects.

In 1987 we met for a dinner at Mdina to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our foundation and then, I had ended my short speech by expressing my certainty that we would meet again in 25 years' time to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup>. And here we are! Looking back now, any of the original members of 1962 and difficult times, should feel proud and satisfied that our efforts have not been in vain and there is more awareness of nature now than ever before. We only hope that, although we have lost much of our natural heritage later generations would still have enough left to enjoy and celebrate yet another 50 years!



## EkoSkola ... 10 Years on

Paul Pace

Ten years since its initial launch during the scholastic year 2002-2003 the EkoSkola programme has mushroomed from just 6 schools to 108 schools ... about 62% of the total school number in the Maltese Islands. This amounts to more than 42,000 participating students. During its conceptual year, the programme's targets seemed rather idealistic: students who are actively involved in school management and development; the seamless integration of environmental education in the curriculum; schools incorporating sustainability within their policies and interacting with their surrounding communities.

Nevertheless, 10 years down the line have proved that this educational dream has become a reality. Mainly due to the fact that the programme is completely voluntary and also to the reliability of the support offered to schools, EkoSkola has been instrumental in bringing about a welcomed change in our educational community. Local research has shown that the EkoSkola process is positively contributing to a generation of young people who are actively committed to promoting individual and institutional change towards sustainable lifestyles. This augurs well with the proposal of the National Curriculum Framework to promote Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme. For the coming years, EkoSkola intends to consolidate its commitment and support towards the implementation of this important milestone in curriculum development.



## Environmental Games at the Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre

NTM believes that hands-on and experiential learning is highly commendable in all cycles of the formal education process. Experiential learning is intimately related to out-of-class activities. This is why NTM has been offering the service to schools to visit sites of special educational interest and outdoor spaces. After having started years ago with the Wied Għolliġa Nature Reserve and Educational Centre, this year NTM took the challenge to manage the Education programmes at the Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre.

Since its official opening in April 2011, the Xrobb l-Għagin started attracting visitors of all ages, interests and backgrounds. In a span of less than two months, during the first scholastic term, an estimated 550 visitors all ages experienced the learning opportunities provided on site. Xrobb l-Għagin also provided guided tours for groups from the non-formal education sector. The site's potential to significantly address Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at all levels is unfolding at a constant pace.

For sure, the students are learning through fun! The pictures accompanying this article are witness to this. NTM's vision for Education at the Park is ambitious in the short, medium and long term. We will keep you updated as the experience unfolds.

*Esther Sammut Carbone*

## Annual General Meeting

The 2011 AGM will take place on the **16th August 2011** at the Wied Għolliġa Environment Centre.

Nomination sheets for council members are attached separately and should reach the NTM offices by post or email by 12th August 2011.



Nature Trust (Malta) is always looking to expand its team of volunteers for all parts of the organisation. If you wish to join us or help us in some way or other, give us a call on 21313150 or send us an email on [info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org)

## OUTDOOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS/LOCAL COUNCILS/SCOUT GROUPS etc.

Wied Għolliġa Nature Reserve; Il-Qammieh (Mellicha); Kuncizzjoni/Ġnejna; Buskett/Clapham Junction; Il-Maqluba/Wied iż-Żurriq; Comino; Dwejra Gozo

Bookings and info: [annalise.falzon@gmail.com](mailto:annalise.falzon@gmail.com)  
Environmental Educator and Nature Walks Guide

## Sharks get some good news...



This time last year Nature Trust (Malta) was urging the MEPs to sign the declaration for changing the European Finning regulation. Although finning is illegal in the European Union, the regulation is fraught with loopholes making it easy for finning to take place. Finning is the removal of fins from a shark and dumping the carcass back into the sea and apart from being inhumane, this process is wasteful.

This October, Commissioner Damanaki accepted the declaration and released the proposal. The next step is for the Fisheries Ministers to sign it and this can then become a law. The proposal states that 'All sharks must be landed with fins fully attached'. As Nature Trust, we are very happy with the outcome of this declaration as Malta played a very important part in making this a success. Cards were written to our MEPs urging them to sign the declaration and influence other member states' parliamentarians to do the same.

Last October during European Shark Week, Nature Trust and two other NGOs held activities for their members, to raise awareness about the need for a National Shark Plan of Action. This management will help our fisheries manage the way sharks are caught to reduce bycatch and have a more selective fishery. Members of the team also appeared on two television programmes promoting the work we do with sharks.

The Marine Conservation and Rescue Team wish to thank you for your support and wish you a Merry Christmas!

*Graziella Cavlan*

*Marine Conservation and Rescue Officer*

## Nature Photographer of the Year Competition

In order to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of our organization, we have decided to re-introduce the **Nature Photographer of the Year Competition** for 2012.

In this competition, participants would be asked to submit any number of photos relating to a particular theme. There will be an edition every three months, giving a total of four editions in the year. Participants would be able to submit any number of photos for as many editions as (s)he desires at a rate of €0.50c each.

Each of the four editions will have a winner internally selected by a jury. The four winning photos will then pass to the final and the Nature Photographer of the Year selected from those four photographs. Prizes will be given during an Award Ceremony to be held in December at the Xrobb l-Ghagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre.

A public vote, via Facebook, will also take place with a number of photos selected by the jury every three months. The photo with the highest number of votes will win the public vote for that edition.

For more information see pages 7 and 8 of this newsletter or contact us on 21313150 or [info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org).

## Art Exhibition

Also relating to our 50 Year Anniversary is an art exhibition we intend to hold during the month of December at the Xrobb l-Ghagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre.

The theme for the exhibition is **The Maltese Landscape** and participation is free of charge. If an artist wishes to sell his or her painting/s during the exhibition we NTM are asking for a percentage of the sales in order to help us in our fundraising to maintain our nature reserves and continue publishing material.

Artists who are interested in taking part in this exhibition or who require more information should contact us on 21313150 or [info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org).

## Wied Ghollieqa ... a small nature reserve with a big history! Zach Engerer - Youths & Scientific Officer

Since prehistoric times, the Wied Ghollieqa Nature Reserve and its environs have always managed to attract attention in one way or another and, judging by the numerous archaeological remains found in the area, this site may have always been popular by inhabitants of the place.

In the past, however, the footprint left by the people was quite small as they managed to live peacefully and in harmony with nature. However, as in most areas across the world, the ever increasing population coupled with the increased urbanization of land has constantly had an impact on this valley.

The first major impact was that of agriculture as most of the area was cleared in order to make way for the growth of crops and rearing of animals. Later on, some of these fields were abandoned and agriculture was also becoming less and less common leaving the agricultural part of Wied Ghollieqa in quite a shabby state.

In the 1990s, this fact, together with the constant encroachment of nearby towns (namely Kappara, Msida, Gzira and Ta' Xbiex), led to the speculation that this area can be developed and integrated into the ever expanding University.

Luckily, however, a number of University students and residents of the area opposed this development and the first scientific report of the area was drawn up and reasons for saving Wied Ghollieqa were analysed. This report however, had no effect on the scheduled plans and a car park was built with the result that many old trees were uprooted, rubble walls bulldozed and fertile soil carted away or dumped.

Finally, in 1991, it was decided that there was a basis for the scientific report and eventually, development was shelved. In November 1993, legal notice 146 was passed, declaring Wied Ghollieqa a Bird Sanctuary as of 1st January 1994 and in 1997, parts of Wied Ghollieqa were also declared as a Level 2 Area of Ecological Importance (AEI) and a Level 1 Site of Scientific Importance surrounded by Levels 2 and 3 Buffer Zones according to Government Notice 241 of 1997.

In 1999, the former Environment Protection Department (now part of MEPA) gave sole responsibility of the site to Nature Trust (Malta) and in 2000 the Green 2000 Campaign was launched: a project in which 8,000 trees and shrubs will be planted in the valley throughout the years by members of the public and various organisations. In 2001, Wied Ghollieqa was also designated as a Tree Reserve/Nature Reserve and in 2003 as a Special Area of Conservation.

Today, the site boasts a very large amount of local indigenous trees such as the Aleppo Pine (Znuber), Evergreen Oak (Balluta) and the Sandarac Gum Tree (Sigra tal-Gharghar), making it a prime example of a well restored area. Visits to the Nature Reserve are free and access is possible at all times. Guided walks are also possible and may be booked by contacting us on 21313150 or [info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org).



**Note on Activities:** Activities are subject to change or to cancellation due to events such as bad weather so please book with us before-hand. Anyone attending walks is expected to follow the guide and keep to the group. Suitable clothing (trekking shoes for long walks) and a first aid kit are required. Long walks are not suitable for children, unfit and unadventurous persons. Children attending activities must be accompanied by adults. **NOTE:** Nature Trust will not be held responsible for any losses or injuries during its activities.



JANUARY	15	Guided Walk - Bahrija (Half Day)	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
FEBRUARY	15	Indoor Talk - <i>Ecology of the Aeolian Islands and Ustica</i>	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
MARCH	10	50 Year Anniversary Official Launch	Details: info@naturetrustmalta.org
	24-25	Open Weekend - Xrobb l-Ghagin	Details: info@naturetrustmalta.org
APRIL	11	Natural History Course (9 Weekly Sessions)	Details: info@naturetrustmalta.org
	TBA	Guided Walk - Gozo (Full Day)	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
MAY	10	Annual General Meeting	Details: info@naturetrustmalta.org
	TBA	Guided Walk - Ahrax tal-Mellieha (Half Day)	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
JUNE	03	Site Visit - St. Paul's Islands	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
	17	Snorkelling	Details: grazcavlan@gmail.com
JULY	11	Marine Biology Course (3 Weekly Sessions + 1 Dive)	Details: info@naturetrustmalta.org
AUGUST	22	Half Day Seminar: <i>What is Nature Trust?</i>	Details: zach.engerer@gmail.com
	TBA	Kayaking	Details: grazcavlan@gmail.com
SEPTEMBER	TBA	Guided Walk - Wied Babu and Maqluba (Half Day)	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
	TBA	Guided Walk - Pembroke (Half Day)	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
OCTOBER	TBA	Guided Walk - Wied Qliegħa	Details: wildalienplanet@gmail.com
NOVEMBER	TBA	Open Day - Wied Ghollieqa Nature Reserve	Details: zach.engerer@gmail.com
	TBA	Indoor Talk - <i>The Art of Honey Making</i>	Details: zach.engerer@gmail.com
DECEMBER	07	Nature Photographer of the Year Award Ceremony	Details: info@naturetrustmalta.org

Details of all activities will be made available closer to the date and in all cases booking is recommended as places are on a first come first served basis.

Dates of activities marked as TBA are To Be Announced at a later date as we are in the final planning stages.

Besides the activities listed above, we are also planning a number of other activities such as clean-ups, film nights, social events, fundraising activities, etc.

Postal Address

Postal Address: Nature Trust (Malta), P.O. Box 9, Valletta . VLT1000

Tel/Fax/Ans. Machine: +356 2131 3150

Email: info@naturetrustmalta.org Website: www.naturetrustmalta.org

## NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

### - Competition Rules -

#### Competition Format

This competition is divided into four themes, as follows:

- |                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1. January - March    | Landscape |
| 2. April - June       | Flora     |
| 3. July - September   | Marine    |
| 4. October - December | Fauna     |

#### Selecting the Winner: Jury Vote - Nature Photographer of the Year

Following the submission of photos for each theme, a Nature Trust (Malta) jury will declare one photo as the winner and two others as the runners up. The winning photo of each theme will then pass to a final in order for the Nature Photographer of the Year to be selected.

#### Selecting the Winner: Public Vote

Besides the winner and the two runners up, the Nature Trust (Malta) team will also select another 12 photos to pass to a public vote. These 15 photos of each theme will be uploaded onto a Facebook album and the public will be asked to select a winner for each theme.

#### Submission & Announcement of Results

Photos must be submitted by end January, end April, end July and end October in order to give time for the Nature Trust (Malta) team to select the winning entries. All photos must be submitted by email at [naturetrust1962@gmail.com](mailto:naturetrust1962@gmail.com) or via CD at our offices. Each entry will cost the participant €0.50c and must be accompanied by the form on page 8 (overleaf)

Results of the jury vote will be announced during February, May, August and November. Following announcement, the public vote via Facebook will be launched and the public will have one month to vote for a winning entry.

#### Award Ceremony

Following selection of the winning entry of each theme, an award ceremony will be held in December at the Xrobb l-Ghagin Nature Park and Sustainable Centre in order to declare an overall winner of the competition. Results will be revealed on the night of the Award Ceremony.

#### Prizes

Prizes will be given out to the Nature Photographer of the Year and all other participants in the award ceremony together with the winners of the public vote.

#### Photograph Rules

The image submitted must be the work of the photographer. Digital manipulation and editing are not allowed and no watermark or logos present on the photo itself will be accepted.

#### Use of the Photos by NTM

All images received by NTM will be credited to the author. The winners and two runners up of each theme will be used by NTM in the 2013 calendar of the organization. NTM may also allow the media to display a selection of the winning/highly commended photos in order to publicize the contest.

**Nature Photographer  
of the Year Competition**

By submitting this application form you have accepted the rules of the competition and abided by the code of conduct above for each photograph.

**THEME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Photos:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Are you a member of  
Nature Trust Malta?**

**YES / NO**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I have accepted the Competition Rules:**      **Yes / No**

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR**

**- Code of Conduct -**

**Some rules to keep in mind...**

1. The observation of legal regulations for wild-life protection is imperative.
2. Only take pictures in natural environment. Do not pick flowers or pursue animals!
3. When taking pictures, neither the object nor its surroundings should be harmed or damaged.
4. Disturbing foraging animals or animals feeding their offspring is to be avoided on all accounts.
5. Any interference in the natural habitat is to be avoided: do not use baits such as birdsong or food to attract animals. In case of doubts please contact us.

*The subject and the  
habitat are more  
important than the  
photograph!*

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**Tel/Fax/Ans. Machine: +356 2131 3150**

**Email: [info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org)      Website: [www.naturetrustmalta.org](http://www.naturetrustmalta.org)**