



**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.*

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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,

We hope you had a good festive season and that you started 2013 well.

Our friends that unfortunately have faced a bumpy start are in our prayers and we wish them all the best and courage.

This year NTM is facing new challenges. We hope to conclude the agreement with the authorities re the Pembroke Natura 2000 site, we are in discussion phase with the authorities regarding conservation measures on St Paul's Islands, we aim to start seeking funding support and apply for grants for Xrobb L-Għażin Phase Two (i.e. the Wildlife

Rehabilitation Centre) better results and also launch the Green Flag programme in Malta.

Our NGO has presented the political parties with a proposal document for issues it wants to see included in their electoral manifesto. We hope that the environment will be featured in this period especially biodiversity.

AS always NTM will work with anyone in government and hopes that all political parties will acknowledge our suggestions and take them on board. This will not only help our natural heritage but also have



better results and also launch the Green Flag programme in Malta.

**KLABB BALLOTTA IS BACK!!!**

Sunday 27th December 2012 was the day many kids members and their families have been waiting for. Klabb Ballottra was relaunched by an unforgettable outing for NTM's young members at Buskett.

'Young members' and 'family members' have received a newsletter with details of activities covering December 2012 to February 2013. We are sure they enjoyed the three postcards featuring three beautiful flowers of the Maltese islands, enclosed with the newsletter. Just keep your eyes open for adverts of the approximately monthly activities for children from the age of 5 to 12 years.

Check our Facebook page and email updates and encourage your friends to look for details also in the school magazines *Tagħna t-Tfal* and *Is-Sagħtar*. Fresh air, physical activity, learning through play and establishing links with nature are among the main goals of the Klabb Ballottra. Klabb Ballottra is fun! Just come along and enjoy!

The Klabb Ballottra organisers are Anthea Pisani, Esther Sammut Carbone and Jeffrey Sciberras. The team extends its thanks to Annalise Falzon for her service to NTM by leading the first of Klabb Ballottra activities at Buskett. (see also page 4)



## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Nature Trust Malta will be held on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013** at the Wied Ghollieqa Environment Centre (University of Malta Campus) at 5.30pm. The agenda for the AGM is as follows:

- 1. Minutes of previous AGM**
- 2. Secretary's Report**
- 3. Financial Report**
- 4. President's Address**
- 5. Amendments to Statute**
- 6. Election of new council 2013 / 2015**

Nomination sheets for those interested in contesting the Council Election are attached with the newsletter. Members obtaining two or more nominations will be eligible for Council Elections. Candidates need to be paid up members of NTM and must have attained 18 years of age. No more than 11 nominations can be made by any paid up member. Nominations are to be sent to: Nature Trust (Malta), Electoral Officer, Wied Ghollieqa Environment Centre, University of Malta Campus, Msida by not later than **31 March 2013**.

## From the NTM Corridors

- The **Xrobb L-Għagin Hostel** is in its final stages and we hope to open in the first quarter of 2013
- A stolen bike was set on fire in the **Wied Ghollieqa Nature Reserve**. We were luckily in the vicinity and managed to combat the fires and save many trees from being burnt. Police are investigating the incident
- **Wildlife Rescue Team** is planning another training session for its volunteers in the first quarter of 2013
- Issue #16 of **Il-Ballottra** is to be sent to all members by April 2013.
- Our Scientific Journal - **The Central Mediterranean Naturalist** is in its final stages and the Editorial Board Chairperson is now **Mr Edwin Lanfranco**
- NTM Council Members are at present meeting all **political parties** to discuss environmental issues to be included in their electoral programmes
- The **EkoSkola Programme** is now reaching 83% of all the students in Malta and Gozo. Over 35 schools have obtained the Green Flag International Eco Label while the Young Reporters for the Environment and the Learning About Forests Programmes are slowly growing. NTM is now being considered by the Foundation for Environmental Education as a Successful Programme Implementer.
- NTM has again been appointed as a Board Member of the Mediterranean NGO Network, the **Mediterranean Information Office**, for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development. Our president who represents NTM has also been appointed the Financial Director on this Board
- NTM has started another pilot programme – **EcoCentres** which will be officially launched in the coming months

### Call for Volunteers!

Nature Trust (Malta) is looking for a number of volunteers to help us in administration (book keeping and deposits), woodwork to repair wooden gates at our sites, databases, guiding visitors to our sites especially on weekends and for the design of educational publications and material

Any member interested is to send an email on  
[info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org)

### NTM Products from Wied Ghollieqa

Honey - 7€  
 Carob Syrup - 5€  
 Capers - 2€  
 Lemon Jam - 2.50€

All products are pesticide free  
 All proceeds go to the upkeep of Wied Ghollieqa

## A Hedgehog Rescue



A hoglet was found orphaned and rescued from Mosta, was recently successfully released at Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park after six weeks in rehabilitation. The young hedgehog was being treated and looked after by Nature Trust's Wildlife Rescue Team.

Hoglets are often orphaned during the warm months of summer, since this is the season when hedgehogs have young and the mother would go out to feed at night and get run over, leaving the young without a mother and worse still without food.

Hoglets are born after 18 weeks of gestation and leave the nest after six weeks. They suckle for about three weeks after they are born and are then weaned on to solid food.

The Wildlife Rescue Team's job in hedgehog rehabilitation, is to make sure that these hoglets are reared up healthy and taught how to forage, so that they can fend for themselves when released. It is imperative for our volunteers to treat these animals as wild ones and not interact with them as if they are a pet, otherwise this will reduce their chances of survival.

Hedgehogs are brought to Nature Trust (Malta) with all sorts of injuries too; some have cuts, or parasite poisoning while some get caught in plastic or string. One of the other culprits in hedgehog deaths is the six pack plastic ring found in packs of beer. The hedgehog gets plastic stuck around its neck when out foraging and as the hedgehog grows, the plastic tightens around its neck causing suffocation. This is why it is important to dispose of rubbish well, keeping in mind we share our environment with other creatures.

In Malta our hedgehogs' worst enemy is the car. Many hedgehogs are run over by cars because they come out to forage at night, the bright lights of the car headlights frightens them and they freeze on the spot making it easier for cars to accidentally run them over.

Nature Trust volunteers have a permit for handling and caring for hedgehogs and is required because hedgehogs are a protected species in the Maltese islands. The team also has two veterinarians, who deal with the hedgehogs' injuries and parasites.

Dr Luke Sultana from Animal Doctors, has dealt with some gruesome injuries on these little creatures and is on call 24 hours a day and his clinic does this work free of charge. Animal Doctors is a team of vets in Hamrun who have been dealing with rare species of animals, as well as normal pets. Dr Sultana who is a volunteer on the Wildlife Rescue Team of Nature Trust also deals with the rescue of injured turtles and dolphins.

Nature Trust's Wildlife Rescue Team is raising funds to open the new Rehabilitation Centre at Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park through guided walks and talks, demonstrations of rescuing dolphins as well as the Adopt a Turtle Campaign. The NGO is also hoping to start up an Adopt a Hedgehog Campaign and is looking for businesses who will be interested in sponsoring such a campaign.

Anyone finding orphaned or injured hedgehogs should call our emergency number 99422086. One must be sure that the hoglets are not taken from their mother and also to look around for others, because a nest usually consists of two to three young. Anyone interested in helping out this cause can email [info@naturetrustmalta.org](mailto:info@naturetrustmalta.org).



**WILDLIFE  
RESCUE TEAM**

**Donations to Nature Trust (Malta) can be done via Internet Banking to the following accounts:**

HSBC: 039069000001 BOV: 40012310515

**Thanks for your donation!**

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

Wied Ghollieqa Nature Reserve; Il-Qammieħ (Mellieħha); Kuncizzjoni/ġnejna; Buskett/Clapham Junction; Il-Maqluba/Wied iż-Żurrieq; Comino; Dwejra Gozo

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

## Buskett with a difference



December saw a group of young keen Klabb Ballottra members set out to explore Buskett in a different way - rather than just using this nature reserve as a noisy playing area the team walked in respect of nature whilst enjoying it and learning about plants and more.

The participants experienced the woodland by using various senses though games such as *Treehugging* which involves feeling trees, *TopsyTurvy* which involves seeing nature through mirrors, the *Silence Challenge*, which involves practising perfect silence and stillness to become aware of surroundings and even produced an impromptu exhibition of nature reflections.

**Check out our next events and book a place for your children and friends.**

## Europe Says NO to Shark Finning



Nature Trust and its members have ended 2012 celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since the organization was founded in 1962 with a win for sharks.

After many years of lobbying for better conservation measures on European sharks, Nature Trust together with the coalition of

NGOs called Shark Alliance can be proud of a triumphant end to this year.

In 2010, when the declaration was passed proposing to end shark finning in the EU, we had no idea regarding the amount of hard work it would take to make this proposal law. Two years later, on the 22nd November, all MEPs voted at the European Parliament.

There was much opposition from Spanish and Portuguese MEPs, with their countries being the only member states with a permit to land sharks without fins. However, with this regulation allowing for sharks to be landed in one port and their fins landed in another, it made it very difficult to regulate finning.

The only way to curb finning was to land sharks with their fins attached.

Thus, 566 MEPs voted for a ‘fins naturally attached’ policy, ending finning altogether. We wish to thank our MEPs who always support sharks as we as all our members who took the time to sign petitions and join us on this quest to conserve our sharks, without your support this would not have been possible.

Graziella Cavlan

## Calendar of Events

09 FEB	Kids (5-12)	Xrobb l-Għagin Walk led by Klabb Ballottra Team Bookings: contact Esther on 79211282	
10 FEB	Walk	Mnajdra Circular Route Walk led by Annalise Falzon Bookings: annalise.falzon@gmail.com	
16 MAR	Kids (8-12)	Qammiegh Walk led by Klabb Ballottra Team Bookings: naturetrustactivities@gmail.com	
25 MAR	Talk	Reptiles in Malta Talk given by Arnold Sciberras Bookings: info@naturetrustmalta.org	
28 MAR	Kids (8-12)	Nature Photography at Majjistral Park Session led by Annalise Falzon Bookings: annalise.falzon@gmail.com	
17 APR		<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b> Wied Ghollieqa Environment Centre <i>Refer to page 2 for more information</i>	
21 APR	Open Day	<b>Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre</b>	
24 APR	Educational	Natural History Course Bookings: info@naturetrustmalta.org	Course spread over 6 weeks
25 APR	Talk	Sharks Talk given by Graziella Cavlan Bookings: info@naturetrustmalta.org	
12 MAY	Walk	Pembroke Walk led by Jeffrey and Arnold Sciberras Bookings: naturetrustactivities@gmail.com	
30 MAY	Walk	Sunset and Night Walk Walk led by Annalise Falzon Bookings: annalise.falzon@gmail.com	
16 JUN	Boat Trip	Filfla Bookings: info@naturetrustmalta.org	

**Note on Activities:**

Activities are subject to change or cancellation due to events such as bad weather so please book with us beforehand. 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.

During all free events, donations will be accepted and will go towards the Adopt-A-Turtle campaign to raise funds to build a wildlife rehabilitation centre for injured marine turtles and other wildlife such as hedgehogs. We thank you for all donations.