



Working in Britain for Birds in Italy

Italian Society for the Protection of Birds - UK Branch

Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU)

Honorary Patrons: Bill Oddie, Tony Soper

Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2009

LIPU-UK, c/o Fernwood, Doddington Road, Whisby, Lincs, LN6 9BX is registered with the Charity Commission (No 1081826) and is constituted by Deed of Trust.

The charity is administered by an Executive Committee, the members of which during the financial year were:

Chairman:	Mr. Joseph Fleming FCIB
Treasurer/Secretary:	Mr David Lingard
Members:	Mrs Carol Debney
	Professor Barry Fantoni
	Mr Tony Gdula
	Mrs Shirley Lingard

Objectives

LIPU-UK has one over-riding objective, namely, to support and encourage the bird protection and habitat conservation activities of Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU) – the BirdLife International Partner for Italy. To that end, LIPU-UK works to raise awareness in the UK of the severe challenges to the bird life of Italy (and to migratory species of birds which fly through that country) as a result of the culture of indiscriminate hunting and trapping of birds in that country.

Executive Management

The Executive Committee has formal meetings three times each year augmented by telephone and internet communication between members on a regular basis. The administration of LIPU-UK is undertaken by David Lingard (who comes from a long career as a flying officer in the RAF), assisted by his wife, Shirley, whilst Carol Debney brings a career background in publishing and advertising to the Trust. Carol has also taken over the role of co-ordinator of the team of translators who bring LIPU publications to our members in the UK. Barry Fantoni provides an Italian dimension to our deliberations – and his long involvement in arts and broadcasting is also very relevant to us. Tony Gdula is a schoolteacher with all the experience that comes from a career dealing with young people. Joe Fleming is a retired bank executive with a background as a senior manager in the specialised field of credit and risk.

Finance

During this financial year, the international banking crisis triggered a move into recession by most major economies – including the UK and Italy. One of the predictable consequences of recession is a rise in unemployment and, in turn, this produces an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty, even for those who have not lost their employment. Given that background – and the unprecedented reduction in the Bank of England Base Rate to a half of one per cent – it is not surprising that the total income generated by LIPU-UK in 2008/09 was significantly lower than the previous year at just under £59,000. However, that reduction should be seen in the context that legacies in the current financial year were over £41,000 less than in 2007/08. No charity can predict the amount which might be received in future years from legacies, and yet these generous bequests can form a significant proportion of income streams. As a matter of policy, we have never formally asked members to remember LIPU-UK when making their Wills. However, our reluctance to promote such a commitment when many major charities pursue that objective persistently, has brought its own reward in our being remembered by members who wanted to finance our cause to an extent that might have been difficult in their lifetime. Subscriptions and Donations at over £41,000 also show a downward trend but, again, this is really as a result of an exceptional donation in the previous year and we are now seeing a return to the level which has been more typical in the years prior to that. The figure for Bank interest at over £8,000 is almost half the amount received in the previous financial year but is still remarkably good seen in the context of ultra low interest rates for the majority of the financial year. In the light of the

massive losses incurred by many major banking institutions here in the UK, safety of our funds has been a paramount concern – and will continue to be so. Judicious cash management with timely arrangement of fixed term deposits has been the key and will ensure that we should still generate an above average return on our funds during the financial year ending June 2010. Gift Aid at just over £6,000 continues to provide a positive contribution to our income and the annual Prize Draw once again proved popular with almost an identical contribution to our funds as last year of over £2,000. As in the past, we thank the generosity of the donors of the attractive tangible prizes on offer and, in particular, of members who bought (and sold) tickets.

The vast majority of the total outgoings in 2008/09 relate to financial transfers to LIPU in support of the five projects detailed in the Annual Report for 2007/08 which totalled €70,000 (just over £60,000) out of the full year total outflow figure of about £67,000. Our ability to achieve that level of support in a year when income was depressed was partly attributable to the continued support by way of donation from our good friends, the Anglo Italian Society for the Protection of Animals (AISPA) with whom we have worked closely in recent years and it is right for their support to be readily acknowledged in this report.

Our operating costs are always subject to close scrutiny and, in relation to the volume of work undertaken, and the production of quarterly English translations of the LIPU “Ali” magazine, they are commendably low. We have managed to maintain operating costs within an informal target of 10% of total income for a number of years but 2008/09 saw that target modestly exceeded at just over 11%. This is still an amazing achievement compared to the cost/income ratios of the overwhelming majority of other UK charities – both large and small. It is no secret that the main reason for this “value for money” regime is the result of the work and commitment of David Lingard. Economies beyond those already in force are difficult to identify. The cost of postage goes up each year but the lower expenditure figure this year reflects the purchase of an advance stock at pre-increase prices in the previous financial year. We could save postage costs if more members with internet access would agree to discontinue receiving “Ali” newsletters in printed form and read these on our website www.lipu-uk.org/Pubs/Publications Similarly, payment of annual subscriptions by Bankers’ Order would also save operating costs – and help from an administration perspective. We are making progress with that ambition; approximately 46% of members are now paying subscriptions in this way.

Financial Reserves Policy

The net funds of LIPU-UK are allocated into three different categories, namely, Restricted Funds, Unrestricted Funds and Designated Funds.

- Restricted Funds consist of money which has been donated to LIPU-UK to be used for a specific purpose.
- Unrestricted Funds are, in essence, money which can be spent on anything which furthers the objectives of LIPU-UK.
- Designated Funds/Reserves represents funds which have been ear-marked for use in a particular way and these can be comprised of funds which are Restricted and/or Unrestricted.

Currently, LIPU-UK maintains two Reserves within the Designated Funds category.

- A Business Reserve - that is the Trustees' estimation of the prudent level of funds needed to guard against any potential liquidity problem that might arise if income unexpectedly dried up and financial commitments had to be met. The Business Reserve is composed solely of Unrestricted Funds.
- The Oasi Fund – established by the Trustees to accumulate funds which would be employed either to fund the establishment of a reserve in Italy which had great potential for the protection of birds and their habitats, or to finance the addition of land or buildings within an existing reserve in Italy which would enhance existing habitats or bird protection resources. The Oasi Fund currently consists solely of Unrestricted Funds. However, if at some future date, a bequest or donation was received which had been designated by the donor/benefactor for use solely for the objectives of the Oasi Fund, then those monies would be ring-fenced within this particular fund.

The Oasi Fund was established in 2000 at a figure in the region of £5,000; at the end of the financial year under review it stood at just over £276,000. Over the years, a number of potential candidate reserves have been considered as recipients of finance from these funds but, for a variety of reasons, have not progressed to fruition. We are in regular dialogue with our colleagues in Parma about how we could best deploy the Oasi Fund and believe that there could be a positive development to announce before the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Oasi Fund is reached.

Membership

Despite initiatives such as the attractive new recruitment leaflet, increased “roadshows” by David Lingard, the incentive for new members of a free copy of the excellent “A Birdwatcher’s Guide to Italy” (thanks to the sponsorship of the publishers - Lynx Editions) - and our continued presence at the British Bird Watching Fair at Rutland Water, we have seen our numbers fall for the third year in succession to 907 (958). Given the recession, uncertainty of employment, declining income of those in retirement partially dependent on interest on savings, it is not really surprising that our membership is less than it was a year ago. Across the UK, charities generally are feeling the pinch in terms of income and membership. We are not being complacent about this but, equally, we do not think that the way to counter this adverse trend is by spending money speculatively. Currently, we are looking at the possibility of attracting an Anglo-Italian celebrity to head a recruitment campaign both in the UK and Italy.

Commitment to Projects in Italy

Our 2009 Annual Appeal was launched midway through the financial year. The funds generated by this exercise are ear-marked for the following projects.

1. Anti-poaching campaigns and activities in the Straits of Messina, Brescia and Sardinia.
2. A sixth successive year of survey work to map the raptor migration routes through Sicily in the Spring (this continues to deliver invaluable data).
3. The monitoring of Lesser Kestrel breeding in Puglia region.
4. The support of LIPU Recovery Centres by funding the purchase of medical and surgical supplies.
5. The vitally important task of identifying Important Bird Areas in the coastal waters of Italy i.e. the foundation of Marine IBAs for Italy.

In total, our commitment is to provide a total of €62,500 for these five projects which are all vitally important and really do make a difference in terms of thwarting hunters, protecting birds and habitat – and in producing invaluable data. As always, we are looking to our members to help us to raise that sum. We are very grateful for your past generosity and, despite all the uncertainties and pressures of the current economic climate, we do hope you will again respond very positively.

Acknowledgements

Our team of volunteer translators is so important to us. Their combined efforts provide our membership with a very lucid and readable version of the translated elements of the English version of Ali (and that is something to which a number of trans-national publications aspire, but don't always achieve!). They are always listed individually in the Ali and thanked for their work which I readily do in this report – we couldn't function effectively without them. The task of liaising with Parma and then co-ordinating the work of the translators is now being undertaken by one of the Trustees, Carol Debney. Our thanks are due to Carol for all that she does for LIPU-UK.

In my report last year, I mentioned the importance of succession planning in terms of new Trustees; none have come forward. In the March 2009 edition of "Ali", David reminded us that he has been the UK Representative to LIPU and undertaken the role of Secretary/Treasurer since mid 1998. He also reminded us that "nothing lasts for ever". I find it hard to envisage LIPU-UK without David and, of course, his wife, Shirley – and it has been a joint effort. In many ways, David's devotion to duty has heightened our dependence on him but, collectively as Trustees, we do need to look forward to a future when David and Shirley really will retire from their very active roles but perhaps continue as Trustees. It would be wonderful if one of our members, reading this report, felt that they needed a challenge in their lives and would at least be prepared to consider commencing a dialogue with David, or with me, about the possibility of taking on perhaps one element of David's dual responsibilities. In the meantime, we extend our sincere thanks to David and Shirley for all that they have done, and continue to do, for LIPU.

Review and Reflections

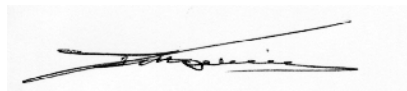
Italy is rightly famed for its long history of cultural refinement, artistic brilliance and for being one of the great nations which brought to the world "civilisation". However, there has been a serious flaw in this historical inheritance, namely, the predilection to enjoy the hunting, and indiscriminate trapping, of birds to an extreme which is not only illegal but also barbaric. However, the tide is slowly turning, thanks to the work of LIPU which came into being in 1965. In 1970, there were over 2 million hunters but this number has now reduced by 60% - still too many remain but they are finding it harder to operate. Through dedicated work and with continued emphasis on educating society (and particularly the young), LIPU is making a difference and they are grateful for the sup-

port they receive from their members in the UK towards their key objectives of species protection, conservation of habitats, preservation of biodiversity and growth of public awareness about the challenges facing the bird life in Italy.

LIPU is a success story and we are rightly proud of being part of it. Our colleagues in Italy now manage 34 bird reserves (Oasi) bringing the area managed to 7,000 hectares. They operate a Seabird Rescue Centre in Tuscany and several Rehabilitation Centres for birds of prey and urban bird life. "Adopt a bird" schemes and public releases of rehabilitated birds are winning greater public support for LIPU – and greater awareness of the damage to wildlife caused by illegal hunters and trappers. Conservation projects across a wide range of threatened species such as Audouin's Gull, White-headed Duck, Lesser Kestrel, Red Kite and White Stork and the re-introduction of the Griffon Vulture have all been carried out successfully in recent times. Of equal importance, national campaigns for tougher legislation have resulted in more rigorous hunting laws, a reduced list of hunting species, a shorter hunting season and a new law on Protected Areas. It is also worth noting that LIPU now has 70 voluntary ecological "police". In addition, the gazetting of new Reserves and National Parks – including many IBAs – has been a priority and LIPU continues to lobby for IBAs to be designated as SPAs; 90 out of a total of 192 IBAs have now gained this higher designation which brings added protection to these vitally important habitats.

The hunting fraternity in Italy are attempting to counter this continuing onslaught by trying to introduce amendments to the legislation which constrains their activities (Law 157). LIPU is leading the fight against this outrageous attempt and has the support of a number of influential NGOs but, perhaps more importantly, the mood of the nation is with them. However, it is disappointing to find that EC Directives on bird protection can apparently be challenged so blatantly under the guise of "derogation"; a more fitting expression would be "escape clause". Therefore, the fight goes on and our support is needed just as much as it has ever been. On behalf of your Executive Committee and our colleagues in Parma, I thank you for your commitment to our cause and for your generosity in funding so many worthwhile projects over the years. Long may this continue!

Joe Fleming
21 September 2009



On behalf of the Trustees/Members of the Executive Committee of LIPU-UK

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year to 30 June 2009

<u>Income and Expenditure</u>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total	2007-8
	£	£	£	
Legacies	500	0	500	41861
Subscriptions & Donations	19988	21140	41128	56042
Annual Draw	2436	0	2436	2428
Gift Aid tax claims	6056	0	6056	7326
Deposit Interest	8580	0	8580	16243
Charitable Trading	0	0	0	0
Total Income	37560	21140	58700	123900
<u>Charitable Activity Expenditure</u>				
Paid to LIPU for Projects	38952	21140	60092	63649
Newsletter Production	2867	0	2867	2644
Travel	458	0	458	581
Total	42277	21140	63417	66874
<u>Other Expenditure</u>				
Postage	1130	0	1130	3207
Printing	0	0	0	644
British Birdwatching Fair	656	0	656	616
Annual Draw	665	0	665	664
Trustees Meetings	266	0	266	106
Independent Examiners Fee	160	0	160	150
Stationery	25	0	25	196
Recruiting Campaign	100	0	100	471
Miscellaneous Admin costs	126	0	126	311
Insurance	43	0	43	49
Petty Cash	131	0	131	155
Total	3302	0	3302	6569
Total Expenditure	45579	21140	66719	73443
Net Income for the Year	(8019)	0	(8019)	50457
Fund Balances B/F	289938			239481
Fund Balances C/F	281919	0	281919	289938