

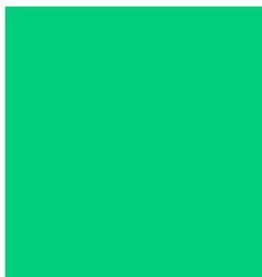
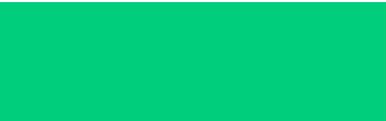


Experience

Israel

March 19 – 24, 2023

Like Never Before



SEE A DIFFERENT, beautiful side to Israel and get close to nature while learning about the history of one of the world's oldest environmental organizations. Enjoy a week of unique insights, beautiful nature, 5-star accommodations, great company, and amazing food.

About Nature Israel

The American Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (ASPNI), known as Nature Israel, is the American fundraising arm of The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the leader in protecting Israel's environment. SPNI is the largest nature conservation organization in Israel and among the oldest in the world. Nature Israel Travel connects people with tours of SPNI's preservation projects and other notable wildlife and natural phenomenon in Israel.

1
DAY

Sunday,
March 19

Nili and David Jerusalem Bird Observatory

In 1993, two young birdwatchers discovered a banded migrant bird from Sweden and so started the Nili and David Jerusalem Bird Observatory, a center of education, science, and community located next to the Knesset. Over 50,000 visitors, from around the world and all sectors of society, flock to visit the JBO. You'll be joining them to experience an unforgettable up-close bird banding activity and learn about Israel's vital importance to global bird migration.



Levi Eshkol House

Levi Eshkol is arguably Israel's most underappreciated Prime Minister. Get a guided tour of Israel's Historic Prime Ministers' Residence – where Ben Gurion and Golda Meir also resided — and learn about Levi Eshkol's impact on Israeli-American relations and the building of the National Water Carrier. The Eshkol House is also the home of SPNI's Jerusalem community. We'll have lunch with community professionals and hear about SPNI's work on the municipal level.



Gazelle Valley Park

Located in the heart of Jerusalem, in the shadow of the infamous Holyland apartment block, the Gazelle Valley was saved by SPNI and turned into a world-class urban wildlife site. It's a very special type of park, and a haven for the endangered Israeli mountain gazelle. Amir Balaban, our Director of Urban Nature, will tell you the story of how the park came to be and how it's being used as a model for urban sustainability in Israel and around the world.

Wildfire Recovery of the Jerusalem Hills

More than 6,000 acres of the Jerusalem Forest were torched by wildfires last August. With an SPNI professional, you will hike in places affected by the fire to witness first-hand the recovery and see how resilient nature is. You'll learn about Israel's misguided afforestation policy and what SPNI is doing about it.



Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

Group returns to the hotel to freshen up before dinner.

DAY

2

Monday,
March 20

Visit Start-Up Nature Rewilding Project

Start-Up Nature is one of SPNI's most ambitious initiatives – to create artificial wetlands that will support mass bird migration and global biodiversity. At Kibbutz Kfar Ruppin, you'll see migrating birds in their glory, and you'll hear about the complexities of creating and managing a nature reserve from former fishponds. You'll also learn about SPNI's bold goals for replicating this model nationwide.



Treasures of the Jordan Valley

While driving back to Jerusalem, we'll explore some special sites along the Syrian-African rift and the peaceful border with Jordan. We'll stop at Qasr al-Yahud, the baptismal site on the banks of the Jordan River, a site of great significance in the Christian tradition, where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.

Nearby, we'll see an SPNI-pioneered project to create bat caves in abandoned military bunkers (following the peace treaty in Jordan in 1994) and use insectivore bats as biological pest control for farmers on both sides of the Jordan, reducing the need for chemical pesticides.



Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

Evening to be spent at leisure in Jerusalem. Return to Jerusalem estimated at 5:30 – 6:00 pm.

DAY

3

Tuesday,
March 21

Boat Ride on the Dead Sea

Join the Dead Sea Story for a unique boat ride on the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. You will see first-hand the dramatic geological changes, salt crystal formations, and sink holes from the vantage point of the sea itself, and learn about what is being done to protect this natural wonder.



Wadi David Hike at Ein Gedi

Enjoy an easy hike to David's waterfall, one of the many trails in the area. Learn about the natural and biblical history of Ein Gedi during a 60-90 minute walk up this ancient desert spring, and see SPNI's first Field School.



Masada

In the days of the Great Revolt, the last of the rebels against Rome entrenched themselves at Masada and turned their desperate fight into a symbol of the struggle for freedom. Ascend this world UNESCO heritage site by cable car and learn the tragic history of this famous Jewish stronghold.



Isrotel Dead Sea, Ein Bokek

Dinner in the hotel. Overnight at the Isrotel Dead Sea in Ein Bokek.

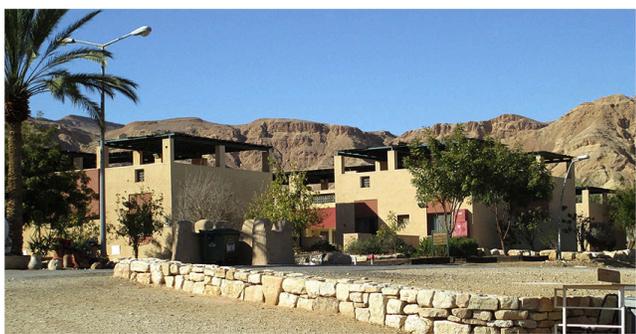
DAY

4

Wednesday,
March 22

Hatzeva Field School

Travelling south to SPNI's Field School in the middle of the Arava desert, you'll be introduced to a most curious flock of birds, the Arabian babbler. These birds maintain a rigid social structure and were the topic of SPNI co-founder Amotz Zehavi's Ph.D. research into evolutionary behavior. These birds are used to human presence so look forward to getting extremely close to these friendly avians.



Kibbutz Ketura

You will visit Kibbutz Ketura, the epicenter of Israel's solar energy industry. You'll tour the kibbutz and learn about Israeli solar technology and about the balance that needs to be found between clean energy and protecting open spaces.

Evrona Nature Reserve

Evrona Nature Reserve was devastated after an oil spill in 2014. Home to delicate Dorcas gazelles, other small mammals, and an acacia tree forest, the nature reserve is still recovering. You'll get exclusive access to the scene of Israel's biggest environmental disaster.



Royal Beach Hotel, Eilat

After arrival in Eilat, enjoy an evening at your leisure.

DAY

5

Thursday,
March 23

Eilat International Birding and Research Center

You'll enjoy a VIP tour of this birding hotspot, one of Eilat's top tourist attractions. Visiting at the beginning of the spring migration, you will get a chance to see many different bird species, including flamingoes, and, hopefully, some seasonal rarities.



Coral Reefs

Enjoy a ride on a glass-bottom boat to see Eilat's coral reefs. You'll receive expert insight into why Israel's corals are so resilient and the experimental techniques scientists are using to protect and regenerate them.

Timna Park

You will hike through King Solomon's mines in the Timna Valley and discover some of the amazing geology and landscapes of Timna Valley, including strips of volcanic magma frozen into the cliffs.



Royal Beach Hotel, Eilat

Second night at the Royal Beach Hotel in Eilat.

DAY

6

Friday,
March 24

Ramon Crater, Return from Eilat to Jerusalem

As time allows, we'll break up the drive with stops at various points of interest along the way including within Makhtesh Ramon, the Ramon Crater. We will also stop for lunch in Mitzpe Ramon. We will arrive in Jerusalem or Ben Gurion Airport in late afternoon.



"I was so fortunate to travel to Israel with Nature Israel. I have always wanted to go during fall migration when 500 million birds fly through Israel from Europe and Asia — it's truly amazing!"

Elaine Schmerling
Nature Israel Travel Participant

Cost

\$2,599
Per person in double room

\$3,299
Per person in a single room

Price includes 5-star accommodations from March 6 -11, 2023, private transport, a guide, all activities, breakfast, lunch, and three dinners.

Not included are:

- Tips (\$20 per person per day, collected on the first day).
- Airfare and airport transfer.
- Travel insurance.

Participants should be able to handle light- to moderate-intensity activities. Participants will need to show proof of COVID vaccinations and abide by COVID restrictions.

Register / Questions

To register for the trip, call or email Jessica and she will get back to you regarding payment.

Jessica Lewis, Director of Marketing
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