Israel’s nature is... Diverse Majestic Unique Breathtaking YOURS!

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) invites you to tour, explore and connect with Israel’s nature.
A Special Offer for friends of SPNI abroad: SPNI invites you and your group or family to tour, explore and connect with Israel’s unique nature!

To help introduce you to Israeli nature, SPNI is offering to arrange and guide you and your group on these special nature visits.

We invite you to spend part of your upcoming trip with us in order to see a different side of Israel, to marvel at our natural beauty and biodiversity, and learn how together, we can make our shared world a greener, healthier place for all.

The Society for the Protection of Nature Israel (SPNI), the oldest and largest environmental organization in Israel, works to protect the open spaces and preserve the biodiversity of the land of Israel through environmental activism, education and eco-tourism. A UN-designated "global biodiversity hotspot" at the intersection of three continents and several climatic zones, Israel boasts an astonishing array of flora and fauna supported by a broad range of diverse habitats.

Our motto “Educate. Love. Protect.” emphasizes that we can best protect Israeli nature through environmental education and fostering a love of the outdoors. SPNI offers eco-tourism experiences throughout the country and invites you to let us help you plan an unforgettable nature experience the next time you visit Israel with your family, organization or community.

Your Israeli nature experience can be a one-hour trip to one of our birding stations or urban nature sites or a day-long (or longer!) trek on a portion of the Israel National Trail, a 627-mile long expanse that traverses Israel from north to south, was blazed and is maintained by SPNI, and was declared one of the world’s 20 “epic trails” by National Geographic. No matter the length of your visit and how much time you have to spare, we can customize a nature excursion just for you!

What follows are just a few suggestions for connecting with Israeli nature. For more information or to arrange a visit, please contact us via e-mail at jays@spni.org.il
Jerusalem

**Gazelle Valley Park**
Jerusalem’s Gazelle Valley Park is a world-class example of how nature can be curated to improve the quality of life in a city. An orchard that was saved from construction and rehabilitated as Jerusalem’s biggest open park, the Gazelle Valley Park serves as home to 30 endangered Israeli mountain gazelle that roam freely across a square kilometer of land in perfect harmony with visitors. Within the park, a newly created, artificial wetland system purifies water from the surrounding neighborhoods, attracting waterfowl and migrating birds. Wild herbs and reconstituted orchards can be foraged, and our unique water-level bird blind offers spectacular close-up views of wildlife.  
**Duration: 1 – 3 hours**

**Levi Eshkol House**
Enjoy a guided tour of a place where history was made. This newly restored heritage site, now SPNI’s Jerusalem headquarters, was the official residence of Israel’s first Prime Ministers, David Ben Gurion, Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir (and the site of her famous “kitchen cabinet”). The official exhibition of Levi Eshkol’s life and achievements includes an interactive exhibit and a dramatic 17-minute documentary that focuses on Levi Eshkol’s masterful nation-building and his handling of the Six Day War. A visit can also include a discussion of environmental challenges in Israel’s capital, as the Levi Eshkol House serves as a center for environmental activism in the city. 
**Duration: 1 hour**
Tel Aviv

**ENOSH Restorative Roof Garden**
Discover the healing power of nature firsthand at this roof-top garden, a joint venture between SPNI and ENOSH, the Israeli Mental Health Association. Developed to help patients dealing with severe mental health conditions, the project demonstrates that work in the garden plays an active and important part in the rehabilitation process. During your visit, you will tour the garden and see its state-of-the-art hydroponic systems, as well as meet some of the beneficiaries of this project. You will also see how oils extracted from the plants are used to make beautiful and fragrant natural soaps, and even have an opportunity to pick up some of the aromatic natural products in the gift shop.

*Duration: 1-2 hours*

**Yarkon River Walk and Birding Center**
This riverside walk through a short section of Tel Aviv’s largest park tells the story of Israel’s water supply. Starting at the Tel Aviv pumping stations, you’ll learn about their construction and impact on the river and city, the tragic story of a bridge collapse at the Maccabiah Games (Jewish Olympics), and the processes that have cleaned up the river in the years since. An artificial wetland that was created during this process has become Israel’s newest urban nature attraction, serving as a haven for birds and rare amphibians, as well as the perfect introduction to the environment for young Israelis.

*Duration: 1-2 hours*
Hula Valley
A visit to the Hula Valley is one of the top experiences for bird lovers anywhere in the world. If you visit Israel in the spring or fall, at the height of the migration season, a visit to the Hula Valley must not be missed. Enjoy a trip on our mobile bleachers to see tens of thousands of cranes and storks take off from the Hula Lake as the sun rises over the Golan Heights. During the morning hours, dozens of different species of birds of prey and water birds can be seen throughout the park, visible by an easy walk or bike ride around the nature reserve. **Duration: 3 hours**

Tavor Winery
Helping businesses become sustainable while protecting Israeli nature is one of SPNI’s most important areas of focus, and this joint project with the Tavor Winery has created one of the first ecological vineyards. Combining cutting-edge agricultural technology and environmental science, we have developed a series of protocols that negate the winery’s impact on local biodiversity. You can visit the winery to see the adaptations made to improve conditions for the reptiles and mammals that live in the surrounding hills. This experience can also be combined with a wine tasting and delicious lunch. **Duration: 2-3 hours**

Galilee and the North

Photo: Dov Greenblat

Photo: Dov Greenblat
The Negev and Eilat

Engaging Minorities in Planning
Experience the world’s first Bedouin cities through the eyes of its residents. SPNI empowers residents with the training and tools necessary to actively plan how their city will grow over the coming years, while ensuring that it is green and sustainable. This project is unique for Bedouins, who were primarily nomadic desert wanderers prior to this generation. By working with teenagers and women in the community, we are actively helping the entire population overcome the challenges that come with living in a city. During your visit you will have the opportunity to meet with these impressive young men and women and see how marginalized populations can be successfully engaged in civil society. **Duration: 1-2 hours**

Bat Colonies instead of Border Bunkers
Close to the Qasr-El-Yehud baptismal site on the Jordan River near Jericho, SPNI has begun fulfilling Isaiah’s famous prophecy — “and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares” — with the transformation of old army bunkers from after the Six Day War into roosts for some of Israel’s rare and endangered bat species. As an added bonus, the bats devour insects, acting as natural pesticides for local farmers. You will tour this project with one of Israel’s foremost mammal experts and see firsthand how we are transforming tools of war into symbols of peace and agricultural sustainability. **Duration: 1 hour**

Eilat Birdwatching Center
SPNI’s International Birdwatching and Research Center in Eilat, which was founded in the early 1990’s on what was once an industrial waste site, is a perfect example of cooperation between a local municipality and SPNI. Now situated in a healthy, thriving salt marsh, the Center is one of the most unique and important birding sites in the country. Spring migrants arrive at Eilat immediately after crossing the Sahara, making the region a critical stopover site for millions of birds. The park features a wheelchair accessible boardwalk, several trails, and a set of well situated hides. **Duration: 1-2 hours**
Snorkeling in the Red Sea Marine Reserve
The Coral Reef Nature Reserve is across the road from the Eilat Field School, which leads the “Making a Difference” campaign to protect Eilat’s Gulf and coral reef. Our marine ecologists will take you on a spectacular underwater tour of the coral reserve and teach you about this unique and endangered habitat and the challenges of promoting public awareness of diving and snorkeling without negatively impacting the coral reef and the native sea life. If the tide is out, your visit will also include a tour of the beach’s crucial intertidal zone, an important link in the area’s biodiversity. In addition, the Eilat Field School offers special hiking tours unavailable elsewhere.
Duration: 1-2 hours

Hiking Options
SPNI is responsible for mapping, marking and maintaining all of Israel’s hiking trails. If you are interested in hiking, we would be delighted to design an itinerary in any part of the country that will perfectly match your interests and level of hiking fitness, as well as full information about the Biblical, historical, and archaeological significance of the region chosen.
Duration: Varies by route

Community Garden Project (multiple locations)
It is very special to plant something of your own in the Land of Israel. SPNI supports dozens of community gardening projects around Israel, working with schools, immigrants and municipalities to cultivate their own urban agricultural projects. Gardeners are able to engage with their neighbors in a non-political setting and enjoy abundant harvests of homegrown greens. SPNI can organize a visit and planting activity at any community garden in Israel.
Duration: 1 hour

Nationwide Options:
Nature Defense Force
The Nature Defense Force, a joint project between SPNI and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), promotes conservation projects in army bases across Israel. With 25% of Israel’s land located within closed military zones, including many rare habitats, the IDF must play a crucial role in the country’s conservation efforts. This project challenges base commanders to develop – with professional support and guidance – truly innovative projects to help preserve the environment. These projects are judged by a national panel, and those deemed exceptional receive full funding. Thus far, more than 50 projects have been funded as a part of this initiative, including the creation of wildlife corridors through border fences, islands at sea for birds to rest, and gardens of rare plants that are tended by soldiers from difficult backgrounds. (Special IDF clearance is required to tour these projects).

Duration: 1-3 hour

Become One With Nature: SPNI’s Field Schools
Beginning in the early 1960s, SPNI established a network of field schools embedded in nature that would allow Israeli citizens and tourists from around the world to experience and interact with Israel’s nature in meaningful ways. The idea caught on, and years later, these facilities remain SPNI’s main centers of activity, offering extensive experiential programming, guided tours, and rustic but comfortable lodging in immediate proximity to hiking trails and a wide variety of nature sites. The field school concept is so successful, that it has been replicated throughout Israel and in several countries around the globe.

Visit our field schools for an afternoon or stay for a night or two and experience the unique interaction of man and nature that only they can provide. The schools are located in diverse habitats throughout Israel, as per the map:

Please contact us at jays@spni.org.il to see how you can include a visit to one of these unique conservation projects in your itinerary.