



A Bird's Eye View of the Holy Land

Newsletter no. 16 Spring 2016

White-throated Kingfisher in flight resembles an unreal artwork (Photo: Aharon Shimshon)

Dear friends,

In this newsletter, we will update you on our varied activities, which continue to broaden in scope and increase in volume from year to year, with the subject of birding significantly expanding its impact and presence among the Israeli public.

As this newsletter is coming off the printing press, the third Champion of the Flyways competition is being held in Eilat with the participation of many enthusiastic teams from Israel and abroad. We will report its accomplishments in our next newsletter.

The participation of our team together with the Jordanians and the American musician Paul Winter at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2016 was a great success, and you can read about this in the next article.

In 2016 BirdLife Cyprus joined our Barn Owls and Swifts projects, and we are proud that the two projects have spread wings to Cyprus.

Yossi Leshem will be on his last sabbatical from June 1st 2016 at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, as the guest of Prof. Alexandre Roulin who is an exceptional partner in many of our projects. With joint forces Yossi and Alex plan to use the four months of the sabbatical to promote projects in Europe, with the hope that it is still possible to stop the rapid deterioration in the populations of four vulture species. In Israel two are already extinct and the remaining two in danger of extinction.

The success of the reintroduction of the Bearded Vultures to the Alps and Massif Central in France is a worthy model that we would like to replicate in the Middle East as well, after solving the issue of bird poisonings.

We wish you enjoyable reading, and invite you to support us in promoting our projects in nature conservation, education and bird research in Israel.

Yours,

Prof. Yossi Leshem

Director of the International Center for the Study
of Bird Migration and Secretary of the Hoopoe Foundation

Dan Alon

Director of the Israel Ornithological Center, SPNI

For the most updated birding news
from Israel visit: www.birds.org.il





The national and regional Barn Owls project arrives at the prestigious World Economic Forum at Davos, January 2016



The Barn Owl has replaced the "dove of peace" as the symbol of cooperation in the Middle East

On January 22nd 2016, we organized a 90-minute event "Birds Know No Boundaries - Cross-border Environmental Projects in the Middle East for People and Nature" within the framework of the World Economic Forum at Davos which is attended by 3,000 world leaders and leading economic experts. Six projects were presented at the event,

one of which was the use of Barn Owls as biological pest control agents in agriculture, a highly successful regional project running in partnership with government, academic and public agencies. The event was enthusiastically received by the audience, and the exposure of our projects in this prestigious forum will no doubt significantly help the furthering of our vision.

We invite you to view the following links:

- a presentation of the Davos event: <http://bit.ly/23Dcq1H>; • a movie of the Davos event: <https://youtu.be/HJPhCuNidpw>
- the event booklet: <http://bit.ly/1RYB9rM> (with details of all six projects, for readers interested in contributing towards the projects);
- a presentation of the meeting with Mr. Shimon Peres at the Peres Center for Peace to report on the Davos event: <http://bit.ly/1Pnuntj>



Israel's 9th President, the Honorable Shimon Peres, was meant to present the opening lecture at our event, but due to a mild heart attack he was replaced by his son Chemi Peres, Managing General Partner & Co-Founder of Pitango Venture Capital, the leading venture capital company in Israel, and Chairman of the Peres Center for Peace (Photo: Yossi Leshem)



Event presenters, from left to right: Prof. Alexandre Roulin (University of Lausanne, Switzerland), General (Ret.) Mansour Abu Rashid (Chairman of the Amman Center for Peace and Development, Jordan), Prof. Yossi Leshem (Tel Aviv University and the SPNI, Israel), Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Baruch Spiegel (ECF, Israel) (Photo: Yossi Leshem)



Composer and musician Paul Winter, seven-time Grammy Award winner, opened and closed our event, playing excerpts from his new composition "Flyways" which celebrates bird migration and the music of the countries through which they fly along the Great Rift Valley (Photo: Kay Winter)



February 10th 2016: Meeting with Mr. Shimon Peres after the Davos event at the Peres Center for Peace in Tel Aviv-Jaffa; Prof. Roulin presents Mr. Shimon Peres with the painting of the Bearded Vulture ("Peres" in Hebrew) flying above the Alps, painted especially for him by the Swiss artist Laurent Willenegger (Photo: Yosef Avi Yair Engel (Jucha))

