Nature Israel Discovery Mission

November 6th – 11th 2022

“Israel is literally dotted with lovely corners and even a few species that would have long ago disappeared without SPNI's uncompromising voice.”
Pollution in a Promised Land, an environmental history of Israel – Professor Alon Tal

You are invited to spend a week with us this November to see some of these corners and species that you’ve helped save through your support of SPNI.

For veteran SPNI supporters, this week is a chance for us to show you how thankful we are for your generosity. We want to share with you the finest of Israel’s nature and give you the inside story of how you’ve made a difference in our country.

For first timers to Israel and to SPNI, you’ll see a different, beautiful side to Israel that you never realized existed while learning about the history of one of the world’s oldest environmental organizations.

Experience first-hand a week of spectacular bird migration, unique insights, beautiful nature, and amazing food.
Itinerary

Sunday November 6th

Gazelle Valley

Located in the shadow of the infamous Holyland apartment block, the Gazelle Valley was saved by SPNI and turned into an urban wildlife park. 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.

Levi Eshkol House

Levi Eshkol is arguably Israel's most underappreciated Prime Minister. We will give you a guided tour of Israel’s Historic Prime Ministers’ Residence where you will learn about Levi Eshkol’s impact on Israeli-American relations, developing Israel’s economy and building the National Water Carrier.

Tour of Jerusalem’s Old City

No visit to Israel is complete without a visit to Jerusalem’s Old City. You’ll have a guided tour to the Western Wall, Cardo, and other areas of interest in this important place to all three of the world’s major religions.

Return to hotel to freshen up before dinner as a group

Overnight: David Citadel, Jerusalem

Monday November 7th

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. Now over 50,000 children from Jerusalem and the surrounding area visit the JBO. You’ll be joining them to experience an unforgettable up close bird banding activity and learn about the importance of Israel on bird migration routes.

Kasser El Yahud Baptismal Site
Kasser El Yahud is visited by thousands of Christian pilgrims each year who visit this place where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. It’s here that SPNI is working to fulfill one of Isaiah’s prophecies by turning abandoned army bunkers into roosts for endangered bats.

**Ein Gedi Field School**

SPNI is the biggest provider of environmental education in Israel, including hundreds of classes each year at our network of Field Schools. Iris Hann, our CEO will join you to tell you about our ambitious plans to revolutionize sustainable building in Israel together with experiential environmental education.

**Wadi David Hike**

Enjoy an easy/moderate 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.

Return to Jerusalem for an evening at leisure and dinner on your own

**Overnight:** David Citadel, Jerusalem

**Tuesday November 8th**

**Kfar Ruppin**

Kibbutz Kfar Ruppin on the banks of the Jordan River is home to one of SPNI's most ambitious initiatives – to create an artificial wetland, to support mass bird migration and global biodiversity. You’ll hear about the complexities of managing an artificial wetland and SPNI’s bold goals for replicating this model nationwide.

**Wine Tasting at Tabor Winery**

Israel is home to a dynamic wine industry. On our way north, you will stop at the Tabor Winery for a light lunch and wine tasting. Relax while trying some of the most amazing vintage wines that are grown and bottled here.

**National Water Carrier**

Completed in 1956 Israel’s National Water Carrier is still Israel’s largest infrastructure project. Moving water from the Sea of Galilee/Kinneret across the country, the National Water Carrier is really the foundation for Israel’s modern economy. At your visit to the
Mekorot pumping site, you’ll learn all about the amazing work that went into this incredible feat and also about the current status of Israel’s water economy.

Freshen up at the hotel for dinner as a group

**Overnight:** Pastoral Hotel, Kfar-Blum

### Wednesday November 9th

**Sunrise tour of Hula Valley**

Undoubtedly one of the annual highlights of Israeli nature is the phenomenal experience of watching 40,000 cranes take off from the Hula Valley while the sky rises over the Golan Heights. Bring your binoculars and cameras for one of the best nature experiences available anywhere in the world.

**Tel Dan and Beit Ussishkin**

Before we leave the north, you will enjoy Tel Dan, an hour-long hike mixing together nature and biblical archeology. Tel Dan is home to the Abrahamic Gate which dates back to Canaanite times, the ancient city of Dan and is also one of the main sources of the Dan spring.

Beit Ussishkin is SPNI’s unique museum detailing the geological and natural history of the Galilee and Golan. It’s also home to the Northern Trailhead of the world-famous Israel National Trail.

Although we won’t have time to hike the entire Israel National Trail on this trip, you can take a photo commemorating your first few steps along the path.

**Vulture Breeding Program at Hai Bar Carmel**

Israel’s Griffon Vultures nearly became extinct decades ago, now thanks to your support and partnerships with Israel’s Nature and Parks Authority, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Israel Electrical Company these magnificent birds are having a comeback. You will get a behind the scenes tour of the vulture breeding center at Hai Bar Carmel and learn how your support helps bring populations back from the brink of extinction.

Check into the hotel and freshen up for a free evening at leisure and dinner on own

**Overnight:** Royal Beach Tel Aviv Hotel
Thursday November 10th

IDF’s Officer Training School

SPNI Chairman Yossi ben Artzi is honored to be able to show you around the Israeli Defense Force’s Officer Training School. You will gain a deeper understanding of how leadership in the IDF is cultivated and the proud history behind one of the world’s strongest military forces.

Visit to an Educational Program

SPNI is the Ministry of Education’s partner in developing engaging and informative nature programs for young Israelis. You’ll come away inspired after working with some of the students in an interactive activity.

After lunch, drop off at hotel and a free afternoon in Tel Aviv

Return to the hotel to freshen up and join the group for a closing dinner to reflect on an unforgettable week

Overnight: Royal Beach Tel Aviv Hotel

Optional Mission Add On: Friday November 11th

TLV Balloon

Get a bird’s eye view of Tel Aviv and Israel’s entire central region. From 300 feet up, you’ll gain an appreciation of the difficulties of planning in this complex environment.

Rosh Tzipor Artificial Wetlands

A last chance to enjoy some quiet in nature before heading home in Rosh Tzipor, an artificial wetland created in the middle of Tel Aviv’s Yarkon River. With the help of one of SPNI’s bird guides, you’ll be spotting many different species from the water level.

Carmel Shuk Tour

We will take you straight from the quiet of nature to the bustle of the Carmel Market on Friday. Our guide will lead you on an unforgettable walking, tasting and cultural tour of Tel Aviv’s oldest market and treat you to some of the finest culinary delights in the city.
Prices and Important Information:

Book now through July 25th

We are limited to 40 participants.

Contact Robin Gordon, Director of Donor Relations, at aspni@aol.com or call (516) 466-1781 to arrange payment.

Price per person sharing a double room $2,530
*Single Supplement: $1,310

Price includes accommodations for the week, private transport, guide, all activities, daily breakfast and lunch, and three dinners.

Optional Extras:

Friday Mission add-on: $350 (based on minimum 20 participants)

Not included:

- Tips ($20 per person per day, collected on the first day)
- Airfare and airport transfer not included
- Participants must have their own travel insurance
- Participants should be able to handle light to moderate intensity activities