

# **SPNI's Three-Year Work Plan for Nature Protection: Goals, Areas, and Strategies 2021 – 2023 Summary 2018 – 2020**

January 2021





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# Introductory Remarks and Background

2020 - A process for examining goal achievements, deriving key insights, and setting goals for the coming years

The process of goal setting for 2021-2023 had four key stages:

## A. Examining Previous Goals

The first stage included an analysis of the targets that were defined for each goal, and whether they were fully or partially achieved, or not achieved at all.

Goal	Trend	Symbols Key: Success  Improvement  No change 
		
		
		

## B. Key Insights

The second stage included an analysis of key reasons why objectives were or were not achieved, as well as whether or not goals should continue into the following years.

## C. Setting Goals for 2021-2023

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this be an objective of the department?

In the third stage, it was decided which goals would continue in the following years, according to the analysis of the 2018-2020 objectives and resulting insights. Appropriate adjustments were made.

## D. Defining New Goals

In the fourth stage, the need to define new goals was examined. Several goals were proposed throughout this process, and each was examined in a S.W.O.T analysis.

S.W.O.T Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats





# SPNI's Nature Protection Goals



El Al river, Ramat hagolan | Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# SPNI's Nature Protection Goals

## Primary Goal:

Protecting a wide variety of contiguous and functional ecosystems, while preventing the extinction of various species and habitats.

## Secondary Goals:

1. **Protecting broad open spaces** – SPNI will act to protect large open spaces, at various stages of conservation.
2. **Protecting contiguous open spaces** – SPNI will act to create contiguous open spaces by protecting **ecological corridors** as open ecological bridges, allowing for connectivity and movement through critical bottlenecks.
3. **Protecting representative open spaces** – SPNI will act to protect threatened ecosystems, where less than 30% of their area is protected.
4. **Promoting effective management of open spaces** – SPNI will act to promote management, agricultural stewardship, regulation, and monitoring that will allow for the protection of functional ecosystems. It will do so by **addressing processes that threaten** these systems, such as biological invasion, hunting, poisoning, electrification, altered water flow, low water quality, trampling, deforestation, etc., **and by protecting species** with monitoring, agricultural management, and endangered species protection measures.

To achieve this goals, SPNI will act in an integrated manner:

- A. Statutory protection<sup>1</sup> of areas (habitats, corridors, and protection of open spaces)
- B. Effective management of open spaces (regulation, agricultural management, public communication, etc.)
- C. Addressing processes that threaten these systems (invasion, hunting, poisoning, electrification, altered water flow, low water quality, trampling, deforestation, etc.)

Awareness-raising activities are also needed to achieve these goals. This includes marketing, public relations, and educational activities, to be carried out by the Community and Education Department.

(1) Statutory Protection – the meaning of the word "statutory" is "according to the law." A statutory plan is a plan that has been approved by the law. This refers to protection through planning processes outlined in the law.





# Examination of Achieved Goals, Key Insights, and Goal Setting for 2021–2023



Coastline | Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# Threatened Ecosystems

## Background

The Land of Israel is located at the meeting point of three continents, and is characterized by an impressive diversity of different ecosystems. The following data explain the land's unique and impressive diversity of animal and plant species and landscapes. However, despite the existence of many protected areas, and efforts to increase the amount of protected spaces, existing nature reserves do not sufficiently protect all types of ecosystems in Israel, although new reserves have been proposed or are in various stages of approval. Often, destructive processes occur even in ecosystems that have achieved statutory protection, due to insufficient management by conservation authorities. Many ecosystems in Israel lack sufficient protection, and less than 30% of their area is protected in nature reserves. Additionally, several suffer from various threats, such as the introduction of invasive species, pollution, damage by vehicles, and more.

## Vision

Growing the percentage of areas with statutory protection for all selected ecosystems.

## Goals

- Increase statutory protection for all selected ecosystems
- Increase public protection for those ecosystems
- Improved management of those ecosystems leading to improvement in the status of resident species.

### Examination of Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Increase statutory protection for all selected ecosystems	➡
Increase public protection for those ecosystems	➡
Improved management of those ecosystems leading to improvement in the status of resident species	➡

### Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
The key reason for the lack of success in meeting these goals was the lack of an appropriate platform to promote this goal, and lack of clear leadership in the department.	This should continue to be a goal, as long as there is an appropriate platform, and an entity that will take responsibility for it.

# Strengthening Protection of Threatened Ecosystems

## 2021–2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
Increasing the percentage of protected areas in representative habitats to 30%	<p>Promotion of new nature reserves and gardens through the strategic plan for open spaces. The goal is to promote statutory additions through an amendment to National Outline Plan / TAMA 1 or another format.</p> <p><b>Goal: Launching a statutory process within a year.</b></p> <p>At the same time, underrepresented habitats should be promoted in a different protection format, in areas where reserves cannot be established:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A mechanism to manage wetland habitats in a non-reserve format is needed.</li><li>2. There are habitats that do not have enough area to be represented. New thinking should be promoted regarding this subject. Restoration of habitats (mostly on agricultural land, abandoned mines, and more) should be proposed.</li><li>3. We wish to increase the percentage of protected areas of representative habitats from 17% to 30%</li></ol>

# Ecological Corridors

## Background

Open, contiguous spaces are necessary to protect biodiversity and functional ecosystems. A lack of continuity between open spaces prevents genetic exchange between populations, which is necessary for a species' long-term survival. Isolated populations, whose movements are limited, are characterized by low genetic diversity and are more sensitive to diseases and changes in their environment. As a result, these populations are weaker and more vulnerable. Therefore, they are at greater risk of extinction.

An ecological corridor is an open area that is not subject to changes in time or space, that connects two natural areas. The area of this corridor allows for full life cycles and the movement of a wide variety of organisms. Protecting the functionality of these ecological corridors is an important tool in protecting the health of species populations in open areas. They also ensure the functioning, vitality, and survival of ecosystems. The corridor's quality depends on the area it covers, its width, and vegetative infrastructure (which provides most animals with a basis for movement, camouflage, nesting, sleeping, and finding food). Wider corridors are more efficient. Corridors with more natural and local vegetation are of a higher quality.

Corridors are primarily threatened by highways, and the development of towns and industrial zones. However, they can also be threatened by agricultural structures, reservoirs, quarries, energy and infrastructure installations, antennas, artificial forests, recreational areas in forests and open areas.

## Vision

Ecological corridors on national, district, and local levels, that are effectively managed and functional.

## Goals

- Promotion and regulation of ecological corridors in national planning in Israel.
- Strategic planning for corridors: Locating areas where national ecological corridors are under threat, then mapping and preparing an action plan; establishing statutes (regulation in national plans, in the framework of the Planning and Building Law), detailed at the district level; developing planning tools (such as plans for open areas) and agricultural management (tools for stewardship, like grazing, supervision and regulation, fencing, monitoring and more) for selected corridors.
- Establishing statutes and agricultural management for an eastern national corridor.

## Examination of Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Promotion and regulation of ecological corridors in national planning in Israel	↑
Strategic planning for corridors: mapping and preparing an action plan; establishing statutes; district-level details; developing planning tools	↑
Establishing statutes and agricultural management for an eastern national corridor	↑

## Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
Success was possible due to the integration of strategic processes and leadership at the Planning Administration, persistence, and pro-activity.	This should be defined as a goal for future years, to complete these processes and bring about approved plans. Similarly, the topic of management should be expanded.



Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# Protection and Management of Ecological Corridors

## 2021-2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
1. Promoting partial District Master Plans in all districts	<p>Each coordinator will promote a District Master Plan in coordination with environmental organizations in their district.</p> <p>1. Central District - The District Master Plan has passed at the district level and should reach the Committee for Key Planning Issues. We will advance our notes and amendments to the District Master Plan until its final approval. <b>The goal is to have it approved within a year.</b></p> <p>2. Haifa District - The plan is being worked on at the district level. We will bring the plan to the District Advisory Committee. Together with the coordinator, we will put pressure on the Planning Administration to advance the plan as a partial District Master Plan. <b>The goal is to have the District Master Plan approved within the next two years.</b></p> <p>3. Southern District - A partial District Master Plan was approved by a majority of the district, and there is already a desire to have it approved by the full district. We are promoting it in the District Advisory Committee. <b>The goal is to have the District Master Plan approved within the next two years.</b></p> <p>4. Northern District - We are mapping the corridors in order to begin a process similar to the other districts. We will lead the mapping and the beginning of the District Master Plan. <b>The goal is to have the District Master Plan approved within the next two years.</b></p> <p>5. Jerusalem District - In contrast to the other districts, in the Jerusalem District, the goal is to have the core reserve approved as a corridor, as well as other contested areas and bottlenecks. We will promote this issue with the district. <b>The goal is to begin the work process within a year.</b></p>
2. Incorporating the corridors in comprehensive plans	<p><b>The comprehensive plans at the level of Regional Councils and municipalities continue to advance. Each coordinator will push for the incorporation of corridors at the local level as part of comprehensive plans, together with their planning teams. We will collaborate with the Planning Administration to assist the work with the comprehensive plans and the incorporation of the corridors.</b></p>

Goals	Targets
3. Promotion of corridor management and supervision as a complimentary and important aspect of planning	<p>Legal advances are one side of the coin. The subject of ecological corridor management should be promulgated in order to receive the best possible protection. We will promote a management and supervision format among environmental organizations, the Agriculture Ministry, regional councils, and the Planning Administration. Additionally, a regional council will be selected to pilot a management and supervision format for the corridors. <b>The goal is to begin a pilot with a year, and to have a working group on a management format within a year.</b></p>
4. Protection of bottlenecks on a national level	<p>Promoting a buffer around bottlenecks<sup>2</sup> - this has already been discussed at the Committee for Key Planning Issues and sent to the district level. <b>The goal is to complete a new protection format for preservation areas within the next two years.</b></p>



Photo by: Dov Greenblat

(2) Bottleneck - an area within an ecological corridor that limits the movement of species and can create a separation in the continuity of the corridor, due to factors such as: the size of the area, shape of the area, land use, and activity in the bottleneck or next to it.



# Impeding Destructive Development

## Background

Open areas are all areas that are not built up, within developed areas and outside of them. They have significant natural value, including landscapes and agricultural and national heritage sites. Many uses and functions fall under this wide definition, including nature preserves, national parks, forests, agricultural areas, parks, recreational sites, whole landscapes, heritage sites and architectural ruins, riverbeds, springs, and beaches. Israel is blessed with a variety of landscapes, sites, and animal and plant species. It is known as one of the most biologically diverse places in the world. Its open spaces contain habitats and ecosystems which provide people with a variety of free services (services of these ecosystems) that are necessary for human survival.

Israel is a small country, with an increasing population and an economy with accelerated growth. Israel suffers from rapid development and construction, at the expense of these open areas.

The continuity of open areas in Israel has shrunk in recent years, as some areas are cut off by infrastructure projects, new development projects, and population growth. The need for recreational sites creates additional pressure and further crowds the remaining open areas.

## Vision

A clear policy for the State of Israel regarding the protection of open spaces. Successful implementation of sustainable development.

## Goals

- Strengthening the protection of open spaces in National Outline Plan No. 1 (TAMA 1)
- Cancellation of planning committees for Preferred Housing Areas and the return of planning to the district level
- Stopping initiatives to create new rural villages
- Promotion of a national housing plan directed towards areas that are not sensitive to development

## Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Strengthening the protection of open spaces in National Outline Plan No. 1 (TAMA 1)	↑
Cancellation of planning committees for Preferred Housing Areas and the return of planning to the district level	↗
Stopping initiatives to create new rural villages	↑
Promotion of a national housing plan directed towards areas that are not sensitive to development	↑

## Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
The planning system as a whole has shifted, and we have encountered fewer plans that would be destructive.	However, these kinds of plans appear continuously, and we need to stay alert. This is a long-term goal and part of our ongoing work.



Jordan Valley | Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# Sustainable Planning

## 2021–2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
Cancellation of the National Planning and Construction Committee for Preferred Housing Areas	The overall goal is the cancellation of this committee. An alternative goal is shrinking its authority to urban renewal and the Haredi and Arab sectors.
Minimizing the destruction of key areas in long-term planning	Moderating conflicts between key areas and development needs through the Strategic Plan for Open Spaces.
Minimizing the destruction of key areas in strategic plans for housing and employment	Removal of problematic area in the Strategic Plan for Housing and Employment.
Shrinking the gap between planning and implementation by highlighting the supervision of plan implementation	A report that examines the gap between planning and execution by providing examples, and proposing solutions to shrink this gap. This is budget-dependent, and an effort will be made to pool funds with the Nature and Parks Authority and the Environmental Protection Ministry.
Blocking the trend of new roads and infrastructure for private cars	Presentation of a holistic approach that prefers public transportation, which will serve as the basis for expert opinions regarding plans for new highways. This is conditional upon the budget for transportation consulting, and a request for funding will be submitted.
Promotion of policies that encourage renewable energy use, that are not at the expense of natural areas	Preventing violation of the policies that were outlined at the national committee, for reaching 30% renewable energy. Preparation of an expert opinion that will allow formation and advancement of polices relating to solar energy facilities that integrate agricultural use (agro-voltage). This is dependent on the budget, and possibilities for funding from the Environmental Protection Ministry will be examined.



The English Forest | Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# Rehabilitation of Streams

## Background

Streams and healthy wetland habitats are necessary for nature protection, because they provide important ecological services, such as the management of flooding and run-off in water basins, water filtration to remove sediment and organic pollutants, and the protection of unique biodiversity. Additionally, streams are important for nature conservation, because they serve as corridors that contribute to ecological continuity and the biodiversity of natural systems. They also serve as excellent recreational sites, in both agricultural and urban areas. **Despite their great importance to human survival, streams, wetland habitats, and springs have been several damaged by agricultural and urban development.**

### Three key factors damage streams:

- A. Drought and Drying Up:** Most springs in Israel are designated for agricultural use and their water does not flow in rivers.
- B. Pollution:** All rivers in agricultural areas suffer from run-off (especially the streams in the coastal plain and the valleys).
- C. Engineering of streams and their transformation into drainage channels:** All rivers in agricultural areas have been realigned and rerouted, in order to straighten their paths, to create agricultural fields on their banks, and to transform the streams into drainage channels. This has damaged the functioning of the ecosystems and biodiversity in the wetland habitats around them (streams in the coastal plain and the valleys).

Eco-hydrological rehabilitation emphasizes ecological aspects (such as the structure of the river channel, the width of the channel and slope of its banks, the path of its turns, streambed vegetation) and hydrological aspects (the amount of water that flows in the stream, the water source, water quality, timing of water flow, etc.).

## Vision

Central rivers will be rehabilitated, pollutants will be removed, and the original natural water flow will return (as possible). They will function as healthy, stable, diverse ecosystems, that provide necessary ecological services, as well as high quality recreational sites for the Israeli public.

## Goals

### Regarding the restoration of water flow in the rivers

- A conceptual shift away from allocating water to nature (nature as a consumer), to releasing the springs and restoring natural water flow.
- The Water Authority will take responsibility for the restoration of the water flow in streams (including funding and implementing Water Plans for the streams and implementing a Master Water Plan for Nature).
- Releasing the springs at the Jordan River headwaters (above the Kinneret), and advancing real change in the management of natural water resources in the basin.
- Releasing the springs in Emek HaMa'ayanot and rehabilitating the springs in the Lower Galilee.
- Strengthening the public aspects of water resource management: creation of a regulatory public water committee and strengthening public engagement mechanisms in the water sector.

### Regarding the (eco-hydrological) rehabilitation of riverbed areas

- A conceptual shift away from the paradigm of draining and routing streams, to a paradigm of eco-hydrological rehabilitation of streams.
- Bolstering environmental considerations in regulatory activity regarding drainage and rivers. Transforming state authorities into significant actors in (sustainable) management of water and land resources, and biodiversity in river basins, for the benefit of restoration.
- Returning responsibility for rehabilitation of streams to the Environmental Protection Ministry through the Rivers Law.
- Quick advancement and funding of solutions to prevent pollution of streams in routine and emergency situations.

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Rehabilitation of Rivers	
Goals	Trend
A conceptual shift away from the paradigm of draining and routing streams, to a paradigm of eco-hydrological rehabilitation of streams.	↗
Bolstering environmental considerations in regulatory activity regarding drainage and streams.	↗
Returning responsibility for rehabilitation of streams to the Environmental Protection Ministry through the Rivers Law.	→
Quick advancement and funding of solutions to prevent pollution of streams in routine and emergency situations.	→



Flow Restoration	
Goals	Trend
A conceptual shift away from allocating water to nature (nature as a consumer), to releasing the springs and restoring natural water flow.	↗
The Water Authority will take responsibility for the restoration of the streamflow	↗
Releasing the springs at the Jordan River headwaters (above the Kinneret), and advancing real change in the management of natural water resources in the basin.	↗
Releasing the springs in Emek HaMa'ayanot and rehabilitating the springs in the Lower Galilee.	→
Strengthening the public aspects of water resource management: creation of a regulatory public water committee and strengthening public engagement mechanisms in the water sector.	→

Key Insights and Future Predictions

	Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
Rehabilitation of Rivers	Over the years, and together with the Foundation supporting this, the project goals have been modified and refined. A team has been created and began work this year.	Definitely, depending on the current objectives.
Flow Restoration	Responsibilities for this goal were divided among many areas, with limited staff. Therefore, several of the targets were not successfully met. Over the past years, the goals were updated and a working group was formed.	Definitely, depending on the current objectives.

Rehabilitation of Rivers

2021–2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
Conceptual change: from a paradigm of draining and routing rivers, to a paradigm of eco-hydrological rehabilitation of rivers.	1. Changing the Drainage Law 2. Expanding the responsibilities of the Drainage Authorities as part of the Rivers and Springs Law 3. Raising awareness among policymakers through public pressure – Carnival at the Stream, various activities with streams 4. Reviving the Rivers Lobby and promoting the issue in Knesset
Strengthening environmental actions and public engagement of the Drainage and Riverbeds Authorities	1. Field trips and workshops regarding the challenges in the water basin, and the need to provide natural solutions for streams 2. Enlisting coordinators for public engagement and river rehabilitation for drainage authorities in need
Promoting detailed planning and guidance principles that require the protection and rehabilitation of rivers on a national, district, and local level – a new conceptual framework of river environments (like the beach environment)	Advancing this idea on all planning levels 1. Incorporation in National Outline Plan 47/N 2. Advancing a change to National Outline Plan 1 3. Promoting this idea in new National Outline Plans relating to water basins 4. Integration in comprehensive plans 5. Implementation at drainage facilities and inclusion in detailed plans
Quick advancement and funding of solutions to prevent pollution of rivers, in both routine and emergency situations.	1. An expert economic opinion on taxing runoff into the rivers 2. An expert legal opinion on the required change in the approval process 3. An expert ecological opinion on the damages caused by the runoff of brackish water and sewage into riverbeds
Restoration of natural water flow in rivers and springs, and protection of wetlands	Improving water flow in coastal streams by implementing a government decision to return water flow to seven rivers, and advance funded water plans to release spring water.  Connecting separated regions through an exchange that will improve nature and ecosystems in rivers and springs. Selection of an option to directly connect the area above the Kinneret, instead of an option that will do so through the Kinneret.  Removal of blockages in riverbeds, that is, dams and reservoirs. Prevention of destructive reservoirs and support of reservoirs that do not damage natural water flow.  An action plan to protect water habitats, due to climate change in Israel.



# Protection of Marine Environments

## Background

Despite the large size of Israel's marine area (about 26,000 km2), it receives limited attention. Much is hidden when it comes to marine nature, but we know that it contains magical, fascinating, and fragile nature: turtles, wandering schools of blue snapper tuna, predatory fish, colorful sponges, and a rich variety of reef formations.

The health of the Mediterranean Sea is critical for our existence: most of our drinking water comes from the Mediterranean Sea, as well as our food (fishing), cooling for critical infrastructure (electricity), and imports. The sea also generates oxygen and moderates climate change through carbon fixation. We have limited ability to address some of the threats to the Mediterranean Sea (climate change and biological invasion through the Suez Canal). However, there are dangers that we can prevent and minimize: overfishing, destructive infrastructure development, the release of dangerous materials during energy drilling, sound and light pollution, and damage to the flow of sand.

One of the ways to protect the marine environment is by promoting sustainable fishing, which considers fish a resource to be protected for future generations. In order to practice sustainable fishing, there must be surveys to examine the state of the fish population, to gather data on fishing quantities, and to examine how fishing fleets gather their catch. These data allow us to estimate the fish stock left in the sea, and inform decisions regarding an endangered resource. An additional way to protect the marine environment is to promote the Marine Areas Law, which will define the sea regions close to Israel's coast and establish the rights, obligations, and powers of the State of Israel, in law. The law is meant to apply Israeli law to Israel's economic waters, where gas and oil drilling occurs, as well as to add capabilities to the Energy and National Infrastructures Ministry.

## Vision

The Mediterranean Sea thrives and functions as a healthy ecosystem, providing infrastructure for rich biodiversity, is resilient to climate change, contains a stable population of local species, and provides necessary ecosystem services for the human population. The nation treats the Mediterranean Sea as a natural resource, and manages it in order to protect it as a healthy ecosystem: in legislation, regional planning, research and monitoring, environmental management of reserves, sustainable fishing, and secure infrastructure. The public recognizes the importance of the sea its natural value, and actively participates in protecting it and motivating policymakers to effectively manage it.

## Goals

- Establishment, management, and regulation of marine nature reserve areas, as No-Take Zones (areas where there are limits on human activity, in order to protect the resources of the area), to include at least 20% of Israel's marine area (territorial waters + reserves in economic waters).
- Strictly enforced sustainable fishing (by the Nature and Parks Authority). Creation of a fishing culture that abides with the law and respects the sea, including endangered species.
- Regulation of regional planning to establish environmental principles in marine areas, within a legal framework.
- Passing the Marine Areas Law, which provides appropriate environmental, planning, and public infrastructure to manage the economic waters, including implementation of environmental and public audit mechanisms for gas and oil drilling.
- Involving policy makers, relevant communities, and the general public to engage with marine protection.

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Establishment, management, and regulation of marine nature reserve areas, as No-Take Zones, to include at least 20% of Israel's marine area (territorial waters + reserves in economic waters).	↑
Strictly enforced sustainable fishing. Creation of a fishing culture that abides with the law and respects the sea, including endangered species.	↗
Regulation of regional planning to establish environmental principles in marine areas, within a legal framework.	↑
Passing the Marine Areas Law, which provides appropriate environmental, planning, and public infrastructure to manage the economic waters.	→
Involving policy makers, relevant communities, and the general public to engage with marine protection.	↗



Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
Success requires leadership, focus, and a budget. There was an effective lobby to assist public pressure, as well as organized, scientifically backed work by the staff.	Definitely, depending on the current objectives

Protection of Marine Environments

2021–2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
Establishment, management, and regulation of marine nature reserve areas, as No-Take Zones	To include at least 20% of Israel's marine area (territorial waters + 10% reserved in economic waters).
Marine Areas Law	Passing the Marine Areas Law, which provides appropriate environmental, planning, and public infrastructure to manage the economic waters, including implementation of environmental and public audit mechanisms for gas and oil drilling, fishing, and infrastructure for nature reserves.
Sustainable Fishing	Strictly enforced sustainable fishing (by the Nature and Parks Authority). Creation of a fishing culture that abides with the law and respects the sea, including endangered species.
Regulating regional planning	Regulating regional planning that establishes environmental principles in the marine region, in a legal framework, and implements guidelines for protecting nature from development initiatives in the sea.
Involving policy makers with the public	Involving policy makers, relevant communities, and the general public to participate in protecting the sea, through real-time reporting of damage, activism, and engagement on social media.



Achziv Beach, Mediterranean Coast | Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# Urban Nature

## Background

Because 90% of Israel's residents are concentrated in cities, urban nature areas have great importance. Beyond their low costs of maintenance, natural areas in cities help moderate environmental damage, shape the character of the city, and of course, provide educational and recreational activities for city residents. Urban nature sites, aside from preserving natural resources, are meant to create a space for the general public to encounter unique natural resources that are nearby, low-cost, and accessible. Urban nature sites engage the public in many ways: involvement in research, educational activities, recreational activity, and even maintenance of the site itself.

## Vision

All cities in Israel have performed urban nature surveys, which are implemented as part of each city's master plan. Urban nature sites are established by law, managed by urban ecologists, and maintained through community engagement.

## Goals

- Integration of urban nature surveys in policy papers and urban master plans
- Establishment of urban nature sites in cities, and management by urban ecologists
- Raising awareness about the importance of protecting urban nature, in the eyes of the public and policymakers

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Integration of urban nature surveys in policy papers and urban master plans	↑
Establishment of urban nature sites in cities, and management by urban ecologists	↑
Raising awareness about the importance of protecting urban nature, in the eyes of the public and policymakers	↑

### Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
Cooperation with the Environmental Protection Ministry to publish an Open Call for 2020–2022, to enact surveys and policies and expand the circle of authorities dealing with this issue.	Yes, while updating the goals.

# Urban Nature

## 2021–2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
Integrating the urban environment within nature conservation in Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of field methods in the organization</li><li>• Promoting the topic in government ministries</li><li>• Fundraising for the issue</li><li>• PR in traditional and social media</li></ul>
Creation of a national data center for urban natural infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating contracts and conducting surveys of urban nature</li></ul>
Legal and regulatory integration of the subject of urban nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Defining the concept of urban nature in National Outline Plans</li><li>• Integration of urban nature in comprehensive plans</li><li>• Urban nature listed as one of the outcomes of the Strategic Plan for Open Spaces</li></ul>
Promoting sustainable planning and management of natural infrastructure in cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of data collection at all levels of urban planning and management in Israel</li><li>• Training relevant staff in government ministries and municipalities</li></ul>
Promoting the establishment of urban nature sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of urban nature sites</li><li>• Guiding planning</li><li>• Operation</li></ul>



# Birds

## Background

Israel has one of the richest collections of bird species relative to its area, with more than 530 different species of birds here during various seasons. According to the most recent Red Book findings, 65 species of birds are seriously endangered at present, in contrast to only 38 such species in 2002. This is caused by changes to and destruction of natural habitats, poisoning, electrification, hunting, damage from agricultural nets, invasive species, and more.

## Vision

Improvement in the state of birds in Israel, with an emphasis on the protection of endangered species and functional and contiguous ecosystems.

## Goals

- Improvement in the state of birds in Israel, with an emphasis on endangered species
- Protection of functional and contiguous ecosystems

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Improvement in the state of birds in Israel, with an emphasis on endangered species	↗
Protection of functional and contiguous ecosystems	↗

### Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
A large team is committed to this. There is space to set goals that go beyond bird protection, even while focusing on that.	Definitely, according to the current objectives, and while expanding to include all wild animals.

# Wild Animals and Birds

## 2021–2023 Goals

Goals	Targets
Increasing the protection of water reservoirs, fish ponds, and artificial water sources that sustain a variety of birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitioning 2000–2500 dunam of fish ponds to ecologically oriented management, to protect wetland habitats and connect them to riverbed systems</li> </ul>
New nesting atlas – preparing maps of nests for all nesting bird species in Israel. These data layers will be used by SPNI in the next version of the Red Book and in conservation plans for endangered species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused surveys, funded by the Nature and Parks Authority, Open Spaces Fund, other foundations.</li> <li>• Setting defined birdwatching protocols in the designated eBird protocol prepared for this purpose</li> <li>• Focused field surveys of habitat areas, with the assistance of volunteers and the Bird Team</li> </ul>
Strengthening legislation to protect wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing the Wildlife Law (prohibiting hunting for sport and increasing penalties)</li> <li>• Poisoning Law – increasing supervision, enforcement, and penalties for poisoning</li> </ul>
Significant strengthening of the Mammals Center as a joint unit with the Ornithological Center, or as an adjusted and shared work interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening and integrating partnerships between the Mammals Center and the Ornithological Center</li> <li>• Ongoing and effective activity of the Ecology Forum as a leading professional body in the field</li> </ul>
Completion of regional bird centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete implementation of government decision to create regional bird centers</li> </ul>

# New Work Plan Goals for 2021-2023

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A view from the Golan Heights to Mount Hermon | Photo by: Dov Greenblat

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# Climate Crisis

## Background

Last year, the organization decided to define this subject as a central and cross-organizational goal. The department has begun to focus its activity on the topic, while connecting it to the ecological crisis, and intends to create nature based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This goal must be further defined, after which it will serve as the basis for an organizational work plan for implementation.

## Vision

Creation of a updated climate policy in Israel, with an emphasis on nature conservation, damage prevention, and nature-based solutions to meet the challenges of climate change.

## Goals

- Gathering scientific information on the climate change impact on ecosystems in Israel, and what is needed to protect them from a warming planet.
- Transforming this information into policies to protect nature in a warming planet.
- Examining policies with economic and legal tools.
- Promoting climate policies that support nature in Israel, including legislation, institutional mechanisms, planning, and additional tools.
- Preventing engineered solutions that harm nature in attempting to address climate change impacts.



# Changing the Culture of Littering, and Waste Reduction in Public Spaces (Budget-Dependent)

## Background

Last year, the organization began to deal with waste reduction in public spaces, with the understanding that this issue expresses the relationship between people, nature, and open spaces. Waste (mostly organic) thrown into nature can harm wildlife. Our actions were led by the Education Department. It is proposed that the organization raise funds to consistently engage in additional fields that affect nature conservation in open areas.

## Vision

Public spaces and open areas in Israel are clean and free of waste, as a result of social change: the public no longer litters in open areas. There is a regulatory, infrastructural, and enforcement framework for all types of waste in public places.

## Goals

- Promoting proposed legislation to increase penalties and enforcement
- Implementing a pilot with at least one local authority or with a regional authority, like the Drainage Authority
- Improvement of cleanliness on IDF bases through the Nature Protection Army
- Improvement of cleanliness in open spaces, beyond trash cans
- Addressing construction waste that is left in open spaces and preparing a report together with other organizations.





# Topics and Goals from 2018–2020 not included in the 2021–2023 Work Plan

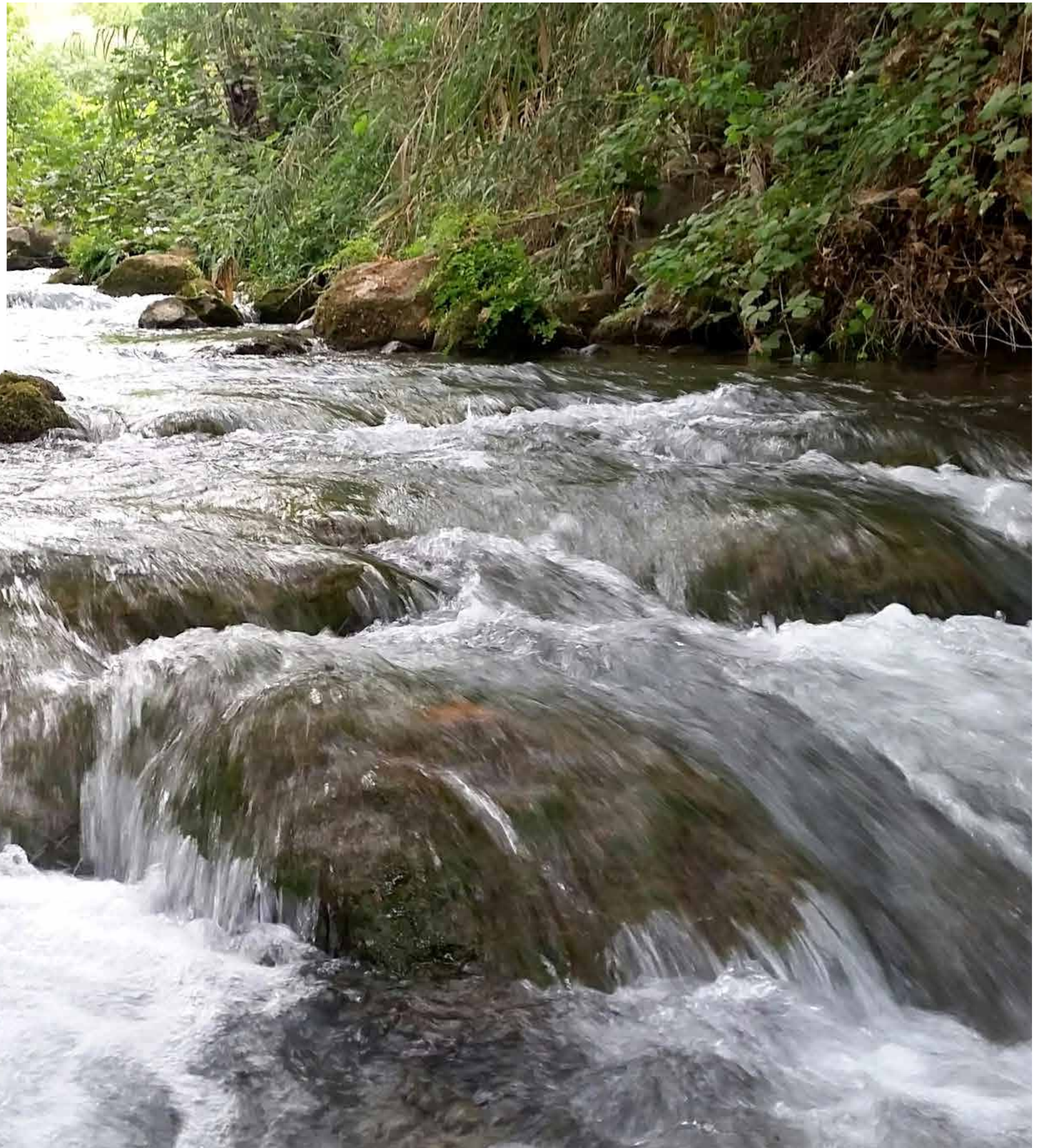


Photo by: Dov Greenblat



# Hot Spots - Critical Sites for Biodiversity Conservation

## Background

To conserve biodiversity, it is essential to preserve sites and habitats that are not already protected. Conservation is critical to maintain biodiversity and the system services that they provide for the health and welfare of the public. These are usually small sites, ranging in size from a couple to a hundred dunam, and are critical for the protection of Israel's biodiversity. The Deshe Institute is leading this work to identify, map, and classify these sites, as well as describe the threats facing them. This work is the basis for dealing with hot spots.

## Vision

Hot spots for biodiversity conservation are protected by law or through public recognition.

## Goals

- Increased legal protection of hot spots for biodiversity
- Increased protection of biodiversity hot spots by the public
- Improved management of these sites, leading to improvements endangered species status'

## Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Increased legal protection of hot spots for biodiversity	➔
Increased protection of biodiversity hot spots by the public	➔
Improved management of these sites, leading to improvements endangered species status'	➔

## Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
Lack of success, due to lack of leadership or appropriate platform to promote this issue	This goal was changed to the protection of sites with ecological significance (Hot Spots, wetland habitats, springs, etc.), that are not suitable to be a nature preserve or national park, and could be advanced through the Strategic Plan for Open Spaces



# Sustainable Energy

## Background

In Israel today, there are many development initiatives in the energy sector. These include creating energy pumping stations, attempts to produce oil from shale, wind turbines, solar energy, extracting natural gas from marine reservoirs, and more. These initiatives are advanced on an ad-hoc basis, without a comprehensive approach. As a result, there is an urgent need to create a national policy for the energy sector.

Encouraging conservation and energy efficiency, and transitioning to an energy sector based on natural gas and renewable energy, are central foundations for Israel's energy policy. World experience shows that investment in conservation and intelligent consumption of electricity is more effective than investment in new energy production methods. In addition to solving critical power shortages, energy efficiency has many additional benefits, such as reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, lower dependency on imported energy sources, preservation of open areas, and more.

## Vision

SPNI helps promote a mixture of renewable energy sources, based on roof solar panels.

## Goals

- Promoting solar energy on roofs
- Preventing increased use of wind energy
- Sustainable electricity production through natural gas

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Promoting solar energy on roofs	↑
Preventing increased use of wind energy	↑
Sustainable electricity production through natural gas	↘

### Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
SPNI's approach has been adopted by policymakers, including the Planning Administration.	The central goals have been achieved. However, it is estimated that the tension between various renewable energy sources will only increase in years to come. As the subject arises, it will be addressed as part of the ongoing planning process.





# Establishing Reserves

## Background

Nature reserves that are established by law are the most effective instrument to protect open spaces and ecosystems. The Nature and Parks Authority has responsibility for the nature reserves, and they are supervised and managed by ecologists and rangers. Alongside its enforcement capabilities, the Nature and Parks Authority has capacity to effectively manage these areas. The process of declaring a nature reserve is lengthy, with many steps, such as obtaining approval from the Defense Minister or the Antiquities Authority, coordinating with local authorities, and more. An approved reserve is a space whose purpose has been approved, but has not yet finished the declaration process.

## Vision

Approved nature reserves will be expanded and formalized, in order to legally protect their open spaces, ecological corridors, and threatened ecosystems.

## Goals

- Advancing the declaration of planned, approved nature reserves
- Expanding existing nature reserves
- Identifying new spaces that could be nature resources, and beginning the planning and approval process

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018–2020

Goals	Trend
Advancing the declaration of planned, approved nature reserves	↑
Expanding existing nature reserves	↗
Identifying new spaces that could be nature resources, and beginning the planning and approval process	↑

### Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
Significant progress has been achieved following several years where declarations were delayed. This is primarily due to changes in the Interior Ministry, and the prioritization by the Nature and Parks Authority and SPNI	More ambitious goals could be defined in the Strategic Plan to increase the percentage of protected representative habitats from 17% to 30%. This goal will go under Strengthening the Protection of Threatened Ecosystems



The lagoon in Achziv | Photo by: Dov Greenblat

# Invasive Species

## Background

Invasive species are species where individuals leave their natural habitat as a result of human activity (intentionally or accidentally) and cause changes in natural ecosystems, while harming local species. This change causes serious damage to agriculture, economy, and health. Examples in Israel include the **small fire ant** which stings humans, the **Asian tiger mosquito**, which transmits diseases like the West Nile Virus, and **ragweed**, a plant that damages agricultural fields. Increased international trade and merchandise imports to Israel, and the lack of legislation to prevent the entry of invasive species (through an audit system and supervising this trade), have led to a rise in invasive species in Israel's ecosystems. This invasion is exacerbated by other processes, such as land damaged by development and infrastructure work, climate change catalyzing tropical invasive species viability, and the lack of an efficient mechanism to eliminate invasive species following their arrival.

## Vision

Israel is appropriately prepared to prevent damages from invasive species. Invasive species are monitored, and there is an organized process to minimize the harm caused by invasive species, and to prevent their spread.

## Goals

- Preventing new invasive species arrivals in Israel
- Minimizing the damage caused by invasive species and preventing their spread

### Examining Progress on Objectives in 2018-2020

Goals	Trend
Preventing of new invasive species arrivals in Israel	➡
Minimizing the damage caused by invasive species and preventing their spread	➡

### Key Insights and Future Predictions

Key Insights Regarding Success / Lack of Success	Should this continue to be a goal of the department?
The goals were not achieved due to lack of budget and staff.	This subject is significant for nature conservation in Israel, but due to the lack of appropriate resources, we have no real capability to advance it on a system level.





