

Eilat Bird Festival 2025

23 – 26 March 2025

We are delighted to announce registration is open for Eilat Bird Festival 2025, offering an amazing program of birding in Eilat and the Arava.

Hosted by Birdlife Israel, the Eilat Bird Festival brings together birders from the world over for an unforgettable 4 days of birds, migration and nature during the peak of spring migration.



Caspian Plover - Spring 2021 Photo: Ezra Hadad

Eilat is one of the most impressive locations to experience the spring migration spectacle as millions of birds funnel through the area on their way north from Africa to Europe and Asia. A large variety of habitats from salt marsh and ponds to agricultural fields and kibbutz gardens. As well as the natural desert environment, provide important stopover sites for the birds who are looking for food and water after their long crossing of the Sahara Desert.

The Festival is based in Eilat and takes in all the major sites and key species of Southern Israel. Over 200 species of birds is possible as well as a nice list of reptiles and mammals. Highlights include: Black Scrub Robin, Steppe Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Greater Flamingo, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Namaqua Dove, Arabian Bee-eater, Dead Sea Sparrow and so much more.

Once again the Festival will be based at the Kibbutz Eilat Country Lodging just outside of the city and away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Eilat. The Kibbutz welcomes us with friendly hospitality, clean comfortable rooms surrounded by the beautiful kibbutz gardens, great food and beautiful views of the surrounding mountains.

There is no doubt that the Eilat Bird Festival is by far the best value package for birding Eilat and southern Israel during the peak of spring migration. We are happy to continue providing the perfect platform to your amazing birding experience. The tour is led by the best tour leaders in Israel, so make sure to book your package soon. We thank our followers and many returning clients which are a testament to the quality of the event. See you in the field, the Eilat Festival team.

The Eilat Bird Festival includes:

- Pickup and transfer from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on day 1.
Drop off in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem on last day (day 4).
- 3 nights at Eilat guest house cottages on HB basis (Breakfast and dinner included)
- Birding program at some of the best hotspots in southern Israel.
- All transportation within the country in comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles.
- All entry fees are included.

Not included: lunch (we will stop everyday where light lunches can be purchased), telephone, beverages, laundry, tips.

Schedule:

Day 1 Sunday 23/3/25 –7:00 Departure from Tel Aviv Arlozorov train station

The day will start with a short visit to the Nili and David Jerusalem Bird Observatory, where we will pick up more participants. From there we will continue south to the Dead Sea. We will visit the fields north of the Dead Sea in search of desert and migratory species, we will stop at a great observation point for the migration of raptors, and on the way south we will stop at other birding sites in the Arava Valley. We will arrive in our guest house in Eilat in the late afternoon for dinner.

Overnight at Kibbutz Eilat Country Lodging

Day 2 Monday 24/3/25 - Eilat Area

Today we will concentrate on birding in the Eilat area. We will start with a morning tour that includes bird watching in the birding park in Eilat, then after breakfast at the guest house, we will continue to the Eilat mountains to observe the migration of raptors as they move north out of Egypt. After a lunch break we will visit the salt ponds and water reservoirs in the Eilat area, and towards evening we will go to see sea birds on the north coast of Eilat. Then back to the guest house for dinner and a lecture.

Overnight at Kibbutz Eilat Country Lodging

Day 3 Tuesday 25/3/25 – the Southern Arava

We will start the day with early morning tour of Holland Park and then return to breakfast at the guest house. After breakfast we will go to the area to visit birding sites around Kibbutz Neot Smadar and from there we will continue to the area of Kibbutz Yotvata area and various hotspots around the Arava kibbutzim. Then it's back to the guest house for dinner.

Overnight at Kibbutz Eilat Country Lodging

Day 4 Wednesday 26/3/25 – North through the Negev

We will have an early departure from guest house with a packed breakfast to eat on the way, and start making our way back north. On the way we visit the Ovda valley to search for larks and other desert birds and we will stop along the way to observe birds and animals in the area of the Ramon Crater, the Negev Mountains and other sites on the way to Tel Aviv/Jerusalem.

Estimated end time: 17:00 in Tel Aviv/Jerusalem

Please note - the tour program during your stay in Eilat is relatively flexible and can change according to the bird reports and weather that week. You can be sure that we will keep busy with birds all day

Prices

Double room (per person): 3526 NIS

Single room: 4223 NIS

Double room – per person (members of SPNI and Birdlife Israel's Bird Club): 3340 NIS

Single room (members of SPNI and Birdlife Israel's Bird Club): 4137 NIS

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT - REGISTER BEFORE 31/12/24 AND RECEIVE A 100 NIS
DISCOUNT ON PRICE**

TO REGISTER: <https://eventbuzz.co.il/eilateng25>



Steppe Buzzards - Heading north Photo: Hadoram Shirihai

For more information contact Alena Kacal at alenk@spni.org.il
Let's go birding in Eilat this spring!



Conservation Commitment: The Eilat Bird Festival is a program of BirdLife Israel, part of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI). Your participation in this festival supports the ongoing research, conservation and education work of BirdLife Israel and helps to protect important stopover sites for hundreds of millions of birds who migrate through Israel every year.

Carbon offset donation: Participants are invited to donate an additional amount to help offset their carbon footprint in participating in the tour. If you choose to do so, your donation will go to the StartUp Nature restoration and carbon capturing program of BirdLife Israel. This program is restoring wetlands around the country in order to create new stopover sites for migratory birds and increase biodiversity. To make a donation: <https://secured.israelgives.org/en/pay/StartUpNature>

Cancellation policy

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel's (SPNI) cancellation policy complies with Israel's consumer protection law and regulations. This cancellation policy set up favorable conditions for private customers who make reservations for trips/festivals through SPNI.

Cancellation up to 14 days before the date of the activity, will be charged a cancellation fee of 5% of the price of the activity, or 100 NIS – whichever is lower.

Cancellation less from 14 days to 2 days before the date of the activity, will be charged a cancellation fee of 50% of the price of the activity.

Cancellation of less than 2 days before the start day of the activity, the full payment will be charged.

- If you are cancelling because of a medical condition please make sure to provide the necessary paperwork with your cancellation and we will assess the situation before charging penalties.

SPNI reserves the right to cancel the favorable cancellation policies or to determine from time to time additional favorable cancellation conditions at its complete and exclusive discretion.

For more information, contact Alena Kacal at alenk@spni.org.il

FAQ's

Do I have to participate in all the trips? Or can I skip one if I want to rest?

On day 2 and 3, there will be a series of shorter trips – with one before breakfast, one after breakfast and one in the afternoon. In between we will be returning to the hotel. It is possible on these days to skip one of the sessions if needed. On the first and last days, we will be travelling for most of the day and would not be possible to skip any part of the day.

How much walking is involved?

There is some light to moderate walking each day. Within the hotel, there is some walking to and from your rooms to buses and meals, and there may be some stairs. On trips, participants will be getting in and out of the mini-bus and there may be some walking on site. Usually the mini-bus is with the group at all times if needed.

What is the best field guide for Israel?

The best guide is the Collins - The Most Complete Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe, 3rd edition, by Lars Svensson et al. This is also available as an app on your cellphone. The benefit to the app is that it includes calls and songs of most of the birds. The Collins app does cost money. Merlin also has a bird pack for Israel which you can download for free. This also includes bird calls and songs.

What is the weather like in March?

March in Israel can be quite pleasant– cool in the evenings and hot during the day. However, the weather at this time of year can be variable – from rain to very hot. We recommend bringing a few different layers of clothing to accommodate the changes in temperature throughout the day, including a light rain jacket in case of rain. Good walking shoes are recommended but sandals are great for the evenings. A good hat is a must!

Lunch is not part of the package: where can I purchase lunch?

On longer trips days, we will stop at locations where simple lunches can be purchased. Participants can also purchase food and snacks at the mini-mart at the kibbutz that sells a variety of food. Each room has a kitchenette equipped with a fridge, electric kettle and microwave.

If I come from overseas, will I have trouble bringing optics into Israel?

There is usually no problem bringing personal optics into Israel. However, keep in mind if you plan to travel to Jordan after the Festival – some people have been told that they cannot bring optics across the border into Jordan.

Do I need to bring cash with me?

Almost every transaction in Israel can be done with a credit cards, so cash is not essential. However, you might want to have a few shekels to spend on drinks and lunches, etc. Please be aware that tips for guides and drivers are not covered by the cost of the festival – if you decide to tip, cash is best – but does not have to be in shekels.

I am mainly a photographer, is this festival suitable for photographers?

The Eilat Bird Festival will focus on birdwatching and will move at a pace suitable to birdwatchers. While many people do bring cameras, we do not tend to spend dedicated time at any one place in order to focus on photography. There will be a couple occasions where there is more time for photography and some time when people will be able to do their own thing. Great care is taken to ensure that everyone has good looks at the birds, and we ask that participants not block each other's views, walk in-front of the group or wander into areas of the path where birds can be scared away. We also ask that participants not leave the designated paths in nature reserves or use playback calls.

Did we cover all your questions? If not feel free to be in touch with us – we are happy to help answer any of your questions or concerns. Contact us at alenk@spni.org.il