



JBO 2025

IMPACT REPORT

My vision for the JBO is to be much more than a birdwatching site. I see it as a living laboratory, where research, education, community, technological innovation, and nature conservation all come together in one shared space.

Yotam Bashan, JBO Director



The Society for the
Protection of Nature
in Israel



התחנה לחקר ציפורי ירושלים
ע"ש נילי ודוד
The Nili and David Jerusalem Bird Observatory

2025 IMPACT IN NUMBERS

7,830

**BIRDS RINGED &
RECORDED**

67

SPECIES

229

RINGING DAYS

10,000+

**SCHOOL
CHILDREN VISITED
THE JBO**

200+

**SCIENCE
TEACHERS
TRAINED**

150+

**PARTICIPANTS IN
NATURE CAMPUS**



**The JBO's most veteran volunteer,
Gerda Israel, with a Eurasian
Wren**

INTRODUCTION

For more than three decades, **the Nili and David Jerusalem Bird Observatory (JBO)** has worked in the heart of a dense and growing city, out of a belief that nature, research, education, and community can — and must — exist side by side.

Over the past year, the JBO further strengthened its role as a focal point for birding and for an active environmental community. At Ariel Pavilion, daily ringing continued throughout the year, with especially busy days during the migration seasons, when many birds were captured and ringed as part of ongoing monitoring of migration, breeding, and how birds use the site. Carried out each morning by professional staff and volunteers, the ringing work has also become an important entry point for young people seeking to experience careful fieldwork firsthand and to understand the value of long-term monitoring of bird populations in Israel.

In recent years, nature conservation has faced challenges that few of us could have anticipated. At a time when public attention is understandably drawn to security, recovery, and resilience, environmental concerns can easily be pushed aside. Yet this is precisely when places such as the JBO matter most. We see it in the growing number of volunteers, in the families who come to visit, and in the young people looking for meaningful ways to take part. Nature offers people a place to breathe, to connect, and to remember that we share our city with a living world that also depends on our care.

None of this happens by itself. Thank you for standing with us, and for helping ensure that the JBO remains a place where birds and people can thrive together.



Remembering Dr. Gidon Perlman

Dr. Gidon Perlman, who passed away this year at the age of 54, was one of the founders of the Jerusalem Bird Observatory, alongside Amir Balaban, and one of the people who shaped it into what it is today.

A cardiologist by profession and one of Israel's leading birders, Gidon brought passion and precision to every part of his work — from bird ringing and research to teaching, conservation, and the care with which he examined even the most familiar bird.



He was a devoted and demanding mentor. Over many years, he trained and guided generations of ringers, volunteers, and young birders, setting high standards of accuracy, professionalism, and commitment. Many of the people leading bird-ringing and conservation work in Israel today were shaped by his teaching, his exacting methods, and his enduring enthusiasm.

After being diagnosed with ALS, Gidon continued to remain closely involved in the JBO's life and work. Even as the illness progressed, he came to the JBO frequently, followed its monitoring and research, and continued to share his knowledge and guidance. He did so with the same determination that defined him throughout his life. Throughout, he remained surrounded by the family, friends, and wider community who loved him and had learned from him over the years.

The rigor, care, and commitment that continue to guide the JBO today are part of the path Gidon set. We are profoundly grateful for all that he gave to the JBO, to Israeli birding, and to the people whose lives he touched. He will be deeply missed.

May his memory be a blessing.

A HAVEN FOR BIRDS & BIRD CONSERVATION

MONITORING BIRDLIFE

One of the foundations of the JBO's work is the daily ringing work carried out by our professional staff, volunteers, and national service participants.

Throughout the morning, the team makes regular rounds of the mist nets, gently removing newly caught birds and placing each one in a soft cloth bag. Each bird is then ringed, measured, recorded, and released — adding another painstakingly gathered data point to our long-term body of knowledge. As data is gathered and documented, it reveals patterns such as migration routes and timing, changes in bird numbers, and shifts in the birds' physical condition during migration.

In 2025, the JBO recorded 7,830 birds from 67 species over 229 ringing days. Among them were several rare species, underscoring the station's continued value as an urban stopover site and long-term monitoring station.



A Rare visitor

A young **White-throated Robin** (***Irania gutturalis***) was one of the year's most memorable captures. It is an extremely rare migrant in Israel, outside of a small breeding population in Mount Hermon. The species takes its scientific name from Iran - part of its wider western Asian range, and this visitor reminded us that migration follows routes that pay no attention to the borders below.



First Swiss Connection

In July, we received exciting news: a **Lesser Whitethroat** (***Curruca curruca***) ringed at the station had been recaptured at a major migration research station in the Swiss Alps — **2,909 kilometers** away.

It was the first bird ringed at the JBO ever recorded in Switzerland, and possibly the first bird ringed in Israel to be recaptured there!



News from Slovakia

Another long-distance recovery involved a male **Eurasian Blackcap** (***Sylvia atricapilla***) ringed at the JBO, which was later found in Slovakia - **2,223 kilometers** away. Blackcaps are familiar migrants in Israel, although a small and irregular breeding presence has also been recorded in the country's north.

Threads Across the Flyway

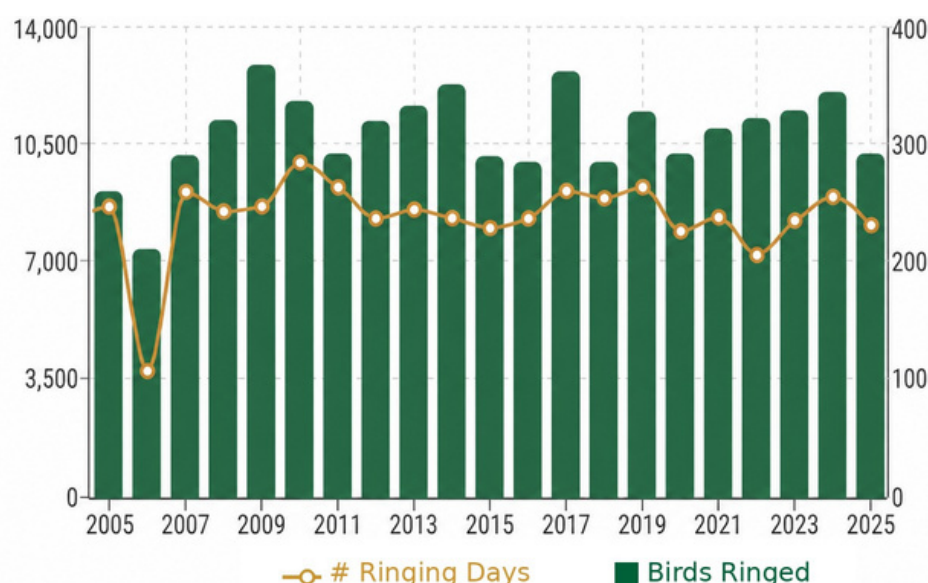
We know that birds migrate. We see them crossing our skies and pausing at the JBO and other stopover sites. But each international capture brings home the enormity of what that means: tiny creatures making vast journeys across continents — twice-yearly pilgrimages — following an imperative as ancient as the species themselves.



A map of all international ringing captures connected to the JBO: birds ringed in Jerusalem and later recaptured abroad, alongside birds ringed elsewhere and later recaptured at the JBO.

To date, these records include 72 birds from 13 species, linking the JBO with 21 countries.

Annual Ringing Activity at the JBO



The chart tracks the number of birds ringed each year since 2005, alongside the number of ringing days needed to carry it out.

Behind every bar are early mornings, careful hands, and systematic documentation.

We are so grateful to our wonderful and dedicated volunteers whose commitment makes this tremendous effort possible.

ENSURING A HEALTHY HABITAT

The JBO is not a large natural landscape, but a carefully managed urban habitat of 1.2 acres in the heart of Jerusalem. Its value for birds depends on the quality of that habitat: enough vegetation to provide food and cover, enough water to sustain plant life through the dry months, and enough ongoing care to keep the site functioning as a place birds can use.

In Israel's climate, water is central to that work. In 2025, an unusually dry winter left the site under particular strain. To protect the habitat value of the site, we significantly increased irrigation, helping maintain the vegetation and food sources that migrating and resident birds depend on.

Habitat care also continued through planting and botanical enrichment. The annual planting tradition added to the station's plant diversity, including rare plants for which the JBO serves as a refuge garden. Together, this work strengthens the ecological fabric of the station — supporting birds, plants, and the wider urban biodiversity that makes the JBO important far beyond its size.



Volunteers help maintain the Nyman Pond, a vital part of the JBO habitat. Its water and surrounding vegetation provide birds and other wildlife with drinking water, food, shelter, and a place to rest.

Nurturing Fledgling Birders: Growing the Next Generation of Scientists, Conservationists, and Bird Lovers

OPENING THE DOOR TO NATURE

It has always been part of our mission to use the site as a place of education — bringing children and young people closer to nature; for many children, this is often their first real encounter with birds, migration, and wildlife .

In 2025, more than 10,000 schoolchildren and Ministry of Education groups took part in JBO educational programs on nature conservation, birding, ecology, and bird ringing.

We also worked with teachers, extending the reach of this work into many classrooms across the city. More than **200 science teachers** from the Jerusalem area took part in professional training days at the JBO, deepening their knowledge of ecology, birds, climate change, and nature conservation.

DEEPENING THE CONNECTION

From the very beginning, one of the JBO's core programs has been birding groups for children and youth. As the coordinator of BirdLife Israel's birding groups nationwide, the JBO plays a central role in cultivating the next generation of birders across the country.

2025 was an especially significant year for the program. Alongside the long-running youth and young birders' groups in Jerusalem, two new groups opened in September — one in Jerusalem and, one in Tel Aviv. The Tel Aviv group marked an important step in extending the program and bringing the JBO's approach to birding education to a new community.

Through regular meetings, local field outings, and visits to some of Israel's most interesting birding sites, participants developed bird identification skills, learned about migration, and gained experience using binoculars and other field equipment.



Some of our young birders during field activities and ringing sessions.

For generations of young participants, the JBO's birding groups have offered a way into the natural world — sparking curiosity, building knowledge, and, for a remarkable number, leading to serious birding, conservation, and scientific work.

Dr. Yael Lenerd — From Young Birder to Fully-Fledged Scientist

As a child growing up in Eilat, Yael Lenerd travelled to Jerusalem to take part in the JBO's birding groups. Her fascination with birds grew into years of commitment: she volunteered at the station, trained as a bird ringer, and later led JBO birding groups herself.

Yael went on to earn a PhD in Desert Studies at Ben-Gurion University and now holds a postdoctoral position in Germany. Her research focuses on how human-made noise affects wildlife, particularly songbirds. Combining field observations, bird ringing, acoustic recordings, and tracking data, she examines how noise changes birds' behavior — and how its impacts can be reduced.



The Annual Youth Birding Conference



More than 50 young birders gathered at the JBO's annual youth conference for a day of talks on bird conservation, ornithology, birding in Israel and abroad, and stories from the field. Many of the speakers were themselves young birders, including JBO alumni now active in research and conservation.

Held for the second year in memory of **Tair Israeli z"l**, a much-loved young birder, the conference brought together a serious, enthusiastic community of young people already finding their own place in the world of birds.

A Hub for Urban Nature

Growing a Community of Nature Lovers in Jerusalem



In line with SPNI's long-standing philosophy, we believe that conservation depends not only on protecting habitats and wildlife, but also on education and community engagement.

Over the years, the JBO has become a shared place where people form an ongoing connection with birds and urban nature — and with each other. It is now a center for a vibrant community of nature lovers and enthusiasts.

In 2025, we continued to nurture and grow this community through a varied program of public events, courses, workshops, volunteering opportunities, and nature-inspired art.

NATURE CAMPUS

At the beginning of the year, the JBO held “Nature Campus” — a full week in which the entire JBO became a lively and varied learning space. Each day offered a different perspective on Israel's wildlife and natural environment, with experts from a range of fields leading the sessions. The event was organized in partnership with academic institutions and other environmental organizations.

More than 150 participants took part in “Nature Campus.” For many, it was their first opportunity to explore both urban nature and the natural world beyond the city in greater depth. Participants responded enthusiastically, reinforcing the importance of the JBO's role in making environmental education accessible to the wider public.



All ages were represented at the “Nature Campus.”

NATURE AS COMMON GROUND

In partnership with the Jerusalem Municipality and the Jerusalem Foundation, the JBO held its Shared Learning program this year, bringing together Arab school groups from East Jerusalem and Jewish school groups from West Jerusalem to learn about birds, nature conservation, and urban nature.

Over the course of 12 meetings, the students also had the opportunity to get to know one another, talk, and learn together. Their shared encounters with nature demonstrated that despite the divisions often felt between East and West Jerusalem, they are all part of one larger human and ecological system.



Netta volunteers - Urban Nature Stewards - repainting the Ariel Pavilion.

Netta volunteers — Ne'emanai Teva Ironi, or Urban Nature Stewards — are nature lovers trained by SPNI to serve as guardians of nature in their cities. In 2025, Jerusalem's wonderful Netta volunteers were a tremendous help at the JBO, contributing their time and energy to a variety of maintenance tasks.

MEETING SPACE FOR ART AND NATURE

Through the **Gail Rubin Nature Art Gallery**, the JBO provides another way for people to engage with nature. This year, the Gallery hosted two exhibitions celebrating nature photography: Ezra Hadad's striking photographs of striped hyenas, and *On a Deserted Island*, Yossi Eshbol's historical photography exhibition documenting the islands of Tiran.

The Gallery also hosted the launch of two children's books, inviting families and visitors to encounter the natural world through stories and images.



*A photograph from *On a Deserted Island*, Yossi Eshbol's exhibition documenting research expeditions to Tiran Island in the Red Sea between 1975 and 1982 — a rare visual record of the island's breeding seabirds and coastal wildlife.*

LOOKING AHEAD

Despite the challenges of the past year, 2025 saw the JBO continue to grow and develop. In the years ahead, we plan to strengthen JBO's work, as well as continue to invest in the site itself.

Caring for the Site

We plan to restore the JBO's historic terraces, continue to enrich the native vegetation, and improve habitats for birds and other wildlife.

Advancing Bird Research

We aim to make fuller use of the extraordinary ringing database built up over more than three decades. One central goal is to bring a dedicated researcher to work regularly from the JBO, leading research on bird migration, urban ecology, and the effects of climate change.

Tracking Migration in a New Way

We are also working toward bringing the international Motus wildlife-tracking network to the JBO. Using a network of receiving antennas and tiny radio transmitters, Motus makes it possible to follow individual birds as they travel across countries and continents — revealing movements that traditional ringing alone cannot capture. Connecting the JBO to this global network would place Jerusalem at an important point on the international flyway and open new possibilities for understanding the remarkable journeys of the birds that pass over the city.

Investing in the Next Generation

Alongside this, we will continue to expand birding groups and training programs, invest in the next generation of birders, nature researchers, and conservationists, and deepen community involvement in the life of the JBO.

We are so grateful to the donors and partners who believe in this place and in what it can become. Your support helps the JBO flourish as a haven for birds, a home for learning and discovery, and a space for nature in the heart of the city - to inspire, connect, and refresh the spirit.

