

A Rocha Lebanon for the Environment

Friends of A Rocha Lebanon Newsletter number 13, June 2007
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Dear Friends,

Well it has been another roller coaster ride here in Lebanon!

A lot has happened since our last newsletter, back in March, when we launched our community conservation initiative "Wild Aammiq". Despite unusually late, cool and rainy weather we had a very full program of groups enjoying the beauty of the Aammiq wetland and mountain slopes. School and other groups delighted in observing birds and other wildlife, including the night heron colony. Other groups took advantage of the ideal walking weather for longer hikes up the mountain.



The weather proved a challenge for some groups – who would have though we would have 2 days of torrential rain in May. But with innovation of the A Rocha and ACS staff and a determination not to miss out a great time was had by all, even if we would not have won a fashion award!

Is Chris getting arrested... car paper problems, something worse?

No. As part of the SPNL sustainable hunting project, Internal Security Forces and Ministry of agriculture guards attended the A Rocha Lebanon training in bird identification at Aammiq. The aim of the course is to help equip those responsible for the eventual administration of the new hunting law with the skills they need.

Of course these were some of the "ups" of Spring 2007. With the fighting at Nahr el Barid and the bombs rocking Beirut from May the number of groups booking declined to a trickle.

Competition: Send in a Caption for the photo– the best one will get a free Bird field guide for the birds of the Middle East (in Arabic)!!!

ADVERTISEMENT

A Rocha Lebanon Teachers' Pack

Now available for the bargain price of 75,000LL – a pack containing all of the Aammiq Wildlife books (birds, dragonflies, butterflies plants and mammals), the Caring for Creation coloring book (in Arabic), a bundle of attractive postcards, and copies of several other leaflets and brochures talking about different aspects of our work. This all comes in a handy and



Special Species Spot

This month, rather than looking at a single species, we are going to look at a group – the Dragonflies. These are relatively large insects, which, along with the closely related Damselflies, make up the Family Odonata. You have probably seen Dragonflies, with their long bodies and 4 transparent wings, hovering and darting over ponds and streams on a summer's day, looking just like small helicopters – in fact “helicopter” is the common local name for these insects here, in Lebanon. There are many different species which come in a variety of colors and sizes, from the small, red Darters, to the big Golden-ringed Dragonfly, with its striking pattern of yellow and black hoops along its body.

The Aammiq Marsh is a good place to see them, but Dragonflies can be found anywhere, even in fairly dry places, so long as there is some water nearby, even if it is only a drainage ditch in a field.

They are all tied to water for the first part of their lives. In fact, the mature Dragonfly that you see flashing above the pools at Aammiq may have spent up to five years underwater as a nymph (an immature Dragonfly or Damselfly). These nymphs, although not as beautiful as the adults, are still fascinating creatures. They are equipped with massive jaws in comparison to their body size and are some of the fiercest predators in the underwater world, preying on other insects, tadpoles and even small fish.

The skin of insects cannot stretch, like our skin, so as the Dragonfly nymph grows it has to change its skin several times. Eventually the nearly-mature nymph will pull itself out of the water, usually up the stem of a plant. There it will clasp onto the stem and burst out of its skin for the final time. The difference is that this time, what comes out has beautiful, translucent wings, and after it has dried off in the sun, its bright colors will also appear.

Then the adult Dragonfly will set off to find a mate and start the cycle all over again.



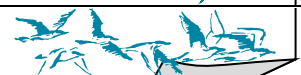
Environmental Sunday Liturgy !!

“Let us praise our lord who covers him self with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.”

This year, the A Rocha Lebanon team came up with the idea of preparing an environmental liturgy to be used in the churches every year celebrating the World Environment day. And so we did! This year 8 churches used our liturgy, we prayed in our churches for the groaning earth, and challenged our selves to reduce our use of plastic cups and plates replacing them with reusable materials.

Now after receiving the positive feed back from the churches, we are encouraged to continue working in this project every year, as we will provide the churches with the liturgies containing different themes and challenges each year.

If you would like to get a copy of our liturgy to use in your church please email us, and we will send it to you.



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Together, caring for God's creation

Thanks for reading to the end don't forget our website: www.arochoa.org

Best wishes, The A Rocha Lebanon team

Lebanon A Rocha news available in 2 languages!!!

If you are reading this newsletter in English but would prefer to have it in Arabic email us and we will send you your preferred version.