



Dear friends,

Summer is on the way! A wonderful time to visit the Aammig wetlands, if you haven't already been this year. This newsletter highlights some of our work at the marshes and, we hope, catches something of the magic of the place. Contact Ramsey or Faisal (<http://en.arochoa.org/lbaammig/index3.html>) to arrange a group trip.

By the way apologies for any of our regular readers who received newsletter 16 several times last month the office computer seems to have a mind of its own!

### **Aammig Marsh Update – June 2008**

This time of the year is one of the most beautiful times at the Marsh – The winter chill has gone and the weather is warm but the marsh is still green, with lots of wildflowers blooming and quite a lot of water in the pools. The Moorhens, Coots and Mallards have all got young so there are lots of cute balls of fluff of different shapes and sizes skittering around over the surface of the water. Most of the migrant birds have passed through but they have been replaced by numerous colorful butterflies and dragonflies.

One of the worries now is that, following several fairly dry winters, the marsh will dry out completely again this year as it did last year. One of the causes for this is the pumping of water, downstream from the protected area, to irrigate fields. This water actually comes originally from the springs which feed the wetland. In an attempt to remedy this problem we have used soil, taken from one of the grassland areas, to close up the main channel along which this water passes on its way out of the marsh. This should keep the water level nice and high for the rest of the summer and it has also enabled us to create a new pool which should provide some good habitat for migrating waders next spring. To check how well this works we are monitoring the water level above and below the new dam, and also in the main pools near the road.



### **Job opportunity Scientific Officer –to start as soon as possible**

We are looking for someone with at least an undergraduate degree in the biological sciences, with a specialist research interest in one or more of the following areas;  
birds, mammals, reptiles/amphibians, fish, invertebrates, hydrology, plants, agriculture.

Open to any one, local or expatriate but ideally willing to live in the Bekaa.  
Full or part time. For full job description and profile please write to Chris Naylor  
[arochoa@cyberia.net.lb](mailto:arochoa@cyberia.net.lb)

# Spring 2008 in Aammiq



Despite continued instability in the country this year many groups were still able to make it Aammiq to enjoy unforgettable experiences through environmental education, hiking and just having fun.

Here are some of our visitors' comments...

## **Mrs. Joyce Zurub Karamanoukian**

On May 25, 2008 All Saint's Episcopal Church with the help of A Rocha organized an ecological and spiritual trip to Aammiq marshes in the Bekaa Valley.

We Were met by Faisal from A Rocha who accompanied us inside the marshes and explained in details about all the living spieces in the area and how they are being protected. The walk inside the marshes which are considered as a national reserve, was very interesting and breath taking. We watched different species of birds, butterflies and small fish as well as being enchanted by the beautiful greenery that surrounds the place. Two and a half hours walking within the marshes passed swiftly. Special thanks to the A Rocha organization who, help protect God's creation and make people know and appreciate nature.

## **Mr. Youssif Kourfaly**

Our trip to Aammiq natural reserve took place on a beautiful Sunday morning.

At around 9:30 we reached our destination. We waited for our guide and went into the marshes equipped with binoculars. The reserve is situated in a rather low population density area. It is one of the few or remaining protected areas in our region where migrant birds find refuge. We were able to watch some ducks, birds and different kinds of large birds that resemble penguins for they stand up straight and motionless for a very long period of time. The area was threatened at one time, however, it is getting back its natural beauty since through our walk we were able to see wild plants with thorns growing along beds of flowers and along with grassland. All through our walk a refreshing and dry mildly cold wind made us forget the distance we walked. All too soon we had to return to Beirut, whenever you leave this wonderful place it is too early!

**There are 10 differences between these two pictures ... Can you find them??**



Thanks for reading to the end. Don't forget to visit our website: [www.arocha.org](http://www.arocha.org)

Best wishes, The A Rocha Lebanon Team [lebanon@arocha.org](mailto:lebanon@arocha.org)

A Rocha Lebanon newsletters are 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.



**A ROCHA**

*Together, caring for God's creation*