

A Rocha Lebanon for the Environment

Friends of A Rocha Lebanon Newsletter number 14, September 2007
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Big news!!!



These old sheds will be demolished and replaced by the Eco-Lodge

The lodge will serve visitors to the wetland and the Chuof Mountain reserve and all profits will go to preserve the habitats and wild life of the area. It will mean a lot of work for the team over the next 2 years, and during the next 3 months the designs for the lodge and the detailed budget needs to be completed.

Team News

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Helen Demopoulos on to the team. She has come to work with us for a year on the scientific projects with Colin. She comes with a wealth of experience having worked for a UK ecological consultancy for 7 years and has volunteered in Canada, Armenia and Iceland on ecological and development projects, next newsletter we will ask her what she thinks of Lebanon (she has only just arrived so we will give her a while to settle in first!)

2 New IBAs for Lebanon

Despite the disruption to the Important Bird Area (IBA) research program, caused by the war in 2006, two of that year's sites have now been declared as IBAs.

These sites are the semi-desert area near Ras Baalbek in the northern Bekaa, which was surveyed by A Rocha staff and volunteers, and the Beirut River Valley, from Hammana to Baabda, which was surveyed by our partners in SPNL (Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon).

The Ras Baalbek site qualified as an IBA because of the number of specialist desert species of birds that breed there, but which are rare or unknown in other parts of Lebanon – these include Desert Lark, Mourning Wheatear and the beautiful Cream-Coloured Courser.

Beirut River Valley is primarily important because of the huge numbers of soaring birds that pass through on migration in Spring and Autumn.

Environmental Education at Aammig

If you are a teacher / involved in education and are not on our education mailing list send us an email and we will send you our latest education mailing. Find out about the exciting possibilities for school, college and university groups at Aammig this autumn. Hiking, bird watching, nature interpretation.....

What on earth is a bulldozer doing in the wetland?

Well, not getting stuck, fortunately although we were worried!

We have been using the fact that the area of the springs dried, for the first time in four years, to remove reeds that were choking the dry pools and open up the views from the bird hide and avenue of trees.

Did you know that wetlands need a lot of managing? Left to themselves they slowly fill up with plant material and dry, a process known as succession. One of the ways we control this is with the grazing of sheep, goats and water buffalo, but in dry spells it always helps to get physical.



Migrating Raptors

Have you seen any large flocks of birds this fall, over the hills or even over towns and villages? If you have, you have seen part of one of the world's great wildlife spectacles – the annual southward migration of tens of thousands of soaring birds, such as eagles, buzzards and storks, from their breeding areas in the north, to Africa, where they will spend the winter.

During the nesting season, these birds can be very hard to find, as they are spread out over huge areas in Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Asia. However, because of their large size, they rely on columns of warm air rising off the land (called thermals) to help them gain height, before they can fly any distance. This means that they can't migrate over large bodies of water, such as the Mediterranean Sea, and instead, are funneled down through the most direct overland route to Africa – which takes them straight over our heads here in Lebanon.















Every fall it is possible to see more than 20 species of raptor (another word for birds of prey). The commonest are Lesser Spotted Eagle, Honey Buzzard and Steppe Buzzard.

White Pelicans and two species of stork also pass through, although the White Stork, despite being extremely numerous on migration in the spring, is relatively rare here in Autumn.

Even if you live in Beirut you don't have to travel very far to see this amazing spectacle – soaring birds can be seen migrating over every part of Lebanon and one of the best places to see large numbers in fall is Bhamdoun, on the Damascus Highway. One observer saw more than 70,000 raptors here between August and October in 2006.

Butterflies Sudok

- 1 
- 2 
- 3 
- 4 
- 5 
- 6 
- 7 
- 8 
- 9 

Instructions

A Sudoku is a logic puzzle consisting of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into 9 smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle, fill in the grid so that each of the 9 different butterflies shown, appears only once in each row, column and 3x3 box. Use the Copy/Paste function on your computer to fill in the grid. Every Sudoku has a logical and unique solution.

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

Best wishes from the A Rocha Lebanon team



A ROCHA

Together, caring for God's creation

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.