

A Rocha Lebanon for the Environment

Friends of A Rocha Lebanon Newsletter number 15, Dec 2007
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Dear Friends,

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.*



Have you noticed how the great words of our Christmas carols join humanity, the angelic realm and nature in a chorus of praise to God at Christ's birth? The Herald angels sing, fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, the ox and ass and camel adore, Joyful nations rise and Mary worships with a kiss.

The Christmas story of the incarnation integrates the three realities as God touches earth., May you know a truly integrated life this holiday season and in the year to come.

Owls at Aamiq



We have just started catching and ringing some Owls found at Aamiq wetland. We're hoping that this is the start of an exciting new project to find out a bit more about them, which species we have and how many.

At Aamiq so far we have ringed 3 Long-eared Owls *Asio otus* (pictured) and 2 Barn Owls *Tyto alba*. We are not sure yet whether the Long-eareds migrate through in the Autumn or whether they overwinter in the Long Avenue of Trees in the Marsh. Other owls that have been heard and seen in Aamiq include the Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops*, which has been observed there in April in previous years. We are hoping to carry out some migration monitoring of this species in the spring to see when they start arriving, and whether they stay to breed. Scops Owls are found mainly in southern and eastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean and Russia.

They are more often heard than seen, their call is not what you would think of as a typical owl call - is a repeated short, deep whistling 'tyuu' which is audible to the human ear for 1 km! The Scops Owls are small in size (about 20 cm high) and they eat mainly insects, with a few small birds, reptiles and mammals. The habitat they like is mixed open woodland. Watch this space to see what we find out in the coming months!

Meet Helen



1. Can you tell us something about yourself?

I studied Biology and then Environmental Sciences in London and since then I worked in several different organizations the most recent being an ecological consultancy in the south of England for over 7 years.

2. What brings you to Lebanon?

I wanted to experience life in the Middle East and also to continue working for the environment. The opportunity of working for A Rocha Lebanon seemed to be a perfect combination of these.

3. What exactly do you do with A Rocha?

I work with Colin on the science program here which involves bird monitoring work, bird ringing and field work for the Important Bird Area project. I am also involved with another

project which will start next year carrying out bird research at a mountainous area outside of Beirut. This project will go towards a management plan with the aim of conserving the area.

4. Do you like living in Lebanon?

Yes, apart from the traffic in Beirut! I like living near to the Corniche and I like the food too.

Thank you Helen... nice to have you with us.

A Roach's Volunteer:

Hello!

My name is Sandra ten Zijthoff, I'm part Dutch and part Peruvian and came to Lebanon during my "gap year" before continuing on for an MSc in International Development Studies in Amsterdam. I arrived in August and have been volunteering with the A Rocha-Lebanon team for 2.5 months now. It has been a fulfilling experience, to say the least! As an amateur herpetologist, I've been recording the various reptile and amphibian species



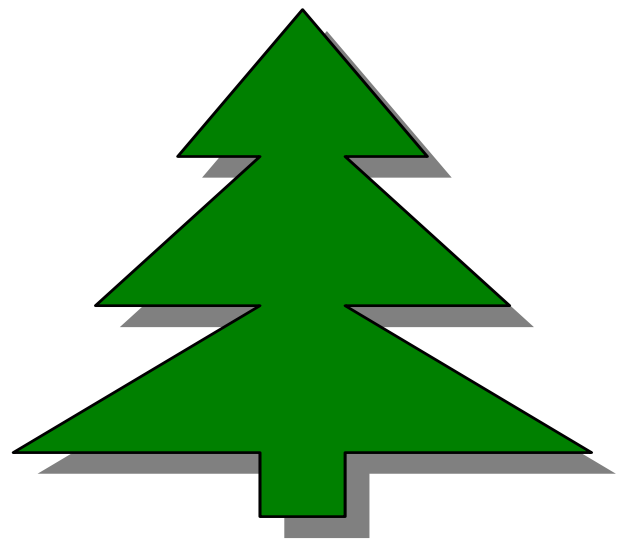
found in the region. These creatures have been a passion of mine since childhood and the opportunity to study and interact with them to further efforts in conservation cannot compare to anything I've done before. I will be sorry to leave Lebanon and the A Rocha team this December, but grateful to have been included into and encouraged by this team. I pray that their work will continue to bear fruit so that the beauty of Lebanon would be preserved for years to come.

Where is the right place for a bird?

ON A PLATE FOR DINNER???
Or IN A TREE??

Use the following bird pictures to decorate our Christmas tree. If you can guess the names of these birds write back to us, the first 5 correct answers will get a nice present...

'THE FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST' IN ARABIC.



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.



A ROCHA

Together, caring for God's creation