**(Protecting Nature) https://www.teva.org.il/**

Protecting Nature

Protecting Wildlife

Protecting Oceans and Beaches

Protecting Streams

Coping with the Climate Crisis

Protecting Open Landscapes

Protecting Nature in the City

Campaigning for Nature

Report Wildlife

<https://www.teva.org.il/nature/wildlife> (Protecting Wildlife)

1. The Story in 100 Words

Why we protect wildlife

How we protect wildlife

What if we fail?

More information

**Protecting Wildlife**

Israel is located at a major global intersection of 3 continents, 4 vegetation types, and 5 climate zones. Thanks to our unique location, we can enjoy a rare abundance of wildlife.

But are we able to protect this treasure, and enjoy it?

A wild ass walking in the southern Negev. Photo: Yuval Daks

Israel is a wildlife hotspot. From the Galilee to the Negev, you can find animals from the tropics, the Sahara Desert, the mountains of Asia, and of course—from the Mediterranean region. Some of them are rare and are not found anywhere else in the world.

Yes, you read that correctly. Dozens of species of mammals, fish, and amphibians are only found in Israel. For example, there is a gazelle that lives only in Israel, a viper that lives only on Mt. Hermon, and the Hula painted frog, which hops around nowhere else in the world except the Hula Valley.

<https://www.teva.org.il/nature/wildlife> (Why Protect Wildlife?)

2. Why Protect Wildlife?

Why do we need to protect wildlife?

Hundreds of millions of birds cross Israel’s skies each year. We are able to host this spectacular flyover due to our unique location at the intersection of Asia, Europe, and Africa.

This is just one example of the incredible natural abundance in Israel. The innumerable animals and plants that surround us create a rich wildlife population without which, Israel would be something else entirely—something much less impressive.

Dorcas gazelle

Photo: Noam Weiss

Profile of a European turtledove standing in the water

Photo: Yuval Daks

Who actually cares if a fish, fly, or even a bear or leopard that lived here in the past, disappears from the landscape? The truth is, that each and every one of these animals is essential. We are part of the spectacular tapestry of Israel’s nature, and no one species can survive without all of the ecosystem’s components.

**Our existence depends on the entire spectrum of all animals: from algae and microscopic bacteria to birds, frogs, foxes—and even humans.**

A vixen suckles her pups. Photo: Yuval Daks

<https://www.teva.org.il/nature/wildlife>

3. How to Protect Wildlife

How do we save wildlife?

Humans cause existential danger to wildlife, often simply out of ignorance. For example, we need to protect birds and bats from getting electrified, or from crashing into wind turbines.

Some threats, such as overhunting and fatal poisoning, are caused intentionally—and must be stopped.

Observations of gazelles in Israel

Wild animals cannot survive without high-quality open landscapes. We have prevented aggressive development plans that would have left them without land to walk on or air to breathe, such as in the Hula Valley, the hills around Modi’in, and many other places. Thanks to a joint campaign, we’ve saved the ibex, the gazelle, and many other animals.

It’s not just us protecting nature—nature also protects us. For example, without the bats and birds that protect our fruit and vegetables from pests, we wouldn’t have enough food to eat.

A male ibex in Ein Gedi. Photo: Yuval Daks

<https://www.teva.org.il/nature/wildlife>

4. What if We Fail?

**What might happen if we fail?**

If we don’t hurry to save wild animals from fatal threats, we will soon only be able to see them in zoos or pictures.

Nature is disappearing throughout the world; globally, 70% of wild animals have experienced a decrease in population size over the last 50 years, mainly because of humans. Tens of thousands of species are currently endangered. There has never been such an intense threat to nature in the last few million years.

* 60%

of mammals in Israel are endangered

* 83%

of amphibians may disappear

* 15

types of birds per km2 in Israel—a world record

Never again will we see a bear, cheetah, or leopard; these extraordinary wild animals that walked the trails and mountains around us have disappeared due to hunting or habitat destruction. As many of the wild animals who live only in Israel are endangered, this fabulous revelry may be cut short.

**We cannot fix the mistakes of the past. Now, we must do all we can to protect the wild animals that are still with us and ensure that nature stays rich and abundant, which is essential to us humans as well.**

A golden jackal and Egyptian vultures. Photo: Yuval Daks

[**https://www.teva.org.il/nature/wildlife**](https://www.teva.org.il/nature/wildlife)

**More Campaigns for Nature Protection**

[**https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns**](https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns)

**All Campaigns**

**Campaigning for Nature**

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel initiates and leads dozens of public campaigns to protect the wildlife, plants, and landscapes of Israel. You’re invited to join the most important campaigns that are currently happening—for the protection of nature and our environment.

Oceans and Beaches

A fish caught in a fishing net

A license to kill ocean life

The campaign story

A drone image of the marina in Herzliya

Parking lots for yachts instead of beaches

The full story

Close-up of a dusky grouper

The campaign to save the dusky grouper

The full story

The coral reef in Eilat

Stopping the crude oil disaster in the Gulf of Eilat

The full story

Four Bluefin tuna

The deep-sea campaign

The full story

Open landscapes

Motorcycles speeding through southern Israel

Changing the route of the Minus 400 motorcycle race

The full story

An ibex standing in a green field

Protecting the Jerusalem Hills

The full campaign

Aerial photo of Mt. Keta

Rare nature in danger in the Mt. Hermon foothills

The full story

The coral reef in Eilat

Stopping the crude oil disaster in the Gulf of Eilat

The full story

The streams

A man hiking in Banias Stream

Saving Israel’s streams

The full story

A wide aerial landscape view of Ein Davsha

The campaign for the springs (Ein Davsha)

The full story

Wildlife

Profile of a European turtledove standing in the water

The campaign against hunting

The full story

A griffon vulture

The campaign against poisonings

The full story

Urban nature

An ibex standing in a green field

Protecting the Jerusalem Hills

The full campaign

**A License to Kill Ocean Life**

**The campaign story**

[**https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns**](https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns)

1. The story in 100 words

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/8655#intro>

The story in 100 words

The ocean appears as large, empty, and tranquil; expanses of blue waters in which fish can swim without being disturbed. How much damage can a few fishing boats actually do?

It turns out that the damage can be tremendously destructive.

Fishing with trawler boats is an undisciplined and uncontrolled method which indiscriminately kills fish, sea turtles, corals, and any other organisms that encounter the boats. They leave irreversible destruction in their wake and bring very little benefit. Unfortunately, they operate in Israel under a government license and even receive financial assistance.

So, let’s work together to stop trawler boats

The campaign against trawler boats, in numbers

Less than 1%

of the fish consumed in Israel

Trawler fishing provides only a small number of fish to Israeli consumers

70%

of trawler fishing

Most of the catch from trawler fishing is not suitable for consumption. Countless fish and other marine animals that are deemed “useless” are killed and thrown back into the sea.

50

fishermen

Trawler fishing supports a very small group of licensed fishermen

1,300

sea turtles

are harmed by trawler fishing in Israel. The annual toll of harmed protected marine animals includes at least two dolphins, as well as thousands of sharks, stingrays, and corals.

2,500

km2

The habitat area impacted annually by trawler fishing

1

2

3

4

5

The full story on trawler fishing

One morning, a dead dolphin washed up on the beach in Bat Yam. Beachgoers got a close-up look at the valued, well-loved animal that is rarely seen in Israel. But sadly, this dolphin’s story is heartbreaking and upsetting.

A long mark across the dolphin’s tale revealed its cause of death. This mark was left by the large net of a trawler ship; one of the ropes that secure it wrapped around the dolphin and dragged it along the seabed. Just like humans, dolphins need fresh air to breathe, but because it was trapped in the net underwater it choked to death on the seabed, for no good cause or reason.

The worst fishing method in the world

Fishing is the main threat to oceanic nature throughout the world, including in the Mediterranean Sea. Trawler boats are the most harmful and unnecessary fishing method of all.

What is a trawler boat, actually? It’s a fishing boat that drops a large, funnel-shaped net to the seabed and drags it behind the boat. The net ensnares every single thing that it encounters.

The net traps marine animals of all species and sizes, from tiny fingerlings and feather stars (a type of endangered coral) to sea turtles and dolphins. The animals trapped in the net are dragged for hours along the seabed until the net is pulled up to the boat; by then, most of them are strangled, crushed, and dead.

Absurdly, trawler ships support very few fishermen and are not very efficient. Thanks to our previous campaigns, there are currently 16 trawler boats operating in Israel with about 50 licensed fishermen. However, because this fishing method is uncontrollable, the boats trap approximately 1,000 tons of marine animals each year, or around 60% of the total fish catch in the Mediterranean Sea. The bottom line is that all of this destruction brings very little benefit. Most of the catch, namely, the dead animals, is thrown back into the sea without any use; thus, in practice, the trawler boats supply only 1% of fish for consumption in Israel.

For every fish caught in a trawler boat net that reaches someone’s plate, hundreds of fish, turtles, and protected animals die indiscriminately for no reason. The impact of trawler boats is tremendous and will accompany us for several decades into the future. Each year, the huge nets kill approximately 1,300 sea turtles, thousands of rays and sharks, tens of thousands of corals, and at least 2 dolphins—all within Israel’s waters alone!

Great harm to the ocean, and the climate as well

The trawler boats’ fatal plowing drags across the sea bed hundreds or even thousands of times a year, causing great environmental damage—greater even than the damage caused by water pollution. This damage exceeds the animals that die—the trawler boats simply destroy all the nature in the ocean.

Among other things, this method causes a phenomenon called “sand fluidization” that, in turn, causes erosion of the seabed surface. As a result of this phenomenon, the fine soil particles disappear from the ocean soil (they are “fluidized”), and only the larger particles remain. The changing soil affects the availability of animals’ food and their ability to shelter themselves in the soil. The trawler boat’s net also destroys deep coral reefs and sponge gardens, which are the most complex habitats in our oceans. All this destruction reduces the number of available fish and thus, reduces the profits of fishermen who use other, less damaging methods which focus on catching specific fish species.

To estimate the great extent of this phenomenon, it is worth noting that globally, trawler boats displace a quantity of soil and sand similar to the amount that reaches the oceans naturally from all of the rivers worldwide. Some regions around the world have experienced a 70% decrease in the number of bivalves, and the disappearance of about one-quarter of burrow-digging animals, such as sea anemones and worms.

Another terrible result, which was discovered in a recent research study, is the release of the carbon dioxide stored in the seabed, furthering the escalation of the climate crisis. According to estimates, 1 gigaton per year of carbon is released due to trawling, which is equivalent to the amount released by all the aerial traffic in the world!

Despite the immense damage compared to the negligible benefit, trawler fishing operations in Israel receive a generous economic benefit: a maximum refund of approximately 70% of tax costs on the diesel that fuels the boats.

For further reading

All about the dangers of trawler fishing on “The Blue Half” website

A shark trapped in a fishing net

The state of the campaign

Following the fishing reform that we promoted in 2016, trawler fishing was banned in about 40% of Israel’s coastal waters. One-third of the boats were decommissioned and the fishermen received compensation.

But this was still not enough. We must fight to completely stop this fishing method which destroys ocean life. A relatively small sum of only 32 million NIS is required to compensate the trawler fishermen; thus, we can save the Mediterranean Sea from disaster.

More stories from the ocean

The sensitive shark: how can we protect sharks along Israel’s coast?

06-01-2022

How we managed to promote the protection of Israel’s coast

01-12-2021

Dolphins, turtles, and the critters they live with: a new marine nature reserve is on its way!

23-02-2022

Do you want to help us protect the oceans and beaches?

Become members and nature protectors

Join now

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/8655#small-fight-in-nums>

2. The Campaign in Numbers

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Absurdly, trawler ships support very few fishermen and are not very efficient. Thanks to our previous campaigns, there are currently 16 trawler boats operating in Israel with about 50 licensed fishermen. However, because this fishing method is uncontrollable, the boats trap approximately 1,000 tons of marine animals each year, or around 60% of the total fish catch in the Mediterranean Sea. The bottom line is that all of this destruction brings very little benefit. Most of the catch, namely, the dead animals, is thrown back into the sea without any use; thus, in practice, the trawler boats supply only 1% of fish for consumption in Israel.

For every fish caught in a trawler boat net that reaches someone’s plate, hundreds of fish, turtles, and protected animals die indiscriminately for no reason. The impact of trawler boats is tremendous and will accompany us for several decades into the future. Each year, the huge nets kill approximately 1,300 sea turtles, thousands of rays and sharks, tens of thousands of corals, and at least 2 dolphins—all within Israel’s waters alone!

Great harm to the ocean, and the climate as well

The trawler boats’ fatal plowing drags across the sea bed hundreds or even thousands of times a year, causing great environmental damage—greater even than the damage caused by water pollution. This damage exceeds the animals that die—the trawler boats simply destroy all the nature in the ocean.

Among other things, this method causes a phenomenon called “sand fluidization” that, in turn, causes erosion of the seabed surface. As a result of this phenomenon, the fine soil particles disappear from the ocean soil (they are “fluidized”), and only the larger particles remain. The changing soil affects the availability of animals’ food and their ability to shelter themselves in the soil. The trawler boat’s net also destroys deep coral reefs and sponge gardens, which are the most complex habitats in our oceans. All this destruction reduces the number of available fish and thus, reduces the profits of fishermen who use other, less damaging methods which focus on catching specific fish species.

To estimate the great extent of this phenomenon, it is worth noting that globally, trawler boats displace a quantity of soil and sand similar to the amount that reaches the oceans naturally from all of the rivers worldwide. Some regions around the world have experienced a 70% decrease in the number of bivalves, and the disappearance of about one-quarter of burrow-digging animals, such as sea anemones and worms.

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More stories from the ocean

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/8655#sf-story>

3. The Full Story

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More stories from the ocean

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/8655#current-state>

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<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/8655#more-posts>

5. More campaigns

More stories from the ocean

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06-01-2022

How we managed to promote the protection of Israel’s coast

01-12-2021

Dolphins, turtles, and the critters they live with: a new marine nature reserve is on its way!

23-02-2022

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/4390>

Parking lots for yachts instead of beaches

1. The story in 100 words
2. The campaign in numbers
3. The full story
4. The state of the campaign
5. More campaigns

Parking lots

for yachts—instead of

beaches

This campaign is part of the campaigns for:

Oceans and Beaches

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/4390#intro>

1. The story in 100 words

What would you think if someone suggested building a car parking lot in the Yarkon Park, Jerusalem Forest, or Har Meiron Nature Reserve? You would probably think that this is a really bad idea, and rightly so.

Yet, this is exactly what will likely happen to our beaches. There is a plan in place to build six new marinas, which are literally parking lots for yachts and sailing boats.

An ongoing campaign by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, with the support of our members, led to an official recommendation to reject the building of most of these marinas. Read the full story of the campaign, and find out what else we can do to protect the beaches for us all.

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/4390#small-fight-in-nums>

2. The Campaign in Numbers

The campaign against building the marinas, in numbers

150 km

The length of undeveloped beaches along Israel’s Mediterranean coast, excluding infrastructure, industry, and military installations

1 km2

The average area each new marina takes away from Israel’s beaches

1.6 cm2 per citizen

The area of beach available to each citizen of Israel today, compared to 20 cm2 per citizen when the country was established

13 countries

Only 13 countries have more crowded beaches than Israel. All of these countries have either incredibly high population density, or very little beach area relative to the size of that country

80% of the marina area is private

In the plan to establish new marinas and expand existing marinas, the overwhelming majority of the area is designated for mooring private yachts and sailing ships

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/4390#sf-story>

3. The Full Story

The full story on the marinas

Going to the beach is one of the most fun, free, and accessible ways to spend time—Israelis love going to the beach. The problem is that the beaches are really crowded. Just try finding space for your towel on a Saturday morning and you’ll understand how crowded it really is.

This problem didn’t come from nowhere. Israel’s coastal strip along the Mediterranean Sea is 200 km long and currently, about one-quarter of it is occupied by infrastructure, industry, and military or security uses.

Further, Israel is a highly densely populated country and has the lowest amount of beach area available per citizen, globally. The crowdedness of the beaches affects most Israelis; the majority of people live nearby the sea so they can spend time there, as they wish.

Our calculations at the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel show that this problem is worsening with time: at the time of the country’s establishment, each citizen could enjoy 30 cm2 of the Mediterranean coastal beach, whereas today, they must be content with only 1.6 cm2 per person.

Harm to the environment—and beachgoers

Now, let’s look at the plan to build six new marinas in Israel—in Nahariya, Haifa, Hadera, Netanya, Tel Aviv, and Bat Yam—which was almost approved, yet stopped, due only to the campaign by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Did you know that each of these marinas, which moor approximately 1,000 yachts, could steal away about one kilometer of beach? Basically, to satisfy a small number of yacht owners, we steal the sea from tens of thousands of Israelis who won’t be able to relax, swim, or have fun in it.

Not only do marinas prevent people from accessing the sea, but they also have an impact on nature and the environment. For example, marinas damage nesting sites for sea turtles and prevent sand from reaching the nearby beaches, thus causing the sandy beach strip to recede. Moreover, the breakwaters that are built for protecting the marinas cover areas of the sea with sand, which impacts the animals and plants living there.

Don’t be fooled, building marinas isn’t even economical and requires a subsidy from the State, which can come in the form of allocating additional coastal areas to entrepreneurs for construction and commerce near the beach, or land in other places. Already, some of the existing marinas have not been profitable ventures.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel believes that people can make do with the large existing marinas; they can be expanded, improved, and more efficient to provide a reasonable solution for existing and future needs. According to our estimates, these operations could almost double the number of mooring plots. Thanks to our campaign, the members of the National Planning and Building Committee understood that the new building plan was problematic.

Water sports instead of yachts

Sometimes, the marina developers claim that this is in fact a novel way to benefit the public by promoting marine education and sports. Don’t let them sway you; nearly all of the existing marina plots are used for mooring private yachts, not for such public purposes.

Currently, there are about 2,500 mooring plots in Israel. The plan promoted by the Israel Port Authority, an agency supported by the Ministry of Transportation, suggests adding another 5,000 plots by establishing new marinas, expanding the existing ones, and improving their efficiency. According to the plan, about 80% of the new mooring plots will be allocated to private yachts and sailboats. The remaining 20% of plots, at most, will be allocated to sailing vessels for education and water sports.

Of course, education and water sports can and should be promoted; but this can be done within the existing marinas, especially if they are to be expanded and made more efficient, without the need to establish new marinas.

Building new parking lots for yachts mustn’t take priority in a country lacking beach space. Instead of subsidizing new marinas, the government needs to provide a solution for the many Israelis who simply want to relax, do sports, or just sit on the beach—but don’t have enough space to do so.

For further reading

A win for the sea: “Only” one of the six marinas will be established (article on Ynet)

The Planning Administration recommends establishing only one marina (article in The Marker)

Who needs new marinas? (article in Globes magazine)

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/4390#current-state>

4. The State of the Campaign

The sub-committee of the National Planning and Building Committee adopted the approach suggested by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and decided that it is more important to protect the undeveloped beaches than to build new marinas.

Currently, the plan to build one new marina, instead of the six outlined in the original plan, will be tabled in a sitting of the national committee.

With the help of all our members, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel will continue to campaign against the harming of marine nature in Israel, to protect the coastal areas that serve millions of Israelis.

<https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/4390#more-posts>

5. More campaigns