**Protecting Streams** [**https://www.teva.org.il/nature/rivers**](https://www.teva.org.il/nature/rivers)

The story in 100 words

Why we protect streams

How we protect streams

What if we fail?

More information

1. The Story in 100 Words

Israel is hot and crowded, but if we look closely, we’ll discover that it’s dotted with countless sites for refreshing water hikes: streams, springs, and winter ponds.

Over the years, we’ve drained and sealed many of these beauties of nature. Others have become sources of pollution that we and animals avoid, instead of enjoying them.

Photo: Yuval Daks

There are dozens of streams that should be full of clear, flowing water but have become polluted, dry channels. How did this happen? In the past, we used the streams and springs as sources of drinking water and irrigation water. Worse, we turned streams into sewage channels that drained the polluted water directly into the sea.

Thanks to the revolutionary desalination efforts, we now have abundant freshwater. Now is the time to stop the destruction of streams and springs—and return them to their natural state.

The mountainous Jordan. Photo: Yuval Daks

2. Why We Protect Streams

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

Why do we need to protect the streams and water sources?

Without sources of clean, healthy water, none of us could survive. It’s wrong to think that a natural stream or shady spring is just a treat that can be destroyed for the benefit of construction or agriculture.

When we drain a stream or confine its water to a pipe, humans, animals, and plants become susceptible to an array of pitfalls as a result.

A hiker at the Banias

Photo: Dov Greenblatt

A purple heron in a field

The purple heron, a water bird

Photo: Liron Shapiro

In the early days of the country, Israel’s residents rallied around the project to drain the Hula swamp—because everyone was sure that agriculture was more important than swamps.

This was a terrible mistake. Although swamps seem to be merely a source of dirt and mosquitos, the Hula played a critical role; it purified the water flowing into the Sea of Galilee. Today, we are paying a high price for the services that the Hula swamp provided for free.

There are dozens more streams and springs that are not treated with the respect they deserve from us.

3. How We Protect Streams

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

How do we save our streams and water sources?

The good news is we can revive the streams and water sources that we’ve damaged.

Many of us already realize that we must protect our streams and springs. But to ensure this happens, the government (and us included) need to make a quicker and more decisive effort. This is the only way we’ll be able to enjoy abundant, fresh water within spectacularly diverse natural surroundings.

**The Streams in Israel**

Our streams and springs can go back to being as full and clear as they once were. It doesn’t require much effort to ensure that we can all benefit from them; animals and plants will once again enjoy a suitable habitat in which to thrive.

To make sure this happens we must stop the pollution infiltrating the streams and release the spring water to nature. The streams are waiting for us to free them from their concrete pipes and drainage channels that confine them, and renew their natural meanders—all the way from the mountains to the sea.

Flash floods in the Judean Desert. Photo: Yuval Daks

4. What If We Fail?

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

What might happen if we fail?

Dozens of animal and plant species are in danger of extinction because of damage to their water sources. Did you know that the African softshell turtle almost disappeared completely due to pollution and destruction of the landscapes adjacent to the streams?

Many more animals and plants struggle to survive because the streams and springs have been devastated. But it’s not too late to save Israel’s natural water sources.

Only 3%

of the streams and swamps in Israel in the 19th century still exist

600 km

the potential length of the streams in Israel that can be saved

Only 220 km

the total length of currently healthy streams

The serious floods experienced in Nahariya, Tel Aviv, Eilat, and other cities demonstrate the detrimental consequences of stream destruction. Over the years, we straightened the natural stream meanders and turned them into straight concrete channels. We established neighborhoods and agricultural fields in the open spaces that could have absorbed the rainwater. The results: channels overflowing with tremendous amounts of water, causing terrible destruction.

If we don’t hurry to save the streams and springs, all of Israel’s nature will undergo detrimental, irreversible change.

Polluted Ashalim Stream. Photo Yuval Daks

5. More Information <https://www.teva.org.il/nature/rivers>

More campaigns for nature protection

All campaigns

A man hiking in Banias Stream

Saving the streams

**Coping with the Climate Crisis** <https://www.teva.org.il/nature/climate>

The story in 100 words

Why we protect the environment

How we protect the environment

What if we fail?

More information

Crude oil refineries in Haifa

1. The Story in 100 Words

The significance of the climate crisis is tremendous: it influences every aspect of our lives; from the food we eat to the water we drink and the air we breathe.

This is because the forests, deserts, streams, and sea are impacted by the climate crisis caused by humans, and this significant impact on nature also affects us.

But there is also a positive side to the story: nature can be an important part of any solution to the crisis, including in Israel.

A traffic jam on Highway 20

2. Why We Protect the Environment

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

Why do we need to cope with the climate crisis?

Nature works like a sophisticated machine. On one hand, it releases carbon dioxide, and on the other hand, the plants and soil can reabsorb it and maintain a healthy balance in the atmosphere.

However, in the last 150 years, humans have overloaded the atmosphere with carbon at an ever-increasing rate—impinging on nature’s ability to balance it. The result is bad news for all of us: global warming is becoming more extreme.

Green transportation

Photo: Dov Greenblatt

Solar panels on the roofs of houses

Solar panels on the roofs of houses

Photo: Dov Greenblatt

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, humans have produced energy through a process that emits carbon dioxide. Moreover, we are destroying the natural systems, such as plants and soil, which were once able to stabilize the level of carbon in the atmosphere and maintain a balanced climate.

The results: the earth is becoming hotter, and hotter, and hotter. New heat records are set nearly every year and the climate crisis causes fires, flash floods, droughts, and more. Israel is heating faster than the global average.

A fire. Photo: Arnav Kainthola from the Pexels website

3. How We Protect the Environment

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

How do we cope with the climate crisis?

Government policy plays an important role in the process toward a healthier and more balanced climate. The government needs to allow increased energy production from green sources and limit the carbon and methane emissions that disrupt the atmosphere.

Likewise, it’s imperative to pass a climate law that ensures a budget for supervision of policy implementation and action toward this issue which is critically important to our existence.

The expected decrease in rain

So, what can we do to help, in Israel?

1. Protect the open landscapes that facilitate absorption of the carbon we emit.
2. Add green spaces in cities that are expected to suffer significantly from global warming.
3. Take personal responsibility to ensure that our shopping, investments, and taxes promote a balanced, healthy environment.
4. Make Israel a center for climate innovation—and change the rules of the game throughout the world!

Gazelle Valley. Photo: Dov Greenblatt

4. What If We Fail?

What might happen if we fail?

The state comptroller declared that Israel is failing in its effort to cope with climate change.

We belong to the upper third of countries that emit the most greenhouse gases per capita and are doing very little to change this dangerous trend. If we continue this way, we’ll pay in human lives, extinction of wildlife, and dozens of billions of shekels or more, per year.

125 thousand

years have passed since it was as hot as it is today

85%

of the world’s citizens are already suffering from global warming

3-fold

the increase in the rate of warming temperatures in Israel in recent decades

1.7

If we don’t stop the climate crisis, we’ll all suffer from fires, floods, a lack of water, and famine. We won’t be able to live in cities suffering from extreme heat.

If the crisis continues to escalate, nature’s ability to balance out the damage caused by humans will decline further and further. Instead of nature being a partner in fixing the problem, it will contribute to making the problem worse.

But there is also a positive scenario, in which we enlist in the climate campaign to promote a healthier, more balanced environment for everyone.

Melting icebergs

**Protecting Open Landscapes** [**https://www.teva.org.il/nature/open\_land**](https://www.teva.org.il/nature/open_land)

The story in 100 words

Why we protect open landscapes

How we protect open landscapes

What if we fail?

More information

An ibex in Ramon Crater. Photo: Yuval Daks

1. The Story in 100 Words

Within a few years, Israel is expected to be the most crowded country in the West. We clearly need more houses and roads. But are we also looking after the needs of the gazelle, hare, and vulture? Do we understand that if we don’t protect nature, we’re also putting ourselves in danger?

If we continue exploiting every bit of available land, leaving animals and plants stranded on “habitat islands”, nature will not survive and then, we won’t have air to breathe, food to eat, or water to drink.

A field of anemones in Megiddo. Photo: Yuval Daks

2. Why We Protect Open Landscapes

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

Why do we need to protect the open landscapes?

Israel is a wonder of nature. We are considered a global hotspot with an extraordinary concentration of rare species of animals and plants that don’t exist anywhere else in the world. Only about 2% of the world can claim this extraordinary feat. But these wonderful treasures of nature might simply disappear. The jackals that wander the Dan region and the wild boar that have invaded Haifa emphasize the extent to which wild animals are desperate for a habitat.

A griffon vulture in the Golan Heights

Photo: Liron Shapiro

An ibex in the Arava Desert

Photo: Dov Greenblatt

Nature is a fragile, complex system in which each component depends on all the others. Bacteria, bees, birds, and trees affect each other in countless ways, not all of which are known to us. What we do know, is that we won’t survive without healthy, resilient natural environments.

The key point is balance. We must ensure that animals and plants have protected, high-quality landscapes, such as nature reserves; then we’ll be able to enjoy the abundance they shower us with.

Ein Evrona Nature Reserve. Photo: Yuval Daks

3. How We Protect Open Landscapes

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

How do we save the open landscapes?

To leave enough space for animals and plants to exist and thrive alongside us, we must find a point of balance between the needs of humans and those of nature.

For example, we can manage our cities efficiently with fewer detached houses and wiser space management of built-up areas. Thus, we’ll be able to save hundreds of thousands of dunams of land and not waste Israel’s gradually disappearing open landscapes.

Open landscapes in Israel

Over the years, we have saved many open landscapes in Israel, whether in the hills around Modi’in, the Hula Valley, or the Negev. This long battle is still far from finished.

Nature cannot survive within the confines of small parks or habitat islands—fragments of land separated and isolated from each other by roads and other human means. To ensure our children will also be able to enjoy Israel’s rare animals and plants, we need continuity of open landscapes from Mt. Hermon and the Galilee, through the crowded center of the country, all the way to Eilat. Otherwise, nature will suffocate and fade away.

Ein Davsha in the Golan Heights. Photo: Yuval Daks

4. What If We Fail?

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

What might happen if we fail?

From the snowy Mt. Hermon and the green Galilee, through the Asian Arava Desert and the Mediterranean Sea coast, to the arid Negev—Israel boasts a tremendous diversity of nature and landscapes that create its unique identity. It’s rare to find such richness even in much larger countries.

Today, it’s clear to most of us that the earth’s resources may run out if we keep acting as we have done until now. We cannot continue to cause damage to nature unflinchingly.

2%

of the global land area is defined as a species hotspot—a unique environment—which includes Israel

80

species of plants per kilometer in Israel, compared to just 30 in Greece and 10 in France

150

endangered species of animals in Israel

Destruction of open landscapes has consequences for decades to come and may even be irreversible. The bear, fallow deer, cheetah, and leopard have already disappeared from Israel’s landscapes. Recently, the black vulture and bearded vulture also became extinct. There are 150 animal species and more than 400 plant species that are endangered. Fortunately, the ibex and the gazelle were saved; this happened only thanks to action for nature protection.

If we don’t begin to truly protect nature, humans won’t have beautiful places to hike; in the worst-case scenario, we will have neither air to breathe nor food to eat.

Mt. Hermon. Photo: Yuval Daks

More campaigns

for nature protection

5. More Information <https://www.teva.org.il/nature/open_land>

Destroying nature

The coral reef in Eilat

Stopping the crude oil disaster

Aerial photos of Mt. Keta

Small mountain—big nature

A griffon vulture

The campaign against poisonings

A man hiking in Banias Stream

Saving the streams

**Protecting Urban Nature** <https://www.teva.org.il/nature/urban_nature>

The story in 100 words

Why we protect urban nature

How we protect urban nature

What if we fail?

1. The Story in 100 Words

More information

Most of us here in Israel live in crowded cities and must travel long hours on crowded roads to enjoy nature’s beauty and tranquility.

But the astonishing experience of nature isn’t experienced only in the forests or craters. It’s also abundant in the city, if we know where to find it.

Nature’s beauty within cities can be expressed in a tiny bird’s nest, a large winter pond, or a rare tree. It can be found both in green parks and in unexpected places such as an abandoned parking lot or a roof.

Nature in the city protects some of the plant and animal richness that can be found in open landscapes. As it is a very sensitive environment due to its proximity to crowded, polluted regions and unceasing construction, we must work together to protect it.

Irises in an urban field. Photo: Iris Arbel

2. Why We Protect Urban Nature

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

Why do we need to protect nature in the city?

Urban nature gives cities a unique character. Think about the unrivalled beauty of the green wadis in Haifa, the valleys in Jerusalem, or the dunes in Tel Aviv.

The rapid growth of cities devours every bit of available land and destroys nearly every trace of the natural landscape that once existed. Without the delight of animals and plants, our cities would be dull and boring.

A tortoise in Gazelle Valley in Jerusalem. Photo: Dov Greenblatt

We use up many natural resources that we don’t think about, for example, the ground on which our cities are built and our daily drinking water. We also produce a lot of garbage and pollute the air unceasingly. This is true throughout the world, particularly in countries crowded with houses, roads, and infrastructure, such as Israel.

If we can find a balance between our needs and those of the jackals, porcupines, and flowers, we’ll be able to live in healthy, thriving green cities.

The dune in Ashdod. Photo: Itzhak Cohen

3. How We Protect Urban Nature

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

How do we save nature in the city?

Jerusalem, Netanya, Holon, and many other cities boast thriving urban nature. We need only cross the road to immediately lose ourselves in a colorful, shady environment.

If we want more nature in our urban environments, we need to go out into the fields, identify sites with wild animals and plants, and then avoid building houses and roads that will destroy these places.

In the past, it was thought that nature exists only in the wild landscapes of the mountains and deserts. In recent years, we have come to understand that cities also have unique wild animals and plants; therefore, the effort to protect nature also includes cities.

Residents from Gazelle Valley in Jerusalem prevented the construction of roads and houses in the small natural habitats surrounding their towns. Thus, a wonderful natural site was salvaged among the intersections and interchanges, enabling the area’s residents to enjoy nature near their homes.

Gazelles in Gazelle Valley in Jerusalem. Photo: Dov Greenblatt

4. What if We Fail?

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

What might happen if we fail?

Cities in Israel—where nearly all of us live—are growing rapidly and demanding more and more land, energy, food, and water. But these are limited resources. If we don’t act wisely, the wild plants and animals will struggle to survive—and so will humans.

Nurturing nature in cities contributes to balancing our needs with those of the tortoise, birds, and trees.

* More than 50%

of the global population lives in urban settlements

* 92%

of Israelis live in cities

* 80%

of global polluting greenhouse gas emissions come from cities

When we open the window or go out to the balcony, do we see only houses and roads, or also trees, birds, and even wild animals?

Nature in the city is a quiet, green kingdom that helps purify the air from pollutants, creates spectacular landscapes inside the urban environment, and aids the survival of animals and plants. Together with residents and municipalities, we are fighting to protect this. Otherwise, we’ll be trapped in boxes of concrete, asphalt, and smoke.

Winter blossoms in Zichron Ya’akov. Photo: Avner Rinot

More Campaigns for Nature Protection

All Campaigns

More Information

**Campaigning for Nature** [**https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns**](https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns) **First page**

Campaigning for Nature

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel leads dozens of public campaigns to protect Israel’s animals, plants, and landscapes. You’re invited to join the most important campaigns that are happening now—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 campaign for the deep ocean**

**The full story**

**Open Landscapes**

**Motorcycles speeding in 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**

**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 in the water**

**The campaign against hunting**

**The full story**

**A griffon vulture**

**The campaign against poisoning**

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

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

This campaign belongs to the campaigns for:

Oceans and Beaches

1. The Story in 100 Words <https://www.teva.org.il/campaigns/8655#intro>

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 with 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.

2. The Campaign in Numbers

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

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

3. The Full Story

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

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 tail revealed its cause of death. This mark was left by the large net of a trawler ship; one of the ropes that secure the net 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 fishing is 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 burrowing 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.

4. The State of the Campaign

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

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.