

## Germany-Israel Ranger Organizations Twinning Project

### Israeli Rangers Delegation in Germany

July 28, 2023 – August 6, 2023



#### Participants

- Gal Arieli – delegation leader
- Avam Attar – deputy delegation leader
- Ariav Buldo – Agricultural damage ranger
- Ofir Brikenstein – Regional ranger
- Eyal Ben-Giat – Regional ranger
- Yair Bar-Lev – Green Patrol ranger

## **Introduction**

The Germany-Israel rangers' organizations' twinning project has been underway for six years now. In its framework, delegations of rangers from both countries travel once a year to the other country for a study tour in the host country (rangers from Israel are guests in Germany and rangers from Germany are guests in Israel). This year, the delegation from Israel visited protected nature sites in the state of Brandenburg in eastern Germany and in the Schwarzwald National Park in the state of Baden-Württemberg in southwestern Germany.

## **Friday, July 28**

Arrival in Berlin, tour of the city's points of interest focusing on the time when the city was divided. Visit to the Holocaust memorial and the famous Brandenburg Gate.



### **Sunday, July 30**

Visit to Gluper See (Gluper Lake). Introduction to the monitoring of migratory aquatic birds; banding of a pair of hoopoe chicks in one of the nesting boxes in the field; tour of the meadows with a focus on preserving them as a nesting site for ground nesting species; visit to the Milower Berg Park; tour of the reserve and introduction to management and treatment of invasive plant species and reintroduction of local species; introduction to a European Union-funded project to protect grasslands; visit to the visitor center in the town near the reserve; meeting with the director of the project to conserve the great bustard, a ground nesting species; tour of the great bustard's habitat and mating areas.

### **Monday, July 31**

Arrival at the Nuthe-Nieplitz Park; joint ceremony to mark World Ranger Day; tour of the network of bridges built in the area and ascent to a lookout tower; report on the area and the buildings that were once a recuperation home for soldiers of the German and the Russian armies; travel to Forst Jüterbog in Zinna-Keilberg, a forested area that once served as a large army camp, experienced a major fire and is now a protected area; tour of the area and discussion of the forest fire-prevention management activities there; Ofir and Yair's presentation to the local rangers about the INPA and the Green Patrol.

### **Tuesday, August 1**

Arrival at the UNESCO Spreewald Biosphere Reserve; visit and guided tour of the visitor center in the city of Lubbenau, located in the biosphere reserve. Tour of the city and introduction to tourism there; travel to Schlepzig Park, an aquatic habitat consisting of a system of channels and streams based on the Spree River; sailing for about 5 km by boat in the reserve; discussion of water management in the reserve, in its surrounding agricultural zones, and visitor management; day ended with a shared dinner in the field.

### Wednesday, August 2

Travel by train to the city of Baden Baden in southwestern Germany; meeting with Urs Reif, president of the European Ranger Federation; walking tour and introduction to the city's points of interest; arrival at a forest hut in Schwarzwald National Park.



### Thursday, August 3

Walking tour of Mount Hoher Ochsenkopf and introduction to the core area in the northern part of the park, focusing on visitor management; visit of the new visitor center in the center of the park and general geographical introduction to the Black Forest region and the national park in particular; presentation of the work of the INPA and the Green Patrol by Ofir and Yair to the national park's rangers; shared barbecue dinner and getting to know the rangers and the volunteers.



### **Friday, August 4**

Introduction to management and monitoring of wildlife in the park, particularly wolves and red deer; presentation of the conservation and monitoring project of the capercaillie; presentation of hunting management in the national park; Introductory tour of the national park's network of overnight campgrounds and their management; visit to points of interest in the southern part of the national park.

### **Saturday, August 5**

Presentation of the public relations and enforcement work of the rangers in the national park; walking tour and lookout over the region at Mount Schliffkopf; presentation of herding management throughout the national park and visit to herds of sheep, cows and horses in the area; visit to the candle festival in the village of Buhlbach.

### **Sunday, August 6**

Return to Israel

### **Summary**

We found the challenges to nature protection in Germany and Israel to be similar. Fruitful discussions took place between the delegations throughout the visit, while presenting the challenges and how to meet them in both countries. We found that in terms of enforcement, the local rangers have the authority to hand out monetary fines only in a few places, and most of their activities involve public relations. Most instances of enforcement that go beyond public relations require intervention by the local police. In most cases, the rangers deal with a variety of subjects such as ecological management, monitoring, maintenance and public relations only in the protected areas rather than in all the natural areas of a particular district or state. Agricultural damage is managed almost entirely by licensed hunters. Germany has a

large variety of protected spaces, of which national parks are accorded the highest level of protection, after which come areas defined as wilderness, biosphere reserve and nature reserve.

In the Black Forest National Park we learned that the area is managed in three circles:

- Core areas – no human intervention at all in nature
- Managed and monitored areas – managed and monitored by means of seasonal grazing and limited hunting.
- Disturbed natural areas – usually on the margins of the park, overlapping agricultural areas and communities.

We note in particular the warm and professional hosting by the German team, led by Britta and Urs, who, from the moment we landed until the moment we left, took care of everything, large and small.

We look forward to many more joint activities like these between the Israel and German twin organizations!

Note: Yair Bar Lev had to return to Israel early (on August 4) due to the untimely death of his mother. His flight back to Israel was arranged with the assistance of Ilan Yeger, Gal Arieli and Gil, the travel agent. We send our condolences to Yair.







Report: Ofir Brikenstein