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The Bekaa valley was filled with wildflowers this spring, as you will see in the blog on the missing frogs. Among all this new growth, the hum of bees and deafening frog calls returned as well. In this newsletter, you'll read how A Rocha Lebanon hosted a workshop on bees with naturalist Mira Boustani and began a survey for a rare frog species in Aammiq.

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On the Urgency of Being a Naturalist: A Workshop on Wild Bees

On April 15 at our office in Aana, naturalist Mira Boustani conducted a workshop on the bees of Lebanon. She has already named three wild bee species in Lebanon, following in Adam's calling to name the animals.

[Read blog](#)



Of Frogs and Princes, and Needles in a Haystack

In 2000, an A Rocha scientist observed a frog, which could be the long-lost species in the Aammik Wetlands in the Beqaa Valley. A team began a survey in April to hopefully find the rare species.



The Case of the Missing Frogs

Phil Good, A Rocha volunteer, writes about his routine in setting up listening devices throughout the wetlands. So far, they have created 13,000 five-minute sound files.

[How the survey works](#)

[See progress](#)



**Farewell and Thank
You,**

Phil and Sylvie Good!

Faithful, enthusiastic volunteers since early 2022, Phil and Sylvie have dedicated hours of time and hard work to the project in Mekse. We will miss their weekly trips, but we are grateful for all the support they provided. Please pray for them as they begin the next chapter of their journey in the UK.



Restore people and places with us

You can donate online throughout the world to support A Rocha Lebanon! Thank you for considering a gift to help us continue our work in this beautiful country.

[Give today](#)

Prayer: God of Creation and Lord of Life

God of creation and Lord of life, you entrusted us to care for our environment, but in many parts of the world we have failed. Help us to realise how fragile and unstable our surroundings are, because we are not looking after creation. We need to be true stewards and to understand how the most insignificant little flowers, and the tiniest insects, each creature and individual people are all part of a wondrous whole. Amen. [[Credit](#) to The Church of England's Environmental Programme]

20 days in Mekse – Late Spring 2023



I. Land restoration



Beginning of May 2022

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End of May 2023

The decision not to plow and the digging of swales brought back humidity on the land



**Swale trench planted
with poplars**

**Swale hill planted
with oak trees**





Irrigation canals are opened in late spring to keep melt snow water from the mountain on the land before the summer drought



Seedling protection

**If planting poplars produces effects after 3 years,
planting oak trees is a 30 years investment**



Fire prevention with Ayman's herd



Only goats eat thistle

After Wrapped Reichstag and
Wrapped Pont Neuf,
Wrapped trees

In memory of Christo and Jeanne-
Claude and their installations





**Construction
of a
herb spiral
by the entrance**



**Preparation of a site for the Bedouin tent (L:24m, l:5m)
as a shadowed space for religious service, class, and as a
resthouse for visitors**



II. Nature Conservation

3 kinds of meadows are clearly identified on the site

Poor soil

dominated by

Thistle and chicorium endivia

Dry land

dominated by

Wild oat

Rich soil

dominated by

Clover and other legumes





**Water inhabitants of the pond
Fishes, frogs, turtles, and a water snake (Natrix)**







Dragonflies and damselflies

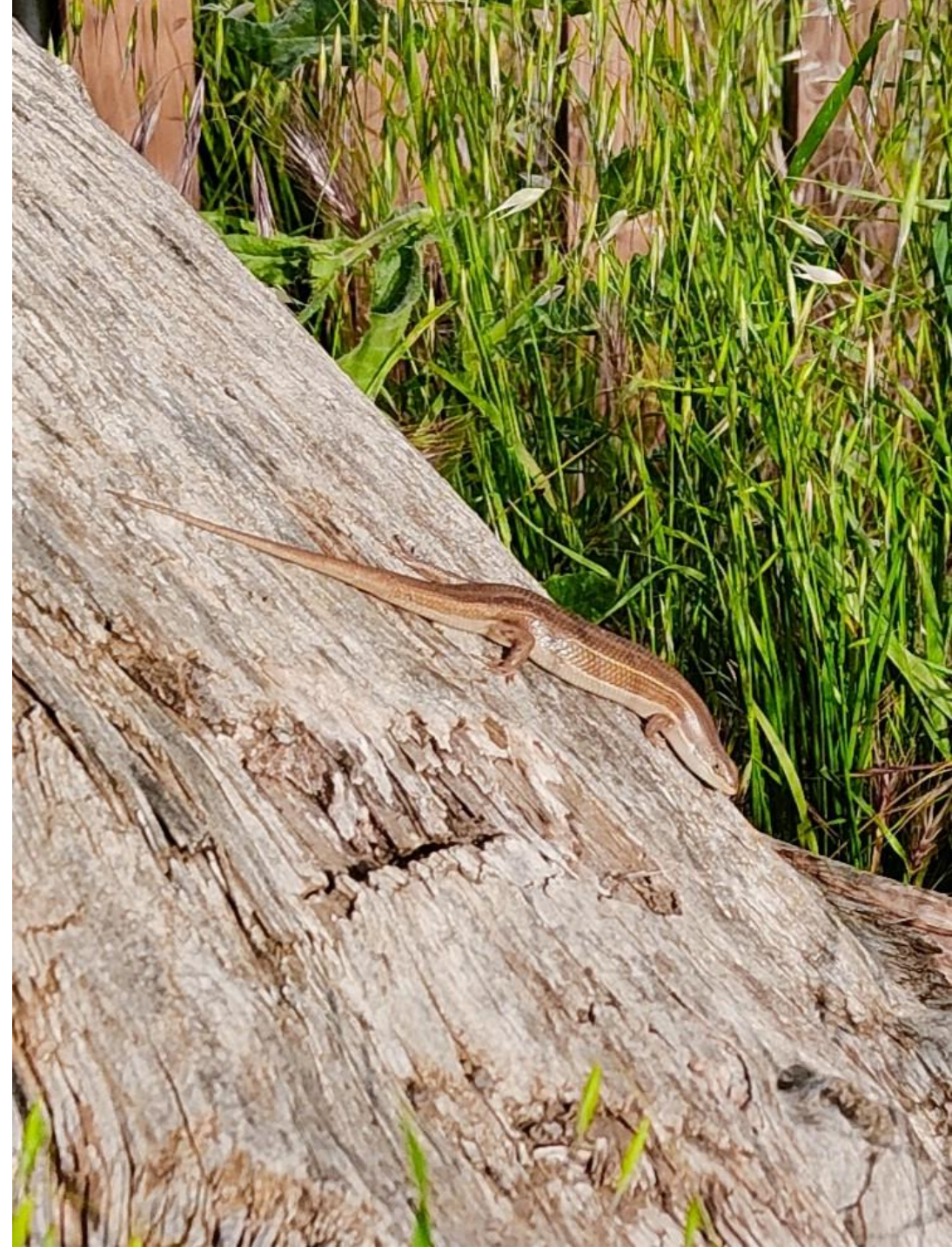


Butterflies





Lizards



Bees



Wild cocoo bee and a swarm of honey bees caught in a rammed-earth hive





Minotaur emprisonned in the maze

III. Education



Chasing Butterflies



Swimming Lesson

Portraits in wheelbarrow





Alouch



Nouh



Yacine



Daher

Next steps



Preparation of the opening

Cluster 001 (cultural space in Mar Mikhail) proposed to organize a festival on biodiversity in late summer for the opening. The mayor agreed on it



Extension of the project next door



Toward A Rocha Center for Biodiversity?

Together with the mayor, we discussed with Dr Rifaat Ghanem, owner of the adjoining land and its unfinished building for renting it in order to develop an A Rocha center next to the land restored by A Rocha.

Dr Rifaat already agreed on that we use the site (the land, the building and the pit) as it is. For instance, we can even put solar pannels on the rooftop.

He also offered to discuss on a lease, a five-years contract with two options: we rent it and manage the work as we want, or we agree with him on the details of the design and materials.

This would be an opportunity for ARL to open an A Rocha center, with a show room for exhibitions on biodiversity. It would bring additional value to the site, and the opening of a shop selling local products would possibly bring an income to A Rocha.

A forest-garden could be developed on the 2 acres land.





The project can be developed step by step, and begin with only two rooms on the ground floor, one for the shop, one for exhibitions