



Photo: KKL-JNF Acclimatization Center and Clinic

## **Treatment and Rehabilitation of Birds and Wildlife: KKL-JNF Operates a Clinic and "Acclimatization Center", the First of its Kind in Israel, in Agamon HaHula**

Every year dozens of wildlife animals get injured in northern Israel, due to a shortage of veterinary hospitals in the region, many of them do not receive timely medical treatment, which endangers their lives and their chances to successfully return to nature. All that changed in 2019 with the opening of the KKL-JNF's "*Acclimatization Center and Wildlife Clinic*" in the Agamon HaHula. The clinic accepts injured wildlife providing them with first-response, life-saving treatment; the birds are transferred to acclimatization enclosures for further treatment and follow-up. Three acclimatization enclosures - two designed for birds of prey and one for songbirds - facilitate rehabilitation in a natural setting (outside of the clinic), isolated from humans and inside a protected facility; these enclosures permit monitoring of the birds' recovery and return to nature under controlled and safe conditions when they are deemed ready for it. This acclimatization method is based on an international method for the treatment of wildlife and avifauna, and this is the first instance it is being applied in Israel. The Agamon HaHula site was chosen because it is situated along one of the most important bird migration routes in the world; millions of birds, comprised of dozens of bird species, migrate along it twice a year between Europe and Africa, plus is it home to various terrestrial wildlife species. Beyond that, there are dozens of other wildlife species in the Hula Valley,

throughout the Galilee and in the Golan Heights. The existence of this center and clinic is essential for the preservation of northern Israel's nature, wildlife and its unique and spectacular ecosystems.

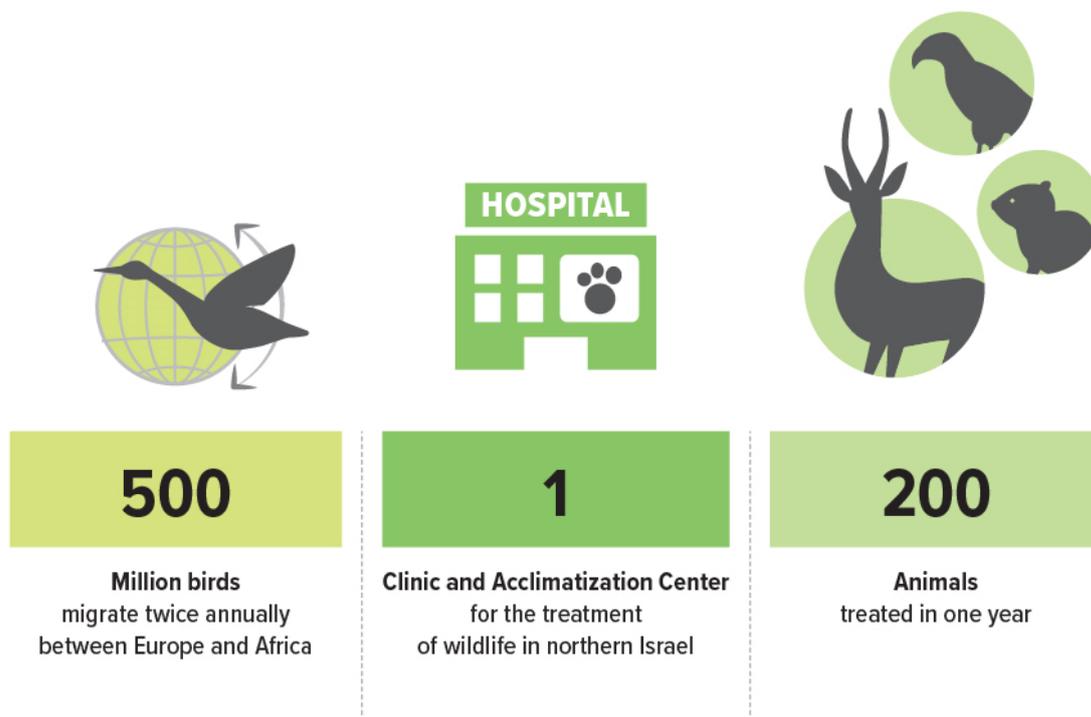
Operation of the "*Acclimatization Center and Wildlife Clinic*" is a non-stop, year-round endeavor ensuring continuous care and treatment for animals throughout the Galilee and Golan Heights, all done in real time while allowing for acclimatization before their return to nature. In order to do this, various operational components are needed, including: administrative needs (professional workers, volunteers), animal food, medical equipment and routine maintenance of the facility. The center/clinic is staffed with a general manager, who is also a veterinarian by profession specializing in birds and wildlife; she is responsible for the center's general management and its workforce. Additional staff positions include chief caregiver, administrative coordinator, research coordinator and volunteers (students from the nearby Tel-Hai College). Animal food is diverse and originates from several sources: for predatory and scavenging birds of prey treated in the clinic, the staff raises most of their food itself (larvae, rodents, etc. that requires sawdust, rodent food and vegetables); outsourced foodstuffs include milk substitutes, seeds, red meat, fish, etc. Veterinary equipment includes: medicines, perishable medical equipment (syringes, needles, dressings, etc.), non-perishable medical equipment (surgical tools, heating lamps, etc.) and ancillary equipment (nets, office equipment, rodent cages and carrying cages for hospitalization, etc.).

There is also a need to maintain the clinic's building and acclimatization enclosures': renovation of nets and shade awnings; repair of doors and partitions; repair of holes in the nets; maintenance of the water supply system, surveillance cameras and medical equipment (X-ray machines, anesthesia, pumps, freezer); electrical repairs, plumbing, air conditioning, communications, etc.

*The clinic is capable of providing "first response" emergency treatment to injured animals but is not able to perform complex surgeries or procedures. As such, animals requiring additional medical care are transferred to the Israel Wildlife Hospital located in the Safari Zoo in Ramat Gan. In the case of birds, they are returned to the acclimatization enclosures once they have sufficiently recovered.*

**Annual operation cost for 2021: 998,500 NIS**

**Donors will receive appropriate recognition**



### **Descriptions of Staff Positions:**

❖ **Director, *The Acclimatization Center and Wildlife Clinic* (Veterinarian)**

Responsible for managing all professional aspects of the acclimatization center including: the clinic, acclimatization enclosures, research and educational program. The director is responsible for the center's staff and the hospitalized/acclimatized animals, promoting projects and building professional content such as acclimatization, treatment and restoration protocols.

❖ **Administrative Coordinator**

Provide assistance to the director of the *Acclimatization Center and Wildlife Clinic*; responsibility for the volunteer and student program, logistics, ordering equipment and food; recordkeeping and documentation; preparing and compiling material for the media and educational program; maintenance of the clinic in concert with the chief caregiver; maintain communication with the Israel Wildlife Hospital.

❖ **Research Coordinator**

Responsible for writing and submitting research grant proposals; maintaining contacts with researchers; submitting permit applications; monitoring research progress; liaising with the Agamon HaHula's research center.

❖ Chief Caregiver

Assisting the director of the *Acclimatization Center and Wildlife Clinic*; providing therapeutic care in the clinic; responsibility for the provision of medication and food to hospitalized and acclimatized animals; daily monitoring of acclimatized animals through behavioral analysis via cameras and direct observation; maintenance of enclosures, cages and their environs; responsibility for growing food; general maintenance of the clinic.

❖ Volunteers

Students from the Department of Animal Sciences who come as part of their studies and receive academic credit points for this volunteer work; retirees from the Upper Galilee that volunteer in the various projects at the Agamon HaHula; residents of the Galilee and the Golan Heights who are interested in volunteering; volunteering in the variety of activities at the acclimatization center, from assistance in the clinic to raising chicks during the nesting season.

- Photos for illustrative purposes only.
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