

*Jewish Heritage, the Natural World and the Land of Israel:
How YOU Make a Difference*



מוזיאון הטבע התנ"כי

THE BIBLICAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

IMPACT REPORT
2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I walk through the museum, I continue to be amazed by everything we have accomplished together, and at our ability to adapt to meet current needs.

Each year, the museum grows. In 2023, we welcomed over 40,000 visitors – school groups, organizations and families, including non-Jews and Jews across the religious spectrum from Israel and around the world.

Since October 7th, guests have included many hundreds of Israelis who had to evacuate their homes, and families of reserve soldiers – for visits made possible by your generosity. Donor support will continue to make a difference through programs to boost national morale and provide emotional healing.

When we get feedback from visitors, one of the comments that makes us most proud is when they thank us for our sensitivity and caring. Always important, it is even more so now, as we host people who have gone through so much.

As we reflect on 2023, we want to thank you for your caring, generosity, and for being part of the museum family.

Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin

Director, The Biblical Museum of Natural History



EXECUTIVE TEAM:

Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin,
Executive Director

Maayan Steele,
Managing Director

Ellen Levi,
Head of Advancement

Dr. Sigalit Hertz,
Public Relations

Jonathan Finkel,
Business Development



OUR MISSION

To inspire greater appreciation of the connections between Jewish identity, the natural world, and the Land of Israel



“What a place! I don’t think there’s anywhere else in the world where there is such a connection between God’s creations, the Bible and the animal world.”

Senator Joseph Lieberman

Enriching Jewish Identity

Through interactive tours, visitors explore the animals of our Jewish heritage and how Jewish identity relates to the natural world.

Appreciating the Wonders of Nature

Hands-on experiences bring the Torah’s texts to life and teach how to relate to the natural world with awe, respect and sensitivity.

Connecting to the Land of Israel

The museum experience strengthens the historic connection of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel via the role that its wildlife plays in Jewish tradition.



VISITOR HIGHLIGHTS

Diversity of Visitors

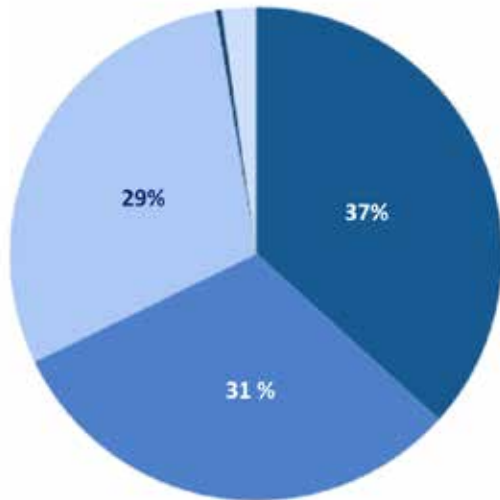
We continued to welcome an extraordinarily diverse range of visitors – schools, camps, senior centers and organizations across Israel, as well as programs for youth and adults visiting from around the world.

Jews across the religious spectrum, from secular Haifa schools to Satmar chassidic groups from Bnei Brak, non-Jews, children, teens and adults, and people with special needs all come to learn about the connections between Jewish tradition, the animal kingdom and the Land of Israel. They leave excited and enriched.



A Chassidic yeshiva rebbe who visited the museum with his family thought that volunteering would be very beneficial for one of his students. Yisrael loved putting on his museum shirt and finding his niche!

- Dati Leumi
- Secular
- Haredi
- Other
- Non-Jewish



Radio host Nachum Segal wrestles with Shayna, our giant python.



The Kashrut Department of Tnuva came for a special in-depth enrichment tour with a focus on our Hall of Kosher Classification.



In this group of Christian Bible teachers, participants came from Tonga, Indonesia, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Bolivia, Siberia, Zambia, Korea, Italy, Nigeria, Switzerland, and Benin!

CHASDEI TEVA FUND

Inspiring Groups of all Backgrounds, Abilities, Ages and Nationalities

In recent years, more school groups than ever have reached out to coordinate visits. Many of them, especially those from the ultra-Orthodox sector, are unable to pay anything close to the full admission fee. Chasdei Teva is the name of our initiative to subsidize these visits. Your support ensures we can welcome them all!



Yakir Shlomo Honikman is six years old, lives in Tekoa and loves animals. He was born with cerebral palsy, and visited the museum with his school, Mercaz Shikum Yeladim in Jerusalem.

He talked about it so much that his father Yehudah brought him back.

“Yakir Shlomo loves animals and loves the variety of what’s available at the museum,” shares Yehudah. “He doesn’t just play with the snakes, but learns what our sources say about them. I love that he can experience and learn so much.”



One of the hundreds of school groups that you enabled to learn about Torah and nature



Encountering a giant lizard is less scary when you have a puppet giant lizard!

“We are delighted to support this project, which has the triple effect of enabling groups who might not otherwise visit the Museum to be introduced to the wonders of the natural world; introducing them to biological thinking; and, in some cases, simply giving them an enjoyable and memorable outing! The work of the Museum in expanding the minds and vision of young (and old!) visitors is invaluable!”

*Michelle Stein and Paul Shaviv
Chasdei Teva Supporters*

EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHT

The Art of the Ark

Generous donor support made possible the beautiful new “Art of the Ark” exhibit in memory of Anne Samson.

The exhibit showcases over 100 stunning artistic representations of Noah’s ark, with examples from every continent, illustrating the different animals central to each indigenous culture’s heritage.

“I’m so touched by the generosity of so many people. This unique exhibit is of extraordinary beauty. The exhibit spreads a message of care and is a perfect memorial for Anne, whose beauty and warmth made her so beloved.”

Lee Samson, Chairman of the Board

The “Art of the Ark” reinforces the museum’s message of the centrality of the animals of Israel to Jewish heritage and culture.



EVENT HIGHLIGHT

The Feast of Kosher Curiosities

Thank you to everyone from Israel and the Diaspora who joined us for a sold-out Feast of Kosher Curiosities. The 130 guests enjoyed exotic kosher delicacies alongside fascinating insights into the world of Torah and wildlife.

“The Feast was a one-of-a-kind experience. We enjoyed an exotic multi-course meal at the museum alongside Rabbi Slifkin’s fascinating insights on wildlife and kashrut. We were thrilled to participate with so many friends and family and support the museum’s important educational work.”

Seth Fischer, Raanana



WHEN CRISIS HIT, YOUR GENEROSITY OFFERED COMFORT

None of us anticipated the tragedy we would experience on October 7th and the way our lives would change. When we considered how to use the Museum's unique resources to help, you answered the call.

Your generosity enabled us to provide free tours to hundreds of Israelis who had to evacuate their homes, and to families in which a parent was called up for reserve duty, often for months on end. Thanks to you, we invited families for "animal interaction hours" and donated the softest of stuffed animals from our gift shop – a special request from the community of Shlomit (which evacuated their homes near the Gaza border) to soothe their children at bedtime.



To the Biblical Museum of Natural History family, hello!

Family - because you give the feeling of a family; the behavior of the staff towards us was filled with warmth.

We are from Netivot. We hadn't left our home for the better part of a month. No school, no social gatherings. We decided to take a long weekend to clear our minds and refresh ourselves, and we went to the museum.

It's hard to express how much we enjoyed ourselves. Your offer of free admission made this possible, especially as we haven't been able to work since the war began.

You opened your doors and your hearts. It's amazing and unifying, and we just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The Maimon Family

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

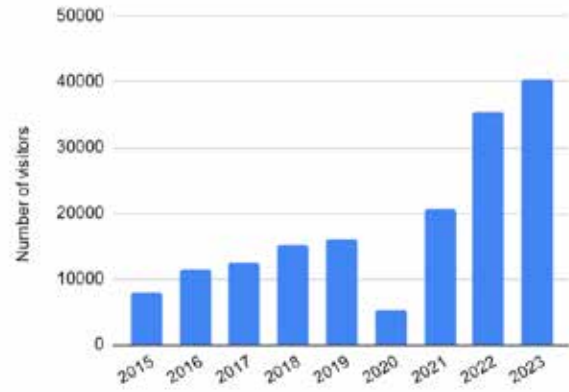
Continued Growth

Even with the steep drop in attendance after the outbreak of the war, over 40,000 guests visited the museum in 2023, including Israelis, tourists and groups of all backgrounds. We consistently receive 5-star ratings on TripAdvisor for an outstanding educational experience with our knowledgeable and friendly staff.

Financial Stability

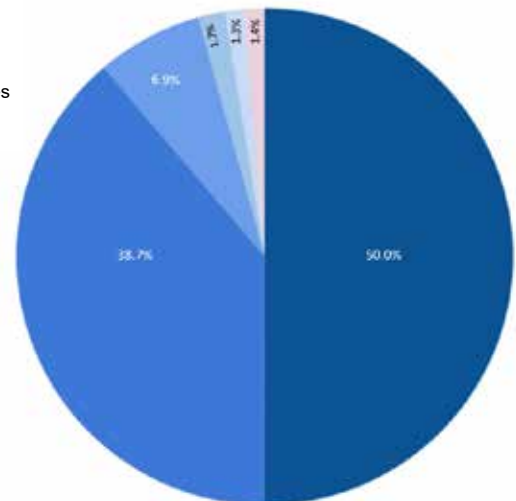
A continued increase in visitors and supporters put the museum in a sound financial position, enabling us to weather the difficulties created by the war. We were able to cover half of our \$1.1 million 2023 budget via ticket, gift and book sales, and events. Your support covered the other half, inspiring so many people with the beauty of Jewish heritage, the natural world and Israel!

Annual Visitor Growth



- Donations
- Ticket Sales
- Gift Store/ Book Sales
- Events
- Online Classes
- Other

Expense Coverage 2023



Some of the larger school groups, such as this group of 120 students, fill the auditorium to capacity!

ON THE HORIZON 2024

The Rand Mineral Collection

Jonathan and Anne Rand recently donated over 500 stunning minerals from their world-class collection. The minerals will be exhibited throughout the museum.

“We are thrilled to bring the best pieces from our worldwide mineral collection to Israel and enable thousands of museum visitors each year to appreciate their beauty,” shares Jonathan. “Showcasing these minerals in the museum will inspire people about the wonders of God’s creation.”

Special Exhibits Gallery

Our new Special Exhibits Gallery will house part of the Rand Mineral Collection as well as showcase unusual and fascinating rare items from around the world related to wildlife, nature and Judaism. The gallery will be open to Friends of the Museum, and to the general public for an additional fee.

The Torah Encyclopedia of the Animal Kingdom, Hebrew Edition

Our flagship publication has been published in Hebrew translation, thanks to the Ryzman, Baum, Distenfeld and Shepherd families. An initial 1,000 copies have already been printed, to be sold through the museum and in collaboration with the Nature & Parks Authority.

Thanks to generous sponsorship from Dr. Chaim and Chana Gelbfish, thousands more copies will be printed for sale and to be distributed to schools across Israel.

Additional Books on the Horizon

Several additional books are in the works, including a reprint of *Perek Shira: Nature’s Song*, sponsored by Dr. Elliot Goldofsky; a coffee-table volume to accompany our new Art of the Ark exhibit; and a book of nature-related insights on the weekly Torah portion.

Future Planning

With the extraordinary growth of the museum, we are set to outgrow our building - and our parking - within a few years. Initial steps are being taken to explore future expansion.



THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Thank you to our 2023 Friends and Patrons!



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WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Sponsor an Exhibit, Publication or Program

Dedicate a specific museum exhibit, publication or program that is meaningful to you and inspire thousands of visitors with an appreciation of Torah, nature and Israel.

Become a Patron

Join the Museum family of patrons and support one of the most beloved educational destinations in Israel; our patrons enable us to host tens of thousands of schoolchildren.

Leave a Legacy Gift

Include a gift to the museum in your will and make an enduring impact.

Join the Board

Help guide the Museum's continued growth and innovation.

Offer your Expertise

We appreciate the guidance of many friends and supporters experienced in different areas who donate their time and expertise.

Email advancement@biblicalnaturalhistory.org to let us know how you would like to get involved.



Steve and Rivky Weiss, sponsors of the "Animals of Avot" exhibit



The Russak Family, sponsors of the Russak Hall of Shofars



Seth Fischer, Gold Patron



Jake and Loren Shepherd (and children), Bronze Patrons



“The Biblical Museum of Natural History is a terrific concept.... Rabbi Dr. Slifkin’s work in teaching about the Bible and the animal kingdom has been wonderfully educational and illuminating, and I salute him for it.”

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks



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**The BIBLICAL MUSEUM
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