

Egypt: Mindy Baha El Din

Status of conservation projects

GEF UNDP BirdLife Migratory Soaring Bird Project has been temporarily stalled. Encouraged and advertised for people to apply for ABC grants. The binoculars & books were never distributed due to the revolution. We still have them. Keep hoping to be able to restart local guide program. We will donate them to NCE or another program if unable to do so. NCE is conducting a study about Sacred Ibis reintroduction into Egypt. Some bird surveys are planned. A number of Egyptian researchers are studying abroad.

Conservation concerns

Birding tourism is down. Research is down. Protected Area rangers are striking since the government is not supporting them and they are concerned about threats to nature and Protected Areas.

Bird hunting was recently opened but to be regulated by Law 9. There is no way to monitor....there is no hunting management system in Egypt. Even international bird trade appears to be restarting e.g..African Grey Parrots were recently seen for sale. Both were closed due to bird flu...but authorities are allowing the trade to resume. Due to lack of law enforcement the word is that illegal activities are going on...no one to monitor, supervise or regulate.

The same is happening at Protected Areas and to areas important for nature...uncontrolled haphazard development...no one monitoring....no supervision....no regulation..

Ministry of Environment has a new Minister. Person in charge of Nature Conservation Sector is from military and doesn't know or do anything. Hence rangers protesting...

BirdLife is helping us and is one of the few international organisations which makes a concerted effort to assist Egypt in this field.

Have been doing a lot of lobbying on birds wind farms, power lines and solar energy.

New Contacts with other Bird Clubs

Nature Conservation Egypt is doing a lot of work to raise awareness. It is the most active organisation in Egypt at the moment with regards to bird conservation. I have been personally trying to improve relations with Libya birders..promoting bird tourism & cooperation.

Promotional Activity for ABC (e.g. talks)

A number of Egyptians were made ABC members. They were very happy about this.

Other Concerns or Issues

We had a revolution. Security and economy is badly impacted. Nature conservation has been hurt too! The situation here remains in constant flux, changing day to day...but in general it has gone from optimistic to uncertain. NGOs are also under attack...existing laws are highly controlling and limiting of NGO activities. Foreign funding is very controlled. Unbelievable they now want to pass a new law which is even more restrictive law than the old one. Still we hope next year will be better....all of us want a better future for birds and nature in Egypt. The interest is there...but the political will plus the post revolution situation in the country make it a very difficult environment to work in. So birds and conservation are on the back burner. Appreciate ABC interest and support!