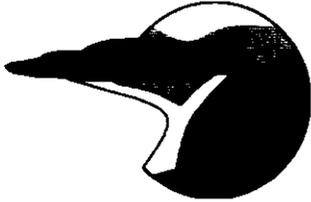


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מכון הערבה ללימודי הסביבה
The Arava Institute for
Environmental Studies

FoEME Friends of the Earth Middle East



Biodiversity Study פרויקט מגוון מינים

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT No. 2

March 03- November 03

Assessment of Species Diversity in the Southern Arava Rift Valley

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Jordan Society for Sustainable Development

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Section I: Technical Progress

- I. A) Research Objectives:
We are on schedule!
We have just completed the fourth and final field session in the 2003-study sites. We have been working this year on 16 sites (8 sites in Israel and 8 in Jordan). All sites were monitored four times a year at different seasons as planned. This last field work will not directly overlap in timing in Israel and Jordan due to religious constraints: the dates we need to be in the field based on moon light and temperatures fell within the Ramadan fasting. therefore the Jordanian team started their field work 4 days before planned schedule.
- I. B) Research Accomplishment:
We haven't yet started analyzing the data.
- I. C) Scientific Impact of Cooperation:
No changes since previous report.
- I. D) Description of Project Impact:
Not yet relevant.
- I. E) Strengthening of Middle Eastern Institutions:
None to report.
- I. F) Future Work:
In the coming couple of months, we plan on finding new field sites for the year of 2004 – 8 in Jordan and 8 in Israel and get them ready for the coming winter field session, which will be the first of four to occur in these sites. We are interested in organizing another workshop to summarize the first year of work and discuss the coming year.

Section II: Project Management and Cooperation

II. A) Managerial Issues:
Communication can at time be challenging, but in general we are dealing with it fine. The fact that our work on both side of the political border needs to be so finely tuned, requires constant communication, understanding and creativity. At times both sides feel some frustration in regard to communication difficulties.

II. B) Special Concerns:
None to report.

II. C) Cooperation, Travel, Training and Publications:
Meetings and cross country visits are still one sided due to preferences of Jordanian colleagues, however few of the Jordanian field assistants have shown interest in arriving to Israel. The visa process has started for research assistant Hatem Sultan.

The travels since last report:

- 10/4/03 Dalit Ucitel to Aqaba to exchange gear.
- 15/5/03 Dalit Ucitel and Noa Guez to Aqaba to take to Israel invertebrates preserved in alcohol.
- 29/5/03 Dalit Ucitel to border in order to bring few items needed to Jordanian team.
- 23/6/03 Uri Shanas and Dalit Ucitel to Aqaba to discuss research plans.
- 16/7/03 Dalit Ucitel to Aqaba to bring gear.
- 21/7/03 Dalit Ucitel to Aqaba for data exchange.
- 15-17/10/03 Dalit Ucitel to Arava Valley to join fieldwork on the Jordanian side.

We hope for more crossing from our Jordanian partners to Israel. We do not have substantial data yet to allow us potential publication.

II. D) Request for USAID Actions:
None to report.



The smallest gecko in the Arava Valley – Sand gecko (*Tropiocolles nattereri*) riding on the endangered Middle Eastern Short-fingered gecko (*Stenodactylus doriae*).



The Wadge snouted skink (*Sphenops sepsoides*) can be found in sandy habitat such as the dunes and the semi-stable dunes.



The Anderson's gerbil (*Gerbillus gerbillus*) inhabits sandy habitats only and is listed as vulnerable in the Israeli red book.



The Jordanian team at work : (from right) Khaled Nasser - field coordinator, Hatem Sultan – much needed research assistant, Mohamed – part time field assistant & Abu-Hassan – a local bedouin who guards a couple of sites that are next to his village.



The Israeli team at work : (from right) Shaham Mitler – master's student, Elad Topel – master's student, Dalit Ucitel – research assistant and study coordinator, Idan Shapira master's student & Roei Talby – part time field assistant.