Palestine Museum of Natural History
Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability

Annual Report 2020

31 December 2020

Aerial view of PIBS/PMNH site at Bethlehem University Mar Andrea Campus
Neighbourhood children enjoying the new playground

*Crocus hyemalis* at our botanical garden
1 Preface

2020 was a challenging year for all people. But with challenge comes opportunities and the team (staff, volunteers, donors) of the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability rose up to the challenge as you will see on these pages of our 2020 annual report. We expanded existing programs like our Animal Rehabilitation Unit, Cultural Heritage Program, and Environmental Monitoring Unit. We started new programs such as opening a children exploratory playground, molecular facilities (and integrating with our clinical and research cytogenetics laboratory), in-situ and ex-situ conservation programs, a new Biodiversity Center, new library facilities, and the group “Palestine Action for the Planet”. We produced over 15 research papers in various areas including impact of COVID-19 on biodiversity in Palestine. We adapted to this virus by creating virtual educational programs, webinars and more. We built new partnerships including with the Ministry of Education, the Natural History Museum-London, Biodiversity Center at An-Najah National University, and others. We were also selected to work on the National Biodiversity Strategy and the 6th National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Over 10 funded programs achieved outputs desired (with very few delays) in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The accomplishments listed in this Annual Report were achieved despite the decline in support via international and local volunteers due to travel restrictions. We now launched regular online volunteer meetings (monthly) and we started to build (virtually) “Friends of PIBS” (people willing to help remotely). While our unrestricted donations in 2020 were about 1/4th of that in 2019 (due to lack of travel on fundraising tours and lack of visitors who usually donate), we are optimistic that we will continue our growth (of course the more support, we have the more accelerated growth we have). In fact our accomplishments summarized below reached global recognition. For example, we were invited to give dozens of webinars to a global audience including at the European Citizen Science Association conference. Prof. Qumsiyeh was also recognized with two prestigious awards for establishing the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability (Paul K. Feyerbrand and Takreem Awards). Within this institute, we also have a sense of belonging and we care for each other as a family. We had Summer Shaheen leave us to pursue her master degree, and we had one of our previous team members finish her PhD in Germany. Reena graduated with an M.Sc. and continues to work with us. We are proud of all these accomplishments. What we hope to do for 2021, with your support, is more work on e-learning, better use of audiovisual, increased use of social media, hands-on children’s science education, civic education leading to cleaner environment, more climate change education and citizen science programs, and beginning construction on the new Green Building. We have never been more optimistic about the future. Please consider increasing your involvement with our work, and if you are new, consider joining a team that is making a difference in life (people, fauna, flora) in this corner of the Fertile Crescent: The Holy Land, the Land of Hope and Renewal.
The team

The team includes 9 staff members, dozens of volunteers, and hundreds of supporters.

Dedicated to all the friends we lost in 2020

2 Research and Publications

Handal, E.N. A Teratological Record of the Southern Green Stink Bug Nezara viridula (Hemiptera, Heteroptera, Pentatomidae) from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (West Bank). Jordan Journal of Natural History, In press.


Qumsiyeh, M.B. Giving Hope and Getting Results for Sustainability in Palestine. Kapitál (Slovak cultural monthly journal).


Other articles and reports

Conservation Careers highlights: Helping Palestine’s people live in harmony with nature: LINK

ICAHD UK Interview with Prof Qumsiyeh on resisting oppression and optimism of the will: LINK

Qumsiyeh donates award money to BU: LINK

Class on Indigenous struggles - Palestine given at Fielding University LINK

Impact of the Israeli Occupation on Palestinian Science, Education, and Research: A Conversation with Palestinian Colleagues on the infringements on the rights to science and education of the Palestinian people: LINK

3 Education and Workshops

In the January and February 2020 period, we received over 500 locals and more than 200 international visitors to the Museum. Then on March 5th we entered into lockdown followed by other restrictions on movements and travels (e.g. no school visits). We had to adapt by developing new educational awareness outreach models. We continued to help schools either starting or strengthening educational clubs. We also worked with five schools (>120 students) this year under the Education program to enhance awareness of environmental clubs near the world heritage site (see section on this). We also have collaborations with the Paris Museum of Natural History and the Natural History Museum in London regarding education about plants and animals, respectively.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>QGIS</td>
<td>Julius Pahl</td>
<td>20 March</td>
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<td>Biodiversity paper</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>1 April</td>
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<td>Biodiversity and GPA</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>8 April</td>
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<td>Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>15 April</td>
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<td>Environmental DNA</td>
<td>Prof. Alfried P. Vogler</td>
<td>22 April</td>
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<td>Project Design and Proposal Writing</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>29 April</td>
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<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Linda Majaj</td>
<td>6 May</td>
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<td>Media Strategy</td>
<td>Reena Saeed</td>
<td>13 May</td>
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<td>Darwin Report</td>
<td>Abdel Salam al Janazreh</td>
<td>21 May</td>
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<td>Environmental Impacts of Occupation</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>4 June</td>
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<td>Green Museums</td>
<td>Elias Handal &amp; MQ</td>
<td>4 June</td>
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<td>Management and Leadership</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>17 June</td>
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<td>Circadian Clock</td>
<td>Duaa Subhi</td>
<td>29 July</td>
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<td>Information Management</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>5 August</td>
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<td>Museum Management</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>12 August</td>
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<td>The Impact of Israel’s Annexation Plans on Palestinian Research and Higher Education</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>21 August</td>
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<td>BDS, Capitalism, Colonialism and the Climate Crisis: Connecting the Dots</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>9 September</td>
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<td>Impact of the Israeli Occupation on Palestinian Science, Education, and Research</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>26 September</td>
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<td>On indigenous struggles - Palestine</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>27 September</td>
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<td>Taxidermy</td>
<td>Walid Basha</td>
<td>22 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>How indigenous people of Palestine fight the domineering system of colonialism and protect our nature and our planet @International Wilderness week</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>23 October</td>
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<td>Enhancing Participatory Approach in actions of Palestinian Museums and Cultural Organizations</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>25 October</td>
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<td>Artas Agriculture Workshop</td>
<td>Mohammad Abu Amriyeh</td>
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<td>Environmental Emergency Webinar</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>7 November</td>
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<td>Middle Eastern Social innovation Lab MESIL lecture on human and nature sustainability in Artas</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>17 November</td>
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<td>Lecture on ornithology (BU Zoology class)</td>
<td>Elias Handal</td>
<td>4 December</td>
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<td>Conditions of Palestinian farmers and ways that Palestinians are solving their agriculture crisis amidst Israeli occupation for a class at the Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>9 December</td>
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## Nine Quarantine Renaissance Webinars

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Working with farmers in marginalized communities</td>
<td>Summer Shaheen</td>
<td>18 August</td>
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<td>The link between human diversity, biodiversity and sustainability</td>
<td>Linda Majaj</td>
<td>25 August</td>
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<td>Founding and Director of the PIBs and PMNH</td>
<td>Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>31 August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management challenges and opportunities in pandemics and colonialism</td>
<td>Abdel Salam Al Janazreh</td>
<td>9 September</td>
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<td>Environmental Awareness Focusing on Children</td>
<td>Elias Handal</td>
<td>15 September</td>
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<td>Volunteerism in Palestine Today: Addressing the Challenges of Occupation and Pandemic</td>
<td>Jessie Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>22 September</td>
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<td>Role of Community gardens and gardening at home for the renaissance of our Palestinian society in light of the Corona pandemic and the Israeli occupation</td>
<td>Mohammed Najajreh</td>
<td>29 September</td>
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<td>Settler Colonialism and the Natural Environment with PMNH</td>
<td>Reena Saeed</td>
<td>6 October</td>
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<td>Improving the State of the Palestinian Environment via Public Participation</td>
<td>Mohammed Abu Sarhan</td>
<td>13 October</td>
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## The continuing education and First Aid sessions

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Host or Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scorpion Biodiversity and Interlope Divergence at “Evolution Canyon”</td>
<td>Elias Handal</td>
<td>5 June</td>
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<td>Climate Change Paper &amp; GIS in Biodiversity Research</td>
<td>Julius Pahl</td>
<td>10 June</td>
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<td>Color morphs of flower, exhibit design</td>
<td>Elias Handal &amp; MQ</td>
<td>24 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Aid I</td>
<td>Dr. Abdul Hameed Ja’afreh</td>
<td>28 September</td>
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<td>First Aid II</td>
<td>Dr. Abdul Hameed Ja’afreh</td>
<td>1 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Aid III</td>
<td>Dr. Abdul Hameed Ja’afreh</td>
<td>15 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Aid IV</td>
<td>Dr. Abdul Hameed Ja’afreh</td>
<td>22 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Aid V</td>
<td>Dr. Abdul Hameed Ja’afreh</td>
<td>29 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Aid VI</td>
<td>Dr. Abdul Hameed Ja’afreh</td>
<td>5 November</td>
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First Aid training

Darwin Initiative event with almost 100 stakeholders
4 Conservation and Animal Rehabilitation

Our conservation efforts continue unabated despite the challenges. Below are some new initiatives for 2020.

**In-situ and ex-situ plant conservation**

We counted so far over 388 species in our botanical garden. Thanks to funds from the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), we were able to advance a number of issues (still ongoing through 2021):

- Enhanced the botanical ecosystem to serve as an oasis in an urban area by introducing many new trees, perennial and annual plants. We already brought many and by end of 2021 there will be over 550 species.

- We worked on the threatened orchid populations with the aim to establish an orchid corner in the garden that serves for ex-situ conservation plus advancing our study of orchids in protected areas in the West Bank (for in-situ conservation).

- Educational materials were developed for use especially during the pandemic

National plant of Palestine: *Iris haynei*  
*Gynandriris sisyrinchium* at the museum
**Education and research programs on conservation**

These continue to accelerate. They are reported in chapter 2 and 3.

![Sampling at the pond near Jinsafut](image)

**Starting new national conservation programs**

This year we became more visible nationally and were trusted by the State of Palestine to work on the National Biodiversity Action Plan and to produce the 6th national report for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Both are done in close partnership and cooperation with the Environment Quality Authority (EQA) and relevant stakeholders.
Coincidentally we also had a project funded by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS) and the Management and Reporting of Biodiversity Data (MRV) Belgium to enhance conservation, reclamation, and strengthening of biodiversity via creating structures for research on protected areas, especially in compliance with CBD guidelines. A further aim is to disseminate the strategies adopted by the national authorities.

![Meeting with representatives of the EQA](image)

**Animal rehabilitation**

We rescued and released many injured animals in 2020. This was done in collaboration with the EQA and local communities. A success story is the rehabilitation of a female striped hyena, Linda. We also successfully rehabilitated and released an Eagle Owl in March, just before the lockdown started. It is one of the largest owl species in Palestine and the world. This goes in line with our efforts to protect threatened and endangered species in Palestine. On the anniversary of *World Environment Day*, the PMNH released a long-legged buzzard. It was rehabilitated over 11 months at the museum in coordination with rehabilitation specialists for birds of prey in Germany, Nature Support e.V.. We have just received a juvenile Eagle Owl in mid December for rehabilitation. The owl appeared to be healthy and we expect to release it soon.
Palestine Action for the Planet (PAP)

Palestine Action for the Planet is one of many new initiatives related to conservation we engaged in this year in education on issues like combating climate change. It is an informal network to do activities related to conservation. Here is an article from PAP.
This project’s main objective is to increase respect for ourselves, each other, and nature leading to conflict resolutions as a result of joint actions (across the Green Line) that are mutually beneficial leading to sustainability of human and natural systems. The three-year long (2020-2022) project aims at valuing diversity - agricultural, human and natural. It is funded by the EUPI and in partnership with the Galilee Society and the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People. Accomplished so far:

- Setting up of three centers at the three partner institutions is ongoing. This includes a Biodiversity Center (PIBS, Bethlehem), Human Diversity Center (PCR, Beit Sahour), and Education Center (GS, Galilee). The three centers have structures, staffing, and resources to become regional and even global centers.

- Furnishing and creating a mobile educational unit to go to remote locations

- Selected, funded, and trained nine researchers for research related to diversity. Other in-house researchers were also engaged and produced important relevant research (see chapter 2).
6 Molecular Biology

Funded by the oldest scientific association in the World (The Royal Society, London UK) and in partnership with the Museum of Natural History of London, PIBS is engaged in capacity and infrastructure building activities (Dec 2019 - Nov 2022). They will lead to the setup of an advanced center for molecular studies of fauna and flora by the end of the project.

Desktop study and an outline of the main research projects to be done in the following years (see LINK).
Collected and catalogued over 3,000 specimens from eleven locations in the West Bank, focusing on the protected areas that are most threatened.

Dr. Alfried Vogler from the Natural History Museum in London gave a public lecture to introduce new research technologies that will be implemented through the project. The audience included researchers and students (MSc and PhD) from Palestine and the UK. The lecture can be seen here. Also, we highlighted the project on our social media platforms including, for example, this post on Facebook.

Created a new biodiversity center, funded by the Royal Society and the EU Peacebuilding Initiative. The molecular unit within this center which is still under construction, will be well equipped to do cutting-edge molecular research and to host (as well as train) local and international students and researchers.
The new molecular laboratory (top) and taxonomy lab
7 Serving Nature and Society in a World Heritage Site

This project constitutes conservation, agriculture, research, and education in the UNESCO designated world heritage site in the Al-Makhrour Valley area just south of Jerusalem (encompassing communities of Battir, Husan, Al-Walaja, Beit Jala).

Cooperating with our colleagues locally and in the UK and funded by Darwin Initiative (UK), the aims of the project included sustaining human and natural communities in the valley system.

Some of the achievements so far are:

- Enhancing resilience of communities through traditional and sustainable agricultural practices and direct support of agriculture to 81 households farmers (22 in Hussan, 20 in Battir, 13 in Al Walaja, and 26 in Beit Jala). The farmers benefited by doing eco-friendly agriculture resulting in increased production. They received seeds and 87000 seedlings and produced approximately 11.4 tons of vegetables.

- Working on conservation through restoration of key habitats critically selected at three sites in the Al-Makhrour valley. The restoration action focused on improving ecological functionality, preventing soil erosion and enhancing carbon dioxide absorption on site.

- Supporting women households in the four target communities through four grants (£4000 each) to four existing/new women business groups. These selected women groups became even more motivated after the pandemic hit. The women projects were launched during September and the women immediately initiated their activities and offered services and sales of amazing products.

- Increasing awareness and shared learning by conducting exchange visits between communities, during which traditional farming practices and success stories were exchanged.

- Engaging five schools in Bethlehem District (Walaja, Battir, Husan, Beit Jala) via online workshops in November 2020. Over 120 students participated and learned about biodiversity in the Valley and in Palestine. Participating students also received project sweatshirts and hats.
Images from activities with locals and school children from the Al-Makhrour valley
Response letter from the UNESCO
8 Cultural Heritage

The ethnography section continues to attract the interest of researchers and visitors. The smartphone game developed with the name Sido AlMuzare’ (سيدو المزارع) attracts the interest of many children who learn about traditional farming techniques and proverbs. We also leverage the pride in our cultural heritage ongoing conservation projects in villages like Battir and Artas which have to contend with multiple pressures including the Israeli occupation.

9 Medical Zoology

We are creating a medical zoology and medical entomological unit that serves the needs of the Palestinian population to study scorpion stings and animal bites. This unit is created via a project funded by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to Bethlehem University. The new unit will research areas directly relevant to the health of human beings in Palestine, including animals that act as vectors of human or livestock disease. Currently, we are doing research on mosquitos, sandflies, poisonous animals (scorpions and snakes), birds (myna birds), and mammals (hyenas). We have also been working along-
Mohammad Abusarhan and Reena Saeed from the medical zoology team side the Ministry of Health (MoH) to analyse the extensive records at MoH databases of the stings and bites encountered in the last five years and create a guidance of accurate species encounters to health clinics and hospitals.

10 Green Oasis in Bethlehem for Plant and Ecosystem Conservation

This involves a series of projects that transformed the botanical garden to become an exploration, education, and conservation garden in Bethlehem. A number of subprojects and activities have been achieved through partnership.
**Green Playground: Children’s Ecological Garden for Play and Learning**

Taking inspiration from nature and using ideas seen in other successful playgrounds using recycled and natural material, we proceeded to rehabilitate and develop a section of the land in the museum into an interactive exploration playground/children garden. The recent phenomenon of children’s gardens – both the landscape design and the educational play activities that are integral to their implementation – is based on the key concepts and research that demonstrate how children learn through play and provide strong evidence that outdoor play experiences in natural settings are essential components for building knowledge in many fields, as well as personal skills. We designated three areas of the garden as safe children’s areas built around the existing greenhouse and the aviary/animal room: a community garden, playground and discovery area. We thus sought and received complementary funding from Playground for Palestine, Rotary Foundation, Western Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order (USA), the Jerusalem Fund, and the Association France Palestine Solidarity which collectively cover the costs for (a) infrastructure for garden including an amphitheater, terracing, soil, wood, etc., (b) playground and exploration area material, (c) supplies for gardening (tools, seeds, seedlings, etc.), (d) program development and activities (trainer, transportation, etc.).
Barefoot Sensory Path

The idea of a barefoot sensory path was suggested by a Museum intern, Julius in May, 2020 and the path was completed in June 2020. It offers our visitors to have an enjoyable experience to walk barefooted. Barefoot walking is a healthy and fun way to connect with the environment. Filled with various materials found around the museum ground, this path provides different sensory input and activates the more than 20 muscles of the foot. It serves to enhance the circulation of the foot, build up balance and strengthen the link between brain and extremity. As feet are put in shoes, their presence and full functionality are often neglected. Come and discover the prickle and softness of the earth and feel what is around you!
Community Garden

Our community garden continues to benefit the local society even after the project duration has ended. With self-funding since December 2019, the activities were abruptly halted by the initial lockdown during this year’s spring season. However the interest in gardening has recovered well afterwards, and families care for their plots. Despite the challenges, the community garden has received even new families.

The community garden’s blessings
11 Library and Volunteer Workspace

We consolidated the existing book library and added more books into a newly acquired space on the fourth floor of the building. Here the library with computers (some desktop computers will be delivered by end of Dec 2020) will act also as a workspace for volunteers. To make it more exciting, one of the rooms on the same floor has been turned into a bedroom. Volunteers and staff can stay there as needed (for example we utilized it during the curfews imposed in pandemic time). In addition a kitchen is provided for their use.
12 Volunteers

Our volunteer force was going strong until the Coronavirus lockdown that started on 5 March 2020. Volunteers scheduled to arrive after that date were not able to do so. Those who were already with us had to cut short their stay. Nevertheless we had over 10 international volunteers before March 4th and only a few afterwards. Zohar is a long term volunteer with us. She, Mazin and Jessie even stayed at the museum during full closures in the Bethlehem area. As far as local volunteers, we had 35 local volunteers who spent time (anywhere from one day up to 2-3 weeks) working with us on various aspects (garden, exhibits, education, media, social issues etc). During the olive harvest in late October, we received over 20 volunteers on one day and a few local ones on the other three days of harvest. To volunteer with us, please go to this LINK.
Volunteer effort for the olive harvest

Our hats off to all present and past volunteers who made tremendous contributions to what PIBS/PMNH is today. Many alumni continued to be interested in our ongoing development and offered to help from afar. To stay in touch during the COVID-19 Pandemic, we began to hold monthly volunteer virtual meet-ups beginning in July 2020. See a summary of one of the meetings and photos [here](#).
13 Media and Visibility

PMNH/PIBS quickly adapted to the pandemic by developing remote education modules such as virtual tours of the Museum done via videos, e.g. on the GARDEN. We were on TV shows, radio programs, interviewed for newspaper and magazine articles, were visible in social media and much more (over 120 in total this year). Prof. Qumsiyeh also sends weekly messages to over 50,000 people (more than half of the messages are specifically promoting what we do at PIBS/PMNH. Here is an example of one such blog. Below you also find recognitions/awards examples (showing that our work is appreciated by others). Also Prof. Qumsiyeh worked as board member and advisor to a number of international and local groups, for example, Scientists for Palestine.
## Examples of visibility action by month

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<td>January</td>
<td>Environmental education for children, Bethlehem Bible College</td>
<td>LINK</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>This week in Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>National Geographic video on Al-Makhour A brief video explaining an example of the Education Programs carried out by the Palestine Institute of Biodiversity and Sustainability at Bethlehem University</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Teaching for the Future</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Orchids in Palestine</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Webinar on Environmental Impacts of Occupation by Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Rotary club funds the community garden</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Dr. Qumsiyeh selected as Honorary member of ICCA Consortium Interview with David Rovics</td>
<td>ICCA</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>ICAHD UK Interview with Prof. Qumsiyeh on resisting oppression and optimism</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Can unity and diversity in humans and nature help reshape our world after the coronavirus pandemic?</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>Indigenous people of Palestine fight the domineering system of colonialism and protect our nature and our planet</td>
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<td>Interview at Maan TV about Biodiversity and Natural Heritage in Palestine</td>
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Serving Humans and Nature in Palestine

The Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability (PIBS) accelerated its activities in the last few months. Two major projects have already started. The first project, funded by the Royal Society, working with the Natural History Museum in London under its major collaborations in molecular biodiversity projects.

The other project to enhance diversity and unity in nature and in human communities, is funded by the European Union in collaboration with the Galilee Society and the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People.

In January, the Founder and Director of PIBS, Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh, traveled to the USA and Switzerland and gave a series of 22 talks related to Palestine and the work done at the PIBS.

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge “MIT”, Dr. Qumsiyeh attended and gave a presentation at the Scientists for Palestine meetings. He was elected to the organizing committee to structure more effective work between scientists in Palestine and those in other countries.

There were also discussions to establish an American-Palestinian Science Bridge similar to the one which already exists with Germany. Two staff members from PIBS had gone to Germany on exchange visits last summer.

Dr. Qumsiyeh also visited Switzerland and the US, and held meetings with key people at museums, research institutes, and botanical gardens. As a result, the PIBS project on Climate Change, which previously was done in collaboration with the City of Geneva and Zoi Environment Network, will now expand. The PIBS has collaborated on land use research with the Natural History Museum of Bern, Switzerland and will expand this to include other groups of animals.

A new annual report was released in January and summarizes achievements in 2019 in different areas. It is very beautifully illustrated with photos of these activities: it can be downloaded through scanning the QR code.

The PIBS continues to serve nature and humans in Palestine through agriculture, pessaculture, rehabilitating and releasing injured animals. R&D, and conducting environmental awareness and education programs to people as young as kindergarten and seniors even in their 90s.

The PIBS continues to educate and act for conservation and we welcome hundreds of local and international visitors, volunteers, and supporters.
Published story about seed distribution to farmers
Awards

The work of the museum and its team is highly appreciated in many areas. Here are examples of awards received.

• The Paul K. Feyerabend Foundation Award: LINK

• TAKREEM gave Prof. Qumsiyeh its prestigious award for sustainable development at a ceremony on 28 November 2020 (for 2019 nomination delayed ceremony due to COVID-19). Prof. Qumsiyeh was honored for his work establishing PIBS/PMNH and more. You can find the segment of the video with Prof. Qumsiyeh from the virtual award ceremony HERE.

Partnerships

The museum continues to build partnerships with governmental and non-governmental institutions to advance nature conservation and sustainable human communities.
Signing MOU (7 December 2020) between Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability at Bethlehem University and the Palestinian Environment Quality Authority

Delegate visit: Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, first Counselor Tomasz Grysa and Bethlehem University Vice Chancellor Brother Peter Bray
14 Fundraising and other Support

There are many other ways to help us besides volunteering. Donating (money or in kind) is an important way to help us build the institute and advance our collective work to serve nature and society. Funding from grants for specific projects continued and actually increased during this difficult year. But this is what they call restricted funding for specific projects (see accomplishments listed above for activities in those areas). Unrestricted funding or foundational support was already limited (see 2019 annual report on our homepage) and declined significantly in 2020 (to 1/4th of the amount in 2019) for various reasons:

1. Many donations came to us from local and international visitors to the museum. Those visitations were essentially stopped for most of the 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Staff travel abroad was also stopped because of the global Covid-19 outbreak. In particular, Prof. Qumsiyeh used to travel overseas annually to give dozens of lectures and this had generated lots of enthusiasm and donations (in money and in-kind like books etc). This especially came to a halt.

3. The economic and health situation around the world suffered because of the pandemic. Many donations were redirected to health issues.

The COVID-19 situation has also impacted our work in other ways. As noted above, volunteering declined. Local and international volunteers used to do much of the work in and around the Institute. As such help declined in 2020, we were forced to spend more of our money to do tasks that volunteers otherwise helped to do before COVID-19 (like harvesting olives, garden work, etc.). To donate, please go to this [LINK](#).

Nevertheless, PIBS/PMNH did receive several very generous donations. We would like to express our profound gratitude to the 121 donors in the year 2020 (as of December 30, 2020). Two-thirds of them are first-time donors to PIBS/PMNH:


Logos of funders
Our future is very bright with your support (a collective effort). In 2021 we pledge to:
• Work in partnership with others to benefit thousands of locals and internationals, whether in-person visits, via our forthcoming mobile educational unit, or via online platforms and new technologies.

• Publish 20 research papers in areas ranging from biodiversity conservation to taxonomy to ecology to molecular genetics to museology.

• Establish “Friends of PMNH/PIBS” in several countries to help our work remotely and to raise funds.

• Work on the National Biodiversity strategy and the 6th CBD report for Palestine.