

UZBEKISTAN (continued)		2017 June 9 (Fruit) (Set/2)			
831	1300s	Figs, <i>Ficus carica</i>		Moraceae	Fr A
832	1600s	Peaches, <i>Prunus persica</i>		Rosaceae	Fr A

ISRAEL ENDANGERED SPECIES

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[*Ed note: This article is from a press release provided by The Israel Philatelic Service (www.israelpost.co.il). The author is an ecologist with The Israel Nature and Parks Authority.*]

A public association called Hai-Bar was founded in the 1960s under the patronage of the Nature Parks Authority and managed by Avraham Yaffe and Uri Tson. The association's objective was to restore wildlife species that had become extinct in Israel and repopulate endangered species.

In the early 1970s, an area of approximately 12,000 dunams (2,965 acres) was fenced in within the Yotvata Nature Reserve, which preserves one of the salt flats in the Southern Arava. Large herbivores that had become extinct in Israel were brought in, as well as a number of species that did not exist in Israel, but were endangered in the world, such as the Wild Ass, White Antelope, Sahara Oryx, Arabian Oryx, African Wild Ass, and Ostrich. It is a diverse habitat, rich in species and large acacia trees that grow in the western part of the reserve.

In the beginning of the 21st century, a few thousand additional dunams were fenced in to the west of Highway 90 in order to protect the world's last population of Acacia Gazelle, which is endangered worldwide. This species is monitored carefully to preserve its existence.

Some of the wildlife species in Yotvata Hai-Bar are not being repopulated in Israel, but are raised as part of an international preservation effort to prevent their extinction. The Hai-Bar also serves as an emergency veterinary facility as well as a rehabilitation and way station for animals injured in the wild, with the intention of releasing them back into nature after they have healed.

Some of the Hai-Bar's most prominent species:

Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*)

The Arabian Oryx is suited to extreme desert conditions. It can survive for many days without water, making do with only the liquids derived from its food. It lives in small herds with a hierarchy for males and for females. The size of the herd varies depending on the food supply. Acacia seed pods are the Arabian Oryx's main source of food and passage through the oryx's digestive system improves the seeds' germination success. In the late 1970s, a breeding core with four oryx pairs was established at the Hai-Bar, and today there are more than 100 of these animals in the reserve. An estimated 100 others live in the wild in the Arava and in the Negev mountain area.

Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus*)

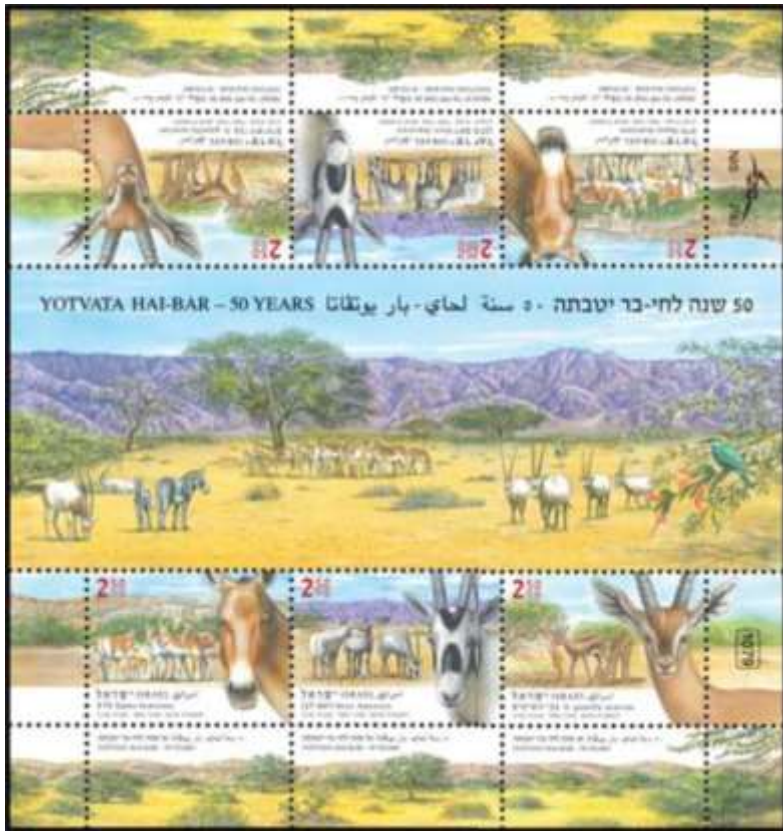
The Wild Ass lives in herds of females that move between the territories of the dominant males, while the young males live in bachelor herds. It feeds on desert vegetation, but does need water. The number of male territories is determined by the available water sources. The Asian Wild Ass, a sub-species of the Middle-eastern Wild Ass is extinct, thus the breeding core established in Yotvata Hai-Bar in the 1960s was based on a population made up of two other sub-species: the Persian Wild Ass and the Turkmenian Wild Ass. The re-introduction program began in 1982 in the Machtesh Ramon area and is considered to be a success. Today there are some 300 of these animals living in the wild.

Acacia Gazelle (*Gazella gazella acaciae*)

The Acacia Gazelle was discovered in the Arava in the 1960s by zoologist Giora Ilani. This is the rarest gazelle species in Israel and the population is only about 20 animals, which currently live in a fenced area of the Yotvata Reserve. Most of its food comes from the acacia trees, mainly the foliage and the fruit, which it can reach by standing on its hind legs. The Israel Nature and Parks Authority makes great efforts to preserve and nurture the Acacia Gazelle population in the hope that in the future it will grow and be able to return to the wild.

Miniature Sheet

On 6 February 2018, Israel Post issued a miniature sheet of six stamps and six tabs depicting the three animals described above and honoring the 50th anniversary of Yotvata Hai-Bar. The sheets were printed using offset lithography by Cartor Security Printing in France. Each stamp measures 30 mm high by 40 mm wide.



The Yotvata Hai-Bar nature reserve is located about 35 km north of Eilat. It is open year round during daytime. There is a driving path suitable for all types of vehicles that enables visitors (who must remain inside the vehicle) to observe the animals. The reserve also offers an overnight campground as well as a visitor center and souvenir store.



ACACIA

The *Acacia* genus is a botanical mess. These shrubs and trees take their common name from the genus name. Initially, the genus comprised a group of plant species native to Africa and Australia, with the first species *A. nilotica* described by Linnaeus.

Controversy erupted in the early 21st century when it became evident that the genus as it stood to that point was not monophyletic (i.e., descended from a common ancestor), and that several divergent lineages needed to be placed in separate genera. It turned out that one lineage comprising more than 900 species mainly native to Australia was not closely related to the mainly African lineage that contained *A. nilotica*—the first and type species.

This meant that the Australian lineage (by far the most prolific in number of species) would need to be renamed. Botanist Les Pedley proposed the name *Racosperma* for this group, which was inconsistently adopted.

Australian botanists counter-proposed that this would be more disruptive than setting a different type species (*A. penninervis*) and allowing this large number of species to remain *Acacia*, resulting in the two African lineages being renamed *Vachellia* and *Senegalia*, and the two New World lineages renamed *Acaciella* and *Mariosousa*. This was officially adopted in 2011 by the International Botanical Congress (conveniently held in Melbourne), but many botanists from Africa and elsewhere disagreed that this was necessary and some continue to consider the entire group as one genus.