

# APOLLONIA NATIONAL PARK

NATIONAL PARKS & NATURE RESERVES IN ISRAEL  
Legend  
● INPA Site  
■ Nature Reserve & National Park Areas



1. NIMROD'S FORTRESS N.P.
2. HERMON STREAM N.R. (BANIAS)
3. TEL DAN N.R.
4. SENIR STREAM N.R.
5. HORESHAT TAL N.P.
6. IYON STREAM N.R.
7. HULA N.R.
8. TEL HAZOR N.P.
9. AKHZIV N.P.
10. YEHI'AM FORTRESS N.P.
11. BAR'AM N.P.
12. AMUD STREAM N.R.
13. KORAZIM N.P.
14. CAPERNAUM N.P.
15. BETHA - BET ZAYDA N.R.
16. YEHUDIYA N.R.
17. GAMLA N.R.
18. KURSI N.P.
19. HAMAT TEVERYA N.P.
20. ARBEL N.P.
21. EN AFEQ N.R.
22. ZIPPORI N.P.
23. HAI-BAR CARMEL N.R.
24. MT. CARMEL N.P.
25. BET SHE'ARIM N.P.
26. NAHAL ME'AROT N.R.
27. DOR HABONIM N.R.
28. TEL MEGIDDO N.P. (ARMAGEDDON)
29. KOKHAV HAYARDEN N.P. (BELVOIR)
30. MA'AYAN HAROD N.P.
31. BET ALFA N.P.
32. GAN HASHELOSHA N.P. (SAKHNE)
33. BET SHE'AN N.P.
34. TANINIM STREAM N.R.
35. CAESAREA N.P.
36. ALEXANDER STREAM N.P.
37. SEBASTIA N.P.
38. APOLLONIA N.P.
39. YARQON N.P.
40. EN PERAT N.R.
41. JERUSALEM WALLS N.P.
42. CASTEL N.P.
43. AQUA BELLA N.P. (EN HEMED)
44. SOREQ CAVE N.R. (STALACTITE CAVE)
45. ASHQELON N.P.
46. BET GUVRIN N.P. (MARESHA)
47. QUMRAN N.P.
48. ENOT ZUKIM N.R. (EN FASHKHA)
49. HERODYON N.P.
50. EN GEDI N.R.
51. EN GEDI ANTIQUITIES N.P.
52. MASADA N.P.
53. TEL ARAD N.P.
54. TEL BE'ER SHEVA N.P.
55. ESHKOL N.P. (BESOR)
56. MAMSHIT N.P. (KURNUB)
57. SHIVTA N.P.
58. BEN GURION'S BURIAL PLACE N.P.
59. EN AVEDAT N.P.
60. AVEDAT N.P.
61. RAMON VISITOR CENTRE & BIO RAMON
62. HAI-BAR YOTVATA N.R. (DESERT WILDLIFE)
63. CORAL BEACH N.R.

## APOLLONIA NATIONAL PARK

### Dear Visitors,

Please observe the following rules:

- Obey signposted directions.
- Do not harm flora, fauna, or inanimate objects.
- Visitors are permitted only on signposted roads and paths..
- It is prohibited to remain in the park after dark!
- Please keep the area clean.
- The lighting of fires is prohibited!
- Climbing or rappelling from the cliff is prohibited.
- Do not approach the edge of the cliff.
- Watch out for falling or rolling stones.
- Do not climb the ruins and do not enter restricted rooms and spaces.



03.08



שם-ירוק  
INFORMATION SERVICE  
www.parks.org.il

All proceeds will be used to protect nature and heritage

Tel: 09-9550929

Have a pleasant visit

Text: Avivit Gera and Yaakov Shkolnik  
English translation: Miriam Feinberg Vamosh  
Aerial photography: Albatross  
Photograph of Crusader bowl: Pavel Shergo  
Artist's rendering: Yura Duchovny

Photographs of evening primrose and Crusader Fortress: INPA Archives  
Israel Nature and Parks Authority

# WELCOME TO

## APOLLONIA NATIONAL PARK

Apollonia is located on a cliff that stretches the length of the Sharon coast. The cliff is composed of kurkar (*calcareous sandstone*), red loam, and sand. At the top of the cliff, high above a small natural anchorage, people first settled some 2500 years ago. Thus began the fascinating history of Apollonia.

Remains of settlements that existed here for 1800 years were uncovered by an expedition of the Tel Aviv Institute of Archaeology, headed by Israel Roll.

The site is located in the within a national park, which the Israel Nature and Parks Authority has prepared for visitors.



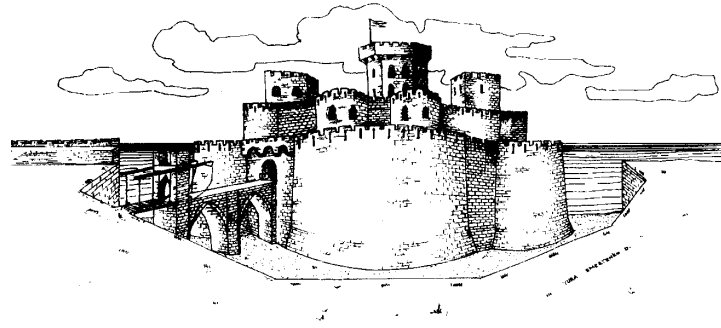
A remnant of the outer fortifications of the Crusader Fortress

### The History of Apollonia

The first settlement on this site was founded by the Phoenicians at the end of the sixth century BCE (the Persian period). The Phoenicians called the place Arsuf after one of their deities, Reshef, god of war and storms. The Phoenicians took advantage of the sea, fishing for snails from which they produced purple dye. They also used the natural cove as an anchorage for the ships that linked them to the world of the Greeks.

During the Hellenistic period, between the fourth to the first centuries BCE, the residents of Arsuf identified Reshef with the god Apollo, and therefore renamed their city Apollonia. Later, the Coastal Plain, including Apollonia, was captured by the Hasmoneans. The historian Josephus Flavius mentions Apollonia as one of the coastal cities ruled by Hasmonean King Alexander Jannaeus (Antiquities of the Jews 13:4:395).

During the Roman period, from the first to the third centuries CE, Apollonia flourished and became a real city. A Samaritan community, and perhaps a Jewish community as well, lived in Apollonia during the Roman and Byzantine periods. During the fifth and sixth centuries of the Byzantine period, the city - at that time known as Suzussa - reached the height of its development, and became the main port city for the southern Sharon Plain. Its area covered 70 acres and it possessed wine and oil presses and a well-developed glass industry. A magnificent church stood in the southwestern part of the city at this time. The town was unfortified, and boasted a sophisticated water system based on collection of surface runoff in cisterns. During the Early Islamic period, from the seventh to the eleventh centuries CE, the city was ruled by the Muslims, who renamed it Arsuf and surrounded it with a wall in order to protect it from attack by the Byzantine fleet. At this time, the city was densely populated, but it shrank to 22 acres in size.



A suggested reconstruction of the Crusader Fortress

In 1099 CE, after the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders, they turned their attention to Arsuf but failed to conquer it. In the spring of 1101 CE, Crusader King Baldwin I conquered the city with the aid of the Genoan fleet. The Crusaders renamed the city Arsour.

In the mid-twelfth century CE, the entire area of the southern Sharon Plain was awarded to a noble Crusader family and Arsour became the regional capital. The Crusaders strengthened the walls of the former Muslim city, digging a dry moat around them for additional protection. In the wake of the Crusader defeat at the Battle of Hittin in 1187 CE, the city came under control of the Muslims for four years. The Crusader victory at the Battle of Arsuf in 1191 CE was to determine control of the Land of Israel for an additional one hundred years.

In 1241 CE, the Crusaders, led by Jean d'Ibelin d'Arsour, began construction of a fortress in the northern part of the town. With his death in 1258 CE, control of the city passed to his son, Belian the 1st. Belian was unable to withstand the continuous pressure of Mameluke

Muslim attacks. He therefore transferred control of his Southern Sharon fiefdom, including Arsour, to the Hospitaller Knights, and a few hundred soldiers of this order took up residence in the fortress. In the spring of 1265 CE, Arsour was attacked by the Mameluke Sultan Bibars, at the head of a large and powerful army.

The ensuing battle lasted for forty days until the city fell. When the Crusader soldiers holding out within the fortress saw that there was no hope, they agreed to surrender on condition that they be allowed to leave the city. Baibars agreed, however after entering the fortress, he forced its defenders to destroy and burn it, and took them prisoner. Thus the end came to the city of Arsour and its fortress, which had only stood for 24 years! The Mamelukes established a military outpost here that was eventually abandoned. The fortress was never again inhabited.

### Plant Life at Apollonia

On the kurkar (*calcareous sandstone*) ridge near the sea on which Apollonia is perched, the main factors influencing the flora in this vicinity are strong winds bearing salt spray from the sea, the brittle nature of the limestone, and the sandy covering. The plants growing on the ridge are highly resistant to both the salt spray and sandy cover. Plants like the shrubby saltbush (*Atriplex halimus*), the lavender (*Limonium virgatum*), prickly drop-seed grass (*Sporobolus virginicus*), and the evening primrose (*Oenothera drummondii*) flourish here.



The evening primrose

A forest of Mt. Tabor Oak (*Quercus ithaburensis*) once existed east of Apollonia. The destruction of the forests of the Sharon began in the Crusader period, when the wood was harvested for construction and fuel, and continued through the Ottoman period. Today, no vestige of the oak forest remains in the vicinity of Apollonia.

|                    |                       |                          |                      |                        |                       |                        |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Persian<br>586-332 | Hellenistic<br>332-63 | Roman<br>63 BCE - 324 CE | Byzantine<br>324-638 | Early Arab<br>638-1099 | Crusader<br>1099-1291 | Late Arab<br>1291-1516 | Ottoman<br>1516 -1917 |
| B C E              |                       |                          |                      | C E                    |                       |                        |                       |