

R/C Soaring in Israel

Sun, sand and favourable winds the whole year round.

[Rene Wallage](#)



Yoav Harari and his daughter Shira fly at Bat Yam under the watchful eye of Yoav's brother, Eiran. (image: Ariel Erefrid)

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The aeromodelling history of Israel is as old, if not older, than the State of Israel itself (i.e. 58 plus years). The Israel Aero Club (AMA equivalent) has faded black & white pictures of old timer free flight and early RC models with various propulsion systems. The Israeli RC community is very diverse and vibrant. We even sport some international champions!

The slope soaring community is slightly younger. It started after the introduction of affordable RC systems. Most slope soaring is done along the Mediterranean coastal dunes and cliffs, although there are some spectacular sites in the Negev desert in the south, and the Golan Heights in the north. One of the best things I like about the slope community (as opposed to the Israeli RC community in general), is the enormous diversity of backgrounds. We have kids, students, and manual laborers rubbing shoulders with aeronautical engineers, senior surgeons, and high tech professionals. We even have a regular visitor from the US, who is captain on one of the airlines having layovers in Tel Aviv! It's just more proof that RC slope soaring is a great equalizer. Our weekends are Fridays/Saturdays. Some pilots are religious observant and fly only Fridays, but there are plenty of others flying both days (weather and family permitting). Being on the eastern Mediterranean coast, there is no real defined 'slope season'. Most slope days year round we enjoy winds ranging from 10 to 20 mph.





Two tailless foamies chase each other up and down the beach. (images: Ariel Erefrid)

Drinking water, a hat, sunglasses and sun screen are a must almost all year round. We do get some winter storms, when winds reach 50–60 mph (or more), rarely with rain, and sometimes even as cold as +10C! Those are the days we huddle around the air conditioner set to “heat” and work on our next project.

Although we do have slope soaring competitions, the emphasis is on fun flying. The foamies far outnumber the crunchies on the slope, and we usually either give each other a wide berth, or one group grounds itself voluntarily to let the other group get some airtime as well.



That blue frame building is about 600 meters away, but Ariel's 270mm telephoto lens makes it look much closer. (image: Ariel Erefrid)

By far the most popular slope soaring site for the past few years is in Bat Yam, just south of Tel Aviv. The site is a dune about 35–40 meters high, with a 50 by 70 meters rocky/sandy/grassy landing area. Most of the time it is accessible by regular family car. The nicest feature of the site (apart from the people) is the fact that in front of the slope is about one kilometer stretch of beach towards the sea. This means that if Mother Earth calls your plane for a consultation, there is no chance of a 'splash'. This feature makes it very attractive for beginning slope soarers.

There are other sites with better/higher slopes (or cliffs), but lack the stretch of beach and/or have no way of descending to the beach to retrieve a lost glider.

The past few months the wind has been very iffy at best, but now with spring in the air I've recycled my slope soaring packs, cleaned up my MiniWeasel, MonsterMugi, MPX Easy Glider and Unicorn, and am anxiously following Windguru. Wind forecast this weekend: due West 16–18 mph.

Yeeehaaaaa!!!

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Shachar and Eli, shooting the breeze after a hard day flying. (image: Ariel Erefrid)

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