

The Greatest Story Never Told

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“If the pope is interested, everyone is interested,” said Alexandre Roulin, accepting the 2019 Environmental Peacebuilding Research Award in Irvine, California. The University of Lausanne professor’s project—on how conserving barn owls in the Middle East brings together people in Israel, Jordan, and Palestine across political divides—is certainly unique and intriguing.

(Also, cute owls!)

The spiritual leader of the world’s 1 billion Catholics reached out to Roulin because the “Barn Owls Know No Boundaries” project promises a possible way to build peace in one of the world’s most intractable religious conflicts. A tremendous story, right?

But despite having all the hallmarks of a great tale, a quick Google search finds only a handful of stories about it. This lack of media attention is unfortunately an ongoing challenge for what I have long viewed as “the greatest story never told.”