

focus

Abu Dhabi, March 2005 - Vol 29 (3)



Emirates Natural History Group

Patron: H.E. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan

EDITORIAL

The Inter Emirates Weekend has been and gone. By all accounts, it was a successful and enjoyable weekend, smoothly run, with a wide range of excursions and other activities. So many people were involved in it's organisation that I won't attempt listing all the names, but would like to express sincere thanks to the organising sub-committee (which largely let me off the hook!), the excursion and activity leaders, all those stalwarts who manned the desk, the enthusiastic members who attended, and the Mafraq Hotel management and staff. We have received very nice expressions of thanks from the Dubai and Al Ain groups, which I would like to pass on here.

The excursions allowed our members to participate in and see first hand some of the recent and important discoveries, such as the Mleisa Miocene elephant trackways and the amazing spoon worm site at Ra's Hanjarah. Now we know what spoon worms look like, I hope more records of these strange animals will be forthcoming from along the coast. Even on the IEW, the spoon worms at Futaisi were observed to still be doing well.

Perhaps even more importantly, the IEW allowed us to make new contacts and re-establish old ones with the other chapters. One useful discussion has resulted in some serious thought on how the three chapters of the ENHG can collaborate with setting up a database to record natural history records in the UAE. While all the chapters currently do this to a greater or lesser extent, a combined database makes so much more sense. After all, we all travel to and make observations in each other's territories! Having records and observations properly recorded and published would make a terrifically valuable resource for scientific studies and conservation in the UAE. Worldwide, amateur naturalists have been at the forefront in such valuable record keeping. We can all contribute to this effort in the UAE.

On a sadder note. Our ex-chairman Simon Aspinall has now left the UAE and will be working from home in Norfolk, England. However Simon will still be coming back to the UAE frequently and we will hold him to his offer of a talk on Antarctica, which he is presently visiting!

Drew Gardner

Annual Bonanza – What a difference some rain makes

The rainfall over the past months has ensured that some parts of the Emirate are distinctly green, and places that in the summer months are devoid of vegetation have come alive with a profusion of annuals. As Allestree pointed out in the last issue of *Focus*, the crucifer *Eremobium aegyptiacum* has put on some impressive displays this year, covering the low dunes in many areas. It is also the first time this species has been recorded for the Al Wathba Wetland Reserve (by the author).

The prostrate annual *Gisekia pharnaceoides* is probably more widespread than indicated in M. Jongbloed's

In this issue ...

- Page 1: Editorial
Annual Bonanza – What a difference some rain makes
- Page 2: Annual Bonanza (cont.)
- Page 3: IEW Wrap-up: Walking with the Spoon Worms; Ancient Elephant Track-way
- Page 4: IEW: In the sand; The Dinner
- Page 5: IEW: Quiz answers; Al Futaisi Island
- Page 6: Old Tribuli; Holidays; More floral notes
- Page 7: The ENHG stall
- Page 8: Lectures, Field Trips, Sponsors

FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: *Salvadora persica* - toothbrushes on sale at Liwa
Photographer: Simon Aspinall

"Wildflowers of the UAE" book, and was found to be frequent on low sand dunes in the Al Hayer-Shuwaib-Al Faqa area. Also near Al Faqa, the rare yellow-flowering form of *Astragalus hauarensis* was recorded.



Yellow-flowering form of the annual *Astragalus hauarensis*



Close encounter with an Arabian toad-headed agamid whilst photographing *Astragalus*

In the last issue of *Focus*, I highlighted the distinguishing features between *Fagonia indica* and *F. ovalifolia*. Unfortunately, after inspection of several other identification books, it has become clear that the situation is more complex than previously thought. Populations of *Fagonia indica* that occur locally are not covered in minute sticky glands, which according to Ghazanfar's "Annotated Catalogue of the Vascular Plants of Oman" is distinctive of the species. However, it appears that over most of its range (including Somalia and North Africa), the presence of such glands is a characteristic feature of *F. indica*. According to some authors, glabrous populations, and therefore most of those occurring in Abu Dhabi, should be assigned to *Fagonia paulayana*, which is treated as a rare, separate species in the "Wildflowers of the UAE" book. However, in the Flora of Somalia, the author regards *F. paulayana* merely as a glabrous form of *Fagonia indica*, therefore not meriting distinction as a separate species. And to make matters more complex, *Fagonia schweinfurthia*, listed in the "Wildflowers of the UAE" book as a distinct species so far recorded from Wadi Bih, is considered as just a variety of *Fagonia indica* in the Flora of Egypt, but again as a separate taxon in the Flora of Somalia. It is no wonder that people such as myself prefer to quickly look away when confronted with *Fagonia*, especially as I have come across another, highly distinctive taxon in Wadi Tarabat (Jebel Hafit) for which I currently have no name!

At the time of writing (22 March), Jebel Hafit is still a good place to visit, with some plants about to begin flowering over the next week or so. These include *Boerhavia elegans* in the mouth of Wadi Tarabat, a very attractive species. New species recorded for the mountain (i.e. not listed in the book "Jebel Hafit, A Natural History"), include *Centaurea pseudosinaica* (Wadi Tarabat), *Diplotaxis harra* (locally common at 650 m), *Ogastemma pusillum* (locally common in Wadi Tarabat higher up), *Paronychia arabica* (Wadi Tarabat), *Rostraria pumila* (locally common in a dried out puddle at 650 m and not to be confused with small specimens of *Enneapogon desvauxii*, a rather similar species mentioned in my contribution in the last issue of *Focus*), and *Salsola imbricata* (Wadi Tarabat - accidentally missing from the species list in the Jebel Hafit book).

Wadi Tarabat and the mountain in general have certainly profited from the recent drastic reduction in grazing, and it is now possible to see a number of highly palatable plant species much favoured by livestock, growing considerably larger and producing flowers. These include *Cymbopogon commutatus* (Lemon grass), which, when I first visited the area two years ago, was grazed right back to the base of the plants.

Higher up the mountain, yellow is the dominant colour, with a several composites in full flower, including *Pulicaria edmondsonii*, *Pulicaria glutinosa* and *Rhanterium epapposum*. It is quite striking that these yellow-flowering species blossom rather late in the season. On sunny days, they attract numerous small bees.



The flowerheads of *Iphiona aucheri*, a plant highly toxic to livestock, attract numerous bees

The coastal and near-coastal sand sheets immediately to the north of the Taweelah desalination plant support probably the largest remaining intact area of species-rich coastal white sand vegetation in Abu Dhabi Emirate. Although coastal white sands occur right up to the border with Saudi Arabia, they become increasingly species-poor further west. For instance, key species such as *Coelachyrum piercii* are probably no longer present to the south-west of Taweelah, possibly for mesoclimatic reasons. In fact this is the first record of the grass in Abu Dhabi Emirate. Conversely, more extensive, species-rich coastal white sand habitats occur to the north-east of Taweelah, and good examples of this highly threatened habitat can still be seen by the Sheikh Zayed road near Jebel Ali.



Sphaerocoma aucheri, the predominant dwarf shrub on coastal white sands at Taweelah

Another key species at Taweelah is the dwarf shrub *Sphaerocoma aucheri*, which is the dominant species over large tracts. It is accompanied by the perennial graminoids *Coelachyrum piercii* (locally abundant, especially as it had also germinated profusely from seed during the winter), *Panicum turgidum*, *Sporobolus iocladius* and *Cyperus arenarius*, as well as the woody perennials *Cornulaca monacantha*, *Heliotropium bacciferum*, *Limonium axillare* (uncommon, found in slight depressions) and *Zygophyllum qatarense* (uncommon). *Helianthemum lippii* is also very common, but the individual plants of this facultative annual are often minute. Total cover of the perennials ranges from about 2 to 8 %. Annuals are common in the area, but the number of species is restricted. The most common of

these is *Arnebia hispidissima*, followed by *Lotus halophilus* (now mainly in fruit) and *Oligomeris linifolia*. Locally common are *Hippocrepis areolata*, *Launaea capitata* and *Launaea mucronata*. The aforementioned *Eremobium aegyptiacum* occurs in scattered patches. *Herniaria hemistemon* was found to be common in some parts, but the plants are easily overlooked. Much less common are *Fagonia ovalifolia*, *Schismus barbatus* and *Zygophyllum simplex*. A desiccated species of *Astragalus* was also found, closely resembling *A. schimperi*, but precise determination was not possible. *Centaurea pseudosinaica* occurs here and there.

For the record, the coastal white sands at Taweelah are one of the last known breeding grounds of Chestnut-bellied sandgrouse in Abu Dhabi Emirate, and at least 21 were flushed on a track at about 11 am in the second half of March.

Gary Brown

Inter-emirates Weekend Wrap-up

Thursday & Friday – Walking with the Spoon Worms

Well I had heard about them – spoon worms (Phyla Echiura) – but didn't know whether I would be lucky enough to see one. On Thursday and Friday morning Dick Hornby led IEW groups to a mangrove area at Ras Hanjurah. After being stumped guessing what made the large 'mounds' in the area (feeding flamingos), Dick pointed out the hundreds of smaller but very distinctive mounds in the intertidal mud / sand area that had been quietly created by spoon worms ... and right on cue, as we were studying one of the mounds, the resident spoon worm's proboscis – or 'tongue' – appeared and extended out, searching around for suitable surface sand / mud to gather for its meal. Quite amazing as it just seemed to get longer and longer (40 or 50 cm) until it decided it had had enough and retracted remarkably quickly back into its hole.

To date, the body of these creatures has not been seen – for although Dick has tried to dig one or two out, their holes are deep (at least 1 m) and digging efforts have been hampered by the incoming tide. So a definitive identification of this spoon worm population has not yet been made look out for a proper discussion of these spoon worms in the next issue of *Tribulus*.

We had a wonderful time squelching around in the mud searching for, and spotting spoon worms. Many thanks Dick for introducing us to these creatures – I hope to see more of them in the future!

Jenny Mueller

Thursday 17th - Ancient Elephant Track-way

Local people had assumed that they were dinosaur footprints, and I could see why. I was standing in a desert area of Abu Dhabi's Western Region, looking along a distinct track of enormous footprints in the hard rock surface. To the right were two more parallel tracks, and I could envisage the smaller of the two being made by a juvenile animal. Judging by fossils found at other nearby sites, the tracks were possibly made by *Stegotrabelodon syrticus* (an ancient elephant species to you and me!!).



One of the Track-ways

I was on a field trip organised as part of the ENHG inter-emirates weekend, hosted this year by the Abu Dhabi group. I'd heard about the discovery of these track-ways at a fascinating talk by Dr Mark Beech, and read more about them in *Tribulus* (Vol 13.2).

I usually need to use a great deal of imagination when viewing archaeological or fossil remains, and considering these prints are thought to be around 6 and 8 million years old, I was expecting to work very hard imagining that depressions in the rock were in fact made by ancient elephants! Surprisingly, this was not the case on this occasion, and it was easy to visualise a family of elephants trundling through the now solidified mud in the not too distant past. The fact that this occurred so very long ago made the sight even more startling. Add to this the many fragments of fossilised ostrich shell and petrified plant root remains scattered around, and the



Ostrich Shell fossils

vivid descriptions given to us by our distinguished

guides, it wasn't difficult to imagine the area being very different to the arid desert it is today.

The track-ways are across the bed of what appears to be a dried up lake in the midst of an area of low sand dunes. In the centre of this 'lake' is a monolith, conveniently displaying the sediments that previously covered the track-ways. We were all captivated by this site and there was much lively discussion and speculation about the tracks, but because this is a recent discovery there were inevitably more questions than answers. Clearly there is much more work to be done here, and much more to be discovered, while another piece of the jigsaw puzzle of this fascinating region gradually falls into place.



Petrified Roots

Our time at the track-ways just flew by, but the day wasn't finished there. We climbed back into the vehicles and travelled back to the main highway, which took us onto another site rich in fossils. Here there were fossilised fish bones, crocodile teeth and bones of the three-toed horse.

On behalf of all participants, I would like to say a big thank-you to Drew Gardner, Mark Beech, and Will Higgs. Your knowledge, so generously shared, and your infectious enthusiasm, made this an unforgettable trip.

Roy Richards

In the Sand – Thursday & Friday

What a weekend to remember!!

We left home on the 17th and drove up to Al Mafrag Hotel, and from there we started our trip to Razeen Al Qu'a. We stopped and deflated the tires to 20 psi. (I did my bit to help my father - but I had deflated the tire completely and we had to fill it!)

Our destination was 'Two Trees'. Here Alan McGee explained some techniques of sand driving and demonstrated the uses of some tools required during a desert drive.

Three dunes had been marked according to difficulty. My father got ready to try them all. We tried out the first one and succeeded - but there was also plenty of towing and digging going on. We went on to the second one!! That was a very cool drive. There wasn't time to go

through the third dune. After a rest we started on a real drive through the desert. It was a very bumpy ride!! We enjoyed it a lot! None of the drivers got stuck and all of us were proud of that. After lunch we went on another convoy sand drive, which was equally tough. I don't think I've had such a fun-filled day!!



The next morning we arrived at the meeting point and deflated the tires. Today I stayed away. At 'Two Trees' Alan outlined our program and explained some new techniques of sand driving, of course, with his toy car, and towing. We then practised on some harder dunes - it felt like a roller coaster ride!!

After lunch the group split, with some deciding to go straight home and other (including us) taking a longer route home through the desert.

That drive was an absolute adventure. The wind had got stronger and the sand started to blow. Some of us got stuck and Richard had a flat tire. However, we got out of every situation and were finally on our way home. We stopped at a petrol station on the way and inflated our tires.

Woo!! That weekend was the best I've ever had!! It had everything: adventure, learning, fun and finally meeting new people. It was absolutely great. I will treasure my experience forever. I hope more weekends as such will be organized for more FUN!!

Mona Ash

Special thanks to the team of instructors who helped with this activity – their patience and tuition made it such a positive experience for the participants. Thank you to Peter Rothfels, Jay Bidal, Michele Dowse, Patrick Sullivan and James Buckingham for giving up your time and doing such an excellent job!

Thursday Evening: The Dinner

During the Thursday night dinner the recipient of the Bish Brown Award was announced: Dr Sandy Fowler was presented with this award in recognition of his contribution to the collection, identification, cataloguing and recording of sea shells in the Emirates.

Peter Hellyer was announced as the recipient of the Sheikh Mubarak Award. Peter has made enormous contributions to archaeology and natural history in the UAE over the last 30 years. His publication record is second to none, including 'Filling in the Blanks' and 'Hidden Riches' on the UAE's archaeology, founding and editing the ENHG's journal *Tribulus*, and instigating and editing many of the books on the ENHG book table, including the recent 'Jebel Hafit: A Natural History' and the *magnum opus* 'Emirates Natural History', currently in press. As Executive Director of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey, Peter has been instrumental in many major archaeological discoveries, such as the Nestorian monastery on Sir Bani Yas and the wonderful

Neolithic sites on Delma and Marawah. It is hard to imagine a more deserving recipient.

Natural and Un-natural Quiz: the answers!!

Remember those 26 mystery items displayed? All of them were found in the UAE or across the border in northern Oman. This is what they were:

1. Nummulites: these fossils are from the upper Dammam formation (upper Eocene 40 million years old) from Wadi Tarabat, Jebel Hafit. They were single-celled forams, living in the sea.
2. Sandstone concretions: from the Bab oilfield in western Abu Dhabi Emirate.
3. Musket balls. Lead musket balls, handmade in iron bullet moulds were widely used until the 20th century. These are from Wadi Jabib.
4. Pyrite nodules. Iron sulphide, from Dammam formation, Wadi Tarabat.
5. Dung beetle balls formed by the beetles by rolling, from camel dung.
6. Beach rolled pebbles in Nummulitic limestone from Dibab, Oman.
7. Cannon ball. A 5 lb iron cannon ball from Wadi Safwan.
8. Flint or chert nodule. An oddly shaped, wind polished flint nodule from Jebel Barakah, Western Abu Dhabi Emirate.
9. 18th century fuluus (copper civic coinage from Shushtar, Khuzestan, Iran). Found in Wadi Jabib.
10. 'Desert rose' Calcium sulphate. From near Liwa.
11. A stone tobacco pipe. Similar pipes are still carved in Dhofar. This one was found in Wadi Jabib, Age unknown.
12. Quartz crystals (rock crystal) from Wadi Bani Auf, Jebel Akhdar, Oman.
13. An ornament carved from shell. Function unknown. Probably Iron Age. Wadi Jabib.
14. Shell of *Magilus antiquus* (Burrowing coral shell) from Quriyat, Oman. Although it looks and feels like a fossil, this is a recent shell, which lives in coral heads. As the coral grows outwards, it grows outward too and fills up the inside part of the shell with solid limestone.
15. Gypsum (satin spar) formation, from Jebel Barakah.
16. Copper object of unknown function, possibly a gaming piece or a measuring weight or a seal? Any ideas?
17. Fossil coral, Wadi Safwan, Tertiary.
18. Fossil sea urchin spines, from a cidaroid sea urchin - probably *Delocidaris*, Wadi Safwan, Tertiary.
19. Fossil serpulid worm tube probably *Protula*, Jebel Hafit.
20. Copper ornament from lid of coffee pot. This one is old and hand made, perhaps 18th century. Qarn Safwan.
21. Whet stone for sharpening knife, probably worn on a leather thong.
22. Fossil (and recent for comparison) wood. Late Miocene from Baynoonah.
23. 'Dreikanter' wind and sand-polished limestone rocks. From near Khaluf, Oman. Note the rough base and angular faces.
24. Fossil crocodile teeth, Late Miocene, Baynoonah.
25. Dolphin vertebra, Sandy Beach.
26. Limestone pebble resembling dinosaur egg. It is not known

how the surface ornamentation formed. This has been used as a hammer stone, probably in the Iron Age. Sadly not a dinosaur egg according to dinosaur experts at the Natural History Museum in London!

And the winner: Steve Raynor from Dubai with correct identification of 15! Congratulations to Steve.

Answers supplied by Drew Gardner

Friday 18th – Al Futaisi Island

One possibility of the Friday IEW program was the island excursion to Futaisi. After having been closed for a few months, this, of course, seemed to be of interest to a lot [40] of us- it could be closed again tomorrow.

The island belongs to the "Rainbow" Sheikh Hamed. So it was easy to find the rainbow jetty. The ferry sails in a westerly direction through a man-made channel [with man-made islands on especially the northern side], and looking back one has an incredible skyline of Abu Dhabi, on this truly very clear day. After 20 minutes, we arrived at Futaisi.

To start, we all went together to the archaeological site: the spring or water hole, nowadays dry, but renowned for having sweet water. This island has been inhabited for a long time. On the way, we passed the "zoo", one enormous tortoise and a few peacocks, and walking over some oleander adorned pathways, we arrived at the dhubb site. One frightened dhubb, just on his way out of its burrow, got sort of half stuck on the way in again, but for us an opportunity to see him very close up. Towards the sea, we spotted ospreys and their nest, as big as a wheel, where they come back to every year, and so it becomes higher and higher. The birds don't seem to mind the spotlights, hanging over the cliff every 3 meters or so to illuminate it. After this, we split up in 2 groups: "mangrove and plants" and "birds".

I joined the flora group, we headed out westwards, towards the fortress and we found between the mesquites, some lotus and even 2 tiny yellow primulas in bloom. Groups of gazelles stared at us from a respectable distance; they graze all they can find and are not given any fodder. At the mangroves, where Allestree explained us their breathing system, but couldn't see any in bloom. Allestree had said we might see some spoon worms when somebody screamed: spoon worm! All of us, very excited, went into the glibby, sucking mud, to see this incredible creature. It's like a jellyfish, transparent, long flat Chinese rice noodle, with tiny dark brown spots. It came [here on Futaisi] out of a fairly round heap of sand, surrounded by a ring of seawater. One came out as far as 40 to 50 centimeters, and as we looked more carefully, we saw the more and more of these amazing creatures. Probably you need to go there at the right time and the right tide. On the drier beach, I found some lovely and interesting seashells: some pearl oysters with mother of pearl on both sides [did the outer part disappear?], moon snails, turret shells and murex shells [*Hexaplex kuesterianus* or a juvenile *Chicoreus ramosus*].

Going back, we stopped over at the cemetery. Val and Allestree had a look inside, with the rest of us hanging over the restored wall, and indeed they found some more lotus and *Arnebia*.

Back at the swimming pool and coffee shop - next time they might have the luxurious food they advertise in their folder - we met up with the other group. After lunch, I saw a small part of the north side, where coconut trees are planted, it seems that they have a tough life. A very nice mesa-like stone formation is near the water, as one sees on the way to Mirfa.

Some people spent the afternoon at the pool, some of us had a sightseeing tour, in a golf buggy, of their chalets and by 4.00pm we left the island. The sea was rather choppy, and there was a cool breeze. All in all a very entertaining, all-round wildlife excursion, and hopefully Futaisi stays open in the near future.

Atie Vogler-Arntz

Old Tribuli

This summer, the ENHG Journal, TRIBULUS, will begin its fifteenth year of publication.

Since it began, it has become increasingly important as a source of published data about the palaeontology, natural history and archaeology of the Emirates. Much of the material published in TRIBULUS is available nowhere else.

As the Journal continues to expand its reputation overseas, the Editorial Board are receiving an increasing number of requests from overseas academic and other scientific institutions for sets of the Journal. We cannot, unfortunately, meet all of these requests, since some of the issues are out of print, and reprinting would make no economic sense.

If any members are leaving the UAE, and do not want to take their copies of TRIBULUS with them, then we would be delighted to have them back!

Anyone wishing to hand back copies should contact any member of the ENHG Committee in Abu Dhabi or the Group Chairmen in Dubai and Al Ain, who will arrange to get the copies to me.

Many thanks, in advance!

Peter Hellyer

Managing Editor

TRIBULUS

Holidays

Birding in Kerala

My husband and I went to Kerala, India during my January-February break to predominantly kayak. We spent 6 great days kayaking the rivers and backwaters and spent 2 days at a birding camp. We are not birders but found out how much there is to see in Kerala. We used a company to make most of our arrangements and I wanted to recommend them to any of the Abu Dhabi members who might want a birding holiday. It was Kalypso Adventures out of Cochin. <http://www.kalypsoadventures.com>. They specialize in birding and the kayaking was down their list. They were very reasonable, professional and wonderful to deal with - overall one of our best vacations ever. The bird camp

they own is great too.

Anyway, since they are only a few hours flight away I thought some birding enthusiasts might like to know about them.

Beth Wallace (Al Ain Chapter)

Yemen

During the January Eid break Marc Dyer and Karen Cooper spent some time in Yemen. They have put together a website which is well worth a look: the link is

<http://www.geocities.com/marcandkaren2004/2005yemen.html>

More Floral Notes: Spring time in Abu Dhabi, March 2005

Because of the rain we have had this year the variety of annuals is greater than in the preceding few years. Abu Dhabi's verges, lawns and flowerbeds are now full of "weeds". It's a colourful mix. And because the metabolism of the native plants works more quickly than exotics in order to cope with the short growing period, it doesn't take long for these natives to "take over" a patch where zinnias or petunias have been carefully arranged in rows.

One of the most striking daisy-type flowers is the *Eclipta prostrata* which seems to do best in lawns. You will be struck by long dark green leaves sheltering what looks like a large off-white daisy. There are masses close to the Maqta Bridge and along the Western Lagoon. Alongside the *Eclipta* you will find a straggly dandelion-like flower: *Launaea*.



This one is not so fussy where it grows, and is often to be found on bare sandy or gravelly patches all over town. (The best displays I've seen of this one are out on the fodder fields within the Camel Race Course at Al Wathba.) Which *Launaea* you are looking at may be a problem, as the literature does little to separate them out. *Mucronata*, *capitata* or *nudicaulis*, probably. Once they grow tall they all seem to lack leaves on the upper parts. So we may be forgiven for referring to them all as *nudicaulis*. Whatever the species, *Launaea* are among the most distinctive of Abu Dhabi's wild flora.

The local *Tribulus* is up in force. Some of it is prostrate along the ground, particularly in the inner city, and some semi-erect among grasses and other plants. *Tribulus*

prefers the sandy areas and will quickly colonise a quiet area of compacted sand or gravel. The ground is still damp enough to support this plant, and it is certainly taking advantage of the exceptional conditions this year.



Another plant coming up strong and tall is the tobacco plant: *Nicotiana plumbaginifolia*. I wrote briefly about this one last year. It is limited to Abu Dhabi town, and not reported anywhere else in the UAE. It has long trumpet-like blooms with a broad-leafed basal rosette. And it can be viewed along Hamdan, Al Salam and Al Saada Streets for those interested in going to have a look. The bloom is pale pinky-white.



If you want to see the purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) at its best, find it before about ten a.m. This plant likes to protect itself from the sun and closes up around mid-morning. The same is true for the convolvulus that colonise other low plants in their vicinity. The common Abu Dhabi convolvulus species are *Convolvulus arvensis* and *bushiricus* are best early morning before the light has washed out their attractive pink shading.

As far as grasses are concerned, we have an amazing display this year of Rabbit's Foot Grass which has appeared in many grassy areas. At a distance this grass appears like a pale white patch about 8-10 inches above the ground.

The sedges are in there, too. The lawn-obligate is the medium sized sedge: *Cyperus rotundifolius*, and there is plenty of *Fimbristylis*, too. It seems to me that it is not practically possible for the gardeners ever to remove these intruders from the nicely manicured lawns of the city. I think these natives are here for the duration.

Can I recommend the *Comprehensive Guide to the Wild Flowers of the UAE* by Marijcke Jongbloed et al.? You

will descriptions of all these plants, and some of the pictures are very good, too. Only 100AED from the ENHG sales desk.

Allestree Fisher

**ITEMS ON SALE
AT THE ENHG STALL**

- Abu Dhabi Bird checklist 10Dhs.
(Free if you spend over 50Dhs!)
- Emirates Bird Report, 50Dhs.
- Birdlife in Oman, 120Dhs.
Beautiful photographs by the Eriksens.
- Bird watching Guide to Oman, 95Dhs
(Copies signed by Eriksens & Sargeants).
- Breeding Birds of UAE, 60Dhs.
Author: Simon Aspinall
- Seashells, 30Dhs.
A useful little waterproof guide to the region's shells.
- Wild about Reptiles, 60Dhs.
- Wild about Mammals, 40Dhs.
Marijcke Jongbloed, mammals of the UAE.
- Plant Checklist, 25Dhs.
Marijcke Jongbloed - Know your local wild plants.
- Jebel Hafit – A Natural History, 100Dhs.
- Pests – Find out what's in and around your home
- Children's books: Yaw the Wildcat; Hayat the Leopard
- ENHG T-shirts/golf (polo) shirts/caps.
25Dhs/35Dhs/10Dhs.
Buy any 2 – get 10Dhs off.

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Lectures

5 April 2005
Dr Heiko Kallweit
Archaeological studies in
Umm al Zumul

19 April 2005
Dr Robert Whitcombe
Environmental assessments
in the Middle East

3 May 2005
Brien Holmes
Topic TBA

17 May 2005
Sandy Fowler
Sea shells and Man

7 June 2005
Brigitte Haworth
Insects of Wadi Tarabat

Field Trips

14-15 April 2005
Overnight camping – Jebel
Dhanna/Sabkha Mutti.
Allestree Fisher

5-6 May 2005
Overnight camping - East
coast. Swimming, flora,
Fujeirah fort / museum.
Allestree Fisher

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