

# focus



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Emirates Natural History Group

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

## EDITORIAL

This time last year, we started a 'Member's Sightings' section in which to publish digital images of animals and plants taken in and around the UAE, and I would like to repeat the invitation to all members to contribute to this. As most of us now have digital cameras and many have GPS, it is easy to make valuable contributions to the documentation of the local fauna and flora. Just how useful this can be is illustrated by the recent discovery of the Arabian Cat Snake in the country. Long suspected of occurring in the UAE, there were no documented records until Neil Tovey spotted a road-killed snake while birding near Kalba. The pictures he took are clearly identifiable, and hence a new addition to the reptile list for the country was made (paper forthcoming in the next *Tribulus*). Really, any records, even of common species, are useful, as they give a species location at a particular point in time, and hence can be used to track future changes in distributions. This is all the more important with the reality of climate change upon us.

And speaking of photography, we are always grateful for cover images for *Focus* (or *Tribulus*). The best pictures for this purpose are those which are taken (or can be cropped) in 'portrait' rather than 'landscape' orientation. So if you have an image you would like to see grace our covers, send it to Keith Taylor for *Focus* or Peter Hellyer for *Tribulus*. Then again the Inter-Emirates Weekend, with its annual photo competition, is not that far off (probably in late March). Now that the cool weather is here at last, it is time to get shooting!

**Drew Gardner**

## Natural History Awards Nominations

Nominations are invited from paid-up members of the ENHG (Abu Dhabi), ENHG (Al Ain) and the Dubai NHG for the two annual ENHG awards: the Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Prize for natural history and the Bish Brown Award.

The Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Prize for natural history is given to a person who has made a substantial, original contribution to knowledge of the history, natural history, culture, archaeology or palaeontology of the UAE, such contribution being reflected through means such as publications and lectures. The award was instituted by the ENHG Patron, HE Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, and comprises an inscribed silver dhow and a cash prize.

The Bish Brown Award is given to a person who has made a significant contribution to promoting wider interest in the objectives of the UAE's three natural history groups, through means such as educational activities, raising public consciousness in the media, playing a leading role in NHG activities etc. The award was endowed by former Vice Chairman, Terry Adams and former Secretary, Caroline Adams, to commemorate the founder of the ENHG, J.N.B. 'Bish' Brown. The award comprises a silver mounted eagle, to be held for one year by the recipient.

## In this issue

- Page 1:** Front Cover
- Page 2:** Editorial, Natural History Awards Nominations, Invitation to Beach Clean-up Event
- Page 3:** Invitation to Beach Clean-up Event, Recycling Venue Update No. 3, Sharjah Museums Trip
- Page 4:** Fossilized Mangrove and Sebkhah
- Page 5:** Whale Shark Update, Africa's Highest Hotel—Simien Lodge, Villa for Rent in Crete
- Page 6:** Camping Cooker Advisory, Recent Speaker
- Page 7:** Convoy Rules, This Month's Contributors, Bookstall
- Page 8:** Committee Members, Lectures, Field Trips, Two Upcoming Conferences, In the Local News Media, Websites of General Interest, ENHG Corporate Sponsors

### FRONT COVER PICTURE

*Pencil Sketch: Arabian Tahr*

*Artist: Feng Wen*

*Image Digitising Photographer: Keith Taylor*

Any individual, whether or not he or she is a member of the Natural History Groups, can be nominated for either award, with the exception of current committee members of the ENHG in Abu Dhabi.

In nominating a candidate, or candidates, please provide a brief summary (no more than 200 words) of justification for the nomination – ie an explanation of what the candidate(s) has achieved. Nominations can be sent either by post (to Drew Gardner, Chairman, ENHG, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi), by email (to any ENHG committee member) or hand-delivered to any ENHG committee member. The closing date for nominations is **28 January 2008**, and winners will be selected by the ENHG (Abu Dhabi) committee by the March meeting. The Committee's decision is final.

**ENHG Archives**

## Beach Clean-up Event

*Invitation from Emirates Marine Environmental Group:*

"We would like to invite you to participate in the Dubai Municipality & EMEG 'Clean up the World 2008' event. Taking place on Friday the 21st of November from 10:00am to 12:00pm at the Umm Suqeim Jumeirah Beach, the event caters to all ages and involves volunteers picking up litter along the shoreline.

Refreshments will be provided by EMEG and T-shirts and caps by Dubai Municipality. All litter collected at the end of the clean up session will be weighed and recorded by Dubai Municipality.

Come join us in our efforts for the Clean Up the World campaign in its 16th successful year, whereby communities around the world are motivated to clean up & conserve the environment. Give 2 hours of your weekend to be a part of a positive global campaign."

Maps & Registration: [hadia@emeg.ae](mailto:hadia@emeg.ae) / 050 4545934  
Coordination of rides from AD: [feng.wen@adpc.ae](mailto:feng.wen@adpc.ae)

*Forwarded by Feng Wen*

## Recycling Venue Update No. 3

### Public Venues in AD for Recycling or Reuse

- ADCO – large bins behind white metal sliding gate in ADCO car park on Khaleej Al Arabi near Corniche St: for recycling newspapers & aluminum cans.
- ADMA-OPCO – bins behind the ADMA-OPCO tower on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> & Old Corniche Rd for recycling newspapers, aluminum cans, & plastic bottles.
- Spinneys (Khalidiyah) – a Coke-can-shaped barrel at the rear of the car-park for recycling aluminum cans.
- IKEA at Marina Mall – a bin near the exit for newspapers, which IKEA reuses for packing sold items. This is a reuse (not recycling) option.
- ADNOC stations, etc. – mobile phone recycling boxes. For all locations in AD, see <http://www.envirofone.ae>.

### Members-only Recycling Venue in AD

'The Club': newspaper, aluminum, plastic & glass.

### Recycling Venues Elsewhere in the UAE

- Dubai – several sites for recycling old computers. For locations, see <http://www.dm.gov.ae/DMEGOV/pcrecycle/pr-location-donate.html>.
- Dibba, Sharjah – bins on the main street for recycling newspaper, aluminum & plastic bottles (useful for those on East Coast diving or camping trips).

### Info. on How to Set up Recycling at Your Workplace

- Contact Teresa at Zenath Paper Trading how to get them to pick up recyclables from your school/workplace: [teresa@etisalat.blackberry.com](mailto:teresa@etisalat.blackberry.com).
- Contact Habiba al Marashi of the EEG for info. on setting up a recycling program: [eeg@emirates.net.ae](mailto:eeg@emirates.net.ae).
- Register with Go Green Offices to set up a workplace collection center for ink cartridges for recycling: <http://www.gogreen.ae/cartridge-recycling.php>.

### Plastic bag alternative

- AD Coop (Mina & AD Mall) uses biodegradable bags.

### Good Tips for Sustainable Living

- Mission Green Earth: <http://missiongreeneearth.ae/>

**The Editor thanks all ENHG members who have submitted contributions to this evolving update.**

## Sharjah Museums Trip

On 10-11 October, 2008, 15-20 ENHG members visited a number of the museums in Sharjah, with free admission provided at some, courtesy of the Sharjah Museums Director. One carload made a day trip of it, while the others stayed over at a Sharjah hotel and visited several more museums the next day. Below is a sampling of the comments by trip participants which Andrew sent in a letter to the Director and Tourism and Marketing Manager of the Sharjah Museums. – Ed.

"We enjoyed all three museums we attended. The tour guide, Abdullah, at the Museum of Islamic Civilisation, did an excellent job showing us around and answering all our questions; he was also a fun guy with the children. Alya did a great family workshop at the Art Museum and got my daughters interested and talking about the art we saw, as well as drawing some "masterpieces" for our wall. Finally, we all enjoyed seeing the aquarium and the large variety of sea life living in Sharjah's waters. We can't wait to visit again."

**Dr R. Andrew Bean**

"At all of the 6 museums I visited, the staff were very helpful, friendly and informative. We appreciated and enjoyed the hospitality and refreshments provided by our tour guide at the Sharjah Archaeological Museum, while Abdullah's explanation and tour of the Museum of Islamic Civilisation brought the displays to life. The Natural History, Botanical, Wildlife and Sharjah Art Museums are all packed full of first class displays and exhibits, certainly enough to fill several more weekends. I'll certainly be back!"

**Cath Ware**

"My wife and I were most impressed with the variety and standard of the 8 museums we visited this last weekend. We were particularly impressed with the Archaeological Museum, Museum of Islamic Civilisation, Art Gallery and the 2 restored houses. The high standard of exhibits and expertise of the guides was greatly appreciated and has encouraged us to plan return visits and to tell our Abu Dhabi friends about the "gems" that await them in Sharjah."

**Richard Tapper**

"I was really excited to finally get a chance to see several museums in Sharjah on one weekend. I was particularly happy to get to the Archaeology Museum. Our guide was very informative. I have been out to the sites of the digs several times over the 15 years I have lived here, and seeing the exhibits was a great pleasure. The explanation of how the casting of the grave was done at Jebel Buhais was very interesting. I think that perhaps dates on the actual exhibit cases would be helpful for those who don't have a guide to take them through the museum.

The Islamic Civilization answered a lot of my questions and gave me much more depth to my understanding of Islam and its development over the last 14 centuries. I found lots of Arabic words I have heard over the years and learned fuller meanings for them, which gives me a better understanding of the culture surrounding Islam."

**Molly McQuarrie**

*NB: Those interested in visiting the Archaeology and Science museums in Sharjah any time soon should be advised that direct access to them from the Quran Roundabout (Cultural Square) has been blocked due to massive construction. Here's a detour: Doubling back from that former roundabout, headed inland, take the first available exit, work your way onto Wasit Road (117<sup>th</sup> St.), turn right onto Sheikh Zayed Rd. (124<sup>th</sup> St.) and right onto First Industrial Rd. (117<sup>th</sup> St.); both museums will be ahead on the right-hand side.*

–Ed.

## Fossilized Mangrove and Sebka



On Friday October 17<sup>th</sup>, a 10-vehicle convoy left the Musaffah ADNOC in the direction of Mirfa, but did a U-turn at the Abu Al Abyad roundabout, and then headed back and off across 2 kilometres of sebka (salt flat) to a rocky outcrop, recently named Hajr al Qurm (Mangrove Rock). The themes of the trip were geological, botanical and gastronomical.



Hajr Al Qurm

As we approached the rock we stopped to examine the polygons of salt, now covered in dust and sand. No-one could explain why the surface subdivides into these regular shapes after the salt flats dry out. Springtime is the best time to see the glistening salt after the rain and the high waters evaporate.

These quaternary outcrops sitting on some Miocene fluvial deposits are a place where you can see fossilized mangrove roots without clambering too high. These roots are approximately 8 meters above the surrounding salt flats, representing the high water level at the end of the last glaciation. The so-called inverted topography comes from the realization one gets that the top of the rock was, in fact, the interdunal area, with sand dunes sitting on top of them before the last and previous glaciations! So what is now the highest point of the rock was the lowest point in the past. There are crusty marine deposits at various levels at this site, which we presume goes back to the recent Pleistocene era, ie sediment from the bed of the Gulf from previous glacial periods.

There is at least one stratum of red fluvial deposits near which members found some fossilized ostrich egg

shells. Such deposits from rivers and the inundated Gulf here go back perhaps as much as 8 million or more years. There are many such sites in the western region (Al Gharbia) of Abu Dhabi, but this one, at least, is easily accessible.

Nearby there are various salt bushes, more than I had originally thought, and higher up on the calcareous marine deposits, away from the saltiness of today's sebka, there is evidence of more plant life struggling to survive in what must be an extremely harsh environment even for halophytic (salt tolerant) plants surviving mostly on dewfall.



*Anabasis setifera*

These *Salsola* and *Haloxylon* bushes will soon be in flower. December is the best time for most of the bushes in the vicinity of the rock. The *Haloxylon* produces winged fruits for wind dispersal in shades of red, pink, off-white and pure white



*Haloxylon salicornicum*

The final theme of this trip was lunch, so we sat in the dust composing the alluvial fan of the rock and tried to make a little shade with our parasols. There's plenty of room at this site for people to camp away from the road, or to take families for a day out and a picnic. There are not many birds apart from Isabelline Wheatears and sparrows, but there are plenty of gerbil and fox tracks. We recommend Hajr Al Qurm as a quiet, not-too-far-from-AD spot for natural history amateurs (like us!) and specialists alike.

**Allestree Fisher**

**Photographs by the author**

## Whale Shark Update

Following pressure from Government, non-governmental organisations, the media and individuals, the owners of Atlantis – The Palm have agreed to release “Sammy”, the whale shark, back into the Gulf. She should never have been caught in the first place, of course.

**Peter Hellyer**

(Extracted, with permission, from Peter Hellyer's Oct. 27 article in *The National*. See p 8 website list for link. –Ed.)

## Africa's Highest Hotel--Simien Lodge

Fancy a holiday with a difference? Then why not head to Simien Lodge in Ethiopia's Simien Mountains National Park, an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The scenery is outstanding and the park boasts a high degree of floral and faunal endemism, i.e. you can't see much of it anywhere else in the world.

The new lodge, at 3260 m (10,700 feet) is the highest hotel in Africa, and has all home comforts, and more – underfloor heating and hot showers in your en-suite cabin, courtesy of solar panels, plus a restaurant and bar, both with roaring log fires and English-speaking staff and guides. Day or overnight camping trips can easily be arranged to areas further into the park, for hill-climbers or to see Walia Ibex, for example.

The harmless endemic vegetarian Gelada Baboon is impossible to miss. They often feed in large numbers around the lodge or cabins, even if they spend the night on the safety (!) of the escarpment face itself. You can literally sit within feet of them, and without any fear being shown or necessary - by them or by you.

Near the lodge itself there is plenty to see and do. A self-guided nature trail just 600 metres long (1200m return) is one recommended walk for visiting naturalists. This is down the valley to the south-west below the Lodge. You weave your way back up hill through the Tree Heaths and Tree St. John's Wort, where you can also admire the endemic Abyssinian Roses. Typical birds you can expect to find along the way are Wattled Ibis, Brown-rumped and Streaky Serins, Dusky Turtle Doves and Chiffchaff (winter only). You may also find White-backed Black Tit, Brown Woodland Warbler and Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, or be lucky enough to locate the pair of unobtrusive Abyssinian Woodpeckers that glean food from lichens in the tree heaths here. Almost certainly you will hear Cinnamon Bracken Warbler, although this skulking species is often difficult if not impossible to see. Try waiting patiently by the thick bushes around the spring below the tacos. Speckled Doves, Fiscal Shrike, both serins and Abyssinian Cisticola will keep you company here.

Don't forget to watch overhead for birds of prey – with eighteen species recorded to date, including several species of vulture and Tawny Eagles, the sky is rarely empty for long, if at all. Fan-tailed Ravens cavort and tumble entertainingly whilst that remarkable Ethiopian speciality, Thick-billed Raven, prefers to loaf near the Lodge and scavenge noisily and boldly for kitchen scraps. Lammergeier is a garden bird at the Lodge, which is quite possibly the best place in the world to get point blank views of this the dramatic and much sought-after 'Bonebreaker'.

It is recommended you spend an hour or two sat on the escarpment edge itself. Try anywhere north of the Lodge where there is an uninterrupted view of the spectacular scenery. Find a comfortable rock where the view meets this description and watch for birds of prey above and below you. Bands of Gelada Baboons may view you with amusement rather than the other way round. Apart from birds of prey, other species to watch out for are White-collared Pigeon, White-winged Cliffchat, Abyssinian Catbird (which has a loud and beautiful song although usually delivered out of sight from thick cover of roses or other broadleaves) and pairs of White-backed Black Tit, all four being endemic species. Parties of Erckel's Francolin may also be disturbed at the escarpment. Pay special attention if the gelada start alarming, as, if you are lucky, a Simien Wolf may be wandering by.

One particular location needs mentioning here, at least for birders: a site nearby the Lodge where it is possible to see the little-known *Ankober Serin*. This endemic species, which has a predilection to live on the rock face at the top of the often foggy escarpment, perhaps then hardly surprisingly, was only newly described to science following its discovery in 1979. This was near the village of Ankober in southern Ethiopia. Since that time it has been found in at least three other localities, including very recently (from 1997) in Simien itself. The site near Simien Lodge is one such new site, but one needs to go to the precise spot to sit and watch and wait for birds to arrive. The site is just 960m from the Lodge (as the raven flies) at the escarpment edge which you come to at the top end of the open rose-filled valley to the east. The GPS coordinates of a safe lookout point are 13.12.35N 37.59.17E. The site can be recognized in being a rather bare and crumbly basalt face below and across a relatively narrow cleft from the observation point. Ruppell's Chat also occurs here (as well as by the river and falls a few kilometres outside the park entrance). Menelik's Bushbuck has been seen coming to drink from pools near the roadside before the zigzag climb back up to the Lodge.

If you are planning a visit to Ethiopia, even if your main purpose is to visit the religious sites such as Axum and Lalibela, or view the falls of the Blue Nile, have a think about visiting Simien too – you will not be disappointed. Note that visitors to Simien Lodge can avail of a meet and greet pick-up service from the airport at Gondar.

Check out the Simien Lodge website:

Web: [www.simiens.com](http://www.simiens.com) Email: [lodge@simiens.com](mailto:lodge@simiens.com)

**Simon Aspinall**

## Villa for Rent in Crete

Two bedroom, 2 bathroom villa with private swimming pool and stunning views, available for holidays. On the edge of a village in the White Mountains and only 4 kms from the sea. Ideal for walking and bird watching, visiting Minoan, Roman and Venetian archaeological sites and exploring the lovely old harbour towns of Chania and Rethymnon.

For more details and pictures see

<http://sites.google.com/site/noraandjimsgavalohorivilla>

Or phone Nora 050 823 1689 or Jim 050 617 4309

## Camping Cooker Advisory

On the first evening of the ENHG camping trip in the Musandam during the past Eid holiday, I was using an unknown brand of camping stove I'd bought from Carrefour, (but now no longer on the shelves). It was the type which has a gas canister under a flap at the side of the gas ring. We had used it on a previous trip, but in Musandam when we inserted a new gas canister, within 5 minutes of lighting it, it exploded with such a bang that campers around us thought it was the Eid cannon! The cooker itself was torn to pieces and landed a metre away while the gas canister shot along the ground, and we found it next morning about 50 metres away. It could have been a very serious accident, but fortunately we had just walked away from the cooker, and the projectiles went away from us.

At least one camper happening on the aftermath of the explosion, observing where the cooker had landed—directly on top of our barbecue—jumped to the erroneous conclusion that the explosion was caused by the cooker's unsafe placement. I would like to stress emphatically that this was not the case. The cooker was originally a safe metre away from the barbecue, which in any case had failed to light because we'd kept it too long, and had therefore produced no lasting heat. (In fact, that was why we'd taken our steaks to a friend's campfire to cook directly after turning on the cooker.) The cooker was red-hot from the explosion—not from any other heat source.

Our assessment of the probable cause was that the gas canister had not engaged with the cooker properly. When Jim inserted the new canister, the lever which locks it in place seemed stiff and didn't snap into place, and on previous use the cooker had got very hot. We therefore believe it was a fault with the mechanism.

A fault like this may only occur once in thousands of cookers, but that doesn't mean that it won't happen again. I think it is less likely to occur with a reputable make which has more rigorous quality control, and therefore it is probably safer to stay away from unknown brands. I would like to warn campers to buy only a reputable make of cooker, as another time someone might be seriously injured. We've since bought a Camping Gaz cooker.

Our thanks also to everyone who let us use their cookers, BBQs and campfires for the rest of the Musandam camping weekend to cook and boil tea.

**Nora Dransfield**

*NB: Those of us who've been using the inexpensive type of self-lighting cooker uneventfully for years might nevertheless do well to heed the above sobering words of advice. But for those who continue to use this type, here's one more word of caution: The locking notch on the lip of the horizontally-placed canister must be in the 12:00 position, and the control knob must be in the Off position. Don't try to force the locking lever down otherwise. If it meets the above conditions and still doesn't lock smoothly, then discontinue using the cooker immediately, for safety's sake!*

- Ed.

## Recent Speaker

**Donald S. Afan**, from the Philippines, started his professional work when as an undergraduate student in 1995 he joined several environmental assessments and forest expeditions as a field technician/assistant biologist. His interest in birds, particularly eagles, flourished when he joined the Philippine Eagle Conservation and Research Programme as biologist from 1997 to 2002, when he travelled extensively into the forested mountains all over the Philippines studying the eagles. A graduate of the University of the Philippines (B.Sc.) and Ateneo de Davao University (M.Sc.), Donald is affiliated with the Biological Sciences Department of the University of Santo Tomas. It was during these times that he led several of his students in conducting research on a broad range of topics including ecology, molecular biology and systematics. Despite the busy academic schedule, he continued to participate in significant biodiversity studies including the 2004 BP-Conservation-Grants-funded 'Gaynawaan' Project, on which he was the team leader for mammals, and the Ruffords-Small-Grants-funded project that investigated the effects of fragmentation in lowland rainforests on herpetofaunal communities. He has co-authored several publications on Philippine biodiversity that appeared in major and national peer-reviewed journals, including the *IBIS* and the *Wilson Bulletin*. He is currently an environmental consultant with Environmental Resources Management, based in Abu Dhabi.



Donald Afan with a Philippine Eagle

**The Editor thanks the above speaker for providing autobiographical info. & photo for Focus.**

## Convoy Rules

Once again, the prime field trip season is upon us, so it's a good time for all ENHG members, new and returning, to review basic convoy rules. Because convoys are something of a bothersome necessity on field trips, we offer this set of rules to make our journeys together as safe and hassle-free as possible. —Ed.

### ENHG Trip Convoy Guidelines

#### 1 General Items

Arrive at the starting point in plenty of time for the briefing on the route and destination of the trip. Please be ready to start with a full fuel tank. If you are going to leave the group before the end of the trip, please notify the trip leader and others. Do not go faster than you feel comfortable driving

#### 2 Rules of the Road

Our line of cars should not dominate the road. If others are trying to pass the group, please let them do so. Whenever the group stops, if at all feasible, make sure you pull off the road completely. Always use your indicators in plenty of time to guide cars in the group, as well as other road users. If you want the group to stop, flash your headlights. If the car behind you flashes its headlights, flash yours until the group leader pulls over. When the group passes through a congested area, it should try to stop as soon as safely practicable to regroup.

#### 3 Overtaking

Overtake only when it is permitted and safe to do so.

#### 4 Speed

Always stay within the legal speed limit. If the traffic is flowing more slowly than the legal limit, go with the traffic flow. The lead car should establish a sensible pace for the group. It is the individual driver's responsibility to keep the vehicle behind in sight, insuring that the group stays together. If the car behind slows down, please slow down with it. If every car does this, the convoy will stay together.

#### 5 Tips for the trip leader

Have a short meeting of all drivers to explain the route and destinations. Assign a buddy to drivers who are unfamiliar with the route. Hand out route directions if possible. If there is a large number of vehicles, it is advisable to break up into two groups, with a lead car for each group.

#### 6 Lead car driver

The lead car driver should designate someone to act as "sweep" (tail-end-Charlie) for the convoy. This driver will ensure that all cars follow the intended route. He or she will have a mobile phone or walkie-talkie connection to the lead driver in case of mix-ups or emergencies.

*Archives of ENHG, Al Ain Chapter*

## This Month's Contributors

Simon Aspinall, Andrew Bean, Nora Dransfield, Feng Wen, Allestree Fisher, Peter Hellyer, Molly McQuarrie, Richard Tapper, Keith Taylor & Cath Ware

### ITEMS ON SALE AT THE ENHG STALL

- The Emirates – A Natural History, 350 dhs  
*The first complete referencing guide to the wildlife of the UAE. 580 colour photos.*
- Jebel Hafit – A Natural History, 100 dhs  
*An attractive, encyclopaedic presentation of the natural resources of a local landmark.*  
*NB: Copies of this book are available as donations to schools. See a committee member to request one.*
- Breeding Birds of the UAE, 50 dhs
- Abu Dhabi Bird checklist 10 dhs  
*(Free if you spend over 100Dhs!)*
- Emirates Bird Report, 50 dhs
- Common Birds in Oman, 100 dhs  
*A beginner's field guide—can be helpful in identifying birds in the UAE as well.*
- Bird watching guide to Oman, 2nd edition, 100 dhs. *Guide to bird watching spots in Oman.*
- The Birds of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, 50 dhs
- 2009 bird calendar, 30 dhs  
*A must for yourself ... and a perfect gift.*
- Falconry, 60 dhs
- Snakes of Arabia, 50 dhs
- Pests, 35 dhs  
*Find out what's in and around your home.*
- Reef Fishes of the UAE, 50 dhs
- Snorkeling and Diving in Oman, 50 dhs
- Comprehensive Guide to the Flora of the UAE, 100 dhs
- Plant Checklist, 25 dhs.
- Wildflowers of the UAE, 100 dhs
- Feast of Dates, 100 dhs
- UAE in Focus, 100 dhs
- UAE Yearbook 2008, 50 dhs
- Wind towers, 225 dhs
- Sir Bani Yas, 100 dhs
- On-Road in the UAE, 50 dhs
- Trucial States, 150 dhs
- Oman, 150 dhs
- Omani Folk Tales, 70 dhs

## Committee Members

Dr. Drew Gardner  
(Chairman)  
Mobile: 050-6675830  
[drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae](mailto:drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae)

Jenny Mueller  
(Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-3110632  
[jennymuae@hotmail.com](mailto:jennymuae@hotmail.com)

Eila Merriman  
(Treasurer)  
Mobile: 050-9081200  
[kubukabin@hotmail.com](mailto:kubukabin@hotmail.com)

Ms Hazel Spencer  
(Lecture Coordinator)  
Mobile: 050-8150539  
[hspencer@mac.com](mailto:hspencer@mac.com)

Dr. Andrew Bean  
(Excursion Secretary &  
Corporate Sponsorship Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-3221327  
[rexabean@emirates.net.ae](mailto:rexabean@emirates.net.ae)

Allestree Fisher  
(Assistant Excursion Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-6672237  
[allestree.fisher@hct.ac.ae](mailto:allestree.fisher@hct.ac.ae)

Peter Hellyer  
(Editor of Tribulus)  
Mobile: 050-6424357  
[peter@extinfo.gov.ae](mailto:peter@extinfo.gov.ae)

Keith Taylor  
(Focus Editor)  
Mobile: 050-820-4938  
[kjtaylor13@yahoo.com](mailto:kjtaylor13@yahoo.com)

Patricia MacLachlan  
(Public Relations Secretary)  
[mp\\_maclachlanuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mp_maclachlanuk@yahoo.co.uk)

Dr. Dick Hornby  
(Member)  
Home: 02-6274049  
[dnahornby@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dnahornby@yahoo.co.uk)

Martin & Linda Betz  
(Members)  
Home: 02-6272309  
[lindaleviskabetz@yahoo.com](mailto:lindaleviskabetz@yahoo.com)

Ms. Donatella Astratti  
(Member)  
[sadalnashirah@gmail.com](mailto:sadalnashirah@gmail.com)

Ms. Molly McQuarrie  
(Member)  
[bonesetc@emirates.net.ae](mailto:bonesetc@emirates.net.ae)

## Lectures

4<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
The Philippine Eagle:  
What do we know after  
100 years?

**Donald Afan**

18<sup>th</sup> Nov. 7:30 PM  
Arabian Gulf Coral  
Reef Study

**Marcus Chandler**

4<sup>th</sup> Dec. **No Talk**  
(due to holiday)

16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 7:30 PM  
The famous Abu Dhabi  
Sabkha

**Dr. Christian  
Strohmeier,  
Geologist, ADCO**

## Field Trips

21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov.  
Sand Driving Course at  
Two Trees Campsite  
(FULLY BOOKED)

**Andrew Bean**

5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Dec.  
Re-run Sand Driving  
Course at Two Trees  
Campsite  
(BOOK NOW)

**Andrew Bean**

19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Dec.  
Camping Trip to Jebel  
Rawdah

**Allestree Fisher**

## Two Upcoming Conferences

16-20 Nov: **Archaeozoology of Southwest Asia**.  
Venue: Hotel Mercure, Jebel Hafit, Al Ain. For  
registration info, see [alexandriarchive.org/icaz](http://alexandriarchive.org/icaz).  
Conference registration fee of 150 dirhams covers  
lunch and dinner.

23-25 Nov: **History of the UAE**. Venue: the Centre  
for Documentation and Research, Abu Dhabi (behind  
the Airport Road Carrefour). This conference is free.  
Day 1: Archaeology; Day 2: History.

## In the Local News Media

Peter Hellyer's article in The National: "Quietly...that's  
how this country is making its mark": [http://www.the  
national.ae/article/20081027/OPINION/893577452](http://www.thenational.ae/article/20081027/OPINION/893577452)

Re. Mike Gillett: "A Love Affair with a Giant Beetle":  
[http://www.enhg.org/alain/mike/giant\\_beetle.htm](http://www.enhg.org/alain/mike/giant_beetle.htm)

## Websites of General Interest

ENHG Website, with newsletter & Tribulus archives:  
<http://www.enhg.org>

Wildlife Middle East News:  
<http://www.wmenews.com>

Tommy Pedersen's new UAE Birding Site:  
[www.uaebirding.com](http://www.uaebirding.com)

Hanne & Jens Eriksen's Birds Oman website:  
[www.BirdsOman.com](http://www.BirdsOman.com)

Dubai Astronomy Group:  
<http://www.dubaiastromy.com>

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## Yahoo Groups website

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG/>