

focus



Abu Dhabi, December 2010
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Emirates Natural History Group

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

EDITORIAL

Inter Emirates Weekend 2011 is now set for 17th – 19th February, 2011, based at the Tilal Liwa Hotel near Madinat Zayed. The focus this year will be on trips to prime locations in Abu Dhabi's Western Region. See the announcement on p. 4 for reservation details and prospective trips & activities. Please make your hotel & Friday dinner reservations ASAP. Closing date: Jan 31st.

The following ENHG Research and Conservation Grants have now been awarded: 10,000 Dhs to Aaron Henderson for a phylogenetic assessment of rays and guitarfish from the southeastern Arabian Peninsula and 15,000 Dhs to David Robinson to sponsor a whale shark tracking satellite tag. ENHG thanks all its members for enabling it to support this valuable work.

Collaboration has been established between ESG (Emirates Society of Geophysics) and the ENHG. See the ESG website link on p. 8 for information on trips and talks that may be of interest to ENHG members.

Long-time member Nick Benge has for many years provided the ENHG with an annual auditing service in exchange for having his chartered accountant company, BDO Patel, listed as a corporate sponsor of the ENHG. He has now decided to transfer that corporate sponsorship to a new company that he is helping his son run: Waveblade, which markets a revolutionary new marine vessel hull-cleaning tool. Nevertheless, Nick is still happy to continue doing the ENHG audit for as long as he remains in the UAE.

This issue's cover, by Hanne & Jens Eriksen, reflects their recent fascinating presentation on birds and nature in Iceland. We are pleased to offer the Eriksens a lifetime membership in the ENHG as they leave us for a well-deserved retirement based in Oman, where they will continue their photography and book-writing. We look forward to a return visit from them sometime. We are happy to report that a new group of book table volunteers are now set to take over from the Eriksens.

We wish all our members a happy holiday season and look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Keith Taylor

Sheikh Mubarak, Bish Brown Awards

Nominations are invited from paid-up members of the ENHG-Abu Dhabi, ENHG-AI Ain and 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

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Atlantic Puffin, Iceland

Photographer: Hanne & Jens Eriksen

This month's contributors

ENHG Committee, Steve James, Simon Strickland, Keith Taylor, May Yoke Taylor, Vesela Todorova, of The National

ENHG Membership Information

Annual membership in the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG is 100 Dhs – for both individual and family membership. NB: 2010 membership is reduced to 50 Dhs from Oct - Dec. See Membership Sec. or Asst. at the next meeting for a membership form.

Members are entitled to join the group on all day trips and overnight camping trips. Each member is also entitled to a copy of the ENHG's normally annual scientific journal, *Tribulus*. If you have not yet collected your copy of Volume 18, please contact Chairman; there are still copies in stock.

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. There is also a cash prize (at the discretion of our Patron).

Any individual, whether or not a member of one of the above three groups, can be nominated for either award—with the exception of current elected committee members (Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) 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: i.e. 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, or by email or hand-delivered to any ENHG committee member. The closing date for nominations is **31 January 2010**, and winners will be selected by the ENHG (original Abu Dhabi branch) committee during the February meeting. The Committee's decision is final.

ENHG Committee

Two Unusual Bird Sightings

In response to the two bird-watching trip write-ups published in November 2010 Focus, ENHG committee member and environmental consultant Dick Hornby commented that two of the sightings reported for Abu Dhabi island were rather out of the ordinary: Greater Hoopoe Lark in the Western Corniche Park on 30th Oct. and Red-backed Shrike in the Eastern Corniche mangroves on 5th Nov. At Dick's suggestion, we wrote to former ENHG Chairman Steve James, a resident bird maven, for commentary on these sightings. Steve's responses follow:

Greater Hoopoe Lark [small brown desert-dwelling birds with distinctive downward-curving beaks] were formerly widespread on Abu Dhabi island. In 1992 I saw them at Bateen Air Base, in Khalidiyah and down both the western and eastern lagoons. Destruction of their habitat has meant most have now gone; however, the odd one still pops up in unusual places like the grass on the Emirates Palace Hotel and where Andrew Bean saw his. I have a couple of records from near the Officer's Club. They are still breeding on Bateen Air Base, together with Chestnut bellied Sandgrouse. Both these species are still hanging on, on most of the smaller islands around AD Island like Lulu etc., and I once saw a Hoopoe Lark at the Port near the British Club. I have no doubt that Andrew is correct in his identification, as it is a virtually unmistakable species!

Red-backed Shrike are unusual in Abu Dhabi at this time of year, but not rare. They can be quite common in late spring, usually mid April to end of May. I have seen 50+ in a day on AD island then! In autumn, they are scarce, in ones and twos, from early September until mid November. The 5th is not that unusual a date. I presume this record was of a juvenile? This is the commonest in autumn here. This identification could easily be correct, but without a description, I cannot be sure. The confusion species is Isabelline Shrike, which is the commonest species of shrike here in autumn.

NB: Simon Strickland, who identified the Red-backed Shrike, has contributed the following description:

The Red-backed Shrike I saw fitted the description and illustration in *Field Guide to Birds of the Middle East*. It was clearly Red-backed rather than Isabelline as its back was red with brown, rather than grey. It was also clearly immature/1st winter as its back was not as red as that of an adult male, and its head was brown with grey rather than fully grey. It also had the very clear, dense crescentic barring on its upperparts typical of 1st winter Red-backed, and it had a dark brown rump and tail rather than the orange-rufous rump and undertail of the Isabelline Shrike.

Keith Taylor/Steve James/Simon Strickland

Eid Al Adha Camping Trip to Oman

During the week of the 2010 Eid al Adha holiday, 13th-19th Nov, Excursion Secretary Andrew Bean led a compact group of eight ENHG members on a wide-ranging trip through northern Oman, based at a campsite high on the flanks of Jebel Shams above Hoota cave on the road over the mountains to the coast.

First off, after leaving Abu Dhabi on the morning of Saturday, 13th November, travelling through the Mezyad border post, we stopped for lunch at Al Selaif, the ruined village on the south side of Ibri—a glimpse of history.

Our high-altitude campsite was cold at night – probably down to a low of 5°C – making the evening campfire most welcome. The first night we took a quick peek through the club's telescope and saw Jupiter and three moons. On the fourth evening, there were scattered raindrops at the campsite. We had a regular evening visitor to the tents – a scavenging Egyptian Spiny Mouse. After most of the group left, an Arabian Red Fox also came round. The predominate flora: bût trees, *Monothea buxifolia* (too late for berries) 'Hopbush', *Dodonaea viscosa* and wild Olive, *Olea europea*. Black & white Hume's Wheatears were the most obvious birds.



The vista from our campsite

Photo: May Yoke Taylor

On Day 2, before the Eid holiday began in Oman, we visited points of cultural interest, starting with Jabrin Fort – the old mazelike fortified house of the Imam Bil'arub, who moved his capital there in 1670—and the excellent Nizwa Fort museum, featuring educational videos of traditional Omani handicrafts. We then visited the ruined, bombed-out village of Tanuf, and also the small, still lived-in village and plantation up the wadi behind it.

On Day 3, we drove up a challenging dirt road over the pass and down past the village of Bilad Sait. We stopped briefly at the mouth of a picturesque wadi where we spotted toads and scorpion moultings in a pool and a sunbird in the bushes. We also stopped at some small tombs—one in good condition, with its central cavity still evident. We then drove down through the old foothill town of Rustaq, to Al Sawadi Resort on the coast, where we caught a boat out to small island with a coral reef and went snorkelling for an hour. We saw box fish, Picasso Trigger Fish, Parrot fish, Clown Fish, etc. But we also saw a lot of litter and damaged coral. The showers at the dive centre were a welcome relief. We convoyed back to camp round the mountains, on a fast night-time drive via the main highway through Nizwa.

On Day 4, we drove up the main Jebel Shams road to Hail Village and then walked down to the Hidden Village –Sap Bani Khamis—where we had lunch, and where most went ahead up to explore the pool at the top of the old agricultural terracing behind that naturally-fortified abandoned village. It became very cold, and it actually started to rain briefly, so we took shelter under the overhangs. Not all of us were prepared with extra layers of clothing; it was perhaps the only time most of us had been cold on a hiking trip in the mountains in Oman.

On Day 5, Andrew and Tom got up at 4am to drive back round the mountain to Al Sawadi Resort to go scuba diving at 7:30am. These two remaining campers then got up early on Day 6 and managed to get tickets to enter Hoota Cave, where they found an impressive museum explaining the cave's fascinating geology. They also met a very informative local resident at the Hoota Rest House. As a result, Andrew is planning a trip back to the Hoota cave and rest house this coming January.

For most of us, Day 5 was the day to break camp. Two had to return home, but after a game of campsite boules, the other four of us headed for Ibri, where we opted to spend a night in a hotel on the way home. On Day 6, Nov. 17th, recalling the trip written up in [December 2008 Focus](#), we called for directions to the Ibri anticline—a distinctive series of rock outcroppings 30 km SE of town on the shortcut to Salalah—and found our way there without difficulty. There we found an amazing assortment of marine fossils. These findings will be written up in Jan. 2011 Focus.

Keith Taylor

UK Scientist Leads Fight to Save Capital's Sabkhas

The following article appeared in The National on 21 Nov, 2010. We reprint it here, with permission, as a follow-up to Dr. Graham Evans' 2 Nov talk to the ENHG on the geomorphology and ecological significance of the world's deltas—especially for those who would like to learn more about the specific subject Dr. Evans, and his associate Tony Kirkham, are the world's foremost experts in: the sabkhas of Abu Dhabi. –Ed.

Many people do not know what a sabkha is. Even fewer, if they saw one, would find it beautiful and worth protecting.

But sabkhas, as the low-lying coastal salt flats along Abu Dhabi's western shores are called, were making the emirate famous long before any of its man-made attractions. Ask a geologist anywhere about the UAE's capital and they will immediately recall Abu Dhabi's sabkhas - which are the largest in the world.

Among the sabkhas' most ardent supporters is Prof Graham Evans, a professor emeritus at Imperial College, London.

Prof Evans has been studying Abu Dhabi's sabkhas since the early 1960s and visited again this month. He was accompanied by his associate Dr Tony Kirkham, who has been campaigning on behalf of the sabkhas since the mid-1990s.

Their goal: to raise concern among anyone who will listen. A surge in development means the sabkhas are quickly disappearing and with them Abu Dhabi's ownership of a piece of nature that could help unlock mysteries about ancient sea levels.

"We have seen what has been going on and we feel horrified," said Prof Evans. "For the past 10 years, we have been trying to persuade the Government and various agencies that this [seemingly] rather uninteresting salty plain is unique in the world and they should preserve it."

The sabkhas lie along the coastline west of Abu Dhabi city, stretching all the way to its western-most parts. They extend up to 15 kilometres inland.

Their harsh beauty will evade those observing them from the comfort of a car. A closer look is required to appreciate the large expanses of salty crusts, forming various shapes. In winter, the surface is flooded with rainwater. In drier months, as the water evaporates, the crust cracks into almost symmetrical polygon forms. In other areas, there are whitish wrinkles, created by tiny organisms.

Because of the high salinity and the hard crust, plants do not grow on the sabkhas. The salinity makes them inhospitable for animals too. Cynobacteria, however, are able to thrive. They form large patches on the sabkha surface.

When Prof Evans arrived in Abu Dhabi in 1962, he found unspoiled stretches of sabkha that yielded discoveries with world-wide significance. By 1996, when Dr Kirkham was living in Abu Dhabi, the original sabkhas studied by his former tutor and his colleagues had been spoiled by human activity.

Dr Kirkham identified three areas of exceptional significance and lobbied for them to be protected. They are along a 30km stretch of coastline in Al Dabbiya, approximately an hour's drive from Abu Dhabi city. The scientists think it is not too late to protect them today.

"There are roads and pipelines, but it is still reasonably well-preserved," Dr Kirkham said.

Civil work and oil and gas infrastructure projects, dredging and infilling are the main threats. The industrial area of Musaffah is a typical example.

Dr Thabit Zahran al Abdessalaam, the director of the biodiversity sector at the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, agreed that saving at least some of the sabkhas should be a priority.

"It is something we need to look into seriously, and at the present moment we are not," he said.

"It is an issue of awareness and we scientists are to blame," he said, explaining that a parallel can be drawn with the ways mangroves were regarded here in the past.

Not so long ago, mangroves were considered useless swamps and were destroyed. Now, their conservation profile is a lot higher and there are many efforts to protect or replant them.

Sabkhas are part of a living system which includes some of Abu Dhabi's off-shore islands, its shallow sea lagoons

and coral reefs. A vivid description of the dynamics that formed the sabkhas is presented in the book *The Emirates - A Natural History*.

Sabkhas form close to seas as the salts produced by coral reefs are deposited on land. In the summer months, water evaporates and a hard crust of calcium carbonate gypsum and other salts forms just below the surface. This crust prevents plants from settling on the sabkhas and it also ensures they are flooded by rains. As the rainwater cannot seep into the ground, it slowly evaporates, forming the sabkhas' unique crust.

Prof Evans believes that explaining the processes forming Abu Dhabi's sabkhas can be done by a museum, which could turn them into a natural history attraction.

And the sabkhas still have a role in science. This month, Prof Evans and Dr Kirkham collected 20 samples from hills of ancient origin, dotted around the sabkha surface.

They are looking for funding to enable them to date the newly collected samples. The information, they said, will yield important details about past periods of sea level rise - and could provide a yardstick for global warming.

The first adventure: his arrival

The story of how Graham Evans arrived in Abu Dhabi is like something from an adventure book.

He was brought in by the British Royal Navy, one of the few transport options in the autumn of 1962.

He camped on Saadiyat Island with two research students, plus an Omani guard, a camel and a cat which "appeared from nowhere".

His wife was also there, as the couple were supposed to be on their honeymoon.

"There was just dates, fish and tinned food," said Prof Evans, remembering how his young bride had tears in her eyes once, when after a visit to the market, he appeared with an onion and a head of lettuce.

"The fort," he added, "was the biggest building in town."

His research team also got unwanted attention after the research students were lost at sea and spent the night in a boat during a storm.

Yet, the expedition was to yield a discovery which "caused an enormous stir in the geological world".

Exploring sites on Saadiyat and Musaffah, Prof Evans discovered that the mineral anhydrite was forming just below the sabkha surface.

"This mineral is common on the geological column as a cap rock in oil fields, in successions of carbonate rocks all over the world," Prof Evans said.

"It was always assumed it was formed in deep water."

But in Abu Dhabi it was formed in coastal flats, which were flooded by some water, but only occasionally.

"This is now in geological textbooks all over the world," Prof Evans said.

Vesela Todorova, of *The National*

Inter-Emirates Weekend 2011

Inter-Emirates Weekend 2011, hosted by the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG, will be held from **Thurs 17th – Sat 19th February**, and is open to paid-up members of all three natural history groups in the UAE. The venue is the Tilal Liwa Hotel, near Madinat Zayed, about a two hours' drive from Abu Dhabi. (Camping in the desert near the hotel is also an option.)

Fifty rooms will be held for us at the rates shown below until January 31st, 2011. IEW 2011 room rates for Tilal Liwa Hotel on 17th-19th Feb. – (both rates include breakfast and are inclusive of 16% tax):

Stand Sgl/Dbf room–desert-facing view: AED 578.84

Stand Dbf room–courtyard-facing view: AED 694.84

NB: Tilal Liwa bookings qualify for Etihad Guest Points.

The buffet dinner in the restaurant of the Tilal Liwa hotel on Friday eve. Feb 18th – @ AED150 ea. – will be followed by an evening programme in the hotel ballroom featuring our guest speaker, Mike Jennings, author of *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia*, along with presentations of our annual natural history awards and the awards for winners of the IEW photo competition. For hotel room and dinner reservations, call: **+9712 894 6111** or email: reservations.tilal@danathotels.com. For further enquiries: Selimkhan Arifov, Senior Sales Manager, Mobile: **+971 50 616 0439**.

This IEW will offer what is for many of us a rare chance to visit a variety of landscapes in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi Emirate in a single weekend. Here's a provisional programme (to be finalised in Jan 2011):

Field Trips:

Shoreline birding at Mirfa and birding/geology at Sila'a
Elephant tracks near Ruwais

Liwa dunes, three Liwa forts and fish farm

Schweihat Island (geology and fossils)

Sabkha tour – half day on Sat. afternoon

Activities:

Star gazing – one evening after dinner by the hotel

Insects – light trapping in the evening by the hotel

Photographic competition Fri eve 18th Feb:

Max. 2 photos per person, taken in UAE/Oman.

Categories: Flora, Fauna, Scapes, Culture & Heritage.

Min. size: 120 x 185mm; must be mounted & labelled:

name, title, place & date taken.

Two competitions: Adults and Children 12 & under.

Submissions: from 17th Feb. up to 5 pm 18th Feb.

In early January, confirmed information regarding the IEW 2011 programme will be updated on two websites - <http://www.enhg.org/iew2011/iew2011.html> and <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG/>, as well as published in Jan. 2011 Focus.

ENHG Committee

Upcoming Speakers

On 4th January 2011, either **Fred Launay** or **Nicolas Heard** will speak to us on the work of the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. A biography of the speaker will appear in January Focus, after that talk.

For basic information on the MBZ Species Conservation Fund, see write-up in [December Focus 2009](#), pp 5-6.

Nessrine Alzahrawi joined EWS-WWF in 2009 as a Marine Biologist and Conservation Officer for the Sustainable Fisheries Campaign. She holds an MS in Aquatic Biology and Resource Management from Exeter University, UK and a BS in Environmental Sciences from the American University of Sharjah, UAE.

Nessrine has also worked as a Marine Ecology Consultant and Research Assistant with the United Nations University – International Network on Water, Environment and Health, Dubai, where she carried out her Masters Research Project on the impacts of Palm Jumeirah development on benthic invertebrate communities. Her undergraduate research focused on the habitat ecology of marine invertebrates in Al Aqqa marine reserve in Fujairah.

Nessrine's role on the Sustainable Fisheries Campaign "Choose Wisely" is to increase awareness about threats currently faced by fisheries in the UAE by identifying local overfished species and highlighting the importance of sustainable fishing. The local Hamour is currently one of the most popular commercial fish species in the region and this high demand has resulted in a severe decline. The Choose Wisely campaign aims to inform stakeholders (consumers, retailers, the food and hotel industry) about the pressures of over fishing and how it affects UAE stocks and to promote sustainable choices.

On January 18th, 2011, Nessrine will give a presentation to the ENHG titled **Fisheries of the UAE: a precious resource in decline**. She has provided us with the following synopsis of the core issue, expanding on the theme raised by Rima Jabado in her Dec. 21st talk and at the recent Marine Conservation Forum in Abu Dhabi.

Unsustainable fishing is a worldwide problem, with currently over 80% of the world's main fish stocks considered as fully exploited, overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion by the Food and Agriculture organisation (FAO). We live in a world that wants more and more seafood, making overfishing and its associated environmental impact one of the biggest sustainability challenges. This strong market demand, coupled with poor governance, leads to unsustainable fisheries that become rapidly depleted.

The people and the landscape of the United Arab Emirates have changed tremendously in the past 40 years. Naturally, this has led to a change in the way in which resources are used. Fisheries are no exception. Too many fish are being removed too early in their lifespan, reducing their potential to produce the next generation and ensure future stocks.

Emirates Wildlife Society in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature (EWS-WWF) aims to tackle this issue by empowering consumers to make informed choices through a campaign named "Choose Wisely", by providing information on the status of the stock, and encouraging UAE residents to consume more responsibly.

The Editor thanks the above speaker for providing autobiographical information for Focus.

Holiday Bungalow in South Africa



Charming thatched bungalow, situated in a secure private nature reserve, on the banks of the Sabie River, overlooking Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Fully furnished. Sleeps eight in comfort, in four bedrooms (three bathrooms). Wonderful verandah for entertaining while bird/game watching. Over 300 species of birds & 42 species of mammal seen from the property. Elephant; Buffalo; Hippo; Crocodile; Giraffe & a host of smaller game seen daily. Lion sometimes seen, Leopard always present but difficult to see. Hyaena seen at night.

Makes a fantastic base for exploring KNP & the Drakensburg Mountains. KNP entrance 1km away.

120 pounds sterling a night for eight people

100 pounds a night for six

90 pounds a night for fewer than six people

Contact Steve James via e-mail: sjames677@gmail.com

Also see website: <http://www.krugerholidays.com/> for further information and an excellent photo gallery.

In the Local News Media

The National, Nov. 11:

[Marine group pushes nature education](#)

The National, November 6:

[Abu Dhabi shores cleared of rubbish](#)

The National, November 25:

[Drive to protect desert's plant life](#)

The National, November 27: [Researchers play tag with gentle giants](#)

The National, November 28: [Unusual pneumonia outbreak kills camels on Dubai farms](#)

Gulf News, November 28: [Whale shark watch goes in-depth on mysterious migration patterns](#)

The National, December 11: [Sharks: the danger that lurks beneath us](#)

The National, December 11: [Sheikh Abdullah's pledge on climate](#)

The National, December 12: [Poachers from Gulf threaten falcons](#)

The National, Dec. 13: [Sir Bani Yas island shows the region's religious diversity](#)

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ITEMS ON SALE

AT THE ENHG BOOK STALL

All prices are in dirhams.

- The Emirates – A Natural History, 350. *The first complete referencing guide to the wildlife of the UAE. 580 colour photos.*
- Jebel Hafit – A Natural History, 100. *An attractive, encyclopaedic presentation of the natural resources of this local landmark. (Free copies available to schools. Ask Chairman.)*
- Terrestrial Environment of Abu Dhabi Emirate, 240.
- Marine Environment and Resources of Abu Dhabi, 140.
- Wild about Reptiles, 40.
- Snakes of Arabia, 50.
- Arthropod Fauna of the UAE, Vol 1, 110.
- Arthropod Fauna of the UAE, Vol 2, 110.
- Breeding Birds of the United Arab Emirates, 100
- Abu Dhabi Bird checklist, 10.
- Emirates Bird Report, 20.
- Birdwatching guide to Oman, 2nd edition, 100. *Guide to bird watching spots in Oman.*
- Common Birds in Oman, 2nd ed, Dhs 120
- Comprehensive Guide to the Wildflowers of the UAE, 100.
- Butterflies of Saudi Arabia & its neighbours 90.
- Trucial States, 120.
- Oman 1965, 120.
- Natural History of Oman, 50.
- Feast of Dates, 100.
- On-road in the UAE, 50.
- UAE in Focus, 100.
- Sir Bani Yas, 100.
- Musandam, 90.
- Abu Dhabi 8 million years ago, 15.
- Discovering Qatar, 120.

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Required: An AV Assistant to control the lights and sound during some meetings, as part of a team (training will be provided). Can you help us?

Lectures

Venue: HCT / Abu Dhabi Men's College

Press CTRL+click [here](#) to view map/directions.

14th Dec. **7:30 PM**
Iceland - Birds and Nature
Hanne & Jens Eriksen

21st Dec. **7:30 PM**
A Fish Story: Sharks, Fisheries and the Unknown

Rima Jabado

4th Jan. **7:30 PM**
The Work of the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund

Speaker: Fred Launay or Nicolas Heard

18th Jan. **7:30 PM**
Fisheries of the UAE: a precious resource in decline

Nessrine Alzahrawi

Field Trips

18th Dec.
A visit to the Emirates Hydroponics Farms in Al Bahia (Shahama); Beach walk/BBQ
Feng Wen

8th Jan.
Afternoon birdwatching Al Wathba lakes
Andrew Bean/Oscar Campbell

21st-22nd Jan.
Al Hoota Guest House staying at 2000m above Al Hamra in Oman. (Bring clothes for snow conditions)
Andrew Bean

17th-19th Feb.
InterEmirates Weekend Tilal Liwa hotel

Websites of General Interest

ENHG-AA Website (Archives: 3 NHG newsletters, Tribulus): <http://www.enhg.org>

Qatar Natural History Group: <http://www.qnhg.com>

Emirates Society of Geoscience: <http://www.esg-uae.org>

Noukhada Adventure Company: <http://noukhada.ae>

Tommy Pedersen's UAE Birding / UAE Nature Forum: <http://www.uaebirding.com>

Hanne & Jens Eriksen's Birds Oman website: www.BirdsOman.com

Emirates Marine Environmental Group: www.emeg.ae

Emirates Diving Association: <http://www.emiratesdiving.com/index.php>

Archaeology website: <http://www.adias-uae.com>

Sharjah Museums: <http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae>

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

ArabianWildlife: <http://www.arabianwildlife.com/main.htm>

ARKive: Images of Life on Earth: <http://www.arkive.org>

ZipcodeZoo: Comprehensive naturalists' resource <http://zipcodezoo.com/default.asp>

ENHG Equipment for Members' Use

The following ENHG equipment is available for members' use during field trips or on request:

- Birding Telescope
- GPS unit – GARMIN GPSMAP 60CSx
- First-Aid Kit
- Sky Scout astronomical object locator/identifier
- Celestron NexStar telescope (on field trips only)
- Two satellite phones, taken on camping trips.

Phone numbers: No. 1: 008821644400956

No. 2: 008821644400965

Enquiries: Andrew Bean, rexabea@emirates.net.ae

ENHG-AD Research & Conservation Fund Grant Application Information

For background on this fund, see [Dec 2009 Focus](#), p5.

For research & grant application guidelines, click [here](#).

For grant application form, click [here](#).

For further enquiries, contact ENHG Chairman Drew Gardner, at drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae.

Newsletter Details

Newsletter contributions to: newsletter@chirri2000.com

Postal Address

ENHG c/o Environment Agency -
Abu Dhabi, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi

Members' Items for sale

Please send small ads to: newsletter@chirri2000.com

Yahoo Groups website

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG>
(Click Join button to sign up for ENHG info.)