

focus



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Emirates Natural History Group

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

EDITORIAL

Kicking off this issue are a report of a camping trip to Khor Kalba and a further update on the count of the endangered kingfishers in Kalba that is currently under way. See next month's issue for a concluding report on that survey. Following is a report from another of Andrew Bean's well-appreciated regular series of introductory birdwatching trips on AD Island, along with a few shots of activities during the Inter-Emirates Weekend 2011.

Next, we present the long-awaited, well-deserving, winning photographs from the IEW Photo Competition. Following upcoming speaker info, we continue our series of recycling updates, in the belief that taking care of the environment goes hand-in-hand with appreciating it. In this issue we also introduce the first of a new series of natural history quizzes, focusing on those traits that assist in distinguish superficially similar pairs of fauna or flora. Good luck with it!

All are invited to two informative upcoming talks, and we encourage members to join in the final two trips of the season: a high-altitude camping trip and an eve. ramble with Drew Gardner. Please note alternate venue for the 17th May lecture meeting—at NYUAD. Details on p 8.

Keith Taylor

March Camping Trip to Khor Kalba

18th–19th March, Feng led small group on a camping trip to Khor Kalba. After a lunch stop to explore a wadi near Masafi and a look at the Friday Market, we made it to Fujairah to check out the culturally interesting Fri. aft. bullfights, made memorable by a close call in which a pair of competing bulls charged the fence behind which a number of our party were standing! In the waning late afternoon we ruled out inland and mangrove-bank campsite locations and finally settled on a relatively insect-light campsite on the beach at Khor Kalba.

Our evening campfire social hour included a visit by a local police patrol, politely checking us out but welcoming us to camp there. When we spoke of our interest in nature conservation and in particular in the kingfishers of Khor Kalba, they warmed to the topic of these 'special birds'. That encounter and also a glimpse of orange-suited Baladiya workers collecting rubbish off the beach the next morning gave the impression that the local authorities care, at least to some extent, about preserving this important natural habitat.



Common Kingfisher: a winter visitor
Photo: May Yoke Taylor

As for the kingfishers, after ocean swims and breakfast the next morning, most of us had kingfisher sightings

In this issue

- Page 1:** Front cover
Page 2: Editorial, March Camping Trip to Khor Kalba
Page 3: Kalba Collared Kingfisher Survey: April 2011 Update, March 12, 2011 Introductory Birding, Selected Photos from the IEW
Page 4: IEW 2011 Photo Competition Winners
Page 5: Upcoming Speakers
Page 6: Abu Dhabi Recycling Update 2011, Quiz #1: What Are the Differences?, In the Local News Media
Page 7: Corporate Sponsors, ENHG Bookstall
Page 8: Committee Members, Lectures, Field Trips, Websites of General Interest, Equipment for Members' Use, Research & Conservation Fund, Newsletter Details

FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Hoopoe at Emirates Palace Hotel, Abu Dhabi

Photographer: May Yoke Taylor

This month's contributors

Ahmed Al Ali, Laurel Bassett, Andrew Bean, Oscar Campbell, Alex Beck, Simona Beck, Stefan Beck, Alberto Gonzalez, Christoph Herzog, Angie Marles, Molly McQuarrie, Aurore Queromain, Steve Raynor, Keith Taylor, May Yoke Taylor, Neil Tovey, Deborah Wolf

ENHG Membership Information

Annual membership in the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG is 100 Dhs – for both individual and family membership. 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 peer-reviewed journal, *Tribulus*. Volume 19 will be released next season. by Sept. 2011.

along the mangroves – with less effort than expected – of both the winter migrant Common Kingfisher and the highly endangered local race of Collared Kingfisher (*kalbaensis*) – currently the subject of an ENHG-funded census. (See the report that follows directly below.)



Collared Kingfisher (*kalbaensis*) with oddly crippled feet
Photo: Angie Marles

Keith Taylor

IEW 2011 Photo Competition Winners

Adults: Fauna (Tied winners)



Fighting Herons, by Alberto Gonzalez



Mangrove Seedlings, by Christoph Herzog

Adults: Scapes



Sunset at Ras al Hadd, by Steve Raynor

Adults: Culture



Coffee-making in Oman, by Laurel Bassett

Adults: Flora (Tied winners)



Twisted Branches, by Stefan Beck

Children: Fauna



Lizard, by Aurore Queromain

Children: Flora

Lonely Tree in the Oman Mountains, by Alex Beck

Children: Scapes

Mountains near Mussa, Oman, by Alex Beck

Children: Culture

Omani Fort, by Simona Beck

Thanks to all who submitted such a range of fine photos and to all who voted in this most enjoyable contest. –Ed.

Upcoming Speakers

Mr. Olabode (Bode) Esan is the Waste Manager at Masdar (Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company). Bode is responsible for development and implementation of the solid waste management and reduction programme for Masdar City. He will be giving a lecture to the ENHG on May 17th entitled: *An overview of Masdar and the City's solid waste management strategy.*

Bode moved to Abu Dhabi from the UK in 2007. Prior to Masdar, he was the Solid Waste Adviser at Abu Dhabi Municipality, where he managed the outsourced street cleaning and municipal solid waste services for Abu Dhabi city.

Over the course of his professional career, spanning more than 20 years, Bode has been engaged on projects in several countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, including work for donor organisations such as the World Bank and DFID. He has been involved in the delivery of waste collection, recycling, composting and treatment services including: the development of local, regional and national policies, strategies and legislation; infrastructure development and contract procurement; development of strategic partnerships; capacity building and training.



Dr. Jeffrey Szuchman is an archaeologist specializing in the ancient Near East. His primary research interests include the archaeology of pastoral nomadism and encounters between tribes and states in the ancient world. He is also interested in early camel nomadism and issues in management and ownership of cultural heritage. He has conducted archaeological fieldwork at sites in Turkey, the UAE, and other countries. Dr. Szuchman is an assistant professor at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi, where he teaches Archaeology of the UAE, World History and Ancient Civilizations.

On 7th June, 2011, in a presentation to the ENHG entitled *Why Archaeology in the UAE is Important*, Dr. Szuchman will talk about archaeology and identity

building in the UAE, Emirati interest and participation in archaeology, the impact of regional conflicts on the archaeology of the UAE, and archaeology education in national universities here.

The Editor thanks the above speakers for providing autobiographical information & photos for Focus.

Abu Dhabi Recycling Update 2011

The Spinneys recycling area has been re-opened with a new and better centre!! Before it was suddenly closed over a year ago, this was a VERY POPULAR recycling drop-off point. People insisted on bringing in large boxes or bags of paper, glass, and plastics. It was an amazing grassroots effort which grew and grew and was FULLY utilized for nearly 12 years - long before the government got involved in recycling efforts in Abu Dhabi.

Zenath is a private company based locally in Mussafah, which bales the material and, depending on markets, sends it to India via Jebel Ali port, where it is processed. It has not been an easy task for Zenath, and the recent recession did not make their work easy to maintain. Luckily, the recycling section is part of quite a large company, so they didn't go under.

Shortly after the re-installation of these recycling bins, on 3 Jan. 2011, the following message was received from Sheik Mohamed, Sr. Executive for Purchasing, Zenath Recycling & Waste Management:

"We have installed a recycling centre at Spinneys Khalidiya Abu Dhabi. This is a part of our commitment to promote recycling in the emirate. We look forward maximum utilization. Please feel free to drop in recyclables. We have organized clearance on a daily basis."



Photo: Molly McQuarrie

It seems that the Spinneys centre was closed down because the bins were not of a size approved by the Baladiya. A recent check has found these smaller-sized bins apparently well-utilised and maintained. However, if the bins are found to be full (particularly the one for newspaper), recyclables can be left in the large skips found behind the large iron door to the right of the entrance to the ADCO compound recycling point on Khaleej Al Arabi Street near the Corniche—which also has a recycling pickup contract with Zenath.

Molly McQuarrie / Keith Taylor

Quiz #1: What Are the Differences?

Below is the first of a series of quizzes that will be run in Focus, based on questions that have arisen on field trips, in lectures, in Focus articles or in conversations at home. With questions ranging in levels of difficulty, there should be something here for the whole family to puzzle over. See how many significant differences between the members of each of these pairs you can come up with.

NB: For two of the pairs below, the differences are based mainly on obvious morphological traits. However, for the other two pairs, the most significant difference has to do with a behavioural trait, which in one case is straightforward but in the other is really quite complex. (Btw, one of the creatures listed below does not occur in this region.)

What are the differences between...?

1. a falcon and a kestrel
2. a true grass and a sedge
3. a locust and a grasshopper
4. a dugong and a manatee

Carefully-researched answers to this quiz, with photos of local examples (where possible), will appear in the June 2011 issue of Focus. Further quizzes in the series will be run in Focus next season. –Ed.

In the Local News Media

The National, March 3: [Masdar to lead Gulf in clean energy network](#)

Gulf News, March 16: [Interactive: Biosphere Global](#)

Gulf News, March 16: [Leopard tracking in Oman](#)

The National, March 31: [Archaeologists mourn loss of ancient sites to development](#)

The National, April 16: [Documentary promises 'a resounding voice for our oceans'](#)

Al Jazeera, April 19: [Saving the Leopard](#)

The National, April 23: [Abu Dhabi's sanctuary for bird and marine life](#)

Gulf Times, April 26: [Whale shark tagged off Qatari Coast](#)

The National, April 29: [Food 'as vital an issue as oil', says Geldof](#)

The National, April 30: [Emirati counterparts to Indiana Jones uncover archaeological treasures](#)

The National, April 30: [Camel blood could help guide breast cancer treatment](#)

The National, April 30: [Street fair offers a taste of the future](#)

The National, May 4: [Mysterious death of a young dugong](#)

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These companies are supporting the ENHG activities in the region. We hope you as ENHG members will in turn support these companies whenever you can. Click on the links below for information about the sponsors.

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WSP Group



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 Drew.)
- Wild about Mammals, 40.
- Wild about Reptiles, 40.
- Snakes of Arabia, 50.
- Breeding Birds of the United Arab Emirates, 100.
- Abu Dhabi Bird checklist, 10.
- Sandgrouse checklist of the birds of the United Arab Emirates, 25.
- 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.
- Butterflies of Saudi Arabia & its neighbours 90.
- Trucial States, 120.
- UAE in Focus, 100.
- Oman 1965, 120.
- Natural History of Oman, 50.
- Feast of Dates, 100.
- Field Guide to the Geology of Oman, 75.
- Abu Dhabi 8 Million Years ago, 15.
- Arabian Wildlife Encyclopedia, 120.
- Sulphur, Camels and Gunpowder, 100.
- Native Plants of Oman, 80
- Little O in Oman, 25.
- Heritage Vol. 1, 60.

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Required: Additional Assistant Excursion Secretary to help organise and lead field trips. Can you do this?

Required: PR Secretary to help the ENHG get the word out about our meetings. Can you do this?

Lectures

The 17th May talk is at an alternate venue: NYUAD in GF Multi-purpose Room.
(Check email for map)

17th May **7:30 PM**
Overview of Masdar and the City's Solid Waste Management Strategy
Olabode Esan (Bode)

Both June talks are at our standard venue: HCT/Abu Dhabi Men's College Auditorium.

7th June **7:30 PM**
Why Archaeology in the UAE is Important
Jeffrey Szuchman

21st June **7:30 PM**
The Work of the International Fund for the Conservation of the Houbara
Delfine Delire

Field Trips

22nd-23rd April
Desert Camping Trip to Umm Az Zamul
Andrew Bean

6th May
Noukhada Kayaking Bird Island Tour
Andrew Bean

20th-21st May
Camping Trip to Summit of Wadi Bih
Andrew Bean

3rd June
Bat & Gecko Spotting Trip to Qarn Nazwa
Drew Gardner

Social Event

31st May **6:30 PM**
Social get-together at Relax@12, on top floor of Aloft Hotel (ADNEC)

Websites of General Interest

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emirates Marine Environmental Group: www.emeg.ae

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

Environment Agency Abu Dhabi: <http://www.ead.ae/en/>

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

Fujairah in Focus: <http://fujairahinfocus.blogspot.com/>

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

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

Arabian Wildlife:
<http://www.arabianwildlife.com/main.htm>

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

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, rexabean@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

Members' Items for sale

Please send small ads to:
newsletter@chirri2000.com

Postal Address

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Yahoo Groups website

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