

# focus



Abu Dhabi, September 2011

Vol 35 (7)



Emirates Natural History Group

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

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to a flying start after the summer break & Eid holiday, with two lectures, two day trips and a social event on offer in Sept. And welcome to the Sept issue of *focus*! Our lead article on the 2010 NH Awards highlights the importance our Patron, H. E. Sheikh Nahyan, places on the research and conservation work that our Group promotes. Following that, we report on three new Lifetime Memberships in the ENHG, awarded in June 2011. Our sincerest thanks go out to these members for their vital contributions to our Group. Also included are a set of answers to the first of a planned series of natural history quizzes, introduced in May 2011. We hope it fully answers your questions, but if not, let us know.

In Committee news, Dr Drew Gardner has now stepped down from the ENHG (Abu Dhabi) Chairmanship. We warmly thank him for his confident stewardship of our Group over the past six and a half years. And we look forward to his imminent completion of the book he is writing on the reptiles and amphibians of SE Arabia.

Yours truly will fill in as needed to keep things running smoothly for now, but as I intend to continue as *focus* Editor, I am unable to serve as Acting Chair as well, since this dual role is just not feasible. Therefore, the Committee extends an invitation to anyone willing to assist us in the role of ENHG Chair—anyone keen to promote the Group's role in exploring & recording this region's natural environment & archaeological record and in supporting vital research & conservation projects. In any event, the Committee is now working on a quality programme of lectures & field trips for 2011-2012.

Given the predominately expatriate membership of the ENHG, cycles of turnover on the Committee such as we are now experiencing are of course quite natural. Accepting this, we encourage any members who can find the time to assist us. We are currently looking for members willing to assist with getting the word out about the Group's activities and also to assist with leading day trips or camping trips. In addition, we now need a new Lecture Coordinator, as Monika has had to step down for family reasons. Thanks to Monika for a job well done!

I also want to personally thank all the others who likewise stepped forward during the 2010-2011 season to fill Committee position vacancies: Ron as Treasurer, Gaby & Louise first as Acting Secretaries and then as Book Stall Staffers, Julie, coming back as Secretary as soon as her schedule allowed and Avra, pitching in as needed with the Book Stall, as standby Membership Secretary and now also as Corporate Sponsorship Secretary-in-training. Ann Pearson, now preparing for return to the UK, deserves a special vote of thanks from all of us for so effectively promoting the aims of our Group to our Corporate Sponsors, who must in turn be thanked for helping make possible our expanding Research & Conservation Grant programme.

In R&C grant news: First, in a late June email vote, Laurence Garey was awarded AED 2,245 to search UK-based archives for further light on the RAF Wellington crash at Dhadhah in 1943—not natural history, but relevant history, previously written up in *Tribulus*.

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### FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Persian Wonder Gecko, *Teretoscincus keyserlingii*, in *Pennisetum divisum* grass habitat, vicinity of Dubailand, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Photographer: May Yoke Taylor

## This month's contributors

Peter Hellyer, David Robinson, Keith Taylor, May Yoke Taylor

## ENHG Membership Information

Annual membership in the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG is 100 Dhs – for both individual and family membership. NB: 2011 membership is reduced to 50 Dhs from Sept - 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 peer-reviewed journal, *Tribulus*. Volume 19 should be available at meetings starting on 18 Oct, 2011. Volume 20 is projected for the start of 2012.

Second, the ENHG-sponsored tag deployed on a male whale shark on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 unexpectedly detached after only 19 days, but important data was collected. (See update on p 4.) Third, David Stanton has now begun organizing Arabian Leopard conservation projects in Yemen & follow-up training, sponsored by a second ENHG grant. Fourth, the survey of the Kingfishers of Khor Kalba is in its final stages this month. Finally, two ENHG-sponsored studies of fish in Arabian waters are ongoing: a phylogenetic assessment of rays and guitarfish by Dr. Aaron Henderson, et. al. & a study of shark stocks by Rima Jabado, who still welcomes fish market survey volunteers. (Send email enquiries to rimajabado@hotmail.com.) We look forward to further reports on all of the above projects. We also welcome new R&C grant applications—details on p 8.

**Keith Taylor**

## Scientific Research 'Essential', Says Nahyan

*The following article, written by Peter Hellyer, former ENHG Chairman and current Senior Committee Member, and first published in WAM on 23 June 2011, is reprinted by permission of the author. –Ed.*

The promotion of scientific research within the country is 'a fundamental and essential part of the UAE's development programme', Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan said last night.

He was speaking during a ceremony for the presentation of the UAE's two premier awards for natural history, the Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Annual Prize for Natural History and the Bish Brown Award for Natural History.

"The late Sheikh Zayed taught us that 'a people that does not know its past cannot understand the present or deal with the challenges of the future'", Sheikh Nahyan said.

"The need for the promotion of scientific research, in all fields, provides us with a similar challenge to learn, to equip ourselves for the future," he said.

"Such research," he added, "is a fundamental and essential part of the UAE's development programme. This is particularly true in the sphere of our environment and natural history. The more that we understand our environment, and what lives within it, the better equipped we are to protect and conserve it, as part of the country's overall drive for sustainable development."

The Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Prize is awarded for original scientific research and was created twenty years ago by the Emirates Natural History Group, the country's oldest environmental non-governmental organisation. Sheikh Nahyan is the Group's patron. The winner of the prize for 2010, biologist Mr Antonius Van Harten, has directed for over six years a research project to study the insects and other arthropods of the UAE, the first time that such a detailed study has been undertaken.



Sheikh Nahyan and Mr Antonius (Tony) van Harten

The research, sponsored by H.H. Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, has so far led to the publication of

four volumes of 'The Arthropod Fauna of the UAE,' with two more planned. As a result of the work, involving dozens of top international experts, around 2,000 species have been identified in the UAE for the first time. Of these, around 300 are new to science and have never been found anywhere else in the world.

"The work by Mr Van Harten and his colleagues provides remarkable evidence not only of the biodiversity of the Emirates but also of the fact that there are many new scientific discoveries waiting to be made in the UAE," Sheikh Nahyan said. "They have made a major contribution both to the country and to the world of science."

The second award, the Bish Brown Award, named after the founder of the Emirates Natural History Group, is presented to an individual who has made a major contribution to promoting environmental awareness.

The 2010 winner, Christophe Tourenq, of the Emirates Wildlife Society – Worldwide Fund for Nature, EWS-WWF, was a key figure in the research that led to the designation of the Wadi Wurrayah area, in Fujairah, as a protected area. During the work, he and colleagues worked closely with the Fujairah Municipality and the Higher Colleges of Technology in Fujairah and also with local inhabitants. Their development of a programme to involve the local inhabitants in the management of Wadi Wurrayah's unique environment was crucial in persuading Fujairah Ruler and Supreme Council member H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi to create the protected area.



Sheikh Nahyan and Dr Christophe Tourenq

The recipients of the two awards expressed their thanks to Sheikh Nahyan for his interest and support.

"Our project to study a particular aspect of the UAE's wildlife has produced amazing results," said Van Harten. "I am particularly grateful to H.H. Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed for his sponsorship, which has made the work possible. The encouragement that my colleagues and I have received from Sheikh Nahyan will, I hope, stimulate others to undertake other research in future."

Tourenq also thanked Sheikh Nahyan for the way in which the Higher Colleges of Technology in Fujairah have helped on the Wadi Wurrayah project.

“The HCT-Fujairah has been an invaluable local partner for EWS-WWF in reaching out to local communities,” he said. “Now, together, we are able to use Wadi Wurrayah as an open-air environmental laboratory for Emirati students in education sciences. These students, the teachers of tomorrow, will play a fundamental role in promoting environmental awareness and an understanding of conservation in the years to come. “

**Peter Hellyer**

*Photos courtesy of the Office of Sheikh Nahayan*

## ENHG Lifetime Membership Awards

At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011 the Committee of the ENHG (AD) voted to award the following three ENHG Lifetime Memberships in recognition of years of service to the Group for which we are deeply indebted:

**John Stewart-Smith**, Founding ENHG Chairman and early observer of the UAE's coastal birdlife, who, along with Bish Brown and others established the now-thriving natural history movement in the Emirates.

**Simon Aspinall**, former ENHG Chairman and field trip leader, Deputy Editor of *Tribulus* and former Chairman of the Emirates Bird Records Committee, whose work over two decades (focusing on birdlife) has greatly enhanced our knowledge of the UAE's wildlife and environment and our awareness of the threats they face.

**Roy Richards & Liz Sowinska**, longtime Group stalwarts, former *focus* Editors, founders of the AUHENHG Yahoo group web forum, and enthusiastic leaders of our annual mountain hikes which have become an ENHG tradition, have helped give shape to the Group as we know it today.

*Following an extended stay in the UK, we now expect Roy Richards to return to the UAE by October, 2011. We will officially present Roy and Liz with their Lifetime Membership certificate after his return; we will shortly post the other two. We are most happy to keep those Lifetime Members no longer residing in the UAE in touch with our doings by sending them our newsletter.*

-Ed.

## Whale Shark Tagging Update

In [June 2011 focus](#), we reprinted an article on PhD student David Robinson's project with Sharkwatch Arabia to tag and study whale sharks in the Arabian Gulf, and mentioned the then-imminent ENHG-funded deployment of a whale shark tag. Following is an update on that deployment.

We had initially requested the tagging of a female whale shark, which seemed quite likely in early June of this year. However, due to rough seas, David had difficulty carrying out the deployment until early July, when only males were visible. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, our tag was deployed on a male whale shark, designated 11A0007 for the purpose of the study.

As announced earlier, that tag was programmed to detach after four months, leading to a report on its data

by mid-November. However, David reported in late July that our tag had in fact detached after only 19 days.

David has sent us a PowerPoint summary of the information our tag collected whilst attached to the whale shark, which has now been uploaded to the Files section of our Yahoo Group forum, accessible [here](#). Following in italics is his assessment of the situation:

*Both of the tags I deployed on July 9th came off within 12 hours of each other. They both initiated a premature release after being at a constant depth (56m and 52m) for 192 hours (our failsafe set point).*

*This could mean 1 of 3 possibilities*

- 1.) That both sharks died within 12 hours of each other (whale sharks sink when they die).*
- 2.) That both sharks managed to pull the tags out from the anchor by snagging them on something at depth where they stayed for 192 hours (but the tags have very short tethers to minimise the chance of entanglement).*
- 3.) That the sharks are resting on the bottom for long periods of time between feeding events (it is possible, but resting in whale sharks is behaviour that has never been recorded to date).*

*Because the deployment period was short, the tag managed to transmit a relatively large percentage of its data, so I was able to get a very good insight into how your shark was utilising the water column throughout the day and night. Please see the depth comparisons in the uploaded PowerPoint. Your shark was certainly deep at night and at the surface in the day, particularly between 06:00 and 12:00. Your shark also displayed a high site fidelity throughout the short tag attachment period.*

*It will be great to compare this data to the other tags when they eventually come off. As you will see from the map, your tag was heading towards the UAE before the battery ran out, so I have high hopes that it will be recovered. The tag has my contact details on, and if it is found then we can download all the data the tag collected (the tag collects info every 10 seconds), and we can also insert a new battery and re-deploy.*

As of the date of this publication, this tag has not yet been located, but if it is recovered and redeployed on another whale shark, perhaps next season, we will keep you informed. This premature detachment is just one of those unforeseen things that happen in the world of natural history research. But we can be sure that the data that was collected will contribute usefully to the increased understanding of whale sharks in this region that this study will produce.

Meanwhile, the whale shark tagging programme is ongoing, with updates available on the following website: <http://www.sharkwatcharabia.com/index.html>, which also has a form you can use to report any whale shark sightings. (Also see news article link on p 6.) We will run any further updates in *focus* as we receive them. Looking ahead a few years, we can expect a report on the findings of this study for *Tribulus* after the initial publication of David's doctoral dissertation in 2015.

**Keith Taylor and David Robinson**

## Answers to Quiz #1: What are the Differences?

These answers to the quiz run in May 2011 Focus have been checked for accuracy by a panel of naturalists. However, if you beg to differ with any of the differences proposed, please notify the newsletter editor. –Ed.

Here are the main differences between . . .

### 1. ... a falcon and a kestrel:



Saker Falcon



Common Kestrel

Actually, a kestrel **is** a true falcon, one of 37 species (also including Merlins and Hobbies) in Genus *Falco*, Family Falconidae: small birds of prey with long, pointed wings for powerful flight, strongly hooked bills for killing prey, sharply curved talons & keen eyesight. To re-frame the question, "What makes kestrels different from other falcons, e.g. the larger Saker Falcon?" Our answer: **A kestrel is a smaller falcon that hovers while hunting** (at 10–20m up), then swoops down on its prey, which includes reptiles & insects, as well as the prey preferred by larger falcons: mammals & birds. **Saker Falcons are better adapted to active hunting on the wing, and they rarely hover.** *Falco sp.* mainly resident in the UAE: Common Kestrel. Migrant breeder: Sooty Falcon. Winter visitors: Eurasian Hobby, Lesser Kestrel, Merlin & Lanner, Saker & Peregrine Falcons. The last two are also imported, captured or bred in the UAE for falconry.

### 2. ... a true grass and a sedge:



A common grass:  
*Pennisetum divisum*



A common sedge:  
*Cyperus conglomeratus*

True grasses (Family Poaceae) and sedges (Family Cyperaceae) are low-growing plants with non-woody stems & inconspicuous flowers. Though sedges are often mistaken for grasses, they are structurally distinct. Grasses have protective bracts (modified leaves) above and below the floret(s), with fibrous bits sticking out; sedges have only one bract below a spiked flowering cluster. Grass leaves are jointed at the junction with the sheath—not so in sedges. The sheaths are usually open in grasses, but closed in sedges. Most grasses have hollow internodes, but they are always solid in sedges. And remember: **"Grasses are round; sedges have edges."** Grass stem cross-sections are round, but those of sedges are polygonal (mostly triangular), as

can be felt when you roll them between your fingers. The UAE has roughly 70 grass species and only a few sedge species, but one of them, *Cyperus conglomeratus*, is very dominant here, especially noticeable as about the only thing growing on many sand dunes.

### 3. ... a locust and a grasshopper:



Desert Locust (solitary phase): A common grasshopper:  
*Schistocerca gregaria* *Acorypha glaucopsis*

Another trick question! The term 'grasshopper' is sometimes used to refer to all Acrididae and other grasshopper-like families in the order Orthoptera (which also includes crickets). But the common name 'locust' is based on behavioural traits, not taxonomy. **'Locust' is the name given to a number of grasshopper species in Family Acrididae that change colour and behaviour by swarming at high population densities.** Several different genera in Family Acrididae contain locusts, but not all species within each genus are locusts. Therefore, you need to identify a grasshopper to species to verify whether it can actually be considered a locust. There are at least 40 species of Acrididae in the UAE. A 'non-locust' grasshopper common on rocky hillsides here is *Acorypha glaucopsis*, which has made its way onto a 250 fils stamp. A locust that occurs here (not so common) is the Desert Locust, *Schistocerca gregaria*—only very rarely swarming. See [May 2008 focus](#) for more locust info & photos.

### 4. ... a dugong and a manatee:



Dugong



West Indian Manatee

Dugongs (one species in Family Dugongidae) and manatees (three species in Family Trichechidae) are aquatic herbivorous mammals with paddle-like forelimbs and no dorsal fin or hind limbs—the only surviving species in the Order Sirenia. Their differences are clear-cut. **The dugong has a dolphin-like fluked tail and a sharply downward-pointing snout adapted for 'hoovering up' seagrasses.** Dugongs, which are strictly marine, are found mainly in Australia, with sizeable populations also in the southern Red Sea and here in the SW Arabian Gulf. **The manatee, on the other hand, has a distinctly rounded paddle-shaped tail and a divided upper lip, which it uses to eat a wide range of plant species—leaves, grass and algae—and even, but rarely, fish from nets.** The three species—West Indian, Amazonian, and West African—are found in the regions so indicated, and they all utilise fresh water to some degree (the Amazonian do so exclusively).

Keith Taylor

Online photo/info references available on request

## Errata

The following errata all occurred on p. 5 of June 2011 focus, in the write-up titled "Camping Trip to Wadi Bih". They have all been corrected in a revised copy of that issue that has been re-uploaded to both online archives.

The bird incorrectly identified of June 2011 focus as the House Bunting is actually the very common Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*. And as a matter of fact, the bird in this region which some refer to as the House Bunting is properly called the Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata*. It is quite likely that Striolated Buntings were seen in the mountains on this Wadi Bih trip, but this write-up did not include a picture of one.

Although the maximum age for terraced fields in these mountains may 700 years, according to archaeological records, we can't state with certainty that that's how old these ones are. They certainly do go back a long way!

The correct spelling of the wadi referred to on p. 5 of June 2011 focus leading to Wadi Bih from Dibba is Wadi "Kabb ash-Shamsi".

Although there are feral donkeys along the Wadi Bih road, they are actually quite rare in the mountains in general and only congregate there where they can take advantage of the leavings of human beings. Feral goats actually do far more damage to mountain vegetation.

-Ed.

## Upcoming Speaker



**Dr Andrew Dixon** is Head of Research at International Wildlife Consultants Ltd (IWC), a company based in the UK that undertakes research projects on behalf of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi. IWC is currently administering five major research projects with funding from Abu Dhabi: (i) a "conservation through sustainable use" project for the Saker Falcon in Mongolia, (ii) a reintroduction project for the Saker Falcon in Bulgaria, (iii) a satellite tracking study of migratory Peregrines in northern Eurasia, (iv) a study of genetic variation in Eurasian Saker and Peregrine populations and (v) the whole genome sequencing of the Saker and Peregrine Falcon. In addition, we support long-term monitoring of breeding Sakers in Kazakhstan, co-ordinate the Middle East Falcon

Research Group (producing the biannual newsletter *Falco* and maintaining the website [www.mefrg.org](http://www.mefrg.org)), have established and continue to support the Southeast Europe Saker Network ([www.cherrug.org](http://www.cherrug.org)) and act as advisors for the UAE in relation to falcon conservation issues within international conventions such as CITES and CMS. Dr Dixon has worked for IWC since 2005 and has a lifelong interest in birds, especially raptors.

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

## In the Local News Media

The National, June 12: [Saker Falcon numbers given an extra lift by barrels on poles](#)

The National, June 23: [Desert watering hole tempts migrant birds](#)

The National, July 3: [Al Ain's World Heritage tombs can now rest in peace](#)

The National, July 11: [Rare wild cat is recovering after surgery](#)

The National, July 12: [Great Gulf Turtle Race results just in](#)

The National, July 29: [Mangroves under threat due to capital's expansion](#)

The National, August 2: [Three fish added to sustainable seafood guide's safe-to-eat list](#)

Gulf News, August 23: [Public urged to report whale shark sightings](#)

## Marine Life Rescue Contact Info.

In Abu Dhabi:

EAD Hotline for reporting environmental emergencies including pollution and injured wildlife: 8009990. Email: [envirocomplaint@ead.ae](mailto:envirocomplaint@ead.ae)

EAD Emergency response manager: Mr. Abdul Rahman. Mob: 0506674171 (contactable 24 hours/day)

EAD contact for sea turtles, dugongs and dolphins: Dr Himansu Das, Biodiversity Management Sector. Tel: 26934654; Mob: 0504465125; Email: [hsdas@ead.ae](mailto:hsdas@ead.ae)

In Dubai:


















Emirates Marine Environment Group (EMEG) (Tel: 043630581/Fax:043630460; Email: [info@emeg.ae](mailto:info@emeg.ae))

Dubai Municipality: Main number: 800900. Marine Environment & Sanctuaries Unit (Tel: +9714 606 6818, Fax +9714 703 3532), Email: [marabdulla@dm.gov.ae](mailto:marabdulla@dm.gov.ae).

Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Centre at the Burj al Arab Aquarium. Tel: 043017198. 24-hour email contact, Attn. Mr Warren Baverstock, Manager of Operations, BAA Aquarium: [warren.baverstock@jumeirah.com](mailto:warren.baverstock@jumeirah.com)  
To post Facebook message triggering an after-hours SMS alert: [www.facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation](http://www.facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation)

## Corporate Sponsors of the ENHG - 2011

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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Nautica Environmental Associates L.L.C.	
Partex Oil and Gas	
Readymix Abu Dhabi Limited L.L.C.	
Shell	
Total ABK	
Ultra Dascam (Shaheen)	

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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 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.

## Committee Members

**Required: Acting Chairman to chair meetings, represent the Group officially and organise activities. Can you do this?**

Keith Taylor  
(Deputy Chairman / focus Editor)  
Mobile: 050-820-4938  
[kjtaylor13@yahoo.com](mailto:kjtaylor13@yahoo.com)

Julie Bird  
(Secretary)  
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Ron Priestley  
(Treasurer)  
Mobile: 050-315-9908  
[ronprst@gmail.com](mailto:ronprst@gmail.com)

**Required: Lecture Coordinator to assist us with contacting speakers for ENHG lectures. Can you do this?**

Peter Hellyer  
(Editor of *Tribulus* / Librarian)  
Mobile: 050-642-4357  
[peter@extinfo.gov.ae](mailto:peter@extinfo.gov.ae)

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Avra Theophanous  
(Incoming Corporate Sponsorship Sec. & Asst. Membership Sec.)  
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Gaby Zezulka-Mailloux  
(Book Sales Assistant)  
[gabrielle.mailloux@adu.ac.ae](mailto:gabrielle.mailloux@adu.ac.ae)

**Required: PR Secretary to assist with getting the word out about our activities. Can you do this?**

Drew Gardner  
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Mobile: 050-667-5830  
[drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae](mailto:drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae)

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Stefan Beck  
(Member)  
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[stefan\\_k\\_beck@yahoo.de](mailto:stefan_k_beck@yahoo.de)

## Lectures

**Venue: HCT / Abu Dhabi Men's College**

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

6<sup>th</sup> Sept.  
An Intro. to the Natural History of the UAE  
**Drew Gardner**

13<sup>th</sup> Sept. **7:30 PM**  
Saker Falcon Conservation in Mongolia  
**Andrew Dixon**

## Social Event

20<sup>th</sup> Sept. **6:30 PM**  
Informal gathering at Relax @ 12, top of the Aloft Hotel (ADNEC), to chat about plans for the coming season.

## Field Trips

17<sup>th</sup> Sept.  
Day Trip to Sharjah Wildlife Ctr. & Natural History Museum  
**Keith Taylor**

23<sup>rd</sup> Sept.  
Abu Dhabi Beach Walk  
**Feng Wen**

14<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
Abu Dhabi Island Morning Birdwatching  
**Andrew Bean**

21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Oct.  
Camping trip: Umm al Zamool Oryx Preserve  
**Andrew Bean**

28<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
Day Trip to Ras al Khaimah dhow yard to watch traditional ship-building  
**Feng Wen**

4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Nov. (tentative)  
Eid Al Adha mountain camping trip to Jebel Akhdar, Oman  
**Angie Marles & Ron Priestley**

## Websites of General Interest

Emirates Natural History Group – Al Ain (Archives: newsletters of 3 NHGs, *Tribulus*): <http://www.enhg.org>

Dubai Natural History Group: <http://dnhg.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 website: [www.BirdsOman.com](http://www.BirdsOman.com)

Wikispecies:  
[http://species.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://species.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

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

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

Emirates Marine Environmental Group: [www.emeg.ae](http://www.emeg.ae)

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

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

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>

Sharkwatch Arabia: <http://www.sharkwatcharabia.com>

Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen: <http://www.yemenileopard.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](mailto: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 Deputy Chairman Keith Taylor at [kjtaylor13@yahoo.com](mailto:kjtaylor13@yahoo.com).

## Newsletter Details

Newsletter contributions to:  
[newsletter@chirri2000.com](mailto:newsletter@chirri2000.com)

## Members' Items for sale

Please send small ads to:  
[newsletter@chirri2000.com](mailto:newsletter@chirri2000.com)

## Postal Address

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

## Yahoo Groups website

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