

focus



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Emirates Natural History Group

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

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another bumper issue of *Focus*! As the write-ups and photos attest, lots of good lectures and now well-attended trips are underway. We welcome Ronnie Gallagher and Ian Townson to this season's Field Trip Coordinator team—and there's still room for more. If you have a particular interest (birds, bugs, bones, etc.) you'd like to share in the field; if you have a favourite spot you'd like to take others to see; or if you'd like to get a group together to visit one of this country's many fine museums, please consider leading at least a one-off trip for our Group. Don't miss out on the fun!

It's good to see the PR outreach is continuing, with a feature article on ENHG in Time Out Abu Dhabi (Dec 12th issue). Claudia's contributions from overseas are appreciated, but we could use assistance with consistent PR outreach by volunteers on the scene, as well.

Please note that after many years without a fee increase, the ENHG-AD Committee now has raised the annual family membership fee for 2013 to 150 Dhs, but individual membership remains at 100 DHs. NB: Memberships are renewable in January. Bear in mind that both regular members' and corporate sponsors' fees help the ENHG-AD publish *Tribulus* and fund Research & Conservation grants.

A breaking announcement: See p. 6 for a unique volunteer opportunity to join in on an environmental survey project; note the Jan 27th deadline. On p. 7, please see the Update for Inter-Emirates Weekend 2013 (in Al Ain Feb 21-23); note the Jan 20 deadline for the Friday dinner registration. Also, remember to bring aluminium cans to meetings for the Can Drive for Charity, which the ENHG is now supporting—see p. 6.

Take note that our first meeting of 2013 has been shifted to the second Tuesday as New Year's Day falls on the first Tuesday. Please come along to this chapter's first Members' Night on January 8th, and consider sharing short anecdotes and photos (on a flash drive, to project through the ADWC computer) that you think would be of interest to others in the Group. In addition to that, we will show a DVD of the EAD's dugong tagging & monitoring programme by Yusuf Thakur, which he shared with our Group three years ago. Members of the general public are of course welcome to attend, as always!

Finally, nominations for the ENHG's two natural history awards are now open—see directly below.

Keith Taylor

Natural History Award Nominations

Nominations are now invited from paid-up members of the ENHG-Abu Dhabi, ENHG-Al Ain, Dubai NHG and ENHG-Fujairah for the two annual ENHG awards for 2012: 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

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Awl-headed or Crowned Leaf-nosed snake
Lytorhynchus diadema, on As Sila's gypsum coast

Photographer: May Yoke Taylor

This month's contributors

PK Ashraf, Oscar Campbell, Denis Cheng, David Curry, ENHG-Abu Dhabi, ENHG-Al Ain, Peter Hellyer, David Edwards, Jane Glavan, Eleonora, Lichtenecker Penny Lichtenecker, Rex Sartain, John Stewart-Smith, Keith Taylor, May Yoke Taylor, Wikipedia, Zayed University

ENHG Membership Information

Annual membership in the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG is 100 Dhs per individual and now 150 Dhs for family membership. See Membership Sec. or Asst. at the next meeting for a membership form. Membership renewals for 2013 are due in January.

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 20 is now available at ENHG meetings.

instituted by the ENHG Patron, HE Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, 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. This award comprises a silver mounted falcon, 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 four 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 Dr. Andrew Bean, 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 2012**, and winners will be selected by the ENHG (original Abu Dhabi branch) committee during the February meeting. The Committee's decision is final. Winners will be announced at the Inter-Emirates Weekend dinner, 22 Feb 2012.

ENHG-Abu Dhabi

Natural History Award Presentations

On Tuesday evening, November 13th 2012, the official presentation of the ENHG's two annual Natural History Awards for 2011 was held at the Majlis of our Patron, H.E. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan.

These awards were first announced at the Inter-Emirates Weekend in February, 2012. Both of these awards were granted to long-time ENHG members who have worked with Zayed University, so this time these awards highlight the excellent research and outreach that is taking place in the UAE within the context of that academic institution.

Dr. Drew Gardner (who left the UAE earlier this year) is the winner of the Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Annual Prize for Natural History, for his original research and contributions to knowledge of the reptiles of the UAE (and Oman); his book on this topic is due out soon.

As Dr. Gardner is in Australia, and was unable to be present for the occasion, the Chancellor of Zayed University officially accepted his award on his behalf. Dr Gardner is expected to collect the silver dhow associated with this prize on a future trip to the UAE.



Present at this awards ceremony were (from left to right above): Former ZU Associate Provost & Campus Director (now consultant for the iPad implementation project) Dr. Thomas Cochran; Sally Bengé (accompanied at the

event by husband, ENHG Life Member Nick Bengé – not pictured here); ZU Vice President Dr. Suleiman Al Jassim; ZU Chancellor and Minister of Higher Education & Research H.E. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan; ENHG-AI Ain Chair and Bish Brown Award recipient Dr. Brigitte Howarth; ENHG-AD Chairman Dr. Andrew Bean; ZU Provost Dr. Lauren R. (Larry) Wilson and Former ENHG-AD Chairman and Life Member Peter Hellyer.

Dr. Brigitte Howarth is the winner of the Bish Brown Award - for individuals who have worked to promote knowledge of conservation and natural history, for her dedicated work in promoting the external outreach activities of the Al Ain branch of the Emirates Natural History Group, ENHG, as well as for her scientific research.

Dr. Howarth was present for the awards ceremony, bringing with her the silver falcon statuette, in its newly reinforced carrying case, which will continue to reside with her until the announcement of the Bish Brown Award for 2012 at the upcoming Inter-Emirates Weekend at the end of February, 2013.



Dr. Brigitte Howarth holding the Bish Brown Award statuette with ZU Provost Larry Wilson

Keith Taylor / Peter Hellyer

Photographs courtesy of Zayed University

Eid Camping Trip to Jebel Shams

A getaway to the Hidden Village on Jebel Shams & the charming village of Misfat A'Abriyeen was enjoyed by nine of us, including six new to the ENHG, on 25-27 Oct. If a participant of this or any trip submits a write-up, such as the one on pp. 4-5 below, it will be published. –Ed.



ENHG group on the cliff's edge overlooking Wadi Ghul



Abandoned village, As Sab, on wadi face trail



Refreshing pool above the village: its water source

All photographs by May Yoke Taylor

Trip to the Stars



Photo: PK Ashraf

Just a few days after my arrival in Abu Dhabi, my daughter Eleonora told me we were driving off into the desert with the Emirates Natural History Group to view the stars, far from the strong light of civilisation. At the service-station meeting place I met new faces and watched the various desert-worthy vehicles roll in. Divided into two groups, we drove for long distances on expressways bordered either by sandy stretches or acres of date palm plantations, keeping together thanks to ever-vigilant 'Sweeps' Ashraf and Michael Creamer.

Eventually, we arrived at a road branching off to the Tal Moreib—the Liwa desert's highest dune, which the locals enjoy driving up and down. There a couple of scouts drove off to look for the best campsite location. Meanwhile the two dogs included in the group enjoyed stretching their legs. Finally, we were ready to proceed carefully, either slowly or faster depending on the hardness of the sand. We came to an area where camel races are sometimes held and went a bit further, to a sort-of-bowl surrounded by high dunes.

There we parked cars and looked for desirable places to pitch tents. It was amusing to see the simple and complicated tents and facilities of the various participants and to observe how quickly some created a cosy desert home while others struggled with rods and pegs. While the area and equipment for the grill was chosen, several people took off to climb up the steep dune slopes. With great excitement we saw a Reem (Sand) Gazelle sprinting along the periphery of the campsite. Not much later the first dune-buggies appeared and we hoped they would not careen over our friends. This caused a flurry of resituating some of the tents that were at the foot of the high slope, for fear that an out-of-control vehicle might race into someone's tent.



As our trip leader Denis Cheng and others began to set up their telescopes for the evenings' stargazing, a long fire-pit was dug and charcoal & coconut husks set alight, and tables were set up, on which Ashraf at once set a hearty dish of lamb biriyani, satisfying our initial hunger. Then more plates were uncovered with many intriguing potluck dishes, including various kinds of meat barbecued on a large improvised grill—the ENHG-AD's first truly communal campsite meal, by all accounts.



Trip leader Denis at the potluck barbecue

During the early part of the evening, Denis was having more trouble than usual setting up his Meade 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and its guidance computer; it seemed there were "anti-astronomy djinns" in the vicinity. When he had finally managed to "wrestle them to the ground," he finally began the trip's main event: the star-gazing session. He introduced it with a presentation consisting of a tribute to two significant amateur astronomers, Clyde Tombaugh, the discoverer of the "dwarf planet" Pluto, and Percival Lowell, whom Denis called the "King of amateur astronomers." Denis also paid tribute to one early professional astronomer, Charles Messier, since the wondrous objects in the sky that now bear his name, the Messier Objects, would be some of the prime targets for viewing through the telescopes during the evening's star-gazing session.

Emerging from a nap, I found a battery of telescopes in use (including Jeff's Celestron 6" and Bill's birding scope). Everyone lined up to take peeks at Messier objects, stars and planets. Most exciting for me was

viewing Jupiter with 4 visible moons. Some familiar constellations were visible and others were identified by means of the Group's Sky Scout and even a couple of smart phone apps. The Leonid meteor shower after midnight was disappointingly sparse, but there was still so much to see as the heavens were so full of stars on this moonless dark-sky night deep in the desert.

The next morning after a hearty breakfast, some of us went off to look for a plant with yellow blossoms—*Tribulus arabicus*—which was nestling between some of the sand hills. How wonderful to see these lovely flowers amongst all the sand!



Photo: Jeanne Queromain

On the way home, we stopped to see Al Jabana Fort, a reconstructed fortified house, which guarded a large plantation in the eastern end of the Liwa oasis. It was great to look into every room and space as well as to climb the stairs to the surrounding wall, taking lots of pictures of heads peering out of doors and over walls.



We also had a look at examples of the national tree of Abu Dhabi—the ghaf. One by one the cars peeled off on their own way home leaving our car alone to enjoy a Pakistani meal in a small road house after our attempt to visit the luxurious Qasr Al Sarab hotel was thwarted by a governmental conference. The trip was rounded off by a visit to the gardens of the Rainbow Sheik's car museum, just north of a thin band of dew-dependent saxaul trees.

After a wonderful weekend with sparkling stars, large dunes, new friends and great food, I would like to thank the fantastic organisers Denis and Keith. And another big thanks goes to Keith for providing us with a ride, a roof and cosy sleeping bags!

Penny Lichtenecker
(with assistance from Eleonora, Keith & Denis)

Uncredited photographs by Eleonora Lichtenecker

Definition of 'Saltation'

This obscure term has come up recently in discussions on trips to sand dunes (as in the above). –Ed.

In geology, **saltation** (from Latin, *saltus*, "leap") is a specific type of particle transport by fluids such as wind or water. It occurs when loose material is removed from a bed and carried by the fluid, before being transported back to the surface. Examples include pebble transport by rivers, sand drift over desert surfaces, soil blowing over fields, or even snow drift over smooth surfaces such as those in the Arctic or Canadian Prairies.

Wikipedia

November Introductory Birding

Continuing an established tradition, on 23 November, ten amateur ENHG birders toured Abu Dhabi Island, honing skills with binoculars and field guides while surveying the birdlife. Here is a list of the approx. 25 bird species spotted, 21 of them positively ID'd:

Eastern Corniche mangroves and palm grove:

Grey Heron	Greater Flamingo
Common Redshank	Cormorant sp.
Red-wattled Lapwing	Laughing Dove
White-eared Bulbul	House Sparrow

Possibilities, with no photo evidence to confirm ID:

Grey Plover or Little Stint?

Warbler species (poss. Clamorous Reed?)

Mushrif Palace Park palm grove:

Grey Francolin	Collared Dove
Red-vented Bulbul	White-eared Bulbul
Common Swift	Common Kestrel
Little Green Bee-eater	Ring-necked Parakeet
Warbler sp.	

Western Corniche Park lawns & beach:

Crested Lark	White Wagtail
Common Mynah	House Sparrow
Collared Dove	Socotra Cormorant
Common Tern	White-headed Gull
Grey Heron	Eurasian Curlew

Wrapping up our excursion, we paid our usual visit to the tamarind tree behind the old ADNOC residence/clinic. As expected at this time of year, weaver birds were not in evidence, though their nests were. We will arrange a visit at the end of another birding trip next spring, when we expect to see up to three species of weaver birds building nests. If anyone can shed light on the in-country migration these introduced resident birds must have worked out for themselves, please let us know.

Keith Taylor

Announcement: Khor Kalba Closure

In response to our recent enquiry, ENHG-Fujairah Chairman David Edwards has sent in this update on Khor Kalba, re-printed here with his permission. -Ed.

The Khor Kalba pedestrian bridge and access to the mangrove area is indeed off limits now. It is closed to all traffic, and the fishermen have been banned from the area as well. It's one part of a larger project by the Sharjah Govt. to create a nature preserve and to begin generating some green tourist dirhams down the line. Here's a link to an online article on this project: May 1, 2012: [Shurooq announces "Kalba Eco-Tourism project", the largest of its kind in the region.](#)

The project hopes to see the return of the sea turtles in significant numbers and encompasses lands from the mangroves all the way back to the mountains' skirt. They have evicted the camel farmers as well and are hoping to provide a place for gazelle, and I would imagine some predators too, eventually. When it's finished, the only access will be with one of their rangers and it won't be free. To take our college students there we needed to jump through enough hoops that our ecology department is now looking for another less-bureaucratic green cleanup site.

David Edwards

AGEDI Call for Volunteers

We are now happy to announce the commencement of the Abu Dhabi Blue Carbon Demonstration project. We are hereby reaching out to the Emirates Natural History Group for volunteers who can assist in the field work component required for the successful delivery of the project.

On behalf of AGEDI (the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative), a team of experts will be assessing carbon stocks in marshes, mangroves, sabkha and seagrasses. We are pleased to share global experience in blue carbon stock assessment, mangrove and tidal wetland ecology, field mapping and map ground truthing with the volunteers.

The project field work will be conducted over a 3 week period from Tuesday 15 January 2013 to Thursday 31 January 2013.

We understand volunteers may not be able to commit for the full period, however it is advantageous for volunteers to be available for a minimum of 3 consecutive days over the duration of field work period. If this isn't possible, we will review volunteers' available dates on a case by case basis to meet the needs of the project.

We encourage and welcome all keen environmentalists' efforts to the project. However, to ensure the experience is a successful one, we are looking for volunteers who are physically fit to conduct field work activities, have a keen interest in the environment and coastal ecosystem issues and are available for a short training and information session the week commencing Sunday 13 January 2013.

For further details regarding the needs of the fieldwork and the wide array of benefits that it has to offer volunteers, please contact Larissa Owen, AGEDI PR & Outreach Manager at BCdemonstration@ead.ae no later than **Thursday 27 December 2012**.

With the support of the ENHG, the Abu Dhabi Blue Carbon Demonstration Project field work aims to assess the carbon and ecosystem services of Abu Dhabi's blue carbon coastal habitats, gain an understanding of their geographic extent and assess blue carbon in a climate and policy framework for the development of potential mitigation initiatives in the UAE and ultimately, improve management options for the preservation and restoration of the coastal ecosystems.

Jane Glavan, AGEDI Partnership Project Manager

Can Collection Drive for Charity

The ENHG Committee is now supporting an aluminium can collection drive for charity, conducted by AD resident Michael Manlogon. Starting in 2010, he has established a daily routine of collecting cans from food courts, etc. and preparing them for sale to a recycler, donating the proceeds to such charities as UNICEF, World Vision & Adopt-a-Hometown-School Project of ABS-CBN Foundation all in direct support of children's education in his home country, The Philippines—a win-win proposition we feel is worth supporting.

Having been initiated on Nov. 20th, 2012, a signposted can collection bag is now on display at the rear of the meeting hall at each ENHG lecture meeting. –Ed.

Errata

The following two errors in Nov 2012 Focus were helpfully pointed out to us by founding ENHG Chairman and Life Member John Stewart-Smith. –Ed.

1. The plan for your Inter-Emirates Weekend at Al Ain in February 2013 looks like the place to be on that weekend BUT I notice you mention that was founded in 1980. In fact it began in Abu Dhabi several years earlier [1976 to be precise] as can be verified by some of the old documentation. I hope you all enjoy the weekend and wish I could join you there, but that is not possible. Please convey my regards to all.

2. My second point regards Peter Hellyer's review of "Imperial Outpost in the Gulf". He wrote that Sharjah airport 'fell into disuse' with the RAF withdrawal in 1971 prior to the opening of the new Sharjah International Airport in 1977. In fact this is incorrect. The Abu Dhabi Air Force moved the Hunter Close Air Support Squadron from the old Abu Dhabi Airport (on Abu Dhabi Island) to the old Sharjah Airport in November 1973. The Hunters continued to operate from there until at least August 1977 when I left the United Arab Emirates Air Force. This was deemed to be a "Detached Unit" of the ADAF, and I served there in various roles including Squadron Commander and Detachment Commander. We had a fully operational base with our own on-base accommodation, maintenance personnel and support. I recall that our Air Traffic services were provided under contract by Cable and Wireless personnel.

I'm not sure when the last official BOAC service into Sharjah (old airfield) took place but I do know that I was very surprised while driving around the airfield on my early morning inspection to see a BOAC VC-10 arrive unannounced on the runway. The aircraft came to a halt on the runway so I drove my Land rover alongside the cockpit to see what was going on. The captain poked his head out and asked where he was. I said, "This is Sharjah military. Dubai International is a few miles in that direction." His head disappeared for a minute and then reappeared. I shouted, "Follow me and you can take off again for Dubai." He did just that and I never heard anything further! For the record, that was probably the last BOAC passenger flight into the old airport at Sharjah.

Gosh! Didn't we have fun in the Old Days?

John Stewart-Smith

Update: Inter-Emirates Weekend 2013

In the tradition of ENHG, the hosting of the Inter-Emirates Weekend has been shared between the groups over the years. This year, we are looking forward to welcoming you to Al Ain! With tradition in mind, and not forgetting ol' favourites, we would like to introduce a theme to the weekend - 'Origins of the ENHG'. This will particularly be shared with participants during the dinner on Friday evening, and opportunities on Friday and Saturday to work with and help organize archival material that dates back to the origins of the group in 1976 and its founder, Bish Brown. Along with a walk down memory lane, many other activities will be available.

The dates are Thurs 21st – Sat 23rd, February 2013. The event will be based at the Danat Resort Hotel in Al Ain. The deadline to apply for the special IEW discounted room rate has now passed, but affordable deals are available at other hotels in the area. Reservations for the Friday dinner will remain open till Jan. 20th. To reserve your place for dinner in the Danat Hotel Ballroom on Feb 22nd at 145 Dhs each (inclusive of taxes), please forward an email to interemiratesweekend@gmail.com.

The most up-to-date version of the IEW 2013 programme has been posted on the website www.enhg.org (as of 17th Dec unfortunately off-line, though that's being sorted). It can also be found on the web forum <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG> (requiring an FOC subscription). Specific information about meeting places and maps for these will be sent out closer to the time. For further enquiries write interemiratesweekend@gmail.com.

There is no need to pre-register for trip activities (only the dinner). On Thursday 21st February, we will have a registration desk set up at the Danat Hotel from 5pm-9pm where people can sign up for activities and pay for their Dinner Tickets. There will also be a short registration session on Friday morning and again on Friday afternoon.

ENHG-AI Ain

Recent Speakers

David Currie has worked in the fisheries, aquaculture and marine environment sector since 1975, in both commercial farming and on development projects. His projects have mainly been based in Latin America and South East Asia, but also in East Africa and the Middle East. Since August 2012, David has been based in Abu Dhabi with FAO's (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) Fishery & Aquaculture Division.

80% of the world's wild fish resources are now fully or over exploited and there is little opportunity to increase catches in the future. The annual wild catch has stagnated over the last 20 years at around 90 million tons. Meanwhile, production from aquaculture (fish farming) has grown from 13 million tons in 1990 to 60 million tons in 2010, showing a compounded growth rate of 8% per annum since 1970.

Per capita fish consumption is increasing - and with the current world population of 7 billion projected to reach 9

or 10 billion by 2050, it is aquaculture that will have to meet the expanding world demand for fish. Currently, world aquaculture production is dominated by production of freshwater carp (31%), plants (24%) and molluscs (18%) with China responsible for 61% of world production. The environmental impacts of most of this farming are benign or positive, but there are also subsectors of aquaculture such as salmon and shrimp farming that have a history of causing environmental damage.

In an ENHG lecture on Nov 20th titled *World Aquaculture—Feeding the World?*, David Currie presented us with an in-depth look at the history of aquaculture around the world and hazarded a few guesses about the future of the industry. This lecture, thankfully arranged at short notice, was timely as it touched on one of the key environmental stress points mentioned in the previous ENHG lecture—Dr Perry's Environment Vision talk: declining wild fisheries.



Catfish farming in Vietnam



Oscar Campbell, 37 years young, is from Northern Ireland where as a boy he began bird-watching – still his strongest avocational interest, although he is keen on other aspects of natural history as well. He teaches chemistry at an Abu Dhabi school and in his free time, when not doing lots of bird-watching of his own, he serves as a guide for visiting birders, contributes to ornithological publications, submits bird records online and serves as the Chairman of the Emirates Bird Records Committee (EBRC).

As the ultimate inter-continental stepping stone, the Middle East is a superlative location to observe bird migration. On the Arabian Gulf coast, such migration is especially heavy and obvious in spring. Oscar's Dec. 4th talk discussed and illustrated spring bird migration through Abu Dhabi, using the author's own data, compiled over six springs of intensive observation. Focusing on bird migration phenology, the study of "the

dates of first occurrence of [such] biological events in their annual cycle” (*Wikipedia*), this well documented & illustrated talk clued us in to the remarkable bounty awaiting springtime birders here in Abu Dhabi.

Lieutenant Colonel Rex Sartain is a Rifleman with 35 years’ service in the British Army. His postings have included Gibraltar, Germany, the Balkans, Turkey, East and West Africa and very occasionally the UK. His interests in conservation have their origins from working in such varied places and travelling with Sara, his wife and companion. Most recently Rex has been an active Board and Committee member in a number of Wild Life and Conservation Groups and has now, during his current posting to Abu Dhabi, joined the ENHG Committee as the Group’s new Treasurer.



On December 18th, Rex gave the ENHG a talk distilled from his years of military experience in remote locations, entitled, *Fighting with Lions: a Story of Conservation, Community and Soldiers in the Bush*. In his 32 years of training in the bush there were regular encounters with wildlife: ranging from scorpions and snakes to elephants, buffalos and lions. Whilst the British Army has always taught the importance of "environmental factors", only recently has this interest expanded to preserving the countryside. "Fighting with Lions" refers to how military training is conducted on huge tracts of private and community land alongside endangered nature and failing local communities. This is a story of balancing military requirements with conservation and community: to the mutual benefit of all – even the lions!



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

Corporate Sponsors of the ENHG - 2012

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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Partex Oil and Gas	
Readymix Abu Dhabi Limited L.L.C. (Click on link & scroll down)	
Shell	
URS	
Wave Craft, Ltd. (Auditor Nick Bengé's Co.)	
WSP Group	

In the Local News Media

- Gulf News, Nov 9: [Atlantis welcomes rare baby sea ray birth](#)
- Gulf News, Nov 10: [Rays of hope make waves along the waters off Palm Jumeirah](#)

In the Local News Media, Cont'd.

The National, Nov 11: [Trees threatened by development get a new life ... in Mushrif Park](#)

The National, Nov 14: [The lake that came and went](#)

The National, Nov 17: [Reward for plover lovers on birdwatching trip to the UAE](#)

The National, Nov 24: [Lion of the Sea' 500 years ago may be the new face of tourism](#)

The National, Dec 7th: [Why the Kumzari tongue consists of ancient words with a future](#)

The National, Dec 7th: [The Ali Column: How we can help preserve marine life](#)

The National, Dec 13th: [Blue flag raised at Abu Dhabi's Al Bateen Beach](#)

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 for schools donations.)
- Wild about Mammals, 40
- Breeding Birds of the United Arab Emirates, 100
- Birds of the UAE--Common guide to species, 60
- Birds of the UAE--Helm field guide, 70
- 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, 120
- Butterflies of Saudi Arabia & its neighbours, 90
- UAE in Focus, 100
- Natural History of Oman, 50
- 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
- Marine Environment, Resource of the UAE, 140
- *NEW: Focus on Fujairah: Through Minie's lens 1964-2001, 150*

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.org>

Historical Association of Oman: <http://www.hao.org.om/>

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

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

Roy & Liz's website: www.chirri2000.com

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

Emirates Marine Environmental Group: www.emeg.ae

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

Emirates Wildlife Society – World Wildlife Fund:
http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/united_arab_emirates/

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

UAE Environmental Atlas (Sign up for notice of release):
<http://www.environmentalatlas.ae/>

Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority
<http://www.adach.ae/en/> (Still using ADACH website)

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

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

NYUAD Events Calendar:
<http://nyuad.nyu.edu/news.events/events.ad.html>

Khalifa University Events Calendar:
<http://www.kustar.ac.ae/campus/dss/schedules/default.aspx>

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

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

The Rock Art of the Hajar Mountains:
http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/uae/hajar_mountains/index.php

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

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

Zoology in the Middle East (Peer-reviewed ISI Journal):
<http://www.kasperek-verlag.de/ZME-allgem.htm>

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

Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen: <http://www.yemenileopard.org>

Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund:
<http://www.mbzspeciesconservation.org/>

EDGE: Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered: <http://www.edgeofexistence.org>

Protected Planet: IUCN & UNEP-WCMC Database:
<http://www.protectedplanet.net>

Encyclopedia of Life: <http://eol.org/>

ARKive Images of Life on Earth: <http://www.arkive.org>
Jewels of the UAE: <http://www.arkive.org/uae/en/>

NHBS Environment Bookstore: <http://www.nhbs.com/>

Committee Members

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Sought: Additional Book Stall Assistant to help with book sales at ENHG meetings. Can you do this?

Sought: Committee Volunteer to assist with PR outreach to promote ENHG activities on a regular basis. Can you do this?

Lectures

Meeting Venue:
Abu Dhabi Women's College, City Campus
Emirates Hall

Nov 20th
World Aquaculture—
Feeding the World?
David Currie

Dec 4th
Spring Bird Migration
through Abu Dhabi
Oscar Campbell

Dec 18th
Fighting with Lions: a
Story of Conservation,
Community and
Soldiers in the Bush
Rex Sartain

Jan. 8th **7:30 PM**
Members' Show & Tell;
DVD of EAD's Dugong
Monitoring Programme
by Yusuf Thakur
MC: Andrew Bean

Field Trips

Nov 23rd
Introductory Birding
Trip on AD Island
Keith Taylor

Nov 30th/Dec 1st & 2nd
As Sila Camping Trip
Keith Taylor

Dec 14th/15th
Wadi Hilo excavation
tour by Prof Uerpmann/
Campers' visits: Kalba
Museum & Wadi Hayl
Keith Taylor & Ronnie Gallagher

Jan. 11th/12th
Tell Abraq (UAQ) site
tour by Prof. Magee /
Camping in Wadi Falaj
al-Moalla
Keith Taylor & Ronnie Gallagher

ENHG-AD Research & Conservation Fund Grant Application Information

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

For further enquiries and for grant application guidelines and application form, contact ENHG Chairman Andrew Bean at rabean@eim.ae.

NB: These documents are posted in the Files section of the AUHENHG YahooGroup (see address below).

ENHG Equipment for Members' Use

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

- Starter camping set: 2 new sleeping bags & maps, medium-sized cool box, old Coleman '5-man' tent
- GPS unit – GARMIN GPSMAP 60CSx
- First-Aid Kit
- Birding Telescope
- 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: Keith Taylor, kjtaylor13@yahoo.com.

Marine Life Rescue Contact Info.

In Abu Dhabi:

EAD Hotline for reporting environmental emergencies including pollution and injured wildlife: 8009990. Email: 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

In Dubai:

Emirates Marine Environment Group (EMEG) (Tel: 043630581/Fax:043630460; Email: 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.

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
To post Facebook message triggering an after-hours SMS alert: www.facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation

Newsletter Details

Newsletter contributions to:
newsletter@chirri2000.com

Members' Items for sale

Please send small ads to:
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.)