

focus



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Vol 38 (4)



Emirates Natural History Group

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

EDITORIAL

Welcome back to *Focus*, which picks up again with the December 2014 issue after a hiatus of several months, during a period of Committee turnover & reorganization. NB: the September Editorial was distributed without a newsletter. With a new *Focus* editorial team in formation, we now expect to resume monthly publication. If you are interested in joining this team, please let us know.

Thanks to an upwelling of support, The ENHG-AD Committee has now filled almost all of its current vacancies. We welcome Richard Flemmings as our enthusiastic new Corporate Sponsor Secretary and Maggie Case in the new position of Awards and Grants Coordinator. We also welcome Yves Queromain and Athol Yates, keen new Field Trip Coordinators, Mustafa Huseen Ali, our new Book Stall Coordinator cum Librarian, and Leander Kruger, our first-ever Ride-Sharing Coordinator, who is assisting those without vehicles to attend our lecture meetings, now held regularly in the conference rooms of the Park Hyatt Resort Hotel on Sadiyat Island—our Gold Level Sponsor. And finally, we welcome Marieke Van Der Vlugt as Meeting Assistant, helping out and providing cover when needed at the membership and book tables.

This region's beautiful "winter" weather is now upon us. Our Field Trip leaders Denis and Yves have coordinated two well-enjoyed camping trips – an ambitious one to Salalah, including diving in the clear waters there – written up in this issue – and another to Liwa, including stargazing in the clear night sky conditions there. Day trips have included our introductory birding tour on AD Island (see below) and a wadi ramble in the Hatta area. Thanks to Munir for stepping in and organizing the latter. If you would also like to come forward and lead an ENHG group to a spot of particular interest, please contact Lead Field Trip Coordinator Denis.

Our Lecture Coordinator Arabella has done a great job of inviting a stellar line-up of speakers, and we have even more in store for the remainder of the season. Please note the excellent write-ups in this issue on the talks by Dr Rima Jabado on conservation of sharks and rays and by Dr Sabir Muzaffar on Socotra Cormorant research.

Finally, it is now time to call for nominations for the ENHG-AD's two natural history awards for 2014. The Mubarak bin Mohammed Prize recognizes significant research as well as publication and lecturing related to the natural history or archaeology of this region – South-Eastern Arabia. The Bish Brown Award, named after the Group's most influential founding member, J. N. Bishop Brown, recognizes significant contribution to the activities of the UAE's NHGs as well as voluntary contributions from outside our Groups to environmental education and conservation.

Nominations may be sent in to ENHG Awards and Grants Coordinator Dr. Maggie Case: pearl1@fontiernet.net. Nominations close on Jan 31 2014. The award winners will be announced during the IEW dinner programme on Feb. 20, 2015.

Keith Taylor

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Sunrise in Salalah

Photographer: Sally Koorneef

This Month's Contributors

Laura Conner, Dick Hornby, Rima Jabado, Sally Koorneef, Leander Kruger, Sabir Muzaffar, Jeanne Queromain, Yves Queromain, Claudia Steuber, Keith Taylor

ENHG Membership Information

Annual membership in the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG is 100 Dhs per individual and now 150 Dhs per family membership. See Membership Secretary or Asst. at the next meeting for a membership form. The membership year is now Sept. 1st – Aug 31st. 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*. Volumes 20 and 21 are currently available at meetings. Volume 22 is expected by the start of 2015.

Eremomidas arabicus

On 20th October 2010, in a remote area of high dunes about 25 km south-west of Sweihan, I came across a distinctive fly that I had seen once before, in the Liwa dunes, several years ago. Enquiries at that time, and advice from Brigitte Howarth, led to the information that this is a very specialised desert resident known as *Eremomidas arabicus*, of the family Mydidae.

There were two remarkable aspects of the observation. The first is that this female fly was of an exceptional size, probably about 45 mm long, and very heavy-bodied. I am confident that this is the biggest fly in the Arabian Peninsula, but can anyone prove me wrong?

There are other very large mydids in Amazon rainforest, but, in general, hot deserts are not where you expect large insects to occur. The other interesting aspect of the observation is that the female was being mated by two males at the same time! Or at least there were two males attempting to achieve this, and they were so engrossed in their business that I was able to get very close with the camera, and obtained respectable results.



Through Brigitte Howarth, I was put in touch with the world expert on Mydidae, Torsten Dikow, and he has told me that the species appears to be restricted to remote natural areas of sandy desert in Arabia, but little is known about the species because it is seen and photographed so infrequently. Other Mydidae have an annual life cycle, and, in deserts, emergence of the adults is believed to be triggered by an event such as rain, to ensure that adult males and females have the opportunity to get together. Torsten speculates that the larvae probably live deep in the sand, perhaps as much as 2 to 3 metres down, where it is always cool, and where they feed on other insect larvae. He thinks it is possible that the larvae might continue to feed for a second year, and this might account for how the females can become so big.

I doubt that there had been any rain south-west of Sweihan since about March, but someone may be able to prove me wrong. If there was no rain, I wonder what could have stimulated the simultaneous appearance of three of these specialised flies, which are believed to be very short-lived as adults. Without a trigger, mating opportunities would seem to be very infrequent events, putting the survival of the species in jeopardy.

I would be very interested to know if anyone else has seen and/or photographed this species. It would be good to know how widespread it is, whether it is confined to areas of remote mega dunes, and anything else about its life history.

Dick Hornby

Photographs by the author

7th Nov Birding Tour of Abu Dhabi

Eastern Corniche: Mangroves and Mudflats

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)
 Egyptian goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)
 Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*)
 Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*)
 Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
 Common Blackheaded Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)
 Western Reef Heron (*Egretta gularis*)
 Striated Heron (*Butorides striata*)
 Sandpiper sp. (Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*?)
 Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)



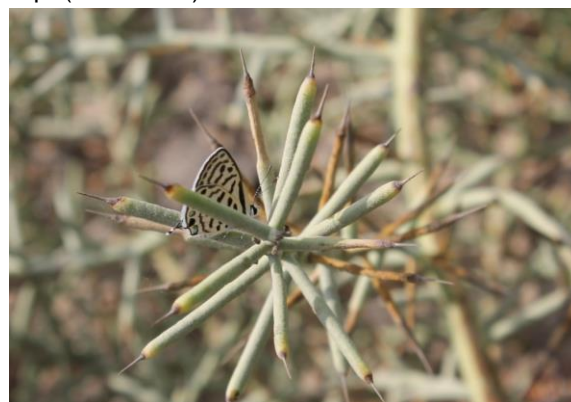
Photo: Common Blackheaded Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Eastern Corniche: Park and Palm Plantation

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
 House Crow (*Corvus splendens*)
 Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)
 Common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)
 Common pigeon (*Columba livia*)
 Graceful prinia (*Prinia gracilis*) - possible sighting
 Laughing dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*)
 Collard Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)
 Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*)
 White Eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus leucotis*)

Mushrif Palace: Park and Fringes

Grey Francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*)
 Collard Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)
 Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*)
 White Eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus leucotis*)
 Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)
 Warbler sp.
 Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)
 Dove sp. (red breast)



Mediterranean Pierrot butterfly in Mushrif Palace Park

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
 Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*)
 White Eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus leucotis*)
 House Crow (*Corvus splendens*)
 Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)

Western Corniche: Shoreline

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) or Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Greater Sandplover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)

Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*)

Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)



Greater sand plover (*Charadrius leschenaultia*)

Leander Kruger

Photographs by the author

A Wonderful Trip to Salalah



Photo: Sally Koorneef

We started our trip to Salalah from Abu Dhabi and spent the first night in Ibri, and we left at 7.00 the following morning, arriving after a very long road to our camping spot in a beach on the west of the Mugsail.

The monsoon rains were just over but it was already warm. The contrast between the 40+ temperatures of the white rocky desert and the 25 C of the coast are nevertheless always stunning.

Our first day coincided with the first day of Eid, so the Queen of Sheba's city (Khor Ruri) and the Frankincense Museum were closed, but we managed to eat at the picturesque harbor city of Mirbah, where a fish restaurant opened their doors for us! In the afternoon, we went into the Dhofar mountains just north of Khor Ruri, hoping to see some baobabs, but were unsuccessful. However, we managed to admire the Tayq sinkhole and Wadi Darbat (below).

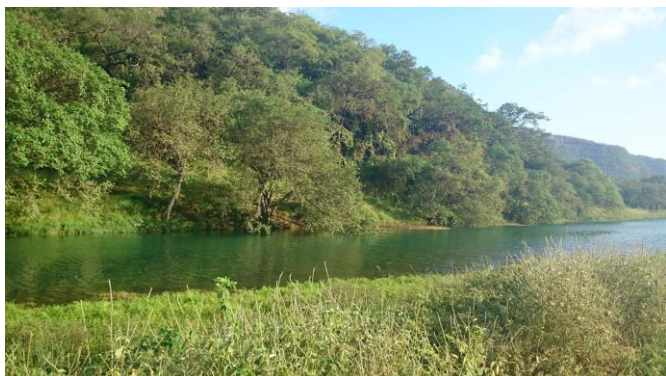


Photo: Yves Queromain

Back at the camp we saw a chameleon, *Chamaeleo arabicus*, which takes a bright green color during the monsoon season (Notice the change of color below!), an Indian roller (which did not let itself have its picture taken), small baobabs and frankincense trees. On the Mugsail beach, the cold streams loaded with plankton at the monsoon season attracted fish and therefore large pods of hunchback dolphins, which we were lucky to see once on our way to the camp.



Photo: Yves Queromain



Photo: Yves Queromain

Day Two:

We rose at 6am again to a beautiful sunrise, the sea lapping meters away from the tent and after a hearty breakfast, headed to a secluded beach close to 100kms west of our Camping site through Salalah. Once there, after a final and very bumpy 30 minute drive off road, we arrived at an idyllic beach with blue waters and went snorkeling. The waters were much cooler than Abu Dhabi, at 22-16 C currently.

We saw lots of schools of fish, moving in and around the sea plants and corals, one barracuda was spotted, two Sting rays, a very large Hamour, sea eels (not sure of their names) and many other colorful fishes. Visibility was good and the divers went further out and even saw a Crocodile fish.

The Sea was beautiful and fresh, the current strong and we had some clouds which gave us some welcome shade. In the distance was the backdrop of the mountains shrouded in dark cloud as the monsoon demonstrated its refusal to leave Salalah just yet!

Once back in Salalah we went for some local Cuisine and met up with the diving crew afterwards who were heading back to AD that evening. We made it to the local market to get some fresh Omani Banana's, coconuts and sugar cane.

We returned to our campsite, observing the sun going down, and managed to get some beach cleaning done

before the light completely disappeared. We managed to fill over six large black sacks of mostly old rope, plastic bottles and bags.

We got the children to build and light the campfire and then we chilled out in preparation for the long Journey home the following morning.

That night saw some light rain and the clouds close in around the mountains which gave us a spectacular sunrise the next morning (See cover photo).

Some wildlife observed:

We saw a couple of Huge_Golden Orb Weaver spiders in the car parks of some of our stops. They are harmless but weave huge webs and look quite scary.



Photo: Sally Koorneef

We also saw a Red-winged Starling, found in East Africa and Southern Africa.



Photo: Sally Koorneef

We had a wonderful trip to Salalah!



Photo: Sally Koorneef

Jeanne Queromain / Sally Koorneef

Lecture Review: Socotra Cormorants of Siniya Island: Past, Present, Future

[Presentation on 4th Nov, 2014 by Dr. Sabir bin Muzaffar, Dept. of Biology, The College of Science, UAEU.]



Photo: Courtesy of Sabir Muzaffar

The Socotra cormorant is an endemic bird species of the Gulf region typical for pelagic oceanic environments. These seabirds, along with gulls, auks, puffins and penguins, spend most of their lives at sea or breeding on remote islands and inaccessible cliffs where they live in dense colonies. Research still needs to be conducted to understand the special biology of the Socotra cormorant: a bird native to the extreme environment of the Arabian Gulf and the adjoining desert. For instance, how is this bird better adapted to the local conditions of the UAE than the less common Great Cormorant?

Until 2006 around 20 colonies of breeding Socotra cormorants were documented in the UAE. Since then at least 7 colonies have disappeared. The preservation of the Vulnerable* Socotra cormorant cannot be emphasized enough. (*According to the IUCN, the categorization of this species as Vulnerable means that it is in imminent danger of becoming Endangered.)

It was a pleasure for the Emirates Natural History Group to host Dr. Sabir Muzaffar and to learn the outcome of four years of research conducted on these mysterious birds on Siniya Island. The ENHG hosted a talk on cormorants three years ago by Robert Gubiani; Dr. Muzaffar's lecture gave us further insights into the special life conditions of the Socotra cormorant.

Dr. Muzaffar concentrates his research on Siniya Island in Umm al Quwain, which to date has the largest colony, with 20,00 to 35,000 breeding pairs recorded between 2013 and 2014. Other important colonies of Socotra cormorants are located on Dayyina and Gaghra Islands, but smaller Islands are also breeding sites.

Dr. Muzaffar examined the life cycle of the birds starting from breeding biology, documentation of habitats, diet, causes of mortality and the extent of movement around the Gulf using tracking devices. One of the unique characteristics of the Socotra Cormorants is the asynchronous wide breeding season from March to September. Dr. Muzaffar could document that the Socotra cormorant prefers breeding on open, sun exposed spaces. The nests of the Socotra Cormorants are simple cup-shaped nests on the ground. It is a miracle that eggs and chicks can survive the Arabian summer heat. If we were to put our bare feet in the

cormorant's nests they would burn immediately. When questioned about this, Dr. Sabir stated that no research has been conducted on how the eggshells and skin of the newly hatched chicks and can withstand the scorching summer heat, although the behavior of the parents might offer an explanation. Parents stand up and spread their wings slightly to provide shade throughout the incubation period, thereby reducing the temperature by a few degrees.

Nevertheless, the eggs of birds nesting under the shade of the invasive mesquite tree are larger than the ones in the sun-exposed sites. The cormorants usually lay a clutch of three to four eggs though three chicks is the most an adult bird can care for. 75% of the eggs actually hatch. Cannibalism is not uncommon in the colonies on Siniya Island. Dr. Muzaffar documented younger chicks being taken away by older, unrelated chicks when the parents weren't present. This coincides with the long breeding season where different aged chicks are together at the same time in one breeding colony. One might ask the question, is this a special adaption to the local environment? In some instances, eggs are also taken away. Red foxes, feral cats, discarded fishing equipment and pollution are also a threat to the birds.

In his observations of the daily cycle of the birds Dr. Muzaffar found that the cormorants leave the colonies and their young to fish in the lagoons and the Gulf between 7-10 o'clock in the morning and return between 12-3 o'clock in the afternoon. Dr. Muzaffar's work also consists of catching of the birds to fix them with expensive transmitters. The transmitters' life expectancy is between one to two years. In addition to the nine transmitters affixed last year, an additional 12 transmitters will be deployed in 2014 to record the movement of the birds around the Gulf. NB: The UAE Government did not increase funding this past year; Dr. Muzaffar clarifies that they are continuing our work with additional funding from different sources.

In contrast to what most fishermen thought in former times, there is little overlap in the diet of the birds and the catch of the fisheries. In the early part the season the Socotra's favorite food are flying fish, *Paraxocoetus mento*, which are substituted by sardines in the latter half of the season. In 2012/2013 Dr. Muzaffar could also document anchovies as an additional part the bird's diet.

Even if it is necessary to keep an eye on the number of feral cats and foxes living close to the cormorants (just 16 foxes consume 2,000 birds every season), the largest threats for the cormorants are anthropogenic. The waste from oil exploration and development, debris like plastic and nylon ropes and the bulldozing of colonies near human settlements all severely threaten the populations of cormorants. Uncontrolled island tourism, for instance people who use the Islands for weekend barbecues, may cause breeding failures among the birds and generates additional harmful debris. The combination of these threats could lead to severe population decline and even extinction.

Though reports of other cormorant colonies are not good in other locations and though regional overlapping protection of the Socotra is in need, Dr. Sabir bin Muzaffar has documented some good news on Siniya Island. As a major conservation area containing 40% of

the Socotra cormorant population in the Arabian Gulf, efforts by scientists and conservationists are showing their effectiveness. This success can be noted in the increase in the amount of estimated breeding pairs on Siniya Island. From 15,000 breeding pairs in 1995 there are now an estimated 20,000-35,000 breeding pairs on Siniya.

Nevertheless, this species needs more protection. More research needs to be completed by scientists to understand the biology of the Socotra cormorant. Dr. Muzaffar's important research will help maintain and protect this bird and others like it in the coastal areas of the Gulf region. By enforcing federal laws, cross border patrols between Oman and the UAE and good management practices, Abu Dhabi's remaining colonies will be protected from future disturbance and potential extinction. Dr. Muzaffar's research has been supported by many research and conservation grants, including the Mohammad Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, the Ministry of Environment and Water's research grant and the UAE University's NRF grant. We are looking forward to future updates on the success of this very special seabird.

Claudia Steuber / Laura Conner

Lecture Review: *The known and unknown: a closer look at Arabian elasmobranchs*

[Presentation on 14th Oct 2014 by Dr. Rima Jabado.]



Photo: Courtesy of Rima Jabado

Our encounters with sharks and rays in the UAE usually consist of what we find at fish markets and restaurants, sighting the sand tiger shark at the Dubai aquarium and reading about sightings of whale sharks reported in the paper. Many species of elasmobranchs, including hammerheads and sawfishes, once present in the region in large numbers, have been in steady decline in recent decades. Evidence of the shark's existence dates back to 420 to 450 million years before land vertebrates existed. Now 70 of the approximate total 500 known species of sharks are endangered. Worldwide, only 5 to 10 fatal shark attacks happen annually, but it is estimated that over 70 million sharks are killed annually for the fin trade.

The shark is at the top of oceanic food chains, making it an important part of marine ecosystems, and its decline will not have a positive impact on other fish populations.

When Rima Jabado moved to the UAE, she realized there was little information on elasmobranchs in the region, so she began long-term research on shark

populations of the Arabian Gulf, which became the basis for her PhD dissertation.

On October 14, Rima shared the results of her work with the ENHG. Her work has included exploring regional fish markets, interviewing fishermen at landing sites, field work to collect genetic samples and tagging, measuring, sexing and identifying shark species. She has confirmed 31 shark species in the Gulf to date, which has increased the number of known species from 26 in 2012. For example, two different species of hammerheads can be found in the Gulf, the Great Hammerhead, *Sphyrna mokarran* and the Scalloped Hammerhead, *Sphyrna lewini*. A third, the Smooth Hammerhead, *Sphyrna zygaena*, is found in Fujairah.

Her research includes other elasmobranchs such as rays, sawfish and guitarfish, species about which even less recorded data exists.

Rima differentiates and identifies the animals by looking at some morphological characteristics such as the number of fins, markings on the fins and the shape of fins and teeth. She also tests genetic differences to perfectly isolate each species' DNA.

It was immediately evident to Rima that many species were endangered due to overfishing, which coincides statistically with an 80% decline in many different populations worldwide since 1970. The evidence also indicated that the Asian fin trade has had the greatest impact. Locally, species were and still are threatened not only by overfishing (especially sharks) but also due to habitat destruction and the use of drift nets and long lines in the fishing industry.

Rima started monitoring the markets across the UAE in 2010 to assess the number, diversity and distribution of shark species caught. Additionally, Rima launched the Gulf Elasmobranch Project to assess what species are being taken from local waters and to study the sustainability of the fishing and fin trade in the Gulf. She has been supported by local fishermen and has earned respect in this male dominated industry, which is great for her future research and work to put an end to the overfishing and unsustainable use of these essential species.

Many of the sharks and rays at the landing sites and markets are small in size, which means the biggest ones have already been taken out, and females are often gravid (pregnant). This makes the situation worse because most sharks take many years to mature and give birth to a small number of pups. Actually, many sharks develop slowly in relation to other fish and often reach sexual maturity after the 10th year. The majority of the catch from the UAE tends to be small sharks such as the Spot-tail, *Carcharhinus sorrah*, or Milk Shark, of *Rhizoprionodon acutus*. But species like the Thresher Shark, *Alopias* sp., are also traded from Oman in the UAE. According to Rima, catching many females at a time could be due to migration patterns or the fact that thresher sharks aggregate by sex. The migration pattern of elasmobranchs regionally is hardly understood, so Rima is working to observe migrations of tagged sharks in the Gulf and Indian Ocean. The biological differences of elasmobranchs found in the Gulf and Indian Ocean also remains in question.

Fishing kills 26-73 million sharks per year, primarily for

the Asian fin trade, and 19% of this kill occurs around the Arabian Peninsula. The UAE is the 4th largest market for the processing and trade of elasmobranch fins, therefore making it critical for it to become influential in controlling the trade. Recently, fin sales have decreased due to the reduced size and quantity of sharks and growing negative sentiment surrounding the fin trade.

Rima's research not only confirms the severe stress on these species, but also shows that not all elasmobranch species existing in the Gulf have yet been recorded. In addition, many potential physiological adaptations to the extreme environmental characteristics in the Gulf still remain undocumented for elasmobranchs in the region. Recent research provides one example of whale sharks who spend time on the surface in the warm waters, but also frequently dive to deeper, cooler waters, presumably to be able to handle these warm waters.

A regional approach to the protection of sharks and the other elasmobranchs in breeding and feeding areas, and also due diligence when enforcing regulations regarding fishing laws are both still in need.

Going forward, Dr. Jabado will continue her quest to analyze the sustainability of elasmobranch fishing in the Gulf. Her goal is to further identify all the species in the region and to get a clear picture of what's being fished. Reference materials containing biological data need to be published to help scientists manage elasmobranchs surveys. Socioeconomic studies will be conducted to see what impact fishing bans would have in the UAE. Citizen science and the use of the Internet play a part in helping Dr. Jabado collect some data. Recently, photos of a sand tiger, *Carcharias taurus* shark in UAE waters and of whale sharks, *Rhincondon typus*, in Qatar posted on social media became legitimate proof that these species exist here and require further study. Whale shark sightings turned into a PhD study for David Robinson, who has been studying their occurrence and distribution in the region (See recent talk listing on p 10.)

Dr. Jabado's work to recognize the unique biology of the Arabian elasmobranchs and the extreme stresses they face has been monumental. While Dr. Jabado was working with the Ministry of Environment and Water, based on the results of her study, the UAE passed ministerial resolution 500 of 2014. This new law now 'prohibits the fishing of any species listed on the Convention of the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). (cf. The National, Oct. 25, 2014) The Ministry of Environment and Water enacted an additional ban on shark fishing from February 1 until the end of June that will protect juvenile and gravid females during the breeding season.

The UAE is on its way to protecting other threatened species and to ensuring more sustainable fishing practice, supported by Rima's work. The ENHG wants to thank Dr. Rima Jabado and wishes her further success in helping to preserve the Elasmobranchs of the gulf, and we will all try to support her work by sending all documented sightings of these animals to her. You can visit her website for more information at www.gulfelasmoproject.com and like her Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GulfElasmoProject.

Claudia Steuber / Laura Conner

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In the News Media

The National, Dec 18, 2013: [Sharjah's Sir Bu Nair Island added to global list of protected areas](#)

The National, March 12: [Emirati researcher wants to see harsher punishments for those who break environmental laws](#)

The National, Oct 28: [500 falconers from 80 countries swoop on Abu Dhabi](#)

The National, Nov 27: [Huge decline in Gulf fish stocks](#)

The National, Nov 30: [Celebrating nature: Sir Bani Yas Island marks 6th year - in pictures](#)

The National, Dec 3: [Al Wathba's window to the past: Sheikh Zayed Heritage Festival celebrates UAE's legacy](#)

The National, Dec 7: [RAK wildlife to be catalogued with the help of students](#)

The National, Dec 10: [Paleontologists describe a Western Region once teeming with animals](#)

Gulf News Dec 10: [7 more UAE beaches receive Blue Flag certification](#)

The National, Dec 11: [Local trees come to life in the UAE](#)

Websites of General Interest

I. Websites of regional NHGs (&HA) & members:

Emirates Natural History Group – Al Ain (Archives: newsletters of 3 NHGs, *Tribulus*): <http://www.enhg.org>
 ENHG-AA forum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ENHG>
 Dubai Natural History Group: <http://dnhg.org>
 Qatar Natural History Group: <http://www.qnhg.org>
 Historical Association of Oman: <http://www.hao.org.om/>
 Hanne & Jens Eriksen's website: www.BirdsOman.com
 Roy Richards's mountain website: www.chirri2000.com

II. Websites of UAE-based affiliated organisations:

Tommy Pedersen's UAE Birding / UAE Nature Forum: <http://www.uaebirding.com>
 Emirates Soc. of Geoscience: <http://www.esg-uae.org>
 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>
 [EAD Online Library: <http://library.ead.ae>]
 Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority <http://www.adach.ae/en/> (Still using ADACH website)
 Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund: <http://www.mbzspeciesconservation.org/>
 Al Mahara Diving Center: <http://www.divemahara.com/>
 Noukhada Adventure Co.: <http://noukhada.ae>
 Dubai Astronomy Group: <http://www.dubaiastronomy.com>
 Sharjah Museums: <http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae>
 Abu Dhabi Green Drinks: <http://www.greendrinks.org/Abu%20Dhabi>

III. UAE-based & regional informational websites:

Environmental Atlas of Abu Dhabi Emirate: <http://www.environmentalatlas.ae>
 An outline of Systematic Conservation Planning <http://dev.grida.no/rob/Hyder/index.html#1/> [by AGEDI]
 UAE archaeology website: <http://www.adias-uae.com>
 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>
 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>

Websites of General Interest, Cont'd.

IV. International informational websites:

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/>]
 EDGE: Evolutionarily Distinct & Globally Endangered: <http://www.edgeofexistence.org>
 Protected Planet: IUCN & UNEP-WCMC database: <http://www.protectedplanet.net>
 Project Noah: www.projectnoah.org "digital butterfly net"
 Cheetah Conservation Fund: <http://www.cheetah.org>
 [Bushblok: <http://www.bushblok.com>]
 Fish base: <http://www.fishbase.org>

ITEMS ON SALE

AT THE ENHG BOOK STALL

All prices are in dirhams.

- Jebel Hafit – A Natural History, 100
An attractive, encyclopaedic presentation of the natural resources of this national landmark. (Free copies available for schools donations.)
- Focus on Fujairah: Through Minie's lens 1964-2001, 150
- Abu Dhabi 8 Million Years Ago, 15
- Native Plants of Oman, 80
- Wild about mammals, 40
- Falconry, 225
- Turtle Secrets, 75
- Snorkeling and Diving, 75
- Wilfred Thesiger, 185
- The UAE: Formative Years, 175
- Faces of the Emirates, 200
- Guinness Book of Records 2014, 75
- Various maps, guides & atlases from the region
- Tribulus, our annual Journal - see for details

On order:

- Birds of the UAE - A guide to common and important species
- Birds of the UAE - Helm field guide
- Wildflowers of the UAE

NB: This list shows some new titles and some old favourites, but not all may be in stock. Visit the book table at meetings and watch for an update in Jan Focus.

Enquiries: Contact Book Stall Coordinator Moustafa:
 Mobile: 050-761-7214 / Email: mhuseen@gmail.com

Committee Members

Keith Taylor
(Chairman & Outgoing *Focus* Editor)
Mobile: 050-820-4938
kjtaylor13@yahoo.com

Denis Cheng
Deputy Chairman & Lead Field Trip Coordinator
Mobile: 055-776-8785
spacemandc@gmail.com

Ian Townson
(Secretary)
Mobile: 050-111-4598
ian_townson@hotmail.com

Derek Gliddon
(Treasurer)
Mobile: 050-643-7263
derekgiddon@hotmail.com

Elaine Mazarello é Kemuel
(Membership Secretary & Public Relations Coordinator)
Mobile: 050-310-1385
elainemaz@yahoo.com

Arabella Willing
(Lecture Coordinator)
Mobile: 056-621-9891
arabella.willing@hyatt.com

Richard Flemmings (Corporate Sponsorship Coordinator)
Mobile: 056 309 0577
richflemmings@gmail.com

Yves Queromain
(Field Trip Coordinator)
050-312-6566
queromain@gmail.com

Athol Yates
(Field Trip Coordinator)
056-307-6754
athol.yates@kustar.ae

Peter Hellyer
(Editor of *Tribulus*)
Mobile: 050-642-4357
hellyer@emirates.net.ae

Nessrine Zahlawi
(Online Outreach Coordinator)
Mobile: 050-661-9342
ness.zahlawi@gmail.com

Maggie Case
(Grants & Awards Coordinator)
Mobile: 056-101-9571
pearl1@fontiernet.net

Moustafa Huseen Ali
(Book Stall Coordinator & Librarian)
Mobile: 050-761-7214
mhuseen@gmail.com

Leander Kruger
(Ride-sharing Coordinator)
Mobile: 050-323-3080
leander.kruger@gmail.com

Dick Hornby
(Member)
Mobile: 050-662-4501
dnahornby@yahoo.co.uk

Lectures

Regular meeting venue provided by Park Hyatt Resort Hotel – Abu Dhabi

Nov 24th
[One-off joint lecture with AD Sub Aqua Club at The Club, in AD]
The Ecology of Whale Sharks in the Arabian Gulf & Gulf of Oman
David Robinson

Dec 16th **7:30 PM**
Drinks from 7:00 PM
[Park Hyatt venue: Al Yazia Ballroom]
UAE Natural History Christmas Quiz
Dick Hornby

Jan 6th **7:30 PM**
Hydroponic Farming
Rudi Azzato

Jan 20th **7:30 PM**
1) Annual General Mtg.
2) Lecture TBA
Speaker TBA

Field Trips

Dec 2nd
Zayed Heritage Festival
Athol Yates

Dec 5th
Hatta Area Wadi Walk
Munir El Kadi

Jan 2015 field trips
TBA-Check your Inbox!

Committee Adjuncts

Michael Creamer
(General Handyman)
Mobile: 050-821-5204
michaelacreamer@hotmail.com

Marieke van der Vlugt
(Meeting Assistant)
Marieke.vd.vlugt@gmail.com

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 Grants Coordinator Dr Maggie Case at pearl1@fontiernet.net

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
- Two satellite phones, taken on camping trips. Phone numbers: No. 1: 00882 1644400956
No. 2: 00882 1644400965

Enquiries: Ian Townson, ian_townson@hotmail.com.

- Celestron NexStar telescope (on field trips only)
 - Sky Scout astronomical object locator/identifier
- Enquiries: Denis Cheng, spacemandc@gmail.com.

Emergency Response Contacts

In Abu Dhabi:

Environment Authority of Abu Dhabi (EAD) Customer Service: 800555 (24 hours) / customerservice@ead.ae for any enquiries, complaints incident reports or emergencies related to the environment in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

In Dubai:

Emirates Marine Environment Group (EMEG) (Tel: 04 363 0581/Fax: 04 363 0460; Email: info@emeg.ae)

Dubai Municipality: Main number: 800900. Marine Environment & Sanctuaries Unit (Tel: 04 606 6818, Fax 04 703 3532), Email: marabdulla@dm.gov.ae.

Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Centre at the Burj al Arab Aquarium. Tel: 04 301 7198. 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

ENHG-AD Facebook Page / AUHENHG YahooGroup site

ENHG-AD Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ENHGAD> <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG>
(Click Join button to sign up for ENHG info.)

ENHG-AD Postal Address/ Newsletter Index

ENHG c/o Environment Agency, AD PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi
Searchable index of *focus* issues 92007-2014: <http://www.enha.org> (Abu Dhabi/ Index to *focus*)