

focus



Abu Dhabi, January-February 2015
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Emirates Natural History Group

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

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the January-February 2015 bumper issue of *Focus*, introducing new *Focus* Editor, Furat Al Samaraie. This issue features write-ups of two well-appreciated ENHG lectures in recent months – Sheikh Dr Majid Al Qasimi's excellent insider's overview of the veterinary profession in the UAE, and Rudy Azzato's informative introduction to the hydroponics farming business here, complete with take-home samples. These write-ups are by *Focus* reporters Claudia Steuber and Laura Conner, who are helping make the continuation of our newsletter possible this season. Well done to both!

Future issues will feature write-ups of other well-appreciated presentations, including Dr Ana Salbany's on the care and study of dolphins in captivity in Dubai and doctoral candidate Mohammad Farhadinia's on the conservation of the Persian Leopard in Iran. Also to be included are write-ups of the February camping trip to the low-dunes Two Trees site and this month's ENHG birding tour by special arrangement to EAD's Al Wathba Reserve, which is now newly opened to the public 8am to 2pm Thursdays & Saturdays, with free guidebooks. For more info: <http://www.ead.ae/al-wathba-wetland-2>.

Prior to the lecture meeting on Feb 17th, the ENHG-AD held the long-deferred Annual General Meeting with a review of 2013 up to June 2014, bringing us up to date with the current membership year. The Treasurer's and Chairman's reports for that AGM will soon be sent round to the ENHG-AD membership, along with the draft of our updated Constitution, which is pending approval by the membership at an upcoming meeting--TBA.

Inter-Emirates Weekend 2015 was held in Ras Al Khaimah on Feb 19-21, hosted by the DNHG, attended by members of all four of this country's NHGs, and featuring trips to many spots of great mutual interest in the northern Emirates, write-ups about which are expected in upcoming newsletter issues. See the write-up below for details of the IEW dinner programme.

In ENHG-AD Committee news, Leander Kruger has relocated to Dubai to start a new job there, so he has sadly stepped down from our Committee. We thank him for his efforts at helping members without vehicles get rides to our meetings at the Park Hyatt on Saadiyat, and we welcome anyone else who would be interested in assuming this role.

Finally, some of you may recall the community outreach meeting in 2012, organized with ENHG-AD by the PR firm M&N Place at which our input was invited to the development of Mushrif Central Park. Recently two of us went along on a site visit to MCP and found it has a lot to offer, from attractive landscaping to meeting spaces, to a petting zoo. We have now learned that the park will have its Community Day grand opening this Friday, 20th March, from 12 noon to 4pm, with an entertainment programme, followed by the opening of a weekly Ripe Food & Craft Market on Saturday, 21st March, from 4pm to 9 pm. For more info on the MCP, see news link on p8/ http://mushrifcentralpark.ae/mushrif_en/index.php/visitor-information.

Keith Taylor

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Black-headed Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail subspecies, classic early March migrant to UAE, taken at Sila

Photographer: Oscar Campbell

This Month's Contributors

Cheryl Bray, John Burt, Andrew Childs, Laura Conner, Oscar Campbell, Tamsin Carlisle, Valerie Chalmers, Robert Cook, DNHG, Sally Koorneef, Pradeep Radhakrishna, 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*. Volume 22 is now available at meetings. See review on p. 7.

IEW 2015 Gala Buffet Dinner

The Gala Dinner was held in the restaurant of the Golden Tulip Khatt Springs Hotel in Ras Al Khaimah. A highlight of the evening was an illustrated talk entitled 'The British Attacks of 1809 and 1819: A brief History and what remains today' given by Christian Velde, Resident Archaeologist at the Department of Antiquities in RAK.

Christian's talk was followed by the presentation of the Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohamed Award for Natural History and the Bish Brown Award.

The Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohamed Award for Natural History, which is the country's premier natural history

award, is intended to acknowledge the contributions made by an individual, primarily through original research and publication, to the scientific study of the archaeology, history and natural history of the UAE. Dr Richard Hornby was the recipient of this award for 2014, principally in recognition of his considerable contributions to the knowledge of the UAE's fauna and flora for over twenty years, first through his work as managing director of the National Avian Research Centre, then as an adviser to the Federal Environment Agency and now through the environmental consultancy, Nautica Environmental Associates, of which he is a co-founder. Additionally, through his consultancy work through Nautica for the EAD, for oil companies and for other bodies, he has done much to raise the level of scientific recording and analysis in this important aspect of the overall environment and natural history scene here. At the same time he has engaged in his own independent research and publication through many contributions to *Tribulus*, and his service as editor of and leading contributor to the ADCO study formed the basis of the Jebel Hafit book published by the ENHG. He has also advised many others, both professional and amateur naturalists who are active in their field, through mentoring in the preparation of their own papers, through collecting samples for identification by external specialists and in many other ways.



Dr. Richard Hornby, Sheikh Mubarak Prize winner

The presentation of 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 four 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 for 2014 was made to Sonja Lavrencic, DNHG Field Trip Coordinator, in recognition of her sustained exploration and active sharing of places and phenomena of varied natural history interest; her revitalization of the Dubai Natural History Group's field trip program, with the inclusion of several trips to regional destinations; her encouragement of mutually beneficial interaction between the DNHG and the ENHG-AI Ain as well as two other groups with shared

interests – the Emirates Architectural Heritage Group and the Dubai Astronomy Group – and her services in general as a respected ambassador of the shared goals of all of the UAE's natural history groups, welcoming many residents of this region to the sophisticated enjoyment of the world around us.



Sonja Lavrencic, Bish Brown Award winner

(Two above photographs by Pradeep Radhakrishna)

Following these presentations, a special token of thanks was given to DNHG Vice Chair Valerie Chalmers by representatives of all four NHGs, in recognition of her tireless service to the DNHG for over two decades—most especially for doing the lion's share of organizing now six successful IEWs including this one.

It was also announced that next year's IEW will be hosted by the still fledgling ENHG-Fujairah on their home turf, and Acting Chairman David Edwards gave an attractive run-down of the great variety of field trip options that we can look forward to at that event.

Finally, the winners of the Inter-Emirates Weekend Photographic Competition were then announced and were as follows:

Plants:

Winner: Tamsin Carlisle with "Rimth – Empty Quarter, Dhohar"

Runner-up: Martina Fella with "Close-up of *Tephrosia apollinea* – "dhafra".

Animals:

Winner: Robert Cook with "Plain White Tigers at Dusk".

Runner-up: Brigitte Howarth with "Smile! *Pristurus carteri*".

Geology/Landscape:

Winner: Cheryl Bray with "Solitary Walk".

Runner-up: Angela Manthorpe with "Rawdah Bowl, Musandam Jan 2015".

Architecture/Archaeology:

Winner: Andrew Childs with "Watch Tower in Southern Oman".

Runner-up: Peter Olliff with "Wadi House".

Culture:

Winner: Sally Koornneef with "Resting in Fujairah".

Runner-up: Michelle Sinclair with "RAK Scarecrow".

Adventure HQ and Explorer kindly sponsored the Photographic Competition. Each of the winners was presented with a Dh100/- voucher from Adventure HQ and a large book from Explorer. The five runners-up each received an Explorer calendar.

Here are the winning photos:



Rimth, by Tamsin Carlisle



Tiger Butterflies at Dusk, by Robert Cook



Solitary Walk - Cheryl Bray



Watch Tower in Southern Oman, by Andrew Childs



Resting in Fujairah, by Sally Koorneef

Keith Taylor / Valerie Chalmers

ENHG Birdwatching Boat Trip on the Musaffah Channel

On Saturday 14th February eleven members of the ENHG – Abu Dhabi branch were lucky enough to join Captain Maarten on a boat trip to explore the islands and channels lying west of the main island of Abu Dhabi. Departure was prompt at 0800 from the jetty and, once Maarten had shown us his favorite **Little Green Bee-eaters**, perched on wires on the edge of a small island across from the Intercontinental Hotel beach, we turned away from the skyscrapers and traffic noise and headed further out to a number of small, sandy islands that have been constructed in recent years offshore from Futaisi Island. Just being out on the boat was pleasure enough; the early morning air was fresh, the water still and the rising sun lacked any serious heat. Better still, we were soon amongst plenty of birds, with **Saunders's** and **Lesser Crested Terns** appearing around the boat and our first waders, Arctic-breeding **Turnstones** and locally breeding **Kentish Plovers** rubbing shoulders on the shoreline. One island had recently been planted with young mangroves and it was here, along with more waders that we found the first of what was to become the bird of the trip (at least for me): a whole flock **Great Black-headed Gulls** loafing on the central ridge of the island. This 'king of gulls' is somewhat of an Arabian specialty, breeding on islands in remote central Asian

and Tibetan lakes and spending the winter on Arabian coastlines, albeit quite often some way offshore. Not only is this one of the biggest gulls in the world, but also one of the best looking – at least in breeding plumage, as was case for the vast majority of the birds we saw.

We had almost 50 in this first flock, which seemed quite remarkable at the time – in almost nine years of Abu Dhabi birding I have never surpassed 30 in one place at one time before, and less than ten is far more likely. We were probably fortunate in that we had just about hit peak time for this dramatic gull, as it leaves Arabian waters from early March onwards and our luck just kept coming – heading inshore towards Mussafah we soon picked up other small groups scattered with **Great Cormorants** and waders on sandbars, including another 32 together. The final score was an amazing 105. There are just a handful of higher counts than this for the species in the UAE Bird Database although, interestingly, they include 184 way back in January 1994 from Futaisi Island. So our tally was not without historical precedent.

As it turned out, it was to be a day of high scores. Although the high tide along the Mussafah channel kept many of the smaller waders roosting and away from the shore, we did have some amazing views of hundreds of **Dunlins** in wispy flocks wheeling over the mudflats and hundreds of **Eurasian Oystercatchers** doing likewise, although with rather less finesse. Some of the latter settled out of view but we managed to count 300 when settled; again there are very few records in the database that surpass this. **Grey Herons**, **Great Cormorants** and, of course, **Greater Flamingoes** were also present in big numbers – we reckoned over 5000 of the latter in dense flocks. Hopping ashore on a causeway near where the flamingoes nested in enormous numbers some years ago, we were able to set up the telescopes to survey the scene – sky and shorebirds everywhere, an **Osprey** lazily flying up ahead of us to soon settle again, a passing **Great Spotted Eagle** being buzzed by a **Marsh Harrier** and striking yellow spikes of the parasitic **Desert Hyacinth**; it was hard to believe that the bustle of downtown Abu Dhabi was only 45 minutes away. En-route between Futaisi and Mussafah, Marten had stopped to show the skeleton of a large baleen whale, now mounted near the jetty of a private island. This was almost the only cetacean we saw for just a single **Humpbacked Dolphin** showed up for just a quick view, about the only poor showing on a great morning out.

Many thanks indeed to Maarten for another great trip, and to First Mate Dick Hornby for co-coordinating the crew.

A bird list, with approximate counts, is given below:

Large White-headed Gull 200	
Black-headed Gull 500	Pallas Gull 105
Slender-billed Gull 750	Turnstone 50
Bar-tailed Godwit 200	Terek Sandpiper 8
Eurasian Curlew 120	Whimbrel 6
Gull-billed Tern 25	Caspian Tern 8
Common Greenshank 1	Common Redshank 1
Lesser Crested Tern 75	Dunlin 500

Saunders's Tern 100	Little Stint 6
Socotra Cormorant 2	Grey Plover 15
Great Cormorant 250	Red-wattled Lapwing 2
Grey Heron 50	Kentish Plover 20
Western Reef Egret 75	Marsh Harrier 1
Eurasian Spoonbill 10	Great Spotted Eagle 1
Greater Flamingo 5000	Teal 5
Black-winged Stilt 1	Desert Wheatear 2
Eurasian Oystercatcher 300	Little Green Bee Eater 3

Oscar Campbell

Lecture Review: A Veterinary Perspective of the UAE and the Challenges of Hyper Development in the Arab World

[Presentation on 18th Nov, 2014 by Sheikh Dr. Majid Sutan Al Qassimi, Head of Terrestrial Division, EAD]

Sheikh Dr. Majid Sultan Al Qassimi's talk for the Natural history group on the 18th of November 2015 was quite special for all of us. Dr. Majid explained that he is one of just five Emirati veterinarians in the UAE. Many long-time, animal-loving members of ENHG have never had the opportunity to meet an Emirati vet. His talk was an enthusiastic mixture of the documentation of his work and discussion with the attending members of the group.

Dr. Majid, who is related to the royal family of Sharjah, studied veterinary medicine at Saint Istvan University in Budapest. He is currently the director of the Terrestrial Biodiversity department of the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi.

Dr. Majid emphasized that he has worked diligently to learn as much as he could and had no problem getting his hands dirty. At the beginning of his talk, Dr. Majid showed a photo of himself with a young street cat, so there is no question that both pedigree and common pets are equally valuable to him.

His interest in wild animals helped him become a vet at Al Ain Zoo. He described some of his experiences at the zoo, like the struggle to save a giraffe foal infected with e.coli, and a monkey whose teeth were so decayed that they all had to be extracted. Giraffes and rhinos, which Dr. Majid described as behaving like big dogs, are some of his favorite animals.

Dr. Majid is not afraid to face the darker side of veterinarian medicine and his career includes work in an abattoir. He emphasized his respect for every veterinarian who works to address public health concerns by conducting tests on livestock and cadavers at the abattoirs.

A general problem in the UAE is the passion people have for exotic animals that often find their way illegally into the country. As a veterinarian, Dr. Majid is passionate about the need for providing species-appropriate accommodation to exotic animals in captivity. He often helps people by explaining the responsibilities and effort involved in keeping wild animals as pets. He emphasizes that the legally-

imported exotic carnivores owned by the UAE's ruling families have good living conditions and are kept in spacious private zoos with specially-trained staff in attendance.

Dr. Majid is vocal about the practice of keeping wild animals as pets. Not only is the practice illegal but it can be dangerous too. The animals offered on the black market often carry diseases that can affect humans. Primates, who are genetically close to humans, can harbor harmful diseases such as tuberculosis. Many of the illegally imported big cat cubs die before they are mature and they become more dangerous to humans as they grow.

Along with 179 other nations, the UAE is a signatory to the CITES convention and Dr. Majid and the UAE will continue to support the protection of wildlife and to improve the situation within the Emirates.

With his job as Director of Terrestrial Biodiversity with the Environment Agency in Abu Dhabi since 2012, Dr. Majid has had a chance to work on the conservation of the UAE environment. His goals include the reintroduction of different species of gazelles like the Reem or Sand Gazelle (*Gazella subguttorsa maricia*) Arabian Mountain Gazelle (*Gazella gazelle cora*), and the Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*) that are born and raised in captivity with the goal of reintroducing them into natural preservation areas. He also mentioned the challenges of keeping so many animals in captivity, specifically with regard to herd health.

As head of terrestrial biodiversity control in the Emirates, Dr. Majid is facing a large amount of future work. In addition, he is lobbying for more professionals to join the newly formed UAE veterinary association which will encourage communication and the use of common standards in veterinary practices.

There is no question that Dr. Majid wants to make a difference and take his country forward in thinking about and protecting the local environment and wildlife. His presentation was full of enthusiasm for animals, nature and wildlife.

Dr. Majid thanked the Natural History Group for all their observations of nature and we look forward to hearing about his successes in the future.

Claudia Steuber / Laura Conner

Lecture Review: Hydroponics in the UAE

[Presentation on 6th January, 2015, by Rudi Azzato]

The word *hydroponic* comes from the Latin and literally means 'working water'. So, quite simply, hydroponics means cultivating plants with water and without soil. Rudi Azzato, a seasoned hydroponics horticulturalist from the Emirates Hydroponics Farms (EHF) in Al Bahia, recently shared the joys and sorrows of growing food crops with water in a desert climate with the ENHG.

With over 15 years of experience in the hydroponics industry, Mr. Azzato is not a newcomer to the field.

Though hydroponic growing systems have been used extensively in Europe for many years, it is relatively new to the Emirates with the first facility established in Abu Dhabi 20 years ago. EHF was first called City Farm when Rudi came to the UAE in 2006. The farm was renamed in 2008 and has suffered teething pains since its inception. But, like most things, with education, good infrastructure and sound ethical practices, the Emirates Hydroponics Farms is now a 20,000m² facility growing two-dozen varieties of herbs and leaf crops year round in the desert.

The majority of the farm is made up of plastic 6m high hoop houses and open spaces (used in winter only). The tall greenhouses allow for more vertical space to be utilized. Mr. Azzato explained that they are in the planning stage of installing a large glass house. Glass greenhouses are extremely expensive and must be installed with extra equipment to cool the plants in summer and warm them in winter. They are quite an investment.

Rudi explained the basic process for growing leaf crops and herbs in his facility. Non-genetically modified pelletized seeds are imported from Europe and seedlings are started in a cube of rock wool substrate. Each seed is coated with a mixture of clay and fertilizer that will hasten the germination process. The rock wool cubes are placed in a food grade PVC trough and 'bathed' in a solution of water and nutrients. Food grade PVC plastic tubing is free of lead and other toxic components that might be absorbed by the plants. The nutrient mix is differentiated for the needs of each plant and flows freely around the plants roots as it matures.

Lettuce seedlings are divided after 18 days then spend another 32 days in larger troughs before they are harvested. The troughs are vertically placed, creating 60% more growing area than traditional 'field' methods. EHF can grow 18 crops (seed to harvestable plant) of Boston lettuce over 12 months. Herbs are slightly different as they are transferred to pots filled with 92-98% organic peat from Germany. As a whole, the Emirates Hydroponics Farms produces approximately 2 million herbs and lettuces a year!

Clean water, a scarce and valuable resource here in Abu Dhabi, is one of the main components to hydroponics. One of the many positive features of the system is that the water is not only cleaned in a reverse osmosis system but also chilled to the appropriate temperature for plant growth, especially in summer. The remaining water is recycled and reused later. Growing tomatoes hydroponically can save 60% of the total water used and lettuces can save a whopping 90% compared to conventional practices (using soil). The Emirates Hydroponics Farms actively engages in researching and developing new and more efficient ways to maximize space, conserve resources and grow high quality food crops.

If you grow food crops, you will inevitably have to deal with pests. EHF occasionally uses organic pesticides, such as neem oil to combat aphids. Emirates Hydroponics Farms follows strict withholding periods before crops can be harvested. In some cases,

companion planting can deter insects, such as planting strong scented basil amidst tomatoes to prevent aphids. Starting in 2010, samples of all crops are sent to the Abu Dhabi Health Authority for e coli, bacterial and pesticide testing. The farm is proud of its sound record and exemplary test results.

Along with its economic successes, the Emirates Hydroponics Farm is now a role model for the government to show local, traditional farmers how they can switch from one growing method to another. Since 60-90% of fresh produce is imported into the UAE, the hydroponic method of growing fresh vegetables, lettuces and herbs is a sustainable and important method of farming. With little competition in the market, Emirati farmers are beginning to see the positive aspects of hydroponics.

Rudi emphasized the importance of educating people about farming and hydroponics. With guidance, grant money and appropriate education, local farmers are beginning to explore sustainable hydroponics. More follow up and support of farmers is crucial to making the transfer from traditional methods to modern methods successful. Education is not limited to adults; educators and children are encouraged to travel to the farm to learn about where delicious produce comes from. The Emirates Natural History Group is looking forward to the visit soon.

For further information on the farm, or to place an online order, visit www.emiratesfarms.com. The farm is conveniently located between Abu Dhabi and Dubai in Al Bahia.

Claudia Steuber / Laura Conner

The Leaning Acacia Trees

Have you ever wondered why Acacia trees in the UAE and northern Oman are oddly tilted? Well, one of my undergraduate students, Zach Ross, went out and explored this last year. The answer is not the wind (as most people think), nor the latitude. In fact, these plants are "aiming" their canopies at the midday summer sun.



Photo: John Burt

This is quite surprising, since this maximizes their leaf exposure at the hottest time of day during the hottest time of year (which is usually damaging in plants). But what this does is that it shades the soil around the base of the plants. This keeps the soil in that area significantly cooler, decreasing evaporation of the scarce water around the taproot system. The Acacia tree has a

taproot system which is not very common. The canopy effectively shades the area of soil above the roots of the tree, which are concentrated in a narrow deep cone. Other trees have a relatively wider and shallower fibrous root system which has little chance of reaching water in arid conditions. In addition, the fibrous root system radiates outwards from the base and is therefore mostly under soil not shaded by the tree itself.

You can find a copy of the PDF article [here](#), and the HTML (online) version [here](#) in the *Journal of Arid Environments*.

Dr. John Burt, NYUAD

Tribulus vol. 22



Tribulus vol. 22 was published at year-end 2014 and is now available FOC to paid-up ENHG-AD members at lectures. Volume 22 presents, as usual, a diverse array of original research about UAE natural history, including:

- the first published reports of tarantulas in the UAE.
- an account of a high elevation biodiversity hotspot and refuge in the Hajar Mountains.
- reports of two butterflies newly recorded in the UAE.
- reports on the behaviour and ecology of several other insect species.
- a record of Holocene climatic change (10,000 BC to present) based on studies at Mleiha.
- new flora records for Abu Dhabi and the UAE.
- an account of a most unusual seashell – the 'furbelowed watering pot'.
- a report on ancient Arabic inscriptions on rocks in the Hajar Mountains.

DNHG - from The Gazelle, vol. 30 no. 1

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These companies are supporting ENHG activities in the region, making possible our Research & Conservation grants and the publication of our annual journal, *Tribulus*. 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.



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In the News Media

The National, Jan 28: [Hamad Al-Reisi and the Houbara](#)

The National, Feb 8: [Insect discoveries create a buzz](#)
(Seven new insect discoveries in Wadi Wurraya)

Gulf News, Feb 21: [Dubai Safari will replace the existing small zoo](#)

The National, March 2: [Sharjah Breeding Centre and the Arabian Leopard](#)

Khaleej Times, March 4: [Dubai Rainforest gets eco alarm bells ringing](#)

The National, March 7: [The UAE's own Tarantula](#)

The National, March 9: [Much awaited Mushrif Central Park to open next Friday](#)

The National, March 12: [The Tahr springs back to life](#)

The National, March 12: [Houbara rehomed in Sir Bani Yas](#)

Gulf News, March 14: [Darshan's eagle-eye view sets world record](#)

The National, March 15: [Rare Omani Owl spotted in Abu Dhabi](#)

The National, March 16: [FAO recognition for Al Ain and Liwa as Agricultural Heritage sites](#)

Gulf News, March 16: [African safari project in Al Ain](#)

The National, March 18: [Masdar solar power plant celebrates second anniversary](#)

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.environmentalatlus.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>

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 Endangered Wildlife Yemen:
<https://www.facebook.com/yemenileopard>

British Foundation for the Study of Arabia:
<https://www.thebfsa.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>

Iranian Cheetah Society: <http://www.cheetahsalive.org>

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
- 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
- Reptiles & Amphibians of Oman & the UAE, by Dr. Drew Gardner; available April 7th, price TBC

Still 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; watch for an update in next *Focus*.

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Lectures

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

Jan 6th
Hydroponic Farming in
the UAE
Rudy Azzato

Jan 27th
Report on 14th Gulf
Astronomy Conference
Denis Cheng

Feb 3rd
Prehistoric
Archaeology of AD's
Coasts & Islands
Mark Beech

Feb 17th
1) Annual General Mtg
2) Husbandry of Pacific
Bottlenose Dolphins
Ana Salbany

Field Trips

Feb 13th/14th
Camping Trip to "Two
Trees"
Keith Taylor

Feb 14th
Musaffah Channel
Birdwatching Boat Trip
**Ian Townson/
Capt. Maarten**

Feb. 19th/20th/21st
Inter-Emirates
Weekend 2015 in RAK
Host: DNHG

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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 & mats, two old '5-man' tents, camping stove & pots, misc.
- Birding telescope
- GPS unit – GARMIN GPSMAP 60CSx
Enquiries: Keith Taylor: kjtaylor13@yahoo.com
Liz Sowinska: lizchirri@gmail.com
- First-Aid Kit
- Two satellite phones
Enquiries: Yves Queromain: queromain@gmail.com
- Celestron NexStar telescope (on field trips only)
- Sky Scout astronomical object locator/identifier
Enquiries: Denis Cheng: spacemandc@gmail.com

Emergency Response Contact Info.

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

Facebook Page

ENHG-AD public Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/ENHGAD

YahooGroup web forum

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

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