

## Obituary

### Professor Ronald Phillips

Professor Doctor Ronald Phillips died in November 2005, after returning from Florida to his family in the Ukraine. Many *Tribulus* readers will know and fondly remember him, either as a highly professional researcher, or as an extremely friendly and charming companion, or both.

Ronald was a seagrass specialist with many years of experience throughout the world and more recently experience in the Arabian region, in particular the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. He was undoubtedly the father of seagrass research and published over 70 papers and five books on the subject during his long career.

He was one of the pioneers of seagrass conservation, being active back in the 1960s and 1970s, and assisted substantially in spreading awareness of the values of these habitats to marine and coastal users.

In 1997 he fulfilled a lifelong dream to study seagrass in the southern Arabian Gulf when he was invited to assist the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, EAD, (formerly ERWDA) to undertake seagrass research in Abu Dhabi Emirate.

Ronald continued his efforts in Abu Dhabi with the Emirates Heritage Club throughout the late 1990s and into this century, and was one of the first researchers to collect extensive baseline data on the rich seagrass resources of Abu Dhabi.

Ronald was also invited on several occasions to work with the regional UNESCO office on important publications on seagrass research methods. In 2002 he was one of the most eminent of the keynote lecturers in Qatar at the QUEST 2002 conference. In 2003 he assisted UNESCO and the Kingdom of Bahrain with their plans to establish a World Heritage Site covering the Hawar archipelago, based on the presence of some of the world's most productive seagrass beds, which support entire Gulf food chains, including dugongs and numerous other marine species.

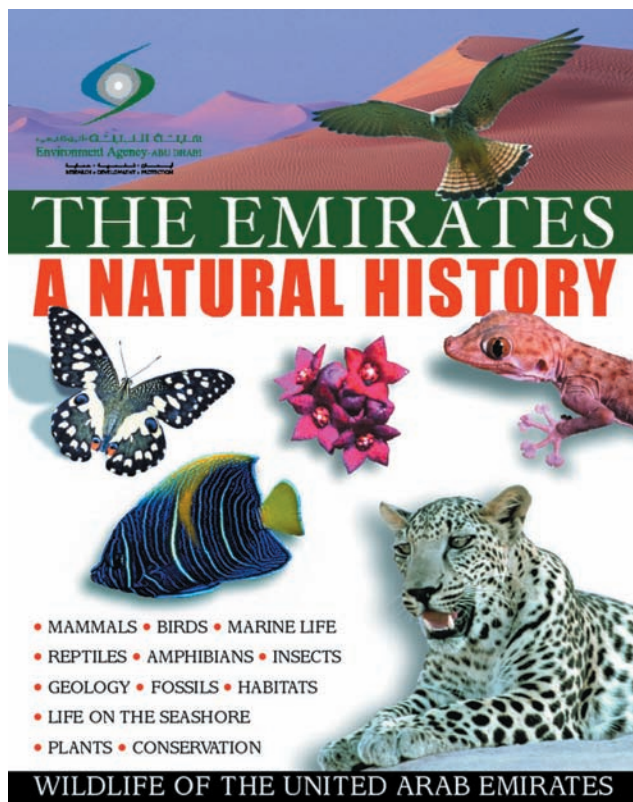
During his frequent research trips throughout the marine and coastal areas in the Gulf, Ronald collected extensive field data and also trained local Emirati postgraduate students on the techniques to monitor seagrass, and on its ecological values and general environmental importance. In 2002 and 2005 Ronald published his survey results with Abu Dhabi-based researchers and students, as part of the Emirates Heritage Club's Abu Dhabi Marine Atlas programme.

Ronald was liked by all people he came in contact with, regardless of age, cultural, or ethnic differences, and he will be sadly missed by his family, colleagues, friends and students, particularly those of us here in Abu Dhabi.

We are thankful for the time Professor Phillips spent with us, and for the knowledge he shared with us. We will not forget him, or the tremendous importance of his pioneering work. Professor Phillips was an inspiration to us all, and, in his memory, we continue to work towards the conservation of seagrass resources in the Gulf region.

**Ronald Loughland**  
**Emirates Heritage Club,**  
**Abu Dhabi, UAE**

**Benno Boer**  
**Ecological Sciences Advisor -**  
**UNESCO Arab Region.**  
**UNESCO Regional Office in the**  
**Arab States of the Gulf.**  
**Doha, Qatar**



## Reviews and Publications

**The Emirates - A Natural History. Edited by Peter Hellyer and Simon Aspinall. Trident Press Ltd. (2005). Published with the support of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, EAD, Mubadala, First Gulf Bank, Dolphin Energy, Aldar Properties, Total & Shell. Trident Press Ltd. (2005). ISBN 1-905486-02-02**

At first glance, the names of contributing authors of *The Emirates - A Natural History*, (published by Trident Press in November 2005) reads like a short list of some of the most prominent contemporary Arabian naturalists, all of whom are professionally known to the two editors, Peter Hellyer and Simon Aspinall. This is a strong editorial duo, both of whom have considerable relevant experience in the UAE, one as expert professional naturalist and the other as naturalist, writer, archaeologist and journalist of some standing.

This massive undertaking comes as the ambitious sequel to the previous "Natural Emirates", published in 1996, which was in itself a very useful mini-encyclopaedia of amateur and professional alike. What the present work gains in much increased coverage it loses in reader-friendliness. But how could you make it any smaller and still retain its appeal, its hundreds of photographs, which are of a very high quality, and all the textual detail? Nevertheless, it remains a somewhat cumbersome object to read. A large inclined museum desk would be perhaps the easiest method. It has all the trappings of an addition to the reference section of your local library.

The book represents not only a staggering scholarly review of every domain of the natural world within the borders of the UAE, but is also testimony to how the work of recording the data has gradually moved into the hands of professionals from the beginnings of data collection carried out by enthusiastic amateurs of the Emirates Natural History Group in the late 1970s. The next obvious goal for subsequent editions would be to have contributions by UAE citizens to the scientific investigation of their own environment.

The success of the present venture is that every area of natural history has been included within the 432 pages of the book, with the lists of species recorded. It also contains two

sets of bibliographies: one for each chapter and one general one at the end. From a scientific standpoint, the bibliographies themselves add great value to this work and should prove useful to future researchers.

A few critical comments, however, seem to suggest themselves, apart from the occasional mis-spelling. First of all, the number of pages devoted to the geology and distribution of sand in the UAE, bears little relationship to the physical presence of sand, particularly in Abu Dhabi emirate, which occupies 86% of the total surface area of the country, most of which is sand sheets or sand dunes. Sand is arguably the defining feature of the UAE. It deserves a more detailed coverage. There is almost as much on lichens as sand! That is not to say that Gary Feulner's chapter on geology is not excellent, as it provides scientific insights that make this chapter one of the best.

Another lacuna is the lack of detailed coverage of the northern emirates. The professional experts seem to have drawn their data more from the seas and deserts of Abu Dhabi than from anywhere else. I would like to see more examples and photographs from the north and east coast, where there is greater floral and faunal biodiversity and less sand.

The next omission, of a number of recent discoveries, should not be attributed to the editors as discoveries are constantly being made in every field of scientific endeavour. The text of the book had been at the printers for some time when they were made aware of these discoveries. No doubt the new information will appear in a subsequent edition. Particularly as a result of Dr. Richard Hornby's investigations, a little known shoreline creature, the spoonworm, (Phylum Echiura) has been discovered on several sites along the UAE coast (see *Tribulus* 15.1, pp. 3-8). These investigations are still at a preliminary stage, but constitute an exciting addition to the marine species of the UAE. Other new discoveries, of birds, reptiles and plants, have also been made in recent months.

There is good coverage of the sand desert vegetation by Brown and Boer, but the floral selection is short of local examples, particularly of the northern and eastern emirates, and lacks photographs of some of the showiest species: *Tecomella undulata*, *Eremobium aegyptiacum*, *Aloe vera*, *Anagallis arvensis*, *Anthemis deserti*, *Lavandula subnuda*, among others. There are very few pictures of graminoids, which is surprising, as irrigation today is currently increasing the distribution and variety of grasses and sedges.

Human intervention in the environment has been well covered from the historical viewpoint on pp. 27-37, and it has been shown how *Homo sapiens* has changed the environment from at least the Hafit period onwards. What needs to be included is the contemporary record. The effect on the environment of continuing irrigation and agro-forestry programmes is not mentioned.

Chapters of excellence abound throughout the book. Although invidious to single out separate chapters for praise, worth mentioning are: the Geological Overview, Insects and other arthropods, Terrestrial Reptiles, Marine Fish, Birds, and Terrestrial Mammals. The exhaustive lists of species have already been mentioned and also the very useful bibliographies. There is never any comparison to be made with the glossy would-be publications that find their way onto booksellers' shelves. It is what it sets out to be: a thoroughgoing illustrated scientific account. No doubt it will serve as a catalyst for further research at a time when the UAE desert is being covered with concrete and roads as never before. The editors are to be congratulated on orchestrating such a harmonious and colourful symphony of nature in all its aspects in this corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

**Allestree Fisher**

## Other Books received

**Wadis of Oman - Satellite Image Atlas.** Farouk El-Baz (ed.). (2004). Prepared by the Center for Remote Sensing, Boston University, U.S.A. Office of The Advisor to His Majesty The Sultan for Cultural Affairs, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. Reg.no. 163/2004.

This very handy sized 22 x 18cm sized atlas contains 150 satellite images at 1:250,000 scale. Each image covers 50 x 50 kilometres. Also included is an index of wadi names in Arabic and English, along with the length of the wadi in kilometres, as well as an index of towns and villages in Arabic and English. The Atlas is also available in CD format. Both products are available from the Family Bookshop in Muscat.

**The Architecture of the United Arab Emirates.** Salma Samar Damluji (ed.). (2006). Garnet Publishing, Reading, U.K. ISBN-13: 978-1-85964-156-9. 325 pages.

This book discusses Modern as well as Vernacular Architecture in the United Arab Emirates. Of particular interest from the historical point of view are the following chapters:

F. Heard-Bey: 'Adapting to Change - An historical background to traditional and modern living conditions in the United Arab Emirates' (4-19).

G. King: 'The Islamic Architecture of Dalma Island' (151-178).

K. Olroyd-Robinson: 'The Urban Architecture of Al Bastakiyyah' (179-204).

D. Willems: 'The Ancient Mosques of Ra's al Khaymah' (205-222).

H.M. Al Naboodah: 'The Forts and Towers of Al 'Ayn' (223-238).

A.S. Al-Azzawi: 'Analysis of the Square: Al Murabba'ah' (239-264).

S.S. Damluji: 'In Search of the Vernacular' (254-307).

**The Desert of Southeast Arabia.** Kenneth W. Glennie. (2005). GeoArabia. Gulf PetroLink, Manama, Bahrain. ISBN 99901-04-89-1. Hardbound, 215 pages, over 200 coloured illustrations, photos and satellite images. This book can be ordered from the website:

<http://www.gulfpetrolink.net/spGlennie/spGlennieidx.htm>

In his book "The Desert of Southeast Arabia", Ken Glennie takes us on a journey back in time to when Arabia was a much greener place, and he explains how global climate change made it so barren. Ken started writing this book 10 years ago for students; this is one reason for the extensive Glossary at the back. After many modifications and revisions, his book now provides a different perspective to a well-known topic. Its simplicity, detailed descriptions and illustrations will undoubtedly appeal to students, desert travellers and scientists. Of great value, especially when used in conjunction with studies on the ground, are the satellite images (Landsat) seen here in spectacular colour. None of these images, however, can replace seeing the desert rocks and sediments first hand. In this book, Ken shares his vast knowledge of the Arabian Desert, and an exquisite collection of photos taken on the ground and from the air.

**The Islamic Coinages of the Bahrain Region during the Abbasid Caliphate (132-656 Hijri/750-1260 CA).** Abdullah Khamis Al-Sulaiti. (2005). Ministry of Information, Bahrain. ISBN 99901-90-17-8. 205 pages, 37 colour plates. This book contains a rare collection of Islamic golden, silver and bronze coins which circulated in the region of Bahrain during the Abbasid Caliphate. The author spent more than three years compiling the book which makes an important contribution to the study of numismatics in the region.

**Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia.** John Topham. (2005). Hardbound, 192 pages, colour photographs throughout. First published by Stacey International 1982. Revised edition published 2005 by Stacey International, London. This book can be ordered online at:

<http://www.stacey-international.co.uk>

This is a new issue of an acknowledged classic in the field of Saudi Arabian desert crafts. With new photographs and updated text, it has already become the standard work for a new generation of Arabian enthusiasts. Covering the costumes, equipment, and artefacts of the Bedouin of Saudi Arabia, it examines the work of jewellery makers, leather workers, basket weavers, carpenters and metal workers, with stunning colour photographs to illustrate each example. In the engaging text, written by experts in the field, we get a real sense of the traditional lifestyle and ethnology of this enigmatic people. The majority of the costumes, jewellery and weavings shown in this book belong to John Topham, whose important collection has been exhibited throughout the USA and Arabia.

## Articles & Papers

The following published papers dealing with the UAE and adjacent areas have been received or noted.

## Archaeology

**Adumatu: No. 13 (January 2006)**, P.O. Box 10071, Riyadh 11433, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Published by the Abdul Rahman Al-Sudairy Foundation, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Email: [adumatu@suhuf.net.sa](mailto:adumatu@suhuf.net.sa) – Web: [www.adumatu.com](http://www.adumatu.com) - ISSN 1319-8947

Adumatu is an international academic refereed journal on the archaeology of the Arab World. More details can be found on its website at: [www.adumatu.com](http://www.adumatu.com)

Volume 13 contains a number of articles of interest to the archaeology of this region including:

Dr. Abdulaziz S. Ghizzi: 'Characteristics of and Research on al-Ubaid Pottery in the Eastern Region, Saudi Arabia: a Descriptive Study.'

Ali R. Al-Medeilwi: 'Civilization Connections between Oman Province and Neighbouring Urban Centers during the Fourth and Third Millennia BC.'

Prof. Khalaf Al-Tarawneh & Najla Ahmad Ali: 'Coins' Information Role during the Umayyad Period.'

## Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy Vol. 17.1 (May 2006)

Blackwell Publishing. Web:

<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0905-7196> - ISSN 0905-7196

Gerd Weisgerber: 'The mineral wealth of ancient Arabia and its use. I: Copper mining and smelting at Feinan and Timna - comparison and evaluation of techniques, production, and strategies' (pp. 1-30)

An De Waele and Ernie Haerinck: 'Etched (carnelian) beads from northeast and southeast Arabia' (pp. 31-40)

L. Nehmé, Th. Arnoux, J.-Cl. Bessac, J.-P. Braun, J.-M. Dentzer, A. Kermorvant, I. Sachet, L. Tholbecq and J.-B. Rigot: 'Mission archéologique de Madain Salih (Arabie Saoudite) : Recherches menées de 2001 à 2003 dans l'ancienne Hijra des Nabatéens' (1) (pp. 41-124).

## Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies, No. 11 (2006).

Society for Arabian Studies, c/o the British Academy, 10, Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1 5AH, UK. ISSN 1361-9144.

Much, as usual on the UAE, including the annual news round-up of archaeological activity throughout the country, reviews of two recent publications (Jebel Hafit - A Natural History, edited by Simon Aspinall and Peter Hellyer and

published by the Emirates Natural History Group and the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations, ADCO, and The Emirates - A Natural History, edited by Peter Hellyer and Simon Aspinall and published by Trident Press with the support of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, EAD), and the following paper:

'Neolithic sites in Umm az-Zamul, SE desert of Abu Dhabi, UAE'. Mark Beech, Heiko Kallweit, Richard Cuttler and Walid Yasin Al-Tikriti. pp. 17-26.

A preliminary report on the December 2005 / January 2006 work at Umm az-Zamul, undertaken by the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey, ADIAS, and the Department of Antiquities and Tourism, Al Ain (now part of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage).

## Journal of Oman Studies Vol. 13 (2004)

(N.B. not released until late 2005)

Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman - ISSN 0378-8180.

M.R. and B. Bhacker: 'Qalhat in Arabian History: Context and Chronicles' (11-56).

L. Korn, J. Häser, J. Schreiber, A. Gangler, M. Nagieb, S. Siebert and A. Buerkert: 'Tiwi, Ash Shab and Wadi Tiwi: the Development of an Oasis on the North-Eastern coast of Oman' (57-90).

B. Mershen: 'Ibn Muqarrab and Naynuh: A Folk-tale from Tiwi' (91-98).

A. Sheriff: 'Sur: The World of a Dhow Port' (99-112).

D. Insall: 'Ash Shibabiyah: the Indigenous Flute of the Eastern Hajar Mountains' (113-126).

W. and F. Lancaster: 'Ar Rawdah in the Musandam' (127-138).

A. Patzelt: 'Flora and Vegetation of Juzur al Hallaniyat (the Kuria Muria Islands) with a Report of Additional Species' (139-154).

M.D. Robinson, H. bin Ali ar Ra'isi and A. Spalton: 'Group Size and Composition of the Arabian Tahr (*Hemitragus jayakari* Thomas, 1894)' (155-164).

M. Wark: 'Weft-twined Purses from the Wadi Sarin' (165-174).

N. Whalen: 'Lower Palaeolithic Sites in the Huqf Area of Central Oman' (175-182).

S. Bandyopadhyay: 'Harat al Bilad (Manah) - Tribal Pattern, Settlement Structure and Architecture' (183-262).

M. Kervran: 'Archaeological Research at Suhar 1980-1986' (263-381).

## Other Archaeology

Beech, M. (2006). Book review of "The Early Dilmun Settlement at Saar", edited by Robert Killick and Jane Moon, London-Bahrain Archaeological Expedition Saar Excavation Report 3. xii+367 pages, 536 colour illustrations, tables. 2005. Ludlow: Archaeology International; 0-9539561-1-3 hardback". **Antiquity 80 (No.307, March 2006):** pp. 227-228.

Beech, M. and E. Glover. (2005). The environment and economy of an Ubaid-related settlement on Dalma island, United Arab Emirates. **Paléorient 31/1:** pp. 97-107.

Carter, R.A. (2005). "The History and Prehistory of Pearling in the 'Persian' Gulf." **Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 48/2:** pp. 139-209.

Crawford, H. (2005). "Mesopotamia and the Gulf: The history of a relationship." **Iraq 67 (2):** pp. 41-46.

Magee, P. (2005). "The chronology and environmental background of Iron Age settlement in southeastern Iran and the question of the origin of the qanat irrigation system." **Iranica Antiqua 40:** pp. 217-231.

Magee, P. (2005). "Columned halls, bridge-spouted vessels, C14 dates and the chronology of the east Arabian Iron Age: A

response to some recent comments by Muscarella." **Ancient West and East 4 (1)**: pp. 160-169.

Magee, P. (2005). "The production, distribution and function of Iron Age bridge-spouted vessels in Iran and Arabia: results from recent excavations and geochemical analysis." **Iran - Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies 16**: pp. 93-115.

Potts, D.T. (2006). "Elamites and Kassites in the 'Persian Gulf.'" **Journal of Near Eastern Studies 65 (2)**: pp. 111-120.

## Natural History

### Botany

Gallacher, D. J. and J. P. Hill (2006). 'Effects of camel grazing on the ecology of small perennial plants in the Dubai (UAE) inland desert.' **Journal of Arid Environments 66 (4)**: pp. 738-750.

El-Keblawy, A. and A. Al-Rawai (2006). 'Effects of seed maturation time and dry storage on light and temperature requirements during germination in invasive *Prosopis juliflora*.' **Flora - Morphology, Distribution, Functional Ecology of Plants 201 (2)**: pp. 135-143.

Marwah, R. G., M. O. Fatope, R.A. Mahrooqi, G.B. Varma, H.Al-Abadi and S.K.S. Al-Burtamani. (*in press*). 'Antioxidant capacity of some edible and wound healing plants in Oman.' **Food Chemistry**.

### Fisheries and Marine

Ben Meriem, S., A. Al-Marzouqi and J. AL-Mamry. (2006). 'Fisheries exploitation pattern of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, *Scomberomorus commerson*, in Oman and potential management options.' **Journal of Applied Ichthyology 22 (3)**: 218-224.

Govender, A., H. Al-Oufi, J.L. McIlwain and M.C. Claereboudt. (2006). 'A per-recruit assessment of the kingfish (*Scomberomorus commerson*) resource of Oman with an evaluation of the effectiveness of some management regulations.' **Fisheries Research 77 (2)**: 239-247.

Grandcourt, E. M., T. Z. Al Abdessalaam, F. Francis and A.T. Al Shamsi. (2006). 'Fisheries biology of a short-lived tropical species: *Gerres longirostris* (Lacepede, 1801) in the Arabian Gulf.' **ICES Journal of Marine Science 63 (3)**: 52-459.

Hoolihan, J. P. (2006). 'Age and growth of Indo-Pacific sailfish, *Istiophorus platypterus*, from the Arabian Gulf.' **Fisheries Research 78 (2-3)**: 218-226.

van Herwerden, L., J. McIlwain, H. Al-Oufi, W. Al-Amry and A. Reyes. (2006). 'Development and application of microsatellite markers for *Scomberomorus commerson* (Perciformes; Teleostei) to a population genetic study of Arabian Peninsula stocks.' **Fisheries Research 79 (3)**: 258-266.

### Geology

Aali, J., H. Rahimpour-Bonab and M.R. Kamali. (2006). 'Geochemistry and origin of the world's largest gas field from 'Persian' Gulf, Iran.' **Journal of Petroleum Science and Engineering 50 (3-4)**: 161-175.

Allen, P. A. and J. Leather (2006). 'Post-Marinoan marine siliciclastic sedimentation: The Masirah Bay Formation, Neoproterozoic Huqf Supergroup of Oman.' **Precambrian Research 144 (3-4)**: 167-198.

Breesch, L., R. Swennen and B. Vincent. (2006). 'Dolomite formation in breccias at the Musandam Platform border, Northern Oman Mountains, United Arab Emirates.' **Journal of Geochemical Exploration - GEOFLUIDS V: 5th International Conference on Fluid Evolution, Migration and Interaction in Sedimentary Basins and Orogenic**

**Belts 89 (1-3)**: 19-22.

Le Guerroue, E., P. A. Allen and A. Cozzi. (2006). 'Chemostratigraphic and sedimentological framework of the largest negative carbon isotopic excursion in Earth history: The Neoproterozoic Shuram Formation (Nafun Group, Oman).' **Precambrian Research 146 (1-2)**: 68-92.

Mercogli, I., A. P. Briner, R. Frei, R. Schonberg, T.F. Nagler, J. Kramers and T. Peters. (2006). 'Lithostratigraphy and geochronology of the Neoproterozoic crystalline basement of Salalah, Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman.' **Precambrian Research 145 (3-4)**: 182-206.

Rodgers, A., A.-R. Fowler, A.M.S. Al-Amri and A. Al-Enezi. (2006). 'The March 11, 2002 Masafi, United Arab Emirates earthquake: Insights into the seismotectonics of the northern Oman Mountains.' **Tectonophysics 415 (1-4)**: pp. 57-64.

### Ornithology

**The Phoenix, No. 22, January 2006**. Compiled by Michael Jennings, Warners Farm House, Warters Drove, Somersham, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3WD, UK. E-mail: arabianbirds@dsl.pipex.com Sponsored and published by the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development, PO Box 61681, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. ISSN 0268-487X.

The usual round-up of news on the breeding birds of Arabia. This issue contains only one short note of direct relevance to the UAE, *viz.*

Pleasance, B., Castell, C. Mason, J. & Williams, S. Peter Castell, John Mason & Steve Williams (2006). 'White-collared Kingfisher breeding at Khor Kalba.' 27-28.

### Palaeontology

Bibi, F., Shabel, A., Kraatz, B., and Stidham, T.A. (2006). 'New Fossil Ratite (Aves: Palaeognathae) Eggshell Discoveries from the Late Miocene Baynunah Formation of the United Arab Emirates, Arabian Peninsula.' **Palaeontologia Electronica**: 1-13. Available online at:

[http://palaeo-electronica.org/2006\\_1/eggshell/issue1\\_06.htm](http://palaeo-electronica.org/2006_1/eggshell/issue1_06.htm)  
Leonard, L. M., G. J. Dyke and C.A. Walker. (2006). 'New specimens of a fossil ostrich from the Miocene of Kenya.' **Journal of African Earth Sciences**.

Stewart, J.R. and M. Beech. (2006). 'The Miocene birds of Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) with a discussion of the age of modern species and genera.' **Historical Biology 18 (2)**: 103-113.

### Other

Alamer, M. (2006). 'Physiological responses of Saudi Arabia indigenous goats to water deprivation.' **Small Ruminant Research 63 (1-2)**: 100-109.

Al-Subhi, A. M., A. O. Al-Adawi, et al. (2006). '*Ceratocystis omanensis*, a new species from diseased mango trees in Oman.' **Mycological Research 110 (2)**: 237-245.

Wakefield, S. and O. Attum (2006). 'The effects of human visits on the use of a waterhole by endangered ungulates.' **Journal of Arid Environments 65 (4)**: 668-672.