

Dugong agreement signed

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the Conservation and Management of Dugongs *Dugong dugon* and their Habitats throughout their Range was signed by seven countries, including the United Arab Emirates, at a meeting held in Abu Dhabi in late October 2007. Other signatories included Madagascar, Australia, Burma, Tanzania, Eritrea and France, with Iran and Kenya having indicated that they would sign later.

The signing of the MoU came at the end of a meeting, organised by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, EAD, and the Convention on Migratory Species, CMS, to discuss and adopt a Conservation and Management Action Plan for the dugong, and was attended by representatives of over thirty countries. The meeting, sponsored by the oil company, TOTAL ABK, which has also funded earlier research into dugongs in UAE waters, followed earlier meetings held in Bangkok, Thailand (in August 2005 and in May 2006) and in Abu Dhabi, UAE (in May 2006).

The meeting consisted of two concurrent workshops concerning the implementation of the Dugong Conservation and Management Plan in the East Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and West Indian Ocean sub-regions.

Dugongs are one of only four species of the order Sirenia, all of which are listed as vulnerable to extinction by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The dugong has a large range of distribution that spans at least 37 countries and territories encompassing tropical, sub-tropical coastal and inland waters of the Indian and Pacific Ocean. A significant proportion of the world's dugongs occur in the Arabian Gulf. Other important areas of dugong occurrence in the Western Indian Ocean region include the Red Sea and the East African coast. The Arabian Gulf and Red Sea host an estimated population of more than 7,000 dugongs, which constitutes the largest population outside Australia. About 40 percent of this population occurs in Abu Dhabi waters in the UAE, making the UAE particularly significant in terms of global dugong conservation efforts.

(Source: EAD press releases, 27, 28 and 31 October 2007)

Marawah becomes UAE's first Biosphere Reserve

The Marawah Marine Protected Area, MMPA, managed by the Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi, EAD, has been accepted and accredited as a Biosphere Reserve within the Man and Biosphere, MAB, network of Global Biosphere Reserves maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO. This announcement makes Marawah the first Biosphere Reserve in the UAE.

The Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve, situated west of Abu Dhabi island, is home to important marine and coastal ecosystems including seagrass beds, coral reefs and mangroves. The Reserve also hosts 60% of the second largest population of dugongs in the world.

Marawah is also of great cultural and archaeological significance in the UAE, with archaeological sites dating back to the Arabian Neolithic (Late Stone Age) period, around 5,500 years ago, having been identified on Marawah island, one of several in the reserve, as well as sites from later periods, including the Bronze Age, Iron Age, late pre-Islamic and Islamic periods.

The announcement, made in Abu Dhabi at the beginning of November 2007, followed a meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme at UNESCO Headquarters in France in September 2007.

The Biosphere Reserve concept provides context-specific opportunities to combine scientific knowledge and governance modalities to reduce biodiversity loss; improve livelihoods; enhance social, economic and cultural conditions for environmental sustainability. Biosphere reserves can also serve as learning sites for the public.

The Marawah MPA, the largest Marine Protected Area in the Arabian Gulf, was established as a reserve in 2001. Situated west of the city of Abu Dhabi, it includes the islands of Marawah, Liffiyah, Umm Amim, Junanah, Salahah, Halat Hail, Halat Mubarras, Bazm al-Gharbi and Bu Tini and covers an area of 4,255 sq. km.

The marine areas of the MPA include important seagrass beds and populations of dolphins, turtles and dugongs, as well as coral reefs.

(Source: EAD press release, 1 November 2007)

Controls on groundwater wells

A new by-law for Abu Dhabi Emirate Law No. 6 for 1996 has been issued to regulate the management of groundwater wells in the Emirate.

The by-law will help control groundwater abstraction within the Emirate. It presents a mechanism for issuing permits to those who wish to dig wells. A committee has been formed within the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, EAD, which has been responsible since 2005 for groundwater resources management in Abu Dhabi, to study and assess all requests received for digging new wells. It is estimated that there are currently around 100,000 wells within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, with the location of only about a quarter of these having been determined to date. Activities such as digging new wells, maintaining existing wells and replacing old wells with new ones will now require permits.

According to EAD, Abu Dhabi Emirate's groundwater supply has been reduced by 18% since 2003. This has meant that the Emirate has increasingly relied on unconventional water resources, such as desalination and re-use of treated wastewater. EAD estimates that 641 cubic metres of groundwater resources are still available, but less than 3% of this is fresh and, based on current abstraction rates, both fresh and brackish reserves will be depleted within 50 years. Groundwater contributes 71.2% to the total water demand, followed by desalinated water (24%) and treated wastewater (4.8%).

(Source: EAD press release, 7 November 2007)

Christmas whales

A rare sighting of three killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), the largest member of the dolphin family, was reported by fishermen around 12 kilometres offshore from the village of Rams, in Ra's al-Khaimah, on 25th December 2007. The three animals were said to be around 10-12 metres in length. They were seen by two Emirati fishermen, who followed them for around a kilometre and said that they had never previously seen the species, in ten years of fishing in Ra's al-Khaimah waters.

Killer whales were first reported in UAE waters, off the coast of Abu Dhabi, only a few years ago by a research team from the Abu Dhabi-based Emirates Heritage Club, although they are more frequently seen off the coast of Oman and can be expected to occur occasionally off the UAE's East Coast.

(Source: *Gulf News*, 26th December 2007).

Zoology in the Middle East

The publishers of the journal *Zoology in the Middle East* have completed a compilation of the Index for the first 40 issues of the journal.

Copies of the Index, together with abstracts of all full papers, can be downloaded, free of charge, from their website, www.kasperek-verlag.de

With 660 articles on more than 5,200 printed pages from 731 authors coming from 50 countries, *Zoology in the Middle East* is a unique information source for all zoologists and ecologists interested in this part of the world and also documents twenty years of the development of scientific research throughout the region.

UAE Specimens Clarify Marine Gastropod Taxonomy

Specimens from the United Arab Emirates have contributed to two recent scientific studies of the molecular phylogeny (DNA taxonomy) of marine gastropod groups in the Indo-West Pacific region, including the recognition of two new species found locally.

Specimens of UAE *Turbo* and *Lunella* spp. from both

coasts were examined as part of a study of the broader class of Turbinid (turban-shaped) gastropods. A subsequent paper will focus more narrowly on the two genera *Turbo* and *Lunella* in particular, and is expected to confirm the existence of a hitherto unrecognised species in the UAE, first suspected by local naturalists on the basis of consistent morphological differences observed in the course of the collection effort.

In a second study, DNA analysis of specimens from Khor Julfar in Ra's al-Khaimah of the common large bubble shell, previously considered to be *Bulla ampulla*, has helped to confirm that the species present in the extreme north-western Indian Ocean, including the seashores of Arabia, is in fact a distinct species. It has been named *Bulla arabica* and the type specimens are those from Ra's al-Khaimah.

B. ampulla has a broad range throughout most of the Indo-West Pacific, from the shores of East Africa to Asia, Northern Australia and New Caledonia, but it appears to be absent from Arabian shores. Instead, it is the newly recognised *B. arabica* that is the large bubble shell found in the Red Sea, Yemen, Oman and the Arabian Gulf, and eastwards to Karachi. Beached shells of *B. arabica*, but so far not living animals, have also been found in the eastern Mediterranean.

Both of the foregoing studies were conducted by researchers at the Molluscan Research Unit of the Department of Zoology at The Natural History Museum in London.

References

◇ Williams, S.T. 2007. Origins and diversification of Indo-West Pacific marine fauna: evolutionary history and biogeography of turban shells (Gastropoda, Turbinidae). *Biol. Jour. Linnean Soc.* 92: 573-592.

≈ Malaquias, M. (*in press*).

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Reviews

Snakes of Arabia: A Field Guide to the Snakes of the Arabian Peninsula and its Shores' by Damien Egan. 2007. Published Motivate Publishing, Dubai. ISBN 978 1 86063 239 6 208 pp.

This book is exactly what the title indicates. It is an exceptionally user-friendly field guide that enables virtually any snake encountered on the Arabian Peninsula to be identified with ease, even by naturalists not familiar with the more esoteric aspects of snake morphology. The format is small enough to be carried to the field, and the quality of the binding appears adequate, though only time will tell if it can stand field usage without falling apart! This is a much needed volume for both professional and amateur naturalists, and for anyone whose work or play takes them into the

Arabian outdoors. The guide covers all 55 species of land and sea snakes recorded.

The first quarter of the book provides valuable information on the main geographical regions of Arabia, snake biology and adaptations, venomous snakes, snake venoms and good, advice on snakebites. There is information on how to identify snakes from their shape, form, colour, scalation, and tracks and traces. The remainder of the book is taken up by detailed and standardised species accounts providing a description of the species including diagnostic features and possible confusion with similar species, information on distributions and aspects of natural history as far as these are known. A distribution map based on records is provided for each species. Some species are included despite their Arabian records being suspect, but this does

ensure that the treatment is comprehensive.

The Guide is exceptionally well illustrated with high quality photos of many species (including some different colour morphs and geographical variants), and with excellent coloured illustrations (by the author, who is an artist of considerable accomplishment) of the side and top of the head and the overall body shape and pattern. The scalation is accurately portrayed in these and this feature makes the book particularly valuable and unusual in guides of this type.

The book is aimed at a general audience and there are no citations of sources of the information in the text. While this makes the book much more readable, it is frustrating for serious snake students as there is no way of knowing which information and observations are new. This is especially true for some of the aspects of natural history such as clutch sizes and incubation times and diet.

A minor criticism is that the photographs are in some cases sited opposite different species accounts, which may cause some confusion, especially where the snake is not named in the legend. Hence the species on page 156 is the Yellow Sea Snake and not the Short Sea Snake described on the facing page. The photo of a Sindh Saw-scaled viper on Pg 9 is above the description of the Hijaz mountains, well out of its distributional range. Some of the thumbnail photos, particularly those illustrating habitats are rather too small to be of real use. Understandably, the provenance of the photos and geographic descriptions have a bias towards those areas more familiar to the author, such as the UAE, Dhofar, and Yemen. In discussing the eastern mountain chain, the discussion is mainly of Musandam, whereas the higher and arguably more significant Al Jebel al Akhdar is not mentioned. Note that the back cover picture is an Arabian cat snake, and not a Sindh Saw-scaled viper as indicated on page 2. A few of the photos are of African species or forms not found in Arabia (e.g. the nominate form of *Cerastes cerastes* on pg 173 and the North African carpet viper from Sudan on page 180), and the space may have been better used illustrating more Arabian snakes.

The section on antivenoms, while warning of the potential dangers of antivenom use, is potentially confusing in suggesting that antivenom should be in a first aid kit carried by 'anyone who is active in the outdoors'. Given that the antivenom needs to be kept chilled, that many ampoules may be needed in the case of a serious bite, and also that adrenaline must also be on hand, this advice is only practical for a professional snake researcher who is likely to be handling venomous snakes. Moreover it needs to be strongly stressed that antivenoms have to be raised against the correct species for a given area. The antivenoms are quite specific, and snake venoms may be geographically variable, even within a species. Also there are no effective antivenoms available for some Arabian species. For the UAE the most effective antivenoms are those produced by the Saudi National Guard. For the general naturalist, the car keys are the most valuable first aid device for snake bite!

A few comments are merited on the distribution maps and descriptions, as they illustrate Oman and UAE

species. *Lytorhynchus diadema* (pg 99) is found in the Wahiba sands. *Spalerosophis diadema* (pg 122) is found on Masirah. *Echis coloratus* is found on the Huqf escarpment in central Oman. *Echis omanensis* (pg 188) certainly occurs as high as 1900 metres above sea level on Jebel Shams. The comment that Hardwick's rat snake (*Platycephalus ventromaculatus*) is found on "a few of the islands off the United Arab Emirates" is not substantiated in the literature. The only published records from the UAE are from Sir Bani Yas and Dalma (see Aspinall and Gardner in this volume). The Arabian cat snake (pg 124) can reach a larger size than indicated, as I have measured one from 113.2 cm long from Nizwa. There are likely to be similar range adjustments required, but this does represent a very valuable first effort to map the Arabian snake distributions.

As in any first edition, there are some printing and factual errors, and while it may seem churlish to point some of these out, this may help with a second edition! On Pg 47, spiny tailed lizards do have faeces with an accompanying uric acid mass. On Pg 57, the Nurse's thread snake was photographed at Dibab (not Dibdab), and Pg 64, the family Boidae is misspelt. The photograph of Thomas' Racer on Page 81 is not the type specimen as stated (the type was collected by Bertram Thomas in 1931,) but of a specimen collected by Nick Arnold in Dhofar in 1977. *Pseudotrapelus* is spelt incorrectly on page 191. The references could have been edited more carefully as there are specific names capitalised, others not in italics; Gasperetti (1988) is out of its alphabetic sequence; Podarcis is misspelt in Van der Kooij (2001) and Beat Schätti's name is also misspelt.

Niggles aside, Damien Egan must be congratulated on producing such a useful, accurate, inexpensive and beautiful guide. This will certainly be a requirement on any Arabian naturalist's bookshelf and in the field bag.

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Dolphin. By Robert Baldwin and Thabit Al Abdessalaam. Published 2007 by Seawords Ltd., 95, Wilton Road, Suite 3, London SW1V 1BZ. www.seawordsbooks.com Sponsored by Dolphin Energy Ltd., Abu Dhabi, UAE. ISBN (10) 0-9551550-1-0, ISBN(13) 978-0-9551550-1-7. 147 pp., English and Arabic text.

'Dolphin' aims to 'portray the interest and wonder that dolphins evoke within human culture, the sense of mystery and well-being they induce, and the serious conservation message they embody'. Quite appropriately, the book was published in the year that the United Nations and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society designated as the 'Year of the Dolphin'.

The authors hold a wealth of experience in the field which is reflected throughout the text. Robert Baldwin has been involved in the study of whales and dolphins since 1988, particularly in the UAE and Oman, and has

written several other illustrated books on marine life, including three on whales and dolphins. Thabit Zahran Al Abdessalaam has had an extensive career in marine research and conservation in the region and has also authored a number of books on fisheries and marine biology.

The subject matter embraces representative aspects of the biology, physiology and behavioural ecology of dolphins and includes a section on conservation. Specifically, the content includes chapters on: the dolphin family, distribution and habitats, the dolphin body, swimming and diving, senses and communication, social life, feeding, captivity and conservation. Whilst the book is written in such a way as to be readily understood by the layman, it contains a wealth of interesting factual information that will appeal to a more specialised and discerning audience.

The format and layout of 'Dolphins' also makes the book a delight to read. The photographs are stunning and it is clear that a great deal of care has gone into selecting the images. They often portray remarkable aspects of dolphin behaviour and certainly capture the 'grace, tranquillity, energy, power, teamwork, sensitivity and beauty' of dolphins, as intended by the authors.

There is no reference list or bibliography as the authors suggest that listing them all would be impossible. However, the Acknowledgements section does draw attention to selected key books for those readers interested in learning more about the natural history, ecology and conservation of dolphins. In summary, 'Dolphins' is an easy-to-read, informative and beautifully illustrated book that is a must for those with an interest in dolphins and marine conservation. Whilst the target audience is clearly general, the text is sufficiently factual to make it of use to students and researchers alike.

Dolphin Energy, sponsors of the publication, deserve credit for having made the book possible.

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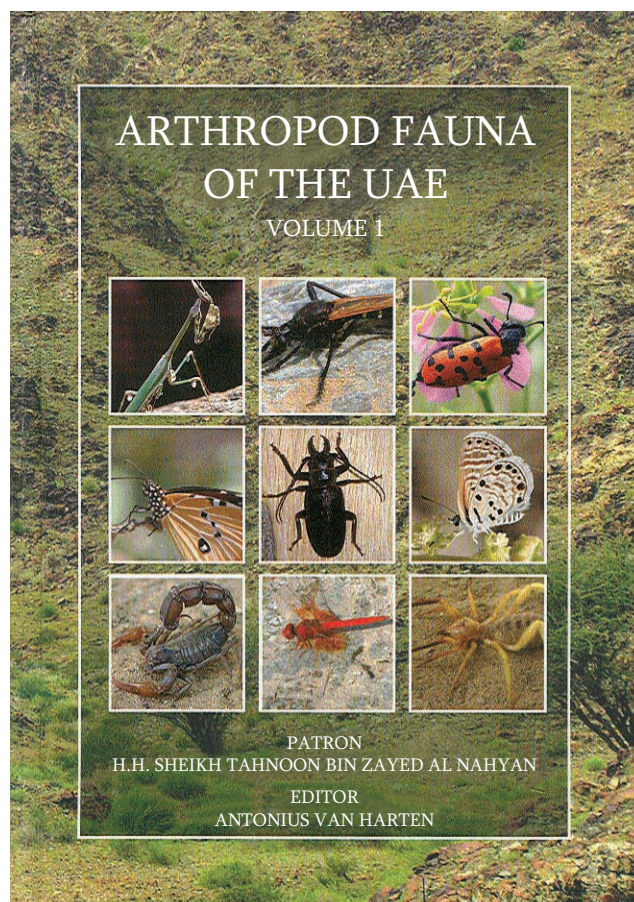
ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1, Antonius Van Harten (editor), Multiply Marketing Consultancy Services (Publisher), Abu Dhabi, ISBN 978-9948-03-642-5 754 pages.

ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1, edited by Antonius Van Harten, is the first volume of a culmination of results from extensive collecting undertaken by the editor and his visiting specialists of arthropods within the UAE by various methods including the use of light traps, malaise traps, hand-collecting, water traps, baited traps, and extracting arthropods from soil and leaf litter. Most of the habitats that occur in the UAE were sampled, some more than others. This initiative began in late 2004 when Van Harten was brought to the UAE to record the arthropod fauna and create an inventory of species. The process included collecting material, sorting it to mainly family level and then recruiting the aid of specialists from all

over the world in the respective families to sort through the samples and identify to the lowest taxonomic level, mostly to species level. The identification of all insects to family level is no small task, indeed, the editor has successfully been able to process vast amounts of material. Such systematic sampling over three years therefore yielded many new species to the UAE, including some new to science.

Arthropods covered by this hardback book include mites, cockroaches, thysanurans, mayflies, booklice and barklice, thrips, twisted-wing parasites, true bugs, beetles, bees and wasps, butterflies, and flies. It should be noted that within each of the orders listed exist many families and not all families are reported here and will presumably be included in future volumes, together with reports on other arthropod orders not covered by this book. The records in this book are supposed to be new records to the UAE, of which it states there are 570 of which 87 species and subspecies are new to science. It is stated that only 25% of the collaborating taxonomists have contributed to the current volume and that only about 30% of the families collected so far have been reported in this volume.

Reporting is achieved at a high standard as seen in reputable international journals with contributions from authors written in the form of a scientific paper reporting on a particular arthropod family or order. Some contributions deal with large numbers of species, whereas others may cover only one genus. In most cases the descriptions include identification keys and descriptions of specimens, occasionally habitat notes. Much of ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1 is well illustrated including colour photographs (of mostly pinned material), colour and



black and white drawings, and scanning electron microscope images. Illustrations ensure that identifying characters can be seen, while the inclusion of a list of taxonomic novelties and a zoological index is also worth noting.

The editor describes the methods and sampling localities, and the specialists report their identifications, although the editor is also joint author for the contribution of thrips. There are at least 50 contributing authors and so, without a doubt, ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1 is the most authoritative text on the arthropods listed above that has been published to date of UAE arthropods.

Whilst an effort was made by specialists to refer to earlier works of published records, their literature review was not inclusive of all known material published to date, something commonly rectified during the editing process. For example, a recent publication of the fly fauna of the UAE in *Tribulus* Vol. 16.2 lists several families, genera and species of flies new to the UAE (Howarth, 2006), and regrettably these records are ignored and therefore some are repeated as new to the UAE in ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1. This only includes one example of recently published material, whilst the review of Van Harten's *Insects of the UAE. A checklist of Published Records* pointed out that the checklist equally fell short of including records published during the early years of the ENHG in the first publication of the Abu Dhabi ENHG, namely *The Bulletin* (Howarth, 2006).

The criticism of those early records has been that without specimens to back up a published record, verification is impossible and therefore makes the record dubious. This indeed is very true, particularly when revisions of species or groups of species take place based on new information regarding distinguishing characters. Furthermore, DNA work of insects is also under way and phylogenies are constantly updated. It is also commonplace that specimens are misidentified and without a specimen to verify the record, the criticism was appropriate.

Thus, for many years it was not possible to verify the early records because the occurrence and location of specimens was unknown. Approximately two years ago a collection of arthropods was found amongst the stored items of the Abu Dhabi ENHG at a time when the storage facility was being vacated due to plans to demolish the building. The Al Ain chapter of the ENHG offered to look after all items in the store, including the insects. The collection of the Abu Dhabi ENHG has been amalgamated with the Al Ain collection and this collection is now known as the 'Joint Al Ain and Abu Dhabi Emirates Natural History Group Collection' (Howarth, 2006). This private collection was initiated by the founders of the ENHG in their efforts to observe, record and report, this mandate still being the overriding objective of the natural history groups of the UAE. The challenge some 30 years ago was that internet and swift communication was not available, keys for fauna and flora of this region were not, and remain, unavailable for many arthropods and the efforts of those amateur enthusiasts was to do the best they could, i.e. seek the

advice of some specialists if they had access to them, and publish in *The Bulletin*.

The editor of ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1 was made aware of the joint collection and whilst he has made an effort to introduce some visiting entomologists to us, verification of the specimens has not occurred thus far. It is therefore possible that efforts made early on by people such as Bish Brown, Ian Hamer and others have not received proper recognition. In discussions with the editor after the publication of ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1, an agreement was reached that specimens from the Joint Al Ain and Abu Dhabi Emirates Natural History Group Collection should be sent for verification to the same specialists that will be investigating the material for future volumes of the book. Once those specimens have been included, and an effort has been made to exhaust all other possible sources of material and information, the inventory efforts will be as complete as possible. Currently, ARTHROPOD FAUNA OF THE UAE, VOLUME 1 is not available in book stores, though the editor is kindly donating a copy to each of the three natural history groups in the UAE for their libraries. The price is not agreed but, once this has been done, books will be made available. The suggested price is AED270 (50 Euros), which is a reasonable price for the coverage of species.

References

Howarth, B. (2006) Book review of: A. van Harten (2005) *Insects of the UAE: A Checklist of Published Records*. Dar Al Ummah, Abu Dhabi, *Tribulus* 16.2: 37.

Howarth, B. (2006) Diptera of the UAE – collated records from the literature with additions of new records, accompanied by some notes on Mydidae and Stratiomyidae new to the UAE, *Tribulus* 16.2:24-29.

Van Harten, A. (2005). *Insects of the UAE: A Checklist of Published Records*. Dar Al Ummah, Abu Dhabi.

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Articles and Papers

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

Archaeology and Palaeontology

Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy. Blackwell Publishing. Print ISSN 0905-7196. Online ISSN: 1800-0471

Website:

<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/toc/aae>

May 2007 - Vol. 18 Issue 1 Page 1-122

Carl Phillips. The third-millennium tombs and settlement at Mowaihat in the Emirate of Ajman, U.A.E. 1-7

Katrien Rutten. The Roman fine wares of ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, U.A.E.) and their distribution in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. 8-24.

Anne Benoist. An Iron Age II snake cult in the Oman peninsula: evidence from Bithnah (Emirate of Fujairah). 34-54.

D. T. Potts. Revisiting the snake burials of the Late Dilmun building complex on Bahrain. 55-74.

Derek Kennet. The decline of eastern Arabia in the Sasanian period. 86-122.

November 2007 - Vol. 18 Issue 2 Page 123-264

Debra L. Martin. Bioarchaeology in the United Arab Emirates. 124-131

A.G. Parker and A.S. Goudie. Development of the Bronze Age landscape in the southeastern Arabian Gulf: new evidence from a buried shell midden in the eastern extremity of the Rub' al-Khali desert, Emirate of Ras al-Khaimah, U.A.E. 132-138.

Michele C. Ziolkowski (2007) Rock on art: petroglyph sites in the United Arab Emirates. 208-238

Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, Vol. 37 (2007). Seminar for Arabian Studies and Archaeopress, Oxford. ISSN: 0308-8421. ISBN: 978-1-905739-10.3 Proceedings of the 2006 Seminar for Arabian Studies in London.

Papers of relevance to the UAE include:

Cuttler, R., Beech, M., Kallweit, H., Zander, A. & Al Tikriti, W.Y. Pastoral nomadic communities of the Holocene climatic optimum: excavation and research at Kharimat Khor al-Manahil and Khor al-Manahil in the Rub al-Khali, Abu Dhabi. 61-78

Delrue, P. Flip the coin. Preliminary results of compositional EDX analyses on south-east Arabian coins from ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE). 79-92

Dreschler, P. Spreading the Neolithic over the Arabian peninsula. 93-109

Nash, H. Stargazing in traditional water management: a case study in northern Oman. 157-170

Rose, J. The Arabian Corridor Migration Model: archaeological evidence for hominid dispersals into Oman during the Middle and Upper Pleistocene. 219-237

Schreiber, J. Transformation processes in oasis settlements in Oman 2005 archaeological survey at the oasis of Nizwa: a preliminary report. 263-275

Scott-Jackson, J., Scott-Jackson, W. & Jasim, S. Middle Palaeolithic or what? New sites in Sharjah, UAE. 277-279

De Waele, A. The beads of ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE). 297-308

Other papers and publications

Phillips, C., Irving, B., Glover, E., Czastka, J. (2005). Archaeological survey in the vicinity of Kalba: a preliminary to further research. Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah, UAE.

Medical

The following paper, published in 2000, has been drawn to our attention, and reports on tests carried out at the Allergy Clinic at Tawam Hospital, Al Ain. Results suggest that a number of flora species present in the UAE may be responsible for cases of asthma and allergic rhinitis.

Rasanen, L. Inhalant allergy in the United Arab Emirates. Allergy: European Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology. Vol. 55(1):95-96, January 2000.

Ornithology

Sandgrouse – Journal of the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, UK. ISSN: 0260-4736

Vol. 29.1 (Spring 2007).

Simon Aspinall and Peter Hellyer – Letter to the Editor (p.111). A response to Colin Richardson (2006) 'Conservation Issues in the United Arab Emirates – a personal view'.

Vol. 29.2 (Autumn 2007).

G. R. Lobley. Wintering of Greater Spotted *Aquila clanga* and Eastern Imperial Eagles *A. heliaca* in the Arabian peninsula. 177-182.

Vladimir Arkhipov and Michael Blair. Skua (*Catharacta, Stercorarius*) occurrences in the OSME Region. 183-204
Ian Harrison. Recent decisions by the Oman Bird Records Committee – an update on first records for the Sultanate of Oman. 217-217.

Falco – The Newsletter of the Middle East Falcon Research Group. Issue No. 30, Autumn 2007. ISSN: 1608-1544. Contact details: Dr. Tom Bailey, Dubai Falcon Hospital, PO Box 23919, Dubai, UAE. tom.bailey@dfh.ae

As usual, a selection of useful papers in the latest edition of **Falco**, with several dealing with the results of veterinary studies and research undertaken by UAE-based scientists.

Combreau, O. (2007). Arabic falconry and the illegal houbara trade in Arabia. 16-17.

Molero, C., Bailey, T.A., & Di Somma, A. (2007). Anaesthesia of falcons with a combination of injectable anaesthesia (ketamine-medetomidine) and gas anaesthesia (isoflurane). 17-19.

Lloyd, C., Hebel, C. & Padrtova, R. (2007). Non-invasive indirect blood pressure measurements in Falconiformes. 20-21.

Wernery, U., Hotzel, H., Joseph, S. & Joseph, M. (2007). Mycoplasma infections in hunting falcons in the United Arab Emirates. 25-26

Other

Jennings, MC and TA Sadler. 2006. Report on the activity of the small birds of prey and owls group at the Conservation Workshop of the Fauna of Arabia held at the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife - Desert Park, Sharjah, UAE; 19-23 February 2006. <http://hawar-islands.com/distmaps/final.html>. Accessed 21 October 2007.

Wildlife General

The on-line journal **Wildlife Middle East Newsletter** <http://wmenews.com/> has continued to produce a useful series of articles and notes, all available for free download. Recent papers have included:

Volume 1, issue 3 (December 2006)

Preliminary report on the survey of the health status of the spiny-tailed lizard (*Uromastix* sp.) in Warsan Farm, Al Ajban, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Volume 1, issue 4 (March 2007)

Implementation of the CITES convention in the UAE.

Vol. 2, issue 1 (June 2007)

Education and awareness efforts on wildlife issues by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi.

Camera trap survey in the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve

Vol. 2, issue 3 (December 2007)

West Nile Fever in the United Arab Emirates

Seroprevalence of H5 avian influenza virus in birds from the United Arab Emirates