

# focus



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Emirates Natural History Group

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

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to a bumper issue of Focus. A look through the contents certainly shows that the ENHG is a vibrant and very active organization! As the weather cools off and camping becomes a more comfortable option, I am sure many of our members will be spending more time in the outdoors. Please do consider writing up any observations or experiences for Focus, or submitting photos to the editor. We should be able to identify most things among us! And you never know...such observations may turn out to be really important and interesting. There is so much still unknown in the Natural History of the UAE and always the possibility of discovering unknown archaeological sites.

The first lecture in October, on the genesis of the Yemen Leopard Recovery Programme by David Stanton (nicely summarized by Molly on pages 7-8) was a treat for those attending. We believe that the YLRP is an exciting and critical initiative to collect data and start the long process of recovery for the critically endangered leopards of the Yemen. Having so recently lost the UAE leopard population from the mountains here, we feel it important to assist in this new venture. I would like to thank all our members for their support in providing a small grant to the YLRP. We and David will keep the ENHG membership up to date in progress!

Finally, welcome to our four new Committee members: Barbara Smith, Laura Wallace, Stefan Beck and Julie Bird. We do appreciate their enthusiasm and support for our Group. Julie has agreed to serve as our Secretary, taking over from Jenny Mueller. Thanks, Jenny, for your truly dedicated service over the past few years!

*Drew Gardner*

## EMEG Beach Iftar Dinner 2009



*Photo: EMEG*

On Friday 11 September, members of all three NHGs joined the Emirates Marine Environmental Group for the third annual Iftar dinner held at the EMEG Reserve near Jebel Ali and hosted by EMEG Founder/Director Major Ali Al Suweidi. Those of us who drove in convoy from Abu Dhabi arrived at the beach reserve in time for a quick swim before dinner. This time guests were asked to bring dishes from their countries to share, so there was a spillover table of delicious side dishes and desserts in addition to Major Ali's traditional fare - harees, grilled fish and rice, barbecued shellfish, etc.

## In this issue

- Page 1:** Front cover
- Page 2:** Editorial, EMEG Beach Iftar Dinner 2009
- Page 3:** Pearl Diving at the EMEG Reserve, Eid Camping Trip to Hail Juwari
- Page 4:** Eid Camping Trip to Hail Juwari
- Page 5:** Eid Camping Trip to Hail Juwari
- Page 6:** Eid Camping Trip to Hail Juwari, ENHG Trip Convoy Guidelines
- Page 7:** ENHG Trip Convoy Guidelines, Review: Genesis of the Yemeni Leopard Recovery Programme
- Page 8:** Review: Genesis of the YLRP, Next Speaker, Upcoming Speaker
- Page 9:** Kelley's Kettle - Special Offer, ENHG Equipment for Members' Use, Websites of General Interest, Bookstall
- Page 10:** Committee Members, Lectures, Field Trips, In the Local News Media, Corporate Sponsors

## FRONT COVER PICTURE

*Photograph: Aloe vera at Ayun Dhofar, Oman*

*Photographer: Drew Gardner*

## This month's contributors

Andrew Bean, Michael Creamer, EMEG, ENHG- Al Ain, Feng Wen, Drew Gardner, Molly McQuarrie, Greta Shorey, Keith Taylor, May Yoke Taylor

After dinner, our host, Major Ali, introduced two films about pearl diving, which tied in to the next day's pearl diving experience. The first film, in black-and-white, commissioned by Sheikh Zayed in 1971, showed footage of Emiratis engaging in pearl diving in the same boats and under the same conditions as their forebears. The second film, in colour, showed a more recent pearl diving expedition.

Following the films, EMEG's Senior Environmental Manager / Incoming Marine Program Director Keith Wilson gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all of EMEG's current projects: island cleanups, coral translocation, etc. He also informed us that Rima Jabado was about to leave her position as EMEG's Marine Program Director to begin working on a PhD in marine biology, studying sharks in Arabian Gulf waters--an important, not very well studied, subject.

Most guests returned home Friday night, but a few of us camped on the EMEG beach. Temperatures were high for camping--certainly not below 30° C, but with the help of the sea breeze and the sound of lapping waves, sleep was possible. Those who had signed up for the pearl diving trip were up early and off at 7 a.m. The rest of us enjoyed a more leisurely morning of swimming, visiting, and birdwatching on the beach after another visit to this special place before heading homeward.

*Keith Taylor*

## Pearl Diving at the EMEG Reserve

On 12 September, Major Ali and his sailing crew led a pearling expedition in the water off Jebel Ali, giving twenty-four eager participants from all three natural history groups a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in a tradition that was once central to the life of Arabian Gulf people.

After a brief introduction to the history and technique of pearling, we were fitted with traditional clothes. Leaving behind modern accessories such as sun glasses, watches, and cameras, we waded in knee-deep water to bring water, dates, and barasti mats to a 15-year-old pearling dhow of the Jalibut design, while chanting "Salli Ala al Nabi Mohammed (praise Mohammed)". There is a song for each task. While the jalibut sailed to the pearl bank selected for that day, Major Ali led the chant and told us stories.



Traditional-style boat crew and pearl divers

*Photo: EMEG*

We learned that the Arabian Gulf had lured generations of divers to risk their lives in search for treasures in order to pay off debts that passed on from fathers to sons. Divers faced dangers of "bends", as well as of attacks by barracudas, sharks and jelly fish, not to mention the extreme hardship of spending up to three summer months at sea. Each dive would last 2 to 3 minutes, while the divers collected as many oysters as possible. From 6 am till sunset, divers worked in the summer heat, only breaking for a prayer, a lunch consisting of three dates and a small cup of water, and a brief rest. At the end of the day, a meager meal of fish and rice would be distributed according to the amount of oysters a diver brought that day. Many would go hungry.

On our expedition, we helped with sailing, tried our hands at diving and opening oysters, and feasted on a delicious meal of fish, rice, and fruits. At the end of the trip, we joined the captain in a cheerful bargaining game with a pearl merchant to get a good price for two small pearls collected.

Pearling in the Gulf region goes back 4,000 years, but it disappeared some 20 years ago. While the Gulf no longer yields "the most perfect and exquisite pearls" as Pliny, the author of *Naturalis Historia*, once claimed, the tradition still lives on in the memories of the people who treasure it.

*Fen Weng*

## Eid Camping Trip to Hail Juwari



Hail Juwari wadi beneath cloud-shrouded mountains

*Photo: Keith Taylor*

At the start of the long 2009 Eid Al Fitr holiday, from 18 to 20, 21, or 22 September (reflecting various return dates), a total of 28 campers in 10 cars (14 adults and 7 children) enjoyed a camping trip in the cool juniper woodlands on a high plateau on the flanks of Jebel Shams in Oman: Hail Juwari.

Scouting the site in advance for us, Stefan found that our intended campsite inside the forest of large juniper trees, accessible one year ago, was now blocked to us. The guard at the now-locked gate communicated to Greta in Arabic that Sultan Qaboos had left instructions that he could be coming in his helicopter today (or any other day), and that soldiers were on permanent duty there. We understood that it might be possible to access this site in small groups, though none of us actually attempted that this time.

Fortunately, a suitable alternate campsite was found nearby on a fairly flat but VERY rocky open space, requiring tents to be tied to anchor stones in lieu of tent pegs. This site had a view of Ibri and Jebel Misht to the west, and Jebel Shams to the east. The altitude was 2,240m, allowing us to beat the heat, with daytime temperatures in the 20s, down to something like 16°C at night - cool enough to enjoy songs and stories round evening campfires, followed by snug sleeping bags.

In various groups, we explored Hail Juwari on a number of walks over the course of our stay. On Day 2, we drove several kilometers back to the brown sign that had greeted us at the top of our steep climb up from the Jebel Shams road--a sign posted by the Omani government displaying essential rules, in Arabic, for visitors to the area--including admonishments to remove all rubbish and to refrain from lighting fires near trees. Having turned left at the T-junction marked by this sign on our way up, this time we drove on past it to the right, several kilometers into a major wadi/gorge, down a road near houses, where we parked and walked down to visible flowing water, exploring the wadi pools and falaj. That afternoon Andrew and family walked down into the juniper forest valley outside the gated area, spotting some 10 m tall junipers, and a wadi running with water.

During the afternoon of Day 2, the clouds began to form regularly over the mountain with occasional drizzle or rain. For some of us, enjoying afternoon siestas, this



was the first time we had been in our tents in the rain in this part of the world. Stefan, who was off on a hike, returned to find his mesh-top tent, left sans rain-fly, hastily covered over with a mat by other campers, but with a puddle on the floor. Michael observed that the refreshing breeze that blew UP the wadi after 10:00 a.m. might be caused by the sun's heating of the wadi walls, causing a thermal updraft sucking cooler air from lower elevations. Of course, as tempting as camping or living in the wadi might be, it is risky due to flash flooding. It can rains at any time of year, and clouds on the mountain top spell DANGER!

On sunny Day 3, one group walked along a ridge behind the camp in view of Jebel Misht, round boulders and a large overhang, and others climbed the hills on either side. And Keith demonstrated his solar cooker (see June 2009 Focus), handily cooking pumpkin for dinner.



Hikers behind campsite, Jebel Misht in background  
Photo: May Yoke Taylor

That afternoon, a larger group, led by Stefan, drove back past the site of the previous morning's wadi excursion, and walked several kilometers down a wide, steep wadi, some reaching a point quite far down, near its mouth on the plain below.



Trekking along the cliff-side road in the wide wadi  
Photo: May Yoke Taylor

Following are some of the natural history observations we made during the course of the above rambles round Hail Juwari. First off, the flora dotting the hilltops by our campsite consisted largely of four species. Three of them were small-sized trees, growing in clusters: wild Olive, *Olea europea*; juniper, *Juniperus excelsa*; and bhoot, *Monothecha buxifolia* (but now reclassified as *Sideroxylon mascatense*, says Dr. Shahina Ghazanfar.)



Juniper and wild Olive trees  
Photo: Andrew Bean



Trip leader Andrew picking a bhoot berry  
Photo: Keith Taylor



Overripe bhoot berries drying out on the tree  
Photo: May Yoke Taylor

The taller bhoot trees we found along the road closer to the wadis (see above photos) displayed the sweet purple berries that are said to be highly regarded among the locals for their nutritive and health-giving properties. They were evidently just past their peak season, but a few still ripe berries were collected and consumed on breakfast cereal - carefully, as each one contains a large, tooth-crackingly hard pit. For those who have the patience for them, they have a deliciously sweet flavour - not a bit tart. One of their main properties - a mild laxative effect - was duly noted!





*Dodonaea viscosa*, 'Hopbush'

Photo: Keith Taylor

The fourth plant species - growing everywhere around the campsite - was a prolific shrub with a woody base, *Dodonaea viscosa*, commonly known as 'hopbush'. One supposes this common name arose because the seed pods, (some were still hanging on to these shrubs in late September, well past the fruiting season) are designed as fliers, with flat rounded projecting wings, which may perhaps be superficially reminiscent of the papery outer husks of hops seed cones. Amazingly, as a quick web search reveals, this species, a member of the soapberry family, Sapindaceae, is found, in many varieties, on all continents other than Antarctica. Apparently, this is one of nature's great adapters. According to Marijcke Jongbloed in her *Guide to Wildflowers of the UAE*, the leaves (containing a resinous substance) are used as a traditional treatment for toothache and sore muscles, and they are not browsed by goats or camels--which one supposes may help to account for its prevalence.

Down by the terraced wadi stream were the usual wadi plants such as oleanders, along with date palms, of course. Also seen were ground hugging woody, spiny plants identified by Dick Hornby as *Ziziphus hajarensis*, the Hajar Mountain (possibly endemic) version of the much taller sidr tree, *Z. spina-christi*. An identifying feature is the triple-vein vein branching from the base of each leaf (which shows the importance of a leaf close-up shot for the purposes of flora identification).



*Ziziphus hajarensis*

Photo: Keith Taylor

Another striking plant, growing next to an olive tree along the wide wadi road walk, was a shrub with a woody base, which Dick Hornby ID'd from a photo as *Pulicaria glutinosa*, 'Sticky Fleabane' (see Feb Focus 2009, p3). However, Drew Gardner suspects it is

actually *Euryops arabicus*. Both are yellow-flowered members of the family Asteraceae. Though this lone plant stood out as a splash of bright green in this high, dry, dusty wadi, whichever species it is, it is a lot more common down in Oman's central desert, where *P. glutinosa* is one of three dominant shrubs (cf. *Biology of the Central Desert of Oman*, by our acquaintance from Kew Gardens, Dr. Shahina Ghazanfar).



Provisionally identified by DG as *Euryops arabicus*

Photo: May Yoke Taylor

A number of insects were observed around the campsite, including a rather large brown ant species, a dusty brown dragonfly, and the following butterfly, which has been identified by former DNHG member Khalid Rafeek, now in Abu Dhabi, as a quite common species in this region, a White-edged Rock Brown. We've just learned that the food plants of all satyrids are grasses; we'll keep an eye out for grasses next time we see them.



White-edged Rock Brown, a satyrid, or grayling

Photo: May Yoke Taylor

Moving on to reptiles, two lizard species were observed. The one we managed to photograph has been identified by Drew Gardner as a Rock Semaphore Gecko, *Pristurus rupestris*.



Rock Semaphore Gecko, *Pristurus rupestris*

Photo: Keith Taylor

Barbara Braun reported seeing a snake near the large juniper forest that was “a pale tan with a touch of pink and very, very long and thin”. Drew says it is most likely a Wadi Racer, *Platyceps rhodorachis*. Though available photos of the latter are much darker and thicker than what Barbara saw, Andrew comments that “their possible colour seems capable of being anything,” so this ID remains unclear. In addition, a dead toad, *Bufo arabicus*, was seen along the falaj, where, incidentally, one live leech was also seen.

As for birds, swifts (species unidentified) buzzed the campsite regularly, and small brown Desert-Lark-sized birds twittered in the olive trees morning and evening. Stefan saw an eagle with a triangular whitish patch underneath, which he tentatively guesses might be a Bonelli's Eagle. In the large wadi we photographed a silhouetted shrike--species unknown. One bird photo, sent to the Eriksens, yielded a precise identification--the Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, *Monticola saxatilis*, the male of which is arguably one of the most beautiful birds in the region, with a blue head and back, a chestnut underside, and dark gray wings. Our photo, though adequate for identification, doesn't meet the standards of this newsletter, but some excellent ones can be seen on this webpage: <http://www.birdsoman.com/Birds/130-Thrushes/RufoustailedRockThrush/RufoustailedRockThrush.htm>.

In an overhang behind the campsite, sandy beige deposits were found hanging from the blackened ceiling, with inner layers / 'tunnels' exposed (see photo below). Some assumed them to be stalactites and others the work of 'mud termites'; Drew has declared them to be travertine stalactites--nothing to do with insects.



The 'throne room' in overhang near campsite

Photo: Keith Taylor



Cut-away layers of travertine stalactite

Photo: Keith Taylor

In the evenings, Andrew trained the club's Celestron telescope on Jupiter and its moons and on the Andromeda galaxy. Of special interest was the GPS-guided Sky Scout locator/identifier tool (a recent ENHG acquisition), which allowed some of us to expand our knowledge of constellations, and to get more information about visible stars and planets. Watch for future ENHG star-gazing outings to have a go with this equipment!

As for archaeological remnants, at the rear of the campsite, we found an oblong pile of stones that we speculated could be a broken-down wolf trap; we know wolf traps have been found elsewhere in this area (see Sept. 2007 Focus), and this pile seemed too small to be from a tomb. Also, black smudges on the overhang ceiling might be traces of human habitation; we've heard that local Omanis lived in caves in this region until being provided with government-issue tents, now being replaced by houses.

And as for observations of contemporary culture, Barbara B. & Michael C. observed old Omani man spinning wool onto a hand-held spindle as he walked along the road. Nick Poultney managed to answer the old man's questions as to our destination in Arabic. It was obvious the old man thought we were camping as a stop on a journey rather than as a destination.

On our way out, on the first day of Eid in Oman, we (Keith and May Yoke) stopped to unload rubbish at a public skip at the first village near the bottom of the mountain road. While doing so, we were hailed by an Omani who invited us in to his house to join him, his brother, and their whole families--men and women, boys and girls--for coffee, bread and meat, and Omani halwa. A Jacky Chan film, dubbed into Arabic, was showing on the TV in the background. We observed that Omanis are always welcoming to expat travellers, as that this wasn't the first time we'd been invited in to an Omani home for refreshments.

Keith Taylor, Michael Creamer, Greta Shorey

## ENHG Trip Convoy Guidelines

*Once again, the prime field trip season is upon us, so it's a good time for all ENHG members, new and returning, to review basic convoy rules. Because convoys are something of a bothersome necessity on field trips, we offer this set of rules to make our journeys together as safe and hassle-free as possible. --Ed.*

### 1 General Items

Arrive at the starting point in plenty of time for the briefing on the route and destination of the trip. Please be ready to start with a full fuel tank. If you are going to leave the group before the end of the trip, please notify the trip leader and others. Do not go faster than you feel comfortable driving. **Keep your headlights on to make it easier to identify the members of the convoy.**

### 2 Rules of the Road

Our line of cars should not dominate the road. If others are trying to pass the group, please let them do so. Whenever the group stops, if at all feasible, make sure you pull off the road completely. Always use your indicators in plenty of time to guide cars in the group, as



well as other road users. **If you want the group to stop, flash your headlights.** If the car behind you flashes its headlights, flash yours until the group leader pulls over. When the group passes through a congested area, it should try to stop as soon as safely practicable to regroup.

### **3 Overtaking**

Overtake only when it is permitted and safe to do so.

### **4 Speed**

Always stay within the legal speed limit. If the traffic is flowing more slowly than the legal limit, go with the traffic flow. The lead car should establish a sensible pace for the group. It is the individual driver's responsibility to keep the vehicle behind in sight, insuring that the group stays together. **If the car behind slows down, please slow down with it.** If every car does this the convoy will stay together.

### **5 Tips for the trip leader**

Have a short meeting of all drivers to explain the route and destinations. Assign a buddy to drivers who are unfamiliar with the route. Hand out route directions if possible. **Collect mobile phone numbers** and emergency contact numbers of all drivers, and make sure all drivers have your mobile phone number. If there is a large number of vehicles, it is advisable to break up into two groups with a lead car for each group.

### **6 Sweep/Rear Guard**

The lead car driver should designate someone to act as "sweep" (rear guard) for the convoy. **The sweep should always stay at the rear**, should be on the lookout for unscheduled stops (due, for example, to a red light, overheating, puncture, or other breakdown, or unscheduled petrol station or photograph-taking stop) and should alert the leader by phone, if necessary.

*Adapted from document in ENHG-AI Ain Archives*

## **Review: Genesis of the Yemeni Leopard Recovery Programme**

It is highly interesting how the ENHG meetings get off the ground every 2 weeks or so. There is the mingling around the book table, the meeting of old friends, announcements of up-coming talks and field trips, the odd announcement or appeal for assistance, after which we finally settle down to the serious business of the evening--listening to the guest speaker. Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> was no exception, with a talk and subsequent discussion about the conservation of wild leopards in Yemen, on the bottom of the Arabian Peninsula.

David Stanton, an American science teacher formerly working for the Sana'a International School, now acting as a full-time conservationist, was with us for one evening only, to give us insight into the difficulties of conserving a species whose continued existence in Yemen is probable though not confirmed, and in a part of the world subject to multitudinous forces that mitigate against any success in the effort.

To date there is no proof that any wild specimens remain in Yemen of *Panthera pardus nimr*, known as the

Arabian Leopard. The word 'nimr' in the name refers both to its Arabic name and to the fact that it one of the 15 currently accepted Leopard subspecies. This Arabian big cat is actually the smallest of all the leopards.

There is a successful breeding programme underway in His Majesty's Bait al Barakah Breeding Centre for Omani Mammals just outside Muscat, as well as in zoos around the world. The Omani programme started in 1985 with 2 males and 2 females. For further information see the internet citations below. Oman loaned 2 breeding females to the Breeding Centre for Endangered Wildlife in Sharjah, which currently maintains the world's largest captive breeding population of Arabian Leopards. Yemen's Taiz Zoo also has a successful breeding programme although Sana'a Zoo has had no breeding success with its 4 leopards to date because of a lack of capacity and much needed expertise. Young have been born there but have not survived.

David enumerated the challenges facing YLRP--the Yemeni Leopard Recovery Programme. They include the following: habitat destruction and the need for security and conservation of leopard prey species; the need for prevention of the lucrative trafficking of endangered species for private collectors; the need for education to modify the attitude that the leopard is a nuisance or 'trash' species; unfounded suspicions that leopard conservation will interfere with the locals' access to the area; and the on-going security situation in parts of Yemen. While raising public awareness David has received comments from Yemenis which include, "We have leopards in Yemen?"

He also detailed the challenges of getting funding. Funding is especially important as it can benefit the local people economically--which is a powerful incentive to the surrounding communities to protect their rare and unique native fauna.

On a positive note, David described the support he has received from some government functionaries and several corporate sponsors. There is a need for on-going funding to train and employ Yemeni rangers, to train Yemenis in husbandry, to obtain expertise in such skills as sedating leopards and fitting them with tracking devices should any leopards be found, and perhaps even a livestock insurance programme to protect local food and income sources and to fund the conservation and repletion of leopard prey species.

The Omani efforts have tracked leopards to within 1 km of the Yemeni border, so there is hope that some of them have 'passports' to cross over into Yemen.

David concluded with a Margaret Mead quotation: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." The subsequent discussion ranged from questions such as, "What would you do if you did locate some leopards?" to the suggestion to contact the archaeologists in Yemen to see if they have recorded any leopard traps, as a map of these structures could give a rough idea of the leopard's historical range.

David thankfully acknowledged a grant of \$3,000 from the project support funds of our chapter of the ENHG.

For further information on Arabian Leopards:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian\\_Leopard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Leopard)  
[http://www.oryxoman.com/jabel\\_samhan.html](http://www.oryxoman.com/jabel_samhan.html)  
<http://www.breedingcentresharjah.com/Home.htm>  
[http://www.wmnews.com/newsletters/File/Volume-3/Issue-1/WME\\_V3I1\\_E\\_P2.pdf](http://www.wmnews.com/newsletters/File/Volume-3/Issue-1/WME_V3I1_E_P2.pdf)

To view a slide show and a short video:  
<http://www.arkive.org/arabian-leopard/panthera-pardus-nimr/>

YRLP contact details: David B. Stanton, Coordinator,  
 P.O. Box 7069, Sana'a, Yemen; Tel: +967733916928;  
 Email: [yrlp@yemenileopard.org](mailto:yrlp@yemenileopard.org)

### Molly McQuarrie

*NB: The ENHG's grant to the YLRP is designated to cover training for five Yemenis at the Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve in Dhofar, Oman. The funds will contribute to transportation to and from Oman and accommodation & expenses over a two-week period.*

*Expected outcomes:*

1. Memorandum of understanding between YLRP and Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve staff
2. Initial appraisal of selected locations for the presence of leopards en route to Dhofar
3. Acquisition of necessary skills to independently conduct Arabian Leopard field research, specifically including Initial appraisal of other locations upon the return trip to Sana'a

*Candidates for this training (including not only professional biologists but also uneducated former leopard hunters) have been identified; they are currently expected to begin training by early January, 2010.*

*David Stanton will be invited back to report to the ENHG membership on the success of this project and on the unfolding mission of the YLRP, probably by the end of the 2009-2010 lecture season. -Ed.*

### Next Speaker



**Dr. Richard (Dick) Hornby** has a background in zoology, but he also has a keen interest in botany and ecology in general. For about twenty years he worked with the Nature Conservancy Council in southern England. Here he filled various roles, mostly concerned with threats to coastal and terrestrial habitats, evaluation and management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and lots of casework. After a period as an ecological consultant in Southern England, he moved to Abu Dhabi in 1993 to set up the National Avian Research Centre (NARC), which is now part of EAD. When the organization was well established he moved to the UAE Federal Environmental Agency (FEA) to advise on wildlife and land use issues. In 1996 he became an independent ecological consultant, based in Abu Dhabi. He extended

his interests into marine and coastal ecology, and carried out a number of coastal surveys.

In 1997 Dick joined the staff of The Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems, to work as an Academic Editor, while continuing with ecological consultancy. The encyclopedia is devoted to bringing together a comprehensive and integrated body of knowledge for use in correcting current practices which threaten the Earth's essential life support systems.

In 2005 the consultancy work became a little more official, and he established Nautica Environmental Associates, jointly with Veryan Pappin. The company has always been busy and has grown to about a dozen people. Dick takes the lead with all the terrestrial surveys and has carried out many surveys in UAE, Qatar and Bahrain.

For about ten years Dick has also been involved with co-leading natural history holiday tours, mostly in Mediterranean Europe. He was the Chairman of the Emirates Natural History Group from 1993 to 1999.

### Upcoming Speaker



**Dr. Christophe Tourenq** started to work in 2001 at the National Avian Research Center (near Sweihan, Al Ain) from the former Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA), now known as Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD). Thereafter, he moved to Abu Dhabi EAD headquarter to work at the Terrestrial Environment Research Center until the end of 2005. Since early 2006 he has been working as project manager with the Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS) in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) on the Wadi Wurayah Protected Area Project.

In a joint project, the WWF-EWS worked hard together on a proposal which culminated in March 2009 with the official declaration of Wadi Wurayah, in Fujairah Emirate, as a Mountain Protected Area. Wadi Wurayah is of considerable ecological significance because of its permanent water resources, with an exceptional quality of water that supports a rich biodiversity of fauna and flora. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty, which is already an established and popular tourist attraction.

The Wadi Wurayah Mountain Protected Area is now a unique protected natural area in the mountains of the UAE and is poised to become an example for other Emirates of how to integrate tourism, local use and conservation of their natural resources.

*The Editor thanks the above speakers for providing autobiographical info. & photo for Focus.*



## Kelly Kettle - Special Offer

The fuel-efficient Kelly Kettle, mentioned in June 2009 Focus, and shown in the photograph below, is now on offer to all paid-up members of all three Natural History Groups in the UAE at a 10% discount until 31 Oct. 2009. You can order this kettle from <http://www.kellykettle.com>. After registering, click on the online shopping link, choose a kettle, and add it to your shopping cart. On the order form, fill in this Coupon Code: 10%ENHG. -Ed



Kelly Kettle

### ENHG Equipment for Members' Use

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

- First-Aid Kit
  - 'Nikon Coolpix' camera: 5 Megapixel, 4x opt zoom
  - 'GARMIN GPSMAP 60CSx' GPS unit
  - Birding Telescope
  - 'Sky Scout': celestial object identifier/locator tool  
(The club also has a good astronomical telescope, a Celestron, which is only used on official ENHG trips)
- Please contact Andrew Bean, Excursion Secretary, at [rexabean@emirates.net.ae](mailto:rexabean@emirates.net.ae) to make enquiries. -Ed.

### Websites of General Interest

ENHG-AA Website (Archives: 3 newsletters, Tribulus):  
<http://www.enhg.org>

Tommy Pedersen's UAE Birding / UAE Nature Forum:  
[www.uaebirding.com](http://www.uaebirding.com)

Hanne & Jens Eriksen's Birds Oman website:  
[www.BirdsOman.com](http://www.BirdsOman.com)

Qatar NHG website:  
<http://www.qnhg.org>

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

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

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

Sharjah Museums sites (Check out the virtual tours!):  
<http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae/>

Emirates Marine Environmental Group:  
[www.emeg.ae](http://www.emeg.ae)

EMEG Ecologist Keith Wilson's Public Gallery:  
<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/KDPWilson>

### ITEMS ON SALE

#### AT THE ENHG STALL

All prices are in dirhams.

- The Emirates – A Natural History, 350.  
*The first complete referencing guide to the wildlife of the UAE. 580 colour photos.*
- Jebel Hafit – A Natural History, 100.  
*An attractive, encyclopaedic presentation of the natural resources of this local landmark.  
(Free copies available to schools. Ask Chairman.)*
- Terrestrial Environment of Abu Dhabi Emirate, 240.
- Marine Environment and Resources of Abu Dhabi, 140.
- Seashells of Eastern Arabia, 120.
- Wild About Mammals, 40.
- Wild About Reptiles, 40.
- Snakes of Arabia, 50.
- On-road in the UAE, 50.
- Abu Dhabi Bird checklist, 10.
- Emirates Bird Report, 20.
- Oman Bird List, ed 6, 30.
- Birdwatching guide to Oman, 2nd edition, 100.  
*Guide to bird watching spots in Oman.*
- The Birds of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, 50.
- Native Plants of Oman, 80.
- Comprehensive Guide to the Wildflowers of the UAE, 100.
- Trucial States, 150.
- Oman 1965, 150.
- Natural History of Oman, 50.
- Falconry, 60.
- Pests, 35. *Find out what's in and around your home.*
- Reef Fishes of the UAE, 50.
- Snorkeling and Diving in Oman, 50.
- Feast of Dates, 100.
- UAE in Focus, 100.
- Sir Bani Yas, 100.
- Musandam, 90.
- Abu Dhabi 8 million years ago, 15.
- Discovering Qatar, 120.

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## Lectures

### Venue: HCT/ADMC Auditorium

Press CTRL+click [here](#) to view map/directions.

6<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
Genesis of the Yemeni  
Leopard Recovery  
Programme  
**David Stanton**

### Alternate venue for Oct 20: CERT Health Sciences Auditorium

Press CTRL+click [here](#) to view map/directions.

20<sup>th</sup> Oct. 7:30 PM  
Natural History of the  
UAE (Part 2)

**Dick Hornby**

### Regular Venue: HCT/ADMC Auditorium

3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 7:30 PM  
Wadi Wurayah  
Protected Area: After  
the official declaration

**Christophe Tourenq**

## Field Trips

9th/10th Oct.  
Camping/Snorkelling -  
Sawadi & Daymaniyat  
Islands Nature Reserve  
**Feng Wen**

23rd Oct.  
½ Day Trip to Al Ain  
Zoo

**Andrew Bean**

13th/14th Nov.  
Day Trip to Umm Al  
Quwain

**Feng Wen**

27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> Nov. (Eid)  
Camping/snorkelling  
trip to the Musandam

**Andrew Bean**

## In the Local News Media

Large colony of flamingos found (near Musaffah):  
<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090914/NATIONAL/709139815/1010>

Fresh calls for whale shark's release:  
<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090921/NATIONAL/709209888/1139>

Big ears and fast feet (by Chris Drew, hare expert):  
<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090927/NATIONAL/709269954>

Hanging out with bat man (Drew Gardner):  
<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091004/NATIONAL/710039944/1342>

They're crazy for the foxes:  
<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091011/NATIONAL/710109913/1342>

Cute, but no cuddly kitty:  
<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091018/NATIONAL/710179949/1342>

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