



# GAZELLE

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مجموعتنا دورية للتاريخ والطبيعي

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**Contributors—**

Thanks to the following for their contributions this month:

*Gosia van Unen and Margaret Swan.*

Send your contributions to:

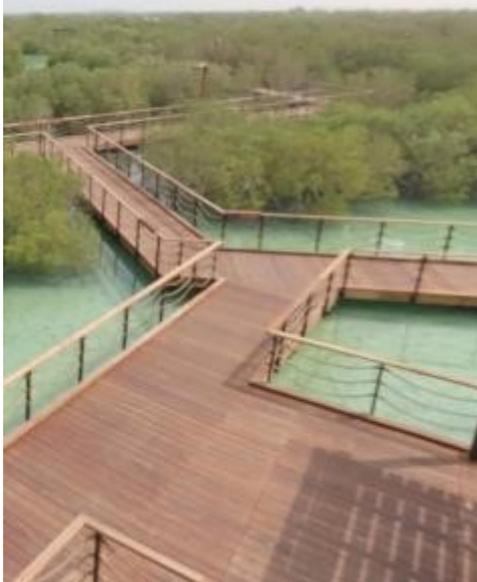
[gazelleeditor@gmail.com](mailto:gazelleeditor@gmail.com)

**New membership secretary needed—see page 4**



Unidentified fish, approximately 20—25 cm in length

*Part of the intricate boardwalk at Jubail Mangrove Park as seen from the observation deck*



**Jubail Mangrove Park and the Gazelle**

**A**fter attending a recent online lecture exploring the Ecology of Qatar's Marine and Terrestrial Environments lecture which was presented by Dr. Greta Aeby and Dr. Aspa D. Chatziefthimiou I thought about my last visit of the mangroves in Abu Dhabi.

Now, more than ever, we realize that everything in nature is connected and that removing or destroying certain parts of it inadvertently impacts the rest of the system. Mangroves are such a system that has far reaching interconnectivity, providing wildlife habitats, protecting coastlines, shielding corals from sediment, reducing CO2 emissions and so much more.

Jubail Mangrove Park lies within Abu Dhabi, on Jubail Island. Stepping onto the boardwalk you can almost feel the pulse of the sea's tidal movements. If you plan your visit at the brief equilibrium between the tides then it truly feels as if time stands still.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Announcements and Recorders

### Monthly Virtual Speaker Information

Sunday, 10th January, 2021, at 8pm via Zoom

**Presenter:** Dr. Yash Bhatnagar

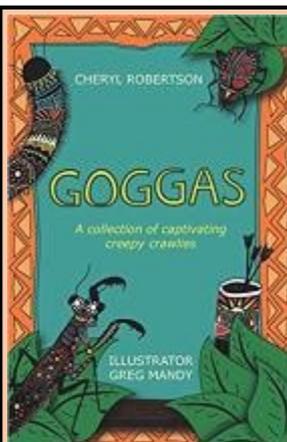
**Lecture Title:** "Wild encounters in the high Himalaya."

Dr. Yash Bhatnagar will present us with some of his fascinating encounters with wildlife (and people) over the three decades of work across different parts of the Himalaya.

**Biography** - Dr. Yash Veer Bhatnagar completed his PhD on ibex ecology in the mid 1990's and since then has been engaged in ecological research and conservation in the Asian mountains. He has led and participated in numerous research projects that include exploratory surveys, species ecology studies and understanding conservation threats, with a focus on snow leopard and other high-altitude wildlife. A strong believer in participatory conservation, he has been part of numerous initiatives with communities, and has further expanded this to include all stakeholders that influence wildlife conservation in the mountains of Asia. Since about 2000, he is using these learnings to scale up such initiatives to large landscapes. An important tool for this is to develop participatory, landscape level long-term management plans with thorough involvement of the government and local community. Among his primary achievements was leading a joint team of researchers and foresters to develop a national strategy for snow leopard conservation, the Project Snow Leopard, and subsequently, a management plan for a large landscape in Himachal Pradesh. He further ensured in its effective implementation that includes cooperation, coordination and convergence among conservation agencies, local communities and government departments to plan and carry out the necessary work.

He has worked in different capacities in India's premier institute, the Wildlife Institute of India for about 15 years and from 2003 to 2019 in the Snow Leopard Trust and Nature Conservation Foundation. Between 2015 and 2019 he additionally led the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Program's initiative to develop and implement integrated, climate smart landscape-level plans of snow leopard landscape in all the 12 range countries. Since January 2020, he is developing an independent program in NCF to continue work in the Himalaya.

He has over 45 peer reviewed publications and numerous other reports, conference papers and popular articles to his credit.



DNHG member, Cheryl Robertson who has contributed articles for the Gazelle in the past, has written a book. The book is for children, aged between 3—15.

Jeffrey A. Lockwood — professor, entomologist and author, writes:

*'This nonfiction book introduces the reader to some peculiar traits of creepy crawlies that are essential to the food chain as decomposers, soil aerators, food sources and more.'*

The book is available from all Amazon outlets.

### DNHG Recorders

**Reptiles - Dr. Reza Khan**  
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**Seashells - Andrew Childs**  
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**Bird Recorder— Panos Azmanis**  
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### From the Editor:

I was delighted to find this moon snail egg case during exercise on New Year's morning. It was very small and the only one along that part of the Jumeirah shoreline.

In Abu Dhabi, not just marine life was observed on the coast.

Gosia would appreciate if someone could identify the fish on the front cover. Enjoy your read!

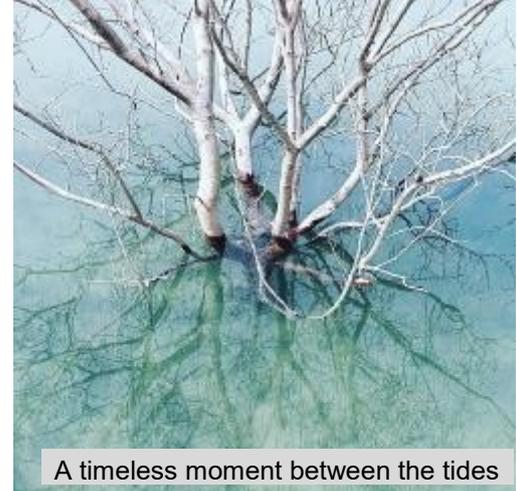


# Spotlight!

## Observations at Jubail Mangrove Park, by Gosia van Unen



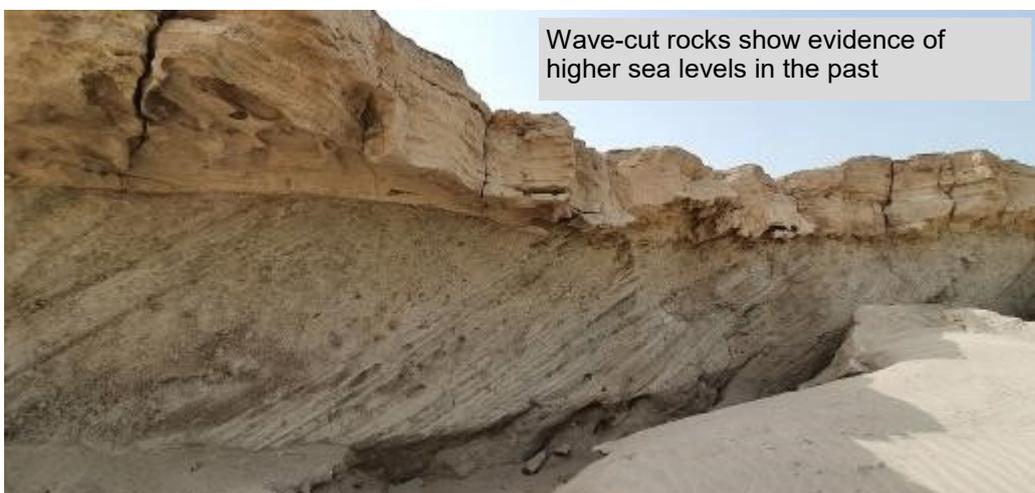
Mangrove vegetation along the channels



A timeless moment between the tides



Mottled shore crab *Pachygrapsus transversus* is a species of decapods in the family Grapsidae



Wave-cut rocks show evidence of higher sea levels in the past



Cornetfish *Fistularia commersonii*

## Field Clips

(Continued from page 1)

Despite the quiet nature of things in Jubail Mangrove Park there is a lot going on and plenty to see. Life is a constant struggle in a hot very saline environment. Close to shore, short and spiky aerial roots of the Grey Mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) protrude from the soft muddy bottom. This is the only mangrove species found in Abu Dhabi. It accumulates and excretes excess salt through the leaves making them look grey, hence the name. Walking further another section of the mangroves opens up to the sea and, just as the tide starts moving, you can see trumpet fish lined up in the current. There are many more fish species taking advantage of the secluded mangrove habitat such as Snappers, Trevallies, Scads, Rabbit Fish, Silver Biddy, Silver Mulletts, Milkfish or Four-Lined Terapon. Still further along the boardwalk there are strange looking black blobs on the mangrove branches. Looking more like an alien growth than a living creature, at closer inspection they turn out to be crabs. There are about 13 different crab species to be found within the mangroves. They include Ghost/Sand Crabs, Mottled Crabs and Swimmer Crabs. Still further down the walkway, a serious hunt is taking place. Small fish are being hunted by bigger ones. They use the shadows of the mangroves, walkway piers and observation buildings stilts to their advantage. There are many bird species staying here. Most common species are Greater Flamingo, Western Reef Heron, Grey Heron, Crab Plover, Grey Plover, Dunlin, Curlew Sandpiper and Whimbrel. With every turn of the way the view is different. You pass deeper channels, thickets and open shallows. There are shaded resting areas along the way and you can spend several hours there. Back on the shore there is still more to explore. Just before the entrance stretches a natural shoreline lined up with tiny shell fragments and enclosed by a higher cliff, a record of geological past, with various sediment layers pointing to different climate conditions and sea levels. Below the ledge I spotted fresh gazelle tracks. I had to think about the story of Abu Dhabi and its name attributed to this settlement. I also followed the gazelle and it brought me to the fresh water source. This time however, it was an irrigation sprinkler near the main building. Times change...

*Contribution by Gosia van Unen*

(more photographs can be seen on the Spotlight page)

Opening times can be found at the link below. The best time to visit is at high tide and a tide tables link is thoughtfully provided on the website:

<https://park.jubailisland.ae/>



Mottled shore crab *Pachygrapsus transversus*



Gazelle tracks along the shore

### Membership Secretary

An opportunity has arisen for a volunteer to take up the position of membership secretary. The new secretary will not only help the DNHG but reply to inquiries and generally interact with the membership. A knowledge of Excel is a requirement. Please contact any member of the committee if you are interested in this position (*contact details on page 6*).

We also take this opportunity to thank Aubrey Baugh, our present secretary, for her valuable contributions and wish her and her family well as they take up a new venture in Saudi Arabia.

## Field Clips

**A** light-hearted approach to field clip descriptions during walks in Jumeirah, by Margaret Swan

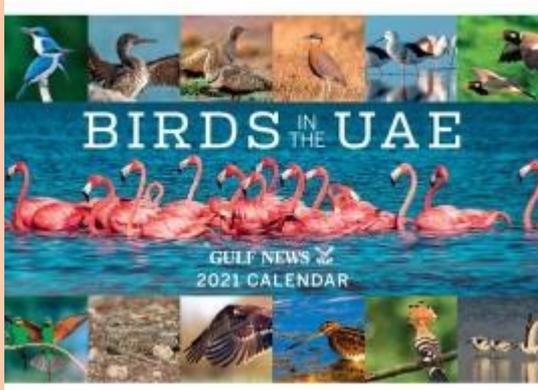
That moment, when you realise you are coming in to land in a tree full of rose-ringed parakeets.



Heron on the lookout!



Social distance queuing (or maybe watching to see what swims by the young cormorant).



Gulf News writes about producing this calendar for 2021. The photographs were taken by bird enthusiasts and collated by experts. Read the full article here:

<https://gulfnews.com/uae/brilliant-birds-in-the-uae-revealed-in-all-their-glory-1.75917225>



Image Credit: NASA, ESA and J. Olmsted (STScI)

Tsunami-like energy generated from a black hole, shoots out from a quasar, captured here by the Hubble Telescope. Read the full explanation at: <https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/quasars-rip-across-galaxies-like-tsunamis>

## Dubai Natural History Group (DNHG) Programme 2021

Monthly lectures are presently transmitted via Zoom, starting at 8.00pm

- 10 January:** Dr Yash Veer Bhatnagar will present an illustrated talk on "Wild encounters in the high Himalaya."
- 7 February:** Ali El-Keblawy will present an illustrated talk on "Plant diversity in the UAE: challenges and conservation."

The DNHG field trip program has been temporarily suspended in compliance with UAE coronavirus precautions, which are still in force.

## DNHG COMMITTEE 2020/2021

When possible, please contact committee members outside office hours

|                        | Name                         | telephone    | email                         |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Chairman               | <b>Gary Feulner</b>          | 04 306 5570  | grfeulner@gmail.com           |
| Vice Chairman          | <b>Valerie Chalmers</b>      | 050 830 5018 | valeriechalmers@gmail.com     |
| Treasurer              | <b>Puneet Kumar</b>          | 050 452 4820 | puneetcps@gmail.com           |
| Membership Secretary   | <b>Aubrey Baugh</b>          | 052 103 5167 | aubaug@gmail.com              |
| Speaker Co-ordinator   | <b>Michelle Sinclair</b>     | 050 458 6079 | sinclairmichelle611@gmail.com |
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## DNHG Membership

DNHG membership remains one of Dubai's best bargains at Dh100 for families and Dh50 for singles. Membership for the current year is valid from September 2020 to September 2021. In consideration of the restrictions on our lectures and field trips due to COVID-19, **all members who were paid up for 2019-2020 will be automatically renewed for 2020-2021**, without a renewal fee.

New members can join by (i) sending to the Membership Secretary (see above) a completed one-page membership form, which can be downloaded from our website ([www.dnhg.org](http://www.dnhg.org)) and (ii) making payment to our Emirates NBD account by cash deposit or transfer from your bank or ATM, using our IBAN number:

AE640260001012012013302. However, this process does not always identify the payer. So if you wish to pay by cash deposit, please also photograph or scan a copy of your payment confirmation and send via e-mail to the Membership Secretary, so we know whose money we have received.

DNHG membership entitles you to participate in field trips and helps pay for our lecture hall, publication and distribution of our monthly newsletter, the *Gazelle*, our post office box, additions to our library, incidental expenses of speakers and occasional special projects.