

GAZELLE

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مجموعة دبي للتاريخ الطبيعي

DUBAI NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

PO Box 9234, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Members' News

Interesting times....

Peter Cunningham, a DNHG member from Al-Ain and a frequent contributor to the *Gazelle*, has accepted an offer to serve as senior lecturer and coordinator for a B.Tech. degree program in Nature Conservation at Polytechnic of Namibia. Peter is already on station in Windhoek but his responsibilities will carry him around the country and into the field. We have not lost him entirely, however, as his family still resides in Al-Ain, and he will be "commuting" periodically. He is already making UAE field plans for the summer break in December and January, in part to continue his study of the ecology of *dhubs* (spiny-tailed lizards) in the UAE. Peter's ample time in the field, coupled with his keen eye and professional training, have made him one of the more accomplished UAE observers.

John Peacock has left Dubai after several years as a landscaper with an interest in reforestation of desert areas. He very kindly donated a number of natural history magazines to our library, including a complete collection of *New Scientist* for several years, smaller numbers of *National Geographic* and *Seedling*, and an eclectic collection of other titles.

Prof. **John Fox**, now of American University in Sharjah, and **Barbara Laird** of Zayed University have volunteered jointly to assume the position of DNHG Archeology Recorders, which has been vacant for some months. We hope to hear from them from time to time about news and observations locally, and they hope to hear from you. Good questions are as important as good answers.

Our Seashell Recorder, **Dr Sandy Fowler**, is heading inland. He is to drive one of the four ambulances purchased and fitted out by Gulf for Good with funds raised by participants in the Kilimanjaro sponsored climb. The Land-Rover Defenders will be shipped to Dar-Es-Salaam and delivered in Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Namibia. In other words, coast to coast over rather challenging roads. Three teams of drivers have volunteered to drive in one of three legs, two drivers per ambulance for safety and security. Sandy will be on the middle leg, driving from Lilongwe in Malawi across Zambia via Lusaka to Livingstone, near the Victoria falls. Needless to say, he is looking forward to the flora and fauna of Africa and hopes for a day or two free at the end of his stint to see some of the sights and natural history.

DNHG Membership

DNHG membership will be, from September 2001 when your next year's membership is due, Dhs. 50 for singles and Dhs. 100 for couples and families.

This is still the best bargain in town! You can join or renew at meetings (see Membership Secretary Fi Skennerton) or by sending us a cheque made out to Lloyds Bank account no. 173746. (*Please note* we cannot cash cheques made out to the DNHG.) Membership is valid from September 2001 to September 2002.

DNHG membership entitles you to participate in field trips and helps pay for our lecture hall, publication and distribution of our monthly newsletter, additions to our library, incidental expenses of speakers and occasional special projects. Our new fee will allow us to find a more permanent home for the library, and a more convenient venue for our meetings.

This month's Contributors

The Editor would like to thank the following for their reports:

Barbara Couldrey
Gary Feulner
Peter Cunningham
Sandy Fowler



Field Trips etc ...

A Varied Line-up

There is a big demand for places on the trips planned, so please contact the leader to reserve a place as soon as you are sure you can go. Remember that others may be languishing on a waiting list, so cancel early if that is what you must do.

Arabian Horse Breeding Centre, Al Awir Friday 28 September

Meet at the Hilton car park at 08.00 and follow Fi Skennerton. Bring your coffee and croissants, hat, camera, and lots of water, and wear proper shoes. Contact Fi for details on 050 – 624 3028

Bird watching with David Snelling Friday 12 October

Meet at 8.00am inside the sewage treatment plant site. It lies off the Hatta Road to the right, past Al Awir industrial area. Inside the entrance gate, carry on along the road towards the big globes, past the left turn which the sludge lorries take. A short way along towards the globes a rough tarmac road goes off to the right with a concrete blockhouse beside it. Park off the road in this area by 8.00am for the start of watching at several different sites. Contact David Snelling on 050 552 6308.

Stargazing Thursday 18 October

Lamjed El-Kefi's stargazing starts early, at 6.30pm at a site along the Jebel Ali – Al Ain Road. Lamjed will provide maps and skycharts at the 7 October meeting. Bring picnics, binoculars, and a blacklight if you have one. You do not need a 4WD, and you do not need to register with Lamjed. Just turn up and enjoy the wonder of it.

Wadi Bih Friday 19 October

Peter van Amsterdam will lead this day trip through Wadi Bih, culminating in a swim on Dibba beach. Bring sunhat, walking shoes, picnic, 3l water/person and a 4WD. Meet at Al Arz Bakery (used to be Wendy's) on the Sharjah Road at 8.30am, or earlier if you want coffee and croissants. Contact Peter on 269 2519 or at pvana@emirates.net.ae for bookings and information.

Wahiba Sands/Turtle Watching at Ras al Hadd, Oman 24-26 October

Mary Beardwood plans to do this trip with Nahar Tours and members must make their own bookings with Mr al Harthy at emptyqtr@omantel.net.om. Mention DNHG! The programme is: Wed. night: stay at Nahar Tourism Oasis, approximately 3 hours from the UAE border. Thursday: guided tour to the beginning of the Wahiba Sands, lunch at Wadi Bani Khaled beside the green pools, continue driving to the turtle beach. Empty Quarter Tours will have the camp set up ready for you; BBQ dinner followed by watching the turtles laying eggs. Friday: after breakfast (end of E.Q. Tours' bit), the group will drive to Sur and along the coast road to Muscat.

Cost is O.R.72/person (under 12's free) and cars and fuel are not included. Camping gear, main meals, fees etc are. The offer is for a minimum of 10 persons, so if you are keen and sure, contact Mary promptly and then make your booking. A deposit should be made before 01 October, and the balance paid to Mary at the 7 October meeting. Alternatively, camping only with barbeque, breakfast and permission for visiting turtle beach (the E.Q. Tours bit) is O.R.35/person.

Contact Mary for any further help at mikemary@emirates.net.ae

Forts of the Nizwa Plain, Oman 7-9 November

Exploration of Sulaif, Jabrin, Bahla and Nizwa forts, no doubt with many interesting little diversions, intended and not. Meet on Wed. night at the Ibri Hotel, and spend the second night at the Wadi Dariz Hotel in Nizwa. Limited numbers because of accommodation. Contact Peter van Amsterdam on 269 2519 or by e.mail at pvana@emirates.net.ae

Fossiling and Camping 29 –30 November

Mike Lorrigan and Tess Kazim will lead this trip. They plan to leave on Thursday, camp overnight and do some more fossiling the next day. Details will be published in October's *Gazelle*.

Our Next Presentation

On 7 October, Simon Aspinall will present "The Natural History of Oman", a BBC Documentary. It was commissioned by the BBC from Oxford Scientific Films, one of the UK's premier independent wildlife film and documentary-making companies with an award-winning portfolio. The film will be introduced by Simon, who is author of *Breeding Birds of the UAE* and one of those who makes a profession out of exploring the UAE and Oman countryside. Simon says this film is not to be missed.

Simon will also bring with him from Abu Dhabi some archeology and other natural history publications not readily available commercially.



Drought Scouting Questions

A mid-July visit (on Friday the 13th) to upper Wadi Baraq, in the mountains near Fili, revealed a sad state of affairs. Where three years ago there were pools and fish and cattail reeds, the wadi is now bone dry, and examination of a new cistern showed that the water table was some 8-10 metres below wadi level. The cistern is used to water a resident herd of goats (some penned and others free-roaming), sheep and even several cows. Does this make sense?

Along the bedrock course of a nearby gorge, which would have been one of the last refuges of water, were found the charred carcasses of a dozen donkeys, burned, presumably, to minimize odor and disease. Did they die a natural death, from drought? At least four other donkey carcasses (and a cow) were found elsewhere in the area. Or is it possible that they were they killed as competition with livestock for food and water?

At least one pending question has now tentatively been answered. A few years ago, Wadi Baraq was noted as being unusual in having the Arabian killifish *Aphanius dispar* as its only fish, whereas in virtually all other mountain wadis the endemic *Garra barreimiae* is present and is more common. If, however, Wadi Baraq is subject to complete drying up, as now appears to be the case, this may periodically eliminate all of the fish. *Garra* has no way to repopulate in the short term, but the Arabian killifish is available from official sources for mosquito control. The population originally seen there is now more confidently presumed to have been artificially introduced.

The test will come when the rains fall again and the wadi fills. Will the fish come back on their own, or will they need "help"? Report by Gary Feulner

Wasp Weekend

Peter Cunningham and I were on the trail of the Dhofar toad when we spent a steamy June overnight at a permanent spring in a tributary of Wadi Bih, now a small pond improved by human artifice. Plenty of tadpoles and baby toads were in evidence, suggesting possible year-round breeding at this site, but only a single adult was identified, calling by night from deep within a damp crack near the source of the spring. Full results of our toad reconnaissance in the Musandam will be published in an upcoming *Tribulus*.

Otherwise, the spring proved to be a magnet for life of all sorts. A group of some 20 Chukar was present near dusk, and at dawn came yellow-vented bulbuls, house buntings and desert larks to drink, along with more than 100 goats, most traveling in groups of 4-10, calling and gobbling in a language all their own but often surprisingly human. On the way in, we had observed, from a distance, a mother goat and newborn kid too young to walk.

Less endearing was the thick cloud of wasps -- some 200 or more -- above the little pond. Approach was not for the faint hearted, since both of the wasps present, the ochre-colored Arabian Paper Wasp (*Polistes wattii*) and the red-and-yellow Eastern Hornet (*Vespa orientalis*), are inquisitive social wasps that readily investigate new additions to their surroundings. This includes human observers, with the result that wasps inadvertently caught in clothing led to a few stings.

Both wasps need to drink regularly. The Arabian paper wasp can normally alight safely on the water surface to drink, and then fly off, but the hornet is heavier and breaks the surface tension, with the result that it can drink safely only from the water's edge or from a floating leaf or other object. A hornet that lands in the water will eventually drown if it cannot exit to dry land. Drowning casualties are not uncommon, but at

the spring they were astonishingly abundant. A raft of more than 200 hornet corpses floated on a small upper pond, and the ground beside the main pond was covered by a mat of hundreds more, probably representing flotsam scooped from the pond by local human visitors.

Peter and I also took advantage of the overnight opportunity to black-light for scorpions, and on the rocky ledges opposite the spring they found four large, brown-and-yellow *Hottentota jayakari*, probably the most common mountain scorpion, the first one only two metres from Peter's mattress.

On the way out, parched but curious, we stopped to examine the remains of stone dwellings beside the lower wadi and set in cliff ledges above. In the heat of summer and the grip of drought it was difficult to imagine why anyone would have lived here. Report by Gary Feulner

Tired and Feathered

An August day in the field left us with just enough time for a late afternoon visit to Wadi Bu Qal'ah, near Mahdhah. The gorge in this unheralded wadi has permanent water and gorge-side caves that are difficult for non-flyers to reach. As a result, one of those caves proved to be home to dozens of fruit bats.

At the moment the gorge also attracts the largest pigeon population I have seen at a wild site, probably concentrated by the effects of drought elsewhere. Peter Cunningham and I estimated more than 70 in flight at once, but it would have taken several times that number (I estimate, not entirely facetiously) to account for all the pigeon feathers that clogged the pools and falls in the gorge. This made our aquatic exploration of the gorge only a few notches short of revolting in places.

Report by Gary Feulner



Field Clips ...

E.mail your reports to pvana@emirates.net.ae, (Arial 10 justified) or deliver them to Anne Millen on floppy disk at monthly meetings.

Hanging Out at Hanging Gardens

Where to find "action" on a summer weekend morning? The Hanging Gardens, at the foot of the western escarpment of Jebel Qatar near Al-Ain, held the promise of both water and shade. It received at least one and possibly more rain showers last fall, causing waterfalls from the plateau, and live toads were reported during the spring (playing in fresh donkey droppings). Surface water was non-existent by the end of August, but the perennial vegetation on the slopes and wadis below the cliffs looked refreshed compared to most mountain front areas. Annual plants had fared less well, possibly due to the use of this area for grazing. We saw a single herd of 90 sheep, led by one of 5 goats.

Hanging Gardens is one of the northernmost sites for two tree species common in Oman. One is *Maerua crassifolia*, a member of the caper family that looks superficially like an Acacia, but with mostly drooping branches. This tree is easy to see in the lower wadi. It has a particularly distinctive flower which lacks petals entirely, having only a dozen or so long, thin white stamens. Also present, but only in the amphitheater below the main waterfall, are 8-10 large shrubs of *Acridocarpus orientalis*, which resembles the wadi fig *Ficus cordata salicifolia*. To the south of Wadi Jizzi, where wadi elevations rise above 600 metres, *A. orientalis* seems to fill the usual niche of the wadi fig alongside broad gravel wadis.

Water percolating through the limestone cliffs has created "pipe organ" stalactites on the cliff face near the waterfall. Droplets still formed at the tip one of these, making a drinking fountain for neighborhood birds. Most (Desert Larks and Yellow-Vented Bulbuls) had to hover for a tiny sip; only Hume's Wheatear was able to perch, awkwardly, on the cliff face to drink.

We also investigated a low cave nearby, mostly hidden by brush. On the roof near the entrance we found a few other seeps, but with their drips distorted by the growth of algae or mosses on which the dissolved calcium carbonate was precipitated. In the same area we found the skeleton of a juvenile bat and the headless carcass of a rat. At several points on the slopes below the cliffs Peter Cunningham identified the droppings of both red fox and Blanford's fox, the latter especially rich in seeds and insect parts.

Large vertical crevices at the base of the cliff form occasional slot caves. Some of these seem to be permanently shaded from the sun, creating a specialized mini-environment that may be home to certain species not typical of the mountain areas. Among other things we saw and photographed several spiders not previously encountered.

Most exciting of all, however, was the discovery – at a distance – of two very large, dark, well-formed and recent looking stick nests on a ledge above the cliffs near the main waterfall. We estimated diameters of two feet (60 cm) or more. Each nest was sheltered by a substantial overhang and near each were the bleached remains of an earlier nest. From experience, Peter reckoned they were vulture nests. In this area, the most likely candidate is the Egyptian Vulture, but the Griffon Vulture cannot yet be ruled out. Both are said to nest gregariously in stick nests on cliff ledges (although

there is some expert disagreement about Griffon nests). Although the Egyptian Vulture is relatively common in the Al-Ain area, nesting sites are not. If the nests were from the current year, then they may have been abandoned only very recently, as Egyptian Vulture chicks may remain in the nest until August. This site will repay a visit next winter and spring. Report by Gary Feulner

Al Maha by Night

Not everybody has the same idea of spending a night at the Al Maha Desert Resort, so off we went with boots, flashlights and blacklights at 9 pm for a walk in the dunes. The guides at Al-Maha are all professionally trained in wildlife and conservation, but had asked for a little help to better acquaint new staff with the specific plants and animals to be found here in the UAE. We were pleased to assist.

Peter Cunningham led by lantern light and did not disappoint. Before long we had turned up several Arabian Sand Geckos *Stenodactylus arabicus* (an almost transparent gecko, the UAE's smallest, with stumpy, webbed forefeet), the Dune Sand Gecko *Stenodactylus doriae* (another pinkish nocturnal variety that earns its name), and a small Sawscale Viper *E. carinatus*. Peter had gone to work even before the evening had properly started, finding a specimen of *Pristurus minimus*, a small diurnal semaphore gecko that lives on sand, at the Al Maha gate at sunset.

A small number of insects and spiders were encountered. Both the geckos and the spiders seemed to profit from the attention of human observers and particularly their flashlights, which attracted abundant insect prey. Also observed were two of the larger desert scorpions, the black *Androctonus crassicauda* and the yellowish, broad-bodied *Apistobuthus pterygocercus*, which has a distinctively enlarged second tail segment.



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The recorders are not necessarily scientific experts in their designated fields. In fact, most are not. However, they are interested and knowledgeable amateurs - please contact them if you have any interesting reports or queries.

The intention is that information will be channelled through to the *Gazelle* editor, so new information can be shared with all our readers.

Back at the guest chalets, pale, thin-bodied, fast moving camel spiders were hyperactive under the driveway lights.

In the course of the evening, it became clear that the Al Maha staff are already well familiar with the habits of a number of distinctive resort denizens, and we hope to be able to share their observations and experiences from time to time. One possibility that became evident is that we may have a species of trap door spider in the UAE that has so far gone unheralded.

The next day began at 5:30 am with dramatic demonstration flying by falcons Aisha (a saqr) and Rasha (a peregrine), after which the birds drank from a bowl of water – a phenomenon that would greatly surprise most European falconers.

This was followed by a walking tour of the native plants on the reserve, during which approximately 30 species were identified, with a few additions and subtractions in comparison to a similar exercise conducted 2-1/2 years before. Again, the Al Maha staff had obviously kept their eyes open, since they arranged to pass by several problematic specimens. In light of a perceived tendency to landscape the local desert out of existence, it is also a pleasure to report that the Al Maha property remains very much a desert environment – still the real thing. *Report by Gary Feulner*

Tripped Up Trips

DNHG field trips have been notorious for attracting scarce rain, flat tires, and even one unscheduled overnight in the mountains. Recently, some more ambitious trips have fallen victim to other circumstances beyond our control. Sir Bani Yas island was closed to us last spring due to the foot and mouth disease emergency. Apologies are now due to those who were interested in early September's scheduled trip to Salalah

at the perfect time of year just after the SW monsoon. Unfortunately a last minute change of schedule by the airline made our planned excursion not feasible for most working folk.

Special Reports:

Ajman Museum

The Ajman Fort is the second largest in the Northern Emirates and now houses the Ajman Museum. It is conveniently located on Ajman's central square, just a block from the beach and only about 1 km from Ajman's two beachfront hotels. The Museum is well done and features both indoor and outdoor exhibits of traditional mud and *barasti* (palm frond) buildings, Ajman archeology, traditional costumes, traditional medicine, a traditional souq, functioning windtowers, weaponry, musical instruments, and traditional fishing, pearling and agriculture. The Museum is open mornings and evenings, from Sunday through to Thursday, inclusive, and evenings on Friday. It is closed on Saturdays.

Jinn or Owls in the Al-Jeer Cave?

After reading repeated local newspaper reports about strange noises coming from a small cave about 300 metres above the Khasab road near the UAE border post, and hearing first hand from local Emiratis about the new 'tourist attraction', I decided to check it out for myself.

It is easy to identify the site as litter left by the many 'tourists' scars the landscape. The top part of the scramble is not for the faint hearted as there is already a lot of shine on the rather exposed rocks. The cave is about 3.5m wide and is blocked by fine rubble about 8m inside. As we approached the cave



special reports ...

cave two Hume's wheatears flew out, while inside crag martins cavorted about in the entrance. There was a fairly substantial nesting shelf near the roof of the cave (out of reach) with dropping marks running down the rock. A feather or two lay on the ground, some downy, another more like a dove wing feather. There was absolutely no noise in the cave so the jinns or nesting birds had flown.

On reaching the road we met two Emiratis who had actually seen and filmed a large owl in the cave (perhaps an Eagle owl?) during 'the breeding period'. I was promised a copy of the video! Let us hope that eventuates. One of the several stories I have heard over the last month or two beats all the rest! It came from a well educated Ras Al Khaimah Emirati who had spoken to the now elderly son of a man who had taken a party through the cave many years ago . . . a 20 minute short cut to Fujairah! Only one adventurer survived.

Report by Barbara Couldrey

A Sand Cat!

Sand Cat...here? I was more amazed than startled as a Sand Cat emerged from its den not 10 metres away whilst I was looking for Sand Vipers and this at approximately 10 o'clock in the morning. This small cat (smallest of the local wild cats) with its distinctive white/grey coat and "military-like stripes" on its forelegs, typically flattened its ears to be less conspicuous and watched me intently before moving away swiftly. A serendipitous left turn led to this sighting, on this, another rewarding outing.

The scientific name for the Sand Cat is *Felis margarita* – named after the French general who discovered it in the 19th century on the Algerian-Lybian frontier and named by Loche in 1858. Sand cats are infrequently encountered

due to their secretive and shy nature, inaccessible habitat and usually nocturnal activity patterns. Before this present sighting they were generally thought to be limited to the great sandy areas of the Liwa oasis and usually only noted from their tracks. Their natural distribution includes the Sahara desert, much of interior Arabia and desert areas in Iran and Pakistan.

True to its name, the Sand Cat is well adapted to a desert environment and does not need surface water to survive, but obtains its water requirements through its mainly reptile and small mammal prey. They are also known to prey effectively on poisonous Sand Vipers, thought to be a favourite prey species in North Africa. During a recent literature study on the species I came across a vivid description of an encounter between a Sand Cat and Sand Viper by a French researcher in the Sahara. He describes it as follows: "The little cat used a game of attack and dodge, consisting of hitting the head of the reptile with its paws. Despite all the liveliness of the snake, which lunged forward to bite with its mouth open and its fangs out, the cat managed to stun it with six or seven light blows on top of the skull. When the viper's head was lowered sufficiently, the cat suddenly flattened it to the ground with a skilful blow of its paw, enabling it to immobilise its dangerous mouth. Then it was able to take the reptile's neck between its teeth and crush it with a sharp bite." Another obvious adaptation is the "hairy pads" which facilitates locomotion in a sandy environment, but for obvious reasons makes track identification difficult.

The precise location of this sighting is not disclosed to protect the cat from further disturbance. These cats are routinely caught throughout their range and sold to unscrupulous zoos and wildlife dealers or killed by misguided individuals. However, it is encourag-

ing that this species is still alive and well in an area not normally associated with its local distribution. This sighting is also presently being submitted for publication as a first live sighting of the species from the UAE.

Report by Peter Cunningham

Congratulations!

October 6th sees the launch of 'The Children's Encyclopaedia of Arabia' – which is the work of the DNHG Field Trip Co-ordinator, Mary Beardwood. For many years Mary taught in Oman, Qatar and the U.A.E. and wondered why no one had ever written a reference book for children about the Arabian Peninsula. Children tried to do their project work with books written for adults. They copied pictures, but were unable to read or understand the text. So three years ago she resolved to write a book for them, which has short pieces of information, illustrated with lively photographs and drawings. Of course, such a book relies on contributions from many different people, experts in their own field, and Mary's many friends at Dubai Natural History Group came up trumps providing help in a wide range of areas. Colin Richardson on Birds, Alan Dickson on Insects, Gary Feulner on Insects and Fossils, Valerie Chalmers on Fossils, Marijcke Jongbloed on Reptiles and Plants, Sandy Fowler on Seashells, Beryl Comar on paper nautilus, Carole Harris on Coral reefs...what a wealth of knowledge they have between them! These same people and Lamjed el Kefi also provided some of the stunning photographs in the book. Ann Holt's photograph of a turtle digging its 'nest', taken on last years field trip to Oman also found a place. Other members of the group lent books. Particular thanks go to Fi Skennerton and Deanne White for their help here. The book will be in local bookshops shortly or visit www.childrensarabia.com and order through Amazon.co.uk



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Book Reviews:

An Interesting Perspective

United Arab Emirates: A New Perspective is now available at local bookstores. This book is a revised edition of the 25th anniversary volume, *Perspectives on the UAE*, but the new volume has updated the best and improved the rest. DNHG members who might otherwise eschew this as a political or socio-economic tome should know that it includes excellent chapters on geology and geography, ancient archeology, Islamic archeology, and tribal society, all by recognized experts such as Kenneth Glennie, Dan Potts, Geoffrey King and Frauke Heard-Bey. For history buffs, there are two chapters on the story of federation of the UAE. New chapters have been added on oil and gas, environmental protection and poetry. If you missed

this book the first time around, this a good opportunity to add it to your library. The list price is Dh. 120.

A Visual Delight

Birdlife in Oman, by Hanne and Jens Eriksen, was published in 1999, and remains very popular. It is a region by region collection of spectacularly beautiful photographs of the birds in their natural habitats, and includes a few firsts such as their picture of a Houbara Bustard chick.

Many of the photographs are of birds in action – a Night Heron catches a dragonfly, a Purple Sunbird pushes food down the throat of its chick, a Greenshank tries unsuccessfully to swallow an Arabian toad. A series of photographs of the pretty little Blue-cheeked Bee-eater proves that

Cheeked Bee-eater shows that they catch a lot more than just bees.

The photographs of some of the birds of the Musandam Peninsula, such as Sand Partridges and Chukars, are particularly interesting for those of us in the UAE who get out into the hills (or who read Gary's columns). A short, pertinent text accompanies each photograph. It is not a comprehensive round-up of all the birds of Oman but covers the most interesting and remarkable birds of each area, and has a wealth of information. Areas where birds are likely to be seen are given, as are the best times of year.

Copies are available at meetings from Patricia Rosetti, and you can also obtain copies of the delightful Oman Bird Calendar.

Dubai Natural History Group Programme

Lectures at Jumeirah English Speaking School, Gymnasium 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm

- 7 October Simon Aspinall presents "The Natural History of Oman"
- 4 November Mohammed Abdul Rahman Hassan – Environmental Conservation in Dubai (tentative)

Field Trips (DNHG members only, please)

- 28 September Arabian Horse Breeding Centre, Al Awir
- 12 October Bird Watching with David Snelling
- 18 October Stargazing with Lamjed El-Kefi
- 19 October Wadi Bih with Peter van Amsterdam
- 24-26 October Wahiba Sands/Turtle Watching at Ras al Hadd
- 7-9 November Forts of the Nizwa Plain, Oman
- 29-30 November Fossiling and Camping Trip