

# GAZELLE

Vol. 14 no. 5 – May 1999



مجموعة دبي للتاريخ الطبيعي

**DUBAI NATURAL HISTORY GROUP**

PO Box 9234, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

## Members' News

**Mary Beardwood** has kindly volunteered to join the DNHG Committee as a Field Trip Coordinator. Mary welcomes your field trip ideas, particularly suggestions for suitable summer outings. She has already arranged for a September tour of the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah.

At the request of Mark Beech, a University of York archeologist engaged in an analysis of animal bones found at UAE archeological sites and fish bones in particular, **Gary Feulner** recently collected specimens of the several varieties of UAE freshwater fish for Mark's reference collection of skeletal material. Gary says that until he mastered his technique, he and the fish were fairly evenly matched.

### This month's Contributors

The editor would like to thank the following members for their reports:

**Mary Beardwood**  
**Kathy Bird**  
**Valerie Chalmers**  
**Neil Curtis**  
**Gary Feulner**  
**Dr Reza Khan**

### End of season get-together.

We are all looking forward to the Buffet Evening at the Dubai Country Club on Thursday 10 June starting at 8.00 p.m.

It will be a good opportunity to get to know other members of the DNHG – there is never enough time at meetings.

Please bring any natural history photographs [max 3 per person] on any subject related to Natural History, to the Sunday 6 June meeting. (It would help if members could pay for their tickets at the meeting too. The cost for the buffet is Dhs 65 per person).

The winner will become the proud holder of the DNHG Annual Photographer of the Year Trophy as well as an attractive keepsake, so dig out those old photographs, which must be loosely connected with natural history.

Please contact Peter Griffin by phone 387342, fax 387352 or email "griff@emirates.net.ae" to reserve your places or for further details.

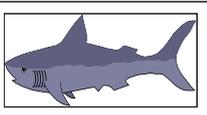
## Members' Night Speakers

**Allan Hartley** is an engineer currently causing havoc at Dubai Airport. He has lived in such diverse places as Burma and the Falkland Islands and first visited Dubai in the late seventies. His great love of the mountains has taken him from the Alps to the Himalayas.

**Ann Morgan** has been in the Middle East for 20 years. She is a history teacher who helped to transform the Ras al Khaimah fort into a museum. She spends much of her spare time assisting the Sharjah archeological team and has recently written a book "Covering the Sands of Time".

**Peter Payne** has survived divers close encounters with the local wildlife during his 7 years in Kenya, from the Plasmodium parasite to the bull elephant. He is one of only a few climbers who have ascended Africa's 3 summits Kili-manjaro, Mt Kenya and Mt Stanley in the Ruwenzori.

**Neil Curtis** has spent much of his spare time in the UAE exploring deserts, coast and mountains of the Emirates and Oman. Formerly editor of Gazelle he writes occasional pieces for Gulf News' Friday magazine. Neil and Sarah are expecting their son Dylan to be born in time to come to his talk.



## Field Trips

### Arabian Wildlife Centre Friday 17 September

A guided tour starting at 10.00. The centre in Sharjah will be open to the general public so there should be no restrictions on numbers, and admission will be free to members.

Please contact Mary Beardwood for further details.

### More stargazing with Lamjed el-Kefi and team

Friday 8 October

In order to take full advantage of this sighting of Jupiter and the new moon it is necessary to start at 5.30pm.

Further details will be available in the August/September edition of Gazelle.

### Autumn Birding Trip Friday 22 October

Steve James will lead this outing to Khor Dubai and the water treatment plant. Time and meeting place to be decided in September.

### Inter-Emirates Week- end, Futaisi Island, Abu Dhabi

25 and 26 March 1999

Members of the three Natural History Groups from Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Dubai gathered on Futaisi Island on Thursday afternoon. Having succeeded in securing places for the night (no mean feat) in the pre-erected tents, they set off to join the afternoon excursions – a boat trip with Steve James, a coastal walk with Dick Hornby and an archaeological walk with Chas.

Valerie joined the group for a coastal walk, turning over rocks and even breeze blocks to look for life. The breeze blocks provided good areas for colonisation. They also found jam jars covered with acorn barnacles. Animal and plants found included:

Echinoderms – sea stars, brittle stars and sea urchins with spines, black and orange sea squirts (*Urochordates*)

Sponges

Tube worms – *Pomato leus*

Sea slugs – *Nudibranchs*

Arthropods – acorn barnacles, isopods, numerous species of crabs including swimming crabs, hermit crabs, mantis shrimps, snapping shrimps, small shrimps similar to *Gammarus*

Molluscs – jewel box shells, plenty of arch shells (*Acar plicata*) pearl oysters, 3 species of Ceriths – *Cerithium scabridum* (small species), *Cerithium caeruleum* (larger species) and *Cerithium cingulata* (horn shell – not so common) Fish – small guppies and 1 stone fish, quite common on the shore. (A stone fish was caught and put on display for everyone to see on Friday)

Numerous seaweed including Peacock weed.

Returning from their trip the group saw gazelle, a sand hare and dhubs - spiny-tailed lizards (on the golf course).

In the evening everyone assembled at the golf clubhouse for drinks, an excellent buffet dinner and a quiz. A sand hare even dared to come close to the clubhouse and was spotted!

The following day after a hearty breakfast they set off on the morning excursions, a boat trip with Dick, an island walk and bird watching with Steve and an archaeological walk with Chas. The boat stopped at Bahrani Island for a snorkel and a swim and to explore the area. Sand gazelle were seen from the boat and their tracks were found on the island together with those of a fox possibly. A sand hare was sighted twice. Those who went snorkelling saw pen shells and sea grass.

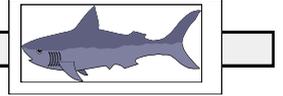
Highlights of Steve's trip were 2 hares, osprey, sand gazelle, dhubs, bar-tailed godwits, greater and lesser sand plovers (the greater in summer plumage), Kentish plovers and chestnut-bellied sand grouse.

After a late lunch Valerie joined Chas's group for the archaeological walk. Chas told them that Futaisi Island was one of two islands which has permanent archaeology and that the island had never been heavily populated. Futaisi has not been excavated below the Late Islamic Period. Pottery shards of 'chocolate chip' 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century ware and Julfa ware have been found and also hearths. They went to see a graveyard – the graves orientated NS – very Late Islamic – with a mosque sitting on the top. Not far from there was a depression, which provided shelter in the evening for the fishing Bedouin to process the pearling food. Pottery, shells, hearths and burnt stones were seen. 2 shell middens nearby yielded pearling oyster shells, typical of Abu Dhabi middens. In the garden on the way back they saw a water-collecting cistern, the best example in any of the islands. It is well preserved, only run-off water was channelled into it. It is Late Islamic at least.

Late afternoon saw people making their way back to the mainland by ferry. A good weekend was had by all. Full marks to the caterers who produced excellent meals for about 90 people in a small kitchen area. Many thanks to the Emirates Natural History Group, the trip leaders, and Steve James in particular, for organising such a successful weekend.

Report by Valerie Chalmers





Send in your reports to [griff@emirates.net.ae](mailto:griff@emirates.net.ae), or deliver them on floppy disk at monthly meetings, or fax to 387 352 (14 plus point size text, please).

## Two New UAE Damselflies

English amateur entomologist Graham Giles conducted a survey of the Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) of the UAE during several visits from 1996 to 1998, with occasional assistance from several DNHG members. He published an illustrated and annotated checklist of the species known to occur in the UAE in *Tribulus* no. 8.2 (Winter 1998). In his notes he speculated that additional species would be found, and predicted the occurrence of at least one likely candidate.

Consistent with Graham's prediction, *Ceragrion glabrum*, a small but striking red and yellow damselfly with bright green eyes, has recently been observed by Steve Green and Gary Feulner at the Wadi Qowr dam. This damselfly is known from Oman and has been seen by Graham and by Mike Gillett at mountain front plantation sites near Al-Ain, including Aboule, Musah and Khatwah. In Wadi Qowr it was seen among relatively thick reeds and other vegetation beside ponded water, a habitat which differs somewhat from the rocky wadi environment described for it in *Insects of Eastern Arabia*.

In addition, Steve and Gary have documented the existence, also at the Wadi Qowr Dam, of another new species of damselfly, a thin bright blue one that frequents vegetation at the water's edge (but distinct from the endemic "powder blue damselfly" *Arabicnemis caerulea*). This new damselfly has not yet been positively identified but seems to bear a resemblance to *Pseudagrion decorum*, an Asian

species also known from Oman.

Report by Gary Feulner

## Why "Fringe Toes"?

While in Spain on business, Gary Feulner climbed Monserrat near Barcelona, a striking massif that resembles the UAE's own Jebel Hafeet in its size and the apparent inaccessibility of its steep, barren summits. Nevertheless, Monserrat is the site of a famous cathedral half-way up, and small monastic enclaves dot its upper slopes. In the course of touring, Gary noticed a small, common local lizard which proved to have extremely long, thin toes on its hind feet, resembling those of the UAE's fringe-toed lizard (*Acanthodactylus gongrorhynchatus*). Fringe toes have typically been explained as an adaptation to the exceptional heat of the sand deserts of the UAE. So Gary wondered why the same feature should be found in a lizard inhabiting a temperate, albeit Mediterranean, climate in an environment of relatively well vegetated soil at 1000 meters altitude on the slopes of a mountain that receives snowfall in winter. Is there something we don't know about fringe toes?

## Donkey Treys/ Donkey Brays

In the local mountains, away from inhabited areas, a disproportionate number of the few donkeys present seem to be found in groups of two or three. The pairs are usually recognisable as a mother and young. Do the trios represent a mother and the two most recent offspring?

Donkeys are fundamentally herd animals and the characteristic social arrangement is believed to be

a matriarchal herd. Those of the UAE, however, are feral and do not represent natural populations.

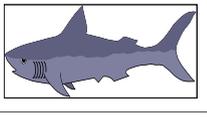
It would be an interesting experiment to investigate the reconstitution of "natural" herds from feral individuals over time. However, human influences and the relatively spartan environment of the UAE would probably favour aggregation and foraging in smaller rather than larger groups. In the Arabian environment, even wolves are solitary hunters. In a number of years of observation, the largest donkey herd I have seen while hiking in the mountains was 11.

I have also once seen a loose group of 13 near a rough vehicle track, but both of these observations were exceptional. Nearer to civilisation and in more hospitable terrain, larger groups may be seen. For example, Dr Reza Khan has recently reported a group of about 20, including adult males, female and adolescents, congregating in a shady flat area not far from the new road between Munnay'i and Hiluw.

Another point for further observation: In the mountains, often the first notice that feral donkeys are present in the immediate vicinity is a snort from a stationary, watching animal. At a greater distance, donkeys may react to the presence of intruders by banshee-like braying. But is this behaviour characteristic of donkeys generally, or is it a warning or territorial behaviour characteristic of males only?

Report by Gary Feulner





## more field reports...

### Ribbon-Wings

Dr. Mike Gillett of Al-Ain encountered more than 50 large adult ribbon-wings on a mid-April weekend. Believing them to be nocturnal, he was especially surprised to find them feeding by day on the nectar of a variety of flowering mountain plants.

These attractive and delicate looking insects take their name from the extension of their hind wings into long, narrow, thread-like processes that may be decorated with leaf-like flanges. The front wings are large and veined like those of antlions, to which they are related. Like antlions, the larvae are ground dwelling predators.

Gary Feulner reports seeing his first adult ribbon-wing near Shawkah on the same weekend. Viewed under magnification in the field, he says, they have a rather comical visage, with large round compound eyes and a long, pointed orange snout.

### Spring Birding

This spring has turned up a number of interesting sightings, including several new 'spots' for the author - starting with a spotted redshank at Emirates Golf Course on May 2. Also present was a pair of lesser flamingos beside the main flock of greater flamingos, with their distinctive black, sharply down-turned bills, pinker colour and smaller size. While these may have been escapees, another pair was observed by the author in the more wild surroundings of Khor Dhiris, on the Huqf coast of Oman, in November 1998.

Another 'first' was a flock of yellow-throated sparrows, seen in acacia scrub above a wet wadi just in from the mountain front near Ibri in Oman on May 4. Attention was initially drawn by the sheer volume of chirping created by the flock, with the males' yellow throat and the females' pinkish bills confirming the difference from the com-

moner house sparrow.

Further into Oman, in the mountains between Yanqul and Rustaq on May 5, a group of two male and two female Leichtenstein's sandgrouse were observed at very close quarters, appearing relatively unconcerned at human presence. This sighting recalls one made by the author and Gary Feulner in Wadi Naqab, where a female and a young Leichtenstein's sandgrouse huddled together less than two metres from the car rather than taking immediate flight.

A truly remarkable sighting was made in the mountains of Northern Oman on May 8, when a lappet-faced vulture was observed nesting on top of an acacia tree east of Jebal Suweimi. The bird flew off as the nest was approached, and circled once overhead as a photograph was taken of one single egg lying on a twig nest around 120cm x 90cm.

Another trip to the Emirates Golf Course on May 24 turned up two further rarities, although both are presumed to have been ferally breeding or escapees. The first, a pin-tailed sandgrouse, was seen outside the perimeter of the golf course at around 8.45am, along with a flock of up to 50 chestnut-bellied sandgrouse. The pin-tailed was distinctive by its larger size, greenish hue to the wings, and the white belly marked clearly from the buff breast by a strong black line.

The second rarity, a single Egyptian goose, was observed standing among the tamarisk shrubs fringing the 'nature reserve' lake to the east of the watered golf course area. For the record, the lesser flamingo were still present out on the lake, while a rufous bush-chat, another first for the author, was seen on the pathways through the mesquite bushes.

Finally, a trip out to Nadd Al Sheba on May 5 produced at least ten spotted flycatchers along a shady tree-lined track. These are among the last of the last spring migrants to pass through the Emirates,

rounding off an extremely interesting season.

*Report by Neil Curtis*

### Another New Mountain Shrub

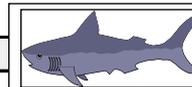
Thanks to the efforts of Ian Curtis ("our man" at the Edinburgh Herbarium and brother of former *Gazelle* editor Neil), a new entry has been added to the flora of the Hajar Mountains of the UAE and Oman. *Grewia villosa* Willd. is relatively well known from the mountains of western Arabia, but only three specimens have so far been observed locally, from scattered locations between Jebel Sumayni and Jebel Qatar. A specimen in flower and fruit, collected in 1998 by visiting former member John Martin and Gary Feulner, permitted Ian to make a positive identification. Its heavily veined leaves resemble those of *Lantana*.

*Report by Gary Feulner*

### Death of a campaigner for the Arabian Oryx

Lt-Col Leofric Boyle died recently aged 100. He was secretary of the Fauna Preservation Society (FPS) from 1950 to 1963. He introduced a bill in British parliament controlling the importation of endangered species and he was instrumental in saving the rare Arabian oryx.

When, in the early 1960's, the FPS learned that the species was in danger of extinction after relentless culling by poachers, Boyle oversaw "Operation Oryx". This entailed capturing four oryx and removing them to Phoenix Zoo in Arizona. There they bred successfully and have since been re-introduced into Oman.



## Dubai Natural History Group Recorders

Reptiles - Dr Reza Khan  
res 448 283  
off 440 462  
fax (off) 499 437

Archaeology - Steve Green  
res 846 486  
off 206 8202  
fax (off) 220 103

Birds - Rod Fox  
fax 673 939  
foxline@emirates.net.ae

Seashells - Sandy Fowler  
res 442 242,  
fax 442 242

Astronomy - Lamjed El-Kefi  
res 06-583 003  
off 06-247 958

Geology - Gary Feulner  
res 306 5570  
fax 313 371

Fossils - Valerie Chalmers  
res 494 816,  
fax 452 727

Insects - Gary Feulner  
(see above)

Mammals - Marijcke Jongbloed  
off 06-311 411  
res 06-311 126  
fax 06-311 000

mjongbld@emirates.net.ae

Marine Life - Lamjed El-Kefi  
(see above)

Plants - Valerie Chalmers  
(see above)

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.



Please send your reptile reports to  
Dr Reza Khan

### Reticulated Python

*Python reticulatus* is known to be the longest species of snake in the world, it can measure more than 32 feet (9.5 metres). It lives in the moist evergreen forests of Eastern India, through Bangladesh and up to Indonesia. This python is popular with the captive breeders and the zoo world. People like it for its sheer size and spectacular colour pattern. Dubai Zoo received two sub-adult Reticulated Pythons about four years ago. They have been housed in a snake cubicle that measures 3 x 2 x 3.5 metres. They share the cage with an Indian Python (*Python molurus molurus*) which has a different sub-specific status from the other Indian Pythons (*Python molurus vivitatus*) exhibited in the zoo. Three sides of the cubicle are made up of transparent acrylic sheet, the rear and the ceiling are made of plywood while the roof is of asbestos sheet. There are a few dried up branches, some pebbles, stones and a small water trough inside. A split-unit air conditioning vent is fitted to the roof and there are electric cables for heating lamp and light bulbs.

The pythons often sleep over the electric cable that runs parallel to the roof. However, most of the time they remain coiled and motionless on the floor. We did not observe them courting each other, but early in the morning of March 1 we saw a larger specimen (nearly 3 metres) had coiled up a dozen eggs. These are the size of a goose egg but shaped like an antibiotic capsule (roughly 10 x 6 cms). As far as we know this is the first time a Reticulated Python has laid eggs in a zoo in the Arab world. The eggs are supposed to hatch in 8 to 11 weeks.

Report by Dr Reza Khan

### Red Backed Spider

The red-back spider *Lactrodectus mactans hasselti* is of the family Theridiidae. It is closely related to the katipo of New Zealand and the black widow of North America.

The male is much smaller than the female and although he is equipped with venom glands his fangs are unable to effectively penetrate human skin. The female, at 10mm in size, is a threat to humans, particularly children, and also pets.

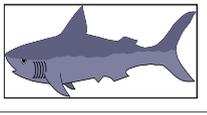
The spiders mature in summer, at which time the female produces up to three egg cocoons each containing around 30 eggs.

The spiders are easy to locate because they weave large untidy webs which are extremely tough and sticky. They tend to be found around the rim of flower pots, and in dark quiet corners. When disturbed they either retreat further into their nesting site, or curl up in a ball and play dead.

Red-backs are normally active around dusk and at night. They spend the day concealed near the web or hanging upside down on the web itself. Their prey stumbles into a sticky tension line. The spider then throws swathes of silk around the prey, completing the immobilisation with a bite. The tiny amount of venom produced is more toxic than that of the rattle snake.

The spider is thought to have been introduced some 20 years ago when low cost housing was being built along the Jumeirah Beach Road. Timber was imported from Australia for the construction, bringing with it the red-back.

Take care in the garden by wearing gloves. In the event of a bite, apply a cold pack over the bitten area to relieve pain but do not apply pressure this increases the pain. Collect the spider for identification if possible, and go to the Rashid Hospital which has the anti-venom serum.



## *special feature...*

### **Eco Arabia 99 Conference**

Sponsored by Shell

In Dubai an international conference brought together representatives from many different organisations concerned with the ongoing need for the protection of the marine environment and recent developments in this field. Enforcement of regulations already in place was a prime concern. Contingency plans to deal with the treatment of pollution, and the benefits of coastal mapping to aid in clean up operations, were also matters addressed by speakers from different areas of the world.

On the first afternoon, three speakers from Dubai were of particular interest on Natural History matters. Kevin Martin from the Wildlife Protection Office described how an artificial reef was constructed in 1996 to promote ecotourism within the Arabian Gulf.

The reef was made from concrete blocks of the kind used to make the island on which the Arabian Tower at the Jumeirah Beach complex was built. The blocks were lowered into the water, three in each section, to a depth of ten metres. Within three months there was a 50% coverage of the blocks with algae, barnacles, sponges, coral heads and oysters. By the end of the first year there was 100% coverage and reef fish were attracted to it. There is a protection order on the reef so no fishing is allowed nearby giving an ideal opportunity for a scientific study of the flora and fauna that make the reef their home.

Kevin Hyland, also from the Wildlife Protection Office talked about the efforts to establish a breeding colony of the Greater Flamingo at Khor Dubai. The colony, which numbers hundreds of young birds, has been humanised by twice daily supplemental feeding, but mature birds are much more sensitive to disturbance and only approach the site when it is free of humans. A trial to build a lagoon with the

water level controlled by a basic box type sluice gate was held at the end of 1996 to see if the flamingos would accept the area and be less disturbed by human activity. The water came from a dewatering programme draining the area around Nadd al Sheba and was maintained until July 1998. In the autumn of 1998 the centre of the Al Quoz race track was made into a lake and a captive population of 40 flamingos was introduced to the site. A study carried out in Miami found that flamingos can travel up to 190 kilometres a night to forage and return to feed their young. It follows that "Satellite wetlands", within this radius from Khor Dubai have the potential to influence the colony there so it is important to have a national policy for conserving the wetlands and constructing new ones. It was recommended that whilst the Khor Dubai site should continue to be maintained for breeding, the best way to achieve a successful breeding colony in Dubai may be to select a new site for a flamingo sanctuary that fulfils all the criteria for the best conditions for the breeding pairs and create a satellite wetland at this site.

Colin Richardson spoke about the environmental problems threatening the breeding birds on the Abu Dhabi islands caused by human activities in the area. Stocks of fish have been severely reduced by the number of fishing boats, which have tripled in the last 15 years. Fish traps are bought in large quantities and these sit on the ocean floor for several days, acting as death traps to fish, many of which are unsuitable to sell commercially. The traps can be lost if floats become cut, causing more deaths and he suggested that if the entrance to the traps were biodegradable the fish could eventually escape. He then outlined the species that were at risk, with particular reference to the factors disturbing their breeding patterns and concluded that the problems must be tackled or much of the natural heritage of the region will be lost.

The conference was an excellent

platform for the discussion of environmental concerns of the area.

*Report by Mary Beardwood*

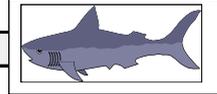
### **A Visit to Al Ain Souq**

On 7 May a small band of NHG members met up with Philip Iddison for the interesting and informative tour around Al Ain souq, a colourful, bustling place. They mingled with vendors and customers and the boys with cardboard boxes offering to carry their purchases. Philip's first stop was the air-conditioned fruit and vegetable market. There are a number of bread stalls here, selling several different varieties of UAE bread, but the one that interested the group most was the Ethiopian sour dough bread. They bought some of this. Next they were shown around the herb souq, where every known herb seemed to be on sale. The parsley, radish tops, rocket, dill and many more were fresh and fragrant. Ladies in their traditional dress sold herbs as well as pantaloons in glorious colours with elaborately embroidered ankle borders and burqahs

The fish market came next, of particular interest to Philip who is conducting a 'fish in season' survey. In the back room of an Omani sweet shop they saw red and yellow halwa being made in huge copper pots. They purchased some of this in the traditional plaited date palm wrappings.

The hardware souq also sells camel accessories and in a side room large tobacco leaves were hanging to dry. The group returned to the fruit and vegetable souq when the guided tour finished, and then retreated to the cool and spacious museum before returning home, content with their day and their purchases.

*Report by Kathy Bird*



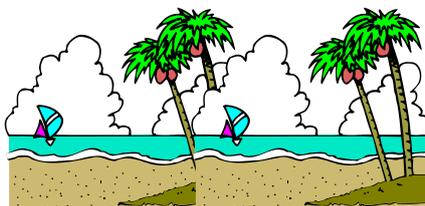
	name	tel.home	tel.office	fax
Chairman	<b>Gary Feulner</b> messages: 306	5300 5300	313 320 x500	313 371
Vice Chairman	<b>Valerie Chalmers</b>	494 816	no calls pls.	3983 727
Treasurer	<b>Peter Griffin</b> e-mail: griff@emirates.net.ae	387 342	387 342	387 352
Membership Secretary	<b>Kathy Bird</b>	594 207		
Membership Assistant	<b>Barbara Hayward</b>	389 158	620 029	387 875
Fieldtrip Co-ordinator	<b>Katrina Lynes</b>	558 529	no calls pls	558 529
Fieldtrip Co-ordinator	<b>Mary Beardwood</b>	441 838		
Newsletter Editor	<b>Anna Griffin</b> e-mail: griff@emirates.net.ae	387 342	387 342	387 352
Publisher	<b>Peter van Amsterdam</b> e-mail: pvana@emirates.net.ae	386 015	355 495	386 018
Librarian	<b>Beryl Comar</b> e-mail: comar@emirates.net.ae	822 945	no calls pls.	822 945
Speaker Co-ordinator	<b>Jim Footitt</b>	367 887		367 887
Chief Engineer	<b>Bob White</b>	512 801	690 029	691 369
Member at Large	<b>Sandy Fowler</b>	822 945	no calls pls	822 945
Postmaster	<b>Gail Gordon</b>	499 879		499 879

## Oldest Shipwreck Off the Turkish Coast

Archeologists from the Institute of Nautical Archeology have for a number of years been excavating the "oldest shipwreck ever found," a Bronze Age wreck near the village of Ulu Burun in southern Turkey. Their work has expanded knowledge of life in the 14th century BC. Findings confirm that extensive land and maritime trade was taking place between Europe, subtropical Africa and the Middle East. Among the remains were many copper ingots (from Cyprus) and, for the first time in the history of archeology, tin ingots (from Asia), as well as the earliest glass ingots (from Canaan) ever retrieved. Ingots are specific units of raw material, smelted into a special shape. Bronze was manufactured by melting together tin and copper from the ingots.

Other artifacts recovered from the shipwreck are Baltic amber beads, Mycenaean vessels, Cypriot pottery, Canaanite amphoras, raw

ivory from Syria or Africa, ebony and spices such as sumac, coriander and black cumin. They also found the first ancient tablets that clearly describe the extensive trade of glass among about a dozen Mediterranean civilizations whose goods the ship was carrying. They uncovered a great number of personal items, which tell much about the origin of the merchants, the people who worked on board the ship, and even two wealthy nobles on board (as indicated by the presence of fine gold jewelry and two valuable Mycenaean swords). *Adapted from "Oldest Shipwreck Gives New Glimpse of History," Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Jan/Feb 1999, p. 75.*



## UAE Fish Website

Mark Beech of the University of York, who is currently engaged in a study of animal bones (and particularly fish bones) found in association with UAE archaeological sites, maintains a web site titled "UAE Fishes: A Web Guide". It is located at:

<http://www-users.york.ac.uk/mjb117>

## Letters to the editor

News? Views?

Write to us at PO Box 9234, or simply fax / e-mail Anna Griffin or any of the committee members listed above!

## Dubai Natural History Group Programme

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

June 6: Members' Night    Allan Hartley - Jordan Highlights and the Fabulous Dolomites  
   Ann Morgan - Archaeological discoveries in the UAE  
   Peter Payne - An introduction to the mountains of East Africa  
   Neil Curtis - A coastal trip around the Oman

Field Trips planned for next season (DNHG members only, please. Details inside)

September 17    Arabian Wildlife Centre  
   A guided tour around the new centre.

October 8        Stargazing with Lamjed el-Kefi  
   What's to see in the night sky in the Autumn?

October 22       Autumn Birding with Steve James from the Abu Dhabi NHG  
   Bird watching at Khor Dubai and the water treatment plant.

The DNHG would like to thank the staff of "Flying Colours", located in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Sheikh Zayed Road, for their help in printing the April edition of Gazelle, while Peter van Amsterdam was on holiday.

---

**Title Surname**  
**PO Box**  
**City**  
**UAE**

---