

GAZELLE

Vol. 14 no. 10 – November 1999



مجموعة دبي للتاريخ الطبيعي

DUBAI NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

PO Box 9234, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Members' News

Salvete!

It's a pleasure to welcome **Dr Marijcke Jongbloed** back to Dubai. Marijcke is perhaps best known locally as an author, the Coordinator of the Arabian Leopard Trust, and the former Director of the Sharjah Natural History Museum, but she is also a longtime member of the DNHG and a former *Gazelle* editor. She has returned to her erstwhile home in Jumeirah, which during her absence has doubled as the ALT headquarters.

Peter Cunningham, a DNHG member resident in Al Ain, is an ecologist by training, holding an MSc in Wildlife Management. He has several spare time research projects going which we hope to hear more about. These include a study of dhubs, comparing the daily activity patterns and diet from summer to winter as well as a reconnaissance of waterholes on Jebel Hafeet.

Jan Denning, who spent a number of years in Doha and was active with the Qatar Natural History Group, has volunteered to serve on the DNHG Committee, joining Mary Beardwood as Field Trip Co-Coordinator, a welcome addition, as we have started the season with a very full field trip schedule.

Chairman **Gary Feulner** used the last of summer weather for over-

land travel along the Batinah coast of Oman, looking at mangroves and khors along the way. One result was the discovery of a natural khor with a substantial population of the giant mud creeper *Terebralia palustris*, but without any of the mangrove trees with which this snail is typically associated. (The June and July/August 1998 issues of the *Gazelle* first reported *T. palustris* in a concrete storm drainage channel near Khor Fakkan.) Gary also recommends a visit to the Oman Natural History Museum for members visiting the Muscat area. It's in the so-called "Ministry area" between Seeb and Muscat, adjacent to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.

Former DNHG member **John Martin** is back once again in November to assist the archeological team of the National Museum of Ras Al-Khaimah.

Longtime members **David and Ann Blanchard** will be leaving Dubai in December and have sent their thanks and goodbyes. We wish them well for the Millenium.



Dr Walter Pearson will be our speaker on Dec 5.

Please see Page 6 for further details.

DNHG Membership/Renewals

The DNHG's new membership year began in September 1999, so subscriptions are now overdue. For those members who have not renewed this will be the last opportunity to receive the *Gazelle* and join forthcoming field trips.

Membership remains a bargain at Dhs 50 (singles or family). You may join or renew at meetings (see Kathy Bird the Membership Secretary) or send a cheque made out to **Lloyds Bank account no 173746**. (Please note we cannot cash cheques made out to the DNHG).

This month's Contributors

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

Valerie Chalmers
Jan Denning
Helen Emery
Gary Feulner
Rod Fox
Edward Griffiths
Marijcke Jongbloed
Michael and Jill Oats
Cynthia Payne and
Fiona Skennerton



Field Trips and News...

Field Trips

Mountain Hiking - Full Friday 10 December

Helen Emery will lead a hike to Jebel Bu Faraj. Meeting at the Hilton covered car park at 7.30am, the drive there will be around 1 1/2 hours and the hike will take 4 hours maximum.

Bring 2 full large size Masafi bottles of water (3 litres total), sturdy shoes, a packed lunch, hat and suncream. 4 wheel drive is necessary. (See Helen's Hiking Hints on Page 6).

Please contact Helen on 594154 or Mary Beardwood on 441838 if you require further details.

Nature Walk Friday 17 December

Chairman Gary Feulner will lead this trip to a wet wadi, emphasis on life in and around fresh water pools. Leaving Dubai at 7.30am sharp. Travel by combo of car and on foot. Requirements as above plus binoculars and hand lens. 4 wheel drive is necessary. Return to Dubai around 6pm.

Call Gary on 331-3320x500 (office) or 306-5570 (home).

Note: Be prepared – Gary's last two 'wet wadi' trips were rained on and participants watched the wadis fill.

Graves at Shimal Friday 28 January

Christian Velde, our speaker on 16 January, will lead a trip to view the Shimal cemetery in Ras al-Khaimah starting at 9.30am.

Interested parties should contact Mary Beardwood on 441838 for further details.

Autumn Bird Watching

On 22nd October, Steve James led a birdwatching trip for our members to Khor Dubai accompanied by enthusiasts from Abu Dhabi. This area is now designated a Wild Life Reserve. Khor Dubai stands at a migratory crossroads with birds passing through in their hundreds of thousands at this time of year.

Michael and Jill Oates reported on the day. "On our first field trip as new members everybody was so kind and gave us a warm welcome. We were amazed at Steve James' observation skills. He made sure we didn't miss a thing, helped by Andrew and Abdul Hakim who arranged the telescopes for closer viewing. The highlight for us was the rare Spotted Eagle and the Marsh Harrier fighting over their lunch, a tasty wader which the Harrier dropped in the water rather than give up. A total of 45 species were noted in a four hours session which finished up at Al Awir. A Collared Pratincole, White Winged Plover and Barbary Falcon just started the long list that everyone achieved during the day.

A big thank you to Steve and his fellow twitchers who certainly helped to improve our bird watching skills."

Report by Michael and Jill Oats

Wadi Bih

This was a first time trip to Wadi Bih for most of us in the group and was judged a great day out due, in no small part to the forethought and planning of our expedition leader, Peter van Amsterdam. Our thanks to Peter for all his efforts.

The Hajar mountains are always an awesome sight, and we travelled up from the wadi floor to an elevation of 2000 ft where we stopped to explore a tiny village that had been abandoned by its residents some 30 years earlier. The village comprised plantations,

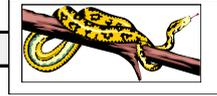
stepped terraces, a fajal system and stone dwellings all perched on an impossible promontory, which gives new meaning to "a room with a view". There was a little cemetery which proved curious because the graves were not orientated to Mecca, and the headstones had pictorial inscriptions on them. We would welcome the views of anyone who could shed light on this unusual phenomenon.

Report by Jan Denning

Women in UAE Natural History

A look at the professional literature of UAE and Arabian natural history gives an indication of the important role played by women. True, the explorers and collectors of the 18th and 19th centuries were men – Forsskal, Aucher-Eloy, Jayakar and others – but the late 20th century tells a different tale. Among those who have left an indelible mark are archaeologist Beatrice de Cardi, who still visits from time to time. Her early survey and site work in the Northern Emirates continues to provoke further investigation and established her as the doyenne of UAE archaeology. The late botanist Dorothy Hilcoat of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, who provided many identifications of flora from the UAE and Oman in the 1970s and 1980s, has been remembered in volume I of *Flora of Arabia* for having "for so many years and almost single-handedly, kept alive research into the Arabian flora." Similarly, the comprehensive *Seashells of Eastern Arabia* is dedicated to the memory of Kathleen Smythe, who conducted field work in the UAE and Oman in the 1970s and 1980s and whom the authors describe as an enthusiastic pioneer of eastern Arabian malacology (the study of molluscs).

Report by Gary Feulner



Send in your reports to griff@emirates.net.ae, or deliver them on floppy disk at monthly meetings, or fax to 394 0352 (minimum point size 14 please).

Viper strike

Snakes are common on the site of the Desert Park, the species recorded so far being the saw scale viper (*Echis carinatus*), the sand snake (*Psammophis schokari*), hooded malpolon (*Malpolon moilensis*), jayakari's sand boa (*Eryx jayakari*) and leaf nosed snake (*Lytorhynchys diadema*).

Twice a viper encountered in my swimming pool has made me achieve near Olympic speeds to reach safety. In both cases it was a rather small, ca. 30 cm. long sawscale viper. It was fished out with a net and deposited outside in the desert. At the beginning of October, at about 6 pm, a similar-sized viper was stepped upon by my house boy. Understandably the viper did not take kindly to this treatment and bit the oppressor in the back of the heel, before taking refuge in the innards of the car standing close by. Within seconds I was able to apply the Aspivenin vacuum pump, that I keep handy for just such occasions, and extracted a half dozen drops of blood, hopefully laced with venom, from the site of the bite. Only one fang had penetrated sufficiently to have pierced the skin, the other must have glanced off. Thiruppa reported very little pain at this time. I instructed him to lie down quietly with head and chest at a higher level than his foot and to move as little as possible. No tourniquet or compressing bandage was applied. After more than an hour some slight swelling occurred around the heel. Since the authorities on snake bites state that you can only assume that no venom is injected if there is no swelling at all, I decided to go to hospital. I had checked beforehand which

hospital had anti-venom available in case it was needed and the choice was the Al Qasimiya Hospital in Sharjah.

When we arrived at the crowded emergency room reception, the word "snake bite" galvanised everyone into a frenzy of activity. The desk nurse gave me a sound scolding for waiting one and a half hour before bringing the patient in. While I took care of the registration, Thiruppa was whisked into a treatment room, where a catheter was inserted into a vein – a very good measure as this would be difficult to do if haemorrhagic shock occurred at a later stage. Throughout the night he was kept under observation with frequent monitoring of blood pressure and pulse. Blood tests were carried out four times, but none revealed disturbances of blood clotting. I was thoroughly impressed by the efficient and professional handling of the case, and recommend treatment for this kind of accident at the Al Qasimiyah Hospital with full confidence!

Thiruppa was released from hospital the next day. The verdict from the hospital doctor was that, based on the lack of blood clotting disturbances, no venom had been injected. But Thiruppa reported having had a frightful headache during the night, and tolerable pain in his leg up to his knee. This pain subsided during the day and settled eventually in a small area around his ankle, which also remained swollen for the whole of the next week. For at least three days he had difficulty walking because of the pain, but the area did not blister or show tissue damage. The symptoms improved quickly when I switched the painkillers from panadol to ipobrufen, which has swelling reducing properties.

I am certain the symptoms Thiruppa experienced cannot be attributed only to the damage of the actual bite. There was certainly no infection of any kind (no redness or throbbing) that could have caused the swelling and the pain. From my observation I feel that venom was indeed injected, but most of it was probably removed

by the quick application of the vacuum pump. Whatever little remained was enough to cause the generalized (headache) and local (swelling, pain) symptoms, but not enough to affect blood clotting.

The vacuum pump that I used is the Aspivenin pump, which is a safe and easy-to-use gadget, available at some local pharmacies. It works well for insect stings, I have used it with success in a case of stingray sting and I am sure it mitigated my houseboy's ordeal, because I was able to apply it within minutes after the viper bite.

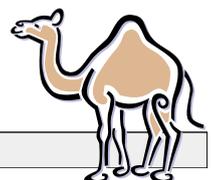
Report by Dr Marijcke Jongbloed

Thirsty Visitors

With reference to the article Swimming Snakes in Gazelle October 99 – as the Dubai Country Club Committee Member responsible for the construction and commissioning of the original club swimming pool in the early 1970's, I can report that swimming vipers were a regular feature in the days before the increase in membership drove them to quieter areas. Many a morning the staff had to fish them from the pool. Rather than considering a change in habits of local vipers (Dr Jongbloed's comment), it was assumed then that they just popped into this new "wadi" area for a drink and inadvertently slipped into the pool from the tiled surround.

This was presumably the case for the adult camel found one morning standing forlornly in the shallow end. Its removal was both hilarious and a good drenching for all concerned.

Thanks to Edward Griffiths for this interesting snippet





additional news ...

A Sighting of Bottle-Nosed Dolphins

At 5pm on Tuesday 19th October, the crew of the Aqua Jade cruiser from the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club spotted nearly 100 dolphins between Chicago Beach North Cardinal Mark and the Jumeirah Beach Hotel. The dolphins were described as black with pink snub noses. The males were about 9ft in length, and the females about 7ft, with babies 3 ½ ft. This information was given to Valerie Chalmers and after checking her copy of "Whales and Dolphins of the UAE" by Robert Baldwin, Valerie contacted Steve James of the Emirates Natural History Group in Abu Dhabi, who confirmed that these were bottle-nosed dolphins. In his book Robert Baldwin says that 'bottle-nosed dolphins found in deeper water off Fujairah are larger and have shorter beaks'. This would tie in well with the description given to Valerie.

Report by Valerie Chalmers

Visiting the Arabian Wildlife Centre

"The focus of the Wildlife Centre is on Arabian wildlife and aims to show people how rich in diversity the fauna of the Arabian Peninsula is" (sic) - and the Centre does exactly that.

The first section is dedicated to reptiles and insects - Dhabs, Agamas, Lizards, Geckos, Beetles, Toads, Terrapins and Fish. Out of this section, the Spiny Tailed Agama (Albert) was the most friendly. Fascinating information on every inhabitant is provided - Tilapias (small fish) have been introduced to this part of the world as mosquito deterrents however the snag here is that they have a detrimental impact on indigenous fish species. Dragonflies mate whilst in flight. At any one time there are at least 1 quadrillion living ants on earth. Desert Monitor Lizards can grow to 1.2 metres.

Continuing past scorpions and camel spiders, is a well thought out aviary containing different species of local songbirds as well as Sandgrouse, Hubara, Flamingos and Rock Hyraxes. There followed the three smaller cats of the desert - caracal, wildcat and sandcat. Caracals were used by Asian royalty to hunt gazelles and birds. Gordon's Wildcats apparently don't need to drink water - they simply lick the moisture off their coats.

Night and day is switched in the nocturnal house to display the mongoose, honeybadger, genets, jackal, foxes (the brush of the Blandford fox is almost the same length as his body) and the porcupines (which are the Bedouins favoured food).

It is winter yet all inhabitants were panting. However we learned there are plans to have cool air blown through to keep the animals cooler in the summer. Here we saw Ostrich (which don't sleep longer than 15 minutes at a time), Baboons (Kong being the rather aggressive, leader of the group - did anybody see his teeth?), a Hyena and a Cheetah (Akhbar the Great was said to have kept 1000 Cheetahs for hunting). The last Cheetah was said to have been shot in Yemen 40 years ago. Finally Andy, an 8th month old Arabian Leopard, too big to play with, which was bred at the Centre - its favourite meal is a brace of quail. His fellow inmates are housed in the Breeding Centre.

With the Natural History Museum and the Children's Farm all in the same area, it would be easy to spend a whole day learning about the country in which we live, though our tour took around 2 hours.

Many thanks must go to Peter Wright, a member of the South African management team at the Centre, who made us all very welcome and answered a lot of ingenuous questions.

Report by Fiona Skennerton and Cynthia Peyton

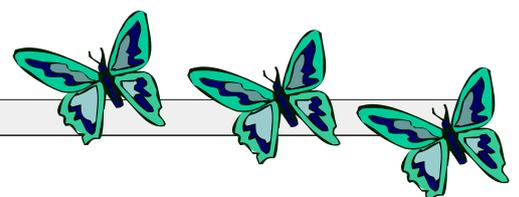
Blue Spotted Arab Bloom

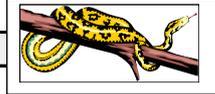
There seems to have been another huge population explosion of the Blue Spotted Arab butterfly (*Colotis phisadia*) in the area between Dubai and Al-Ain, according to Dr Mike Gillett, with seemingly continuous breeding going on. The Blue Spotted Arab is an Arabian member of the Family Pieridae and can be found throughout the UAE. It is a relatively small butterfly. The underside is yellow-green with a few black spots; the upper side is a mix of orange, yellow, black and a pale grey-blue.

Large numbers have been present so far this autumn along the Al-Ain to Ain Al-Faydah road, which was often visibly littered with specimens struck by cars. Other observers found them abundant in wilder country as well, for example in wadis near the summit of Jebel Hafeet. Mike says there were plenty in urban Al Ain too - the landscaped beds of spreading *Sesuvium verrucosum* at the Medical School hosted them by the hundreds and the butterfly was seen crossing roads all over town. It was also present all the way along the Al Ain to Dubai road. This is believed to be the same butterfly seen in flight and reported by several members from the area between Dubai and Al-Awir.

Mike has previously observed that population increases of the Blue Spotted Arab are often correlated with those of the Small Salmon Arab (*Colotis calais*), a closely related species. In this instance however, he remarks that he has not seen any Small Salmon Arabs recently: "It is as if the latter species has been less successful in availing itself of the now abundant plantings of *Salvadora persica* [the commonly called "toothbrush bush"] at roadsides and elsewhere."

Report by Gary Feulner





Dubai Natural History Group Recorders

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

Archaeology – Volunteer required

Birds - Rod Fox
res 208 9416
fax 673 939
foxline@emirates.net.ae

Seashells - Sandy Fowler
res 442 243
fax 442 243

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

Geology - Gary Feulner
res 306 5570
fax 331 3371

Fossils - Valerie Chalmers
res 494 816,
fax 398 3727

Insects - Gary Feulner
(see above)

Mammals - Marijcke Jongbloed
res 06-311 126
fax 06-311 126
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.

—BIRD—
—REPORT—
By Rod Fox



Please fax Rod Fox with new sites and sightings

October is one of the best bird-watching months in the UAE with the skies full of migrants and winter visitors looking out for sustenance at a pool of water or a patch of grass. Over two hundred species of bird are recorded at this time of the year which thankfully coincides with a more agreeable temperature for birding..

As I was bemoaning the lack of good local sites, I caught a glimpse of water not a mile from my villa in Mirdiff. On closer inspection, I found a large area of waste land being used as a sewage dump. The shallow water has attracted the White-tailed Plover with its stately walk and bright yellow legs, as well as the furtive Spotted Crake which I've seen briefly in the ditches between the thick vegetation. Other birds I have seen on this site have been Spotted Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Little and Black-necked Grebe as well as waders and duck usually expected at this kind of habitat. This is a site worth visiting especially as it may be a very temporary one.

Another excellent place for birding is the so-called Dubai Pivots on the Hatta Road just past the Sewage Treatment Plant. Six White Stork wintered there last year and two have arrived so far. It is essentially acres of camel fodder with flooded areas and on two recent visits, I have seen Cattle Egret, Collared Pratincole, Kestrel, Great-grey and Isabelline Shrike, Swallow, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Indian Roller and Tawny Pipit around the edges of the field. I have also seen Marsh Harrier and a female Montagu's Harrier, the latter requiring careful observation to distinguish it from a female Pallid Harrier, which has a pale, dark-streaked collar. Harriers often fly low and allow good views which

helps in the process of identification. Other birds seen here recently, alas not by the author, include a Peregrine, Rosy starlings, Short-toed lark, 2 Richard's Pipit, Blyth's Pipit and Yellow Wagtail.

If you then take the road to the Sewage Treatment Plant there is a track off to the right before the plant which leads to a gravel pit and pools of water which provide another excellent site. They have recently attracted 250 or so waders including White-tailed Plover, Pacific Golden Plover, Ruff, Marsh Sand Piper as well as Garganey, Shoveler and a Pintail. On a dried patch of sewage nearby on the day I visited, was a Black-tailed Godwit in amongst a group of Black-tailed Stilt. A 'scope is best at the gravel pits as the birds are often a fair distance away.

Many thanks to Mike and Jill Oates who faxed me recently about a Yellow-billed Stork they had seen at Khor Dubai which they correctly noted is not on the UAE bird lists. This is an escapee and probably one of the six who wintered here last year, tagging on to the large flock of Greater Flamingo.

"Finders Eaters"

Member Anne Millen is interested in organising a dinner in the desert one evening in December and invites anyone with a GPS to join her and Peter van Amsterdam in some out of the way spot. All you will need is the coordinates of the particular tree, and your own dinner and beverage in case you fail to find Anne and Peter.

Any interested parties should call Peter on 050-6425077, leaving name and contact details. Anne will be away until the 22 November but will return calls after that date.



Packing Your Backpack:

Hiking in the UAE can be great fun as long as you are properly equipped.

Water is very important, village wells tend to be dry or full of goat droppings. Two full masafi bottles (3 litres total) is the minimum for each person on any hike, but in the hotter months I would prefer to take 3. Your rucksack needs to be 30 to 35 litre size so that it is not stuffed full, and therefore uncomfortable to carry. Pack a few extra sandwiches, chocolate, sweets and Isostar which are good energy boosts for the last couple of hours of the hike.

A small head torch which takes lightweight batteries is invaluable if for some unforeseen reason you don't get down before darkness – no-one deliberately plans for this, but it can happen. A space blanket and warm jacket are also desirable.

Walking sticks and long trousers I tend to boycott – both are cumbersome and get in the way. Sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat are essentials – and so is a camera. I prefer a small autofocus zoom lens to heavy photographic equipment and tripods – these mountains are not for the faint-hearted and an extra bottle of water may save your life; a fancy camera won't!

Sun & Sand in City Centre sells Timberland boots which look strong enough for most jebel hikes. My own preference is for canvas/suede lightweight boots with high ankle support, for loose rocky descents, and tough, flexible soles. It is also a good idea for one person in the group to have a basic medical kit on them. Plastic bags for rubbish and specimen collection are useful. Bring all this lot and hopefully you'll have a good day out in the UAE mountains!!

Sound advice from Helen Emery.

Jebel Hafeet Summit Wadis

A visit to the high but relatively flat summit wadis of Jebel Hafeet started the winter hiking season for Gary Feulner and Peter Cunningham. Although they represent one of the more benign environments on the mountain, the summit wadis, too, were suffering from the prolonged drought. Not a drop of surface water was seen despite the presence of a number of potholes that would have held up to a meter and a half or more when full. An addition to the plant list for Jebel Hafeet was *Nannorhops ritchieana*, the dwarf palm, which was present in several typical patches.

Peter was able to identify occasional droppings of Blanford's fox, and also several probable gazelle spoor. The elusive Arabian tahr remained elusive, however. As tahr are understood to drink daily, if any are present on the mountain their current range may be restricted by the drought. No feral goats were seen either, although apparent goat droppings were present in small numbers. Peter and Gary also had good views of a rather large, fawn-colored agama that even dashed to gobble up a small ant while under close scrutiny – a lot of effort for not very many calories.

STAG-gering Blooper

Dr Mike Gillett says he was duly impressed with the fine picture of a male *Acanthophorus arabicus* (Thomson, 1887) on page 3 of the October *Gazelle*, but he alerts us that "Despite its awesome mandibles, this beetle is not actually a stag beetle (Family Lucanidae) but a member of the quite unrelated Family Cerambycidae (Sub-family Prioninae) or longhorn beetles." Mike adds, "This beetle is about at this time of the year and seems to be associated with natural stands of *ghaf* trees. I have heard many reports of these large beetles from Al-Ain, but the only examples I

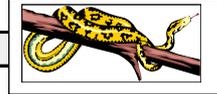
have seen are the dead remains of two specimens, both females and about 4 and 5 cm in length. Generally speaking, members of this family are scarce in the UAE and I know of only 4 other species. Just over 50 species are known from the whole of Arabia. The real stag beetles or lucanids and the related bess bugs (Family Passalidae) are both, as far as I know, unrepresented in Arabia."

Our Next Speaker

Dr Walter Pearson is the Director of the Marine Environmental Research Centre at ERWDA in Abu Dhabi. He was born in New England, USA, where he grew up swimming and snorkelling around Cape Cod. He studied in Maine, Alaska and Oregon and did his PhD thesis on the effects of PCBs on the behaviour of the Oregon shore crab.

For most of his career he worked for Battelle Laboratories, the world's first and now largest not-for-profit research organisation. His research there focused on the role of chemo-reception in the behaviour and ecology of marine organisms and the effects of pollution and other human activities on marine fish, invertebrates and estuarine environments.

Walt has led or participated in many multi-disciplinary, multi-organisational studies to assess natural resource issues. Among other things, he was the Technical Leader of a large multi-disciplinary study to assess the damages to herring fisheries resources following the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska and was called as the expert witness at the trial. He also led a fisheries resource damage assessment team for the Seki oil spill, in the UAE, in 1994. On secondment from Battelle, he established an innovative education programme that trains displaced US timber workers in environmental policy and assessment.



	name	tel.home	tel.office	fax
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Wanted: Snails and Slugs

The DNHG is now in contact with international experts who have expressed an interest in making an accounting of the terrestrial and freshwater snails of the UAE. This is a result of the collection efforts begun in Dubai two years ago by Stephen and Adam Green. Although several papers have been published on land and freshwater snails of Arabia, the UAE has largely been ignored. A first step will be to include the UAE's snail fauna in the IUCN list.

Fewer than 10 each of land and freshwater snails have so far been recognized from the UAE. Of these, a few of each are considered native and most of the rest represent species spread by human activity that are now known from suitable habitats worldwide. There have been a few surprises, however. At least one privately

landscaped Dubai residential complex is home to vast numbers of a snail native to Florida in the USA, but also found in residential gardens in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. More remarkably, live specimens of an unknown Dubai lawn snail have been dissected by a European researcher with results that were described as "overwhelming!" The snail differed in so many characteristics from related species that it is considered to represent a new genus.

How can you help? Dubai is growing fast, with lots of new parks, water and greenery, including imported soil and imported plants. These are likely environments for snails and no one person can sample them all. So if you should happen to come across land or freshwater snails -- perhaps while pottering in the garden or playing a shot from the rough -- collect a few shells, bag 'em and tag 'em! Shells are sufficient in the first instance. Live

snails are not required unless the snail proves to be new and the identification is in doubt. However, it is useful to note whether live snails are present. Among other things, this helps to distinguish bona fide land and freshwater snails from the background of sea-shells that abound in Dubai's native soils.

All specimens will be gratefully accepted by Chairman Gary Feulner, and contributors will be kept informed of progress. Please remember to record the location and the habitat, as well as your name, the date, and any remarks. It is hoped also to involve local gardening groups and the Dubai Municipality's Agriculture Department in this search.



GAZELLE

Dubai Natural History Group Programme

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

- December 5 Fate and Effects of Oil Spills – Dr Walter Pearson
January 16 Shimal: A Cemetery of the 2nd Millenium BC – Christian Velde
February 6 Seashells and The Ecology of Arabian Gulf Molluscs – Horst Kauch

Field Trips (DNHG members only, please. Details on page1.)

- December 10 Mountain Hiking – This Field Trip is full.
Explore new heights at Jebel Bu Faraj with Helen Emery
December 17 Nature Walk
A slow paced exploration of a 'wet' wadi
January 21 Re-visiting Wadi Bih
For those who missed the popular November Field Trip
January 28 Graves at Shimal
Visit to a cemetery of the 2nd Millenium BC.

If anyone would like to lead a field trip to an area of special interest please contact Mary Beardwood or Jan Denning.

Title Surname
PO Box
City
UAE
