



GAZELLE

مجموعتنا دورية للتاريخ والطبيعي



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Contributors —

Thank you to the following members for their contributions this month:

- *Angela Manthorpe
- *Chris Bowden
- *Eliza Romaniuk
- *Gary Brown
- *Gary Feulner
- *John Lamoreux
- *Kateryna Fomenko
- *Namitha Jassem
- *Neil Cox
- *Thomas Brooks

A sneak peek into the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital on page 3



Wildlife in Sicily

Contribution and photo by Angela Manthorpe

Wherever we went hiking in Sicily and the Aeolian islands it seemed that Italian wall lizards (*Podarcis siculus*) were present. They are abundant in all human-created habitats, particularly around walls and gardens and we would often see them running ahead of us, darting for cover or observing us from a safe distance. So it was with interest that we interrupted our tour of the museums at Lipari castle to observe a lizard 'on the hunt'.

A bright green male had been spotted with a smaller reptile firmly clamped in its jaws; periodically the male would shake its head back and forth, pushing the smaller one around. We had a lively discussion – were they different species; was the larger one trying to kill the other; why was the small one not struggling to get away? Subsequent online research revealed that we had witnessed part of a mating tussle.

April to July is the lizards' breeding season and, during this time, the males become more brightly coloured and will establish a territory, which is defended aggressively from rivals. The males are usually several centimetres larger than the females, and when a male finds a potential mate, it will bite the body or head and they may wrestle for extended periods, particularly if the female is unreceptive. We did not stay to find out what happened next but, after mating, females will typically lay several clutches of eggs in the soil and under rocks. The incubation period is approximately two months.

See Gazelle December 2016 for a similar encounter with mating fringe-toed lizards in the Dubai desert.

Announcements and Recordors



Exchanging a sample bottle in Wadi Shawkah



Receiving the 2012 Bish Brown Award from HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak al Nahyan

Monthly Lecture

Monday 3 November 2022 at 8 pm

Central Veterinary Research Laboratory

Location link : <https://maps.app.goo.gl/HXjmpJvaHxZXwheS8>

Topic: Workshop on the Insect Collection of JAAENHG

Speaker: Dr Brigitte Howarth

Abstract: Although some collecting had occurred in the 1940's and 1950's, material from these early collecting trips were described much later (e.g. Popov 1980). Recording of insects only began in earnest in the 1980's, mainly as the result of the enthusiastic activities of amateur expatriate residents, such as the founder of the ENHG, Bish Brown. In those early days, some individuals collected specimens, and curated specimens were collated by the newly founded Abu Dhabi chapter of the Emirates Natural History Group (ENHG). Expatriate life is transient with individuals often leaving the UAE and, for many years, the insects collected by them remained hidden amongst other stored material until in 2005 the collection was re-discovered. At this point the Al Ain chapter of the ENHG inherited the specimens which now form part of the Joint Al Ain and Abu Dhabi Emirates Natural History Group (JAAENHG) Insect Collection. I was made curator and custodian of the collection and it resides in a special room in my house.

This workshop will discuss the roles of collections such as the JAAENHG. Setting up different activities, there will be an opportunity to experience curation, look down a microscope, view parts of the JAAENHG collection and also view archival records of the ENHG. You are welcome to bring along objects/photos and we will gladly attempt to assist you towards an identification.

About the Speaker:

For as long as I can remember, I have had a deep appreciation and love of natural environments, the organisms that inhabit these areas, and the interactions between organisms and environments. Arriving in the UAE in 1998, after having completed both my undergraduate degree in Applied Ecology and my PhD in ecological entomology in the UK, I have been fortunate to become familiar with the terrestrial biodiversity of several regional countries including the UAE, Oman and Kuwait. This has included arthropods and plants, but also small mammals and reptiles, all excellent proxy-taxons to help evaluate species diversity as well as ecological relationships of local environments. Having taught at a federal university in the UAE and gained experience in academic administration, I am currently a curator at the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi. I have been involved with the ENHG since 1998 in a variety of roles, currently chair of Al Ain, but I have also been the curator and custodian of the Emirates Natural History Group's arthropod collection since locating it in storage from which I recovered it over a decade ago. I was very honoured to receive the Sheikh Mubarak Bin Mohammed Prize in 2006 and the Bish Brown Award in 2012.

DNHG Recordors

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From the Editor:

2025 - 2026 season will bring many more interesting trips and lectures! Please share with us through the email below your observations, stories, photos and captions of wildlife, nature and history in the UAE or abroad.

Email: gazelleeditor@gmail.com

Deadline: any time before

20-November-2025

...for the November edition...

Your contributions bring the Gazelle newsletter to life and encourage continuous learning of our History and Nature!

A visit to the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital Contribution by Eliza Romaniuk; photos by Eliza Romaniuk & Kateryna Fomenko

On 5th October a group of DNHG members went on a trip to the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital (ADFH). At the beginning of our tour our guide, Dennis Paez, briefed us about the history of the hospital. The facility was opened in 1999 with the aim to protect, conserve, research and promote captive-bred and wild falcons health and falconry traditions. From its humble beginning, the hospital has since expanded to accept not only falcons but a variety of birds and poultry species such as peacocks, owls and houbaras. In 2007 the Pet Care Centre for dogs and cats was established on the site, followed by the Abu Dhabi Animal Shelter. At present, the hospital also offers opportunities for education, training and research.

Dennis followed with the information that there are three main species of falcons in the UAE and went on to explain how they differ.

The **Peregrine falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*), the smallest of the three but the fastest, can easily reach over 350km/h while diving to catch its prey. Their remarkable speed makes them the fastest animal in the world. The males are usually about the size of a crow, while the females are larger and stronger, which is seen in other falcon species as well.

Peregrine falcons are found across the globe, inhabiting both the northern and southern hemispheres. The ones living in the north are usually migratory, flying to warmer places for the winter, while their southern counterparts are often residents. They are usually found in rocky areas as they prefer high places, e.g. steep cliffs, where their eggs are laid in a shallow scrape or depression made by them in a rock face. Their diet primarily consists of medium-sized birds, such as pigeons, doves etc.



Peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus)



Saker falcon (Falco cherrug)

The **Saker falcon** (*Falco cherrug*), called “saqr” in Arabic, is a bird of prey which is integral to Arab culture, officially named the national bird of the UAE and featured on the country’s emblem. This species has been prized by falconers for its impressive endurance in flight, great strength and its ability to cope with harsh conditions of the Arabian Peninsula. Bedouins regarded them as a symbol of courage, patience, nobility and freedom.

Saker falcons are well suited to hunting close to the ground in the open areas as their bodies are capable of rapid acceleration and great manoeuvrability. They hunt small to medium-sized mammals and various birds including the houbara. These large and powerful predators have also been reported to attack animals much bigger than themselves such as gazelle and deer. They inhabit semi-desert and forest areas stretching from Eastern Europe to Central Asia. For the winter period they migrate to northern parts of southern Asia and some parts of Africa. Females might typically weigh up to 1300g while males usually weigh no more than 990g.



Gyrfalcon (Falco rusticolus)

The **Gyrfalcon** (*Falco rusticolus*) is the largest and one of the most expensive falcon species in the world. Some may fetch over AED1,000,000 for breeders as they are valued for their beauty and strength. Their distribution range covers the Arctic regions of North America, Europe and Asia, including Scandinavia, Russia, Siberia, Alaska, and Canada. They are determined hunters, feeding on birds and mammals, and are known for their power and long flight range. Both the Saker falcon and Gyrfalcon do not build nests but occupy the abandoned nests of other birds.

(continued on page 4)

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His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan with one of his falcons

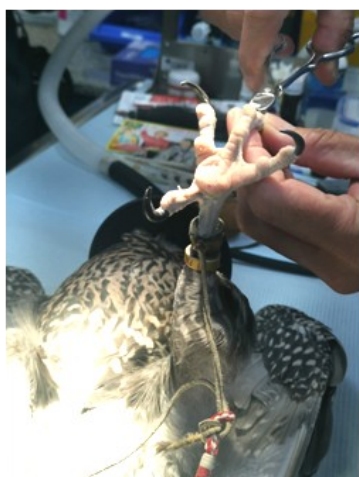
To protect these species, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan issued a directive for all captive falcons to be released in 1995. Nowadays, catching or possessing wild falcons is illegal in the UAE. That is why hybrid falcons, of which some are bred in ADFH, have been gaining popularity as falconry is keenly continued in the country as part of its national heritage. These are crossbreeds, such as the Gyr peregrine and Saker-Peregrine hybrid. We saw a number of them during the tour of the hospital. Hunting in the wild is prohibited as our native animals need to be protected. However, falconers can still train their falcons in designated areas in the western region of Abu Dhabi, as well as take them on hunting expeditions to other countries - whereby falcons may fly in first, business or economy class cabins on Emirates and some other airlines. All falcons in the UAE are chipped and ringed, and the ones travelling abroad are issued special passports with a validity of three years.

Having learnt about falcons and falconry, we were then led to a moulting room. We were informed that moulting is a process of replacing old feathers with new ones. It happens annually between March and October and may cover a period of 5 - 8 months.

When the new feathers are in place, the falcons that want to fly to the south start their migration season. That was the time when, in the past, they were caught by Bedouins to be trained and used for hunting and providing falconers and their families with vital food. To enable the birds to return and breed in their countries of origin, they were released at the end of the hunting season, most often in January/ February.



The moulting room



Talon clipping - (photo by Kateryna Fomenko)



Beak filling

The next stop was the surgery room, which added another level to our experience. It was a highlight of the ADFH trip for me. First of all, we witnessed a minor procedure of talon clipping and beak filing. In the wild, both talons and beaks wear off naturally but captive-bred falcons need to go for pedicure and beak-cure regularly. Their sharp talons can injure the soft foot sole if they overgrow. The curved talons are used for grasping prey or sitting on the perch, while hooked beaks with a tooth-like projection are suitable for breaking the prey's bones. As with all predators, such procedures must be carried out under anesthesia.

As a nice memory of the trip, all the participants had a chance to put on a special glove and have a falcon sit on it for a personal photo. It was quite an experience to have such a mighty predator so close to me and to be able to gently pet it on the chest.

After a photo session, it was time for the "feeding show". We were reminded that falcons eat only fresh meat – they will not touch a dead carcass. As soon as Dennis started unwrapping the quail from the aluminium foil, all the falcons present became a bit agitated even though they had their hoods on. They have excellent sight and hearing, but their sense of smell is weak. When the quail was placed really close, in front of their hooded heads, they were totally unresponsive to the potential meal.

One of our group members was asked to volunteer for the feeding session – Kateryna bravely stepped forward. She was given a glove and asked to hold the meat firmly. The falcon wasted no time but greedily started devouring the prey. They eat fast, as other predators might attack them and steal their meal. The quail disappeared in a blink of an eye and we could see how the falcon's chest appeared inflated. It was not the chest though, but the esophagus located in the upper part of the falcon's body from which the food moves down to be digested. This brought us to the end of our tour.

We would like to thank the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital and its staff for such a wonderful experience.



Esophagus filled with quail

The UAE's "Big Black Scorpion" Comprises Two Species

Contribution by Gary Feulner;
Photos by Gary Feulner and Gary Brown

To generations of weekend campers, hikers and picnickers, the UAE's "big black scorpion" is one of the best known denizens of the country's great outdoors. It is widespread in the UAE and ranges from the huge sand dunes of Liwa across the sand and gravel plains of the northern Emirates and into the gravel wadi environments of the Hajar Mountain foothills. It is most often regarded with a mix of fascination and caution, if not outright fear, because its painful sting has the documented potential to cause systemic reactions even in healthy adult humans.

Now, our "big black scorpion" has joined many other UAE examples of the sophistication and subtlety of modern taxonomic science. It has been determined to be distinct from the "true" *Androctonus crassicauda* (a species originally named from Iran), and to represent not one, but two previously unrecognised species.



A big black scorpion (immature) from Dubai, presumptively *A. omanensis* (photo by Gary Brown)

Until very recently, the populations found in the UAE and Oman were considered to be the local representatives of a single species, *Androctonus crassicauda*, that was reckoned to extend across the arid and semi-arid regions of North Africa, Arabia, the Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Iran. Beginning about five years ago, however, molecular genetic technology coupled with more rigorous anatomical techniques (including statistical analysis) began to indicate and then confirm that *A. crassicauda* was not a single species but a complex of closely similar or "cryptic" species, each occupying particular geographical areas and/ or habitats within the overall range of the complex, with each local species receiving its own individual name.

Against this background, scorpion taxonomist Graeme Lowe, whose painstaking work on the scorpions of the UAE and Oman has spanned several decades, applied his attention to "*A. crassicauda*" of Eastern Arabia. His results, published in *Euscorpius* (September 2025) and based on examination of nearly 200 specimens, recognise **two** species distinguished by slight but consistent anatomical differences, and also by habitat: (1) ***Androctonus omanensis*** inhabits the Hajar Mountain foothills and the adjacent sand and gravel plains, including coastal regions. (2) ***A. ammophilus*** inhabits the deeper sands in the north-east of the Empty Quarter, including the south of Abu Dhabi Emirate and the adjacent regions of Saudi Arabia and north-western Oman. The epithet "*ammophilus*" means sand-loving.

The anatomical differences between the two new species include the proportions of the thoracic segments (broader and flatter in *A. ammophilus*) and the leg proportions (longer in *A. ammophilus*), as well as the detailed ornamentation of the carapace and the arrangement of sensory hairs (trichobothria). Dr. Lowe hypothesises that these differences arose during the Pleistocene, when the increasing aridity of Arabia during glacial periods created the extensive dune sands that now characterise the range of *A. ammophilus*.

These results are a satisfying confirmation of many principles of evolutionary theory, and they help to explain the exceptional ecological range of the putative "species". But is there any practical significance for UAE campers, hikers and picnickers? Probably very little, apart from scoring points in campfire conversation. Shakespeare reminded us that "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet".



A big black scorpion from Liwa, presumptively *Androctonus ammophilus*. (photo by Gary Feulner)

The "big black scorpion", by whatever name, still warrants our respect and caution, whenever and wherever encountered.

There is still so much to discover in the UAE and beyond. Join our DNHG field trips, renew your membership !



DNHG membership renewal for 2025-2026 season!

The new season started in September and with that some interesting field trips and activities have taken place, with many more in the pipeline for our members! At our November lecture you can easily renew your membership by paying cash to Valerie Chalmers, DNHG's Vice Chairman.

For further details please go to page 9.

Exploring Socotra

Contribution and photos by
Chris Bowden, John Lamoreux, Namitha Jassem, Neil Cox & Thomas Brooks

The Socotra Archipelago, poised between the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, is a place of rare beauty and extraordinary biodiversity. Organised by the DNHG, and led by environmental expert Ahmed Saeed Suleiman, our trip to Socotra was an unparalleled opportunity to explore a unique natural world. Aside from its rich marine life, Socotra is home to 12 endemic bird species, 28 endemic reptiles and over 300 endemic plants. Notable among these is the Dragon's Blood Tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*, Vulnerable), which has become a symbol of the island's surreal landscape. A designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, Socotra is a sanctuary for threatened species and the last stronghold of an endangered language and culture.

Our adventure began at the conclusion of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) meetings, hosted by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi from October 25-28, 2024. Over 300 conservation leaders gathered to issue a declaration **"Saving Species Sustains Life"** emphasising the urgent need for interconnected solutions to protect biodiversity, stabilise climate and support human wellbeing. As threats continue to emerge and accelerate, the SSC has spurred its efforts maintaining that species conservation is fundamental to the achievement of global sustainability goals. Worldwide, over 46,000 known species are threatened with extinction, although this number could be close to two million, factoring in those as yet undiscovered. Preserving unique ecosystems under threat, such as those present in Socotra, is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.



Socotra Dragon's Blood trees -
(photo by Thomas Brooks)



Arher Beach (photo by Namitha Jassem)

Due to a cancellation of our planned return

flights, our itinerary was compressed but still took us across the island and a diverse range of habitats. On October 29th we explored the lush Wadi Ayhaft, then headed to Arher Beach on the Eastern coast with its enormous and spectacular dunes. On October 30th we drove inland to the Diksam Plateau, an otherworldly landscape with a forest of Dragon Blood trees and on October 31st we journeyed west to Qalansiyah for a boat trip along the coast, and then made our way back along the north coast. On November 1st we wrapped up the journey by heading back to the airport, replete with our findings, having seen all the endemic birds.



Socotra Buzzard at Qalansiyah
(photo by Thomas Brooks)

On the very first day, we spotted the endemic Socotran Chameleon (*Chamaeleo monachus*, Near Threatened), the Socotra Buzzard (*Buteo socotraensis*, Vulnerable) and the Socotra Scops Owl (*Otus socotranus*, Least Concern). While we hunted with spotlights almost every night for the elusive Nubian Nightjar, ironically, we found an equally beautiful Eurasian Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*, Least Concern) in a last-ditch effort on the morning before our flight out. Beyond the iconic species, one of the unique phenomena we observed was crab pyramids, intricately built structures apparently built by the *Ocypode saratan*, the Red Sea Ghost Crab. Up on the Diksam Plateau, we were delighted to find the endemic damselfly Socotra Bluet (*Azuragrion granti*, Near Threatened) as well as Socotra Freshwater Crab (*Socotrapotamon socotrense*, Endangered).



Socotra chameleon
(photo by
Namitha Jassem)

The unique and fragile nature of Socotra's plants and animals can be seen in the number of Key Biodiversity



Socotra Scops Owl at Khor Sirhin
(photo by Thomas Brooks)

Areas (KBAs) on the island (i.e. 16, excluding the outer islands). KBAs are recognised as globally important for the persistence of biodiversity and we were fortunate enough to visit six of these in our short time on the island. Indeed, most of the marvellous creatures we came to see live within KBAs. Although this recognition of these sites does not convey any legal protection or management requirement, it does indicate that even within an island as special as Socotra there are small areas where the biodiversity stands out and where future conservation efforts should be directed. Often the greatest hurdle to safeguarding KBAs is making sure governments understand the importance of such sites. It is therefore most encouraging that our guide, Ahmed Saeed Suleiman, who leads the DNHG tours, not only serves as the Wetlands Contact Point for the Environmental Protection Authority of the Ministry of Water and Environment, Republic of Yemen, but is one of the authors of the publication that identified KBAs for Socotra and certainly knows their importance more than anyone.

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The threats to Socotra's biodiversity are varied. Like all island-dwellers, Socotra's species are vulnerable to predatory alien species, such as feral cats. Invasive Small Indian Civets (*Viverricula indica*, Least Concern) are abundant; we saw thirteen during two evenings of night-torching. While Ahmed thought civet numbers have recently increased, they were apparently introduced onto Socotra many centuries ago and so may now be less of a threat to the island's surviving species. Ahmed also explained to us how he and colleagues successfully prevented colonisation by House Crows (*Corvus splendens*, Least Concern), an invasive species scourge of the Arabian and East African coast. Meanwhile, intensification of traditional approaches to both grazing and fishing are placing increasing pressures on the island's plants and marine fishes.



Egyptian Vulture at Arhar Beach with Ahmed Saeed Suleiman (left) & Tomas Brooks (right) (photo by John Lamoreaux)

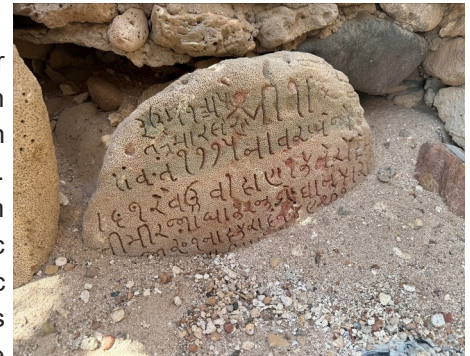
Chris had previously visited Yemen (North Yemen) as a member of the pioneering Ornithological Society of the Middle East's (OSME) two-month expedition in 1985 and had ever since hoped to visit more of the country, especially Socotra and so this opportunity to visit was one he did not want to miss. As Programme Manager of SAVE (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction) and Co-Chair of the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group, there was the added draw of the globally endangered and locally revered Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*). Socotra holds the highest concentration of these birds in the world. The population of nearly 2,000 has thus far not been affected by rodenticides or veterinary diclofenac and, hopefully, their abundance will continue to be a feature of any visit. Development pressures will bring their own challenges and climate change also looms as a longer-term threat; for example in exacerbating overgrazing-driven declines in the Dragon's Blood trees.

Socotra's cultural heritage is also fascinating - traditional knowledge intertwined with the island's natural resources. One of the most striking experiences was seeing coral tablets carved with ancient Indian languages, a remnant of Socotra's mercantile history.

The dwarf cattle farmed there most likely came from South Arabia millennia ago and their significance is woven into Soqotri (typically classified as an Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, South Semitic and South Arabian language). The island's geology is also an intriguing study. A fragment of Gondwanaland, its subsequent isolation from Arabia and Africa presents a unique exploration of tectonic and evolutionary science in the examination of its endemic species. The loss of any one species, apart from its ecological significance, is an irretrievably lost puzzle piece of our shared history.



Socotri cattle (photo by Thomas Brooks)



Coral tablet with inscription (photo by John Lamoreaux)

When asked, Richard Porter, a name synonymous with conservation in the Middle East, gave us his top priorities for wildlife conservation in Socotra: "(1) To support, strengthen and empower the Socotra Wildlife Association (SWA) so that it is a force capable of meaningful conservation advocacy - without an active NGO, meaningful conservation is unlikely to happen - and (2) To pursue an Action Plan for Egyptian Vultures (already drafted), especially to ensure that harmful NSAIDs are never used in animal husbandry."

Our trip would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Sonja Lavrenčič, Ahmed and his dedicated team.

Their kindness, patience and flexibility in adjusting to unexpected changes made the trip not only possible but incredibly rewarding. We are deeply grateful for their expertise and for making our journey to Socotra a memorable and meaningful experience. We saw all eleven of the Socotra mainland avian endemics despite our short visit and we highly recommend the excursion to anyone with a fascination for natural history and unique cultures, and to deepen an understanding of the need for conservation action.



Stone-walled enclosure for milking cattle (photo by Thomas Brooks)



Ghost crab sand pyramids at Arhar Beach (photo by Neil Cox)



A wadi near Qhafshifo village (photo by Namitha Jassem)



From the Chairman's desk

DNHG Membership Secretary - Vacancy !

What does the role entail:

- The DNHG Membership Secretary oversees annual renewals and new memberships, and ensures that our Excel records are accurate and up-to-date.
- The Membership Secretary is often the first point of contact for new members. This is a very important position for DNHG operations.

Current membership status:

- DNHG membership records have been consolidated and streamlined over the past two years by Kateryna Fomenko, whom members are accustomed to seeing at monthly lectures and many field trips.
- Kateryna has recently made the decision to "retire" from those administrative responsibilities, in part to allow her to take on new activities, but she has become an apt student of UAE flora and fauna and we will continue to see and hear from her in the natural history context.

If interested - who to contact:

Interested volunteers should contact the Chairman or Vice Chairman, or Kateryna herself, for more information (see contact details on page 9). Kateryna will be available to assist with the transition.

Skills required:

Familiarity with Excel and a bit of enthusiasm (and occasional patience) in communicating with new members. It is a plus, but not absolutely critical, to be a fairly regular attendee at monthly lectures.

Speakers Wanted - [[Your Name and / or Suggestions Here!](#)]

The DNHG is proud to host monthly lectures on natural history topics that might not find a ready forum elsewhere. Our speakers include internationally recognised experts as well as local researchers (both professionals and amateurs), including DNHG members who have engaged in projects or had experiences that would be of general interest to other members.

The DNHG Committee tries to keep a lookout for potential speakers, but we are not all-seeing.

We welcome your suggestions (ideally with background information and contact details) and we invite you to contact Speaker Coordinator Marios Mantzourogianis or another Committee Member (*see contact details on page 9*).

Of special interest to natural history amateurs, the DNHG's annual **Members Night** programme features several short (15-20 minute) presentations by members about their personal natural history observations, discoveries, explorations or special interests, whether in the UAE or Arabia or elsewhere in the world that might be of general interest to members. **Members Night** has routinely showcased unheralded talent and expertise. **Members Night 2026** is likely to be in May or June.

To volunteer or to get more information, members should contact the Speaker Coordinator or another Committee Member (*see page 9*).

Amateur natural history investigation



Inspecting Oolites



Taking a close look



Examining a Redback spider



Farewell Dame Jane Goodall (1934 - 2025)

The DNHG joins much of the world in mourning the death of Jane Goodall, a trail-blazing naturalist and tireless conservationist.

A primatologist and anthropologist by profession she dedicated her life to animals, the planet and hope.



Dubai Natural History Group (DNHG) Programme 2025 - 2026

DNHG Lectures 2025 - 2026

- 03 November 2025 Dr Brigitte Howarth - Workshop on the Insect Collection of JAAENHG
(*Joint Al Ain and Abu Dhabi Natural History Group*)
- 15 December 2025 Marios Mantzourogianis - Shooting to Save - The Role of Photography in Conservation
- 19 January 2026 Renate Wernery (CVRL) - Camel Milk - the White Gold of the Desert

Note: Our monthly lectures are now being held at the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory (CVRL), 17 Street Za'abeel 2
Google maps link for location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/HXjmpJvaHxZXwheS8>

DNHG Field Trips 2025 - 2026

- 22 November 2025 - Hajar Mountain Front Nature Walk *details to be announced*
- 29 November - 6 December 2025 - Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, North India (*currently full*)
- 20 - 21 December 2025 - DNHG's traditional Christmas picnic and camping trip
- 13 - 20 January 2026 - Socotra island *a great opportunity to encounter unique flora and fauna*
- 23 - 31 May 2026 (Eid Al Adha) - Peloponnese - Greece *there is still so much to discover*
- Date to be confirmed* - Atlantis Atlas Project - *behind the scenes of its conservation programme*
- 2026 dates to be confirmed* - Makalali Game Reserve Safari *a repeat trip due to popularity*

Note: If you have any suggestions for DNHG field trips, which you would like to lead, please do let Sonja Lavrenčič know.

For more information on upcoming lectures, field trips and membership please refer to the DNHG website www.dnhg.org

To sign up for the field trips only, please contact: Sonja Lavrenčič at lavson@gmail.com

DNHG COMMITTEE 2025 / 2026

When possible, please contact committee members outside office hours

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DNHG Membership

DNHG membership remains one of Dubai's best bargains at Dh100 for families and Dh50 for singles. Membership for the new season/year is valid from **September 2025 to September 2026**. Initial and renewal fees can be paid in cash at lecture meetings or remotely as described in (2) below.

New members can join in person at monthly lecture meetings or remotely. There are only two requirements:

- (1) Complete the one-page Membership Application available at meetings or by download from our website (www.dnhg.org) and hand or e-mail it to the Membership Secretary (see above);
- (2) Pay the membership fee, either in cash at a lecture or remotely by cash deposit or bank transfer to our Emirates NBD account, using our IBAN number AE640260001012012013302.

Important: The banking process does not always identify the payer, so please include a note in the transfer stating the member(s) name(s) and send the Membership Secretary an e-mail with a reference number or photo of the payment slip, so we know whose money we have received.

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