



GAZELLE

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مجموعة دبي للتاريخ الطبيعي

Strolling along the beach of Al Aqah in the late afternoon on 4th September 2017, I noticed an unusual beautiful large bird sitting at the high tide line. Thinking it was resting, I kept walking. On my way back it was still at the same spot. I approached it carefully and realized that it must have been injured as it made no attempt to fly away. Yet it seemed still energetic as it was hissing towards me, though barely moving. As the sunset was approaching as well as high tide, I decided to get some fresh fish and water and tried to feed him, without success.

At home I searched for the bird's name and guessed it was a Masked Booby, a very rare visitor to this area.

In vain I called several veterinarian clinics. My last attempt to rescue the bird was by email contact.

Rapidly several emails reached me confirming the bird species as

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Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* with a glimpse of hope as the members of the UAE Bird Recorder Association were trying to find a way of rescuing

it. Unfortunately, this was also in vain. Very early the next morning I set out only to find the Masked Booby dead at the sea shore – nature had taken its toll.

My sighting of the subadult Masked Booby is recorded as 34th by the UAE Bird Recorder since its first record “off Al Sha’am on 2nd May 1973”. It is generally seen between April and November.

Contribution by Ulrike Andorff

Contributors—

Thanks to the following for their contributions:

Ulrike Andorff, Binish Roobas, Gary Feulner, Sandhya Prakash, Susan Hassall, Helga Meyer, Margaret Swan, William Pardoe and Puneet Verma.

Send your contributions to:

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By 25th November



Announcements and Recordors

Monthly Speaker -

8pm on Sunday 12th November, 2017

Dr Gary Brown will present an illustrated talk on

"Habitats and Habitat Mapping in the UAE"

Dr Gary Brown has worked in various countries of the Arabian Peninsula for over 20 years, including at several academic institutions (Kuwait University, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat). The "Abu Dhabi Habitats Manual", now used for all ecological EIAs in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, was developed during his time spent at ERWDA (now EAD) in Abu Dhabi over a decade ago, together with Dr Benno Böer of UNESCO, also a former employee at ERWDA.



Olea europaea, Jebel Shams,

"The Emirates, A Natural History", "Jebel Hafit, A Natural History" and "Desert Ecology of Abu Dhabi". He is currently working on his next major book project dealing with the vegetation ecology of Eastern Arabia.

Gary holds an MSc and PhD in Botany/Ecology from the University of Bonn, and gained the qualifications for full professor in Germany. He has published extensively in refereed scientific journals, mainly on vegetation, ecology and botany in both Europe and the Arabian Peninsula. Apart from being the senior author of the book "Vegetation Ecology of Socotra", published by Springer, he has also contributed chapters to various key books on the natural history of the Emirates, including,

'40 years of archaeological cooperation between the United Arab Emirates and France'

From 18th October, a special exhibition to mark the 40th anniversary of French exploratory archaeological excavations in the United Arab Emirates, will commence at the Sharjah Archaeology Museum.

These early excavations revealed much about life in the past and the importance of commercial links between East and West. The exhibition runs until 31st January, 2018 and enquiries can be made at 06 5665466. Car parking is available.



From the Editor:

A Masked Booby is the cover feature this month, the 34th recorded sighting since 1973.

The giant flag that stands out against the vivid blue sky in Jumeirah 1, was once the tallest flag in the world. But, what lies in its shadow? This year saw the opening of a new museum in Dubai. Contemporary in design and meeting the need for modern learning media, the Etihad (Etihad meaning

'union' or 'together') Museum celebrates 'The United Arab Emirates' and houses the Constitution, written and signed in 1971 at Union House, within the grounds. See page 4 to find out what else this modern, fluid museum holds.

For those that could not make the field trip on 28th, details of the exhibition at Sharjah Archaeology Museum, can be found above. Trip reports from different perspectives can be found on pages 6 and 7. Enjoy your read!

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Spotlight!

DNHG Trip to Etihad Museum, by Puneet Verma



Nature's Gifts, by Margaret Swan (gathered this month in North East England)



Autumn leaves



Conkers



Rosehips



(not quite ready yet) Hazelnuts



"Something took a bite in the middle of the night"

(the mushroom, around 5" in diameter, was whole the previous day)



The sea at Easington Colliery, once blackened with coal, now leaves a different treasure on its pristine beaches



Pine cones



Traditional architecture in Sharjah, by Helga Meyer



Field Trip

Etihad Museum

The Dubai Natural History Group on 14 October 2017 organized a field trip for its members to the Etihad Museum.

On 7 Jan 2017 the Etihad Museum was dedicated to the nation. A dynamic 21st century museum, Etihad Museum is focused on inspiring its visitors with the story of the founding of the UAE.



The six initial Rulers pose underneath the new United Arab Emirates flag. On the right the original flagpole is shown in front of the taller flagpole, bearing the giant UAE flag.



The 25,000 m² landmark is located on 2nd December Street and befittingly at the very place where the UAE was founded in 1971 when six of the seven emirates united on 2 December of that year, Ras al Khaimah joining in 1972.

The outdoors is lined with lavender flowers and a Ghaf tree, which was in existence since the signing occurred, has been preserved.

Through a unique visitor journey, the various pavilions house historic artefacts, experience-driven exhibitions, interactive programmes and education initiatives that explore the chronology of events that culminated in the unification of the Emirates in 1971, with a key emphasis on the period between 1968 and 1974. The programmes also aim to educate visitors

about the nation's constitution, in particular - the rights, privileges and responsibilities that it bestows upon the people of the UAE.

The Royal Majlis in the Guest Palace is far grander than the old Union Building, where the historical document was signed all those years ago.

The lavish dining hall can accommodate 300 people and is possibly one of the largest in a public building. The royal family had a celebration as soon as Etihad Museum was built.

Sheikh Rashid had an open office policy where people could



come and meet him at anytime – be it expats or nationals. The door of even the current Office is left open always. Many Indian businessmen engaged with him as the first traders in these majlis. The first coins and currencies were all Indian.

Prior to Unification, all the seven emirates had Red and White Flags – each emirate having a different design.

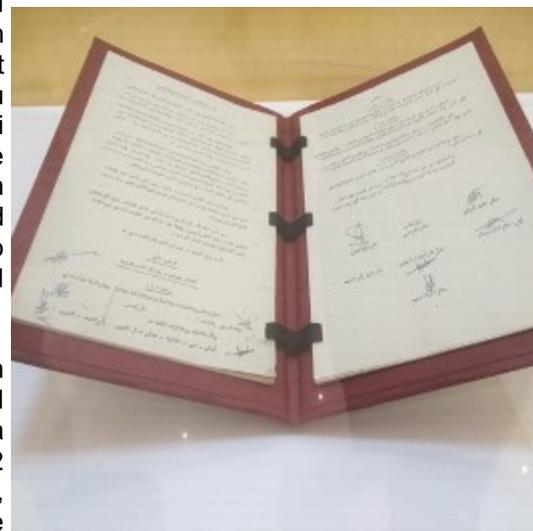
There is a feature based on 7 focus areas, where you can move a square with either of these words written Security, Religion, Culture, Independence, Defence, Identity, Territorial Sovereignty

to the centre of the table and a large image will show up on the adjacent wall, with the meaning and pictures related to the focus word.



The Museum has fantastic interactive screens and movies on the ethos of the Constitution, Unification, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed's voice delivering the exact feelings at the time Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rashid met between Abu Dhabi and Dubai in a tent on the sand and Sheikh Rashid asked Sheikh Zayed to lead the unified nation.

The Constitution itself, is displayed in an area surrounded by 2 carat gold leaf, showcasing the value of this important document.



We spent time at the library on completion of the tour, which houses a good collection of historic books in both English and Arabic. We headed back at 1pm – a day well spent in a beautiful Etihad Museum.

Contribution by Sandhya Prakash

Field Clips—Home and Away!



Clipper (*Parthenos sylvia*)

Travelers' Tips: Singapore Airport Butterflies

Traveling in Southeast Asia as this Gazelle goes to press, Gary Feulner and Binish Roobas wrote back to recommend the Butterfly Garden at Singapore's Changi Airport, for travelers who are transiting there.

The Butterfly Garden is conveniently located just off the main hub of Terminal 3, which serves Singapore

Airlines and more than a dozen other international carriers.

On display are many Southeast Asian butterflies, including the Common Mormon,



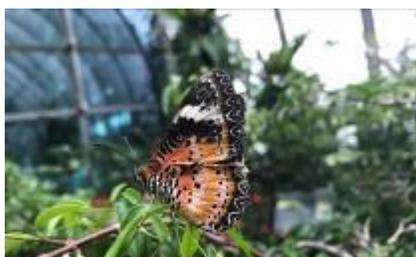
Cruiser (*Vindula arsinoe*)

Leopard Lacewing, Clipper, Cruiser, Autumn Leaf, Chocolate Pansy and many more.

The only possible downside to a visit is that the Butterfly Garden is climate

controlled to relatively warm, humid Southeast Asian standards.

Thanks to Gary Feulner and Binish Roobas for this contribution.



Leopard lacewing (*Cethosia cyane*)



Autumn leaf (*Doleschallia bisaltide*)



Great Eggfly (*Hypolimnias bolina*)



Chocolate pansy (*Junonia iphita*)



Grey Pansy (*Junonia atlites*)

Small Salmon Arab (*Colotis amata*)
identified by Binish Roobas



Butterfly in Jumeirah 3

I was so lucky to spot a butterfly yesterday—the first since the weather has cooled down a little.

It is restless and difficult to follow. When it finally settled on a branch for a few seconds, I could hardly see it. It blends in perfectly with the foliage of the bush.

It gave me great pleasure to see this butterfly, as our area here in Jumeirah 3 is still one big building site—it used to

be so lush with Jumeirah Beach Park and the bigger Safa Park. Feeling the impact, we hardly see any birds and only this butterfly has visited since before the summer.

by
Helga Meyer



Field Trip

Sharjah Museum Trip

Members of DNHG had a delightful coach trip to Sharjah on 28th October. It was lovely to be whisked to the Archaeological Museum with no thought of routes, jams or parking. Once there we were free to



Camel figurine from Muweilah, 900—600 BC

meander at leisure through the wonderfully well presented exhibits ranging from 86 thousand years ago up to the 17th century. Pottery, jewellery, hunting implements, household objects and skeletons were on display along with informative videos. I was intrigued by the bead necklaces and pearls found adorning bodies buried millennia ago.

Our next stop was the Sharjah Art Museum, after time to wander the souk in search of sustenance.



Wood cut of red tiled roof, by
Thuraya Al Baqsami

Thuraya Al Baqsami's retrospective was the main event. It was fascinating to see how her work has evolved through a number of different media and symbols. Her wood cuts and turbaned figures were particularly appealing.

Also on display were works from the gallery's collection including works by UEA artist Qader Al Rais. Then it was back on the bus to

inspect bargains from the souk; well done, Sally Ann, with the mats! Chatting and snoozing back to Dubai.

An interesting, relaxing and enjoyable day out!

Contribution by Susan Hassall



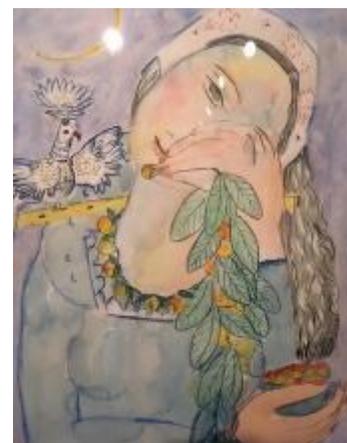
This ceramic jar, found in the tomb at Tell Abra, was identified as a ceramic jar from eastern Iran between 2200—2000 BC.



Ceramic jar with spout, found on Sir Abu Nu'air Island, 1100—300 BC



Ceramic figurine of a man's head, found at Meiliha 200—150 BC



Shalabiya Ibrahim 'The Hoopoe'

Field Trips and other Snips

Ancient Astrolabe.

The Astrolabe was an instrument used for maritime navigation.

When the Portuguese ship, Esmerelda set sail in 1503, she probably didn't think that her journey would come to an abrupt end under 2 metres of water, close to an island, 25 miles from the Omani coast.

Read the full National Geographic article [here](#), and scroll down that page to watch footage covering scientific and marine archaeological discoveries found in, and around the shipwreck.



Local fishermen rest on this side of Sharjah Creek, whilst cargo is loaded onto larger wooden dhows on the far side.

Al Ain Military Exhibition

Organized by the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi, in cooperation with the Armed Forces and Museum and Military History Centre, the annual cultural programme in Al Ain includes an exhibition of the Trucial Scouts, which will be held at Jalili Fort, from November 1 until April 28, 2018. Read the Gulf News article to find out more by clicking or tapping [here](#)

Stone Age Archaeology of the UAE, and the exhibition of Thuraya Al Baqsami's art

Sharjah, October 28

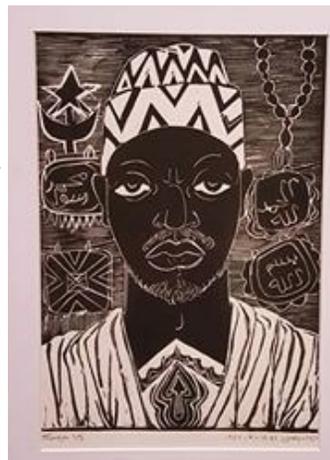
The emphasis of this trip was to visit the Stone Age exhibits discussed by Dr Sophie Mery, in her DNHG talk earlier this month. Whilst in Sharjah, we also visited the Sharjah Art Exhibition, where a renowned Kuwaiti artist has a thought-provoking display of her life's work and the personal stories behind its evolution. Both exhibitions sparked interesting discussions and, combined with the setting in Sharjah's cultural centre, it made for a contrasting trip to our sister city.



Starting with the exhibition of the 40 years of Emirati/French Archaeological Cooperation, it really brought home the extent of the archaeology in this country and its significance to human history. On display are a wide variety of ceramic and stone work, jewellery, tools and weapons. 125,000 year-old stone tools from the nomadic Jebel Faya site reveal one of the first stops on our migration out of Africa, continuing into the Gulf Oasis before the melting ice-age flooded it. I

find it fascinating to connect our cross-cultural legends, such as the Garden of Eden and the Great Flood, with archaeological and geological history (for more on this see David Miller's book 'Beyond Dubai').

Changing tone to the artwork of Thuraya Al Baqsami, I was surprised by the journey her paintings take you on. It is a chronological display from her first works onward, offering a unique perspective on the evolution of an artist - rather than just seeing their final masterpieces. Excerpts beside the collections add the dimension of story to it all, relating the life experiences that manifest in her work. Thuraya's influences are varied; from three years in Senegal where she experiments with African colour and style, to 8 years in Russia where her work takes on a more rigid, theoretical approach and seems to stray from her bold and funky nature that was evident in her first paintings. I was hoping for her to re-discover that voice and she did so during the shocking Gulf War collections, as a way to brighten a dark time. Even so,



the mood of her paintings became sinister, and a recurring theme was of ghostly characters without hair - as if the humanity of the people had been sucked out by the Iraqi invasion. It was interesting to follow the personal experience of this through the lens of abstract paintings and the powerful stories exposing them.



After the war colour bursts out and she creates an other-worldly collection called Dream Rain. This sudden exuberance is

shaken to the reality of war in the following collection, where she uses the symbolism of inner and outer worlds, expressed in half the painting continuing with the dreamy blues and greens, and the other of fiery red and inner turbulence.

The exhibition ends with a video of Thuraya Al Baqsami in her workshop, telling her story. It rounds it all off with another layer to the experience, discovering the lady herself. I'm known to get bored in art exhibits, but the unique journey of this one kept me engaged and left an impression. Combined with the Stone-age exhibition and the time spent wandering in the souks, it was a varied and thought-provoking trip well worth waking up for.

Contribution by William Pardoe (with photos from Helga Meyer)

Dubai Natural History Group Programme

Lectures at Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, 7.30 for 8.00pm

November 12: Dr Gary Brown on 'Habitats and Habitat Mapping in the UAE'

December 10: Members' Night

Scheduled Field Trips (Members only)

October 28: Two museum trip—Sharjah Archaeological Museum and Sharjah Art Museum

*Field trips will be
circulated to members via
e-mail*

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Contributions

Do you have a field report, unusual finding, interesting news article, book review, amazing photograph, or community news to share?

Do you have any photos from countries you've visited over the summer? What wildlife or local culture did you see?

Send your contributions to:

gazelleeditor@gmail.com

DNHG Membership

Membership remains one of Dubai's best bargains at Dh100 for families and Dh50 for singles. Membership is valid from September 2017 to September 2018. You can join or renew at meetings or by sending us a cheque made out to HSBC account number 030100242001. (Please note we cannot cash cheques made out to the DNHG).

Payment can also be made by cash deposit at a bank or ATM, using our IBAN number AE900200000030 100242001. However, this process does not identify you as the payer. If you wish to pay by cash, please also photograph or scan a copy of your payment confirmation and send via e-mail to the Membership Secretary, so we know whose money we have received.

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