



# GAZELLE

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مجموعة دبي للتاريخ والطبيعي

## Good Bye, Dubai Zoo

The DNHG adds its farewell to Dubai Zoo, which closed its doors on November 5, bringing to an end "More than 50 years of Happy Memories", as local newspapers put it. I paid an



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### Contributors—

Thanks to the following for their contributions:

Gary Feulner, Hiba Allam, Ulrike Andorff, Stephen Green, Margaret Swan/Oscar Campbell, Tamsin Carlisle, Sandeep Vincent and the Central Veterinary Research Centre.

Send your contributions to:

[gazelleeditor@gmail.com](mailto:gazelleeditor@gmail.com)

By 29th December



Wondering what this is? Find out on page 4

impromptu visit on closing day for a photograph with longtime Zoo Director Dr. Reza Khan (now a consultant to Dubai Municipality), to sign a goodbye billboard, and to pay my respects to some of the animals still in residence, including gazelle, oryx (Arabian and Beisa), hog deer, emus, porcupines and green and patas monkeys.

Dubai Zoo was the product of an earlier era, enlightened at the time and, while many people viewed (and recall) it in that context, the zoo was not without its critics as standards and expectations for zoological parks developed in the ensuing decades. Inevitably, there were limits on space and amenities, but the zoo remained an oasis of calm, and a place where community members of all classes could visit for a nominal fee and be taken out of their everyday world.

Zoos will always be controversial, philosophically, in the modern era. (What right have we to capture and display? But how can we expect the public to value or conserve what they have never seen?) What was never in question was the dedication of zoo staff to maintaining the environment to the best of their ability and resources, even when stretched by the need to accommodate sick or confiscated animals from various sources, often on short notice.

Proposals for a replacement for Dubai Zoo have been in the works for more than 20 years, with various sites and designs considered. Now, they have reached fruition with the completion of Dubai Safari (on the Awir Road), where Dubai Zoo's animals will be transferred, and most of them displayed in a themed setting. Dubai Safari is slated to open soon.

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## Announcements and Recorders

**Monthly Speakers -  
8pm on Sunday 10th December, 2017**

**Three DNHG members will present talks as follows:**

**Lecture Title - "Saruq al-Hadid - A Journey into the UAE's Past"**

**Biography - Anelisa Lambert**

Anelisa has a degree in Modern Languages (French Italian BA Hons 1992) and a CELTA qualification, so has been a 'language person' for most of her working life, including working at International House in Dubai, tutoring in French and English, and setting up and teaching English classes for ladies in the labour camps here in Al Quoz.

Anelise lived in Greece for 4 years as a child, and fell in love with Knossos, Mycenae, Tiryns, Sir Arthur Evans and archaeology in general.

A few years ago she began distance learning for a BA in Archaeology and started volunteering at a multi-period site in the UAE called Saruq al-Hadid. Anelise also attended a field school at the UNESCO World Heritage site in Bat, Oman.

The artefacts excavated at Saruq al-Hadid were exhibited at a new museum in Shindaga. Anelisa was part of the research team, assisting Dr. Alasdair Brooks, to select and research the layout and content.

Although Anelisa no longer attends the site due to her work schedule, archaeology still remains a fascinating amateur interest.

**Lecture Title - "Sulphur, a volcano, and UAE"**

Sulphur has a fearsome reputation that is well earned, so naturally we like to get protection and sneak a peek. This report was inspired by a tourist trip to a crater rim, so it will include some extracurricular angles of sulphur.

**Biography - Graham Murray**

Graham hails from New Zealand, courtesy of migrants from Scotland, circa 1870-80. His working life started as a science teacher, following a degree in Chemistry. There was a stint in an Observatory; an astronomy Patent opened that door. He is an architect by marriage, having worked in a practice set up by his wife. Graham thinks New Zealand is a great place to train for many science careers.

Graham comes from a farming family (sheep, cattle, forestry, stone and pip fruit). In New Zealand no one lives more than 50km from the sea allowing for hobbies such as scuba, fishing and boating. New Zealand has many "local" climates, one of them being Mt. Cook, which Graham has climbed. New Zealand also has spectacular countryside filled with V and U valleys and quakes and volcanoes.

**Lecture Title—"Learning the Avian Fauna of the UAE: land of birds from three continents"**

**Biography—Tamsin Carlisle**

Tamsin has been watching birds on various continents since childhood, with a focus on observing their behaviour in relation to habitat. She has a BA in Zoology from Oxford University, a PhD in Behavioural Ecology from University of California at Santa Barbara, and in recent years has been the DNHG's Bird Recorder.

## DNHG Recorders

**Reptiles - Dr. Reza Khan** 050 6563601

**Astronomy - Lamjed El-Kefi** res: 06-5310467 off: 06-5583 003 email: lankefi@emirates.net.ae

**Marine Life - Lamjed El-Kefi**

**Geology - Gary Feulner** res: 306 5570

**Insects - Gary Feulner**

**Fossils - Valerie Chalmers**  
res: 4572167 mobile: 050 455 8498  
email: valeriechalmers@gmail.com

**Plants - Valerie Chalmers**

**Archaeology - MaryAnne Pardoe**  
mobile: 050 724 2984 email: maryannepardoe@yahoo.co.uk

**Mammals - Lynsey Gedman** mobile: 050 576 0383 email: lynseygedman@hotmail.com

**Seashells - Andrew Childs** mobile: 050 459 0112 email: andrew.childs@eim.ae

**Birds - Tamsin Carlisle** mobile: 050 1004702 email: tamsin.carlisle@platts.com

### **From the Editor:**

Dubai Zoo closed its doors earlier this month, in preparation for the imminent opening of the sprawling 'Dubai Safari.' [Read more here.](#)

Other reports this month include beach finds (page 4), and bird sightings, both local and migratory (page 6).

Following-up from last month's report of an ailing Masked booby, the experts listed on page 7 may be able to assist in similar situations.

Also on page 7, the EPAA in Sharjah are concerned about the poaching of endangered birds.

Enjoy your read!



# Spotlight!

## Turtle-watching in Sur Province, Oman, by Tamsin Carlisle



Turtle coming ashore at full moon



Green Turtle Female covering nest



Green Turtle Hatching



Omani guide

## DNHG Trip to Mleiha Archaeological Centre, by Sandeep Vincent



## A close-up of insect life around a Sodom's Apple Milkweed, by Tamsin Carlisle (photos taken in Wadi Shab, Oman)



Wadi Shab, Oman



Mediterranean Pierrot Butterfly



Grasshopper



Carpenter Bee



Paper Wasp

# Field Clips

## Local Beach Finds



Hiba Allam kindly shared her photos with us, from a morning beach walk this month at Jumeirah 1.

The photo on the left shows a beautifully-patterned jellyfish. Hiba stated that in all the time she has lived in Dubai (11 years) she has never seen

one like this.

The photo (below-left) shows the shell of a sea urchin (with a few spines still attached). The live ones are



best avoided, as treading on one of these can be very painful.



The final photos, above-right and left, are of a hermit crab and, on closer

inspection, Hiba observed that the pinkish crab (a *Dardanus* sp., per Gary Feulner) had strikingly contrasting blue eyes!

Contribution by Hiba Allam

### Editor's Note:



I chanced upon the same species of jellyfish this month at Jumeirah 2 fishing village (left), and believe it to be a *Cassiopeia andromeda* 'Upside-down jellyfish' - as identified in 'The Emirates—a Natural History', p. 200. It has 'a distinctive disc-shaped bell.'

## The Ultimate Treasure of the Sea

I have enjoyed beachcombing in the UAE for the past 13 years but never, ever dreamt of such an amazing find.

Strolling along a beach at the East Coast, known as heaven for shellers, I

was disappointed not having spotted anything interesting after almost an hour walk in the heat of the afternoon sun.



I was thinking of turning around when my eyes caught something rather unusual... the outline of a seahorse skeleton. Carefully I removed the sand and dug this seahorse out, huge in size and placed it in my shelling bag. Dancing for joy, unable to concentrate on any further shelling, I returned home to wash this precious animal. It shows injuries at the dorsal and the cheek, may be the causes of its death. The remaining body, its long thick snout and tail are complete. It measures 20 cm from head to beginning of the tail curve, approximately 23cm from head to tail end.

Considering the habitat and size, I identified it as a *Hippocampus kuda* (Common or Yellow Seahorse) belonging to the family Syngnathidae.

This seahorse has a carnivorous diet and feeds on small crustaceans and other planktonic organisms. It is the male who broods the eggs in its ventral brood pouch. The young pups exit the pouch once fully grown, and from then on live independently.

The *Hippocampus kuda* is currently classified as vulnerable by the IUCN.

Contribution by Ulrike Andorff

## Man-of-War Attacks English Coast

Overseas member Stephen Green, now resident on the south coast of staid old England, has once again encountered one of the dangers of nature "red in tooth and claw". But his story - and his warning - is even more relevant to those of us living or vacationing in more tropical climes. On 14th October, Stephen wrote:

"For me today, this is my first time for a Portuguese Man-of-War. Luckily for me, it had been battered and smashed on the rocks and 99% of its tentacles removed. It was also a small one.



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# Field Clips and Announcements

(Continued from page 4)

I lifted it by the gas bag gingerly, to put it in a container so that I could identify it. As I picked it up, a gust of wind (we are getting the tail end of the Atlantic Hurricanes) blew and the three remaining damaged but still attached tentacles wrapped around one of my fingers. They were thin blue strands, not much thicker than sewing thread and only about 3 cm long. I suspect the animals/polyps were dead.

About ten minutes later, a burning sensation started on the upper part of my right middle finger. This intensified over the next hour. It felt like my finger was on fire. Similar, but less severe tingling started on my other right hand fingers and thumb, on the tips of my left hand (which I used to peel off the sticky strands) and around my mouth and nose (I must have accidentally touched my face). The painful burning sensation lasted a good two to three hours. Four hours later the fingers were numb. It now seems to have passed. I think a child, attracted by the beautiful colours, could get into serious trouble. Likewise, a swimmer inadvertently entering hundreds of 30 metre long adult stinging tentacles may be overcome by the pain.

The Environmental Agency have taken the specimen away and will report it.”

(Stephen sent further photos of nine more specimens that he found the following day, adding that Simon Taylor, the UK marine mollusk recorder, was collecting on the Gower Peninsula, Wales, and reported seeing two dozen that particular day.



## Good Bye, Anne Marie

Longtime member and former DNHG Membership Secretary Anne Marie Bui will be leaving Dubai at the end of November. Anne Marie and her sister Genevieve Delattre will be returning permanently to France. We expect they will continue to travel regularly and we hope to see them from time to time, at least in transit. The photo shows Anne Marie (in blue) climbing a waterfall on a DNHG hike in the mid-1990s. Can you identify others in the photo?

**Photo—Anne Marie (in blue) climbing a waterfall**

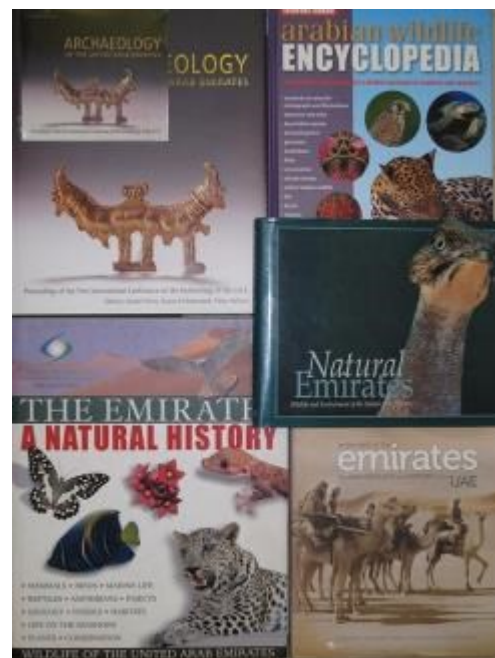
## Thank you, Trident Press

Peter and Paula Vine of Trident Press Ltd. are leaving their part-time residence in the UAE to return permanently to the Irish countryside – although not out of cyber-reach. Trident Press has been engaged in UAE natural history publishing for more than two decades. Their titles include such well known works as *Natural Emirates* (1996), *Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates* (2003) (book and DVD), *The Emirates – A Natural History* (2005), *Arabian Wildlife magazine*, the internet-linked *Arabian Wildlife Encyclopedia* (2010), and (not least) the [uaeinteract.com](http://uaeinteract.com) website (which Trident Press turned over to the Ministry of Information a couple of years ago).

The Vines have very kindly donated copies of a number of Trident Press titles for the DNHG library and for sale to members. A special gift is a DVD version of the 1967 film *Farewell Arabia*, shown on British and American television, giving an account of the early modern development of Abu Dhabi based upon its newfound oil wealth.

*Contribution by Gary Feulner*

**Photos: Some well-known Trident Press titles**



## Field Clips

### Transiting in Dubai!

It would seem that the 'Swan Halfway Hotel' with Birdbath en-suite has a high rating on the feathered version of 'TripAdvisor.'



European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Joking aside, apart from the usual local birds, we receive the odd random visitor. On 3rd of this month whilst looking to see why the bulbuls and sunbirds were making such a fuss, I was surprised to see them objecting to a bird sheltering on an upstairs window sill. It was very still and quite small (about 7 inches from beak to tail feathers).

Having windows that can see out but things can't see in does have its advantages, as the windows inadvertently act like 'hides'. A closer inspection from the upstairs bedroom revealed a strikingly-patterned, resting bird. If it felt my presence it wasn't letting on. It was quite windy outside and the bird could clearly be seen rocking gently with the wind, eyes half-closed.

I couldn't see the feet as they were tucked under, but noticed it had whiskers and the eyes were rather large, suggesting that it might be nocturnal.

Abu Dhabi based, Oscar Campbell, Emirates Bird Records Committee (EBRC) Chairman enlightened me. He identified this bird as a European Nightjar and added the following:

*"This is a fairly common migrant in the UAE but it is always a very lucky break to find. I saw one myself this morning actually, so there are a few moving right now. They migrate from late September to early November through the UAE and, as far as we know, many go as far as South Africa. The whiskers are to help catch moving targets—moths I guess mainly at night, and it flew here on its own. This species migrates at night and not, as far as we know, in flocks. Navigation is by genes (and stars, magnetic compass etc.)"*

Many small moths fly out of foliage when I water the back garden, so there would appear to be ample food on offer. In fact later I noticed another guest—a tiny praying mantis nymph, which instinctively launched its tiny self in true mantis fashion at the gigantic phone screen, when capturing this fuzzy image (left).



Praying Mantis  
*Mantis religiosa*

Meanwhile, the little exhausted bird, with a one-night stopover, seemed to be rejuvenated enough to continue on its journey. Either that or the nagging local birds drove it further away to a 7-star bird hotel further down the road!

*Contribution by Margaret Swan with identification and italicized comments from Oscar Campbell*

(Continued from page 1)

Members may also be interested in a recent article in *Gulf News Friday Magazine*, profiling the unusual experiences of the family of DNHG member Dr. Reza Khan, who lived for nearly thirty years on the grounds of Dubai Zoo: <https://fridaymagazine.ae/life-culture/people-profiles/my-family-and-other-animals-growing-up-inside-dubai-zoo-1.212729>



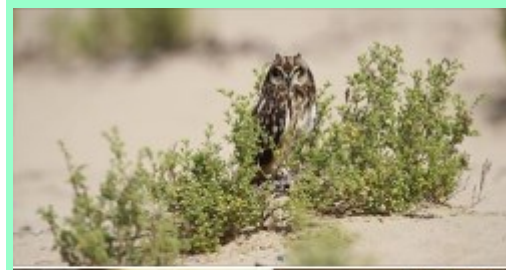
Dubai Zoo in 1981 -- Valerie Chalmers strokes a cheetah

*Contribution by Gary Feulner*

### Owl-spotting

[This is a link to the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory \(CVRL\)](#), facebook page where, on 6th November not one, but three different owl species were observed in the desert during the late afternoon.

A Short-eared Owl (top), a Barn Owl (below-left) and a Little Owl (below-right) were captured on camera. To see all three in succession is regarded as highly unusual. Read more at the above link.



Barn Owl



Fig.3 Little



## Useful Contacts



For reference only—this story of an injured bird (above) appeared in the 'Huffington Post.' [Click here for the full story.](#)

### Veterinary Services: Who ya gonna call?

The story in last month's *Gazelle* of the exotic but ailing Masked Booby that expired on a beach in Fujairah prompted reminders that several of our members are veterinary professionals, some affiliated with government or private institutions that would be pleased to assist in such instances, including treatment and/or necropsy to determine the cause of death, which could provide valuable information.

Below is contact information for several institutions and individuals. We will also make this information available on the DNHG website.

#### Dubai

##### \*Central Veterinary Research Laboratory

PO Box 597, Dubai, UAE

Tel: +9714-337-5165; Fax: + 9714-336-8638

[After hours (8am to 4pm, Sun to Thu): Duty 050-748-6956]

email: [cvrl@cvrl.ae](mailto:cvrl@cvrl.ae)

fb: <https://www.facebook.com/CVRL.UAE>

website: [www.cvrl.ae](http://www.cvrl.ae)

Scientific Director: Dr. Ulrich Wernery

##### \*Dubai Falcon Hospital/Wadi al Safa Wildlife Center

Al Saada St (Happiness St), Za'abeel

Dubai, UAE

Dr Panagiotis (Panos) Azmanis

DVM, Dr.med.vet, Dip ECZM (Avian)

European Recognised Veterinary Specialist in Zoological Medicine (Avian)

IUCN Wildlife Health Specialist Group

email: [azmanis.vet@gmail.com](mailto:azmanis.vet@gmail.com)

fb: <https://www.facebook.com/Rescue-Wildlife-in-Dubai-and-UAE-1501111596590777/>

[NB: Dubai Falcon Hospital offers voluntarily its state-of-the-art services for any wild injured raptors that might be found or confiscated. If possible the finder should first inform Dr. Panos by e-mail or Facebook before bringing the raptor to DFH.

Other birds (non raptorial) cannot be admitted to DFH but, if contacted, Dr. Panos would advise how best to have them treated appropriately.

For non avian-species (e.g. mammals) he would also offer his services or forward the case to a colleague.

#### Sharjah / East Coast

##### \*Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW)

PO Box 29922 | Sharjah | United Arab Emirates

Tel: +9716-531-1212 | Fax: +9716-531-1156

Email: [bceaw@bceaw.ae](mailto:bceaw@bceaw.ae) | Web: [www.bceaw.ae](http://www.bceaw.ae)

[BCEAW has veterinarians resident both at Sharjah Desert Park (on the Sharjah-Dhaid Road) and at Kalba on the East Coast, where they serve the Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre and the nearby Birds of Prey Centre.]

*Contribution by Gary Feulner*



### **155 bird-calling devices seized in Sharjah**

Local media recently reported that 155 bird-calling devices were seized in Sharjah, by the Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPPA). This was action due to the illegal poaching of endangered species.

Any similar-looking device that members may happen to come across whilst out in the desert, please report the position to the EPAA:

+97165311501 during working hours 7.30am—2.30pm, or:

[\(click or tap here for contact details\)](#)

(Photo courtesy of EPAA)

# Dubai Natural History Group Programme

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

December 10: Members' Night (see page 2)

January 7: Harry George, an Environmental Scientist

February 4: Ajmal Hasan, Education Manager, Mleiha, under the Sharjah Investment & Development Authority, Shurooq. Photographer, Naturalist and Wildlife Enthusiast

## Scheduled Field Trips (Members only)

December 15—16: Pre-Christmas Desert Camp

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

## DNHG COMMITTEE 2017

When possible, please contact committee members outside office hours

	<b>Name</b>	<b>telephone</b>	<b>email</b>
Chairman	<b>Gary Feulner</b>	04 3065570	grfeulner@gmail.com
Vice Chairman	<b>Valerie Chalmers</b>	050 455 8498	valeriechalmers@gmail.com
Treasurer	<b>Rakesh Rungta</b>	050 774 4273	rakeshrungta10@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	<b>Anindita Radhakrishna</b>	050 656 9165	anin@emirates.net.ae
Speaker Co-ordinator	<b>Michelle Sinclair</b>	050 458 6079	sinclairm2004@yahoo.com
Fieldtrip Co-ordinator	<b>Sonja Lavrenčič</b>	050 256 1496	lavson@gmail.com
Member-at-Large	<b>Pradeep Radhakrishna</b>	050 450 8496	wgarnet@eim.ae
Newsletter Editor	<b>Margaret Swan</b>	050 7984108	gazelleeditor@gmail.com
Librarian/Book Sales	<b>Angela Manthorpe</b>	056 6441054	manthorpe2005@yahoo.co.uk
Postmaster	<b>Sandi Ellis</b>	050 644 2682	sandiellis@gmail.com
Chief Engineer	<b>Ajmal Hasan</b>	056 5047006	ajmal_hasan@hotmail.com
Website Co-ordinator	<b>Sandhya Prakash</b>	050 551 2481	sandy_pi@yahoo.com
Greeter at meetings	<b>Helga Meyer</b>	055 821 7266	willyroaming@gmail.com

Postal Address: DNHG, PO Box 9234, Dubai, UAE

## 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](mailto: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.