

# GAZELLE

Vol 19 no 9 – September 2004



مجموعة دبي للتاريخ الطبيعي

**DUBAI NATURAL HISTORY GROUP**

PO Box 9234, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

## Members' News

### In Memorium: Rosemary Leila

Our long time member Dr. Rosemary Leila died in England on September 6th, with family in attendance. A number of past and present DNHG members were also in touch with Rosemary in the days before her death. Many of you know that Rosemary had been battling cancer for several years. In spite of the rigors of periodic treatments, her spirits never flagged, at least in public, although there was apparently never any significant remission. She remained a regular attendee at DNHG lectures and field trips, and was also active with the Dubai Singers. Her latest DNHG contribution, sent from England during the summer, appears in this issue under the heading "Sunning Birds".

A memorial service was held in Dubai on Sunday, 19 September, at Holy Trinity Church. A memorial service will be held in England on Monday, 1 November at 11am at The Church of St John the Baptist, Holywell-cum-Needlingworth, St Ives, Cambridgeshire. Memorial donations if desired should be made payable to The Royal Marsden Hospital and may be sent to Dennis Easton Funeral Services, The Lodge, 1 Broad Leas, St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE27 4PU, United Kingdom.

*Hello all...*

It's a pleasure to welcome **Michel de Martigny** back to Dubai and the DNHG. Michel has kept in touch during his absence of a few years – an odyssey which saw him resident in various places including his native Canada, a yacht in the Gulf of Alaska, and Hong Kong.

**Larry Schwab** is this year's winner of our first-to-renew-by-mail commendation. Good for the DNHG, but maybe not so good for Larry, since it probably means that he was here and hard at work when Membership Secretary Lena Linton's reminder arrived - while many of the rest of us were on vacation. Thanks to Larry and others who have eased our burdens by renewing in advance.

**Carolyn Lehmann**, who is a life member of the DNHG, and who now lives in cyclone-ravaged Florida, wrote after the first storm to let us know that she and her husband Dieter had survived. She gave a graphic description of the extraordinary weather conditions, and the damage their house and boat sustained. But, as she added philosophically, "It could have been a lot worse"!

### *DNHG Membership*

September marks the start of the new DNHG membership year. DNHG membership remains a bargain at Dhs. 100 for couples and Dh. 50 for singles. You can join or renew at meetings or by sending us a cheque made out to Lloyds Bank account no. 173746 posted to us at PO Box 9234, Dubai. (Please note we *cannot* cash cheques made out to the DNHG.)

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

New members who joined in May or June will be enrolled automatically for the coming membership year (Sep 04-Sep 05).

### **This month's Contributors**

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

Rosemary Leila  
Mohammed Arfan Asif  
Gary Feulner  
Drew Gardner



## Field Trips etc ...

### **Joint ENHG/DNHG Archaeological/Fossil trip to Jebel Buhays Fri 8 October**

This trip will be led by Allestree Fisher and Valerie Chalmers. The meeting place will be the Madam Roundabout at 10.15 a.m. ENHG will meet us there by 10.30 a.m. We will go off to see the Wadi Suq tombs first and then go to a fossil site, have lunch and look for more fossils. For sign up or further information please email Valerie Chalmers on either [vmc@latifaschool.co.ae](mailto:vmc@latifaschool.co.ae) or [valeriechalmers@hotmail.com](mailto:valeriechalmers@hotmail.com) or phone on 04-3494816 or fax on 04-3400990.

### **Wadi Bih with Peter van A. Fri 22 Oct**

This is a day trip, which involves mountain driving, spectacular wadis, a rough walk to an ancient village, and if you like, a swim at Dibba Beach. You need 4WD, picnic, loads of water, sturdy shoes, hats and togs, and passports/documentation for driver and *all* passengers. Details will be in October's *Gazelle*.

### **Hajar Mountain Camping and Hiking Thurs & Fri 28-29 October**

Mike Lorrigan and Richard Dennis will lead this trip, which will involve an overnight camp on a rocky plain overlooking a deep wadi in the vicinity of the Hatta mountains, approximately one hour 20 minutes drive from Dubai. Prior to setting up camp there will be a short detour to a fossil bed (thousands of gastropods) and a visit to some unusual calcite "terracing" and a colony of fish living in some interesting "rock pools". Evening entertainment will include a night-time stroll to see a local colony of foxes and whatever else might be lurking in the darkness. The morning event will be a fairly simple hike through the wadi, offering some interesting views and the possibility of being greeted by the resident donkeys. Solid walking boots are required and each walker should carry a minimum of 3 litres

of water. (Bringing fox-food is optional.) Non-campers are welcome to join the hiking group at no later than 8am on Friday morning. Details about where and when to meet up will be confirmed later.

### **Shelling with Sandy Fowler 29 October**

Dr Sandy Fowler will take you to Shaikh's Beach for half a day and show you why small is beautiful! Full details and directions in next issue. Sandy will be going to Sabah for a few weeks Sept/early Oct.

### **Eid Trip to Turtle Beach at Ras Al Junaiz and to Wahiba Sands 12-15 November 2004**

Turtle watching is one of the more unique experiences of the region but this is a long trip, requiring essentially a full day to travel down and a day to travel back (about 8-10 hours). Bearing this in mind a 3 or 4 day trip is envisaged. The basic plan is to travel most of the way down on Day 1 (12 Nov) overnight at the Al Areesh Camp which is situated on the edge of the Wahiba Sands. Day 2 (13 Nov) will be spent travelling at a leisurely pace to the Al Naseem Camp at Ras Al Junaiz (near the turtle beaches) not far from Sur, making a possible detour en route to Wad Bani Khaled. We will overnight at Al Nasseem Camp, turtle watching with a guide from the camp and getting up very early next morning to see the turtles returning to the sea. There are various options for Day 3 (14 Nov). Some people may want to return to Dubai or visit other areas. For those who are interested the coast road from Sur to Quriyat is well worth exploring. It is a scenic route with much to offer including the Mausoleum of Bibi Miriam and the Bimah Sink Hole. Then back to Muscat from Quriyat by main road and to stay overnight in Muscat. We have used the Safeer Hotel Suites, which is very reasonably priced, a few times. Then Day 4(15 Nov) back to Dubai or carrying on exploring Muscat/other places in Oman.

Cost for the Turtle Beach camp is

estimated at Dh150/- per person/night including dinner and breakfast. Turtle viewing permits are Dh20/- per person. There are two rates for the Wahiba Sands camp approximately Dh160/- per person per night including dinner and breakfast (2 rooms but no bathroom) and Dh350/- (2 rooms x 4 beds with en-suite bathroom) Val Chalmers has all the details. Cost of hotel room at Safeer Suites Hotel is approximately Dh150/- (or less - depends on whether we book 2 or 3 room suites etc. Again, Val Chalmers has the details). We need to make reservations ASAP and then forward deposits. Roads best suited to 4WD. If you are seriously interested, please contact Val on [vmc@latifaschool.co.ae](mailto:vmc@latifaschool.co.ae) or on [valeriechalmers@hotmail.com](mailto:valeriechalmers@hotmail.com) or fax her on 04-3400990.

### **Our Next Speaker**

Dr. Michael P.T. Gillett is a professor of biochemistry and was attached to the Faculty of Medicine at UAE University in Al-Ain. He has been in the Emirates since 1991.

Born in Birmingham, UK, he has also worked extensively in Brazil. Unfortunately, Mike will be leaving the UAE in October for fresh challenges, so we are delighted that he can share some of his very extensive knowledge with us. He has been a life-long natural history fan with a particular interest in insects, especially *Coleoptera* (beetles).

He also has a special professional interest in insect toxins, which dovetails nicely with his avocation as perhaps the UAE's most accomplished insect taxonomist. He has been a frequent contributor to *Tribulus*, writing on scarab beetles, tiger beetles, butterflies and moths, and general natural history topics.



### DNHG Field Trip Policies

Members are reminded that DNHG field trips are cooperative ventures among the participants, for their mutual benefit and enjoyment. DNHG field trip leaders are not normally professionals or experts, but fellow members who have agreed to share their time and their knowledge with other participants, on a volunteer basis. The relationship of trip leaders and participants is that of co-venturers, not professional and client. For these reasons field trip participation is limited to DNHG members and their bona fide non-resident guests.

Various dangers are inherent in travel in and around the UAE and in the exploration of the natural environment, whether by automobile, by boat, on foot or otherwise, and whether on-road or off-road, in the cities or countryside, in the mountains or deserts or at sea. By participating in DNHG field trips, members accept these risks, and they accept responsibility for their own safety and welfare. Field trip participants are normally required to sign a waiver form to this effect. Without these understandings, the DNHG would be unable to sponsor field trips or to recruit volunteers to lead them.

Field trips vary in both format and organization, depending on the nature of the trip, the number of participants, and the preferences of the field trip leader. If the number of participants is limited and sign-up is required, members should make every effort to honor their commitments or to give timely notice otherwise, as a courtesy both to the trip leader and to other members who might like to have the chance to participate.

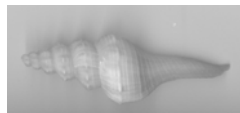


### Sunning Birds

Rosemary Leila, who returned to the UK before the summer, nevertheless stayed in touch. She wrote: "Just read your piece in [the May 2004] *Gazelle* about the Indian Roller sunning itself, and I thought 'I've seen our blackbirds do that'. They usually do it in the mornings, on some very dry ground near some tall conifers. The slight slope of the ground gives them maximum exposure to the easterly sun. They seem to be slightly stupefied when doing it, as I can approach quite near before they will gather themselves together and fly off. Often to a similar spot just a few yards further on. So I looked in my Readers' Digest *Book of British Birds* and I quote:

'Sunning, which is associated with preening and scratching, may help to de-louse the bird by making its feather parasites move about the plumage so that they are more accessible when the bird preens; and ultra-violet light from the sun may affect the properties of the preen oil on the bird's feathers in some beneficial way.'

"As a child I can remember being told that birds liked to get ants into their feathers. Then, as the preened, they squashed the ants and the formic acid produced killed the parasites. No idea if this is true or not, but ants usually like to be in hot dry places. Perhaps the outspread wings are a signal to 'climb aboard'." *Contribution by Rosemary Leila*



### UAE Seashell Database

If summertime in the UAE is too hot to make hay while the sun shines, at least it's not too hot to make plans. Our own physician Dr. Sandy Fowler liaised over the summer with biologist Dr. Richard Hornby of Abu Dhabi (and a DNHG member) with

a view to laying the groundwork for the compilation of existing information into a comprehensive database of shelled molluscs found in the UAE.

Sandy's seashell database is thought to be one of the most complete for Dubai and the Northern Emirates. Sandy is now in the process of augmenting it with UAE data generously provided by other current and former Dubai resident shell collectors, including Horst Kauch, Maria Larkworthy (now retired to France) and Carolyn Lehmann (a DNHG life member now retired to Florida). Dick Hornby has additional data on seashells and live molluscs for offshore and coastal Abu Dhabi (including his own data and that of other individuals and institutions) and survey data for much of the rest of the UAE coast as well.

The principal reference for serious local shell collectors is *Seashells of Eastern Arabia* by Donald Bosch et al., edited by Peter Dance and published by Motivate, but that volume is somewhat less comprehensive for UAE species than it is for Omani ones. Of course, the interest it has spurred (along with its facilitation of identifications) has already led to a number of new discoveries in the UAE. The incorporation of offshore (and subsea) data, as well as data from coastal surveys, is an especially valuable addition since, as has been demonstrated, the shells of many species simply do not seem to find their way to the beach front, even when they can be found in close proximity, e.g., on a rocky breakwater.

It will be interesting and potentially instructive to have a more accurate assessment of the molluscan biodiversity in UAE waters. And in particular, it will be useful to have as complete an account as possible of the species found within the Arabian Gulf, which is generally reckoned to be a stressful environment for most marine organisms, due to elevated salinity and large seawater temperature fluctuations from summer to winter. *Report by Gary Feulner*



## Field Clips ...

E.mail your reports to [pvana@emirates.net.ae](mailto:pvana@emirates.net.ae), (Arial 10 justified) or deliver them to Anne Millen on floppy disk at monthly meetings.

### *Réunion and Mauritius: Indian Ocean islands that are different but familiar*

My vacation in August on the Indian Ocean islands of Réunion (a Department of France) and Mauritius was intended primarily for fresh air and exercise, hiking among the still relatively steep volcanic terrain of Réunion, followed by more relaxed touring on the older and less rugged Mauritius. Nevertheless, I could hardly avoid paying a bit of attention to natural history, which, it turns out, is particularly interesting and accessible to someone who is already acquainted with the UAE.

Happily, relatively good guidebooks were available, although it was easiest to obtain these only once on the islands, either at the airports or at larger bookstores in towns. The following are some natural history generalisations based on my observations, supplemented by guidebook information.

The flora and fauna of Réunion and Mauritius retains some characteristics that emphasise the young and isolated character of these two islands, lying 700 km and 900 km, respectively, east of Madagascar. Both are volcanic islands no more than c. 8 million years old. Like the Hawaiian chain, they have been formed as their oceanic plate has moved across a so-called "Hot Spot" within the earth's mantle below, and Piton de la Fournaise (Furnace Peak) on Réunion is one of the world's most active volcanoes.

Like many oceanic islands, the native flora and fauna is (or was) composed of a relatively small number of species overall, and a relatively

high proportion of endemics (species found only there). However, also like many oceanic islands, much of the native flora and fauna is threatened or has already become extinct as a result of changes wrought by human settlement and exploitation. Réunion and Mauritius have been known to sailors since the 16th century. Throughout the 17th century they were relied on for provisioning in the form of the native giant land tortoises and, on Mauritius, the emblematic Dodo, a large ground bird in the pigeon family. The islands were settled extensively only in the early 18th century but have been heavily modified by sugar cane cultivation for the past 200 years.

As a result, most of what the modern day visitor sees of these islands emphasises two other aspects of the flora and fauna, ones that make them seem very reminiscent of Dubai and the UAE: (1) their affinity with the West Indian Ocean ecosystem generally, and (2) their affinity with an association of species now widespread worldwide in the tropics and subtropics due to introduction by man, whether by design - for utility (e.g., sisal or various timber trees) or ornamentation (e.g. Oleander, Lantana, and various decorative Acacias) - or inadvertently, as weeds or pests. The latter affinity is particularly apparent in the case of plants. The least affected environment is the higher summit areas of Réunion (2,000-3,000 meters), whose flora is said to resemble that of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa, but invasive shrubs can be found at all elevations.

The seabird and shorebird fauna of Réunion and Mauritius would be largely familiar to UAE birdwatchers. Along with many regular migrant sandpipers, plovers, turnstones, etc., the Crab Plover is an occasional migrant to Mauritius from its breeding areas in Arabia. The seabird fauna of the islands also includes a number of oceanic species rare or absent in the UAE, such as puffins, noddies and shearwaters, but most of these restrict themselves to the tiny, predator-

free islets off the northern Mauritius coast. Near cliff habitats, even inland, the White-tailed Tropicbird is common and distinctive. Among fresh or brackish water waders on Mauritius, I found the Moorhen and the Striated (or Little Green) Heron to be common.

Each island has recorded no more than 70 birds overall, and on dry land the total number of bird species is only half that, or less - although perhaps a large number for islands that are no larger in area than, say, the mountains of the Musandam Peninsula. However, the perching birds that a visitor is likely to see are all the product of human introduction. The most common, by far, are: House Sparrow (a hazard at outdoor breakfast tables), Common Mynah, and Red-Whiskered Bulbul (similar in habits and audacity to the UAE's White-Cheeked Bulbul). Pigeons are also present and on Mauritius I saw a number of Barred Ground Doves (*Geopelia striata*). One "cited" bird new to me was the Madagascar Fody (*Foudia madagascarensis*). This bird is present on both Réunion and Mauritius but is itself a French introduction and competes with similar but endemic fodies on each of the islands.



Photograph by Arfan Asif

Réunion has lost at least 11 species of endemic birds since the arrival of man, but in the forests it is still easy to see several endemic warblers, notably the Tectec (*Saxicola tectes*), as well as the Mascarene Swiftlet and the Réunion bulbul. [Like finches in the Galapagos, there is an endemic Bulbul in each of Réunion, Mauritius, the Comoros, the Seychelles and Madagascar.] There is only a single resi-



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Marine Life - Lamjed El-Kefi

Geology - Gary Feulner

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fax 330 3550

Insects - Gary Feulner

Fossils - Valerie Chalmers

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fax 340 0990  
vmc@latifaschool.co.ae

Plants - Valerie Chalmers

Mammals - **Recorder needed**

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.

dent raptor on Réunion, an endemic harrier called the Papangue (*Circus maillardi*); these are sufficiently common that I was able to see several. On Mauritius, the Dodo is long gone, and the Mauritius Kestrel and Pink Pigeon were each reduced to fewer than a dozen individuals in the wild, but captive breeding and rigorous local conservation efforts have brought the numbers of each back above 100. I was lucky enough to see a Mauritius Kestrel at a great distance from a scenic overlook, and a Pink Pigeon in a zoo.

The situation for native reptiles is less encouraging. The giant land tortoises of Réunion and Mauritius are extinct, but offshore islets have been re-stocked with near relatives from the island of Aldabra, part of the Seychelles. On Mauritius, small native lizards (colorful geckos and skinks) and a couple of small snakes fell victim to introduced rats and mongooses (which are also a problem for many birds) and are now found almost exclusively on the offshore islets, where they are rigorously protected. They are thought to have arrived in Mauritius originally by flotation on debris, but in two separate waves, one by storms from Madagascar and the second by normal ocean currents from the Sunda Islands and Australia. On Réunion, indigenous lizards seem to have fared no better, but several colorful species have been introduced from Madagascar. House geckos have been introduced on both islands.

Large mammals have not successfully taken to the wild on Réunion, despite the former introduction of the Indonesian Red Deer, domestic pigs and domestic goats. On Mauritius, wild pigs still thrive, but wild goats and wild cattle have been eliminated. Réunion has also been spared the ravages of the Indian Gray Mongoose (blamed on the English) and the Crab-Eating Maque (blamed on the Dutch).

In freshwater bodies (ponds and rivers) there appear to be several

indigenous fish, including three eels, a goby and a carp, but at several other commonly introduced fish are present - notably Tilapia, Gourami, Gambusia, guppies and goldfish. Trout have also been introduced at certain sites in Réunion. The only amphibians, a frog and a toad, are both introduced. Freshwater snails are said to number 12 species in Mauritius. Of these I recognised three of the four that are most common in the UAE - the conical *Melanoides tuberculata*, generally considered a pest snail around the Indian Ocean; the scoop-shaped *Radix natalensis*, a primarily African species; and *Thiara scabra*, a conical but coronated species found in the UAE in irrigated mountain cultivations.

Land snails are reckoned to number 125 indigenous species on Mauritius, which seems disproportionately high, but the only one I noticed on either Réunion or Mauritius was the large (6+ cm) *Achatina sp.*, an African snail that has been introduced to a number of Indian Ocean islands and is said to be a pest on fruits and vegetables. Reportedly, a second, carnivorous snail has been introduced to control it.

At sea, both the Green Turtle and the Hawksbill Turtle are present, as in the UAE. The Dugong is said to be found in Mauritius but not Réunion, perhaps reflecting the more extensive development of fringing reefs and lagoons of the former.

A very thoughtful and engrossing account of biodiversity and extinction, and of the scientists who studied and continue to study it, is *The Song of the Dodo: Island biogeography in an age of extinction*, by David Quammen (New York, Touchstone, 1996). Report by Gary Feulner

### Thru the lens...

Overnight rain did not stop us proceeding with our plan to drive 30km to the edge of the "Rock", Bangalore. August is cool and Bangalore has many nature enthusiasts, and



## Field Clips...

those fabulous nature photographers out there have been responsible for India's great showing at the Nature Biennials.



Yes, the rain God on that memorable day was kind. We found that the soft diffused light aided by fill-in-flash did wonders for our subject - the Small Blue Kingfisher. It was my first attempt at photographing this most beautiful bird. I rate it above the Pied Kingfisher and the White Breasted Kingfisher found quite commonly in this area.



The hide was a make-shift one. The Small Blue Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) had made a nest - a horizontal tunnel burrowed on the walls of a narrow dry canal connecting the river below. To reach the muddy floor 7 feet down required a ladder. Coconut fronds were placed as a barricade - a natural hide. The photographs had to be taken while standing because of the height of the nest, and a dark green rug was used to cover the top of the canal where the photographer stood. The off-camera flash was camouflaged with twigs and leaves, and a very small gap was made between the leaves for the lens fixed on a sturdy tripod... and we were ready.



The Small Blue Kingfisher, in its characteristic manner, dived at top speed, caught hold of a fish in its long bill and landed on the perch (our point of focus) near the nest. Before entering the nest it beat its quarry to death. It reappeared after feeding the young ones, and it was amazing to see how skillfully the kingfisher, with its short stumpy tail, then skimmed the surface of the river to clean its mud-laden bill before the next plunge.



Both parents look alike bobbing their heads time and again. They take equal responsibility in feeding and caring for the young. On one occasion I managed to get both of them together with food.



Bird photography requires great patience and an entire day was dedicated to capturing the beauty of this splendid bird. Text and Photographs by Arfan Asif

### Part IV of Drew Gardiner on Geckos

The desert geckos of the genus *Stenodactylus* illustrate the adaptation of gecko toes for different habitats. One large species, *S. doriae* lives on fine, wind-blown sands, where it walks slowly at night, raised high off the surface on its long legs. It has flattened toes with projecting fringes of long scales to increase the surface area in contact with the loose sand. Compared to the size of its body, the head is enormous, probably to accommodate very large eyes. Another sand dweller, the Arabian sand gecko (*Stenodactylus arabicus*) has webbed toes, which offer an alternative adaptation for increasing the foot surface area. Such adaptations are paralleled by experienced sand drivers who reduce the tyre pressure of their vehicles in soft sand to increase their grip and avoid becoming bogged down. Other desert geckos found in here are *S. leptosymbotes*, *S. sleveni* and *S. khobarensis*, which live on gravel plains, firmer sand and sabkhas respectively. On these firmer surfaces there is no need for reduced tyre pressure, and these geckos have more rounded toes. *S. khobarensis* has spiny scales under the toes which may prevent damp sabkha mud sticking in some way.

One of the most widespread geckos is the Baluch ground gecko *Bunopus tuberculatus*, which can often be found hiding under rubbish and stones in sandy area. Closely related is the banded ground gecko *Bunopus spatalurus*, found in the gravel plains and mountain foothills. *Cyrtopodion scabrum* is a species which often lives alongside man and can be found in Abu Dhabi and around buildings at some oil camps in the desert. Thanks to Drew Gardiner. The fifth (and final) installment of Drew's article will be in the October Gazelle.





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*ENHG Programme:**Lectures:*

Oct 5 Peter Hellyer - An Introduction to the Tribes of Abu Dhabi

Oct 19 Oliver Combreau - Update on Houbara

Nov 2 Chris Drew - Mammals of Abu Dhabi

*Field Trips:*

Fri Oct 8 Day trip with Allestree & Val - details on p.2

Thur Oct 14 Afternoon/evening sortie looking for geckos and other reptiles with Drew Gardiner, Jebel Ali area. Bring BBQ. Home about 22.30 hrs

Thur & Fri 21-22 Oct Falaj sites around Madam & Buraimi with Allestree Fisher

*HAO Programme**Lectures:*

Mon Oct 4  
"Historical Review of the Present Day Indian Ocean Dynamics" by Mr Maoof Raza (M.Phil in International Relations, Cambridge University, MA War Studies from King's College, London). Known strategic thinker and international affairs correspondent and writer, visiting research fellow at King's College, and Regional Director for South Asia at Middlesex University.

Mon Oct 11  
Illustrated talk entitled "the Military Bands of Oman" by Wing Commander Ian Kendrick who is known to some of our members, and who has delivered several talks and lectures on traditional and military music in Oman on earlier occasions.

*A question for those interested in Marine Life*

What's 1.5 cm long, sand coloured, leggy and takes the offensive?

Last week, one of our members was bitten by something in the shallows of Jumeira Beach, on the near end behind Wollongong University. She was walking on the beach and through the shallows when she felt a painful bite on the dorsum of her foot. Looking down, she saw something like a centipede, partly obscured by sand. As it continued to hang on and bite hard, her natural history curiosity was overcome by a wish to be painfree, and she squashed it with her other foot. She bathed her foot in the sea and it bled briefly. Subsequently, her foot itched, swelled and the bite formed a blister surrounded by a haemorrhagic area.

Does any member know what the assailant might have been?

## Dubai Natural History Group Programme

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

Oct 3: The Beetle Species Carabeus: From Linnaeus to the Internet -- Prof. Mike Gillett

Nov 7: Natural History of Spitsbergen – Simon Aspinall

**Field Trips** (Members only, please. Details inside.)

Oct 8: Fossil hunting and tombs at Jebel Buhays (jointly with ENHG Abu Dhabi)

Oct 22: Wadi Bih trip

Oct 29: Seashell collecting at Black Palace Beach

Oct 28-29: Hajar Mountain camping and hiking

Nov 12-15: Turtle Watching at Ras al Junaiz, Oman