



# Progress Report

January 2010 - December 2011



P.O.Box 3955 Muscat, 112  
Sultanate of Oman  
T +968 24790945  
F +968 24790986  
[www.eso.org.om](http://www.eso.org.om)

# Table of Contents

<b>Message from the President</b>	4	<b>Community Outreach Projects</b>	16
<b>Introduction</b>	5	<i>Raising Awareness in Schools</i>	16
<b>ESO Board</b>	6	<i>Women's Empowerment and Environmental Education</i>	17
<b>Marine Conservation Projects</b>	8	<i>Tree Planting in Dhofar</i>	18
<i>Turtle Research and Conservation</i>	9	<i>Beach and Reef Clean up at the Damaniyat Islands</i>	18
<i>Renaissance Whale &amp; Dolphin Project</i>	12	<i>Earth Hour 2011</i>	20
<b>Terrestrial Conservation Projects</b>	14	<b>ESO Strategy</b>	22
<i>Egyptian Vulture Research</i>	14	<i>ESO Strategy Members Forum</i>	22
<i>Frankincense Research</i>	15	<i>Programmes</i>	22



Mangroves at Bandar Khayran

Front Cover: A Cormorant dries off after fishing on the Dhofar coast



<b>Other Activities</b>	24	<b>Capacity Building</b>	28
<i>Annual Fundraising Ball</i>	24	<i>Staffing</i>	28
<i>International Awards     &amp; Collaborations</i>	25	<i>Graduate Training Programme</i>	28
<i>Other Awards, Grants     and Donations</i>	25	<b>Conferences, Workshops &amp; Events Attended by ESO</b>	29
<b>Membership</b>		2010	29
<i>Individual Membership</i>	26	2011	29
<i>Corporate Membership</i>	27	<i>Steering Committees</i>	30
		<i>Affiliations with International Organisations</i>	30
		<b>Conclusion</b>	31
		<b>Acknowledgements</b>	32



# Message from the President

It is with great pride that I present ESO's administrative report for 2010-2011.

The Society has grown by leaps and bounds, and all due to the people who work tirelessly to make sure projects are on course, proposals and reports are submitted and grants are sought and secured - and the list goes on.

When ESO started off in 2004 it was entirely run by volunteers and although today the society has paid staff, the Board is still made up of individuals who volunteer their time to a common cause.

As we approach the Annual General Assembly and an election year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every Board Member for their time and effort over the past 2 years.

I would also like to thank advisors and volunteers who offer their knowledge and expertise and often go the extra mile, sometimes performing thankless tasks. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

I would like to recognise the companies who believe in our cause and whom we consider more as partners than sponsors. I hope that from this report you will be able to see what your funding has allowed us to achieve over the last two years.

The nurturing of our relationship with the private sector, government and the public is critical to our ongoing success. I'd like to extend a special thanks to all our supporters who have played a role in sustaining ESO's ability to stand tall as a significant stakeholder in and defender of Oman's natural heritage.



**Tania S Al Said**  
**President**

# Introduction

There have been big changes to the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) in 2010-2011. We have hired new staff to deal with project management, community outreach and education as well as someone dedicated to volunteerism and membership. Three local field assistants have been hired in Masirah and will be trained in techniques enabling more research in both marine and terrestrial projects.

New projects are afoot and much needed funding for continued projects has allowed ESO to take research, especially in the marine field, to a new level. In 2010 (and after over 10 years of research) ESO presented scientific findings at the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to support the discovery of a genetically unique population of humpback whale which does not breed or feed outside of Omani waters. The IWC has since given a name to the new sub-species: Arabian Sea Humpback Whale. Our terrestrial projects continue with Frankincense research and a new project on the endangered Egyptian Vulture will begin in early 2012. Community outreach projects including our Women's Empowerment and Environmental Education Project are in their second phase and schools have been targeted in educational campaigns. ESO joined the global initiative Earth Hour in 2010 and following the success of our annual Masirah Turtle Festival in 2010, 2011's festival was an even bigger achievement. An anti plastic bag campaign was a resounding success in 2010 and our anti littering campaigns continue throughout the Sultanate.



ESO has helped build capacity in environmental research techniques both nationally and internationally and is currently working with both Sri Lankan and Yemeni scientists sharing best practices. In 2011 we have been readying the Society to be able to administratively take on more Omani graduates and train them in areas of environmental conservation, project management and fundraising with both in-office and in-field experience. We moved offices at the end of 2011 and are grateful to have been given rent free office space for two years. This has enabled us to continue expanding our programmes and staffing to meet the needs and requirements of the Society.

ESO continues to be a leading player within the environmental NGO scene, representing all regional NGO's at UNEP meetings, as well as attending and contributing to regional and international conferences. Our website [www.eso.org.om](http://www.eso.org.om) won the HH Sheikh Ali Al Sabah Informatics Award for best NGO website for the MENA region.

As 2012 begins there are many exciting ventures to look forward to. We will be initiating our fresh graduate training programmes as well as implementing a volunteer strategy. Earth Hour 2012 will be much larger this year with the Royal Opera House Muscat joining us in turning off all non-essential lighting on March 31st 2012 at 8:30pm. Please continue to visit the calendar of events on our website for up-to-date information and enjoy reading our 2010-2011 report!

Best Wishes

**Lamees Daar**  
**Executive Director**

# ESO Board

The following Board Members were elected in March 2010 for a two year duration:

## President

**HH Sayyida Tania bint Shabib Al Said** holds a BSO degree in Marine and Freshwater Biology and a Diploma in Early Childhood Education. She is a founding member of ESO and has served as the President of the Board of Directors of ESO since its establishment. Sayyida Tania initiated the Say No to Plastic Bags campaign, organizes the annual fundraising ball of ESO, and regularly appears in the media representing ESO. She won the GCC Award for the best environmental personality in the Arabian Gulf Region in 2009.

## Vice President

**Dr. Mehdi Jaafar** is a founding member of ESO and has been Vice President of the society since its establishment. He has worked in the areas of environmental awareness and conservation over his careers and has recently retired from his position as advisor for the Center for Environmental Studies and Research (CESAR) at the Sultan Qaboos University. Dr. Mehdi has represented ESO at most regional and international conferences over the years and regularly represents ESO on Oman TV. Dr. Mehdi was recently nominated to represent all of West Asia's Environmental NGOs at UNEP's 11th Special Session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Bali in 2010.

## Executive Director

**Ms. Lamees Daar** is a founding board member of ESO and has been on the executive board since ESO's establishment. Lamees voluntarily managed the society for three years until a manager was hired in 2007. She represented ESO at most regional UNEP meetings in the Society's early years. She holds a BSc in Environmental Sciences and in the past has worked for HMR Environmental Consultants. Lamees has been responsible for securing numerous funding opportunities and sponsorships for ESO, writing proposals for current projects, chairing the Ras al Jinz Turtle Center Steering Committee, co-managing the anti plastic bag campaign, writing regular press releases, and managing a comprehensive overhaul of the ESO website. She is also responsible for the increase in capacity at ESO and putting training programmes in place for the new graduate programme.

## Community Outreach Officer

**Mr. Nasser Al Maskari** currently works as an environmental expert at Occidental Oman (OXY). He has a BSc in Fisheries Science and an MSc in Marine Sciences and Environmental Studies. He has worked as a Nature Reserve Specialist, Head of Permits and Head of Projects Evaluation Section at the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources (MRMEWR). He was also Director of Planning for Nature Conservation at MRMEWR. Nasser has been a

Social Responsibility advisor at OXY since 2009. Nasser is a member of the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary Committee and Member of the National Committee for IUCN. He was a member of the National Committee of Selecting World Heritage and Natural sites in Oman and the Oman Marine Biodiversity Committee. He was a founding member of ESO and a board member for 2 years from 2004-2006, at which time he was also head of the ESO Terrestrial Group.

## Treasurer

**Mr. Yasser Macki** works as a System Engineer with COWI - Larsen Joint Venture on the Development of Muscat and Salalah International Airports. He holds a BA in Management Information Systems and has been an ESO member since 2004 as well as ESO's Treasurer on the current board. During his tenure as treasurer, Yasser has been responsible for managing ESO's overall as well as specific project budgets. He has also implemented ESO's accounting system. Yasser is very active in a voluntary capacity and has organised and managed the majority of ESO clean ups over the years.



## Public Relations Officer

**Ms. Dana Sarhan** is the managing Director of The CSR Company Oman and worked as Corporate Social Responsibility and Marketing Manager at Omran. Prior to working at Omran she was Corporate Affairs and Marketing Officer at HSBC and the Public Relations Manager and Brand ambassador at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel. Dana holds a BA in International Hospitality and Tourism Management and a postgraduate diploma in Responsible Tourism Management from Leeds Metropolitan University, UK. Dana serves on the current board of the Association of Intervention for Children with Special Needs and has been an active member of ESO since its establishment.

## Membership Officer

**Dr. Juma Al Maskari** holds a PhD in Atmospheric Sciences (meteorology) from the University of Leeds and a Masters in Remote Sensing, Image Processing and Applications from the University of Dundee in the UK. He currently works as the Assistant Director General for Civil Aviation and Meteorology for Meteorological Affairs. Before that, he was the Chief of Research

and International Organizations at the Department of Meteorology of Muscat International Airport. He has also been a visiting scientist, lecturer and consultant at universities in Oman and the UK. He has a passion for environmental issues and has been as member of ESO for 6 years as well as a member of the previous ESO board 2008-2010. He has many publications and has taken part in many conferences and seminars such as the World Climate Conference and the Indian Ocean Tropical Cyclones and Climatic Change.

## Board Member

**Dr. Mohsen Al Amri** holds a PhD in Biology Science, Ecology and Soil Sciences. His research interests lie in environmental pollution by waste water and plant ecology. He has over 11 scientific publications and has been an active member of ESO for 4 years as well as serving on the current board for 2 years. He leads the ESO Frankincense Project in Salalah to monitor the health of frankincense trees and determine the number of times a tree can be harvested before permanent damage occurs. Dr Mohsen has been instrumental in furthering ESO's outreach and tree planting projects in Dhofar.

## Board Member

**Mr. Osamah Abdullatif** works as Head of Public Companies in the Project & Structured Finance Division at Bank Muscat. He is a founding member of ESO and has held the positions of treasurer and Executive Director on the ESO Board. During his tenure as executive director (2006-2008), Osamah standardized the forms used in the administrative work of ESO and provided assistance to the manager. He is part of ESO's executive committee and is an active and committed member of ESO. Osamah holds a BSc in Finance and an MSc in Business IT Systems.

## Board Member

**Mr. Raed Dawood** is currently working with Nawras as Business Development Director and has a wide range of private sector experience with more than 15 years work experience in several fields including Telecom, Banking, Investments, and Audit. Raed is a founding member of ESO and the creator of the ESO brand and logo. Raed holds an HE diploma and a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration with a minor in marketing. Raed is an active member of ESO and regularly volunteers his time to help with matters concerning HR, design and artwork.



Arabian Sea Humpback Whales  
off the Dhofar Coast

# Marine Conservation Projects

The marine environment in Oman is of significant importance to the people of the Sultanate, for the biodiversity it harbours and the ecological functions it supports. However, from a scientific perspective, Oman's marine environment is still relatively unexplored and has many conservation challenges. As a consequence, there is a constant need for additional resources, effort and funding to help improve our awareness, understanding and ability to conserve the wealth of natural and cultural heritage of our seas and coasts.

ESO's marine conservation programme currently involves three main elements including the on-going Whale and Dolphin Project (now called Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Research), and the Turtle Research and Conservation Project focusing on Masirah Island, Ras al Hadd and the Damaniyat Islands Nature Reserve (DINR). Within each of these elements there are numerous activities and areas of overlap, but for convenience, each one is called a 'project'. The Turtle Research and Conservation Project and the Whale and Dolphin Project have been running for more than eleven years. However, there is also always scope for new ideas either to expand existing projects or to initiate new projects. In that respect, members of ESO's marine team keep track of conservation initiatives and priorities at regional and global levels.

Through its marine projects, ESO continues to cooperate with the Omani Government in order to help further common goals, through regular meetings as well as research and advice in specific areas, such as:

- Contribution of information on marine wildlife to the National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs (MECA).
- Cooperation and data sharing on whale and dolphin reports and preparation of scientific papers with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MoAF).
- Participation to the National Cetacean Stranding Committee Meetings under UNEP's Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) hosted by MECA.
- Provision of information on marine species to MECA and the Royal Omani Police for new legislation related to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- Participation in MECA Diving Committee for protection of coral reefs from diving, fishing activities, and other human activities.

ESO marine projects heavily rely on funding from third parties raised through the submission of proposals to international, regional and local funding agencies as well as the private sector.





## Turtle Research and Conservation

All species of marine turtles are considered to be in danger of extinction and are classified by IUCN's Red Data List as Endangered Species. The hawksbill turtle is now classified as Critically Endangered, the final category before extinction.

Green, Hawksbill and Loggerhead turtles nest in Oman in globally significant numbers. Ras Al Hadd is one of the largest green turtle nesting colonies in the world and hawksbill nesting at the DINR is of global significance to the species, in the most part due to the high density of nesting at the islands. Masirah Island is unsurpassed by any comparable nesting location in the world, with an estimated nesting population of 30,000 Loggerhead females, making the island host to possibly as much as 40% of the world's nesting Loggerheads. In addition to the DINR and Masirah Island, Oman hosts nesting turtles on at least 350 beaches along its coastline and it is thought that coastal waters support feeding Green and Hawksbill turtles in their tens of thousands. The Sultanate is therefore a country of great importance for the future of marine turtles.

Over five years ago, MECA identified ESO as a partner in its turtle conservation project and for that designated ESO as the official recipient of the award from the **US Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF)**. ESO has since received other awards from MTCF which enabled further tagging of Green and Hawksbill turtles at Ras al Hadd and the DINR and Loggerhead turtles on Masirah, as well as other work towards the ultimate aim of assisting with the strategic development of turtle conservation in Oman. This work is a collaboration among individuals from the world's foremost turtle specialists, including those from such internationally renowned institutions as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Over the past four years, turtle research has focused on the high profile satellite tagging programme, involving the attachment of satellite transmitters to nesting turtles and subsequent tracking, via satellite, of their movements over the 9-12 months of the transmitters' battery life. This is an indication of where our turtles go after nesting and provides good evidence of potential feeding grounds, as well as migratory routes. You will be able to see them, and track their movements daily at [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org).



Hawksbill Turtle at the Damaniyat Islands





Tagged Loggerhead turtle makes its way back to the sea on Masirah Island

The main project activities in the past year can be summarised as follows:

### **Recruitment and training**

In order to assist in research on Masirah Island, ESO has hired and trained three full time local assistant researchers. These researchers will work on ESO turtle projects during the nesting season and will assist in both the Renaissance Whale and Dolphin project as well as ESO's Egyptian Vulture project during the off seasons.

### **Flipper tagging, measurements, DNA sampling and nesting success assessments**

An attempt was made to fit each turtle with two flipper tags, one on each of the foreflippers. This was undertaken by MECA rangers. Each flipper tag has a unique identity and many thousands of such tags have been deployed by MECA over the years. Tissue samples were also collected from each turtle and archived for later DNA analysis. For those turtles that successfully nested, a new locating system was used so that the team can return later in the season and determine how many of the eggs successfully hatched.

### **Turtle Tagging**

Post-nesting tracks from satellite-tagged Loggerhead turtles studied between 2007 and 2010 have revealed a migration away from Masirah to both Yemen waters in the south and Arabian Gulf waters to the north (MECA and ESO unpublished data).

In April 2011, a total of 18 new satellite tags were fitted onto female Loggerhead turtles nesting at Masirah Island. Each turtle in this tagging programme was fitted with a 'Wildlife Computers' MK10 transmitter, which incorporates the latest GPS technology in the tagging device. The tag unit uses a GPS receiver and is specifically configured to give precise information about the location of tagged turtles whenever they make landfall. This will enable the research team to understand the nesting frequency of the turtles throughout the season. The tagging team was therefore on site at the very beginning of the nesting season to try and catch the first nesters emerging from the sea for this year. It is hoped that the results of the work will enable a more accurate assessment of the total population of nesting Loggerheads at Masirah Island, in addition to revealing post-nesting migrations as in previous years.

ESO also collaborated in 2010 and 2011 with the Emirates Wildlife Society/WWF in tagging of Hawksbill turtles at the Damaniyat Islands as well as Loggerheads at Masirah Island.

### **Nesting beach assessments**

The satellite tracking project is part of a much larger research campaign on the island. The focus of this research is on determination of the total number (and distribution) of nests over the course of the five month nesting season between April and September. This is achieved through conducting counts during daily beach surveys on index nesting beaches and island-wide surveys twice per month. The real value of these data will be in detecting variation between years to enable determination of population size, as well as the trend in the population. To date, it would appear that the population is declining. Over the next few years, the magnitude and rate of this decline will become clearer. However, it is hoped that management intervention may be able to reverse the trend. Nesting beach surveys this year began according to schedule, on the 1st May 2011.

### **Awareness raising and collaboration**

ESO's first Annual Masirah Turtle Festival took place in May 2010 and the second in May 2011. Activities included presentations and fun games and exercises with local school children, meetings with the Masirah Women's Association, meetings with the Wali and Assistant Wali, beach clean ups and engaging local children in turtle tagging. This festival is organised in collaboration with MECA, Ministry of Education, SQU, and the Omani Women's Association.

Teaching local Masirah kids the global importance of their resident Loggerhead turtles







## Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Project

Sponsored by **Renaissance Services SAOG**, ESO's research is achieved through coastal and offshore studies, as well as beach surveys, and includes distribution and abundance studies, genetic research, population studies, studies of ecology and habitat use, acoustic studies, behavioural studies, investigations of pollution and health concerns, and more. Results of research are shared with government agencies in order to develop conservation strategies, and with a wide range of collaborators from the international scientific and conservation communities in more than ten different countries. They are also used for public awareness raising and education in the Arabian region, in order to teach the general public and future generations about the wealth of marine life in their waters. ESO presented results at the 2nd Marine Conservation Forum for the Gulf Region in 2010 as well as the International Whaling Commission Meetings in 2010 and 2011. Results have been published in peer reviewed journals.

ESO data has found that Oman's humpback whales are part of a genetically isolated population, and for the first time also reveal that this unique stock is among the most endangered population of any whale or dolphin anywhere in the world (numbering in the low hundreds). Even more worrying, the results suggest that the population may be in decline. This unusual and rare sub-species has recently been named the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale. Preliminary research begun over the last year suggests that this isolation of the humpback whale may not be limited to this species; there are already signs that blue whales, Bryde's whales and several species of dolphins may be similarly unique 'Arabian' populations.

In the past two years, the major activities undertaken can be summarised as follows:

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection included DNA sampling of both live and dead cetaceans, records of sightings of live cetaceans during dedicated small boat surveys in Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar, additional incidental sightings from Musandam, Al Batinah and Muscat (mostly third party reports), and photo-identification matching work on humpback whales from Oman and other countries in the Indian Ocean. All records were entered and stored on our dedicated cetacean database, and a new system was implemented to improve the photo-identification database and allow for its continued expansion.

For the first time, ESO also began a high-tech acoustic research programme in collaboration with international scientists. Preliminary analysis of over one month of recordings has been undertaken and a further three months of data has been collected. Acoustics data collection is on-going, and collection of data on the dolphin watching industry has also begun. There has been continued assessment of results of surveys, especially that focussing on humpback whales. This led to presentation and publication of results at International Whaling Commission meetings, raising the profile of Oman and its whales to a higher level than ever before.

The Whale and Dolphin Research Project has previously hosted two UK university PhD students studying whales and dolphins in Oman, and is currently hosting a third through a UK-based university. The project also currently facilitates a library of reference materials, databases, catalogues and other information repositories related to cetacean research in Oman, including archived tissue samples taken from both live and dead cetaceans for current and future analysis related to genetic, pathological, pollutant and other studies. The information includes that obtained from the project itself and almost all other documented records of whales and dolphins conducted in Oman from this and previous centuries. ESO would like to thank **OMASCO** for providing top-of-the-line cameras and outboard engines to facilitate this work. Thanks also goes to **Ernest Meili** who kayaked along the coast of Oman to raise funds for acoustic equipment.

### **Emergency Responses and Public Awareness Contributions**

The research team members were actively involved in responding to strandings, including at least one live stranding involving a bottlenose dolphin at Sifah. The team has provided material for awareness raising and development of a dedicated educational pack for Omani school children, as well as giving public lectures/presentations. The team also provided information for the publication of an article on the project for the Ministry of Information's annual review in addition to furnishing articles and information to the local media. In addition, the team has helped host both National Geographic journalists and BBC film crews, with the latter on-going and aimed at contribution towards a new BBC documentary series called 'Wild Arabia' due to be aired in 2013.

### **Tourism Potential and Guidelines**

ESO has begun investigation of the potential for whale/dolphin related tourism in Oman, starting with an assessment of current tourism activities around Muscat, and more recently in Dhofar. This programme aims to help boost the tourism industry, whilst at the same time making sure that whale and dolphin watching is sustainable and follows best international practise. To this end, the team has produced guidelines for whale and dolphin watching which it hopes to make public and put into use in 2012.

### **Training and Collaboration**

ESO continues to collaborate with the government to help make use of the team's research results for the most positive benefit of Omanis and the country. This collaboration has mostly been with MECA, but last year extended to include more direct communication with MAFW. The team also helps to train government staff during field surveys, and has also begun targeting foreign researchers in countries that may share populations of whales with Oman, such as UAE, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. People from all three of these countries have been involved in capacity building efforts by ESO. The well-established collaboration developed by ESO over the years with the many other academic and conservation organisations around the world is also ongoing.

# Terrestrial Conservation Projects

## Egyptian Vulture Research

After being awarded a grant by the **Hima Fund**, ESO will start work on researching and conserving through awareness, the Egyptian Vulture population on Masirah Island.

The project's objectives are to:

- Survey the population of the Egyptian Vultures on Masirah Island and around the dumpsites of Muscat
- Contribute to building up long-term conservation and research strategy for securing the future survival of the Egyptian Vulture on Masirah Island
- Develop local capacity among key educational institutions in Oman by engaging Omani students
- Enhance the local and national knowledge of endangered birds, and particularly Egyptian Vultures within local communities, by working with the Omani Women's Association

To achieve our objectives, the project will cover the following activities:

- **Survey the Egyptian Vultures Population on Masirah Island:** Survey the population of Egyptian Vultures during breeding season and establish a population monitoring scheme.
- **Develop local capacity among key educational institutions by engaging Omani students:** The field work will be done in conjunction with key educational institutions in Oman, such as Sultan Qaboos University, by engaging students in field activities and creating an interaction with international scientific experts.
- **Work with the Omani Women's Association:** Enhance the local knowledge about the importance of birds in general and the Egyptian Vulture in particular, orient locals about sustainable income generated project and provide them with technical and social support to learn how to develop their income generating projects.

This project will run from February - October 2012



Egyptian Vulture



## Frankincense Research

Frankincense in Oman plays important historical, social and environmental roles. The frankincense tree is an integral part of the Omani heritage. Frankincense trees also grow on marginal land not suitable for ordinary agriculture, protect the soil from erosion, provide green cover, produce good biomass and provide shade. This research project sponsored by **HSBC** is also unique in that it is the first project that the ESO is implementing in the region of Dhofar. Frankincense trees start producing resin when they are about 8-10 years old and tapping is done 2 to 3 times a year. Recent studies have indicated that the population is declining, partly due to over-exploitation. This research aims to determine the right frequency of cutting to obtain a good yield without harming the trees.

This 4 year research project began in January 2010 and has made good progress. ESO has hired and trained local assistant researchers to conduct studies in four locations. Over 180 trees have been sampled and meetings have been held with local farmers and harvesters in order to gather information on equipment and methods used in harvesting frankincense.

Our researchers have been monitoring and documenting morphological changes in each tree as well as the flowering process and collection of seeds. In addition to this, three weather stations have been purchased and installed to monitor climate change in sample sites. This research will continue until 2013.

ESO technician monitoring a Frankincense tree in Dhofar





# Community Outreach Projects

This on-going umbrella project raises awareness on different environmental issues at the public, business and decisionmaking levels. Most of the projects under this category open up opportunities to actively involve members of the public in environmental protection activities and acquaint them with environmental issues at the local, regional and global levels, demonstrating ESO's commitment to action as well as general awareness building.

## Raising Awareness in Schools

ESO has been going to schools and colleges to raise awareness of the Society and our work as well as environmental issues.

Due to ESO's head office being in Muscat the majority of the educational institutions visited have been in Muscat. However, we have managed to reach areas outside the capital such as Nizwa, Musanaa'h, Khasab, Yiti and Salalah.

In 2011, work began on Arabic education kits which can be distributed to teachers in 2012. The kits will focus on both the terrestrial and marine environment.



An ESO interactive school visit to get children thinking about what they can do to make a difference at home

## Women's Empowerment and Environmental Education

The Women's Empowerment and Environmental Education Project commenced in early 2010 and is funded by the **US Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)** and implemented in collaboration with the Majlis Ash'shura and the Omani Women's Association (OWA). The main focus of the project was to give women the opportunity to voice environmental concerns affecting their local communities and share mitigation measures with decision-makers.

In 2010, Around 20 members from the Omani Women's Association were chosen ( from each of the participating cities: Muscat, Nizwa, Sohar and Salalah). Training workshops in each region were given on how to conduct background research, gather data and finally document an existing environmental problem in their respective communities. The women paired up to work on the essays and one winning essay from each region was chosen based on the environmental concern and the suggested plausible and practical solutions they documented.



HE Mohammed Al Tobi, Minister of the Environment and Climate Affairs awarding a winner of the Essay Competition

The winning essays were:

- Zuwan Al Husni and Zakiya Al Husni - An analytical study on the phenomena of waste in Muscat
- Siham Al Hagim and Fatma AL Jabal - The problem of sanitation in Salalah
- Moza Al Maqbali and Aisha Al Maqbali – Environmental and health problems in Sohar
- Thikra Al Mouslehi – Groundwater pollution in Nizwa

In March 2011, ESO arranged for a meeting at the Majlis where the 4 winners met with their regional Majlis Ash'shura representative to discuss and develop a report with recommendations addressed to the President of the Majlis Ash'shura. The representatives from the Majlis committed to approaching government authorities to attempt to find solutions or mitigation measures to the environmental issues voiced by the local women. A closing ceremony recognising the combined efforts of the individuals and organisations involved took place on Sunday March 27 under the patronage of His Excellency Mohammad Bin Salim Al Tobi, Minister of Environment and Climate Affairs, an active ESO member since 2005 and former Majlis Ash'shura representative for Nizwa.

The second phase of this project began in March 2011 and targets women in Sur, Ibri and Khasab. The 2010 winner from Nizwa, Thikra Al Mouslehi now joins ESO in implementing the workshop training.





Children at Al Oukdeen Primary School planting saplings



Dr Mohsen Al Amri teaches children to dig holes and place irrigation

## Tree Planting in Dhofar

As part of The Emirate's Environmental Group's (EEG) Million Tree Planting Initiative funded by **Bank Sarasin-Alpen**, ESO hosted a tree planting initiative, led by ESO board member Dr Mohsen Al Amri, at the Al Oukdeen Primary School in Salalah. In order for this project to be sustainable, a proper garden was developed on the school premises and students were taught the importance of planting native trees. These young trees are protected by a fence and are regularly monitored.

ESO and EEG signed a cooperative agreement in 2010 to facilitate collaboration between the two organisations for the benefit of the environment and to tackle sustainable development issues by promoting regional and trans-regional cooperation for creating a more environmentally conscious Gulf. All the trees planted are listed and posted under UNEP's 'Billion Tree Campaign' website [www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/](http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/)

## Beach and Reef Clean up at the Damaniyat Islands

In early 2010 **Oman Sail Staff Members** climbed Jebel Akhdar in order to raise funds for ESO's beach and reef clean up at the Damaniyat Islands in December 2010. In order to involve local communities and raise anti-littering awareness, ESO's Dima Radwan, Community Outreach and Education Manager, organised outreach activities in local schools in Sawadi, targeting teachers and teenage students. ESO visited 4 schools and gave presentations about Oman's environment, managing home waste and anti-littering.



School girls discuss how we can combat littering in Oman



On December 8-10, ESO in collaboration with the Oman Sail team, Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs (MECA), Coast Guard, Royal Navy and four local dive centers worked together to clean up the beaches and coral reefs of three of the Damaniyat Islands (Jabal Kabeer, Kharaba and Joon).



A total of 30 local volunteers helped out and waste was collected from the beach and gathered in coordination with local fishermen and the Municipality of Barka. Approximately 200kg of nets were recovered from the sea, along with several old fishing traps.

To ensure sustainability of this campaign, ESO in cooperation with MECA have arranged for a total of 10 informative anti littering awareness signs to be deployed on four islands.

Special thanks go to Oman Sail, Ocean Blue Oman, Hud-Hud Travel, Oman Charter, Gulf Divers LLC, IBM Dubai, Extra Divers Sawadi, RASAC, Omanta Scuba, Muscat Divers, Knight Dive, Barka Municipality, local fishermen from Barka al Haradi area (Idris Khamis al Yehyai'i, Ibrahim Said al Falahi, Ammar Hachel al Yehyai'i), Hmud Bin Azzan Primary School, Um Eias Primary School, Suhban Wa'el secondary school and Al Billah secondary school.

Volunteers clean up the Damaniyat Islands, recovering nets that were entangled on the coral reefs



## Earth Hour 2011

Every year millions of people around the world have joined this global initiative to demonstrate their concerns about the future of our planet by doing something simple, yet remarkable - they turn off their lights for one hour on the last Saturday in March at 8:30pm.

During the month of March 2011 and sponsored by **Muscat Pharmacy & Stores LLC** and **Special Technical Services (STS)**, ESO reached out to individuals, schools and the public and private sector in Oman to spread awareness about global warming and encouraged everyone to turn off lights on March 26th.

ESO distributed awareness brochures sponsored by to 14 public and private schools in Muscat and Nizwa. Teachers were given information on how to convey the awareness messages to their students. Similar messages were distributed amongst Ministries, companies and NGOs and both Apex Press & Publishing as well as Hi FM and Sultanate of Oman Radio helped ESO reach out to the general public.

We were able to calculate that during 2011's Earth hour we saved 20,000 KW of power in Oman (enough to power all households in Al Khuwair for one hour)!





جمعية البيئة العمانية  
Environment Society of Oman

60+  
EARTH  
HOUR



# THANK YOU

To everyone who participated in  
**EARTH HOUR 2011**  
by turning off their lights



TOGETHER WE SAVED

## 20000 KW\*

of energy just in **ONE HOUR!**

Your help and commitment will save  
our environment for future generations

Earth Hour 2011 sponsored by

**STS**



Earth Hour 2011 supported by

**Ministries:**

Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Heritage and Culture  
Ministry of Housing  
Ministry of Regional Municipalities and  
Water Resources  
Ministry of Sports Affairs  
Ministry of Transport and Communication

**Corporates:**

Ajit Khimji Group  
Alarjan Towell Investment Co.  
Al Mashriq MIEC  
Bait Al Zubair Foundation

Intercontinental Hotels Group  
Lamor Clean Globe Oman  
MB Holding Company LLC  
Oman Botanic Garden  
Oman Environmental Services Holding  
Company (SAOC)  
Oman Sail  
Oman Investment & Finance Co. SAOG  
(OIFC)  
Petroleum Development Oman  
Renaissance Services (SAOG)  
Shell Development Oman  
Sohar Aluminium  
Sultanate of Oman Radio

**Schools:**

American British Academy  
Al Huda Private School  
Al Imam Naser Ben Mershid  
Al Qala'a School  
Al Sahwa School  
Al Sheikh Saeed Ben Khalfan Al Khalili  
Durrat Al Khaleej School  
Muscat International School  
The American International School of  
Muscat  
The British School Muscat  
The Sultan's School  
Um Habibah School  
Zubaidah Um Al Ameen School

\* This calculation provided by



جمعية البيئة العمانية  
Environment Society of Oman

**MUSCAT DAILY**



95.9FM

[www.eso.org.om](http://www.eso.org.om)

# ESO Strategy

## ESO Strategy Members' Forum

ESO's five year strategy expired at the end of 2010 and led to many far reaching and diverse successes for ESO. As the Society continues to grow, so do the demands placed on it. To ensure continued effectiveness 2011 was time for a new strategy to be discussed.

In January 2011 the ESO Board called for a members' forum to begin the process of strengthening the engagement of all stakeholders to further ensure ESO's role as a credible actor in its domain: nationally, regionally and internationally. The attendance exceeded 100 people and discussions centered around three main issues: ESO's identity, stakeholders, and projects and priorities.

A questionnaire was circulated to all members and those in attendance to find out what issues people want ESO to focus on. This list was then presented at a second forum in a market place and the ideas were debated and discussed.

## Programmes

During discussions at these meetings, 15 programmes were selected to promote the ESO strategy. A programme is considered to be a group of related projects managed in a coordinated way to reap maximum benefit. This may not have been possible if each of these projects was managed individually. This portfolio of 15 ESO programmes constituted a 'wish list' that could be put into action once a sufficient number of members were committed to making it operational. Many of these programmes have already been implemented.

The 15 programmes below have now been established as the ESO "wish list" and many of them, as can be seen in this report, are already running:

### 1. Lectures, exhibitions, field trips and educational activities

Set up a yearly calendar for lectures, organisation of exhibitions and field trips to raise shared awareness. ESO's calendar of events can be found on [www.eso.org.om](http://www.eso.org.om)

### 2. ESO research arm

Act as a focal point for research, set the strategic direction, network with stakeholders and assist in securing necessary funding and disseminate results.

### 3. Environmental competitions

Organise competitions such as art, environmental speaking, essay writing and debates.

### 4. Direct impact hands on projects

Create mechanism for direct actions with the assistance of ESO members and the general public for the benefit of the environment.

### 5. Central repository of environmental knowledge

Assemble dynamic database of studies, information, facts and figures on the Omani environment using both ESO data and collecting data from other researchers and research facilities.

**6. Membership life and social networking**

Create venues for direct interactions among members formally and informally from online dialogues to casual self organised social gatherings.

**7. Member and skills directory**

Create a comprehensive database of members and volunteers with their interests and skills so that programmes and projects can leverage the available knowledge of ESO members.

**8. College chapters**

Form close, long lasting relationships with colleges and universities. Give higher education students the opportunity to lead environmental activities in their areas.

**9. ESO think tank**

Analyse environment-related issues either reactively or proactively so that public positions are made on the basis of solid empirical, theoretical and local evidence.

**10. Private sector liaison task force**

Establish ties with the private sector to promote environmentally sound practices and secure partnerships and sponsorships.

**11. Public sector liaison task force**

Set up active focal points with public agencies and ministries to acquire relevant knowledge on public policy developments and influence decision-making.

**12. NGO liaison task force**

Establish strong links, dialogue and common activities with other NGOs, locally and internationally and be part of the civil society network.

**13. Linking with houses of expertise**

Exchange ideas, data, knowledge and expertise with the various research units in Oman's universities and public institutions.

**14. Accreditation and product endorsement**

Establish the mechanisms by which ESO could endorse products and organisations and notify that it complies with a given set of environmental criteria.

**15. Strategic follow up**

Rethink about ways to better achieve ESO's goals and include members in the strategic process.

ESO would like to thank all involved in both the organisation and participation of this strategic process, especially **Olivier Renard** and **Ra'id Jamali** who were instrumental in planning the process, compiling data and formulating conclusions.



# Other Activities

## Annual Fundraising Ball

Every year an annual fundraising ball is held in order to fund ESO's administrative costs. Our 2011 ball was a great success, raising RO 60,000. This year's sponsors were: **Sohar Aluminium (Gold)**, **Saud Bahwan Automotives (Silver)** and **Saab Al Mashriq Renewable Energy & Green Technologies (Bronze)**.



Sayyida Tania Al Said, Sayyid Tarik Al Said and Henk Pauw from Sohar Aluminium at the ESO Ball 2011

## International Awards and Collaborations

### MOU Signed between ESO and EEG

In February 2011, ESO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Emirates Environment Group (EEG). The MOU aims to harness regional cooperation on environmental initiatives and to provide a framework of cooperation to promote long-term conditions to support natural resources, environmental conservation, public awareness and sustainable development especially in the Arabian Gulf region and the Arab world in general. ESO and EEG will also aid each other with technical knowledge and assistance for the implementation of national and sub-regional plans for the enhancement of environmental conservation.

### ESO Wins Award for Website

Over one year after launching its website [www.eso.org.om](http://www.eso.org.om) ESO received the 2010 Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award for being recognised as the finest website among thousands of civil society organisations in the Arab world that exceeded all criterions of the award. On May 25, 2011 ESO attended the award ceremony in Kuwait.

Dr Mehdi Jaafar, ESO's VP is interviewed by Kuwait TV after receiving the award



### Other Awards, Grants and Donations

ESO would like to give special thanks to all those who have helped us achieve our goals over the last two years. These donors, sponsors and grant agencies are listed below in order of the date donations were received from January 2010 to December 2011:

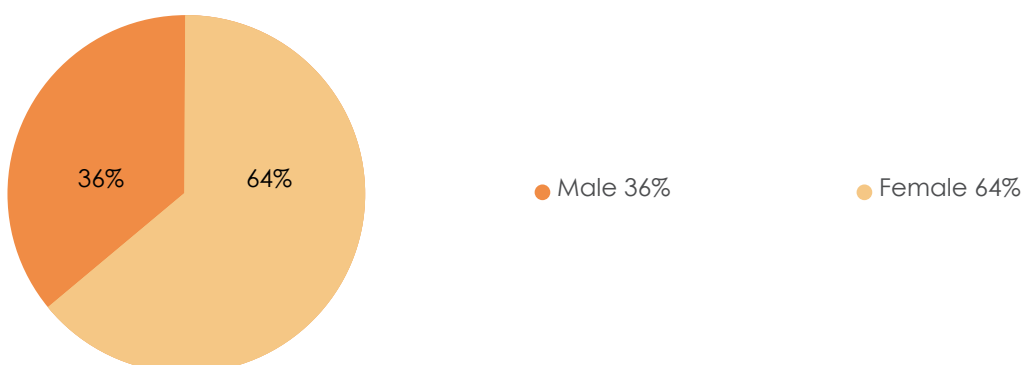
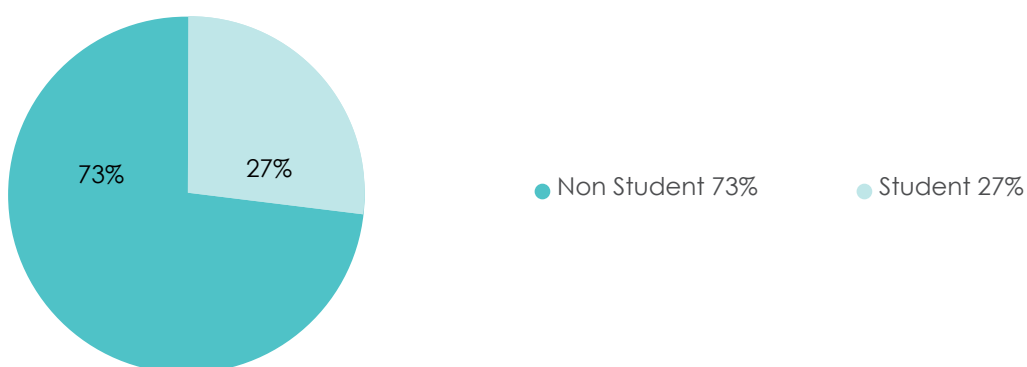
- **Ernest Meili, Special Technical Services LLC** and **Private Donation** for Kayaking Expedition to raise funds for whale and dolphin research
- **Middle East Partnership Initiative Grant** for Women's Environmental Education and Empowerment
- **HSBC** for Frankincense Project
- **Bank Sohar** grant
- **Ford Foundation Environmental Grant** for Turtle Conservation Programme
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service** for Satellite Tracking of Loggerhead Turtles
- **Renaissance SAOG** for Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Research
- **Special Technical Services LLC & Muscat Pharmacy LLC** for Earth Hour 2011
- **OMASCO** for cameras and outboard engines for use in Whale and Dolphin Research
- **Sohar Aluminium, Saud Bahwan Grp & Saab Al Mashriq Renewable Energy & Green Technologies** for Annual Fundraising Ball
- **Shell Oman Marketing Co SAOG** for ESO fuel cards
- **Oman Sail Staff** for Damaniyat Island Anti Littering Campaign
- **US Department of Interior** for Women's Environmental Education and Empowerment Project
- **Ajit Khimji Group LLC** for free office space
- **Assarain Furniture** for complete office furnishings
- **Bahwan Cybertek, Danat Al Khaleej Furnishing LLC, Greens Plants LLC, IMTAC LLC, Khimji Ramdas LLC, OHI Telecommunications Co** and **Sabco Art LLC** for new office in kind sponsorship.



# Membership

## Individual Membership

As of December 2011 there were a total of 746 ESO individual members. The charts below show percentages of Omanis, students and male vs female members.



## Coporate Membership

**ESO is grateful for the support of all our corporate members below (in alphabetical order)**

1. Ajit Khimji Group of Companies
2. Alargan Towell Investment Company
3. Al Mashriq International Engineering Consultancy
4. Bank Muscat
5. Carillion Alawi
6. Cowi & Partners LLC
7. Electricity Holding Company SAOC
8. Ericsson Oman LLC
9. Ernst & Young
10. Gulf Triangle Industries LLC
11. Haya Water
12. Lamor Clean Globe Oman
13. Maqshan Oil & Gas Services (SAOC)
14. Muriya Tourism Development
15. Muscat Electricity Distribution Company
16. National Bank of Oman
17. Oman Environmental Services Holding Company
18. Oman Investment & Finance Company SAOG
19. Oman Solar Systems Company LLC
20. Omran
21. Oman Trading International Ltd.
22. Petroleum Development of Oman
23. Port of Salalah
24. Port of Sohar
25. PricewaterhouseCoopers
26. Shell Development Oman
27. Shell Oman Marketing Services
28. Sohar Aluminium
29. The Wave Muscat
30. Towell Auto Center LLC



# Capacity Building

## Staffing

When ESO was founded in 2004 there were no paid or permanent staff. The Society was run purely on a volunteer basis, mainly by dedicated board members. In January 2006 our first administrative assistant was hired, followed by a manager in July 2007. An Omani management trainee was hired in 2008 and the office has been capably run since then. Both the manager and trainee were hired with funds from a corporate sponsor until 2009 at which point the funding expired and administrative costs were covered through alternative funding that was coming in from projects and fundraising events.

In 2011, the Board agreed that it was necessary to hire more staff to be able to cope with the expanding on going projects, community outreach and educational campaigns as well as membership.

In addition to a General Manager and Administrative Assistant, the following additional staff members have been hired:

- Community Outreach and Education Manager
- Volunteerism and Membership Manager
- PR and Fundraising Manager
- Projects Manager
- Public Relations Officer (PRO)

As of December 2011 ESO staff numbered 7. The office space that had accommodated the Society in the past was no longer big enough and we are extremely grateful to **Ajit Khimji Group of Companies** who have given ESO 2-year rent free office space in their building in Darsait. **Assarain Furniture LLC** also provided complete office furnishings for the new premises.

## Graduate Training Programme

During the period of 2008-2010 the Society found it very difficult to retain Omani employees as once they had been hired and trained they were being offered more attractive positions with higher remuneration packages in both the private and government sectors. Part of the reason for this is that there are very few qualified candidates in the field of environmental conservation.

Although this loss of staff presented a hindrance to ESO, it was acknowledged by the Board as a benefit to society as a whole: ESO has a critical role in identifying, recruiting and training Omanis that can go on to make a difference in society. They can be trained in community outreach and gain experience working with an NGO and conservation management before entering the Omani workforce. ESO has now made a commitment to training Omani graduates in these fields so that they can go on to join other companies and government institutions or to pursue a career with ESO.

ESO is very pleased to announce that this programme is funded by **Oman LNG LLC**, ESO's Capacity Building Partner, and will begin in April 2012.

# Conferences, Workshops & Events Attended by ESO

It is important to ESO that both our staff and board members attend and contribute to national, regional and international conferences and workshops as well as steering committees which consider ESO a stakeholder.

## 2010

- Gulf Eco, Muscat, Oman
- EU-GCC Joint Gulf Seminar on Waste Management, Muscat, Oman.
- Regional Workshop on Environmental Crises Management from Educational & Awareness Perspectives in GCC Countries
- UNEP Middle East Cleaner Fuel & Vehicles-Air Policy Forum, Cairo, Egypt
- Seminar Workshop on Sustainability, Muscat, Oman
- Omani-French Workshop on Green Architecture and Eco-tourism, Muscat, Oman
- 62nd Annual International Whaling Commission Meeting, Agadir, Morocco
- Energy & Water Exhibition, Muscat, Oman, July 2010
- Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED), Beirut, Lebanon
- 2nd International Conference on Coastal Zone Engineering and Management, SQU, Muscat, Oman
- 4th International Responsible Tourism Conference, Muscat, Oman
- Muscat Green Conference, Muscat, Oman
- 10th International Conference on Development of Drylands (ICDD), Cairo, Egypt
- Modeling Oceanic and Atmospheric Processes, Muscat, Oman
- Workshop on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Phenomena in the Sultanate of Oman, Muscat, Oman
- 2nd Marine Conservation Forum for the Gulf Region, Abu Dhabi, UAE

## 2011

- Nizwa Environmental Exhibition on Global Warming, Oman Environment Day, Nizwa, Oman
- Education for Sustainable Development in Support of Rapprochement of Cultures & Biodiversity Conference, Muscat, Oman
- Major Groups & Stakeholders Advisory Group Consultative Meetings on International Environmental Governance & Green Economy, Geneva, Switzerland
- UNEP-ROWA Annual Consultation meeting for West Asia, Beirut, Lebanon
- ESCWA's Expert Group Meeting on "Promoting Best Practices on Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in the ESCWA Region", Beirut, Lebanon
- UNEP's Regional Civil Society Consultation Meeting, Beirut, Lebanon
- IUCN Red List Workshop, Red Sea, Jordan
- 25th Extra Ordinary Session of GC/GMEF of UNEP, Bali, Indonesia
- UNEP's 26th Session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), Nairobi, Kenya.
- SQU Environmental Week, Muscat, Oman
- Oman Sail Extreme 40s, Muscat, Oman
- Canadian Stampede, Muscat, Oman

## 2011 continued...

- Seminar on Human Development Based Approach organized by Tawasul, Muscat, Oman
- Workshop on Best Practices in Sustainability and Social Responsibility: Shared Values organized by Tawasul, Muscat, Oman
- IUCN 7th Regional Conservation Forum, Kuwait City, Kuwait
- Omani Women's Association Workshop: Women & Environment Workshop, Muscat, Oman
- Regional RAMSAR Workshop on WETLANDS and GCC membership, Muscat, Oman
- Workshop on Wetlands and the RAMSAR Convention in West Asia, Fujairah, UAE
- Parks, Biodiversity, and Ecotourism Management Course, USA
- Biodiversity Workshop on Conservation & Utilization of Omani Genetic Resources, Muscat, Oman
- Strategic Workshop for the Animal & Plant Genetic Resource Center, Muscat, Oman
- Gulf Environment and Sustainable Development Forum, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- HH Sheikh Salem Al Ali Al Sabah Annual Informatics Award, Kuwait City, Kuwait
- OER Oman Annual Green Awards, Muscat, Oman
- Workshop on Plastic Bags and their Impacts on the Environment, Muscat, Oman
- Workshop on Eco Tourism and Protected Areas Management, Al Feynan, Jordan
- Volunteers Expo and conference in celebration of International Volunteer Day, Muscat, Oman
- 63rd Annual International Whaling Commission Meeting, Tromso, Norway

## Steering Committees

ESO lends expertise and advice by sitting on a number of national steering committees and panels:

- National Sustainable Development Indicators (Former Ministry of National Economy)
- National Environmental Indicators under the auspices of Ministry of Environment & Climate Affairs
- Tawasul Advisory Committee
- Arabian Global Compact Steering Committee based in Dubai and hosted by Emirates Environmental Group (EEG)
- Judging Panel of Gulf Colleges and Universities Environmental Public Speaking Competition organised by EEG
- Judging Panel of Ford Conservation Fund based in Dubai
- Judging Panel of Oman Green Awards
- Representing West Asia at UNEP meetings
- Representing West Asia in the IEG-AG  
(International Environmental Governance Advisory Group created by Major Groups & Stakeholders)
- Sports & Environment Olympic Committee for Oman
- National Committee on Monitoring & Reporting on Mammals Stranding
- Committee on Plant Genetic Resources
- National Committee on Red Tide
- Committee for International Year of Biodiversity

## Affiliations with International Organisations

- United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Indian Ocean Research & Conservation Association
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Middle East Partnership Initiative
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Birdlife International
- National Research UK
- Emirates Environmental Group
- Emirates Wildlife Society/WWF
- Ford Foundation
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association
- Sackler Institute of Comparative Genomics, American Museum of Natural History
- University of Stockholm
- University of South Wales
- School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Durham University
- Center for Dolphin Studies, Port Elizabeth, South Africa



# Conclusion

The last two years have shown that ESO is a professional, hard working organisation capable of producing internationally acknowledged research and results. The Society has increased capacity and hired qualified managers in areas ranging from community outreach and education to membership and project management, enabling us to train young Omani graduates in the field of environmental conservation and civil society management.

ESO's projects are wide ranging and cover environmental education as well as terrestrial and marine research, making the Society a leading player in Oman's conservation strategy. We have been asked to advise on matters concerning the environment and sit on both governmental and private steering committees. The Society has also been asked to lead discussions and represent all regional (West Asia) environmental NGOs at United Nations meetings and we are a proud member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

There is, however, much more to be done. ESO will focus the next few years on nation-wide awareness campaigns, school involvement, membership involvement and capacity building as well as continuing much needed scientific research, providing baseline data for conservation strategies.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has always encouraged Oman's leadership in the field of environmental protection. Under his leadership, civil societies in the Sultanate have flourished and our relationship with His Majesty's government, primarily The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, will enable ESO to have a positive impact on Oman's natural heritage.



# Acknowledgements

There are many people we wish to thank for their support, hard work and dedication to ESO:

First and foremost special thanks go to ESO Patron, HH Sayyid Tarik bin Shabib Al Said, who has always supported the Society and has been instrumental in its success.

Nida Helou, General Manager of ESO from 2007-2011, returned to Lebanon to be with her husband. Passionate and dedicated, Nida will always be an asset to ESO and we wish her the best for the future.

Volunteers are a very important part of our research projects. In particular Robert Baldwin, Head of ESO's Marine Team, works tirelessly to ensure our research is the very best it can be. Andy Willson who lives with turtles and away from "civilisation" for 6 months of the year. Corrine de Zeeuw who is an asset both in the office and in the field, Roxanne Whelan who's quality of work was instrumental in designing turtle educational material, Israa and Juhaina Al Rashdi who initiated the ESO library archives, Maryam Al Kalbani, who's energy and enthusiasm added great value to ESO's outreach programme, Alefiyah Balasinorwala, who helped in the collection of information needed to revive projects, Hamad Al Mahrouqi has always dedicated time to ESO, and Shaima Al Humaidi who has volunteered her time on many occasions at expos and events. ESO would also like to thank those who helped in organisation of the members' forum: Peter Farrington, Nasser Al Tobi, Dr Nadia Al Saadi, Kholoud Ismail, Serhat Akiska, Dr Simon Wilson, Dr Chris Hilman, Dareen Matwani, Hannah Macki, Nuhaila Al Shukry, and Nusaiba Al Shukry.

A special thank you must be given to Olivier Renard and Ra'id Jamali, without whom the members' forum and ESO strategy would not have materialised. They have given the Society much of their time and energy and we hope that they will continue to work with ESO in the future.

ESO Staff are the backbone of the Society and its work. Of course thanks go to all but special thanks goes to Bashar Zaitoon who has been with ESO since the office was first opened and has a genuine interest in the success of the Society as well as the environment. He is part of the ESO family and is invaluable to the Society.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth and the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development have always been staunch supporters of ESO and we thank them for their guidance and understanding of our work.

None of ESO's work would be possible without much needed funding from our Corporate Members, Sponsors and Supporters. We thank all of them and hope that their generosity will continue for years to come.

ESO Members are the Society's ambassadors and we thank every one of our dedicated members for coming to events, dedicating their time and supporting the conservation of Oman's environment.

Katana Ltd designed the fantastic ESO website and we thank them for all their hard work and continued support. Oman's media have been extremely supportive in making our efforts public and ESO would like to thank all media houses for their continued coverage of our projects and successes. Special thanks goes to Apex Publishing who have given free advertising space to ESO over the last two years for which we are extremely grateful.

Turtle nesting area on the UNESCO  
protected Damaniyat Islands

