



# Annual Report 2024







His Majesty  
Sultan Qaboos bin Said



*May Allah have mercy upon him*



His Majesty  
Sultan Haitham bin Tarik





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# Message from the President

Dear Friends,

The Environment Society of Oman's annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and share our vision for the year ahead. This year, we have even more to celebrate as 2024 marks our 20th anniversary. Over the past two decades, ESO has been a pioneer in protecting Oman's natural environment, our most precious heritage.

Oman is blessed with diverse landscapes, rich biodiversity, and vital habitats. Our founders' commitment to preserving these invaluable natural assets for future generations continues to drive our mission today. We take pride in supporting pioneering marine and terrestrial research crucial to conserving endangered species in Oman. Recognizing that a thriving future for our youth depends on sustainable practices, we continue to design education and community programs that promote environmental



As I complete my second year as President of the ESO Board, I remain inspired by our team's engagement with communities across Oman, including women, youth, fishing communities, corporates, and the general public. This year, our outreach expanded beyond Muscat to include Al Sharqiyah and Dhofar, covering sustainability, climate change, plastic pollution, and the conservation of sea turtles on Masirah Island. We are especially grateful to the community members and corporate partners whose involvement has been pivotal to the success of these initiatives. The growth of the Namat Competition, now in its fourth edition, highlights Oman's progress in raising environmental awareness and empowering the next generation of leaders in sustainability.

Biodiversity is vital to our survival, and ESO has intensified its efforts to protect essential ecosystems and endangered species. A key achievement this year was the progress in conserving Oman's national gem, the frankincense trees. Our team has advanced surveys, strengthened collaborations with local stakeholders, and made significant strides in research that supports long-term conservation strategies.

While celebrating these accomplishments, we acknowledge the invaluable support of our stakeholders. Sustainable funding remains an ongoing challenge, and I am particularly grateful to the Board for championing initiatives such as the ESO Art and Cup for Care events, which raised both awareness and funds. We deeply appreciate the contributions from our supporters and partners.

Working alongside an exceptional team, I am confident that ESO will continue to build on its successes in the years to come, striving toward a sustainable future for Oman contributing to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and deeply aligned with Oman Vision 2040 towards a balanced approach to economic growth, environmental preservation and social well-being.

With unwavering commitment and hope for the future,

**Dr. Amor Al Matani**  
President



Little owl (*Athene noctua*), Amardeep Singh



# Introduction



As we mark the 20th anniversary of ESO's inception, I reflect with immense pride on the strides we have made in championing environmental conservation and fostering climate resilience. Our journey has been one of growth, collaboration, and unwavering commitment to Oman's natural heritage and its people. Thank you to all who have been part of our conservation journey.

The critical role of biodiversity and wildlife populations in building climate resilience has never been clearer. Commitments to restore and regenerate nature should be prioritized alongside our efforts to reduce emissions. As mandated Environment, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) reporting comes into effect for publicly listed companies in 2025, we encourage corporate stakeholders to align their strategies with global framework agreements that emphasize the pivotal role that natural ecosystems play in supporting climate resilience, capturing and storing carbon and safeguarding communities.

Recognizing the importance of our youth as changemakers, we launched the **Green Campus Competition** — a college and university programme empowering students to tackle challenges under the net-zero theme. This competition encourages innovation, collaboration, and sustainability-driven solutions, building the skills of tomorrow's leaders. Similarly, under the **Oman Climate Dialogues Series**, we hosted a workshop titled Green Jobs and the Youth Perspective for university students and early-career professionals. This session highlighted the critical intersection of sustainability and employment, underscoring that every job in the future must integrate green practices to create a sustainable future for our planet.

Our research and conservation efforts remain focused on flagship species, including whales and dolphins, sea turtles, frankincense trees, and raptors. By addressing the threats to these species and advocating for collaborative action with communities, industry and government, we are working to preserve the ecosystems they represent, amplifying the impact of our conservation efforts across Oman.

This year, I was deeply honoured to receive the 2024 National Geographic Wayfinder Award, a testament to the internationally recognized and appreciated work of the Environment Society of Oman. This achievement is a reflection of the dedication of our staff, board, and members, whose collective efforts have made this success possible.

As we look ahead to the next chapter of ESO's journey, I am confident that our reach and impact will only continue to expand. Together, we can build a future that harmonizes environmental sustainability, societal resilience, and economic growth.

With warm regards,

**Suaad Al Harthi**  
Executive Director



Wattled Starling (*Creatophora cinerea*), Amardeep Singh



## Supporting Oman's Vision 2040 and UN Sustainability Goals

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Al Said, Oman's Vision 2040 provides a robust foundation for a development agenda that emphasizes the importance of safeguarding our nation's exceptional natural resources. At ESO, we are steadfast in advocating for national initiatives that foster sustainable development while mitigating or eliminating actions harmful to Oman's environment and rich biodiversity.



### ESO Strategy

Guided by our [Five-Year Strategic Plan \(2023-2027\)](#), ESO remains committed to protecting Oman's natural heritage for future generations.

**Vision:** To play a leading role in the conservation of Oman's natural heritage.

**Mission:** To protect and conserve Oman's natural heritage and influence environmentally sustainable behavior through education, awareness, and conservation initiatives.

Our strategic priorities are defined as Partnership, Conservation, Fundraising, Internal Capabilities and People and Culture, with key objectives and performance indicators set in order to respond to the overarching goal of protecting Oman's natural heritage for future generations.

### Our programmes



Conduct **research** on threatened species



Build **capacity** within the environmental sector



**Educate** and raise awareness of communities on the importance of adopting sustainable lifestyles



**Conserve** Oman's natural heritage for future generations



**Advocate** for environmental sustainability



### Alignment to UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly to provide a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. While we contribute to all 17 SDGs, our work at ESO mostly aligns with the following global goals:

**4** QUALITY EDUCATION



**5** GENDER EQUALITY



**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



**13** CLIMATE ACTION



**14** LIFE BELOW WATER



**15** LIFE ON LAND



**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





Research and Conservation

4

Field surveys, covering sea turtles, Egyptian vultures and frankincense in Dhofar



36

Collaborations with international organisations



5

Conservation awareness materials produced



3

Conservation workshops on frankincense and marine turtle lighting pollution impact



20

Female loggerhead turtles rescued



60

Tons of Abandoned Lost or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) removed, contributing to a total of 825 tons of ALDFG removed to date.



6

Houses and mosques refitted with wildlife-certified lighting fixtures on Masirah Island



78

km of nesting beaches cleaned



Environmental Education

164

Schools Registered



11

Governorates



6

Nationwide winners & supplementary awards



Membership and Social Media

33,760

Total followers across all platforms



234

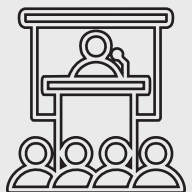
Individual members



Community Engagement

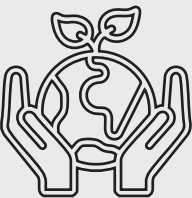
92

Public events



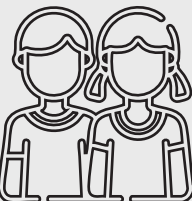
5774

Engaged in environmental awareness



4840

Youth engaged



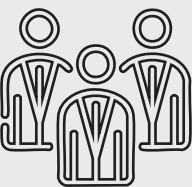
314

volunteers supported our events or initiatives



24

Corporate members





# ESO Board



**Dr Amor Al Matani**  
President



**Ms Rumaitha Al Busaidi**  
Vice President



**Mrs Amira Al Yarubi**  
Director



**Mr Abdulaziz Al Abdali**  
Treasurer



**Mrs Nashwa Al Rawahy**  
Secretary



**Dr Ali Akaak**  
Board Member



**Mr Essam Al Sheibany**  
Board Member



**Dr Mohammed Al Kalbani**  
Board Member



**Mr Nasser Al Maskari**  
Board Member



**Mr Omar Al Riyami**  
Board Member

## President

**Honourable Dr Amor Al Matani** holds a BEng (Hons), an MBA and a PhD in Sustainability. After graduating from Teesside University, UK in 1990 as an Instrumentation and Control Engineer, he joined Petroleum Development Oman in upstream operations and commissioning. In 1993 he moved to the Ministry of Health where he occupied several executive positions. He completed his MBA (Newcastle) in 1997 before being appointed Director-General for Sur Industrial Estate in the Public Establishment of Industrial Estates. Dr Al Matani joined Oman LNG in 2002 as Deputy CEO and the Chief HR Executive Officer. In June 2019, he was appointed CEO of the Oman LNG foundation. Dr Al Matani has a passion for improving work environments and is a proactive leader, striving for a more sustainable Oman. He has a keen interest in education and is a member of several university and technical college boards. He is Chairman of the Board of Trustees for OLN's HAS International School and many others. In 2023, Dr Al Matani was appointed as a member of the Oman State Council.

## Vice President

**Ms Rumaitha Al Busaidi** is a scientist and environmental advocate working on sustainable solutions to climate change. Her 2021 TED talk examining women as the key to our climate future has garnered more than a million views. Rumaitha currently serves as Business Development Manager at Hydrom, the orchestrator of green hydrogen development in Oman. Nationally, she actively works with the government on sustainable diversification and energy transition strategies. Internationally, she has advised the Biden administration on developing a climate resilience standard for US foreign aid, the government of Greenland on creating a framework for local sustainable tourism, and the Arab League on empowering Arab youth in climate change negotiations spaces. Her work in climate change has been recognized by the United Nations, the EU, and NATO. Rumaitha was most recently named in Reuters's climate hot list and subsequently recognized in their 'Top 25 Women in Climate Change' list and was listed on the BBC list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world in 2023.

## Director

**Mrs Amira Al Yarubi** holds a BSc in Management Information Systems from Sultan Qaboos University and a 2019 IEMA (Environmental Management Certification). She is Assistant Director of Oman Vision 2040's team within the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology. Amira is a certified Lead Auditor in Environmental Management Systems and a Sustainability Practitioner. She began her career as a CSR specialist at the Information Technology Authority before joining the QHSE team to handle the Environment Management System at the Ministry of Technology & Communication. Amira initiated environmental programmes such as waste reduction campaigns aimed at reducing paper and plastic consumption and worked closely with the event team to ensure environmentally friendly practices were adopted. As an ESO member, Amira participated in the Eco-thon as a mentor for the student groups and continues to spread conservation messages through her social media accounts. As a mother, she continually strives to raise environmentally conscious children by educating them on saving the planet and engaging them in clean-up campaigns.

## Treasurer

**Mr Abdulaziz Al Abdali** has over 15 years of finance experience, and currently serves as Group Manager for Finance Operations at Fisheries Development Oman SAOC. Besides his position in FDO Abdulaziz works as part time Chief Financial Officer in Aquatic Investment Excellence LLC. He also holds positions as Board of Director and Chairman of the Audit Committee at International Seafood Company SAOC (Simak) and Board Member at Fanar International Fisheries LLC. Abdulaziz's expertise spans strategic finance planning, governance, budget management and team leadership. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Arab Open University, Muscat. Outside of his finance career, Abdulaziz actively engages in marine conservation efforts through his sea touring and water sports company in Muscat.

## Secretary

**Mrs Nashwa Al Rawahy** is a Director at HMR Consultants, a leading Omani environmental and engineering consultancy headquartered in Muscat, with regional offices in the UAE. With over 15 years of experience, Nashwa has established herself as a leading professional in her field. She is a proud alumnus of George Washington University in the US, where she earned both her Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Environmental and Civil Engineering. Her career has been defined by a commitment to solving complex environmental challenges through innovative and sustainable approaches, always adhering to regulatory standards and international best practices. Nashwa's diverse project portfolio includes environmental and social impact assessments and related technical studies, sustainability strategy development and ESG reporting, life cycle assessments, energy efficiency, and climate change management. Her expertise spans a range of industries, including green hydrogen and its derivatives, renewable energy, oil and gas, manufacturing, power and water, and urban master planning. Nashwa's position on the board is driven by her deep-seated commitment to environmental stewardship and a desire to leverage her knowledge and experience to further ESO's mission.

## Board Member

**Dr Ali Akaak** is an experienced academic and professional in business and tourism management. He currently serves as the Head of the Continuing Education and Community Service Department at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Salalah. Dr Akaak holds a doctorate in Tourism Management and Development from the University of Exeter Business School, UK, and brings over 20 years of expertise in academic and administrative roles across public and private universities. He has published and presented extensively on sustainability, strategic planning, destination management, tourism development, labor unions, and social entrepreneurship at local and international conferences. Dr Akaak is an active member of several professional local and international organizations, including the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Dhofar), the Oman American Business Council, the Omani Society of Human Resources Management, the World Tourism Association for Cultural and Heritage, and the Green Destination Organization.



## Board Member

**Mr Essam Al Sheibany** is an accomplished professional with extensive expertise of 31+ years in the oil and gas industry. Proficient in setting up and efficiently managing the operation of refineries and petrochemical divisions, Mr Al Sheibany has held various senior positions and is currently working as Group Vice President QHSSE and Sustainability of ASYAD, where he is in charge of developing, implementing, and managing enterprise-wide quality, health and safety, security and environmental programmes, policies, and procedures, sustainability frameworks and ESG financing, decarbonization, energy optimization and net zero plans.

## Board Member

**Dr Mohammed Al Kalbani** holds a PhD in Environmental Sustainability from the University of Aberdeen, UK, as well as an MSc and BSc in Environmental Engineering Sciences and Management. He has worked as a research assistant at Sultan Qaboos University, and most recently as Director of the Department of Sustainable Development at the Environment Authority. Dr Al Kalbani regularly participates in research projects related to integrated environmental assessment, environmental preservation, biodiversity conservation, climate change, environmental management, and legislation. He has published several papers and participated in the 4th - 6th Global Environmental Outlook Reports for UNEP and the Arab Environmental Outlook Report for the Arab League. He has presented papers at international conferences, symposiums, and workshops. Serving on ESO's board since 2017, Dr Al Kalbani has represented ESO internationally and has worked on the organisation's Green Schools Campaign, Eco-thon, Inter-College Environmental Speaking Competition, research and conservation projects and community outreach programmes.

## Board Member

**Mr Nasser Al Maskari** is a committed advocate for sustainable development in Oman, deeply committed to environmental, safety, and health causes, while actively supporting Omani civil societies. His educational journey includes an MSc in Environmental Studies within the field of Marine Sciences from Sultan Qaboos University (2006). He also holds a BSc in Fisheries Science from the same institution (1996). Mr Al Maskari's professional journey traverses both the public and private sectors. During his tenure at the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment, and Water Resources (MRME&WR) from 1997 to 2006, he held significant roles, including Head of Permits Section and Director of Planning for the Nature Conservation Department. In 2006, Nasser embarked on a corporate career, joining Occidental Mukhaizna LLC (OXY) as an Environmental Compliance Specialist. Over the years, Mr Al Maskari has shouldered progressively senior positions, culminating in his current role as Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Occidental Oman (OXY). Mr Al Maskari is dedicated to fostering collaboration between governmental and private sectors, raising public awareness on critical issues, and actively supporting the objectives of Omani civil societies. As a founding member of ESO, he has left a lasting impact on environmental causes and sustainable practices.

## Board Member

**Mr Omar Al Riyami** holds a Master's degree in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management from the University of Manchester, UK, and a Bachelor's degree in Marine Science and Fisheries from Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. With over 16 years of experience in Environmental Management and Sustainability, he has worked with leading organizations in Oman, including Petroleum Development Oman, OQ8, OQ, and the Environment Society of Oman. Omar currently serves as the Head of Sustainability at OQ Gas Networks, where he leads the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into the company's operations and drives sustainability performance. Mr Al Riyami has represented Oman internationally and made significant contributions to Oman's environmental and sustainability efforts. He participated in developing the Oman Environmental Strategy issued in 2022 and two years earlier, successfully oversaw the development of the 'Environment and Natural Resources' priority for the 10th Development Plan under the Oman Vision 2040 framework. He is currently leading the same priority for the 11th Development Plan, ensuring alignment with national sustainability objectives.



Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Nicholai Georgiou



# ESO Staff



Masirah Field Team



1. Suaad Al Harthi  
Executive Director

2. Bashaar Zaitoon  
Administrative Manager

3. Maïa Sarrouf Willson  
Research and Conservation Manager

4. Said Al Jabri  
Public Relations Officer

5. Ghaniya Al Mawali  
Communication and Fundraising  
Manager

6. Jawaher Al Ghafri  
Education Coordinator

7. Atika Ahmed  
Accountant

8. Rabab Al Lawati  
Conservation Outreach  
Coordinator

9. Ahmed Al Zadjali  
Membership and Media  
Coordinator

10. Fathiya Al Kindi  
Community Engagement and  
Advocacy Manager

11. Mai Abumughli  
Communication and Events  
Coordinator

12. Juma Al Araimi  
Masirah Field  
Coordinator

Masirah Field Team

1. Taher Al Farsi  
Field Assistant

2. Rashad Al Farsi  
Field Assistant

3. Salim Al Farsi  
Field Assistant



Gecko (*Sphaerodactylidae*), Ahmed Al Washahi



# Marine Conservation

## Turtle Research and Conservation Programme

The global importance of Oman to the survival of sea turtles has been definitively established through research conducted within the Sultanate from 1970s. Since 2008, ESO, in collaboration with the **Environment Authority (EA)** and senior international scientists, has played a lead research role in accelerating our knowledge and understanding of turtle biology, ecology and conservation needs, raising the international profile of Oman's turtles.

Masirah Island is one of the largest nesting rookeries for loggerhead turtles in the world. ESO research confirms that this population has suffered a **79% decline** since the late 1970s. The major threats that impact both habitat and population numbers are land-use disturbances, such as extensive coastal development, light pollution, and beach driving; and sea-based disturbances such as turtles being unintentionally caught in fishing nets (bycatch).

## Field Surveys and Data Analysis

For the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, ESO conducted monitoring surveys of nesting loggerheads on Masirah Island, supported by a five-year funding plan from the **US Fish and Wildlife Service – Marine Turtle Conservation Fund**. Though this project focuses on loggerheads, our field assistants additionally monitor green turtles from May to November, and hawksbill and olive ridley turtles from January to July.

The new team recruited and trained in 2022 continued to conduct annual surveys according to well-established protocols, with the core goal of completing track count surveys and nesting success data collection in support of long-term trend assessments. These surveys were held on both index beaches (high density nesting) and secondary or island-wide beaches to understand the distribution of nesting females. Additionally, stranding surveys of both cetaceans and turtles were conducted across the island. During field surveys, the team rescued 11 lost nesting females, likely as a result of light pollution, nine turtles trapped on rocks or flipped over by waves, and numerous hatchlings entangled in fishing nets.

Analysis of 2023 nesting data showed a continuous decline in the mean nesting density of loggerhead turtles when compared to published nesting density estimates generated from data collected between 2008 and 2016. This represents the third lowest documented mean for successful nesting since 2008. A 20% shift in nesting density from the north of the island to the south is also noted. This ongoing decline raises significant conservation concerns, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced conservation and management efforts to mitigate threats and ensure the long-term survival of the species.

The ESO team continues to support the field work on hatching success implemented by **Future Seas Global SPC**, in collaboration with the **EA** and **Ocean Ecology Network**.



Loggerhead sea turtle, (*Caretta caretta*), Taher Al Farsi

## Light Pollution Mitigation and Advocacy

Maximising the recruitment of loggerhead turtles (new individuals added to a population either by birth or maturation) has been identified as one of the most important conservation activities for addressing the loggerhead turtle population decline on Masirah. The Lighting Solutions Project was launched to address reduced turtle nesting on beaches due to the disturbance of adults and disorientation of hatchlings caused by artificial light sources from public infrastructure and private buildings.

The project was initiated in 2021 by identifying the most serious light pollution areas and initiating dialogue with authorities on the Island. Following a project assessment and community engagement phase, 12 houses and two mosques were retrofitted with turtle-friendly lighting in 2023 and 2024. ESO is now exploring the possibility of additional lighting changes at commercial and government properties, such as the Masirah Island Resort and Masirah Fishermen's Village.



**What are turtle friendly lights?** Turtle friendly lights minimise light pollution using shielded, warm amber coloured, low-intensity bulbs with a narrow spectral output. Lighting fixtures should also be directed away from beaches, avoid bright reflective surfaces, and be controlled by timers or motion sensors to prevent disorientation of nesting turtles and hatchlings. Coastal setbacks or buffer areas where certain developments are either prohibited or restricted from the Mean Sea Water Level (MSWL) are recommended for planning purposes.

## Advocacy

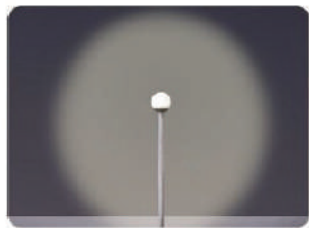
Working closely with the **Environment Authority** and the **Wali's office on Masirah**, ESO and its collaborators have been highlighting conservation concerns and working with the community to develop solutions. In 2024, advocacy meetings were held with the **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources** in both Muscat and Masirah to discuss lighting pollution and a management plan for fishermen, followed by a site visit to the Masirah Fishermen's Village to assess the situation and discuss mitigation options. Light-pollution focused workshops were also held on the Island in February and October 2024.

ESO's continued advocacy has ensured certain streetlights close to nesting beaches on Masirah Island are switched off after 10 pm during the loggerhead nesting season. This is the second year that this decision has been implemented, and it should be celebrated as a conservation success. Additionally, turtle friendly lighting options are being considered in other municipal areas. To support the local government, guidelines detailing lighting design, technical requirements, and regulations have been developed for the area by **Pendoley Environmental** and **Future Seas Global SPC**.

We would like to thank the **Wali of Masirah, Masirah Municipality, Environment Authority, Ocean Ecology Network, US Fish and Wildlife Service**, and **Future Seas Global SPC** for supporting turtle threat mitigation on Masirah.



Unshielded



Partially shielded



Fully shielded

**©Commonwealth of Australia, 2019**

National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds, Commonwealth of Australia 2019. For licence conditions see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. No changes to the original figures have been made



## Abandoned Fishing Net Threats and Collection

Entanglement in derelict fishing nets is an overarching threat to all marine species, and, is observed regularly along Oman's beaches, turtles are not exempt. Numerous cases of female turtles digging nests with missing front or rear flippers, from injuries sustained by net entanglement have been observed by the ESO field team, showing their resilience to recover from a missing limb. Injuries, however, reduce a turtle's lifespan, making it harder to escape future entanglement incidents and more vulnerable to predation. While ESO has observed these incidents on Masirah's beaches, no research was done to document entanglement impacts at sea.

ESO's work on the collection and recycling of abandoned fishing nets aims to reduce wildlife entanglement on Masirah Island. A 13-day net clean-up campaign took place between January and February 2024, and was implemented in partnership with **Future Seas Global SPC** and in collaboration with the **Environment Authority, be'ah, SUMA EcoVision LLC**, local labourers, **HE Wali of Masirah**, and the **Masirah Municipality**.

In total, 78 kilometres of nesting beaches were cleared of nets, with an estimated 60 tons of abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) collected and transferred to a dumpsite. Other waste collected included plastic baskets, crates, tyres, shoes, camping gear, furniture and electronic appliances. The exercise resulted in cleaner nesting beaches, increased community awareness about the importance of sustainable fishing gear disposal, and a broader understanding of the need for responsible waste management to protect marine environments.

Since 2017, ESO has removed an estimated total of 825 tons of ALDFG from Masirah's nesting beaches and continues to encourage the public to discard waste responsibly to safeguard our native wildlife and preserve the health of Oman's coastal ecosystems.



## Whale and Dolphin Research and Conservation Programme

Oman's waters host 20 different species of whales and dolphins (cetaceans), including four species of great whales. ESO has engaged in cetacean research since 2004, with a particular focus on Oman's genetically isolated sub-population of Arabian Sea humpback whales (ASHW). With fewer than 100 individuals remaining, the population was designated as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of threatened species in 2008. The conservation of this unique population across its regional range is critical to its survival.

ESO remains active as part of the **Arabian Sea Whale Network (ASWN)**, a network of large international NGOs, grass-root environmental organizations and regional academic institutions that collaborate to conserve humpback whales and other cetaceans in the Arabian Sea. An online meeting was held this year to discuss regional collaboration and updates, capacity building requirements and consider progress towards advancing a regional Conservation Management Plan (CMP).



## Conservation Management Plan for the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale (ASHW)

There is a critical need for cross-cutting conservation action to be taken at the government level to address the threats faced by ASHW and other marine mammals in Oman. These threats include: ship collisions, noise pollution, unsustainable tourism and fishing net entanglement. In November 2022, the **Environment Authority (EA)** in collaboration with ESO, hosted a workshop focusing on the development of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the ASHW. The two-day workshop was attended by over 60 participants representing 30 local and international organisations. In 2023 and 2024, ESO continued to engage with the **EA** for their endorsement of the CMP process and its implementation.

## Sperm Whale Stranding

A sperm whale stranded and died off the coast of Sawadi beach and was reported to Oman's stranding network. This was an opportunity for scientists to collect data and samples in support of conservation management. By conducting necropsies of marine mammals significant information can be gathered on the health of the individual, the species and the ocean environment.

The **Environment Authority** were on hand leading the protocols, expert support was received from veterinarians from **Yas SeaWorld Research and Rescue Center** and support provided by the ESO, **Future Seas Global SPC** and **Five Oceans Environmental Services** team members. The **Royal Oman Navy** and **Royal Oman Police** were on site managing the crowds and the removal process, **Al Mussanah Municipality** supported the disposal, and **Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)** are storing the samples and will begin some analysis work. This was an excellent showcase of government authorities, consultants an NGO and international partners all collaborating to support data collection and appropriate disposal.





## Coral Reef Monitoring Initiative

Coral reefs are crucial in supporting biodiversity, protecting shorelines, and coastal communities. These ecosystems are threatened globally by climate change impacts including increasing ocean temperatures and ocean acidification, which are further compounded by human induced threats. The coral reefs of the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Sea are known for their unique biodiversity and the extreme environmental conditions they endure. The regional trend shows an estimated loss of 40% of live coral between 1996 and 2019 as a result of repeated bleaching events. This year marked the fourth global mass bleaching event since 1998 considered to be the second bleaching event to occur over the past decade.

To support conservation management, ESO launched a pilot coral reef monitoring initiative to gain a better understanding of the status and resilience of coral reefs surrounding Muscat. Through support of volunteers and in-kind supporters, four sites were established (including two within the Ad-Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve). We thank the **Environment Authority, Oman Sail – SeaOman, Extra Divers, Five Oceans Environmental Services, The Lighthouse Consultancy** and **New York University – Abu Dhabi** for supporting this initiative.



# Terrestrial Conservation

## Raptor Research and Conservation Programme

Sitting at the top of the food chain, raptors such as eagles, falcons, vultures, hawks, and owls are key indicators of the overall health of ecosystems. These birds of prey provide many ecosystem services, for example, some species eat millions of insects, which, if left unchecked, could threaten agriculture. Others consume animal carcasses, helping to prevent the spread of disease. Over the last few decades, human activities have contributed to the fragmentation and destruction of raptor habitats. In addition, the intensification of agriculture; electrocution and collision with power infrastructure; shooting, poisoning, and trapping; and reduced breeding success due to pesticides and other contaminants, are threatening raptors, leading to reduced population levels, and limited geographic ranges.

### Vulture Field Surveys

ESO continues its research efforts on two globally endangered vultures found in Oman: the Egyptian and the Lappet-faced vultures.

In 2012, field surveys on Masirah Island for nesting Egyptian vultures (EV) (*Neophron percnopterus*) revealed fifty-three nesting territories were found, one of the highest breeding densities in the world. 85% of those breeding territories were in the northern half of the island, where the main municipal dump was located. In 2024, ESO secured sponsorship from **Renaissance Services** to repeat those surveys and compare the breeding behaviour of this species over the past 12 years, in collaboration with **Dr Ivaylo Angelov**, Expert Raptor Ornithologist and **International Avian Research**.

A total of 70 EV territories were surveyed over 18 field days in February and June 2024, 58 of which were occupied. The breeding success of 41 pairs was monitored and 18 fledged chicks were recorded. Compared to 2012, the overall population seems to be stable, despite the closure of the main dumpsite on the island in 2015. Additionally, the team observed a significantly higher share of successful pairs occurring in the southern part of the island, and recorded high incidence of trios. These results are set to be published in the near future (Angelov et al. *in prep*) and we thank the **Environment Authority** for providing permits for the surveys.

No project funding was secured to complete Lappet-faced vulture (LFV) (*Torgos tracheliotos*) field surveys in 2024. However, ESO received external observer information concerning seven nests across four Governorates. Despite missing out on field surveys, efforts shifted to data analysis and management. Throughout the year, the team developed a LFV nest identification catalogue, reporting on over 40 active nests across eight Governorates of Oman in a user-friendly, easily viewable format. Additionally, a camera trap behaviour log was filled out for footage collected between 2021 and 2023 on LFVs and EVs. A total of 8,805 photos and 2,806 videos from eight LFV nests and 15,530 photos and 1,809 videos from three EV nests were viewed and categorised based on behaviour and life stages. This initiative marks the first step towards gaining further insight into vulture behaviour from camera trap footage and its potential analysis.



Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Ivaylo Angelov



Two data sharing agreements were signed with the **Zoological Society of London** in 2023 and 2024 for Master's students to combine the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to analyse field data from Oman. The aim of the programme is to enable students to develop their skills using tools for nature conservation, and to deepen their knowledge about the species. The first student's review (analysing the status and distribution of nesting LFVs) produced 36 distinct occupied breeding territories for LFV (conservative estimate), suggesting Oman may support a healthy breeding population of LFVs. The second review (analysing the dispersal patterns and behaviour of juvenile LFVs) concluded that dispersal strategies of juveniles remain similar for the first six-months of age, and are likely driven by developmental changes, whereas they become highly variable in the following six-months.

## Frankincense Research and Conservation Programme

Frankincense, also known as luban, plays an integral part in the Omani heritage and culture and has been a key source of income for local communities for centuries. *Boswellia sacra*, the species of frankincense native to Oman, Yemen and Northern Somalia, holds a Near Threatened status on the IUCN Red List and only occurs in the Dhofar Governorate within the Sultanate.

## Population Assessment of Frankincense Trees in Oman

Due to the concerns that *Boswellia sacra* populations may be experiencing undocumented pressures, a 2022 assessment funded by the **British Embassy's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** in Oman revealed that while *Boswellia* face a range of pressures, the trees continue to be widely distributed in Dhofar, and many populations continue to regenerate at different rates across various sites. The results of this assessment are currently in review to be published as a scientific paper (Johnson et al. *in review*).

The next phase of research was secured from **Shell Development Oman LLC** in 2023, aiming to i) continue monitoring frankincense populations across key sites, ii) raise awareness and advocate for conservation and iii) build local capacity for tree and habitat management. This project was successfully delivered in collaboration with **Environment Authority (EA), Wageningen University/Sustainable Forests, FairSource Botanicals LLC**, and **Mendel University in Brno**.

In February this year, the team, including three rangers from **EA**, spent 20 days in Dhofar, conducting drone mapping, and recording and evaluating population structure, level of regeneration, and presence and levels of threats such as grazing, resin harvesting, and insects. 43 drone flights were held in important growth areas, previously identified in 2022/2023. The data was then used to construct digital elevation models and photo orthomosaics, which can be used to determine tree density in each location and the distribution of individuals depending on slope. Six detailed transects were also conducted, to expand the set of data on population structure and regeneration collected in 2022.

Nine tree cores were collected as a trial to utilize tree rings in determining the age of trees. Few samples yielded good measurements, and there is a need to collect a higher number of tree disks to effectively analyse the annual growth and age of frankincense trees. All surveys were done under permits from the **Environment Authority**, the **National Survey Authority**, and the **Civil Aviation Authority**.

A data sharing agreement was signed with the **University of Wageningen** in 2022 to model the species distribution of *Boswellia sacra* in Oman and Yemen using Maxent. Maxent is a software used to perform Species Distribution Modelling (SDM) and gain knowledge about possible distributions, and their changes in the future. The 2024 results will be incorporated with historical field data to generate a more accurate population assessment.



Gull-billed tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*), Sooraj Jayaraj



# Community Engagement and Education

## Marine Turtle Research and Conservation Engagement Nationwide Public Awareness Campaign

To raise public awareness about marine turtles in Oman, ESO delivered a six-month, nationwide public awareness campaign from November 2023 to May 2024. Through the campaign, ESO engaged with 2,907 students, from 1st to 12th grade, across 83 public schools in four governorates (Muscat, South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar) and 13 wilayats. Through interactive sessions and awareness materials, students learned about the four marine turtle species nesting in Oman, their life cycle, reproduction, nesting season, conservation status, the threats they face, and how to support marine turtle conservation. Engagement efforts also targeted **Omani Women's Associations** in five wilayats, **Wali** offices in 10 wilayats, as well as representatives from the **Environment Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, Ministry of Education, local municipalities, fishermen and heads of communities**.



## Light Pollution Community Engagement

Light pollution poses a major threat to nesting turtles and hatchlings. Marine turtles use the brightest point on the horizon, typically illuminated by the moon, to locate the ocean. Consequently, artificial lighting sources often disorient turtles, causing them to wander in-land towards houses and streetlights, rather than to the sea. This exposes turtles to threats such as predation, entanglement, dehydration, and trampling by cars, amongst other threats, ultimately contributing to turtle deaths and population decline. Community engagement and awareness raising is a key part of mitigating this threat. Over the past four years, and with sponsorship from the

**Marine Turtle Conservation Fund** of the **US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)**, ESO, together with the **Environment Authority, Future Seas Global SPC** and **Ocean Ecology Network**, has engaged with communities to raise awareness on the issue.

Property owners of houses on key nesting turtle beaches were encouraged to adopt better lighting practices and fittings, to benefit the livelihoods of both people and sea turtles on the island. In 2024, six houses were retrofitted with turtle-friendly lighting fixtures, bringing the total to 12 houses and two mosques since 2023. The success of this initiative has resulted in a growing interest from other home-owners within the community, presenting an opportunity for further engagement and changes.

To recognise the efforts made and inspire continued action, a community workshop on light pollution was held on Masirah in February 2024. A technical workshop for key stakeholders and local community members was followed by a broader presentation for all project collaborators. The workshop was attended by the Honourable Dr Amor Al Mataani, ESO's President and Chairman of the Board, Sheikh Abdulhameed Al Abri, Deputy Wali of Masirah, and local authority representatives. We would like to thank the **Environment Authority and Masirah Sports and Cultural Hall** for supporting this initiative.

In October 2024, a lighting demonstration was conducted to show the effect of artificial lighting on sea turtle hatchling orientation. The event included a hatchling lighting arena experiment, in which hatchlings were released from the centre of a four-meter circle drawn in the sand. Observations focused on whether the hatchlings moved toward the ocean or inland light sources. Of the 30 hatchlings released, 25 moved inland towards the light, while five remained stationary. Notably, none of the hatchlings navigated towards the ocean, their natural course of action, indicating disorientation. The event also featured presentations on the outcomes of the light pollution, and the hatching success project led by **Future Seas Global SPC and Ocean Ecology Network**. The hatching success project determines the successful incubation of nests and emergence of hatchlings, following rigorous scientific protocols.

Ongoing discussions with **Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN)** aim to integrate a turtle-friendly and sustainable tourism approach into their upcoming refurbishment plans for the **Masirah Island Resort Hotel**. The team handed the hotel several turtle friendly light bulbs (true amber) which have been refurbished on some of the room balconies and other external lights.

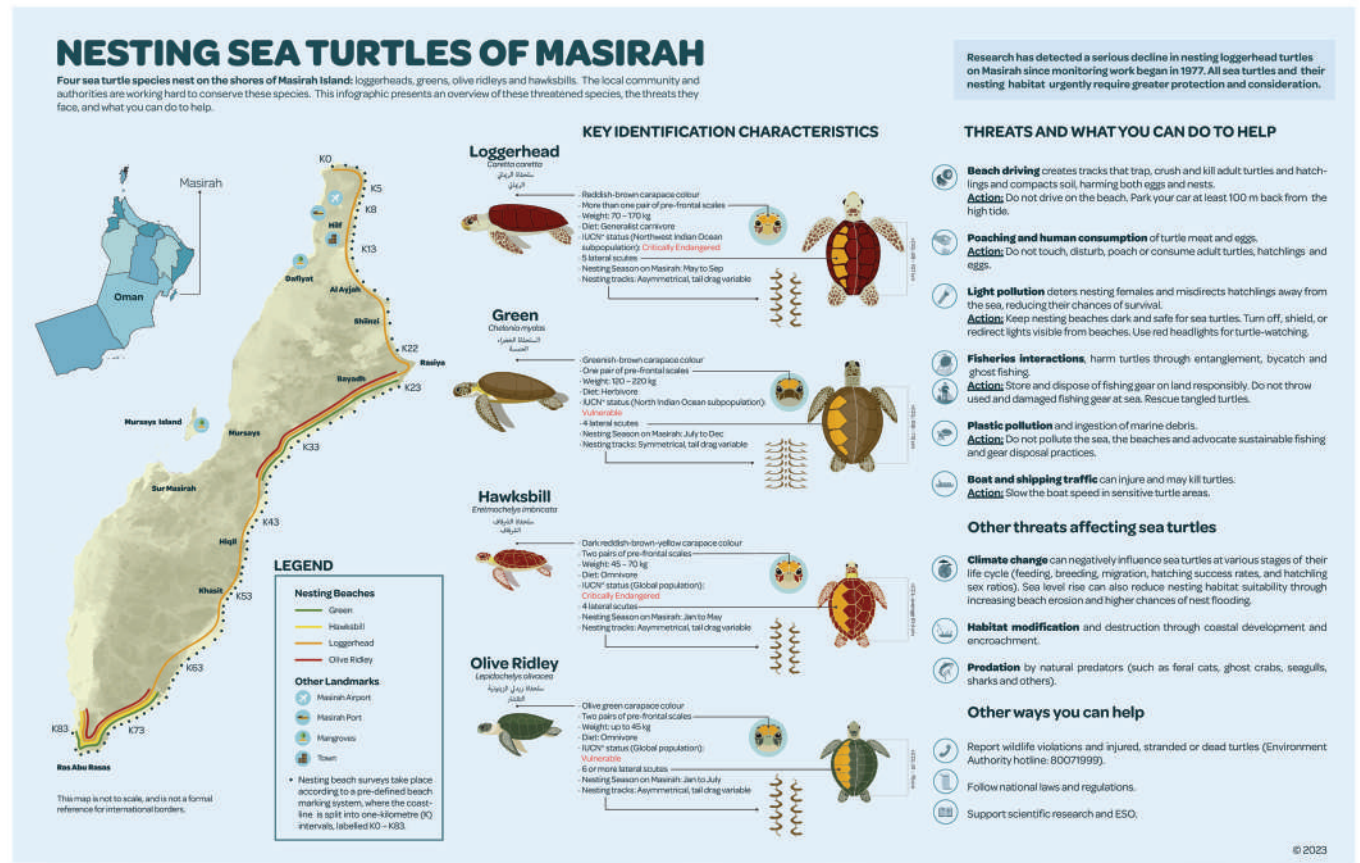




Science Communication and Awareness Material

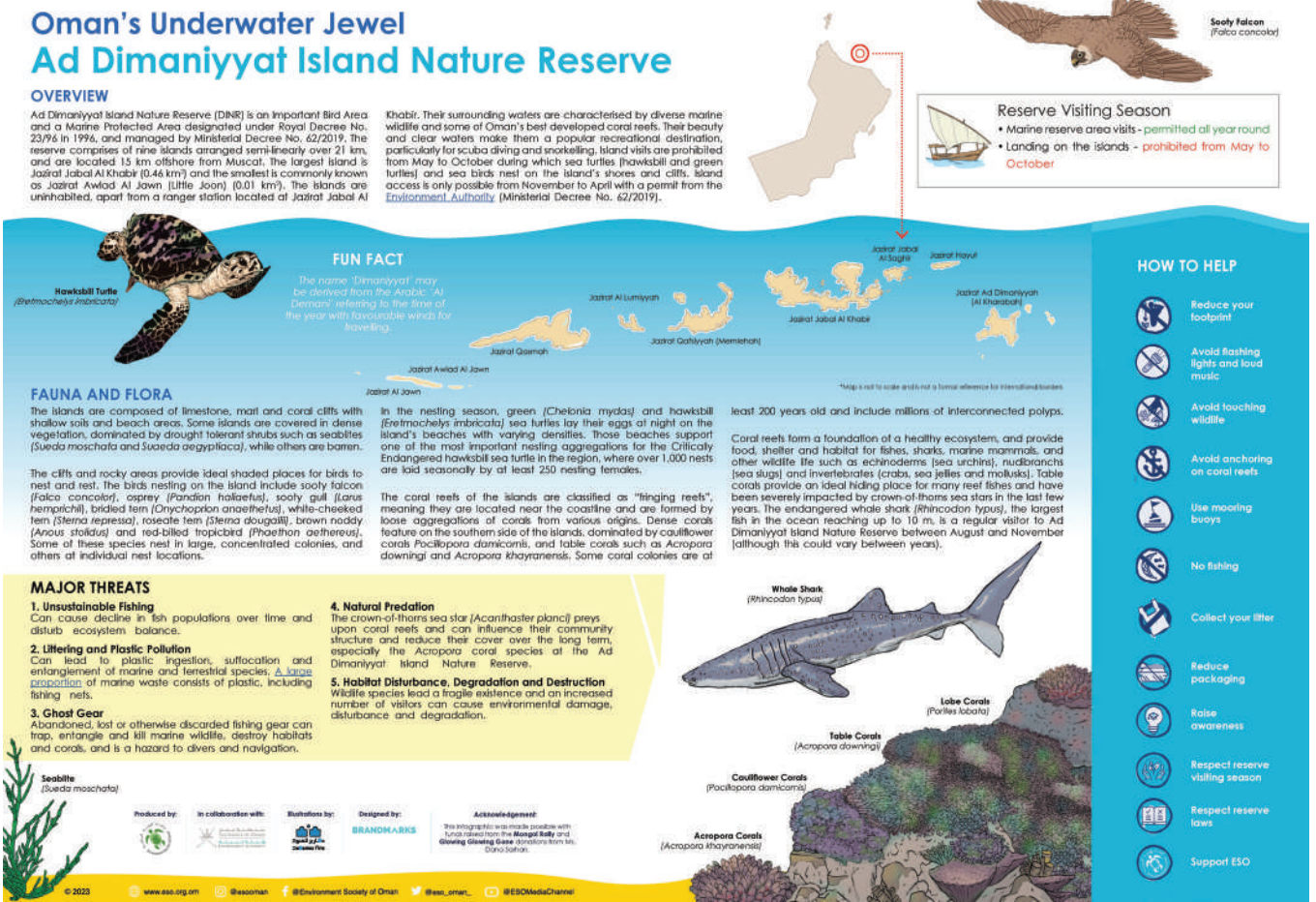
To enhance knowledge and understanding of marine turtles and their habitats, and to complement community engagement efforts, ESO produced three awareness materials targeting the general public. These resources, available on ESO's website, include the 'Nesting Sea Turtles of Masirah' infographic (Arabic and English), the 'Sea Turtles of Oman Children's Activity Booklet' (Arabic and English), and the dual-language 'Nesting Sea Turtles of Oman' booklet.

To raise awareness on Oman's sea turtles and to launch the Sea Turtles of Oman activity booklets, ESO organized a turtle awareness campaign in schools. The campaign successfully reached 2111 students across 52 schools, in 11 wilayats across three governorates (Muscat, Al Batinah and Al Sharqiyah). The primary target was students from Grades 4 to 6, however, presentations were occasionally extended to students in grades 3, 7, 8, and 9 based on class availability. These engaging awareness sessions introduced students to the different types of sea turtles found in Oman, their life cycles, the threats they face, and ways to mitigate these threats. The presentations were followed by interactive trivia sessions where students were awarded with the activity booklet to further reinforce their understanding and awareness.



Awareness Raising for Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve

The Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve (DINR) is a Marine Protected Area comprised of nine islands arranged semi-linearly over 21 kilometres that are located 15 kilometres off Muscat's shore. The islands and their surrounding waters are characterised by diverse terrestrial and marine wildlife, and some of Oman's best developed coral reefs. In 2023, ESO visited the wilayats of Bousher, Al Seeb, Barka and Al Mussanah, engaging with over 1,400 individuals from **Wali offices, Omani Women's Associations**, government schools, universities, and fishermen. Through presentations on the DINR and its rich biodiversity, discussions were held on the threats the islands face, and how local communities can participate in their conservation. In 2024, ESO engaged with ten Environment Authority DINR rangers, and 285 additional school and university students. The presentations were accompanied by the distribution of awareness materials, including an infographic on the DINR and a biodiversity booklet compiling 120 species of marine and terrestrial species found within the reserve. A total of 2,600 copies of the awareness materials were distributed in 2024 to government stakeholders, schools and the local communities. The campaign was delivered in collaboration with the **Environment Authority**, and supported by the **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Interior, Port of Barka, Port of Al Seeb, Al Mussanah Municipality** and the **National Survey Authority**. The initiative was made possible with funds raised from the **Mongol Rally** and **Glowing Gone** donations from **Ms Dana Sarhan**.





## Raptor Research and Conservation Engagement

Although no dedicated public engagement efforts were delivered in 2024, capacity-building initiatives were integrated into Egyptian vulture surveys on Masirah Island. In February and June 2024, ESO field assistants were able to participate in vulture monitoring activities that focused on identifying territories, assessing occupancy, and gaining introductory insights into vulture behaviour. ESO continues to receive valuable information from local community members regarding Lappet-faced vulture nesting locations in Al Hajar mountains area.



## Frankincense Research and Conservation Engagement

In February 2024, ESO delivered a frankincense (*Boswellia sacra*) capacity building workshop in Salalah, Dhofar, in collaboration with the **Environment Authority**. The workshop aimed to detail the frankincense research efforts to date and share key scientific and technical knowledge to support local capacity building. Presentations offered both a global and local overview of frankincense characteristics, distribution and threats, along with insights into effective management strategies. The workshop also introduced the use of biotechnology and Geographic Information System (GIS) for monitoring frankincense, highlighting their application in the survey methodology followed in recent surveys in Dhofar. Live-translated talks were delivered by expert speakers Professor Frans Bongers (previously Professor of Forest Ecology and Management at Wageningen University), Dr Petr Vahalik (expert in implementation of GIS/Remote Sensing/Unmanned Aerial Vehicle in management of natural resources at Mendel University in Brno), and Stephen Johnson, (ecologist and director of FairSource Botanicals LLC).

In June 2024, ESO engaged with the **Environment Authority** and **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources** in Muscat to present an update on the status of data analysis, and to discuss the national assessment of *Boswellia sacra* under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. These collaborative efforts reflect a shared commitment to advancing research and advocating for the sustainable use of natural resources.

In February 2024, Stephen Johnson delivered a lecture to ESO members titled "Conservation of *Boswellia sacra* in Oman: Balancing Nature, Culture, and Development for the Luban Tree". The lecture presented an overview of ESO's

frankincense research efforts, from mapping the species' distribution to assessing pressures and their impact on population dynamics.

In May 2024, ESO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **Amouage**, aimed at the preservation of frankincense, and the development of Wadi Dawkah as a Center of Excellence for Frankincense.



## The Environmental Sustainability Conference

The Environmental Sustainability Conference, held in February, was honored by the patronage of HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tariq Al Said and organized by the **Environment Authority** in collaboration with the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**. During the event, the ESO team showcased their initiatives in the exhibition section, and Suaad Al Harthi, ESO Executive Director, led a side event focusing on Nature-Based Solutions and Climate Change. The panelists, representing various backgrounds, shared insights and experiences from ecosystem restoration projects in Oman, Malaysia, India, and Egypt.



## 2024 Sustainability Fair

ESO served as honorary environmental supporters at the 2024 Oman Sustainability Fair, hosted by the **Oman American Business Council (OABC)**. Held in February at the W Muscat, the event showcased a wide array of sustainability initiatives developed by students from various private schools in Oman. ESO board member Dr Ali Akaak, ESO board member participated on the judging panel, evaluating the innovative student projects. This event provided an excellent platform for engaging with other organizations that share our commitment to environmental protection and sustainability. We extend our gratitude to the **OABC** for inviting us to participate in this impactful event.



## Oman Sustainability Week

ESO was proud to be an official supporter of Oman Sustainability Week, which took place in April. ESO's work, mission and activities were exhibited and the team delivered two presentations covering topics such as the Namat Competition and addressing Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss. Our upcoming collaboration with **Bank Nizwa** for a new educational competition, Wa'ai was also announced, and we would like to extend our appreciation to the team from **CONNECT Events** for promoting sustainability in Oman.



## Plastic Free July Campaign and World Cleanup Day

As part of our continued commitment to environmental education and encouraging sustainable practices, we proudly launched this year's Plastic Awareness Campaign, made possible with the valued support of **Renaissance Services SAOG**. The campaign opened with an impactful talk by Mr Raghav Dandapani, "Rethinking Plastic: Unveiling the Dual Nature of Plastic and the Urgency of Comprehensive Waste Management", followed by social media outreach to amplify awareness across Oman.

In Dhofar, ESO organized interactive booths in two popular malls, offering easy steps for reducing plastic use. The campaign included a community clean-up at Dahariz Beach in Salalah, fostering collective action to protect marine life and maintain clean coastlines. To celebrate World Cleanup Day 2024, ESO partnered with **Oman Sail** for a final beach clean-up at Mussanah Beach where over 60 participants came together and collected an estimated 500kgs of litter. Throughout this campaign, over 360 people were engaged and empowered to adopt sustainable behaviours regarding single-use plastic. We extend our special thanks to all the dedicated volunteers and valuable sponsors whose contributions were instrumental in making this initiative a success.



## Oman Climate Dialogues

In May 2023, ESO launched the Oman Climate Dialogues, a groundbreaking collaborative initiative with **ASYAD Group** aimed at addressing urgent environmental issues and deepening the Omani public's understanding of the climate crisis. Spanning a year and concluding in August 2024, this series featured seven impactful talks, workshops, and panel discussions, bringing together environmental advocates, industry experts, and over 350 participants to explore sustainable solutions and Oman's journey to carbon neutrality by 2050. The events underscored the pressing need for environmental adaptation and transformative actions across individual, organizational, and national levels. The first workshop titled Green Jobs and the Youth Perspective implemented in partnership with **Muscat University** and the **EU Delegation** highlighted the role of green jobs in advancing carbon capture, developing sustainability skills, and fostering a climate-conscious workforce. The second workshop titled Exploring Sustainable Finance was implemented in partnership with Sohar International and explored how financial institutions can champion green projects despite regulatory challenges, aligning with Oman's Vision 2040. This year,



the final two workshops focused on empowering youth and driving financial innovation for sustainability. The 2024 workshops featured renowned speakers from local, regional, and international platforms, engaging a diverse audience and facilitating meaningful dialogue. Participation increased by 133% compared to 2023, largely driven by dynamic youth engagement, emphasizing the growing influence of the Oman Climate Dialogues. Looking ahead, ESO is excited to expand the scope of the next edition of the Oman Climate Dialogues, aiming to address broader topics and deepen its impact on the community.



World Environment Day

World Environment Day, celebrated annually on June 5, raises environmental awareness and inspires global action. We were proud to see many organizations in Oman share in this celebration and delighted to be invited to an insightful talk by Sayyida Dr Jihad Al Busaidi at **Alizz Islamic Bank**, discussing air pollution and its effect on climate change. We also thank **PDO** for including ESO in their dedicated exhibition on June 25-26, where we showcased our efforts and environmental contributions to the PDO staff.



International Day for Biological Diversity

International Day for Biological Diversity, celebrated on May 22, raises awareness about the vital role of biodiversity in sustaining life on earth. It highlights the importance of preserving diverse ecosystems, species, and genetic resources, and encourages global action to protect and sustainably manage our planet’s natural wealth. ESO was invited to celebrate at an exhibition organized by one of our key partners, **Nama Water Services**, which brought together key contributors to Oman’s biodiversity. We are thankful for Nama Water’s efforts in organizing this exhibition and recognizing the significance of this day for Oman.

Oman Tree Day

On Oman Tree Day, ESO joined an event organized by the **Omani Women’s Association** Seeb at the Childcare Centre in Al Koudh. ESO led an engaging educational activity focused on Omani trees, introducing children to their unique characteristics while fostering team building, problem-solving, and communication skills through puzzles, scavenger hunts, and other exciting challenges.



Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax* sp.), Sooraj Jayaraj



# Education Activities

Oman's youth are our most important environmental campaigners for a sustainable future. ESO delivers a range of nation-wide educational initiatives that target schools, colleges and universities, aiming to raise environmental awareness and promote the adoption of more sustainable behaviors.

## Namat Schools Competition 2023-2024

The Namat Schools Competition was designed for government schools from grades five to twelve and is a collaborative effort between students, teachers, parents and the local community. Students are challenged to make tangible changes within their school environment and local community to minimize their ecological footprint. Now in its fourth year, the Namat Competition 2023-2024 was sponsored by **Veolia Oman** and implemented in close collaboration with the **Ministry of Education**.

A total of 164 registrations were received from across all 11 governorates, 11 schools were short-listed and visited by a judging panel consisting of ESO and Veolia Oman. ESO was proud to see the six winning teams (representing four governorates) present their projects at the award ceremony on October 31 under the patronage of HE Dr Madiha Al Shaibaniya, Minister of Education.



The Namat Competition continues to serve as a beacon of hope for schools throughout Oman and their surrounding communities. Participants channel their voices, skills, and ideas towards influencing positive changes within their schools and local areas. This movement is dedicated to nurturing change makers, recognizing the urgent need to protect our fragile environment and lead a sustainable lifestyle. We congratulate the winning schools and look forward to the fifth round of the Namat Competition next year.



### 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Al-Azhar bin Muhammad Al-Azkawi School - Al Dakhiliyah

Key achievements:

- **Collecting greywater** (from rainwater, water cooler filters, air conditioning units, and sinks) to irrigate plants in the school garden.
- Utilizing **water pressure** to generate electricity to power lights, fans, and educational screens.
- Using a **machine to shred garden waste**, generating income for the school and recycling paper and plastic waste through partnerships with specialized recycling companies.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Jimah School - Al Dakhiliyah

Key achievements:

- **Purifying greywater** with bio-rock technology to irrigate the school nursery.
- Harnessing **solar energy** to power the agricultural greenhouse and wind energy to operate fans in the school assembly area.
- Recycling school waste, with an emphasis on reducing waste, especially single-use plastic.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Umm Dharr Al-Ghaffari School - Al Buraimi

Key achievements:

- Establishing a clear **internal policy on environment and sustainability**.
- Launching various **initiatives to reduce waste** inside and outside the school.
- Organizing an **Energy-Saving Home Competition**, which encouraged households to reduce their electricity consumption and explore renewable energy sources.

3 supplementary awards were recognized as follows:

### Namat Sustainability Award: Al-Amal School for the Deaf - Muscat

Key achievements:

- Producing **organic compost**: A special lab was set up for anaerobic fermentation of food waste, and an outdoor space was equipped for composting.
- **Recycling wastewater** at the school using solar energy.
- Creating **Al-Amal Newspaper**: Aiming to raise awareness among the school community and the wider public. A website was also designed to meet community needs in sustainability, selling items like solar lamps, organic pesticides, fertilizers, and various seedlings.



### Namat Award for Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Jameel Bin Khamis Al-Saadi School - North Al Batinah

Key achievements:

- Establishing a student-run company for **fish farming** using solar energy, conducting a feasibility study on breeding and marketing tilapia fish.
- Producing **organic fertilizers** from fish and pond waste (both liquid and dried fish fertilizers), testing, and marketing them.
- **Improving irrigation efficiency** by replacing traditional systems with modern irrigation pipes.



### Namat Award for Community Partnership: Wadi Bani Omar Basic Education School - North Al Batinah Governorate

Key achievements:

- Establishing a **Green Club** to use recycled and traditional materials, connecting the past, present, and future, and targeting the school and local community. **Solar panels** were used to power equipment.
- Utilizing **greywater** at the school and fixing leaks regularly, reducing the daily water supply from 3,000 to 1,500 gallons. This knowledge was transferred to the community and implemented in many homes.
- Continuing the **"Ideal Energy-Saving Home" competition**, with 50 homes participating.
- Leveraging existing community models and collaborating with **local volunteers** on activities such as planting seedlings, using greywater, blacksmithing workshops, and recycling.





## Young Explorer 2024

ESO, in partnership with **Oman LNG**, successfully launched the Young Explorer Summer Programme to inspire environmental responsibility amongst youth. This initiative engaged children aged 6-11 in learning about sustainability through a week-long workshop held in Sur. With 30 participants, the programme covered critical topics such as climate change, biodiversity, conservation, plastic pollution, and waste reduction.

Using interactive activities to simplify complex environmental concepts, the programme combined storytelling, art and hands-on projects to enhance creativity, teamwork and critical thinking. Highlights included an environmental "passport" given to each child to track their progress, with new stamps earned each day. The journey concluded with a closing ceremony, where children received their final stamps and eco-friendly gifts.



Through this initiative, ESO and **Oman LNG** aim to foster a generation committed to environmental stewardship. By exposing children to pressing environmental challenges, the programme seeks to instil a lasting sense of responsibility, ensuring a more sustainable future for Oman.



## Wa'ai Competition 2024

The Wa'ai Competition, organized by ESO in partnership with **Bank Nizwa**, is an online environmental competition for Omani youth aged 18-25. The competition invited participants to create impactful and visually engaging content addressing Oman's environmental challenges, with awards recognizing creativity and potential for meaningful impact.

The competition featured themes of Climate Change and Plastic Pollution, with entries spanning three categories: short videos, reusable merchandise designs, and infographics. Participants submitted projects over two months, and a panel of judges selected finalists, with winners determined through a 24-hour public vote on ESO's Instagram. Cash prizes were awarded to the top three entries in each category. The reusable merchandise design category was eliminated due to lack of qualifying submissions. Winners presented their work at an awards event hosted at Bank Nizwa.

The Wa'ai Competition winners included:



Infographic Category:



Alameen bin Mamoon  
bin Salem Al Amiri



Rahat Shakeel



Suha Mansoor Saif  
Al Harrasi



Short Film Category:



Nasser bin Hamed  
bin Nasser Al Amri



"We Deserve  
to Live"



"Filter Zula"





# Capacity Building

## Capacity Building Programme

In 2010, due to a lack of Omanis in the field of environment within the country, it was agreed by the ESO Board that a central part of ESO's mandate would be to hire and train Omani graduates in conservation, community engagement and NGO management, giving them an opportunity to pursue a career with ESO or take on environmental roles in the public or private sector.

ESO has successfully trained 18 young Omanis, some of whom are still with ESO and some who have gone on to work in both the public or private sector, spreading their knowledge and experience. Many of these graduates are very active members and volunteers of ESO and continue to be environmental ambassadors for Oman.

In 2024, the Capacity Building Programme was sponsored by **Veolia Oman**, with four Omanis being supported through the programme. Although graduates are trained in a specific area of NGO management, each are given exposure to the following areas:

- ESO Manage – NGO Management and Fundraising
- ESO Protect – Research and Conservation
- ESO Advocate – Education and Community Outreach

### Rabab Al Lawati



Rabab Al Lawati holds a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Wildlife and Conservation Biology, from La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She joined ESO as Conservation Outreach Coordinator in February 2021 and has since supported the organisation's field work, data management, reporting and engagement with stakeholders and local communities. In 2024, Rabab played a key role in developing science communication materials, building databases for research programmes, particularly the vulture research projects, and coordinating research and conservation projects to ensure their successful delivery. She represented ESO at various national, regional and international events, including the IUCN West Asia Regional Conservation Forum in Saudi Arabia, the CMS Working Group on South West Asia for Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in Saudi Arabia, and the Immersed in Change High-Level Event in Costa Rica. Rabab

remains committed to advancing conservation efforts through research, effective communication and collaboration.

### Jawaher Al Ghafri



Jawaher Al Ghafri, a graduate of Sur College of Applied Sciences with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies, joined ESO as Education Coordinator in 2016. Jawaher now leads ESO's educational programmes, targeting students from schools, colleges, and universities across Oman. In 2019, Jawaher launched the *Namat Competition*, now recognized as Oman's largest sustainability initiative for government schools. Now in its fifth year, the competition has reached over 600 schools nationwide, encouraging students to implement sustainability practices in waste, water, and energy management while fostering community engagement, creativity, and entrepreneurial skills. It's continued success has garnered enduring support from Veolia and the Ministry of Education. Expanding ESO's educational impact in 2024, Jawaher introduced the *Green Campus Initiative*, a competition focused on higher education institutions, and

developed a condensed summer course for children, delivering foundational environmental and sustainability education through engaging activities. Her commitment to advancing environmental education extends to international platforms. In 2024, Jawaher participated in initiatives with UNICEF and attended the 12th World Environmental Education Congress in Abu Dhabi, gaining insights from global educational practices to inspire and empower Oman's youth.

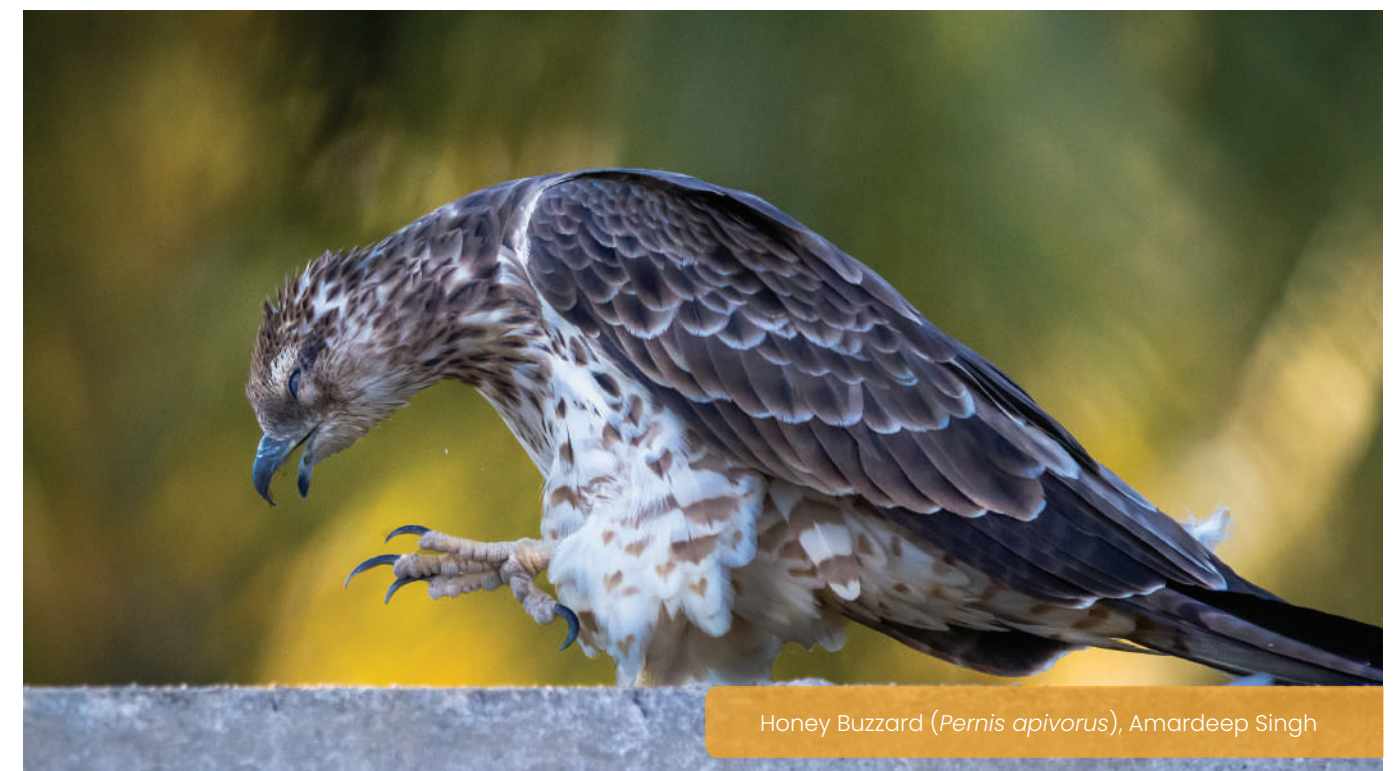
### Juhaina Al Ghafri

Juhaina Al Ghafri holds a Bachelor's degree in Bioscience from La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. After volunteering with ESO in 2020, Juhaina officially joined the organization as Communication and Membership Coordinator in February 2021. Juhaina quickly took the lead, managing member engagement and activities while also serving as project manager for the Oman Climate Dialogues in collaboration with ASYAD Group. Her responsibilities extended to driving ESO's communication initiatives, where she spearheaded social media efforts, significantly enhancing the organization's outreach and impact. Juhaina also completed the cetacean survey capacity-building training organized by ESO, contributing to the development of Omani expertise in research and conservation. Juhaina's work with ESO continued until the end of the first quarter of 2024, leaving a lasting legacy in strengthening our community engagement and conservation initiatives. We wish Juhaina all the success in her future endeavors.



### Ahmed Al Zadjali

Ahmed Al Zadjali holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing from Sultan Qaboos University. With a strong foundation built through multiple internships in communication, events, and marketing, along with a genuine passion for charitable work, Ahmed joined ESO in the second half of 2024 as the Communication and Membership Coordinator. Driven by a clear motivation to enhance ESO's communication efforts, particularly on social media, he also oversees ESO's membership activities and events. Ahmed has undergone on-the-job training to deepen his environmental knowledge and gain valuable insights from the team. This ensures that ESO's communication efforts are not only impactful but also resonate meaningfully with external audiences. Since his appointment, Ahmed has successfully increased ESO's social media engagement through compelling and impactful content. He played a leading role in the Plastic Free July campaign, both online and in Dhofar, effectively extending ESO's messaging to the public. Additionally, he has spearheaded the social media efforts for several key ESO initiatives, including the Oman Climate Dialogues, the Namat Competition, and the Green Campus launch.



Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), Amardeep Singh



Volunteer of the Year Award

Reema Makki

Reema’s work has been showcased in key events like *Cup for Care* and the *Oman Climate Dialogues*. She played a significant role in crafting ESO’s communication materials, including topic selection for the second edition of the Oman Climate Dialogues, writing newsletters, drafting the Annual Report, and preparing press releases. Her efforts have greatly supported the team in managing their workload and ensuring the timely and effective delivery of key projects. Thank you for your contributions!



Coral Reef Monitoring Initiative Volunteers

We thank **Abdulnasser Al Sinani, Antonia Vegh, Elayne Looker, Jenan Al Asfoor, Juma Al Hamadani, Michele Pedrelli, Nasser Al Ruzeiqi, Oliver Taylor, Sarah Vier, Sulaiman Al Majaini and Zakariya Al Hasani** as a collective group for supporting the coral reef monitoring initiative. Understanding the natural and human-induced threats currently being faced by coral reefs they collectively came together to support contributing to a better understanding of the health of Oman’s coral reefs. Thank you all for your efforts!



Internships

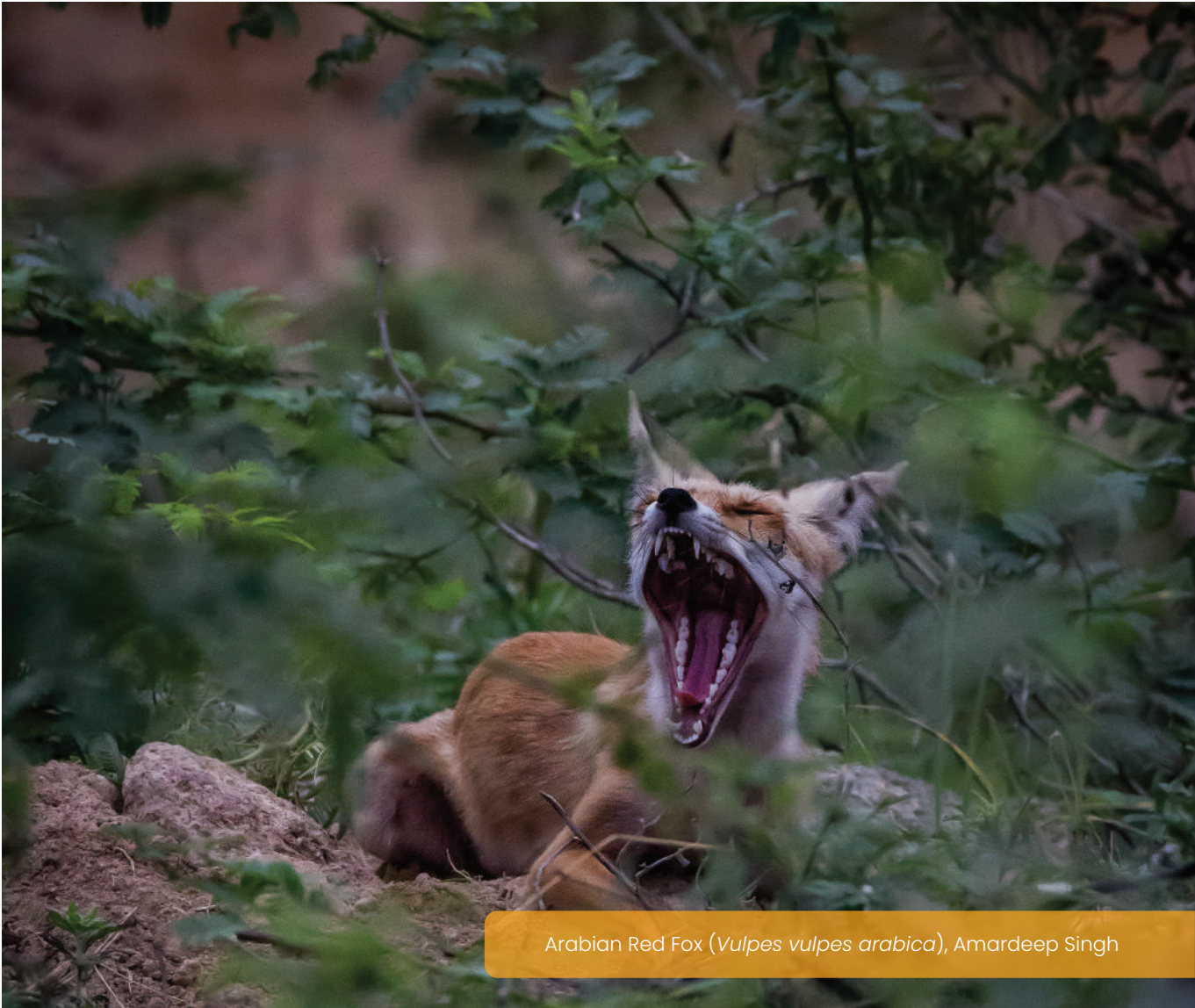


Fatma Al Farsi and Sara Zaitoon

Fatma Al Farsi (BSc in Environmental Management and Practice – ongoing, Global College of Engineering and Technology), and Sara Zaitoon (undergraduate student) completed an internship at ESO, supporting the Research and Conservation team on the Frankincense Research and Conservation Programme, and other administrative tasks.

Reema Makki

Reema Makki, who holds a Bachelor’s degree in Media and Communications from the University of Leicester, joined ESO in August. Since then, she has been an integral part of the Communication Team, contributing to various areas such as design, content creation, on-site event support, and photography.



Arabian Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes arabica*), Amardeep Singh



# Other Activities And Fundraisers

## ESO Art

In February, ESO hosted an inspiring art event at the **Crowne Plaza Muscat** in collaboration with local and international artists celebrating the role of art in supporting environmental conservation. With 21 artists generously pledging 50% of their artwork sales to further ESO's mission, the event brought together art enthusiasts and conservation supporters alike, amplifying ESO's message through creative expression. ESO extends special gratitude to **Anna Dudchenko** for her exceptional leadership and coordination, as well as to all the artists and buyers whose contributions made the event a memorable success.



## Cup for Care: Charity Breakfast

In November, ESO hosted its first charity breakfast event at Salam Square Hall, uniting 30 influential women to champion environmental stewardship. The gathering aimed to deepen participants' understanding of ESO's mission, inspire collaboration, and secure vital support for our initiatives. The event featured an inspiring welcome from Rumaitha Al Busaidi, ESO's Board Vice President, an impactful presentation by our Executive Director, Suaad Al Harthi, showcasing ESO's journey and aspirations, and an engaging feedback session to align efforts with shared goals. Our heartfelt thanks to the participants, donors, and in-kind partners—**Mosaic Events, Mani's Go, and Salam Properties**—whose support made this milestone event a success.



## International Schools & Universities

ESO actively engages with international schools, conducting sessions to foster environmental awareness and engagement with students. Notable participants this year included **ABA International School, Cheltenham Muscat, The American International School of Muscat, and British School Muscat**. In a wonderful display of support, these educational institutions organized donation drives to contribute to ESO's mission.



Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*), Nicholai Georgiou



# Awards, Grants, Donations and In-Kind Support

## Awards

### National Geographic Society Wayfinder Award

Joining the global National Geographic Explorer Community, we are proud to announce that ESO's Executive Director, Suaad Al Harthi, received the [National Geographic Society's 2024 Wayfinder Award](#) presented by Kia. Wayfinder Award recipients are individuals who have proven themselves to be the next generation of influential leaders, communicators and innovators whose critical work inspires us to learn about, care for, and protect the wonder of our world. Suaad presented a talk during the National Geographic Explorers Festival in Washington, DC showcasing the unique Arabian Sea humpback whales as flagships for broader conservation initiatives carried out by ESO; highlighting their isolation, low population size, threats they face and the need for conservation advocacy.



### Outstanding Environmental Impact Award



ESO was honored to participate in the inaugural edition of the Oman CSR Summit & Awards held at the Sheraton Oman Hotel. This event brought together NGOs advocating for humanitarian, social, and environmental causes, alongside corporates showcasing their ESG initiatives and community contributions. Receiving the **Outstanding Environmental Impact Award** was a proud moment, recognizing ESO's 20 years of dedicated efforts in conserving endangered species and inspiring communities across Oman. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to **United Media Services** for this esteemed recognition and for organizing a platform that highlights and unites the nation's most impactful initiatives.



Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Nicholai Georgiou



## Donations, Contributions and In-Kind Support

ESO would like to give special thanks to all those who have helped us achieve our goals in 2024. Our donors, sponsors, grant agencies and individual supporters who have supported us are listed below in alphabetical order

- **ABA International School** for donations
- **ABA International School, Barka Wild Animals Breeding Center, Modern College of Business and Science, Muscat University, PDO EcOman Centre, and Sohar International** for hosting our 2024 membership events.
- **Ahmed Alwashahi, Amardeep Singh, Ivaylo Angelov, Nicholai Georgiou, Oman in Focus, Paul Flandinette, Sooraj Jayaraj, Taher Al Farsi and Yaqoob Al Rashdi** for allowing us to use their imagery on ESO's platforms and materials
- **Ajit Khimji Group LLC** for contributing office space for ESO
- **Ali Al Rasbi** for his contributions to the Research & Conservation Department
- **Anantara Al Baleed Resort Salalah** for guest donations
- **Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort** for guest donations
- **Anna Dudchenko** for supporting the launch of ESO Art
- **ASYAD Group** for funding the Oman Climate Dialogue Series
- **Aya Bingradi** for her generous bake sale donations
- **Bank Dhofar** for supporting donations to ESO via their mobile banking app
- **Bank Nizwa** for sponsoring the Wa'ai Educational Competition
- **be'ah, Climate Fresk Oman, EU Delegation, Oman Sail, OQ, Perfect Reflection, Reef Check Oman, and Salam Space** for contributing to our 2024 membership events
- **Brandmarks** for offering design and animation work beyond their agreed scope
- **British School Muscat** for donations
- **Capitano Sea Tours** for providing sea tour vouchers for ESO team building and membership engagement activities
- **Cheltenham School Muscat** for donations
- **Crowne Plaza** for donations towards ESO Art 2024
- **Dentons Muscat** for providing legal advice
- **Ella Rajda** for her kind donation towards the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale Project
- **Europcar** for donating vehicles to support our field work
- **Hud Hud Travel** for guest donations
- **International Avian Research** for supporting the Raptors Research & Conservation Programme
- **Kempinski Hotel Muscat** for hosting the Green Campus project launch
- **Mani's Go, Mosaic Events, Salam Properties** for supporting the ESO Charity Breakfast
- **Masirah Municipality** for supporting the Turtle Research & Conservation Programme
- **Mendel University** for supporting the Frankincense Research and Conservation Programme
- **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources** for supporting our conservation projects
- **Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Interior** for supporting the delivery of the Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve community engagement campaign
- **National Finance Company** for sponsoring the Green Campus Initiative
- **National Geographic Society** for awarding the 2024 Wayfinder Award to Suaad Al Harthi
- **Nicholai Georgiou** for donations through his artwork sales
- **Ocean Ecology Network** for supporting the Turtle Research and Conservation Programme
- **Oman Arab Bank** for supporting donations to ESO via their mobile banking app
- **Oman Hockey Association** for their kind donation
- **Oman LNG** for sponsoring the **Young Explorers Initiative**
- **Oman National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science** for joining our judging panel for the Namat Schools Competition
- **Oman Sail** for collaborating with ESO on World Cleanup Day
- **Oman Sail – Sea Oman, Extra Divers, Five Oceans Environmental Services, The Lighthouse Consultancy, New York University – Abu Dhabi** for supporting ESO Coral Reef Monitoring Initiative
- **Omantel** for supporting donations to ESO from their customers via app and SMS services
- **PDO Recreational Club** for their kind donation
- **Pendoley Environmental** for supporting the Turtle Research and Conservation Programme lighting solutions initiatives
- **Renaissance Services SAOG** for sponsoring the Plastic Free July and World Cleanup Day Community Engagement Projects

- **Shell Development Oman LLC** for funding the Frankincense Research and Conservation Programme
- **Talabat** for enabling customer donations to ESO via their food delivery app
- **The Chedi Muscat** for guest donations
- **The Conscious Travel Foundation** for their generous donation
- **The International School of Muscat** for donations
- **TMDone** for enabling customer donations to ESO via their food delivery app
- **TRACCS Oman** for media and public relations support throughout the year
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service – Marine Turtle Conservation Fund** for funding the Turtle Research and Conservation Programme
- **Veolia Oman** for sponsoring the ESO Capacity Building Programme and the Namat Schools Competition
- **Waterfront & Marina Services SAOC** for free berthing of the ESO boat
- **White Wall** for providing us with interactive screens during the Oman Sustainability Week 2024

## Tourism Donation Programme

### Oman's Visitors Giving Back

While tourism can exert significant pressure on the environment, it also holds the potential for positive change. Collaborating with hotels and tour operators, we present Oman's tourists with the opportunity to actively contribute to our conservation efforts. By doing so, they can play a vital role in safeguarding our endangered wildlife and preserving our precious natural heritage, giving back to Oman and its environment.

### Where do donations go?

Donations play a crucial role in providing the essential funds required to administer our conservation projects, dedicated to safeguarding Oman's endangered biodiversity. These initiatives focus on the Arabian Sea humpback whale, loggerhead turtles, Egyptian and Lappet-faced vultures, and the preservation of frankincense trees. With your generous contributions, ESO can actively protect these imperilled species and equip future generations to do the same.

We hope to inspire more hotels and tour operators to join this program, and we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the following establishments for offering their guests the opportunity to contribute to ESO's mission.

**THE CHEDI**  
MUSCAT, OMAN

  
**ANANTARA**  
AL JABAL AL AKHDAR  
RESORT

  
**PANORAMA**  
TRAVEL

أبـلا الجبل الأخضر . عُـمان  
**JABAL AKHDAR . OMAN**

  
منتجع البليـد - صلالة  
**AL BALEED RESORT**  
**SALALAH**  
BY ANANTARA

  
**Hud Hud Travels**



# Local and International Highlights

## CMS Working Group on the South-West Asia Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)** organised a meeting in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Working Group on the South-West Asia Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds. The meeting provided an opportunity for working group members and representatives of Range States to discuss the implementation of the current CMS mandates and initiatives to tackle the illegal hunting and trade of migratory



birds in the region. Discussions were held on the next steps for officially launching the new CMS Task Force, including its draft Terms of Reference. Revisions were made to the latest version of the action plan and next steps were discussed for the CMS COP 14 held in February 2024 in Uzbekistan. The Environment Society of Oman was represented by Rabab Al Lawati.

## World Environmental Education Congress

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

The 12th World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) took place in Abu Dhabi bringing together global participants to explore advancements in environmental and sustainability education. Centered on the theme "Connecting People, Creating Tomorrow," the event addressed ten key topics, including climate change, biodiversity, sustainable practices, and the role of artificial intelligence in education. The congress featured plenary sessions, parallel discussions, youth conferences, field trips, and workshops. Discussions explored diverse topics, such as on-campus composting, greywater recycling, cultural heritage conservation, and leveraging AI for environmental awareness. The event concluded with a summary of challenges, dimensions, and goals for environmental education, setting the stage for the next WEEC in Perth, Australia.

## Immersed in Change

San José, Costa Rica

In June, the **Government of Costa Rica** hosted the "Immersed in Change" High-Level Event on Ocean Action in San José, Costa Rica, with the attendance of 1,500 delegates from over 40 countries. The event convened as a preparatory meeting for the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) in 2025, and resulted in the *Peace for the Ocean Declaration* signed by over two dozen countries, demonstrating a commitment to expanding transformative ocean actions that support nature-positive economies. The declaration reaffirmed commitments to Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water) and outlined key priorities for the six years remaining under the Ocean Decade and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Priorities included accelerating climate action, ratifying and implementing the Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), advancing the global plastics treaty, and strengthening the ocean science-policy interface. The event emphasized partnerships and financial mobilization to ensure continued progress toward a healthy, restored ocean. ESO would like to express its gratitude to the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** for fully funding ESO's participation in this significant event, allowing the Society to gain valuable insights and actively engage in the global efforts towards ocean action and restoration. The Environment Society of Oman was represented by Rabab Al Lawati.



## IUCN West Asia Regional Conservation Forum

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the **National Centre for Wildlife**, hosted IUCN's 10th Regional Conservation Forum for West Asia in Riyadh. The event theme was *West Asia Conservation Actions for a Sustainable Future*, and it brought together IUCN members, including governments, NGOs, and local communities to address regional environmental challenges and align their efforts with global environmental goals. Discussions spanned a wide range of critical topics, such as water, energy, and food security, empowering local communities, enhancing climate resilience, addressing land degradation and desertification, financing nature, enhancing area-based conservation, and IUCN governance and policies. The forum also marked a pivotal step in shaping strategies for the upcoming World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi in October 2025. The Environment Society of Oman was represented by Rabab Al Lawati.

## Earthwatch Europe Science Camp

Oxford, United Kingdom

The **Earthwatch Europe** Science Camp offers early-career environmental researchers with a dynamic five-day programme in Oxford, United Kingdom, designed to highlight the pivotal role of community engagement in environmental research. Participants, including ESO's Conservation & Outreach Coordinator, Rabab Al Lawati, explored the significance of science communication, citizen science and nature connection, learning practical strategies for applying these principles. The camp offered expert-led sessions on key environmental challenges, exploring themes such as planetary boundaries, the Economic Doughnut framework, environmental inequity, and innovative approaches to citizen-led data collection. Through this experience, researchers are equipped with the tools to collaborate with communities and drive meaningful environmental solutions. ESO extends its appreciation to Earthwatch Europe for funding and supporting the Society's participation.





# Status and Trends of Arabian Gulf Coral Reefs: Data Integration and Analysis

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Hosted by **NYU-AD**, this second regional reef monitoring workshop gathered representatives from institutions representing the ROPME Sea Area (Arabian Gulf, Sea of Oman, Arabian Sea) to exchange knowledge and information on the status of coral reefs. The workshop focused on the broader International Coral Reef Initiative and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, discussing how data collected from the region has contributed to the 2020 Global Report and will contribute to the upcoming 2025 Global Report. Regional presentations from participants showcased insights and challenges faced, along with streamlining data collection and analysis for the region.



## UNCCD COP16

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16)** took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from December 8 to 13, 2024. Representing the Environment Society of Oman (ESO), Ghaniya Al Maawali joined the Omani delegation, thanks to an invitation from the **Environment Authority**. The delegation participated in key ministerial dialogues on drought resilience, financing, and migration. The conference spotlighted combating desertification, land degradation, and advancing sustainable agriculture while reducing carbon emissions. Panels showcased innovations in communicating sustainability, leveraging technology, and community engagement. Highlights included Saudi Arabia's use of the date industry for food production and manufacturing, UNEP and IUCN's global initiatives on desertification, and Saudi Arabia's bold strides towards net-zero emissions and sustainable urban planning.

# Conferences, Lectures and Workshops

ESO is represented by volunteers, staff and board members at national, regional, and international conferences and workshops. Below is a list of those attended in 2024:

- Birdlife International Regional Partnership Meeting, BirdLife International – Middle East Office; Online
- Building Capacity for Biodiversity Finance: Tutorial for Concept Note and Proposal Development, American University of Beirut and ESCWA; Online
- Climate Finance and Climate Change Adaptation for Agriculture and Water Sectors, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Salalah
- Conservation Trainers Network Webinar, WildTeam UK; Online
- Earth Hour 2025 Network Calls, Earth Hour; Online
- Earthwatch UK Science Camp, Earthwatch Europe; Oxford
- 10th Educational Forum in the GCC; Keeping it Real: Content, Connections and Critical Thinking, National Geographic Learning; Muscat
- Fifth Duqm Forum, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Muscat
- 11th Five-Year Development Plan – Environment and Natural Resources Priority Group, Ministry of Economy; Muscat
- Dubai Future Forum, Dubai Future Foundation; Dubai
- Global Framework for Biodiversity and the Control of Invasive Alien Species Workshop, Environment Authority; Salalah
- Guidance for the Restoration, Creation, and Management of Saltmarshes and Tidal Flats, Wetlands International; Online
- Immersed in Change, Government of Costa Rica; San Jose
- The Importance of Protecting and Preserving the Environment, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS); Salalah
- IUCN Resolution 123 Citizen's Assembly, International Union for the Conservation of Nature; Bangkok
- IUCN West Asia Regional Conservation Forum 2024, IUCN West Asia; Riyadh
- National Geographic Explorers Festival, National Geographic Society; Washington DC
- Oman American Business Association Sustainability Fair, Oman American Business Association (OABC); Muscat
- Oman Conference for Sustainability and Decarbonization, Environment Authority; Muscat
- Oman Sustainability Week, Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Petroleum Development Oman; Muscat
- Our Sustainable Energy Workshop, Authority for Public Services Regulation: Muscat
- Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Cities Conference, Society of Engineers (OSE); Salalah
- Status and Trends of Arabian Gulf Coral Reef, New York University Abu Dhabi; Abu Dhabi
- Strengthening Monitoring of Migratory Waterbirds and KBAs in Africa, Birdlife International; Online
- Understanding the State of the Coastal Wetlands of the Arabian Peninsula, BirdLife International – Middle East Office; Online
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16)
- Working Group on SW Asia Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory birds, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); Riyadh
- 12th World Environmental Education Congress; World Environmental Education Congress Network; Abu Dhabi



Pharaoh Eagle-Owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*), Ahmed Alwashahi



Public Talks and Membership Events

February	<p><b>Public Talk:</b> “Conservation of <i>Boswellia sacra</i> in Oman: Balancing Nature, Culture, and Development for the Luban Tree” by Stephen Johnson</p> <p><b>Membership Event:</b> Qantab Beach Cleanup, delivered by ESO &amp; Salam Space</p>
April	<p><b>Public Talk:</b> “Exploring Energy Transition: Essence, Competitiveness, Human Skills” by Dr. Khalil Hanashi</p> <p><b>Public Talk:</b> “The Heart of Arabia: A 28-day journey on foot and by camel across Arabia on the trail of British explorer Harry St John Philby” by Mark Evans</p>
May	<p><b>Public Talk:</b> “Man and Land in Musandam: The Role of Local Communities in Plant Conservation” by Saif Al Hatmi</p> <p><b>Membership Event:</b> Second Oman Climate Dialogues Workshop: “Green Jobs &amp; The Youth Perspective”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speakers: Karan Khimji, Mohammed Ambusaidi, Raquel Noboa and Prof. Mahmoud Al Wahibi.</li><li>• Panel Discussion: “How to unlock the power of youth by upskilling? The Role of Education” delivered by Aleksandra Minik, Romain Boitard, and Dr Abdulrahman Baboraik, with facilitation by Nashwa Al Rawahi</li></ul>
June	<p><b>Public Talk:</b> “Oman’s Blue World: Marine Importance, Coastal Diversity and the Underwater World” by Jenan Al Asfoor</p>
July	<p><b>Public Talk:</b> “Rethinking Plastic: Unveiling the Dual Nature of Plastic and the Urgency of Comprehensive Waste Management” by Raghav Dandapani</p>
August	<p><b>Membership Event:</b> Dhahariz Beach Cleanup: Part of the Free Plastic July Campaign in Dhofar, delivered by ESO &amp; Renaissance</p>
September	<p><b>Workshop:</b> “Biodiversity Collage” by Aisha Al Balushi</p> <p><b>Membership Event:</b> World Clean-up Day – Al Mussanah Public Beach, delivered by Renaissance Services and Oman Sail</p> <p><b>Membership Event:</b> Third Oman Climate Dialogues Workshop: “Exploring Sustainable Finance &amp; Investment”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speakers: Hanifa Ymer, Mohsin Al Jabri and Fatma Al Shekaili</li><li>• Panel Discussion: “Exploring Sustainable Finance &amp; Investment” delivered by Khalid Al Ghammari and Ahmed Al Mukhaini with facilitation by Khalid Al Huraibi</li></ul>
November	<p><b>Public Talk:</b> “Sustainable Facility Management for the presentation” by Moosa Al Hadhrami from Perfect Reflection</p>
December	<p><b>Membership Activity:</b> Dolphin watching and coastal sea tour, hosted by <b>Capitano Oman</b></p>

Corporate Membership

ESO is grateful for the support of all our Corporate Members

- Ajit Khimji Group of Companies
  - Alizz Islamic Bank
  - Amouage
  - Bank Muscat
  - Bank Nizwa
  - Barka Desalination Company
  - Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang (CMS)
  - Dentons Muscat
  - Europcar Oman
  - EY Oman
  - Nama Water Services
  - National Finance Company
  - National Trading Company
  - OCTAL Holding SAOC
- Oman Cables Industry SAOC
  - Oman Sail
  - Omantel
  - Omran Group
  - Oman Oil Marketing Company
  - OQ
  - OQ8
  - Perfect Reflections
  - Port of Duqm
  - STRABAG Oman LLC
  - Sustainable City – Yiti
  - TotalEnergies Renewables Development Middle East (Oman)

Our Corporate Membership serves as a valuable gateway to fostering connections and collaborations with our partners. We are committed to continuously enhancing and adding value and privileges to this membership. Alongside the recognition received as corporate members, other benefits include providing specific guidelines to promote sustainable office practices, organizing eco-friendly events, and facilitating corporate clean-up initiatives. We also encourage joint campaigns to support environmental causes and look forward to launching more initiatives that strengthen this collaboration.





## International Collaborations

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies   | 19. Megaptera Marine Conservation  |
| 2. African Aquatic Mammal Network   | 20. Mendel University in Brno  |
| 3. Arabian Sea Whale Network  | 21. National Geographic Society  |
| 4. American University of Beirut  | 22. New York University Abu Dhabi  |
| 5. BirdLife International – Middle East Regional Office                                   | 23. Ocean Ecology Network  |
| 6. Clear Blue Photo   | 24. Ornithological Society of the Middle East                              |
| 7. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Abu Dhabi Office) | 25. Pendoley Environmental   |
| 8. Earthwatch Europe  | 26. Sustainable Forests  |
| 9. European Union   | 27. United Nations Environment Programme – West Asia                       |
| 10. Fair Source Botanicals LLC  | 28. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) |
| 11. Fundación Cethus  | 29. University of Nizwa  |
| 12. International Avian Research  | 30. University of Exeter, Centre for Ecology and Conservation              |
| 13. International Union for the Conservation of Nature – Regional Office for West Asia    | 31. Wild Me  |
| 14. International Whaling Commission  | 32. Wildbook   |
| 15. IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group   | 33. Wildlife Conservation Society  |
| 16. IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group   | 34. World Shipping Council   |
| 17. Key Conservation  | 35. WWF – Earth Hour   |
| 18. Let's Do It World – World Clean-up Day  | 36. Yas SeaWorld Research and Rescue Center                                |



Mediterranean Chameleon (*Chamaeleo Chamaeleo*), Nasser Al Kindi

## Membership Benefits

We are thrilled to announce that all our 2023 partners have continued their collaboration with us in 2024, reaffirming their commitment to supporting our initiatives. This year, we've strengthened partnerships across diverse sectors, including beauty, veterinary care, hotels and resorts, activities and entertainment, car rentals, restaurants, and cafés, to offer our members an array of exclusive discounts and benefits. Our goal remains to enhance and expand these privileges, ensuring our members enjoy even greater value and experiences through their membership.

### Beauty

#### Ayana Spa

Oman's first organic, green spa, inspired by nature, using only premium organic products that are safe for the body and the environment. Members can select from a choice of luxurious treatments from around the world to rejuvenate and beautify.

2nd Floor Al Sarooj Plaza, Muscat  
Telephone: 2469 3435  
email: [info@ayanaspa.com](mailto:info@ayanaspa.com)  
website: [www.ayanaspa.com](http://www.ayanaspa.com)



#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% on facial services, hair services and massage services
- 10% - 20% on body waxing packages, massage and spa treatment packages and manicure & pedicure package
- Discount is applicable Sunday -Thursday on services above RO 16

#### Me Time Ladies Salon

Me Time Salon is a project by Bint Al Jabry Trading. Located in Al Khuwair with experienced staff, services include all beauty treatments from hair styling to spa treatments. Offer extends to members +1. A member who comes in with a partner can enjoy the discounts in Me Time Ladies Salon or Me Time Men's Salon

Booking Tel:  
Naji (Hair Stylist) 95238483  
Mimi (Beauty Expert) 94061217

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% off any hair and facial services
- 20% off products
- 20 RO for 1 hour body massage
- 10 RO for 1 hour back and shoulders
- 10 RO for manicure & pedicure



#### Me Time Men's Salon

Me Time Salon is a project by Bint Al Jabry Trading. The salon is located in Al knuwair with experienced staff. Offer extends to members +1. A member who comes in with a partner can enjoy the discounts in Me Time Ladies Salon or Me Time Men's Salon

Booking Tel: Iheb Kahloun (Hair Stylist) 79094423

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% off any hair treatments and style
- 10% off 1 hour head & Shoulders massage
- 10% on face waxing
- 15 RO only for hair protein and straightener





## Veterinary

### Capital Veterinary Centre

Capital Veterinary Centre LLC "CVC" provides the highest level of veterinary care available in Oman. Services include; early-age neutering, ophthalmic surgery, orthopedic surgery, dental and scaling and other dental procedures, x-rays, precaution vaccinations along with treatments of various illnesses and diseases. Additional services include pet grooming services accommodating pets whilst their owners are travelling. For more information visit [www.vetoman.com](http://www.vetoman.com).

Telephone: +968 24577551

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- On purchase of one eligible grooming service receive the second service of equal or lower value free.
- On purchase of one day boarding service, receive the second boarding day free.
- On purchase of one doctor consultation receive the second consultation free.
- 15% off dental and scaling under sedation, dog spay or castration (neutering) operation, DHPPL vaccine for dogs and Tricat vaccine for cats
- 20% off rabies vaccine for cats and dogs
- 25% off for stray animals for any service
- 30% off microchip for cats and dogs



### Al Qurum Veterinary Clinic

Al Qurum Veterinary Clinic, where your pets get the best Pet-erinary care in Oman. Located in Madinat Sultan Qaboos or Azaiba.

Website: [www.muscatvets.com](http://www.muscatvets.com)

Email: [info@muscatvets.com](mailto:info@muscatvets.com)

MSQ Hospital 2460 7735

Azaiba Clinic 2412 1173

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% discount on vaccinations, routine consultations and neutering
- Discount valid in both branches (Al Azaiba and MSQ)



## Hotels & Resorts

### Sama Properties

Sama Heights (Jabel Al Akhdar), Sama Al Wasil (Ibra, Al Shariqiyah), Sama Ras Al Jinz, Sama Heritage



#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 15% discount on room rate which are on half board. This offer cannot be combined with any other promotions. Reservation must be made prior to arrival and a confirmation voucher along with membership card must be presented upon check in. Any extras will be an additional charge.

### Turtle Beach Resort

A traditional Omani-style resort operating for more than 20 years, located in Ras Al Hadd area (world-famous breeding ground for the green turtles). Turtle Beach Resort is a semi-island resort surrounded by sea.

For Reservation: [info@tbroman.com](mailto:info@tbroman.com)

Mobile: +968 99007709

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 15% discount on room rate which are half board
- Discount cannot be combined with any other promotions
- Reservations must be done prior to arrival



## Activities and Entertainment

### Wave Summit

Break your routine by joining our kayaking trips and enjoying spectacular views of Oman from a different angle

Contact Person: Bassam Al Jabri

Mobile: +96897471484

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 20% discount for ESO members up to 5 times per person on any of 2 hours program
- Offer is not valid in full day trips
- Offer valid during weekdays only, from Sunday to Thursday



### EuropCar

Is one of the world's leading and largest mobility services provider representing an extensive network in 140 countries. Ajit Khimji Group holds the franchise of Europcar in Oman since 1972. Being part of such a big and diverse group gives Europcar an access to all the resources required to successfully operate the car rental & leasing activities in Oman. Europcar is specialized in mobility services and provides a choice of alternatives to outright purchase. These include Short & Long-term rentals, Chauffeur & Transfer services, Flexi-Lease and International Reservations for your travel abroad.

Contact Person: Wassem Ahmed

Mobile: +968 9786 7424

Email: [sales@europcaroman.net](mailto:sales@europcaroman.net)

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 15% off the best available rate displayed on the website



### Salam Space Yoga

Is a beautiful seaside studio that provides experiential knowledge through the use of accessible yogic tools to initiate, shape and sustain your regular yoga practice. We meet you where you are within your Yogic journey and provide customized pathways for you to reach your goals. Whether you are healing from a temporary condition, living with a chronic illness, or preparing the body and mind to become stronger and more resilient, you will be guided towards your goal, and services will be tailored to your individual needs. We are teachers who value daily time spent practicing the methodologies of Yoga, which is why we offer you studio time as an important part of our scheduling. When students utilize it to practice outside of their guided class hours inner peace will abound.

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% off on all classes and events booked in advance

### Restaurants & Cafe's

#### Woodlands

Is a restaurant located in Oman, serving a selection of Indian food that delivers across Ruwi

Contact Person: Bassam Al Jabri

Mobile: +96897471484

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% off on food and soft beverages only (valid for dine-in/takeaway and deliveries)

### 7 Sisters Café

7 Sisters Cafe is cozy and home like environment cafe a true story of seven sisters with a dream of spreading love and great taste through every sip and bite you take. it's the next trend in beverages (Bubble Tea). A unique Tea concept that is dedicated to make Tea a healthier, refreshing and lifestyle drinks. Also, we bring comfort home food to you.

Mobile: +96897471484

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 10% off on any food and beverage





# 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's Patron, HH Sayyid Tarik bin Shabib Al Said, who has always supported the Society and has been instrumental in its success. We also thank the ESO Board 2024-2026 for their voluntary commitment and dedication over this term.

A special thank you to ESO President, the Honourable Dr Amor Al Matani for his strategic vision and guidance.

We must acknowledge the continued support of our Emeriti Board members, HH Sayyida Tania Al Said, Sayyida Lamees Daar and Dr Mehdi Jaffar who continue to support and inspire us.

We thank the Ajit Khimji Group, who have given ESO free office space for many years.

The Environment Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Development continue to be strong supporters of ESO, and we thank them for their guidance and understanding of our work.

None of ESO's work would be possible without the much-needed funding we receive from our corporate members, sponsors, and supporters. We thank all of them and hope that their generosity will continue for years to come.

Anna Dudchenko for curating ESO Art event on behalf of ESO, supporting donations and awareness raising.

ESO Board Members Rumaitha Al Busaidi, Amira Al Yarubi and Nashwa Al Rawahi for hosting and facilitating Cup for Care, ESO's first charity breakfast event. The event was made possible by in-kind support from Mani's Go, Mosaic Events and Salam Properties, and we thank them for being a part of our conservation journey.

We thank Ahmed Alwashahi, Amardeep Singh, Ivaylo Angelov, Nicholai Georgiou, Oman in Focus, Paul Flandinette, Sooraj Jayaraj, Taher Al Farsi and Yaqoob Al Rashdi who have allowed us the use of their beautiful images throughout this report.

We thank all who have provided ESO with space to host our membership events including: ABA International School, Capitano Tours, Barka Wild Animals Breeding Center, Modern College of Business and Science, Muscat University, PDO EcOman Centre, and Sohar International. Europcar who provide staff vehicles for our field work and Waterfront & Marina Services SAOC who provide ESO with free berthing for the ESO boat.

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. We would like to especially thank TRACCS Oman for providing our PR services pro-bono for many years. We appreciated their commitment and sponsorship and were saddened by their closure this year.

We thank Dr Khamis Al Jabri and Oman Sail team for eagerly partnering with us on several initiatives of mutual interest including: Project Earthlings Launch, World Hockey Tournament, World Clean-up Day and the Coral Monitoring Initiative.

We thank every one of our members for attending our events and dedicating their time and energy to supporting the conservation of Oman's environment.

Last but not least, we must also acknowledge the dedication of our staff who are the backbone of the Society and its work.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our vision of conserving Oman's environment and seek continued collaboration and support from all our valued partners and supporters.

## Volunteer Acknowledgements

Volunteers are a very important part of ESO's work, strengthening our organization's ability to deliver our mission to protect Oman's environment and wildlife. In particular, we would like to thank:

**Abdulnasser Al Sinani, Antonia Vegg, Elayne Looker, Jenan Al Asfoor, Juma Al Hamadani, Michele Pedrelli, Nasser Al Ruzeiqi, Oliver Taylor, Sarah Vier, Sulaiman Al Majaini and Zakariya Al Hasani** for supporting the coral reef monitoring initiative

**Abdulmalik bin Mutib Al-Yaqoubi, Abdulwahid Salem Al-Masoudi, Al-Khansa Sami Mohammed Al-Siyabi, Al-Azhar Saif Said Al-Dhuwani, Al-Yaqdhan Musa Mohammed Al-Nabhani, Shahed Nail Abdel Fattah Mufleh, Al-Qasim Al-Tamtami, Eva Al-Masoudiya, Fai Ali Al-Saadiya, Raghad Jamal Ahmed Al-Abriya, Shahd Al-Hashimiya, Sidra Mahmoud Al-Sattof and Shooq Jumaa Khater Al-Mukhinya** for supporting Oman Tree Day

**Dr Ali Akaak** for supporting community engagement initiatives in Dhofar

**Ali Al Rasbi**, for supporting ESO's Research & Conservation Department

**Anna Dudchenko** for supporting the launch of ESO Art

**Hawa Al Shuraiqi and Sulaiman Al Rahbi** for supporting the Namat Competition as a Master of Ceremonies

**Khalid Al Huraibi and Nashwa Al Rawahi** for moderating panel discussions during the Oman Climate Dialogues Workshops

**Nuhaila Al Sulaimani** for supporting environmental education initiatives

**Sayyida Lamees Daar and Olivia Dalziel**, for their dedication and support in the design and production of ESO's 2024 Annual Report

**Reema Makki** for interning and supporting the ESO Communication Team

**Rumaitha Al Busaidi, Nashwa Al Rawahi and Amira Al Yarubi** for their collective effort and support in driving the success of ESO's Charity Breakfast Event: Cup for Care

**Sara Zaitoon** for interning with ESO and supporting the organisation of ESO's photo database

**Sofiya Zobairi** for supporting ESO during the Oman American Business Council Sustainability Fair

We thank all volunteers who have supported ESO clean-up initiatives throughout the year and all volunteers who may not be mentioned and have helped ESO in any way in 2024. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at ESO, please email us on [admin@eso.org.om](mailto:admin@eso.org.om)

Thank you to everyone who supported the efforts of ESO in 2024. Without the support of our sponsors, members and volunteers none of the work we deliver would be possible



Smooth Cornetfish (*Fistularia commersonii*), Paul Flandinette





# Annual Report 2024

