



ISSUE Q2 | APRIL - JUNE

NEWSLETTER 2023

Environment Society of Oman
www.eso.org.om

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Hamed Al Gheilani



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

A summary of our Q2 highlights across research, conservation, education and community engagement.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Chasing Oman's Endangered Vulture Population



MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Highlights from our membership programme and details of how to get involved!



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS



World Ocean Day

On the occasion of World Ocean's Day, ESO joined forces with **Oman Sail** and the Environment Authority to conduct an underwater clean up at the Dimaniyat Islands to remove abandoned fishing nets entangled in the coral. It is estimated that up to 1 million tons of fishing equipment is abandoned in the oceans each year, killing up to 650,000 marine species. The volunteer team removed approximately 200 kgs of nets during the clean-up. A video of our efforts is available ESO's YouTube channel ([ESOMediaChannel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQmMediaChannel)).



Marine Turtle Research and Conservation Programme

We have been engaged in sea turtle research and conservation on Masirah Island since 2008. This year's field season began on the 1st of May, aiming to monitor nesting population trends and implement conservation actions to protect the critically endangered Northwest Indian Ocean subpopulation of Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) that nests there. We would like to thank the **Environment Authority**, the **USFWS Marine Turtle Conservation Fund**, **Ocean Ecology Network**, the **Wali of Masirah** and **Future Seas Global SPC** for supporting this work.



Raptor Field Survey

The second phase of our field surveys on Masirah Island to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats to Egyptian vultures found on the island took place in April. This population was last surveyed in 2012, when 52 breeding territories were found to be occupied by pairs, one of the highest densities in the world. 11 years later we are completing the same survey to understand the population breeding trend. Data from the surveys are still being analysed. We would like to thank the **Disney Conservation Fund** for sponsoring this work and the **Environment Authority** for their ongoing support.



Namat Schools Competition

Q2 was a busy month for the Namat Competition! In April, a panel of judges met over 2 weeks to review the project progress reports submitted by 57 schools from across the Sultanate, selecting 9 schools to move forward to the final round. In May, our judges visited each of the finalists to conduct their final assessments ahead of the award ceremony which will be held in September. We would like to thank **Veolia Oman** for their continued sponsorship of this important education initiative and our valuable member **Badar Al Yazidi** for volunteering their time to be part of the judging panel.



Oman Climate Dialogues Launch 2023

In May, ESO launched Oman Climate Dialogues, a joint initiative between ESO and **ASYAD Group** designed to strengthen climate cooperation across all communities in Oman. With the support of local and international experts leading panel discussions and workshops, this series is the chance for us all to explore how Oman is responding to this global challenge. To learn more, visit <https://asyad.om/oman-climate-change-dialogues>. Our climate matters – be part of the debate!



Fundraising Movie Event - Wild Oman: Wonder of Arabia

In May, in celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity, ESO hosted an exclusive screening of **Wild Oman: Wonder of Arabia**, a first-of-its-kind wildlife documentary focusing exclusively on the wildlife of Oman. We would like to thank the team from **Oman in Focus** and all of their producing and distribution partners for allowing us to screen their beautiful documentary and to **Omantel** for hosting us all for the evening.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Chasing Oman's Endangered Vulture Population

Oman is home to over 30 species of raptors that occur as passage migrants, winter visitors or resident breeders. A number of the species are listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, such as the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and Lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*). A full list can be found in the **"Raptors of Oman"** booklet, freely available in both English and Arabic on the ESO website.

ESO's Raptors Research and Conservation Programme started in 2012 and aims to maintain the favorable conservation status of raptors in Oman, particularly vultures. Consistent research has allowed us to gather vital data to understand population size, locate nests and monitor reproduction and lay the foundation to investigate their behavioural ecology. Since 2021, this work has been sponsored by the **Disney Conservation Fund**. Their support has allowed us to (i) conduct breeding surveys for both

the Egyptian and Lappet-faced vulture, (ii) undertake research into the causes of egg and chick loss, (iii) place camera traps and fit satellite trackers to juvenile vultures, expanding our efforts to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats faced by this endangered species. In 2023, our field efforts have moved to Masirah Island to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats to Egyptian vultures found on the island. This population was last surveyed in 2012, when 52 breeding territories were found to be occupied by pairs, one of the highest densities in the world. 11 years later we are completing the same survey to understand the population breeding trend. Results from the current survey are still being compiled.

Each of these initiatives help ESO gather vital data to assist us in the implementation of conservation actions crucial to the long-term survival of these two charismatic and endangered vulture

species in Oman. Our conservation efforts include outreach initiatives with local communities to raise awareness about the important role raptors play in our environment and the behaviours we can all adopt to support their conservation. We will soon launch an infographic designed to raise awareness on the resident vultures of Oman in both English and Arabic, and it will be freely available on ESO's website.

We look forward to continuing our research and conservation efforts for these incredible animals and hope that our efforts will help fill some of the gaps that remain in our understanding of the behaviour, movement and ecology of Oman's endangered raptors. Thank you to the **Disney Conservation Fund**, **Hawkwatch International**, the **Anglo Omani Society** and the **Environment Authority** for supporting the conservation of raptors in Oman.



MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

We are proud to offer both corporate and individual membership programmes, providing the community in Oman the opportunity to get closer to the work of ESO. We organise regular lectures and events allowing our members to come together in support of the environment. Upcoming events are listed on our website ([link](https://www.eso.org.om)), with recordings of previous events available on the ESO YouTube channel ([ESOMediaChannel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQmMediaChannel)).



April Lecture

The April lecture was delivered by **Dr Salvador Carranza**, a Research Professor and Director of the Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC-UPF), Barcelona, Spain. The lecture titled **"Reptiles of Oman"**, explored a number of species of reptiles endemic to Oman, with a focus on some of the groups currently being investigated that will result in the description of several new species.



May Lecture

In May, ESO launched **Oman Climate Dialogues**, a joint initiative between ESO and **ASYAD group** designed to strengthen climate cooperation across all communities in Oman. The first panel discussion titled **"The Status of Oman's Climate: Why it Matters?"**. The panel was led by **Rumalitha Al Busaidi** an ESO Board Director with guest panelists Ambassador **Dr Adana Al Azri** who is the chairman of the Commission on the Limit of Continental Shelf at the United Nations and our second panelist is **Professor Yassine Charabi**, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences & Director Centre of Environmental Studies and Research. The panel explored Oman's performance in recent environmental indices, vulnerability of Oman to climate change and of the air and sea quality of Oman related to climate change.



May Lecture

May's lecture is being hosted in conjunction with **The Anglo-Omani Society** titled **"Unlocking the Mysteries of Oman's Arabian Sea Humpback Whale Population"** which was delivered by **Dr Andrew Willson**, a marine biologist expert and the founder of **Future Seas Global SPC** and **Ms. Suad Al Harthi** ESO's Executive Director. The lecture provided an overview about the humpback whale populations and the importance of protecting these majestic species. We would like to thank **OQ** and **Oman LNG** for sponsoring this event.



June Event

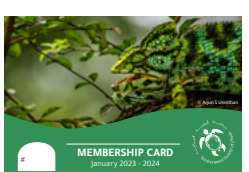
On 5th June, ESO and Oman Sail organized a **beach clean-up** to mark **World Environment Day**. With collective effort of 45 volunteers, we managed to remove 30 bags, an estimated of 336 kgs of litter, from Al Seeb beach in 40-degree heat. Thank you to everyone who participated in this event, **Oman Sail** for their logistical support. Together we can beat plastic pollution!



June Lecture

In June, we hosted the second panel discussion as part of the **"Oman Climate Dialogues"** initiative in partnership with **ASYAD Group**. Titled **"Energy Transition and Carbon Neutrality by 2050"**, the panel explored Oman's ambitions for carbon neutrality, its plans, and performance in a regional and global context. The panel was moderated by **Rumalitha Al Busaidi**, an ESO Board Director, with guest speakers **Eng. Fatza Al Harthi**, Head of Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources for Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up unit, **Khalid Al Huraibi**, a Strategic Advisor for 44.01, and **Eman Adel**, a sustainability Expert for RCREEE. Thank you to **ASYAD Group** for the continuous support of this initiative.





Become a Member Today!

If you would like to become an ESO member or renew click:

[NEW MEMBER](#)[RENEWALS](#)

*STUDENT MEMBERSHIP 5 RO

Your support matters.

Thank you for believing in our commitment to conserve and protect the incredible biodiversity of Oman.

*INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP 10 RO

*CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP 1K RO



FOR ENQUIRIES:

Individual Membership: Juhaina Al Ghafri - membership@eso.org.om

Corporate Membership / Membership: Ghaniya Al Maawali: ghaniya.almaawali@eso.org.om

*Memberships are per year.

Why support ESO!

Your support enables us to...

- Conduct **RESEARCH** on threatened and endangered species in Oman
- EDUCATE** communities on the importance of adopting more sustainable lifestyles
- ADVOCATE** for environmental sustainability
- BUILD CAPACITY** within the environmental sector in Oman
- CONSERVE** Oman's natural heritage for future generations.

How to support ESO in 2023

1. MAKE A DONATION VIA



Bank transfer, Bank Muscat
#0315-0039-6351-0017



SEND DONATE
90108

2. CLICK & FOLLOW US



3. CLICK TO JOIN OR RENEW ESO MEMBERSHIP

[MEMBERSHIP](#)

4. SUPPORT ESO FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

[LEARN MORE](#)

DONATION PROGRAMMES

We are very grateful to all our donation partners, who kindly add an optional donation to guests bills. We are actively working to encourage more hotels and tour operators to join the program.



THANK YOU!

Anglo Omani Society for their dedication in delivering a successful event and securing donations towards ESO

Badar Al Yazidi for supporting the Namat Competition judging

Rumalitha Al Busaidi for leading and moderating the Climate Change Series

All Nasser Al Rasbi, for supporting the Raptor Research and Conservation Project

University of Technology & Applied Sciences in Nizwa for their generous donation

ABA International School for their generous donation on World Whale Day

The French School for their generous for their generous donation on World Turtle Day

TRACCS for their ongoing in-kind media services