



ISSUE Q4 | October - December

NEWSLETTER 2023

Environment Society of Oman
www.eso.org.om

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Paul Plandinette



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

A summary of our Q4 highlights across research, conservation, education and community engagement.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Capacity Building for Cetacean Research and Conservation



MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

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



Achievements and Events



Namat Competition 4th Edition

The 4th edition of the Namat Competition for 2023/2024 began on September 18, 2023, during the 3rd edition Awards Ceremony, with continued support from **Veolia Oman** for the 4th and 5th editions. The invited government schools to register and submit action plans, receiving 163 registrations with consideration to a new and comprehensive competition criterion. After evaluation, 144 schools from 11 governorates qualified. They are currently implementing their plans, and we anticipate final reports by April 4, 2024. We look forward to celebrating the achievements of participating schools in the Namat Competition.



UN Climate Change Conference - COP28, Dubai, UAE

ESO proudly participated in COP28, the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Dubai, as part of the Oman National Delegation. Our delegation included Dr. Amor Al Matani, Amira Al Yarubi, Dr. Nasser Al Maskari, Rumaitha Al Busaidi, Suad Al Harthi, Ghaniya Al Mawali, and Jawaher Al Ghafri. ESO representatives actively engaged in panel discussions on nature-based solutions, gender equality, and youth involvement in climate action. Additionally, Juhaina Al Ghafri was invited by **The Gulf Research Center (GRC)** and **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme Gulf States** to participate in two side events. She highlighted ESO's climate change mitigation efforts and youth perspectives from GCC countries, emphasizing ESO's role and initiatives.



Oman Natural Heritage Lecture, London, UK

The 7th Oman Natural Heritage Lecture occurred at London's Royal Geographical Society on December 6th, highlighting Oman's remarkable mangroves and designating the Barr Al Hikman peninsula as Oman's latest Ramsar site. Speakers Badar Al Bulushi and Aziza Al Adhooobi discussed mangrove restoration, resilience building, and community engagement. Suad Al Harthi and Nigel Winter co-chaired the session, [accessible online](#). The Environment Authority and ESO exhibited literature before the event. Funding came from the **British Omani Society**, **London Speaker Bureau**, **Oman LNG**, and **Earthwatch Europe**, with additional support from in-kind supporters and volunteers for a successful event.



Oman Climate Dialogues Closing of Panel Discussions

In November, the Oman Climate Dialogues, a collaborative effort between ESO and Asyad Group, successfully concluded its panel discussions. These discussions, spanning four sessions, delved into the expectations and ambitions of COP28, aiming to strengthen climate cooperation and understanding among Oman's diverse communities. Guided by local and international experts, the panels explored Oman's response to the global climate challenge. Following the panel series, we launched the second phase of our project: workshops. The first workshop, centered on Sustainable Events, fostered cross-sectoral collaboration and knowledge exchange. Two more workshops are in the planning stages for 2024, promising further engagement and learning opportunities. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to **Asyad Group** for their invaluable support in making this initiative possible.



Plastic Awareness Campaign

In October, **Barka Desalination Company** joined hands with ESO and the Omani Women Associations for an impactful plastic awareness campaign. This initiative garnered participation from a total of 331 individuals, including 176 students. The campaign encompassed a range of activities, including presentations, problem-solving exercises, and cleanup efforts. Additionally, educational materials were distributed to empower participants to make eco-conscious choices for a plastic-free future. This multifaceted campaign spanned various locations, including Barka in South Al Batinah, Adam and Al Zahya in Ad Dakhliya, Salalah in Dhofar, and Sur and Qurun in South Sharqiyah.



Marine Turtle Research and Conservation Programme

In our ongoing programme, stranding surveys have been conducted on Masirah Island. To enhance awareness, we've published an informative infographic about the nesting sea turtles of Masirah in both [English](#) and [Arabic](#), available on the ESO website. We're also in the final stages of creating a comprehensive booklet on the sea turtles of Oman. Looking ahead, we have plans for olive ridley and hawksbill nesting surveys on Masirah Island starting in February 2024. Furthermore, we've initiated a nationwide awareness campaign about the sea turtles of Oman, engaging approximately 2'085 students in 63 government schools and 100 community leaders across three Governorates (Al Wusta, South Al Sharqiyah, and Dhofar). These community leaders represent fishermen, wali offices, and Omani Women Associations, collectively working towards the conservation of these precious marine species.



Ad Dimaniyyat Islands Nature Reserve-Awareness Raising Campaign

Our dedicated campaign has concluded with significant steps to educate and engage the community. We've published informative resources, including the Ad Dimaniyyat Islands Nature Reserve infographic in both [English](#) and [Arabic](#), in addition to the ["Biodiversity Booklet"](#), which can be freely downloaded from the ESO website. Our outreach efforts have extended to approximately 1'100 individuals across the Wilayat of South Al Batinah and Muscat. Our target audience comprises government schools, Omani Women Associations, Wali Offices, fishermen, and university students. Through these initiatives, we aim to enhance awareness and appreciation for the unique biodiversity and ecological significance of Ad Dimaniyyat Islands Nature Reserve.



Whale and Dolphin Research and Conservation

The ESO team has been actively engaged in critical surveys and collaborations to further marine conservation. We participated in a whole survey funded by the Environment Authority in Sarab, successfully tagging an Arabian Sea Humpback Whale (ASHW) with a satellite tag and fitting others with behavior-recording tags. The survey was held for 11 days, recording ten ASHW sightings. The collaboration between **Oman Environment Authority**, **Environment Society of Oman**, **Future Seas Global SPC**, **Ocean Alliance**, and **Aarhus University** is dedicated to understanding the behavior and energetics of this endangered whale population for future conservation efforts. Additionally, we actively contributed to EA's marine mammal survey in Musandam, reinforcing our commitment to marine life conservation in Oman's waters.

Project Spotlight Capacity Building for Cetacean Research and Conservation

In Oman's waters, there are 20 diverse species of whales and dolphins, including four great whale species. ESO has been actively researching cetaceans since 2004, with a particular focus on the Arabian Sea humpback whale (ASHW). Research revealed that this unique sub-population, with fewer than 100 individuals, resides year-round in the Indian Ocean off Oman's coast and is genetically isolated from other humpback whale populations. In 2008, research from Oman led to the designation of this population as "Endangered" on the IUCN Red List.

Recognizing the importance of cultivating local expertise, ESO, with support from HSBG Oman (now Sonar International), established a capacity-building program. This initiative has

trained four candidates, including two ESO staff members, with the goal of forming an Omani team capable of contributing to future cetacean research. The program covers cetacean biology, ecology, research methodologies, photo-identification, data collection, networking, and conservation communication.

In 2023, the program expanded with its final module, focusing on engaging stakeholders in conservation through media and communication. Candidates participated in boat-based surveys, observing bottlenose dolphins off Muscat's coast. They presented their final projects in October, applying their year-long experience to topics such as survey reporting, geospatial analysis, systematic cetacean survey design, conservation

needs, and a national awareness campaign for cetaceans.

ESO's commitment to cetacean research and local capacity building is vital for the conservation of these endangered marine species in Oman's waters. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our sponsor, **HSBG Oman (now Sonar International)**, for investing in Omani talents and supporting research and conservation in the marine environment. Your support has made a significant impact on our efforts to protect and preserve these vital ecosystems.



ESO Membership Update

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](#)), with recordings of previous events available on the ESO YouTube channel ([ESOMediaChannel](#)).



October Event

ESO recently hosted the second exclusive screening of 'Wild Oman: Wonder of Arabia,' a captivating documentary that explores Oman's remarkable wildlife. We are thankful to the **Oman in Focus** team for their unwavering support and their generous contribution of this stunning documentary to help raise funds for ESO. We extend our appreciation to **Omantel** for graciously hosting the event at their prestigious headquarters, making this screening possible.



October Workshop

With climate change being a pressing global concern there's never been a more crucial time to delve deeper into the subject. ESO organized a workshop in collaboration with the **Climate Fresh** team in Oman. The workshop helped the participants to understand climate change, causes and consequences in an interactive way. Special thanks to the facilitator **Aisha Al Balushi** and for **PDO Knowledge Center** for the in-kind support by providing a venue and thank you to all the participants who joined us on the day.



November Lecture

The 4th Panel Discussion of the Oman Climate Dialogues, titled "The Road to COP28: Expectations and Ambitions," occurred this quarter. Sponsored by **Asyad Group**, the event was skillfully moderated by **Khalid Al Huraili**, featuring guest panelists **Dr. Said Al Sami**, a Weather and Climate Specialist, and **Mohammed Al Shuayli**, a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager. The discussion introduced COP28 and its regional significance while delving into Oman's expectations and future steps. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the speakers for their invaluable contributions to the session. Recordings of all Climate Dialogues sessions are available on our YouTube Channel ([ESOMediaChannel](#)).



November Lecture

In November, we launched the first workshop of the Oman Climate Dialogues series, titled "How to Run Sustainable Events." This event, sponsored by **Asyad Group** and facilitated by sustainable events expert **Kaiser Tirmizi**, marked the beginning of the series' second phase.

The workshop agenda, developed in consultation with the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**, centered on the significance of hosting sustainable events and offered insights into best practices for planning and execution. We extend our sincere gratitude to the facilitator for sharing his expertise, to the **German Society of Technology in Oman (Gutech)** for providing the venue, and to **WEF** for their invaluable guidance.



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!

FOR ENQUIRIES:

Individual Membership:

Corporate Sponsorship / Membership

*INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP 10^{RO}

Juhaina Al Ghafri - membership@eso.org.om

Ghaniya Al Maawali: ghaniya.almaawali@eso.org.om

*CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP 1K^{RO}

*Memberships are per year.

Why support ESO!

Your support enables us to...

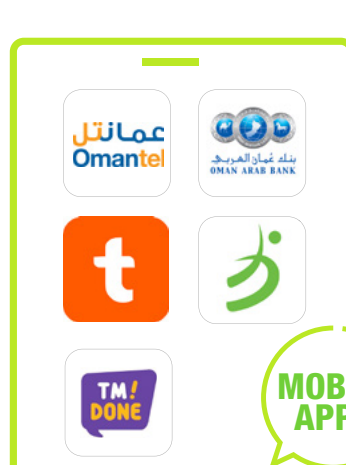
- Conduct **RESEARCH** on threatened and endangered species in Oman
- EDUCATE** communities on the importance of adopting more sustainable lifestyles
- ADVOCATE** for environmental sustainability
- BUILD CAPACITY** within the environmental sector in Oman
- CONSERVE** Oman's natural heritage for future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

How to support ESO in 2023

1. MAKE A DONATION VIA



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



2. CLICK & FOLLOW US



3. CLICK TO JOIN OR RENEW ESO MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

4. SUPPORT OUR CHARITY 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.

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THANK YOU!

- Ella Rajda** for supporting the Communication Team as an intern
- "Friends and Supporters of ESO"** who have chosen to support ESO's initiatives in place of celebrating their birthdays
- GU Tech** for providing us with the venue to host the 1st workshop from the Oman Climate Dialogues
- Kaiser Tirmizi** for leading and facilitating the 1st workshop from the Oman Climate Dialogues
- Khalid Al Huraili** for leading and moderating the 4th panel discussion from the Oman Climate Dialogues
- Oman in Focus** for providing us with the 'Wild Oman' documentary to host the second movie screening event
- Omantel** for providing us with the venue to host our movie screening event
- PDO EcoOman Centre** for providing us with the venue to host our membership event
- Sayyida Lamees Daar** and **Olivia Dalziel** for their support in reviewing the ESO 2023 Annual Report
- The **Conscious Travel Foundation** for their generous donation
- TRACCS** for their ongoing in-kind media services

Sardine season in Dhofar, Hamed Al Ghelali