ISSUE Q2 - APRIL - JUNE

NEWSLETTER 2024

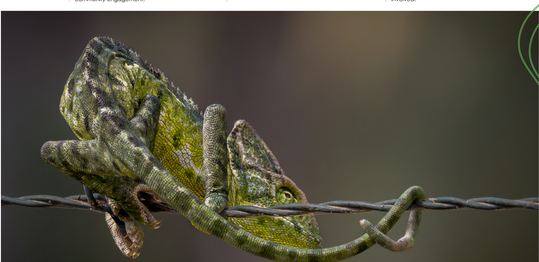
Environment Society of Oman
www.eso.org.om

Cover Photo:
Arabian chameleon
(*Chamaeleo arabicus*)
Amandeep Singh

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

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT
Ad Dimaniyyat Islands Nature Reserve Community Engagement Campaign

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



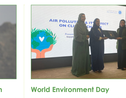
ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

Marine Turtles Research and Conservation Programme

The ESO field team continues its annual loggerhead turtle surveys on Masirah Island, conducted during the nesting season from May to September. Alongside these surveys, the team has been actively monitoring sea turtles that were misoriented, flipped over, or stranded on the island's beaches. We have expanded our educational resources with the release of the **Nesting Sea Turtles of Oman Introductory Guide** and the **Sea Turtles of Oman Children's Activity Booklet**, complementing our recently produced **Nesting Sea Turtles of Masirah** infographic, all now available for download on the ESO Resources Page. We extend our gratitude to the **US Fish and Marine Service** for their funding, which has been instrumental in supporting this important project.

Raptors Research & Conservation

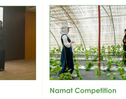
In June 2024, we conducted a second round of Egyptian vulture surveys on Masirah Island. The data collected is currently being analysed to assess changes in the number of territorial pairs, the ratio of non-breeding adults to breeding pairs, and the overall breeding population. This research is crucial for understanding and conserving the species. We extend our gratitude to **Renaissance Services SAOG** for their funding, which has been instrumental in supporting this important project.



World Environment Day

World Environment Day, celebrated annually on June 5th, raises awareness about environmental issues and inspires global action. Each year focuses on a specific theme to address pressing environmental concerns. We are proud to partner with Ashkara Beach Resort for this celebration and were delighted to be invited by some of our partners to join them.

On June 4th, we had an early celebration with **Alia Hamis**, the attendee in a night at the ballet, who generously invited her friends and colleagues, presenting our Sayadiya Dr Jihad Bussidi. Additionally, we were delighted to be part of **PDO**'s dedicated exhibition on June 23-26, where ESO showcased its efforts and environmental contributions to the PDO staff.



Namat Competition

The Namat Competition's final assessment and school visits were successfully completed, covering 11 schools across 6 governorates over six days. Schools effectively incorporated competition themes, positively impacting their communities by promoting single-use water bottles and utilizing reusable alternatives. Greywater usage improved, now connected to solar and wind energy for pumping. Previous participants, maintained sustainability and encouraged innovation and entrepreneurship. Six schools were recognized for their exceptional efforts, with prizes for outstanding work: Jmaal bin Khamis School, Al Ather bin Muhammed Al Aakawi School, Jinah School, Al Ansaf Deaf School, Om Diner Al Ghafari School, and Wadi bani Omar School. We appreciate **Vasilia Oman** and the **Ministry of Education** for providing the venue for the ceremony. Collaboration throughout the Namat Competition journey and look forward to a successful awarding ceremony tentatively set for September.

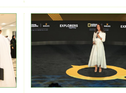
Oman Sustainability Week

ESO was proud to be an official supporter of Oman Sustainability Week, which took place from April 28th to May 2nd. Our participation included exhibiting for all three days and sharing our mission and activities with visitors. Additionally, the team delivered two presentations covering topics such as the Namat Competition and Climate Change. We extend our gratitude to our partners at new collaboration with **Bank Nizwa** during Sustainability Week to introduce the new educational competition, Wa'ra. We would like to extend our appreciation to the team from **CONNECT Events** for including ESO in this impactful event and for supporting its sustainability goals.

International Day for Biological Diversity

International Day for Biological Diversity, celebrated on May 22, raises awareness about the vital importance of biodiversity on our 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 this day at an exhibition organized by one of our key partners, **Nama Water Services**, held at their headquarters. The event brought together key contributors to Oman's biodiversity, including ESO. We are thankful for Nama Water's efforts in organizing this exhibition and recognizing the significance of this day for Oman.



National Geographic Society's 2024 Wayfinder Award

ESO's Executive Director, Susaad Al Harthi, received the National Geographic Society's 2024 Wayfinder Award, recognizing her as a global National Geographic Explorer Community 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 planet. Susaad delivered a powerful keynote 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.

Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).
Ashkara Menagerie.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Ad Dimaniyyat Islands Nature Reserve Community Engagement Campaign

ESO has successfully wrapped up its "Ad Dimaniyyat Islands Nature Reserve (DINR) Awareness, Raising and Community Engagement Campaign," a five-month initiative dedicated to highlighting the reserve's rich biodiversity and its crucial ecological role. Designated in 1996, DINR comprises nine islands 13 km offshore from the coast of Muscat towards Barka, known for their turtle nesting beaches, bird breeding grounds, stunning natural scenery, and vibrant coral reefs.

DINR is a vital nesting site for the critically endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and the vulnerable green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). It also attracts the endangered whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) between August and November. The island's cliffs and rocky areas provide ideal nesting habitats for the vulnerable sooty falcon (*Falco concolor*), the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), and various tern species.

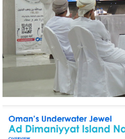
Throughout the campaign, ESO focused on raising awareness about DINR's unique flora and fauna, addressing five major threats to the reserve, and advocating for ways the public can help in mitigating those threats. The campaign also targeted local communities in Bausher, Al Seeb, Barka, and Al Musanah, given their coastal locations and proximity to the reserve.

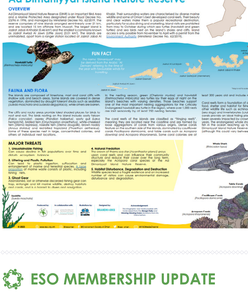
ESO's efforts were extensive, reaching out to 1,387 individuals, including representatives from Wali offices, Oman Women's Associations, fishermen, government officials, and students from various schools and universities. EA rangers working at DINR were also engaged due to their critical role in managing the reserve.

We would like to extend its appreciation firstly to **Ms Dana Sarhan**, **Mongal Rally**, and **Glowing Glowing Gone** for their generous donations and funding for this project. Additionally, we are grateful to Mr **Ali Al Raabi**, Community Engagement Consultant, for his dedication in leading this initiative with ESO and contributing to raising awareness about Oman's rich biodiversity among the youth and local communities.

To further raise awareness, ESO developed an infographic and a bilingual biodiversity booklet detailing the ecological and cultural significance of DINR, both available for download on ESO's website. The campaign aligns with ESO's broader mission to raise the public's awareness about environmental issues and promote sustainable practices in Oman.

Through local engagement and educational initiatives, ESO aims to foster a deeper connection between communities and their natural heritage, ensuring that the unique biodiversity is protected for generations to come.





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).

APRIL TALK

ESO organized a talk with Dr. Ghada Al Hanaishi titled "Exploring Energy Transition: Economic, Geopolitical, Technological Competitiveness, and Human Skills." The talk facilitated an engaging discussion to understand Oman's direction towards energy transition and its market expectations. We extend our special appreciation to **PDO** **EcoClub** for providing the venue for the talk.

MAY TALK

ESO organized a public talk with Mark Evans, the first person to complete a 28-day journey on foot and by camel across Arabia on the trail of British explorer Harry St John Philby.[1] The talk highlighted Mark's journey retracing every point of Philby's 1932 expedition, accompanied by his son and Philby's grandaughter. We thank **ASA International School** for providing us with the venue for the talk.

MAY - WORKSHOP

As part of the Oman Climate Dialogues Series sponsored by **ASYAD Group**, ESO organized the second Youth Roundtable Workshop, held in collaboration with the European Union. The event brought together local and international speakers to explore opportunities in the green job sector and discuss youth perspectives on sustainable employment. We thank **Muscat University** for providing us with the venue for the workshop.

JUNE TALK

ESO organized a public talk with with Dr. Ghada Al Hanaishi titled "Man and Land in Musandam: The Role of Local Communities in Plant Conservation." The talk discussed the unique knowledge and vital role of native plants in Musandam, and examined how these incredible stewards of the landscape, drawing on their traditional knowledge, occasional pressures, and resource limitations, can extend special appreciation to **Modern College of Business & Science (MCBS)** for providing the venue for the talk.

JUNE TALK

ESO organized a public talk with Dr. Ghanaya Al Maawali titled "Oman's Blue World: Our Maritime Importance, Coastal Diversity, and the Underwater World. Jenan, the founder of Reef Check Oman, shared her extensive experience working along Oman's coastline, highlighting a significant conservation challenge in a high-flux underwater life. We would like to extend our special thanks to the **Modern College of Business & Science (MCBS)** for graciously providing the venue for this event.

Become a Member Today!

If you would like to become an ESO member or **renew your membership** click on:

NEW MEMBER | RENEWALS

***STUDENT MEMBERSHIP 5 RO**

***INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP 10 RO**

***CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP 1K RO**

Your support matters.

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

FOR ENQUIRIES:
Individual Membership: membership@eso.org.om
Corporate Sponsorship / Membership: **Ghanaya Al Maawali:** ghanaya.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 2024

1. MAKE A DONATION VIA

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

Omantel
SEND DONATION
90108

MOBILE APPS

2. FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

3. JOIN OR RENEW ESO MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMME

MEMBERSHIP

4. SUPPORT OUR CHARITY INITIATIVES

LEARN MORE

ESO Annual Report 2023 now available on our resources page

Honeycomb moray eel (*Gymnothorax chlorostigma*). Paul Handreck

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.

THE CHEDI MUSCAT, OMAN | ANANTARA AL JABAL AL AKHDAR RESORT | AliLA MUSCAT, JW MARRIOTT HOTEL MUSCAT, RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL | panorama travel | Hud Hud Travels

THANK YOU!

ASA International School for providing us with the venue to host our recent membership talk

British School Muscat for their kind donation

Cheltenham School Muscat for their kind donation

Hawa Al Sharaiqi for volunteering during Namat Competition assessment phase

Modern College of Business and Science for providing us with the venue to host our recent membership talk

Muscat University for providing us with the venue to host our recent Climate Dialogues workshop

The American International School Muscat for their kind donation

TRACCS for their ongoing in-kind media services