



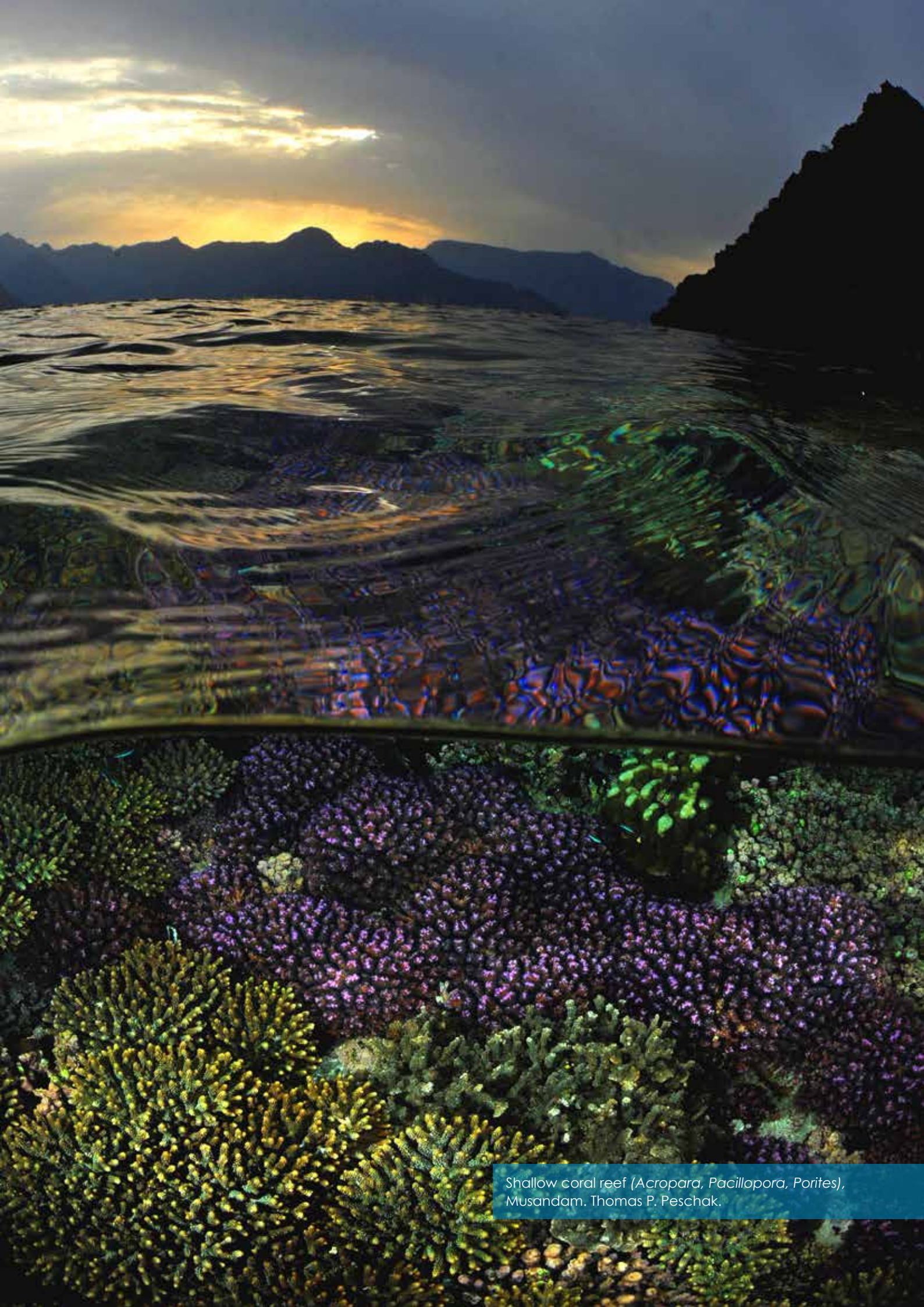
Annual Report 2013



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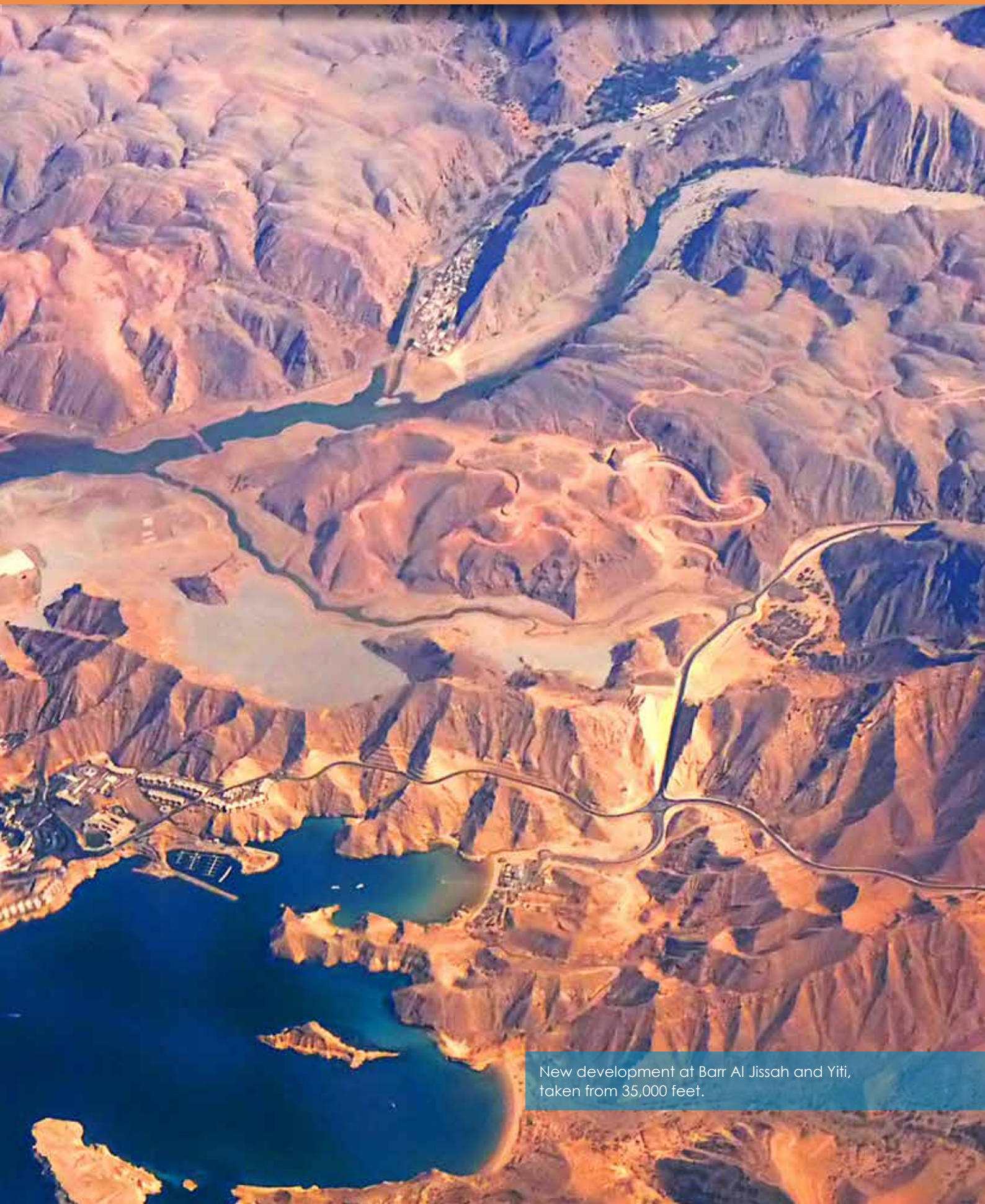
His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said



Shallow coral reef (*Acropora*, *Pocillopora*, *Porites*),
Musandam. Thomas P. Peschak.

Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT	06
INTRODUCTION	07
ESO BOARD	08
MARINE CONSERVATION PROJECTS	10
- Turtle Research and Conservation	
- Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Project	
TERRESTRIAL CONSERVATION PROJECTS	19
- Frankincense Research	
COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS	20
- 4th Annual Masirah Festival	
- "Let's Plant One" Native Tree Planting Campaign	
- World Migratory Bird Day	
- Second Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition	
- Earth Hour 2013	
CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM	28
- Oman LNG LLC: ESO's Capacity Building Partner	
- Omani Training Program	
- Internship Program	
OTHER ACTIVITIES	32
- ECO BOWL 2013	
- Volunteer of the Year Award 2013	
- Freezing Omanis	
- Awards, Grants and Donations	
- International Conferences Highlights	
MEMBERSHIP	38
- Individual Membership	
- Corporate Membership	
- Affiliations with International Organisations	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	42



New development at Barr Al Jissah and Yiti,
taken from 35,000 feet.

Message from the President

As you will see in this annual report, 2013 has been a year of growth for the Environment Society of Oman (ESO). With the help of our capacity building partner Oman LNG, we were able to train young graduates in the field of NGO work. Some of these graduates pass through the program and move on to pursue different avenues and others remain with ESO. For those that pursue other avenues they are leaving having a renewed appreciation for the environment and an understanding of how NGOs operate and what an NGO is capable of achieving. I believe that when they leave they become ESO ambassadors in their new work place. For those graduates that remain and take on more permanent positions within ESO, we support them by giving them access to various experiences. Providing access to courses to further improve their skills, as well as field experience and awareness raising campaigns and covering all aspects of NGO work gives them the opportunity to see an idea grow and, in some cases, become strategies to be implemented by our country.



ESO's research continues to grow with results that are both very encouraging and sometimes very disappointing when we see numbers of threatened species decreasing. It is only through continual studies and monitoring that we are able to help bring about change.

I would like to recognise the companies who continue to believe in our cause and have partnered with us over the years. Our annual report is a testament to what your funds continue to enable us to achieve.

The continued strengthening of our relationship with the private sector, the government and the community is critical to our future success.

ESO has built strong ties with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and we are very grateful for their support and trust in ESO's abilities.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank our supporters who have played a vital role in helping ESO grow into a significant stakeholder in the conservation of Oman's natural heritage.

I'd like to extend a special thanks and appreciation to all the individual members, volunteers and board members who give so much time to ESO, and without whom we would not be where we are today.

Tania S Al Said
President

Introduction



2013 has been a marathon year for the Environment Society of Oman (ESO). Our capacity building program and training of young Omanis in the field of environmental conservation have exceeded expectations and enhanced our educational projects, community outreach work, volunteer programs and scientific research.

We have seen the continuation of annual events such as the Masirah Festival, Earth Hour and the Inter-College Public Speaking Competition, which was an incredible success this year, with 22 teams and over 100 students participating!

Our scientific projects continue with new discoveries and findings being made, especially in the area of whale and dolphin work, where we are focusing our future efforts on satellite tracking of the genetically unique Omani population the Arabian Sea humpback whale and have started conservation efforts with both the government and private sector. The Frankincense Project in Dhofar is coming to an end after four years of research and we are excited to see the results in 2014. In addition we have made startling discoveries pointing to an 83% decrease in the population of Loggerhead turtles since 1977, leading to an increased conservation effort from all parties and stakeholders.

ESO is currently looking for funding for Phase 3 of our Women's Empowerment and Environmental Education Project, which will take action on two environmental problems identified by past participants of the project. Our Tree Planting campaign this year was exceptional and volunteers, students and members came together to plant thousands of native trees!

2013 has seen nine of our Omani staff being trained in field research, data entry and analysis, dolphin rescues, project management, administrative work and some have even travelled as far as Morocco and South Africa for training programs. This has all been made possible through our partnership with Oman LNG LLC and we will continue to ensure that Omanis (both graduates and non-graduates) are given the necessary skills to work in the field of environmental conservation over the coming years.

This year ESO attended conferences, workshops and meetings all over the world including Korea, USA, Jordan, Egypt, UAE and Tunisia and continues to be a driving force in the international environmental NGO arena.

ESO is also proud to be a member of the Committee for the National Turtle Conservation Strategy as well as the Committee for National Team for Plastic Bag Impacts, which are both chaired by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ESO Staff, Board Members and Volunteers for all the time and energy they put into making ESO a success. Our work would not be possible without the support of Oman's corporate sector – we thank you for your generous contributions.

Enjoy our 2013 Annual Report and thank you for taking the time to read about our work and achievements.

Best Wishes,

Lamees Daar
Executive Director

ESO Board

The following Board Members were elected in March 2012 for a two-year duration:

President

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

Vice President

Dr. Mehdi Jaafar is a founding member of ESO and has been Vice President of the Society since its establishment. He worked in the field of human resources development before moving into nature conservation, environmental education awareness and international relations. He helped launch Oman's 1st National Strategy on Conservation and draft the 2nd National Biodiversity Strategy and the National Action Plan. Dr Mehdi co-chaired CESAR/SQU's organising committee to the International Conference on the Conservation of Mountains where Al Jabal Al Akhdar Conservation Research project was showcased. He is a member of many national committees addressing a myriad of environmental issues and is a on numerous judging panels including The Ford Regional Conservation Fund and The Regional Colleges & Universities Environmental Public Speaking Competition. He was an elected representative of West Asia Environmental NGOs UNEP Governing Council & Major Groups and Stakeholders Annual Conferences in 2010, 2011, and 2012. He was an elected representative of the International Environmental Advisory Group from 2010-2012. Dr Mehdi is a regular speaker, writer and panellist on a number of environmental and sustainable development matters.

Executive Director

Ms. Lamees Daar, a founding board member of ESO, has been on the Executive Board since its establishment and voluntarily manages the organisation. She represented ESO at most regional UNEP meetings in the Society's early years and holds a BSc in Environmental Sciences. She previously worked as an environmental consultant for environmental engineering firms and was seconded to Petroleum Development of Oman to monitor ISO14000 practices. Lamees has been responsible for the overall managing of all ESO projects and staff, securing numerous funding opportunities and sponsorships for ESO, writing proposals for current projects, chairing the Ras al Jinz Turtle Center Steering Committee, co-managing the anti-plastic bag campaign, writing regular press releases, and managing a comprehensive overhaul of the ESO website. She is also responsible for the increase in capacity at ESO and putting training programs in place for the new capacity building program.

Community Outreach Officer

Mr. Nasser Al Maskari currently works as an environmental expert at Occidental Oman (OXY). He has a BSc in Fisheries Science and an MSc in Marine Sciences and Environmental Studies. He has worked as a Nature Reserve Specialist, Head of Permits and Head of Projects Evaluation Section at the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources (MRMEWR). He was also Director of Planning for Nature Conservation at MRMEWR. Nasser has been a Social Responsibility advisor at OXY since 2009 and is a member of the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary Committee and Member of the National Committee for IUCN. He was a member of the national committee of selecting world heritage and natural sites in Oman and the Oman Marine Biodiversity Committee. He was a founding member of ESO and a board member for 2 years from 2004-2006, at which time he was also head of the ESO Terrestrial Group.

Treasurer

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

Public Relations Officer

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

Board Member

Dr. Mohsen Al Amri holds a PhD in Biology, Ecology and Soil Sciences. His research interests lie in environmental pollution by wastewater and plant ecology. He has 13 scientific publications and has been an active member of ESO for 4 years as well as serving on the ESO board for 4 years. He leads the ESO Frankincense Project in Dhofar to monitor the health of frankincense trees and determine the number of times a tree can be harvested before permanent damage occurs. This project was recently featured in a French documentary aired in 2012. Dr Mohsen has also been instrumental in furthering ESO's outreach and tree planting projects in Dhofar both with schools and government. He regularly meets and interacts with volunteers in Southern Oman on behalf of ESO and travels to Muscat every month to attend ESO Board meetings.

Board Member

Mr. Raed Dawood is currently working with Nawras as Business Development Director and has a wide range of private sector experience with more than 15 years' work experience in the several fields including telecom, banking, investments, and auditing. Raed is a founding member of ESO and the creator of the ESO brand and logo. Raed holds an HE diploma and a BSc in Business Administration and Marketing. Raed is an active member of ESO and regularly volunteers his time to help with matters concerning HR, design and artwork.

Board Member

Mr. Amor Al Mataani holds a BEng(Hons.) and an MBA. After graduating from Teesside University, UK 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 was Deputy Director General for Administration and Finance at the Royal Hospital. He completed his MBA (Newcastle) in 1997 before being appointed Director General for Sur Industrial Estate in the Public Establishment of Industrial Estates (PEIE). He joined Oman LNG in 2002 as Deputy CEO and occupies the position to date. He has a keen interest in education and he is member on a number of university and technical colleges' boards and chairman of the Board of Trustees for O LNG's HAS School. He is also the Chairman of O LNG's Tender Board and an active board member in the Oman Road Safety Association.

Board Member

Dr. Nadiya Al-Saady has a PhD from the University of Minnesota, USA, in the area of plant genetics. She is currently the Director of the Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center of the Research Council. Dr. Nadiya was formally a faculty member in the Department of Crop Sciences, College of Agricultural & Marine Sciences (CAMS), at Sultan Qaboos University. Her research interests are in the areas of genetic diversity and biotechnology. She has supervised numerous BSc and MSc students and is currently supervising a PhD student. She has published scientific papers in internationally reviewed journals in the areas of genetic engineering, disease diagnosis and genetic diversity. She is a member of numerous national and international committees on plant genetic resources.

Marine Conservation Projects

Turtle Research and Conservation

The global importance of Oman to the survival of turtles – where all species are classified under 'endangered' or 'critically endangered' status listings throughout the world - has been definitively established through surveys and research conducted within the Sultanate over the past 35 years. In the last 7 years, ESO, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs** (MECA) and senior international scientists, has played the lead research role on turtles in the Sultanate. We have accelerated our knowledge and understanding of turtle biology, ecology and conservation needs, as well as raised the international profile of Oman's turtle resources. Through grants and long-term support, especially from the **US Marine Turtle Conservation Fund** (MTCF), ESO has been able to work towards the conservation of turtles through continued monitoring and research efforts, enhancement of resource capacity and management activities, and engagement of local communities.

However, due to new regulations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oman, NGOs are unable to receive further funding from such international organisations and, therefore, ESO continues to look for local support in order to monitor Oman's turtle populations.

The project is mainly centred on Masirah Island, focusing on loggerhead turtles.

The project's long-term aims are:

- To implement research to guide conservation management of turtles, especially the globally important loggerhead turtle population on Masirah Island;
- To study the migration and nesting frequency of turtles and understand potential interaction with human activities;
- To research and assess population trends of turtles nesting in Oman;
- To identify, assess and help mitigate threats to turtles through conservation management recommendations;
- To build capacity of local communities and institutions to be able to contribute to research and conservation of turtles;
- To inform and educate local communities and the general public about the value and importance of turtles as essential components of a healthy environment.



'Aziza' a female loggerhead turtle was tagged to be tracked by satellite, Natasa Silec

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

Surprising and Devastating Population Assessment!

Now in the 6th year, the nesting beach surveys for 2013 continued on Masirah with the same primary research objectives of producing track counts from nesting beaches for assessment of nesting population trend analysis. Additional secondary monitoring activities are included in the scope of work to generate ratios of nesting success and hatching success as a means of qualifying the reproductive output of different beaches.

Fieldwork is undertaken by ESO's local field assistants and scientific support staff, in cooperation with the MECA ranger's office on the island. As a major research milestone, the data collected on this program over the last six years, together with data originating from initial surveys in 1977 were analysed with collaborating scientists in Florida for a publication to evaluate the trend of the nesting population over the last 35 years. Initial results alert the team to an alarming population decline of more than 82% since 1977! Full analysis is still being completed but these results have led ESO to take on a more proactive role in conservation measures and stakeholder engagement while continuing to monitor turtle populations.

Community Outreach

The annual Masirah Festival took place at the beginning of the loggerhead nesting season. This outreach program extended to school children, young adults, Oman Women's Association, fishing community as well as some with the Wali's office. Full details on the festival can be found on page 20. Work has continued with ESO education team developing signage and public information posters for Masirah. Posters were distributed during the Masirah Festival. The design for the signage is complete and ESO has received permission from the MECA to install the signs in 2014.

Recruitment and Training

In order to assist in research on Masirah Island, ESO has hired and trained three full time local field assistants (FAs). These FAs work on ESO turtle projects during the nesting season and assist in both the Renaissance Whale and Dolphin project as well as ESO's Egyptian Vulture project during the off-season. In order to ensure sustainability of this training ESO has set up a permanent office in Masirah which the FAs work from. Training is ongoing in the form of computer and language courses, and in-house as well as in-field training. 2013 saw the FAs take a lead on the Sustainable Fishing Towards Turtle Conservation Project as well as beach stranding surveys, which are done on a monthly basis by All Terrain Vehicles. All records are archived and compiled into a central database currently operated by project partners in **Five Oceans Environmental Services LLC**. In addition, two graduates from **Sultan Qaboos University** were engaged to work on data collection to understand how fishing methods are affecting turtle populations around Masirah Island (outlined below).



Signs describing delicate environment on Masirah Island will be installed in 2014



ESO Field Assistant Ghasi Al Farsi
with Masirah fisherman

Sustainable Fishing Towards Turtle Conservation Project

ESO has initiated the Sea Turtle Conservation and Sustainable Fishing project on Masirah Island as a pilot project to understand the context of fishing on Masirah and the level of interaction between loggerhead turtles and fishing activities. Funding was received in 2011 from **US Marine Conservation Fund** but delays in determining project methodology meant work began in 2013. Bycatch is known to be one of the major threats to sea turtles globally and has been documented as one of the most significant causes of mortality to turtles in Oman. Preliminary bycatch studies undertaken by ESO at Masirah Island have identified key working partners among the local fishing community and have contributed to an early appraisal of the scope, scale and details of the bycatch problem. Early work shows that turtles are incidentally caught in both active and passive (discarded/lost) fishing gear, especially gill nets, including those used in shark fisheries, and lobster nets, within artisanal and commercial fisheries both near to nesting areas and critical habitats on and around Masirah, as well as further afield during seasonal migrations to key foraging sites.

After extensive stakeholder engagement with the **Wali of Masirah** and through questionnaires and interviews with the fishing community it was revealed that an extensive drift and bottom net fishery that runs from skiffs in the south west corner of the island between November and March, and a less intensively in the north east of from March to May each year. The extent of the fisheries are adjacent to nesting beaches frequented by all four species of turtle known to nest on Masirah whom use the coastal site for foraging, breeding and refuge. Bycatch (turtles caught by mistake during finishing activity) is reported from these areas in this fishery, including loggerheads. However, the survivability of turtles is not completely understood from the fisher surveys, and requires further investigation through an experimental fishing project carried out off skiffs by ESO team members. Following sea safety training provided by **Oman Sail LLC**, ESO field assistants will carry out this project in 2014.

The results of the surveys also indicate that Dhow vessels operate drift and bottom gill nets year-round from nearby to 500km away from the island. The overlap between the fishery and turtle habitat use suggests that this may have the most significant impact on most turtles given the extended (12-24 hour) soak time of nets, resulting in a proportionally lower survival rate of caught turtles for each hour of deployment. Further survey of this fishery will be carried out in the future to yield more accurate results about the impact of Dhow fisheries.

National Turtle Conservation Strategy

ESO research over the last 6 years has confirmed that Oman has among the largest and most important populations of turtles in the world and that they are genetically isolated. The work has also shown that turtles are under increasing pressure and that population decline already detected in some populations is likely to worsen in the future. A strategy to effectively conserve Oman's turtles is urgently needed.

We are pleased that the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs** has initiated a committee to work on the development of a National Turtle Conservation Strategy. It is anticipated that this strategy will be keenly watched by the global turtle conservation community, tourism companies and foreign governments, all of whom have an interest to see Oman's huge turtle populations better protected.

Loggerhead turtles are often caught by accident in fishing nets



Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Project

Thanks to the renewed support of **Renaissance Services SAOG**, The Renaissance Whale and Dolphin project has been continuing throughout 2013. It is a multifaceted scientific and public awareness project established by ESO in 2011 and aims to build on existing research and knowledge of Oman's cetaceans and provide information that can lead to effective conservation management. The work is conducted in coordination with **MECA** and the **Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth** (MAFW).

Humpback whales are world famous for undertaking long seasonal migrations between polar feeding areas and tropical breeding areas. Our research has shown Oman's humpback whales to be the only known population in the world not to migrate, but rather to breed and feed in the same geographic area. This makes them truly Arabian whales! Not only are these whales distinct in this regard, but our recent research also indicates they are one of the smallest and potentially most vulnerable whale populations in the world, numbering fewer than 100 individuals in Oman.

ESO was very proud to have our work and the rare Arabian Sea humpback whales in Dhofar featured in **BBC's *Wild Arabia*** documentary in March 2013.

The project aims to cooperate and assist with local and international bodies to improve conservation of cetaceans based on information acquired through scientific research; better define cetacean distribution, abundance and population identities in Oman; define critical habitats of cetaceans in Oman; identify, assess and help mitigate threats to cetaceans through conservation management recommendations and action; and raise awareness of marine and coastal environmental issues related to cetaceans and to enhance environmental education in Oman.

Partnerships

The collaboration between ESO, MAFW and MECA contributes towards the conservation of cetaceans through continued monitoring and research efforts, enhancement of resource capacity and management activities, and engagement of local communities.

In addition to local support, the full team includes numerous international associates and collaborators including those from The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the University of Durham, the University of Cape Town and University Malaysia Sarawak. The team is also supported by a network of volunteers sourced from both the local resident community in Oman and occasionally from overseas.

Arabian Sea Humpback Whale, Hallanyiat Islands,
Tobias Friedrich



Passive Acoustic Monitoring

In November 2012 three Marine Acoustic Recording Units were deployed in a triangulation configuration in the Gulf of Masirah and were then recovered 142 days later by divers in April 2013. They have been redeployed and are now providing broader coverage of the area adjacent to the Duqm Port facility. We thank the **Port of Duqm** for hosting the field team and providing berthing for the ESO survey vessel.

Data from this work continues to be archived, and it is anticipated that processing will commence through experts setting up a new acoustic lab at the WCS facilities in New York.



Mass Stranding of False Killer Whales

In January 2013 twelve false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*) were found at the high water mark of a small section of beach on the Batinah coastline adjacent to Sawadi Hotel. Members of the public had tried to return animals back to the sea prior to the arrival of experts, with all but one subsequently re-stranding. The ESO team was contacted by MECA, and supporting consultants at **Five Oceans** as well as veterinarians from the **Royal Diwan** attended and helped to perform necropsies on 11 specimens.

Providing a definitive cause of strandings is often very difficult, and can be due to accumulation or linkage of complex factors and multiple factors such as old age, disease, predators, starvation, vessel strikes, toxins, hunting and red tides, amongst others. Few of these possible causes can yet be completely eliminated from this stranding event.

However two can be identified as contributing causes. Absence of food in the stomachs of three animals dissected and the occurrence of a storm at the time of stranding may have resulted in fatigue and disorientation. Returning stranded animals back to sea and giving them a chance for survival is important from the point of view of species conservation and protection. *Pseudorca crassidens* are thought to have a gestation time of up to 14-16 months with females ovulating once every seven years. As such, reproductive capacity of this species is very low, making it vulnerable to any threat. It is notable that two of the stranded animals were found to be pregnant.

Evaluating causal links of strandings and related mortalities is a key facet of information required at national strategic levels and gaining an insight into these causal links through research can help flag critical conservation management issues that require urgent attention.

Stranding Training

ESO attended a stranding training workshop organized by MECA in March of 2013. This work was a continuation of collaborative efforts to build capacity in Oman for response to stranding events. As part of this initiative consultants supporting both ESO and the ministry have been revising record keeping process for strandings in Oman. Previous records held in the Oman Cetacean Database (OMCD) have now been extracted and incorporated within a new database that deals with strandings alone. This database is now referred to as the Oman Stranding Database (OMSD). This simplifies the workflow, allows turtles to be added into the database and also enables division of labour on database management.

Whale and Dolphin Tour Operator Guidelines

With tourism comes environmental threats and impacts, but also potential opportunities. The Renaissance Whale and Dolphin project hopes to improve, educate and stimulate the emerging dolphin watching industry in Oman, and in doing so to protect whales and dolphins from potentially harmful impacts from tourism. The ultimate goal is to contribute to a raising of the standards and economic profitability of whale/dolphin watching tourism in Oman, and one that actively supports conservation of cetaceans and their habitat.

Funding in 2012 from the **International Whaling Committee (IWC)** Scientific Committee allowed for background research on the industry to be undertaken in Muscat, including operator surveys and generation of guidelines. The first Whale and Dolphin Watching Guideline workshop was delivered on the 4th and 5th of November 2013 at Oman Sail's Headquarters and was attended by tour operators and representatives from the MAFW and the **Ministry of Tourism (MOT)** and supported by the **IWC Whale Watching Subcommittee**. The training consisted of classroom training as well as in-water training in which interactions with dolphins and whales were simulated using best practices. The venue for the workshop and boat for the training were provided by Oman Sail. A second workshop is being organized to take place in January 2014 targeting tour operators in Southern Oman.

Guidelines for watching Whales & Dolphins in Oman

At least twenty species of whales and dolphins occur in Oman including some which are resident year round. The best times to watch whales and dolphins are early morning and late afternoon, when the sea is often calmest. Remember that boats can disturb, stress or injure whales and dolphins. You can responsibly enjoy watching them by following some simple guidelines.

Approaching Whales & Dolphins

- Slow down at 500m & maintain a constant speed (less than 4 knots).
- Approach from the side and slightly behind and follow their direction of travel.
- Avoid approaching from directly behind or in front, or cutting across their path.
- Avoid sudden changes in speed and direction.
- Never chase or harass them or try to provoke a reaction by revving engines.
- Avoid calves, and whales and dolphins that are foraging or resting.
- Only 3 boats should be watching at a time. Wait your turn.
- Keep your distance. Allow at least 100 metres between you and a whale and 50 metres between you and a dolphin.
- Position your vessel on the same side as other vessels that are also watching.
- Avoid overtaking them, waiting in their path or drifting onto them.
- If you are approached by a whale or dolphin when stationary, remain where you are. Do not re-engage your props until the animals move away.
- If dolphins choose to bow ride, maintain course and speed.
- Allow groups of whales or dolphins to remain together: never drive through or between them.

Behaviour on board

- Do not bang on the hull, shout or whistle to provoke a reaction.
- It is dangerous to attempt to swim with, touch or feed whales and dolphins.
- Take extra care to avoid collisions with whales and dolphins in your path.
- Avoid using noisy equipment, such as echo sounders or sonar and bow or stern lateral thrusters.

Knowing when to leave

- Minimise the amount of time you spend viewing to 30 minutes.
- If you have to keep changing direction, then the animals may be trying to avoid you and should be left alone.
- Look out for other signs of disturbance, such as sudden, repeated or prolonged dives, frequent changes of direction, formation of tight groups that swim away from you, or aggressive slaps and slashes of tail flukes and flippers.
- If you have cut your engines choose the right moment to restart them to avoid disturbance.
- Move away slowly when leaving, keeping to the 4 knot speed limit until you are at least 100 metres away.

إرشادات لمشاهدة الحيتان والدلافين في سلطنة عمان

تتضمن المياه العمانية عشرين نوعاً على الأقل من الحيتان والدلافين، منها المتوطن الدائم ومنها الزائر العابر. وتعتبر الفترة الصباحية وما بعد الظهر أفضل فترات مشاهدة هذه الحيوانات إذ يكون البحر في هذا الوقت هادئاً. علينا أن نتذكر أن القوارب يمكن أن تزعج الحيتان والدلافين أو أن تصيدها بالخطأ أو الجرح، كما يجب أن نعلم أن المسكوبة لا تنشط منا حتى أثناء التمتع بمشاهدة الدلافين والحيتان لذا فإليه يجب علينا اتباع الإرشادات التالية:

الاقتراب من الحيتان والدلافين

- يجب تخفيض السرعة عند الاقتراب من 500 متر وتكون السرعة بطيئة وأقل من 4 عقدة.
- أدرك على أن يبقى القارب خلف المجموعة وعلى أحد الجانبين مع اتباع خط سيرها.
- تجنب الاقتراب من الخلف أو القدام مباشرة أو قطع مساراتها.
- تجنب تغيير السرعة أو الاتجاه بشكل مفاجئ.
- لا تطعمها أو تصيغها على فوطك، ولا تحاول الإمساك بها عن طريق إمساكها بالخيوط.
- تجنب الاقتراب من صغارها والدلافين والدلافين التي ترتفع عن الغداء أو لتدخر الراحة.
- يجب أن لا يذهب عدد القوارب في الزمعة الواحدة 3 قوارب.
- مراعاة المسافة الفاصلة، أحرص على كونا مسافة 100 متر بين القارب والحيتان ومسافة 50 متر بين القارب والدلافين.
- يجب أن تكون القوارب خلفها في نفس الجانب.
- تجنب الظهور المفاجئ أو الوقوف في مسارها أو الاقتراب في اتجاهها.
- في حال الاقتراب أحد الحيتان أو الدلافين من القارب فأحرص على عدم تحريك القارب أو تشغيل المحرك حتى تتأكد من اتجاه الحيتان.
- في حالة اقتراب الدلافين من القارب فحافظ على ذات السرعة واتجاهها.
- يجب عدم القفز من القارب والحيتان والدلافين، ويجب عدم فعل أفراد القارب أي شيء يزعجها.

السلوك على متن القارب

- تجنب إحداث أصوات عالية لإثارة الحيوانات (القارب على هبكل القارب الصغير الصرير).
- تسبب دمع الحيتان والدلافين أو إزعاجها أو لمسها أو تلمس على خطوها فبذلك يجب تجنب التصرف بهذه الطريقة وتجنب لثبات حالتك لتتأكد من جح الحيتان أو الدلافين الموجودة في طريقك.
- تجنب استخدام المعدات المثيرة للضوضاء على أجهزة فحص بصوتيات الصدى أو الفولسر الجانبية الموجودة في مقدمة القارب.

الوقت المناسب للإبتعاد والرحيل

- قلل من مقدار الوقت الذي تقضيه في مشاهدة الحيتان والدلافين إلى 30 دقيقة.
- إذا كان يتعين عليك التمسك في تغيير اتجاهك، فقد تحاول الحيوانات تجنبك وتغلبها ويجب تركها وحيدة.
- راقب تصرفات الحيوانات التي تدل على إزعاجها، مثل الهجمات المفاجئة والمكثرة والمضطربة، وتغير الاتجاه بشكل متكرر وتشكيل مجموعات صغيرة لتسبح بالقرب من القارب أو إزعاجها على سطح الماء التي تدل على مقاومة الضوضاء.
- تد توقف محركك القارب، فإذ لم تنته بعدة ثواني من تصرفها لتجأ إلى إزعاج الحيوانات.
- ابتعد ببطء عند المغادرة، وحافظ على حد السرعة البالغ 4 عقدة إلى أن تصبح على بعد 100 متر على الأقل.

For more information visit www.eso.org.om

www.eso.org.om لمزيد من المعلومات لزيارة موقعنا

Theme design by Soara.com

ESO has developed guidelines designed to explain best practices when whale and dolphin watching

Capacity Building and Regional Collaboration

The IWC Scientific Committee meeting in Jeju Korea in June (see page 35) presented opportunities for ESO to connect with counterparts and ensure the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale remains high on the agenda for international support. The Scientific Committee will continue to seek endorsement from IWC commissioners for support in the development of a Conservation Management Plan from range states. Given the long-standing history of our research, ESO has been approached by **WWF International** to provide advice and contributions in the formation of a conservation initiative.

Meanwhile, ESO continues to build the capacity of our three field assistants based on Masirah Island. They have been included in the ongoing field surveys and have been trained on sighting surveys and data entry. The training has also enabled them to independently conduct stranding surveys along the entire coastline of Masirah Island, which contributes to the stranding databases used for both cetaceans and sea turtles.

Goals for 2014

In the 2011 to 2013 season the field team was tasked with conducting vessel surveys within discrete areas previously identified as 'hotspots', including the Halaniyat Bay and Gulf of Masirah area. As well as identifying habitat use within these areas, the survey efforts continued the capture-mark-recapture (CMR) methodology from photo-identification methods, in order to update the population estimate for the Arabian Sea humpback whale.

This data highlighted the fact that a population revision would not be robust using the CMR method, and that this objective could only be revealed with continued monitoring in Oman and development of new survey projects in other range states. However one caveat to this requirement is that little is known about the movement and distribution of whales in the region beyond a few key sites in Oman. This is important to define where other states should focus research activities.

ESO has consulted with leading global experts in humpback whale tagging and secured endorsement of the IWC Scientific Committee. This will allow us to see where the whales travel and whether they are in the path of shipping routes. It will also allow better identification of habitats to enable work on conservation measures in those areas. Continued funds have been awarded by **Renaissance Services** and humpback tagging work will begin in 2014.

Workshops took place in Muscat, Hallaniyat Islands and Mirbat to discuss guidelines with tour operators



Mountain gazelle



Terrestrial Conservation Projects

Frankincense Research

Frankincense has played an integral part in the Omani heritage and culture and has been the main source of income for the Dhofari people for centuries. Frankincense trees also play important environmental roles: they grow on marginal land not suitable for ordinary agriculture, protect the soil from erosion, produce good biomass and provide shade. Few people know that frankincense is harvested by tapping the trunk and branches of the *Boswellia sacra* tree. In the past few years and after close monitoring of the growth patterns of the frankincense trees, researchers noticed that the tapping has been harsh, often leading to the degradation of the tree beyond repair. Changes in the climate over the past few years might have also had an impact on the growth of frankincense trees. Accordingly, it was important to monitor these two factors and record their impacts on the sustainability of frankincense farming in Dhofar.

Sponsored by **HSBC**, this long-term research project aims to determine the right frequency of cutting to get a good yield without adversely harming the trees. Additionally, by monitoring the meteorological data in three different locations, the project aims to set a baseline for weather data that can be used in the future to monitor impact as a result of climate change and its effect in the growth patterns of frankincense trees. An indirect objective of the project is also to attempt to encourage the old frankincense harvesters who are currently quitting the business and moving to the big cities, to believe in the viability of this business again and re-grow frankincense trees but this time to harvest them at sustainable levels.

2014 will see an end to this project lead by ESO Board Member Dr. Mohsen Al Amri and over the next year the research will give ESO a good understanding of the sustainable rate at which to harvest frankincense in order to maintain long term tree health and sustainability. We will also be able to understand whether the agro-ecological zones of the trees has any effect on yield and the annual variability in harvest levels and yield (how a yield in one year can impact the following years). We will also be able to understand how climatic data may influence yield and whether there is any correlation between tree size and the yield.



ESO Technician, Badr Al Shanfari,
assesses the health of frankincense trees

Community Outreach Projects

Our community outreach initiatives range from raising awareness of environmental issues in schools and public arena, as well as targeting higher education students. 2013 has seen ESO increased tree planting activities and the continuation of the annual environmental public speaking competition. Earth Hour was a huge success and our focus is to increase volunteerism and actively engage with the public.

4th Annual Masirah Festival

Masirah Island is located off the east coast of Oman, and with an estimated population of 12,000. It is 95 km long, running north-south and between 12 and 14km wide, with a total area of about 649km². It is the largest nesting site in the world for the endangered loggerhead turtle and part of ESO's core conservation strategy. Funded by **BP Oman**, The Masirah Festival took place for the fourth consecutive year on Masirah Island in April 2013, the beginning of the loggerhead turtle nesting season. The festival activities included educational indoor activities, beach visits, football tournaments and official meetings with the Wali of Masirah that were aimed at raising environmental awareness about the significance of the island for biodiversity and the role of the local community to conserve it for future generations.

Training University Students

ESO has a successful history in engaging higher education institutions and involving them in community outreach work. In particular, **Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)** students have been actively involved in the Masirah Festival since its inception. This year, six students from the Marine Science and Fisheries Department volunteered to assist ESO and were trained in school community outreach activities.

School Activities

For the past three years, school activities have focused on the importance of loggerhead turtles. In 2013, however, there was a change in the approach and ESO widened the awareness and introduced the different biodiversity inhabiting the island and how these flora and fauna interact with each other leading to the concept of "Ecological Balance". The activity included an in-class interactive presentation with an automated model of "Food Web" interactions as well as discussion sessions of the major human threats to the ecological balance. This led to discussions of the children's role to help minimize negative impacts and conserve the environment.

The ESO team then took a total of 200 students from all three schools in Masirah out to the beaches to investigate threats to the loggerhead turtles and conduct beach clean ups.

School students on Masirah Island help with a beach clean up during the Festival





Football Tournament

Following the 2012 success of the Masirah Festival football tournament, 2013 saw an increase to 120 players and attracted the local community, giving ESO an excellent opportunity to disseminate information, educational booklets, research findings and general environmental awareness.

A football league of 80 players was formed and ESO held a four-day tournament, attracting local spectators. This was the perfect opportunity for ESO to interact with the Masirah community and give out information on research findings and general environmental awareness. Each team was given the name of resident Masirah biodiversity: Loggerheads, Hawksbills, Greens, Leatherbacks, Humpback Whales, Masirah Gazelles, Egyptian Vultures, Ospreys, Swift Hern, and of course, our ESO Team. The championship took place over three days with spectacular attendance from Masirah residents and for the second year was won by the Loggerhead team!



“Let’s Plant One” Native Tree Planting Campaign

ESO's 2013 Native Tree Planting Campaign was jointly sponsored by **Port of Salalah** and the **Ford Environmental Conservation Grant** and aims not only to plant 12,000 trees, but to engage volunteers and raise awareness of the importance of planting native trees. The campaign focuses on the Dhofar region, which faces desertification, and has built long-standing relationships with the local community, officials, volunteers, schools, universities and colleges.

Opening Ceremony

This week-long phase of the campaign launched on March 30th at the **University of Dhofar** under the patronage of HE Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar. Both

Volunteers in Wilayat Dalkyt collect seeds for cultivation of saplings to be used in the Tree Planting Campaign



Children in Dhofar run a marathon in support of ESO's activities

the ESO team and board members were present as well as officials from **Dhofar Municipality**, Municipal Council Members, Walis and Director Generals and Port of Salalah. The event concluded with a tree planting event led by volunteers, university students and staff as well as the local Salalah church.

School Involvement

On March 31st **The Sultan School** in Salalah invited all local schools to participate in a tree planting event and awareness walk for the campaign and saw over 250 students as well as the President of the Dhofar Municipality and other officials taking part. ESO provided certificates, prizes and t-shirts.

Later that week the **Ajdorot School** in Rakhyut, in the presence of the Wali of Rakhyut, held an event organized especially for the ESO campaign. It included speeches, competitions, poetry and presentations as well as a tree planting event assisted by over 50 students. The team then travelled to Dhalkoot and planted trees with more schools in the presence of the Wali of Dhalkoot along with volunteers and students.

Tree Planting

In addition to events at schools, 50 trees were planted in Rabkoot and the **Salalah College of Technology**, where 60 volunteers were on hand to help. The Research Center at the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs** in Hasik, 200km east of Salalah was the next port of call where over 120 trees were planted with the help of 20 volunteers from MECA and the Deputy Wali's Office and we were even joined by staff from the **Oman Botanical Gardens**.

It was an excellent week for the Native Tree Planting Campaign and a great success for ESO to have engaged so many participants. Efforts will continue in 2014 with school awareness and we would like to thank ESO Board Members Dr Mohsen Al Amri and Dr Mehdi Jaafar who have led this campaign since 2012. ESO is grateful to announce that the Dhofar Municipality and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries have renewed their pledge to plant only native species in the region and we thank them for their help and support in this campaign.



Dr Mohsen Al Amri, ESO Board Member, leads the Tree Planting Campaign

World Migratory Bird Day

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is a global event to raise awareness on the importance of Migratory Birds and the protection of their habitats. People from all over the world organize events and education programs in celebration of this day and with sponsorship from **Oman LNG**, ESO participated for the first time in Oman on May 12th-13th 2013.

The event included public lectures, a photograph exhibition at the **EcOman Center** and a bird walking field trip to the Al Ansab Wetland. We would like to thank **Waheed Al Fazari, Jens Eriksen, Haya Water**, and **PDO** for their support of the initiative.

ESO Members enjoyed a bird watching day out



Western Reef Heron



Second Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition

In cooperation with **Emirates Environmental Group** (EEG), ESO held the 2nd Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition organized with the aim of developing a deep appreciation of the environment and an understanding of the challenges facing it through study, research, discussion and debate.

An open challenge was thrown to the higher education student community across Oman. The students built and presented strong cases on different contemporary issues and questions relating to the environment. The competition gave the participants a wonderful opportunity to showcase knowledge and talent, and served as a good networking tool among government and private academic institutions.

Sponsored by **Bank Sohar** (Gold Sponsor), **Petroleum Development of Oman** (PDO), **Oman LNG LLC** (Silver Sponsors), and **Port of Duqm** (Bronze Sponsor) and supported by **TRACCS Oman**, the competition was held on November 11th under the patronage of H.H. Dr. Sayyida Mona Bint Fahd Al Said.

A distinguished panel of judges were invited to evaluate the performances of the participants: HH Sayyida Tania Al Said (President, ESO), Dr. Mehdi Jaafar (Vice President, ESO), Yasser Abdullah Sulaiman (Lieutenant Governor Marketing District 20, Toastmasters), Hassan Al Saleh (Managing Partner, Traccs Oman).



SQU Students receive their winning trophy

Winning teams

Who Left the Tap Open?

Nizwa University (Maha Al Alawi, Houda Al Hatmi, Zainab Al Nasser, Al Zahraa Al Ghafri)

Arts and the Environment

Nizwa University (Maryam Al Masalhi, Rahma Al Suqri, Maany Al Hinaii, Mahlaa Al Khusaibi)

Technology Owes Ecology an Apology

Sultan Qaboos University (Nasser Al Hajri, Mazin Al Mamari, Ghaanim Al Hashmi, Hamood Al Araimi, Hamed Al Mukhaini)

Global Challenges – Local Solutions:

Sultan Qaboos University (Marwa Al Mahrooqi, Tahani Al Khusaibi, Amira Al Rajhi)

Following the success of the National Competition, ESO held workshops for the winning teams to enhance their design and presentation skills for the Regional Competition in Dubai where they competed against 58 teams from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain.



The judges were impressed with the quality of presentations



The winning teams travelled to Dubai for the Regional Competition

Earth Hour 2013

2013 saw a huge success in ESO joining the global initiative of Earth Hour, which aims to demonstrate concerns about the future of our planet by doing something simple, yet remarkable – turning off lights for one hour on the last Saturday in March at 8:30pm. This year, with the slogan "I will if you will", we were proud to partner with **Sohar Aluminium** and **Sabco Group** (Gold Sponsors), **PDO** and **Oman Data Park** (Silver Sponsors), and **Muscat Pharmacy**, **Omran**, **Towell Engineering**, and **Daleel Petroleum** (Bronze Sponsors). Using social and conventional media, ESO received over 2000 pledges of support from the public and private sector, government and educational institutions to turn their lights off for 1 hour. It was an incredible display of community participation!

YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook along with support from **Apex Publishing**, **Polyphaemus**, **Merge 104.8** and **Al Wisal** enabled ESO to get the message out across Oman and engage volunteers. ESO was honoured that the **Royal Opera House Muscat**, the **Grand Mosque**, **Muscat Municipality** and **SQU** also joined in the initiative and turned off all non-essential lighting. In 2013 we were able to calculate that during Earth Hour, Oman saved 69,560 KWh of electricity, an increase of 28% from our 2012 calculations! This is enough power to provide electricity in 1300 homes for one hour!

Special support was received from the InterContinental Hotel Muscat who held an outdoor event to celebrate Earth Hour where glow in the dark t-shirts were sold and families enjoyed hand painting, capoeira performances and a countdown to earth hour.

In line with the global challenge for 2013 Earth Hour "I will if you will" the ESO Board and Staff pledged to carry out a beach clean up if we received more than 2000 pledges of support.



Jaber bin Zaid School received the winning trophy for ESO's Annual School Energy Saving Competition!



THANK YOU TO ALL EARTH HOUR VOLUNTEERS!

THANK YOU!

23 DEGREES NORTH | 4TI TAISM | 95.9 HI-FM | AIESEC OMAN | AJIT KHIMJI GROUP LLC | AL DASTOOR CONTRACTING & TRADING LLC | AL GHUBRAH POWER & DESALINATION COMPANY | AL OSOOL AL ARABIA LLC | AL QURUM MEDICAL CENTRE | AL QURUM VETERINARY CLINIC | AL RAHAL ENGINEERING & PROJECTS | AL WISAL | AL-KAHLILI GROUP | ALEX TENNIS SCHOOL | ALJIZI WATER | APEX PRESS AND PUBLISHING | ARABIAN MARITIME AND NAVIGATION AIDS SERVICES | AXIS TECHNOLOGY | BAIT AL ZUBAIR FOUNDATION | BANDERA EVENTS | BANK DHOFAR | BARAKA BINT THALABA BASIC SCHOOL (7-11) | BIN MIRZA INTERNATIONAL | BLUE HORIZON (OMOZZ) | BOUTIQUE MUSCAT | BREADTALK OMAN | CAKE GALLERY | CARILLION ALAWI LLC | CARTEX PRINTER CARTRIDGES | CLASS 5 THE SULTAN'S SCHOOL | COEJA ECO SOLUTIONS | CROWNE PLAZA MUSCAT | CROWNE PLAZA SOHAR | DALEEL PETROLEUM LLC | DHOFAR POWER COMPANY | DIRECTORATE OF MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY AT AL AMERAT | DOUGLAS OMAN HOLDING INTERNATIONAL | EAMAR ENGINEERING CONSULTANCY | EI HAB TRAVELS LLC | ELECTRICITY HOLDING COMPANY GROUP | ENGINEERING VILLAGE | ERA REAL ESTATE | ERNST & YOUNG | EYECOMMS | FIVE OCEANS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | FLAMINGO HOTEL MANAGEMENT | GALAXY WAY | GEORGIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN OMAN | GLOBAL SCUBA | GLORIA JEAN'S COFFEES - MISK MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL LLC | GOLDEN TULIP KHASAB RESORT | GOLDEN TULIP SEEB | GRADE 4FR TAISM | HMR ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS | HOFINCONS & CO. LLC | IMAGINE TECHNOLOGIES | INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY | INTERCONTINENTAL MUSCAT | ION EXCHANGE & CO. LLC | JALAN PRIVATE SCHOOL | KNOWLEDGE OASIS MUSCAT | MAGIC TOUCH BEAUTY SALON | MAJAN ELECTRICITY COMPANY | MAJAN ELECTRICITY COMPANY SAOC | MAZOOON ELECTRICITY COMPANY | MAZOOON ELECTRICITY COMPANY SAOC | MAZOOON ENVIRONMENTAL & TECH. SERVICES LLC (METS) | MERGE 104.8 | MGI MODERN GULF INSTITUTE | MILLENNIUM RELOCATIONS | MODERN GULF INSTITUTE | MODERN ROSE TRADING ENT.LLC | MODERN TECHNOLOGY COMPUTER SERVICES LLC | MOSAIC LLC | MUMTAZ MAHAL | MUSCAT DAILY | MUSCAT GRAND MALL | MUSCAT INSURANCE SERVICES LLC | MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | MUSCAT MOBILES | NANDO'S OMAN | NARANJEE HIRJEE & CO. LLC | NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN | NATIONAL NURSERY MONTESSORI | NATIONAL SYSTEM MANAGEMENT LLC | NAWRAS | OCEAN BLUE INTERNATIONAL LLC | OETC | OMAN AIR | OMAN AQUA SCIENCE LLC. | OMAN BOTANIC GARDEN | OMAN DATA PARK | OMAN DENTAL COLLEGE | OMAN LNG LLC | OMAN OBSERVER | OMAN OIL COMPANY | OMAN SAIL | OMAN SHIP MANAGEMENT COMPANY SAOC | OMAN SHIPPING COMPANY SAOC | OMAN TANK TERMINAL COMPANY | OMAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (OMRAN) | OMAN VISITORS PORTAL | OMANTEL | ONEOMAN.COM | OOSC | PASSAGE TO INDIA RESTAURANT | PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT OMAN | QPS 128 | R & N KHIMJI L.L.C | RAMESH KHIMJI GROUP | RAS AL JINZ TURTLES RESERVE | RENAISSANCE EQUIPMENT TRADING LLC | RENAISSANCE SERVICES SAOG | ROYAL FLIGHT SCHOOL | ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT | RURAL AREAS ELECTRICITY COMPANY SAOC | SALALAH METHANOL | SEA LEGENDS | SOHAR ALUMINIUM | STEPS4WARD | STS | SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY | SUPER QUALITY FOR HEARING AID & SPEECH THERAPY | TAWOOS INDUSTRIAL SERVICES COMPANY LLC | TECLUTION | THE AGENCY | THE FLOWER SHOP | THE K'S CAFE | THE SULTAN'S SCHOOL | TIBIAAN PROPERTIES | TOP MEDICAL CARE | TOWELL AUTO CENTRE | TRACCS | TURTLE BEACH RESORT | UNITED MEDIA SERVICES LLC | VOLKSWAGEN - WATTAYAH MOTORS | WATER WORLD MARINE LLC | WHISPERS OF SERENITY CLINIC | WORLEYPARSONS | Y1 GREEN | "YEAR 1 BLUE, THE SULTAN'S SCHOOL" | YEAR 3A | YEAR 5 A - SULTAN SCHOOL | مدرسة | اللجنة العليا للسلامة والصحة والبيئة | جامعة الفلكية العمانية | الزاوية الجديدة | المعهد العالي للعلوم الإدارية والمالية | 5-12 | "مدرسة العجبة للتعليم الاساسي" | 12-11 | مؤسسة رؤية الشباب



SELECT PARTNERS:



SELECT PARTNERS:



SELECT PARTNERS:



Capacity Building Program

Oman LNG LLC: ESO's Capacity Building Partner

ESO has been steadily growing over the last seven years and it remains our goal to train Omanis in the field of environmental conservation. Due to natural attrition and as NGO employees were unable to secure bank loans, local employees are often recruited to other organizations seeking to improve their environmental capabilities. In 2011 we found ourselves faced with a major restructuring of staff in order to keep up with the growing responsibilities and projects that ESO has and wants to continue taking on.

It was agreed by the ESO Board that a central part of ESO's mandate would be to train Omani graduates in conservation strategies and NGO and community involvement before joining Oman's workforce and give them an opportunity to pursue a career with ESO. However, there was a shortfall in funding between the administrative costs that are brought in from project funding, and the running costs of the Society.

In March 2012 **Oman LNG** (OLNG) became ESO's Capacity Building Partner in order to help cover this short fall of funding, allowing the Society in turn to successfully increase all project capabilities, increase community outreach programs, increase volunteer involvement and start an Omani Training Program in the field of environmental conservation.

Since receiving the OLNG funds in April 2012, ESO has speedily been making progress in the area of capacity building. To date ten employees have been hired and trained, giving ESO the much-needed support and administrative assistance it requires, in order to further plans for an increased number of research, community outreach and education projects in Oman. In addition, the funds have enabled ESO to reach out more effectively and engage with the public, as well as the various official bodies.

ESO is very grateful for the OLNG support, and eagerly anticipate the upcoming phases of collaboration, which will enable the Society to further establish itself as an effective organisation dedicated to nature conservation and raising awareness in Oman. The ESO/OLNG Capacity Building Partnership is fulfilling our ultimate aim of becoming an independent, self-sustaining organization, run by professional and qualified local citizens, safeguarding Oman's natural heritage.

Omani Training Program

Although graduates are trained in a specific area of NGO management, each leave the training program with experience in the following areas:

- NGO Management
- Project Management
- Conservation Management
- In-field Research Experience
- Community Outreach
- Awareness Raising
- Volunteer Management

ESO would like to thank Bank Muscat and the National Bank of Oman for their support in providing free training courses to our staff. We would also like to thank Bank Muscat for ensuring ESO staff's applicability for bank loans.



Omar Al Riyami

Omar graduated from Sultan Qaboos University in 2008 with a BSc in Marine Sciences and Fisheries. He joined ESO in 2009 as Marine Projects Assistant at a time when ESO only had 3 staff and due to his passion in working with local communities and schools and he took over as Community Outreach Manager. Omar designed and implemented awareness and outreach programs, and coordinated ESO activities at schools, colleges and universities. During Omar's tenure at ESO he attended most ESO-Governmental meetings and is well known by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Fisheries and Agricultural Wealth, as well as by government agencies in Sharqiya and Dhofar Regions. He has represented ESO on countless occasions and attended training and workshops including a 6-week Parks, Biodiversity and Ecotourism WHAT? in the United States and the

IUCN Red List Workshop in Jordan. Omar was chosen by UNESCO to attend and represent ESO at the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in Kyoto, Japan in 2012. In September 2013 Omar moved to the private sector as an environmental advisor and although we were sad to see him leave after 4 years we wish him the best and he continues to volunteer with ESO and sit on the committee formed by the Ministry of Environment to regulate plastic bag usage in Oman.

Asma Al Balushi

Asma graduated from Sultan Qaboos University in 2011 with a BSc in Marine Science. She was recruited for the position of Projects Management Coordinator and has been with ESO since March 2012, assisting in consultant management, proposal and report writing, securing scientific research permits and liaising between ESO's Muscat and Masirah offices. Following Asma's successful publication in the Phoenix as a first author in 2012, she has taken on larger responsibilities, ensuring stakeholder engagement as a high priority. Asma has led meetings with the Wali of Masirah, engaged with the Oman Women's Association and given numerous presentations, strengthening ESO's community outreach program and ensuring that results of our scientific projects are shared with relevant parties. In October, Asma secured a nomination through ESO to attend the 10-day Earthwatch Emerging Scientists Program, which took place at the Lajuma Research Center, Soutpansberg Mountains, Limpopo Province in South Africa. She was one of 10 participants from Africa and the Middle East and she engaged in both scientific research and education. The skills gained on the program are invaluable and although they were integrated into a research project focusing on leopards and monkeys, they can be applied to using those skills and knowledge within Oman's scientific research programs.



Omar Al Hosni

Omar holds a BSc in Environmental Biology from SQU and was hired as Community Outreach Coordinator as soon as he graduated. He stayed with ESO from March-August 2013 and his role was to assist in implementing community outreach work. In line with this Omar worked on two main projects: Tree Planting Campaign in Salalah and Masirah Festival on Masirah Island. He was instrumental in liaising with schools and volunteers to make both events a success. He was also responsible for creating educational booklets that were distributed at both events. Omar Al Hosni left ESO to pursue a career in The Diwan Special Forces. He is still an active ESO member and continues to volunteer during our activities.

Sawsan Al Husaini

Sawsan has been working with ESO for two years and is now ESO's full time Public Relations Officer and Administrative Assistant. Sawsan has proven herself to be capable and hardworking and ESO has ensured she has obtained English language courses as well as customer service courses. She has recently completed 3 examinations in an elementary English course at the British Council and excelled in all. She has proven herself to be dedicated and we wish her luck with the pre-intermediate level courses she will be starting in 2014.



Juma Al Arimi, Ghasi Al Farsi and Juma Al Humaidi

Juma, Ghasi and Juma have been working for ESO since 2009 as part time field assistants in Masirah. Although they were initially recruited and trained by ESO to help with field surveys of loggerhead turtles, their contributions have been unparalleled in terms of creating ties with the local community in Masirah. Our field assistants have now been working full time with ESO for two years, assisting in the field with our Turtle Conservation, Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Project and Egyptian Vulture research. Not only have the field assistants been trained in field surveying methods, they have completed computer, English, typing, bird identification and ringing, and whale and dolphin identification courses. They have worked with experts from the US, Netherlands, Bulgaria and the UK and recently took the lead in ESO's sustainable fishing towards turtle conservation project during which they worked with SQU interns and marine scientists. Working towards capacity building of Omanis in field research techniques is a high priority for ESO and we are excited to have such wonderful field assistants to work with and start to achieve this goal!



Nuhaila Al Sulaimani

Nuhaila began volunteering with ESO during our Earth Hour Campaign and holds both a BSc in Applied Biology from the Higher College of Technology and an MSc in Environmental Monitoring and Management from the University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus. She has worked both as an elementary school teacher in Oman as well as an environmental specialist at a consultancy firm. Nuhaila joined ESO as Education Coordinator in October and is a great asset to the organization. In the short time that she has been with ESO she has worked on the Inter College Environmental Public Speaking Competition, tree planting campaign, and liaising with AISEC to plan a Go Green Campaign. Nuhaila is currently working on an educative booklet to be given to students in Dhofar schools outlining the importance of planting native trees in Oman as well as arranging voluntary participation in disseminating this information.



Khalid Al Khaldi

Khalid Al Khaldi volunteered for ESO for three months during the preparation for the Inter College Speaking Competition and was solely responsible for contacting and engaging college and university students. Khalid has a natural charismatic ability to engage and excite volunteers and students and so it was only natural for him to join ESO full time as Membership and Volunteer Coordinator. He is still completing his diploma in Engineering Computer Science from Waljat College of Applied Sciences but is able to be in the office every day as he has finished course work but still completing exams. For his voluntary dedication to ESO before becoming a staff member, Khalid was awarded this year's Volunteer of the Year Award.



Internship Program

Both ESO and our university interns have benefited from our internship program over the last year. Students all have their educational experience in common but what stands out to employers is those students who also have work experiences by the time they graduate. As a non-profit, non-government organization, we greatly appreciate the time, effort and commitment that interns provide. In 2013 we were happy to host five interns.

Utkarsh Shroff is a student in Media Studies at Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune, India, and was required to complete an internship as part of his curriculum. For six weeks at ESO Utkarsh spent his time working on ideas for a new corporate membership package which will be rolled out in 2014.

Amjed Al Balushi is a student at the Higher College of Technology in Muscat majoring in Business and completed a three month internship at ESO to help administrate our inter-college speaking competition. He was invaluable in ensuring that the event was a success by registering participant information, archiving and filing, event set up, and drafting letters to participants and their colleges.

Pritam Kumar is a student in Media Studies at Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune, India, and was required to complete an internship as part of his curriculum. Pritam spent six weeks at ESO managing our social media and providing workshops to staff on how social media works. He also took photographs at ESO events during this time and provided a social media report summary and recommendations at the end of his internship.

Bassim Al Subhi and **Assad Al Aamri** joined ESO for three months after completing a degree in Marine Sciences from Sultan Qaboos University. During their internship they worked hard on our Sea Turtle Conservation and Sustainable Fishing Project on Masirah and played an integral role in designing and conducting community surveys as well as conducting background research, documentation of data and preparation of project reports. Both gave excellent presentations to our staff following the end of their internship and both have secured jobs at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth.



Amjed Al Balushi



Bassim Al Subhi



Pritam Kumar



Assad Al Aamri

Other Activities

ECO BOWL 2013

14 teams competed in ESO's 2nd annual Corporate Bowling competition aiming to raise funds for ESO. Taking first place with an unbeaten 1469 points was National Bank of Oman, second place went to Ahli Bank with a close 1232 points and third place to BankMuscat with 1201 points. Prizes were provided courtesy of City Cinema, Sifawy Boutique Hotel, More Café and Lokanta Restaurant.

The following companies supported ESO in raising funds during the Eco Bowl: Enhance, Al Anwar Group, Zubair Automotive, Khimji Ramdas, Services & Trade, NBO, Ahli Bank, Oman LNG, Renaissance Services, Nawras, Occidental of Oman, Bank Dhofar, Carillion Alawi, and Bank Muscat.

The best striker award was given to Lutfi Al Harthy for a total of eleven strikes in the tournament. We would like to thank all the companies who participated and look forward to the 2014 rematch!



Volunteer of the Year Award 2013

The ESO Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding efforts of our volunteers. It's our way of thanking them for their generous hours and services throughout the year.

The award of the Volunteer of the Year 2013 went to Khalid Al Khaldi in Muscat and to Eman Al Huraibi in Salalah.



Khalid's contribution to the Inter-College Speaking Competition was unparalleled. He created and maintained ties with college students and helped mentor them through their presentation designs. Khalid took an active role in organizing the event nationally and even accompanied the students to Dubai for the regional competition. We are very proud that Khalid has now joined ESO on a full time basis as our Membership and Volunteer Coordinator.

Eman was instrumental in assisting with ESO's tree planting campaign in Dhofar. Her work, dedication and initiatives were truly exemplary. Eman took it upon herself to organize, supervise and follow up on the marathon run, painting contest and tree planting at the Diwan School. We are grateful for her commitment and excited to continue working with Eman as she takes a larger role in the 2014 tree planting campaign aimed at designing and distributing educational booklets and organizing a student conference to discuss native trees.



In other news, we are very excited that Antonia Vegh, who was awarded the 2012 Volunteer of the Year Award has joined ESO full time as our Events Coordinator! Antonia recently attended an expedition to Musandam organized by Biosphere Expeditions during which she received training for coral reef health checks. She is focusing her time at ESO managing volunteers, organising clean ups and coordinating events.



The Freezing Omanis hold the ESO flag with Sir Robert Swan, the first man to walk both North and South Poles and founder of 2041



Freezing Omanis

ESO was very excited to be able to support Bader Al Lawati and Ameer Abdhussain nicknamed "The Freezing Omanis" on their adventure to the Antarctic in February 2013. Bader and Ameer carried ESO's flag on their expedition and raised awareness of the fragility of our environment upon their return to Oman. They continue to promote conservation and bring about change through public appearances and social media and we wish them luck on their continued journey!

Awards, Grants and Donations

ESO would like to give special thanks to all those who have helped us achieve our goals in 2013. These donors, sponsors and grant agencies are listed below in date order of the donations:

- **Ajit Khimji Group** for free office space
- **Oman LNG** for the Capacity Building Program
- **TRACCS Oman** for public relations support
- **Apex Publishing** for their continued support
- **HSBC** for the Frankincense Project
- **Renaissance Services** for Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Project
- **Marina Bandar Al Rowdha** for the free berthing of the ESO boat
- **Sohar Aluminium** for sponsorship of ESO awareness and corporate films
- **The Agency** for the production of ESO awareness film
- **Shell Oman** for fuel cards
- **Towell Auto Center** for vehicle rental
- **The Chedi Muscat, Sifawy Boutique Hotel** and **Golden Tulip Muscat** for guest donations
- **Merge FM** and **Wisal FM** for Oman Environment Day coverage
- **Drums of India Concert** donation
- **MB Petroleum, Port of Duqm, OMZEST, National Bank of Oman** and **Bank Muscat** for Sponsorship of the ESO Fundraising Ball
- **Jawad Sultan Group, Mistal, HSBC, Muscat Hills, More Café, Mani's Catering, GHM Hotels, Royal Opera House Muscat, Epic Private Journeys, Beho Beho** (Selous Game Reserve) for the raffle and auction Prizes at the ESO Fundraising Ball
- **Sohar Aluminium, Sabco Group, Petroleum Development of Oman, Oman Data Park, Muscat Pharmacy, Omran, Towell Engineering, and Daleel Petroleum** for Earth Hour 2013
- **Muscat Daily, Al Isbou'a** and **The Week** (Apex Publishing) for media support during Earth Hour 2013
- **Intercontinental Muscat, Polyphaemus, Eventus, SNK Productions, Merge 104.8** and **Al Wisal** for support during Earth Hour 2013
- **Port of Salalah** and **Ford Environmental Grant** for Tree Planting Campaign
- **BP Oman** for Masirah Festival
- **National Bank of Oman** for staff training courses
- **Oman LNG, Haya Water** and **EcOman Center** for World Migratory Bird Day
- **Radisson Blu** for ESO Ramadan Quiz
- **Bank Sohar, Oman LNG, PDO** and the **Port of Duqm** for Inter-College Environmental Public Speaking Competition
- **Oman Sail** for use of their premises for Dolphin Tour Operator Workshop
- **Oman Air** for displaying ESO awareness film on board flights
- **UMS** for webmail support
- **Sifawy Boutique Hotel, More Café, City Cinema** and **Lokanta Restaurant** for ECO BOWL 2013 prizes
- **Paradigm Advertising & Publishing** for ECO BOWL 2013 support
- **Bank Muscat** for staff training courses
- **Petroleum Development Oman** for the use of their lecture hall

International Conferences Highlights

International Whaling Commission, Jeju, South Korea (June 2013)

ESO's whale and dolphin program was presented at the annual meeting this year by Andrew Willson whose attendance was requested by the IWC as an invited participant. The primary presentation to the Southern Hemisphere sub-committee detailed the progress with work in the past year, the key threats to the Arabian Sea humpback whale population and recommendations for future action. The recommendations included commencing a satellite tagging project to assist in habitat mapping for addressing critical management issues and reinforcing ties with regional counterparts to better understand the movement of the whales amongst all range states. Both concepts were reviewed and supported by members of the committee.

Regional Biodiversity Rapid Assessment Project, Abu Dhabi, UAE

ESO was pleased to be able to contribute extensively to the completion of the Regional Biodiversity Assessment Project initiated by The Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI), supported by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD). With contributions from over 140 stakeholder institutions the project achieved several key outcomes: the first comprehensive habitat maps for the region; headline indicators from the Ecosystem Threat Status and Protection Level Assessments; the first objective measure of conservation for the Arabian Peninsula ecosystems; and spatial prioritizations identifying trans-boundary priority areas. Access to the e-copy of the report is accessible on www.AGEDI.ae

Conferences, Lectures and Workshops attended in 2013

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 2013:

International Whaling Commission, Scientific Committee meeting, Jeju, South Korea

4th Roundtable Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Arab Region: UNEP/ESCWA/ Arab League, Cairo, Egypt

Expert Group Meeting on Green Value Chains for Improved Livelihoods in the Arab Region & The Second Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (AFSN): ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon

Second Meeting for CSO Representatives in the Arab Region on Food Security, Amman, Jordan

Fifth Session of the Governing Body of The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Muscat, Oman

Sinai Agama (*Pseudotrapelus sinaitus*)





Mangroves near Mahout Island
Thomas P. Peschak

Arab Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals November, Tunisia

Arabian Leopard Conservation Conference: National Centre for Field Environmental Research, Mirbat, Oman

State Council 2nd Normal session on Establishment of a General National Authority to address the issue of Waste Management, Muscat, Oman

Annual Regional Consultative Meeting for Major Groups and Stakeholders and Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Arab Water Security Strategy and its Action Plan, Amman, Jordan

Strengthening Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making; Building Connections in Africa and the Middle East, Rabat, Morocco

Regional Biodiversity Rapid Assessment Project Workshop, Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative, Abu Dhabi, UAE

33rd International Sea Turtle Symposium 2013, Baltimore, USA

International symposium of Biotechnology and Conservation of Species from Arid Regions: SQU, Muscat, Oman

German Approaches in the field of environmental technologies (Renewable Energy, Waste Water & Waste Management): Energy Agency of Rhineland-Palatinate / Institute for Applied Material Flow Management, Muscat, Oman

Marine Biotechnology Symposium: SQU, Muscat, Oman

Strengthening Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making, Muscat, Oman

Capacity Building Workshop on Birds Research, Muscat, Oman

Response to Marine Mammal and Turtle Stranding, Muscat, Oman

Afkar 3 (Assessing Youth Initiatives), Salalah, Oman

Workshop for updating the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan, Muscat, Oman

Conserving Leopards and Monkeys in South Africa: Earthwatch, Polokwane, South Africa

Water Bird Census Workshop, Muscat, Oman

Regional Inter-College Environmental Speaking Competition: Emirates Environmental Group, Dubai, UAE

Reef Check Eco Diver training: Biosphere Expeditions, Musandam, Oman

International Workshop on Environmental Sustainability of Mangrove Ecosystem, Muscat, Oman

Marine Science and Fisheries Open Day: SQU, Muscat, Oman

Waste Management Forum: Bidbid Municipality, MRMWR, Bidbid, Oman

Environmental Forum, Wadi Al Ma'awel, Oman

Environmental concerns in Industrial Estates: Sur Industrial Estate, Sur, Oman

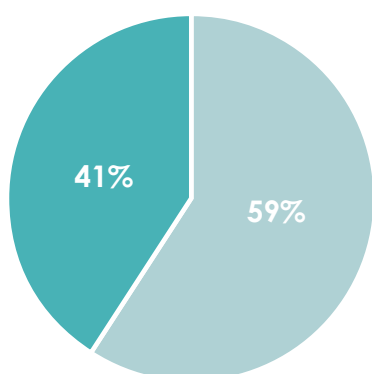
World Environment Day (Food Waste): ITA, Muscat, Oman

Polyolefin Plastic Arabia Conference: PEIE, Muscat, Oman

Membership

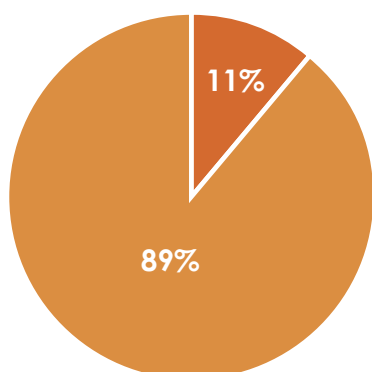
Individual Membership

As of December 2013 there were a total of 947 ESO individual members. The charts below show percentages of Omanis, students and male vs female members.



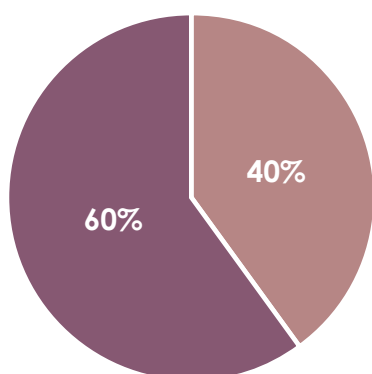
Omani

Non-Omani



Student

Non-Student




Male

Female

Corporate Membership

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

Ajit Khimji Group of Companies
Alargan Towell Investment Company
Al Hassan Engineering
Al Mashriq International Engineering Consultancy
Al Reef Real Estate Co.
Bank Dhofar
Bank Muscat
Carillion Alawi
Electricity Holding Company
Ernst & Young
Gulf Triangle Industries
Haya Water
Lamor Clean Globe Oman
Maqshan Oil & Gas Services
Muriya Tourism Development
Muscat Electricity Distribution Company
Muscat Finance
Muscat Overseas
National Bank of Oman
Nawras
Oman Environmental Services Holding Company
Oman Investment & Finance Company
Oman Solar Systems Company
Omran
Oman Trading International
Petroleum Development of Oman
Port of Duqm
Port of Salalah
Port of Sohar
PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Shell Development Oman
Shell Oman Marketing Services
Sohar Aluminium
Strabag Oman
Towell Auto Center
WS Atkins International Co.



Arabian Ghost Crab (*Ocypode rotundata*)
Masirah Island. Thomas P. Peschak



Affiliations with International Organisations

- United Nations Environmental Program
- United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- Indian Ocean Research & Conservation Association
- International Whaling Commission
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Birdlife International
- Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds
- Emirates Environmental Group
- Emirates Wildlife Society/WWF
- Ford Foundation
- Earth Watch Institute
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association
- Sackler Institute of Comparative Genomics, American Museum of Natural History
- University of Stockholm
- University of South Wales
- School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Durham University
- South West Fisheries and Science Centre
- Ifremer (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea)
- Center for GeoGenetics, Natural History Museum of Denmark, University of Copenhagen
- Motte Marine Laboratory
- Florida Wildlife Commission

Juvenile Green Turtle
(*Chelonia mydas*), Musandam
Thomas P. Peschak



Acknowledgements

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

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

ESO Staff are the backbone of the Society and its work and we thank all that have come and gone over the years. They have all made a lasting difference and will always be remembered. We would especially like to thank Omar Al Riyami who watched ESO grow from its infancy and who continues to volunteer his time to the organization. In addition we would like to congratulate our Projects Manager, Suaad Al Harthy on the birth of her daughter. Sana Tawileh was instrumental in establishing social media connections for ESO and we wish her the best.

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

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

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

Oman's media have been extremely supportive in making our efforts public and ESO would like to thank all media houses for their continued coverage of our projects and successes. Special thanks go to Apex Publishing who have given free advertising space to ESO over the last four years for which we are extremely grateful.

Volunteer Acknowledgements

Volunteers are a very important part of our research projects. In particular Khalid Al Khaldi who won the ESO Volunteer of the Year Award and has now become a permanent staff member, and Eman Al Huraibi also winner of the Volunteer of the Year Award, who volunteered for the Dhofar Tree Planting Campaign and continues to do so. Antonia Vegh who helped with anything and everything and we are very happy to see her join ESO permanently. Robert Baldwin, who works tirelessly to ensure our conservation programs for both cetaceans and turtles are of the highest quality and is always at ESO's disposal for advice. Andy Wilson who has been a permanent source of support for our marine projects. Omar Al Riyami who continues to represent ESO at the Steering Committee Meetings for Plastic Bag Regulations held by MECA and in the media.

Our interns, Utkarsh Shroff who helped create a corporate membership package and Pritam Kumar who continued our social media presence and took amazing photos at ESO events. Kristina Lane, who helped administrate the dolphin tour operator guideline workshops and gave much needed assistance sorting out our storage room! Issra Al Balushi who came into the office on a daily basis to help with administrative work and was a great asset. Nitin Kumar for help with designing.

Bushra Al Kindi, Bader Al Lawati, Sultan Al Abdali, Fahmi Al Ma'awali, Nuhaila Al Sulaimani, Dareen Matwani, Nicki Burns, Celina, Irene, Johnson Owe, Omar Al Hosni, Ahmed Al Rawahi, Hamad Al Sharji, Majed Akaak and Khalid Al Busaidi for their dedication during Earth Hour. Omar Al Hosni, AbdulBari Al Shidi, Ibrahim Al Zakwani and Ahmed Al Sedairi (SQU Biology Group) for their help with the Oman Eco exhibition. Ali Jaffar Al Lawati and Ghudaina Al Issai for their help with the education booklet for the Tree Planting Campaign. Mohammed Al Habsi for helping with photography at ESO events. Esra Soydan for her help with Competition posters.



Agama lizard (*Pseudotrapelus jensvindumi*)

SQU students Haitham Al Gheilani, Bader Al Buwqi, Saleh Al Jaafary, Fatima Al Harbi, Najjiya Al Saadi and Rawan Al Saadi for their excellent work and help during the Masirah Festival. Dr Hamed Al Gheilani for conducting marine environment presentations on ESO's behalf and his commitment to ensuring college participation during the Inter-College Speaking Competition.

College and University students Khalid Khalfan Al Khaldi, Bushra Abdullah Al-Bulushi, Maiya Harib Al Hajri, Al Khalil Ahmed Al Rahbi, Suleiman Al Rahbi, Ahmed Nasser Al Rawahi, AbdulBari Khalfan Al-Shidi, Al Zahraa Khalfan Al Ghaferi, Suleiman Al Harassi, and Fatima Mohammed Al Jazmi for being our student ambassadors and mentors in the run up to the Inter-College Speaking Competition. Maimoona Al Ruqaishi for her advice, patience and assistance during the competition. Hassan Al Saleh and Yasser Sulaiman for their advice, mentorship and for sitting on the Speaking Competition judging panel. Sami Al Asmi and Fatma Hamayon for their spectacular MC skills at the Speaking Competition.

The Municipality of Barka, Gordon Taylor, Faisal Hamood Al Shidhani, Mundher Mohammed Al Amri, Bader Al Lawati, Nasser Al Lawati, Teresa Mary Sullivan, Benison, Hakimat Shaibu, Mukhtar Kadiri, Anton Russel, Nitheesh Sundaresan, Anu Nitheesh and her son, Anna Celina Tamayo, Irena J Aninipot, Rodge Flores Jr., Asma Al Bulushi, Sana Tawileh, Salim Abdullah Salim Al Hamdani, Juma Mohammed Al Harasi, Sawsadi Youth Group, and of course all 21 kids from Sawadi for help during the 2nd Annual Clean Up Oman Day in Sawadi. Michele Sephton and Joanna Vos for attending the Mangrove Workshop organized by MECA.

Thank you to all our volunteers without whom our work would not be possible.

Camels on the beach
off the coast of Salalah



