



ISSUE Q1 - APRIL

# NEWSLETTER 2022

Environment Society of Oman  
[www.eso.org.om](http://www.eso.org.om)

Cover Photo:  
Hawksbill sea turtle, Paul Flaninette



## ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

A summary of our Q1 highlights across research, conservation, education and community engagement.



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Population Assessment of Frankincense Trees in Oman (*Boswellia sacra*)



## MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

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

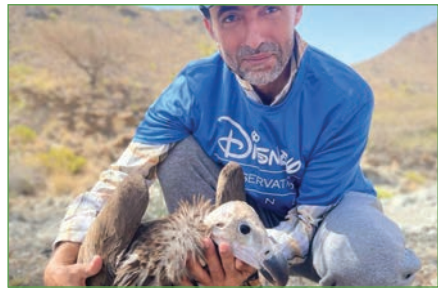


## ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS



### Fishing Net Collection and Recycling on Masirah Island

ESO are committed to clearing abandoned fishing nets and other marine debris from important turtle nesting beaches on Masirah Island, with an estimated 685 tons removed since 2017! Building on this work, we have partnered with **Future Seas Global SPC** to conduct net clearance campaigns and **Wakud International LLC** (part of the **44.01 Group**) to recycle the nets rather than sending them to landfill. Our thanks to the **British Embassy Muscat** for sponsoring this work and to the **Environment Authority, Be'ah**, the **Wali of Masirah** and **local Municipalities** for their support.



### Raptor Field Survey

Our conservation efforts to support raptors in Oman are ongoing. Our team have recently completed 3 rounds of Lappet-faced vulture surveys with 36 nests identified, expanding our efforts to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats faced by this endangered species. We would like to thank the **Disney Conservation Fund** for sponsoring this work and the **Environment Authority** for their ongoing support.



### Namat Schools Competition

ESO's Namat Competition, an initiative established to raise environmental awareness amongst the Omani youth, was launched in December 2021. Schools from across Oman have been invited to develop projects related to the themes of managing waste, water and energy. 274 schools registered, with 81 projects selected to move forward. We would like to thank **Veolia Oman** and **Emily's Garden** for their continued sponsorship of this important education initiative and look forward to seeing how the projects develop in the coming months.



### Earth Hour 2022

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement which encourages individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential lights, for one hour on the last Saturday of March, as a symbol of commitment to our planet. ESO celebrated Earth Hour this year with a social media campaign, posting daily challenges to encourage the adoption of more sustainable practices and an event bringing together our members, with support from **Salaam Space** and **Move Green** for a short hike, sunset yoga session and a waste free picnic. It was fantastic to see how people and organisations from across Oman came together in solidarity for this global movement.



### ESO Annual General Meeting (AGM)

On 28<sup>th</sup> March, we held our AGM, with representatives of the ESO board, staff and members coming together to review ESO's achievement in 2021 and plans for 2022. We also had the pleasure of welcoming our newest board member Dr Ali Akkac. Thank you to everyone who supported our event.



### Global Recycling Day

To mark Global Recycling Day on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022, ESO collaborated with **Recycling Services LLC, Mazoon Diary, Muscat Duty Free and Move Green** to deliver a social media campaign and various outreach events designed to raise awareness about the importance of recycling and encouraging people to see used products as a possible resource and not simply as waste. Thank you to everyone who joined the campaign!

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Population Assessment of Frankincense Trees in Oman (*Boswellia sacra*)

Frankincense, also known as Luban, plays an integral part in the Omani heritage and culture and has been a main source of income for Dhofari communities for centuries. The species of frankincense native to Oman, Yemen and Northern Somalia is the *Boswellia sacra*, considered to produce a fine quality resin. A population assessment of *Boswellia sacra* was last completed over 20 years ago in 1998, giving it a Near Threatened status on the IUCN Red List.

With funding from the **British Embassy in Muscat**, a field team from ESO, in collaboration with the **Environment Authority, Wageningen University & Research, FairSource Botanicals LLC**, and **Mendel University** in Brno spent the first 3 months of 2022 completing surveys of the *Boswellia sacra* trees in Dhofar to help support an updated population and distribution assessment.

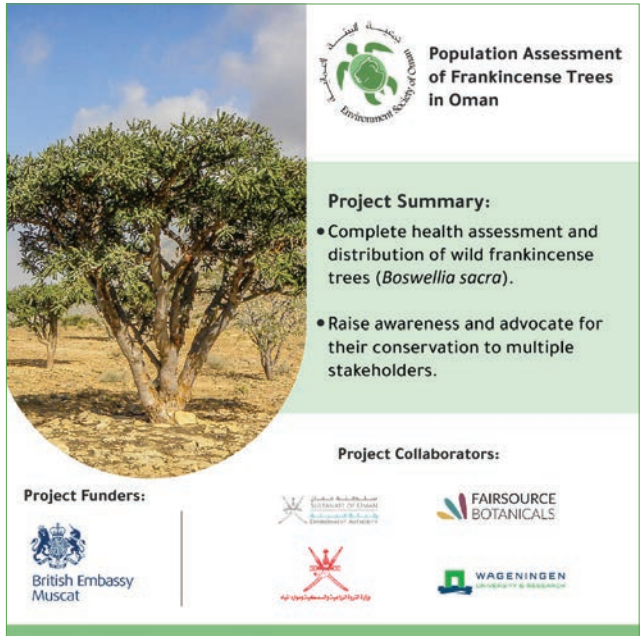
In this short time, the team have been able to:

- map the distribution and population of *Boswellia sacra* in Dhofar, whilst also establishing permanent study sites to evaluate long-term population ecology
- assess the different threats to the species, and
- engage with local stakeholders to understand community perceptions whilst also building local capacity to survey and protect the trees in the future.

*Boswellia sacra* faces a variety of threats, including grazing, resin harvesting, insect attack, mining, as well as more natural pressures from wind and flooding. The results of our survey give us some confidence that we will not see catastrophic population collapse in the near future. However, without intervention many threats are likely to intensify—grazing

with increased camel populations, harvesting in response to increasing demand for frankincense, increases in insect attacks due to more vulnerable trees from the harvesting, etc—and as they do, population declines will accelerate and intensify. Therefore, intervention to mitigate these threats is critical to ensuring the health and stability of *Boswellia* populations in Dhofar.

The final recommendations from this study have been communicated to the concerned authorities to influence conservation and management planning of the species and its habitat. The conservation of *Boswellia sacra* will continue to be a central focus for the work of ESO. Moving forward we will be working closely with the Environment Authority to recommend a variety of approaches to conserving these unique trees, including targeted research to further elucidate population dynamics, potential impacts of climate change, and social drivers of tree management.



## MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

We are proud to offer both corporate and individual membership programs, offering anyone passionate about environmental conservation the chance to support the work of Oman's only environmental NGO. Following 2 years of online activities, we are excited to be building back our membership calendar for 2022 and would like to express our gratitude to all our members for their ongoing support.



JANUARY - 2022

Thank you to everyone who participated in our clean up event for **Oman Environment Day**. Together we cleared an estimated 728kgs of litter from Oman's beaches. Thank you to **Data Academy Be'ah** for the logistical support and of course our members who joined us!



JANUARY - 2022

Our first lecture of the year was presented by **Mr Ibrahim Al Zakwani**, titled "Barr al Hikman – A Study of marine intertidal ecosystem foodwebs using isotopes"



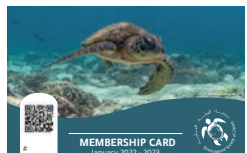
FEBRUARY - 2022

In February, we heard from **Dr Michel Claereboudt**, Professor of Marine Ecology at the Department of Marine Sciences and Fisheries at SQU and **Paul Flaninette**, a professional underwater photographer about the 8 year journey to produce "Secret Seas", Oman's first underwater photographic book.



MARCH - 2022

In March, we offered our members the opportunity to come together to celebrate Earth Hour offering a short hike, sunset yoga and waste free picnic. We would like to thank **Salaam Space** and **Move Green** for supporting the event and all our members who joined us.



## Become a Member Today!

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

NEW MEMBER

RENEWALS

\*STUDENT MEMBERSHIP **5<sup>RO</sup>**

\*INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP **10<sup>RO</sup>**

\*CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP **1K<sup>RO</sup>**

### Your support matters.

We would like to thank all our Corporate Members for supporting our work through this program.

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

#### FOR ENQUIRIES:

Individual Membership: Corporate Sponsorship / Membership



Juhaina Al Ghafri - [juhaina.alghafri@eso.org.om](mailto:juhaina.alghafri@eso.org.om)  
Olivia Dalziel - [olivia.dalziel@eso.org.om](mailto:olivia.dalziel@eso.org.om)

\*Memberships are per year.

## Why support ESO!

Your support allows us to...

- Conduct **RESEARCH** on 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, and
- PROTECT** Oman's natural heritage for future generations.

## How to support ESO in 2022

### 1. CLICK & FOLLOW US



### 2. CLICK TO JOIN OR RENEW ESO MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

### 3. MAKE A DONATION

Via our website [www.esoo.org.om](http://www.esoo.org.om)

SMS Via an SMS with Omantel send 'Donate' to 90108 to donate 1 OMR per month

Via any of these apps:



Bank transfer, Bank Muscat  
#0315-0039-6351-0036

## DONATION PROGRAMS

We are very grateful to all our donation partners, who kindly add an optional 1 OMR donation to guests bills. We are actively working to encourage more hotels and tour operators to join the program.



## THANK YOU!

Thank you to **Royal Air Force of Oman** for supporting our field teams for both our Turtle Conservation and Frankincense Conservation Projects.

Thank you to **Europcar** for donating vehicles to support our field work.

Thank you to **ThePlatform / +UP** for designing our 2021 Annual Report.

Thank you to **UMS** for website hosting support.