



ISSUE Q2 - JULY

NEWSLETTER 2022

Environment Society of Oman
www.eso.org.om

Cover Photo:
Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*),
Hadi Al Hikmani



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

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



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Chasing Oman's Endangered Vulture Populations



MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

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



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS



Marine Turtle Research and Conservation Program

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



Raptor Field Survey

Our conservation efforts to support Lappet-faced vultures in Oman are ongoing. Our team continue to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats faced by this endangered species, as well as delivering community outreach initiatives to raise awareness. In a first for Oman, our expert team fitted rings and satellite trackers to 4 juvenile Lappet-faced vultures, allowing us to monitor their movements, indicating the areas they visit to feed and breed and how their movements change over time. We would like to thank **Disney Conservation Fund**, **Hawkwatch International**, the **Anglo Omani Society** and the **Environment Authority** for supporting this work.



Namat Schools Competition

The second round of ESO's Namat Competition took place in Q2. 81 projects from the 274 schools registered to take part in the environmental awareness competition moved forward into the second phase of the competition, developing projects related to the themes of managing waste, water and energy. In May, a panel of judges met over 2 weeks to review the project progress reports, selecting 11 schools to move forward to the final round. Final assessments will take place in September. We would like to thank **Veolia Oman** and **Emily's Garden** for their continued sponsorship of this important education initiative.



World Ocean Day

On the occasion of World Ocean's Day, ESO joined forces with **Oman Sail** and **DB Schenker Oman** to conduct an underwater clean up at the Dimaniyat Islands to remove abandoned fishing nets entangled in the coral. Approximately 200kgs of nets were removed during the clean-up. It is estimated that up to 1 million tons of fishing equipment is abandoned in the ocean each year, killing up to 650,000 marine species. A video of our efforts is available, click below to watch.

WATCH



Have you seen our 2021 Annual Report?

Designed to highlight the importance of our work and acknowledge the many organizations and individuals who make it possible, our Annual Report is also a wonderful celebration of the incredible biodiversity we enjoy here in Oman. This year, however, we did things differently.

By cutting back on printing our normal A4 report, we are saving an estimated*:

- 500kg of paper...the equivalent of 12 trees.
- 459.7kg CO₂e...the equivalent amount of CO₂ emissions produced driving an average car in Oman from Muscat to Salalah.
- 219,970 gallons of water...the same amount of water required by a family of four over 18 months.



To view our full report and learn more about the work of ESO, scan the QR code.



Emergency Clean up response

We would like to thank the community for their incredible response to the environmental crisis presented by the spill of detergent packets at sea in June. It was devastating to see our beaches and seas so polluted, but inspiring to witness how the community came together in response. A special thanks to **SeaOman**, powered by **Oman Sail**, **Move Green** and the **Environment Authority** for their support.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Chasing Oman's Endangered Vulture Populations

ESO's Raptors Research & Conservation Programme started in 2012 and aims to maintain the favorable conservation status of raptors in Oman, particularly vultures. The objectives of this programme are:

- To contribute to an improved understanding of raptor species.
- To educate local communities on the role raptors play in the environment.
- To encourage communication and publication of findings, and
- Advocate for conservation actions at the local and government level.

Oman is home to over 30 species of raptors that occur as passage migrants, winter visitors or resident breeders. A number of the species are listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, such as the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotes*) and Steppe eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) which are Endangered; and the Sooty falcon (*Falco concolor*), Eastern Imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) and Greater Spotted eagle (*Clanga clanga*)

which are Vulnerable. A full list can be found in the 'Raptors of Oman' booklet, freely available in both English and Arabic on the ESO website.

In 2021, ESO initiated a series of Egyptian and Lappet-faced vulture breeding surveys to support our Raptor Conservation Programme. With funding provided by the **Disney Conservation Fund**, we were able to gather vital data to assist us in the implementation of conservation actions crucial to the long-term survival of these two charismatic and endangered vulture species in Oman. This work has continued in 2022, allowing us to survey both known and new areas of Lappet-faced vulture activity and undertake further research about the causes of egg and chick loss observed in 2021. We have also fitted camera traps to provide further insight into the behavior, expanding our efforts to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats faced by this endangered species.

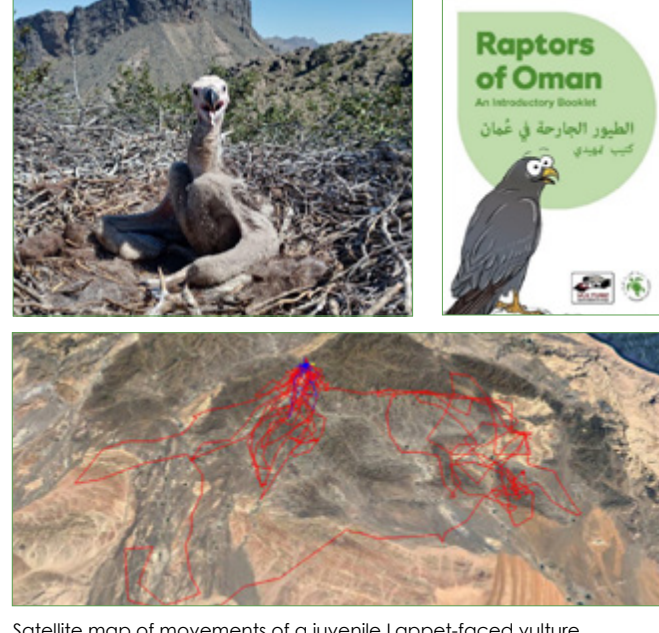
In a first for Oman, our expert team have also fitted rings and satellite trackers to 4 juvenile Lappet-faced vultures, allowing us to better understand their movements, indicating the areas they visit to feed and breed and how their movements change

over time (daily, seasonally and yearly). A blog has been set up to track the movements of these endangered raptors - <https://lappetsoman.blogspot.com/>.

As with all our projects, the team have also been undertaking a series of outreach and awareness initiatives with local communities to raise awareness about the important role raptors play in our environment and the behaviours we can all adopt to support their conservation.

We look forward to continuing our research and conservation efforts for these incredible animals and hope that our efforts will help fill some of the gaps that remain in our understanding of the behaviour, movement and ecology of Oman's endangered raptors.

Thank you to the **Disney Conservation Fund**, **Hawkwatch International**, the **Anglo Omani Society** and the **Environment Authority** for supporting the conservation of raptors in Oman.



Satellite map of movements of a juvenile Lappet-faced vulture.

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.



APRIL - 2022

Our April lecture was delivered by **Dr Hadi Al Hikmani**, a manager of the Environment Affairs department (Salalah) Office for Conservation of the Environment, Environment Authority. Dr Hadi has spent 20 years researching the ecology and conservation of the Critically Endangered Arabian leopard as well as co-authoring the first book on this subspecies "The Arabian leopards of Oman". The lecture, titled "The status of the Critically Endangered Arabian leopard in Oman" explored what we know about this subspecies of leopard, the threats it faces and the conservation actions taken by the Oman government to protect it.



APRIL - 2022

On the occasion of Earth Day 2022, our members came together to raise awareness about the declining quality of our environment. Together we enjoyed a sunset kayak and waste free picnic whilst exploring the changes we can all make in our own lives to support a more environmentally sustainable future. We would like to thank **Wave Summit** for supporting the event and our members who joined us.



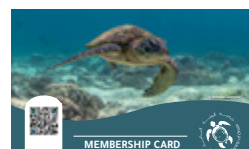
MAY - 2022

To celebrate World Turtle Day, we hosted our first family membership lecture, encouraging young and old to come together to learn about the different species of turtles that can be found in Oman. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm from our mini environmentalists! We would like to thank **Rabab Al Lawati**, ESO's Conservation Outreach Coordinator for the presentation and **PDO's EcOman Centre** for hosting us.



JUNE - 2022

In June, our members came together to hear from **Dr Andrew Wilson**, founder of **Future Seas**, an environmental sciences company in Oman working closely with ESO and the Environment Authority to find solutions for the recovery of the loggerhead turtle population on Masirah Island. The event, "Development and Conservation - Finding Solutions for Masirah's Turtles", followed the life-cycle of turtles to uncover the complex array of threats thought to be behind the declining population and the urgency of finding conservation solutions that work in step with socio-economic development of Masirah and beyond. We would like to thank **PDO EcOman Centre** for hosting us for this event.



Become a Member Today!

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

NEW MEMBER

RENEWALS

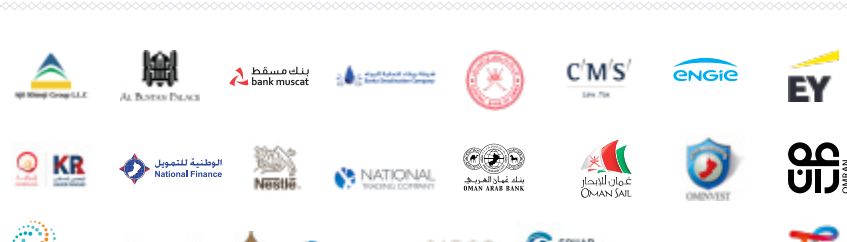
*STUDENT MEMBERSHIP 5^{RO}

Your support matters.

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

*INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP 10^{RO}

*CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP 1K^{RO}



FOR ENQUIRIES:

Individual Membership:
Corporate Sponsorship / Membership

Juhaina Al Ghafri - membership@eso.org.om
Olivia Dalziel - 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.eso.org.om

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 **PDO's EcOman Centre** for hosting our monthly membership lectures.

Thank you to ESO's diving volunteers **Jenan Al Asfaw** and **Aisha Al Ghallabi** for joining our underwater clean up to remove abandoned fishing nets from the coral at the Dimaniyat Islands.

Thank you to **Zuhair Al Farsi**, **Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science** and **Huda Al Harthi**, **Marketing & Communication Officer**, **Veolia** for giving up their time to be part of the panel reviewing project submissions from schools participating in ESO's Namat School Competition.

Thank you to **IMTAC** for donating 2 computers to support our operations.

Thank you to **Hawkwatch International** for donating 5 satellite tags to support our Raptor Conservation Programme and to the **Anglo Omani Society** for providing supplementary funding to this work.