



ISSUE Q1 - APRIL

NEWSLETTER 2023

Environment Society of Oman
www.eso.org.om

Cover Photo:
Petiolate wasp (*Prionyx* sp.),
Ghaniya Almajrafi



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

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



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Capacity Building for Cetacean Research and Conservation in Oman.



MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

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



ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS



Oman Environment Day

On 8th January, ESO members and volunteers came together to mark Oman Environment Day. 68 volunteers worked tirelessly to clear 110 bags, an estimated 1,232 kg of litter, from Seeb beach. A special thanks to **Tunes** for the drum circle, **Al Bustan** for the snacks, **Be'ah** for their logistical support and **Aluban Alfakher** who provided wonderful gifts of luban for the volunteers. Thank you for helping us keep our environment clean!



Masirah Island Net Removal Campaign

As part of ESO's ongoing programme to protect sea turtle species nesting on Masirah Island, ESO is committed to clearing abandoned fishing nets and other marine debris from important turtle nesting beaches, with an estimated 765 tons of abandoned fishing gear removed since 2017! Our recent clean-up was made possible thanks to funding provided by the **US Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Turtle Conservation Fund** and was delivered in collaboration with **Future Seas Global SPC**. We would like to thank the **Environment Authority, Be'ah, Ecovision and Masirah Municipality** for their support.



Raptor Field Survey

During Q1 our team undertook field surveys on Masirah Island to monitor the occurrence, breeding and potential threats to Egyptian vultures found on the island. This population was last surveyed in 2012, when 52 breeding territories were found to be occupied by pairs, one of the highest densities in the world. 11 years later we are completing the same survey to understand the population breeding trend. The second phase of these surveys will take place in April 2023. We would like to thank the **Disney Conservation Fund** for sponsoring this work and the **Environment Authority** for their ongoing support.



Climate Change Awareness Videos

With funding provided by the **British Embassy Muscat**, ESO issued 2 awareness videos designed to raise awareness about climate change; what is causing it, its impact on our environment and our own human health as well as the role we can all play in fighting it. The videos have been shared with the public as well as schools across Oman in the hope that we can all be inspired to make changes for a more sustainable future. Both videos are available on ESO's YouTube channel ([ESOMediaChannel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQMedaChannel)).



Earth Hour 2023

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. It was fantastic to see how people and organizations from across Oman came together in solidarity for this global movement. ESO celebrated with an event bringing together our members to enjoy nature with a sunset kayak and a waste free iftar. Thank you to all our members who supported our Earth Hour event.



ESO Annual General Meeting (AGM)

ESO's AGM was held on 14th March, with representatives of the ESO board, staff and members coming together to review ESO's achievement in 2022 and plans for 2023. During the meeting, HH Sayyida Tania Al Said, one of ESO's founding members and ESO's President since 2004 announced her intent to step down and welcomed ESO's new President, Dr Amor Al Matani. We would like to acknowledge the unwavering support of Sayyida Tania which has been instrumental in all that ESO has achieved during the last 19 years and welcome Dr Amor, whom we know is deeply committed to building on ESO's success for an even more productive future.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Capacity Building for Cetacean Research and Conservation in Oman

There are over 80 species of cetaceans in the world, 20 of them live in Oman's water, including 4 species of great whales. ESO has been engaged in whale and dolphin research in Oman since the organization's inception in 2004, with a particular focus on the Arabian Sea humpback whale (ASHW).

Dedicated research on ASHWs has confirmed that this unique sub-population is small (possibly fewer than 100 individuals), resident in the Arabian Sea year-round, and genetically distinct and isolated from other humpback whale populations. In 2008 the population was designated as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The conservation of this unique population across its regional range is critical to its survival.

Over the years, work supported by ESO has included fieldwork

and research on themes related to taxonomy, genetics, status assessments, acoustics, spatial ecology and stranding. Recognizing the need to secure the long-term sustainability of this work, ESO, with funding from **HSBC Oman**, has developed a training programme designed to increase the local capacity for cetacean research and conservation.

A one-year cetacean capacity building programme was launched in September 2022 with candidates from ESO as well as government agencies and other local organizations supporting cetacean conservation in Oman. Through a mixture of class room based and field-based training, the programme provides candidates with opportunities to explore their interest in various disciplines, and learn about cetacean biology, ecology,

research methodology and protocols, photo-identification, data collection, and communication. The immediate goal is to form an Oman team that can contribute to future cetacean research activities in Oman. In the longer term however, the course will also provide opportunities for candidates to progress further in science or science communication.

To date, the candidates have received four classroom-based training sessions and participated in two field surveys putting their training into practice. Over the months ahead they will be out on the water for 1-2 days a month all building to our November surveys where we hope each of the candidates will be ready to make a valuable contribution to the research necessary to help conserve Oman's Arabian Sea humpback whales.

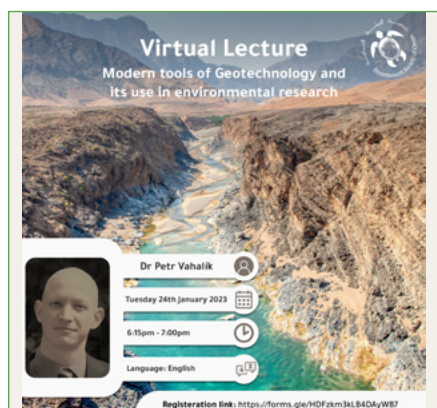


MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

We are proud to offer both corporate and individual membership programmes, providing the community in Oman the opportunity to get closer to the work of ESO. We organise regular lectures and events allowing our members to come together in support of the environment. Upcoming events are listed on our website ([link](https://www.eso.org.om)), with recordings of previous events available on the ESO YouTube channel ([ESOMediaChannel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQMedaChannel)).



On the occasion of Oman Environment Day, 68 volunteers worked to clear 110 bags, an estimated 1,232 kg of litter from Seeb beach. A special thanks to **Tunes** for the drum circle, **Al Bustan** for the snacks, **Be'ah** for their logistical support and **Aluban Alfakher** who provided wonderful gifts of luban for the volunteers. Thank you for helping us keep our environment clean!



Our January lecture was delivered by **Dr Petr Vahalik**, an Assistant Professor and researcher at Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic. The lecture titled **"Modern tools of Geotechnology and its use in environmental research"** explored how geographic information systems and remote sensing technologies are supporting the management of our natural resources.



In celebration of **World Wetlands Day**, ESO invited members to attend an exclusive visit to Al Ansab Wetlands to learn about the importance of wetlands for our environment and the incredible biodiversity supported by Al Ansab Wetlands. We would like to thank the team from **Al Ansab Wetlands** who hosted our members so generously.



Our February lecture, titled **"Snakes in Oman"** was delivered by **Ahmed Al Busadi**, a snake and wildlife specialist from the Natural and Medical Sciences Research Department of the University of Niwza. The lecture provided an overview about the different species of snakes that can be found in Oman, the important role they play in our ecosystems as well as the actions to take when encountering a snake.

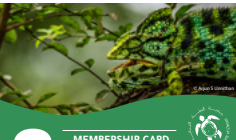


MARCH - 2023

ESO members were invited to join millions around the world celebrating **Earth Hour**, a global movement which aims to encourage individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential lights and do something good for nature, for one hour as a symbol of commitment to our planet. ESO celebrated with an event bringing together our members to connect with nature by joining a sunset kayak and a waste free iftar.



Grey-headed kingfisher (*Halcyon leucocephala*), Dr Hamed Al Ghehaili



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: Juhaina Al Ghafri - membership@eso.org.om

Corporate Sponsorship / Membership: Olivia Dalziel - olivia.dalziel@eso.org.om

*Memberships are per year.

Why support ESO!

Your support enables us to...

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

How to support ESO in 2023

- MAKE A DONATION VIA**


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



SEND DONATE 90108
- CLICK & FOLLOW US**
- CLICK TO JOIN OR RENEW ESO MEMBERSHIP**
[MEMBERSHIP](#)
- SUPPORT ESO FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES**
[LEARN MORE](#)

DONATION PROGRAMMES

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



THANK YOU!

We are grateful to **The Hon. Lujaina Mohsin Darwish** for hosting a dinner to help raise awareness and funds to support ESO.

We are grateful to **Gulf Hotel SAOG Oman** for donating funds to support the work of ESO.

Thank you to the **Book Depository** for helping develop ESO's resource library.

Thank you to **Traccs** for providing in kind media services.

Thank you to **Ernst & Young** for providing in kind auditing services.

Thank you to **Sharaf & Co.** for supporting the development of ESO's strategy.

Thank you to **Cultural Club** for hosting ESO's AGM.

Thank you to **Sacra Soap and Body** for donating gifts to support ESO's fundraising activities.