

2010/11 SEASON

# Qatar Natural History Group

Newsletter # 2  
February 2011





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**Front Cover Picture:** Halong Bay, Vietnam  
 by Mike Lesser

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

So far our season has started well with interesting talks, rambles and field trips. Whilst the field trips will only run until late April, when it starts to get too hot for the desert, the monthly meetings continue through 1<sup>st</sup> June. Plans are being made for the next QNHG international trip. Mabeth and I had a great trip to Vietnam and Cambodia over the Christmas holidays (see my trip report on the Vietnam portion). We would love to see more participation on these overseas trips. It's always more interesting to travel and share experiences with other QNHG members. There is a spring trip planned for Oman (see page 4. for details in this newsletter), but with the first Eid over summer, the trip following won't be until second Eid.

### HELP IS STILL NEEDED FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE!

As we hope all of you know the QNHG is a volunteer organisation and functions only because its members take on the various responsibilities. It is the nature of Qatar that people come and go, and this is reflected in both our general membership and the Steering Committee. We have had several new people join the Committee this year, but we still need help. In addition to the specific job, all Committee members are expected to attend

meetings of the SC which are held every 4-6 weeks during the season.

Positions that need filling include:

**Membership Chair:** Taking and recording memberships before each meeting. Ordering the membership cards. Updating the membership status on our website. It involves a lot of effort at the first few meetings of the season and less afterwards.

**Newsletter:** We have at least one volunteer to help out, but we would like at least one other. Louise Hunter, the previous editor has left Doha, but will offer assistance from afar.

**Social Secretary:** Mike Lortie, who has filled in for this role this season has had to return to the US for health reasons (and we thank him for his efforts and wish him well). We therefore need a replacement. It involves bringing refreshments to the meetings and planning the year-end social event. The set up of the hot water urn and cleaning are done by DESS staff. The role could be shared between someone willing to bring the refreshments and someone willing to plan the year-end event.

**Rambles and Field trips:** John Tribuna, who chairs this Committee, always needs help from people willing to plan and/or lead these trips. Please email me if you are interested in any of these roles. If you are interested in helping out, but none of these roles seems right for you, please let me know as we are always looking for help and other roles may become available. I look forward to seeing you at our meetings and Rambles.



**Michael Lesser**  
**Chairman, QNHG**



**NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S MESSAGE**

I am very pleased to welcome Balaji Alagusundaram to the QNHG editorial team! We have worked together to publish this issue of the newsletter and I am confident that Balaji will be bringing lots of new ideas to improve the format and content in the future.

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to the second newsletter of the 2010/11 season:

- Bronwyn Donaldson
- Fran Gillespie
- Mike Lesser
- Dileep Kumar
- Eric Tull
- Chong Hoe Ong

The QNHG Newsletter would not be so informative and interesting without your input.

Many thanks to Mike & Mabeth Lesser for their very interesting article about their recent trip to Vietnam. We look forward to reading about the Cambodia half of their trip in the next issue. We have received many favorable comments about the newsletter, and about the travel articles in particular, please keep them coming. Also do consider sending in any information that may be

useful to others just starting out on their adventure in Qatar. If you are considering taking a holiday over Easter then do consider joining the QNHG trip 'Discover Oman'. For details of the proposed itinerary go to the following link: <http://qnhg.org/activities/overseastrips> .

Please send any articles, information or announcements to [newsletter-editor@qnhg.org](mailto:newsletter-editor@qnhg.org) or [hunterlm95@yahoo.com](mailto:hunterlm95@yahoo.com) or [yathiraigal@gmail.com](mailto:yathiraigal@gmail.com) and put 'QNHG Newsletter' in the subject line. Please send photographs separately and make sure to label them. See page 14 for announcements from the Tuesday Ladies Group, the Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar Bird Club etc.

Also, if you have any comments about the newsletter or suggestions for articles please send those too. Remember to check the website regularly for updates regarding our talks programme and other activities.

This issue of the newsletter is available on the QNHG website, together with previous issues which can be found in the archive section.

**Balaji Alagusundaram / Louise Hunter**  
**QNHG Newsletter Editorial Team**

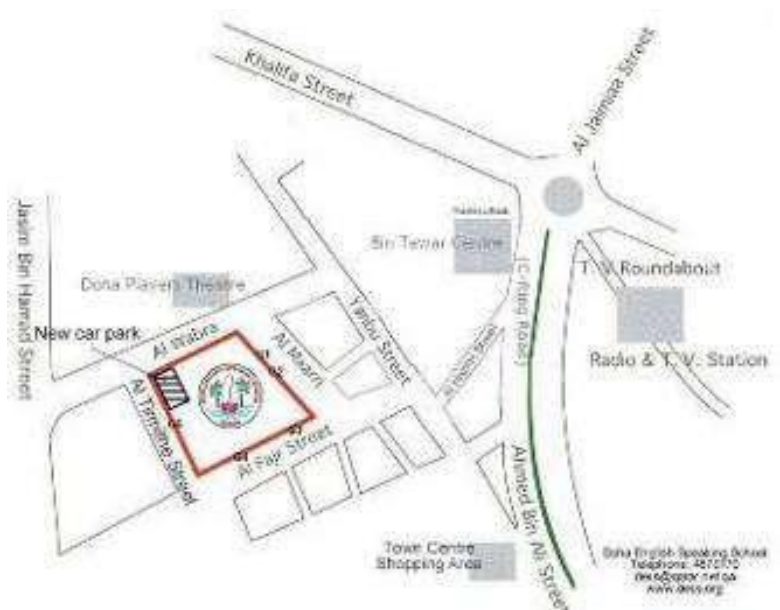
**QNHG MEETING DETAILS**

QNHG meetings take place between October and June, usually on the **first Wednesday of the month**.

Please note that the dates for the next three meetings of the 2010/2011 season will be: **February 2nd, March 2nd & April 6th** .

Further details about our speakers may be found on page ..... Meetings are held at **7.00 pm in the Multipurpose hall of the Doha English Speaking School (DESS)**. [See location map]. However, the location of meetings may sometimes be changed to the smaller **gymnasium at DESS**.

An illustrated talk follows any announcements, and there is a lending library of books available to members, with over 200 books and journals to choose from.



## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL WITH QNHG

QNHG Overseas trips provide not just a great trip, but give the opportunity to travel with a group of other QNHG members to share the experience. Note that whilst these trips are limited to members, friends of members are welcome; all they need to do is to join the QNHG.

**Patricia Grindley** is our Overseas Trip coordinator and she hopes to offer a number of trips for members this year coinciding with not just the Eid holidays, but also other holiday periods. The next trip will be in April with a fantastic tour of **Oman** – including Al Ain, Muscat, Jebel Shams, Nizwah, Sink-hole, wadi-bashing etc. Further information may be found on the QNHG website plus a useful packing guide to help you remember all those essential little items that we all need but often forget to take along! [www.qnhg.org/activities/overseastrips](http://www.qnhg.org/activities/overseastrips). For any further queries, comments, suggestions, please contact Patricia at [overseas-trips-coordinator@qnhg.org](mailto:overseas-trips-coordinator@qnhg.org).

## VIETNAM - CAMBODIA

### A HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER - Mike and Mabeth Lesser's trip to Vietnam over Christmas

I came of age as an American in the late 1960's and a trip to Vietnam was something I then tried my best to avoid. Despite the memories of that time (and as a marcher, not a soldier, I am sure mine were much easier to deal with), I wanted to see what had become of the country so intertwined with our history through the 1960's and 1970's. Qatar Air now has a direct flight to Hanoi which Mabeth and I, along with our son Fred, boarded in the wee hours of Christmas Eve morning. It's a 10 hour overnight flight, including a stopover in Bangkok (you stay onboard), so we splurged on Business Class to try and get some (albeit little) sleep. Our friends at Mannai Travel made all the arrangements (including handling the visas). The folks at Asian Trails, who handled the arrangements in-country, did a terrific job.



**Figure 1: Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum on the right**

Christmas party at the hotel filled with families celebrating the holiday, gifts for the children and a very thin and short Father Christmas complete with red suit and beard.

We spent Christmas Day exploring Hanoi, starting with Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum (Stalinist architecture, small but in good taste) and the surrounding compound of the old Presidential Palace and his office and residence, including two picturesque pagodas. Ho remains a revered figure in Vietnam and there was almost a religious air surrounding our visit to view his mummified (with the help of the Russians, no doubt) remains. He seemed to have lived an austere personal life—a small bedroom with a single bed, a small study and dining room (he did, however, have his own personal bunker, but that couldn't be considered a luxury). One wonders what he would have thought of it all. In



addition to the tourists, there were crowds of old soldiers paying their respects. I had to think about what many of these veterans had gone through in the many years of war and suffering.



After a lunch of pho bo (beef noodle soup) we visited the Quan Thanh Temple dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and one of the Four Sacred Temples of Hanoi. That was followed by the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first university founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, with the names of the doctoral laureates carved on stone steles placed on top of turtles. On the way to our next stop Lan pointed out to us the lake where John McCain landed after his plane was shot down and the small piece



remaining of the "Hanoi Hilton", where American flyers were imprisoned, left as a reminder of the war. Afterwards we took a cyclo tour of the old city. Hanoi is a somewhat "grey" city, but the older sections have kept its French colonial buildings, with trees and parks. Many of the streets are named after the trade they specialize in, such as Silk Street and Bamboo Street.



After the "relaxing" cyclo drive through the Hanoi traffic, we went to a performance of traditional Vietnamese water puppets. The puppeteers stand behind the curtain in waist deep water manipulating their charges. Later I briefly became a multi-millionaire when went to the ATM and withdrew 2,000,000 Dong! Alas it was only US\$100 (QR 365).

The next morning we left for the 175 kilometer ride to Halong Bay, one of Vietnam's (and the World's, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site) scenic wonders. The bay has over 2,000 limestone peaked islets scattered throughout. We boarded one of the many cruise boats that sail the Bay for an overnight trip. The boat stopped to visit Surprise Cave (there are numerous caverns on the islets), as well as a grotto



entrance through the wall of an islet to a small enclosed bay. We had the choice of kayaking in (Fred) or being taken in a row boat (me) or taking a nap (Mabeth). The next morning we (or at least Fred) had the opportunity to climb the 400+ steps to the top of Titop Island for a panoramic view of the Bay.

As we headed back along the same road toward Hanoi, we stopped at a ceramic factory along the way. Motorcycles are commonly used to transport goods and, in addition to these pots, we saw motorcycles carrying pigs, chickens, bales of stuff piled high over the driver's head, and just about almost anything and everything that would fit.





**Figure 2: But Thap Pagoda near Hanoi**

Before getting to the Airport, we detoured to But Thap Pagoda, a 17<sup>th</sup> century wooden pagoda enclosed inside an outer structure protecting it from the elements. We then took the one hour flight to Hu, the capital of the Nguyn dynasty during the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To start the morning we sailed



**Figure 3: Thiên Mu Pagoda, Hue**

up the Perfume River to the Thiên Mu Pagoda, the largest in the city

and its official symbol, as well as being the tallest in Vietnam. It dates from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and was built by the Nguyn Lords who eventually created their dynasty.



The Citadel (inspired by the Forbidden City in Beijing) was nearly destroyed during the Tet Offensive in 1968. There is, however, a great deal of reconstruction going on. You need to pay a visit, just to grasp the



sheer size of the palace. You can visit a few of the buildings that were spared, but mostly we walked around the area and tried to imagine what was there. They even had an elephant taking tourists around for a ride (and for a ride, as at 150,000 Dong was certainly out of the reach of most Vietnamese—still only around \$8).



We then spent a bit of time wandering through the public market, and enjoyed another lunch of pho bo. Our guide made a brief stop at a shop where they made incense and conical hats to help relieve the tourists of some of their money. We then we headed back to the airport for the



afternoon flight to Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City.



Saigon (by which it is called by everyone, except the officials) is the opposite of Hanoi. Saigon feels full of life, fashion and lights. Certainly Saigon has a lot more night life, which we were just too tired by then to sample. We visited Notre Dame Cathedral built by the French and still a very active church for the Catholic minority, the



Post Office and the History Museum. We also went to what is now called the War Remnants Museum, but was originally called the Museum of American War Crimes when it first opened in 1975. It was more of an exhibit than a museum, telling the unfortunately familiar story of the damage done during the war and the terrible toll endured by its victims. While there are few remnants in the museum, outside it a number of captured or abandoned American aircraft, including a Chinook



helicopter, are on display. The Reunification Palace is the former Presidential Palace of South Vietnam. It is an airy, 1960's modern building and kept up, inside and out, as it looked when used through 1975. It was here that the famous pictures of the tanks going through the gate during the fall of Saigon were taken. They argue over which tank was actually first, so they have both tanks on display. After yet another lunch of pho bo (which I had really gotten to like), Mabeth took the afternoon off and Fred and I continued to the Cho Binh Tay market in Chinatown and a visit to Thien Hau Pagoda with a number of fantastic sculptured friezes.



While much of Saigon seems modern, you get the impression that its rapid growth has surpassed its infrastructure. Everywhere you look up you see electric cables going every which way, with new cables being layered onto the poles leaving what looks like a tangle of snakes.

We (Fred and I) sampled a bit of the night life with a few beers in a sidewalk café near the hotel, watching elegantly clad young ladies in extremely short skirts stopping off for a drink. But somewhat early to bed as we had to leave for our flight to Seam Reap Cambodia the next morning to see Angkor Wat and the other early Khmer temples. More on that part of the trip in the next newsletter.

While we really enjoyed the trip, we would have liked a bit more time to explore. The itinerary took us to five different places (Hanoi-Halong Bay-Hue-Saigon, in Vietnam and Seam Reap in Cambodia) over eight days (only one or two nights in each hotel, three plane trips and a long car ride). However, if your goal is to see as much of the country as possible in a short time it was fine and quite well organised.

If you are headed to Vietnam a few hints: If you go in the winter, remember that Hanoi can get quite cool, bring a jacket (Saigon and the south will be warm, or hot, all year). Drink bottled water only (make sure the bottle is sealed when you buy it), but you should be OK with tea or soup which has been boiled,

be careful about ice. Make sure to try the pho bo, it's cheap and was always tasty. Also try the spring rolls, usually served with a fish sauce. Vietnamese beer is not bad and usually very inexpensive. We did not get to try the even cheaper street beer (*bia hoi*), but I am told it's pretty good. You can get Dong out of the ATM's but US\$ are universally accepted. If you pay in larger bills you will usually get your change in Dong. Not a lot of beggars to contend with, but a lot of ladies selling T-shirts or other items (feel confident that any souvenirs of the American war, like old Zippo lighters, are fake)—as in most of the developing world, bargaining is expected. If you sit down for a meal at a local restaurant or in the markets, be prepared to have them try to drop off all sorts of unordered dishes—if you don't want them, just wave them away. If they ask you for 40,000 Dong for the hat, just remember that's only QR 7½ (\$2)!

## QNHG LIBRARY NEWS

Qatar Natural History Group has its own library covering a wide range of natural history subjects focussing on the Arabian Gulf - especially Qatar.

If you have questions about the library, contact librarian Robin Urban the new QNHG Librarian at [librarian@qnhg.org](mailto:librarian@qnhg.org).

The next issue of the newsletter will carry the library updates. Information about books held in the library can be found on the QNHG website <http://qnhg.org/Library/Inventory>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### QATAR GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Qatar Geological Society has a new website. Visit [www.site.qatargeolsoc.com/](http://www.site.qatargeolsoc.com/) to see information about the schedule of meetings, speakers and fieldtrips.

## BIRDING NEWS FROM THE QATAR BIRD CLUB

While most birds seem to have settled in for the winter months, there is still some movement of birds into and out of the area. Raptors have been particularly common at Al Arakhiya Farm, with numerous **Marsh Harriers** (*Circus aeruginosus*) and **Eurasian Kestrels** (*Falco tinnunculus*), and smaller numbers of **Pallid** (*Circus macrourus*) and **Montagu's Harriers** (*Circus pygargus*). There must be a good crop of rodents there this year. Spring is in the air for some species, as **Crested Larks** (*Galerida cristata*) and **Corn Buntings** (*Emberiza calandra*) can be heard singing at Al Arakhiya and **Clamorous Reed-Warblers** (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) and **Graceful Prinias** (*Prinia gracilis*) are singing at Abu Nakhla. Parts of the Abu Nakhla ponds are black with a very large number of **Great Cormorants** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).



Rarities or unusual birds have included **White Stork** (*Ciconia ciconia*), **Pied Kingfisher** (*Ceryle rudis*) and **Jack Snipe** (*Gallinago minima*) at Abu Nakhla in December and into early January. Several birders were lucky enough to get views or photographs of **Hypocolius** (*Hypocolius ampelinus*) at Umm Bab – photographed here. A **Finsch's Wheatear** (*Oenanthe finschii*) was present at Fuwairit in early December. The **Red-tailed Wheatear** (*Oenanthe chrysopygia*) has recently been split into two species - the **Kurdish** (*Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna*) and **Red-tailed Wheatears** - and both species were present at Al Arakhiya in early January.

An **Amur Falcon** (*Falco amurensis*) and a **Village Indigobird** (*Vidua chalybeata*) (the latter presumably an escaped bird) were also seen and photographed at Al Arakhiya.



Lastly one **Sociable Lapwing** (*Vanellus gregarius*), a critically endangered species, may have overwintered at Al Arakhiya Farm, as records show that one was present there in late-November and again more recently. It/both birds have fortunately escaped the indiscriminate bird shooters who have been encountered frequently both at Al Arakhiya and at Abu Nakhla.

**Eric Tull**  
**Dileep Kumar - photographs**

**Northern Lapwing**

**RAMBLE REPORTS**

**Camp in the Deep South of Qatar.  
Jaow Hashemiyah ( Acacia Camp)  
November 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Twenty two cars assembled at Al Wakrah to travel down to the camp site at Jaow Hashemiyah, which we refer to as Acacia Camp. It was a beautiful sunny morning, the air a little crisp with the temperatures perfect for a camping trip.

We headed off down in the direction of Turayna Farm passing by the gardens and goat farm to stop for lunch at a sandy bowl speckled with trees for a little shade. Excitement arose when one of our number spotted a snake hanging from an Acacia tree!!



Tony, a herpetologist, caught the creature so all could have a look. He identified it as a False Cobra, *Malpolon moilensis*, then placed it back in the bushes to go about its business.

It was then back into the cars and on to Al Qasaira, an old rain water cistern, just slightly off the route through to the camp. This was a structure built to catch water running off the surrounding outcrops but at this time of the year was totally dry. Some of the rocky desert around this area has the pink tinge to it caused by the higher amount of manganese in the limestone.



From here it was directly down to the camp site so everyone had time to get sorted well before dark.



An unexpected extra was a Qatari man with his falcons passing through the valley. We welcomed him and he was very happy to show off his falcons to the gathered crowd. It was then time for a walk around the rock formations surrounding the camp for those who wanted to join in. We had some eager participants so first explored the area where the Midra Shale is showing through, searching for the perfect Sharks' teeth and other fossilised material. I gave the children small plastic bags so they all managed to put together a little collection. It was then on towards the oyster shells and a walk around the tops observing the Gastropods in situ. Sunset came

upon us very quickly so it was back to the camp for dinner in the desert. The communal campfire was lit at about seven pm and we settled down for an evening with a clear sky, good company and a great fire.

Saturday morning dawned clear and windless so once all was packed we set out over to the Jaow Hamrya (Shark's Teeth Valley) which is about four kilometres away across country. At this site one of the



members found a perfect pearly white shark's tooth, it must be beginner's luck! Others found many interesting ironised pieces including probable teeth, worms and Echinoderm spurs.

The last part of the trek took us across from Jaow Hamrya to the Western end of the Inland Sea where we were able to sight some Flamingoes out in the water. They are careful to keep their distance. We then headed back through the gravel tracks to Turayna Farm where we bade farewell to the campers and everyone set off for home after a fairly full weekend. ~**Bronwyn Donaldson**

### An Evening to Remember – Starry Night in the Dunes Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2010

Stars in the clear night sky were reflected in the eyes of hundreds of excited youngsters when Santa Claus came to visit Qatar. The occasion was *Starry Night in the Dunes*, an annual event organised for more than three decades by the Qatar Natural History Group, combined in recent years with the Doha Players.

Santa [Greg Polkowski] and his green-clad Elf [Hansa Munyegera] arrived in style in an open buggy and toured the crowds greeting well-wishers before holding court in 'Santa's Grotto', a traditional canvas tent hung with strings of coloured lights and decorations. A long queue of children formed, waiting to confide in him their Christmas wishes and receive a gift. Unfazed by one youngster who bluntly declared, 'I know you're a fake,' Santa kept his cool and amiably allowed himself to be photographed with his young visitors.



Starry Night is a special occasion, eagerly anticipated at this time of year. Families from many nations gather to enjoy the desert scenery, light BBQs and sing festive songs around a huge bonfire. The same great crescent dune west of Al Wukair, one of Qatar's unique 'singing dunes', has always been used as the venue. Long before sunset the dune was covered with excited children, clambering to the top and racing down,

fascinated by the strange booming sounds made by the sand as it shifted under their feet.

After dark candles in sand-filled paper bags were lit in a circle around a huge bonfire and the crowds gathered to sing traditional Christmas carols, led by the Doha Chamber Singers.

For children, the unfamiliar experience of being in the open desert at night is always exciting. Friday's event will be recalled with pleasure by many, but perhaps most of all by the children. The stars twinkling above, the glowing candles, the blazing bonfire and the traditional songs all combined to make Starry Night an evening to remember.

**Fran Gillespie**  
**Chong Hoe Ong - photograph**

## LECTURE PROGRAMME

Please note new meeting time of 7:00 pm. All will be welcome, please feel free to bring along friends and guests to the presentation. Details of speakers scheduled for February through to the end of June 2011 will be posted on the QNHG website in due course and in the next issue of the newsletter.

Please note that the dates for presentations for the next three months will be:

**February 2nd, March 2nd & April 6th.**

The speaker for the February presentation will be **Mark Strickson**, natural history film producer.

The title of his presentation is **Filming Qatar's Wildlife**. Mark will talk about natural history filming and show some selections from his recent films.

Mark specialises in producing natural history films but has also made engineering, history and even cookery programmes! His clients have included National Geographic, the BBC, ITV, C4, C5, the Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, Travel, ZDF and Canal +. He has been a senior producer for Granada TV's wildlife department and within National Geographic. His work ranges from directing the first films with Australian presenter Steve Irwin to producing award winning animal behaviour documentaries. While Mark was Head of Programmes at the world-famous producer Oxford Scientific Films, the company won both an Emmy and two Wildscreen Golden Panda Awards. Mark currently lives in New Zealand, where until recently he worked for National Geographic. He now spends a lot of time in Qatar where he is producing and directing a raft of programmes for the Qatar National Day Committee



**Mark Strickson on location in Qatar**

Our March presentation will be given by **Dr Mark Beech**, Cultural Landscapes Manager, Historic Environment Department, [Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage \(ADACH\)](#), Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



**Dr. Mark Beech**

His presentation is titled: **Late Miocene fossils from Abu Dhabi's Western Region** - the story

behind the Yale University-Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage fossil project, discovering and studying the animals and plants which lived in Abu Dhabi six to eight million years ago.

Mark Beech has been involved in the archaeology of the UAE since 1994. From 2002 to 2006 he was the Senior Resident Archaeologist for the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey [ADIAS]. Since 2006 he has held the position of Cultural Landscapes Manager, Historic Environment Department, [Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage \(ADACH\)](http://www.adach.gov.ae). He is also an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the Department of Archaeology, University of York, U.K. For further information please visit Mark's website: [www.markbeech.com](http://www.markbeech.com).

Mark and his colleagues have made some remarkable fossil discoveries in the UAE, including the largest fossil ever found on the Arabian Peninsula, a 2.5-metre-long elephant tusk! Together with Peter Hellyer he has published a small book for the general reader, ***Abu Dhabi 8 Million Years Ago***, and hopefully he'll bring some copies along with him. This is the second time Mark, a very popular speaker, has given a presentation to the QNHG.

## FRAN'S BOOKSTALL

In addition to signed copies of her books ***Discovering Qatar*** and the newly-published ***Common Birds of Qatar***, both priced at **QR 120**, Fran Gillespie will have some extra items on sale at QNHG meetings in 2011:

**Wildflowers of Qatar** The well-known Qatari artist Ali Al Sharif is an authority on the wild plants of Qatar and has made many discoveries in over 20 years of roaming the desert, taking thousands of photographs. This year for the first time he has put together some of the best of his photographs of Qatar's wildflowers in a superb calendar, together with text giving information about each plant and a reproduction of one of his wildflower paintings. This is one calendar you won't want to throw away at the end of the year! A limited number of copies will be available at **QR 50** each. Sorry, no reservations for this or for the items below, sales are on first-come first-served basis.

**Arabian Birds** Hanne and Jens Eriksen, whose superb nature photography is renowned world-wide and who have illustrated a number of books on birds including ***Common Birds of Qatar***, have for many years produced an annual Arabian Bird Calendar. Fran hopes to have copies for sale from mid-January onwards, price **QR 30**.

**Phoenix**, the annual journal of the Arabian Breeding Birds Atlas published in the UK by Mike Jennings, is available to QNHG members each year and contains much of interest to bird enthusiasts. It will be published in January. Fran has ordered 30 copies and will notify members when they arrive. The journal is free but a charge of **QR 10** per copy is levied to cover the postage costs.



**Arabian Wildlife Encyclopedia** Just published by Trident Press in the UK, this large hardback is packed with illustrations and contains masses of information on all aspects of Arabian wildlife, much of which is relevant to Qatar. It includes photographs by experts already well-known to the QNHG such as Drew Gardner, the Eriksens and Marijcke Jongbloed, many of whose photos were used by Fran in her books. The text is aimed at age 10+ but the book is as interesting for the adult general reader as for youngsters. For more information see the website [www.arabianwildlife.com](http://www.arabianwildlife.com) The publishers' price is £25.00 [ QR 141.00] but they have generously agreed to make it available to QNHG members at the hugely discounted price of **QR 100**.

**RAMBLE / FIELD TRIP PROGRAMME**

**QNHG – Rambles & Field Trips  
February-April Schedule 2011**

February, March and April will see us returning to some old haunts and hopefully finding some new. Over the next few months we will be returning to the archeological digs up north at Zubara City and Al Ruwaidah, as well as venturing back into the Kharrara area to see the effects of all these rains. We will be having follow up trips for both our desert driving and safety participants, as well as an automobile GPS treasure hunt to follow up on the walking introduction to hand held GPS use up in Simaisma. We will be visiting Al Khor Island and with any luck the Mesaieed Marshes, and we have yet to do a beach or other area clean-up, so if you know a place that could benefit from our showing up to have fun and pick up trash, let me know!



**John D. Tribuna  
Rambles & Field Trips Coordinator  
QNHG**

**QNHG HATS**



Patricia Grindley has organised the manufacture and sale of QNHG bush hats!

Available in beige or blue with the QNHG logo. Hurry while stocks last! The first order of 50 was sold out at the November meeting. She hopes to have another batch to sell at the March meeting. Only 40QR each! If you missed it, do not worry, more can be ordered.

**Patricia Grindley  
Overseas Trip Co-ordinator  
QNHG**



## QATAR MUSEUMS AUTHORITY

The MIA has just announced that over half a million visits have been made to the museum since it opened in 2008! The museum is open every day except Tuesday, free admission except for entry to temporary exhibitions.

**QMA Gallery** is hosting the first ever photographic exhibition by Sheikh Khalid Bin Hamad Al Thani. "Here is My Secret" is an exhibition of platinum print photographs, showing natural objects and details from the Qatari landscape including wildlife and plants. The exhibition is housed in the QMA Gallery, Building No. 10, Katara/Cultural Village, is open every day from 3-9 pm, and runs until the **19<sup>th</sup> of Feb.** Ph: 4422 4805 or 4422 2010

### 'The Golden Age of Dutch Painting, Masterpieces from the Rijksmuseum'

11 March – 6 June. Exhibition:

This is the first exhibition of Dutch art to be held in the Gulf region and will take place in the temporary exhibition hall, the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha.

## QAWS

For information about the Qatar Animal Welfare Society please visit their website [www.qaws.org](http://www.qaws.org) or contact them via [contact@qaws.org](mailto:contact@qaws.org). Volunteers are always welcome [volunteers@qaws.org](mailto:volunteers@qaws.org).

**Adoption Fair & Car Boot Sale, 10am-2pm, Friday 11th February @ Football pitch next to QAWS** Come along and meet our gorgeous animals available for adoption, browse the stalls, enter the raffle or bring along your own dog for a doggie play date! Entry QAR5 per adults (kid's free!). Vendor stalls QAR100 per car/table.

**\*\* Save the date \*\* Thursday 3rd March @ Ramada Plaza Doha—QAWS 2011 Furball** A fantastic night of dinner, dancing and celebrating the work QAWS does. Don't miss it!!! Information on tickets to follow closer to the date, watch this space! For *more information on these events*, contact QAWS on 5539 6074 or email: [contact@qaws.org](mailto:contact@qaws.org)

## TUESDAY LADIES GROUP – NEW SEASON

All ladies are welcome to join us at the Ramada Hotel for an informal breakfast followed by a presentation. Meetings are held bimonthly on alternate Tuesdays throughout the months of September to June, 9.00 for a 10am start, visitors welcome.

For further information contact us by email: [tlgdoha@gmail.com](mailto:tlgdoha@gmail.com) or visit our website – [www.tlgdoha.com](http://www.tlgdoha.com). Not sure if you want to become a member? Please join us as a guest.

## QNHG MEMBERSHIP

### QNHG Membership Guidelines

- Our new season starts in the month of October every year.
- Membership to the Qatar Natural History Group is to be renewed on a yearly basis.



- A membership period coincides with our season (October to September of the next year).
- Membership applications are accepted throughout the year. Memberships always expire on September 30th of each year.
- There are two types of memberships with the following membership fees (effective October 2010):
  - Single Membership (QR.50/year)
  - Family Membership (QR.100/year)

Members from last season **do not** need to repeat the online registration process – simply pay your 2010/11 fees at the next meeting or event. Fees for the 2010/2011 season will remain at the same rate as last year: 50QR for individual membership and 100QR for a couple or family.

### QNHG Membership Application Process for NEW members

1. Applicant submits membership request using the [online application form](#)
2. Applicant receives an email confirming the successful submission of the membership application.
3. The applicant's membership to QNHG remains blocked until membership fees are received.
4. Membership fees may be paid at any QNHG event: general meeting; ramble or special event.
5. Once the membership fees have been received, the applicant's membership is changed to active and access to all web site functions is enabled. The applicant will receive QNHG emails from this time.

### 2010/11 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

#### Chairman:

Michael Lesser  
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#### Secretary:

Roze Dzugan  
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#### Membership Secretary:

POSITION VACANT  
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#### Newsletter Editor:

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#### Talks Co-ordinators:

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#### Ramble / Fieldtrips Co-ordinator:

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