

WEDNESDAY 4 JANUARY 2012 at 7:00 pm at DESS

Speaker: Dr Fareed Krupp, Director, Qatar Natural History Museum, Qatar Museums Authority

Title of Presentation: Freshwater and Marine Fish Conservation in the Arabian Peninsula

Summary of Presentation: The Arabian Peninsula was once inhabited by a rich freshwater fauna of African origin, but increasingly arid conditions resulted in a low species diversity. The region is home to only 20 species of freshwater fishes. Several species of marine origin also inhabit inland waters. The distribution and conservation status of all freshwater-fish species has been assessed in recent years. At least four species must be considered critically endangered. Major threats are uncontrolled development, associated with water abstraction, habitat fragmentation, pollution, and introduction of alien species. The adoption of a regionally coordinated approach towards the conservation of freshwater biota is urgently required, including protected areas, enhanced assessment and monitoring programs, captive breeding, raising public awareness and improving environmental legislation and enforcement.

With more than 2000 species, fish diversity in the Arabian Seas Region is one of the highest globally and the degree of endemism: species that occur only here and nowhere else on earth, is significant. While many areas in the Red Sea region and Southern Arabia are still in a reasonably healthy condition, the Gulf environment is in rapid decline. Over-exploitation and destructive fishing methods pose the greatest threat to marine fish. In many parts of the region, populations of economically important species, such as sharks, are on the verge of collapse. In addition, human population and economic growth have contributed to increased development, associated with pollution, dredging and filling operations with negative effects on marine organisms. Stock assessments and IUCN species and biotope Red Lists are urgently required as a tool for planning and management of conservation and sustainable fisheries. The lack of enforcement of existing fisheries legislation needs major attention.

Speaker bio: Dr Fareed Krupp is a Natural History Museum scientist and aquatic biologist, specialising in fish research and environmental management in the Middle East. He obtained his doctoral degree in 1985 from the University of Mainz in Germany, with a thesis on Arabian inland water fishes.

Since 1984 he has edited the continuous book series "Fauna of Arabia". From 1987 – 2011 he was Curator of Fishes at Senckenberg Research Institute and the Museum of Nature in Frankfurt, Germany. From 1991 – 2002 he was seconded to international organisations, and from 1991 to 1995 he was EU Project Manager in Jubail, Saudi Arabia, leading an interdisciplinary team of scientists studying the environmental effects of the Gulf War oil spill.

Qatar Natural History Group Programme

From 1996 to 2002 Dr. Krupp was UN and World Bank Chief Technical Advisor, coordinating the Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In 2002 he returned to Frankfurt as Curator of Fishes at Senckenberg Museum and since 2008 he was the Project Group Leader for Tropical Marine Ecosystems at the Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre.

In July 2011 he was appointed Director of the Qatar Natural History Museum and is now based in Doha.