

Nature Oman is a fundraising movement that has been initiated by the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) as a chance for the public in Oman to get involved as volunteers and raise awareness of the environment in Oman by helping in raising funds through different activities and merchandise. All funds will go towards protecting Oman's endangered wildlife and conserving our natural heritage. ESO is currently working on 4 projects that are:

1- Turtle Research and Conservation

Did you know that four species of sea turtles nest in Oman: Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). All these species are in decline due to human related threats. Help us protect them.

There are seven types of Sea Turtles in the world and five of them visit, some nest in Oman. The Sultanate of Oman has been conducting surveys and research on the survival of sea turtles over the past forty years. In the last nine years ESO joined the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs (MECA) in collaboration with senior international scientists focusing on Loggerhead Turtles based in Masirah Island. The nesting of loggerhead turtles shows a dramatic decline on the island during 2008-2012 and this is a call to ESO, MECA and everyone to help conserve and protect this specie.

2- Renaissance Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Did you know that Arabian Sea Humpback Whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) are the only type of humpback whales that do not migrate between polar waters (to feed) and tropical waters (to breed and give birth)? They are resident in the Arabian waters and face many threats due to their isolation. Help us conserve them.

Humpback Whales are famous for undertaking long seasonal migration between polar feeding areas and tropical breeding areas. However, research has shown that the Arabian Sea humpback whale to be the only known population not to migrate, but rather to breed and feed in the same geographic area. This makes them truly Arabian whales! Not migrating and staying in the same area puts these species in danger.

3- Frankincense Research and Conservation

Did you know that trade of resin from the Frankincense tree (*Boswellia sacra*) has been part of Dhofar's economy for millennia. The value of frankincense in the markets of the Roman Empire, for instance, was at times equal to that of gold. Frankincense trees populations are declining in Dhofar. Help us protect them.

Frankincense trees play important environmental roles: they grow on marginal land not suitable for ordinary agriculture, protect the soil from erosion, produce good biomass and provide shade. Frankincense is harvested by tapping the trunk and branches of the *Boswellia sacra* tree and researchers have noticed that the tapping has been too harsh, often leading to the degradation of the tree beyond repair.

4- Raptor Research and Conservation

Did you know that Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) is a globally threatened species? But populations in Oman are flourishing and Masirah Island holds one of the densest populations in the world. Help us preserve that.

Raptors, or birds of prey, such as eagles, falcons, vultures, hawks and owls are key indicators of the overall health of the ecosystem. They eat millions of insects, which, if left unchecked, would threaten agriculture crops. They also consume animal carcasses, which in turn, prevents the spread of disease. However, over the last few decades, human activities have contributed to the

fragmentation destruction of raptor habitats through development; the intensification of agriculture and other land-use practices.

Community Outreach

ESO has a dedicated Community Outreach Department, which focuses on supporting ESO's aim to raise awareness on environmental conservation and engage members through lectures, events and activities. Dr. Hamad is the community outreach manager where he travels to different parts of the Sultanate to raise awareness and teach the public about endangered species and how people can contribute to the environment. Mainly, the awareness program takes place in the areas of research as Masirah Island and Dhofar. ESO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, developed content for Environmental Education which aims to raise environmental awareness amongst Omani youth through a program designed for school children in different parts of the Sultanate.