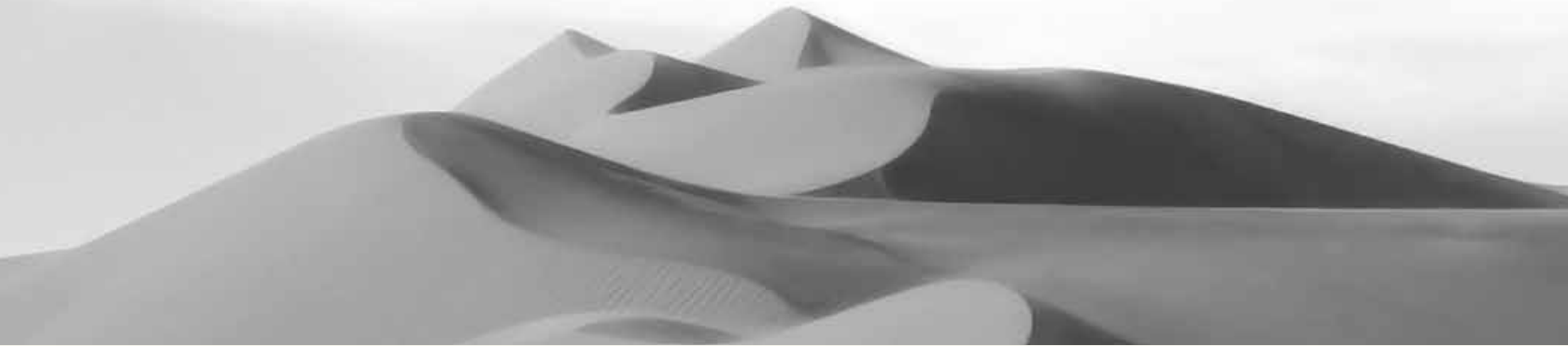




10 YEARS

CELEBRATING A CONSERVATION JOURNEY IN THE UAE



About EWS-WWF

Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS) is a UAE environmental non-profit organisation, established under the patronage of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler’s Representative in the western region and Chairman of Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD). EWS works in association with WWF (EWS-WWF), one of the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organisations. EWS-WWF has been active in the UAE since 2001 and has initiated and implemented numerous conservation and education projects in the region.

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10 YEARS

CELEBRATING A CONSERVATION JOURNEY IN THE UAE
2001-2011



FOREWORD FROM H. E. MOHAMMED AHMED AL BOWARDI

**Chairman of the Board of Directors
of EWS-WWF**

10 years ago, Emirates Wildlife Society in association with WWF was established. It brought together an inspiring determination to protect the UAE's natural wealth and the years of experience from a credible international organisation.

This Emirati non-profit organisation has since grown to become a leader in environmental conservation, successfully implementing influential projects that will leave their mark for years to come.

Throughout its journey, EWS-WWF has stayed committed to its key founding principles, and as a result has gained the trust of its partners and the hearts of its supporters. EWS-WWF has continued to work closely with institutions and organisations, drawing from their support and at the same time, lending its own expertise to facilitate the development of long-term, well-rounded solutions to environmental challenges.

By striving to achieve shared goals in protecting nature and underpinning a sustainable future for the country, EWS-WWF has also been working in the community to elevate environmental consciousness and empower all UAE residents to become part of the solution.

Through capacity building, furthering environmental education and local scientific research, a solid long-term foundation is being set for the country to continue its efforts in environmental actions in the decades to come.

In the face of growing environmental challenges, EWS-WWF aspires to continue on this path – maintaining its passion towards helping to create a sustainable future for the UAE and the region, while contributing to global efforts to help us pass on a living planet to our future generations.



MESSAGE FROM H. E. RAZAN KHALIFA AL MUBARAK

Managing Director of EWS-WWF

Looking back with pride, I realise how far EWS-WWF has come on its journey.

Starting out with a team you could count on one hand, to an organisation which today boasts a varied skill-set in policy, conservation, education, communication and fundraising. Yet the organisation has maintained its passion and the team still tackles its projects with the same level of excitement and dedication, backed by a strong support network.

The successes we are celebrating this year are the triumphs of all of us, and could not have been achieved without the committed support of sponsors, partners, volunteers, media, teachers, students and the UAE community.

This 10th anniversary is a prime time to celebrate our successes. We have come a long way: aiding in the establishment of the country's first mountain protected area, helping the UAE to understand and take action to lower its Ecological Footprint, launching the Marine Turtle Conservation Project, initiating environmental education, curbing the illegal wildlife trade, awarding environmental excellence, mapping coral reefs and promoting well-managed and sustainable fisheries.

There is also pride to be felt in the UAE's own strides towards sustainability, with ambitious initiatives and plans set to guide the country towards a more environmentally viable future.

The world faces growing environmental challenges that threaten our seas, deserts, mountains and natural resources, and although we have achieved a lot, our work here is far from over. The impacts of climate change are expected to be felt across the region and the globe, posing pressure on our energy, water and food security. Our own consumption patterns are also leaving their marks on the natural environment, with species driven to extinction and important habitats vanishing.

It's only by working together that we can address these pressing issues.

We look forward to working with the same level of commitment and enthusiasm and hope to gain your continued support for a better future for our country and world.

10 YEARS 10 STORIES



INTRODUCTION BY IDA TILLISCH

Acting Director General of EWS-WWF

This 10th anniversary milestone in Emirates Wildlife Society's history is one to be celebrated. Since the organisation's establishment in 2001, it has been working in association with one of the world's most trusted and experienced environmental organisations: WWF, and aspires to be the leading environmental NGO within the UAE and the region.

Our mission is to work with people and institutions to conserve biodiversity, tackle climate change and reduce the Ecological Footprint through education, awareness, policy and science-based conservation initiatives.

Moving into the future, EWS-WWF will continue its mission to conserve the natural heritage of the UAE, bringing together stakeholders from all sectors of society to develop and implement the right solutions to our environmental issues. Together we must reduce our Ecological Footprint and at the same time, safeguard the rich and unique biodiversity our terrestrial and marine landscape is blessed with.

I hope you will enjoy reading 'Celebrating a Conservation Journey in the UAE,' which highlights 10 key achievements of EWS-WWF in the last decade. We also hope you will join us as we embark on our exciting journey into the next decade.



CONTRIBUTING TO CONSERVATION

Marine Turtle Conservation Project

Filling scientific data gaps for the protection of Hawksbill turtles in the Gulf region

As the moon beams brightly over the region’s coastlines, hundreds of turtle hatchlings force their way up to the sand’s surface. Once emerged, they scuttle down the beach in a frenzy, heading to the sea, where they will begin their 30-year journeys towards adulthood.

Floating as part of the ocean’s plankton for a decade, they hide from predators, until they become juveniles. Coupled with natural dangers, the odds are stacked against them with human-induced threats such as accidental capture in fishing nets, habitat loss, pollution and climate change. These elements present challenges to their survival as a species, even in adulthood.

Reaching sexual maturity and migrating to the mating grounds is one of the most vital phases in their lifecycle, yet despite their large numbers, only one in 1000 survives to adulthood.

Existing on this planet for more than 100 million years, turtles are essential to marine habitat ecosystems.

Contributing to the protection of Hawksbill turtles’ in the Gulf, the EWS-WWF Marine Turtle Conservation Project aims to identify migration routes and key feeding grounds in the region essential to this critically endangered species’ future.

Hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature

Tracking up to 75 post-nesting female Hawksbills across Oman, the UAE, Iran and Qatar using satellite tracking technology, this three-year project is the first to integrate a regional collaboration into its studies, by working with partners in these respective countries. By adopting this approach, the project is helping to fill data gaps in the Middle East.

The EWS-WWF turtle tagging team patiently patrols the beaches at night during the nesting season, waiting to witness a dark shape emerge from the water. The female Hawksbill endures a laborious two or more hour process of digging a nest and laying her eggs. Before returning to the sea, her 80cm shell is fitted with a satellite transmitter in a painless process using resin and fibreglass.

Every time she surfaces to breathe, the transmitter sends a signal to the satellite. From this our researchers are able to pinpoint her approximate location in the region at any given time. More importantly however, this turtle’s migratory data, cross-referenced with other data collected throughout the project, will help highlight feeding grounds and migratory patterns in the Gulf.

Garnering support from the media, the Marine Turtle Conservation Project has already raised public awareness of this species’ conservation needs through the Great Gulf Turtle Race. This symbolic five-week event, offers the public a light-hearted way to learn more about the project’s significance to the region while cheering for their favourite turtle.

Information gathered from this research project will contribute to the global scientific community. By sharing this knowledge with relevant authorities in the region, it can in turn guide the design of future conservation plans, helping to ensure the protection and survival of this exceptional species in the 21st century.



©EWS-WWF

Fitting satellite transmitters to female Hawksbills in the Gulf is helping to identify the migratory patterns and vital foraging grounds of this critically endangered species.



INITIATING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Be’ati Watani & Eco-Schools

Inspiring future generations to be passionate about the environment

In classrooms across the country, students are learning about the UAE’s precious natural resources and how we all need to protect them.

Reaching out to more than a million students to date, Be’ati Watani, which began as a bilingual programme called Enviro-Spellathon and was launched by EWS-WWF and its partners in 2003, leads pupils on a light-hearted journey of discovery.

By integrating environmental education into the classroom, children learn how their country’s resources and wildlife need to be cared for and protected. It encourages them to become environmentally responsible citizens.

Youngsters learn about a range of environmental topics from wildlife of the UAE to tackling climate change with animated Emirati mascots Aisha, Hamad and their families.

Despite starting as a small paper-based initiative teaching students about the UAE environment, its popularity has flourished and in more recent years, the programme has dramatically widened its remit to offer students a curriculum-style environmental programme on CD. It changed its name to Be’ati Watani (my environment, my country) to best reflect this and in 2011, the programme moved to a fully interactive and engaging online platform.

Presenting information collected from scientific research in an easy-to-understand way, Be’ati Watani gained endorsement from the Ministry of Education as a highly recommended extracurricular activity for schools.

Inspiring youngsters to be passionate about environmental issues is vital to ensuring the future health of our planet.

Youngsters surveyed before and after taking the Be’ati Watani course showed significant improvements in their awareness of local wildlife and how they can help conserve natural resources. Aiding children appreciate the environment is recognised as one of the key triumphs of this project.

Be’ati Watani supplies teachers with resources to help guide classroom discussions by providing knowledge about the UAE’s biodiversity in a student-friendly manner.

Moving through eight levels, the Be’ati Watani website is a wealth of information as well as an interactive platform for students to take quizzes, play games and challenge each other on how much they know about the environment.

Spanning across all emirates and due to strong backing from teachers currently implementing the programme, Be’ati Watani will soon launch in a new country for the first time: Qatar.

Another strand of environmental education initiated by EWS-WWF, as the national operator for the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), is Eco-Schools.

By driving entire schools to take environmental action, Eco-Schools empowers youngsters to play an active role in mitigating climate change and lowering their schools’ Ecological Footprint.

Through implementing seven key steps, students act in the classroom, in their school and their community to improve the environment and produce measurable reductions in their resource consumption.

Acting as an incentive, schools can apply to be certified with a Green Flag after implementing the seven environmental steps into their daily school life.

Eco-Schools’ Green Flag is an international recognition of environmental excellence in schools. Once schools are awarded with a Green Flag, which can be displayed on their premises, they must reapply and be assessed every two years to ensure they are still compliant to the conditions of the prestigious award.

Initiating and expanding environmental education in the UAE through Be’ati Watani and Eco-Schools, is one of EWS-WWF’s key achievements as an organisation.



© Tiffany Schultz

Be’ati Watani and Eco-Schools educational programmes offer the country’s youth an engaging way to learn about the environment.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Sustainable Fisheries and the Choose Wisely Campaign

Working with UAE communities to raise awareness in order to safeguard our fisheries

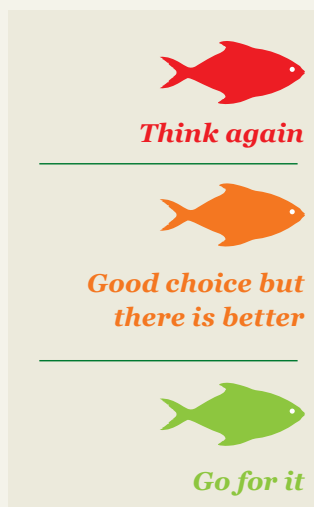
A pearl diver plunges from his boat into the depths of the water below, unaided by a mask or oxygen tank. He submerges into a world of plenty. Fish dart in all directions as he explores deeper and deeper. The free-diver reaches depths of more than 30m in the quest for his livelihood.

In the past, fishermen used simple equipment and relied on the sea’s wealth to feed their communities. Casting gargoor nets overboard to catch a small number of fish, this activity placed little pressure on nature’s abundance, and so the country’s close relationship with the sea became an integral part of Emirati heritage.

These days however, although some fishermen are still using traditional methods, they are mostly being replaced by modern techniques to help feed a continually growing population.

With increasing numbers of fishermen and higher consumer demand, local commercial fish stocks have declined by 80% since 1978 which today has resulted in unsustainable levels. An alarming 60% of all catch is composed of overfished species, making it a significant environmental issue for the country with some species, such as Hamour being fished at more than seven times the sustainable rate.

◀ In the UAE, overfishing is an issue threatening not only local fish stocks but also livelihoods depending on this natural resource.



The easily recognisable campaign logo is starting to appear in menus and on fish stalls in popular supermarkets to identify sustainable choices

At the supermarket, fish are neatly displayed at the counter. Helping consumers to reach a decision on which fish to pick for their weekly meals, is a handy pocket-sized consumer guide from the EWS-WWF Choose Wisely campaign. With its traffic light classification system, consumers are able to make informed decisions on which UAE-sustainable fish to buy.

Overfished species appear on the red list while fish on the orange list are presently experiencing some fishing pressures. Completing the traffic light system are green listed fish, giving consumers the go ahead to eat a species which currently has healthy stock levels in the UAE. Species are added to the red, orange or green lists, subject to the most up-to-date local scientific data.

Even if previously unaware of unsustainable choices, consumers can now easily identify fish either using the consumer guide or by checking the red, orange and green sustainability labels at the fish counters of participating supermarkets.

Not only has shopping for fish become easier since the launch of Choose Wisely in 2009, but an increasing number of restaurants now display the campaign's traffic light fish logo, signifying the sustainability status of each of its dishes.

Championing the campaign, volunteers submitted their fish dish recipes, to later be published in a 50-page bilingual sustainable cookbook by EWS-WWF. Sustainable Fish Recipes won 'Best Fish & Seafood Book' at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in 2010.

Furthering the public's engagement with choosing sustainable fish, the cookbook is now assisting people in cooking up some delicious and sustainable homemade fish dishes.

Raising awareness of Choose Wisely through a dedicated website and extensive media coverage has also helped boost EWS-WWF's profile nationally.

During Ramadan 2011, Choose Wisely garnered even more popularity as two new species were added to the green list and some of the more popular recipes were published in the media, creating a buzz around the topic of sustainable Iftars.

Addressing the ever-present issue of overfishing species native to UAE waters, the campaign will continue partnering with the retail, gastronomy and tourism sectors in promoting sustainable seafood while strengthening current partnerships. Engaging with fishing communities and raising further awareness of sustainable choices are the next chapters of the Sustainable Fisheries Project.



Consumers can now make informed decisions on sustainable fish options by using the Choose Wisely campaign's traffic light coding system.

© Eman Al Hawary



UNDERSTANDING AND REDUCING THE UAE'S ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Ecological Footprint Initiative

Leading in-depth research into the country's Ecological Footprint

As the planet's population exceeds seven billion people, it is vital now more than ever, to understand and measure humanity's demands on the world's resources.

As a 'health check-up' for the earth, the WWF Living Planet Report ranks countries according to their Ecological Footprints per capita. This indicator measures each country's environmental impact by calculating its demand from cropland, grazing land, fisheries, forests, carbon uptake land and built-up land, while taking into account the impacts of importing and exporting.

After being ranked as having one of the highest per capita Ecological Footprints in the world in the 2006 Living Planet Report, the UAE became the third country, after Switzerland and Japan, to embark on in-depth research into its footprint.

In 2007, through a unique partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Water, Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative and the Global Footprint Network, EWS-WWF launched the Ecological Footprint Initiative (which in Arabic is known as the Al Basma Al Beeiyah Initiative).

With the aim of understanding and tackling the Ecological Footprint, through the initiative EWS-WWF was able to help build government capacity, pinpoint which activities were the

Overconsumption is a global issue threatening the sustainability of our natural resources. The Ecological Footprint indicator measures the consumption of nations within its borders, accounting for imported goods.

highest contributors to the UAE's footprint as well as better understand the makeup of Ecological Footprints in arid countries.

EWS-WWF translated the Living Planet Report into Arabic to help raise awareness among the Arab community. It was shared with key stakeholders including the government, private sector and Arabic media.

This desert ecosystem, rich with sunshine, has seen vast increases in population and economic growth in recent times, however its limited natural resources are being exhausted to the point that to satisfy demand, significant quantities are being imported from overseas.

With temperatures reaching up to 50C in the summer months and less than 120mm of rainfall every year, increasing amounts of energy are required for cooling and water desalination plants. These activities are major contributors to the UAE's Ecological Footprint alongside high consumption from individuals.

Following the findings from the initiative's first phase and recognising all sectors of society play a part, EWS-WWF in partnership with the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi launched awareness campaign Heroes of the UAE, with the aim of encouraging everyone to make changes to their daily routines to help lower the country's footprint.

One fundamental legacy of the initiative is the development of a scientific scenario modelling tool that assesses how future policies targeted towards the energy and water sector, would affect the country's Ecological Footprint up to the year 2030.

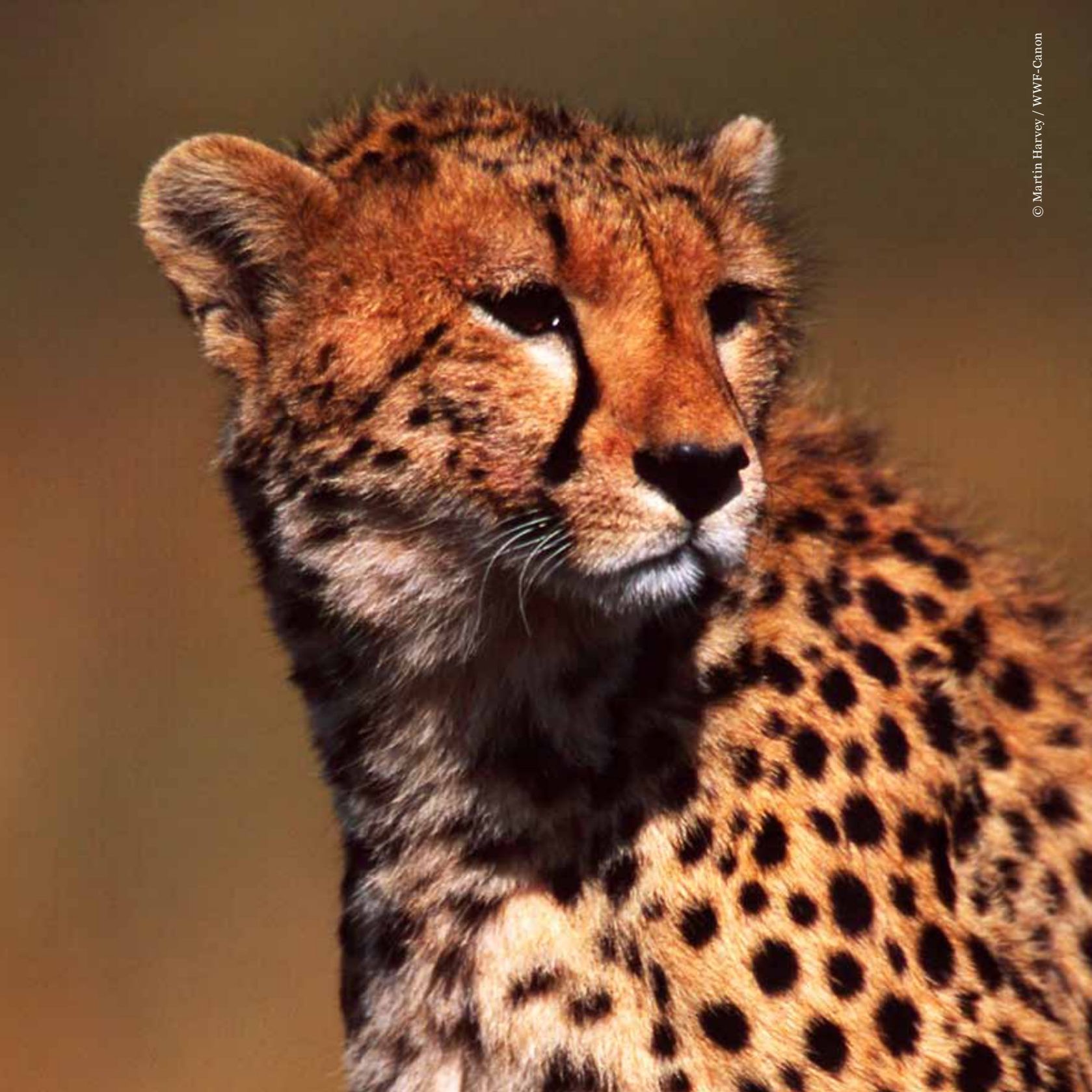
Aiding in policy assessment, this cutting-edge research allows decision makers to visualise how these future policies could affect the environment.

The scenario modelling tool estimates that if the most ambitious plans, centred on energy and water savings were implemented in Abu Dhabi, the emirate could reduce its carbon emissions by up to 40% by 2030.

Building on the key successes of the project to date, the next phase of the initiative will address the need for quick-win policy options to further reduce the country's Ecological Footprint.



The Ecological Footprint Initiative launched a call to all residents to think twice about their consumption patterns. An award-winning animation film was produced highlighting the relation between our daily actions and the Ecological Footprint.



CURBING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

CITES

Building national capacity to protect the world’s rarest species from trafficking

Identifying wildlife species entering the country are a team of UAE customs officers. Using Arabic identification manuals and putting into practice their specialised training, they are able to distinguish which species are coming into the country legally and which are not.

With more than 20 entry points into the country, customs officers play a vital role in curbing wildlife trafficking.

This detrimental and illegal activity has seen several species of endangered animals being traded on Middle Eastern markets including cheetahs, gazelles, reptiles and monkeys as well as exotic rare birds; however it is not just a regional issue, but one that spans across the globe.

A lucrative trade worth billions of dollars every year, trafficking is one of the main causes of animal and plant extinction in the wild. Illegal and unregulated wildlife trade also carries serious economic, health and conservation implications for the receiving countries through the spread of invasive species and infectious diseases.

From the trade of big cats and primates to the sale of animal by-products, the International treaty CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) provides nations with guidance on how to curb the issue.

Joining as a CITES signatory in February 1990, the UAE outlined its intentions of addressing the illegal wildlife trade by compliance to this international convention. Difficulties implementing CITES however attracted media attention and as a result a trade ban was enforced on the country in 2001.

CITES is an international agreement that strives towards regulating the trade of species and plants to help ensure their survival, especially endangered species such as cheetahs.

Championing the bid to curb this unlawful industry in the UAE, EWS-WWF worked on legislation and capacity building for CITES authorities from 2001, when the trade ban was imposed. With the support of the Environment and Research of Wildlife Development Agency (now known as the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi), the need for capacity building among local authorities was continued and in 2004, EWS-WWF launched new efforts to build CITES capacity for customs officials.

Identification manuals were translated into Arabic and published by EWS-WWF, aiding authorities in the enforcement process.

Translating the manuals has proved highly useful to those working to enforce CITES, as they contain explanations, descriptions and sketches of the internationally banned species and assist in identifying which species need permits to be legally traded and which do not.

This became the first ever Arabic species identification manual of its kind and is now used by the UAE government and throughout the Middle East.

Further facilitating skills development, a comprehensive training workshop by EWS-WWF was held with Fujairah Municipality for customs and enforcement officers where the translated identification manuals were presented.

Accomplishments of EWS-WWF's CITES Wildlife Trade Project were commended by the CITES Secretariat. The UAE is an example of a country which was able to turn itself around from non-implementation and a trade ban, to being a recognised member country of CITES with implementation measures in place.

The trade ban was partially lifted in 2002 after appropriate legislation was enforced and lifted fully in 2003. EWS-WWF now acts as an advisor and monitoring agency for CITES, following the conclusion of its capacity building project in 2008. Meanwhile the Ministry of Environment and Water is designated as the CITES Management Authority and the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi is the scientific authority for the UAE.

The trade of wildlife and wildlife parts are major direct threats to species in the wild. Regrettably however, it is still not uncommon to see exotic animals exhibited as pets in this region, and the Middle East has also become a major transit hub for illegal trade of animal parts, such as ivory and rhino horns from Africa to their consumers in Asia.

Continuous education, development of skills through training on CITES is essential to curb this destructive trade. Shifting towards increasing public awareness is recognised as one of the most significant factors to the success of CITES in the UAE moving forwards.



Customs officials in the UAE have been trained to recognise animal and plant parts being traded illegally. This Yemeni dagger is a prime example of an illegally traded animal part, since its handle is made from rhino horn.



© EWS-WWF

AWARDING ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL EXCELLENCE

Blue Flag

Facilitating the implementation of a prestigious eco-label for beaches and marinas

As the sun shines over Abu Dhabi, families strolling along the Corniche are safe in the knowledge that this is one of an elite number of coastal destinations worldwide.

As the first Blue Flag beach in the Gulf, Abu Dhabi Corniche is a gem in this modern metropolis, attracting tourists and local communities alike to its clear waters and clean beaches.

From people sharing picnics to keen athletes using the promenade to exercise, this popular shoreline is thriving, and thanks to the Blue Flag being hoisted over its turquoise waters in June 2011, it is now receiving the international acknowledgement it deserves.

To gain this prestigious eco-label, Abu Dhabi Corniche, home to thousands of visitors every year, had to comply with 32 strict criteria centred on environmental management, information and education, water quality, public safety and services.

EWS-WWF is the national coordinator in the UAE for the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE): the international founder organisation of the Blue Flag programme.

In this capacity, EWS-WWF advises and assists beach and marina managers interested in receiving the Blue Flag to achieve their goals.

Blue Flag is a credible environmental certification that demands high standards of water quality and coastal management.

EWS-WWF accepts applications for this prestigious recognition, which are only sent to the international jury if it gains approval from the national jury. It also coordinates with potential stakeholders to ensure they meet the stringent criteria in order to achieve Blue Flag status.

By working closely with the Municipality of Abu Dhabi City, EWS-WWF assisted in the successful completion of the pilot phase at the Corniche beach.

Joining the Blue Flag ranks in the UAE are Al Bandar Marina and Yas Marina, as the first marinas in the region to claim this degree of coastal excellence closely followed by the beach at Le Meridien Mina Seyahi in Dubai. As this prominent eco-label gains publicity and momentum, EWS-WWF is confident there will be an increase in applications and Blue Flags being awarded to the country.

From humble beginnings in French coastal towns in 1987, when municipalities were awarded for sewage treatment and bathing water quality compliance, Blue Flag is a symbol now recognised the world over and has increased its prominence to the point that the programme is now acknowledged by the United Nations Environment Programme as well as the World Tourism Organisation.

One of the Blue Flag's unique elements is its transparency of water bathing standards, as awarded venues must continue to comply with and meet set standards on an annual basis through regular water quality testing.

EWS-WWF not only works to ensure more beaches and marinas play their part, but also monitors compliance of those already in possession of the environmental accolade.

Blue Flags are awarded for one season only and renewed annually to coastal locations consistently meeting the expected standards. Instances of non-compliance, results in Blue Flags being withdrawn: this has earned the programme its reputation as a trustworthy and transparent indicator of coastal excellence.

Carrying forward the Blue Flag success story in the UAE, EWS-WWF is continuing to work with municipalities, hotels, marinas and schools to take action and raise awareness of the importance of these marine habitats enjoyed by humans and other species alike, and to help ensure the emirates continue to be an attractive location for tourists, residents and wildlife.



© EWS-WWF

A number of Blue Flags now fly proudly over the UAE, marking a significant step towards the recognition of coastal excellence in the country.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

Heroes of the UAE

Empowering the UAE community to tackle climate change and reduce the country's Ecological Footprint

There are heroes out there. They may not be wearing superhero outfits but they are using energy efficient light bulbs, cutting their shower times in half and using the sun to dry their clothes.

Through a partnership with the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi, EWS-WWF was motivated to launch Heroes of the UAE in February 2009, to help address the country's high Ecological Footprint, to inspire people to reduce their electricity and water use on a daily basis.

Promoting sustainable lifestyles, this campaign offers those sectors of society contributing most highly to the country's Ecological Footprint: households, government and the private sector, simple yet effective ways to lower consumption.

Endorsed by the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Education, this campaign has reached out to more than 500,000 people since it was launched.

The campaign targets households, which contribute to 57% of the country's Ecological Footprint, through its dedicated website, outreach events and energy and water audits and makeovers.

Complete with handy tips to conserve energy and water, animations which explain the environmental issues we face locally and globally, as well as a useful carbon calculator to measure consumption patterns, the website is fundamental in elevating awareness.

Our individual actions contribute to the country's Ecological Footprint. Making small changes towards conservation of our natural resources will ensure a sustainable future for our children.



Heroes of the UAE is an awareness campaign that promotes sustainable lifestyles among all sectors of society.

By conducting three energy and water audits and makeovers in homes across the emirates, Heroes of the UAE was able to demonstrate how everyone can achieve considerable reductions by employing simple behavioural changes, as well as technical changes.

Recognising that the private sector can play a vital role in lowering carbon emissions, the campaign developed a business-specific toolkit, to aid organisations in initiating conservation measures at work.

Due to high demand, the toolkit has since grown to contain a range of new resources, including an animated presentation designed to help businesses educate and engage their employees on environmental issues.

Organisations are encouraged to become Corporate Heroes by reaching a 10% minimum reduction in their energy and water consumption, as well as applying a long-term environmental strategy. Companies must present their results to EWS-WWF to become a verified Corporate Hero.

EWS-WWF carried out four energy and water audits and makeovers in workplaces across the UAE to demonstrate how organisations can cut their energy and water usage.

Working with the government, EWS-WWF helped the Ministry of Environment and Water achieve a 24% carbon footprint reduction and 44% drop in water consumption after an energy and water audit and makeover in its office building in Dubai. These reductions were realised by installing water saving devices and improving air conditioning efficiency.

Other government agencies joining the campaign: Dubai Municipality, Abu Dhabi's Department of Transport and the Executive Affairs Authority Abu Dhabi, have also pledged to become Corporate Heroes.

Turning its attention to investing in education, EWS-WWF is helping to instil a sense of responsibility for the environment in younger generations.

Students from 77 schools participating in the programme, pledged to play their role by taking environmental actions.

Captivating young minds with quizzes and competitions, the schools programme invested 600,000AED into energy and water audits and makeovers at five schools. The anticipated savings of all five schools as a result is 121 tonnes of carbon dioxide and financial savings of 100,000AED per year.

Heroes of the UAE quickly became a recognised and successful, multi-faceted campaign, championing environmental change across the emirates.



As main contributors of the Ecological Footprint, Heroes of the UAE calls for energy and water conservation to help lower the country's high Ecological Footprint.



© Hartmut Junguis / WWF-Canon

PRESERVING OUR NATURAL HABITATS

Wadi Wurayah

Protecting biodiversity at an important site

Heading into the rocky Hajar mountains, the EWS-WWF research team carefully positions its camera traps, aiming to capture stunning shots of Wadi Wurayah’s most elusive residents. From the predatory Caracal stalking its prey to the Blanford’s fox caring for its young, the wealth of information revealed by the camera traps is fascinating.

With exceptional water quality at nine freshwater sources within this mountain area, wildlife in the wadi is plentiful: mountain gazelles, Gordon’s wildcats, blue tailed lizards, Omani carpet vipers, orchids, garra fish, Arabian tahrs and even migratory houbara bustards, all make Wadi Wurayah their home.

It is thought that in the region of 500 species inhabit Wadi Wurayah, 55 of them previously unknown to science have been discovered since EWS-WWF researchers began studying the area in 2006. Documenting all species found in the wadi resulted in a comprehensive publication by EWS-WWF in the same year. As new species have been discovered, supplementary reports have been published.

Set in Fujairah, Wadi Wurayah boasts a wide range of biodiversity as well as cultural significance as a heritage site, since the discovery of 15th century pottery fragments and ancient Islamic graveyards.

However, threatening to destroy Wadi Wurayah’s rare and endangered wildlife and resources is the overexploitation of its freshwater sources, quarrying, urbanisation, littering and hunting, among other unsustainable practices.

Preserving habitats is vital to maintaining a balanced ecosystem where biodiversity can thrive.

Sharing a long-term vision with Fujairah Municipality, local residents and universities to protect this natural treasure, EWS-WWF has worked closely with all parties to foster successful partnerships.

Realising the vision came in 2009 when a 129km range between Khor Fakhan and Bidiyah was declared a mountain protected area by Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Fujairah, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammad Al Sharqi.

The benefits of awarding the spot protected status include supporting the area’s rich biodiversity as well as providing environmental services and socio-economic opportunities.

Collecting further environmental accolades, Wadi Wurayah was the second site in the UAE to be announced as a wetland of international importance under the RAMSAR convention in 2010, following Ras al Khor, Dubai, in 2008. Facilitating the lines of communication to help preserve wetlands in the region, a RAMSAR workshop was held in Fujairah and hosted by Fujairah Municipality.

Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden visited the protected area in 2011 as a royal guest of the Crown Prince of Fujairah, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad al Sharqi.

Environmental education in schools and colleges has also seen students become regular visitors to this biodiversity hotspot.

Ensuring the protection of this site and its natural ecosystems is the next phase. By working towards appropriate management and monitoring of Wadi Wurayah National Park, it will help prevent exploitation of the area and initiate educational and scientific opportunities for visitors, as well as protecting the site for future generations to cherish.



Announcing Wadi Wurayah as a mountain protected area is integral to preserving its high quality freshwater resources.



© EWS-WWF

CONTRIBUTING TO MARINE RESEARCH

Coral Reef Conservation

Understanding key areas essential for the Gulf’s marine environment

Plunging beneath the deep blue waters off of the UAE coastline, a vibrant underwater world awaits.

Teeming with life and boasting a plethora of colours, Abu Dhabi and Qatari waters are integral to the Gulf’s marine ecosystems. Diving below the surface, this world unfolds: pink, yellow and orange corals of all shapes and sizes sprout from the sea floor, providing shelter to the many species sharing this environment.

Residing here among the soft and hard corals, leopard eels camouflage themselves to stalk their prey, while starfish and seahorses rely on these reefs for basic survival.

Coral reefs provide shelter, food and breeding grounds for important local species for fisheries and conservation, including the yellow Arabian butterflyfish which feed exclusively on coral polyps.

These jewels of the sea are essential to safeguarding the health of marine ecosystems because they are home to around a quarter of all marine life, despite coral reefs making up less than one percent of the marine environment.

Coral reefs in the Gulf are providing unique opportunities for researchers to understand the future impacts of climate change due to their ability to withstand high salinity and sea temperatures above 30C. They are fragile however and threatened by degradation, climate change, as well as coastal development.

Many species depend on rich coral reefs in the Gulf for their survival.

By undertaking in-depth research into underwater habitats in waters off Abu Dhabi and Qatar, EWS-WWF has made substantial contributions to marine research in the region.

Extensive mapping of the corals is one of the legacies of the Coral Reef Conservation Project as well as the publication of a list of coral species living in the south eastern Arabian Gulf, which now serves as a baseline for research in the region. Two biodiversity hotspots were discovered as a result of the coral mapping: Ras Ghanada and Halul Island.

A conservation and management plan was published as a result of the research, which deemed coral reefs in Abu Dhabi and eastern Qatar as critical to the survival of the Gulf's ecosystem. Fruition of the project saw strategic recommendations to protect coral reefs outlined in the management plan.

The project findings also showed that original plans to build Khalifa Port would directly impact Ras Ghanada coral reef. Boasting the only cactus coral along Abu Dhabi's mainland coast, Ras Ghanada is known for its biodiversity and reef development.

By sharing this information with the Abu Dhabi authorities, they were able to make informed decisions on the future of the port and decided instead to build on a reclaimed island four kilometres out to sea.

Avoiding huge destruction to Ras Ghanada, Khalifa Port opened on the new site in 2010, keeping intact this gem of the Arabian Gulf and the number of species depending on it. This outcome demonstrates the relevance of EWS-WWF's approach in working with local authorities.

The installation of 12 coral monitoring stations at key locations throughout the region is also one of the legacies of the project. These stations, now mostly monitored by the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi, gauge temperature changes and collect photographic data, allowing researchers to monitor coral growth. They also gather coral larvae: helping to monitor the type of corals in the vicinity as well as their health.

Owing to the accomplishments of the initial coral mapping, continued mapping of these marine gems in UAE waters, is seen as a priority for EWS-WWF.



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Mapping coral reefs highlighted their importance to marine life in the region. As a result, the project also documented the unique range of biodiversity in local waters and how important it is to protect it.



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Earth Hour has become the largest voluntary environmental action ever, marking a global shift towards being increasingly environmentally conscious of our combined actions.

INSPIRING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Earth Hour

Joining a global call to action against climate change

Watching from balconies in anticipation, people witness the night-time skyline change as lights shut off in neighbouring apartments, nearby hotels and office blocks.

Onlookers unite in this worldwide call to action against climate change, while turning off lights and appliances in their homes for one hour: Earth Hour.

What started from a single city event in Sydney 2007, has now snowballed into a global phenomenon celebrated in more than 5000 cities across 135 countries: a symbolic demonstration of what can be achieved if we all act together.

As the local facilitator for Earth Hour, EWS-WWF saw all seven emirates participating and showing solidarity in this global sustainability movement, for the first time ever in 2011.

Plunging into darkness, in stark contrast to their usual prominence in the UAE's skyline, iconic buildings such as Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the Burj Khalifa and Fujairah Fort joined thousands of other landmarks around the globe for this blackout event.

Earth Hour is the largest global grass roots environmental movement in history with 1.8 billion people reached in 2011. As the first step everyone can take together towards a better, more sustainable future, Earth Hour offers an easy way for everyone to take part while increasing awareness of how actions we take in our daily lives add up and impact the environment.

Across the emirates hundreds of schools, businesses and thousands of individuals are participating in Earth Hour year after year, clearly demonstrating that we care about our planet and want to see an end to climate change.

As its popularity grows, the successful campaign is urging people to do more by going Beyond the Hour: a drive to inspire people to change their behaviours not just during Earth Hour, but beyond it.

In the UAE, individuals shared their many great ideas to go Beyond the Hour in order to conserve energy and water including: turning off taps while brushing teeth, using public transport, reducing the use of air conditioning used and switching all office equipment off when not in use.

Prominent UAE figure His Highness Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi, dubbed locally as the Green Sheikh, avidly promotes the cause and pledged to go Beyond the Hour.

As Earth Hour's popularity increases, more and more ways to celebrate the hour are being presented to the community, by the community. In 2011, public and private events were published on the EWS-WWF Earth Hour website including gatherings at Abu Dhabi Corniche, Burj Khalifa, Festival City, Al Qasba, Fujairah Fort, alongside dinners in the dark and picnics on the beach.

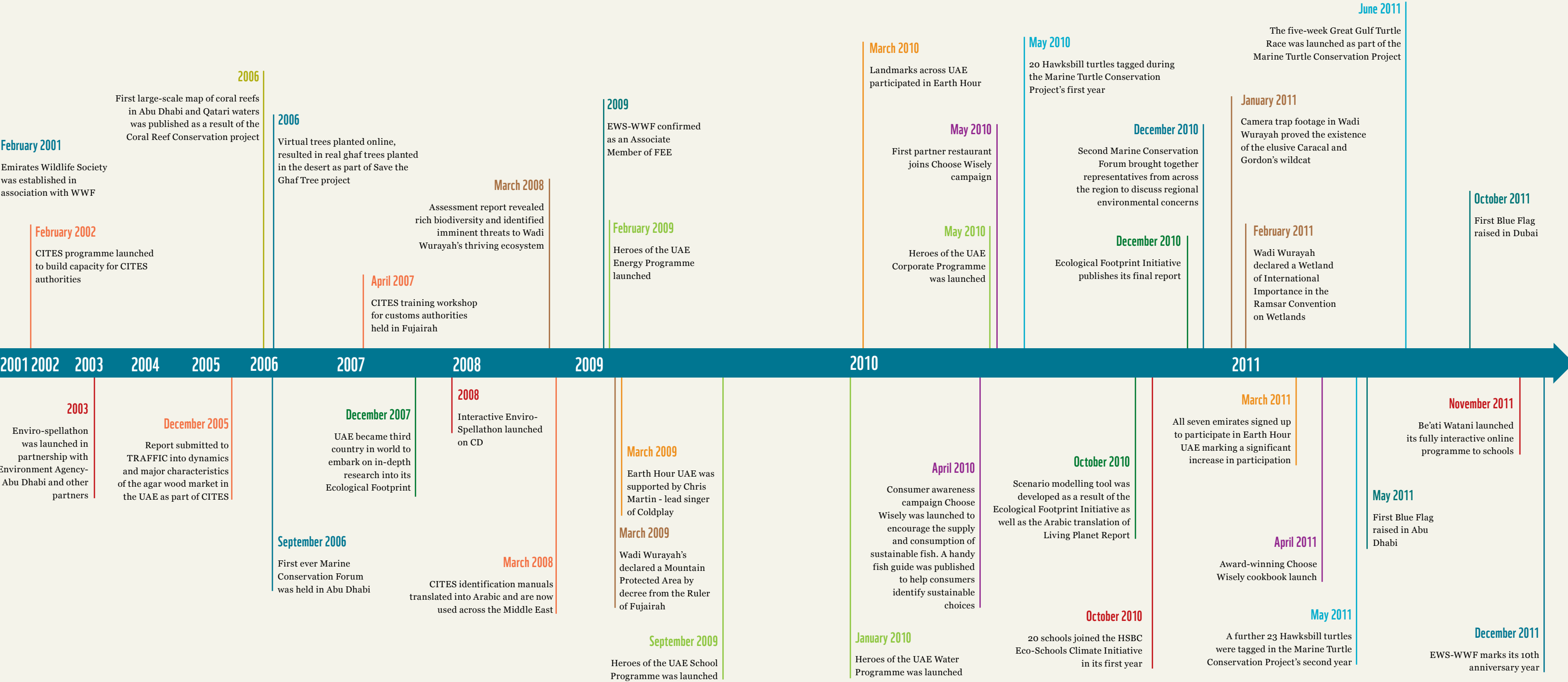
Using Earth Hour as a springboard to excite people about caring for the environment, it is a vital platform for EWS-WWF in reaching out and sharing information to educate people on how we all must start to take action for the betterment of our planet.



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All seven emirates have joined this global call against climate change with many residents participating in public events and at home.

Highlights



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We would like to take this opportunity to extend a big thank you to those who have contributed to the successes we are celebrating.

Throughout its first 10 years, the EWS-WWF team has tackled every issue and programme with unrelenting passion and dedication. Every person who has worked as part of the EWS-WWF team have contributed something special to make EWS-WWF the organisation it is today.

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THANK YOU!

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and Ruler’s Representative in the Western Region.

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VOLUNTEERS

With a network of 800 volunteers and counting, EWS-WWF depends on the additional time and support extended by these passionate individuals, who have gone above and beyond to help us in our work over the last decade. Our volunteers are an extension of our team and although this page alone is not enough to include all your names, we'd like to extend a special thank you to all of you.