



The National field research centre for environmental conservation

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Sultanate of Oman
Diwan of Royal Court

Issue 1

The environment is everyone's responsibility



Mobile Field Unit To Explore Oman's Biological Diversity



NFRCEC trains 5 Students in the UK



Sultanate: Harmony between development and environmental conservation



A great concern for our natural environment and the significant milestones achieved in protecting and nurturing it together has earned the Sultanate of Oman a respectable position among nations concerned with environmental protection. However, we still need to exert more efforts and pay more attention to specific challenges related to environment protection while planning and implementing development projects. We must proceed to expand and develop our existing engagements with regional and international environmental organizations. In addition, every citizen must actively take part in protecting our natural resources and safeguarding public health. It's the duty of each one of us to lovingly nurture the rich and uniquely beautiful nature and its precious resources granted to our beloved Oman by the Almighty God.

Qaboos Bin Said - 18 November 1985

**Speech of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said
on the occasion of the 15th National Day**

The National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation «NFRCEC» The Leader's Vision .. For protecting the Omani Environment

Thanks to the wise vision of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said - may Allah keep and protect Him, the Sultanate has in place a strong environmental policy framework and the necessary foundation for the conservation and preservation of its environment. As a result environmental protection constitutes a major element in the planning and implementation stages of all the development projects.

Several important achievements in the field of environment make the Sultanate a unique nation, and in fact, environment has been a basic component of all the economic and social development witnessed by the country since the dawn of the blessed renaissance.

The Royal attention paid by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, may Allah keep and protect Him, to the environment and related issues reflects HM's vision for the nation's environment which considers the environment as a crucial aspect of life. The Royal directive to establish the National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) by virtue of Royal Decree no. (542009) exemplifies his integrated and wise vision, and strategic approach towards protecting the environment and conserving its rich resources.

NFRCEC aims to regulate and also encourage field research on environmental conservation, and inspire Omani employees, researchers, specialists and students to involve in environmental initiatives. Additionally, the Centre helps to fine-tune their academic abilities and potential, and publish their research findings locally and internationally.

The Center takes care of developing field research projects for protecting the environment and ensuring its sustainability in the Sultanate, in addition to preserving the environment by all possible means. The Center also encourages academic and civil institutions, community organisations, researchers and others to participate in field environmental studies and researches. It also seeks to raise public awareness on environment and impart fundamental environmental concepts through school curricula and mass media.

NFRCEC aims to build real partnership between local communities and the surrounding environment through identifying the common benefits and interests that contribute to conserving the environment. This will have significant positive impact on these communities' daily social life.

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H.E. Sayyid Khalid Bin Helal Al-Busaidi,
Minister of Diwan of Royal Court

Sultanate: Harmony between development and environmental conservation

H.E. Sayyid Khalid Bin Helal Al-Busaidi, Minister of Diwan of Royal Court, said that the Sultanate pays special attention to the two crucial aspects of environment and climate since the dawn of the Blessed Renaissance under the wise leadership of HM Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, may Allah keep and protect Him.

The Sultanate has all along adopted a balanced approach to development based on the principle of harmony between comprehensive development requirements and the necessity of environmental protection and conservation of our natural resources, with a strong focus on eliminating or minimizing all forms of pollution and striving to realize the aspirations of the current and future generations, H.E noted.

H.E. said the basic framework for environmental initiatives in the Sultanate was drafted as part of an integrated strategy to achieve the desired economic and social objectives, by taking into account the importance of protecting the environment and conserving its natural resources in line with sustainable development paradigms. The Sultanate has endorsed most of the major international treaties and agreements on environmental protection and climatic systems in support of international efforts in this regard. It has formulated several legislations and established appropriate institutional and legal frameworks for effective implementation of its environmental obligations, H.E noted.

The efforts exerted by the Sultanate, which are in tune with international initiatives, in solving the varied environmental issues are guided by a range of policies and procedures set through royal directives from HM Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, may Allah keep and protect Him. HM has given Royal Orders that the nation's economic and social developments should be accompanied by proper care for its environment and conservation of natural resources. For its part, the Omani government has been keen to ensure effective implementation of all such policies and procedures without exception.

H.E. continued that the wise policy

pursued by the Sultanate had a significant role in effectively addressing many of the environmental issues. The hard work and efficient coordination among various governmental authorities concerned with the environment has led to the formulation and implementation of crucial legislations, and environmental systems -- often in collaboration with the private sector and the civil community institutions. These legislations and systems have ensured that only sustainable development is pursued, which doesn't meddle with the sanctity of the environment.

A turning point in this regard was the Muscat Declaration issued by the Supreme Council of their Majesties and Highnesses, along with the leaders of the GCC countries, in its 29th meeting held in December 2008, which stressed the importance of developing scientific means of forecasting environmental and climate changes. It also emphasized the necessity of intensifying joint cooperation among the GCC countries to effectively deal with such threats, and also to develop plans and policies to ensure environmental protection and conservation of resources for the benefit of future generations.

The National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) plays a big role in contributing to conserving the environmental system in the Sultanate through scientific studies and researches undertaken in collaboration with international organizations and governmental agencies, he noted, adding, NFRCEC is considered a scientific agency that works towards developing Omani capabilities in the field of environmental research.

The center aims to set in place proper frameworks for addressing the various environmental issues in the Sultanate as per sustainable development patterns that suit the specific requirements of the economic and environmental development in the Sultanate. Additionally, the center works toward creating the required environmental awareness among various segments of the society about the importance of protecting Oman's environment and conserving its natural resources, H.E Al Busaidi said.



It is indeed fortunate that environment has been an important pillar of the Blessed Renaissance. By pressing ahead with initiatives on the environmental awareness front, which we consider to be a crucial component in promoting the principles of environmental protection and sustenance, we will certainly achieve the goals of sustainable development in various fields.

The mass media - including print, radio, visual and digital - play a pivotal role in this field. They have directly contributed to generating in the public, across communities and groups, a heightened awareness about the importance of preserving the environment and conserving natural resources.

This newsletter entitled «The Lynx» is a significant element of the strategic plan set by the National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) to raise public awareness about the importance of environmental field researches as well as communities' participation in preserving the Sultanate's environment.

The newsletter aims to enhance national capabilities and ignite enthusiasm in the field of environmental research and develop human resource capabilities in the Sultanate to keep pace with latest developments and requirements in the sector.

The newsletter will focus - in the successive issues - on various environmental topics and issues at the local and international levels from an academic angle. It will highlight the role of environmental field research in resolving varied environmental issues, apart from emphasizing the center's efforts at developing national research capabilities through training programs and other means in collaboration with international environmental organizations.

This newsletter will also introduce eminent international environmental scientists and researchers and their works to its readers, and help those experts gain insights into the Sultanate and its varied initiatives and projects in the field of environmental preservation as well.

We hope the newsletter would achieve its academic and educational objectives and contribute to enrich the Omani environment.

Dr. Saif Al-Shaqasi:

The Center seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of environmental field research among the people of the Sultanate and strives to highlight the need to preserve the Omani environment and conserve its natural resources

Dr. Saif Bin Rashid Al-Shaqasi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC), stated that the center seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of environmental field research among its people across communities and categories, and also strives to highlight the need to preserve the Omani environment and conserve its natural resources.

He stressed the importance of boosting public awareness about the crucial nature of environmental research in line with the policy of sustainable development in the Sultanate, over and above the technical and scientific developments taking place in this field. «Raising public awareness about environmental research is an important component of the centre's mission. Going further, informing the people about various environmental issues and solutions is a critical academic aspect of the whole spectrum of environmental initiatives. Such efforts verily constitute the basis for developing an effective environmental framework in the Sultanate, because the individual is the main driver of the environmental development process as he/she influences, and is influenced by, the environment directly.» Dr Al-Shaqasi indicated.

NFRCEC's newsletter, «The Lynx», is part of the center's awareness project on environmental field research conceived with the aim of conveying its objectives to the general public and achieving its scientific purpose, he said.

«The newsletter presents a raft of local, regional and international subjects and issues on the environment front in a culturally and aesthetically appealing way so as to reach a wider audience. The newsletter is expected to develop a positive vibe among its readers with regard to preserving their environment.» Dr Al-Shaqasi continued.

«Lynx will also open up new horizons for theoretical and field research on the environment. It will review in its next



**Dr. Saif Bin Rashid Al-Shaqasi,
Acting CEO of NFRCEC**

issues some important environmental studies and researches at the local, regional and international levels. The newsletter is issued both in Arabic and English with the objective of attracting a broader community of researchers and scientists interested in environment and field research from the Sultanate and abroad. It will also be distributed to distinguished academics and international organizations working on the environment front outside the Sultanate," he pointed out.

He further said that the center is putting together a strategy and work plan in coordination with competent authorities in the Sultanate and some international organizations, adding, these will contribute to establishing a proper framework for studying the various components of the Omani environment, determining priorities and working on its development and sustainability.

«The center will undertake important research projects in collaboration with the Earth Watch Institute which will include a project on the vegetation in Jebel Al-Akhdar and Jebel Shams in Al-

Dakhiliya Governorate. The center will also implement a project on the Arabian tahr animal at the Jebel of Al-Hajar and another on the Leopard at Jebel Samhan area in Dhofar Governorate.» he added.

«The center will also carry out a project that will study the fresh water coming through the Falaj of Laza in the Wilayat of Samail as a model. It will implement a mobile environmental field unit to survey the biological diversity at the Jebel of Al-Hajar. In addition, the center will develop human resources associated with this project through external and internal training courses with the objective of keeping up with the scientific and technological updates in the environmental field.» Dr Al-Shaqasi revealed.

He also made clear that the center has designed a few academic programs for developing the capabilities of researchers in the Sultanate. It has conducted training courses for students outside the Sultanate in collaboration with the Earth Watch Institute with the objective of developing their capabilities in the field of environmental research and learning from the experiences of other countries in this field.

These training courses have contributed significantly to honing the national capabilities in the field of environmental research. In addition, the center is currently studying how to benefit from the scientific researches in the environmental field conducted by the universities in the Sultanate and means of coordinating with university researchers.

The center is also considering holding scientific symposia to discuss latest scientific researches and their outcomes guided by competent environmental authorities in the Sultanate. It also aims to come up with constructive recommendations that contribute to solving a wide range of environmental issues in the Sultanate, setting up the scientific basis for developing natural resources in the Sultanate and ensuring its sustainability and development, he noted.

Oman celebrates the World Wildlife Day

The Sultanate joined in the celebrations marking World Wildlife Day, on the 3rd of March. The celebrations highlighted the efforts by the Sultanate towards protecting and enriching its wildlife through designing and effectively implementing various programs in collaboration with both international and regional organizations. The United Nations General Assembly in its 68th session held on 20 December 2013 declared 3rd March as World Wildlife Day. This day corresponds to the day of adopting the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) signed on the same day in 1973.

Sultanate participates in World Water Day Celebrations

The Sultanate held celebrations marking the World Water Day (22nd March). World Water Day was declared by the United Nations Organization to remind the world about the importance of water as a precious resource and to highlight the grave scarcity of water faced by some countries along with associated challenges including salinity, and contamination. The theme of World Water Day this year was «Water and Sustainable Development», aptly chosen as water is the foundation on which development is based. The theme also reflects the close relationship between water and sustainable development across sectors and fields.

UNESCO invites Nominations to Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation 2015

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has invited nominations to the the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation 2015. The Prize is awarded every two years through the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere program (MAB) that recognises distinguished contributions by individuals, groups, institutions and organizations in the field of environmental preservation, in line with UNESCO's policies and programs. The international coordination office of MAB receives the nominations and select the winner without any discrimination .

In collaboration with Earthwatch Institute & the University of Nizwa

NFRCEC trains 5 Students in the UK

The students attended lectures at various colleges under Oxford University related to field work safety, environmental issues, environmental planning and use of Global Positioning System (GPS). There were lectures in entomology and scientific methods of conducting field research. In collaboration with the Earthwatch Institute and the Aflaj Research Unit at the University of Nizwa, the National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) has sent 5 students from the University of Nizwa on a wildlife training course at Oxford City in the United Kingdom. The course included theory and practical modules. The students attended lectures at various colleges under Oxford University, on field work safety, environmental issues, environmental planning and use of Global Positioning System (GPS), apart from entomology and scientific methods of conducting field research.

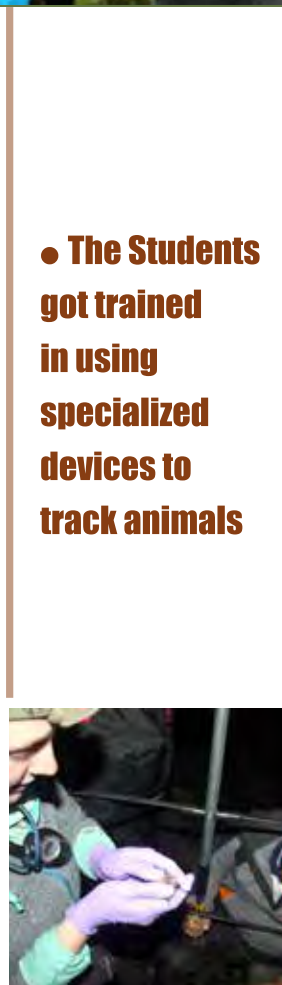
The lectures were delivered by a group of scientists and academics specialized in environmental studies. The practical part was conducted at the academic research field at Wytham Wood Area, where students were trained in using specialized devices for tracking animals and undertaking field research to study their behavior.

The students enthusiastically participated in all the workshops, debates and discussions, and gained latest knowledge from subject experts.

Bashair Al-Jaberiah, one of the student participants, said: «I acquired invaluable knowledge including practical skills through the training program. It also helped improve my leadership and administrative skills.» «I was really inspired by the depth of cultural, intellectual and academic exchange that took place between students and scientists and academics. We will continue to expand on our knowledge, and raise the profile of our beloved country and work to preserve and nurture our civilizational heritage and natural wealth. We would like to extend our deep gratitude to HM Sultan Qaboos Bin Said for his kind care and concern for the development of the Omani youth.»

Another participant Zeinab Al-Mataniah said: «I was very fortunate to be among the group of five students selected from my university to participate in this training program. The program offered an unparalleled research experience.»

«I learnt a lot from this experience. I took part in many debates and discussions with the faculty members. We developed a deep bond with nature, which led to a



● The Students got trained in using specialized devices to track animals

comprehensive understanding of the real meaning of conserving the environment and knowing more about the environment we live in," she said.

Yarub Al-Mahrouqi had this comment: «It was a unique experience as I managed to significantly broaden my understanding of environment. The program had a positive impact on all the aspects of my personality. It enabled me to acquaint myself with the surrounding environment and its precious resources, and design appropriate environmental research methods.»

Mariam Al-Harthiah recounted her experience saying: «The days we spent at Oxford were very useful to us as a group. I always dreamed of acquiring practical knowledge, and my dream turned into reality at Wytham Wood. The strong correlation between theoretical and practical aspects was quite remarkable.»

Mariam Al-Maslehiah commented that, «The training course opened up my horizons and inspired me to learn more by way of effective interaction with scientists and specialists in the environment conservation field. It has truly opened up the gates of scientific research before me.»

«I have always sought to acquire knowledge and skills in field research. Working with international organizations that support the cause of environment helped me familiarize myself with the latest methodology of scientific studies and research. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to HM Sultan Qaboos on his continuous support for environmental conservation. I also thank Earthwatch Institute for its commendable support,» she added.

Solar Energy utilized in Irrigation

Turkey has come up with a solar-powered, state-of-the-art portable equipment that can uninterruptedly irrigate agricultural land 24 hours a day even in the hot summer months. Apart from helping reduce electricity bills, it can help overcome power outages occurring due to heavy energy consumption in the hot summer. The machine operates at night on a battery that is charged during the day. This innovative equipment, considered to be a significant invention in the field of agriculture, is capable of extracting water from depths of up to 170 meters. The machine can irrigate fields extending from 50 – 150 acres.

Energy Plants discovered in the Arabian Deserts

The United States of America has established a research center for energy plants on an area of 40 acres at Tucson City in Arizona. The center has studied about 1000 species of energy plants so far. Against this backdrop, it seems the Arabian deserts will continue to astonish us with their secrets and hidden treasures that remain unexplored. The latest of these treasures is the *Jatropha Curcas* plant that grows in the deserts of some Arab countries including Egypt, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Libya.

Solar Parks for the Residential Neighborhoods

The idea of establishing solar parks in the neighborhoods started in Colorado. It has now spread to Minnesota, California, Massachusetts and other American states. There is increasing demand for solutions that utilize renewable energy across the USA such as the energy park which allows people to purchase green energy without buying solar panels which they may find expensive or impractical. The electricity produced by the solar park feeds the public power network, and in turn is used by customers.

To discover more information about the Biological Diversity in Oman

Mobile Field Unit To Explore Oman's Biological Diversity



Despite its dry climate Oman's rich and diverse environment supports the existence of a great variety of species including the endangered Arabian ibex and tiger.

There are more than 1200 species of plants, 500 species of birds, 75 species of reptiles, three species of amphibians and many invertebrates in the Sultanate. This rich environment needs to be explored, primarily through research and studies on these species. Certainly their numbers could be more than what is known currently.

Against this backdrop, the National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) has, in collaboration with Earthwatch Institute, established a mobile field unit for environmental studies with the objective of facilitating environmental field researches and expeditions. This unit helps researchers as well as those interested in environmental matters collect extensive data and pictures, and also undertake real-time environmental monitoring.

The unit includes a group of experts and researchers in the various fields of environmental study. They are currently conducting a comprehensive survey of Oman's biological diversity across different areas of Al-Hajar Mountains including Al-Saleel Nature Reserve, Ras Al-Shagar Reserve, Jabal Qahwan, Jebel Akhdar, Jebel Shams and others. The survey began last year and will close this year. The study areas were chosen on the basis of their rich biological diversity which makes it conducive to environmental studies and explorations.

- The unit will undertake comprehensive survey of Oman's Biological Diversity

- Concerted efforts by experts and researchers to collect data and images



The unit established integrated camping center in every designated area for a period of five weeks to undertake all kinds of surveys, with facilities such as sleeping tents, water closets, a tent for food another for holding scientific discussions and also facilities to record new data.

The functions of the unit include holding surveys on small and large mammals, insects and birds, and vegetation as well. Various techniques including distinct traps for reptiles and insects are used in the surveys. Insect meshes and ultraviolet lights are also used. These meshes are equipped with UV light, and are placed on trees at night and are checked early morning.

Once the insects and animals are surveyed and data recorded, they are released into the environment. Trap cameras are used to monitor and study the animals in rugged areas.

Employees from various competent authorities in the Sultanate are part of this unit, and this ensures that not only specialists but others interested in environment are also able to collaborate in environmental efforts. The authorities include the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs; Sultan Qaboos University; University of Nizwa, Petroleum Development Oman, and the Environment Society of Oman, to name a few.

The Mobile Field Unit is also working on preparing a database that identifies the habitats of different species which will facilitate the process of monitoring the future impacts of climate changes and designing related research initiatives. It also seeks to achieve capacity building by way of participating in the preparation of biological diversity database and also training the employees of NFRCEC and other agencies in conducting research on biological diversity.

● Database on the habitats of various species to facilitate tracking

● Trap cameras to monitor animals in rugged areas



Reflects Sultanate's efforts to up-skill Omani Researchers in environmental field

NFRCEC participates in Field Research Expedition in Australia



As part of its efforts at enhancing engagement with international agencies working in the environmental field, the National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) joined hands with the Earthwatch Institute. Under this collaboration Eng. Khalifah Bin Badawi Bin Said Al-Hajji participated in an environmental field research expedition in Queensland Province, Australia.

Commenting on the project, Eng. Khalifah said: «The expedition was part of a collaboration between the Diwan of Royal Court and the Earthwatch Institute aimed at training Omani researchers in the environmental sector. NFRCEC strives to develop the capabilities of Omani researchers through associate programs at the local and international levels.»
«Such collaborative researches are important, for they are done under the guidance of experts from various countries with distinctly different environmental systems and cultures, giving the whole experience the characteristics of a live encyclopedia.

«The team carried out a comprehensive survey of the biological diversity of the region and also studied the effects of climate change on the area. Not only environmental specialists but people curious to learn about our environment as well were part of the program. The expedition provided the participants with real time experience in conducting meticulous field research apart from offering them an opportunity to gain insights into leading scientists' thoughts and practices,» he said.

«The 10-day expedition included seven nights spent in Noah Beach Camping Area inside tents. The entire program was meticulously designed. The team members were divided into various groups assigned with survey of birds, reptiles and mammals, and members were shuffled across groups during the project. The groups worked independently and in collaboration day and night. Every group was assigned an expert in the relevant field as its leader,» he said.

It is worth noting that Queensland is a rainforest that was added to the World Heritage List in 1988. Despite its small size as a rainforest, it boasts rich biological diversity.

● The expedition provided the participants with real time experience in conducting meticulous field research apart from offering them an opportunity to gain insights into leading scientists' thoughts and practices

● Queensland is a rainforest that was added to the World Heritage List in 1988. Despite its small size as a rainforest, it boasts rich biological diversity.





Viewpoint

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NFRCEC organizes workshop on GIS

The National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) has organized a four-day workshop for its employees on Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Conducted by Dr. Ihsan Khalifah, an expert in Geographic Information and Remote Sensing Systems, the workshop had theory and practical sessions aimed at familiarizing the participants with various GIS aspects such as how to determine field work sites, manage GIS and draw geological maps. Commenting on the workshop, Dr. Khalifah said: «It's important to learn to use data properly in various programs for eventual application on the ground. This was the focus of the workshop; further it explored methods of identifying relevant data and information that could help decision makers in resolving issues.» In all 10 NFRCEC employees



with expertise in distinct domains attended the workshop. One of the participants, Mr. Issa Al-Samsami, an environmental planning specialist noted, «The workshop shone light on methods to examine the environmental changes and determine wildlife sites in different areas. We were required to do a project based on data collected through GIS. Also, we were guided to prepare geological maps.» For environment and climate affairs researcher Hana Al-Hinai, the workshop proved to be an effective platform to learn how to scientifically collect relevant data and apply that in various programs. Yet another participant Mr. Mohamed Al-Muqimi, an Information Systems Technician, who has attended the GIS workshop for the second time, appreciated the greater emphasis on practical sessions at this workshop. The workshop concluded with a competition in designing the most beautiful map of the Sultanate.

We are all responsible for protecting the Environment

Environment is one of the most highlighted aspects of the developmental framework in the Sultanate, and features prominently in all the commercial and industrial projects in the Sultanate in line with the government policy committed to protecting public health and surrounding environment. Indeed, the Sultanate is among the few countries that have found a fine balance between economic and environmental development, working on the principle of sustainable development. In fact environmental preservation and conservation of natural resources through sustainable development practices is considered a citizen's right not for the present generation alone but future generations as well. Clearly, the Royal attention paid by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said to the global as well as national environment has contributed to raising the profile of the Sultanate as one the leading countries with a strong pro-environment focus. Worth mentioning is the biennial Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, awarded through the UNESCO, which encourages and recognises proactive efforts at protecting the global environment. The prize highlights His Majesty's continued support for green causes on a global scale.

At the local level, His Majesty has strongly encouraged the design and implementation of various initiatives towards nurturing the environment. Going back to the 1970s, His Majesty presided over the Environment Protection and Pollution Prevention Council in 1979, which laid the framework for policy guidelines on safeguarding the Sultanate's environment. Our beloved Sultan also established a separate ministry for the environment in 1984, a first of its kind move in the entire Arab World. Further, 2001 and 2002 were marked as the Omani Environment Years. His Majesty has also instituted an award for the human and environmental affairs sector at the Secretariat General for the GCC Countries in 2008. In addition, the Sultanate has endorsed many international environmental treaties and agreements. The Sultanate has also drafted several key environmental laws and legislations to ensure that economic development doesn't jeopardize Oman's environmental health. Going further, many natural reserves had been established in the Sultanate. The efforts exerted by the various government entities in the Sultanate to preserve the Omani environment and conserve its natural resources can be considered phenomenal. In this context it must also be noted that environment belongs to us all and preserving it is a collective public responsibility, not just that of the government. His Majesty, may Allah keep and protect Him, has elaborated on this idea in many of his speeches. Based on the Sultanate's shared values and social principles and in support of the focused government efforts in the environmental field, both individuals and social institutions should willingly assume a significant role in preserving the Omani environment. To conclude, as community members we must all take it upon ourselves to work towards raising the level of environmental awareness of our family members and the larger community, and instill in them a pro-environment mindset and channelize every effort big or small to achieve the goal of preserving the Omani environment and conserving its natural resources. We can't afford to ignore that the coming generations have a fundamental right to a clean and safe environment.

NFRCEC: an introduction

The National Field Research Center for Environmental Conservation (NFRCEC) was established by virtue of Royal Decree no.: 542009/ as an independent entity with a distinct organizational structure. The center has been established in recognition of the importance of and need for environmental field research and studies in the Sultanate, and in accordance with the directives and the high priority attached by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said (may Allah keep and protect Him) to the cause of environment since the dawn of the Blessed Renaissance. The center has specific tasks and objectives as mandated by a scientific approach to conserve and protect the environment and wildlife in the Sultanate. Oman has 18 internationally registered



nature reserves among a total of 77 environmental conservation areas that are scattered across the governorates. The center was founded to complement the efforts exerted at the government level to preserve the Omani environment, enrich environmental field studies and researches and woo more researchers and students to the field of environment.



Lynx: a model for protection of various components of Omani environment

North America and differs from the Caracal animal. The lynx feeds daily on the small preys like rabbits, foxes and other animals. It is considered to be one of the important Omani wildlife components. The lynx lives in specific regions including Dhofar Governorate, Jiddat Al-Harasees, Musandam Governorate and the northern mountains. It has many different local names according to the areas in which it lives including Al-Hamara, Al-Khuwaingah, Abu Onaiq and Al-Tefit. It is a medium-sized cat with tall legs, round face and thin ears covered with hair. Its color is brownish or yellowish red with black

hair behind its ears. The lynx leads a solitary life. It appears during both day and night; but catches its preys mostly at night. It is agile and fast while catching the birds and attacks birds at an amazing speed and catches them by its front claws. It also feeds on rabbits, mice, small deer and livestock. The lynx can attain chasing (its prey) speeds of 120 – 80 km/h. Its gestation period is about 75 days. The female lynx delivers one or two baby lynxes. The weight of the adult lynx ranges between 22 – 14 kilograms. The competent authorities of the Sultanate exert great efforts to protect lynx as it is crucial element of the Omani environment.

