

## Field Clips

### Leatherback Turtle

The turtle skeleton presently prepared by taxidermists of the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory, Dubai is of a leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) found dead off the Emirate of Fujairah, approximately 6 kilometres east of Fujairah City. Although of worldwide distribution this species is

Balazs Buzas, zoo manager of Al Mayya Sanctuary (right) and visiting herpetologist Nathanael Maury with the leatherback turtle found off Fujairah.

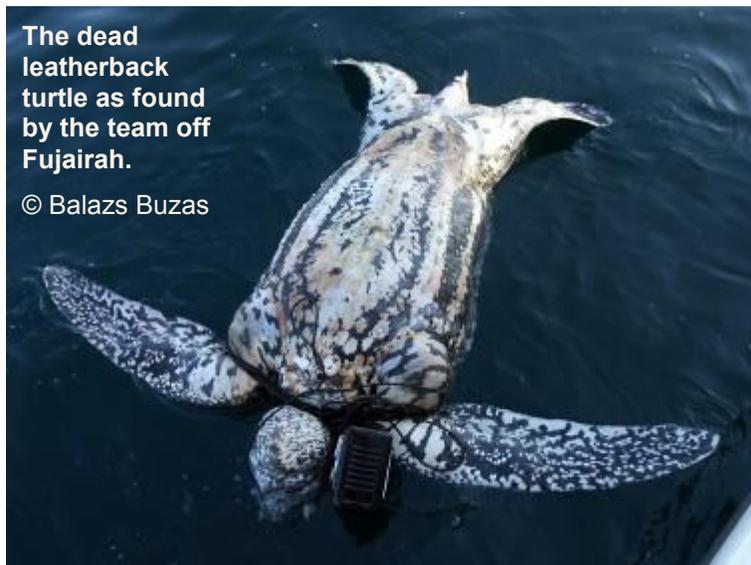
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listed as critically endangered by the IUCN due to its steeply declining numbers. Populations in the Indian Ocean remain generally unassessed and unevaluated. Sightings from the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman surrounding the UAE are few, with all anecdotal records originating from off Dubai. This

The dead leatherback turtle as found by the team off Fujairah.

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particular specimen, the first of its kind ever found in Fujairah waters, was discovered floating on its back, entangled in fishing gear earlier this year by a research team of Al Mayya Sanctuary surveying sea snakes in the area, sponsored by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, the Crown Prince of Fujairah. The circumstances of its recovery and the significance of the find are reported in greater detail in Marine Turtle Newsletter published by SEATURTLE.ORG. Once assembled the skeleton will be put on public display in Fujairah.

Contribution by Balazs Farkas

### The Look of a Hunter: the Locust Terror

Invertebrate and vertebrate life are not always so very different. Or, at least, the constraints imposed by physics on form and function may lead to surprisingly similar engineering designs. Who, for example, can look at the accompanying photos of a local insect without perceiving its wolf-like form and marking it as a predator, and probably a fearsome one? The silhouette is that of a classic cartoon villain (think of Scar, from Disney's *The Lion King*).

It is, in fact, the UAE's most massive wasp, *Prionyx crudelis*, the so-called Locust Terror. *Insects of Eastern Arabia* (Walker & Pittaway, 1987) says of *P. crudelis*: "In Africa, packs of this large ferocious wasp follow locust swarms and prey on the

weaker individuals. In Arabia, [it] generally confines its attention to species of *Anacridium* and *Heteracris* [two large locust genera]. It is capable of flying with heavy grasshoppers to its nest."

In the UAE, single individuals have been seen throughout the mountain regions. The photos shown here are from Wadi Tarabat in spring 2017. Four other species of *Prionyx* wasps are also known from the UAE. Two were recognized in the 1980s by Kenneth Guichard and two more were added by C. Schmid-Egger in volume 4 of *Arthropod Fauna of the UAE* (van Harten, ed., 2011). Most of these species have a core range from Africa to India.

Contribution by Gary Feulner

A profile of the Locust Terror.



A slightly more endearing frontal view.

