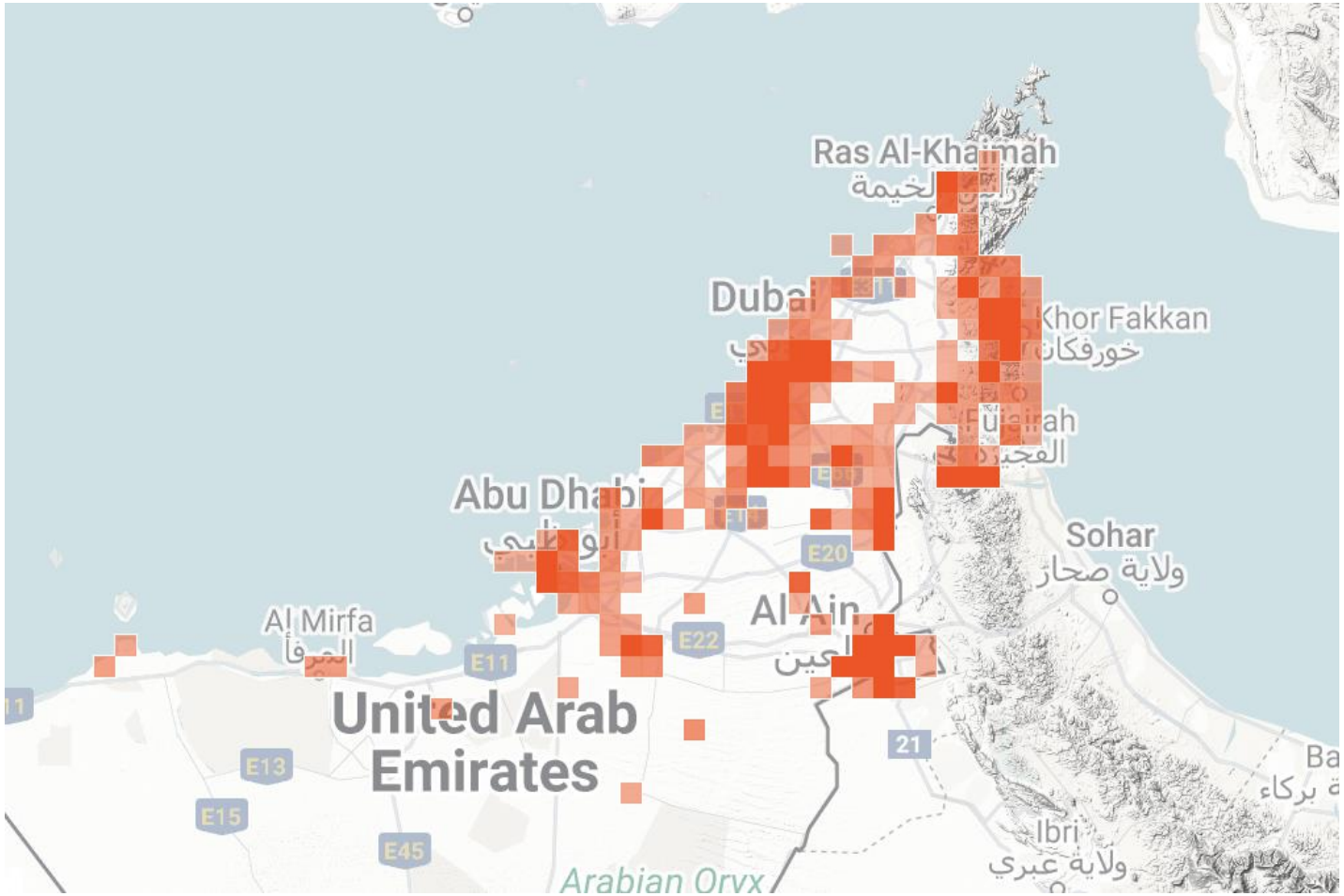

Emirates Nature
WWF
المشرق
mashreq
AL ISLAMI
NOTICE NATURE
PROJECT REPORT 2024
#Climb2Change
Rise every day

Notice Nature aims to uncover the hidden activity of wildlife in the UAE

7,572

Wildlife observations have been added to the Notice Nature project in iNaturalist in 2024



Observations mapped across desert sands, rugged mountains & freshwater habitats

Every species recorded tells a story, and over 1,000 stories were documented this year!

Collecting this data and assessing the status of key species and ecosystems contribute to science while enabling the creation, monitoring, and restoration of habitats for critical species.

The Notice Nature project focuses on Four Flagship Species

Little is known about these species, including their distributions, population size and trends across the UAE. Hence, the project allows collection of data & information – that is critical for their conservation.

- **Arabian Caracal** – Slender, medium-sized cat (5.8–22 kg), short tail & long ear tufts. A top predator.
- **Arabian Tahr** – Endemic to Hajar mountain range. Known for their impressive agility and climbing abilities.
- **Arabian Eagle Owl** – First recorded in UAE by Emirates Nature in 2017.
- **Blanford's fox** – Small mountain fox with wide ears and a long, bushy tail.

Rare Owls in Spotlight

Owls have distinctive calls. We utilize remote audio detectors to locate these species. **Seven species of owls have been identified in Wadi Wurayah**. Two of these are:

Arabian Eagle Owl

The Arabian Eagle Owl was first recorded in the UAE in 2017 by Emirates Nature-WWF.

Omani Owl

The Omani Owl was only discovered in the Hajar Mountains in Oman in 2013 from its call. It was found in UAE by Emirates Nature-WWF in July 2015. It is critically endangered.

Blanford's Fox in Spotlight

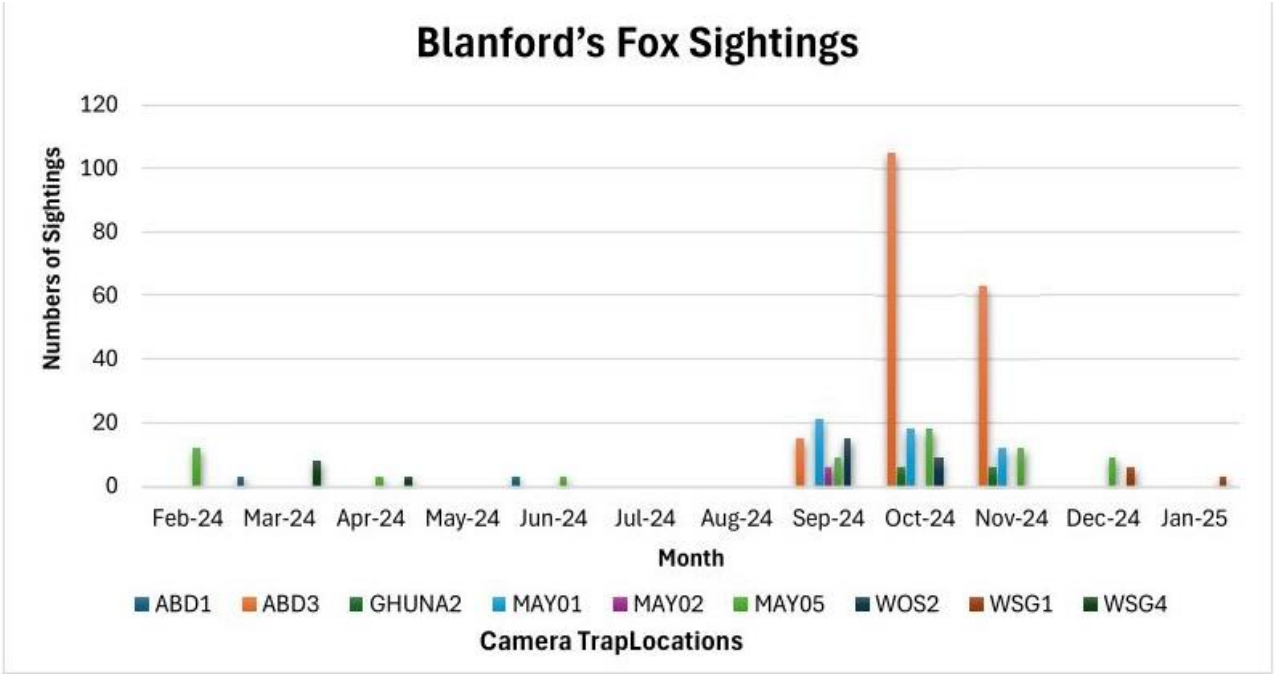
The rare Blandford's Fox, one of our flagship species, **had been sighted**!

- Blanford's fox was first recorded in the UAE mountains in 1995 and has only been spotted sporadically since.
- Recent camera trap images in protected habitats captured rare sightings of this elusive species.
- These sightings provide critical data to inform conservation efforts and inspire new protection strategies.
- The findings highlight the urgent need for innovative measures to safeguard the species' future.

Blanford's Fox in Spotlight

Since then and throughout 2024, the Blandford's Fox has now been recorded **multiple times and at multiple locations**!

- The graph shows the importance of research efforts as earlier it was rarely spotted while through Camera trap surveys now it has been recorded in more than Nine sites in Wadi Wurayah.
- It also proves the effectiveness of Protected Areas where such rare species can thrive better compared to other areas because of less disturbance.
- Camera traps also record human presence in those areas which can be a threat to those vulnerable species so through this data those threats can be highlighted to the relevant authorities, and they can take necessary actions and policy interventions.
- Availability of data will also change the status of a species as it will be better known with more data.



No species exists in isolation

Along with the flagship species, we also collected data on species linked to the four flagship species, including their food plants and prey animals:

- Rodents, bats, reptiles, insects, birds are prey for Caracal, Blanford's Fox and Arabian Eagle Owls. These species are important parts of the Hajar ecosystem.
- Plant species diversity, as the Arabian Tahr and prey species are dependent on plants.
- Many of these species are linked to fresh water, so physical & chemical analysis of water bodies will be conducted on regular basis.

How we study these species

We use a variety of scientific techniques to study species:

Records

Direct records: e.g. iNaturalist

Surveys

Audio and Ultrasound surveys

DNA

eDNA from hair and scats

Trapping

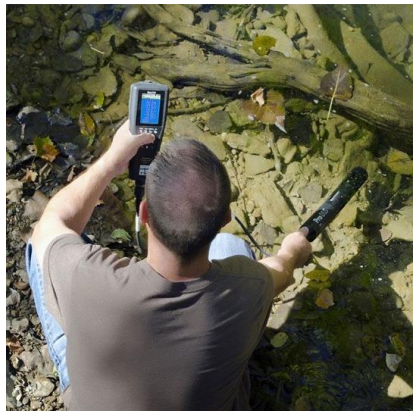
Camera trapping & small mammal live trapping

Research Equipment

Camera Trap

Bird and Bat Recorders

Insect Trap



Water Testing

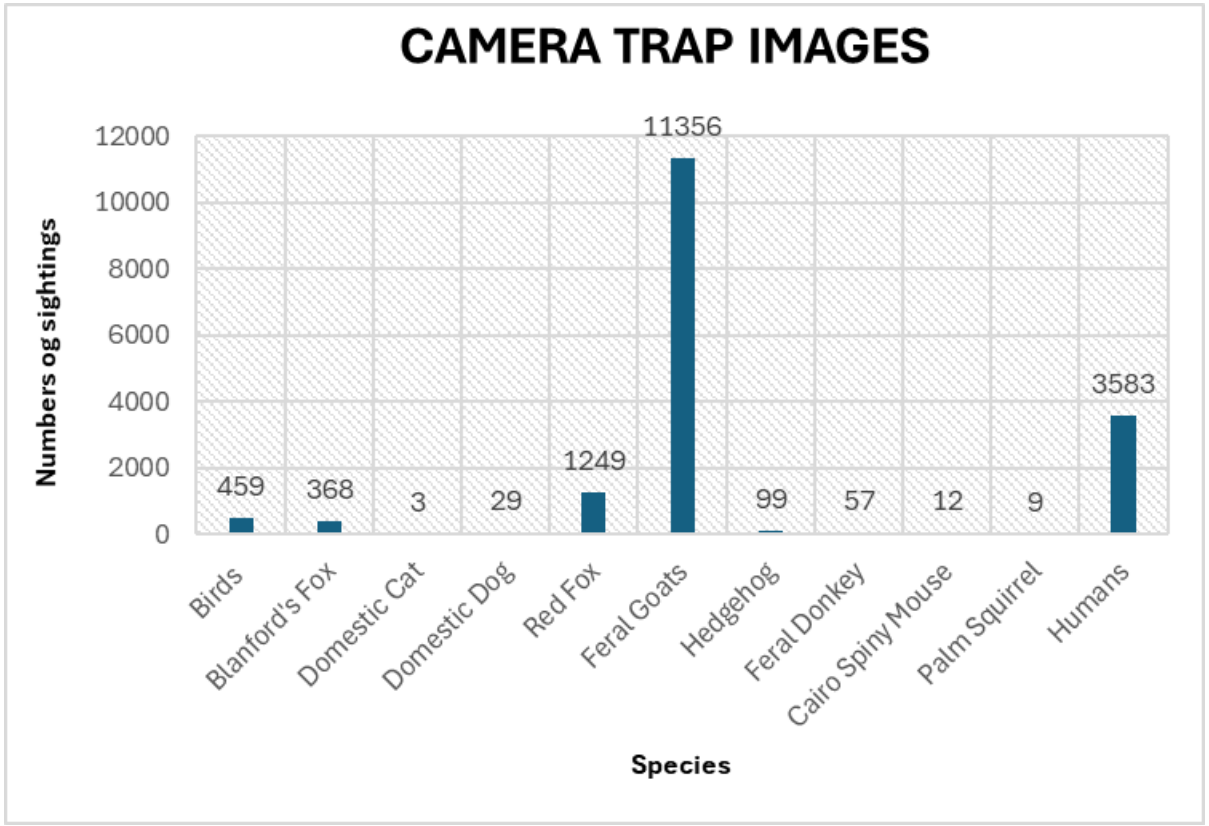
Camera Trapping

Trail camera can take images and video, day or night **when triggered by a movement!**

8158 Camera trap images were classified by volunteers in 2024

Camera Trapping Summary for 2024

- A Total of 50 Camera traps were deployed in 2024 and regularly monitored
- Camera traps recorded total of 52,495 images throughout 2024
- Out of all the images, 17,224 images were actual recordings of sighting while 35,271 were blank images as Camera traps are motion sensitive and can be triggered by any motion.
- It can be noticed that Feral Goat population is very high which are competing with other ungulates so recommendations will be given to relevant authorities for its management.
- As some of the sites are close of nature trails that's why human sightings are high which will also provide important data to relevant authorities for its management.
- Sites with Blanford's Fox sightings will be recommended as high priority management sites.



Small mammal live-trapping

We use Sherman traps to determining the species and abundance of small mammals, which are prey for caracal, foxes, and owls. The small mammals are released unharmed after capture. The species include Cairo Spiny Mouse and Wagner's gerbils.

Mashreq Customers on the Frontlines of Conservation

Our project engages the community through citizen science, crowdsourcing biodiversity hotspot searches in protected areas and local spaces.

- Mashreq customers gained firsthand insight by working alongside experienced scientists
- We hosted **5** events in 2024, with a capacity of **1000** Mashreq customers
- Participants were asked to rate their experience on a scale of 0 to 10, with the average rating being **9.6**

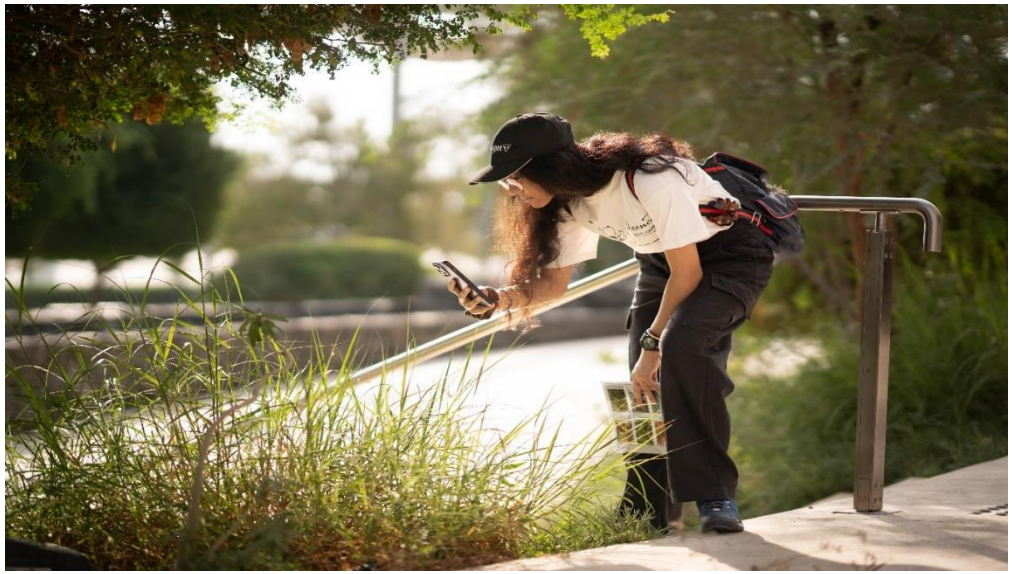
Inspiring Tomorrow's Conservationists

What if the next generation could step into the shoes of scientists and become problem solvers today?

- Young explorers participated in species observations in real conservation settings through the **"Be a Scientist for a Day"** event.
- They gathered data and gained hands-on experience in scientific inquiry.
- The experience laid the foundation for a blueprint to empower youth across UAE schools towards environmental action.
- Youth contributed **256 observations** on iNaturalist

Sparking Change for Nature in the UAE

The Citizen Science approach has the added benefit of shifting attitudes about the type of wildlife that shares our neighborhood, and the value that it brings to our lives.



"Masterclass on Hajar Mountains with Dr. Drew was a treat, highlighting some fascinating endemic wildlife in the Hajar Mountains. Highly recommend!" Chanda Miyanda

MASTERCLASS: NATURE OF HAJAR MOUNTAINS

"It was an amazing experience, revealing that the desert hosts a surprising range of creatures. The WWF Volunteers were remarkably friendly and generously imparted their knowledge to the entire group.
A big Thank you goes for their efforts." Samrin Anjum

NATURE AT NIGHT

Participants Contributions to Science

Through the project we created **4 Field guides** which proved to be highly effective for volunteers to identify species, **176** Citizen Scientists **recorded observations**.

A selection of photos of wildlife submitted by the community in 2024

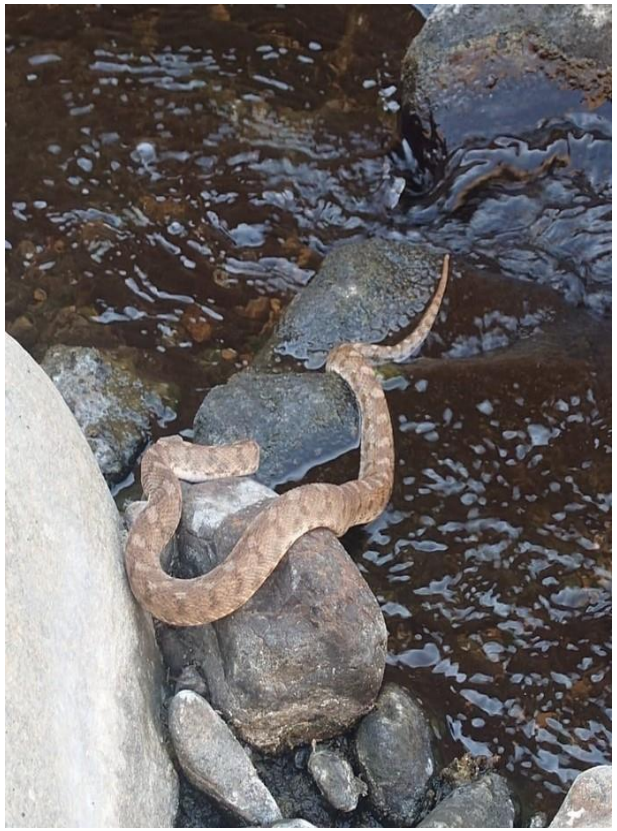
Cheesman's Gerbil
9 Observations

Iranian Black-tailed Scorpion
14 Observations

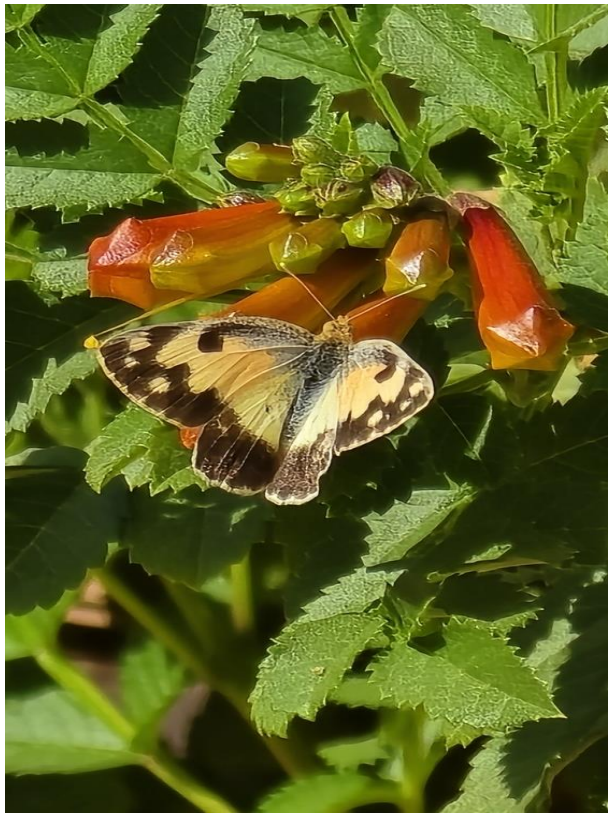
Blue Tailed Omani Lizard
4 Observations

Participants Contributions to Science

Red Veined Dropwing
35 Observations



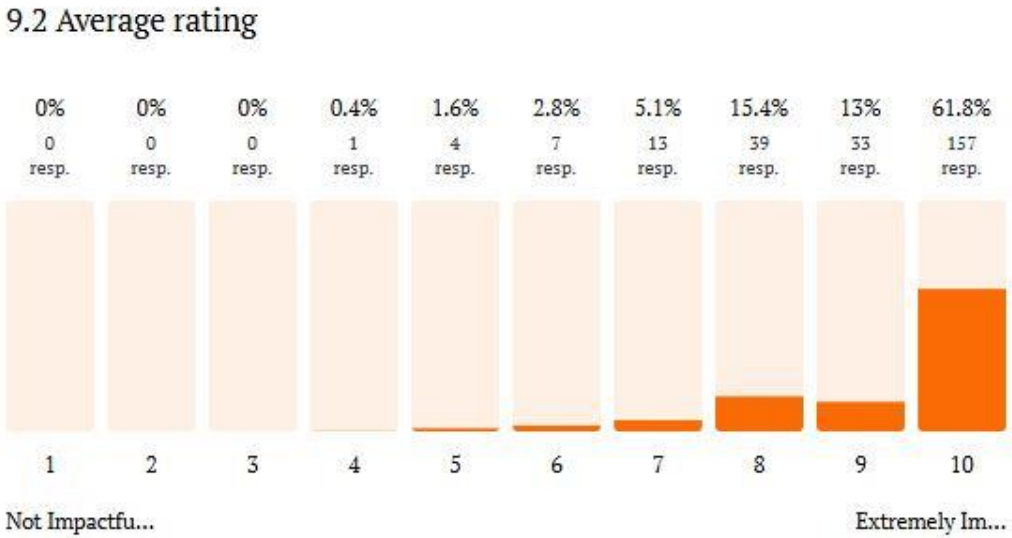
Oman Saw Scaled Viper
27 Observations



White Arab
35 Observations

Positive Feedback From the Community

Thousands have already joined Notice Nature, the UAE's largest citizen science community and wildlife mapping initiative launched by Mashreq and Emirates Nature-WWF.



Participants were asked to rate their experience

- The average rating was **9.6/10**
- Around **80%** of respondents rated the experience **10/10**

We asked participants to rate the impactfulness of our events

- The average rating was **9.2/10**
- Around **62%** of reviewers rated the event impact **10/10**

KPIs for Biodiversity Mapping & Assessment 2025

KPI 1	Camera trapping for priority species	Additional 20 camera traps across 5 locations Wadi Wurayah, Wadi Abadillah, Ain al Ghamour, Wadi Shees, Wadi Dahir. Targeted number of trap nights: 10,000
KPI 2	eDNA sample collection and analysis	20 samples for eDNA analysis to be collected from Wadi Wurayah Ain Al Ghamoor, Wadi Abadillah and Wadi Dahir
KPI 3	Bat detector deployment	4 bat detectors to be deployed for total of 200 detector nights in locations, plus analysis of recordings
KPI 4	Audio detector deployment	4 audio detectors for owl survey, 6 locations, 100 recording nights plus analysis of recordings
KPI 5	Live trapping and surveys	Small mammal live trapping in Wadi Wurayah, 100 trap nights odonata survey in Wadi Wurayah and Ain Al Galmoor, 15 surveys
KPI 6	Reporting	Reporting and publication of results to date.

Timeline for Biodiversity Mapping & Assessment 2025

Activity description	Landscape	Month of 2025											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Field surveys and data collection													
Camera trap deployment in the field	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
Collection of data from camera traps	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
SM4 bird & bat recorders deployment in the field	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
Collection of data from SM4 bird & bat	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
General field biodiversity surveys	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
Vegetation surveys	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
eDNA sampling and analysis	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
Rodents trapping in identified research sites	Wadi wurayah												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
Freshwater monitoring (water testing)	Wadi wurayah												
	Ain al ghamoor												
	Wadi abadillah												
	Wadi dhahir												
	Wadi shees												
Data management and analysis													
Analyzing the collected data	All sites												
Interpreting results and outcomes	All sites												
Reporting and dissemination													
Preparing technical report	All sites												
Share results in peer-reviewed journals	All sites												
Communicate survey results to stakeholders	All sites												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