

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### FATAL POLLUTION IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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In the past 15 years, the pathologist at CVRL has observed a tremendous increase in fatalities of animals caused by plastic ingestion. The victims of plastic pollution, in order of prevalence, are: cattle, adult camels, young camels, sheep, goats, ostriches, houbara bustards and gazelles. Even turtles and birds die from ingesting trash. These animals find plastic bags, ropes, bottles, bottle caps, and cutlery in their environment and eat them. Young animals are especially vulnerable to plastic pollution. They are curious animals because they start playing with plastic bags, nibble at them and finally swallow them.

In 2006, a total of 1300 animals autopsied at CVRL, more than 100 animals (around 10%) had plastic in their stomachs. Over the past year, plastic ingestion by animals has reached epidemic proportions. The worst case was a cow that had ingested 60kg of solid plastic, which took the shape of the cow's stomach.

#### PLASTIC POLLUTION – THE SOLUTION

- Because plastic can take over 400 years to breakdown, almost all the plastic that has ever been produced, is still somewhere on the planet!
- More than 60% of the litter on beaches is plastic
- Plastic kills significant numbers of land based as well as marine animals
- Plastic litters our streets and countryside and blocks our drains

#### THE SOLUTION

There is no viable alternative to plastic, so the solution to the problem is to use Symphony Environmental's d2w™ oxo-biodegradable additives which enable plastic to degrade totally, in an environmentally friendly way, in a short and predetermined time, at little or no extra cost, thereby significantly contributing to the reduction of the above mentioned problems. Visit Symphony's website at [HYPERLINK www.degradable.net](http://www.degradable.net) for more information or contact Winston Pryce at [ipt@interplastuae.com](mailto:ipt@interplastuae.com).



Figure 1. Camels at a rubbish tip in the desert (©Ulie Wernery).

### POSSIBLE NEW SPECIES OF SEA SLUG DISCOVERED

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In March 2007 Qatar Natural History Group (QNHG) organized an intertidal marine ecology fieldtrip through Professor Roberternshaw of Cornell University. At one location Mrs Patterson found a sea slug, otherwise known as a *Nudibranch* (Latin Nudi = bare and Branch = lungs [or gills], as their gills are exposed to the environment unlike humans who have their lungs within their bodies). Dr Macdonald a marine scientist helped with an initial identification and knew roughly what group this sea slug belonged to within, but had never seen one with this particular type of colouration and pattern. Pictures of the slug were sent to Dr Rudman an expert at the Australian Museum who runs the "Sea Slug Forum". He replied that it may be a new species of *Nudibranch* belonging to the Genus *Chromodoris*. He also said that it resembles another species (*Chromodoris petechalis*) that was originally described from Pakistan in the early 20th Century, but the original specimen has been lost and only seen / photographed once since, in 1975 in Hawai'i of all places. Without a specimen to examine and confirm, Dr. Rudman tentatively suspected that this specimen was a new species to science.

There are between twenty and thirty sea slug species known to inhabit the marine environment of the Arabian Gulf. The species *Chromodoris cazae* is endemic to the area (this means it is only known from the UAE and Qatar), so this further supports the potential for a new species. In addition, there are interesting colour variations in the sea slugs found in local waters. Specimens of *Flabellina rubrolineata* have a purple colouration instead of usually being red. This species is also a suspected Lesipian Migrant, which means that it has been introduced into the Mediterranean from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal.

You can see more pictures of this beautiful creature, that would have perhaps been more appropriate to have been discovered in Bahrain due to its colouration being similar to their National Flag and get more information about sea slugs at <http://www.seaslugforum.net/display.cfm?id=19803>



Figure 1. A species new to science, *Chromodoris* sp. 16, yet to be described (© Mike Smith).