

# FATAL POLLUTION



A Documentary (2008)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

U. Wernery,  
Central Veterinary Research Laboratory,  
P.O. Box 597, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.  
Tel: 04-3375165 Fax: 04-3368 638

Email: [cvrl@cvrl.ae](mailto:cvrl@cvrl.ae)

# Fatal Pollution

A local friend of mine told me one day: in the near future, the “Empty Quarter” will be called “Full Quarter”. Picknickers, campers, wadi-bashers, off-roaders, and endurance riders leave their bags, bottles, caps, lids, plates, containers, cutlery, ropes, loops of can holders and even tyres in the desert. It is difficult to get away from trash, which does not stay just where it is thrown. It blows away with the wind penetrating the most remote desert places; clinging on trees and shrubs, lying covered by a veneer of sand, polluting the most picturesque places of the desert. It is not just an eyesore. Plastics and rubbish take a heavy toll on wildlife and livestock. Every year hundreds of animals face agonizing deaths by plastic ingestion in the seas, in the desert, even in cities. Animals are curious and especially young ones sniff at trash, nibble at it and then swallow only to choke and die. Some may survive longer until their intestines are blocked, or noxious ingredients being released into the organism. Their suffering is prolonged with excruciating pain before death. Over the last decade, many animals necropsied at the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory in Dubai died from trash ingestion; including camels, cattle, sheep, goats, gazelles, ostriches, houbara bustards. The author visited one place in the Ras Al Khaimah desert to where owners had dragged animals which died from plastic ingestion. I counted more than 30 carcasses and I named the place “Death Valley”. Some of the pictures shown in this document are from this valley. In the United Arab Emirates this kind of pollution has reached “epidemic” proportions. The following pictures speak for themselves.



Fig. 1: Five camel calves feeding on plastic bags carelessly dumped into the desert



Fig. 2: A cow with a huge mass of plastic in its rumen



Fig. 3: Only bones and a huge plastic conglomerate where the stomach was is left behind



Fig. 4: A plastic fishing net has strangled the right front flipper of a Green Sea Turtle, causing severe gangrene



Fig. 5: Plastic found in a dromedary's stomach



Fig. 6: This expensive milking dromedary suffered 14 days from obstruction of the intestine by plastic bags until it died



Fig. 7: This adult ostrich ingested hundreds of wire pieces, carelessly left in the cage after completion. It died from a perforated stomach



Fig. 8: This Houbara Bustard died from a rod and a plastic cap in its stomach



Fig.9: This conglomeration of trash killed a cow by obstructing the entrance to the intestine



Fig. 10: Two big stones in the rumen of a camel calf caused by ingesting plastic ropes. Ingested plastic ropes calcify and produce the stones seen.



Fig. 11: Calcified rubbish found in a horse's stomach is being cleaned.



Fig. 12: A gazelle has suffocated by a plastic lid causing obstruction of the airway passage



**Please make sure that you don't litter, to ensure that wild and domesticated animals that live in the desert can thrive and not suffer from the horrific conditions demonstrated in this brochure. Make sure that the occurrence of tragedies as shown in the top picture diminish and hopefully disappear.**