

Socotra

A Greentours Trip Report

February 2025

Led by Ian Green



Day 1 February 11th Arrival

Our flight from Abu Dhabi took us over the spectacular landforms of Oman before crossing the waters of the Arabian Sea. Suddenly a mountainous island rose in front of us out of the sea. The approach to Socotra is spectacular with the crenulated parapets of the Hajhir Mountains rising not far inland of the airport.

The arrivals procedure was straightforward. It took a while to get everyone through though. We met Ali, our minder and guide for the next week and then headed outside. Now we met our drivers and our 4wds which were to be our steeds for the week. We headed off to the capital and soon saw evidence of just how amazing the flora is on this island. Between the airport and the town a mountain reaches the sea and the slopes of this, right by the road, were covered in all sorts of botanical wonders! Our first Desert Roses were a spectacular sight and there were some lovely tree euphorbias, *Euphorbia arbuscula*.

Then it was into the capital. In contrast to the lovely slopes we'd been passing the town was pretty grim! However the absolute mess with rubbish everywhere has changed in the last couple of years – they were clearly trying to clean the place up. Nonetheless the traditional local garbage collectors – Egyptian Vultures – had not lost their jobs! These wandered like chickens around the town, and we would become used to them walking around us and even hopping onto the backs of chairs to see what was on the table! We had an excellent fish (very tasty king fish) lunch with rice and flatbread in a pleasant little restaurant and sorted out a few practicalities.

Then it was along the coast, our eyes devouring the amazing habitats we were driving through, but we were also tired from a short night and the heat. A wadi with water gave us a few common waterbirds including Red-knobbed Coot – with at least two families of half grown youngsters. We spotted Black-winged Stilts, Western Reef Heron, Great Egret, several Indian Pond Herons and three Glossy Ibis. There were Wood Sandpipers, Greenshank, Little Stint and Temminck's Stint too. Driving across the Croton plains Black-crowned Finch Larks were numerous and Somali Starlings were frequent. Then it was up onto the Homhil Plateau via a twisting bumpy track – the drivers did well. We sopped to admire our first Dragon Tree and noted *Boswellia socotrana*, *Withania somnifera* and some very fine spiders. Driving across the plateau we stopped in a grove of Frankincense Trees. These were the most widespread species – *Boswellia elongata*. *Boswellias* are a very important genus on the island, not least for their commercial worth which in former times was considerable. They are still harvested for the 'frankincense' even today. The essential oils have a strong and very pleasant perfume. These particular ones showed signs of the harvesting. Our team was ahead of us and had the camp set up with those lovely 'Arab'-style tents looking a picture in the imposing landscape.

Once we'd settled into our rather beautiful tents we set off down a water course where the smooth-worn rocks allowed fairly easy walking. There were little pools and some running water. The delightful little gentian relative *Exacum affine* was common in damp spots. Two or three Socotra Buzzards sailed overhead. The walk took us to a beautiful 'infinity' pool about 10m across and full of cool water. The lip looked all the way down to the sea and there were cliffs and steep slopes either side. Socotra Sparrows were common. The flora was extraordinary. Dragon Trees were scattered across the slope opposite and some not far from the camp. The old man whose land we were



Kalanchoe farinacea, *Exacum affine*
and *Adiantum balfourii*

camping on had in the past told us that when he was a child the Dragon Trees here were so close together he could clamber from the top of one to the top of another. Not anymore! But still to us they were impressive. Scattered amongst them were Frankincense Trees. Mostly *Boswellia elongata* with long leaves but also a few *Boswellia socotrana* too. There were a number of common little *Acanthaceae* such as *Dicliptera effusa* and *Hypoestes pubescens*. Little mounds of *Oldenlandia pulvinata* were a delight, this is a very

pretty little *Rubiaceae*. There were also *Indogiferas* flowering. *Asphodelus tenuifolius* surprised us by being native! The little lizard *Pristurus socotranus* was common. We had a very pleasant swim in the infinity pool!



Socotran Chamaeleon

Walking back there were Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper and a Pin-tailed Snipe along the river's course. As the sun disappeared behind the big ridge we were back at the camp, the cooks hard at work making the evening meal. A goat they had bought from the village – tastily cooked and beautifully presented – formed the meals centrepiece along with some nice potatoes and macaroni.

After dark I spotted a rather stately Chamaeleon in the Buxus near the camp.

Day 2 February 14th Homhil, Arher and Irasel Camp

Breakfast was flat lavaş-style breads with honey and cheese and eggs and a very nice omelette with vegetables.

This morning's walk was up the ridge opposite. It was quite a tough hike, the land rocky and steep, and it took us two hours to reach the top, with many stops. People dropped out at regular intervals and walked back down to take a cooling dip in the infinity pool. We found a rich assortment of rare and fantastical flora. There were wonderful patches of *Kalanchoe farinacea*, the higher plants in particularly good flower, and *Aloe perryi* had spikes of orange flowers some of them being visited by the endemic Socotra Sunbird.

We found some amazing specimens of the Cucumber Tree *Dendrosicyos socotrana*. This strange cucurbit has taken water conservation to an extreme having a trunk that looks like a baobab and with a little head of curving leafy branches poking out the top! It was nice to see a cute little baby one only 20cm high. The long-tubed white blooms of *Tamridea capsulifera* grew amongst the rocks early in our



Boswellia nana

walk. On the cliffs our guide showed us the rock-hugging Frankincense which turned out to be *Boswellia popoviana* and only a little later we encountered the extraordinary 'rock' Frankincense *Boswellia nana*. It really just resembles a chunky little rock with leaves coming out. Its squat little trunk is squeezed into cracks in the low cliffs here never deigning to emerge more than a few centimetres. A totally weird tree! There were another two *Boswellias* up here – *elongata*, and *socotrana* with tiny leaflets. On the top of the



Kalanchoe farinacea

cliffs was a low scrub of the lovely 'daphne' *Gnidia socotrana* the bright yellow flowers only in bud, orange *Ballochia amoena*, yellow *Barleria tetracantha* and the blue pea *Zygocarpum caeruleum*. Another herbaceous pea with larger violet flowers, *Tephrosia odorata*, was commoner. There were innumerable small beauties such as the weird violet relative *Hybanthus enneaspermus*, and both delicate *Oldenlandia balfourii* and



unknown
Rubiacean

Oldenlandia bicornuta. Unexpected finds included the yellow bulb *Hypoxis angustifolia* and *Dorstenia socotrana*. This latter is truly a botanical gem. It is certainly not beautiful, the umbilicus-like somewhat fleshy leaves were tucked into just a few of the highest crevices – sadly no flowers this year though. It is a fig! Only a few centimetre high and extremely rare. The shrub *Anisotes diversifolius*



Geranium biuncinatum

had long-lipped curved orange and yellow flowers. Another shrub

was the prostrate *Ruellia dioscoridis* with nice white blooms. At the furthest point of our walk, right along the very top of Hamerdoh, we found lots of the large leaves of *Ledebouria grandiflora* and a number of new plants such as the fern *Asplenium schweinfurthii*, the yellow shrubby pea *Chapmannia gracilis*, the succulent daisy *Kleinia scotia*, rare *Euphorbia hamaderoensis*, *Heliotropium balfourii* and the lovely little pink and purple *Geranium*



Ruellia patula

biuncinatum. Hill-topping butterflies included the Joker, many *Acraea neobule*, and a single Danaid Eggfly. The nicely marked lizard *Pristurus socotranus* was common and we saw the Socotra Brown Skink and a new gecko was lurking in the limestone crevices right on top of the ridge.

Socotra Sparrows were common and so too the Somali Starlings but we saw few birds other than a pair of Socotra Buzzards and a Common Kestrel.

Another strange tree grew right on the highest spot on the ridge. This was *Croton pachycladus*. Its current status is not clear as apparently it was thought that it might just be a form of *Croton socotranus* but it is very clearly different- we even compared them on the way down! It is known only from this ridge and there's probably less than a couple of hundred trees of this species in the entire world! Down in the dirt were two new lizards – the pretty *Mesalina balfouri* and the drabber *Pristurus insignis*.

Fully exercised and by now rather warm we devoured a fine lunch of rice and chicken. Our tents were soon packed and were off to the next camp.

We dropped down to the north coast and headed east along an increasingly impressive coastline.

Just inland of the coastal strip rose a cliff that got higher and higher as we drove. Huge sand dunes had been blown up against the cliff. The white sand pristine for hundreds of metres up to the cliff. This is traditionally the camping spot for groups but with other groups here and mosquitoes around the fresh water spring we just made a brief stop to look at a mixed flock of Sooty Gulls, Crested Terns and Heuglin's Gulls on the beach. Much lovely *Heliotropeum sokotranum* with white and yellow flowers and *Heliotropium pterocarpum* with white flowers and a greenish-yellow centre were on the sand by the road.

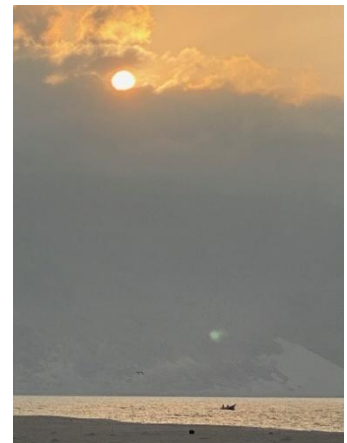
Then we continued east almost to the farthest tip of the island at Irasel. What an amazing spot! Apart from the two little buildings which housed a couple of fishing families a kilometre from us we had the whole place to ourselves. The views back to the dunes and cliffs of Arher were amazing. We soon found that this beach was a marvellous spot for shells. Tiger Cowries and Arabian False Cowries were frequent and there was a big range of other shells too including some vast conches. Someone had spent the last year collecting bones from the beach and there were skulls of spinner dolphin and a small whale as well as vertebrae from a larger whale and some very fine corals and shells. Sooty Gulls flew past. In the low dunes where we met both *Limonium paulayanum* and *Limonium sokotranum* and lots of *Zygophyllum simplex*. We walked up to the little point north of the camp where Bottle-nose Dolphins were close inshore and Kentish Plovers, Grey Plovers, Whimbrel and Sanderling were on the beach, Quite a number of large parrotfish had washed up dead and were stuffed into the



Pharaoh
Moray

entrances of the ghost crabs' burrows. A big surprise as the sun lowered was a passage of shearwaters offshore that included several Jouanin's Petrels along with the more numerous Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. In the rock pools I found two Pharaoh Moray Eels, a newly-described species!

Dinner under the stars on the beach was sublime!



Day 3 February 8th Irasel Camp, Hoq Cave & Dihamry

Dawn was a great time to experience the pristine beach. Grey Plover, Sanderling, Turnstones and a Greenshank moved on ahead of us and Swift Terns caroused past just offshore. There were Brown Boobies too. At 'the point' there was a large ghost crab town. These made great foregrounds of scenic pictures along the beach towards the camp and the giant dunes and escarpments of Arher beyond with the sun rising behind. The family of Bottlenose Dolphins again cruised close to the shore.

After breakfast on the beach we drove along the coast to our morning rendezvous with the Hoq Cave. At the trailhead we got ourselves ready for the walk. It is not hugely long, but it is uphill and

at times steep and would take us about an hour and a half hour to complete. It was already warm! We ascended gently at first through rather monotonous Croton 'woodland' but soon 'escarpment' diversity kicked in and we admired various trees alongside the path. Some of the *Sterculia africana* were really big, some of the largest trees on the island. They had the large beetle *Malodon arabicum* hiding underneath loose plates of bark. There were also a number of *Boswellia elongata* and a little further up we saw *Boswellia dioscorides*. This species has waxy blue-green leaves and is always growing out of rock. Which can make it difficult to get close to. We also saw *Commiphora parvifolia*, *Commiphora ornifolia*, *Commiphora planifrons*, *Acacia pennivenia*, *Dirichletia* (was *Carphalea*) *obovata* and the pendulous *Muhlea angolensis*. A lone *Lanea transulta* stood overlooking the blue and turquoise sea below. There was a huge *Euphorbia socotrana* the best part of 5m high and a nice leguminous tree with singled yellow pea flowers was *Chapmannia gracilis*. Socotra Sunbirds and Socotra Sparrows were the main birds. The skipper *Coeliades anchioses* was common as was the Common Joker and we also saw Plain Tiger. Little *Hypoestes pubescens* was common and as we got higher we found the blue form of *Anagallis arvensis*, the delicate pink flowered *Peristrophe paniculata* and lots of *Helichrysum gracilipes* in flower. We saw both blue *Trichodesma microcalyx* and white *Trichodesma laxiflora*. The shiny brown skink *Trachylepis socotranus* was common.

The cave entrance is huge and cascades of *Adiantum balfouri* hung there with abundant *Exacum affine*. Once inside the cave we were transported into a different world. Stalactites and stalagmites vied for our attention, mostly keeping a discreet distance from each other but occasionally un-covid-like



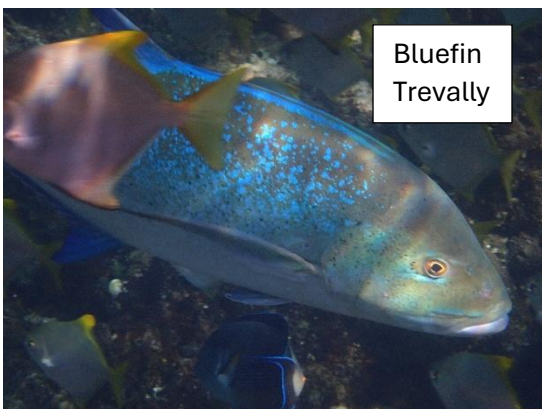
proximity was noted, two fine examples actually almost touching. There were sheets and drapes on the walls, minarets and organs on the floor. We wandered deep into the cave – we were in there over an hour. At the farthest point there were pools which reflected the speleological architecture to wonderful affect.

Meanwhile Peter and I were outside exploring an area of cliff. Here was *Aerva microphylla*, the strange umbellifer *Rughidia milleri*, flowering *Poskea socotrana*, and a highlight – the twisted *Boswellia popoviana*. The vine *Dioscorea lanata* trailed through various bushes and trees including the lovely yellow-flowered *Ballochia atro-virgata* and the fig *Ficus vasta* with improbably large bright green

leaves. *Lavandula ninmoi* was in flower. On a cliff we spotted *Euphorbia obcordata* and *Helichrysum* sp B as it is currently known as! A surprise was the bottle fig, *Dorstenia gigas*, some impressive bottles stuck to the cliff here. Another surprise was *Punica protopunica*. Other plants we discovered here included a new *Croton*, *Paracalyx balfourii*, *Vernonia cockburniana*, *Grewia bilocularis*, and both *Secamone socotrana* and *Secamone cuneifolia*. Socotran Buzzards were enjoying the uplift from the escarpment, a family of Socotra White-eyes were seen, and as we returned to the cave entrance we spotted a Golden-winged Grosbeak.

We returned to the carpark hot and in need of a cold drink. Next we stopped at a little museum in a village – Frankincense trees in the courtyard. Inside were a range of local artefacts that intrigued us including a variety of water carriers and a boat. Salem delighted in showing us how various items would have been used. It was a fascinating visit. The bones of a large *Balaenoptera* whale were in the courtyard too.

A late lunch was taken in the rather neat little coral shelter at Dihmary our base for the next twenty-four hours. It was again a truly delicious fish with persian-style rice and beans in vegetables in a tasty sauce. For most of us the afternoon was spent snorkelling in the waters offshore of Dihmary. This was truly superb. Fishlife was most evident and in places it was absolutely crazy how many fish there were. There were stunning yellow and blue Yellowtail Tang in the shallows but only a few metres on around a coral head were all sorts of fish. There were large groups of Sohail Surgeonfish and Lined Surgeonfish, sometimes the two species together – hybrids are apparently known from Socotran waters. Immediately apparent were large colourful parrotfish. Strange to say almost the first fish I saw was an amazing find, a False Stonefish that lay camouflaged amongst boulders I almost imperceptibly moving along on its rather strikingly marked fins. Almost immediately after I found a superb (a kind of guitarfish) lying on the sandy bottom. Butterflyfishes are a delight and there were many species here – Arabian Butterflyfish, Threadfin Butterflyfish, Red-tailed Butterflyfish, the widespread Raccoon Butterflyfish,



Bluefin Trevally

Lined Butterflyfish, and the regional endemic Horseshoe Butterflyfish. We enjoyed a large shoal of



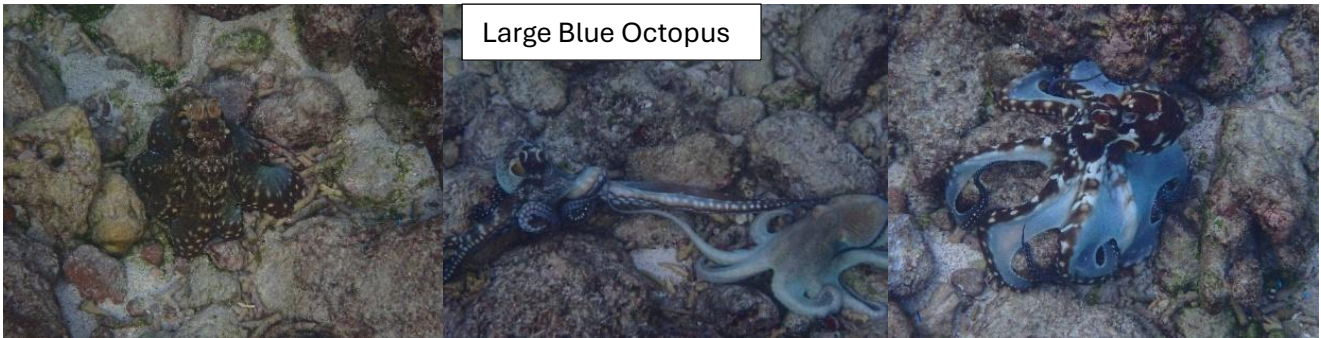
Yellowtail Tang & baby Emperor Angelfish



Orangespine Unicornfish



Honeycomb Moray



Large Blue Octopus

Silver Moonyfish that didn't like to be separated. A huge Bluefin Trevally lazily swam in and out of them. We saw half a dozen black-spotted Honeycomb Morays, one of them must have been close to a metre and half long and solid too. There was also a Laced Moray and Alf and Hannah saw a fabulous Geometric Moray helping a fish find its way. Several of us saw Large Blue Octopus. I watched two – a large one and a smaller one. The smaller one went into general camo mode and hid for a while on the side of a stone. The other one went star-shine white then boulder-green and interspersed these with a fetching opalescent blue when it revealed the membranes around its upper tentacles. It insinuated itself across the sea floor for a while then suddenly the other one sped over and playfully reached out its tentacle which the other one held for a few moments before the little one gave it a sharp pull and fled off in the other direction. There followed Eystripe Surgeonfish,



Heavybeak Parrotfish

Bird Wrasse and a number of blue-edged Bluefin Trevally. Brilliant blue and yellow Cerulean Damsels held court and Yellowfin Goatfish hung in the water. Longbarbel Goatfish fossicked on the sandy bottoms with occasional Picasso Triggerfish and its cousin the Arabian Picassofish. Gorgeous Crowned Tobies hovered about coral heads and Guineafowl Pufferfish floated past. First one then two Olive Ridley Turtles came to see what we were doing. In places the water was thick with mixed shoals of black and white Indian Triggerfish,

Convict Surgeonfish and Circle-Spine Surgeonfish. There were some impressively large and improbably bright-coloured parrotfishes nibbling away at the reef. Bicolor Parrotfish, Heavybeak Parrotfish, Purple-Brown Parrotfish, Bullethead Parrotfish and Rusty Parrotfish among them and probably others – I always find parrotfish ID a bit of a challenge! Pairs of Moorish Idols sailed serenely around and we also saw Yellowtail Triggerfish, Orangespine Unicornfish and Yellowfin Emperor. Peacock



Green Turtle

Groupers and Blacktip Groupers sat on rocky perches. Scrawled Filefish hovered in the water looking at us. We saw Solander's Toby, the gorgeous orange Lyretail Anthias and a great big swam of the quite literally



Broadbarred Firefish

see-through Schooling Cardinalfish. A was a spectacular sight – several Broadbarred Firefish came out as the afternoon waned, and then we saw a single Devil Firefish too.

Day 4

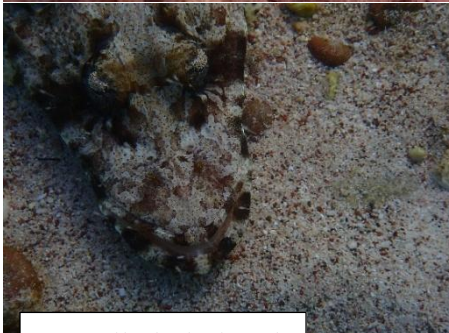
February 16th

Dihamry, Wadi Goo, Zahek dunes and to Omeq Beach



Early morning I explored the red rock outcrops near the camp. A falcon had been busy plucking birds. He'd been eating Cuckoos as always, this year just Common Cuckoo, but there was an interesting collection of small wader and quail feathers for me to sort through! Offshore a shearwater was too far out to identify but the large group of Spinner Dolphins were nice and close inshore.

After breakfast we again took to Dihamry's waters with our snorkels. As in the previous afternoon the fish were simply outstanding and other marine life too. More Black-spotted Morays were seen very well and there was also a superb Giant Moray. New fish included a fabulous deepest blue-purple Red-toothed Triggerfish, swarms of blue and yellow Bengal Snappers, and large mixed shoals of Striated Fusiliers, Lunar Fusiliers and Multi-lined Fusiliers. More turtles were seen this morning including a Hawksbill Turtle. Several Scribbled Filefish cruised past and there were Unicorn Fish too – in fact several species with Sleek, Bluespine, Humpback and Orangespine Unicornfish all present. Puffers were more noticeable this morning with several Guineafowl Pufferfish and there was also Masked Pufferfish. Yellowbar and Emperor Angelfish are seriously impressive fish and they were joined by Red Sea Damsels and Lemon Angelfish. The local form of this species appears to be what is known in the aquarium trade as Armitage's Angelfish. The status of this taxon is debated though it is generally now thought to be a hybrid. However we have seen neither parent species in the waters of Dihamry so maybe the jury's out for now? There seemed endless variety of wrasse species – those identified were Barred Thicklip Wrasse, Blackeye Thicklip Wrasse, Brokenline Wrasse, Zigzag Wrasse, Sixbar Wrasse, Goldbar Wrasse, Moon Wrasse, and the distinctive juvenile forms of Queen Coris - there were also adults seen too. There were swarms of Sweepers under one overhand along with the Schooling Cardinalfish. Octopuses again featured today with several sightings, indeed there was even a second species noted - the White-spotted Octopus. Near the get-in was a nice group of Big-fin Squid watching our every move, moving away



Tasselled Flathead



Blue-spotted Wrasse



Arabian Butterflyfish

as we approached and then approaching us as we ignored them! Biggest creature of the morning had to be the two metre wide Ocellated Eagle Ray that arced up from the seabed right past me before flapping majestically away. There were also Pale-lipped Surgeonfish, Circled Spine Surgeonfish, Red Sea Sailfin Tang, Peacock Grouper, Coral Hind, Gudgeon Silverside and Valentin's Toby.

By lunchtime and including the afternoon and morning snorkelling sessions we had identified 119 species of fish, and there were quite a few that we had not been able to put a name to!

After lunch we headed south across the island passing the vast Croton plains before heading uphill to rockier terrain dominated by *Adenium obesum*. We stopped to look at some *Monolluma* which didn't have any flowers! Also here was *Barleria tetraantha* and *Oldenlandia pulverulenta*. Moving on we passed fabulous hillsides covered in the *Adeniums* and *Boswellia elongata*. We stopped briefly in the river deep into Wadi Goo. In the water were pretty little *Aphaniops dispar* fish.



Eventually we emerged at sea level on the southern side of the island. This was a different landscape with the arid flatlands interrupted by the occasional village and date palms. Soon we found



ourselves in an amazing dune scape. Pure white sand stretching to the coast. It was beautiful. Then it was on to our camp at Omeq beach. This is another beautiful spot, a wide arcing bay with lots of sand, here slightly tinged with granite sand hues, backed by low dunes and behind date palms and salt pans. We walked to the latter where lots of ladies were at work and looking forward to a dip in the ocean to cool off after a hard day's labour. So they were not best amused to see a bunch of camera-toting foreigners bearing down upon them, however once they'd chased us men off they were far more welcoming to the ladies. Meanwhile Lesser Crested Tens could be seen dropping in to roost in the salt pans.

Dinner was sublime. Under the most starry of skies with the waves providing the soundtrack we feasted on lobsters purchased in the morning at Dihamry along with a nice bisque sauce, flatbreads and also some tasty fish.

Day 5 February 10th Dagub Cave and to Dixaim & Firmihin

The sun rose over the Indian Ocean as we wandered about the beach or the dunes. Birding along the pebble ridge we spotted Grey Plovers, Little Ringed & Kentish Plovers, Grey Plovers, Whimbrel and a whole bundle of Common Sandpipers. Abundant large shells and sea urchins were washed upon the beach. A long-dead Loggerhead Turtle was also there.

After breakfast we headed across the barren Noged Plain to Dagub Cave which sits at the base of the Southern escarpment. Seeps on the walls of the escarpment are home to some of the island's rarest plants – here we could see two of them – *Exacum socotranum* and *Scaviola socotraensis*. The latter though was near the top of the cliff! There were some fine large shrubs of the sea-lavender *Limonium paulayanum* growing on the cliff and quite a few *Boswellia popoviana*. Inside the cave three Lesser Mouse-tailed Bat hung from the roof.

Then it was up on the limestone plateau and along to Dixaim crossing a largely bare landscape.

We made a brief stop on said plateau which allowed us to see a rare endemic - a pomegranate! There were a number of shiny waxy orange-red buds. It even had a few diminutive fruits. The seemingly barren landscape had an unusual assemblage of plants growing in the canyons one being a large tree of *Ficus vasta*. This and *Ficus cordata* would seem to have their names applied wrongly somehow as it is *vasta* that has the large very cordate leaves. The little fern *Negripteris sciona* was already drying up in the cracks of the limestone. There was a fine tree of *Boswellia ameero* and on some low cliffs the woody *Dyerophytum socotrana*, *Secamone socotrana*, *Grewia mansouriana*, *Vernonia cockburniana* which is a small tree with purple centaurea-like flowers, and the ultra-rare *Pulicaria aromatica*. There was some nice flowering *Kalanchoe farinosa* and we also found *Periploca visciformis*, *Trichocalyx orbiculatus*, the woody mignonette *Reseda viridis*, the strange *Globularian* relative *Poskea socotrana* and Peter found our first *Euclea divinorum*, a relative of the Ebony.

At Dixaim we decided to head straight to the main Dragon Tree forests at Firmihin and our camp there, descending a spectacular and rough road through the canyon and up the other side. We passed *Ochradenus arabica*, a strange broom-like mignonette, and the yellow-flowered composite *Euryops arabica* en route.



Dragon Trees soon appeared and it wasn't long before we were in quite a forest of these amazing trees. Ecologically the Dragon Trees are a mist-forest denizen, gaining a significant proportion of their water from the moisture on their leaves each morning. They have a form like an umbrella. They were spread across the hillsides and slopes making a surreal landscape. Ali had promised us a camp site with a view and my what a spot he had chosen looking out over the Dragon Tree forest with the Hajhir Mountains for a backdrop – breathtaking. We took lunch and sat and admired the view as the kitchen staff (aka Egyptian Vultures) helped clear up anything we didn't eat.

In the afternoon we went to visit Suliyeman who is the local village headman. Though he was away, his wife and family allowed us to visit his garden. Suliyeman is growing Dragon Trees from seed. He has many in a little 'nursey', the tiniest were just one year old and he had some that were 27 years old and they really weren't so big. It clearly takes a while for a Dragon



Tree to reach full size. There was also *Crotolaria socotrana* and *Ruta chalepensis*. He was also growing *Boswellias* and *Punicas*. We did a little incense and incense pot shopping.

Then it was off for a walk through the Dragon Trees with Suliyeman's son. We stopped often and enjoyed the fabulous habitat we were walking through. Our guide took us to a mightily impressive



viewpoint. The Dragon Trees stretched out before us, it was easy to imagine we were watching a scene from many millions of years ago. We walked over to the top of the Dirhor Canyon as the sun headed for the horizon and the light bathing the canyon and Dragon Tree forests was amazing.

The team made a great campfire whilst we ate a delicious dinner. A great way to enjoy the fabulous night sky where the stars shone so brightly with no discernible light pollution.

After dinner I went looking for the Socotran Scops Owl but only heard them in the distance. I did find one cute little *Hemidactylus homoelepis* gecko though.

Day 6 February 18th Dirhor Canyon and to Qalansiyah

Several of us wandered the surrounding Dragon Tree forest pre-dawn trying to find the right spot to capture the rising sun through the geometric trees. It was a clear morning and I reckon a great many photos were obtained!

After a tasty and much appreciated breakfast we were off driving back down through the forest. We stopped first to look for *Monolluma socotrana* which we didn't



find in flower though we found at least twenty plants. An African Rock Martins flew over and a pair of Brown-necked Ravens. Again cliffs proved productive with *Reseda viridis*, *Lindenbergia*, *Hypericum* and *Pluchea obovata*. The Dragon Tree forest clothing the rocky ridges here was very beautiful and Peter, Alf and Hannah found one section with closed canopy, they said the temperature dropped 5 degrees under the full shade!

Then it was down into the Dirhor Canyon that separates Firmihin from Dixaim. This has water in it much of the year and there were plenty of pools. Several of us took a dip in the cool waters. There were a few Bruce's Green Pigeons around and a couple of parties of Socotra White-eyes. Common Sandpiper and Grey Wagtail too. The flora was interesting with some fine plants. *Cryptolepis socotrana* formed small trees on the gorge walls. We were searching for something else though. The Bottle Fig. Superficially similar to the widespread Desert Rose. We observed Desert Rose after Desert Rose until finally the Bottle Figs were spotted growing high on the cliff above us. *Pulicaria vieraoides* was the chasmophytic yellow *Asteraceae* on the gorge walls and *Gaillonia puberula* cascaded with tiny white flowers. Beyond the best swimming hole I found some *Angkalanthus oligophylla* with just a few flowers and sadly too far up the cliff to photograph – would be wonderful to see this beauty in full fresh bloom.

Driving up the far side of the gorge we passed much of the strange mignonette relative *Ochradenus socotranus* and a Socotra Warbler posed in a bush right by the car. We were all hungry now (early breakfast, late lunch...) and so we stopped at Dixaim shop which was an experience in itself.

Now we descended from the highlands to the north coast.

Then it was along to Qalansiyah. This is the Socotra's second largest settlement which is to say, a big-ish village. By the village is a hill. And behind it... a stunning landscape of white sands, lagoon and cliffs. What a setting. The camp was placed at the back of the lagoon which was almost a kilometre across. Great expanses of white sand spread around and behind it, the eastern edge a high cliff/mountain. We enjoyed a late lunch and spent the afternoon exploring the area. The lagoon had plenty of Western Reef Egrets as well as Grey Herons. There were Curlews and Whimbrels, the latter in some numbers. There were Crested Terns and three Caspian Terns. Offshore were many Brown Boobies. *Boswellia bullata*, *Camptoloma hyperiifolium* and *Aloe perryi* all grew on the steep slopes to the east of the lagoon. Other nice finds were *Turrea socotrana*, *Chapmannia sericea*, the small tree *Withania riebeckii*, and the lovely *Acridocarpus socotranus* with racemes of yellow flowers, were all noted.

Dinner tonight was an amazing affair with a delicious squid, a tasty and most succulent fish, potatoes in a sauce and something really delicious which I couldn't quite fathom out – what a feast!

Day 7 February 19th Shoab & Wadi Ayaft



Just after dawn there were at three Slender-billed Gulls and a Caspian Tern on the lagoon below the tents. After an early breakfast we headed straight to Qalansiyah village to catch our boat to Shoab. There were many little boats lined up on the shore and chaotic crowd of fishermen and children welcomed us. However we were soon in our boats and motoring smoothly out into the bay. We passed some massive parrotfish easily visible in such clear waters as was a lounging Green Turtle. Some nice group of Socotra Cormorants gave us chance to see them up close. It didn't take long to spot the first dolphins! They announced themselves with a few of their trademark aerial spins. This was a large pod of Spinner Dolphins. They coursed through the water right by the boat at times. Our boatman was good at getting us close to them. The problem was to try and catch that in your camera. Some managed... After playing with them for a little we headed west towards Shoab along a spectacular stretch of coast. The mountains inland reaching right to the sea in some impressive cliffs. We stopped by a very photogenic Brown Booby. Then by an Osprey that had caught a fish and who posed beautifully for us. We found Red-billed Tropicbirds sailing high over the water here. There were at least ten of them favouring one particular high and rugged cliff. It looked like they were probably nesting on the almost vertical mountainsides. It was a beautiful sight seeing them sailing



above us. A number of Sooty Gulls perched on several tiny islets that had a few Lesser Crested Terns too. One rock in the sea had bonsai-ed plants of the Frankincense *Boswellia bullata*. The inland cliffs which were largely bare did have some impressive Cucumber Trees.

Eventually we landed at Shoab. A spectacular location with a lovely beach backed by a little mangrove and behind those mountains and more mountains. Shoab lies right at the western tip of Socotra. There was an interesting flora in the sand areas by the mangroves with lots of *Chenopodiaceae* such as *Atriplex stocksii*, *Anthrocnemum macrostachyum* and the spikey *Cornulaca ehrenbergii*. There was also the local endemic *Heliotropium shoabense* and a truly tough Acacia – *Vachellia oerfota*. Some took a swim and did a little beach combing. Several of us went snorkelling. Interestingly the fish here were almost universally different from Dihamry. There were lots of Sergeant Majors and Dusky Sergeant Majors and there were many baby ones so tiny yet so perfect. In fact there were huge numbers of baby fish generally. The baby Emperor Angelfish were a mass of white swirls and patterns on a blue background. There were lots of Masked Pufferfish and we saw Golden-striped Cardinalfish and

swarms of blue and yellow Blue-striped Snappers. There were large shoals of mixed Fusiliers made up of Multi-lined, Striated and Gold-banded Fusiliers. Black-tailed Snapper, blennies, sweepers, Small-spotted Dart, Black-tail Emperor. Cryptic Nebulous Wrasse were harder to spot than the striking purple, pink and green Surge Wrasse! There were some lovely little demoiselles – notably the bright yellow Sulphur Damsel, as well as Arabian Spinecheek and the very cute Cube Boxfish was much enjoyed.



The other main snorkelling highlight though was undoubtedly a squadron of Rainbow Runners. Like a Barracuda in general shape but altogether more sporty and elegant these two foot long missiles are fabulous to watch underwater. There was also a Great Barracuda, some Obtuse (or Yellowtail) Barracuda and a Yellowfin Tuna that swam past and a little offshore a very large ray (species unknown) cavorted on the surface. Just as we left the beach a bunch of perhaps ten Bottle-nosed Dolphins were in the bay.

Our boat journey back also saw us meeting more Spinner Dolphins. These gave us an even better show than the morning. The pod divided into two, near shore and outer, and we followed or waited for each section in turn. There were probably around two hundred animals altogether. Brown Boobies flew past regularly. We saw a disturbance in the water and headed over to find a 'bait-ball' of little fish. This is when marauding larger fish have caused them to mass together in a tight ball – quite a sight. We briefly glimpsed the attackers, almost certainly Great Barracuda but they were soon off.

Then it was back for an early lunch by the lagoon. In the early afternoon we headed back to close to the airport and Wadi Ayaft. This is one of the most diverse botanical sites on the island and there seemed to be a different tree every corner we turned. The wadi is also exceptionally beautiful with cliffs on high and the slopes below with giant tumbled boulder sheltering all sorts of goodies. And all the time, the jagged peaks of the Hajhir at the end of the valley. It was noisy with Laughing Doves and Socotra Sparrows, and a goodly few Socotra Sunbirds too. There were some truly large *Sterculia africana* and also fine trees of *Lanaea trisulca*. Rocks had much *Boswellia popoviana* and we also saw the *socotrana* form of *Boswellia socotrana* and *Boswellia elongata* too!

Commiphoras were represented by *ornifolia*, *parviflora* and *socotrana*. *Cordia obtusa*, a *Boraginacean* tree was in orange fruit. On the big rocks we started to find many bottle-figs *Dorstenia gigas*, indeed the high cliffs above had huge numbers of these strange plants. There were little ferns like *Actiniopteris semiflabellata* and *Negripteris sciona*. *Cissus paniculata* trailed over *Cissus subaphylla* showing just how different two plants of the same genus could look. We found an area covered in the little grey subshrubs of *Campylanthus spinosus*, a lovely thing when its pretty pink flowers are open – they weren't today! *Sarcostemma socotranum* looked like a giant broom! We swam in a beautiful large and very deep pool in the wadi before heading back down as the sun sank in the western sky lighting the granite peaks above. Dragonflies and damselflies were particularly varied here.

We returned to our campsite which after a whole of week of stunning campsites really took the biscuit with an all-round panorama of the Wadi and the mountains above.

We popped out for a short night walk and saw no less than four Socotran Chameleons and a Small Indian Civet!



Day 8 February 18th Departure

We awoke to see the sun rising over the peaks of the Hajhir Mountains, swirls of mist and cloud wreathing them beautifully.

Several of us took an early morning walk in search of the Socotran Golden-winged Grosbeak, but none were to be seen. There were lots of Socotran Sunbirds and a few Bruce's Green Pigeons and we re-found one of the previous night's Chameleons so were able to spend daylight time with these charismatic animals.

We enjoyed a relaxed breakfast in the sun and then said goodbye to our wonderful team who'd done such a fantastic job all week looking after us and making each camp a memorable experience. Then it was down the wadi which reached the sea close to the airport. We stopped a few minutes at the oldest school on Socotra. Ali knew the teachers and we were allowed into class... a fun few minutes was had with some lively pupils keen to practise their English. The school was started way back in the ... 1970s!

The airport check-in was perhaps less chaotic that we might have imagined and we were soon on our way over the Arabian Sea....

Systematic List Number 1 Flora

The following list is provided by Peter Steiger

Ordered by trees = t, shrubs = s, subshrubs = sb, perennials = p, annuals = a, vines = v, succulents = c
species seen only by a minority of the group = *

species narrow endemic with very limited distribution = E

The following species are present at many localities and may not be mentioned in every local list:

Ziziphus spina-christi	thorny, lv ov 3nerved	t
Croton socotranus	fl ov small to 4 cm	s
Jatropha unicostata	fl yellgreen, lv ov clust to 15 cm	s
Senna holosericea	fl yel, lv 8-12 fol	sb
Solanum incanum	fl lilac or white, lv spiny grey	s
Tephrosia apollinea	fl pink, lv 5-9p	sb
Tephrosia purpurea	fl pink, lv 11-17p	sb
Ageratum conyzoides	fl wh to lilac <i>South-America</i>	p
Argemone mexicana	fl yel, lv spiny dark green <i>Mexico</i>	p
Solanum villosum	fl lilac, lv unarmed green	p

Day 1 Homhil plateau 280-320 m

Succulent shrubland

Boswellia elongata	lvl long, white below, rhachis winged	t
Boswellia socotrana ssp. socotrana	lv tiny, greygreen, rhachis winged	t
Commiphora ornifolia	lv 3-5p, bark grey	t
Dracaena cinnabari	Dragon tree	t
Ficus cordata	lv lanc	t
Lanea transulta	lv lanc 20 cm ANAC	t
Sterculia africana	lv 3-5 p, bark flaky	t
Adenium obesum	Desert Rose, fl pink	sc
Anisotes diversifolius	fl red, lv rd obtuse at tip	s
Ballochia rotundifolia	fl red, lv rd small, very frequent	s
Buxanthus pedicelatus	Box tree, lv ov evergreen	s
Cissus hamaderoensis	vine, lv grey, st greygreen, quadr	sv
Croton socotranus	fl ov small to 4 cm	s
Dendrosycios socotrana	Cucumber tree, lv crowded	sc
Euphorbia schimperii	fl yel, pencil like twigs	sc
Euphorbia spiralis	fl yel, spiny quadrangular	sc
Jatropha unicostata	fl yellgreen, lv ov clust to 15 cm	s
Withania adunensis	fl greenish, lv greygreen ov	s
Adiantum balfourii	fern, lv pinn ov entire	p
Aerva lanata	fl wh glob, lv grey	p
Aloe perryi	fl red, infl 1,5 red, yellow tip	pc

<i>Asphodelus tenuifolius</i>	fl white	p
<i>Convolvulus sarmentosus</i>	fl white, st app hairy lv ell	p
<i>Exacum affine</i>	fl blue	p
<i>Hypoestes pubescens</i>	fl wh to lilac 3p in spice	p
<i>Kalanchoe farinacea</i>	fl red, lv glaucous ob	pc
<i>Monolluma socotranum</i> (<i>Caralluma</i>)	st erect grey suc	pc
<i>Oldenlandia pulvinata</i>	fl mauve, lv lin prostrate	p
<i>Rhinacanthus scoparius</i>	fl white, lower lip 3p, lv ov	sb

Day 2 Homhil-Arher beach

Homhil Ridge 350-700 m

Succulent shrubland, Semi-evergreen woodland

<i>Boswellia elongata</i>	lvl long, white below, rhachis winged	t
<i>Boswellia nana</i>	rock, small, lv small simple or lobed	t E
<i>Boswellia nana</i> x <i>socotrana</i>	rock, small, lv pinn like <i>B. socotrana</i>	t E*
<i>Boswellia popovii</i>	rock, lv long simple	t
<i>Chapmannia gracilis</i>	fl yel, lv pinn 2-7p	ts*
<i>Commiphora ornifolia</i>	lv 3-5p, bark grey	t
<i>Croton pachycladus</i>	crown flat, fl wh long styled	t E*
<i>Dracaena cinnabari</i>	Dragon tree	t
<i>Lanea transulta</i>	lv lanc 20 cm ANAC	t*
<i>Sterculia africana</i>	lv 3-5 p, bark flaky	t
<i>Vachellia pennivenia</i>	lv pin, fresh green, bark grey-yel	t
<i>Adenium obesum</i>	Desert Rose, fl pink	sc
<i>Anisotes diversifolius</i>	fl red, lv rd obtuse at tip	s
<i>Asparagus africanus</i>	lv lin	s
<i>Ballochia amoena</i>	fl orange, lv lin fasciculate	s
<i>Ballochia rotundifolia</i>	fl red, lv rd small, very frequent	s
<i>Buxanthus pedicelatus</i>	Box tree, lv ov evergreen	s
<i>Carphalea obovata</i>	fl lilac pink, calyx white, lv ov	s*
<i>Cissus hamaderoensis</i>	vine, lv grey, st greengreen, quadr	sv
<i>Commiphora kua</i>	wiry, spiny, lv 1-3, yellow, aromatic	s*
<i>Croton socotranus</i>	fl ov small to 4 cm	s
<i>Dendrosycios socotrana</i>	Cucumber tree, lv crowded	sc
<i>Euphorbia hamaderoensis</i>	pigmy, lv ov	sc E*
<i>Euphorbia schimperi</i>	fl yel, pencil like twigs	sc
<i>Euphorbia spiralis</i>	fl yel, spiny quadrangular	sc
<i>Gnidia socotrana</i>	lv dark green, obov clust	s*
<i>Hibiscus stenanthus</i>	lv rigid hairy, often prostrate	s
<i>Jatropha unicostata</i>	fl yellgreen, lv ov clust to 15 cm	s
<i>Kleinia scotia</i>	fr hairy, tw suc fingers	sc*
<i>Lindenbergia socotrana</i>	fl yel w red, lv ov	s
<i>Lycium socotranum</i>	spiny, lv ov	s
<i>Rhus thyrsoiflora</i>	lv 3p, prominent midnerv, aromatic	s*
<i>Secamone cuneifolia</i>	fl yell 5p, lv lin oblong	sv*

Tamriddaea capsulifera	fl wh long tubed	s
Tragia balfouriana	fl cream, lv ov-rd dent stinging hairs!	sv
Trichocalyx obovatus	fl red 2p, lv obovate	s
Trichocalyx orbiculatus	fl red 2p, lv orbicular	s
Withania adunensis	fl a lv greygreen ov	s
Zygocarpum caeruleum	lv 5p orb	s
Actiniopteris semiflabellata	fern, lv lin divided, dried out	p
Adiantum balfourii	fern, lv pinn ov entire	p
Aerva javanica	fl wh spiky	p
Aerva lanata	fl wh glob, lv grey	p
Aloe perryi	fl red, infl 1,5 red, yellow tip	pc
Anagallis arvensis	fl blue	p
Asplenium schweinfurthii	fern, Lv pinn, entire	p*
Babiana socotrana	weltd lv	p*
Asphodelus tenuifolius	fl white	p
Caralluma socotrana	no fl, warty fingers	pc*
Chorisochoa striata	fl pink 4p, lv ov	sb*
Commelina albescens	fl pale lilac 2p	p*
Convolvulus hildebrandtii	fl white, lv lin	p
Convolvulus sarmentosus	fl white, st app hairy lv ell	p
Crotalaria leptocarpa	fl yel, lv 3p	p*
Cuscuta planiflora	fl white, st red trailing	p
Cystostemon socotranus	fl white erect, lv hispid	p
Dicliptera effusa	fl pink, lower lip broad	p
Dioscorea lanata	lv triangular	pv
Dorstenia socotrana	lv umbilicoid in rock	p E*
Exacum affine	fl blue	p
Gaillonia puberula	fl wh 5p, lv li to ov	sb
Geranium biuncinatum	fl magenta w black, lb orb	p*
Helichrysum gracilipes	fl minute pink-white styled	p
Helichrysum sp. B	fl pink, lv grey ov aromatic	sb E*
Heliotropium balfourii	fl white, lv ov bullate	sb
Hybanthus enneaspermus	fl white-blue, lv lin to ov	sb *
Hypoestes pubescens	fl wh to lilac 3p in spice	p
Hypoxis angustifolia	fl yel star, lv lin dense	p
Indigofera cordifolia	fl dark red, lv 1p, prostrate	p*
Kalanchoe farinacea	lv wh-green imbricate	pc
Lavandula nimmoi	fl blue, lv dent	sb
Ledebouria grandiflora	lv large fleshy on ground	p*
Lindenbergia socotrana	fl yel w red in rock	p
Lotus ononopsis	fl yel, lv green	p*
Oldenlandia balfourii	fl white 4p long styles, lv ov	p
Oldenlandia bicornuta	fl wh-bluish4p, lv lin	p
Oldenlandia pulvinata	fl mauve, lv lin prostrate	p
Portulaca quadrifida	fl yel, lv opp flat	p
Rhinacanthus scoparius	fl white, lower lip 3p, lv ov	sb
Ruellia dioscorides	fl wh 5p, prostrate	p

Ruellia patula	fl lilac 5p	p
Rughidia cordata	lv pinn on rock, fr	p*
Sarcostemma socotranum	tw pencil like	pc*
Scrophularia arguta	fl redbrown	p
Tephrosia odorata	fl violet, lv 3p	p*
Teucrium sokotranum	fl white, lv ell, cushion	p*
Trichodesma laxiflorum	fl pale blue, lv ov	p

Arher dunes and Irasel Coast 0-30 m

Croton shrubland, Coastal dwarf shrub, Spring wetland

Capparis cartilaginea	fl white, lv orb	s
Cissus subaphylla	fl yel, st ell, grey flat	sv
Tamarix nilotica	fl white, lv scaly blue green	s
Cistanche phelypaea	fl yel, parasitic on Heliotropium	p*
Eleocharis geniculata	fl brown, st round, wet	p*
Fagonia quatarensis	fl white, lv ball like	sbc
Heliotropium socotranum	fl yel and wh	sb
Heliotropium pterocarpum	fl wh	sb
Indigofera argentea	lv silvery hairy	p*
Limonium paulayanum	fl lilac, lv spatulate	sb
Limonium sokotranum	fl lilac, lv lin-cylindrical	sb
Pergularia tomentosa	fl greenish, lv heart shaped	pv*
Phyla nodiflora	fl pink-white, lv dent, wet	p

Day 3 Hoq Cave to Dihamri

Way up to Hoq cave 30-350 m

Croton shrubland, Succulent and Semi-evergreen shrubland

Boswellia elongata	lvl long	t
Boswellia dioscorides	rock, rhachis not wigd, lv 11-17 pinn glauc	t
Commiphora parviflora	intricate spreading, lv imbr 7-11p	t
Commiphora ornifolia	bk grey, lv clust 3-7p	t
Ficus cordata	lv lin ovate long	t
Ficus vasta	lv broad orbicular rough	t
Lanea transulta	lv lanc 20 cm	t
Maerua angolensis	one trunk w pendulant branches	t
Sterculia africana	tree, lv 5lobed, bark flaky	t
Vachellia pennivenia	lv 2-3p dark green, bark yel-grey	t
Adenium obesum	Desert Rose, fl pink	sc
Capparis cartilaginea	fl white, lv orb	s
Cissus subaphylla	fl yel, st ell, grey flat	sv
Dirichletia (Carphalea) obovata	fl pink-lilac, large cylix white	s
Euphorbia spiralis	fl green, st spiny cyl	sc
Jatropha unicostata	fl yell gr, lv clust 15 cm	s

<i>Lycium sokotranum</i>	fl white/yell, spiny, lv obov	s
<i>Rhus thyrsoiflora</i>	lv 3p, prominent midnerv, aromatic	s
<i>Tragia balfouriana</i>	fl cream, lv ov-rd dent stinging hairs!	sv
<i>Acalypha indica</i>	fl green, lv ob, disturbed ground	p
<i>Adiantum balfourii</i>	fern, lv pinn ov entire	p
<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	fern, lv crenate, only in cave	p
<i>Aerva javanica</i>	fl wh spiky	p
<i>Aerva lanata</i>	fl wh glob, lv grey	p
<i>Caralluma socotrana</i>	no fl, warty fingers	pc*
<i>Commelina forskalaei</i> (ramulosa)	fl blue 3p	p
<i>Commicarpus heimerlii</i>	fl pink, lv ov, st gland	p
<i>Exacum affine</i>	fl light blue	p
<i>Heliotropium balfourii</i>	fl white, lv ov bullate	sb
<i>Hypoestes pubescens</i>	fl wh-lilac in spike	p
<i>Indigofera socotrana</i>	fl pink, lv 7-11, elliptic	p
<i>Lavandula nimmoi</i>	fl blue, lv deeply pinn	sb
<i>Lindenbergia socotrana</i>	fl yel w red in rock	p
<i>Oldenlandia balfourii</i>	fl white 4p long styles, lv ov	p
<i>Peristrophe paniculata</i>	fl mag 2 lipped	p
<i>Trichodesma laxiflora</i>	fl blue white hanging bell	p

Around cave 350-420 m

Succulent and Semi-evergreen shrubland

Only additional species to those seen on the way up

<i>Boswellia popoviana</i>	twisted, lv simple white felted below	t*
<i>Maerua angolensis</i>	fl greenish yell	t*
<i>Punica protopunica</i>	fl red, fr green, lv orb	t*
<i>Aerva microphylla</i>	fl white glob, lv green, on rock	s*
<i>Allophylus rubifolius</i>	lv 3p bluegrey orb	s*
<i>Chapmannia gracilis</i>	fl yel whorled, lv 3-7p	s*
<i>Ballochia atro-virgata</i>	fl yel, lv crowded	s*
<i>Dyerophytum socotranum</i>	orangish calyx w wh and green fl	s*
<i>Euphorbia obcordata</i>	fl yel, lv blue green clust	s*
<i>Gnidia socotrana</i>	lv dark green, obov clust	s*
<i>Grewia bilocularis</i>	lv ov strongly hispid	s*
<i>Paracalyx balfourii</i>	fl yell w red, lv 3p silvery hairy	s*
<i>Secamone cuneifolia</i>	fl yell 5p, lv lin oblong	sv*
<i>Secamone socotrana</i>	fl cream, lv ov	sv*
<i>Vernonia cockburniana</i>	fr hairy, lv orb small	s*
<i>Chenopodium murale</i>	fl green, lv ov crenate, disturbed a*	
<i>Helichrysum gracilipes</i>	fl pinkish, sprawling	p*
<i>Helichrysum</i> sp. B	fl pink, lv grey ov aromatic	sb E*
<i>Digera muricata</i>	fl pink spike, lv ov	p*

<i>Dioscorea lanata</i>	trailing vine, lv cordate	pv*
<i>Geranium biuncinatum</i>	fl mag black centred	p*
<i>Limonium paulayanum</i>	fl lilac, lv spatulate on rock	sb*
<i>Micromeria remota</i>	fl pink, lv ov entire creeping	p*
<i>Polycarpea balfourii</i>	fl white, lv whorled, tender	a*
<i>Poskea socotrana</i>	fl wh in spike, lv grey orb	sb*
<i>Rughidia milleri</i>	lv glossy pinn, scaly stemmed API	p*
<i>Scrophularia arguta</i>	fl red-brown, lv ov serr	p*
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	fl yel, disturbed	p*

Day 4 Dihamri to Amaq

Wadi Goo on the Way to the South Coast 50-400 m

Croton shrubland and Succulent shrubland

<i>Boswellia elongata</i>	lvl long with winged rhachis	t
<i>Euphorbia arbuscula</i>	crown flat, tw pencillike greygreen	t
<i>Ficus cordata</i>	lv lin ovate long	t
<i>Adenium obesum</i>	Desert Rose, fl pink	sc
<i>Barleria tetraacantha</i>	fl lemon yel, lv spiny	sb
<i>Indigofera pseudointricata</i>	lv dark green silvery, dominant	sb
<i>Chara</i> sp.	divided lv Algae in river	p
<i>Monolluma socotrana</i>	fr hairy, succulent fingers	pc

Zahak Dunes and Ameq campground 0-20m

Coastal shrub and Salt depression

<i>Tamarix nilotica</i>	fl white, lv scaly blue green	s
<i>Heliotropium riebeckii</i>	fl yel, hispid hairy, dwarf	p
<i>Indigofera pseudointricata</i>	lv dark green silvery, dominant	sb
<i>Limonium paulayanum</i>	fl lilac, lv spatulate	sb
<i>Xylocalyx asper</i>	fl white, low, lv ov scaly grouped	sb

Day 5 Dagub Cave to Dixim and Firmihin

Dagub Cave cliff 150 m

Croton shrubland and moist rockwall

<i>Boswellia popoviana</i>	lv simple white felted below	t
<i>Aerva microphylla</i>	fl white glob, lv green, on rock	s
<i>Capparis cartilaginea</i>	fl white, lv orb	s
<i>Erythroxyton socotranum</i>	fl cream, lv ov densly veined	s E not clearly seen
<i>Scaevola socotraensis</i>	fl wh, pend, lv ov clust	s E*
<i>Tamarix nilotica</i>	fl white, lv scaly blue green	s

Adiantum capillus-veneris	fern, lv crenate, only in cave	p
Exacum socotranum	fl blue, lv spath	s E
Limonium paulayanum	fl pink, lv spath grey	sb

Dixim plateau 450-550 m

Succulent and Semi-evergreen shrubland

Boswellia ameroo	fl crimson, lv entire, dark green above	t
Euclea divinorum	fl white clust, lv op ellipt 8 cm	t
Ficus cordata	lv long ovate	t
Punica protopunica	fl red, fr green, lv orb	t
Allophylus rubifolius	lv 3p bluegrey orb	s
Buxanthus pedicelatus	Box tree, lv ov evergreen	s
Cissus hamaderoensis	vine, lv grey, st greygreen, quadr, fl yel	sv
Dirichletia (Carphalea) obovata	fl pink-lilac, large cylx	s
Dyerophytum socotranum	fl yel, lv glauc circ to ovate	s
Grewia mansouriana	lv ovata, rough	s
Trichocalyx orbiculatus	fl red 2p, calyx hairy, lv orb	s
Vernonia cockburniana	fl cream, fr hairy, lv small orb	s
Aloe perryi	no fl	pc
Kalanchoe farinacea	fl red	pc
Negripteris sciona	fern in cracks, dried out	p
Poskea socotrana	fl wh in spike, lv grey orb	sb
Pulicaria aromatica	fl yel.lv grey ov, strong aromatic	sb E*
Reseda viridis	fl green-red, lv ov lanc	sb
Commicarpus simonyi	fl pink pedic, lv ov triang	p
Periploca visciformis	fl yel-brown, tw broom like	sb

Garden in Firmihin village 750 m

Dracaena cinnabari	young plants from one to twenty years	t
Psidium gujava	Guava, lv ovate, bark light grey flakky	<i>Central-South America</i>
Terminalia catappa	Indian Almond, lv large glossy often red	<i>East-Asia</i>
Ruta graveolens	Vine-Rue, lv pinn, blue green, aromatic	<i>Mediterranean</i>

Dragon tree forest on Firmihin plateau 670-750 m

Succulent and Semi-evergreen shrubland with dominant Dragon tree (Afternoon and morning of next day walks)

Boswellia elongata	lv long, white below, rhachis winged	t
Boswellia popoviana	lv simple white felted below	t
Euphorbia arbuscula	crown flat, tw pencillike greygreen	t

<i>Ficus cordata</i>	lv lanc	t
<i>Sterculia africana</i>	lv 3-5 p, bark flaky	t
<i>Adenium obesum</i>	Desert Rose, fl pink	sc
<i>Ballochia rotundifolia</i>	fl red, lv rd small, very frequent	s
<i>Cissus hamaderoensis</i>	vine, lv grey, st greygreen, quadr	sv
<i>Euphorbia schimperi</i>	fl yel, pencil like twigs	sc
<i>Euphorbia spiralis</i>	fl yel, spiny quadrangular	sc
<i>Euryops arabicus</i>	fl yel, lv div dark green	s
<i>Aerva lanata</i>	fl wh glob, lv grey	p
<i>Aloe perryi</i>	fl red, infl 1,5 red, yellow tip	pc
<i>Hypoestes pubescens</i>	fl wh to lilac 3p in spice	p
<i>Kalanchoe farinacea</i>	fl red, lv glaucous ob	pc
<i>Monolluma socotranum</i> (<i>Caralluma</i>)	st erect grey suc	pc
<i>Rhinacanthus scoparius</i>	fl white, lower lip 3p, lv ov	sb
<i>Ruellia dioscoridis</i>	fl white 5p, lv ovate	sb

Day 6 Dirhor canyon and to Qualansiyah

Dirhor Canyon 300-350 m

Succulent and Semi-evergreen shrubland

<i>Aerva microphylla</i>	fl white glob, lv green, on rock	s
<i>Allophylus rubifolius</i>	lv 3foliate, fl thin spiky green, fr red berries	s
<i>Angkalanthus oligophylla</i>	fl orange drooping spike, lv lin	s E*
<i>Cryptolepis socotrana</i>	fl white, lv orbic bluegrey, hanging on rocks	sv
<i>Dorstenia gigas</i>	fl yel succ bottle fig	sc
<i>Ochradenus socotranus</i>	fl yel, lv linear	s
<i>Vernonia cockburniana</i>	fl lilac, lv small orb	s
<i>Eulophia petersii</i>	large bulbs w lin lv on rock	p
<i>Farsetia stylosa</i>	fl white, fr brassicoide, lv ov green in rocks	p
<i>Gaillonia puberula</i>	fl white 4 p, lv lin	p*
<i>Lindenbergia socotrana</i>	fl yel w red	p
<i>Monolluma socotrana</i>	no fl, succ	pc
<i>Polycarpea caespitosa</i>	fl white, lv in rosette and lin opp	p
<i>Poskea socotrana</i>	fl wh in spike, lv grey orb	sb
<i>Pulicaria diversifolia</i>	fl yel, lv ov dentate, plant erect in rocks	p
<i>Reseda viridis</i>	fl green-red, lv ov lanc	sb

Shibereh 100 m

Croton shrubland

<i>Boswellia socotrana</i> ssp. <i>aspleniifolia</i>	bk grey, lv pinn, strongly glauc, crown flat	t
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Qualansyiah lagoon slope 0-200 m

Croton and Succulent shrubland

Boswellia bullata	bk pale grey, lv serr dark green, toment below	t*
Chapmannia sericea	lv pinn 10-20 p, silvery	t*
Turrea socotrana	fl cream, lv clust ov	t*
Allophylus rubifolius	lv 3foliate, fl thin spiky green, fr red berries	s*
Pulicaria stephanocarpa	fl yell, lv ov grey, aromatic, dominant	s
Withania riebeckii	fl green, lv grey rd	s*
Aloe perryi	fl red	pc*
Camptoloma hyperiiflorum	fl white, gland p wet to touch	p*
Chorisochoa striata	fl pink in imbricate spike	P*
Heliotropium socotranum	fl yel	p*
Leucas spiculifera	fl white, lv w 3 spines	sb*
Pluchea glutinosa	fr straw, lv ov	sb*

Day 7 Shoab and Wadi Ayhaft

Rock in the sea south of Qualansyiah 5 m

Boswellia bullata	bonsai size
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Shoab 0-50 m

Sand dunes, Mangrove lagoon and Croton shrubland

Avicennia marina	White Mangrove, fl yellow, lv ov leathery	t
Tamarix aphylla	fl white, lv scaly	t*
Tamarix nilotica	fl pink/white, lv scaly	t
Arthrocnemum macrostachyum	st jointed, green	s*
Atriplex grifithii	lv grey round, undulate	s
Capparis cartilaginea	fl white, lv orb	s
Limonium sokotranum	fl lilac pink, lv lin	s*
Lycium socotranum	spiny	s*
Suaeda monoica	lv grey lin, 2 sides flat	s*
Vachellia sarcophylla	fl cream, lv 1-2p greygreen, spiny	s*

Wadi Ayhaft 100-280 m

Croton shrubland, Succulent and Semi-evergreen shrubland

Boswellia elongata	bk brown flaking lv 13-28 p long	t
Commiphora ornifolia	bk pale grey, lv 3-7p	t
Commiphora parvifolia	lv 7-11p branches spreading on all sides	t
Cordia obtusa	fl white, fr orange, lv obov rough	t

Lannea transulta	lv alternate lanc 20 cm	t
Sterculia africana	lv 5lobed, bark shagged	t
Tamarindus indicus	lv pinn, dark green, around campsite	t
Ziziphus spina-christii	spiny, lv orb 3nerved, fr yellowgreen	t
Ballochia amoena	fl red, lv lin fasciculate	s
Adenium obesum	Desert Rose, fl pink	sc
Cissus subaphylla	st grey flat	sc
Cryptolepis intricata	fl cream, lv lin-oblong s 1	s
Dirichletia (Placoda) obovata	fl pink 5p, calyx dry white, lv ovate	s
Dorstenia gigas	Bottle fig in rock	sc
Gnidia socotrana	fl yel, lv ov clust	s
Withania riebeckii	fl green, calyx small, lv ov	s
Actinopteris semiflabellata	fern lv ginkogide lin, dried out	p
Adiantum balfourii	fern, lv pinn ov entire	p
Campylanthus spinosus	no fl, small shrub, lv grey	sb
Lindenbergia socotrana	fl yel w red, lv ov	p
Nephrolepis sciona	fern, pinn, lvl undivided, dried out	p
Placopoda virgata	fl wh, lv clust fleshy orbic	s
Pulicaria diversifolia	fl yel, lv ov dentate, plant erect in rocks	p
Sarcostemma socotranum	fl cream 5p, st pencil like greygreen	sb

Systematic List Number 2

Birds

Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	several just outside Haribo
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	2 Qalansiyah
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	the falcon at Dihamry had plucked at least one as usual!
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Qalansiyah
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Very common and widespread
Bruce's Green Pigeon	<i>Treron waalia</i>	noted in most wooded canyons
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	common at all wetlands
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	most wetlands
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	2 near the airport
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	wetlands throughout
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	scattered along coasts
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Omeq Beach
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Omeq Beach
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	most coastal areas
Lesser Sandplover	<i>Charadrius atrifrons</i>	1 Omeq Beach
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	frequent along allcoasts
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	frequent at Qalansiyah Lagoon
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	scattered along coasts
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	both days Irasel
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	1 just outside Haribo, also noted both days Omeq
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	1 just outside Haribo
Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	1 at Homhil in the riverbed
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Scattered along coasts and wadis
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	scattered throughout
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	scattered
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	scattered
Sooty Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus hemprichii</i>	Large flocks along north coast mixing with the next species, less common on south coast
Baltic Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Irasel
Heuglin's Gull	<i>Larus heuglini</i>	Large flocks along sandy shores
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	3 at Qalansiyah Lagoon
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	3 at Qalansiyah Lagoon
Great Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	abundant along all shores
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	Omeq, and Shoab, where common
Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>	c.10 along the cliffs between Qalansiyah and Shoab looked like they must be breeding
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>	c.10 off of Irasel
Jouanin's Petrel	<i>Bulweria fallax</i>	2 off of Irasel
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Occasional birds on all coasts

Socotra Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax nigrogularis</i>	scattered and occasionally frequent (e.g. off Qalansiyah Lagoon) along shores
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	3 just outside Haribo
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	several just outside Haribo
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1 Qalansiyah Lagoon
Western Reef Heron	<i>Egretta gularis</i>	Common and widespread around the coast
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	widespread in low numbers
Western Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	singles near Haribo and Irasel
Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	2 Qalansiyah Lagoon
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Abundant and ever present in the sky
Socotra Buzzard	<i>Buteo socotranus</i>	1 or 2 seen most days
Socotra Scops Owl	<i>Otus socotranus</i>	2 only heard this year
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinunculus</i>	scattered
Socotra Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor uncinatus</i>	scattered throughout
Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	scattered
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	2 Omeq Beach
Pale Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne obsoleta</i>	several in Daerhu Wadi
Socotra Warbler	<i>Incana incana</i>	1 Daerhu Wadi
Socotra Cisticola	<i>Cisticola haesitata</i>	Omeq Beach
Socotra White-eye	<i>Zosterops abyssinica</i>	scattered throughout
Socotra Starling	<i>Onychognathus frater</i>	only 1 seen at Firmihin
Somali Starling	<i>Onychognathus blythii</i>	Very common and widespread
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	scattered throughout
Socotra Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia balfouri</i>	widespread
Socotra Sparrow	<i>Passer insularis</i>	abundant
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	2 Daerhu Wadi
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	1 Omeq Beach
Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similes</i>	local in dry areas
Socotra Golden-winged Grosbeak	<i>Rhynchostruthus socotranus</i>	1 Hoq Cave entrance area

Systematic List Number 3 Marine

The majority of the following were recorded at Dihamry. This is a composite list from the last two visits – those that we didn't see in 2025 are included in brackets. In fact I've had only time to go through half the photos at Dihamry so I am sure there's much to add....

Mammals

Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>	a few Irasel and Dihamry, many off Qalansiyah/Shoab
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	a few Irasel and Qalansiyah/Shoab

Turtles

Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Shoab
Loggerhead Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	a dead one at Omeq
Olive Ridley Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	Dihamry
Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	at least two at Dihamry

Acanthuridae

Eyestripe Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus dussumieri</i>	Dihamry
Black Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus gahhm</i>	Dihamry, Shoab
Pale-lipped Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucocheilus</i>	Dihamry
Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>	Dihamry
Sohail Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus sohal</i>	Dihamry
Circled Spine Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus tennentii</i>	Dihamry
Convict Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>	Dihamry
Striped Bristletooth	<i>Ctenochaetus striatus</i>	Dihamry
[Whitemargin Unicornfish	<i>Naso annulatus</i>	Dihamry]
Humpback Unicornfish	<i>Naso brachycentron</i>	Dihamry
[Horseface Unicornfish	<i>Naso fageni</i>	Dihamry]
Sleek Unicornfish	<i>Naso hexacanthus</i>	Dihamry
Orangespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	Dihamry - common
Humpnose Unicornfish	<i>Naso tuberosus</i>	Dihamry
Bluespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso unicornis</i>	Dihamry
Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	Dihamry
Red Sea Sailfin Tang	<i>Zebrosoma desjardinii</i>	Dihamry
Yellowtail Tang	<i>Zebrosoma xanthurum</i>	Dihamry

Aetobatidae

Ocellated Eagle Ray	<i>Aetobatus ocellatus</i>	Dihamry – a trip highlight!
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Atherinidae

Robust Silverside	<i>Antherinomorus lacunosus</i>	Dihamry
Gudgeon Silverside	<i>Hypoatherina temminckii</i>	Dihamry

Apogonidae

[Twobelt Cardinalfish	<i>Apogonichthyoides taeniatus</i>	Shoab]
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[Five-lined Cardinalfish	<i>Cheilodipterus quinquelineatus</i>	Shoab]
Golden-striped Cardinalfish	<i>Ostorhinchus cyanosoma</i>	Dihamry
Schooling Cardinalfish	<i>Rhabdamia cypselurus</i>	Dihamry – translucent body
[Orange-lined Cardinalfish	<i>Taeniamia fucata</i>	Shoab]

Aulostomidae

Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>	Dihamry
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Balistidae

[Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistoides conspicillum</i>	Dihamry]
[Titan Triggerfish	<i>Balistoides viridescens</i>	Dihamry]
[Blue Triggerfish	<i>Pseudobalistes fuscus</i>	Dihamry]
Yellowtail Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus undulatus</i>	Dihamry
Indian Triggerfish	<i>Milichthys indicus</i>	Dihamry
Red-toothed Triggerfish	<i>Odonus niger</i>	1 at Dihamry
Bluethroat Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen albicaudatus</i>	Dihamry
[Halfmoon Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen chrysopterus</i>	Dihamry]
Picasso Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus aculeatus</i>	Dihamry
Arabian Picassofish	<i>Rhinecanthus assasi</i>	Dihamry

Caesionidae

Lunar Fusilier	<i>Caesio lunaris</i>	Dihamry
Striated Fusilier	<i>Caesio striata</i>	Dihamry, Shoab
Multi-lined Fusilier	<i>Caesio varilineata</i>	Dihamry, Shoab
Goldband Fusilier	<i>Pterocaesio chrysozona</i>	Shoab

Carangidae

[Orange-spotted Trevally	<i>Carangoides bajad</i>	Dihamry]
[Black Trevally	<i>Caranx lugubris</i>	Dihamry]
Bluefin Trevally	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>	Dihamry
Indian Scad	<i>Decapterus russelii</i>	Dihamry
Rainbow Runner	<i>Elagatis bipinnulata</i>	Shoab
Small-spotted Dart	<i>Trachinotus baillonii</i>	Dihamry, Shoab

Carcharinidae

[White-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>	Dihamry]
[Lemon Shark	<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>	Dihamry]

Chaetoniidae

Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>	Dihamry
Red-tailed Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon collare</i>	Dihamry
[African Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon dolosus</i>	Dihamry]
[Red Sea Raccoon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon fasciatus</i>	Dihamry]
Lined Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lineolatus</i>	Dihamry
Raccoon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lunula</i>	Dihamry
[Madagascar Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon madagaskariensis</i>	Dihamry]

Arabian Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon melapterus</i>	Dihamry
Horseshoe Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon pictus</i>	Dihamry
[Rip Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>	Dihamry]
[Teardrop Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon unimaculatus</i>	Dihamry]
Vagabond Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon vagabundus</i>	Dihamry
Longfin Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus acuminatus</i>	Dihamry]

Dasyatidae

[Dark Spotted Stingray	<i>Taeniurops meyeri</i>	Qalansiyah]
[Round Fantail Stingray	<i>Taeniurops grabatus</i>	Sboab]

Diodontidae

Long-spined Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon holacanthus</i>	Shoab
Masked Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon liturosus</i>	Dihamry, Shoab

Fistularidae

Cornetfish	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>	Dihamry
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Haemulidae

[Blackspotted Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus gaterinus</i>	Dihamry]
Silver Sweetlips	<i>Diagramma punctatum</i>	Dihamry

Hemiramphidae

[Valenciennes Halfbeak	<i>Hyporamphus limbatus</i>	Dihamry, Qalansiyah (lagoon)]
Spotted Halfbeak	<i>Hyporamphus far</i>	Dihamry

Holocentridae

[White-tipped Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis vittata</i>	Dihamry]
[Pinecone Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis murdjan</i>	Dihamry]
[Crown Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron diadema</i>	Dihamry]

The complete absence of *Holocentridae* this year was a bit strange!

Kyphosidae

[Blue Sea Chub	<i>Kyphosus cinerascens</i>	Dihamry]
Lowfin Chub	<i>Kyphosus vaigensis</i>	Dihamry

Labridae

Blue-spotted Wrasse	<i>Anampses caeruleopunctatus</i>	Dihamry
[Saddleback Hogfish	<i>Bodianus bilunulatus</i>	Dihamry]
Broomtail Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus lunulatus</i>	Dihamry
[Clown Sand Wrasse	<i>Coris aygula</i>	Dihamry]
Queen Coris	<i>Coris formosa</i>	Shoab
[African Coris	<i>Coris cuvieri</i>	Shoab]
Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus varius</i>	Dihamry
Dusky Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres marginatus</i>	Dihamry

Nebulous Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres nebulosus</i>	Shoab
Zigzag Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres scapularis</i>	Dihamry
Barred Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus fasciatus</i>	Dihamry
Blackeye Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>	Dihamry
Bicolor Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides bicolor</i>	Dihamry
Common Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>	Dihamry
[Brokenline Wrasse	<i>Stethojulis interrupta</i>	Dihamry]
Sixbar Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hardwicke</i>	Dihamry
[Goldbar Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hebraicum</i>	Dihamry]
Moon Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lunare</i>	Dihamry
Sunset Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lutescens</i>	Dihamry
Surge Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma purpuraceum</i>	Shoab

Lethrinidae

Yellowfin Emperor	<i>Lethrinus erythracanthus</i>	Dihamry
	[<i>Lethrinus crocineus</i>	Dihamry]
Humpnose Big-eyed Bream	<i>Monotaxis grandoculis</i>	Dihamry, Shoab

Loliginidae

Bigfin Reef Squid	<i>Sepioteuthis lessoniana</i>	Dihamry
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Lutjanidae

Bengal Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bengalensis</i>	Dihamry
[Two-spot Red Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bohar</i>	Shoab]
Blackspot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus ehrenbergii</i>	Dihamry
Blacktail Snapper	<i>Lutjanus fulvous</i>	Shoab
Humpback Snapper	<i>Lutjanus gibbus</i>	Dihamry
Blue-striped Snapper	<i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>	Shoab

Monocanthidae

Scribbled Filefish	<i>Aluterus scriptus</i>	several seen Dihamry
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Monodactylidae

Silver Moonyfish	<i>Monodactylus argenteus</i>	large dense school Dihamry
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Mugilidae

[Mullet sp	<i>Crenimugil pedaraki</i>	Omeq]
Fringelip Mullet	<i>Crenimugil crenilabis</i>	Dihamry
Mullet sp	<i>Plicomugil labiosus</i>	Dihamry

Mullidae

Yellowfin Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys vanicolensis</i>	Dihamry
Dash-and-dot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>	Dihamry
Yellowsaddle Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus cyclostomus</i>	Dihamry
Red Sea Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus forsskali</i>	Dihamry
Longbarbel Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus macronema</i>	Dihamry

[Round-spot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus pleurostigma</i>	Dihamry]
[Rosy Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus rubescens</i>	Dihamry]
Doublebar Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus trifasciatus</i>	Dihamry
Muraenidae		
Honeycomb Moray	<i>Gymnothorax favagineus</i>	Dihamry
Geometric Moray	<i>Gymnothorax griseus</i>	Dihamry
Pharaoh's Moray	<i>Gymnothorax pharaonica</i>	Irasel beach pools
Giant Moray	<i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>	One seen Dihamry
Laced Moray	<i>Gymnothorax tessellata</i>	Dihamry, less common than <i>favagineus</i> there
[Barred Moray	<i>Echidna polyzona</i>	Dihamry]
Nemipteridae		
Arabian Spinecheek	<i>Scolopsis ghanam</i>	Dihamry, Shoab
Octopodidae		
Big Blue Octopus	<i>Octopus cyanea</i>	Dihamry
White-spotted Octopus	<i>Calistoctopus macropus</i>	Dihamry
Ostraciidae		
Cube Boxfish	<i>Ostracion cubicus</i>	Shoab
Pempheridae		
[Yelloweye Sweeper	<i>Pempheris flavicylca</i>	Dihamry]
Blackspot Sweeper	<i>Pempheris oualensis</i>	Dihamry
Cave Sweeper	<i>Pempheris vanicolensis</i>	Dihamry
Platycephalidae		
Tentacled Flathead	<i>Papilloculiceps longiceps</i>	Dihamry
Pomacanthidae		
Lemon Angelfish	<i>Centropyge flavissima</i>	Dihamry. However the images I got of this fish suggest it is 'Armitage's Angelfish', <i>Apolemichthys armitagei</i> as was, because this was later thought to be a hybrid. However on Socotra one of the parents is absent so the jury's out on this one!
Emperor Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus imperator</i>	Dihamry
Yellowbar Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus maculosus</i>	Dihamry- big!
[Trapeze Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus rhomboides</i>	Dihamry]
[Koran Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus semicirculatus</i>	Dihamry]

Pomacentridae

Yellowtail Sergeant	<i>Abudefduf notatus</i>	Dihamry
Scissortail Sergeant	<i>Abudefduf sexfasciatus</i>	Dihamry
Blackspot Sergeant	<i>Abudefduf sordidus</i>	Shoab
Indo-Pacific Sergeant	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>	Dihamry
[Vanderbilt's Puller	<i>Chromis vanderbilti</i>	Dihamry]
Tiger Damsel	<i>Chrysiptera annulata</i>	Shoab
One-spot Damsel	<i>Chrysiptera unimaculata</i>	Dihamry
White-tail Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus aruanus</i>	Dihamry
[Red Sea Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus marginatus</i>	Dihamry]
Caerulean Damsel	<i>Pomacentrus caeruleus</i>	Dihamry, Shoab
Sulphur Damsel	<i>Pomacentrus sulfureus</i>	Shoab
Threeline Damsel	<i>Pomacentrus trilineatus</i>	Dihamry
Jewel Damsel	<i>Stegastes lacrymatus</i>	Dihamry

Pseudochromidae

Olive Dottyback	<i>Pseudochromis olivaceus</i>	Dihamry
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Scaridae

Bicolor Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>	Dihamry
Heavybeak Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus gibbus</i>	Dihamry
Bullethead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus sordidus</i>	Dihamry
Red Sea Parrotfish	<i>Scarus collana</i>	Dihamry
Rusty Parrotfish	<i>Scarus ferrugineus</i>	Dihamry
Purple-brown Parrotfish	<i>Scarus fuscopurpureus</i>	Dihamry – quite common
Swarthy Parrotfish	<i>Scarus niger</i>	Dihamry
Ember Parrotfish	<i>Scarus rubroviolaceus</i>	Dihamry
[Indian Parrotfish	<i>Scarus strongylocephalus</i>	Dihamry]

Scorpaenidae

Broadbarred Firefish	<i>Pterois antennata</i>	Dihamry
Devil Firefish	<i>Pterois miles</i>	Dihamry
False Stonefish	<i>Scorpaenopsis diabolius</i>	Dihamry
[Raggy Scorpionfish	<i>Scorpaenopsis venosa</i>	Shoab]

Serranidae

Redmouth Grouper	<i>Aethaloperca rogae</i>	Dihamry
Peacock Grouper	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>	Dihamry
Coral Hind	<i>Cephalopholis miniata</i>	Dihamry
Blacktip Grouper	<i>Epinephelus fasciatus</i>	Dihamry
[Smooth Grouper	<i>Dermatolepis striolatus</i>	Dihamry]
[Redstripe Fairy Basslet	<i>Pseudanthias fasciatus</i>	Dihamry]
Lyretail Anthias	<i>Pseudanthias squamipinnis</i>	Dihamry

Siganidae

Streamlined Spinefoot	<i>Siganus argenteus</i>	Dihamry
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Sparidae

Two-bar Seabream

Acanthopagrus bifasciatus

Dihamry

Sphyraenidae

Great Barracuda

[Bigeye Barracuda

Obtuse Barracuda

Sphyraena barracuda

Sphyraena forsteri

Sphyraena obtusata

Shoab

Dihamry]

Shoab. This species or possibly *Sphyraena flavicauda*

Tetraodontidae

Guineafowl Pufferfish

Arothron meleagris

Dihamry. Masked Pufferfish

Arothron diadematus is found in the

Red Sea but not sure whether both

species occur side by side in Socotra?

[Stellate Pufferfish

Crowned Toby

Peter's Toby

Solander's Toby

[Valentin's Toby

Arothron stellatus

Canthigaster coronata

Canthigaster petersi

Canthigaster solandri

Canthigaster valentina

Dihamry]

Dihamry

Shoab

Dihamry

Dihamry]