

# OSME NEWS

Geoff Welch

## Certificate of Recognition

While many of the problems facing birds and the environment in the OSME region will only be solved by the work of governments and NGOs, a great many individuals are selflessly devoting much of their time, energy and resources to 'make a difference' at a local level. OSME feels strongly that such commitment should be recognised and therefore we are launching an annual Certificate of Recognition award which includes £200 worth of books from the Natural History Book Service (NHBS).

We are delighted to announce that the first recipient is Ahmad Aidek from Syria for the production of *A Guide to the Biodiversity of Deir ez-Zor Area* which was published in 2010 (see Plates 1,2). This photographic

guide to the flora and fauna of the area is for free distribution to local schools, universities, conservation staff and interested locals. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing situation in Syria, it has not yet been possible to send Ahmed his certificate or books.

OSME is now inviting nominations for this year's award. Nominees should be residents of the OSME region who have made an outstanding individual contribution to the conservation of species or sites locally. This can take the form of research, awareness-raising or practical action. Nominations should be no more than two pages of A4 and clearly state why the action carried out is 'outstanding' and provide details of:

- the issue that was addressed
- the action(s) that was carried out
- the successful outcome.

Additional supporting materials such as photographs, media coverage *etc* are also welcome. Nominations should be sent by email to the OSME Secretary (secretary@osme.org) by 31 October 2013. Please note that self-nominations are not permitted and the £200 award is for books only and cannot be taken as cash.

## Conservation and Research Fund news

Due to personal reasons, Christine Booth has regrettably decided to stand down as chair of the CRF sub-committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all of the work she did to 'professionalise' the operation of the CRF. A replacement chair will be appointed shortly. On a more positive note, I am pleased to welcome Maxim Koshkin who will be advising on applications to the fund from a Central Asian perspective.

Additionally, I am also pleased to announce that the 'average' level of grant awarded by the CRF has now been increased to £1000 and larger grants, up to £2500 will also be considered—see the OSME website for details of how to apply.

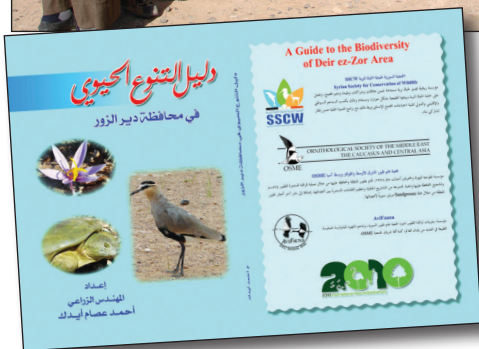


Plate 1 (top). Ahmad Aidek (second from left) with local community members. © Ahmad Aidek

Plate 2 (bottom). Cover of *A Guide to the Biodiversity of Deir ez-Zor Area*. © Ahmad Aidek